

THE RANGE AND PERSPECTIVES OF SOCIOLOGICAL AESTHETICS *

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Nikola Božilović

Faculty of Philosophy, Niš, Serbia

Ćirila i Metodija 2

E-mail: bonicult@medianis.net

Abstract. *Today, aesthetics is much more opened to cooperation with other sciences than before. That is why, in this work, the author does not ask whether sociological aesthetics is possible, but how. Firstly, he discovers the historical roots of this problem and points to the fact that W. Hausenstein set the basis for the foundation of "sociological aesthetics" in the 19th century. However, a more significant relationship between aesthetic ideas and the prevailing view of the world (the spirit of time, the vision of the world) was not established until the first half of the following, 20th century. In that context the author pays special attention to the ideological and contextual aesthetics of T. Adorno, H. R. Jauss' aesthetics of reception and R. Bastide's social conception of art, explicitly named as "sociological aesthetics". The phenomenon of art is being treated here from a scientific standpoint – a sociological one, affirming what is most important in this domain, which is – the particularity of the aesthetic. The author speaks in favour of the modern conception of sociological aesthetics, which he identifies in contemporary creative movements and tendencies, such as postmodernism and conceptual art, happening, performance, video-art, graphic and industrial design.*

Key words: *aesthetics, ideology, art, vision of the world, communication, taste, reception.*

INTRODUCTION

In spite of the fact that aesthetics is an independent discipline constituted only by getting its name in the 18th century, its past is, historically speaking, quite long. The definition of the subject of aesthetics has been problematic from its beginnings. It's no wonder if one knows that the category of beautiful, which was ascribed to it as the subject of

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study, can be multidimensional and can not comprise only beautiful, that is valuable, in art and nature. Apart from that, the beautiful can have many connotations, from religious and ethical to educational and cultural in general. Today, everything has got complicated since many turnovers have happened in the field of art and artistic values, and the number of artistic categories have multiplied. Gillo Dorfles has shown that some principles like harmony, balance and pleasantness, have grown old and that the forms of art which have been distanced from the previous ideals of beauty have to be necessarily accepted. He warns that meta-artistic, para-artistic and non-artistic elements, which have been considered as kitsch, have been included in the field of today's aesthetics (Dorfles 1997:9). When such turnovers happen in art, then it is logical that they have to be reflected in the science which studies it. The first question that is posed today is: *is aesthetics philosophical or scientific discipline?* If we choose the first solution, then we agree that aesthetics represents *the philosophy of beautiful in the field of art*, which is typical for Shelling or Hegel. This is according to the principle that aesthetics is the thought (or meditation) of beautiful. In the second case, aesthetics is defined as *the science about sense perception (knowledge)*, and the most famous definition that aesthetics is *the science about beautiful* is, although unsaid, quite problematic. This definition, as well as many others similar to it, is so ample that it can not be used and today it can be used as a question in a cross word puzzle. T. W. Adorno has been crystal clear about that: "The definition of aesthetics as the study about beautiful is not very fruitful, because the formal character of the notion of beauty derives from the full content of the aesthetic. If aesthetics should not be anything else but the systematic listing of everything that is called beautiful, then no image of life in the notion of only beautiful would be given to us. In that what the aesthetic reflection of beautiful is directed to, the notion of beautiful represents only one moment." (Adorno 1979: 102-103).

In any case, aesthetics is, in a philosophical sense of the word, most indirectly focused on the research of the essence of art, within which it (in vain ?) tries to answer the question: *what is art?* Judging by the scope and the character of the aesthetic meditation of beautiful, there is a usual division on *general aesthetics*, which studies art in its wholeness, *comparative aesthetics*, focused on the comparative study of different artistic types, and *special aesthetics*, which examine the specific types of art. With different theoretical orientations in the history of aesthetic thought (phenomenological, existentialist, structuralist, semantic), aesthetics has passed (and overcome) many Scylles and Charybdis, expressed, above all, in the form of many sociolinguistic, vulgar –economic and dogmatic and Marxist deformations. Today it is easy to observe that aesthetics is not any more, as it was, closed in the impenetrable philosophical systems. In order to research the subject more thoroughly, aesthetics has opened itself to other sciences, above all to sociology, psychology and semiology. Being aware that it could not answer its key question, it has been opened for other thoughts and it shows its readiness to accept their notions and arguments and to make the combination of methodological steps in research.

It is important to mention that sociological aesthetics does not threaten general or philosophical aesthetics and it does not influence the sociology of art as well. Namely, the sociology of art deals with the examination of artistic problems in order to gain new knowledge of society, while sociological aesthetics examines social circumstances of the origin and the influence of art in order to illuminate its essential interest more completely, and that is the knowledge of the aesthetic phenomenon. That's why I can not agree with

the interpretations which every research of social circumstances of the work of art assigns to the term of *social aesthetics*, and that that procedure is automatically qualified as *sociologism*. For such a selective approach to the works of art, I could not see a more appropriate term than the syntagm *aesthetic Puritanism*.

Before the official naming by the German philosopher A. Baumgarten (1735), aesthetics was an unavoidable structural component of all great philosophical systems. Many of them contained implicitly the knowledge about social conditioning of art and thought about it, but we encounter a closer and more explicit definition of art as an integral aesthetic and social phenomenon in the works of some theoreticians of art in the first half of the 20th century. The basic thread connecting aesthetics and sociology is their common subject of study which is art. However, it is about two different, that is specific, approaches: *Aesthetics* examines art as a phenomenon which is relatively closed; as an entity *sui generis*, on that condition, ontically independent. *Sociology* circles eternally out of the field of art. Guided by the scientific curiosity, it is always close to art, it circles and flies around it, but it never touches it directly. Since both approaches are theoretically relevant, it is reasonable to support the idea of founding one discipline which would use all possibilities and advantages of an interdisciplinary approach to an artistic phenomenon. I am convinced that today one does not pose a question if, but *how is sociological aesthetics possible?*

Apart from the representatives of the empirical movement in the sociology of art, such as Alphons Silbermann, who excludes the problems of artistic values from the realm of sociology, other movements, that is their proponents, are not for the absolute value neutrality for their science. In a word, the problem of aesthetic values, aesthetic specification and artistic excellence is not irrelevant for an art sociologist. The period of mutual ignorance of aestheticians has lasted for a long time: the first underestimated and disdained the sociological approach to art, thinking that it is inadequate for studying a specific nature of art, while others ignored aesthetic research as an arbitrary reflection and scientifically useless speculation.

It goes without saying that a mutual denial was harmful both for aesthetics and sociology. The aestheticians were bent for constructing a closed world of art, not seeing that there are not only external but also internal ties between artistic and social values. Many sociologists again, even implicitly, denied the relative independence of art from society or they remained at the description of the external relation of this aesthetic phenomenon. One-sidedness in explaining art derives from the one which is most important, and it appears when the fact that art is relevant via its aesthetic essence is neglected. The orthodox sociological purism could be overcome only if one understands that the work of art is both the social and artistic fact at the same time. It does not mean that sociology of art should by all means overtake the job of aesthetics. The subject of sociology of art includes the problem of value of the work of art, but not in the way it has been done in aesthetics. The heart of the matter is the fact that a work of art is not *any* social fact, but the *specific* social fact. A sociologist is in that way directed to the cooperation with science which originally studies that specification, and that is aesthetics (Rankovic 1996:14-18). *Aesthetics of reception* is closest to a sociological approach according to which the work of art does not exist until it becomes the process of aesthetic communication. "Books which are not read do not exist for sociology as well as the score which is not played or does not apply to the inner ear is not music but its recording. The process of art is speech

and conversation; as pure day-dreaming or monologue without response it does not have an ontic quality. A printed text acquires an aesthetic reality while it is read; if it is not read, it remains as a string of hieroglyphic signs (Hauser/2 1986: 4).

Pointing to the closeness and the necessity of cooperation between aesthetics and sociology is still at the beginning of what I want to show, and that is the possibility of creating a *sociological aesthetics*, which could be autonomous to gnoseological aesthetics and to the sociology of art. It means that it should overcome its weaknesses at first, uncertainties and dilemmas. And its subject, art, should not be limited, that is, it should not be put into any enclosed field or reservation because it is open and free *per definitionem*.

Today, one asks a question about the sense of aesthetics as a thoughtful knowledge of the real. There is a doubt of the possibility that it could be explained *discursively* what one *feels* toward the works of art. The essence of this doubt is the unbelief in the power of aesthetics to *find out* the essence of the aesthetic, because it escapes the reflection remaining in the space of sensibility and imagination. I take an aesthetic anthropological attitude toward that: discarding aesthetics one would immediately discard art as a work of its anthropological essence. *Homo sapiens*, that is being who is according to definition reasonable and thinking, would lose in that way the most valuable part of himself. Without thinking about art, the very art would be nonsense; it would be something peripheral, the goods with one-way usability – as an ornament, ad or wrapping material. Broadly speaking, if there are sciences about media, sports, fashion, museums and other cultural contents of human life, why should it be denied to aesthetics that it is the science on art? In the second half of the 20th century there has been an enormous partialization and specialization in all sciences. Almost at the same time, there has been an opposing process which brought about a greater interdisciplinary cooperation, as well as the unity of different disciplines. By way of integration there are completely new joint approaches, and in that way we get the ethnography of communication, medical anthropology, ethno-biology, ethno-musicology, socio-linguistics. As the tree of art has been expanding all the time, there has been a need for new approaches in researching aesthetic phenomena. One of the significant disciplines in that sense could be *sociological aesthetics*. It treats the phenomenon of art from one scientific point of view – sociological, not negating but affirming the thing that is most important in the field, that is *the characteristic of aesthetics*.

The idea of sociological aesthetics could be logically connected to the idea of *ideological aesthetics*, which is long lasting. The representatives of ideological aesthetics are philosophers of different historical periods of quite different orientations, from Plato, Kand and Hegel, Schopenhauer and Adorno, Thomas Aquines and Lukacs. In the first and the second case it is about the confrontation between the aesthetic and ideological – as social, that is psychological, in the third case – an aesthetician is a state or church thinker, with a clearly defined and distinguished class, political and social interest. The last type of aesthetic thinking is dogmatic by form, and by content it is ideological (Petrovic 1972: 124-126). When an aesthetician brings into his system out-of-theory assumptions and motives of social and psychological nature, we deal with an aesthetics coming from a metaphysical and ontological frame which steps in the world of society. The basis for founding one "sociological aesthetics" has been pointed by Wilhelm Hausenstein concretely in the 19th century. He pleaded that an artistic phenomenon in its wholeness could be explained from the perspective of positive sociology by making parallels, which, allegedly, exist between social forms and artistic contents. In this phase, it is only about *the*

idea of sociological aesthetics. The idea was developed by Charles Lalo in the first half of the 20th century. As a representative of an aesthetic synthetic conception which relies on psychological and sociological principles, he ascribed a relative character to the interpretation of art. Relativism led Lalo to investigate the network of "anesthetic conditions of aesthetic life", among which are social classes, religious institutions, families, education, technical discoveries, fashion, game and economical changes. By affirming the principles of "real" sociological aesthetics, Lalo advocated the view that beautiful and ugly, since aesthetic categories "have history", make it possible for them "to develop in the human collective life." (Lalo 1966:56).

Theoretically speaking, ideological aesthetics affirms the type of historical understanding in the field of artistic praxis and connects aesthetic ideal and the prevailing view of the world. The place of ideological in it has been determined by different factors, among which the most important are historical time and *cultural landscape*, as T.W. Adorno would say. Looking from purely philosophical perspective, the ideological aesthetics derives from *gnoseological aesthetics* as a trend in the development of aesthetic thinking. Shortly, this is about the reconsideration ofgnoseological, that is ideological dimension in aesthetic thinking. Of course, thegnoseological could in any case be equal to ideological. Although a social moment can not be reduced to ideological or the moment of knowledge, the above mentioned orientations in aesthetics clear a path to a sociological informative thinking of the phenomenon.

1. THE IDEOLOGY AND THE TRUTH OF ART: T.W. ADORNO

Theodore W. Adorno (1903-1969), as it seems, is the first representative of those thinking enterprises in aesthetics which have made the way for sociological aesthetics. He founded his aesthetics (the philosophy of art) in a positive way as sociology of art, and in a negative way asgnoseology of art. (Petrovic 1972: 223) He advocated a standpoint which is directly opposite to Silbermann's preferring of empirical quantity methods in researching the reception of works and in requiring the value of neutrality in the sociology of art. Adorno's aesthetics belongs to the movements of *ideological aesthetics*, and it is classified as a trend of *informative aesthetics*, at the center of whose interest is a non-artistic idea. Its "informativity" shows in the attempt to solve thegnoseological problem of art (the unity of the general and concrete). As far as the question of the affirmation of the general in the concrete is concerned, Adorno advocates the standpoint according to which the subject of creation (artist) is understood as an individual existence, without being given up to the mere individual self-will.

Adorno takes into consideration the social dimension of art, which he expresses by the idea that art is "turned toward outside". He doesn't see sociability of art in the apologetic courting, but, on the contrary, in its opposite position to society; he recognizes the social side of art in its asociability, autonomy, protest and resistance! The subject emancipation which he required could be achieved only in the atmosphere in which art is insubordinate and resistant (Adorno 1979: 369-371). Taking into account a complete involvement of art into social life, the outstanding representative of the Critical school of society is unambiguous and firm in his attitude that "a complete non-ideological art is not at all possible." (1979: 387) After claiming that ideology is inevitable in art, Adorno felt the need to men-

tion the way ideology and truth of art are not mutually related as "cats and dogs", so that there isn't one without the other in art. Because of that reciprocity, there is an ideological misuse which encourages art to carry out as in "direct kick". If society shamelessly turns into society, he adds, art is more completely polarized to ideology and protest. That polarization rarely ends well, because art remains enclosed within itself in the end, and ideology is rejected into pure and authoritative copy of reality (1979: 382-383)

In the context of ideological basis and aesthetic judgment and aesthetic opinion, Adorno speaks of "artistic enjoyment". According to him, under the mask of Kantian idea of uninteresting likeability, enjoyment can not be understood. The participation of the empirical subject in reality should be reduced to the extent at which the work of art can be ranked according to quality. It means that the work of art will be enjoyed less if it is better understood, so that only amateurs enjoy concretely the work of art ("Works of art are by themselves what they are, and not for their observers.") Adorno pleads to cancel the notion of artistic enjoyment as constitute, and he objects to the aesthetic hedonism by a well known idea from Kant's theory on the sublime, in which one finds out that happiness which is given by a work of art could be recognized in the feeling of *resistance* which they possess. (see 1979: 43-47)

It's very important to point out that Adorno, taking into consideration ideological components of artistic creation and experience, does not get into sociology nor into aestheticism. He takes into account the relationship between artistic and social truth, at which he doesn't look positivistically and metaphysically. On that occasion, he has a flexible attitude, with the full consideration of the aesthetic and the social in art: "No work of art, however, can be socially true if it is not true in itself; even less, on the contrary, socially untrue consciousness can become aesthetically authentic. The social and immanent aspect of artistic works do not coincide, but they do not diverge either so completely as cultural fetishism and practices would equally require. The content of truth of the work of art always possesses one value thanks to which it overcomes its aesthetic structure acquiring thus aesthetic position." (1979: 403)

I think that Adorno could not be on the way to the sociology of art, as it seems at first sight, but he rather traces a sociological aesthetics. At the field of art, his target is rather aesthetics than sociology, and that is aesthetics with transparent sociological character.

2. THE MEDIATING EXPERIENCE OF AUDIENCE: H. R. JAUSS

The second set of theories which inspire hope of the possibility of sociological aesthetics has been grouped around the aesthetic and sociological orientations which base their research of art on the phenomenon of artistic communication, that is the reception of the work of art. A significant number of authors belongs to them who can hardly represent a unique "school" regarding the difference of theoretical and methodological concepts. The most outstanding between them are the representatives of philosophical hermeneutics headed by H-G. Gadamer, but also authors who are controversial about their ideological orientation, like K. Mannheim and A. Hauser. Adorno thought that the communication of art was very significant. Nevertheless, he paid the greatest attention to its content.

The issue that I tackle here makes me pay greater attention to German theoretician of literature H. R. Jauss, but I will, justifiably talk shortly about the hermeneutic approach to

the research of art. Of course, everything with the aim of getting closer to the subject of science (discipline) which is called *sociological aesthetics*. The essence of hermeneutic approach to art (theories and methods) consists generally of interpreting works of art from the structures and contexts of social and cultural historical circumstances, with the intention to determine the *meaning* and *sense* of the works of art individually and the whole structure of social life. When one starts from the fact that works of art can not be understood by itself, then it is clear why reality which they radiate is reflected through "the view of the world", "the spirit of time", and "the vision of the world". The pioneers of hermeneutic approach and spiritual and historical sciences were F. Schleiermacher and W. Dilthey, and the leading figure of contemporary hermeneutics is, already mentioned, Hans-Georg Gadamer.

By having overcome the positivistic epoch and later the period of aspirations for a broad synthesis, Hans Robert Jauss (1921-1997) brought significant innovations in approaching literary works. According to this author, the history of literature has been for a long time the history of authors and works. Within its own methodical constellation: author - work - reader (audience), Jauss has stressed the significance of *mediating experience* of those who read the work of art. "The third stop is, he says, a reader, a listener or an observer, in a word a recipient (Jauss 1978: 29) To Adorno's "communicative function" of aesthetic experience he added the ability of shaping norms. "The communicative, and with it the socially-oriented function of art (...) starts with the implicit overtaking of experience and norms, but also the insight into the experience and roles of others, which pre-form its social behavior, and they can stimulate and change it." (1978: 363) Jauss does not reduce one-sidedly his interpretation based on the aesthetics of reception and on the occasion of the concrete work of art to its influence. Since he determines the character of a work of art as a *dynamic structure*, as a convergence of the text and reception, he thinks that its influence could be separated from reception without difficulty.

By pleading to return a lost social and communicative function to an aesthetic experience, Jauss does not deny the partiality or "the relative autonomy" of art; he just pleads for a canon of the autonomous art, petrified in the institution, to be subjected to a *historical understanding*, which can help to understand the relationship of the interaction of art and society to a great extent. Accordingly, the act of aesthetics of reception can be conceived with the help of hermeneutic logic, and can be realized through the mediating process of the work of art and the addressee, the influence and reception (1978: 350-354)

The fact that gives a sociological character as well as the scientific dignity to Jauss' aesthetics, is the emphasis on the role of the reader (collective subject) in communication. By returning of a "long restricted rules" to the recipient, that is to the reader (audience) a "progressive concretization of sense" comes to the scene of science of literature, embodied in the convergence of the text and reception, the given structure of a work and the interpretation which accepts it. Jauss observes the undifferentiated unity of the productive and receptive side of aesthetic experience, thinking that: a) a work can not exist without its influence; b) its influence presupposes reception; c) the opinion of the audience, on the other side, determines the author's production. He considers a reader (the recipient of a work) active (through collective) subject, who should not be put between brackets in the history of literature (art), that is avoided (see 1978: 366).

By completely explaining the significance of the reader in the process of communication and his role in producing writing, the proverb uttered by Paul Valery can be shaped

in detail: "My lines have that sense which is attributed to them." Within the context which I advocate here, the aesthetics of reception becomes an argument, motive and content which justifies the need for a discipline which has the name of *sociological aesthetics*.

Sociological aesthetics, the one I advocate, can be announced in the terminological alternative of the *aesthetics of communication*. There are authors today who try to found this discipline scientifically (see Caune 2001). They want to base it on the relation: art-aesthetic experience. The theoreticians of this profile and scientific provenance pose new questions within it. One of them is: is the communicative standpoint called to intervene in understanding art. I claim that answers to this question and the one similar to it, can not be offered out of a sociological scientific discourse.

3. ART AS SOCIAL INSTITUTION: R. BASTIDE

The French anthropologist, aesthetician and sociologist Roger Bastide (1898-1974) give a significant contribution to an interdisciplinary, aesthetic and sociological research of art. Whether he contributed to the founding of sociology which starts from aesthetics or his aesthetics has an obvious sociological character - one can discuss this at the theoretical level. In any case, Bastide was justifiably proclaimed to be "the pioneer of sociological aesthetics. His claim about the existence of sociological aesthetics (*sic*) is based on the idea of "art as social institution." According to him, art is collective *per se* because it is connected to social institutions. It, however, doesn't rely only on the institutions it finds, but it also creates its own institutions. Not denying a certain autonomy of art, Bastide starts an analysis of its different impacts on society as whole, as well as on certain elements which make that whole.

Bastide gets closer to the essential questions of these complex problems by emphasizing first a non-parallel relationship between art and society. There are three characteristic types of this relationship according to the author: a) art is often behind the economical development; great artistic schools do not appear in the period of prosperity of any country, but after that, often after the period of social prosperity when the period of decadence starts; b) art is manifested as a confrontation or opposition to social life, at least as an escape from reality - in this case art is disobedient, heretical, non-conformist, impractical (reaction to society, state, religion); c) the time of duration of art is independent of social duration; it happens, let's say, that aesthetic duration weakens and that social duration prolongs; their lives could be developed according to their own rhythms (Bastide 1981: 141-149). The polyvalent relationship which exists between art and society did not lead Bastide to do research in some social equivalents of art. He completely recognized the autonomous position of art, thinking that art successfully gets into pores of social life. Then he noticed the following: "When philosophers first got interested in art, their attention was caught by its inevitable impact on the social life of an individual." Not long after that he brought a conviction that "art influences collective life and that it is capable of reshaping the destiny of society." (1981: 27)

It is interesting to see how Bastide in a gradual and first of all original way gets closer to the key problems of these serious problems. He first of all starts from the facts that there are two types of artists: the ones who want their art to serve society in general (romanticists) or some special group (for example, working class) and others, who advocate

mottoes and the movement "art for art" (*l'art pur l'art*). The author is undecided and impartial regarding these ideas since he is not preoccupied with the contents of the works of art, not with the introduction of ethical criteria and standards. His attention is devoted to the *formal side of art* and, according to that, to the question if art, independently of its contents, so by itself, has some *social* impact, and, if it has, what is it about? Taking into account the philosophical account of this issue, Bastide is directed to a sociological aspect or, more concretely, to the thinking from the sociological aesthetic standpoint. All in all, it is important to mention that it doesn't remain at "universalistic prejudice" about the existence of society in general. There is no Society but societies for him, so, regarding the groups which are active in societies, there are national or class arts, elite or folk arts. (1981: 175-177)

Bastide doesn't disregard different theoretical conceptions, and thus those which do not consider artistic "serving of society" as equal, but which social perversity turns into a game. The game is not a serious activity in this case, an art-luxury and leisure. Even if it is so, Bastide philosophizes, even if art has come out of game, it could not be given up to the whim of an individual. According to him, art has become means "for collective aims", has achieved social determination (and responsibility) and in any sense could be used for the goals of "serious activities", such as magic, war, religion or the state (1981: 177-178). One doesn't have to think that art is solitary it was born for social collectivity and religion and mortality; as an expression of social life it is in the function of its solidarity. The closeness to Durkheim's sociological conception is recognizable with these thoughts, as well as the foundation on the philosophy of spiritual life or the philosophy of culture. In the context of the influence of art on society Bastide especially worked on the influences which it carries out on religion or politics. All these with a remark that the influence of art on society should not be studied "so much on some special organ, but on the wholeness of tradition and the way of life." (1981: 181) The author in society clearly recognizes their spiritual implications which he connects to the *styles of life*. In that context, he separates two mutually opposed conceptions, which appear in the German sociology of spirit: one, spiritualistic, which claims that spirit can influence society (the spirit which in the style of life and art shows as pure spirituality and irrationality) and the other, which finds a coincidence among the styles of life, the way of production and class position (which corresponds to the Marxist interpretation). Bastide, at last, from the position of sociological aesthetics and anthropology, focuses his attention on the place where art penetrates the human to change society. (1981: 185)

According to the previous analyses, the author draws some relevant conclusions which refer to art and the wholeness of social and cultural life. According to him, the dualism of "aesthetic subuniversum" and "material surroundings" can be overcome by a complex sociological enterprise, by the one which is based on *the aesthetic aspect of social relations*. In a word, according to Bastide, at the beginning philosophers moved from logical (reasonable) principles in explaining human (social) order. These principles will be later replaced by the so-called biological order. The weaknesses of the logical and biological concepts were first overcome in a religious principle of the given order, and with an insight in the later weakened power of religion in "bringing into the order of the social world," a long-lasting principle of the unity of the order - *art* has been founded ("There are religious societies like an old Egypt and there are artistic societies like Confucius' China"). For Bastide that was an obvious change from the mystical to the aesthetic. Simi-

larly to Max Weber in the area of religion, he points how art, in the constellation of social life, there are factors and indicators of social movements and changes. That's why he, limiting himself to the area of western culture, poses a thoughtful question: "How can one understand feudality, monarchy or romanticism without the help of the aesthetic factor?" Bastide brought an inevitable aesthetic perspective into the analysis of society, showing that sociology becomes more powerful when it draws its conclusions together with aesthetics. Maybe the power of his arguments has not reached the power of Weber's thought, but all the same Roger Bastide showed that anthropology and sociology can further be successfully developed without the support of aesthetics, or *vice versa*. He was pretty convincing since he was successful, both theoretically and empirically, in all the three areas of scientific research.

PERSPECTIVES

Sociological aesthetics, the one I plead for, is not about a classical interdisciplinary approach to aesthetic phenomenon, united in a common sociological aesthetic enterprise. It is less about the reduction of this discipline to aesthetics or sociology of art. It simply needs help to define a scientific level which will theoretically raise and surpass both disciplines (without the inclination to negate them individually) and at the same time overcome their one-sidedness. Sociological aesthetics will in a way represent a dam to every sociologism and aestheticism.

Sociological aesthetics will find its premises at the relation of an aesthetic and social subject, as an individual or a representative of a social group (class, nation, gender, party). It will also deal with the examination of the relationship between the work of art and social institutions, as well as an important relationship between ideology and an aesthetic thought. At the broader level of the relation of art and society, it should not be stopped at perceiving the structural generality, but it should recognize the vital aesthetic phenomena, which arise "in collusion" with the living individuals. It should respect their social determinism, but also the sensibility and imagination which the individuals radiate.

The time of great philosophical and aesthetic system has passed. Sociological aesthetics, if it wants to survive, should be modern and in accordance with time. It could be achieved if it is turned into the *event* which is created around the concrete aesthetic subject (the attitude, case, problem). It will be contemporary if it considers an aesthetic life as everyday life, not as a *privilege* of social elites. Listening to the everyday is a challenge of time and at the same time its imperative; the style of life will serve as a frame of thought and understanding, and the explanation of an aesthetic phenomenon will become a resulting point or an ideal which it strives for.

There is no need for a retrospection in sociological aesthetics because other sciences deal with the works of art through history. It should master the notion and category apparatus which it is going to put up with the contemporary trends in art such as postmodernism or conceptual art. In the domain of its research there will be forms of artistic alternatives and artistic enterprises of happening, performance, video-art, graphics, or individual design, computer graphics, cartoon animation or rock music. Sociological aesthetics will comprise for sure *street-art* and *land-art*, and especially multimedia projects (mixed media) where there are joined creative enterprises of different artistic languages. All this

could ensure for it to be up-to-date and fresh, the contemporary sociological aesthetics will raise dignity to tripped and obviously discharged "batteries" which the classical aesthetic thought is interested in (if we agree that aesthetics is in crisis nowadays). The real or "pure" aestheticians should not worry over the presence of the sociological. It should be a guarantee of empirical concreteness and the modernity of approach in analyzing the aesthetic phenomenon. It is well-known that sociology in general hasn't always been "only a modern phenomenon but also the power of modernization." (Berger-Kellner 1991: 155)

I would like to clarify: sociological aesthetics is an *aesthetics*. In that syntagm aesthetics is a noun (with capital A), and sociology is an adjective. So, this form of aesthetic thought has focused its research around aesthetic subject, around which the phenomena of authors' idea and intervention, the taste of the audience and the attitude of critics are grouped. All this primarily in the way of aesthetics. But not any aesthetics, but the one which starts from the fact that art is a social institution, that it carries out collective goals (besides satisfying personal tastes). Art does not do that simply by copying or supporting society but, according to Adorno's remarks, most frequently contrary to the established social aspirations. The connection of art to other elements of social and spiritual life (morality, religion, philosophy, politics) should not be harmful for art because it could influence social changes and can not only depend on them. In any case, the autonomy of art is protected, and the idea of *aesthetics* with the prefix *sociological* is defended.

It is not necessary to put the prefix "contemporary" in front of the phrase sociological aesthetics, since this is assumed referring to the relative youth of this discipline. The discussed aesthetic requirements (Adorno, Jaus, Bastide), in my opinion, are only the theoretical predecessors (not the only one) of aesthetics which relies on sociology in its contents. The research done within the ideological or gneoseological aesthetics, as well as informative aesthetics and the aesthetics of reception, are only good prolegomenon for a new discipline whose area is worth spreading to the area of contemporary artistic enterprises.

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DOMAŠAJ I PERSPEKTIVE SOCIOLOŠKE ESTETIKE

Nikola Božilović

Estetika danas, mnogo više nego ranije, otvorena je za saradnju sa drugim naukama. Zato autor u ovome radu ne pita da li je, već kako je mogućna sociološka estetika. On najpre otkriva istorijske korenove ovog problema i ukazuje da je osnove za utemeljenje "sociološke estetike" postavio V. Hauzenštajn u 19. veku. Značajnija veza između estetičkih ideja i preovlađujućeg pogleda na svet (duha vremena, vizije sveta) ipak je uspostavljena tek u prvoj polovini narednog, 20. veka. U tom kontekstu autor se posebno osvrće na ideološku i sadržajnu estetiku T. Adorna, estetiku recepcije H. R. Jausa i socijalnu koncepciju umetnosti R. Bastida, imenovanu eksplicitno kao "sociološka estetika". Fenomen umetnosti ovde se tretira sa jednog naučnog stanovišta – sociološkog, afirmišući ono što je u ovom domenu najvažnije, a to je – osobenost estetskog. Autor se zalaže za modernu koncepciju sociološke estetike, koju on identifikuje u savremenim stvaralačkim pravcima i tendencijama, kao što su postmodernizam i konceptualna umetnost, hepening, performans, video-art, grafički i industrijski dizajn.

Ključne reči: *estetika, ideologija, umetnost, vizija sveta, komunikacija, ukus, recepcija.*