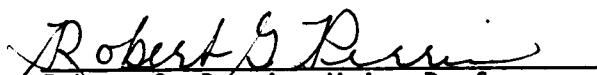
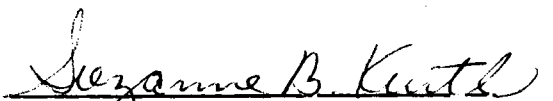
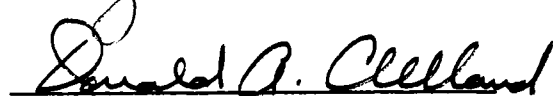


To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by John P. Lynxwiler entitled "Art as Data: An Exploratory Essay." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Sociology.


Robert G. Perrin, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:


Vice Chancellor
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Thesis
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ART AS DATA: AN EXPLORATORY ESSAY

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

John P. Lynxwiler

June 1980

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ABSTRACT

The possibilities and feasibilities of developing a comprehensive methodology for analyzing art from a sociological perspective with special attention to the meaning of art works is explored. It is argued that a proper framework for understanding the relationship between art and society can be found within an analysis of the content of an art work at the level of meaning. The content of an art work is expressed in a unique form of non-verbal communication; thus, the social meaning attributed to the work represents data on the life experiences of artists, as well as the relationship between the material and non-material components of a society's culture. By combining the hermeneutical philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer with a phenomenological perspective, as it has been developed within the Weberian-Schutzian tradition, the initial steps are taken towards explicating this methodology for the sociology of art.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. THE SOCIOLOGY OF ART	15
III. TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF ART	29
IV. TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE SOCIOLOGY OF ART	40
V. CONCLUSIONS	67
BIBLIOGRAPHY	77
APPENDICES	88
Appendix A	89
Appendix B	99
VITA	100

GLOSSARY

Art Objects or performances created in response to certain real or imagined events or objects. Art serves no utilitarian function, but is valued for its intrinsic qualities. Art serves to deny the individual's life-world, yet it is also the means by which individuals organize and communicate their subjective emotions and feelings.

Craft Objects produced by individuals to serve a utilitarian function within the life-world.

Creation Synonymous with making or construction.

Discursive or sensate language That form of language which allows individuals to organize and communicate their sensate experiences of the world around them.

Effective historical consciousness The ability to "open" oneself up to history, thus allowing the art object that is to be interpreted an opportunity to "reveal" itself. The task of the effective historical consciousness is the fusing of historical horizons.

Emotions or feelings Everything that may be felt (i.e., sensations, attitudes, sensibilities, mental and physical conditions, and the full spectrum of emotions).

Existentialism A movement in philosophy that stresses human freedom and responsibility for our actions.

Hermeneutics The process of interpreting and understanding; usually refers to the interpretation of texts, historical acts, or historical objects.

Hermeneutic circle In the most general sense, the process of interpreting and understanding a text, historical act, object, etc. through a dialectical process that involves understanding the whole through the parts and the parts through the whole.

Horizons The limits of perception or knowledge that one has of the familiar world. Horizons are formed out of the socio-historical context in which an object, event, or individual is situated.

Indexicality Refers to situated meanings; the meanings attributed to rules, norms, terms, etc. may change as the context of the situation in which they are used changes.

Intentionality The thesis that every conscious act has an object.

Intersubjectivity The world common to all members; the meanings shared among and between members.

Life-world The world as encountered in everyday life and given in direct and immediate experience.

Meaning That which is intended to be or is expressed or indicated; meaning refers to the social analysis of action which is anchored within the confinements of external conditions.

Natural attitude The actor's tendency to accept without question (naively) or to suspend doubt in the paramount reality of our everyday world.

Ontology The philosophical study of "Being."

Transcendental ego The fact of one's own self-consciousness; the mental activity that unifies our various thoughts and sensations.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Sociology and Art

Sociology is the scientific study of human social behavior. It is concerned with both the creation of social settings (e.g., groups, organizations, cultures, and societies) in which individuals live out their lives and the various ways these social settings shape the "raw" individual into a social being. The sociological enterprise, then, has as a goal, the understanding and explanation of the interactions between individuals and their social settings. The achievement of this goal requires a comprehensive examination of both objective (i.e., overt, observable) and subjective (i.e., covert, relatively hidden) components of social behavior. Together, these two facets of social behavior form the individual's social life as well as his social setting.

The "methods" required for an examination of social behavior can vary from personal insight to precise "head counts." Within sociology, a great deal of discussion has been generated over the utility of different methodological strategies in attaining the larger goals of the sociological enterprise. Many times these methodological discussions are grounded in larger disputes concerning the utility of applying sociological analysis to either the subjective or the objective aspects of social behavior. Regardless of the side to which any particular sociologist may find himself drawn, the majority of his peers would agree that investigations into both the covert and overt aspects of

social behavior are necessary if sociology is to achieve its broader goal (cf. the correspondence between Schutz and Parsons in Grathoff, 1978).

Still, sociologists usually find themselves emphasizing either the subjective or the objective aspects of social behavior. The subject matter of their research is to a large extent determined by which aspect they find most appealing (cf. Wallace, 1969:Pt. I). The methods or strategies found in sociology are developed as a means for obtaining answers to the sociologist's questions. Understanding is achieved as valid answers are obtained during the research process. Since the real object is the attainment of valid answers, the methods utilized, it can be argued, should be defined in such a way as to include "all the ways of thinking and even feeling about subject matter" (Redfield, 1977:12).

Robert Redfield believed that social scientists must adapt their methods to fit the questions posed by their research. The social scientist must use whatever means available in order to solve the problems posed by his subject matter. In "The Art of Social Science" (1977), Redfield discusses what he finds to be a common anomaly within the social sciences. His position can be stated in the following manner: a great deal of importance in the social sciences is placed on the cultivation of highly formalized methodological procedures. However, many of the especially insightful expositions or "classic works" constitute a breach of the standard canons of formal scientific research. What the classic expositions seem to share is (1) a perception of human nature, (2) a wealth of significant generalizations, and (3) a fresh, independent examination of the subject matter.

Methods, according to Redfield, should be defined in the "broadest sense to include all the ways of thinking and even feeling

about subject matter" (1977:12). He concludes his essay by noting that "in advancing social science, we invent and practice techniques, and we also cultivate a humanistic art" (1977:15). This humanistic art stands in opposition to what can be called "methodological imperialism."

Methodological imperialism refers to the condition in which the currently available methods of a science determine the selection of research problems and/or the limits of analysis in a given area. To advocate such a condition limits the scope of sociological research and ultimately stultifies the sociological enterprise. Methods constitute procedures or techniques that guide scientific research, but methods should not be allowed to determine the course of the scientific enterprise. Instead, the sociologist must cultivate the humanistic art in his research. The cultivation of this humanistic art requires more than formal training. It requires the development of a sociological imagination.

The sociological imagination allows for the adjustment and creation of methods suitable to the subject matter and the questions posed by the researcher. As C. Wright Mills asserts:

The sociological imagination, I remind you, in considerable part consists of the capacity to shift from one perspective to another, and in the process to build up an adequate view of a total society and its components. It is this imagination, of course, that sets off the social scientist from the mere technician. . . . There is a playfulness of mind back of such combining as well as a truly fierce drive to make sense of the world, which the technician as such usually lacks. . . . Let every man be his own methodologist, let every man be his own theorist; let theory and method again become part of the practice of a craft (Mills, 1959: 211, 212, 224 [*italics added*]).

Even though Mills made this statement some twenty years ago, the challenge he issued retains its power to stimulate sociologists today.

There is an old saying that seems to fit Mills' statement: "A well turned phrase can move the hearts of men."

It requires a special skill to be able to stimulate emotions through words, music, dance, painting, and sculpture. Those individuals who have the ability to "move the hearts of men" or to "paint a picture worth a thousand words" are referred to as artists, and the objects that they produce are labeled "art."

Art is as much a part of human history as the family. It would be possible to trace the origin of man's interest in art to a period somewhere between 15,000 and 10,000 B.C. (Janson, 1971). Granted these early artisans were often more concerned with communication than with the artistic portrayal of themselves or their world; however, they, none the less, represent an attempt to render on a two-dimensional surface what had been experienced in a three-dimensional world. Art, as an artifact, has been used as a method for recording, categorizing, and understanding past and present civilizations.

Art has also been used to help motivate people to accept social order, demand social reform, and instigate social revolutions. Aristotle conceived art to be the reflection of nature, and Marx saw it as a reflection of the existing system of production. Nietzsche felt that art was a potential means for fulfilling the individual's will to power, and Parsons held that art was a means through which the stress caused by instrumental roles in a social system could be eased (cf. Appendix A).

Is art a mirror of nature? It is not in the strict sense of the term. Rudolf Arnheim responds to this by stating that "if you assume that art copies nature, you would expect that the earliest phases of art would attempt to show things as they appear in photographs, but

instead, you find highly stylized geometric shapes" (Arnheim, 1972:94). Noelle Rodriquiz has shown that the Marxian paradigm alone is not sufficient for the analysis of art due to the "opposition of subjective and objective aspects of art" (Rodriquiz, 1974:7). We also find that the romantic philosophy of Nietzsche and that of the German Idealists offer little in the way of a workable solution for sociologists. Parsons may have come close, but as with Max Weber, he stops short in his analysis of art by positing an explanation developed within the philosophy of Aristotle (cf. Appendix A).

There have been many attempts to develop a theory of art and society. One of the first was made by Madame de Staël in 1800, when she examined the relationship of literature and society. Classical thinkers in philosophy and sociology have examined this relationship (cf. Appendix A), and with few exceptions, it has been neglected even though its potential influence has often been stressed.

Does art function as a social safety valve permitting the release of tensions and strains built up through the everyday routine of fulfilling instrumental roles? Aristotle and later Parsons posited such an explanation. Perhaps art does serve as a means for maintaining societal order and thus for providing a subtle form of social control. Talcott Parsons (1964) hinted at the possibility of art emerging as a separate sphere when he noted that artists, like intellectuals, may form "sects" sharing "a common belief system differing from the diffuser (sic) general ideology of the society" (1964:412). Although he went no further, one can consider the influences often exerted by "sects" of intellectuals to discern the potential influence artists and their work may have in bringing about change within the art world and the larger society.

The sociology of art as a subfield within sociology has worked from the standpoint of art as an institution. By standard definitions, the sociology of art studies the relationship between art and society by examining the influence each has on the other. In this way, the sociologist can examine the network of social values, norms, and roles that are involved in the creation, evaluation, use and distribution of art in society (cf. Dictionary of Modern Sociology, 1970:405; Encyclopedia of Sociology, 1974:14). This tendency to view art as an institution is not a novel position for sociologists to assume. Max Weber (1964) noted the potential art contains for influencing societal change when art emerges as an alternative to religion and takes the shape of an institution.

However, before art can be examined as an institution, a means must be developed for the retrieval of the meaning of the art work. The content of an art work is a form of non-verbal communication that contains data about the private world of the artist and the larger community of societal members. Art allows individuals to see their world in an emotional rather than rational way. Portions of this emotional, non-verbal language are unique to the individual artist and the artistic milieu in which he lives. However, the artist is also a member of the larger societal community, and therefore, portions of this emotional, non-verbal language are shared by other members of the society. The meaning attributed to an art work represents data on the life experiences of artists, and ultimately, it provides data for the sociologist seeking to explicate the relationship between the material and non-material components of a society's culture.

Max Weber (1964), Georg Simmel (1950), and later Robert Nisbet (1963) have noted the connection art shares with science and in particular the social sciences. Art abstracts reality transforming intangible emotions, visions, and ideas into tangible, points of reality. On the other hand, the substance which sociology seeks to place under its microscope for analysis has "no counterpart whatever in immediate reality" (Simmel, 1950:5). This connection between art and science is more obvious as stated by Nisbet: "the artist's interest in form is the scientist's interest in structure" (1963:152). Both the artist and the sociologist are focusing their work on the problems, attitudes, beliefs, values, and norms present in the existing social order. Both science and art require form, but it is the content of the object that separates them. The artist is "concerned with the mood of a period rather than with the analytical synthesis of its various problems" (Block, 1943:314).

While it may be true that artists "speak" a different language than the rest of society, the artists' self-understanding of themselves and their world, occurs as a result of a socially produced, public language, and it can be reduced to sociological schemes of understanding. Within this same line of thought, literary critical theory has held that art accomplishes social change by changing the language of a society. The problem for the sociology of art is how to examine the two-way impact art and society have on each other. By examining the content of art works at the level of meaning, the sociologist is able to add another dimension to his analysis of this two-way impact. To accomplish this analysis is not an easy task since it requires the sociologist to extract the subjective aspects from a material object.

Purpose and Limitations of This Study

This paper centers itself on just such a problem. That is, it will explore the possibilities and feasibilities of developing a comprehensive methodology for analyzing art from a sociological perspective with special attention to the meaning of art objects. The contribution that this paper seeks to make is a preliminary examination of an approach to art that could ultimately establish a more comprehensive sociology of art. In order to further define the scope of this paper, five questions have been developed that touch upon issues of central importance to a sociology of art. A short discussion accompanies each question, and those questions that are of central importance to this paper are noted within each discussion.

1. How does art relate to larger societal processes?

Art, since it is almost without exception a univerval feature of societies, does relate to the overall structure of a society and thus would seem an important subject for sociological analysis. Satisfactory arguments have been developed by others (cf. Albrecht, 1954; Clark, 1970; Kavolis, 1968) which view art as an integral part of society. Art objects, when taken as social facts, symbolize the non-material realms of a society, and can, therefore, be examined as a reflection of the society's culture, a device for maintaining social stability, a means for influencing social change, a method for cataloging societal advancement (e.g., technological progress), and a barometer of social climate.

Before any of these arguments can be accepted or rejected, it is necessary to relate art to the level of the individual artist, and to those factors which influence the production and meaning of a work of art.

2. How is it that some objects and/or performances come to be viewed as "art?"

This is a difficult but important question for the sociology of art. For that matter, it is a difficult problem for those studying art within a psychological, philosophical, or historical framework. An obvious response to this question might be found within the "labeling" perspective (a development within symbolic interactionist sociology) used by many researchers to explain deviant behavior. In this context, art may be defined in the following manner:

Social groups create [art] by making the rules whose infraction constitutes [non-art], and by applying those rules to particular objects or acts and labeling them as [art]. From this point of view, [art] is not a quality of the object or act the person creates, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an [artist, object, or act]. [Art] is an object or act to which that label has successfully been applied; [artistic] behavior is behavior that people so label (My apologies to Howard Becker 1963:9, for having substituted "art" for "deviance" in what is otherwise his passage).

It could be argued from such a position that, once established, societal definitions of art are internalized by many but not by all. What is art to one group may not be art to another. The problem of universals in art themes will be discussed at a later point although it does present a serious problem for the position taken above.

On the other hand, it is not always necessary to have a precise answer to this question in order to investigate artists and the objects they produce. A definition of why "art is art" may be taken as given data, and thus, allow the investigator to proceed in his analysis. Such a position will be maintained in this paper. Although some light will perhaps be shed on this question, it will not be (nor does it necessarily have to be) of central concern.

3. If art is to be viewed as having a structure, what are the features of this structure, and how does this structure affect the works of art produced?

Defining art as a specific group of individuals engaged in specialized activities that are oriented towards the production of artistic creations, is a valuable asset for sociologists attempting to compile empirical information about artists and their position within the art world. Viewing art as having a structure, that is, examining the art world in terms of work groups, peer groups, or larger organizational patterns and the effect that these groupings have on each other and on individual roles, in addition to calling for an analysis of the components which make up the artistic structure, would also necessitate turning the analysis around to view how the structure, once established, affects the production of artistic works. The issues discussed in this paper, while not focusing directly on this question, will be of assistance to those who are concerned with it.

4. What part does the artist's socio-historical matrix play in the creation of art objects?

The creation (here used to refer to those novel objects or performances considered as art and which are produced through the combination of existing materials into new forms) of art objects does not originate in a vacuum nor can the process be effectively explained through psychology. The socio-historical context of the artist's life-world (cf. glossary) must be considered. It is these factors which enclose and provide the origin for the creation or production of art objects.

The answer to this question is complex and important to the sociology of art since it is just such a question which underscores those previously mentioned. Such a question calls for an examination of the artist's socially created subjective world and its relationship to the objective social world in which his artistic creation manifests itself. It is this question and the one which follows, as both are intimately related, that will constitute this paper's primary concern.

5. How is the individual artist's consciousness related to the contents of the art work produced?

This question is related to the previous one. Both the artist's consciousness (here referring to the individual's knowledge of sensations and mental operations) by which creation is guided and thru which meaning is attributed (or attached) to the contents of the art work are woven into the fabric of the socio-historical setting. The artist internalizes the culture of the socio-historical matrix which becomes a means for organizing his understanding of social reality. This process of internalization molds the artist's consciousness shaping the perceptions he will formulate throughout his life (cf. Mueller, 1973; Edelman, 1977). The art works produced by the artist are a result of the mental operations performed within his consciousness, and the meanings attached to the works by the artist and his public are constituted through their respective, socially constructed ways of seeing the world.

Chapter I ("Introduction") has pointed to several key issues that will be elaborated throughout the remainder of this paper. Chapter II ("The Sociology of Art") will review current work in the area, after which the limitations of these works will be examined. The terms "art"

and "meaning" will also be discussed in order to underscore their unique features. Chapter II will conclude with a brief examination of sociology as a science. Chapter III ("Towards an Understanding of Art") will discuss the phenomenological basis for establishing a sociology of art at the level of meaning as well as examine the unique language that art utilizes to communicate emotional experience. Chapter IV ("Towards a Comprehensive Sociology of Art") will explicate the hermeneutic perspective and provide suggestions for its application in the analysis of art works at the level of meaning. Chapter V ("Conclusions") will evaluate the hermeneutic-phenomenological approach for analyzing the content of art works at the level of meaning.

The subsequent chapters in this paper examine a neglected aspect within the sociology of art (and ultimately, the sociology of knowledge) and offer a unique method for the analysis of this neglected but important aspect. The social meaning of art works can provide valuable data on the artist, his socio-historical milieu, and ultimately, the understanding of social behavior. Thus, the issues that are explicated within this paper constitute important, initial efforts toward developing a novel approach for the sociological analysis of human social behavior.

Methodology

Because this paper attempts to develop and adapt a philosophical treatise for the sociological analysis of art, support will be drawn from existing studies completed by others working in this area. Much of my thinking has been influenced by Anthony Giddens's book New Rules of Sociological Method (1976). This influence directed me into the

world of philosophical phenomenology and hermeneutics. The choice of whose work to include and whose to overlook was made as a result of my inquiries into this area. Certain individuals emerged as more relevant to the questions posed by this paper, and a reading of their works often led to other sources. As such, reaching closure was not an easy task (according to both Weber and hermeneutics, closure is never final anyway, but always an arbitrary point selected by the investigator). However, this process of reviewing different works with regard to their usefulness in developing my argument eventually led me in particular to the writings of three individuals. The work done by Susanne Langer helped formulate the argument calling for a radical approach to the sociology of art. Hermeneutical philosophy, as conceived by Hans-Georg Gadamer, provided a framework from which I could build the strategy needed for the sociology of art. Finally, the work of Alfred Schutz and his students provided a basis for adapting philosophical hermeneutics to the sociology of art.

The support for my contentions in this paper are drawn from the work of individuals who have expressed similar thoughts in their own work. Additional support will include considered personal observations and assessments as well as those of professional art historians.

The issues explored in this paper represent major theoretical problems that demand the attention of the sociologist interested in conducting formal investigations into the arts. Without a satisfactory examination of such problems as artistic creativity, aesthetic evaluations, and the social meaning of art objects, the sociology of art cannot move towards the development of a comprehensive theoretical understanding of the relationship between art and society. The solutions

to these problems and the development of a comprehensive sociology of art cannot be provided all at once, but a start must be made. This essay explores many of the problems confronting the sociology of art, and though it does not provide all the answers, it does constitute an important step in the right direction.

CHAPTER II

THE SOCIOLOGY OF ART

Review of the Field

When one seeks to analyze a work(s) of art, there are several methodological strategies that can be employed from various theoretical perspectives within the social sciences. This is true whether one is interested in painting, literature, drama, sculpture, music, dance, poetry, or the communities of individuals who are involved in these areas as performers, creators, consumers, critics, or supportive personnel. Thus, as with other areas of social life, art has been subjected to the sociologist's methods in an attempt to extract data that will aid in the understanding of human actions.

The social critic Tom Wolfe has examined modern art from one such perspective (Wolfe, 1975). He has focused his analysis on the role of art critics as artistic promoters who have expanded their positions as critics to one of interpreters of art. Through Wolfe's insightful presentation, we are given a view of the art critic as a public relations man who orchestrates the public into gestalt shifts allowing them access into the tangled world of aesthetic understanding. Wolfe takes the reader into a world in which individuals must accept a given explanation of an object before they confront it. Even the individual artists are portrayed as puppets who have come to believe their own press releases. Wolfe's analysis of modern artists and their critics may not be representative of mainstream sociological analysis, but according to a few (cf. Lofland, 1971), it represents the sociological imagination at work.

On the other hand, Michal McCall's study of female artists in St. Louis offers insights on another level. McCall (1978) was interested in gaining insight into the artist as a member of the artistic community striving for success and fulfillment. McCall examines the ways in which female artists define their artistic status within the artistic community. Her analysis utilizes the symbolic interactionist approach (cf. Heap and Roth, 1973) in order to discover how females define themselves and others as artists.

Transcending many of Wolfe's and McCall's concerns, Hugh Duncan has developed a theoretical model which parallels and expands the ideas of Kenneth Burke. Duncan (1953, 1957) has attempted to draw out the relationship between artists, critics, and the public as a means for mapping out the directions research should follow. Duncan views art as an institution and develops a theory of art grounded in the patterns of communication between the artist, the public, and the critics.

Duncan is not alone in attempting to point out the directions that research in art should follow. Schaper (1969) has called for sociologists to pay attention to artistic styles as a means for analyzing art. Yoos (1966) discusses the function of analyzing the titles of art works as a means towards gaining a sociological understanding of art. Duvignaud's work in France (1972) points to the need for sociologists to develop a sociology of the imagination when undertaking studies of artists and their work. Kavolis (1965, 1968) has examined the relationship of art to social class, pointing to the idea that artistic creativity is linked to economic factors. Albrecht (1954, 1956) views art as an institution that allows the researcher to examine the relationship between social values and those values

expressed in literature. Pelles (1963) has studied the social background of artists. Similar studies have been undertaken by Elkoﬀ (1970) and Grayburn (1963). Walters and Tobin (1976) have investigated the portrayal of females in the visual arts. Deinhard (1970) has attempted to develop a theory of art that takes into account the trans-historical nature of artistic works. Lowenthal (1967) and Goldmann (1964) have examined the historical relationships of art and society. General theories of art, aside from Sorokin's, have been developed mainly out of the Marxian tradition (cf. Hauser, 1951; Fisher, 1964).

From this brief survey of the field, it should be noted that the sociology of art is not a virgin area unpenetrated by the sociologist's methods and theories. Most of the studies conducted in the arts have been empirical analyses. More recently, sociologists have called for a clarification of concepts and guiding theories (cf. Becker, 1978; Best, 1977; Wolff, 1975). This concern within the sociology of art, then, is not new; rather, it underscores the thoughts expressed earlier by others (cf. Pittman, 1957, Barnett, 1959).

As I mentioned earlier, there are very few guiding theories that attempt to examine the content of art works at the level of meaning. Only the Marxist approach attempts such an analysis, and the problems of a Marxist approach to art have been effectively pointed out by several writers (cf. Duvignaud, 1972; Marcuse, 1977; Rodriquez, 1974; Duncan, 1957; Wolff, 1975). The primary criticism expressed by these writers concerns the deterministic nature of a Marxian analysis. To claim that material conditions are virtually the only factors influencing the production of art objects is similar to claiming that a relatively complete understanding of a building can be reached by

viewing it only from the front. Art is a subjective experience both for the artist and for the public. To be certain, there are material factors influencing art, and symbolic elements may very nearly though not completely be "explained away" through such a macro-deterministic point of view.

Other studies that attempt to examine the content of an art work at the level of meaning usually slip into an attempt at a psychological explanation of the artist's motives and life history. Such an explanation ignores the social factors that are essential to a comprehensive understanding of art. Howard Becker (1974) has discussed the roles played by supportive personnel and existing materials in the creation of art works. Besides, a psychological explanation that centers itself on the artist's motives can only provide an understanding of the artist and not an understanding of the art work's social meaning. In an effort to avoid such a narrow approach, it will be useful to examine two concepts that are of central importance to this paper--art and meaning.

Art and Meaning

Art is normally placed within the context of a definition similar to the following: "... the production or expression of what is beautiful, appealing, or of more than ordinary significance" (The American College Dictionary, 1969:70). However, Howard Becker (1978) has noted the difficulties in defining art, and he has concluded that this problem of definition may be of use in analyzing change. Following Becker, art is to be separated from craft, since craft involves the creation of goods produced to serve utilitarian purposes (e.g.,

pottery, plumbing, or piano music for dancing). On the other hand, art, in particular symbolic or "high art," has "no evident or possible practical use" (Becker, 1978:865). Thus, pottery may be a craft or an art depending upon its degree of decoration and aesthetic qualities.

Charles Fethe (1977) has approached the problem of making a distinction between art and craft from a phenomenological perspective. Fethe combines Collingwood's definition of art with Husserl's description of the life-world (Lebenswelt). Fethe applauds Collingwood's contention that art is distinct from craft due to its power for expressing emotions (Fethe, 1977:130). However, Fethe finds fault with Collingwood's inability to elaborate on this distinction. With the aid of phenomenology, this distinction becomes more precise.

Through Husserl's definition of the life-world, craft can be viewed as a "part of the life-world which displays aesthetic qualities" (Fethe, 1977:133). The experience of art, however, is, "in essence, a denial of the characteristics which mark our experience of the life-world: it is a denial of purposiveness, utility and common expectations" (Fethe, 1977:134). The craftsman creates objects that have a specific place in the life-world even though they are deemed intrinsically valuable; however, the artist creates objects which deny "the life-world in a radical way by presenting a possible substitute for it" (Fethe, 1977:134-135). The distinction between art and craft depends on the "potential the object has to affect our experience of the life-world" (Fethe, 1977:136). This distinction, which Fethe makes, has the added advantage that it is not restricted to any single field of the arts, but instead, it can be used to analyze art, be it painting, dancing, or basket weaving.

Both Becker and Fethe present usable definitions of art for the purposes of this paper. However, because this paper will develop a phenomenological perspective, the above distinctions made by Fethe will be utilized when it becomes necessary to distinguish between art and craft. Those areas which fall under the general heading of art but constitute differing fields will be referred to by using the general headings or terminology (e.g., literature, poetry, music, etc.). The fields of painting and sculpture will be combined under the term "visual arts," excluding films, drama, dance, etc.

The other term that requires elaboration is "meaning." Meaning, as it is used throughout this paper, does not refer to psychological interpretations of motives, but to the social analysis of action.

[M]eaningfully understood mental and emotional relationships and especially, action that is rationally purposefully motivated are for sociology, thoroughly qualified to figure as links in the causal chain which, for example, begins with external conditions and in the end leads again to "outer" behavior (Max Weber, trans. by Roth, et al., 1970; quoted in Graber, 1975:69).

Thus, social action, including mental and emotional relationships, is behavior that begins and ends within the confinements of external conditions. Berger and Luckmann (1967), by following the lead of Weber and Schutz, have discussed the ways in which objective, external conditions become part of the individual's subjective life-world. For Berger and Luckmann the causal chain of which Weber spoke is circular in nature. Social individuals and groups create objects that eventually take on a life apart from those who created them. These objects, and the meanings imputed to them, are then internalized by members of the society. If these objects are the externalization and

objectivation of the artists' subjective experiences, then they represent data for the social scientist seeking to understand social action, for they are the objective manifestation of subjective, social life as experienced by the artist. It might be useful to examine the form that these objects take, but it would be just as useful to examine the meanings that these objects have for those who create, use, and live among them.

For example, artists may have various private motives for pursuing their similar careers, but the majority, if not all of them, share the same goal--the creation of art objects. Once created, these objects represent socio-cultural objects, and various interpretations and meanings may be attributed to them by societal members according to existing socio-cultural standards. Thus, the "meaning" attributed to an art object represents social data on the life experiences of socially created and constrained individuals.

By focusing attention on the art object, the researcher is in a position to examine art as a form of communication. This communication does not directly take place between the artist and his public. Instead, it involves a dialogue between the object and the individual who confronts it. The object, once created, exists separately from its creator. It stands over and against the individual as the manifestation of a portion of the social world. From this position, the art object in some respects represents what Durkheim referred to as a social fact. However, if the sociologist is to fully analyze the art object, he must go beyond the form that the object takes and examine instead the content within the object. The content of an art object represents the sum of the attributes that comprise a given conception.

Form, on the other hand, alludes to the external appearance of the object or the manner in which it is presented.

The form of an art object may cause individuals to accept or reject it as an art object. It is the form that first engages the observer's attention. It is the form that causes observers to comment on the aesthetic qualities of the object. But, it is the content that speaks most directly to the observer. It may be the total object that the individual confronts, but it is the content of the object that enters into a "dialogue" with the individual. The sociological meaning of an art object's content is the point from which the sociology of art should build its foundations because it is here that the socially constructed, inter-subjective nature of the social world is most directly confronted.

The dicotomy of form and content represent problems for the sociologist. Examinations of form which include the analysis of color, composition, titles, style, etc. can be subjected to standard sociological methods, and in this sense, form represents objective factors. However, an analysis of the art object's content requires an examination of subjective factors. Psychologists and art historians tend to examine this content by attempting to discover the artist's motives. However, once created, the object can no longer be understood only in terms that relate back to the artist since the object now stands alone confronting directly those who witness it. An analysis that examines artistic motives will at best result in some understanding of the artistic motives, but not in an understanding of the art object as it constitutes data about the larger social milieu.

Through the medium of art, we can discover the subjective impact society has on the rest of us. Art, like language, is a form of communication as well as a system for organizing the member's world within a socio-historical period. I will return to this important notion during the discussion of the language of art.

Every great work of art is both timeless and an expression of its time (Dienhard, 1970). The work carries within it certain qualities that allow it to transcend the socio-historical period or "frame" in which it was created. Thus, it stands apart from its creator. To achieve the purpose of this paper requires an examination of this act of communication as well as an introduction to a line of inquiry that will allow the sociologist to analyze art objects at the level of meaning.

Science and the Sociology of Art

The above discussion of art and meaning may have helped clarify some of the central issues in this paper; further clarification can be provided by turning to the science of sociology as it relates to art. Sociologists have spent a good deal of time attempting to legitimate their discipline as a "true" science. Modeling many of their theories after those common to the natural sciences, sociologists have attempted to elevate their discipline to the level of formal science by striving towards rigorously controlled research. As a result, sociologists have been forced to adopt a defensive attitude with regard to both those who criticize the discipline's claim as a legitimate science (cf. Merton's reply to Kirk, 1974:7-18) and to those who criticize the discipline from within (cf. Coser's presidential address to the American

Sociological Association, 1975). Both of these problems are relevant to the topic of this paper.

On the one hand, sociology's preoccupation with legitimating itself as a science in a manner similar to the natural sciences severely hinders its efforts to understand art. If sociologists adopt such a position, they would also be inclined to assume that, in the words of Brown, "where science stops there art begins." Such a statement has, as its basis, the assumption that:

"Art" is associated in popular conceptions with emotions and feelings, with the unique, particular, and unpredictable, with creativity and genius; "science," on the other hand, is thought of as the province of rationality, ordered and disciplined thought, clearly defined problems, and carefully tested solutions (Brown, 1977:3).

Sociology cannot allow itself to assume such a position with regard to art because art embodies important knowledge about the social world. The objective or external factors which shape our subjective consciousness become objectified in a work of art. To ignore such objects because they do not lend themselves to orthodox research techniques is to defeat the purpose of sociology as a discipline concerned with the comings and goings of humans within a larger community of individuals. In short, it is to adopt a position similar to methodological determinism.

Leslie White (1949) has suggested that science is a form of social action that "deals with experience according to certain assumptions and with certain techniques" (White as quoted in Nisbet and Perrin, 1977:9). Science differs from other methods of acquiring knowledge because of its insistence that logical inferences be drawn from the study of empirical occurrences. When making logical inferences, the scientist must adhere to the canons of his discipline. The canons of scientific research

stress the importance of the scientist's objectivity throughout the study. By examining his data from an unbiased position, the scientist increases the validity of his conclusions. Further, the scientist must design his research so that others may replicate the study. Finally, the research conducted and the conclusions reached by the scientist must build upon and add to the existing body of scientific knowledge.

The science of sociology follows the canons of science as they have been outlined in the above discussion. However, sociologists must contend with certain problems that are unique to the social sciences. Unlike the natural scientist, the sociologist is a member of the social world that he is seeking to understand. This presents a great many problems for the sociologist, who is attempting to remain objective in his research. It is impossible to completely suspend the values and biases which have been internalized from birth. There are those who would argue that sociology remains biased regardless of how refined measuring techniques become (cf. Douglas, 1970).

Even if these biases could be suspended, sociologists must contend with a subject matter that is much more complex than any found in the natural sciences. Sociologists can never account for all the intervening variables that influence social behavior. Not only is the sociologist often unaware "of all the variables affecting a particular sector of social behavior" (Hibbet and Perrin, 1977:20), but time and cost considerations often limit the number of variables that he can attempt to account for in his research.

There is also the problem of subjective components which can influence social behavior. The objective and subjective aspects of social behavior (these were discussed in the first chapter) compound

the problems faced by the sociologist. The external dimensions of social behavior are often amenable to scientific analysis, but the subjective factors that lie behind external behavior make an adequate understanding difficult.

The very act of studying social behavior can change the behavior under examination. Such realities as "free will" often act to confound even the most meticulous sociological studies. Still, sociologists persist in their effort to grasp the meaning of social behavior and to understand the organization of the social world. Existing techniques are refined and new methods are introduced in order to advance the ever growing body of scientific knowledge.

As this body of knowledge grows, sociologists work to refine the concepts that are used in their scientific investigations of the social world. The general absence of conceptual uniformity within sociology is an earmark of a "new" science. As sociology matures, the central concepts utilized in the analysis of the social world will hopefully become more scientifically "pure" or "constant." However, at the present time, there is a tendency to "ignore or underemphasize that part of social reality not readily amenable to existing methods and concepts" (Nisbet and Perrin, 1977:23). The result of this tendency is a myopic understanding of the social world. To overcome such limitations, the sociologist must utilize every available technique and method in his quest for scientific understanding. Psychology has, for many years, utilized the findings of the natural sciences in its attempt to unravel the workings of the human mind. Sociology must also look to other disciplines in an effort to understand social behavior. Philosophy and the humanities should not be overlooked in this search for clues to the

understanding of social behavior. (See Nisbet and Perrin [1977:Ch. 1], from which some of the preceeding has been adapted.)

It is not the purpose of this paper to unduly criticize the prevalent methodological and theoretical approaches of sociology, but instead, to note their very real limits for achieving an adequate understanding of art. This is not a novel position to assume, as Martindale (1958) and, more recently, Best (1977) have discussed the limits and problems that a scientific sociology must contend with when investigating aesthetic experience. Part of the problem lies in the differences and difficulties of language.

An art work "speaks" to us, as viewers, through an emotional language which is difficult to translate into the sensate language we use in everyday communication. Susanne Langer (1957, 1962) and Ernst Cassier (1966, I) have noted the difficulties involved in translating to sensate language the emotional experiences which one encounters when witnessing art. Add to this problematic translation situation the language of the artistic world which most sociologists confront as laymen, and the sociology of art indeed becomes a difficult area for analysis.

Sociological approaches to art that examine content usually begin by developing categories into which the data are placed. However, such a perspective tends to ignore the notion that art communicates in a language that is different from our everyday sensate or discursive language. The position which this paper explores is one that allows the art work itself to help "generate" categories. In other words, the hermeneutic-phenomenological perspective allows for the translation from emotional to sensate while taking into account the social factors which helped shape the art work. As such, it combines both micro- and macro-levels

of analysis. A similar program has been developed by Giddens (1976) in his discussion of sociological methods. If the hermeneutic-phenomenological approach is successfully developed and applied, it promises to be extremely useful in organizing the sociology of art. This would be true whether the sociologist was interested in understanding the artist's socio-historical matrix, the society producing the art work, or the culture that popularized the work. Depending upon the guiding question, the hermeneutic-phenomenological approach can utilize the social meaning of art works as data on the relationship between art and society. Ultimately, the understandings acquired through the hermeneutic-phenomenological approach will provide a means for organizing the sociology of art into a more comprehensive discipline.

At the basis of this approach is the perspective often referred to as verstehende sociology. Verstehende sociology connotes a wide range of perspectives within sociology (cf. Morris, 1977; Heap and Roth, 1973). Thus, it is necessary to describe just what variation is to be used as a means for adapting hermeneutical philosophy to the program of this paper. In doing this, we will be able to begin to address the central problems that have previously been outlined. First, the phenomenological perspective will be discussed. We may then turn to the problematic issue involved in the language of art. Finally, the hermeneutic-philosophical perspective will be examined, and the possibilities of utilizing a hermeneutic-phenomenological perspective for the analysis of art will be explored.

CHAPTER III

TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF ART

Phenomenology

This section discusses the phenomenological perspective as a basis for establishing a sociology of art at the level of meaning. However, before beginning this discussion, I think it is necessary to stress the point that this paper does not dismiss, as have other works (cf. Douglas, 1970), the more positivistic or quantitative branches of sociology as irrelevant or misguided. Quite to the contrary, I find that a phenomenological approach is necessary to sociology but by no means superior to the theories and methods which have become the mainstream approaches in sociology. It is obvious to me that all approaches or perspectives practiced within sociology are in some sense useful vis-a-vis the larger goal of attaining an understanding of the social world.

Phenomenology has its foundations in philosophy, though in recent years psychologists and sociologists have built perspectives grounded in certain aspects of philosophical phenomenology. Among phenomenologists, there is a recognized but often unspoken problem which has not helped this perspective's attempts to legitimate itself within sociology. At the same time, this problem may have weakened its position in philosophy. The problem is simply that what is called "phenomenology" means different things to different people. Paul Attwell (1974) notes this problem in his discussion of phenomenological sociology, while Hans-Georg Gadamer takes note of the many conceptions and interpretations of phenomenology existing in the philosophical literature. Gadamer writes:

[T]he question, "What is phenomenology?" was posed by almost every scholar whom we can assign to this movement, and the question was answered differently by each one. . . . One's own philosophical standpoint always shines through his description of the basic meaning of phenomenology. . . . Every phenomenologist had his own opinion about what phenomenology really was. . . . The only person who could claim authenticity, because of his unique position, was the founder of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl (1963:143).

I do not think that this is a problem for those who practice the phenomenological approach, but it may have helped confuse those who are seeking an understanding of phenomenology. What becomes necessary, when relating a phenomenological approach to others, is an explanation of the position taken by the author in question. This being the case, it becomes necessary for me to outline the phenomenological approach utilized in this paper. Perhaps it would aid this discussion if a general description of the phenomenological approach were presented (that is a description of those general features of phenomenology on which there is substantial agreement). The logical beginnings for an understanding of phenomenology is to be found in the writings of Edmund Husserl (see, e.g., Ideas [Vol. 1], 1913; Cartesian Meditations, 1913). The seeming failures of Husserl's attempts to establish a philosophy at the level of a rigorous science are well known; however, in his search for the "transcendental ego," Husserl set the stage for modern phenomenology. Before turning to these contributions, I would like to present what may for our purposes be taken as a general definition of phenomenology. As Richard Palmer summarizes the phenomenological position:

[P]henomenology means letting things become manifest as what they are, without forcing our own categories on them. It means a reversal of direction from that one is accustomed to: it is not we who point to things; rather, things show themselves to us. This is not to suggest some primitive animism but the recognition that the very essence of true understanding is that of being led by the power of the thing to manifest itself.

This conception is an expression of Husserl's own intention to return to things themselves. Phenomenology is a means of being led by the phenomenon through a way of access genuinely belonging to it (1969:128).

This is not meant to suggest that the object actually "speaks" to the phenomenologist and in this way the object contains some sort of intrinsic, immutable quality over and above the form it takes. Instead, the phenomenologist carefully and cognitively suspends his own position, as much as possible, so that the object's conferred meaning (i.e., by its creator or present user) can be intellectually retrieved. Also, within the preceding passage, there is another general description that may aid in understanding phenomenology. Phenomenology is, by definition, ahistorical. That is, it does not concern itself with the historical nature of humans. As will be noted in Chapter IV, Gadamer overcomes these limitations through his discussion of philosophical hermeneutics.

Perhaps the most important concept developed by Husserl is his formulation of the Lebenswelt or "life-world." Husserl's explication of the life-world is scattered throughout his voluminous writings on phenomenology, and it was shortly before his death that he began to develop a comprehensive discussion of the concept. Nevertheless, it is "the most influential and suggestive idea that has come out of the study and edition of Husserl's unpublished manuscripts thus far" (Spiegelberg, 1960:159). The Lebenswelt or life-world of an individual is "the world as encountered in everyday life and given in direct and immediate experience" (Gurwitsch, 1970:35).

For the purposes of this paper, it is not necessary to fully develop Husserl's original ideas concerning the life-world. Rather, it will suffice to note its essential features and then discuss the

directions that this concept has taken since his death in 1938. As just noted, Husserl's original formulation of the life-world has and is undergoing changes in its meaning; however, the following passages may be taken as a summary of the main features of this important concept.

1. The most important, and most problematic, fact concerning the life-world is that it constitutes a mode of reality, the reality perceived by the normal adult going about his daily affairs. This mode of reality is finite; it differs from the realities perceived by, for example, the dreamer or the insane.

2. The finite character of the life-world might lead one to think that we are dealing with a subjective concept, but it would be more correct to say that the concept of the life-world is neither subjective nor objective in the normal sense of these terms. For although the life-world is a world-as-perceived and could not be what it is apart from the consciousness which is aware of it, it is not created by consciousness nor is it a function of the peculiarities of individual minds. It is a world of meanings, but "there," pre-given and intersubjectivity.

3. "The life-world," says Husserl, "for us who wakingly live in it, is always already there, existing in advance for us, the 'ground' of all praxis, whether theoretical or extra-theoretical." It is the world conceived pragmatically, the ground of actions and expectations: we expect it always to be there and we have a good idea of what to expect from it.

4. The life-world is mediated to us through culture. It is structured into the various categories and types which are built into our language. It is thus a common world, one which can be shared by others who follow our culture and our linguistic habits (Fetthe, 1977:132-133).

The above points constitute a brief summary of Husserl's concept of the life-world. It is, however, in the work of Alfred Schutz that the concept of life-world becomes important for sociology.

The work of philosopher and social scientist Alfred Schutz has placed him in a special position within verstehende sociology. Schutz's phenomenology is derived from the writings of Husserl and Weber, with additional insights being drawn from the work of Bergson, James, Mead, Simmel, and Thomas, among others (Morris, 1977). The portion of Schutz's

work that is important here is his formalization of the life-world, which constitutes an elaboration of Husserl's original formulation. For Schutz, as with Husserl, the life-world is an intersubjective or shared world in which "we, as human beings among fellow beings, experience culture and society, take a stand with regard to their objects, are influenced by them and act upon them" (Schutz, 1966:116, cf. Schutz, 1966, I).

The life world thus comprises our "stock of knowledge at hand" which is socially approved and socially derived (Gurwitch, 1970:50). Socially approved, as it is used here, refers to the notion that forms of conduct are taken for granted and tacitly approved in typical situations. The life-world is socially derived because it is for the most part passed on to us by others who constitute the members of our life-world such as teachers, parents, friends, and others who share our culture (Schutz, 1966:72). "Man in daily life . . . finds at any given moment a stock of knowledge at hand that serves him as a scheme of interpretation of his past and present experiences, and also determines his anticipations of things to come" (Schutz, 1966:74). Because we are presented at birth with a view of the world as given (i.e., existing prior to us and existing after our death), we take on what is referred to as "the natural attitude."

The natural attitude allows us to accept the world we live in as "well circumscribed objects with definite qualities which resist us and upon which we may act" (Schutz, 1966:72). "The natural attitude is the 'naive' attitude of the situated ego the individual's consciousness located in a specific situation and time frame and is characterized by the mundane practical reasoning of everyday life in which his worlds,

social and natural are indubitable, simply 'there,' and taken-for-granted" (Phillipson, 1973:127). The descriptive investigation of the natural attitude is, for Schutz, the goal of a phenomenological oriented sociology (Roche, 1973:31). Such an investigation is concerned with how an individual accomplishes his day-to-day life with only a vague understanding of the situations he encounters. Each of the situations may present the individual with contradictions in relation to other encountered situations, but the natural attitude allows the individual to accomplish his everyday life without consciously confronting these contradictions. Thus, the goal of Schutz's phenomenological approach became the description of the mundane social world's constitution which is essentially incoherent, only partially clear, and not at all free from contradictions (Schutz, 1966:75-76).

Husserl's program of phenomenology included two additional concepts important to Schutz's approach. The first is intentionality. Intentionality refers to the notion that an individual's consciousness is always conscious of something. Borrowing from Weber, Schutz added the idea of action to the concept of an intentional consciousness (Morris, 1977). Thus, every human action and act of consciousness is purposive or oriented towards something (of something) (Roche, 1973:33). Weber noted how the individual's actions are oriented towards others when he wrote:

Action is social insofar as, by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual (or individuals) it takes account of the behaviour of others and is thereby oriented in its course (Weber, 1947:88).

Because artists create their work with an audience in mind, art-works represent a product of social action.

This notion of the intentionality of actions allows one to suggest that the doings of individuals in their everyday world are social actions which may be made understandable (intelligible) for sociology through a program of verstehende analysis. However, such an analysis requires the existence of some sort of "collective consciousness" among those individuals who can be grouped together as members of a particular society or collectivity. To this end, Husserl developed the concept of "intersubjectivity," which became a pivotal point in the development of a phenomenological sociology as well as an empirical psychology.

It is the idea of intersubjectivity that allows Berger and Luckmann (1967) to develop their treatise on the social construction of reality. Intersubjectivity, as it has evolved in the writings of Schutz, gives rise to the idea that we can know more about others than they do of themselves.

Just as one suspends doubt in his everyday world, so too, do individuals suspend their doubt in assuming that others experience the same world as they. This "reciprocity of perspectives" is based on our taken-for-granted beliefs that (1) if we were to change places with another, each would experience the world in a similar fashion; and (2) in spite of our unique biographies, each of us can disregard these differences, and experience common objects, facts, and events in an "empirically identical manner" (Phillipson, 1973:126). Thus, intersubjectivity refers not to one's private world but to the world common to all of us (Schutz, 1966:112).

In addition to these two points which form the foundations of intersubjectivity, Schutz developed his "general thesis of the alter ego." This thesis provides the basis for a social science seeking to

describe the natural attitude of our everyday world. For Schutz, the phenomenological investigator can understand the social actions of others better than they can understand their own actions. Maurice Roche has described the general thesis of the alter ego in the following manner:

. . . Schutz draws attention to the facts of communication. When the Other speaks and I listen, I am absorbed in the "vivid presence" of the Other's thought. Just as the Other cannot see his own facial expressions, so he cannot catch his own thought by a reflective turn, that is in the "just now" area of time. At the moment he expresses his thought I know the Other in a very different and conceivable more direct way than he knows himself. The opposite holds when I am the speaker, performer or communicator, and the Other is the listening, watchful audience. Then at the moment of performance he knows me in a different way, and conceivable more directly than I know myself, at that moment (1973:32).

This notion requires that sociologists focus their research on the socio-temporal reality of their subjects, which is why "indexicality" has become of central importance to ethnomethodologists, who follow the Schutzian tradition (cf. Garfinkel, 1967). Indexicality, as it is used by ethnomethodologists, is the notion that "rules, or norms, or terms, or explanations . . . have meaning in a particular situation but this meaning may not be the same in another situation" (Morris, 1977:40). In other words, the meaning of an individual's actions are strictly relative to the situation in which they occur. This is, of course, why ethnomethodologists, and others who subscribe to similar perspectives, take an ahistorical position.

Thus, what Schutz gives to sociology is a new way of viewing the socio-cultural world. Schutz's entire program for the social sciences will not be presented here; however, his concern is with the description of the nature of social phenomena and the ways in which they are experienced by individuals in their everyday activities. "This is to be accomplished by examining how situated members construct their realities,

how they account them, and what they account" (Phillipson, 1973:146). This last point brings up the act of communication, which provides further underpinnings for ethnomethodology and its concern with language. However, this paper is not concerned so much with spoken (sensate/discursive) language, but with non-verbal language as it is expressed in the visual arts.

The Language of Art

I will now turn to an examination of non-verbal language and more closely examine the world of art. Susanne Langer, paralleling many of Cassirer's (1966) ideas on symbolic forms, has noted the differences between the subjective language of art and the objective language used to organize our everyday world (Langer, 1957, 1962). Language is the prime instrument of conceptual expression. "Language analyzes, recombines and 'fixes' biologically based subjective consciousness and forms it into intersubjective, typical and communicable experiences" (Berger and Luckmann, 1969:414). Our world, as Wittgenstein and others have noted, is organized according to our language. "The things we can say are in effect the things we can think," and thus, "whatever has a name is an object for thought" (Langer, 1962:79). Language enables us to communicate, but it also allows us to organize sense perceptions into typifications. As Langer has noted:

Without words, sense experience is only a flow of impressions as subjective as our feelings; words make it objective; and carve it up into "things" and "facts" that we can note, remember, and think about. . . . Language gives outward experience its form, and makes it definite and clear (1962:79).

The importance that discursive language has in organizing the world of sensate experiences into a "logical scaffolding" is not to be

denied; however, this paper will not subscribe to the somewhat deterministic premise others such as Wittgenstein and Whorf have assumed in their study of language. Instead, Bernstein's argument that the limits of one's language are social will be adopted in order to align more closely the notions of language with the purposes of this paper.

According to Bernstein's argument, "the form of the social relation . . . generates distinct linguistic forms or codes and these codes essentially transmit the culture and so constrain behavior" (1971:122). This position parallels the one taken by ethnomethodologists, who focus on the "context-bound contingencies of actual language use" (Phillipson, 1973:141). A further reason for this denial of Wittgensteinian language philosophy will become apparent in later chapters.

Returning to Langer's discussion of language, we find that after positing her description of discursive language, she proceeds to illustrate how the world of emotions and feelings is organized. Langer has noted that:

there is a great deal of experience that is knowable, not only as immediate, formless, meaningless impact, but as one aspect of the intricate web of life, yet defies discursive formulation, and therefore verbal expression: that is what we sometimes call the subjective aspect of experience, . . . the "inward life" of human beings (1957:22).

Langer finds that this subjective world of experiences, which is part of the life-world, renders itself unintelligible in our normal discursive language which gives outward experience its form. At the most, our language can only offer generalizing words to explain inner emotions and feelings such as joy, fear, hate, love, etc. The exact nature of feeling, which includes everything that may be felt, cannot be rendered in discursive language (Langer, 1962). "The only pattern discursive

thought can find in them is the outward events that cause them" (Langer, 1962:79).

It is in art that the subjective nature of our inner world is rendered manifest. Just as language gives form to our sense experience, the arts we live with form our emotive experience (Langer, 1957, 1962).

Langer states this idea as follows:

A work of art presents something like a direct vision of . . . subjective reality. . . . The primary function of art is to objectify feeling so that we can contemplate and understand it. . . . Art objectifies the inner experience (or life) which language cannot do . . . because (language) operates on a different set of logic forms. . . . What language does for sense perceptions--art does for the awareness of subjective reality (1962:80-82).

For Langer, art is the objectification of subjective reality. A work of art presents us with a representation of the inward feelings that are themselves a result of our experiences in the life-world.

Further, the art object is not contextually bound in the sense given to linguistic communication by ethnomethodologists. An art work represents the consciousness of the artist, and thus, provides data for the clarification of the life-world and the natural attitude taken by members of society. At the same time, an art object is an objective (i.e., tangible) representation of reality, which being socially constructed, provides data on the existing social milieu in which it continues to exist as a valued object.

The problem, however, is how to extract a valid understanding of the art work that would be useful for an interpretative (Verstehen) sociology. This paper, in exploring the possibilities of extracting a valid understanding of the content of art works, at the level of meaning, now turns to hermeneutics as a way of facilitating the attainment of this goal.

CHAPTER IV

TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE SOCIOLOGY OF ART

Hermeneutics: How to Use Art as Data

Richard Palmer, in tracing the ethnology of hermeneutics back to its Greek roots, states that "the origins of the modern words 'hermeneutics' or 'hermeneutical' suggest the process of 'bringing to understanding,' especially as this process involves language, since language is the medium par excellence in the process" (1969:13). The term "hermeneutics" dates back to the seventeenth century; however, it can be loosely applied even to the interpretations Jesus made from the Old Testament. The Apostles, in turn, utilized a form of hermeneutics when they interpreted Jesus to his followers. This points to perhaps the oldest use of hermeneutics and also to its most widely accepted definition--biblical exegesis (Palmer, 1969). Hermeneutics was generally restricted to biblical exegesis until, with the rise of rationalism in philosophy, Schleiermacher reinterpreted hermeneutics as the science of interpretation.

Friedrich Schleiermacher. It was Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) who developed the concept of the "hermeneutic circle" and recognized the dialectical process involved in the understanding of a text (Palmer, 1969). The concept of the hermeneutic circle involves three interrelated parts. First, there is an assumption that in order for us to understand something we must compare it with something else. This parallels the use of metaphors in theory construction (cf. Skidmore,

1975). Second, the object to be understood is never immediately given to perception, but instead, it is revealed as units or parts, which together make up the whole object. Finally, we can understand an object through a process of interpreting the whole through the parts, while the parts are defined by the whole. An individual concept derives its meaning from a context or "horizon" within which it stands, yet the horizon is made up of the very elements to which it gives meaning (Palmer, 1969). In this way, the parts and the whole give meaning to each other, and understanding is seen, at least metaphorically, as circular. Schleiermacher made several other assertions concerning hermeneutics; however, it is with one of his biographers that hermeneutics becomes important for sociology.

Wilhelm Dilthey. Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1912) utilized Schleiermacher's hermeneutics in order to develop a methodological foundation for the Geisteswissenschaften (i.e., those disciplines which interpret expressions of man's inner life). In rejecting both the idealist tradition in Germany and the rules of the natural sciences, Dilthey's verstehende sociology attempted to develop an objective method for understanding the "expressions of inner life" (Palmer, 1969:98). Thus, Dilthey expanded the subject matter with which hermeneutics could be applied. Objects created by individuals represented expressions of their inner life which were historically located. Like Schleiermacher, Dilthey's hermeneutics required the interpreter to become "one" with the historical period of the object to be understood.

Dilthey identified the meaning of the text or action with the subjective intention of its author. Starting from the documents, artifacts, actions, and so on that are the content of the historical world, the task of understanding is to recover

the original life-world they betoken and to understand the other person (the author or historical agent) as he understood himself. Understanding is essentially a self-transposition or imaginative projection whereby the knower negates the temporal distance that separates him from his object and becomes contemporaneous with it (Linge, 1966: xiii-xiv).

In completing such a projection, the interpreter must suspend his own socio-historical context. The interpreter was, according to Dilthey's hermeneutics, expected to ride a mental time machine back to the horizon of the object's creation in order to retrieve objectively grasped facts. This, of course, is impossible since the interpreter could never completely divorce himself from his present horizon (socio-historical context).

Though Dilthey's efforts at developing a methodological foundation for the Geisteswissenschaften were never widely accepted, he none the less broadened the concept of hermeneutics as well as anticipated the work of Husserl and Nietzsche. Also important are his views on art. As Palmer notes when discussing the importance of art for Dilthey,

Art, for Dilthey, is the purest expression of life . . . although the art work is a good in itself and its encounter is not a means to any other end, the work . . . is related to something beyond itself . . . the art work does not point to its author at all but to life itself . . . the art work is the most reliable enduring and fruitful object of the human studies . . . art is not poetic fantasy and delight but expression of the truth of lived experience (1969:113, 114).

Within more recent discourses on philosophical hermeneutics, only Hans-Georg Gadamer (1975) shares Dilthey's interest in art. In moving our discussion from Dilthey to Gadamer, the innovative writings of Martin Heidegger are not taken into account. However, this does not present a problem in terms of either continuity or understanding because Gadamer, a student of Heidegger, incorporates his teacher's thoughts

throughout his work. It might, however, be useful to briefly mention Heidegger's central ideas as a means for introducing the work of Gadamer.

Martin Heidegger. The aim of Heidegger's hermeneutics was to reach an understanding of "Being" rather than to develop a method for the Geisteswissenschaften. That is, for Heidegger, Verstehen "becomes the power to grasp one's own possibilities for being, within the context of the life-world in which one exists" (Palmer, 1969:131). Understanding is not to be grasped as it was for Dilthey. Instead, it is to be the basis for interpreting the world (human existence). Understanding becomes the "disclosure of what is real for man," and thus, incorporates a phenomenological twist through Heidegger's assertion that understanding is temporal, intentional and historical (Palmer, 1969:140). The understanding of an object requires a fusion between the horizon of the object to be understood and that of the interpreter (Ricoeur, 1976:93). In another sense, Heidegger transforms his mentor's (Husserl) phenomenology into a study of ontology by giving phenomenology an existential flavor.

Hermeneutics in Heidegger, then, is a fundamental theory of how understanding emerges in human existence. His analysis weds hermeneutics to existential ontology and to phenomenology, and it points to a ground for hermeneutics not in subjectivity but in the facticity of world and in the historicity of understanding (Palmer, 1969:137).

By turning to the work of Gadamer, Heidegger's central ideas can be further illuminated.

Hans-Georg Gadamer. Gadamer's monumental work, Truth and Method (1975), offers a critique of aesthetic theory and an inquiry into the means by which individuals reach understanding. Thus, Gadamer, unlike

Dilthey, is not concerned with developing a method for obtaining a "scientific" understanding; instead, his concern is "not what we do or what we ought to do, but what happens to us over and above our wanting and doing" (Gadamer, 1975:xvi). However, in accomplishing this philosophical goal, Gadamer has pointed to a methodology which may be useful for the sociology of art.

Hermeneutics is still the process of interpreting and understanding. But, Gadamer rejects Schleiermacher's and Dilthey's re-constructive hermeneutics, and thereby, frees it from psychologism (i.e., reconstructing in the interpreter's mind the author's original intentions). Gadamer's hermeneutics is a merging of the socio-historical frame of the object to be understood with the socio-historical frame of the interpreter. "Understanding is not to be thought of so much as an action of one's subjectivity, but as the placing of oneself within a process of tradition, in which past and present are constantly fused" (Gadamer, 1975:258).

This fusion of past and present turns around the problem of relativity. The relativity of historical understanding is no longer a problem, but becomes an integral part of Gadamer's hermeneutics. The original meaning intended by the author is also bracketed as an interpretation which is no longer useful for the understanding of his work.

Every age has to understand a transmitted text in its own way, for the text is part of the whole of the tradition in which the age takes an objective interest and in which it seeks to understand itself. The real meaning of a text, as it speaks to the interpreter, does not depend on the contingencies of the author and whom he originally wrote for. It certainly is not identical with them, for it is always partly determined also by the historical situation of the interpreter and hence by the totality of the objective course of history (Gadamer, 1975:263).

History is viewed not as a province for human self-reflection but as a dynamic flow of events in which both the interpreter and the object to be understood reside.

In fact history does not belong to us, but we belong to it. Long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society, and state in which we live (Gadamer, 1957:245).

Thus, unlike Dilthey's re-constructive hermeneutics, to understand the past no longer requires a suspension of our present situation. Instead, it is because of our present situation that we understand the past at all. We interpret the past through the present. As suggested earlier, this makes all historical understanding relative in the sense that as the present situation becomes past, so too will the understanding of history, objects, and acts change. In other words, Gadamer makes the assertion that we cannot escape, suspend, or bracket the socio-historical situation in which we find ourselves. The act of interpreting and understanding an object's meaning involves the fusion or interplay between our present socio-historical situation and the one belonging to the object. The meaning attributed to an object changes relative to the interpreter's present socio-historical situation because these situations are grounded within a specific time frame (i.e., past and present). While this may seem to be an attack upon scientific understanding,

the aim of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is to illuminate the human context within which scientific understanding occurs and to account for the necessity for repeated attempts at critical understanding (Linge, 1977:xviii).

By incorporating the interpreter's historical situation into the event of understanding, Gadamer must deal with the effect pre-understanding has on the act of interpretation. For this reason, he discusses the role

of "prejudices" as they relate to the act of understanding. Gadamer's use of the term prejudice refers to a

. . . preconception (a pre-judgment), which does indeed direct and even distort perception, but which is all the same neither inimical to the truth nor immune to correction and adjustment (Wolff, 1975:104).

Since Gadamer approaches understanding from an ontological point, he presupposes the effect our prejudices have on our understanding of the world (cf. Gadamer, 1975:241-245). "The prejudices of the individual, far more than his judgments, constitute the historical reality of his being" (Gadamer, 1975:245). There can be no understanding which is presuppositionless.

A biblical, literary, or scientific text is not interpreted without preconceptions. Understanding, since it is a historically accumulated and historically operative basic structure, underlies even scientific interpretations; the meaning of a described experiment does not come from the interplay of the elements in the experiment but from the tradition of interpretation in which it stands and the future possibilities it opens up (Palmer, 1969:182).

Prejudices are a result of the tradition in which we stand, and as such, prejudices and tradition are what makes understanding possible (cf. Palmer, 1969:180-184; Linge, 1977:xiv,xv). The act of understanding and interpreting a text, art work, or historical act is guided by our prejudices. Further, our historical situation, to which our prejudices belong, constitutes our horizon:

The concept of the "horizon" suggests itself because it expresses the wide, superior vision that the person who is seeking to understand must have. To acquire a horizon means that one learns to look beyond what is close at hand--not in order to look away from it, but to see it better within a larger whole and in truer proportion (Gadamer, 1975:272).

A hermeneutical situation involves both the horizon of the interpreter, and the horizon belonging to the object to be grasped. For just

as we acquire a historical horizon, so too do the objects of our past belong to a historical horizon. Although we are temporarily separated from the past, Gadamer maintains that the past is linked to us through the flow of a historical tradition.

In fact the horizon of the present is being continually formed, in that we have continually to test all our prejudices. An important part of this testing is the encounter with the past and the understanding of the tradition from which we come. Hence, the horizon of the present cannot be formed without the past. There is no more an isolated horizon of the present than there are historical horizons. Understanding, rather, is always the fusion of these horizons which we imagine to exist by themselves. We know the power of this kind of fusion chiefly from earlier times and their naive attitude to themselves and their origin. In a tradition this process of fusion is continually going on, for there old and new continually grow together to make something of living value, without either being explicitly distinguished from the other (Gadamer, 1975:273).

Understanding becomes a conversation-like process in which the horizons of the interpreter and the object to be understood enter into a type of question and answer dialogue. "Like all genuine dialogue, the hermeneutic conversation between the interpreter and the text involves equality and active reciprocity" (Linge, 1977:xx). As such, Gadamer's hermeneutics is concerned not with a text's author, but with the text itself.

The task of hermeneutics is 'to bring the text out of the alienation in which it finds itself (as fixed, written form), back into the living present of dialogue whose primordial fulfillment is question and answer'" (Gadamer as quoted by Palmer, 1969:200).

Gadamer has here combined a phenomenological approach, that is, letting the text or historical act "reveal itself," so to speak, to the interpreter, through a question and answer process involving a dialectical hermeneutics.

The hermeneutic act (or circle) "begins when the interpreter opens himself to the text by listening to it and allowing it to assert its viewpoint" (Linge, 1977:xx,xxi). When approaching a text, historical act, or a painting, the interpreter brings with him the prejudices formed out of his horizon. In confronting the object, the interpreter "opens" himself to the text, which can "question" the interpreter. In order to clarify this important point, it will be helpful to quote Gadamer at length.

The first thing is the question that the text presents us with, our response to the word handed down to us, so that its understanding must already include the work of historical self-mediation of present and tradition. Thus the relation of question and answer is, in fact, reversed. The voice that speaks to us from the past--be it text, work, trace--itself poses a question and places our meaning in openness. In order to answer this question, we, of whom the question is asked, must ourselves begin to ask questions. We must attempt to reconstruct the question to which the transmitted text is the answer. But we shall not be able to do this without going beyond the historical horizon it presents us with. The reconstruction of the question to which the text is presumed to be the answer takes place itself within a process of questioning through which we seek the answer to the question that the text asks us. A reconstructed question can never stand within its original horizon: for the historical horizon that is outlined in the reconstruction is not a truly comprehensive one. It is, rather, included within the horizon that embraces us as the questioners who have responded to the word that has been handed down (1975:336-337).

Such an "involvement" "creates a balance (or a dialectic) between prejudices and openness" (Wolff, 1975:105). This balance is "constantly revised in terms of what emerges as he (the interpreter) penetrates into meaning," and the end result is understanding (Gadamer, 1975:236). In other words, our prejudices help us formulate a pre-understanding of the material. As we allow the text to confront us as an active participant in understanding, our pre-understandings are replaced by more suitable

ones. This process continues until understandings are reached which are confirmed by the material (Gadamer, 1975:236-237).

Gadamer points out that this question and answer dialogue between the interpreter and the object is more than simple interpretation (cf. Gadamer, 1975:258). It is also the fusion of horizons--the present horizon of the interpreter and the past horizon of the object to be understood. As these horizons come together making understanding possible, there is a part-whole relationship between them. Understanding part of a text, facilitates the understanding of the whole text, and by understanding the whole text better, one can gain a better understanding of the parts.

On a more macro scale, Gadamer is suggesting that we begin our interpretation of a painting or text by presupposing an understanding of it in relation to the society, its culture and the tradition in which it originally existed (its horizon). By adopting an openness to the object, we are able to put questions to it and be questioned by it. The answers or interpretations reached allow for a new understanding to emerge out of the object, its horizon, and our own horizon as well. The accomplishment of such a task requires all that was discussed in the preceding paragraphs and is referred to as the "effective historical consciousness" (Gadamer, 1975:310). "The consciousness of effective history is our own consciousness that we are finite historical beings and that consequently, the risk of mediation is not optional for us" (Linge, 1977:xxvii). Thus, there can never be a complete interpretation or understanding of an object or text except as it exists within the boundaries of the interpreter's socio-historical situation.

From this point it is necessary to introduce Gadamer's discussion of language and its relationship to his overall philosophy. Gadamer finds that "language is the universal medium in which understanding itself is realized" (Gadamer, 1975:350). To illustrate the importance which language has in Gadamer's philosophy, we may quote him at length:

Language is by no means simply an instrument, a tool. For it is in the nature of the tool that we master its use, which is to say we take it in hand and lay it aside when it has done its service. That is not the same as when we take the words of a language, lying ready in the mouth, and with their use let them sink back into the general store of words over which we dispose. Such an analogy is false because we never find ourselves as consciousness over against the world and, as it were, grasp after a tool of understanding in a wordless condition. Rather, in all our knowledge of ourselves and in all knowledge of the world, we are always already encompassed by the language that is our own (Gadamer, 1969:62).

It is through our language that we both know and are oriented to our world. Understanding is mediated through language. When we are involved in a conversation, we reach an understanding of what is said primarily through language, and thereby language discloses knowledge which in turn expands our horizon. We build an understanding of what another says by interpreting and then translating his words into mental pictures. There is, however, the possibility of forming different pictures, because, as ethnomethodologists point out, much of what is meant in a conversation is left unsaid. Thus, each conversation may be open to various interpretations. "Every conversation has an inner infinity and no end" (Linge, 1977:xxxiii).

Gadamer sees language in a way similar to Wittgenstein's concept of "language games" in that the meaning of a word is to be found within the context of its use. However, although Gadamer agrees that language allows for an institutionalized, intersubjective view of reality, he

goes further than Wittgenstein by introducing a hermeneutical dimension, derived in part from Hegel, which is as follows:

Learning our first language and learning subsequent ones are not the same thing. The latter always presupposes the mastery of at least one language, and in learning the first language, we acquire the basis for altering it and fusing it with other language games. . . . We already possess all other language games in principle, not by a new socialization, but through mediation, translation. . . . The concept of language as something within which men are bound and frozen is an illusion, because it contains only half the truth. . . . Worlds given in language are not mutually exclusive entities; it is the power of language that such "mutually exclusive" worlds can merge in understanding (Linge, 1977:xxxviii,xxxix).

Thus, language is of prime importance in hermeneutics. Language is the medium in which understanding occurs. It is the main current connecting historical horizons in the flow of tradition, and "tradition encompasses institutions and life-forms as well as texts" (Gadamer, 1964:96). As horizons fuse in the hermeneutical circle of interpretation, understanding emerges through a dialectical understanding in which both the interpreter's consciousness and the object are altered. A complete and final understanding can never be made because of the "infinity of the unsaid" (Gadamer, 1975:427,428).

The preceding does not represent an exhaustive explanation of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics; however, it does serve to illuminate his central thesis of how understanding proceeds in hermeneutic analysis. Before pointing out the implications of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics for a sociology of art, we should first say something about his analysis of art in general.

Gadamer and art. Gadamer's discussion of art revolves around a reformulation of the aesthetic philosophy. This view of the aesthetic consciousness, which dates back to Descartes, sees art as an

"atemporal moment" relating to nothing but itself (providing only perceptual enjoyment) (cf. Palmer, 1969:167). Gadamer points out that art is not merely perceptual enjoyment, but also knowledge in the sense that it is "an expression of the artistic idea" (Gadamer, 1975:333).

Whether we call it unconscious creation of the genius or consider the conceptual inexhaustability of every artistic expression from the point of view of the beholder, the aesthetic consciousness can appeal to the fact that the work of art communicates itself (Gadamer, 1964:96).

If the work of art communicates itself, it does so in a special way since art, regardless of its historical origin, seems to penetrate (more completely than other objects) our immediate horizon. Gadamer gives art this unique position for ontological reasons:

The justification must be ontological: when we see a great work of art and enter its world, we do not leave home so much as "come home." . . . The artist has captured reality in an image, a form; he has not conjured up an enchanted never-never-land but rather this very world of experience and self-understanding in which we live, move, and have our being. . . . The understanding of art does not come through methodically cutting and dividing it as an object, or through separating form from content; it comes through openness to being, and to hearing the question put to us by the work (Palmer, 1969:168).

This implies that art must speak through a language. For if one's world is mediated through language, then art, being an object created and existing within the world, must also reveal itself in a language.

What we are calling the language of the work of art, for the sake of which the work is preserved and handed on, is the language the work of art itself speaks, whether it is linguistic in nature or not (Gadamer, 1964:100).

Thus, even non-linguistic works of art such as paintings, dance, films, and sculpture are within the scope of hermeneutical analysis. We understand art by first confronting it and being confronted by it. In this confrontation, we form an anticipation of its meaning derived from our

openness to it. This anticipation develops our initial questions which are then put to the work.

Application of the Hermeneutic Approach

In this section of the paper I will attempt to further explicate the hermeneutical method by providing an example of hermeneutical analysis. The example should not be construed as a completed strategy. That is, the example should be viewed as the initial step in formalizing the strategy under consideration. The example is admittedly sketchy and lacks the kind of elaboration that would ultimately be necessary for a relatively complete analysis. This is not, however, a problem in relation to my central objective, which is not to pretend to resolve all the problems inherent in and incidental to the hermeneutical approach. Instead, my aim is to attempt to develop a foundation from which the approach may proceed (first, in terms of theoretical refinement and second, in terms of practical application).

The area of art selected for this example is that portion of the visual arts referred to as painting, although any area of the arts would suffice (e.g., dance, literature, etc.). Painting is used here to refer to that activity of the arts that seeks to combine image and idea onto a two-dimensional surface through the application of a pigmented liquid medium. An artist can be defined as one who creates paintings for the purpose of communicating his ideas to others. A critic is one who attempts to define and interpret the painting for others while at the same time placing a value on the art work. Thus, the critic's interpretation includes an evaluation of the painting. This evaluation is, like the painting itself, aimed at an audience. The audience is comprised

of individuals who are consumers of art objects in either a material or non-material sense (or both). Within this example, the area of painting referred to as "high" art or culture has been selected. This latter distinction has been made in order to limit the boundaries of the example, but it does not refer to any limitations inherent in the approach.

In order for it to be comprehensive, the strategy would necessarily involve three sections (or levels). The first of these sections would deal directly with the application of the hermeneutic strategy. The second section would center itself on a description of painting as it exists in modern society. The third section would employ a phenomenological approach aimed at the analysis of painting as it exists for those involved in its production and consumption. Taken together, these three sections would constitute a comprehensive sociology of art.

First level of analysis. As just indicated, the first level specifically utilizes a hermeneutic approach (although it should be noted that the hermeneutic approach is relevant on all three levels cf. Bauman, 1978). Within this level of analysis, the central question to be answered is that of "how does painting fit into the society?" Such a question brings up the initial problem of where to begin the analysis. Normally, the analysis begins by attempting to posit some sort of "world view" of the society and then locating painting within this world view. However, the sociologist must first determine where to begin and anchor this understanding of the world view. It could be economic, religious, political, or even cross-cultural. Each would seem to "color" or limit the resulting analysis by placing more emphasis

in one area at the expense of another influential area. The hermeneutic analysis does not require such an anchoring or advance definition. Instead, it calls for the sociologist to open himself to the subject and adopt the effective historical consciousness.

The historical consciousness would allow the sociologist to examine all factors without adopting any particular viewpoint. That is, equipped with the insights a sociologist acquires for noting the influences of societal groupings on a phenomenon, the investigator would be in a position to examine all facets of society with regard to their influencing and interlocking weight in the shaping and positioning of modern painting.

A discussion of painting would have to include the influencing factors of certain European schools. One example of this would be influences that the English Pop Art movement had on American Pop Art. The English movement began several years prior to the movement in America, yet it was in America that the Pop Art movement had its greatest impact. There may be several interrelated factors to account for this, and any analysis that anchors itself to only one type (e.g., economic factors) may overlook important influences. Analysis on this level would pull together the influencing factors that shaped the society's "world view" (historical, cultural, and cross-cultural) making the emergence of the modern painting possible.

The hermeneutical approach allows one to take into account factors such as creativity, language, technology, and urbanization as well as economics and social groupings all of which may influence (or have influenced) painting in America today. Critics of a hermeneutical approach may discount any claim that it might lay to scientific status.

In defense of hermeneutics, it can be maintained that the method allows for constant revisions--it does not prematurely tend towards closure, as is true of so many other knowledge gaining strategies. As Wolff affirms:

It is open to the objection that it is impressionistic and unscientific, but can retort that the test is in the explanatory scope and potential of its final results. In the meantime, it is in a position to note any aspect of society which has a determining influence on thought creativity (1975:136).

From the preceding discussion it will have become apparent that the hermeneutic approach is not a mere technique for gathering data so much as it is a strategy for guiding the analysis from start through finish. One begins with a subjective hypothesis of how painting "fits" into modern society. The effective historical consciousness allows the individual to be aware of past and present events with regard to their effect on painting. Within the hermeneutic circle, the individual is in a position to examine different parts of society without focusing upon any one more than others. The non-paradigmatic nature of a hermeneutic approach emphasizes an unfettered sensitivity to the data, and in this way, hermeneutics, as opposed to many of the more traditional and committed strategies found in sociology, does not begin an analysis by imposing a body of knowledge upon the data that should only be reached in the form of conclusions (e.g., classes, antagonisms, functions, institutional configurations, etc.). Knowledge should only come as conclusions; by circumventing this order, the explanatory power of the research is severely limited.

It is during this first phase of inquiry that the paintings themselves become a source for analysis. The guiding questions for the analysis are a result of the "confrontation" between the investigator

and the painting. By referring back to the paintings, the investigator is able to determine if his understandings are correct. The "openness" that one maintains during the hermeneutic analysis allows for revisions in understanding as well as new directions for further investigation. The particular paintings that one selects for the hermeneutic analysis would most probably be the leading representatives of modern art as recognized by artists, critics, and the audience. Those paintings that are only representative of one group may be of special importance in guiding both this phase and the final phase.

Third Class Carriage by Honoré Daumier. Before turning to the second phase of the analysis, it might be helpful to provide the reader with a more concrete example of how the initial phase would proceed. Although the analysis is not complete, it will serve to illustrate the steps utilized in the question and answer process of hermeneutic analysis.

For the purposes of this sketch, one would turn to thousands of art works, hundreds of historical periods, and numerous artistic schools in various countries. Entire historical periods could be examined such as the Romanesque period, in which artists attempted to capture the religious fever of their times, or the Gothic period, which created architectural structures of overwhelming grandeur paralleling the complete domination achieved by the church in society, or any number of other periods. Specific schools in art could become the focus for analysis, for example, the Romantic period in France, when artists, rebelling against the smooth, glazed surfaces and linear renderings of idealized, classical figures, began to focus their attention on the

emotional struggles of man in the present, this closely paralleling the political struggles occurring at that time. However, since this sketch is included for only illustrative purposes, I have selected a single painting from the Realist period in France.

The painting to be examined is Third Class Carriage, painted in 1862 by the French artist Honoré Daumier (cf. Appendix B). When observing (or confronting) the painting for the first time, we are presented with the simple, everyday activity of travel. The method of transportation depicted is mass transportation on some sort of railway system. Thus, the first question to be answered is "where is this scene taking place?" The answer to the question comes from the artist's life, and we find that Daumier lived and worked in Paris. During the 1860's, Paris was a major center of European activity. The railway scene, the paintings date, and the geographic location of the artist all lead to the conclusion that Daumier was depicting an everyday activity taking place in a major French city during the Industrial Revolution. This was a period of political upheaval and urbanization, but what does the painting tell us about the effects of this massive change?

Returning to the painting, we find that the form of the painting reveals certain answers to this question. First of all, the painting is broken into two separate sections. The figures in the foreground are cut off from those seated in the background. This division is made more distinct by the artist's use of lighting, which emphasizes the figures in the foreground. The background figures seem to be engaged in various conversations while the figures in the foreground seem to

be isolated from the activity around them. Perhaps Daumier is attempting to portray the isolation experienced by individuals living in a system which is changing so rapidly that people are losing their sense of individuality.

Crowded conformity and personal isolation are qualities found within rapid urbanization, and it is these emotions that the painting conveys. Modern sociologists (cf. Gold, 1974; Freudenberg, 1979; Albrecht, 1976) have investigated the impact of rapid growth on traditional ways of life, and classical sociologists have also examined the impact that rapid urbanization has on the individual's quality of life (cf. Simmel [1950] and Nisbet's [1966] discussion of Marx's and Tocqueville's analysis of the individual in modern society). The painting conveys the emotions that the above writers sought to analyze through abstract concepts and categories. It should be noted that neither type is more important than the other, but each type complements and supports the other. Thus, Daumier's painting could be viewed as data supporting the work of various writers who have investigated the condition of modern man existing within the "lonely crowd."

If we return to Daumier's work, we can see that the clothes of the figures in the foreground differ from those worn by the figures in the background. This may symbolize the class position of the riders. Those in the background are dressed in fashions characterizing the middle class or bourgeois culture of the period. The figures in the foreground are dressed in the garb of nineteenth century peasants. Perhaps Daumier was also making a statement about the class conditions of the period.

As we examine the painting, our eyes are drawn to the old woman in the center of the painting. This is accomplished through a deliberate placement of the woman in the center of the painting. Daumier has also developed the composition of the painting in such a way that the three (not counting the baby) figures in the foreground form a triangle with the old woman at the triangle's peak. This technique draws the observer's eyes to the old woman's face on which a wry, almost knowing smile is fixed. What purpose does this serve, and what message does the smile reflect?

First of all, Daumier had completed the painting at the age of fifty-four, and this would suggest that he had first-hand knowledge of the political upheavals in France and Europe during the nineteenth century. Secondly, a review of Daumier's life finds that he worked as a political cartoonist for the critical journal Le Charivari. Thus, we could conclude that the artist was not apolitical, but instead, he was active in the socio-political events of his day. Indeed, at one point, he was imprisoned for publishing a cartoon that attacked the existing government. Perhaps the preeminence of the old woman was Daumier's attempt to express what his literary counterparts, such as Balzac and Baudelaire, had expressed as the "heroism of modern life."

Still, this interpretation does not justify the old woman's knowing smile. A more plausible interpretation would take account of the revolutionary events occurring in Europe during Daumier's lifetime. The old woman seems to convey a feeling of superiority, which her attire does not support. Daumier may have been attempting to point out that even though the revolutions of 1848 had failed, the peasants would ultimately triumph. Such a humanistic position is supported by

the growing acceptance of Rousseau's philosophy and Marxist doctrines, which was in fact occurring in France at the time. The two small children could represent the coming generations who would soon awaken and ultimately emerge as the victors in the struggles going on in Europe.

Even this brief examination of Daumier's painting reveals the impact of the industrial revolution on the individual as well as the political feelings shared by many liberal and radical thinkers with regard to the revolutions in Europe. Further analysis would eventually lead to a more complete understanding of the painting and of the society that shaped the artist. To reach such an understanding, we would have to turn to other works by the artist and those completed by his contemporaries.

As this sketch has pointed out, the hermeneutical approach achieves understanding through a process that is very similar to a conversational dialogue. As our understanding of specific parts increases, we are able to reach a more complete understanding of the whole work, and as our understanding of the entire object increases, our interpretations of specific parts can be re-examined to help insure that a valid understanding of the object has been achieved. Within a comprehensive analysis of art, the hermeneutical approach would "frame" the understandings reached in the other two sections, and by the same token, the findings of these latter sections would allow for adjustments within the initial hermeneutic understanding.

Second level of analysis. The second phase of the analysis would include a description of painting in modern society. Several

strategies could be employed, but the objective would be a description of the intrinsic features of modern painting. That is, the focus of this phase would be an explication of the relationship among many of today's prominent schools of painting.

The techniques, materials, palette shifts, vocabulary, and other factors that make up modern painting would be described in this section. It would also describe the movements underway in terms of gallery exhibits, subject matter, success, supportive personnel, and their relationship to other art forms (e.g., dance, music, sculpture, architecture, and design).

The type of research that Becker (1974) calls for in his discussion of art's supportive personnel would be useful in this section. Other strategies might include an examination of the titles of modern paintings (cf. Yoos, 1966); a comparison of common themes, subjects, mediums, etc.; the relationship of economic determinants (or other factors) and creativity (cf. Kavolis, 1965); or a demographic analysis of painters and paintings with regard to income, age, sex, and actual numbers of artists employed or works exhibited (cf. NEA, 1977a, 1977b, 1978). It is within this section that the majority of research conducted by social scientists with regard to art would be placed since the findings would be of obvious utility for reaching a comprehensive sociology of art.

Third level of analysis. The final part of the analysis would focus on the production and consumption of art as it exists for those directly involved in such activities. To accomplish this analysis, a micro-level approach would be employed. I would not discount or attempt to limit the particular banner under which the various types of micro-

level analysis proceed. Instead, I would assume that each type offers insights that are unique to its approach. By using the term "phenomenology," I am simply referring to those approaches that seek to explore the life-world of the individual within a particular group. Thus, those approaches that seek to reconstruct the member's reality within a situation or group such as symbolic interactionism would be utilized as well as those approaches that investigate the interactional "forms" of behavior (cf. Schwartz and Jacobs, 1979).

While this is not a novel approach for organizing phenomenological sociologies (cf. Morris, 1977; Heap and Roth, 1973), it will allow for all those sociologies that investigate the actor's definition of the situation and methods for arriving at and sustaining this definition (reality) to be subsumed under a general heading. Reasons for taking this somewhat broad approach can be defended from several sources (cf. Attwell, 1974; Heap and Roth, 1973; Morris, 1977; Denzin, 1970). Each of these authors seem to agree that all of these approaches (e.g., symbolic interaction, ethnomethodology, reflexive sociology, the sociology of the absurd, Marxist phenomenology, phenomenology, and the dramaturgic approach) share a common objective. That is, "to understand social life is to understand the processes through which individuals interpret situations and construct their actions with respect to each other" (House, 1977:167).

Depending upon the investigator's interest as to which phenomenological approach to employ, he would necessarily stress certain parts of this common interest more than other parts. Thus, McCall's study of female artists stressed the artist's interpretation more than the construction or maintenance portions of the artist's life-world.

However, those with other interests may center their investigations on the means by which the artist's definition of the situation is constructed. Still others may concentrate their analysis on the means by which the artist's subjective interpretations become the foundation for conducting interaction. Finally, there would be those investigators who would be concerned with the methods artists employ in order to sustain their definitions or interpretations of the situation.

As parts of the art world, art critics and audiences would also be examined in terms of their place in the world of painting. An analysis of the critic's role in defining paintings for the artists and the audience would be of use in understanding the relationships between these groups. Perhaps the critics' role of interpreter could be examined for its impact on shaping (constructing) the shared meanings that groups (artists and audience) utilize in their everyday activities of creating and understanding paintings (cf. Wolfe, 1975).

Recap of the preceding discussion. In this brief discussion I have tried to outline the general means by which a comprehensive sociology of art can be realized. The second and third sections of the preceding analysis conform to the more-or-less established (accepted) perspectives found in sociology. The hermeneutic approach provides a framework into which the other sections can be placed in order to provide the comprehensive approach. Hermeneutics will, in a sense, be applicable for all three levels of analysis since it is within the hermeneutic framework that the other two sections are utilized for an understanding of art and society. The hermeneutic strategy allows the investigator to move from structural features to individual relationships

and group processes in his movement within the hermeneutic circle. With such a strategy, subjective and objective factors can be combined in order to build a total picture of art and society.

The work of art--in this case the painting--provides the sociologist with a valuable source for understanding social action, society, and social history. On the individual level it can be viewed as a means for understanding the life-world of the artist, critic, and audience since it is the objective result of subjective, emotional discourse. It is a re-creation of the artist's subjective experience one step removed (Best, 1977). However, the subjective experience was shaped through experience and interaction within a society. The art objects also represent the forces that a social world has upon the artist. These forces act upon the creation of the painting as well as the subsequent interpretations made by others with regard to the painting. Through a proper application of the hermeneutic approach, the sociologist will be in a position to understand the role of society in shaping art objects, and in turn, the sociologist will gain insight that leads to a better understanding of society. This understanding of society must be placed within a historical frame if it is to be useful. The hermeneutic approach allows the sociologist to examine an art object in such a way that not only do individual life-worlds become important but also the impact of social structures can be accounted for. In order for this examination to become an understanding of society, it must be interpreted within a historical frame of social change. One method for establishing this socio-historical frame is through the use of world views, which the hermeneutic approach begins with and refines within the

hermeneutic circle. By developing a hermeneutic understanding of societies and socio-historical change, the sociologist can better understand his present, immediate society, and the life-worlds of those who live out their lives within in.

This understanding begins and ends with the art object. For it is the art object that possesses the key by which the investigator can open the door to understanding the artist, his life-world, the society in which he lives, and the society's position in the flow of history. Hermeneutics provides a means for grasping this key without imposing arbitrary frameworks into which the findings are placed. The object speaks for itself. As Simmel (1950:17) writes:

Any creation in the fields of art . . . , observes a certain order that we can understand in terms of the objective situation of its contents and that is characterized by such relations as intensification, connection, differentiation, combination, etc. No human wish or practice can take arbitrary steps, jump arbitrary distances, perform arbitrary syntheses. They must follow the intrinsic logic of things.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

As stated earlier, much of what Gadamer has to say about the nature of understanding requires us to reformulate some of our conventional thinking. The preceding discussion of Gadamer's work points up the clear possibilities that are offered for analyzing the content of art work at the level of meaning. Although Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy is not conventional sociology, I believe its value for analyzing art clearly outweighs its limitations. However, for a sociology of art to utilize Gadamer's hermeneutics, several facets of his philosophy must be further developed. Even though the present paper consists primarily of an inquiry into the various possibilities of developing a comprehensive method, the major problems inherent in Gadamer's work will be noted, if not resolved.

The major obstacle of Gadamer's hermeneutics for sociology is the obvious fact that it is philosophical discourse on the ontology of Verstehen. Epistemological issues are touched on in an indirect fashion, but even these are not presented in an effort to develop a sociological methodology. However, in the course of his work, Gadamer shows that knowledge or understanding can never reach a finite objective conclusion. "There is undoubtedly no understanding that is free of all prejudices, however much the will of our knowledge must be directed towards escaping their thrall" (Gadamer, 1975:445). I do not see this as reason enough to ignore Gadamer's work, especially if one realizes sociology's difficulty in attaining complete, objective knowledge.

There will always be the intrusion of prejudices which "color" the researcher's analysis.

There is, of course, no possibility of ever arriving at a "fact" that is uncolored by the ethnographic instrument, the perceiver of the fact. The concrete system necessarily remains a mystery. All we can do is learn more about our sensory means of perception, and mechanical and other extrinsic extensions of them, and our own cultural prison. Communication to a degree is possible, and it is the wish of most parties in most situations to refine that degree (Paul Bohannan, 1969:407; as quoted by Wolff, 1975:123).

The findings of any research or interpretation require continual retesting to insure the validity and reliability of the conclusions. Gadamer acknowledges the existence of these prejudices, and to some extent overcomes their problematic nature by incorporating them as a necessary pre-condition for understanding to occur. In doing this, he develops a type of hermeneutics that has a sociological orientation that Schleiermacher and Dilthey's re-constructive, psychological hermeneutics did not.

Perhaps the only means for overcoming problems of reliability within the hermeneutic method is to be found in its actual use. The conclusions which are reached by one researcher should be more or less similar to those obtained by others utilizing the method in their analysis of the same phenomena. Thus, only through a careful, step by step documentation of the hermeneutic method, can replication be attempted by others. This would bind the issue of reliability quite closely with the problem of validity.

Validity within the hermeneutic method does not rest on statistical tables and measures. Instead, it resides in the logical formulations and referents utilized in building propositions during the analysis. So long as the findings represent logical conclusions based

upon and derived from objective, real events (or objects), the analysis must be accredited some degree of validity. To put this argument into other terms,

. . . the only germane question is, "Would an independent observer make conceptual discoveries that empirically or logically invalidate his own?" That another observer--with or without the same general framework or perspective--might develop a very different analytic scheme, conceptual model, or metaphor is to be expected. . . . therefore, all independently developed data and analyses would necessarily be different. One or another analysis may be conceptually superior, but if any fails to contradict the original research, it must be regarded as supplementary or complementary (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973:134).

The validity of a hermeneutic interpretation is made through its ability to remain the accepted interpretation. "The role of falsification is played here by the conflict between competing interpretations" (Ricoeur, 1973:34). Ricoeur reached this conclusion within a larger discussion on the utility of the hermeneutic method within the human sciences. He arrived at the above conclusion through a discussion of the differences between an interpretation and a guess.

Guesses are arrived at through a process in which the individual makes judgments concerning the priority or importance of one part over another. This act of judging what is important or unimportant or essential or unessential does not involve the logic utilized for empirical verification. Instead, "validation is an argumentative discipline comparable to the juridical procedures of legal interpretation" (Ricoeur, 1973:32,33). Thus, while there may be various ways of interpreting an object or an action, the decision to accept one interpretation over another is reached by determining which interpretation is more probable (Ricoeur, 1973:34). For that matter, different interpretations of an object or event may be combined in a selective manner utilizing those

portions of each interpretation which are more probable than others. In this manner, an interpretation could be obtained that is more probable than any of the various interpretations alone.

Gadamer has also assumed the existence of a common tradition. This presents problems in certain respects. Although one may be able to assume a tradition connecting Western societies, it requires a considerable effort to identify a common tradition between our present society and that of one existing in fourteenth century China. Therefore, such a hermeneutical analysis would seem to be limited in application at this point even though Gadamer's discussion overcomes such limitations on a philosophical, in not an empirical, level. Gadamer's use of language as the common thread of tradition shows certain similarities with George Herbert Mead's conception of symbols.

From a Meadian point of view, time and symbols are integral features of each other. Without symbols, people would have no sense of time. Symbols provide us with a past and a future which can be discussed in the present moment. Other animals respond to time in terms of physiological mechanisms that enable them to adjust to seasonal changes and the need to procreate. They probably lack, however, any elaborate conception of their past or concern for the distant future. Through language we are given a communal history or, to use an equivalent term, something anthropologists call culture. Through language we are also given a personal history or what social psychologists call personality (Cuzzort and King, 1976:115).

Language, whether it is sensate or emotional, provides individuals with a sense of common culture and also shapes their social selves.

Gadamer's assumptions concerning "cultural totalities" may also present difficulties for the individual engaged in sociological analysis. Substantiating such a notion has been a problem for sociological analysis in the past. Janet Wolff has tried to show that Gadamer overcomes this problem by working at the level of "horizons." As she has

pointed out by way of a conclusion to this problem:

My conclusion on this controversial problem is that this is in fact the only way cultural history can proceed. Although it remains true that a social world-view cannot be shown to exist (in its unity, coherence and consistency) in the same way as Husserl and Merleau-Ponty have demonstrated the nature of the Lebenswelt of the individual, and although there is no reason to assume a single world-view for a complex group, it is methodologically both permissible and necessary to posit such a world-view. Here, Gadamer's hermeneutic circle with the guidance of the wirkungsgeschichtliche Bewusstsein [effective-historical consciousness], serves to help the historian/sociologist, and to adjust the postulated world-view until it comes as closely as possible in line with reality (Wolff, 1975:126).

Wolff's solution to this problem does nothing more than rationalize it into an intellectual corner. The problem of positing a world-view remains no matter how many revisions one may make, although Gadamer's solution to this problem seems to be a step in the right direction.

Another criticism of Gadamer's work is to be found in his almost deterministic approach to the power of language. As a sociologist, certain questions surface as to the usefulness of an approach which does not take into account the material aspects of a society in shaping one's reality: Habermas has noted this problem in Gadamer's approach (cf. Wolff's review of Habermas's critique in Wolff, 1975; also Gadamer's discussion, 1967). Gadamer has attempted to refute Habermas's critique by showing that material factors indeed shape horizons, but they are both within the realm of hermeneutics and manifested in language. Still, material factors play a more important role in the shaping of our horizons than Gadamer's theory acknowledges. In their discussion of the social construction of reality Berger and Luckmann (1967) attempt to provide a means to work out this problem. They have shown how material objects, once internalized, become a primary force in shaping our reality,

and thus, find their expression manifested in our language.

On a final point, I would agree with Gadamer that every piece of art work embodies an element of knowledge which, if properly retrieved, can be useful in understanding both our present and past horizons; however, I would also agree with the idea that art objects can be witnessed solely for perceptual enjoyment. Wolff (1975) cited objections to just such an issue when noting that Gadamer does not clarify his position on an art object's ability to exist both in the past and immediate present of the interpreter (cf. Wolff, 1975:127,128). This latter problem might be helped by explicating the language which art embodies.

I have tried to show, through the discussion of Langer's work, that art is the language through which we organize and communicate to one another our emotions and feelings. I do not conclude that art cannot be retrieved and understood in discursive or sensate language. Instead, I hold that, although art does communicate on an emotional level, it is still a product of the socio-historical milieu of the artist. For we understand our emotions as a result of our being in the world which is always a social world. Thus, even something as psychologically rooted as emotions and feelings are, in the end, the result of our sociality. Art is the language of emotions or feelings, but the emotions and feelings communicated in this language are, as Gadamer, following Heidegger, has pointed out, a result of our being in the world which is itself made intelligible through the language of our world--thus, an institutionalized, structured, and intersubjective way of organizing what is always in the beginning social. If Gadamer, and others, are correct here in asserting that our total Lebenswelt is a result of the social milieu, then our emotions and feelings are also

socially organized, and as such, can be retrieved through the proper analysis.

The foregoing, then, presents some of the more obvious objections that might be raised against Gadamer's hermeneutics. These objections do not cover all the problems that must be overcome in order for hermeneutics to more closely inform the sociological study of art.

Summary

At this point, I would like to draw together much of what has been discussed in an effort to summarize the ways the preceding lines of thought are useful to the development of a mature sociology of art.

Phenomenology (as it has been developed in the Weber-Schutz tradition) is concerned with the description of the natural attitude and in relating individual actions and objects to the life-world of individuals. As such, it operates satisfactorily at a micro level of analysis. A phenomenological approach makes it possible to discuss an art work as it relates to the individual's life-world. Because of this, phenomenology could analyze art objects at the level of the individual artist, critic and spectator. Thus, a comprehensive analysis of a painting(s) could be accomplished at the micro level. However, phenomenology is, by definition, ahistorical, and therefore, unable to deal adequately with the historical conditions which affect the material under study.

Historical and extra-individual factors must be examined if art is to be properly understood. Hermeneutics can provide such an analysis. Through a hermeneutical examination, the extra-individual factors whether they be religious, political, economic, or class related, can be brought to light. Also, the historical evolution of painting can be brought out

in such a way that preconceived categories are avoided.

A further advantage of the hermeneutic approach is its ability to avoid psychological explanations of art. Through Gadamer's discussion of hermeneutics and the process of understanding, we are able to analyze the content of art objects in order to retrieve the social meanings attached to them. Such an analysis follows the Weberian-Schutzian tradition of social meanings (cf. Munch, 1975; Graber, 1975; Morris, 1977).

We have within Gadamer's theory a means for asserting cultural totalities in a way that allows for an "open" understanding of socio-cultural factors and their impact on art. By utilizing a descriptive technique, these factors could be extracted for various types of theoretical analysis (e.g., conflict perspectives, functionalist perspectives, etc.). Of significance here is the oscillation between past and present inherent in the hermeneutical approach. Such a movement allows for a more open analysis of the past, but it also, in moving from nearness to distance, enables the analysis of our present horizon to become more complete. Thus, an extremely important aspect of hermeneutical analysis for sociology is its ability to "sensitize" the researcher to social factors that might otherwise be overlooked.

If we examine this distant-nearness analogy, then Gadamer's work begins to parallel sociological investigations as they are more commonly presented. A verstehende program, as it is utilized in sociology, incorporates this distant-nearness relationship. Simmel was working along these lines when he wrote "The Stranger."

The stranger is . . . being discussed here not . . . as the wanderer who comes today and goes tomorrow, but rather as the person who comes today and stays tomorrow. He is, so to speak, the potential wanderer. . . . The unity of nearness and remoteness involved in every human relation is organized,

in the phenomenon of the stranger, in a way which may be most briefly formulated by saying that in the relationship to him, distance means that he, who is close by, is far, and strangeness means that he, who also is far, is actually near. Another expression of this constellation lies in the objectivity of the stranger. He is not radically committed to the unique ingredients and peculiar tendencies of the group, and therefore approaches them with the specific attitude of "objectivity." But objectivity does not simply involve passivity and detachment; it is a particular structure composed of distance and nearness, indifference and involvement. . . . Objectivity is by no means non-participation (which is altogether outside both subjective and objective interaction), but a positive and specific kind of participation (Simmel, 1950:402,404).

By oscilating between near and far, the sociologist is able to better understand what actions mean for individuals and the role of history in their lives. This is similar to Gadamer's concept of the effective-historical consciousness and to his discussion of prejudices which guide the process of understanding. Gouldner (1970:29-37) has shown, with a similar concept, that prejudices guide the thinking of a researcher from beginning to end. Perhaps then, Gadamer's most important contribution to sociology is to be found within his discussion concerning the place prejudices have in guiding from the outset our understanding of social objects and actions as they relate to the whole of society and history. By becoming aware of his prejudices and maintaining an "openness" to the object under scrutiny, the sociologist is able to "tune in" to the larger socio-historical matrix, and in this way he can become more sensitive to influencing factors as well as his role in the research process.

Hermeneutics represents a method that allows for the necessary freedom required in attaining a valid understanding of the present thread of social life and its connection to the fabric of social history. This I take to be the objective of the social sciences and of the

humanities. If hermeneutics can provide a means--even if one among many--of achieving this goal, then we should utilize whatever insights it may offer. Robert Redfield made note of this over thirty years ago when he wrote the following:

It [social science] is a way of learning about man in society which uses the precise procedures and the objectivity characteristic of physics as far as these will helpfully go in studying human beings but no further, and which uses, indispensably, that personal direct apprehension of the human qualities of behavior and of institutions which is shared by the novelist (1977:12).

In conclusion, I believe that hermeneutics provides a fruitful means for furthering the goals of sociology through the insights of the humanities. Hermeneutics represents a highly credible approach to the sociological analysis of art and ultimately, to sociology's larger goal of understanding social behavior. Following the tradition set forth in the writings of Max Weber and Alfred Schutz, hermeneutics is representative of those sociologies that exemplify the sociological imagination at work. There is a great deal of work remaining for those who would employ such an approach, but the promise of hermeneutics is well worth any effort that is required to render it feasible for sociology.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

REVIEW OF CLASSICAL PHILOSOPHERS AND SOCIOLOGISTS

RELEVANT TO THE SUBJECT

This appendix is intended as an attempt to acquaint the reader with those individuals whose work is relevant to the larger objective of the present study.¹ In the ensuing discussions, it will become apparent that Western philosophers and sociologists have for the most part located their discussions of art within the context of their larger theories about the nature of social life.

PLATO

Plato, in describing his version of the ideal state, noted the importance of art and its connection to morality and the state. In the second book of the Republic, Plato inadvertently stresses the power of art over men when he (in the person of Socrates) states: "Then the first thing will be to establish a censorship of the writers of fiction" (Jowett, 1942:279). The same censorship awaits the musician and painter, who would corrupt the youth with their creativity were this creativity not regulated (Jowett, 1972:278,279). In book three, Plato suggests the

¹There are numerous individuals who were excluded from this review for various reasons. For example, Kant and Fichte are omitted because they were more concerned with aesthetics. (Questions of beauty are not of central importance to the present work.) Therefore, the "purposiveness without purpose" of art, as discussed by Kant and the German Idealists, is not presented. Likewise excluded are Schopenhauer and Nietzsche for their rejection of a material substructure offered little assistance for developing a sociology of art. Sumner and Keller have also been omitted; their views simply parallel others already included.

influence of art by calling for state control over all branches of the arts, thereby avoiding the corruption of the member's soul and ultimately of the state itself (Jowett, 1972:288,290). Plato also attacks the arts, in particular poetry and painting, in the tenth book of the Republic (cf. Fuller, 1947:142,143).

The reason for Plato's treatment of art is grounded in his concern for aesthetic quality. The basis of this concern is Plato's realization of art's potential in promoting societal change. The arts have the ability to alter individual's lives by shaping their beliefs and values which will, in turn, change the existing state.

ARISTOTLE

Turning to Aristotle, we find a theory of art that is different from Plato's. Aristotle developed his philosophy of art in conjunction with his theory of psychology.

Art is the imitation of nature, and it fulfills the individual's need for expressive creation (Durant, 1926:84). Both the senses and the intellect of the individual are satisfied through art (Fuller, 1948:223). The purpose of art is not to educate (as in the theory of Plato) but to provide pleasure and an expressive outlet for man--the "imitative animal" (Fuller, 1948:223). Thus,

. . . the function of art is catharsis, purification: emotions accumulated in us under the pressure of social restraints, and liable to sudden issue in unsocial and destructive action, are touched off and sluiced away in the harmless form of theatrical excitement (Durant, 1926:84,85).

The arts provide a safety valve for societal members in order to insure social stability and acceptance of the status quo.

With this in mind, it would seem that Aristotle anticipated some

of Coser's thinking about the functions of art. For as Coser points out in The Functions of Social Conflict (1964), art, in addition to serving other social functions, provides an outlet for the release of social tension, helping to maintain the status quo of the group.

MARX

Karl Marx's theory of art is a derivative of his more extensive theory about man's presumed struggle to free himself and his labor from the control of the governing class. For Marx, the existing economic infra-structure largely determines all other spheres of man's activities. The point is best made in Marx's own words:

. . . from the definite form of material production there results, first a definite structure of society; and secondly, a definite relationship of men to nature. Their state forms and intellectual outlook are determined by both. So is the nature of their intellectual production (Marx, 1942:27).

Furthermore, Marx's analysis of class formation links artistic taste and consumption to different classes.

Artistic expression is the result of social factors based upon past historical epochs and the present form of material production. The comments that Marx made concerning artists were always presented within this frame of understanding. His discussion of Shelley and Byron are examples:

The real difference between Byron and Shelley lies in the following: Those who understand and cherish them, consider it fortunate that Byron died in his thirty-sixth year, since if he had lived longer he would have become a reactionary bourgeois. On the other hand, they regret that Shelley died at twenty-nine, since he was a thoroughgoing revolutionary and would have belonged to the Socialist vanguard (Marx, 1942:132).

As this brief passage points out, Marx's analysis of art focuses on the work's content (and to a lesser extent on style), which he held to be

directly linked to the artist's class position. For Marx, art's highest calling is in service to the state, including the ideal, revolutionary state. Thus, both Marx and Plato shared the opinion that certain forms of artistic expression were "good" for society and should be encouraged, while other forms must be exposed and censored if an ideal state were to be achieved and maintained.

Marx and Aristotle also shared certain opinions about art. Marx felt that art mirrored the existing means of production, which itself was the result of man's attempts to transform nature (Ollman, 1971). Aristotle, too, saw art as a mirror of nature, though it is difficult to know how much of the nature was given and how much was the result of human action. Aristotle noted the function of art as a means for maintaining the existing social order. Marx, though he preferred art which promoted change, also indicated that most art, because of its class basis, aided in legitimating the dominant bourgeois ideology. Thus, by serving as a tool for maintaining the existing class structure, art helped ensure social stability. Marx, because of his philosophical roots, also realized the power art has in promoting change, a point only implicit in Aristotle.

SPENCER

Like Aristotle, Herbert Spencer formulated his philosophy of art within a larger volume of work dealing with psychology. Within The Principles of Psychology (1882), Spencer developed a theory of the origin of art.

According to Spencer, humans have the ability to develop more energy than is required for their own survival (Barnett, 1959). This

excess energy, once accumulated, was expressed in the form of art (and at a lower level in sports), which did not fulfill survival functions, but which was gratifying for humans in and of itself (Albrecht, 1970). Thus, Spencer explains the origin of art as well as developing an explanation for the fact that as societies progress in industrial complexity, the time, importance, and manpower allotted for the arts also increases.

For Spencer, the function of art in society becomes simply another form of recreation, which could be placed in the same general category as baseball and hula-hoops. The criticism of such a position is most forcefully made by Radhakamal Mukerjee:

. . . it is the materialistic outlook of earlier sociology under the inspiration of Herbert Spencer that is largely responsible for the neglect of the significance of the arts in the history of social development (1954:2).

Perhaps Spencer's failure to provide an adequate theory of the relationship between art and society was due to his larger concern of explicating the evolution of whole populations of human societies. Spencer developed a viable explanation for the origin of art; however, he was not especially concerned with its functional value for mankind through the ages. Thus, he could remain content with a theory of art that does not go beyond art's recreational function. He did, however, place a higher degree of value on art as a means for "gratuitous satisfaction" when compared to other forms of recreation (Albrecht, 1970:9).

DURKHEIM

Durkheim had very little to say concerning art and its relationship to the rest of society. He does note that "art, by definition, moves in the domain of the unreal, of the imaginary" (Durkheim, 1972:110).

In contrast to art which "we can only fully experience" by "losing sight of reality" stands morality which "can only be grasped in relation to the real phenomena: otherwise it is lost in the void" (Durkheim, 1972: 110). For Durkheim, the arts will become more prevalent in a society that is characterized by organic solidarity. Furthermore, Durkheim would probably assign to art the function of expressing the ritual necessary for the emergence and maintenance of a religion.

Duncan (1953:233) has noted that Durkheim's discussion of certain moments of ritual detachment are treated as forms of play "which, in turn, is grounded in the notion that play (and art) are ways of getting rid of excess energy stirred up by religious ritual." In this fashion, Duncan ties Durkheim to Spencer's analysis of the function of art.

Within Durkheim's short treatment of art, there exists a possible tie between art and social change. That is, the increasing occurrence and rising popularity of art in society signifies a decline in the social morality, and thus connotes a kind of change.

WEBER

The work of Max Weber provides more productive insights into art and society than the theories of Spencer and Durkheim. Weber gives art greater importance in the shaping of human history than did his contemporaries. He notes the close relationship between art and science with creative inspiration playing an important role in the advancement of both fields (cf. Weber, 1976). Weber (1976) points out that during the Renaissance it was art which refined the experiment so necessary to scientific work. Moving from this point, it becomes easier to see why Weber would consider art a force of social change that needed to be fully understood (or appreciated) by social scientists.

Weber also noted art's connection to status groups and life styles. In this discussion, he echoes Marx's earlier notion that artistic forms and styles are related to classes. In focusing on status privileges, Weber states that the "artistic and literary activity (of the privileged status groups) is also considered as degrading work as soon as it is exploited for income or at least when it is connected with hard physical exertion" (Weber, 1976:191). Just as Weber extended Marx's analysis of class by including status and power, he also noted that the artistic tastes and pursuits of groups are related to their class positions. This would be of help to those concerned with determining the class position of individuals within the social ordering, since certain classes would, by virtue of their socioeconomic status, differ in their consumption and patronage of various art forms and styles.

Weber also found connections between art and religion, and noted the influence of art in directing and charting social change. Weber explains this relationship and art's role in changing the existing social order as follows:

The great majority of religions have in some manner entered such alliances (with art). The more they wished to be universalist mass religions and were thus directed to emotional propaganda and mass appeals, the more systematic were their alliances with art. . . . The development of intellectualism and the rationalization of life change this situation. For under these conditions, art becomes a cosmos of more and more consciously grasped independent values which exist in their own light. Art takes over the function of a this-worldly salvation, no matter how this may be interpreted. It provides a salvation from the routines of everyday life, and especially from the increasing pressures of theoretical and practical rationalism (1976:343,243).

Art, through its ability to appeal to emotions and to popularize a religion for mass consumption, has an instrumental function for religion. In modern societies art offers people a secular alternative to the

emotional gratifications and releases offered through traditional, sacred religions, and it is in this sense that art may come to be viewed as an institution (Albrecht, 1970). As such, it has the power to influence other institutions, thus bringing about societal change.

SIMMEL

Georg Simmel's ideas on art were grounded in his extensive philosophical writings, especially his discussions of aesthetics (cf. Etzkorn, 1968). Simmel, even more than Weber, stressed the relationship between art and science. For example, Simmel (1950:5) writes: "[science] is abstracted from reality; it is not itself a given reality," and elsewhere he (1950:42) notes that "fully established, art is wholly separated from life." However, Simmel was able to extend this connection to all of human social behavior since sociologists as well as artists are but "slices" of social behavior and not a separate course.

Because of his background in aesthetic philosophy, Simmel was able to utilize the artistic metaphors of "form" and "content" as a strategy for understanding social interaction (cf. Schwartz and Jacobs, 1979). The forms of social behavior are discernable patterns above the more situationally (indexically) located content that is contained within social interaction. Thus, Simmel had, in many ways, preceded the writings of modern phenomenologists (cf. Morris, 1977). Simmel's knowledge of art served as a foundation for his analysis of all the forms of social interaction (where findings could be understood as generalized patterns), not just issues of concern to the sociology of art (cf. Davis, 1973).

SOROKIN

Pitirim Sorokin devoted a great part of his theory of cultural change to an analysis of art. Perhaps it was his focus on culture and its influence on society that led him to such an expansive analysis of art. As Schneider (1976:72) notes, Sorokin's work "comes close to being a 'philosophy of history.'" This owed in part to his desire to examine "art for clues to the general processes of cultural integration and change rather than to learn how it is related to the social order in a causal-functional manner" (Barnett, 1959:204). Sorokin's analysis of art covers some twenty-five centuries. He utilizes the shifts in accepted forms and styles to support his idea that art trends in history are subject to shifts between two polarized concepts (Barnett, 1959). This "pendulum swing" of art trends through history is between the "Sensate" and the "Ideational":

For Sorokin, the character of the main types depended on premises about "true" or "ultimate" reality. In Sensate culture, such reality is a set of phenomena that can be grasped by the senses. In Ideational culture, "true" or "ultimate" reality transcends the sensible world (Schneider, 1976:73).

Art trends form a historical map of cultural shifts. For Sorokin, however, art is only a reflection of the larger socio-cultural forces.

PARSONS

Talcott Parsons includes art and the role of the artist in his larger discussion of expressive symbols and the social system (Parsons, 1964). From the outset of his discussion, Parsons notes that "the field of expressive symbolism is, in a theoretical sense, one of the least developed parts of the theory of action" (Parsons, 1964:384).

For Parsons, expressive symbols in the "purist form" allow for the cultural patterning of actions in which "the interest in immediate gratifications is primacy" (Parsons, 1964:384). Parsons sees art as a means by which societal members can release in a socially acceptable manner the strain built up during the enactment of instrumental roles (Albrecht, 1970). Thus, art serves as a balancing mechanism: it aids the maintenance of societal equilibrium. In one sense, this is the same function assigned to art by Aristotle several centuries earlier.

APPENDIX B

THIRD CLASS CARRIAGE

by

Honoré Daumier
c. 1862

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



VITA

John P. Lynxwiler was born May 3, 1951 in Wichita, Kansas. His parents, Gladys and John, have three other children, Judith Ann, Toni Jean, and Bret De. John was married in 1972 to Cissi Holt of Demopolis, Alabama. They have two children, Elizabeth Ann (born 1972) and John Christopher (born 1976).

After completing four years of service in the United States Air Force, John entered Livingston University (Livingston, Alabama) in the spring of 1975. Majoring in sociology and minoring in art, he graduated cum laude in 1977 with a Bachelor of Science degree. In the fall of 1977 he entered the Graduate Program at The University of Tennessee. John is presently continuing his graduate studies in sociology at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.