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THE RELIGIOUS AND ARTISTIC
REFLECTION OF REALITY*(A contribution to the question of the relations between religion and art.)*

If we examine the causes of religiosity and the lingering on of outmoded religious beliefs under the conditions of our contemporary society, we shall discover that, in the complex of factors and circumstances by which the religious convictions of some people are supported and which render it difficult for a certain number of religious believers to rid themselves of their religious outlook on the world, a considerable part is played in some cases by works of art, made use of by religious bodies to influence their believers, or, to put it more exactly: this part is played by certain incorrect opinions on art in general and on works of art which have a specific relationship to the activities of religious institutions and especially religious cults. Experience has shown that not a few believers give, among the reasons for their religious convictions and their attitude to religion, the aesthetic reason; they imagine, for example, that certain of their aesthetic needs can be satisfied only by religion and that if religious faith is justified in the life of man in no other way, then at least it is justified by its aesthetic function.

For a number of people the primary and decisive stimulus leading to participation in religious ceremonies is not what is represented by these ceremonies; their liturgic significance has often long since vanished from people's conscious mind, so that often they do not at all realise the real content of what they are taking part in. The decisive stimulus for them is the outward aspect of the ceremonies and those undoubtedly aesthetic elements of the ecclesiastical background against which the service takes place, the devotional accompaniments, i. e. various objects related to the ceremony (robes, vessels, etc), church music and song, etc. At the same time, in a socialist society, where religion loses its socio-economic roots and thus is bound to lose its influence rapidly, a spontaneous prejudice in favour of the aesthetic elements in a religious cult may often prove the beginning of prejudice in favour of the cult itself and of religion, and the beginning of special endeavours to explain the need for religious faith under new circumstances, in which the need for religion as an ideology has completely retreated into the background, since such an ideology could find its complete function only under systems of exploitation. The relationship of man to aesthetic (artistic) values, which in the past were particularly prominent in connection with religion and by means of which the churches still affect people, is apt to be confused with the relationship of religion to art. In other words: from the fact that works of art have appeared or appear to have a specific connection with religious cults and in the past frequently developed precisely in connection with the activity of the churches and various religious institutions, conclusions are drawn regarding the causality of the relationship between religion and certain artistic works, or at least conclusions

which suggest that religion was a necessary condition for their development, and that religious conviction is therefore an essential condition for the existence of true aesthetic experience in man.

These unjustifiable deductions find favourable soil in the fact that hitherto comparatively little attention has been devoted to explaining these questions in the course of educating the workers scientific atheism, as well as in the strength of tradition in the ideological field, shown by the reluctance to relinquish the old way of thinking and the accustomed forms of the old way of life. Thus it is possible for these conclusions to enable individuals, who in one way or another are affected by religious inclination, to defend religious beliefs from positions other than those which religious apologetics must usually defend against attacks on the "articles of faith". In place of the indefensibly reactionary character of the churches in the past, they can place in the forefront their supposed cultural role, instead of the easily attacked dogmatic basis of religion they can point to faith as a requirement of the heart, of feeling, not susceptible to proofs of reason. Such individuals even acknowledge that from the view-point of the modern man there is much that is unacceptable in religion, that in the history of the churches there are many dark aspects, but nevertheless the Marxist assessment of religion appears to them to be onesided and negative, because, they allege, it does not take into account the fact that the churches were also generous supporters of art, that in connection with their activities there arose a great many unique works of art, which have notably enriched human culture and become an enduring part of its treasure-house. In some of these individuals, especially among intellectuals, we find that they confuse the relation of man to art which is in some way connected with religion, with the relation between faith and art (a relation seen as causal dependence), and on the basis of this confusion they construct some kind of religion of beauty, which they allege is in no way contradictory to a scientific outlook, in no way prevents a person from accepting and recognising scientific truth, and indeed suitably complements the onesided rationalism and intellectualism of the modern man, etc.¹

The churches naturally are very ready to understand such and similar opinions, even if they scarcely give them the stamp of official approval. After all, in their own way, these opinions do express precisely what the Neo-Thomists, for example, so laboriously endeavour to prove, namely that between the world of science and the world of faith there exists no unbridgeable gulf, that the antagonism between religion and science is purely a Marxist invention, the Marxists refusing to see that even faith has its full justification in the life of man and that it can be no obstacle to science. Such opinions enable the churches by means of certain works of art and aesthetic elements in their cults to influence more readily even those to whom religious dogmas are foreign and who even refuse to accept them. A link is formed which continues to bind even those who are undergoing the process of emancipation from religion, to some supposititious supernatural sphere, unattainable by reason, to the world of faith, whose substance is in principle always the same, even when it clothes itself in a very modern form.

Thus from the point of view of the practical need for a more profound education of the workers at the present time, we intend to examine more closely the problem of the relationship between art and religion and to attempt to explain theoretically some of the questions which arise.

Hitherto attempts to delimit the relationship between religion and art have for the most part gone no further than the approximate empirical statement of connection between the two, which has often vastly exaggerated this relationship. A proof of this is for example the fact that in many Marxist works on the history of literature and art all works with a religious subject or theme continue to be interpreted as works with a religious content, or even directly labelled religious works of art. In order to advance from this approximate and inaccurate empiric statement of the connection between religion and art, to a statement of the laws of relationship, it is necessary to approach the delimitation of the relationship of religion and art by way of the definition of the specific character of those two forms of social consciousness, i. e. we must examine the religious and the artistic reflection of reality from the viewpoint of the special characteristics of the object of that reflection, its form and the way in which it is realised.

This was the way chosen by Jaroslav Volek in his study published over five years ago, *On the Specific Character of the Object of Artistic Reflection of Reality*,² but the conclusions reached by this author are not, in my opinion, altogether acceptable. Nevertheless his work can provide a suitable point of departure for the present exposition, since he posed a number of questions, whose formation would otherwise demand a great deal of space, and thus enables us to attack the matter straight away. Further, some of the opinions expressed in this work by Volek — regardless of whether he has himself changed his opinion or not — still affect atheistic education and that not always in a desirable direction, so that it will not be without some practical use if we take up a critical standpoint towards them, even considering the length of time which has elapsed since his study was published.

Jaroslav Volek takes as his point of departure the generally accepted thesis that art is one of the forms of social consciousness, alongside of which there exist other forms, science, morality, philosophy, religion. Each of these forms reflects objective reality in its specific way, which differs from that of the other forms. The question is how to decide on what is the specific character of this reflection of reality in the case of art, and to ascertain to what extent, alongside the particular nature of the form and mode of reflection, the specific character of art is also determined by the specific character of the object which art reflects.

Volek reached his formulation of this question — already posed by the Soviet art theoretician A. J. Burov — and at the same time endeavoured to solve it by a logical-theoretic analysis of Lenin's well-known schema of the three terms of cognition (nature — human cognition = the human brain — the form of reflection of nature in human cognition³). Setting out from this schema, by means of the logical deductive method he proceeds as follows: If the form of artistic reflection of reality is different from the form of reflection of objective reality in science, morality, philosophy and religion, which can be perceived most markedly when comparing art with science, in which latter this form of reflection appears as concepts, categories, laws. etc., it is necessary to assume that the artistic reflection of reality differs also in its second term, i. e. in the manner in which this reflection is carried out in the human mind, and also in the specific character of the first term, i. e. the object of reflection of reality in art. He then proceeds to concentrate his attention above all on the examination of the specific character of the first term of the artistic reflection of reality, after having first of all shortly considered the problem of the second term, the more profound examination of which might well

have shown him the weaknesses of the whole methodological approach used in the study, and might have corrected some of the false conclusions to which this approach led him.⁴ According to him the specific character of the first term in the artistic reflection of reality consists in the fact that the reflected object includes in itself to a certain degree also the creative subject itself, that art is thus not only the reflection of objective reality, but also self-expression of the subject, a self-expression, which is certainly in some way historically determined in every case, but which nevertheless has no correspondence in objective reality (as is the case for example with the genres of absolute music), and is thus only the self-expression of the subject.⁵

And this is just where things have gone wrong. The content of the concept "self-expression" can no doubt be explained, according to the way Volek interprets it, in the sense of emphasising the active function of the subject in cognition, in the sense of underlining the role of cognition itself in cognition, or the role of one form of social consciousness in the other form.⁶ This would not be unacceptable. However, Volek's conception of self-expression cannot be expounded altogether so simply. This conception can to some extent be explained even by asserting that Volek in a sense has retreated from the position of the Marxist theory of cognition, and destroys the polarity of object — subject with the decisive role played by the object,⁷ emphasising too onesidedly the function of the subject in cognition, or in some forms of social consciousness. This is shown *inter alia* precisely by his defining of the relationship between art and religion on the basis of including the subject in the object of artistic reflection of reality and by indicating self-expression to be the specific feature of art. Religion is according to him basically an inadequate, untrue, unobjective reflection of reality, as a form of social consciousness it is a purely subjective reflection,⁸ it is "a typical and special instance of self-expression (with a prevalence of the social over the individual)".⁹ Therefore, he asserts, "between art and religion there is . . . noetically precisely the same relationship as between their objects. Clearly they have something c o m m o n in the object: namely, the subject; as a result of this they are also self-expression. This partial agreement enables us to explain the existence of r e l i g i o u s a r t, which in spite of all the excruciating would-be expounders of so-called popular realism in Gothic, etc., quite clearly not only existed, but for centuries remained dominant, so that down to the present day the larger portion of all works of art consists of religious art (not only of course of Christian religious art), and art religious not only in its t h e m e, but also in its c o n t e n t. For if art is bound to be the expression of the subject and if this subject is religiously inclined, and furthermore if his religion is also an expression of the same subject, then naturally, if the artist is to remain true to himself and to his own time, he cannot avoid expressing this religious content too in his creative work. Not to create religious art would have meant 'for, say Giotto or Fra Angelico, or for the painters of the Russian icons or for the creators of the lovely Negro spirituals, simply to l i e, to depict untruthfully the special and specific object of art."¹⁰

Even if Volek then endeavours to show in what way art and religion "profoundly and basically differ",¹¹ and even though his arguments at times are very suggestive and convincing,¹² for the reader who is familiar with Marxism neither those statements which we have quoted, nor some further remarks which may be found in his study, ring so convincingly as to allow them to be accepted with-

out reserve. It is impossible to take seriously, for example, the statement that "if science is only the objective reflection of reality and if art is the combination of objective and subjective reflection, then religion is — as a form of social consciousness — merely a reflection of the subjective".¹³ The reader must enquire, whether religion as an inadequate, untrue, unobjective reflection of reality can for that reason be considered to be an invention, a noetically subjective product of human consciousness;¹⁴ he must ask, where and how could religion, which is "adequate only and exclusively in relation to the subject",¹⁵ have a positive effect on art, which is "a truthful and relatively adequate reflection both of the objective and of the subjective part of the object",¹⁶ as is also asserted in this study.¹⁷ It is impossible without pausing critically over what we read, to pass by such formulations as: "Because it (religion — J. L.) is the expression of the subject (and all the more so, the less it is conditioned by objective reality as the object of reflection, by which it is so to speak dependent on the characteristics and attributes of this subject), because the subject after all is responsible for the entire outward appearance and inner content of religion, therefore we may also say that it is to a considerable extent the faithful reflection of the subject, his limitation, weakness, desires, needs, stage of social development, etc."¹⁸

I shall not quote further, as I have no desire to polemise. All that was required was to find a certain point of departure from which to develop the problems connected with the relationship of religion and art, the formulation of questions which we shall in due course analyse with reference to some works which deal with these questions. If we should at the same time demonstrate in what way some of Volek's contentions about the relation of art and religion are too one-sided, then no harm will be done; since, as has already been said, not only have these opinions been expressed in a publication already over five years old, but they are also opinions which are still widely held and their effect on the practical methods of scientific atheist education of the workers does not always contribute to the correct orientation of those working in this field.

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If we speak of religion and art as forms of social consciousness, it is necessary in order to formulate their relationship correctly, first to define closely and clarify the concept of social consciousness itself.

Social consciousness is not only a noetic but also a historical-materialist category. Any one of its forms is realised not only through the subject, which in every case is historically determined and conditioned, i. e. as the individual consciousness of a socially determined and conditioned subject, but further is always in the final instance the reflection of social being, of social reality existing independently of the subject. Here naturally the subject reflects objectivity to different degrees and the process of cognition is not only a passive, photographic mirroring of the object in the human mind; nevertheless, in the relationship object — subject the situation of the object is always (so far as we retain our Marxist position) the decisive one and so even with the most complicated means of conveying the reflection the result can never be the destruction of its objective basis, no interpretation of the object by the subject can lead to a reflection so completely inadequate to the reflected objective reality, that we could consider it noetically speaking to be so subjective, as to be purely the self-expression of the subject. If we conceive

the regularity of the process of cognition as the regularity of a historical process, then the inadequacy of reflection (cognition) to the object reflected (object of cognition) can in no case in the course of our consideration appear as merely the expression of subjectivity of reflection (cognition), but we must above all consider it as the expression of its historical limitation, and in no sense as something completely arbitrary. The degree of inadequacy of the reflection (cognition) is not only the degree of its subjectivity, but above all the degree of its historical, i. e. objectively given limitation, or to put it differently: with regard to absolute truth, a greater or less degree of untruthful cognition is always simultaneously — and precisely to that degree — the objective reflection of the historical, socially determined and conditioned limitation of the subject.

It is important to repeat these fundamental tenets of the Marxist theory of cognition for two reasons. First it is necessary to emphasise, that every form of social consciousness reflects in one way or another social being, i. e. the economic system (the economic structure) of society,¹⁹ so that the object of reflection in one or the other form of social consciousness should not be confused with its object as ideology (theory). This we may say frequently takes place and leads to various difficulties and misunderstandings; thus morality is often defined as one of the forms of social consciousness, which represents a system of principles and norms of behaviour and action which sum up the relationships of people to each other and to society. G. M. Gak in the study *Ucheniye ob obshchestvennom soznaniyi ve svetye teoriya poznaniya* rightly remarks, that the specific character of morality can certainly be defined by thus indicating its object as an ideology, but by this we do not answer the question, what part of social being (of the economic structure of society) is reflected in morality and how it is reflected.²⁰ Similarly when A. J. Burov says that the specific object of art is man as a member of society, as a living whole, with all the many-sided aspects of his human characteristics and relationships, he is partly right, but nevertheless he does not define exactly what art reflects from social being and how it reflects it in comparison with other forms of social consciousness.²¹ Similarly, if Volek supposes that he has got near enough to the definition of the specific nature of art by stressing the exceptional role of the subject in the artistic reflection of reality, and that to the extent of including the subject itself in the object of that reflection, then we must point out that the subject can participate to an exceptionally important degree in reflection in the case of all forms of social consciousness, since all the forms of social consciousness are the subjective reflection of objective reality and reflect not only this objective reality itself, but also the relation of the subject to it, e. g. emotional or voluntary relations.

We should be indeed building on mere appearance, if we were to see these relations of subject and object only in some forms of social consciousness and practically denied their existence in other forms, if we were to allege that these relationships of the subject to objective reality must exist for example in art, morality or religion more strongly, intensely and strikingly than in the case of politics, law and philosophy. G. M. Gak in the work already cited pointed out that no form of social consciousness exists only in a purely ideological (theoretical) form, but as an inseparable union of ideology and social psychology. At the same time Gak showed by means of a thorough analysis of the socio-psychological elements of social consciousness that not even this element is something completely subjective, but that it too reflects — although at a different level than the

ideological — social being,²² which in every case remains the point of departure for defining the specific character of the individual forms of social consciousness, which as the real object of reflection cannot be confused with the object of individual forms of social consciousness as ideology.²³ Such confusion cannot but lead (and in religion this is very obvious!) to the blind alley of subjectivism, in which J. Volek has also landed with some of his statements (see above).

However, to state what it is that the individual forms of social consciousness specifically reflect from social being, cannot be done only on the level of the most general theoretical assumption that social consciousness really reflects social being. Here we have arrived at the second main reason why it is necessary to call to mind when we are defining the specific character of religion and art and their mutual relationship, the basic tenets of the Marxist theory of cognition. Since social being always takes on a certain and concrete historical aspect, we cannot define the specific character of the individual forms of social consciousness — and this naturally holds good for both religion and art — merely by an analysis of the most general noetic categories, merely by a logical and theoretical analysis of Lenin's general schema of cognition (nature or social reality — human cognition = the human brain — the form of reflection of the object in human cognition), in which we replace the third term by a different quantity and in a purely abstract and deductive way deduce therefrom certain changes in both the first and the second term. This is a procedure which is more or less speculative, to some extent possible as a working hypothesis, but nothing more. From the need to respect the unity of the historical and the logical it follows that the correct application of the logical-theoretical method cannot even in the Marxist theory of cognition do without the application of the historical-inductive method, since both methods form an inseparable unity, being the two aspects of the single, dialectical materialist method and their separation from each other cannot but lead to false conclusions.

Surely political consciousness, for example, moral consciousness, world outlook (philosophy) and aesthetic consciousness in certain cases (as political opinions, moral principles, general laws of being or aesthetic ideals) from the purely formal side do not differ from each other, all are concepts, categories, abstractions to some extent. It can be seen that actually all the forms of social consciousness are realised — with the exception of religion — basically by means of the same manner of cognition, namely fundamentally by the logical, scientific manner of cognition. From this we may deduce the important conclusion that science is not a special form of social consciousness, but by means of its results participates in all forms of social consciousness — with the exception of religion — namely in their content, while Volek has constructed his entire study of the specific character of the object of artistic reflection of reality on, among other things, precisely the presupposition that science is a special form of social reality. (Thus in his work all the forms of social consciousness find themselves in a somewhat metaphysically conceived antithesis to science and thus he arrives at an exaggeration of their subjective, non-scientific aspects and elements, while their construction in fact develops precisely from their rational core.)

Politics, law, morality, philosophy, art and religion too are of course special forms of social consciousness, which differ from each other. In what they differ, in what lies their specific character, we cannot ascertain only by means of the logical theoretical analysis of Lenin's general schema of cognition (the schema of

logical, scientific cognition, which participates in all forms of social consciousness with the exception of religion), but on the contrary, each of them must be examined also by the historical-inductive method, setting out from the historically concrete aspect of the social reality which they reflect, and not merely considering this objective social reality as their object only on the most general theoretical level.

This requirement was applied with all thoroughness by the classical writers of Marx-Leninism in their work.

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As far as religion is concerned, it can be shown how the application of this requirement affects the definitions or characterisations of this form of social consciousness which these classical writers give in their works. In order to save space it will be well to use these definitions and characterisations in what follows.

Marx, as is known, characterised religion above all as a product of certain social (historical) conditions. "Man makes religion," he wrote in his *Introduction to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*, "religion does not make man . . . But man is not an abstract being enthroned somewhere beyond this world. Man, that means the world of man, the state, society".²⁴ In the same work, in his characterisation of religion as "the sigh of the downtrodden creature, the feeling of the unfeeling world, the soul of soulless conditions"²⁵ he defines those conditions which characterise religion as "the sigh of the downtrodden creature, the feeling of the specific nature of religion is one passage in Marx's *Capital*, where he characterises pre-capitalist productive organisms: "Those ancient social organisms of production are, as compared with bourgeois society, extremely simple and transparent. But they are founded either on the immature development of man individually, who has not yet severed the umbilical cord that unites him with his fellow men in a primitive tribal community, or upon direct relations of subjection. They can arise and exist only when the development of the productive power of labour has not risen beyond a low stage and when, therefore, the social relations within the sphere of material life, between man and man, and between man and Nature, are correspondingly narrow. This narrowness is reflected in the ancient worship of Nature, and in the other elements of the popular religions. The religious reflex of the real world can, in any case, only then finally vanish, when the practical relations of everyday life offer to man none but perfectly intelligible and reasonable relations with regard to his fellowmen and to nature.

"The life-process of society, which is based on the process of material production, does not strip off its mystical veil until it is treated as production by freely associated men, and is consciously regulated by them in accordance with a settled plan. This, however, demands for society a certain material groundwork or set of conditions of existence which in their turn are the spontaneous product of a long and painful process of development."²⁶

Engels gives his classic definition of religion in *Anti-Dühring*. "The whole of religion," he writes here, "is nothing more than the fantastic reflection in the minds of men of those external forces which rule their everyday life, a reflection

* *Capital* is quoted here from the English translation of 1886 by Moore and Aveling, 6th edition, 1900, p. 51-2. The English text is very close to the Czech translation used by the author of the present study, with the exception of the sentence here emphasised by him, which in the Czech version reads: "This real limitation is reflected ideally . . ." (Translator's note.)

in which earthly forces take on the form of supernatural forces".²⁷ Further he gives a closer definition of those forces: "At the beginnings of history it is first of all the natural forces which are reflected and in their further development go through the most diverse and varied personifications in the case of different nations. But very soon along with the natural forces there come into play also social forces, forces which stand opposed to people precisely as hostilely and at first precisely as inexplicably, which rule them with precisely the same apparently natural necessity as the forces of nature themselves."²⁸ However, a further important remark of Engels on the nature of religion is often frequently forgotten, although it occurs in the same paragraph from which the above definition has been quoted. Engels here stresses that "in this convenient and adaptable form (the fantastic reflection of reality — J. L.) religion can continue to exist further as a direct, i. e. emotional form of the relationship of people to those natural and social forces, foreign to them and ruling over them, so long as people remain under the rule of those forces".²⁹

Lenin in his article "Socialism and Religion" defines religion thus: "Religion is one of the kinds of spiritual oppression which always and everywhere weigh upon the masses, exhausted as they are by unending work for others, by want and by isolation. From the helplessness of the exploited classes in the fight against the exploiters springs the belief in a better life after death just as inescapably as the helplessness of the savage in the fight against nature causes faith in gods, devils, miracles, etc."³⁰ In his article "On the Attitude of the Workers' Party towards Religion" we may read: "In modern capitalist countries these roots (i. e. of religion — J. L.) are mainly social. The deepest root of religion today is the social oppression of the working masses and their apparently complete helplessness in face of the blind forces of capitalism, which every day and every hour inflicts upon ordinary working people the most horrible suffering and the most savage torment, a thousand times more severe than those inflicted by extraordinary events, such as wars, earthquakes, etc. . . . Fear of the blind forces of capital . . . such is the root of modern religion which the materialist must bear in mind first and foremost if he does not wish to remain an infant-school materialist."³¹ *

In all the above-quoted definitions and characterisations of religion it is worth noting, that what the classic writers stress is the objective, socio-economic basis of religious consciousness, and how they exactly delimit what it is that religion reflects of objective reality and of social being, while they accord to the actual content of religion the least possible attention, as a secondary matter.³² Particularly Engels' definition makes it clear that the religious reflection of reality can appear only at a point where there stand opposed to man external, objective forces, unknown natural and social forces, which rule his everyday life. This specific situation is also stressed by Lenin in his characterisations of religion. If there does not exist such an object of reflection, then neither can religion develop.³³ In the passage from Marx's *Capital*, quoted above, the specific nature of the socio-economic conditions reflected by religion is exactly defined: Marx here indicates that the object of religious reflection is the objectively real limitation of relationships of people to each other and to nature, caused in the first place

* Quoted according to V. I. Lenin, *Marx—Engels—Marxism*. Moscow, 1947, p. 243-4. (Translator's note.)

by the low level of development of the productive forces, then (this being especially clear under capitalism), by production relationships which mutilate the human personality.

The objectively real limitation could not and cannot of course find a positive reflection in the consciousness of people, i. e. as an at least partially true cognition of reality, but precisely in that special form, which though it is adequate to the specific object of reflection, has a content which is entirely negative from the viewpoint of the truthful cognition of reality.

The religious reflection of reality is always, whatever the various religions assert (and as we know, their content is very varied), objective only in the sense, that it adequately reflects the real, objectively actual limitation of relationships of people mutually and to nature. In other words: religion always and everywhere was and is only the picture of man, who has not yet completely realised himself as man, or man in his human substance alienated, dehumanised³⁴ — which, I emphasise, is of course something different from asserting that it is purely the subjective product of man, invented. The religious reflection of reality, whose cognitive value from the viewpoint of the truthful cognition of this reality is nil, thus cannot itself be any kind opinion and still less a theory in the true sense of the word. Let us consider how sensitively the classic writers expressed this: Marx speaks of religion (e. g. in the quotation from *Capital*) as a mythical veil, Engels as a fantastic reflection of external forces and of man's direct emotional relationship to them in their mystificatory form, Lenin as faith in a future life, gods, devils, miracles etc. Religion is a mixture of the inverted, fantastic mirroring of the world and of emotionally free elements, which as Eda Sládková shows in the study *Cognition and Religious Belief*, "does not find its roots first of all in thought, but in the practical social situation of man, in his social relationships, in his relation to nature, in the relationship of individual social groups to each other and in the relationship of the individual to the social whole".³⁵

From this several important conclusions arise: First of all we must see that in religion as a form of social consciousness there clearly dominates the socio-psychological element. The actual religious reflection of reality itself is for the most part not bounded by anything exactly, on the contrary its typical characteristic is uncertainty, lack of definition, confusion. Religion in individuals is often very difficult to define, a conglomeration of the most varied fantastic ideas, interests, emotional experiences and free reactions; therefore too the majority of believers are unable (so far as they are not replying automatically according to the catechism) to express clearly what it is they believe in, what is the nature of god, why they believe in him, etc. Typical for religion are the obscure movements of the mind and various, sometimes even almost pathological states of mental mood and lack of capacity for thought; to these too correspond perfectly the specific forms of religious life and practice, prayer, contemplation, various "visions", religious fits (ecstasies), religious madness (orgies), the performance of ceremonies which from the point of view of useful practical activity are completely useless, etc. With all this religion takes on a character which largely induces us to interpret the religious reflection of reality as a noetically subjective product, invention, etc., which as we have shown is incorrect.

In the second place: What is generally considered to be religion, is usually the ecclesiastical, theological, or theological-philosophical version of religious fantasies carried out by means of non-religious elements. Religion, that is to say, is such

a reflection of reality as can be put into practice as an ideology only with the help of and by means of higher, more advanced forms of reflection.³⁶ Therefore every historical, ideological form of religion consists really in a special way of more or less distorted ideas and opinions about nature (the old natural religions) or more or less distorted notions, the ideas, opinions or even whole theories, political, legal, moral, philosophical, as well as the aesthetic ideals of a particular time, by means of deciphering which we can arrive at a certain relatively truthful cognition of the social reality of that time. Therefore it is possible to examine every religion as a more or less distorted reflection of the historical movement of society, while at the same time of course with regard to the unusually great strength of tradition in this form of social consciousness we must preserve great caution in forming our conclusions.

Thirdly: Even if religion has undoubtedly, and especially in the past, played a serious role in the development of society, has strongly influenced the historical social practice of people and naturally also the other forms of social consciousness, it is not necessary on the other hand to exaggerate its role and attribute too great importance to it, for the life of society has continued, and its development and social progress, which religion could not prevent, have always been carried out in contradiction to religion and against religion, through the fact that even believers, religiously inclined people, in practice often neglected religion and were not guided by it even in their thoughts, and in their daily practical activity and daily thought they also denied it. It is worth noting that religion itself — if it desired to ensure its preservation and influence — could not completely cut itself off from the real needs and interests of people, could at no time continue without elements that had a certain rational core and without elements based on correct practice and not on mistaken, false practice, these elements in some religious tendencies occurring to such an extent, that finally they completely thrust aside and suppressed the irrationally fantastic basis of faith, and religion began gradually to change into its own ideological negation. This process has been shown, with the use of sufficiently convincing material, by, for example, Markéta Machovcová and Milan Machovec in their monograph *The Utopias of the Visionaries and Sectarians*; they demonstrated that a sectarian movement in the person of its most advanced representatives eventually arrives by means of the strengthening of the rational elements in the opinions of the sectaries by way of pantheism as far as to the utter denial of theism and to spontaneous materialism (of course limited by the limitations of their time).³⁷ In the same way Robert Kalivoda in his *Hussite Ideology* has shown the ideology of the peasant-plebeian Tábör by generalising the practical experiences of the poor gained in the fight against feudalism and by the development of the rational core in the opinions of the Tábör Chiliasts gradually reached its most mature form in the pantheism of Pikart, attaining a position which — with some reservations — we may characterise as anti-religious.³⁸

It is always necessary to take into consideration the fact that every religious system is a polymorphic phenomenon, including besides its own religious elements a number of non-religious elements. These non-religious elements do not of course have the same significance in every religious system and they cannot be extracted at will from the given structure, nor can their role be unhistorically exaggerated. (Here care is particularly necessary in the analysis and critical assessment of the various heretical movements, expressing an oppositional

tendency against the official church and the feudal system, in order to avoid reading into them what in reality they did not contain and could not have contained.) On the other hand, however, in examining the historical role of religion we must eliminate from the religious structure examined everything which fundamentally does not belong to religion, we must so to speak isolate religion in its historically and noetically pure form and differentiate precisely all the cultural values contained either in the religious structure directly or connected with it more or less closely — according to the degree to which they were adapted for the requirements of religion (of the churches). For religion itself is always, be it emphasised, merely a reflection, whose specific object is the objective limitation, the underdeveloped state of the relationships of people to each other and to nature, in other words, the lack of culture of the given social conditions and of man as part of them, and thus always and everywhere, wherever it developed and develops, it has been and is one of the most characteristic symptoms of that lack of culture.⁴⁰

In this way we shall reach a more exact definition of the relationship between religion and mythology, or some kinds of folk literature, fairy-tale, ballad, etc., in which there also occur supernatural forces and beings, a definition more exact than that of J. A. Kryvelyov in the study *The Basic Definitive Characteristic of Religion*. His wide definition of religion as a “summing-up of certain opinions, ideas and beliefs”⁴¹ permits us directly to subsume under the term religion a number of phenomena and elements of a non-religious character and thus to exaggerate the sphere and role of religion in the development of society, which is today particularly useful for the defenders of religion. The latter, if they cannot any longer preserve faith in dogmas, etc., make play at least with the supposedly cultural role of religion, including its supposedly great role in the development of art, which, as we know, took a great deal from mythology.

However, it will be advisable not to go too far ahead and first to devote our attention to the question of the specific character of the artistic reflection of reality.

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Attempts to define the specific character of art have usually set out from the evident difference of the means of expression in art from the means of expression of the other forms of social consciousness. While for all the other forms of social consciousness — with the exception of religion, in which case the reader will have no longer any difficulty in concluding why it should be an exception — the main means of expression is the word (or its graphic sign) as the bearer of a more or less exact and constant conceptual categorical content, art, besides verbal material, uses a number of further means of expression in order to express the content of the reality it reflects. This has led, in the case of an insufficiently profound analysis, to the well-known and so-far widely accepted assertion, that art, in contradiction to the other forms of social consciousness, which reflect reality in concepts, categories, laws, in other words fundamentally in a theoretic form, reflects objective reality in artistic images.⁴² The means of expression, which naturally the work of art, the artefact, also is, was completely identified with the form of artistic reflection of reality, i. e. with that third term in Lenin's schema of cognition, which has been mentioned above, although there is no reason for this identification.⁴³ And

here the question began to be put: If the form of reflection in art is different from the form of reflection in science, morality, philosophy, etc. is not the manner of reflection also different and even its very object?

Obviously those are the same questions which Volek formulated in his study *On the Specific Character of the Object of Artistic Reflection of Reality*. And since Volek too was led to form these questions by a lapse of logical thought, by the complete identification of the form of artistic reflection as a process with the artefact, we can perceive that he too reached not altogether correct conclusions; for if it is a general truth that wrongly formulated questions can hardly give a correct answer, in science this is doubly so. It is most obvious in his specification of art as self-expression on the basis of his supposition that the object of artistic reflection of reality also includes the subject. As we already know, from this he deduces a certain identity between art and religion, which according to him is also self-expression, "a purely subjective reflection".⁴⁴

It is not however our task here to criticise in particular only Volek's opinions, for his theory of art as self-expression is only one example of the too onesided insistence on the role of the subject in art, with which we still frequently meet even in the field of Marxist aesthetics and which springs on the one hand from the lack of sufficient attention to or respect for the thesis of the objectively real character of the beautiful, partly from the tendency to judge art (and the artist) as something exclusive, a tendency which has so far strongly continued to prevail, and which survives from the past, when artistic creative work was of course really something exclusive. Let us try to arrive at the definition of the specific character of the artistic reflection of reality by means of a critique of its interpretation as a noetically purely subjective product. At the same time we shall find revealed the basic differences between art and religion in the complete cross-section of their historical co-existence to be undoubtedly far more striking than Volek has shown them to be.

It will perhaps be most convenient to set out from that obvious feature of art, its emotional nature. Feeling certainly plays a very significant role in art, becoming all the more prominent when we compare it with science and deduct the psychological side of scientific cognition. Yet precisely such a comparison can be very deceptive, if we simply "see with satisfaction" the fact of the striking emotional character of art and attribute to it such a significance as it cannot have, in other words, if we want to constitute it the very basis of art. For feelings are not alone the characteristics of art, they also play a quite exceptional part in for example politics, morality, science, etc. We must realise that to admit the contention that the basis of art lies in the expression of some kind of specifically aesthetic emotion would mean to admit the possibility of deducing from emotions the basis of morality, religion, etc. as well, which would of course be nothing other than pure idealism. When in a similar connection Professor Wilhelm Senff of the German Democratic Republic in his study *Materialism and Aesthetics*⁴⁵ criticises another German theorist of art, Walter Besenbruch, for having in his work *Dialectics and Aesthetics*⁴⁶ more or less reduced the basis of the beautiful and of art to the realm of feelings, he correctly reminds us of Hegel's remark in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*: "We must in general say, that nothing great in this world came into existence without passion."⁴⁷ And further he correctly deduces: "Whoever wants to give a complete reply to the question of the specific character of the beautiful, must also concentrate on the specific in the field of emotions.

He must ask: What characteristics do emotions have in the field (im Bereich) of aesthetics?"⁴⁸

If we wish to reply to this question otherwise than by some meaningless tautology to the effect that the specific character of aesthetic feelings lies in their aesthetic nature, or by inventing an answer, then we must reach the conclusion that their specific character is determined by something specific outside them, by some specific objective reality which calls them forth and which must first be recognised. Only by thus setting out from the objective existence of the beautiful, can the solution of the question of the specific character of art find a way out of the region of guesswork, speculation, and all kinds of artificial constructions on to the firm soil of really scientific investigation. This is the way already pointed out by the Marxist classics, whose works contain — even if it is not always explicitly stated — in fact the whole theoretical and methodological basis of Marxist aesthetics, unfortunately not always sufficiently respected and made use of in working out the problems of aesthetics.

In one of his earliest works, the *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts* of 1844, Marx already showed that it is impossible to arrive at an understanding of the basis of art only by the analysis of aesthetic awareness itself, but that its specific character must be sought in the socio-historical process, i. e. the material process of the life of society, which the different forms of social consciousness reflect. Here Marx very accurately observed, that "only by the objectively developed enriching of the human personality there partly develop and partly are newly created the subjective human sensory characteristics, the musical ear, the eye for beauty of form, in short those senses capable of human experience, senses which show themselves to be vital human forces".⁴⁹ In other words: Aesthetic consciousness first arose and was developed in the process of the social work and production activity of people as a special reflection of that process and of the humanising of nature in this process (nature humanised in the form of a product serving human needs); it developed in human senses, i. e. senses gradually set free in the process of social work activity from coarse, practical, purely animal need; the aesthetic features and aspects of reality (of nature and of society) began to be reflected in human consciousness only after the conditions for their subjective reflection matured objectively in the course of development of the productive forces of society, only when the subject — man — in the process of social production activity developed so far as to perceive (and recognise) reality not only as useful, but as humanly useful, that is to say as beautiful.⁵⁰

In agreement with Marx's ideas on aesthetic consciousness as a reflection of the socio-historical process, in which not merely the simple usefulness of the perceived objective world, but also its human usefulness, i. e. its beauty, become prominent, a further outstanding art theorist from the German Democratic Republic, Horst Redeker, in the study *History and Laws of the Aesthetic*, explains the birth of aesthetic consciousness and its substance thus: "The point of departure and the basis for the birth of aesthetic consciousness in its original form is the ancient natural collective, which gained the means of life directly by collective work. For each individual, membership of the collective was the condition of his existence. The individual proved himself by his work to be a worthy member of the collective, the product of his work was the objective expression of his collective substance, his proof and his certification as a member of the collective. The reflection of the product of work as the objectivisation of his social,

collective substance is the original form of aesthetic reflection, aesthetic consciousness, and this reflection takes the form of the beautiful. In the reflection of the product there is reflected the substance of nature, which is expressed in the product, in its usefulness for man, and which becomes the content of aesthetic consciousness. Such is the origin and the original aspect of aesthetic consciousness.⁵¹ Further Redeker shows that it is on this simple, causal and logical relation that the mechanism of the beautiful is based in a further field as well. Work activity and its product are reflected as beautiful in the consciousness of the producer not only in the process of work, but also outside the productive process itself, they are reflected as beautiful not only in the consciousness of the producer, but also in other individuals who themselves are not directly participating in production, not only do new products continually become reflected in the consciousness of people as beautiful, but finally so too does nature itself.⁵² Then in place of material production, in which the aesthetic collective substance of the individual is confirmed, there arises social activity, the class war, and in place of nature as object, whose basic character, appearing in the product, becomes the content of aesthetic consciousness, there appears society.⁵³

On the basis of the same mechanism as simple aesthetic consciousness (the perception of the objective world as beautiful), there occurs in the process of material production, the establishment of art as the highest form of aesthetic consciousness, as the highest form of aesthetic acquisition of reality, as its aesthetic reproduction. The immediate point of departure for the birth of art is also the material production of the collective, whose aim is the ensuring of means of life for the collective. The first art is fundamentally the independently appearing aesthetic reflection of material production, the aesthetic reflection of the work process, and that first of all by the direct sensuous bodily form of imitating material production itself outside the actual work process. "In work", says Redeker, in the study quoted, "the collective discovers beauty along with its own social strength, which in art becomes a special manifestation of the confirmation and development of the collective. There then arises the need that this confirmation which the collective experiences through its work, should be capable of being expressed by the collective also outwith material production itself, independently of the natural limits by which the beautiful is limited in material production and by which material production is itself bound, in a pure form, directly aimed towards a social (i. e. aesthetic — J. L.) purpose. The need arises for the positive experience of the collective, the social confirmation of the collective through work and in work, the aesthetic substance of work, to be practised outside work itself, which means to 'work' only for the sake of beauty, to fill the form of work only with a content and aim of aesthetic confirmation. The actual work is imitated, bodily movements are carried out, in order to achieve the full experience of the confirmation and support of the collective substance, of collectivity . . ."⁵⁴

In this way there developed as the independent aesthetic reflection of the social productive process first of all the ancient dance, from which in due course there developed and freed themselves, as independent forms of art, music (vocal and instrumental), poetry (lyric, epic, drama) and histrionic (mimetic) art, just as from the aesthetic imitation of the product of labour there in course of time develop the plastic (fine) arts (painting, sculpture, and even architecture). With the change to class society the place in art of material production (work) as the form of aesthetic strengthening of the social basis of the individual was naturally

taken by a different kind of practical activity and confirmation of membership in the collective — by social activity, the class war. For slave-owners material production could not be the aesthetic confirmation of their social substance, since they did not work and even profoundly despised work. Therefore art could not even be an aesthetic confirmation of the collective substance of the individual in the form of imitation of work, of production, but instead in the form of imitation of social activity (the class war) as a confirmation of membership of a class, of class commitment. In art the reproduction of social reality began to take the most prominent place. In this way, and along with the ever growing division of labour into physical and mental, art too continued to be differentiated and not only did its territory immensely expand and with it the emotional content, but also the scope of its means of expression, essential for the aesthetic reproduction of a richly involved and delicately shaded reality.⁵⁵ From the direct and sensuously physical imitation of material production, art passed over to the sensuously mental imitation of social activity in all its variety of form and complication, given by the high degree of communicability of various social phenomena, it became an ideological weapon in the class war, of its different aspects and of different stages of its development.

In its substance however art remained and still is the aesthetic reflection of reality in the form of practice, the practical-mental acquisition of reality as the aesthetic confirmation of the collective, or of the class basis of the individual, and that even in those kinds which apparently stand outside this contention (such as for example absolute music). And in this there also lies the specific character of the artistic reflection of reality. Art reflects reality without abstraction from practice, it is a reproduction of reality in the form of practice, a direct remodelling of reality and — whether the artists realises it or whether he carries out his creative work in an absolutely spontaneous manner — it is so as the highest aesthetic confirmation of his social and class substance.⁵⁶

Art as such also was and is above all a form of the cognition of reality. At the same time the sensuously concrete nature of works of art cannot be placed in antithesis to those forms of social consciousness which reflect reality by abstraction from practice, the aesthetic cognition of reality cannot be placed in antithesis to the cognition of that reality in the form of concepts, categories, laws, theories, etc., for the aesthetic reflection of reality is not carried out outside logical (scientific) cognition, but this logical (scientific) cognition is always its organic integrating constituent. Similarly in the process of the aesthetic, artistic acquirement of reality realised in the form of practice (imitation of practice) there are revealed and laid bare fundamental features and aspects of reality, while in the same way, — as Senff writes in his study *Materialism and Aesthetics* — the work process itself includes moments when the fundamental nature of things and phenomena are grasped and revealed. In the artistic process just as in the process of material production and in the process of social practice in general it comes about that it is the basic features and aspects of things and phenomena which come to the fore, while their unfundamental or less fundamental characteristics retreat into the background, are modified or eliminated. The artistic reflection of reality is thus — of course at the aesthetic level — the process of rendering things and phenomena substantial (*Verwesentlichung*), which Senff characterises thus: the creative subject gradually chooses the fundamental aspects and qualities of his material from a long series and varied combination of different aspects and qualities, which

are less fundamental. At the same time it is unavoidable that processes of choice and abstraction, elimination, analysis and synthesis should occur, i. e. it is impossible that cognition, in the form of conceptual logical (scientific) cognition should not be present.⁵⁷ These logical processes can be found "bewitched" even in the least "logical" abstract work of art, often of course in a very much distorted shape, which naturally also distorts the reflection of reality in such a work, going so far as the negation of art into non-art, into the expression of nothing but the arbitrary will of the subject.

From what we have just said it is clear that the specific character of art cannot be seen only in the fact that in the artistic reflection of reality there appears in the foreground relatively more strikingly than in other forms of social consciousness the role of the subject. The specific character of art as self-expression does not correspond to its real fundamental character. It is more defensible to speak rather of the expression of the artist's individuality, which is much more striking than the expression of the individuality of the subject in for example morality, philosophy, etc., if only for the simple reason that art does not abstract from practice as do those forms of social consciousness, which reflect reality in theoretic form, but it reflects objective reality in the form of practice, i. e. also in its uniqueness, to which understandably the more striking expression of the uniqueness of its subject corresponds in the artistic reflection. Individuality of course cannot be identified with the subjective, cannot be considered to be self-expression, for thus the concepts (categories) which appear fundamentally in other dialectical connections would be confused.⁵⁸ The individuality of the artist expressing itself in the artistic reflection of reality does not in any way render impossible the greatest possible objectivity of that reflection, on the contrary, it stresses and makes more expressive the particular and the general, the basic features and aspects of reality, which are reflected in art, by a personal conception, whose role does not exist in the other forms of social consciousness and science so markedly (by which we do not assert that in the latter the personal conception of basic features and aspects of reality are entirely lacking or that they would not have significance here). At the same time for all art there remains true that slogan which in his time Zdeněk Nejedlý expressed and which, after all — whether it pleases everybody or not — indicates the boundary between art and non-art: "It is not in the least true, that there could be anything beautiful which is not true, morally sound and intellectually great."⁵⁹ With regard to the artistic subject this means, that the real genius of the artist always depended above all on whether he succeeded with profound truth — of course by means of his own methods of expression in art — in revealing the basic features and aspects of his time, and not only in revealing something purely subjective. Only in this way could he be understood in society (even though perhaps not immediately), only thus could he have a strong effect on society and through his work become firmly rooted in the culture of his nation or even of the whole of mankind.⁶⁰

Now we can sum up what we have ascertained about the relationship of religion and art.

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If we thoroughly work out to a conclusion the findings of the foregoing remarks on the specific character of the religious and artistic reflection of reality, we cannot avoid seeing that the artistic reflection of reality could and can be

realised only as a reflection which in regard to the religious reflection of the world is basically antagonistic, as a relatively truthful reproduction of reality, as its positive cognition, and that thus religion could never have a positive, healthful effect on art, could not be its fount of inspiration, etc. It would be completely illogical if we were to assert that religion, as an expression of the undeveloped human substance of man or as the dehumanisation of this substance had or has a healthful effect on art as the expression of the developed vital forces of man, and it would contradict the assessment of religion given by the classic writers of Marx-Leninism, which is perfectly clear and straightforward; it would be strange, if the effect of religion on art could be positive, while always and everywhere it has otherwise played a purely negative historical role.⁶¹

What had a positive effect on art was above all those forms of social consciousness which contain positive, relatively true cognition of reality, political opinions, morals, philosophy, but not religion. Therefore too there exists — in spite of the differences in their function — a profound inner connection between art and science (scientific cognition) which consists not only in the corresponding truthfulness of their content, but above all in the fact that scientific truths, scientific cognition enter organically and directly into the content of art. Scientific abstractions, which as Lenin states in the *Philosophical Notebooks*, are not removed from reality, from life, but increase the force of cognition,⁶² serve the perfecting of all human activity, and science by its results even affects positively artistic creative work. The advance of the scientific approach in the whole of social life and the development and growth of art are internally bound by the same laws.⁶³

In times when religion was the regular product of objective conditions in the life of people and when its influence reached into all domains of human activity and into all territories of social consciousness, art of course was bound to reflect even this reality. This was all the more so the case because religion could never exist isolated from the real needs and interests of the people, and not having, as we have stated, its own means to communicate its content, it made use of art as one of the important means of expressing its content and affecting the masses. The believer in those days, when religion was bound to a greater or less extent to be part of his life, did not become an atheist, when he created works of art. Nevertheless, from the necessary, regular coexistence of religion and art in primitive communal society and in antagonistic societies, we cannot deduce the causal dependence of art on religion, nor the positive influence of religion on art, just as from the necessary, regular coexistence of the inverted religious image of the world and the relatively truthful perceptions of those societies we cannot deduce the causal dependence of relatively truthful cognition on religious fantasies, nor can we assert that these fantasies had a positive effect on the truthful cognition of the world.

Even if the individual forms of social consciousness, and thus also art, of necessity contained in the past religious elements (for the objective conditions did not exist which would have permitted people to attain a scientific world outlook), it is necessary to realise that a) their positive construction developed equally necessarily not on the basis of those religious elements, but on the basis of rational elements or on elements containing at least a rational core, b) religion as a form of social consciousness incomplete in itself, incapable of expressing its content without the help of the most advanced forms of reflection necessarily contained to some extent in one way or another those advanced forms of reflection of reality

along with their rational elements or elements with a rational core. It is then impossible to speak of the effect of religion either on social practice or on individual forms of social consciousness only in a general way; it might then come about, that the influence of religion would appear in some cases to be a really positive influence. If we examine the effect of religion, we must differentiate precisely between the religious and non-religious elements in the given structure. Then we may fairly easily ascertain that the alleged positive effects of religion always were and are purely apparent, that what had a positive effect was always in essence the non-religious, while religion itself could never have more than an effect corresponding to the substance of that form of social consciousness, i. e. a completely negative effect.

This fully applies also to the effect of religion on art. Not even when art was very closely bound up with religion and directly served religion (religious organizations and institutions, the needs of the cult) did it develop from religion, from some specifically religious feelings, etc., but the primary, decisive relation for art, for its growth, was its relation to natural and social reality, whether it was a direct relationship or one brought about by means of those forms of social consciousness which reflect this reality at least to the slightest degree positively and truthfully. Religion could only form a certain framework, in which the aesthetic consciousness of man and his artistic creations could move, a framework in every case in some way limiting and deforming the aesthetic consciousness and artistic creation, but it could never be either the source of artistic inspiration, or the object of art, and thus not even its actual content.⁶⁴ These assertions are based on the fact, that just as in the past a man could not be an atheist, his consciousness being bound to move within the framework of the religious outlook on the world, beyond which he was incapable of stepping in the given historical conditions, so man did not exist as an absolutely religious subject, in other words: there did not exist a man, who in his consciousness reflected the world completely and absolutely in a false and distorted way.

We may conclude: the assertion of the positive influence of religion in art must be fundamentally rejected both for the present and for the past. Not only because it does not correspond to the facts, but also because it can lead to disorientation and mistakes in scientific atheist education. On the one side it can fundamentally weaken the basic Marxist attitude to religion, if we admit (in any degree whatever) the positive role of religion in art and in the development of artistic creation. On the other hand it can lead to the outwardly politically violent but inwardly uncertain and objectively harmful exclusion of works of art with religious subjects from the historical development of art, instead of these works being interpreted correctly and with understanding, instead of arranging for an educative Marxist approach to them. I shall however return to this in a further paper, which I hope in course of time to append to this study.

Translated by Jessie Kocmanová

NOTES

¹ On this question a wide literature has already grown up in the West, of which I may mention at least the study by Adolf Köberle published under the typical title *Musik als Religion?* in the book *Prisma der gegenwärtigen Musik*, Hamburg, 1959. A great number of similar studies and articles in periodicals exist, which demonstrate how intensively in the world

of capitalism new interpretations of religion are being sought, which will be acceptable to modern man, whose traditional basis of faith — church dogma — has been shaken.

² See *Otázky teorie poznání*. (Questions of the Theory of Cognition.) Essays. Prague 1957, p. 263—358.

³ Ibid p. 272 n.

⁴ Ibid p. 287 n.

⁵ Ibid p. 316 n.

⁶ Cf. op. cit. e. g. p. 350, 351, etc.

⁷ This has already been pointed out by Květoslav Chvatík in his review of Volek's study see *Nová mysl* (*New Thought*.) 1958, no. 1, p. 64—75.

⁸ See *Otázky teorie poznání*, p. 346.

⁹ Ibid p. 347.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid p. 348.

¹² Cf. *ibid* p. 351 n.

¹³ Ibid p. 346.

¹⁴ Ibid p. 347.

¹⁵ Ibid p. 348.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid p. 349.

¹⁸ Ibid p. 347.

¹⁹ Cf. V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works I*, Prague 1954, p. 54.

²⁰ G. M. Gak, *Ucheniye ob obshchestvennom soznaniyi ve svetye teoriya poznaniya*, Moscow 1960, p. 87.

²¹ Ibid p. 88 n.

²² Ibid p. 58 n.

²³ Ibid p. 83 n.

²⁴ K. Marx, F. Engels, *O náboženství*. (*On Religion*.) Prague 1957, p. 39.

²⁵ Ibid p. 40.

²⁶ K. Marx, *Kapitál I*, Prague 1954, p. 97. (See also translator's note in the text.)

²⁷ F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Prague 1949, p. 270.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ V. I. Lenin, *O náboženství*, p. 5.

³¹ Ibid p. 15, 16.

³² Cf. K. Marx, *Kapitál I*, p. 398. The English edition (cf. n. 26), p. 367 n., reads as follows: "Every history of religion even, that fails to take account of this material basis, is uncritical. It is, in reality, much easier to discover by analysis the earthly core of the misty creations of religion, than, conversely, it is, to develop from the actual relations of life the corresponding celestialised forms of those relations. The latter method is the only materialistic, and therefore the only scientific one."

³³ For this reason G. M. Gak in the work quoted (cf. n. 20) criticises the teachings on the so-called noetic roots of religion (especially J. A. Kryvelyov), because Lenin's thesis of the noetic roots of religion is here mechanically applied to religion. The possibility of the appearance of idealism really does rest in the very process of cognition, in the absolutising of one of its sides, but a) idealism, even if it is — according to Lenin — the way to religion, cannot for this reason be identified with religion, and b) religion is the reflection of objectively real forces, standing in everyday life opposed to man as hostile unknown forces. According to the teaching on the noetic roots of religion the religious reflection of reality could originate even in communist society, where those forces will not stand opposed to man, since even in communism it is not possible to eliminate apodictically certain idealistic distortions in the process of cognition; here however they can never lead to religion. (Cf. Gak, op. cit., p. 149 n.)

³⁴ Cf. K. Marx, F. Engels, *O náboženství*, p. 39.

³⁵ Eda Sládková, *Poznání a náboženská víra*. (*Cognition and Religious Faith*.) Prague 1961, p. 58.

³⁶ This thought was first expressed in Czechoslovakia by Karel Stejskal in the article "Umění a náboženství", (*Art and Religion*), in *Dějiny a současnost* (*History and the Present*), 1961, no. 1, p. 23.

³⁷ See Markéta Machovcová, Milan Machovec, *Utopie blouznivců a sektářů*. (*The Utopias of the Visionaries and Sectarians*.) Prague 1960, esp. p. 342—415.

³⁸ Robert Kalivoda, *Husitská ideologie*. (*Hussite Ideology*.) Prague 1961, esp. p. 333—383.

³⁹ Some of these, as for example the rational elements in idealist philosophy, which the theologians made use of to construct a system of dogma and to justify dogmas, directly participated in the break-up of church ideology.

⁴⁰ The concept "lack of culture" is not understood here in the narrow sense of the term, i. e. as lack of education, etc., but, as is clear from the context, as the opposite of full development of human vital forces, which is achieved by the complete emancipation of all human senses and properties under communism, cf. K. Marx, *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts*, Prague 1961, p. 97.

⁴¹ *Přspěvky k dějinám náboženství a ateismu. (Contributions to the History of Religion and Atheism.)* Prague 1961, p. 334.

⁴² The term "image" hitherto frequently used to indicate the form of artistic reflection of reality, is very inexact and quite unsuitable as an exact term for all kinds of art (e. g. for music). It has too metaphorical a character and as such is lacking in content. We may just as well say of morality, philosophy, etc. that they give a certain image (picture) of the world. For this reason the term tells us very little about the specific character of the artistic reflection of reality.

⁴³ This has already been pointed out by Květoslav Chvatík in his review of Volek's study, cf. n. 7, loc. cit.

⁴⁴ *Otázky teorie poznání*, p. 346.

⁴⁵ Wilhelm Senff, *Materialismus und Ästhetik*, Berlin 1959.

⁴⁶ Walter Besenbruch, *Dialektik und Ästhetik*, Berlin 1958.

⁴⁷ Senff, op. cit., p. 24.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁴⁹ K. Marx, *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts*, p. 99.

⁵⁰ Cf. *ibid.* p. 97.

⁵¹ Horst Redeker, *Geschichte und Gesetze des Ästhetischen*, Berlin 1960, p. 28.

⁵² *Ibid.* p. 29.

⁵³ *Ibid.* p. 76 n.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 96, 97.

⁵⁵ This was shown in the growth of various genres within the different kinds of art, the multiplication and perfecting of artistic techniques, etc. The freeing of art from the directly sensuous physical imitation of material production or of the work product, set free a greater area for creative fantasy, which became the characteristic element of art and stamped upon it as a reflection combining the truth of bare fact with poetic truth, with the anticipation of what would in the future be possible and real, its special dynamic character.

⁵⁶ Practice here of course cannot be understood, as often happens, only as the "doing of things". The artist does not produce, art is "the objective expression of the mental relationship of man to reality, the expression of his thoughts and feelings" (see *Základy marxisticko-leninské estetiky. (The Fundamentals of Marx-Leninist Aesthetics.)* Prague 1961, p. 195. At the same time, however, art as the aesthetic imitation of practice, of activity is always a certain transformation of reality. This is the basis of that catharsis already established by Aristotle — in the artistic process, as an imitation of practice, the subject experiences on the aesthetic plane the same thing, which he would experience in actual practice (e. g. love of country, hatred of the enemy, the emotion of love, etc.) From this springs the great mobilising force of art (we may call to mind only in passing the role of the revolutionary songs) and the significance of art as an educative factor.

⁵⁷ Senff, op. cit., p. 16; cf. Redeker, op. cit., p. 21 n. and 85.

⁵⁸ The identification of the individual and the subjective in the artistic reflection of reality is to be found in the study of Volek' quoted.

⁵⁹ Zdenek Nejedlý, *Z české kultury. (From Czech Culture.)* Prague, 1953, p. 18.

⁶⁰ Recently this was shown convincingly by Antonín Sychra in his analysis of Dvořák's symphonics — see his book *Estetika Dvořákovy symfonické tvorby. (The Aesthetics of Dvořák's Symphonic Composition.)* Prague 1959.

⁶¹ In this connection we require to say a few words on the role of the church as the patron of art. It is true that the church was to a considerable extent involved in the creative work of artists, and gave them — from selfish reasons — material support by means of the work it ordered, etc. If, however, we consider merely the fact that simultaneously — and this was its main purpose — the church participated in its own way in the conservation of those social conditions under which, according to Marx and Engels, artistic talent was exclusively concentrated in individuals at the cost of its suppression in thousands of other individuals (cf. K. Marx--F. Engels, Works, Vol. 3, Prague 1958, p. 491, 402), then it follows, that to speak of the beneficent

effect of the church on the development of art simply does not correspond to the reality. Ecclesiastical practice had the lion's share in bringing about the fact that the broad masses of the impoverished people did not see the real beauty revealed by artists, even when they walked past it and even when it was exhibited for their admiration. (Cf. also Nejedlý, op. cit., p. 17, 18.)

⁶² Cf. Lenin, *Philosophical Notebooks*, p. 67.

⁶³ Cf. Senff, op. cit., p. 65.

⁶⁴ Cf. Redeker, op. cit., p. 100, 101, etc., Otakar Nahodil, *Masky v prvobytné společnosti*, (*Masks in Primitive Society*), in the periodical *Věda a život* (*Science and Life*), 1961, no. 6, p. 330–336. The author intends to return in a separate study to the historical documentation of these statements.

The Czech translations from those hitherto untranslated works in German were made by the author and used as the basis of the English translations.

Náboženský a umělecký odraz skutečnosti

Stať je příspěvkem k řešení otázky vztahu mezi náboženstvím a uměním, jehož nesprávné chápání v některých případech je jedním z faktorů napomáhajících udržování náboženských přežitků v socialistické (komunistické) společnosti. Domnění, že náboženství bylo nebo dosud může být inspiračním zdrojem umělecké tvorby, že působilo kladně na rozvoj umění, vede často k odůvodňování potřebnosti náboženské víry i pro moderního člověka z její údajné estetické funkce. Toho využívají církve, které obhajují náboženství alespoň jeho „kulturní úlohou“, nemohou-li proti vědě obhájit jeho dogmatický základ. Tvrzení o náboženství jako inspiračním zdroji umění, o pozitivním vlivu náboženské víry na uměleckou tvorbu ovšem neodpovídá faktům. Autor rozbořem náboženského a uměleckého odrazu skutečnosti ukazuje, že jde v podstatě o dvě antagonistické formy společenského vědomí. Náboženství je iracionálně fantastickým odrazem objektivní skutečnosti, nepoznaných přírodních a společenských sil, které stojí proti člověku v každodenním životě jako cizí, nepřátelské síly. Umění proti tomu je nejvyšší formou estetického osvojení objektivní skutečnosti, které se realizuje na základě jejího relativně pravdivého poznávání, odkrývání podstatných stránek a rysů reálného světa, přírody, společnosti, člověka. Z nutné koexistence náboženství a umění v minulosti nelze vyvozovat kauzální vztah mezi nimi, ani kladné působení náboženských fantazií na uměleckou tvorbu, stejně jako z nutné koexistence náboženství a pravdivých poznatků o světě nelze vyvozovat příčinnou souvislost mezi náboženstvím a pravdivým poznáním skutečnosti a tvrdit, že náboženství mělo na toto pravdivé poznávání skutečnosti blahodárný vliv. Úznávat pozitivní úlohu náboženství v rozvoji umění by znamenalo ustupovat od marxistického hodnocení náboženství, které je — jak potvrzují díla klasiků — jednoznačně negativní. Na druhé straně by to mohlo vést k levičáckému, pseudoradikálnímu odmítnutí celé řady významných uměleckých děl, vytvořených na náboženské syžety, avšak svým obsahem, v jádru nenáboženských.

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