

REVIEWS

Maria GOLASZEWSKA, *Estetyka rzeczywistosci*, Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, Warszawa 1984, 251 pp.

Often life itself appears to be colourless and meaningless. Man's ability to pattern a life of his choice depends on his attitude towards life as instanced by biographies of well-known people. It is a process of mutual transformation that man transforms himself into a creative force. Through his attitude towards life man transforms the world in which he lives. Art in effect helps man in such a process of transformation by pointing towards various patterns of lived experiences. This these of 'Estetyka rzeczywistosci' is both for a general reading and for a scholarly discussion.

Contemplating on the structures of such an experience the author argues that if the meaning of life were to be conditional by the occurrence of a series of pre-reflective chance events then the meaning of life could not be coherent: the fact of existence without any justifications or a totally anonymous existence would only be meaningless. However individual's hermeneutic stance seems to be so natural that one invests these pre-reflective events with coherency and sense. On a self-conscious level, that is to say as an unarticulated mode, such a sense confirming activity assumes a mythologising attitude when man postulates an all-embracing transcendental power that decides his destiny. In such an attitude life's meaning would not be more than a mere chance existence. Such a meaning is not ordered logically and lacks freedom of choice. In a more consistent manner when the meaning of life and reality are understood as the continuation of relatively isolated events and as organically interrelated, the fatalistic and deterministic ideas of life give way for a structural sense of life.

Structuralists (post-structuralists) views like that of Lévi-Strauss and Barthes are cited. For Lévi-Strauss however no distinction exists between the pre-cultural and the civilised societies according to his 'The Savage Mind'. Prof. Golaszewska discerns types of structures and observes a distinction between pre-reflective and the reflective to convey the aesthetics of reality. For Barthes "meaning (which is always constituted rather than found) (Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative" in *Image, Music Text*, transl. S. Heath, New York, 1977, p. 79) for "reality" (which is always found rather than constituted)" should not be mistaken. Prof. Golaszewska however like Lévi-Strauss sets out the fundamental binary relations to discern the structures of the aesthetic sense and provides certain principles to relate the projective structures i.e., conceptual ideas in the mind of the observer or interpreter with the objective structure, as very often found in symbolical drawings like a geometrical figure in perspective. Thus the author renders 'structures' factual, in a sense where it is taken to be the meaning both as constituted and as found, unlike Barthes. This is however a philosophical point of dispute among semioticians, hermeneutists, phenomenologists and of course structuralists, when each of them elaborate a particular philosophy of mind and language.

Various senses of structures are distinguished such as scientific structure as non-artistic and structures created artistically which are characterised by their appeal to 'wholeness', 'transformation' effected by different styles, conventions and other artistic ways of expressions. The artistic structures are 'unique' bearing

the style of the individual artist whereas the scientific structures are characterised by their theoretical models and their 'transformations' are effected by their methodological investigations. The creativity of scientific structures unlike the artistic ones seek harmony between theory and reality i.e., harmony between logical and natural orders of being. On the other hand mythological structures are determined by a hybrid of fiction and history as for example, Nazism. At the unconscious level mythologization like belief in astrology takes place. However, despite the differences among the structures of science, art and myths the ways of patterning the organic unity and the interrelatedness of parts as 'whole' proceed according to certain principles such as rhythm, symmetry and proportion. Such a principle could be discerned not only in the phenomenon of space and time but also in the conceptual ideas which play a significant role in literature, music and painting deciding functionally particular style and spirit of each epoch. Likewise harmony, enrichment, tension, duration and spatial distantiating are other principles that operate on binary opposition in the schematic formation of structures. A discussion on the varieties of structural sense of space and conceptualisation is followed up to indicate the basic binary opposition involved in these structured senses.

With this structural analysis the author makes an effort to relate the discerned structures of art to existence. Existence of art is conceived to be real, ideal as well as intentional, as that which reflects reality in various ways. Representation of the real in art in the literary work of art in particular is discussed. The relationship between art and reality is to be discerned in the way art imitates reality, conveys its ambiguity and the way its structural reconstruction interprets and conveys the meaning of life and reality which the modern theater and other mass communication media perform. By discerning the structural sense one could be aesthetically aware of oneself and others as well as of natural events and in fine history.

Contemporary aesthetic theories without depending upon traditional views are still to formulate a viable formula to evaluate modern art and artistic sensibilities. In this context the reflections of the author on the 'structures' of art which the common man discerns in the world of natural relationship and the artist transforms into art deserves a close look at the problems involved in such a view, namely, how structures relate themselves to facts, and render them meaningful. In other words how structures articulate the ways in which 'Life is beautiful' in spite of 'Life' understood in a pessimistic and ironic sense. Prof. Golaszewska to be sure has not argued for pure structuralism which may lead to unqualified idealism without intersubjective communication. It seems the author thinks of these structures as neutral (ontologically ?) that could render life either dreadful or beautiful depending on the way man determines himself by his defining the relationship with his environment. Art in effect provides the patterns of such self-determinations which could depict the dreadful as well as the beautiful and thus it has the capacity to point out the 'structures' of reality. Understood in this sense art trains our psyche and nurses the hope of finding the truth. This analysis of the author probes the possibility of discovering the aesthetic meaning in existence. It combines the structuralist approach with phenomenology of perception and has an interpretative dimension. It strives to put forward the idea how the unconscious structures relate themselves to the conscious expressions in human creations.