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SOVIET DISCUSSION OF ART AND LITERATURE

1953 - 1973

by

ANTHONY C. WILSON

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Australian National University, February, 1976.

STATEMENT

This thesis is based on original work. The bulk of the research and writing for it was carried out by the author under the auspices of the History of Ideas Unit, Australian National University, Canberra, between October 1970 and January 1974. A number of revisions and amendments to the text were completed in 1975.

All authorities and sources which have been consulted are acknowledged in the footnotes and bibliography.

(A.C. WILSON)

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NOTES ON THE TRANSLITERATION OF RUSSIAN TITLES AND NAMES AND ON THE TRANSLATION OF FOREIGN TITLES AND NAMES.

TRANSLITERATION:

For the transliteration of certain Cyrillic letters or combination of letters for which alternative transliterations exist in English, I have used the following forms :

(1) 'yu', 'ya' and 'ye' in the case of the corresponding Russian vowels (i.e. 'yunost'' , 'yazyk' etc)

(ii) '-oi' , '-i', '-y' for Russian adjectival endings (sotsiologicheski', 'khudozhestvenny', etc)

Note,however, that:

(i) where the transliterations I have applied do not accord with standard,very common transliterations like ' Soviet', 'Brezhnev' I have used the common form (instead of writing 'Sovyet' or 'Brezhnyev')

(ii) as far as Russian writers with names of German origi are concerned-cf.' Friedlander', 'Goldentricht' , 'Focht'- I have retained the German spelling and not transliterated the Cyrillic letters exactly;I have not written 'Fridlander', 'Goldentrikht','Fokht'.

TRANSLATION:

The practice adopted in this study is as follows:

(i) the titles of Russian critical articles and books etc., when first introduced, are presented in transliterated form, with an English translation appended; thereafter they are referred to in the Russian (transliter-

ated) form only.

(ii) The titles and names of Russian works of fiction and journals are introduced in a transliterated form only, without a translation, throughout.

(iii) The titles of works (especially works by Marx and Engels), originally written in German are throughout translated into English, without reference to their original German title. This is simply because the present writer has little knowledge of German and partly because Marx's and Engel's works are well known by their English titles. (one exception of course is Marx's Grundrisse which is best known by its German title and is so introduced in this work.)

(iv) For work in other languages known to me, the same system is applied as for Russian titles: original title plus translation when it is first introduced in this study; original only for works of fiction and journals.

SELECTED ABBREVIATIONS :

(Many of these refer to periodicals, both Soviet and non-Soviet, that have been used extensively in this thesis)

ANSSR: Akademiya Nauk SSR

JAAC: (US) Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism.

LG: Literaturnaya gazeta

MGU: Moskovski Gosudarstvenny Universitet

NM: Novy mir

Osnovy: Osnovy marksistsko-leninskoi estetiki

(The Foundations of Marxist-Leninist Aesthetics), Gospolitizdat, Moscow, 1961 edition.

SST: Studies in Soviet Thought

VF: Voprosy filosofii

VL: Voprosy literatury.

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SYNOPSIS

This study outlines the content and main trends of Soviet discussion on art in the period, 1953 - 1973. It establishes the political framework of the discussion after 1953 and the link between this and the emergence of what are termed 'official' and 'professional' approaches in Soviet writing on art. Equivalent approaches are also to be found in Soviet artistic practice and wider intellectual discussion as well. A third - strongly non-conformist and anti-Marxist - exists in the latter two fields, but not, it is argued, to the same extent in Soviet aesthetic discussion itself.

Nevertheless, differences and tensions do exist in this discussion. The study examines specific areas and themes in Soviet discussion of art - like the theory of beauty, the moral in art, art and society, art and form, theory of literature etc and highlights the differences apparent in Soviet writings here. These are shown to result not only from the presence of non-Marxist thinking alongside the Marxist, but from a wider conflict between the 'reductionist-materialist' view of art, and the approach which(without necessarily abandoning Marxist-Leninist categories) emphasises much more the integrity and specific nature of artistic activity itself. Soviet discussion reflects a continuing balance (and tension) between these and related approaches, and the preoccupation of critics with defending one or the other, along with other factors, will keep Soviet discussion within its present contours for the forseeable future. It will thus remain, on the whole, fairly conservative, somewhat (at times) pedestrian and at a distance, in scope and themes, from 'revisionist' and other Western writing on art.

INTRODUCTION

Soviet artistic practice and critical writing about such practice have, since the early days of the Communist regime, provided a considerable source of information about intellectual developments in the U.S.S.R.. In part, this is the result of the important role artistic practice has traditionally played in Russia as a vehicle for conveying ideas, whether they be part of the prevailing social and political orthodoxy or represent thinking that has grown up to counter it. It is clear, moreover, that in the Soviet Union today Soviet artistic practice and Soviet criticism of art are still fulfilling this role. To take artistic practice, one can discern three types of art (at least literary art) being produced in the Soviet Union today which reflect, in turn, three types of thinking current in Soviet intellectual life. There are, of course, variations and modifications within each type and in certain artists and thinkers there is a tendency to move from one to another, to blur the distinction between them. Nevertheless they remain, in broad terms, valid and useful distinctions.

The first type could be called 'partisan and orthodox' - it embraces that large body of socialist realist art which portrays Soviet reality with unstinting partisanship, that is, interprets such reality in accordance with the latest Party "line" on any given aspect of it. Some of this work - as in the writings of the novelists Kochetov and Shevtsov - goes even further and expresses a certain nostalgia for the more repressive, doctrinaire ways of the Stalin era itself. Partisan art, furthermore, reflects complete faith in the goals of Communist construction and the policies of the C.P.S.

Alongside the orthodox artists are a breed of often younger and better artists, mainly writers like Tendryakov, Voinovich and others, who, Max Hayward suggests, might be called neo-realists. (1) These people are sufficiently socialist or at any rate sufficiently reserved in their differences with official art to be published. Thus while they are, in fact, critical of aspects of Soviet reality they do not systematically attack the regime or communism. These men are in many ways like those critics and thinkers whom I shall call 'professionals'. The latter, while probably sincere Marxist - Leninists in most cases, feel that slavish support for the regime is not necessary for their concerns. Possibly in a situation where there was no censorship, neo-realist artists, as well as the professional critics, might be more distant from the official line than their published work suggests. However, as long as censorship remains in force in the Soviet Union and assuming they do not publish their work from the comparative safety of the West we can never know what their "actual feelings" are towards this line. Here, as elsewhere in this study, we can draw conclusions about Soviet attitudes only, obviously, on the basis of what men can actually publish within the Soviet Union not on the basis of what they may or may not believe. (2)

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(1) Max Hayward: "The Decline of Socialist Realism", Survey Winter, 1972, p.91.

(2) There are several incidents, known to Western scholars through samizdat which support the view that some at least of the Soviet artists and writers in this category may in "uncensored conditions" take a different line from what they actually say in print. It is known, for example that at a closed session of the Writers' Union of 17th November 1966 many writers present spoke of A. Solzhenitsyn and his (then) half-completed novel Rakovy korpus in very favourable terms. (and cf. A. Rothberg, The Heirs of Stalin, Cornell University Press, New York, 1972 pp. 176-177.

At a further distance still from official art and constituting a third type are writers like Solzhenitsyn and the late Boris Pasternak for whom censorship within the U.S.S.R. acts as no restriction. The latter, clearly, do not accept the values of Communism and set out to counterpose to these their own philosophy and values - in the case of these two writers, a philosophy of individualism founded, it seems clear, on a Christian ethic. This type of artistic creation, in turn, reflects - indeed demonstrably reinforces - that small, but significant group of thinkers in the U.S.S.R. who are clearly opposed to Marxism-Leninism and often antagonistic to the Soviet regime. We know that such thinkers exist from such things as the samizdat phenomenon (in particular the Chronicle of Current Events.), institutions like the Committee for Human Rights in the U.S.S.R., and the pronouncements of its co-founder, the physicist Andrei Sakharov, and of his colleague Valeri Chalidze (who in December 1972 had his Soviet citizenship revoked by the Supreme Soviet while lecturing in the United States and thus was forced into exile in America.)[1] In addition there are the activities of other dissidents from other professions, like A. Amalrik, Yu. Galanskov P. Grigorenko, the Medvedev brothers and others, all of whom have met varying degrees of repression and punishment from Soviet authorities. These men may dissent on the basis of a whole range of beliefs - from the strident

(1) A similar fate befell Zhores Medvedev, the geneticist, while he was on a visit to the United Kingdom. His brother Roy, the historian, still lives in Russia.

non-conformism and anti-Sovietism of Amalrik, to the often barely distinguished Slavophilism of some samizdat writers, and the liberal-minded and not anti-Soviet 'constitutionalism' of Sakharov and his supporters. They may also have different goals, depending on these beliefs. But they appear united by the simple courage of their convictions and their willingness to confront the regime with an often radical and hostile critique of itself.

These strands of thinking in Soviet life, particularly as expressed in artistic practice, have been the object, over recent years, of critical discussion and examination by Western specialis such as Max Hayward (in England) and Professors E.J. Simmons and M. Slonim and others (in the U.S.A.) . More recently, the dissidents themselves have attracted considerable attention in the West with the continuing drama of Solzhenitsyn's defiance of the regime and the Soviet literary establishment, and his subsequent expulsio from the U.S.S.R.; with Sakharov's outspokenness on civil rights and other issues; with the harsh repression of dissidents like Amalrik and Grigorenko, and so on. The activities of the dissidents have been extensively documented in two recent studies, namely A. Rothburg: The Heirs of Stalin: Dissidence and the Soviet Regime, 1953-70, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1972, and P. Reddaway (ed.) Uncensored Russia: The Human Rights Movement in the Soviet Union, Jonathon Cape, London, 1973,

Because the topic has already attracted substantial commentary, this present study does not aim to examine or appraise new developments in Soviet artistic practice in the post-Stalin era. Rather, it concentrates on a somewhat more neglected area - that is Soviet criticism of art, that part of Soviet theoretical discussion which embraces Soviet aesthetics, as well as Soviet theory of literature and theory of socialist realism. This is not

to say that developments in artistic practice are irrelevant for this enquiry and will not be touched upon. But they themselves will not constitute the prime object of study.

To examine Soviet critical writing on art since 1953 is an extensive task. Clearly, in a study of this nature, it is not sufficient merely to chronicle what was written when or even to establish the major themes and preoccupations of the better critics. It is necessary, in addition, to make clear the overall thrust and shape of Soviet criticism over the past twenty years to see if in fact there are significant differen of approach and levels of discussion throughout the period.

For this task one has before one the example of Soviet artistic practice. Do the same sort of broad differences of approach exist in Soviet critical theory, as exist in artistic practice and, I have argued, in Soviet intellectual life as a whole?

To answer these questions, one has to pose and follow up others . An initial task - of obvious importance in the Soviet context - is to clarify what I call the ' historical', that is to say, time-bound, primarily socio-political, context of Soviet discussion of art. One needs to ascertain what sort of controls and limits are placed by offical authorities on critical discussion - on critics who want to publish in a book or article form in the U.S.S.R. and who face the controls of the Soviet censorship. We next need to examine what might be called the Marxist-Leninist core of Soviet aesthetic discussion and inquire whether there also exist in this direction themes and ideas inspired from sources outside Marxism, Are they dissident ideas, in other words or can they

coexist with Marxist ideas without tension?

In answer to these broad questions and problems, kept in mind throughout the whole of this study, it will be argued that political controls upon Soviet writing on art are less rigorous than those upon artistic practice. They are, in fact, not often applied in the form of external rebuke and intervention by the Party but make themselves felt in the form of an official line on art. This is propagated by official critics in textbooks and similar sorts of outlets - in other words, by men who are primarily partisan in intellect and disposition.

Side by side with the official view of art, there exists what can be called a 'professional' stream of writing. 'Professional' writers are not concerned simply to propagate an official line on art, as official critics do, though many are capable of writing 'officially', if need be. For this reason the category 'professional' should be applied to describe a certain disposition or capacity that critics may draw upon as much as a distinct type of critic. The hallmark of 'professionalism' is a concern by critics with the integrity of their object of study, art, and with the 'creative' application of Marxist-Leninist precepts in order to understand it more fully. To the extent that 'professional' writing is undoctrinaire, often quite original and forced to make more concessions to the official line than it would in conditions free of censorship, it is typical of the second type of approach present in Soviet thought generally, and in Soviet artistic practice in particular.

The third - dissident, heterodox - approach, is not, it will be argued, found to any significant degree in Soviet (published) criticism of art. In relation to certain themes

(the moral in art, the problem of form and so on) it will be shown that some Soviet critics do embrace non - Marxist ideas. However, these ideas, on the evidence so far available to me, do not exist in sharp tension with the Marxist-Leninist, but serve often to complement them, to illuminate questions on which Marxist critics have little to say. The latter seem prepared to draw upon or rebut these ideas, but not to banish them.

For this reason there is little notable dissidence - in the sense that Solzhenitsyn is dissident - in discussion published within the Soviet Union about art, no noticeable attempt to undermine the Marxist line in a samizdat - style campaign.(1) This stands, in contrast of course, with the phenomenon of samizdat works of literature that are a clear rebuff to socialist realist literary practice. A number of factors, it will be shown, may be responsible for this - the attitudes of Party men towards critics, as opposed to practitioners of art, the safer position of neo-formalist criticism (but not art) in the U.S.S.R. and so on.

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(1)
One has to mention, of course, that some Soviet critics and writers have attacked Soviet literary theories by having their criticisms published abroad (the tamizdat phenomenon) cf. Sinyavski's essay 'On Socialist Realism' which he had published in Paris under the pseudonym A.Tertz in 1959 and which is considered in more detail in Chapter X. There is also the series of attacks on socialist realism (amongst other things) launched by A.Kuznetsov following his defection while on a visit to London, in July 1969, as well as Solzhenitsyn's broadsides - within Russia - against official aesthetics particularly during his struggles with the Boards of the U.S.S.R. and R.S.F.S.R.Writers Unions between 1967 and 1969, and earlier. But in degree and scope, these attacks do not compare with the samzidat - and tamizdat -phenomenon applied to literary practice. The three dissidents mentioned in this footnote furthermore are not - with the exception of Sinyavski - primarily critics; and they all now express their "dissidence" in the comparative freedom of the West.

Having outlined the broad purpose and theme of this work, it is perhaps appropriate now to look in more detail at it precise scope and methodology.

Primarily this research has been conceived as a study in the history of ideas. The ideas of Soviet aesthetic discussio are, we have stated, primarily the general ideas and values of what may be called Soviet Marxism, which influence contempo ary Soviet thinking in other fields, and which, in turn, represent adaptations and modifications of ideas formulated by the 'classical' Marxists, that is to say, by Marx and Engel themselves, as well as by Plekhanov and Lenin. They are treated within the framework of history of ideas since this discipline is concerned with tracing the development of particular ideas in time over a wide range of fields, analysing their interconnection and modification, and their possible relationships to social and political events at specific periods.

In the present study the application of the ideas of Soviet Marxism to the field of criticism is the prime object of interest; but since the manner of their application and their content have been determined in large measure by tenets of Soviet Marxism both as a political ideology and a social philosophy, Soviet socio-political thought and Soviet developments in the social and political fields cannot be ignored. It should be noted that there are obvious limitations to this process of cross-reference and comparison. The prime focus of this thesis remains Soviet thinking about art - its character and ideas, not the place of such thinking in Sovi philosophy considered as a whole or, say, a comparison between the handling of certain Marxist-Leninist categories in

aesthetics and their handling in other branches of Soviet philosophy like ethics or logic. To undertake a study with the latter themes would demand a very comprehensive knowledge of Soviet philosophy and its various branches. This I do not have.

Limitations on the scope of the study have also been imposed by the character and content of Soviet writing on aesthetics. Traditionally aesthetics - or enquiry into the nature of the beautiful and of art - has given rise to much obscure or waffly discussion. "No philosophical discipline", one critic has written[1] "is plagued with more vacuity". Another speaks of it persistent "dreariness", resulting from pedantic debates amongst aestheticians about the exact scope of their discipline[2] No doubt these defects come about in large measure because such things as 'beauty','artistry' and so on tend to be less intellectual and rational, more subjective and tenuous phenomena than others with which philosophers grapple.

Soviet aesthetics, for its part, shares, indeed intensifies these general problems of aesthetics. Soviet discussion is not merely obscure, but prolix and repetitious. In large measure the existence of 'official' and dogmatic approaches in Soviet discussion have caused this. Such approaches bring

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(1) The commentator in question was a critic who contributed an unsigned article on the life and work of T.W. Adorno for the Times Literary Supplement (Edition of 9th March 1973, p.

(2) Cf. J.A. Passmore, "Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art", Critica Revista Hispanoamericana de Filosofia, Vol.ii, No.6 (September) 1968, pp.47-66.

with them the habit of ponderous exegesis, the need to justify particular positions or conclusions both by ritual and often lengthy quotations from the "appropriate" doctrinal authoritie and in language that accords with the approved jargon. Aesthe ics in its Soviet variant, has, moreover, many sub-branches an specialised fields of inquiry, like theory of socialist realism , theory of literature and so on. Many of these are legitimate and useful, and exist in Western aesthetics. Other however, overlap with each other like some of the sub-branches of iskusstvoznaniye (the theory of artistic practice). This habit of rather pedantically defining and compartmentalising areas of knowledge is, of course, in itself a major cause of repetitiousness and prolixity in Soviet writing on art.

To offset as far as possible these defects in Soviet discussion, and bring out its salient points more clearly, this writer has concentrated on particular ideas of the discussion and on a particular time-span . He has, in fact, focussed most of his attention on Soviet discussion of literature , and of those general aesthetic concepts that are relevant to an understanding of literature. He has not treated Soviet discussion of other specific genres like the cinema, the theatre, sculpture and so on. In this respect he is in harmony with traditional (and continuing) Russian attitudes: Soviet critics and writers as well as their pre-revolutionary counterparts have tended to equate art with literature, and when discussing "general problems of art" to illustrate these with examples or problems taken from literary practice. Doubtless the fact that many Soviet critics of art are themselves practising writers or at least people writing o social and political themes rather than practitioners of the

plastic genres, partly explains the Soviet emphasis on literature.

In relation to the question of time-span, the author's concern has been with Soviet aesthetic discussion during the twenty years following the death of Stalin. The importance of the year 1953 as a date with which to begin this study is obvious enough. The cut-off date of 1972/73[1] has been chosen for neatness and convenience (the bulk of research having been completed in that year) and not because it represents, as it were, the close of an era, or the culminatic of any particular trends. Within the twenty-year period however trends do emerge, develop and decline and at certain stages certain themes in aesthetics and literary criticism predominate over others.

The present study ,then, is a critical one, to the extent that its author aims to examine Soviet ideas on art in order to build up a picture of the Soviet view of art, to explain the tensions and inconsistencies within that view, and draw the appropriate conclusions about them. It is not critical in the sense that its writer has an external (personal) point of view or aesthetic theory that he wants to counterpose mechanically and ab initio to Soviet aesthetics as such. This study is thus an exercise in immanent criticism since it does not analyse one aesthetic theory from the standpoint

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(1) This does not mean that work published in the Soviet Union after December 1972 has not been read. But unless it reveals significant new trends or throws some light on existing ones, there will be little reference to it in this study.

of another. In this way a more balanced assessment and understanding of Soviet aesthetics is likely to result.

1. SOVIET DISCUSSION OF ART, 1953 - 73: POLITICAL AND RELATED, HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

Any examination of Soviet discussion of art since 1953 has to make reference to the political climate in which this discussion took place, and which, indeed, preceded it. Soviet thinking on art and literature may owe much to Marxist-Leninist ideas, to a specifically Russian ('Belinski') tradition of literary criticism and to the views of individual artists like Gorki and Fedin. Yet the thrust of Soviet discussi as well as its content at particular periods are determined by something more than the internal ebb and flow of arguments amongst the critics and theorists themselves on the basis of these antecedents. What might be called outside, " external " circumstances are important. These provide the historical framework for the whole discussion and they centre on aspects of Soviet political, intellectual and cultural life over the last twenty years or so. With this framework understood, and its importance assessed in this chapter, it will be possible in subsequent chapters to examine Soviet discussion of art with greater insight.

The attitudes of Soviet politicians and of Marxist - Leninist ideologues towards art and criticism of art are, quite clearly, the most important "external" factor. It should be said at the outset that there is some division of opinion amongst Western critics on how to categorise these attitudes. Can one speak of a uniform, official view of art, in force consistently since 1917 and perhaps typified by the attitudes and policies of Stalin and his cultural bureaucrats ? Or, is the position a little more complex , involving, amongst other

things a distinction between what we might call 'Leninist' and 'Stalinist' attitudes ? A number of critics (1) adhere to the former view, claiming that Lenin was repressive and narrow-minded in his attitude to artistic practice and criticism, and that Soviet Communists after him have, if anything, intensified his doctrinaire mentality. They assume that the very radical political goals of Lenin and his followers, as well as the ideology they evolved to help realise them, demanded that all ar and all criticism and discussion of art be completely politicise i.e. made to serve the Bolshevik cause and be judged on how well it did so.

Then there are critics who distinguish sharply the Leninis from the Stalinist approach, who claim like Professor Ernest J. Simmons that " this [Stalinist] conception of belles - lettres was not a part of Communist theory in 1917 ".(2)

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(1) Amongst these are George Steiner in his essay " Marxism and the Literary Critic ", pp. 271-290 of Language and Silence (Essays 1958-66), Pelican Books, Middlesex, 1969. Steiner argues in this essay that Lenin was a totalitarian in cultural as well as political matters and thus responsible for all that is "vulgar" and "political" in Soviet literary criticism, and (international) Marxist criticism in general. He contrasts the 'Leninist' stream of Marxist criticism with what he call the 'Engelsian' (less dogmatic) stream, so-named because of the tone and insights evident in Engels' famous critique of Balzac's work. SeeChapter VII of this study for a fuller reference to this and to Lenin's own attitude to art in the discussion of social determination in art and partiinost'.

The American Marxist, Max Eastman, also highlighted the totalitarian aspects of Soviet cultural and literary policy in his Artists in Uniform , A.A. Knopf, New York, 1934. He makes it clear that there is much that is specifically Leninist and indeed Russian in this policy.

(2) Cited from the introductory chapter of a compilation edited by him and entitled Through the Looking Glass of Soviet Literature: Views of Russian Society , Columbia University Press, New York, 1953, p.5.

This writer belongs to the latter group and he does so for a number of reasons. First, there are Lenin's own stated attitudes to art. It is true that in his famous 1905 article (1) Lenin had suggested that those Russian writers supporting the new (Bolshevik) cause should be completely partisan for it and thus serve as effective propagandists for it. None of his actions after 1917 suggest, however, that he wanted to make all literature in the Soviet Union partisan now that ther was only one political group dominant. For reasons that will be discussed more fully in the subsequent analysis of partiino Lenin was more of a pluralist in cultural than in political matters. In his 1905 article he had stated that " the literary side of the proletarian party cause cannot be mechanically identified with its other sides ".(2) Later there would be the obvious contrast between the monolithic structure of Russian political life after 1917 (achieved through the suppression of groups like the Social - Revolutionaries and the Kadety) and the continued vitality and diversity of artistic life. This diversity was reflected, above all, in the existenc in the early 'twenties, of such different artistic groups as th Proletkul't , Pereval, LEF, the Serapion Brothers and so on.

Secondly, there are other, perhaps more fundamental, reasons besides Lenin's own views to support a " liberal" interpretation of early Soviet policy on art. For example, there was not in Lenin's time a strong tradition of specificall Marxist thinking on art. The " classics of Marxism " (the

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(1) "Partiinaya organizatsiya i partiinaya literatura " (Party Organisation and Party Literature), first published in Novaya zhizn', No. 12, 1905.

(2) V.I. Lenin: On Literature and Art, Progress, Moscow, 1967, p. 24

works of Marx and Engels) had offered radical, important insights on questions of social and economic theory. They had little to say directly on art and what little Marx did say, in his Economic - Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, for example, was not known to Lenin and other Russian Marxists of his time, (The Manuscripts were not discovered until 1932). For his par Engels had little of substance to say on art, partly one suspe because he, like Marx, had so many other concerns on his mind. His comments on realism and on Balzac are sketchy and incomple and those on the place of art in the superstructure/base relationship serve mainly as an elaboration of his understandi of historical materialism generally . The work of G.V. Plekhar represents perhaps an exception to this general rule, but there is little evidence that Lenin himself was extensively acquainte with or influenced by Plekhanov's writing on art (as distinct from his other writing.) Thus Lenin's comparatively equivocal attitude to art reflects, in part, its relative unimportance up to this time in the Marxist scheme of things.(1)

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(1) Engels' views on art are contained in two letters written minor writers of the time, Margaret Harkness and Minna Kautsky, between 1886 and 1887 as well as in subsequent (1890) letters to Ernst Bloch and others. The latter seek to clarify certain problems raised by the theory of historical materialism. Engels' writings on art as well as Marx's are brought together in an important Soviet compilation, K. Marks i F. Engels ob iskusstve (Karl Marx and F. Engels on Art.) ed.M. Lifshits, Politizdat, Moscow, 1957. (It was reissued in 1968). Lenin's writings of relevance to art are likewise brought together in the compilation V.I. Lenin o literature i iskusstve (V.I. Lenin on Literature and Art), Goslitizdat, Moscow, 1960.

Plekhanov's major writings on art are contained in his six Pis'ma bez adresa (Letters without an Address), written between 1899 and 1900 and dealing in the main with art of primitive cultures (both past and present). There is also his 'Iskusstvo i obshchestvennaya zhizn' (Art and Social Li written between 1912 and 1913, which expands his sociologic critique of art and examines the art of the French Parnasse (mid - 19th century) and the Russian dekadentsvo (late 19 century) from a sociological perspective. Plekhanov's writings on art have been collected together in G.V. Plekhanov: Iskusstvo i literatura (Art and Literature) (i two volumes), Goslitizdat, Moscow, 1958.

Besides Marxist traditions, a more purely Russian tradition is also important in explaining the early Bolshevik attitude to art. One reason why a narrow attitude was generally not evident amongst Lenin and his followers lay in a very "Russian" tradition of respect for the integrity and honesty of even the most committed art. This meant that committed, partisan art could be discussed, indeed practised without, in Russian eyes, the discussion or practice becoming simply ideologised or politicised, without, that is, questions relating to the specific quality and the integrity of aestheti activity being lost sight of. Even during the excesses of Stalinism, the strength of this tradition could be seen; writing in 1952, Professor Simmons noted that

> profound belief in the Party and all it stands for may enable the sincere Communist writer to accept control as an article of faith in no sense inhibiting his artisti functioning. The obvious analogy is the mediaeval Christian artist for whom the controls of the Church were an inseparable part of his religious convictions. (1)

In many ways, of course, Stalinist art and art criticism reflected a considerable debasement of this "Russian tradition" The tradition certainly found a healthier expression in the work of those great critics of the 19th century who did so much to build it up - men like Belinski, Chernyshevski and Mikhailovski, as well as writers like Dostoyeveski and Tolstoi. Putting it very broadly, one could say that men like these were concerned to show that art could preserve and indeed enhance its integrity by its moral 'pafos' (or passionate commitment), by the artist's desire to embrace the values and aspirations of Russian society (as understood by him) as his own.

(1) E.J. Simmons (ed): Through the Looking Glass of Soviet Literature: Views of Russian Society, p.19.

This desire, as one commentator, Professor Eugene Kamenka notes, is closely linked with a particular Russian tradition in philosophy generally. This manifested itself in the search for

> the ideal of integral knowledge, blending into a single harmony the nature of the cosmos and the aspirations of man; [in] the tendency to fuse truth as righteousness with theoretical truth ; and [in] the placing of ethical personalism at the very centre of philosophy. (1).

It can indeed be argued that the notion of artistic truth itself serves to bring together these two ideas of truth and thus reinforces this tradition.

The Russianness of the tradition is also emphasised by those factors which shaped Russian history. These include a (usually)comparatively low level of intellectual discussion in Russia during and more especially after the Kievan era (brought about principally by isolation from intellectual currents in the West) and, generally, the wide range of political and social problems besetting the country. Amongst these were the generally backward and high-handed Tsarist autocracy and a continuing " crisis of identity " which was caused in part by the legacy of the Petrine reforms and which led in the early 19th century to the far-reaching dispute between the Westernisers and Slavophiles. It is little wonder that totalistic philosophies were wanted by Russian thinkers to " cut through " their country's social and cultural problems and that these philosophies were, in comparison with those of Western philosophers, often naively and sloppily formulated.

To a very great extent, of course, Bolshevism represented an outgrowth of this tradition, albeit one with strong Western roots (in Marxism). As far as art was concerned, it is clear

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(1) E. Kamenka: "Soviet Philosophy, 1917-67." in (footnote 1 cont'

especially after a perusal of Sheila P. Fitzpatrick's The Commissariat of Enlightenment and specific works like Trotski's Literature and Revolution and Lunacharski's numerous, though often mediocre, critical articles that many of the leading Bolsheviks, cultured and well-read men as they were, believed that art could be made partisan for the revolutionary cause, but that it need not in the process lose its integrity, its specific qualities as art. A significant example of this belief can be found in Nikolai Bukharin's erudite and persuasive speech to the First Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934. Here the necessary partisanship of the new socialist realist art is justified by Bukharin partly by means of a scholarly examination of the specific features of art, and of poetry in particular. (1)

It is, of course, all too true that a number of Russian artists suffered grieviously, indeed fatally, in the early years of the Bolshevik regime, but in the two most obvious cases - those of Gumilev and Blok, a harsh and callous policy towards the arts by the new regime was notresponsible. (Gumilev was shot for "counter-revolutionary" (political) activity in 1921; Blok died amidst the appalling deprivations of War Communism the same year).

(1) See p. ___ of the Chapter on socialist realism for fuller discussion of this speech.

(Footnote 1 cont'd from p. 6)

Social Thought in the Soviet Union, (Edited, with an introduction by A. Simirenko, Quadrangle Books, Chicago, 1969, pp.80-81. Cf. also G.L. Kline, "Changing Attitudes Towards the Individual", pp. 606-625 of C.E. Black (ed) The Transformation of Russian Society, Harvard University Press, 1960.

In point of fact, actual Bolshevik policy towards the ar in the years immediately after Lenin's death, as well as befo confirm these general remarks about Bolshevik attitudes. As it was, the various literary groupings continued after 1924 a new ones sprang up. In the field of criticism, Formalists, led by Shklovski, Eichenbaum and Jakobson intensified their polemics with Marxist critics over questions of artistic technique. All this was in keeping with a policy that was avowedly Leninist and proclaimed by Lenin's successors in an important 1925 Resolution of the Party. (1) It also stood in noticeable contrast to the situation prevailing in intellectual life during the middle and late 'twenties. Here debate between Marxist intellectuals and philosophers (in particular between the 'mechanist' and 'dialectical' schools) dominated all other debate. Non-Marxist philosophers could not offer significant opposition particularl after 1922 when prominent non-Marxist philosophers like Losski and Frank were exiled from the U.S.S.R. Even earlier the regim had virtually proscribed non-Marxist intellectual groups. Certainly no figure outside the Party (or outside the arts as well) enjoyed the stature that Maxim Gorki did, after his return to the U.S.S.R. in 1928.

(1) Specifically in a June 1925 Resolution of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) entitled O politike partii v oblasti khudozhestvennoi literatury. (On the Party's Policy in the Field of Artistic Literature). In the Resolution believed to have been largely drafted by Bukharin the party opposed itself to "incompetent, administrative interference" in literature. It could not dictate here, it claimed: it could merely give encouragement to literary groups sympathetic to its cause while warning them of the danger of arrogance and philistinism. The party would also strive not to alienate groups, politically indifferent or hostile, yet of great artistic potential. The Resolution also stated that the general direction and form of Soviet literature was to be the result of "the fr competition of different groups and trends". The Resolution is reproduced in full on pp.35-39 of the sbornik: O literature (On Literature), a collection of Party documents on art, published by Gosuchebpedgiz, Mosc 1960.

And this stature, one feels, comes as much from Bolshevik respe for Gorki as a great artist, as from their pleasure that he was not, generally, unsympathetic to their ideas.(1)

The advent of Stalin to supreme power by the beginning of the 'thirties and the totalitarian attitudes prevailing afterwards sharply changed traditional official attitudes to discussion both on aesthetics and other problems. As Victor Erlich puts it

> By 1930 genuine controversy had virtually ceased.... literary theorising became increasingly a matter of intellectual shadow-boxing, of timid exegesis...(2)

Furthermore, the integrity of subjects like aesthetics and literary theory was seriously weakened by the habit, common to many old Bolsheviks, and widespread during Stalin's time, of viewing the various branches of knowledge not as separate, respected disciplines but merely as applications of the "universally valid philosophy" of dialectical materialism. Further, under Stalin, the disciplines existed not so much to follow up specialised interests as to provide (where they could) doctrinal justification for the practices of the Stalinist state. All this eventually produced a kon'yunturshchin

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(1) The actual extent of Gorki's partisanshiphas been the subjec of some discussion by scholars. It is known, for example, that during the period he published Novaya zhizn'(April 1917 till mid-1918 when it was closed down) Gorki frequently attacked the Bolsheviks, condemning them as fanatics and philistines. Doubtless his attitude towards Bolshevik political practice explained his decision to emigrate in 1921. However, by 1928 his partisanship was sufficiently strong again to permit him firstly to come to terms with Bolshevik practice and then later to become the respected "elder figure" of socialist realism and Stalinist art in Russia itself. For a discussion of Gorki's 1917-18 articles against the Bolsheviks, see Melvin J. Laski's review of Maxim Gorki: Untimely Thoughts: Essays on Revolution, Culture and the Bolsheviks (ed. M. Yermolayev), Garnstone Press, London, 1971 in Encounter, March 1972. (The book reviewed contains translation of Gorki's 1917-18 articles)
(N.B. Footnotes (2) and (3) are to be found on page 10)

in Soviet intellectual life. In the cultural sphere, under Stalin, the integrity and distinctiveness of art and of that branch of philosophy concerned with it (aesthetics) were weakened by actual institutional means (not always apparent in the treatment of the natural sciences). The various artistic groupings had, for example, been merged into the one Union of Soviet Writers following the Central Committee's Decree of April 1932. (1) It is wrong, of course, to say tha from 1930 to 1953 all discussion on art ceased – the Leninist and more particularly "Russian" respect for art could not be neutralised overnight. And it is worthwhile at this point to note the more positive developments of the Stalin years, developments which the Thaw critics and writers would build upon and which provided some small measure of continuity between them and pre-Stalin Soviet discussion. This is not to overlook or excuse in any way the persecution suffered by Soviet literary figures like Mandelshtam in the 'thirties .

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(1) The whole question of the position of the disciplines, and especially the natural sciences, in Stalinist Russia and in the years prior to and after Stalin, is dealt with by Loren R. Graham in his "Science Policy and Planning in the U.S.S.R.", Survey, No. 64. 1967. "Case studies" of abuses in such fields as biology and psychology, especially during 1948-53, are presented by Robert L. Tucker in The Soviet Political Mind, Frederick A. Praeger, New York, 1963, pp. 92 et seq.

(Footnotes cont'd from p. 9)

(2) Cited from Victor Erlich: "Social and Aesthetic Criteria in Soviet Russian Criticism" in Continuity and Change in Russian and Soviet Thought (ed. E.J. Simmons), Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1955, p. 399.

(3) This is a Russian term that has no one-word English equivalent. For this reason the Russian term will be used throughout the thesis where it becomes necessary . It can be broadly translated as a "yielding to the demands of the moment."

These, we know from Nadezhda Mandelshtam's Hope against Hope, were terrible enough, indeed fatal. It is, however, to deny that Soviet cultural and intellectual life under Stalin had absolutely no positive features.

There was, for example, in the mid-'thirties a quite vigorous attack on Plekhanov's " vulgar sociology " in the work of M. Lifshits [1] who, also in 1937, produced his respectable study of Karl Marx's philosophy of art. The promulgation of the Stalin Constitution in 1936 led to a discussion the following year by the noted educationalist, A.S. Makarenko, on the " Strength of Soviet Humanism ". Much of it was very routine and laudatory but some of it tried to treat Soviet art, specifically socialist realism, in a less stereotyped fashion. Further, the 1940 Kratki filosofski slovar' did at least provide a (short) article on aesthetics although it ignored altogether a subject like ethics.

The Zhdanovshchina (1946-48) may have represented the grossest expression of Stalinist policy towards the arts; but it was not a time of complete blight. For example the charge of " rootless cosmopolitanism" - used by Zhdanov to drive a number of writers into silence - did produce quite interesting, sustained debate during 1948-50 on whether patriotism and " Russianness " alone were sufficient ingredients for Soviet art, as something primarily socialist in its inspiration.[2] Furthermore, even

(1) Further reference to this is made in Chapter VII, pp.205-6.

(2) For discussion of these debates, see in particular, Robert M. Hankin: " Post-War Ideology and Literary Scholarship", pp. 244-290 of Through the Looking Glass of Soviet Literature; and also Walter M. Vickery, " Zhdanovism, 1946-53" pp.99-124 of Literature and Revolution in Soviet Russia, 1917-62 (A Symposium, edited by Max Hayward and Leo Labedz), Oxford University Press, 1963.

while the most abject service concept of art predominated right up to Stalin's death[1], an attempt to inject a certain sophistication back into Soviet aesthetic discussion was evident during his last years. More specifically Zhdanov's attack on Soviet philosophers, in June 1947, for their "laziness" and "timidity", produced a number of responses of value to aesthetics, besides the launching of Voprosy filosofii. First, in March 1948, the U.S.S.R. Academy of Social Sciences held a series of discussions on aesthetics, partly with the aim of formulating a Zhdanovite aesthetic, partly to examine the sad state of instruction in aesthetics in the U.S.S.R. There were no Chairs in aesthetics, no research of any substance was going on. Secondly , earlier that year, in Voprosy filosofii, No.1, 1948, two aestheticans, V.F. Berestnev and P.S. Trofimov published their Proyekt programmy printsipov marksistsko - leninskoi estetiki (Draft Programme of the Principles of Marxist-Leninist Aesthetics.)

More generally, the discussion, initiated by Stalin himself on the question of the relationship between base and superstructure, particularly in the light of Marxist practice in Stalinist Russia, had some fruitful spin-off for aesthetics during Stalin last years though its full significance would only become apparent after 1953. Stalin in his 1938 article Dialekticheski i istoricheski materializm (Dialectical and Historical Materialism), orginally included in the History of the CPSU (Short Course) had stressed the capacity of the superstructure

(1) The mentality prévalent at the time is well caught by a remark of the critic V.V. Yermilov in 1950. Speaking of Stalin's well-known dictum about Soviet artists being engineers of the human soul, Yermilov wrote: " Only he, the educator of millions, the mentor of mentors could have defined the significance of writers in the new society in terms so full of love and wisdom". Cited from Sovetskaya literatura, No. 4, 1950, p.126.

particularly the political superstructure, to react back on the socio-economic base.

This capacity had been amply demonstrated, of course, by Stalin's own First Five Year Plan. In June 1950, Stalin carried discussion on base and superstructure a step forward with his intervention in a debate amongst Soviet linguists on the nature of language. In his Marksizm i voprosy yazykoznaniy (Marxism and Questions of Linguistics)(1) Stalin, while still asserting the active role of the superstructure (2), made the commonsense observation that language could not be properly discussed in terms of base and superstructure; (some Soviet linguists, followers of N. Marr, held that it could.) Contrary to their views, Stalin stated that changes in language could not be held to follow changes in the socio-economic base, nor did language help in any way to transform that base. The article had two consequences for aesthetics. Firstly during 1950-51 it did prompt some " timid exegeses" on the nature of art - the most notable being P.S. Trofimov's article, Ob

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(1) This " article", actually written in the form of answers to certain questions put to Stalin by " young correspondents" was published in Pravda on 20th June 1950. It was subsequently published in Vol. XVI (pp.114-43) of Stalin's Sochineniya . The first thirteen volumes of this were produced in the U.S.S.R. and covered material of Stalin's up to 1933; the last three volumes covering important material after 1933, were published by the Stanford University Press in 1967, after being put together by the Hoover Institute on War, Revolution and Peace in that University.

(2) Writing on the superstructure in the linguistics article, Stalin said: "The superstructure becomes a very considerable and active force, actively helps its base to stabilise and strengthen itself, and takes all measures appropriate for the task of helping a new structure to deal the death blow to and liquidate the old base and old classes". J.V. Stalin: Sochineniya, Vol. XVI, Stanford University Press, 1967, p. 115.

otnoshenii iskusstva k bazisu i nadstroike [1] (On the Relationship of Art to the Base and Superstructure). In this article the more timeless elements of art, those unconnected with socio-economic considerations, were examined in the context, inter alia, of Marx's discussion of Greek art in the Grundisse and, more predictably, of Zhdanov's observation, at the 1948 Congress of Soviet Musicians, that music had certa "integral laws ". What the timelessness or integrity of art consisted in, Trofimov did not discuss in any depth, however. The prevailing line in Stalinist aesthetics, exemplified in particular by V.A. Razumny in a 1952 article on the realistic image, was that art existed, above all, to portray the typical. Such a duty for art, clearly, bound it more closely to social reality and social change rather than highlighted its timelessness or distinctiveness from other human activities In addition, G. Malenkov's stress on typicality as the cornerstone of art (made a speech at the 19th Congress of the Party in 1952) gave further weight to this approach.

The second consequence of the base/superstructure discussion in Stalin's time was that the concept of ' superstructure' became more than ever a part of what R.T. De George has called 'systematic' (as opposed to 'dogmatic') thinking in Soviet Marxism, [3] and, as such, could be a subject for creative, critical philosophical discussion.

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(1) It was published in VF, No. 2, 1951.

(2) V.A. Razumny: " O sushchnosti realisticheskogo khudozhestvennogo obraza" (On the Essence of the Realistic Image of Art), VF, No.6. 1952.

(3) This problem touches on the issue of de-ideologisation in Soviet thought, particularly after 1956. The work of J.M. Bochenski is important for an understanding of this process - i particular his " Three Components of Communist Ideology", SEE (Vol.II) No.1., 1962. R.T. De George draws on this work in discussing deideologisation in his Patterns of Soviet Thought, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1966, p.231, et seq.

Certainly the concept raised a number of questions for aestheticians. What in art constituted part of the superstructure and what was independent of it? And if art had a firm part in the superstructure, what was the nature and extent of its "transforming" role, vis à vis the socio-economic base? These questions could be approached seriously, as we shall see, after the death of Stalin. Aesthetic discussion may not have been obliterated during his rule; it was, however, greatly extended after his death. (1) The years after the death of Stalin are popularly known as the 'Thaw' yea Ehrenburg used the term to describe the feeling prevalent in the U.S.S.R. the year after Stalin died, in his novel Ottepel' of 1954. Ottepel' of course, means 'Thaw' in Russian and to the extent that there was a substantial "melting of the political ice", to the extent, in other words, that conditions in Russia did become less harsh after Stalin's death, the term is valid. But it leads to a certain confusion if it is applied without qualification to cover the whole of the period from Stalin's death, to say, Khrushchev's ouster, or even beyond that. The notion of a thaw carries also with it associations of a continuous and intensifying process of loosening, of a continual melting of the ice. In fact, of course, during 1953-64, there were substantial "refreezes" most notably during the years 1957 and 1963. In the period after 1964, furthermore, the notion of a thaw has dubious application, as we shall see. Nevertheless we can say that the term 'Thaw' is a useful one for describing, in a brief and vivid way, the broad trend and spirit of the

(1) To be more precise, the years after 1950 are generally held to witness the beginnings of more substantive and interesting developments in Soviet philosophy generally and in aesthetics in particular, after the Stalin era. In the sphere of literary criticism and literary practice the effects of Stalin's death made themselves felt more quickly with, amongst other things, a series of articles that on the whole could be characterised as being distinct

(N.B. Footnote (1) cont'd p.16)

Khrushchev era as compared to that of the Stalin, for providing a shorthand characterisation of the years after 1953, and up to the early 'sixties, in the Soviet Union.

One of the most important effects of the Thaw was felt in Soviet intellectual life. Clearly, the more relaxed political conditions helped break down the Stalinist kon'yunkturshchina. The new leadership was less obsessed wit tightly controlling fields of intellectual enquiry and using these, where thay could be used, merely to justify their own practices. Writers on aesthetics (and other branches of knowledge) could at least make an attempt to return to pre-Stalin standards. In this writer's judgement, and as he hopes to show, post-Stalin Soviet aestheticians have not attained the standards reached in the 'twenties, have not as yet produced men of the stature and scholarship of A.K. Voronski, A.S. Dolinin, V.F. Pereverzev and other great Marxist critics of the 'twenties. The men who have some ability like M. Bakhtin, L.I. Timofeyev and others are generally older critics who began work in the 'twenties, and who cannot be reckoned as a part of a new, post-Stalin generation of aestheticians and critics. A number of factors explain why Soviet thinking on art still remains often mediocre, despite the better intellectual climate. First there is the existence and constant propagation of an official line on art, which acts to some extent as a brake on more independent and professional critics themselves anxious to appear "Soviet-minded" and not too idiosyncratic in their criticism. Possibly of greater importance, there is the great uniformity and dullness evident in Soviet artistic practice over the past twenty years (as compared with the art of the 'twenties).

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in content from Stalinist literary criticism, appearing in Novy mir and elsewhere from 1953/54 onwards.

This dullness results, in part, from the continued tight organisation of Soviet literary and artistic life (in the respective Unions of Soviet Writers, Artists, Composers, Cinematographers, etc.). Thus a less exciting art world generally has made for duller criticism and discussion of art in the Soviet Union. Finally there is the attitude of the Party, under both Khrushchev and Brezhnev. While it is argued that neither of them has interfered significantly in the sphere of artistic criticism itself (certainly to a lesser extent than in the sphere of artistic practice itself), neither Khrushchev nor Brezhnev have possessed any of the intellectual flair and cultural background common to many of the old Bolsheviks of the 'twenties. Unlike leaders such as Trotski and Bukharin, they themselves have offered no examples of, or incentive to, excellence and originality in aesthetics and related fields. The tone of the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime (with its prudent mediocrity) and of Khrushchev's (with its often bizarre mixture of liberalizing tendencies and crass philistinism) has not been helpful in this respect.

For all this, when viewed from the standpoint of the Stalin years, political and ideological developments particularly since 1956, have been of more benefit than harm to Soviet criticism and discussion of art. An outstanding feature of these developments has been the trend towards de-ideologisation in Soviet thinking and attitudes, a trend emphasised by many Western commentators on the Soviet scene. It would not be untrue to state that this trend has been due t

(1) For a discussion of the role of ideology in post-Stalin Russia, see in particular E. Kamenka: "Pluralism and Soviet Culture" and D. McCallum: "Obstacles to Change in a Communist System", pp. 96-115 and pp. 109-120 respectively of The Disintegrating Monolith: Pluralist Trends in the Communist World. (eds. [illegible] Miller and [illegible] Aldoy), [illegible] Pole and Co., Brisbane, Australia, 1964. Kamenka notes that the Party, having less recourse to ideological justification, has had to rely on "physical and managerial control, on patriotism and social conformism...." (p.94).

(Footnote cont'd p.18)

a number of factors-political,educational and intellectual. Political factors are probably the most important;they are closely tied in with the others,being in large measure a precondition for them.

At the political level-that is for the purposes of political control-it is clear that Soviet leaders have since the mid-'fifties made much less use of Soviet ideology,that complex of ideas and exhortations deduced originally from Marx's and Engels' thinking, in order to seize and consolidate political power. Obviously it has not been abandonned as such an instrument;(1) but the demands of the post-Stalin era,particularly in the international sphere,have caused it to be played down in Soviet relations with the outside world. Specifically these demands are those of great power Realpolitik and big technology,demands which effect Soviet external and internal policy and which no responsible Soviet leader can ignore.Combined,they have led to much less doctrinaire and more flexible attitudes in Soviet leaders from Khrushchev on,a willingness to modify or ignore the tenets of this ideology in the interest of pretical policy

(1)The increased pace of detente with the West under Brezhnev ,for example,has made the Soviet leadership concerned to see that such detente does not imply an ideological "convergence" with capitalism.Thus at periods when externally Brezhnev's regime speaks most eagerly of detente,internally it is inclined to stress(albeit in ritual form')theimportance and"purity" as well as the "stability" of Marxist-Leninist doctrine. In other words it is concerned to show Soviet citizens that overtures to the West do not mean the weakening of Soviet ideology,the importing of Western liberalism and other ideas. cf.also p.17.,n.1 supra

(p.17, n.1 cont'd)He adds;however,that the Party is not yet prepared to jettison Marxist ideology in any open way and indeed will still appeal to Marxist orthodoxy in order to attack opposition,since it is not sure how effective these newer methods of control are by themselves.McCallum places greater weight on the continuing importance of ideological controls,even while he concedes that the ideology has been fragmented and weakened by conflicting demands made upon it between purely national and international considerations.Though written several years ago these articles still,to this writer,.throw some light on the contemporary political situation in theU.S.S.R.

one such tenet - Lenin's thesis on the inevitable conflict between the capitalist and communist systems - was replaced by Khrushchev's doctrine of peaceful coexistence. And this change was made necessary by the realities of the nuclear age, the search for a realistic foundation (Realpolitik) to govern relations between the super-powers in such an age.

Similarly the demands of economic development, and the enormous growth of science and technology in the U.S.S.R. in the past fifteen years (part of a world-wide process) have encouraged, indeed put a premium on, more pragmatic attitudes amongst Soviet politicans and administrators. In itself, of course, this growth has provided an enormous educational rationale for downplaying ideology. Clearly in an age of technology the building of Communism requires more than basic skills or crude deductions from dialectical materialism. Even under Stalin, of course, from the late thirties onwards, the Soviet educational system was producing more and more specialist men who had more than basic skills and obviously needed the proper opportunities to apply their abilities. The figures speak for themselves - in 1968/69, for example, there were 49 million students attending primary and secondary schools in the U.S.S.R. (compared with 9½ million approximately in 1914/15). Tertiary education had expanded from some thirteen universities in 1913 to forty six in 1969.(1)

It has been educational-political developments which should be seen as background for de-ideologisation in a third area -

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(1) For these and other figures relating to Soviet educational developments, see " U.S.S.R. Education", Novosti, Moscow. 1970, pp 28-29, 62-63, etc.

that of intellectual discussion. The 'intellectual' and 'educational' spheres are of course very closely linked. Both suffered from Stalinist repression; both benefitted from the relaxation after 1953. Intellectuals, however, were more prolific and outspoken than scientists or teachers in discussi the necessity for less doctrinaire and totalitarian attitudes towards learning and intellectual life.

For the intellectuals, however, the downplaying of ideolog has been a relative thing. Political changes after 1953 would not mean a complete disavowal of the fundamental principles or, to use Bochenski's phrase, the 'basic dogma' of Marxism Leninism - such as the propositions that "there is no God", that "mankind progresses towards more rational societies", that "there are no discontinuities in the social and material world", to name a few. A Communist editorial of 1955 reminds its readers that: "... it is not possible to make use of freedo of discussion and criticism to revise fundamental principles"(1) and further that "... within Marxist philosophy there can be no question of different ideological tendencies existing".(2)

Furthermore, what the changes did mean was that certain problems could cease being treated dogmatically and become part of what Bochenski calls 'the systematic superstructure' or the 'declassified doctrines' of Marxism - Leninism.(3) The

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(1) Communist, No.7, 1955, p. 119.

(2) Ibid., p. 123.

(3) Cf. Bochenski, op. cit. The three components were accordingl for Bochenski, 'dogma', 'systematic superstructure' and 'declassified doctrine'

need to use these two other categories to classify statements made within the framework of Marxist-Leninist ideology, points of course, to the growing sophistication of these statements after 1953. Ideas forming part of 'the systematic structure' of Marxism - Leninism embraced, as Bochenski notes, ideas able be discussed, be the subject of differing interpretations but which could not be denied outright (like the scope of dialectical logic or the materialist, non-idealist, explanation of the beautiful.) 'Declassified doctrines' referred to questions on which the basic tenets of diamat were now felt to offer little illumination or about which Marxist-Leninist dialecticians had traditionally shown little interest. Presumably Lenin's thesis on the inevitablity of conflict between Communism and capitalism became 'declassified', the latter because international developments had made it an embarrassment. All this meant, of course, that more and more elements in Marxism-Leninism could be used as a starting point for discussion and intellectual enquiry - instead of simply being paraded as dogmas and thus acting as a substitute for discussion. (This is not to deny, of course, the obvious fact that many dogmas have remained in Soviet Marxism.)

Another feature, indeed consequence, of a less dogmatic intellectual climate was the exposure of the distortions, deceit and sheer inaccuracy of Stalinist scholarship, failings that were all too clearly the result of the intellectual stultification prevailing under Stalin. The pace of this exposure was stepped up during 1956 with the appearance of a number of important Novy mir articles and, of course, with Khrushchev's denunciation of the Stalinist personality cult (including the cult of the 'universal mentor') in his "secret speech" of February, 1956. Amongst the Novy mir articles were

Konstantin Simonov's " Literaturnye zametki" (NM, No.12,1956) in which he remarks, inter alia, that

> by our collective efforts we must get clear as to precisely how the cult of personality affected literatur .... without an analysis of mistakes it is difficult to correct them.(1)

Similarly, A. Metchenko, in an article in the same edition of Novy mir, entitled " Istorizm i dogma" (Historicism and Dogma), calls for a reappraisal of Stalinist literary scholarship and the correction of its"extreme evaluations", that is, of those relating to Mandelshtam and Akhmatova especially. A similar note was struck by L. Denisova and V. Zhdanov in their "Modernizatsiya i proizvol v osveshchenii proshlogo." (Modernization and Arbitrariness in the Illumination of the Past), NM, No.8,1956.

The Party itself was prepared to revaluate many of its past attitudes, particularly those of the Zhdanov era. A Central Committee Decree of 28th May 1958(2) drew attention to a number of operatic and musical works that had been "incorrectly evaluated" in the latter years of Stalin's rule, often very arbitrarily by Stalin himself. In an indirect way the Decree was a criticism of Stalin's habit of laying down the law in fields about which he had little or no knowledge.

Much of this discussion was, of course, by Western standard still very limited, as Professor Gleb Struve points out;(5) It moreover continued to reflect considerable hostility towards

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(1) NM No. 12, 1956, p. 239

(2) The decree " Ob ispravlenii oshibok v otsenke oper ' Velikay Druzhba', ' Bogdan Khuehnitski' i ' Ot Vsego Serd'tsa" (On Correcting Mistakes in the Evaluation of the Operas...) is reproduced on pp. 152-3 of the sbornik O literature.

(5) See G. Struve: " Western Writing on Soviet Literature", pp. 103-4 of the compilation The State of Soviet Studies (eds. Walter Laqueur and Leo Labedz), M.I.T. Press, Cambridg Mass., 1965.

Western scholarship on the U.S.S.R.(1) even while criticisms of Stalin were being re-echoed in more muted form by Soviet critics themselves.

Nevertheless, however cautiously initially, the trend towards more objective scholarship has increased in scope. Thus the four-volume Istoriya russkoi sovetskoi literatury (put out by the Gorki Institute during the period 1967 - 71) displayed greater fairness in its treatment of writers and made some attempt to correlate the length of the discussion with their literary (and not their political) importance. The Kratkaya literaturnaya entsiklopediya (KLE : its first seven volumes came out between 1962-72) displayed ever higher standards and avoided, to a greater degree that the Istoriya, "labelling" writers or condemning those recently attacked in offical circles.(2)

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(1) Cf. R. Samarin: Iskazhenive istorii sovetskoi literatury v literaturovedenii S.Sh.A. (The Distortion of the History of Soviet Literature in U.S. Literary Theory.), Moscow, 1962.

(2) There are, of course, certain limitations to this process. On subjects that are politically taboo (currently) - like, presumably, the work of Solzhenitsyn - it has not been possible for Soviet critics to do anything but offer routine condemnation or silence. However, for certain authors, the passage of time and de-Stalinisation have caused some critical reassessments. The work of Osip Mandelshtam, for example, continues to be rehabilitated, in qualified terms, in Soviet criticism. Recently one critic, A. Dymshits, wrote that though Mandelshtam's attitude to the Revolution was " ambiguous ", he left behind verses "which organically belong to Russian artistic culture of pre-revolutionary and Soviet times."(VL, No 3, 1972, p.94). For its part the KLE has moved towards a less harsh assessment of the work of Boris Pasternak. Though it is still not politically possible to praise, say, the artistry of Dr. Zhivago, or even defend its apolitical tone while ignoring its "drawbacks", it is now possible, to judge from the KLE entry on Pasternak, to mention the novel without accusing Pasternak of consistent and deliber anti-Sovietism. Concerning the content of Dr. Zhivago, the KLE notes only that " in the novel there is expressed a deep disenchantment with the idea of Revolution" (KLE, Tom 5, Izd-vo Sovetskaya entsiklopediya, Moscow, 1968, p. 622). It observes, without further comment, that the novel " cau

(N.B. Footnote (2) continued on page 24.)

Also important for establishing new standards of professional enquiry in aesthetics and criticism was the substantial discussion initiated by aestheticians themselves on the scope of their subject and subsequently, from 1956, on the problem of the beautiful, as a distinct concern of art. So, too, the 1958-60 debate between V.P. Tugarinov, V. Kelle and others on the universal as opposed to the "socially determined" elements in art (and other activities) deepened Soviet discussion and consideration of art as a specific form of human consciousness. These discussions will be looked at in greater detail in their appropriate contexts later in this work: they are mentioned here to illustrate the effect of "external" changes on a specific area of Soviet intellectual life in the post-Stalin era, and as something which intensified the development brought about by these changes.

Two further effects might be mentioned - firstly the publication of the Osnovy marksistskoi filosofii (The Foundations of Marxist Philosophy) in 1958 (edited by F.V. Konstantinov) as well as of the Osnovy marksistsko-leninskoi estetiki (The Foundations of Marxist-Leninist Aesthetics) in 1960 (edited by M.F. Ovsyannikov and others); and secondly the establishment of the first Chair of Aesthetics at MGU in 1960 (filled by Ovsyannikov). Both events, obviously, did much to stimulate both the discussion and, equally important, the teaching of a subject like aesthetics.

(Footnote (2) cont'd from previous page)
sharp criticism in the Soviet press" (ibid). The article appears to show some respect for Pasternak's abilities as a poet though, partly, of course, for reasons of space, it in no way approached the level of critical appreciation revealed in A. Sinyavski's Introductory Article to a 1965 Soviet compilation of Pasternak's poetic works. The KLE article is signed by Z. Paperny.

The overall change of tone and mood in intellectual life during the years after 1953 is caught well in two specific observations from Soviet thinkers, one relating to aesthetics, the other to the general principles of philosophical enquiry. Regarding the latter, the philosophers V. Yelle and M. Kovalzon wrote in their 1959 study entitled Formy obshchestvennogo soznaniya (Forms of Social Consciousness):

> If we do not take into consideration the specific nature of philosophy, its difference from politics, then the cognitive element is entirely eliminated from the history of philosophy ... The whole history of philosophy would appear to be a struggle between various attitudes toward life (mirovozzreniya), an illustration of political struggle. Reducing philosophy to politics leads consequently to a kon'yunkturshchina, to endeavours to adapt the solution and consideration of philosophical problems to the changing requirements of concrete policies. (1)

Concerning the former, I. Astakhov, an aesthetician, wrote in his book Iskusstvo i problema prekrasnogo (Art and the Problem of the Beautiful), 1963:

> The time is happily long since past, when aestheticians were ready to see in their science everything except knowledge about the beautiful and when the supporters of the theory of the beautiful were taken for unrepentant Hegelians ....(2)

Defending the importance of serious discussion and debate with a discipline like aesthetics, Astakhov went on:

> Now it is clear to anyone that without discussion, there is neither a free exchange of views, nor even serious advance in knowledge. (3).

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(1) Cited by Helmut Fleischer in his article " The Limits of Party-Mindedness: A Selection of Texts" (SST, Vol.2, 1962, pp 119-131) at p. 130. Fleischer's transliteration of Russian words and his American spelling (cf. "endeavors") have been changed to conform with this writer's own practice - as have, where necessary, the transliterations and spelling used in other texts cited in this study.

(2) I. Astakhov: Iskusstvo i problema prekrasnogo (Art and the Problem of the Beautiful), Sovetski pisatel', Moscow, 1963, p.3.

(3) Ibid., p.4.

Despite the colder political climate since Khrushchev's ouster, it is doubtful that these views would be repudiated today. The principle of professional enquiry within a range of clearly defined disciplines could only be overthrown or subverted, it would seem, by the reinstatement of Stalinist standards and practices, something hardly likely to be contemplated by the present collective leadership.

The years after 1953, that more specifically, after 1956, saw the revival of freer intellectual life in the U.S.S.R. Noticeable in this also was the considerable discussion carried on by Soviet writers and intellectuals on the relationship between the individual and the collective in socialist society. There was in this discussion a genuine attempt to come to grips with what "individual " values (like sincerity, honesty, and so on) were all about, stifled or perverted as they had been under Stalin; and to define what should be the proper relationship between these values and the values of Communism. In some sens of course, (and this is hinted at in Marietta Shaginyan's comments noted below) greater intellectual freedom will almost inevitably lead to the emphasising of individual values. A freer, and more specialised intellectual life encourages the making of distinctions and often a sceptical frame of mind towards "ultimate", universal philosophies or dogmas. It may also lead to scepticism about <u>any</u> set of values, and to an awareness of the need to distinguish between personal and social values. A certain individualism in this vein, all the more noticeable, in contrast to the spirit of the Stalin era, was evident in some Soviet writers after 1953. It was not unnatural that <u>literary</u> men should be a driving force in the post - 1953 movement towards "moral de-Stalinisation", as one writer, Isaac Deutscher, described the thaw.(1)

(1) In an Essay written in 1957 and entitled (footnote cont'd p27

since it was writers and poets who more perhaps than men in other careers knew, or strove to know, what sincerity and personal values were all about. These values were, moreover, central to literature, particularly 19th century Russian literature which had, in part through the legacy of Belinski, reflected individual writers' search for "the truth" and their attempts to relate personal values to this truth. This theme was continued in Soviet literature, though it was debased under Stalin when deceit and official mythologising forced their way into literature. However, less repressive political conditions after the Thaw gave the writer a chance to regain some measure of integrity, to examine his debasement under Stalin, to ask how it occurred and to resume, even more intensely, his search for "the truth". Always in the background was the fear of another debasement and the need to fortify oneself to cope with it successfully.

All these feelings were reflected in a growing number of works of criticism or fiction that came out almost immediately after Stalin's death in 1953. Amongst these were: Olga Berggolt's "Razgovor o lirike" (Conversation on the Lyric,

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"Steps to a New Russian Literature", Deutscher argues that moral regeneration and rediscovery were particular features of the Russian Thaw, whereas in Eastern Europe de-Stalinisation had overtones of nationalism above anything else. Like George Gibian (q.v.) Deutscher further argues that the weakness and naivete of much of the Thaw's literature were due to (a) the decline of artistic standards under Stalin (b) the fact that leading protagonists of the Thaw like Ehrenburg had compromised themselves too heavily during Stalin's rule (c) the fact that an attempt to take stock of Stalin and his legacy could not be done overnight, i.e. too hastily or superficially. In an uncanny prediction of the work of Solzhenitsyn, Deutscher concludes: "Perhaps the well of Russia's experience and conditions (under Stalin) is too deep and still too agitated for contemporary literature to draw from it ... but sooner or later Russian literature is bound to draw from this well and when it does, the world will hold its breath". Cited from I. Deutscher: Ironies of History, O.U.P., 1966 (a collection of Deutscher's monographs and articles), p.247.

LG, April 16, 1953); A. Tvardovski's " Za dal'yu dal"(The Horizon Beyond the Horizon, NM, No. 6, 1953); I. Ehrenburg's " O rabote pisatel'ya " (On the Writer's Craft, Znamya, No 10 1953); and V. Pomerantsev's "Ob iskrennosti v literature" (On Sincerity in Literature, NM, No. 12, 1953). Many of these writers were uncertain initially about what this new individualism amounted to in concrete terms, and, more generally, about the goals of moral de-Stalinisation. There seemed amongst them to be only the general belief that " there is one reality, the truth, and one way of seeing it if one is sane, educated and enlightened". (1)

As it was, much of the spirit of this writing, its discussion of moral themes had been the object of criticism from the Board of the Writers' Union in August 1954, and Zorin's play Gosti had been withdrawn from the stage for its excessive " subjectivity " and " distortions" of Soviet life. Clearly some writers were, in official eyes, going too far and implying that the Communist system was fundamentally wrong and had not merely suffered temporary aberrations under Stalin.

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(1) G. Gibian: " Russian Literature during the Thaw", in Literature and Revolution in Soviet Russia (eds. Hayward and Labedz), p.143. Gibian is amongst the most authoritative of Western scholars on the Soviet Thaw and post-1953 Soviet literature. So also is Walter E. Vickery; see his The Cult of Optimism: Political and Ideological Problems of Dissent in Soviet Literature, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 1963.

Like Deutscher, Vickery stresses the " Russian " character of the Thaw and ridicules the suggestion that the moral and political changes it witnessed in any sense implied that Russians wanted to break completely from their Soviet and Russian traditions and introduce " Western" (liberal) political traditions and ideas. In other words, for Vickery, the Thaw and de-Stalinisation were an internal Russian affair, which could not be explained along the lines of, say, the Westerniser/Slavophile debate. The issue of Westernism and "the copying of foreign models" was irrelevant.

It seemed clear, however, what most writers after 1953 did not want. The Second Congress of Soviet Writers, in December 1954, had condemned the Stalinist practice of adorning Soviet reality with a phony gloss (priukrasheniye) and pretending that it was devoid of social conflict and human tensions (teoriya beskonfliknosti). In this sense the restoration of "human values" and of truthfulness generally to Soviet writing was as much dictated by the demands of realism as by the demands of morality and individualism.

In a similar vein of criticism, and speaking to the same Congress, the writer Marietta Shaginyan railed against besprintsipnaya kon'yunkturshchina, meaning, for her, the tendency to obliterate personal standards and convictions in criticism - of one's own work and others(1). Ehrenburg, formerly as a public figure at least, implacably Stalinist in his ideas on art, wrote in articles like Kul'tura i odichaniye (Culture and Barbarism) of the need to safeguard Soviet cultural standards by combatting ideological distortions and dishonesty and by strengthening contact with "progressive" elements in the West. In subsequent articles on Stendhal (1957) and Chekhov (1959), furthermore, he made it clear that these great artists' personal honesty in their art, and (in Chekhov's case) healthy scepticism towards life, prevented these very distortions. Stendhal for his part, Ehrenburg stated, provide a "lesson" in his hatred of tyranny and hypocrisy.(2)

(1) M. Shaginyan: Ob iskusstve i literature (On Art and Literature), Sovetski pisatel', Moscow, 1958, p.322. This compilation of Shaginyan's critical writings includes her 1954 speech.

(2) cf. I. Ehrenburg, "The Lessons of Stendhal", Inostrannaya literatura, June 1957 (text in English) and "Pereclityvaya Chekhova" (On Rereading Chekhov), NM, Nos 5 and 6, 1959. These articles had quite an impact at the time, not unexpectedly in view of their relevance.

Further, during the early years of the post-Stalin era writers such as D. Granin in his Sobstvennoye mneniye and, later, V. Panova in her Sentimental'ny roman made it clear that socialism was meaningful to the extent that it was not a vehicle for cynical self-advancement, personal dishonesty and so on; the socialist ethic was more effectively applied in public life, to the extent that it reinforced and was reinforced by personal values and standards in personal life. And writing towards the end of the 'fifties on these values, another writer, Nina Ivanter made the following remarks in her Snova avgust through the mouth of a former political prisoner, amnestied after Stalin's death and released from the camps:

> ... it turns out that kindness is the most valuable of human qualities and sometimes outweighs every other virtue ... and how many years had to pass before I suddenly understood that human kindness is a fine and most necessary thing in life.(1)

Although certain commentators like Robert C. Tucker in his The Soviet Political Mind (2) consider that post-Stalin rulers stood apart from the processes of moral de-Stalinisation as a result of the traditional antagonism of Russian rulers to popular aspirations and movements, in fact they, initially at least, influenced the content and tone of moral discussion, chiefly through the concepts of "socialist humanism" and "Communism as humanism". These concepts - in vogue briefly during 1936-37 under Stalin - were revived after 1953 in the

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(1) This story appeared in August 1959 issue of Novy mir. The passage in question is also cited in Harold Swayze: Political Control of Literature in the U.S.S.R., 1946-1959, Harvard University Press, Mass., 1962, p.217.

(2) Tucker, op. cit., Chapter 4, pp.80-90.

in the work of writers and writer-critics like K. Fedin, B. Suchkov and A. Dement'yev. Communist Party leaders themselves popularised the concepts particularly at the 22nd Congress of the C.P.S.U. in October, 1961. As the liberal period of Khrushchev's rule came to an end from 1963 onwards, they were increasingly played down in official documents and declarations, and remain in them today more as clichés that as points for elaboration and discussion.

Soviet discussion on humanism and socialist humanism from the late 'fifties onward had, it should be noted, a certain superficial and repetitive quality. This resulted to a large degree from the fact that Soviet philosophers and writers, in discussing humanism as it is revealed in art or in other contexts failed to make the important distinction between what Professor G.L. Kline has called a 'humanism of principles' and a 'humanism of ideals'.(1) A 'humanism of principles' is one based on the notion that human beings, as human beings, as men, have a certain intrinsic worth and also that they have certain basic rights and freedoms because of this. Such a humanism has strongly ethical overtones: it ca lead to the view that morality, moral codes should exist to reflect, preserve and strengthen those human qualities that make for the intrinsic worth of men - i.e. goodness, honesty, sincerity, truthfulness and so on. Such qualities are

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(1) The distinction is made and discussed in G.L. Kline: " Was Marx an Ethical Humanist?" SST. 9, (1969) pp. 91-103. cf. p. 93 et seq. It will be referred to elsewhere in this study where 'humanism' enters the discussion.

likely to flourish in societies that are free, just, in short humanistic in this ethical sense than in those that are not.

A'humanism of ideals'on the other hand, leads to a very instrumentalist approach to humanism. Under this approach, which is very evident in much Soviet writing on (socialist) humanism, future 'humanistic'ideals, values and aspirations are what give significance to existing human lives - the latter have no intrinsic value and indeed in Stalinist Russia , as everyo knows, they were treated most inhumanly in the name of a future ideal. Naturally in Soviet writing this type of humanism has been often identified with Communism : the humanist ideals, Soviet commentators say , are in fact those of the Communist society, that type of society in which men will for the first time be truly human.

In the Thaw years, then, these distinctions between types of humanism were not made, in fact were noticeably blurred in the notion of socialist humanism. There was, furthermore, much talk of propagating under the slogan of 'socialist humanism' or 'socialism as the highest form of humanism' the idea that Communist values and beliefs could be the basis of both private and public morality. Specifically, the line went, Communism embodies the finest traditions of humanity and also encouraged those private, personal values like sincerity, honesty, truthfulness and so on. Communism in fact could be dignified and better "sold to" the Soviet people if explained in terms of these latter values. Thus the authors of the Osnovy marksistskoi filosofii (1958) in the lengthy section on moral' (morality) wrote to the effect that Communist values would last and be effective only if "internalised" as cultural and private values and imposed from the outside.(1)

V.P. Tugarinov in his O tsennost'yakh zhizni i kul'tury (On the Values of Life and Culture), (1960), stressed that the objective content of values as a general category and the particular, class content of Marxist values were not incompatib indeed they were closely interrelated. Finally the Party itself in the C.P.S.U. Programme adopted after the 22nd Congres in 1961 declared on the question of Communist morality:

> The simple norms of morality and justice, which under the exploiters' domination were distorted or shamelessly violated, Communism has turned into indestructible rules of life governing relations between individuals and nations alike. (1)

At another level, humanistic values, broadly defined, were propagated officially without reference to their link with Communism. This had a clear political rationale however; some of these values - like being considerate to others, self-disciplined, honest etc - were used directly to make the Soviet system work more efficiently, as a form of labour discipline similar in purpose to "bourgeois" appeals to punctuality, honesty etc. in the West.

The years 1953-56, then, were a watershed for Soviet discussion on art, both for the freer intellectual atmosphere th

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(1) Programma KPSS-a (The Programme of the C.P.S.U) Pravda Moscow, 1961, p.110.

Footnote (1) from previous page
More specifically the authors of this text-book stated "The building of Communism pre-supposes an ever-expanding use of activities with a moral basis (rather than an adminstrative one) in the regulation of relations between people." (Italics added), p.566 (1964 edition).

produced and the renewed interest that was shown towards the question of values and morality and their relationship to art (specifically literature). With the possible exception of the renewed debate on moral questions during 1961-62 - what might be called the high point of the second Khrushchev Thaw (beginning in 1958-59) - it has been less easy to relate specific aspects of Soviet aesthetic/ critical discussion to specific cultural and political events occurring after 1956. Such discussion has gone on more or less on its own terms provided always that a number of " unwritten conventions" are observed. These, it can be deduced, include the following: that writers on art do not disavow the importance of Marxist-Leninist doctrine for illuminating questions relating to aesthetics and criticism (this, of course, does not prevent writers from making little, if any, reference to Marxist-Leninis in their work); that the officially enshrined "great works" of Soviet art (the "classics" of a Sholokhov or a Shostakovich, for example) should not be subject to re-evaluation ;equally that (current) politically taboo topics - Dr. Zhivago, the works of Solzhenitsyn. etc. should not be favourably re-assesse finally that a hard-line Stalinist mentality should not predominate again amongst Soviet critics. Behind all this, it can be argued, lies the re-establishment of a more 'Leninist' attitude amongst Party officials towards art criticism at least. (The spirit of the 1925 Resolution cannot, of course, return in relation to artistic practice, given the existence of a single official Soviet art form - socialist realism - and of a single literary grouping - the Union of Soviet Writers.)

Also important in determining the Party's attitude since 1953-56 is what might be called the "ideological flaccidity"

of (post-Stalin) Party ideologues. These men simply have not initiated substantial, interesting discussion on Marxism-Leninism in a manner comparable to that of their Polish or Czechoslovak colleagues during, say, 1956 and 1968. They are content, instead, in the appropriate Party documents to "affirm the correctness" of Marxist-Leninism prinicples, but never to initiate significant discussion or reinterpretation of them. No doubt all this is, in very large measure, a result of the intellectual capacities of C.P.S.U. ideologues as well as of their demonstrated conservatism.

The proposition that specific "external" (political) events after 1956 have had little effect on aesthetic discussion can be illustrated by a number of examples. The year 1957 was the year of Khrushchev's first substantial retrenchment in the Thaw, a year marked by his campaign against the "anti-party" group and by the domestic repercussions of the abortive 1956 Hungarian counter-revolution. Yet in the same year, V.F.Vanslov Problema prekrasnogo (The Problem of the Beautiful) appeared, an intelligent discussion of the topic that remains a cornerstone of post-Stalin Soviet aesthetics. Similarly in 1968 - the year of Czechoslovakia, the Brezhnev Doctrine, and internal repression - a sbornik designed to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Marx's birth was produced by aestheticians. (It consisted of monographs discussing the link between Marx's ideas and aesthetics.(1)) Furthermore, 1969-71 may have witnesse

(1) A.D. Dymshits, et al (ed): K. Marks i aktual'nye voprosy estetiki i literaturovedeniya (K Marx and Contemporary Questions in Aesthetics and Theory of Literature) Nauka, Moscow, 1969.

the continuation and indeed intensification of the middle-of-th road conservatism that is the hallmark of the present collectiv leadership in the U.S.S.R.; it also witnessed the publication of both run-of-the-mill compilations on problems of socialist aesthetics, and quite intelligent discussions of the image and the moral in art.(1)

Of course, it should be emphasised again, the situation for writers and practitioners of the arts generally has been a little different partly because of the more immediate impact and accessibility of literature and also because of a Russian tradition of literary censorship going back to the Tsars. One need only recall Khrushchev's attacks on Dudintsev in 1957 and on the sculptor Neizvestny and all modernist art in late 1962 and early 1963. Furthermore, the monolithic Union of Soviet Writers has remained, after 1953, as a Stalinist legacy even if its structure was very modestly democratised after December 1954 and partially decentralised in 1957 following the setting up of a RSFSR Writers' Union; in association with it

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(1) Cf. K. Goranov: Khudozhestvenny obraz i ego istoricheskaya zhizn' (The Artistic Image and its Historical Life.) Iskusstve, Moscow, 1969; and V. Tolstykh (ed.): Iskusstvo-nravstvennoye i beznravstvennoye (Art-Moral and Immoral), sbornik statei Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1969

(2) As evidence of the continuation of a Stalinist mentality in the administration of the arts after 1953, one can note the reaction to an article by B.A. Mazarov and O.V. Gridneva appearing in VF, No.5, 1956. It was entitled " K voprosu ob otstavanii dramaturgii i teatra". (A Contribution on the Question of the Lag in Dramaturgy and in the Theatre) and urged that the writing and production of plays be free of th direct control of the U.S.S.R. Ministry of Culture (this control had been imposed in 1953). The plea fell on deaf ears. F a detailed account of Soviet administration of culture and t arts (including the media) both before and after 1953, see especially Chapter IV of The Politics of Ideas in the U.S.S.R published by the Bodley Head Press, London, 1967, as part of a " Soviet Studies" series edited by Robert Conquest; also Harold Swayze: The Political Control of Literature in the U.S.S.R. 1946-59 , passim.

The attitudes of Soviet political authorities towards critics and aestheticians can, today, then, be described as one of "vigilance without sustained interference." Assuming the continuation of the present regime for the foreseeable future there is no reason to think that this attitude will alter. Furthermore, the Brezhnev regime is one dedicated to upholding the status quo. It feels it faces no need for further de-Stalinisation and, to this extent, to speak of any shifts or changes in its policies (on literary criticism or anything else) in terms of 'Thaws' and 'freezes' is, I think, overstating the case. The notion of a thaw will be valid again only if there is a radical departure from the regime's "middle-of-the-road" conservatism, and one that brings with it a sense of release and rebirth, similar to the feelings experienced after 1953. As it is, the modifications recently discernible in its policies (viz. rapprochement with America, greater tolerance towards Jewish emigration) seem containable within the present policy framework.

The conservatism of the regime is evident in a number of ways. One of the most obvious is the use of Lenin's name and ideas to sanction present policies, to become in themselves a conservative force in Soviet life. Certainly all the official homage and commentary devoted to Lenin during the centenary year of his birth, in particular the Thesis of the C.P.S.U. published in December 1969 to mark the beginning of the Centenary, seeks to do this. This approach also reflects the "ideological flaccidity" noted earlier - the fact, one feels, that regime leaders are simply not able to do anything else in the realm of ideology but present a ritualised version of Lenin's ideas.

The reinforcement of the status quo has come about by other means beside invocation of Lenin's sacred name. It seems to be a feature of this particular regime that it can contain the extreme conservative forces in Soviet life on the one hand and "liberal" groups advocating change on the other, in an effort to hold the middle ground, or in other words (agai to preserve things as they are. It is true a number of events testify to a worsening of the situation for those supporting a relaxation of controls in literary and other fields since 1965 - the trial and conviction of Daniel and Sinyavski in February 1966 and the subsequent addition to the Soviet Criminal Code that year of a new article (190) which made it an offense to disseminate in oral or written form "conscious fabrications discrediting the Soviet State". There has also been the sustained and continuing campaign against Solzhenitsyn marked by his expulsion from the Union of Soviet Writers in November 1969; his increasingly courageous stand on civil rights issues and the furore surrounding his nomination for the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1972.(1) Other less dramatic, but still substantial events have included the forced resignation of Tvardovski as editor of Novy mir in February 197 Yet the situation has not reached the stage where men advocatin no relaxation , indeed often a substantial intensification of political controls dominate Soviet literary life.(2) "Conservati

(1) More recently, of course - in February 1974 - Solzhenitsyn was stripped of his Soviet citizenship and expelled from the U.S.S.R.

(2) To "counter balance" the departure of Solzhenitsyn, or at least to be mentioned along with it, is the death of a leading "hard-liner" in literature, V. Kochetov.

periodicals like Okt'yabr, Molodaya gvardiya and Sovetskaya Rossiya are counter-balanced by the still noticeably "liberal" Novy mir, Yunost' and Neva, amongst others. Liberals may often still have to resort to the aesopic and the abstract to make a concrete point about literature and literary values (1) but for their part those conservatives openly sympathetic to Stalin can only express their defence of his rule and values in oblique, indirect ways. (The writer, V. Kochetov did so in his novel, Chego zhe ty khochesh, serialised in Okt'yabr between September and November of 1969.)

Moreover, the conservative position, in its extreme variants, is to some extent checkmated by the obvious antipathy shared by many C.P.S.U. politicians towards a resumption of Stalinist norms in Soviet life, and by the obvious truth that Stalinist literature was and remains bad literature. (One commentator on the Soviet literary scene, Max Hayward, has indeed argued that the regime is more vigilant towards neo-Stalinist elements than towards the liberals who are, in

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(1) cf. Andrei Nuikin, "Nravstvennoye, dukhovnoye, ideinoye"(The Moral, The Spiritual, The Principled), NM, No.1, 1971. pp.194-207. It should be noted that the use of the English word 'spiritual' to translate the Russian original 'dukhovnoye' does present some problems. 'Dukhovnoye', like the German 'geistiger' has a broader meaning than the English adjective, referring as it does to those things pertaining to the spirit (dukh) of man - that is, primarily non-religious qualities, qualities of the mind which, in the Soviet view certainly, are shaped by a culture rather than by a religion. It seems better in the Soviet context to translate the Russian adjective henceforth by the word 'cultural' or possibly (cf p.97 infra) by the term 'spiritual - cultural'. 'Spiritual' by itself is misleading because of its religious connotations in English.
For a discussion of the translation of Russian adjective 'ideiny' see p. 41 infra. For a discussion of the aesopic element in Nuikin's article , see p 168 infra.

his eyes, more easily containable. (1) Thus the Soviet Cultural Congress held in December 11 - 12, 1969, while making a "ritual" plea for a unified approach to Soviet reality by Soviet writers (in the light of the Lenin Centenary), specifically attacked works that was aesthetically bad, even if its political content was acceptable. The C.P.S.U. General Secretary, Brezhnev, reinforced the regime's attitude when he said in March 1971 at the 24th Congress of the Party:

> There are some who seek to reduce the many-sidedness of Soviet actuality today to problems, which, as a result of overcoming the consequences of the personality cult, have been irrevocably consigned to the past. The other extreme which is also current among certain writers is an attempt to whitewash phenomena of the past which the Party has subjected to determined criticism and to preserve concepts and viewpoints which cut across what is new and creative and introduced by the Party ... in recent years. (2)

Thus to speak of the regime's "conservatism." in artistic/cultural matters is to say, in effect, that it is anxious that neither the liberals nor the hard-liners (neo-Stalinists) should totally dictate tastes and standards in literature or criticism. Such "conservatism" was echoed in the speech of G. Markov, Secretary of the Board of the Union of Soviet Writers to the Union's Fifth Congress (in June 1971). It was entitled "Sovetskaya literatura v bor'be za kommunizm" (Soviet Literature in the Struggle for Communism). In it, Markov both

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(1) In his article "The Decline of Socialist Realism", Hayward notes: " An important consequence of this growth of opposition ist Stalinism is that the Party still clings to the centrist policy inherited from Khrushchev without his violent lurching from side to side." Cited from Survey, Winter 1972 p.94. (It should be stressed that the centrism of the Brezhnev regime is, of course, clearly a more conservative one than that of Khrushchev and has led to greater restrictions on intellectual and cultural life in the Soviet Union in the '70's than under Khrushchev. Soviet ideologues since 1964 have tended to endorse the Brezhnev brand of centrism on ideological and artistic matters against the neo-Stalinists. For example, M.F. Iovchuk, in an article "Sovremennye problemy ideologicheskoi bor'by: razvitie sotsialisticheskoi ideologii i kultury"(Contemporary Problems in the Ideological Struggle :the Development of Socialist Ideology and Culture) Kommunist, No.15, 1971, pp 92-112 condemns both the "excesses of Novy Mir and the (footnotes (1), (2) cont'd p.40)

lauded the Party as an artist's supreme guide in the task of portraying Soviet reality and at the same time affirmed the need for creativity and originality in Soviet art. (1) As far as criticism and writing on art was concerned Markov was no in his speech advocating that aestheticians and critics take their orders from the Party. He merely reminded them to produce Soviet criticism and to avoid too individual an approach on the one hand and excessive vulgarity on the other. Statements with a similar theme are evident in one of the few "Decree on art criticism issued by the Party itself since 1953. In its report to the 25th Congress of the C.P.S.U., released in March 1971, the Party's Central Committee called for greater "creative effort" in the sphere of literary and general criticism. This was followed up by a subsequent (January 1972 Postanovleniye (Decree) (2) from the Central Committee. Yet both documents, like Markov's speech, are vaguely worded and pedestrian formulations. To take one section of the Decree:

> The state of criticism still does not fully correspond to the requirements set by the growing role of artistic culture in Communist construction. The processes of development in Soviet literature and art ... are not analysed deeply and they are distinguished by a low philosophical and aesthetic level. (3)

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(1) The speech is reproduced in full in Soviet Literature (published in English), No. 11, 1971, pp.74-115

(2) "O khudozhestvenno - literaturnoi kritike" (On the Criticism of Artistic Literature), Pravda, January 25, 1972, p.1.

(3) Ibid.

(1) (Cont'd from p.39) "notorious works of I. Shevtsov" (an anti-Semitic, neo-Stalinist writer) which display "lack of faith in the Soviet intelligensia and youth" (p.101).

(2) (Cont'd from p.39) Izvestiya, March 31, 1971, p.3.

Clearly the C.C. is still upholding the "Soviet Communist" basis of any critical writing produced in the U.S.S.R. But it does so in predictable terms - it calls on the one hand (in effect) for no diminution of partisan judgements, but also affirms, on the other, the need for criticism to be free from superficiality and vulgarity. The Postanovleniye can thus be called a conservative document since it reveals no change in the regime's attitude to the arts, no attempt to favour any (new) artistic grouping at the expense of others.

The practical effects of this decree have been obvious - both hard-line and less doctrinaire critics have been encouraged to air their views. Even single critics have voiced both doctrinaire, partisan views, where necessary, and also less doctrinaire ones. Thus, in the wake of the January Decree the well-known critic, A. Dymshits produced a ritual, partisan piece of criticism, appropriate for the journal Kommunist.(1) At roughly the same time, however, he also produced what can only be called a revaluation of the poet Mandelshtam. Obviously neither stand offended the political authorities, and doubtless the sorts of sentiment both reflect will continue to be expressed in criticism for the duration of the present regime at least.

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(1) Cf. A. Dymshits: "Protiv ustupchivosti v ideino-esteticheskoi bor'be" (Against Capitulation in the Struggle of Principles in Aesthetics), Kommunist, No. 11, 1972, pp.115-120. For details of Dymshits' article on Mandelshtam, see p.23, n.2. supra. With regard to the Russian phrase 'ideino - esteticheskoi', I have taken 'ideino-' to qualify 'esteticheskoi'. The former adjective means of course, not 'ideological' but 'having to do with principles',- 'principled' (and cf. p. 38 n.1 supra)

II THE SCOPE AND BROAD TRENDS OF SOVIET DISCUSSION ON AESTHETICS

We have seen from the last chapter that the C.P.S.U. has not, for a variety of reasons, intervened regularly and actively during the years 1955-75 in Soviet discussion and criticism of art. True, its presence sets some limits to this discussion by way of those "unwritten conventions" referred to earlier. But within those conventions what causes the ebb and flow of ideas in Soviet discussion of art is not a succession of Party decrees on criticism, but primarily intellectual factors differences of opinion amongst critics, debate on terminology and so on.

The question of the scope of aesthetics itself provides an initial, major source of difference and disagreement in Soviet discussion. The 'official' definition is as follows: aesthetics is the "science concerning the essence of the beautiful, the general laws governing both the aesthetic activity of people, and art as a specific form of knowing the world".(1) It is furthermore a social-historical science (to use Engels' definition from Anti-Dühring) and its Marxist-Leninist variant is "the highest form of the science of aesthetics".(2)

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(1) V.K. Skatershchikov: K izucheniyu osnov marksistsko-leninskoi estetiki, (Towards the Study of the Foundations of Marxist-Leninist Aesthetics), Mysl' Moscow, 1965, p.5.

(2) Osnovy marksistsko-leninskoi estetiki (The Foundations of Marxist-Leninist Aesthetics), Politizdat, Moscow, 1961, p.5, (from the Foreword).

This official view of aesthetics bears in many ways the imprint of the official approach that formulated it. To understand the formulation more fully therefore we ought to look more closely at this approach.

It is essential to remember that an official, 'orthodox'(1) view of art is systematically propagated in the U.S.S.R.. Its function is partly educational, insofar as there is a need to disseminate a standard line on aesthetics amongst the various secondary and tertiary educational institutes in the U.S.S.R. Not surprisingly therefore the orthodoxy finds its clearest and strongest expression in texts that have been approved in the U.S.S.R. Ministry of Higher Education as the basis for courses on aesthetics. Amongst the most notable are the Osnovy marksistsko-leninskoi estetiki written by a ' kollekt of well-known writers on art as well as a study guide to the book written by B. Skatershchikov in 1965 entitled K izucheniyu osnov marksistsko-leninskoi estetiki (A Contribution to the Study of the Foundations of Marxist-Leninist Aesthetics).(2)

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(1) Terms like 'professional','orthodox','non-professional' are used in this chapter and elsewhere to indicate different attitudes of mind which are found in different Soviet writers writing about art and which often can be combined i the one critic. To avoid repeated use of these terms and images of priests, doctors, lawyers etc that they can conjure up, I have used terms like 'doctrinaire','less doctrinaire' as alternatives throughout this study.

(2) The Osnovy was first published in 1960 and republished in 1961 and 1964 - an indication of its importance for educational purposes. It was edited by V.F.Berestnev and G .A. Nedovishin. Other official texts published during the '60's were: (i) M.P. Ovsyannikov and V.V.Vanslov (eds): Marksistsk leninskaya estetika :uchebnoye posobye (Marxist-Leninist Aesthetics: a Study Aid). Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1966, and (ii) F.V. Konstantinov (ed.): Osnovy marksistskoi filosofii (Th Foundations of Marxist Philosophy), Politizdat, Moscow, 1964 (2nd edition). Its section on Marxist aesthetics echoes the themes of the Osnovy marksistsko-leninskoi estetiki.

One might add that the Party itself, as well as its orthodox supporters, has been active in the sphere of artistic education. Its views here were set out in that section of the 1961 Party Programme entitled Zadachi partii v oblasti ideologii, vospitaniya, obrazovaniya, nauki, i kultury (Tasks for the Party in the Sphere of Ideology, Upbringing, Education, Science and Culture). In addition there are also Resolutions of the C.P.S.U. Central Committee's Plenary Session on Ideology of June 1963 and the Central Committee's Report to the 24th Congress of the C.P.S.U. (March 1971). And some of these and other statements of Party bodies have be codified in a special compilation obviously designed for educational purposes.(1)

The points mentioned above might seem, prima facie, to conflict with the general argument put foward in this study, concerning the relationship between Soviet politics and Soviet discussion of art - i.e. the Party is in fact interfering actively and constantly in this discussion. However, it shoul be remembered that both official writing and Party compilation on art represent contributions to a discussion in which their authors do not participate as men who dominate the discussion and whose very utterances would (as in Stalin's day) signify victory for the point of view they express and bring defeat an disgrace to their opponents. Thus politicised or quasi-politic-

(1) The compilation was entitled KPSS o kul'ture, prosveshchen i nauke (The C.P.S.U. on Culture, Enlightenment and Science Politizdat, Moscow, 1963. Important extracts from the 196 programme are contained on pp. 104 - 106; the Resolution o the Plenary Session on Ideology is contained on pp. 106-12

ised Soviet aesthetic discussion should be regarded as being part of Soviet discussion on art as a whole, and less as an "external" thing confronting it. As it is, most offical writers , as will be shown, are themselves academics or teacher of art, distinguished from their opponents mainly by their perspective and not by their occupation. In short, the Party may encourage the dissemination of an official line on art through these men; it has taken no steps to see that the considerably more sophisticated and interesting writing of the Vanslovs and Ovsyannikovs merely echoes it. It is in this light that the Party's so-called "interference" in aesthetic discussi should be seen.

This said, however, the official doctrinaire line on art remains a considerable and significant force in Soviet aesthetic discussion. It does so partly because its advocates have not de-ideologised their work in the same way or to the same extent as other writers on art have since 1955/6. They still adhere to the belief that the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism provided infallible answers to all aesthetic questions and that the aesthetician or literary critic should merely "apply" its principles and teachings in their work.

Educational considerations themselves, of course, partly contribute to the official writers' resistance to de-ideologisat ion. For the purposes of instruction, it is necessary to formu- late an aesthetic which teaches pupils what art should be, how they should react to aesthetic phenomena. And for the orthodox writer on art, Marxism-Leninism, treated as infallible and self-sufficient on aesthetic matters, provides a ready-made source of instruction.

At another level, more purely political, ideological reasons are important. Orthodox writing on art has grown, in part, to counter the increasing professionalism and de-ideologisation apparent in Soviet intellectual life particularly after 1956. While 'professional' colleagues do not threaten them as a heterodoxy or heresy (most operate clearly within a Marxist-Leninist framework), they are to be opposed because in the name of professionalism they are sceptical of the power of Marxism-Leninism to provide all the time correct answers to all questions of aesthetics and thus undermine the idea of a dogmatic (normative) educational philosophy of art, totally identified with its precepts.

There are three reasons why, in the orthodox, doctrinaire view, aesthetics should be simply Marxism-Leninism applied to art and why, furthermore, to recall the definition given earlier Marxist-Leninist aesthetics "is the highest form of aesthetics".

Firstly, as a general proposition, Marxism-Leninism is claimed to be the most advanced philosophy evolved by men. It will be, therefore, by definition, the most illuminating on all problems including aesthetic ones. Secondly, artistic activity even the evolution of aesthetic theories themselves have come about, in the Marxist view, as a result of human socio-economic activity - man's fundamental urge to relate and adapt to the material reality surrounding him by means of developing social and economic systems. Activities like art and aesthetic theorising, therefore, bear the imprint of particular societies, classes and social values. Art itself is to be judged in terms of its value to the society that produced it, and aesthetics, a

a social-historical science exists to make this judgement. Since Marxism-Leninism possesses the most scientific understanding of social practice and of historical developments, it follows, in the doctrinaire view, that a Marxist-Leninist aesthetic is best equipped to explain art and evaluate art.(1)

Thirdly and finally, Marxism-Leninism offers profound understanding of human cognitive processes - the specific means by which men come to know their world, and to sort out what is true and false in the claims they make about it. And these cognitive processes are applied in art as well as intellectual activity. Orthodox, doctrinaire thinking on Marxist-Leninist epistemology reinforces strongly the orthodox argument against the integrity of individual disciplines like aesthetics. The argument here derives in part from discussio of an important problem for Marxist thinkers; namely, to what

(1) As evidence both of its attitude to art and art theories and of its belief in Marxism's superiority, the Osnovy devote 142 closely printed pages to the history of aesthetic theories. These are seen as being firmly linked to the social formation that produced them and are praised or damned to the extent that they approach the Marxist ideal. Thus Renaissance and Enlightenment art theories are approved of as representing an advance over medieval ones; their content was determined by the ethos of the class most influential, in the Soviet view, during the post-medieval era - i.e. the rising bourgeoisie. They shared the limitations of the bourgeois ethos, however-the 'sensationalist' and 'empiricist' approaches discernible in post-medieval aesthetic themes are traceable, the Osnovy claim, to bourgeois "individalism". Naturally, of course, the corollary of all this is that in the Soviet era aesthetics should be reflecting proletarian (i.e. Marxist-Leninist) ideas and values. These values have no limitations. Their infallibility thus is a further incentive to their dutiful propagation in aesthetics.

extent does dialectical materialism obviate the need to have separate disciplines, areas of knowledge and thus render unnecessary detailed study of their methodologies, not to mentic their application. If diamat in its propositions reflects the real laws of the world (that is, the dialectical nature of all reality), and if, further, human thinking and cognitive processes (logic and knowledge) are dialectical processes, statements about any aspect of reality can and must be validated by reference solely to dialectical materialist philosophy. The above, of course, represents a very simplified statement of the problem – it has been put more cogently and fully by Thomas J. Blakeley in his Soviet Theory of Knowledge.(1) But it is important in the context of the present discussion to make reference to it. The 'universalist' approach to Marxism, amongst the old Bolsheviks, reflected these ideas about diamat; and they were, as we have seen, a factor behind the Stalinist kon'yunkturshchina. They have also remained as a matter of philosophical dispute after Stalin's death.

As a basis, then, for justifying a rather crude version of aesthetics and upholding ideological purity on aesthetic matters, the above arguments on the scope and importance of Marxism-Leninism are central to doctrinaire critics' thinking and provide these men with much of their persistence and polemical zeal in the face of more sophisticated discussion from 'professional' writers. One should perhaps add one final point about the

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(1) See Soviet Theory of Knowledge, D. Reidel, Dordrecht, Holland 1964, in particular pp. 18–24 and 80–85. The problem of the relationship between logic, diamat and epistemology is discussed in fuller detail in the chapter on the Soviet theory of reflection and aesthetics.

orthodox doctrinaire approach. It might seem from its "textbook", dogmatic image that the orthodoxy in Soviet aesthetics is simply the creation of officials from the U.S.S.R. Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Culture and the Department of Culture and Science of the C.P.S.U. Central Committee. Official, orthodox writing is, in fact, done mainly by bona fide writers on art, albeit of varying abilities. Many are academics and doubtless members of the Party "control committee" in their particular university departments. (1) For example, and this highlights the educational rather than the political-bureaucratic aspect of the orthodoxy, the kollektiv writing the Osnovy included such aestheticians as G.A. Nedovishin and M.F. Ovsyannikov.(The latter, in collaboration with V.V. Vanslov, has also edited another textbook on Marxist-Leninist aesthetics). (2) The orthodoxy is thus sustained in part by men who are willing to keep the popularisation of aesthetics separate from higher-level research into it. It is also sustained by men who by temperament and ability can do little else, men who, it could be surmised, relish the status their official activity offers them and indeed use it to score of points against their more gifted colleagues. These men are orthodox by default, as it were, and include, amongst others, such figures as S.M. Petrov(writing on socialist realism)and thos

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(1) It needs to be emphasised at this point that all Soviet writers on art, whether official or not, are subject to scrutiny and emendation by fellow academics or critics within university departments or the editorial boards of journals and by officials from the Ministry of Higher Education which administers Soviet universities. Such writing then has to face further possible censorship by Glavlit before it is eventually published (if at all). Clearly, however, these groups take their cue from current, general (Party) political attitudes towards artistic criticism and intellectual discussion; and, equally clearly, their censoring activities today are on a much less drastic scale than they were in Stalin's time. They allow Vanslov's work to appear along with the Osnovy.

(2) Cf. p.43, footnote (1), supra.

stalwart defenders of partiinost', V. Ivanov and V. Yermilov. For them, the glossing over of problems, the neutralising of important and controversial issues and other characteristics of dogmatic, doctrinaire scholarship are an automatic habit of mind rather than a necessity for educational and political reasons. These men at least, deserve J.M. Bochenski's designation 'reactionaries'.(1)

It is now appropriate to characterise in preliminary, general terms Soviet writing which is not orthodox and doctrinaire and see how attitudes towards the scope and content of aesthetics as a discipline can illuminate the basic differences between this and orthodox criticism. Of course it will be clear that non-orthodox or 'professional' criticism is not a homogeneous thing and that it includes the work of critics who do not look upon themselves as professionals in the sense of being "scientific", analytical critics or indeed of writing full-time on criticism. The term 'professional' is perhaps unfortunate for this reason. It is, however, valid for another; what unites these critics is a respect for the integrity their subject, be it aesthetics or more specifically, artistic practice itself. This, in one sense, is the hallmark of professionalism.

Before examining more fully their broad differences with orthodox critics, one might be more specific about the people who are 'professional' critics. This is not intended to amount to a full personal biography of individual critics. (Further

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(1) J.M. Bochenski: Soviet Russian Dialectical Materialism (Diamat), revised and edited by Thomas J. Blakeley, D. Reidel Publishing Coy., Dordrecht, Holland, 1963, pp. 159-161. (See p. 62 infra. for further reference to this term.)

information on individuals and their work can be found under the relevant entries in the still uncompleted Kratkaya literaturnaya entsiklopediya). Rather, the following account is included to give some background information on the important names which will crop up throughout this study, their fields of interest, as well as their publishing outlets, places of research and related topics.

Obviously most professional critics are full-time writers on aesthetics, but men of greater ability and education than the typical propagator of more doctrinaire views. Such men include V.V. Vanslov, N.A. Nedovishin and M.F. Ovsyannikov (the last-named being also, and primarily, a specialist on Hegel). Most of them teach at universities. The teaching of aesthetics at university level is, of course, an important indication of the disciplines's growing professionalism. The work of the Department of Aesthetics, set up in 1960 at Moscow State University and headed by Ovsyannikov, is especially important here.(1) The impact of Aesthetics Departments at, say, universities in Kiev and Leningrad is less easy to judge, though a number of important Ukrainian theorists of literature, writing for a wider, Soviet audience, have strong links with Kiev university.

As a result of the important debate on the nature of beauty

(1) For an account of the work of the MGU Aesthetics Department during the ten years following its establishment, see E.G. Yakovlev: "Kafedra estetiki 10 let" (The Chair of Aesthetics Over 10 Years), Vestnik MGU-s, No.5, 1970, pp.92-93.

in the late 'fifties and early 'sixties, many of these profes ional aestheticians grouped themselves into two aesthetic "schools" depending on their approaches. There was the 'soci (obshchestvennaya) school which had V.V. Vanslov as its doyen and included such 'professionals' as G.A. Nadovishin, S.S. Goldentricht, Yu. Borev, I. Burov and others; and the 'objectivist' or 'natural' (prirodicheskaya) school which included I. Astakhov and S. Trofimov amongst others.

In more recent years, writers with a professional interest in a particular sub-branch of aesthetics have come to the for as interest in subsidiary areas of aesthetics has increased, following the clarification and exposition of basic (general) aesthetic problems in the late 'fifties and early 'sixties (The debate on the nature of beauty is, for example, no longer a central issue). Work on literary studies and specifically teoriya literatury (Theory of Literature) has been developing since the late 'fifties; the names of D.S. Likhachev, N.K. Gudzi, D.D. Blagoi, M.B. Khrapchenko, A.S. Bushman, P.A. Nikolayev and L.I. Timofeyev are notable here, the first three for their studies of pre-nineteeth century Russian literature, the latter for their work on theory of literature. In addition certain writers have devoted themselves to extensive study of the particular foms and genres of art, as well as porticular artistic trends like realism and socialist realism. The first sbornik statei on socialist realism, for example, appeared in the late 'fifties (1958); since then monographs and books on this subject and related areas have proliferated, indeed, been produced with monotonous regularity The notable writers on specific techniques and trends in art (specifically literature) include: V. Ozerov, G. Lomidze, A.

Metchenko, L. Novichenko, A. Ovcharenko and V. Pertsev; as well as K.Z. Apresyan, N. Gei, B. Meilakh, A. Myasnikov and V. Piskunov.

These are the more competent specialists. Their work ofte extends beyond the sphere of artistic techniques and trends. (They can produce run-of-the-mill articles on general problems of aesthetics.) But they represent the core of 'professionals who work on specific areas of Soviet aesthetics rather than on general theory of art. It is these men who form the bulk of those contributing to the increasingly better quality and more scholarly sborniki that have appeared since the mid - 'sixties. These sborniki are taken up more and more with problems in specific areas of aesthetics. To give some idea of fields of specialist interest, the titles of the more notable sborniki produced in recent years, could be mentioned here. These include: Aktual'nye problemy sotsialisticheskogo realizma (Present-Day Problems of Socialist Realism), eds.: N.K. Gei, A.S. Myasnikov, et.al., Sovetskii pisatel', Moscow, 1969; Problemy tipologii russkogo realizma (Problems in the Typology of Russian Realism), eds.: N.L. Stepanov and N.R. Poch Nauka, Moscow, 1969; Problema psikhologizma v sovetskoi literature (The Problems of Psychologism in Soviet Literature), eds.: V.A. Kovalov and A.I. Pavlovski, Nauka, Leningrad, 1970. The year before a special compilation on the problem of moralit and art was published. It was entitled Iskusstvo nravstvennova i beznravstvennoye (Moral and Immoral Art) and edited by V. Tolstykh.

More recently, in 1971, the second volume of Problemy romantizma (Problems of Romanticism), compiled by U.R. Fecht, was published by Iskusstvo. (The first volume, dealing with

romanticism in a Russian rather than a world-wide context was published in 1967). It is interesting to note, furthermore, Soviet attempts to give these more specialised compilations as wide a publicity, internationally, as possible. In this the work of the Foreign Language Publishing House in Moscow, latterly known as Progress Publishers, has been useful. Two recent Progress publications - Art and Society (1968) and Problems of Modern Aesthetics (1971), contain articles by the best Soviet specialists.

Standing outside the ranks of the specialists and the earlier breed of 'generalist' aestheticians, but in this writer's view, still within the 'professional', non-doctrinaire category, are men who in the content and style of their material do not conform to the usual professional image. They can be divided into two groups: (i) critics and writer-critics with a notably "personal" and not specifically Marxist view of life[1] and (ii) 'neo-formalist' critics or philosophers of art. The former embraces critics who have a very personal vision of what art is about, and for whom qualities like truthfulness and sincerity are more important than Marxist-Leninist desiderata. Such men include B. Runin, A. Men'shutin and N. Korzhavin, and their work appeared mainly during the more liberal years of the

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(1) I have referred to these critics and to their moral ideas as 'personalist' for this reason; for a fuller explanation of the term and its limitations see pp 160 et seq infra. I prefer it to the term 'expressionist' used by J. Pizer in his article " The Theory of Objective Beauty in Soviet Aesthetics", p. 156 et seq. of Philosophy in the Soviet Union a Survey of the Mid-Sixties, (ed.E. Laszlo), Frederick A. Praeger, New York, 1967. The term 'neo-formalist' is used on occasions by Soviet critics, cf. M.B Khrapchenko: Tvorcheskaya individual'nost' pisatelya i razvitiye literatury (The Creative Individuality of the Writer and the Development of Literature), Sovetski pisatel' Moscow, 1970, p.264.

Khrushchev era, particularly during the discussion on Communism and morality; with the eclipse of this discussion they have appeared less often in print in recent years.(1) Not unexpectedly, 'personalist' critics have a less doctrinaire approach to criticism and writing on art; they regard such writing, no less than artistic practice itself, as an independen "personal" activity, not merely as the application of offical ideas and philosophies. To this extent they might be called 'professionals'.

The neo-formalists, for their part, are at one with other professionals in their opposition to the doctrinaire mentality. They differ, however, in their excessive pre-occupation with questions of form and technique in art and in their general omission of Marxist-Leninist ideas in their discussion. While many of these writers (like Yu. Lotman, B. Uspenski, G. Khilmi, to name the more prolific and important writers) might query the label 'neo-formalist', preferring, it appears, others like 'structuralist' 'communicator' etc., the label is a convenient one to use; clearly Russian formalists of the 'twenties - men like Shklovski and Eichenbaum, both of whom are still writing in the U.S.S.R. - are the most notable intellectual influence on these critics, more so than Marxist-Leninist theories themselves. For this reason the neo-formalists today are regarded, at best, with a sort of

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(1) The work of B. Runin is an exception here, mainly because Runin no longer confines himself to 'personalist' themes (cf. last two items listed beside his name in the Bibliography).

muted interest by more 'professional' writers on art, and of course with hostility by doctrinaire critics. Their place and influence in Soviet aesthetics, as well as the content of their ideals will be considered in greater detail when the Soviet discussion of form in art is examined.

The term 'professional' then, embraces men of varying abilities, interests and specialities - most of them are people whose work is important for any substantial study of Soviet thinking on literature. It also embraces men of varying ages - like Timofeyev and Runin who were born in the first decade or so of the century,(1) and who might be said to have continued the more scholarly and independent traditions of Soviet Marxist criticism of the 'twenties and early 'thirties into the post-Stalin era. Older men like Timofeyev as well as literary specialists like Gudzi and Blagoi have indeed enriched post-Stalinist aesthetics with the qualities of an earlier Soviet tradition that lapsed under Stalin, namely erudition, insight and careful scholarship. But it would be foolish to assert that these qualities are manifest in the older men alone, or indeed that age plays any noticeable role in determining the specific attitudes of critics. For example Runin, we have stated, has had links (less noticeable in recent years) with 'personalist' criticism. Conversely a much younger writer on art, Yu. Davydov is throwing fresh light on a slightly old-fashioned, 'vulgar' (in Soviet eyes) areas of aesthetics - that of the sociology of art and the question of

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(1) Timofeyev was born in 1904, Runin in 1912 (to take the names of some of the older men).

social determinism in art.

'Professional' writers on art, no less than doctrinaire critics, are enormously prolific. The amount of Soviet writing on "questions of art" is very large quite apart from the amoun of "artistic literature" - mainly fiction- produced. For example a publication, entitled Sovetskoye literaturovedeniye i kritika .... knigi i stati 1963-67 gg. (Bibliograficheski ukazatel') (Soviet Theory of Literature and Criticism .... Books and Articles: 1963-67 A Bibliographical Index), Nauka, Moscow, 1970, runs to 180 pages, and it is dealing only with Russian language material. A similar compilation, listing both the fiction and the critical/theoretical material produced during 1962-63 comes to 623 pages. Much of the material listed appears to be repetitive and superficial. Some of it however, is both readable and enlightening. It is indispensable for gaining some insight into the work of Soviet critics and for finding out where areas of disagreement between them lie.

The very quantity of Soviet writing on art, in part, reflects the extreme "bookishness" of Soviet culture generally and the deliberate policy of the C.P.S.U. Since Lenin's day, Soviet leaders have aimed to raise educational standards in a backward society by massive publishing of such things as the Marxist classics, literary classics, selected Osnovy and other textbooks, as well as, at a higher level, a whole array of technical and scholarly literature in both monograph and book form.

By way of concluding this background material on Soviet 'professional' critics, we might look in some detail at the

publishing outlets available to them as well as at the places of research where some of them work. To take the latter first besides the Aesthetics Departments that exist in a few universities, like MGU, there are, of course, the Gorki Institut of World Literature in Moscow and the Pushkin Institute of Russian Literature in Leningrad. These are both attached to the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences and funded by it. The Gorki Institute, in particular, produces a steady flow of books and sborniki. A number of specialists in literature work full - or part-time under the auspices of these Institutes. These include such people as Khrapchenko, Ovcharenko, Nikolayev and others. There are, too, other Institutes, lesser known, that do research on art - including the Moscow Institute of Plastic Arts.(1) The Institute of Marxism-Leninism also in Moscow, has produced no substantive work on art, as far as I am aware. Its research, generally, tends towards the doctrinaire approach in all fields.

A number of periodicals act as publishing outlets for material produced in these Institutes and elsewhere. That literary and aesthetic discussion occupies so much space in these journals is doubtless due to the fact that there is a considerable number of critics and aestheticians present on their editorial boards. The periodicals include Novy mir, Voprosy literatury, Zvezda, and Neva which are all relatively liberal monthlies. There is also Voprosy filosofii for more

(1) This like a number of other smaller, more specialised institutes is attached to the Akademiya Khudozhestv SSSR.

philosophical writing on the arts, Iskusstvo, Tvorchestvo and Arkhitektura S.S.S.R. (all monthlies) which embrace the plastic arts, and Teatr for writers on drama.

It will be obvious from the above that most professional writing is centred in Moscow and Leningrad (in the R.S.F.S.R.) Most of its contributors are Russian or Russian Jews. For all this, it has a definite "Soviet" air about it - i.e. is meant for a wider Soviet, and not a regional audience. Indeed some writing on art is done by men who may be of regional and non-Russian birth, but who have gone on to acquire national (Soviet) reputations and become, in the process, Russianised, so to speak. For example, men like Lomidze, Metchenko, and Ovcharenko, with Georgian, Byelorussian or Ukrainian names, are described - in Kratkaya literaturnaya entsiklopediya [1] - as being "russkiye sovetskiye kritiki/literaturovedy" (one, Novichenko is, however, referred to as a Ukrainian theorist of literature[2]). Needless to say, the focus of this thesis will be on the work of the critics writing in a Soviet context, and not in any possible regional one. In any event non-Russian material is not accessible to this writer for obvious, linguistic reasons; and further, from articles he has read in Russian by regional writers like Novichenko, he is not conscious of any specifically Ukrainian or Georgian theory of art or line of criticism that differs from Soviet theory and criticism as a

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(1) See the entries for these men in Kratkaya literaturnaya entsiklopediya (The Short Literary Encyclopedia), Izd-vo Sovetskaya entsiklopediya Vols.4 and 5, 1967 and 1968 pp.410, 814 (Vol.4) and p. 381-4 (Vol.5) respectively.
(2) Ibid. Vol. 5), p. 315.

whole.

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It has been stated before that what binds less doctrinaire writers together, for all their diverse interests and viewpoints is a common approach to the scope of aesthetics and its related fields of interest. Let us look fully at this approach. Of course, the 'professional', less doctrinaire critic, no less than the doctrinaire one, would agree that art is primarily a social activity, that aesthetics should be preoccupied with discussing the social genesis and content of aesthetic activity and that Marxism-Leninism offers to aestheticians unquestionable help and insight here. Unlike the orthodox critic however, his less doctrinaire counterparts deny strongly that social issues were the only concern of aesthetics and that their subject amounted merely to the unthinking application of the principles of diamat to the study of art. In the words of a 'professional' aesthetician himself:

> To examine Marxist-Leninist aesthetics at the level o
> only the general laws of dialectical materialism and
> of its categories, without involving oneself in
> research into the particular phenomena involved
> in man's artistic assimilation of the world, without
> studying art, means confining aesthetics merely to ar
> illustration of the fundamentals of dialectical
> materialism [and] ... keeps research away from problem
> that are particular to it [aesthetics]. (1)

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(1) Cited from P.S. Trofimov: Estetika marksizma-leninizma (The Aesthetics of Marxism-Leninism), Sovetski khudozhnik, Moscow, 1964, p.194.

This approach derives strength from two other factors besides the demands of professional enquiry. One is that the "foundations" of Marxism-Leninism (such as the theory of reflection) have in fact been the subject of differing interpretations amongst the less doctrinaire critics. Differences here amongst critics, moreover, are increased because many of them drew upon non-Marxist sources (Hegel, Chernyshevski, Aristotle and others) to support their differing interpretatio of Marxist-Leninist theory.

The other important reason for the 'professional' critics inability to become merely apologists for Marxist-Leninist principles lies in one fact, already referred to in this stud and one certainly not stressed by the Soviets themselves - namely the very paucity of discussion on art in the classics of Marxism-Leninism. Of the four major Marxist thinkers important to Soviet thinking - Marx himself, Engels, Plekhanov and Lenin - only one, Plekhanov, addressed a major part of his work to questions of aesthetics.(1)

It becomes difficult, in view of all this, then, to speak of a systematic and coherent aesthetic developed by the founders of Marxism. As a result, many Western and 'revisionis Marxists (most notably Yugoslav Marxists like Miroslav Beker) are at pains to stress that a homogeneous Marxist aesthetic "deduced" from the Marxist classics cannot exist.

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(1) See chapter 1, p.4. and footnote.

Beker[1] makes the further point, that even if the founders of Marxism-Leninism had been fuller in their discussion of ar any bona fide Marxist critic and theoretician of art would ha to reject the idea of merely propagating dogmatic views on art taken from the Marxist-Leninist canon and nowhere else.

One upshot of thinking like this is the noticeable interes amongst many Soviet writers in non-Marxist aesthetics, particu larly in relation to topics like the nature of beauty where th Marxist classics provide little illumination. Indeed on this topic and others, two non-Marxist thinkers - Aristotle and Hegel - attract considerable interest. This fact in turn recalls J.M. Bochenski's observation that Soviet thinkers in the field of ontology can be classified as either 'Hegelians' or 'Aristotelians'. Those who cannot (mainly orthodox thinker are labelled 'reactionaries' by Bochenski.[2]

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(1) Beker's views are set out in his article "Marxism and the Critical Determinants of Judgement", J.A.A.C., Fall, 1970 pp.37-41. Beker is a member of the Philosophy Department Zagreb University where he, along with other Yugoslav philosophers like R. Supek have been doing useful, original work on aesthetics, using Marxist principles to provide a framework for their enquiries. At the time of writing (la 1974) it is not known how many of these philosophers are still teaching at Yugslav universities, that is whether in fact they were dismissed in the course of Tito's campaign that year against 'bourgeois-nationalist' and 'revisionist trends in Yugoslav political and intellectual life.

Developments in Yugoslav aesthetics are not, of cou of central importance to this study, but, like the work of Lukacs, will be touched upon where they serve to illuminat the Soviet approach on specific topics (Supek's work on a polydeterministic model of culture is useful in this regard As far as can be gathered, Soviet aestheticians, both orthod and professional, do not discuss in any detail the thinkin of the Yugoslavs. Most of them appear hostile to it, labell it 'revisionist'. Lukacs, the great Hungarian Marxist, attracts greater attention for the originality of his views though these are often attacked. Following Lukacs' death i the middle of 1971, the obituary notice in Voprosy filosof (November 1971) spoke of his "notable contribution to the development of world wide philosophical culture"(p.188) but made no favourable, overall evaluation of his work.

(2) Bochenski, op. cit., pp.. 159 - 161.

Soviet interest in non-Marxist thinking is demonstrated in other ways. At a March 1956 Symposium on aesthetics (sponsored by the Editorial Board of Voprosy filosofii) the majority of the sixteen or so aestheticians present resolutely condemned a view expressed by one colleague to the effect that no significant thought in aesthetics had been developed prior to Marx and Engels. This view had been put forward by P.S. Trofimov. He had qualified it by saying that aesthetics, as a socio-historical science, had been neglected by pre-Marxi thinkers but implied that the socio-historical aspect of aesthetics and art was central. The Editorial Board of Voprosy filosofii, in its comments on the symposium, likewise condemned Trofimov and noted that:

> Marxist aesthetics did not arise in a vacuum, but was a further development of this field of human knowledge.(1)

It is, of course, necessary to stress that the professional aestheticians' readiness to look at non-Marxist philosophy reflects, again, the increasing professionalism and broader perspectives of Soviet philosophy generally after the death of Stalin, its interest in both exploring and objectively assessir thinkers of a non-Marxist stripe. Thus a comparison between the 1951 Kratki filosofski slovar' (edited by M.M. Rozental' and P.F. Yudin) and the 1963 edition (also edited by them) shows the latter exhibits "an enormous improvement in range, technicality and fairness of entries; it is no longer a handbo

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(1) VF, No. 3, 1956, p.188. This same issue, on pp.173 -189, carried a summary of the Symposium, under the title, "Diskussiya o predmete marksistsko-leninskoi estetiki" (A Discussion on the Object of Marxist-Leninist Aesthetics

of dogmatic instruction ..."[1]. Names like Thales, Thomas Aquinas, Machiavelli are no longer left out; the entry for a philosopher like Aristotle, furthermore, is no longer completely overshadowed by that for Stalin (whose entry is reduced to a length commensurate with his importance as a "philosopher")

If, then, aesthetics, for the less doctrinaire critic, is not the simple application of dialectical materialism to the study of art, what precisely is it? Debates on the spetsifika of aesthetics amongst such critics featured substantially in aesthetic discussion in the years immediately after 1953. In them, it should be stressed from the outset, no Soviet aesthetician denied that aesthetics was a legitimate discipline and branch of philosophy assuming that its central pre-occupation was the nature of beauty (in reality or as assimilated by men in art). Some Western philosophers of art, notably J.A. Passmore[2] have made such a denial. Beauty, Passmore claims, can only be defined in lexicographical terms, and its elusive, "subjectively viewed" content and character make it an unsatisfactory topic for philosophical exploration. This, of course, has the added consequence of ruling out the idea of a normative aesthetics.[3]

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(1) Eugene Kamenka: "Soviet Philosophy 1917-1967", p. 105 of Social Thought in the Soviet Union (ed.: A.Simirenko). See also Kamenka's [Soviet] Philosophy, The New Professionalism, Survey, no.56, July 1965 for an additional account of changes in the attitudes and evaluations of post-Stalin philosophers.

(2) J.A. Passmore: "Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art".

(3) More specifically, Passmore writes: "There is nothing illuminating or non- lexicographical to be said about the nature of the beautiful in general, and there are no defects and excellencies peculiar to and common to all works of art... If I am right, then philosophy has nothing to contribute to aesthetics except its destruction." (Cited from Critica, Vol. ii, No 6, 1968, p. 65)

Further, the beautiful is not, for Passmore, the central consideration for men who are preoccupied with the study of art and with evaluating it. Here other disciplines are importa - like that of literary criticism and theory of literature which Passmore distinguishes from aesthetics by the interest of the literary critic in questions of artistic technique and by the ability of the theorist of literature to offer more significant criteria for evaluating artistic work. Aesthetics, properly defined, is removed from these concerns in Passmore's view.

No Soviet aesthetician would claim for Passmore's reasons, or any other, that a science of the beautiful cannot exist, or that aesthetics is irrelevant to the study and evaluation of artistic practice. They do agree in fact - and this emerged clearly from the important 1956 symposium as well as from articles published at the time (2) - that aesthetics is primarily the "science" of the beautiful and because the beautiful is examined and reproduced by men in the course of their artistic activity, art itself comes within its purview.

Artistic practice amounts, however, to more than man's assimilation of the beautiful in nature. The various forms of art impose their own demands on the process of assimilation, their own standards of artistry, in other words. To explain and evaluate art, therefore, aesthetics should be preoccupied

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(1) Amongst the more important of these articles were: "O Zadachakh marksistsko-leninskoi estetiki" (On the Tasks of Marxist-Leninist Aesthetics), VF. No.4, 1955 (no author given) A.Gorelova: "Patriotizm i partiinost'" (Patriotism and Partisanship), Zvezda, No.5 1955; and V.N. Shutski: "Printsipy marksistsko-leninskoi estetiki" (The Principles of Marxist-Leninist Aesthetics), Kommunist, No.16, 1954; there is also, of course, "O predmete estetiki" (noted earlier).

not merely with the beauty (krasota) of particular works, but their artistry (khudozhestvennost'). And the two, clearly, are not identical terms.

Most 'professional' aestheticians (and this emerged clearly from the 1956 symposium) agree that aestheticians should be concerned with questions of artistic technique as well as the theory of the beautiful. They differ concerning the nature and the extent of this concern. Some like P.S. Trofimov see the aesthetician as an all-embracing generalist easily able to move from examining questions relating to the beautiful to studying the techniques and potentialities of a particular genre. The distinction between him and the specialist in, say, theory of literature is not a vital or particularly necessary one.(1) Others - the majority - concede that the aesthetician should have some acquaintance with specific genres of art, if only to keep his general thinkin on art up to date and relevant; but they would emphasise far more than Trofimov, the distinction between the general theory of art (which is the concern of aesthetics and involves primarily the theory of the beautiful) and what might be called the theory of artistic practice, of the techniques applied in the various genres. The latter, while agreed to be

(1) "Both aesthetician and theorist of literature are closely linked, often moving from one role to the other; the literary critic and technician of art frequently appear in the role of aesthetician and vice versa," P.S. Trofimov, op.cit., p.219.

a branch of aesthetics, is still a separate field demanding its own specialists. This field is often called in Russian iskusstvoznaniye and has itself sub-branches dealing with the specific study of the techniques of particular forms (cf. teoriya literatury). This latter approach has other consequences as well. Those who adhere to it put great stress on defining the relationship between aesthetics and other disciplines that can contribute to our knowledge of art. In the process they take pains to make it clear where aesthetics overlaps with these other disciplines and where it does not.

This approach received a significant boost from the early 'sixties on, with the flowering of such branches of knowledge as cybernetics and information theory in the U.S.S.R. and elsewhere. 1962 is often given as an important date - the year when the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences devoted a special session to the problem of applying the techniques of cybernetics and related disciplines to the social sciences - though an important precondition for the growth of these disciplines in the U.S.S.R. was established earlier, in 1956. In that year cybernetics was fully accepted in the U.S.S.R. as the necessary science of computers, and no longer damned as a bourgeois pseudo-science.

For illuminating the relationship between aesthetics and these new sciences, the work of a 'professional' aesthetician, B.S. Meilakh, has been most useful. He is one of the most productive Soviet theorists of art. In his monograph "Puti kompleksnogo izucheniya khudozhestvennogo tvorchestva" (The Ways for an All-round Study of Artistic Creativity) (1) he

(1) Meilakh's monograph is included on pp.5-34 of an important compilation he himself edited - namely Sodruzhestvo nauk i tainy tvorchestva (Collaboration between the Disciplines and the Secrets of Creativity,) Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1968.

stresses that concepts from cybernetics and related sciences - such as model-building (modelirovaniye) can supplement those of diamat to make aesthetics a more exact discipline. The imp of these sciences will be further discussed in other contexts elsewhere in this study.

Besides these newer fields of knowledge - more conventiona ones - like sociology and psychology - have attracted the attention of 'professional' aestheticians anxious to establish their discipline's precise relationship to both. Clearly, if art is the product of both the psyche and social consciousness then aesthetic activity can come within the purview of psychology and sociology. Here, however, aestheticians like Meilakh as well as the participants at the 1956 Symposium on aesthetics [2] will make two qualifications. Firstly, discussi about art cannot be "reduced" simply to questions of psychology and sociology in the same way that art itself cannot be "reduced" simply to the psyche or to social matters. These attitudes are called 'psychologism' and 'sociologism' respectively and they occur amongst a number of Soviet critics; they are also constantly attacked, as we shall see, by others. Secondly, a detailed analysis of, say, some of Dostoyevski's characters, whether by an aesthetician indulging in amateur

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(1) Meilakh raises these points on pp.11 and 16 of his monograph. At the 1956 symposium the speakers V.A.Razumny, G.B. Puzis and G.A.Nedovishin, amongst others raised these questions. It is also interesting that Meilakh considers at length (op.cit., p.22 at seq.) the ways by which the natural sciences (particularly physiology) can be useful both to aestheticians and to specific research on creativity. He quotes Marx's and Engels' view that the laws of nature and of men are inextricably linked and mention almost in the same breath, Gorki's interest in Pavlov's work for its relevance to an understanding of artistic creativity. However, he cautions against the danger of reducing artistic creativity to a series of reflexes ('physiologism') just as he cautions against 'psychologism'

psychologising or by a professional psychologist, is not the same thing as an account of the presentation of these character as art. Psychology may, in short, illuminate aspects of aesthetics or theory of literature. This discipline cannot replace both. A similar point is made rather forcefully by the author-critic, A. Dement'yev, on the relationship between mathematics and aesthetics.(1)

Thus a so-called interdisciplinary approach to aesthetics, feshionable since the early 'sixties amongst many 'professional writers on art, has not had the effect (nor has such an effec been intended) of diminishing understanding of the spetsifika of aesthetics, but rather the reverse.

By way of conclusion on the nature and scope of aesthetics in professional discussion, it should be pointed out that not all non-orthodox writers on art espouse the above views on aesthetics. For the 'personalist' critic, the distinctiveness, indeed relevance of aesthetics as a separate special discipline becomes questionable, since for him it is foolish to have an area of knowledge where laws and generalisations about the artistic process are formulated when artistic creativi in the 'personalist' definition, is a very personal and subjective matter. For some neo-formalists like Lotman and Khilmi, on the other hand, aesthetics becomes subsumed under such sciences as semiotics and information theory. For them

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(1) Cf. A. Dement'yev: Na novom etape (At a New Stage), Sovetski pisatel', Moscow, 1965, pp.48-49.

the question of the distinctiveness and general characteristics of such things as aesthetic perception and the creative process take second place to a study of the forms and patterns produced by both. Here, for them, the communications sciences provide the best tools for such a study.

This initial discussion of the scope of aesthetics clarifies, then, the important distinction in Soviet thinking on art between less doctrinaire (or 'professional') and more doctrinaire (or orthodox) frames of mind (as well as variations of approach amongst the less doctrinaire. Further differences are revealed in Soviet discussion on epistemology and specifically on artistic cognition. Since the cognitive aspect of artistic activity is of central interest for Soviet aesthetics, Soviet thinking on cognition will next be considered in order to clarify what the Soviet thinkers mean by artistic cognition and how they differ in their understanding of it.

III. SOVIET THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE AND SOVIET AESTHETICS.

For Soviet professional writers on art, Marxism-Leninism cannot, as we have seen, be a substitute for the science of aesthetics, but neither can it be divorced from aesthetics. The "proper" relationship is set out by G. Kunitsyn:

> The founders of Communism...were the first to show that freedom of creativity could be seen in terms of an indivisible union of two fundamental and inter-related aspects - the 'aesthetic-epistemological' conditioned by the objective laws governing the perception of reality and the 'social' extending its roots into human social practice. Neither can be correctly understood if divorced from the other.(1)

"True art", art that is at its freest and most creative, Kunitsyn goes on to say,(2) is art that strives, above all, to grapple with, to comprehend reality and does so in a socially significant way. That is, through such art we - the viewers - are able to tell that its creator has understood the social import of what he is describing. The writings of the "founders" of Marxist-Leninist epistemology (Marx, Engels and Lenin),

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(1) Cited from G.Kunitsyn, "Lenin on Partisanship and Creativity" p.132 of Socialist Realism in Literature and Art (a compilation of articles published in English), Progress, Moscow, 1971.

(2) There would appear to be no major disagreement among Soviet theorists with Kunitsyn's view on the importance of these "objective laws" of cognition. One critic, V.Tasalov, does suggest - in an article "Desyat' let problemy estetiches[illegible] 1956-66" (Ten Years of the Problem of Aesthetic) included in the 9th edition of the sbornik Voprosy estetiki, Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1971 - that the theory of reflection does not provide all the answers to questions relating to aesthetic cognition; but his colleagues have not voiced a similar opinion.

Kunitsyn claims, illuminate more profoundly than other writings the cognitive aspect of all human activity (including art) and the necessarily social content and function of all cognitive processes. In the Soviet view, these things are of supreme relevance to aesthetics for the following three reasons. First, the "truth" about reality can be expressed in art only where there is a "correct" relationship between the perceiving artist and the world he perceives, and a close link between the form and content. Secondly, Marxist-Leninist epistemology offers the most profound explanation of the social basis of human cognitive processes, showing why this basis is a necessary one. Thirdly, Marxist-Leninist discussion of

> the level, laws and forms of reflection of the world in the human consciousness provides a basis for research into the special features of the perception of reality by means of art. (1)

in particular the operation and nature of the various modes of sense perception.

It might be profitable at this point to discuss these matters more fully, not for their own sake, but to further our understanding of Soviet aesthetics. Soviet epistemology, as such, has been fully discussed by such Western scholars as T. Blakeley and G. Wetter and, of course, by Soviet writers themselves.(2)

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(1) B.S. Meilakh, "Puti kompleksnogo izucheniya khudozhestvennogo tvorchestva", in Meilakh (ed.) Sovremennoe khudozhestvo nauk i tainy tvorchestva p.11.

(2) For Blakeley's discussion, see his Soviet Theory of Knowledge passim: for Wetter's work, there is Chapter 6, ("Soviet Theory of Knowledge") of his Soviet Ideology Today, translated from the German by Peter Heath and published by Frederick A. Praeger, New York, 1966. For Soviet writing on epistemology, see in particular the discussion on theory of reflection in Osnovy marksistskoi filosofii (p.50ff) and J.M.Bochenski's excellent summary of it in The Dogmatic Principles of Soviet Philosophy, D.Reidel Publishing Co., Dordrecht, Holland, 1963. A less 'official' discussion of aspects of the theory of reflection is contained in Dolgov "Object and Subject ; Objective and Subjective, pp.55-64 of A. Dymshits(ed.): Art and Society, Progress, Moscow, 1968.

Soviet theory of knowledge is, we know, a Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge, based on aspects of the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin as interpreted in Soviet epistemology. These thinkers, as a number of commentators point out (1) did in fact differ amongst themselves in their understanding of such key problems as the meaning of 'materialism', the relationship between 'material' and 'non-material', the role of dialectical processes in human cognition and so on; so much so that it becomes difficult to talk of a uniform Marxist-Leninist epistemological canon which they bequeathed to posterity. (2)

This problem, of course, has ramifications that apply to the philosophy of dialectical materialism itself as well as to Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge. As Z.A. Jordan points out in The Evolution of Dialectical Materialism, they completely undermine the idea that dialectical materialism itself is

> a single, continuous and uniform doctrine ... based upon the unvarying assumptions, first formulated by Marx and Engels, 'the first founders of the doctrine' which later were only explained amplified and defended by other followers. (3)

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(1) Cf. especially Z.A. Jordan: The Evolution of Dialectical Materialism, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1967.

(2) It is in fact not the intention of the present writer to embark on a discussion of what the views of Marx and Engels themselves were on these and other epistemological problems only to present, where necessary, what Soviet epistemologists consider them to be. It is not within the scope of this chapter to examine the problem of how "true to Marx" are the epistemological ideas of Soviet thinkers and thus to look in detail at Marx's own views on cognition.

(3) Jordan, op. cit., p. ix.

For Soviet philosophers, these points and the various differences of view - highlighted by Jordan - in the work of later Marxists like Plekhanov, Lenin and Stalin, are far less important than their own claim to be working within a coherent intellectual system known as dialectical materialism and one built up through a codification of the thought of the Marxist "classics". That the codification might not always be true to the spirit or the substance of Marx's ideas in particular is something that Soviet philosophers do not discuss. Thus Soviet theory of knowledge, like Soviet philosophy generally, in claiming intellectual descent from Marx and Engels cannot be relied upon to give a true picture of what these men actually said and meant. This fact needs to be borne in mind in any discussion of Soviet theory of knowledge, and indeed, of Soviet aesthetics itself.

More specifically, Soviet theory of knowledge can be said to be based on the ideas contained in four Marxist "classics": namely Engels' Anti-Dühring of 1878 (where the dialectic was given its "canonical" definition and his Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical Philosophy of 1888; as well as Lenin's Materializm i empiriokritits'izm (Materialism and Empirio - Criticism), of 1908, and his Filosofskiye tetradi (Philosophical Notebooks). The last consist of jottings and short commentaries on significant philosophical texts, set down mainly between 1914-15 and published for the first time as a separate book in 1933, nine years after Lenin's death. The Tetradi received serious attention from Soviet philosophers only after 1953 when they came to be elevated, for the first time, over Lenin's earlier work in philosophical importance.

Soviet philosophers claim to be 'materialists' - not in the vulgar or "mechanical" sense of the word, but in the sense that Engels and Lenin might be called materialists. In other words, Soviet philosophers do not hold that everything (including human thought) can be reduced to a material base, to matter; rather that matter is the primary reality of the universe, existing outside the human consciousness, independently of it, also logically prior to it. Human consciousness is a separate, secondary reality, not reducible to the first, but largely developing and changing in reaction to it; and any view which holds consciousness to be the primary reality, is labelled 'idealistic' by Soviet philosophers (just as it was labelled by Lenin himself in his Materializm i empiriokritikizm).

The chief feature of the world of matter and of consciousness (as well as energy), for Soviet philosophers, is the presence of a dialectic in it. By dialectic, Soviet philosophers mean both the science of the general laws of motion and of the development of nature, human society and thought (1), an

(1) Of course, the question of the scope of the dialectic leads to the problem, raised earlier, of whether dialectics (or science of the dialectic) incorporates and thus replaces such traditionally separate branches of philosophy as epistemology and logic, or whether it merely is another branch itself. The problem arises partly from Lenin's statement in the Tetradi - in a short note entitled K voprosu dialektiki (A Contribution to the Question of the Dialectic) - to the effect that dialectics "sovpadaet s" theory of knowledge. As Blakeley points out in his discussion of the matter (p.18 et seq) the Russian verb is ambiguous, meaning both "coincides with" and "is identical to." A number of Soviet philosophers, labelled by Blakeley 'modernist', consider, in relation to this note, that Lenin was not implying that dialectics had now replaced by incorporation, other traditionally distinct branches of philosophy, only that it was close to them in some areas. Other philosophers, labelled 'classicist', do not agree, seeing in Lenin's remarks, as they understand them, a disregard for the autonomy of the various disciplines within and without philosophy. No doubt most orthodox Soviet aestheticians favour this 'classical' interpretation of Lenin. For the 'modernist' interpretation, see in particular I.I. Novinskii: O 'Filosofskikh tetradyakh' V.I. Lenina, Nauka, Moscow, 1959, p.260; for the 'classicist', see Sovetskoi filosofii, p.303.

movement and change itself. Because they emphasise (with Engels) the dialectical nature of phenomena, Soviet philosophers can be called 'dialectical materialists'.

It is central to Soviet philosophy and, more especially, to Soviet epistemology that there exist in reality two dialectics - that of the external world, changing in time (the 'objective dialectic') and that of human thought (the 'subjective dialectic') likewise changing in response to changes in the first. Precisely how does the latter respond? It does so, chiefly, by taking copies of what is reflected on to it from the outside world. Thus men come to know reality initially at least by what is reflected on to their consciousness. (This reflection image was used by Lenin throughout Materialism i empiriokrititsism - and persists in Soviet thinking hence the term 'theory of reflection' to describe his and subsequent Soviet thinking on cognition). Furthermore, the accuracy of most "reflections" is confirmed on the general grounds that the laws of the dialectic ensure that (a) there must be a correlation between the content of human cognition and that of real world and (b) the process of knowing is itself dialectical, i.e. reproduces the processes of being in the real world. On the principle of the unity of the laws of being and those of knowing and thinking there can be no other result. Any errors that exist in human knowledge are the result of "false consciousness" of the dialectic, i.e. "false" ideology, non-dialectical thinking, etc. But more simply, all this amounts to the proposition that what we know determines how we know it; or as Jetter puts it

> since dialectical materialism assumes the dialectic of knowledge and reality to coincide, it regards an investigation of the form of thought as inadmissible, when divorced from content.(1)

(1) Jetter, op. cit., p. 124.

The above propositions are crucial for explaining the insistence by Soviet aestheticians on the principle of the unity between the forms men use to create art and the content that they place in such art, between the techniques of cognition and its objects. Also crucial to Soviet aesthetics are two other propositions put forward in Soviet discussion of knowledge (both derived mainly from Lenin's ideas). The first is that knowledge is always relative (in Lenin's view, to a given stage of the dialectic); the second is that the process of cognition involves more than a passive human percipient who simply mirrors reality; cognition is rather a process that can give full play to human inventiveness and imagination.

As far as the first proposition is concerned, it is clear that, for Lenin, what men know about reality is limited by and relative to the stage reached, at any one point in time, by developments in the external, that is to say, social and natural world. The social, historical context of any cognitive act, the influence of particular social modes and views on men's perception of reality are thus very important, both for the aesthetician considering the art of particular periods, and for the social historian considering social developments as a whole. A further conclusion results from this. Lenin and Soviet epistemologists say that while knowledge at a given period is relative, the knowledge gained in particular societies at a certain period will be "truer" than that gained by other societies in the same period. Here two things are important - the degree of social liberation and opportunity for creative social practice offered by a society and, dependent on these, the degree of understanding of 'objective dialectical developments' that it reveals. On both these counts, the knowledge of

Soviet man is 'truer' than those of men, in say, capitalist societies. Marxism-Leninism has allowed Soviet man to grasp "objective developments" more clearly than others could and social conditions in Russia now have given him unparalleled opportunities for applying his knowledge. The social and historical thrust of Soviet aesthetics, and the laudatory tone of Soviet philosophers' references to their own theories in aesthetics and elsewhere, have their origins in Soviet thinking about the development of human knowledge, amongst other things. In this connection, too, the concept of absolute knowledge is important. Absolute knowledge is supposedly acquired at the end of the historical and dialectical process and clearly, Soviet theorists say, some societies are nearer to it than others. Lenin himself does not say much about the content of this absolute knowledge (or knowledge of absolute truth, as he calls it), but does note:

> The limits of the approximation of our knowledge to the objective absolute truth are historically conditioned, but the existence of such a truth is unconditional, and the fact that we are approaching nearer to it is also unconditional. (1)

It is clear from Soviet writing, however, that "absolute truth is not so much a goal, as a process - the constantly expanding absolutely true content of relatively true knowledge".(2)

The concept of absolute knowledge, whatever its precise formulation, has one specific and very important application in

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(1) V.I. Lenin: Materialism and Empirio-Criticism (trans: A. Fineberg). Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1947, pp.134-135.

(2) Osnovy marksistskoi filosofii, p. 129.

Soviet aesthetics - namely the concept of absolute beauty. This beauty represents the highest form of all that is beautiful and uplifting. It exists prior to man, but is gradually revealed to man in the course of the development of human art; its scope and content will be more fully examined when beauty is discussed as a category.

Soviet theory of knowledge is also at the core of much Soviet writing on the creative aspect of art. Such writing draws heavily on this in order to show that art must be more than a mere mirroring of reality and that, to this end, artistic cognition is and must be different from other forms of cognition. And to examine these propositions closely, Soviet aestheticians generally make reference to Soviet epistemological writing on two questions, namely the relationship between knowledge and practice, and secondly, the question of the spetsifika and function of the empirical, 'sense' modes of cognition. On these questions, Soviet epistemology draws heavily on the work of Lenin, particularly his Tetradi, rather than the earlier, less sophisticated Materializm i empiriokritirsizm.

In outlining initially his theory of reflection in the latter, Lenin obviously faced the problem that if all human knowledge amounted simply to copies of developing external reality, then this knowledge would be very homogeneous, allowing no scope for differences and variations in human perception of the world. Yet, quite clearly, men do differ amongst themselves in their perception and knowledge of the world.

In the Tetradi, Lenin had to come to grips with this problem partly through his extensive reading and annotation of the work of Hegel, in particular the Science of Logic; he had also, it would appear from the Tetradi, studied the work of Greek philosophers like Aristotle and Heraclitus. Through these readings, Lenin came to stress the active role of consciousness in influencing and moulding reality. Of course, for Lenin, the Hegelian dialectic existed primarily in the world of matter (outside the consciousness) rather than in the world of thought and ideas itself. But human consciousness, in coming to grapple with this world outside itself, also developed a "dialectic" of its own. In his conspectus of Hegel's Science of Logic, Lenin lists those elements of the dialectic common both to matter and consciousness.(1) In his 1915 note K voprosu dialektiki he wrote that the knowledge obtained by the dialectical consciousness is

> living, many-sided knowledge ... with an infinite number of shades of every approach and approximation to reality, with a philosophical system growing out of each shade ... knowledge is not a straight line, but a curve ... a spiral (2)

Further, in the same note, he spelled out the importance of Hegel and other idealist philosophers, as compared to "metaphysical materialists" like Aristotle. The former, to Lenin, emphasised the creative, "assertive" aspects of human cognitive processes but had, unfortunately, discussed them in an "obscurantist" way: the idealists were expressing important insights but in a mystical form.(3) To illustrate further the view that human

(1) V.I. Lenin: Collected Works, Vol. 38 (1963) pp. 221-222.
(2) Ibid., pp. 362-363.
(3) Cf. "Philosophical idealism is only nonsense from the standpoint of crude, simple, metaphysical materialism. From the standpoint of dialectical materialsim, on the other hand, philosophical idealism is one-sided ... development (inflation, distortion) of one of the features ... of knowledge into an absolute, divorced from matter, from nature ... " Ibid., p. 3 (Italics are Lenin's).

comprehension of reality involved more than acts of "reflection" Lenin wrote (in his marginalia on Aristotle's Metaphysics):

> The approach of the human mind to a particular thing, the taking of a copy ... is not a simple, immediate act, a dead mirroring, but one which is complex ... zig-zag like, which includes in it the possibility of the flight of fantasy from life; more than that: the possibility of the transformation ... of the idea into a fantasy ... For even in the simplest generalisation ... ('table' in general) there is a certain bit of fantasy. (1)

The fact that the reflection was more than a "dead mirroring" was due, in part, Lenin perceived, to the interplay or dialectic between the various cognitive modes - in particular, between 'sensation' (one of the lowest) and 'conceptualisation' (one of the highest), during which others like 'fantasy' often played an intervening role. Generally, Soviet epistemology, since Lenin, has stressed the necessary interrelationship between then sensory and the rational cognitive modes:

> Knowledge is essentially a product of cooperation between the sensory and the rational and by this it seeks to correct the one-sidedness of empiricism and rationalism alike. (2)

Soviet emphasis on both sorts of cognitive modes is a key feature in Soviet discussion of the forms of aesthetic cognition - in particular those quintessentially artistic phenomena, the image and realistic type. The latter represent a uniquely artistic way of conveying the general features of reality in particular form, of combining the general (discerned by reason) with the particular (discerned at the lower levels of cognition). Art is, indeed, unique in that it can present universal truths in particular, vivid forms. This is something

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(1) Ibid., p. 372. (Italics are Lenin's.)

(2) Cited from Wetter, op. cit., p. 129.

that sets it apart, in the main, from other forms of expressio and communication. This uniqueness is constantly emphasised i Soviet discussion.

In his creative activity, in his work or creating images, t artist draws, in the main, on four of the seven important cognitive modes, recognised in Soviet theory of knowledge and outlined by Blakeley in his work. At the lowest level, there is living contemplation - zhivoye sozertsaniye - which simply "registers", as it were, the vast mass of empirical data that is perceived by the senses (i.e. sense impressions) These are then "treated" by a higher mode-sensation (oshchushcheniye which both "registers" and "refines" particular sense-impress - ions. Employing the next highest mode-perception (vospriyatiye - however, men do try to create a synthesis of these impressions and, using a higher mode still - representation (predstavleniye) - they establish, in embryonic form, their "essential", "general" features. It is at the level of these last two modes that artists themselves tend to operate, aided by imagination (voobrazheniye)which, in the Soviet view, bridges those modes that operate at the level of sense-know- ledge and those that do not. Incidentally, these latter, the higher, intellectual modes - conceptualisation, judgement and reasoning (ponyatiye, suzhdeniye, umozaklyucheniye)-are less relevant, but not irrelevant, to art; they can offer more complete insights into what is typical and general from the observed mass of sensations and these insights can be expressed, especially in the less plastic and more verbal of the artistic genres like literature.

While all the above cognitive modes are important for allowing men and specifically artists to come to grips with

reality, it is in human practice, in the specific act of artistic creation, that men are able to attain full knowledge of their world. As Lenin wrote:

> From living contemplation to abstract thought and from this to practice - such is the dialectical path of the cognition of truth, of the cognition of objective reality. (1)

The central importance of practice in human cognitive and creative activity is stressed constantly in Soviet epistemology:

> Human sensuous - material activity that changes objects is called practice. Practice lies at the basis of knowledge. It is the interaction between the subject (man) and the object (material thing), the direct result of which is the changing of the object. (2)

In Soviet discussion of practice most writers -not unexpectedly - draw heavily on the work of Karl Marx. In his Second Thesis on Feuerbach, Marx wrote:

> The question of whether objective truth is an attribute of human thought is not a theoretical, but a practical question. Man must prove the truth... the this-sidedness of his thinking in practice. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking that is unrelated-to practice is a purely scholastic question. (3)

From this and other passages in Marx's early work, it is clear that truth, the reality of external phenomena is discovered by men through social practice, through their attempt to deal with the world, to come to grips with it and thereby to master it, to make it no longer strange or external to themselves. Thus, so far as the beautiful in nature is

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(1) Lenin, op cit., p. 171

(2) Osnovy marksistskoi filosofii, p. 299

(3) Karl Marx: The German Ideology (with Theses on Feuerbach appended), trans. R. Pascal et al., Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1940, p. 207.

concerned, men's knowledge of it and related aesthetic phenomena, their complete appropriation of these for their own ends, can only start with the creation of specific works of art. This practical activity has another effect, of course, besides deepening human knowledge of the aesthetic. It refines those very senses men apply to understand the aesthetic and, in conditions of freedom, guarantees even better art. In the following quotations from his Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, for example, Marx can be taken to mean that the steady "objectifying" of the human "essence" will improve, amongst other things, both human art and human understanding of the beautiful, so that human creative capacities and cognitive powers will reach even greater heights of freedom and assertiveness, as they react to a world increasingly humanised and created by themselves, one which is inimical to those things that "oppress" men and cramp their search for knowledge, viz. the spirit of capitalism, with its fetish for money, its "burdened" man and "dealer in minerals":

> The burdened man has no sense of the finest play, the dealer in minerals sees only the mercantile value, but not the beauty or the antique nature of the minerals. ...Thus the objectification of the human essence in both its practical and theoretical aspects is required to make man's senses human as well as to create human sense corresponding to the entire wealth of human and natural substance....All history is the preparation for man to become the object of sensuous consciousness, for the needs of man to become natural, sensuous needs.

and:

> Only music awakens the aesthetic sensibility of man. Only through the objective development of the richness of human nature is the richness of subjective human sensitivity, the ear for music, the eye for the beauty of form....in part evolved, in part created.... ..... The objectivity of human nature , both

> in theory and practice, is necessary ... both in order to humanise man's sensibility and to create for all the richness of human and material existence, a corresponding human sensibility. (1)

Cognition, thus, for Marx is a process in which the cognitive agent is as important as the thing known, in which, necessarily, men must transform and create and be transformed and created. It hardly needs saying that Soviet theorists (including the aestheticians) are agreed that Marx's own ideas on practice do not amount to a philosophy of *pragmatism*, to the proposition that things are true for us to the extent that they are held to be useful. The official line on this question as stated in the Osnovy marksistskoi filosofii, for example, is as follows:

> The truthfulness [istinnost'] of knowledge does not derive from its usefulness [pol'za], rather the great practical significance of knowledge derives from its truthfulness, from the fact that it correctly reflects reality. (2)

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Through their understanding, then, of what the classics of Marxism-Leninism say on epistemological matters, Soviet writers come to regard the cognitive modes, the act of cognition itself as existing primarily to allow men to grapple with the real world, to identify its various phenomena. They do not exist to obscure men's understanding of it, or to direct their attention to the 'non-real' world of the super-natural, the occult and so on. Lenin's emphasis on a mode of cognition like fantasy, as well as Soviet discussion of a mode

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(1) K. Marx: The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 (trans. Y. Milligan), Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1961, pp. 109 -111.

(2) Osnovy marksistskoi filosofii, p. 302.

like imagination, are all based on the premise that whatever forms they may give rise to in art, however bizarre their working may appear, they exist primarily to illuminate reality, to bring out some feature of it that might remain obscure under more 'usual' modes of cognition. Furthermore, Marxist-Leninist theory causes Soviet epistemology to downplay completely any role for such phenomena as the irrational, intuitive or unconscious in helping men to understand the world. Soviet writers cannot deny that men are sometimes irrational; however they minimise the extent of such irrationality. The role of such things as unconscious inspiration, or the unconscious (bessoznatel'noye) generally in activities like art is also constantly minimised, indeed denied outright. A Soviet writer on this topic, M. Afasizhyev, tells his readers that concentration on the problem of the unconscious can only serve as a "comfortable substitute for the social problems of art." (1) In very large part, of course, Afasizhyev's and other writers' comments are motivated by Soviet antagonism towards the psychological theories of Sigmund Freud and those men regarded by Soviet writers as his intellectual predecessors - i.e. "subjective idealists" and "apologists for the unconscious" like Schopenhauer, Bergson and E. von Hartmann.(2) They are also motivated by the "correct" Soviet psychological theories, in particular those of I. Pavlov and, more recently, D. N. Uznadze. The latter are clearly non-Freudian, particularly Pavlov's theories with their insistence that so-called intuitive, unconscious acts of men, in fact, have their origin

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(1) Cited from his article "Problema bessoznatel'nago v khudozhestvennom tvorchestve (The Problem of the Unconscious in Artistic Creativity), p. 71 of A.I. Bazhenova, et al. (eds.): Estetika: kategorii i iskusstva, Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1965

(2) Soviet views on Freud and like-minded thinkers, in so far as their ideas influence art, are outlined more fully in the discussion of the "psychological element" of art in Chap. VII

in human efforts to know, to come to grips with the external world. Thus Afasizhyev himself comes to the conclusion that "sudden, intuitive flashes are nothing but the result of a synthesising of the analytical work of the mind."(1) (that is, of a cognitive process.)

If the Marxist -Leninist legacy has made Soviet ideas on cognition firmly "materialist" and "socially-involved", as it were, it has also led to a certain confusion and tension, particularly over two categories important in any branch of knowledge, and especially in aesthetics. These are the categories of the 'objective' and 'the subjective'.

In Soviet discussion, and Marxist discussion generally, the objective is that which exists as "object", as matter outside human consciousness, or "... which presents man with that object or part of himself with which he establishes practical or theoretical relationships".(2) In a more abstract,

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(1) Estetika: kategorii i iskusstva, p. 82. Interesting in this connection are the views of Uznadze, a Georgian experimental psychologist, who is quoted at length by Afasizhyev. Uznadze speaks not so much in terms of a human psyche, as of a human 'role-consciousness', formed and shaped by social practice and only marginally influenced by irrational, neurotic, etc., impulses.

The attitude of Soviet psychologists and aestheticians to the problem of the unconscious is discussed at length by J. Pitet in "The Problem of the Unconscious in the Creative Process , as Treated in Soviet Aesthetics," J.A.A.C., Summer 1963, pp.399 - 406.

(2) Dolgov, op cit. p. 55.

and partisan sense, the objective, in Soviet parlance, also refers to those elements of material existence in which the presence of the dialectic is evident, which, in other words, are developing according to the laws of social and historical necessity, and in a manner that can only be favourable to the Marxist cause.

For its part, the subjective, broadly, is that which exists outside objects, i.e. in subjects - perceiving agents like men. In Soviet theory of knowledge and in thinking based on it, both categories are acknowledged to be important and interdependent in the cognitive process. In point of fact, however, one or other is usually given emphasis amongst Soviet aestheticians.

There is, for example (as we have noted), a stream of thought in Soviet aesthetics called the 'objectivist'. Its adherents draw heavily on Lenin's earlier work on epistemology and thus emphasise the prime importance of objective phenomena perceived rather than the perceiving agent or process. For 'objectivist' aestheticians, an activity like art becomes less important than the phenomena it reflects; since the substantial (objective phenomena) is primary, and also self-explanatory, ar and artists, they reason, can do nothing better than reflect it. They cannot embellish or deepen it, since their work represents, in Lenin's terms, merely a copy (imitation) of the original and is therefore inferior to it. Here, the impact of the earlier epistemological thinking of Lenin as an 'objectivist' is strengthened by arguments provided by Aristotle - in particular his view that art is primarily a mimetic process. It is also strengthened by a weakness in the

theory of reflection itself - viz. in the process of "knowing by reflection" one can never know that our copy (reflection) is true to the original since we can never, under such a theory know the original at all, only the copy. In such circumstances our knowledge, and creations like art based upon it, are at best second-rate, to be taken on trust, as it were. They are secondary to the reality which men attempt to grapple with and thus inferior, but definition, to it. It is not surprising, therefore that Soviet objectivist theories of art places little stress on the integrity and uniqueness of the artistic mode of cognition.

This is not the case with those Soviet aestheticians who emphasise the (at least) equal importance of the subjective aspect of the cognitive process, the perceiving agent as well as the objects perceived. These aestheticians are often called 'social' and they use Marx's ideas on practice and Lenin's modification of his earlier "crude reflectionism" to defend and advocate their views.

For the social aesthetician, the objective properties of, say, a phenomenon like the beautiful cannot be known and understood without the human(subjective) perceiving, knowing agent. The objective reality of the beautiful, far from being a copy,only imperfectly understood by human beings attempting to reproduce it in art,can only be fully shown and set forth as a result of human creative practice, as a result of human attempts to know it. In this sense, talk of "ranking" the objective above the subjective, of emphasising the dichotomy between them is meaningless. The two categories complement each other, are necessary for understanding each other. All this causes the social aestheticians to place much more

emphasis on the importance and distinctiveness of 'subjective moments, elements'[1] in artistic practice, than do the objectivists. It also leads them to emphasise the distinctiveness and integrity of artistic practice itself more than their opponents do.

It should be mentioned that some social aestheticians, primarily orthodox-minded, do come to similar conclusions to the objectivists. These critics tend to explain the "subjecti moments" of art in terms of the immediate, social environment of the 'subjective' creative artist, and, at a further remove, in terms of an objective dialectic that explains all phenomena. This "reduction" of the subjective to the social-historical categories, to primarily objective phenomena, thus achieves the same effect as does the objectivists' relative neglect of it - namely a decline in interest in the force, and distinctiveness of the subjective elements in art (as opposed to the others) and in the distinctiveness of the aesthetic manifestation of the subjective as opposed to others. And it is a "reduction" caused primarily by the cruder approaches evident in Soviet theory of knowledge.

Thus one can say that the all-important categories of the 'objective' and 'subjective' in Soviet aesthetics are to be explained in large measures in terms of Soviet theory of

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(1) 'Moments' is, of course, used here and elsewhere in this study (cf.pp170 n1, 173 etc) in the Hegelian sense of an 'aspect' of the dialectical and historical process.

knowledge and that the limitations of the explanation, and the degree of tension existing between the two categories are also traceable to such theory, specifically to the change in tone and emphasis in Lenin's earlier and later works on epistemolog It is not surprising to see that, to offset these limitations, Soviet thinkers have often gone beyond epistemology in their discussion of the subjective and objective in specific areas, like the beautiful in art, morality in art, and so on. We shall now turn to these questions to see, among other things, precisely how they have done so, to find out in the process how solid is the Marxist-Leninist core of their discussion.

IV. THE 'SPETSIFIKA' OF ART.

It is very apparent from Soviet discussion that Soviet critics and scholars clarify points and make definitions by stressing the relationship between things, more particularly the "correct" relationship. Other theorists do the same of course, but in the Soviet case the word 'relationships' receives added importance because of Marxist-Leninist doctrine - and in particular the determination of Marxist-Leninists to explain the world in terms of the correct and necessary relationship between, amongst other things, matter and consciousness, subject and object as well as their belief that relationships are so vastly important since all reality is dialectical i.e. interrelated and complex. Each of its parts must be studied as Lenin said, in a way that highlights "the entire totality of the manifold relations of this thing [a part of the whole] to others". (1) These relationships are, moreover, in dialectical theory, changing all the time, hence the importance of attention to them.

The above approach is especially evident in Soviet discussion of art as a human activity. Except for the most extreme 'personalist' writers, all Soviet scholars, and critics, seek to clarify the nature and function of art by defining its relationship with reality. Art is viewed as the product of

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(1) Cited from his notes on Hegel's Science of Logic, p.221 of V.I. Lenin: Collected Works, Vol. 38 (1965)

consciousness, and consciousness under Soviet theory of knowledge must grapple with reality . If art is viewed in this light, two problems arise - that of its precise status vis-à-vis the reality with which it grapples and the specific nature of its grappling process. What, in other words, distinguishes art from other forms of human consciousness like religion and science? Most Soviet writers on art, from the 'professional' and orthodox theorist to the 'personalist' writer-critic, address themselves to the former issue. The latter is covered mainly by the 'professional' critics (well), the orthodox (routinely) and by the 'personalists' (very rarely

Art, in the standard Soviet view, is preoccupied with men's "cultural assimilation of the world, i.e. grappling with reality", (1) and more particularly with those aspects of reality that can be called aesthetic elements, i.e. the beautiful, the harmonious, the symmetrical and so on. Given that the prime purpose of the grappling is to make sense of the world and thereby master it, how do men make sense of its aesthetic component? They do so, initially and chiefly, as we have seen from Soviet theory of knowledge, at the level of sense-knowledge and by creating works of art. It is further central to Soviet thinking that developed artistic practice will refine men's ability to know the beautiful, i.e. refine his modes of sense-knowledge and artistic technique and enable him to produce better art. Artistic activity thus has a clearly define educational role as well, teaching men to be better artists:

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(1) Osnovy, p. 172

through practice and giving the public at large an awareness of art, i.e. greater aesthetic sensibility by providing material for them to contemplate. Naturally doctrinaire orthodox writers stress this educational raison d'être of artistic activity.(1) But a less orthodox writer like O. Larmin will do so too.(2) It is, of course, conceded that someone might like to manifest his understanding of the aesthetic by writing and theorising about it rather than producing art. Thus artistic theory complements artistic practice in heightening aesthetic sensibility in oneself and in others, in educating people about art.

The aesthetic component of artistic activity relates, in the Soviet view, both to the reproduction of aesthetic phenomena in nature and to that quality of "disinterested delight", attendant upon contemplating such phenomena. What is 'aesthetic in the latter sense, is often overlooked by orthodox Soviet writers on art, or confused with terms like 'social' and 'cognitive'. The doctrinaire line on art, of course, is that men reproduce the aesthetic for cognitive and social reasons - that is to come to know and dominate nature and to help build order and harmony in society. What might be called the 'purely aesthetic' motive for reproducing aesthetic phenomena - sheer enjoyment of beauty and harmony for their own sakes - remain in doctrinaire, orthodox writing incidental or at best strongly linked with the social motive: men's ability to enjoy the

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(1) The Osnovy, for example, devotes a large part of its longest section (Razdel II) to the theme of aesthetic education.

(2) O. Larmin: "Soviet Society and the Aesthetic Ideal", p.45 of A.L.Dymshits (ed.): Art and Society.

aesthetic for its own sake is refined through artistic and social practice and is thus historically determined. Socially more advanced societies will be more sophisticated aesthetically The Osnovy, discussing art in primitive societies, says "that it is possible to speak only of the faint beginnings, the premonition of aesthetic feeling in the strict sense of the word." (1)

From this it would follow that the idea of a common, universal and equally strong aesthetic feeling in all men, irrespective of their social values, would be denied by Osnovy. All this thinking on the nature and genesis of art owes much to G.V. Plekhanov; and it will be examined, along with Plekhanov's ideas, in greater depth when beauty as a social phenomenon is examined and a critique of the shortcomings of the 'social' view of art is offered.

By way of contrast to the official approach, less doctrinaire writers are not so happy with the blurring of the distinctions between the social and the aesthetic. To a writer like Vanslov (1), for example, it is not realistic to talk, as the Osnovy does, of aesthetic ideals in art and men's desire to reproduce them, as a motive for creativity, when, in the final analysis, aesthetic ideals are ranked by the Osnovy according to the extent to which they reflect social desiderata, social ideals, the extent, indeed, that they are worth propagating for their social and political value. (We have mentioned earlier, for example, that the authors of the Osnovy devote 142 closely printed pages to the aesthetic ideals and those general

(1) Osnovy, p.189

(2) Cf. Problema prekrasnogo, p.130, et seq

aesthetic theories evolved during various periods of history and attempt to rank them to the extent that they approach the 'social' ideals of Marxism-Leninism.)

While not disavowing the Osnovy's emphasis on art as an act of grappling with reality, 'professional' theorists take pains to separate out the various motives behind the artistic act and, what is more, try to establish which motives and which resultant features of art should be present for good art to result. They do distinguish various elements like the 'social', 'aesthetic', 'personal' and 'moral' elements in a work of art and do attempt to show which one element is necessary for good art and which elements combined are necessary and sufficient for such art. Is, for example, the presence of the right "social ideal" alone both necessary and sufficient for good art or is it merely one component, though a necessary one, in such art? Their attempt to sort out problems like these allows 'professional' critics' discussion to contain more insights and fewer cliches than that of more doctrinaire writers. Subsequent, fuller examination of these various elements in art will make this fact quite clear.

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Art for the 'professional' Soviet critic, then, is a phenomenon that is understandable in terms of man's attempt to comprehend reality, albeit for reasons that do not amount simply to the 'socio-cognitive'. It is, however, a very society-directed, positive and beneficial activity as orthodox writers themselves would agree. It presupposes a cultural-spiritual (dukhovny)[1] assimilation of the world, that is an

(1) See p.36 .2. where the problems of translating dukhovny are discussed.

assimilation made in the light of those values internalised from the culture one lives in, which reinforce or find particul use for qualities of the human spirit (dukh) like bravery, honesty, a sense of principle, etc. Such qualities are both drawn upon and further refined by art and applied by it to help confirm men's mastery of the world. The dukhovnost' of art indeed stands in noticeable and favourable contrast to the so-called spirituality of religion. It is worth-while dwelling on this contrast, since Soviet thinking on religion generally, and on religious art in particular, highlights further their conception of aesthetic activity. The science/art contrast will also be examined for the same reason.

Soviet thinking on religion is greatly indebted to the classic critique of it offered by Ludwig Feuerbach in The Essence of Christianity , published in 1841. It is also influenced by Karl Marx's treatment of religion in the course of his own studies on Feuerbach and, later, in his writings on alienation and capitalism.

The official and 'professional' Soviet line on religious and artistic experience is that the two phenomena are not unrelated though their approaches differ on to the ultimate scope and content of religion and art. It is agreed that religion and art have their origins in social practice and ful f social needs; primitive men evolved the idea of divinity to enable himself to feel more secure in and to master an initiall alien and hostile environment. God, Feuerbach asserted, is the projection of man's aspirations, the symbol of mastery, as it were, a human figure become divine. Even other religious concepts, such as that of the Virgin Mary in Christianity,

were evolved to express basic social and "this-wordly" truths such as the idea of virginity. Aesthetic feeling and art, likewise, in the general Soviet view, were cultivated by men for primarily social reasons - to give shape, harmony and form to the external world and thereby, in one way, to master it. Modern anthropological evidence would, incidentally, tend to confirm these views on the origin of religion and art; the social basis of religious rites and artistic practice has been noticed in such studies of primitive peoples as those of the British anthropologist, Anthony Forge, concerning New Guinea tribes.(1)

Religion and art are also similar, Soviet writers agree, in their use of basic human emotions and spiritual experiences to express themselves. They indeed come together in that phenomenonknown as religious art, in the attempt, in other words, to portray Divinity in terms of beauty. Yet a fundamental difference remains between them, a difference which becomes central to what might be called the vulgar Marxist Soviet critique of religion which we shall examine below.

Religions, as they develop become "fetishes" for men, obscuring the original social purpose they served and directing men's attention away from the visible (social) world and from social needs, to a supernatural world that is false and inhuman

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(1) Cf. Anthony Forge: "Learning to See in New Guinea", pp. 269-291 of Philip Mayer (ed.): Socialization, Tavistock Publications, London, 1970. Forge is dealing in particular with the art of the Abelam tribe in the Sepik district of New Guinea. He notes that much of Abelam art has traditionalistic, ritualistic over-tones which obscure its immediate social significance, and that those participating in Abelam rites and cults are not always conscious of any socio-cultural reason for doing so. However, he claims, such activities have socio-cultural motives behind them.

The whole process of the institutionalisation of the churches, the cults of "mystery and terror" evolved from earliest times demonstrate this. Aesthetic activity, by way of contrast has remained a force for social good, serving to illuminate the world for men, to affirm man himself in the world, to exemplify and encourage humanistic sentiments. Did this mean that basic antipathies exist between the two? 'Professional' critics, like B.S. Meilakh who write on the problem,(1) by and large do not assert this in as many words. Few of them, in fact, quite clear none that this writer is aware of, would endorse the view that religions, even those of the East with their emphasis on harmony and tranquility, are basically humanistic in their outlooks and ideas. But they are confronted by the fact that great art like Greek art and that of Dostoyevski was produced by people who were conscious of expressing religious sentiments as art and who were not trying to suppress or modify them in the process. It is true that Greek religion, for example, was less supernatural and more anthropomorphic than most; but to suggest that the Greeks, in embodying this religion in artistic form (sculpture, friezes on temples etc..) were expressing non-religious ideas, or creating figures that they no longer wished to worship, is hardly true. Similarly, it is wrong to suggest, as B.S. Meilakh points out, that Dostoyevski did not produce great art under the influence of ideas that were obviously religious, or that he himself saw any incompatibility between his religious ideas and purposes and his work as an artist.

What critics like Meilakh will say, however, is that religious ideas will only become successful art to the extent that an

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(1) Cf. B.S. Meilakh: "O khudozhestvennom myshlenii Dostoyevskog

positive social-humanistic value they may possess is *drawn out* and emphasised through presentation in the aesthetic mode, to the extent, in other words, that this mode is able to neutralise all the "fetishistic", "scholastic" and "superstitious" elements in religion. Furthermore, "religious" characters, such as those in Dostoyevski's novels, are acceptable as art, to the extent that they illuminate the religious mentality or a social-psychological state of men. To quote Meilakh:

> But in episodes embodying religious motifs and images [Dostoyevski] has achieved an artistic effect only in cases when they .... have been subordinated to the analytical task of revealing the characters - emotional - psychological experiences. (1)

When religious ideas are present in art in scholastic and schematic form, however, with the negative aspects of their religiosity emphasised, the result is a failure as art. Meilakh points to the failure of Father Zossima's testament in *Brat'ya Karamazovy* in this respect. More generally Soviet critics will contrast the art of the Middle Ages (i.e. Gothic) with that of the Renaissance and say that the former is weaker because its religious content, inspired, in the Soviet view by 'scholasticism', is less suitable as art than the 'humanised' religious art of the latter. There is also, closer to home, the contrast stressed by E.G. Yakovlev between the flatness of the standard Russian icon and those vivid and rich exemplars provided by the humanistic Kosunskaya school of iconography which flourished at Novgorod in the fifteenth century and culmina

(1) Ibid., p.97. Italics are Meilakh's. The phrase " have been subordinated to the analytical task of revealing..." is a translation of the literal Russian " have fulfilled a functi subordinated to an analytical task - the revelation etc....

(Footnote (1) continued from page 100)
(On the Artistic Thought of Dostoyevski), VL, No.1, 1972, pp. 89-104.

ed in the work of Andrei Bobyev.

In contrast to the 'professional' approach of critics like Meilakh, there is what might be called the vulgar doctrinaire approach to the question of religion and its relationship to art. In this approach, the view is taken, in the words of Osnovy that "there exist antagonisms between religion and art",(1) that religion is an incubus upon and not an inspiration for art, ----- religious artists (the Greeks, the Renaissance Italians and so on) have no religious motives in mind, when the create, but merely a spirit of humanism that transcends religion and causes artistic success. The Osnovy, particularly in its discussion of Russian medieval art implies, furthermore, that religious artists are actually hostile to the church which exploits their art for ends they clearly do not accept.

Perhaps the most elaborate exposition of the Osnovy view is contained in E.G. Yakovlev's Esteticheskiye chuvstva i religioznoye perezhivaniye (Aesthetic Feelings and Religious Experience), published by Sovetski pisatel', Moscow, 1964. Here it is consistently argued that the fetishistic, superstitious and other-worldly nature of religion makes it impossible for this form of "false consciousness" to have anything in common with art. Indeed, it is suggested that religious feelings were somehow unnatural to primitive man and that they developed as a distortion of more fundamental and natural aesthetic feelings. (2) As a result, Yakovlev can only argue that religious ar

(1) Osnovy, p. 216
(2) In fact, Yakovlev - in a significant departure from the common Soviet view - suggests that social practice does not explain the origin of aesthetic feeling. He prefers the psychological -biological explanation, adopted initially by G.V. Plekhanov - that is, aesthetic feelings were develo ed by men as they came to appreciate the symmetry and harmo of their own bodies and bodily movements. Religious feelin
(Footnote (2) contin. page 103)

is successful as art because it portrays, through the express wishes of its creators, non-religious feelings in a religious guise. This line is apparent in Yakovlev's treatment of Dostoyevski; he considers that even the religious beliefs of Dostoyevski the man held no significance for Dostoyevski the artist, that they were in effect concealed in his art. Furthermore, (echoing a viewpoint of the Osnovy) since religion and art are antagonistic, Yakovlev claims, the church can use art only for cynical (political) reasons, to consolidate its influence and not for any love of art. Yakovlev suggests that the Catholic (French) clergy in Indo-China encouraged a symbiosis between Gothic and traditional Vietnamese architectural styles to encourage the myth of a happy relationship between the oppressors and the oppressed, (i.e. between the French and the Vietnamese) and not for any aesthetic reason.

Many Soviet critics have regarded Yakovlev's approach as too crude - particularly his assumption that religious art, if successful, is so in spite of its religious content. They cannot accept his notion of a religion/art emnity. In fact the general crudity of Yakovlev's approach led to his being refused the high degree of Doctor of Philosophical Sciences by the Department of Aesthetics at Moscow State University, after he had submitted his work for this degree.

The more sophisticated rather than the crude Soviet view concerning the relationship between religion and art seems to this writer the more plausible one. He accepts that while

(Footnote (2) contin. from page 102)
then developed from these, as men sought some explanation for this harmony (and other phenomena they came to identify as aesthetic) and found it in the idea of God.

religion and art are clearly different forms of consciousness, they need not always be antagonistic. Religion, conceived and propagated as such and not merely as humanism by another name, has demonstrably inspired great art. It is clear, however, that religion once deprived of the element of dukhovnost' it shares with art, once its "superstitious" or "doctrinal" elements become uppermost, loses its effectiveness as a source and inspiration for art. In this respect, too, the less crude Soviet view seems to be valid. The contrast, so often mentioned between medieval [scholastic] art and Renaissance-Hellenic art, is a telling one. Few would deny that medieval art - with some exceptions like Rublyev's icons, Italian quattrocento religious tryptichs - was less vivid, less original, less productive of variation and creative adaptation than the other art form.

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It has become fashionable in the U.S.S.R., since the early 'sixties, and indeed before that, to examine closely the relationship that exists between art and science. This has been done to clarify the essential nature of each, as well as to stress that the relationship between them need not, indeed should not, be an antagonistic one, and that the basis for a "proper" relationship is provided, above all, by the Communist society and the specific uses to which it puts both art and science. Besides having the "trendy" overtones that such discussion still has in the West, scholarly and not so scholarly articles in the U.S.S.R. on the subject are also politically safe; they offer a very obvious way by which the artistic and scientific communities can say something that is objective and often interesting about art and science and which can also earn

them credit politically with Party authorities.

It is clear that there is a fairly uniform approach to this topic in both doctrinaire and less doctrinaire writing. It was, of course, fashionable after the 'fifties, amongst certain poets like Voznesenski in his Anti-Worlds miscellany (1962) and critics like B. Runin during his 'personalist' phase, to speak of the growing, if not fundamental, division between the fiziki and liriki, between the physicists and the lyricists. In the post-Sputnik era the editors of Pravda, in an editorial included in the 1st January, 1960 issue, were moved to point out that getting to the moon, or even putting "moons" into space, was not the sole aim of man's creative endeavours. Even today there are undoubtedly in the Soviet Union traces of what has been called tsekhovaya uchenost' (roughly - 'professional snobbery') in the attitudes of artists and scientists towards each other, and these exist in the attitudes of professional groups elsewhere to outsiders. One writer, Yuri Schroeder, has complained of outmoded obsessions with science amongst ordinary, impressionable people for whom science had become a fetish in itself, irrespective of its concrete achievements and failures:

> For these people it is easier to admit that art generally gives one no knowledge of the world than to renounce faith in the general significance of scientific knowledge.(1)

Even so, the doctrine of the two separate and exclusive cultures - one scientific, the other rigorously artistic - has

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(1) Yu.Schroeder: "Nauka - istochnik znanii i suyeverii" (Science - the Source of Knowledge and Superstitions), NM, No. 10, 1969, p. 207.

never seriously been defended or propounded in the U.S.S.R. or become manifest in Soviet practice. Soviet writers have, in fact, consistently attacked certain Western theorists of cultu like C.P. Snow who stresses that the two worlds of science an culture are separate and not mutually reinforcing, or like F.R. Leavis who has emphasised the need for one separate, elitist and primarily literary culture to preserve "civilised values" in an increasingly technocratic society.(1)

There are a number of reasons for all this. At one level, as we have already seen, science, particularly social science and the new sciences like cybernetics and information theory, have shown that they can be applied to the study of art and offer illuminating insights on both its aesthetic and non-aesthetic components - indeed can help destroy the dilettantism that can threaten criticism of art.(2) The U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences has been to the fore in encouraging scientific or "complex" approaches to artistic activity and thus discouraging the idea that the achievements of science and scientific cultur generally are irrelevant for art. Besides sponsoring joint conferences of aestheticians and social and natural scientists to examine aesthetic problems (beginning in June 1962), the Academy has instituted a kommissiya po kompleksnomy izucheniyu khudozhestvennogo tvorchestva (Commission for an All-round

(1) A Soviet critique of theorists like Snow can be found in (amongst other works) A. Myasnikov: "Sotsialisticheskij realizm i voprosy teorii literatury", pp.84-135 of the sbornik Aktual'nye problemy sotsialisticheskogo realizma, Sovetskij pisatel', Moscow, 1969.

(2) This is a theme running through an article by M.Volkenstein entitled 'Nauka i lyudi'. ('The Science of People'), NM No.11 1969. pp. 178-203. The article stresses as well the humanistic, even "aesthetic" aspects of the natural sciences, and the insights that they can bring to aesthetics and literary criticism.

Study of Artistic Creativity) headed by B.S. Meilakh. Meilakh himself has been largely responsible for bringing out a number of sborniki dealing with the scientific study of art and the similarities between science and art as forms of cognitive activity. Reference has already been made to his Sodruzhestvo nauk i tainy tvorchestva. A more recent compilation, featuring a number of articles written by Meilakh himself, is Na rubezhe nauki i iskusstva (On the Borderline Between Science and Art Nauka, Leningrad, 1971. A central theme in the compilation - the similarities in the nature of both science and art - is one which has been attracting increasing attention in recent years; it is also one which offers considerable insights into the nature of art itself, as the Soviets understand it. It is noticeable that writers on art of all shades of opinion have contributed to discussion of the topic; they are all agreed that art and science possess common features. Thus the objectivist aesthetician, V. Romanenko, writes that :

> the tradition of a creative union, a unity of scienc and art, acquired ever greater significance ... on the basis of the tradition, it is easier for scientists and artists to join forces in the struggle for the peace and progress of mankind. (1)

A 'personalist' critic like B. Runin also asserts:

> that there is something common to both kinds of intellectual activity [i.e. scientific and artistic] is confirmed by the unified nature of the material they deal with. (2)

Another critic, less easily categorised, Genrykh Volkov,

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(1) V. Romanenko: " Tvorcheskoye vzaimodeistviye iskusstva i nauki" (The Creative Interaction Between Art and Science). p.82 of the sbornik, Estetika segodnya (Aesthetics Today), Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1968.

(2) B. Runin: "Logika nauki i logika iskusstva" (The Logic of Science and the Logic of Art), p.116 of the sbornik B.S. Meilakh (ed.): Sodruzhestvo nauk i tainy tvorchestva.

stresses that science needs elements of imagination as much as art needs a "touch of logic" - otherwise the former will become like a "programmed automation". (1)

It is clear that the similarity between artistic and scientific modes of cognition is stressed by Soviet commentators because Soviet epistemologists see no discontinuity between sense cognition and intellectual cognition, indeed stress their interaction. Both activities are cognitive processes that strive to make sense of the world and they are, in the Soviet view, united in the common task of opening up the world for men's benefit, of demonstrating human potential and ridding men of false consciousness. Science like art, moreover, can have a clear aesthetic aspect as well, to the extent that science does bring order and harmony out of chaos, out of the seemingly inexplicable.

More generally it is by remembering the common goals of art and science that men can eradicate, as Yu. Schroeder points out,(2) "fetishistic ideas", about the superiority and infallibility of this or that "branch of cognition" over others. Of course, there are obvious differences between art and science; otherwise how could they be distinguished or why should they exist as separate things? In the context of examining the general Soviet kharakteristika (characterisation of art, it is important to stress the following. Art, Soviet

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(1) Volkov, op. cit p. 191.

(2) Schroeder, op. cit. p. 224 and elsewhere.

critics would agree, contains a large element of the subjectiv and personal and partly for this reason, the knowledge acquire by it is not cumulative in the way that scientific truths abou reality are; because truths in art are presented in the form of images and not concepts and because they are so heavily overlaid with personal insights and evaluations, they do not automatically provide in themselves a basis for the discovery of further truths, for the progressive expansion of knowledge.

It is, of course, true that artists may discover different forms of presenting content over the years, may advance the techniques discovered by earlier artists; it is also true and has to be so, in the Soviet context that, as social conditions mature, art itself will come to take on a more progressive content. But here, extra-aesthetic factors (social progress) are responsible primarily. Generally, the central aesthetic component of art does not tend, in Soviet discussion, to be examined in terms of time, progress and so on. Indeed when comparing the aesthetic "effect" of a Giacometti sculpture on the one hand and a statue by Phidias on the other, one is struck, Soviet critics stress, not by the differences in their form but by their common power to evoke the aesthetic in equal measure, albeit by different forms. In this context, indeed, the concept of more or less advanced forms of art becomes dubious. This line of thinking is very strong in Soviet discussion of form in art, as will be seen, in fuller detail, subsequently.

Difficulties can creep into Soviet discussion, however, when there is too sharp distinction drawn between the "personal evaluative nature" of art and the "objective, value-free nature

of science. B. Runin, in particular, makes excessive use of this distinction, a legacy perhaps of his 'personalist' interests. As a general proposition, the distinction is valid and Runin is right to note the etymology of the Russian verbs connected with scientific research - izuchat', izyskat', issledovat', as opposed to those of verbs employed in connecti with artisticwork like voploshchat', voobrazhat'sya, etc. (the former denote impersonal seeking out, the latter the idea of personal involvement, imprint.) But Runin, Volkov and other Soviet commentators mentioned above also, in seeming contradic tion, take great pains to stress that art has to retain some objectivity, that the artistic image, as the counterpart of the scientific concept, reflects general truths in particular forms and, conversely, that science itself is not so impersona or value-free.

As a general proposition, science is much more free of class or personal prejudices and distinctions than art. (And for this reason, it made little sense to many Bolsheviks in the 1920's to propagate the idea of a special, proletarian science, completely different in tone and achievements from so-called "bourgeois" science, even while many of them were coming to accept the idea of a special Soviet art form - socialist realism - admittedly not so extreme or artificial as Proletkul't art, but something quite new, all the same.(1) The scientist,

(1) The trends in Bolshevik and Stalinist policy toward science are outlined in Loren R. Graham: "Science Policy and Planni in the U.S.S.R.", Survey, No.64,1967. As has been stressed earlier (Chapter I)even Stalin did not shackle science to the same extent that he did art. As Graham points out, ther was, during his rule, no detailed planning and setting of priorities for existing sciences, let alone an attempt to create an overall, new proletarian science (Lysenkoism was an exception, not the rule). There was also under Stalin Lenin, no institution like the State Committee for the (contin. on page 111.)

however, can be influenced by personal quirks and by the power of imagination to make certain sorts of discoveries that would otherwise have eluded him. And Soviet writing quotes constant from prominent scientists like Einstein, Niels Bohr and others who have testified to the relevance of art, artistic imaginati for their work. Art and science are not so much different as complementary in the common task of opening up the world for men. They may each possess seemingly distinctive features but some of these are necessarily present in both of them - i.e. imagination in science, generalisation in art.

To conclude, then, we may say that, for Soviet theorists, art is a particular mode of grappling with reality. It is different from religion because of its emphasis on a world that one can see and because of its social orientation; and from science because of a certain timelessness, a greater measure of individuality and subjectivity, and the use primarily of sense knowledge (imagination, representation and so on), all of which are evident in artistic activity. These differences make up, in rudimentary form, the spetsifika of art, in the Soviet view. They may not, as they stand, amount to distinctio noticeably unlike those made by many non-Soviet critics. However, they receive fuller and more specifically Soviet treatment in the context of a discussion on the following themes:

- art as a purveyor of the beautiful. (This clarifies the question of art's relationship to reality, its mode of sense-knowledge and the question of its timelessness.)

- art as a moral force in society.

Coordination of Scientific Research Work, set up in 1961.

- art as a social and cultural formation. (These last two themes clarify the role of the personal and at another remove, the impersonal, social and time-bound forces in art.

- art as Form. (This clarifies the question of artistic technique and makes it clear why not just any artistic statement about reality can emerge as good art.)

Through consideration of these themes, Soviet thinkers are able to elaborate upon the spetsifika and the integrity of art. The question of the integrity of art is an important one to emerge from these problems and is closely related to the spetsifika of art. For while Soviet aestheticians hold firmly to Lenin's belief in the conventional character of art (uslovnost' iskusstva), to his view that "it does not demand that its products be recognised as reality",(1) most of them do not believe that, as a form dependent upon reality, art is inferior to it or without justification in its own right. The existence of a complex of factors that comprise the spetsifika of art makes that impossible. It is only, indeed, when the specific qualities of art are ignored by Soviet aestheticians that doubts are cast on the very integrity of art, on its distinctiveness from other forms of consciousness. This theme in Soviet thinking will also be highlighted in the discussion that follows.

(1) Lenin, op.cit., p. 73.

V. THE BEAUTIFUL AND ART

The presence of the aesthetic is a central ingredient in artistic activity. And it is, in the Soviet view, necessary if artistic activity is to take place. In being preoccupied with the aesthetic, men are chiefly preoccupied with the beautiful. At this point, we might examine more seriously, therefore, Soviet views on the nature of the beautiful itself. Analysis of Soviet discussion will indicate the extent to which social elements are, for Soviet critics, important in shaping men's perception of the beautiful and thus determining the necessary (aesthetic) component of artistic activity itself, and the extent to which non-social factors (the universal features of aesthetic experience and so on) play an important role. Clarifying the relationship between these two elements, and the possible tension between them, deepens our insight into Soviet understanding of the aesthetic and in particular of its integrity.

Discussion of the beautiful and its nature is a central feature of post-Stalin aesthetics. The new professionalism evident in Soviet intellectual life manifested itself quickly in discussion on beauty, chiefly, one suspects, because beauty as a category lent itself more readily than others to less dogmatic and less "ideological" treatment. As it was, it had never been treated "dogmatically" in the Stalin era since little was written about it then. And even during that era a Soviet aesthetician, P.S. Trofimov, could hint at the difficulties of treating it in this fashion(1). The beautiful, then, increasingly, after 1953 entered the realm of"the systematic

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(1) See chapter 1, p.14 footnote (1)

superstructure" of Soviet Marxist thought, to use Bochenski's phrase again. It could not be treated in crude terms as simply a "reflection" of a socio-economic base. On the other hand, it could not be "declassified". That is to say, 'idealist' or 'subjective' theories of beauty could not be propagated by a Soviet thinker without drawing sharp rebuke from his colleagues. A 'materialist' framework for the discussion was needed within which differences could be expressed- provided the framework itself was not undermined.

Discussion on the beautiful was not premature, indeed it was overdue. V. Vanslov, whose 1956 work Problema prekrasnogo is perhaps the most important and thorough Soviet contribution to the subject wrote in his Introduction that superficial treatment or neglect of the basic categories in aesthetics constituted one of the weakest features of Soviet aesthetics, and that a full Marxist-Leninist discussion of them "cannot be undertaken over and above a solution to the problem of the aesthetic" (by which Vanslov meant primarily the beautiful).(1)

There had been (as we have noted) "timid exegreses" on the nature of the beautiful in Stalin's time, particularly in the Trofimov article. But serious work was not to begin until after 1954-55. L.N. Stolovich's article "Ob esteticheskikh svoistvakh deistvitel'nosti" (On the Aesthetic Properties of Reality), VF, No. 4, 1956, was the first of a series of discussions which lasted into the early 'sixties (1963-64) and aimed to clarify, on a Marxist-Leninist basis, the nature

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(1) Vanslov: Problema prekrasnogo, P.4.

of beauty. Stolovich's position - that beauty cannot be fully explained without reference to the human percipient - sparked off polemics which saw Soviet aestheticians grouping themselves into those who supported him (the 'social' school including Vanslov, Goldentricht, A. Burov, Yu. Borev and others)(1) and those who did not, i.e. the 'objectivist' or 'naturalist' school.(2) This included I. Astakhov, P. Ivanov, V. Romanenko and A. Yegorov. Other writers, more 'personalist' and less technical in their outlook, entered the debate, without, however, favouring either side. Neither side considered itself a school so much as the correct proponent of the Soviet line on aesthetics. The therm 'school' and designations like 'social' or 'objectivist' are used by Western commentators on Soviet aesthetics and not so much by Soviet aestheticians themselves.)

It is clear that the social approach was and remains the

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(1) In addition to Vanslov's work, the following books (amongst others) reflect the 'social' approach:- A.Burov: Estetich-eskoye sushchestvo iskusstva (The Aesthetic Essence of Art) Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1956; L.N. Stolovich: Esteticheskoye v deistvitel'nosti i v iskusstve (The Aesthetic in Reality and in Art), Goslitizdat, Moscow, 1959; and Yu. Borev: Osnovnye esteticheskiye kategorii (Basic Aesthetic Categories), Vysshaya Shkola, Moscow, 1960.

(2) The term 'objectivist' is the more common translation of the Russian adjective prirodicheskaya, used by some Soviet critics. (A small number of English-speaking critics, including J. Fizer, translate it as 'naturalist' however.) The more important objectivist examinations of beauty are contained in articles rather than books and include:- A. Yegorov: "Protiv sub'yektivnogo istolkovaniya preskras-nogo" (Against a Subjective Treatment of the Beautiful), Kommunist, No.9, 1957, pp.78-90: K. Zelinski: "O krasote"(O Beauty), VL, No.2, 1960, pp.37-48) P.L. Ivanov: "O dvukh formakh esteticheskogo v ob'yektivnoi deistvitel'nosti" (On Two Forms of the Aesthetic in Objective Reality), VF, No 12, 1962, pp.47-56. There is also I. Astakhov's book-length study, Iskusstvo i problema prekrasnogo (Art and the Proble of the Beautiful), Sovetski pisatel', Moscow, 1963. This book was as important for the 'objectivist' school as Vanslov's was for the 'social'.

more popular among both the less doctrinaire and the more orthodox writers. It is also clear that generally, though not uniformly, this approach produced the most intelligent and sophisticated discussion and use of Marxist-Leninist categories Inevitably, it also attracted the vulgarisers amongst whom, of course, are the orthodox writers on art.

It is not this writer's purpose to trace the precise twists and turns of an often abstruse and tiresomely repetitive debate. Articles fulfilling this function appeared in Studies in Soviet Thought and other publications in the mid-'sixties.(1 But its general content will be looked at, not merely to see the social and non-social component of the aesthetic, but to understand the relationship of the aesthetic to other phenomena and to establish what role the ideas of Marxism-Leninism play in clarifying these problems.

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The social aesthetician, as a Marxist-Leninist aesthetician, cannot deny that the beautiful exists as an objective property of things in reality, in nature. Vanslov particularly attacks, for example, a view atrributed to Gorki, that somehow the Russian landscape lacked beauty until Levitan came along to use this landscape as the basis of art. It is "extreme subjectivism" to state that beauty is merely a quality contributed by the human consciousness which varies in its content according to human taste. It is also "extreme (objective) idealism" to hold, on the other hand, as Plato in particular did, that beauty is the manifestation of some immanent form, never fully

(1) Cf. Ervin Laszlo: "Recent Trends in Soviet Aesthetics", SST No.3, 1964, pp.218-31; and J.Fizer: "The Theory of Objective Beauty in Soviet Aesthetics"in E.Laszlo (ed.): Philosophy in the U.S.S.R.: A Survey of the Mid-'Sixties, pp. 148-160.

known by the human consciousness and transcending empirical reality. Yet clearly, because only human beings, and not animals are able to assimilate and appreciate the beautiful and be inspired to reproduce it, the full essence of the beautiful (i.e. its appreciation) is not manifested outside the human, social context. As Vanslov writes:

> Being the result and product of man's assimilation of reality, beauty is the outcome of society... the essential character of beauty is socio-historical rather than natural.(1)

For the social asethetician, indeed, the objective nature of beauty derives in large measure from the necessity of defining it in terms of objective social processes as well as in terms of its objective existence in nature, with emphasis on the firs One might note in this respect that orthodox writers tend to place weight on both aspects. The Osnovy states that " The beautiful exists objectively in nature [but] the capacity for its perception and understanding is a result of historical development."(2) The writers of the Osnovy would not suggest, as the more extreme adherents of Vanslov's position do, that beauty is simply what men at different stages of history deem to be beautiful.

A number of assumptions are noticeable in the social approach. Firstly, and this is particularly evident in Vanslov book, the perception of beauty is seen very much in terms of

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(1) Vanslov, Problema prekrasnogo, p. 59.
(2) Osnovy, p. 431.

human social practice, as that "in which is expressed the affirmation of man in the world, in which his development and freedom are objectified".(1) Secondly, social aestheticians claim to be drawing heavily on Marx's and Lenin's epistemology, to justify the idea of a humanised, assimilated beauty. One commentator, J. Fizer, has stated that Marxist epistemology alone does this for them, that there is a tension between Marx and Lenin's ideas on knowledge and that as a result Marxist-Leninist ideology "failed to be even a sufficient framework for discussion, let alone a directive force".(2) Soviet social aestheticians who draw heavily upon both Marx's ideas about practice as well as Lenin's thinking from the Tetradi are not conscious of this; for the objectivist aesthetician with his stress on the cruder, earlier ideas of Materializm i empiriokritsizm, this tension is undoubtedly more obvious, however, as will be seen.

Difficulties do exist for the social aesthetician in propounding his theories, however. Does not the treatment of the aesthetic (the beautiful in nature) and of its perception in art as primarily social phenomena reduce or harm the integrity

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(1) Vanslov, op.cit., p. 55.

(2) J. Fizer: "The Theory of Objective Beauty in Soviet Aesthetics", in E. Laszlo (ed.): op.cit., p. 158. Fizer has in mind the tension between the active, creative connotation of the Marxian notion that man's mental activity and the object interact in a single process and that mental activities do not passively cognise an object but actively strive towards it" (E.Kamenka: The Ethical Foundations of Marxism, p. 126), Marx's notion of (artistic) praxis and the "passive" notion of cognition, of man's relationship to reality in the cognition process as shown in Lenin's theory of reflection, initially formulated in his Materializm i empiriokritsizm.

of both? The social aestheticians seem aware of this problem, though they do not always highlight it in these terms. Vanslov for example, makes it clear that the dialectic between men in society and the beauty he perceives in nature does not lead to a distortion of the latter, a weakening of its authenticity or integrity. He notes that humanised beauty (beauty in art) is faithful to the nature of "the individual originality of the [natural] material; it does not constrain and eliminate it".(1) Furthermore, social aestheticians in their treatment of beauty as, in effect, a socio-historical category are influenced heavily by the work of Hegel and Plekhanov, besides Lenin and Marx. Through this the relationship between the objective element (beauty in nature) and the subjective (the perceiving agent) come to be seen in more complex terms than those of bipolarisation and antagonism, or of a threatened absorption or reduction of one element into the other.

Plekhanov, it is true, is less important than Hegel for social aestheticians in this respect. Plekhanov, in his early work,(2) saw men's desire to reproduce the beautiful as motivated by what he called biological considerations. In primitive societies men appreciated beauty not for its sake, so much as for biological reassurance, for affirmation of the strength and vigour displayed by the symmetry, balance and general beauty of their bodies. Plekhanov's conclusions

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(1) Vanslov, Problema prekrasnogo p.70.

(2) Cf. his first Pis'mo bez adresa (Letter without an Address) written in 1899.

were made from his own rather than other men's speculations on primitive societies, in particular those of the German economist Karl Bucher; they also reflected, quite clearly, the influence of Darwin's writing. This 'Darwinian' strain in his work was later rejected by Plekhanov and is condemned by Soviet social aestheticians themselves.(1) The biological approach to art is still defended by some Soviet critics however,(2) but it has been overshadowed by the 'sociological' critique of the beautiful, a critique that Plekhanov in his subsequent work developed, indeed which was evident in even his earlier, Darwin-influenced work. It became clear to Plekhanov, for example, that men were moved to reproduce the beautiful above all to express, particularly in pre-literate societies, a social message, to fulfil the social need of making sense of the world in order to adapt themselves more securely to it. Plekhanov wrote:

> Through the [social] conditions surrounding him, it can be explained how a particular social being ... must possess just these aesthetic tastes and concept and no others. (3)

and:

> The first task of criticism consists in translating the ideas of a given artistic subject from the language of art into the language of sociology.(4)

Environmental or sociological considerations thus became paramount in explaining the genesis of art in both pre-literate

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(1) Vanslov, op.cit., p.49

(2) Notably, as we have seen, by E.G. Yakovlev in his Estetich-eschiye chuvstva i religioznoye perezhivaniye

(3) G.V. Plekhanov: Iskusstvo i literatura, p.13. (Cited from th lst Pis'mo bez adresa.)

(4) Ibid., p. 123 (Cited from a Preface he wrote to a collection of his shorter articles, entitled Za dvadtsat' let (Over Twenty Years).

and subsequent societies. Plekhanov, it should be noted, did not use these considerations to clarify the nature of beauty itself. To this topic he devoted little thought beyond denying the need to have absolute criteria for evaluating the beautiful.(1) But he did make it clear that the aesthetic component of art - reflecting enjoyment of beauty for its own sake - emerged with increasing strength as men became socially more secure and confident. Thus, for example, once they had develop spears to the point where they could satisfy all their hunting and military needs, men could increasingly consider stylising these objects, letting aesthetic rather than social factors determine the quality and nature of the final product.

Plekhanov's ideas on the social dimension of aesthetic activities and the necessary link between human capacity for aesthetic enjoyment and the degree of men's social awareness and maturity have all strongly influenced the social aestheticians. We have seen that Osnovy (along with Vanslov) talks of the "faint beginnings" of aesthetic feelings in primitive societies. We also see in the work of Vanslov,(2) Stolovich and their colleagues the assertion that only in a society as socially mature, advanced and liberated as the Communist one, can the beauty of such things as waterfalls be appreciated fully. The dynamism of the waterfall parallels the dynamism of the Communist society and the message of social liberation that

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(1) He did this in his Iskusstvo i obshchestvennaya zhizn' (Art and Social Life). See pp.192-3 of Iskusstvo i literatu (Vol.I).

(2) Cf. Vanslov, Problema prekrasnogo. p. 55.

it symbolises is best understood in this context. Of course, the aesthetic enjoyment of this beauty is inseparable from awareness of its social message - which reinforces the social aesthetician's view that beauty is a social rather than natural phenomenon.

Plekhanov's work is not central to the social viewpoint however; and because Plekhanov himself, certainly in his later studies of specific artistic phenomena (French classical drama, Russian dekadentstvo, etc.) concentrated on a sociological critique of them, ignoring or confusing their aesthetic element and questions of their artistry, he is criticised by the social aestheticians. Saying that beauty is a social phenomenon does not mean that aesthetic questions become reduced to social ones, or that these questions, like the questions of art itself, lose their integrity. Plekhanov's writings on beauty, furthermore, are, for many social aestheticians, overshadowed by the work of Hegel on the subject, work, that is, of a great Idealist which has clearly influenced the ideas of Vanslov.

It should be noted that Hegel's ideas, particularly as they apply to art, have over the past ten years or so, been attracting growing interest in Soviet intellectual life. They have also met with growing if qualified approval. Even an orthodox textbook in 1961 could note, concerning German Idealist philosophy generally, that:

> the basic service of the classics of German Idealist philosophy consists in their attempt to give a dialectical treatment to the chief problems of art, even though on an idealist basis. (1)

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(1) Cf. Osnovy, p.94.

This view - the idea (in effect) that many of Marx's ideas were prefigured by Hegel's, that Hegel was expressing important truths in an idealist guise -is re-echoed, in a joint article by M.F. Ovsyannikov, the Hegel specialist, and D.D. Sredni, and in the work of the writer-critic,Yu Kuz'menko.(1) Hegel's importance is further demonstrated by the fact that in 1968, the first volume of a planned four-volume translation of Hegel' Philosophy of Fine Art was published. (It was edited by M. Lifshits and was the first Russian translation of this work.) Hegel's ideas on art - his thinking on beauty, his view of realism and the artistic type, his theory of genres and artisti progress - are all important for Soviet aestheticians. In the context of the present discussion, we shall consider briefly hi thinking in relation to beauty. His views on the other issues will be considered in their appropriate contexts.

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(1) Cf. M.F. Ovsyannikov and D.D. Sredni: "Estetika Gegelya v s remennoi bor'be idei" (The Aesthetics of Hegel in the Contemporary Struggle of Ideas), VF, No.8, 1970, pp.55-65. The authors noted: "Hegel's service lies in the shaping and presentation of the dialectical method ... but it is precisely in aesthetics that it /the method/ manifests itself in i clearest, most consistent, and as it were, most visible form."

In another comment Yu. Kuz'menko notes that "the correct ions introduced by Marxism into the aesthetic theory of Hegel, naturally, do not diminish the significance of the fact that Hegel, the aesthetician, went further than his predecessors. One can only be amazed that, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Hegel was able to see the central problems which realistic art was about to deal with, and was able to define the chief types of relationships existing between the new, "private" individual and his environment . Hegel's aesthetics distil the essence of those currents of world artistic culture which have become in our time an inseparable part of the culture of socialism." Yu. Kuz'menko Mera istiny (The Measure of Truth), Sovetski pisatel', Moscow, 1971, pp.74 - 75.

Throughout his Philosophy of Fine Art, Hegel maintained that beauty was the Idea or Spirit "in sensuous form" and that more generally, "the life of the Spirit comes to dwell in art. under sensuous guise".(1) As a manifestation of the Idea, beauty develops in history, becoming progressively more spiritualised and more final and complete. Hegel believed, however, that the development of beauty, like that of art was limited because of the limitations that beauty as primarily a sensuous phenomenon offered for the expression of an increasingly spiritualised Idea. He believed that, with the advent of Romantic art, the limitations of the beautiful as a vehicle for the Idea had become so very obvious and that henceforth art would take second place to religion. He also believed that ultimately philosophy would supersede religion.

The objectivity of the beautiful, for Hegel, derives not from its physical, natural (surface) form, but from its being part of a rational world that is developing towards an end. Submission to this "rational world" guarantees human freedom.

The social school accept many of these premises of Hegel's and use them to bolster their main ideas. For example, the idea that beauty is social rather than natural in content, that its objectivity comes from something more than its physical material presence draws added strength from Hegel's beliefs; beauty is at the same time a social and an objective phenomenon not merely because men impart much of themselves in their assimilation and mastery of the beautiful, but because they

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(1) G.W.F. Hegel: Philosophy of Fine Art (Vol.I.) trans. F. Osmaston, London, 1920, p.537. This title is a commonly accepted English translation of the German original, Vorlesungen über die Ästhetk , Hegel's work being infact posthumous compilation of lectures notes for students.

assimilate it in certain ways, ways determined by the dialectic of the Idea, or, in more concrete terms, the (objective) "socia dialectic" of history.

Moreover, it is clear from Hegel that this process of assimilation and the content of beauty assimilated have to be considered in socio-historical terms. The historical thrust of Soviet social thinking on beauty comes, in large measure, from Hegel as well as from Soviet theory of knowledge. Hegel's idea that beauty becomes fuller and more vivid with the progrès of the Idea leads, in the works of Vanslov and others, to the theme that the content of beauty changes in the history of artistic development, as men become more socially liberated and are thereby better able to appreciate aesthetic phenomena.(1) There is, however, in the social aestheticians' views, no trace of Hegel's idea that the development of beauty is limited or that art itself, as its principal vehicle of expression, must give way to higher instruments manifesting the Idea. This dialectic of beauty is just one manifestation of the dialectic of history itself and will advance as far as the social dialectic itself will in the Soviet view. This approach, of course, reinforces the social view that beauty is not so much a natural form that may or may not change over time, as a concept that is meaningless outside the human, social context, whose content must, therefore, necessarily change with society. Indeed beauty, for Vanslov and others, is developing in history to an absolute state that is perfect (absolute) beauty. This

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(1) Cf. "Things appear objectively beautiful ... to the extent that they express the level of freedom and development in society". Vanslov, Problema prekrasnogo, p.84. This leads to the problem of more or less objective beauty which is dealt with further on.

view derives both from Hegel's thinking concerning the dialectic of the Idea, and from Lenin's notion of Absolutes, particularly Absolute Truth, outlined in his theory of knowledge. The social aestheticians are not very clear what precisely absolute beauty amounts to and its rather shadowy formulation reflects Hegelian influences and jargon. Presumably, in the Soviet context, it is that beauty which conveys the greatest social inspiration and aesthetic enjoyment to men.

Furthermore, social aestheticians do not deal satisfactorily with possible objections to the idea of 'the relatively beautiful implicit in the concept of 'absolute beauty', or with the doubts this idea casts on the objectivity of the beautiful at any given point in time. Nor do they question the assumption (behind all their thinking) that men's perception of the beautiful and thus the content of beauty itself become fuller and richer - in a continual progression - with the passage of time. History has its periods of good and bad art and bad art is not necessarily the earliest. For example, Gothic art, it has been argued, is less aesthetically satisfying, and its beauty less uplifting that earlier, say, Hellenic art.

Despite its limitations, the category of Absolute Beauty is an important one, not only for Vanslov, but for Soviet aestheticians generally. Like the consideration of the aesthetic generally, it enables Soviet discussion to avoid, where it so wishes, a vulgarised application of the socio-historical approach to the beautiful. For this reason, more orthodox critics tend to downplay this category, while being generally sympathetic to social aestheticians in other respects. Vanslov

states[1] that, from the standpoint of universal/ absolute beauty, there is much that can be salvaged from the work of nineteenth century poets like Fet and A.K. Tolstoi, and even fin de siècle modernist composers like Strauss and Bruckner. Relative to his age and its social demands (critical realism in literature, radical change in politics) the beauty in Fet's lyrics seems trivial, almost decadent as a result of Fet's gentry mentality and personal obsessions which distorted his appreciation of what he saw in nature. Yet, taken out of its class context and viewed absolutely, the beauty in Fet, and artistry as well, can, Vanslov notes, inspire Communists today and can be objectively valuable, after it "negative" elements have been neutralised. It is clear, for Vanslov, as for his other colleagues in the social school, that the aesthetic component in all art (i.e. the portrayal of beauty) has both timeless and timebound elements; this fact is indeed a particul feature of men's aesthetic activities, distinguishes them from other (social) activities and is a source of strength and inspiration. Thus Vanslov can say:

> to ignore the complexity and contradictions [between the relative and absolute in art] ... and consequently the absolute content itself, would lead to an unforgivable impoverishment of our artistic development. (1)

If the integrity of the aesthetic is, in social aesthetic-ians' work, strengthened by the concept of Absolute Beauty, and the avoidance of social reductionism, it also emerges in the discussion of taste, in the avoidance of saying that the beautiful is what each man deems to be.

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(1) Vanslov, Problema prekrasnogo. p. 123, et seq

(2) Ibid., p. 127.

The existence and content of beauty may not be intelligible without the perceiving subject; conversely the subject's perception is determined by several common features in what he sees, by certain common social demands. So-called subjective views of beauty, ideas about personal tastes in beauty, are necessarily objective to some degree, "in as much as features of objective truth are contained in the form of subjective individual judgements".(1) Taste that does not reflect an appreciation of the objectively beautiful is, by definition, bad taste, and one which provides no true aesthetic enjoyment.

The 'social'critique of taste takes a number of forms. First, there is the attack on one aesthetician A.I. Burov, who claims to be an exponent of the social approach, although he is rejected by the others for his "extreme subjectivism."

Burov, in his book Esteticheskoye sushchestvo iskusstva defines beauty as a "principle of definite quality reflected in the consciousness."(2) The principle is, in turn, defined in terms of "the life of the intellect and heart, labour and creativity".(3) Subsequently, he talks of man as"the absolute aesthetic object. An object becomes beautiful only to the extent that man recognises it in himself, his creative possibilities."(4) Burov pays attention to the qualities of

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(1) Ibid., p. 107

(2) Burov, op. cit., p. 188

(3) Ibid., p. 199

(4) Ibid., p. 273 The content of this passage is in fact very Chernyshevskian (see pp. 131,137-40 infra), but Chernyshevski's ideas are here used by Burov to support a 'subjectivis view of beauty, not an 'objectivist' one. Burov can do this only by identifying the 'objective' with the 'subjective' an this his 'socially-orientated'colleagues and the objectivist themselves would not accept.

beautiful things in nature as an ingredient in beauty; and social aestheticians like Stolovich and Vanslov draw attention to this. They do not imply that Burov is ignoring the concrete beauty of nature or advocating that beauty is simply as each individual perceives it to be. Burov is still a Marxist; the common social context and aims of the human percipient are important. But, they claim, his position can let theories about the autonomy of taste "in through the back door" as it were, unless beauty in nature is fully considered, unless the concept of beauty is defined in terms of a full (dialectical) understanding of the relationship between percipient and the beauty perceived. (1) The other objection to Burov concerns more the question of the logical relationship between the various categories he uses. Saying that man is "the absolute aesthetic object" tells us little about aesthetics or beauty. Stolovich, in particular, stresses that categories in aesthetics and other fields like ethics have an integral, independent existence of their own. They are related to the social needs of men but they cannot be identified with them, with man himself. Beauty can hardly be man.(2)

A more extreme version of the subjectivist approach to beauty, attacked by most social critics, lies in the view which equates the beautiful with that which is pleasant to the senses

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(1) These points are made by, amongst others, Vanslov in his discussion of subjective beauty in his Problema prekrasnogo, and by Stolovich in his Esteticheskoye v deistvitel'nosti i v iskusstve, where he accuses Burov of approaching the subjective percipient "anthropologically" (i.e. not in a concrete, social context.)

(2) Cf. Stolovich, Esteticheskoye v deistvitel'nosti i v iskusstve, p.223 et seq.. At one point Stolovich quips that if man is the "absolute aesthetic object", who is the subject in this relationship ?

or taste of any individual. (This is a so-called physiological approach to beauty and was evident in aesthetics particularly i the work of two nineteeth century Russian experimental psychologists, V. Teshneyev and L.E. Obolenski.) Vanslov and his colleagues, however, dismiss the validity of this approach, firstly because it stresses too much physiological rather than social aspects of aesthetic perception and secondly, following from this, it reduces beauty to the "autonomy of taste" and does not define its "objective qualities". The social aestheticians do not deny that standards of beauty may vary, though not greatly, throughout the world - but the explanation lies in particular social values and expectations, not in personal tastes. The differences are, however, less important than the similarities dictated by the objective properties of human, social processes generally, and the beauty which men perceive in nature.

It should be noted, in conclusion, that the social aestheticians' ideas on taste reflect those of most Soviet writers on art, including the objectivists. These writers tend to attack the ideas, for example, of Kant to the effect that men decide what is beautiful, according to an 'autonomous' sense of taste.(1) Clearly, for Soviet theorists of art, the perception and expression of the beautiful remains a cognitive process, aimed

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(1) For the 'social' view of Kant, see in particular Vanslov, Problema prekrasnogo pp.97 et seq and Stolovich Esteticheskoye v deistvitel'nosti i v iskusstve pp. 16-17. Stolovich quotes Kant's remark that "a judgement of taste is not a cognitive judgement, and beauty is not a property of an object considered in itself", even though for Kant, human tastes, in relation to the beautiful, had certain common features. Even so, Kant was mistaken, Stolovich claims, in ignoring the cognitive basis of aesthetic activity and how this defined the scope and content of the beautiful.

at mastering reality for social purposes.It is not an act of self-gratification based on the assumption that perception of beauty cannot tell us anything objective about the world and man's relationship to it.

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We have said that the objectivist aestheticians do not disagree with their social counterparts on this general proposition. However,they have been forced to make their views known as a result of the way this proposition has been "distorted" by the latt and most objectivist writing was done in the late !fifties and early 'sixties in reply to them.The titles of some objectivists' articles and books underlie the polemical tone of their work- cf. A. Yegorov's "Protiv subyektivnogo istolkovaniya prekrasnogo. I.Astakhov's "Esteticheski sub'yektivizm i problema prekrasnogo." (an article from which his later book grew)and so on.

The objectivists' critique of beauty rests on what is to them the only logical interpretation of Lenin's theory of reflection, as originally formulated in 1908 as well as on certain empirical observations about beauty which are strengthened in part by by the views of N.G.Chernyshevski,the Russian revolutionary criti who remains a significant influence on objectivist aestheticians. For these men beauty is a phenomenon objectively existing in natur and does not require a human percipient or a work of art to "complete" its objectivity. Qualities are present in all beautiful phenomena like symmetry,harmony and so on which to the objectivists do not need completion or heightening in human art. They claim Lenin never said phenomena outside consciousness were

somehow dependent on the latter for their full identity, their full objectivity to be realised; only that man's knowledge abou them came through their being "reflected" onto the consciousnes and more profoundly understood as the reflection proceeded from the lower to the higher cognitive modes.

At a general level, of course, implicit in the objectivist argument is the belief that copies or reflections of natural phenomena are inferior to the real thing. Far from elevating nature by humanising it, men can often imperfectly come to grips with it. As one objectivist P.L. Ivanov writes:

> the subjective image of the objective world is not.. a mirror-like reflection but ... one that is consequently not always unconditionally true. (1)

In support of the objectivist argument here, is the fallacy inherent in other reflection theories of knowledge (like Locke's) a fallacy which is, however, not emphasised by Soviet aestheticians of any school and one which we have noted already - namely if the knower is to show that x is a copy of y he must know y directly, which he cannot, by definition,do. His knowledge of y must therefore remain limited, because his "copy of it is imperfect.

More specifically, the objectivist attack on Vanslov and others takes two forms - first a criticism of the logic if their

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(1) Ivanov, "O dvukh formakh esteticheskogo v ob'yektivnoi deistvitel'nosti," VF, no. 12. 1962, p.52.

position, and secondly, usually an attack on their interpretation of the young Marx which often becomes an attack on Marx himself. To the leading objectivist aesthetician, I. Astakhov, the mancentredness of the social approach is wrong. It ignores the fact that the prime test of whether a phenomenon is objectively beautiful or not lies in its natural veshchestvennost' (roughly, material content) and that no amount of social enlightenment social good, present in an artist's creative talen will enable a man to turn something that is ugly in nature into something that is beautiful in art, beautiful, that is, after human assimilation. Astakhov does not deny that the beautiful in nature undergoes modification or change in art but to sugges a discontinuity between natural beauty and humanised beauty, or to imply that the latter is able to transcend the bounds set by the former and improve on it is erroneous. "The beauty" Astakhov writes, "present in the birch tree transformed by man will not in any way be foreign to its natural beauty".(2) It has in fact to be created according to the laws imposed by the latter and the fact that it often is not (owing to the varying abilities of artists), the very fact of the inconsistenc and imperfections of beauty assimilated by man would seem to invalidate the claim that "social" beauty is "higher" than natural. It is not surprising, moreover, that Astakhov and his colleagues do not approve of the Hegelian strand in "social" aesthetics - the elevation of beauty to the "misty realm of ideas", the suggestion that beauty itself is developing in history. To the objectivists, beauty in nature does not change,

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(1) Astakhov, Iskusstvo i problema prekrasnogo, P. 24 et seq.

(2) Ibid., p. 45

though human assimilation of it will take different forms. These two points should not, in their view, be confused. Furthe more, though both Astakhov and P.L. Ivanov seem at times ambiguou on the question, it is clear from objectivist writing, that the aesthetic itself, i.e. those feelings evoked by the contemplatio of the beautiful, is a quality inherent in natural phenomena and not something attributed to them by man. For the objectivist, then, the concept of social beauty and the objectivity of this form of beauty have no foundation. This is further demonstrated by the fact that not all beauty assimilated by men is reproduced as art for social reasons. They point to the example of Lomonosov who, they claim, observed the beautiful with clinical, scientific detachment (as a scientist himself) and still produce great art.

The objectivists strengthen their case against the 'social' aestheticians by attacking the latter's interpretation of Marx. In this, men like Astakhov seem to be wavering between saying that the early Marx was wrong or "immature" in his thinking ("a number of authors refer without justification, to the early economic philosophical manuscripts of Marx"[1]), and claiming that social aestheticians have "vulgarised" his views. Regardin the latter point, Astakhov notes that, for Marx, aesthetic activities are something much less related to men's attempts to

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(1) Ibid., pp.23 -24. It is, of course, the orthodox view in Soviet philosophy generally that Marx's Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 must be read in the light of his later work, that they are an adumbration, misleading when taken on their own.

humanise nature and overcome alienation than socio-economic activities were. He defends the view that Marx in one passage mentioning the beauty of precious metals[1] was, in effect, saying that the aesthetic qualities of such metals and men's perceptic of these qualities were not determined by their social usefulne to men. And this fact is used by objectivists to justify, still further, their treating not merely the beautiful but the wider category of "the aesthetic" itself as an objective quality inherent in nature and not one attributed by men.

It might seem that the emphasis on the objectivity of natural beauty would, for the objectivists, put art itself very much in the background. Yet here most objectivists stress two points; the objective qualities of natural beauty are better portrayed in certain art in certain societies; secondly art is not a mechanical mirroring of nature - otherwise there would be little variation in all the art produced in history. In addition, saying that man's creative capacities and social aspirations are not a pre-condition for the manifestation of objective beauty is not to say that they are irrelevant for art. There is, it is true, one objectivist, K. Zelinski,[2] who tends to stress that art is basically a process of reflection and who downplays social considerations completely. Most objectivists, however, are not, contrary to the view of J. Fize[3] politically (socially) neutral or passive in their approach to

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(1) Iskusstvo i problema prekrasnogo, p. 49 et seq

(2) cf. his monograph "O krasote".

(3) Cf. his article "The Theory of Objective Beauty in Soviet Aesthetics."

art. Astakhov states that art

> reflects life according to its own [i.e. arts] laws which, in the final analysis, are the laws of beauty This guarantees the active, educative influence of art on life. (1)

Astakhov claims that Communist society, being built in accordan with the objective laws and processes of history, is the one that provides the best inspiration for the objective perception of beauty. The objectively beautiful inspires the realisation of the Communist ideal; and its portrayal in art as a Communist ideal heightens our insight into and interest in the beautiful as an objective phenomenon. Putting these points more abstract ly, Astakhov writes that art aims at

> a beautiful representation (otobrazheniye) of reality and this latter signifies the perfect portrayal of life in the light of the highest ideal. (2)

This theme is common in the social aestheticians' treatment of the beauty of art too, though it is used to defend their ideas concerning the objectivity of social beauty. For the objectivists its main purpose is to defend the value of art against charges that their idea of beauty denigrates it. In general there is much talk in objectivist writing, especially in the work of Astakhov and P.L. Ivanov, of the educative value of art, art, that is, which uses the inspiration of objective beauty to further the Communist ideal. However both schools are sufficiently aware of the integrity of beauty not to identify it completely with the Communist ideal, as doctrinaire Soviet aestheticians tend to do. In other words, few

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(1) Iskusstvo i problema prekrasnogo, p. 119.

(2) Ibid., p. 115.

Soviet theorists of art, whether objectivist or social, claim that beautiful art must be partisan art or vice versa; or further that (Communist) partisanship alone is necessary and sufficient for the portrayal of beauty.

One can note, by way of conclusion on the objectivists, that their ideas on the integrity of art, (even while they maintain the primacy and objectivity of natural beauty) come out clearly in their critique of N.G. Chernyshevski. The ideas of this pre-Marxist Russian critic clearly influence objectivist critics, but they are not uncritically accepted by them.(1)

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(1) It is interesting to note that James P. Scanlan in his "N.G. Chernyshevski and Soviet Philosophy", SST, VII,1967, pp.1-27, argues that most Soviet work on Chernyshevski, Stalinist and post-Stalin, has been very laudatory of the man, claiming him to be, if not a Marxist before Marx, then at least to represent the highest stage of thought prior to Marx. (Soviet writing also denies the importance of non-Marxist influences like Bentham, though not Feuerbach, on Chernyshevski.) Scanlan cites the strong Soviet attack on V.G. Baskakov's 1956 study "Mirovozzreniye N.G. Chernyshevskogo" (The World-view of N.G. Chernyshevski) which had highlighted the limitations ("anthropologism") of Chernyshevski's thought. These attacks were evident in both the 1956 (Novy mir) discussion of Baskakov's book and also in I. Ya. Shchipanov (ed.): Protiv sovremennykh fal'sifikatorov istorii russkoi filosofii (Against Contemporary Falsifiers of the History of Russian Philosophy), published in 1960.

While Scanlan may be right about Stalinist writing on Chernyshevski with its typical over-evaluation of Russian revolutionary-democratic thinking in general, he underestimates the degree of criticism of Chernyshevski amongst Soviet critics after 1956. For one example of criticism, see that by G. Kunitsyn, cited on p. 151, n.1 infra.

In general, objectivists would support the claim

> that the general service of Russian revolutionary democratic aesthetics, and especially of its greates representaive, N.G. Chernyshevski, consists in [its] relentless struggle against any idealistic divorce of art from life, in the affirmation of the material ist thesis of the objectivity of the real as the source of the beautiful, in exposing the reactionary theory of pure art. (1) (italics added)

The label 'Aristotelian' can often be applied to the objectivist approach to art because their views parallel those of Aristotle on both the primacy of the real [natural] world and on the necessarily mimetic role art has to play in coming to grips with it. But it would be more accurate to claim that the 'Aristotelian' elements in their thinking have come via Chernyshevski rather than directly from the great Greek philosopher himself. It is true that the major intellectual influence upon Chernyshevski was Feuerbach; but from time to time in his aesthetic work, Chernyshevski does refer directly to Aristotle. In 1854 he had written a review of the Poetics. The following year in his famous dissertation Esteticheskiye otnosheniya iskusstva k deistvitel'nosti (The Aesthetic Relatior ships of Art to Reality) Chernyshevski, striving in part to undermine the idealist aesthetics of Hegel, claimed that from the definition "beauty is life", it will follow that "the highest beauty is the beauty that man meets within the world of reality..."(2) - a position that accords with Aristotle's.

In order, however, to vindicate the existence of art Chernyshevski had to go further and state that the beauty of art lay in its distillation of the beauty of life in the light

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(1) G.M. Gak, et al. (eds.): Formy obshchestvennogo soznaniya, Izd-vo MGU-a, 1960, p.140

(2) N.G. Chernyshevski: Selected Philosophical Essays, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1953, p. 292.

of high social ideals. More specifically it came from, as he put it, "representing, explaining and judging life." (1)

The problem with Chernyshevski's aesthetics, however, was as Astakhov points out,(2) that he oscillated between labelling art as, necessarily, imitation, and then upholding it as "creative reproduction" of life. Eventually - in his 1888 edition (the third) of his dissertation - he settled on the view that

> this artistic recasting [of life] is pale in intensi and poor in content compared with the impression mad on our minds by objects in the real world. (3)

Astakhov claims that Chernyshevski was right to stress that the real world was primary and that it had to be the focus of art. Chernyshevski was wrong, however, to claim, as he frequently did, that art was simply parasitic upon the real world and added nothing to illuminate it. More generally, Chernyshevski ignored the "dialectical" relationship between the artist and his reality and the way this beauty was adapted and treated in the various genres. Chernyshevski's approach to a genre like music shows his lack of attention to the last point. It is foolish , claims Astakhov, to say, as Chernyshevski's did, that music can be divided into 'artificial' ('annotated', 'complex') and 'natural' (i.e. folk) when music itself

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(1) Chernyshevski, op cit., p. 287

(2) Astakhov, op. cit., p. 69, et seq

(3) Chernyshevski, op cit., p. 412.

must be an artifice on Chernyshevski's own terms. To treat the beauty in music and other genres properly, in an "unvulgar" fashion, Soviet aesthetics has to avoid ranking genres (to the extent that they faithfully copy reality) and recognise that they must be examined in terms of their intrinsic merit and characteristics, and in terms of the talent exhibited and the aesthetic pleasure afforded in each and not in terms of now natural it appears.

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To conclude this discussion of beauty, we might examine how Soviet aestheticians view the relationship between beauty and other categories like 'truth' and 'utility'. For their part, the objectivists seems concerned to preserve the integrity of categories like the beautiful and the aesthetic by stressing their separate existence, their independence from social categ-ories.Yet this"integrity"is not put to interesting use by the objectivists. In their concern to reject a 'mechanical' approach to art, they tend to stress not so much the scope for creativity allowed individual artists in their reproduction of beauty as the value of art for transmitting the beautiful to serve a specific social and political end. Art is mentioned by Astakhov, for example, as being an inspiration for people like George Dimitrov and Albert Einstein,men of different temperament and talents, but working for what a Soviet writer would take to be "progressive" goals. The objectivists do not deny the particularity of art, as opposed to other activities - Astakhov's critique of Chernyshevski shows this. Yet the ease with which many of them see this integrity as being strengthened by the "task of serving Communism" tends to obscure their arguments in the defence of the objectivity

of beauty and the creativity and integrity of the artistic process

By way of contrast, social aestheticians like Vanslov, while maintaining that concepts like the beautiful and the aesthetic are only fully comprehensible in relation to human activities and needs, still see these as playing a more crucial and distinctive role in art than do the objectivists. The category of absolute beauty, viewed not so much in terms of actual, physical beauty but as a concept to distinguish relatively and absolutely beautiful things does at least allow social aestheticians to define and evaluate the beauty of particular artists from a wider perspective from that of socio-economic content. For example it enables, Vanslov to mitigate condemnation of a poet like Fet in a way that is not evident in objectivist writing.

There is, furthermore, in Vanslov an attempt to highlight the integrity of beauty as a category, however defined, by determining its precise relationship to other categories and concepts. Objectivist aestheticians are not so insensitive on this point as orthodox official writers are. They are, however, less sensitive to it than the socials aestheticians. As an example of precise categorisation, Vanslov does say that not everything useful to man is automatically beautiful. Beautiful things, by way of contrast, are always useful but the essence of beauty is not defined by utility alone. To meet the argument that exploiting the usefulness of a tree for wood will rob men of its beauty, Vanslov urges rejection

of the "bourgeois-commercial" notions of utility:

> True art is always beautful, and at the same time it is always useful. Useful not in the sense of material needs but in the sense of its social significance - i.e. educative, and cognitive significance, the satisfaction of cultural needs and the aesthetic demands of people. (1)

Likewise, as we have seen, the beautiful and the pleasant cannot be defined in terms of the other, according to Vanslov, Stolovich and others. The beautiful is not simply something that is pleasant; its percipient is something more than the sum of his physiological reflexes. Of course, a pleasurable sensation is one of the results of perceiving the beautiful, but only one.

The detailed discussion of the relationship between truth, beauty and goodness in Problema prekrasnogo (2) is one of the more interesting aspects of the social aestheticians' work in this respect. For Vanslov and his colleagues truth cannot simply be identified with beauty or vice versa since the truth clearly belongs to the realm of 'reflections' rather than the reality reflected, according to the 'social' view (and of course according to Soviet theory of knowledge as well). Truth amounts to a verification that the reflection , or more specifically the human practice, accords with the reality; it is not a property of real, natural things themselves. Concerning the link between beauty and good Vanslov rejects

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(1) Vanslov, Problema prekrasnogo p. 143

(2) Cf. "The Theory of Beauty in Soviet Aesthetics", p. 159 (in the Laszlo compilation.)

the argument that aesthetic and ethical statements serve the same ends - i.e. are in effect indistinguishable. This tells us nothing about the spetsifika of each. For Vanslov, aesthet ideals and beauty itself are related to man's attempt to know his reality: ethical ideals are worked out by men to regulate social relations. It so happens that an aesthetic ideal might have ethical value for this reason and that perceiving an object of beauty with an ethical ideal in mind may tell us more about the former. This does not mean that the two are identical. Other issues like the beautiful and the tragic are considered in a similar way, with regard to the integrity of each category.

It is interesting that what J. Fizer calls the 'expressio ist', i.e. 'personalist' school of critical thought tends to downplay these last distinctions - indeed they tend to treat the beautiful less as a quality of physical objects than as a quality to be found in people, something in fact synonymous with such qualities as sincerity, honesty and so on. For this reason, their ideas will be looked at in greater detail in the discussion on the moral and personal and spiritual values in art, which follows.

For their social and to a lesser extent, objectivist counterparts, however, beauty defined in the physical sense is a distinctive and necessary part of all art, something, in fact, that distinguishes art from, say, morality. It is also something which precludes, in the Soviet view, the notion that the physically ugly can pass for good art. Surrealist aesthetics might accept this, but Soviet aestheticans generally are too conservative, too wedded to 'reflectionist' epistemolog

to do so.

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The debate between the objectivist and the social aestheticians has been never formally resolved. Political authority did not resolve it as the Party was not interested. The appeal to Lenin by both sides was basically for an intellectual rather than political reason - the discussion was between professional theorists of art, not partisan critics and Lenin, in any case, offered support to both sides depending on whether one stressed his early or his later work on theory of knowledge. However, the fact of this debate's non-resolution or resolution is less important that the light it throws on the general problem of artistic integrity. In other words, when Soviet aestheticians are discussing beauty, to what extent does æsthetic activity (the reproduction of beauty as art) become conflated with other activities and goals and thus obscured by them, and to what extent are its status and its specific qualities demeaned or minimised in the process

Soviet Marxist theory, specifically Soviet theory of reflection does, as we have seen, pose a number of problems here. These become highlighted where stress on the objectivity of the beautiful in nature has led to a denigration of aesthetic activity in the work of objectivist aestheticians (though Astakhov, for one, is sensitive to this.) Art, under this approach. merely mirrors something that is more real and

important than itself and its mirroring, thus denigrated tends to be regarded as no different in kind from other forms of mirroring. This explains the ease with which objectivist aestheticians can identify the "aesthetic component" of art with political and social desiderata and thus obscure the former's distinctiveness.

On the'social'side, at first glance, the status of objective beauty and of the artistic creator remains an unambiguous one. Beauty remains, as it were, "incomplete" without the perceiving agent and this justifies artistic activity; but the perceiving agent and artistic activity itself are demeaned by the reductionism implicit in much social thinking particularly in its orthodox variant, and by the tendency to consider that artist s primarily a social instrument to further social and not aesthetic goals.

Vanslov and his colleagues would, it is true, reject the charge of reductionism, the accusation that they ignore the integrity of the beautiful and the beautiful in art by conflating these two concepts and by then explaining them as primarily social phenomena. They would claim that through their Hegelian interpretation of Marx and of Leninist epistemology, the integrity of the objective aspect of the aesthetic (beauty in nature and socialised beauty assimilated in art) and the subjective aspect (the individual percipient and creator of art) is not demeaned by this conflation; rather, it is made clear that each factor is incomplete without the other, each has to be explained in terms of the other. The charge of "social reductionism" can be further countered by them through

reference to their emphasis on the category of "Absolute Beauty and to the care with which an aesthetician like Vanslov will distinguish between the beautiful and other phenomena like the good, the pleasant and the useful. Beauty, in other words, cannot be simply reduced to other (predominantly social) categories. These last points are certainly strong points in defence of the social aestheticians. It is clear, however, that through their own emphasis on the social context of the perception of beauty they have allowed the problem of its integrity (in art) to be vulgarised by critics less sensitive to the complexities of the aesthetic - social relationship than themselves.

VI. THE MORAL CONTENT OF ART.

Besides being preoccupied with the beautiful, art, certainl most Soviet art, does, in the view of the Soviet critic, exhibi concern with moral problems and issues, those elements that help to make it the great "spiritual force" Soviet critics believe it to be.

The question of the relationship between art and morality is obviously one of considerable importance in any aesthetic theory: it has preoccupied leading aesthetic thinkers from Plato and Aristotle to Lessing and Diderot and, amongst others, Schiller, Schelling and Hegel. It has also pre-occupied Soviet aestheticians, in part because of the traditional bias in Russian philosophy generally towards ethical questions, and in part because of a set of circumstances particular to the Soviet scene, namely de-Stalinisation and the consequent increased emphasis on questions of private and public morality in Soviet discussion.

In its consideration of moral questions and their place in art, Soviet aesthetics reveals a number of different perspectives and strains. These could be broadly divided into three, namely the 'personalist', the 'aesthetic-humanist' and the 'instrumentalist'. These strains are not highlighted by Soviet critics themselves, but they can be discerned by the intellegent observer particularly if he asks general questions about the art/moralityrelationship and sees how particular Soviet critics answer them, if at all. (Much Soviet discussion

of the problem is in fact woffly and obtuse because it is not anchored in the conceptual framework provided by these questions.) We might look at the latter now, before examining Soviet discussion itself.

Perhaps the most important question relates to the place of moral judgements, exhortations and so on in art. Put another way, does a work of art have to contain what may be called a "moral content" in order to be art ? If it does, if possession of moral content is at least a necessary condition for the success of a work of art, two further questions must be asked. What is the nature of this content and, related to this, what is the relationship between the moral and the aesthetic qualiti of a work of art ?

On the question of the nature of such moral content, two approaches are possible in aesthetic theory. One is to suggest that the moral quality of art derives from the material the "subject matter" contained in the work itself and is so derived because it is being presented in art: the other is to downplay the actual work before us and its visible or readable content and to suggest that its moral quality derives from the moral outlook and intentions of its creators and the response it evokes from the percipients/readers. On this approach a work of art is held to contain moral content only because it is simply a medium of communication and not because of the special moral effect that the artistry itself brings to the content.

The other question, that of the relationship between the moral and the aesthetic, in its turn, raises a number of issues. Does the moral content of art amount simply to those

moral ideas, desiderata and so on that have been translated into art, often with no regard for aesthetic considerations ? In other words, should moral art be no different from a moral sermon or tract ? Thinkers with what is often described as a prescriptive or instrumental approach to questions of art and morality would agree that there is no difference here. They have their supporters, quite clearly, amongst some Soviet aestheticians but they are opposed by many others. Those who resolutely attack instrumentalist arguments and the instrumentalist mentality do so on the grounds that moral ideas, to pass as art, have to be presented in artistic form. And to do this, they have to be presented as something freely chosen and believed in by the artist himself and not as some 'external' dictate, some instrument for a cause that may be alien to the artist. This distinction between the instrumentalist and the non-instrumentalist approach on questions of art and morality is the one most emphasised in Soviet aesthetics, often at the expense of the illumination of other important issues;(1) and it has, of course, been a staple theme in aesthetic discussion generally, particularly from the 18th century onwards.

Two final problems, arising from the morality/art discussion present themselves - the question of competing moralities in art and the problem of the moral neutrality of art. The first is an important problem in so far as it raises the question

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(1) It appears, for example, to be the central distinction made in an important article "Ne moral'yu edinoi" (Not By Morality Alone), written by a leading Soviet writer on the problem of morality and art, V. Tolstykh. See the compilation Iskusstvo nravstvennoye i beznravstvennoye (Moral and Immoral Art), Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1969, p.32. The compilation is edited by Tolstykh.

of which sort of moral ideas are best suited for presentation as art and why certain ideas might be better than others. The second problem concerns the status of artistic language and its suitability for conveying moral sentiments. It is a problem that preoccupies certain Western aestheticians; it meets with negligible treatment in Soviet aesthetics however. This is because almost all Soviet aestheticians, whatever their differences, are agreed that art cannot be morally neutral.

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Reference has been made to the particularly Russian traditions that influence Soviet thinking on art, as well as the more specifically Marxist. It is now appropriate to discuss these a little more fully, before looking at the Soviet discussion itself and analysing it in the light of the issues raised above.

What many critics, notably T. Proctor (1), have called the "Belinski tradition" in Russian literary criticism is obviously important for Soviet discussion. In its emphasis both on the moral power of art (achieved through art's natural affinity for "the truth") and on the moral pafos (passion) of the artist himself, this tradition has influenced both those Soviet critics who stress the moral integrity of art and those stressing the moral force of the artist. As will be seen, however, the former critics borrow more from Marxist thinking tha

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(1) Cf. T. Proctor: Dostoyevski and the Belinski School of Literary Criticism, Mouton, The Hague, 1969, passim

from the Belinski tradition.[1]

Strictly speaking, the work of V.G. Belinski (1811-1848) should be seen as a development from two sources. One is non-Russian, namely German Idealist philosophy's 'organic' notions of society and art; the other is a more specifically Russian tradition of moral discussion. In the Idealist (and more specifically Hegelian) view art was seen as exerting a moral force because both it and the artist necessarily reflecte (i.e. were organic with) the processes of society and history, forces, in Hegel's view, that were in turn manifestations of the Idea, a rational spirit guiding human activity and aspirations.

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(1) Marxists critics and scholars in the Soviet Union tend unanimously to acknowledge Belinski's importance however, partly for reasons of patriotism and also because he popula ised the "civic", "service" notion of art, and thus "paved the way" for Chernyshevski, Dobrolyubov et al including, eventually, of course, Marxist-Leninist critics themselves. This is evident in such works as M. Polyakov's Vissarion Belinski: lichnost' idei, epokha (Vissarion Belinski: [His] Personality, Ideas, Epoch), Goslitizdat, Moscow, 1960 and B. Bursov's Voprosy realizma v estetike revolyutsionnykh demokratov (Questions of Realism In The Aesthetics of the Revolutionary Democrats), Goslitizdat, Moscow, 1953. There is, however, criticism, from the Marxist perspective, of the limitations of Belinski's ideas and those of other pre-Marxist radicals, cf. "There is [a] certain onesidedness in the views of the revolutionary democrats when they discuss freedom of creativity. The anthropological principle which they applied often in science is visible also here." Cited from G. Kunsitsyn "Lenin on Partisanship and Freedom of Creativity", p. 132, of Socialist Realism in Literature and Art. By the 'anthropological principle' Kunsitsyn means the tendency to use abstract terms like 'general human needs' 'human goodness' etc., to avoid treating men in a specific socio-economic context. Kunsitsyn's criticism is, as has been shown, applied against other thinkers as well -i.e. Chernyshevski. The word 'science' in the translation cited is a misleading English term for the Russian 'nauka' which, of course, means 'science' in the broad sense of 'all learning, branches of knowledge'.

This spirit was a humane force; and art became moral because in Hegel's words

> its (art's) object is ... yet further to deliver to the domain of feeling and the delight of our vision all that the mind may possess ... of the Idea, that majestic hierarchy of the noble, eternal and true. (1)

German Idealist philosophy, of course, influenced Belinski (as well as other Russian intellectuals) in the 1830s and early 40s - in Belinski's case the influence first came from Schelling, later from Hegel.

The "native Russian" tradition of moral concern springs from perhaps less intellectual sources: Tsarist Russia in Belinski's time was (as has been noted in another context) a country with shallow native intellectual traditions and great social identity problems. For a comparatively unsophisticated Russian intellectual or philosopher, the search for, and identification with, some simple "truth" that would solve these problems became a leading pre-occupation. Often these truths were defined in terms of some social and/or moral formula like narodnost' (popular spirit) rather than the more complex ideas.(2)

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(1) Cited from Philosophies of Art and Beauty: Selected Readings in Aesthetics from Plato to Heidegger. (eds. : A. Hofstadter, R. Kuhns) The Modern Library, New York, 1964, p. 1417.

(2) This did not mean that Russia, particularly in the first half of the 19th century, failed to produce men of considerable intellectual and journalistic abilities. In this respect the work of P. Ya. Chaadayev, A.S. Khomyakov, A.I. Herzen, T. Granovski, and others stands out. But their work cannot compare in depth, complexity and "system" with German philosophy or French social thought, however much some of these Russian thinkers were influenced by these foreign sources.

All this led to a sense both of moral righteousness and social concern amongst Russians, a concern that embraced artists and critics as well as philosophers. The important "philosophical" group obshchestvo lyubomudriya (roughly, Wisdom - Lovers' Society) of the 1820's included some of the leading artists of the Pushkin Pleiade. Pushkin himself wrote on social and moral themes.

Belinski was the strongest exponent of this concern in the first half of the 19th century and his acquaintance with, though not extensive knowledge of, German Idealist philosophy deepened this concern. The twists and developments in Belinski's thought under the influence of different intellectual mentors need not detain us here. Suffice it to note that his views on the relationship between art and morality are more fully expounded in his more mature, later works such as Vzglyad na russkuyu literatury 1847 goda (A Look at Russian Literature of 1847) and in his letter of December 1847 to the publisher V.P. Botkin, amongst others. A central component of art, Belinski asserts, is its pafos. Such pafos

> is a living creation in which there is no boundary between the idea and the form ... [It] is the key to the [poet's] personality and his poetry. The first task of the critic should be to unravel what the pafos of a poet consists of. (1)

The pafos of a work as Belinski saw it, derived from its moral tone, the sense of commitment and belief exhibited by its creator in what he was portraying. Such pafos, Belinski held, derived also from the artist's unique ability, via the artistic image and the creative imagination (fantazia) to divine (ugadat' the truth and essence of phenomena and thus arrive at something

(1) V.G. Belinski: Polnoye sobraniye sochinenii, tom VII (Collected Works, Vol 10), Izd-vo ANSSR. Moscow.1955.s.314.

he could believe in, uphold and propagate as right. In this sense - truth, pravda in Russian - had considerable moral overtones and was to be distinguished from istina or scientifi truth. Increasingly this truth came, in Belinski's work, to be identified with progressive, social causes, with the values of the people (narodnost') where earlier, in his 'Schelling' and 'Hegel' phases, he found it in the "universal world spirit" of Idealist philosophy. (The influence of Fourier and French socialists as well as that of the Natural'naya shkola were clearly important factors behind the radicalisation of Belinski thought from the early 'forties onward).

The embodiment of pravda, the artist's commitment to this, made for the moral pafos of art, then, in Belinski's view. This pafos clearly by itself was not enough to make art artistic. Extra-moral, i.e. aesthetic, considerations were important. Belinski, unlike his successors Dobrolyubov and Chernyshevski, believed, by and large, in the integrity of art and his tendency to lapse into dogmatic righteousness about what artists should be doing should not obscure this fact. He did not believe that art should be indistinguishable from a moral tract. He did believe, however, that much of the power, vividness and integrity of art derived from its moral content and that it was natural for artists to be preoccupied with moral themes; this naturalness and integrity would prevent art from being moralistic, from becoming a tract.

These ideas form the core of the Belinski tradition. They were taken up, and expanded upon or modified by, successively, the revolutionary democrats (Dobrolyubov, Chernyshevski and

Pisarev) populist critics like Mikhailovski and individual artists like Gorki. Indeed it is partly through these men that Belinskian notions of art reach Soviet critics; that is why, strictly speaking, it is preferrable to refer to the term 'Belinski tradition' rather than simply the name of Belinski alone in this discussion.

One very important bearer of this tradition for Soviet critics and a man who put his distinctive stamp on it is Maxim Gorki. In actual fact Gorki exerts a strong influenc on Soviet thinking in two ways. The earlier (pre-1905) Gorki, the figure of moral integrity, the artist who both exemplifies and writes about his beliefs honestly and openly, is more in keeping with the Belinski tradition. The later Gorki, partisan for the Bolshevik cause (though not always so) and eventually the leading defender and theoretician of socialist realism,(1) has links with the Marxist tradition in Soviet thinking on morality and art. Let us now look more closely at this Marxist tradition.

It is clear that those aestheticians that take a Marxist view of the art/morality relationship draw heavily on Soviet Marxist writings on ethics generally.

Western scholars who have written on Soviet ethics, in particular Professor E. Kamenka and Professor H. Marcuse,(2)

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(1) See chapter I,p.9, footnote (1), for discussion of the extent of Gorki's partisanship.

(2) See in particular Chapters 15 and 16 of Eugene Kamenka: The Ethical Foundations of Marxism, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1962; and Chapter VI of his Marxism and Ethics, Macmillan, London, 1969; also Herbert Marcuse: Soviet Marxism: A Critical Analysis, Pelican Books, Middlesex,1971.

discern a number of streams or approaches to ethical questions evident in Soviet writing since 1917. One stream could be called the 'utopian-socialist' and to some extent parallels (1) the ethic of the spontaneous cooperative, free and unalienated man which is manifest in Marx's early work, though it is, after the mid 1840's, obscured by the working out of his critique of human society and human history, his 'historical materialism'. This ethic is one of promise and hope, justifying the coming of revolution and the building of a communist society in which the "natural, co-operative impulses" of man would be allowed free play, unstultified by the pressures of previous (class) societies, in which the very need for regulations would disappear. This stream in its purest form did not long survive the period immediately after 1917 as Kamenka points out.(2) It is a stream which has had no noticable impact on Soviet aesthetic thought, moreover. The second stream is derived, in particular, from the work of Marx and Engels written after 1844 - notably Marx's Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy and Capital, as well as Engel's Anti-Dühring. In this work, of course, the 'materialist' critique of society was developed, the view that "the mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social political and intellectual processes of life."(3) As a product

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(1) The term 'parallels' is used because Bolshevik philosophers in the period before and after 1917 were not, of course, acquainted with such early works of Marx as the 1844 Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts. These were not published until the 1930's and even then had little impact on Soviet thought until the late 1950's.

(2) cf. Marxism and Ethics, p.56 In large measure this was because this stream had been popularised by pre-revolutiona "Nietzschean" Marxists.

(3) Cited from Karl Marx: "Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy", p. 137 of Marx, Engels, Lenin. On Historical Materialism, Progress, Moscow, 1972

of the general theory of historical materialism, this second stream thus sees questions of ethics and morality in extremely deterministic terms; particular moralities are shaped by particular class interests and reflect the interests of mostly competing and antagonistic groups. This stream puts little emphasis on the common, human 'objective' substance in moralities that allowed men to transcend their differences, on those elements of moral discussion that go beyond questions of class and interests. This stream remains strong in Soviet ethical discussion and has a considerable influence on aesthetic thought.

There is a third stream of thought which owes much, if not all its content, to Lenin's ideas of partisanship and is responsible for the crude and more instrumentalistic ideas of Soviet theorists. Lenin himself came to apply it when discussing the morality of the revolutionary society, specifically in his speech to the Third All-Union Congress of the Komsomol in 1920. What was moral and good in the revolutionary society was what served the revolutionary party. This was nothing but the extension to ethics of the principle of partisanship (partiinost') he had elaborated fifteen or so years earlier. Naturally the partisan morality of revolutionary society was better and higher than that of any other class or group and for this reason was all the more to be preserved. During much of the 'twenties and 'thirties this crude instrumentalism prevailed in Soviet discussion and still is to be found, certainly in the discussion of Communist morality in Soviet text books on ethics and aesthetics. A fourth stream of thinking is more recent and could be said to date from the promulgation of the Stalin Constitution in 1936. It is also perhaps the Marxist stream of moral discussion having the most

influence on Soviet aesthetics. It embraces the idea that morality and law, that is to say, socialist morality and law, are not merely instrumentalistic but have an objective and normative force of their own. They do not merely reflect class interests and values but help transform them - as the institutions of the Stalin State demonstrated. From the 'fifties on, the emphasis on normative morality has become more explicit in Soviet text books on ethics and party documents on moral problems. This had clear a political rationale of course - i.e. to stabilise the political system, first under Khrushchev and then under Brezhnev, to discredit the widespread lawlessness and disregard for norms in many fields, prevailing under Stalin and thus to help prevent the rise of a future cult of personality.

For post-Stalin writers on ethics, socialist morality became a positive and integral force because it contained, in the Soviet view, certain 'universal' and human values discernible in varying degrees in preceding class moralities but now made a central part of communist morality, since Communist society was free of class antagonisms. Such values facilitated, moreover, for the first time in any society the correlation of social (public) norms with individual(private) norms.

> The individual and social interest ... coalesce and true ... morality becomes possible. Conscience and duty are the individual's subjective internalisation of social interest, his recognition of his interdependence with his fellow men. (1)

As Kamenka further notes, (2) Soviet moral philosophers do not

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(1) Marxism and Ethics, p. 62.

(2) Ibid., pp. 62-63.

examine clearly and logically precisely how the social and individual interests are related; they merely run them together assuming that in the Communist society they must coincide.(1) A similar vagueness is observable, as we have seen, in Soviet discussion of 'socialist humanism' and 'socialism as humanism'. Both concepts are used extensively by Soviet writers on ethics to buttress the idea that socialist morality and law have a certain objective force and value of their own. Yet these writers ignore the fact that the concept of humanism, when use (as it is so often in Soviet discussion) in the sense of a 'humanism of ideals' introduces instrumentalist notions into Soviet writing on ethics. The objective qualities of Soviet morality slip from view when it becomes clear that Soviet commentators in extolling the "humanism" of Soviet morality are not drawing, in effect, attention to the "objective feature of the latter, but to its suitablity for realising "humanist" goals and ideals and ultimately the goals and ideals of Communism.

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Reference has already been made to the political conditions that brought about a renewed interest in moral issues in the Soviet Union after Stalin's death. Moral discussion in aesthetics clearly followed and was influenced by political developments in the Khrushchev era; it continued into the

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(1) A statement cited in Soviet discussion on this theme is one from Marx in his Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844: "Communism ... [is] the real appropriation of the essentially human by and for man; ... the complete and conscious return of man to himself... This Communism is the genuine resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and himself, between existence and essential being ... " (From the translation by M.Milligan, Lawrence Wishart, London, 1961, p.73.)

Brezhnev era but on a much smaller scale. It seems unlikely that this discussion will return to its old vigour and interest as long as present political conditions remain unchanged.

One of the streams of discussion most clearly associated with the Thaws is the 'personalist' stream. To speak of certain Soviet writers or critics as 'personalist' is, perhaps, to categorize them with a formal title which they would reject. The term is awkward because it no-where occurs in Soviet criticism and because 'personalism', as an '-ism', presupposes the existence of a coherent set of critical beliefs to which critics designated as 'personalist', consciously and consistently, subscribe. It also invites confusion with philosophical terms like 'ethical personalism' that are not relevant to the present discussion. In fact there was never any 'personalist' school of criticism in the U.S.S.R., let alone one subscribing to, say, a philosophy of 'ethical personalism'. Nevertheless one can say that certain critics in some of their writing possess what I call 'personalist' features, that a number of recurring - 'personalist' - themes and sentiments can be found in it and that these themes throw light on Soviet discussion of the moral in art. I repeat that the term 'personalist' is one only favoured by myself but that because of the etymology of the word, its value as a shorthand designation seems obvious.(1) We might clarify what is meant by 'personalist' criticism.

This criticism it needs to be said at the outset, is closely

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(1) Cf. p. 54 n.1. supra

related to the Belinski tradition of art discussion. It stresses not so much the integrity and moral force of art itself but rather emphasises the moral impact of the artistic persona, the idea of artists as unique purveyors of the truth and thus, as such, forces for good, moral forces in the community. This concept of the truth as a moral force is, of course, a legacy of the Belinski tradition and is to be found in much of the commentary written between 1953 and 1955 by such writers and critics as Shaginyan and Pomerantsev, Tvardovski and Ehrenberg.(1) One could say such commentary possesses personali features, in particular the feeling (and it remains basically that) that "the truth" will follow, if the artist is true to himself, does not dissimulate or exhibit the deceit, hyperbole and so on of Stalinist literature, the immorality of the Stalin era being traceable to its perversion of the truth. The fore-mentionned writers and critics do not show what precisel it is in the artistic persona that logically should make it (onc sincerely conveyed) a vehicle for truth. They mainly emphasise that through the truth, so induced comes the moral force of art. What, then, do they say that the truth consists of, for it to possess such moral power in art. The answer is that they say very little. It is not so much certain, so-called objectiv properties and attributes of truth that are important for them, as the quality it evokes in each man seeking to portray it. This last point is crucial as it further justifies the title 'personalist' and explains why art acquires a moral force in the eyes of writers who have 'personalist' sentiments.

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(1) See chapter I, pp.27-28 for further details on these and other Thaw writers and for titles of their work.

Truth, as the philosopher K.G. Ballestrem has pointed out,(1) is viewed in Soviet philosophy in two ways; firstly as istina - the objective property of things which, according to Soviet (Leninist) epistemology, does change as phenomena themselves change in the course of the objective, dialectical, evolution of matter. Secondly, it is pravda - the moral quality that certain things acquire because they are shown in their essence, without dissimulation, or magnification and because the process of showing them draws upon and further encourages qualities of sincerity and honesty in individuals. It is truth in this second sense that remains at the core of criticism with 'personalist' qualities. And it is the effect o pravda on each man that makes it both a moral and 'personalist' concept. 'Personalist' critics, it should be noted, do not discuss 'personalism' in terms of personal truths known only to each individual and having a moral effect, if any, on him alone. The emphasis, as noted, is rather on the common moral effect upon individuals of the process of "being truthful" . The need for pravda is discussed and justified in these terms. The issue of moral anarchy, the dangers of individualism implicit in 'personalism' as defined above are not discussed in Soviet writing partly for these reasons.

It is a further belief of 'personalist' critics that pravda is more often manifest in art than anywhere else and that artists are very honest, moral men well suited to portrayi it. One may, on the evidence of many artists and their behaviour (Caravaggio, Nekrasov, to take examples), deny that

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(1) K. G. Ballestrem: " The Soviet Concept of Truth", SST, IV, 1964, pp. 1-17.

integrity and honesty are particular qualities of artists, or qualities to be found in them more than other groups. But it is a central assumption of Soviet criticism, again due, in part, to the legacy of Belinski and his successors, and has to be recognised as such, whatever reservations one may have about its validity.

A further development of all this is the notion that the artistic 'persona' can serve as an encouragement, a moral beacon to others, that it can communicate a moral message to others, rather than merely stand as a moral example. It should be noted here that the term 'artist as communicator' rather that the shorter 'artist as exposer' is more relevant in the Soviet case. It might be thought that the 'personalist' approach to art could lead, by extension, to the notion of art as exposure, the idea that through art, the artistic persona (as opposed to other types) strips bare, gets to the bottom of a society, of a personality, and this allows art to perform a moral service in the process. The term 'exposure' - in its Russian equivalent obnazheniye - does not feature in 'personalist' discussion or Soviet discussion, generally, of art produced in the U.S.S.R. Doubtless there are obvious, ideological reasons for this(1). That is, in Soviet society Soviet critics would hold, there is less need for exposure in the sense that the word is often used - of stripping away the falsehoods to reveal an unpalatable truth. The concept is more applicable in

(1) This is not to overlook the fact that some of the more independent Soviet(Marxist) aestheticians and critics of the 1920's did touch on the notion of exposure, used in this sense - A.K. Voronski, for example. The famous critic and editor (of the journal Krasnaya nov') developed from his notion of art as essentially a special type of cognition that had, above all, to be truthful, the idea that art led to a sryvaniye pokrovov (a tearing-off of covers) from reality. Voronski was, of course, deprived in 1927-8 of his editorship

(footnote (1) cont. on page 166)

capitalist societies where there is far more falsehood and more unpalatable truth.

The communication theme and its moral significance are highlighted, in particular, in the work of B. Runin. In 1960 he wrote a lengthy defence of that most personal of poetic forms - the lyric. (1) He defended the lyric as a genre becaus the personal insights of the artist in this 'personal' form can and should be relevant to the reading public. Both are educated, for Runin, according to the same social principles; it is, moreover, advantageous that the lyric poet see himself both as subject and object - i.e. as both the subject of persona reflection and the object of other people's attention and expectations. Otherwise hermeticism, withdrawal into oneself, a selfish 'personalism' will result with disastrous consequences for the lyric's form and content. Other critics like A. Men'sh tin and N. Korzhavin (2) make similar points. Korzhavin, in this connection, draws an interesting, though disputable, contr

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(1) B. Runin: "Spor neobkhodimo prodolzhit", NM No. 11, 1960 pp. 195-219

(2) Cf. N. Korzhavin: "V zashchitu banal'nykh istin" (In Defence of Banal Truths), NM, No. 3, 1961, pp 234-246; A. Men'shutin (in collaboration with A. Sinyavski): "Za poeticheskuyu aktivnost'" (For an Active Spirit in Poetry), NM No. 1, 1961, pp. 224-241.

(footnote (1) cont'd. from page 163)
and Party membership because of pressure from R.A.P.P. and, later, Stalinists and disappeared in the Great Purges. Since 1953 his name has been partially rehabilitated in the U.S.S.R.; some of his articles have been published in limited editions but there has been no endorsement of his views. For a discussion of the evolution of Voronski's views, their fate and Voronski's partial rehabilitation in the U.S.S.R. afterwards, see Robert A. Maguire: Red Virgin Soil: Soviet Literature in the 1920's, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1968, passim .

between the lyrics of Voznesenski and those of Pushkin; Voznesenski's are hermetic, 'scholastic' and 'obscure', in Korzhavin' view, through the author's fanciful and easily exhausted preoccupation with himself. He is typical of those authors who "want to compel the reader to feel where there is no justification for feeling anything".(1) Pushkin, however, is not scholastic because he has something to say both to himself and through himself to others.

It is true that social demands upon the writer often do not allow the moral force of his 'personal' vision to shine through strongly and this fact introduces certain tensions in Soviet discussion of the interrelationship between the moral and the personal in art. In the writing of Tvardovski, when he addresses himself to this theme for example, there is a certain oscillation in emphasis between the values of the artistic persona and the values and demands of those he communicates with - his readers and the wider society.(2) This oscillation, one suspects, is caused partly, if not wholly, by political factors. In the Soviet context (to facilitate publication) writers, when exploring the "personal theme", have to make some reference, however ritualised, to political goals and programme to suggest that these are not irrelevant to their own personal concerns.

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(1) Korzhavin, op.cit., p. 243. Korzhavin, it should be noted, has recently become an émigré and is now living in the United States.

(2) Tvardovski also goes beyond oscillating and on occasions stresses the primacy of social demands, social reality for the writer. This is evident is such comments of his as "It [reality] is for me the highest value, and I do not want it to be replaced by any fanciful version of it." (Inostrannaya literatura, No.1, 1966, p.145)and "The activity of the readers creates that powerful, genuinely democratic upsurge of public opinion, without which real literary life is impossible." (NM. No.1. 1965. p.17. Cited from his article celebrating the 40th anniversary of Novy mir's inauguration)

In some writing on this theme, however, both the social ar personal are brought into a plausible relationship which does not thus undermine the moral value of the interconnection between the two. In his 1953 article,for example, Pomerantsev does not identify the truth and personal values simply with the building of communism; but he does make it clear that communist values are renewed and "rediscovered" in literature with a strong personal bias,that through the medium of such literature, in particular the lyric, readers as individuals are able to perceive these values in a much less impersonal light. The sincerity of "personal" literature helps here, Pomerantsev states, its tone and thrust making socialist values and socialist society seem much less tinged with a bureaucratic administrative mentality, much more human.

By way of general conclusion, one has to note that an air of imprecision and waffle hangs over much Soviet discussion of the personal in art. This is not unexpected since many critics who write on this theme possess not so much trained, critical minds as simple literary ability. The moral role of the artist and the moral content of art are, for example, not discussed by them in any depth. While it is clear to the outside commentator that for most critics writing on 'personalist' themes, the moral content of art derives ultimately from the artist and his special relationship to the truth and to his readers, the nature of the relationship comes to cloud what the content is all about and what the precise moral role of the artist is. The more hermetic, subjective writers on this theme include writers and critics like A. Nuikin,(1)

(1) Nuikin himself concedes that art has moral content, but denies that either it or the artist should be "held to
(Footnote (1) cont. on page 169)

they see the truth in very fuzzy, often unspoken terms and impl; that the moral qualities induced by it give art some vague moral spin-off, as it were. Beyond this they are not specific. They certainly do not see themselves as bastions of morality or moral spokesmen and are coy about the "communication" side of their art. The more forthright and society-orientated critics writin; on the personal theme like Tvardovski, Pomerantsev and Runin are more definitive on the moral role of the artists. They can be, however, vague in their turn on the elements that make for its moral content. A critic like M.Gus, for example, will say that art is moral because it represents "the truth" - the truth of art is, however, defined by running together such philosophically diverse concepts as conscience, personal integrity and socialism(1) with little attempt to sort out their interrelationships or indeed their relevance. Even at the more technical level, there is little solid discussion of how sincerity becomes art or, more generally, of the relationship between moral categories and aesthetic ones.

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(1) Cf. his article "Sud sovesti" (The Judgement of Conscience), pp.292-312 of the compilation Literatura i epokha (Literature and the Epoch), Sovetski pisatel', Moscow, 1963

(Footnote (1) cont. from page 166)
account" for this by society. Society cannot judge how well the artist is performing as a moral force, a source of moral ideas."... It seems to me that a precise, universal criterion for the evaluation of works of art cannot exist. The dream of such a criterion, freeing one from the necessity of thinking and comprehending for oneself, is one of the typical manifestations of bourgeois mass-culture." Cited from "Nravstvennoye, dukhovnoye, ideinoye", NM, No. 1. 1971, p.206.

Vagueness on the moral content of art is generally what distinguishes 'personalist' criticism from another important stream, one that might be called 'humanist-aesthetic' (a term, incidentally, which is not a Soviet one, but one employed by this writer.) The latter stream is clearly more in touch with the main body of Soviet thinking on ethics and is sustained by men of higher intellectual calibre than the 'personalist' critics. It includes few practising artists and more professional writers on moral and aesthetic problems. A useful and convenient link between one stream and the other is, arguably, provided by the critic Andrei Nuikin in his Novy Mir article. Nuikin's work reflects many 'personalist' ideas; but he also in this article criticises many critics who talk in waffly terms about the human moral content of art, about 'truth' in general, which, Nuikin notes tartly, means one thing to a Nazi, another to a Communist. He also attacks those presumably more vulgar (partisan) critics who treat moral matters in art, in terms of the impact of the moral message, of how loudly it is proclaimed, rather than in terms of its artistry. Nuikin's attack, it should be noted, is couched in aesopic terms - a traditional ploy amongst Soviet critics who wish to make an extensive attack on fellow critics and their standards. "Bourgeois mass-culture" is the alleged enemy. But the message is meant for people closer to home.

The humanist-aesthetic stream comes closer to tackling Nuikin's criticisms. It is a product of that tradition of Soviet ethical thinking which concentrates on the "objective" features of moralities. The aesthetic variant, however, generally lacks the normative tone characteristic of ethical writing; its proponents are less concerned with the political need to dignify Communist morality by pointing out how

"objective" it is.

Generally, most thinkers in this stream consider that the moral content of art derives from qualities inherent in and particular to art itself, to the aesthetic process. The moral concerns of the artist and his audience are of less interest to them. Art has a moral role primarily because it is suitable for conveying the basic values of life and such values permit the individualised, and specifically artistic, treatment of moral problems. This approach is evident in the work of moral philosophers like V.P. Tugarinov,(1) V. Kelle and M. Koval'zon writing in the period 1958-62. These men were not, of course, aestheticians, but they did stress the importance of art in their discussion. The impact of their work is less evident nowadays, the values debate being a product of the more liberal years of the Khrushchev era and linked, like so much moral discussion at the time, with the Party's espousal and propagation of the notion of socialist humanism. But their influence can still be felt, most noticeably in E. Il'enkov's contribution to the 1969 compilation on art and morality edited by V. Tolstykh, and in the articles noted earlier of critics like M. Volkenstein and Yu. Schroeder appearing in particular in Novy mir in late 1969, and comparing the values of science and art.(2)

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(1) I would place Tugarinov more in the 'aesthetic' rather than 'humanist' side of the tradition. The concept of humanism used, arguably, in the sense of a 'humanism of principles' - is treated in his work, but it takes second place to the notion of the aesthetic and to the relationship of the latt with the values of public and private life.

(2) See chapter IV, p. 105, et seq.

In his earlier (1958) work Sootnosheniye kategorii istoricheskogo materializma (The Inter-relationship between the Catergories of Historical Materialism), Tugarinov was concerned to establish the general distinction between those products of human consciousness like values, moral codes and so on, which had a specific class character and those which possessed elements transcending class, elements that were universal and objective . Tugarinov conceded that certain products like moral codes possessed both. However this was disputed by Kelle and Koval'zon in their Formy obshchestvennogo soznaniy (Forms of Social Consciousness), written in 1959, partly to qualify Tugarinov's ideas by insisting upon the strict separation of 'objective-cognitive' ideas and products of human thinking, and 'class-ideological' ones, to use their term. Tugarinov amplified his position in his more important (1960) work O tsennost'yakh zhizni i kul'tury (On the Values of Life and Culture). In it Tugarinov stressed that there existed values that were propagated and upheld because of their acceptablity to particular societies and particular cultures. There were public values, the values of kul'tura like partisanship, communist discipline, energy and heroism in one's work etc. There were others, however, like the so-called abstract values of goodness, fidelity, honesty etc. that were common to life (zhizn')in general, that reflected general qualities and aspirations of mankind as a whole[1] and that, finally and most important , were accepted because they could

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(1) The phrase often used by Tugarinov in his work is "values which reflect moments common to all men" (Obshchechelovecheskiye momenty) (Italics added). Cf. Tugarinov, op cit. p. 24; 'moments' is here used, of course, in a Hegelian sense of 'dialectical' aspect of phrase.

be internalised by individuals in the course of their private lives.

In Communist society, according to Tugarinov, the two are mutually reinforcing: he admits, however, that the latter have been neglected through emphasis on the former and particularly by the duty to uphold them. To rectify this imbalance Tugarinov sets out to illuminate the specific nature of these general values by concentrating on one medium where there are clearly evident, namely art. (His colleagues Kelle and Koval'zon pointedly ignored or downplayed the importance of art for their discussion.) It could be suggested that Tugarinov's ideas, the emphasis on abstract (universal) values as a categor have introduced bourgeois i.e. pre-Marxist, ideas into Soviet thinking on art, making it reminiscent of Aristotelian or 18th century Enlightenment discussion.

Tugarinov himself claims to be discussing values using "the methodoligical foundations", which "the classics of Marxis provided for a scientific treatment of value categories."(1) Tugarinov uses expressions like 'Marxist' and 'this is a Marxist postion' throughout his article. Furthermore his discussion of beauty is clearly within the Vanslovian (predominantly Marxist) stream of Soviet aesthetics. As against this, it must be said that the emphasis on values in a supra-class context has, in fact, introduced themes reminiscent of classical and not specifically Marxist aesthetics into Soviet discussion; just as the emphasis on the aesthetic and on its special moral connotations introduces (via Belinski originally) ideas derived from German Idealist philosophy, German romantic-

(1) Ibid., p.7.

ism and classical aesthetics before that.

Let us look more closely at Tugarinov's ideas. It is an assumption, at times spelled out, usually not, of Tugarinov's that the moral force and appeal of values like honesty, goodnes and so on (called also 'cultural-spiritual'[1] values by Tugarinov, to distinguish them from the purely 'material' and 'social-political' ones) resides (a) in their universality and (b) in their appeal to individual men. They are so widespread, so much part of men, so incontrovertible, that the individual can accept them freely, as his <u>own</u> values. A phenomenon like beauty, Tugarinov suggests, has similar appeal for similar reasons. It is universal and univerally recognised and also 'objective' in the sense of existing in nature rather than as a creation of the human mind. Here Tugarinov distinguishes between its objectivity and the objectivity of values like goodness and honesty. He does not imply that the latter exist in nature waiting for men to discover them; he doe state, however, that these values, once evolved by men, become reified, as it were, and come to have a certain objective force of their own in human history. His ideas recall Vanslov's distinction between aesthetic and ethical terms, and their

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(1) I have avoided using 'cultural' alone to translate 'dukhovn y ' here because, to repeat, Tugarinov clearly uses the word 'kultura' to refer to <u>non-private life</u> whose values are <u>contrasted</u> with the 'dukhovny' ones. To retain the 'private' overtones of <u>dukhovny</u> in this context I have used the term 'cultural-spiritual' to translate the Russian adjectiv

encourages,confirms and strengthens the integrity of the individual men and women who exhibit it.

It is not surprising,therefore,that Tugarinov conludes that art-the aesthetic experience-is an ideal way of expressing 'spiritual' values,and that the beautiful evokes,for the individual contemplating it,feelings of goodness,sincerity and so on,without actually being or becoming any of these qualities;and that it confirms their value and worthiness for individual men.

Tugarinov,like most commentators in the'aesthetic-humanist'stream does stress that the aesthetic presentation of spiritual values differs from the presentation found in a moral or political tract.He uses the terminology of Leninist epistemology to distinguish the artistic mode of thinking about spiritual values from the intellectual/conceptual mode,and warns of the dangers of 'one-sided rationalism',cold moralising and so on in art(1).He says that art is a moral force because of its link with spiritual values,but emphasises that its moral influence comes about not through strident advocacy,foreign to its nature,but through the example and presence of values like goodness and honesty in art,their obvious affinity with the aesthetic and through the artist's free and genuine espousal of them.But he does leave one /continues straight on,p.175./

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(1) Tugarinov,op.cit.,p.101.

noticeable lacuna in his discussion, one found else where in Soviet discussion. Does the aesthetic have a moral force simply because of its association with the standard spiritual-cultural values and is it in effect indistinguishable from them Or does it somehow represent a special, higher moral force —than, say, these values, a force that, in addition, is distinctively aesthetic. Tugarinov does not really address himself to these questions but merely highlights the distinctiveness, but not the superiority of art as a purveyor of moral themes. These problems are, however, touched upon more directly by V. Tolstykh in what is the central article in the important 1969 compilation on morality and art which he edited. The continuation of discussion on the subject nine years after Tugarinov's work testifies to its continuing importance in Soviet aesthetics although clearly it has passed its peak.

For Tolstykh the aesthetic is a distinctively moral and never an immoral force that somehow has a purer and more universal moral tone than conventional moral forces like legal codes, exhortations and so on. Tolstykh does not specifically say this, but it is implied at certain points in his discussion. Clearly he is re-echoing one theme, noted earlier , particularly in Soviet discussion of art and religion - i.e. the transcendent and absolute power of the aesthetic.(1)

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(1) This theme is also touched on in Tolstykh's sbornik by the critic V. Perlin in an article entitled "Zachem nam proshloye ?" (What's the Past to Us?) Perlin notes how the power of the aesthetic allowed certain icon painters of the past (in particular Rublyev) to produce great art despite the "obscurantist" content of their religious motifs.

The aesthetic, he implies, is what enables artists from differing moral traditions (the Muslim and the Christian, to use his example) to understand and appreciate each other and what enables people of all eras to appreciate them both. The ultimate impulse for artistic creation and ultimate standard for the appreciation of art are not so much ethical ones, defined by Tolstykh in terms of particular moralities and values, as aesthetic ones:

> The strength of art does not lie in its ethic. It is the strength of aesthetic feeling. A work of art is"called forth" by feeling ... and not by the moral -ethical situation of the moment. The value of the latter is changeable; that of the former is absolute.(1)

Taken overall, Tolstykh's position on the art/morality relationship is quite complex. He seems to be saying that the aesthetic represents a higher type of ethic, without being specifically defined in ethical terms. At the same time he does not advocate that conventional morality should be 'aestheticised' and attacks philosphers like Heiddegger, Santayana, Nietzsche who,he claims, have advocated this. On another occasion he makes pejorative remarks about the conservatism of moral conventions and values and contrasts this with art's "exploration of the new"; but then he balances these remarks with an emphasis on the sociological context of art and a statement on the relevance of aspects of Plekhanov's approach for determining the relative, class-bound, elements of art.

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(1) Cited from Tolstykh's own article in the sbornik: "Ne moral'yu edinoi" (Not by Morality Alone), p. 41.

Clearly in Tolstykh's ideas, a tension exists between the more 'classical' (and also Belinskian) strain in Soviet aesthetics on the one hand, and conventional Soviet Marxist attitudes to art and morality on the other with their insistence that both ultimately reflect social desiderata. This makes it difficult for him to reach the unqualified claim that art is a distinct and higher moral force and one that does not have to be explained in terms of its relevance and subservience to conventional, approved moral standards like those of Soviet Communism. The ambiguities evident in Tolstykh reflect the strength of doctrinaire thinking in both Soviet aesthetics and ethics on a critic who is not of the run-of-the-mill, orthodox variety.

Discussion emphasising more specifically the humanistic rather than the aesthetic side of art as the basis of its moral force occupies, as we would expect, an important place in the 'aesthetic-humanistic' stream of Soviet aesthetic thought. The discussion here is generally very superficial and routine. It is noticeable for its constant references to the 'humanist' passages in the work of the young Marx and its use of these to justify fairly conventional ideas on humanism, and not to explore this concept in any depth. There is no attempt to distinguish between, say, a 'humanism of principles' and a 'humanism of ideals'. There is no attempt to discuss humanism as a "working topic" for presentation in the artistic mode (as opposed to others). Two broad approaches can be discerned in Soviet discussion, One could almost be said to advocate a 'humanism of principles', though its proponents do not use this term. They appear to be saying that art is humanistic because it deals with people who as humans possess

intrinsic worth and qualities of a high moral order. This type of humanism would seem to be present in the no by means accid · ental discussion of Hamlet that is to be found in some Soviet criticism at the height of the post-1957 Thaw (1961). This discussion is found particularly in articles in a Shekspirovski sbornik (Shakespeare Miscellany) which appeared that year. Commenting on Hamlet's words and character, in shor his integrity as a seeker of truth, as the "archetypal man", one contributor to the sbornik, P. Wertzmann wrote that they

> agitate our minds, turn our vision from "appearances" to "inner reality" serve as an example of an impassioned, profound, personal response to the ethical problems in life and politics and evoke in us persistent scepticism toward what others like to call well-being ... there is every justification for considering Hamlet a brother in arms in the struggle for honesty and justice in human relations.(1)

In its tone this approach further resembles 'personalist' discussion; the aesopic reference ("scepticism... well being") clearly has as its target Soviet politicians besides politician in general, as an American historian of Russia, Arthur P. Mendel, points out.(2)

In another approach, humanism is linked more closely with what might be called a type of higher civic mindedness that recalls the 'humanism of ideals" referred to earlier. Under this approach 'humanist' art is art which strives to make the world better for man and acquires moral stature as a result. For this task humanism draws strength from the values of Communist

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(1) Cited from Arthur P. Mendel: "Hamlet and Soviet Humanism", Slavic Review, December 1971, pp. 736-7.

(2) See especially the conclusion of Mendel's article.

society, and indeed is able to reflect the truth about them. Not surprisingly, this approach to humanism finds its clearest expression in the works of critics who write periodic reviews or summaries of Soviet literature. These men appear anxious to establish the "Soviet" content of this literature, amongst other things, and examine the humanist and related elements of particular works from this perspective. Thus P. Svetov[1] analysing the heroes of Soviet literature produced in 1961 (in particular the works of Tendryakov and Nagibin) agrees that many serve as clear moral examples but that some are unrelated to the demands and realities, the "truths" of Soviet life, and are inaccessible to the "man at the bench". They are in other words ineffective instruments for reflecting that "humanism" that is, of necessity, embodied in the ideals of Communism. There is also, Svetov adds, too much moralising and not enough use of artistry (the juxtaposition of characters, the dramatic conflict of ideas) to make moral points. In another review

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(1) Cf. P. Svetov: "Nravstvenny kodeks geroya" (The Moral Code of the Hero), VL, No.3, 1962, pp. 1-36. Svetov, it should be noted, has recently written a book entitled Nravstvenny fundament (The Moral Foundation), Detskaya literatura, Moscow, 1971, on the moral development of children, and the use of literature to assist in this. Predictably it is a fairly banal and amateur document by someone who is not a moral philosopher, pediatrician, or educator. Beside the work of Svetov, reference might be made to such articles as A. Marchenko's "Vremya iskat' sebya" (Time to Search for Oneself), NM, No. 10, 1972, pp.221-242, and V. Novikov' book Khudozhestvennaya pravda i dialektika tvorchestva (Artistic Truth and the Dialectic of Creativity), Sovetski pisatel', Moscow, 1971. Despite their typically high flown titles, these books are essentially reviews of recent Soviet literature. In them there are elaborate discussions about how the truth of Soviet life has been perceived at various periods, about the extent to which the truth has changed, and about the methods of its portrayal. Marchenko for example, finds that the truth lies in the "humanism" of Soviet life. The two terms are in fact run together in his usage - humanism becoming synonymous with the truth).

in a similar vein this time by V. Ognev writing in Novy mir in 1971 (1) about the contributors to the 1969 Den' poezii miscellany, the critic takes issue with the poet-critics V. Chalmayev, V. Kozhinov, S. Kunyayev and others. The latter see spirituality, truth and so on in intensely personal terms, and set up false dichotomies in appraising poets like Yevtushenko, Rozhdestvenski and others, between their "public persona" and private souls. The best Soviet writers, Ognev claims, present no such disharmony and easily blend - and should blend private values with civic ones becoming, Ognev remarks, a combination of Fet and Nekrasov.

In most discussion of the aesthetic-humanist quality of art and its moral impact, the position of the artist tends, as noted, to be overlooked. Is he simply an agent or executor of the artistic process with little interest or knowledge of the effect of this process, particularly in the moral sphere? One commentator, at least, within the aesthetic-humanist tradition of writing seeks to clarify the moral content of art stressing not so much the moral integrity of art itself, as the moral responsibility and involvement of the artist. The commentator is M.F. Ovsyannikov. He relates the concept of moral responsiblity to the "freedom" and "rationality" evinced in the values of socialist art and to the creative freedom that exists in socialist society. In one important article (2)

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(1) V. Ognev: "Poiski 'dukhovnosti' ili boyazn' realizma" (The Search for 'Cultural Identity' or Is it the Fear of Realism?), NM, No. 7, 1971, pp. 224 - 244.

(2) M.F. Ovsyannikov: "Creative Freedom and Moral Responsibility pp. 104 - 121 of A. Dymshits (ed.): Art and Society.

Ovsyannikov notes that the artist has to be a morally responsible person because he is defending the values of social ism rather than, specifically, humanism. These values are, by definition, not imposed on men (artists) but are spiritually assimilated by them as free agents exercising a theoretical freedom of choice but always opting for such values because they are expressions of a logical, rational and (in Hegelian terms) "free"order; and expressions of themselves as part of that order. Ovsyannikov writes:

> There is an organic link between the question of the artist's moral responsibility and his creative freedom. This is only natural, for responsibility implie the freedom of the individual on whom it is laid. If a man behaves like an automation, that is, if all his actions depended entirely on outside circumstances then it would be quite ridiculous to make him responsible for his actions and their consequences. It is equally true that real creative freedom is impossible unless the artist is fully aware of this moral responsibility for what he does. Irresponsible actions are the actions not of a free man, but of a slave and, what is more, of the worst kind of slave, one who imagines he is free. (1)

Two points should be noted here: Ovsyannikov was writing partly to justify the Leninist critique of bourgeois ideas of freedom (as "slavery turned inside out" which leads to the irresponsibility and anarchy.)(2) Secondly, through Ovsyannikov's writing a further extra-Marxist (and specifically Hegelian) lega comes to influence Soviet discussion. (Ovsyannikov is, as has

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(1) Ibid., p. 120.

(2) Advanced in his 1905 article "Partiinaya organizatsiya i partiinaya literatura", amongst others.

been noted, a Hegel scholar and has written extensively on the great philospher.) And this legacy reinforces less normative attitudes in Soviet morality/art discussion, attitude that are to be found in the aesthetic/humanist current of Soviet thinking. While, clearly, freedom, as defined by Ovsyannikov remains the "social freedom" so often proclaimed by Soviet political commentators and ideologues and while the understanding of freedom as an ethical notion is not advanced significantly by him, the idea that art becomes moral not because of its (prescribed) expression of social and moral desiderata, but because the artist feels personal responsibility for, and has a stake in what he is writing, is an important one. It is something which illustrates a further distinctive element in the artistic treatment of moral problems.

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The theme of moral responsibility is significantly absent from the third current in Soviet discussion on morality and art - the instrumentalist or vulgar one. This current is frankly partisan and instrumentalist (hence its designation), deriving much of its force from the 'reductionist' element in Soviet ethical thinking generally, from Lenin's ideas on partisanship and from the assumption that the morality of the Communist state reflects Communist - and humanist - values and, as such is a better and higher morality than any other.(1) Naturally,

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(1) That is, this stream draws on the second and third approaches in Soviet writing on ethics generally, outlined earlier, and tends to conflate them, emphasising, however, more the instrumentalist rather then simply the 'class-reductionist' approach to morality. The latter, though, is not ignored and surfaces as we shall see, in Soviet notions of the "bourgeois moral" tone of Western art and in the concept of the "bourgeois novel

this stream is favoured by orthodox official Soviet critics and by the Party which clearly, as Professor R.T. De George notes, primarily uses morality "as a form of social control... inculcating [a] purely functional approach to morality". (1) Orthodox critics would support the view that the moral content of art should be imbued with "the spirit of Communism", indeed that art becomes moral to the extent that it glorifies Communist goals (and the Party's role in achieving them), and strengthens the people's faith in these. The Osnovy, for example, in its central statement on the ethical content of art is quite frankly instrumentalistic (as well as reductionist).

> Everything... which serves the great cause of Communism is ... moral. This evaluation [of what is right or wrong] ... is inseparably linked with a man's world view ... (2)

For art to be moral, under the doctrinaire, vulgar approach it has to reflect Communist values or, better, educate men in them. There is no reference to the problem of conveying moral ideas by aesthetic means, to the role of the artist in doing this. At best there are references (not many) to the humanist and universal features of Communist morality as opposed to other moralities and the implication that these somehow make the propagation of Communist morality in art compatible with the aesthetic. (This comes out more strongly in an early post-Stalin article on morality and aesthetics written by A. Lezhnev (3

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(1) Cf. R.T. De George: "Soviet Ethics and Soviet Society", SST IV, 1964, p.215
(2) Both these statements are made on p. 223 of the Osnovy.
(3) A. Lezhnev: "Etika i estetika" (Ethics and Aesthetics), Okt'yabr, No. 12, 1955, pp. 161-169.

I would tend to regard this article, despite its apparently reasonable tone and talk of humanism as being in the doctrinair orthodox mould both for its references (approving) to the Stalinist dictum about artists "as engineers of the soul" and its habit of quoting from such party leaders as Kalinin and even Zhdanov.

The orthodox view is quite widespread, though not dominant. It appears in the 1969 compilation (edited by Tolstykh) in an article by S. Gerasimov entitled "O nravstvennom kriterii zhizhni" (On the Moral Criterion of Life). Here a broadly defined narodnost'(rather than specific Communist values) is sa to be an important constituent of Soviet morality; art, therefo has to be narodny to be moral. A colleague V. Shubman, in the same compilation is more specific about narodnost'but no less pedestrian overall, when he states:

> Morality is the truth ... this means ... thinking as the people think. For the people always know the truth. (1)

The partisan, instrumentalist approach is also apparent in those critics who equate the truth with civic-mindedness, who see that this can only emerge with the author's complete denial of his persona and with the redirection of his energies towards the "civic" problems of the day. This approach (with the term grazhdanski used more often than partiiny) has been

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(1) V. Shubman: "Nravstvennost' est' pravda" (Morality is Truth), p. 139 of Iskusstvo nravstvennoye i beznravstvennoye

evident, in particular, in the work of the critic, S. Vasilyev, during the debate on the "civic content" of Soviet poetry in Literaturnaya gazeta between January and April 1969. It also was upheld in the face of attempts by some critics in Voprosy literatury, during the first six months of 1968, to rehabilitate, partially, the work of Mikhail Bulgakov whose "white-guard" and "uncivic" sentiments in the 'twenties and 'thirties were still considered "immoral" by many die-hard Soviet critics in the 'sixties.

The orthodox, partisan line also influences some Soviet discussion on humanism, particularly in the crude and mediocre book of N. Abalkin's entitled Oruzhiye gumanizma (The Weapon of Humanism). As its title suggests, the book discusses humanism not for its intrinsic moral interest but as a weapon - the central weapon - of Communist morality in its struggle against the West. Indeed the concept of humanism becomes meaningless in Abalkin's hands - it is a "humanism of ideals' of the worst sort. As the American sociologist A. Kassof points out in a perceptive essay (1) doctrinaire critics like Abalkin flaunt terms like 'humanism' about to justify political and cultural orthodoxy, claiming in the process that the Soviet brand of humanism - in the Soviet system as constituted - is better than "other humanisms" in the West, or even, it is implied, in other socialist countries. The term 'humanism' by definition cannot be qualified in this fashion; one is either humanistic or one is not.

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(1) A. Kassof: "The New Soviet Man in Theory and Practice", SST, VII, 1967, pp. 171 - 182.

The vulgarisation of the term can be further seen in orthodox critics' use of the concept of 'the New Soviet Man' - an essentially conservative idea, as Kassof notes. This concept, defended vigorously by Abalkin in the face of "slanderous attacks" on it by such Western commentators as Kassof and Klaus Mehnert[1], is based on the premise that the moral force of Communist values, of Soviet humanism, is leading to the creation of a new type of man, superior to all others. It has also led to further stress on the instrumental role of Soviet morality and of art as a bearer of moral messages. The idea that such a man could "be moulded" according to prescribed and politically desirable values has, incidentally, caused the concept of the New Soviet Man and its orthodox proponents to be attacked by more liberal commentators both in the context of the art/morality discussion and in other contexts as well.[2] The concept is rarely discussed nowadays in the U.S.S.R., however, and would appear to have been put aside. It is easy to see furthermore - that this grandiloquent term would have little place in the more sober, prosaic and technocratic regime of Brazhnev - Kosygin.

The content and tone of much orthodox discussion of art and morality are especially evident in the treatment of Western art. It is not unexpected that orthodox critics should be

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(1) Cf. Klaus Mehnert: Anatomy of Soviet Man, London, Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1961.

(2) One of the more liberal critics of the concept, the playwright N. Pogodin, attacked the idea in an Izvestiya article of 12th December 1962 as well as the peremptory way artists, in particular, were ordered to make it a theme in their work. Pogodin suggests that writers describe Soviet men as they are, and not create an artificial model of what they would or should become in the future.

preoccupied with this, given their 'class-reductionist' view of moralities as well as their instrumentalist views. To them, Western moralities and Western art ipso facto reflect interest antagonistic to the Communist ones; there must be "exposed", not merely to be defeated but to stress the rightness of the Communist view that there can be no morality comparable to the Communist one. In the process much slipshod thinking about Western art becomes apparent and once again not much light is thrown on the art/morality relationship as a general problem in aesthetics.

The deficiencies of orthodox writing show up more strikingly when it is compared with the work of the better Soviet critics on the subject. A number of these commentators (from the 'humanist/aesthetic' and 'personalist' streams alike) have indeed written on Western art and its moral impact, often reaching conclusions similar to the doctrinaire critics'. A most recent example is V. Dneprov's book: Literatura i nravstvenny opyt cheloveka; razmyshleniya o sovremennoi zarubezhnoi literature (Literature and the Moral Experience of Man; Reflections on Contemporary Foreign Literature), Sovetski pisatel', Leningrad, 1970. But there is an attempt in works like these, just as there is in A. Nuikin's important Novy mir article, to avoid crude attacks on Western art in general and its moral content in particular. Both Dneprov and Nuikin accept the proposition that the social and political systems of Western countries are not conducive to a moral outlook, are in fact immoral, and that the personal tragedies or immorality revealed in the particular works of art are the products, in part, of these systems just as is the dominant philosophy of art in the West - namely modernism. There remains, however,

the problem of those Western writers and artists who have swum against the capitalist/modernist tide like Böll, Grass, Aragon, Hemingway, Sillitoe, to name a few mentioned regularly in Sovie criticism. There also remains the problem, to quote Nuikin, that, "talent does not in every case desert the writer when he begins to preach reactionary, immoral ideas".(1) In the first place critics like Dneprov and Nuikin stress that the Wes has produced some fine art, that some Western art is morally exemplary because of its progressive content, because some great Western writers are able to see through capitalist values and come to hold progressive ideas. This is, indeed, a measure of their greatness. Such an attitude, of course, implicitly acknowledges the limitations of the 'class-reductionist' or a vulgar critique of art and reflects the common Soviet line which modifies it - i.e. great art transcends class values and has universal appeal. The second problem is a more difficult one. What are we to say of the moral content of Western writers like Pound and Montherlant, men of great artistic gifts but also of decidedly reactionary views ? How can we explain the apparent contradiction between great artistry and the reactionary views and morality ?

In more sophisticated Soviet thinking, a number of approaches can be discerned. The first which Nuikin himself appears to take is to deny the contradiction , and say that a poet like Pound, while conceded to be a technically able versifier can in no sense be called a "great artist", precisely because of hi

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(1) A. Nuikin: "Nravstvennoye, dukhovnoye, ideinoye," NM, No.1 1971, p. 196.

views. Another is to question the extent of the artist's "reaction" or to claim that it is neutralised by the power of the aesthetic (the final work of art), that a moral, humanistic "glow" persists in the work despite the ideas and intentions of the author. Here traditional Soviet (and Belinskian) ideas about the moral and humanistic qualities of art are employed, and the argument advanced that artistry, if powerful enough, is sufficient by itself to make a work moral. If it is not sufficently powerful to offset the "reaction" in a writer, then, by definition, this artistry is not great. Arguments along these lines, as will be seen, are employed consistently in Soviet criticism of Dostoyevski. In the context of morality art discussion generally they reinforce the 'aesthetic-humanist' stream of thought. They are certainly quite removed from most hard-line discussion of Western art in such books as Abalkin's, where he claims, in effect, that there are today no Western heirs to the great Western progressive artists of the past; only Soviet socialist realists, Soviet humanists can be called such heirs.(1) A similar line is found in the work of such doctrinaire critics as E.M. Metel'skaya and S. Lezhnev.(2)

The Soviet critique of modernism will be looked at in more

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(1) Cf. Oruzhiye gumanizma, p. 164: "It [Soviet literature] has gained world-wide recognition by dint of the fact that it has become the worthy heir of the humanist legacy, bequeathed by artists of the past."

(2) For Lezhnev's article see above. E.V. Metel'skaya's article is entitled "Esteticheskoye osmysleniye nravstvennogo oblika sovremennika" (Aesthetic Interpretation of the Moral Visage of Modern Man.) This appeared in a doctrinaire 1963 compilation entitled Voprosy marksistsko- leninskoi estetiki (Questions of Marxist-Leninist aesthetics), Politizdat, Moscow.

detail in relation to the discussion of socialist realism. It is clear, however, that for Soviet discussion of morality and art such a critique, in its vulgar form, contributes little more than abuse. In its 'aesthetic/humanist' form, however, more light is shed both on Western art and on the ideas of the 'aesthetic/humanist' critics themselves.

Before concluding this account, it will be helpful to discuss Soviet attitudes towards the problem of whether a work of art can or should be morally neutral. This problem, in turn, raises two issues. The first concerns the integrity or status of artistic language as a vehicle for moral ideas and sentiment The second relates to the problem of intentionality in art, and to the difficulties posed by the creative process with its possible distortion of moral intentions and feelings in the artist.

These two questions might be clarified by reference to certain Western discussion of them since a number of Western thinkers on art from time to time have raised these questions mainly in philosophical journals like the British Journal of Aesthetics or the (U.S.) Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism. One problem that attracts their attention is that of artistic communication; before moral discourse in art can begin there has to be an "agreed language" of communication. Does art provide this, or is it so subjective or arbitrary as to fail to do so ? One American critic, John Hospers, in an important article, "Implied Truth and Literature (1)

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(1) In JAAC, Fall, 1960, pp. 37-46.

rejects the extreme view that one man's art is more or less unintelligible to another man contemplating it. His attitudes seem typical of many Western aesthetic theorists today.(1) In their view, art may contain much illusion and its 'image-structure' implies a method of communication different from that of normal verbal and logical intercourse; but it may also be assumed that artists seek to make certain statements about the world or themselves and that these statements, or "truths" are at least understood, if not shared, by those perceiving the art.

> It is important, at the outset, that we should not discuss literature as "non-cognitive" ... we cannot easily relegate poetry to the category of emotive language. Perhaps the author is expressing a feelin but this does not prevent him from making statements which he believes to be true...(2)

The question of the comprehensibility and cognitive force of art is a separate one from that of its suitability for moral discussion. But clearly art has to be established as meaningful before this can begin. Hospers does not go on to the second question but it has emerged in modern Western aesthetics - in the extreme position of Benedetto Croce, who claimed that the artistic image and the aesthetic generally were morally neutral,(3) and also in the more recent treatment

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(1) Cf. Harold Osborne: Aesthetics and Art Theory; An Historical Introduction, Longmans, 1968.

(2) Hospers, op.cit., p. 37.

(3) Croce's position is taken up and elaborated upon by Professo L.W. Hyman in his "Literature and Morality in Contemporary Criticism", JAAC, Fall, 1971, pp. 83-86. Hyman argues that artistic activity causes men to suspend moral judgements because they are attracted to the things portrayed by art, irrespective of their moral worth. Art is indeed for Hyman a unifying force for men, but it uses no moral weapons to become this: "The crucial distinction for the artist is tha
(Footnote(3) cont. on page 192)

of R.W. Beardsmore in his book Art and Morality (Macmillans, London, 1971). This English aesthetician claims a distinctive but limited moral role for art as being "revelatory of great truths". The artist is not so much a moralist since moralising and the crassly instrumental use of art for moral purposes weakens artistry. But he does exert, in Beardsmore's view, a beneficial moral influence on people by presenting 'values' and 'truths' in ways that are arresting, dramatic and often new. These values were essentially those built up by the community and recognised by it as having a moral content. They were given extra force through their treatment in art. (Beardsmore does state that art may create new truths and invest them with a moral force simply by revealing them but he sees no practical role for art as a sort of "moral avant-garde".)

This question of the status of artistic language and its possible neutality in moral discourse is not, generally, touched upon in Soviet discussion. This is so because in all three streams of thought examined, it is assumed and often stated that art has a definite moral content and moral role and

(footnote (3) cont. from page 191)

> his characters and their actions make up an autonomous world in which the reader's feelings of praise and blame are transformed into a feeling of acceptance. It is only by leaving behind us all our particular judgements that we can unite with all men". (p.86) It could be pointed out however - and Soviet critics themselves would be the first to do so - that our "acceptance" of characters in art is precisely the result of a moral judgement, that in fact the aesthetic universalism emphasised by Hyman, has its base in the humanistic (and therefore morally good) qualities of the aesthetic. This 'universalism' makes art a decidedly moral phenomena - not an amoral one, as Hyman suggests.

and that the language of art does not obscure but rather enhances moral discourse. It clearly is cognitive, Soviet thinkers would insist - Marxist-Leninist epistemology asserts that decisively. Only in the most eccentric of 'personalist' discussion is there the suggestion that art is somehow morally neutral since it is expressive of numerous individual truths or points of view, i.e. it is inherently subjective as to be ineffective as a vehicle for moral sentiment. This extreme "reduction" of the 'personalist' position can be seen in the work of the critic D. Dar,(1) though in little other work.

The problem of intentionality in art and its relationship to moral content does not receive substantial treatment in Soviet writing. The Soviets do concede that, through the demands of a work's evolving "internal structure" as well as physical and temperamental circumstances experienced during the act of creation, the final product may turn out differently from what was intended. But none of their writing would suggest that immoral ideas could subvert moral intentions, that an author wanting to "make a moral point" in a work of art would find on completion of his work that he was no longer "making moral points". The change of intention is evident only as a reverse process - that is to say, "immoral" ideas and intentions can be, and often are, transmuted into a moral one in the course of sustained aesthetic activity. This is a

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(1) D. Dar: "Pis'mo molodomu drugu", Zvezda , No. 12. 1966. pp.99-109. From the sub-title of the article, Dar makes it clear that he is concerned to examine the "relationship existing between author and reader" and to establish whether this relationship can, in fact, be a moral one.

central point in the Soviet discussion of the aesthetic and its link with morality - as we have seen.

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By way of conclusion, we might say that moral sentiments an judgements, expressed in the artistic mode, are an important constituent of art, in the Soviet view. There is little doubt, in Soviet minds, however diverse Soviet discussion may b on subsidiary matters, that art is a moral force in society, that good art can and should inspire noble moral sentiments and conduct in men and that art whose conduct and tone is inspi ed by the values of Communism and related concepts like humanis will exert the most powerful and beneficial moral influence. As we have seen, however, Soviet thinkers do differ amongst themselves on the ways and means by which art exerts its moral influence, and the extent to which it retains its integrity and distinctiveness in the process. And these differences in approach in turn reflect differing influences on Soviet discussion. There is, to recapitulate, the crude, partisan application of Marxist principles, in the instrumentalist approach; the application of more liberal Marxist ideas, tempered by sentiments derived from pre-Marxist aesthetics in the 'aesthetic/humanist' approach, and the presence of the Belinski tradition in 'personalist' discussion as well as at times in the preceding approach. It should be noted that no one approach predominates, though the influence of the 'personalist' strain has declined in the past decade. It is unlikely that any one approach will dominate in the future, certainly if one assumes the continuation of present political conditions. Partisan instrumentalism remains too crude to be

the dominant approach, even in Soviet terms, given the growth of professionalism and sophistication in Soviet aesthetic inquiry since 1956. At the same time, the more liberal and interesting ideas discernible in the 'aesthetic/humanist' and 'personalist' streams will not, in this writer's opinion, be further developed. Thinkers here are hamstrung by the existence of official, partisan views on morality and on art; this leads them, in many cases, to obscure discussion of the distinctive and particular problems of treating moral themes in an artistic mode, with ritual talk of the rightness and suitability of certain Communist or Communist-orientated ideas for such themes.

This "check-mating of forces" in Soviet discussion has not enriched it. As long as it continues, important issues like the possible moral neutrality of art, and the treatment of non-Communist moralities in art will not attract original discussion from Soviet thinkers.

VII. ART AND SOCIETY

In previous discussion, we have examined those elements that are, for Soviet theorists, essential for the creation of art - namely what might be broadly categorised as 'aesthetic' and 'moral' experiences. It is now necessary to examine another element, whose presence, while not conceded - except by orthodox critics - to be sufficient by itself for the creation of art, is generally agreed to be an important force behind artistic activity. This element may, again, be broadly categorised as the 'social element'. And the question of its precise place in artistic activity, in other words, of its precise relationship to the artistic/aesthetic, is acknowledged by Soviet theorists to be an important and complex one. In their discussion of the social element in art, Soviet aestheticians draw heavily on the categories of historical materialism because, in the words of one theorist:

> The classics of Marxism - Leninism put forward and grounded very important methodological principles in the field of the theory of art. They offer a consistently materialistic interpretation of art. They have laid bare the dialectic of the mutual relationships between art and society, identified the profound connection between a writer's creativity and the social struggle, indicated the complex character of the mutual relationships between world-view and artistic method, and investigated the question of tendentiousness and partisanship in art. (1)

Another Soviet critic notes that Marx himself may not have provided all the answers to questions of art, but that he did offer "the /materialist/ key which allows deeper

(1) A. Iezuitov: "Sotsiologiya i iskusstvoznaniye", in B.S. Meilakh (ed.): Sodruzhestvo nauk i tainy tvorchestva, p. 38.

understanding of it". (1)

These "methodological principles" of Marxism-Leninism have, in fact, led to the development of two noticeable strands in Soviet thinking on the social element in art. One, the 'reductionist' or 'sociological', insists that art "reflects" social mores and aspirations and, by implication, is virtually indistinguishable from other forms of "reflection". It also holds the social component of art to be an undifferentiated whole and not a complex, many-sided phenomenon, whose relationship to the aesthetic component takes many forms. The other strand stands opposed to this one and is the basis of a more sophisticated critique. Both strands - the crude and the more complex - have their origin in the writings of the founders of Marxism.

Marx's and Engels' own critique of history and society itself was ambiguously formulated. It is true that after the Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, Marx had espoused what is usually described as a 'materialist' interpretation of history, a belief, to recapitulate the quotation in an expanded form, that

> the mode of production and material life determines the general character of the social, political and intellectual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being but on the contrary their social being that determines their consciousness. (2)

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(1) Cited from Yu. Borev : "Gnoseologicheskiye problemy obraznogo myshleniya" (Epistemological Problems of Thinking in Images), p.78 of A. Dymshits (ed.): K. Marks i aktual'nye voprosy estetiki i literaturovedeniya.

(2) See Chapter VI, p. 156.

Yet, in his discussion of Greek art in the Grundrisse, Marx himself does imply that a social explanation of all phenomena is not always sufficient - in other words that specific human activities cannot be reduced to and totally explained by their social origin and content. In the passage on Greek art, for example, Marx notes that such art "presupposes Greek mythology, i.e. Nature and social forms already worked over by folk imagination in an unconsciously artistic form",(1) (italics added). Marx here is saying that the artistic form results from something more than a "social factor", is not merely a "reflection of Greek society". The "social forms" of the Greeks'art may be a necessary precondition for Greek art but they are not a sufficient one - the aesthetic component - "the unconsciously artistic form" is also needed. Marx, of course, does not elaborate on this component or discuss why it is central for art.

Marx does attempt to provide a 'social' explanation for the appeal of this art to later generations by relating it to the immature stage of Greek society; but this is unconvincing for it emerges from Marx's account that a psychological factor - the appeal of the child-like and pristine for men irrespective of their social organisation - explains the continuing charm of Greek art. Furthermore, in his miscellaneous reviews and jottings on current European literature (the work of Sue and Balzac for example) which

(1) Karl Marx: A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy (including the Grundrisse), Progress, Moscow, 1970, p.216. I have altered a little the Soviet translation given there. My discussion of Marx's thoughts on Greek art draws substantially on points made in Eugene Kamenka: The Ethical Foundations of Marxism, pp.135-7.

are scattered throughout The Holy Family and elsewhere, Marx notes that the increasingly proletarian (lower class) content of European literature is related to the growing importance of this group and the urgency of its problems. But he does not elaborate upon the nature of the relationship or say how important 'social' factors have been for producing European literature.

Engels, in his own sparse comments on literature, makes it clear also - if only by implication - that the relationship between artistic activity and social forces and values is not a simple or predictable one. For example, in two important letters, written to two minor novelists, Margaret Harkness and Minna Kautsky (Karl Kautsky's mother) between 1886-87,(1) Engels both elucidates his ideas on the ingredients of realism and raises the issue (though not directly) of "social determination" in literature. Realistic literature, Engels says, is about "typical characters in typical situations"; to understand the typical and discern it one has to have a feeling for social Tendenz, (broadly - the dominant, "essential" social trend of an era, which clearly, for Engels, in the late 19th century, is identified with the aspirations and activities of revolutionary and workers' movements.) (2)

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(1) Important extracts from these letters are cited in Peter Demetz: Marx, Engels and the Poets, University of Chicago Press, 1967, pp.129 and 132.

(2) The term Tendenz was actually first used by the critics of the Young Germany group (in particular by Karl Gutzkow) in the early decades of the 19th century. This group espoused ideas about "socially concerned art", expressed, albeit, in a highly romantic form and felt that such art needed to display awareness of the Tendenz of the times, as its distinguishing characteristic. Engels' thinking on art, in his early years, was influenced by this group. In his later letter to Miss Harkness, Engels complained that she had not portrayed social Tendenz accurately in her novel City Girl.

Balzac is cited and praised by Engels as a great realist writer (as opposed to a mere photographer like Zola). Yet Balzac's case presents an anomaly: a writer with legitimist sympathies and a strong sympathy with and knowledge of French upper class values is able to portray realistically all levels of French society (his Comédie Humaine) and especially the lower orders (the Tendenz in French society) with which, prima facie, he would have little acquaintance. Clearly, his art and its content could "not be reduced" to his legitimist sentiments and upper class sympathies. Other explanations (primarily artistic) are needed to supplement the social ones, for us to understand why Balzac's picture of society took its particular form.

The argument that emerges only faintly from Engels' two letters on realism - that a sociological explanation of art is insufficient, particularly in the case of great artists - comes out with much greater clarity in his later work - specifically in a series of letters written to colleagues and friends during 1890. Partly under the influence of the positivism of Taine, who emphasised the role of extra-economic determinants such as climate and race in the production of art, Engels stresses that the socio-economic base (the mode of production in social life) did not always exert a direct and immediate influence on human affairs; in a letter to Joseph Bloch of September 21, 1890, he notes that:

> The economic system is the basis [of social change] but the various elements of the superstructure also ... exercise their influence upon the course of historical

> struggles ... We make history ourselves, but under very definite assumptions and conditions. Amongst these the economic ones are ultimately decisive. But the political ones, etc., indeed even the [cultural] traditions which haunt human minds also play a part ... (1)

We might legitimately conclude from this passage that the appearance of a specific work of art at a specific time may be due to a combination of factors, cultural, possibly political, almost certainly personal, mediating between it and the socio-economic base predominant at that time. These may well modify or lessen the impact of socio-economic effects altogether as a factor behind the appearance of a specific work; and their precise interrelationship, the strength and nature of each of them will be crucial in explaining the particularity as opposed to the general features of the work of art in question.

The effects of socio-economic processes upon aesthetic activity, then, are complex and by no means easily predictable. This is because socio-economic processes are not the sole cause and determinant of aesthetic activity and, where they are operative, their content may, in turn, be determined by the reaction of the mediating elements back upon them. In addition the field upon which they operate - in this case artists and artistic traditions - is not a homogeneous, uniform one. The economic causes will produce different effects according to the "variations within the field" to use the language of physics.

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(1) Cited from T. Borodulina (ed.): Marx, Engels, Lenin. On Historical Materialism, Progress, Moscow, 1972. p.294.

These points need to be made in any elaboration of the materialist critique of art. They were not made directly by Marx and Engels at least in their application of historical materialism to aesthetic activity. But they can be developed from those sections of Marx's and Engels' work where art is being referred to in more than sociological terms. And they have been so developed by those Soviet critics who view the social content of art in more complex terms. Before examining their ideas, however, we should consider the views of their generally, but not exclusively, doctrinaire opponents who still insist on a reductionist, sociological critique of art and who draw inspiration from Marx and Engels simple model of economic determinism, and, more important, from the ideas of G.V. Plekhanov.

More than anyone perhaps, Plekhanov helped to perpetuate the genetic fallacy in much Soviet discussion of the social in art - the notion that the character of art and individual works of art are explainable entirely in terms of their social origin. We have already seen how this made Plekhanov, for all the erudition and scholarship he brought to Marxist criticism of art, somewhat limited and insensitive on the question of the "aesthetic essence" of art. A number of commentators - notably the Soviet critic, P.A. Nikolayev

and the Western one, L. Baxandall [1] have suggested that Plekhanov's critique of art was not so crude or 'reductionist' as popularly believed; but the fact remains that in his mature writing on art - in the Third and subsequent Pismo bez adresa (1900) and his Iskusstvo i obshchestvennaya zhizn' (1912-13), amongst others, Plekhanov's researches into the art of primitive and contemporary cultures led him to the conclusion that artistic activity was inspired primarily by the social values and aims of particular societies, i.e. was above all a social activity, and that the criterion for artistic excellence was social utility or worth. His criticism has been called 'sociological' and 'utilitarian' both because it stressed the necessity for sociological explanations of all aesthetic activity and because it applied purely social (utilitarian) standards for evaluating art. The sociological explanation and the utilitarian evaluation were, of course, closely interrelated and the interrelationship was maintained during the development of Soviet 'sociological' theories of art from the 1920s onwards. It was also maintained, with something often added - an authoritarian

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(1) Nikolayev discusses Plekhanov in his Vozniknoveniye marksistskogo literaturovedeniya v Rossii (The Rise of Marxist Theory of Literature in Russia), Izd-vo MGU-a, Moscow, 1970. He notes that Plekhanov did not simply reduce aesthetic questions to social questions and that "he accepted the positions of classical aesthetics on the specific quality of art which resides in the image" (p.253). Nikolayev has written a book-length study of Plekhanov entitled "Esteticheskiye i literaturniye teorii G.V. Plekhanova" (The Aesthetic and Literary Theories of G.V. Plekhanov), Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1968.

L. Baxandall, for his part, in his "Marxism and Aesthetics; A Critique of the Contribution of George Plekhanov", JAAC, Spring, 1967, pp.267-279, denied that Plekhanov was a 'sociologist' or a utilitarian on aesthetic matters, because of "Kantian strains" in his work. Another American philosopher of art, W.H. Truitt, attacked Baxandall's view in an article entitled "Mr. Baxandall's Revisionism: Marxism and Aesthetics", JAAC, Summer, 1970, pp.511-514.

tone resulting from the totalitarianism of the Soviet (Stalinist) State. Art had to display certain social values for political ends. (This authoritarianism was absent from the work of Marx, Engels and Plekhanov). Plekhanov's influence was more directly felt during the 1920's when a number of Soviet critics, noticeably V.F. Pereverzev and A.S. Tseitlin, made attempts to develop his crude application of historical materialism to art. Pereverzev's work in particular was very important, and as head of the Literature Section of the State Academy of Arts in Moscow, he came to dominate Soviet Marxist literary criticism in the 1920's. In 1929 he wrote:

> Genuine literary scholarship must feel its way into a work of art, to that point where objective presentation shades into the subject, where the object portrayed and the portrayer form an organic whole. It is at this point that we come to that being which underlies a work of art, to that social reality where in the living production processes of society, the object and the subject are organically fused. (1)

He noted further that the stylistic features of an artist, as well as the general tone of his art were determined not by

> the personality of the writer. The real basis of style must be sought where the source of the social law lies, in those production relationships in which the social character which is projected in the images of art is formed. (2)

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(1) V.F. Pereverzev: "Neobkhodimiye predposylki marksistskogo literaturovedeniya" (The Necessary Prerequisites of a Marxist Theory of Literature), pp.14-15 of the 1928 compilation Literaturovedenive, GKhN, Moscow, 1928.

(2) V.F. Pereverzev: "Problemy marksistskogo literaturovedeniya" (Problems of a Marxist Theory of Literature), Literatura i Marksizm, No. 2, 1929, pp.20-21.

For reasons that will be apparent below, Pereverzev's 'sociologism' came under increasing attack despite its often brilliant formulation in critical articles. In 1930 he was denounced for Menshevism and dismissed from his job.(1) Totalitarian pressures - Stalin's moves against independent thinkers in all fields - were important here, in addition to the deficiencies of Pereverzev's ideas.

'Sociologism' - the tendency to reduce all aesthetic questions in art criticism to questions of social origin and class ideology - received a further setback in the 'thirties, particularly after 1932 - the year that Engels' letter to Margaret Harkness was published for the first time in Russian. The letter occasioned sustained argument in the pages of the journal Literaturny kritik between 1933-35 on the validity of the sociological explanation of art. One writer and defender of sociologism, Professor I. Nusinov, claimed that Balzac's class milieu and class ideology, complex as they were, were of central importance in explaining the strength of Balzac's realism and his choice of themes and characters. A number of other critics disagreed with him -

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(1) V.F. Pereverzev himself is still treated warily in the U.S.S.R., possibly because 'sociologism' is still officially viewed with disfavour, and he steadfastly refused to recant his views (cf. discussion of him and his ideas in V.I. Kulyeshov (ed.): Sovetskoye literaturovedenive za 50 let (Soviet Theory of Literature over 50 Years), Izd-vo MGU-a, Moscow, 1967, p.28 et seq.

It is interesting to note, however, that in 1971 Nauka Publishing House reissued Pereverzev's Literatura drevnei Rusi (The Literature of Ancient Russia) presumably because it contained a less rigorous application of his sociological method. More important perhaps, the republication of this work coincided with a growth of interest, amongst Soviet critics, in the fields of comparative and ancient literature.

notably the philosopher, M. Rozental' and the theorists of art, I. Sergiyevski and M. Lifshits. The first two men in particular, concentrated on the purely artistic sources of Balzac's realism, implying that realistic truths, the ability to be realistic were a feature of all great artists, qua artists, whatever their social origin.

Sociologism has not been a dominant feature of Soviet discussion, certainly after 1956. It has appeared in a direct form in such works as E. Safronov's book O sotsiologicheskom analize v literaturnoi kritike (On Sociological Analysis in Literary Criticism), Vilnius, 1960, and in a more modified and sophisticated form in Yu. Davydov's recent study, Iskusstvo kak sotsiologicheski fenomen (Art as a Sociological Phenomenon), Nauka, Moscow, 1970. Safronov makes it clear that all questions of art, all aesthetic questions can be "reduced" to social ones and explained by sociological methods; Davydov, however, is interested in applying sociologism mainly to illuminate a particular problem in aesthetics namely that of the "sociology of taste in art", the question of the relationship, in other words, between the content of art at particular periods and the tastes of its audience. (He looks specifically at public artistic taste in classical Greece, 5 - 4th century. B.C.) He admits, however, that a sociology of taste is inadequate for dealing with such problems as the epistemology of Greek art - the question, in other words, of how Greek artists specifically grappled with reality and how they expressed their knowledge in art.

One of the reasons why sociologism is a minority trend in post-Stalin Soviet aesthetics is that it is condemned by both orthodox critics and by professional theorists like M.B. Khrapchenko, L.I. Timofeyev, A. Iezuitov and others. Most of their attacks are often indirect in that they come in the form of general studies of the social content of art, studies which illuminate the extent to which the operation of social factors in general is modified by demands peculiar to the artistic process - those elements of contingency, coincidence, intuition and so on that influence the working of the tvorchestvo. These studies also, as we shall see, highlight other factors that are operative in artistic production - factors of author-personality, cultural tradition and so on and they stress that no one factor is of sole or absolute importance in determining the nature of particular works and that each factor is, in turn, modified by the operation of the others. They stress, too, the complexity of the category 'social', saying that it is rarely defined in terms of something quite determinate and simple like the objective, external values or demands of particular classes, but that it embraces both the 'subjective' cultural positions and the perceptions of particular artists as to what their social values amount to. For these writers, to say that "art is primarily determined by social forces", "is the sum of these forces" is merely to obscure rather than to clarify precisely what factors are responsible for the creation of particular works at particular times. This indirect indictment of sociologism runs through a compilation like Art and Society, edited by A. Dymshits. On occasions the sociological method is attacked systematically and

directly rather than indirectly. Such an attack is found in A. Iezuitov's important article "Sotsiologiya i iskusstvoznaniye", cited earlier (p. 196). Iezuitov attacks both the mechanistic nature of sociologism and its identification of aesthetic categories with sociological ones. The "mechanistic approach" is stated to exist in the crude determinism of the sociologists , their assumption that artists of a particular society, or in the smaller view, a particular social milieu within a society, are bound to reflect uniformly and consistently the particular social mores of the wider group. This view, however, as we have noted, and as Iezuitov implies, fails to distinguish clearly the cause and the field on which it operates, to suggest that the same cause will produce similar effects over a wide range of fields. This drawback becomes particularly glaring in the case of Soviet discussion of modernist art - where sociologistic interpretations abound and are duly criticised. In some of these, the "social ethics of Western society" and "Western capitalism" are treated as undifferentiated wholes, stated to be the sufficient cause of modernism and to be absorbed in a uniform fashion, by all Western artists, whatever their personality or viewpoint.

This problem leads to Iezuitov's second point - the sociologist's denial or lack of interest in the spetskifika of art as an activity having its own features which modify the application of social factors. Iezuitov notes that, of all people, artists are perhaps the most idiosyncratic.

They are certainly the least able to be grouped together as a homogeneous "field", passively waiting the effects of social determinants. He concludes that art may well be influenced by the values of a particular society, but that

> art of a [particular] social formation may be extraordinarily heterogeneous and diverse, both according to its composition and the quality of its aesthetic principles. (1)

He also asserts that:-

> the most balanced and fruitful way of studying art lies in studying its genres as phenomena in which ... are manifested universal socio-aesthetic regularities in the development of art, and in which at the same time there exists the unique creative originality of the artist. (2)

Sociologism, then, fails to clarify properly either these laws or the originality of the artist. Also, and this is an important point often not stressed in Soviet discussion, it makes aesthetic criticism, the proper evaluation of art, redundant or at best pedestrian. If art is merely a social "reflection" it can be praised or blamed only for the clinical accuracy or otherwise, of its "reflection". Such criticism is, however, the criticism of a cataloguer.

Yet art, as Soviet aestheticians so constantly stress, is more than an act of reflection. It is the result of an interplay between the creative consciousness and the social environment, the subjective and objective factors operating in aesthetic situations. And sociologism in

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(1) Ibid., p.47.

(2) Ibid., p.43.

Soviet aesthetics has in large measure been undermined by the persistent emphasis given by Soviet aestheticians since 1956 to all these factors and in particular to the role of consciousness in art. The importance of the 'values' debate of 1958-62 for this should not be underestimated, with its concern to clarify which products of the human consciousness and human cognition are largely moulded by socio-economic forces and which are not. This concern pervades much philosophical and specifically aesthetic discussion throughout the 1960's in the Soviet Union, particularly that at an April 1965 Philosophical Congress in Moscow devoted to "the problems of dialectical materialism". It recurs in the numerous sborniki devoted, often verbosely and repetitively, to "problems of aesthetics and creativity". The 1968 compilation Art and Society is probably the best of its kind in its treatment of the role of consciousness in art, with such monographs as K. Dolgov's "Object-Subject; Objective and Subjective in art"; M. Ovsyannikov's "Creative Freedom and Moral Responsibility" and Y. Gromov's "World Outlook and Artistic Originality". The discussion of consciousness in art has also been invigorated through serious attempts by Soviet aestheticians and philosophers generally to use, or rather creatively adapt, the propositions of historical materialism in order to provide a better understanding of a phenomenon like culture. Certainly the discussion does not depart in any sense from the jargon or the concepts of historical materialism. But the overwhelming trend would appear to be towards a less crude application of these in relation to something as complex as culture.

The discussion on consciousness in Soviet aesthetics does touch upon a central problem that must be considered first in any examination of the social element in art. This is the problem of the relationship between the subjective factors in art - the artist's personality and ideas - and the 'objective', that is to say, those things that enter art "from the outside", i.e. the actual social reality described, the values and mores that exist in particular societies. Our discussion of Soviet theory of knowledge has illustrated the dangers, to aesthetics, of absolutising one or other element.

And the standard middle-of-the-road Soviet view, expressed by many more doctrinaire and professional aestheticians alike, is that their relationship in the case of art can be quite complex. It is clear that one (subjective) cannot be reduced to the other; it is equally clear, however, that the two cannot be divorced entirely from each other. Thus the Soviet aesthetician, Y. Gromov, notes that a "scientific" analysis of the relationship between subjective and objective in art "must proceed on the basis ... that ... the unity [of these factors] is of a complex, dialectical nature". (1) Another writer - the theorist of literature, M. Khrapchenko - states that when subjective factors are uppermost in art and the creative powers of a writer are divorced from objective reality, then "false ideas" result:

> The history of literature knows [of instances] when talented writers tried to plumb the depths of this or that social phenomenon, proceeding from a false idea. (2)

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(1) A. Dymshits (ed.): Art and Society, p.124.

(2) M.B. Khrapchenko: Tvorcheskaya individual'nost' pisatelya i razvitiye literatury, pp.11-12.

While Khrapchenko, in particular, warns against 'absolutising' the social (objective) element in art, he stresses that the assumption that the artist has no link with society and is expressing no reaction to it, however disguised and complex, does "not have sufficient foundation and cannot explain many complex literary phenomena". (1) These attitudes are all evident in the general Soviet line on Balzac. Here it is held that the "social factors" - class ideology, and milieu - very clearly influenced Balzac's art. The class was the French aristocracy in the years after the 1815 Restoration; the class ideology was legitimism - i.e. contempt for the bourgeois, "illegitimate" monarch Louis Phillipe who took the throne in 1830, as well as a certain anti-capitalism, that is, antagonism towards the entrepreneurial, non-aristocratic elements the King represented. Balzac's art, of course, cannot be reduced to legitimist propaganda as the Soviet "sociological" critic Professor Nusinov implied it could in the 'thirties. Nor, however, can legitimist beliefs be completely divorced from it, as Nusinov's opponent, Rozental' claimed. The greatness of Balzac's art rests, as Engels suggested, on his ability to expose the essence of capitalist society, to lay bare, as Balzac explains in the preface to the Comédie Humaine, the social constants and trends operating behind all the seeming contingencies, confusion, chance happenings and so on of human life. The strength of this exposure, in the standard Soviet view, derives from Balzac's conscious intention to expose - an intention springing both from his legitimist dislike of capitalist society and from his position as an artist. Generally this exposure was sustained at a high level; any weaknesses in

(1) Ibid., p.12.

it - evident, in the Soviet view, in some of the portraits of Père Goriot, like that of the Vicomtesse de Beauséant, were due to "contradictions" in his ideas, that is to say, an abhorrence for certain aristocratic mores, on the one hand and a high regard for aristocratic ideals on the other. The weaknesses were not due to a fundamental contradiction between the legitimist and the artist, between his social and artistic values. Furthermore, the standard Soviet view that art - free of such a contradiction - is somehow strengthened, seems a plausible one. The feeling in the reader or percipient that what is emerging as art is somehow alien to the author and his original intention, the realisation that there is a tension between the two, arguably could undermine the total artistic impact of the particular work and the coherence of what it depicted. It would make the percipient wonder why the author proceeded with it in the first place and query the sincerity of the finished product. It leads ultimately, to the sort of ridicule that Khrapchenko legitimately heaps upon Rozental's critique of Balzac in the 'thirties. Speaking of the latter, Khrapchenko notes:

> One can only marvel at how powerless and insignificant Balzac himself was, and how wise and all-knowing was that realism of his standing somewhere in the wings. (1)

That is, it is foolish to suggest - as Rozental' did - that Balzac's art emerged from a man totally uninfluenced by particular social values and unconscious that he was making a statement about society. This is not to suggest

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(1) Ibid., p.37.

that the relationship between the "socio-ideological motivation" of an author (what he thinks and feels under the influence of objective factors) and his final work of art is not a complex one; it is to deny the idea of a complete rift between them, to suggest that the most subjective, creative element is not uninfluenced by certain objective conditions, particularly in the case of writers deemed by Soviet critics to be good, if not great.

All too often the idea of a rift is posited where none exists, and this factor is stressed in Soviet writing by critics like Khrapchenko, G.N. Pospelov, V. Etov, and others in relation to Dostoyevski. Superficially there would seem to be a rift - the humanistic thrust of the "subjective" tvorchestvo and the final work of art, and, at the other end, the perverse philosophy and petty bourgeois values of the "objective" social milieu in which Dostoyevski lived, i.e. the Russian meshchanstvo. How, then, does one overcome the rift? Here Soviet critics emphasise the need to take a "complex, dialectical" approach to the question of the interrelationship between objective and subjective elements in art. This means first a many-sided analysis of the objective elements themselves, the values of the social milieu in question as depicted by Dostoyevski and others who wrote about it. Can this milieu in toto be labelled simply 'reactionary', 'progressive', 'popular', or whatever? And can the author's ideology, developed initially from its values be similarly labelled?

As the subsequent and special consideration of the treatment of Dostoyevski in Soviet criticism will show, they cannot. In short the social content of a work of art, particularly the social milieu and the ideology of its creator should not be seen in pat and uncomplex terms. Writing of Dostoyevski, the Osnovy makes points that would be endorsed by most Soviet critics:

> The question [of social values and influences in Dostoyevski] should not be put dogmatically: was or was not Dostoyevski a writer of the people [narodny] ? It is put dialectically; which aspects of his creative activity possess features of genuine narodnost', and which aspects, expressing a crying contradiction to narodnost', show evidence of a concession to reaction, or even of a decline of the artist under the influence of unfavourable social conditions? (1)

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While, then, objective factors are not insignificant in determining the content of works of art, Soviet critics, almost without exception, do acknowledge that their role is often modified by the process of artistic creativity. It is stated especially by literary theorists like Timofeyev, for example, that what he calls the 'immediate' (neposredstvenny) artistic level of a work - the level of technique, as it were, which involves such things as character development, the internal dynamic of a work's plot or structure and so on - may modify an author's original intention - his ideas and motives for writing that are shaped initially and partly by the objective factors. Timofeyev writes in

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(1) Osnovy, p.332.

this connection:

> The concrete character [of such things as characterisation, plot dynamic and so on] cannot be arbitrarily changed by the writer depending on his ideological evaluation of them. The artistic image, Gorki wrote ... is always broader and deeper than ideas. (1)

For example, it is clear from Tolstoi's notebooks that he did not intend the death of Vronski in Anna Karenina but that the internal dynamic of Vronski's character, as it developed, made this death inevitable. Soviet critics consider, however, that artistic factors do not significantly alter or reverse the artist's conception of the scope of his work; they merely give rise to unintended ideas about its content. Soviet critics, furthermore, make it clear that "modifications of intent" occurring during the creative process can be due to social as much as to artistic factors in the first place. For example, changes in external reality may make the artistic portrayal of a certain type inaccurate and force the author to update it; the projected development of characters themselves may be modified not merely because of artistic logic but because they are taken from real life situations and developments which are changing. These observations by Soviet critics seem obviously of relevance and sound. Many authors, particularly naturalist artists, indeed, may have no firm intentions or preconceptions at the beginning of their work other than to reflect the evolving pattern of a particular social milieu, to show their central characters as evolving in interaction with

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(1) L.I. Timofeyev: Osnovy teorii literatury, Prosveshcheniye, Moscow, 1966, p.12.

this milieu (Goncharov's novel Oblomov is cited by Khrapchenko as evidence of this). In these cases, of course, the argument about the modifying power of artistic technique becomes irrelevant; there are no initial specific intentions and ideas to be modified.

It is noticeable that most Soviet critics (the 'sociological' excepted), discussing the genesis and the social context of art, do not regard any one factor such as social values, artistry, the personality of the artist and so on as an absolute in itself which, alone, is both necessary and sufficient to explain the origin of a particular work. There is great stress on the inter-relationship amongst all three factors working together for the production of art, a great emphasis on proving that there is no necessary rift between them, no hierarchy of causal factors. Much of this approach reflects, of course, the application of the dialectical method to literary and artistic matters. That is to say, it is accepted as central that literature, for example, is a socio-historical phenomenon but that it is also a complex one whose complexity is due to the relationship between the socio-historical and other elements. The "dialectic" between these is, above all, what interests the Soviet critic, and taking a dialectical view of them, understanding the complex and often changing nature of their relationship is important for him, influenced as he is by the precepts of dialectical materialism and trained as he is to seek out and understand the specific nature (spetsifika) of the literary process in terms of this complexity. Certainly,

the "dialectical" approach predominates amongst professional Soviet aestheticians, as it does, in a more naive and ritualised form, amongst the more doctrinaire critics. It is, for example, uppermost in an important two-volume compilation entitled Problemy khudozhestvennoi formy sotsialisticheskogo realizma (Problems of Artistic Form in Socialist Realism), Nauka, Moscow, 1971 which features contributions by many of the better Soviet theorists of art - such as M. Bakhtin, N. Gei, V.V. Kozhinov and others. Discussing points made in this compilation, one reviewer wrote:

> Is it generally just to pose a question about a hierarchy of causative factors? Rather it seems necessary to speak of all these factors as components of a single complex that can be called "aesthetic relationships". Changes, movements in a system of aesthetic relationships always totally affect each of the components. (1)

This dialectical approach comes out strongly in Soviet treatment of what could be called "psychological factors" in art - the question, primarily, of the artist's personality and temperament - and their relationship to the social (objective) factors. It should be stressed that Soviet critics, both doctrinaire and professional, do not deny the substantial role the artistic personality plays in creativity. Even if the artist is a man of noticeably bland and pedestrian personality it is highly unlikely, in the

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(1) G. Belaya: "Iskusstvo i deistvitel'nost': poetika sotsialisticheskogo realizma" (Art and Reality: the Poetics of Socialist Realism), Zvezda, No.3, 1973, p.216.

Soviet view, that his personality will not influence his art in some way, making it a little different from that of other artists. This is shown in the way he reacts to his social milieu, the slightly different slant he gives to it, its ideology and social values. This is often expressed in terms of an aesthetic ideal that exists in the mind of the artist, helping him to make sense of his world and guiding the shape and content of the final work of art. One critic has written:

> Aesthetic perception is nothing but the finding of an aesthetic ideal in reality ... the initial stage of the aesthetic self-assertion of a person. (1)

In other words, if one grants the importance of social beliefs, values and so on for art, one also has to grant that these usually are present in art through the mediation of the artist's psyche, and can profitably be discussed in the context of the latter.

Whilst stressing the importance of psychological factors, Soviet critics do not, in the main, make them the central consideration behind the genesis of art. For reasons of doctrine (the place of histomat categories in their thinking) and in order to give a "dialectical" explanation of the genesis of art, Soviet critics react sharply to attempts to absolutise psychological factors, which they call 'psychologism'. One Soviet critic, M. Markov did, in fact, do this in a recent study, Iskusstvo

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(1) A. Kharchev: "Aesthetics and Morality: Some Definitions" in A. Dymshits (ed.): Art and Society, p.93.

kak protsess: osnovy funktsional'noi teorii iskusstva (Art as Process: The Fundamentals of a Functional Theory of Art), Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1970. Markov was applying the methodology of psychology to examine aesthetic phenomena, concentrating on those personal (psychological) processes, important for the creative artist. This led, in his work, to undue stress on the microcosmic aspects of art, to ignoring the broad question of the object of aesthetic activity and its social dimension, to the advocacy of art as a "total system of psychological processes". (1) These faults of 'psychological' criticism are highlighted in most Soviet text-books on aesthetics and in criticism like that of M. Belaya in her article "O sovremennoi kritike" (On Contemporary Criticism), Zvezda, No.11, 1970.

Much of this criticism, like Belaya's article, was directed specifically against that writing and criticism of the early 'sixties that had a strongly "personal" flavour to it (labelled 'personalist' by this writer). It condemned the 'personalists' excessive preoccupation with the poetic and artistic persona as the main-spring of all art, as the central thing to be examined in order to explain art. To rebuff criticism written in this vein, Belaya, in particular, claims it led to an amateurish and coy psychologising in which the insights of this discipline were ignored and terms like 'sincerity', 'personal honesty' and so on, were used instead to discuss the psychology of an artist.

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(1) Markov, op. cit., p.29.

Outside 'personalist' criticism, however, there were more scientific and professional attempts, evident in Markov's book and in studies like B. Bursov's *roman-trilogiya* on Dostoyevski, to use *bona fide* concepts and terms from psychology to explain the genesis of art. This, perhaps, more than 'personalist' criticism, has attracted the ire of most Soviet commentators because of its relatively professional and rigorous psychologism. Soviet annoyance with such psychologism has two main causes. First, there is the demonstrable inadequacy of criticism that reduces all questions of art to question of psychology, an inadequacy similar to that found in sociological criticism. Second, there are the strong overtones of Freudianism in this criticism.

Generally, Soviet critics, in attacking psychologism are quite sound and commonsensical. Indeed commonsense observations about art as much as the influence of historical materialism motivate their remarks here. It *is* a fact that the genesis and content of a particular work cannot be explained in psychological terms alone. It would, for example, be foolhardy to claim that all of Dostoyevski's characters are simply reflections or extensions of himself and his admittedly complex personality. In the case of certain novels like *Besy*, there is documentary evidence, from Dostoyevski's letters and notebooks, that events happening in the outside world, non-psychological factors such as the *Nechayev* affair provided the initial impetus for writing. Soviet critics concede, as we shall see, that the personality of an author may interact with the

particular types or figures derived from reality to produce modifications and developments in characters. It is, however, the task of the responsible critic, they say, to determine the extent and nature of this process, not to claim that everything in a work of art is derived from its creator's psyche.

For them, the purely psychologistic approach ignores the question of other external influences on the artist - those of a particular literary trend or of another artist either on his whole work or on specific aspects of it. Yet for the bulk of Soviet critics and theorists of art these questions are vital. Clearly the personality may determine that external social influences are perceived in a particular form, with a particular slant; but equally clearly its own activity and "substance" are, in the general Soviet view, shaped and influenced by these external factors.

The 'Freudian' overtones of purely psychologistic criticism are often noted in Soviet discussion. In this connection it should be stressed that there is, in both Soviet aesthetics and other disciplines, a standard line on Freud that is repeated in most 'professional' discussion - for instance by M. Khrapchenko at the beginning of his Tvorcheskaya individual'nost' i razvitiye literatury, and by the critic V.R. Shcherbina in his compilation Puti iskusstva

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For them, the purely psychologistic approach ignores the question of other external influences on the artist - those of a particular literary trend or of another artist either on his whole work or on specific aspects of it. Yet for the bulk of Soviet critics and theorists of art these questions are vital. Clearly the personality may determine that external social influences are perceived in a particular form, with a particular slant; but equally clearly its own activity and "substance" are, in the general Soviet view, shaped and influenced by these external factors.

The 'Freudian' overtones of purely psychologistic criticism are often noted in Soviet discussion. In this connection it should be stressed that there is, in both Soviet aesthetics and other disciplines, a standard line on Freud that is repeated in most 'professional' discussion - for instance by M. Khrapchenko at the beginning of his Tvorcheskaya individual'nost' i razvitiye literatury, and by the critic V.R. Shcherbina in his compilation Puti iskusstva

(Paths of Art). [1] Freud and his ideas, it is held, are the product of the decadence of Western society. Their excessive stress on the psyche and its problems reflect the atomisation and alienation inherent in this society, where social values, a sense of social harmony and cooperation, the very importance of "the social" are downplayed and weakened as a result of these processes. Freudianism is typical of a number of Western theories (like modernism and existentialism) that ignore questions of social reality, that concentrate on the personal, the irrational, the fantastic etc. Freudianism, in the Soviet view, indeed, has been an inspiration for similar sorts of theories in other fields. It is this sort of reasoning that enables the Soviet Kratki slovar' po estetike (Short Dictionary on Aesthetics) to stage categorically, under its quite substantial entry on the subject, that:

> Freudianism is the theoretical base for such formalist tendencies in contemporary bourgeois art as surrealism, naturalism, abstractionism. (2)

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(1) Cf. V.R. Shcherbina: Puti iskusstva, Goslitizdat, Moscow, 1970, p.297 et seq. Here he discusses in some detail Freud's theories and compares them with Jung's. He adds that both reflect "the essence of modernist mythology ... the universalisation of laws relating, above all, to the depressive (depressivnive) processes of bourgeois society and the urge to build on their foundations a general model of existence". (p.310)

Cf. also: " ... Freud was one of the most prominent philosophers of the bourgeois decadence and his psychological views are deeply imbued with idealism." A. Dymshits: "Protiv ustupchivosti v ideino-esteticheskoi bor'be", Kommunist, No. 11, 1972, p.119.

(2) M.F. Ovsyannikov and V.A. Razumny (eds.): Kratki slovar' po estetike, Politizdat, Moscow, 1964, p.404.

Freudianism, as such, of course stands opposed to Marxism, to the categories of historical materialism and, more particularly, to the spirit and ideas of Soviet aesthetics. Soviet critics like Khrapchenko who attack both Freud and Soviet psychologism, do not suggest that the latter is always expressed in purely Freudian terms (i.e. that characters in literature are motivated simply by their sexual libido, their subconscious ego and so on, to express Freud's ideas crudely). But they make it clear that it introduces into Soviet aesthetics feelings and ideas that are typical of Western thought and are alien by their very nature to Soviet society and its ideals.

The word 'psychologism' - psikhologizm - is, in the main, clearly a derogatory one in Soviet parlance. It also has bad connotations in Marxist criticism generally. Georg Lukacs considers that psychologistic criticism ignores

> the representation of the real and complete, that is social, human being, and slowly transforms the individual into a shapeless bundle, an uncontrolled torrent of free undisciplined associations ... (1)

Nevertheless, amongst Soviet critics like A. Iezuitov (2) who examine the role of psychological factors in art in some depth, the term 'psychologism' is not always treated as one

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(1) Georg Lukacs: Writer and Critic and other Essays (a Collection of Essays, edited and translated by Professor A. Kahn), Merlin Press, London, 1970, p.106.

(2) Cf. his "Problema psikhologizma v otsenke i literature" (The Problem of Psychologism in Evaluation and Literature), pp.39-57 of V.A. Kovalov and A.I. Pavlovski (eds.): Problema psikhologizma v sovetskoi literature.

See also A.G. Kovalov: Psikhologiya literaturnogo tvorchestva (The Psychology of Literary Creativity), Izd-vo Leningradskogo Universiteta, Leningrad, 1960.

of abuse. Iezuitov, for example, concedes that psychological factors are important in art - at two levels - and that Soviet criticism must be 'psychologistic' in coming to grips with them. The psychologism becomes perverse, and worthy of condemnation when the criticism extends beyond these levels.

At one level psychologism is justified when the critic probes the inner world of the artists' characters themselves, tries to see what motivates them, what influence the outside world has on them and how successfully all this is translated into art. These, Iezuitov claims, are legitimate interests for a Soviet critic, provided that they do not become the sole interest. They are sanctioned, for Iezuitov, by the work of N.G. Chernyshevski who claimed that

> psychological analysis is [one] of the most substantial qualities giving strength to creative talent. (1)

Chernyshevksi himself, as a critic, was the first to highlight the innovative psychological techniques used by Leo Tolstoi in his Sevastopol'skiye rasskazy of 1855 (i.e. the early use of interior monologue, the introduction of other characters by way of observations about them in the mind of the main character, and so on).

At another level, psychologism can emerge legitimately in the Soviet critic's examination of the psychology of the artist himself and in his discussion of the role played by an artist's personality in the genesis and content of his work. Iezuitov makes it clear, however, that this role

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(1) Iezuitov, op. cit., p.53.

is to be regarded as a limited one. In this connection he specifically attacks what he calls a "third level" of psychologism. Such amounts to pure and therefore perverse psychologism because through it the critic will reduce all aspects of an artist and his work solely to questions of psychology. Even in the case of modernist writers like Woolf, Gide and Proust (whose art is intimately bound up with their interior world and seems, indeed, merely an extension of it) purely psychologistic explanations of its genesis are not sufficient. Just as Plekhanov in his Iskusstvo i obshchestvennaya zhizn' had shown that there was a sound social explanation for the existence of that most anti-social of art movements, namely the French Parnasse, so Iezuitov and likeminded Soviet critics argue, criticism of the most 'psychological' artists is incomplete without a (social) explanation of their 'psychological' state. Iezuitov's views have evidently not been refuted at any length by his colleagues; one could say, therefore, that for most Soviet critics, the psyche of the artist is an important element in artistic creativity and an important consideration in artistic criticism. But they demonstrate time and again in their work that it is only one of several factors operative in the genesis of art, that its influence is, to a great extent, modified by other operative factors.

Indeed in the final analysis, for them, the greatness and interest of an artist's personality or psyche depends, in very large measure, on the extent to which it is attuned to and responsive to society and, above all, to those progressive social values and causes which, in the Soviet

view, produce great art. As M.B. Khrapchenko puts it:

> The more significant the creative personality of the writer, the closer are his links with the world, the more powerful is the social element in him. While remaining himself ... a great artist reflects deep social processes. (1)

Doubtless the Soviet criterion for judging the "significance" and "interest" of the artist's personality is a loaded and slanted one to some, particularly, one would think, to those modernist writers and critics mentioned earlier. But it follows naturally from the terms and perspective of Soviet discussion and reveals both the strength and the weaknesses of that discussion. On the one hand (for clearly ideological reasons) the Soviet approach does less than justice to great modernist artists like Kafka, Duchamps and Proust, whose personalities were undeniably complex and profound . (2) It in fact actually simplifies and distorts the personalities of these writers because Soviet critics persistently vulgarise the phenomenon of modernism itself. On the other hand, it is appropriate in the case of that large group of artists who achieve distinction by directing the force of their art and personality towards understanding or commenting on the social issues of their day. One thinks of the talents and interests (in Russian literature) of a Pushkin, a Gorki, or a Tolstoi, all men of unique personality.

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(1) Khrapchenko, Tvorcheskaya individual'nost' pisatelya i razvitiye literatury, p.89.

(2) They were sufficiently complex to interest Western Marxists - cf. Walter Benjamin's brilliant studies of Proust and Kafka in Illuminations (a collection of his essays), Jonathan Cape, London, 1970.

One factor important in the genesis of art - often subsumed under the category 'social' but still in many respects distinctive from it - is what might be called the cultural factor. Of course, the term 'cultural' does embrace social, ideological even personal and psychological phenomena. But the tendency to identify cultural phenomena with them, to say that the culture of a particular society at a particular period amounts to merely its basic social mores as expressed in art is simply to ignore the spetsifika of culture. This complaint has been voiced more than once by Soviet critics interested in the problem particularly A.I. Aryumedov and O.N. Alterovich; (1) and it has been noticeable that since the mid-'sixties (1965) more Soviet critics have been approaching culture as a fairly complex phenomenon and that the level of Soviet discussion on culture has risen. Quite clearly propositions about culture, to use Bochenski's model again, are now part of the systematic super-structure of Soviet thought and not of its unquestioned (basic) dogma and, as such, they lead to discussion which permits disagreements and re-interpretation of previous lines or views.

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(1) A.I. Aryumedov discusses this problem, amongst others, in his article "Spetsifika issledovaniya razvitiya dukhovnoi kul'tury" (The Specific Nature of Research into the Development of the Culture of Spiritual /i.e. pertaining to the human spirit/ Values); and O.N. Alterovich in his "Dialektika kul'turnogo razvitiya" (The Dialectics of Cultural Development). The articles are included, respectively on pp.223-233 and pp.233-247 of the sbornik Sovremennive problemy materialisticheskoi dialektiki (Contemporary Problems of the Materialist Dialectic), Nauka, Moscow, 1966. The sbornik is edited by F.V. Konstantinov and others (including Alterovich) and comprises papers given by philosophers who attended the April 1965 seminar convened in Moscow to discuss histomat and diamat.

Most Soviet theorists will agree that culture, both as a general concept and in its specific variations, is a phenomenon that can and does influence social mores and values and particular works of art as well as being influenced by them. It is also something that possesses a path of development or dialectic separate from those of social and aesthetic activity but closely related to them nevertheless. These factors complicate the role cultural phenomena play in the genesis of art and should be noted, at the outset, in any discussion of culture and art.

More specifically, A. G. Spirkin in his Kurs' marksistskoi filosofii defines culture as a

> totality of material and spiritual values and also of the means of their creation; the ability to use them for the further progress of mankind and to transmit them from generation to generation ... (1)

Alterovich, in his article "Dialektika kul'turnogo razvitiya" (The Dialectics of Cultural Development) states:

> Culture is the assimilation by mankind (at the level of ethnic community, class and ... individual) of an objectively existing reality. (2)

Cultures, of course, vary greatly throughout the world according to the impact of ethnic, class and individual characteristics. But, Soviet critics state (correctly), different societies and the cultures they have developed possess certain common features, if they are to be regarded

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(1) Kurs' marksistskoi filosofii, p.430. (Italics in whole of original passage removed).

(2) Alterovich, op. cit., p.239.

as possessing 'culture' as Soviet critics understand the term. The first feature is a certain humanistic quality, a broadly progressive spirit which facilitates social progress and which, while giving scope obviously to group, i.e. class and national, sentiments inspires men in a particular group to take an interest in those of others to cooperate with them, indeed to borrow and assimilate elements of their particular culture. For Soviet theorists, culture is not an "exclusivist" concept, but one that has encouraged interchange between peoples. Secondly, cultures go through a period of growth and decline - cultural decadence in fact arises when a culture becomes ossified and its creativity and progressive dynamic stultified. But these cycles of rise and decline are not merely "reflections" of economic and social changes. It is true that cultural developments like the romantic movements dominating the cultures of the Continent in the early 19th century were precipitated by socio-economic upheavals such as the French Revolution or drew strength from these. But often particular cultures persist, sometimes brilliantly, after the social order linked with them has declined, (1) because

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(1) One Yugoslav theorist, Rudi Supek, considers that cultural changes proceed according to two cycles - which he calls endogenous and exogenous. The former involve changes that occur within an historical epoch and are presumably defined in terms of the prevailing socio-economic order; the latter transcend such epochs. Cultural changes, however, Supek adds, are not to be discussed in terms that make no reference to history as the historical content and thrust of culture is important: "There can be no doubt that the cyclic phenomena of cultural upsurge and stagnation, of progressive élan and decadence, amount to no more than a separate rhythm within a more general and more universal process of change." Cited from his article "Freedom and Polydeterminism in Cultural Criticism" in Erich Fromm (ed.): Socialist Humanism (an international symposium), Penguin Press, London, 1967, p.267.

of a number of factors mediating between them and the socio-economic base; namely the continuing internal dynamic of the culture concerned, the existence of brilliant individual exponents of the culture (creative artists), the strength of the culture's past tradition and the influence of strong cultures from the outside. One can point to late Fifth Century and early Fourth Century B.C. Athenian culture is an example of cultural flowering in a period of socio-economic and political turmoil and collapse, and one sustained because of the influence of one or more of these factors.

In addition, moreover, though this point tends to be stressed more by 'revisionist' Marxist theorists of culture like Rudi Supek, (1) and less by Soviet critics, even so-called decadent culture like the Russian dekadentsvo and the symbolist movement contained art which reflected progressive, humanistic and noble values albeit in an often idealist and bizarre guise. The poetry of Alexander Blok is an example. Such art, in part, subsequently influenced the development of Soviet culture, though it sprang from a different socio-economic environment.

What does all this amount to, especially as far as Soviet thinking on the relationship between art and society is concerned? Primarily, it leads to recognition of the fact that the "cultural context", the impact of cultural values on an artist is very important in helping to explain the

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(1) In his article, just cited. Other references to Supek given here are based on this article.

genesis of a particular work of art at a particular time, i.e. it is one of the important causal factors. But because the cultural context and cultural values are not simply synonymous with the social context and social values of activities such as art, the actual content and nature of the cultural influence on specific authors considered to "possess culture" are something that must be analysed and clarified carefully. This is especially important in cases of a continued cultural flowering, amid socio-economic decline, and arguable cultural decadence during periods of social stability and prosperity. In both cases non-native cultures and traditions can often explain these phenomena.

For the development of Russian decadence, for example, the influence of French symbolism and the fin de siècle revival of interest in eastern religions and in mysticism generally were clearly important. Also important were the ways individual artists assimilated such culture, ways determined by their capacities, inclinations and so on.

These questions, then, have to be understood if the cultural context of specific works and the role of cultural factors in the genesis of these works are to be clarified. In this connection, Soviet writers on culture stress that it is often noticeable how inaccurately labelled are certain cultures and the works of art produced by them. This results often through a vulgar application of terms like "cultural progress" or "cultural decadence". Soviet writers like Aryumedov and non-Soviet Marxists like Supek take pains to

stress that these terms should not be defined in terms of simplistic deductions from either histomat, or the theory of reflection. Supek, in particular, criticises the habit of measuring the 'progressiveness' or lack of 'progressiveness' in a culture by the extent of the realism its art displays. He also criticises the state of mind behind this habit, the general assumption that art or, more broadly, culture which is not somehow objective , i.e. not preoccupied wholly with reflecting the real world and its problems cannot be called progressive.(1) But if 'progressive' is strictly defined in this sense, what are we to make of "non-objective" techniques and their use in the work of a poet like Mayakovski who is acknowledged to be a revolutionary and not decadent artist. Further, what progress is, in fact, being achieved if progress in cultures is held to begin and end with the simple mastery and application of realistic techniques; where is the progression, the development?

These problems merely confirm the complexity of cultural phenomena and the danger of treating them as simple reifications of the socio-economic base, unmediated by other factors; as primarily social and not many-sided in content. Clearly culture contains personal, aesthetic and "universally human" elements whose changing relationships explain its complexity.

It should be stressed that much Soviet writing on culture, most of it in fact, does not bring out these points in much detail. But they are alluded to and are implicit in what is said by many writers.

(1) Soviet use of the word 'humanism' in discussion on culture might also be criticised for its looseness, the assumption that it is virtually synonymous with the values of Communism. (and cf. pp.31, 159 etc supra)

It is also clear that for most Soviet writers, the "human" or "universal" component of culture is central. This component is not examined, so much as assumed to be present in all cultures worthy of the name and assumed, but not demonstrated, to be a progressive force in history. Soviet discussion of the concept of humanism itself, as we have seen, suffers from this assumption of a spontaneously cooperative, progressive "human essence", present in all men and visibly manifest in many cultures. Furthermore, this human component emerges in Soviet discussion as a static, homogeneous determinant whose actual content in specific cultures is obscure. The fact that it may develop, enrich itself and undergo permutations in the course of cultural development and particularly in the course of feedback from specific cultures is not stressed in Soviet discussion. Possibly because of its limitations for an understanding of culture, the universalist/humanist approach to culture has been downplayed or attacked in much Marxist and specifically 'New Left' criticism in the West. New Left critics particularly attack its manifestation, indeed perversion in the work of F.R. Leavis and his supporters. (1) In Soviet writing, however, there is no such criticism of the concept. And this is to be expected for a number of reasons. First Soviet thinking is heavily imbued with notions about

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(1) An example of such criticism is contained in the Australian Marxist theoretical journal Arena (cf. especially, issue No.28, 1972, p.56 et seq.) where the concept of the humanist essence of culture is argued by some New Left critics to be a hollow one. It is, further, seen by them to amount to nothing more than a "subjective standard" for evaluating cultural phenomena, and one derived from a "unified, élitist, university ethos". To some Arena writers, indeed, the humanism of culture exists solely in the minds of critics like F.R. Leavis and Raymond Williams and not in actual cultures themselves.

the "humanistic", "universal" essence of genuine aesthetic experiences and Soviet thinkers naturally discern such an essence in a related phenomenon like culture. Secondly, stress on culture as a humanistic force "dignifies" Soviet culture itself as an outgrowth of past culture, as the heir to noble and progressive traditions. This argument was a central factor behind earlier Bolshevik attitudes to the place of pre-revolutionary culture and art in the revolutionary society; it was recognised by both Lenin and Lunacharski for example, that Soviet society could not reject bourgeois culture merely because it was bourgeois. They approached culture from a humanist rather than class perspective and saw that culture, pre-revolutionary art, literature etc. contained undeniably "humanistic" progressive features and as such could be harnessed to the needs of the new society, could be adapted to an ideology that itself distilled the best in past (Western) culture. As Lenin himself wrote:

> Marxism ... far from rejecting the most valuable achievements of the bourgeois epoch has, on the contrary, assimilated and re-fashioned everything of value in more than 2,000 years of the development of human thought and culture. Only further work on this basis and in this direction ... can be recognised as the development of a genuine proletarian culture. (1)

Lenin, as we know, made this statement specifically to head off attempts by the Proletkult to create a totally new 'proletarian' culture and to propagate an exclusivist

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(1) Lenin's remarks here are taken from a Resolution he submitted to the 1920 Congress of the Proletkult. (Cited from V.I. Lenin: On Art and Literature, Progress, 1967, p.155.

(non-humanist) and totally 'class' view of culture. And Lenin's remarks are still of central and continuing importance in determining current Soviet thinking on culture, particularly given his status as the fountain-head of wisdom - in all spheres - for Soviet Marxists.

There is one final point to be made. The emphasis on humanism and on the common, humanistic core of cultural phenomena offers Soviet theorists a plausible explanation for the phenomenon of 'genius'. This is a phenomenon that any aesthetic theory has to come to grips with. Soviet aesthetics does so in the context, in the main, of discussion on culture. Men are called geniuses (in the Soviet view) because of their ability to transcend their class and era - they have a universal appeal and universal message to all men. They represent, as a non-Soviet Marxist has put it "such individualised social totalities as have encompassed a maximum of 'human totality' in a personal, creative act". (1) They have done so because they possess in brilliantly developed form all the great, humanistic impulses of men. 'Genius', as the Soviet critic B. Bursov writes "is the greatest proof of the unity of human nature ... consequently there is nothing in it which is not in principle present in every other human being, even if in only the tiniest doses". (2) The Soviet critic M. Bakhtin echoes these points in an article on artistic talent and genius in Novy mir, No.11, 1970; (3) like most other Soviet critics, furthermore, he avoids a

(1) Supek, op. cit., p.264

(2) B. Bursov: "Den'gi i vzdokhnoveniye" (Money and Inspiration), Part II (pp.85-175) of his roman-trilogiya on Dostoyevski, Zvezda, No.12, 1970, p.133.

(3) M. Bakhtin: "Smelyeye pol'zovat'sya vozmozhnost'yami" (Make Bolder Use of the Possibilities), NM, No. 11, 1970, pp.237-240.

psychologistic approach to genius, that is, preoccupation with the psychology of inspiration and talent, and concentrates instead on the humanist/cultural explanation of its existence.

The social content of art, then, is a crucial and complex component of it. This content does not amount to a mere reflection of a given objective reality in art. It is mediated through and modified by other factors, like artistic technique, an artist's psychology and his cultural inheritance. These factors, themselves interacting with and modifying one another, are equally crucial in determining the shape and form of particular works and explaining their genesis. The dialectic between them and with the social elements needs, Soviet critics constantly stress, to be clarified in each specific work, to see what elements play which role in making it what it is.

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The "social content" is, of course, more than the day to day happenings of particular societies, or a portrayal of their dominant values or personalities. For the Soviet critic, it also embraces the specific concepts of narodnost' (broadly translated as "popular spirit") and partiinost' (meaning on occasions in Soviet usage the quality of being partisan for any belief, but much more often, being partisan for Communism). These two concepts are particularly Soviet and, of course, are embodied in

Soviet artistic practice. (1) As such, they need to be treated separately from the general category of "the social" and from its relationship with other factors. Of course, in many respects they are less important concepts, since they are treated, particularly by doctrinaire Soviet critics, almost as absolutes that do not require elaboration or explanation in terms of other aesthetic categories; they are necessities that art cannot ignore. For other critics, however, concepts like partiinost' represent veritable "old men of the sea", cramping their thought and style and leading all too often to vulgarisation and simplification in critical discussion.

To consider narodnost' first, this has been a staple term in Russian criticism since it was first popularised by critics of the 1820's and '30's, ranging from Pushkin to Senkovski and Nadezhdin. In the Soviet context, the concept in itself is not productive of interesting discussion or debate because it tends to merge with the idea of humanism. Furthermore, it has become subordinated to the debate on the class and supra-class content of art and the attack on sociological reductionism. One might also argue, legitimately, that in the Soviet context narodnost' is a less particular

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(1) Similar concepts, less extensively used in Soviet writing, are klassovost' (class-content) and ideinost' (the content of ideas, beliefs). These two are interrelated, since the idea-content of a particular work amounts, in the Soviet view, primarily to the ideas of a particular class, though not, of course, exclusively so. Both concepts, especially when used with reference to Soviet art, are usually subsumed under partiinost', presumably for the reason that the ideas of the proletarian class, become in the Soviet case, less important than the need to display partisanship for them in art. For this reason the discussion on pp.225-244 concentrates on narodnost' and partiinost'.

and arresting concept than it was in the nineteenth century; "the people" and their values have come to dominate the whole of the U.S.S.R. and no longer remain the distinctive, suffering group they were in Tsarist Russia.

Broadly, by narodnost', Soviet critics mean popular values and mores, defined not in the exclusivist, and often racial or Fascist sense of the values of a particular people or race, but in terms of the progressive, humanistic values of "the people" who in the Soviet mind are the workers, the peasants, the labouring classes of society.

Of course, in the Soviet view, the values of narodnost' are natural to man as a species but have been stultified or perverted in varying degrees by the class society, by the demands of particular interest groups and above all by the rise of capitalism. Certain classes, in the classic Marxist view, however, by dint of their aspirations and social position, have come to embody narodnost' more fully than others - these are the proletariat and peasantry, their suffering and freedom from capitalistic and other anti-humanistic ideas make them natural vehicles for narodnost', make them in other words, compassionate, honest, sympathetic to their fellow men and preoccupied with building a better world free of class hatred and greed. In the Marxist view, all history is a movement in favour of the proletariat, in favour, one might say, of an increasingly unfettered demonstration of narodnost'.

All this is very reminiscent, as we have seen, of Soviet discussion on humanism. Narodnost' certainly carries

the same moral connotations and overtones that the idea of humanism does and, therefore, becomes something to be commended and advocated. It is, however, discussed in stricter socio-historical terms than the idea of humanism is. The Osnovy notes that " [the degree of] narodnost' ... is dependent on the concrete relations between social forces in a society, at a given stage of its development" (1) and distinguishes - following Lenin's observations expressed in his Tolstoi articles and elsewhere - three stages in the growth of popular spirit in the nineteenth century, viz. the 'gentry-revolutionary', the 'revolutionary-democratic' and finally the 'proletarian' stages. (2) This distinction implies not merely that popular values were given increasing scope and thus were strengthened as the century wore on, but that thinkers, often from 'non-popular' classes publicised this process at various stages, contributing something to narodnost' in the process, and becoming themselves narodny. The distinction also reflects the particular and sometimes cavalier way Soviet writers treat narodnost' - its development becomes indistinguishable from the development of revolutionary consciousness; the original popular mores and popular classes become forgotten or obscured once attention is focused on the glosses and commentaries on narodnost' by revolutionary artists and intellectuals. The content of narodnost' is approached in Soviet discussion in other ways as well. The Osnovy, for example states that writers like Turgenev, Ostrovski, Goncharov, were neither "of the low orders" or men of revolutionary, popular sentiments.

(1) Osnovy, p.333.

(2) Loc. cit.

Nevertheless their work was narodny "because it gave profoundly truthful pictures of life and helped people to become conscious of social reality and of themselves". (1) Implicit in these sentiments is the Belinskian thesis that a truthful portrayal of narodny values makes one's own work "popular"; and also that narodnost' is an essential and important component of the truth (pravda) of life which artists, above all, are equipped to seek out and portray. A portrayal of narodnost', then, becomes a natural task for artists, qua artists, that enables art to play a moral role in society.

Narodnost' defined in this last sense (as simply "being truthful") remains important for Soviet critics in that it helps them to face, yet again, the problem of "non-popular", but still arguably great, artists. Artists from 'non-popular' classes like Shakespeare and Balzac, et al., can display narodnost' in their art and produce great art because it is natural for them as artists to do so, because the aesthetic process, for reasons already noted makes men, in the Soviet view, sensitive to "the truth", to the values and sentiments of "the people" and to their revolutionary aspirations. Discussion of narodnost' in this sense thus modifies a strictly class approach to art and weakens the arguments of the "vulgar sociologists". Of course, commentary on it in these terms repeats the points and problems raised in most Soviet discussion of culture and the class/art relationship generally. However, it also reinforces the latter discussion.

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(1) Ibid., p.333.

Narodnost' is also discussed in relation to the issue of the popularisation and vulgarisation of art and also of the nationality question in art. To consider the first point - narodnost' is often defended by Soviet critics because its presence makes art more accessible to the masses. In the process, however, critics like A. Kukarkin - in his monograph "The Problem of Mass Art" (1) draw a sharp distinction between 'popular content' and 'popularisation' in the sense of vulgarisation. It is central to Leninist thinking on culture and on cultural education for the masses that popular values and tastes are not antipathetic to sophistication and complexity, and indeed that they can and should be enriched and raised by acquaintance with "the classics" of art, the best of pre-revolutionary culture. Popular art, for Lenin, was never to be art that vulgarised or debased content and technique, but art which elevated popular appreciation of both, while retaining solidly narodny themes and values in this content. As early as 1901 Lenin had written:

> 'Popularisation' ... is a long way from vulgarisation, from talking down. The popular [narodny] writer leads his reader towards profound truths ... he assumes in the undeveloped reader a serious intention to use his head ... and teaches him to go forward independently. (2)

These sentiments are constantly repeated in contemporary Soviet discussion, orthodox and less orthodox alike. They are, moreover, employed to attack Western ideas on mass art,

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(1) A. Dymshits (ed.): Art and Society, pp.261-272.

(2) Cited from Lenin's comments on a "non-popular" journal, Svoboda, in V.I. Lenin: On Literature and Art, p.17.

as the Soviets interpret them. In the West the profit motive, massive commercialisation and the prevailing "reactionary-modernist" ideology have all combined, so the Soviet line runs, to vulgarise and trivialise any popular (i.e. progressive) sentiments and values that may exist. 'Popular' in the sense of narodny has been replaced by popular in the sense of "vulgar", "simplified". Only a small band of great writers, like Aragon, Böll, Hemingway and Conrad (to name a few from the Soviet pantheon of "progressive Western artists") have been able to resist this pervasive process of 'Hollywoodisation', to use Kukarkin's phrase. And they are great, in the Soviet view, precisely for this reason.

It has been seen that in its Soviet usage, narodnost' is a social rather than a racial concept, without the overtones that the word 'popular' acquires in Fascist ideologies. It should be noted, however, that in recent years, in a number of articles written by V. Chalmayev and others (1) there has been a trend to treat narodnost' in much the same way as the nineteenth century Russian Slavophiles did - i.e. as a concept which embraces the "particular" features of the Russian people and suggests that these are the basis of what is good and progressive in Soviet life and art. These articles, appearing mostly during 1968-69, recall articles written during the Zhdanov

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(1) Chalmayev's articles include: "Velikiye iskaniya" (Great Searchings) and "Neizbezhnost'" (Inevitability) which were printed in Molodaya gvardiya, Nos. 3 and 9, 1968, pp.270-95 and 259-89, respectively. His views were subsequently defended and supported by A. Lanshchikov in an article "Ostorozhno - kontseptsiya (polemicheskiye zametki)" (Careful - It's an Idea (Polemical Notes)), Molodaya gvardiya, No.2, 1969, pp.275-297.

era. Their appearance in recent years could be said to coincide in part with the increasingly conservative atmosphere of the Brezhnev regime - the fact that Chalmayev's and other articles were published in Molodaya gvardiya (the Komsomol journal) suggests a degree of official encouragement. More generally, perhaps, the recent emphasis on what might be called 'Slavic culturalism' in Soviet writing can be explained by the desire of some intellectuals (like Chalmayev) to defend orthodox Soviet positions on art with additional arguments beside the traditional Marxist-Leninist ones. Chalmayev, for example, makes it clear that adherence to "pristine" Russian values will help keep socialist realism free of Western (modernist) influences. It can also be explained by the desire of some samizdat writers to defend certain spiritual and religious values for their own sake. (1)

This writing has been attacked in particular by A. Dement'yev in his article "O traditsiyakh i narodnosti" (On Traditions and Narodnost'). (2) Condemning Chalmayev's approach, Dement'yev says that his Slavophile predecessors

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(1) Cf. G.L. Kline: "Religion, National Character and the 'Rediscovery of Russian Roots' ", Slavic Review, March 1973, pp.29-40. Kline thinks that religious motives play only a small part in the rediscovery of Slavophile ideas. He suggests, instead, that the latest Soviet census - showing an increase in the proportion of non-Russian to Russian people in the U.S.S.R. - could be a substantial cause. He makes it clear that the 'culturalist' movement is a complex phenomenon, being used by both dissidents and supporters of the regime for their own ends, and that it contains in often ill-concealed form elements of "old fashioned" Russian anti-semitism and chauvinism.

(2) This appeared in Novy mir, No.4, 1969, pp.215-235.

"cannot in our day be the highest authority for resolving questions of patriotism, nationality and so on". (1) Chalmayev, he adds, adopts a chauvinistic approach to issues and ignores the fact that while particularly Russian traditions and sentiments are important for determining themes and content in Soviet literature, the spirit of Communism - its internationalism, humanism and narodnost' - are obviously of greater importance. Other writers - notably Ye. Dorosh - have made more moderate rejoinders to Chalmayev (2) and sought to clarify the relationship between narodnost', as usually defined, and "Russian values". They have suggested that narodnost' remains basically a non-racial category, but that, obviously, the content of the popular spirit will be modified and influenced by the particular mores and characteristics of individual peoples and races. This is especially evident in the various national literatures of the Soviet Union, where national traditions have modified in varying degrees their "socialist content". (The discussion of the relationship between socialist realism and nationality is one that will be considered in greater detail in Chapter X.)

National traditions, narodnost' in a national sense, then, are an important determinant of the content and,

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(1) Ibid., p.217.

(2) Cf. Ye. Dorosh: "Obrazy Rossii" (Images of Russia), NM, No.3, 1969. In July, 1969, Dement'yev himself was attacked by several critics for the "severity" of his ideas and was later removed from the assistant editorship of Novy mir. This, it could reasonably be assumed, suggests official pressure against those who condemn outright the revival of Slavophile or chauvinist ideas; and thus shows (again) that the regime is by no means discouraging such ideas.

more particularly, the form of art. Soviet aestheticians will differ amongst themselves on whether a national form in art is a distinct and necessary category of aesthetics, separate from that of form generally; (1) but few are prepared to "absolutise" national factors and say that narodnost', defined in this sense, is the most important element in art. The reasons are, of course, clearly doctrinal.

The actual mechanics of the embodiment of narodnost' in art and the criteria needed to evaluate its success as art are not discussed in any depth by Soviet critics who deal with the concept; it is implied, particularly by orthodox doctrinaire critics, that narodnost' is its own justification in art and that its presence, therefore, poses no aesthetic problems.

The "social content" of art is, for the doctrinaire Soviet critic especially extended and deepened through the concept of partisanship (partiinost'), the idea of the committedness, of art. It is a concept that, to repeat, is not stressed by most professional writers on art - it is mentioned by them only as a matter of routine, if at all. The reasons are fairly clear. Soviet discussion of partisanship, as well as Lenin's original formulation of the concept have politicised aesthetic practice and aesthetic discussion to a very considerable degree. The rationale behind partisanship is primarily a political one. For the orthodox

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(1) Cf. the discussion at the beginning of M. Nurmatov: "O natsional'noi forme v iskusstve", pp.108-118 of Bazhenova, et al. (eds.), op. cit.

Soviet critic it is not enough for social values like narodnost' to be merely reflected in art, particularly when their distinctiveness is obscured in a state like the U.S.S.R. where "the people" are claimed to have such an all-embracing role. These values need clarification and interpretation - and from whom else but the representatives, the vanguard of the people - the C.P.S.U.

These points are all echoed in various forms - routinely in more sophisticated defences of partiinost' like those of G. Kunitsyn (1) and forthrightly in doctrinaire writing. The Osnovy, for example, note:

> True partisanship ... consists not only in support for the policies of the Communist Party, but also in the full absorption of the partisan, Communist spirit into the consciousness of the Soviet people and, in particular, of the practitioners of art. Communist consciousness must enter the flesh and blood of each man. (2)

This is a political statement and one revealing the qualities typical, as J.M. Bochenski notes, of partisan discussion - a lack of intellectual depth, a certain self righteousness, dogmatism etc. (3)

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(1) G. Kunitsyn: "Partiinost' literatury i problemy khudozhestvennogo masterstva" (The Partisanship of Literature and Problems of Artistic Craftsmanship), pp.3-76 of B.S. Meilakh (ed.): Talant pisatelya i protsessy tvorchestva; and "Lenin on Partisanship and Freedom of Creativity", pp.127-155 of the compilation Socialist Realism in Literature and Art.

(2) Osnovy, p.342.

(3) J.M. Bochenski: "On Partisanship in Philosophy" (Part 1), SST, Vol.5, 1965, pp.1-11. These qualities are very evident in Party writing of relevance to criticism such as Khrushchev's 1958 "article" with the theme "Za tesnuyu svyaz' literatury i iskusstva s zhizn'yu naroda" (For a Close Link Between Literature and Art and the Life of the People) and, after 1964, important documents like the C.C. Report to the 24th Congress of the C.P.S.U. (March 1971) and the January 1972 C.C. Decree on criticism.

Most of the content and tone of Soviet writing on partisanship is traceable to Lenin's original formulation and discussion of the term. Partiinost' is indeed one of the most important things that Lenin left to Soviet aesthetics. It has provided the core of its "Leninist legacy" - even while the nature of this legacy, like the nature of partisanship itself, has been the object occasionally of differing interpretations from Soviet aestheticians.

Lenin himself was quite explicit when he first used the concept in an 1895 article "Ekonomicheskoye soderzhaniye narodnichestva" (The Economic Content of Populism). Lenin criticised populism (the ideas of the Narodniks) for its objectivism, that is to say, the belief that objective reality should be allowed to evolve unimpeded (spontaneously) according to its necessary, preordained course, and that somehow, in this way, populist goals would be attained. He contrasted this with what he called the 'materialist' (partisan) approach, under which reality was appraised in a partisan way, from the perspective of a particular group - in Lenin's case, the proletarian, revolutionary class, in order to transform it in a manner favourable to the group's interests. Lenin wrote:

> The objectivist speaks of the necessity of a given historical process ... the materialist clarifies precisely how a particular class defines [opredelyaet] this necessity. Materialism includes within itself, so to speak ... partisanship, and has, in any evaluation of an event, directly and openly, to take a stand according to the viewpoint of a special group. (1)

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(1) Cited in the compilation V.I. Lenin o literature i iskusstve, p.93.

Other Marxist thinkers, notably Marx himself, (1) had advanced the idea of partisanship earlier, but none made it so central to his thinking as did Lenin. The idea of partisanship, of course, led directly to Lenin's subsequent notions about an élite, vanguard, revolutionary party, the partisan spokesman for the proletariat and the guardian and arbiter of its interests. It was also used to propagate and defend these notions within the fledgling Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, and helped to provoke the major split between 'objectivist' thinkers in the party (the eventual Mensheviks) and those who supported Lenin's ideas (the Bolsheviks).

Partisanship, then, for Lenin became intimately bound up with questions of politics - political organisation and political tactics. This is abundantly clear from further discussion of it in the celebrated "Partiinaya organizatsiya i partiinaya literatura". This article has been discussed and cited countless times. It has provoked much commentary because its content and Lenin's attitudes to the arts after 1917 have been subject to differing interpretations. As has been noted in Chapter I, some (Western) commentators hold that Lenin wanted to politicise all art produced in the new

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(1) Marx, for example, was markedly partisan in his evaluation of "progressive" German poets like Herwegh and Freiligrath. In correspondence with Engels, in the 1840's in particular (often discussing the programme and propaganda of the League of Communists) Marx made clear in his cursory, partisan observations what aspect of these poets' work reflected sentiments akin to his own and the League's and what aspects fell short of the proper revolutionary spirit. More specifically, he criticised at length Lassalle's tragedy Franz Von Sickingen for its "incorrect political stand" (Osnovy, p.556). He did not, however, write specifically and separately on "partisanship in art" as a general aesthetic problem.

regime in the name of partiinost'; others consider that he was concerned only to control artists who were already partisan for the Bolsheviks, and to let other artists create as they wish. This writer, for reasons outlined earlier, does not believe that Lenin conceived partisanship to the basis of a "literary totalitarianism" of the sort later practised by Stalin. And during a high point of the Thaw (1956) there were indeed some Soviet critics who took this view of Leninist partisanship, and felt confident of doing so, not merely because of Krupskaya's famous gloss on the 1905 article [1] but because of such statements in the article as

> ... the literary aspect of the proletarian party's cause cannot be mechanically identified with other aspects ... there is no question that literature is least of all subject to mechanical adjustment and levelling. (2)

The critics concerned were Yu. M. Strochkov and K.Z. Apresyan and their articles were entitled, respectively, "O state V.I. Lenina: partiinaya organizatsiya...", appearing in Voprosy istorii, No.4, 1956; and "V.I. Lenin o svyazi iskusstva s narodno zhizn'yu" (V.I. Lenin on the Link Between Art and the Life of the People) appearing in VF, No.1, 1957.

Most Soviet critics, however, have not dared to make such an interpretation - the above articles provoked such an outcry that material written in a similar vein has not appeared in the Soviet Union since.

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(1) In a reminiscence about Lenin, reproduced in the Soviet periodical Druzhba narodov, No.IV, 1960, Krupskaya had stated that her husband had intended his remarks to apply to Party propaganda and publicity rather than to imaginative literature (belles-lettres) as a whole.

(2) V.I. Lenin o literature i iskusstve, p.97.

In a very important sense, of course, what Lenin did or did not mean about partisanship in art becomes irrelevant. We are now confronted by the reality that developed under Stalin - the imposition of a single (partisan) canon of art and a single bureaucracy to administer the work of artists, both of which continue today. The idea that partisanship should be present in all art and all genres of art receives its legitimation, for orthodox critics, in this reality as well as through invocation of Lenin's sacred name. Such critics indeed, insist that Lenin was a systematic and brilliant theorist of art, and in no doubt over the scope of partiinost'. These views are all present in the work of two critics in particular who emerged as stalwart defenders of a narrow interpretation of partiinost' and critics of Strochkov and Apresyan during and after 1956. They were B.S. Ryurikov and V. Ivanov. (1) Ryurikov, in particular, who died in 1969 and was, for a period, editor of Literaturnaya gazeta, he also played a leading role in putting together the compilation V.I. Lenin o literature i iskusstve in 1960.(2) Generally the standard exposition of partiinost', as contained in Ryurikov's and other critics' work, goes little beyond the formulation noted in the Osnovy earlier. Some orthodox commentators, including the authors of the Osnovy, do raise the question of the relationship between partiinost' and the aesthetic, only to state in so many words that a proper

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(1) Cf. B. Ryurikov: "Lenin i sotsialisticheskaya kul'tura" (Lenin and Socialist Culture), Kommunist, No.17, 1956; and V. Ivanov: "Leninski printsip partiinosti literatury" (The Leninist Principle of the Partisanship of Literature), Kommunist, No.5, 1956.

(2) The compilers of a commemorative sbornik of Ryurikov's articles, published in 1972 by Sovetski pisatel' with the theme Real'ny gumanizm, note (p.5) that this critic played an especially important and effective part in the struggle against "the views of certain revisionists [presumably Strochkov et al.] who hold that Lenin's writing on art is uncoordinated and haphazard [razroznenny i sluchainy] in character".

understanding of partiinost', "transcends" this issue. This sort of fudging merely obscures and does not sharpen the issue; it shows little respect for the aesthetic as such.

By way of contrast less doctrinaire Soviet critics have tended to treat the concept in two ways. Most have ignored or downplayed it but some have tried to relate it more closely to the demands and opportunities of artistic creativity. A third option - that of reinterpreting Lenin's 1905 article as Strochkov and Apresyan did - has not, of course, been possible in recent years.

Those who take a less doctrinaire attitude to partiinost' include the leading critic G. Kunitsyn in his article "Lenin on Partisanship and Freedom of Creativity". They also include (outside the Soviet Union) G. Lukacs whose essay "Art and Objective Truth" (1) reflects similar sentiments to Kunitsyn's, though ones more profoundly expressed, and indeed may have originally inspired them (Lukacs' essay was written in the mid-thirties).

Kunitsyn, like Lukacs, does attempt to justify partiinost' not merely because it is the "right thing" for art to display but also because it brings qualities that can only enhance and inspire the artist. For the artist, being partisan for the revolutionary cause means "feeling freedom", 'freedom'being defined in the classic Marxist-Leninist sense of that which

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(1) Lukacs' essay, dealing with partiinost' in conjunction with other problems, is contained on pp.25-60 of A. Kahn (ed.): Writer and Critic.

makes the people free, i.e. the thrust of history towards Communism. Thus Kunitsyn notes, "Communist partisanship in no way restrains the artist's talent but, on the contrary, guarantees it genuine freedom". (1) He contrasts Communist partisanship with the partisanship, displayed by bourgeois thinkers and artists, for bourgeois ideas and claims that this bourgeois partisanship, being bourgeois, merely shackles both groups. Partisanship, for Kunitsyn, also heightens one's creative and artistic powers; it is an aid to realism in that it enables artists to see into the objective developments of events, their Tendenz, to use Engels phrase, rather than their superficial and often momentary details; further, it provides the artist with a sense of conviction and commitment.

For all this, however, partiinost' is still discussed by Kunitsyn and like-minded critics in terms of the values and aspirations of the C.P.S.U. There is little attempt to link partiinost' with the personal convictions and aspirations of the individual artist, to suggest that Communist values must be acceptable to him in terms of the latter before he can present them as art. This line of thinking motivated certain, mainly 'personalist' discussion of partiinost' in the early 'sixties, as we have seen from discussion of the moral element in art. It never got far because partisan values so often took second place to the personal. It has not re-surfaced because 'personalist' approaches to art no longer occupy a central place in Soviet discussion, and because such interpretations of partiinost' were possible

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(1) Socialist Realism in Literature and Art, p.129.

mainly during the Thaw of the early 'sixties. The abrupt termination of this in December 1962 and the advent of a more conservative regime in October 1964 witnessed, as we have seen, in other contexts the advent of a more ritualised and dogmatic treatment of partiinost', both from Party officials and the Party's apologists amongst literary critics. Such treatment has continued to the present day.

With regard to those professional critics who largely ignore partiinost', it is clear that they do so because they feel it contributes nothing to our understanding of the spetsifika of art. Thus aestheticians like V. Vanslov and I. Astakhov, in their work on the beautiful (as a central aesthetic category), make only a formal nod towards partiinost' at the end of their work. They appear to treat it as an afterthought, as something that has to be mentioned, however briefly, to leave a good impression (with the censor), and not as a key concept in aesthetics. Further, they imply that partiinost' cannot be mechanically "applied" in art, but only introduced in artistic (aesthetic) terms.

Vanslov, for example, notes that "Communism and beauty today are inseparable; likewise inseparable are beauty and art". (1) That is, what one can say of importance about Communism in art will come only through the application of an aesthetic idea like beauty, through the presentation of Communism (i.e. partisan values) in terms of the beautiful, and not, incidentally, the reverse.

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(1) V. Vanslov: Problema prekrasnogo, p.262.

Partiinost' is, by and large, discussed in Soviet criticism as something particular to Soviet art. Soviet critics concede that Western art may display partisanship for the values of Western society, but for them this partisanship, as we have noted, is inferior to Communist partiinost'. Clearly, in Soviet usage, the concept of partiinost' contains within it no hint of cultural relativism - the claim that any sort of art is to be admired if it is partisan for the values of a dominant social or political order, i.e. displays conviction and zeal for these. This same absence of relativism is evident when partiinost' is discussed by Soviet critics not so much as an element in the content of art but as a yardstick by which to judge specific works, as a tool of criticism. The yardstick is planted firmly in partiiny (Communist) soil and no other. Here, clearly, Soviet critics are influenced by Lenin's writings.

It is true, as the Soviets constantly stress, that partiinost' enabled Lenin to go beyond Plekhanov's sociological reductionism in understanding and evaluating art. It is not true, however, to state, as the (Polish) critic Stefan Morawski does, (1) that Lenin's ideas moved discussion on art in any significant sense away from social issues and onto specific aesthetic problems. Lenin's partisan understanding and evaluation of a writer like Tolstoi for example - in

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(1) In an article "Lenin as a Literary Theorist", Science and Society, Vol.XXIX, No.1, 1965, pp.2-25, Morawski argues that Lenin in his concept of partiinost', was able to bring out the 'cognitive-mimetic' aspects of the art of a writer like Tolstoi as well as the sociological (or 'functional') aspects of its genesis. But Lenin nowhere in the Tolstoi articles tried to explain exactly how Tolstoi's perception (or cognition) of the world was turned into art.

the four articles he devoted to the man [1] - merely saw him in more complex terms than those of a typical "repentant nobleman", apologising to the peasants for his way of life in an ethic of humility (Tolstoianism). (This is, broadly, Plekhanov's explanation of Tolstoi). Lenin wanted to evaluate Tolstoi's work partisanly - i.e. in the light of the revolutionary struggle, and specifically as the product of the 'first' revolution, i.e. the growing movement of agrarian protest beginning after the 1861 Reforms and sustained by some members of the rural barstvo like Tolstoi himself. This movement, Lenin claimed, lacked the scientific understanding of revolutionary processes and goals provided by Marxism and tended to express its opposition to Tsarist highhandedness and bureaucracy in dreams of a rural utopia, campaigns of disobedience and non-violence, and more importantly, in a rejection of Western materialism and political thought. Tolstoi, the man, reflected the contradictions of the movement - the progressive aims and the reactionary mentality. Doubtless seeing Tolstoi's "contradictions" in these terms was more correct that Plekhanov's approach was, but what light does it throw on War and Peace and indeed on all Tolstoi's art produced before his Confession of 1879-82 and the elaboration of Tolstoianism?

The truth, of course, is that Lenin, at least did not pretend to analyse in any depth Tolstoi's artistry, the

(1) The most important of these were Lev Tol'stoi kak zerkalo russkoi revolyutsii (Leo Tolstoi as a Mirror of the Russian Revolution), written in 1908 and L.N. Tol'stoi, written in late 1910 after Tolstoi's death.

specific processes whereby the author assimilated this largely rural reality and turned it into art. (Lenin merely makes it clear that the vividness of Tolstoi's work is a result of his being closely identified with the rural scene and its contradictions). There is no discussion of the ingredients of Tolstoi's realism, or the suggestion that the greatness of Tolstoi's art resides in something more than its illumination of a certain stage of revolutionary consciousness, the limitations of which had to be noted and neutralised in the next-proletarian-stage. As it is, this ex post facto rationalisation of Tolstoi's art and motives for writing can become ludicrous. Lenin does not himself suggest that Tolstoi wrote War and Peace as an expression of revolutionary (partisan) consciousness, but he leaves Tolstoi's great novel open to being explained in this manner.

As an account, then, of the genesis of Tolstoi's work, the partisan approach, as applied by Lenin, is incomplete; as an evaluation of its artistry, it is next to useless. The difficulties it provided on the latter score are illustrated by Lenin's favourable attitude to the talent of a minor, Whiteguard and distinctly unpartisan writer (1) and his coolness to the techniques of one of the most partisan - Mayakovski. What, in other words, is the precise relationship between artistry and partisanship? Is the latter an ingredient or the ingredient for artistic success, possibly enabling a writer (as Engels showed with the Tendenz of Balzac's work) to produce great art despite a reactionary

(1) The reference is to K.A. Averchenko's A Dozen Knives in the Back of the Revolution, a collection of stories called by Lenin in 1921 "a capably written little work". Lenin notes this writer's hostility to him and to the Revolution, but concludes: "In my opinion some of these stories are worth reprinting. Talent should be encouraged". Cited on p.157 of V.I. Lenin: On Literature and Art.

class background. Or can an artist produce *great* art *without* partisanship being evident in his work? Lenin does not answer these questions; again we see how more pressing interests clearly did not allow him to (systematically) follow up the aesthetic problems, raised by *partiinost'*. In one sense (if in no others), Soviet critics who apply a *partiiny* yardstick to all art (the authors of the *Osnovy* and other orthodox commentators) have gone a little further than Lenin - they are *consistent* in their belief that partisanship provides a solid basis for deciding and evaluating artistic worth. Such worth, for these critics, is established by the degree of partisan zeal revealed in a work of art - zeal for the Communist cause, or, as a concession to non-Soviet art, to causes strongly sympathetic to Communism. Art that has no such zeal is bad art. This simple equation (which leads inevitably to distorted and unfair evaluation of writers like Dostoyevski) has already been seen in operation in the 'instrumentalist' critique of the moral content and worth of Western art. It is also present, as we shall see, in most Soviet critiques of Western art generally. For less doctrinaire critics its limitations are obvious, and for this reason, the *partiiny* brand of evaluation is avoided by them, particularly in more specialised areas of Soviet discussion like theory of literature. In their general philistinism and lack of sophistication then, the *partiiny* critics remain true to Lenin (at least to Lenin the art critic) and, of course, to the spirit of *partiinost'*.

VIII. FORM IN ART

The question of the nature and status of form in art is an important one in Soviet aesthetics, as in any aesthetic theory. Form is, quite clearly, one of those features, along with the presence of beauty and of 'moral-spiritual' content, that cannot be ignored if the spetsifika of art is to be properly understood. It is also, equally clearly, something that influences and limits the content of art itself as well as being influenced in turn by the latter. As the Soviet theorist, A. Myasnikov has written:

> The history of art shows that art is not only the product of real life, reflected through the prism of the individual artist, but of those aesthetic forms in which similar manifestations of real life were reflected at earlier stages in the development of art ... (1)

Discussion of form as a category in aesthetics must embrace a number of problems. First, and most important, there is the question of the general relationship between form and content. Secondly, there is the question of artistic genres, those specific forms of art evolved by men for the purposes of conveying aesthetic perceptions in particular ways. The nature and scope of these genres are determined, in large measure, by socio-historical factors and by the relationships existing between each of them. Finally, separate from genres as a category are those other elements of artistic form, the "working tools"

(1) A. Myasnikov: "Tradition and Innovation", p.139 of S. Mozhnyagun (ed.): Problems of Modern Aesthetics, Progress, Moscow, 1969.

of art such as style, method, image and so on. What is their nature and how can they be properly defined?

Soviet aestheticians take all these questions seriously and indeed often discuss them at very considerable length. We shall now look at Soviet discussion of form in order to highlight its broad trends and establish what they tell us about Soviet aesthetics and Soviet aestheticians.

One of the most obvious things discernible in Soviet discussion, at both doctrinaire and professional levels, is that its basic ideas on form and on the form-content relationship, are derived from those "core" elements in Soviet aesthetic thought - the theory of reflection and the general principles of historical and dialectical materialism. Another, following from this, is the existence of a basic dogma in the discussion - namely the principle of the unity of form and content - as well as of a number of ideas (like the concept of artistic progress) which, as posited, do not undermine this dogma, and about which differences of viewpoint may be expressed. Soviet discussion on form, therefore, may be said to contain, to use Bochenski's terms again, elements both of 'the basic dogmas' and 'systematic superstructure' of Soviet Marxist thought. The dogma is clear enough, though it is often stated and elaborated in quite a sophisticated way.

It is axiomatic in Soviet thinking that the forms of art are determined by the nature and scope of the content

they seek to embody. They are not evolved prior to content, i.e. in and for themselves, and do not develop divorced from content, that is to say, solely according to laws of their own. Any approach which refjects these ideas is labelled by Soviet critics 'formalism' and is condemned as being contrary to the principles of Marxism-Leninism. Indeed one of the most serious charges against a work of art, certainly in doctrinaire Soviet writing, is that it is formalistic, that its creator is playing with techniques and forms for their own sake, since they are not being used to illuminate any demonstrable content. Further, the Western observer gets the impression from Soviet writing that realistic, even certain ecclesiastical art, however reactionary its content, is more acceptable in the eyes of Soviet theorists than formalistic art. At least the former (as an example, say, medieval art), demonstrates, yet again, the importance of art as a means of illuminating specific social values and ideas at specific periods, in this case the scholastic and theological views about man prevalent during the Middle Ages.

The most important of the principles behind Soviet thinking on form is the assertion, fundamental to Soviet epistemology, that the content of matter, i.e. the perceived world, determines the forms and modes in and by which it is perceived. This assertion leads to the Soviet insistence on the unity of form and content.

This unity, however, is discussed in dialectical terms. It is stressed, for example, that content and form constantly interact with, and modify, each other, that the work of art bears witness to this process of interaction and becomes a dynamic and distinctive force because of this. The relationship between content and form is thus a dialectical one, analogous to dialectical processes existing in life itself.

Soviet theoreticians, together with non-Soviet Marxist critics like Lukacs, stress that one feature of the dialectic is the continual interplay between the abstract and the concrete, between the general and the particular. Form and content themselves are often discussed in terms of such an interplay - form being said to have the properties of the concrete and particular, content those of the abstract and of the general.

Form, for example, is particular in the sense that, defined as style, it is the creation of particular artists and also because it draws upon particular modes and instruments for perceiving reality. It is concrete because, as the Osnovy says, it has "a strict finiteness ... form in art imparts to content a completeness..." (1) . It freezes, as it were, the great flow of living reality into shape, renders amorphous, day to day, happenings concrete and observable, and provides a framework within which often bizarre, violent and unrelated incidents are given meaning

(1) Osnovy, pp.414-415.

and shown to be related. (Lukacs highlights this element of form in his analysis of Père Goriot and of Balzac's artistry generally.) (1) Content, in its turn, is general and abstract in the sense that it often is not finite, it contains "truths" which form the basis of the types or abstractions presented in art and it must be rendered specific by form to become art.

It is, of course, stressed that neither form nor content remain unchanged by the constant interaction between them. When Hegel wrote in his Philosophy of Fine Art to the effect that content is nothing but the transformation of form into content, and form is nothing but the transformation of content into form, he did not, of course, mean, and is not taken by Soviet aestheticians to mean, that there is, in effect, no distinction between them. The phrase, rather, points up and explains the dynamic quality of the relationship between the two. It is a dynamism that results specifically from the ability of the artist, working with artistic forms, to transform events or people, seemingly unimportant in themselves, by juxtaposing them with each other in order to bring out their distinctiveness and/or their common qualities, to achieve a certain insight about them that reality and the mere contemplation of reality cannot itself provide. In this sense is the content of reality transformed or reshaped , a certain illusion about it created by artistic form which deepens our understanding of it. In their turn, of course, forms are modified by the content they have to deal

(1) See his essay: "Art and Objective Truth", pp.49 et seq. of Georg Lukacs: Writer and Critic and Other Essays.

with - narrative techniques, for example, originally formulated to meet the demands of the epic, leisurely and grandiloquent as this genre was, had to be adapted to meet the demands, first, of historical narrative, and then, later, of non-epic genres like the ballad, picaresque tale, and the modern novel.

If dialectical materialism is used as the basis of Soviet thinking generally about form, historical materialism and its precepts influence to a very marked degree Soviet thinking on the evolution of artistic form and genres themselves - sculpture, architecture, music, painting and literature, to name the more common. (1) It is thus not surprising that the evolution of artistic forms is discussed in concrete, socio-historical terms by Soviet critics. This is clear, initially, from the Soviet critics' rejection of Plato's "metaphysic of form" - the view, expressed in Book X of the Republic, that particular artistic forms are imitations of higher , eternal and allegedly changeless forms - and also from their condemnation of Kantian 'subjectivism' - Kant's view expressed in his Critique of Judgement, that a particular genre is the creation of a particular faculty within the human mind. (2)

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(1) A distinction needs of course, to be made between the 'forms' and the 'genres' of art. By 'forms' (or branches) of art, I mean such things as literature, music, sculpture and the like; by 'genres' the distinctions of type within forms - like the novel, the ballad, drama within literature, the cantata, the sonata, the symphony within music, and so on. There are also other distinctions which cannot easily be accommodated by the term 'genre' - such as the distinction between prose and poetry. Both might be called 'branches' or 'types' of literature, but hardly genres of literature.

(2) Cf. Osnovy, p.464

In Soviet discussion, the influence of Hegel is obvious. The historical thrust of Hegel's thought, his attempt to periodise the development of genres by analysing their genesis and functions both meet with Soviet approval, indeed have left a considerable mark on Soviet thinking on the genres. (1) It is true, of course, that Hegel's underlying idealist view of art - his belief that artists through the ages have attempted to reproduce the Idea or Spirit in progressively less clumsy, more spiritual ways - is condemned by Soviet critics because Hegel approaches "real phenomena...in a fantastically inverted, idealistically distorted way". (2) But some of Hegel's presuppositions

(1) Cf. "Hegel's great service consists in the fact that he tries to build a theory of the arts on the basis of an historical study of the different aspects, genres and styles of art. This is linked to the fact that Hegel's aesthetic is an aesthetic of content; with Hegel the forms of the development of art are made to be dependent on the development of content..." (Osnovy, p.113) Thus, as we shall see, Soviet critics who approach the genres from a "typological" point of view, do not ignore the social-historical dimension, particularly as an explanation of the success or fall of particular genres at particular periods.

(2) Ibid., p.466. In his Philosophy of Fine Art, Hegel outlined three stages in the development of artistic genres. The first - 'symbolic' - stage dominated early oriental art, where a crude and schematic portrayal of reality (and its essence - the Idea) was evident; the second - 'classical' - stage was manifest in classical Greek art. Here more adequate, but still plastic representations of the Idea could be seen. Only in the third - 'romantic' - stage (which, Hegel claims, began with medieval art) did art begin to express something of the true, spiritual essence of the Idea, by using less plastic genres. It thereby achieved a unity between form and content, by evolving forms that more appropriately conveyed the content. Hegel believed that further development in art after the romantic stage was impossible: its spirituality could never be sufficiently developed to capture fully the spiritual and intellectual dimension of the Idea, particularly after the latter evolved to still higher stages in the historical dialectic. Hegel believed that religion and, more important, philosophy would supersede art because they could convey this dimension.

clearly influence Soviet thinking, e.g. his view that human aesthetic processes are somehow teleological, and that the predominance of particular genres at certain stages of history reflects particular qualities in the mentality and values of particular societies. In their discussion of the historical development of genres, the Osnovy and Soviet critics concretise the Hegelian Idea in the more tangible form of the social and economic dialectic. They say that in large measure socio-economic factors determine the nature of the genres, not to mention the content of the art they embodied. Thus the predominance of representational, plastic genres like architecture, sculpture, in ancient Greek art, was due partly to the structure of Greek society, where it is held, a leisure class existed to help patronise large "plastic" projects like the construction of the Parthenon. There also existed a slave class to quarry the marble necessary to build these, as well as a social ethic that was quite sophisticated but still limited by the outlook of a "slave-owning democracy". (The assertion that Greek art was primarily representational/plastic is one made by Hegel. It is, of course, debatable, given the existence of Greek classical tragedy, amongst other things.)

In subsequent discussion the Osnovy reiterate their view that particular genres of art develop in response to particular socio-economic conditions and ideals and from this come to the conclusion - one shared by other critics like A. Yegorov and D. Mozhnyagun [1] - that in a society

(1) See in particular A. Yegorov: "Progressive Development in the Arts" and S. Mozhnyagun: "Art and Technology", pp.281-341 and pp.181-93 of A. Dymshits (ed.): Art and Society.

free of class conflict (the Communist one) the genres will reach their fullest development. The authors of the Osnovy state that

> the principle of organic, all-round development of all the genres of art can be fully realised only in the art of the Communist society. (1)

What they mean precisely by "all-round development" is not made very clear. Presumably what will happen is that in the classless society, one enriched by greater leisure time and greater technical skill, the possibilities open for experimentation in the genres will be so much greater. Genres traditionally accepted as expressing certain types of ideas and theories in certain ways will have their scope broadened, because class and other biases associated with them will have been eliminated. One might surmise that sculpture which during the era of the proletarian dictatorship and the building of Communism has been very much a heroic, almost hyperbolic genre in Soviet art, in keeping with the "urgent and lofty" spirit of this era, might become more relaxed, more sinuously rather than stridently plastic, in short more flexible in the fully Communist society. In this society, furthermore, a cross-fertilisation between genres might become possible which broadens the scope of each. Already this is evident in the son et lumière shows in the West, which received much impetus initially from Nazi ceremonial at Party rallies and meetings in the nineteen-thirties. The use of light

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(1) Osnovy, p.469.

at the 1934 Party rally to perform an architectural role was an early and brilliant example of what such experimentation with a genre could achieve. In the process the scope of light displays, as a form of art, was extended - light, specifically the rows of searchlights facing skyward - could be used to enclose space rather than merely illuminate it. It thus could, and did perform a function similar to that of architecture. Soviet critics, would, of course, say that there are obvious limits to these developments. These are determined by both the content which forms portray and by Soviet aesthetic tastes, assuming these did not alter significantly. Bizarre, modernistic experiments would, presumably, not be encouraged and, say, a theme like suffering would probably be more satisfactorily portrayed by traditional theatre than in a light show.

These thoughts must remain speculation - that is, until we see what happens in the arts when (and if) a "fully Communist" society is built on earth. But they do represent inferences, applied to the future, that can be legitimately made from Soviet thinking on past and present developments in the genres. The whole subject also represents what might be called a fairly exciting area in Soviet and Marxist aesthetics, one that has in the past attracted the attention of the more intelligent and perceptive Marxist commentators on art like Leon Trotski. (1)

(1) Cf. his Literatura i revolyutsiya (Literature and Revolution), written in 1922 and subsequently published in English by the University of Michigan Press. The last chapter of his book, "Revolutionary and Socialist Art" (pp.253 ff in the University of Michigan edition) concentrates on the development and future of the genres under Communism. Writing on this theme, Trotski emphasises the fact that in "conditions of full Communism" the division between work and leisure will become increasingly meaningless and the arts traditionally associated with work, like architecture, graphics and so on, will assume a new dimension and role as aids to pleasure and leisure.

A materialist explanation of the origins of genres is, then, fairly evident in Soviet thinking. Equally evident, however, in all but the weakest Soviet discussion, are important qualifications to this explanation when the question of artistic progress, progressive development of the genres is looked at more closely. Prima facie, it might seem genres refine themselves and develop over the course of years, in response primarily to socio-economic determinants; that certain genres represent a demonstrable improvement upon other earlier genres. To use an example offered by Hegel, Greek sculpture was a significant advance over oriental water-colour painting because it brought more dynamism, dimension and vividness to the representation of reality. Yet in what sense can these advances be considered analogous to changes - advances - in the social and economic order itself? In what sense, in other words, is the idea of progressive development, of steadily "more rational formations", so central to the Marxist understanding of social change, applicable in the case of aesthetic change? On this matter a theorist of literature, L.I. Timofeyev, expresses a view which is shared by many Soviet critics:

> It is understandable that in the field of art, a direct comparison of its individual manifestations is impossible; on the strength of their individuality they are incomparable, just as, let us say, the automobile and propeller-driven aeroplane can't be directly compared. But comparing them at a more general level, (say "on the level" of the internal-combustion engine) one can speak about their "coefficient of progressiveness" within a given area of progress. Without comparing individual works of art, we have the right to relate them at the level of method, that is in their relationship to artistic progress as a whole, to find a general historical criterion for comparing. (1)

(1) L.I. Timofeyev: "Khudozhestvenny progress" (Artistic Progress), NM, No.5, 1971, p.238.

M. Ovsyannikov makes a similar point when he says:

> A well-known artistic image cannot become outmoded. A scientific theory may become outmoded, that is, replaced by a more advanced, broader scientific concept ... However Gogol did not supersede Pushkin, just as Tolstoi did not supersede Goncharov ... In the process of the development of art earlier forms like the Iliad, the Odyssey ... the Divine Comedy ... remain vital and significant in their own right and exist side by side with modern works of art and continue to give us aesthetic pleasure ... (1)

Timofeyev and Ovsyannikov, in effect, are saying that in relation to aesthetic phenomena, the habit of "ranking" works of art, or claiming that one individual work of art marks an advance on another, is a dangerous one. There exist criteria like aesthetic effect, artistic impact, in terms of which one can say that certain works are better than others. But these criteria cannot always be discussed within a strictly historical framework, in other words, in terms of a specifically Marxist model of progressive and continual improvement in "aesthetic effects" in the course of human history. Greek sculpture may have been an advance over Chinese water-colours, but is Gothic art necessarily an advance over Greek?

When they elaborate on this central point, Soviet critics, including theorists of literature who devote much time to this problem, make two crucial points often overlooked in the cruder, more doctrinaire and more "technological" Soviet discussion of the subject. The first point relates to artistic content. There can be

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(1) M.F. Ovsyannikov: "The Artistic Image", pp.220-1 of S. Mozhnyagun (ed.): Problems of Modern Aesthetics.

progress in the content of art, Soviet critics agree, to the extent that art reflects the reality of ever more advanced social and economic formations. The idea-content (ideinost') of socialist realist art is, for a Soviet critic, demonstrably higher than that of preceding art forms and in this sense such art is better. But the "progress" represented here is very much due to non-aesthetic factors; and it is by no means a uniform or predictable sort of progress. In other words because a new and higher social formation has evolved it does not follow that the art produced by it will be consistently higher than the art produced by the earlier formations. Soviet theorists of culture like O.N. Alterovich and A. Zvorkin and historians and theorists of literature like D. Likhachyev and E. Anufruyev (1) stress that mediating between the socio-economic base and the final work of art are the individual talent of artists and also cultural traditions that may be carryovers from earlier, less advanced social formations and that may be exerting a retrograde influence on art. Furthermore, such factors as

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(1) The work of critics stressing these points includes: O.N. Alterovich, op. cit., (Chapter VII); A.A. Zvorkin: "The Culture of the Twentieth Century", Cahiers d'histoire mondiale, XII, 1970, pp.73-80; D. Likhachyev: "Budushchyeye literatury kak predmet izucheniya" (The Future of Literature as an Object of Study), NM, No.9, 1969, pp.167-184 and E. Anufruyev: "Iskusstvo i nauchno - tekhnicheski progress" (Art and Scientific-Technological Progress), pp.358-382 of the sbornik, Estetika segodnya (Aesthetics Today), Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1965.

It should be noted that V. Vanslov has recently written a full-length study entitled "Progress v iskusstve" (Progress in Art) Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1973. The work is interesting because in it Vanslov claims that there has been too much emphasis in recent Soviet writing upon distinguishing artistic progress from social progress. He would emphasise what both types of progress have in common rather than where they differ. As it is, he claims, artistic progress remains intimately bound up with social progress and with different sorts of social progress. Otherwise, how can one explain the differences between (socialist) realism and modernism and justify the claim that one form is "an advance upon" the other?

artistic talent and genius are not, by definition, increasingly manifest as human society progresses. Less progressive societies or social eras may have the same number of talented people as more progressive ones. These factors - important, as we have seen, in Soviet discussion of culture - complicate the progress paradigm insofar as art is concerned.

The second point relates to artistic form - and here the idea of artistic progress becomes still more complex as Soviet debate on tekhnologizm in art shows. This debate is, of course, very much a product of the increasing emphasis placed over the past ten years or so on science and technology in the Soviet Union. The defenders of tekhnologizm (1) argue that in a science - and technology - oriented era, art should embrace more scientific, technological forms than those offered by conventional realism. It should keep pace with scientific progress, by adopting the forms of science.

Opponents of this approach, like E. Anufruyev (2) argue - persuasively - that art cannot be so blandly harnessed to and identified with science; or, to use Anufruyev's image, cannot follow the spaceships into the cosmos. Otherwise gimmicks and foolishness result. As we have seen in earlier discussion (Chapter IV) and as critics of N.Voronov argue, scientific cognition is different from aesthetic cognition; science progresses and advances, reaching new discoveries on the basis of old discoveries. Art as a form of cognition is

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(1) Cf. N. Voronov: "O probleme khudozhestvennogo konstruirovaniya" (On the Problem of Artistic Design), Tekhnicheskaya estetika, No. 6, 1964, pp.60-75.

(2) Anufruyev, op. cit.

basically changeless and non-cumulative . Seeming advances in the content (or ideinost') of art are due to changes in the external world brought about by non-aesthetic means and not to changes brought into the world by aesthetic cognition. This central fact leads to another conclusion in Soviet discussion - namely that the forms used to convey the content of art cannot themselves be ranked, cannot be discussed in terms of a cumulative development of forms. Though forms are related to content and one content can be "higher" than another, one cannot state categorically that the forms of Greek art are somehow more primitive, less advanced than those of the art of nineteenth century industrial Europe. (This qualification was also made by Marx in his discussion of art in the Grundrisse.) Of course, one is aware that for many orthodox Soviet critics and those influenced by the Hegelian account of artistic development, the distinction between form and content in the discussion of artistic progress is a specious one, given their basic unity. But for critics like Anufruyev and Ovsyannikov interested in stressing the integrity of art and the distinctiveness of artistic development as opposed to other types of development, this distinction remains important. It does not, moreover, contradict the thesis about the unity of form and content. It in fact endorses it; one of the reasons why classical Greek art, especially sculpture is rated so highly by both Western and Soviet critics, although appearing early on in time, is that its form was perfectly adequate and suited to its content and that the resultant balance and harmony it displayed were and remain the source of extreme aesthetic satisfaction. Such satisfaction, furthermore, can occur in

art at both ends of the chronological spectrum; just as can the opposite of such pleasure. Socialist realism, for example, Anufruyev claims, would be made to look ridiculous if presented in gimmicky, 'technologistic' terms. Its content, he claims, would be out of kilter with such form. This again takes us back to Ovsyannikov's point that aesthetic pleasure does not develop in intensity as men advance socially.

Soviet thinking on the idea of progress in art and on the proposition that various forms of art can usefully be ranked in order of merit is illuminated by discussion on the nature of each form. Here Soviet writers stress the impossibility of ranking forms (or genres within forms) or, more specifically, of saying that one particular form is better suited "to meet the demands of Communism" than others. Instead, people like A. Zis' and the authors of the Osnovy, (1) will note that different forms and genres perform different functions, have different subjects, primarily because of differences in their means of expression. They also note that no one form can replace the others, however contemporary it may appear, because forms, as presently used, are by and large not interchangeable and because they serve particular, specialised aesthetic needs. (2) A. Zis' argues, for example,

(1) Cf. A. Zis' monograph, "The Non-Interchangeability of the Arts included in A. Dymshits (ed.): Art and Society. The section in the Osnovy entitled "Vidy i zhanri iskusstva" (pp.462-526) was compiled by Yu. D. Kolpinski, L.I. Timofeyev, Yu. B. Borev and V.F. Berestnev.

(2) The theme of the integrity and distinctiveness is stressed often enough by the authors of the Osnovy: "Of course, any classification putting types (vidy) of art together into definite groups will have a somewhat relative, conventional character, for only all the essential peculiarities of each genre of art, taken together, define its uniqueness, its distinctiveness from all other genres of art. What is actuall unique to each genre and how they are in fact related to each other can be determined only on the basis of a thorough analysis ... of each genre and its special place in the general system of all genres." (p.470)

that visual, or audio-visual forms of art (cinema, television), although in a technical sense an advance on, say, verbal forms, cannot be said to replace them and other forms, to be the form now best equipped to capture all facets of Communist construction. In point of fact, there will always be a place for both a verbal-temporal form like literature or a more purely temporal form like music where the dimension of time and the opportunities for "unfolding" and "development" in artistic content presented in these forms allow greater depth and insight in an artist's work. Such qualities are less easy to obtain in the visual and plastic forms with their more evocative, demonstrative features and their greater immediacy.

The above argument, of course, reflects common-sense distinctions between forms like literature and painting/sculpture based on observation of their operation in practice. The distinctions are, in fact, listed in an abbreviated form in the Osnovy, (1) and are distinctions of the type that would be made in any discussion of art, irrespective of its philosophical bias. For this reason, they need not detain us here; and those relating to literature as a very crucial and important form receive specific attention in the examination of Soviet teoriya literatury.

While it is important to remember the distinctions between the various forms and genres, it is also important, in the Soviet view, to consider what they have in common - namely the artistic image (obraz). "The artistic image",

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(1) Osnovy, p.471.

A. Zis' writes in his Lektsii po marksistsko-leninskoi estetike" is a universal category of art. The artistic-imaginative form of reflecting life is present in all forms of art without exception". (1) Zis's comments would be endorsed by all Soviet aestheticians.

The image can be called a key concept in Soviet aesthetic discussion as well as a key element in art because examination of it leads to a re-statement or deeper illumination of important problems and themes in this discussion, namely the cognitive force of art and the distinctiveness of the sense mode of cognition; the nature and scope of "the aesthetic"; the principle of the unity of form and content and the nature and scope of realism and art of "the typical". Soviet statements about the nature of the image thus remain firmly within the bounds of the general precepts of Soviet aesthetics.

It is stressed, for example, that the image is, above all, an artistic statement about reality - the result of an act of artistic cognition and something which, further, is responsible for the evocative, imaginative power of art, a quality which cannot be found in other "statements" such as those of mathematics, science or intellectual discourse generally. While Soviet critics, as we have seen, do not see artistic and scientific-intellectual practice in rigidly exclusive terms, they are agreed that an artistic statement (image) offers some insight into reality that other statements do not. How is this? The artistic image, the Soviet philosopher, A. Spirkin has written, "is a unity of a conceptual and sensuous, concrete reflection of reality". (2) It also represents, in the words

(1) Lektsii po marksistsko-leninskoi estetike (Lectures on Marxist-Leninist aesthetics), Izd-vo VTO, Moscow, 1964, p.8.

(2) A. Spirkin, Kurs marksistskoi filosofii, p.462.

of earlier critics like Gorki and Belinski respectively, "a hypothesis by the artist on the essence of the thing depicted" and shows "the potential of things as divined by the intellect and reproduced by the creative imagination".(1)

Granted its basic cognitive function as emphasised in all these statements, it is clear that the image is a product of a certain cognitive modes. These are the lower or sense modes which, as we have seen from Soviet theory of knowledge, "register" the particular phenomena of experience. The image, in part, is a reflection of particulars which accounts for its vividness; it also seeks to embody the general and typical features of reality, deepening our insight into the particulars by showing their link with more general phenomena. Literary images, especially, have this feature - in the novel with its vast array of characters and events, the artist, perhaps more than the practitioner of plastic genres, is tempted to bring out the general features of phenomena, if only to bring them under control, as it were, and heighten their impact by showing what they have in common with other phenomena and, by implication, what they do not. There is a certain logic in this - a novel specifically about poverty cannot consist of portraits of bedraggled eccentrics having nothing in common; how otherwise could the theme of pauperdom and insight into it be conveyed?

The modes usually employed to universalise the image are, as we have seen, vospriyatiye (perception) and voobrazheniye (imagination). As a result the 'universal'

(1) These definitions are cited by the Osnovy on pp.387 and 400 respectively.

is present in images mainly in an allusive, informal way, as it were, and it is precisely for this reason that the image has those powers of evocation, suggestiveness noted by Belinski. When we see the image, say, of a tramp in art, Soviet critics hold, we are both struck by the vividness of the picture of an individual tramp and also alerted and stimulated by those general qualities of 'trampness' that are fused with the particular portrait but which are not spelled out in detail by the artist; they are often presented in initially imperceptible terms as subtle extensions or modifications of the individual image. Furthermore, if the universal and particular are not so presented in an artistic image we get, to use A. Zis's words, merely "a random mixture of images and concepts [in art which] ... leads to illustrativeness and rhetoric, to a weakened conceptual and emotional resonance in the work". (1)

Artists can and do, it is true, employ images in a more clearly defined intellectual sense - i.e. as leading ideas and principles which will guide the overall development of their work. These are often called proobrazy in Soviet discussion. But these exist primarily in the artist's mind to spark the creation of specific obrazy in artistic practice and they rarely become embodied in art itself, and only then can exist in images which must be highly vivid and individual.

This fact is evident, Soviet critics would hold, in a work like Gorki's Na dne; the leading idea or image, i.e.

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(1) A. Zis', loc. cit.

the "lower depths ethos" - a certain "noble" amorality - cannot, with Gorki, be plausibly embodied in one character, but is split up amongst many "lower depth" characters, whose individuality makes its presence and content more vivid and at the same time more evocative. Each individual reveals only a part of the ethos, but may suggest other features of it which are confirmed in other characters, as a composite picture of the "lower depths" is built up in the play. There is indeed a lack of definiteness in individual images, a quality which conceals as much as it reveals. And it is this quality which for Soviet commentators is as important as its more obvious qualities of plasticity and vividness, a quality which makes for the suggestive power of art as a whole.

In stressing, then, that the image is produced through cognition of both particular and universal in real life Soviet theorists draw heavily on Soviet theory of knowledge. They also draw substantially on the Soviet theory of form which, as we have seen, is closely linked with the former. To Soviet theorists, the structure of the image reflects, indeed is a microcosm, of the dialectic between form and content in the real world, between, that is, the particular and general. As such, neither can be superseded by the other in the image, as in real life. This fact as well as the line concerning the imagination/unconscious laid down in Soviet theory of knowledge determines Soviet thinking on the role of the imagination in the creation of images.

Soviet theorists hold that the imagination exists to heighten our understanding of reality partly by showing the extent and variety of ways in which universal traits receive their particular embodiment in life. The image, once created, should reflect this principle; it should not be the product of an imagination which distorts or evades reality. This - in Soviet terms - simple and obvious truism is confirmed by a further theme in the discussion of the image - the necessity to conceive and produce the image aesthetically, in terms of the beautiful. S.S. Goldentricht, for example, writes that in the image the artist "creates ... a new aesthetic reality". (1)

Thus besides discerning and highlighting the particular and universal in phenomena, artists through the image seek to highlight their beauty and to present particular and universal features in terms of the latter. The beauty may be self-evident in the object described; or created or intensified through the process of its transformation - via the artistic imagination - into an artistic image. It can indeed be argued, and is in Soviet discussion, that the blending or dovetailing of particular and universal in the image is itself, by definition, an aesthetic process - that the aesthetic force of an image derives not merely from the physical beauty of objects described but from an aesthetic principle of harmony of universal and particular, of unity within diversity. It is this aesthetic force which also contributes significantly to the evocative power of the image, to its ability to show

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(1) Cited from G.M. Gak et al. (eds.): Formy obshchestvennogo soznaniya, p.462. (Goldentricht contributed the chapter on aesthetics to this compilation).

(pokazyvat') rather than prove (dokazyvat') the truth about phenomena, to evoke a feeling of authenticity. In this connection, it should be noted, Soviet critics repeat an equation often found in Soviet aesthetic theory - that of "the aesthetic" with pravda, of beauty with truthfulness. The aesthetic serves to invest individual images with truthfulness; it convinces those perceiving them that the facts about phenomena, recorded in images, must be the "right" ones, that the images themselves are not distorting reality.

At the same time, Soviet writers add, there is no suggestion of didacticism, of preaching via images that "tell the truth". This particular quality of the image - its freedom from didacticism except perhaps in such genres as the fable - is stressed by commentators like M.F. Ovsyannikov (1) and is seen as being reinforced by its aesthetic content.

All this, as we have seen in another context, gives images in particular, and art and the aesthetic in general, a certain moral dimension. It does not lead, as we have also seen, to the outright assertion by Soviet critics that the artistic mode of thinking in images is the highest and most truthful form of cognition; merely that it is different, not ineffective and, above all, truthful.

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(1) Cf. Ovsyannikov, op. cit., p.225.

It is axiomatic in Soviet discussion of form that fullest scope for both the image and the genres of art is allowed in that artistic mode which, to Soviet critics, dominates all others, namely, realism. We shall now examine this mode of art, to see why it features so prominently in Soviet aesthetics.

One should say at the outset that the term 'realism' is perhaps the most overworked and vaguest of those terms commonly used by aestheticians. The Western (revisionist) Marxist writer on art, Ernst Fischer, has written:

> The concept of "realism in art" is both loose and indefinite. In one case realism is described as a trend, as an evaluation of objective reality; in other as a style, as a method. The boundaries between these two definitions often tend to be blurred. (1)

The Soviet critic, S.O. Mashinski, has also observed:

> ... in the minds of our contemporary theorists of literature, realism has become not so much a concept reflecting a definite aspect of the content of art, as a designation by another label for literature as a whole, all the particular features of its content and form. (2)

Behind these two statements is the presupposition that a simple, inclusive definition of realism raises more questions

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(1) Cited from his 1964 work Literature and the Spirit of the Times by S. Mozhnyagun in his monograph "Unadorned Modernism", p. 252 of Problems of Modern Aesthetics.

(2) S.O. Mashinski: "Tipologicheskoye i konkretno-istoricheskoye issledovaniye literatury" (Typological and Concrete-Historical Research into Literature), p.134 of N.L. Stepanov and U.R. Focht (eds.): Problemy tipologii russkogo realizma.

than it answers. To say, for example, that realism is "the faithful portrayal of reality in art" is to beg two questions:

(i) can reality, that is to say, individual real objects be, in fact, reproduced faithfully in art?

(ii) assuming that (i) offers no problem, is it sufficient to reproduce life as it is in order to be called a realistic artist?

For Soviet theorists, the first question poses no problem. Soviet aestheticians, whatever their ability or viewpoint, emphasise, as we have constantly stressed, the cognitive power of art, the ability of the artist to understand reality in all its facets. Western theorists like the British Marxist critic, John Berger, it is true, do question the effectiveness of art as a form of cognition mainly on two grounds. First, Berger claims, the cognitive power of art is limited because the artist, particularly in one-plane genres of art such as painting, is not able to perceive particular objects of real life, say, a mountain or a house, in totality, i.e. from all sides. The percipient is limited by the position from which he views (he can generally only see the front view) and by the fact that his perception of this front view is also limited; he cannot in one optical focus catch all details and all possible movements "between details" at any one point in time, on this front surface. Secondly,

what he perceives and records about objects is also determined and limited by his own intentions and knowledge, what he wants to know about the phenomena and how much this knowledge means to him. To summarise from Berger:

> No work of art can do justice to the whole complexity of reality. Every work of art is a simplification based on a convention. The convention itself emphasises a particular aspect of nature in accordance with the interests of the particular social group or class that has created it. (1)

Soviet critics (so far as this writer is aware) do not specifically answer the sort of points raised by Berger because they do not raise them themselves. But it is not difficult to envisage their replies. From the outset they would concede that no work of art can become the reality it reproduces - a painting of a tree does not lose its leaves or bend in the wind. The conditional or conventional character of art has, of course, always been accepted in Soviet aesthetics and the argument that art has to encompass reality fully in all its textures and dimensions in order to be called realistic would appear specious and unnecessary to them. Obviously the fixed position of the percipient-artist imposes limitations in some genres but, it should be noted, these are reduced, if not eliminated in such multi-plane genres as sculpture and temporal and verbal ones as literature. More generally, the processes of knowledge as the Soviet thinkers understand them enable artists to penetrate ever more deeply into phenomena, to grasp at least the essence of a phenomenon, if

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(1) J. Berger: "Problems of Socialist Art", p.215 of Lee Baxandall (ed.): Radical Perspectives in the Arts, Pelican Books, Middlesex, 1972.

not always its total spatial surface. To this extent art can be faithful to reality.

Soviet thinkers agree that preconceptions or particular motives may distort perceptions but argue that certain of these (particularly partisan ones) facilitate such perceptions, make them objective whereas others ('reactionary', 'subjective' ones and so on) do not. This last consideration leads directly on to the second question raised at the beginning of the discussion, namely whether an intention simply to portray reality faithfully (quite apart from other motives) will make one's art realistic. It is accepted by most professional Soviet critics and theorists of realism (V.V. Vinogradov, M. Khrapchenko, B. Suchkov, G.N. Pospelov and others) as well as by doctrinaire critics, that this mode of art amounts to more than the "faithful reflection of reality" or "truth to life" - terms that are generally rendered in Russian by the words pravdivost' or, more concretely, pravdopodobiye. For these critics, to equate realistic art with the art of the camera is both limiting and dangerous - it blurs the distinction, vital in Soviet theory, between realism and naturalism and it leads to 'sociologistic' interpretations of realism. (The two results are strongly interconnected.)

To consider the latter first: a writer may be held to be a realist simply because by dint of his knowledge of a certain milieu, as a product of it, he is able to describe it realistically. This, as will be recalled, was the approach

in the 1930's of the Soviet critic Nusinov towards the realism of Balzac - an approach condemned at the time as 'sociologistic' since it presupposes, in a manner typical of sociologism, that there is no aesthetic 'mediation' between the social environment and its "reflection in art"; and that any social environment is good material for realism, provided it is "faithfully recorded". Under this approach in sum, we can say that Balzac is a good realist because he is a good copier and that most retrograde writers are good realists because they know their retrograde (reactionary) class environment well. Yet for Soviet critics like Vinogradov, Khrapchenko et al., this approach offers a wrong understanding both of realism in general and Balzac's realism in particular, primarily because it presupposes a naturalistic view of realism.

Naturalism is condemned by all Soviet critics, primarily because it is both bad art and a bad 'picture' of reality. As a form of art which accepts "habits of looking ... formed ... today by photography and building upon these, ... reminds us of what we have already seen", (1) naturalism reduces art to an exercise of the most mechanical sort. The naturalist makes no attempt to grapple with reality; he merely catalogues its surface details. This attitude encourages the belief that such catalogues are sufficient for art to be realistic and, as a corollary, the view that somehow art dealing with the most trivial and sordid of everyday details is the most realistic.

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(1) Ibid., p.216.

In point of fact, Soviet theorists agree, naturalistic realism is a distortion of reality, through its 'mechanistic' nature, the inability of naturalistic artists to perceive the dialectic in reality and between artist and reality, and thus to distinguish between the particular and the universal. It also distorts through its preoccupation with the trivial and sordid.

These points have all emerged in Soviet discussion of realism itself. They were advanced often in schematic form at an early (April 1957) Moscow seminar on realism sponsored by the Gorki Institute and attended by many Soviet specialists. This seminar was later criticised (along with other writing at the time) by V. Vinogradov because it was too superficial in its discussion and too obsessed with seeing realism in mechanical, "truth to nature" terms. (1) Since 1957 Soviet discussion of realism has, in fact, concentrated on two themes - namely, the role of pravdivost' in realism, and the related problem of the scope of realistic artistic techniques and, secondly, the role of the type and of social truth as a definitive element in realism.

"Truth to life" is an important ingredient in realistic art, in the Soviet view; but is not by itself necessary or sufficient for realism. It is important in the sense that realistic art must be authentic - that is, present us with a world we recognise as reality . But, as it stands, the concept of pravdivost' is not enough. Use of it, as the keystone of any definition of realism, implies, as we have

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(1) V.V. Vinogradov: Problema avtorstva i teoriya stilya (The Problem of Authorship and the Theory of Style), Goslitizdat, Moscow, 1961, p.454 et seq.

noted, that truth to any detail of life constitutes realism, that the limits of realism are theoretically infinite and that "camera techniques" are the basis of art.

To consider this last point more fully, we know from the discussion of Soviet theory of knowledge that artistic cognition goes beyond those elementary forms of cognition which are analogous to photography. We also know from this discussion that reality can be perceived in a "heightened" form by the creative imagination in order to be understood more clearly. Thus it is commonplace for Soviet critics to state that so-called distortions of reality, via hyperbole, dream sequences, sustained metaphors and other techniques, are legitimate to the extent that reality is more deeply illuminated - i.e. to the extent that we know more about a given reality than a simple description of its surface details might provide. But clearly the technique is in the Soviet context acceptable only in limited doses, must be used to illuminate an "approved" reality or make "acceptable" points about it and cannot be too bizarre, or be used merely for the purpose of indulging the artistic imagination. In this respect science-fiction - nauchnava fantastika - is commended as something in which all three conditions are usually met; it is now an object of serious study by Soviet critics. (1)

(1) Cf. A.F. Britikov: Russki sovetski nauchno-fantasticheski roman (The Soviet Russian Science-Fiction Novel), Nauka, Moscow, 1970. Tarkovski's science-fiction film "Solaris" illustrates one acceptable use of the "(scientific) fantastic in the arts in the U.S.S.R. It is noteworthy also that excessive use of the "ordinary-fantastic" in the U.S.S.R. (everyday reality and people distorted often for "incorrect", decadent, artistic effects) has strong links in the minds of many Soviet critics with political heterodoxy, dissidence, cf. the work of Zamyatin in the 'twenties and Sinyavski-Tertz in the late 'fifties and the 'sixties. Artistic non-conformity, particularly in a state where an official artistic canon exists, can easily be considered to be inspired by, to reflect political and social non-conformity,

(Footnote (1) continued on page 289).

On the question of the limits of realism, Soviet thinking emerges more clearly in discussion of the typical as a key ingredient in realism. (It has, of course, been an important theme in Marxist aesthetics generally ever since Engels made reference to it in his discussion of realism.) What is the typical? Soviet theorists, the orthodox certainly, would agree with the broad content of, if not with the Stalinist (political) motives behind a definition offered by Politburo member G. Malenkov, at the 19th C.P.S.U. Congress, held in 1952. (This was given in the course of a Party attack on "shortcomings" in contemporary Soviet literature, and particularly on the "negativism" and distortions of certain writers.) Malenkov noted:

> In the Marxist-Leninist view the typical by no means signifies some sort of statistical average. Typicalness corresponds to the essence of a given socio-historical phenomenon; it is not simply the most widespread ... ordinary phenomenon. Conscious exaggeration and accentuation of an image do not exclude typicalness, but disclose it more fully and emphasise it. The typical is the basic sphere of the manifestation of partiinost' in realistic art ... (1)

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(1) Cited from E.J. Simmons: "Soviet Literature and Controls", p.25 of Simmons (ed.): Through the Looking Glass of Soviet Literature (translation emended slightly).

(Footnote (1) continued from previous page)

in official minds. Explaining the reasons for the harsher sentence that was imposed on Sinyavski than on Daniel, following their trial in 1966, the writer on Soviet cultural history, A. Rothberg, noted "but perhaps the most important consideration was the actual nature of Sinyavski's work - writing which struck with a savage irony and fantastic imagination at some of the favourite shibboleths of the Soviet regime". (A. Rothberg: The Heirs of Stalin, p.156). Here the test of "illuminating an approved reality" is clearly not passed by Sinyavski; in his work (Soviet) reality is merely distorted and ridiculed, in the Soviet view.

What Soviet theorists seek to emphasise is that the typical does not emerge from a random sample of figures or circumstances in a given reality, but from the conscious choice and development of certain figures or circumstances, from the need to show that such are, in fact, typical. And the reasons for this are both artistic and socio-political. To establish that phenomena are typical, the artist has to show - and show vividly and concisely within the often limited time and/or space imposed by his genre - the reality or slice of reality of which they are typical: and furthermore, show them to be organically related to and developing with this reality (and not merely as fixed and immobile accretions to it). V.V. Vinogradov has written:

> Typical, realistic characters do not arise from themselves and are not simply the object of the external influence of relationships in social life ... they always are formed from inside, under the influence of definite social relationships, but always bear within themselves both the mark of being conditioned by these relationships and their own internal logic (vnutrenniye zakonomernosti). (1)

In other words, their reality (typicality) in art can only be shown both by establishing their plausibility as self-motivated individual human beings, and by making clear that their motives and character are linked in some degree to a definite social milieu, group or situation. It is clear, then, for Soviet theorists that typical characters are not simply social archetypes, though their link with a recognisable social milieu is a precondition for their effectiveness as types. Typical characters may each possess

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(1) V.V. Vinogradov: O yazyke khudozhestvennoi literatury (On the Language of Belles-Lettres), Goslitizdat, Moscow, 1959, p.103.

particularities different from other characters, as well as their common type (and these can be emphasised to highlight the type in turn more strongly). There is nothing odd in this, as this combining of particular and universal lies at the basis of image-forming in art, in the Soviet view. Soviet theoreticians also make it clear that certain characters in typical art can remain complete "particulars" - oddities in themselves - in order again to highlight the types more clearly. They themselves may in no way be typical. In addition, the portrayal of the typical in this way (and thus realism as a whole) is facilitated not merely by surface-description of an empirical reality, but by what can be called 'psychological realism', "the reproduction of the inner world of man", the revelation of

> how objective reality fills the consciousness of man ... and man leaves his imprint upon the environment both within the confines of individual experience and within the broader limits of social practice. (1)

Soviet theorists do stress that a type taken from any reality, any form of typicality, is not in itself an ingredient of realism. And they do so in the context not only of an attack on naturalism, but of a critique of the notion of réalisme sans rivages generally (popularised by the French Marxist philosopher, Roger Garaudy). They may and do differ in the arguments they use in their critique. But the thrust of their sentiments is clear, and our understanding of realism in Soviet aesthetics is deepened by following them.

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(1) Osnovy, p.551.

For the orthodox critic, especially (taking his cue from remarks like Malenkov's) and from the Engels' critique, 'typical' art is, above all, the art of Tendenz, the art which reflects the social tendency of history and which for Marxists is reflected in the forward movement of revolutionary and proletarian groups. Figures that are typical of this reality are, in the Soviet view, the types whose portrayal offers the most realistic art, and whose essence can only properly be discerned through a partisan understanding of reality.

In this way partiinost' becomes a central concept for the Soviet critic in determining which subjects are realistic and which are not. It may be argued that "decadent aristocrats" are typical of a certain milieu, are recognisable types and can be portrayed just as realistically as can oppressed workers. The Soviet critic, however, clearly distinguishes between the realism of the former and that of the latter. Partisan realism and types that reflect "true" social trends is for him the "deeper" realism. This is not to say that realities like a decadent aristocracy or, say, American capitalism might not themselves be subjects for partisan art - such art would, in fact, by definition, highlight their true (reactionary, "doomed") nature better than would the art of apologists for both. But this is still art of partisan criticism rather than partisan endorsement and somehow - it is claimed-less vivid, less gripping than the latter.

At another level, the 'unlimited realism' concept is attacked by professional critics like M. Ovsyannikov and S. Mozhnyagun [1] because it is contrary to the principles of Soviet theory of knowledge and because it is often the by-product of fallacious (and specifically 'revisionist') ideas on art from such Western Marxist thinkers as Ernst Fischer and Garaudy himself. [2] Thus Mozhynagun will say that "typical", realistic art cannot be broadened to include any art which has external reality as a point of departure for other so-called "higher realities" or which portrays phenomena based on real life, in decidedly unreal forms. Behind these 'revisionist' notions of realism is the view that through art the artist creates a "second reality" which is somehow higher, more true than empirical reality, and in the name of which any distortion or extension of the latter is possible. Behind them also is the idea that there can be a discontinuity between the content of empirical reality and the forms used to express it.

The first view, for the Soviet critic, is contrary to his ideas on the uslovnost' of art (i.e. art does not become - whether in a higher or lower form - the reality it describes) and to his belief that artistic forms of cognition are, in no sense, superior to other forms though they produce different, distinctive types of "reflection". The second notion is possible only if, as Mozhnyagun writes:

> the question of forms of reflection is ignored and with it the assumption that form should correspond to objective reality ... It is precisely

(1) Ovsyannikov and Mozhnyagun, op. cit. (in Problems of Modern Aesthetics).

(2) Cf. Ernst Fischer: Art against Ideology (trans. Anna Bostok), Allen Lane, London, 1969; Roger Garaudy: Marxism in the Twentieth Century (trans. René Hague), Collins, London, 1970.

> this ... that goes unnoticed by those who in their definition of realism accentuate only the point of departure (objective reality) and ignore the final result, the product of that reflection (the writer's creative method, his artistic method, the artistic form of his work). (1)

'Revisionist' theorists of realism like Garaudy and Fischer could be said to accentuate only the point of departure (objective reality) in one sense at least. Their views of realism are, in fact, determined by a theory of art in which its role as an instrument of reflection and of partisan judgement is minimised. Such a theory, in turn, reflects both men's concern to establish a new critique of Marxist philosophy as a whole and to chart new lines of development for Marxist thinking both in aesthetics and other fields. To Garaudy, the theorist of art and literature, Marxism is a philosophy which illuminates and should illuminate the principle of creativity as the key to man's mastery of the world, the key to his nature and his potential. Such a principle finds clear expression, above all, in art which Garaudy defines as "man's knowledge of his creative powers expressed in the inexhaustible language of the myth"; (2) and it leads to the further view that "our Marxist conception of realism must not, in the course of artistic practice, follow the lead of what was most conservative and limited in bourgeois aesthetics, but embrace the heritage of all the great creative periods of mankind". (3) Art, for Garaudy, exists to maximise human creative potential, and our understanding of it.

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(1) Mozhnyagun, op. cit., pp.252-253.

(2) Garaudy, op. cit., p.192.

(3) Ibid., p.190.

Fischer, for his part, comes to a similar view of art, though for different reasons. Amongst them, of course, is his argument, put forward in Art against Ideology, that through the aesthetic, men and specifically Marxists can guard against the "dead weight" of ideology and dogmatism. The latter, in his view, shackles human thought by tying men to preconceptions about themselves and their capacities that can become outdated, and irrelevant. (1)

Since Soviet critics do not, as far as this writer is aware, try to explain the aesthetic and justify art by reference to a critique or mystique of creativity (mythmaking) or by labouring the art/ideology antithesis, they are neither sympathetic to Garaudy's and Fischer's ideas or to the conclusions about "unlimited realism" that are tied in with them. This is abundantly clear from Mozhnyagun's article.

Realism, then, for the Soviet critic, is neither "without limits" nor simply a "mirror of reality" justified by its veracity to randomly selected details of everyday life. In their concern to categorise realism precisely, Soviet critics (with some exceptions) do not, however, go to the extreme of defining it in terms of a definite artistic style. And they do so because of the distinction they consistently uphold between 'style' and 'method'.

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(1) This point is implicit in such remarks as: "There is such a thing as a socialist way of thinking. This way of thinking determines the artists' attitude on crucial situations; but it does not prejudice his adherence to this or that movement in art, nor saddle him with a view of reality laid down by sacred ideology ... There is no such thing as a bourgeois or a socialist form or means of expression in art." Fischer, op. cit., p.60.

A method in art is commonly defined as a system of ideas and values which inclines the artist to see reality in particular ways, and which also motivates the artist to use certain techniques and language. It does not, however, determine for him precisely which techniques should be used at what stage or in which context of his work. To this extent the term is often interchangeable with the term 'mode' which is often used (by this writer amongst others) to categorise broad artistic phenomena like realism and romanticism.

Style, by way of contrast, is a much more specific concept, that can be defined both from a 'macro-perspective' and 'micro-perspective', to use terms favoured by Khrapchenko;(1) or considered both 'subjectively' and 'objectively' to use terms favoured by Vinogradov.(2) It thus becomes clear that style can be viewed in two ways. One can see it as a constantly changing, developing and, above all, variegated phenomenon determined by a number of factors, generally agreed to include such things as the author's personality, the state and adaptability of a literary language or artistic mode at

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(1) Khrapchenko advances this model in the chapter on style in his Tvorcheskaya individual'nost' pisatelya i razvitiye literatury. The macrocosmic view of style would appear to be the majority view in Soviet aesthetics. It is shared - albeit with some qualifications - by A. Sokolov in his Teoriya stilya (Theory of Style) Iskusstvo , Moscow, 1968, and by A. Grigoriyan in his Problema khudozhestvennogo stilya (The Problem of Style in Art), Armenian Academy of Sciences Publishing House, Yerevan, 1966. It is also advanced by such critics as V. Dneprov and Ya. Elsberg in several articles.

(2) This emerges from the introductory comments in his Problema avtorstva i teoriya stilya.

various periods, the demand and scope of a particular artistic genre and possibly readers' tastes. (1) These are factors, the relative importance of each of which will naturally vary in the case of different styles and they could be said to be at the basis of a 'macrocosmic' or 'objective' approach to style. And style, approached in this way becomes what Khrapchenko calls a soderzhatel'naya forma, whose outward substance is that of a form, but whose essence is defined by phenomena of content . Style, under this approach, must also be considered dialectically; the content of the whole and its parts, in specific contexts and changing situations, must be clarified and the relationship of part to whole and vice versa defined in elaborate (and often pedantic) language in the manner of dialectical argument.

A second approach is to see style as a uniform, given microcosm, whose prime featuresare specific sorts of lexical units.

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(1) Cf. "Style cannot be indifferent to the method, nor to the world-view, manner and personality of the artist, his understanding of the epoch. Style is the highest unity of all these categories." (A. Grigoriyan, op. cit., p.51). Style could thus be said to be a unifying force in artistic work, bringing together various determinants of the creative process. This idea is stressed by a number of theorists of literature, writing on style. It is both a product of these determinants but also can, on the commonly held Soviet view, reshape their subsequent interrelationship and character as the work proceeds. The demands of style mean, for example, that in a genre like the lyric, or in "lyrical" sections of a novel, an artist might have to temper his traits, let us say, of extroversion and ebullience because he is using a style dictated by lyrical language and the lyrical genre. It should be stressed that the role of style as itself a determinant in artistic activity can be exaggerated, particularly when, often in Soviet criticism, writers use the word 'stylistic' when they clearly mean something broader like 'aesthetic' or 'artistic'. But it is obvious - equally - that style is not simply a "passive" phenomenon in art.

> Style is the word, taken in relation to the image. It is the constant interaction of the concepts and meanings arising in a word which has been placed in a poetic context. (1)

The focus here is on the individual component of style - i.e. words and their meanings, without consideration of possible external determinants of style and the role they may play in causing changes in it.

Considered in either sense, the concept of style presents a number of difficulties as a category to describe realism , the deficiencies of style, considered microcosmically, being particularly glaring.

The microcosmic view of style does, for example, lead to the notion of a common realistic 'style' to which all realists are supposed to conform, as the hallmark of their realism, and which indeed becomes the key to a definition of realism. Such an approach is visible in the work of the more doctrinaire theorists of realism (and socialist realism) like S. Petrov and I. Pavlov, (2) and has been condemned by Vinogradov and by B. Reizov. (3) The view of realism as a "single style" leads, it is clear from Petrov's and Pavlov's work, to a superficial understanding of realism, to a willingness to see realism simply in terms of its lexical

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(1) V. Turbin: "Chto zhe takoye khudozhestvennoye proizvedeniye?" (Precisely What is a Work of Art?) VL, No.10, 1959, p.133.

(2) Cf. S. Petrov: "O realizme kak khudozhestvenny metod" (On Realism as an Artistic Method), VL, No.10, 1957; T. Pavlov "O nashikh diskussiyakh" (On Our Discussions), Neva, No.1, 1958. A. Chicherin: Idei i stil': o prirode poeticheskogo slova (Ideas and Style: On the Nature of the Poetic Word), Sovetski pisatel', Moscow, 1968, reflects a similar bias.

(3) Vinogradov, op. cit.; B. Reizov: "O literaturnykh napravleniyakh" (On Literary Trends), VL, No.1, 1957.

components and not in terms of other factors - like subject-matter, the personality of an author and so on.

It is, under this approach, sufficient evidence of a work's 'realism' that words "taken from everyday life" appear in it - and, by extension, that the work somehow is preoccupied with "the life of the people" and "popular values". These, as Vinogradov notes, may constitute "elements of realism" but they are not sufficient criteria for calling a work realistic. This fact becomes clear when one discusses the 'realism' of old Russian (pre-18th century) literature. It is not sufficient to say that realism (as a literary mode) began the moment the first bytovoye slovo was written on a legal gramota or an epistle. It is likewise wrong to say that realism in Old Russian literature developed in "a single stream" (realizm yedinogo potoka) the different stages of which were characterised by the changing social-historical content of the bytovye slova employed. S. Petrov, for example, talks of 'Renaissance' realism, 'Enlightenment' realism, 'national' realism (i.e. romanticism) and so on. Instead, Vinogradov notes, one has to come to grips with the fact that 'realism' as a literary phenomenon in pre-18th century Russia was much more complex, and is best examined from a number of standpoints and perspectives. These merely confirm that realism, obviously, amounted to more than art which reflected everyday life, or a style defined in the most narrow sense. There were a number of 'realisms' - some dictated by the demands of the genre they appeared in (from the personal testament or epistle to the hagiographic tale) and others by the personalities of those writing about reality.

For Vinogradov, indeed, the obraz avtora - the image the author has of himself; his artistic personality - is a crucial determinant of style (and thus of realistic styles). It is something "in which are fused all the qualities and peculiarities of the style of a work of art", (1) and which is the basis of the rechevaya struktura (speech structure) in a work.

Even more important for considering the realism of old Russian (and indeed contemporary) literature is the state of the literary language itself, at various stages, and the question of the extent to which it can assimilate (and become an artistic vehicle for) an increasing range of technical, dialect, and other lexical forms. The realism of the early Kievan chronicles like Nachalnaya letopis' (Primary Chronicle) has to be accepted as a very limited sort of realism because the Russian language was not by then sufficiently advanced to be a vehicle for relatively sophisticated perceptions of reality. (The conventions of 11th and 12th century Kievan historiography were also, of course, a limiting factor here.) By way of contrast, as Vinogradov stresses in a concluding section of his work, the Russian literary language in the 1820's and 1830's had become a sufficiently flexible, sophisticated instrument to enable archaic and allegorical turns of phrase, derived from Old Russian, to be successfully used for literary

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(1) Vinogradov, Problema avtorstva i teoriya stilya, p.155. Vinogradov has been criticised - by Khrapchenko in particular - for absolutising the importance of the obraz avtora as a determinant of style. In his Tvorcheskaya individual'nost' i razvitiye literatury, the latter calls the concept vague and confusing - advocacy of it implies both that an author has, above all, a fixed image of himself in mind when he writes and that every stylistic trait can automatically be reduced to and explained by a similar personality trait (i.e. a nervous, jagged style always implies that its creator is neurotic)

(realistic) effect in the contemporary language. They were so used by romantic novelists like A.A. Bestuzhev-Marlinski and M.N. Zagoskin, both of whom tried, with the fervour typical of romantic medievalists of the time, to recreate the reality of Kievan and Moscovite Russia in the novel form - and produce art. Yet to critics who see realism as a uniform style characterised, above all, by its use of certain types of jargon and phraseology, there would, on their own terms, be little difference between the realism employed in a novel by a Russian medievalist and that of the letopisi or zhitiya by which it is inspired. In fact, of course, while Zagoskin may imitate elements of the letopis' this does not mean that his novels become one. To quote from Vinogradov again:

> Attempts to devise a 'universal' typology for literary realism, devoid of [knowledge of] the history of national literary languages ... , turn out to be productive of few results and have little substance, from a methodological point of view. (1)

It might seem that those critics who take the broader, 'macrocosmic' view of style, like Vinogradov and Khrapchenko, would be tempted to equate style with a method and to come to the conclusion that a method like realism was also a style as well. However, only one critic in the Vinogradov camp - A. Sokolov in his Teoriya stilya - comes to this conclusion; the others do not appear to do so. For them the existence of numerous determinants of style, their varying influence on specific styles is proof of the complexity of styles.

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(1) Ibid., p.531.

In its turn, the number of differing styles is evidence that authors faithful to a particular method like realism in fact do not adopt a single, realistic style. For arguing along these lines, one might use the example of the Pushkin Pleiade of the 1820's. The poets of the Pleiade, as romantics, possessed certain elements, both of subject matter and style, in common (such as the theme of romantic revolt, romantic individualism, as well as language and imagery influenced by German romanticism). They could not, however, be said to write in a uniform romantic "style" and could not be held to succeed or fail, to the extent that they did. In a case like this, one can at most concede that there may be stylistic schools operating within a method (cf. the Natural'naya shkola and, later, the Narodnik realists writing within the mainstream of Russian 19th century critical realism). That is to say, it can be conceded that groups of writers may have a common style, but that this group and the style it adopts are not synonymous with a literary method, but only function as one phenomenon within it.

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Realism, as it emerges from Soviet discussion, is a concept that is strictly defined according to the staple elements of Soviet aesthetics - the theory of reflection, the dialectical principle of the relationship between parts and whole, and form and content, as well as the notion of partisanship and social Tendenz. As defined in this way,

it remains a key topic in Soviet aesthetics and of central importance, as we shall see, in its discussion of socialist realism and modernism. It also remains a topic (like the question of Form generally) which often attracts fairly conventional and repetitive discussion.

Perhaps for this reason, a stream in Soviet aesthetics has developed which could be called neo-formalist. Neo-formalist critics seek to understand questions of artistic form by ignoring and going beyond the Marxist-Leninist doctrines of Soviet aesthetics. Because it is clearly a minority stream within Soviet aesthetics, contains much esoteric technical discussion (it draws heavily on the jargon of more recently developed disciplines like cybernetics, semiotics and information theory), neo-formalism will not be discussed at length here - we shall merely look at the general themes of its proponents and try to define the attitudes of other Soviet aestheticians towards them.

In their attitude to art, Soviet neo-formalists are clearly influenced both by the great Russian formalists of the 1920's like Eichenbaum, Shklovski and Tynyanov and by theorists of the communication sciences in more recent times.

These men have influenced the neo-formalists' preoccupation with art less as a creative and specifically aesthetic experience but as a phenomenon possessing form and structure and emitting certain types and amounts of information , or signals , depending on the form involved. Under this approach art, in fact, becomes something that is not explored, explained

or evaluated but rather is quantified and measured with, in many cases, little interest being shown in its distinctive (aesthetic) quality, its integrity as art. The preconditions, necessary and sufficient both for the "proper" creation and perception of art do not, on the whole, interest the neo-formalist. It is the finished formal product that is their main concern.

The Soviet neo-formalists can be divided into two main groups - the 'structuralists' and the 'semantic'/'information' theorists. The former include Yu. Lotman, a prolific and important figure in the field of Soviet criticism generally, and B. Uspenski; (1) these critics are concerned, to put it simply, with examining the structures of art, particularly poetry - that is, the form of individual structures (words) together with their interrelationship within the whole, their pattern and arrangement. It is clear that the growth of a structuralist aesthetic in the U.S.S.R. from the 1920's is related partly to the development of architecture - and of an architectural aesthetic in that country - with its emphasis on the necessity of good design, and good construction

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(1) Lotman's ideas receive their fullest expression in his recent work, Struktura khudozhestvennogo tektsa (The Structure of the Artistic Text), Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1970. He has been developing them since the early 'sixties when his Lektsii po strukturnoi poetike (Lectures on Structuralist Poetics) were published by the Tartu University Press (1964). His subsequent (1966) work Khudozhestvennaya struktura 'Evgenii Onegin' (The Artistic Structure of Evgenii Onegin) was also published by that press. Another important work by Lotman is a monograph entitled "Literaturovedeniye dolzhno byt' nauchnym" (The Study of Literature Should Be Scientific), VL, No.1, 1967, pp.90-100 where 'scientific' meant 'structuralist'. The work of B. Uspenski includes his Poetika kompozitsii (The Poetics of Composition), Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1971.

techniques as being of central importance.(1) For Lotman indeed the structure of art becomes some "higher unity" since "it [the work of art] cannot be constructed by copying an object in the forms inherent in it. It is [rather] the representation of one reality in another".(2) The forms or structure of a work becomes for Lotman an end in itself; content, what the artist has to say, exists, on this principle, primarily to be shaped into lexical or plastic patterns and shapes, the formulation and construction of which - as form in themselves and irrespective of their content - become the artist's chief concern and source of satisfaction.

The other stream within neo-formalism is more complex and variegated. The common interest of its adherents seems to be in the 'information' content of art. Such content can either be approached microcosmically, i.e. at the level of the basic

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(1) See A. Besançon: "Soviet Painting. Tradition and Experiment", Survey, No.46, (January 1963), pp.85-86, where he underlines the importance of this fact.

(2) Yu. Lotman: Struktura khudozhestvennogo teksta, p.256.

Lotman illustrates his approach with an examination of Voznesenski's poem Ya Goya (I am Goya). For Lotman the striking lexical and phonetic patterns of this poem - in particular the proliferation of homophones derived from the opening words "Ya Goya" (i.e. with the 'ya' and 'go' sounds predominant) are caused by a formal, structural scheme which suggests itself to Voznesenski as he goes along. Other critics, however, emphasise that the patterns in the poem are dictated, above all, by its semantic unity - in other words, by a whole theme worked out by the poet - before he began to write. Thus Voznesenski was using words primarily to convey and develop meaning and orchestrating the sound patterns of the words to highlight this development. He was not putting words together simply on the basis of affinities suggested to him by their sounds or, possibly, shape. These last points are made by M. Chirshman in an article "Tselostnost' literaturnogo proizvedeniya" (The Wholeness of a Literary Work), pp.49-98 of the compilation Problemy khudozheshvennoi formy sotsialisticheskogo realizma (Tom II). In this article Chirshman offers a critique of Lotman's book.

component of the artistic message - words, musical annotations etc., by men whose training is primarily in semantics and linguistics; or it can be considered macrocosmically - that is, from the point of view of the message of the whole and by men who are skilled in the new information sciences and who aim to quantify the 'information-impact' of art as a whole on percipients. (1) It could be said that the former group concentrate on the "rational" arts (literature and music) and the latter on the plastic and representational (sculpture and painting etc.); that the former are very mindful of the achievement and ideas of earlier Russian schools of linguistic criticism (like the OPOYAZ group within Formalism during the 1920's) and that the latter are clearly influenced by - and strive to keep up with - developments, internationally, in the information sciences. Both groups are, however, related to the extent that they ignore questions of artistry, of the aesthetic, in their work. One critic in this stream, G.F. Khil'mi, in fact, denies the relevance of aesthetic considerations at all. (2) There is, he claims, no particular aesthetic form of perception - and of reproducing perceptions; further, that what appears pleasing to the eye, ear or mind in art is the result of the percipients' taste, not a quality

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(1) Amongst works in the 'information' stream are: (i) I. Kondratov: Matematika i poeziya (Mathematics and Poetry), Znaniye, Moscow, 1962; (ii) A. Grekova: "K voprosu ob informatsii" (A Contribution to the Question of Information), Nauka i zhizn', No.3, 1967, pp.70-83; (iii) G.F. Khil'mi: "Logika poezii" (The Logic of Poetry), VF, No.11, 1967, pp.111-119; (iv) A.A. Peck: "K probleme bytiya proizvedeniya iskusstva" (A Contribution to the Problem of the Existence of Works of Art), VF, No.7, 1971, pp.82-90.

(2) In his "Logika poezii".

inherent in the work of art itself. (1) The only given and certain thing that can be discussed about art is the information it conveys at any given stage and not the intentions of its creator, the extent of its aesthetic component, and so on. Typically, Khil'mi does not stipulate what sort of information should be given in art; he writes, it seems clear, as a technician of information, not as a party ideologue or, indeed, as a Marxist-Leninist aesthetician.

Neo-formalism in Soviet aesthetics does, it has been stressed, represent a minority viewpoint - and neo-formalists themselves are often criticised by the Marxist-Leninist aestheticians. One can, however, discern certain differences of approach amongst the latter in their attitude to the former, differences that are not, it would appear, always related to the degree of professionalism of the critics concerned. Those who criticise the neo-formalists most strongly - like B. Runin - do so, not only because of their formalism, but because of their disregard (in many cases) of the distinctiveness and integrity of the aesthetic mode of cognition. Addressing himself to Khil'mi's ideas, Runin writes: Art is created

> not as a result of an emotional embellishment of some abstract thought, but as a result of an act of artistic knowledge ... artistry is a

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(1) He qualifies this claim by saying that any artistry intended by the artist himself (rather than artistry "attributed" by the percipient) is an extra added by the artist, once he has established his message. It is not integral to the process of establishing the message itself which, for Khil'mi, is the chief priority of the artist. Khil'mi does not answer the obvious question of why the artist has chosen the artistic mode to make a point if he is not interested in questions of artistry.

> category of the function of art ... a measure of the object of perception and the subject. (1)

It cannot, in other words, be subsumed or ignored in the course of attempts to quantify the information conveyed by specific works of art. Runin is prepared to concede in the same article that the neo-formalists ask interesting questions about technical aspects of art, (2) but feels the answers and the general thrust of their work - insofar as it has a common theme, are unsatisfactory. M. Kagan and A. Begiashvili (3) equally critical, decry attempts by neo-formalists (particularly structuralist critics like Lotman) to propagate their ideas as an all-embracing philosophy of art. They also reject the suggestion that neo-formalism is compatible with a Marxist-Leninist aesthetic because it illuminates aspects of aesthetics not touched upon by Marxists - it in fact "absolutises" these aspects.

There is, however, a less doctrinaire approach amongst some Soviet aestheticians on this last point, the feeling being evident in some writing that neo-formalism does, in fact, make a contribution to Soviet aesthetics by concentrating on technical questions of form in art. Admittedly neo-formalist writing can be abstruse, this line of thinking runs; it lacks the proper (Marxist-Leninist) bias and will, for this reason, always remain a distinctly minority element in Soviet thinking. But neo-formalist

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(1) B. Runin: "Toska po iskusstvometrii" (The Yearning for Measurement in Art) VL, No.8, 1969, p.111 and p.117. This article is a critique of structuralism.

(2) Ibid., p.114.

(3) M. Kagan: "Itak,'strukturalizm' ili 'antistrukturalizm'?" (And so, 'Structuralism' or 'Anti-Structuralism'?) VL, No.2, 1969, pp.113-134; A. Begiashvili: "Predely 'strukturnogo' literaturovedeniya" (The Limitations of a 'Structuralist' Approach to Art), VL, No.6, 1970, pp.75-88.

critics are serious, professional men; and since they do not so much undermine Marxist-Leninist principles as consider them not germane to their concerns, their work deserves publication, and not abuse. This line of thought - clearly - must have been followed by the editorial staff of the Iskusstvo Publishing House in Moscow when it initiated, in 1970, a series of publications entitled Sovremennye issledovaniya po teorii iskusstva (Contemporary Researches on the Theory of Art). Lotman's and Uspenski's latest works (1) have been published in this series. An attitude like this can only explain the favourable reviews of Uspenski's work by A. Zhelkovski and Yu. Shcheglov in the April 1972 edition of Voprosy literatury. Neither reviewer uses the term 'Marxist-Leninist' once and appears prepared to accept the work reviewed on its own (structuralist) terms. Similarly a collection of Eichenbaum's critical articles, including his earliest writings and entitled O poezii was favourably reviewed by Z. Paperny (2) both for the novelty of some of Eichenbaum's ideas and for the light they throw on the integrity, adaptability and general character of poetic forms.

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(1) See footnote (1), p.304, supra.

(2) See his review of this work in NM, No.11, 1969, pp.249-252. The Eichenbaum collection was published by Sovetski pisatel', Moscow, in 1969. A collection entitled O proze: sbornik statei (On Prose: a Collection of Eichenbaum's Articles) was also published by Goslitizdat, Moscow in 1969 which is evidence of Eichenbaum's increasing respectability with Soviet critics. Other formalist critics of the 'twenties and 'thirties are being reprinted in the Soviet Union, it should be noted. Yu. N. Tynyanov's Pushkin i yego sovremenniki (Pushkin and his Contemporaries), begun in 1935 and never completed was reprinted in a new Soviet edition by Nauka Publishing House in 1969. A collection of essays on art by Victor Shklovski, hardly a Marxist critic, was published by Sovetski pisatel' in 1970.

More generally, it should be said that the formalist critics have, over the past two years, attracted more scholarly attention from Soviet critics than they did in the past. (1) One could even say that in certain areas of Soviet writing on art (Dostoyevski criticism, poetic form, prosody for example) critics heavily influenced by formalist ideas - like Bakhtin, Shklovski and, of course, Lotman have contributed much of importance. Their work here clearly influences other Soviet critics writing on these matters, to the extent that it cannot be ignored, even if it is often rebutted. (2)

The fact that there are noticeable differences amongst Soviet (Marxist-Leninist) aestheticians in their attitude to neo-formalist writing shows up quite well the maturity and comparative complexity and sophistication of Soviet aesthetics today. In saying this, however, one has to emphasise yet again that Soviet aesthetics is based on Marxist-Leninist principles and that these, as far as can be observed, have not been modified noticeably in their application to aesthetics by the influence of neo-formalist

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(1) Cf. V. Kozhinov: "Istoriya literatury v rabotakh OPOYAZ-a" (Literary History in the Works of OPOYAZ) VL, No.7, 1972, pp.97-113. Here Kozhinov makes some attempt to give an intelligent account of the ideas of OPOYAZ. At the same time he criticises them for their drawbacks (specifically the emphasis on the konstruktivny printsip as the key to an understanding of art).

(2) Cf. Bakhtin's discussion of Dostoyevski, which is examined in Chapter XI, infra

critics. And while as mentioned, Soviet discussion in particular areas does incorporate some neo-formalist ideas overall neo-formalist critics, as such, are not accorded great significance in Soviet criticism today. Thus the official Kratkaya literaturnaya entsiklopediya devotes only 8 lines to the critic Lotman (Vol. IV, p.433) while a fairly minor U.S. poet of the 19th century, James Russell Lowell, gets an entry of 18 lines. Most of the entry for Lotman in the KLE is taken up with a reference to his published work and to the fact that he is a specialist in 18th century literature, as well as in the early 19th century. There is no reference to his work on poetics, no use in fact of the term 'neo-formalist' in relation to him. It is true that structuralism has a significantly larger entry in the KLE (an article by I. Smirnov in Vol. VII, pp.231-234 dealing with manifestations of this school of criticism within and outside the U.S.S.R.); there is an attempt to explain, in a fairly sophisticated way, the principles of structuralist criticism. But the article also attacks Soviet structuralism in particular for the "abstractness" of its critical theory and practice which only works "to the detriment of the definite artistic originality of the texts" and is characterised by an "absence of qualitative criteria in the explanation of the place of a work of art in a historico-cultural chain [of events]". (Both quotations from p.233 of the KLE (Vol. VII).

One might conclude here by saying that the official Soviet line on neo-formalism is determined in large measure, by critical and artistic tastes prevailing in the U.S.S.R.

For many Soviet writers, formalism (whether in art or criticism) remains distinctively a Western (modernist) phenomenon, a fact confirmed to them by the (often forced) departure of many Russian formalists for the West in the 'twenties and afterwards and their continued activity there. And while, as the critic Alain Besançon notes, Russian public taste eagerly embraces non-Russian (Western) art of the type produced by Van Eyck, a Manet or a Tiepolo, "upon Western [i.e. modernist] art of today - complete silence". (1) Such art was not embraced on any significant scale when Besançon made that comment ten years ago - and is not today. (2) And neo-formalist criticism must suffer to some degree "by association" with it. This can only damage its development in the Soviet Union, as long as Russian public tastes and aesthetic theories are determined so substantially by Marxist-Leninist principles and socialist realist practice.

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(1) Besançon, op. cit., p.89.

(2) This point was confirmed rather sharply to the present writer when he visited the U.S.S.R. at the end of 1973. Apart from the pervasive 'squareness' of Soviet culture generally, he noted, in particular, that even (often first-rate) examples of native Russian modernist art - Vrubel's paintings for example - were conspicuously ignored by the guide who was taking him and other foreigners through the Tretyakov gallery.

IX. SOVIET THEORY OF LITERATURE

Soviet theory of literature is of interest, both for a further understanding of the general ideas and principles of Soviet aesthetics and for insight into literary activity itself. An examination of it has been included in this study to show how these ideas, or most of them, are applied and modified when the Soviet theorist come to grips with a specific area of artistic practice - namely literature. This chapter is, in fact, the first of three that show the "working operation", as it were, of these ideas in specific contexts and for specific purposes.

Theory of literature had a respectable history as a separate discipline in Russian scholarship prior to the Revolution. Scholars like A.A. Potebnya, A.N. Veselovski, A.N. Pypin and D.N. Ovsyanniko-Kulikovski, had established a solid 'academic' tradition of inquiry in the field in the nineteenth century and early years of the twentieth. (1) In the process they showed themselves aware of developments abroad in literary theory - particularly the work of the positivist theorist Hippolyte Taine. Since 1917, and specifically in the thirty years or so after 1934, literary theory has been overshadowed by developments in aesthetics and in the so-called theory of socialist realism. The reasons seem clear enough - the initial concentration of

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(1) There were, of course, a number of streams within the academic school - an 'historical' (Pypin), a 'comparative' (Veselovski), a 'psychological' (Potebnya) and a 'philological' (V.N. Peretz). Writing on this school, the Soviet critic, V.I. Borshchukov notes that "in spite of the serious vulnerability of its conceptions and methodology, [it] amassed a hugh amount of material on the history of Russian and world literature, and by its concrete research .. pushed literary theory forward". Cited from V.I. Borshchukov: Istoriya literatury i sovremennost' (The History of Literatur and the Present), Nauka, Moscow, 1972, p.21.

Soviet theorists on general problems of aesthetics, and particularly during the Stalin era, the tendency to identify 'literature' with 'socialist (realist) literature'. (1) From the mid-'fifties however, Soviet theory of literature revived. The revival coincided with the revival of literature generally and discussion about literature after Stalin and was particularly evident in the substantial work begun in the field of Old Russian literary studies from the late 'fifties and in the development of comparative literary studies in the 'sixties. 1958, for example, saw the publication of two important works by N.K. Gudzi and D.S. Likhachev, (both the leading Soviet specialists in the field of pre-18th century literature). These were Gudzi 's Literatura kievskoi Rusi i drevneishiye inoslavyanskiye literatury (The Literature of Kievan Russia and the Earliest Literatures of Other Slavic Peoples) which, as the title suggests, was also a comparative study; and Likhachev's Chelovek v literature drevnei Rusi (Man in the Literature of Ancient Russia). In addition to the specialists, writers contributing to the Literaturnoye nasledstvo and Biblioteka poeta series of compilations, devoted to literary problems and including literary (poetic) texts, furthered Soviet literary scholarship and appreciation - as they had been doing from the time the series were initiated in 1931-32. These and other studies (2) made clear the breadth and complexity of literature as an artistic phenomenon, and they provided material from which the doyen

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(1) This tendency has persisted in some more doctrinaire writers after 1953. Cf. V. Ivanov: "O nekotorykh aktual'nykh voprosakh literatury" (On Some Present-Day Questions of Literature), Kommunist, No.9, 1972, pp.117-126, where 'literature' is equated with Soviet socialist realism since the 1920's.

(2) See, in particular, pp.21 et seq.

of Soviet theorists of literature, L.N. Timofeyev, was to draw when he wrote his Osnovy teorii literatury (The Fundamentals of the Theory of Literature) in 1966. This text was, it should be noted, published some six years after the Osnovy on aesthetics - an indication, again, that theory of literature was a "late developer" after 1953; it was also put out by one man, and not a kollektiv, an indication, possibly of the more specialist tone and content of this discipline.

Soviet theorists of literature from Timofeyev down have been generally at pains to emphasise the distinctiveness of their discipline; and discussion on the particular methodology of theory of literature has formed a large part of their work since 1966. The important series of articles on literary theory, appearing in a number of editions of Novy mir, from March 1971, devoted much attention to this problem and included L.N. Novichenko's article "K novomu urovnyu" (Towards a New Level), NM, No.3, 1971. Also important was A.S. Bushman's study "Metodologicheskiye voprosy literaturovedcheskikh issledovanii" (Methodological Questions Concerning Research in the Theory of Literature). The general position which emerged from such writing would seem to be simply this (although there are variations and differences of approach in certain writers): theorists of literature must use, where they can, the general precepts and categories of Soviet aesthetics both to build up a theory of literature and to illuminate specific literary works. In this way, theory of literature will avoid becoming indistinguishable from literary criticism -

the theorist of literature must draw conclusions about individual literary works but present them in the context of an overall explanation (theory) of literary phenomena - indeed often use them to modify or extend this explanation. In sum, theorists of literature should not be so theoretical as to be arcane and specious in dealing with literary phenomena; at the same time they should not be so shallow in their theorising as to be indistinguishable from ordinary critics.

It is clear that the Soviet theorist of literature relies, above all, on the categories and ideas of Marxim-Leninism. There can be no Soviet theory of literature that ignores these. In this regard, D.D. Blagoi writes that only through Marxism-Leninism "can one understand scientifically ... the development of literature ... To become a Marxist-Leninist discipline has been the aspiration of Soviet literary science from the very beginning". (1) Needless to say, Blagoi hastens to add, Marxist-Leninist ideas must be applied "unschematically" and undogmatically. Certainly there is less evidence of an "official" line in theory of literature than there is in aesthetics. It is true that a number of critics, like I. Anisimov and, on occasions, V. Ozerov, (2)

(1) Cited from Blagoi's discussion of literary theory entitled "Dusha v zavetnoi lire" (A Soul in an Intimate Lyre), NM, No.6, 1971, p.227.

(2) Cf. I. Anisimov: "Novye zadachi literaturovedeniya" (New Tasks for Theory of Literature), VL, No.2, 1962, pp.3-19 Anisimov attacks outstanding American theorists of literature like Lionel Trilling and Irving Stone and implies they are simple-minded compared to Soviet theorists, thus displaying a certain chauvinism; he also explains "the tasks" of Soviet theory in terms of Party, political needs, thus displaying his orthodoxy. V. Ozerov in an article "Mera uvazheniya; vysota trebovanii" (A Measure of Respect; The Loftiness of the Demands), NM, No.6, 1971, pp.234-243, is not above making similar remarks, but these are qualified by his references to limitations in Soviet theory and by the more scholarly tone of his article.

can beat an official drum and imply both that theorists of literature need merely "mechanically" apply Marxist-Leninist dogmas to arrive at a scientific critique of literature and that because of these dogmas Soviet theory of literature is the best in the world. But the tone of Soviet discussion is usually quite removed from this. It is true most Soviet theorists recognise and stress the "Sovietness" of their arguments; ideas outside a Marxist-Leninist framework, specifically the neo-formalist, tend to be treated warily. (1) But they do so in non-strident tones, making it clear that Marxist-Leninist principles do not hinder but actively help them in their task of understanding literature.

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Literature, both Soviet and Western theorists would agree, is a verbal medium whose principal dimension is time and whose impact (vis-à-vis that of other genres of art) comes from its powers of generalisation, the ability of writers to combine the particular with the general. This force, one could say, derives, first, from the "temporal" aspect of literature - the writer's ability to see phenomena in sequence, in time and thus to gain some idea about the thing(s) they might have in common, as well as some insight into their particular qualities; it also comes from the generalising force of verbal expression. The non-verbal (representational, plastic) genres, we know from Soviet theory of form and Soviet theory of

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(1) Cf. D.D. Blagoi's attack on the work of Yu. Lotman (specifically his mathematical analyses of Alexander Blok's lyrics) in his June 1971 NM article.

knowledge, offer a more immediate, less universal perception of reality both because they concentrate on phenomena "frozen" at a point of time, as it were, and because they have recourse to only the concrete modes of human cognition - sensation, representation etc. One could illustrate the distinction with an example. A. Yarushenko's portrait, "The Stoker" (1879) is a singularly arresting picture of a worn, yet still proud worker - and that is the point. We remain transfixed by the singularity of this portrait, the vividness of the particular stoker; and overlook another aspect that may have been intended by the artist- the typicality of the stoker, as one of many oppressed, yet still proud members of a growing proletariat in Tsarist Russia.

The verbal mode (literature) has a different effect. And this arises not simply because words instead of oils or marble are being used. Words alone (i.e. in themselves, devoid of meaning) do not distinguish literature from other genres. This fact may be shown in a comparison between the two branches of literature - poetry and prose. Poetry, Jean-Paul Sartre once said, employs words, seen by the poet as objects "joined together by magical connotations of fitness and incongruity, like colours and sounds". (1) Though there are exceptions to the rule (one thinks immediately of John Donne and the English Metaphysical poets), one could say that for many poets the verbal, cognitive or abstract content of

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(1) J.-P. Sartre: What is Literature (trans. Bernard Frechtman), Methuen and Co., London, 1950, p.5; cf. also "One does not paint meanings; one does not put them to music. Under these conditions, who else would require that the painter or musician commit himself [to ideas, values] . Poetry is on the side of sculpture and music." Ibid., p.4.

words is less important than their sound or any allusion or ambiguity they may contain. That individual words do not appear to them as separate verbal units with a specific meaning different from that of others, can be shown in poets' use of imagery, their habit of giving "flesh" and meaning to words primarily by comparing the phenomena they refer to with other phenomena either directly (in similes) or indirectly (in metaphors). In poetry, words are thus used in relation to each other, not so much to form a logical progression of ideas, as to amplify the meaning of each individual word understood imperfectly by itself. Prose-writers, of course, use words this 'poetic" sense. But they also more frequently use them as means by which to grasp phenomena quite profoundly, to rationalise about them (albeit in an artistic and not intellectual mode) by showing their essences as well as their surfaces.

The foregoing has a number of very important consequences for literature considered, that is, primarily as prose. It makes it perhaps much more, than, say, poetry, a <u>socio-historical</u> phenomenon - possibly <u>the</u> most socially and historically determined of the genres. The writer, in seeking complexity and depth, is bound to penetrate more deeply into the external reality of, say, his immediate social environment, particularly as he needs to understand it as it <u>develops</u> over a period of time. And in seeking to grasp it more deeply, he is more likely to grasp and be influenced by those specifically human (socio-historical) values and demands that underlie and motivate it. Practitioners of other genres, non-verbal and non-temporal as these often are, see - or tend

to see - the surfaces alone, to be influenced by the momentary, the distinctive, but not the socially constant, universal or typical. This dichotomy may not be an entirely valid one. (Does it hold in the case of those many 'social' as opposed to lyrical or whimsical - poets and painters - in the world?) Nevertheless it does contain an important truth - namely, that for the theorist of literature, the socio-historical dimension of a literary work is of supreme importance, requiring close examination and clarification.

Another consequence of the distinctive quality of literature - particularly its temporal dimension - is the great demands it imposes upon artistry. When such art has to be sustained at novel-length, it tends to develop a life and patterns of its own, both of which may succeed or fail. Examining this artistry, its components and the way it is integrated with the socio-historical content of a work, also becomes of central importance for the theorist of literature. These two important features of prose-literature - its complexity of content as well as its artistic demands - might now be looked at more closely in relation to Soviet theory of literature.

For a theorist like L.I. Timofeyev, the chief object of literature is "the portrayal of man in his complex and multi-faceted relationship to reality, of man as an ensemble (sovokupnost') of social relations". (1) This is an aim, which, for Timofeyev, distinguishes literature from other

(1) Timofeyev, op. cit., p.37. The phrase is, of course, taken from Marx's Sixth Thesis on Feuerbach where Marx asserted that the essence of men does not inhere in "the single individual" but is "the ensemble of social relations".

forms of art, an aim which literature is better equipped than they to fulfil. We have seen from Soviet discussion of the relationship between the social and aesthetic elements in art, between the artist as a social being and the artist as a creator that this relationship is held by most Soviet critics to be quite complex. The category 'social' is not an undifferentiated whole; an artist and his work cannot simply be reduced to specific, social mores and values. If Soviet aesthetics has firmly established this particular point, Soviet theorists of literature, working from it, must go further. What model or system of ideas can, in fact, define and explain the presence of a specific "social content" in specific works and tell us how this content is presented as literature? Timofeyev and the majority of his colleagues are unanimous in rejecting both sociological reductionism and partiinost' as the basis of such a model. Timofeyev, for example - conspicuously - does not devote much time to partiinost' in his Osnovy teorii literatury. And it is clear that a partisan explanation of literary works is often no less reductionist that a sociological one, with the added disadvantage that it tends to simplify our understanding of their "social content", as well. Under the partisan approach, different writers or literary movements are divided into the simple categories 'progressive' (more or less so) and 'reactionary'. Authors are seen as being simply bearers of progressive or reactionary ideas (i.e. are reduced to these categories), and no other classification for them is permitted. Yet the partisan explanation of writers and their work is often an ex post facto one (Lenin's critique of Tolstoi, as we have seen, suffers from this drawback). Writers are often explained by the more partisan Soviet theorists in terms of progressive, partisan intentions that may never

have entered their minds. For example, to read some of the cruder Soviet interpretations of Shakespeare such as that of the Osnovy, one has the impression that Shakespeare was constantly conscious of his place in the historical and revolutionary process and in a play like Macbeth or Hamlet, deliberately set out to use his main characters as vehicles for eliminating "remnants of feudalism", to the extent, that is, that his (Elizabethan) "gentry ethos" permitted.

Instead of sociological or partisan explanations of literature, the majority of Soviet theorists have come down in favour of one or other of four distinct models of literature. It needs to be noted that the distinction between some models is often a very fine one - they blur easily into one another, and can, in some cases, be seen to complement rather than contradict one another. (One Soviet theorist, in fact, speaks of two basic models of literature. (1))

The first and most important model is what might be called 'the qualified socio-historical'. It is exemplified in Timofeyev's work and other basic studies like A.N. Bogdanov and L.G. Yudkevich's Metodika literaturovedcheskogo analiza (A Method of Analysis for Theory of Literature), Prosveshcheniye, Moscow, 1969. Those who adhere to it consider that their prime task is to explain the socio-historical content of particular works, by reference to the social milieu and mores

(1) Cf. M.B. Khrapchenko: "Tipologicheskoye izucheniye literatury i ego printsipy" (The Typological Study of Literature and its Principles), pp.8-38 of Stepanov and Focht (eds.): Problemy tipologii russkogo realizma.

of the writer, and, equally important, his own perception of both (as evidenced in his diaries, notebooks, the observations of other people about him and so on). It is assumed, under this model, that the content of a work is primarily "matter taken from human social reality", at particular stages in history, but that this reality may be modified, distorted or possibly enhanced both by the author's perception of it and by the application of the artistic processes necessary to turn it into literature. This model could thus be called the reverse of 'sociologism' because it presupposes a number of levels operating in a work of literature that mediate between society and the social "reflection" and because it also presupposes the belief that if literature were simply the result of social "reflection" and determinism, then there would be little complexity in literature and little explanation for theorists of literature to give - little need indeed for a theory of literature. (To this extent its emphasis on the socio-historical content of literature is a qualified one.)

These levels, to use Timofeyev's terms, can be called the level of 'objective content', the 'subjective' level of author-mediation and the 'direct' level of artistry, called 'direct' presumably because it is often the distinguishing and most obvious element in a work. To explain the inter-relationships of all three, to establish, for example, why, what we know - from historical accounts - to be true about early 19th century Russian army life may (or may not) have been artistically distorted by Lermontov in, say, his

Geroi nashego vremeni - such are the concerns of theorists like Timofeyev. Of course, it is stated by these theorists that elements like style and tvorchestvo operating in these latter levels of a work may themselves be influenced and shaped by the historical process, but that, equally with certain artists, they may not. To such theorists it is, indeed, within the bounds of 'historicism' to establish what works are, in fact, ahistorical, that is, show no awareness of socio-historical factors at all and which ones are even anti-historical, that is, deny or appear to deny the importance and reality of historical change and possibly stress instead the timeless, the constant elements in human life. In such writing it might also be suggested that specific, socio-historical situations are, in fact, not one link in a developing chain called 'history', but often discrete, self-contained events that cannot be characterised as having meaning or purpose beyond themselves.

In saying that proponents of a socio-historical model are influenced heavily by histomat, one must not also forget they are also dialecticians who pride themselves on a "dialectical" application of their model. In other words, the socio-historicial base of literature and specific works is for them crucial - but it is only one element in a work, viewed as a whole. Its interaction with other parts - the other "levels" of art - its modification as the whole emerges and its possible modifying effect on the whole, in turn, are also necessary "dialectical" problems that, Timofeyev emphasises,

must be taken into account. (1)

Another model, at a certain remove from the above, could be called the 'typological'. It has been discussed at length in a sbornik like Problemy tipologii russkogo realizma and applied in many studies sponsored by the Gorki Institute from the late 'fifties on. A typological study, one Soviet critic has written

> presupposes the disclosure of those principles and sources which allow one to speak of a certain literary-aesthetic common element (obshchnost') and of the affiliation of a given phenomenon with a definite type, genus. (2)

In other words, under this model, the content of particular works is clarified in terms of the work's artistic context primarily, of its links with a clearly defined literary 'type' - be it a literary mode like romanticism, or realism (and sub-modes within these like critical realism) or a literary genre - like the novel, the epos, the skaz and so on. While clearly historical factors are important in the genesis of these phenomena, specific works are examined under the typological model, to find out the extent to which their content - both "socio-historical events" and the artistic assimilation of them - conform to or depart from a specific literary 'type'. The question of their social and historical verisimilitude is secondary. Invariably the habit of classifying literary phenomena into types - of

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(1) A particularly interesting example of a "dialectical" application of the socio-historical model is contained in M. Girshman: "Tselostnost' literaturnogo proizvedeniya" (The Wholeness of a Literary Work), pp.49-97 of Vol.II of the sbornik: Problema khudozhestvennoi formy sotsialisticheskogo realizma.

(2) Stepanov and Focht (eds.): Problemy tipologii russkogo realizma, p.12.

typologising them - leads to discussion about the suitability of the terms employed for naming particular literary types and the extent to which these may need to be modified.

A third Soviet model of literature - the 'comparative' - incorporates elements of the first two. Theorists applying it seek to explain the work of one writer by comparing him to another, often from a different country. The comparison is initially made on the basis of a posited common literary method; but the method itself, like the ideas and content of the authors compared, are closely linked to specific historical situations. Needless to say, the comparative model often produces comparative typologies as much as it does comparisons of individual writers, comparisons, for example, between the realism of England and Russia at specified periods.

The fourth model is in effect a non-model, and is rarer in Soviet writing. Its advocates claim that the whole concept of "total explanations" of literature, of necessarily classifying writers according to a literary trend or specific historical era, is misguided. A literary work, they consider, has intrinsic merit and needs neither explanation nor justification in terms of other works or phenomena. Not unexpectedly, some neo-formalists critics (like Lotman) are foremost in rejecting the "model" method of analysis, preferring to approach a work from the point of view of its own internal structure and form and see this as unique and therefore worthy of a separate analysis with no wider terms of reference.

These models might be examined in greater detail. Considering first the "qualified socio-historical" model, one needs to ask specific questions to understand how it should, in the Soviet view, be applied. Firstly, what does an analysis of a particular society (that is the subject of particular literary works) reveal its actual, objective, social content, social forces to be? Secondly, how is this content presented in the work concerned, how authentic is it? How, in other words, does a particular author perceive this society and to what degree does his understanding of objective social forces actually distort their presentation in literature? An historical approach to the work of writers like Balzac and Dickens, for example, with these questions in mind shows Soviet theorists that the content of their work was "socially authentic", that these men broadly "understood" (and did not distort) their times and the objective social forces existing in them. Similarly, an historical approach to less socially-orientated writers will reveal important facts about the content of their work precisely because critics can establish that "distortions" occur (by comparing the actual literary content and the objective, social context). They then can try and explain why they have occurred. Often the explanation may lie chiefly with "external factors" - a social climate that is persistently hostile to literary/artistic activity (Bogdanov and Yudkevich mention the content of the Soviet writer/poet, V. Lugovski, during the Stalin era as compared with his work after the death of Stalin; or the artist's perception of his society and its objective forces may be at fault because of factors particular to himself alone - not the least of which is his artistry.

A variation on the above can, of course, occur in work which the socio-historical approach establishes as being "socially authentic", but as still being subject to distorted personal perceptions. The analyst, using this approach, is then led to ask why the content remains socially authentic and objective, despite these perceptions. (Presumably, Soviet critics would and do argue, the overwhelming "rightness" of the social values portrayed is a cause here.)

More generally, it is literature which obviously is not simply a "mirror of the times" that can be most fruitfully illuminated by the socio-historical model. Because it seeks to establish the social dimension of a work, to specify what sort of things a work, produced in a particular social context, should be concerned with, its proponents can all the more easily pinpoint "distortions" in particular works and be more concerned to explain why they have occurred.

In the task of explaining both a writer's "distortion" of society or his evident, accurate assimilation of it, proponents of the socio-historical model, in particular Bogdanov and Yudkevich, stress not only the need for accurate socio-historical research, but also full attention to biographical detail - especially to a close reading of what writers themselves put down in diaries and notebooks, by way of reflection on their society, their methods of writing and their artistic aims.

In particular, attention to this aspect will reveal two other specific social influences, determining the extent of a work's "social authenticity". The first could be called the

reading tastes of the author; the second the general tastes of his readers. For example, what an author reads is often the key to how he perceives his society and the extent to which his perception is, in Soviet terms, "distorted". Some Soviet writers - like V. Kaverin [1] - place great stress on this - because an author's reading habits, seemingly random from a superficial look at the books chosen, often, on deeper analysis, are seen to serve consistent tastes and interests. Tolstoi, Kaverin notes, once remarked how the books he read, while writing Anna Karenina, appeared to be a random selection; but in fact, Tolstoi claims, he was unconsciously choosing them to help stimulate his mind on problems relevant to the novel he was writing. Thus in an author's reading, Kaverin notes, (as well as in the reading of any man)

> ... there begins and develops professional choice ... self-knowledge, comparison, judgement [all of] which the experience of books produces upon reality. Thus begins an examination, a search for what is one's own in that which is outside oneself (chuzhoye), the cultivation of taste. (2)

Kaverin adds that certain books (i.e. escapist or reactionary literature) will not assist the writer here and presumably his reading of them will indicate the extent to which his wider social perceptions are "distorted".

The second question - reader-tastes and the author's response to them - has more recently been introduced into

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(1) V. Kaverin: "Sobesednik: zametki o chtenii" (A Partner in Conversations: Notes on Reading), NM, No.1, 1969, pp.155-169.

(2) Ibid., p.169.

the Soviet 'socio-historical' model of literature. Briefly, this question presupposes the view that the content of literature can in some way be related to the tastes of its audience at particular stages of history. To examine the relationship, the Soviet theorist has increasingly to resort to a 'sociology of taste', a branch of sociology which has, it would appear, only surfaced in the U.S.S.R. in recent years, in particular since 1970. Its growth, no doubt, can be related to the increasing importance of sociology - no longer a "Western bourgeois pseudo-science" - in the U.S.S.R., and the increasing application of sociological techniques and surveys to investigate issues like "hooliganism", worker-management relations and so on - in short to find out what people feel about specific problems, what their tastes are. In Soviet theory of literature, the tastes examined have been primarily those of the contemporary reading public in the U.S.S.R., but sociological enquiries into these tastes have all too often tended to lapse into analyses of socially topical themes. In other words, research purporting to establish what Soviet readers themselves think their writers should be preoccupied with amounts often to nothing more than an account in which the researcher/critic himself clarifies what are the "urgent and topical developments" in specific areas of society and how writers can properly portray them (and, further, whether they have, in fact, done so).

There are some articles which are more concerned with audience taste per se - such as "Chitatel' i sto shest'desyat millionov" (The Reader and The 160 Million) by the popular literary commentator, I.L. Andronikov.(1) Andronikov

(1) NM, No.6, 1971, pp.228-233.

suggests that the television age (with its 160,000,000 viewers) has altered the reading habits and literary tastes of Soviet citizens and that writers, and particularly writers for television, need to "take cognisance" of this.

Most articles, however, are less "scientifically sociological" on the question of reader tastes. Amongst these are A. Yanov: "Rabochaya tema" (The Worker Theme), and A.Filatova's "Rabochi chelovek i ego delo" (The Working Man and His Concerns). (1) Here readers' tastes are, in effect, stated to be nothing more than demands upon writers to let them (the readers) know what is happening in Soviet society; and in the sphere of industrial life (and thus of the industrial novel), both critics in these articles proceed to tell us precisely what has been happening in Soviet industrial life in recent years. They make reference to such phenomena as staff turnover, otherwise called "fluidity of cadres", boredom and absenteeism on the job, the increasing specialisation of some blue-collar jobs etc. They also have not "met their readers' demands", i.e. given a distorted or superficial picture of problems in Soviet industrial life. (2)

Possibly of greater interest are studies by some Soviet aestheticians of the artistic tastes of non-Soviet societies. A recent study by Yu. Davydov - Iskusstvo kak sotsiologicheski

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(1) NM, No.3, 1971, pp.239-265 and Zvezda, No.10, 1970, pp.187-192 respectively.

(2) Yanov, for example, analyses T. Nikolayevna's important Thaw novel Bitva na puti in this light; though he commends the author for her generally accurate portrayal of conflict in industrial life - in particular that between the professional manager and the partisan hack.

fenomen - attempts, as has been noted earlier in another context, to show, for example, precisely how classical Greek art was largely determined by the tastes of its consumers and not the least by the social conditions (leisure) which allowed them to indulge these to a high degree. Of course, it can be argued that, in the final analysis, readership tastes in the Soviet context become indistinguishable from the leading mores and values of Soviet society, and it is these, above all, Soviet critics are talking about when they speak of the reader's "influence upon" writers. This indeed is a legitimate criticism. For the Soviet critic, both reader and writer are ultimately shaped in varying degrees by the values of their common social milieu; and the dialectic between them is thus largely a preordained one, virtually undistinguishable from, and certainly to be subsumed under, the wider dialectic between writer (and reader) and society. The argument that the reader-writer dialectic may have a force and spetsifika of its own, transcending social mores and social developments is not put forward in Soviet theory of literature. ('Personalist' critics, do, it will be recalled, place a special emphasis on the special "bond" between reader and writer as an explanation for the moral force of art; but they are not concerned so much to relate the content and genesis of specific works to specific and particular readership tastes. Further they make it clear that the writer, the author's persona, is the important element in the relationship.)

Soviet discussion of the reader and his tastes as a determinant of literary content is thus couched in concrete socio-historical terms, not surprisingly given the particular model of literature under which this discussion appears to proceed. There is evidently no "mystique" of the reader, no mystique concerning the reader's role in creativity, along the lines of Jean-Paul Sartre's remark

> Creation is brought about by the freedom of the reader ... [from preconceived ideas about literature] ... thus the writer appeals to the reader's freedom to collaborate in the production of his work. (1)

The socio-historical model of literature does not, we have seen, deny the integrity and importance of artistic factors and author-psychology in helping to explain the content of specific works. In the discussion of these factors, however, Soviet critics like Timofeyev can slip rapidly from simple explanations to (often dubious) evaluations of them. In the process they draw on a number of elements present in general Soviet aesthetic theory - in particular the theory of the image, the 'macrocosmic' concept of style, and the theory of genius. For example, Timofeyev (like Soviet aestheticians generally), will concede that demands of art - the logic of character development, for example - will modify content, the social "reflection", and similarly that an author's psyche can clearly distort his perception of the world. These are things detectable in any literature - and when they become evident in very large measure, as in

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(1) Sartre, op. cit., p.32.

modernist art, they become negative and harmful in their consequences, leading to artistry flawed by psychologism and formalism. But they need not always be harmful and negative and the extent of their integration with the social (objective) content is a key to the overall success of a work of art. Timofeyev gives examples: socialist realist art, he claims, is successful art because the three levels of 'objective content', 'author-creativity', and 'artistry' are fully integrated, with no one level "cramping" the other. And he can say this, in part, because he identifies the artistic level so closely with the operation of the image. The content of socialist life, he implies, offers rich material, on the basis of which the image can fulfil "to a profound degree" its basic function of particularising and generalising about life, to produce both individuals and types. In the socialist society the types and the individuals are richer than in any other, and thus the basis for richer, more vivid art. The demands of social verisimilitude on the one hand and artistry on the other in socialist realism are thus demonstrably not opposed. They are willingly served, in turn, the argument runs, by the author, who, by definition, as a socialist writer and a partisan one cannot be "apart from his society" or likely for reasons of personality to give a "disturbed"picture of it.

Another indication of the positive results that occur when all three levels of art work together can be seen in the style (and artistry) generally of Tolstoi, the creator of Voina i mir (1865-1869) as compared to Tolstoi, the creator

of Voskresen'ye (1899). If style is defined macrocosmically as a phenomenon resulting from the interaction of author-personality, the demands of objective (social) content and the demands of language - and Timofeyev and his colleagues define it in this way - then it can be asserted that the style of a writer will be at its best when all these elements are demonstrably working together in particular works. This happens in Voina i mir where one theme in the content - the unpredictability and uncontrollability of historical events - accords with the personality of its creator. Tolstoi was (then) by and large unwilling to set himself or his characters up as mentors and moralisers about life or arbiters of it, and was able and willing instead to accept the spontaneity and pleasure of things as they happen. By the time Voskresen'ye was written, however, a "moralistic/religious subjectivity" had, in the Soviet view, become deeply embedded in Tolstoi, and this distorted his perception of reality, and in the case of Voskresen'ye, the reality of the growing revolutionary movement. The result is a contrast between the rich, full style of Voina i mir and moralistic and schematic tone and style of Voskresen'ye. However simplistic Soviet interpretations of Tolstoi's "conversion" of 1879-1882 and of his post-Ispoved' psychology may be, one has to agree that Soviet critics are making a perfectly valid comparison between the style (artistry) of the two novels. They are also perfectly sound in ascribing the loss of Tolstoi's artistic power to the fact that he was, after 1879-1882, a man much less at ease with the world, and less able to enjoy and recreate it artistically. The three

levels of his art could no longer come together, because one - the author's personality - had become "distorted".

Of course, it can often happen that the objective content itself is inimical to both the author's personality and artistic style; his social milieu may be reactionary and oppressive, its dominant values "set against the tide of history". However, Soviet theorists reply it is precisely a measure of artistic talent and genius that writers can see through such a milieu, present its content objectively (in the Marxist sense) and perhaps predict the downfall of its dominant (reactionary) values. Such "talented" writers include, in the Soviet view, Russian writers like Gogol', as well as Western writers like Shakespeare, Molière and Balzac.

To conclude here, it can be said that the Soviet socio-historical model of literature is useful for its emphasis on the social and historical context of specific works; and for clarifying the various elements that co-exist with it. These elements - artistry, author psychology - clearly exist in most literature. Their presence is an observed, empirical fact. But to suggest (as Soviet theorists tend to) that when they are such as to produce literature of a less than progressive hue, they are always somehow "distorting" both reality and artistry, is to introduce a considerable bias into allegedly "scientific" Soviet explanations of literature. Furthermore, it amounts to "loading" the model against writers who do not have a message in any sense compatible with the Communist one and/or who do not conform to Soviet

notions of artistry. (This, of course, is a general problem in Soviet discussion of the categories of the personal, the social and the artistic in aesthetics).

The example of Tolstoi may work in favour of Timofeyev and his colleagues; but there are others that do not. For example, to take a case outside literature, can we speak of a gradual decline in the artistry of a Picasso or a Zadkine, both progressive (left-wing) Western artists, as they worked out and refined the techniques of Cubism and, partly under the influence of Cézanne, Braque and others in painting, moved away from simple, single-plane 'representationalism'. The socialist message in both these men's later works - Picasso's Guernica, Zadkine's monument to blitzed Rotterdam, for example - remained as strong as ever; yet here was art that on the face of it was schematic, bizarre and thus harmful to this message. Could one, then, speak of a tension between art-content and artistry?

Soviet critics, in fact, have not claimed that such a tension exists in Guernica, as we know from the obituaries published in Russia after Picasso's death in 1973 and from some criticism published before. (1) Indeed they have been throughout Picasso's long life noticeably reluctant to raise

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(1) Cf. E. Tager: "O granitsakh sotsialisticheskogo realizma" (On the Limits of Socialist Realism) where this critic notes that "Picasso ... bears witness to the fact that a work, avant-garde through and through [Guernica] , ... can meet those demands - ideological, socio-political, humanistic - which we make of works of socialist art." (Cited from p.550 of N.K. Gei et al. (eds.): Aktual'nye problemy sotsialisticheskogo realizma.

Tager was, it should be noted, making these demands in the context of a plea for a more liberal definition of the "boundaries" of socialist realism.

in detail the problem of the apparent tension between the painter's avant-garde techniques and his progressive, partisan world-view (as a member of the French Communist Party). But one could expect, from a model of literature like Timofeyev's, that this general problem would need to be tackled by them. Moreover, the fact that in Picasso's (or Zadkine's) case a tension demonstrably does not exist, points up weaknesses in the model. Its weaknesses are also evident in the case of artists, who are in no sense progressive but who consistently produce arguably great art. One thinks of those "hieratic" odes of Vyacheslav Ivanov (the Cor Ardens cycle of 1911, for example), or the poems and the novel Melki bes of Sologub - indeed much of turn-of-the-century Russian modernism . These artists were not somehow alienated from the material they produced. Indeed, in terms of Timofeyev's own model, their work represents an almost classic harmony between its content, the personalities of its creators and an artistic mode flowing from both.

The weaknesses of the socio-historical model are not quite those of a purely partisan approach to literature. Its proponents at least recognise the integrity of the creative personality and his artistry as separate and important factors in art. But this importance and integrity become qualified - clearly - when these same critics imply or state that neither factor is at its peak, so to speak, or contributing to the unity of the whole, unless it is harnessed to certain types of content and in certain (broadly realistic) ways. This is the bias that weakens this model. It is a bias, that, of course, is readily understandable, given the basis of the

model in Soviet Marxist thinking; but it makes it of dubious value for explaining the art, say, of Picasso.

The second - 'typological' - model of literature in Soviet theory, should, on the face of it, be free of these drawbacks. As noted, proponents of this model seek to explain specific works of literature in terms of a posited literary type, that is, of a specific genre like the novel or poetry and to specific modes within these genres like realism, romanticism, the tragic and the comic etc. What the work contains, its strengths and weaknesses are traceable to the nature and concerns of the type. Moreover, in the typological model, types and modes of art are viewed precisely as that - specifically artistic phenomena that become 'reified', as it were, through constant artistic practice and develop a life of their own. They are not viewed as primarily "reflections" of a given socio-historical reality, mediated through an "aesthetic experience", yet dependent upon and otherwise indistinguishable from the former. The typological model is in large measure based on the belief that certain artists write or create in a certain way because they want to be "true to type", to an artistic mode that appeals to them as artists, not because they see themselves in specific social categories, as being preoccupied with certain social themes. Furthermore, to a theorist like M. Khrapchenko, the typological - as opposed to the socio-historical model - is of value because the theorist can, through it, attempt to deal with the existence of certain common artistic qualities in writers from different classes and with different social concerns. All this is not to say that the categories of histomat, the

socio-historical model of literature have no place in Soviet discussion of a typological model of literature, or , more generally, a typology of all forms of art generally. It will be recalled that Soviet critics and the men they claim to have been influenced by (i.e. Hegel) have stated that the content of forms of art, like sculpture, music, literature and also the genres within these forms like the novel (within literature) is determined in large measure by socio-historical factors and that the development of these forms is also conditioned by them. Moreover Soviet critics who do ignore such factors in their discussion of the typological model are liable to bring the model itself into disrepute in the eyes of some of their colleagues, who then attack it for its "metaphysical" limitations. (1) It needs to be added finally that while histomat categories cannot easily be divorced from the typological model, they also introduce tensions into its application.

It is clear that typological model (qualified by obvious references to socio-historical factors) is evident in such important studies as D.S. Likhachev's Chelovek v literature drevnei Rusi. In studying certain literary trends of pre-18th century Russian literature, Likhachev concentrates on what might be called 'intra-literary' features in the development of specific literary phenomena - like the historical lay/epic, the popular skaz, byliny and so on. In other words, he tries to establish that such development was the result of more than responses to socio-economic demands. In fact, the conventions and artistic demands of the literary types

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(1) A strong attack on these limitations is made by B. Reizov in his article "O literaturnykh napravleniyakh", VL, No.1, 1957.

themselves were of crucial importance. The need to refine or replace conventions within such genres as the byliny or skaz was a need dictated above all by artistic use and experiment and not solely by socio-economic changes and consequently changes in theme, Likhachev makes it clear. Furthermore, borrowings and adaptations by practitioners of one genre from the conventions of another were not uncommon, if the former thought this would improve or expand the artistry of their own genres. Likhachev, for example, establishes that the creators of the seventeenth-century Russian folk tales (often purely fictional and allegorical - like the Gore-Zloschastiye or the tale of Savva Grudtsyn) adapted for their purposes, the moralising and often grandiloquent language and sentiments taken from an altogether different genre - namely, the historical narratives and official annals of sixteenth century Muscovite historiography. Such sentiments were often used in these tales to express brief flashes of what Likhachev calls 'psychological realism'. (Prince Kurbski's famous 1564 epistle to Ivan the Terrible is considered by Likhachev and some Western scholars to be displaying this quality. (1) Kurbski, as it were, prefigured aspects of the folk-tale, by adapting official Muscovite language to more "popular, realistic" sentiments and thus broadening the scope of both its language and content by drawing on an earlier genre. In all this, Likhachev emphasises that the simple artistic need to develop the folk-tale genre, to make it more flexible and plausible, less wooden as art, enabled its practitioners to fuse popular and "Muscovite" language without strain, and in the process, to broaden the range of the Russian literaturny yazyk itself.

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(1) It is also considered to be apocryphal by some scholars.

Clearly, under this predominantly typological approach, less emphasis is placed on those socio-historical factors that could be said to have influenced seventeenth century Russian literature, i.e. the breakdown of barriers between "official" and "popular" elements in Russian life during the Smuta, the continuing rise of the popular elements after reestablishment of stability, etc. (Likhachev, of course, does not explicitly deny the importance of historical factors for, say, the development of the folk-tale; he merely wishes to concentrate on an artistic explanation of this genre.) In many respects Likhachev's approach has filled gaps in Soviet literary scholarship (particularly relating to the period before 1700). In fact, before the publication of his book, one Soviet critic, G.M. Friedlander, had in a 1968 sbornik statei complained of the excessive 'historicism' evident in most Soviet studies of Old Russian literature. (1)

It is to be expected that the typological - as opposed to the socio-historical approach - will develop and continue in such studies, despite counterblasts from the 'historicists'. (2

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(1) See G.M. Friedlander: "Osnovnye etapy sovetskogo literaturovedeniya" (The Basic Stages in Soviet Literary Theory), pp. 5-33 of V.G. Bazanov (ed.): Sovetskoye literaturovedenive za 50 let (Soviet Literary Theory over 50 Years).

(2) Cf. in particular, E.A. Yakovlev: "Protiv antiistorizma" (Against Anti-Historicism), LG, November 15, 1972, pp.6-8 and the general thrust of V.I. Borshchukov: Istoriva literatury i sovremennost'. Borshchukov's 'historicism' is in many respects of a stringent and dubious kind. In his emphasis on the historical dimension of literary phenomena, Borshchukov accepts that such phenomena follow each other in a strict causal chain. He argues, in effect, that without the Pushkins there would have been no Lermontovs, implying, without showing convincingly why, that Pushkin's existence was a necessary and sufficient precondition for the artistic success of Lermontov's work. Most 'historicist' theorists would not go so far, particularly if they accept the general Soviet line that great artistic talent is on the whole an atemporal phenomenon that does not always coincide with the movements of history.

Old Russian literature possessed a considerable array of literary genres (though it did not attain excellence in any of them). And these need to be studied, as Likhachev emphasises, precisely as genres or types distinctive from, but by no means isolated from each other. Indeed the typological model of literature is very well suited to the analysis of multi-genre literary activity. However, when it is applied to something like Russian literature of the nineteenth century, its usefulness is not so apparent. Here one could "typify" much literature - at least during the sixty years between the Golden Age of Poetry and the poetic (symbolist) revival of the 1890's - as being the age of the realistic novel, with few other genres - folk-lullabies, lays or whatever intruding. Yet the realistic novel, as a literary type, was a broad and often heterogeneous phenomenon. It was often called, more fully, the 'critical realist novel', but was to be more usefully explained in terms of the personalities and ideas of individual critical realists and in terms of the topical social and political themes their work reflected. In other words, it is foolish to pretend that critical realism is best approached as a significant literary type, with special, constant, 'intra-literary' conventions and life all of its own. Soviet theorists who so approach it often end up with obscure, hair-splitting discussion about the precise scope of critical realism, discussion which merely highlights the inadequacy of this term as a way of "explaining" writers as diverse as Gogol', Pisemski, Shchedrin or Tolstoi.

It is true that scholars as distinguished as D. Blagoi and R. Samarin did, from the mid 'fifties onward, produce a

stream of scholarly work on the typology of critical realism mostly under the auspices of the Gorki Institute. (1) Such work tended, however, to highlight the inadequacy of the typological approach to nineteenth century writers, the arbitrariness of claiming that Tolstoi and Dostoyevski thought of themselves as critical realists, working within a clear literary tradition, first, and as Tolstoi or Dostoyevski second. The inadequacy of the approach in this case is further demonstrated by the attempt of some Soviet scholars to replace the term 'critical realism' with other definitions (types) and sub-types like 'revolutionary-democratic realism', 'bourgeois-gentry realism', and so on. These exercises have obscured as much as they clarified. For example, a 19th century critic, I.M. Lavretski, who originally posited the type 'revolutionary democratic realism' included under it the work of Herzen and Shchedrin, two dissimilar writers. Furthermore, typologising along these lines produces ex post facto rationalisations: Lavretski in no way shows that these writers were writing in a particular style, and on particular topics, in deliberate conformity to a literary mode or type which they themselves recognise as 'revolutionary-democratic realism'. A similar defect is particularly glaring in the contribution of an otherwise able literary critic - D.S. Mirski - to the Soviet Literaturnaya entsikopediya (Vol. 9, 1935) under the entry 'realism'.

Generally, such a typology defines literary modes primarily in terms of their ideological content and not in terms of

(1) The results of much of their earlier research was published in Izvestiya Akademii Nauk S.S.S.R.: Seriya Literatury i Yazyka, Vypusk 6; 1956.

their artistic spetsifika. Thus used, it becomes virtually indistinguishable from a socio-historical model of literature and its value - as a typology of art - is as a result dubious, as M. Khrapchenko emphasises. (1) Khrapchenko similarly argues that micro-typologies, as used by some neo-formalists, are also of questionable value. These critics try to create a typology by examining certain common features in the style or (in poetry) metre of a work - its structure rather than content. One critic, Roman Jakobson, writing well before 1953 of course, discovered common binary metres in the poetry of Marvell, Pushkin and Blok, and concluded that the latter two poets represented a 'Marvell' school in Russian poetry. Again there is no evidence to suggest that they were deliberate imitators of Marvell - thus this explanation of Pushkin's and Blok's verse turns out to be entirely specious (2) like the micro-typology underlying it.

There remains, of course, the broader question of the development and stability of types of literature, indeed types of art as a whole. As a rule we do not go to Soviet theory of literature to discover Soviet thinking on this matter, so much as to other areas of Soviet aesthetics such as the theory of the genres (within the discussion of form in art) where, as we have seen, the question is touched on in other contexts such as the notion of progress in art and the development and popularity of specific genres at specific

(1) Cf. Khrapchenko, op. cit., p.14 et seq. His views stand opposed to those of V. Borshchukov who tries to unite the typological and socio-historical models by insisting that "a typological connection between different literatures is best of all shown, in our view, by a common conception of the world and man at a definite historical stage, by a link between the [various] standpoints of aesthetic ideas". Borshchukov, op. cit., p.238.

(2) The work of Jakobson and the other critics referred to above Lavretski and Mirski - is noted by Khrapchenko, pp.14-15, 20-21, op. cit.

periods. In all these other contexts the influence of historical materialism and its categories is uppermost. We might elaborate on these "other contexts" at this point.

In discussing the question of the stability of the genres, Soviet critics do not find the notion of 'popularity' sufficient by itself for explaining why some genres persist and others may die. Such a notion presupposes that the particular whims and tastes of certain audiences as well as the artists' deliberate attempts to pander to these tastes are the crucial determinants of the stability and durability of certain types of art at specific periods. The point however for Soviet theorists, is that a form like sculpture was popular with the ancient Greeks not simply because Greek artists for vicarious reasons liked plastic shapes or that most Greek artists had a gift for sculpture - as opposed to other forms - but for the basic reason (illuminated by histomat) that Greek society had the marble, the slaves to extract it and, above all, the religious sentiments, in particular a tradition of anthropomorphic gods, to make sculpture - the plastic evocation of their gods and of life in general - a practical and necessary form of art for them. On the other hand they did not produce novels because, in the Soviet view, of the "... well known narrowness of the circle of ideological-aesthetic interests of slave-owning society at the classical stage of its development. The narrowness of the ancient slave-owning ideology almost completely excluded from the sphere of art the direct portrayal of the contradictions of social life and of its conflicts". (1)

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(1) Osnovy, p.469.

Thus too, to continue from the Greeks to the Middle Ages, "under the influence of the religious-ecclesiastical ideology of the Middle Ages in Europe interest in transmitting the beauty of man, his body died away". (1) As a result sculpture declined in the Middle Ages - all pictorial art including religious sculptures took on a "schematic and lifeless" form. For its part the novel as an artistic genre, only became possible when society grew more complex when men were more aware of its "contradictions" and used this genre to "expose" them. Awareness of these contradictions as well as, it must be noted, the low stage of development of literary language and literary traditions in such countries as France and England held back the appearance of this genre until the 18th century, early 19th century, in the Soviet view.

It needs to be said and it should indeed be evident from Soviet discussion of such things as the idea of progress in art (2) that Soviet theorists do not (with some exceptions) view the development of genres in "teleological" terms, as culminating in the emergence of some super-genre. That is to say they do not take the histomat explanation of the origin and development of genres to its logical conclusion and consider that the eventual emergence of a Communist society will demand the emergence of a specific and higher Communist genre (or indeed mode) of art. This whole issue was of course a topic of great debate in the early 'twenties in the U.S.S.R. particularly amongst radical artistic groups like the Proletkul't

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(1) loc. cit.

(2) see pp.269 - supra.

and the Futurist group LEF. In this case the debate centred on the extent to which a qualitatively "higher", new art form and possibly mode of art would be necessary in the new, revolutionary society even before it had made its transition to full Communism. The Futurists and the Proletkul't agitated for the idea, but artistically conservative elements such as Lenin (in the Party) and the Fellow-Travellers outside it resisted it.

The debate has not been resumed to any great extent in the U.S.S.R. today (1) particularly since Soviet artists are confronted by the seemingly immutable reality of socialist realism, as mode of art that has made use of all the major traditional genres, indeed whose apologists vigorously uphold the continued use of these. Soviet writers on socialist realism have stressed, as will be shown in more detail in subsequent discussion, that socialist society offers a broader scope for the application of these genres than any other type of society does. They go further and stress, as the Osnovy do, that the "principle of harmonious, all-round development of all the genres of art can be realised fully only in the art of the Communist society".(2) They do not show how this is being achieved in Soviet art but this writer has tried, earlier in this study to show ways in which it might be done. (3) Thus it can be said that all the major genres of art are "stable" in the U.S.S.R. today because

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(1) But see p.271 supra for opposing views in recent Soviet writing on this issue.

(2) Osnovy p.469 (italics added).

(3) See p.267 supra.

socio-historical conditions (the "richness and many-sidedness" of Soviet society) demand their presence in art.

Side by side with this argument goes another - namely, that it is not practical to try and "rank" any of these genres, forms of art against one another. Here Soviet critics develop ideas that we have met in Soviet discussion of artistic progress. That is, the aesthetic impact of a work of art and the genre of art through which it is expressed cannot be qualified in terms of its early or late appearance in history. The Greeks got the same degree of aesthetic pleasure from their sculpture as a Soviet citizen would from reading a "good" Soviet classic or viewing a "good" piece of socialist realist art. The aesthetic, by reason of its universality, cannot be qualified this way. This, to repeat, is what Timofeyev means when he states that "it is understandable that in the field of art a direct comparison of its individual manifestations is not possible ..." (1)

The argument <u>does</u> differ when the purely <u>social</u> as opposed to aesthetic content of art is considered, and here Soviet critics would say that a type of literature (i.e. a <u>mode</u> rather than a genre) like critical realism, modernism etc. by their content and the aesthetic philosophy that inspires them do represent progress or regress in the arts. (2)

For this reason they would say that such artistic <u>modes</u> as naturalism or critical realism are highly prone to

(1) L. Timofeyev, "Khudozhestvenny progress" NM, No.5, 1971, p.2

(2) Marxist critics writing outside the Soviet Union have often come to the same conclusion. For example G. Lukacs in <u>The Meaning of Contemporary Realism</u> attacked naturalism as well as revolutionary romanticism as the enemies of "proper" art for a socialist society. Unlike Soviet critics he still sees a place for critical realism in socialist art, however, and says that it is not a specifically bourgeois genre - that is, characteristic only of pre-revolutionary societies.

instability, to decline not so much because of their intra-literary, aesthetic elements, but because of extra-literary - i.e. social - elements. It may be argued that some modernist works give aesthetically the same amount of pleasure as a socialist realist novel does. Here Soviet critics, (as the discussions of modernism in Chaper X shows) can only affirm that the aesthetic has no real chance of being expressed in such bizarre and inhuman art.

Thus it is clear that Soviet critics do not hold that intra-literary factors play any significant role in determining the stability of genres of art. The social impact of a genre like the novel, whether it continues to fulfil legitimate social needs will determine whether it will survive, not any intrinsic flaws in the forms and techniques of the novel itself.

To conclude, typologies are most effectively used for explaining particular forms and content in art when they are presented at a level that is neither too general (like 'ideological' typologies) or too particular (like micro-typologies). Such typologies, usually built around common artistic genres like the novel, the ballad etc., and their expression in particular artistic modes like realism, romanticism and so on, are best able to explain why a writer appears to have something in common with certain others, why he has chosen similar content and techniques. Such typologies also lead the critic to highlight what is distinctive, nepovtorimoye in particular writers and encourages the critic to ask why distinctive qualities persist apart from "the type". This "negative feedback" from the typological model of literature is, of course, as valuable as the positive.

The third - comparative - model of literature may now be considered. It is less prominent in Soviet theory, partly because it incorporates many of the ideas of the earlier models. It is, strictly speaking, not so much a separate model, as an extended application of the models already discussed.

Comparisons, to be useful, should illuminate differences as well as similarities. Generally, Soviet literary theorists, attempting either to clarify the common socio-historical origins of specific works or to reduce literary phenomena to artistic types, are more concerned with establishing the similarities - and plausible, telling similarities at that. (There is, it should be noted, little fondness amongst Soviet critics for academic, rather fatuous comparative studies that illuminate neither of the two (or more) writers compared, studies of the sort that compare the "lyrical content" of, say, two minor lyricists only to discover that it is much the same, and of marginal depth or interest.) Soviet studies in comparative literature, then, tend to concentrate on comparing literary phenomena that have more similarities that result from their being part of a wider phenomenon like romanticism or realism. Differences between individual romantics and realists tend, furthermore, to be generally downplayed because most Soviet critics emphasise that romanticism and realism are primarily socio-historical (and only secondarily aesthetic) phenomena, transcending national and cultural divisions. In this respect Soviet scholars of

romantic art - U.R. Focht, I.F. Volkov, R.F. Yusufov, A.N. Sokolov, V.V. Vanslov and others [1] - differ from some of their Western counterparts.

A detailed discussion of the Soviet comparative critique of romanticism or realism is not possible in the context of the present general discussion of trends and themes within Soviet literary theory as a whole. Suffice it to mention here that the points which Soviet critics make about romanticism are histomat points. For them romanticism represents a step forward in art, an advance on 17th and 18th century classicism which reflected the hierarchical and closed world of that era. The break-up of this world paved the way for the growth of romantic art. Such art was characterised, in the Soviet view, by an all-powerful individualism. This represented a clear reaction to the ethos of feudalism and absolutism with its stress on the submission of the individual to a hierarchical/ contractual order and also to the philosophy of the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on the cultivation of human reason and human social propriety as a necessary precondition for human prosperity. The traits of romantic art were, of course, also linked with specific historical phenomena like

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(1) U.R. Focht was the compiler of and a contributor to the two-volume Problemy romantizma published by Iskusstvo, Moscow, in 1967 and 1971. The first volume dealt with Russian Romanticism, the second with Romanticism as a continental phenomenon; I.F. Volkov contributed the article "Romantizm kak tvorcheski metod" (Romanticism as a Creative Method) to the second volume.

R.F. Yusufov is the author of Russki romantizm nachala XIX veka i natsional'nye kul'tury (Russian Romanticism at the Beginning of the 19th Century and National Cultures), Nauka, Moscow, 1970; A.N. Sokolov contributed an article "Problema romantizma v sovetskom literaturovedenii" (The Problem of Romanticism in Soviet Theory of Literature) to the compilation Sovetskoye literaturovedeniye za 50 let; V.V. Vanslov is the author of Estetika romantizma (The Aesthetics of Romanticism), Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1966.

the French Revolution, the Napoleonic ethic, the German Idealist philosophers' demolition of 18th century rationalism and Germany's own Sturm und Drang movement in the arts; and however different the influence of each might have been in the case of individual romantics, their cumulative effect was clear. By making the individual artist the determinant of what was created, as it were, these "forces of romantic revolt", Soviet theorists claim, enormously expanded the scope of art including the scope of literary language. Reality could no longer be compartimentalised in art, according to the "external" standards of social and literary propriety set by Boileau and others before 1789, i.e. according to what was proper for treatment in the elevated genres and in the lower ones. Reality, in the Soviet view, came to be seen as a totality, to the romantic individualist freed from the conventions and hierarchies of the pre-1789 era, to the Idealist philosopher groping towards an all-embracing explanation of the universe and to the citizen of Western Europe, himself experiencing, at a more mundane level the pervasive effects of the French and Industrial Revolutions on all strata of society.

Soviet theorists, most notably G.M. Friedlander, (1) also hold that the romantic writers abused his freedom. He lapsed into complete subjectivity and his own view of the world (his "illusion" or ideal of it) came to replace the empirical world with its "rich, many-sided" reality, indeed came to be opposed to it - hence the "romantic agony", the state of dvoyemiriye reflected in romantic art. It was the

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(1) G.M. Friedlander: Poetika russkogo realizma (The Poetics of Russian Realism), Nauka, Leningrad, 1971, p.16 et seq.

hallmark of realistic art - in particular critical realism, Friedlander claims, that it neutralised the worst aspects of romanticism, carried forward the latter's "democratic" element, and continued broadening the scope of art by making the lower social orders - and everyday life - the subject for serious and not comical or satirical treatment. In this, the critical realists were, as all Soviet theorists emphasise, reflecting the upsurge of popular (and revolutionary) feeling in continental countries; they were also trying to be better realists, striving, more than romantic artists ever did, to catch the totality, the many-sidedness of reality, and perfecting such tools as the novel-form, the artistic image and the artistic type, in order to do so.

These elements in both romanticism and realism, as broadly defined above were, Soviet critics state, a definite feature of the literatures of France, Germany, England and Russia in the half-century or so after 1789 - they amount to certain "irreducible" similarities that the comparativist must consider when he discusses the romantic and realistic literatures of all four countries. It might seem that a phenomenon like romanticism in which the national Ego (and national exclusiveness in art) was seen as a logical extension of the individual (creative) Ego would not be a phenomenon easily categorisable in terms of common (supra-national) themes, ideas and preconditions. But, in fact, romantic literatures borrowed from and were heavily influenced by one another. Within a multi-national state like Tsarist Russia this was particularly evident, as R.F. Yusufov shows in his study of Russian romanticism in the early 19th century. (1)

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(1) Yusufov, op. cit.

Yusufov notes that borrowings from other (Ukrainian, Caucasian) traditions were justified at the time by Russian romantic theorists like O. Somov, A. Bestuzhev-Marlinski and others on the ground that they vindicated and enriched the natsional'naya samobytnost' (national distinctiveness) of Russian romantic art - the latter was sufficiently strong for Russian artists to know what they could successfully adapt and borrow from non-Russian art. Furthermore, a comparison between individual romantic artists like Byron and, say, Pushkin will in Soviet criticism emphasise what elements are common to their romanticism rather than what is different. For example, I.F. Volkov, in his discussion of Pushkin's debt to Byron, treats this debt in terms of "core" romantic themes taken by the Russian poet from the English. He does not distinguish nearly so much what was specific and distinctive in Byron's assimilation of romantic techniques and themes or make clear the extent to which Pushkin's own (specific) application of them was influenced by a particularly 'Byronic' romanticism.

Such practices have led to a certain superficiality in Soviet comparative studies in romanticism, a tendency noted by Soviet critics themselves (1) to characterise romanticism by such broad terms as 'irrationalism', 'subjectivity', 'conflicts' and so on. None of these by itself can be called a distinguishing quality of romantic art (all of them are also present in modernism); and their inadequacy in this

(1) This drawback as well as other aspects of Soviet discussion of romanticism are noted in N.K. Gei and V. Piskunov: Esteticheski ideal sovetskoi literatury, Chapter II.

respect would be shown by closer examination of romanticism as a working system of art applied in different ways by particular artists.

This weakness is perhaps less evident in Soviet comparative studies of 19th century realism - partly, one suspects, because Soviet critics are more sympathetic to this mode: M. Khrapchenko, for example, stresses that comparisons between Russian realists on the one hand, and the "realisms" of different countries on the other, can fruitfully illuminate the complexity and diversity of realism as a continental phenomenon. Such comparisons, furthermore, he notes, must not be simply chronological - i.e. between writers twenty years apart, on the expectation that the more recent writer will somehow represent an advance , in theme content, technique etc., over the earlier. This expectation presupposes that literary modes always develop or change substantially with time. In fact, Khrapchenko notes, comparisons between contemporary realist writers will reveal as many differences as will comparisons between realist writers of different periods. This fact merely highlights the further fact that the cultivation of a literary mode at any point in time is qualified by such factors as artistic ability, personality, personal interest - none of which can be stereotyped within a mode. As Khrapchenko says:

> One cannot replace the disclosure of a most complex system of "co-ordinates" [i.e., a literary mode as applied by particular authors] ... with a vertically chronological "cut", with juxtapositions in a narrow time-frame. (1)

(1) M.B. Khrapchenko: Tvorcheskaya individual'nost' pisatelya i razvitive literatury, p.91.

Similarly, G.M. Friedlander notes substantial differences between the realism of the Russian classics and that of other 19th century continental literatures. Such differences include the greater intensity and totality in the themes and content of Russian writers, the presence of "popular spirit" in most aspects of the social reality portrayed, the greater experimentation evident in Russian narrative/plot techniques (multi-level plot construction, conflation of past and present, the use of a number of different narrators, etc.) and so on. And such differences can be explained, amongst other things, by the personality of Russian writers, the greater impact of narodnost' on Russian social and literary life, the tastes and expectations of Russian readers.

There is, as we have noted, a fourth strand of thinking (model) in Soviet literary theory. It is a minority one and is evident from time to time in the work of some neo-formalist critics like Yu. Lotman. (1) Without suggesting that the work of his colleagues is wrong, Lotman, for example, will make the point that literary phenomena are too diverse and complex to be satisfactorily explained by any one model of literature; just as, generally, their content cannot be reduced to socio-historical categories. In addition, any literary science faces the difficulty of finding a metalanguage (metayazik is the term Lotman uses) that does justice to a wide range of literary phenomena. In the absence of this, Lotman suggests, one must shelve pre-conceived models of literature and work on the assumption that in a subjective activity like art, it

(1) Cf. Yu. Lotman: "O tipologicheskom izuchenii literatury" (On the Typological Study of Literature), pp.123-132 of Problemy tipologii russkogo realizma.

is the particular and the specific - more than the general and typical - which require highlighting and discussion. (This rationale doubtless explains Lotman's own interest in the particular structures of particular works, his desire to examine these because of their intrinsic interest and not to fit them into a typical or "model" structure.)

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The argument that any theory of literature has to be 'multivalent' (a term often used by the American literary theorist, René Wellek) would not be accepted by most Soviet theorists. They would agree that literature is a complex phenomenon whose content is determined by a number of variables. But they would deny that this meant that literature could not be satisfactorily explained and judged according to a single (i.e. univalent) model of literature. Such a model, properly designed, can overcome, they would claim, the tension deemed by many Western theorists (including Wellek) to exist between a judgement of the aesthetic value of a work (based on a reaction to its artistry and often called a "judgement of sensibility") and a "reasoned, ratiocinative judgement"(1) (based on an understanding of the social/personal and other factors that have determined its genesis and content). This model is the qualified socio-historical model, in which judgements of sensibility and appreciation of aesthetic worth

(1) These expressions are again René Wellek's, and are used, in particular, in his discussion of the problem of multivalence in the book on literary theory he wrote with W. Austen (see pp.248-51 especially of their Theory of Literature, Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1966). Wellek and Austen, it should be noted, stress that there should not be a tension between these two judgements in any properly multivalent theory of literature.

are based on an assessment of how well the various "levels" of a work - as defined by Timofeyev - have come together in a "dialectical" harmony. Such a harmony is, by definition, a measure of a literary work's aesthetic success; and because measuring and understanding it (and "the levels" on which it depends) is a cognitive process, through it judgements of sensibility and reasoned, ratiocinative judgements become closely interconnected - and not potentially antagonistic. One cannot find aesthetic pleasure in disharmony, and one can only understand whether such harmony exists by grasping what the various levels of a work are, by finding out what the author is saying and why (the objective level), how satisfied he himself is with his content (the subjective level) and how well he has translated it into art (the "direct", artistic level).

The other main Soviet model of literature - the typological - is perhaps the weaker in the view of Timofeyev and his colleagues because it does not clarify the objective level of a work or make clear a writer's actual intentions and the degree to which he has modified them in the actual execution of the work. It thus has a less strong claim to being a self-sufficient (univalent) and comprehensive model of literature. Nevertheless by examining works in the context of overall systems (types) of art, the aesthetic ('sensible') judgements of 'typological' theorists about artistic worth are related closely to 'reasoned' judgements about the aims, techniques, etc., of the artistic mode or type under which the work in question falls. This model, too, need not exhibit a division between a "judgement of sensibility" and a "reasoned

judgement". Ideally, both Soviet models need to be combined to provide the best insight into specific works and the best assessment of their aesthetic value. However, their proponents do, on the whole, claim that each is sufficient by itself. As a result, Soviet literary theory, as long as it is dominated by thinking of Timofeyev's type (the majority view) will not embrace a Wellek-style notion of multivalence - that is to say, a belief that a series of models and approaches, none adequate by itself, is necessary to understand and evaluate literary phenomena.

This fact, perhaps, augurs badly for Soviet discussion of literature as a whole. Against this, however, should be set the fact that differences of approach continue to exist in Soviet literary theory and that no one approach has gained complete hegemony. There is also the fact that such theory is to some extent enriched by the continuing debate as to the merits of each approach, and by the fairly complex application of general themes and categories of Soviet aesthetics which is evident (as we have shown) in such debate.

X. SOVIET DISCUSSION OF SOCIALIST REALISM

Of all branches of Soviet thinking on art, the theory of socialist realism has suffered hardest from the Stalinist legacy and a Russian tradition of political-bureaucratic interference with literature that goes back further than Stalin. A canon of art, supposedly introduced to prevent artistic cliquishness and the domination of one artistic group over others [1] became, from the mid-'thirties onwards, almost a fetish to which all Soviet writers and artists had to pay homage. It was seen as an infallible artistic tool in the process of building Communism and its infallibility rested on two unchallenged assumptions - first that, in the final analysis, party-mindedness (partiinost') was the best, indeed sole, inspiration for a writer in his task of reflecting the new Soviet society; and secondly, that the tried and tested methods of earlier Russian realists, as adapted in particular by Gorki, offered the best tools for the job. In effect, socialist realist art during the Stalin era came to put the artist at a level no higher than that of literary craftsman for the State. Furthermore, up to 1956, discussion amongst critics on the scope and the application of the canon was marked on the whole (except during 1932-34) by self congratulatory and dogmatic assertions like that from the critic M. Serebryanski who noted that only socialist realism was real art, that is, art that possessed artistic truth. Such art resulted from "the ability to tell everything necessary,

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(1) The genesis of socialist realism - in the U.S.S.R. and elsewhere - has been widely discussed in such works as Max Eastman: Artists in Uniform and D.F. Markov: Genezis sotsialisticheskogo realizma (The Genesis of Socialist Realism), Nauka, Moscow, 1970. It does not require systematic elaboration here.

but to tell it correctly, that is, from a definite, Bolshevik point of view". (1) Commenting on material like that, the writer and critic Andrei Sinyavski (2) could only conclude that socialist realism had become its own justification; the artist was to get as much joy and self expression out of it as the writers of "hommage ode" were to obtain from praising some ruler or benefactor in the 18th century.

Clearly, the legacy of service art and servile thinking about art has left its influence on Soviet discussion of socialist realism after 1956. Yet, equally clearly, such discussion shows a certain depth and breadth that shows a less doctrinaire Soviet tradition existing side by side with the doctrinaire one. This tradition was established in many of the speeches made at the 1934 Congress of the Union of Soviet Writers. The theme of many of these, particularly the speeches by Karl Radek and Nikolai Bukharin, was that socialist realism was not a method imposed by the Party on artists, but a slogan that in Radek's words, expressed "the ripened requirements of Soviet art";(3) and it would not lead to a demeaning of "the integrity of the poetic/artistic image" -

(1) M. Serebryanski: Literaturnye ocherki (Literary Essays), Goslitizdat, Moscow, 1938, p.231.

(2) Sinyavski, writing under his pseudonym of A. Tertz, produced a lengthy essay on socialist realism in the late 'fifties. It was smuggled to the West, first published in the French journal, L'Esprit on November 2, 1959 and subsequently in book form by Pantheon Books, New York, 1960. In his essay Sinyavski, amongst other things, offers a lengthy and unfavourable critique of Marxist (and materialist approaches to art and criticises political commandism in Soviet artistic practice.

(3) The phrase was used in his speech to the Congress and is cited from Problems of Soviet Literature, Wishart and Sons, London, 1940, p.155.

a theme of Bukharin's. No one at the Congress, least of all A.A. Zhdanov, then Secretary to the Central Committee, stood up to tell artists precisely how they should go about becoming socialist realists, what techniques they could or could not use to do so.

This less hortatory and dogmatic approach to socialist realism, largely disappeared from the mid-'thirties till about 1956. It re-emerged encouraged by a number of factors. In the first place 'socialism' now no longer embraced the Soviet Union alone, but a land mass stretching from the Elbe to the China Sea. This fact forced Soviet commentators to come to grips with the problem of the adaptation of socialist realism to differing national and cultural traditions. Socialist realism could not now be regarded as a purely Soviet phenomenon, nor indeed be so easily discussed in terms of stereotypes of any sort. It had acquired an international currency, and needed careful and systematic discussion, particularly if it was to gain intellectual respectability as a theory of art. In addition, of course, the theory of socialist realism, like other branches of knowledge, benefitted from the post-Stalin intellectual and cultural Thaw. Certainly there was some spin-off from the revival of aesthetics in the post-Stalin era. The spin-off was not a direct or quick one, however, and the whole question of the precise relationship between the theory of socialist realism and aesthetics is (still) a source of some disagreement amongst Soviet theorists themselves. Soviet critics and

aestheticians disagree, for example, on the question of whether one can gain deeper insight into the problems of socialist realism by discussing these with reference to the general problems and categories of aesthetics itself. One aesthetician, A. Myasnikov, considers that theoretical discussion of socialist realism gives "unrestricted scope for revealing all the peculiarities of art, as a definite form of men's cultural activity".(1) However, yet another, M. Khrapchenko, notes that

> Marxist criticism does not categorise the method of socialist realism in terms of the materialist dialectic; nor does it demand the realisation [in socialist realist art] of its basic categories. (2)

S.S. Goldentricht, supporting the latter, writes:

> Confusing socialist realism [with aesthetics generally] ignores its spetsifika, and leads to schematism, to "reflections of reflections" in art rather than to a sensuous-concrete embodiment of things in images. (3)

The aestheticians thus would appear to be divided between those who think that reference to general aesthetic categories will enrich theory of socialist realism (and vice versa) and those who consider that this will obscure it. The division does not always accord with the 'professional'/doctrinaire distinction; though it is clear that many who support

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(1) A. Myasnikov: "Sotsialisticheski realizm i voprosy teorii literatury" (Socialist Realism and Questions of Theory of Literature), p.91 of N.K. Gei et al. (eds.): Aktual'nye problemy sotsialisticheskogo realizma.

(2) M.B. Khrapchenko: Tvorcheskaya individual'nost' pisatelya i razvitive literatury, p.49.

(3) Cited from G.M. Gak et al. (eds.): Formy obshchestvennogo soznaniya, p.178.

Khrapchenko on this point are themselves doctrinaire critics who simply wish to "examine" socialist realism mainly in order to defend and flaunt its partisanship. This attitude is especially evident in the numerous hortatory, thoroughly partisan speeches on socialist realism and related topics given at Writers' Union Congresses and elsewhere by C.P.S.U. politicians as well as by literary bureaucrats and hacks.

To this writer, discussion and disagreement amongst Soviet critics and writers on the above question becomes a little tiresome and fatuous. In their own work on socialist realism, a large number of Soviet critics do in fact show that aspects of socialist realism can be and are illuminated by general reference to aesthetics, that the theory of socialist realism is in large measure determined by Soviet aesthetic theory generally and that in any event there are larger problems looming in theory of socialist realism than the question of its link with aesthetics. Let us look at these.

The problems can be broken down into three broad questions. First, there is the question of a definition of the scope of socialist realism, as a form of art; secondly, there is the question of the degree of "creative freedom" permissible within its confines; and, thirdly, is the more general issue of the role of certain elements - 'traditional', 'national' and 'romantic' - in its content. In discussing them, Soviet critics in many instances, draw upon certain general themes in Soviet aesthetics, and also upon the relatively enlightened ('professional') as well as the somewhat less enlightened

approaches that pervade Soviet aesthetic thought.

Concerning the scope of socialist realism, it was stated in the Charter of the Union of Soviet Writers, adopted in 1934, that

> socialist realism which is the basic method of Soviet artistic literature and literary criticism, demands of the artist a truthful, historically concrete portrayal of reality in its revolutionary development, whereby truthfulness and historical concreteness must be combined with the tasks of ideologically reforming and educating the toilers in the spirit of socialism. (1)

In 1954, at the Second Congress of the Writers' Union, everything after the phrase 'whereby' was deleted. In 1959, however, at the Third Congress and in the wake of retrenchments in the Thaw, the phrase after 'whereby' was restored. But to make it less hard-line in substance, the following phrase was added after it.

> It [socialist realism] allows writers ample possibilities for free creation and initiative in all spheres of content and form, and for the display of the individual peculiarities of their talents; it presupposes a wealth and diversity of artistic means and styles; it furthers innovation in all spheres of creation. (2)

The above statements - in many cases - have been the source of differences amongst Soviet critics as to what precisely they mean. For example, can one maintain on the basis of

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(1) Pervy vsesovuzny s'yezd pisatelei S.S.S.R.: stenograficheski otchet (First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers: Stenographic Report) Politizdat, Moscow, 1934, p.666.

(2) Treti s'yezd pisatelei S.S.S.R.: stenograficheski otchet (Third Congress of Writers of the U.S.S.R.: Stenographic Report), Politizdat, Moscow, 1959, p.248.

them that socialist realism is an exclusively Soviet phenomenon and that it differs substantially from other types of realism.

On the first point, few, if any, Soviet critics would state that socialist realism is today a purely Soviet form tailored specifically to the task of reflecting Soviet reality only; or further, that the only literature produced in the Soviet Union is socialist realism. Critics would say, however, that it is a qualitatively new art form that can only develop after a revolutionary (socialist) transformation of society and that it "supersedes" other forms of realism. Thus the critics G. Lomidze and A. Ovcharenko, both 'professional writers on socialist realism, as well as others, stress that the advent of a socialist reality in Russia necessitated a new artistic method qualitatively different from the method of critical realism which reigned in the pre-revolutionary society. Lomidze does not believe, for example, that critical realism could exist forever, in fact, existed after 1917 in Russia. The imperfect artistry of early Soviet artists and the painful adaptation to the new socialist reality by pre-revolutionary artists were not the hall-marks of critical realists. Critical realism, as a form of criticism, as a critique, in art, of a repressive society was, in any case, rendered unnecessary, Lomidze says, with the coming of the Revolution. Though his views are not uniformly accepted by others, Lomidze concludes that while socialist realism did not come overnight, there could only be a movement away from critical realism after 1917. (1) By way of contrast there

(1) Lomidze's views are found in particular in his article "O sootnoshenii kriticheskogo i sotsialisticheskogo realizma" (On the Relationship between Critical and Socialist Realism), pp.276-310 of N.K. Gei et al. (eds.): op. cit. He develops his ideas also in the context of discussion of socialist realism in the various national literatures of the Soviet republics.

is a minority group of critics who accept the view that there is no real distinction between critical and socialist realism, and that writers who make a revolutionary critique of non-socialist society can be socialist realists as well as critical realists. A recent study of the English novel in the last decade (V. Ivasheva: The Contemporary English Novel), concludes that two modern British writers, I.D. Lambert and Herbert Smith are socialist realists by dint of their portrayal of the dissatisfaction of English workers and of their "revolutionary" consciousness.

Whether its focus is on the Soviet Union or beyond, whether it is merely indistinguishable from other realisms or a separate and higher form, socialist realism does not bring with it homogeneous and stereotyped content. On this, all Soviet critics appear agreed. In this connection the critic, D. Sarabryanov, writes in an article "On the Question of the Creative Multiformity of Soviet Art":

> In a socialist society this multiform, objective reality is the major object of artistic perception. Soviet artists ... see the aim of creativity ... as the embodiment of certain aspects of reality and penetration into its very essence ... It may be revealed only by artists working together in various genres, devoted to different themes, and seeking their interests in the varied spheres of contemporary or past history ... [Moreover] since in socialist society there are no antagonistic classes, the aesthetic interests of members of that society do not clash. Soviet writers have a common interest in an art that is humane, noble, realistic, educative and inspiring ... The variety of aesthetic interest is determined by the all-round development of man under socialism, the development of his spiritual world and his individual tastes. (1)

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(1) Cited from M. Parkhomenko and A.S. Myasnikov (eds.): Socialist Realism in Literature and Art, pp.184-185.

The multiformity of Soviet realism is, above all, then, a function of its socialist content and socialist perspective; it is a result of the innovatory nature of socialist realism itself - innovatory, not in terms of its "artistic gimmickery", but in the sense of new content provided by a changing society, the limitless potential of Communist man and so on. Soviet discussion of "artistic multiformity" in socialist realism is always premissed on content. It is not a specific account of the ways and means by which artists can be different. It is not surprising, from all this, then, that Soviet ideas about being avant-garde and innovative are different from Western (modernist) ones. Socialist realist literature, for Soviet critics, is avant-garde because it is the literature of the vanguard ideology of humanity, not because it is the most inaccessible, bizarre, ahead of its time and so on.

The above references to be unstereotyped content, broad perspectives etc. of socialist realism reinforce the more common Soviet conception of socialist realism as a general method rather than as particular artistic style which has to be laboriously mastered. As G. Lomidze puts it: Certain people

> portray the method of socialist realism as some half-mysterious, complex mechanism, only parts, details of which are assimilated. They forget the elementary truth namely, that an artistic method cannot exist in a logically purified form, as a collection of formulae, progressive knowledge of which opens up an unhindered passage to comparatively easily conquered peaks. (1)

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(1) Cited from the Introduction to G.I. Lomidze et al.(eds.): Sotsialisticheski realism v literaturakh narodov S.S.S.R. (Socialist Realism in the Literatures of the Peoples of the U.S.S.R.) Izd-vo ANSSSR, Moscow, 1962, p.13.

And when the 'method' critics talk about style, and the multiformity of styles in socialist realism, they mean the word in the broad, macrocosmic sense. In this they are following the view discussed in Soviet theory of form, to the effect (as we have noted) that style is a phenomenon determined by a number of factors which vary according to individual writers. It is not something prescribed or fixed (the microcosmic approach). Some critics - a minority - adhere to the latter approach in discussing the content and scope of socialist realism. They advocate a fixed single style for socialist realism, indeed they claim that it already possesses this in Soviet practice. They include S. Petrov, Z. Kedrina, A. Asadullayevna and others. (1) Some critics like Asadullayevna and Kedrina are even more specific on what they mean by a socialist realist style. For example, Asadullayevna has detected five elements or 'sub-styles' within the dominant socialist realist style - namely, the realistic, the romantic, the fantastic, the lyrical and the satiric. The trouble with this approach, as critics like Ovcharenko and Metchenko point out, (2) is that socialist realism treated microcosmically becomes a dogmatic, inward-looking canon of art, which will force artists to consider only those aspects of socialist society that can be best handled according to the approved stylistic conventions and modes. The dialectical interplay - between various facets of reality, between artist and reality etc. - emphasised so heavily by many Soviet critics as an ingredient of realism

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(1) Cf. especially S. Petrov: Vozniknoveniye i formirovaniye sotsialisticheskogo realizma (The Rise and Formation of Socialist Realism), Goslitizdat, Moscow, 1970; and S.G. Asadullayevna: Istorizm, teoriya i tipologiya sotsialisticheskogo realizma (The Historicism, Theory and Typology of Socialist Realism) Baku, 1969, passim.

(2) See their articles listed further on.

and as a determinant of style, will not be present in a socialist realism so rigidly defined. This will do less than justice, in turn, to a socialist reality and a socialist art in which dialectical processes are occurring.

Critics concerned with identifying particular socialist realist styles also become preoccupied with the question of whether the modernist style of, say, Bely and Pasternak in the 1920's was a form of 'socialist modernism' that pre-figured a later strain in socialist realism itself - a modernist style within the socialist realist method. Were, in other words, Pasternak and Bely in their own idiosyncratic way, proto-socialist realists? For critics of the microcosmic approach like Lomidze, Metchenko and Ovcharenko, this sort of discussion becomes pointless, and they said as much in articles appearing in Voprosy literatury, Nos. 6-8, 1965 and at a November 1966 discussion of socialist realism. (1) Certain works, they argue, clearly pre-figured socialist realism - like Gorki's Mat', (1907) often, loosely perhaps, called the first socialist realist novel; and clearly, they argue, the trend of literature after 1917 was towards

(1) Cf. also, Metchenko: "O sotsialisticheskom realizme i sotsialisticheskom iskusstve" (On Socialist Realism and Socialist Art), Oktyabr', No.6, 1967, pp.185-200, in which it is stipulated that socialist realism, though it can be broadly defined as a method, is not synonymous with the general category of "socialist art". For this reason Pasternak can be called a socialist artist but does not need to be called a proto-socialist realist; A. Ovcharenko: "Prodolzheniye spora" (The Continuation of the Dispute), NM, No. 5, 1971, pp.243-266. (Ovcharenko condemns dogmatic attitudes towards a definition of socialist realism and admits the existence of both a wide variety of styles within socialist realism and of other methods co-existing with socialist realism, in Soviet literature); D. Markov: "Vsestoronne issledovat' sotsialisticheskuyu literatury" (Let's Have an All-Round Examination of Socialist Literature), NM, No.12, 1970, pp.215-219.

socialist realism. But socialist realism did not occur overnight, and before its proclamation in 1932, strictly speaking, no writer could be called socialist realist. Only those concerned with rigidly categorising socialist realism and its "stylistic components" will ask whether and to what extent writers of the 'twenties were "incipient" socialist realists.

In their defence of socialist realism as a method, critics like Lomidze, Ovcharenko and Metchenko admit that the method is circumscribed to some degree, i.e. by the demands of a socialist society and the portrayal of a socialist reality. Certain Czechoslovak critics, at a 1965 meeting with their Soviet counterparts, argued that a 'modernist' treatment of socialist reality was possible, that a technique which they called socialist modernism could legitimately be used within the method itself. Soviet critics at that meeting, in particular Ovcharenko, replied that one could not, be definition, be a modernist and socialist realist at the same time and that while romanticism may be an element within socialist realism, modernism is not. At best, critics like Ovcharenko will say that the devices of fantasy, escapism and so on can be used to make a point about socialist reality; but that mere use of them does not constitute a specific style within socialist realism or even a formal branch of it.

Notwithstanding occasional differences of emphasis and perspective among them, the approach of Ovcharenko, Lomidze and their colleagues on the scope of socialist realism would seem to be the "middle of the road" (and more plausible) one

amongst Soviet critics and theorists of socialist realism. Furthermore, these men clearly dissociate themselves from extremists within their midst who would go so far as to replace the concept of a socialist realist method with that of an even more broadly defined socialist realist trend (napravleniye). Those who advocate the latter approach clearly are influenced by the writings of the French Marxist, Roger Garaudy on réalisme sans rivages. (1) One Soviet writer, so influenced, I. Braginski, agrees with certain Czechoslovak theorists that modernism is a legitimate element within socialist realism. Another, E. Tager, suggests that the designation 'socialist realism' be replaced by the expression 'socialist art'; within such art a number of socialist methods would be possible - like socialist realism, socialist modernism, socialist romanticism and so on. (2)

It should be noted that this discussion, generally, on the scope of socialist realism, can become somewhat tiresome and pedantic partly because the distinctions it employes are ones of degree rather than kind and partly because they are dependent on personal attitudes or evaluation. That is to say, what is a 'method' to one man may be a 'style' to another. It so often (though not always) becomes a question of interpretation (rather than of objective fact) as to whether particular authors can be said to share a common socialist realist style, or to be working within a broadly defined socialist realist method but using styles that may have as many

(1) Cf. his D'un réalisme sans rivages: Picasso, Saint-John Perse, Kafka (On a Realism Without Bounds: Picasso, Saint-John Perse, Kafka), Plon, Paris, 1963.

(2) Cf. I. Braginski: "O sotsialisticheskom realizme i yego beregakh" (On Socialist Realism and its Bounds), pp.440-451 of Gei, et al. (eds.): op. cit.; Tager, op. cit.(Chapter IX).

differences as things in common. The discussion is, nevertheless, interesting in showing that certain critics like Ovcharenko, in his important, 1968 study (1) are prepared to take cognisance of the fact that there do exist Soviet writers with different styles who are equally concerned with a realistic portrayal of socialist reality. There is for example, the obvious contrast between the work of new writers of the 'sixties like Nagibin and Tendryakov and the old style Stalinist and 'monumentalist' socialist realists like Sholokhov, Kochetov.

For critics like Ovcharenko, socialist realism, then, is a broad guideline for art but not, by the same token, an outmoded literary cliché. The latter suggestion is made in effect by Max Hayward in his article "The Decline of Socialist Realism". Hayward believes that the pronouncements of Ovcharenko and like-minded critics about the scope of socialist realism merely conceal, and often not very well, the fact that socialist realism can no longer be viewed as a significant "literary reality" in the U.S.S.R.; it embraces such a wide variety of different writers and styles as to be virtually meaningless as a canon of art. The work of Ovcharenko and others represents

> the covering-up of the King's nakedness as practiced by all keepers of a decaying ideology that is no longer properly enforced by a secular

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(1) Sotsialisticheski realizm i sovremenny literaturny protsess (Socialist Realism and the Contemporary Literary Process), Sovetski pisatel', Moscow, 1968.

> arm. The essence of this subterfuge ... consists in claiming that your doctrine has never been so rigid as your enemies make out. (1)

Hayward's statement strikes this writer as being somewhat extreme. As will be argued more fully in the sequel, the doctrine has not become outmoded, so much as it has been subject to updated and flexible re-definitions that no longer hinge (as they did in Stalin's day) on the idea of a uniform realist style and a uniform partisan zeal as the test of a successful socialist realist work.

We might, at this point, consider a second problem in socialist realism - that of its partisan and revolutionary content, and, associated with this, the question of its "creative freedom". Two trends are discernible in Soviet discussion here. One represents an application and expression of partiinost'; the other reflects the view that "creative freedom" is natural to the whole process of art.

The critique of freedom in terms of partiinost' should be familiar from earlier discussion of the concept, and of Lenin's own ideas on the subject. There is, on the one hand, the often vulgar emphasis on the social side of partiinost' - the argument that Soviet artists inspired by Marxist-Leninist principles in a socialist society must, by definition, be free agents. The content of the work "liberates" them as well as

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(1) Hayward, op. cit., p.90. Hayward argues that the classics of Soviet socialist realism - Fedin's Goroda i gody; Katayev's Molodaya gvardiya; Sholokov's Tikhi Don and others were characterised, above all, by a revolutionary optimism. Such optimism cannot be found, he claims, in much Soviet writing of recent years - like that of Solzhenitsyn, Bykov, Dudintsev, or the lyric poetry of Tvardovski or Akhmadulina. This work may be realistic, but its "socialist" content is not readily apparent.

the audience they write for. They are also free from the obligation to pander to the "whims" of a capitalist literary/artistic market. At a more sophisticated level there is an 'epistemological' defence of partiinost' found in the work of G. Kunitsyn who notes

> ... the problem of freedom also has an epistemological aspect: the better the artist's knowledge of a subject, the greater is his freedom. In relation to creativity this means the practical use of the objective laws and the aesthetic aspects of art. (1)

Clearly, it is partisanship that helps one acquire knowledge and skill in art; it provides the artist with correct knowledge of the trends of Soviet reality, because it illuminates our understanding of the objective dialectic in reality generally, a point which Lenin himself repeatedly stressed.

The other trend of discussion on free creativity in socialist realism draws heavily on Soviet thinking about the image; and its arguments run as follows. Socialist realism does not make the artist "unfree" because as an artist, he can focus on whatever aspect of the world he likes, whatever aspect he feels will serve to reflect his understanding of Soviet reality and heighten our own. The creative scope of the image does not imply uniform methods of apprehending reality. (2)

(1) Kunitsyn, op. cit., p.129.

(2) This point was stressed by N. Bukharin at the 1934 Congress. Speaking of the image and the new socialist art, Bukharin noted, inter alia: "Generalisation in art, in the image is achieved not by extinguishing the sensory, but by substitutin a complex of sense symbols for the great multitude of other complexes. The substitute becomes a 'symbol', an 'image', a 'type', an emotionally coloured unity, behind which and in th folds of whose garments, threads of other sensory elements are revealed... To the extent that such images are fixated and selected ... are constructively, creatively reproduced, to this extent we have art". Cited from Problems of Soviet Literature, pp.192 and 203-4.

It is true, Soviet critics note, that the typical elements in a society cannot be deduced or made up in an individualistic fashion; they exist to be discovered, helped by partisan understanding. It is how these elements are manipulated, how they are related to particulars via the image to produce individual characters, wherein the true artistic freedom and scope of socialist realism lies and where the devices of imagination, intuition and so on, come into full - and free - play. As Gorki wrote in 1935

> Intuitive should not be understood as meaning something ahead of knowledge, something prophetic. It provides the missing links and details to experimental searches when the latter have been started in the form of a hypothesis or image ... (1)

The final result of this should be an image in socialist realist art, in which, to use the words of the Osnovy

> are inseparably combined liveliness, a plastic concreteness in the reflection of sensuous reality and deep insight into the inner meaning of reality. (2)

Above all, to quote from the preceding sentence in the Osnovy, "neither empirical authenticity without the depth of insight, nor the illustration of general concepts will give us the realistic image". (2)

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(1) Cited from a letter of M. Gorki to A.S. Shcherbakov of February 19, 1935 p.54 of Parkhomenko and Myasnikov (eds.): op. cit.

(2) Osnovy, p.576.

The feeling that the socialist realist has in his knowledge of society and his artistic image an indisputable basis for great art, is, then, a very strong element in the Soviet discussion and defence of creative freedom in socialist realism. Such discussion may, at times, strike the Western reader as somewhat shallow and self-righteous, but it does draw on standard Soviet ideas about general, aesthetic phenomena like the image, imagination etc. Furthermore, Soviet attacks on Western, modernist art and its preoccupations draw strength, in part, from the above arguments; Western artists, it is claimed, have no way of seeing their society in totality, no firm perspective from which to expose its "contradictions". Hence as the critic, A. Ivanshchenko points out, they are not

> in a position to rise to an integrated view of reality, to a reflection of historical phenomena being presented in their objective interconnection and interdependencies and treated as a whole. The reactionary, empty and anti-humane nature of [Western] content is inextricably connected with the degradation of form and with desperate attempts to conceal emptiness of content under various formal experiments. (1)

It should be noted that discussion of the aesthetic as a pre-condition for artistic freedom and the defence of partisanship, as an ingredient in this freedom come together in the concept of the socialist realist aesthetic ideal. Such an ideal, in the Soviet view, is evolved by the artist from his perception of life. The ideal represents his attempt to generalise about life in terms of the beautiful and the

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(1) A. Ivanshchenko: "The Most Important Development of Contemporary Art", ibid., p.224.

uplifting, both of which he can, furthermore, identify with objective social processes like the building of Communism, the leading role of the Party and so on. This ideal, for the critic, L. Novichenko, for example, heightens the "analytical element of a work, keeps the artist focused on the broader perspective and allows him to fit the details better into place". (1) In other words, an aesthetic ideal makes the socialist realist a better artist as well as a freer one. Clearly, the artistry of a work will be weakened if its creative, self-expressive elements are negligible, if the ideal is merely the mechanical application of "outside" and "non-internalised" values.

What one does with one's freedom in socialist realist art depends also, of course, on talent, on the ability to use aesthetic partisanship to artistic advantage. Here, of course, the fact that one is able to apply - in the majority Soviet view - a large number of styles in socialist realist art and not be condemned to one, is a further illustration of the freedom and scope which the method allows individual artists. It is also assumed throughout the discussion on artistic freedom, that the subjective elements of creativity do not conflict with the objective pre-conditions for creative freedom; indeed that they are enhanced with them. Much of the 'personalist' writing, discussed earlier (Chapter VI) in another context, had this theme - in particular V. Runin's defence, in 1960, of the lyric. But the specifically 'personalist' defence of socialist realism has been largely

(1) L. Novichenko: "Problema tvorcheskoi pozitsii pisatelya i nekotorye cherty sovremennoi literatury" (The Problems of the Creative Position of the Writer and Certain Features of Contemporary Literature), p.29 of N.K. Gei, et al. (eds.): op. cit.

discredited since the 'personal element' in socialist realist art, for these critics, came to overshadow the socialist.

Concerning the problems of tradition, nationality and revolutionary romanticism in socialist realism, it does seem odd that the art form of a revolutionary society should preoccupy itself with questions of tradition and the legacy of the past. Yet socialist realism in its methods is a conservative art form. The "progressive, forward-looking" ideology behind socialist realism can be, in the Soviet view, suitably conveyed in forms that are, essentially, developments from those of 19th century critical realism. In this respect, Lenin's own attitudes and tastes in art are important. It is partly for this reason that the "traditional" devices and "traditional" techniques of the 19th century Russian novel, the general "old fashioned" stress on realism and the realistic image should loom so large in socialist realism. The thinking and artistic practice of Maxim Gorki are also important here. At the 1934 Congress of Soviet Writers, Gorki had noted concerning the language and style of socialist realism that ..

> ... it is necessary to write about the heroes of the revolution in a language that is epic, simple, stern even, avoiding any embellishments - to write just as the sculptors of Greece portrayed the bodies of heroes and gods. (1)

The defence of tradition has its place, of course, in the general debate on the creative freedom and the stylistic scope of socialist realism. The critic Ya. El'sberg argues that

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(1) Cf. B. Meilakh (ed.): Russkiye pisateli o literaturnom trude (Russian Writers on Literary Work), Volume IV, Sovetski pisatel', Leningrad, 1956, p.215.

adaptation of art from the past can only enrich socialist realism - it gives individual socialist realists freedom to choose from the past what they feel can be usefully adapted for socialist realism. El'sberg states:

> ... if the literature of socialist realism neglected the experience of the classical heritage, it would prove incapable of satisfying the living requirements of the day and of finding new artistic solutions to the problems [of their reproduction in art] . (1)

In this sense recourse to traditional art becomes a force for innovation as well as an exercise in creative freedom. One is not imprisoned by past art - one is introducing new experiments into art by adapting traditional devices of art to new themes and new content. El'sberg also uses arguments from Soviet thinking on culture and on the role of traditions within a culture in order to justify his approach. Traditions can be used in socialist realist art because, as we have observed from Soviet commentary earlier, they have proved by their continued survival their suitability for contemporary society and because they reflect often the best, the most universal elements in human experience. El'sberg's position on tradition is shared by most critics - both those who see socialist realism in broad terms as a method of art and those who "dogmatise" about the specific styles of socialist realism. Amongst the latter however, are some critics, notably S. Petrov (2), who argue that a specific

(1) Ya. El'sberg: "Klassicheskoye nasledstvo i khudozhestvennoye novatorstvo literatury sotsialisticheskogo realizma" (The Classical Legacy and Artistic Innovation in the Literature of Socialist Realism), p.21 of V.M. Ozerov (ed.): Problemy sotsialisticheskogo realizma (Problems of Socialist Realism), Sovetski pisatel', Moscow, 1961.

(2) Cf. S. Petrov: "Ob edinstve literatury sotsialisticheskogo realizma" (On the Unity of Socialist Realist Literature), Moskva, No.12, 1958.

socialist realist style should incorporate as few traditional elements as possible - if it is to be a specifically socialist style of art. (Petrov, needless to say, is attacked by El'sberg for being 'un-Leninist' and raising the "artificial" question of a uniform, special socialist realist style.)

National traditions and national forms of art play an important part in socialist realism. The expression 'national tradition' can refer to particular national forms or genres of art as well as to the particular content of such art. What could be called the standard Soviet line on the national content of socialist realism is based on the Leninist thesis (1) that the communisation of the various nationalities within the U.S.S.R. would, in time, eradicate national traditions antipathetic to the socialist idea and on the view of theorists in the Stalin and post-Stalin era that those traditions remaining (by definition the best and most progressive) could be incorporated into socialist realist literature and art, to give a distinctive flavour to both. Only on this basis would Stalin's slogan "national in form, socialist in content" be feasible. Some critics, notably N. Zaripov and M. Nurmatov (2) would go further; they hold that the category 'national form' in art is indistinguishable from, or at most a separate element in, that of form generally. Artistic forms primarily, to them,

(1) Cf. "The elements of democratic and socialist culture are present ... in every national culture ... In advancing the slogan of 'the international culture of democracy and of the working-class movement', we take from each national culture only its democratic and socialist elements; we take them only and absolutely in opposition to the bourgeois culture and the bourgeois nationalism of each nation". Cited from V.I. Lenin On Literature and Art, pp.84-85. (Italics are Lenin's.)

(2) Nurmatov's views are to be found on pp.108-118 of A.I. Bazhenova, et al. (eds.): Estetika: kategorii i iskusstva; Zaripov's are included in the compilation Osnovnye problemy sovetskoi literatury na sovremennom etape (Basic Problems of Soviet Literature at its Present Stage).

are the result of the supra-national phenomenon of aesthetic perception and cognition by artists and can only be modified slightly by national traditions, the peculiarities of a particular environment. They stress the universal aspect of art and artistic cognition and say that the combination of the 'aesthetic' and 'socialist' in the categories 'socialist realism' merely reinforces the universality. This view we have, of course, met before in the Soviet discussion of narodnost', and of its importance in art. It does, however, have one particular consequence when applied to the theory of socialist realism. It leads, in critics like G. Lomidze and others(1), to the view that the artists of the various Soviet republics need not be deterred by national limitations (like an undeveloped or non-existent literary tradition) when they try to create from scratch, as it were, a national form of socialist realist art. They can, in the socialist context, Lomidze claims, "telescope" those clearly defined stages of romanticism, realism, critical realism, etc. through which Russian literature passed before socialist realism could emerge. The demands of socialist construction mean that in, for example, a newer Soviet republic like Uzbekistan (and one without a significant literary tradition before the advent of Soviet power), Uzbek writers would have no need, let alone time, to serve an apprenticeship in critical realism, before becoming socialist realists. They would start "straight in", though their initial efforts would be uneven, to say the least.

(1) Lomidze's views are expressed in a number of articles. In particular there is his Introduction (already noted) to the sbornik Sotsialisticheski realizm v literaturakh narodov S.S.S.R.; and also an article entitled "Metodologicheskiye voprosy izucheniya vzaimosvyazi i vzaimoobogashcheniya sovetskikh literatur" (Methodological Questions Relating to the Study of the Mutual Links Between and Mutual Enrichmen of Soviet Literatures) in the sbornik Puti razvitiya sovetsko mnogonatsional'noi literatury (Paths of Development of Soviet Multi-National Literature), Nauka, Moscow, 1967.

Lomidze appears confident that the need for - and inspiration of - socialist literature in Soviet republics outweighs any difficulties that national (regional) cultural limitations might place in the path of its development.

It might follow from the above that in socialist realism, the socialist content will in time obliterate national distinctions in the various Soviet literatures. Writers like Lomidze, Novichenko and Petrov [1] tend to disagree with this. Petrov quotes the example of Dagestanian literature, limited in the past by the region's geographical terrain (its mountains) and its feudal ethos but enriched subsequently by the Revolution and able to remain distinctly Dagestanian as well as socialist - the "Soviet Dagestanian" poetry of Rasul Gamzatov is evidence of this. Novichenko, for his part, notes that post-war socialist realism in both the Ukraine and Latvia remains distinctively national as well as socialist. The socialist content is indisputable - but in the literature of the Ukraine it is expressed with a subtle, suggestive lyricism and romanticism that have their origin in a native Ukrainian tradition of folk poetry, a tradition that has dominated others; in Latvian literature, the socialist themes are expressed in the style of the "monumental" and realistic epos - a genre that is solidly part of the Latvian artistic tradition. In short, Novichenko concludes, socialism cannot negate these national traditions; nor, incidentally, can one

(1) Cf. L. Novichenko: "Mnogoobrazive khudozhestvennykh form i stilei v literature sotsialisticheskogo realizma" (The Variety of Artistic Forms and Styles in the Literature of Socialist Realism), pp.81-140 of V.M. Ozerov (ed.): op. cit.; S. Petrov: Vozniknovenive i formirovanive sotsialisticheskogo realizma. Petrov, of course, tends to downplay the role and scope of national traditions in socialist realism, because he believes that this form of art should be socialist, above all, in its style.

say whether one tradition or the other makes for "better" socialist realism. (1)

There is, it should be noted, a further Soviet trend in discussion of national elements and socialist realism. It is a distinctly minority one and exemplified in the work of two critics in particular - A. Mordinov and M. Parkhomenko. (2) These critics see national traditions as playing a much more definite role in determining the content of various national literatures in the Soviet Union. Mordinov at the outset considers 'national form' in art as a separate category from 'form' generally because of its special determining role. Parkhomenko, for his part, does not believe that the various national literatures in the U.S.S.R. are able to adapt to the demands of socialist realism with equal ease. Neither writer, it should be noted, holds that any national tradition in the Soviet Union would undermine completely the socialist content of socialist realism; but they both emphasise that the dialectic between national form and socialist content is a very complex one; too often simplified by other Soviet critics (presumably, Lomidze and his colleagues) and that it produces variations and modifications on socialist themes that are not easy to predict in the case of each individual national writer or national work.

All Soviet critics, it should be emphasised, however, agree that the relationship between national tradition and socialist

(1) V.M. Ozerov (ed.): op. cit., p.111.

(2) Cf. M. Parkhomenko: "Chudo ili zakonomernost'" (Miracle or Law of Nature), included in the sbornik Puti razvitiya sovetskoi mnogonatsional'noi literatury; A. Mordinov: O sotsialisticheskom soderzhanii i natsional'noi forme sovetskoi kul'tury (On the Socialist Content and National Form of Soviet Culture), Politizdat, Moscow, 1959.

content should be a profitable one, providing still further scope for creative richness and multiformity in socialist realism. Novichenko stresses, moreover, that the public in the various nationalities expect to see their national particularities manifest in their literature; and it is the duty of socialist realist literature to satisfy their demands.(1) Thus, depending on whether their emphasis is on the 'national' or the 'socialist' content of socialist realism, for some critics national traditions are enriched and extended by the socialist content of their literature; for others the reverse applies. Furthermore, for critics like Lomidze who emphasise that 'national' and 'socialist' are not mutually exclusive categories, the common vehicle of socialist realism in the U.S.S.R. allows various national literatures to enrich and influence each other. There is, he claims, the example of the influence of the (Soviet) Ukrainian folk lullaby and lyric on (Soviet) Russian poetry since 1917 and the influence of the Russian novel on Soviet Ukrainian fiction.

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The place of revolutionary romanticism in socialist realism is an important issue in Soviet discussion, for it ties in with the question of the scope and definition of socialist realism itself and the problem of creative freedom for individual artists. It should be said at the outset that romantic elements are recognised by most Soviet critics to exist in socialist realism. The question they seek to answer

(1) Cf. "The elements in the soul of the reader are extraordinarily diverse, and this ... diversity increases in proportion to the swift spiritual and cultural growth of Soviet man ... it is the duty of literature to satisfy his demands." Novichenko, op. cit., p.139.

is whether the romantic elements co-exist separately with the socialist and realist or are "submerged" by them. Secondly, the presence of "ideals", "aspiration" and so on, hallmarks of all romantic literature, obviously offers scope for subjectivity in personal expression and evaluation in socialist realism. The problem here arises of distinguishing the ideal in socialist realist literature from the ideal in traditional romantic literature of the 19th century. Finally, straddling all these questions is a problem highlighted in particular by Andrei Sinyavski in his essay on socialist realism - namely how does one deal with the apparent contradiction between romantic content sustained in part by a "revolutionary teleology" and an art form and artistic practice which are conventional, if not conservative.

The question of the nature of the ideals in socialist realist literature and their portrayal might usefully be considered first. It should be said here that much of Soviet discussion on this topic and on romanticism in socialist realism generally falls prey to a certain amount of dialectical mystification, to an airy acceptance of the "transforming" value of romantic ideals in socialist art, without any attempt to relate them to the demands of art and realism. It is here that, for some critics, socialist realism becomes, like the dialectic itself, a sort of

unquestioned popular mythology whose content and scope are in no way clarified as a result. (1)

Maxim Gorki, whose own life and writing did so much to "sanctify" the concept of romanticism in Soviet socialist realism, once remarked:

> But if ... we add the desirable, the possible and in this way further fill out the image, we will get that romanticism that lies at the basis of myth ... (2)

In Soviet terms the desired for, the possible are the goals of the revolution; they also embrace the process of change needed to achieve these. Any ideal in Soviet art, in the final analysis, is based on a vision of the revolutionary process and its goals - the pravda veka as opposed to the pravda zhizni (i.e. a truth or goal that becomes apparent after the passage of many (100) years as opposed to the truth(s) of everyday life) to use a dichotomy favoured by many

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(1) Max Eastman, in his Artists in Uniform: A Study of Literature and Bureaucratism (1934), traced much of the myth-making and also the consequent 'commandist' tone of Soviet Marxist thinking to Hegelian ideas (particularly about the dialectic) taken into Marxism. Writing of the relationship between Marx's philosophy and its Hegelian antecedents, Eastman noted "Marx tore the soul out of the whole Hegelian fabrication, dispelled the pious emotions, and replaced the conservative with a revolutionary goal and moral, but left the apotheosis of the parlour game working away just as miraculously, just as superscientifically as before." (ibid., p.194) For Eastman, the dialectic had become a fetish, a myth in Marxist philosophy, in the name of which every extreme measure and attitude was justified. In discussing Soviet art, Eastman does not specifically say that "dialectical mystification" was directly responsible for the nature and limitations of socialist realist artistic practice, but he implies that it has stultified discussion on the theory of socialist realism, and, specifically, on revolutionary romanticism (the place of ideals) in socialist art.

(2) Meilakh (ed.): Russkiye pisateli o literaturnom trude (Vol. IV)p.73.

Soviet critics. However, there is little Soviet discussion on the specific character of the ideal; what discussion there is - usually in the hands of mediocre critics - becomes obscured in mystification and jargon. The only valuable point to emerge from it is the quite legitimate claim that Soviet romantic ideals differ from those of 19th century ones to the extent that they are ultimately realisable and also do not reflect the artist's alienation from the existing order but rather link him more closely to it. The existing Soviet reality will achieve the ideal and attachment to it is as important as to the ideal. Furthermore, the argument runs, socialist realists, by being alone able to reveal in art the concrete relationship between the ideal and the real in Soviet life, somehow endow the romantic elements of socialist realism with a scientific aura, impossible to see in old-style, traditional romanticism.

The more serious critics and writers on socialist realism who wish neither to obscure nor escape from the problem of romanticism tend to concentrate on the second issue raised earlier - the relationship between the ideal and the creating artist as well as the question of the ideal's embodiment in art. A number of quite interesting trends are apparent in this discussion. It is clear, for example, to N. Gei and V. Piskunov, specifically in their book Esteticheski ideal' sovetskoi literatury and to another critic, V. Muriam who specialises in this topic, (1) that the romantic, that is to

(1) Cf. V. Muriam: "Napravleniye spora (esteticheski ideal, kak kategoriya marksistsko-leninskoi estetiki)" (The Thrust of the Dispute - the Aesthetic Ideal as a Category of Marxist-Leninist Aesthetics), p.31 et seq. of Bazhenova et al. (eds.): op. cit.

say revolutionary, ideal in socialist realist art should be presented primarily in terms of the aesthetic, i.e. as an aesthetic ideal. The artist must see the coming Communist Utopia and the process of building of socialism itself as things of beauty. This apparently is not too difficult for aestheticians like Gei and Piskunov who assert that "Communism and beauty are indivisible".(1) Other aestheticians like V. Vanslov and I. Astakhov say the same thing of course (in the context of a discussion of beauty rather than socialist realism); unlike Gei and Piskunov, however, they do not go so far as to imply that beauty and Communism are identical phenomena. The introduction of the concept of beauty into discussion of socialist realism, of course, underlies the obvious importance of this concept in Soviet aesthetics generally and the extent to which Soviet aestheticians are prepared to illuminate socialist realism - and specifically its romantic content - by recourse to it.

In their discussion of the romantic ideal and its relationship to the socialist realist writer a number of other points are apparent in Soviet critics' thinking, many of which are not drawn out by the critics themselves. There is, for example, the emphasis at one moment on the prescriptive (normative) aspect of the ideal and at another on its descriptive aspect. The terminology employed by Soviet critics reflects this confusion - many of them tend to use in the same breath 'ideal' in the singular and 'ideals' in the plural. Gei and Piskunov's book reflects this habit; the authors seem to hover between asserting that the ideal is something

(1) Gei and Piskunov, op. cit., p.6.

prescribed, determining in advance the artist's attitude to reality and claiming that the ideal (or ideals) in fact emerge from the artist's own observations and conclusions about reality. Yet their emphasis, as the title of their book shows, is primarily on the prescriptive aspect of the ideal - as an all embracing "given", like the fact of the coming Communist Utopia and the moral worth of its realisation all of which must determine the artist's attitude to Soviet reality, his evaluation of it and his translation of it into art. The critic, V. Muriam, while not denying the existence of a general ideal with its moral, prescriptive overtones, pays greater attention to the problem of the assimilation of ideals by the artist. In turn the "romantic" content of socialist realism derives in large measure from the artist's own ideals. More specifically Muriam sees justification for this approach in the Soviet theory of knowledge where formulation of a concept or an idea(1) can only proceed on the basis of impressions and sensations received from reality. While a certain ideal, once established, may remain broadly valid and influential, this is not to say that a succession of more personal specific ideals might not be inspired by it; and these must be constantly validated and kept up-to-date by changes in reality itself.(1) This microcosmic view of the ideal is strengthened by the nature of art itself - its concentration, through the image, as much on specifics, particulars as on general phenomena. The nature of artistic creativity itself, it is apparent to Muriam and others like V. Razumny and O. Larmin (2) means, in

(1) Cf. Because of its social basis, "the aesthetic ideal does, moreover, change and perfect itself in the course of human cognition and social practice." Cited from Bazhenova, et al. (eds.): op. cit., p.31.

(2) Cf. V. Razumny and O. Larmin: "O kategorii esteticheskogo ideala" (On the Category of the Aesthetic Ideal), pp.192-208 of Nauchnye doklady vysshikh shkol (Filosofskiye nauki), No.3, 1961.

other words, that socialist realist romanticism cannot dispense with a strong element of the subjective, cannot reduce the artist to a mere mouthpiece for officially approved ideals. This is especially so in socialist realist literature where, as we have seen from discussion by theorists of literature, the content of an external ideal is bound to be modified as a result of the dialectic, apparent in the long process of literary creativity, between the writer and the objective reality he describes and the writer and the artistic form (and technique) he employs. Such modifications are bound to be more apparent in literature which aims to strike a romantic note. As A. Ovcharenko has observed:

> In romanticism ... there is always an element of considerable unpredictability; accidents frequently predominate over the objective sequence of things ... Also characteristic is a subjectivism, which is manifest in a pervasive lyricism, in idiosyncratic autobiographies of heroes, in peculiarities of typisation, in the selection of expressive details, and even in ignoring them. (*)

There is in Soviet discussion quite extensive debate on the question of which artistic forms are best suited to embody the romantic ideal in socialist realism. Gei, Piskunov and other critics stress that the image of the "positive hero" as the best or only repository of an ideal has clear limitations in socialist realism since it reflects the mentality of critical realism, the notion of the lone revolutionary struggling against reaction. In a society building Communism the scope for the embodiment of ideals is much wider - these can be shown not merely in particular heroes or even anti-heroes but in

(1) A. Ovcharenko: "Romantizm v sovetskoi literature" (Romanticism in Soviet Literature), pp.312-313 of Gei, et al. (eds.): op. cit.

"a whole system of images, the interaction of characters, and the mutual contrast and collision of characters". (1) These critics claim that A. Fadeyev's Razgrom (The Debacle) offers a good example of romantic ideals in action in socialist realist art.

Almost all post-Stalin Soviet writers would agree that there is today no place for the two besetting sins of Stalinist romanticism, namely, outrageous optimism and the falsification of existing socialist reality in the name of a future ideal (which Soviet critics now call priukrasheniye) and (secondly) the notion that achieving the ideal was a process free of human conflicts, doubts and sufferings (the so-called teoriya beskonfliktnosti). Both of these sins, we have noted, were condemned at the Second Congress of Soviet Writers in December 1954 and there has, since then, been little attempt amongst the better artists and critics certainly, to revive or rehabilitate them.

It is clear from the above discussion that the border-line between romanticism and realism in socialist realism is a fine one. It is not easy to distinguish between the two, when socialist realism itself is defined as a method of portraying "reality in its revolutionary development" (i.e. reality as the writer and society generally expect and wish it to become) and when, equally important, the revolutionary ideal and the ideals which determine the artist's perception and evaluation of reality become very close to the Tendenz of realism, to those general (typical) observations about a society from

(1) Gei and Piskunov, op. cit., p.173.

which realistic writers create particular (realistic) images in art.

Far from being seen as contradictory, 'realism' and 'romanticism' become in most Soviet discussion loosely interchangeable. This fact explains perhaps the vagueness surrounding the use of the term 'romantic' in Soviet discussion, and more particularly, the lack of a definition of its spetsifika. It is clear, for example, that certain writers like G. Babayev in his book Poet i vremya (The Poet and the Time) (while dealing specifically with the Soviet poet Samyed Vurgun) attempts no definition at all; he speaks of the "romantic countryside" in Vurgun's verse, his "romantic style" and so on. Other critics like Ovcharenko (1) face the problem of definition by condemning attempts to "categorise" romanticism as a method, style, form of cognition of socialist reality, or whatever. There are simply romantic perspectives and elements that enter socialist realism in discussion or portrayal of the "bigger truths" (ideals) of life, to use Ovcharenko's phrase; and since those truths are presented against a background of socialist reality and objective happenings it seems unreasonable to emphasise any dichotomy between 'realistic' and 'romantic'. Similarly, for Ovcharenko, it is foolish to "absolutise" the idea of a romantic style, when the writer on the very same page might slip into the most realistic descriptions. This attitude, of course, tallies with the general Soviet line on style to the effect that particular styles cannot be characterised by such things as individual words, jargon, etc.

(1) Cf. his article "Romantizm v sovetskoi literature".

Essentially then, for Ovcharenko and other critics like Gei, Piskunov and Muriam, the content of socialist realist romanticism is reality "with something added" as Gorki stated. (They differ, of course, on the scope of the "something added", i.e. the degree of the subjective as opposed to prescribed elements present in it.) It is, however, unreasonable to distinguish sharply the romantic from realistic elements or for that matter to posit a separate form of art, 'socialist romanticism', existing alongside socialist realism. Rather socialist realism, by its nature, must contain romantic elements that pose no contradictions with the realistic and can be encompassed within socialist realism, defined as a method of Soviet art.

There are inevitably minority views here. For example, A.S. Bushman denies that romantic elements have a place in socialist realism, strictly defined; romanticism is merely a temporary phase in a writer's literary activity, as he develops into a full-fledged socialist realist. Another critic, L. Yegorova, has stated that romanticism, traditionally defined, is opposed to the method of socialist realism and is only "superficially" present in certain socialist realist works. At a further remove from this are the views of A. Sinyavski who, it will be recalled, sees a strong, almost fatal tension existing between the teleology (i.e. - in effect - the romantic spirit) of revolutionary society and the conservatism of its principal art-form. All these views are,

however, peripheral to the main thrust of Soviet thinking on the problem. (1)

It should be obvious from the foregoing that for most Soviet critics, romanticism is not synonymous with a spirit of criticism of or disillusionment with Soviet reality. Despite the fact that post-Stalin Soviet literary practice (i.e. some of the rasskazy of writers like Voinovich, Nagibin, Tendryakov and others) has, as we have mentioned, shown examples of romantic 'negativism' - disillusionment, however muted, with aspects of existing Soviet reality, socialist realist theory still persists, in the main, in considering revolutionary romanticism as simply a (necessary) expression of boundless optimism.

These attitudes, incidentally, are reflected quite clearly in the Soviet critique of tragedy in revolutionary (socialist realist) art. In the work of critics like A. Zis', D. Srednoi

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(1) Cf. A. Bushman, p.45 et seq. of the sbornik Voprosy metodologii literaturovedeniya (Questions of the Methodology of Literary Science) Moscow, 1966; L. Yegorova: O romanticheskom techenii v sovetskoi proze (On the Romantic Stream in Soviet Prose), Stavropol, 1966, p.19 et seq.; A. Sinyavski, op. cit. Sinyavski's views here, were, in a way, foreshadowed by a French Marxist literary critic Henri Lefebvre (who has been attacked by Soviet writers as a 'revisionist'). In an article "Vers un romantisme revolutionnaire" (Towards a Revolutionary Romanticism), pp.544-572 of La nouvelle Nouvelle Revue française, No.58, 1957, Lefebvre defined such romanticism in a very general way - i.e. without any specifically socialist content. For Lefebvre, romanticism results from the desire of the modern artist to "heighten" the present modern surface of reality by drawing out what may be 'possible' or 'possible-impossible' (his terms) in the course of its future evolution. He does not think the conservative techniques of conventional socialist realism would help the artist here, but would merely create tensions for him.

and Yu. Borev who have written extensively on tragedy, the tragic is deemed to result solely from personal setbacks (failure in love, premature death and so on) or conflicts between opposites in the dialectical, revolutionary process. It is not deemed to result from the fact that revolutionary destiny (the Fate or Necessity of the classical, Aristotelian theory of tragedy) might not be acting in the individual's best interest or the fact that the individual might suffer tragically from his opposition to or disillusionment with it. In other words, for obvious doctrinal reasons, Soviet theorists do not accept the Aristotelian thesis that Fate or Necessity acts or can act in a malevolent sense toward individuals or groups and thus cause tragedy. Rather

> what is necessary (fated) for man ... [i.e.] the revolutionary process ... is that which makes him free ... All necessities are within human control and serve human ends. (1)

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(1) D. Sredni: "The Tragic in Soviet Art", p.83 of A. Dymshits (ed.): Art and Society. This attitude reflects the wider Soviet view of tragedy as a form of art and its limited application in socialist art. E. Starinkevich, for example, in his article, "Problemy tragedii i sovremennost'" (The Problems of Tragedy and The Present), VL, No.2, 1962, pp. 70-93, argues that the tragic element must be combined with others (by the very nature of socialist, revolutionary art). That is to say, the tragic must not be allowed to predominate and people should not be given the final impression that they are witnessing a tragedy. Starinkevich does concede that tragedy has been an important form in Western (European) literature, requiring great artistic skill, and adds that where tragic elements do enter Soviet art, they should be conveyed artistically and not schematically (particularly where a "tragedy of conflict" is involved). This point is also stressed by A. Abalkin in his "V poiskakh konflikta" (In Search of Conflict), NM, No.5, 1953 and by the Osnovy in their discussion of tragedy (p.450 et seq.)

Soviet theorists do, of course, stress the rightness of their notion of the tragic by highlighting the "limitations" of earlier theorists - not only Aristotle, but also Hegel and Chernyshevski; Hegel was too obsessed with solitary "noble" tragic heroes; Chernyshevski often ignored the "true social" base of tragic events.

This, of course, is a very Marxist-Leninist notion of tragedy (or rather a non-notion); and one which would be strongly opposed by people sceptical of the idea of free-will, human control over events and human perfectibility. For them, indeed, the notion of the tragic is based wholly or partly on the belief that those ideas are simply illusions - tragedy results when we are forced to realise that they are so. Soviet arguments have to be accepted on their own terms; at the very least our own opinions and glosses should not interfere with a factual account of them.

Besides the views of Sredni and his colleagues, there is the approach of A. Zis', who goes further than they in claiming that tragedy in socialist realism takes on a very different meaning and purpose. Unfortunate, unhappy events can occur in socialist realist plots - such as a character's death, misfortune or injury on behalf of the revolutionary cause. Yet such things remain ultimately not tragic, since they highlight the worth of the man who dies and the cause for which he was working. "The innovative element in Soviet tragedy", A. Zis' notes, "is [thus] revealed in a new type of life - affirmation".(1)

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(1) A. Zis': Lektsii po marksistsko-leninskoi estetike, p.132. The corollary of this, of course, is that Soviet theorists do not see anything tragic in people who may misguidedly fight the revolutionary process, only to learn the error (futility) of their ways too late (after a violent death). Yu. Borev writes: "The most terrible destruction of everything base, evil, reactionary and outworn arouses in us neither pity nor sympathy - not a shadow of tragic emotion; on the contrary it arouses a sigh of relief, a sense of the justice of revenge ..." (Yu. Borev: Kategorii estetiki, Izd-vo MGU-a, Moscow, 1959, p.103). It appears that only one critic, M. Volkenstein (in his work Dramaturgiya) is prepared to be charitable to these people and view them as "partly at least tragic". Their actions, he claims, are the product of the "tragic flaw" of being misguided.

We have noted that Soviet ideas on romanticism, highlighted as they are by Soviet theories of tragedy, have not, it appears, fully liberated themselves from the Stalinist cult of revolutionary optimism, that mechanical glorification of socialist goals which led to the development of what both Lukacs and the British Marxist critic John Berger have called the crude "socialist naturalism" in Soviet writing of the Stalin era. (1) Indeed, because of its debasement in the Stalin era, the term 'romanticism' still has slightly pejorative overtones for a Marxist critic like Lukacs. (2) For this reason Lukacs wishes to revitalise 'romanticism' in socialist realism and stresses the need to present a romantic "ideal" in art, as a means by which to evaluate critically present socialist society as well as a way of showing its transformation. This for him would prevent the schematism and complacency that he believes exist in Soviet socialist realism. Lukacs' belief that a critical romanticism is not incompatible with the "revolutionary dynamic" of socialist realism has not, as far as this writer is aware, drawn substantial fire from Soviet critics - which suggest perhaps that many of them may not be unsympathetic to his ideas on romanticism but are not prepared or able to develop such ideas in their own critical work.

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(1) For Berger's view on "socialist naturalism" in Soviet art, see p.50 et seq. of his Art and Revolution: Ernst Neizvestny and the Role of the Artist in the U.S.S.R., Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1969.

(2) Lukacs' discussion of revolutionary romanticism and socialist realism is to be found on pp.124 et seq. of the chapter "Critical Realism and Socialist Realism" in his The Meaning of Contemporary Realism (trans. J. and N. Mander), Merlin Press, London, 1969.

The thrust of much Soviet thinking on socialist realism is, we have stated, towards a broad definition of its scope and content. At the same time there is concern that, in the process, socialist realism should not lose its distinctiveness and thus its raison d'être. Soviet commentators like Ovcharenko and Lomidze, for example, are at pains to stress the difference between socialist realism and other methods such as critical realism and modernism. Ovcharenko, we have noted, in his Sotsialisticheski realizm i sovremenny literaturny protsess, concedes that Soviet writers like Bykov, Voinovich and others display a "critical" spirit, but does not go as far as calling them critical realists; this term applies, certainly in the Soviet critics studied by this researcher, to the realism displayed by pre-revolutionary writers critical of pre-revolutionary social orders. The criticism displayed in socialist art must be a different sort of criticism, both in degree and kind, and can, Ovcharenko implies, be accommodated within socialist realism. (He does not go on to develop the view that the critical element can and should be an essential ingredient of "socialist romanticism"). Lomidze re-echoes Ovcharenko here in his article "O sootnoshenii kriticheskogo i sotsialisticheskogo realizma".

There is the same staunch affirmation of the distinctiveness of socialist realism when the question of its relationship to modernism is examined. Soviet attitudes to modernism have been touched upon before in the context of Soviet discussion of psychologism and the moral element in art. These attitudes reveal considerable antipathy and hostility. Modernism - a term which Soviet critics use to embrace all non-realistic

art produced in the West - is, in their view, the direct descendent of those decadent/symbolist/impressionistic forms of art produced in the late 19th century and in the early years of the 20th in Europe. It reflects the same anti-humanistic, anti-social (capitalist-bourgeois) ideology as the one that produced these earlier forms of art. Naturally such art, like the ideology itself, has to be combatted as part of the Communists' struggle against capitalism everywhere - a struggle that in the ideological sphere (at least) precludes any "peaceful coexistence" (indeed, which necessarily becomes more intense as political detente proceeds(1)). This certainly is the clear message of a compilation like Ideologicheskaya bor'ba v literature i estetike (The Ideological Struggle in Literature and Aesthetics), Goslitizdat, Moscow, 1972. In it, amongst other things, A. Ovcharenko attacks the anti-Soviet bias of Western critics like Ernest J. Simmons. The latter had unfavourably reviewed his 1968 work on socialist realism and Ovcharenko clearly considers that Simmons' review is simply a vehicle for modernist propaganda, not to mention anti-Sovietism. (2) In response, Ovcharenko argues, socialist

(1) As evidence of this, one can cite the increased repression against Soviet dissidents in the wake of the Soviet-American Summit of June 1973 (the arrest of Amalrik, the trial of Yakir and Krasin etc.). There was also the warning against ideological detente, given by the Kremlin's veteran ideologue M. Suslov, at a July 1973 meeting of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet.

(2) The quite important exchange between Simmons and Ovcharenko on the scope and content of socialist realism took place in the first half of 1970. Ovcharenko's reply, written in May 1970, is included as an article in the compilation entitled Sotsialisticheski realizm i sovvetologiya: otvet Prof. Ernestu Dzh. Simmonsu (Socialist Realism and Sovietology: A Reply to Prof. Ernest J. Simmons), pp.122-154. Other articles besides Ovcharenko's reveal the bias of this compilation quite clearly. Cf. A. Mendel'son and A. Nikolyukin: Literaturovedeniye v SShA i antikommunizm (Literary Studies in the U.S.A. and Anti-Communism), pp.98-121 I. Fradkin: Drang nach Osten v novom izdanii: zametki o neofashistskoi literature v FRG (The "Drang Nach Osten" in a New Edition: Notes on Neo-Fascist Literature in the FRG), pp.155-187.

realism must be "sharpened" as a weapon in the ideological struggle, its own superiority over and distinctiveness from modernism must be emphasised. Another critic, A. Dymshits, is even more explicit on this point. This ideological struggle, he writes, "is a clash between art dealing with carefully selected and well thought-out social subjects and aiming to ... solve social and aesthetic problems, and a capricious and wilful attitude towards life, art and the reader". (1)

The Soviet attack on modernism is not sustained on ideological grounds alone however. Indeed, it is clear, as we have seen in Soviet discussion of the moral elements in Western art, that 'ideologising' Soviet discussion of modernism can be detrimental since obvious distinctions between Western artists are blurred in the process; the Bölls and the Hemingways do not clearly "share the same ideology" as the Pirandellos or Bacons, although in the Soviet view they are the products of the same society. Clearly the discussion of modernism and its differences with socialist realism has to go beyond the "art is a reflection of society/ideology" thesis, if the nature of both forms is to be understood more deeply.

Western aestheticians like Thomas H. Munro and Soviet critics like Yu. Borev who have studied modernism in depth see modernist writing from broadly two perspectives. Firstly, there is the approach which might be called purely sociological. This sees modernist techniques and leitmotifs as simple "reflections" of the socio-economic conditions of Western society. The bizarre modes of modernism reflect the anarchy and despair of modern capitalist society or, in the words of

(1) A. Dymshits: "Realism and Modernism", p.261 of D. Moshnagun (ed.): Problems of Modern Aesthetics.

G.D. Gachev: "This modernist breakdown of man in the literary image has an objective basis since it reflects the actual relations between man and capitalist society." (1)

Such an approach, of course, reinforces a simplified, ideological view of modernism even if it does not always lead to an invective against it. Under it, modernists like Dali, Bacon, Pirandello and others are held to create bizarre images that are artistic equivalents of the social conditions that their works reflect. They are also considered virtual prisoners of their society, no matter how self-consciously they affect to scorn it, or reject it and are almost to be forgiven for this reason, critics like Gachev seem to imply. In fact, far from "distorting" (capitalist) reality, they are its most effective portrayers, realists if you like, because "modernist art is the only possible method for the reflection and aesthetic perception of our epoch within the framework of bourgeois society and consciousness". (2) This approach, it should be noted, can be buttressed by arguments that are not strictly sociological. The British Marxist critic, John Berger has argued, as part of his thinking on realism and cognition in art, that "reality is far more complex than any single view of appearances" (3) and that as a result modernist art (Cézanne, Braque, etc.) is a valuable inspiration for both realist and socialist realist, in that modernist artists do attempt to capture something of the multi-dimensionality of reality.

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(1) G.D. Gachev: Teoriya literatury (Theory of Literature), Goslitizdat, Moscow, 1962, p.262.

(2) Cited from Voprosy estetiki, No.6, 1964, p.259.

(3) John Berger: "Problems of Socialist Art", p.215 of Baxandall (ed.): op. cit.

The other approach (commoner amongst Western than Soviet critics) tends to examine modernism as a form of artistic avant-garde, as a means, in other words, of transcending capitalist values and modern (Western) modes of perception. The American aesthetician, Thomas H. Munro has stated in this connection that he regards modernism "as a romantic revolutionary movement away from oppressive rules and centralised authority ... This may open the way to new discoveries ... and new kinds of aesthetic experience". (1) This approach is premissed on the belief that for the artist there are two realities - one of empirical, everyday life; another (the higher) representing the artist's own interpretation of the world, an interpretation in which the borderline between illusion and reality is increasingly blurred.

Emphasis on the first interpretation of modernism has led many critics (particularly some Western realists at a 1963 International Forum of Writers held in Leningrad as well as those Czech socialist realists already referred to) to affirm that the techniques of modernism can usefully be adapted by socialist realists in their writing, presumably, on 'modernist' society, or on 'modernist' features of socialist society. Underlying this approach is the belief that modernism is not so much a pervasive and repugnant philosophy of art, as an effective (realistic on its own terms) way of portraying the particular reality of the West. The Soviet response to this interpretation and attitude has generally been negative, despite its (minority) endorsement by Soviet critics like Gachev and Borev. For example, the critic A. Ovcharenko has consistently said that techniques claimed to be 'modernist' (the stream of

(1) Thomas H. Munro: Evolution in the Arts and Other Theories of Cultural History, New York, 1964, p.21.

consciousness, dream/reality juxtaposition and so on) have been the stock in trade of many realists and socialist realists for years now. And these writers have not found it necessary to depart from the traditional content of realism and socialist realism in order to adopt them. Secondly, if modernist techniques and content are held to be so intimately bound up with the modernist (capitalist) mode of life, how can they be grafted convincingly onto a literary method that is the product of a different mode. (This "fallacy" in an argument like Berger's is heavily emphasised by D. Mozhnyagun. (1))

More generally, the 'sociologism' displayed in numerous defences of modernism is strongly condemned by most Soviet critics. To critics like Mozhnyagun, Dymshits and Myasnikov, it is simply not true that Western society can only be portrayed vividly and properly in the modernist mode - the work of great realists like Böll, Hemingway and others disproves this immediately. For these critics indeed, modernists cannot see the wood for the trees in Western society; modernism's bizarre techniques, far from illuminating the "contradictions" of capitalism, only obscure them. As Mozhnyagun observes:

> The history of modernism is characterised by a consistently progressive disintegration of the image ... In its attempt to justify the artist's right to deform the image, modern bourgeois aesthetics speaks of the need to create a new mythology ... a poetic convention for the aesthetic interpretation of history ... However it is difficult to understand how a person professing to think in terms of his age can see modernism as its only possible "reflection" and fail to notice the phenomenon of socialist realism which is to be found in bourgeois society but is not the product of bourgeois consciousness. (2)

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(1) In his article "Unadorned Realism", p. 233 et seq.

(2) Ibid., pp.233-235.

The second interpretation of modernism makes it even more damnable in the eyes of Mozhnyagun and his colleagues. The claim to avant-gardism is symptomatic of a cultural élitism, he states, and in fact, instead of "leading" society, the modernist avant-garde seeks to reject or transcend it, thereby intensifying its own "anti-popular" spirit. Likewise the special (higher) reality claimed and propagated by modernists is rejected as spurious - it conflicts with a "true" understanding of reality as revealed by the Leninist theory of reflection, by the theory of realism and other staple elements of Soviet aesthetics.

It is clear, then, that the majority of Soviet theorists consider that the phenomenon known as modernism is incompatible with socialist realism - and in the discussion they illuminate their understanding of both. The expression 'socialist modernism' thus becomes for them a contradiction in terms; and the so-called modernist techniques of socialist realism are defended on the grounds that these techniques represent developments common to 20th century realism as a whole, techniques whose application in socialist realist art can be justified to the extent that they illuminate any aspect of socialist reality and are compatible with a less rigidly defined (delimited) critique of this art-form.

* * * *

Western observers of Soviet discussion on socialist realism might be at times reminded of the tale of the Emperor's new clothes - the more waffling, non-existent almost, the

socialist realist doctrine appears to be, the more strongly do Soviet critics assert its existence. It would be wrong to conclude from this that socialist realism, as both a practice and theory of art, has ceased to be a significant force in Soviet culture; socialist realism is still described as the basic method of Soviet art and there are many Soviet artists (like Yevtushenko) who do not shrink from calling themselves socialist realists. Soviet critics themselves convincingly emphasise the distinction between socialist realism on the one hand and other artistic methods such as critical realism and modernism, on the other. But the analogy with the tale of the Emperor's new clothes is valid in one respect; Soviet discussion about socialist realism (particularly when viewed in comparison with discussion in other areas of aesthetics) does not, qualitatively speaking, amount to very much. There is little contribution by Soviet critics to a significant development of the theory of socialist realism.

All we can say is that the middle of the road, common-sense observations of critics like Ovcharenko, Lomidze and others, for example, do reflect attempts to keep the theory in line with developments in practice; that these critics do recognise that a plurality of styles is to be seen in this practice without the socialist core of socialist realism being undermined or challenged. Where the core has been undermined in the eyes of Soviet critics - in the work of Solzhenitsyn for example, or occasionally in specific works of authors otherwise acceptable, such as Yevtushenko's Kazanski universitet - these writers have been taken to task. Thus, Soviet writing on socialist realism has, it seems, no wider goal than a "critical

stock-taking" of current Soviet artistic practice. As in Soviet discussion of form generally, there is little attempt to discuss the future of socialist (realist) art - particularly under conditions of full Communism in the way that Trotski, Garaudy, Lukacs or Berger have done. Furthermore (except, possibly in discussion of revolutionary romanticism and tragedy, and Western modernism) Soviet theory of socialist realism exhibits no striking or particularly interesting application of themes and ideas taken from Soviet aesthetics generally. This in large measure results, of course, from the old-fashioned (1) circumscribed content of socialist realism itself, the fact that socialist realist theory draws on the more partisan, crude strains in Marxist-Leninist aesthetics and on pre-Marxist (utilitarian) Russian criticism before that. And, of course, deficiencies like these, present in more competent Soviet discussion, are considerably more abundant in that vast mass of 'orthodox', partisan, Soviet writing on socialist realism.

In sum, then, it is not from theory of socialist realism that more professional Soviet discussion on art is emerging, or will emerge - the categories and problems of Soviet aesthetics find, on the whole, fuller illumination outside

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(1) The phrase 'old-fashioned' used quite often in this study to describe Soviet thinking, is also used by the American critic, Max Riesner in his "Russian Aesthetics Today and their Historical Background", JAAC, Fall, 1963, pp.47-53. Riesner claims that Soviet criticism in general (as well as discussion of socialist realism) is very "19th century-ish" in its emphasis on realism and literary practice.

its framework. And this assessment is likely to remain valid certainly as long as the bulk of Soviet socialist realism remains (by Western standards) conservative and in large measure responsive to the prevailing political orthodoxy. (1)

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(1) There is, perhaps, less conservatism in Soviet (socialist realist) music where such composers as Leonid Grabovski, Andrei Volkonski and others have, over the past ten years, displayed a certain amount of innovation, particularly in the field of twelve-tone music. The point, however, is that Soviet public tastes in music (as in literature and the plastic arts) remain by and large fairly conservative, "square" almost, and that the critics and theorists of music, like the critics and theorists of Soviet literature are not doing much to push tastes in a more enlightened direction. This task has been left to the practitioners of music - they "have an important function, for they may well provide the soil in which a more liberal aesthetic, education and musical policy may grow". (Cited from F.K. Prieburg: "The Sound of the New Music", Survey, January, 1963, p.101.

XI. THE SOVIET CRITIQUE OF DOSTOYEVSKI

The life and work of Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevski presents a challenge to the Soviet critic who seeks to understand and evaluate it. Here is a great writer who has produced some of the world's greatest art, yet under the inspiration of ideas which can, in the Soviet view, be called 'reactionary'. How does one explain what is, to many Soviet critics, a glaring contradiction, without explaining it away by emphasis solely on the artistry of Dostoyevski or, conversely, exclusively on the ideinost' of his work? Explaining the contradictions of Dostoyevski would seem to be a natural task for "dialectical" critics like the Soviet. And through their explanations we come to learn as much about the complexities (contradictions) of Soviet criticism itself as about those in the artist criticised. An artist as complex as Dostoyevski inevitably attracts diverse and often contradictory critical assessments. One thinks of the assessments of André Gide in French literary criticism or of Patrick White in Australian.

It is Soviet criticism of Dostoyevski, rather than Dostoyevski himself, which is the chief concern of this study. Our aim, of course, is not so much to clarify the contradictions of the writer himself - and thus make yet another contribution to Dostoyevski scholarship - as to use Soviet writing on Dostoyevski to illuminate still further our understanding of the general theme and principles of Soviet aesthetics and criticism.

In part, the relative complexity of Soviet Dostoyevski criticism is due to differing standards evident in Soviet criticism generally - to the broad differences between doctrinaire and less doctrinaire writing. In addition, Soviet criticism after 1953 (more exactly after 1956) also incorporates the various, often contradictory trends discernible in Russian criticism of Dostoyevski before both 1917 and the death of Stalin. These trends will be duly discussed. At this point, however, it is important to make one preliminary observation: post-Stalin Soviet criticism of Dostoyevski does not really represent a qualitatively new and higher stage of criticism. The years after 1953 did not mark a watershed; rather they provided critics with an opportunity to re-explore, initially timidly, aspects of the writer that were for political reasons ignored under Stalin and to resume themes evident in pre-Stalin and pre-revolutionary Dostoyevski criticism. This act of "picking up the threads", as it were, was especially noticeable in the work of critics like M. Bakhtin, V. Kirpotin and A. Dolinin. Some of these critics re-issued after 1956 works that were first published some thirty years earlier. (1)

While there may be a broad continuity between pre-Stalin (1930) and post-Stalin Dostoyevski criticism, political considerations and specific political events are important for determining the particular shape and emphasis of such criticism at particular periods. A sketch of the political background to the discussion is therefore necessary here.

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(1) Such works included: Bakhtin's Problemy poetiki Dostoyevskogo (Problems in the Poetics of Dostoyevski) first published in 1929, later reissued in 1963; and Kirpotin's F.M. Dostoyevski first published in 1947 (an oddly fruitful year for Stalinist Dostoyevski scholarship) and republished in 1960.

Dostoyevski himself was very conscious of his role as a "civic enlightener" and a publisher (as well as publiciser) of conservative views, both as editor of Grazhdanin from 1873-76, and in his Dnevnik pisatelya from 1876 to his death. The Tsarist authorities made no noticeable attempt to propagate his views for political purposes after his death. From 1881 till the Revolution, furthermore, Dostoyevski the political figure faded from view. Instead interest was increasingly focussed on him as a religious and spiritual figure. This interest was justified by the intrinsic importance of the religious-spiritual elements in Dostoyevski's work and by the critical bent of the symbolist/decadent commentators of the time - men like Rozanov, Shestov, Merezhkovski and, of course, Vyacheslav Ivanov. Though Lenin had once spoken of his work as arkhiskvernoye (arch-bad), (1) for their part, the Bolsheviks, along with Lenin, were initially prepared to treat him primarily as a great artist and to forgive his political trespasses. His name was included along with those of Belinski and Radishchev in a list, approved in August 1918, of famous men who were to be commemorated with statues throughout the new Soviet state. It is true, of course, that after 1918, individual partisan critics like Gorki continued their attacks on Dostoyevski and specifically (in Gorki's case) on the writer's "Karamazov spirit" of brutishness, reaction and sado-masochism - just as critics of a religious or formalist bent continued to defend him.

The complete politicisation of Dostoyevski discussion did not begin until the early 'thirties after, that is, Stalin

(1) V.I. Lenin on Literature and Art, p.194.

had gained supreme power. Stalinist totalitarianism and the imposition of a single Stalinist (class) perspective on everything ensured that the literary squabblings between Marxist and formalists over the significance of Dostoyevski were put speedily to an end, along with, of course, significant literary discussion generally. Thus the fiftieth anniversary of Dostoyevski's death was observed, in 1931, under the slogan Za klassovuyu pereotsenku trudov Dostoyevskogo (For a Class Revaluation of Dostoyevski's Work). Thus, too, was the great Dostoyevski critic, Leonid Grossman, who in his 1924 study Put' Dostoyevskogo (Dostoyevski's Path) expounded a view of the writer as a tormented and never satisfied seeker of ideas, forced to conclude by 1933 that Dostoyevski was a willing and consistent spokesman for reaction in his later years. (1)

Political demands, generally, meant that Dostoyevski scholarship of the 'thirties was forced to concentrate on (admittedly, often valuable) forays into aspects of Dostoyevski's life and working routines, taking advantage of the wealth of material available from Tsarist archives that had been opened up in 1918. Anything outside this area was too dangerous. Dostoyevski gained spectacular, if brief, respectability during the war, of course. During the war years Dostoyevski was fostered as a great Russian patriot and a hater of Germans; and the humanistic elements in his work were linked firmly with his very Russianness.

Dostoyevski continued in favour up to 1946/47. These years coincided with the 125th anniversary of Dostoyevski's birth,

(1) Cf. Grossman's study: Dostoyevski i pravitel'stvennïye krugi 1870-kh godov (Dostoyevski and the Ruling Circles of the 1870's).

and were marked by praise for Dostoyevski both from doctrinaire critics like D.I. Zaslavski and more academic ones like A.S. Dolinin. The Zhdanovshchina eventually caught up with the writer, however; in December 1947 the same Zaslavski attacked the "distortions" of V. Kirpotin's 1947 studies Molodoi Dostoyevski and F.M. Dostoyevski. In the same month, V.V. Yermilov followed this up with an article in a similar vein. As a result, from 1948 until Stalin's death, no further editions of Dostoyevski's works were reprinted in the U.S.S.R. and his museum - in that part of a Moscow hospital where his father had worked - was closed down. Serious study of Dostoyevski was proscribed, since his art was, in the official view, "hostile to the Soviet people".

Revival of Dostoyevski scholarship began only cautiously after March 1953. In May, 1954, the editor-in-chief of Literaturnaya gazeta, B. Ryurikov, complained in an article of the lack of adequate Dostoyevski scholarship in the Soviet Union. In 1955, Lenin's name was invoked to help thaw the ice a little; in April of that year an excerpt from V. Bonch-Bruyevich's memoirs of Lenin was published in separate form. This recalled Lenin's hostility to Dostoyevski's ideas, but his concession - in remarks to Bonch-Bruyevich - that aspects of Besy were useful for their critique of "petit-bourgeois revolutionary" ideas (Bakuninism).

Dostoyevski's emergence from the Stalinist limbo proceeded apace during 1956 - the year in which the 75th anniversary of Dostoyevski's death was commemorated. This year witnessed,

first, the anniversary publication of the initial volume of a ten-volume edition of Dostoyevski's works and, second, the release (in the Literaturnoye nasledstvo series) of the first of a number of compilations of hitherto unpublished Dostoyevskiana - drafts of Dostoyevski's manuscripts, letters, family documents and so on. In 1956, too, V. Yermilov published the first full length work on Dostoyevski since 1947 (Fyodor Dostoyevski) though its mediocre (and very partisan) content indicated that Stalinist attitudes could not be jettisoned overnight. (1)

Since 1956 Soviet Dostoyevski scholarship has, generally, moved forward. Clearly, it has not reached the levels of the criticism of the 'twenties; there are, at present, no names to compare with Marxist critics like V.F. Pereverzev, formalists like Yu. N. Tynyanov, Yu. Aikhenvald and more academic, but still recognisably Soviet, Dostoyevski scholars like Leonid Grossman. (Works of scholars like Bakhtin and Kirpotin written after 1953, are, of course, a continuation of what was begun in the 'twenties and 'thirties). Yet the criticism has reached a level comparable to the level of more professional Soviet discussion after 1953 in other areas of aesthetics and criticism.

In this, Dostoyevski critics have been helped by the political climate. For if anything, official attitudes have tended (after 1956) towards an increasingly more generous treatment of Dostoyevski. This might seem an anomaly, given

(1) A further indication of this came when it was decided to omit "the more reactionary" material from Dnevnik pisatelya as well as the whole of Zapiski iz podpolya from the planned ten-volume edition of Dostoyevski's work. Also, the 1956 collection of critical essays F.M. Dostoyevski v russkoi kritike (F.M. Dostoyevski in Russian Criticism) omitted the invaluable work of decadent/symbolist critics like Rozanov and Shestov.

the Brezhnev regime's generally conservative attitudes. It is, I think, explainable by a fairly deliberate political decision to "claim" Dostoyevski, as a great writer and international figure, for the Communist cause and for the regime itself to assert that what is important in Dostoyevski is the impact and power of his picture of suffering in Tsarist Russia. The "correctness" of the Communist way of eliminating this suffering is thereby also enhanced. Thus in yet another Dostoyevski anniversary year (1971 - the 150th anniversary of his birth [1]) these official attitudes gave rise not merely to generous praise for Dostoyevski but often to a certain possessiveness towards him. For example, Pravda in its anniversary editorial of 11th November 1971 wrote:

> There is no reason why we should abandon this great writer to the reactionaries. We cannot reconcile ourself to reactionaries and idealists who claim Dostoyevski as their own. (2)

Less 'official' critics like V.N. Dneprov made a related point no less strongly:

> Dostoyevski was a genius at divination, but what he could never guess was that his novels would participate in the construction of socialism. (3)

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(1) As part of these anniversary celebrations, the Pushkin Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences embarked on the compilation of a thirty-volume edition of everything Dostoyevski wrote (a contrast to the 1956 compilation which was selective). The first volume was published in 1972 by Nauka. It includes Dostoyevski's earliest fiction. The first seventeen volumes are expected to include all of Dostoyevski's fiction, the last thirteen his later journalistic work and miscellaneous other material.

(2) Similarly Ya. El'sberg attacks attempts by bourgeois scholars in particular existential critics like Camus, to claim Dostoyevski, as their own - cf. his "Sovremennaya burzhuaznaya kontseptsiya tvorchestva Dostoyevskogo i ideologicheskaya bor'ba" (The Contemporary Bourgeois Conception of Dostoyevski's Creative Work and the Ideological Struggle), pp.306-332 of the compilation Ideologicheskaya bo'rba v literature i estetike (The Ideological Struggle in Literature and Aesthetics).

(Footnote (3) continued on page 417).

As an indication, overall, of the change in official attitudes to Dostoyevski, particularly since 1956, it can be noted that whereas the novel Besy was described by the Bol'shaya sovetskaya entsiklopediya (BSE) in 1952 as a "ferocious lampoon"(1) on the Russian revolutionary movement, by 1971 it had become "an anatomy and critique of ultra-leftist extremism". (2) This change of feeling may not be the result of particularly liberal official attitudes and has, for its part led to some distorted interpretations (3) of Dostoyevski, just as routine condemnation did in the past. But clearly the new attitudes have not hindered serious Dostoyevski discussion over the past ten years; and no apparent guidelines or limits have been set for this discussion.

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In considering the discussion, one needs to make a number of preliminary observations about what Dostoyevski actually was. At one level he could be called a chronicler of social events, a writer not uninfluenced by the social ideas and issues of his day. His early works like Bednye lyudy (1845), Dvoinik (1846) and Khozyaika (1847) deal with the lives of those struggling, seemingly "fragmented" characters who came

(1) BSE, 2nd edition, Moscow, XV p.150.

(2) It was so described by the critic B.L. Suchkov in a short anniversary article in LG, November 17, 1971. (p.4).

(3) In an article "Dostoyevski i sovremennost': pisatel', yego naslediye i issledovateli" (Dostoyevski and the Present: the Writer, his Legacy and Those Who Do Research on Him), NM, No.8 1971, pp.240-253, the critic U. Gural'nik says, in effect, that Dostoyevski has to be viewed as a complex whole, parts of whom cannot be sliced off or claimed for this or that cause. This will only distort our understanding of the man and his work.

(Footnote (3) continued from previous page).

(3) V.N. Dneprov: "Dostoyevski, kak pisatel' dvadtsatogo veka" (Dostoyevski as a Writer of the Twentieth Century), Inostrannaya literatura, No.11, 1971, p.200.

primarily but not exclusively from the least privileged sections of the meshchanstvo - the Russian petit-bourgeoisie - that is, the order of Russian society which attracted the greatest attention from Russian writers of the 1840's, particularly those of the so-called Natural School. The meshchanstvo was treated by them with both genuine compassion and often sentimental condescension - attitudes which Dostoyevski himself did not avoid. From the 1840's on the meshchanstvo came to play an increasingly important role in Russian society providing the clerks and administrators for the expanding bureaucracy of the Tsarist system and the artisans to help accelerate Russia's transition from an almost feudal economy and social structure to a capitalist one approaching in scale (after the Great Reforms of the 1860's), the capitalist systems of Western Europe. The meshchanstvo also provided a significant number of educated young men and women, dedicated either to overthrowing the system or at least to pursuing a life of political crime within it. Such men and women along with the "poor folk" crowd the pages of a writer like Dostoyevski who was born into the meshchanstvo, spent most of his life amongst it, and whose plebeian tastes (on many matters) largely reflected those of this class. Even in the later novels, from 1860 onwards, where social compassion and social ideas often take second place to questions of character psychology and to ideas of a mystical, religious and reactionary stripe, the social presence of the meshchanstvo is always felt - from the portraits of prosperous German and Russian artisans in Prestuplenive i nakazanive to the account of minor police and legal officials' lives and occupations in both this work and Brat'ya Karamazovy.

To take one important area of Soviet Dostoyevski criticism first: did all this mean that Dostoyevski himself was simply a "reflection" of his time and that the interest of his work and the success of his art depend on the extent to which he accurately "chronicled" it? To those exponents of the 'sociological' stream in Soviet criticism before 1956, noticeably V. Pereverzev and A. Tseitlin, and answer to this question was 'yes'. In his two major studies on Dostoyevski (1), Pereverzev, for example, reduced features both of Dostoyevski's art and of his personality to those elements apparent in the Russian petit-bourgeoisie during the "period of the transition" (i.e. the Great Reforms). This period, according to Pereverzev, brought about complex attitudes in this group, making it upwardly mobile but still uncertain of its precise position between the "lower depths" of the proletariat on the one hand and the established gentry and aristocracy on the other. It - and Dostoyevski in particular - thus alternated between compassion toward the suffering of the "lower depths" and an almost hysterical desire to escape from any association with it. A.Tseitlin took a similar line, with some qualifications, in his treatment of Dostoyevski. (2)

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(1) Specifically his Tvorchestvo Dostoyevskogo: kriticheski ocherk (Dostoyevski's Creative Activity: A Critical Essay), first published in 1912 and republished in 1925, along with a study, F.M. Dostoyevski, by Goslitizdat, Moscow.

(2) In an article in LG of February 9, 1931, Tseitlin identified two streams in the meshchanstvo - the 'radical' (embracing the raznochintsy) and the 'petit-bourgeois' (which included Dostoyevski). The meshchanstvo was thus categorised by Tseitlin as divided rather than ambiguous in its beliefs. Dostoyevski was not, in Tseitlin's view, both progressive and reactionary at the same time. Rather he sided consistently with the reactionaries. A number of Soviet critics have mirrored Tseitlin's views in the past twenty years.

All this was plausible up to a point and helped to illuminate aspects of Dostoyevski's work; but to attempt to solve all the problems of his artistry and personality by reference to them - and then offer these solutions as the only possible interpretation of Dostoyevski - inevitably tended to vulgarise the discussion. As it was, Pereverzev, as we have seen, was denounced for his "vulgar sociologism" in 1930; his critical judgements as applied to both Dostoyevski and other writers are still officially condemned in the U.S.S.R. The limitations and consequences of sociological criticism in the eyes of official Soviet critics have, of course, been noted elsewhere; (1) and it can be stated that because of them post-Stalin Soviet critics have avoided a purely sociological critique of Dostoyevski. To this extent Soviet criticism maintains some continuity with the radical critics of the past like Belinski, Dobrolyubov and Pisarev. The latter were clearly concerned with the social context and import of Dostoyevski's work but (with the exception possibly of Dobrolyubov) they did not reduce all questions of Dostoyevski's art to sociological ones.

For a number of post-Stalin Soviet critics also, like M. Shcheglov, V. Etov and V. Yermilov, sociological explanations tell only part of the story about Dostoyevski. In their work the degree of scholarship and exactitude brought to the analysis of social questions in Dostoyevski varies considerably with each critic; none of it reaches the level of Pereverzev's studies. Some remarks like those of the critic M. Shcheglov,

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(1) Cf. the discussion of sociologism in Chapter VII.

are trite, almost routine:

> The world-view of Dostoyevski himself was the product of an era (mercilessly described by him) of the crisis and the collapse of ideals. (1)

Yermilov is more specific when he speaks of the determining influence of "an epoch of transition and crisis when the feudal, serf-owning relationships in Russia were giving way to new capitalist relationships". (2) The worth of these statements generally is not great. Both Shcheglov and Yermilov make it clear for example (rightly), that other factors such as conscience and artistic harmony were of equal importance in "determining" Dostoyevski's art. However, so far as an examination of the social dimension of Dostoyevski's work is concerned, these critics' penchants and critical themes deprive what little social commentary there is in their work of any objectivity and accuracy. What, in fact, is the objective social content of Dostoyevski's novels and of his urban milieu - a society full of sado-masochistic individualists (which suits Yermilov's very partisan explanation of Prestuplenive i nakazanive) or one peopled by a religion-crazed Lumpenproletariat with whom Dostoyevski was out of sympathy (this, according to another critic, V. Etov, is portrayed in the same novel). Similarly, did the "spiritual crisis of capitalism" in the 1860's and '70's spawn petit-bourgeois anarchists and pseudo-revolutionaries (whom Etov thinks are being portrayed in Besy) or genuine revolutionaries who, in Yermilov's view, are being "slandered" in this novel?

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(1) Mark Shcheglov: Literaturno-kriticheskive stati (Essays in Literature Criticism), Foreword by N.K. Gudzi, Sovetski pisatel' Moscow, 1965, p.198.

(2) V.V. Yermilov: Fyodor Dostoyevski (trans. J. Katzer), Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1956, p.8.

If Dostoyevski is held to be influenced by his times, to reflect them, then the times are characterised in contradictory ways by Soviet critics - their actual social and historical reality is not established definitively. One critic, Etov himself, has admitted as much (1). He has said that Soviet critics would do better to concentrate on the copious notebooks which Dostoyevski invariably prepared prior to writing his novels so that they can see what actual social issues, themes or facts were judged by the writer himself to be relevant and important for particular novels. (2) It is clear, for example, from his notebooks on Prestupleniye i nakazaniye that much of the inspiration for that novel came from Dostoyevski's perusal, in the popular press, of debates on juridical and penal procedure both before and after the law reforms of 1864. Dostoyevski, too, looked to the popular press of the day to provide authentic material to help him capture the spirit and ethos of his urban milieu. Finally, and this is stressed by the critic B. Meilakh in particular, (3)

(1) Cf. V.I. Etov: Dostoyevski: ocherk tvorchestva (Dostoyevski: an Essay on Creativity), Prosveshcheniye, Moscow, 1968. Etov makes these remarks in the course of reviewing Soviet writing on Dostoyevski, since the 1920's. Etov refers to the work of G.M. Friedlander (Realizm Dostoyevskogo, 1964) and M. Gus (Idei i obrazy F.M. Dostoyevskogo, 1962) as exceptions here. Both works have contributed useful research on the "social element" in Dostoyevski; the first three chapters of Gus' work on Dostoyevski's formative years are particularly useful.

(2) Etov himself in Dostoyevski: ocherk tvorchestva quotes extensively from Gus and Friedlander and Dostoyevski's own notes - his references to current press items on particular court cases and other material he scribbled down prior to writing his novels.

(3) B.S. Meilakh: Problema upravleniya svoim talantom" (The Problem of Controlling One's Talent), p.200 et seq. of Meilakh (ed.): Talant pisatelya ... i protsessy tvorchestva. On pp.204-5, he cites Dostoyevski's own correspondence to show the writer's sensitivity towards his readers' tastes and interests.

Dostoyevski clearly had the tastes and interests of his reading public in mind when he wrote. In this respect he was like Dickens. But, at the same time, his work, like Dickens', could not be called simply a response to public tastes and demands.

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As Marxist-Leninists then, Soviet critics emphasise that the social dimension of Dostoyevski's work is important. Most of them, clearly, do not wish to "absolutise" it (even if some may distort it or treat it sketchily). Following from their thinking on "the social" in art generally, they see this category as intermeshed with others, particularly in a writer like Dostoyevski. Foremost amongst the latter is the category of the "psychological", which most Soviet critics concede, as we have seen, to be important for understanding his tvorchestvo.

Soviet writing on the psychology of Dostoyevski, on psychological aspects of his life and work is probably less extensive than the volumes of criticism produced on this topic in the West - by such men as Gide, the emigré Russian critic Mochulski in the 'twenties and 'thirties, and later by English-speaking Dostoyevski critics like E.H. Carr, E.J. Simmons, Janko Lavrin and George Steiner. However, Soviet interest is still substantial, even if, as always it is qualified by the caveat against "absolutising" the psychological elements in Dostoyevski.

It is a fact, of course, from the obvious evidence of his life and work and from the recollections of contemporaries and critics shortly under his death (1) that Dostoyevski was an enormously complex individual, whose complexities were doubtless aggravated by personal misfortunes and external conditions. A man who had been traumatised by the murder of his father (1838), the experience of a mock-execution (1849), who had a compulsive mania for gambling and who could work at an enormous pitch of concentration amidst long periods of idleness, could not in any sense be called a normal, average or balanced individual. Added to all this, of course, was the element of mental anguish and self-doubt in Dostoyevski: his assertion in Brat'ya Karamazovy and in his diaries of the value of Christian humility and the example of Christ as guides to life, and then at the other extreme his statement in Chelovek iz podpolya that there were no lastingly valuable beliefs in a cynical and brutal world. Clearly, of course, no-one can say that Dmitri (or Alyosha) Karamazov or the Man from the Underground "totally represented" Dostoyevski as he was at any one point in time; but their presence points up in many cases ingredients in the Dostoyevskian psyche that the author might subsequently downplay, but could never make disappear.

In expressing interest in psychological aspects of Dostoyevski Soviet critics after 1953 are following in the tradition of certain Soviet writers of the 'twenties and 'thirties like L. Grossman and earlier radical Russian critics like N.K. Mikhailovski. Mikhailovski's critique, in his

(1) Some of these were drawn together in an important article by L.N. Voitolovski, written in 1911 and entitled "F.M. Dostoyevski: k tridtsatiletiyu so dnya konchiny" (F.M. Dostoyevski: On the Thirtieth Anniversary of His Death), Kievskaya mysl', No.28, 1911.

famous article, "Zhestoki talant" (Cruel Talent) of 1882, was an extreme presentation of the 'psychological' approach, in which Dostoyevski was seen as being inspired solely by sado-masochistic drives and nothing else, a man whose world was "a menagerie of preying beasts in which the writer has assigned himself the role of cruel trainer". (1) However, Mikhailovski's critique had considerable influence, particularly on early 20th century radical figures like Gorki and, one suspects, Lenin. Gorki, as we have noted, saw Dostoyevski as very much preoccupied with the cruel and the bestial for their own sake and called this dominant quality of his work 'Karamazovism'. (2)

Traces of this crude categorisation of Dostoyevski may be found in some Soviet criticism, in particular in parts of Yermilov's book. But Soviet critics generally avoid it. The better of them, like A. Iezuitov, have concentrated instead on separating out the various problems that psychological studies of Dostoyevski involve. (It was noticeable, by way of contrast, that critics like Mikhailovski and Gorki never attempted to justify the psychological explanation of Dostoyevski or to say where it was useful and where it was insufficient. Their work was too polemical for that.)

According to Iezuitov, as we have noted earlier (Chapter VII), psychologism has three different senses in Soviet criticism. At one level psychologism is present, and most

(1) Cited in V. Seduro: Dostoyevski in Russian Literary Criticism, 1846-1956, Columbia University Press, New York, 1957, p.32.

(2) The phrase was used in an article by Gorki published in Russkoye slovo, September, 1913. Gorki was attacking the (then) current cult of Dostoyevski in Russia, that had been sustained, in part, by a recent Moscow Art Theatre dramatisation of both Prestupleniye i nakazaniye and Besy.

justified, when the critic is interested in illuminating mainly the inner worlds and most writers portray the tensions, the emotions and so on revealed in them. In another sense psychologism is present when the critic discusses the writer himself and his psyche as a key to an understanding of his characters and his work. Finally, of course, psychologism is present in a most extreme (and unjustified) form when a critic reduces every aspect of a literary work to the psyche of the author. Psychologism in all three senses is present in Soviet criticism of Dostoyevski. The starting point for most psychologistic criticism of Dostoyevski is a remark by the writer himself to the effect that:

> They call me a psychologist. This is not true - I am only a realist in the highest sense of the word - that is, I portray all the depths of the human soul. (1)

For the critics N. Chirkov and M. Bakhtin, the psychological element in Dostoyevski finds its chief expression at the artistic level, that is, as psychological realism. (This might be called psychologism in the first sense.) Neither critic is greatly interested in whether character 'x' represents trait 'y' of Dostoyevski and what might be termed a clinical explanation of certain of his characters' moods. Rather, for Bakhtin, what he calls the polyphony of individual psychic consciousnesses in the novels illustrates not Dostoyevski's interest in certain psychic states and in their development, but in his idea of a polyphonic novel which became central to his realism and which often unwittingly drew upon past artistic

(1) Cited in N.M. Chirkov: O stile Dostoyevskogo (On Dostoyevski's Style), Izd-vo ANSSR, Moscow, 1963, p.58. Chirkov's work was written in 1946 and published posthumously in 1963.

conventions. In this type of novel, Bakhtin says, the characters are treated not so much as emanations of their creator's psyche, but as individuals who develop independently according to the demands of artistic plausibility. (The concept of the polyphonic novel will be considered in more detail further on.) Chirkov, for his part, also looks at Dostoyevski at the psychological level, mainly in order to see how Dostoyevski practised psychological realism as a technique. Another critic, V. Kirpotin, notes that in contrast to the "degenerate and decadent" psychologism of Proust and Kafka, Dostoyevski's psychologism is "a special artistic method of penetrating into the objective essence of a contradictory human collective". (1) Kirpotin implies in this connection that Dostoyevski was able to see other people objectively, uncluttered by personal prejudices.

A number of Soviet critics, it should be noted, are not so sure on this point, particularly the 'partisan' critics like Yermilov. Dostoyevski's "psychological portraits", particularly in Besy, were, they claim, distorted by his social and political prejudices and his admittedly far from normal personality. This led to Dostoyevski's habit "of sending messages to the wrong social addresses", to use Yermilov's phrase. This psychological criticism - in the second sense - also emphasises Dostoyevski as a figure of doubt and self-torment (though such a figure is of interest to the Soviet critic, for moral reasons as well, as we shall see.)

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(1) V. Kirpotin: F.M. Dostoyevski, Goslitizdat, Moscow, 1960, p.367.

Psychological criticism in the third sense, predictably, is not always particularly enlightening when directed at Dostoyevski. Such criticism might be said to be present in B. Bursov's three-part roman-issledovaniye on the writer.(1) Bursov proceeds on the premise that "Everything in him [Dostoyevski] is personal, that is to say, subjective, even during his most profound immersion in an era" and "In the final analysis, all the literary qualities in a writer come down to his human qualities".(2)

One must add that Bursov's discussion of these human qualities in Dostoyevski, generally, does not rise above the level of writing found in less serious women's journals. He suggests, without convincing evidence, that the complexity of Dostoyevski is traceable ultimately to his love-hate relationship with his father; he raises the interesting and valid point that Dostoyevski, like Tolstoi, was conscious of the moral force of his art but does not seriously analyse the ethical content of Dostoyevski's work at all. Finally Bursov's assessment of Dostoyevski is blinkered by his own partisan pre-judgements - he makes a great point of the fact that Dostoyevski was a child of the capitalist era and therefore had to feel guilty about aspects of this era as if he were personally responsible for them.

Generally Soviet critics' fairly unprofound treatment of Dostoyevski at the psychological level has two consequences -

(1) It is entitled: "Lichnost' Dostoyevskogo" (The Personality of Dostoyevski) and was published in three issues of Zvezda over the years 1969-72.

(2) Cited from Zvezda No.12, 1970, p.89. The passage is taken from the second part of Bursov's work, entitled "Den'gi i vzdokhnoveniye" (Money and Inspiration), pp.85-201, op. cit

one bad, the other good. The good consequence is that avoidance of too close a focus on the Dostoyevskian psyche has prevented the bias of the sort that enters Mikhailovski's work. The Dostoyevski Mikhailovski saw became, ultimately, a creation of Mikhailovski's mind; and the critic's obsession with and clear dislike of Dostoyevski the man distorted his picture of Dostoyevski's art. On the other hand, Soviet criticism does not exhibit the depth and insights of, say, Merezhkovski, Rozanov or, more recently, in the West, George Steiner in their discussion of psychological elements in Dostoyevski - a discussion that, amongst other things, seeks to compare Dostoyevski's artistic technique with Tolstoi's and explain the differences partly in terms of personality differences. (1)

Soviet criticism is more plausible and substantial when it deals with the moral content of Dostoyevski's art. In this respect it is being true to the traditions of much Russian criticism from Belinski onwards; it is also tapping a strong and well-developed theme in Soviet aesthetics itself - that of the moral power of art and of the various ways by which moral sentiments are expressed and perceived in art.

As a moral figure and an artist Dostoyevski offers much food for thought. If anything is uniform in this writer's work it is his consistent interest in questions of conscience and values, defined more specifically in terms of beliefs that will explain the world and provide a code of conduct for life in it. So-called "philosophical" discussion in Dostoyevski,

(1) Cf. Merezhkovski's Tolstoi i Dostoyevski, Mir iskusstva, 1901; and Steiner's Tolstoi or Dostoyevski: An Essay in Contrast, Faber and Faber, London, 1960.

whether in his novels or elsewhere, thus has a strong ethical overtone. In Zapiski iz podpolya, the Underground Man concludes that life has no meaning and cannot, therefore, (contrary to the view of Utopian socialists) be restructured or (contrary to the assumptions of conventional morality) be lived according to a set of moral norms or conventions. Raskolnikov in Prestupleniye i nakazaniye believes that humanity is divided between the Napoleons who are the source of all progress and are above the law, and the herd who are beneath them. He concludes he is a Napoleon and therefore justified in committing murder to achieve his ends - he cannot be shackled by conventional morality. In Brat'ya Karamazovy, Ivan seeks a morality of freedom and compassion that will plausibly explain the world - he cannot find it in religion and the idea of a benign divinity, because of the problem of theodicy and needless suffering; and clearly he is unhappy with theocratic totalitarianism - a kingdom of God without God - suggested by the Grand Inquisitor in a famous passage.

Other examples of similar ideas and philosophies are found in his novels - in particular in Besy (cf. Shatov and Kirillov). Of course, many of them did not represent final solutions to life for Dostoyevski; many indeed were clearly alien to him. But their exposition can be viewed, overall, in the context of Dostoyevski's own tormented search for a system of ideas which would explain the world fully to him. To some critics, this was the tragedy of Dostoyevski, a tragedy, in part, aggravated by the "tragic conflicts" of his era and one that made him adopt the roman-tragediya as the vehicle

for his more successful works. (1)

It should be made clear here that most Soviet critics believe that the moral dimension in Dostoyevski, expressed partly in the idea of a moral search, is not unrelated to "social factors", but that it has a definite spetsifika and importance of its own. This moral search, as we know, led Dostoyevski to embrace the socialist ideas of Fourier and the Christian socialist ideas of Lamennais in the 1840's; the conservative ideas of the pochvenniki (relating to the intrinsic values of the Russian soil and byt) in the early 1860's; and finally the ideas of Christian Russia in the 1870's - ideas which were influenced by the thinking of Pobedonostsev and official circles and which Dostoyevski developed into a philosophy of "essentially Russian humility" that had certain quasi-socialistic, anarchistic and often chauvinistic overtones. Even so, these latter ideas were not totally embraced. In a letter to Pobedonostsev of 1879, Dostoyevski queried whether the defence of these ideas (in the testament of Father Zossima in Brat'ya Karamozovy, for example,) would be convincing; in another letter whether Christ really was the Truth and the Way of the Scriptures. (2)

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(1) Cf. "The original nature of the conflicts worked out by Dostoyevski bears the imprint of the particular features of his philosophy, and of objectively tragic conditions". V.I. Etov: "O khudozhestvennom svoyeobrazii sotsial'no - filosofskogo romana Dostoyevskogo" (On the Artistic Originality of Dostoyevski's Social-Philosophical Novel), p.342 of U. Gural'nik et al. (eds.): Dostoyevski - khudozhnik i myslitel', Goslitizdat, Moscow, 1972.

(2) These remarks are to be found in the four-volume edition of Dostoyevski's letters brought out in the Soviet Union between 1928 and 1959 by Goslitizdat (and its predecessor - Giz - the State Publishing House). See Vol. IV, p.109 and Vol.I, p.142, respectively.

Soviet examination of Dostoyevski's search for an ethic and philosophy that would ultimately satisfy him varies in its tone and scope. At one level - the lowest - there is an attempt to "partisanly reduce" Dostoyevski's moral ideas, to discuss them in terms reminiscent of those used in the instrumentalist/partisan stream of Soviet discussion on art and morality. Like this stream itself, this is clearly a minority approach and is found, typically, in the work of Yermilov. To this critic, the ethic of Dostoyevski is primarily that of the petit-bourgeois. While this does not match exactly that of his character Raskolnikov, the problems of the Raskolnikov ethic might apply to Dostoyevski himself:

> The revelation that a decent way out of the impasse [of Raskolnikov's ideas] cannot be found if mankind remains in fact and spirit within the framework of capitalism, forms the objective content of the novel. (1)

Yermilov sees little complexity in Dostoyevski's ideas and accepts the line that his ethic can be stereotyped according to its class origin. A similar approach and tone is evident at times in another stream of Soviet criticism, but for different reasons; certain Soviet critics examine the ethical ideas of Dostoyevski to discover the extent to which they can or cannot be reduced to a central set of beliefs defined in terms of a "consistent, humanistic ethic". Soviet criticism here reflects very much the ideas and values of Soviet discussion of humanism generally. As a result, Soviet writing on Dostoyevski's humanism tends not to be very specific, and is wedded to such phrases as "the affirmation of man", "truth and sincerity", and the "evil of suffering". It can also be

(1) Yermilov, op. cit. p.92.

said to develop along three lines. There is Yermilov's partisan and reductionist view that Dostoyevski's reactionary ideas, unfortunate personality and class milieu generally did not make him humanistic by inclination or temperament certainly after 1848, and that the humanistic content in his work is derived purely from the portrait of human suffering, which Dostoyevski gives the reader but which he does not intend to use as an illustration for some humanistic theme, in Yermilov's view. V.I. Etov, in a more sophisticated way admittedly, re-echoes this view when he speaks of the "unilinear development" of Dostoyevski's work from the social ideas of his youth to the obscurantist philosophy of his declining years. In other words, for Etov, the writer's humanism was diluted and rendered ineffective early on and that as a result Dostoyevski's work has little moral interest for us. (1)

The second line developed by such critics as M. Gus and V. Kirpotin argues that there is no discontinuity between the early and the later Dostoyevski, no contradiction between a humane artistic genius and a reactionary thinker. These critics, implicitly at least, attack the "class-reductionist" (and crudely partisan) approach to Dostoyevski. They stress that there were contradictions within Dostoyevski, viewed as a complex whole (where, incidentally, Dostoyevski the writer on social-political matters and Dostoyevski the artist cannot usefully be distinguished); but that this "complex whole" retained a solidly humanistic core throughout and is thus of interest to us from the ethical point of view. As

(1) See the introductory pages of his Dostoyevski: ocherk tvorchestva for an exposition of this view.

Gus wrote, comparing Gogol' and Dostoyevski:

> The essence of the tragedy of ... Gogol' and Dostoyevski lay not in a contradiction between their creative work and their world view, but in a contradiction within their creative work and within their world view. (1)

If there were "departures from humanism" in his great novels, these were caused by the need to give an objective portrait of the "immature petit-bourgeois level" of the revolutionary movement (Gus' view of Besy) or by religious obscurantism. For those who deny that Dostoyevski had humanistic instincts, these critics point to the portraits of suffering in the novels - Sonya Marmaledova in Prestuplenive i nakazanive, the description of the consumptive Swiss girl, Marie, in Idiot, the portraits of Dmitri, Alyosha and the mal'chiki in Brat'ya Karamazovy. Such portraits are held to be evidence of Dostoyevski's basic compassion for people and their vividness is a measure of his anger at human suffering. Such anger is also reflected in Dostoyevski's strictures against the capitalist, entrepreneurial mentality in his novels and in his correspondence.

A further extension of this approach, evident in the work of B.S. Meilakh and at times in Gus,(2) holds that even the reactionary ideas of Dostoyevski were, in fact, a partial source of his humanism and that there was no basic antipathy between the two. (The "reactionary ideas" are in fact shown to be more complex than usually believed.) In some cases, in the work of Bursov for example, (3) a kind of partisanship in

(1) M. Gus: Idei i obrazy F.M. Dostoyevskogo (The Ideas and Images of F.M. Dostoyevski), Goslitizdat, Moscow, 1962, p.4.

(2) For Gus' discussion on this point, see in particular Idei i obrazy F.M. Dostoyevskogo, p.490 et seq. For that of Meilakh, see his "O khudozhestvennom myshlenii Dostoyevskogo" (VL, No.1, 1972) passim.

(3) Cf. B. Bursov: "Dostoyevski i modernizm" (Dostoyevski and Modernism) Zvezda, No.8, 1965, pp.175-193.

reverse operates - of the sort that has dominated official attitudes to Dostoyevski since the early 1960's. Dostoyevski's ideas must be "claimed" for the cause of the revolution, and not left to its adversaries - variously described as 'the camp of reaction', 'modernism' and so on. The humanistic, progressive core of Dostoyevski's work must be emphasised and the undeniably reactionary elements of the man re-examined. This attitude is evident in articles included in the anniversary sborniki put out on Dostoyevski in 1971-72 - such as, for example, U. Gural'nik et al. (eds.): Dostoyevski: khudozhnik i myslitel' (Dostoyevski: Artist and Thinker). Thus M. Gus sets out to show that Dostoyevski's defence of conservative values, in his articles in the journals Vremya and Epokha from 1861 to 1865 and later in his Dnevnik pisatelya was aimed at facilitating a "moral transformation" in Russian life. Dostoyevski's ideas "supported the dark and deep democratic spirit of the muzhik, his striving to attain happiness on earth, not in heaven"(1). All this, at least, was to the writer's credit. It contrasted favourably with the cynical and unpleasant conservatism of Katkov and Pobedonostsev, even if it fell far short of what was objectively required for Russia. In this latter connection, Gus contrasts Dostoyevski's critique of the Russian obshchina (peasant commune) with Marx's. (2)

(1) Gus, op. cit., p.496.

(2) Dostoyevski showed considerable enthusiasm for the frugality, humility and communal spirit of the Russian obshchina. Marx in his 1881 letter to Vera Zasulich gave a very partisan critique of the same phenomenon, Gus notes. Considering the place of this institution in the revolutionary movement, Marx came to the conclusion that it could, by itself, be the basis of social transformation in Russia, provided it rid itself of those "obscurantist" elements in it that Dostoyevski praised. Russia, Marx further concluded, would not, itself, need to develop an advanced proletariat to effect revolutionary chang though clearly the obshchina would be helped in its revolutionary task by proletarian successes elsewhere. In short, for Dostoyevski, the obshchina served as a bastion

(Footnote (2) continued on page 436).

More important, perhaps, is B.S. Meilakh's critique of Dostoyevski's religious beliefs and their relationship to his humanism. His critique rests on the more sophisticated Soviet critique of religion generally. This holds, as we have seen, that while organised religions generally cannot be compared in their content and intentions to humanist philosophies and to aesthetic activity, certain religious feelings and states of mind do draw upon or parallel such human emotions as charity, compassion and dignity particularly when expressed through the medium of aesthetic activity. Meilakh holds that where in Dostoyevski's work the humanistic and altruistic elements of religion are able to "shine through" the fetish of religious doctrine, to become embodied in a vivid image (such as in Ivan's attack on theodicy in Pro and Contra, a part of Brat'ya Karamozovy), the humanism of Dostoyevski comes through clearly. However, where the dogmatic and superstitious elements of (organised) religion are uppermost as in Father Zossima's testament in the same novel, it clearly does not. In other words, Meilakh is saying that any humanistic elements in Dostoyevski's religious ideas will only be evident if presented graphically in the aesthetic mode (the aesthetic and the humanistic being so closely related). Meilakh makes the additional (valid) point that Dostoyevski's ideas were not dogmas (fetishes) for him but something to provide spiritual guidance, and valid only while they were believed in. (Dostoyevski's basic humanism was thus not imprisoned and obscured by constantly held religious doctrines but given

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(Footnote (2) continued from previous page).

of the status quo: for Marx it was the vehicle for rapid social change. Gus adds in all seriousness that Dostoyevski might have come around to Marx's view, had he resolved the conflicts within himself and within society, on a "socialist basis".

scope by a certain scepticism in the author.) From this Meilakh can conclude that Dostoyevski was not an unwavering apologist for Pobedonostsev and official circles throughout the 1870's and that Brat'ya Karamazovy was not a straight-out defence of Russian Orthodoxy. To back up his view, Meilakh notes that after Dostoyevski's death official circles appeared to have increasing doubts about Dostoyevski's religious ideas and the value of his work as religious propaganda. Thus in 1886, the chief censor Kossovich forbade the printing of sections of Brat'ya Karamazovy (notably the one entitled Russki inok) on the grounds that the quasi-socialist and mystical content of the novel's religious ideas would be harmful to the lower classes. (1) Writing in issue No. 9 of the journal Vera i razum for 1892, the theologian M. Linitski in an article "Izyashchnaya literatura i filosofia" (Belles-lettres and Philosophy) drew attention to and criticised the "negative and doubting" side of Dostoyevski's religious thinking. (2)

Meilakh's position, incidentally, contrasts with that of Yermilov, who not merely condemns Dostoyevski's religious ideas outright (as religious ideas), but implies that the most "religious" of Dostoyevski's novels - Brat'ya Karamazovy - is also his worst.

In contrast to the above lines of approach on the moral/ethical aspect of Dostoyevski there is yet another one. This might be labelled as something approximating to the

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(1) and (2) These details are noted by Meilakh, op. cit. pp. 103-104.

'personalist' approach evident in wider Soviet discussion of art and morality. Its leading proponent appears to be M. Gural'nik. (1) He proceeds from the premise that, first, it is wrong to sit in judgement on Dostoyevski, to damn or approve him to the extent that he is seen to approach or not approach an ideal like humanism; (2) secondly that Dostoyevski was a writer of conscience, concerned with moral decisions and for finding a code of ethics that would satisfy himself alone. It is his search that should interest us, not whether he had at any one time the right answers. Thirdly, the ideas of a Raskolnikov may be repugnant to us, but they are interesting because they raise fundamental questions of ethics, like the question of free-will, absolute freedom and so on; and not because they can be "sociologically reduced" to a particular period or class milieu.

While he is fully aware that no Soviet criticism of Dostoyevski can ignore the question of what is valuable and what is harmful ideologically in Dostoyevski, Gural'nik does state that specific discussion on moral and ethical questions in Dostoyevski would be productive of less routine commentary if it followed up the points he makes. In this way, furthermore, Soviet critics would be less concerned to <u>assess</u> the moral impact and message of Dostoyevski's art. Instead, Soviet critics should seek to understand whether Dostoyevski is in fact sufficiently one-sided a figure to be regarded as evoking either favourable or unfavourable moral responses.

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(1) Cf. M. Gural'nik: "Dostoyevski i sovremennost': pisatel', yego naslediye i issledovateli".

(2) "Soviet literary science does not occupy the role of 'prosecutor' or 'advocate' for genius: a great artist does not lack defence. His 'justification' is in his very creative ability, in that truth which he has been able to tell to his contemporaries and succeeding generations". <u>Ibid</u>., p.253. (<u>NM</u>, No.8, 1971.)

Before leaving the discussion, one might draw attention to an aspect of Dostoyevski's humanism not specifically touched on by Soviet critics - that is the question of whether it was a 'humanism of principles' or a 'humanism of ideals'. One can gauge from a reading of Soviet critics how they might answer this question, even if they do not put it in the first place, and even further, if the distinction is not one that would greatly concern them, certainly the more doctrinaire critics. The critic B.S. Meilakh (that is, when he is discussing the humanism of Dostoyevski's religious ideas presented in the artistic mode - as characters and not as "dead ideas"), V. Kirpotin and M. Gus (cf. pp.433, 434 supra) could be said to emphasise in effect that the humanism of Dostoyevski was primarily a 'humanism of principles' - that is, Dostoyevski loved humanity because of the intrinsic worth and dignity of human beings, and anything which impaired this dignity like poverty or suffering provoked his ire and/or compassion (cf. the tone and vividness of Ivan's arguments against theodicy in Brat'ya Karamazovy which reflect this type of humanism).

Other Soviet critics, both the hostile, partisan ones like V. Yermilov and the favourably disposed, partisan ones like those contributing to the Gural'nik compilation (cf. p.435) could be said to regard Dostoyevski's humanism in instrumentalist terms - that is as a 'humanism of ideals'. In other words for these critics such things as the portrayal of suffering were emphasised by Dostoyevski because they served some wider goal (the "perverse Christian utopianism" and the cult of smireniye, in the case of the hostile critics

or the coming of a nobler social order 'obviously not for Dostoyevski Communism but something which the well-disposed partisan critic does not consider hostile to it.)

It would not be inaccurate, looking at the evidence in his works and given how complex a personality and moral figure he was to say that both types of humanism exist in Dostoyevski and that Soviet critics could be said to acknowledge - implicitly - the presence of one or the other type in Dostoyevski depending on their critical views and disposition. Furthermore, there is a case for accepting the view, similar to the point made by B.S. Meilakh, that a 'humanism of principles' is more suitable for treatment in the aesthetic mode than is a 'humanism of ideals', not the least because the subject of the former is people treated as people and not simply to illustrate some ulterior theme. In addition it has been more than once stressed by Dostoyevski scholars, in the West and in the U.S.S.R. that Dostoyevski the writer can descend very quickly to Dostoyevski the publicist and pamphleteer once his humanism becomes too closely linked with his religious, political and social ideas, once it becomes a 'humanism of ideals'. There can be no doubt which evokes the stronger response from readers as art - the humanism expressed through the portrait of Sonya Marmaledov or the humanism which might be said to be present in the ideas of Father Zossima or in those of the "reformed" Raskolnikov at the end of Prestuplenive i nakazanive. This in itself, it might be added, is an interesting reflection on the sincerity, strength, indeed superiority, morally, of a 'humanism of principles' as opposed to one based on ideals.

The preceding discussion has concentrated on what might be called Soviet extra-aesthetic criticism of Dostoyevski. We shall now turn to examine Soviet discussion that is more closely related to questions of aesthetics and artistic technique. Some of this discussion is heavily overlaid with sociological and psychological analysis, of course, but some of it is not.

A central theme in Soviet aesthetics and criticism, we have seen, is the distinctiveness of the aesthetic and of art. The aesthetic embodies the beautiful and the harmonious. It is uplifting, pure and somehow morally excellent and beneficial because it stimulates a sense of community and nobility in man. (And to this extent it reinforces the moral dimension of Dostoyevski's work.) There is a significant stream in Soviet criticism of Dostoyevski, represented by the critics Friedlander, Meilakh, Kirpotin and others which holds that a unifying force in Dostoyevski's work is his sense of the aesthetic treated very much as a separate idea, as well as an attribute of art. For example, Friedlander(1) considers that behind Dostoyevski's idea of a Christian and Russian harmonious world-order, and his general search for a unifying principle to life, behind all the moods of doubt and mental self-flagellation in the man himself and what can be called the psychic chaos or nadryvy of his main characters, lay a vision that was primarily aesthetic and one that naturally needed to

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(1) Cf. G.M. Friedlander: "Estetika F.M. Dostoyevskogo" (The Aesthetics of F.M. Dostoyevski), VF, No.11, 1971, pp.91-102. In his earlier work "Realizm F.M. Dostoyevskogo", Friedlander appeared to waver between asserting that an aesthetic vision was an "inbuilt component" of the Dostoyevskian mirovozzrenive and claiming that it only emerged in the course of his art, as if extraneous to Dostoyevski the man and thinker.

be translated into art rather than to be expounded in learned articles. Meilakh himself quotes Dostoyevski's remark:

> Beauty is present in everything healthy ... it is harmony. In it is a guarantee of tranquility ... the demand for beauty grows more when man is out of harmony with reality. (1)

While Meilakh believes that this aesthetic vision, in the final analysis, did not overcome the nadryvy in Dostoyevski himself, indeed was obscured by them, Friedlander and Kirpotin take the line that the aesthetic vision of Dostoyevski stands out all the more sharply when contrasted with the doubts and disharmony of Dostoyevski the man and Dostoyevski's work. To them the aesthetic is less a goal or vision that Dostoyevski strives to achieve in the course of his whole work than an ingredient of his art which was present from the beginning. The continual contrast between the aesthetic and non-aesthetic, their juxtaposition and tension constitutes yet another contradiction in Dostoyevski and one which Kirpotin, following to some extent the critique of Vyacheslav Ivanov (2) calls the tragediya in Dostoyevski. Kirpotin in this respect is quite illuminating, particularly when he compares Dostoyevski's

(1) Cited in B. Meilakh (ed.): Talant pisatelya i protsessy tvorchestva, p.210.

(2) The idea that "tragic content" made Dostoyevski refine a special form called the roman-tragediya was first advanced by Vyacheslav Ivanov in an article entitled "Dostoyevski i roman-tragediya," Russkaya mysl', Nos. 5 and 6, 1911. The form was developed, Ivanov concluded, from Greek and later (Shakespearian) tragic forms. Dostoyevski also built on developments in the genre of the Russian tragic novel brought about by both Pushkin and Gogol. Kirpotin writes: "Dostoyevski translated the tragic conflict, already found in Pushkin, into a prose narrative that had been worked out in the writings of Gogol and the Natural School. He freed the general principles against which ... the hero struggles, from symbolic personification. He made the Persona (litso) the centre of the narrative ... The result is what we call the roman-tragediya of Dostoyevski". Cited from the sbornik Dostoyevski i russkiye pisateli, p.75.

aesthetic vision with that of Gogol and examines the tragic tension that underlay both writers' work.

At a cruder level than all this is, of course, the denial that an aesthetic vision ever was present in Dostoyevski himself or the view that, if it was, it was totally supplanted by his reactionary ideas. This theme is present throughout the work of Vermilov and most Stalinist Dostoyevski scholarship. It manifests itself in the assertion that the aesthetic sense or feel in Dostoyevski's work comes out despite its author, through the great and illuminating power of art itself, as if this art is something over which its creator has no control, which transcends his intentions and foibles as a result of the innate goodness and nobility of the aesthetic. As far as the contemporary official line on Dostoyevski is concerned, such an approach is - rightly - acknowledged to be too crude and implausible by half. (It is also so acknowledged in relation to Balzac and other great, if semi-reactionary writers, as we have seen.) The rigid distinction between the artistic effect of Dostoyevski's work and his ideas in general implies, for these critics, a fundamental divorce between form and content. It is indeed on this latter premise that so much of the quite scholarly and competent Soviet studies of Dostoyevski's artistry proceeds. As one of the better specialists in this field, N. Chirkov, writes:

> The artist's system of ideas and their living movement cannot be analysed without looking deeply at the artistic form of his works, his style. (1)

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(1) Chirkov, op. cit., p.3.

In much of what it contributes to our understanding of Dostoyevski, Soviet scholarship is - necessarily - indistinguishable from that of Western critics. Writers like Meilakh, Chirkov, Pospelov and Friedlander concentrate on defining the essential features of Dostoyevski's realism and his peculiarities as a writer. They highlight the good and bad features of his artistry, often citing Dostoyevski's own references to his techniques of writing and to his own weaknesses. The distinctive features of Dostoyevski's art are well known - there is, for example, his highly concentrated narration, his telescoping of events and action into a short interval of time, his use of suspense and coincidence, techniques which clearly show the influence of what Chirkov calls the detektivno-avantyurny genre of writing. Such a genre was practised by such writers as Poe, Sue and Dickens but in Dostoyevski it bore the distinctive qualities of the Russian author himself - his shrill, often inchoate and prolix prose style, his efforts to embody spiritual and psychic conflicts (often through a conflict of ideas and beliefs, in addition to physical conflict and violence). All Soviet critics indeed are agreed that a hallmark of Dostoyevski's realism was this ability to describe graphically psychological states and conditions, to trace interlocking human consciousnesses and to make the latter often the embodiment of ideas. They are also agreed that the ideas can only be successful as art provided, as we have seen earlier, they are presented in unschematic form. With Dostoyevski, it is agreed, they usually are; the failures such as the epilogue and Raskolnikov's "conversion" in Prestupleniye i nakazaniye, the testament of Father Zossima in Brat'ya Karamozovy, are massively outweighed by the successes. Soviet critics do disagree, however, on the nature of Dostoyevski's

"psychological realism" and the way its demands have moulded his artistic technique. The commonest view and, so far as one can judge an orthodox view, is that:

> The boiling of passions amongst the heroes [of Dostoyevski's novel] reflects not their independence but a passionate search for and a tenacious knowledge of the truth by the author himself. (1)

In other words, Dostoyevski's characters represent different aspects of Dostoyevski's personality - either one or more than one, in combinations that may change in the course of the novel. The second approach, evident in the work of Chirkov and Friedlander, has a more sociological bias. The variety and complexity of Dostoyevski's portraits merely reflect the complexity and variety of types in Russian society of the time, in accordance with what are basically realistic techniques, and ones "which do not reflect one-sided, rationalistic formulae in the understanding of spiritual processes". (2) The question of the degree of the author's connection with character is judged as less important than the question of the vividness and the authenticity of these characters. In this respect, writers like Chirkov provide quite useful work in their analysis of the techniques of Dostoyevski's characterisations. These include the delineation of the "spiritual essence" of characters, the reproduction of this essence by both expressionistic and impressionistic methods, the heightening of tension in character portrayal by revelation of the ambiguities in a character - what Chirkov

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(1) Etov, op. cit., p.35.

(2) Chirkov, op. cit., p.78.

calls the svetoten' (chiaroscuro) of a person like Svidrigailov - or the disclosure of coincidences and bizarre happenings, not initially made clear, in the characters' past life.

Separate from both these approaches, but closer to the second than to the first, is the work of M. Bakhtin. Many of Bakhtin's ideas are influenced by the work of other Soviet scholars of the time - Leonid Grossman's Stil' Dostoyevskogo (Dostoyevski's Style, 1925) and B.M. Engelhardt's Ideologicheski roman (The Ideological Novel, 1928) and also by formalist criticism (though Bakhtin himself denies any link between his work and theirs).

Bakhtin, we have stated, was aware that Dostoyevski aimed to portray psychic and spiritual conflict in his work. Bakhtin claims that, to this end, Dostoyevski refined and developed the techniques of what he (Bakhtin) calls the polyphonic novel, techniques that were evident in earlier literatures - in the satires of Menippus, in the feudal "carnival burlesques" that inspired parts of Don Quixote, for example. The many sounds (or "battle of voices") in Dostoyevski's novels were the voices of individual characters, which were deliberately sustained by their creator as independent entities for artistic ends and not simply as illustrations of some aspect of his own psyche. The fact that the polyphony was so brilliantly sustained, testifies in Bakhtin's eyes, to Dostoyevski's success as an artist and only secondarily to the depth and range of his "psychological insight". Bakhtin writes that

Dostoyevski's novels ...

> are built not as the sum total of a single consciousness, objectively drawing into itself other consciousness, but as the sum total of the interactions of several consciousnesses none of which becomes from the beginning to end the object of another. This interaction gives no basis for objectifying all events according to the usual monologic model of a novel . (1)

Bakhtin further argues that in the polyphonic novel, the author becomes increasingly an orchestrator of voices, as these voices develop, intermesh with others and acquire a logic and momentum of their own:

> Each creative talent is defined by its object ... therefore it creates nothing ... but merely uncovers what is given in the object itself . (2)

Bakhtin, to illuminate his thesis further, contrasts the polyphony of Dostoyevski with the seemingly variegated structure of Tolstoi's great novels. In the latter the great multitude of characters and actors, in fact, are firmly bound up with (unified by) the personality and intentions of the author. Bakhtin's work, thought-provoking and well-researched though it is, has drawn some criticism from Soviet critics - notably L. Shubin and G.V. Pospelov. (3) The latter

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(1) Bakhtin, op. cit., pp.23-24. Bakhtin, subsequently, in a singularly sensitive and analytical piece of criticism examines the 'polyphonic' language of Dostoyevski, the different levels at which it operates, depending on whether one character is communicating directly with another, describing him to a third, or describing the third to him, etc

(2) Ibid., p.87.

(3) Cf. L. Shubin: "Gumanizm Dostoyevskogo i dostoyevshchina" (The Humanism of Dostoyevski and Dostoyevskyism), VL, No.1, 1965, pp.78-94; and G.V. Pospelov: "Preuvelicheniya ot uvlecheniya" (Exaggerations from Enthusiasm), VL, No.1, 1965, pp.95-108.

attack his writing on the grounds that it downgrades the unity of Dostoyevski's work (provided in part by its humanism) and ignores the extent to which the author's characters represent emanations or aspects of himself. Secondly they say that it presupposes that polyphony is always present and always working successfully in Dostoyevski's novels, and that it presents the polyphony thesis too dogmatically. To use Pospelov's phrase, Bakhtin has written "a homophonic book on the polyphonic novel". (1)

To this writer, some of these criticisms of Bakhtin's approach are valid. In general terms, it is always dangerous to interpret a writer as complex as Dostoyevski according to a single critical thesis - be it a formalist, Marxist or whatever. However, Bakhtin's work provides a useful corrective to those Soviet critics who seek to categorise Dostoyevski's art, merely as conventional (19th century) Russian realism with a strong element of psychologising added. It should be quite evident that the realism of Dostoyevski and of his "types" is of a totally different order from that of Turgenev and Tolstoi, for example. The difference lies partly in Dostoyevski's artistic techniques (the much greater emphasis on the fantastic, bizarre, coincidental, etc.) and in his characters. Outwardly, they seem identifiable products of Russian society of the time; but at another level, figures like Raskolnikov, Myshkin, Stavrogin et al. are something else - "spiritual essences ... easily assimilated only by a profoundly

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(1) Pospelov, op. cit., p.108.

diseased spiritual organism" to use D.S. Mirski's graphic phrase. (1) The polyphonic model helps us to understand why they have this effect - it shows us how Dostoyevski's characters seem to acquire a life and logic of their own, to run their own course like mad phantoms, unmindful of others, obsessed and self-directed. It does not, however, help us to understand their link with their creator and their general relevance to Dostoyevski's ideas . To this extent, a quasi-formalistic approach to Dostoyevski - for such Bakhtin's is - needs to be complemented by other elements of Soviet criticism to give a more balanced picture of Dostoyevski's artistry.

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Apart perhaps from Bakhtin's work on Dostoyevski, Soviet criticism of the author (since 1956) has not added much to that enormous fund of international scholarship on the man. But it does tell us quite a lot about Soviet discussion of art, reinforcing one's earlier conclusions about it. There is, for example, its evident de-ideologisation. Reading Soviet critics on Dostoyevski, we become aware of the extent to which critical dogmas, prevalent during Stalin's rule, about the writer have broken down completely and the extent to which whole areas of the writer's life and work have entered the 'systematic superstructure' of Marxist thought, to use Bochenski's model again. The dogmas include the partisan line that Dostoyevski is a simple reactionary, anathema therefore

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(1) D.S. Mirski: A History of Russian Literature, Alfred A. Knopf New York, 1958, pp.276 and 278.

to Soviet readers. Areas now open for scholarly discussion and disagreement include the nature and extent of Dostoyevski's "reaction", the nature of his psyche, its role in his art, etc.

Dostoyevski criticism also has highlighted yet again the inadequacies of certain elements in Soviet criticism generally - such as sociologism, psychologism and "partisan moralising" and shows why and where these, taken separately, are insufficient for an understanding of Dostoyevski, viewed - necessarily - as a complex whole. Critics who view Dostoyevski in this way provide more illuminating discussion of him. To view him in this way such critics, as we have seen, tend to concentrate on the theme of the moral dimension of Dostoyevski's art (not viewed partisanly) and related to it, the notion of a certain aesthetic unity (perhaps not deliberately sought by the author) in his work. Themes such as these, perhaps more than any other element in Soviet criticism, are able to explain most satisfactorily how the various levels of Dostoyevski's writing cohere, that is, the level of its objective content, the level of subjectivity and the level of art, to use Timofeyev's model. Through these themes, furthermore, and through, as we have seen, the non-Marxist elements they draw upon, Soviet critics are able to avoid the pitfalls that a purely 'materialist' and partisan critique of Dostoyevski would provide.

XII. CONCLUSION

In reviewing Soviet thinking on art, one is struck by the extent to which many Soviet critics examine what art has to do, rather than what it is. There is little Soviet discussion similar to that found, say, in Richard Wollheim's Art and Its Objects (Penguin, 1970) concerning the "ontological status" of a work of art. The questions posed in such discussion are rarely raised by Soviet thinkers. Amongst these are, broadly, the following: (i) does the "artistic quality" of art derive primarily from the ability of the finished work of art itself to reflect completely the physical presence (and beauty) of natural objects? (ii) does it possess this ability? (iii) if it does not, can one say that such quality derives more from the creator and/or percipient themselves, from what the one perceives and expresses about reality and from what the other reads into the artistic perception once expressed. (The latter line of thought is held, with qualifications and modifications, by such Western aestheticians as Croce and Collingwood).

Soviet theorists would, of course, say that they answer these questions, even if they do not labour the asking of them. For them the artistic quality of art derives primarily from the artist's reflection of reality and from his reflection of certain desiderata in that reality, though obviously in the process of reflection the artist and - what is sometimes important - the percipient contribute something to the final artistic whole. Here, Soviet critics see no difficulty in conflating "both sides of the ontological problem", as it were - in saying on the one hand that the work of art (the artistic

"reflection") itself is the (self-contained) source of its artistry and, on the other, that the artistry is somehow enriched by our own perceptions of the physical work, and by the artist's final touches to it. And they can do this because the ontological question is less important to them than that of what art does and expresses.

Soviet discussion on this latter theme - in its orthodox variant certainly - is characterised by a certain rigidity and crudity of thought. Those elements of the Marxist-Leninist "core" of Soviet aesthetics - theory of reflection, histomat, partiinost', etc. are used to buttress a view of art that is instrumentalist, macrocosmic and, in large measure, philistine. Art is seen as serving specific social and political interests down through the ages. An examination of the internal coherence and artistry of specific works of art - what might be called a microcosmic approach - is rejected in favour of an examination of artistic content in terms of an explanation and evaluation of specific socio-political content.

Many Soviet critics (grouped together in this study under the label, 'professional') do not obviously take this approach. They try to give some account of the spetsifika of art. This is a term that recurs in their work and while it does not lead them to discuss the finer points of the ontology of art, it does take them into issues where the crude application of Marxist-Leninist principles to aesthetic activity will not suffice. Amongst these are the theory of beauty (and of the aesthetic generally), the problem of the moral dimension of

art, and, in theory of literature, the question of a suitable model to explain literary phenomena. These concerns cause these theorists to approach socio-historical content as an important, but not as the necessary and sufficient ingredient of artistic work. In the theory of beauty, for example, the category of Absolute Beauty leads an aesthetician like Vanslov to caution against too crude an evaluation of a poetic phenomenon like the work of Fet, against a "reductionist histomat explanation of his poetry as simply the product of a declining and morally confused gentry. The phenomenon of the aesthetic itself, we learn from Soviet Dostoyevski criticism, can be seen, along with that of the moral, to give a certain consistency and unity (integrity) to Dostoyevski's work, viewed as a whole, despite the changing social concerns of its author at various stages in his life and work.

Discussion of the moral and personal in art likewise forces professional Soviet critics to accept the view that for some types of art, and for certain elements in art, questions of socio-political content - and the materialist explanation of art - become irrelevant. In theory of literature, proponents of a 'typological' model of literature show that in some genres of art, an internal dynamic operates which is dictated by artistic demands and often shown to be exogenous to socio-historical changes. (Soviet discussion makes the same point in relation to the phenomenon of culture).

The existence of discussion along these lines has introduced a number of strains and differences into Soviet discussion of art. These strains, it has been argued, are not

as severe as those existing in Soviet artistic practice (where a Solzhenitsyn was to be found alongside socialist realist hacks) or in wider, Soviet intellectual discussion where Party ideologues exist alongside samizdat writers in varying degrees opposed to Marxism-Leninism. However, such strains in Soviet discussion of art result, in part, from the presence of elements outside the Marxist-Leninist canon - from "old-fashioned", classical aesthetics (in some Soviet notions of and in the general Soviet stress on the beautiful), from Belinski and his tradition (in the emphasis on the moral dimension of art), from the work of Russian and non-Russian formalist/structuralist critics (in the discussion of artistic form, etc.). But they have also come in large measure from conflicting strains within Marxism-Leninism itself - and in particular from Soviet epistemology and the "two Lenins" who have influenced it - the latter Lenin who emphasised the scope and importance of the creative consciousness in cognitive activities; and the earlier one who did not.

Soviet aesthetics, it can be argued, by and large does not offer us particularly interesting or novel insight into the nature of art or of particular authors (Dostoyevski is an example). But it is of interest, both to non-Marxist (Western) critics and in terms of Marxist-Leninist aesthetics generally, to the extent that it does exhibit the strains referred to above. These strains highlight yet again the limitations of the 'materialist' explanation and evaluation of art, show the extent to which socio-historical categories cannot provide a necessary and sufficient explanation of aesthetic phenomena;

and thus draw to our attention in what ways the life of art is not synonymous with that of society. This, in turn, clarifies our understanding of the spetsifika of art, albeit in ways that are not new or original.

It should be mentioned that for many Soviet critics these tensions are minimised to the extent that they regard their critical work as "amplifying" the Marxist explanation of art rather than showing its limitations. They are able to accept the Marxist-Leninist materialist foundations and build on it a fairly sophisticated critical superstructure (incorporating some non-Marxist elements). The work of many 'social' aestheticians, in particular Vanslov, bears witness to this fact.

For others however, the process of 'amplification' can lead to conflict with the foundations and in the end, historat principles serve to curb this amplification. This we notice in particular in Timofeyev's "qualified" socio-historical model of literature, where the qualification cannot be sufficiently extended to give a satisfactory explanation of the art of Picasso - a 'partisan' artist who does not "obey" the model and employ partisan (i.e. socialist realist) artistic techniques. Another example of this comes out in Soviet discussion of the moral and art, especially in V. Tolstykh's compilation; while Soviet aestheticians like Tolstykh emphasise that the aesthetic is an important and distinctive moral force, they cannot bring themselves to say that it represents a higher morality, and one free of Communist content.

All this has meant that while aesthetic categories cannot, in much Soviet discussion, be reduced to socio-historical ones, they cannot be completely divorced from them either. Thus, in large measure, Soviet aestheticians have been preoccupied with maintaining an (often uneasy) balance between them - all the while emphasising, often tiresomely - the spetsifika of art lest the balance be lost.

And this situation, it might further be noted, has not widened the vision or scope of Soviet aesthetics, has not allowed Soviet thinkers to tie an examination of the spetsifika and integrity of art in with a fairly radical critique of the possibilities that dialectical and historical materialism might offer for the enrichment of Marxist-Leninist aesthetics. These possibilities have been considered, albeit from varying perspectives and with varying conclusions, by 'revisionist' (Western) Marxists like Garaudy, Arvon, Fischer, Raphael and Marcuse. (1) Soviet thinkers are not likely to emulate their

(1) The work of Garaudy and Fischer has been mentioned in Chapter VIII; for the other thinkers, see Henri Arvon: Marxist Aesthetics (trans. Helen Lane), Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1973; Max Raphael: La théorie marxiste de l'art. Proudhon, Marx, Picasso: Trois études sur la sociologie de l'art (Marxist Theory of Art ... Three Studies on the Sociology of Art), Editions Excelsior, Paris, 1935: Herbert Marcuse: Art in the One-Dimensional Society, pp.53-67 of Lee Baxandall (ed.): Radical Perspectives in the Arts.

Arvon, for example, thinks that Marxist aesthetics should examine more deeply the dialectics of art as a dynamic totality characterised by changing and never fixed relationships between form and content, "creative subjectivity" and "social objectivity" etc. in particular works. Raphael, for his part, was concerned amongst other things, that Marxist aesthetics should shed more light on the "internal" processes of art, showing in particular from an analysis of particular works how artists themselves saw their work as they created (on the assumption that it represented for many something "eternally new and unfolding"), and how far socio-economic factors determined their vision. Marcuse is concerned with the "transcendental powers" of art, although he believes that these - in traditional artistic genres at least - have been stultified in advanced capitalist ('one-dimensional') societie Marxist aesthetics, he believes, should be concerned with "rediscovering" these powers and showing how they can be harnessed to accelerate, though not to initiate, a revolutionary transformation in such societies.

efforts, as long as the political and philosophical framework of Soviet discussion, and it might be added, Soviet public tastes in art continue in their present form.

XIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bibliographical Note:

This bibliography does not and cannot, of course, claim to offer an exhaustive list of every source, Russian and non-Russian, that is relevant to this study. It does, however, offer a list of those works (both books and articles) that the present writer considers to have significant bearing on his topic in its philosophical, literary or socio-political dimensions and to which he was able to have access. For this reason, Russian works from the pre-Soviet and pre-1953 period are included, as well, of course, as those from that great corpus of writing - known as the classics of Marxism-Leninism - which clearly have influenced Soviet aesthetic and literary discussion after 1953. (Writing under all these categories is listed in either Section A or Section B of the Bibliography according to its content).

To provide some perspective, both Marxist and non-Marxist, on and a point of contrast to, Soviet treatment of aesthetic and literary problems some important Western works consulted for this study are also included in the Bibliography (Section C). Western works dealing with Soviet aesthetics or criticism and considered important for this study are also included in this Section.

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