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Abstract and Socialist Humanism

NIKOLAI GEI
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NO MATTER WHAT THE SUBJECT OF A BOOK MAY BE, IT IS ABOUT man, it wages a battle either for or against him. Art is the forward line along which a stubborn ideological battle centering around an understanding of man and humaneness is being fought.

Who, then, is the hero of our literature? Must he only be a forward-looking man with a rich inner world, a man of moral integrity, or can he also be a person who advances towards his ideal along the thorny path of query? That is the question posed by the many critical articles that have appeared lately in connection with the discussion of books by Sholokhov, Panova and Bondarev, plays by Arbuzov and Rozov, Dovzhenko's cinema-poem about the sea, and other works. It is a question that holds the attention of gifted young artists and experienced masters alike. That is quite understandable. The controversy about the heroes of Soviet literature is inseparably bound up with the treatment in literature of the new man, his place in life, his happiness, and the meaning of his endeavours.

The tenth thesis of Marx on Feuerbach states directly that the aim of dialectical materialism is not a 'civil' but a human society, or socialised mankind. The emergence of the socialist camp, signifying the practical realisation of Marx's thesis, has led to a fundamental alteration of the world climate and to the spread of humanistic awareness through-

out the world.¹ It is becoming a real force, taking shape in the powerful movement of peace supporters. The preaching of misanthropy now enjoys less and less support. Hopeless pessimism and statements claiming that people have nothing left to do but wallow in the stench of their own putrefaction, as Randolph Stow put it, are becoming less widespread than they used to be.

Capitalism and humanism are forces in fundamental opposition to each other. Capitalism, as it was defined more than a century ago by Marx and Engels, remains true to its nature, alienating man from man, dehumanising the personality, creating hostile relations between freedom and historical necessity, between society and the individual.

But in our time the ideal of humanism, freedom and peace is a social force that no sensible politician can afford to ignore. The bourgeoisie, compelled to play up to the humanistic awareness of the millions of ordinary people, tries at the same time to influence and subordinate this awareness, to divert it from being spontaneously drawn to socialism, to oppose socialist humanism with a demagogic imitation of 'humanism' to which a universal character is ascribed.

West-European and American politicians are giving more and more thought to the weaknesses of their camp in the ideological battle. The crucial weakness of American society, says Walter Lippman, is that the people have no inspiring goal to unite them.

The ideologists of capitalism are acutely aware of the lack of ideals that would help them to persuade people of the necessity of the existing order of things.

They energetically insist that modern capitalism has been miraculously transformed into a society founded on the principles of economic humanism and is the only society where the flowering of the individual is possible.

Ideologists like Herter and Lodge are prepared to re-

¹ Even bourgeois moralists and philosophers cannot help admitting that 'Marxism has saved humanistic ethics from its distortion in capitalist society' (Herbert Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism: A Critical Analysis*, New York, 1958, p. 202).

nounce the hated term 'capitalism' altogether in order to hide the real substance of imperialism under the unpretentious label of 'economic humanism'. Such sleight-of-hand shows that bourgeois ideologists are compelled to take the sentiments of the common people into account and to play on those sentiments. Resorting to mystification, they picture the people's gains as a consequence of the progress of capitalism and depict the concessions they are compelled to make as natural blessings. The venerable philosopher J. Fürstenberg admits: 'There is nothing more crafty than the discovery that in order to subordinate the popular masses they must be allowed to imagine they are governing themselves. This is the meaning of the political concepts of "freedom" and "public opinion".'²

Bourgeois ideologists advocate an egocentric personality in order to compromise the idea of struggle and reconcile man to the existing class contradictions. This is often done in subtle, disguised ways, by idyllizing modest human happiness, family comfort, and the touching emotions of the 'little' man. They turn the self-alienation of man into an absolute category and depict a personality mutilated by the division of labour and restricted by the framework of the existing order as the only and eternal measure of all things; they elevate bourgeois moral standards to the rank of a universal virtue. Their aim is to prove that the smaller you are the better.

In a foreign film we saw the main character was an ordinary, kind-hearted man with simple dreams of happiness: he wanted to get married and have a family. That is as far as his interests and spiritual requirements went. Instead of making high demands of a man, which would give him the right to great happiness, the authors of the film limited themselves to sympathising with the hero and others like him whose unassuming ideal is to be satisfied with little if only they can brighten, to some degree, 'solitary confinement in their own skins'. The personal happiness

²J. Fürstenberg, *Dialectique du XX-eme siecle* (Paris, 1953), p. 303.

of the virtuous individual as contrasted to the unsightly aspects of reality is the 'philosophy' of the American way of life. That is the reason why the micro-problems of existence are blown up out of all proportion, overshadow and exclude problems that are common to all mankind. To be more exact, the makers of the film attempt to solve the problem in their own way, but they give a completely false answer to the question of what should be regarded as common to all mankind. 'You dream of the happiness of millions and fail to see the individual,' they tell us, 'whereas for us mankind does not exist; it is a fiction, a misuse of the word. There is neither mankind, nor universal happiness nor universal interests. There is only the individual man and his personal happiness, which he can attain by remaining within the existing system.' Thus interpreted, what is universal appears as a simple arithmetical sum of millions of scattered individuals, each of whom is subject to the eternal laws of existence and seeks happiness only for himself.

A favourite argument of the opponents of Marxism is to 'accuse' it of anti-humanism, claiming that it relegates human life and the interests of the individual to the domain of chance and that it builds all its generalisations on 'the abstract framework of universality.' The attacks on 'the adherents of universal happiness' serve as a loophole for the preaching of indulgence towards and pity for imperfect man, but actually these attacks stem from lack of faith in the creative potentialities of the individual.

Existentialism, which claims recognition as the most humanistic philosophy of our time, regards life as a chaos that is not subject to control (Albert Camus), and legitimises the infinite loneliness of the individual, who is put into the world only for the sake of himself (Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers). Humanism is transformed into individualism, which is made out to be freedom of the individual. Thus, bourgeois humanism negate itself. As a result, we have man shut off from social relations, the sport of the dark forces of the subconscious, condemned to the anarchic wilfulness of the flesh. When the individual is deprived

of social content he loses human content as well. By making their hero the lone individualist the existentialists attempt to speak on behalf of man in general without realising that the cult of the helpless individual is inimical to the interests of mankind and at times proves to be the other side, of Nietzscheism. They try to frighten man with the 'jaws of the collective' that grind up his 'I' and then, afraid of their own bogeys, cynically turn their hero inside out or else lead him into an ethical underground. The most ultra-modern trends of bourgeois thought wind up with the pessimistic conclusion, as old as the world itself, conclusion fervently repeated by Jaspers: 'No ideals are possible for man inasmuch as man is imperfect.'

The crisis of official bourgeois humanism has spurred the clergy to great activity. Modernising the Biblical tenets of universal love and humility, they represent them as Christian humanist called upon to save and renew the sinful world. They maintain that the humanistic ideals of the Renaissance, the French Revolution and then socialism have exhausted themselves and proven bankrupt, and that the time has come to set up in opposition to them their ideal of the practising Christian. As Abbot Bigot's *Marxism and Humanism* testifies, the Christian is nothing more than an idealised bourgeois with all his inherent attributes of private property in its original form.

Ideologues of capitalism and militant churchmen are united in their desire to discredit the idea of a revolutionary reshaping of the world. 'The fundamental law of the life of society is not struggle...as claimed by Marxist sociology based on dialectical materialism, but cooperation on the basis of human solidarity perfected by Christian charity, which is the origin of peace.'³ That is the latest world of the Christian clergy, and it warms the heart of the bourgeois.

Realising that a realistic embodiment of their ideal in a concrete, true-to-life image is impossible, Christian mentors give their blessing of modernism. Articles in West-German and Spanish reactionary magazines reiterate that

³ *Sapientia Aquianatis Communicationes IV Congressus thomistici internationales* (Romae, 1955), Vol. I, p. 359.

literature is incapable of portraying a well-rounded individual and therefore should deal with abstract symbols of man and abstractionist allusions to him. (Verily: 'The more man entrusts himself to God the less he belongs to himself.')

Christian humanism exploits the popularity of socialist ideas. In his *L'Antechrist*, Ernest Renan asserted that the Old Testament was the 'creation of ecstatic utopians carried away by a powerful socialist ideal.'

Progressive intellectuals abroad are becoming more and more acutely and painfully aware of the gulf between lip-service rendered to love of man and the practical activities of the powers-that-be. Faced by the danger of atomic death, they are coming out in defence of mankind and its future, but the vagueness of their ideals and positive programme prevents them from making a profound analysis of the existing contradictions. A typical example is the American film *On the Beach*, which presents a forceful picture of the horrible consequences of an atomic world war. You sympathise deeply with the characters in this film, the last members of the doomed human race, but you cannot really understand what it was that brought about that frightful catastrophe and what should be done to prevent such a catastrophe. The war broke out because of a chance misunderstanding. No one is innocent, and no one is guilty. Such a treatment of the problem disarms and discourages anyone looking for an answer to the burning question of the destiny of the world. The injustice of the bourgeois social order is condemned—from the standpoint of abstract humanism, true, but it is condemned nevertheless. It would therefore be a big mistake to fail to discriminate between apologists of capitalism, to whom humanism is a screen, and writers who take the side of man.

Capitalism in general and imperialism in particular turn democracy into an illusion—and at the same time capitalism engenders democratic aspirations in the masses, establishes democratic institutions, sharpens the antagonism between imperialism, which denies democracy, and the masses, which strive towards democracy.¹

¹ V. I. Lenin, 'Collected Works', Vol. 23, p. 13 (Russ. ed.).

For all its weaknesses abstract humanism is an advance in the development of democratic consciousness, a form of moral protest and ethical opposition to the official 'humanism' concocted according to the prescriptions of Lodge and Herter. In the final analysis, abstract humanism is our ally in upholding the dignity of man, in the battle against art that degrades the individual. It comes into conflict with the domination of money and profit, which turn human dignity into an exchange value.

By making their good and their human hero come into conflict with evil and inhuman bourgeois society realist writers teach us, with tremendous humanistic passion, to see the human in people; they proclaim the infinite value of man, they see his splendid spirit, and they call on their readers to treasure it. But to go no farther than that means telling only half the truth. Although they reject the anti-human nature of the exploiting society they conduct their criticism of it from within, thinking in categories and concepts that do not go beyond the framework of the bourgeois world. As a result, the artist dooms himself to a social near-sightedness that narrows his horizons. In his conception the laws governing the bourgeois world acquire a universal and absolute nature.

The most vulnerable spot in the writings of foreign critical realists is their positive programme. A writer is not obliged, of course, to provide answers to all the questions he poses, but both affirmation and negation are inseparably connected in art with the loftiness and sincerity of social and aesthetic ideals.

The 'angry young men,' as they are called in Britain, have written a number of critical books: Amis' *Lucky Jim*, Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* and John Wain's *Hurry On Down*. The heroes of these interesting books are moved by bold and noble impulses but they lack clear-cut ideals worth fighting for. Their emotional dissatisfaction does not lead them to the formulation of a conscious goal in life. Osborne's hero frankly states this. The same admission is made by the hero of Kerouac's *On the Road*. As they speed across America he is asked by one of his companions what is the

purpose of their wanderings. He replies that he doesn't know where they are going, or why. They simply have to be on the go.

Like the characters in their books, the 'angry young men' recognise the drabness of the bourgeois way of life; they long for a fresh breeze; they dream of arriving somewhere and finding something—but that's all.

The standpoint formulated by the American writer John Clayton, who says that he is on the side of the unnoticed, the inarticulate and the unwanted, on the side of all who suffer, no matter where they are, is typical of many contemporary realistic writers abroad. The Italian author Montella has dedicated one of his latest novels 'to all the Akaki Akakievich Bashmachkins of all times and peoples.' The glorious traditions of Gogol from which, in the words of Dostoyevsky, all of Russian literature stemmed are to this day a living heritage of progressive European literature. But after turning their backs on the official bourgeois doctrine contemporary critical realists often proclaim compassion and pity instead of struggle. Their humanism, which urges faith in man, involuntarily affirms lack of faith in constructive forces and the tragic impossibility of changing life. Thus, a sense of wretchedness is born. The poison of pessimism and despair corrodes even the courageous hero.

Such different writers as Remarque, Faulkner and Steinbeck reject the reality around them and seek a way out, but fail to find it. They are against fascist violence and oppression of the people, yet they do not accept the revolutionary transformation of life, they stand apart from communism.

While regarding the existing order as an evil, the critical realists look upon historical changes as something like geological cataclysms that bring men nothing but misfortune.

Robinson Crusoe is shipwrecked, but even though he is cast up on a deserted island he acquires a firm footing: the world smiles on him. He emerges victorious from his clash with life's misadventures. Defoe's novel reflects an optimism which bourgeois humanism subsequently lost.

Life showed that through the irony of history the hero who made a deserted island a comfortable place to live in turned the whole world into a capitalist jungle. The critical realists created a gallery of portraits of civilised vultures like Dreiser's Cowperwood, Rolland's Timon and Druon's Noel Schudler. These are strong, resolute, imperious characters, yet they are repulsive. They bring misfortune and sorrow to all who in one way or another come within the sphere of their activities, beginning with Schudler J. and ending with the obscure pearl diver, Kino, in Steinbeck's story 'The Pearl'.

The sympathies of the critical realists are wholly on the side of suffering man, on the side of Kino, for example, on whom fortune seems to have smiled at last, but then the treasure he finds becomes a source of great misfortune to him. Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* also poetises the will-power of an ordinary man, his long-suffering, calloused hands, and the elemental force of life. The heroic, monumental figure of the old fisherman seems to symbolise the invincible spirit of the people. He is confident that man was not created to suffer failure, that a man can be destroyed but he cannot be defeated.

That is the same principle Robinson Crusoe followed. The world-outlook of Hemingway himself, however, is inconsistent: he believes that the old man will not give in, that nothing can make him give up the fight, yet at the same time he believes that the old man's position is hopeless.

When an aesthetic ideal is limited to a single character, even if a heroic one, and takes in 'the horizon of one' but not the 'horizon of all,' humanism is deprived of optimistic inspiration and is incapable of resisting pessimism with sufficient vigour.

At the time of World War I, Romain Rolland, meditating together with his hero Clerambault, thought about people with anguished tenderness: 'But how to console them if you do not believe in the ideal by which they lived and which is killing them?'

And then the answer he had sought so long came to

him without his even noticing how it happened: 'You have to love people more than an illusion and more than the truth.'⁵

Rolland's postulate is a humanist's reaction to the capitalist structure of society, in which man is sheared of his human qualities and individuality is lost among forces hostile to it. Rolland resolutely takes the side of man and is against all the forces opposing man.

This dilemma characteristic of abstract humanism appears to be insolvable, but the innovatory nature of socialist humanism lies precisely in that it overcomes and removes the barrier between the common ideal of mankind and the interests of the individual.

In communist society man becomes himself. Socialist humanism makes one realise that man must get to know and to organise his own forces as social forces. Then he will no longer separate from himself a social force in the shape of a political force. That is the meaning of true human emancipation.

The Yugoslav theoreticians revealed their total bankruptcy when they declared, in the Programme of the Yugoslav League of Communists, that 'socialism cannot subordinate man's personal happiness to any higher aims because the highest aim of socialism is man's personal happiness.' They put forward that thesis as a new word in Marxism, as its further 'creative' development, although in fact it repeats the old and persistent song of the bourgeois propagandists that communist morality is a picture of the future that compensates the individuals for their present sufferings and disillusionment. Marx, polemising with the Hegelian philosophy, declared: 'The abolition of religion, as an

⁵ Chekhov expressed practically the same idea in his 'Story of an Old Gardner': 'Believing in God is not hard. The inquisitors believed in Him, and so did Biron and Arakcheyev. No, you must believe in Man.'

Kornei Chukovsky tells us that Chekhov's story was mutilated by the tsarist censor. The ending, which brought out the main idea of the story, was deleted and has not yet been restored in the Soviet editions of Chekhov.

illusory happiness of the people, is demanded by their *real* happiness.⁶

Unlike all other forms and types of humanism, socialist humanism is the only real concept of true happiness for all men, an ideal that can be attained. The goal of socialism is, of course, the personal happiness of each individual, but this cannot be achieved without a struggle for the happiness of all mankind.

Proceeding from the experience of the Great October Revolution, Romain Rolland resolves what had seemed to him the irreconcilable conflict between man and society. He discovers a truth that does not stand in opposition to man but rather helps him to become himself. That is the logic of the development of Rolland's writing, from *Clerambault* to *L'Ame Enchantée*, from 'being above the struggle' to the great historic truth of socialism.

The aesthetic ideal of writers who adopt the new creative method founded by Maxim Gorky affirms the universal content of socialist humanism. And it is on this basis that the writings of Gorky, Rolland, Martin Andersen-Nexo, Barbusse, Eluard and Neruda find a common meeting-ground.

The transformation of life through revolution was always a stumbling-block for abstract humanism. The necessity of a class struggle, a difficult, bitter struggle, has often alienated and frightened even honest foreign artists.

That it eliminates the chief weakness of abstract humanism, its contemplativeness, is what gives proletarian humanism its pioneering character. The humanism of Soviet art must indicate how to achieve the goal. As Anton Makarenko saw it, proletarian humanism

is not confined within the brackets of formal wishes, is not a literary pose. The banner of humanism is the banner not of a benevolent dream but of an invincible force.

That is why our humanism contains no thought of

⁶ K. Marx and F. Engels, 'Collected Works', Vol. I, p. 415 (Rss. ed.).

reconciliation. It has no flavour of inactive, verbal pacifism.⁷

Recognition of the class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat as the only real way of building a just world is what divides basically the two types of humanism. The significance of the individual is now measured by his place and role in the life of a revolutionary people, which, in the final analysis, also determines his role and place in the life of mankind.

Gorky's humanism breaks out of the exceedingly vague sphere of 'men and mankind' and gives the problem historical concreteness. This in its turn makes it possible really to examine the relations between the individual and the world, between man and mankind. The question is thus removed from the sphere of moral abstractions and placed on solid ground.

Even the title of two books of recent years in Russian and Ukrainian literature, Sholokhov's *Fate of A Man* and Stelmakh's *Human Blood Is Not Water*, show that the authors are concerned with man, his destiny, his life and his hard struggle for happiness. These books join in the controversy about humanism, militantly opposing the heroic image of the individual to the opinion that there are neither judges nor judged, merely victims or, as Gorky's Luka⁸ said: 'I have respect for crooks, too. Not even a flea but has its merits, the way I look at it. They're all of them black, they all of them jump.'

At the same time, both writers are against ignoring the individual, against regarding him exclusively as a means of attaining some end. In his review of Gribachov's poem 'Spring on the Pobeda Farm', a certain critic once exclaimed ecstatically: 'What if a man dies, as long as the cause triumphs!' With all the forces of their artistry Sholokhov and Stelmakh speak out against such a light-hearted, thoughtless, 'what-if-a-man-dies' attitude, against the brutality of an Uzelkov.⁹ To them blood is not 'water without kith

⁷ A. S. Makarenko, 'Works'. Vol. 7, p. 155 (Russ. ed.).

⁸ A character in Gorky's *The Lower Depths*.

⁹ A character from P. Nilin's novel *Cruelty*.

or kin, that you find in a cloud, or on a blade of grass, or in a lake, or in a well. Blood is only found on the ground. It is the life of fathers and children, the gentle blush of a maiden, the bold sparkle in a young man's eye, the brave deed of a warrior and the tender smile of a child.'

Stelmakh's novel is a stirring lyrical meditation on man and humanity. His characters undergo a unique trial of love, and only those who pass the test are judged worthy of the name of man.

From his consideration of people Stelmakh passes on to thoughts of mankind and of the spirit that which unites all men. He writes:

Life may take away those near and dear to him; it may take away love and happiness, but man remains a human being nevertheless. But if, however, hope, that vague mirage of tantalising and delusive fulfilment, is lost, man turns into a living corpse.

But Stelmakh would not be a follower of socialist realism if he stopped there. His consideration of man and the wise kindly spirit of mankind are inseparable from his consideration of the major historical events into which his characters are drawn and of their place in life. Through his character portrayals the novelist declares: industry, humaneness, truthfulness and other virtues are not enough to determine what a man is like; these virtues do not provide a true aesthetic evaluation of his character.

A proponent of abstract humanism in Stelmakh's novel is the schoolmaster Danilo Pidoprigora, a preacher of tolerance. Even before the revolution the idea of class struggle had seemed to him 'too primitive and rigid.' The novelist shows that such philanthropically-minded people are easily swayed by demagogy; they are incapable of orienting themselves among the contradictions of life. The illusion of universal fraternity drives Danilo into the arms of the counter-revolutionary band led by Petlyura. But the author has faith in man. Soon afterwards Danilo arrives at a bitter realisation of his mistake and deserts the band. Morally bruised and wounded, the former schoolmaster now yearns only for a quiet, peaceful life.

Wishing utterly to condemn an attitude of non-interference, Stelmakh draws another portrait, that of Danilo's cousin Miron. The traits of one are continued and developed in the other. A fine, kind-hearted man, Miron tries to remain on the sidelines, out of range of the battle, and finds himself an involuntary accomplice of the enemies of his people.

The hero of Soviet literature must be active. It is organically impossible for Soviet literature to poetise passive people who avoid struggle.

A new and heroic concept of the individual is being developed by Soviet literature. Our art wants to inspire the individual to feats of valour, to educate him to be a fighter and an active personality. The heroes of Stelmakh's novel are Communists and other active people who are consistent in their pursuance of the humanitarian ideal. They are an embodiment of man's dream of a free, unfettered, happy individual.

Miroshnichenko, Marchenko, Goritsvet and Nechuviter are among those who are paving the way to the future for others. At the same time, working to make others happy enriches them spiritually and develops them into the most humane of men.

The author's humanitarian attitude naturally leads him to expose those who conceal their indifference and cruelty with ultra-revolutionary phraseology about the end justifying the means, who forget about human beings in their work for the cause. The nickname 'leather jacket' in the novel is the opposite of the proud word 'man'. On the lips of Svirid Miroshnichenko 'leather jacket' is a synonym for heartlessness. The author 'slays' Kulnitsky with an apt detail when he describes Kulnitsky trying to comfort a sobbing woman in the following words: 'He patted her shoulder with his creaking leather sleeve.' Kulnitsky does not pass the test of humanism to which the characters in the novel are subjected.

The class struggle in a small village in Podolye develops beneath the pen of the gifted author into a significant

consideration of man and humainty. Stelmakh fiercely hates the shedding of blood but sees no other way of defeating the man-haters.

There is a memorable scene in Vera Panova's *Sentimental Novel* when an argument breaks out beside the corpse of Kushli, who was killed by the kulaks, an argument about why he was murdered.

'Don't try to prove to me this was a political murder,' the schoolmaster insists obstinately. 'It's nothing but an old family quarrel. Something wasn't divided the way it should have been a long time ago, before the revolution.'...

'A man has killed a man,' the school master goes on excitedly. 'Since the time of Cain and Abel man has been killing man and inventing excuses for it.' He rises and strides off across the moonlit meadow, small and frail, one of those stubborn creatures who would rather die than admit he was in the wrong; his head floated in the clear night like a luminescent ball....

It's incomprehensible, thought Sevastyanov, why a man who has obviously been unlucky and unhappy, who has led a life of hard work, should show such hostility towards the truth of the class struggle, which illuminates and explains everything. Is it really easier for him to live out his life in the dark? It will take a lot of hard work before we get the truth of the struggle into all heads, young and old....

From the very beginning Soviet literature has been putting the truth of the class struggle 'into all heads, young and old.' That is the highest type of humanism, the most consistent and effective.

What makes socialist humanism especially attractive is that it does not shut itself up in the micro-world of a single man, with his hopes and troubles, does not limit itself to consideration of one man's lasting value and right to personal happiness, but fights for the happiness of all.

Man is not a minute particle for the universe, which is what he turns out to be when the individual and history are depicted separately, but an inalienable unit of the human community. The world in man, or man in the world—such

is the graphic although conditional division of the two creative principles. The division is approximate if only because a true enrichment of the individual takes place only when man rises to almost inaccessible heights, not in order to retreat into proud isolation or give himself up to contemplation of the infiniteness of life, in which intelligent sympathy verges on indifferent scepticism, but in order to take upon himself the responsibilities, as well as the difficulties and dangers, of the trail-blazer.

From their own creative experience modern critical realists have come to realise the limitations of a humanism that detaches the individual from the world, and find themselves forced to travel the path from man to the world. Only on this path can man find his real strength. Soviet literature closely links each individual with the general 'state of the world'. The hero's realisation that he is a member of the world community and the cause he serves is a righteous cause develops in him a feeling of personal responsibility for everything that takes place on earth; it elevates him and makes him feel his worth.

The heroes of the 'lost generation' of Remarque, Aldington and Dos Passos returned from the war broken, empty men for whom life had lost its flavour. The war had pushed them out of society, opened their eyes to the 'values' of bourgeois civilisation, and made them doubt all ideals. The burden of civilisation is for them a curse weighing man down. They sought to shake off the fetters of the social man and to find a 'natural' state in comradeship, love and friendship.

Proceeding from a different, an inspiring historical experience, Soviet writers show how their heroes develop and display all their possibilities after the revolution and the Civil War dig them out of their narrow world of private existence, bring them up against big social problems that must be solved, and force them to ponder on the destiny of classes, nations, and the world. From out of the midst of a downtrodden people man rises to conscious historical creativity. As a result consciousness of the value of each individual increases immeasurably. Chapayev speaks of this

to Klychkov¹⁰ when he compares his former reckless daring with the new feeling that he is necessary to the common cause and is responsible for this cause.

The less progressive the social structure the more significant is abstract humanism. When, for instance, Hans Fallada wrote his novel *Jeder stirbt für sich allein* during the Nazi dictatorship it was an act of civic courage and deep love of man. And the books of the West-German writer Heinrich Böll, filled as they are with love and compassion for man, expose the order of things in Federal Germany. But when a Soviet artist judges people from the standpoint of abstract love of man he is retreating from a life that aims at educating the new man of communist society, and his work is bound to be a failure.

The universal in the destiny of each person in our time is inseparably bound up with the communistic factor because the communist spirit is the highest expression of the universal spirit, and to deviate from this means to lose genuinely human qualities. The social and the historical are not labels on a man but actual ways through which character is manifested. The characters in Volodin's play *Five Evenings* are vulnerable for the very reason that they do not quite face the world. Man's social life, says the play, not only does not make for a broader mental outlook but, rather, leads to a one-sided attitude towards things. It is no wonder that the author fails in what is most important—to evoke sympathy in his characters as human beings. To the end they remain pitiful and lost.

Each period has confronted literature with questions that imperiously demand answers. The question asked by our period is: How is man to live the communist way? In order to answer this now when communism is already a matter of the discernible future the writer must make the man of today tangible, must present an artistically convincing image of the new man.

'What, indeed, is he like, this man of the future? How are we to recognise the characteristics of this man? What

¹⁰ Characters from D. Furmanov's novel *Chapayev*.

are the signs that will tell us?' D. Kozhevnikov asks, in the name of today's writers, in his latest story *Meet Baluyev*.

Who is right? Those who believe that all should be forgiven, that faults should be balanced by the virtues everyone possesses, that every man is deserving of pity? Or, on the contrary, is I. Kupriyanov right when he says that the 'little people' do not interest the artist, that they are not the ones who will go along the road into communism? The moment the young researcher in Aleshin's play *Everything Is Left for the People* displays weakness, the stern critic declares him a faint-hearted intellectual, and his sweetheart is not trusted because of her inner confusion.

Should everyone or only the chosen be taken along on the 'time machine'? That is the problem posed in 'No Room for Him Among Us', a story by the Czech writer Jiri Marek. In the beginning the characters, members of a socialist work team, seem to agree with I. Kupriyanov. They mercilessly expel from their midst a team-member Philip, for not doing his job properly. But after pondering on the new meaning of life and on what living in the socialist way means, they gradually come to realise that by washing their hands of Philip they have taken the line of least resistance. They are sorry for Philip, a man no longer young, burdened with a large family, and incapable of setting records, but this does not imply all-forgiveness. When they decide to take him back on their team they realise this decision is the first step towards changing both him and themselves.

There are those who think that to display universal humanism means to be tolerant of human weaknesses and faults. Love of man is made a synonym for pity and an unwillingness to make demands of others. But socialist humanism is characterised by a lofty moral exactingness. That is still another way in which it differs in principle from abstract humanism. The path to communism is open to all, but each must win his right to enter communism. That is what determines the moral standards which Soviet literature sets its hero.

Through the medium of art the Soviet writer is encour-

aging the development of the new man. Affirming the ideal, he does not embellish reality or invent anything, but tries to make clear the trend of the forward movement, the beauty of the Soviet people's advance towards communism.

Great historical changes are forcing the literature of critical realism as well to put the question more trenchantly of man's responsibility for everything that takes place with his participation and before his eyes. Anthony, hero of Aldington's *All Men Are Enemies*, used his love to fence himself off from the world, but such a solution is no longer acceptable to many progressive artists abroad. Crossing the boundaries of individualism, they reach the conclusion so neatly summed up by Nazim Hikmet, an exponent of socialist poetry, when he asked: 'If I don't burn, and you don't burn, and we don't burn who will dissipate the darkness?'

Ravik, hero of Remarque's *Arc de Triomphe* comes to the conclusion that if each forgives and forgets injustice the world will remain unchanged and in the power of brute force. But Ravik's prescription is activity by the lone*, still cannot draw the only correct conclusion—that there must be a collective protest and collective action.

In one of his poems, Bertold Brecht describes a man telling about an accident. As he tells it, the accident becomes a concept that has nothing fatalistic about it. There is no place for superstition or the power of the constellations. There is only the power of mistakes. Brecht indicates the real way out—that man must be educated to have faith in his own powers and to be an active revolutionary.

When he portrays a positive character the socialist realist writer takes his stand, first and foremost, on a dialectical solution of the problem of the determinism of the character he has created and his historical activity.

Gorky spoke of 'growth and resistance to environment' as the main trait of a positive character. A positive character, he said, does not place all the blame on circumstances or find excuses for his faults, but holds that man is personally responsible for what happens.

* Individual. He clearly sees that 'If I don't burn, and you don't burn'.

out the world.¹ It is becoming a real force, taking shape in the powerful movement of peace supporters. The preaching of misanthropy now enjoys less and less support. Hopeless pessimism and statements claiming that people have nothing left to do but wallow in the stench of their own putrefaction, as Randolph Stow put it, are becoming less widespread than they used to be.

Capitalism and humanism are forces in fundamental opposition to each other. Capitalism, as it was defined more than a century ago by Marx and Engels, remains true to its nature, alienating man from man, dehumanising the personality, creating hostile relations between freedom and historical necessity, between society and the individual.

But in our time the ideal of humanism, freedom and peace is a social force that no sensible politician can afford to ignore. The bourgeoisie, compelled to play up to the humanistic awareness of the millions of ordinary people, tries at the same time to influence and subordinate this awareness, to divert it from being spontaneously drawn to socialism, to oppose socialist humanism with a demagogic imitation of 'humanism' to which a universal character is ascribed.

West-European and American politicians are giving more and more thought to the weaknesses of their camp in the ideological battle. The crucial weakness of American society, says Walter Lippman, is that the people have no inspiring goal to unite them.

The ideologists of capitalism are acutely aware of the lack of ideals that would help them to persuade people of the necessity of the existing order of things.

They energetically insist that modern capitalism has been miraculously transformed into a society founded on the principles of economic humanism and is the only society where the flowering of the individual is possible.

Ideologists like Herter and Lodge are prepared to re-

¹ Even bourgeois moralists and philosophers cannot help admitting that 'Marxism has saved humanistic ethics from its distortion in capitalist society' (Herbert Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism: A Critical Analysis*, New York, 1958, p. 202).

Coincidence and pressure from outside forces have never been an excuse in the aesthetics of socialist realism, for inactivity or passiveness. On the contrary, our art tends to portray an individual who overcomes all difficulties and emerges victorious. Even removed by force of exceptional circumstances from the general stream, when he is left alone with his conscience and has complete 'freedom of choice,' he will nevertheless choose the only path possible for him, the path of struggle, will choose to follow the line of greatest resistance (Fadeyev's *Young Guard*, Sholokhov's *Fate of A Man*, Aligher's *Zoya*, etc.).

The source of the historical optimism of the Soviet man, even when he is 'lonely, and alone, and weak, and small,' (Tvardovsky) is in the fact that he is 'a particle of the strength' that is known as the people.

From the time of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* literature has had a hero with an ideal. But merely having an ideal is one thing; putting it into practice in one's own life, like the self-improving heroes of Leo Tolstoy, is another matter, and exerting a moral influence on others, like Roland's Christophe, is still another. Finally, the next stage is to fight for the people and with the people. It is at this stage that a truly democratic, heroic concept of man arises.

In contradistinction to reactionary theories that contrast the heroic with the human, Soviet literature sees the moral standard and the highest example of humanism to lie precisely in the heroic.

But today the concept of the heroic does not end with the domain of morality; it is measured not by personal merit alone but is made directly dependent on man's participation in remaking the world. This explains the failure of attempts to elevate to the level of a modern hero a person who lacks drive, even though he may be a fine character. The critics of the schematic hero who invariably won out over all his opponents were in many ways right. What we have in mind is the direction in which the hero is moving, his substance, the objective meaning of his views and actions.

In his story 'The Captains', Hans Leberecht depicts the

conflict between a strong, forceful personality, Metslang, chief engineer of a factory, and outwardly timid and indecisive person, design engineer Priit Koppel. At first the young people at the factory like Metslang, a real captain, as he is called in the township of Suur-Sond. Yet little by little they come to take the side of Koppel, who has worked out a new method of gas extraction which the chief engineer does not want to introduce. In the end, the new method wins natural and deserved success. Under pressure of public opinion Metslang is forced to give in and reassess his actions. Koppel is stronger than Metslang because he has the truth on his side, and now it is he whom the young workers call 'Captain'. Koppel is of the same type as Ivan Vikhrov,¹¹ a man who is incapable of making a compromise with his conscience. These men are not the kind who always rush into open battle, but they possess a tremendous reserve of strength. They are guided by faith in the justice of the Soviet way of life, under which the truth is bound to win out.

The positive hero is necessary not in order to embellish reality or represent the desirable as the natural, even if it involves a shift of the real proportions. The hero of realistic art helps us to understand the objective course of life, to register aspirations and human qualities that acquire the significance of historical necessity at a definite stage in history for the class that guides the progress of society. The positive character is positive not because he has no faults or weaknesses but because, as Fucik put it, 'at the *decisive moment* he does what is called for by the interests of human society.'¹²

How should the hero be depicted? Should he be portrayed 'with his failings and sins, with all his human entrails,' or as a 'fantastic figure, that is, vivid, yet, in many respects, castrated'¹³? To this day writers are grappling

¹¹ The hero of Leonid Leonov's novel 'Russian Forest' (in Russian).

¹² J. Fucik, 'Selected Writings' (Moscow, 1952), p. 143 (Russ. ed.).

¹³ D. Furmanov 'Selected Works', 3 Vols. (Moscow, 1952), Vol. 3, p. 231 (in Russian).

with the dilemma formulated with such polemic sharpness by D. Furmanov, author of *Chapayev*. That it has not yet lost its acuteness is illustrated, for one thing, by V. Nekrasov's recent criticism of Dovzhenko's 'Poem About the Sea'. The dilemma stated by Furmanov confronts an author as soon as he seeks the 'key' to what he has conceived and is about to write.

It is important to emphasize that the idea formulated by Furmanov points to a still more complex law. When they consider the principles of delineating the character of the hero, writers seek the most effective way of bringing out the historical meaning, significance and content of a man's actions, the dialectical relationship between what a person is 'of himself' and the objective importance he acquires as a participant in historical events.

Each author follows his own road in solving this problem. But diversified though their creative personalities are, Soviet writers are united by a common approach to the ordinary man as the maker of history. Abstract axioms and rules about what the positive hero should be like do not exist for them. What they ask themselves is how the character should act in order to measure up to the demands of the revolution and of history. Figuratively speaking, not abstract 'virtues' but real actions produce the positive hero. To be more precise, it is not 'virtues' that determine his actions but actions that determine his virtues.

The right to be called a hero of our time is not something handed out to everyone. It has to be won. Both Koppels and Mityasovs¹⁴ are often encountered in real life. The aim of literature is not to simplify and schematize complex processes of life, not to slight the Mityasovs with a condescending air or artificially to model them on the Voropayevs¹⁵ but to develop an inner emulation of the Voropayevs.

When an author surrenders high ethical standards, he fails, as a rule, to accomplish what he sets out to. That was what happened to E. Evtushenko, for instance, in his

¹⁴ Character in V. Nekrasov's story 'Home Town'.

¹⁵ The main character in Pavlenko's *Happiness*.

poems about a college student who was called a nihilist by all his despairing relatives and about a young woman who works at a shoe factory.

The poet had the best of intentions: to portray an ordinary working girl and an ordinary young man. But we do not learn anything about them apart from the fact they both like ultra-fashionable clothes and the student is constantly shocking his relatives—'conscientious working folk'—although the poet is convinced that both are capable of great things. Instead of indicating traits of character that lead to great things he limits himself to superficialities. A liking for narrow trousers or fashionable frocks neither proves nor refutes anything. It is hardly right to make breadth of spirit in any way dependent on breadth of trousers. Evtushenko lets himself get so carried away by polemics with contemporary philistinism that he himself falls victim to philistine ideas and runs aground as soon as he sets out on a bold voyage in the wake of his hero.

Socialist realism aims at raising human values. Its ideal is the well-rounded individual, and therefore it sets its literary characters high standards.

Virgin Soil Upturned by Sholokhov, 'Stars in the Day-time' by Bergolts, 'The Tiny Little Bird' by Kakhar and 'Ice Diary' by Smuul reveal the unusual in the commonplace, the great in the ordinary. Their authors do not contrast the ordinary to the exceptional, the routine to the heroic. The hero of these books is the plain working man, and he is a source of lofty poetry because he withstands the test of life.

The Italian neo-realists strive to depict the man of the masses, a man like many others. Kinship with his fellow men is the source of the strength of this hero, who is endowed with attractive human qualities. But whereas the heroes of the classical realists were capable of spiritual development and self-improvement, the heroes of the neo-realists possess all their various traits from the very outset; there is both good and bad in them, and these make themselves apparent in different ways under different circumstances. Still, the hero is not a mechanical mixture of the

great and the small, of virtues and vices, of nobleness and baseness, as Somerset Maugham claims in his book *The Summing Up*.

In the case of Vasco Pratolini, Alberto Moravia and Carlo Levi the complexity of man does not turn into an equal balance of his traits. Their vision, sharpened by sympathy, helps them to see the predominance of the good over the evil and the base, instead of going in for a collection of faults and virtues.

Soviet literature has gone immeasurably farther in its study of man, although our opponents abroad maintain that the new man can arise only in the future and that to search for him at present is hopeless. They are ready to depict the Soviet author as a Diogenes searching in vain with a lantern, in broad daylight, for at least one genuine person.

The play 'Irkutsk Story' by A. Arbuzov describes the birth of a new, communist man in the thick of life itself, in a Soviet collective. The guiding motif of the play is constant movement, ascent. The characters are on the road. They think, talk and argue a great deal about the road, and the play ends with wishes for a happy journey. The characters in the play are the crew of a big dragline excavator. This has symbolic meaning in the play because in Russian it is called a 'walking', that is, a 'forward-moving', excavator, and Victor's suggestion that Valentina should be taken onto the 'walker' has both a literal and a figurative meaning. The excavator operators take her into their collective and at the same time take her along with them on the road to communism.

The concepts of the road and happiness often go together in the play when the characters speak about their lives and their future. But the road along which the heroes of the mid-twentieth century march towards communism is a road that has its steep rises and its turns. The playwright makes the surmounting of difficulties an artistic principle. This applies even to the new-born twins, to whom the chorus extends the following message: 'Let us wish Lenchka and Fedka luck. May their road not be easy and smooth.'

The heroine of the play, Valentina, is an unimportant

person whom, one might think, it would be easy to pass without noticing in our heroic times. But the artist who adheres to socialist realism approaches people with an optimistic hypothesis since they are worthy not so much of sympathy as of faith.

The hardest misfortunes and trials fall to the lot of the 'people in the queue', the 'man in the street', as they put it nowadays in British and American literature, and their only support is the author's compassion. If a critical realist had it in his power to protect a defenceless character he would do so. Playwright Arbusov, on the contrary, places Valentina in a particularly difficult situation: he makes her experience the grief of losing the man she loves through death. The ten members of the excavator crew, real friends of Sergei and Valentina, are ready, out of the goodness of their heart, to do the work of eleven, as though nothing had happened to Sergei, and turn his wages over to Valentina and her children. But the first to speak out against this degrading pity is Victor, the one who loves her the most. 'I don't want her to be given money just for nothing! Sergei turned her into a real person. I respect her now.' Respect goes hand in hand with demands. The playwright poetizes the hero's readiness to face up to life as a supreme virtue. Valentina becomes a member of the crew. And this is a big victory for the 'little person', who is given a start on the road to communism—but not out of pity.

There is a vulnerable spot in the artistic conception of 'Irkutsk Story', however. The spectator finds it difficult to say how the heroine would have behaved under ordinary circumstances: if the misfortune had not occurred, would she have joined the crew of the excavator or would she have remained outside the mainstream of life?

Soviet art strives to express with increasing fullness and depth the remarkable breadth of the process by which the ordinary man is drawn into the heroic work of building the new life.

'It's hard being a human being nowadays,' says the main character in V. Kozhevnikov's novel, *Meet Baluyev*. 'Be-

sides his job and his speciality, a lot is demanded of him in the way of spiritual, unwritten duties.'

That thought could serve as an epigraph in books about the people who are entering communism.

The strength of Soviet literature has always lain in the fact that it creates positive heroes worthy of emulation, men and women who have blazed new trails and whose life is an example. That cannot be done by contrasting the hero to the ordinary man. Great though the distance may be between Levinson and Morozka,¹⁶ between Basov and Guseinov,¹⁷ between Voropayev and Zhurina,¹⁸ between Davydov and Arzhanov,¹⁹ and between Baluyev and Podgorjana,²⁰ they do not exist without each other. It is in the relationships between them that there arises the ideological and aesthetic problem of the work, its literary logic.

In works of Soviet literature there is no aesthetic barrier between the character who leads and the character who is led. Levinson would not have been what he was if he had not dreamed about happiness for Morozka; there are times when Basov envies Guseinov's push and energy; at the crucial moment Lena Zhurina proves to have a loftier spirit than the man from whom she received so much; Davydov is surprised to discover the depths of folk wisdom possessed by the silent Arzhanov.

It is in place here to recall the words of Ragozin, one of the characters in Konstantin Fedin's two connected novels.²¹ He says: '... you will bow to your desire, say, to have a communist society when a society like that does not yet exist. And you will grow accustomed to bowing to your desires. But you will get out of the habit of dealing with people... You should go to the people now, and find at least a little something of the future in them.' Those words furnish a key to one of the big and difficult aesthetic problems of socialist realism.

¹⁶ Characters in Fadeyev's *The Nineteen*.

¹⁷ Characters in Krymov's 'Tanker Dervent' (in Russian).

¹⁸ Characters in Pavlenko's *Happiness*.

¹⁹ Characters in Sholokhov's *Virgin Soil Upturned*.

²⁰ Characters in Kozhevnikov's *Meet Baluyev*.

²¹ *Early Joys* and *No Ordinary Summer*.

A characteristic feature of Soviet art, the art of socialist humanism, is its ability to bring out the educational aspect of revolutionary activity, to show the education of the builders of the new society.

—FROM *Voprosy Literaturi*, no. 12, 1960 (MOSCOW).

Some Trends in Modern Bourgeois Aesthetics

G. KURSANOV
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THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON AESTHETICS ATTENDED by 400 scholars from more than 20 countries was held in Athens in Autumn, 1960. Though nearly all the chief European and a number of American countries were represented, no one had been invited from the Asian (except for Japan) and African countries (which is quite characteristic of the European organisers of the congress).

The congress in Athens, too, was attended for the first time by a Soviet delegation whose aim it was to elucidate the cardinal principles of Marxist-Leninist aesthetics and reveal the historic significance of the art of socialist realism. To strengthen peace and friendship between the nations, the Soviet scholars did their best to establish friendliest ties with their counterparts in other countries.

'The present state of aesthetic science'—such was the general theme of the congress. Here, it should be noted that the representatives of bourgeois science have been dealing with a wide range of questions on aesthetics and the development of art.

The dicta of life have compelled the bourgeois aesthetes and philosophers to pose and evolve urgent and vital problems of aesthetics and art. The conclusions they have reached on these matters, however, are highly paradoxical. Besides accepting the aesthetic theories based to a greater or lesser extent on classical art, the bourgeois aesthetes

give predominance to the theory justifying the various modernist and religious-mystical trends in art.

* * *

The plenary and sectional sessions of the congress, as well as the press reports of its activities were continuously marked by a conflict of ideas between Marxist-Leninist aesthetic science and the various trends of modern bourgeois aesthetics and philosophy. We must observe at once, however, that the representatives of bourgeois aesthetics included a number of progressive and democratic groups. This was particularly true of the art critics and historians, to say nothing of the artists and writers many of whom were guided by critical realism and did not at all follow the 'advices' of the reactionary bourgeois aesthetes and philosophers.

The undisguised enemies of Marxism, the ideologues of reactionary monopoly capital, took a truculent position at the congress, deliberately distorting our scientific, revolutionary outlook, never hesitating to resort to the crudest means. This was exemplified by one American delegate who brashly announced that there could, allegedly, be no talk of Marxist aesthetics since Marx had only made isolated references to art, but never dealt with aesthetics specially.

But this was a primitive piece of legerdemain, for Marx's 'isolated references', as is known, are worth volumes written by the bourgeois art theoreticians. It is equally well known that Marx and his continuators created a scientific theory of art, disclosing its essence as a social factor, revealing its enormous role in social life. The creation of a scientific theory of art, indeed, proved possible only on the basis of the scientific, dialectical-materialistic conception of social phenomena.

Marxist-Leninist aesthetics, too, were subjected to other subtler and stealthier attacks at the congress; and it is upon these that we would like to concentrate.

Reactionary bourgeois aesthetics presently reveal the following most characteristic tendencies: firstly, the approach to art from the point of view of positivism in all

its varieties; secondly, the dissemination of various psychological theories, particularly of Freud and depth psychology; and thirdly, the penetration of mystical-religious conceptions in aesthetics. To this we may add that modern bourgeois aesthetic thought, like modern bourgeois philosophy as a whole, is simply unable to produce integral and consistent conceptions at all worthy of such bourgeois philosophers of the past as Hegel and others of his calibre. Bourgeois aesthetics today are marred by extreme eclecticism, the mixture of subjective and objective idealism, vulgar materialism and mechanism.

Let us examine the 'modish' semantic views in modern aesthetics. The British, American, and Austrian aesthetes at the congress advanced from the position of semantic philosophy claiming that art was to be regarded as a 'language'. They argued that the creativity of the artist was limited to the function of creating a language in art, and that the entire progress of art, indeed, was progress only in the sphere of the external, 'linguistic' forms of artistic creation. Though the language of a work of art, and its complement of artistic media are indubitably important components of art, it would be the height of bigotry and empty formalism to limit all social meaning of art and its logical historical development to the linguistic form alone! The modern bourgeois aesthetes, as we see, have taken a great step backwards, as compared with Hegel who proclaimed the indivisibility of form and content in art, and their unity determining both the value and meaning of a work of art. Nor has anything of value been contributed by phenomenism. Though pointing to the 'confusion and crisis' in modern aesthetics, phenomenism does not fill the breach, claiming as it does that the chief thing in aesthetics is the phenomenological description of an artistic experiment. For this signifies that bourgeois aesthetics can only reach the superficial, external, i.e., the phenomenological view of artistic phenomena.

The most pretentious trend of positivist aesthetics is that known as 'neo-naturalism'. This was championed at the congress by the American philosopher T. Munro, editor of the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*.

At a plenary session of the congress, Munro presented the philosophical foundation of his aesthetic doctrine as follows: naturalism (or 'neo-naturalism' according to the 'latest' terminology) is bent upon the precise portrayal of reality. The faithful portrayal of the 'facts' is more valuable than expression of 'the beautiful or noble' in naturalistic art, according to Munro. Contemporary 'western neo-naturalism', Munro claims, includes elements of Greek materialism, the humanism of the Renaissance, the positivism of Comte, the evolutionism of Spencer, the materialistic determinism of Marx, and the existentialism of Sartre, though differing from all of these. What motley eclecticism!

But the chief thing in Munro's doctrine is its typical positivism, for he himself speaks of his interest in semantics and 'philosophical analysis', an interest which he shares with positivism. In the main, naturalist aesthetics must deal with the various facts of man's artistic activity. Thus, we once more are confronted with narrow and limited empiricism incapable of solving the greater problems of art.

Extremely important in principle is Munro's statement that 'naturalism, to all intents and purposes, refutes the Marxist contention of the struggle of the classes, and economic determination in the development of culture and art.' Munro, in general, is not at all original in this, for there is hardly a bourgeois ideologue today who does not deny the Marxist theory of class struggle. As for the contention regarding 'economic determinism', Marx never averred that art was directly dependent on economics. Marx, Engels, and Lenin determinedly opposed such simplification and vulgarisation of Marxism.

Marxist-Leninist aesthetics cover all the complex and many-faceted contacts between art and the various social processes and phenomena, regardless of what Munro and the other bourgeois philosophers may say. Disclosed particularly is the potent influence exercised on the development of art by the policy of the ruling classes and state power which command all the means necessary for this. That this influence is very great indeed is shown by numerous examples. As is known, the film-workers of Italy and USA—even of

Hollywood!—have recently come out against the direct and crude interference of the authorities in the creative work of the film world.

Marxist-Leninist aesthetics, for their part show that art as a form of social consciousness enjoys relatively independent development. The complex and varied history of artistic creation is marked by the production of such treasures which preserve their value and meaning, exactly as they are, for a series of epochs.

What has 'economic determinism' to do with this? It is evident, surely, that the bourgeois philosophers and scholars of aesthetics, so inimical to Marxism, have been distorting our outlook and vulgarising it, for they have only a crude and highly superficial idea of its context. It is an old maxim that 'ignorance offers a poor argument!'

The decisive development of all social phenomena indubitably hinges on society's economic foundation. And this pertains fully to the development of art as well. But the effect of this determining factor is neither immediate nor direct, for it is brought to bear through a series of intermediaries, through the intricate and paradoxical process of art's development—in closest contact with the other forms of ideology and the entire political life of society.

Returning to Munro, we should particularly note that despite his 'realistic' and 'down-to-earth' positions he eventually comes to affirm the superiority of 'mystical and religious art' over art directly concerned with reality. Hence the exaltation of the myths and faiths and the animadversion of the scientific elements in art. This is likewise characteristic of the whole of modern positivist philosophy which, for all its 'realism' and 'empiricism' winds up on the reactionary 'foundation' of various divine revelations, down to proving the existence of God through 'religious experimentation'.

Characteristic of reactionary bourgeois aesthetics are the spreading psychological conceptions about art, conceptions kindred mainly to the mystical ideas of Freud and 'depth psychology' in general. The congress in Athens was not only marked by a series of reports of this kind, but also

G. Duron, is the great negation of all standards and categories of classical art, of style, harmony, beauty, etc. What could be wilder! Abstractionism, true enough, is quite alien to the sense of harmony and beauty in artistic forms, not to mention the chief thing—its hostility to content of thought in a work of art. This is tantamount to the negation of all that is great and splendid in art, the pigmies' denial of the giants. How can anyone talk of a 'great renewal' and especially of a 'new epoch' in culture and art, while denying everything truly great in art?

Abstract art which represents artistic fantasy's complete flight from life, is deeply alien to the people, in its essence. This is most clearly shown by the fact that the masses do not frequent the abstractionist exhibitions: the 'plain people' move spontaneously towards realistic art, to that which is vital, which is filled with lofty, noble and splendid feelings and ideas. Abstract art is the food of the sated, pseudo-artistic élite with perverted tastes, of the group of anarchistic bourgeois intellectuals who have lost all ties with the masses, of indeed never had such ties. Among the representatives of abstract art there are, of course, some few progressive, cultural figures who attempt to use this medium as a protest against the predominating bourgeois culture, its decadent morals, canons, etc. But these are but a handful and do not shape the social basis of modernist art.

To bolster the authority of this art, the modern bourgeois philosophers and scholars of aesthetics have been attempting to give it a 'theoretical' foundation, resorting, first of all, to the ideas of 'depth psychology', as already mentioned. Thus, Tsatsos, the same referred to before, declared that the abstractionist artist dissected his object, abstracting one aspect of it or another, and drawing the resulting image accordingly. And this, allegedly, expressed his "freedom of spirit", his inner world's independence of all external, 'alien' influences. The process of the work produced the hypertrophy of the 'irrational element', filling the opus with allogical content.

The irrational and the unconscious, the deep, dark instincts—such are the sources of the sick fractures, the form-

less and confused 'images', of the fantastic chunks dished up in lieu of the beautiful human shape.

An 'original' explanation and 'justification' of abstractionism was offered by the Italian scholar of aesthetics G. Facchi in his speech characteristically entitled: 'From the Primitive to the Abstract.' He claimed that abstractionism took its source from the psycho-physical trauma of infancy: from birth itself, from the time of weaning, from the nostalgia for the 'initial state'. That was the source of all that was vague, mysterious, and indefinite, the psychic depths from which the artist drew his craving to lend expression to all these inclinations. It was this that explained the distortions of his organisms. In short, we are confronted with the newest manifestation of the split consciousness characteristic of the spiritually broken man ejected from normal life. And this, in the last analysis, has its causes in society torn by social cataclysms and conflicts. But the split, unhappy and sick consciousness creating abstractionism in art is no justification of the latter, but on the contrary spells its condemnation. It is no accident, therefore, that this art derives its 'theoretic' foundation from the reactionary catechisms of irrationalism, of Freudian mysticism profoundly inimical to science and reason.

Despite this content of abstractionism there are not a few bourgeois aesthetes who regard abstract art as something of a 'new renaissance'. In his thesis, 'On Prophecy in Modern Art', P. Michelis, one of the organisers of the congress, concluded that abstractionism, as yet vague and undetermined, nonetheless offered a 'prophecy', a 'presentiment' of the world's future. If this art is still unclear and incomprehensible to many, insist the apologists of abstractionism, everyone is sure to understand it ultimately.

One would like to know where they found their 'logic'? What can cultured mankind derive from an art that conveys neither truth nor beauty?

In a number of countries, there are many, among them even bourgeois artists and scholars of aesthetics, who are critical of abstractionism, rejecting its 'revelations' and refuting its anti-humane trend. The Greek art critic and

historian of architecture Konstantinides, for instance, spoke up sharply against abstractionist art, declaring that he could not understand it, that it touched no aesthetic emotions, and contradicted all the canons of the beautiful, and especially the beauty of classical art. The same vein was struck by several other art critics and scholars of aesthetics, who drew scathing comparisons between the shapelessness and ugliness of the abstract '*chefs-d'oeuvre*' and the great works of classical art. All this deserves to be welcomed, of course.

But while complaining of the 'bacchanalia of abstractionism' annihilating form and beauty in art, they often preach the artist's departure from the reality of his times; they see the future of art with a jaundiced eye and return to the old theory of 'art for art's sake'. It was in this spirit that the French aesthete Rene Eugé appealed for 'an ascent to the Acropolis,' for contemplation of its magnificence, and the attempt to save art from the 'modern Minotaur,' i.e., from modern science and technology menacing the very existence of art.

All these conclusions reveal the helplessness of bourgeois aesthetics, their inability to solve the fundamental problems of art or to determine its place and role in society. The very fact that such catechisms are delivered is indicative of the despondency and pessimism, of the complete indifference to the ideals of the future and the realities of life on the part of a certain section of the bourgeois intelligentsia. We Marxists highly appreciate the classical art of the past, but it is not passively that we contemplate its works. It is through the latter that we learn of life in the one epoch or another, in them that we find the progressive ideas of humanism, democracy, and high civic duty marking the great works of art of various peoples at various times. It was on this plane that one of the Soviet delegates delivered his speech on the significance of Leonardo da Vinci.

Of marked importance during the work of the congress were the interesting reports of the Czech delegates, and particularly M. Novak's talk, 'Problems of Progress and Art,' and K. Shvatik's report, 'The Aesthetic Values and Social Functions of Art,' as well as the reports of the Polish

scholars of aesthetics, particularly S. Morawski's 'Realism as an Aesthetic Category,' and a number of other lectures. The speeches of the Czech and Polish delegates were received with deep attention and, on the whole, played a vital role in the general struggle on behalf of the principles of true realism in art versus the unscientific bourgeois aesthetic theories and views.

In the capitalist countries, too, there are not a few really progressive thinkers in the sphere of aesthetics as well, people who stand up against the bourgeois ideology and conception of art. This was exemplified at the congress by the Greek art theoretician G. Imbriotis who presented his interesting thesis, 'Art and Science.' In this talk, Professor Imbriotis consistently refuted the reactionary view that science was limited to the cognition of external phenomena, while art, owing to its 'mystical nature,' could allegedly penetrate to the essence of being and 'approach the absolute' truth. Though there were qualitative differences between art and science, said Imbriotis, the two were not necessarily separated by an unbridgeable gulf.

More than that, the two had quite a number of things in common. Whereas science resorted to generalisations, studying the laws of existence, 'individualistic' art, too, engaged in generalisations, since it typified living reality. The chief thing that united them, however, was their combined influence upon social progress. It goes without saying, concluded Imbriotis, that this refers to progressive and not to mystical art which seeks its source in the supernatural and can, therefore, contribute nothing to progress. All these profoundly true premises attest to the force and urgency of the ideas of this progressive Greek scholar.

* * *

The clash of opinions over abstractionist art showed that the future of art could not be a matter of indifference to those destined to speak in its name and formulate its theories. Many of the scholars of aesthetics, to do them justice, determinedly rejected abstractionism, believing that this was the path to the dissolution of art. Disagreement, however, pre-

vailed among the representatives of bourgeois aesthetics where the future development of art was concerned. Instead of examining the progressive art of today and attempting to see how the finest traditions of art's centuries old development were making themselves felt through life itself, linking the past with the present and illuminating the path to the future, some of the non-Marxist aesthetes attempted to prove that art had already rounded its peak, and that its 'golden age' lay far behind. These theoreticians voiced the motto: 'Back to the classical art of old!' Others who realised that development could not spell a simple return to former stages attempted to peer into the future, but could find little of solace there.

Characteristic and worthy of note was the trend expressed by the Italian scholar of aesthetics, Professor Guido Calogero of the University of Rome in his thesis: 'Art and the World of the Future.' He attempted to link the development of art with the profound changes in social life. Regrettably, he said nothing at all about the social structure of the contemporary world, about the birth of the new world filled with unprecedented possibilities for the development of art. Utter indifference to political thought left its impress on the speeches of many other bourgeois aesthetes as well; and it was this that enfeebled their discourses and arguments.

For all that, Professor Calogero's attempt to link the future of art with the real, social processes served to distinguish his thesis among the mass of the others, many of which never transcended the purely 'metaphysical considerations.' Fairly widespread in modern bourgeois philosophy is the opinion that the technical revolution and the unprecedented development of technology are incompatible with the development of the individuality and truly humane relations between people.

There has been much talk of the 'mechanisation' of human existence, something allegedly devastating and reducing people to be slaves of technology. Calogero, too, pointed to this tendency, imagining 'the world of the future' as one of automatised people and ideas. 'We shall be supplied with all the calculations,' he said, 'but we shall also

find ourselves in the grip of the formulae, confined to the world of figures and diagrams that will lend us confidence and rid us of the freedom of doubt. We shall have fewer anxieties and, perhaps, fewer joys which so often evolve from victory over adversity must necessarily precede the former. We shall be more serene, but also more automatised in a world stripped of the risk of adventure.'

From this view of the future world, a 'tranquil' and 'secure' world, he evolves the inevitability of art's extinction. 'That world,' he said, 'will apparently be one deprived of the stirring beauty of art.' Unlike other western aesthetes, however, Calogero did not prophesy the eradication of art in this 'automatised' society. Aware of the beneficial side of technology, of the fact that it was bound to free man of hard labour and add to his leisure, he expressed the opinion that people would 'make greater use of art, but produce less of it than before.' Mankind, in the professor's view, has accumulated vast treasures of art which unlike other treasures can never lose their value and will serve mankind always; interest in art will grow among the masses, but the basis for the further development, for the 'production' of art will be narrowed owing to the spread of technology; the future will be 'unaesthetic,' therefore, and man's search for beauty will be limited mainly to the art funds of the past. Such are the prospects of art, as visualised by some representatives of modern western aesthetics.

This view was opposed by the Czech delegate M. Novak. In his thesis on progress in art he stressed that the development of society could not but enhance the progressive role of art. Exercising more and more influence on the masses and increasing its affinity with them, it would come to portray reality more deeply and fully, disclosing the essence of life. It was in this sense that artistic progress had to be weighed, and not in such claims as that Shakespeare had been greater than Sophocles, or that the Italian palaces were more perfect than the Acropolis.

Indubitably correct, these premises reveal the fallacy of the catechism of pessimism in art.

The Marxist-Leninist aesthetics hold that the future

communist society spells the great renaissance of all forms of spiritual culture in which art shall receive brilliant and many-faceted development. The future of society will be marked by two decisive features: the toil of man will turn into a primary need of life, and the artistic endeavour of man in all spheres of life will attain a growth which could never be matched before.

Both of these features are not figments of fantasy, for they have already struck root and are developing where society has been freed of social oppression, of the bourgeois relations, and has taken to the path of socialism. Millions of people in that society have changed their views on labour, of all society. And the creative element in their work has come to the fore even now. A profound process is in progress, effacing the divide between physical and mental work; man in a socialist society develops his physical and spiritual capabilities in labour. And this is only the beginning! Technical progress has been freeing man of hard labour, and at the same time heightening the creative element of work. The very development of technology and its unprecedented possibilities are also the results of man's labour. Superb prospects are unfolding here for the application of all human abilities, and it is almost impossible to define the limits of developing these capabilities in people freed from the fetters of capitalist slavery.

How can one, therefore, hold that this must be a time barren of passions, of struggle, and aspirations, a time 'stripped of the stirring beauty of art'? How much daring and what great risks shall be demanded by the era of Cosmic flight, the era whose beginning we have already witnessed, the time for the discovery of new worlds? Surely, this era, too, shall confront man with all unimaginable adversities, and offer him the joys of victory won through supreme efforts and despite the inevitable tragedies that have always attended great discoveries in the past, and will, undoubtedly, do so in the future, as well.

The world of the future will be no philistine swamp. It will bring no era of nostalgia, boredom and spleen, but one of unprecedented growth in art; since art is always to be

found in the thick of life, where man lives and fights and great deeds are done. Faulty to the core is the idea that art could be 'produced' only in that brief span—an insignificant span, indeed, when it shall have been viewed from the future—when mankind bore the yoke of social, national, and other slavery, when it was split into warring camps, when it was torn by social antagonisms, and murderous endless wars. The future world that will know nothing of these 'delights' of the past will undoubtedly create more favourable circumstances for art. Gorky once aptly remarked that art is the cultivation of man. Now, the modern man is undoubtedly the one who has fought heroically against the forces of the old world to establish the new; he is the man of the future society, the man of whose creative possibilities we have only a vague notion. And it is he and the beauty of his work that will serve as the best guarantees of art's illimitable prospects.

Man, moreover, is not only the chief subject of art, but also its chief consumer. He is himself the creator of art. And that is why there is no foundation at all to Calogero's hypothesis that the future will have no artists, since there will be no need for the 'production' of art. This erroneous supposition stems from the incorrect understanding of man's new circumstances resulting from time saving and greater leisure. Here, too, we find that the bourgeois philosophers are unable to transcend the limits of bourgeois society, for they assume that having got through with a certain portion of necessary toil (as unpleasant as always), man will be able to devote the rest of his time to 'idling,' to recreation, and only at best to the 'consumption' of art. But far from being an integral part of man's nature, idleness is a product of the old society in which those who are rich and sated do not know what to do with their time, while others worn down by hard physical labour are glad to do nothing, if only to regain some of their strength.

The building of socialism has already shown that millions are being introduced to the treasures of art; the aesthetic level of the masses is rising; outstanding artists are appearing from amid the people; and amateur art has

attained enormous proportions. All this will prove true of communism to an immeasurably greater extent.

The pessimistic prospects, forecast by some of the bourgeois aesthetes, therefore, are quite unfounded. The Marxist-Leninist scholars of aesthetics at the congress sharply criticised such a definition of the question. Referring to the Marxist teachings on society, to the experience of art in the socialist countries, to the practical work of building the new, socialist culture, they unfolded the logical and genuine prospects of art in the present and the future.

The Marxist scholars of aesthetics (and particularly the report of the Soviet delegate M. A. Dynnik) defended and substantiated the premise that the history of art had consistently advanced artistic realism, in the widest sense of the word, as the trend in closest harmony with and most expressive of art's very being. Artistic realism as a means of reflecting reality was not merely one of the possible trends, but the summary and the final conclusion of centuries of art. And it was no accident, therefore, but quite logical that the new art created in the socialist society should continue precisely along that line in the historic development of art. This referred to the art of socialist realism.

This was the first time that such an idea was voiced at an international aesthetics congress. Far from being presented as a hypothesis, or a theoretical proposition, it was set forth as the voice of experience, as the vital results of art, already rooted in life and exercising its fruitful influence upon the arts of other countries.

During the congress, one of the Athenian newspapers remarked that Soviet aesthetics allegedly acknowledged socialist realism exclusively, tolerating no other methods. But this was only an attempt to use fallacious methods to stifle the voice of the new art—the art that was truly human and of the people. Far from rejecting all that is valuable and progressive in western art, or all that has been attained by other methods, Soviet art in every way welcomes any work of art that has not turned indifferently from life and the acute problems of our times, but, on the contrary, penetrates to the thick of the struggle and gives, even the most

modest impetus, to the forward stride of life. We are frankly opposed to such conceptions of art as the one reflected in the retort of a British delegate to one of the Soviet speakers: 'Why do you mix art with the people? The people and art are incompatible.' This is the sort of conception of art that socialist realism really refuses to tolerate, since it is deeply rooted in the people who wrought the greatest of all revolutions paving a new path for all mankind.

That is why there is no foundation to the arguments of those who attempt to present socialist realism as something quite monotonous, as something proscribing multiplicity of means, forms, and methods of creativity. Such fabrications have been completely refuted by the practice of art in the U.S.S.R. and the other people's democracies. The method of socialist realism is 'single-voiced' in one respect only: It demands the truth, the portrayal of life in its revolutionary development; it demands that the artist learn from the people and be a teacher to them at the same time, that he teach them the beauty of struggle for a rich and happy existence fraught with profoundest meaning. If this 'monotone' of socialist realism is unacceptable to some, there is little that can be done about it. For this tenor is not something prompted by a subjective desire, but by the demands of the current epoch in which art and the interests of the working people, socialist ideology and the perfected artistic form have blended into one. As for the means and methods of portraying the developments, socialist realism has never set any limits to the artist's endeavours; it has never foisted any 'iron canons' upon him to prevent him from displaying his creative individuality to the full. It was in this spirit that the Soviet delegates interpreted the essence of socialist realism at the congress.

The participation of the representatives of the Marxist scholars of aesthetics from the U.S.S.R. and the other People's Democracies in the work of the congress was undoubtedly of importance, for the Marxists were able to counter the idealist teachings on art with their own scientific, Marxist views on the essence and social significance of art. They

illustrated that scientific aesthetics were founded on the philosophy of dialectic and historical materialism, on the materialistic theory of portrayal, and illuminated the new features and peculiarities of art in the socialist society.

The participation of the Soviet scholars in the international discussions of aesthetics, at the same time, revealed certain gaps and shortcomings in their work; firstly, insufficient knowledge of the modern trends of bourgeois idealistic aesthetics, and secondly, not a sufficiently thorough and specific criticism of their theories. Their work at the congress also revealed that the range of the problems, with which they had dealt, had been too narrow, that they had been striving to limit themselves to general, sufficiently thrashed-out questions, while failing to explore various genres, aesthetic categories, etc. The vast scope of the programme of the congress was commented upon at the beginning of this article; and many of its items, unfortunately, were by-passed by our scholars of aesthetics. The chief thing, however, is that no fundamental work has been published to date to generalise the world-wide and historic significance of the elements of the new, socialist art, and disclose its aesthetic foundations.

At the congress we were convinced that the progressive sections of the world public are enormously interested in the new culture arisen on the soil upheaved by the socialist revolution, and is hopefully waiting for just such works from the Marxists. The compilation of fundamental works is the duty of the Soviet philosophers, aesthetes and critics.

—FROM *Kommunist*, No. 3, 1961 (MOSCOW).

George Santayana and His Philosophy of 'Aesthetic Sense'

N. S. YULINA

IN MODERN BOURGEOIS PHILOSOPHY GEORGE SANTAYANA (1863-1952) stands apart, not adhering to any of its more or less definitely established academic trends. But, at the same time, all the basic trends, contradictions and 'reappraisals of values' which characterise present-day bourgeois thought stand out very sharply and vividly in his works.

Santayana is known not only as a philosopher but also as a poet, writer and literary critic. Spanish by birth, he lived for many years in the USA and was recognised as a 'classic' of American philosophy.

In bourgeois literature we find contradictory opinions concerning Santayana. The critics from the camp of the positivists usually qualify him 'as a 'Platonist', a 'scholastic' and a 'philosopher of the past', who did not understand the spirit of the present time.¹ Santayana himself did much to justify this appraisal. He constantly emphasised his dislike of the 'unfortunate experience of the twentieth century' which had given rise to 'strange religions, incomprehensible philosophies', 'disreputable interests'. He liked to speak of himself as a 'sceptic', 'atheist', 'supporter of Greek rationalism', a 'disciple' of Democritus and Epicurus, and even as an 'advocate' of materialism. He outlined his philosophy in an ostentatiously 'classic' form, with wide use of poetical deviations, moral maxims and aesthetic appraisals.

¹ See B. Russell, 'The Philosophy of Santayana' in the symposium, *The Philosophy of George Santayana* (ed. P. S. Schilpp, Chicago, 1940), p. 455.

The neo-Thomists are of a different opinion about Santayana. Correctly assuming him to be far from 'the golden age' of the greatest achievement of reason in the cognition of reality,² they qualify him as a subjectivist and agnostic, a mouthpiece of the trend for irrationalism that is typical of modern philosophy, and on this basis they even raise him to the status of a super-modern philosopher.³

To say nothing of the fact that Santayana's philosophy deals in a somewhat old fashioned and archaic form with problems which are regarded as topical by such 'modernist' trends as pragmatism, and the modern sentiments of a certain part of the bourgeois intelligentsia who seek from reactionary positions to substantiate the contradictory development of science, culture and civilisation in the era of imperialism.

1. Crisis of Bourgeois Culture and 'Moral Philosophy'

In bourgeois histories of philosophy, in particular Anglo-American, the twentieth century is usually called the 'century of analysis', thus emphasising the dominating position of the analytical and so-called 'scientific empirical' trends. Such an appraisal cannot but be regarded as one-sided. If we are to speak of the nature of modern idealism, then its distinguishing feature is the parallel development of two philosophies which at first seem to exclude one another, but in reality are interconnected and complement each other: the trends which claim to be scientific and demand a reconstruction of philosophy on the basis of empirical methods, and the trends which are openly anti-scientific, in which science is regarded as one of the forms of the myth, and one or another form of the irrational 'perception' of reality is presented as an 'objective' position. The former includes different forms of subjective-idealistic empiricism and bourgeois utilitarianism, while the latter includes many different forms of the 'philosophy of life'.

² See R. Butler, *The Mind of Santayana* (Chicago, 1955), p. 139.

³ V. E. Smith, *Idea-Men of Today* (Milwaukee, 1950), p. 55.

The philosophy of Santayana belongs to the latter type and follows the line of development of bourgeois thought which stems from Nietzsche, Dilthey, Simmel, and Spengler, to existentialism. If in its gnosiological premises and content Santayana's teaching is close to such 'scientific philosophies' as pragmatism and 'realism', then in the understanding of the subject and the aims of philosophy, it differs sharply from them. Whereas the representatives of the above-mentioned trends claimed that they were creating a scientific philosophy or at least bringing philosophy into conformity with modern science, Santayana openly declared: 'My philosophy is not and does not claim to be scientific. . . . Like the philosophies of the ancients, it is a discipline of the mind and the heart, a non-ecclesiastical religion.'⁴ Santayana describes his own works as 'spiritual idleness', as the result of moral-aesthetical contemplation of mankind, infected by the 'violent desire' to make money, machines and war.⁵

Santayana focused his attention on moral philosophy. He constantly reiterated that 'moral philosophy is my chosen subject.'⁶ Nevertheless, the moral philosophy of Santayana should not be understood as an ethical theory in the ordinary traditional sense in which it was treated by his ideological predecessors R. Emmerson, G. Royce, and W. James. Santayana does not recognise ethics (or aesthetics, the 'philosophy of history', and the 'philosophy of science') as separate philosophical disciplines. Like the modern positivists Santayana considers it practically useless and 'naive' to discuss moral standards and duties, but, contrary to them, he admits that man should have an 'intellectual religion', a theory of the perception of life, as it were, or, as he says, 'the art of achieving happiness'. It is in this sense that he usually employs the term 'moral philosophy'.

The 'philosophy of life', of which Santayana's 'moral philosophy' is one version, represents, like the neopositivistic forms of philosophy, a specific product of the twentieth cen-

⁴ Santayana, *The Realm of Spirit* (New York, 1940), p. 273.

⁶ Santayana, *The Idler and His Works* (New York, 1957), p. 8.

⁶ Santayana, *Soliloquies in England and Later Soliloquies* (London, 1922), p. 237.

ture, born of the social-historical and spiritual conditions of the era of imperialism.

The appearance of the 'philosophy of life' was due primarily to facts evidencing the profound social contradictions in bourgeois society, the crisis of bourgeois culture, the anti-humanist trends in the development of science and technology in conditions of modern capitalism. Being a typical manifestation of the crisis of bourgeois culture, the 'philosophy of life' seeks to concentrate the attention of man on private problems, on questions connected with the elaboration of an individual approach to the chaotic and inexplicable course of events, and in this way to overcome the ideological and moral crisis.

If we are to consider the different versions of the 'philosophy of life' from the viewpoint of the formation of man's attitude to the social reality, we find a definite resemblance among them. All of them claim to be 'critical philosophies'. In all of them you may find notes of protest against the hideous phenomena of capitalist reality. Sometimes this protest takes a sharp form turning into anarchistic opposition to any moral, into fruitless revolt against science, and a nihilistic attitude to all theories.

Mostly, however, the 'philosophy of life' appears in the form of various 'escapist' theories, or theories of 'moral desertion'. In them the nonacceptance of certain aspects of capitalist reality finds expression in preaching withdrawal from the real world to the inner, subjective 'world of the spirit'. The inner, spiritual life of the individual is contrasted to real life, to society, it is made a fetish of and lent the illusion of self-existence. In practice theories of this type lead to reconciliation with capitalist reality. This was the type of philosophy created by Santayana. It should be noted that the 'escapist' theories may have an extremely varied social basis. Some of them reflect the pessimistic sentiments of the broad circles of the bourgeois intelligentsia, frightened by wars, by the failure of bourgeois-liberal slogans by crises. Others reflect the instinctive protest of the petty bourgeois against the economic and political con-

sequences of capitalism, the causes of which he is not capable of understanding.

As for Santayana's philosophy, it belongs to the extremely reactionary trend of the 'philosophy of life', representing the bourgeois-aristocratic reaction to the growth of democracy in all its forms and manifestations, to the socialist movement, and the progressive course of modern thought.

Man and culture—this is the central theme of Santayana's philosophy of the 'aesthetic sense'. It peculiarly reflects the contradictions in the development of civilisation under the conditions of bourgeois social relations, the specific features of the spiritual life of the individual, formed in these conditions.

On the one hand, science and engineering under capitalism are sources of the development of the productive forces, a means of increasing the material power of man, while at the same time the application of science and engineering for purposes of profit and war turns them into a potential source of danger, threatening the culture and the very life of man.

The anti-humanist application of science and technology under capitalism is also manifested in the fact that industry while being a prerequisite of intellectual and moral freedom, at the same time serves to oppress people, to transform them into a featureless and formless mass. Man begins to resemble a robot, he becomes spiritually impoverished, and loses his freedom. A paradoxical situation arises, in which the increase of man's power over nature is accompanied by the intensification of his dependence on the elementary forces reigning in bourgeois society.

Science and technology exercise a similar dual influence on spiritual culture proper. Thanks to the new technique a certain democratisation of culture is taking place: the educational level of the people rises, the means for the dissemination of culture, such as the cinema, wireless, theatre and literature give the broad masses access to culture. At the same time, the extensive exploitation of culture for purposes of profit, which has been made pos-

sible by the new technique, has led to its impoverishment, standardisation and vulgarisation.

Santayana specifies the facts of the reality around him: the irrational nature of historical development, the anti-humanist trends in the development of science and technology, the suppression of the freedom of the individual by society. He marks the vulgarisation of culture and the impoverishment of the spiritual world of man. Noting with regret the downfall of the old 'Christian world' and 'aristocratic traditions,' Santayana, quoting Emerson, states that 'things are in the saddle and are whipping up mankind',⁷ the drive for profits is becoming an end in itself, and business, the basic form of human activity.

Santayana sets himself the task of interpreting these phenomena, of revealing 'the moral significance' of the development of culture and civilisation in the twentieth century, and of determining on the basis of this the attitude to the modern social reality, in order to find a reply to the question of 'how happiness and freedom are possible'. But he regards the problems of culture and civilisation from the viewpoint of the illusory forms of bourgeois consciousness, the result of which is not an objective portrayal but a distorted picture of reality.

2. *'Realism' and the Ontological Treatment of Spiritual Wealth*

At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, that is, in the period of the formation of Santayana's views, philosophy in America was represented chiefly by religious, moral and aesthetic theories. His early works very clearly reflected the spiritual mood of the America of that time. With the establishment of the first independent trends—pragmatism, neo-realism and critical realism—the theories of gnosiology and ontology became predominant.

These problems attracted Santayana's attention, too.

⁷ Santayana, *Reason in Society* (New York, 1930), p. 67.

Moreover, the theoretical solution which he presented is, on the whole, on a plane with the general idealistic solution presented by critical realism. But in turning to the traditional ontological and gnosiological problems, Santayana did not pursue the aim of settling any real problems of philosophy (to some extent this is also typical of neo-realism and critical realism). Santayana regarded his works in this field as prolegomena, i.e. further discourses necessary for the elaboration of moral-aesthetic positions.

In the twenties and thirties Santayana created a speculative system, the teaching on the 'Realms of Being'. In contradistinction to the speculative systems of the past, he denies his philosophy the significance of an analogue of reality. The theory of the four 'Realms'—the 'Realm of Essence', 'Realm of Matter', 'Realm of Truth', 'Realm of the Spirit'—in his conception, was to represent the result of a 'moral reflex' to being, and to serve in actuality as a theoretical foundation for the spiritual position which Santayana proposed to take up with regard to modern culture.

The central idea of his teaching is the conception of the ideal essences.

'Essence' is, of course, not a new concept in philosophy. As a category of being, 'essence' already figured in the conceptions of the Greeks, the medieval scholastics, and the philosophers of modern times.

But there is a great difference between the 'essence' of Santayana and the 'essence' of Plato, Aristotle, Avicenna and even of Thomas Aquinas. In their systems, this category, in spite of its idealistic and sometimes even scholastic interpretation, served as a specific means of revealing the 'essence of being'. But it was not so with Santayana. 'Essence' in his philosophy is simply an element of subjective experience, a phenomenon of consciousness having no relation to the objects and the phenomena of the objective world.

According to Santayana, all types of self-identical ideal 'qualities', and 'characters' directly given to the consciousness, are essences. For instance, the 'sense of

pain', 'azure blue', 'beauty', 'the form of a ballistic sphere', etc. There are also more complicated essences, for instance, 'Shakespeare's plays' or the 'philosophy of Hegel'. All historical events are essences, he asserts, and even the whole of the history of mankind is an essence. The aggregate of all these ideal 'unique' properties forms the 'Realm of Essence'.

Nowhere does Santayana achieve such flights of eloquence as in the description of the 'Realm of Essence': It is immeasurably richer than the phenomena of earthly life, so that even the very richest imagination cannot conceive the whole of this wealth. All qualities here are 'eternal' and 'immutable'. Each essence is self-identical and shines with its own light, therefore there can be no illusion, mirage or deception here. But most important is that the 'Realm of Essence' is the most authentic reality and the truest being. For only idealistic phenomena, directly given to the consciousness can really be referred to as 'existing' ones while the outer world, on the other hand, is always given through essence, and its existence is problematical.

We shall be wrong, however, if we assume that all the colours and qualities qualified as essences by Santayana are in some way related to material objects and phenomena. One of his principal maxims states that essence does not exist. His theory holds that being implies possession of substance in space and time. Speaking of substance, of the lunar eclipse, for instance, he argues that it is in some definite space and time, it cannot be reduced either to physical phenomena or to physiological processes of the brain. The only thing that can be said about essences is that they are endowed with being; he states that ontological being encompasses all essences.⁸

He states that essences are considered as something existing because "The Realm of Essence" or a segment of the realm of essence, which may happen to be illustrated in existence,⁹ is projected through consciousness of flowing matter, thus creating an illusion of interrelation between

⁸ Santayana, *The Realm of Essence* (London, 1928), p. 78.

⁹ Santayana, *The Realm of Truth* (London, 1937).

essences and external objects. In fact, he goes on to say, essence and being, the ideal and material are not interdependent, and their relationship is due to the human force of habit.

In this way Santayana follows the traditional course of objective idealists, and seeks to represent the ideal as being independent not only of matter, but of consciousness as well, a sovereign being unrelated to ultimate objects and the thinking of individuals.

On what real factors is Santayana speculating when he ascribes independent being to essences? It should be remembered that it is extremely difficult to reveal the earthly foundations of the doctrine of 'essence'. It is a formation of great complexity resulting from the amalgamation of specific aspects and forms of knowledge. Specific forms of knowledge through the sense of vision, certain properties of abstractions, specific aesthetic qualities, etc. are used in this case in treating the properties of essence. This is why the students of Santayana's philosophy as a rule consider essences from the 'psychological' viewpoint, comparing them with Plato's 'ideas,' Berkley's sensations, and the preceptions of the Machists. It should be pointed out, however, that speculations on the nature of abstractions or sensations are not the main point in his doctrine of essences.

The principal factor, idealistically distorted by Santayana, is the specific nature of spiritual culture, the specific part played by spiritual products in social life. If we discard the element of mysticism in his concept of dissolution in sensations, essences are in fact constituent parts of spiritual culture: aesthetic and moral values, notions, theories, concepts of the arts, religion, literature, etc. The *Realm of Essence* claims to be some sort of treasurehouse of the spiritual riches of culture. Hence, seclusion of the ideal in an independent sphere is not so much a resurgence of Platonism (as asserted by the majority of investigators of Santayana's philosophy), but as a manifestation of the widespread trend in modern bourgeois philosophy to ontologise spiritual products, a trend that is particu-

larly characteristic of the 'philosophy of culture' (neo-Kantianism, Emile Durkheim, Max Sheler, Hartmann and others). These multifold theories of culture have in common the inability, because of their idealistic approach to social phenomena, to trace back the genesis of spiritual culture, to find its social 'substance' and to detect the real relations of human beings it expresses (as distinct from its ideological expression).

By ascribing to the spiritual content of culture an independent being bourgeois thinkers are in fact giving a philosophical expression to the illusions on the role of ideological forms inherent in bourgeois consciousness. Certain values, ideals and standards which form the ideological expression of the social process, are appearing to the individual as something from the beyond, externally imparted to man, as, for example, something that he must accept and put in practice irrespective of his own will.

Representing the transformation of definite social relations and expressing men's interdependence, various spiritual formations manifest these relations in the shape of ideological phenomena, in rigid forms of social consciousness. The objectivity, superindividualism, and a certain degree of compulsion in the ideological forms are in point of fact expressing the predominance of social relations over the individual.

To the bourgeois thinker who perceives this process through the prism of fallacious idealistic constructions these ideological forms seem to conform to general norms and values which dominate material elements. Hence, the never ending quest for the specific spiritual 'substance', and as a consequence of this, the infinity of theoretical versions of the special spiritual being.

Because of Santayana's 'naturalistic' approach to society these elements are especially vivid in his treatment of the subject. Since he ignores the specific social reality, he also fails to understand the specific nature of the new qualities generated by society—legal, moral, aesthetic, religious, and other ideas. Instead of ascertaining the real material relations which are translated into relationships of conscious-

ness, and of evolving a system of interrelations linking the ideal to the material (which would actually be a realistic approach to culture), Santayana gives a one-sided definition of the qualitative distinction between ideal formations and material phenomena and attempts to solve the problem of the nature of the ideal without departing from the sphere of individual experience. Due to a mechanistic approach the ideal is secluded from the material into a specific reality and is endowed with its 'own' ontological characteristics.

3. *'Materialism' or the Theory of 'Insanity'*

Behind objectified illusions of social consciousness and its cultural prejudices there is a definite and altogether different reality. In a spontaneously developing society man comes in contact with this reality unconsciously. The basic material relations not assimilated by the mind of the bourgeois individual are regarded by him as something pre-social, primitive and biological. Santayana claims that this objective reality, the substance of social life, is an object of 'animal faith'.

And he states that nature sends 'impulses' through man and deals him a series of 'blows', compelling him to believe that something exists, and that he must live in harmony with his environment. He holds that all reasonable, practically desirable activity, all achievements of civilization, science and technology are manifestations of this most irrational, animal and primitive faith¹⁰. Thus it is claimed that reality which is behind social fiction is an object of 'animal faith' and is in itself something irrational. It intrudes into the world of ideals, standards and objectified general notions of bourgeois consciousness in the shape of 'blows' and violence, playing a part of a static force which disrupts 'spiritual harmony'.

It is true that unlike other idealists Santayana firmly states that the external is 'existence', 'nature', 'substance',

¹⁰ Santayana, *Scepticism and Animal Faith* (London, 1923), pp. 190-91.

or 'matter'. Without losing an opportunity of mocking the idealists, he stresses that the substance which he speaks of is not metaphysical but physical. It is the multiform matter of the world with which he comes in contact in his activities¹¹. Therefore he calls himself a 'materialist' and even 'the only living materialist'. But as one of his critics rightly remarked Santayana's recognition of matter was, to all intents and purposes, a 'paean to the spirit'.

It is a fact that after attributing to essences all the content of being, all the colours and individual features which distinguish one thing from another, Santayana did not leave to matter a single quality of its own. It has been transformed into nothingness, into non-existence. By its inner structure matter became a mere 'dark principle', an 'irrational force' which is in principle incognisable.

It is clearly evident that this theory of matter has many similarities with the traditional theological concept which states that the source of movement and of world multiformity is a self-sufficient immutable being—God. But this is not only a question of fideism. Santayana's theory of matter is used as evidence of the absolute authenticity of the social fictions, through the prism of which reality is perceived by bourgeois consciousness and with the help of which it is depicted. It is these fictions that are ascribed content and significance; as for the reality of the external world, nature and society, in virtue of the fact that they are lacking content and are non-existent, the cognition of these realities is claimed to be a fruitless and useless undertaking.

Once he declared that human thought is an illusory flight of fancy, unrelated to the phenomena of the external world, and the external world is an object of biological, animal faith, Santayana was faced with the problem: on what grounds can we at all define nature as a system of knowledge distinguishable from delirium and hallucinations? Why does not practical life as a whole enter in conflict with the actual environment, but instead follows its course in harmony with it? To explain the fact of this 'miracu-

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

lous' coincidence of theory and practice, Santayana resorts to pragmatism.

One of the basic propositions of his philosophy, which determined the solution of many problems, is the postulate that man's interrelation with the surrounding world is not characterised by an increasingly adequate knowledge of reality, but by a creation of an increasingly complex and multifarious system of symbols. The myth is the fundamental form of the symbol system, and it can assume different shapes: religion, science, the arts, common sense, delirium, and so forth; its specific form depends on the sphere of its application. It follows that science is as much a myth as religion, its only distinction being that in certain practical fields its symbols happened to be adequate in relation to external existence. Santayana goes on to say that fitness and authenticity in science, like fitness and authenticity in sensation, are pragmatic in the sense that they show the real relations, course, and distribution of events in the terms in which they appear in our experience.¹² Obviously it does not follow from this that science is more authentic than other forms of spiritual activity. In other fields a fantastic system may be even more useful and have a greater pragmatic value.¹³ For example, in the sphere of moral life, religion and common sense are more important than science.

Santayana subjects to harsh criticism those who believe that man can obtain an adequate picture of the world through cognition. With a great deal of eloquence he seeks to demonstrate that the mind is totally unable to trace the root of things in darkness; it cannot discover why they exist; it must remain content to record their ephemeral aspect which is nothing else but essence.¹⁴ And he concludes by stating that the pride of science must be converted into humility; it should no longer imagine that it reveals the inner nature of things. The forms of science are as arbitrary as the different languages and sign methods.¹⁵

¹² *Soliloquies in England*, p. 257.

¹³ Santayana, *Reason in Science* (N. Y., 1928), Vol. V, p. 8.

¹⁴ Santayana, *The Realm of Matter* (London, 1930), pp. 103-4.

¹⁵ Santayana, *Some Turns of Thought in Modern Philosophy* (N. Y., 1933), p. 79.

This understanding of science leads to a conclusion which has shocked even sophisticated bourgeois critics. Santayana asserts that the life led by mankind is simultaneously the quintessence and the sum total of insanity.¹⁶ A whole section of this work seeks to prove the proposition that human life rests not on the principle of sanity but on that of insanity. Our senses give us only a hazy picture of rushing-by events; reason adds new fictions transforming the testimony of the senses into fantastic representations; the system of knowledge existing in the shape of science reinforces subjectivity due to conventional signs and purely pragmatic concepts; moral, religious and other views make an additional contribution to the colossal structure of human insanity. Inasmuch as man looks upon reality as something authentic, he acts as an insane person who mistakes the fruits of his imagination for reality.

Although Santayana painted such a grim picture, he nevertheless urged not to regard insanity as an abnormal phenomenon. He says that mankind's way of life is a 'normal pathology'. Its foundations rest on nature, and it is a normal condition for perpetuating the human race. Wisdom lies not in attempting to be free of illusions and myths for the purpose of discovering 'the one and only truth' (which, in his opinion, may lead to the creation of new myths), but in the ability to make use of the practical aspects of the myths and to enjoy their aesthetic loveliness. One can attain an objective viewpoint only by accepting insanity as 'normal insanity'.

Such is the logical consequence of a doctrine which lays claims to 'anti-dogmatism' and 'intellectual courage'. The promise to free mankind from fictions, dogmas, and 'strange religions' has assumed the form of a eulogy to them all, providing one displays self-discipline and conforms to 'normal insanity'. Santayana's philosophy turns everything inside out: matter is illusion while illusion is reality; reason is animal instinct, while delirium is the highest human

¹⁶ Santayana, *Dialogues in Limbo* (Ann Arbor, 1957), p. 37.

faculty; science is fiction, and religion is the highest form of knowledge.

If Santayana's tenets are considered from the standpoint of plain human common sense they look original to say the least. Yet in modern bourgeois philosophy this is far from being original. It will suffice to recall Nietzsche's theory of myth-making and his assertion that 'we live in a world of phantasy. A world distorted and turned inside out, empty, but full of clear dreams,' in which philosophy introduces a new fallacy whose value is that it has aesthetic charm.¹⁷

Similar philosophical variations can be found in the works of Spengler, of many 'culture philosophers', and in modernistic and formalistic theories of literature and arts.

Santayana's 'aesthetic sense' and another 'philosophy of life' of the twentieth century—existentialism—have many traits in common. Both are focused on moral problems, the problems of the spiritual life of the individual, in the light of which all other philosophical problems are studied. They have a common tendency of bringing ethics and aesthetics closer together and of claiming the right to destroy the traditional barrier separating the arts from philosophy. They are also united in the effort to represent all types of human spiritual activity in a single mythical form.

Paradoxically, the advocates of the theory of the myth, as a rule, try to define their views as a philosophy of people free from prejudices, and to misrepresent their perception of the world as that of men of intellect. They assert that the one and only objective position is the one adopted by the sceptics and nihilists who deny in principle the authenticity of any theory. However, this attempt to rise above ideology is untenable. Nihilism and mythologism cannot guarantee an independent outlook to the observer because man depends on society. Whether he wants to or not he takes up a clearly defined class stand and adopts the ideology inherent in his class. It follows that conscious advocacy of the theory of the myth tantamounts to taking

¹⁷ *Collected Works*, Klyukin, Publisher, Vol. III, p. 56.

up a stand endorsing the illusions of bourgeois consciousness. In spite of all the 'criticisms' to which these philosophic ideas are subjected, their advocates accept as normal not only the social fictions subsisting in bourgeois society, but also the social relations whose expressions and tools are these very fictions. As a result, the phenomena of reality appear in a distorted and twisted form.

This is the case with Santayana. Concentrating exclusively on the crises in the development of civilisation and culture he adapts the effect of these crises for the cause, and conversely. Santayana realises that social development in his day is spontaneous, irrational, and deeply antagonistic. But since he considers the bourgeois form of society as the only possible one, he raises the specific nature of the march of history under capitalism to the level of a universal form of historical advance. Hence, his conclusion that history is chaos,¹⁸ a stream of blind, irrational forces, which man is unable either to grasp or redirect.

The same approach is visible in his appraisal of culture. He states that the trends of scientific and technological progress are hostile to spiritual culture, that the material conditions of life are suppressing the freedom of the individual that culture is being vulgarised, etc. Santayana claims that this is caused by the fatal triumph of 'animality', by the one-sided development of science and technology as such. Hence, his conclusion that civilisation should not be measured by the human knowledge of material structures and processes, nor by technical achievements and the volume of material wealth which mankind obtains.

He wrote that we should rather measure the extent of happiness and civilisation achieved by some race, by the proportion of energy it dedicates to free and noble pursuits, to the adornment of life and culture of the imagination.¹⁹ One may say that he developed this idea in all his subsequent works.

On the basis of this traditional aristocratic attitude to

¹⁸ Santayana, *Domination and Powers* (N.Y., 1951), p. 33.

¹⁹ Santayana, *The Sense of Beauty* (N.Y., 1955), p. 27.

culture Santayana elaborates a theory according to which material progress is inversely proportional to spiritual and moral progress.

His failure to understand the essence and character of culture is due to the fact that while he scorns the spiritual fruits of contemporaneous society, he accepts in toto its economic foundations. He holds that the age of imperialism is the age of sound health and maturity.²⁰

Since he holds that capitalistic social conditions are eternal and that the progress of civilisation rests on these conditions, he inevitably arrives at the pessimistic deduction that spiritual culture is regressing. Like Nietzsche, Spengler and other augurs of imperialism, Santayana views the age of science with ill forebodings of decline: he believes that man will be subjected by machines, deprived of individual traits, and become a part of the social and economic mechanism. And like the former, he turns to antiquity and the Middle Ages in quest of an ideal.

In his opposition to injection of technology in modern culture, to subjection of culture to business, to standardisation and monstrous forms of culture in modern society, Santayana's criticisms assume the form of a struggle for mankind, for a true, deep-rooted culture. It must be said that he succeeded—evidently incompletely and erroneously—in discovering the ulcers of modern bourgeois civilisation. In spite of this his own brand of 'humanism' is a far cry from true humanism.

Had Santayana truly been concerned with the fate of modern man he would have turned his attention to the ghastly conditions of life which are morally and spiritually crippling the human being and have a devastating effect on culture. But he finds the root of evil elsewhere. He holds that pseudo-culture has replaced true culture because of the 'plebeian spirit of the age', 'the dominance of the rabble', and the democratisation of life. Actually what worries him is not so much the state of ethics, arts, etc., as the fact that modern culture is no longer the exclusive appanage of

²⁰ Santayana, *The Middle Span* (N.Y., 1945), p. 170.

the enlightened patrons of arts, that the fruits of contemporaneous civilisation—the cinema, radio, theatre, literature—are spreading culture among the masses. He asserts that if culture is true and noble it should remain rare; if it is widespread it is bound to become mediocre.²¹ Because of this he thinks that abolition of the aristocracy in the sense of social privileges and sanctioned power amounts to cutting off the source which hitherto gave birth to all culture. In the absence of spiritual aristocracy, he goes on to say, the people become a trivial, superstitious, sensuous, custom-bound herd.²²

This outlook on culture is not an isolated phenomenon in modern bourgeois thought. Under different guises it is advocated by Nietzsche, T. S. Eliot, Aldous Huxley and others. Underlying this view is the notion that culture is a purely spiritual phenomenon, an object of luxury for the exclusive use of the select. Culture is thus identified with the snobish culture of the ruling classes. As for the working masses, they are denied the right to join in the creation of culture and they are assigned the role of biological material for perfecting the spirit. Furthermore, it is tacitly assumed that the highest type of culture can flourish only when the masses are poverty-stricken and ignorant.

Obviously this approach precludes any understanding of the conflicting processes in the development of modern culture. Democratisation of culture, participation of the people in its creation—i.e., the actual elements testifying to spiritual progress—are regarded as the cause of decadence, while the actual cause of standardisation, vulgarisation and decline—i.e., the conversion of the arts and culture into profitable business—remains in the shade.

4. *'The Aesthetic Sense' Advocates Reconciliation With Reality*

What position should one take up according to Santayana in respect to culture, civilisation, and social reality in

²¹ *Reason in Society*, p. 111.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 125-27.

the twentieth century? What is the moral sense of contrasting ontologically the 'Realm of Essence' to the 'Realm of Matter'?

Formally, Santayana agrees that matter exists, thereby implying the existence of the practical aspects of life—production, scientific knowledge, etc.—without which, as he is willing to admit, neither 'free intellectual activity', nor aesthetic enjoyment of the arts, poetry or religion are possible. On the other hand, production, scientific and other activities in bourgeois society are closely bound to business, lucre, and the cult of material wealth. Santayana views bourgeois 'materialism' as a universality characteristic of human practice, and qualifies practical life as being of the 'animal' and 'lower' type.

Therefore, in the realm of philosophy material being acquires an 'impure' and 'problematical' nature. The aspiration to salvage the arts, poesy and romanticism, i.e., the aristocratic culture, prompts Santayana to declare that the true human purpose in life is the striving for 'pure' and 'authentic' being of 'essences', i.e., the life purpose of the 'spiritual aristocracy'.

In defining the moral position in respect to practical and spiritual activities, a specific role is assigned to the category of 'spirit'. Santayana sets it aside in a special 'realm' defined as independent reality.

In his philosophy 'the spirit' is some sort of individual means, used by man doomed to live within matter (or as Santayana likes to say 'live amid circumstances'), to avoid these circumstances, to free himself from them through union with the true being of essences and thus attain 'spiritual perfection'. Intuition or 'dissolution' in essences is the supreme manifestation of the spirit.

In describing the process of 'spiritual perfection' he resorts to orthodox Christian terminology ('good', 'devil', 'flesh', etc.), and this is not due to chance. He holds that his philosophy reveals the intellectual foundations of Christian religion, befogged by prejudices, dogmas and myths. At the end of the fourth volume of his 'Realms' he stated that his interpretation of these four realms of Being may be re-

garded as the reducing of Christian theology and spiritual discipline to their secret inner source.²³

The students of Santayana's doctrine generally agree that his philosophy is another version of Christian ethics, usually pointing out such features as retreat from life, scorn of the flesh, and the preaching of the beyond. This is the conclusion arrived at by the American historian of philosophy Karl Munitz in his book on Santayana's moral philosophy. On the whole, this judgement is valid, though incomplete. Santayana's ethics emphasise not so much a retreat from as reconciliation with reality.

His foremost philosophic idea is that although man is bound by matter, he attains freedom and happiness not in practical life but in the spiritual sphere, in the intuition of essences. It follows therefore that freedom and happiness is not a retreat from life but a new understanding of its meaning from the standpoint of aesthetic significance. The very same world which may be monstrous materially is aesthetically always admirable once it has been ascribed this 'aesthetic' quality it is no longer dreadful in Santayana's eyes.

He finds comfort in viewing the phenomena of life as unique aesthetic scenes, comparable to cinema shots or kaleidoscopic figures.

Let us now assume that this ethical concept has become more widespread, especially because Santayana conceived it as the ethics of sane persons. In his everyday life man comes in contact with evil, injustice and deceit. What should he do under the circumstances? Santayana holds that he should not strive to alter the existing state of affairs. War, social injustice and deceit are manifestations of the natural course of the 'material substance' which man is unable either to forestall or channel in another direction. Therefore he is offered the only way out—retreat into 'spiritual life'. As soon as we visualise the surrounding phenomena as aesthetically inimitable scenes, there follows an immediate metamorphosis: evil and misfortunes are stripped

²³ *The Realm of Spirit*, p. 291.

of any practical significance and life is converted into a spectacle. Even war acquires its own 'tragic charm'.

Quite obviously the basic moral function of Santayana's materialism is to justify the existing state of affairs and impress the idea that the course of events is inevitable. Thus 'The Aesthetical Sense' is merely the old religious doctrine of resignation and self-resignation whose supreme virtue is submission to events.

In the light of this it is interesting to see Santayana's attitude towards religion. He denied the material truth of religion. He called himself an 'atheist', 'materialist', and 'sceptic' and never missed a chance of scoffing at the naiveté of the Christian dogmas, the faith in the after life, and the divine origin of Jesus Christ. But the truth of the matter is that Santayana's atheism is a modern form of theology. Although he rejects the naive form of religion, he retains its content, and preaches it in a more refined manner.

Although he denies that religion has any significance in the field of cognition—a bourgeois philosopher's inference drawn from the progress in science and scientific learning—he, nevertheless, insists that its other function should be safeguarded: the erroneous attitude toward world phenomena, namely the function rooted in the social conditions of an exploiting society. In other words, while Santayana recognises the theoretical fallacy of religion, he still strives to keep alive its practical aspects. Not only to keep them alive, but to strengthen them as well. To achieve this he wants to make it more intellectual, adapt it to the requirements of bourgeois intellectuals in the twentieth century, and for this purpose to transfer its function to philosophy. Denial of the relationship of philosophy and science and the dependence of harmonious spiritual life on the scientific cognition of the world is bound to lead to a mythological, religious conception of the world. And that is indeed the case with Santayana.

It will be recalled that bourgeois philosophy made several attempts at building ethics on aesthetics or on aestheticized religion. At times these attempts were of a democratic nature. For instance, in Kant's and Friedrich von Schiller's

ethics the doctrine of 'aesthetic contemplation' was objectively directed against bourgeois utilitarianism and individualism, against the alienation from man of universal moral standards. In more recent times similar attempts also contained an element of protest against bourgeois utilitarianism, but more often than not they expressed an aristocratic reaction to the democratisation of culture and to progressive trends in modern thought (Ruskin, Nietzsche, Spengler). Hence, the preaching of an 'aesthetical attitude to reality' is often combined with the cult of a strong despot and the demand to institute a fascist dictatorship to set things in 'order' in a world that is unstable and uncomfortable for the bourgeois aristocracy.

That was the type of aesthetic sense preached by Santayana. No wonder that the main content of his last work, *Domination and Powers* (1952), in which he outlined an anti-democratic utopia of a social 'rational order', is the idea of establishing the worldwide rule of a 'spiritual élite,' which should be carried into effect by violent means of governing the 'ignorant majority'.

* * *

Santayana did not found a school and he did not have any outstanding followers. It would be, however, a mistake to look upon him as an isolated philosopher. His ideas had fairly wide repercussions in bourgeois thought and the principle of 'rational order' he advanced is used by bourgeois ideologists in their constructions of an ideal social order.*

Santayana's influence was felt in contemporaneous decadent trends and in the arts and literature. In the United States *The Sense of Beauty* is still the most widely read work on aesthetics.

Just like Marcel Proust, T. S. Eliot, Henry James and similar authors, Santayana helped to a considerable extent

* Walter Lippmann, for instance, who was Santayana's assistant at Harvard University and remained on friendly terms with him later on, used Santayana's ideas in his anti-democratic theory of an 'organised intelligentsia'.

to spread modernist and formalist theories of literature and culture. His idea of 'art for art's sake' combined with the concept that deep culture belongs only to 'highbrow intellectuals' is used by reactionary scholars to justify the existence of cultural backwardness and the division of society into an 'élite' and an 'ignorant majority'.

Whatever influence Santayana exerted on bourgeois culture and irrespective of the extent to which his ideas were in harmony with the sentiments of bourgeois intellectuals, it must be acknowledged that they can survive only in a society which leaves no room for a rational understanding of reality. They are a part of the myth brought into the world by this society. In a positive sense they are sterile. And this sterility is due to the fact that in a period of sharp struggles for the economic, social, and spiritual emancipation of mankind Santayana sided with the most reactionary forces.

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Architecture and Technical Progress

GEORGI BORISOVSKY

GUY DE MAUPASSANT FLED FROM PARIS TO KEEP FROM SEEING the newly-built Eiffel Tower. He wrote:

'I fled from Paris, and then left France because the vision of Eiffel Tower haunted me.... Just imagine what our distant descendants will say of our generation, if only an outburst of wrath on the part of the people does not send that scrawny towering pyramid of iron ladders toppling.' He was sincerely amazed at 'the papers' unanimous and bold assertion that the metal structure sported an ultra-modern style of architecture.'

Some 50-odd years ago, people were afraid to walk over the thin bridges of reinforced concrete in the new building on Red Square (the present GUM or State Department Store). They thought it was entirely too flimsy, and therefore unbeautiful.

The guy-rope type ceiling over the enormous halls is one of the latest achievements of modern architectural engineering. It 'hangs' over the halls like a colossal tent-top. An inverted dome! The structure rests upon two slanting arches. The whole ceiling is supported by those two points. The layman can hardly comprehend the miracle of those supports, nor can he appreciate the entire beauty of the engineer's and architect's daring ideas.

Take the Crimean Bridge spanning Moscow River. Its traffic way is suspended from two enormous 'chains' anchored to massive supports. It is hard to tell what sup-

ports, and what is supported. For the uninitiated the structural principle of this bridge is a mystery.

Or take the 'Leninskiye Gori' ('Leinn Hills') Metro Station in Moscow, consisting of a platform suspended from two rows of far-spaced metal suspenders. Since the suspenders carry the tension load, they are very slender. But they give the impression of supports that carry the pressure load.

I can cite many more cases in point. An unversed person can hardly fathom the technology of modern architecture—the purpose of all those suspenders, guy ropes, tension members, panel plates and vaults. Architecture seemed such a simple thing a little while ago, and now its genuine import can be fully appreciated only by the architect and designer.

Perhaps I am exaggerating somewhat, and the 'secrets' of the architecture of today and the near future are not so very mysterious after all. What I wish to stress here, however, is that the production and application of new materials stem from new principles that largely renounce the age-old traditions of architecture.

Soon our Communist Party will hold its current Twenty-Second Congress. This Congress will help us still better to discern the outlines of the communist future of our Soviet society. Therefore, it is very important to understand and appreciate all the new progressive phenomena that are already taking place in every field of endeavour, including architecture.

It is from an examination of these trends that we shall begin our excursion into the architecture of the future. Of the future that is already living in our present. Let us first tackle the building industry's problems which must be resolved today.

Weight and Lightness

Baalbek, Syria. Stones that had once been part of a great temple lie strewn about its ruins. They are almost twice as high as a room (five meters) and a quarter of a football field long (25 meters). As I regard a photograph

showing tiny figures of men clustering around one of those gigantic stones, I recall a picture out of a children's book depicting Gulliver surrounded by the Lilliputians. A road skirts the fantastic 'brick' which has been lying on the same spot for some 2,000 years.

Mark Twain wrote that the temples were built upon massive sub-structures seemingly capable of supporting a mountain. The material used were rocks the height of an omnibus. The huge remnants of the columns were eight feet thick; the splendid capitals were the size of a small cottage, and the stone slabs four or five feet deep were embellished with beautiful carving, and were of such huge dimensions that a single slab could easily cover the floor of an ordinary living room. How could those huge stones have ever been dragged out of the quarries and raised to the dizzy height of a temple?

With the massive stone structures, man sang a hymn to Weight, extolling it, thrilling in it, poetizing and worshipping it. He prided himself on being able to place one huge stone upon another at the price of untold efforts. And he worked it in such a way as to make it appear still more massive and heavier. Thus he felt he was imparting greater heroism to the deeds of men. The architect discovered forms, techtonics, correlations of parts and rhythms which would enhance those deeds tenfold.

The Egyptian pyramids, Greek temples, Roman structures, Italian palazzo—all those were hymns to the defeat of weight, to colossal physical effort.

The man of antiquity loved everything massive and heavy—architecture, utensils, clothes. To his mind, weight and massiveness imparted durability to all things, made them richer and handsomer.

Another trend manifested itself at the same time. Man worshipped weight and yet felt the need of breaking away from its onerous confines. Recall the legends of the Tower of Babel 'as high as the heavens,' the flying carpet, and the wings of Icarus. Man wished to incarnate these dreams in stone, and he erected structures whose lightness amazes us to this day. Such are, for example, the Gothic churches,

whose architecture seems to have cut itself free from terrestrial gravitation and soars high into the skies.

I thought of those two trends of past architecture when I visited the Mitishchi Synthetic Building Materials Works. As I passed through its shops, I felt as though I had landed on another planet where everything was 10 times lighter than on Earth. A three-square-meter slab of foam plastic. Made of any ordinary building material—brick or slab concrete—it would have weighed about two tons, and could have been moved only by crane. But these foam plastic slabs were tossed up onto a lorry by a young girl with no effort at all.

I saw a wash basin of very solid proportions, but when I attempted to pick it up, it almost flew out of my hands. It was practically weightless. Some plastic materials are 700 times lighter than steel, 100 times lighter than water and 25 times lighter than cork. And in spite of their gossamer weight, they are wonderfully strong.

The modern science of building construction has evolved a new conception—the coefficient of quality of construction. This is the relation between a material's durability and its volumetrical weight. The more durable and light the material, the more perfect it is.

The traditional architecture of yore dealt with building materials of a low coefficient of construction quality. Whereas this coefficient was 0.06 for concrete, 0.51 for steel and 2.5 for plastic material, it was only 0.02 for brick and stone (the chief material used in the old buildings). Brick is 100 times poorer than any article made of plastic material.

Of late, science and engineering have produced a great deal of unusually strong and light materials. Glass thread, for instance. One square millimeter in thickness, it withstands a stress of 300 kilograms. Glass thread is several times stronger than steel wire.

A house built of the new materials is from 20 to 30 times lighter than the ordinary dwelling. If we were to place a brick house on one scale, 30 houses made of, say, glass plas-

tics would have to be placed on the other to balance it. The weight of a single house equal to that of a whole street!

The shell of an egg is often cited as an example of strong and light construction (with regard to weight and size). Indeed, its thickness is only a sixtieth of the egg's diameter. Our engineers have designed a structure which has all the merits of the egg shell.

The dome over the hall of a new theatre in Novosibirsk is 55 meters in diameter, and only eight centimeters thick! The correlation of the 'shell' to the span is 1:70. In the United States Fuller's plywood domes have a correlation of 1:2000. He has also designed small domes 10-15 in diameter that are four times lighter than a tent of the same size, and six times cheaper. They are built eight times quicker too. A hangar topped with such a dome weighs no more than 630 kilograms. It can be lifted and carried to another place by helicopter.

Of great interest is prestressed reinforced concrete. We know that it is distinguished for the fact that the framework is preliminarily stressed as the concrete sets. This construction is very strong. Suffice it to say that in France the wings of a plane were made of prestressed concrete, after the design by Freycinet.

I should also like to mention pneumatic structures to which the future belongs. Try to imagine a huge bicycle tube cut crosswise. Its ends are hermetically plugged. When air is pumped into the tube, it swells and forms an arch. If we set several such arches in a row and stretch a strong transparent fabric (such as nylon) between them, we shall have a model of a pneumatic structure. This design was first proposed by the Soviet engineer L. Arsenyev in 1951.

We visualise a light aerial architecture of the future. Whereas the architects of old composed a grand hymn to Weight, our architects shall compose an inspired symphony to Lightness.

Pressure and Tension

If a raw piece of clay is pressed into a pancake you can set a large weight upon it without deforming it. That is a

test for pressure. But if you stretch the clay pancake, it will crack at the least effort. That is a test for tension. In builders' terms, the clay 'carriès' the pressure, but 'does not carry' the tension.

Now stand a rope up vertically and try placing a weight on it. It will immediately crumple. It cannot withstand any pressure. But if we stretch the rope taut, it will hold up some very large loads. The rope carries the tension load.

A stone or brick pillar can withstand enormous pressure. But place it horizontally and stretch it, and it will crack under a very slight load.

In the past, architects built out of natural stone, brick or wood. Theirs was a stone architecture in the main (with the exception of northern lands abounding in timber). The architect had to select constructions wherein the material was subject to pressure and not to tension. Therefore, besides the ordinary wall, he made extensive use of arches, vaults and domes.

In our time, as I have pointed out above, science offers the means for increasing the tensile strength of building materials. Scientists claim they can produce new metal materials whose tensile strength will be a hundred times greater than that of the existing metals. We are already producing thread-like crystals of iron that are 60-80 times stronger than the ordinary ones. Does that mean that supports, such as pillars and columns, and other constructions, will grow slenderer? Not at all. Let us imagine a column of super-hard steel. It is no thicker than a wire, and yet, in spite of its remarkable strength, it will bend under a load.

It appears, therefore, that durability is not everything. The trouble lies in the loss of balance or, as the engineers say, in rigidity, in the modulus of elasticity. Today the rigidity of such a construction as a column has almost reached its theoretical apex. It cannot be any slenderer. An increase in the material's strength can be of no avail. We get a paradox: by reinforcing the material we cannot make the construction any stronger. We must find some other principles of designing.

Everything falls into its place as soon as we make the materials carry tension, and not pressure. There are infinite possibilities for this. You can hang a lorry on three nylon threads!

In other words, to make better use of the new super-strong materials we must devise constructions which will chiefly resist tension loads.

What constructions are these?

In my yard I can see the prototype of such a construction; a large heavy rug hangs on a line drawn between two slender posts. The Crimean Bridge of Moscow mentioned above follows the pattern of this construction. Only here there are huge metal towers instead of the post (pressure resistance), metal plates that form an eyebar chain instead of the rope (tensile resistance), and a traffic way suspended from the chain instead of the rug. Or take the suspension bridge over the Hudson in New York. Two mighty stone supports stand at a distance of more than a kilometer, and anchored to them are two eyebar chains from which the bridge is suspended.

Ergo, the old traditional architecture dealt with pressure loads, whereas the architects of today are determined to replace pressure resistance with tensile resistance (wherever possible, of course). That is, first of all.

Secondly, stone architecture demanded the placing of the building elements (blocks and bricks) as closely as possible, the laying of one upon the other. The architecture of past years was an architecture of stone blocks, bricks and other building materials placed one upon the other.

Today we are able to revise the situation. Whereas, due to the enormous weight of the building materials, it was formerly necessary to set a wall upon a firm foundation, now it can be suspended from skeleton construction and thus save the money and labour needed for foundation laying operations. This is all the more rational if we remember that modern walls are manufactured from thin plates of light material with low heat-conductivity. You can hang a plate, but if you stand it up, it will fall.

In the Soviet pavilion at the Brussels Fair a wall was

exhibited hanging in midair. The side walls of the Unesco Building in Paris are also suspended. Thus, a building is able to 'breathe.' A hanging wall! A wall that hangs like a rug! No doubt, this trend will be further developed. Not out of a desire to wax original, but because it is more profitable to make material carry the tension (vertical load) and not the pressure (horizontal load) as before.

Dolmens and Nomad Tents

Once upon a time, at the dawn of mankind, naked hairy men with low brows and fierce eyes managed to set up two enormous stones and hoist a third over them. They made what we, their descendants, call a dolmen. It was the prototype of stone architecture.

Another type of structure was also evolved—the nomad's tent.

Two architectural antipodes based on diametrically opposed building principles.

The dolmen is heavy and massive, whereas the tent is light and aerial.

The dolmen is an elementary pressure-resisting structure, whereas a tent is a suspension, chiefly tension-resisting system. The dolmen is distinguished for its ample rigidity and immobility. A tent is both flexible and mobile.

Architecture next occupied itself exclusively with improving the principles of the dolmen. (The Parthenon is a dolmen brought to the point of perfection). The principles of the tent remained undeveloped. True, an exception is represented by the colossal tents stretched over the Coliseum of Ancient Rome, in the Syracuses, in Pompeii and some other cities. Pliny tells us that a huge tent covered the Roman Forum which, 'according to legend, seemed even more stupendous than the battle of the Gladiators.' But those were temporary structures.

We have what we call the 'guy-rope system', which was first theoretically based and applied in the construction of the Nizhny-Novgorod Fair in 1896 by the talented Russian

engineer V. G. Shuhokv. It is probably the most progressive of all the existing designs.

Essentially, the guy-rope system is a tent, only it is made not of animal skins, rugs or canvas, but of concrete, steel and aluminum.

Recall the construction of an ordinary tent. To a few sticks dug into the ground (the pressure-resisting supports) are secured ropes on which, say, canvas is stretched. The rope and canvas carry the tension load. Now let us return to the guy-rope system. The sticks here are replaced by perfected vertical supports or arches. Sometimes the arches are set up at an angle to one another, and the building rests upon those two points alone. Or a ring is formed to which the suspended roof is anchored. The ring itself rests upon a row of vertical posts.

The tent is replaced by concrete or metal plates secured to cables. This construction is very light, and capable of spanning large distances. The construction of the stadium in North Carolina, erected along the lines of this system, covers an area of 100×100 meters.

Guy-rope constructions are being applied on an ever wider scale in the Soviet Union, especially in large structures such as stadiums. It would be worth while applying this construction to small bays in many-storied buildings. In short, to use it in the building of dwelling houses, schools, kindergartens and nurseries, and in mass building generally. How about turning a tent into a many-storied structure?

Suspension House

For several years I have been entertaining the idea of designing such a house, prompted by the sight of all the superstrong and light building materials that have been appearing.

It is difficult to outline the idea of a suspension house without displaying the necessary drawings. I shall refer all interested readers to last year's 12th issue of the *Architecture of the USSR* magazine, featuring pictures of the variants of my design.

The scheme is as follows: a few supports, one for each flat, stand at a distance from one another. They are hollow reinforced concrete tubes containing the water, sewer, heating, gas and sundry pipes and chute-hoppers. These tubes are practically the only elements carrying the pressure load. From them, with the aid of cables (or nets) are suspended the ceilings of four or five stories. In lieu of walls hang heat-and sound-insulating materials. Like blankets they can be hung, but not stood up. Over the heat insulator on the façade hangs a waterproof film—just like a raincoat. The 'blanket' and the film are delivered to the building site in rolls—and that, of course, facilitates their transportation. (The materials of the future will all come in rolls).

That is one of the possible designs of the suspension house. Naturally, I have given a very rough description of it.

Everything in it is suspended—the walls, the partitions, the windows, the ceilings and the balconies. And since the structure is suspended, it is tensile. All the parts of the house can therefore be made of thin materials, down to the finest films and network of glass or nylon threads.

Remember that a glass thread a millimeter thick can withstand the weight of five men, and a lorry can be hung on three such threads. Glass is not subject to corrosion, and that too is a great advantage.

'But how can one live in a house suspended from threads? If they tear, the house will fall,' is the objection to my proposed design.

'Near fear,' I say. 'The threads form a net similar to the fisherman's. It is very strong and can hold several tons of fish. I heard that a whale was caught in a net like that. Lions are also caught in fine nets.'

The material's strength is determined not so much by the quality of its thread, as by the fact that the load is distributed equally over the net. That makes for its durability. When the net tears in one place, the load immediately shifts to the other threads, the construction does not collapse, and, contrary to the ordinary constructions, no catastrophe ensues.

The net is stretched in front of the façade. The building 'hangs' within the net. The latter can be woven like lace. It is a construction without any welding and riveting. The façade is dressed in lace.

No expensive foundation work is needed for it. Foundations are laid only under the supports that are situated at large distances from each other. Thus, the earthwork is minimised to the extreme. It is a very flexible construction. If the building pitches, it will not collapse, since the walls and ceilings are not joined by rigid joints—they are freely suspended from the cables. Such a building fears no earthquakes.

In other words, we can resolve the planning of a dwelling house and a whole block of houses in a completely new way. This is how it might look, say, in one of the southern districts of our country. Two adjoining houses stand close together. Between them hang two corridors. They are placed at different levels with an eye to allowing access to the flats over a broad incline (instead of stairs). In the butt-end is the stair enclosure. All this hangs. The net is interwoven with creepers. The hanging corridor is like a forest track, and the inclines are like forest pathways leading to the flats. Such 'tracks' can serve several houses; they can be blind or transit, and form suspension streets.

This variant is also feasible for the central zones of our country. A more solid partition between the adjoining houses, also suspended, is designated for a small club, motion picture theatre, café or restaurant.

I do not claim that the houses of the near future will be replicas of the ones described here. But I am convinced that the new constructions using new building materials will inevitably give rise to new planned structures. Today this may still seem fantastic, but it will not be long before steel, irradiated by neutrons, will become 100 times stronger, super-strong titanium will find broad application, and plastic building materials will be 'lighter than air.' That is when the suspension towns with hanging gardens and streets will become a reality.

However, the problems of industrial building construction deal not only with the development of progressive designs, the production of superstrong and superlight building materials alone. The essential point lies in entirely new methods of their production. And this is where standardisation steps in.

Standards

Take any object at random. It is standardised. My fountain pen is standard; so is my paper and ink.

Glance around you. Your furniture, television set, wireless, electric bulbs are all standard. And so is the whole house, for that matter.

Outside, at the entrance to your house stand several cars. A Moskvich, a Pobeda, a Volga—they too are the output of mass production. A standard tramcar trundles by on muted springs. A standard bus slithers down the road. A standard motorcycle speeds past with a deafening series of backfire.

People stream along the sidewalks. Many of them wear similar coats and hats, and carry standard bags and briefcases.... The whole world is filled with standard objects. But the world itself is not standard. That is a point we should learn to appreciate.

Standardisation is firmly rooted in our life. So firmly, in fact, that we forget to notice it, just as we fail to notice the air around us. Today standardisation is still a necessity. We cannot do without it. If it should disappear, mass machine production would disappear with it, and we would go hungry and clotheless.

Were I a poet, I would sing a glorious hymn to modern standardisation, a hymn replete with love and gratitude. I would describe it as a Good Genie possessing the wonderful gift of making expensive things cheap. Just as Midas who, according to Greek legend, turned everything he touched to gold, thus does standardisation turn unique commodities into mass and accessible products. That is better than gold.

But sometimes the Good Genie can wax wayward and

capricious. When we violate a law or rule that we still know too little of, standardisation punishes us, making things drab and dreadfully similar. If we want to continue to partake of its benefits, we must make a study of its idiosyncracies.

And that is not all. Life has advanced the even more complex problem of devising universal standards for all countries.

In the recent past man was interested in a problem that seemed like an anachronism: by what yardstick to measure objects?

In the prerevolutionary builders' handbooks there were up to a hundred different kinds of feet, 40-odd different kinds of miles, 120 sundry kinds of pounds, etc. There were, for instance, workers', decimal, bi-decimal, geodetic, weavers', tailors', old, new, architects', engineers', geometrical and mathematical feet. There were big and small pounds, old and new, ordinary, office, monetary, trade, city, mining, Nuremberg, artillery, medical, apothecaries' and metric pounds. A pound for meat, and a pound for iron. Beef was weighed with one kind of weight, and nails with another.

Far back, in the depths of history, there were even stranger phenomena. In the Middle Ages every city had its own table of measures. Big landowners had the right to have their own tables of measures. It was only the French Revolution that put an end to this crazy patchwork of measurement systems. A metric system was finally evolved that received almost universal recognition.

However, that problem was limited, dealing as it did only with the question of what yardstick to measure things with. But now we are in need of a common system of international standards. That is a far more grand and complex problem than the one tackled in its time by the scientists committee appointed by the French revolutionary government, with the great Laplace assisting.

Not so long ago a conference of experts of the USSR and the People's Democracies was held to solve this problem.

But before we proceed with this topic let us visit a certain wonder-factory.

'Cosmic Factory'

At all times and epochs man turned to Nature in an attempt to unravel her secrets and benefit by them. For him, Nature was and still is a wonderful story book. And though there are still many pages in it that he is unable to comprehend, and it is written in cryptic hieroglyphics, gradually, line by line, he is revealing its genuine meaning. Let us glance into that book.

The world appears to us in the form of a great 'cosmic factory' which puts out an unceasing stream of serial products. It mass produces everything imaginable—bees, ants, butterflies, birches, pines, molecules and atoms.... And all this exclusively in the form of serial mass production—series of animals, series of insects, plants, etc. The factory has never produced any unique items unrelated to its kind. Its production is exclusively mass and serial.

Sir Joseph Thomson, the physicist and recipient of the Nobel Prize, claimed that Nature's mass production was the most profound of scientific truths. Setting forth the principles underlying the Universe, which no amount of discoveries can change, he pointed out, besides the laws of preservation of mass and energy and other eternal laws, the principle of 'mass production' inherent in the Universe. But the amazing thing is that, notwithstanding their mass production, each product of the 'cosmic factory' is an individual. Each sheep in the herd, no matter how similar it is to its brothers and sisters, is an individual.

But this individuality is always confined to a definite type, to a definite series (sheep, ants).

How is this cosmic factory, whose trade mark bears the word 'Nature', organised?

In terms of modern engineering, the entire output of the Universe consists of 102 known 'standard' elements. But the Earth's crust and the atmosphere surrounding it consist of a mere dozen elements in the main. These elements, when joined, create molecules of an infinite quantity of substances. Today chemistry deals with more than half a million different substances.

What is it that provides so infinite a variety of 'products' out of a minimum quantity of different standards and elements?

In the first place, they unite neither by chance nor chaotically, but according to a definite system. In the second place, in uniting, the elements produce new qualitatively different substances. Conditionally, we can call this the principle of variant transformations.

In the absence of the principle of variant transformations, the world with its infinite variety of substances could not have existed in its present form. The Universe is composed of a combination of absolutely opposed properties: a set limitation of elements at one pole, and an infinite variety of substances on the other. Mass standards on the one hand, and individual 'output' on the other. Moreover, Nature's creations are both beautiful and poetic. Here everything is made not only according to the laws of expediency, but also according to the laws of beauty.

Now let us return to modern architecture.

Under the conditions of piece, unique, construction, the elements of a building—the windows, doors and staircases—are individual, having as they do differing forms and sizes. But in the case of mass architecture, the elements of a building are united in a single system. Thus, the sizes of standard windows change through a certain quantity called modulus. The same applies to the standards of doors, balconies, blocks, etc. Standard houses which yesterday were still entirely individual and unique are today included in series. And series constitute a system.

Standardisation, therefore, is an element of a system.

Unfortunately, our standards frequently lack the principle of the variant transformations mentioned above.

We know that Nature consists of chemical compounds and mechanical mixtures. Their difference lies, in the first case, in that the compounds of elements engender a new substance (new quality), for instance, oxygen plus hydrogen equals water; and in the second case, in that the basic properties of the components remain unchanged. In the first case we have the principle of variant transformations, and

in the second case, this principle is absent. The trouble is that our standards more frequently provide only for 'mechanical mixtures' and not for 'chemical compounds.'

What does this mean? Let me cite a few concrete examples.

The standard residential section, consisting of a staircase enclosure with two or three flats on each floor, is the basis of our standards in housing construction. By combining several sections horizontally and vertically, we get a series of houses of diverse height and length. But the quantity of sections and floors can change, whereas the quality of the houses remains unchanged (the flats are all alike).

Another example. We began building dwelling houses out of volumetric elements. Each room (or several rooms) represented a gigantic brick, as it were, and the house was assembled from them. The dwelling house of volumetric elements designed by the Special Architectural Designing Bureau of the Moscow City Executive Committee is not bad, but its method of standards is wrong in principle. There are three standard basic volumetric elements—two rooms (A), a room plus bath-toilet and kitchen (B), and a bath-toilet plus kitchen and staircase enclosure (C). We can, however, get only one living section out of these three standards. The three letters can only be placed in consecutive order (A, B, C). They cannot be reshuffled.

B. T. Makarychev proposes another variant, consisting of five standard volumetric blocks (A, B, C, D, E), from which can be assembled flats with any arrangement of rooms, section, corridor, gallery houses with flats on one or two levels; house-sections, hotels, hostels. Various words and phrases can be composed out of the five letters. And each time a new quality—new planning—will evolve. These are not 'mechanical mixtures' but 'chemical compounds.' In this case we have the principle of variant transformations which is absent in the first design.

But we shall not go into the details of the two designs here. What we are interested in is the method.

Lately, various construction proposals based on the above principle have been appearing in the press with

increasing frequency. They include variant flats in which the shifting of partitions produce diversely planned two, three and even four rooms; so-called sectional furniture that make possible varied groupings from a limited number of standards. When grouped, the different standards produce a new piece unlike the material they were made of. From the standard elements is created a non-standard whole. Unfortunately, the ideas of variant architecture have not received broad recognition, and are only beginning to attract the attention of some of our designing and research institutes.

Variant standards are the ideal to which we should aspire. Only a system of standards that offers possibilities for producing variants has a future before it. Therein lies the method against the monotony which the existing standards frequently breed.

It is time to elaborate a scientific theory of variant standards. It is necessary to discover the laws by which we can arrive at a great number of diverse solutions from a very limited quantity of standards. It is necessary to make the demands for variants a part of our building rules and codes. Non-variant standards should signify poor standards.

Mechanism and Organism

Mechanism and organism! What is the essential difference between them in regard to form and composition?

If we take apart a mechanism, such as, say, a typewriter, we get a pile of standard bolts, nuts, cogged wheels and other parts whose forms and proportions have little in common with the form and proportions of the whole—the typewriter.

Living organisms are made in another way. In them the part frequently repeats the forms and proportions of the whole. The big is repeated in the small. Man's beauty 'consists of the balanced proportions between finger and finger, all the fingers and the wrist, the wrist and the elbow, the elbow and the arm— between all the parts generally

and the whole,' wrote Claudius Galen in the second century of our era.

The living organism contains not a mechanical but an organic tie. This tie is higher and more perfect, built up as it is on the harmony of parts and the whole. It is upon this tie that Nature's beauty rests.

Like Nature, a beautiful work of architecture is always organic. 'A building is like a living being, in the creating of which we must copy Nature,' said Leon Battista Alberti, scientist; architect, writer, musician and one of the greatest humanists of the Renaissance.

The present system of standards is merely the result of construction-functional demands. It provides the mechanical and not the organic unity of standards. Ergo, the architect is forced to compose a building from standards that are often unbeautiful in proportion and unconnected among themselves by any harmonious correlations.

It is considered that beautiful proportions are the best means of creating a beautiful architecture. This is essentially so. In architecture proportions constitute its inner beauty. Though invisible, they are always tangible, like spiritual beauty.

The irony of fate lies in the fact that today, when our architecture has become so simple and laconic, and, consequently, the role of proportions has grown immeasurably, we have ceased to consider them.

I believe the reason for this lies in the following. Previously, under the artisan methods of labour, the architect designed rooms of random height, and windows, doors and walls of random sizes, he was thus able to impart one or another proportion to the building and its parts. Now the height of a building is preplanned, and the sizes of the windows and doors and walls are all subordinated to special standards (standard blocks, standard panels). Standards have killed beautiful proportions.

*Several years ago the architect found a simple way out of his predicament: he embellished the standard windows and walls with architectural decorations (columns, pilasters

and arches), and within the limits of these decorations often found beautiful proportions. Today the architect is no longer a decorator, and the problem of proportions now hangs in midair.

We should be erring if we substituted the problem of beauty for the problem of variety. Even if we were to assume that all the standards were different, they would not be any more beautiful.

The organic ties between the parts and the whole are one of the distinctive qualities of art generally, and architecture in particular. Recall the case when a single part (triglyph) discovered by the American scientist Dinsmoor helped him to reconstruct an entire ancient Greek temple. The Soviet scientist V. D. Blavatsky discovered during the excavations of Panticapei a piece of architrave which enabled him to reconstruct the whole building. Of course, the scientists were able to do this only because they had studied a number of similar structures, because in the finest monuments of architecture every block, every part is harmoniously bound in proportions to the whole. This harmony imparts a certain organic quality to the structures.

Can we create standards by basing ourselves on their organic ties alone? Can we achieve a harmonic whole with the aid of standards? Of course we can. Standard windows, doors, panels, balconies, decorative tiles and sundry elements of buildings must be linked in a single architectural system, a system of proportions in particular. They must be organically bound up with one another. Their different combinations will produce new architectural variants.

In assembling a house, the builders can erect it out of beautiful elements, each of which is worth a special examination. The architectural whole will be an organic and not a mechanical compound of beautiful 'things' having one and the same harmonical base. Consequently, the beauty of industrial architecture depends on a system of standards that will contain not only functional, but also harmonious, artistic elements.

The 'Music' of Architecture

A poet called architecture 'frozen music'. In music sounds move, change their timber, their colouring, recede and swell. Architecture is also movement.

Slim columns and the vaults of Gothic churches soar; the columns of the temple in Pestum are charged with an inner powerful and serene movement.

The centuries pass, but the movement confined within the static stone constructions remains. Static movement! Architecture is one of the greatest paradoxes of movement frozen in eternal calm.

The Soviet architects are striving to create a beautiful music of architecture, a music which could be expressed with the aid of standardisation. It is a problem of great complexity.

Allow me to improvise. Here are two dwelling houses. Two standards. They constitute a microdistrict. One is a four-storey, rambling, horizontal house with ordinary flats for large families, whereas the other is a tall tower-like ten-storey, square house for single people or small families. It is the so-called tower house. Thus the architect deals with two types of houses, a horizontal (sectional) house, and a vertical (tower) house.

Horizontal and vertical! That is contrast, and contrast is the strongest means of composition. A horizontal house is more serene, less active. It easily merges with its surroundings. Not so the vertical tower house, which energetically asserts its existence and stands out starkly against its surroundings. It has another sound—the sound of the vertical. If the horizontal can be compared to pianissimo, the vertical can be compared to fortissimo; if the horizontal is minor, the vertical is major. By alternating the horizontal house with the vertical one (if it is functionally justified), we shall have one composition. If we group two vertical houses with a horizontal one we shall get something entirely different. Tower buildings gathered together in the middle of a block will 'sound' like trumpets in an orchestra—loud and solemn.

Nor is that all. The houses are built of large horizontal and vertical blocks (or panels). Placed above the windows, the first form an unbroken horizontal strip, whereas the second are set up between the windows. Now let us face the horizontal blocks with white, grey and black morblite. This will be not merely three variants for the colour solution of the blocks; it will be a system, a colour gamut built up of a gradual increase—white, grey, black.

Let us imagine a microdistrict built of such houses. Say we walk down the street leading to its centre. The large-block houses stand with their block fronts facing the street. They are white and mat. The horizontal blocks are also white, but faced with morblite. White shiny strips of morblite that softly stress the different purposes of the blocks and thus reveal the tectonics of the wall. Between the 'lines' of the houses to the right can be seen a school, and, to the left, a kindergarten.

The row of houses is broken by a green garden, in the middle of which looms a tower house. Here reside the single people and small families. On the glazed ground floor are situated a cafeteria and a delicatessen. This is the vertical point. The major.

Let us go on. Here are more sectional houses. But the horizontal blocks are grey here. The horizontal has a more energetic sound, but within the confines of the same constructional design.

Then another green garden, of larger dimensions. With three tower houses. Three mighty verticals, three mighty chords. The houses form a triangle. The ground floors are joined, and contain a dining room, library, reading room.

And now we can see the houses built of large blocks, but their horizontal blocks are black. Shiny black strips of morblite, with a golden ceramic 'thread' drawn through the middle. The horizontal has a still more defined, energetic ring.

We are in the centre of the microdistrict. There is a lake here, around which stand several tower houses. A symphony of verticals! The centre is a park, amid whose

green are sprinkled the public buildings—a club, a cinema, a department store and a post office....

In this plan there is movement, development. Here the standard appears in a new aspect. It is not only diverse, not only beautiful, but also instrumental in forming an ensemble. It is not simply an exhibition of handsome façades, but one of the ways of creating architecture, an architecture of ringing, and not frozen music. An architecture created with the aid of standards.

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I close my eyes and visualize the architecture of the future. Though its outlines are still hazy and undefined, there are points that can be discerned more or less clearly.

I am struck by the new construction of the buildings. It is tensile, and not made to carry pressure as before. Its walls and partitions are suspended. They are light, flexible, transparent, heat-proof and sound-proof. They can be removed and again suspended. In good weather, the walls are raised to let in the sun and fresh air. When it is cold and damp, the wall is lowered again. It can be lowered partly to form a large open window, of any size and in any place. During frosts, a second wall can be suspended.

At the press of a button the partition slips up like a blind. Several rooms are thus turned into a large living room. Lower two partitions, and you have an isolated room. Lower still another 'blind' and you will have one more room....

I visualize this architecture and it puts me in mind of a lily. In the morning it opens its petals to the sun. The sun moves, and the flowers head moves after it. At sundown the petals close to form a snug refuge.

Man has always tried to make his architecture organic. He has striven to build dwellings and cities according to the laws of living nature. This aspiration found its expression in the Egyptian column, the antique order and the Gothic church.

But the builder dealt with dead, inert material. There-

fore the construction of the building obeyed the laws of dead nature. It was motionless and immutable as a rock.

And only now, when people have learned to create entirely new building materials and basically different constructions, when variant standards have appeared, there is a real opportunity to make our architecture mobile, like a living creature which easily adapts itself to changing conditions. Architecture is becoming organic not only in form, but in essence.

—FROM *Novy Mir*, No. 5 (MOSCOW).

On the Art of the 'Distractionists'

D. Z A S L A V S K Y

THE NOISIEST TREND OF MODERN BOURGEOIS ART HAS DUBBED itself abstractionist art, a name with which it has been worthied by others, as well. 'Abstractionist' is a rather long word, a bit clumsy, and not too easy to understand. What is most important, moreover, is that it is confusing and apt to lead one astray, for it does not at all express what it really means.

The real abstract thought is one that is detached or distracted from any object. An abstraction, therefore, can be said to pose the detached and universal against the concrete and the individual, against that which is alive, corporal and particular. But this does not imply that an abstraction, in the usual sense of the word, negates the corporal or is inimical to it, in any way. Quite the contrary: the abstraction leans on the concrete and living world. More than that, it confirms both its truth and objectivity. The abstraction, indeed, establishes the kinship of phenomena through their common traits, and therefore, helps us to understand the animated world, the laws to which it is subjected, the sources of its phenomena, and the link-up of their causes.

But all of this has nothing to do with so-called 'abstractionism' in art, for the latter flatly denies all that is corporal, alive, and objective. Apart from doing nothing whatever to help our understanding of the objective world, this pseudo-abstractionism denies its very meaning, for it draws its entire content from a world reduced to extreme subjec-

tivism. Its attitude to the real, objectively existing world is inimical, contemptuous, and overweening, for it lives by its own untrammelled fantasy, utterly free of all control of its creativity by fact and logic.

The phenomenon, of course, is anything but new. In one of Ostrovsky's comedies there was a pious pilgrim who sincerely believed in the existence of a devil who had only a back and a pair of nostrils. Had this old woman been an artist, she would undoubtedly have painted that back and nostrils in the most lurid oils, and would thus have produced a truly 'abstractionist' work of art.

Something of the sort, it seems to me, came within my vision at an art show in Brussels, or was it Copenhagen? When I asked my guide what the picture was called, and how one was to understand those nostrils planted on the back, he answered approximately:

'The picture is called, "Dawn at Sunset;" and as for those nostrils, they're not to be understood at all, and shouldn't be, in fact! Isn't that wonderful?'

'Marvelous!' I answered, really pleased to have been relieved of the need to understand or even to think about anything at all.

The word 'abstractionism' in art, to my mind, is best translated as formlessness in art, or the distraction of our minds from all form in art. And the artists of this trend had perhaps best be called 'the distractionists'. Far be it from me, though, to give this term the slightest offensive shading. Why, indeed, should the artists be offended, for they really deny all meaning and distract our minds from the meaning of all concepts and phenomena?

One might imagine that the distractionist artists lead a carefree existence, having rid themselves of all the demands and rules of real life. But this would be far from the truth, for their lives are filled with contradictions and hardships, and they are in fact compelled to wage an incessant struggle.

Their chief difficulty is that having rid themselves subjectively from all rules of the real world they are nonetheless compelled to live in the real and objective world. To

nourish themselves, they must create; or, to put it differently, they must sell their creations to nourish themselves.

A work of art in a bourgeois society is chiefly a piece of merchandise, and sometimes nothing more than that. The value of a picture or sculpture depends on the demand it creates; and it is the extent of this demand that determines its exchange value in cash. That is how the distractionist artist comes to perceive the meaning of the monetary relations of the bourgeois society.

The distractionist artists are anything but disinterested in these relations, as a rule. But even those who are deeply and sincerely devoted to their art and not bent on pursuing wealth alone, would like to penetrate to the widest masses of the 'consumers'. They, too, hunger for fame and glory and would like the people to be familiar with their works. But there, precisely, is where an acute and often dramatic contradiction arises.

Let us quote the story of a clash reported by the Right-wing West German magazine, *Stern*. Dr. Ewelbauer, the director of a Braunschweig municipal hospital and admirer of 'non-representational art,' as it is called, erected a curious aggregate in the maternity section of his establishment. The top and bottom of the thing consisted of copper wire bent hither and thither. The middle was graced with a half-ball of metal, somewhat resembling half an egg. Labelled 'The Prospective Mother,' the aggregate was meant for the aesthetic enjoyment of the prospective mothers about to be delivered in this ward.

But the plain women of Braunschweig unanimously demanded the removal of the wired 'sculpture'. Highly indignant, they complained that this was a mockery of motherhood, and that the sight of such an artistic horror could provoke miscarriages, or at least harm the health of the mother and child. Dr. Ewelbauer vainly attempted to defend this 'work of art', insisting that the angry mothers knew absolutely nothing about 'the new art'. And he was perfectly right, for the women really knew nothing about it.

The city magistrate was in a quandary. Though he ordered the removal of 'The Prospective Mother', he was afraid of being accused of persecuting what was 'new' in art, and therefore had it reinstated in the municipal museum, probably alongside the stone axe of a prehistoric cave man.

This precipitated a controversy in the West German press. While some newspapers took the side of the plain German women, others argued that the decision of the magistrate had run contrary to an article in the Federal German Republic's Constitution, to the article referring to the freedom of art. The question remained, however, as to what type of production 'The Prospective Mother' belonged to: to non-representative art, or to non-representative machine building?

But there are other contradictions, too, in the lives of the distractionists, things that provoke quarrels among themselves, and between themselves and bourgeois society.

It is evidently not very easy to live in an atmosphere devoid of meaning, for a subjective life utterly isolated from real life must be exceedingly wretched. It is only the heroic natures or the brazen pot-boilers who can endure the deprivations of the recluse in the desert. The artists cannot help yearning for life and the world of reality. They cannot help introducing the elements of realism even in their meaningless paintings, and strive for recognition not for the sake of meaningless content, but in spite of it.

Others attempt to justify what is meaningless and to reconcile it with thought, and the real world. The West German weekly, *Die Zeit* has sought to acquaint its readers with the so-called 'scientific' trend in non-representative art. The theoreticians of this trend claim that the new discoveries of physics, chemistry, and astronomy demand portrayals absolutely new in principle. Microscopy, it appears, has disclosed the complete coincidence of the structure of matter and certain samples of 'abstract' painting. The ultra-microscopes or electric computing machines are thus allegedly rehabilitating this meaningless art in the work of the scientific cognition of reality.

Die Zeit, for all that, polemised valiantly with these 'theoreticians,' showing that their attempts to create a new concept of space and form in the real world had nothing to do with real science and scientific art.

'Abstract art with its fortuitous ornamentation or metaphysical concepts on space can hardly compare with the scientific art of Leonardo who used his pencil to observe and study the functions of people and objects,' wrote the magazine.

There was a time, long long ago, when the adherents of Thomas Aquinas attempted to introduce the principle of reason and rationalism in religious mysticism, while the adherents of the equally sainted Tertullian stuck to their formula: 'I believe it because it has no meaning'. We are not inclined to enter into the essence of such controversies, since we are not interested in the theological differences over various dogmas of faith.

We fully acknowledge our incompetence to decide such questions as to which devils are better—the yellow or the green? But we feel that in theology and non-representative art alike the devil with the nostrils on his back has as much a right to existence in a cerebrated or cerebrally debilitated world as the violet devils with eyes all over their bodies.

Though they deny the real world, the distractionist artists are indubitably real enough in themselves. They hold their own place in the ideological and philosophical trends of the times. They also take part in the ideological struggle waged between the opposed social-political systems. Nor can there be any doubt that the non-representative trend in art is nourished by the juices of idealism, and not only of idealism, but its most subjective brand. But whatever form of idealism non-representative art may belong to, and whatever raiments it might don, the fact remains that it is deeply alien to scientific materialism and profoundly hostile to Marxism. It is the product of bourgeois thinking in the period of the decay of the bourgeois society. Though it totters on the boundary

of reason, its social nature lies well beyond the border of the socialist camp.

There is no denying that there are not a few people in bourgeois society and especially in its intellectual circles who derive satisfaction and even pleasure from 'abstractionist,' or as we would call it, 'distractionist' art. That is something as incomprehensible to us as many other things of a similar nature. We never interfere in the controversies of the Catholics and Protestants. Nor do we judge or care to judge the comparative merits of the Buddhist and Jewish faiths. It is possible, too, that the Khlysts, or say, the Jehovites have their own ideas of beauty and aesthetics. They do not understand our language, nor we theirs.

In general, we are able to judge all these varieties of idealism and fideism by the things they do in the real world. If these believers happen to be advocates of peace, we are friendly to them, never troubling to examine the essence of their world outlooks. If they happen to advocate war, aggression and savage reaction we combat them as we would any enemies of reason and progress.

There is one thing, however, to which we most determinedly and categorically object. We cannot refrain from protesting against the fact that the distractionist artists dub themselves the 'new', 'young', and 'left-wing' trend of art. How can a trend be called 'young' and 'new', when it is nearing its centennial. The muse of the distractionists can hardly be called a young girl. She is a grandmother and even a great grandmother who is making vain attempts to hide her wrinkles under a fat layer of rouge.

The crusade against realism, as is known, was launched at the beginning of our century by the Italian futurist Marinetti. That was when the trend was really new. The modish winds making for the overthrow of intelligible, meaningful art, and the rout of the realistic values blew all over Europe, penetrating to Russia, as well. We, the old-timers, saw this for ourselves some sixty years ago, when we viewed all sorts of new pictures planting nostrils on backs in various ways. That, too, was the time of books

that denied the rules of grammar. The authors of other similar works proudly called themselves '*nichevokites*' (derived from the word '*nichevo*'—'nothing').

The whole thing had the air of a scandal. While some gloated, others laughed, and still others fumed. Passions indeed ran high. Kornei Chukovsky has recalled Ilya Yefimovich Repin's fit of rage when he visited the exhibition of the 'young'. 'Smearers, imposters!' he shouted, stamping his feet and shaking his fists. He was ready to tear and destroy the canvases that insulted his artistic taste.

But soon the storm subsided, for the scandal had lost its novelty. Then came something quite unexpected.

During the first years of revolution when the Bolsheviks were busy defending their country and restoring the economy, the distractionists grew especially active and pushed to the foreground again. Some of the acknowledged masters of realistic art at first lost their hands. Many of them indeed kept aloof of the tense and seething struggle. The distractionists, for their part, advertised themselves as innovators, as 'leftists' in their struggle against bourgeois art on behalf of the revolutionaries.

They availed themselves of everything: of the squares for their monumental paintings, of walls for their placards, of the stages for their productions of 'the new trend'. They kept drawing, writing, and playing incessantly. They filled all nooks with ugly statuary of plaster and stone, things supposed to represent leading public figures, but which really represented nothing at all. And how furiously they persecuted the realist artists!

Incredible things happened then! The entire history of Russian art was spat upon. All the traditions were repudiated for the sole reason that they were traditions. It was as though some supreme spirit of mischief had cast a spell over the youth, urging them to spit upon the Bolshoi and Maly Theatres and the Moscow Art Theatre from the heights of their inflated grandeur. Everything these theatres stood for was labelled as trash and condemned to be scrapped.

But this deluge of abstractionism subsided as quickly as it came. Which does not imply that it was forbidden! What had actually happened was that the public, the really new working class public who had been watching and wondering over these weird events suddenly yawned widely, sincerely, from ear to ear, and then turned indifferently from the spectacle, for they had had enough of it, and were bored.

Encouraged in the sphere of culture by the Party, the people precisely then took to art with a fervour never witnessed before. But it was real art which they demanded, the art that reflected life, that was linked with life, the art that was meaningful and real. And the Party supported the wholesome demand of the people with all its might.

The 'young' art had thus had the opportunity to leave mementos of itself in the shape of great and lasting works, but actually left nothing at all. Stricken with senile debility, it was as barren as could be.

Our lives today are pervaded with creativity, with the urge to move ahead, continuously to enrich our spiritual existence, and promote the fruitful struggle of the new against the old.

Nothing could be more hostile to realism in our country, to socialist realism, than dogmatic stagnation.

The Draft Programme of the CPSU has allotted a prominent place to art in the construction of the communist society. The grand prospects of the near future stir all people with living souls. Filling all the material and cultural needs of the working people, the communist society promises great achievements in the sphere of beauty. The Communist is not only a strong, intelligent, educated, and honourable person, but also an artist, a creator, a poet, a man who loves people and nature.

Real life is rich in our times; it abounds with ideas and artistic images, and is attractively varied. How wretched and limited by comparison is the meaningless little world of 'abstractionism,' this decaying heap of bourgeois vegetation.

How miserable and spiritually poor are the distractionists who sigh and yearn for wire-ware depicting 'the prospective mother.' They do not know that we were fanned by those rotten winds from the blind alleys of bourgeois decadence once before. The people then discarded the simian vogue, demanding real art from the Soviet artists, art linked with life, with the labours and struggle for the future, art that was at once joyous and wholesome.

The Draft Programme stirs, stimulates and inspires the Soviet people to creative work and ever greater daring through all its content and the whole of its tenor. It has indeed combined strict scientific exposition with profound political lyricism, and actually represents a poem to labour shining in the light of the future.

What scope this offers to realistic artistic imagination! What true artist could stand dispassionately aside from this forward and upward march of man?

—FROM *Sovetskaya Kultura*, 19 AUGUST 1961 (MOSCOW).

MISCELLANY

ANTIMATTER WILL SUPPLY THE ANSWER

ALL matter encountered on earth and all known celestial bodies consist of protons, neutrons and electrons...

Until recently it was considered universally recognised that that had always been so.

Corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Sciences B. M. Pontecorvo and Dr. J. A. Smorodinsky, who has a doctor's degree in physics and mathematics, have shaken this certitude. At a recent conference on cosmogony, the two scientists reported on a hypothesis they have advanced and call 'the neutrino hypothesis of evolution of the Universe.'

According to this hypothesis, at the initial stage of evolution the bulk of the mass of the Universe was made up not of protons, electrons and neutrons but of neutrinos and antineutrinos—mysterious elementary particles which scientists have not as yet succeeded in directly observing.

What induced the authors of this hypothesis to abandon the universally recognised opinion that the qualitative make-up of the Universe remains invariable throughout its infinite existence?

The crux of this problem is the question of matter and antimatter.

Right and left, up and down, plus and minus... Every concept has its opposite.

It is no wonder that people came to the conclusion that everything in the world is symmetrical.

But the world of elementary particles for a long time 'managed' without symmetry; only particles held sway in it. 'Mirror images' of electrons, protons and neutrons were unknown. However, the incontestable logic of mathematical equations compelled the British physicist, Paul Dirac, to introduce into theory the first antiparticle—the 'positive electron'. And shortly afterwards, in the course of cosmic ray experiments, scientists succeeded in observing the birth of a positron—a particle differing from the electron by the sign of its charge.

The tempestuous development of physics led to the discovery of other antiparticles.

It seemed that everything had taken its proper place. If theory demanded it, a corresponding antiparticle was found for each particle. But every answer gives rise to a new question: why, then, do all bodies known to us consist of ordinary particles, why do we not come across anti-atoms, which, in turn, are made up of antiprotons, antineutrons and positrons? And although present-day physics considers that particles and antiparticles stand on an absolutely equal footing, it is unable as yet to give an answer to this question. The only thing which is known is that, when a particle and antiparticle collide, both vanish, turning into another form of matter. That is why antiparticles cannot exist for long in our world.

Thus the question of why our world is not symmetrical, of why matter in it predominates over antimatter, has remained open to this day.

'Painters and sculptors like to say that they pass what they see through the prism of their own ego'. This statement was once made by Rodin, and his point of view found followers. In this process a new vision of the surrounding world is born. Such a vision, tinted by the sentiments and experience of the artist, frequently reflects reality fully than the finest photograph.

Do not scientists too act in the same way, voluntarily or involuntarily following men of art in their creative work? Bucking up against a problem, each of them summons to his aid the formulae and equations which in his

opinion will help perceive the incomprehensible in true light. Thus fusion of the unknown with truths that have gone down into textbooks, filtered through the mind of the scientist, becomes the source of an entirely new outlook on the world.

Naturalists solve the ancient riddle of the Universe in different ways. How did the Universe originate? What are the laws of its evolution?

Most scientists, not knowing how to go about solving the problem of antimatter, put it down to chance. An opinion is rife that the predominance of particles over antiparticles is a result of fortuity. If a world of particles exists, then an antiworld with a preponderance of antiparticles could equally well arise.

In conformity with another hypothesis, there may be numerous worlds and antiworlds in the Universe, and it is this which insures the symmetry of matter and antimatter.

These hypotheses have a weak side to them. The whole experience of mankind testifies to the little likelihood of big chance deviations from the mean. Therefore there is very little likelihood of such tremendous deviations from the mean as the origin of the stellar worlds and antiworlds known to us.

Pontecorvo and Smorodinsky suggested an entirely new explanation of the observed excess of matter over antimatter. This explanation is based on the properties of neutrinos, the very lightest of all particles.

Neutrinos are amazing particles. Entering science on the pen point of the theoretical physicist, they have proved necessary to explain certain processes proceeding in the micro world. The thing is that experimental physicists following the interaction of elementary particles in many instances came to the conclusion that the observations do not conform with the laws of conservation of energy and momentum.

But the scientists knew that these fundamental laws of nature are never violated. At the same time the experi-

ments were very exact and fully reliable. All check-ups led to the conclusion that the conservation laws are violated or else... or else, the Swiss physicist Pauli declared in 1931, another particle is taking part in the reaction, which remains undetected and carries away the excess energy and momentum that the particles registered by the instruments are short of. The name 'neutrino' was proposed two years later by the outstanding Italian physicist Fermi and since then it has once and for all received general recognition. Subsequently, it had to be acknowledged that there also exist antineutrinos—particles differing from the neutrinos in magnetic properties.

The neutrino and the antineutrino differ in many respects from the other elementary particles. They practically do not interact with any other forms of matter or energy. They have 'nothing with which to hook on to' the outside world: they do not have an electric charge and do not even have mass, or, more correctly speaking, rest mass. At any rate, this mass is so insignificant that it is impossible to measure as yet. These particles are never at rest; they are always in motion and move with the speed of light.

Once they have been born, these impetuous particles remain forever in the Universe. They are all around us: both in our room and in every corner of the infinite cosmos. Nothing is an obstacle to them. They pass through the Earth, the stars and the galaxies. This ability of theirs is characterised by a conventional quantity—the length of the free path of a particle, i.e. the path that it covers without hindrance. For a neutrino in the expanses of the Universe, this quantity is expressed by a figure with 28 zeros. This means that if two neutrinos were to be flying from the Earth to the Moon, one of them would not reach it only if this whole space were filled with iron.

And these amazing particles—the neutrino and the antineutrino—were selected by Pontecorvo and Smorodinsky as guides into the past of the world. They assumed that, in the most remote times about which physics may judge, the bulk of matter existed in the form of high-

energy neutrinos and antineutrinos and its density was very great, many times greater than in our days.

In these conditions the casual formation of a large number of protons, neutrons and other particles not counterbalanced by a corresponding number of antiparticles is quite possible. It is possible because, owing to the tremendous number of neutrinos and antineutrinos, the overall balance of matter and antimatter was little upset.

Proceeding from the general theory of relativity, Soviet physicist Friedman came to the conclusion that the Universe must be expanded. After a time astronomers observing distant star-clusters with the help of telescopes became convinced that they were receding from us at tremendous velocity, and, what is more, receding all the faster the farther away they are from us at the given moment.

According to the neutrino hypothesis, in the process of expansion of the Universe the neutrinos and antineutrinos, flying at the speed of light, used up a considerable part of their initial energy. And since the mass of the neutrino and the antineutrino is entirely determined by their energies, the neutrino mass of the Universe too decreased during expansion. At the same time this mass was distributed over a huge volume.

This makes it especially difficult to check the hypothesis by direct experiment.

At the conference an experiment was discussed which can determine the density of the neutrinos and their total number in the Universe. A procedure for the experiment was suggested by the Soviet physicist Kharitonov. In this experiment one of the nuclear reactions called forth by antineutrinos must be kept under observation.

Of course, those neutrinos which are constantly being born anew during various nuclear reactions will also be detected in the process. However, calculations will permit an estimate to be made of the number of these 'young' neutrinos, and of the mass of those which took part in the early stages of evolution of the world.

And if scientists really succeed in revealing the as-

sumed quantity of antimatter in the form of antineutrinos, the experiment will confirm that we are living in a world densely saturated with invisible neutrinos and antineutrinos. The density of the clusters of matter in the form of stars will then seem an insignificant quantity in comparison with the initial density of neutrinos and antineutrinos, will seem a small accumulation of matter, which can be explained by fortuity, or, as scientists say, 'by fluctuations'.

The conceived experiment will possibly also show that in our region of the Universe the mass of the antineutrinos is greater than the mass of the neutrinos and this compensates the visible and instrument-detected superiority of particles over antiparticles. Simply antimatter is, in the main, the elusive antineutrinos, and thus not only matter but also antimatter surrounds us.

Thus, if the hypothesis advanced by Pontecorvo and Smorodinsky is confirmed by the experiment being set up, the imaginary 'worlds' and 'antiworlds' will not be needed to save the customary beautiful conceptions about the symmetry of the Universe. Proof would have been found right alongside of us.

However, the experiment has not yet been carried out and these assumptions have not yet been confirmed, but, be that as it may, the neutrino hypothesis of evolution of the Universe is one of the researches that has led to the birth of a new science—neutrino astronomy. It will help solve the old mystery of the origin and development of the world in which we live.

—I. RADUNSKAY IN *Literaturnaya Gazetta*, 2 DECEMBER
1961 (MOSCOW).

NERVES . . . OF IRON

A MAN who is self-controlled even in moments of great danger is said to have 'iron' nerves. Till recently this was quite

a usual metaphor. But the time is near when we shall be able to understand this expression literally. Nerves of iron....

The Central Doctors Advanced Training Institute is situated in the Vossataniye Square in Moscow, opposite a tall house. Behind one of the numerous doors there is a laboratory with a somewhat phantastic name—'Laboratory of Electronic Vision'. Here for two years already work has been proceeding on creating an electronic eye and making prosthetic nerves under the guidance of Professor Boris Ognev, Corresponding Member of the Academy of Medical Sciences and Vasili Gudov, Master of Technical Sciences. As it has now become typical of the times, the investigations are carried out with the close cooperation of scientists of different specialities—physicians and engineers.

The surgeon Boris Ognev ablated a dog's sciatic nerve and put a bow-shaped metal electrode in its place. At first the animal felt a little strange with this 'acquisition'. Apparently some discomfort told on it, because the biological current passed through electrodes and not through usual nerve fibres in the operated leg. But after some time the animal began to move, to stand up and sit down easily. A whole series of such tests was carried out on dogs, rabbits and monkeys. At the same time control tests were made. In some animals the ablated sections of the nerves were not replaced by prosthetic devices. In such cases the paw grew weak, oedema developed and slow recrosis set in.

At a special conference of the Academy of Medical Sciences physicians, physiologists, surgeons, examining the dog attentively and with interest, could hardly ascertain which paw had undergone such an unusual operation. The dog behaved like all animals of its species having natural nerves. The metal prosthetic device functioned excellently.

Now there is a dog in the laboratory, in which they succeeded in cutting the vagus in the neck on both sides. Impulses pass through it to the region of the heart, lungs, stomach and to other vital organs. About nine months have already elapsed since the prosthesis of this nerve, but up to now no deviations in the activity of the dog's organism have

been found. The dog eats and sleeps normally, it is cheerful and merry.

The successful prosthesis of the laryngeal nerves which govern the vocal chords was a great achievement of the scientists. The timbre and intensity of the dog's voice did not lose their merits after the unusual operation. It was even possible to record the motion of the vocal chords with the help of a special camera from the cavity of the dog's mouth and gullet.

At present the staff of the laboratory work with the keenest interest on the prosthesis of the optic nerve. They have already succeeded in recording the biological currents obtained from it. They have also begun the prosthesis of other nerves—facial, acoustic and diaphragmatic, and the spinal roots. The prosthesis of nerves is an entirely new medical problem, but its solution opens up wide prospects now.

Professor Boris Ognev thinks that when these methods are developed further, they can be used for treatment of man in clinical conditions. Whole sections of the nerve fibre are often torn and even destroyed after accidents or different operations: this results in the paralysis of organs. For instance an injury to an optic or aural nerve causes blindness or deafness. The prosthesis of these nerves will make it possible to restore vision and hearing. For the time being it is hard to imagine what splendid opportunities successful work on the prosthesis of spinal roots will give.

—OLEG LAINE

MACHINE VERSUS MAN

No one is today surprised by the miracles performed by cybernetic machines. They map out the trajectories of sputniks, are capable of solving tasks which previously required years, translate from one language into another, play chess and draughts. However, when I was offered to play

a game of draughts with a machine, I nevertheless vaguely doubted the abilities of my electronic 'partner'.

In front of me was the board with draughts. One side was mine the other—the machine's. The cybernetic player kindly offered me to make the first move. No sooner had I done this than the counter-move was immediately printed on the machine's tape.

And thus the game started. From the very first move I felt the iron logic and consistency of my partner.

A complicated move only brought me closer to the end. I felt that my last draught would immediately be captured.

The only thing left to do was to violate the rules. However, in reply the figure 9 appeared seven times on the machine's tape. The engineer-in-charge deciphered what seven 9's meant in the machine's language: 'play an honest game with me.'

The game which I described took place in the Radio Electronics and Communications Pavilion at the USSR Exhibition of Economic Achievement. My partner was the 'Minsk', a new electronic machine. It is capable of solving the most intricate problems in science and engineering, and in between business it takes time off for draughts. Any visitor can have a game with the machine. If given another assignment the 'Minsk' could also play chess.

Many new exhibits have been added to the Radio Electronics and Communications Pavilion.

Armenian specialists have named their cybernetic machine 'Razdan', in honour of their republic's main river. This is a small compact machine as semi-conductors and ferrites were employed in building it. However, it has a large capacity and its speed of operation is even higher than that of the 'Minsk'. An equation with 800 unknowns is solved by the 'Razdan' within two days, while this would ordinarily require 300 years, i.e., many generations of mathematicians would have to do this.

This machine can also cope with even more intricate tasks. Within one and a half months it can figure out the functions met in light defraction phenomena. A human being would require 15,000 years to accomplish this.

The 'Setun' electronic computer with which the work regimen of the Cheboskary Electric Station was worked out, is being demonstrated in Moscow. The 'Setun' computes the value of sine for every one-thousandth part of a degree and almost instantaneously produces a ready seven-digit table.

In between work the 'Setun' demonstrates its drawings to visitors. Using zeros and the figure one it draws the contours of the Moscow University building at Lenin Hills where incidentally this machine was designed also.

The smallest cybernetic machine on display is the MN-10 which was built without a single radiovalve. All the valves were replaced by semi-conductors. Next to it is the MN-11 which has great speed in solving problems—100 solutions per second.

Every new machine on display shows diverse abilities. The guide, for instance, shows how the USM conducts research of an oiled seam, more so, provides the reply as to how many years the oil in the deposit will last.

I briefly described several electronic machines. But they are only a small part of the cybernetic devices which appeared in the Pavilion on the eve of the 22nd CPSU Congress.

—KONSTANTIN LEONIDOV

A WONDER HOUSE

THE quiet Novotorzhkovskaya Ulitsa, which only recently appeared at Vyborgsky District, has become a place of pilgrimage for many people of late.

'You are looking for our TV house?' ask the local inhabitants. 'Why, there it is, just a little distance away.'

Indeed, this unusual building resembles a giant television set: it has rounded-out corners and a front 'panel' made entirely of glass. But this is not the only thing that interests visitors. The house was built of materials used for the first time in construction work. From top to bottom, all walls, doors and even the nails are made of plastic mate-

rials. Crossing the threshold of this cosy house, you find yourself in the realm of chemistry.

Plastics... They penetrate ever more widely into every branch of industry and everyday life, replacing wood, glass and metal. Building engineers devised the idea of erecting a complete house from the new materials and testing their strength, hygienic, heat-conducting, sound-insulating and other properties under conditions of durable exploitation.

Many institutions participated in the creation of this miraculous house. Its designs and models were prepared by the Lenproekt Institute, and its technology by engineers and architects of the Leningrad branch of the USSR Academy of Construction and Architecture. Building work was done by the Orgtekhstroi Trust of the Leningrad Economic Council. Individual constructions and parts were manufactured by the Okhta Chemical Plant, the laminated plastics plant and the *Komsomolskaya Pravda* plant.

A plastic glass staircase leads to a narrow balcony-lodge from which there is an entrance to the plastic cottage. The house with all its equipment and furniture weighs a little more than 4.5 tons. It stands two metres above the ground. Its basis consists of a technical chamber, assembled from glass blocks and installed on a reinforced iron foundation. In it are located the heating, ventilating and electrical appliances.

The house consists of eight rings forming the ceiling and walls. Each ring is pasted together from four hollow panels. Their outer and inner walls have a thickness of 4 mm. The space between them is filled in with a synthetic material of excellent heat-resisting and sound-insulating qualities. The total thickness of the walls is only 10 cm. That is why the house weighs so little.

Even bigger surprises await the visitor on crossing the threshold of the house.

Wallpaper of pleasant light colours made of polychlorovynil film on paper base. It is beautiful, practical and easy to wash. The floor is covered with bright-blue linoleum.

The cosy one-flat house has about 40 sq. m. of floor

space. Its small anteroom has an in-built wardrobe and cupboards. Next to it is a kitchenette.

A narrow door from the kitchen opens into the living room. Its front wall is made of glass. It is not ordinary glass, but organic. It is safety glass and freely passes ultra-violet rays. You can be sunburned without leaving your home. In bad weather all you have to do is to step into the bathroom and put on the light, and rays of 'Alpine sun' will flood you from special bulbs.

With the aid of synthetic drapery the flat can be easily divided into three separate rooms: a study, a sitting room and a bed-room. Through holes in the walls ventilators supply fresh air, heated in air stoves of the technical chamber and maintain a steady temperature of nineteen degrees centigrade day and night.

The furniture in the house is in tone with the walls and everything else.

Plastic glass, wood-shavings plates, coated with laminated plastics, lavsan, paralon and other synthetic materials were used to produce this furniture. The low multi-coloured chairs, sofas and beds, in which ordinary springs are replaced by paralon, are very restful.

When we left this wonderful house, the finishing touches were being put to it.

—A. AVERIN IN *Sovetskaya Rossia*, 20 DECEMBER 1961
(MOSCOW)

FIRST FILM FOR THE BLIND

THE first film for the blind—Anderson's fairy tale *Wineherd*—was made at the initiative of Nikolai Semevsky, the drawing master of the First Boarding School for the Blind in Moscow. The children listen to this film while turning the pages of special albums of illustrations. The kids recognise the heroes of the film and give them their own characteris-

tics. The children see the heroes of Andersen's tale quite correctly.

By means of the Somevsky Instrument, which has been designed on the basis of the principle of orthogonal projection, i.e., three dimensional representation of the substance, all textbooks for the blind can be illustrated: from history books with the pictures of ancient Greeks to textbooks of physics and geometry containing the necessary schemes.

The blind can make architectural and other designs. About 200 blind people are now teaching in Soviet higher educational establishments. The development of the new science will still further add to their knowledge.