

STEFAN MORAWSKI

## *Art and Obscenity*

### I

IN EXPLORING the relationship between art and obscenity it is easy to stray into a whole labyrinth of disconnected issues. The problem lends itself to examination from a variety of viewpoints: the purely analytic, the purely pragmatic (the moral, religious, or political angle, for example), or a combination of the two when it is hoped that theoretical inquiry will yield guidance for a working strategy. Here I have chosen for the path of analysis, but even this is far from being clear-cut since there are a number of avenues to choose from: sociology (or, in broader terms, culturology), psychology, ethics, aesthetics. Finally, this field can be observed from a wider perspective, not so much scientific in the strict sense as philosophical. It seems essential, therefore, since this is to be an essay and not a book, to narrow the subject, define our point of departure, and clearly specify the questions to be asked. Thus, my frame of reference is aesthetics and, accordingly, the problem of art and obscenity interests me primarily in terms of the structure of art-works. The questions involved in a field of inquiry so limited may be posed as follows: 1) can art be pornographic or, in other words, is the aesthetic phenomenon compatible with those products of culture commonly branded as filth? 2) Even if the answer is

no, can obscenity arise in art and, if so, what place does it occupy in the artistic structure as a whole? These questions are of a structural nature, but to answer them we must also investigate the genesis and function of the views which maintain there is such a thing as pornography, a designation, be it noted, often applied to objects which do not, from the aesthetic point of view, admit of qualification as obscene. Our first task, then, must be to clarify the two key concepts used in the title of this essay, which, according to some, may be complementary and, according to others, are mutually exclusive. Obscenity and pornography, let me add, are used here as synonymous terms. Though obscenity usually is understood in a larger sense, comprising also description of acts which do not necessarily arouse sexual desires (for instance, defecation) or any usage of words which are dirty but not leading directly to sexual associations, I do not wish, for the purpose of this essay, to draw this distinction. Pornography is undoubtedly obscene, and what shall interest us as obscene will be only of pornographic character.

### II

Art can be defined in various ways. Since a discussion of this problem and the establishment of my own position are beyond the scope of this essay, let me briefly recapitulate the principles which readers familiar with my earlier works will have seen argued in full elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> In my view, we should reject the two extreme approaches which have persistently recurred

STEFAN MORAWSKI, *professor of aesthetics at the University of Warsaw, Poland, taught at the University of California, Berkeley, Summer, 1966. He has published many works on aesthetics in Polish and English.*

in the history of aesthetics, namely, the absolutism which maintains that art is a supra-historical phenomenon and as such has to fulfill certain a priori conditions, and the relativism which holds that the list of qualities considered definitive of art is inexhaustible since different peoples, indeed different individuals, have taken a different view of the extent and substance of artistic phenomena at different periods of history. I think it more reasonable to avoid either of these poles and look for certain constants arising out of the natural dispositions of the human race and the accumulated social and cultural experience of mankind. Artistic values have emerged in a historical process of gradual detachment from a tissue of magico-religious phenomena, informational or purely recreational pursuits, and technico-productive endeavors. Eventually they became discrete and independent, as cohesive structures furnished either with purely sensory elements or with mimetic or functional features. At the same time, each of these more or less complex structures may contain additional, specific values denoted by the term *expression*. The fundamental value of art, and so its constituent element, is thus what Gestaltists call a "pregnant" structure. But artistic values are of many kinds: the purely formal, the mimetic (in the representational arts), the functional (in the applied arts), and the expressive. The work of art always recreates some quasi-real world, contrasted with actual objects, but it is also invariably a physical or cultural article. For our purposes it is the mimetic values which form the crucial layer. They are an integral part of superior artistic structures and it is in them that moral, religious, political, philosophical, or other ideas are embodied through representation (modified, of course, by form and the particular pattern of elements) of the reality in which we live. Such ideas have frequently been the salient feature of an artistic structure. We cannot, therefore, exclude the reactions, usually animated, of the public to these ideas, among other things because each work of art is a socio-cultural phenomenon and

not only a strictly aesthetic one. It would be wrongheaded, however, to try to arbitrate on what is or is not a work of art simply on the basis of the nature of the ideas implied by its mimetic values. Equally questionable is the grading of works of art according to the merits of their moral, religious, political ideas. The position to which I adhere might be called structuralist-historical, that is, in the course of historical-cultural processes we note the emergence and establishment of relatively autonomous objects which we qualify as artistic and whose basic values are of course aesthetic. These may be purely formal values but they might equally well be mimetic or functional, or primarily expressive.<sup>2</sup>

Obscenity seems a more straightforward concept since indecency in art or life usually means the same thing to most people. But unambiguity is only apparent. Although the two international conventions on this subject—Paris, May 4, 1910 and Geneva, December 31, 1924—seemed to express the conviction that pornography is readily recognizable, neither offered any clearly phrased definition which would distinguish pornography from art, for example. As will be seen, the problems of definition are hardly less formidable than in the case of art. Let us take a closer look at the conventional notions of pornography. Obscenity might be defined as the representation or suggestion in words or images, with the help of objects, themes, motifs, or situations, of all those elements which belong to the sexual life. I have deliberately cast the definition in such general terms so that it can embrace every kind of socio-cultural stereotype. Questions, then, immediately come to mind: what do we mean by "the sexual life"? Does it refer to displays of nudity, or to descriptions of intercourse, or perhaps to accounts of perversion? Again, where do the limits of obscenity run in different cultural configurations? These are good questions, but before we tackle them let us try to improve our working definition of obscenity. From judicial rulings and notorious acts of censorship it appears that

the touchstone is calculated salacity, that is, deliberate excitement of the sexual imagination. These were the grounds on which Henry Miller's *Sexus* was confiscated in Norway in 1958-9. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was hounded for years on the charge that Lawrence, for depraved purposes, was soliciting readers to follow the example of his characters. The same fate was suffered by *Ulysses*.<sup>3</sup>

There is, however, a more subtle thread running through the court cases. This is the argument that pornography deals with the private side of sex. Thus coitus is private but not kissing, homosexual urges but not teenage love-play, masturbation but not the caresses of husband and wife. The reverse side of this argument is the assertion that the pornographer's handling of sex is vulgar and explicit: explicit because of the naturalistic description, vulgar because of the deliberate inflation of sex to the exclusion of all the other relationships between men and women or human beings in general.

If we adopt these qualifications, we shall mean by obscenity, not the suggestion or representation of erotic motives or situations, but a specific kind of treatment, namely, their exploitation for the purposes of arousing the sex instincts of the reader or spectator with the help of symbols, objects, or scenes of an utterly private nature shown in a vulgar and explicit way. This definition is an advance on the previous one since it lends more substance to the concept. But it, too, raises doubts, since we immediately have to relativize such terms as "arousing the sex instincts," "private," "vulgar." Here we are encroaching on the domain of psychology and social anthropology. It would not be hard to find a host of examples to illustrate that what is a sexual stimulus to some leaves others cold, that the private sphere in French and English civilization is wholly dissimilar, and different again in European culture as a whole from what is recognized as such in Trobriand. The same applies to vulgarity. Behavior which in middle or upper class company would be regarded as shockingly gross is a natural

form of sexual contact among the *lumpen* proletariat. But, despite the undoubtedly relative nature of the concept of obscenity, I think the definition given above can be usefully adopted for our considerations. Psychological and sociological factors do not change the fact that pornography is commonly regarded as flagrant erotic display designed to excite the spectator, reader, or listener. We should, however, remember that the statement "such-and-such a work is obscene" must always be subjected to specific historical and psychological analysis. Otherwise we will not be able to appreciate why, for instance, Judge Lockwood sentenced Oscar Wilde to two years in prison for an offense which for the Greeks of Plato's and Alcibiades' day was a socially approved practice, or why the German parliament at the close of the nineteenth century banned the Venus de Milo while the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries had revered the Venus of Medici as a pure and matchless monument to feminine beauty.

### III

I shall now try to answer the first of the two questions posed at the beginning of this essay. In my view, a work of art is not and cannot be an object of an obscene nature. The mutual exclusiveness of art and obscenity is apparent in the three fundamental aspects in which all artistic phenomena are examined, namely, the genetic, the structural, and the functional. In other words, I take into account both the structure of the work and its creator and audience. But a test of pornographic content cannot be conducted purely on the basis either of the reaction of the audience or of the intention of the artist as explained in some separate text. This is all secondary evidence, whereas the basic criterion, in my contention, is the structure of the work. Identification of a particular work as pornographic, however, can never be reduced simply to a demonstration of its structure. Definition usually depends on a combination of syndromatic elements: either the intention of the artist

or the mode of reception, or at times both, are the controlling check, substantiating the accuracy of the decipherment of its structure. Thus, if the structure is taken as an independent variable, then in the definition of the pornographic quotient of a work here proposed, the intention of the artist and the method of perception act as dependent variables. As a result of the interaction between the independent variable and the dependent variables, we obtain alternative pornographic readings, and works classified in this category can be graded according to whether their interpretation as pornographic is more or less strong. Be it added that this definitional construction has to be devised in relation to a particular historical period, that is, the one in which the work was produced. Any subsequent patterns of perception must be referred back to the original circumstances, to the original context.

Seen thus, the antithesis between art and pornography emphasized a moment ago becomes perfectly clear on all three counts, genetic, structural, and functional: genetic, since it is not the artist's intention to arouse sexual excitement; structural, since the erotic elements of a work are never the chief or dominant values, nor even of equal weight to the aesthetic ones; functional, since the aesthetic experience proper consists precisely in the elimination of a practical, operational attitude involving us in the work of art as if it were a real person or situation. It might be retorted that in primitive art, and not only there, the erotic stimuli obliterate or at least eclipse all others, that throughout the centuries sexual motifs have been embodied in artistic structures in scatological form without being in any way purely secondary elements, and that appreciation of a work of art which sees only its aesthetic values is lopsided, while advocacy of such a response sounds remarkably like aestheticism. I will try to answer these charges and so buttress my own position.

There is no denying that not only in primitive but also in Indian art and at

certain periods of European art (for instance, the fourth century Sicyon school, French Rococo painting, or the *oeuvre* of Felicien Rops) the pursuit of an erotic appeal was very pronounced. But it would be wrong to interpret this unqualifiedly, in each case, as an attempt to arouse sexual excitement. Malinowski emphasized the magico-religious significance of the sexual games and themes in Trobriand folklore which he described in his *Sex Life of the Savages*. These elements served to uphold cultural bonds, to fortify social approval for the acknowledged ideal of beauty in both sexes, and finally to reaffirm ritually the primacy of life over death, of procreation over sterility. In Indian as in African or Brazilian art the erotic intertwines with the religious. We have here, I think, a special mimetic content, special because the mentality and emotional responses, the customs and moral standards of primitive men or others living in a world of specific religious canons incorporate sexual motifs as an organic part of them.<sup>4</sup> With Boucher or Rops the position is different, but here, too, a distinction should be drawn. In the first case, the deliberate stimulation of the sexual imagination appears to have been in harmony with the psycho-social climate prevalent among Boucher's audience, and in addition—which seems to me the crucial point—nudity was for Boucher simply a modish and popular subject which he cultivated for artistic purposes. We can see, then, that it is not only the structure of a work, but also its superstructure (that is, its socio-historical context) which determines its character and its degree of art or obscenity. There is a comparison here with the behavior and acting styles of the Italians which strike the non-Italian as unduly flamboyant but which seem wholly natural to their compatriots.

Rops is another matter, since the purveying of sexual thrills is with him all too transparent. But this problem goes beyond the scope of the questions now under consideration since Rops is a borderline case which requires separate scrutiny. In any case, it is bound up with the second counter-argument concerning the erotic as

a dominant feature of certain artistic structures. If examples are actually to be found of this, then we have to decide whether they are really artistic or at least to what degree. This problem will be discussed in the next section. The third objection has to do with the mode of perception of a work of art. The accusation of aestheticism has already been parried, since under purely aesthetic values we also subsumed mimetic ones and the moral, political, religious, philosophical, or other ideas planted in their tissue. It is obvious that we respond differently to Rembrandt's *Return of the Prodigal Son* than to Mondrian's *Boogie Woogie*, to the Sieneese Madonnas than to Renoir's nudes. We do not read Rabelais' *Gargantua et Pantagruel* or Brantôme's *Dames galantes* in the same way as the novels of Richardson or Dickens. Similar variations appear in the aesthetic experience engendered by the plays of Wycherley and that produced by Goethe or Hugo. But this does not alter the fact that in each case we are reacting to *mimesis*, that is, to a specific quasi-world represented in the work within the limits of its structure. The moment that the ideas plucked from the mimetic fabric loom larger in our response than the structure of the work taken as a whole we pass into the sphere of non-aesthetic experiences of which sex is one. The difference with which I am here concerned was fully grasped by Freud, though he had little reason indeed to accept a condition of the neutralization of the libido. In his theoretical writings on the relationship between art and sex he revealingly classifies aesthetic experiences proper under *Vorlust*. Poetry, like children's games and day-dreaming, gratifies our deepest sexual desires, but the poet not only condenses his material, not only hides the real longings behind symbols, but also to some extent purges these drives of the libido, arranging the psychic contents connected with them into artistic form. This operation releases in us not only enjoyment of the cathartic type but also and above all pleasures of a strictly aesthetic nature.<sup>5</sup>

I regard, therefore, as inconsistent and

misleading the interpretation of art given by Edward Fuchs in his remarkable and still interesting work, *Geschichte der erotischen Kunst* (1912). Here we can leave aside the fact that he proceeded from the methodological assumptions of historical materialism to state—without any regard to the inherent contradictions of this position—that the regular and fundamental impulse of art was the sexual impulse. For our purposes what is more relevant is his contention that the basic law, *Lebensgesetz*, of art is employment of erotic motifs and his argument that the stronger the erotic effect of a work the more artistic it is. Yet Fuchs himself talks of the degradation of art at least since the Rococo period because of its decadent treatment of sex. He emphasizes several times that the only feature of art is a "healthy sensualism." In this connection he stresses the point that the erotic motif, *das Stoffliche*, should be controlled by artistic means to the extent that "das gemein Sinnliche aufgelöst und völlig überwunden ist." The weakness of Fuchs's case lies in his failure to explain what this "healthy eroticism" implies and to draw the conclusions from this sensible reservation about formal artistic predominance in the presentation of sexual elements. It is impossible to react sexually, though this is the response postulated by Fuchs, to works in which the erotic has been in a sense neutralized by the artist. As a result, from Fuchs's highly instructive book we learn a great deal about the unending obsession with sex in works of art, but the evidence adduced has not been properly classified. Fuchs has completely failed to see that the works quoted by him can be arranged in a continuum: from the blatantly pornographic, like the priapic statues in Pompeii and the frescoes in the Casa Vetii, or the sixteenth-century painting by Van Orley showing Neptune having intercourse with a nymph, through works like Poussin's *Satyr Discovers Venus Sleeping* or Rembrandt's etching *The French Bed*, to works in which the erotic is only a means towards different artistic objectives. This applies, for instance, to Fouquet's well-

known portrait of Agnes Sorel, the mistress of Charles VII, which showed her as a Madonna with one breast exposed, with Rubens' portrait of his wife, Helene Fourment, in the nude, with the anti-papist Dutch etchings decrying the lasciviousness of monks and nuns, among them a little known copper engraving by Rembrandt, *Monk with Girl among the Reeds*, and finally with the English cartoons of Gillray, Rowlandson, and Cruikshank where too great play is made of sexual elements for the purposes of caricature.

If my arguments carry conviction, we should—all rejoinders to the contrary—uphold the proposition that art and obscenity are mutually exclusive. Now let us take some examples which will illustrate the conflict between the aesthetic posture which seeks to do justice by a work and the non-aesthetic attitude which trims it to the needs and prejudices of the perceiver. Let us begin with the simplest problem: the portrayal of the nude in the European tradition. In Greek art representations of Venus were, as I have remarked, a natural occurrence. The point, however, is not that Greek custom licensed public displays of the nude, since it might be countered that the Greeks may have seen nothing wrong in such works, but for us after centuries of Christian, or rather Puritan, civilization they are utterly indecent. What is relevant is that the Venus Anadyomene, like the Venus de Milo, was above all else an ideal expression of feminine beauty cast in harmonious forms. Anyone who looks at the sleeping figure of the Hermaphrodite in the Rome National Museum purely from the sexual point of view, engrossed by the erect phallus and lost to the expression and formal rhythms of the sculpture, is quite simply aesthetically blind and nothing can be done about him until he is taught to see. When Rubens painted the encounter between the King and Queen in his *Maria de Medici* cycle, he bared her bosom, but the whole body had already been shown naked since the times of Masaccio and Botticelli or Van Eyck. True, Adam and Eve in the Ghent Altar modestly conceal their pu-

denda, and Botticelli's Venus is more a poetic symbol than a flesh-and-blood woman; but even before Rubens, the great Venetians (Titian, Giorgione, Tintoretto) were bringing out a pagan and sensuous beauty in their women's bodies, while in the same century Rembrandt did not balk at showing ugliness of the nude. In none of these cases is sex the keynote of the work; thus it cannot be claimed that the artist was seeking to arouse the sexual imagination. The further history of European painting corroborates this diagnosis. Ingres' *Turkish Bath* caused as great a scandal in its time as did Manet's *Luncheon on the Grass*, but the erotic motif here was no more than a peg for an exercise in aesthetics. The modernist period—in the nudes of Toulouse-Lautrec, Marquet, or Friesz—favored ordinariness in its choice of model; in its works we can detect a specific sexual tantalization and an undisguised earthiness of situation. Yet these artists, too, achieved primarily painterly values. From Renoir's and Cézanne's *Bathers* and Dégas' *Woman at Her Dressing Table* these subjects have been a staple of avant-garde art, modified in keeping with the programmatic rules of each school and gradually losing their suggestiveness in the swing to non-figurativeness (as in Delaunay's *Three Graces*), decorativism (Miro's *Nude before Her Mirror*), or finally to surrealist metaphysics (Coutaud's *Erotic Magic*).<sup>6</sup> Certain social groups, inspired by certain institutions, have always jibbed at such works—at least the representational ones—and denounced their authors as debauchers. But this is running ahead. We will come back later to the identity, the motives, and the credentials of those who tax portrayals of nudity with sowing corruption.

Literature is, of course, a far riper source for the student of these conflicts between the legitimate and the distorted response to art. We could go back to Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, Baudelaire's *Flowers of Evil* or Zola's *Earth* to turn up examples of the classic misunderstanding between the work expressing not the slightest attack on the sexual imagination and a

group of readers who judge it by non-aesthetic standards from the angle of their own moral taboos. But let us confine ourselves to the most notorious twentieth-century controversies. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover* Lawrence championed man's right to full personal happiness against middle-class prudery. This cause had already been taken up by Freud who trenchantly demonstrated that the mental ailments of the patients under his observation had their roots in sexual disturbances. Lawrence made a religion out of sex but his assault on the moral cobwebs of his day was highly salutary. Henry Miller is a thornier problem. *Tropic of Cancer* was an artist's revolt against capitalist civilization in all its forms. At the beginning of the book, he writes of the need to shock readers, of the necessity of a blood transfusion, and this injection of fresh blood could be found only in the primitive, direct experiencing of his own existence. In this, sex occupies a central place. Through his hero Miller confesses: "I am spiritually dead. Physically I am alive. Morally I am free. The world which I have departed is a menagerie. . . . If I am a hyena I am a lean and hungry one. I go forth to fatten myself."<sup>7</sup> Miller's hero feels utterly isolated. Paris is for him an escape from humanity; he is an outsider in the city which is "a blind alley at the end of which is a scaffold."<sup>8</sup> An exile from the human world he hates, he tries to return to the earth ("I belong to the earth"), the symbol of durability. Sexual passion, he claims, is the only way of revitalizing existence, of returning to natural drives, to elemental desires and urges.<sup>9</sup> One can, of course, read *Tropic of Cancer* as pornography, but only by going against its grain. For it is a philosophical book, encapsulating the rebelliousness of the artists of the thirties. Its climate is similar to that of Joyce and Kafka; all three protested with the same violence against the realities of their times, although each of them sought to resolve his dramatic situation in a different way. A kindred world to Miller's can also be seen in the oppressive, harshly tense paintings of Soutine. This world abuts

on the still fashionable concept of instinctivism as the only antidote to the false ideas and words borne in the head. Despite its tone of nihilism, *Tropic of Cancer* was the revolt of a deeply lacerated man. Paraphrasing Marx in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844), we might say that Miller simply wanted to see man return to himself, to his own dignity; he longed for a release from capitalist alienation, but not fully grasping the processes in which he was trapped, he could find a way out only in a reversion to barbaric existence. Miller's book does not titillate; it appalls. Its persuasive function is purgative; it belongs in the Dionysian element. Nabokov's *Lolita* is in a somewhat different category. Here, as in Lawrence, we are back in Freudian territory. Nabokov defends Humbert as a man who is sick but whose intentions merit sympathy; he shows the mechanism of his genuine passion and love for Lolita. Although in Part 2 (Chapters 31, 32, and 36) he makes Humbert admit that his behavior deserves censure, this act of self-accusation is extenuated by the portrayal of Lolita as a tease with a natural bent for seeking premature pleasures. Nabokov is, therefore, a humanist writer in the *nil humanum* sense. People suffer from various infatuations and fight their passions in various ways. On this reckoning, Humbert is, if different, no worse than Othello or Werther. *Lolita* is not a protest against a whole civilization nor does it expound a personal philosophy like *Tropic of Cancer*. Nevertheless it, too, cries out against a restrictive moral code which stigmatizes certain ailments of a sexual nature (as natural in the end as healthy responses since Freud has said that we are all in some sense sick) and the behavior to which they lead as immoral and their inclusion in a work of art as obscene. Those who tried to read *Lolita* "for the dirty bits" must have been quickly disenchanted. It is a serious and difficult book, distanced from its theme and written with profound compassion for its self-tortured hero. In 1956 Nabokov wrote of *Lolita*: "For me a work of fiction exists only insofar as it affords me what I shall

bluntly call aesthetic bliss . . ." <sup>10</sup> Elsewhere he observes of pornography:

Obscenity must be mated with banality because every kind of aesthetic enjoyment has to be entirely replaced by simple sexual stimulation. . . . Thus, in pornographic novels, action has to be limited to the copulation of clichés. Style, structure, imagery should never distract the reader from his tepid lust. The novel must consist of an alternation of sexual scenes.<sup>11</sup>

An even richer vein of inquiry is the film. If it is fairly easy to distinguish literature with a capital L (that is, books of serious artistic purpose) from the second-rate production, in the cinema this line tends to be blurred. The film is one of the mass media and in the vast majority of cases it is two-faced, its loyalties divided between art and entertainment. As the epigraph for his three-volume *L'Erotisme au cinéma* (Paris, 1960), Lo Duca took Malraux's aphorism that the East has opium and the West has women; he concludes that eroticism is so characteristic a feature of contemporary European culture that a highly realistic, "documentary" art form like the cinema would be sailing under the falsest colors if it fought shy of sex. But if we think of films with a distinct and outspoken sexual bias, like Autant-Lara's *Le Diable au corps*, Malle's *Les Amants*, Vadim's *Et Dieu créa la femme*, Clouzot's *La Verité*, Fellini's *Dolce Vita*, or Antonioni's *L'Aventura*, we will see that in none of them was the erotic an end in itself, that none of these directors was seeking to titivate the audience. Fellini rakes over his orgy scenes with the cold eye of a moralist; Antonioni shows up the hero's dramatic emptiness by the frantic pursuit of kicks, his emotional crippledness in a shipwrecked world without personal ties; Autant-Lara and Malle extol the passions which lend life richness and poetry; Vadim's film is a paean to "dem ewig Weiblichen," to the feminine abandon and innocent charms of a modern Aphrodite as elemental as nature herself; Clouzot traces the tragic search for love in a world without bearings or directions which can only offer temporary unions. I will now deal with another film which has recently been

the storm center of a controversy throughout the European press: Bergman's *The Silence*. Some denounced it as filth, period. A meticulous score was kept of the offending passages: copulation (twice), masturbation. The people drawn to this film for the same prurient motives as the readers of *Tropic of Cancer* or *Lolita* were in no mood to notice the philosophical subtleties or the artistic merits. In fact, all the erotic episodes are essential counterpoints to the film's central theme of total isolation. The two heroines live in a world so alienated that any kind of communication, even with those closest to them, has been severed. Sex seems to be the only lifeline left, the only hope of making contact with other people, if only through a moment's gratification. And when this chance has failed, there remains only one's own body, and the pleasures it can yield, as an escape from the depths. Both sisters lose; sex proves a hollow salvation. If the world is empty, if it alienates (symbolized by the endless, labyrinthine corridors of the hotel, by the dwarfs ostracized from society, by the parallel figures of the old waiter and the small boy, both of them equally alone and hungry for affection), then an attempt must be made to break out of this situation. A note written by the dying aunt to the boy is Bergman's *porteparole*. Whether his philosophy is convincing is beside the point. All that matters here is that this is a film which strikes one of the most dramatic chords of our times, a film which is shatteringly true on its own terms and handles its subject with consummate artistry.

It might be answered that Bergman has deliberately set out to shock. Be that as it may, it does not undermine our argument. Even if he was trying to shock, there was nothing lubricious in his motives. The worst we could say is that he has not scrupled to show a woman in so unconscionably intimate an act as masturbation. But this betokens only intellectual and moral courage, not an intention to deprave and corrupt. On the contrary, if *nil humanum alienum est*, there is no subject on earth off limits to the genuine



artist. Let me repeat once again: it is not content but presentation which is the test of the obscenity of a work. In other words, it is necessary and reasonable to distinguish between eroticism and obscenity. This point was firmly stressed in (from my perspective) an excellent book by Eberhard and Phyllis Kronhausen, *Pornography and the Law* (1959). I have to assent to the distinction made by them, namely that obscenity can only be tested when the reader or the beholder is incessantly attacked by erotic stimulants, and the product is used exclusively or almost solely as an aphrodisiac. Erotic literature or art, on the contrary, presents sex and its concomitants in the rich life-frame.

This sentiment is shared by the liberal judges who have stood out against the persistent attempts to ban works dealing with the subjects regarded as taboo by certain sections of society. Let me take two cases quoted in Alec Craig's book, one of which represented a real breakthrough in obscenity legislation. This was Judge Woolsey's clearance of *Ulysses* in 1933, a judgment subsequently upheld by the United States Court of Appeals. Its opinion, delivered by Judge Hand, declared, "whether a particular book would tend to excite [the sex] impulses must be tested . . . against its effect on a person with average sex instincts—what the French call *l'homme moyen sensuel*." What is even more important, points 3 and 4 of the opinion clearly imply that the author's intent is to be deduced from the structure of the work itself. Arguing that literature should enjoy the same immunity as works of science, the judgment states:

The question in each case is whether a publication taken as a whole has a libidinous effect. . . . In applying this test, relevancy of the objectionable parts to the theme, the established reputation of the work in the estimation of approved critics, if the book is modern, and the verdict of the past, if it is ancient, are persuasive pieces of evidence, for works of art are not likely to sustain a high position with no better warrant for their existence than their obscene content.<sup>12</sup>

The second case was the decision of Judge Bryan revoking the confiscation of

*Lady Chatterley's Lover* by the United States Postmaster General. This opinion repeats the argument that the author's intent must be judged by the structural content of the work. While conceding that an author might write an obscene book despite the best of intentions, Judge Bryan made the point that literary and intellectual merit is sufficient evidence on which to decide whether it is pornographic. Lawrence's book was recognized as exceptionally fine. The same point of view was persuasively defended by E. and Ph. Kronhausen. Their argument addressed against arbitrary labelling some artists as lewd, lascivious, predominantly appealing to prurient interests in nudity, etc., on the basis that someone or some group is sexually frustrated brought them to the following, radical conclusion: No penal code can be modelled in respect to judging obscenity on "community standards." Those standards are always vulnerable; therefore the only verifiable criterion can be the structure and within it first of all the content of the examined work.

Both these cases and the opinions of authorities on the legal issues, as well as the view of such experts as the Kronhausens, that the acid test is the intention expressed in the work and not the tendency imputed to it, support my contention. Thus I can now rest my case that art and obscenity are incompatible.<sup>13</sup> I propose to make only certain modifications in order to be able to answer the second of our questions: can obscene elements operate in a work of art and, if so, how?

#### IV

In arguing the antithesis between art and obscenity I have been invoking an ideal or, strictly speaking, an optimal model. In actual fact each cultural product is artistic or obscene to a varying degree. The effect of this relativism is to admit the presence of the lewd in artworks. Its place in art depends on the kind of work, and on the proportion between the strictly aesthetic and the dirty elements. I shall try to isolate some of the main types.

In a work of art, as my analysis has shown, the erotic features are so resorbed by the aesthetic values that they cannot play a separate and relatively independent role. But there have been and are works which contain certain obscene portions elevated sometimes even into obscene sequences, retaining a certain measure of autonomy. They are either so obtrusive that they burst out of the total structure, or they are interpolations or even incrustations unconnected with the concept of the work. One could point to a fair sprinkling of such obscene portions in Aretino, and certain passages in Henry Miller more than hold their own on this score. Smaller but equally striking goblets of this kind can be found in Rabelais, in Casanova's *Memoirs*, in Diderot's *Jacques le Fataliste*, in Faulkner's *Sanctuary*, and in *Lolita*. On the other hand, they are notably missing from Laclos' *Liaisons dangereuses*. It is enough to think back over Letters LXXIX and LXXXV, relating the adventures of Chevalier Prévau, to see that the overriding tone here is a kind of intellectual naughtiness, a delight in the art of cynical seduction. This mood has, for that matter, nurtured one of the chief strains in French literature, one which ought not to be confused with pornography, although the ambience of such books makes for the evocation of a sexual atmosphere.

In all the works cited in the previous paragraph, the obscene portions are related to the artistic design. But this cannot be said of a film like Sjöman's *491*. This has two scenes (homosexual intercourse and bestialism) whose showing cannot be justified by the needs of the storyline or as dramatically necessary. The film is about juvenile delinquents and an experiment in re-education. The episodes in question can only be regarded as dirt for dirt's sake; they pander to the baser instincts and are bound to stimulate a larger measure of sexual than aesthetic sensations.

The case I now want to deal with is a kind of halfway house between the work which is closer to art than pornography

and that which definitely falls on the far side of this line. I am thinking of Félicien Rops, not the whole of his work, of course, but its most popular products. Although it seems a little fulsome to compare his gifts, as Baudelaire did in a sonnet in 1865, with the Pyramid of Cheops, although Rops himself was surely exaggerating his achievements in claiming to have found "une formule nouvelle," the artistic merits of his drawings and etchings are beyond dispute. Nor can we deny him a certain philosophy of life, idiosyncratic though it was: his guiding lights were Baudelaire, Poe, and Huysmans, and he shared their dandyism and misogyny, contempt for the mob and hatred of the bourgeois. His sexual obsessions were fundamentally satanic: we have only to recall his *Pornocracie*, a symbol of the blind lusts which drive men to destruction, or his "Le vol et la prostitution dominant le monde," or his visions of men and women ravaged by syphilis and drink.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, the majority of his water colors, prints, and drawings are lewd. The women are shown from the back, with their legs apart and bending forward; invariably they sport Folies-Bergère-type black stockings and gloves, which luridly point up the nakedness of their breasts, thighs, bellies; usually there are men present at these brazen, frequently disgusting displays. At times Rops deliberately stressed the narcissism of women by making them hold or cup their breast and eye it winsomely. *Le miroir de la coquetterie*, *Seule*, *le Maillot*, *Nubilité*, *Impudeur*, *Suffisance*—these are just a random sample of works which confound an aesthetic response but invite an erotic one. True, the climate of Rops's pictures has a smack of the whole period—Toulouse-Lautrec, Strindberg, Przybyszewski. Women were looked upon as incarnations of the devil and, since "*am Anfang war des Geschlecht*," eroticism was at once demonized and exposed in a gross and naturalistic manner. All that can be said, then, is that obscenity fitted in with the artistic vision of the time, but even so, no one presented it so furiously and aggressively, or in such abundance, as Rops. In

the pictures quoted, he seems to me more of a pornographer than an artist but not because he drew attention, as Huysmans wrote, to the apocalypse of prostitution. The whore has been a heroine of drama and literature since the beginning of the nineteenth century and in our day has had a remarkable run in the cinema. She belongs with the dispossessed and the rebels of capitalist society. From Fleur de Marie in *Mystères de Paris* to Fellini's *Cabiria* and the Mercouri character in Dassin's *Never on Sunday* she has even been represented as one of the select company of the pure in heart. Once again it is not the subject which matters but the presentation. The nearest approach to Rops's trollops in the cinema has been Marlene Dietrich's wanton in *The Blue Angel*.

A different kind of proportion between obscenity and aesthetic values arises when the latter are either unremarkable or downright exiguous. In these cases, even themes of no great piquancy take control and distil an atmosphere more sexual than artistic. A film like *Gilda* is a typical example. The film industry has, in fact, made a specialty of this kind of pabulum since it has a ready-made appeal for the less discriminating public, purveying as it does a glib illusion of art and more or less calculated doses of sexual stimulation. It was in films of this sort that Marilyn Monroe and Brigitte Bardot were launched—and duly dismissed by serious critics as nothing more than sex symbols; more substantial scripts brought out a latent dramatic talent. Other actresses have remained glorified pin-ups, press-button dummies put through their erotic paces in one piece of mass-produced hokum after another.<sup>15</sup> In art there seems to be a counterpart here in such works as the Venus Callipygos, Museo Nazionale, Naples; the Renaissance woodcut by P. Flötner, *Eroticum*, Friedrich-Museum, Berlin; or the Dutch work, *Monk and Nun*, c. 1600, Haarlem Museum, in which a monk fondles the bare breast of a nun and leans lustfully over her.

The final kind of work is that which masquerades as art but is really a tawdry

counterfeit filled with a carefully balanced mixture of sex and sadism. This literature of the gutter is unfortunately a staple of an ill, neurotic system of culture. The obscenity here lies in the general atmosphere of the product: the writing is blunt and nasty, studiously bent on arousing the reader. Apart from this pulp fiction with its scabrous stock-in-trade, the market is flooded with other appeals of a tamer but no less lubricious nature: most magazines are crowded with pictures of artfully posed, naked girls, and the majority of advertisements use the same kind of sexual hard sell.

In this same class we should also include the would-be artistic strip-tease (with its elements of mock-copulation and mock-fellatio). Paris teems with shows of this kind, of various degrees of quality. I am concerned here only with the best productions in which each number is preceded by an intelligent line of patter, skillful music and lighting, plus graceful and attractive performers, the whole of which adds up to something like art. But it will always be no more than a sham, since in the main the only purpose is to put the audience into a sexual trance. The strip-show, even when it aspires to theater, tellingly demonstrates exactly what pornography is. In primitive art—in Brazil, Africa, India—we also come across erotic dances built around the same motives as in the sophisticated strip-tease: women dancing with sticks and imitating the act of sex. Yet the primitive dance is either part of a ritual in which all members of the tribe participate, or it is a rudimentary form of theater or mime in which socially important phenomena are enacted. In the strip-tease only the aphrodisiac function is left: for our benefit it is a demonstration of *ars amatoria* or else a preparation for it with measured stimuli.

Of course this kind of production can be found in earlier centuries. I have mentioned the statues in Pompeii with their accent on erection and illustration of intercourse in various positions. Edward Fuchs in his already quoted study, vol. 1, has collected reproductions of many works

in which para-erotic stimulation of the spectator was the main purpose. It is revealing that in the Middle Ages this kind of feature appears in architecture, in obscene jokes. Some of the Renaissance copper engravings of Hans S. Beham and above all the countless etchings of the Rococo period with their titivating *style galant* could serve as copybook examples of a quasi-artistic but at bottom pornographic *communiqué*. The same could be said of some English cartoons of the late eighteenth century. Fuchs reproduces, for instance, a lampoon of flagellations which plays entirely on the coarsest sexual associations—a man with his trousers down straddling a woman while a second woman with bared breasts flogs him, the whole scene lit by a candle shaped like an erect phallus.

Thus we have the answer to our second question. The obscene can have a place in art-works in various make-ups depending on the expressiveness and aggressiveness of the lewd portions and on the weight of the artistic values. Culture products can be graded along a scale running from those in which the obscene is almost wholly immersed in the artistic tissue to those in which the reverse is true, that is, from works of art in the strictest sense to unabashed pornography. We can distinguish four basic creative methods by means of which even a considerable stock of obscene portions is, so to speak, neutralized. First, the erotic elements may be treated *metaphysically*. In this case sex is regarded as the absolute or related to some other absolute. This was the approach of Lawrence, and in Polish literature of Przybyszewski and Witkiewicz. Second, the sexual may be poeticized, that is, invested with a pronounced emotional charge. The love-making scenes in Malle's *Les Amants* or Clouzot's *La Verité* are precisely of this kind. Third, the description of sex may be intellectualized through a distancing of the characters from their behavior. Aldous Huxley was the past master of this technique. Finally, the most frequent method, *aestheticization*, that is, the accenting of such values as sound, color, shape, movement, etc. These four devices are not the

only ways of offsetting lewdness but they serve to sum up our point of view on the mutual exclusiveness of art and obscenity. It should be added, however, that on the various rungs of the pornographic ladder the qualification of obscene may be attached to passages which were never intended as such by the author. Here we have to do with the mechanism of the actual structure of the work in which artistic values may be overshadowed by extremely forceful erotic themes or, as a result of the inadequacy of the artistic values, even commonplace varieties of the latter appear in a much stronger light.

Before passing on to the next section, we ought briefly to examine the relationship between the particular arts and obscenity. So far I have omitted all mention of the non-representational arts. Architecture and music provide too scant material for scrutiny of their obscenity quotient. Although the applied arts have had their share of mimetic features (Greek vases, for example), although it is possible to regard free-standing sculpture of an erotic character as an architectural complex (for instance, the thirty phalluses and twenty vaginas in Dinapur on the India-Burma border), although music in conjunction with a libretto or ballet can engender sexual associations, these are all borderline cases. Primitive architecture and sculpture have been explained away as symbolic manifestations of the libido,<sup>16</sup> but in the process it is forgotten that architecture derived from certain needs and the technical resources available, while sculpture has a magico-religious nature. Music is an a-semantic art and so multivalent that its texture alone, without any additional elements, is incapable of suggesting anything erotic. Certain parts of the Warsaw production of Luigi Nono's *Red Coat* (October, 1962) worked on the sexual imagination since the choreographer, Françoise Adret, played up the scene of Don Perlimplino's impotence and Belisa's five adventures on her wedding night. This was a classic example of what we have called obscene portions. On the other hand, in Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, the erotic hints which lie in the ballet are

so submerged in the musical conception that the artistic values dominate the whole structure of the performance.

In conclusion I stand by my contention that it is above all the representational arts referring as they do to real equivalents (objects and situations) which are most liable to be invaded by obscene portions or sequences.<sup>17</sup> Let me add, though, that not knowing the historical background of particular works, that is, their magico-religious symbolism, we are often prone to sniff out the presence of obscenity where no such intention was conceivable and no traces of it are noticeable in the structure of the art-work. This, I feel, accounts for the reputation surrounding the Pompeii frescoes among the uninformed.<sup>18</sup> In other cases, ignorant of the erotic motivations current in a particular culture, we never suspect the existence, in a symbolic and camouflaged form, of obscene motifs where they are barely visible, that is, precisely in works of non-representational art. But this problem goes beyond our frame of inquiry, for it touches on the interpretation of all works of art regardless of their content and meaning.

#### V

I think my theoretical conclusions are clear. As for the practical lessons, these boil down to recommendations which are not, unfortunately, truisms for everybody. We must draw a line between hard-core pornography and art, however loaded with obscene portions. The first should be eliminated with all the weapons at our command; the latter should be defended against the attacks of unqualified persons and institutions. Now this conclusion might be challenged, not for its distinction between art and pornography but because of its assumption that pornography is pernicious. So far little is known of what effect pornography really has. Psychological and sociological studies have been in progress for many years, but their findings are not of a piece. In the highly authoritative, already referred to, book by Eberhard and Phyllis Kronhausen, it is claimed, for instance, that even hard-core

pornography frequently is accompanied by purgative cathexy. Granted even that catharsis of the kind conjectured by the Kronhausens does actually take place with the very young or the very old, or in persons suffering some sort of sexual disturbance, it is still impossible to abandon the position that hard-core pornography is harmful.<sup>19</sup>

Here are the arguments against tolerating pornography: 1) In the overwhelming majority of cases it is by no means connected with natural needs but is a cultural product; in other words, a peculiar system of stimuli backed by certain institutions is contrived to overpower the people on whom it operates and create in them a regular additional compulsion of the same kind as gambling. 2) Pornography as a social product is a very frequent feature of many models of contemporary culture; it is therefore a fact of social consequence whose range and influence cannot be discounted. 3) The stimuli supplied by pornography not only undermine the cultural impulses offered by art and study, or even interesting entertainments, but, systematically applied, they also completely numb perception of genuine cultural values: in short, pornography stifles people's chances of full cultural development and impoverishes their inward life. 4) Pornography frequently—as in comic strips—goes hand in hand with a cultivation of brutality and amorality as principles in life, and is an invariable concomitant of prostitution.

Of course, underlying the belief that pornography is mentally and socially harmful is an axiological conviction which might be rejected. Nevertheless, this conviction which takes as its ideal a man of rich endowment, and considers such values as art and scholarship to be superior to purely hedonistic values, and these in turn to be superior to the gratification of artificially stimulated needs, seems to have behind it all the arguments accumulated by axiology, and not only in Europe at that.

Particularly revealing from this point of view is the strip show which in our day is enjoying a fantastic boom. An excellent

analysis of this phenomenon can be found in an essay by Leszek Kolakowski,<sup>20</sup> treating it in relation to the nature-culture antinomy. I feel, however, that in this case the chief oppositions are those lying within culture itself. The strip-tease makes for a debasement of intimacy, bringing into a bright public light what we consider to be an utterly private business. Second, it is connected with male domination, demonstrating that women are or may be commodities to be bought and sold after prior inspection. Third, the strip-tease by belittling the beauty of the female body—since it often shows downright ugliness—reveals at once that it is not concerned with an aesthetic spectacle but with sexual excitement. Even if Roland Barthes<sup>21</sup> is right in stressing that generally strip-tease desexualizes woman—which I doubt—he himself emphasized the cheap “magic” of this show. It is a mock-myth answering the lowest needs. In short, any systems of values which treat the human individual as an absolute good are here blatantly scouted.

Does this imply a need for a radical ban on pornography? No, since this is not a question of sanctions which might have the same unintended consequences as prohibition in America. The strategy and tactics in any campaign should follow those used by abolitionists in dealing with prostitution. What is needed is to cure the causes, not the symptoms. This means an effective and sustained curtailment of the range and influence of pornography to the point of its complete eradication. One of the weapons which could be employed might be the satisfaction of those needs which are asserted to be indispensably linked with pornography, through an art itself saturated with erotic themes. Thus, in this respect, I totally agree with the persuasive arguments set out in Jerome Frank's essay “Obscenity and the Law.”<sup>22</sup> Frank is perfectly right in protesting against conviction as the proper punishment for spreading obscenity. But it is one thing to convict and quite another not to stand passively by observing the corruption of culture.

The ability to distinguish between these two different phenomena requires above all aesthetic sensibility and knowledge, supported by a general grasp of sociology. The aesthetic education of society seems the only effective way of meeting these requirements. I am wholeheartedly in favor of educational programs of the kind proposed by Herbert Read. But I must confess that I think it more likely that a solution of the conflicts between the mechanisms which drag art into the cogs of ideological prejudice and those which seek to protect its independence from the former will be attained following social revolution and a thorough transformation of the total structure of society than as a result of aesthetic education programs, however enlightened. If we are to stop people being fed daily doses of pornography and if we are to prevent great artists from being accused of seeking to deprave and corrupt, shock treatment needs to be administered to society from the roots up. How right Marx was when he wrote in the 1840's that humanity would throw off its shackles once *homo economicus* had been superseded by a man pursuing the complete harmonious fulfillment of all the riches of the natural needs of the human race. Among them are his various sexual impulses. It is worth remembering that this man of the future, inwardly balanced and in tune with his surroundings, was to be *homo aestheticus*.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. S. Morawski, “O wartości artystycznej” (On artistic value), *Kultura i Społeczeństwo* (1962), 4, 33–53, and “A Scheme for Criteria of Evaluation,” *Proceedings of Fifth International Congress of Aesthetics* (Amsterdam, 1965).

<sup>22</sup> The view expounded here seems consistent with the methodological directives of Marx and his remarks on aesthetic axiology, few and uncoordinated though they are. In the Marxist tradition this argument has rarely been advanced since it was the ideas of Plekhanov which dominated the field. Recently a similar interpretation of artistic values has been put forward by other Marxists. See G. Lukacs, *Die Eigensart des Aesthetischen* (Neuwied, 1963); L. Goldman, *Recherches dialectiques* (Paris, 1959); E. Fischer, *Von der Notwendigkeit der Kunst* (Dresden, 1959).

<sup>3</sup> See Alec Craig's instructive book, *The Banned Books of England and Other Countries* (London, 1962).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. T. Hakenssen, "Art and Dance, Sex in Primitive," and A. Ellis, "Art and Sex," *The Encyclopedia of Sexual Behaviour* (New York, 1961), pp. 154-179.

<sup>5</sup> See Freud's essays, "The Poet and Daydreaming" (1908), and "The Uncanny" (1919). Cf. B. Nelson, ed., *On Creativity and the Unconscious* (New York, 1958), pp. 53-54, 155-161. In his only other works concerned with aesthetics (the books about Leonardo and wit) Freud developed this view and used it to show that psychoanalytic methods of study stop on the threshold of art. Of the Freudians I have read, this subject has been best and most profoundly analyzed by Ernst Kris. Following Freud closely, I feel, he indicated that the art-world-like dreams not only mask genuine material from the sphere of the libido but also re-mask the dream material through formal devices. Since the ego participates in the artistic and aesthetic process, cathexis of psychic energy is changed. Cf. *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art* (London, 1953), pp. 13-63.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. V. George, *Corps et visages féminins* (Paris, 1955).

<sup>7</sup> Henry Miller, *Tropic of Cancer* (New York, 1961), p. 90.

<sup>8</sup> Miller, p. 164.

<sup>9</sup> Miller, pp. 229-233. Compare also his *The World of Sex* (New York), esp. pp. 16-27.

<sup>10</sup> Nabokov, *Lolita* (New York, 1959), p. 286.

<sup>11</sup> Nabokov, p. 284.

<sup>12</sup> A. Craig, pp. 145-46; my italics.

<sup>13</sup> Craig, p. 214, rejects, as I do, the view that literature of a genuine kind can be pornographic. This position is shared by D. Loth in *The Erotic in Literature* (London, 1962). But neither of these writers offers any theoretical underpinning to support their belief. When they argue quite reasonably that the author's intentions themselves are not sufficient grounds for judging whether a book is obscene or not, they forget that 1) the intention can be reconstructed from the structure of the work, and 2) the intention, if it has been enunciated in a separate commentary, as Thomas Mann did with Doctor Faustus, provides important interpretative material and makes it possible to compare intention with execution. My point of view on artistic intent differs, therefore, from that expounded in the well-known essay by M. C. Beardsley and W. K. Wimsatt, Jr., "The Intentional Fallacy"; cf. Wimsatt's *The Verbal Icon* (New York, 1958), pp. 3-18.

<sup>14</sup> All the main writers on the work of Félicien Rops have defended him on these grounds against accusation of decadence and pornography. Cf. E.

Ramiro, *Félicien Rops* (Paris, 1905); C. Lemonnier, *Félicien Rops, l'homme et l'artiste* (Paris, 1908); G. Kahn, *F. Rops. L'Art et Le Beau*, numero special (Librairie artistique et litteraire, 1965), pp. 5-59; R. Klein, *F. Rops*, *ibid.*, 111, numero special, 5-63. Each of them concedes, however, that the obscene is the dominant feature of Rops's work.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. A. Kyrrou, *Amour—erotisme et cinéma* (Paris, 1957). Kyrrou maintains that since the last war the film has been taken over by the ideal of a woman practising sex mechanically and impersonally since the act of love itself has come to be treated as one of many consumer activities. A similar observation is made in a sharply critical tone by Carlo Lizzani through his hero in the film *La Vita agra*, 1964.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. the Freudian interpretation in E. von Sydow, *Primitive Kunst und Psychanalyse* (Leipzig-Wein-Zürich, 1927).

<sup>17</sup> It would require a separate discussion to answer the question which of the representational arts, if it introduces obscene portions, is most open to the charge of being pornography plain and simple. I personally feel that parasexual responses are most likely to be stimulated by the theater, mime, and dance because of the direct physical presence of the performer. But the matter is complicated by the fact that in films and literature the absence of this physical contact makes identification with a character or situation easier.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. the analysis of the frieze of the Dionysian mysteries in the Villa dei Misteri in A. Maiuri, *Pompei* (Rome, 1938, and 1952), and K. Schefold, *Pompejanische Malerei, Sinn und Ideengeschichte* (Bâle, 1952).

<sup>19</sup> I think that the Kronhausens are not quite sure if their psychiatrists' point of view is on the whole defensible. They are for erotic art and literature as I am, because it does not block the sexual drives or cause frustrations. The therapeutic function of erotic and aesthetic appeal cannot be, as I understand it, compared to the worthless, aesthetically offensive, vulgar stimulation of hard-core pornography. For the latter, even if it gives some relief, reaffirms the dreadful taboos and deepens the immaturity and the pathological status of the culture which so badly needs pornography. See *Pornography and the Law* (New York, 1964), pp. 325-53 and 386-89.

<sup>20</sup> L. Kolakowski, "Epistemologia strip-tease u," *The Epistemology of Strip-tease* (Twórczość, Warsaw, April, 1966).

<sup>21</sup> R. Barthes, *Mythologies* (Paris, 1957), pp. 165-8.

<sup>22</sup> J. Frank, "Obscenity and the Law," in M. Levich, ed., *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Criticism* (New York, 1963), pp. 418-440.