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44 - 2014

ISSN 1230-0330
42>

sztuka i filozofia

art and philosophy

sztuka i filozofia

44 – 2014

sztuka i filozofia

Uniwersytet Warszawski Instytut Filozofii

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ISSN 1230 – 0330

Nakład 200 egz.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgment

The content of the 44th issue of *Sztuka i Filozofia/Art and Philosophy* is directly connected with topics covered in the 42th issue of *Sztuka i Filozofia/Art and Philosophy* which was published in 2013, just before the XIXth International Congress of Aesthetics. The key article of the latter issue, "Criticism and Interpretation," was written by Noël Carroll. At the Congress Noël Carroll's theory of art interpretation was presented and discussed, on a dedicated panel, in which Noël Carroll himself participated, and during which Cynthia Freeland and Kalle Puolakka were commentators. I owe Noël Carroll a debt of gratitude for making *Sztuka i Filozofia/Art and Philosophy* a venue for a discussion on his theory of interpretation. Without his willingness and patience this project would not have been possible. Also, the debate heavily depends on contributions from the above mentioned Congress commentators, Cynthia Freeland and Kalle Puolakka, as well as from the added commentary of Elisabeth Schellekens, Gemma Argüello Manresa, Randy Auxier and Stephen Davies.

I would like to extend my appreciation to all of the authors who published in this issue of *Sztuka i Filozofia/Art and Philosophy*.

Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues from the editorial staff of *Art and Philosophy*, Bogna Obidzińska and Piotr Schollenberger for securing funds that allowed us to publish these special issues of our journal.

ISSN 1230-0330

Discussion on "Criticism and Interpretation" by Noël Carroll

Kalle Puolakka

The Relevance of Authorial Intentions

The question of the relevance of authorial intentions for interpretation has steadily established itself as one of the core debates of analytic philosophy of art. Noël Carroll has been among the main figures of this debate and has defended a position known as modest actual intentionalism, or modest actual mentalism as Carroll terms this view in "Criticism and Interpretation," in a series of articles against critiques from anti-intentionalist and hypothetical intentionalist takes on the interpretation of art. In "Criticism and Interpretation," Carroll expands on an idea which has been one of the cornerstones of his defense of modest actual intentionalism, namely, stressing the continuity between the interpretation of art and other forms of interpretation and communicative situations we encounter in our daily lives. Against the contrast between art interpretation and more mundane forms of interpretation the anti-intentionalists and hypothetical intentionalists invoke, Carroll argues that much art is underlain by communicative features similar to those our non-art encounters with other people involve. Moreover, we regularly explain the communicative actions of our interlocutors by referring to their actual intentions. We are also incredibly successful in tracing these intentions. Otherwise social life would become impossible or at least incredibly hard. Since similar communicative intents characterize the making of artworks, discovering the actual intentions of the artist becomes a legitimate target of art interpretation.

Now, I tend to be in a general agreement with the modest actual intentionalist position on interpretation and have defended it against hermeneutic and neopragmatist critiques in an earlier work of mine.[1] So, I have no need to embark on any kind of fundamental quarrel with the views Carroll presents in "Criticism and Interpretation." Here my interest will lie mainly in the analogy

1 K. Puolakka, *Reconsidering Relativism and Intentionalism in Interpretation. Davidson, Hermeneutics, and Pragmatism*, Lexington Books, Lanham, MD 2011.

between art interpretation and communication he draws in the paper and at the end of my commentary I will have a look at the debate between modest actual intentionalism and hypothetical intentionalism from a slightly different angle from the one Carroll approaches it in his paper.

First, it seems that there are at least some differences between art interpretation and ordinary, non-art cases of communication. While the flow of ordinary communication is dependent on our ability to interpret the intentions of our conspecifics with a miraculous accuracy and pace, the beginning points of interpretation in the case of art seem to be precisely those in which the flow of life is interrupted. That is, something in the artwork catches our eyes or ears and leaves us in a state of bewilderment. That interpretation frequently arises from these sorts of events is seen from the examples Carroll uses to illuminate his position. Why does the Joe Wright movie adaptation of *Anna Karenina* use theatrical stage sets? What is the purpose of the draining of bright colors in von Donnersmarck's *The Lives of Others*? Why does Wagner begin *Das Rheingold* with a chord of one hundred and thirty six measures? Or, to use an example of my own, why does Paul Auster use footnotes in his novel *Oracle Night*?

In all of these examples, interpretation is focused on questions regarding authorial choices. Hence, interpretation seems to become a form of problem solving, that is, interpretation seeks to find an answer to the questions artworks pose to their viewers and offers an explanation of the features they contain causing our bewilderment. By finding an explanation to the peculiar authorial choices present in the work and the communicative intents behind them, interpretation relieves the interpreter from her state of puzzlement.

To see interpretation as essentially concerned with these sorts of features of artworks raises some questions for the analogy Carroll draws between art interpretation and more mundane forms of communication. For our ordinary communicative situations do not seem to be that heavily permeated by similar bewildering causing features. Their more frequent presence could perhaps make our lives more exciting, but precisely at the cost of the flow which normally characterizes our everyday life and the communicative situations it includes. The lack of these question-posing aspects does not merely concern our everyday lives, for many artworks do not seem to involve the kinds of interpretation demanding peculiar authorial choices the examples Carroll uses do. All artworks do not leave us in a state of bewilderment and do not, hence, call for interpretation in the kind of explanatory sense present in Carroll's examples. It is, however, hard to deny that artworks, which lack these sorts of aspects, could not possess themes, theses, and expressive properties, which Carroll finds the primary objects of interpretation. But in cases where the communicative intentions of the author are in no way connected to peculiar or standout authorial choices, should the attempt to grasp the content of these sorts of works and to discover the communicative intents of their authors be called interpretation. Or is our understanding in these sorts of cases perhaps based on some other sense-making activity than interpretation?

The slight discontinuity between art interpretation and ordinary communication I have here pointed at does not undermine the view that the two activities

could not lie on a continuum, which is at the heart of Carroll's modest actual intentionalism. However, it seems to raise some questions about the aims and scope of interpretation. If the notion of interpretation is primarily reserved for the sorts of cases of problem solving present in the examples mentioned above, does grasping the communicative intentions of our everyday interlocutors truly rest on interpretation. How about understanding the contents of artworks which do not contain inventive eye-catching authorial choices?

Now, turning to my second point, in an earlier article Carroll defends modest actual intentionalism not just by emphasizing the communicative interests we have toward artworks, but by developing an analogy between art interpretation and conversation. There he claims that "when we read a literary text or contemplate a painting, we enter a relationship with its creator that is roughly analogous to a conversation."[2] Carroll acknowledges that one important aspect of conversations is missing in the case of art interpretation, namely "the spontaneous feedback" we get from our interlocutors in real-life conversations. In this respect, art interpretation has less of an interactive character than conversations at their best do. Nevertheless, he thinks there is a significant overlap between conversations and art interpretation. For example, a rewarding case of art interpretation, in Carroll's view, involves the same kind of "conviction of having grasped" the author's intentions that is also a key aspect of good conversations. That is, encounters with both artworks and other people that "left us with only our clever construals or educated guesses, no matter how aesthetically rich, would leave us with a sense that something was missing."[3]

Moreover, Carroll refers, in the defense of modest actual intentionalism he presents in this earlier article, to the sense of community one gains with one's interlocutors in the course of a good conversation and he in fact finds "the prospect of community" "a constitutive value" of what he terms "serious conversations." Carroll again stresses the similarities between conversations and the interpretation of art, for, in his view, "this prospect of community supplies a major impetus motivating our interest in engaging literary texts and artworks."[4]

Both of these overlaps between conversation and art interpretation Carroll draws attention to are intended to support the modest actual intentionalist take on the interpretation of art over anti-intentionalist and value-maximizing views. A reference to the actual intention of the author is needed to secure the conviction that our interpretations are not just educated guesses, but that they truly correspond to actual communicative intentions, and the emergence of the sense of community Carroll considers a constitutive value of art interpretation requires that one has achieved a genuine understanding of the author's conversational aims.

From this conversational take on the interpretation of art, Carroll, again in the earlier article, criticizes value-maximizing views of art interpretation for involving a highly "consumerist" attitude toward artworks. In his view, they

2 N. Carroll, "Art, Intention, and Conversation," in: *Beyond Aesthetics. Philosophical Essays*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK 2001/1992, p. 174.

3 *Ibidem*.

4 *Ibidem*.

do not approach artworks as artifacts that result from human actions and that embody communicative intents of our fellows, but as things that exist primarily for meeting our hedonistic desires. These conversational aspects art involves thus limit "the range of aesthetically enhancing interpretations we can countenance."[5] Continuing on this line of thought, in "Criticism and Interpretation" Carroll builds an even stronger ethical undertone to his defense of modest actual intentionalism. There he insists that communication rests on a moral ground in that "it is not only morally wrong to willfully misinterpret another's communication or to ignore another's intention, but it is self-degrading to do so as well."[6] And given that art interpretation is a form of communication, ignoring or deliberately misinterpreting the author's intentions should be considered equally objectionable.

However, there is also a slight difference in the line of defense Carroll presents in these two articles, for in the more recent text Carroll no longer refers to an analogy between art interpretation and conversation, but approaches interpretation in terms of communication in a more general sense. Not all cases of communication count as conversations. Communication can mean a highly simple form of conveying ideas and information and does not necessarily have to involve the kinds of features Carroll attributes to conversations in the earlier article. For example, a night table in a hotel room I recently stayed at had a piece of paper which said: "This card left on bed means 'Please change bed sheets'." This case of communication hardly constitutes a conversation and my ability to grasp the intents of the hotel cleaning department does not give rise in me to any kind of fulfilling sense of community with them.

This difference between the conceptions regarding the communicative aspects of art found in Carroll's texts raises a question about the view of communication underlying his version of modest actual intentionalism. Has Carroll totally abandoned the idea that art interpretation is marked by qualities similar to those serious conversations are? Is it enough for a proponent of modest actual intentionalism to rely on a more modest view of communication, that is, on one that does not necessarily regard the kinds of features Carroll lists in his earlier defense of modest actual intentionalism as important parts of our communicative engagements with artworks?

The reason why I raise Carroll's treatment of conversations from his earlier paper on modest actual intentionalism here is that it might provide a ground for an aesthetic defense of the view of interpretation he supports. For, in the earlier article, Carroll does not seem to emphasize the overlap between interpretation and conversation merely for the sake of highlighting the communicative aspects of art, but, with the help of that analogy, his goal also seems to be to draw attention to the fact that the conversational model of art interpretation he outlines in that article incorporates an important experiential level of art interpretation, which anti-intentionalist and value-maximizing views cannot embrace.

5 *Ibidem*, p. 175.

6 N. Carroll, "Criticism and Interpretation", in: *Sztuka i Filozofia: Art and Philosophy*, 42 (2013), pp. 7-20.

Some philosophers, like John Dewey, have argued that good conversations can, due to the "continuous interchange and blending"[7] they involve, also possess aesthetic features. That is, conversations can be characterized by a cumulative and intensive developmental character that is also a central feature of aesthetic experience, at least according to a Deweyan understanding of that notion. No less important for the heightened experience good conversations engender is the sense of community one achieves with one's interlocutors in the course of a good conversation.

Now, Dewey seems to be pointing at the same kinds of qualities in conversations as Carroll in his earlier defense of modest actual intentionalism. Dewey's account of conversations is part of his more general view of aesthetic experience he presents in *Art as Experience*. In some places, Dewey contrasts aesthetic experience to what he calls "inchoate experience," which involves opposite qualities to those that, in his view, characterize aesthetic experience. Unlike in aesthetic experience, in this case things follow each other, but the different parts of the experience in no way build on earlier ones or develop them. Yet, "because of continuous merging" there are "no holes, mechanical junctions, and dead centers" in aesthetic experience.[8]

It seems that conversations, which fail to meet the criteria Carroll sets for what he calls serious conversations, are precisely marked by the kinds of qualities Dewey tries to capture with his notion of inchoate experience. Conversations during which we can only make educated guesses of the communicative intents of our interlocutors and which we leave with the conviction that something was missing are precisely among the experiences Dewey would call inchoate. In this case the close of the conversation is, to quote Dewey again, "a cessation" rather than "a consummation."[9]

These Deweyan ideas deepens the view of the experiential aspects related to conversations Carroll provided in his earlier article and that he found important parts also of the interpretation of art. But would Carroll any longer be willing to pursue this line of defense of modest actual intentionalism? His slightly different approach to the communicative aspects of interpretation in "Criticism and Interpretation" at least throws some doubt on his willingness to develop a defense of modest actual intentionalism on the analogy between conversation and interpretation he hinted at in his earlier article. Now, I admit that the conversational model of interpretation I have here outlined on the basis of some ideas found in Carroll's earlier essay and Dewey's aesthetics is still very sketchy, but I think the experiential aspects involved in our encounters with artworks it brings to light implies that the modest actual intentionalist should perhaps not totally give up the analogy between art interpretation and conversation.

Now, to close I will take a look at the debate between modest actual intentionalism and hypothetical intentionalism. In the paper, Carroll approaches it mainly as an epistemological issue about the kind of evidence that it is legitimate

7 J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, Perigee, New York 2005/1934, p. 38.
8 *Ibidem*.
9 *Ibidem*, p. 37.

to rely on in forming and defending an interpretation. The hypothetical intentionalist insists on the public character of interpretation and rules out, for example, private authorial avowals and unpublished notes from the realm of valid evidence. I wholly agree with Carroll that there is likely to be no nonarbitrary way of making the distinction between private and public evidence and I think he puts this arbitrariness well when he writes that "what are today's private letters, journals, manuscripts, and interviews are often published or made publicly available in library collections tomorrow".[10]

But let me try to frame the debate between modest actual intentionalism and hypothetical intentionalism slightly differently. For it seems to me that one of the central motivating factors of hypothetical intentionalism is a disbelief toward the idea that every interpretable aspect of an artwork could be directly connected to an author's *actual* intentions. That is, it is arguable that artworks may possess features, which can be subjected to interpretation, but which bear no direct relationship to the author's actual intentions. Referring to the Quine-Duhem thesis on the under-determination of hypotheses by the evidence, Carroll argues in the paper that there can be cases where the principles of hypothetical intentionalism will leave the meaning of a work ambiguous, since "the evidence allowed by hypothetical intentionalists will support different hypotheses from different ideal observers".[11] Hence, the actual intention of the author is needed to disambiguate the work under interpretation.

However, it seems that hypothetical intentionalism is better equipped compared to modest actual intentionalism to disambiguate cases, where there does not seem to be a direct connection between the interpretable content of an artwork and the author's actual intentions, that is, cases where we would like to attribute a certain content or expressive property to a work, even though there does not seem to be any actual intention behind that content or property. In cases like these, a proponent of hypothetical intentionalism would insist, the meaning is determined by the best hypothesis about authorial intention made by an ideally-equipped audience and it is irrelevant to the truth of this attribution whether the author actually had an intention that corresponds to the interpretation. Or as the main representative of hypothetical intentionalism, Jerrold Levinson notes, "cases where a contextually informed ideal reader can arrive at a best attributable intention, though no such clear authorial intention exists or existed, will be ambiguous on AI [actual intentionalism] but unambiguous on HI [hypothetical intentionalism]."[12]

So my question is that if the modest actual intentionalist acknowledges the possibility of interpretable content which is not connected to the actual intentions of the author, how the correctness of such attributions are determined in the modest actual intentionalism framework, as there is no actual intention to rely on. Or is the proponent of modest actual intentionalism content to leave parts of the work of this kind ambiguous?

10 N. Carroll, "Criticism and Interpretation," *op. cit.*, p. 13.

11 *Ibidem*, p. 14.

12 J. Levinson, *The Pleasures of Aesthetics. Philosophical Essays*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London 1996, p. 194.

ISSN 1230-0330

Stephen Davies

Modest Actual Mentalism: Questions and Comments

The thoughts presented here are prompted by Noël Carroll's paper "Criticism and Interpretation."[1]

In his paper, Carroll defends the position known as modest actual intentionalism, though he prefers the title "modest actual mentalism." Roughly, this is the view that the artist's intentions determine her work's meaning, and thereby how it should be interpreted, provided that the work can be understood in the fashion intended. A leading rival, known as hypothetical intentionalism, suggests instead that the interpreter should hypothesize what was most likely intended by an author imagined by the interpreter. In its most philosophically interesting variant, the imagined author should match the public persona of the actual author.[2] By contrast with these accounts, my preferred position is called the maximizing view.[3] I think that, in interpreting a given artwork, interpreters should maximize its artistic value, but only insofar as this is consistent with respecting its identity as the artwork it is.

After some remarks about Carroll's treatment of anti-intentionalism and value maximizing, I raise some issues that should give pause to advocates of modest actual mentalism. Though I take Carroll's point that interpretation occurs across the arts,[4] I will confine my attention to the interpretation of literature (including drama and poetry).

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Carroll's treatment of the "intentional fallacy" is orthodox, but I think that orthodoxy deserves to be examined. The argument presented by Wimsatt and Beardsey is simple.[5] If the author succeeded in his intentions the meaning was

1 N. Carroll, "Criticism and Interpretation," in: *Sztuka i Filozofia: Art and Philosophy*, 42 (2013), pp. 7-20.

2 J. Levinson, "Defending Hypothetical Intentionalism," in: *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 50 (2010), pp. 139-150. For critical discussion, see also R. Stecker and S. Davies, "The Hypothetical Intentionalist's Dilemma: A Reply to Levinson," in: *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 50 (2010), pp. 307-312.

3 S. Davies, "Authors' Intentions, Literary Interpretation and Literary Value," in: *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 46 (2006), pp. 223-247.

4 N. Carroll, *op. cit.*, in the discussion of what he labels the "linguistic fallacy".

5 W. K. Wimsatt Jnr. and M. C. Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy," in: *Sewanee Review*, 54 (1946), pp. 468-488.

conveyed to the text of the artwork and if he failed it was not. Either way, it is not necessary to consult evidence of authorial intention external to the work in finding out what meaning its text bears.

This argument contentiously assumes that the meaning of the work is hermetically sealed within it. But the point to note here is that the argument does *not* deny the relevance of all authorial intentions for work meaning. Those carried through to the text are crucial for work meaning. The argument rejects the relevance of *failed* intentions. In this respect the thesis is not clearly at odds with that of modest actual mentalism, which also allows for the possibility of authorial failure and discounts intended meanings that cannot be reconciled with the work's contents. And in ruling out the search for private intentions beyond the text, Wimsatt and Beardsley are not more anti-intentionalist than is Levinson's version of hypothetical intentionalism, which does the same. All in all, the stark contrast drawn between intentionalism and anti-intentionalism is over-exaggerated, I think.

In any case, though Carroll discusses value maximizing alongside anti-intentionalism, the version of the maximizing theory I endorse is no less in favor of seeking out and consulting authors' intentions than is Carroll's modest actual mentalism. Almost inevitably, the intentions of successful authors point to the readings that put the best light on their works. And knowledge of those intentions can lead us to find artistic merit where otherwise it might be overlooked. The difference between the theories consists in this: whereas Carroll thinks the search for work meaning is exhausted by reference to authorial intentions, I do not.

There is a reason why some versions of hypothetical intentionalism and value maximizing get confused with anti-intentionalism. If the hypothetical intentionalist imagines many different authors all very unlike the actual one, there is little limit on the range of interpretations that can be generated. Similarly, if all value maximizing readings are permitted, including ones that make a nonsense of the work as conceived by its author, then plainly value maximizing does not involve respect for authors' intentions.

Playful approaches to interpretation like these are commonplace, but neither Levinson's version of hypothetical intentionalism nor mine of value maximizing endorses this type of interpretative freedom. Carroll suggests that this is because of conservatism in the values held by analytic philosophers.[6] I would diagnose the situation differently. Where the primary object of interpretation is the work as authored, the interpreter is constrained to acknowledge those of the author's intentions relevant to fixing her work's identity. These intentions may concern the work's title, genre, and style, for instance. Authorial intentions about meaning or significance might be by-passed in interpreting the work, but only where this does not betray the work's identity. Here it must be acknowledged that it might not always be obvious how one is to distinguish artists' "ontological" from "content" intentions. Allowing this need not be fatal to the theories of interpretation that are committed to seeking this distinction,

6 N. Carroll, *op. cit.*

however. Under all theories, the limits of what is acceptable by way of interpretive variation and difference are contested.

***

It is common for protagonists of competing philosophical theories of literary interpretation to claim that their account best matches actual critical practice. If by "critical practice" we mean what happens in university Departments of Literature, they are most likely wrong. The "reader response" approach advocated there to literary interpretation is freewheeling and creative, as critics read against the grain and deconstruct the texts they consider. And on the other hand, if we mean by "critical practice" an approach to interpretation that respects the identity of the author's work and aims to characterize how its meaning is to be understood on its own terms, it is doubtful that any of the main philosophical theories of interpretation matches this better than the others. What the artist intended by way of her work's meaning, what it is most reasonable to attribute by way of meaning to a hypothetical author who is like the actual author's public persona, and what meaning best realizes the work's artistic value – these three are likely to coincide much of the time.

There are other reasons why the competing theories will often agree in practice. Moderate actual mentalists quite rightly question general skepticism about our accessibility to the minds and intentions of other people and they quite rightly suggest that the work's text usually provides the strongest evidence of what was intended, so that interpretation can proceed in the absence of independent evidence of authorial intent. But allowing these points, the fact is that modest actual mentalists usually proceed on the basis of inferences about what authorial intentions were most likely. This means that, where independent sources for the author's intentions are unknown, it will be extremely unlikely that they will arrive at results different from those reached by hypothetical intentionalists. And similarly, since both modest actual mentalists and hypothetical intentionalists are bound to assume that the author intended the work to be better rather than worse in the absence of explicit evidence to the contrary, it will be extremely unlikely that they will arrive at results different from those reached by value maximizers.

Of course, there are cases that distinguish between the competing theories. For instance, the author insists on an intended meaning that seems to be manifestly inferior from an artistic point of view to one that the work seems to invite. Or the author insists on an intended meaning that one would not reasonably attribute to a hypothetical author who is relevantly like the actual one. But appeal to critical practice here is unlikely to be decisive. In the face of such examples, critical practice is typically no less divided than are the philosophers' theories.

***

Here is one aspect of critical practice that challenges modest actual mentalism: an interpretation of the work is put to its author who accepts the interpretation

but denies having intended it (or even having considered it). In other words, the author licenses the legitimacy of an interpretation of her work that she had not intended.

We can imagine cases that fit this description that would not trouble the modest actual mentalist. For instance, perhaps the author intended the work to be ambiguous in a certain kind of way and the proposed interpretation provides one possible resolution to that ambiguity. We might consider the proposed interpretation as falling under the scope of the more general intention, even if the author did not articulate to herself details of the approaches to the ambiguity that would make sense of it.

I imagine more testing counterexample will be not uncommon, though. These will be ones in which the proposed interpretation was simply not intended, not even by implication, yet it is accepted by the author. What is more, the interpretation strikes us as true to the work and revealing of it.

One response that might tempt the actual intentionalist – the suggestion that the relevant intention was unconscious – should be resisted. It makes the account viciously circular and unfalsifiable. Talk of unconscious intentions makes sense only in special cases. In these, typically the author rejects or is uncomfortable accepting the proposed interpretation. Reference to unconscious intentions may be plausible where the theme of the interpretation was strongly involved in the author's life and she had reason to suppress her awareness of it, perhaps because it was deeply painful, say. In other words, giving legitimacy to talk of unconscious intentions might require showing that the proposed interpretation captures something the author might have been impelled to convey to the work despite her conscious rejection of it at the time. Later, she continues to reject it or accepts it only with unhappiness. The difficult case, as envisaged above, is not of this kind. Here, an appeal to unconscious intentions would be question-begging.

An alternative response on behalf of the modest actual mentalist would be to charge that authors are simply mistaken if they tolerate unintended interpretations of their works as acceptable. They are too casual in accepting a possible but unintended meaning as belonging to their work.

This response, apart from appearing to legislate arbitrarily in favor of the theory, has the smell of inconsistency. If authors' intentions determine their works' meanings in the first instance, why are we free to disregard their later proclamations about the meanings of those same works?

***

Professor Carroll regards literary artworks as vehicles for the communication of the author's thoughts, attitudes, and emotions and he leans heavily on the metaphor that the relation between author and interpreter is conversational.[7] More accurately, it is implied that the author corresponds to the speaker and the interpreter corresponds to the listener in mid-conversation. Plainly, this

7 *Idem*, *On Criticism*, Routledge, London 2008.

metaphor has some appeal. And if we take it literally, the actual intentionalist wins the day. In actual conversations the listener is interested in the utterer's meaning, in what the speaker meant by what she said, with this settled ultimately by reference to her intended meaning.

There are some aspects of interpretational practice that undermine this metaphor, however. Some authors pointedly decline to commentate on their works. A notorious example was the playwright, Harold Pinter. And many more who do discuss their works do not do so in a proprietary manner. They offer their opinions as if contributing to a collective enterprise of interpretation, not as if those opinions are decisive in trumping the contrasting views of others.

So here is a simile I prefer: artworks are like children. How so? Children are created and shaped by their parents. But when they come out into public society, they are granted increasing degrees of autonomy. Most parents acknowledge and respect this, though many find it hard to relinquish directive governance over the lives of their children. And most parents do what they can to ease their offspring's gradual passage to complete independence. In the end, those progeny give meaning to their own existence through their relations with others. Special among these relationships, one hopes, is the tie to their parents, but this should include mutual forbearance rather than blame on the one side and control on the other. The relation between artists and artworks is similar, I claim. Artworks take on autonomy within a public artworld, though they retain an intimate relationship with their makers. In part, their meaning or significance is negotiated through interactions that are not exclusively with their creator but are also with a wider art public. Interpretation is not a one-sided conversation dominated by the artist but the product of a more genuinely multi-sided conversation between those who receive the artwork, perhaps including also the artist. This conversation often does not achieve consensus and, with good art, it may continue beyond the artist's death and in changed contexts that prompt the artwork's re-examination and re-interpretation.

ISSN 1230-0330

Cynthia Freeland

Abductive Reasoning, Intentionalism and Meanings in Artwork

In his paper Noël Carroll says he will offer new arguments for moderate actual intentionalism, drawing on a close reading of Grice's theory of meaning. I am not sure what exactly Carroll meant was new in his proposal. Others have also attempted to build intentionalist accounts of art interpretation based on the Gricean explanation of linguistic communication, for example Robert Stecker in his 2006 article "Moderate Actual Intentionalism Defended." Like Carroll, Stecker also spoke of accounts of meaning as involving a process of hypothesis formation: "We constantly are forming hypotheses about the point or function of this or that bit in the overall economy of the work."[1] One difference could be that Stecker emphasizes parallels between artworks and *utterances*, whereas Carroll instead compares artists' creation of works to meaningful *actions*, suggesting that the Gricean account can naturally be expanded to include communicative actions as well as utterances. Carroll also wants to stretch the relevant notion of intentions to include things that may not be conscious or explicitly formulated by a speaker/artist/agent: hence his preferred label of "mentalism."

One qualification is important to note at the start. I agree with Carroll when he says, "not all artworks involve meaning." His focus is on cases when artworks *do* have meaning. Such meaning can take various forms, including intellectual or cognitive ones which (either themes or theses), as well as emotional ones, exhibited through expressive properties. Carroll distinguishes the "constitutive" problem of what determines artistic meaning from the "epistemological" problem of how we discern that meaning. Presumably his proposal covers both problems. Carroll also says he will discuss the relationship between interpretation of an artwork and its embodiment.

Much of Carroll's paper is devoted to defending actual over hypothetical intentionalism. Actual intentionalism better enables us to fix accounts of meaning in art: a true account is the one that offers the best abductive explanation, in other words, is the hypothesis that best explains the evidence for what the artist intended.

My comments will take up three different points: (1) whether the intellectual method of *abduction* provides a reason to prefer actual vs. hypothetical intentionalism on epistemic grounds, as Carroll claims; (2) questions about the units of meaning in artworks; (3) problems in applying the Gricean model of intentional speech to actions, including artists' actions in creating their works.

1 R. Stecker, "Moderate Actual Intentionalism Defende," in: *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 64, No. 4 (Autumn, 2006): 429-438.

1. Abduction and Truth: is AI preferable to HI?

Carroll favors moderate actual intentionalism (AI).[2] He argues that both AI and a leading alternative, Hypothetical Intentionalism (HI), "share a roughly Gricean conception of meaning according to which someone means x if he intends to induce the belief in x in his audience *and* he intends his audience to recognize this intention".[3] The Gricean account of meaning is reflexive, meaning that it involves intentions about intentions.[4] On both AI and HI, interpretation involves supplying hypotheses about meaning. However, according to Carroll, HI cannot fix any definite notion of truth among competing hypotheses, because "hypotheses about interpretation may be underdetermined by the evidence." His point here draws upon the Duhem-Quine view that there will be alternative interpretations of (hypotheses about) the available evidence.[5] Carroll explains,

> That is, the evidence allowed by the hypothetical intentionalist will support different hypotheses from different ideal observers, thus providing no way to establish which one constitutes *the* meaning of the poem. One ideal reader, for example, may weigh the strength of her hypothesis in terms of its comprehensiveness, while another prizes specificity to a greater extent.[6]

Carroll considers AI preferable to HI because it affords, at least in principle, correct answers or true explanations of artistic meaning. The Actual Intentionalist can say that a given hypothesis is right, "namely the hypothesis which coincides with the actual intention of the author (where that is consistent with what is available in the text)".[7] Carroll seems to me correct if we are alluding to the *constitutive* notion of an artwork's meaning, but I am not sure there is much difference between the *epistemic* status of hypotheses about meaning on the two key theories under consideration. In the real world, when we hypothesize about the actual intention of an artist we do advance reasons that provide the best evidence for our views, but this "best evidence" can still allow for competing verdicts – just as with the hypothetical intentionalist model. Carroll offers an array of nice examples of this sort of conjecturing for artworks that range from sonnets to ballets, and from opera to film. He says we interpret these using the method of abduction. Abduction is, in brief, selection of a hypothesis that best explains the available evidence. For example, concerning certain aspects of Joe Wright's 2012 movie version of *Anna Karenina*, Carroll says, "We directly ask what the intention behind Wright's directorial choices might be because, even though

2 He actually favors modest actual mentalism, a variant of AI, but for simplicity here I will stick to AI. "Modest actual mentalism contends that the meaning of a poem is determined by the actual intentions and underlying, though not necessarily conscious, assumptions of the poet. That is, modest actual mentalism holds that the cognitive or, more broadly, mental stock of the artist fixes the meaning of the work, so long as said intentions, assumptions, etc. are consistent with what is available in the text." N. Carroll, "Criticism and Interpretation," in: *Sztuka i Filozofia: Art and Philosophy*, 42 (2013), p. 14.

3 *Ibidem*, pp. 14-15.

4 P. Grice, "Meaning," in: *Studies in the Way of Words*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 1987, p. 219. See also S. Neale, "Paul Grice's Philosophy of Language," in: *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 15 (1992), pp. 509-559.

5 See note 11 on whether context alone fixes meaning – it cannot. N. Carroll, "Criticism and Interpretation," *op. cit.*, p. 14.

6 *Ibidem*.

7 *Ibidem.*

there might be some precedents, there are no conventions we can invoke."[8] We ascribe a meaning to it "because that is the best explanation of what Wright might mean given Wright's other directorial choices."[9] Similarly, we interpret the Rose Adagio section of the ballet *Sleeping Beauty* in a certain way "because it is the best hypothesis we can offer of what the actual choreographer intended to communicate about the princess at this point in the narrative."[10]

But the method of abduction does not appear epistemically preferable in truth-identification to the hypothesis-formation procedure followed by proponents of HI. In the classical exposition by Peirce, abduction is contrasted with deduction and induction.

> [Abduction] starts with consideration of facts, that is, particular observations. These observations then give rise to a hypothesis which relates them to some other fact or rule which will account for them. This involves correlating and integrating the facts into a more general description, that is, relating them to a wider context.[11]

Just as with the Duhem-Quine view, so too in abduction there can be multiple hypotheses that explain the evidence. In confronting the challenge of which one to select, Peirce directed us as follows:

1. The hypothesis should explain the facts
2. It should be economical
3. It should be capable of being subjected to experimental testing.[12]

Moving beyond Peirce, let me simply note that as a method, abduction is not yet particularly clear or well defined. To quote from the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy article on the topic by Ivan Douven,

> …it presupposes the notions of candidate explanation and best explanation, neither of which has a straightforward interpretation. While some still hope that the former can be spelled out in purely logical, or at least purely formal, terms, it is often said that the latter must appeal to the so-called theoretical virtues, like simplicity, generality, and coherence with well-established theories; the best explanation would then be the hypothesis which, on balance, does best with respect to these virtues. The problem is that none of the said virtues is presently particularly well understood.[13]

2. Units of Meaning in Art

My next question concerns units of meaning in art. Carroll discusses the relationship between interpretation of an artwork and its embodiment, giving us some

8 *Ibidem*, p. 16.
9 *Ibidem*.
10 *Ibidem*, p. 17.
11 J. Svennevig, "Abduction as a methodological approach to the study of spoken interaction." Trial Lecture, University of Oslo, October 1997. Retrieved from: http://home.bi.no/a0210593/Abduction%20as%20a%20methodological%20.pdf.
12 J. Svennevig, citing K. T. Fann, *Peirce's theory of abduction*, Martinius Nijhoff, The Hague 1970.
13 And further, Douven writes, "Giere, in Callebaut (ed.) 1993 (232), even makes the radical claim that the theoretical virtues lack real content and play no more than a rhetorical role in science." I. Douven, "Abduction," 2011, in: *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved from: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/abduction/; some references omitted here.

examples of what aspects of artwork seem to require or foster interpretation. On the linguistic model of meaning (which he rejects, rightly I think), there are presumably clear units of communication, such as words and sentences. And language involves a compositional notion of meaning: parts go together to make up wholes. But the units of communication in artworks are not generally so delimited, as Carroll shows is even true for literary artworks like poems - there may be more to a poem's expressive potential involving, say, alliteration or rhythm that goes beyond mere linguistic or grammatical meaning construed by the ordinary methods. What are the relevant units of meaning? Carroll interpreted certain staging choices in the *Anna Karenina* movie, a particular dance position in *Sleeping Beauty*, and the prelude of Wagner's *Das Rheingold*. Intentional actions of artists might include overall aims in a given work as well as a myriad of individual choices, say in film, of lens, angles, lighting, sound, music, acting, and so on. Obviously, the problem of defining objects of interpretation is not a unique one for Carroll or any proponent of AI, but it may take on added urgency if we are told that there can be a "true" interpretation in terms of "the artist's intention." I will have more to say on this in my next section below.

In addition to the problem of identifying the proper object of interpretation in a given work, sometimes we may want to say that the meaning of a work is in part comprised by its role in a larger context such as the artist's oeuvre or a part of it. In other words, perhaps an artist works out a communicative intention in a series of works where each one contributes to the overall process. This might be true, for example, of the self-portraiture series done by artists like Cézanne and Rembrandt, the stylistic ventures of various periods by Picasso, or the color field paintings of Rothko. We could compare the articulation of an intention over a series of works to the expression of meaning someone conveys through a certain pattern of actions, for example, to the consistent ways in which a boss treats a subordinate in the work environment through various job assignments, office moves, memos, and so on. I am trying to question how distinct and individualized intentions are.

3. The Gricean Model Applied to Actions

3a. General Issues about Intention and Action

Carroll thinks the Gricean model of meaningful communication can be extended and applied to actions. He says that historians do this all the time in offering explanations for why a certain key figure from the past did something. He remarks,

> We do not approach paintings, movies, music, etc. as we read a printed page. We interpret them as we interpret actions. We ask what the artist has done by making these choices which, in turn, must involve questions about what was intended by performing the pertinent communicative action.[14]

14 N. Carroll, "Criticism and Interpretation," *op. cit.*, p. 18. Carroll adds: "Rather, it is more appropriate to approach artistic choices across the board as actions where intentions are relevant to the interpretation of what the artist has done. Where interpretation is pertinent, the artist has performed an action – a communicative action – which needs to be comprehended in terms of what the artist intended

A closer look raises some doubts about how well the Gricean model of communicative speech applies to this broader realm. The most basic issue concerns clarifying and identifying the relevant reflexive intentions – i.e., the ones that people intend to communicate by their actions while at the same time intending that they be recognized by others. The Gricean model appears to assume a fairly high level of conscious awareness of one's intentions, since one not only intends a purpose or meaning in what one says, but intends that others recognize this intention.

But not all actions are done "with intentions" ahead of time as Carroll himself recognizes (this is why he prefers the term "mentalism" to "intentionalism"). For example when driving I intend to stay on the right side of the road, but this is not something I consciously pay attention to; nor is it clear that I intend others to recognize that I have this intention. This doesn't mean that such actions are meaningless or done without reason. I take the point here from G. E. M. Anscombe's classic book on the topic, *Intention*.[15] Anscombe says things like "intention is never a performance in the mind" (section 27, p. 49); or "The only description that I clearly know of what I am doing may be of something that is at a distance from me" (section 30, p. 53).[16]

Anscombe meant to argue that intentional actions occur even in cases where there is no conscious act of intending. The problem now is that Grice's account of communicative speech appears to imply the presence of a self-aware intention in the conscious mind of the speaker - in particular since speakers also intend that audiences will actually recognize such an intention. But I wonder whether ordinary people who act or speak (as well as, of course, artists), can be said to have such particular intentions that they could articulate, along with the reflexive aim of getting others to recognize them. Anscombe emphasizes that a wide variety of descriptions are possible for any given action, such as making one's arm muscles move, raising a pump handle, sending water into a house, poisoning the inhabitants, and/or fomenting a revolution. Presumably along with these alternative descriptions there are alternative aims or intentions. The array of things done by an artist would be similarly complex, and it does not seem obvious what level the proper account of interpretation should focus on. We can't say that meaning occurs only at the "largest" level (where, say, Duchamp intends to *épater la bourgeoisie* by works like *Fountain*), because sometimes things at the micro-level are also important, such as an artist's intentionally creating what look like paint dribbles by the use of carefully executed machine-made dots.

A similar issue has been raised by Alex Kiefer, who also cites Anscombe in explaining his doubts about the relevance of artistic intentions. Kiefer writes,

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to do. Where the artist employs conventions in pursuit of her ends, this provides us with evidence of what she means. It does not determine what she means. Her intention does", p. 20.

15 G. E. M. Anscombe, *Intention*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 2000; (originally published by Basil Blackwell, 1957). References to the text that follow are to the original 1957 edition.

16 For helpful summaries, see J. Speaks, "A guide to Anscombe's Intention, §§1-31," September 8, 2004. Retrieved from: http://www3.nd.edu/~jspeaks/courses/mcgill/519-action/anscombe-1-31.pdf.

> Nothing about this property of artworks, however, entails that they must have a meaning or point, in the sense of being about something or having a content, or that they must be intended to have such content. More to the point, even if an artist does have a specific intention in creating an artwork (that is, the intention to create art), there is no reason to suppose that all or even most of the artwork's properties will also be tied to specific authorial intentions. Most actions can take an intentional object, but need not. G. E. M. Anscombe, in her tortuous examination of intentional action, classifies intentional actions as those "to which a certain sense of the question 'why?' is given application." Application is refused, not to those instances in which the agent would reply, "for no particular reason," but to those in which the reply would be "I did not realize I was doing that." Proper responses to the question "What are you doing?" when addressed to a person strolling along a path include "I'm taking a stroll to clear my head" as well as "Just strolling" or even "Nothing in particular." Analogous to this case is "I'm doing a painting that will exhibit the malleability of perception" versus "I'm doing a painting!" or simply "Painting."[17]

Some of these Anscombe-style concerns about agents' abilities to express or formulate intentions are echoed in other kinds of discussions about unconscious intentions, where what is meant is nothing like a Freudian model of the unconscious as what is repressed. There are various accounts in the analytic tradition of philosophy of mind as well as in recent scientifically-inspired theories of consciousness, including those by psychologists like Daniel Wegner and Timothy D. Wilson, that allow for the existence of such intentions.[18] Indeed, one current philosophical contender for explaining consciousness, the so-called "HOT" or "higher-order thought" theory, rejects the Gricean model of meaningful speech precisely because of its commitment to intentions as elements of conscious awareness.[19]

3b. Implications for Art

In discussing the interpretation of artworks, points like the following are commonly made: We (allegedly) cannot allude to the artist's intentions in assigning meaning because an artist's statements about intentions may be conflicting. Or, the artist may change his or her mind later on concerning the meaning of their work (as sometimes happens, for example, when a critic offers an interpretation the artist had not thought of but later accepts). It is even said that an artist may not know his or her own intention in creating the work, and may say this directly – or may deny having any particular intention in making it.

Obviously, artists or others can say some of these things without that meaning they are correct. But such claims can find support from certain kinds of art theory which maintain that the artist's intention is worked out through the art itself, and does not exist prior to the work. On such a view, when artists make works, they are involved in a process of figuring out what they intend to communicate. They may not know this until the work is executed, perhaps not even until it is viewed and experienced by others. I would compare the process of

17 A. Kiefer, "The Intentional Model of Interpretation," in: *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 63 (2005), p. 276 (footnote omitted).

18 See T. D. Wilson, *Strangers to Ourselves: Discovering the Adaptive Unconscious*, Harvard, The Belknap Press, Cambridge, MA and London 2002, and D. M. Wegner, *The Illusion of Conscious Will*, MIT, Cambridge, MA 2002; thanks to my colleague Josh Weisberg for these references.

19 R. Brown, "HOT Theories of Consciousness and Gricean Intentions," May 30, 2008. Retrieved from: http://onemorebrown.wordpress.com/2008/05/30/hot-theories-of-consciousness-unconscious-gricean-intentions/.

creating art in these cases to other kinds of communicative contexts in which people have to work toward grasping their own intentions or aims – as when one tries to articulate one's inner feelings to a therapist, works out plans for an upcoming vacation with one's partner, or clarifies a philosophical point through a conversation. It sometimes happens that my colleague says, "Now I see what you want to say. You are arguing that P!" where this seems right, although I didn't previously realize that was my intention. These contexts do seem to involve meaningful actions or dialogue although they don't seem to meet the Gricean criteria for conveying one's intentions. Instead one is communicating partly in order to *discover* one's intentions.

A point like the one I just made has often been made in expressivist theories of art in the vein of Croce, Collingwood, Langer, and Dewey. Even if the point does not work in relation to more cognitive aims of artists, to convey what he labeled themes and theses in their works, it might apply to the artistic communication of expressive properties. Such a view gets a particularly strong statement in Collingwood, who writes,

> when a person expresses an emotion, he is conscious of … a perturbation or excitement which he feels going on within him, but of whose nature he is ignorant. While in this state, all he can say about his emotion is: 'I feel … I don't know what I feel.' From this helpless and oppressed condition he extricates himself by doing something which we call expressing himself. This is an activity which has something to do with the thing we call language: he expresses himself by speaking. It has also something to do with consciousness: the emotion expressed is an emotion of whose nature the person who feels it is no longer unconscious. It also has something to do with the way in which he feels the emotion. As unexpressed, he feels it in what we called a helpless and oppressed way; as expressed, he feels in a way from which this sense of oppression has vanished. His mind is somehow lightened and eased.

It may be à propos here to remind readers that Collingwood was also a philosopher of history, i.e., was also interested in explanations of the behavior of historical figures.[20]

Conclusion

Despite the specific reservations I have expressed here about the usefulness of extending the Gricean model of speech to actions including those of artists, I share Carroll's general intuitions that interpretation should aim at correctness and that capturing artists' own aims is a key part of this enterprise. It is a difficult challenge to explain how the enterprise of art interpretation can be made rational rather than arbitrary, and we owe thanks to Carroll for tackling such an important issue.

20 Quoted in G. Kemp, "Collingwood's Aesthetics," in: *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E. N. Zalta, Fall 2012 Edition. Retrieved from: http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2012/entries/collingwood-aesthetics/.

ISSN 1230-0330

Elisabeth Schellekens

The End of Artistic Meaning?

Like all Noël Carroll's work on artistic interpretation, "Criticism and Interpretation" offers a remarkably clear and concise discussion of how to engage critically with art. The principal target is artistic meaning and the two questions that any attempt to unpack such meaning must tackle head-on. First, the "constitutive question" aims to establish exactly what (or who) determines artistic meaning. Second, the "epistemological question" sets out to explain how we come to know that meaning, that is to say, by what means we access a work's meaning.

Strictly speaking, and as Carroll rightly points out, not all artworks call for interpretation. And even when they do the "intended point" can be fairly one-dimensional (as in the example of a military building like the Pentagon aiming to project some idea of raw strength and indestructibility). Nonetheless, when there is such an element to take part of, working out what a particular meaning consists of must be part and parcel of our experience of the work. Carroll writes, "where the artwork is about something, isolating what it is about – that is, interpreting its meaning – is an unavoidable step in establishing whether the artist has done a good or a bad job articulating whatever the work is about".[1]

As we know from his *On Criticism* (Routledge, 2009), Carroll is a forceful advocate of the view that criticism fundamentally aims at the evaluation of art and it is only by grasping a work's full meaning that can we discern the features and qualities which contribute to its general worth. Interpretation thus has to be prior to evaluation and full-blown appreciation: "[i]n order to evaluate works… we must first interpret them before we go on to judge whether the artist has or has not found the appropriate way to articulate them – that is ways that successfully will support, reinforce, or enhance the meaning".[2] Clearly, this claim relies on the idea that art can have a complex cognitive dimension upon which its overall value depends. Perhaps more controversially, it stipulates that evaluation is always the consequence or end-result of interpretation. Whereas many artworks undoubtedly support this reading, we may want to remain open to the idea that others suit an alternative vision better, one based on a more inclusive process whereby appraisal and understanding progress in parallel to one another. With some visual art, for example, ascertaining or assessing the phenomenal or sensory impression the work gives rise to can itself be key to its most appropriate interpretation. In a case like Picasso's *Guernica*, say, the

1 N. Carroll, "Criticism and Interpretation," in: *Sztuka i Filozofia: Art and Philosophy*, 42 (2013), p. 7.
2 *Ibidem*, p. 8.

evaluative dimension can not only provide a motivation to find the work's complete meaning, but can also contribute to its strength and intensity. In short, there may well be cases where artistic appreciation or estimation feeds into interpretation and vice-versa in a way that might not fit squarely with Carroll's account. That said, if – as Carroll well might – we take evaluation to refer only to the final assessment of a work as a whole, then that notion obviously refers to something rather like a verdict and can more confidently be placed at the tail-end of the artistic experience.

Thinking about artistic meaning and interpretation in this way may seem to project onto art an intentionality that individual pieces cannot possibly support, be they abstract or concrete, multiple or single. After all, one might ask, how could talk of meaning for particular works be anything other than metaphorical? To the extent that anyone interested in artistic interpretation has, by and large, had to operate alongside this kind of question – a question which threatens to derail the entire enterprise – Carroll's analysis certainly doesn't fare any worse than anyone else's. However, talk of artistic meaning as something which the work itself is imbued with – as something which is somehow "in" the piece, there to be discovered by its audience – does reveal some commitment to an interpretative model which strongly points to a highly work-focused constitutive view. This is relevant because if we cast our original problem as one fundamentally concerned with how to unpack something inherent to the artwork, then we may be alienating some aspects of the anti-intentionalist approach before we even formally begin to argue about them.

Crucially, Carroll advises us against committing what he calls the "linguistic fallacy" or the invalid transfer of insights afforded by the literary arts to all forms of art. Here, of course, Carroll is absolutely right to warn us against the dangers associated with assuming that what seems to be true of novels or poems must also be true of, say, sculptures, installations and films. Generally speaking, visual and musical art especially does not rest on anything like "the meaning conventions recorded in dictionaries"[3] even though there can be fairly targeted and firm symbolic representations (such as the representation of peaches in Renaissance paintings symbolizing virtue and honour or dogs symbolizing fidelity and loyalty), and so we are wrong to assume that all artworks offer at least one common and generally accessible mode of deciphering its semantic content. This is an important point, one which can, on reflection, be applied more broadly. For, as we shall see shortly, even works within the same artform can call for different modes of appreciation and interpretation.

As Carroll knows, few artforms or art movements challenge our classical repertoire of engagement as profoundly as has the avant-garde. Often, its very point is to "undermine customary protocols of communication"[4] by presenting its audience with something surprising or unexpected. Carroll writes that

> [a]lthough it is true that we do not have to go to the avant-garde in order to support our claim that much interpretation cannot even be remotely conceived to be modeled on the understanding

3 *Ibidem*, p. 16.
4 *Ibidem*, p. 19.

> of word in terms of their dictionary meanings, the practice of various avant-gardes, literary and otherwise, drives that point home very effectively. For, the genuine avant-garde proceeds by breaking with conventions.[5]

Here, the suggestion that contemporary art is a kind of process in which authorial intention is often important to interpretation in the terms proposed by the notion of conversational implicature[6] is helpful. Using *Brillo Box* as an example, Carroll discusses the way in which Warhol's placement of a mass-produced commodity in the space usually reserved for uniquely crafted works of art leads the viewer to construe a meaning which takes this clash of expectation into account – namely that art is itself a kind of commodity.

> This is the way in which a very great deal of avant-garde art communicates. It adopts a strategy that subverts expectations, but in a way that intends to say something relevant to its art historical circumstances. The audience figures out what the work means by attempting to grock what an informed participant in the discourses of the artworld could intend to get across by upending our presumptions in telling directions, such as inserting the simulacrum of a commodity, a commercial packing carton, into the network of the artworld at just that point where one would anticipate finding something discernibly different, something that looked like the kind of thing we antecedently identified as an artwork.[7]

By highlighting the great extent to which art cannot simply be understood in terms of previously agreed and generally acceptable conventions, Carroll reaches the conclusion that contemporary art strongly supports intentionalism. Contemporary art, Carroll further argues, sets out to convey a message or "intended point" directly via its maker, and thereby "brings out very dramatically a condition of much artistic communication," namely that it must be understood "in terms of authorial intentions."[8]

The early conceptual works Carroll cites to support his position may well point in the direction of intentionalism. Nonetheless, more remains to be said about this issue in relation to more recent works in the same tradition. In what follows, I will suggest that much contemporary art shows that meaning is not always something which needs to be uncovered or discovered in the relation between work and artist and that the rejection of this possibility is largely built on the dismissal of what may be called a more "open" form of interpretation. Linked to this, is the way in which a work's meaning and its intended point can come apart sometimes, such as when at least some of the artistic meaning is determined by the cultural context in which the work is set. Regardless of whether an artist intends to shock and provoke us with his/her work, or not, the way in which we initially receive it can shape our future interpretation and understanding of it. Furthermore, the "intended point" may well lose its force over time and become displaced by another set of responses. As in the case of Warhol's *Brillo Box*, few who view this work today are genuinely shocked by it, with the result that no conclusions can be drawn by the viewer from the artistic

5 *Ibidem*, pp. 18-19.
6 *Ibidem*, p. 19.
7 *Ibidem*.
8 *Ibidem*.

experience about the overlap between artworks and commodities. Instead, the iconic nature of the work becomes the object of a more straightforward and perhaps even aesthetic form of fascination.

In order to make progress with this set of questions, let us begin by addressing the notion at the very heart of our inquiry, that of meaning itself. What do we mean by "meaning" in art? Here again, Carroll provides us with a very useful threefold distinction between forms of artistic meaning.

> There are themes and theses. Roughly, the topic or topics of a work are its theme, as the wrath of Achilles is the theme of the *Iliad*. Where a work stakes out a perspective or position on its theme, we can say it has a thesis. The recent film *Lincoln* by Steven Spielberg is about the abolition of slavery; that is its theme. But it also advances a thesis or perspective about its theme; it is in favor of the abolition of slavery. In addition to their communication of themes and theses, artworks may also possess meaning in terms of exhibiting expressive properties like sadness, joy or gloom. The objects of interpretation then are at least themes, theses, and expressive properties.[9]

One of the main advantages of this categorization is that it carves out more space for the ways in which the non-literary arts can be about something. Lacking the means to develop a specific narrative might reduce the chances of transmitting a highly individualized message successfully, but this aspect in itself need not involve the end of all cognitive or semantic aspiration. Certainly, the sense of hope and optimism conveyed by the last movement of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* can be grasped through its expressive qualities alone without prior knowledge of any theme or particular perspective.

How, then, does more recent contemporary art fit into these categories? Carroll sets to one side the idea that mere contemplation can, by itself, count as a form of proper artistic appreciation. Instead, he takes the view that "most contemporary art, whether esoteric or exoteric, is designed with primarily communicative intent"[10] and, as we have already seen, must therefore be interpreted in order for its value to be recognized. To the extent that anything put forward by one person for scrutiny and engagement by another (or others) inevitably possesses some kind of "communicative intent", that may well be right. But this is not the same as to say that all contemporary art is produced with some interpretable meaning in mind, or at least not if we think of interpretation as the process of coming to know "*the*" or "the determinate"[11] meaning of the work. Can we really say that the art of today still requires or even allows for this kind of interpretation? Are traditional conceptions of artistic meaning defunct?

As we have already seen, Carroll's argument is well tailored to much of the conceptualist art of the 1960s and 1970s, at least in so far as these works were originally conceived and understood. Aiming to make a specific point about a particular area of inquiry, it seems fair to say that much art of that period had both a theme and a perspective, and to that extent at least sits nicely with Carroll's categories of artistic meaning.

9 *Ibidem*, p. 8.
10 *Ibidem*, p. 12.
11 *Ibidem*, p. 14.

When we turn our attention to the art of the 1980s and 1990s, however, it can be argued that a rather different semantic dimension comes into play, one in which notions of a single, determinate meaning is much more problematic to apply. A good example here is the art of the so-called "YBAs", or "Young British Artists." With a piece like Damien Hirst's *The Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*, we can certainly identify a broad theme, supplied by the title. Additionally, the work seems to expect us to supply some kind of thesis in so far as it urges us to think about something which affects us all directly. Importantly, however, the thesis is not something which the work – or its artist – will supply by itself. Rather, the work is democratic in relation to the plurality of any of the theses it may give rise to: none is especially to be valued over any other, provided they are genuine responses to the work. In contradistinction to traditional notions of determinate artistic meaning, the art of the YBAs seems brazenly to court this interpretative plurality. If anything, the more the merrier.

Nor does the rot stop there, so to speak. In much more recent work, this aspect of challenging the viewer to interpret can itself be said to be absent from the equation, and the artwork's value is construed simply in its occupying a communicative space. In other words, artists seem to be less concerned with giving rise to responses than with the simple presentation of things. Taking the nominees for the 2012 Turner Prize as examples, the criteria for the selection of the shortlist seems specifically to exclude traditional communicative elements. Instead, a work "explores" a theme (Elizabeth Price, winner) by using existing film footage and mixing it with text and music; another "creates an atmosphere" (Spartacus Chetwynd) by creating carnivalesque performances including costumes and sets; or "evokes an atmosphere" (Luke Fowler) by interweaving found film footage with own film clips. Similarly, the work of Martin Boyce, winner of the 2011 Turner Prize, "explores visual languages" by using pieces of furniture to create "peculiar landscapes."

If we appeal to the categories of artistic meaning we have been leaning on until now, none of these pieces can rightly be described as presenting a particular thesis such as the promotion of the abolition of slavery. Nor can we reliably find an interpretable theme analogous to Achilles' wrath. The works mentioned above just aren't *about* anything in this sense. And although one might think that at least some of these works manifest expressive properties, and so can be said to have interpretable meaning in virtue of that, any affective components these works might have are fluid and ambiguous, and best conceived as some kind of open-ended mood, disposition or frame of mind – even at the level of emotional register these works tend to be entirely unspecific.

If, as Carroll and many with him do, we want to hold on to the idea that artworks must be appreciated in their own terms and not savoured for whatever pleasurable associations they might happen to give rise to in their audience, this aspect of contemporary art clearly poses serious difficulties for intentionalist theory. How can one, after all, maintain intentionalism where the whole notion of artistic intention seems to have been left behind by artists and spectators alike? Under these circumstances, it seems reasonable to ask whether there can still be room for traditional concepts of interpretation and meaning here. In

cases such as these, where the artist might seek to isolate his own intentions as merely one of many possibly meanings, and where this open-endedness is reflected in the nature of the work itself, it may be that whatever meaning(s) the work may "possess" take a secondary role to a broader and overtly pluralistic process of appreciation and contemplation for its own sake. What may be more important here, in other words, is the experience of seeking an encounter rather than the uncovering of meaning as such. Certainly, if we consider the example of visual art of the last few decades, there are good reasons to believe that artists and their audiences have started to abandon the kind of traditional interpretative model upon which most intentionalist arguments rely. Whether they are right to have done so is, of course, another matter entirely.

ISSN 1230-0330

Gemma Argüello Manresa

Noël Carroll's Modest Actual Mentalism

In his essay on "Criticism and Interpretation" Noël Carroll focuses on critical evaluation of artworks. He starts his paper with the following statement "insofar as not all artworks involve meaning, broadly construed, not all artworks call for interpretation."[1] For Carroll the meaning of an artwork can take the form of themes, thesis or expressive properties that can be interpreted, so it might be difficult to claim that not all artworks involve meaning. Even a conceptual artwork is about some theme or a pure music piece might have at least certain expressive property. In consequence, if for interpretation it is necessary a meaning and any artwork have some kind of meaning, it is possible to interpret it. However, the most important problem for Carroll is how is it possible to interpret that meaning. In order to solve this puzzle he proposes the modest actual intentionalism.

For Carroll critical evaluation of artworks depends on interpretation, which depends on meaning, and meaning is fixed by the actual intentions of the author. He discusses most of the recent approaches on interpretation, however, here I want only explore if Carroll successfully answers to the questions he asks to the proposals he refutes:

1. "The question of what determines the meaning of a poem."

2. "The epistemological question of how we are to go about ascertaining that meaning, notably in terms of what evidence is legitimate and what is not."

Carroll uses a Gricean approach in order to defend the role the author has in determining the meaning of an artwork. Grice distinguishes what it is told from the way it is told, what is implicated in conversations from the way the hearer recognizes the speaker's intentions. Any Gricean approach used for the understanding artworks' meanings must explain how it is possible for the hearers to recognize the author's intentions if he does not communicate what he actually believes and sometimes what he says is far from being perspicuous. In addition, it is barely impossible to recognize the intention the author tries to transmit to the audience, since even if we know him, there might be some mental contents supporting his intentions that he may not even know.

Carroll might answer my reply saying that modest actual mentalism "holds that the cognitive or, more broadly, mental stock of the artist fixes the meaning of the work, so long as said intentions, assumptions, etc. are consistent

1 N. Carroll, "Criticism and Interpretation," in: *Sztuka i Filozofia: Art and Philosophy*, 42 (2013), p. 7.

with what is available in the text." Any artist has a mental stock that fixes the meaning of what he's doing. However, the only way we can only access to his intentions is through the category he chose for a specific artwork. That is, i.e., Homer might try to write a song, but instead he wrote a poem, *The Iliad*. He intentionally wrote a poem. His action does not give us any tool to interpret it as a poem, but only to read it as poem, not as a song. An art critic might interpret it according to certain artistic values, meanwhile a historian according to the relation its mythical content to the context of Ancient Greece. Therefore, intentions might only determine the categories of the artworks we must consider in order to perceive them.

For Carroll, "what is written in on the page is our best evidence of what the poet intended" and "concern for authorial intention does not draw us away from what the poet has written but rather asks readers to attend to it closely and deeply." Carroll thinks that even if he did not know what Homer intended when he wrote *The Iliad*, "as long as the poem is available to us, we do have access to what the author intended." Although we can more or less successfully predict the others' intentions in social life, because we have access to the context of enunciation, i.e. gestures or intonation, our interpretative practice is different when we read the poem.

The skills we have in conversational contexts help us to understand the literary text. However, those skills let us understand the content, not what the author intended. The work gives us information such as expressive properties, descriptions or certain intertextual contents that only gives us the relevant information we should interpret, in order to understand the text. The role played by descriptions, dialogues and the expressive use of language in *The Iliad* let the audience interpret the internal context of the poem, not the intentions behind Homer's utterances. Even a historian, after post-structuralism, might recognize that his interpretation of this poem is based on a narrative practice and a reconstruction of a history in which it is impossible to know what Homer intended, but only what his works might mean according to its own historical period.

It is not the same what an utterance means from what the speaker intended. If one of the purposes of literature is communication, what does literature communicate? Nowadays there are many researchers working on the way certain sounds or movements convey certain expressive properties, without our access to the intentions behind them. In poetry the phonetic structure is more important than in narrative literature in relation to the expression of certain emotions. There are people working on the way sound might be interpreted by the audience even if they don't know the author or even the language. The same has been done for facial expressions and now some people working on cognitive embodiment are starting to explore expression in bodily gestures. Therefore, it is possible to think that the audience is able to recognize that certain utterances express certain properties, such as sadness, even if they don't know who say it. To contend that the intention behind that utterance is to express sadness does not give us more information about it.

Modest actual mentalism neither answers the question of what determines the meaning of an artwork, nor the question of what it is a legitimate critical

evaluation. Abduction inferences of what would happen if the artist chose *y* instead of *x* will give an explanation on what might make different *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* if Picasso changed the representation of one of the prostitutes, not an explanation on what Picasso might be thinking. Furthermore, hypothesizing what the artist was thinking when he chose what he chose does not help us interpret the artwork, since we can always find a better explanation for our hypothesis. Does abduction is necessary for interpretation? Even though criticism always refers to the corpus created by an author, it uses many categories to interpret and judge. Even when critical evaluation consists in the following judgments it is difficult maintain the role of authorial intention in the interpretation:

1. An artwork would be better if the artist have made Y instead of X.

2. An artwork would be better if the some content might have been Y instead of X.

Both judgments focus on the performance done. The intention of the artist, being actual or hypothetical, does not make any difference in the evaluation. Critics have to offer reasons based on the artwork, that is, on what the artist did, not what he might be thinking when he did what he did. In ordinary circumstances I can judge the other's past action even if I do not know his intentions, if what I am judging is the action done. Arguing that some artwork "would be better if" according to the intention behind the artwork, must rely on the possibility that the author should have had another mental repertoire so he might intend to do something different. However, it is impossible to contend that the author might have another mental repertoire, since he might not even be conscious about it. Even if we have access to that content, the artwork would be a different one. For interpreting the artwork the critic only has the artwork and certain properties that can express certain meanings by themselves.

ISSN 1230-0330

Randall Auxier

Virtual Intentionalism or Actual Intentionalism?

Professor Carroll has offered a case for his well-known moderate actual intentionalism in this instance by arguing that various other approaches, including what he calls anti-intentionalism, cannot handle two crucial requirements. The first is a constitutive question: what determines the meaning of a poem (or other work of art)? And second, the epistemological question of how we can or should go about ascertaining that meaning.

I do not myself defend any of the views Carroll is responding to, and so to state my own view of the matter at this point would take attention away from the way Carroll has framed his inquiry. Thus, I want first to ask questions that come from within his designated framework. After that I will briefly indicate my own view and if Professor Carroll wishes to comment beyond the framework for this essay by saying how a defender of moderate actual intentionalism would respond, I would greatly appreciate that as well.

I think my internal questions, as it were, come from the standpoint of anti-intentionalism generally. Umberto Eco's novel *Foucault's Pendulum* has its significant action centered around a cryptic piece of paper left in a publishers office by a mysterious man (who may or may not have been murdered after his one visit to that office). This piece of paper is what Alfred Hitchcock always called the "MacGuffin" in a story – something that everyone wants for some reason that motivates the action. The piece of paper contains what seem to be notations about a location and what was to be found there. The three main characters come to believe that these "instructions" were written long ago by some people who had hidden the esoteric documents of a secret society (which secret society is an open question). At a crucial moment in the story, the girlfriend of the main character snatches the piece of paper (to see what all the fuss is about) and she rather convincingly shows that it is in fact just a grocery list. I had an opportunity to ask Eco about this once. "Was it just a grocery list?" His answer was "I don't know." Of course, it was his own creation, as an author. But on the basis of Eco's own anti-intentionalist theory, I believe he could go further and say "I *can't* know."[1] Without rehearsing the

1 Although Eco has a reputation for irony and authorial mischief, I would point out that F. Scott Fitzgerald also said something similar and was not being playful in the least. In a letter to Edmund Wilson in May of 1925, Fitzgerald said: "The worst fault in it [The Great Gatsby] I think is a BIG FAULT: I gave no account (and had no feeling about or knowledge of) the emotional relations between Gatsby and Daisy from the time of their reunion to the catastrophe." (See Selected Letters by F. Scott Fitzgerald, http://fitzgerald.narod.ru/letters/letters.html, accessed October 17, 2014.) Fitzgerald is quite serious

details of Eco's theory (which is a little more subtle than the rough outline of anti-intentionalism Carroll offers in his essay, being a combined semiotic/reader response/socio-historical epistemology), the question is this: How can Carroll's theory deal with (1) "I don't know" as a sincere answer to the query about the author's intentions? and (2) "I can't know" as an authorial response to the same? and most importantly, (3) how would a moderate actual intentionalist satisfy the constitutive question (and also, therefore the epistemological question) when the author's answer is either "I don't know" or "I can't know"?

It seems to me that there *is* a fact of the matter, within the story, as to whether the cryptic piece of paper is or isn't a grocery list. To give up on that claim is to abandon the presupposed history (the unity of action, in Aristotle's terms) that governs the narrative. *Foucault's Pendulum* is not science fiction or fantasy or magical realism, or any other genre that tampers with the three unities. The novel studiously observes all three unities. Hence, the piece of paper has a history that either does or does not include having been a grocery list - in fact, one of the main characters loses his life because everyone believes that this piece of paper holds the key to locating the secret documents. Either these characters have a true belief or a false belief.

The fact in the story is that the piece of paper functions entirely as such a valuable document, even if everyone (except the girlfriend) is wrong about it. But it seems very likely also that it started as a grocery list. In this example, authorial intentions neither determine the meaning here, nor *can* they. Can a moderate actual intentionalist handle such a situation?

With that said, for my own part, I defend a theory closer to the views of Susanne Langer and Arthur Danto. I don't think intentions of any kind (creative or otherwise) are necessarily clear prior to the act, especially if the act is creative. Just because an agent may have a plan of action prior to acting does not mean that the act itself can be determined by, reduced to, or explained by the plan. Most people actually use the idea of "intention" to mix the plan with the act in some vague and unanalyzable way. I think the plan is both ontologically and epistemologically independent of the act, but the *interpretation* of the act is joined primarily to the act itself, *not* to the plan. The plan is, at most, suggestive of how to interpret the act.

We can set up analogies between plans of action and acts as starting points for interpretation, but intention, if it is relevant at all, exists in the process of interpretation. No one, including the agent, can determine an act with an intention except *after* the act. That is, of course, a matter of interpretation and the mode of determination is reflective rather than a mechanical subsumption of a particular act under some kind of universal. I do not think that intentions can operate logically as universals do, and that when we use intentions as explanations, we err about the very real difference between plans of action and interpretations.

about this void in his knowledge of his own characters, as he makes clear subsequently in the rest of this letter and another one to H. L. Mencken written at the same time. He clearly implies there was an important emotional relation between the characters at this time (the story requires it), but he simply cannot find a way to learn what it is.

Thus, I would say that what Carroll is calling "actual" intentions are really only *virtual* intentions, projected before the act (creative or otherwise) as plans of action, and yet failing to determine that act in any explanatory way, and in some cases, failing to determine the meaning of the act at all. When the difference between plans of action and interpretations is properly respected, explanations *become* interpretations and intentions are not conflated with plans of action. This does not deny the existence of authorial intentions, nor does it deny to those intentions a role in interpreting the artwork (or other act), but it prevents us from thinking that we have to supply some sort of causal or quasi-causal account of the relation between prior intentions and the embodied meaning that exists in the work. In short, there can be a fact of the matter about the relationship between the parts of the work and the whole that does not depend on authorial intentions, but is still relevant to both the plan of action and to the later interpretation of the act.

Yet, there need not be a plan of action at all. I would give as an example Arthur Danto's practice, in making wood block prints, of sitting down to draw with no plan (and no intention except the intention to draw), and to enact drawing until (and if) an image emerged. Only after the act of drawing is temporally extended beyond a few seconds and begins to be collected in reflection does something like a meaning emerge. At that point it would make little sense to say that Danto intended just *this* image, unless one wants to plumb the depths of mysticism. I find that most art interpretation takes for granted that intentions are more powerful than they really are. Danto's practice might be a form of Zen meditation, and the value of seeing it that way is that we become aware that all kinds of acts, like shooting a bow and arrow, bowling, running, playing tennis, and the like, have a non-intentional act at their core.

I think that appealing to intentions to explain an artwork is ontologically backwards (i.e., the artwork itself explains the virtual intentions, but not the actual ones), and that if intentions are to be included at all, these are relations that emerge between the act and its interpretation. Thus, I would suggest that my view is the true actual intentionalism, since my view draws from the actuality of the act and its real consequences for interpretation, while Carroll's view is virtual intentionalism, since it mingles virtual plans of actions with actions and then struggles to explain their relation. I am confident that Carroll will not accept this characterization of his view, but I would be eager to hear how he responds to it.

44 - 2014 sztuka i filozofia
ISSN 1230-0330

Noël Carroll

Criticism and Interpretation Redux: Responses to My Commentators

Introduction

Kalle Puolakka, Stephen Davies, Cynthia Freeland, Elisabeth Schellekens, Gemma Argüella Manresa and Randall Auxier have been generous enough to comment on my article "Criticism and Interpretation." I am grateful for their time and attention. In what follows, I will take up their objections commentator by commentator.

Kalle Puolakka

Kalle Puolakka raises three issues: 1) are everyday interpretations and art interpretations alike; 2) can a Deweyan defense of modest actual mentalism be developed; 3) can hypothetical intentionalism do a better job dealing with features of artworks that appear unconnected to authorial intentions? I shall answer these questions in the order Puolakka advanced them.

In response to Puolakka's first question, I observe that he presumes that interpretation occurs in response to bewilderment in both art and life and, since bewilderment is not the typical response in ordinary discourse, there is neither an analogy between art interpretation and ordinary interpretation nor a continuum. But bewilderment sets the standard too high for interpretation – far higher than I have set it. Bewilderment may come into play in certain art works, such as some avant-garde productions, but it not required for interpretation to be apposite in either art or ordinary discourse. Interpretation in art and ordinary intercourse obtains constantly without being prompted by bewilderment. It may be set in motion merely by anomalies.

Moreover, as anyone who has ever looked at a transcript of everyday speech knows, ordinary discourse is shot full of anomalies – ellipses that need to be filled-in, ambiguous word choices, unstated presuppositions and all sorts of other deviations from the norm, which, as pointed out by philosophers like Donald Davidson, we need to negotiate in our interpretive stride.[1] These need not be bewildering but they nevertheless call for interpretive adjustment – reversing a "he" for a "she" or inadvertently placing a "no" where it doesn't belong and

1 See D. Davidson, "A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs," in: idem, *Truth, Language and History*, The Clarendon Press, Oxford 2005. See also his "James Joyce and Humpty-Dumpty" in the same volume.

innumerable other conversational glitches. Likewise artworks contain many comparable, less-than-bewildering anomalies which invite interpretation and are on a continuum with the less-than-bewildering interpretations we supply constantly in dialogue with our conspecifics.

Of course, sometimes there are words and deeds, perhaps especially our actions, that are arrestingly perplexing and call for interpretation. We may wonder why our lover used that tone of voice. Often we find ourselves saying in response to the words and deeds of others: "Why did you say that?" Or, "Why did you do that?" Perplexity rather than a mere sense of anomaly or of a deviation from expectations may prompt interpretation in, I want to stress, *both* art and everyday life. So again, both these interpretive practices are on a continuum.

Of course, some artworks are bewildering and call for interpretation for that reason. But, equally, there are also bewildering events in everyday life that cry out for interpretation.

That not all interpretation in everyday life is provoked by bewilderment does not establish that art interpretation and everyday interpretation are discontinuous, since in both art and life, what is simply anomalous, unexpected, and perplexing typically elicits interpretation. Indeed, in both art and life, what is merely a choice worthy of questioning is an occasion for interpretation as when we so often query "Why did you do that?"

Needless to say, art interpretation differs from much ordinary social exchange because it often presupposes knowledge about the context and history of the artwork that is not available to everyone. Yet this is only to call attention to the fact that art interpretation is context specific. This makes art interpretation no more discontinuous from everyday discourse than does the context-specificity of gardeners' conversations take them out of the realm of the ordinary.

With respect to Puolakka's defense of a view like mine on Deweyan/aesthetic grounds, I have nothing to say until I have a better sense of what it would look like. I am not a great fan of Dewey's aesthetics, but anyway, I wish Prof. Puolakka good luck with this project.

Lastly, Puolakka proposes that hypothetical intentionalism is better suited to interpret features of works that cannot apparently be connected to the artist's actual intentions. Puolakka writes in terms of *intentions*, but my view, modest actual mentalism, speaks in terms of our mental stock. I think it is very unlikely that there are features of artworks that are not connected at all to the artist's mental stock, conscious, tacit and even unconscious.

Furthermore, the contest that Puolakka imagines also strikes me as highly improbable, since hypothetical intentionalism and modest actual mentalism share most of the same interpretive resources. The only difference is that my position allows resort to what the hypothetical intentionalists stigmatize as "private." But this means in effect that any feature the hypothetical intentionalist can find a hypothesis for, the modest actual intentionalist can as well. So absent the so-called private avowals, the two views will arrive at comparable hypotheses. Thus, it is hard to imagine cases where the hypothetical intentionalist will have the advantage Puolakka contemplates.

Puolakka appears to accept the hypothetical intentionalist's claim that it counts in favor of an interpretation that it makes an artwork turn out better. Although this appeals to the nice guy in many, I have always rejected this suggestion. In art, we care about rewarding artists for what they have actually achieved which will be connected to what she has done which will be connected to her real purposes. But this is not consistent with attributing made-up purposes to artists, however generously minded or kind-hearted that may seem. There are no "A's for effort" in art.

Making artworks seem better is not a grounds for supporting an interpretation, especially where we know the author's interpretation is at variance with the author's actual purposes (as in the much discussed case of A. E. Houseman).

I do not think that we commend or should commend artists for what they could have achieved but rather we praise or blame them for what they have done.

Stephen Davies

Stephen Davies raises questions about the relation of anti-intentionalism to actual intentionalism, about the value-maximizing view, and about authorial endorsements of allegedly unintended meanings, as well as proposing an analogy between artworks and children. Let me address these concern one at a time.

Anti-intentionalism: I was very surprised by Stephen Davies' comments concerning anti-intentionalism's putative closeness to modest actual mentalism. As Davies points out, Wimsatt and Beardsley categorically denied the relevance of evidence of authorial intention *external* to the text. Modest actual mentalism accepts that such evidence may be relevant and even, in some cases, decisive. The views do not converge. Also, the anti-intentionalist position was developed far beyond its founding document. Beardsely expressively rejected the notion that intentions were "in" the text on Humean grounds and argued that [literary] interpretations had to be grounded in the meaning of words their histories, and linguistic conventions. The evolved versions of anti-intentionalism, stridently reject reference to authorial meaning-intentions, even if that may be somewhat ambiguous in "The Intentional Fallacy." Thus, the contrast between anti-intentionalism and modest actual mentalism is not exaggerated. Looking at the development of anti-intentionalism, the orthodox view seems correct.

The Value Maximizing View: I do not think that I confuse the value-maximizing view with hypothetical intentionalism, as Davies appears to suggest. I do think that they both invoke something like the institution of literature (and the arts in general) and its supposed protocols in defense of their reluctance to acknowledge the importance of actual authorial intentions. But otherwise I do not equate them.

It is true that I reject both views on the grounds that the actual practice of art interpretation evinces no settled opinion on the matter of authorial intention. Critics are as apt – or even more apt – to cite evidence of authorial intention as they are to eschew it. Consequently, existing practice does not support the claim that actual authorial intentions are out of bounds. However, I do not claim that actual practice entails my view. I defend modest actual intentionalism on

normative grounds and I challenge hypothetical intentionalism and the value maximizing view to do likewise.

Davies maintains proponents of the maximizing view, like himself, are more conservative than their postmodern brethren because they do not wish to betray the identity of the text. Davies asserts that this may be achieved by distinguishing between ontological (or categorical) authorial intentions and content (or meaning) authorial intentions. The former will be acceptable, the latter not. Davies concedes there may be some slippage here, but, without argument, he contends it will not be serious. Yet, with a great deal of avant-garde art, there is a categorical commitment to subvert conventional meaning. On Davies' view, is that an ontological or a content intention?

I have argued that in philosophy of interpretation, we need to distinguish the epistemological question from the constitutive question – the question of how we come to know the meaning of a work from the question of what determines the meaning of the work. It seems that there are three possible answers to the constitutive question: the artwork itself, the audience, or the author. Claiming that the artwork determines the work, it seems to me is no more than a *façon de parler*; taken literally, it amounts to animism. Hypothetical intentionalism and the value maximizing view suggest that the audience determines meaning. But that seems to lead to indeterminacy of meaning as well as to the counterintuitive implication that you, rather than I, determine what I say. So, modest actual mentalism seems to me to be the best option.

Authorial Endorsements: Sometimes we encounter cases where an artist endorses an interpretation of her work that she avows was not something that she intended. Davies wants to know how a modest, actual mentalist would handle such a case.

The first think to note is that neither modest actual mentalist nor most actual intentionalists are committed to accepting artistic pronouncements about their intentions at face value. Artists sometimes assert intentions that don't have and/or deny intentions that they do have. In this, artists are like the rest of us. And as in the everyday course of affairs, we have no more reason to accept authorial pronouncements than we do the pronouncements of friends, neighbors, and politicians. Artists like everyone else lie and deceive themselves.

Artistic pronouncements endorsing allegedly unintended meanings, like any other artistic pronouncements, must be treated gingerly. For example, artists are often opportunistic and will concur with their interpreters in order to ingratiate themselves to them and/or to seduce a wider audience. An example of this is Alain Robbe-Grillet's endorsement of a psychologistic interpretation of his novels. Thus, one must be careful about endorsements of putatively unintended meanings.

Modest, actual mentalists and most actual intentionalists need not go with whatever an artist says. One must weigh what the artist says against other factors including the artwork itself, its context, and other pronouncements by the same artist.

The modest actual mentalist does not have to agree that the work means *x* just because the artist says it does. And that applies to cases where the artist says she

likes an interpretation that she never thought of. For example, we may reject such an endorsement if the supposed meaning was not available cognitively to her when the work was created – for example, if the proposed "meaning" involves some arcane, esoteric metaphysical theory, known only to a handful of adepts.

However flattering such an interpretation may be to the artist intellectually, inasmuch as it was not part of her cognitive stock when the work was created, it cannot be a part of the meaning of the work. For, it is her actual, originating mental states that fix the meaning of the work – no matter what the artist claims. That is the target our interpretations should strive to identify. Since the "metaphysical" conception in this example was not part of the artist's mental stock at the time the work was "born," it cannot determine the meaning of the work, no matter how much the artist likes it.

But, it might be asked, haven't there been cases where artists have endorsed unthought of interpretations sincerely? Probably. But in those cases, I think what is most likely is that interpreter has put into articulate form something the artist had in mind, but, in descriptive, verbal terms, only vaguely. Artists need not be interpreters of their own works. The work is frequently said to "speak" for itself. We have critics – interpreters – to describe the work to us on our own terms. That is why we have interpreters. Thus, I hazard that when an artist sincerely endorses an interpretation that she says she had not thought of, what is going on is that the interpreter is articulating something that the artist had never put into words exactly, but which nevertheless feels "right," in the same way that the artwork felt right at the moment of its completion.

Of course, we expect that the interpretation of a critic will be more linguistically explicit and verbally articulate than that of the artist will be. The artist would be a critic otherwise (which, though possible, is not necessary). Thus, in those cases where the artist legitimately endorses meaning that she says she never thought of, I suspect that that is because she feels the interpretation is getting at *the same thing* that she was getting at.

Is this account of what is going on viciously circular? I think not, since it will be based on a number of factors about the work and its context and the artist's biography.

The Artwork as Child. Davies rejects the metaphor of the artwork as a conversation and in its stead proposes the artwork as child. His reason for rejecting the conversational model appears to be that some artists, like Harold Pinter, refused to answer questions about their work. This is a strange objection, since the conversation model is not based on artist's speaking apart from their works. The work is the pertinent element of conversation. But in any event, the artwork as child analogy does not seem to me to work in Davies' favor. After all, we do not service to the developing child by interpreting what she says in ways she doesn't intend, no matter how much it pleases us. That borders on child abuse.

Cynthia Freeland

Cynthia Freeland questions the originality of my position, my use of the notion of abduction, my alleged claim that intention always precedes action, and my putative overestimation of the authority of artists' pronouncements.

Prof. Freeland questions whether my arguments are new by associating my position with Robert Stecker, presumably because Stecker also employs a Gricean framework. But I did not claim novelty for my viewpoint on the basis of simply invoking Grice. That was done long before Stecker and not by me, but, I believe, by William Tolhurst.[2] Influenced by the philosopher of language, Stephen Neale, I have introduced to the discussion in aesthetics, I believe, the distinction between the constitutive question and the epistemological question *and* the undermining, on Gricean grounds, of the need for the notion of utterance meaning (neither of which moves are to be found in Stecker). As for the idea of hypothesis formation, that was already present in my own work and that of Jerrold Levinson in the early nineteen nineties. Moreover, what I would also claim to be original in my recent writing is the Linguistic Fallacy which is not available in Stecker or elsewhere.

Prof. Freeland claims that I base my contention of the superiority of modest actual mentalism over hypothetical intentionalism on the basis of the modest actual mentalist's use of abduction. This is inaccurate. Both interpretive approaches will employ abduction in the standard case. Both will employ hypotheses in the same way. The epistemological difference between the two views is the distinction that the hypothetical intentionalist draws between public and private evidence. I maintain that this distinction is arbitrary and unsustainable in practice as well as being at odds with a great deal of contemporary (and traditional) interpretive activity.

That is the basis of the epistemic divide that I draw between my view and hypothetical intentionialism. Abduction has nothing to do with it, since I readily concede that both sides make use of it.

Abduction is especially important in my view in relation to the Linguistic Fallacy. The Linguistic Fallacy appears to treat all interpretive practice as something akin to reading a sentence – decoding dictionary in hand (or mind). I argue that this is a mistake since interpretation is typically a form of abduction. I see no reason why a hypothetical intentionalists must commit themselves to the Linguistic Fallacy, although some may have done so in the past.

Freeland attacks my position on the grounds that "not all actions are done 'with intentions' in the mind ahead of time at all." For instance, intentions, under one construal must be conscious forethoughts. However, modest actual mentalism is not such a narrow form of intentionalism; it pertains to the artist's entire mental stock including tacit presuppositions and unacknowledged desires. The move to talk about the the artist's mental stock – cognitive and emotive, conscious, tacit and unconscious – follows upon Richard Wollheim's criticism of intentionalism, narrowly conceived.[3] Thus, Freeland's criticisms of my view in terms of the subconscious miss their mark. She is attacking another kind of theory.

2 W. Tolhurst, "On What a Text Is and How It Means," in: *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 19, #1 (1979), pp. 3-14. I rely on Part I of P. Grice's *Studies in the Way of Words*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 1989. Also relevant to my view is D. Davidson's requirement of interpretability. See his "A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs," *op. cit.*

3 See my "Art Interpretation," in: *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 51, #12 (2011), pp. 117-135.

The same kind of objection applies to Freeland's Collingwoodian observation that the artist's intention need not precede the execution of her work – it need not be a matter of forethought or preplanning but rather it might emerge in the execution of the work. There is nothing in modest actual mentalism or even in modest actual intentionalism that precludes this. No intentionalist I know of has ever claimed that the relevant art intention had to be a fore-intention (save perhaps Edgar Allen Poe in his "Philosophy of Composition," although that may have been ironic).

Freeland also appears to worry modest actual mentalists and actual intentionalists put too much faith in authorial pronouncements. But as argued in my response to Davies, modest actual intentionalists and actual intentionalists know that artists may dissemble and/or misspeak. We do not put blind faith in the declarations of artists but strive to identify the relevant mental states that determine their performances by interrogating authorial pronouncements in terms of their consistency with the artist's oeuvre, her other statements, historical and cultural context and so forth. Authorial pronouncements are not taken aboard whole cloth and uncritically, but, by the same token, that does not make them altogether forbidden territory either.

Elisabeth Schellekens

Prof. Schellekens' response mainly concerns a worry that my view will have difficulty negotiating the work of the recent avant-garde, such as the Young British Artists. I am not familiar with all of the works she cites. However, her explicit reason for referring to these works is that they are "open." That is, they *invite* viewers to interpret them in their own way. I do not think putatively "open works" pose a problem for modest actual mentalism or for most versions of actual intentionalism. For, whether or not a work possesses an open-ended structure is itself determined by authorial intention.

Pace Schellekens, open artworks have appeared throughout the modernist and postmodernist stages of modern art. For instance, Merce Cunningham intends his choreography to encourage the interpretive play of his audiences.[4] This invitation is built into his work in a number of ways. For instance, the relation between the dance movement and the accompanying music is typically aleatoric; often the dancers hear it for the first time on opening night. The chance relation of the music and the dance opens a space for the audience to make what they will of whatever correspondences they find between the sound and image. But since it is Cunningham's intention that has determined that this is an open structure, it, and comparable open works like it by other artists, said open artworks problematize neither modest actual mentalism nor most forms of actual intentionalism. When it comes to open-ended artworks, these interpretive approaches will endorse interpretive play precisely because that is what is intended.[5]

4 Schellekens also cites some works that promote open-ended moods as counterexamples to my view. I have not seen these works. And I am not sure whether it is their open-endedness or their moodiness that presumably presents a problem for me. But, provisionally, without having seen them, let me say that their moodiness should not challenge my view, since my view includes expressive properties as an object of interpretation whereas their open-endedness is, I hypothesize, intended.

5 This is a point that I have made throughout my writings on interpretation.

Moreover, as the Cunningham example implies, the issue of avant-garde works with open-ended interpretive invitations are not of distinctively recent vintage. Yet, at the same time, I am not as convinced as Schellekens that recent avant-garde art is so pervasively open-ended. A great deal of it is political and promotes determinate theses regarding such subjects as capitalism, consumerism, racism sexism, homophobia, and so on.

Schellekens maintains that I claim that evaluation is always the consequence of interpretation. That is not accurate, since I maintain that there are artworks that do not require interpretations. Nevertheless, they can be evaluated.[6]

Schellekens further points out that evaluation may critically proceed interpretation. I think what she has in mind are cases where when one is attracted to a work, one naturally goes on to ask "why?" That is undeniably correct. But it is a mistake, I think, to identify that initial attraction with critical evaluation. It does not become a critical evaluation until the grounds for approval have been secured, as they might be by an interpretation in the relevant case.

Gemma Argüello Manresa

Gemma Argüello Manresa's major objection to modest actual mentalism appears to rest upon her apparent rejection of my distinction between the constitutive question (what fixes the meaning of an artwork?) and the epistemological question (how do we figure out the meaning of the artwork?) with respect to interpretation. Yet these seem distinguishable insofar as you may know the answer to the constitutive question without having a settled way of discovering the meaning. The issue is the difference between what fixes the determinate meaning and finding it where fixing is a metaphysical matter and finding is epistemic.

Manresa challenges my deployment of the Gricean framework by alluding to our recognition of emotions on the basis of facial expressions and bodily postures, where nothing about the persons bearing these features is known to the observers. Presumably, these examples, where they are experimentally substantiated cross-culturally, would be instances of natural meanings. Artworks are instances of non-natural meanings. Presumably when artists employ naturally meaningful grimaces and gestures – as do actors and dancers on stage and screen – they are employing them intentionally and we recognize their intentions to do so. Whether or not intentions are involved in the recognition of basic emotional facial arrays in the field, so to speak, is not obviously germane to the question of their use in artworks, including acting and dancing in theater and motion pictures, not to mention their mobilization in portraits, sculptures and photos.

Manresa's concluding remarks about evaluation are not directly pertinent to the theory of modest actual mentalism, since it is a theory of interpretation, not evaluation. Though the sorts of interpretations modest actual mentalism delivers are relevant to evaluation, the evaluative questions Manresa presses cannot be answered from inside modest, actual mentalism.

6 Also, I cannot be thought to advance the view that all interpretation precedes evaluation since I allow that historians and cultural theorists may interpret artworks without evaluating them.

Randall Auxier

Randall Auxier presents me with a putative problem case and an allegedly alternative theory. Let me deal with them in that order.

The problem case comes from Umberto Eco's novel *Foucault's Pendulum*. There is a piece of paper which is a document belonging to a secret society. It is destroyed. Eco was asked what the document contained. He said he didn't know. He was asked if it was a grocery list. He said he didn't know. Auxier wants to know how a modest, actual mentalist will deal with the case.

Well, unless there is evidence to the contrary, I see no problem in taking Eco at his word. This is not because I accept anything an author claims, as my discussion of Davies indicates. Nevertheless, to suspect an author's veracity does require some grounds for suspicion.

Furthermore, I don't see why this is a problem case. Perhaps Eco just needed a something to move the plot along, but he had no reason to decide anything else about it. Novels, at any rate, are necessarily indeterminate ontologically. Auxier insists that there must be a fact of the matter about whether or not the document is or is not a grocery list. That is true in the world that we inhabit. But it need not be true on the other side of the fiction operator. Must there be a fact of the matter regarding the number of Lady MacBeth's children.

Auxier calls his alternative theory actual intentionalism and contrasts with my theory which he says is virtual. The difference appears to be that what Auxier calls virtual intentionalism does not recognize that intentions can be formed in the process of creating an artwork. Virtual intentions exist prior to the artwork. In this, Auxier returns us to one of Freeland's complaints.

However, to repeat our response to Freeland, modest actual mentalism is not committed to the view that authorial intentions must pre-exist the pertinent artworks. Like Collingwood, I believe that artists typically come to clarify their intentions in the process of composing their works. So in that specific regard, there is no difference between Auxier and me.

I do, however, distrust his suggestion that artworks *explain* virtual intentions. I deny this because I do not believe that artworks explain anything. Nor do they have intentions or communicate them. Artists do that. To think the artworks do it is a form of critical animism, a superstitious manner of speaking we would be better off without.

44 - 2014 sztuka i filozofia
ISSN 1230-0330

Articles

Ian Verstegen

A Functional Theory of Post-Modern Art

Abstract

This paper proposes a new functionalist way of thinking about post-modern works of art (broadly conceived) by suspending the typical expectation that works of art serve to impart aesthetic experiences. Using the theories of Rudolf Arnheim, the criterion is switched instead to experience. In this way, the typical shortcoming of functionalism is overcome while restoring what is intuitive about the theory. Thus, against standard functionalist theories that dismiss works like Duchamp's urinal or Warhol's brillo boxes, this paper affirms the ubiquity of this conception of art, which is opened up as experience, because these works enhance our experience of the world. What this revised functionalist theory assumes is that even though works of art do not provide aesthetic experiences exclusively, they are nevertheless bounded as artistic statements. But this boundedness does imply simplicity in any sense.

> "He is the greatest artist who has embodied, in the sum of his works, the greatest number of the greatest ideas."[1]

One of the obstacles to the enactment of a moderately objectivist form of aesthetic judgment is the lingering affirmation that works of a post-modern nature cannot be assimilated to normal standards of judgment. Moreover post-modern art, art that deals in allegory, paradox, irony, appropriation, is popularly seen to eschew aesthetic and any kind of formal properties. The most famous theory of post-modern art – the "art world" thesis promulgated by Arthur Danto – precisely weighs the balance of art on relational factors bestowed by the art world where formal factors can be "indiscriminable" from ordinary objects.[2] Thus, Andy Warhol's *Brillo Boxes* are no different from real Brillo boxes; what makes them art is that they have bestowed with such a quality by the art world. More recent functionalist theories of art have reached a similar stalemate by asserting that functionalist principles still hold although there are exceptions that prove the rule. So, Warhol's *Brillo Boxes* or Duchamp's urinal may be

1 J. Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, John Wiley and Sons, New York 1890, Vol. I, p. 12.
2 A. Danto, *The Transformation of the Commonplace*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1981.

conceived of as thought experiments that challenge but do not overthrow the rule of what is *really* art.

Yet as I shall argue these theories are unacceptable because of the great ubiquity of a general, contemporary idea of art that is actually adopted quite spontaneously in artistic practice around the globe. Duchamp and Warhol cannot be written off so easily when their strategies are fairly ubiquitous. Art produced in art schools and shown in galleries is more like Duchamp and Warhol than not. What is perhaps missed in such theories is that they overlook the fact that contemporary art is full of intelligence, thought, if not beauty or aesthetic experiences. I take it as a challenge to understand better this paradox that artists, dealers and curators still happily recognize art when no definition is possible. In trying to solve it, at the same time we can come to a better idea of the nature of art and creativity in such artistic work and indeed the role of perceptual ideas in the post-retinal age of the post-modern. In the end, I want to argue that post-modern works of art are still unified objects of contemplation but should be construed to focus on "elements of experience" not aesthetic qualities.

Working within the functionalist framework, particularly with the theories of Rudolf Arnheim, I propose to redirect the notion of function away from aesthetic experience toward creativity and thought. The key is to regard *all* art as possessing elements of human experience rather than beauty. Traditional works whose aim is beauty are then a subset of a larger category of works in which relationships of antagonism are found between the work of art and the ideas connected to it rather than the normal one of consonance found in modern and per-modern art.[3] This is a way of using psychology without reserving it exclusively for aesthetic perception, giving new meaning to the phrase the "psychology of art." It is, I believe, a unifying to contemporary discourses and reflects real practices.

The Functionalist Framework

To emphasize the need for a truly and positively embracing theory, I take two random works of art listed as critics' picks in the December 2011 issue of *Artforum*. They are chosen more or less at random, and include an installation and a video. Each is described by the author who selected the work.[4]

- Hans-Peter Feldmann, *2010 Hugo Boss Prize*, installation, 2011, Guggenheim Museum, New York; Matthew Higgs, "When, as winner of the 2010 Hugo Boss Prize, Feldmann received a slot on the Guggenheim's 2011 exhibition schedule along with a $100,000 honorarium, he elected to combine the two

3 Recently, Jonathan Gilmore has proposed a functionalist theory that denies that art has any single function. This may serve as an overall functionalist approach. My aim is more modest, simply to accommodate two approaches - that related to pre-modern and modern art and that of post-modern art; "A Functional View of Artistic Evaluation," in: *Philosophical Studies*, 155 (2011), pp. 289-305.

4 There is an obvious problem of bias in my selections. The picks include retrospectives of non-contemporary works, curated exhibitions of mixed works. I selected these at random from among those works that were individual and stand alone.

parts of the award, displaying his money in lieu of conventional artworks. One hundred thousand used one-dollar bills completely covered the gallery walls in neat, overlapping rows. What could have come across as an overly literal, even pedantic gesture turned out to be an unexpectedly melancholic and aesthetically seductive experience."[5]

- Frances Stark, *My Best Thing*; Mai Abu EIDahab, "Employing free text-to-speech animation software and Playmobil-like avatars, Stark's one-hour-and-forty-minute video visualizes the artist's ongoing anonymous chat-room romances. In this format, the conversations-ranging from the overtly sexual to the philosophical and artistic-amount to an insightful and comical look at the modalities and implications of mediated intimacy."[6]

In such post-modern work, the formal element exists like the tip of an iceberg, and submerged below the water line are much larger themes that can potentially affect us the way the Titanic was sunk well below the waterline. Feldmann's dollar bills form a regularized grid that is decorative in the gallery space; Stark's animated characters provide the trappings of a traditional narrative animation. Each of these however is a pretext to consider larger issues: money, sex and relationships.

According to perhaps the most important variety of functionalist aesthetic theory, it is not necessary to worry over post-modern works of art. First suggested by Monroe Beardsley, Nick Zangwill has put forward the idea of the "Unimportance of the Avant Garde."[7] Zangwill rightly points out that it is senseless to define art on extensional grounds, because it causes the perpetual search for "such and such works of art" that do not fit the criteria. His solution in moderate formalism is that aesthetic or formal qualities are still the determiners of art.[8] Avant garde works just happen to have no aesthetic qualities, that is, qualities that afford aesthetic experience and achieve beauty. Other non-formal aesthetic qualities dependently determine different functions, such as when a work serves well as a representation.

Zangwill takes for granted that the basic aesthetic qualities are the core of beauty, of what makes art into art. His pluralist approach is flexible yet it still would exclude those works spoken of before. The key to this exclusion lies in the idea, carried over from Monroe Beardsley, that the functional purpose of art is aesthetic pleasure. He stated formally that a work of art is "either an arrangement of conditions intended to be capable of affording an experience with marked aesthetic character or (incidentally) an arrangement belonging to a class or type of arrangement that is typically intended to have this capacity."[9]

5 M. Higgs, *Artforum* (December 2011), p. 214.

6 M. A. EIDahab, *Artforum* (December 2011), p. 216.

7 M. Beardsley, "Redefining Art," in: *The Aesthetic Point of View*, ed. M. J. Wreen, D. M. Callen, Cornell University Press, Ithaca 1982, pp. 298-315; N. Zangwill, "L'irrilevanza dell'avanguardia," in: *Rivista di Estetica*, 47 (2007): 387-395.

8 N. Zangwill, "Feasible Aesthetic Formalism," in: *The Metaphysics of Beauty* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 55-81.

9 M. Beardsley, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

If we exchange aesthetic experience for the "dynamics of experience" the story changes. The interesting difference between Arnheim and Beardsley (and Zangwill) is that Arnheim never believed that the purpose of art was affording aesthetic experience. "Aesthetic experience" is everywhere in life. Art instead is about thought. Arnheim was never a formal philosopher but gives a serviceable definition in *The Power of the Center*, where he write that art is:

> the ability of perceptual objects to display, through their own properties, relevant dynamics of experience.[10]

He continues that, a work of art is an artifact that contains the same properties and is intended to do so.

Arnheim's definition both shifts attention to the instrumental realization of the "dynamics of experience" and opens up the purview to found objects by beginning with "perceptual objects" and only ending with "a work of art." The separation between art and life is erased.

Art as the Dynamics of Experience

The artworld theory of Arthur Danto, the institutional theory of art of George Dickie, and standard functionalist theories are agreed that post-modern works of art are fundamentally different. In this view, the qualities deemed art-endowing or beautiful are not permanently aesthetic. But the properties that may or may not be beautiful in different contexts still have *real* dispositions, only the contexts change. Thus when Rudolf Arnheim refuses to make beauty a property but a functional element by writing – "Aesthetic beauty is the isomorphic correspondence between what is said and how it is said" – it is not deflationary.[11]

The solution I propose is to note that art has always been about thought and the dynamics of experience. If that is the case, then we should be able to make more headway with post-modern works of art by noting similar principles at work as with more traditional modernist works but perhaps with a different valence. A hint of this is provided by Arnheim, himself, even if he ultimately does not follow the thread to the end. In 1967, Arnheim saw his first Christo sculpture and wrote:

> By wrapping an armchair in sheets of plastic, tying it up with ropes, and displaying it in an art show, one transforms the object into the image of a tortured prisoner. When the aesthetic attitude is called up, it automatically turns the practical function of the object into an expressive one: the chair becomes human, the ropes are fetters, and their crisscross becomes the visual music of violence. The demonstration is no great creative achievement, but it is useful and rather upsetting.[12]

10 R. Arnheim, *The Power of the Center: A Study of Composition in the Visual Arts*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1988.

11 R. Arnheim, *Visual Thinking*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1969, p. 255.

12 R. Arnheim, notebook entry of 13 January 1967, in: *Parables of Sunlight: Observations on Psychology, the Arts and the Rest*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1989, p. 98.

Arnheim understands the metaphoric operation occurring but does not allow it to proceed very far. But our psychologist of art is intelligent enough to recognize the mechanism of metaphoric perception that takes place when faced by a wrapped chair or vespa. Here of course we are not far from the theory of relevance of Dan Sperber and the overall search for meaning that underlies the success of metaphoric language in general.[13]

Let us listen to how Arnheim generates his argument for the *The Power of the Center*, which speaks directly to the issues contained here.[14] Arnheim notes that art is about centers of visual energy and the eccentric vectors that connect them to other centers. This is the basis of art in which recognizable objects are seen, as well as non-representational art. For example, Arnheim discusses Titian's *Holy Family with a Shepherd* in the National Gallery, London, noting that communication is its dominant theme. Joseph stands at the center both mediator and protector.

The individual members of the scene are the dominant centers. They interlock on the left but exclude the shepherd on the right, who Joseph, however, guides to the holy scene. While the painting is a holy family, they are off center and so the painting is really about Joseph, the protector and guide to the epiphany. Now, Arnheim has argued that even in examples like Piet Mondrian's abstractions (or we might add by extension Giuseppe Terragni's similar apartment blocks, as argued by Peter Eisenman), there is a *boundedness* and hence such "post-modern" tactics do not overthrow the power of the center.[15]

Thus, for something to be art it has to be a *percept*, it has to be a differentiated statement. Now, we can go further with Arnheim. The universality of the scheme of centers and vectors is suggested when he wrote that,

> the interaction of the two tendencies [of centricity and eccentricity] represents a fundamental task of life. The proper ratio between the two must be found for existence in general as well as for every particular encounter between the inner and outer centers.[16]

I submit that although he finds the aesthetic result of Christo's wrapped chair limited, his analysis does point to a reconceptualization of the artist's work, in which the chair is not the canvas, so to speak, on which the artist works, but instead is the field of ideas promulgated – our relation to objects *in life* whose roles are defamiliarized. Arnheim need only shift the power of the center from the limited canvas to the larger world for this to occur. What I am saying is that Arnheim's diagrams have to be compared to those, for example, of his teacher Kurt Lewin on the life space, to handle post-modern art.

13 In a similar vein, Jennifer McMahon has argued that although art is sensory, it is always mediated by categories of experience. The aim of art is to find "intention in order" and this is closer to thinking than sensation; "The Aesthetics of Perception: Form as a Sign of Intention," in: *Essays in Philosophy*, 13 (2012), pp. 404-422.

14 R. Arnheim, *The Power…*

15 On Mondrian, see G. Schufreider, "Overpowering the Center: Three Compositions by Mondrian," in: *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 43 (1985), pp. 13-28; for Terragni, see P. Eisenman, "The Futility of Objects: Decomposition and Processed of Differentiation (Difference)," in: *Harvard Architecture Review*, 3 (Winter 1984), pp. 64-82. For Arnheim's response, see "The Center Surviving Mondrian," in: *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 44 (1986), pp. 292-293.

16 R. Arnheim, *The Power…*, p. 2.

At that point, Christo's sculpture becomes about much more than wrapped furniture but in fact a metaphoric transposition of an object like a person, and once we see the chair as a person, they too are tied up. An object that can be deprived of life must be living and so we have the life of objects expressed here. This move from object-as-expressive to object-as-experience makes an unsuspected rapprochement with influential post-modern ideas like Beuy's "social sculpture" (*soziale Plastik*) or Bourriaud's "relational aesthetics."[17] All of these gestures have sought to overcome the autonomy of the work of art and restore it to some element of physical or metaphorical site or life. The key element here is the recognition of spatial ideas to constitute within themselves forms of visual thinking, reflecting thought if not aesthetic experience.

Let me briefly sketch this scenario with the *Artforum* picks above. In the first case, Feldmann's placing money on the walls of a gallery does not impart strictly speaking aesthetic experiences. But the idea of the installation is extremely thoughtful because it forces the viewer to think about the relationship between aesthetic quality and monetary reward. The exact prize takes up the wall that is awarded as a consequence of the Hugo Boss prize. Ideas of the purity of art and the illusion of the meritocracy of the art world and its spoils are called into question.

Stark's animation does not relate aesthetic experiences in the usual manner of agents reacting to one another in an expressive manner, building up a larger artistic statement. Rather, the automation of the animated figures lends a satisfying blankness to the work, as do the computer-generated voices. Their flatness becomes a metaphor for the distance separating two would-be lovers separated by cyberspace. The immediacy of feeling generated by intimate speech is yanked back into reality by its ridiculousness.

One important thing to note is that in both cases there is always an element of contrast here, which says something about post-modern art. In effect, art before post-modernism also had a larger context – think of a religious painting in the medieval period and the larger church dogmas. But that always involved a consonance between form and idea. Now we find that art is relevant when it challenges and undermines a dominant idea. We have found unexpected ways in which psychology is not overthrown but indeed reinforced through the creative processes of contemporary artists. Indeed, my speaking of metaphor suggests that we need to investigate classical categories of the formation of meaning to understand a work of post-modern art.

Unity is Not Simplicity

Now that we understand that formalism was about much more than representation, and whether or not objects could be recognized in works of modern art, we can also see that a more expansive idea of formalism always instrumentally

17 J. Beuys, "I am Searching for Field Character," in: *Art Into Society, Society Into Art*, trans. C. Tisdall, Institute of Contemporary Art, London 1974; N. Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, Les presses du réel, Dijon 2002.

regards some formal solution in comparison to some explicit or implicit intention. It is just the case that modern and pre-modern art tended to engage with reinforcing formal and thematic ideas and post-modern art in general goes in the direction of paradoxical juxtaposition.

Here, I want to draw on another unexpected source, Solomon Asch's theory of personality impression formation. What it serves to do is enforce the idea that even in ordinary psychology, meaning is rarely formed through direct retinal impressions. In classic experiments paralleling Arnheim's own works, Solomon Asch investigated how we form an impression of a person's personality.[18] The same part qualities can interact in vastly different ways when attached to other qualities in different people.

For example, when we hear that a "cheerful" person is "funny," it is different than when we hear that a "cheerful" person is "simple." In each case, "cheerful" has changed its meaning. A person is like a work of art to the degree that sometimes there are things that we personally perceive, perhaps a person's "cheerfulness," and others that we do not (like "funny" or "simple") and have to integrate into our unified impression of that person. In the case of normally congruent qualities, we are close to the case of a traditional work of art, that is harmonious and reflects the Holy Trinity or violent and represents the Scourge of Christ, etc.

But Asch and Henri Zukier also investigated other cases, where it is harder to integrate those qualities, and I would suggest that this case is closer to our post-modern example.[19] Consider the case of the individual who is both:

Sociable—lonely

Cheerful—gloomy

Generous—vindictive

Treacherous—sentimental

Shy—courageous

Brilliant—foolish

Hostile—dependent

18 S. Asch, "Forming Impressions of Personality," in: *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 41 (1946), pp. 258-290.

19 S. Asch, H. Zukier, "Thinking about Persons," in: *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46 (1984), pp. 1230-1240.

Strict—kind

Ambitious—lazy

The qualities are not congruent but subjects find consistent ways to integrate them together. Indeed, Asch and Zukier found that "incongruent pairs were in general no more difficult to resolve than were fitting pairs." Individuals used different strategies: enabling, segregation, means-end, to create a plausible unifying scenario for the person. For example, ambitiousness is reconciled to laziness as a means to an end; the subject has bursts of ambition to allow him to be lazy.

Of course, this reminds us of the case of Mondrian (or Terragni) who in spite of discordant "a-centered" elements nevertheless ends up with a unified work. As Asch and Zukier state in ways very prescient for aesthetics: "Unity is not equivalent to simplicity: Persons are not simple. (However, because unity implies patterning and order, it greatly enhances the possibilities of comprehension.) It follows also that unity is not equivalent to homogeneity, nor is it at odds with contradiction or conflict."[20]

This is not too different from what we do when seeing a Christo sculpture. We see an object, a chair that seems to have traditional qualities of an artistic artifact. But it does not have the traditional trappings of an artifact, a concentration of sign-making activity. The back story is the tied rope, our knowledge of Christo's other works, ideas of mass-production in our post-industrial society. These form the incongruent terms as in Asch's later experiments.

Here, perception is "non-retinal," but Gestalt psychology upon which both Asch and Arnheim rely was founded on non-retinal principles. Their teacher Max Wertheimer experimented cases of seen movement in which there is no visual stimulation.[21] Phi-movement is experienced when two lights flash alternately and motion is perceived. Gestalt experience – psychological wholes – is not always supported by continuous physical stimulation. Arnheim has a good case that continuously existing and visible wholes are not necessary for his aesthetics but they are helpful for his main strategy of interpretation. As I am now showing, even this is not necessary.

There are vast consequences for this shift. As long as Arnheim is presumed to concern himself only with distinct wholes, he can be said to be in a passive, contemplative role. Because form is purely visual, he is a mere 'formalist.' But the spirit of Arnheim's work speaks beyond this. As he suggests in late essays like "Art Among the Objects," Arnheim has the whole weight of the gestalt tradition – not only from the laboratory demonstrations of sensory perception (and cognitive problem-solving) but the innovative ideas of Kurt Lewin on motivation, the landmark studies of group pressure of Solomon Asch and the logic

20 S. Asch, H. Zukier, *op. cit.*, p. 1240.

21 M. Wertheimer, "Experimentelle Studien über das Sehen von Bewegung," in: *Zeitschrift für Psychologie*, 61 (1912), pp. 161-265.

of attribution of Fritz Heider. We have to draw from this expanded repertoire of psychological ideas in general to break Arnheim's and others' ideas out of a stale stereotype of formalism. It is not a question of *whether* perception is applicable to post-modern art – that is ludicrous – but *how*.

To conclude, as long as a non-relational idea of beauty motivates functionalist approaches to aesthetics, they will be limited. The ideas presented here, inspired by Rudolf Arnheim, point to the dynamics of experience as motivating what is artistic. Typically, putting art and beauty on a relational basis is perceived by its critics to be deflationary and limiting the power of the idea of art. However, if we recognize that to raise the very idea of art presumes a tacit idea of function, then the idea of art is senseless outside of a reflective, retrospective context. The ideas presented here give new credence to John Ruskin's words. The aim of art is not beauty but ideas. They may be consonant or dissonant; what is asked of them is that they are profound.

44 - 2014 sztuka i filozofia
ISSN 1230-0330

Joanna Winnicka-Gburek

Personalist Art Criticism – an Outline of a Concept

Abstract

In contemporary debates concerning the status of art criticism, the crux of the matter is the legitimacy of critical judgments of art, and the issue of what should and may be judged in an artwork. I intend to present a number of arguments with regard to these two questions with reference to the philosophy of personalism. I am going to demonstrate that, on the basis of a personalist approach, a critical judgment of art is justified and necessary, and at the same time, critical judgments are aimed not only at a narrowly understood aesthetic conception of the value of an artwork, but also at its ethical value. Hence, personalist art criticism can be understood as entailing an ethical critique.

It is not uncommon to find in discussions about the aim and status of art criticism that a disregard for the concrete *situation of the author of criticism* inevitably leads to a theoretical failure. When considering art criticism, which is a kind of interpersonal communication, one may not justifiably ignore the question of who is speaking about what, and of the purpose and the subject addressed. A well-thought out statement on any phenomenon at all is necessarily a product of a mind with its own world-view, that is a collection of opinions concerning the fundamental issues of the world and human life, including the emotional attitude towards them. Any such word-view arises out of the history of individual experience, and may be defined as comprising a set of specific, elaborated principles organising this experience. The particularity of a world-view has little importance when judgments are made on matters touching upon everyday, practical objects and activities. When, nevertheless, one is confronted with a work of art, or any other important human communication, there occurs a unique, unrepeatable *situation*. A situation – in this case, an aesthetic situation – is always someone's situation. No two situations are alike, because there are no two identical world-views.[1] The world-view contains not only the concept of the human being, but also

1 M. Gołaszewska, *Zarys estetyki*, PWN, Warsaw 1984. The author describes the aesthetic situation in the following way: "One can speak of the aesthetic situation in the sense of an individual, concrete, unique situation. Each act of contact between the viewer and the work of art takes place in different, individual conditions: the circumstances of the reception are different; the type of emotional engagement is different; the personality of the viewer, with all its fleeting emotions and moods, is qualitatively different," p. 29.

the way of understanding value. As such, it also includes the concept of art and art criticism.

If we accept this reasoning, we shall have to agree that all criticism is ideological to the extent that it stems from a particular world-view. An art critic whose world-view is personalist would therefore engage in personalist art criticism. The centre of personalist philosophy is the "person" – unique, free, and, at the same time, oriented towards the other human being, yearning for the common good. These characteristics of the person situate personalism beyond individualism and contextualism, both of which inevitably lead toward relativism.

In formulating this issue for myself, I began by asking the following questions:

What would the consequences be for the practice of art criticism, in the light of a personalist world-view?

What would be the significance for critical judgments on works of art, of a personalist commitment to the priority of the human being?

Must a personalist approach imply a critical evaluation of the product of another human being or, to the contrary, are such evaluations to be avoided precisely owing to the personalist attitude towards others?

If critical judgments are to be accepted within the personalist framework, what are they directed at?

1. The Tradition of Personalist Criticism

The author of the first pioneering outline of personalist criticism in literature was the nestor of Polish emigration literature, Tymon Terlecki,[2] who based his work on the philosophy of Emmanuel Mounier. In his small study, published in London in 1957, Terlecki uses the phrase "personalist criticism" for the first time. In his view, the most important task of personalist criticism is to establish the following:

(a) The "individual, unique and unrepeatable" element in the artist and his work;

(b) The debt the artist owes in his uniqueness to the community, and;

(c) The contribution of the artist to the world of persons and the ways in which he increases the set of existing values.[3]

Let us bear in mind that, according to this model of criticism, the critic's task, usually defined as a reflection on a work of art, acquires a broader prerogative of examining the creative process and its significance. Terlecki

2 The notion of "Polish war emigration literature" includes the work of all those writers who found themselves in emigration outside Poland in 1939, and, who, either during the war, or immediately after it, created a literary circle of patriotic convictions in support of the cause of Polish independence. Tymon Terlecki was one of those who established the direction for all the post-war patriotic literature in emigration. See: "Do emigracji polskiej 1945 roku," in: *Święty płomień*, Biblioteka "Wczoraj i Dziś", J. Rolls Book Co., London 1945.

3 T. Terlecki, *Krytyka personalistyczna. Egzystencjalizm chrześcijański*, Biblioteka "Więzi", Warsaw 1987, p. 32. Krzysztof Dybciak referred to Terlecki's concepts in his literary-critical studies, see his: *Personalistyczna krytyka literacka. Teoria i opis nurtu z lat trzydziestych*, Ossolineum, Warsaw 1981.

names this mutual dependence of artist and viewer (or critic) a drama. Hence, the critic is not only an interpreter of the meaning of the artwork, but also a legitimate participant in an unfolding inter-subjective drama. The personalist requirement that the person-critic treats both the artist and the viewer as persons in a world of persons is therefore the necessary and sufficient pre-condition of art criticism.

Among Terlecki's other theses, we encounter a controversial statement claiming that an artist is an *arch-person*, and that the work of art is the best example of the movement of personalisation. The analysis of features attributed to a person in personalism, which I shall further present, is intended to demonstrate that the predicated unique position of the artist amongst others remains at odds with the spirit of personalism, which regards every person as endowed with unconditional dignity.[4]

2. The Characteristics of a Person

In order to understand the consequences for the practice of art criticism, of adopting the model based on mutual relations of persons involved in *the personalist situation of contact with a work of art*, we should begin by defining the person according to personalism. A detailed discussion of the concept, however, would not only exceed the scope of this article, but would also prove too difficult not the least owing to the proliferation of different schools and trends within personalism.[5] I shall start by presenting the characteristic features of a person, common to all these existing trends, in order to later select a number of them for further analysis in the light of their importance, as I shall argue, for art criticism.

It is important to stress at this point that personalism, in the form it today assumes, was created as a result of a protest against two dominant views on the human being: liberal individualism, which led into, among others, French existentialism; and Marxist materialism. Individualism brings to the forefront the good of an individual focused on himself in his individuality, whereas Marxist materialism aims at subjecting a human being to the social order. In the first case, an individual is constrained by "others;" in the other, individualism is perceived as a threat to the common good. Personalist philosophers emphasise that these two paths of thinking about the human being have given rise to the crisis of culture and the erosion of the fundamental value of human community. The personalists see these two anthropological conceptions as reductionist and,

4 J. Winnicka-Gburek, "Znaczenie personalistycznej krytyki artystycznej w poszukiwaniu sensu sztuki" ("Meaning of the Personalistic Art Criticism in Quest for the Sense of Art)", in: *Estetyka i krytyka*, 21 (2/2011), pp. 165-178. In my essay, I subject Terlecki's conception to criticism, and analyse the validity of such categories as: artistic freedom, personalist freedom, and the role of art in the movement of personalisation. I also attempt to demonstrate that, should the artist be and *arch-person*, all art criticism would be futile.

5 See e.g.: J. M. Burgos, *Personalizm. Autorzy i tematy nowej filozofii*, trans. K. Koprowski, Centrum Myśli Jana Pawła II, Warsaw 2010. S. Kowalczyk, *Personalizm-podstawy, idee, konsekwencje*, Wydawnictwo KUL, Lublin 2012.

as a response, they proposed the fundamental value of the phenomenon of a "person," its freedom, responsibility and inalienable rights.

Personalist theorists point to two basic sources of the concept of a person. One is the well-known definition formulated by Boethius: a person is "an individual substance of a rational nature" (*persona est rationalis naturae individua substantia*),[6] and the other is the elaboration of the same in Roman law, *persona est sui iuris et alteri incommunicabilis*, meaning that a human being – a person – possesses free will, is a master of himself and exists in a way unique to himself. The person is ineffable and inalienable, which is suggested by the term "incommunicability."

A person is free, rational and responsible. He or she possess a dignity, which is an absolute value, i.e., meaning that it is not dependent on the person's achievements, talents or attitude. The human being as a person constitutes a bodily-psychic-spiritual unity, surpassing himself in the movement of realising ever higher values.

Common to all personalist conceptions of the person, notwithstanding some negligible and minor differences, is the emphasis on the person as a social subject. Persons fulfil themselves primarily by cooperating with others and for others. Personalist self-experience is an understanding experience. A human being expects an unconditional understanding from others and desires to understand them in turn.[7]

A personal life is most fully characterised by: on the one hand, the act of personalisation towards the realisation of the highest personal values; and on the other, the process of depersonalisation defined as everything that poses an obstacle to the dynamic urge towards good.[8]

3. Communal Personalism and Individual Engagement as a Justification for Judging Others

All culture theorists are in agreement that art criticism is an act of communication. But opinions remain divided as to the possibility of communication between people. Emmanuel Mounier's theory concerning the significance of communication for the communal life may constitute a model for a critic's action in the public space; a critic who is to be an interpreter, an agent and, first and foremost, a partner in dialogue. Mounier decisively distances himself from the objectification of a human being which manifests itself in a disbelief in the capacity of mutual understanding between people, a position which has its sources in the philosophies of Friedrich Nietzsche and Jean-Paul Sartre. Mounier takes up Sartre's notion of the gaze of the other,[9] but only to interpret it in a radically different manner – in contradistinction to, as he says, the "thieving"

6 A. M. Boethius, *Liber de persona et duabus naturis contra Eutychen et Nestorium* (Roma, 512), II. 4-5.

7 A. Węgrzecki, *O poznawaniu drugiego człowieka*, Akademia Pedagogiczna w Krakowie, Cracow 1992, p. 25.

8 E. Mounier, *Personalism*, trans. P. Mairet, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, London 1962.

9 From translator: J. P. Sartre's "le Regard" is translated into English as "the gaze." In the English translation of E. Mounier, this term is rendered as "the stare." Accordingly, this translation follows the latter.

language of the philosopher, which ascribes to the stare of the other a power to rob a person of his or her subjectivity. A human being objectified by the stare of the other feels shame, senses a threat to his freedom and wishes to take revenge.

The French personalist speaks a different language, in which a word of utmost significance is detachableness, that is a readiness to take criticism and a preparedness to offer to others a benevolent, evaluating stare. This demonstrates that the opinions others have about us, if they wish to share them with us, are invaluable. Everyday experience teaches us this – an awareness of the stare of the other is often sufficient for me to discover a truth about myself. Our self-knowledge is always inadequate and partial, and so also is our evaluation of others. "The person only exists thus towards others, it only knows itself in knowing others, only finds itself in being known by them,"[10] writes Mounier adding that even in rumours there is more adequacy than in introspection. The philosopher calls this stare an overwhelming stare, one that renders you distressed, fearful, causing you to doubt your current situation. Owing to this, the stare of the other is beneficial, because it disrupts the hazardous, destructive and egocentric obscurity of a human being left to his own devices.

In order to change something for the better, one first needs to doubt his current situation. Mounier cites several examples of such a critical "stare," which contribute to the "persistence" of the criticised areas: a stare of atheism cast upon religion (this is what Nietzsche did), of opposition upon the government and of students upon their teachers.

Let us add to these examples the art critic's stare at a work of art, or more precisely at the artist. Mounier advocates the total stare at the person and his or her creations. For Mounier, the person is important regardless of the fact whether he is a craftsman, an intellectual or an artist; and the work of the person is to advance personalisation, that is a movement towards the realisation of ever higher values.

The judgment made on a work is, simultaneously, a critical stare at the person of the artist. The position of a critic, by definition, involves an element of interest, a will to influence what is happening in the surrounding reality, a readiness to stare at the other and to express opinions about him. Terlecki observed that the critic's particular position within the dramatic tension between the artist and the world, compels him to engagement. Existence is action; and present in every action should be, to a greater or lesser extent, one of the following elements: a) transformation of external reality, b) self-formation, c) enrichment of our world of values or d) bringing us closer to other people.[11]

Mounier decries the attitudes of alienation, conformism and lack of interest in the lives of others. In relation to those who think that the world is absurd and there is no sufficient reason to act, he employs a rather inelegant comparison: "The insect that mimics the branch, in order that it may be overlooked in its vegetative immobility, prefigures the man who buries himself in conventionalities

10 *Ibidem*, p. 19.
11 *Ibidem*, pp. 86-90.

rather than answer for himself; or the man who gives himself up to abstract ideas or sentimental effusions to escape the confrontation of events or other men".[12]

Interestingly enough, amongst those who refuse personalist engagement, are included "artistic dilettantes."

Mounier opposes such personalist engagement towards the increase of value to dogmatic regimentation, one example of which is the engagement of a war correspondent who, whether he wants to or not, supports one party to the conflict; or political engagement. An art critic presenting such an attitude could be called an "embedded critic," which not only signifies a rigid normativity and prescriptive criticism, but also a lack of objectivity in his judgments.

Personalist detachableness and engagement, characteristic of the movement of personalisation, entails an expectation to be judged by others and a readiness to judge them in turn.

This analysis of the French personalist's views encourages us to pose the following questions of fundamental importance for personalist aesthetics. How is a judging and total stare at the other person and his or her creations (an artist and his works) inscribed in the two extremes of the treating of a work of art in the history of aesthetic thought: Should a work of art be treated as an existential communique, an expression of personality and a manifestation of the author's real convictions? Should we treat a work of art as an autonomous object?

In the first case, the critic interpreting a work takes into consideration the artist's intentions, and employs to this end the methods available to him (biographical facts, the author's commentary, etc.) In the other case the person of the author remains beyond the critic's scope of interest, and the work of art itself undergoes interpretation with reference to its artistic quality. Both these positions seem reductionist and both diminish either the meaning of the work of art, or the person of the artist.

At this stage of our considerations, which still require further elaboration, let us just say that personalist aesthetics, for which I suggest the working name of *the aesthetics of action*, would rather adopt a position close to the first of the two above-mentioned options. Standing in the centre of aesthetics understood as such, there is a human being – a person – and his or her experience implicated in the creation and reception of a work of art. As opposed to the critics of intentionalism, it is not difficult, after a detailed interpretation, to recognize the intentions of the artist, especially that they are often manifest in the work of art.

In personalist art criticism, judgments are made of a person, but they are fundamentally inspired by a work of art, artistic performance, or a published artistic programme. The critic does not judge ethically the artist's life apart from his art, but he does judge the ethical content of the artwork which forms the pretext for the "conversation" thanks to its high aesthetic quality. In my opinion, the specific characteristic of personalist criticism can be felt in the difference between "he does not judge the morality of the artist beyond art" and "he is not interested in the artist's morality." A personalist critic is interested in

12 *Ibidem*, p. x.

the person of the artist. When a work of art is immoral, the personalist critic disqualifies it as an aesthetic object, but he cannot *not* be interested in the person of the artist. In other words, his engagement does not allow him to remain indifferent to such a manifestation of depersonalisation.

4. The Unconditional Dignity of a Person, according to Personalism, as an Argument for the Legitimacy and Necessity of Ethical, Critical Judgments

Among the features constitutive of personalism, one of the most salient for personalist criticism is the incommunicability of the human person. The notion of incommunicability may be taken in two senses. The first sense refers to limitations at the level of actual communication which are often experienced by people of different cultures; the other sense, which could be called philosophical, points to the idea, simply put, that people are unable to change the essence of what they really are, even though they can alter some of their qualities.

The notion of incommunicability, which has its origins in Roman law, subsequently analysed by Thomas Aquinas and later by neo-thomists, has been more recently the subject of an interesting reading by John Crosby. The idea of incommunicability with its Christian roots, seems intelligible and may prove useful to scholars working from positions far removed from Christianity and theism; however, there are two conditions to this use: a) that a person is treated as something more than merely an instance of human kind, and b) that the person must not be treated as a means to some end.

Incommunicability is often used interchangeably with the notion of being unrepeatable, despite a subtle difference in meaning. "Incommunicability" express individual being by means of an antithesis to what is *general or universal*. "Unrepeatable," by contrast, expresses individual being by means of a certain antithesis to *other individual beings of the same kind.*[13] The fact that a human person is *alteri incommunicabilis* – that is incommunicable and inaccessible to the other, is something more than being "unrepeatable." That something is unique or unrepeatable can be said of an animal, a plant or a stone, whereas the incommunicability or inaccessibility of a person is most inherent to the person's interiority, self-determination, free will. Each person desires to be recognised by the other person exactly in his or her incommunicability, independently of the personality and skills which can be communicated.

J. F. Crosby nicely explains the meaning of incommunicability, i.e. a personal quality which guarantees a person's dignity and value:

> Whoever does not understand how much worth person have by being persons and what a relatively small value difference arises from one of them having some talent and another lacking it, does not really understand the dignity of persons. (…) How often it happens that, sensing our value as incommunicable persons and sensing at the same time that it is endangered by being ignored, we try to affirm it by *extraordinary achievements that set us apart from all others*

13 J. F. Crosby, *The Selfhood of the Human Person*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington 1996, p. 44.

> *and that awaken their astonishment*. We thus confuse what is rare and unusual in the realm of the communicable with our incommunicable selves. We try to affirm our value as persons by trying to realize in ourselves values which, when compared with this fundamental value, are in a sense negligible. We think that, without special talents and achievements, we are in danger of being a defective person, a bad draft fit to be discarded and replaced; with this we absurdly overestimate the importance of special talents and at the same time underestimate the importance of simply being a person.[14]

This passage throws a new light on both artistic creation and related criticism. The personalist understanding of a human value is an exact antithesis to the Romantic myth of the artist as demiurge and genius, as the apotheosis of *The will to power*. According to this interpretation of dignity, even a perfect realisation of aesthetic values cannot have any influence on the judgment of a human being as a person. In Crosby's opinion, the only things which are not veiled by the inalienable value of the person, are moral virtues or their absence. Consequently, the thesis advanced earlier in this paper, that an artist most fully realises his movement of personalisation during the creative process, is unacceptable. Treating an artist as a "better version of a human being" could lead us to laxity in our ethical judgments. Artistic talents, or any other advanced skills, should not be used to situate a human being *Beyond good and evil*.

Thus far, we have discussed the critic's stare at the artist through the work of art. The personalist attitude requires of the critic the same detachableness and respect for the person of the viewer. The artist and the viewer both deserve equal treatment and the acknowledgment of their right to all personalist values. One obstacle to this could be the fact that the viewer is often a mirror image of Mr Testadura from Arthur Danto's famous essay. Testadura, as we recall, was unable to tell the difference between a work of art and an ordinary object. Danto writes: "Testadura is not at that stage. To see something as art requires something the eye cannot decry – an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld."[15]

Moreover, Mr Testadura most probably has not achieved very much and does not possess any particular talents comparable to the artist's or critic's achievements and talents. In the light of personalist philosophy, Mr Testadura, despite his lack of "greatness," has dignity and deserves respect just because he is a person, and this fact alone calls for a careful interest on the part of the artist and the critic.

A personalist critic should apply the same rule as a historian inspired by personalism, who, says Crosby, when describing a military conflict, tries to present it not only from the point of view of "generals and princes," that is, the privileged elites, but also from the point of view of "infantry and civilians." An art critic must not dwell exclusively in the hermetic circle of aloof considerations, intelligible only to the insular art world. He will not dwell there, prevented by the awareness of being a part of the personalist community, and by his respect for personalist values.

14 *Ibidem*, p. 68.
15 A. C. Danto, "The Artworld," in: *The Journal of Philosophy*, (19): 61(1964), p. 580.

Mounier's "request for a stare," for personalist engagement, and his requirement of an unconditional imperative to respect personal dignity, direct us towards one more conclusion: personalist criticism is not a game. To demonstrate this, it suffices to refer to the basic principle of any game, regardless of its different historical interpretation. The aim of the game is not to reach the truth, the aim is the game itself and the pleasure of playing it, or – a situation frequent in the art world and beyond – the aim is gratification. The nestor of Polish art criticism, Mieczysław Porębski, for example, compared art critique to a game of poker, and a critic to a gambler.[16] The comparison may sound attractive from the literary point of view, nevertheless one should bear in mind that it is usually not the player with real assets who wins the game, but the one who knows how to bluff. Seasoned poker players say that poker is a kind of psychodrama, in which the decisive factors are shrewd intelligence, perceptiveness, strength of character and good luck: the cards one receives are of the least importance.

It was David J. Getsy who recently noticed the increasing importance of the game in the art world. The game has become a synonym for art, a metaphor for creativity and a model for art criticism. When I say "I play" (because I am an artist, and art is a game, or I am a critic and criticism is a game), I immediately secure for myself an indulgent acceptance for my activity (artistic, critical). Does not a game, by definition, have little in common with obligations and responsibilities in the real world? It seems, however, that this conviction, that the game is innocent, is incorrect. "Quite the contrary, play activities such as flirtation, mock fighting, imitation, or parody can at times fundamentally reorder the social relations that they are supposedly apart from. Furthermore, play and games can also provide critical reflection on actual events and situations."[17] What we have to contend with in the case of a game are apparently trivial activities which may result in serious consequences.

In my opinion, when used in artistic actions, this subversive technique, completely lacking in seriousness – a game – is less problematic than in its practical application by critics in art criticism, since the method of "diversion and subversion" remains at odds with the personalist approach; this kind of approach excludes any element which could obfuscate or relativize communication between people. One could say that the model for personalist art criticism is not a subversive game but a rational discussion. The critic wants to understand the artist as fully as possible, and to be understood by the addressee of his communication.

16 M. Porębski, *Krytycy i sztuka*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Cracow 2004, p. 24.

17 *Games, Play, and Twentieth-Century Art. From Diversion to Subversion*, ed. D. J. Getsy, Pennsylvania State University Press, Philadelphia 2011, (introduction).

Conclusion

Art criticism may be perceived as a manifestation of depersonalisation in at least three aspects, each of which corresponds to the three participants who communicate with each other in the situation defined in terms of a pretext which is the critical judgment of a work of art.

A critic as a person engages himself "on one side of the conflict" (the side of authorities governing an art institution whose particular aims contradict those of personalist criticism). Otherwise, a critic may present himself as not engaging in the personalist sense, thus refusing to test his views against those of others, abandoning any effort to understand the person of the artist or, more often, the person of the viewer. Finally, a critic may simply be a dilettante, which, according to Mounier's intention, is to be understood as an individual enclosed in his own, well-known but limited conceptual framework.

Depersonalisation of the artist takes place when he is objectified by the critic and the viewer; when neither the critic nor the viewer wish to enter into the unrepeatable and detachable dimension in the person of the artist. In line with what we have already seen, it would be superfluous to add that any kind of criticism, whether positive or negative, is to be expected and is legitimate. The artist, in submitting his work to critical judgment, demands understanding and a response from the critic and the viewer. A lack of well-founded critical judgment must be seen as an objectification of the person of the artist.

We can speak of a depersonalising treatment of the viewer in the situation where the artist deliberately employs such artistic means that cause embarrassment, shock or otherwise offend the viewer. The viewer should also try not to be a dilettante out of respect for the artist and the effort he devotes to the artwork. The viewer should desire to understand the artist, even if his only reason for doing so is the fact that the person of the artist, in the world of persons, expects it.

This essay is but an introduction to, or sketch of, the contemporary conception of personalist art criticism. As such, the arguments that I have presented are open to further development and a deeper elaboration. By way of conclusion, I shall attempt to indicate non-personalist arguments for the presence of 1) critical judgments in art criticism at all, 2) ethical evaluation. It would be interesting to compare arguments used in the on-going debate over ethical criticism, with the aims and principles of personalist art criticism I have presented. The leading participants in the debate are Georges Dickie, Wayne Booth, Martha C. Nussbaum, Noël Carroll and Berys Gaut.[18] The last author in particular, Berys Gaut, draws similar conclusions to the ones argued for in this

18 See for example: G. Dickie, "The Triumph in *Triumph of the Will*," in: *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 45, 2005; W. Booth, *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1998; M. C. Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*, Harvard University Press, Harvard 1997, N. Carroll, "Art and Ethical Criticism: An Overview of Recent Directions of Research," in: *Ethic*, 110 (January 2000); B. Gaut, "The Ethical Criticism of Art," in: *Aesthetics and Ethics: Essays at the Interpretation*, ed. J. Levinson, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998 and B. Gaut, *Art, Emotion and Ethics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2007.

paper, even though his philosophical assumptions have a different starting point. A detailed confrontation of these two positions is beyond the scope of this article; let me simply signal the main lines of argument in Berys Gaut's very interesting remarks on ethics in criticism.

Berys Gaut enumerates three arguments in favour of ethical art criticism:[19]

(a) The moral beauty argument: moral perfection corresponds to the beauty of personal character; the author's character, in its beauty, partly constitutes the beauty of the work of art.

(b) The cognitive argument: an artwork is capable of transmitting knowledge, thus carrying out the function of moral education which, once certain conditions are met, has a positive impact on the aesthetic value of the work.

(c) The merited response argument: this argument is regarded by Gaut's opponents as the most restrictive; an emotional response to a work of art is unmerited when it elicits an immoral response; that the work of art is unethical justifies the lack of response otherwise anticipated by the artist.

Gaut correctly observes that, when a work of art is evaluated with respect to its beauty, cognitive function and emotional dimension, then it has to be admitted that each of these elements implies an ethical aspect.[20]

The stance of personalist art criticism with respect to the legitimacy of art evaluation is in agreement with the theory of ethical art criticism proposed by Gaut. However, personalism goes beyond Gaut by extending the significance of the impact which criticism of an artwork has on the person of the artist and, particularly, on the person of the viewer. In a culture marked by an aversion towards any expression of opinion about someone's work, action, utterance or achievement – a culture in which these are viewed as a usurpation of power and an attempt to subjugate the other – personalism offers an alternative, consisting in the mutual inspiration of persons in a movement of personalisation, leading to the realisation of ever higher personal values (especially moral values). Art, and all the relations it creates between the artist, critic and viewer, just may be one way to bring this about.

Translated by
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19 B. Gaut, *op. cit*.
20 *Idem*, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

ISSN 1230-0330

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Historically Informed Performance a pytanie o historyzm w muzyce

Abstract

The Historically Informed Performance movement, emphasizing the faithful reconstruction of the historical context of performed music and stylistic correctness, not only brought about deep changes of the aesthetics and philosophy of performance but also changed the general ways of thinking about music. The view that sees musical work as determined primarily by its historical and stylistic identity conflicts with the post-romantic, platonic aesthetics of „timeless masterpieces", and the whole problem should be viewed in the context of the philosophical debate about the musical historicism.

In the article the intellectual trends that flourished on the ground of the Historically Informed Performance movement are confronted with the main standpoints of the debate mentioned above. I also suggest a way to overcome some of the arising difficulties, the one inspired by the Alasdair MacIntyre's ethic historicism.

Wiek XX był świadkiem potężnej batalii o miejsce, jakie w wykonawstwie dawnego repertuaru przyznać należy ich mniej lub bardziej peryferyjnym uwarunkowaniem historycznym, a stąd i o nasz stosunek do muzycznej przeszłości jako taki. Ruch „autentycznego wykonawstwa" – z czasem przechrzczony na *Historically Informed Performance* (dalej: HIP) – zaowocował nie tylko istotnymi dokonaniami artystycznymi, ale i poważną przemianą paradygmatów wykonawstwa i percepcji muzyki (mówimy tu oczywiście o tzw. muzyce poważnej). W niniejszym artykule podejmuję próbę interpretacji owych form myślenia o muzyce w teoretycznie naturalnym, choć w praktyce często oderwanym od niej kontekście akademickiej debaty toczącej się wokół pojęcia muzycznego historyzmu – tak, jak rozumiane jest ono w kluczowych dla problemu tekstach Carla Dahlhausa. Wskażę również możliwość przekroczenia powstających aporii w oparciu o inspirację etycznym historyzmem Alasdaira MacIntyre'a.

Zanim przejdę do zarysowania struktury sporu o historyzm – od czego rozpocznę mój zasadniczy wywód – pozostaje mi poczynić dwa łączące się z sobą zastrzeżenia. Po pierwsze, nie zawsze przestrzegam tu ściśle rozróżnienia pomiędzy tradycją kompozytorską, wykonawczą a odbiorczą, zakładając iż pozostają one ze sobą w ścisłym związku, którego rdzeniem jest r o z u m i e n i e muzyki, toż samo we wszystkich trzech przypadkach. Inaczej – to po drugie – rzeczy mają się w przypadkach, gdy piszę o XX wieku, kiedy to koncertowe „życie" nie-współczesnego repertuaru istotnie – choć niecałkowicie – rozeszło

się z aktualnie komponowaną muzyką. Pytania o to, dlaczego przedkładamy dzisiaj muzykę czasów minionych nad muzykę współczesną czy też „muzykę nową"; czy „życie muzyczne" oderwane od aktualnej produkcji muzycznej może być uznane za samoistny element kultury czy sztuki; wreszcie – czy rzeczywiście stoimy dzisiaj w obliczu istotnego kryzysu muzyki – są to oczywiście pytania bezpośrednio związane z omawianą problematyką, wychodzące jednak poza granice rozważanych tu kwestii.

I

Podstawowa oś sporu rozpięta jest pomiędzy biegunami, z jednej strony, historyzmu – rozumianego jako przekonanie, iż dzieło stuki jest, jak to ujął Adorno, „na wskroś historią", a więc iż jego historyczność określa samą jego istotę – z drugiej zaś naiwnego platonizmu, lokującego najwybitniejsze dzieła muzyczne w ponadczasowym królestwie idei i przyznającego im wartość estetyczną niezależną od uwarunkowań oryginalnego kontekstu historycznego. Historyzm w swej najskrajniejszej postaci jest zakwestionowaniem pozornej bliskości pochodzących z mniej lub bardziej odległej przeszłości dzieł, podejrzeniem, iż instynktowne ich rozumienie w rzeczywistości jest nie-rozumieniem; jest, krótko mówiąc, wyzwaniem rzuconym tradycji, rozumianej jako bezrefleksyjne podjęcie dziedzictwa przeszłości. Zarówno dla z ducha platońskiej popularnej estetyki XIX wieku, jak i dla XVIII-wiecznej estetyki natury i smaku konieczność objaśnienia historycznego wskazywała na estetyczne niedostatki dzieła – to, co nie „broniło się" samo mogło być – po części – usprawiedliwione uwarunkowaniami historycznymi. Historyzm odpowiada tu historii uprawianej jako krytyka tradycji, poddającej w wątpliwość pozorną oczywistość podstawowych kategorii estetycznych („naturalności", „piękna" czy czegokolwiek innego), tej zaś przeciwstawiona jest, jak to ujmuje Dahlhaus, „historia skromna, antykwaryczna",[1] badająca genezę dzieła, zatrzymująca się jednak na krok przed autonomiczną sferą przeżycia estetycznego. Historia jako krytyka odpowiada w jakimś sensie tradycyjnej hermeneutyce Schleiermachera i Diltheya, w której jednakże stopniowemu zbliżaniu się do określonego fragmentu dziedzictwa przeszłości towarzyszy odkrycie niedającej się przezwyciężyć obcości. Im głębsze jest rozumienie, tym wyraźniej rysuje się głębokość przepaści, jaka dzieli nas od tego, co minione. W tym sensie historyzm rozumiany jako forma myślenia o muzyce jest wrogiem „praktycznego historyzmu" jako przewagi dawniejszych dzieł nad współczesnymi w programach koncertowych, a także oskarżeniem osobliwego, a niedającego się przeoczyć faktu, iż to właśnie muzyka XVIII i XIX wieku jest dla większości dzisiejszych słuchaczy „tą prawdziwą" muzyką czy też, jak to ujął Eggebrecht, „muzyką po prostu", w odróżnieniu od „muzyki dawnej" i, co istotniejsze, zwanej „muzyką nową" twórczości współczesnej. W takim kontekście wyraz „muzeum" użyty być może jako negatywny osąd

1 C. Dahlhaus, *Doświadczenie historyczne i doświadczenie estetyczne*, w: *Idea muzyki absolutnej i inne studia*, tłum. A. Buchner, PWM, Kraków 1988, s. 389.

współczesnego życia muzycznego. (Dahlhaus: „Słowo „muzeum" wyraża w dyskusjach estetycznych przesyt czy nawet nienawiść do kultury"[2]).

Przestawionej opozycji daleko do wyczerpania wszystkich stanowisk, z jakimi spotkać się można w ramach toczącej się dyskusji. Teza, iż rozwinięta świadomość historyczna jako krytyka oczywistości tego, co przekazane przez tradycję, nieuchronnie prowadzi do wyobcowania z żywego jej nurtu, jest cechą czasów poromantycznych i rodzi się z załamania poprzedzających ją projektów. Oświeceniowy optymizm XVIII wieku w motywowanej historycznie (podobnie jak etnograficznie czy antropologicznie) krytyce partykularyzmu własnej tradycji nie upatrywał wyobcowania, lecz furtki do głębszej, bardziej uniwersalnej świadomości.[3] Konieczność wyjścia poza krąg europejski i badania równorzędnych tradycji wielu kręgów kulturowych budziła zarazem nadzieję na odkrycie ostatecznego i najgłębszego „wspólnego mianownika": nienaruszalnych podstaw natury ludzkiej, niezmiennych praw moralności, uniwersalnych kanonów piękna. Muzyka zresztą odgrywała tu nieraz szczególną rolę, gdy upatrywano w niej uniwersalnego, „naturalnego" języka lub choćby drogi u niemu.

W XIX wieku historia utraciła dotychczasową rolę „kształcenia przez wyobcowanie", zamiast tego oczekiwać zaczęto od niej uprawomocnienia istniejącej tradycji.[4] Metodologiczna krytyka źródeł miała na celu rekonstrukcję własnej przeszłości, przyswojenie jej i utwierdzenie wzbogaconej w ten sposób tradycji. Dlatego właśnie z pozoru tak pokrewna historyzującym ciągotom XX wieku romantyczna fascynacja tym, co dawne – na gruncie muzyki przejawiająca się tak dobrze opisanymi fenomenami, jak renesans muzyki Bacha, solesmeńska próba restytucji chorału gregoriańskiego czy powrót do stylu palestrinowskiego w ruchu cecyliańskim – badana z bliska okazuje się w swej naiwności uderzająco nam obca.

Choć żadna z dwu opisanych form historycznego myślenia o muzyce nie jest już dziś do utrzymania, a teza mówiąca, iż historyczna obiektywizacja przeszłości nieuchronnie nas z niej wyobcowuje, stała się tymczasem – jak pisze Dahlhaus[5] – *communis opinio*, nie do końca jest jasne, co miałoby z tego wynikać. Skrajna, a zarysowana powyżej postać historyzmu zdaje się wchodzić w konflikt z tradycyjnym, a zasadniczo wciąż żywym modelem przeżycia estetycznego, które wyklucza odczytywanie dzieła sztuki jako „dokumentu" wyrażającego „ducha czasu" czy też świadomość określonego momentu historycznego. Ciekawe zresztą, że Adorno zdaje się utożsamiać historyzm z takim właśnie ujęciem, zarazem stanowczo odżegnując się od niego; jego wspomniana już teza, mówiąca, iż dzieło sztuki jest „na wskroś historią", nie ma w zamyśle autora odbierać sztuce jej autonomii ani *stricte* estetycznego charakteru: chodzi raczej o to, iż ta właśnie najgłębsza, immanentna zawartość autonomicznego dzieła sztuki, choć w żadnym sensie nie może być uznana za

2 *Idem*, *Podstawy historii muzyki*, tłum. Z. Skowron, Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa 2010, s. 71.

3 *Ibidem*, s. 65.

4 *Ibidem*, s. 66.

5 *Ibidem*, s. 67.

wtórny wyraz czy manifestację swojego czasu, ma sens jedynie jako tkwiąca w określonym momencie historycznym i odnosząca się do niego. Autentyczne dzieła sztuki „są nieświadomą siebie historiografią swej epoki (…). Ale to właśnie sprawia, że są one niewspółmierne z historyzmem, który zamiast iść za ich własną zawartością historyczną, redukuje je do zewnętrznej wobec nich historii."[6] I jest Adorno absolutnie konsekwentny w swoim stanowisku, pisząc słynne już zdania o niepokonanych niemal trudnościach, z jakimi trzeba się zmierzyć, podejmując dzisiaj próbę adekwatnej, niezafałszowanej recepcji dzieł muzycznych XVIII czy XIX wieku, i o jednym wielkim nieporozumieniu, jakim jest funkcjonowanie tych utworów w obecnej praktyce koncertowej.[7] Postulowana wszakże przez niego możliwość zachowania quasi-estetycznej autonomii dzieł muzycznych przy ich całkowitym uhistorycznieniu jest jednak na tyle problematyczna, iż wydać się może (wespół zresztą z wynikającym z niej modelem percepcji) utopią.[8]

Historystyczne „ukąszenie", poddające w wątpliwość bezrefleksyjną, ufundowaną na rzekomo „naturalnym" poczuciu piękna zażyłość słuchaczy z kanonem wysokiej muzyki europejskiej, z nią zaś popularny platonizm „ponadczasowych arcydzieł", nie prowadzi wszakże nieuchronnie do stanowisk równie skrajnych jak estetyka adornowska, w ujęciach zaś konkurencyjnych pobrzmiewają nieraz echa dwu wcześniejszych modeli uprawiania historii – czy to oświeceniowej nadziei na odkrycie estetycznych niezmienników sztuki, czy to XIX-wiecznej idei uprawiania historii jako przyswajania lub uprawomocnienia tradycji.

Podmywana historyczną krytyką tradycja może być świadomie podtrzymywana przez to, co Dahlhaus nazywa „muzycznym konserwatyzmem" (można by też mówić o esencjalizmie) rozróżniającym nienaruszalne elementy centralne od podlegających zmianom elementów peryferyjnych – czy będzie to konserwatyzm kompozytorski, jak próby zachowania nośnych założeń formy sonatowej poprzez idące z duchem czasu modyfikacje środków kompozytorskich u Brahmsa, czy to, pozostając na gruncie recepcji, rozróżnienie akcydentalnych jakości wykonawczych (interpretacyjnych) od niezmiennej substancji dzieła.[9]

XIX-wieczną ideę uprawiania historii jako hermeneutycznego przyswojenia tradycji podejmuje w XX wieku Gadamer. Porzucając rozumienie tradycji jako danego przedmiotowo, wyraźnie określonego sensu na rzecz „żywego przekazu", bezstronnego obserwatora zaś zastępując wizją badacza, który w sytuację hermeneutyczną z konieczności wnosi z sobą cały bagaż własnych założeń, przesądzeń czy też przed-sądów, opisuje on spotkanie obu tych stron jako strukturę

6 T. W. Adorno, *Teoria estetyczna*, tłum. K. Krzemieniowa, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1994, s. 332, por. także s. 157 i 348.

7 *Idem*, *Filozofia nowej muzyki*, tłum. F. Wayda, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1974, s. 39-41.

8 „To, że do symfonii Beethovena równie nie dorósł ktoś, kto nie rozumie w niej tzw. czysto muzycznych procesów, jak i ten, kto nie potrafi wysłyszeć w niej echa Rewolucji Francuskiej, a także tego, w jaki sposób obydwa momenty zapośredniczają się w tym fenomenie, należy tyleż do trudnych, co i do nieuniknionych tematów estetyki filozoficznej." T. W. Adorno, *Teoria…*, s. 637.

9 C. Dahlhaus, *Podstawy…*, s. 79-80. Warto tu nadmienić, iż o możliwości pogodzenia stanowiska esencjalistycznego z historyzmem mówi A. C. Danto – por. *Po końcu sztuki. Sztuka współczesna i zatarcie się granic tradycji*, tłum. M. Salwa, Universitas, Kraków 2013, s. 151.

dialogiczną, w której dochodzi do wzajemnego porozumienia i „stopienia horyzontów". Tak osiągnięte rozumienie nie posiada jednak waloru przedmiotowo danej prawdy, lecz jest raczej, jak ujmuje to Gadamer, „zastosowaniem" tekstu czy też dzieła do konkretnej sytuacji interpretatora. „Tekst jest rozumiany tylko wtedy, gdy jest każdorazowo rozumiany inaczej."[10] Z drugiej strony nie jest jasne, na ile gadamerowska hermeneutyka posłużyć może za model doświadczenia estetycznego: choć, z jednej strony, pewne jego cechy ekstrapoluje Gadamer na każde doświadczenie hermeneutyczne, z drugiej opowiada się wyraźnie przeciwko temu, co nazywa „rozróżnieniem estetycznym", a więc przeciwko ostremu rozgraniczeniu świata sztuki od tego, co pozaestetyczne. W efekcie trudno o pewność, czy gadamerowskiemu „rozumieniu" bliżej do percepcji estetycznej, czy też do odczytania dzieła jako swoiście rozumianego „dokumentu".[11] Wespół z tym zarzutem wysuwa Dahlhaus kilka innych wątpliwości tyczących się możliwości zastosowania hermeneutyki Gadamera przez historyka muzyki: przede wszystkim zdaje się ona zakładać z góry, iż hermeneutyczne „zbliżanie się" ku danemu fragmentowi przeszłości zaowocować musi rosnącą bliskością i zrozumieniem, podczas gdy, jak twierdzi Dahlhaus, nie ma podstaw aby wykluczyć możliwość przeciwną, iż w miarę głębszego poznawania rosnąć będzie właśnie świadomość nieuniknionej obcości.

O ile zarówno historyzm w postaci nadanej mu przez Adorna, jak i swoista próba przezwyciężenia historyzmu, jaką jest hermeneutyka Gadamera, ze słusznością uznać można za teorie szkicujące czy też postulujące określone podejście badawcze, raczej zaś dystansujące się, jeśli nie wręcz oderwane od realnych postaci, jakie przyjmuje nasz stosunek do określonych fragmentów przeszłości – a więc, w rozważanym przypadku, od współczesnej (w szerokim bardzo rozumieniu) praktyki koncertowej, czy, szerzej, po prostu tzw. życia muzycznego – o tyle w tym ostatnim daje się zaobserwować faktycznie funkcjonujące jedno jeszcze wcielenie szeroko pojętego historyzmu. Zakwestionowane przez historystyczną krytykę doświadczenie estetyczne może zarówno ulec erozji, jak i okopać się na uszczuplonym, lecz pozornie bezpiecznym stanowisku muzycznego konserwatyzmu, możliwy jednakże jest i taki wariant, w którym historyczność dzieła ulega estetyzacji i włączeniu w przeżycie estetyczne. To, co minione może stać się obiektem zainteresowania właśnie dlatego, że niesie z sobą pamięć o przeszłości. Gdy do głosu dochodzi świadomość historyczna nastrojona – by użyć terminu Dahlhausa – sentymentalnie, czasowe oddalenie staje się źródłem estetycznej bliskości, a granica pomiędzy obiema dziedzinami traci swoja ostrość.[12]

Czyniąc powyższe spostrzeżenia podkreśla Dahlhaus pokrewieństwo świadomości historycznej i estetycznej, które rodzą się w tym samym momencie historycznym i wskutek tychże samych procesów. Zarówno historyczne, jak i estetyczne podejście do dzieł sztuki charakteryzuje obiektywizująco-dystansujący stosunek do swojego przedmiotu, możliwy po

10 H.-G. Gadamer, *Prawda i metoda*, tłum. B. Baran, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 2004, s. 422.

11 C. Dahlhaus, *Podstawy…*, s. 69.

12 C. Dahlhaus, *Doświadczenie…*, s. 392.

rozpadzie pierwotnych funkcjonalnych uwikłań sztuki, stąd nie cofa się Dahhaus przed stwierdzeniem, iż z perspektywy historii idei podejścia owe stanowią części jednej całości.[13]

II

Dwa zasadnicze impulsy, które wspólnie dały początek ruchowi, jak wtedy mówiono, „autentycznego wykonawstwa", stanowiły przedziwny splot podejrzliwości z naiwnością, czy też tego, co Nietzsche nazwał historią antykwaryczną z historią jako krytyką tradycji: oto poddając w wątpliwość rzekomą naturalność estetyki późnoromantycznej, opierając się na autorytecie której można było dotąd dowolnie modyfikować „literę" dawnego repertuaru (jak instrumentację i detale interpretacji) gwoli uczynienia zrozumiałym jej „ducha", zwrócono się ku pietystycznej rekonstrukcji materialnego kontekstu „oryginalnych" wykonań dzieła, w nadziei, iż na tej drodze osiągnie się lepsze rozumienie i wgląd w istotę owego repertuaru. Wiele racji wydaje się mieć Taruskin, gdy wskazuje na pokrewieństwo owego podejścia z ówczesnymi prądami myślowymi nastawionymi empirycznie i materialistycznie, dla których owo oparte na estetycznej ocenie rozróżnienie „litery" i „ducha" było pozbawionym podstaw uroszczeniem.[14]

Odrzucenie estetyki późnoromantycznej było na owym etapie tak silne, iż można mieć uzasadnione wątpliwości, czy było ono jedynie skutkiem (słusznego) zakwestionowania jej prawomocności w odniesieniu do dawnego repertuaru, czy też, na odwrót, to cały ruch uznać trzeba za jedno z licznych wcieleń tendencji antyromantycznej, idące pod tym względem ręka w rękę z muzycznym neoklasycyzmem, *Neue Sachligkeit* i innymi przejawami szeroko pojętego modernizmu. Kuriozalne, a obowiązujące w wielu kręgach co najmniej do lat sześćdziesiątych – wbrew zresztą protestom najwybitniejszych przedstawicieli HIP – przekonanie, iż muzyce przedklasycznej obca jest jakakolwiek ekspresja w rozumieniu romantycznym, korespondowało z generalnym odrzuceniem wyolbrzymionej ekspresyjności schyłkowego romantyzmu, które często przyjmowało skrajną postać rezygnacji z uczuciowości muzycznej w ogóle. (By przywołać tamten klimat intelektualny i zdumiewającą szerokość antyromantycznego frontu przypomnijmy *Poetykę Muzyki* Strawińskiego, wprost odrzucającą jakąkolwiek ekspresję wykonawczą, Ortegę y Gasseta piętnującego „uczucia poczciwego burżuja" obrazowane w symfoniach Beethovena czy też gardzącego „krowim ciepłem obory" kompozytora Adriana Leverkühna z *Doktora Faustusa* Tomasza

13 C. Dahlhaus, *Podstawy…*, s. 81.

14 Por. R. Taruskin, *Minioność teraźniejszości i obecność przeszłości*, tłum. C. Zych, „Canor" 23 i 24, 1998. Inne głosy krytyczne, na których omawianie nie ma tu miejsca (nie miały też one wpływu na rozwój ruchu) to: L. Dreyfus, *Muzyka dawna wzięta w obronę przed jej entuzjastami: teoria wykonania historycznego*, tłum. C. Zych, „Canor" 19, 1997; P. Kivy, *The Fine Art of Repetition – Essays in the Philosophy of Music*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1993; *Bach Defended against his Devotees*, w: *Prisms*, tłum. S. i S. Weber, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1981. Najpełniejsze ujęcie syntetyczne: J. Butt, *Playing with History. The Historical Approach to Musical Performance*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2005.

Manna – pamiętając, iż w tej ostatniej książce odbijają się zarówno kompozytorskie idee Schoenberga, jak i poglądy Adorna).

Duże znaczenie wewnątrz ruchu HIP uzyskała spopularyzowana (delikatnie rzecz ujmując) wersja poglądów Adorna głoszona przez Nicolasa Harnoncourta, przeciwstawiającego sobie idee muzyki „pięknej", będącej jedynie ornamentem życia i niewymagającej od słuchacza znawstwa ani wysiłku, oraz muzyki „prawdziwej", przemawiającej, będącej prawdziwym wyrazem ducha swoich czasów[15]. O skuteczne propagowanie idei muzyki „pięknej" oskarżana jest w owym ujęciu Rewolucja Francuska i będące jej wynikiem dążenie do planowej demokratyzacji i egalitaryzacji sztuki.

Zatrzymuję się dłużej nad tymi elementami wczesnej fazy HIP, aby pokazać, na ile ważny był dla niej, obok dążenia do możliwie pełnej rekonstrukcji oryginalnego kontekstu wykonawczego, postulat całkowitego zerwania z istniejącą, post-romantyczną tradycją wykonawczą. Był to ruch wykonawstwa muzyki d a w n e j, wielu zaś spośród jego uczestników rzeczywiście uważało muzykę XVI czy XVIII wieku za bardziej wartościową od muzyki późniejszej i odczuwało ją jako bliższą sobie. Wielokrotnie zwracano uwagę na ambiwalencję ówczesnej sytuacji, gdy fascynacja dawnym instrumentarium i repertuarem była faktycznie fascynacją tym, co odkrywano wówczas jako nowe.

Początki HIP nazwać można – zarówno jeśli chodzi o formułowane wtedy poglądy, jak i (przynajmniej częściowo) ówczesna estetykę wykonawczą – czasem nieporozumień. Szybko okazało się, iż postulat oparcia wykonania jedynie na twardych „danych historycznych" i *sola scriptura* muzycznego *Urtextu*, z wyłączeniem własnej wrażliwości muzycznej (jako nieodwracalnie skażonej romantyczną estetyką wykonawczą) jest czystą utopią, i wiedzie jedynie do osławionego *sewing-machine style*. Z czasem wszakże okazało się także i to, iż po okresie nieuniknionych prób i błędów ukształtowała się cenna i wyraźnie odrębna od wcześniejszych praktyk tradycja wykonawcza, oparta zarówno na inspiracji brzmieniem dawnych instrumentów i techniką gry na nich, dokumentach historycznych, jak i indywidualnych poszukiwaniach poszczególnych artystów. Niedająca się zanegować wartość artystyczna nowej szkoły wykonawczej pozbawia zasadniczego znaczenia pytanie o to, czy rzeczywiście doszło tu do restytucji oryginalnych praktyk wykonawczych, czy też mówić tu należałoby raczej o narodzinach nowej tradycji.

III

Wraz ze zbliżaniem się końca XX wieku pojawiły się tendencje do modyfikacji i poszerzenia konstytutywnego dla HIP pojęcia rekonstrukcji. Nie miało już chodzić jedynie o wierne odtworzenie dotychczas zaniedbywanych elementów wykonania (takich, jak instrumentacja, technika gry czy nierównomierne temperacje), ale i o próbę choć częściowego przywrócenia szerszego, społecznego czy

15 N. Harnoncourt, *Muzyka mową dźwięków*, tłum. M. Czajka, Fundacja „Ruch Muzyczny", Warszawa 1995, s. 7-9.

kulturowego kontekstu w jakim oryginalnie funkcjonowała muzyka przedklasyczna. Jeśli bowiem przyjąć, iż idea muzyki autonomicznej pojawiła się dopiero w wieku XIX, dla epok wcześniejszych zaś właściwe było raczej uwikłanie muzyki w rozmaite funkcje społeczne – rozrywkowe, reprezentacyjne czy kultowe – czy nie należałoby w konsekwencji założyć, iż najpełniej oddamy sprawiedliwość muzyce tamtych czasów przywracając pozamuzyczny sens, jaki źródłowo się z nią łączył?

Wychodzące z takiego stanowiska praktyki łączy przekonanie, iż potrzebna jest nie tylko rekonstrukcja oryginalnego dzieła sztuki (tu w sensie uobecniającego je wykonania), ale i jego oryginalnego sposobu funkcjonowania (czy też relacji łączących je z odbiorcami), a także, iż rekonstrukcja taka jest w jakimś stopniu wykonalna. Łączy je również postawa oskarżenia tradycyjnego modelu życia koncertowego, posądzanego tu o to, iż przenosząc utwory z oryginalnego kontekstu kulturowego do filharmonicznego muzeum uniemożliwia ono odbiorcom żywy kontakt z muzyką.

Zwolennik radykalnej postaci krytycznego historyzmu odpowie, iż w ten sposób przesuwamy jedynie mury metaforycznego muzeum, a zrestytuowane elementy oryginalnego kontekstu kulturowego staną się jedynie innym rodzajem eksponatu, nie zdołamy bowiem zapewnić im w naszym współczesnym sposobie życia tego znaczenia, jakie oryginalnie im przysługiwało. Jedynym konsekwentnym działaniem byłoby tu, metaforycznie rzecz ujmując, zamieszkanie w muzeum.

Krytyka ta jest oczywiście dosyć skrajna – w rzeczywistości niektóre z takich praktyk bądź postulatów ocenić trzeba pozytywnie, jeśli na powrót łączą dawny repertuar z właściwymi im rzeczywistościami, które nadal pozostają żywe (przypadek muzyki liturgicznej); bądź też odnajdują współczesnych form życia lepsze odpowiedniki dla jego oryginalnego kontekstu niż tradycyjne „muzyczne muzeum" sal koncertowych. Nie ulega jednak wątpliwości, iż w tego rodzaju rekonstrukcje nieuniknienie wpisana jest pewna ambiwalencja, tak, iż każdy przypadek oceniać należy oddzielnie – nie zawsze da się z góry przewidzieć, co będzie jedynie historyczną maskaradą, co zaś rzeczywistym ożywieniem konkretnego fragmentu dawnego repertuaru. Obok XIX-wiecznego muzeum „ponadczasowych arcydzieł" niewątpliwie istnieje i interaktywne muzeum „rekonstrukcji historycznych".

IV

Odkrycie, iż zakwestionowawszy rzekomą „naturalność" własnej wrażliwości muzycznej nie jest się skazanym na jej odrzucenie, lecz że daje się ona kształtować i różnicować, było jednym z najważniejszych osiągnięć ruchu HIP. Począwszy od drugiej połowy XX wieku stwierdzenie, iż muzyka każdej epoki wymaga specyficznego dla niej brzmienia instrumentalnego i odrębnej formy ekspresyjności stała się powszechnie akceptowanym przekonaniem, sam zaś ruch porzucił swe preferencje dla epok dawniejszych: dziś poszukuje się „autentycznego" brzmienia

i stylu wykonawczego zarówno dla muzyki Machauta, Monteverdiego i Bacha, jak i twórczości Beethovena, Chopina i Brahmsa. O ile dla pionierów „autentycznego wykonawstwa" dziedzictwo romantycznego stylu wykonawczego było przede wszystkim czymś, co należało przezwyciężyć, o tyle dzisiaj, skoro nikt nie zamierza już narzucać go muzyce epok wcześniejszych, postrzega się go po prostu jako jeden z wielu równoprawnych stylów, odpowiedni dla muzyki Wagnera, a nie Mozarta, tak jak styl wykonawczy klasycyzmu odpowiedni jest dla Mozarta – a nie Wagnera. Sytuację tę opisuje się czasem w analogii do przezwyciężenia etnocentryzmu w badaniach kulturowych: podobnie jak nie sposób zrozumieć obcej kultury przykładając ją do „wzorca" kultury europejskiej, tak samo repertuar konkretnego miejsca i czasu uda nam się zrozumieć – a więc i sensownie wykonać – dopiero wtedy, gdy ujmiemy go na jego własnych prawach, nie narzucając mu – jako rzekomo naturalnego – najbliższego nam stylu muzycznego. W konsekwencji rzetelna edukacja współczesnego muzyka zaczęła nieco przypominać równoległą naukę wielu języków obcych, którymi powinien się on – przynajmniej w podstawowym zakresie – równie sprawnie posługiwać, a podstawowym kryterium oceny wykonania danego dzieła muzycznego stało się odnalezienie historycznie odpowiedniego stylu wykonawczego.

Choć zatem ruch HIP w swojej wczesnej postaci był przede wszystkim zwrotem ku – wcześniej często nieznanemu – repertuarowi epok najdawniejszych, połączonym z przekonaniem o konieczności wypracowania nowego paradygmatu interpretacyjnego, nieopierającego się na bezpośrednim przekazie istniejącej tradycji wykonawczej, lecz na „obiektywnych" danych historycznych, z czasem utracił on swój charakter preferencji na rzecz muzyki dawnej, przekształcając się w uniwersalne przekonanie, iż repertuar każdej z epok rozumieć należy na jej własnych prawach i wykonywać według własnych jej zasad. Choć muzykolodzy zasadniczo nie zrezygnowali z ostrego odgraniczania „muzyki dawnej" jako tej, której tradycja wykonawcza uległa przerwaniu od eggebrechtowskiej „muzyki po prostu", której tradycje wykonawcze rozwijały się zasadniczo nieprzerwanie, dla znaczącej części wykonawców odwołanie się do dokumentów mówiących o praktykach wykonawczych epoki czy użycie oryginalnych instrumentów jest równie konieczne również w interpretacji późniejszego repertuaru.

W nastawieniu tym nietrudno rozpoznać znamiona „historii antykwarycznej" Nietzschego czy też tego, co Dahlhaus nazwał historyzmem „sentymentalnym". Gdy zasadniczy nacisk położony zostaje na ukazanie dzieła muzycznego w pełni jego historycznego (tj. stylistycznego i instrumentalnego) uposażenia, realne staje się niebezpieczeństwo, iż stanie się ono dla słuchaczy przede wszystkim egzemplifikacją stylu epoki. Estetyczną emancypację stylu historycznego (Adorno zapewne wolałby mówić tu o jego fetyszyzacji), który z czynnika służebnego względem estetycznej istoty dzieła stał samoistną wartością, uznać można za istotny element *Historically Informed Performance.* Stopniowa uniwersalizacja założeń HIP i zanik jednoznacznej preferencji na rzecz muzyki dawnej doprowadziły przy tym do zjawisk tak znamiennych i osobliwych zarazem jak życzliwe zainteresowanie hybrydami w rodzaju późnoromantycznych opracowań muzyki

Bacha, dla przedstawicieli wczesnej fazy „autentycznego wykonawstwa" stanowiących jedynie powstałe w wyniku estetycznego nieporozumienia aberracje.[16]

V

Przyglądając się z większego dystansu wyrosłym na gruncie ruchu HIP formom myślenia o muzyce – w każdym razie muzyce wywodzącej się sprzed okresu nazywanego najczęściej, dość już dzisiaj nieprecyzyjnie, „współczesnością" – trudno nie zauważyć pokrewieństw łączących ją z niektórymi ideami charakterystycznymi dla XX-wiecznego postrzegania kultury, czy też – właściwiej rzecz ujmując – wielości kultur i tradycji. Mam tu na myśli przede wszystkim prądy umysłowe związane z szeroko rozumianą ideą multikulturalizmu.[17] Gdy oświeceniowa nadzieja na odnalezienie ponadkulturowych powszechników na drodze „kontrolowanego wyobcowania", jakie dać może zanurzenie się w obcych tradycjach, uznana zostaje za naiwną mrzonkę, próba zaś przykładania ich do miary własnej kultury napiętnowana jako etnocentryzm bądź „kulturowy kolonializm", alternatywą pozostaje wizja archipelagu obcych sobie kultur czy też tradycji niepokojąco podobnego do zbiorowiska odciętych od siebie leibniziańskich monad, poruszając się pomiędzy którymi zmuszeni jesteśmy wyrzec się przewodnictwa wszelkich posiadanych już władz intelektualnych, jako niosących już w sobie uprzedzenia wyniesione z rodzimego kręgu kulturowego. Analogia pomiędzy dystansem czasowym a przestrzennym (w sensie różnicy kulturowej) cieszy się już istotną tradycją – by przywołać choćby tytuł istotnej dla omawianej problematyki pracy Davida Lowenthala *Past is a Foreign Country* – trudno zaiste nie zauważyć, że tendencja do podobnego ujmowania poszczególnych epok czy stylów muzycznych rysuje się dziś bardzo wyraźnie – szczególnie tam, gdzie rzecz dotyczy wykonawstwa i recepcji muzyki. Ukazywane w dziesiątkach publikacji głębokie różnice dzielące poszczególne epoki nie tylko już na płaszczyźnie technik kompozytorskich, form i języka muzycznego, ale i pryncypiów estetycznych, kanonów piękna, społeczno-kulturowych funkcji muzyki, a wreszcie samych pojęć, w jakich była ona ujmowana (jak np. historyczna relatywizacja samego pojęcia dzieła muzycznego) zniechęcają do ujęć czy sądów przekraczających ramy poszczególnych epok. Odpowiadająca popularnej estetyce romantyzmu (gdzieniegdzie dominującej wszak jeszcze do niedawna) wizja historii muzyki jako nietzscheańskiej historii monumentalnej – zestawiającej obok siebie największe arcydzieła z pominięciem twórczości niższych lotów – czy pokrewna im wizja artystycznej tradycji T. S. Eliota zasługują jedynie na uśmiech pobłażania w czasach, gdy przyjmuje się za pewnik, iż właściwym kontekstem dzieła może być jedynie twórczość jego epoki, ocena zaś estetyczna wyodrębniająca spośród muzycznej przeciętności epoki największe arcydzieła staje się więcej niż podejrzana – tym bardziej, gdy zdaje się sugerować,

16 Znamiennym przykładem jest umieszczenie dokonanych przez Maxa Regera opracowań utworów Bacha w programie bachowskiego konkursu organowego w Lipsku w roku 2008.

17 Por. J. Butt, *op. cit.*, s. 28, także s. 143-144.

iż poszczególne szczyty muzyki europejskiej więcej wspólnego mają ze sobą nawzajem niż każdy z nich z osobna ze swym historycznie bliższym podnożem. Sprawności wykonawczo-interpretacyjne z kolei zaczynają być ujmowane mniej jako umiejętność indywidualnego odczytania unikalnego dzieła sztuki, bardziej zaś jako magazyn „narzędzi interpretacyjnych", dobieranych do danego stylu historycznego, w obrębie jego jednakże uznawanych za uniwersalne.

Choć powyższe stanowisko nie tak może często artykułowane jest *explicite*, faktycznie leży ono „na przedłużeniu" wielu praktyk związanych z cieszącymi się dużą popularnością ideami wykonawstwa „stylowego" czy, jak czasem tłumaczy się angielski termin, „historycznie świadomego". Nietrudno też odnaleźć je u autorów skłaniających się do ujmowania muzyki jako zjawiska kulturowego raczej niż estetycznego. Problematyczność takiego ujęcia staje się oczywista przy rzeczywistym i głębszym kontakcie z żywa i uprawianą muzyką – a więc dla wybitniejszych wykonawców czy wnikliwszych muzykologów (a szczególnie osób łączących obydwie profesje), rzadko kiedy jednakże obiekcje owe artykułowane są w sposób wychodzący poza szczegółowe problemy, które w danym przypadku ujawniły słabość przywołanej formy myślenia. Wizja historii muzyki jako archipelagu stylistycznych „wysp" odciętych od siebie nieprzebytym morzem różnic kulturowych cieszy się swoistym prestiżem, jako umożliwiająca quasi-naukową obiektywność w dyskusjach o interpretacji repertuaru dawniejszych epok – trudno nie wyczuć tu też szerzej rozumianego obecnego klimatu intelektualnego – zarazem jednak zdrowy rozsądek tych, którzy zdolni są wejść w rzeczywisty kontakt z estetycznym znaczeniem owego repertuaru, wyraźnie daje do zrozumienia, iż choć XX-wieczny zwrot ku historycznej i stylistycznej „poprawności" czy też „autentyczności" rzeczywiście przyniósł istotne owoce zarówno w kwestii interpretacji wykonawczej, jak i samego rozumienia poszczególnych obszarów repertuaru minionych stuleci w ich specyfice i wzajemnej odmienności, nie usunął bynajmniej podstaw, na jakich mówić można o głębokiej jedności muzycznego dziedzictwa Europy. Nie poddał też w wątpliwość faktu, iż większość, jeśli nie wszystkie interesujące nas dzieła muzyczne istotne są dla nas raczej jako indywidualne i unikalne dzieła sztuki, a nie egzemplifikacje danego stylu historycznego.

Powracając do przywołanej na początkowych stronach artykułu dyskusji, sytuację obecną opisać można jako konflikt nastawionego rekonstrukcyjnie historyzmu „sentymentalnego" – zainteresowanego przeszłością jako przeszłością właśnie i podkreślającego dzielący nas od niej dystans poprzez skupienie się na odtworzeniu całokształtu historycznego kontekstu wykonywanych utworów – i, używając terminologii Dahlhausa, muzycznego konserwatyzmu, utrzymującego, iż historyczna zmienność niektórych aspektów muzyki nie wyklucza możliwości porozumienia, opartego na transhistorycznej „esencji". Pierwszy zespół poglądów ma mocniejsze oparcie zarówno w otwarcie formułowanych teoriach estetycznych i filozoficznych, jak i bardziej ogólnych ideach właściwych naszym czasom, drugi natomiast, rzadziej artykułowany, nadal odnaleźć można u podstaw znakomitej większości żywej praktyki muzycznej, i nie wydaje się, aby cokolwiek mogło mu poważnie zagrozić.

VI

Peterowi Kivy'emu – filozofowi, któremu problematyka muzyczna nie jest bynajmniej obca – zdarza się deklarować, iż bliski jest mu arystotelesowski model uprawiania filozofii, przez co – jak tłumaczy – rozumie taki rodzaj refleksji, który nie próbuje podważać powszechnie żywionych, zdroworozsądkowych przekonań i praktyk, lecz dąży do zapewnienia im głębszej podbudowy i osadzenia w ramach szerszej teorii.[18] Postępując w podobnym duchu, w dalszej części niniejszego tekstu chciałbym zaproponować możliwość takiego spojrzenia na omawiane problemy, które odda sprawiedliwość intuicyjnym przekonaniom większości muzyków i odbiorców, a także pozwoli sformułować adekwatne do nich stanowisko w obrębie początkowo przywołanej tu dyskusji, w sensowny sposób wytłumaczyć przemiany zaszłe na gruncie szeroko rozumianego życia muzycznego w ostatnim stuleciu, a także, w jakimś przynajmniej stopniu, powiedzieć coś więcej o miejscu, w którym znalazła się dzisiaj tradycja muzyki europejskiej pojęta jako całość.

Zacząć należy zaś od tego, iż owa specyficzna forma myślenia o przeszłości, którą pozwoliłem sobie zobrazować wizją „archipelagu" kultur, tradycji czy epok, już w swoim punkcie wyjścia wikła się w istotne trudności. Samo rozpoznanie własnego punktu widzenia jako nieuniknienie zniekształconego uwarunkowaniami własnej kultury (czy też, adekwatniej do rozważanej problematyki, np. wpływami estetyki wykonawczej własnej epoki) zawiera już w sobie domniemane zdystansowanie się od własnego punktu wyjścia, a właściwie od całej płaszczyzny kulturowych czy stylistycznych partykularyzmów. Problem powiększa się jeszcze, gdy zaczynamy twierdzić, iż zajęcie podobnego stanowiska „ponad" pozwala nam bezstronnie docenić obce tradycje czy kultury – równie prawdopodobne wydawać się może, iż więcej w ten sposób tracimy niż zyskujemy. Jeśli przyjąć już twierdzenie o nieredukowalnej odrębności i wzajemnej nieprzekładalności poszczególnych kultur, tradycji czy – w naszym przypadku – stylistyk historycznych, przekonanie, iż sama ta świadomość połączona z muzycznym „rekonstrukcjonizmem" pozwala nam w jakiejś mierze odrzucić czy też zawiesić własne uwarunkowania i z pozycji „bezstronnego obserwatora" docenić każdą z nich w jej własnej odrębności, okazać się może nie mniejszym – choć pozostającym na innym poziomie – uroszczeniem co quasi-etnocentryczne przykładanie każdej z nich do wzorca rodzimej tradycji. Uznając dotyczące niuansów wykonania czy instrumentacji historyczne „dane źródłowe" za bardziej wiarygodne od własnego osądu estetycznego wykonawcy osiągamy niewątpliwie większą wierność w zakresie owych detali, zarazem jednak tracimy możliwość zbliżenia się do oryginalnej, nazwijmy to tak, „filozofii wykonawstwa": trudno o wątpliwości, iż idea wykonawczej „rekonstrukcji historycznej" wydałaby się wykonawcy dowolnej epoki poprzedzającej wiek XX pomysłem dość osobliwym, jeśli nie zupełnym absurdem. Autentyzm „litery" pozostaje tu w sprzeczności z autentyzmem „ducha".[19]

18 Por. np. P. Kivy, *Music, Language and Cognition and other essays in the Aesthetics of Music*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2007, s. 111.

19 Aporie postulatu muzycznej „rekonstrukcji" czy też wykonawczego „autentyzmu" zostały już dość dobrze opisane, zwracano już przy tym uwagę zarówno na jego estetyczną jałowość, jak i utopijność (by

Trudno nie zauważyć, iż wzięta na poważnie wizja historii muzyki jako archipelagu wzajemnie nieprzekładalnych obszarów stylistycznych w nieunikniony sposób wieść powinna ku totalnemu sceptycyzmowi – tak trafnie opisywanemu przez Dahlhausa – dla którego rozumienie spontaniczne i bezpośrednie okazuje się jedynie nieporozumieniem, jedyne zaś prawdziwe zrozumienie to stopniowo odsłaniająca się świadomość nieredukowalnej obcości odległego nam w czasie repertuaru. (Jedynym wyjątkiem, jakiego możliwość można by tu – ewentualnie – rozważyć, mógłby być postulat bezpowrotnego porzucenia własnej tożsamości kulturowej i osiągnięcia za tę cenę identyfikacji z jakąś jedną, wybraną, dawniejszą tradycją muzyczną.[20]) Fakt, iż konsekwencja ta nie jest wyciągana, wiązać można – jeśli pozostajemy na gruncie muzycznej praktyki – z dominującym wśród wykonawców i słuchaczy „muzycznym konserwatyzmem" – jako przekonaniem, iż pewne podstawowe aspekty muzyki (ekspresyjne, formalne czy logiczne) pozostają na przestrzeni wieków zasadniczo niezmienne – na gruncie zaś teorii z osobliwą konstrukcją myślową, wedle której zmiana podstawowego paradygmatu życia koncertowego idąca za postulatem „historycznej rekonstrukcji" pozwala nam wznieść się ponad płaszczyznę stylistycznych partykularyzmów, osiągając coś w rodzaju muzycznego poliglotyzmu; a tym samym tworząc środowisko, w którym poszczególne muzyczne tradycje współistnieć mogą obok siebie (a nawet w tych samych programach koncertowych) niezniekształcone, a zarazem zrozumiałe.

Więcej niż interesujące – choć nie tak znowu może zaskakujące – jest trudne do przeoczenia podobieństwo, jakie łączy tę ostatnią wizję z ideą społeczeństwa liberalnego, w którym wyznawcy rozmaitych przekonań, religii czy światopoglądów żyć mogą obok siebie w harmonii, nie rezygnując zarazem ze swych przekonań. Analogiczne jest tu przekonanie, iż umożliwiająca to współistnienie doktryna sytuuje się niejako na wyższym poziomie niż partykularne doktryny poszczególnych tradycji; analogiczne są również wątpliwości tyczące się powstałego w ten sposób rozwarstwienia: tak jak słusznie pytać można (niekoniecznie przesądzając z góry odpowiedź), czy zepchnięcie wyznawanych przekonań moralnych czy światopoglądowych do wydzielonej sfery „prywatności" nie oznacza przypadkiem ich skutecznej neutralizacji i przemiany w okaleczoną namiastkę tego, czym były poprzednio, tak i niepozbawione podstaw są obawy, czy przeniesione do muzeum „historycznej rekonstrukcji" utwory nie zaczną funkcjonować jako muzealne eksponaty właśnie, interesujące jako egzemplifikacje danego stylu historycznego, nasz zaś do nich stosunek nie stanie się tym, co nazwał Dahlhaus „historyzmem sentymentalnym". (Warto zresztą przypomnieć, iż charakterystyczne dla liberalizmu wyodrębnienie „sfery prywatnej" ma tu i swoją dokładniejsza analogię: odkąd postulat wierności historycznej zyskał w wykonawstwie muzyki ufundowany na quasi-naukowości nowego paradygmatu prestiż, dane historyczne zaczęły rościć sobie prawo do

zacytować jedno z celniejszych sformułowań: „Jak się okazuje, tym, czego dążącemu do „autentyczności" wykonawcy potrzeba najbardziej, jest możliwość wyposażenia słuchaczy w barokowe uszy").

20 Warto zauważyć, iż choć wydawałoby się to naturalną konsekwencją wielu „popularnych" postaci ideologii HIP, wąska specjalizacja w jednym obszarze stylistyczno-historycznym jest wśród wykonawców związanych z tym nurtem wyborem spotykanym bardzo rzadko.

wyznaczania ram, wewnątrz których dopuścić można kierowanie się własnym smakiem, muzykalnością czy poczuciem piękna.)

Opierając się na istnieniu owej analogii, chciałbym w tym miejscu zaproponować dopuszczenie do naszych rozważań inspiracji, jaką zaczerpnąć można z jednej z najistotniejszych krytyk idei społeczeństwa liberalnego sformułowanych w ciągu kilku ostatnich dekad. Mam tu na myśli Alasdaira MacIntyre'a i propagowaną przez niego szczególną odmianę historyzmu etycznego, a szczególnie wizję tradycji sformułowaną w pracy *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*[21] Praca ta jest w pewnym sensie kontynuacją opublikowanej poprzedniej książki *After Virtue*[22], w której przedstawił autor argumenty na rzecz twierdzeń, iż – po pierwsze – jakikolwiek sensowny system etyczny może być sformułowany jedynie na gruncie partykularnej tradycji, tj. konkretnych praktyk określonej wspólnoty; po drugie – iż wszystkie dotychczasowe projekty zbudowania i uzasadnienia etyki uniwersalnej zakończyły się fiaskiem; po trzecie wreszcie, iż nieusuwalna niekonkluzywność obecnych debat moralnych wynika z faktu, że używa się w nich pojęć i koncepcji, które wyrwane zostały z kontekstu wielu różnych tradycji moralnych. Na zarzut, iż przedstawiony zespół twierdzeń nieuniknienie wiedzie do nieusuwalnego etycznego relatywizmu odpowiada MacIntyre w kolejnej książce, pisząc, że nie zgadza się na przypisane mu miano relatywisty nie dlatego, iżby odwołać miał swe twierdzenie o niemożliwości zbudowania etyki uniwersalnej – tj. lokującej się ponad poziomem poszczególnych tradycji moralnych – ale dlatego, iż tradycji owych bynajmniej nie da się zamknąć w pojęciu – by wrócić do zaproponowanej metafory – quasi-leibniziańskich, pozbawionych okien monad. W zasadniczej części swej pracy opisuje MacIntyre dzieje głównych tradycji moralnych Europy, demonstrując, w jaki sposób największe z nich zdolne były krytycznie przyswoić sobie założenia obcych tradycji, same ulegając przy tym istotnym przekształceniom i wspinając się na wyższy poziom samoświadomości i uniwersalności. Najistotniejszą z punktu naszych rozważań tezą MacIntyre'a, zawierającą w sobie niemal całość inspiracji, którą chciałbym się tutaj posłużyć, jest twierdzenie, iż właściwe liberalizmowi „postoświeceniowy relatywizm i perspektywizm" są negatywnym odpowiednikiem czy też zwierciadlanym odbiciem oświeceniowego projektu etyki uniwersalnej, i dzielą z nim podstawowe zaślepienie: nieumiejętność rozpoznania gatunku racjonalności przysługującego tradycjom.[23] Obie klasy doktryn sprowadzają wszystkie bez wyjątku kultury czy tradycje do tworów całkowicie statycznych i, by tak to ująć, jednego rzędu – tj. pozostających w jednej płaszczyźnie, ponad ograniczenia której wznieść się można jedynie wysiłkiem nie tylko zawieszenia własnej tożsamości kulturowej, ale i zakwestionowania potrzeby jakiegokolwiek tego rodzaju określenia. Jest to wszakże ujęcie błędne – powiada MacIntyre – jako że przynajmniej niektóre z rzeczywiście istniejących tradycji zdolne są do rozwoju i wzrostu, przekraczania swoich ograniczeń i stopniowej, choć nigdy nieukończonej uniwersalizacji.

21 Wyd. pol.: A. MacIntyre, *Czyja sprawiedliwość? Jaka racjonalność?*, tłum. zbiorowe, red. A. Chmielewski, Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, Warszawa 2007.

22 Wyd. pol.: A. MacIntyre, *Dziedzictwo cnoty. Studium z teorii moralności*, tłum. A. Chmielewski, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1996.

23 A. MacIntyre, *Czyja sprawiedliwość…*, s. 476.

Lokujący się ponad poziomem kulturowych uwarunkowań punkt widzenia jest zaś nie tyle gwarantem upragnionego obiektywizmu, ile formą deprywacji i wyobcowania, durkheimowską *anomie*.[24]

VII

Inspiracja macintyre'owska pozwala nam zakwestionować – przynajmniej roboczo – wizję historii muzyki jako archipelagu statycznych, osobno stojących tradycji muzycznych, których wytwory wyjęte z „macierzystego środowiska" tracą cały sens. Cała sprawa zasadza się na tym, pod jakim kątem skłonni jesteśmy patrzeć na historię muzyki. Nic nie stoi na przeszkodzie, by wychodząc od cech „powierzchniowych" – takich, jak preferencje brzmieniowe, instrumentacja, praktyki wykonawcze czy wreszcie całokształt tego, co nazywamy stylem muzycznym, pojętym jako wspólny „język" epoki – zdefiniować muzykę renesansu, baroku, klasycyzmu wiedeńskiego czy wczesnego romantyzmu jako takie właśnie, wyraźnie od siebie odgraniczone i wzajemnie nieprzekładalne „obszary kulturowe" – zwłaszcza, gdy dodamy tu również charakterystyczny dla każdej z tych epok kontekst kulturowy i właściwe im doktryny estetyczne. Nietrudno nawet odeprzeć zarzut, iż założona metodologia rzutuje na obraz badanego materiału w tym sensie, że celowo ignoruje się tutaj znaczenie okresów i stylów przejściowych, wykazując na czysto muzycznym gruncie, iż wymienione języki muzyczne rzeczywiście dysponują bogactwem znaczeń, pełnią i uniwersalnością, a przy tym indywidualnością, do jakich daleko tym poprzednim. Problem tkwi raczej w tym, iż wnikając głębiej w opisywany repertuar nie da się przeoczyć przekraczających granice epok związków, powinowactw, nawiązań i kontynuacji, wywołujących nieuniknione skojarzenia raczej z żywotnymi i rozrastającymi się „tradycjami dociekań moralnych" MacIntyre'a niż z antropologicznie pojętymi „kulturowymi monadami". Bach doprowadza do rozkwitu i pełni możliwości tkwiące w wywodzącej się z renesansu sztuce kontrapunktycznej w czasie, gdy oficjalna kultura muzyczna odwróciła się już do niej plecami. Choć stojące u podstaw krystalizującego się na gruncie owych przemian stylu postulaty wyrazistej artykulacji jednostek formy i totalnej symetrii jednoznacznie i bez reszty zrywają ze stylem baroku, najwybitniejsi przedstawiciele nowej epoki – Mozart i Beethoven – do końca życia studiują dostępne im utwory lipskiego kantora. Pierwszej fazy romantyzmu nie sposób z kolei zrozumieć inaczej niż jako nawiązania do idei organicznej, ewolucyjnej formy bachowskiej – wbrew klasycznej architektonice – choć zarazem jest ona próbą kontynuacji (choć często nieudaną) potężnego gestu Beethovena. Rzecz zdaje się tu sprowadzać do pytania, czego szukamy: głębokiej myśli kompozytorskiej czy „wspólnego mianownika" stylu epoki?

Można oczywiście powiedzieć, iż rzecz rozchodzi się tu o głębokie preferencje, dla których trudno znaleźć uzasadnienie. Zależności przyjmują postać kołową: trudno powiedzieć, czy to zwrot ku rekonstrukcji szeroko

24 *Ibidem*, s. 493.

rozumianego kontekstu historycznego zaowocował ujęciem podkreślającym stylistyczną – a więc powierzchniową – tożsamość utworu, gubiąc przy tym świadomość głębokiej ciągłości muzyki europejskiej, czy też odwrotnie, to historystycznie nastawiony „duch czasu", skłaniający do uznania bezpośredniej więzi tradycji za zerwaną i spoglądania na poszczególne epoki z antropologicznego dystansu, skłonił muzyków do zajęcia się raczej wiernością stylistyczną niż głębokim, indywidualnym sensem utworów. Ostatecznie jednak chodzi tu o wybór pomiędzy utrzymaniem estetycznego charakteru muzyki a traktowaniem jej jako fenomenu kulturowego (w wąskim, redukcyjnym sensie terminu), stąd zaś trudno mówić o symetrii stanowisk: żywy i dostatecznie wnikliwy zarazem kontakt z muzyką zawsze owocować będzie spojrzeniem, dla którego styl – nie tracąc pozycji nieredukowalnego momentu dzieła – pozostanie jedynie częściowym jego określeniem, nieobejmującym sobą całej jego zawartości i pozostawiającym miejsce na głębokie, przekraczające granice stylów związki.

Kwestia natury owych związków nie może tu być, z oczywistych względów, rozważona *in extenso*, wskazać wszakże wypada przynajmniej dwa podstawowe i istotnie różne obszary, które, ujmując rzecz najprościej, określić można jako uczucie i myśl. Kto w początkach organowej fantazji g-moll Jana Sebastiana Bacha, uwertury do Don Giovanniego Mozarta i I koncertu fortepianowego Brahmsa skłonny jest raczej tropić specyfikę odmiennych stylów historycznych niż dostrzec bliskie identyczności pokrewieństwo potężnego, lecz stężałego w poczuciu nieodwołalnego tragizmu gestu – ten niewiele rozumie z muzyki europejskiej. O ile wszakże ową wspólnotę uczuciowych składników muzyki próbować można ująć, po myśli „muzycznego konserwatyzmu" Dahlhausa, na kształt głębokich niezmienników muzyki, o tyle jedność muzycznej myśli – wyrażająca się w pierwszym rzędzie w muzycznej konstrukcji – jest przede wszystkim ciągłością rozwoju i zmiany. Muzyczne wynalazki – takie, jak sama idea wielogłosowości, imitacja, muzyczna logika techniki ritornellowej czy wyraziście wyartykułowana architektonika klasycznej formy sonatowej – pojmować trzeba jako rewolucje, zmieniające samą naturę przestrzeni czy też „wymiarów", w których urzeczywistniała się muzyczna konstrukcja. Próba utrzymania i tutaj idei „muzycznych indeterminant" cofnąć musiałaby się aż do nagiego faktu stojącej za tymi formami myśli kompozytorskiej (podobne zresztą ujęcie nie jest bynajmniej pozbawione podstaw), trudno wszakże przeoczyć, jak jednoznacznie koresponduje ów intelektualny aspekt muzyki europejskiej ze szkicowaną przez MacIntyre'a historią „tradycji dociekań moralnych". Co najmniej od czasu Bacha myśl kompozytorska – bo takiego właśnie terminu wypada tu użyć – rozwija się nie inaczej niż inne dziedziny myśli ludzkiej: formułowane są nowe idee, stawiane są problemy i proponowane ich rozwiązania, oddziaływanie zaś najsilniejszych umysłów i rozwój zapoczątkowanych przez nich idei śledzić można na przestrzeni wieków. Przyjęcie takiej wizji pozwala oddać sprawiedliwość bardziej złożonym momentom owej historii, jak chociażby przełomowi stylistycznemu początku drugiej połowy XVIII wieku: całkowite odrzucenie estetyki barokowej zaowocowało wtedy jednoznacznym zerwaniem ciągłości tradycji i narodzinami nowego, istotnie odrębnego stylu klasycznego, który jednakże

niemal od razu po pełnym wykrystalizowaniu się nowej estetyki podjął na własnym gruncie próbę realnej konfrontacji ze spuścizną J. S. Bacha, po przejściu zaś w romantyzm próbę jego pełnej – choć twórczej rzecz jasna – asymilacji. Co istotne, spojrzenie takie pozwala nam porzucić wizję historii muzyki – czy w ogóle sztuki – jako gry anonimowych sił, ustanawiających granice stylów i epok jako ostateczne i nieprzeniknione horyzonty myśli twórczej, na rzecz historii jako – w pierwszym rzędzie, nie przeczymy tu bowiem istnieniu także innych czynników i uwarunkowań – ciągu dających się prześledzić i zrozumieć przemian, będących skutkami świadomej pracy największych muzycznych umysłów kolejnych epok.

VIII

Zaufanie, jakie pokłada MacIntyre w (przynajmniej potencjalnej) żywotności i zdolności do rozrostu tradycji pozwala także zreinterpretować opisywane już przemiany kultury muzycznej XX wieku, wraz z samą ideą historycznej rekonstrukcji. W momencie, gdy nie więzi nas już pojęcie spetryfikowanej, „monadycznej" tradycji, i, wzorem MacIntyre'a, rozróżniamy „wyobcowującą" uniwersalizację, dokonującą się przez zerwanie ze swoją kulturową identyfikacją, ze stopniowym poszerzaniem horyzontów partykularnej tradycji na drodze autentycznej konfrontacji z impulsami płynącymi z zewnątrz, ów charakterystyczny dla ruchu „autentycznego wykonawstwa" zwrot ku wierności materialnym i kulturowym aspektom wykonawstwa danej epoki nie musi być już interpretowany jako nieodwołalne zerwanie nici istniejącej tradycji, wiedzione utopijną nadzieją na przywrócenie do życia dawno zamilkłych praktyk muzycznych. Równie dobrze uznać można, iż był to kolejny moment, gdy tradycja muzyki europejskiej dokonała istotnej automodyfikacji, wykraczając poza dotychczas nieprzekraczalny horyzont stylistycznego partykularyzmu – nie przez jego arbitralne opuszczenie, lecz poprzez konfrontację z dopuszczonymi z zewnątrz inspiracjami. W istocie jest to najtrafniejszy opis tego co rzeczywiście się wydarzyło: postulat wykonawstwa opartego jedynie na zapisie nutowym i danych historycznych, wzdragający się zaś przed skorzystaniem z własnej, rzekomo „postromantycznej" wrażliwości szybko okazał swą jałowość, zmuszając wykonawców do zajęcia bardziej elastycznego stanowiska. Powstałe w efekcie owych przemian nowe „wcielenia" dawnych stylów uznać należałoby za ich hermeneutyczne „odczytania", stapiające to, co wiemy o dawnym wykonawstwie z bagażem XX-wiecznej wrażliwości muzycznej, ukształtowanej przecież nie tylko na Monteverdim i Bachu, ale i na Chopinie, Wagnerze, Debussym i Strawińskim.

Przedstawiony tu punkt widzenia nie implikuje oczywiście zamknięcia oczu na wspomniane już pytanie o koszt owego przedsięwzięcia – to jest o to, czy uwaga poświęcona przez wykonawców czy odbiorców stylistycznej wierności nie zostaje tym samym odebrana estetycznemu (jakkolwiek by je rozumieć) znaczeniu dzieła. Ważne jednak, iż z perspektywy MacIntyre'a pytanie to stawiamy z w e w n ą t r z tradycji, która ów poszerzony, ponadstylistyczny punkt widzenia

skutecznie przyswoiła, stąd jakiekolwiek, choćby częściowe zweryfikowanie go możliwe jest jedynie na drodze kształtującej dalszy jej rozwój praktyki.

IX

Ze zdefiniowanej powyżej, zainspirowanej myślą MacIntyre'a perspektywy warto spojrzeć na jeden jeszcze poruszony już problem. Jak już wspomniałem, koncepcja „rekonstrukcji historycznej" sięgała i sięga często głębiej niż samej tylko płaszczyzny materialnych aspektów wykonania i technik wykonawczych, postulując uwzględnienie także płaszczyzny kulturowego „umocowania" muzyki charakterystycznego dla danej epoki, to jest jej uwikłań funkcjonalnych i powszechnie przyjętych przekonań o istocie i znaczeniu muzyki – czy to w postaci świadomie wyznawanych doktryn estetycznych, czy to podówczas nieuświadomionych, lecz z perspektywy czasu dających się zdefiniować intelektualnych horyzontów epoki. Dotykamy tu koncepcji tak kluczowych jak wykrystalizowane ostatecznie około roku 1800 pojęcie dzieła muzycznego czy też XIX-wieczna idea muzyki absolutnej. Ze stanowiska – nazwijmy je umownie – „antropologizującego" obie te koncepcje zaliczyć trzeba do dziedziny kulturowych partykularyzmów, narzucanie zaś ich muzyce wcześniejszej podejrzewać można o istotne zniekształcanie jej obrazu. Znamienna dla owego punktu widzenia jest praca Lydii Goehr *Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*: autorka bada historię pojęcia „dzieła muzycznego" przywołując przede wszystkim praktyki kulturowe związane z funkcjonowaniem muzyki w epokach przedklasycznych, w drugim rzędzie zaś przyjmowane podówczas doktryny estetyczne i teorio-muzyczne, nie biorąc natomiast pod uwagę wewnętrznych przemian samej muzyki; innymi słowy, nie przyjmując do wiadomości, iż – na przykład – to, jaką koncepcję muzyki urzeczywistniał w swojej twórczości J. S. Bach, może mieć znacznie większe znaczenie dla omawianego problemu niż warunki zewnętrzne, w jakich przyszło mu działać jako kompozytorowi i wykonawcy.[25]

Kilkakrotnie już dotykana kwestia romantycznej reinterpretacji muzyki Bacha jest zresztą na tyle dla omawianej problematyki znamienna, iż warto w tym miejscu rozpatrzyć ją oddzielnie. Niemal wszystkie utwory lipskiego kantora powstawały w sytuacji całkowitego uwikłania w spełniane funkcje – głównie religijne – nie tylko w aspekcie zewnętrznym, ale i wewnętrznym, tj. kompozytorskim: decydujący był tu „retoryczny" impuls stworzenia muzyki przemawiającej, wywołującej w słuchaczu określony odzew emocjonalny czy wręcz – jak czasem chcieliby niektórzy interpretatorzy – odmalowującej określone obrazy. Zarazem wszakże Bach płaszczyznę ową istotnie przekracza, otwierając swoimi dziełami nieznane dotychczas horyzonty doskonałości kontrapunktycznej, organicznej spójności formy i muzycznej logiki, które dla jego współczesnych okazały się ostatecznie niezrozumiałe.[26] Nawet z czysto historycznego punktu widzenia

25 L. Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works. An Essay in Philosophy of Music*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1992, s. 120-147.

26 Z najnowszych ujęć szczególnie istotna jest praca L. Dreyfusa, *Bach and the Patterns of Inventions*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., London 2004.

fascynujące jest patrzeć, jak z często wyświechtanych liczmanów rzemieślniczej „retoryki muzycznej" barokowych Niemiec tworzy Bach za każdym niemal razem dzieła unikalne, niedające się zaszeregować jako egzemplifikacje formalnego czy gatunkowego szablonu – ani też same użyć w roli takiego wzorca. Po okresie niemal powszechnego zapomnienia w drugiej połowie XVIII wieku utwory Bacha, ponownie odkryte przez pierwsze pokolenie romantyków, stały się nie tylko inspiracją, ale faktycznie wzorcem tego, czym miała być prawdziwie autonomiczna „muzyka absolutna". „Dopiero dzięki muzyce Bacha myśl romantyczna znalazła dla siebie adekwatny przedmiot, który zarys idei wypełnił jakby od środka".[27] To, co w utworach lipskiego kantora atakowane było przez współczesnych jako nienaturalne, mechaniczne i ciemne, dla romantyków jawiło się jako manifestacja kluczowych kategorii „poetyczności" i „wzniosłości".[28] Jeśli zgodzić się na proponowany przeze mnie punkt widzenia, pytanie o to, na ile owa romantyczna interpretacja Bacha była nadinterpretacją, postawione być może w sensowny sposób jedynie z pełną świadomością tego, iż stawiamy je z wewnątrz tradycji, która swoje kluczowe kategorie wypracowała w ścisłym związku z ową właśnie romantyczną recepcją bachowskiej myśli kompozytorskiej, odczytanej być może jednostronnie, lecz na pewno nie błędnie. „Konstruktywny" historycyzm MacIntyre'a, dla którego nieusuwalne uwikłanie w historię ludzkich form myślenia nie jest równoznaczne z niemożnością racjonalnego przekraczania horyzontów danej epoki czy też tradycji, zajęcie zaś ponadhistorycznego punktu widzenia postrzegane jest jako postulat utopijny i wiodący na manowce, stawia nas w obliczu faktów dokonanych. Rzecz nie w tym tylko, iż bachowskie *ouevre* istnieje dla nas (jako zjawisko estetyczne) jedynie w postaci przekazu, który dotarł do nas za pośrednictwem kultury muzycznej XIX wieku, ale – co znacznie istotniejsze – iż poprzez tę właśnie linię recepcji płyną żywotne soki bachowskiej myśli kompozytorskiej, zasilające w mniejszym lub większym stopniu całą właściwie późniejszą tradycję muzyczną. Fakt, iż próba rozplątywania zawiłości tego splotu idąc wstecz jest niepotrzebna i niemożliwa, nie przekreśla sensowności dalszych reinterpretacji i korekt naszego rozumienia muzyki Bacha – nie wspominając o tych, które dokonane już zostały w obrębie szeroko rozumianego nurtu HIP – jeśli tylko akceptują one swój rzeczywisty, umocowany w żywej tradycji punkt wyjścia.

Uogólniając powyższe w kontekście rozważanego bezpośrednio przedtem problemu, powiedzieć należałoby co następuje. Niewątpliwie, wychodząc z pozycji zwolenników „głębokich" rekonstrukcji historycznych postulować można wyrwanie całości przedklasycznego repertuaru z obcych im kategorii „muzycznego muzeum", nietrudno też powołać się tutaj na teorie w rodzaju „końca sztuki" A. Danto, głoszące, iż nie sposób już dzisiaj utrzymać pojęcia sztuki jako ostro odgraniczonej od reszty rzeczywistości dziedziny tego, co estetyczne – teorie w oczywisty sposób współbrzmiące z twierdzeniami Lindy Goehr, sprowadzającymi kluczową kategorię „dzieła muzycznego" do przemijalnego fenomenu historycznego. Można też jednak – i jest to stanowisko, jak sadzę,

27 C. Dahlhaus, *O genezie romantycznej interpretacji Bacha*, w: *Idea muzyki absolutnej i inne studia*, tłum. A. Buchner, PWM, Kraków 1988, s. 169.

28 Por. *ibidem*, s. 185-186.

lepiej uzasadnione – idąc za rozwijaną dotychczas inspiracją macintyre'owską zrezygnować zarówno z „antropologizującego" szeregowania kolejnych epok jako odrębnych, zasadniczo nieporównywalnych czy wręcz izolowanych (przynajmniej metodologicznie) obszarów kulturowych, jak i z samych prób stawiania się w pozycji, która pozwala na tego rodzaju panoramiczne spojrzenie, zamiast tego zaś zaakceptować nasze miejsce w e w n ą t r z zróżnicowanej, lecz zasadniczo ciągłej tradycji muzyki europejskiej. Hipoteza zaś, jaka z tego punktu widzenia narzuca się niemalże sama, jest o tyle naturalna dla żywej praktyki muzycznej, o ile kłopotliwa dla niejednego zapewne muzykologa, filozofa czy estetyka. Podobnie jak w odmalowywanej przez MacIntyre'a wizji dziejów etyki niektóre z tradycji okazują się żywotniejsze i trwalsze od innych, a także bardziej uzdolnione do poszerzania horyzontów i konfrontacji z obcymi ideami, tak i w historii muzyki romantyzm wydawać się może czymś więcej niż tylko jedną spośród wielu równorzędnych epok – czasem szczególnym, gdy zarówno teorie estetyczne, jak i szeroko rozpowszechnione przekonania dotyczące sztuki dźwięków spotkały się wreszcie z tym, czym muzyka była już w rzeczywistej praktyce kompozytorskiej od co najmniej wieku, a czego zalążki daje się śledzić daleko wstecz, aż po schyłek średniowiecza. Jeśli wolno podeprzeć się tu heglowską frazą – choćby w roli metafory – muzyka przekracza w wieku XIX próg samowiedzy, tak iż poczesne miejsce, jakie zajmuje ona odtąd w obrębie kultury europejskiej, pozostaje w nierozerwalnym związku z wykrystalizowanymi wtedy, choć rodzącymi się w praktyce muzycznej poprzednich epok koncepcjami estetycznymi.

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Jak starałem się pokazać, przyjęcie nośnych założeń historyzmu MacIntyre'a pozwala przekroczyć podstawowy dylemat, przed jakim stawia nas pytanie o muzyczny historyzm – skąd zaczerpnąć możemy pewność, iż muzyczny „aparat odbiorczy" człowieka XX czy XXI wieku pozostaje w jakimkolwiek sensownym związku z utworami minionych wieków?

W pełni wykorzystać tę inspirację, to – po pierwsze – rozpoznać, w jakim stopniu centralne idee romantycznej estetyki muzycznej nadal współtworzą same podstawy dzisiejszych praktyk muzycznych; po drugie – dostrzec, iż prawomocną konsekwencją rozpoznania historycznej przygodności owych idei jest nie tyle ich zakwestionowanie, ile uznanie naszego własnego uwikłania w historię, nieodłączną bowiem częścią owego historycznego uposażenia jest także nasza, tak a nie inaczej ukształtowana wrażliwość muzyczna; po trzecie wreszcie – zrozumieć, iż oznacza to nie tyle nieprzezwyciężalne ograniczenie horyzontu poznawczego, ile raczej – przeciwnie – zajęcie jedynego dostępnego stanowiska, z którego wytwory naszej kultury mogą przedstawiać dla nas jakiekolwiek znaczenie.

Wydawać się może, iż takie przełamanie historystycznego impasu bliskie jest nieco kantowskiej konstatacji, głoszącej iż to, co poprzez historyczny dystans staje się dla nas niedostępne, z samej definicji nie mogłoby stać się dla nas estetycznie

znaczącym, jako że sama idea estetyczności należy do naszego historyczno-kulturowego uposażenia, czy też – po kantowsku – jest historycznie ukształtowaną formą kategorialnego kształtowania rzeczywistości. Rzeczywiste pokrewieństwo proponowanego ujęcia z tego typu kantyzmem polega na przekonaniu, iż całość istotnej dla nas rzeczywistości znajduje się „po naszej stronie" owej nieprzekraczalnej granicy: świat nieuwikłanych w historię rzeczy-samych-w-sobie nie jest naszym światem. Inspirowany MacIntyre'em estetyczny historyzm wnosi wszakże w tak sformułowane stanowisko konsekwentne rozróżnienie pomiędzy jałową pogonią za „czysto estetyczną" *ding an sich* a poszukiwaniem – czy też, precyzyjniej, kształtowaniem – płaszczyzny racjonalnego porozumienia między historycznym, określającym nas „dzisiaj", a uobecniającą się w dziełach sztuki i przekazach przeszłością. Z tej zaś perspektywy odpowiednikiem kantowskiego „błędu kategorialnego" obarczona jest próba osądzania romantycznej idei absolutnego, autonomicznego i ponadczasowego piękna na abstrakcyjnie skonstruowanej płaszczyźnie „ponadhistorycznej" – jako historycznego partykularyzmu o uniwersalistycznych pretensjach – nie zaś sama ta idea, o ile tylko ujmiemy ją jako wyrastający ze środowiska określonych praktyk i przekonań projekt, którego uniwersalność nie jest zakładana z góry, lecz rodzi się stopniowo w konfrontacji z impulsami w postaci wytworów obcych (zarówno czasowo, jak i przestrzennie) tradycji. Nie istnieją zewnętrzne kryteria, które pozwoliłyby ocenić prawomocność tego procesu, jeśli wszakże rację ma MacIntyre, wystarczającym dowodem na racjonalność danej tradycji jest jej zdolność do realnego zmierzenia się z tym, co przychodzi z zewnątrz, także wtedy, gdy wymaga to zakwestionowania i przeformułowania własnych założeń.

Dokonania ruchu HIP, otwierającego się na dotąd zaniedbywany element historyczno-stylistycznej tożsamości dawnego repertuaru, a zarazem przejmującego od wieku XIX żywą tradycję rozumienia muzycznej struktury i emocji, zdają się najlepszym potwierdzeniem tezy o możliwości racjonalnych poszukiwań podejmowanych wewnątrz określonej tradycji. Paradoksalny przy tym wydaje się fakt, iż na płaszczyźnie ideowej tenże sam ruch przyczynił się do powstania koncepcji tak sprzecznych z duchem macintyre'owskiego historyzmu jak idei uprzedmiotawiającej przeszłość „historycznej rekonstrukcji" i quasi-antropologicznego zainteresowania twórczością minionych epok.

ISSN 1230-0330

Art Is not a Commodity

An Interview with Mirosław Jasiński, Director of the City Gallery in Wrocław, by Ewa D. Bogusz-Boltuc

Ewa D. Bogusz-Boltuc – *Now, you are a Director of the City Gallery in Wrocław, but you've been a diplomat and a film maker. You have a degree in art history and in Polish studies. The City Gallery alone and in cooperation with other art venues has hosted dynamic, diverse and influential exhibitions, such as "The Breughel Family Exhibition: Masterpieces of Flemish Painting" and "Correspondage", a visual correspondence between one of the most prominent artists of the 20th century, Jiři Kolář and a young Parisian, Béatrice Bizot. So, let me start with a personal question - how important is art in your own private life?*

Mirosław Jasiński – To reply, half-jokingly, in the tradition of the Old Testament – and what role can art play in the private life of a man who for the past year or so has engaged with it for 12-15 hours on daily basis?

Incidentally we are preparing an exhibition of five artists, which we have playfully named "Five Musketeers." As it well known, the literary musketeers served the Queen – in Polish (and Latin) art is feminine; that is quite unique. In some sense art is a possessive, demanding and ruthless queen. Her Majesty's service requires dedication and responsibility. The aforementioned exhibition is meant to showcase five artists who pledged their life to art, for whom being an artist is no longer a mere job. What I try to say is that it is close to heart to treat one's work as service rather than occupation.

Of course we live in times where it is common to divide life into professional and private, work and rest, or more precisely, work and rest through entertainment. In such divisions shrinks the space for art as one of the cultural fundaments, which shapes the role models both for a public and private man. The erosion of such approach naturally progressed since XIX Century only to undergo a radical collapse during the I World War. Just as in case of a scholar – truth, or a judge – justice, so for the people dealing in arts (not just artists) it should be difficult to separate private sphere from professional or public. Of course it does not always work this way.

EDBB – *In one of your interviews you've boldly stated that art is not a commodity. However, it seems that artworks are collected for aesthetic and intellectual*

pleasure as well as for prestige and investment. So, according to you, what is art for?

MJ – In my opinion, nowadays the understanding of art's essence was undermined as a result of various complex processes. In this regard I'm an essentialist. Obviously the different aspects of art, or, actually, of its presence in society gained and lost in significance. Yet it seems that the foundations have not changed since the times of the Chauvet cave, the oldest known manifestation of art and artistic creation. As H.-G. Gadamer once wrote "it seems instead to belong to the experience of art that the work of art always has its own present". In contrary to the prevalent up to now yet bankrupting before our own eyes conviction – I believe in the longevity of old triad of beauty, truth and goodness. Foreign to me is both the contraposition of the "living beauty" of mass culture against the "beauty salons" of high art (R. Shusterman) and the post-modern deconstruction of meaning.

When I was studying art history (which was a long time ago) I was taught that in our field, besides the vast knowledge, extremely important is the intuition of an art historian. This exudes a kind of reassuring humility towards an object or research material, i.e. artistic output and its creations. To answer the question more literally, I would say that essentially art is neither a source of aesthetic or intellectual pleasure (in the hedonistic approach) nor a source of prestige or an investment. Of course it could be that as well. Yet at its very foundation it is definitely something more. Sticking to the area of arts based on artefacts (as that is the one I am talking about), it could be said that naturally artworks essentially serve the communication of intricate details of human experience by the means of calculated artificality to heighten an aesthetic and emotional reaction (after Edward Wilson). But I would highlight this existential, not hedonistic, aspect of art's impact.

EDBB – *In your Gallery, you exhibit artworks from the past and present. Works by Picasso, Goya and contemporary Polish artists like Henryk Musiałowicz and Julia Curyło have found their way to your parlor. How do you choose artists and works for exhibitions?*

MJ – From history of art we know that the so-called Great stylistic epochs during which various movements, aspects, mixtures of the old and the new exist so all that which researchers later describe as, for example, Roman style, renaissance, mannerism, baroque, etc. have their organic model of growth, maturation and dying out. For some time now I had this poignant feeling of living at the edge of such two epochs. Naturally it is difficult for us to go beyond our times, nor does that happen in a revolutionary manner, although in arts precisely the role of geniuses and extraordinary artists is the key. Before our very own eyes the artistic potential of modernist epoch has been exhausted. Without a doubt we live in times of conceptual confusion. Hence the bi-directionality of our explorations resulting from doubly optimistic view on the world and the history of art – the faith in its continuity and its indispensability in keeping our humanity, and on the other side the belief in the ability to at least vaguely determine the

direction that the future art will be heading. I don't believe that all artists are right. From its history we know that art is pitiless, both for those who too easily succumb to temporary fads often from mundane reasons and those who, committed to the forms and formulas they have created, did not notice that "the world has changed."

Contrary to what might be the dominating attitude I do not think that all the manifestations of the so called ephemeral art have future (this sounds rather banal). I do not know whether such form of art presentation like gallery will survive (after all it is a relatively recent phenomenon). If it is to survive however, there does not seem to be any other option but to return to the artefact – the fundaments of plastic arts. I do not deny various artistic activities like video, performance, intervention etc. the right to exist. But their place is outside of art galleries, if only because of their temporality. Artefactuality, that is the fact that artworks carry, besides everything else, a record of this particular form, of grappling with matter, that they have a dual spiritually-material ontological structure constitutes for us, as the Gallery, the backbone of our program.

The standard to which we try to hold on to in the times of artistic, and perhaps first and foremost conceptual and terminological confusion.

Naturally there remains a problem of trivial art, of art treated as commodity. It is interesting enough that up to this day what I see as the milestones of development for XX Century art (but who still seem present in some way) namely Marcel Duchamp, Andy Warhol and Joseph Kosuth – negated in the field of art the rightfulness of one of the elements of the aforementioned triad – respectively Truth, Goodness and Beauty.

But what I think today is most important is the process of trivializing arts – turning it into consumerist goods, "positional good" or productions of Damien Hirst. Rightfully so in any case.

I get the impression however that something important is happening. Signals coming from the field of arts, of getting tired of emptiness and gibberish are, it appears, foreshadowing some huge, dare I say tectonic changes. Concerning, in my opinion, other spheres of social life as well. Incidentally this is depicted in a wonderful, fully of irony yet incredibly keen manner by Julia Curyło, a painter who is only 28 years old. I feel that her works are a portent of times to come and a new point of view. Additionally approached in a way that is fearless of the established opinions.

In case of art, its touchstone could be the emanating from or felt in the viewed work "unity of silent knowledge of mind and body" mentioned by Richard Sennnet.

Absence of any of these elements renders the given work dubious in terms of its qualities. Although this does not mean that it automatically becomes rubbish. It could remain a work of art, although a less successful one, if it will not situate itself in the category of consumables like plastic spoons, cinema tickets, plastic bag or toothpicks, the items with which we, as humans, interact in a different manner.

EDBB – *It seems that dematerialization of contemporary art lets curators to reshape their role within the artworld. In the old days curators adhered to artifacts and/or art works. They created narratives and contextualized pieces as these objects allowed to. Now, curators appear to be equally involved in art creation as artists themselves. How could you evaluate this trend?*

MJ – I think this will change. As some food for thought (I really enjoy those kind of coincidences) I will mention that the year 1975 is viewed as the cutoff date between modernism and post-modernism. In 1973, at the conference of International Astronomical Union in Cracow, Brandon Carter proclaimed his famous lecture, which de facto concluded the modernist, neopositivist epoch in cosmology, opening the gates to anthropic, spiritually post-modern visions about the nature of universe. Although they greatly contributed to the developments of physics, it seems that for the past few years we have been observing their steady decline. The technological development and the research at CERN research have been gradually bringing empirical observation back. In the meantime, that is between 1971 (when US terminated the international convertibility of dollar to gold) and 1978 (an amendment to the IMF's Article of Agreement – resignation from gold parity) international economy (and especially the Western one) started to be dominated by the post-modern (detached from the so-called real economy) derivatives and virtual currency.

Nowadays we are witness to mental changes that will lead to money being once again anchored in the economy, or rather in the production (see the EU program of reindustrialisation). How does this relate to art? It seems to me that the artistic equivalent of these tendencies is the restoration of artefact's position in the art system. But how exactly it is difficult to say. We are facing a looming tendency without the knowledge of its final shape. This is actually applicable both to economy and physics. In case of finding out a formula for the quantum theory of gravity we will likely face completely new questions about the physical structure of the universe.

As usual, even if indirectly, art will situate itself in those new contexts. This applies to the curators as well.

As we know, art criticism is not a science but practice. Moreover it is practice rooted in what K. Popper called the second and third world, which means the spheres that evade falsification principle particular to natural sciences. Furthermore, what makes for the special role of art is the fact that we are dealing with artefacts, with things that exist physically and whose significant rationale for existence exists beyond physicality. In my opinion in the end result, both the process of evaluative differentiation of works and its effect cannot be fully rationalized.

As in any other practice, what counts is the theoretical knowledge, experience, intuition, sensitivity, sometimes the precognitive preferences (of which we need to be wary), taste, and many other, non-artistic variables.

In case of gallery exhibitions, there is also the spatial variable and its requirements.

EDBB – *What makes a good exhibition, besides, of course, that we need good art works?*

MJ – Basically the last sentence from the previous paragraph partially answers this question. But I would add three more things.

A prosaic one – financial means and two more complex – will and ability to sense ideas, thoughts and narratives that are interesting to the audience, especially when it involves people at various level of competence. And secondly, receptiveness and ability to take risks connected to placing under public scrutiny the phenomena, characters and works that go beyond the scope of existing frames and habits.

EDBB – *There are no universally accepted rules or common agreement as to what makes art works good or excellent. How you distinguish between "culture and trash"?*

MJ – How to distinguish art from rubbish, non-art? I would admit that for me the most convincing (at least nowadays) is the twofold model for assessing works of art. Actually the precursor and pioneer of this approach was the eminent Polish phenomenologist Roman Ingarden, and after him Stanisław Ossowski. Currently in a modern, enriched by the Anglo-Saxon tradition, form it is Czech aesthetician Tomas Kulka. In fact his book "Art and kitsch" is the first publication in the series of Library of City Gallery in Wrocław. Following Ingarden, Kulka distinguishes between artistic and aesthetic values. Examining the phenomenon of kitsch as a kind of parasite on the aesthetic dimension of an artwork, situating itself outside of art, Kulka paradoxically discovers a mirror brother of kitsch – conceptualism, something that de facto parasitising on the artistic values also places itself outside of art. While in case of kitsch it is difficult to talk about the artistic qualities, for conceptualism there is no aesthetic aspect of an artwork. That is very amusing.

EDBB – *You rely on the work and authority of Ingarden, Ossowski and Kulka. All three of these theories are widely questioned and have been proven to be highly controversial. Moreover, you seem to refer to two different dichotomies: the art/non-art dichotomy and the good art/bad art dichotomy. So let me rephrase my question. Relying on your experience as an art historian and a gallery director, could you give us a sort of guidance how to distinguish between good pieces, mediocre works and bad art?*

MJ – Obviously differentiation between art and non-art is of primary importance when differentiating between a masterpiece, an average piece and a weak one. Generally, I deem as pertaining to arts that, which can be evaluated aesthetically and artistically (let me stress 'and', not either). Naturally both types of evaluation only make sense as intersubjective processes. Both beauty and the strength of artistic expression are subject to evaluation, which has sense only when its intersubjective verification is possible. This obviously is relevant to art in general. The other matter is the division of art into disciplines. There

is a lot of talk about interdisciplinarity and I do not hold anything against correspondence or synergy in art. Sometimes an auditory experience (for example an organ concerto) reinforces the strength of our visual experiences (when viewing a church interior). But it is a different thing altogether when crossing the boundaries entices a blurring of evaluative criteria which is something that, for example, I experienced a number of times watching, as a practising documentary film-maker, the video installations which struck one with their ineptitude once the assessment criteria of film technique were applied. I think that keeping the boundaries (although we should not be strict) between various disciplines has its reason and serves the purpose in keeping the competences of both artists and audience.

Obviously civilizational changes and new technologies bring new challenges. New art disciplines emerge, which gradually develop their own criteria, possess their own history, requirements and institutional background. This is what happened to photography or film and this is likely to happen to the new media as well. What irritates me is the inadequate demands of some of those new phenomena which purport to be a part of an art disciple while in fact representing a disjoint set.

I'm thinking here about performance, video art and video installations. In the first case fascinating is the inversely proportional development of performance in relation to that, which used to be called open theatre. Video art, if it does not want to be a discipline sui generis, seems more akin to film than to the so called Fine Arts. Almost fifty years long invasion of terms from the field of anthropology, sociology and politics into the discourse about art has in my opinion resulted in two negative phenomena. It legitimized the inclusion of non-artistic phenomena (like interventions) into art. On the other hand art, which always existed in a context, under pressure and sometimes in dependence on the three major powers – Religion, Science and Politics – it nonetheless was also a representative of something different altogether, something that exists both in an individual human being as well as in the lives of communities, something that escaped the pervasive tendencies on the side of those three giants. I get the impression that the manner of discourse and the set of terms that were imposed have over those past fifty years pushed art into the custody of Politics (understood very generally, not just as an institution of power). Due to the lack of time, I did not even address the issue of economization. I feel putting those things in order is just as important as the criteria for evaluation of art, if not more.

EDBB – *Taking into consideration prominent controversies around many contemporary exhibitions, I wonder how you see the relation between art and ethics, between aesthetic and moral. Does art have to be ethical or it is immune from ethical constraints?*

MJ – So I will arbitrarily examine these oppositions in the "old-fashioned" style. I think anyway that this kind of juggling hurt all four terms, starting with

aesthetics (with its various institutional, relational, etc. theories) and finishing with art and finally morality.

First one might ask whether it is possible and if so, how would art look in a society completely devoid of morality? A clue of sorts is provided by the old Roman saying: "inter arma, silent Musae". The times of war, ravages, slaughter and pillaging of course does not help arts, although there are many works celebrating those slaughters, ravages and pillaging (such as Trajan's column, battle scenes). War is probably the worst phenomenon that human collectives manage to create. But if we ignore the actual state of affairs, it is rarely connected to complete anomie. Despite all of that it abounds in examples of dedication, heroism and sacrifice. I am reminded at that moment of the famous in the 1960s book by the prominent ethnographer and anthropologists Turnbull - "The Mountain People" - a terrifying examination of a society that has fallen into a state of almost complete anomie (note bene in his spectacle, Peter Brook used the Ik people as a metaphor for our civilization). In the Ik society almost all the higher needs, together with family and parental ties, compassion, love etc. have disappeared. What fascinated me and made me wonder, were the two fragments: a description of how the members of now completely disintegrated and devoid of fundamental bonds, society had a custom of sitting every evening in the kitchen, each separately, in isolation, without any contact though sitting next to each other, on the side and silently contemplating the wide mountain range. They (the Ik) exuded an unspecified metaphysical longing. The other description concerns the Ik observed by Turnbull, who in their collapsed, non-cooperative world were able to minimal cooperation when combing and doing hair (they were holding mirrors to each other). It is as if the needs of looking aesthetically pleasing were more primary than the family ties. Another thing is that the last of the Mohicans of artistic sense (who anyway have died out very quickly) were, amongst other Ik who fought for very existence and plunged further towards anomie, arousing not only curiosity but also puzzlement because of their purposeless, impractical and nonsensical (they were decorating the jars they moulded) activities. In that regard I see art as closely connected to morality. At the existentially elemental level.

In the second take, I feel that the most moral society does not guarantee the creation of good art, nor it is the case that there is no excellent (great?) art serving evil and amoral goals. It does exist. Nonetheless the question remains about its timelessness and universality.

Some of these works still astonish, which I think could be explained due the special role that eyesight plays in our perception. It is much easier for us to be fascinated by the horror of a viewed scene, e.g. a burning apartment, than to listen to the screams of burning victims. The aesthetic and artistic sense tells us that the famous Bolshevik poster from the Revolution "Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge", a masterpiece of avant-garde, is a great work. And yet it is a call to slaughter. It would be difficult to find amongst the old masters an example of such activism. It is a different matter though that very often morality is confused with social mores. There are great masters like Caravaggio

who were at odds with both of these, and others like e.g. Da Vinci, whose life is an example of respecting both one and the other. As per usual, in case of practical mind the establishing of strict norms and their enforcement could lead to a misfortune (e.g. wasting of God-given talent). Anyway, we are talking about the old Faustian dilemma, described in more detail by T. Mann. Despite many doubts, after the experience of communism, I agree with him after all. In some way the myth of Faust is a negative, mirror image of the myth of Prometheus. It might be an exaggeration but I would say that in reaction to the Promethean ambitions of modernism, the Faustian threads shine through the post-modernism. Nonetheless, despite the appearances, the situation of European culture nowadays and in the times of Thomas Mann (1947 AD) in terms of the state of foundations is similar. What we, the City Gallery and Thomas Mann, share in common is hope. In what way? A peculiar manner. In a catalogue for the exhibition "Derealism" inaugurating the new programme of the City Gallery, my essay, which was broadly outlining our point of view, concluded with the following words: *In Hesiod's "Theogony", Zeus, to take revenge on Prometheus, orders creation of Pandora, who, upon opening her box, unleashes evil and misery on the world. It is interesting that the creators of Pandora are Hephaestus (technology), Hermes (trade), Athena (knowledge) and Aphrodite (inspiring lust). Once all the disasters have spread around after opening of the box, Pandora managed to close the box. There is only Hope left at the bottom*.

Contributors

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