

OLEG SUS
Brno

ON SOME STRUCTURAL-SEMANTIC PROBLEMS IN MUKAŘOVSKÝ'S THEORY OF AESTHETIC NORM

1

Until quite recently the aesthetic norm has belonged to those concepts of aesthetics and theory of literature that have escaped notice or have not been brought into connection with methods of the new theoretical analyses. Especially the processes of its genesis, its functioning and its application ("putting into use") have not been analyzed anew in recent times. The norm has not been seen *in actu*, but rather statically, as a finished "thing" of a kind that never aroused any major theoretical problems. It is quite natural that such a static character of the traditional attitude to the aesthetic norm has as a necessary result obscuring of its internal dynamic nature. Consequently, any differentiation of the whole complicated normative process has been left out of account. This kind of attitude certainly causes complete and literal omission of different ways of manifestation, different "modes" of the aesthetic norm, their grades and phases that in reality are distinct and separated and that even enter into contradictory relations. (To put it in other words: a kind of tension occurs between them, *i. e.* the relation of disagreement.) It seems as if the new scientific conceptions were not concerned with the existence of the aesthetic norm. As if the norm were traditionally isolated from any application of both semiological and semantic analyses. It is true that the revived interest in the axiological problems — *e. g.*, in the contemporary Czech and Slovak aesthetics, theory of literature and of the fine arts — has aroused interest also in the problems of norms, nevertheless the whole matter has remained within the framework of the traditional investigations. These investigations never put the basic question of what the aesthetic norm *is* (and may be) and what *it is not* (where are its limits). The theory has not concerned itself with the difference between the "norm-

imposing" (the *normans*) and the object "being subjected to a norm" (the *normatum*), or with the basic ontological difference between the aesthetic norm *outside* the work of art and what has been termed the "norm" *in* art (the "artistic norm"). Different analogies readily occur, namely that are available in the contemporary theory of sign and meaning.

The genuine "aesthetic norm", however, continues to be considerably ambiguous even in the aesthetic theory itself. In the narrower, rather dogmatic, conception the aesthetic norm is mostly considered a fixed rule ("order", "prohibition"). This conception is opposed by the opinions that in different ways disqualify the function of the aesthetic norm in art on the whole. Similar views resort to dissolving the norm in multiformity of countless individual creations-expressions, which are subjectively "necessary", or to more or less negativistic criticism of the normativity in general. Such an extreme sharpening of viewpoints of the dogmatic "normativism" and the relativistic "anti-normativism" against each other hardly makes the whole problem clear; as a matter of fact it makes the objective solution of the problem in theory much more difficult.

In this connexion it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that the theory of the fine arts has its own specific complications and difficulties concerning the aesthetic norm itself. The theory might certainly use as its basis a general model of genesis, functioning and application of the aesthetic norm if it would only be available. Such a model might certainly be used by other sciences of art and by the theory of literature, too. (In the contemporary Czech aesthetics and theory of literature the concept of the aesthetic norm has been elaborated mostly in the works of Jan Mukařovský, as will be discussed below in detail.) We have already suggested that the theory of the fine arts is in a special position, indeed, with regard to the axiological investigation of the aesthetic norm, inasmuch as the old and newly revived difficulties emerge again and again, by the way in connexion with what can be described as "pragmatic" dimension of thought on the works of the fine arts. It applies especially to the living art criticism, and yet more apparently to judgments of taste, to liking and desires of the public, that anything what was not distinguished and differentiated by the theory (with explicit reasons of course) gets mixed or even deformed. In this sphere conceptual diffusions and creation of pseudo-concepts are still quite frequent. (Conditions in other spheres are hardly much better, to be sure, which applies, *e. g.*, to the aesthetic valuation of music or literature *etc.*, too.)

Let us give only two simple examples to show that it is the real thinking on the artistic matter what is necessary, not resorting to one-sided attitudes or non-admitted subjective (personal) ideas, likings or even su-

perstitutions. No wonder that some contemporary artists respond to any attempts at a theory of description and analysis of norms on different occasion rather allergically. The artists are constantly repelled by the dogmatic illusion that it is enough to "apply" the created aesthetic norm and to "transfer" it in a simple and mechanical way into a work of art. At the same time many of those who formulated norms do not realize at all the semiological problems involved in their codification. For any norm as a sign, while being linguistically fixed, shifts away literally — and also necessarily — from the signified. And the norm-instruction always designates its own initial point, the place of its own genesis: that is to say, the form of a norm-impulse which exists in the consciousness of the axiological subject with all its concrete peculiarities and individual characteristics. (This consciousness is a constituent part of the "collective" consciousness so that it should not be interpreted wrongly as a place of existence of subjectivistic dictates and of a kind of non-motivated "freedom", or "taste" that is said to be indisputable...) The designating aesthetic norm in its generalizing linguistic expression simply cannot record all concrete distinctions of the designated object, *i. e.* the object which the aesthetic norm should be applied to. A contention of the mutual misunderstanding between a creator and a theoretician who professes the immediately "applicable" norms becomes more and more intensive as a consequence of a deepening mutual misunderstanding, which projects itself in a different form into the relation between the perceiver and the work of art (or its author, if you like). This misunderstanding is based on a kind of fetishism with respect to two attitudes. The first extreme can be described as follows: an absolutization of a creative act gets captive of a "thing", *i. e.* an artifact. A work of art (and of literature, too) becomes a fact by itself, it is declared to be a finished and perfect creation that was issued only from the unique intention a creative personality. By the means of a typical sort of "short circuit" further implications are drawn: a work of fine arts which is not composed of words (verbal signs) seems to be inaccessible to any kind of intellectual reflection. And more than that: it is often put beyond reach of any supra-individual norms — what is a favoured method of those conceptions that are based on absolutization of the so-called expression or intuition of the creative subject. The work of art is declared to be a genuinely concrete thing, indeed, and the aesthetic norm is devaluated as a secondary and utterly useless addition — from the point of view of the artist at least.

The other extreme is based on "supremacy" of theoretical or critical and ideological reflection over a work of art, although this dominance has never been admitted as a matter of fact. (It is either unconscious or it is veiled into various forms of the alleged "objectivism" in apprecia-

ting the artistic value.) In this case it is a sort of fetishism concerning reflections on works of art what is in question here. In this way the aesthetic norms become absolutized, too. Theoreticians mostly disregard the fact that in their verbal formulations they represent the linguistically codified regulative principles that are merely generalized instructions-utterances on "what ought to be". The more general they are, the poorer they are compared with the factual existence of a work of art: as a matter of fact the aesthetic norm is never able to possess the immediate impressiveness of a finished work of art. And for this reason the codified aesthetic norm always exists, in the strict sense of the word, *outside* the artistic structure, its existence is extra-artistic. It exists *before* the work of art, and *beyond* it as far as it is "inferred" from the work in one way or other. But more than that: antinomy between the ability of the aesthetic norm to have a designation (*i. e.* its linguistic formulation) and the specific existence of the work of art itself, the structure of which is carried by the artistic material that has not the nature of linguistic signs, is manifested very strongly in the fine arts in particular. The basic difference between the verbal expression of the aesthetic norm (in the realm of symbolic signs) and the visual existence of a work of the fine arts (in the realm of iconic means) is self-evident. The ability of the aesthetic norm to be designated adequately, to begin with, is not a simply and easy thing. The more description of "things" that can be found, *e. g.*, on a picture is not an easy matter and even the specialists can fall into awkward errors and confusions, anyway. It has already been noticed by Max Dessoir¹. In the Czech modern aesthetics Otakar Zich pointed out the fact that many things or "significatory presentations" with which we made familiar quite intimately, *e. g.*, on a picture, had not their corresponding names, their verbal designations (what should not mean they were less valued in any respect)².

Yet this is not the end of all complications for the theory of the aesthetic norm in the aesthetics, for it is also necessary to draw attention to the fundamental contradiction between a norm (what *ought to be*) and the factual character of art and literature (what *actually is*). This contradiction is often concealed by terminology that speaks in the same breath the aesthetic and about the "norm" in art, or the artistic (poetic) "norm". But in principle there are two essentially different modus of existing in question here. The aesthetic norm is founded as what has been termed intention — as mentioned above — or it fixes "what ought to

¹ M. Dessoir, *Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*, Stuttgart 1906.

² O. Zich, *Estetické vnímání hudby. Psychologický rozbor* (*The Aesthetic Perception of Music: A Psychological Analysis*), [in:] "Věstník Královské České Společnosti Nauk" (Bulletin of the Royal Bohemian Society of the Sciences), Philosophical-Historical-Linguistic Section, Annual Volume 1910, Prague 1911, p. 38.

be", it belongs to the region of the "norm-imposing" (the *normans*). In other words: it exists outside an artifact. And what seems to be the "norm" within the work itself is something ontologically quite different, for it is a so-called model — and, consequently, it is *ex definitione* an artistic fact. A work of art emanates, as it were, its respective "norms" in virtue of the fact that they lead to employment or imitation of certain imaginative ideas, methods, motives, techniques. But these aesthetic "qualities" of structure are not norms in the proper sense of this word — unless we want to call them "norms" in a transferred, non-proper mode of speaking. These qualities are connected essentially with the category of autonomous existence of a creation. A *creation* acts by its special "suggestion" analogously to a *human deed* which is described in ethics as moral one and for which the theory of moral constructs commandments, or, virtually, the ethical norms. Also in this case the power of a "model" or deed exceeds the effect of mere words. A deed (as well as a work of art) is able to captivate by its immediate existence. It is impossible to say the same about the ethical norms, the less about the aesthetic norms. (Since their existence is always intermediated, then intentional.)

From what has been said, it can be seen that the theory of aesthetic norm has its own special problems and complications. These problems, however, are also related with general problems of axiology and semiology of the aesthetic norm and, consequently, with the problems of the general aesthetics.

2

Foundations of a structural analysis of the aesthetic norm in the contemporary Czech aesthetics have been laid by Jan Mukařovský thirty nine years ago — let us mention at least his classical work *The Aesthetic Function, Norm and Value as Social Facts*³ which integrates very successfully two approaches (in this respect, his work is a "model-work", indeed): a conception of the general aesthetic structuralism with a sociological approach. Mukařovský's aesthetic axiology, of course, has been developing along with the conception of the aesthetic norm as documented by other papers from the 1930s and 1940s. The original conception has been subject to considerable amendations here and there, the initial principles, however, being kept all the time unaltered. A series of ingenious and detailed concretizations of general theorems concerning the norm also appeared, as, *e. g.*, *The Aesthetics of Language*, original published

³ J. Mukařovský, *Eestetická funkce, norma a hodnota jako sociální fakty*, Prague 1936 (further abbr. AEFNV).

in the review of the Prague structuralist school "Slovo a Slovesnost" ("Word and Literature", 1940)⁴. Mukařovský's conception may be developed directly by contemporary structural investigations of the aesthetic norm, for instance by giving more precision to the conception itself or by its extending and further elaboration what presumes exploiting new procedures and an exploration of the new branches of sciences. So it is possible to define, at least approximately, the task facing the contemporary structural — or, more precisely, neostructural — conception of the aesthetic norm, carrying on systematically and critically with the work originated by Jan Mukařovský. In these prolegomena, to be sure, we set before us only partial and much less pretentious goals.

With regard to an analysis of the aesthetic norm, Mukařovský's paper *The Aesthetic Function, Norm and Value* is of constitutive importance, indeed. An investigation of norm was not isolated in this paper; on the contrary, it was treated in organic correlation with the problems of the aesthetic function and the aesthetic value. In Mukařovský's opinion, the *function* is the point of departure, the regulative *norm* is the intermediate member, the *value* — the goal of these dialectical interconnections. A theory that can be called tentatively by the name of the Czech *dynamic structuralism* bounds together all these three elementary moments by virtue of their internal structural continuity. An evidence of dynamism of the aesthetic norm was given with the same striking ingenuity as the same sort of evidence of the aesthetic function in respect to its bearers as well as to the society which it is functioning in. Thus the static character of the norm as an supposedly invariable instruction, generally binding and obligatory, was conclusively disproved:

If — on the one hand — it has been not so difficult to prove the variability — subject to laws of development of course — of aesthetic function, which is *ex definitione* of energetic nature, it is — on the other hand — more difficult to discover the dynamism of the aesthetic norm that has the nature of a rule, and that claims to be of invariable validity. The function, as a living energy, seems to be predetermined to change the width and direction of its river-bed, whereas the norm — a rule and a measure — seems to be immobile in its very substance⁵.

Let us examine more closely the basic knowledge gained by Jan Mukařovský as a result of his noetic analysis of the aesthetic norm. Its sociology as well as its recourse to the so-called constitutive principles following from the very disposition of man, that is to say, from the anthropological basis, will be left out of our considerations. (By the way: enclosing questions of origin and of pragmatic functions in brackets does not mean

⁴ J. Mukařovský, *Estetika jazyka*, [reprinted in:] *Kapitoly z české poetiky* (Chapters from the Czech Poetics) I, Prague 1948 (abbr. CCP), p. 41–77.

⁵ Mukařovský, AEFNV, p. 24.

an intention to suppress them. In order to be able to take even the first steps in structural analysis it seems necessary to define in advance "what" actually is the object of investigation of sources of the aesthetic norm and its particular application.) The conception of the year 1936 interprets the norm on the whole as a *regulative principle*, related to generally appreciated purposes, and not only to singular ones, given by the arbitrariness of an individual. The constitutive relation is defined as a correlation between the value — in art it is superior to the norm, outside art the other way round — and its regulative, *i. e.* the norm which tends *ex definitione* to general validity, to unlimited obligatoriness; for it is to be applied as a measure in all relevant instances subject to it. In general, the value is regulated, stabilized by the norm. The sceptical negation of existence of the norm on the whole, and its dogmatic conversion into unconditionally obligatory instructions was surpassed by Mukařovský's conception of regulative power of the norm not as a sort of one-way pressure emanating from "measure" and subduing the "measured" entirely. On the contrary — Mukařovský disintegrates the surface of the empirical, phenomenal image in order to find out below it a contradictory, two-way motion in a "loop", *i. e.* a dynamic dialectical contradiction stimulating the evolution, a contradiction between the tendency towards unlimited obligatoriness of the norm on the one hand and the negation of its unconditional validity on the other. Behind the tendency towards violating the norm there is a permanent changeability of the aesthetic aspect by means of which the static character of general rules is permanently negated:

Although the norm tends to unconditional obligatoriness, it is never able to reach the validity of a natural law — otherwise it would turn into a natural law itself and cease to be a norm as such. If, *e.g.*, it would be impossible for a human being to get beyond boundaries of the absolute rhythm, as it is impossible for his sight to perceive the infra-red and ultra-violet rays, then rhythm would cease to be a norm that requires its own fulfilment, but that allows at the same time not to be satisfied, and it would become a law of human disposition, which is being observed necessarily and unconsciously. Thus the norm — through tending to unlimited validity — limits itself at the same time by this very tendency. The norm may not only be violated, but it is even possible to imagine a parallelism of two or more concurring norms that are able to be applied simultaneously on the same particular instances and that measure the same value — and in practice this is very often the case. So the norm is based on the fundamental dialectical antinomy between its unconditional validity and merely regulative, may even orientative potency which implies the possibility of its violation⁶.

The aesthetic norm — differing in a specific way from other norms — tends to that pole where its dynamic orientative potency is in action, leading to deviation from general rules or even to their negation (either

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

partial or total). Consequently, the tendency towards violations, towards deformations is an intrinsic one. According to Mukařovský, the most proper application of a norm in artistic creation occurs usually in the process of its continuous violation⁷. Such is the peculiar "gravitation" of the aesthetic norm which is also subject to the general antinomy of obligatoriness and non-observance at the same time. The norm, being applied in the field of art, reveals itself as a very changeable regulative factor, which might be documented, for instance, by the history of artistic creation: alternation of period when the observation of the norm is obligatory with periods of its radical violation can serve as a good example. Nevertheless, a claim to its obligatory validity is the "background" where the notion of "negations" of the aesthetic norm take place — they become one of the chief means of the living act of functioning, *i. e.* the mean of actualization. In this respect, of course, the merely temporal changeability of the norm is no specific thing, it is shared by the aesthetic norm with other norms, *e. g.*, with linguistic and the legal norms, as demonstrated by Mukařovský. (These extra-aesthetic norms, however, are much stable, "conservative" by the very nature of theirs.) Different impulses to shifts, transformations, or even to negation of the norms arise here from the process of "concretization" of the norms, or, to put it differently, in the course of their *application* when the norm (frequently being expressed by an abstract system of codified rules and "laws") has to change itself, literally to transsubstantiate itself, while being applied to the concrete material, *i. e.* to what is "subject to the norm". A special position of the aesthetic norm results from the fact that its application reveals deliberately — stripped to the buff — the dynamism of changes, attracting attention to them in a very striking manner:

A work of art is always a non-adequate application of the aesthetic norm, that is to say, it violates its state hitherto reached not out of gratuitous necessity, but by design and therefore is the violation usually very sharp. The norm is being broken all the time without intermission⁸.

So far Jan Mukařovský⁹.

Up to this point we have been concerned in the aesthetic norm and its interpretation in the quoted paper of Jna Mukařovský; we did not attempt, however, to analyze it any closer from the notional point of view, indeed. Provisionally we should only like to rise some further questions that, after all, are more or less openly implied or suggested in *The Aesthetic Function, Norm and Value* already, Mukařovský's de-

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁹ General interpretation of the aesthetic norm, which our considerations are based on, cf. AEFNV, p. 26–32.

definition does not provide us with a completely unambiguous delimitation of what is the aesthetic norm proper in the narrower and rigorous sense of the word. It is obvious that there must exist a borderline between the norm as a structure *sui generis* and those phenomena that belong, by their own nature, simply to the sphere of heterogeneous phenomena — either to the genetic conditions and determinants of the norm or to the real consequences of its functioning. Thus it is necessary to draw line between the sphere of the *norms proper* (the genuine norms) and all what is *not identical* with them, though the latter would include their most immediate preconditions on the one hand and the direct results of their applications on the other hand. It holds good for any norm, whether aesthetic or extra-aesthetic. There is another distinction to be mentioned — useful both for theory and for practice, indeed — namely the distinction between an energetic source of the norm-constituting process, which is identical with the aesthetic norm “itself”, and that norm which is *ex post* formulated *explicite* as a rule and which occurs in the form of a *normative sentence*. (Such sentence can be seen in a technological formulary-book or in an aesthetic theory, an individual poetics or an ideology of art in general, in codified opinions of critics and perceivers, *etc.*) In 1936 Mukařovský treats the aesthetic norm in an ambiguous way: on the one hand as a dialectical regulative affecting objects of art, on the other hand — and simultaneously — as a realized “norm”, contained in a work of art and created by its virtue. As a matter of fact, both meanings of the term “aesthetic norm” mentioned above were not distinguished one of another distinctly, they intermingled one with another, and the particular meaning became explicit only owing to the context. And so two different things stand side by side: a norm (rule) that is to be applied to any particular instance subject to it, and a definition of a work of art parallel to it both a special application of this aesthetic norm and as a violation of it at the same time. On the other hand, the same “norm” — as to its verbal designation at least — occurs in another mode of existing at the same time, being created by the very structure of a work of art becoming literally its *component*. In one case an artistic creation both violates and observes the aesthetic norm: so it stands beside and against it, it adopts a specific relation to it. In another case the creation actually *produces* a “norm” from itself, especially in the event of a vigorous, great artistic deed which has the property that after a time the structure of such a work of art

can be decomposed into individual detailed norms that are applicable without any harm even outside the range of the structure from which they have originated, nay even outside the range of art in general. [...] The high art is a source and a renovator of the aesthetic norms¹⁰.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 33–34.

The question is that it is hardly possible to operate with diffuse, not unambiguously differentiated meanings of two aesthetic norms, if one of them should have the meaning of a "general rule" applied to its particular object (*i. e.* a work of art) on the one hand and of a norm-creating component within the artistic object, which is some instance considered to be a "source" of norms on the other hand.

We do not believe, however, that the structural analysis consists only in the differentiation mentioned above, it also includes another important difference, namely the distinction between delimitation of the aesthetic norm (N^e) as an energetic regulative principle (N_{imp}^e — *norm-impulse*) and its objectification in a form that can be described in general as instruction (N_{instr}^e — *norm-instruction*), or, to put it differently, in a rule fixed in verbal message that has, from the logical point of view, the form of normative sentences. In Mukařovský's paper *The Aesthetic Function, Norm and Value* of 1936 it is possible to reveal the rudimentary form of mentioned difference, which was only suggested there but not developed and thoroughly discussed. The aesthetic norm was presented there as a sort of rule with a claim of being dynamically variable; such should be the nature of a rule. To be sure, at the end of the Chapter II Jan Mukařovský refuses the conception of the aesthetic norm as a mere *a priori* rule which would measure conditions of the aesthetic pleasure with mechanical exactness and which would establish their optimal state. For that reason he conceives the initial form of a norm energetically: according to Mukařovský, it is

a living energy that, in spite of all multiformity of its manifestations — just through this very multiformity — organizes the realm of the aesthetic phenomena and indicates the direction of its development¹¹.

And that indicated the direction of further and more exact interpretation at least, the evidence of which is Mukařovský's contribution to the 9th International Congress of Philosophy; the contribution was concerned especially about the aesthetic norm, developing further the fundamental noetic and sociologic ideas already formulated in his paper concerning the aesthetic function, norm and value, published earlier in the pamphlet form.

The lecture *La Norme esthétique* appeared in 1937, and even the short space of time between appearing of the two quoted axiological papers was long enough to be a convincing evidence of integration and elaboration of the conception. Already in the opening paragraphs of that contribution (published in French) Mukařovský not only emphasizes the energetic nature of the aesthetic norm, but also draws a sharp dividing

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

line between the non-codified and codified norm. This clear distinction between what may be called norm-impulse and norm-instruction was partly pre-suggested especially in *The Aesthetic Function, Norm and Value* of 1936 — as discussed above — and two years earlier in an extensive paper *General Principles and Development of the Contemporary Czech Verse* of 1934¹². In these papers Jan Mukařovský faced both the problem of the so-called energetic character of the aesthetic norm and the problem of objectification of the norm, though he did not draw all conclusions for his general theory. In his analytical versological studies of 1934, however, while investigating the metrics, Jan Mukařovský introduced the concept of “metrical impulse” borrowed from the Soviet theoretician Tomashevsky; Mukařovský himself interprets this concept as an energetic conception of the metrical norm. So there has appeared the first shape of the relation between a norm generalized into a rule and a “norm-creating” stimulus of the rule, provisionally limited to a special field of poetic rhythm and its metrical fixation.

In his contribution to the 9th Congress of Philosophy Mukařovský drew final consequences from his conception of the aesthetic function as a dynamic power and of the aesthetic norm as a regulating factor that organizes materialization of the function. The concept of the norm cannot be separated from the concept of the function. That is why the norm, by arranging and regulating activity of the function that is just being manifested, has the “energetic” character also¹³. Of course, in this case it is explicit that it is a question of norm in the narrower, strict sense of the word, that it is a question of the “primary aspect” that is related to the non-codified norm, not fixed in the linguistic code. This norm-impulse should not be identified with the so-called *rule* which is a result of codification and generalization of the norm-impulse and by means of which the norm brought directly or indirectly into context with a system of other norms-rules. It follows that according to this interpretation a codified norm that is in contrast to a non-codified norm is a rule expressed in words. The difference between both modes of norms may be also described in other ways, in other terms that would follow up with Mukařovský's definition of differentiation. Norm *in actu* is essentially norm-creating *intention*, norm-impulse or center of stimulation which controls its own objectification fixed in a message; this *communicatum* (message) takes

¹² J. Mukařovský, *Obecné zásady a vývoj novočeského verše*, originally appeared in *Československá vlastivěda (Czechoslovak National Encyclopaedia)*, vol. III: *Jazyk (Language)*, Prague 1934, reprinted in CCP II, p. 9–90.

¹³ J. Mukařovský, *La Norme esthétique*, [in:] *Travaux du IX^e Congrès international de philosophie*, vol. XII: *La Valeur; Les Normes et la Réalité*, III^e partie, Paris 1937, p. 72.

necessarily the shape of verbal expression (and generalization, too) with the appellative function. That is to say, the *norm-impulse* (N_{imp}^e) has its designation in the form of the *norm-instruction* (N_{instr}^e). On the one hand, norm-instruction "means" its determining stimulus (norm-impulse), on the other hand, it expresses "what ought to be (or not to be)", or, generally speaking, what is to happen to a thing to the application of a norm with regard to an aspect of any kind (as art is concerned, to the semantic, formal material aspect, etc.).

3

Nevertheless, let us return shortly to the general definition of the norm from a point of view that is, according to Mukařovský, explicitly of primary importance: the non-codified aesthetic norm — our term: N_{imp}^e . — has been defined as "a regulative principle of energetic nature". Its presence and functioning is felt by an acting individual as a sort of inhibition confining the freedom of his actions; on the other hand, to an evaluating subject, N_{imp}^e seems to be a power regulating the judgment¹⁴. From what has been said we may conclude that, according to Mukařovský, the norm in its authentic, original energetic mode is *prius*. Because of this internal disposition it is not only subject to continual change in the course of its application, but also it functions as an initial dynamic stimulus to the codification in a rule N_{instr}^e , which might be derived *posterius*. According to a statement of Jan Mukařovský, norm is rather energy than rule as to its substance; either formulated or not expressed, applied either consciously or unconsciously¹⁵. Naturally, it is true especially as concerns the aesthetic norm proper (N_{imp}^e). From this point of view there is a problem — already mentioned in concise form — which seems to be rather interesting: what about the existence of "norms" within the structure of a work of art? By the way, Jan Mukařovský rather obscured the problem of double existence of N^e (within and without a work of art) having emphasized, however, the difference between the non-codified norms (N_{imp}^e) and the codified ones (N_{instr}^e). Accepting in this lecture *La Norme esthétique* the mode of a "norm within a work of art" without further specification, he left the problem of structural relation between the norm-impulses "within" and "without" a work of art open, unsolved. Certain ambiguity of existence of N_{imp}^e had been, consequently, transposed from *The Aesthetic Function, Norm and Value* into a special paper of 1937 about the aesthetic norm. Yet is a norm-impulse identical with its appli-

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

cation, is the *normans* identical with the *normatum*? It seems not easy to answer this question in the affirmative. For there is, no doubt, a basic ontological distinction between the norm-impulse and its object, *i.e.* structure of art, analogically as between, *e.g.*, an ethical norm and the conduct of man, between *intentionality* (*i.e.* direction towards "what ought to be or not to be") and *factuality* (matter-of-factness) of the datum ("what there is").

Now the problem becomes more complex because of further differentiation between "poetic" and "aesthetic" norms; anyway the differentiation has, no doubt, its own *raison d'être*. Taking F. X. Šalda as his initial basis, Mukařovský considers that the "maturing, growing up" of a work of art that becomes a model-work (= a set of poetic norms) is a process in the course of which the original contradictions of the artistic structure (as a consequence of discovering character, originality, uniqueness of structure) are brought into equilibrium and are accommodated. Disagreements turn into agreements so that the work of art seems to be "analyzable", that is to say, the works of art seem to be set of aesthetic norms, widely applicable and inviting to be followed after. From the point of view of the general structural theory of norm it is important to differ — as discussed above — between the existence of the "poetic norm" — in broader sense the so-called "artistic norm" in general ($N^{art.}$) — and the existence of the aesthetic norm (N^e). The former is inseparably connected with a tense state of equilibrium between uniqueness and general validity, which penetrate through the whole work of art, being integrated by the aesthetic value. That is why the "artistic norm" ($N^{art.}$) is comparatively more individualized, more specific and, consequently, far from being as general as the other norm N^e , which is much less specific in its intentionality, what results in more overall character as regards claims for validity. Under the overall character is understood comparatively wide radius of possibilities of application which relates to broader range including very many different instances. $N^{art.}$ is a set of instances subject to application, as to its extent this set is smaller; the exploitation or imitation of the original artistic methods is in the first place limited by the very fact that they are connected with a particular creative individuality; only by their acceptance and extension the structure disintegrates and the authentic " $N^{art.}$ s" — "artistic norms" — grow into more easily accessible and applied N^e by the way of transposition into corresponding generalizations, provided that we accept the interpretation of Jan Mukařovský.

The proper concretization of the aesthetic norm as well as both forms of its $N_{imp.}^e$, $N_{instr.}^e$ takes place wherever the norm is being materialized, or, to put in other words, "fulfilled". It applies to the particular material —

in our case to the works of art — which is subject to the normative process; the result of the process is — from a general point of view — the *norm-bound object* (*nO*). For this reason it is also necessary to differentiate consequently between the concept of the aesthetic and the so-called “artistic” (“poetic”) norm. The former belongs to the realm of “what ought to be”, the latter to the realm of “what there is”, as a real model of course. Such is the difference of *Seinsweise*, mode of existing of the *normans* and the *normatum*. In the first sphere appear — either non-expressed or expressed — the attitudes with the appellative and regulative function; they are essentially of intentional character and they are marked by their “tendency towards...” In the other sphere N_{imp}^e and N_{instr}^e are dialectically negated by their own materialization itself. The concept of the aesthetic norm does not coincide with the concept (pseudo-concept) of the so-called “artistic norm” because either of them relate to heterogeneous objectivities. The aesthetic norm (N^e) is founded *intentionally*, “artistic norm” ($N^{art.}$) exists on a quite different bearer, so to say *realiter*. In the former case we give the name of a norm to a certain regulative aiming, directing, codified or non-codified, in the latter case to a certain *component* of the work of art, *i.e.* to the results of the creative process that are not necessarily bound to be *ex definitione* “norms” in the narrower sense at all — it is not the matter of an explicit appeal. That is to say that in the process of passing from N^e to $N^{art.}$ even the concept of the norm itself becomes something different. As a matter of fact, *only* N^e is a norm in the narrower and stricter sense of the word, whereas the “artistic norm” has a transferred meaning, since this term designates only a *real model* ($M^{art.}$)¹⁶, *das Vorbild*. (It does not seem possible to maintain the

¹⁶ It was this conception of mine which served as a starting point for T. Kuklinková (*Hľadanie meradiel estetickéj hodnoty* [In the Search for Measures of the Aesthetic Value], Bratislava 1971), who differentiates what has been termed the norms-things and the generalized norms-images, which appear as “subjective” mental measures, or as impulses, instructions, *etc.*, if you like. T. Kuklinková refers here and elsewhere (*op. cit.*, p. 134–135, and footnotes 27 and 28) to my study *Príspevek ke strukturálnej teórii estetické normy* (A Contribution to the Structural Theory of the Aesthetic Norm), “Estetika” (Aesthetics) III, 1966, p. 300–318. I have demonstrated, however, that the artistic artifact in itself is not a norm in the strict sense of this word, and, consequently, it is not a norm-thing either. It is a real model what is in question here, which is to be differentiated from both the codified and non-codified aesthetic norm. To use the term “norms” in this context would mean to use improper way of speaking, to use the word in a transferred, loose and misleading sense. Therefore it is advisable to correct also the statement that what has been termed norm-thing is one of “forms of existence” of the aesthetic norms. We should not forget that the substantial meaning of real models (the artistic structures proper) consists in the fact that they only primarily stimulate creation of norms, and that they are not identical with them in the literal sense of the word. Otherwise the norms *in imagine* would be derived from a kind

opinion that N_{imp}^e and N_{instr}^e are the "models" of the sort.) The relation between N^e and $M^{art.}$ ($N^{art.}$) might be useful among other for further analysis of the phenomenon which is generally treated as change, non-observance or negation of the norm. This feature has been pointed out by Jan Mukařovský, too: generally speaking, any norm has its temporal variability already while being applied and adapted to new tasks. Therefore even the aesthetic norms undergo transformations in the process of their application. Nevertheless this transformations do not proceed in such an invisible and slow way as the transformations of the linguistic norms. The aesthetic norms change apparently, in a wide range — in art very strikingly, in a "make-it-strange" way. Now we are able to give the reasons for this idea more exactly, from the standpoint of the structural mechanism of genesis of $M^{art.}$. Transition from N^e to $M^{art.}$ is — as established already — a leap into a new sphere of the mode of existing of normativity. And this is an argument for the statement that it is not possible to equate the heterogeneous character of N^e on the one hand with $M^{art.}$ on the other. There subsists no symmetric assignation in the sense of simple univocal correspondence between $M^{art.}$ and N^e and its modes, there is no true "mapping" into each other. Their relation is far from being one of univocal correspondence. On the contrary — violating of the norm as a whole, discussed above, is intensified by the mere fact that $M^{art.}$ as a "model" has its substratum not only in the intentional attitudes and their codificates, but also in the real artifacts and the authors' individualities which involve themselves into the process of creation and introduce elements of uniqueness, originality into the work of art, elements of the unforeseen and unrepeatable — remaining all the same adherent to the contemporary aesthetic norms and norms of taste (either in the positive form, obeying the norms, or in the negative form, e.g., negating them vehemently).

4

Strict distinguishing between the *normans* and the *normatum* results in an initial — though simplified — schema, which demonstrates *grosso modo* functioning and differentiation of the normative process as a whole and of its constituent parts. Now there arises an opportunity here to conceive the binary apposition of the *normans* and the *normatum* as a specific analogy between the "signifier" and "signified", the "expression"

of norms *in rebus*, which would mean both axiological reism and parthenogenesis of norms (i.e., that the aesthetic norms would arise only from norms... *omnis norma e norma*). What I greatly appreciate in Kuklinková, however, is the fact that she recognizes the conceptual differentiation, and that she tries to extend it further.

(*Ex*) and the "content" (*Co*) according to Roland Barthes, as special instances of the asymmetric dualism of the linguistic sign, defined by Serge Karcevsky¹⁷. It will only confirm from a different point of view and on the basis of recent knowledge results of the structural investigation of genesis and application of the aesthetic norm. Let us state in general terms at first that the signifier and the signified are not assigned to each other in a symmetrical manner as two fitting figures: one signifier may be assigned to a very variable class of its signified, and the other way round, for a signified there is necessary to take into account several possibilities of designation, i.e. there is possibility of several signifiers. Whenever the signifier is positively present, also the act of denomination is present — at times only in inchoate form — what is to be understood in a broader sense here. On the one hand the formulated N_{instr}^e belongs indubitably to such an *act of denomination* — in this case it has the form of application — it fixes N_{imp}^e , i.e. its "content"; on the other hand in this manner N_{instr}^e appears in the relation to the norm-bound aesthetic components (*nE*) — which concerns intermediately N_{imp}^e , too. The act of denomination as well as the act of application — the latter being compared with the former — are very complex processes; they should not be understood as mechanical univocal assignation of designations and regulatives (ready once for all) to a solid and fixed set of designated and regulated objects:

In the course of an act of denomination a single word is not being related to a single thing, but always *the whole* semantic system of language is confronted with *the whole* system of things reflected in human mind also in the shape of meanings which are attracted to, and repulsed from, each other by different relations. Between the range of language and the world of things-meanings there is constant state of tension discharging in a continuous series of repeated acts of denomination. Every denomination is situated at the point of intersection of two possibilities: first, one of several or many words for one thing is selected (selection from synonyms), at the same time, however, there is also selection of one thing of several or many things which can be expressed by the word in question (selection from homonyms, i.e. different semantic abilities of the same word-form). Only such denomination that fully satisfied both aspects — synonymic as well as homonymic — seems to be natural and necessary for the particular thing in the particular situation (Jan Mukařovský, *Genesis of Meaning in the Poetry of Mácha*, 1938; the author follows here the opinions of Karcevsky)¹⁸.

Now it is only necessary to substitute for "words" — let us say — the norm-instructions and for "things" the norm-bound aesthetic components carried by the work of art to transpose the knowledge about the

¹⁷ S. Karčevský, *Du dualisme asymétrique du signe linguistique*, [in:] *Travaux du Cercle linguistique de Prague*, vol. I: *Mélanges linguistiques dédiés au Premier Congrès des philologues slaves*, Prague 1929, pp. 88, 93.

¹⁸ J. Mukařovský, *Genetika smyslu v Máchově poesii*, CCP III, p. 245.

dynamic tension and the so-called asymmetry, functioning in the act of denomination, into the aesthetic analysis of the relation between the *normans* and the *normatum*. It will confirm from another then genetic aspect the structural mechanism on non-observance, negation of the aesthetic norm, being one part of its application. The application is nothing else than transition from the "denomination" to the "thing", or, to put it more correctly, from the *normans* to the *normatum* (the object) — $N^e \rightarrow nE$ — and it is subject to the asymmetric dualism in the relation of both these levels¹⁹.

O NIEKTÓRYCH STRUKTURALNYCH I SEMANTYCZNYCH PROBLEMACH W TEORII NORMY ESTETYCZNEJ JANA MUKAŘOVSKIEGO

STRESZCZENIE

Podstawy analizy normy estetycznej w czeskiej estetyce współczesnej i wiedzy o literaturze stworzył Jan Mukařovský swymi pracami aksjologicznymi z lat trzydziestych. Normę estetyczną w samej jej istocie rozumiał jako zasadę regulującą, przy czym to szczególne usytuowanie normy estetycznej wśród innych norm polega na tym, iż każda aplikacja normy estetycznej stwarza swoistą podstawę pod niestanną zmienność normy. Wieloznaczne rozumienie normy estetycznej wymaga wszakże specjalnej analizy semantycznej w celu lepszego odróżnienia różnorodnych aspektów lub modusów samej normy; są to specyficzne zjawiska w procesie normowania i ich odbicie w obiekcie estetycznym (czyli w dziele sztuki).

Trzeba więc wyróżnić normę estetyczną (N^e) w wąskim rozumieniu i jej modusy, tj. normę-impuls ($N^e \text{imp.}$), oraz jej językowe fiksacje, tj. normę-instrukcję ($N^e \text{instr.}$), co odpowiada rozróżnieniu między normą niekodyfikowaną a kodyfikowaną (wg terminologii Mukařovskiego). Dalsze podstawowe odróżnienie dotyczy dziedziny normującego (norma a proces normowania) oraz obszaru normowanego (tj. wpływu normy na jej przedmiot). Dzieło jako nosiciel wartości estetycznych może stać się „wzorcowym” zarówno dla odbiorcy, jak i dla twórcy. Tak powstaje wzór artystyczny, „model” ($M^{\text{art.}}$), który wszakże odznacza się innymi walorami ontologicznymi niż N^e i jej modyfikacje. Przy aplikacji (zastosowaniu) N^e główną rolę odgrywa żywa norma-impuls ($N^e \text{imp.}$). Jest to dynamiczna („energetyczna” zasada regulująca; skodyfikowana postać normy pełni funkcje informacji pośredniczącej (między twórcą a odbiorcą) oraz stabilizującej (w strefie dzieła sztuki). Modus $N^e \text{imp.}$ pozwala przeto uznać za „konkretną” zjawiskową postać N^e , natomiast jej fiksacje w kodzie językowym ($N^e \text{instr.}$) za postać „abstrakcyjną”. Uogólnieniem w obrębie tzw. twierdzeń normatywnych (albo w zbiorze tego rodzaju twierdzeń) są podporządkowane im efekty doświadczeń, mocno dynamiczne, a przy tym zmienne, zindywidualizowane odcienie treści funkcjonujące w normie — impulsie. Norma-instrukcja pełni przeto funkcję określającą: ustala ona normę-impuls oraz jej pochodne będące przedmiotem oznaczania.

¹⁹ On the new structural analysis of the aesthetic norm and its semiological problems cf. O. Sus, *O strukturním rozboru estetické normy a o dynamice jejího vzniku a aplikace* (On the Structural Analysis of the Aesthetic Norm and on the Dynamics of Its Origin and Application), „Česká Literatura” [The Czech Literature] XV, 1967, p. 220–231.

Przy aplikacji N^e oraz jej poszczególnych modusów (przy tzw. realizacji normy) w strukturze artystycznej w istocie rzeczy zmienia się i samo pojęcie normy. Normą właściwą w ścisłym, wąskim znaczeniu tego słowa jest N^e jako impuls i instrukcja. Gdy mówi się o dziele jako o nosicielu tzw. „norm artystycznych” ($N^{art.}$), używa się tu niewłaściwego, przenośnego określenia „norma”. W istocie rzeczy chodzi tu o realny wzór artystyczny, o model ($M^{art.}$), posiadający inny status ontologiczny niż norma właściwa. Normy należą do kategorii zjawisk intencjonalnych, do zakresu „tego, co ma zaistnieć”, natomiast gotowe dzieło — wzór ma swą faktyczną egzystencję, należy do zakresu „tego, co jest”. Nie możemy więc uznać za łączliwe lub rozłączne to, co z jednej strony istnieje i funkcjonuje jako N^e , z drugiej zaś $M^{art.}$. Między nimi egzystuje związek symetryczny, zgodnie z którym wzór artystyczny („norma artystyczna”) odpowiada jednoznacznie N^e (tj. normie estetycznej oraz jej modusom) i wiernie ją spełnia.

Jeśli w sposób naukowo uzasadniony odróżnimy zjawiska „normujące” (*normanus*) od „normowanych” (*normatum*), otrzymamy podstawowy schemat obejmujący przy najmniej *grosso modo* zewnętrzne i wewnętrzne dyferencjacje procesu normatywnego i jego głównych składników. W tym przypadku ciąg „normującego” i „normowanego” można ująć jako szczególny przejaw paralelny z asymetrycznym dualizmem znaku językowego w rozumieniu S. Karčevskiego. Jedna norma (*normans*) może znaleźć swe właściwe odzwierciedlenie w różnych, odmiennych artefaktach (w sferze *normatum*), gdzie po drugiej stronie wynik procesu normującego (obiekt normowany, *nO*) może być odniesiony równocześnie do rozmaitych norm N^e .

Trzeba więc, aby strukturalna teoria normy estetycznej (wyłożona w dziele J. Mukařovskiego) doprowadziła do żywego, dynamicznego ujmowania normy przy zjawiskach genezy, funkcjonowania i realizacji (w tzw. procesie normatywnym) oraz umożliwiła prawidłową analizę semantyczną dotychczasowej terminologii. Pozornie jednolita i niepodzielna norma estetyczna ukaże się wówczas jako rzeczywisty i produktywny zbiór (struktura) własnych inherentnych modusów i opozycji.

Przełożył Jan Trzynadłowski