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## *The Problem of Value and Criteria in Taine's Aesthetics*

I

A. In the introductory and concluding sections of *Philosophie de l'art* Taine has set out in explicit terms his methodological assumptions. This does not of course mean that there is no need to go further than these passages; on the contrary, it is necessary to check them against Taine's other statements. Nevertheless the arguments in the sketches that deal with the essence of a work of art, with the process of its creation, and with the ideal should be taken as a starting-point.

In the introductory sketch Taine says that he conceives aesthetics as a philosophy of beauty which lays down no rules but formulates laws. It follows the example of the natural sciences (botany is the analogy used by Taine), that is, it assembles facts and *explains* them on the basis of the forces governing them. Among these it seeks the fundamental force from which it is possible to induce the most general definition of a particular class of phenomena. Taine calls method of this kind *historical* as opposed to dogmatic which makes use of postulates. This historical point of view commands us to start with the work of art and leave the question of talent or genius aside. A work of art "x" is an integral part of the *oeuvre* of a particular artist; this *oeuvre* is in turn related to a definite artistic "family," that is,

a particular school, movement, or current; and these are determined by the "état d'esprit et de moeurs," or what we would today call the pattern of a particular social consciousness. Thus explanatory procedures in aesthetics as in other disciplines have no place for moral or educational programs. These procedures are what Taine had been pursuing since his university days, and in them he saw a sign of *the independence of science*. In the first two volumes of his *Correspondence* the reader is constantly confronted with the statement that only science can resist political despotism, that it alone, by ensuring a *sine ira* attitude, is in earnest of a genuine intellectual life. Science—which in his early book on Livy he was to say had no country—has to pay a heavy price for its independence: no one really needs it. This clerical and escapist viewpoint which is readily explainable in the context of the regime of Napoléon le Petit and of the ideology to which Taine had succumbed and which he himself had helped to fashion, is of some bearing on the problem under discussion. Aesthetic judgment would mean no more than commitment, the seeking of beauty, in the same way as good or evil, among the goods given official blessing at the time or else its rejection. On the other hand the final sketch in the *Philosophie de l'art* contains a surprise. Taine states authoritatively that he has been making judgments all the time without saying so. Judgment, he

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argues, can have an emotional ("ode") as well as an intellectual basis ("law"). This means that by following the naturalistic method standards of judgment can be framed which are capable of full verification and justification. These criteria are deduced by Taine from his introductory remarks concerning the essence of a work of art. Thus, an exposition of these criteria has to be preceded by a reconstruction of his preliminary argument: the nature of a work of art.

B. In §II of Ch. I we read that art is an imitation of reality; in §III-V this is revised and he now says that it is an imperfect imitation modified by the idea of the artist who reveals the essence of things (*caractère essentiel*), that is, the basic relations between their elements (*les rapports, les dépendances mutuelles*). His examples are: the portraits of Van Dyck confronted with the "photographs" of Denner, Michelangelo's *Tomb of the Medicis*, Rubens' *Kermesse*, and Raphael's *Galatea*. In §VI there is a further revision. In the case of architecture and music which *do not* imitate reality but bring out the essence of things by means of the mathematical relations between each of their elements, the previous definition proves too narrow. As a result a new one is submitted: "Il faut dans tout art un ensemble de parties liées que l'artiste modifie de façon à manifester un caractère."<sup>1</sup> This definition is somewhat unclear. It concerns, as Taine emphasizes, the "internal logic" of a work, its structure which is accentuated by the artist, but at the same time the manifesting of the essence of things is connected with the expression of a mental and social climate (*état d'esprit*). Discussion of this is not undertaken until the next chapter which deals with the production of works of art. Here Taine returns to his genetic considerations ("moral atmosphere" as the source of art). He states that the artist must be a conformist, that is, in tune with his age, since, by the very nature of cultural processes, his audience wants to understand a work while he wants to be commended and recognized. He singles out four ages: antiquity, the middle ages, absolute monarchy, and industrial democracy. In each of these one form

of art came to the fore in the content of a particular mental and social climate: in the first it was sculpture; in the second, architecture; in the third, theater; in the fourth, music. In each, one particular psycho-social model dominated; in Greece, physical perfection in harmony with the psyche; in the middle ages, excessive imagination with mystical tendencies, and feminine delicacy; in the seventeenth century, aristocratic dignity and the manners of the salon; in the nineteenth century, inordinate ambition and unfulfilled hopes. For us the interesting models are the second and the fourth. The second *expresses* Gothic architecture, the fourth the music of Beethoven, Weber, Meyerbeer, Berlioz, and Verdi. In other words, the essence of things which this music reveals is not so much a sound structure as the fitfulness, spleen and romantic *Sehnsucht* of the times.<sup>2</sup> But here it becomes necessary to go back to Chapter 1; in §VII art is compared with science since both reveal the laws governing the world. The idiosyncrasy of art is that it does this "d'une façon sensible et en s'adressant non seulement à la raison mais encore aux sens et au coeur de l'homme le plus ordinaire."<sup>3</sup> This gives it its superiority over science and its greater popularity.

Even if this definition in §VII is taken as a corrective to previous attempts, the problem has by no means been treated at all clearly by Taine in *Philosophie de l'art*. And to the difficulties contained in this definitive work must be added others, far greater, which emerge from a study of his earlier and later works. In his studies of Livy and the classical French philosophers of the nineteenth century written between 1853 and 1856, Taine stated his ideas on the distinction between philosophy, science, and art. This venture was connected with his discovery of a particular attitude to reality which he called "rhetorical." In the second volume of *Correspondence*, in which he records his difficulties with "Livy," he describes him as an "un orateur qui se fait historien." The rhetorical attitude, we are told in *Essai sur Tite-Live*, is characterized by a demonstration not of pure, that is scientific, arguments, but of those which have the persuasive power to convince the person

to whom they are addressed. This is an intellectual improvisation in which not the *raison* of the facts, but the *raison* of the arguer; not truth, but a genuine or feigned sincerity of expression are decisive.

The orator is different not only from the philosopher, but also from the artist. The artist "paints" a picture, he works with his imagination, he represents people and things in their full sensual richness and their full individuality (*telles qu'elles sont*). The orator's element is passion; his purpose is not to show the world but to arouse (*exciter en nous non une image vive mais une persuasion solide ou une forte passion*).<sup>4</sup>

This same description is to be found in the second of the books mentioned above, with reference to V. Cousin.<sup>5</sup> The difference is that here Taine contrasts oratory mainly with poetry. In any case in his essay on Livy he had stated outright that the whole Roman mental and social climate was rhetorical and inimical to poetry, and thus produced no original work of art.<sup>6</sup> Art, as we know from *Philosophie de l'art*, is characterized by its concreteness. It is always a sensual abstraction, a complete vision, as Taine says, of reality, a sympathetic instinct, whereas rhetoric, that is, the effect achieved by the orator, lacks this concreteness. The reflections on Rome's privation of poetry are taken up again in the comparison of Shakespeare with seventeenth-century French literature. In *The History of English Literature* we read that for Racine as for Descartes, man is a rational machine, while for Shakespeare he is a "nervous machine" ruled by the tempers. Man in Shakespeare is a "mélange de l'animal et du poète ayant la verve pour l'esprit, la sensibilité pour vertu, l'imagination pour ressort et pour guide, et conduite du hasard."<sup>7</sup> The Shakespeare ("... il pensait par blocs") paradigm of human beings torn by the passions of life is given the supreme qualification in this fragment. Although Racine and his contemporaries also showed the nature of man, their picture was one-sided. But Shakespeare "accepted nature, finding beauty in the whole of it."<sup>8</sup> In short, Shakespeare, the *poet*, is here contrasted with Racine, who is held up as a rationalist. Poetry is "real fantasy," living characters, living

sensual forms; the converse is "regular logic," a world measured by the precepts of reason, the narrow truth of patrician customs. Taine does not say this but hints that in Shakespeare there is that "concrete abstraction," while in Racine the abstraction is less concrete, and so his art remains dubious. Another example is provided in a later work—the introductory volume to *Les origines de la France contemporaine* (1875). In Book 3, Ch. 2, I, which is devoted to the spirit of classicism, Taine again argues that the seventeenth century with its typical rationalism and analytical temperament was rhetorical or anti-poetic. Molière, Corneille, and Racine depicted types, not individuals; they were unable to go outside their age or beyond the psychological model then prevalent. Lacking *sentiment historique* and *imagination sympathique*, they were unable, Diderot apart, to penetrate the nature of man. None the less, Taine is full of enthusiasm for their writings (Book 4, Ch. 1, V), and emphasizes that despite this defect, or rather *because of it*, they created masterpieces.

Thus even the non-poetic talent can produce works of merit; at any rate it can create art which is of importance not only to a particular generation which finds in it a reflection of its own mental and social climate, but also to subsequent generations. Poetry, which in his writings of the '50s had seemed to be co-extensive with art, has become only one of its variants. The definition of art again becomes vague. On top of this, Taine's remarks about the "English spirit" in his *Notes sur l'Angleterre* ([1871], Ch. VIII) although they reiterate the superiority of English poetry, are not lavish in their praise of English painting and sculpture. On the contrary English art and Ruskin, its spokesman, are attacked for having too little feeling for pictorial properties, attributable to the English spirit which is utilitarian and moralistic (like the Roman) and attached to empiricism and induction.<sup>10</sup>

To sum up, the definitions of art framed or hinted by Taine concern as many as five of its aspects: (a) the sensual elements (which superficially correspond to "concrete abstraction") constituting the basis of its

popularity and superiority over science, (b) the structure of these elements which accents the essence of things either by means of (c) a mimetic function or (d) an expressive function, (e) the compressed but at the same time full individual manifestation of reality ("poetry"), which is equivalent to that "concrete abstraction" (better to say "concrete generalization") but in a profounder sense. The assessment of Roman art or of seventeenth-century French poetry will vary depending on which of these characteristics is taken as fundamental. This, too, will decide whether art is equated with poetry or distinguished from it as fulfilling separate "non-literary" conditions. It is possible that all these five differentiated aspects can be fitted into a single coherent formulation, and I shall try to do this in the second half of my essay. For the moment it has to be stated that Taine clearly gave little precision to these five aspects and that his preference fluctuates between (a) and (e), though (d) is continually used as a supporting argument. But this, as I will show, leads to recurrent internal contradictions.

C. While Taine's definition of art is regrettably vague there is absolute clarity in his arguments separating the *constitutive characteristics of a work of art* from the process of sealing its value on the basis of defined criteria. These constitutive characteristics are, of course, artistic values, that is, they have to be realized if there is to be any judgment at all, or any scaling. What these criteria of judgment are is set out in the final chapter of *Philosophie de l'art*. Let me recapitulate them briefly. They have been called criteria of (a) importance (*importance*); (b) goodness (*bienfaisance*); and (c) consistency (*convergence*). The values that correspond to them concern (a) truth, (b) morality, and (c) internal harmony. By definition, works of art reveal the essence of things and so they can and should be graded according to how deeply they penetrate the essence of things and what essence they penetrate. The cognitive values of literature and art arrange themselves in the manner of geological strata. There is the stratum of *fashion* (usually represented by journalism) and just below it the stratum of *generation*, which like Mme. Scudéry's

book or *Atala* impresses only its immediate recipients. Below this there is the stratum of *national types* like Gil Blas or Manon Lescaut, and a deeper stratum of types which *combine the national with the supranational* (Robinson Crusoe, Don Quixote, Candide). Finally there is the stratum of works which represent a *whole historical age*, such as the *Divine Comedy* and *Faust*, and the *whole of humanity* (the Psalms, the *Imitation of Christ*, Plato's *Dialogues*, Shakespeare). In the fine arts the cross-section runs from drawings through Hogarth's illustration to national types: Italian, Dutch, Spanish. Thus, *the more elemental the characteristic, the better the work*. But, as Taine adds in this chapter, the work of art not only manifests certain patterns; it also either benefits or injures human beings, depending on the kind of hero it presents. Here the graduation goes from straightforward comic types (Sancho Panza) through tragi-comic types (Bovary, Don Quixote) to men and women in the grip of some great, sinful passion (the characters in Byron and Hugo, but above all those of Shakespeare and Balzac). At the bottom of this "geological" stratification are works which show beautiful feelings and noble spirits (Corneille, Richardson, Sand, Goethe, Tennyson). The analogy in the fine arts is with health. The surface stratum is made up of the works of the middle ages ("ascetic"). Below this comes Rembrandt with his spiritualized physical ugliness, below him the untroubled and ribald Dutch painters (Teniers, Brouwer, de Hooch, Steen, Terborch). Then we come to the deeper strata: Jordaens and Rubens in whose paintings man is a hearty animal, and the Florentine school which shows a perfect type of outstanding intelligence. But at the bottom there is the immortal archetype: the Athenian school. Thus, *the better the characteristic in terms of moral and physical health and the better it serves social and individual needs, the better the work of art*.

A work of art emphasizes, however, what has been taken from reality by means of a suitable structure. This is a value which depends on the consistency of effects or, to put it another way, on the harmony of the means of expression. As an example Taine



shows how consistently and many-sidedly Shakespeare and Balzac build up their characters, how they match situation and action with character, and finally how their style is adapted to character and action. In the fine arts the primary condition is the harmonizing of the skeleton with the skin and the architecture of the body with its coloring, and the blending of both with a particular figure and its physiognomy. The consistency of these effects explains the distinctive ambience of the works of Caravaggio, da Vinci, Ribera, Correggio, Veronese, and Giorgione. Thus, *the more cohesive a work of art, the more powerfully it brings out the two values mentioned, the better it is*. The conclusion says that a masterpiece is a work which reveals elemental and maximally good characteristics with the clearest internal structure. Art then enhances and supplements real values. In this case the sum of the grading is added up.

Although the groundwork provided by the definition of art is not consistently adhered to (the characteristic of moral merit is brought in like a *deus ex machina*), although the links between what decides the nature of a work of art and what decides its superior value and the relations between the criteria themselves are not sufficiently clarified, the argument in its totality is this time wholly lucid. However, it is muddled by other remarks to be found in the same chapter. Though Taine attaches no importance to these, the careful reader will find them nodal. First of all, at the very start, Taine emphasizes the *originality* of the artist, that is, that he shows the basic features in his own way (Harpagon and Grandet, Oedipus, King Lear and Goriot, Veronese's and Rembrandt's *Last Supper*, Leda as seen by da Vinci, Michelangelo and Correggio). Although Taine says that all these works refer to some significant part of human nature, that is, all are values of various kinds, the reader would be justified in asking whether *originality* is not a *preliminary* criterion of value, in other words whether it is not a kind of key opening the door to further competition. Secondly, again before proceeding to analyze "importance," Taine refers to "acquired truths." He grants genius to Dante, Shake-

speare, Mozart, Beethoven, Rubens, Rembrandt, etc., claiming that he is entitled to do so by the judgment of many generations. This means, he writes, that cumulative unanimity of judgment approximates these judgments to the truth, since a work that has been through so many different courts and received a similar verdict, has received a *just* verdict. Once again we are presented with an imprecise but clearly comprehensible criterion of value. This is a *sociological investigation of the reception and assessment of a particular work*. This requires, as Taine himself shows, a *historical* attitude on the part of the scientific critic, that is, the ability to examine the situation of those people whom we want to judge. Quite unconsciously Taine here suggests yet a third criterion. Each of the graded values occurs in a particular, almost specially adapted era. For instance, physical health—particularly when it is directly connected with psychical value, is a product of certain fortunate historical circumstances. Retarded or over-developed civilizations do not permit the realization of these essential characteristics. Again (§2, II) comic realism belongs in an age of elegance and decadence; mature eras (Greece in the fifth century B.C., Spain and England in the sixteenth century, France in the eighteenth) gave birth to dramatic heroes seized by mighty passions, while "naïve" ages (that is, primitive times) are accompanied by idealized heroes (Siegfried in the Nibelungen, Achilles and Odysseus, the Greek Gods, the apostles in the Gospels). Finally (§3, II), the beginning of the decline of every age is a period when the consistency of effects is impossible. That is why the Song of Roland, Dante, and Marlowe cannot match their successors just as Giotto cannot match Raphael. On the other hand, Euripides, the Carracci brothers, and Voltaire are either over-sophisticated or mannered. Thus the criterion of value shifts in these examples to the *expression* of a particular age or part of it. To be an expression of a mature age is a higher value, for such an age implicitly contains this kind of value.<sup>11</sup>

It is not only the criteria inherent in his argument that must be taken into account in our discussion. Attention must also be

paid to his tastes. In §2, IV Taine excuses Rembrandt the physical ugliness of his portraits and his philosophizing in paint. However, the main value here proves to be the context of light and shade. In so far as Rembrandt's philosophy can be reduced to the characteristic of "importance," his dramatic chiaroscuro tends toward a *formal* criterion, something that it is a little startling to find in Taine. In terms of the three main characteristics Shakespeare is at fault in the sphere of moral values. But Taine loves his plays; above all else he relishes storms of spirit and the fierce clash of passions. For the same reasons Stendhal is dubbed an *esprit supérieur*. But at the same time the Greeks and the Renaissance Italians—paragons of harmony and inner serenity—are endlessly extolled. Thus a question mark hangs over the nature of elemental or universally human characteristics. It is unclear whether they are represented by a child-like but Olympian man, conquistadorial and joyous (the ancients and Italians) or by a mature but internally-troubled man (the nineteenth-century model). In addition, irrespective of whether "Dionysian" or "Apollonic" characteristics are pre-eminent, the values contained in Taine's methodological exegesis are inconsistent with his incidental remarks and hints which virtually discount moral value.

To sum up, Taine's explicit criteria are not the only criteria proposed and used by him. This makes it necessary to examine the relationship between the former and the latter and see if they are compatible or not. It will also be necessary to discover whether Taine's general thesis—that the constitutive characteristics of a work of art and the criteria by which it is valued or scaled are two different things—has been put into consistent practice by him. There is also the question of whether Taine has chosen the qualifiable characteristics (values) of a work from among its constitutive characteristics (values) or whether he has introduced new ones. Another intriguing point is the curious way in which music and architecture have been omitted from the chapter on criteria. How would the principle of "importance" be applied to architecture? What

"elemental characteristic" is deployed in these arts? Or else, how would the principle of *bienfaisance* apply in music? Would the maximally good characteristic be optimism or pessimism? We can only guess.

Having analyzed Taine's text, let us now proceed to its interpretation.

## II

A. In his definition of art Taine follows in the footsteps of his favorite philosophers: Aristotle, Spinoza, and Hegel. The mimesis of the Greek (*Poetics*, IX, 2–5) is reaffirmed by Hegel (*das Sinnliche vergeistigt und das Geistige versinnlicht*), in an idealist version admittedly, but one which is very close to Taine.<sup>12</sup> The problem of a compact assembly of elements with a precise structure—if such a concept can be attributed to Taine—has its source in the Aristotelian notion of "beginning, middle, and end" (*Poetics*, XXIII, 1–3), which in turn is derived from the "Pythagorean motif"<sup>13</sup> typical in the aesthetic thought of the ancients. The origin of expressionism has to be sought in Hegel's idea of *Weltzustand* which has been given a sociological twist on the lines of the speculations of French aesthetics from Mme. de Staël to the "doctrinaire school." But at the same time in his notion of the "essence of things" and of *caractère essentiel* there are traces of the influence of Spinoza. Being and understanding correspond to each other: the guiding notion corresponds to the essential features. The logic of the civilization type is reflected in the essential features of the work of art, just as these are a reflection of the dominant psycho-social features revealed in each artist. The exemplars of moral (i.e., social) phenomena are the phenomena of nature. The work of art though different and superior to the products of nature (a reflection of the Hegelian Idea) only reproduces the laws that govern them.

B. The discovery of the source of Taine's ideas does not explain or qualify his definition of art. But the variety of its elements makes it easier to understand his difficulties and the consequent inconsistencies. The first question which should now be asked concerns the validity of the five separate as-

pects of his definition and the fundamental feature from which the others are derived. The second question, regardless of whether we uphold these five aspects, has to take up the matter of their coherence. The major reservation must center on the second aspect, that is, the structure of sensual elements as the peculiarity of art. Taine—with his aesthetician's concern for *content not form*, his development of historicism, and his advocacy of sociologism—could not have meant to emphasize this point. Nevertheless his definition (Ch. 1, VI) suggests an interpretation according to which the constitutive factor in an artistic work is some kind of coherent arrangement while its *essence* is its own *internal structure*, that is, the relation of the whole and its parts. This has induced Sholom J. Kahn in an excellent work on the subject with which we are concerned, *Science and Aesthetic Judgment*, to venture into an application of Taine's criteria to cubism.<sup>14</sup> However, Kahn seriously doubts whether Taine's formula of coherent ("organic") arrangement can be defended.<sup>15</sup> For Taine immediately brings in the notion of *expression*. I have already pointed this out in my review of the second chapter of *Philosophie de l'art*. Towards its end it is clearly said that "l'art, comme l'architecture et comme la musique, éveille des émotions sans créer des personnes" and that artists instead of showing the prevalent psycho-social type, as in the representational arts, "s'adressent à lui dans les symphonies de Beethoven et dans les rosaces des cathédrales."<sup>16</sup> Thus we can merge aspect (b) into (c). But it must immediately be stressed that this gives rise to difficulties in accepting Taine's position. *Expression* was *not* incorporated by him into his argument on the nature of a work of art; on the contrary, it was put into a *separate* chapter analyzing the genesis of art. Taine is of course inconsistent—and not only in his exposition of "method." In the conclusion added to the revised edition of *La Fontaine et ses fables* (1861) in which he developed the views of his youth on the nature of beauty, he wrote less about *what* it is than about *how* it is born and, by the same token, the reader is quite justified in supposing that a *definition*

*of the nature of beauty* is implicit in the analysis of the genesis of art.<sup>17</sup>

We are now using Taine to correct Taine and this laborious but rewarding process must be continued further. If we accept *expression*, we must now examine "*mimesis*." Is this characteristic the specific quality of art? Taine's answer in Ch. 1, IV and V, is unambiguously negative. But in Ch. 2, IX, there is a correction to which Taine unwisely does not attach its due importance, namely that *mimesis* is one of the varieties of *expression*. In fact this was the logical conclusion of the analyses in Ch. 2, V and VIII, dealing with ancient sculpture and French seventeenth-century drama as *mimetic expression* of the *personnage regnant*. Sholom J. Kahn who by making use of a telling extract from Taine's *Voyage à l'Italie*, talks about *expression* as the foundation of art (after seeing Bernini's *St. Teresa*), comes to the conclusion that *expression* and *mimesis* amount to the same thing.<sup>18</sup> I would, however, alter this slightly and say that *expression* is the *broader, supreme notion*. Having eliminated two aspects (*mimesis* has now been merged into the principle of *expression*), we are still left with (a) and (e). Kahn has not drawn any distinction between them in his book, though on pp. 170 and 181 he repeats after Taine that art particularizes "universals" and on pp. 51 and 186 goes even further—that art means total individuality and unrepeatability. The particularization of universals derives from Taine's philosophical thinking, later set out systematically in his last book *De l'intelligence* (1870). There are real sciences and non-real sciences (mathematics, for example); similarly there is representational and non-representational art. But the difference between art and science is that the former is given as sense data. This characteristic is proper to *every* work of art—Shakespeare and Racine, a Greek statue and a Roman portrait. This corresponds to what we have called aspect (a). There can be not the slightest doubt that Taine who was here following the traditional line (from Baumgarten to Hegel and the variously inclined Hegelians), saw in this characteristic the specific quality of art. In the conclusion of his theoretical in-

troductory remarks to *Philosophie de l'art*—to go back to this work yet again—we read: “des sons, formes, couleurs ou paroles qui rendent ce personnage *sensible* [my underlining], ou qui agréent aux penchants et aux facultés dont il est composé.”<sup>19</sup> *Thus expression of a historically-defined mental and social climate, perceptible to the senses and given in a cohesive composition of this sense data, would be a collection of the fundamental characteristics defining a work of art.* This is a coherent definition; mimesis is its derivative. We now have an answer to both our questions.

Nevertheless the problem has not yet been solved. Aspect (e) has been left outside the compass of our proposition. “Concrete generalization” in the sense of representing certain living individuals is of course a consequence of aspect (a), that is, the particularization of universals. Indeed Taine’s examples (mainly the Greeks, Shakespeare, Rembrandt, Balzac) seem to warrant the relating of this unique “artistic synthesis” with expression; that is, with the designation of particularly favorable conditions—race, time, and environment. Nevertheless this too does not explain fully the notion of “concrete generalization” in this version. It is, indeed, difficult to accept this concrete generalization as the specific quality of art. If we accept it, we fall into the same net in which Taine entangled himself when he suggested that Rome had no art or that France in the seventeenth century had no poetry.<sup>20</sup>

In both these epochs the conditions of expression and concretization were fulfilled. Taine is, therefore, either contradicting himself or we must ascribe to him the slippery thesis that the specific quality of art is the realization of the “Shakespearean model.” We would then have to sacrifice aspect (e), and transfer discussion of it to the interpretation of the criteria of judgment, since the principle of full and living individuality is a basis for scaling but not for constituting a work of art.

C. In connection with this principle let me consider a point that is subsidiary but significant in Taine’s argumentation: a comparison of his views on poetry and on visual art. From the context it is clear that our

separate aspect (e) is connected by him with the notion of poetry, while *poeticism* would in Taine’s aesthetics belong among the criteria of value. On the other hand, the concept of art (and its equivalent, literature) would be connected with our aspect (a). Visual art therefore can, but need not, be *poetic*. However, Taine tied himself up in difficulties by elsewhere treating the term of poetry as a synonym for and not only as some kind of corollary of art.

This problem must be looked at historically, in terms of the aesthetic and artistic situation of the time. Hegel’s use of the term “poetry” was by no means so unambiguous, that the path was left clear of all pitfalls for Taine, his admirer. In the first part of *Aesthetics* (introduction, 2) poetry is treated on a par with the whole of art since in all branches of artistic production *Allgemeinheit in sinnlicher Gestaltung* is realized. But in the introduction to the third part, Hegel concludes his general reflections on the system of art by investing poetry, as *die absolute, wahrhafte Kunst des Geistes*, with the greatest possibilities of grasping human life.<sup>21</sup>

Although poetry, in comparison with the other arts, loses in sensual character, it has the fullest chance of expressing the spirit in all its configurations and in a variety of forms. Because of this freedom Hegel describes poetry as the *Allgemeine Kunst*.<sup>22</sup> Poetry can convey, better than any other art, man’s spiritual richness and so best meets the condition of *Totalität und Einzelheit*. There are two fragments in which Hegel develops this idea: when he defines “poeticism” (Part 3, Section 3, Ch. III A, 1) and when he analyzes action as the element of poetry (Part 1, Ch. III, B, II.3). It is significant that in the latter fragment, as in all the others concerning *Totalität*, Shakespeare is frequently quoted. This is not the place to analyze the Hegelian notion of poetry or to indicate the essential differences between Taine’s and Hegel’s treatment of this question. My purpose was only to show the former’s possible and, in my view, obvious inspiration. Hegel’s poeticism in the sense of *Totalität* and in the sense which is synonymous with reference to *das Künstlerisch* has in Taine’s conception led



to two compressed but somewhat confused versions of art. We also find in Hegel a view of Roman art which could point in the direction chosen by Taine when writing about the "oratorical spirit." Hegel discussing natural artistic temperaments, denied that the Romans possessed them,<sup>23</sup> though he did not fully develop this point. It is, in fact, left vague, since in his subsequent arguments Hegel analyzes Roman art and accentuates its original features such as the splendor of its public buildings and the development of private building (Part 3, Section 1, Ch. II, 3 b and 3 c), portrait sculpture (Part 3, Section 2, Ch. III, 3 b), the ode, epistles, and satirical verse (Part 3, Section 3, Ch. III, C, II, 3 b). In none of these fragments is the elementary artistry of Roman works questioned. On the other hand, in his main exegesis on Roman satire Hegel refers back to his casual remark about the awkwardness of the Romans. Here we read that the Roman spirit—abstract, cold and rigoristic—was alien to genuine art.<sup>24</sup> "Genuine art" meant no more than Greek art which Plautus and Horace were both supposed to have imitated. "Greek," however, meant only that which was fully individual and poetic in the sense of the Hegelian *Totalität*.<sup>25</sup>

So far I have been concerned with the aesthetic situation; there is still the artistic to be considered. I feel that it was as important a source of confusion in Taine's conception of art as his Hegelian inheritance. Indeed, as I have suggested, the notion of art in my sense (e) was more suited to his modern ideas which were founded on Shakespeare. That is, this notion with its *romantic* derivation probably was more agreeable to Taine because of *his own* experiences. I have written in my study of his particular liking for Stendhal;<sup>26</sup> Shakespeare, Rembrandt, Balzac are the other idols of this cult. The notion of art as poetry and the exemplar of "concrete abstraction" in the profounder sense has been inspired by these artists. Though Taine, in accordance with the classical German tradition, reserved a high place for the Greeks, he took a different view from Hegel (and this seems significant) of contemporary art and literature. There is signal evidence of

this in the conclusion of the second part (§ X) of *Philosophie de l'art* when he appeals for an analysis of the new conditions and their cultural products.<sup>27</sup> Admittedly Taine is separated from Hegel, the metaphysician—particularly by his scientific, sociological attitude. But this different method of viewing phenomena must also have influenced Taine's tastes and these in turn must have reinforced his conviction of the rightness of the method he had chosen.

This brings us to the end of the problem of Taine's definition of art. Let us now move on—taking with us only "concrete generalization" in sense (e)—to an examination of Taine's criteria.

### III

In my analysis of Taine's texts I have discovered as many as eight possible separate touchstones of value, though only three of them are explicitly set out by Taine. In my order of analysis these are: (a) the importance of a feature, (b) the goodness of a feature, (c) consistency of effects, (d) originality, (e) the verdict of generations, (f) the expression of characteristics proper to a particular age, (g) preference for Dionysian features, (h) concrete generalization in the deeper sense. The first operation we have to perform is to try to reduce these eight propositions to a smaller number of basic criteria. This will afford a check on whether and to what extent Taine was consistent.

The criterion of originality is not made very clear. We are told that the *genius* always creates *something new* in defiance of tradition and custom. His originality apparently consists in a mode of vision, previously unencountered, and in a thoroughly individual interpretation of a particular theme or character or else on the discovery of something which had escaped his predecessors. In this same argument, however, Taine changes his line of reasoning since in his comparison of the "Ledas" of da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Correggio, he refers these artists to their century which he claims imposed a particular style on them. In his conclusion (beginning with the introduction—"On the Ideal in Art") he says values of this kind cannot be scaled and

that all original values are equal since all of them are some essential part of human nature. This conclusion does not tally with Taine's introductory remarks. If "original" means the artist's "own, unique method of grasping a particular phenomenon" and if this characteristic can only be found in exceptional artists, then "originality" is a criterion of value. Apart from this, some original works may be highly charged with this quality, others less so. In short, originality is a question of degree and so is eminently suitable as a standard of measurement. On the other hand, it might well be asked whether the use of the word "originality" is not misleading; a man is original in some particular respect, and the same applies to works of art. Could "originality" not be referred to the importance or goodness of a feature or one of the other criteria listed by Taine? This is a sensible suggestion; but apart from Taine's remarks about the "Ledas" there is nothing to support such a reduction. "Originality" is the artist's own way of presenting—in terms of form and content—features that are important, good, etc. In other words, it means a personal style and mode of which, in Taine's view, not every artist is capable. This makes it necessary to uphold originality as a separate criterion of value though it has to be remembered that in some of its forms (works that are original in respect of features "x," "y," "z"), it can be subordinated.

"The verdict of the past" has to do, according to Taine, with acquired truths. An artist's contemporaries passed sentence and this verdict is revised and modified by subsequent generations. The valid judgment is the common factor in all these verdicts. The critic is required to go back to the age in which a work was produced and consider the artist and his public. This is all that is to be found in the second fragment of the introduction. Once again Taine hardly deserves to be commended for clarity. If "the test of time" is to be a criterion of value, at least two interpretations can be put on it: either the merit of a work is decided by the current generation or it is decided by certain features in the work which have survived the judgment of many

generations. In the first case the criterion is a thoroughly relativist one. Values are constantly being reconsidered so that selection is largely if not wholly arbitrary. In the second case some values are repudiated, others introduced, but there is some stock of them which will rule out arbitrariness. Indeed, this cumulation of judgments will only entrench these privileged values all the more firmly. If it is the second version to which Taine subscribes, the criterion of "the verdict of generations" can be taken as an offshoot of the criterion of importance or goodness of a feature, etc. If, however, it is the first, it is a *separate* criterion. Regrettably Taine does not make it easy to decide his intentions, sometimes choosing one, sometimes the other. Some of his remarks (that we have inherited our recognition of Goethe or da Vinci through the good offices of cultural bookkeepers) suggest yet a third interpretation: that values once established are automatically accepted by subsequent generations as a social outgrowth and the deeper it is embedded, the more quickly it is elevated into a "taboo." In any case this is a *sociological* criterion and irreducible to the others proposed. Grading here, as in the case of out and out relativism, would depend on how subsequent, above all current generations, judged works "x," "y," "z."

The criterion of adequate expression of values proper to a particular age seems to be closely related to those explicitly mentioned by Taine. Indeed, this expression concerns important and good features and consistency of effects. But there is one impediment to incorporation of this criterion into one of the others. It involves a "work-epoch" relation to be set against another relation of the same order. In short, there is more value in the work of an artist living in an age that is happy for one reason or another; this, for instance, puts Raphael above Giotto. On the other hand the qualification proposed by Taine has to do with the relation of characteristics from the superficial to the elemental, from the less to the more important, good, consistent. We could, in fact, fit the criterion under discussion to this grading. If the hierarchy of values connected with the importance and

goodness of characteristics or consistency of effects depends on whether and to what degree a particular work makes contact with elemental features, this scale can accommodate those values which somehow sum up these happy ages. This reduction is possible because the criteria listed by Taine are of a double and intersecting nature. They are scientist (naturalistic) when they seek the elementary character of man and historicist when they discover a relation between a particular age and a particular literary hero or figure in a painting. It is in this second aspect that the criterion in question partly overlaps with the criteria listed by Taine.

The criterion of preference for "Dionysian features" is also reducible. It enshrines Taine's romantic tastes which were not crystallized in any thesis. This preference can be treated either as a derivative of the criterion of importance of characteristic (in the end man represents, as far as his element is concerned *both* the need of harmony and the need for conflict situations) or as a synonym of the criterion of "concrete generalization" in the deeper version. In other words, "Dionysian features" stand for poetic art, the art of living individualities. We might also call it romantic art to emphasize its relation with Taine's tastes.

It is tempting to associate the criterion of "concrete generalization" with that of consistency of effects. There are, however, no grounds for a reduction of this sort. After all, the first and second criterion may apply to the same work (for instance, a Shakespeare play) but they concern different aspects of it. Works which lack "Dionysian" or romantic features may be marked by unusual internal cohesion (for instance, the works of Racine and Corneille) or vice versa, lacking this cohesion, they may possess "Dionysian features" (for instance, the works of Hugo).

Thus we are left with six criteria of judgment which must now be examined from the point of view of their coherence. I have discussed this point in the essay already quoted.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless the results of new analyses of Taine's text puts the problem in need of further scrutiny. The criteria listed by Taine are at odds because

the first of them, concerning the feature of importance, takes account of history while the second ignores it. In this first case (§1) the *expression (and mimesis) in relation to a particular historical period* is implied.

Taine considers that the value of a work *increases* in proportion to the profundity with which it characterizes the *typical* phenomena of a particular age. This *Hegelian feature*, here deprived of its metaphysical context, determines the success of Taine's conception. This feature also links his criterion of the importance of the characteristic with *his own* methodological assumptions, that is, study of a work as a product of particular socio-cultural conditions. For the three factors of race, time, and environment can, as both Kahn and I have shown, be referred to this last. Although biological elements can be discovered in the concept of "race," it is historicism which predominates. Although art's dependence on circumstances has a biological admixture (a particular cycle in which the *faculté maitresse* is the motive force), it is historical forces which rule within this cycle. Thus analysis tallies with judgment here. But there is a reappearance of metaphysics, this time derived from Spinoza. Above historical phenomena appear natural phenomena (national, racial, human, elemental features) which are isolated from history and given the highest grading. Here Shakespeare occupies the supreme position next to Don Quixote and the Psalms. The second criterion—the goodness of the feature—is totally anti-historical. Naturalism here takes the curious form of moralism in an original construction. Moralism as the servant of art with respect to socio-political and cultural forces was quite alien to Taine. It conflicted with his ideal on non-engagement. Although §2 has to do with the relation of "art to morality," it is only in the sense that certain features make for the physical and moral health of an individual and society. Here the realists, Balzac and Shakespeare, must yield pride of place to Richardson and Tennyson. The "work-epoch" relation does not come into consideration; account is taken only of elemental features. There are other contradictions along the way: religious feelings are elemental and

so the supreme values in literature, but the ascetic ideal is the lowest value in painting. The Dionysian features (Shakespeare and Rembrandt) retain their greatness in the first scale; in the second it is the Apollonic which comes to the fore. It is here that we are told that Florence is the second home of beauty while the first was Athens (§II, 5). Taine explains that importance and goodness are symptoms of *the same* basic force: the former in relation to the outer world, the latter in relation to the inner world. It emerges, however, that there are two *different* points of departure implied here: from eternal nature and from variable history. The difficulties entailed as a result of the clash between historicism and scientism (with regard to naturism) become apparent when analyzing the third of Taine's criteria. In §3 (2 and 4) the problem of form and content is shown in historical cross-section; even incomplete consistency of effects is a value here since the work *expresses* its historical time. Full "consistency of effects" is also, among other things, a socio-historical value since it is occasioned by the mature heyday of a particular age. But at the beginning of his argument (§3, 1) this criterion is also referred to the models of nature, to the ceaseless endeavor of organisms to bring out their governing features and to the symptomatic attribute of mechanisms, all of which must be inherent.

Thus there are loose ends even in this Aristotelian trinity of criteria (truth, goodness, beauty) which Taine adopted and modified. If the criteria I have singled out, (d), (e), and (h), are added to these three, the problems become excessive. The sociological criterion in its radically relativist version quite simply violates Taine's principles since it eliminates not only elemental features but also all objectively valuable features. In the modified version, by appealing to the judgment of the generations as the final arbiter of some objective values scaled higher than others, it stultifies the naturism which has swept all before it in the discussion of "The Ideal in Art." Could it be, then, that Taine's remarks about the judgment of generations are simply a blunder? I think not; I see them rather as a symptom of his honest scientist's attitude and his soci-

ological thinking which was unfortunately cramped by his acceptance of metaphysical premises. The criteria of originality and "concrete generalization" can hardly be reconciled with the others since Taine's fundamental value is the relation of a work to its age or to the old patterns of nature. It is here that the idea of artistic individuality, meaningless elsewhere, comes into its own.

It would be attractive to attempt an arrangement of Taine's criteria which would take us beyond the simple issues to the more complicated ones and enable us to group the criteria tidily. Those dealing with form (c) and (h) would be the basis. The more internally cohesive a work, the more poetical in the sense we have analyzed, the *better* it would be. Those works which fulfil neither the first nor the second condition would be *outside the compass of good works*. The criteria dealing with content (a) and (b) would be an index of the superior values. The more deeply a work expressed (represented) elemental or good features, the *better* it would be. Those works which only register superficial features would be barely competent. But the appellation *good* would only start to be applied with those works which convey the truth of a given historical cycle. The criterion dealing with the whole of a work (d) would concern a still higher value. The more original a particular work, the *better* it would be. Finally the ultimate criterion (e) would endorse the hierarchy of these values through the changeable verdicts of generations who in effect would be upholding the conviction that criteria (a), (b), (d), and (h) were the most valid, since the values to which they referred are the most lasting. Each of the superior values would imply the lesser ones. A work would be valuable in proportion to the number of superior and supreme values it contained. The masterpiece would be a work which met the conditions laid down by all the criteria.

Would Taine have approved such a scheme? There can be no doubt that he would have rejected it. Even though in his conclusion (§3, 5) he wrote that a masterpiece was a work which fulfilled all his three criteria—which means that he was seeking



an integration of his values—he would not have accepted *the hierarchy of criteria* I have proposed. He did not acknowledge the existence of the criteria of originality and judgment of generations either in practice or in theory. Though he did employ the criterion of “concrete generalization,” he was unaware of this; the criterion of “consistency of effects” was treated as auxiliary rather than fundamental.

We still have to decide whether Taine based his explicit and implicit criteria of value on those values which in his opinion constitute a work of art or whether he had recourse to some new values. Our starting-point might well be the results of the analysis used to reduce Taine's collection of criteria. Of the six which remain, the criteria of the importance and goodness of the feature and of the consistency of effects may be deduced from constitutive features, that is, from the expression and the structure of sense data elements. Thus the criteria, explicitly listed, have to do with a grading of the constitutive values. Each work is in some way important, good and consistent, but some of them are more so than others. The criteria of originality and the judgment of generations are not incompatible with the constitutive features even though they are not derived from them. Expression or structure or both can be original. The judgment of generations is not the intrinsic value of a work but its acceptance or rejection. The criterion of “concrete generalization” can also be deduced from constitutive features, that is, from the sensual and concrete nature of a work, and taken as one of the higher degrees of actualization of this nature. This interpretation which seems to conform with the facts, shows that Taine determined his scale of values consistently. That is, in his set of criteria, he went *beyond* the values which are proper, in his opinion, to the work, to the *position of the judge* (the verdict of generations) without in principle rejecting the objectivist viewpoint. He was led to this solution by naturalism (biologism) even though sociologism (relativism) might have suggested another proposition.

In this way the answer has been provided to the question asked at the beginning of

the investigation. Taine was right in the distinction he drew between the constitutive features of a work of art from the criteria of value which are used to scale it. He failed only to distinguish between the two meanings of “concrete abstraction” and to see that the second of them has nothing to do with the constitutive feature but is a criterion of value. Taine's criteria are still contradictory because of the concomitance of the scientist and historicist tendencies. The sociologism which led Taine to historicism came to nothing because it was curbed and sidetracked by a concept modeled on the lines of biologism of “elementary forces” in art and literature. In addition these are not universal criteria as Taine must himself have realized since he deliberately evaded the issue when he proceeded to consider values in music and architecture. In the introduction (III) to his study of “The Ideal in Art” he referred his readers to the first chapters of *Philosophie de l'art* without as we know saying anything about criteria of judgment. In his conclusion (§III, 5) he stated only that in music and architecture a work constitutes a “self-contained whole.” This would suggest that the basic criterion in these two arts is the consistency of effects. The elemental feature in music would be *expression* of feelings (perhaps religious), in architecture the sense of the harmony of the world. The good feature would be the causing of joy both through a building and through a musical work. These are only guesses, and so flimsy that no sure construction can be built on them. It is precisely with reference to these two arts that Taine could have developed the criteria implied by him and arrived at the scheme which I have outlined. It is to be regretted that he faltered before these difficulties. In any case his is one of the boldest and most significant attempts to set out criteria of judgment in the nineteenth century, as has been emphasized, almost to the point of exaggeration by Sholom J. Kahn.<sup>29</sup>

#### IV

The last chapter of Kahn's book bears the significant title, “Our Heritage from

Taine." Kahn is well aware of many of the limitations of Taine's aesthetic system; nonetheless he stresses its lasting elements. Among these he lists his historicism ("the great modern crystallization of the historical method"), his understanding of the social and institutional role of literature, and his laying of the foundation of the comparative method. Serious doubts might be aroused by Taine's historicism.<sup>30</sup> His second bequest might also be queried when we consider that Taine was concerned not so much by the function as by the genesis of the work of art. The third of his "lasting" elements is also open to scepticism since Taine himself on the whole avoided comparisons between different ages on account of the "cyclical model" proposed by him. On the other hand his "factors"—which can, indeed, be used to trace analogous processes in the history of various literatures—are the summing up of earlier aesthetic thought (from Dubos, Vico, and Herder to Hegel) so that Taine's contribution was more a matter of synthesis than of discovery. If we add that his biologism is a typical acquisition from the middle of the nineteenth century, it might be thought that Taine's system is really a museum piece. This verdict would be thoroughly invidious.

My aim was neither to erect a monument to Taine nor to remove him from the bookshelves of modern aesthetics. Both ventures would be ahistoric and so wrong-minded. I wanted rather to do something suggested by Taine himself in his conclusion to the book on Livy. The third and last paragraph opens with this sentence: "Nous pourrions beaucoup lui apprendre; il peut beaucoup nous enseigner."<sup>31</sup> Thus this sentiment has guided me in the present essay. To what extent do Taine's remarks about value and criteria of judgment coincide with most of the solutions advanced today? This is another field of study, which I have now to leave open.

\* In an essay on Taine in my *Studies in the History of Aesthetic Thought in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* I treated the problem of criteria as one of the examples of the internal contradictions in this writer. His sociologism, which is a partial and idiosyncratic continuation of romantic historicism, comes into conflict with the scienticism

of positivist derivation. In the course of further work on Taine in the University of Warsaw Chair of Aesthetics, in connection with the honors class of 1960–1961 and the thesis of my doctorant Sławomir Krzemien on these problems, I came to the conclusion that this subject requires separate and more thorough study.

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophie de l'art* (Paris, 1865), p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> "Le pèle mêle douloureux et grandiose d'un coeur troublé," *op. cit.*, p. 154.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 73.

<sup>4</sup> *Essai sur Tite-Live* (Paris, 1888), 5th ed., Part 2, Ch. 2, 1, pp. 247–248, Part 2, Ch. 3, § 1, I and II, pp. 251–255, § 2, II, pp. 296–297, and Conclusions, § 1, pp. 330–333.

<sup>5</sup> *Les philosophes classiques du XIX siècle en France* (Paris, 1876), pp. 101–103.

<sup>6</sup> "Dans les arts, rien d'indigène, sauf des mémoires de famille acrits par intérêt de race, des annales sèches... des rituels, des livres de comptes, des recueils de lois, des livres de sentences morales... En poésie, nulle fiction originale, nulle invention des caractères... Si Rome a des poètes, c'est quand son génie périt sous un esprit nouveau." *Op. cit.*, Part 1, Ch. 6, § 2, p. 184.

<sup>7</sup> *Histoire de la littérature anglaise*, Vol. 2 (Paris, 1866), p. 259.

<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 194. It is typical that even in the essay on Livy Shakespeare is the crowning argument for poetry (*op. cit.*, pp. 292–293). In addition Livy is also compared to Racine since "Tite-Live ressemble à nos tragiques du dix-septième siècle. Peu de décorations, point de cris, d'agonies physiques, mais de suites d'idées et de sentiments; plus de raison et de passion que l'imagination" (*op. cit.*, pp. 263–264).

<sup>9</sup> "... défaut qui tient à les qualités et qui maintenu d'abord dans une juste mesure, contribue à lui faire produire ses plus purs chefs d'oeuvres," *op. cit.*, p. 257. Rousseau, Taine goes on, although like others he put on "the clothes of the orator, was excellently understood by his contemporary readers" (*op. cit.*, p. 355).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. a similar reflection in *Philosophie de l'art* in the introductory remarks to Dutch painting, and in the attack on the literariness of Hogarth and Delaroche in the final chapter (§2, V).

<sup>11</sup> This criterion can be found in *Notes d'Angleterre* in Chapters II, III, and VII (dealing with national types, customs, and spirit) when Dickens, Thackeray, Eliot, and Elizabeth Browning are prerogative instances, that is, their artistic values are measured by the extent to which they represent life values, then happily dominating in England.

<sup>12</sup> In the introduction to Hegel's *Aesthetics*, ch. 3, we read that art, as a conscious goal of spiritual activity constructed from the material of the senses and for the senses of man, is something more than the straightforward imitation of nature. What Taine calls the "idea" is here "absolute spirit," but the conclusions are identical. In the introduction, part 1, ch. 2, Hegel emphasizes that "Die Form der sinnlichen Anschauung nun gehört der Kunst an, so dass die Kunst es ist, welche die Wahrheit [my underlining] in Weise sinnlicher Gestaltung für das Bewusstsein hinstellt" (*Aesthetik* [Berlin, 1955], p.

138). In the introduction to part 3, ch. 2, Hegel considers the *Totalität* of art, that is, its fullness connected with an objective-subjective, sensual-spiritual comprehension of reality. This idea fits in with Taine's enthusiasm for Shakespeare's "concrete abstraction." Art, Hegel argues, is not a pure illusion; on the contrary, it is an attainment of the essence of things by way of its sensible symptoms (*Scheinen*). That is why Hegel closes his great work with an encomium to art which represents *die schönste Seite der Weltgeschichte*. The spirit of Taine's conclusion to the first chapter of *Philosophie de l'art* is identical.

<sup>13</sup> I have taken this term from W. Tatarkiewicz, *Historia estetyki*, vol. 1 (Wrocław, 1960).

<sup>14</sup> *Op. cit.* (New York, 1953), pp. 242-243.

<sup>15</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 77 and 167.

<sup>16</sup> *Philosophie de l'art*, *op. cit.*, p. 159. One comes back again to Hegel's *Aesthetik*, where Taine could most probably find his inspiration. Hegel wrote in part 3, section 1, ch. I (*Einleitung und Einteilung*) about architecture expressing *allgemeine Anschauungen*. Part 3, section 3, ch. II (especially §3) dealing with music says that this art conveying *subjective Innerlichkeit* expresses at the same time the characteristic subjective traits (*das Charaktervolle*) of the given historical period. As the cases of evidence are given Handel, Rossini, and above all the church medieval music which we read "gehört zum Tiefsten und Wirkungsreichsten was die Kunst überhaupt hervorbringen kann." About Hegel's conception of music see the very impressive observations in Ernst Fischer's *Von der Notwendigkeit der Kunst* (Dresden, 1959).

<sup>17</sup> We read here that "... the more excellent the poet, the more national he is. The more deeply he expresses himself in art, the more the genius of his age and his race expresses itself through him" and that genius is only the expression of psycho-social forces. *Op. cit.*, 3rd ed., pp. 342-344.

<sup>18</sup> *Science and Aesthetic Judgment*, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78. The opposite argument is advanced by I. Jenkins in his essay, "H. Taine and the Background of Modern Aesthetics," *The Modern Schoolman* (March, 1943). In his view Taine is rather a representative of "expression" since he has more to say about the artist than about his work. Nevertheless Taine's definition of art is deduced from objectivist assumptions, while the subjective aspect (the modifying idea) that is part of these assumptions appears later and never pushes the other aspect into the background.

<sup>19</sup> *Philosophie de l'art*, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

<sup>20</sup> The problem raised here is not my discovery; the credit for this belongs to my doctoral student Sławomir Krzemien with whom I have had a number of stimulating discussions about Taine's aesthetics. In the doctoral thesis already referred to, which is to be printed in its entirety or in the parts relevant to this problem, Krzemien has followed a different course from the one taken in this essay. In his view "concrete generalization" in our sense (c) is considered by Taine to be a constitutive character of a work whereas I think that Taine's remarks on this subject *cannot be given the same weight* as his other propositions. On the other hand, I have taken

account of other aspects of the definition which Krzemien has ignored: the difference between sense (a) and sense (e), and the relation between expression and mimesis. The other points of difference or similarity in our interpretation will be mentioned later.

<sup>21</sup> "Dem Inhalte nach ist deshalb die Poesie die reichste, unbeschränkteste Kunst," quoted from *op. cit.*, p. 588.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 727 and 874.

<sup>23</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 293.

<sup>24</sup> "Des Prinzip dieser politischer Tugend... ist der wahren Kunst entgegen. So finden wir denn auch in Rom keine schöne, freie und grosse Kunst," *op. cit.*, p. 493.

<sup>25</sup> Hegel's imprecise distinction between art in a special sense as poetry and art as a sensible symptom of the spirit has been passed on not only to Taine. In Polish writing J. Kremer adopted it and fell into the same trap; like Taine he was clumsily caught on the horns of the dilemma that *the Romans had an art but that there was no Roman art*. A separate study still has to be made of the relation between Hegel's concept and those of Schleiermacher and Schelling; these in turn led to Croce's system in which poetry being equated with *intuizione pura* completely lost its character of art in the sense of a cultural phenomenon perceived by the senses.

<sup>26</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 377-378.

<sup>27</sup> Compare also the interesting conclusion of *Essai sur Tite-Live* in which he urged contemporary historians to follow the example of both Thucydides the scientist and Tacitus the artist.

<sup>28</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 392-394.

<sup>29</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 186-188, 199-204. I have already expressed my indebtedness to Kahn in a previous essay. It was he who stressed the contradiction between biologism and historicism (*op. cit.*, pp. 135-137) and drew attention (chs. XII and XIII) to the irreconcilability of the criteria set out by Taine and their inapplicability to any but the representational arts. He also comments on the conflict between the "romantic" and "classical" element in Taine's system. He has also accentuated the relation between Taine's three "factors" and sociological criteria, and its severance as soon as we move on to the biologicistic criteria. A new point was discovered by Sławomir Krzemien in his thesis; it is thanks to him that my attention was drawn to "concrete abstraction" as a criterion of value. His analysis emphasized the importance of Taine's tastes in his choice of "romantic" values. In this essay I have tried, making use of the achievements of my predecessors, to take the analysis even further. Propositions (d), (e), and (f), previously ignored or barely mentioned, have been included in the exposition, and the internal problems of Taine's system of judgment have been more carefully reconstructed.

<sup>30</sup> I discussed this point in my essay on Taine quoted earlier. I agree with the view taken by Edmund Wilson in *To the Finland Station* (1940), Part 1, ch. 7, that this was a historicism "in decline" not only in comparison with Hegel but also with Michelet.

<sup>31</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 353.

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The Problem of Value and Criteria in Taine's Aesthetics

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Source: *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (Summer, 1963), pp. 407-421

Published by: [Wiley](#) on behalf of [The American Society for Aesthetics](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/427097>

Accessed: 16/04/2013 17:02

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