OTAKAR ZICH: AESTHETIC AND ARTISTIC EVALUATION

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Editor's Introduction

In this important article, first published in 1917, the Czech aesthetician, musicologist, and composer Otakar Zich (1879–1934) distinguishes between two kinds of evaluation of a work of art: aesthetic evaluation and artistic evaluation. He bases this differentiation on two possible attitudes that a perceiver may have towards a work of art. The first originates solely in the perceiver's experience of the work and his or her search for a feeling of pleasure. It reflects only the subjective preferences of the individual; Zich terms the corresponding value 'relative aesthetic value'. Above the relative value of an emotional effect there is an evaluation of a higher order, which consists in 'comprehending' a work of art. It is to this evaluation that artistic value corresponds. According to Zich, however, this objective value is grounded not in the work itself, but in the distinctive 'personal value' of the artist. In artistic evaluation, the work of art is therefore evaluated as a manifestation of strong artistic individuality.

Ästhetische und künstlerische Bewertung
Der tschechische Ästhetiker, Musikwissenschaftler und Komponist Otakar Zich (1879–1934) unterscheidet in seinem 1917 veröffentlichten bedeutendem Aufsatz zweierlei Bewertung von Kunstwerken: die ästhetische und die künstlerische Bewertung. Er geht dabei von zwei unterschiedlichen Haltungen des Rezipienten gegenüber dem Kunstwerk aus. Die erste gründet ausschließlich auf dem Erleben des Rezipienten und seiner Suche nach dem Gefühl ästhetischen Wohlgefallens. Es ist Ausdruck der subjektiven Präferenzen des Einzelnen; die entsprechende Bewertung nennt Zich den „ästhetischen Wert". Höher als diese emotionale Wirkung des Kunstwerks ist eine Bewertung anzusetzen, deren Quelle das „Begreifen" des Kunstwerkes ist; ihr entspricht der künstlerische Wert des Kunstwerks. Zich zufolge hat dieser objektive Wert seine Grundlage jedoch nicht im Werk selbst, sondern im individuellen „Wert der Persönlichkeit" des Künstlers. Bei der künstlerischen Bewertung wird das Kunstwerk also als Ausdruck starker künstlerischer Individualität bewertet.

Otakar Zich was born in the town of Městec Králové, near Nymburk, Bohemia, on 25 March 1879, and died in the village of Ouběnice, near Příbram, Bohemia, on 9 July 1934. From 1897 to 1901 he read mathematics and physics at Prague University, where he also attended lectures on aesthetics by Otakar Hostinský (1847–1910), and on psychology and philosophy by František Krejčí (1854–1934). He also took a one-year university course in musical composition with Karel Stecker (1861–1918), but was otherwise self-taught as a composer. He graduated in 1901 with a dissertation on mathematics, 'O některých druzích omezených

integrálů' (On certain kinds of definite integrals). While teaching at the grammar school in Domažlice, south Bohemia, from 1903 to 1906, he began systematically to do research on folk songs and dance. This became one of the important, lasting areas of Zich's professional interest.[1] At the Faculty of Arts, Prague, in 1911, he habilitated in aesthetics with a work focusing on experimental aesthetics: 'Esthetické vnímání hudby: Psychologický rozbor na podkladě experimentálním' (The aesthetic perception of music: A psychological analysis based on experiment), the first part of which was published in instalments in *Česká mysl* (Czech thinking), and the second part in *Věstník Královské české společnosti nauk* (The bulletin of the Royal Bohemian Learned Society).[2] From 1919 to 1924 he was Professor of Philosophy and Head of the Philosophy Department at Brno. From 1924, he lectured at the Faculty of Arts, Prague, where, after the death of Hostinský in 1910, he re-established the teaching of aesthetics and the Aesthetics Department. He continually composed, in particular chamber music, attracting the most attention with his operas *Malířský nápad* (A painter's idea), *Vina* (Guilt), and *Preciézky* (with his own translation of Molière's *Les Précieuses ridicules*).

Zich's first real academic work is Esthetické vnímání hudby. In this article he combines a psychological approach with experimental research. He was persuaded of the possibilities of experimental research into aesthetic quality 'von unten' by the studies of the Leipzig aesthetician and experimental psychologist Gustav Theodor Fechner (1801–1887), which he fruitfully compared with the positivist approach of his teachers, Krejčí and Hostinský. (In the long introductory chapter, 'The Historical Dispute about the Content of Music', Zich undertakes a critical analysis of previous ideas on the relationship between music and the emotions, explaining in detail his standpoints.) Fechner, he argues, differed from Hostinský in his opinion on the composition of the aesthetic experience. Hostinský, a Herbartian, was, Zich alleges, unable to provide a convincing answer to the question of whether associated meanings that are linked to aesthetic sensation also have an aesthetic function or whether they are subjective and therefore aesthetically irrelevant; Fechner, on the other hand, insisted that all representations (mental images, *Vorstellungen*) that are regularly repeated

[1] Otakar Zich, 'Píseň a tanec "do kolečka" na Chodsku' [Circle singing and dance in Chodsko], *Český lid* 15, 18, 19 (1906, 1909, 1910); Otakar Zich, 'České lidové tance s proměnlivým taktem' [Czech folk dances with varying time signatures], *Národopisný věstník československý* 11 (1917): 6–53, 149–74, 268–311, 388–427; Otakar Zich, *Naše lidová píseň a hudba* (Prague: Ministry of National Defence, 1919).

[2] Otakar Zich, 'Esthetické vnímání hudby I' [The aesthetic perception of music I], *Česká mysl* 11 (1910): 6–22, 250–65, 330–47, 389–421; Otakar Zich, 'Esthetické vnímání hudby II' [The aesthetic perception of music II], *Věstník Královské české společnosti nauk* (1911): 1–100.

under certain conditions are components of the perceptual basis of experience. As a result, Zich decided to conduct an experiment with musical material, to determine whether differences exist between representations in connection with the quality of experiencing music. The first part of the task entailed the time-consuming testing of his hypothesis in experiments from 1908 to 1909. For this purpose he selected thematically integrated passages from the operas of Bedřich Smetana and Richard Wagner, divested them of all verbal information, and after replaying these examples for respondents he determined their psychological response to, and degree of interest in, this music. An analysis of their verbal testimonies confirmed that a certain analogy exists between particular associated representations and the structure or dynamics of a performed musical passage. Zich called this process the 'reproductive' adoption of musical impressions. The second part of the work consists in theoretical reflections on the material obtained in his experiments. A short time before, Zich had become acquainted with the work of the philosopher Johannes Volkelt (1848–1930) (*System der Ästhetik*, I, 1905), in which the author clarifies Fechner's differentiation of the representations accompanying perceptions of verbal and visual art. He terms those that are regularly repeated 'representations of meaning' (*Bedeutungsvorstellungen*). Zich applied this psychological approach to the process of musical experience, and came to the conclusion that representations of meaning are primarily musical, connected to the perception of the formation and forms of the musical material itself, which thus assist us in revealing the musically logical sense. (He did not believe that anything other than purely musical 'representations of meaning' constituted a lasting component of the aesthetic object.) It was musical material which initially helped Zich best to demonstrate the fundamental theoretical assumption that artistic thought is of a descriptive nature, though certain representations of meaning may be characterized as concepts. From here arises an antithetical process in his method – the conceptual quality may be determined also through the reverse procedure, a detailed formal analysis of a musical work.

Zich presents a synthesis of several years of study of the fundamentals of aesthetic perception and artistic work in his 'Hodnocení esthetické a umělecké' (Aesthetic and artistic evaluation),[3] a translation of which is presented here. He preferred an aesthetic relationship that originates in contact with the work of art. He engaged far less with aesthetics outside art. This also influenced his decision eventually to separate aesthetic quality from artistic, proposing that

[3] Otakar Zich, 'Hodnocení esthetické a umělecké', *Česká mysl* 16 (1917): 129–65.

a purely aesthetic relationship (outside art) enriched human life only with some emotional accent, whereas in artistic creation and perception all manifestations of emotionality should be relegated to second place. As a professional composer he considered a direct link between musical content and emotionality to be a manifestation of dilettantism, into which composers with an insufficient grasp of the logic of musical material begin to slide.

In Zich's differentiation of aesthetic and artistic values, the most important function in methodological terms is that of distinguishing the perceiver's approach to the work of art. The perceiver either experiences the work of art or comprehends it. In experiencing a work a feeling of pleasure or displeasure is awakened, which cannot, however, serve to determine the objective value of the work of art. As a criterion for evaluation this approach would be misleading, because many perceivers experience lesser works more intensely. Zich terms an attitude towards a work of art which originates solely from experience and the search for a feeling of pleasure 'aesthetic value'. This resides purely in the work's effect on the perceiver's mood, on its ability to awaken emotions, and it thus reflects only the subjective taste of the individual, and need not concur with the objective value of the work. Zich was aware that even the required objective foundation of artistic value is mediated by individuals. For him these individuals are strong artistic personalities with a distinctive 'personal value'. We must seek the value of a work of art in how it is understood and experienced by these individuals. Personal value is an individual creative ability, which is characterized on the one hand by a rejection of pseudo-artistic means and on the other by a development of high artistic qualities called 'artistic value'. The permanence of artistic value must be sought in the artwork itself and in the personality of the artist as the maker of the work. Zich opposes the contemporaneous criterion of 'newness' in evaluating a work of art, in the sense that newness as a factor is in itself not sufficient for an adequate evaluation, and must always be supplemented by an expression of strong artistic individuality. In other words, it is this 'personal value' which acquires fundamental importance upon evaluation in art, and at the same time indicates the difference between art and other spheres, since beyond art this value is not a defining criterion.

Zich repeatedly emphasizes that the aesthetic perception of a work of art represents the poorest type of artistic perception, since it mostly leads only to an evocation of emotion, without penetrating to the essence of the work. Aesthetic value comes out of an aesthetic feeling of pleasure, and so has a merely relative, subjective validity. If the evaluation of art depended only upon this approach, then there would be no difference between the value of objects outside art and the works of art themselves, because evaluation would

end with the determination of aesthetic value. Ranked above the relative value of an emotional effect, according to Zich, there is an evaluation of a higher order, which stems from 'comprehending' a work of art, and it takes place only in the realm of the artistic aesthetic. This means that the perceiver's aesthetic evaluation is based on an approach other than artistic evaluation, to which the strict separation of aesthetic value and artistic value consequently corresponds. Zich even proposes the term 'non-aesthetic value' for the result of this qualitatively 'higher' process of artistic evaluation. For the evaluation of a work of art, 'lower' aesthetic evaluation is inadequate. If, in the evaluation, the perceiver finds various emotional values of the work, this does not change the fact that these values are merely attributed to the work, just as moral, political, economic, and other values may be 'projected' onto it. All these values of a work of art are – with the exception of artistic value – merely 'accessory' (secondary) values.

Zich applies the concept of 'comprehending' a work of art also to the method of analysis used in his experimental research.[4] Although he began the analytical method by providing historical information on the origin of a composition, he continued to apply it to the analysis of the material and its arrangement. In a musical work, for example, the analysis consists in finding the basic musical-thematic material (which Zich calls the 'characteristic motifs'). He then continues to examine it from the perspective of its interval form and characteristics. The method involves seeking degrees of affinity with other 'motifs' and their variants, and also observing the contrapuntal processing of the motif, as well as considering the instrumentation, modality, and form of the work. Zich's truly unique contribution to the analysis of a musical work consists in extending the previous conception of form by adding 'dynamic' form, which takes into account dynamics and tonal movement, manifested as contrast and gradation.

Hostinský's influence is clear in Zich's view that the works of Smetana constitute the highpoint of Czech music. Together with other pupils of Hostinský's – Zdeněk Nejedlý, Vladimír Helfert, and Josef Bartoš – Zich entered the fray in favour of Smetana as opposed to Antonín Dvořák. Systematic attacks on the importance of Dvořák's work began in about 1910, and culminated in the publication of *Hudební sborník* (A musical miscellany, 1913), with the approaching ten-year anniversary of Dvořák's death in 1904. The chief initiator of the hostile approach

[4] Otakar Zich, *Smetanova Hubička. Hudebně esthetický rozbor* [Smetana's *The Kiss*. A musical-aesthetic analysis] (Prague: Smetana, 1911); Otakar Zich, 'Dvořákův význam umělecký' [Dvořák's artistic significance], in *Hudební sborník*, vol. 1, edited by Zdeněk Nejedlý (Prague: Smetana, 1913), 145–80; Otakar Zich, *Symfonické básně Smetanovy: Hudebně esthetický rozbor* [Smetana's symphonic poems: A musical-aesthetic analysis] (Prague: Hudební matice Umělecké besedy, 1924) (2nd ed.: Prague: Hudební matice Umělecké besedy, 1949).

to Dvořák was Nejedlý, who hoped to use this 'critical' method to elevate the status of Smetana's works. Armed with the basic methodological tools of aesthetic and artistic evaluation, Zich attempts to demonstrate in a detailed analysis that not only is the artistic value of Dvořák's compositions objectively insignificant, but also, using the comparative method, seeks to point out Dvořák's distinct lack of originality and his tendency towards eclecticism.[5] In this connection Zich distinguishes between being influenced by other composers, particularly at the beginning of one's career, and eclecticism, the unacceptable imitation of another's work, plagiarism. Only a strong artistic personality with strong 'personal value' is characterized by distinctive, individual expression, despite certain influences. Eclectics, on the other hand, never contribute anything of their own of truly genuine importance. In the large volume containing analysis of the material, Zich step by step 'demonstrates' that Dvořák was an unequivocal eclectic, who in his work continuously adopted melody, musical ideas, and forms from others. In Dvořák's operas alone, for example, Zich listed more than 170 examples of eclecticism. He acknowledged Dvořák's excellent and distinctive instrumentation as one of his few original personal attributes. The effect of instrumental mastery in Zich's theory, however, falls within the realm of lower aesthetic value, primarily evoking an emotional response, which cannot become the basis of objective artistic value. It is now clear that here, in the application of the theory of aesthetic and artistic evaluation, Zich failed.

An important complement to the theory of evaluation and value is Zich's reflections on the role of the aesthetic preparation of the mind.[6] He argues for education and training in apperception to enable one to control at will the connection between sensation and a set of representations, and, conversely, to resist other, unsuitable connections. The theory of the aesthetic preparation of the mind emphasizes even more that works of art cannot be approached only on an emotional basis, but that it is far more important to cultivate rational and volitional activities in relation to a work of art. A mere intentional appeal to the emotions is considered a hallmark of bad art or 'pseudo-art'.[7]

The differentiation between aesthetic value and artistic value influenced Zich's conception of aesthetic and artistic education. This became highly relevant immediately after the declaration of Czechoslovak independence in October 1918. His opinion on the introductory courses to be taught in secondary schools set him at odds particularly with the novelist and art critic Bohumil

5 Zich, 'Dvořákův význam umělecký'.

6 Otakar Zich, 'Estetická příprava mysli' [The aesthetic preparation of the mind], *Česká mysl* 17 (1921): 150–62, 193–204.

7 Otakar Zich, 'Proti paumění' [Against pseudo-art], *Budoucno* 1 (1919): 210–16.

Markalous (1882–1952, who wrote under the name Jaromír John). Markalous defended the primary role of aesthetic education outside art, which in essence meant that objects of everyday life were preferred to art in the development of pupils' taste. Zich, on the other hand, argued that aesthetic education in secondary schools should chiefly be based on art theory.[8]

The most important work of Zich's late period was his *Estetika dramatického umění: Teoretická dramaturgie*. (Aesthetics of dramatic art: Dramaturgy in theory, 1931).[9] At the beginning of his university career, Zich, like Hostinský before him, lectured on the art of drama. Zich fundamentally differs from his teacher, however, particularly in his belief that the production of a play, rather than its text, is the work of dramatic art. Consequently, the essence of dramatic art, for Zich, does not appear until the analysis of the actor and his art. (He distinguishes a total of four components in a dramatic work – text, music, set design, and acting.) Though the actor as a performing artist recites a given text, by means of his gestures, facial expressions, and movements he becomes independent of the text. This is why Zich introduced the distinct terms 'the actor character' (*herecká postava*), a purely physiological form determined by the role, and 'the dramatic character' (*dramatická postava*), which can address the audience only by way of psychological characteristics from the stage. Another distinction Zich made, which attracted much attention at the time, was that between what he called the 'dramatic space' (*dramatický prostor*) of the theatre and the 'stage space' (*scénický prostor*). Zich describes the dramatic space as a hexagonal prism, which the audience looks into through one of the 'removed' sides. This delineated 'peephole space' (*kukátkový prostor*) has precisely determined places in terms of the scene and their hierarchical relations, which have various weights of meaning, in which – and this is of fundamental importance – the audience orients itself and perceives its own 'distance' from the actor on stage as meaningful. According to some scholars, Zich's theory anticipates later conceptions of theatrical proxemics. In his preference for the peephole-type of stage, Zich in *Estetika dramatického umění* focused on Realist theatre, though he was also familiar with more modern types of theatre space. This clear preference was reflected in the opinion that the task of the actor should be the realistic presentation of something. Though

8 Otakar Zich, 'Úkoly české esthetiky' [Tasks of Czech aesthetics], *Česká mysl* 17 (1921): 40–7; Otakar Zich, 'Esthetika na školách středních' [Aesthetics in secondary schools], *Česká mysl* 17 (1921): 235–42.

9 Otakar Zich, *Estetika dramatického umění. Teoretická dramaturgie* [Aesthetics of dramatic art: Theoretical dramaturgy] (Prague: Melantrich, 1931). (Second edition: Prague: Panorama, 1986; with an afterword by Ivo Osolsobě, 'Zichova filozofie dramatického tvaru' [Zich's Philosophy of dramatic form].)

highly criticized when it first appeared, this out-dated conception enabled Zich to discover the internal dynamics of the meaning of the stage space, which is used today as a precondition for understanding stage procedures that do not stem from the peephole conceptions of the theatre space. Most leading Czech drama theorists today (for example, Ivo Osolsobě and Miroslav Procházka) agree that Zich understood the theatre semiotically, as a theatrical sign, though he eschewed the term 'sign', preferring to apply psychological analysis to the theatre. In 1933 his *Estetika dramatického umění* received the most positive and comprehensive of all reviews from Jan Mukařovský, Zich's pupil at Prague University and one of the founders of the Prague Linguistic Circle (informally established in 1926). Mukařovský was the first to note that Zich understood theatre by way of the theatrical sign, as a semiotic problem. Zich's pioneering studies in the aesthetics of verse can also reasonably be seen as directly inspiring Mukařovský's main aesthetic specialization.

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OTAKAR ZICH: AESTHETIC AND ARTISTIC EVALUATION, PART 1

I.

1. Without doubt one of the most important debates in contemporary aesthetics is the one between descriptive and normative aesthetics. In the scholarly examination of aesthetic phenomena are we to restrict ourselves to description, analysis, systematization, and explanation (if this is at all possible), or must we go further, assessing these phenomena and establishing norms for aesthetic processes, whether this concerns aesthetic enjoyment or artistic creation?

Normative aesthetics certainly enjoys the 'right of the first born'. One of the sources of modern aesthetics is art criticism. It was from this branch that French aesthetics emerged in the eighteenth century, and it is only natural that evaluation and norms had a leading role in the discipline. A second source, which led chiefly to the creation of German aesthetics, was philosophy. Both Baumgarten's and Kant's aesthetics were established for purely systemic reasons. In addition to logic and ethics, which are the normative sciences for cognition and volition, the trichotomy of reason, feeling, and will required a normative science for feeling (or judgement through feeling), which is aesthetics. Thus the normative nature, and the entire structure in general, of the young discipline was given by analogy to the already developed normative sciences.

It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that the previously almost unquestionable normative nature of aesthetics was seriously shaken. The impetus for this stemmed from both of these sources. Primarily it was modern 'subjective criticism', again predominantly French, which rejected norms and evaluation for criticism and aesthetics. The role of criticism is merely to interpret art, not to judge it; criticism must be written about how a work affects me, not about how I assess it; not in a scholarly form but in an artistic one. The only role pertinent to criticism is therefore a positive one – namely, to present the work and its author to the audience. This dictum, which most artists certainly agreed with (at least when it came to their own works), correctly pointed out many facets of the positive role of criticism. In refusing all evaluation of art, however, it was like a child who believes itself to be invisible if it covers its eyes. This criticism also evaluated, though it did not confess to this evaluation: it evaluated by writing about one work and not another, thus evaluating in its choice of subject matter. Even the most subjective critic would surely not wish to devote as much time, enthusiasm, and wit to a trash novel by a second-rate author as to a novel by Flaubert. The mere fact that a work aroused interest in the critic, and practically forced the critic into writing

a spirited essay, was clearly a matter of evaluation. The dictum of subjective criticism should therefore not have been 'We should not evaluate' but rather 'We do not wish to evaluate, because it is something odious to us and to others; let us therefore select for our criticism a work which we can avoid evaluating.' The facts that there are great works of art and that there are also absolute 'artistic' hotchpotches is undeniable, at least if we place these two extreme views side by side. If this dichotomic classification applied to all works of art, subjective criticism would surely suffice: subjective critics would write about the former and remain silent about the latter. None the less, just as most people – despite characterizations in many domestic novels – are neither complete angels nor complete devils, but usually a bit of both, the same applies to most works of art. With such works, then, evaluation, both positive and negative, is essential. The performance of this evaluation is without doubt a task only for critics. If critics refused to engage in this way, new branches of literature would have to be established to defend good art against bad. True, critics have frequently been mistaken, and sometimes grossly so, but in *both* senses, that is, by rejecting the good and praising the bad. And they will surely continue to be mistaken on many occasions, but *in principle* this changes nothing. Criticism cannot and must not completely avoid evaluation.

The question, is, however, whether the same applies to aesthetics. And it is here that the suggestion to reject norms from the second source, philosophy, particularly from psychology, appears. Aestheticians gradually became aware that *all* the facts of aesthetics are mental facts, and that it was therefore appropriate to establish aesthetics on the basis of psychology. The more psychology freed itself from the grip of philosophy, aiming in its methods towards the ideal of the descriptive natural sciences, the more the tendency against norms in psychological aesthetics emerged. We see the beginning of this in British descriptive aesthetics during the eighteenth century. Since then, in Great Britain, later also in France and America, the traditions of descriptive aesthetics have only grown. The radical turnaround in this direction in Germany is marked by [Gustav] Fechner, who was followed by many other thinkers, though some of them demanded a normative approach to psychological aesthetics as well. They are, however, now clearly contradicting themselves; since if (psychological) aesthetics is defined as the scholarly discipline concerned with aesthetic states of consciousness, its task is surely only to examine what these phenomena are, not to prescribe how they should be, for then they would immediately cross the boundaries into psychology.

The argument put forward by descriptive aestheticians against a normative approach is based on the unusual variability of norms, both historically and

individually. Norms, it is true, have originated, died out, changed, often into their opposites; what one person values is valued by another only conditionally or rejected outright, and this frequently applies also to the same individual in the course of his life! It is natural that whoever observes this spectacle, whether he casts an eye round himself or looks in the mirror of history, is bound to be sceptical. This scepticism is surely justified about a specific norm (for example, a new one), but is it justified about normativity in general? Let us take a look at how this applies in the foremost normative discipline, ethics. Here, too, do we not see this marked variability of norms, to put it concisely, in both spatial and temporal terms? Are norms here not variable to the point of antinomy, for example in nations that adopted Christianity, transforming their norm from 'Hate thine enemy!' to 'Love thine enemy!'? Does not every man have his own ethics, differing somehow from the ethics of the next man? It matters not that his ethics may in some respect be wrong; the individual is convinced of the rightness of his own ethics, and this certainty, so manifest in ethics, is no less so in aesthetics. People have suffered for their artistic convictions (and who, after all, can be sure that they have always done the right thing?) in just the same manner as for their moral convictions. As regards the tremendous diversity in the evaluation of a particular artistic phenomenon, it is no better in the moral dimension. Our ethical principles are indeed fixed, but how fixed is my evaluation of someone's specific act? How many times have we come to believe that we wronged someone in our judgement of them, while at other times were disappointed in someone we had valued highly! We did not know all the motivations that guided both; we judged actions precipitously and one-sidedly. Criminology provides the best example of how difficult it is – for example for members of a jury – to judge, not according to the law, but according to their moral conscience. Is this not similar to 'courts' of art critics and art juries? Sometimes the main flaw is the complexity of the phenomena, with the effect that one-sided and therefore probably erroneous judgements are easy to make; and if the variability in aesthetics is greater than in the moral dimension, this is partly because aesthetic phenomena are generally more complex, the preconditions for understanding artistic values are not so commonly met in people as they are in moral matters, and, lastly, we do not take such a strict approach to the matter in art and are more inclined to permit subjectivism.

From this it follows that aesthetic norms are not by their nature fundamentally different from ethical norms, and that 'aesthetic scepticism', in the sense of rejecting norms as such, would be no more justified than ethical scepticism. If normative aesthetics thus states, in defence against this 'variability', that aesthetic norms can be 'flexible, capable of development and adaptation', and that they in no

way constitute 'absolute norms', this is generally nothing but a pertinent reminder. For both aesthetics and ethics absolute norms as such may be given only by metaphysics. If the requirement for 'flexibility' indicates only that aesthetic norms should be broad enough to fit various areas, and to avoid as far as possible conflicts with other aesthetic norms, this is an entirely appropriate requirement, and it applies equally to ethical norms. But just as ethical norms cannot be so flexible as to permit in certain circumstances negative, unethical behaviour, so, too, artistic norms that permitted inartistic production would be equally worthy of rejection.

2. Let us therefore first address the question of aesthetic norms, leaving aside for the moment the phenomenon of 'evaluation'. Why are they variable? It is because they are abstracted from specific artistic material that is limited in terms of time and place, and cannot therefore have a wider application than one similarly limited in time and place. One aesthetician says, 'Look to the sculpture of classical antiquity, because it contains the ideal of beauty!' Another says, 'Do not look to the sculpture of classical antiquity, because you will find no life in its totality, that is, in its 'characteristic' features. These are antithetical slogans, as if one clergyman told his congregation, 'Listen to your priests, for they are your good shepherds', and another clergyman – seeing corruption in their ranks – declared, 'Do not listen to your priests, for they are wolves amongst sheep!' In different times and places *both* of these preachers could be right, because each expresses a narrow norm. In the same way the statements of both aestheticians could be correct – the first, if degenerate naturalism were predominant; the second, if formulaic classicism were predominant. Again, both norms are narrow, and in opposite circumstances both could be wrong, like the two clergymen.

How then in aesthetics do we achieve universally valid, permanent norms (perhaps not in the full sense of the word 'absolute')? If we wish to remain in the realm of empirical fact, we have to reiterate that it is by abstracting from experience, though not by abstracting from what is limited, as artworks are in general. Since even if we included all works of art in this material we would know only what we know today. A new work would appear tomorrow and undermine these norms. It is necessary to abstract from what is universal and constant; and these are the *psychological laws of aesthetic processes*, of both artistic enjoyment and artistic creation. These laws, residing essentially in the universal laws of mental processes, are surely universal and non-variable, unless the structure of the human mind changed. But then it would not be only aesthetics that had ceased to be valid!

Contemporary normative psychological aesthetics formulates the problem thus: we obtain norms if we express laws of the aesthetic process in an imperative form. This is correct except that in doing so we depart from the field of *psychological aesthetics*. Indeed, we leave the field of science altogether, since to lay down rules is not a task of theoretical disciplines but of practical ones. For our field, *art theory* will be that kind of discipline, in contrast to (theoretical) aesthetics. It is understood that works of art are not entirely excluded from this method; that would be senseless. It concerns, however, not their objective analysis but their psychological analysis. The mental laws of perception, for example, of drama, are the same. Whether this has to do with any member of the audience, or the plays of Sophocles, Shakespeare, or Maeterlinck, they are, were, and will be the same. Aesthetics has not yet travelled very far down this path, particularly not in determining the specific laws of the mental aesthetic process. It is clear, none the less, that in drama the requirement for gradation and contrast is connected with the law of fatigue and stupefaction, the demand for unity of action (the only feature which has persisted from the classical unities) with the principle of continuity of consciousness, and so forth. The only thing that does not seem quite right to me is to call these *practical rules* (laws, principles) 'norms'; in such a case, for example, pedagogy and practical medicine would also have to be termed normative disciplines.[1] But this is, after all, merely a matter of words. In any case, this question of the 'normative' must be eliminated from theoretical *aesthetics*, which does not permit norms at all, and be placed in the field of *art theory*. This is not only a matter of separating theory from practice; *art theory* obviously must contain, in addition to its practical component, a theoretical part as well. This is primarily a matter of the relationship between the aesthetic and the artistic. The *strict* differentiation of aesthetic and artistic facts, previously almost entirely neglected in aesthetics, is, as we shall see, an essential requirement.

[1] I shall not here address the question as to whether artistic 'norms' thus obtained are of the same nature as logical and ethical norms. In particular it seems to me that this is not the case regarding ethical norms. The expression 'you should', so important for the moral dimension, cannot be used well with any other norms. These are always conditioned, in the sense of 'If you wish to participate in art, to be capable of artistic creation, to think correctly, and so forth, then you must. …' If you do not wish to, then give it up. But no *similar* phrasing is possible for ethics, unless we were to formulate moral imperatives conditionally *as well*, for example, 'If you wish to reach a state of eternal bliss, to please God, and so forth, then you must. …' Ultimately, this becomes a relativist attitude, which is more acceptable in anything other than morality. For this alone, the postulate of unconditional (therefore absolute) norms seems to be essential.

3. Having spoken briefly of artistic norms (or, better, rules), we can now turn to our own particular topic, *evaluation*. This needs analysing. Above all, it is clear that the phenomenon of evaluation originates in our consciousness, in the relationship between us and a given object (which may of course reside only in our imagination). The result of evaluation is a value, which we attribute both to the mental process in which the evaluation originated and to the object which instigated this process. Let us then observe the nature of evaluation and value in aesthetic enjoyment.

A thing of beauty – a landscape or painting – pleases me, that is, it awakens an aesthetic feeling of pleasure in me. I naturally appreciate this feeling of pleasure, and so it is entirely natural for me to assign a value to it. Can I also attribute this value to the object which caused me to feel pleasure? Certainly I can, though with the proviso that this is a *value for me*, not a value in itself. After all, this landscape or painting may not please someone for whom such an evaluation – first of all the evaluation of the mental process through which the object is perceived, and then the evaluation of the object itself – does not take place. Value on the *basis of an aesthetic feeling of awakening pleasure* is therefore only relative, and we must therefore term it 'relative value'.[2] This 'relative value' ('for me') is a *subjective* value (it represents only my own mental process) and an *individual* value (it applies only to me, even only to this specific case). At other times (for example, after a number of years) the same object may not please me at all, in which case such 'relative value' will not arise. Furthermore, in this matter the beautiful does not differ from the pleasant; even for enjoyment, for example, the smell of hay during a summer walk, I may repeat the foregoing sentences with the only difference that I shall be reluctant to call the 'feeling of pleasure' awakening in me aesthetic pleasure. There are, however, aestheticians ready to do so. [Jean-Marie] Guyau, for example, justifiably refers to the role played by the pleasure of visual and aural impressions in art, the pleasure of impressions of the senses of smell, taste, and touch, and bodily sensations (which are mainly stigmatized as merely 'pleasant') in the beauties of nature and life in general. So, for example, the smell of hay may play an important role in the aesthetic impression of the landscape (haymaking). One thing at least is certain – namely, that the sequence 'the pleasant, the beauty of nature and of life in general, and artistic beauty' entails a smooth transition in the feeling

[2] [Editor's note: In the original Czech version of this article, Zich distinguishes between two terms for value, *cena* and *hodnota*. He uses *cena*, interchangeably with *relativní hodnota* (relative value), to emphasize its subjective character and its difference from and, indeed, subordination to, non-relative, absolute value, which he calls *hodnota*. We have systematically translated *cena* as 'relative value' and *hodnota* as 'absolute value'.]

of pleasure. In addition, there is still the contentious question of whether the feeling of pleasure is at all qualitatively differentiated, that is, whether it involves anything more than differences of intensity and whether it might not be necessary to attribute seemingly qualitative differences only to the aspect of the content of the mental process. All this is irrelevant to our deduction, however, since we may speak of the 'feeling of pleasure in general' regardless of its further potential nuances (as it appears in all three cases in the sequence, for example, good food, a beautiful landscape, a Bach fugue) when we declare: Value on the basis of an awakening feeling of pleasure is merely 'relative value', subjective and individual; for as soon as we admit that a Bach fugue might not appeal to some people, it follows that such people cannot attribute this 'value' (originating from a feeling of pleasure) without feigning this pleasure.

Despite this incontrovertible fact we may suspect that not everything here is as it should be in the third of the three examples provided, the one taken from art. We feel instinctively that in this case (the Bach fugue) we have a value that is different from the previous two, one which is *objective* and *universal*. This is confirmed for us also by the fact of 'immortal works of art', which triumphantly retain their value over the centuries, and win the admiration of all or at least many. If this concerns the first two cases (good food and a beautiful landscape), then *de gustibus non est disputandum*, but in all art, as Kant stated, *de gustibus est disputandum*. This suggests that in art we believe in the possibility of values higher than merely individual, subjective ones, which are not mere 'relative values'. This intuition does not deceive us; we must therefore ask what this special evaluation consists in. This requires strict differentiation, not the usual one between *the pleasant and the beautiful*, but the distinction between *art* from *everything else*.

The most readily available idea is this: A work of art is created *in order to* please us, in order to awaken this feeling of pleasure in us. If it serves this purpose well, then the *work itself* becomes valuable. It thus acquires an objective value, but not a universal one. This at least overcomes the problem of the subjectivity of value. The 'objectivity' of the value stems, however, from the understanding that the object itself possesses the *power* (which has been instilled in it) to awaken a feeling of pleasure in us, and therefore to apply its value. Only this power is actually objective, since it is a property of the object, independent of the most diverse subjects (people). Evaluation, and therefore value too, must originate here only by way of a subjective path, from the viewer's or listener's relationship to the work. Interpreted strictly, however, there would be only subjective values, but here, for the purpose of differentiation, we will permit ourselves to use the word 'objective'; the justification of the 'objective value' of

a work of *art* then makes perfectly good sense. It is impossible to say of a landscape that it has been instilled with the power to awaken a feeling of pleasure in us, and that it can therefore be valued, whereas a Ruisdael landscape in a gallery has, as it were, truly been waiting for us with this power, which the painter infused into it, and which persists regardless of whether it hangs there without the participation of the passers-by, or whether an art-lover stops to admire it and, as if by magic, elicits the 'potential value' hidden within the canvas. But there is a catch.

The same may be said also about many other merely pleasant objects, for example, food. One need simply recall culinary art, where we see that the word 'art' has not left us even here! Yet this predicate is reserved only for the creators, the chefs, since it would be difficult to use the words 'enjoyment of art' to describe the consumption of their products. But even 'artfully' prepared food has the power to awaken a feeling of pleasure in us, even this awaits us with its 'potential relative value', and so even this may, from this perspective, be rightly attributed an *objective* relative value. It matters not that the origin of evaluation here will largely depend on the individuality of the person enjoying the food: no one can deny the 'objectivity' of the relative value. 'It is well prepared, but it is not to my taste', someone may say, just as an ordinary tourist might comment on the Ruisdael painting: 'Apparently it's beautiful, but I don't like it.' Please excuse the unintentional humour of these lines: there has been no shortage of attempts to place this culinary art, together with a range of others, into a system of 'lower' arts as opposed to 'higher' arts. If we also were to do so, we would be reconciling ourselves to this reproach for our previous reflections. But we shall not do so. Emphasizing the object's usefulness for human pleasure is certainly not without meaning. One may not only attribute to it an 'objectivity' of relative value, but one may also, which is particularly important, draw a distinction between the beauty of art and of life (if it concerns works *created by humans*) and the beauty of nature, where one cannot use such a teleological perspective unless one takes a mystical position and also hypostatizes a creator who has made nature solely (or also) to please us. But let's remain in the realm of the given.

4. Why did we not accede to a merging of all the 'arts', higher and lower? Not because we would consider the *feeling of pleasure* occurring with these to be higher than that which originates from enjoyment of the lower 'arts'. On the contrary, I feel inclined to judge that pleasure itself is in both cases qualitatively the same. And pleasure from lower art may in its intensity certainly surpass that experienced from higher art. But the *evaluation* as we feel it is not the same

here. In the true arts it is higher and, more precisely, it is *universally valid*, independent of the individuality of random viewers or listeners. This is not a mere speculative postulate but a matter of empirical fact, even if perhaps only intuitively felt. The Ruisdael landscape, the Bach fugue, Shakespeare's *Othello*, and so forth, have a value which is universal, not merely relative. But its value or evaluation cannot therefore *ensue from the feeling of pleasure* we have when perceiving such a work and thus not even from the *power* of the work to awaken a *feeling of pleasure*. We see this also from experience, since the 'great, immortal, universally recognized works of art' are surely, at least with regard to the past, an empirical fact, as are paltry, insignificant works of art. And here we may consider two cases:

(a) Feelings of pleasure, and the ensuing appreciation of them, occur in many people even with works of art of negligible worth. The popularity of [Ernst Raupach's] drama *Der Müller und sein Kind* [The Miller and his Child, 1830], for example, cannot be explained other than by an unusual affection for this 'moving' play. And this is surely not true only of the poorly educated lower classes! There are many highly intelligent people who have a strong predilection for all kinds of waltzes and marches. They may deny it, aware that it is considered music of lower artistic merit, but they still enjoy such music. That fact emerges spontaneously upon listening to the music. A positive appraisal thus appears here, even though a negative evaluation should result, that is, these works should not please the ear.

(b) The opposite is just as frequent. Indisputably valuable works of art leave many people unmoved, so appreciation simply does not occur. The works are not valued by these people, though they should be! And again this does not relate only to the poorly educated. Even educated people often derive no pleasure from listening to a Bach fugue. Many educated people, for example, responded to Manet's first paintings with clear displeasure. Particularly in their own time, almost all great works of art meet with a cool reception or even rejection from the viewers and listeners. This is because, when in touch with such works, these people do not experience a feeling of pleasure, or in fact even experience a strong feeling of displeasure. 'Immortal works of art' have usually had to struggle to awaken a feeling of pleasure in the public, and therefore to increase relative value, though they clearly had the same 'value' from the start. In fact in (b), more strikingly than in (a), it was not only generally educated audiences who responded negatively, but also art connoisseurs and professional critics. Many examples could be provided, and not just marginal ones from outside the field of art. Goethe, for instance, did not like the works of Kleist, Spohr did not like the works of Beethoven.

Both of the cases which we objected to under (a) and (b) could be helped if we used the requirement of 'good taste' in the evaluation of art. A man of taste will probably respond to a valuable work of art with a feeling of pleasure, and to a worthless work of art with displeasure. The fact that good taste would of course have to be, *if possible, universal*, is shown by these cases, where the good taste of Goethe and Spohr (at least in their fields) surely cannot be denied; we do recognize, however, that it was limited. So, our requirement is difficult to meet. But, if we express it none the less, it turns out to be a vicious circle, since the 'goodness' of this taste is designated precisely by the universal evaluation whose character we are looking for.

5. The result of our reflections so far is this: Every aesthetic process (the enjoyment of beauty) contains a *feeling of pleasure* and an appreciation ensuing from it; the consequence is an '*aesthetic value*', which we attribute to the object. If we wish to, we may also include under this heading the '*value of the pleasant*', since it is evident that this is of the same nature. In fact, 'aesthetic value' and 'value of the pleasant' are relative values, being dependent on the individual nature of the beholder. Indeed more than this: they are even dependent on a random change in this beholder's individuality, and therefore dependent on the *variable* aspects of human nature in general. This is its precise definition, as opposed to the previous approximate definition with the characteristic of 'individualism'. The main characteristic of 'aesthetic value' as a relative value is that *it is not necessary*, but merely possible. Even a person with refined taste, a good eye, and a sound mind need not necessarily appreciate certain good food, a pleasant landscape, or a beautiful poem. It may not be to his taste, it may not be to his liking.

This relative value or, if we restrict ourselves to the enjoyment of beauty, this 'aesthetic value', appears in the enjoyment of natural beauty just as in artistic beauty. The only difference is that in art we are partially justified in attributing this value to the object (see section 3). Since we have defined relative value as 'a value ensuing from a feeling of pleasure', this objectification may also be expressed as follows: the power of an object to awaken a feeling of pleasure may be termed the *affective appeal* of an object. The aesthetic value of works of art can then be defined as a 'value ensuing from the affective appeal of works of art'. It is, however, clear from this, as we have seen in this section, that this value (ensuing from appeal) is just as relative as the first (ensuing from pleasure). It is not an absolute, universal, and necessary value, in whose existence we believe and which we seek in the field of art. This value must therefore undoubtedly ensue from something other than 'affective appeal', that is, from the power to awaken a feeling of pleasure, even if 'aesthetic'.

It is thus clear that there is a sharp distinction between the evaluation of natural and artistic beauty, though not in the sense that the two kinds of evaluations would be mutually exclusive. Aesthetic appreciation, appearing with regard to nature, occurs also with regard to art; but beyond this, as something important in addition, there appears a further, necessary, universal evaluation, independent of the aspects of human nature and *in this sense* 'absolute'. So, put schematically:

Natural beauty – relative value (aesthetic value)

Artistic beauty – relative value (aesthetic value) + some kind of absolute evaluation.

Aesthetic appraisal, that is, evaluation, springing from a feeling of pleasure, always appears during artistic enjoyment. Indeed, artistic enjoyment frequently remains in this state, and will not grow further. Too many people evaluate art only according to how it affects them emotionally. *They thus maintain the same attitude* (with regard to evaluation) as they hold towards the *beauty of nature* (or life). With regard to art we could also call this attitude 'naïve', but we would need to bear in mind that the epithet relates to the method of evaluation, not to the overall nature of the enjoyment, which may well be profound. The epithet 'natural' would be riskier; for although its evaluation is the same as the evaluation of nature, the entire process in both cases differs in various aspects, for example, in the involvement of illusion. It is, however, a decidedly lower attitude, since it produces only a relative evaluation. But our overall attitude towards art is, and must be, different from our attitude to nature, as we have seen. The relationship of both evaluations is therefore such that the 'absolute' evaluation we seek is independent of relative value; indeed, as soon as we have attained this evaluation it becomes the chief evaluation, and forces into the background the relative value that springs from feeling. I recall the powerful effect that Beethoven's *Eroica* and Smetana's *Vyšehrad* had on me in my youth; these were immense, irresistible emotional impressions. They have now passed, and the emotional intensity is almost imperceptible in comparison with before. And yet, for me, these compositions have not decreased in value. Rather, the opposite is true: I would say that I comprehend these works in far more depth, and value them far more. The expression 'to comprehend' works of art best indicates where, other than in merely being 'pleasing' and 'affectively appealing', the source of a higher evaluation of art may be. I have intentionally chosen the word 'to comprehend', and not the similarly used word 'to understand', in order to indicate that this has to do not only with an intellectual activity that is possible only for professional connoisseurs. Comprehending may be, and frequently is, merely intuitive.

With this word, which for our purposes indicates the sought-after higher attitude of evaluation, we can explain the antagonisms we have outlined so far. The evaluated work of art is not liked by many people, since it is not comprehended, because those perceiving the work do not have this higher attitude (and were perhaps unable to have it), and therefore evaluation did not occur; inasmuch as the work did not awaken a feeling of pleasure, or, on the contrary, it evoked a feeling of displeasure, it was neglected or repudiated. Whoever is unable to take this higher attitude with regard also to other, poor works of art, will not understand their insignificance, and may therefore in fact value them highly, being guided only by the aesthetic appeal these works may possess. And we may take the argument further. Because evaluation based on a feeling of pleasure gives rise to relative value, which – with regard to our attributing it to objects of beauty – we have no alternative but to call *aesthetic value*, it is evident that this desired attitude is something other than aesthetic, namely, *non-aesthetic*, and *the value thus obtained is non-aesthetic*.

One can of course take a non-aesthetic attitude to works of art – and not only one attitude. We encounter a whole range of such attitudes if we look at past and present criticism of works of art. The area most abundant in critical attitudes is poetry, since the medium in which poets create, human language, is also a means of expression in numerous areas of culture and life in general. Visual art, however, also comes into contact with much in culture and life, and even music is not entirely free of such contacts. The chief most often held attitude to art is the ethical attitude. Who would not evaluate, say, Tolstoy's novels or Goya's etchings from this perspective? Linked to this are, for example, the philosophical attitude (Goethe's *Faust*), the religious attitude (Palestrina's masses and Botticelli's Madonnas), and the social attitude in all its diversity (patriotic poems, dance music). If we extended the field of art also to bad art, the number of such attitudes would increase still further, particularly with regard to non-aesthetic pleasures (for example, pulp fiction and pornography). Realizing that an artist, composer, or author has imparted this capability to his work so that it can be evaluated from such an attitude, we may speak of *tendentious* art. There is one attitude here, however, from which, when its conditions are satisfied, we do not term a work tendentious, because it is obvious in every work of art. One may observe this attitude in the development of criticism, which has always striven to attain it. The epochal importance of Boileau as the 'first' critic depended on the fact that he substituted an *artistic* attitude for an ethical attitude (taken with regard to French drama). No one should be surprised that I regard the artistic attitude as non-aesthetic; the whole

analysis of the 'aesthetic value' of a work of art has led us to this, and an analysis of both the artistic attitude and the 'artistic value' thus formed will confirm this for us.

For the time being, however, we have nothing more than a name for the concept; but we may at least refer to its scope, which we know from our own experience. This is the attitude that must be taken with regard to all works, and can be called *l'art pour l'art* (excluding of course the aesthetic attitude). Furthermore, one may also state that, in opposition to all other non-aesthetic attitudes that we have enumerated so far, this single attitude may be called *fundamental* and *specific* to art. This follows from the fact that, as we have seen, there are works of art – great, valuable works of art, universally recognized as such by the best connoisseurs, people of refined taste – which may be evaluated *only* from this artistic attitude. After all, what other, non-artistic attitude could be had, for example, with regard to a Mozart symphony, a Cézanne still life, or a Verlaine poem? This cannot be said of any other attitude we have discussed; none of them *of itself* creates a value of a work of *art*. Any of Hume's treatises, for example, undoubtedly contains as much philosophy as Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* we would scarcely find any philosophy whatsoever. The first, after all, is a non-artistic work, whereas the remaining two are *both* great works of art. Which is greater? We find this question meaningless, inadmissible; it is therefore evident that any philosophical value that may be present in no way increases the artistic value of a work. Similarly a negative *ethical* value of a work, for example, Hauptmann's *Der Biberpelz* [*The Beaver Coat*, 1893], does not diminish the *artistic* value of this work. These values are *diverse* and cannot – in mathematical terms – be added up. Far be it from me to dispute the meaning of all non-artistic values of a work of art, or to repudiate them. This is unnecessary. One must, however, emphasize that these can only be an accompaniment to artistic value, changing nothing in this value, and that they are not necessary for a work of art but only possible, not fundamental but merely *accessory* values.

(To be continued in the next issue.)