

THE OBJECT OF AESTHETIC EVALUATION

In his paper *Aesthetic Experience Regained*³ Beardsley tries to answer what we mean by saying that X is aesthetically better than Y. What properties of X and Y are to be taken into account in justifying a judgment like that? "What we must look for, I suppose, is a dimension along which we can compare aesthetic experiences – call it the dimension of D-ness – so that we can say, justifiably, that it is X's capacity to provide aesthetic experience with greater D-ness that gives it greater artistic goodness than Y has". Beardsley interprets this D-ness in a triple way, calling these three possibilities hedonism, emotionalism, and integrationism. "But the main thing to note is that the pleasure here involved is aesthetic pleasure, i.e. that kind of pleasure that is found in aesthetic experience. The view I propose, then, is that X is artistically better than Y if X is capable of providing a more pleasurable aesthetic experience than any that Y is capable of providing.(...) Letting the term "pleasure" cover all such positive affective states, it seems to me plain that aesthetic experience is pleasurable, and indeed, essentially so".⁴ Another standpoint about this issue is emotionalism, which differs from hedonism in that it is not important what reaction is elicited by the work of art: it is important that the work evokes some reaction, possibly most intensive. According to emotionalists, D-ness consists in the intensity of evoked emotions. For that reason their criterion of value is often originality. Beardsley rejects the two standpoints, leaning towards the third, which is most general but also imperfect, and which he calls integrationism. D-ness is then the degree to which an experience constitutes a whole. The concept of *whole* is so used as to have three parameters: degree of coherence, degree of completeness and degree of complexity, the first two subsumed under the term of unity. Beardsley therefore conceives greater integration as a complex quality, the resultant of these three factors. Thus in this version, a statement that X is aesthetically better than Y means that X is capable of providing an experience of higher integration than that provided by Y.⁵ The standpoints named by Beardsley need not be mutually opposing. They are derived from essentially different planes of generality and have different characters. Integrationism can include hedonism if the pleasure evoked by the work is coherent, complete and complex. Or it can include emotionalism if reaction can satisfy the above conditions. These standpoints are a reflex of various ways of practising the theory of beauty, which Beardsley deals with in detail in his discussion of the theory of aesthetic value. This problem needs no further analysis at this point.

For Beardsley, like for many other aestheticians, evaluation is the final result of the process of evaluating the essence of which is finding values. It is values that require evaluations rather than the other way round. In his paper *O kryteriach aksjologicznych w odniesieniu do dzieł sztuki (On Axiological Criteria in Relation to Works of Art)*, Stefan Morawski distinguishes two kinds of evaluations: fundamental evaluations or

³ M. C. Beardsley: *Aesthetic Experience Regained*, "JAAC", vol. XXVIII, no. 1, 1969, p. 3–11.

⁴ The connection of evaluation with aesthetic experience has been discussed extensively by B. Dziedok: *Spór o znaczenia przeżycia estetycznego dla wartościowania dzieła sztuki* [in:] Z. J. Czarniecki, B. Dziedok: *Homo agens*, Lublin 1980.

primary value judgments which refer to the constitutive properties of all artistic values (and are thus connected with the problem of what the work of art is) and secondary or common evaluations founded on the primary, which in turn are divided into two kinds. One refers to a concrete determination of values and entails the regard for valuable qualities realized in works of art (thereby answering the question in what particular way works of art are good that is valuable). The other kind pertains to the hierarchization of works of art and explains the issue of which works and for what reasons (in relation to given valuable qualities or values) are better that is more valuable.⁶ Beardsley does not use this classification of evaluations, but it is clear for him that when we analyze procedures appropriate for artistic criticism, we do not ask whether X is more or less a work of art. We take this issue for granted. What we ask about is what qualities residing in an X make it especially valuable. If, however, we were to apply Morawski's classification to Beardsley's theory, we would have to admit that secondary evaluations tend to overlap with the fundamental ones. Morawski offers the following comment: "Since variable aesthetic paradigms that decide what is artistic value in a given context at least partly overlap with the set of qualities accumulated throughout history as the basis of values constitutive of works of art, secondary evaluations, which I call proper, refer indirectly (or sometimes even directly) to fundamental evaluations as the essential criterion".⁷ In his other work *Zarys układu kryteriów oceny (An Outline of the System of Criteria of Evaluation)*, Morawski distinguishes artistic criteria which permit to isolate a work of art from among other objects and which are fundamental for every axiological operation, and scalar criteria of secondary character, which refer to evaluations (comparison of works of art for their value). "The suggested distinction between criteria of value and criteria of evaluation is a 20th-c. achievement, not yet accepted by most scholars", says Morawski.⁸ This charge also refers to Beardsley as he seems to fail to notice this distinction. Beardsley uses the three *General Canons* (of unity, complexity and intensity of human regional quality). They apply both to constitutive conditions of works of art (fundamental evaluations or primary value judgments) and to aesthetic value and thereby to aesthetic experience). The same criteria distinguish a work of art and determine its value at the same time. Beardsley does, indeed, formulate specific canons that determine the status and characteristics of each art (e.g. in the theory of literature he follows the "semantic definition" of a literary work), yet the analysis of specific canons of each art shows that

⁵ Beardsley: *op. cit.*

⁶ S. Morawski: *O kryteriach axiologicznych w odniesieniu do dzieł sztuki* [in:] *Granice sztuki*, Warszawa 1972, p. 25. Beardsley speaks of primary and secondary criteria, but he has in mind something entirely different. The criteria are based on the distinction of local and regional qualities: "the properties A,B,C are the primary (positive) criteria of aesthetic value if the addition of any of them or an increase in it, without a decrease in any of the others, will always make the work a better one. And let us say that a given property X is a secondary (positive) criterion of aesthetic value if there is certain set of other properties such that, whenever they are present, the addition of X or an increase in it will always produce an increase in one or more of the primary criteria" M. C. Beardsley: *On the Generality of Critical Reasons*, "Journal of Philosophy", vol. LIX, no. 18, August 30, 1962, p. 485.

⁷ Morawski: *op. cit.*

⁸ S. Morawski: *Zarys układu kryteriów oceny*, "Studia Estetyczne", II, 1965, p. 35.

they can be subsumed under the *General Canons*, they are their particular instances. On the basis of the analyses of the critics' evaluations, Beardsley asserts that all their logical reasons with objective character are connected with the foregoing three criteria. This view is the main tenet of Beardsley's General Criterion Theory.

THE PROCESS OF EVALUATION

In the analysis of the process of evaluating a work of art, we can, according to Beardsley, distinguish a number of procedural steps.⁹ First, we must explain how one work of art can be better than another and how we know that this is really the case i.e. the judgment is true. The second step is to determine the mode in which a work of a given art can be better than another. This step rests upon the conviction that there are differences in evaluation between different arts. The third step consists in identifying the "mode of being good". This can be done by determining the kind of experience evoked by these works. The experience in question is the aesthetic experience. It is the aesthetic character that decides about the value of experience. That is why the next step is the distinction of aesthetic value out of other values: "...the aesthetic value of anything is its capacity to impart – through cognition of it – a marked aesthetic character to experience. The term 'cognition' here refers to the apprehension (but not to misapprehension) of the thing's qualities and relations, including its semantic properties, if any – it covers both perception and interpretive understanding in a broad sense, even where the art work is a literary text or a conceptual piece".¹⁰ Only then the fifth step is possible. Now, the theory of aesthetic value gives us grounds to distinguish between aesthetically relevant and irrelevant reasons of value judgments pronounced by the critics.¹¹ A reason is aesthetically valid when it describes properties which impart a marked aesthetic character to experience evoked by the object. Thus, if Beardsley espouses the instrumentalist theory of aesthetic values, valid reasons will be those that make the aesthetic experience evoked by a work of art unified (integrated), complex and intensive. Therefore, the knowledge whether the reasons of value judgments are aesthetically valid is possible only after we have adopted a certain conception of aesthetic value. In the process of our reception of the work we apprehend value but it follows from Beardsley's theory that, in

⁹ Beardsley: *In Defense of Aesthetic Value*, "Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association", 52 August 1979, p. 723–749.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 728.

¹¹ A. B. Stępień: distinguishes direct and indirect value judgments, writing: "The former directly refers to the object of aesthetic experience and its closing response to value. The latter also refers to other judgments, it is entangled in some theory. It is not enough for the justification of it to refer to aesthetic experience or aesthetic perception. It is by no means easy to tell one kind of judgment from the other. For example, every judgment is formed by means of some concepts (formulated in a language) – can the choice of concepts in a judgment be theoretically neutral?", *Problematyka estetyki*, Warszawa 1975, p. 137. Beardsley is entirely aware of that. In his considerations he focuses his attention on valid value judgments, that is, those having serious and consistent justifications. And these imply the adopted theory and no other.

order to name the value and pronounce a value judgment, we must have a prior knowledge of what value is. According to Karl Aschenbrenner, a true critic is dedicated to a thorough examination of what is or was before him. But he sees his reaction and its object clearly only after he starts searching for the premises of his appraisal: it is only then that he sees clearly all the details of the object.¹² The sixth step is facultative. It is rather a postulate that all concepts be treated in a more systematic way and as a whole. The presented functional account of art appraisal is opposed by those who follow, for example, an institutional conception of art or who contend that the artistic avant-garde has abolished the conception between art and aesthetics, and by those who assert that the concept of art is open and non-definable. Beardsley, on the other hand, follows the definition of art in terms of aesthetic intention.¹³ The work of art differs from other object in that it was created by man with a definite intention of evoking aesthetic experience. Incidentally, this category should not be identified with the principle of intentionality as a method of artistic criticism for Beardsley is an avowed opponent of taking the artist's intentions into account. Beardsley defends the functional conception of evaluating works of art in the following way: first, he does not believe that there are any rational grounds to free works of art from evaluation. On the contrary, we are often compelled to evaluate works of art by a necessity to choose one out of several. Those who consider aesthetic judgments pointless and useless are answered by Beardsley that in discussions where aesthetic value judgments are compared with moral judgments, two important distinctions are often confused: a distinction between moral judgments and value judgments in general, and between aesthetic value judgments and other kinds of judgments. There is no justification for a conviction that aesthetic judgments are by their nature less useful or valuable than others.

THE PROBLEM OF VALUE IN THE LIGHT OF THE MECHANISMS OF EVALUATION

In his article *The Aesthetic Problem of Justification*, Beardsley has stated clearly that the issue of justifying value judgments is entangled in a vast and complicated problem of aesthetic value.¹⁴ Recognition of aesthetic value in the process of evaluating works of art is not the ultimate and sufficient solution of the problem of justification. There is always a question of what kind of value aesthetic value is, or why aesthetic value is valuable. This question is certainly not asked by all aestheticians. It does not occur in the theories

¹² See K. Aschenbrenner: *Pojęciowe uwarunkowanie przeżycia estetycznego*, Studia Filozoficzne, 1976, no. 4 (125), p. 108.

¹³ See M. C. Beardsley: *Aesthetics*, New York 1981, *Introduction*, p. XVIII–XXII and *The Philosophy of Literature* [in:] G. Dickie, R.J. Sclafani (eds): *Aesthetics. A Critical Anthology*, New York 1977, p. 317–333, and Beardsley: *The Aesthetic Point of View*, *Metaphilosophy*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1970.

¹⁴ M. C. Beardsley: *The Aesthetic Problem of Justification*, "Journal of Aesthetic Education", vol. 1, no. 2, 1966, p. 29–39.

whose authors assert that aesthetic value is a value in itself – an intrinsic value. Those who hold this are, however, aware that other questions arise at this point: in what objects does this intrinsic value reside? How do we know that an object is intrinsically valuable? How many kinds of intrinsic value are there? Beardsley has one general doubt about this standpoint: if some work of art is intrinsically valuable, but it is not the object of the current or possible experience, how do we know that this work is valuable? A better modification might be, on Beardsley's view, to solve the problem by placing the intrinsic value in experience rather than in the object. But even then we are compelled to assume that aesthetic pleasure itself, or, generally, aesthetic experience are desirable: Beardsley, as we know, espouses the instrumentalist theory of value. This theory is part of the philosophy of pragmatism and is connected with John Dewey. By showing a transparent relationship between the epistemological and ontological theses of pragmatism and the problems of value and evaluation, it was Dewey who provided the fullest and most thorough account of instrumentalism. In this theory, a fact of experience which is the object of value judgment is a means-end relation. Everything that becomes the object of experience becomes thereby the object of value-conferring evaluations. Values do not exist outside experience, they are the qualities of the objects of experience, not of things themselves. Values exist only in the empirical reality, not outside it. In this world of means and ends, objects or acts can only become valuable as means to an end, never by themselves. According to Dewey, instrumental value is the only value that occurs in the empirical world and the only one about which knowledge is possible. Therefore, the instrumentalist theory of value holds that aesthetic value is a means to an end which is aesthetic experience. This standpoint requires an additional assumption that aesthetic experience is "worth possessing", that the effect itself is valuable. Just as penicillin has a medical value, that is it can produce a medical effect and thereby its result is valuable, so, too, a work of art yields a valuable effect. Yet an essential question arises: what justifies the assumption that aesthetic experience is valuable? Many philosophers hold that it is valuable in itself. We can all agree that we often wish to have experiences for themselves, independently of further experiences to which they lead. It is difficult, however, to prove this intrinsic value. Beardsley holds that there is no such proof. We must thus accept that aesthetic experience has also instrumental value, which certainly is not intrinsic value. This can lead to an infinite number of questions. Beardsley makes an attempt to avoid this. First of all, he holds that discussions between the supporters of "art for art's sake" and the proponents of "the problem of justification of art" are often accompanied by the confusion of intrinsic value with inherent value. According to Hanna Buczyńska-Garewicz:

Independent value is that which is valuable by itself, exclusively for its nature and thereby independent of other values. Consecutive value is that which is secondary in its valuability, derivative of other values without which it would also lose its valuable character. Consecutive values require, therefore, independent values.¹⁵

If, according to Beardsley's instrumentalist theory, the value of the aesthetic object is consecutive, then aesthetic experience, which is the end here, must be an intrinsic value. Beardsley holds that this is not the case. He is against intrinsic value of any kind and refers

¹⁵ H. Buczyńska-Garewicz: *Znak, znaczenie, wartość. Szkice o filozofii amerykańskiej*, Warszawa 1975, p. 203.

to Dewey's standpoint although he believes that Dewey's attack on intrinsic values was not sufficiently convincing.¹⁶ Dewey attempted to construct a consecutive value which could dispense with its accompanying concept of intrinsic value. He held that nothing could be valuable by itself, that is no values were absolute. Dewey introduced a new value: instrumental value which is not a derivative of independent values: not is it an intrinsic value. It is the value of a means to an end. Instrumental value is a consecutive value, yet such as is entirely autonomous towards other values and does not presuppose any independent values. Like Dewey, Beardsley seems to understand value as a variable instrumental relation, and empirical reality as the environment of human activity, as a continuum of means and ends. Properties, states, objects etc. are always valuable with respect to some social needs that make up the universal goal of social existence: thus they are always instrumentally valuable. Value exists only with respect to relations of objects with an action towards an end. It is therefore important to define this end. Beardsley rejects the universal end given once for all. The end is the end-in-view, resulting from action. It follows that ends are at once concrete, relative and temporal. In making a choice we consider alternative means and ends but we always do this in relation to other, more distant ends which we regard, at a given moment, as undoubtedly desirable. With time, experience modifies the order of ends and means because our needs, impulses, desires and satisfactions change. Aesthetic experience is valuable by virtue of the instrumental capability to affect the recipient in different ways: by relieving destructive emotions, integrating his personality, by rendering his perception keener and subtler, by developing empathy and sympathy, preserving psychical balance or by a vision of the harmonious model of life.¹⁷ None of these effects is an intrinsic value, they are merely ends-in-view, opposed to absolute ends. There are certainly situations where we experience some pleasure and if it does not imply any consequences, there is no reason why we should not enjoy it. In this case there is no problem with valuing this pleasure as good or bad. The question about the value of this pleasure does not arise at all. If we are to ask about its value, we go beyond the pleasure itself and try to demonstrate its connection with some other things. Therefore, if an object were really intrinsically valuable, there would be no reason or justification for this value. It would have to be self-evident. The process itself which leads value to occur in the object is implied by the fact that value depends on the relations of the object with other things. In his thorough consideration of arguments for and against intrinsic value, Beardsley asserts that even if something were to have this value, it cannot be cognized and that is why it cannot have any part in ethical and aesthetic justifications.¹⁸ Beardsley's conception raises the same doubt as has been formulated by Buczyńska-Garewicz about Dewey's theory:

Does not Dewey's conception, by eliminating and abolishing the concept of independent value, reject thereby the concept of value entirely, because the category of consecutive value is untenable without its logical premise, which is independent value?¹⁹

¹⁶ See M. C. Beardsley: *Intrinsic Value*, "Philosophy and Phenomenological Research", 1965, vol. XXVI, no. 1.

¹⁷ Beardsley: *Aesthetic*, p. 574-576.

¹⁸ Beardsley: *Intrinsic Value*, p. 13.

¹⁹ Buczyńska-Garewicz: *Znak...*, p. 234.

If Beardsley as an instrumentalist does not accept intrinsic value of works of art, he admits inherent value in art. He writes: "But suppose there is another kind of effect, or set of effects, that is more directly dependent on the work of art *qua* work of art – that satisfies two conditions: first, it is produced by means of, or via, aesthetic enjoyment, and therefore it is produced to some degree (however small) by all works of art; second, the degree to which it is produced is correlated (at least roughly) with the aesthetic value of the work, so that on the whole and generally speaking, the better the work of art the greater the effect it is capable of producing, then the capacity to produce this sort of (desirable) effect is an inherent value of the work."²⁰ Inherent value refers then to the functions which art performs by its nature. Intrinsic and inherent values cover different aspects of art: that is why Beardsley is right that we must not confuse them because this leads to misunderstanding. Beardsley is an instrumentalist and asserts at the same time that it is possible to justify the existence of art in terms of inherent value and ascribe to it uniqueness and autonomy without separating it from all other human interests and values.

THE NATURE AND KINDS OF VALUE JUDGMENTS

Beardsley holds that aesthetic values can be true or false. To question the cognitive status of value judgments is – in his view – to deny the judgments, the necessity, what is more, the possibility of their justification. However, value judgments must be explained and justified, at least because it is necessary to choose between works of art. This problem is accompanied by the question whether the justifications of value judgments about a work of art provide the recipient with knowledge or only with a conviction about the existing state (the value of the work). In his approach to the problems of the status of judgments Beardsley is a cognitivist. His standpoint is that an art critic gives definite knowledge, what is more, this knowledge can be imparted to other people who had no direct contact with the work of art.

For Beardsley, one of the chief tasks of criticism is aesthetic evaluation understood as pronouncing value judgments about a work of art. The critic should not only say whether a work of art is good or bad, but also justify his judgment. Justification of value judgments is one of the general problems of artistic criticism and aesthetics. Critics do not always give reasons, nor are they always aware of them. Yet aestheticians, by analyzing the activities of the critics, provide the answers to the essential questions of evaluation. Aesthetics is, in Beardsley's conception, metacriticism. Certainly, not all judgments and their reasons given by the critics are aesthetic. Some refer to the cognitive value of art (i.e. whether and what knowledge is provided by art; a variety of this value being historical value), others refer to social and in particular to moral values. According to Beardsley, however, the aesthetician is interested in judgments about the aesthetic value of the work. At this point a question could certainly be asked whether the critic values highly a work of art because it has aesthetic value, or whether it possesses this value because the critic values it highly. Beardsley is convinced that aesthetic value is determined by the object itself.

²⁰ M. C. Beardsley: *The Aesthetic Problem of Justification*, p. 34.

Aesthetic reasons are not uniform. Beardsley divides them into three groups: genetic reasons, affective reasons, and objective reasons.²¹ Genetic reasons refer to the origin of the work of art that is to conditions existing before the work itself, to the manner in which it was produced, or its connection with the antecedent psychological states of the artist. The second group refers to the effects of the work upon the percipient, while the third — to the features of the aesthetic object itself. The genetic method of evaluation consists of two steps: we must find what the artist intended his work to be, and second, we must find whether and how far his intention has been fulfilled. For Beardsley, genetic reasons for value judgments have two defects. First of all, we can seldom know the artist's intention with sufficient exactness to judge upon its basis about the value of the work. Moreover, even when we can do so, the resulting judgment is not a judgment of the work, but only of the artist and his skill.²² The fulfillment of the artist's intention cannot, according to Beardsley, be the criterion of aesthetic value for there are works which fulfill the artist's intention very well, and yet we might ask whether they were really worth their original intention. When we speak of a "killful work" this judgment is aesthetically irrelevant to the question whether the work has aesthetic value.²³ The categories often encountered in genetic reasons also include originality. A work of art is said to be good because it is original: when it was created it differed in some notable way from other works known at that time. For Beardsley, however, there are many instances which show that originality has no bearing upon aesthetic value. Caravaggio, for example, was one of the most original painters but that does not make him one of the greatest.²⁴

²¹ See Beardsley: *Aesthetic*, Chapter X, Critical Evaluation, and his: *The Classification of Critical Reasons*, "Journal of Aesthetic Education", vol. 2, no. 3, 1968, p. 55–63., and *The Possibility of Criticism*, Detroit 1970.

²² Beardsley seems to have in mind judgments about values of artistic technique and craft, which result from the artist's skill. According to Morawski "these values do not decide about the specific axiological status of the class of objects called works of art. They are only the necessary condition of most but not all works of art: with these values, which I could call "proto-artistic", the criterion are empirical qualities like a skilful tone, a skilful execution of *pas*, a skilful blend of colours or a skilful construction of verse. Thus, in so far as the judgments about constitutive artistic values derive from *Weltanschauung*, the judgments about artistic technique and skill are perceptual." (*O kryteriach*...., p. 23.)

²³ Polish aesthetics and (mainly literary) criticism also have many in their ranks who oppose evaluation of works of art on the basis of the artist's intention. In her book *Filozoficzne podstawy krytyki literackiej*, adducing the view of eminent Polish critics and literary theorists, M. Gołaszewska writes: "[...] there is a tendency, especially interesting with literary criticism, to evaluate works of art or valuable objects in general by means of some qualities which do not reside in the objects themselves or are at any rate outside their aspects under consideration. This treatment of criteria produces false judgments while this is very frequent with aesthetic judgments. It is an error in literary criticism to evaluate the work without basing upon what has been realized in the work itself but rather on the artist's intention". (*Filozoficzne podstawy krytyki literackiej*, Warszawa 1963, p. 220).

²⁴ On the connection between originality and aesthetic value Beardsley writes: "Suppose there are two of Haydn's symphonies very much alike, and we do not know which he wrote first; are we going to say A becomes better when we decide that it was the earlier, but reverse our judgment when newly discovered band parts give priority to B?

It is the composer's originality that counts, not the music's. We admire, and justly, the originality

Affective reasons for value judgments that is reasons that refer to the percipient's response to the work are likewise unsatisfactory, mainly because they do not specify the difference between pleasure evoked by, say, a musical piece and some other pleasures. Moreover, if this kind of reason employs the criterion of a strong emotional response, we also do not know how the emotional response evoked by the work differs from responses produced by telegrams announcing deaths or weddings. Affective reasons are often, indeed, objective: when they go back to the source of those strong emotional responses, they cease to be affective reasons. The third group of reasons for aesthetic judgments are objective reasons. They refer to some characteristics, that is, some quality or internal relation or set of qualities and relations – within the work itself, or to some meaning-relation between the work and the world. They usually have a descriptive or interpretative character. The terms "objective judgment" or "objective" reason are equivocal. *Objective* may be understood, first, as referring to a certain object and its values. According to Antoni Stępień:

[...] second, a judgment is also objective in a sense that it claims adequately to apprehend some existing state (not produced by the judgment or its pronouncement), the truth. In the third sense, this judgment is objective if it is true (in the classical sense of the word, that is, if it is so and so as this judgment asserts. In the fourth sense, this judgment is objective (objectively valid) if every cognitive subject concerned, or adequately qualified, has, after fulfilling certain operations, sufficient reasons to regard it as true.²⁵

The problem of objectivity of aesthetic judgments is therefore closely connected with the question of the existence of aesthetic value because the possibility of objectivity in the third and fourth senses depends on the mode of existence of aesthetic values and how they are cognitively given to us. Beardsley does not introduce these distinctions but it is clear from his conception that he is concerned with the objectivity of judgments and reason in all four senses. He divides objective reasons into three main groups: first, reasons that bear upon the degree of unity of the work. Second, reasons that bear upon the complexity of the work, and third, reasons that bear upon the intensity of human regional qualities in the work.

Beardsley is aware of the fact that when the critic gives a reason for his value judgment and we find that this reason is good, one more problem arises: how do we know that the reason is good, what makes it a good reason. According to Beardsley,

A relevant reason is one that provides support to the value-judgment for which it is a reason and also helps to explain why the judgment is true.[...] If we insist that a relevant critical reason must have both of these functions, it follows that in order to be relevant, reasons must be statements about its parts or internal relations (including its form, and regional qualities) or interpretive statements about

of Haydn and Beethoven and Stravinsky and Bartók, providing they wrote not only originally but well. But this admiration is based on something like an economic ground, or on the general welfare. After certain sounds have come into the world – after eighty-three Haydn quartets, and, at latest count, a hundred and seven symphonies – for all their incredible variety within a certain range, we bow to the law of diminishing returns. It is more of a contribution to our aesthetic resources, so to speak, if another composer will enlarge the range of chamber music and the symphony, with original innovation, rather than work within the same range. For this we praise him, but from such praise nothing follows about the goodness of the work, except that usually, of course, we would not think that his originality deserved praise unless the results were valuable enough to suggest that the original idea was worth following up." *Aesthetics*, p. 460.

²⁵ Stępień: *Propedeutyka estetyki*, p. 134.

its "meaning" (taking this term loosely enough to include such thing as what it represents, symbolizes, signifies, expresses, says, etc.)²⁶

In order to see whether a reason is significant from the aesthetic point of view, we must first find what the word "good" means in the aesthetic context. We can analyze both what the critics really mean when they use evaluative terms and what they may mean in view of the logical and epistemological problems pertinent to the justification of judgments. This way of argument presupposes first a knowledge (or an assumption) about what aesthetic value is and then a possibility to accept judgments and their reasons given by the critics. On the other hand, Beardsley supports inductive argument: "Such-and-such a degree of unity has a tendency to make an aesthetic object good. This aesthetic object has such-and-such a degree of unity. Therefore, this aesthetic object is good".²⁷ However, there are at least two theories which, according to Beardsley, hold that the statement "This is good" is not the conclusion of a logical argument at all.²⁸ One rests upon the conception of performatory utterances where evaluation utterances are neither true nor false; they can be just or unjust – this is Performatory Theory. Justifications themselves of performatory utterances have a character of evaluations. Judgments have no cognitive status also in the Emotive Theory. Evaluation utterances are not empirical statements but a combination of two components: an exclamatory component and an imperative component. The former expresses the speaker's feelings, the latter calls upon the listener to share the speaker's feelings. As long as the two components are neither true nor false, a value judgment is not a statement, and consequently it cannot appear as the conclusion of a critical argument. Critics often think that they are giving reasons for their judgments whereas they are only giving causes rather than adequate justifications. Such utterances are more like reports of the critic's experiences. Piotr Graff calls them aesthetic statements (*oznajmienia estetyczne*):

I have in mind psychological sentences in the first person singular, Present Tense, like *I like it* or *I do not like it* and their imprecise objective formulations like *this is nice* uttered with an intention of informing about a certain psychical state rather than describing or evaluating the object.²⁹

Aesthetic statements express individual tastes and their content cannot be doubted. They often have an equivocal character for they can perform the function of elliptical evaluations. "I like it" will then stand for "this is aesthetically valuable". Beardsley, however, is concerned with value judgments in the strict sense. For him, aesthetic statements are not judgments.

As for the imperative component of judgments, it has two aspects: evaluation utterances can be *Recommendations* which propose solutions to the problems of actual choice of a work, or they can be *Commendations*, devoid of proposals for action. Critics provide relevant data for decisions, but they enjoin no decisions themselves. That is why critical evaluations are commendations. On the other hand, the critic's work is something more than that of a doctor making a diagnosis, mainly because it contains an element of

²⁶ Beardsley: *The Classification*, p. 56 and 57.

²⁷ Beardsley: *Aesthetics*, p. 472.

²⁸ *Ibid.*,

²⁹ P. Graff: *Oznajmienia estetyczne*, "Studia Estetyczne", XII, Warszawa 1975, p. 125.

evaluation. The critic has a doubtless influence on the recipients, at least because he proposes something to them, but this influence is indirect. Another theory which does not, in Beardsley's view, permit a rational discussion on the reasons of critical judgments is *Relativism*.³⁰ It can assume several forms but the same criterion of evaluation obtains in all of them. That is good which I or a certain group like at a certain period. However, neither Cultural Relativism, nor Epochal, National, Individual or Class Relativism give any empirical evidence that supports contradictory critical statements. Beardsley is aware that the objects of man's aesthetic experience tend to differ. Yet the variability of tastes does not justify relativism. For relativism asserts that the same statement can be true or false, depending on who has uttered it and in what circumstances. For Beardsley, the assertion that tastes differ, therefore critical judgments are relative is not acceptable. He does not accept relativism as a theory of the proper method or manner of defining "good". Underlying all kinds of relativisms are imprecise formulations and confusion of terms. Primarily, variation of the content of cognition or the object of cognition is taken for a change in the truth of cognition. Variability of works which are the objects of aesthetic admiration does not necessarily entail relativity of critical judgments. Moreover, the variability of unsupported judgments must be distinguished from variability of reasons.³¹

Beardsley discusses one more view, not very frequent in aesthetics and somewhat debatable as a defence of some sort of relativism. It is a view that our aesthetic likings and dislikings are completely determined by certain conditions - by our childhood upbringing, cultural milieu, or, for an extreme example, by our "somatotypes". Those who espouse this theory know that somatotypes are mixed, and consequently aesthetic preferences are not subject to our control. They are thus impervious to argument. But Beardsley seems to be convinced that even if aesthetic preferences are determined by causes over which we have no control, we are not forced to equate "X is aesthetically valuable" with "People of my somatotype like things similar to X". This criterion could be made more rational by a re-distinction of somatotypes and by assigning to them definite taste. But this would no longer be relativism.

AESTHETIC PROBLEMS OF CRITICISM

One of the problems which a critic must solve in his work is the question about the proper object of evaluation. Is it, to use Ingarden's idiom, a work of art as a certain schematic product, a definite concretization (individual aesthetic object) or a model or

³⁰ In Polish aesthetics a similar view is advanced by Roman Ingarden, who also opposes relativism in evaluation. He draws our attention to the fact that "whoever does not know aesthetic experience and the revelation of a definite aesthetic value in it or whoever at least ignores or does not understand the proper function of aesthetic experience and is concentrated only on pure judgments only, he is far more sensitive to the arguments of subjective aesthetic relativism and often feels helpless in the face of it. For value judgments, separated from aesthetic experience, are deprived of their appropriate justification". R. Ingarden: *Uwagi o estetycznym sędzię wartościującym* [in:] *Studia z estetyki*, Warszawa 1970, vol. 2, p. 154.

³¹ Beardsley: *Aesthetics*, p. 480-485.

an ideal of aesthetic concretization, the perfect aesthetic object which is to be approximated, and realized by the actual concretization? In his *Aesthetics* Beardsley discusses the problem of aesthetic object and its presentation on the example of a musical composition which we hear all week, but every day with a different orchestra and conductor and through different media: we hear it played in a concert hall, recorded on a phonograph record and on the radio. Despite these differences, we would ordinarily say that we have been listening to the same composition. "And it seems very clear that this common-sense way of speaking — according to which there is one composition, but many experiences of it — is the music critic's natural idiom, too".³²

For when, ordinarily, a music critic writes about a symphony, or a tone poem, or an opera, he is writing about some sort of *object*, not any particular experience of the object. ... we do not identify the musical composition itself with what is phenomenally objective in the auditory field in any single hearing of the music; we want to say that some hearings are more adequate than others. It will help to clarify the problem here if we introduce a new term. An aesthetic object appears in a phenomenal field as a phenomenal object; let us call each such phenomenal object a *presentation* of the aesthetic object. A particular presentation of an aesthetic object is, then, that object experienced by a particular person on a particular occasion.³³

It is thus clear that an aesthetic object is not identical with its particular presentation.³⁴ Critics who talk only about their own experience of an aesthetic object practice impressionistic criticism. The philosophical question here is whether there is any reason for asserting that a critic can make exclusively impressionistic statements. The problem requires a conception of the relation between aesthetic objects and their presentations. When analyzing various statements or advance the following postulates:

1. The aesthetic object is a perceptual object; that is, it can have presentations.
2. Presentations of the same aesthetic object may occur at different times and to different people.
3. Two presentations of the same aesthetic object may differ from each other.
4. The characteristics of an aesthetic object may not be exhaustively revealed in any particular presentation of it.
5. A presentation may be veridical; that is, the characteristics of the presentation may correspond to the characteristics of the aesthetic object.
6. A presentation may be illusory; that is, some of the characteristics of the presentation may fail to correspond to the characteristics of the aesthetic object.
7. If two presentations of the same aesthetic object have incompatible characteristics, at least one of them is illusory.³⁵

Not all characteristics of an aesthetic object can be revealed in a particular presentation, while each characteristic is revealed in some presentation. Beardsley does not thus propose to reduce the aesthetic object to a presentation. He only analyzes the statements about an aesthetic object in the context of statements about presentations. Presentation is not identical with performance or production.

³² Beardsley: *Aesthetics*, op. cit., p. 44.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ It must be stressed that Roman Ingarden understands the aesthetic object in a different way than Beardsley does. For Ingarden understands the aesthetic object is a work of art constituted in the process of aesthetic experience, which becomes an aesthetic object due to its specific realization. See R. Ingarden: *Przeżycie, dzieło, wartość*, Kraków 1966.

³⁵ Beardsley: *Aesthetics*, p. 46 and 48.

When two people listen to a pianist play a sonata, there are three presentations including the pianist's, when the pianist plays it to himself, there is only one presentation. Let us, then, distinguish in the case of music, three things: 1. There is the composer's artifact – in this case the score, 2. There is the performance; any rendition of the sonata that is recognizably guided by the composer's instructions in the artifact will be called a performance of that sonata, but there will, of course, be many different performances of the same work, 3. There is the presentation – a single experience of the music – and for each performance there may be a number of presentations.³⁶

The term performance has two senses: in one sense, when playing a particular recording twice; we are giving two performances of it (two acts of reproduction). In another sense, since the pianist is playing only once, we are dealing with only one performance. Even if he plays it twice, but exactly the same, he is giving only one performance, although several acts. A play can have a number of performances. When critics ask whether a production is adequate to the work, Beardsley warns us against a standpoint which assumes that there is one and only ideal production of the work. On the contrary, there may be several very different, but equally good, productions. "Thus, when we are interested in the characteristics of a musical composition, we must be clear in our own minds whether we are asking about what is common to all, or most, productions of that work, or to a particular production by a particular symphony orchestra under a particular conductor. And the same distinction must be kept in mind for other arts as well."³⁷

Each production may be a single private presentation or a public group of presentations. The problem is that with poetry, which is most often read silently, we have too many separate aesthetic objects. In other arts these distinctions are somewhat different. In painting and sculpture, for example, the distinction between the artifact and the production almost disappears. It follows from Beardsley's reflections that the object of interest for critics in their axiological operations should be – and often is – not single presentations, not particular performances or productions, but the aesthetic object. A critic is, of course, entitled to view this object through his own aesthetic experience and the performance of the work, but he should not confine himself to "impressionistic" judgments. A critic's judgments are the more valuable the more they are interpersonal. Beardsley's distinctions of an aesthetic object, presentations of it and its performances call into mind Roman Ingarden's theory of concretization of the work of art. The latter theory is certainly more perfect, but this is no reason for criticizing Beardsley. He did not devote enough room to the problem of presentations; therefore, this comparison is perhaps too bold. Beardsley's category of presentation seems to perform the same function as the concept of concretization in Ingarden. It is difficult to find out whether Beardsley knew Ingarden's work before he wrote his *Aesthetics*. Most probably he did not; as follows from his subsequent articles Beardsley became acquainted with Ingarden's writings in the 1960's and later. Despite the distinctions he has introduced, Beardsley fails to clarify how the evaluation of an aesthetic object can be influenced by one or another performance of the work. A poor performance of a good work often, as we know, lowers its aesthetic value. Beardsley does indeed write somewhere else that the aesthetic experience should be repeated so that it would become a criterion of aesthetic value and that we are concerned not only with the actual causes of this particular experience and none

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

other, but also with its potential characteristics. Does this mean, however, that we cannot make a value judgment about a work with which we only had a single contact? There are often cases when we are compelled to have no more than a single experience of a work of art, not to mention such works as *impromptus* or happenings. If we then say that while experiencing a film, we found that the work itself was poor but the excellent performance of the actors gave us aesthetic experience, Beardsley would certainly answer that our experience was not after all unified, complex or intense. And he might rather be right.

Another problem the critic faces is that of interpreting the work of art. Is objective interpretation possible? Is interpretation an axiologically neutral operation? What is interpretation? These are the questions that are differently answered by different critics and aestheticians. Murray Krieger and Northrop Frye, for example, hold that theory of literature is practically never free from evaluative statements and the borderline between interpretation and evaluation cannot often be seen. On the other hand, Joseph Margolis contends that we must exclude the use of interpretation in any evaluative sense. Interpretations are believed to affect evaluation but are not equivalent to it.³⁸ The object of interpretation is not given once for all, its properties can be unknown to its interpreter. This conception of interpretations of the same work are possible. Beardsley, however, opposes this view on the grounds that the interpretation of a literary work is tantamount to discovering those features which are descriptively present in the work itself. Consequently, only one true interpretation of a literary work is possible. A similar view is advanced by E. D. Hirsch, Jr., the difference being that he does not identify interpretation with description. The foregoing sense of his views is expressed by Beardsley in the "principle of autonomy": literary works are autonomous units, whose properties are decisive in verifying interpretations and judgments. According to Margolis, Beardsley contradicts it, however, when he assumes that no matter what methods of interpretation are used, we are unable to find out whether some things in the work reside in it or come from outside. Therefore, whatever is external to the work itself and is, nevertheless, an interesting extension of what is certainly in the work can be admitted.³⁹ Margolis' polemic with Beardsley also covers the differences between description and interpretation. For Beardsley, the proper task of the critic is to discover in a literary work the textual meaning, which is hidden, contrary to discovering the author's meaning (Hirsch) although meanings can vary with time. According to Margolis, Beardsley must not exclude, which he does, a possibility of many different interpretations unless he specifies clearly which meaning of the text he has in mind — the present or the previous one. Moreover, the theory of linguistic meaning rests upon the speaker's intentions and as such cannot assign one and exclusively correct meaning to particular expressions. Margolis holds that a critic's interpretation is not restricted, as Beardsley would have it, to plucking out meanings of the text but a critic often deals with the plausible manners of interpretation of the intention of the work. Margolis considers this aspect especially important because it demonstrates that divergent interpretations cannot be reduced to the ambiguities of a nebulous text. The difference between description and interpretation is

³⁸ J. Margolis: *Art and Philosophy. Conceptual Issues in Aesthetics*, Humanities Press 1980, p. 109.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

especially acute in the performing arts like concerts, theatrical plays, ballet or dance. According to Margolis, every theatrical performance or concert can be called an interpretation of the work, where performers and directors contribute something of their own to the text (the score or the script). This is not a description. Performers could be compared to critics; critics, while interpreting, for example, a literary work, behave like conductors or directors. Only the current production of a work can be the grounds for its description. But just as with literature, we cannot speak of the inadequate interpretation, or whether it is true or false. We can only evaluate whether the interpretation is plausible, reasonable, admissible etc. If Beardsley identified interpretation with the production and performance of the work, he would certainly admit multiplicity of interpretations, whereas it has been said that there is not one and only one ideal performance of the work. When he holds that of two divergent interpretations at least one must be illusory, Beardsley invites Margolis' charge, more likely to be directed against a critic than an aesthete, that he does not show how to determine which of the two interpretations is true.

GENERAL CRITERION THEORY

In his paper *On the Generality of Critical Reasons*, Beardsley advances a view that once we have agreed that there are reasons for value judgments, it follows that we must accept the three criteria of evaluation: unity, complexity, and intensity.⁴⁰ Beardsley calls this view *General Criterion Theory*. For we cannot deny that there is a logical connection between judgment and its reason, and thereby this connection can be placed among general concepts. Not all aestheticians, however, admit of the possibility of generalizing the evaluation criteria of works of art as universal canons. In his famous paper *Does Traditional Aesthetics Rest on a Mistake?*, William E. Kennick writes that there are no general rules, principles, criteria, canons, or laws, which could be applied to all works of art and only through them it would be possible to justify critical evaluations.⁴¹ He holds that we can justify value judgments but only in particular cases, that is by referring to a particular work. Furthermore, we can do so without resorting to or being entangled in any general criteria of evaluation. According to others, including Beardsley, if we assume that there are no general criteria of evaluation, we must assume that there are no criteria at all. Beardsley's standpoint was criticized in many ways. One of them is an assertion that works of art are unique, therefore no universal rules can be applied to them. Beardsley counters this:

But perhaps there are no genuine classes of aesthetic objects, such as poems and paintings (this seems to be the extreme neo-Crocean view) – or perhaps the members of each class differ so much from one another that no features can be found that are desirable in all or most of them. But there are genuine classes of aesthetic objects, and their members share important properties.⁴²

⁴⁰ Beardsley: *On the Generality...*

⁴¹ See W. E. Kennick: *Does Traditional Aesthetics Rest on a Mistake*, "Mind", 67, 1958, p. 329.

⁴² Beardsley: *On the Generality...* p. 482.

Other doubts are raised not only about the general criterion theory but about the whole of Beardsley's conception of aesthetic values. Some of his opponents hold that there are no single features (for example of poetry) which would be the necessary or sufficient conditions of value.⁴³ Beardsley is ready to accept the view that there are no sufficient features that constitute a work of art, but there are certainly necessary conditions. Even if these are not single features or conditions, does this discredit the general criterion theory? Another doubt raised by W. E. Kennick can be formulated as a question: what happens when different features are positive qualities in different contexts — humour in one case, tragic intensity in another? For Beardsley it is obvious that qualitatively different, positive features cannot be always combined with or accompany one another in the same work of art. In that case, what does the general criterion theory say when some features are valuable in some works, without being such in others? For example, humour in one play is its merit, in another — its defect. However, Beardsley reminds us that not all features underlying the criteria of evaluation come from the same plane of generality. For some criteria are often subordinated to others. Humour which heightens dramatic tension in a play is its merit, if it lowers the tension, it is a negative feature. Yet it is not humour that is a criterion of evaluation here, but dramatic tension. Failure to distinguish between the degree of generality of various criteria leads to many instances of misunderstanding, which only seemingly negate the general criterion theory.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In summing up M. C. Beardsley's views on the problem of aesthetic evaluation, it must be said that the central category in this conception is the category of aesthetic object, which is the basis of experience. This experience must have an aesthetic character, so that aesthetic value could be distinguished on its basis. Value can be apprehended in aesthetic experience and defined in the process of evaluating the work. This process results in value judgments pronounced through the knowledge of values. These judgments require reasons, which make them valid. The judgments are valid when they refer to the features of the object that give experience a clearly aesthetic character. The features of the aesthetic object are thus the point of departure and at the same time point of arrival in the analysis of the problems of aesthetic evaluation. Everything can therefore be reduced to the qualities of the work, which are subject to the three general canons: of unity, complexity, and intensity. The same canons determine aesthetic value and the value of experience evoked by works of art. The same canons are referred to in the reasons for value judgments. We might ask how Beardsley knows that unity, complexity and intensity are valuable qualities. Is this an *a priori* assumption which determines his entire conception, or is it an inference from some empirical observations? It might seem that this mode of thinking is deductive. We assume what is aesthetic value and on this basis we pronounce value judgments and look for their reasons. Certainly, those who do not accept the general canons and the instrumentalist theory of value, formulate value

⁴³ See A. G. Pleydell-Pearce: *On the Limits and Use of "Aesthetic Criteria"*, "Philosophical Quarterly", 9, 1959, p. 29-45.

judgments on the basis of other conceptions. It should be borne in mind, however, that the order of exposition does not ordinarily correspond to the order of investigation. Beardsley frequently emphasizes that his aesthetic theory is based on the analysis of facts, that is either aesthetic objects or critical statements. For if we have a closer look at arts and the practice of art theorists, we find that the general canons are present as unwritten rules both in the formation of the aesthetic object and in the evaluation of works of art. In Beardsley's thinking we find the inductive mode. The process of evaluation in his conception can be presented as follows: an aesthetic judgment within a certain intellectual or intellectual-verbal structure predicates (positively or negatively) about the value of its object and is true or false. Moreover, this judgment requires a reason, a validation of its cognitive function. This validation can be obtained in the analysis of the work of art through aesthetic experience and a knowledge it has provided about how the work of art participates in the constitution of aesthetic value. Beardsley thus occupies a cognitivist standpoint about the cognitive status of value judgments. J. Margolis argues with this standpoint, holding that value judgments are relative. He contends that if we can give supporting reasons for statements which do not have truth-value, then we cannot demonstrate that if judgments are evaluations and if the evaluations require supporting reasons, then judgments have truth-value.⁴⁴ Margolis also holds that Beardsley must show that evaluations (or comparative value judgments) require that the object of current evaluation possess (or not) the properties which have been proved; that they exist and also that valid evaluations follow from given sets of such properties. In Margolis' view, Beardsley did not do this. We should remember, however, that Beardsley is not an art critic but an aesthete and his task was to show a certain way; a method of evaluation rather than make detailed analyses of works of art (even though some can be found in his writings).

A standpoint of extreme opposition to Beardsley is also taken by Alan Tormey. He opposes cognitivism with regard to the status of evaluations and their reasons. This does not mean that he denies cognitive function to value judgments. Tormey holds that value judgments cannot be conveyed, that is, if someone had no direct contact with a work of art, he cannot accept the critic's judgment of the work as his own. Tormey writes that in art, unlike in law, we do not recognize judgments if a direct experience of the object of judgment does not occur. If value judgments cannot be imparted to other recipients of art, therefore the critic, who hopes to sanction his statement, is doomed to fail because there can be no logical reasons that lead to the acceptance of judgments nor indirect means of imparting them.⁴⁵ Margolis, also an opponent of cognitivism, holds that Tormey's position is extreme. For example, Tormey is wrong when he holds that value judgments are free from the necessity of being justified and, moreover, that they are unaffected by the danger of non-justification.

In his defence of cognitivism Beardsley supports objective reasons, that is, those referring to the features of an object. He also opposes relativism in aesthetic evaluation. For the process of evaluation is well-grounded in the object itself.

The foregoing conception of aesthetic evaluation has been criticized by Stefan Morawski, who writes:

⁴⁴ See Margolis: *op. cit.*, p. 228.

⁴⁵ See A. Tormey: "Critical Judgments", "Theoria", XXXIX, 1973, p. 35-49.

Beardsley's evasiveness is symptomatic and should be presented. He has indicated three objective reasons (unity, complexity, intensity), which are to be the determinants of aesthetic objects, but he treats these reasons as only *instrumental* moments on account of their dependence on aesthetic experience. Hesitating whether to choose objective or subjective value, Beardsley finally decides to define the instrumentality of the aesthetic in a social-cultural context. However, this functional-relativist solution seems to him too trivial and, moreover, too risky in view of the three universal determinants of art which he has assumed. Therefore Beardsley suggests that the concept of instrumental aesthetic value be extended to cover the experience of all mankind which recurs in cultures. Having arrived at this suggestion, Beardsley again makes a sudden turn. For in the end he remains with the purely logical-formal relationist solution, in which aesthetic value is a capacity for some features to occur for someone in some conditions.⁴⁶

It is possible, I believe, to overcome Beardsley's problems on the grounds of axiological historicism. This standpoint is supported by Stefan Morawski, who holds that the criterion of artistic and aesthetic values is founded on social-cultural *praxis* when we refer to "that which, despite variability of art and its accompanying reflection, recurred persistently over the centuries in the collective experience of and studies on it, and which has continued until the present moment".⁴⁷ Morawski believes that in the empiricist orientation the only tenable hypothesis is an anthropological one. It says that aesthetic judgments are objective due to the fact that there are some

[...] social-historical laws, which preserve, in the history of *homo sapiens* and his culture, similar modes of selecting aesthetic objects as peculiar objects with markedly coherent structures, and similar modes of producing objects called works of art, which correspond to those aesthetic needs formed by nature and culture.⁴⁸

No matter what we may say about Beardsley's theory, it must be admitted that his conception is consistent and embraces many aspects of aesthetic evaluation although it has some weak points as well. Its merit is the simplicity and lucidity of exposition. This is doubtlessly due to the empiricist methodological orientation espoused by Beardsley. His considerations are the more convincing because, if our everyday experience does not support them, it at least does not contradict them.

STRESZCZENIE

Tematem niniejszego artykułu jest jeden z głównych problemów koncepcji estetycznej Monroe C. Beardsley'a – problem wartościowania estetycznego. Beardsley w swej teorii wielk uwagi poświęca krytyce artystycznej i wartościowaniu. Zastanawia się on nad celami i przedmiotem ocen, rodzajami uzasadnień sądów oceniających, formułuje kryteria wartościowania estetycznego, a także zajmuje stanowisko wobec problemu statusu poznawczego wypowiedzi wartościujących. Centralną kategorię koncepcji Beardsleya stanowi kategoria przedmiotu estetycznego, który jest podstawą doświadczenia. Doświadczenie to musi mieć charakter estetyczny, ażeby na jego podstawie można było wyróżnić wartość estetyczną. Wartość zaś można uchwycić na drodze doświadczenia estetycznego i określić w procesie wartościowania dzieła. Efektem tego procesu są wartościujące sądy wydawane na podstawie znajomości wartości.

⁴⁶ Morawski: *O obiektywności sądów estetycznych*, "Studia Estetyczne", 1967, IV, p. 253 and 254.

⁴⁷ Morawski: *O kryteriach...*, p. 22.

⁴⁸ Morawski: *O obiektywności*, p. 253.

Sądy te potrzebują uzasadnień, które czynią je prawnocnymi. Są one ważne wtedy, gdy odnoszą się do cech przedmiotu, które nadają doświadczeniu wyraźny charakter estetyczny. Cechy przedmiotu estetycznego są zatem punktem wyjścia i zarazem punktem dojścia w analizie problemów wartościowania estetycznego. Wszystko więc sprowadza się do jakości dzieła, podlegającej trzem kanonom generalnym: integralności, złożoności i intensywności. Te same kanony określają wartość estetyczną oraz wartościowość doświadczenia wzbudzanego przez dzieła sztuki. Do tych samych kanonów odnoszą się uzasadnienia sądów oceniających. Zdaniem Beardsleya, sądy estetyczne mogą być bądź prawdziwe, bądź fałszywe. Ich uzasadnienia dzielą się na genetyczne, afektywne i obiektywne, ale tylko te ostatnie mają – z punktu widzenia estetycznego – charakter relewantny.

РЕЗЮМЕ

Темой данной работы является одна из главных проблем эстетической концепции Монрола Ц. Бердслея (Monroe C. Beardsley), т.е. проблема эстетической оценки. Бердслей в своей теории много внимания посвящает художественной критике и оценке. Он размышляет над целью и предметом оценки, видами обоснований оценивающих суждения, формулирует критерий эстетической оценки, а также высказывает свою точку зрения по вопросу познавательного статуса оценивающего высказывания. Главной категорией концепции Бердслея является категория эстетического предмета, которая лежит в основе опыта. Этот опыт должен иметь эстетический характер, чтобы на его основе отличить эстетическую ценность. Эту ценность осязается путем эстетического опыта и определяется в оценочном процессе произведения. Результатом этого процесса являются оценочные суждения представляемые на основе знания ценности.

Эти суждения требуют обоснований, благодаря которым они будут правомочные. Они вески тогда, когда относятся к чертам предмета, которые придают опыту четкий эстетический характер. Черты эстетического предмета являются исходной и окончательной точкой в анализе проблем эстетической оценки. Итак, все сводится к качеству произведения, которое подчинено трем общим канонам: интегральности, сложности и интенсивности. Эти же каноны определяют эстетическую ценность и значение опыта вызванного произведением искусства. К этим же канонам относятся обоснования оценочных суждений. По мнению Бердслея, эстетические суждения могут быть правдивые или ложные. Их обоснования бывают генетические, аффективные и объективные, но эти последние имеют, с точки эстетического зрения, релятивный характер.