

ESPEES

The Slovak Journal of Aesthetics

Aesthetic Crossroads 3

Vol. 10, No 1
June 2021

Reproduction:
János Fajó
Diagonálna symetria, 1968–1991
Ernest Zmeták Art Gallery
Source: Webumenia.sk

Editor-in-Chief

Adrián Kvokačka (University of Presov, Slovakia)

Editorial Board

Aurosa Alison (Politecnico di Milano, Italy) | Andrea Baldini (Nanjing University, China) | Piroška Balogh (Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary) | Matilde Carrasco Barranco (University of Murcia, Spain) | Monika Bokinić (University of Gdansk, Poland) | Gerald Cipriani (National University of Ireland Galway, Ireland) | Elisabetta Di Stefano (Università degli Studi di Palermo, Italy) | Roman Dykast (Czech Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic) | Jale Adile Erzen (Middle East Technical University, Turkey) | Lisa Giombini (Roma Tre University, Italy) | Arto Haapala (University of Helsinki, Finland) | Slávka Kopčáková (University of Presov, Slovakia) | James Kirwan (Kansai University, Japan) | Haewan Lee (Seoul National University, Republic of Korea) | Sanna Lehtinen (Aalto University, Finland) | Irina Mitrofanovna Lisovets (Ural Federal University, Russian Federation) | Jacob Lund (Aarhus University, Denmark) | Lukáš Makky (University of Presov, Slovakia) | Jana Migašová (University of Presov, Slovakia) | Ancuta Mortu (University of Bucharest - New Europe College, Romania) | Peter Milne (Seoul National University, Republic of Korea) | Joosik Min (Yeungnam University, Republic of Korea) | Boris Viktorovich Orlov (Ural Federal University, Russian Federation) | Max Rynänen (Aalto University, Finland) | Mateusz Salwa (University of Warsaw, Poland) | Miloš Ševčík (Charles University, Czech Republic) | Petra Šobánková (Palacky University, Czech Republic) | Miodrag Šuvaković (University Singidunum, Serbia) | Małgorzata Szyszkowska (University of Warsaw, Poland) | Polona Tratnik (Alma Mater Europaea, Slovenia) | Krystyna Wilkoszewska (Jagiellonian University, Poland)

Advisory Board

Renáta Beličová (Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia) | Markus Cslovjecsek (University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland) | Tomáš Hlobil (Charles University, Czech Republic) | Zdenka Kalnická (University of Ostrava, Czech Republic) | Christoph Khittl (University of Music and Performing Arts, Austria) | Peter Michalovič (Comenius University, Slovakia) | Piotr Przybysz (University of Gdańsk, Poland) | Artem Radeev (Saint Petersburg State University, Russian Federation) | Zoltán Somhegyi (Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary, Hungary) | Jana Sošková (University of Presov, Slovakia)

Editors

Jana Migašová (University of Presov, Slovakia) | Lukáš Makky (University of Presov, Slovakia)

International Editors

Lisa Giombini (Roma Tre University, Italy) | Ancuta Mortu (University of Bucharest - New Europe College, Romania)

Faculty of Arts, University of Presov, Slovakia & Society for Aesthetics in Slovakia.

© 2021

ISSN 1339 - 1119

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	4
SYMPOSIUM	
Aesthetics in Hungary: Traditions and Perspectives	7
Piroska Balogh – Botond Csuka	
Kafka and Buber. Testimony and Impossibility	12
András Czeglédi	
Giorgio Agamben on Aesthetics and Criticism	22
Veronika Darida	
Essay on the Concept of Art and Reality	32
Zoltán Gyenge	
The Program of Cultural Refinement in 19th-Century Hungary: the Example of Count Széchenyi and Baron Kemény	42
Ferenc Hörcher	
Remarks upon the Aesthetics of the Night Sky	51
Endre Szécsényi	
Patterns of Musical Time Experience Before and After Romanticism	64
Bálint Veres	
SHORT ESSAYS AND DISCUSSION PIECES	
Mental Files and the Theory of Fiction: A Reply to Zoltán Vecsey	79
Eleonora Orlando	
INTERVIEW	
Art and Aesthetics in Human Life: An Interview with Jana Sošková	90
Lenka Bandurová	
TRANSLATIONS	
The Ugliness of Banal Truths	97
Jana Sošková	
Neuroscience and Imagination: the Relevance of Susanne Langer's Work to Psychoanalytic Theory (SK)	111
Margaret M. Browning	
BOOK REVIEWS	
Current Issues of 20th- and 21st-Century Musical Aesthetics (SK)	135
Lukáš Makky	
New Textbook within Compendium Aestheticae's Edition in Prešov (SK)	139
Slávka Kopčáková	

Editorial

Dear readers,

As I write this editorial, our life is gradually getting back on track. The pandemic caught us by surprise showing the fragility of our most entrenched beliefs and convictions, but also taught us new ways of living, communicating, and networking.

Within the world of academia, this year has been marked by increasing online collaboration among scholars both on a national and on an international scale. In a period of physical and social isolation, we have learned how important it is to build platforms for dialogue and exchange among different intellectual cultures, sensibilities, and traditions. As editors of this journal, we have tried to seize the best out of the global situation, strengthening our cooperation partnerships and working to improve the scientific relevance of the contents we publish. To this purpose, one of the things we did in the past months was welcoming Dr. Ancuta Mortu, a long-time collaborator and member of the editorial board, as a new International Editor of the journal.

The present issue is also a celebratory one. It marks the anniversary of ESPES, which completes with this issue its first decade of existence. Throughout the past ten years, the journal has undergone many changes in both its form and content. While I am happy to report that ESPES has started to acquire a more consistent format and a more stable international readership, our editorial mission will always be to strive for the journal's continual development and growth.

This anniversary coincides with another festive event. Professor Jana Sošková, the founding Editor-in-chief of this journal and long-time Full Professor of Aesthetics at Prešov University, has recently celebrated her 70th jubilee. To honour this occasion, this issue of ESPES features an interview with Professor Sošková as well as the English translation of one of her numerous works, *The Ugliness of Banal Truths*, published in Slovak in 2003. After almost twenty years since the original release of this paper, I am convinced that Sošková's considerations on the ugliness of banality still retain all their relevance. Now, in translation, they may give a wider circle of readers an insight into her way of thinking and inspire new reflections on the relationship between art, banality, and the notion of truth.

This issue also includes the thematic symposium 'Aesthetics in Hungary' edited by Piroska Balogh and Botond Csuka. Our hope is that the papers included in this symposium will provide readers with

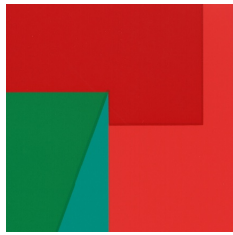
an interesting glimpse into one crossroads of contemporary aesthetics on which much remains to be discovered.

Finally, since its inception, one of the main aims of this journal has been to encourage the development of a scientific-philosophical terminology in Slovak. To this extent, I am pleased to inform you that this issue comprises the first Slovak translation of Margaret Browning's *Neuroscience and imagination: the relevance of Susanne Langer's work to psychoanalytic theory*, initially published in 'The Psychoanalytic Quarterly' in 2006.

In conclusion, since a journal is worthless without an audience, let me express again my gratitude to all of you for your continued support.

I wish you a nice summer and a pleasant reading!

Adrián Kvokačka



AESTHETICS IN
HUNGARY. TRADITIONS
AND PERSPECTIVES

Aesthetics in Hungary: Traditions and Perspectives

Piroska Balogh – Botond Csuka

The paper is meant to introduce a symposium on aesthetics in Hungary today. Through a brief survey of the Hungarian aesthetic tradition, which goes back to the eclectic “university aesthetics” of the late 18th century and produced a number of prominent figures such as Georg Lukács and his disciples in the “Budapest School” in the 20th century, the paper seeks to point out some key characteristics of this tradition and to reflect on the intellectual landscape of contemporary aesthetics in Hungary, diversified by many fields of study, methods and subdisciplines. | Keywords: *Hungarian Aesthetic Tradition, History of Aesthetics, Georg Lukács, Budapest School, Contemporary Aesthetics*

It is highly improbable that a brief collection of essays like the one presented here could make justice to the richness of the ongoing research in any discipline in a country at a given time. This might be especially true of present-day aesthetics in Hungary, where the various discussions are nourished by the long aesthetic tradition in Hungary – a tradition marked characteristically by transdisciplinary communication that interlocks aesthetics with various disciplines within and outside of philosophy. The present of Hungarian aesthetics as well as the novel perspectives opening into its future are shaped by this rich tradition of aesthetic communication.

The Hungarian aesthetic tradition is now nearly 250 years old. A Chair of Aesthetics was founded by Maria Theresia in 1774 at the Royal Hungarian University in Nagyszombat (now Trnava, Slovakia). The department moved to Pest (now Budapest) in 1784, together with the university, and over the next centuries, it became an important centre for aesthetic research in Hungary. We believe that surveying the development of aesthetics as an academic discipline in Hungary can reveal several characteristics of the Hungarian aesthetic tradition, which might offer a framework for the following essays as well.

In the second half of the 18th century, many departments of aesthetics were established at universities throughout the Habsburg Empire (Prague, Vienna,

Lemberg) due to the requirements of official education policy. In several cases, German visiting professors were appointed as instructors, most of whom used German aesthetic manuals as textbooks. At the department of aesthetics in Hungary, however, most of the professors were Hungarian and the German manuals were only recommended readings. The first Hungarian professor of aesthetics, György Alajos (Georg Aloys) Szerdahely (1740–1808) believed it was important that he used his own four-volume aesthetic system, one that followed, although eclectically, the Baumgartian conception of the new discipline. Other long-term professors, such as Lajos János (Johann Ludwig) Schedius (1768–1847) and Ágost (August) Greguss (1825–1882), also summarized their eclectic aesthetic views in their own monographs.

The broad, eclectic nature of these aesthetic theories, which reflects the rambunctious circulation of knowledge in 18th- and 19th-century “university aesthetics”, to use Tomáš Hlobil’s term, meant that from the very beginning, the Hungarian aesthetic tradition envisioned aesthetics not only as philosophy of art, but as epistemology and philosophical anthropology as well. Aesthetics was treated by Hungarian professors of aesthetics as a universal science that deals with the whole sphere of humanity – in theory as well as in practice; insofar aesthetics was expected to function as a vehicle of cultural and social improvement.

The transdisciplinary character of early Hungarian aesthetics can be also attributed to the fact that as an academic discipline, aesthetics was closely intertwined with classical philology and literature for a long time. In the first 100 years, these three disciplines were taught at the same university department, by the same professors, following the same curriculum. Accordingly, revisiting the classical tradition of European art and literature has been (and still is) significant in the Hungarian aesthetic tradition. On the other hand, it was aesthetics that helped create the framework for developing the historical concept and theoretical foundations of Hungarian literature. By the end of the 19th century, however, literary theory and literary history gained the upper hand over aesthetics. It is suggestive that after the death of Ágost Greguss in 1882 until the end of World War II when György (Georg) Lukács (1885–1971) was appointed professor of aesthetics at the University of Budapest, professors of aesthetics (e.g. Zsolt Beöthy) were better known for their work on literary history and criticism than philosophical aesthetics.

Another notable feature of the beginning of the Hungarian aesthetic tradition is that, given that the official language of higher education in Hungary was Latin until 1844, the first defining volumes of Hungarian aesthetics were written in Latin. The use of the Hungarian language only became commonplace in the second half of the 19th century. This special sociolinguistic situation led to two consequences. On the one hand, the works of Hungarian aesthetics professors became known on an international horizon: they were reviewed by European journals, referenced by authors such as Johann Georg Sulzer or, later, Benedetto Croce. On the other hand, aesthetics became an outsider or at least marginalized among the vernacular Hungarian cultural narratives that became increasingly dominant during the

19th century. This peculiar situation is clearly illustrated by the fact that the Hungarian translations of the first Latin-Hungarian aesthetic monographs, after a long time of neglect, have only recently been published.

The long-time neglect of its historical roots in university aesthetics, albeit sad, is hardly surprising: the Hungarian aesthetic tradition was given impetus by a tide of original thinkers during the twentieth century that overshadowed its beginnings. During the intellectually, artistically and politically turbulent years of the 1910s, the *Sonntagskreis* held its regular Sunday meetings in Budapest, bringing together minds that later shaped the intellectual course of the century. Among the members were the soon-to-be Marxist philosopher and critic Georg Lukács, art historian and sociologist Arnold Hauser (1892–1978), and sociologist Karl Mannheim (1893–1947), as well as internationally lesser known figures such as the poet and critic Béla Balázs (1884–1949), art historian Lajos Fülep (1885–1970), writer and artist Anna Lesznai (1885–1966), and author Emma Ritoók (1868–1945). The ‘symphilosophie’ of the *Sonntagskreis* may be seen as the symbolic starting point of the close-knit 20th-century relationship between Hungarian aesthetics and other disciplines such as literary criticism, art history and, most notably, sociology.

Indeed, even though the earlier comprehensive Hungarian aesthetic tradition with an anthropological horizon, partly due to positivism, disintegrated into an ensemble of separate disciplines during the first half of the 20th century, aesthetics kept its close links with other fields of study. Lukács’s influential oeuvre, which is an excellent example of this fusion, played a crucial role in this. The scope of Lukács’s aesthetic thought is astounding – even the range of topics and methodology of his early works. The ‘young Lukács’ combines philosophical aesthetics (*Heidelberger Kunstphilosophie und Ästhetik*, 1912–1918 [1975]), with the sociology of art (*The Sociology of Modern Drama*, 1911), philosophy of history (*The Theory of the Novel*, 1916) or elaborates it through literary criticism and essays (*Soul and Form*, 1910). It was this broad scope of Lukács’s early work, perhaps even more so than his subsequent grandiose Marxist aesthetics, that had the most profound impact on his disciples in the ‘Budapest School’ and Hungarian aesthetics in the second half of the 20th century. The aesthetic thought of Ágnes Heller (1929–2019), Ferenc Fehér (1933–1994), György Márkus (1934–2016), Mihály Vajda (1935–) or Sándor Radnóti (1946–), albeit in different ways, all preserve close links to the history of philosophy, art and literature, as well as to ethics and social philosophy.

Nevertheless, the fact that Lukács’s philosophy played a decisive role in the development of 20th-century Hungarian aesthetics and that Lukács’s own philosophical Marxism had a tumultuous relationship with the official Party ideology had significant consequences on the tradition and its position in the Hungarian intellectual landscape: aesthetics rose to prominence during the socialist era. On the one hand, this meant that state ideologues followed and tried to control the development in the field of aesthetics, including the work on the departments of aesthetics that were re-launched first in Budapest (1973), then in other prestigious university cities such as Pécs (1983). On the

other hand, however, aesthetics also meant an alternative, comparatively spacious intellectual space where renitent minds could feel at home: aesthetics departments, for instance, became the home of some of Lukács's earlier disciples in the 70s and 80s, who brought with them the unbridled spirit of their former teacher.

The aesthetic thought of the Budapest School also shows a kind of self-reflexivity – questions about the birth and concept of aesthetics and about the culture that produced it: that perplexing thing called Western modernity. There are many others who are driven by this self-reflexive interest: during the 1990s and 2000s, there emerged a vibrant community of intellectual historians in Hungary who seek to reconstruct the emergence of modern aesthetics in early modern Europe. Interestingly, this historical and self-reflexive orientation of the Hungarian aesthetic tradition goes back a long way: in his monograph of 1828, Johann Ludwig Schelius devoted a special chapter to the history and the development of aesthetics, organically linking it to his own theorems. In the context of Hungarian university aesthetics, this self-reflexivity characterized both the scholarship and teaching of aesthetics: professors always emphasized the concept of aesthetics, its possible definition, previous interpretations, and the importance of traditions in their lectures.

During the 1980s, when the hegemony of Marxist aesthetics began to crumble, new horizons opened up: the Hungarian aesthetic tradition was given new momentum by phenomenology, hermeneutics, post-structuralism and deconstruction. It is probably safe to say that while aesthetics in Hungary preserved its broad scope, historical interest, and self-reflexivity, it was phenomenology and hermeneutics that have shaped the bulk of novel aesthetic research in Hungary for the last couple of decades. Due to the strenuous work of professors such as Béla Bacsó (1952–) at ELTE, many of the crucial texts of hermeneutical and phenomenological aesthetics have been translated and published, their ideas widely disseminated and discussed, making this line of thought an integral part of Hungarian aesthetic communication by the dawn of the 21st century. In comparison, analytic aesthetics and philosophy of art are not in the forefront, although there seems to be a growing interest in the more recent developments in Anglo-American aesthetics research such as everyday aesthetics, environmental aesthetics or somaesthetics, while there is also thriving transdisciplinary research on, for example, posthumanism and the aesthetics of design.

The list, needless to say, could go on: all around the globe, aesthetics seems to be expanding to hitherto unknown territories, which inevitably gives novel incentives to aesthetic research in Hungary as well. The following essays, though they cannot give a representative sample, show some of the novel developments that are shaping the Hungarian aesthetic tradition today.

Piroska Balogh
Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Humanities
Institute of Hungarian Literature and Cultural Studies
H-1088 Budapest, Múzeum blvd. 4/A.
balogh.piroska@btk.elte.hu

Botond Csuka
University of Physical Education
Department of Social Sciences
H-1123 Budapest, Alkotás út 44.
csukabotond@gmail.com

Kafka and Buber

Testimony and Impossibility

András Czeglédi

“I also talked to Buber yesterday; as a person he is lively and simple and remarkable, and seems to have nothing to do with the lukewarm things he has written” – wrote Franz Kafka to his fiancée Felice Bauer in the early 1913. What is the meaning of this harsh, yet respectful portraiture of Buber? Was it a casual ironic remark – or was it rather the way Kafka really thought of Martin Buber? And to what extent was Kafka important for Buber? How can we understand the collaboration between the writer and philosopher? Close reading, contextualization and *Begegnungseignis* (encounter as fundamental event). | Keywords: *Kafka, Buber, Uchronic Thinking, Remembering the Future, Encounter, Testimony*

Confession and lies are one and the same. In order to confess, one tells lies. One cannot express what one is, for that is precisely what one is; one can communicate only what one is not, that is, lies. Only in the chorus there may be a certain truth.

(Kafka, 1954, p. 308; the translation is slightly revised)

1.

Is it possible, when it comes to confessing and witnessing in an abstract sense, to avoid adopting a personal perspective? It sure is – but it would be in vain. Due to inquiries into uchronia, uchronic thinking, and uchronic intellectual history, I have not been able to find interest in almost anything else recently, but in the crossroads, or clashes of testimony, possibility and impossibility. The missed, or never expected opportunities, the cross-referential relationship between opportunity and the actual state of affairs, and the all-encompassing, reflective account of these, the testimony, and its possible nature.

First, let me provide an account of two instances of my personal involvement with testimony and impossibility. I'll begin with the earliest one: a few years ago, having finished my dissertation, I realized in awe that it should have been written a hundred years earlier, by the young – and therefore, still 'good' –

Lukács, and, naturally, in German. However, this would have been impossible for many reasons. The central aim of the dissertation was to examine the extent to which Dostoevsky, especially his novel *Demons*, had influenced Nietzsche in his later years, most of all his specific concept of nihilism – and, as it later turned out, it did, to a great extent. The complex, comparative study of this relationship was very much in the air towards the end of the *Belle Époque*, and we can mention here the works of Brandes (1889) or those of Shestov (1969), but it became clear to me while reading Lukács's *Theory of the Novel* and especially his *Notes on Dostoevsky* that this interrelationship could have been the great theme of Lukács in his planned book on Dostoevsky. He should have 'only' elaborated on his idea that Nietzsche, so to speak, is a mere Hebbelian-Hegelian sidetrack in a larger European context, but that the supremacy of the anthropological atheism of Kirillov-Nietzsche in opposition to the merely cosmological European atheism is obvious. (Lukács, 2009, p. 271 ff.)¹ However, producing a 'serious' full-fledged text on this subject would have been impossible at the time for a multiplicity of reasons, especially for philological ones: the contemporary philological inquiries into Nietzsche and Dostoevsky were quite far from being ideal. However, after a century – and, to deploy a postmodern cliché, with the end of great theories and narratives – such an endeavour might turn into a philological summary and/or mere infotainment.

The other personal aspect that is important to mention is very closely related to the present paper itself, since the original version of this text, which I have modified to some extent, was supposed to be presented at the Péter Losonczi Memorial Conference in the summer of 2016. (Losonczi, who has passed away prematurely, was a representative of the contemporary middle generation of Hungarian philosophers.) Eventually, the paper's fate took an unusual turn, since I was not able to attend the conference, resulting in one less personal testimony, but the original paper was still presented by helpful intermediaries.²

It is certainly true that we may often have a sense of 'belated testimony' in our strained efforts to make sense of the world, that is, those of us who are concerned with the humanities. It often seems that we are at the wrong place at the wrong time – and that we are lacking the essential skill that is ever so important in love and politics: good timing. I am not certain that Minerva's owl departs *only* at dusk, but she sure comes late. Albeit, I do not say this in an apprehensive, or fatalist tone, since I do believe, to paraphrase William James, that if man did not spend his whole life on a quest for the superfluous, he would never have established himself as inexpugnably as he has done in the necessary (James, 1897, p. 131).

Approaching our present subjects, Kafka and Buber, I wish to examine thoroughly the passage I quoted at the beginning of my paper that simultaneously illuminates the subject of testimony and impossibility, or, more precisely, the impossibility of true testimony. I found this passage a relatively

¹ No full English translation of the Notes has yet been published.

² Also published here: Pannonhalmi Szemle, 2016 XXIV/3., 66–72. See Czeglédi (2016).

long time ago – and Péter Losonczi has played more than a small part in this discovery. Let me recount this story, before we proceed to somehow make sense of the sentence itself.

Péter, who was well-known for his capabilities as an organizer and as someone who prepares and mediates important encounters between people, organized a big conference on Buber, back in the mid-1990s. The reason for the symposium, taking place at the Merlin Theater of Budapest, was the recent release of Buber's *Tales of the Hasidim* in Hungarian, published by Atlantisz Press. After all these years, I have sharp recollections of three presenters – György Tatár, our highly influential professor, and two mutual friends of ours: Zoltán Hidas and Ágoston Schmelowszky. It was clear from the beginning that Tatár would talk about Gershom Scholem's criticism of Buber, while Hidas would draw parallels between the philosophical insights of Kierkegaard and Buber. Schmelowszky may have talked about the Hasidic tales themselves, edited by Buber, but I can no longer remember his exact topic.

What I do remember vividly, however, is my embarrassment: Péter has, once again, come up with a great idea, and – to be honest, a very atypical behaviour among scholars of humanities coming up with great ideas – he was able to substantiate it. We were attending this imposing conference, and many of my peers had already found a way to contribute to it. I, on the other hand, was quite unsure about how to satisfyingly fit in, given my philosophical interests at the time, which included, among other things, research on Nietzsche. A thin link to *Zarathustra* would have been obvious: Eastern Europe being a place of mystical interconnectedness, it was Buber who almost first translated the first part of Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* into Polish – but somehow, I was not keen on the idea.

Therefore, I was trying to do something completely different, only it was not clear to me what this different topic should be. Then, I somehow opened a collection of Kafka's diaries and letters. All of a sudden, the following passage caught my eye:

I also talked to Buber yesterday; as a person he is lively and simple and remarkable, and seems to have nothing to do with the lukewarm things he has written. (Kafka, 1973, p. 161)³

Finally, I ended up with addressing a different topic in my conference paper (Buber as an 'anarchist', the archaic actuality of his *Paths in Utopia*, and its relation to Buber's philosophy of dialogue), but Kafka's statement has been hunting me ever since.

Let us have a look at the so-called facts, of which we know since Nietzsche that they do not exist on their own, since they are themselves mere interpretations. The excerpt is from a letter, written by Kafka to his betrothed, Felice Bauer on January 19, 1913. The letter itself is only a minute part of a larger stream of letters written by Kafka to Felice, for which he had even given up keeping his diaries for almost half a year – diaries which were hitherto of utmost

³ Translation is slightly revised.

importance to him. One can even deem this to be a hiatus in this trace of the perhaps most exciting period of Kafka's whole life. Exciting, because of his incredible productivity as an author at the time: his first book titled *Contemplation* was published, *The Metamorphosis*, *The Judgement* and *Amerika/Lost in America* were written during this period, while he also wrote extensive letters.

No delight is without consequences, however.

The growing stream of letters to Felice (more than 300 in the first 11 months of their relationship) began to consume his literary capabilities, and Kafka felt that he had to choose between 'life' (as in a life shared with Felice) and 'writing'. Their first engagement in June 1914 was broken up four weeks later – Kafka had made his choice. (Wagenbach, 1996, p. 26 f.)⁴

An important thing to note here: the fact that Felice was the recipient of the letter mentioning Buber is barely negligible. It mirrors the nature of their relationship, in which Kafka took up the role of a superior educator, a role which he often played with considerable smugness. We should also consider the phenomenon which Harold Bloom calls the 'anxiety of influence': it's as if Kafka struggled to recover how Buber's texts, and especially his *Tales of Rabbi Nachman*, had fundamentally influenced his own writings, a fact that is philologically verifiable.

Anyhow, diaries were replaced by more serious writings and letters. In parallel, of course, letter writing, which never was a mere private activity for Kafka, gradually became a platform for high-level intellectual reflections. Events of Kafka's life are more easily retraceable from his letters than from the diaries, since the latter "are more like notebooks of a literary author." (Györffy, 1981, 767) Although Kafka dates the entries in his notebooks, booklets and other papers, a significant part of these later became part of the *œuvre* in their own right, since they mostly comprise short story fragments, different versions of texts later finalized, etc. - the actual diary is only an insignificant part of these writings.

The passage from Kafka quoted above has a marvellously enigmatic nature. It objectively documents a single event, the fact of his meeting and conversation with Buber on January 18. The what, the where, the excess of this dialogue remains unknown. On the other hand, there is the laconic, almost indecipherable interpretation of what has happened.

What is the real meaning of this simultaneously appreciative and even warm (since he depicts Buber as personally "lively and simple and remarkable"), yet quite ruthless (the distinction between Buber, the individual, and Buber, the author of "lukewarm things") note? What is the reason for such a judgement and attestation [allegation?] concerning Buber? Is it a momentary, ironic side note, or is it a general, decisive account of the way he thinks of Buber? And

⁴ Translation is slightly revised.

what about the other side of this narrative? What did it mean to Buber to meet Kafka?

It might be easiest to start with the latter question: Buber had always talked about Kafka with utmost reverence, considering him - unsurprisingly - as one of the most prominent intellectual figures, and it might be safe to say, as a *witnessin'* intellectual figure of his age. It should be noted that it seems as if Kafka's 'prospective' relevance, the fact that many had felt and have been recognizing ever since, that he writes about *something that is yet to come*,⁵ is less conspicuous in Buber's case. This prospective aspect of Kafka's works is relevant in the sense that in the 1960s, in the age of "realism without shores", Kafka, decades after his death, becomes one of the most authentic portraitists of social reality, the most important realist author of the era... This was the case, not only among theoreticians, but also among practicing artists. For instance, many claimed that to capture the horrors of the Holocaust, to bear testimony to this event, which is on the verge of the impossible, one must reach back to Kafka. (Joseph Losey's sadly forgotten 1976 film, *Monsieur Klein* might be a quite relevant example here, since one cannot easily decide whether he's watching a film on the Holocaust, or a Kafka-adaptation.)

To answer the first, aforementioned question regarding Kafka's attitude towards Buber - i.e. are Kafka's remarks momentary, or decisive, why does Kafka write what he writes? -, we must first clarify the extent to which Kafka was aware of Buber's intellectual background.

A practical division of Buber's intellectual life consists of three major phases (Komoróczy, 1992, 357). (1) Work on the folkloristic religion of Eastern European Jewry. (2) The translation of, and commentary on the Bible, a work which he had begun together with Rosenzweig, and finished on his own after Rosenzweig's death. (3) His work on the ethics and philosophy of dialogue. It is certain that the third phase is the best-known, since many associate Buber only with his book *I and Thou*. This magnum opus of Buber's was published merely months before Kafka's death, ten years after his letter to Felice. Of course, one may argue that the principles laid out in *I and Thou* are also present more generally throughout Buber's philosophy, but it becomes quite clear when reading Kafka's diaries, letters, and other notes that he was unconcerned with this aspect of Buber's work. Moreover, he couldn't have been aware of the Bible-translation, since it was published only after Kafka's death. Therefore, Kafka knew Buber most of all as a researcher of the Eastern, Yiddish-speaking Jewry, as the author of the *Tales of the Hasidim*.

What's more, this was the topic that affected Kafka most deeply. Similar to his

⁵ The paradox of remembering what is still to come always has, theoretically, an emancipatory aspect to it. It was inspiring to read Alpár Losoncz on the subject recently: "This is the still existent anamnestic-platonic-speculative dimension of philosophy: remembering something which we do not know, which we cannot know. This means that remembering past possibilities opens up the present, thus placing remembrance in the perspective of the future." (Losoncz, 2017, 177) This emancipatory aspect is dimly present in Kafka's case, as well - and who else could have first recognized this, but the very man associated most closely with remembering what is to come, Walter Benjamin. See also his especially magisterial conclusion of his study on Kafka, in which he analyzes *The Truth about Sancho Panza* (Benjamin, 2001, 818). It is, however, beyond any doubt that in Kafka's case, this paradox means remembering a fundamentally dark future.

friend, Max Brod, he came from a highly assimilated background; the family was made up mostly of so-called 'four-day Jews' (which means that they went to the synagogue only four times a year: on the major Jewish holidays and on Emperor Franz Joseph's birthday), who were not familiar with Hebrew liturgical texts, and wished to conform in every way to their non-Jewish surroundings. This must have been especially difficult in Prague, where the Kafka family resided, since their complex identity matrix was further complicated by tensions between Czech and German identities. In his formative as well as in his mature years, Franz Kafka showed a considerable interest in his Jewish roots. The ultimate direction and meaning of this interest are, of course, highly contested in the academic literature concerned with Kafka.

However, the passionate interest itself is quite obvious. The range of subjects Kafka was interested in extends way beyond the basic issues of identity and assimilation: he was preoccupied with many things, from Galician Yiddish theatre – he has considered his friendship with the actor Yitzchak Lowy as one of the most important relationships of his life – through the Yiddish language itself to Hebrew, which he started to study at the age of 30. In this period he was also thinking a lot about traveling to Palestine – he could never have carried out a true *Aliyah*, however, since the British Mandate of Palestine was welcoming at the time only immigrants in good health condition, and – as it is well-known – Kafka was suffering from severe tuberculosis, a condition that eventually proved to be fatal.

2.

This latter event is emphasized in an uchronic essay by Iris Bruce, titled *What if Franz Kafka had immigrated to Palestine?* (Bruce, 2016) Bruce is a specialist of Kafka, who deploys an academic style of prose in this particular essay, writing in accordance with all scientific conventions, in a manner that is eerily similar to that of Borges. The detailed essay that relies heavily on actual primary and secondary sources, recognized authors and texts, is a quasi-academic biography excerpt. Its fictional author is Hugo Immerwahr: the last name is not without meaning, referring to the presumed ever-present honesty of the narrator (and possibly to the first-ever woman to receive an academic degree from a German university); the first name is also significant, which is very likely to be a reference to Hugo Bergmann, a prominent figure of modern cultural Zionism. Bergmann was a close friend of Kafka's from their high school years; his works, and subsequent *Aliyah* had a great impact on Kafka – as mentioned in Kafka's biographies, including in this fictional-uchronic one.

Moreover, Bergmann is a unique link between Buber and Kafka. He is a devoted student and follower of Buber, and while Kafka has reservations about the master, he is enthusiastic about the works of Bergmann, especially his *Jawnee und Jerusalem* – a text which exhibits considerable influence by Buber.

Buber, in some sense, is a key intellectual figure in Bruce's fiction. Although the imagined transformative event, the point of divergence, is the result of his

moving from Berlin to Palestine with his last love, Dora Diamant, it is Buber who convinces Kafka, who lives to be old, to write again – and in Hebrew. Thus, Kafka becomes the author of *The Trial* in Ivrit, receiving the Nobel Prize for literature in 1966. Nevertheless, he remains his actual self:

Kafka's alternative vision addresses the complexities and absurdities of contemporary realities beyond our own time and place. [...] His voice is both new and old. It is heard by many generations around the world and Israel, too: a modern, secular Jewish voice, questioning certainties, deconstructing truths, continually searching for alternate answers in climates of conflicts. (Bruce, 2016, 214)

3.

It is sure, after all, that it was this deep interest in his own Jewishness that led Kafka to get to know Buber, mostly recognized at the time as an authority on Hasidic legends and Jewish folklore. At this point, we must note that Buber's oeuvre has a fourth tenet, which, although closely related to the three phases I mentioned earlier, should be distinguished for heuristic reasons. This may be called (4) public life. As it is well-known, Buber was far from being a Dryasdust, he was not conducting research for its own sake, and was quite active in the public sphere. He was a proud and devoted Zionist, who saw Zionism, above all, as part of his cultural and intellectual work, and consistently opposed the simplified interpretations of it, never considering it to be a friend-and-foe equation – as many do politics since Carl Schmitt, for instance –, or an expression of statist, or anti-Arab sentiments, or what he saw as the self-deception of many Western and Central European Jews.⁶

It was the public figure and the Jewish folklorist, then, who was familiar with Kafka. In other words, he had to encounter the *dialectic* – what a pity, that this multilayered philosophical term has been so permanently discredited – that Buber's public and intellectual work was amalgamated, or to put it more bluntly, was one and the same. This provided a framework for criticism of Buber, which we can discover in Scholem's and even Rosenzweig's attitude towards him: despite all their respect and appreciation for Buber and their gratitude for all they had learned from him, they were disconcerted by the extent to which Buber shapes his historical research according to his worldview, especially when it comes to selecting, editing, and amending Hasidic texts. Naturally, the source of Kafka's dislike was not so *prima facie* philological, or academic, but it is, in fact, related to the basis of these criticisms, that of Buber's general outlook on the world.

⁶ Highlighting all this does in no way mean that I wish to soften, or equivocate over the political aspects of Buber's thought. Buber has, in many cases, deployed *völkisch* rhetorical devices that later became a shameful part of the national socialist vocabulary, such as Blut und Boden (blood and soil) – a fact highlighted in many cases nowadays by far-right websites to exonerate themselves. Even the great Franz Kafka Encyclopedia (Gray et al., 2005) mentions this strange parallel in its article on Buber, highlighting that there is an all-encompassing contextual difference. Although I will not explicate on this in the present footnote, it is important to note that there is an immensely interesting uchronic aspect to Buber's philosophy, a sort of intersection in which he is constantly searching for cross-temporal connections, to capture, and even actualize missed opportunities. This tendency is clearly present in his translations of the Tanakh, and this perspective may also highlight the countless directions towards which a romantic-mythical philosophical vocabulary may lead us.

But, what else do we know about these antagonistic feelings besides the excerpt from Kafka's letter to Felice?

Kafka heard Buber lecturing in 1910, at an event in the Jewish Council House of Prague, organized by the Bar Kochba Association. We know this from implicit sources (from Max Brod, and others), and from the fact that Kafka mentions having heard Buber speak before, in his 1913 letter. Buber appears for the first time not in Kafka's January 19th letter, but in another letter written to Felice three days earlier. From this earlier letter, we can learn what was on his agenda for that night: he writes about Buber's lecture on Jewish myths, which he claims would not be exciting enough on its own to get him out of his room, since he had heard Buber speak before, and Buber did not make a lasting impression. Kafka writes about always missing something from what Buber has to say – but, with a twist that is foreshadowing his later opinion on Buber, he clarifies that Buber has, after all, the ability for great things, and that he had found his *Chinesische Geister- und Liebesgeschichten* quite splendid. Kafka finds a reason to go out, after all, for after Buber's lecture, a public reading by Gertrude Eysoldt had taken place, which he was keen to attend.⁷

It was three days later that Kafka wrote his letter with its strange verdict on Buber to Felice. He reveals nothing about the lecture itself, only about their first meeting and actual discussion two days later. Moreover, the letter also reveals the not insignificant detail, that his first meeting in person, although did not change it completely, but to some extent modified Kafka's formerly unfavourable opinion on Buber.

This may appear as an unusual and quite rare turn of events. In most cases, this happens the other way round: someone who amazes us intellectually in his writings might turn out to be a disappointment in person. The reverse of this happened in the present case: personal contact made Buber more favourable in Kafka's eyes. (Side note: this instance always makes me remember the wise advice of Alpár Losoncz, a Hungarian philosopher from Vojvodina: in order to save ourselves from disappointment, try to avoid meeting contemporary authors and thinkers close to our heart! Although Alpár is a contemporary thinker who is close to my heart, I do try to keep his company any time I get a chance).

So, was Kafka's ambivalent impression of Buber a lasting one?

Fundamentally, yes.

⁷ See also: Kafka (1973), 157f. Sadly, we cannot devote attention to Kafka's own 'Chineseness' here, due to space limitations. It is possible that recognizing this connection can also be attributed to Benjamin (2001). For an insightful account on the subject, see Hsia (1996). The letter quoted here is, not unlike other love letters by Kafka, multilayered and highly reflected. One can observe, reading this letter, an atmosphere of lecturing in his words. At this point of the letter, when Kafka would start discussing Buber's Chinese stories, comes a minute excursion: Kafka runs out of blotting paper, and mentions that while waiting for the ink to dry on the paper, he started reading a copy of *Sentimental Education* lying around on his table. He copies a sentence in French from the book: "Elle avoua qu'elle désirait faire un tour à son bras, dans les rues" (Flaubert, 1910, 602) – here, Kafka is simultaneously courting to Felice, expressing his enthusiasm for Flaubert's linguistic genius, and returns to Buber's Chinese stories, praising them. This unintentionally serves as a great example for Kafka's famous bon mot, that no matter what he writes, it becomes literature.

In the remaining years, another significant intellectual encounter took place between them: two of Kafka's important texts, *Jackals and Arabs* and *A Report to an Academy*, were published in *Der Jude*, a journal founded by Buber. As a good friend, Max Brod recommended Kafka to Buber as a possible editor, but Kafka respectfully declined for his work-overload. A bit later, however, he sent these two texts to Buber, who was eager to receive them.⁸ Albeit this did not change the fact that in the subsequent, sporadic occasions Buber appeared in Kafka's letters and notes, he was always treated with the same, strange attitude.

The question remains: why was that?

We can hardly know for certain – the few subsequent fragments do not add much to what we already know. Academic literature on the subject usually proclaims that although Kafka was an avid follower of Jewish public life, Buber was, nevertheless, always found wanting in his eyes.⁹

This is possible.

But, to conclude with questions, isn't it possible that Kafka had problems with the sometimes overly didactic teachings of Buber, his direct testimony? Isn't this assumption supported by the fact that in the case of the aforementioned two texts Buber suggested using the parabolic subtitle of "Fable," while Kafka insisted on branding them "animal stories"? And to view all this from a reverse perspective: can a philosophy such as Buber's ever avoid being didactic? Isn't it only natural that Kafka, who burst out and wrote: "What have I in common with Jews? I have hardly anything in common with myself and should stand very quietly in a corner, content that I can breathe,"¹⁰ and who wrote *Before the Law*, this ultimate account of the final encounter and the impossibility of testimony, does have an ambivalent attitude towards Buber, the man who proclaimed: at first, there was the encounter and "All real life is encounter." (Buber, 1970, 62)?¹¹

References

Benjamin, W. (2001) 'Franz Kafka. On the Tenth Anniversary of His Death', in Bullock, M.P., Jennings, M.W. (eds.) *Selected Writings. Vol. 3, 1927-1934*. Cambridge; London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, pp. 794-818.

Bergmann, H. (1919) *Jawne und Jerusalem*. Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag.

Brandes, G. (1889) *Impressions from Russia*. Translated by S.C. Eastman. New York: Crowell.

⁸ or more on the cooperation between Kafka and Buber, see also Hanssen's study (2012), which gives a uniquely postcolonial and uchronic (a missed opportunity reemerging in studies on Kafka) account of Kafka.

⁹ A characteristic example of this comes from Hanssen: „[Kafka] was at the centre of Jewish intellectual life, Bohemian journalism, Yiddish theatre, and Zionist cinema. Prague was a hub of Jewish information and experimentation. But, generally, Kafka perceived the Zionist congresses as 'sorry affairs' and the lectures which he attended in 1915 by icons like Solokov, Ussishkin, and Ruppin as unbearably clamorous. Even the performances and texts by Buber, whom he liked on a personal level, were 'dreary' where 'something is missing'." Ibid. 193.

¹⁰ See the entry for 8 January 1914, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka, 1910-1923* (1988, p. 252).

¹¹ Translation is slightly revised.

- Bruce, I. (2016) 'What if Franz Kafka had immigrated to Palestine?', in Rosenfeld, G. (ed.) *What Ifs of Jewish History. From Abraham to Zionism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 187-214.
- Buber, M. (ed.) (1911) *Chinesische Geister- und Liebesgeschichten*. Frankfurt: Rütten & Loening.
- Buber, M. (1947) *Tales of the Hasidim*. Translated by O. Marx. New York: Schocken.
- Buber, M. (1949) *Paths in Utopia*. Translated by R.F.C. Hull. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Buber, M. (1970) *I and Thou*. Translated by W. Kaufmann. New York: Touchstone.
- Buber, M. (1974) *Tales of Rabbi Nachman*. Translated by M. Friedman. London: Souvenir Press.
- Czeglédi, A. (2016) 'A találkozás lehetősége és lehetetlensége: Buber és Kafka' [The possibility and impossibility of encounter: Buber and Kafka], *Pannonhalmi Szemle*, 2016 XXIV/3., pp. 66–72.
- Dostoevsky, F.M. (2008) *Demons*. Translated by R. Maguire. London: Penguin.
- Flaubert, G. (1910) *L'Éducation sentimentale*. Paris: Conard.
- Gray, RT. et al. (eds.) (2005) *Franz Kafka Encyclopedia*. Oxford: Greenwood Press.
- Györffy, M. (1981) 'A monologizáló Kafka' [The monologizing Kafka], in Kafka, F.: *Naplók, levelek*. [Diaries, letters.] Translated by M. Györffy et al. Budapest: Európa, pp. 763–778.
- Hannsen, J. (2012) 'Kafka and Arabs', *Critical Inquiry*, 39, pp. 167–197.
- Hsia, A. (ed.) (1996) *Kafka and China*. Bern/Berlin: Peter Lang.
- James, W. (1897) *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*. New York: Longmans, Green and Co.
- Kafka, F. (1954) *Dearest Father*. Translated by E. Kaiser, E. Wilkins. New York: Schocken.
- Kafka, F. (1973) *Letters to Felice*. Translated by J. Stern, E. Duckworth. New York: Schocken.
- Kafka, F. (1988) *The Diaries of Franz Kafka, 1910–1923*. Translated by M. Greenberg with the cooperation of Hannah Arendt. New York: Schocken.
- Kafka, F. (2009a) *Before the Law*. Translated by I. Johnston. Available at: <http://johnstoniatexts.x10host.com/kafka/beforethelawhtml.html> (Accessed: 30 May 2021)
- Kafka, F. (2009b) *Jackals and Arabs*. Translated by I. Johnston. Available at: <http://www.apolitical.info/webgame/jackals> (Accessed: 30 May 2021)
- Kafka, F. (2009c) *A Report for An Academy*. Translated by I. Johnston. Available at: <http://johnstoniatexts.x10host.com/kafka/reportforacademyhtml.html> (Accessed: 30 May 2021)
- Komoróczy, G. (1992) *Bezárkózás a nemzeti hagyományba*. [Self-Enclosing in National tradition.] Budapest: Századvég.
- Losoncz, A. (2017) 'Emlékezés a jövőre' [Remembering the Future], in Laczkó, S. (ed.) *Lábjegyzetek Platónhoz 15*. [Footnotes to Plato 15.] Szeged: Státus, pp. 159–177.
- Lukács, Gy. (2009) *A regény elmélete. Dosztojevskij-jegyzetek*. [Theory of the Novel. Notes on Dostoevsky.] Translated by M. Mesterházi, D. Tandori. Budapest: Gond-Cura.
- Shestov, L. (1969) *Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Nietzsche*. Translated by S. Roberts. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Wagenbach, K. (1996) *Kafka's Prague. A Travel Reader*. Translated by S. Whiteside. Woodstock: Overlook.

András Czeglédi
 University of Szeged
 Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
 Department of Philosophy
 6722 Szeged, Petőfi S. sgt. 30-34, Hungary
czegledi.andras@szte.hu

Giorgio Agamben on Aesthetics and Criticism

Veronika Darida

Focusing on Giorgio Agamben's early writings (*The Man without Content*, *Stanzas*, *Infancy and History*) this paper investigates the peculiar status of aesthetics that is disclosed by these texts, highlighting particularly the shift that emerges therein from aesthetic to ethical concerns. Agamben's idea of a 'destruction of aesthetics' will bring attention to the question of the destination of aesthetics. The claim that only ruins can outline the original structure of works of art, providing a possible basis for creative criticism, will also be examined in the conclusion. | Keywords: *Agamben*, *Aesthetics*, *Ethics*, *Criticism*, *Gesture*

1. Introduction: Giorgio Agamben and the Problem of Aesthetics

If one were to categorize the work of Giorgio Agamben, one of the most well-known and versatile philosophers of our time, aesthetics wouldn't probably be among the first terms that would come to one's mind. In the vast secondary body of literature devoted to Agamben, one can hardly find any books dealing with this problem (Watkin, 2010; De Bouver, 2016) However, looking at Agamben's whole oeuvre, it seems that a constant aesthetic preoccupation underlies his writings, mainly through literary, painting, and film references (Gustafsson and Gronstad, 2014). This is particularly emphasized in Agamben's later essay collections on painting (Agamben, 2019) and literature (Agamben, 2021), and also in his autobiographical works (Agamben, 2017). As I have argued elsewhere, this late creative age in Agamben's production might be called an "age of summaries" (Darida, 2017), one in which many problems of aesthetics do in fact return.

It should not be forgotten, however, that back in 1979, Agamben already devoted a long encyclopaedia article to the issue of taste, which has recently been re-published as a stand-alone book (Agamben, 2015). Thirty-six years have elapsed between the two editions (1979 to 2015), and unchanged reprinting is a sure sign of the continuity of his philosophical thinking.

In this study, I won't deal with the late writings of Agamben, but rather with his first books *The Man without Content* (Agamben, 1970 and Agamben, 1999), *Stanzas* (Agamben, 1977 and Agamben, 1993), and *Infancy and History* (Agamben, 1978 and Agamben, 2007) – to outline the internal dialogue developing between them, a dialogue that places aesthetic questions and especially the problem of the destruction of aesthetics (Attell, 2015) at the forefront. In particular, I will rely on the works written before the aforementioned study on taste to outline a recurring problem in Agamben's later writings. At the same time, I will also observe how Agamben eventually moves away from aesthetic issues and turns to ethics.

2. The Melancholic Angel of Aesthetics

In the first chapter of Agamben's first book, *The Man Without Content* (1970), entitled *The Most Uncanny Thing*, the author introduces the notion of the destruction of aesthetics. What makes such a radical gesture of destruction necessary, Agamben asks? His answer is that aesthetics has moved away from art and its original meaning. (Agamben, 1970, p.11) Specifically, aesthetics has gone farther and farther away from the subversive, dangerous nature of art, until eventually the distance has become such that loss is no longer perceptible. In the history of aesthetics, mainly starting with Kant, the artwork has been considered the object of an uninterested judgment, only to later become 'uninteresting' in itself. The aesthetic observer is considered a disinterested spectator or a 'man without content' - a definition that could also depict the status of the modern artist.

In *The Man Without Content*, Agamben relies particularly on Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals* (Agamben, 1970, p. 9) and especially on the considerations Nietzsche expresses in the third dissertation ("What do the ascetic ideals mean?"), which are worth quoting at length here:

"That is beautiful", said Kant, "which gives us pleasure *without interest*." Without interest! Compare with this definition one framed by a genuine "spectator" and artist – Stendhal, who once called the beautiful *une promesse de bonheur*. At any rate he *rejected* and repudiated the one point about the aesthetic condition which Kant had stressed: *le désintéressement*. Who is right, Kant or Stendhal? In our aestheticians never weary of asserting in Kant's favour that, under the spell of beautiful, one can never even view undraped female statues 'without interest', one may laugh a little at their expense: the experiences of *artists* on this ticklish point are more 'interesting' and Pygmalion was in any event not necessarily an 'unaesthetic man'. (Nietzsche, 1967, pp. 104-105)

According to Agamben, contrary to the shocking and disturbing experience that art provided at the beginning, something from which ancient philosophers had to protect people (think of Plato's *Republic*), over time the work of art has increasingly lost its elemental influence on the recipient. Instead of the maddening or the divine madness triggered by artworks Plato refers to in his *Ion*, today we can at most experience the madness of the artist, who drifts away from society into the realm of aesthetics. (Agamben, 1970, p. 14)

As a typical example of the insane artist, Agamben refers to Artaud and Hölderlin (Agamben, 1970, p. 15). Significantly, in his *Theater and its Double*, Artaud says: “Unlike our idea of art, which is inert and disinterested, a genuine culture conceives of art as something magical and violently egoistical, that is, self-interested.” (Artaud, 2010, p. 7) Later, at the end of his study, Artaud warns us of the fallacy of artists who “dallying with forms, instead of being like those tortured at the stake, signaling through the flames.” (Artaud, 2010, p. 8)

Hölderlin’s poetry as “the place of the revelation of truth” is also important for Agamben; not by chance he returns to Hölderlin’s late fragments and the question of his madness in his last publication (see Agamben, 2021). Heidegger, whose interpretation of Hölderlin has a decisive influence on Agamben’s approach and method of interpretation, cannot be ignored here. As a student, Agamben attended the Thor seminars, held jointly by Heidegger and René Char, dealing with poetry and existence. Agamben, however, was quite critical towards Heidegger’s reading of Hölderlin, as when saying for example that it is only through the rhythm of poetry that we can break away from time.

One of the most remarkable investigations contained in *The Man without Content*, also pursued in Agamben’s other books, is found in the last chapter of the work, entitled *The Melancholy Angel*. Here, the starting point is how the relationship with the past and tradition has changed in the last century. According to Agamben, from the end of the nineteenth century, there has been a growing tendency to question traditions and a deliberate separation from them, with the consequence that culture and cultural heritage have become inalienable, and that cultural transmission is no longer possible (Agamben, 1970, p. 158).

According to Agamben, this basic experience is accurately described by Baudelaire (Agamben, 1970, p. 160). In his short writings and prose poems, the French poet often talks about the fracture and metropolitan shock that the crowd experiences. We also owe Baudelaire a vivid description of the modern perception - just consider the *Flowers of evil* and the cycle of images about Paris. In these works, the poet appears as a witness of the collapse in a world where beauty only appears as an epiphany, a flash, or a lightning.

The forms of our relationship to the past, Agamben believes, have thus been radically changing. For a human being of our era, the two most authentic forms of this relationship have become quotations and collection. Both are, according to Agamben, basically aggressive gestures, as they signify a break from the past. This is perhaps more obvious in the case of quotations, since quotations always result from a breaking out of an original context. However, collecting objects from the past is not a humble gesture either, since the accumulation of objects also results in depriving them of their usefulness. An unnecessary collection of objects taken away from their living space is a sign of alienation from the past. We can formulate this experience as the empty experience of the present that eliminates the permeability or the gap between the past and the future, a gap which, according to Agamben, is the present. (Agamben, 1970, p. 162)

All this also has an effect on the relation we have to history, as exemplified by the writings of Walter Benjamin. Already in this book, Agamben relies heavily on Benjamin's view of time, which outlines a prophetic (eschatological) way of saving events from the passing of time. (Agamben, 1970, p. 157) This can be clearly observed by looking at Benjamin's *Thesis on the Philosophy of History*:

The chronicler, who recites events without distinguishing between major and minor ones, acts in accordance with the following truth: nothing that has ever happened should be regarded as lost for history. To be sure, only a redeemed mankind receives the fullness of its past – which is to say, only for a redeemed mankind has its past become citable in all its moments. Each moment it has lived becomes a *citation à l'ordre du jour* – and that day is Judgement Day. (Benjamin, 1967, p. 254)

Before briefly addressing this messianic view of time, which plays a central role in Agamben's interpretation of Kafka, it is also important to recall the most memorable image of Benjamin's text 'the angel of history' that can be imagined by way of Klee's painting *Angelus Novus*.

A Klee painting named 'Angelus Novus' shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress. (Ibid.)

The strength of Benjamin's interpretation is that it renders visible what is not visible in the picture. In Klee's painting, we can only see a portrait, and what causes the angel to be shocked remains hidden. However, thanks to this fascinating description, it is possible for us to visualize the debris and ruins of the past. But if we do that, our face will end up resembling that of Klee's *Angel* - horror will strike us and the portrait will become the portrait of our own face.

Agamben's study juxtaposes these two representations (Klee's painting and Benjamin's ekphrasis) with Dürer's *Melancholia*. (Agamben, 1970, p. 165) Looking at this drawing, instead of the angel of history, we find ourselves facing the angel of art (or aesthetics). This angel, the image of a woman immobile and still, is also an allegory of melancholy. To describe it, it may suffice turning to Benjamin's exceptionally beautiful text, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, where melancholy is accurately depicted. Melancholy, according to Benjamin, is characterized by a sense of steadfastness, sadness, and loyalty to the material world. At the same time, it also encloses a gesture of salvation: "Melancholy betrays the world for the sake of knowledge. But in its tenacious self-absorption it embraces dead objects in its contemplation, in order to redeem them." (Benjamin, 1990, p. 157)

Indeed, Dürer's etching is permeated with a kind of timelessness or out-of-timeness or atemporality. The still and monumental female figure, holding a pen in her hand, stares at the ruins of the past among other useless objects of knowledge – things deprived of their use – in a space that Agamben defines as the 'aesthetic space' (*terra aethetica*).

Returning to Klee's picture, Agamben also notes that Kafka's writings disclose a contrasting notion of history, one according to which, as we read in Kafka's notebooks, expulsion from Paradise is meant as eternal and irrevocable. (Agamben, 1970, p. 169)

The Expulsion from Paradise is eternal in its principal aspect: this makes it irrevocable, and our living in this world inevitable, but the eternal nature of the process has the effect that not only could we remain forever in Paradise, but that we are currently there, whether we know it or not. (Kafka, 2006, p. 65)

Kafka is thus another essential reference for Agamben in *The Man without Content* in order to describe the creative experience as a collapse (Agamben, 1970, p.172). In Kafka's perspective, the collapse is a conscious and crystalline experience and writing is a tedious job, an almost unbearable experience. Through writing, the writer constantly strives to transcend human potential, to "defeat the ultimate earthly boundary". In this way, Kafka's oeuvre constantly transcends the aesthetic sphere. Not only does it strive to eliminate all frontiers, but it also strives to burn them. This brings us back to the basic problem of Agamben's book.

The structure of this text is rendered explicit by the fact that it begins with the image of the destruction of aesthetics and ends with the image of a building in flames (Attel, 2015). The burning, however, is what makes the original plan or foundation visible. As Benjamin states in *The Origins of German Tragic Drama*, only ruins show the original structure and plan of a building. In connection with this idea, Agamben's book closes with the thesis that the perfect vision of the new is nothing more than a ruin.

3. The Criticism of Criticism

Agamben's other early work, the *Stanzas* (Agamben, 1993), brings to the fore the issue of the status of criticism. Criticism, unlike fiction, always expects some kind of result or at least a valid thesis as its own outcome. According to Agamben, in the history of philosophy, criticism was, on the one hand, a mapping and a delimitation of the boundaries of knowledge and reason (just think of Kantian criticism), showing exactly where our investigations must end if we do not want to go astray. On the other hand, especially at the Jena School and among the members of *Athanaeum*, criticism played a different role and was primarily concerned with universal poetry, including science and the arts. After the Romantic era, Agamben believes, there has been however a decline in criticism so that criticism has become increasingly irrelevant. (Agamben, 1993, XV) It seems thus legitimate to ask what a 'creative criticism' may mean. Agamben gives two quite different examples of this. (Agamben, 1993, XV) The

first concerns Félix Fénéon, whose name may be familiar to only few people today although he was one of the finest art writers of the *fin de siècle* and of the early 20th century, as well as a friend and critic of Impressionists, Divisionists, and Nabis group painters. Fénéon also had an unparalleled taste in literature, as evidenced by his texts on the poetry of Rimbaud, Laforgue, Mallarmé, Valéry, Apollinaire. Agamben, however, does not dwell on Fénéon's artistic criticism, but rather on his journalistic work: his famous three-line news stories (Fénéon, 1990), which, Agamben claims, are superb short prose poems that sometimes are able to condensate the content of an entire novel in the space of few lines, while also being rich in dramatic tension.

Another example, perhaps less surprisingly, is Walter Benjamin. Here, Agamben does not cite Benjamin's short writings, for instance the aphorisms contained in *One-way Street* or the *Passagenwerk* fragments, but *The Origins of German Tragic Drama*. Emphasizing Fénéon and Benjamin, Agamben juxtaposes shortest, ephemeral and ambitious critical forms in a way that is not unreasonable, since their distance from a traditional and conventional form of criticism makes these uncategorized writings truly inventive critiques. (Agamben, 1993, XV)

But what is the specific subject of criticism? In the Foreword to *Stanzas*, Agamben emphasizes the distinction traditionally drawn between philosophy and poetry as two completely different forms of thinking. While poetry is based on inspiration and voice, philosophy is silent; while poetry seeks to grasp its subject by giving it a beautiful form, philosophy seeks to know it. In other words, poetry grasps its subject without knowing it, while philosophy knows its subject, but cannot grasp it.

Criticism, Agamben argues, was born out of a break between philosophical and poetic thinking. Criticism thus has no object of its own, but can be regarded as an objectless science which is constantly taking over the subjects of the discipline it is examining. (Agamben, 1993, XVII)

In the same work, the author returns to the theme of melancholy, this time emphasizing its lesser-known, erotic and cruel aspects. Agamben resorts to Freud's theoretical approach to account for melancholia (Agamben, 1993, p. 19). Freud describes this subject in much detail in his study of *Mourning and Melancholia* in 1917 (Glocer Fiorini, Bokanowski and Lewkowicz, 2019). According to Freud, like mourning, melancholia is a reaction to a loss. However, while bereavement is always concrete and can be grasped, as in the case of the loss of a loved one, in melancholia this loss can only be of an ideological nature. Therefore, Freud can rightly call melancholia an "unconscious object loss." In this interpretation, melancholia is an ill state in which self-structure undergoes fundamental changes. While in mourning the outside world becomes empty and meaningless due to the lack of the loved one, in melancholia the emptying of the self takes place, a decline in self-esteem, and a great impoverishment of the self.

A new element in Freud's concept, according to Agamben, is that he presents the melancholic person not as a hidden and silent person, but rather as

a talkative one. Melancholia lacks a sense of shame toward others: this is where its heightened loquacity comes from, his “insistent communicativeness which finds satisfaction in self-exposure.” (Glocer Fiorini, Bokanowski and Lewkowicz, 2019, p. 23). There is thus some unconscious and instinctive perversion in melancholia which Agamben emphasizes. In the melancholia of love, the object-loss becomes self-loss, while hysterical identification as a state of object obsession is observed. The subject of melancholia is thus both possessed and lost, much like the Freudian fetish object.

Similarly, a fetish object appears as something both real and unreal, embodied and non-existent, claimed and denied. *The Freud; or, the Absent Object* section of *Stanzas* looks indeed at the ambivalence of the fetish subject. (Agamben, 1993, p. 31) The fetish object - which may be a part of the human body, such as a foot, but also an object, such as a shoe - simultaneously appears in its concrete, tangible reality, while a non-existent object (in Freudian interpretation, the mother’s penis) remains intangible and intact. The ambivalence of the fetish object also affects the relationship of the fetishist to it. The fetishist is like a collector: he constantly multiplies and accumulates his fetish objects. It follows that the fetish object is not something unique and indispensable, but one that can be replaced by countless other indefinite objects, since none of its ‘incarnations’ can fill the lost object’s sign.

Agamben also talks about the fetishist character of certain artists, which manifests itself in the incompleteness of their works. In light of Freud’s artistic writings, we might think for example of Leonardo’s abandoned drawings and Michelangelo’s unfinished statues, but also, following Agamben, of the fragmentary cult of pre-romantic thinkers such as the Schlegel brothers or Novalis, or the new tendency of poetry, after Mallarmé, to recognize its traces via a form of negation: the fragment.

The melancholic, the fetishist and the collector, according to Agamben, all try to grasp the unattainable object of desire. For them, the unreal, the fantasy, becomes real, it binds all their thoughts, it determines their life and artistic activities. (Agamben, 1993, p. 32)

4. The Expropriation of Experience

The notion of the expropriation of experience refers to Agamben’s next book, *Infancy and History* (Agamben, 1978), in which the destruction of experience is already a fact. The expropriation of experience means that it becomes ineffable and inexpressible.

For Agamben, the expropriation of experience of the modern human being is a common phenomenon, unlike Benjamin’s idea that it should rather be interpreted as a post-war traumatic symptom. The expropriation of modern experience, including the loss of artistic (or aesthetic) experience, is accompanied by a proliferation of banality. We seem to have more and more experiences, but in reality our world of experience is getting narrower and poorer. The rapid flow of images does not allow for a true experience of the

art. In his book, Agamben only mentions the fact that the camera is slowly taking over the role of the eye, but now, after a few decades, we see digital cameras doing this much more effectively. Today, people don't even need to visit a museum, as they can walk around a virtual museum, sitting in front of their computer screen, something that, during the pandemic era, has increasingly become part of our real-life experience.

It is important to emphasize that in *Infancy and History* Agamben is not concerned with the sensual experience of the artwork. What concerns him here is more a question of linguistic and prelinguistic experience. Already in this book there is the problem of the *Experimentum linguae*, which Agamben seeks to approach by turning to the experience of the mute words. This is why childhood or infancy (*infanzia*) is so important to him as it denotes, as etymology shows, a pre-speech state. In infancy, there is still a magic language that preserves the original secret names.

In a later study, *Magic and Happiness*, Agamben states:

The secret name is the gesture that restores the creature to the unexpressed. In the final instance, magic is not a knowledge of names but a gesture, a breaking free from the name. That is why a child is never more content than when he invents a secret language. His sadness comes less from ignorance of magic names, than from his own inability to free himself from the name that has been imposed on him [...] And justice, like magic, is nameless. Happy, and without a name, the creature knocks at the gates of the land of the magi, who speak in gesture alone. (Agamben, 2007, p. 22)

This enigmatic passage clearly shows how Agamben's interest is focused on speechless speech, gesture and expression, that is, pure sign language. It is no coincidence that one of his most cited studies, entitled *Notes on Gesture*, is attached to the end of the book *Infancy and History* (Agamben, 2007).

5. Gestures

Notes on Gesture also had a great influence on contemporary theater aesthetics, as gesture-based approaches to theater and dance have become almost paradigmatic today (Lecoq, 1987). However, as Agamben points out, it is not obvious what we mean by the word 'gesture'.

As a starting point, relating to some of his previous works, Agamben refers to the experience or loss of experience of the *fin de siècle period*. As he recalls, by the end of the 19th century, it was a common, almost symptomatic phenomenon for people to 'lose' their simplest gestures. In other words, the simplest and most common gestures, such as walking, became increasingly problematic and difficult for people to execute. As evidence, Agamben relies on studies by Gilles de la Tourettes, including clinical-psychological studies of gait, which accurately demonstrate intermittent steps, meaning the footsteps unstable and volatile (Tourette, 1986). The irregular footsteps curves recorded by de la Tourette and drawn by the patient's steps can also be regarded as a kind of cortical symptom. (Agamben, 2007, p. 150)

It is no coincidence, therefore, that new arts born at that time – first photography, then cinema and modern dance and ballet (consider for instance Duncan and Diaghilev) – deliberately used strong sign languages. The primary reason for this is that spectators looked for lost or alienated gestures in these works. What else could show the continuity of movement and the validity of an expressive gesture better than dance? At the same time, Agamben believes (Agamben, 2007, p. 152), the search for gestures defined not only art practice but also art theory, the most glorious example of which is Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas*.

This broad extension of the meaning of gesture, however, renders the concept elusive. At the end of his short study (Agamben, 2007, p. 154), Agamben provides a new definition for it: the gesture, like for instance walking, is essentially action. This implies that it is not fixable. Gesture always serves as an intermediate, mediating role: it goes beyond itself and does not involve anything definable. A gesture can thus be considered a display of mediation, but only insofar as the gesture itself is the goal of the gesture; to use a Kantian formula, gesture is a 'finality without end'.

It is not surprising, considering the criticism of language Agamben pursued in his earlier works, that what he means by gesture should not be understood as speech but rather as a silent expression. It is a gesture that *shows*, and thus a form of self-certification, which by itself, so Agamben claims, has ethical meaning (Agamben, 2019). Gesture, as stated in the final passages of the *Notes*, is not only aesthetic but also ethical in nature.

References

- Agamben, G. (1970) *L'uomo senza contenuto*. Torino: Einaudi.
- Agamben, G. (1999) *The Man Without Content*. Translated by Georgia Albert. Stanford: Stanford University Press
- Agamben, G. (1977) *Stanze. La parole e il fantasma nella cultura occidentale*. Torino: Einaudi. English translation: Agamben, G. (1993) *Stanzas. Word and Phantasm in Western Culture*. Translated by Roland L. Martiny, Minneapolis-London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Agamben, G. (1978) *Infanzia e storia. Distruzione dell'esperienza e origine della storia*. Torino: Einaudi. English translation: Agamben, G. (2007) *Infancy and History*. Translated by Liz Heron. London-New York: Verso.
- Agamben, G. (2007a) *Profanations*. Translated by J. Fort. New York: Zone Books.
- Agamben, G. (2015) *Gusto*. Macerata: Quodlibet.
- Agamben, G. (2019) *Ami Auschwitzból marad*. Translated by V. Darida. Budapest: Kijárat.
- Agamben, G. (2017) *Autoritratto nello studio*. Roma: Nottetempo.
- Agamben, G. (2019) *Studiolo*. Torino: Einaudi
- Agamben, A. (2020) *Jegyzetek a gesztusról*. Translated by V. Darida. Available at: <https://aszem.info/2020/11/giorgio-agamben-jegyzetek-a-gesztusrol/> (Accessed: 1 January 2021).
- Agamben, G. (2021) *La follia di Hölderlin. Cronaca di una vita abitante (1806-1843)*. Torino: Einaudi.
- Artaud, A. (2010) *The Theater and its Double*. Translated by V. Corti. London: Alma Classics.
- Attell, K. (2015) *Giorgio Agamben. Beyond the Threshold of Deconstruction*. New York: Fordham University Press.

- Benjamin, W. (1969) *Illuminations*. Translated by H. Zohn. New York: Schocken Books.
- Benjamin, W. (1990) *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. Translated by John Osborne. London-New York: Verso.
- Darida V. (2017) 'The Age of Summaries (Annotations to Agamben's two new books)', *Korunk XXVIII* (10), pp. 46-52.
- De Bouver, A. (2016) *Plastic Sovereignities. Giorgio Agamben and the Politics of Aesthetics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Fénéon, F. (1990) *Nouvelles en trois lignes*. Paris: Macula.
- Glocer Fiorini, F. and Bokanowski Th. and Lewkowicz, S. (2009) *On Freud's Mourning and Melancholia*. London: Karnak.
- Gustafsson, H. and Gronstad, A. (2014): *Cinema and Agamben. Ethics, biopolitics and the moving image*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Lecoq, J. (1987) *Le théâtre du geste*. Paris: Bordas
- Kafka, F. (2006) *The Zürau Aphorism*. Translated by Michael Hofman, London: Harvill Secker.
- Nietzsche, F. (1967) *Genealogy of Morals*. Translated by W. Kaufman. New York: Vintage Books.
- Tourette, G. (1886) *Études cliniques et psychologiques sur la marche*. Paris: Delahayre et Crosnier.
- Watkin, W. (2010) *The Literary Agamben: Adventures in Logopoiesis*. London: Continuum.

Veronika Darida

Department of Aesthetics, Institute for Art Theory and Media Studies, University ELTE, Budapest, Múzeum krt. 6-8., Hungary 1088

darida.veronika@btk.elte.hu

Essay on the Concept of Art and Reality

Zoltán Gyenge

Art shows something of reality as a whole, a reality that exists above or below the directly perceptible world. There is a first reality, or empirical reality, which can be mapped and captured through sense perception and is characterized by immediacy; and then there is a second or imagined reality that unfolds beyond direct empirical and experiential observation. While the animal intellect is attracted to the surface, to mere appearances, the human intellect is drawn to what lies beyond the surface. The ability to imagine is a condition of human intellect, being characterized, in Schopenhauer's terms, by a power of "seeing in things not what nature has actually formed but what she endeavored to form, yet did not bring about" (Schopenhauer, 1969, pp. 186-187). For Schopenhauer, this capacity can be fully engaged not by the "ordinary man, that manufactured article of nature" (ibid., p. 187), but by the man of genius. In contrast, John Ruskin holds that the power of art consists precisely in allowing us to regain what can be called the innocence of the eye, in other words, a kind of childlike perception which remains blind to the meaning of perceived things. (Ruskin, 2006, p. 42) This paper seeks a possible answer to the question of how art ties us to reality. | Keywords: *Philosophy of Art, German Idealism, Iconology, Interpretation of Art, 'Internal Erlebnis'*

1. Introduction

1.1. Direct and imagined reality

His contemporaries and rivals were Timanthes, Androeydes, Eupompus and Parrhasius. This last, it is recorded, entered into a competition with Zeuxis, who produced a picture of grapes so successfully represented that birds flew up to the stage-buildings; whereupon Parrhasius himself produced such a realistic picture of a curtain that Zeuxis, proud of the verdict of the birds, requested that the curtain should now be drawn and the picture displayed; and when he realized his mistake, with a modesty that did him honour he yielded up the prize, saying that whereas he had deceived birds Parrhasius had deceived him, an artist. It is said that Zeuxis also subsequently painted a Child Carrying Grapes, and when birds flew to the fruit with the same frankness as before he strode up to the picture in anger with it and said, I have painted the grapes better than the child, as if I had made a success of that as well,

the birds would inevitably have been afraid of it. (Plinius, 1949, 35.36)

This passage is about an illusionistic picture made by Zeuxis, which allures the birds because it looks so real. It illustrates the question of depiction as illusion of direct reality. The ordinary viewer might expect that visual arts represent direct reality, what is more: a more and more accurate copy of reality (it does not matter that everything that exists in nature is more 'realistic' than the content provided by a picture). Yet, according to Gadamer, both nature and art appeal to us.

Naturally the significance of art also depends on the fact that it speaks to us, that it confronts man with himself in his morally determined existence. But the products of art exist only in order to address us in this way – natural objects, however, do not exist to address us in this way. This is the significant interest of the naturally beautiful: that it is still able to present man with himself in respect to his morally determined existence. (Gadamer, 1989, p. 45)

In works of art, artistic beauty is only there to address what precisely defines the function and purpose of the works of art (Hegel calls it exploration or unveiling of truth).

Against this we must maintain that art's vocation is to unveil the *truth* in the form of sensuous artistic configuration, to set forth the reconciled opposition just mentioned, and so to have its end and aim in itself, in this very setting forth and unveiling. (Hegel, 1975, p. 55)

But natural beauty is significantly and fundamentally of another order. Natural beauty is not art's vocation, if there is any vocation at all. I am only referring to the difference between natural and artistic beauty and to the problems of mixing them, and we can think here of Kant's well-known example of imitating a nightingale's song:

And yet in this case we probably confuse our participation in the cheerfulness of a favorite little animal with the beauty of its song, for when bird song is imitated very precisely by a human being (as is sometimes done with the nightingale's warble) it strikes our ear as quite tasteless. (Kant, 1987, p. 94)

The significance of the so-called direct reality (nature) is undeniable and essential, while the higher level of reality is built upon it. At the same time, that direct reality seems to be real is a matter of common sense. External experience sees it as true. More precisely, the external experience sees this as true and does not know about higher order realities. If you have no direct experience of something, if directness is lacking, one may take it does not exist at all. Schopenhauer's introductory sentence in *The World as Will and Representation* reads as follows: "the world is my representation" (*Die Welt ist meine Vorstellung*). (Schopenhauer, 1969, p. 3) Which certainly means two things: on the one hand, all that appears to me is the world. I see the door, my boots, my dog, and much more: the world is thus because it appears so and so to me. On the other hand, everything qualifies as a world insofar as it appears to me. The first reading is intelligible to everyone: what I see, feel or experience truly exists. The second reading says that everything can exist only if it exists directly for me. Accordingly, the 'misconception' related to the

‘objectivity’ of the world can be safely discarded. The objectivity of the world means that it perdures even when I do not experience it. On the other hand, when I imagine what the world would be after my death, it is an image of my own. The deepest basis of *objectivity* is faith and certainty (with respect to the existence of the world) lays in *subjectivity*.

Let us remember that everyday thinking mistakenly relies on the material reality that appears to the senses. One example is the fact that in 1986, many people did not believe that there was radiation caused by the nuclear accident because they ‘did not feel’, ‘did not see’ the rays coming. Let us take another example of popular thinking: the profound belief in this world is expressed by the saying: what I can eat exists. Today’s materialistic based vision of the world is based on a most strong faith in matter. If we think it over, we can conclude that materialism has become a common religion today. Hegel points to this idea when he writes about the appearance (*Schein*) and deception (*Täuschung*) of this ‘bad and transitory world’:

Art liberates the true content of phenomena from the pure appearance and deception of this bad, transitory world, and gives them a higher actuality, born of the spirit. (Hegel, 1975, p. 9)

In Hegel’s view, art unveils truth and provides a higher and spiritual reality. Appearance (*Schein*) and phenomenon (*Erscheinung*) cover more precisely the immediacy of what is tangible, of what one experiences, sees, hears, touches, or, in one word, perceives. The real, the superior and spiritual reality, so the true reality is above it all; and it is not tangible, nor tactile nor perceptible. In brief: spiritual reality is the only intelligible reality. And, according to Hegel, it is conveyed through art. Ordinary thinking, of course, accepts as real whatever is perceptible through the senses. But in Hegel’s view, true reality is a spiritual reality which cannot be grasped, tasted or smelled through material senses.

For the materialist, it is difficult to understand what Hegel is hinting at. Nor is it surprising. Just like philosophy, art is not a mass sport, not even a social entertainment. As Heraclitus warns though, Word (Logos) is true evermore, yet men are unable to understand it (DK B1). “This world, which is the same for all, no one of gods or men has made. But it always was, is, and will be an ever-living Fire, with measures of it kindling, and measures going out” (κόσμον τόνδε, τὸν αὐτὸν ἀπάντων, οὔτε τις θεῶν οὔτε ἀνθρώπων ἐποίησεν, ἀλλ’ ἦν αἰεὶ καὶ ἔστιν καὶ ἔσται πῦρ ἀείζωνον, ἀπτόμενον μέτρα καὶ ἀποσβεννύμενον μέτρα) (DK B30).

Fire or home stove is not simply fire or flame. It refers instead to the coziness of the cosmos, where man is man because he lives near the gods (ἦθος ἀνθρώπων δαίμων) (DK B119). As mythology shows it, man’s place (ἦθος) is near the gods (δαίμων).

1.2. Imagined reality

The curtain of Parrhasius is that which is always beyond directness. More precisely, it is what comes to us through mediation. That which doesn’t seem real to us at first sight. Or what seems real at a first glance (the curtain) but

acquires its meaning only in context. In other words, what is intangible, not palpable, what cannot be tasted; what can only be understood through interpretation. The curtain refers to the world of the imagination where direct experience cannot be valid, which is precisely the opposite of external experience.

Here's another quote from Hegel: "The beauty of art is beauty born of the spirit and born again." (Hegel, 1973, p. 2) As we have seen, Hegel distinguishes between material and spiritual senses, but only between them, whereby the material refers to touch, smell and taste, while the spiritual refers to sight and hearing. But Hegel is not talking about the possibility of inner experience. He speaks of the interior, of course, although not in the sense of emotional passions. Passions, although of no interest to Hegel, can play a role, along with reason, in the possibility of spiritual processing.

To be clear: there is the image, with its colors, shapes, forms, etc. (which fall within sense reality), but there are also the emotions it arises, or the passionate rejection, accompanied by thinking or by spiritual gain in the Hegelian sense (imagined reality). The latter is also a step forward, towards his "transcendence of the sensuous", which Hegel himself considered so important in his *Aesthetics*:

Art liberates the true content of phenomena from the pure appearance and deception of this bad, transitory world, and gives them a higher actuality, born of the spirit. Thus, far from being mere pure appearance, a higher reality and truer existence is to be ascribed to the phenomena of art in comparison with [those of] ordinary reality. (Hegel, 1975, p. 9)

However, according to Hegel, emotional states like pleasure, disgust, anger; joy etc. that might affect the observer don't play any role in transcending the sensuous.

According to Erwin Panofsky, iconology does something similar. In fact, iconology itself is nothing more than iconography brought to the level of spiritual perception. It is very similar to Hegel, but at the same there are significant differences. Panofsky says that iconography refers to a description of a work of art, whereas iconology, to its interpretation. (Panofsky, 1955, p. 26-54)

However, I have always felt, perhaps mistakenly, that his theory is very strongly tied to historicity and that, while it opens the way for a symbolic and allegorical approach of contents, it obscures affective experience or the philosophical dialogue we engage with the image, on the image (and of course with ourselves). It is as if Hegel, Gadamer, and Panofsky needed to be kneaded somehow, added a little Simmel, shaken well and preserved somewhat. Here is what I mean by that. The 'pictorial turn' (in other words, the increase in the role played by the image (Mitchell, 1994, pp. 11-35); "*ikonische Wendung*" (Boehm, 1994, pp. 11-38)) laid emphasis on the iconic cult that prevails in our world which states that the pictorial representation reigns above everything else. But the classics of this theory are quite uncertain as to

when the pictorial turn started. If there really is a visual turnaround, then interdisciplinarity is needed, Mitchell says. As if he were 'really' insecure. And for good reason. It is enough to just look at children who no longer take cubes in their hands, no longer build sandcastles, but use the cubes appearing on a tablet and build virtual castles out of them. The presence of the power of the ability to handle intelligent devices is undeniable. Nowadays, teaching of handwriting is considered by an increasing number of people to be meaningless, because one must be able to type, instead of writing. Those who defend this point of view forget that cognitive skills are developed by using hands (through manual activities). Combined with the activity of the mind, manual activity brings cognitive skills to a level where creativity may emerge.

Seeing the PC or tablet monitor is not looking at a 'picture'. Of course, there are different kinds of pictures. A distinction should be made between simple and complex images. Let us see what differentiates them.

2. The philosophy of images

2.1. Simple images.

Bound to the material world, a simple image does not convey any inner content that would be moved out of immediacy by intellectual or emotional activity. It merely explains and analyses what is otherwise tangible. Such is a priority table. Or Heidegger's signpost ("adjustable red arrow") in *Sein und Zeit*. (Heidegger, 1996, p. 73) A simple image is to be experienced passively; it does not require active perception. Rather, it expects people should follow what everyone is used to be following.

This kind of image belongs to the first reality. It is presumably what Belting calls "visually appearing" (Belting, 2005, p. 2) and being confused with an 'image'. Or, I would say, confusing the simple image with the complex image, since the visual that appears should also be called an image. Maybe it is the way Belting means it. The simple image depicts direct reality.

2.2. The complex image

On the other hand, the complex image conveys different contents. It is given in imagined reality. It is not simply meant to be perceived passively, but calls for common thinking, for joint and passionate conversation, as well as for further intersubjective thinking. Such is the striking angel in the portico in some images of the Annunciation (*Angelic Greeting*). The complex image goes beyond immediacy and tangible materiality. It requires active engagement: to act a certain way, to change yourself by emotionally charged thinking, to ask and doubt, to be transformed by it into an independent and autonomous individual. The image is not just an image: it contains spirit and passion. According to Aby Warburg, through a passion formula (Pathosformeln), "an emotionally charged visual trope", images express universality, namely in the traditional appearance of memory (Warburg, 2003, pp. 104-5).

The complex image may even refer to what Belting calls the “authentic image” (*Das Echte Bild*), where “*echt*” means both ‘authentic’ and ‘real’ or ‘true’. (Belting, 2005, 1. *Das echte Bild und die Medienfrage*), which he associates with the concept of truth. But it just says nothing about what truth is. I have dealt in detail elsewhere with the possible interpretation of ‘truth’ in relation to the meaning of ‘destiny’ on the basis of the myth of Er by Plato. (Plato 1970, Book X. *The Myth of Er*). Belting, on the other hand, says we expect the ‘authentic image’ to return reality as it is. But how to distinguish between them? The approach of Nicolaus Cusanus might be more illuminating than Belting’s. According to Cusanus, there are two kinds of vision. The first refers to individual objects, while the second is the abstract vision (*visus abstractus*), also considered the essential vision (*visus essentialis*). (Cusanus, 1985) Essential vision means seeing the essence.

The question still remains: what is reality or what is reality like? What is it like for you or me, for the others, given that we see it and appreciate it in so many different ways? This problem is addressed in the third part of Gorgias’s “famous triple movement” (*trilemma*) (DK.VII.65.) Gorgias’s first theorem states that the world does not exist. The second theorem states that even if existence exists, it cannot be known. According to the third theorem, even if it can be known, it cannot be communicated because numerous ways of understanding take the meaning so far that it can only be returned by the concept of ‘misunderstanding’.

Thus, postulating the existence of an authentic image will not yield too many results. Belting is right, an authentic image is self-contradictory: as it replaces something, we consider it real. See (Belting, 2005, Chapter 1)

Let us just think of Gombrich, who rightly draws attention to the great number of people who, from Leonardo to Géricault, have already tried to paint the figure of a galloping horse as accurately as possible. Manet portrayed horses from the front in *The Race at Longchamp* (1866), in a completely different way than painters used before to paint a galloping horse (Gombrich, 1951, pp. 387-388). Ernest Meissonier (1815-1891), the most celebrated and highest-paying painter of his age and a contemporary painter of Manet, was able to create a perfect illusion of a winter landscape at the Grande Maison, by using flour to simulate snow. The idea had to be dropped because the flour was attracting rats. Neither his money nor his imagination had limits. When he made *Friedland, 1807* (1861-1875) for his masterpiece, he hired a special team to study the galloping horses. (Friedland was one of the Napoleon’s greatest victory in 1807, when, defeating the Russian army, he enforced peace from Tsar Alexander I).

What is truth? What is reality? What is authentic? There is no clear answer to that.

According to Erwin Panofsky, everything is connected to everything, and this is not always a good thing. It is true for his life. Panofsky as a Jewish descent fled the Nazis, Warburg also left Germany even earlier (though not long ago), yet the two thinkers represent two different eras of art. The Warburg Library was in

Hamburg until Nazi power, then it was evacuated from Hamburg to London. The former director of the Warburg Library was Fritz Saxl, who had also been a significant inspiration for Panofsky, which can be recognized through his works. Panofsky himself emigrated to the States in 1933.

Erwin Panofsky became famous mainly for his development of the ‘iconological method’ mentioned several times in his essays. Let’s look at this briefly. There are three levels in Panofsky’s theory:

Primary or natural subject matter	Pre-iconographical description
Secondary or conventional subject matter	Iconographical analysis
Intrinsic or intrinsic meaning or content	Iconographical interpretation

(Panofsky, 1959, p. 14)

The theory starts with a pre-iconographical level, then it deals with iconographic analysis, and finally, it reaches an iconological level. To my mind, these levels could be divided differently: the third level would be closest to what I myself outline.

My own division into levels of processing of the work of art is based on Panofsky’s theory (but I am also drawing on Hegel and Gadamer).

3. From external experience to inner ‘Erlebnis’

I argue that there are three levels of processing a work of art:

- 3.1. External experience → in relation to a simple image that is given in direct reality.
- 3.2. Understanding → moving from a simple image to a complex image in imagined reality.
- 3.3. Inner Erlebnis (experiencing understanding) → a complex image given in imagined reality.

3.1. External experience

The first level, or external experience, can be related to the pre-iconographical elements. One sees / hears the work of art, one perceives the form, one has a basic understanding of the main actions etc. But this type of understanding is very coarse. For instance, for an Eskimo who has never heard anything about Jesus Christ, Leonardo da Vinci’s *Last Supper* just represents an evening meal

with a feasting group of people. This is also the second level for Panofsky. Contrary to Panofsky, I think most museum visitors remain, to this day, at this level, but at least they go and see an exhibition, listen to an opera, watch a theatre play or a movie etc.

3.2. Understanding

Understanding comes into play when the recipient confronts the work of art with a cultural environment, when he or she interprets historical, artistic, or technical contexts. When he or she knows what happens in a work of art or what is the message conveyed by a work, and why. The recipient, at this stage, can place a given work in time, in a context of style. He or she understands meaning, or at least guesses secondary communication, he or she is able to interpret, compare, sort, and last but not least: appreciate. Let us go on with the example of the *Last Supper*: knowing the rules of perspective, the museum visitor knows what the scene is about, the significance of wine and bread, he or she understands the symbolic meaning. The visitor may have heard of Alberti's famous book *On Painting* or possibly about Ficino. Therefore, the visitor is able to compare, distinguish and evaluate, thanks to his background knowledge. He or she may be going to opera, be especially passionate about the Wagner's music, know lots of stories about him; he or she may be watching the most watched theatres performances or read the most important interpretations of them. If they are not professionals, nor art or music historians, they may still be eager to know a lot of details regarding a particular period or style to which a work belongs. Exhibition organizers, art directors and conductors tend to bear in mind this kind of 'perfect visitor'.

3.3. Internal *Erlebnis* (experience)

More precisely: the experience and understanding internalized (*Erlebnis*). It means more than iconology (Panofsky), more than the history of cultural phenomena and symbols (Cassirer; Panofsky, 1959, p. 8), but it is nothing more than what exists in artistic expertise, it cannot do without it, but it goes beyond it. It is an art-philosophical understanding and an internalized experience. Notions such as *Erlebnis* (experience) (Georg Simmel) and understanding (Hegel) are important here. With respect to *Erlebnis*, Gadamer, for instance, points out that

An aesthetic *Erlebnis* always contains the experience of an infinite whole. Precisely because it does not combine with other experiences to make one open experiential flow, but immediately represents the whole, its significance is infinite. (Gadamer, 1989, p. 61)

What is more, the work itself may be urged to speak (at a hermeneutic level), hinting in a peculiar way at self-understanding. (Gadamer, 1989, p. XX) However, I think the three notions (*Erlebnis*, understanding and dialogue) are somehow present at the same time. *Erlebnis* is what a work of art offers, whatever that may be. The experience, which helps to understand, to recognize

the image while at the same time it carries on, captivates the spectator, and in the whole process, it invites to dialogue, offers interpretation, demands interpretation, argues, accuses, defends, shifts away, alienates, and then attracts. This process is present at the same time in the physical realm and in the mental context. It does not leave alone, it constantly engages, then suddenly releases, liberates, but only to make us soon feel again the tension and the dynamism. This is the task of philosophy of art.

4. Conclusion

A dialogue is needed with and for the work. When this dialogue is initiated, it gives rise to interpretation, then to another thought, then perturbs the feelings again. And so on. This may go beyond the second level (of understanding) but without ignoring it. Every stage can only be left behind if you have already reached it. The three levels are built on the top of each other, one does not exist or can exist without the other. The third only includes the first two. Internal experience (Erlebnis) can only arise if we go beyond external experience and understanding.

To be clear: we first need to look at the picture, listen to the music etc.; then to understand the message (at a hermeneutical level), in a specific cultural context and enjoy the serenity and or pain expressed by the work of art. Finally, this understanding is perceived as experience; the experience (Erlebnis) hidden in understanding makes itself felt. Contrary to popular belief, the two are not mutually exclusive but mutually reinforcing.

More precisely or more intelligibly, there are three stages: the ordinary understanding, the interpretation of art history, and philosophy of art. The third is often forgotten. However, getting further through these stages is getting closer to the work of art itself.

References

- Belting, H. (2005) *Das echte Bild*. München: Beck.
- Boehm, G. (1994) 'Die Wiederkehr der Bilder', in Boehm, G. (ed.) *Was ist ein Bild*. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag.
- Cusanus. (1985) 'De visione Dei, On the Vision of God', in Hopkins, J. (ed.) *Nicholas of Cusa's Dialectical Mysticism: Text, Translation, and Interpretive Study of De Visione Dei*. Minneapolis: The Arthur J. Banning Press.
- Diels, H. and Kranz, W. (1985) *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. Zürich: Weidmann.
- Gadamer, H.-G. (1989) *Truth and Method*. Translated by J. Weinsheimer and D.G. Marshall. London/ New York: Continuum books.
- Gombrich, E. H. (1951) *The Story of Art*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gyenge, Z. (2014) *Kép és mítosz* [Picture and Myth]. Budapest: Typotex.
- Gyenge, Z. (2016) *Kép és mítosz II*. [Picture and Myth II.] Budapest: Typotex.
- Hegel, G.W.F. (1975) *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art, Vol. 1*. Translated by T.M. Knox, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Heidegger, M. (1996) *Being and Time*. Translated by J. Stambaugh. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.

- Kant, I. (1987) *Critique of Judgment*. Translated by W.S. Pluhar, Cambridge: Hackett.
- Mitchell, W.J.T. (1994) 'The Pictorial Turn', in Mitchell, W.J.T. (1994) *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Panofsky, E. (1955) 'Iconography and Iconology: An Introduction to the Study of Renaissance Art', in Panofsky, E. (ed.) *Meaning in the Visual Arts: Papers in and on Art History*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, pp. 26–54.
- Panofsky, E. (1959) *Studies in Iconology*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press.
- Plato. (1970) *The Republic*. Translated by F.N. Cornford. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press.
- Plinius (1949) *Naturalis Historia / Natural History*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.
- Ruskin, John. (2006) *Lectures on Art. Lecture given in 1870 at University of Oxford*. EBook by Project Gutenberg.
- Schopenhauer, A. (1969) *The World as Will and Representation*. Translated by E.F.J. Payne. New York: Dover Publication.
- Warburg, A. (2003) 'Tafel 57. Pathosformel bei Dürer. Mantegna. Kopien. Orpheus. Hercules. Frauenraub. Überreiten in der Apokalypse. Triumph,' in Warnke, M. and Brink, C. (eds.). *Der Bilderatlas Mnemosyne, Bd. II*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.

Zoltán Gyenge
 University of Szeged
 Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
 Department of Philosophy
 H-6722 Szeged, Petőfi sgt. 32-34.
gye@philo.u-szeged.hu

The Program of Cultural Refinement in 19th-Century Hungary: the Example of Count Széchenyi and Baron Kemény

Ferenc Hörcher

In an effort to give a historical depth to recent discussions on taste in Aesthetic theory, this paper recovers a 19th century Hungarian paradigm. While taste first came to the forefront of philosophical reflection with the Enlightenment and especially with Kant, by now there is a growing literature on the survival of that discourse in the first half of the 19th century. The present author contributed to the research, which tried to show that in Hungary Count István Széchenyi, an influential political reformer, can be regarded as an author, who for socio-political reasons relied heavily on the British discourse of politeness and taste. This paper aims to show that the same discourse lived on and was employed in the second half of the 19th century in socio-political debates. The example is Baron Zsigmond Kemény, an admirer and follower of Széchenyi, who transformed the discourse into a bourgeois political-educational program.¹ | *Keywords: Taste, Politeness, Refinement, István Széchenyi, Zsigmond Kemény, 19th century, Hungary*

1. The Aesthetic and the Political

There has been a renewed interest in taste and politeness in the last twenty years.² In the Anglophone world, these notions have been discussed with rising frequency as a result of efforts to approach aesthetic phenomenon more broadly, including much more than the field of the art world. To discuss and possibly theorise such diverse topics as natural or environmental beauty, or popular culture, it is necessary to reassess the categories of judgement and

¹ I would like to extend my thanks to Stephen Patrick for revising the English of this essay and to Andrea Robotka for her help with the text and footnotes.

² For this view, see (Klein, 2002).

taste. On the other hand, Continental phenomenology has also seen renewed interest in the existential relevance of aesthetic ‘*Erlebnis*’.³ An understanding that human life would be much poorer without proper recognition of its aesthetic aspects has played a major role in this. Thirdly, a revival of the Aristotelian understanding of practical philosophy, and discussion of the overlap between politics and aesthetics, or ‘the political and the aesthetic’, as different components of the same field of practical knowledge has also brought taste back into the centre of contemporary discussions of aesthetics.⁴

The present paper sets out to add a further dimension to this renaissance of the concept of taste, specifically from a historical perspective, based on recent findings of the history of political thought in Hungary. We usually associate the notion of taste with the age of Kant, meaning the Enlightenment before, up to, and including him. In an earlier, Hungarian language book of mine, I provided an overview of the paradigm of taste from 1650–1800 in Europe, and in particular in Britain, France and Germany. (Hörcher, 2013) This paper, however, is concerned with the period following that golden age in taste, the 19th century. For the major authors of the 19th century British novel, from Jane Austen to George Eliot, the notion has a recurring relevance, but with heavy moral, political and sometimes even religious overtones. (Garson, 2007)⁵ It has been argued that this is the age of the middle classes, an age of philistine and hypocritical culture, as pointed out by cultural critics from Marx, through Nietzsche, to Bernard Shaw.

Yet one can find another perspective on it, particularly if we include what were (and continue to be) regarded as the peripheries of Europe in the discussion. I would like to introduce a political discourse in Central Europe, that of Count István Széchenyi and Baron Zsigmond Kemény, two Hungarian aristocrats, before and after the revolution of 1848. Neither of them was satisfied with the traditional role assigned to aristocrats by the conventions of their political community, and therefore both of them searched for an opportunity to play their role in a more authentic and socially more fruitful manner. I will argue that Count Széchenyi’s reform program can be interpreted as a latter-day reframing of the discourse of politeness. This discourse had a long history in Europe, and was a dominant ‘ideology’ in the 18th century, especially among the authors of the Scottish Enlightenment, as has been pointed out by authors such as J.G.A. Pocock, Peter Jones and Nicholas Phillipson. This discourse can also be found in late 18th Hungarian political thought, as József Takács has illustrated.⁶ (Takács, 2007) Together with Kálmán Tóth, I have previously demonstrated that it persisted into the first part of the 19th century, as

³ References to this influence can be found in the aesthetic works of the late Sir Roger Scruton.

⁴ A landmark achievement in this direction was the work of Hannah Arendt, in particular in her unfinished work applying the insights of her theory of aesthetic judgement to the field of politics.

⁵ The publisher describes this work as follows: *Moral Taste* is a study of the ideological work done by the equation of good taste and moral refinement in a selection of nineteenth-century writings.

⁶ Authors who have researched the use of this language in 18th-19th century Hungarian literature include Attila Debreczeni, Gergely Fóris and Piroska Balogh.

translations of the texts of Scottish authors show. (Hörcher and Tóth, 2018) With other authors in a collected volume about Széchenyi's by now classical breakthrough work, *Credit (Hitel, 1830)* I argued that it continued to be present in Széchenyi's thought in the early 1830s. (Hörcher, 2014)

In this study, however, I will take one further step by arguing that the notions of politeness and refinement supplied the intellectual resources of one of the major discourses in Hungarian political debate not only in the Age of Reform (1825–1849) but also up to the Settlement with Austria in 1867, and in its later interpretation. While Széchenyi's social program of polishing and refinement, to spread culture and encourage the general civilising process or *Bildung* across the whole social spectrum was received sympathetically by sections of the opposition, the revolution swept away all such efforts towards piecemeal and step-by-step reforms. His program was reframed by Zsigmond Kemény, his younger contemporary and admirer, who in longer pamphlets and in a series of shorter journalistic articles very successfully built up an interpretation of Széchenyi's work (both his publications and his institution-building) as the basis of an alternative to the politicised discourse on independence and national freedom. In this way, he played a major role in preparing the public sphere to accept the terms of the Settlement with Austria.

In this short essay, I will first suggest an interpretation of Széchenyi in terms of the discourse of cultural refinement, as a programme of reforming both the institutional framework of the cultural life of the country and the role and function of culture in public life and interpersonal relationships. To do so, I will draw on the findings of a recent publication by Máté Bodrogi (2011). This will be followed by an account of the reinterpretation of his achievements by his younger contemporary, Baron Kemény following the crushing of the revolution of 1848, and of his appropriation of it for his own program of cultural awakening in the context of neo-absolutism. Here I will refer to a recent research publication by György Eisemann (2020). I will argue that the language they both made use of entailed a genuine reinvention of the 18th century Anglo-Scottish discourse of taste, refinement and politeness, in the context of nation-building and civil progress, in order to counterbalance the language of constitutional grievances and the pathetic rhetoric of a realistically unachievable national independence.

2. The National Reform Program of Cultural Refinement: Count István Széchenyi

Count Széchenyi was only a few years younger than Lord Byron. Both of them were in the public eye during the Napoleonic wars, which they understood as an aristocratic eccentricity. Byron remained stuck in that paradigm, and went to his romantic death near to the battlefield in Missolonghi, in Greece in 1824. Count Széchenyi found his true mission as the awakener of his nation, when he stepped forward in the assembly hall of the Diet to offer a year's income from his estates for the cause of founding a national academy of sciences. Széchenyi was able to shed the role of the aristocratic cavalier, adopting instead another

role: that of the polite gentleman, as described in John Henry Newman's *The Idea of the University* (1852/1858). Like the Biblical good Samaritan, Newman's gentleman is "tender towards the bashful, gentle towards the distant, and merciful towards the absurd". As this example shows, the term 'polite gentleman' was clearly applicable to the Victorian gentleman.

The above claim is rather generalised. Now I would like to make use of it in a more specific and better-defined context. The historian Henrik Marczali claimed that Széchenyi's father had himself been a 'true gentleman'. It is from this family heritage that the son inherited this figure of the gentleman. Playing the British-style gentleman became second nature to Széchenyi. His mission was to show by his own personal example that taste and polite manners were helpful forces in a piecemeal transformation of the social structure. István Széchenyi, a one-time soldier was, unlike Byron, able to make the giant leap from the way of life of the easy-going aristocrat, dressed in the uniform of an officer of the army, to that of the public celebrity and independent political actor in the elegant overcoat of a supporter of culture. His life's work from that time onwards was to convince his compatriots that the way ahead was not through a confrontation with the court in Vienna, but through challenging it in the field of economy and culture, and this vision was shared among an ever-widening circle of the population of the country.

Széchenyi's first literary breakthrough was *Hitel (Credit)*, a non-fictional book about the concept of credit that had two divergent meanings in contemporary Hungarian. On the one hand it was a technical term in the discourse of national economy, referring to the financier's trust towards the creditor. But it was also used to convey the idea of a kind of social cement or cohesion within a particular community, that is, the concurrence of expectations and outcomes of actions, laying the foundations of reliability. Such social cohesion was a rare thing in 19th century Hungary. When Széchenyi pointed out that the country badly lacked the capital of social trust, his terminology once again referred to a more general notion, which could be labelled social intercourse. All his energies as a social organiser were used to encourage this social intercourse not only within and among the various (political, economic and cultural) elites, but also for a widening circle of the civil society. His major innovations usually followed British examples, and included the introduction of horse races in the capital and the foundation of the National Casino, which served as a meeting place for the aristocracy. He also participated in the foundation of the Commercial Bank, once again supporting the development of economic interaction. Through his work as royal commissioner responsible for river regulation along the Danube and the Tisza, or his support of steam navigation, and most famously, his determination to build the Chain Bridge between the two shores of the Danube, between Pest and Buda, he aspired to achieve the overall aim of bringing closer together the members, groups and institutions of civil society, and thus, through social exchange, to achieve the polishing of manners, language, art and the mind.

His written analysis of civilian improvement followed the best traditions of the 18th century language of politeness. To demonstrate this, it is worth examining the use he makes of the concept of *ízlés* (taste) in his book on credit.

“We should not call it unpatriotic, if someone likes the cover of a foreign book better than a Hungarian one. We should look at it as the improvement of a better taste, and we should produce even more proper ones.” (Széchenyi, 1830) Széchenyi’s advice assumes that the improvement of taste is a generally acknowledged value. This is clearly a sign that a public discussion of taste must have taken place by that time in Hungary. From this quote it is also evident that there were tensions between aesthetic judgement and the support for national industry. Széchenyi wished to overcome this false value preference, in order to reassert the autonomous value of the judgement of taste. However, his most relevant point seems to be an implicit encouragement that the political community should improve its common sense of taste, because this will presumably result in a more civilised state of communal affairs.

True judgement of Raphael’s pictures can be made only by a perfect painter or by someone who cannot paint, but whose soul is healthy and intact. Only the perfect experts or the people can judge Mozart’s, (and) Rossini’s divine languages. Only one who trusts her pure natural or all-roundedly cultivated mind, and accustoms it to operation, in other words judgement, in order to avoid making it dependent on another one’s, in the difficult moments of life, only that person can make his own way in the full sense of the word. (Ibid)

This is typical of the, long and complex sentences of Széchenyi, and it illustrates his well-developed concept of the operation and use of aesthetic judgement in human life. This concept was composed of several elements. One is the Rousseauist-Romantic claim, that beside perfect experts of taste (i.e. the professional judge in David Hume’s essay *Of the Standard of Taste*) a simple, un-poisoned spirit (of an individual or a community) can also judge properly. A further point to consider here is that a healthy soul is in any case a requirement for sound aesthetic judgement. However, the most important message is that to live a full and responsible life, one needs to acquire the capacity to judge correctly, and this judgement is both an aesthetic choice and a moral one – a point that is very similar to the teaching of the 19th century Scottish discourse of taste. It is also bound up with the notion of the fully developed personality that is present in Schiller’s views of aesthetic education, as well as in the concept of *Bildung* in early 19th century German philosophy generally.

Finally, a third quote from Széchenyi’s *Hitel* highlights the continuity of his thought with the discourse of taste. “If we should take over more from others, especially in taste, the arts, fine art and customs, than the number of cases they would like to imitate us, we had better rejoice, rather than mourn, and we should envy no one. They are old, we are young.” (Ibid) This is basically a clear-headed recognition of the belatedness of the country, weighed in cultural terms. As a theory of history, however, it is not far from stadial historiography, as practiced by Rousseau, Buffon and the Scots. This held that peoples have their ages, just as humans do. With the passing of time, as habits and customs and laws and institutions develop ‘naturally’ as a result of their practices, they become more cultured just as individuals’ minds become more cultivated. The main point of Széchenyi’s message is

that there is a need for a general program of cultural refinement in 19th century Hungary, both on the individual and the communal level.

3. Aesthetic Education as a Bourgeois Political Program: Baron Zsigmond Kemény

If Széchenyi embodied the program of the 19th century (Victorian) gentleman, the popularisation of that ideology was thanks to Zsigmond Kemény, perhaps the most influential journalist of the period – after Lajos Kossuth himself, the leader of the opposition. The term journalist, however, does not do justice to the manifold interests and activities of Kemény. His most important public persona was that of an original novelist. As a journalist, he prepared the ground for the fiction-writer, by writing articles on the role and function of art and culture in polite society. In doing so, he was following the well-established tradition of the moral weeklies, inherited from the 18th century British and German context. He was also recognised as an influential politician, who was initially close to Széchenyi's position, and later an adjutant of Ferenc Deák, the spiritus rector of Hungarian politics after 1849, and the originator and main negotiator of the idea of the Settlement with the Crown. Kemény expertly played all three of his different public roles of journalist, novel-writer and politician.

His main concern, largely borrowed from Addison, was the following: for people to live a decent and civilised life, what is required is self-improvement: an activity which aims at learning about the outside world, together with gaining deeper insights into one's inner realm, in order to fully exploit one's potential; in other words, conversing and trading, and reading and writing. By engaging in intellectual activity, the individual becomes accustomed to refining her mind in discussions with others.⁷ This will in turn lead to improvements in one's personal intellectual apparatus, which will help the person's social progress and ultimately allow the community to flourish.

Yet to achieve success in conversation and trade one needs to rely on others. Kemény's program in this respect closely followed Széchenyi's idea of building social trust. They both searched for a way out of the political impasse of the country. They wanted to strengthen social ties through interactions, institutions and culture, generally, including academia, a national theatre, opera, exhibitions, etc. Their conviction was that by self-cultivation one arrives indirectly at a state of a more cohesive social structure.

Kemény's fears about the way the uneducated mass of voters can be manipulated in a newly established democracy resembles Tocqueville's and Mill's dictum of the dangers of the tyranny of the majority. The irrationality of the choices of the masses was a concern of Kemény from an early stage, as can be seen in his journal publication, *Korteskedés és ellenszerei (Canvassing and its countermedicines, 1844)*, while the blindness of popular enthusiasm is

⁷ In fact, a crucial issue was to win over a female readership, as they were often excluded from the educational system, and certainly were not involved in political discussions.

a recurring topic of his historical novels. Kemény, the journalist and the novel writer, was paving the way for Kemény, the politician, by demonstrating that without cultural reform programs the calls for widening political participation had no chance.

I would argue that Kemény's worldview (especially after 1849) can be labelled as cultural conservatism, emphasising the dangers of political participation and populist political manipulation. He criticised both the abstract rationalism born in the Enlightenment and the enthusiasm and irrationality of fundamentalist religious belief. Behind his criticism of revolution and enthusiasm lies a concept of the balance of power and his idea of moderation, two concepts which were already present in the philosophical discussions of ancient Athens. Balance and moderation are, of course, aesthetic categories, but he also employed them in his social-historical and geo-political reflections.

The final section of the paper examines the way Kemény analyses taste (more precisely what he calls "the taste of beauty"). In his series of journal articles entitled *Life and Literature (Élet és irodalom)*, this is a recurring phrase. He describes novel writing, for example, in the following way:

we may require from it (the novel) that it offer us beside the joy of our taste of beauty something more as a result, something that we might call (a) worldview, philosophical idea, social judgement, an artistic representation of existing condition, or a sketch of the age, or a yet unresolved moral or governmental problem, or a yet unrecognized momentum of a passion, or a haven to which suffering humanity can escape, a sea, on which we fight, a place of rest, which we have left to get the results of the struggle... future, present, past. (Kemény, 1971)

While clearly somewhat emotive and pathetic, this is not an empty shell of rhetoric, nor is it overly sentimental or excessively ornate. Rather it is the panegyric of novel writing, as he himself practised it, and an effort to show how life and literature are connected in his view. For him, fiction is not simply a flight of fancy. It is not art for its own sake, even if it needs to appeal to our sense of taste and of beauty. It can do much more than that, through enchantment. As Kemény saw it, novels are vehicles to help us reflect and learn by reading them – in other words, they have a cognitive function, an idea familiar from thinkers such as Martha Nussbaum.

The whole series of articles, collected under the title of *Life and Literature*, aims to establish this connection – to teach readers of journals to also read novels and to show them how. He compares novels to plays, arguing that instead of simply telling a story the novel should also give us a hint of real life along with "always dynamic and developing sentiments, emotions, passions and deeds". All in all, he regards the novel as a medium which helps people learn about human nature, saving cost and time to the enquirer, and to do so in an enjoyable way. However, it can only convey such knowledge about worldviews and philosophical ideas, in its modelling of crisis situations, if it remains true to historical resources. (Bényei, 2003) Kemény's general point is in line with the general aims of the classical novels of the 19th century, in Britain, France or

Russia, including the famous *Sentimental Education* (1869) by Flaubert. The novel provides the connection between life and culture (as in Balzac), or, for that matter, life and the taste of beauty. Here is one example of how he connects the two in his discussion of his portrait of Széchenyi's achievements: "every venture which was initiated by the work of Széchenyi aimed at the friction, ripening, concentration of ideas, and almost without exception, to the revival of fortune, spirit and taste of beauty in Budapest." (Kemény, 1970, p. 189)⁸

Kemény suggests that Count Széchenyi's program was not simply a cultural program, but also a program of social improvement. Kemény thus acknowledges Széchenyi's original intention to connect aesthetic and socio-political value.

Conclusion

Our aim was to show that the 18th century discourse on taste was also a source of normative power organising society and preserving political order in 19th century Hungary. Two prime examples of this discourse can be found in Count István Széchenyi and Baron Zsigmond Kemény. The first of them, Széchenyi, a politician, published non-fiction works arguing for a nation-wide cultural revival to achieve social cohesion and develop human interactions within society, enriching both individuals and minor communities. The second, Kemény, published articles to educate a readership for novels, which served as vehicles of sentimental education, again with a view to enhancing social interconnectedness. The two of them, I argued, represented a vision of social reform and a view of the social impact of cultural refinement which was different from the mainstream discourse of national freedom in terms of conflict. Their proposal was a program to rethink the role and function of beauty and a refined sense of beauty in the interest of an enriched public life.

References

- Bényei, P. (2003) *A történelmi regény műfaji változatai és a tragikum kérdései Kemény Zsigmond írásművészetében* (Transformations of the genre of the historical novel and the question of the tragic), PhD thesis, Debrecen University. Available at: https://dea.lib.unideb.hu/dea/bitstream/handle/2437/79725/de_1849.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y
- Bodrogi, F.M. (2011) 'Széchenyi István és a gentlemanek nyelve' (István Széchenyi and the language of the gentlemen), *Irodalomtörténet*, 2, pp. 150–176.
- Eisemann, Gy. (2020) 'Történelem, végzet, forradalom. Esztétika és politika Kemény Zsigmond életművében' (History, Destiny, Revolution. Aesthetics and politics in the oeuvre of Zsigmond Kemény), *Kommentár*, 2, pp. 42–51.
- Garson, M. (2007) *Moral Taste: Aesthetics, Subjectivity, and Social Power in the Nineteenth-Century Novel*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Horkay Hörcher, F. (on other titles Hörcher, F.) (2014) 'Ahol a politikai és a gazdasági eszmetörténet metszi az irodalomtörténetet: A Hítel tudományközi kontextusai' (Where the history of political and economic thought meets literary history: The interdisciplinary contexts of Széchenyi's Hítel), in Hites, S. (ed) *Jólét és*

⁸ I am grateful for this quote to Zsófia Kucserka (2017, pp. 96–97).

- erény: *Tanulmányok Széchenyi István Hitel című művéről*. Budapest: Reciti Kiadó, pp. 9–27.
- Hörcher, F. (on other title Horkay Hörcher, F.) (2013) *Esztétikai gondolkodás a felvilágosodás korában (1650-1800): Az ízlésetztétika paradigmája (Aesthetic Thought in the Age of Enlightenment (1650-1800). The Paradigm of the Aesthetics of Taste)*. Budapest: Gondolat.
- Hörcher, F. and Tóth, K. (2018) 'The Scottish Discourse on Taste in Early 19th-Century Hungary: Two Translations of Hugh Blair's Introduction to Rhetoric', in Balogh, P. and Fórizs, G. (eds) *Anthropologische Ästhetik in Mitteleuropa 1750–1850 - Anthropological Aesthetics in Central Europe 1750–1850*. Hannover: Wehrhahn Verlag, pp. 253–292.
- Kemény, Zs. (1971) "Élet és irodalom", in: Kemény Zs. *Élet és irodalom (Life and Literature)*. Budapest, Szépirodalmi, pp. 123-190.
- Kemény, Zs. (1970) 'Széchenyi István', in Kemény, Zs. *Sorsok és vonzások (Fates and attractions)*. Budapest: Szépirodalmi, pp. 115–309.
- Klein, L.E. (2002) 'Politeness and the Interpretation of the British eighteenth century', *The Historical Journal*, 45(4), pp. 869–898. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X02002716>
- Kucserka Zs. (2017) *Könyvbe vésett jellemek, A szereplői karakter Kemény Zsigmondnál és a 19. századi magyar regényben (Characters engraved in stone. Protagonist characters in the works of Zsigmond Kemény and in 19th century Hungarian novels)*, Budapest: Ráció.
- Széchenyi, I. (1830) *Hitel (Credit)*. Available at: <https://mek.oszk.hu/06100/06132/html/hitel0006.html>
- Takács, J. (2007) 'A csinosodás politikai nyelve' (The political language of refinement), in Takács J. *Modern magyar politikai eszmetörténet*. Budapest: Osiris.

Ferenc Hörcher
 Research Professor
 University of Public Service, Research Institute for Politics and Government
 H-1083 Budapest, Ludovika tér 2.
horcher.ferenc@uni-nke.hu
 Senior Fellow
 Institute of Philosophy, Budapest
 H-1097 Budapest, Tóth Kálmán u. 4.
horcher.ferenc@abtk.hu

Remarks upon the Aesthetics of the Night Sky

Endre Szécsényi

This essay begins with some observations on the main features and availability of the aesthetic experience of the night sky to us. In the second part, the aesthetics of the starry sky is interpreted in terms of time experience, complementing the usual approach in terms of immense space. These remarks on this broad and abundant subject can partly be linked to the intellectual historical interpretation of the birth of modern aesthetics, and partly to the vital discourse of environmental aesthetics, which proves that these two approaches can work together and bring to the fore the aesthetic relevance and fruitfulness of this subject. | Keywords: *Environmental Aesthetics, Aesthetics of Nature, Sublimity, Night Sky, Time Experience*

Introduction

In this essay I deal with some aesthetic aspects of *the experience of the night sky* (ENS, hereafter), more exactly, of *the live prospect of the starry vault seen from the Earth through the naked eye*. In the first part, I re-consider some general features of the availability of this type of experience to us, as well as some theoretical questions which immediately arise from the aesthetic reflections upon the starry heaven as the scene and occasion of natural sublime. In the second part, I offer my own approach to this experience, by focusing on its temporal – and not spatial – dimensions, and claim that the sublime in the ENS can be explained as a reverberation of the cosmic time into the personal life-time, suggesting that the existential relevance of ENS can be thus grasped in a novel manner. My remarks – which, due to the limited space here and the complexity of the subject, inevitably remain somewhat impressionistic – can partly be linked to the intellectual historical interpretation of the birth of modern aesthetics, and partly to the vital discourse of environmental aesthetics, which I am inclined to understand as a replay of the great Enlightenment project of aesthetics.¹ My aim is to suggest that these two approaches – roughly, the historical and the theoretical – can work together, and to highlight the aesthetic relevance and fruitfulness of the discussed topic.

By aesthetics in the title of this essay I mean modern, so to speak, *philosophical* aesthetics, thus the most conspicuous starting point could be Immanuel Kant's oft-cited lines from the "Conclusion" of his Second Critique: "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and reverence [*Bewunderung und Ehrfurcht*], the more often and more steadily one reflects on them: *the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me.*" (Kant, 2015, p. 129) Although Kant just fleetingly mentions the word *sublimity* [*Erhabenheit*] in this section, it is also evident, retrospectively from his Third Critique (e.g. annex to §29), that the night sky is one of the eminent examples of modern (natural) sublime besides bare mountains, deserts, wide and open landscapes, ocean, volcanos, waterfalls, storms, vast dark forests and the like²; and that the foundations of the aesthetic experience of the sublime are laid in *moral feeling*. Thus, it may seem that the *aesthetic* reflections on the ENS must be conceived in the framework of the sublime, or at least some strong references to the tradition of the sublime seem inevitable. If it is true, it also means that the theoretical problems with the sublime³ – whether it is up-to-date or obsolete, whether a thick or thin notion, whether its experience elevates/emancipates or rather astonishes/overwhelms us, etc.⁴ – may simultaneously concern the aesthetic ENS. Meanwhile there can be further particular issues with the aesthetic ENS, too: for instance, whether it is considered as an eventually and fundamentally *positive*, awe-inspiring experience that touches and strengthens the awareness of our moral dignity like in Kant, or an essentially *negative*, dreadful experience which is associated with the despotic and oppressive power of a rigid cosmical system like in William Blake; whether it is still relevant as a live and vivid experience or whether its transformation into digital images of deep space has already overshadowed it⁵; whether it has preserved something of its earlier metaphysical significance or whether it has become the mere indication of physical space (full of sinister or hopeful possibilities).

¹ Recently, focusing only on Immanuel Kant's aesthetics, Jean-Marie Schaeffer analysed the similarities and differences between the 18th-century aesthetics of nature and contemporary environmental aesthetics to conclude that the differences outweigh the similarities (Schaeffer, 2018). (I am grateful to one of my blind reviewers for having called my attention to this article.) However, when I am loosely phrasing the emergence of environmental aesthetics from the mid-1960s onwards as a kind of "replay" of the rise of modern aesthetics, I mostly think of pre-Kantian discourses of natural beauty and natural sublime. Although I do not want to diminish Kant's significance at all, his aesthetic insights cannot fully represent – for his transcendental philosophical language cannot adequately treat – the abundance of the aesthetic ideas of his age and of the previous one from the mid-17th century onwards.

² In the pre-Kantian aesthetics it was far from being so evident, most probably due to the metaphysical 'burden' of starry heaven, night sky was often missing from the list of the 'aesthetic' scenes of wilderness, but at least it was not at all the paradigmatic example of the sublime.

³ As already Ronald Hepburn discussed it (cf. Hepburn, 1988). It is a quite rarely referred paper, perhaps due to its only publication in a not easily available Polish academic journal. The sublime was so much neglected in the aesthetic discourse by the 20th century that it needed to be rehabilitated for the environmental aesthetics (cf. Brady 2012).

⁴ For the sublime as an ardent issue of contemporary aesthetics today, see e.g. (Arcangeli and Dokic, 2021; Brady, 2021; Shapshay, 2021).

⁵ Like the breath-taking pics from the Universe's map, cf. *The Sloan Digital Sky Survey*, <https://www.sdss.org/> (Accessed: 28 December 2020)

1. The Sublime and the ENS

If by now the notion of the sublime is theoretically ambiguous, then why not choose another term or terms to preserve the significance of vivid ENS? Awe, admiration, wonder, grandeur – could be a few candidates. And why can one suggest that the ENS is problematic at all? Is it not universally accepted that it elicits aesthetic experience? Arnold Berleant, for example, argues that we only have access now to the sublime (understood as *negative sublime*) which emanates from the human environment, namely from “a cultural environment of towering institutions whose power is so great that it cannot be conceived directly and concretely and exceeds our capacity to grasp it rationally”; we no longer have access to natural sublime (including the night sky). Moreover, “[m]ost people are no longer aware of the starry heavens that so awed Kant that he took them to exemplify the sublime. The glow of light from our cities renders the stars quite invisible.” (Berleant, 1997, p.78) Indeed, our sublime ENS is significantly different from the starry heavens grasped by Anaxagoras, Ovid, Blaise Pascal, Joseph Addison, Blake, Kant, Henry David Thoreau⁶ but not only in that the light and air pollution hinder most of us from seeing the starry sky in its full brightness every clear (or slightly cloudy) night, or in that we have to make longer and longer excursions to find a proper spot far enough away from every human environment for this kind of enjoyment⁷, but in that the night sky today, especially from places close to crowded airways, is full of flying objects: airplanes⁸, satellites and even the International Space Station. The image of the night sky used to be the prime example of tranquillity, immutability and eternity for millenaries. Nowadays it is replete with human artefacts, and we have to take long and expensive journeys to find a place (in the middle of a desert, of an ocean or of a distant mountain region, etc.) to obtain an ENS at least remotely resembling what was universally and readily available to everybody just a hundred years ago.⁹ Nowadays, the view of a huge and bright starry sky can even carry the sinister meaning of an horrid solitude or an unbridgeable distance from the inhabited regions.¹⁰ Briefly, the erewhile common and potentially everyday ENS has become a rare and almost extraordinary experience to most of us, especially to city dwellers. At the same time, the idea of night sky and its common associations remain highly

⁶ Cf., respectively, Aristotle, *Eudemean Ethics*, 1216a; *Metamorphoses*, I. 84–86.; (Pascal, 1688, p. 147); (Addison, 1965, p. 529); e.g. *America: Prophecy*, plate 10; (Kant, 1892, p. 137); (Thoreau, 1863).

⁷ For example, the International Dark Sky Places programme was established in 2001 to worldwide find and to protect “dark sites” for ENS, cf. <https://www.darksky.org/our-work/conservation/idsp/> (Accessed: 28 December 2020)

⁸ Due to the current covid-19 pandemic, just these days the airways are much less busy, the night sky has temporarily regained something from her earlier peacefulness.

⁹ Even then the ENS would often go unnoticed due to its everydayness. Take for example Tolstoy’s wounded Prince Andrew lying in the battlefield of Austerlitz is wondering at the immeasurably lofty sky with gray clouds above him: “How quiet, peaceful, and solemn; not at all as I ran,’ thought Prince Andrew ‘not as we ran, shouting and fighting [...]: how differently do those clouds glide across that lofty infinite sky! How was it I did not see that lofty sky before? And how happy I am to have found it at last!’ ” (Tolstoy, p. 512)

¹⁰ Like in the movie *Life of Pi* (2012): the magnificent prospects of starry sky from the middle of the ocean may also express the desperate solitude of the main character. Nowadays such a crystal-clear prospect can be gained only very far away from human inhabited regions.

estimated and exploited in our culture, let me refer only to those well-known and oft-cited or -seen dystopian scenes of popular novels and movies, in which the night sky (or the sky in general) cannot be seen in the dark future of humankind.¹¹ The imagined disappearance of the (night) sky is usually associated with some tremendous loss of humanity – loss in both physical and moral/spiritual senses. Based on the popularity and universal communicability of this motif, we may conclude that the archaic spirituality of the direct prospect of the night sky has been somewhat preserved.

2. Scientific Representations of the Night Sky

Today, in an everyday conversation, if we mention 'night sky', images that pop up in one's mind are mostly based on one's memories, on the one hand, of photos taken by (or rather compiled by) astronomers by means of their high-tech devices, by professional photographers who use special filters and exposure durations to show such colours, shades and details of the night sky as we would be unable to perceive otherwise, by astronauts (or by satellites and space probes) from the space, and, on the other, of certain sci-fi or fantasy movie scenes designed by artists and CGI engineers.¹² Undoubtedly, these offer spectacular and unforgettable pictures of the night sky and deep space. While these artistic or artificial representations might raise the threshold of our admiration of the ENS, I think that they have been unable to significantly reshape the traditional ENS, so to speak. Rather, they may replace it because they are more easily available on various digital or broadcasted channels. This development of our visual culture has made the accessibility of real ENS more difficult, and, indirectly, underlines the recently born features of the latter: rarity and exceptionality.

The accumulation of scientific knowledge about the universe from the time of Copernicus onwards has also had an influence on our ENS. Arguably, it does not result in disenchantment (*Entzauberung*): “what our best science” – as Sandra Shapshay claims – “tells us is that the night sky is still full of scientific mystery.” It “gives us a new, informed appreciation of the depths of these mysteries; in such a case, it supports thick sublime experience” (Shapshay, 2013, p. 197). I admit that we can still enthusiastically and/or out of curiosity admire the night sky and deep space (as well as any other vast or small object of nature) through the lens of our best science, but this admiration is not necessarily of an aesthetic nature¹³, and if

¹¹ Like the movies *Blade Runner* (1982), *Matrix* (1999) or the most recent *The Midnight Sky* (2020), etc. In the latter, the night sky, as an apt projective screen, is the appearance of the hope for humankind, but there is only one man in this film, with whom we can see it from the Earth, but he is an exception, the rest of people on Earth have already lost this vision.

¹² As for traditional art, while the starry sky is a topos in poetry and belles-lettres of all ages, it is apparently not a favoured subject for great painters, Vincent van Gogh's or Edvard Munch's canvases seem quite exceptional. For the sky in general as a topic of representational art from Romanticism to avant-garde, see (Clair, 1999). For the contemporary 'sky art', see (Saito, 2017, pp. 69–92).

¹³ Already Edmund Burke recognised that the curiosity, admiration and satisfaction of an anatomist (i.e. a scientist) upon discovering some “excellent contrivance” in nature, differed from the allurements and pleasures of beauty for an ordinary man (i.e. an “aesthete”): “in the former case, whilst we look up to the Maker with admiration and praise, the object which causes it may be odious and distasteful” (Burke, 1990, p. 98) – and what is odious or distasteful is beyond the scope of the aesthetic (i.e. of the beautiful and the sublime).

we call it *sublime*, I think, we misuse this term.¹⁴ Certainly, it is possible and customary to extend the sense of 'the aesthetic' to embrace also the intellectual curiosity and awe – even to set a tight parallelism between aesthetics and mathematics concerning ENS (cf. Rolston, 2011, pp. 274–5) – but these efforts seem to me rather a special blend of the aesthetic and the scientific.¹⁵ I would rather insist on that peculiar type of sensuous-spiritual quality (or type of experience) as 'aesthetic' which was invented and elaborated from the late seventeenth century onwards.¹⁶ The historical relationship between the intellectual or 'scientific' conception of beauty and the imaginative-emotive-spiritual notion of the aesthetic is a quite complicated issue; suffice it to say that the very example of the starry sky can cast some light on it. The rise of modern natural sublime can be interpreted as a reaction to the shift from the finite world of Ptolemy and even Copernicus to the infinite (immense) universe of Newton, from the hierarchically ordered cosmos of quality to the horizontally (multi-sided) extended universe of quantity, from the beautiful, august, divine fabrication to the sublime abyss of deity, etc.¹⁷ Hence it might seem that this transition offers an ample proof for the indispensability of natural scientific knowledge for the aesthetic experience of the given natural object or scene, shortly, for the claim that every aesthetic appreciation of nature must be eventually based on scientific facts, as several cognitivist environmental aestheticians claim (e.g. Carlson and Parsons, 2008; Parsons, 2008). However, in her important paper, even Patricia Matthews acknowledges that not every bit of new scientific information has relevance for our aesthetic experience, only that kind of knowledge matters which “can change our aesthetic assessment of the object by changing how we perceive it.” (Matthews, 2002, p. 44) Newton's and his fellow-naturalists' astronomical discoveries undoubtedly changed the way we perceive the starry sky, and this change could stimulate the rise of the natural sublime from Pascal to Shaftesbury and Addison, from John Baillie¹⁸ to Kant and

¹⁴ “Wonder” as an alternative to “sublime” has already been recommended by Philip Fisher, although at the expense of the oversimplification of the sublime as religious feelings “under aesthetic disguise” and as the “aestheticization of fear” (cf. Fisher, 1998).

¹⁵ Already in 1725, Francis Hutcheson speaks “in the Mathematical Style” about the beautiful in objects, including the works of nature, as “a compound Ratio of Uniformity and Variety”. As for the heavenly bodies, we need “Reasoning and Reflection” to be able to sense beauty in these giant structures (Hutcheson, 2004, pp. 29–31). The “starry Hemisphere” is a “complex idea” which is “Beautiful, Regular, Harmonious” (p. 22) inasmuch as the regular revolutions of the planets, the repetitions of the appearances of the sky with “invariable Constancy”, etc. “are the Beautys which charm the Astronomer and make his tedious Calculations pleasant.” (p. 31) This beauty of the starry sky seems rather a reward for tiresome scientific labour, and only available to a naturalist; moreover, it leaves the question answerable how it is possible to enjoy and to admire the night sky without proper astronomical knowledge.

¹⁶ Recently, concerning mostly Addison's essays, I wrote about this “sensuous-spiritual” as (proto-)aesthetic quality in more detail (cf. Szécsényi, 2020, pp. 59ff) Or as David B. Morris claims in his seminal book, commenting Addison's reflections upon the effects the ocean can take on the imagination: “Simply by opening his eyes to the sublimity of nature, a reasonable being can achieve a new power of religious conviction, one made accessible by the imagination, rendered persuasive by the feelings, and ultimately confirmed by the understanding” (Morris, 1972, p. 137). By “sensuous-spiritual”, I mean something quite like Morris' “imaginative perception” as an alternative “way of knowing the Deity”, but, concerning the later developments, it does not necessarily have to be something religious or theological in the traditional sense.

¹⁷ For the classical interpretations of this shift, see, e.g. (Koyré, 1957; Tuveson, 1960). For the rise of natural sciences in general and their role in the shaping of modernity, see, e.g. (Gaukroger, 2010, pp. 11–54).

¹⁸ The author of *An Essay on the Sublime* (1747).

further. At the same time, alchemical and natural magical elements (besides further ones from different theologies, anthropologies, literature, etc.) were also forged and exploited in the same process of invention of natural sublime of ENS: this may suggest that the manner and the purpose of application could be more relevant than the origins or scientific establishment of the applied elements. Moreover, it is also telling that Pascal and Kant refused the active role of new natural scientific insights in the (proto-aesthetic) wonder of the infinity of space (Pascal, 1688, p. 147) or of the starry sky.¹⁹ To Kant, Thoreau and many others, it has remained a breath-taking and awe-inspiring experience of an enormous canopy with amazing colours and lights: “we must regard [the starry heaven] just as we see it, as a distant, all-embracing, vault.” (Kant, 1792, p. 137) – as it was in the case of the Ptolemaic and Copernican heavens.²⁰ Natural sciences have never had exclusive authority in determining what was ‘nature’ for the modern sublime experience of nature.²¹ Although the concept of an infinite universe came from the natural scientific discoveries of the age, the response to this new situation, the contents, structure and associations of the natural sublime of ENS cannot be fully understood only from the scientifically triggered change of our perception.

My major aim, however, is not to contribute to the long and still ongoing debate concerning the role of scientific knowledge in the aesthetic appreciation of nature, it suffices to say that my position is closer to e.g. Ronald W. Hepburn’s, Emily Brady’s and Beatrice Beressi’s who have claimed that “attempts to make the aesthetics of nature an annex of the natural sciences should be treated with suspicion” (Beressi, 2020, p. 744), that is, who have raised doubts on the cognitivist explanation – elaborated extensively by Allen Carlson and Glenn Parsons, also developed by Matthews, Shapshay and (with historical interest) by William M. Barton (Barton, 2016) amongst many others – of the aesthetic experience of nature. In the case of the night sky, in the paradigmatic Kantian sense, we “can look to the left and the right, and all around” – as Brady writes –, “but it seems to go on forever, filling space and extending outwards in all directions in such a way that we cannot put any boundaries around it through perception. Through this kind of aesthetic experience, *we have a kind of sensuous feeling for the infinite*, one which is quite different from any kind of intellectual, mathematical idea of it.” (Brady, 2013, p. 60 – my emphasis, E. Sz.)

¹⁹ For more details about the incompatibility of Kantian aesthetics of nature with the realist/objectivist demands of the cognitivist environmental aesthetics, see (Schaeffer, 2019, p. 63).

²⁰ Interestingly though, in the above quoted “Conclusion” of the Second Critique, Kant still speaks about the sublimity of the starry heavens in the context of the infinite other worlds discovered by telescopes; in the Third Critique, however, he already excludes these (scientific) reflections from the aesthetic experience of natural sublime (cf. Etlin, 2012, p. 231).

²¹ The vast canopy of the night sky in itself is too big for our imagination, as Kant observed. As if our imagination could not keep pace with our intellect, and it could not absorb all aids and new information from our science. If I gaze at the Orion as I did already decades ago, by now I can know that its famous cloud is a nebula, or that the rising Sirius, “behind” Orion, the brightest fixed star from the Northern hemisphere, is actually a double system, etc. Has my aesthetic appreciation of the night sky changed due to my enlarged astronomical and astrophysical knowledge? Maybe a little, although my accumulated life-experience matters much more in this respect. But has my aesthetic judgement become more proper or more correct? – as Matthews claims (Matthews, 2002, p. 45). Has my wonder become more profound or ‘thicker’? I don’t think so.

In what follows, I shall raise just one further issue concerning the live ENS available to us within the framework of the sublime but not from the angle of the *sensuous feeling for the infinite space*.

3. The Night Sky as Time-Experience

Two years after his death, the last paper of Hepburn, the father of environmental aesthetics, came to light under the title “The Aesthetics of Sky and Space” (Hepburn, 2010).²² The title is already telling: the (aesthetic) experience of sky, either day or night one, is usually connected to – or even identical with – that of space (or recently deep space). My further remarks, however, concern time. When I just began to write this essay, I bumped into an astronomical news article in which a rare appearance of the night sky was recommended: the approximately one-month close of Saturn and Jupiter from earthly perspective.²³ The previous one occurred far before my birth, the succeeding one will do after my death.²⁴ So this was the only opportunity in my whole life to enjoy this particular heavenly spectacle, had I missed it, it would have been gone forever. However, I (together with my readers, of course) have never seen, for example, an explosion of a supernova. If Betelgeuse of Orion remains calm for a few more decades (which is close to nothing in the lifespan of an 8–8.5 milliard-year old red supergiant), I will never see such a magnificent singularity.²⁵ Decades ago, when I was a teenage schoolboy wanting to be an astronomer for a short time, I spent hours and hours examining the night sky through my small refractor. And in one of those cold and clear winter nights (which I used to prefer to warm and balmy summer ones, perhaps because – as Thoreau had remarked in his essay *A Winter Walk*,– “The heavens seem to be nearer the earth” at this season), there was one long minute when I thought that I was being a witness of an outburst: it was incredible and unforgettable. Suddenly, a giant star appeared in the sky, it was seemingly motionless in the constellation in which it kindled, and it was much brighter than any other stars and planets. I was just gazing at it with my naked eye (my small glass was useless to scan stars anyhow). Then I had to realize that it was the reflector of a fighter jet from the nearby military airbase, and it just happened to fly in the very direction of me for a minute or so, then the pilot switched the headlight off and turned his MiG–23 Flogger away, by that time I heard its engine – the miracle was

²² Originally it was a lecture that Hepburn delivered in the conference *Celestial Aesthetics: The Aesthetics of Sky, Space and Heaven* held in Heinäves (Finland) in 2009. Cf. further later developed presentations from this conference (Berleant, 2010; Rolston, 2011; Saito, 2017, pp. 69–92).

²³ Later this event gained a high reputation in the world press, a little bit surprisingly, because it was much less spectacular than, for example, a total eclipse.

²⁴ I found quite different data, according to the first reports, the last similar spectacular conjunction happened in the eighteenth century, the next will do in 2080; according to others, these two giant planets have not been this close to each other in a dark sky from the Earth for 800 years, and we should wait 400 years for the next occurrence.

²⁵ The light takes more than half a millennium to arrive from this star to the Earth, thus perhaps Betelgeuse has already been burst for a while, still perhaps I do not have enough lifetime to abide those gorgeous beams.

over. These examples,²⁶ although *in quite different ways* can show how personal life (its timespan, its fears and hopes) could shape or give meaning to the 'cosmic time' and vice versa in ENS. In addition, our earlier encounters with the night sky, in so far as we dwelled upon those occasions, were often or perhaps always existentially significant for us, and their memories, as in the above examples, carrying relevant moments of our past, can also come into play during our current ENS, as it were, we can experience a kind of emancipation from eternity to lived time in ENS, or, in Blake's words, we can directly feel that "Time is the Mercy of Eternity." (*Milton: A Poem*, Plate 24, ln. 72) Simultaneously, in this lived time of ENS we can also feel a unique timely bond to our ancestors, contemporaries and descendants: the night sky – obviously in its 'intact' prospect (that is, unaltered by our technological civilization, e.g. if we happen to look up the starry heaven travelling halfway on the Trans-Siberian Express) – is perhaps the *only* available particular 'object' that has been immutable throughout the history of our race.²⁷ Since time immemorial every generation has had the opportunity to wonder at almost *the same* breath-taking sight of the starry sky, while everything else in our environments has changed and is incessantly changing.

From the extended history of modern aesthetics, I take Francesco Petrarca's famous letter of c. 1350–1352, backdated to 1336, on his climb of Mont Ventoux, when his "only motive was the wish to see what so great an elevation had to offer." (Petrarch, 1898, p. 307) Amongst the several possible interpretations, now I read it as a report of an attempt to experience the Whole of nature in an enormous prospect, that is, in space: this Whole is identical with the divine that establishes and embraces every existence in nature (cf. Ritter, 1974, pp. 141–147). Once the poet laureate with his brother reaches the summit, he looks around and recognizes the astonishingly broad view in space, still he surprisingly soon loses his interest in this prospect; after a few lines of description in quite a neutral tone, we can read: "Then a new idea took possession of me, and I shifted my thoughts to a consideration of time rather than place [*Occupavit inde animum nova cogitatio atque a locis traduxit ad tempora*]." (Petrarch, 1989, p. 314) As a result of this shift from places to time, Petrarca begins to meditate on his life, his past, present and possible future, much more intensively and in greater length than on the spatial view before. There is an exciting play between space and time: the apparent diminution of spatial distances in his view from the peak are paralleled with, or rather engender, a densification of (personal) time in his mind. His past and future come closer to each other, he is intensively reflecting on the significant events of his life, he is finding new perspectives to see and to evaluate them, he is extending his contemplation backward and forward including afterlife. Space somehow belongs to the terrestrial area, while *time to the spiritual*. After a

²⁶ All of these employ some scientific knowledge about the sky, but these bits of information are quite occasional and contingent, easily replaceable with another ones, with even the traditional image of the eternal and stately rotating starry heaven decorated exceptionally with comets and "falling stars" or their culturally mediated memories.

²⁷ It is not true in a precise astronomical sense, of course, we know that even the "fixed stars" are moving and changing their position in our sky, but the time-scale of their motion is practically beyond human comprehension and experience.

fleeting return to some geographical details of the actual view, the poet opens St Augustine's *Confessions* in whose tenth book he happens to find this sentence (X. viii. 15.): "And men go about to wonder at the heights of the mountains, and the mighty waves of the sea, and the wide sweep of rivers, and the circuit of the ocean, and the revolution of the stars, but themselves they consider not [*Et eunt homines admirari alta montium et ingentes fluctus maris et latissimos lapsus fluminum et oceani ambitum et giros siderum, et relinquunt se ipsos*]." (Petrarch, 1898, p. 317) Besides high mountains and other magnificent natural scenes, there is the starry sky amongst the examples of worldly (therefore worthless) wonders of huge quantity. This ascetic-Platonic refusal means that Petrarca still saw an unbridgeable gap between terrestrial and celestial, between the visible-sensuous and the invisible-spiritual. His enterprise, although it seems modern and unprecedented in many respects, to grasp the Whole in a landscape-view could not have been 'aesthetic' in our sense, the play between the spatial and the temporal was intriguing but remained only rhetorical, and did not constitute a balanced structure of the experience: his spirit could not work, with Hepburn's phrase, as a "metaphysical imagination".²⁸ This is why even ENS could be refused, at least as a physical experience, despite the traditional estimation of the starry heaven as the visibility and the presence of our *cosmos* (Ritter, 1974, p. 148), and/or despite that the contemplation of starry sky had been held to be the metaphysical destiny of humankind (cf. Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics* 1216a; Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, I. 84–86.)

Yet Petrarca clearly recognised how the vision of a vast space in landscape could intensively evoke the sense of time – which can offer us a useful parallelism between vast landscapes and the night sky. Traditionally, the latter can be considered as the display of 'astronomical' time being expressed in distances²⁹ in an Einsteinian or Lemaîtreian space; as the monumental reminiscence of both the 'mythological' and 'cosmogonical' time³⁰; as the message board of 'astrological' time; regarding its majestic revolution, as the basis of our calendar; and also as – maybe firstly and mostly – the profound experience of personal lifetime. Pre-eminently, the latter is the spectator's vivid and strong feeling of the finitude of her own life. While experiencing immense space (and power) has a potential to overwhelm the spectator, and she can sense her own existential insignificance (as it is a commonplace from Pascal's encounter with spatial infinity onwards),³¹ time may have an exciting,

²⁸ Metaphysical imagination "connects with, looks to, the 'spelled out' systematic metaphysical theorising which is its support and ultimate justification. But also it is no less an element of the concrete present landscape-experience: it is fused with the sensory components, not a meditation aroused by these." (Hepburn, 1996, p. 192)

²⁹ In the lightyears between different cosmic bodies and the Earth, in the diameters of nebulae and galaxies, in the length of intergalactic filaments, etc., or in the hypothetical age of our Universe (currently 13.8 milliard years).

³⁰ Either frozen in the constellations (many of which tell some old and tragic stories that had happened between gods and humans), or represented in the more ancient ideas of distant Uranian god(s) (cf. Eliade, 1987, p. 118). Even nowadays the imagination of our scientists constructs mythological names for their astronomical objects from black hole and dark energy to blue giants and brown dwarfs, etc. (cf. Berleant, 2010, p. 142).

³¹ At least this has been the customary description of the first or initial phase of the sublime experience of immense space.

elevating, emancipatory potential quite different from space's. The sense of finitude may immediately raise a feeling of *uniqueness* and *imitability* on a cosmic scale, without there being any hubris or anthropomorphising. During ENS the spectator does not think of herself as the ruler of the universe, as the only source of meaning in the void, or as someone who possesses moral superiority over immense physical objects and dimensions – even if she necessarily and always stands in the centre of ENS, i.e. in the physical centre of the perceived hemisphere. The position she gains is still a special one from where she can reflect on the sky, on Earth, on herself, on her own life and on the history and future of the human race, on the relationship between all these, eventually on the relationship between past, present and future. Although the spatial and the temporal aspects of ENS are eventually inseparable, they can have different and complementary functions in aesthetic appreciation.³²

In his essay *Night and Moonlight*, Thoreau remarks that the light of the Moon “is more proportionate to our knowledge than that of a day. It is no more dusky in ordinary nights, than our mind’s habitual atmosphere, and the moonlight is as bright as our most illuminated moments are.” (Thoreau, 1863, p. 583) One and half centuries earlier, in the first piece of his *Spectator* series “Essays Moral and Divine” (1714) written in Pascalian inspiration, Addison tells the story of his “Sun-set walking in the open Fields, till the Night insensibly fell upon” him. The amazing and spectacular sight of the starry sky with the glowing Milky Way was completed by the rising “full Moon [...] in that clouded Majesty, which Milton takes Notice of”: all this “opened to the Eye a new Picture of Nature, which was more finely shaded, and disposed among softer Lights than that which the Sun had before discovered to us.” (Addison, 1965, p. 529) With these two quotations, finally, I would like to set up a hopefully illuminating analogy between this experience of reverberation under the starry sky and the time-experience of ENS: an analogy between the relationship of cosmic light-beams with the nightly lighting of nature on Earth and that of cosmic time (eternity) with lived personal time.³³ Both types of experience may help us elaborate an aesthetic interpretation of ENS which – without drawing on some illusionary unity or harmony with some Whole and without any distorting projections of anthropomorphising – *could relate us to* the radical otherness and even inhumanity of the night sky. And, although to different extent, both cited authors can suggest the multisensory features of ENS, which is never identical of the mere view of starry sky, but it contains – as its constitutive element – the terrestrial environment (specially illuminated terrestrial landscapes, sounds and voices, smells, tastes, breezes, heat and coolness, etc.). The spectator is at the centre of ENS, but not of the universe or even of the

³² There are, of course, other scenes or sources around us in which we can aesthetically feel and live the temporality of our existence, like, commonly, the sites of ancient or modern ruins, or the surface of Earth regarded as a gigantic ruin (after Thomas Burnet’s popular theory of the late 17th century), or the “*sic transit...*” lessons from the history of humankind, or even some foxed photos in a family album, but the night sky offers something else due to its radical otherness and the immutability of its vast prospect.

³³ It might seem interesting to refer to Lyotard’s (and Barnett Newman’s) “sublime Now”, but I can only indicate here that their “sensation of time” differs from the above outlined timeexperience of ENS (cf. Lyotard, 1991, pp. 89–107).

cosmos; she can simultaneously experience another 'Picture of Nature' with the previously hidden details now disclosed only by the Moon- and starlight – and another state of herself.

Here I can also refer to a passage by Hepburn, even if he insists on the vocabulary of space and body there. In his late evening walk to a Lake District tarn he found, besides the “wonderful enjoyment of the unbroken level surface of water”, that “The moon reflects on the tarn; and that bright, tiny addition to the scene prompts a momentous further change”: he could realize that he was “simply a solitary tarn-watcher” no more, but “one who walks the surface of a planet suspended in a space”, his “sense of bodily size and scale” and his “position” were “determined by [his] relationship with” “other heavenly bodies, planets, satellites and stars” (Hepburn, 1998, p. 273). The reverberation of the Moonlight on the surface of the tarn triggered a sense of an extended self; applying it to the time-experience of ENS, we could say that it is the sense of the past–present–future of both the spectator and the human race on Earth. As if this dimension of the night under the starry sky would have been recognised in the ancient concepts of dreams and prophetic visions, at least in dreams the self’s sensations are intensified and she is partly emancipated from her bodily-physical and timely barriers. This was called Selene’s realm who was the sad lover of Endymion, the shepherd sleeping and dreaming for ever in a cave, and – as the eighth Orphic Hymn says – she was “the Mother of Ages”, the “Fair lamp of Night, its ornament and friend, / Who giv’st to Nature’s works their destin’d end” (Taylor, 1792, p. 126).

4. Concluding Remarks

In the late 17th and the 18th centuries, on the emergence of modern aesthetics, the task was to re-discover the night sky as natural sublime in the context of immense space, reconfiguring its earlier metaphysical and mythological contents; nowadays the task could be to re-discover the quasi-Ptolemaic scheme of aesthetic ENS and to re-appropriate its existentially relevant contents, reconfiguring the claims of natural scientific curiosity and awe, or, more generally, those of the scientific culture in modern Europe, whose most distinctive feature has been “the gradual assimilation of all cognitive values to scientific ones.” (Gaukroger, 2006, p. 11) While the night sky can represent unreachable spatial distances and incomprehensible timescale, some radical otherness and inhumanity, in ENS as an aesthetic experience of the sublime, it is connected or rather related to the Earth including the peculiar circumstances of the experience (the enlightening of terrestrial landscape, voices, smells, etc.), to human race (its past and future), and to the personal life of the spectator. According to my non-cognitivist interpretation, one can exploit the aesthetic potentials of the ENS if one regards the night sky as a reverberation of the cosmic time into the lived world and one’s own lifetime, and not as an inexhaustible fund of astronomical and astrophysical riddles. Certain pieces of scientific knowledge can – as have often – become ingredient of the aesthetic ENS, but this knowledge is not all-explaining, nor exclusive, not even constitutive here: the aesthetic spectator of the night sky will only, so

to speak, cherry-pick from the buffet table provided by our “best science”, she may find some intriguing or inspiring grains of information, indeed, at the same time she permanently uses and applies several other, quite diverse, sources including the elements of the cultural heritage of humankind and those of her own life-experience (her earlier encounters with the night sky, her fears and hopes, etc.). Nowadays, the experience of this reverberation can immediately give a warning: we have one Earth, one world and one life to enjoy, live and preserve; it is not simply anthropocentrism in the pejorative sense of the word, rather an intensively felt awareness of the uniqueness of the sublunary sphere.

References

- Addison, J. et al. (1965) *The Spectator*, Vol. IV. Edited by D.F. Bond. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Arcangeli, M. and Dokic, J. (2021) ‘At the Limits: What Drives Experiences of the Sublime’, *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, 61(2), pp. 145–161.
- Barton, W.M. (2016) *Mountain Aesthetics in Early Modern Latin Literature*. London: Routledge.
- Beressi, B. (2020) ‘Between Nature and Naturalism: A Critical Engagement with the Natural Environmental Model of Aesthetics’, *The Heythrop Journal*, 61, pp. 737–748.
- Berleant, A. (1997) *Living in the Landscape: Towards an Aesthetics of Environment*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.
- Berleant, A. (2010) ‘Celestial Aesthetics’, in *Sensibility and Sense: The Aesthetic Transformation of the Human World*. Exeter: Imprint Academic, pp. 137–153.
- Brady, E. (2012) ‘The Environmental Sublime’, in Costelloe, T.M. (ed.) *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 171–182.
- Brady, E. (2013) *The Sublime in Modern Philosophy: Aesthetics, Ethics, and Nature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brady, E. (2021) ‘Global Climate Changes and Aesthetics’, *Environmental Values* (forthcoming)
- Burke, E. (1990) *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*. Edited by A. Philips. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Carlson, A. and Parsons, G. (2008) *Functional Beauty*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Clair, J. (ed.) (1999) *Cosmos: From Romanticism to Avant-garde*. München: Prestel.
- Eliade, M. (1987) *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. Translated by W.R. Trask. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc.
- Etlin, R.A. (2012) ‘Architecture and the Sublime’, in Costelloe, T.M. (ed.) *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 230–273.
- Fisher, Ph. (1998) *Wonder, the Rainbow, and the Aesthetics of Rare Experiences*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gaukroger, S. (2006) *The Emergence of a Scientific Culture: Science and the Shaping of Modernity, 1210–1685*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Gaukroger, S. (2010) *The Collapse of Mechanism and the Rise of Sensibility: Science and the Shaping of Modernity, 1680–1760*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Hepburn, R.W. (1988) ‘The Concept of the Sublime: Has it any Relevance for Philosophy Today?’, *Dialectics and Humanism*, 15(1–2), pp. 137–155.
- Hepburn, R.W. (1996) ‘Landscape and the Metaphysical Imagination’, *Environmental Values*, 5(3), pp. 191–204.
- Hepburn, R.W. (1998) ‘Nature Humanised: Nature Respected’, *Environmental Values*, 7(3), pp. 267–279.

- Hepburn, R.W. (2010) 'The Aesthetics of Sky and Space', Edited by E. Brady, *Environmental Values*, 19(3), pp. 273–288.
- Hutcheson, F. (2004) *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue. Revised Edition*. Edited by W. Leidhold. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund.
- Kant, I. (1892) *Kritik of Judgment*. Translated by J.H. Bernard. London; New York: Macmillan.
- Kant, I. (2015) *Critique of Practical Reason*. Revised Edition. Translated by M. Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Koyré, A. (1957) *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University.
- Liotard, J.-F. (1991) *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*. Translated by G. Bennington and R. Bowlby. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Matthews, P. (2002) 'Scientific Knowledge and the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 60(1), pp. 37–48.
- Morris, D.B. (1972) *The Religious Sublime: Christian Poetry and Critical Tradition in 18th Century England*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky.
- Parsons, G. (2008) *Aesthetics & Nature*. London: Continuum.
- Pascal, B. (1688) *Thoughts, Meditations, and Prayers, Touching Matters Moral and Divine, as they were found in his Papers after his Death*. Translated by J. Walker. London: Jacob Tonson.
- Petrarch, F. (1898) 'The Ascent of Mount Ventoux to Dionisio da Borgo San Sepolcro', Translated by J.H. Robinson, in Robinson, J.H. (ed.) *Petrarch: The First Modern Scholar and Man of Letters*. New York: G.P. Putnam, pp. 307–320.
- Ritter, J. (1974) *Subjektivität. Sechs Aufsätze*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag.
- Rolston, H., III. 2011. 'Celestial Aesthetics: Over Our and/or in Our Heads', *Theology & Science*, 9(3), pp. 273–285.
- Saito, Y. (2017) *Aesthetics of the Familiar: Everyday Life and World-Making*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schaeffer, J.-M. (2018) 'Esthétique de la nature ou esthétique environnementale?', *Nouvelle Revue d'Esthétique*, 22(2), pp. 55–63.
- Shapshay, S. (2013) 'Contemporary Environmental Aesthetics and the Neglect of the Sublime', *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, 53(2), pp. 181–198.
- Shapshay, S. (2021) 'A Two-Tiered Theory of the Sublime', *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, 61(2), pp. 123–143.
- Szécsényi E. (2020) 'The Jesuit Thread in Joseph Addison's Aesthetics', in Boulard Jouslin, C. and Ertler, K.-D. (eds) *Addison and Europe / Addison et l' Europe*. Berlin: Peter Lang, pp. 49–63.
- Thoreau, H.D. (1863) 'Night and Moonlight', *The Atlantic Monthly Magazine*, November, pp. 573–583.
- Tolstoy, L. (n.d.) *War and Peace*. Translated by L. and A. Maude. Planet eBook.
- Tuveson, E.L. (1960) *The Imagination as a Means of Grace: Locke and the Aesthetics of Romanticism*. Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Endre Szécsényi
 Department of Aesthetics
 ELTE – Eötvös Loránd University
 H-1088 Budapest, Múzeum krt. 6-8.
szecsenyi.endre@btk.elte.hu

Patterns of Musical Time Experience Before and After Romanticism

Bálint Veres

The article pays homage to the leading authority of 20th century Hungarian music aesthetics, József Ujfalussy, by connecting his heritage to more recent research on the problems of musical time and notably to the study pursued by Raymond Monelle. Rather than a perennial invariant, Monelle interpreted musical time as a historically changing phenomenon constituting implicitly the basic levels of musical semantics, as they have developed throughout the Baroque, Classical and Romantic eras. The present study focuses on the last of these paradigms, claiming that the Romantic experience of musical time has dominated both the production and the reception of music culture up to this day. The Romantic musical experience is based on a latent 'framework contract' between composition and audience, which drives the meanings attached to the experience of musical temporality. This latent agreement warrants a need for conventional compositional forms and simultaneously the insufficiency thereof. | Keywords: *Musical Experience, Temporality, Romanticism, Romanticized Hearing, Musical Genre Theory*

1. The Problem of Time in Music

The problem of time in music was solved a long time ago, about a century and a half. Few aesthetic clichés are set more firmly in the public consciousness than the words of wisdom repeated to boredom that 'music is the art of time'. But it is precisely the old and generally accepted commonplaces that we sometimes have to examine deeper to discover and resolve their contradictions. (Ujfalussy, 1962, p. 55)

Half a century ago, the notable 20th century Hungarian philosopher of music, József Ujfalussy, thus formulated the task he was trying to accomplish in one of the chapters of his main work, *The Musical Image of Reality [A valóság zenei képe]* (1962, pp. 55-71). Ujfalussy sought to shift the seemingly banal and rather vague view of music as a 'time art' from a deadlock by validating its spatio-temporality, that is, the spatial aspects that covertly accompany the

eminent temporality of musical experience.¹ He articulated his theoretical intention against the view of aesthetic immanence: an idea that originated from and prevailed within German idealism. Ujfalussy placed his studies on musical spatio-temporality into a broad horizon along the question of musical meaning that is socially formed. This approach makes his work comparable not only to Marxist musicology of the Soviet-Russian era but also to the later research of many Western poststructuralists, among others Lawrence Kramer (1990), Susan McClary (2000) and Jacques Attali (1985).²

One of these poststructuralist researchers, Raymond Monelle (2000) attributed particular importance to the problem of musical time. In chapter 4 of his seminal book *The Sense of Music*, he examined the historical development of temporalisation in composed music and as one of the first moments of grasping musical semantics, he highlighted the layers of meaning in historically changing forms of temporalities in musical works.³ The present study, building primarily on Monelle's insights (and also referring back to the task set by Ujfalussy), seeks to characterize the time experience of musical Romanticism that reigns to this day and defines not only the musical experience of many people today but affects the general time experience as well. My intention is to demonstrate that Romantic musical experience is based on a latent 'framework contract' between the piece of music and the audience that directs and coordinates the meanings attached to the experience of musical temporality. This latent agreement warrants the need for conventional compositional forms and simultaneously the insufficiency thereof. In order to make my position more explicit, I should clarify in the first place the preceding historical process from which the Romantic experience of musical time has emerged.⁴ Thus, my first step will be to briefly reconstruct the temporal poetics of Baroque and Viennese Classical music; only then shall I return to the original question: the musical expression of the temporal experience in modernity.

2. Ambiguity of Musical Time Experience

The starting point can be nothing more than to state that music is temporal in its deepest essence and is even a transfiguration of time itself.⁵ In music, time is preserved and denied at the same time; in a dialectical cycle it ceases and gets exalted. As Schelling (1989, 107 ff.) has already put it, although the self-

¹ Ujfalussy's considerations are in agreement with the criticism that was influentially explicated recently by William John Thomas Michell and other interdisciplinary scholars with regard to the modern standpoint of art theory emerged from Lessing's coat, by subordinating the mediums of arts to the separated and opposed dimensions of spatiality and temporality (Mitchell, 1986).

² For the broader context of post-World War Soviet-Russian and East European musicology compared to Western European and Anglo-Saxon (post)structuralist musicology, see Márta Grabócz (2009).

³ Further notable readings in this respect are Jonathan Kramer (1988), Gisèle Brelet (1949), and Jerrold Levinson (1997).

⁴ In the following, the terms 'modern' and 'romantic', which Hegel already used in a related sense, are treated as quasi-identical concepts. For an updated explanation of the concept of 'romantic,' see Maarten Doorman (2004).

⁵ For highly elaborate formulations of this commonplace, see Vladimir Jankélévitch (1961).

absorbed listening surrenders itself into a moving flux of sound while perceiving the musical process, the latter reaches a resting point in the final chords, which exerts a retroactive effect on the listening experience. The piece of music, both as an ongoing occurrence and as a completed deed, especially in the eyes of the early Romanticists, is honored as the prime path of ascension for the human spirit. They consider it to be reminiscent of philosophical contemplation because of its form, without complicating the spirit with overweight conceptuality (cf. Bowie, 2001, p. 42). The result of the above-mentioned retroactive listening experience is that a work of music becomes what it precisely is in the very moment it has been completed in its performance. It is born just when it passes away and becomes the content of memory and retrospection, as if it has always belonged to the past tense, not to the present.

In the memory, the temporality of the musical process transfigures into something spatial, the imaginary spatialization of its building blocks. "Time in succession becomes a spatial juxtaposition through memory," Ujfalussy (1962, p. 61) writes, referencing the forefather of Western music philosophy, Aristoxenus.⁶ Thus, the work of music follows contradictory drives: in its progression, it meets the expectation of the listener for formal fulfillment and completion that leads into mental spatialization; but at the same time, it procrastinates the achieving of its objective identity. This tension characterizes the piece of music not only in terms of the spatiality that emerges from temporality, but also in its materiality which is acoustically perceivable, and transfigures into an intellectual content within the musical process. This musical content can only come into existence in our imagination. Thus, although music works with the utmost real in our existence: our time, it still casts doubt on the pressing of ever-flowing time, when it establishes itself in the realm of memory and imagination.

Music also interrupts our everyday time experience in multiple ways, because in music, not only natural and cultural time, but also syntactic and semantic time separate from each other. The evolving of the musical process, that is the well-constructed sequence of musical signs, is tied to a certain *chronological* order of the piece in contrast with its retroactive meaning, which has a *kairological* character (cf. Monelle, 2000, pp. 81-114).⁷ The time of signification is thus something quite different from the temporality of the signified. On the one hand, there is a measurable continuum, on the other hand, an undivided whole that Henri Bergson (1912) called 'durée,' i.e. duration.

To sum up, while a work of music constitutes its own time in imagination and memory, at the same time it suspends the 'actual' time, that is the external

⁶ For the original reference see Aristoxenus (1902, sect. 38-39, pp. 193-194).

⁷ Contrary to the quantitative concept of *chronos*, understood as a continuity and progress and as a linkage of successive events, ancient Greek thinking already formulated the qualitative concept of *kairos*, another kind of time that is indeterminate, directionless, unpredictable, decision provoking (or provoked by decision), and which get conceptualized in Aristotelian rhetorics as the 'right moment,' in Christian theology as a 'moment of grace' or 'divine order'. (Cf. McNeill, 1999, p. 44; Sipiora and Baumlin, 2002)

continuity of the *durée* of remembrance and imagination. In other words, it suspends the 'real' present time, and gives place to the piece to flourish, whose final chords have resounded just now. But this summary would be hasty, and it was exactly from this haste that a misunderstanding of the constitutive historicity of Western music came out. The historical aspects of our music culture have not been grasped yet by acknowledging the fact that music possesses a specific kind of time of its own, and its own *durée* is characterized by the spatial qualities of memory and imagination. The historicity typical of Western culture can be grasped where the relationship between musical time, as structured in the compositional form, and the subjective experience of time goes through changes. From this perspective, we can find very similar fault lines in the modern history of European music as recognized by Foucault (1972) in the epistemology of the modern age.⁸

Monelle carried out a thorough historical study on the forms of musical time, i.e. musical temporalization in the above sense, drawing on the philosophical theories of Henri Bergson and the literary scholar George Poulet (1956). His insights offer analytical perspectives that have remained largely untapped so far and can contribute to provide renewed intellectual adventure for our present by the highly respected concert repertoire. "In music we have been so preoccupied with formal categories that we have found no name for the genre of nineteenth-century instrumental music, the musical novel indeed." In a self-evident and yet provocative way, Monelle (2000, p. 119) summarizes a conclusion that he draws from the comparative analysis of musical temporalizations in Baroque, Classical, and Romantic repertoires. In general, these three repertoires of musical works, the most prominent ones in Western music history, are considered from the perspective of musicology – that is based on *Formenlehre* – to be three variations of a single paradigm, the European major-minor tonality. However, they form three dramatically distinct modes of musical time.

3. Temporalities in Baroque and Classical Music

Linking Monelle's considerations to the insights put forward by Hans-Georg Gadamer (1986, pp. 3-53), we can state that Baroque music has a kind of festive character in a temporal sense. Now, the time of the feast, in contrast to its today misinterpretation, in its original sense would not remove us from our normal selves, nor would it put 'real' time in parentheses. On the contrary, feast makes the sempiternity of time and the temporality of human life emphatic. *Sempiternitas* is what Augustine in his *Confessiones* (XI, 14) referred to when he characterized time as something that one experiences as understandable only when one doesn't think about it, but lives with and in it,

⁸ As Clifford Geertz (1978) writes in his elegant review on Discipline and Punishment, according to Foucault "history is not a continuity, one thing growing organically out of the last and into the next, like the chapters in some nineteenth-century romance. It is a series of radical discontinuities, ruptures, breaks, each of which involves a wholly novel mutation in the possibilities for human observation, thought, and action." These mutations or 'epistemological fields' are the ones that research must first and foremost describe "according to the rules determining what kinds of perception and experience can exist within their limits, what can be seen, said, performed, and thought in the conceptual domain they define." Finally, it must be described "how one [of the *épistémès*] has formed itself in the space left vacant by another, ultimately covering it over with new realities."

while if one makes it the subject of thought, it had already slipped out of their hands.⁹ Gadamer emphasizes that we are to adjust ourselves to the feast that discloses the mystery hidden in the sempiternity of time as a dictation. Therefore, instead of supposing that time is at our disposal we subordinate ourselves to it. This is expressed by the saying that we can ‘enact a celebration’, or ruin it with our ignorance. The festival designates its duration: there is an interval between its coming and passing. This festive time, however, does not disconnect itself from the ordinary, but confirms it by a double temporality. Accordingly, this does not mean at all that celebration would be detached from reality or would be imaginary; for without the experience of the feast the daily reality of time would not be accessible otherwise. The feast confronts us with our temporality and teaches us how time ‘is’.

If the temporality of Baroque music is rightly called ecstatic, ecstasy here can only mean that this music connects us with our *ek-static*, that is, unstable and eternally dynamic fundament of existence. The temporal dynamics of Baroque music does not know the difference between pathos and progression: for in this music the pathos always progresses by itself, and at the same time allows itself to be confined within the limits set by ethos. The temporal unity of pathos and ethos forms a typifiable pattern and does not separate into two, distinct moments of pathos and ethos. Baroque music always employs a single temporality, but that temporality – and this is where the typology comes into play – is different in every piece and every movement.

In contrast to a Baroque piece of music conceived in the unity of pathos and ethos, in the internal articulation of which we always find contrastingly separated units that do not form a developing semantic field, the Classical symphony has an argumentative structure (Monelle, 2000, p. 111 ff.). Compared to the festive time of the former, a dramatic-discursive temporality appears here, one in which each moment refers to another moment that can be contrasted with. In Baroque music, time is not yet a constitutive ingredient of form in the strict sense. In turn, the Classical piece of music is first and foremost a temporal form, and in fact, a *dramatic* form of time. The sense of wholeness that arises at the end of the symphony (and at the end of each formal unit) comes from the balance of the interplay of opposing moments. This equilibrium, however, is not fixed, rather, it is a continuous dynamism while giving birth to ever new aspects and relations. Throughout the piece, the symphony is on its way to its own fullness and unceasingly promises the experience of ‘ful-filled time’. (Gadamer, 1970, pp. 341-353) However, the distinction that works between its progression and its completion is mirrored in a duality of its temporal experience. Everything that happens in it to counterbalance opposing moments and to generate its semantic dynamics gets relativized through the contrast between the sheer temporality of progression and the ful-filled time of completion.

The Classical symphony, on the level of its tiniest details, is something

⁹ “Quid est ergo tempus? si nemo ex me quaerat, scio; si quaerenti explicare velim, nescio.” (‘What, then, is time? If no one asks me, I know what it is. If I wish to explain it to him who asks me, I do not know.’) (Augustine, 2006, p. 254)

incredibly eloquent, getting the listener into its own musical discourse like a vortex. However, if we perceive it as a whole, it is a motionless greatness: silent and inaccessible. The philosophical commentaries that develop around symphonies go into raptures over a “supernatural”, “mystic”, “holy”, “divine”, “heavenly”, and “magic world” (E. T. A. Hoffmann, 1917, pp. 123-133), while they speak of it as a language beyond language, and as the manifestation of the ineffable. (cf. Bonds, 2006) The musical commentator, who expects the failure of verbal communicability regarding the musical experience well ahead, often uses an undisguised religious voice to describe the symphony, while reporting on a state of exaltation, which embraces the physical and the mental wholeness of the human being, and can be communicated only in fragments and in retrospect. (cf. Dahlhaus, 1989) However, this devoted discourse does not create an actual religious cult around the ‘absolute’ music because it is incapable of addressing the composition itself and conveying its superhuman *logos* with a binding force.¹⁰

In the Classical symphony, the relationship between the part and the whole is even: conflict, complication and resolution are balanced. If we have called its temporal nature dramatic because of its dual character, let us now add for the sake of precision that its dramatic time dynamics is more similar to comedy than to tragedy. The conflicts and confrontations that arise play a role primarily in postponing a resolution, although the latter always takes place sooner or later. The aspects of development and resolution, that is, the time of realization and the timelessness of completeness, relativize each other, and thus a symphony can be conceived with the same right as something in which everything happens for development, and in which everything exists for the sake of the resolution. The argumentative system of expositions, contrasts, conclusions, and derivations, which make up the fabric of progression in a piece of music, as well as the resolution in which the piece becomes complete, are sources of pleasure for the creator and audience alike, although not the identical kind of pleasure. The euphoria of the finale is prefigured by several points in the musical composition, whose completion provides a timeless synthesis of the entire semiotic structure of the piece.

4. Time Experience in Romantic Music

In Romantic music, this temporal duality sharpens into a dramatic conflict and brings the time dynamics of the piece of music closer to tragedy. (Monelle, 2000, pp. 115-121)¹¹ For the Romantic composer, the progressive and synthetic

¹⁰ From the perspective of the history of mentalities, the captivating aesthetic experience attributed to purely instrumental music can be associated to the decontextualizing character of Winckelmann’s aesthetic sensibility on ancient Greek sculpture, which - decades ahead of the time of the devoutness of the musical experience of symphonies - provides a perfect structural parallel. It is worth noting that oblivion is the key through which both Winckelmann and an early mouthpiece of the idea of absolute music, Wilhelm Wackenroder, are trying to articulate the ecstatic experience they lived through and witnessed; Winckelmann in relation to a Greek (or believed to be Greek) sculpture, Wackenroder in relation to a classical symphony. “In the presence of this miracle of art I forget all else, and I myself take a lofty position for the purpose of looking upon it in a worthy manner.” – Winckelmann writes in his ‘Description of the Apollo Belvedere’. (1872, p. 313) Wackenroder makes a similar statement about the symphony: “I have always experienced that whatever music I am hearing seems to be the best and most exquisite, and makes me forget all other kinds.” (cited in Dahlhaus, 1989, p. 82)

¹¹ However, Monelle does not discuss tragedy but ‘novelness’, that is ‘the musical novel’.

times of music have opposite values: the former connects to the worthless present while the latter is linked to the precious past (or the mysterious future). The two temporal dimensions can no longer translate into each other. Individual moments cannot unite, and the experience of wholeness is not available even where things fit each other in their totality, but only where something remains fragmentary and triggers the feeling of the “infinite”.¹² Monelle (2000, pp. 121-122) rightly points out that while in the Classical symphony every phase can be integrated into each other, in Romantic music, a “textual schizophrenia” prevails. In the experience of Classical symphony, present time and past tense becomes indistinguishable through the dual work of remembrance and expectant imagination. In Romantic art, however, this harmonious consonance of temporalities proves impossible: “remembering is now no longer *uniting* present with past” (Monelle 2000, p. 115), but executes a leap that leads to the past time, which is not linked organically in any way to the present. Thus, it explicitly [highlights] “all the distance that has to be crossed in order to discern ‘in the desolate depths of the gulf within’ the dark, remote, and mysterious being of memory.” (Poulet, 1956, p. 28) The dramatic character of the temporal rupture expressed in Romantic art is aptly illustrated by Poulet when he describes the relationship between the present and the past as one among which “there reappears a sort of dead duration, a kind of negative time composed of destruction and absence, an existence finished.” (*Ibid*) Then he adds (Poulet, 1956, p. 29):

And so there opens, at the center of man’s being, in the actual feeling of his existence, an insupportable void which real existence borders on every side; existence in time. It is as if duration had been broken in the middle and man felt his life torn from him, ahead and behind. The romantic effort to form itself a being out of presentiment and memory ends in the experience of a double tearing of the self.

The exalted air that surrounded Classical symphony precisely due to its ability of dissolving present and past, in Romantic art gets clearly and exclusively connected to the past, which is emphatically distinguished from present time. A Romantic work of art in its wholeness can no longer claim to be a revelation of the absolute: this would need the unification of past, present, and future, and the harmony between its parts and its totality. In a Romantic work, it is only the voice of the past (which has always been past-like even in its present time) that can sound the metaphysical strings, similarly to a revelation beyond language that can only be emitted by the partial (as in 1 Corinthians 13).

According to Monelle’s analyses, the *Romantic* symphony is a *symphony* only in terms of its formal structure but no longer in terms of temporal dynamics, which are more decisive than the formal structure. The proper formal structure is indeed not enough to secure the nature of symphony which is conceived as a source of speechless rapture and undisturbed spiritual devotion. After all, the function and validity of the compositional form is defined by the specific temporal experience aimed by the musical work, but it is precisely the distance

¹² Regarding the expression of the infinite, and for a comparison between Romantic music sensibility and parallel painterly developments, see László Földényi’s studies on Caspar David Friedrich (1993).

between the temporal dynamics of Classical and the Romantic symphony that is insurmountable. Of course, all this does not mean that the temporal dynamics of Romantic music would be some kind of return to the Baroque paradigm. On the contrary, it differs from it in its temporality just as much as the Classical symphony differs from the music of the Baroque era. Additionally, while the Classical symphony still maintains a hidden connection with the temporal experience of Baroque music, in the case of Romanticism, the difference becomes irreversible and final.

For, in the Classical symphony, the sections of a temporal progression step out from the flow only to reunite in the moment of fulfillment and synthesis, preserving thus the experience of the festive time. In contrast, the double temporalization of Romantic music is irreducibly heterogeneous in its nature: it cannot become an ecstatic unity of action and suffering, but is constantly realized as a conflict of these two aspects. The time of progressive thematic argumentation must endure the violent intrusions of a motionless reverie or timeless nostalgia (or utopian dream) again and again; and vice versa, the exclusive moments of remembrance and imagination are again and again disturbed by the compulsion to settle into a formal structure. The synthesis that transforms past, present and future into a single spiritual still life (or even a trance-like state) cannot be born here out of the interplay between the individual elements of the work; but directly emerges out of the operation of the extraordinary, and the charming moments of the work, which saturate the powers of imagination.¹³

Thus, while the experience of transcendence is promised by the Classical symphony through the indistinguishable unity of temporal co-progression and timeless revelation (i.e. the phenomenal and the noetic), the Romantic piece of music entrusts the same to an exclusive, out-of-structure material, which is in fact alien to its own musical context. At this point, Monelle introduces the notion of “genre”¹⁴, relying on Michael Riffaterre’s literary analyses, which can be applied mainly to the sub-themes of the Romantic symphonies, but also to the main themes and transitional passages (the so-called *Gang*). The genre is a kind of poetic parasite: regardless of formal and stylistic constraints, it creates a global feel, and a general atmosphere or content to a section of a narrative-dramatic work of art, but never to the whole. The genre has evocative power and the illusion of verisimilitude. These qualities, however, do not come from its internal qualities, but from its contextual position. And it gains its effectiveness in a contractual way: Romantic music places the natural power of art into the genre that fulfills the condition for the emergence of the unlikely verisimilitude.¹⁵

Genre can only be thought of as opposed to structure, which carries it, gives space to it, and organizes it. However, for Romantics, structure is exactly the

¹³ Monelle (2000, pp. 137-145) provides an outstandingly illuminating example of this in his analysis of Tchaikovsky’s Sixth Symphony.

¹⁴ Meaning as a ‘kind’, a ‘type’ or a ‘stylistic sort’.

¹⁵ Concerning the ‘natural powers’ of art explained from another perspective and in comparison with the opposing aspects of the sociohistorical contexts, see Richard Shusterman’s idea of “art as dramatization.” (2001)

non-artistic part in art. The structure is a mere fabrication, a shot of artificiality, as opposed to the genre, which is – like nature itself – the most homely and most terribly alien at the same time. Genre is an initiation into reality, both as act and as result. It is therefore based on a kind of cultic agreement that is re-established and ritually validated between the creator and the recipient during each aesthetic experience. This cultic agreement manifests itself in nothing else but in its practice: on the one hand, in the ever-reproducing bilaterality of the art experience, which not only separates the acting parties (the artist who performs the initiation and the audience as the initiate) but also generates their virtual community; on the other hand, in those transcendent moments that are offered each time by the effects of verisimilitude in a Romantic work. The cohesion in this community is not ensured by a formal treaty, but by a prior understanding among the members regarding this particular cult of the musical piece, more specifically, about the common belief of what kind of needs music could respond to and what kind of expectations it anticipates. In fact, these expectations can be varied and different in the case of a Romantic musical experience, but the promise of allowing potentially all sorts of expectations goes even beyond this diversity. For, the genre offers a verisimilitude in which the objects of desire can bathe.

5. Time Components of Musical Semantics

The historical dynamics of the changing temporal experiences and conceptions of European music is relevant not only with regards to the history of ideas, or with regards to a better description of the semantics of the concert repertoires. Exploring these dynamics may also encourage drawing practical lessons for today's musical thinking. Above all, the historical dynamics of musical semantics works in the complex interplay that operates between the temporality of a piece of music and the audience's experiential horizon. The problem of musical time cannot be reduced to the enquiry that examines the nature of temporality operating in a piece of music. Such an enquiry should also include the temporality of the listening experience. "What happens in a piece of music, and what does that happening mean?" This was the question asked by classical musicology, based on an idea of "sounding forms in motion" (Hanslick, 1986), mostly in harmony with the newer musicology's program of a musical semantics (Meyer, 1956). "What happens in music listening, and what does that happening mean?" This would be the leading question in a discipline of the history of musical hearing, thus complementing mainstream music history. It is clear that the two questions are not mutually exclusive but mutually presupposed. Musical works cannot be imagined without a reference to the spatio-temporal experiential horizon of an era. And vice versa: musical hearing unfolds and evolves through the acquisition of the spatio-temporal features offered by musical works. Neither can be reduced to the other, but none can be thought through without the other.

Another lesson follows from this: the *temporal paradigms* of European music in the modern era play a decisive role in what can be called the history of musical hearing. Not incidentally, the deteriorating condition of the latter in the 20th

century was characterized by Adorno (1991, pp. 29-60) simply by the phrase “regression of listening”. However, in the perspective of Monelle’s reasoning, it is uncertain whether Adorno’s undoubtedly high-impacting thesis is accurate enough. It seems more appropriate to speak of an all-encompassing *romanticization* of musical hearing, that is, to speak of the fact that the temporal experience of ‘textual schizophrenia’, stretching between structure and genre in Romantic music, has retroactively reached the music of earlier ages (and other cultures) as well. As a compensation, however, this changed sensibility subsequently entered into a cultic deal related to the ‘genre’ in all cases: all musical productions in every culture have an almost equal chance to apply for the enforcement of the lightning-like effects of rapture and ‘verisimilitude’.¹⁶

As an example, here is a remarkable scene from E.M. Forster’s novel *Howards End* (chapter V), which presents the romanticization of a great Classical symphony, the then hundred-year-old Beethoven Fifth in a complex way. It also shows the varied and divergent ways listeners can experience musical time. So, this example also speaks about a process that coincides, from a sociological point of view, with the growing separation of the ‘beau monde’ and the ‘audience’.

It will be generally admitted that Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony is the most sublime noise that has ever penetrated into the ear of man. All sorts and conditions are satisfied by it. Whether you are like Mrs. Munt, and tap surreptitiously when the tunes come – of course, not so as to disturb the others – or like Helen, who can see heroes and shipwrecks in the music’s flood; or like Margaret, who can only see the music; or like Tibby, who is profoundly versed in counterpoint, and holds the full score open on his knee; or like their cousin, Fraulein Mosebach, who remembers all the time that Beethoven is *echt Deutsch*; or like Fraulein Mosebach’s young man, who can remember nothing but Fraulein Mosebach: in any case, the passion of your life becomes more vivid, and you are bound to admit that such a noise is cheap at two shillings. (Forster, 2007, p. 34)

This audience is going through extremely heterogeneous aesthetic experiences. Yet, it can be stated that in the intersection of their heterogeneous attention, there stands the temporal dynamics of the piece. And this is only possible because all of them listen to Beethoven’s symphony (perhaps with the exception of Margaret) in a Romantic way, so the experience of transcendence or rapture makes the work of art fragmentary for all of them. The ‘great moments’ of the symphony that stir the feelings and the imagination of the listeners belong to a temporal experience that is no longer based on the development of the musical structure. The genre is located as an enclave in the musical process and functions as a take-off point for the listener’s experience. This take-off opportunity is by no means surprising to the audience, indeed, they expect it as one of the best deals achievable in their

¹⁶ The significance of this change in sensibility is best understood when modern practice driven by a historical approach is compared to the premodern view that judges musical productions of earlier generations barbaric and unworthy of cultivation (not to mention the music of non-European cultures).

lives. After all, for two shillings, they can get the happiness of having their desires 'taken to stage'.

6. Romantic Sensibility as Determinant of Experiencing Music in Modernity

In contrast to the spellbinding genre sections, which saturate mostly the sub-theme, in terms of the structural progression there does not seem to be a latent contract between the composer and the listener of the Romantic piece of music. This is no wonder, however, since, according to the Romantic conception of art, structure is a mere fabrication, not bound to the expectations for verisimilitude; and consequently it possesses a weightless freedom of assemblage.

This liberty is only available in certain twentieth-century music poetics, but not yet in Romantic music. Romantic composers, in addition to their responsibility for the genre, take on another responsibility as well: the compulsion to a rational and discursive musical form. Monelle (2000, pp. 115-146) gives detailed examples of how works of Schumann, Brahms, Dvořák, and Tchaikovsky demonstrate rivalry between the need for verisimilitude through genre and also need for discipline in musical form-giving. Sometimes it is the genre that overwhelms the other (making all structural elements insignificant), sometimes it is the discipline of form-giving that prevails (thus preventing the genre from reaching its full completion). As a result, on the discursive-structural side there is almost always a collapse due to the conflict; while on the side of the genre, there is almost always an authentic expression. Yet, responsibility for the formal structure can claim a crucial place in Romantic music works because the genre and the ecstatic time experience it promises can only enforce its powers in a contextual way. The genre, as a manifestation of the really real that is recalled through memory and imagination, always needs the formal structure, as a counter-balance: a seemingly progressive, in fact meaningless machinery of the empty present time. Sometimes the past gets stuck between the gears of the present-machine, or the future sparks between them for a moment; and in these cases the greatest pain coincides with the greatest pleasure. It is only due to a Mephistophelian treaty about the musical structure that provides an illusion of progress that the angelic invitation to daydream of the utmost reality can prevail.

Even if it is easy to see that the concept of genre fundamentally presupposes the notion of structure, and that the time of daydreaming is complementary to the time of present-machinery, the question remains as to why structure articulates itself in the 19th century (and in many cases even in the 20th century) within the frameworks of classical ideals of musical form. Why do Romantic composers still call their works a symphony or a sonata? Why do they insist on argumentative forms? Why do they not replace them by static forms in which the timelessness of the genre is not threatened by the compulsion to progress?

As a matter of fact, at least partly, they are indeed abandoning argumentative forms and re-focusing their activities to bagatelles, impromptus, character

pieces, interludes, intermezzi and similar genres, typically compiled into series. But this can only be done because the prestigious Classical symphonic forms are also preserved in Romantic repertoire; and the aesthetic paradigm of the genre / structure divide is coded by these masterworks in each and every composition. Therefore, even in the case of the Romantic repertoire, symphonic works, especially the compositions in sonata forms, should be the focus of research about musical experience. However, the question provoked by the constant presence and unceasing cultural importance of these Romantic symphonies remains valid: Why does the sonata form not disappear along with the temporal dynamics of the Classical symphonies?

The answer can be discovered precisely along the aspect of temporality. If Romantic compositions had turned to the problem of musical structure and process in an original way – rather than focusing on the genre as the mouthpiece of subjectivity – they would have had to legitimize present time, in which every process of form unfolds. But the Romantics identify the present with nullity, invalidity, and emptiness; there is no reason for them to turn to it as a phenomenon with its own value. They were only interested in showing their back to the present.

In connection with the Romantic repertoire, it is a common belief that the formal-structural continuity associated with the Viennese classics should be interpreted here as a tribute, an obvious gesture of historical consciousness. Brahms, for example, arguably expresses his respect for Beethoven through formal features of his works. Respect, however, cannot be the final word with regards to the formal discipline of Romantic works, since, for example, Schumann does not replace the argumentative forms at hand with Baroque structures due to his passion for Bach, and his stylistic and textural allusions are inserted and applied into Classical, argumentative forms.

The Romantic composer thus identifies above all with a specific position in art history. He sees himself as a descendant of Viennese classics, and as an heir of the aesthetics of ‘absolute music’ traced back to Bach (and even Palestrina) in a retroactive way, while he interprets this heritage in various ways.¹⁷ The historical situation of his own position does not dissolve his self-consciousness, however. This is obvious from the contradiction that, while asserting the sublime heritage, the artist is still unable to identify with the formal requirements of tradition, that is the temporal dynamics that operate in the Baroque or Classical repertoire. Unlike the classics who turned to the problems of musical form and discourse, the Romantics turn away from questions of structure – or at least they relate to these in an ambivalent way, because they see them as tied to the dullness of the present time. As George Sand put it in her *Lelia*: “I became aware that the present did not exist for me [...] and that the occupation of my life was to turn ceaselessly toward the lost joys or toward the joys still possible.” (cited in Poulet, 1956, p. 26)

The task that Sand is talking about is an internal and spiritual coercion that

¹⁷ See the problems of the “New German” school and Wagner, as discussed in Dahlhaus (1989, pp. 128-140).

drives the artist toward the really real. This is counterbalanced by another coercion: the denial of the vacuous present, which is accomplished by deliberately letting the formal structure empty out. Maintaining an inherited structure seems, at first glance, the result of a conformist social contract. The formal-structural sample and validity of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony that is upheld also in its wake through Romantic symphonies, allows for the realization of spooky communities such as Forster reports on. The diverse artistic experience of such communities – and its various consequences in how one experiences oneself – can be called spooky because the total musical event falls apart fatally and irrevocably into the divides of the consensual experience of chronos and individual experience of kairos. The chronological homogeneity of the series of musical events rests on its own structure, which maintains, however, only an illusory interrelation between its parts and its whole in the Romantic works. This illusory chronological homogeneity takes the audience into the misconception that their individual revelations have a common focus, although there are only specific sections and segments, which are responsible for producing those effects that invite one for trance and revelation.

So, what seems to be a guarding at first glance, and the preservation of a consensual cultural treasury, is shown in a more thorough investigation that it hides actually an emptying and an annihilation of that treasury of musical forms. Thus, actually it is nothing more than the trampling of the inherited cultural consensus. When music composing does not replace empty structures with new, valid, or updated ones, and when refused consensual forms are not replaced by consensus-seeking novel forms, not only a certain consensus is eliminated, but the possibility of consensus in general is denied. The Romantic composer has the authority and contract to use the evocative and enchanting power of what Monelle called the 'genre'. This gives the right, initially undercover, to destroy conventions by invoking spiritual coercion. This act, with all its consequences, can be justified only by a spontaneous audience that needs the camouflage of the old structure less and less, for it no longer expects either art-historical or comprehensive discursive-cultural validity from the work. It only expects 'big moments' from music. Waiting for these, however, becomes more and more in vain especially in pure instrumental music, above all because of the lack of consensual structural and formal patterns.

References

- Adorno, Th.W. (1991): 'On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of Listening', in *The Culture Industry. Selected essays on mass culture*. London: Routledge, pp. 29-60.
- Aristoxenus (1902) *The Harmonics of Aristoxenus*. Macran, Henry S. (ed.) Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Attali, J. (1985) *Noise. The Political Economy of Music*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Augustine (2006) *Confessions and Enchiridion*. Edited and translated by Albert Cook Outler. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Bergson, H. (1912) *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*. Paris: F. Alcan.
- Bonds, M.E. (2006) *Music as Thought. Listening to the symphony in the age of Beethoven*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Bowie, A. (2001) 'Music and the Rise of Aesthetics'. In Jim Samson (ed.): *The Cambridge*

- History of 19th Century Music*. pp. 29-54. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brelet, G. (1949) *Le temps musical*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Dahlhaus, C. (1989) *The Idea of Absolute Music*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Doorman, M. (2004) *De romantische orde*. Amsterdam: Bakker.
- Földényi, L.F. (1993) *Caspar David Friedrich: Die Nachtseite der Malerei*. München: Matthes & Seitz.
- Forster, E.M. (2007) *Howards End*. Hazleton: The Pennsylvania State University.
- Foucault, M. (1972) *The Archeology of Knowledge*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Gadamer, H-G. (1970) 'Concerning empty and full-filled time', *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 8(4), pp. 341-353.
- Gadamer, H-G. (1986) *The relevance of the beautiful*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Geertz, C. (1978) 'Stir Crazy. Review of Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison, by Michel Foucault,' *The New York Review*, January 26.
- Grabócz, M. (2009) *Musique, narrativité, signification*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Hanslick, E. (1986) *On the Musically Beautiful: A Contribution towards the Revision of the Aesthetics of Music*. Translated by Geoffrey Payzant. Indianapolis: Hackett.
- Hoffmann, E.T.A. (1917) 'Beethoven's instrumental music.' Translated by Arthur W. Locke, *The Musical Quarterly*, 3(1), pp. 123-133.
- Jankélévitch, V. (1961) *La Musique et l'ineffable*. Paris: Armand Colin.
- Kramer, J. (1988) *The Time of Music*. New York: Schirmer Books.
- Kramer, L. (1990) *Music as Cultural Practice. 1800-1900*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Levinson, J. (1997) *Music in the Moment*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- McClary, S. (2000) *Conventional Wisdom. The Content of Musical Form*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- McNeill, W. (1999) *The Glimpse of the Eye: Heidegger, Aristotle, and the Ends of Theory*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Meyer, L.B. (1956) *Emotion and Meaning in Music*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Mitchell, W.J.T. (1986) *Iconology*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Monelle, R. (2000) *The Sense of Music: Semiotic Essays*. Princeton University Press.
- Poulet, G. (1956) *Studies in Human Time*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press.
- Schelling, F.W.J. (1989) *The Philosophy of Art*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Shusterman, R. (2001) 'Art as Dramatization', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 59(4), pp. 363-372.
- Sipiora, Ph. and Baumlin, J.S. (eds) (2002) *Rhetoric and Kairos*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Ujfalussy, J. (1962) *A valóság zenei képe* [The Musical Image of Reality]. Budapest: Zeneműkiadó.
- Winckelmann, J.J. (1782) *History of Ancient Art*, vol. II. Translated by Giles Henry Lodge. Boston: Osgood.

Bálint Veres
 Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design, Budapest
 1121 Budapest, Zugligeti út 9-25.
 Hungary
veresbal@mome.hu



SHORT ESSAYS AND DISCUSSION PIECES

Mental Files and the Theory of Fiction: A Reply to Zoltán Vecsey

Eleonora Orlando

In this work I reply to Zoltán Vecsey's criticisms of the semantic account of fictional names I put forward in Orlando (2017). The main tenet of that proposal is that fictional names refer to individual concepts, which I understand in terms of mental files. In Vecsey (2020), the author presents three main objections: (i) no referential shift can be ascribed to fictional names, (ii) fictional names are supposed to play two conflicting functions, and (iii) the mental file framework is incompatible with an antirealist view of fictional objects. Although the objections are deep and thoughtful, the challenge they involve can be met if certain aspects of the proposal are clarified and developed. | Keywords: *Fictional Name, Fictional Concept, Mental File, Fictional Narrative, Antirealism vs. Realism About Fiction*

In *Fictional Objects within the Theory of Mental Files: Problems and Prospects* (Vecsey, 2020), Zoltán Vecsey does two main things: (i) he criticises the thesis that mental file theory allows for a particular grounding of antirealism about fictional discourse, which I proposed in my (2017) paper; and (ii) he defends the view that mental file theory fits better with realism than with antirealism about fiction. In this reply, I will be concerned with his objections but will not examine his positive view. Although Vecsey's objections are rigorous, interesting and thoughtful, I think that the above-mentioned proposal has been partially misinterpreted. I will then attempt to clarify some aspects of my semantic position regarding fictional names so as to make it clear how it can be considered to meet Vecsey's main objections.

The core purpose of my (2017) paper has been defending the thesis that fictional names refer to individual concepts, which in turn I proposed to construe in terms of mental files. Files are a new way of conceiving of particular concepts, whether individual or indexical: a mental file is a mental representation that stores and anchors information (and misinformation) about a certain particular under a certain label (Perry, 2001; Jeshion, 2009 and 2010; Korta and Perry, 2011; Recanati 2012). Mental files are relationally, as opposed to satisfactorily, identified: in a paradigmatic case, whereas

a descriptive concept applies to a particular by virtue of the fact that it satisfies a certain description (satisfactionally), a mental file applies to a particular by virtue of the fact that it is directly related to it (relationally). The set of direct relations between a mental file and the corresponding particular includes perception, memory, testimony, and the historical chains of communication underlying the use of proper names – those relations are usually characterised as different forms of ‘acquaintance’. By deploying mental files one is able to entertain thoughts about particulars, namely, singular thoughts. That capacity is thus naturally associated with the capacity to use sentences containing genuinely referential expressions, like proper names and indexicals. Files are then the mental counterparts of singular terms; as just explained, they are individual and indexical concepts.

Now, to defend my central claim, I have argued that when an author introduces a fictional name in the process of creating a fictional narrative, even if there is no typical material particular she is related to, she can be taken to open a mental file for a fictional character – since files need not be grounded on typical material particulars. It is then possible to think that *her referential intention is directed towards the file opened in association with the character’s name*, whose main function is to store and anchor information and misinformation concerning that character. Now, the consequent thesis that the fictional name refers to the corresponding file can be considered to be a novel application of Frege’s idea that the kind of entity a word refers to depends on the kind of sentential context in which the word occurs – from now on, I will allude to it as Frege’s *Referential Shift* thesis.

According to Frege (1892), when occurring in certain sentential contexts, such as direct quotations and attitude ascriptions, words must be taken to refer not to the usual objects they refer to, such as typical material particulars, but to themselves or to their customary senses, respectively. The following fragment makes this idea manifest:

If words are used in the ordinary way, what one intends to speak of is their reference. It can also happen, however, that one wishes to talk about the words themselves or their sense. This happens, for instance, when the words of another are quoted. One’s own words then first designate words of the other speaker, and only the latter have their usual reference. We then have signs of signs. In writing, the words are in this case enclosed in quotation marks. Accordingly, a word standing between quotation marks must not be taken as having its ordinary reference. [...] In reported speech one talks about the sense, e.g., of another person’s remarks. It is quite clear that in this way of speaking words do not have their customary reference but designate what is usually their sense. In order to have a short expression, we will say: in reported speech, words are used *indirectly* or have their *indirect* reference. (Frege, 1892, pp. 58-9)

Quotation marks and most psychological verbs are thus indicative of a departure from usual reference, namely, of a *referential shift*; words themselves and senses are the kinds of entities reference might shift to. My idea was then that in writing fiction, as there is no possible outward referential

intention, one could take reference to shift from typical material particulars to concepts in the realm of thought. In other words, since the author of a fictional narrative is not *primarily* concerned with the typical material world, the fictional names she introduces can be thought to refer to the mental files she opens for her characters, namely, to fictional individual concepts. Falling short of a syntactic device like quotation marks or psychological verbs, it is the *author's referential intentions* that can be thought to do the job, namely, signalling the presence of what Frege called an "oblique" context, that is, a context in which reference has shifted.¹

As is clear from Frege's account, the ontological commitment to both words and senses is motivated independently of the *Referential Shift* thesis: the existence of words as units of language is taken for granted, and senses are posited to account for the difference in cognitive significance between pairs of sentences containing different but co-referential terms – namely, to solve the so-called Frege's Puzzle (Salmon, 1983). As it happens, the ontological commitment to mental files is also justified on independent reasons, since, as above emphasised, files are posited to account for singular thoughts or thoughts about particulars.

Now, Vecsey summarises his first objection in the following terms: "a referential shift cannot be elicited by intention alone." (Vecsey, 2020, p. 40)² But, in so claiming, I think that he is misinterpreting my application of Frege's *Referential Shift* thesis. My original idea is neither that (i) fictional names start by being empty names and then shift their referents to mental files, nor that (ii) fictional names shift their referents to the different readers' mental files according to the context of use, as it would follow if they behaved like demonstratives. As he acknowledges a few lines ahead (pp. 40-41), I maintain that fictional names refer to mental files from the very first moment and all along: the files referred to originate in the author's mind during the process of creating the fictional narrative, and then give rise to the types of files constituting the thoughts that structure that narrative. The shift from usual material referents to files is determined by the fact that fictional names occur in peculiar sentential contexts, namely, when the corresponding sentences are used to create, read, interpret or critically analyse fiction – in other terms, when the corresponding sentences are fictively, parafictively or metafictively used. As is known, fictive uses are the uses of fictional sentences, by authors and readers, within the framework of the fictional narrative (such as the use of the first sentence in *The hound of the Baskervilles*, "Mr. Sherlock Holmes, who was usually very late in the mornings, save upon those not infrequent occasions when he was up all night, was seated at the breakfast table"); parafictive uses are reports of the fictional story facts from an external perspective (as in uttering "Holmes is a detective" in the course of a lecture on British literature); and, finally, metafictive ones are uses of fictional sentences

¹ As pointed out by Simpson (1964, pp. 113-4), Frege does not provide us with a general criterion to recognise the kinds of sentential contexts that involve a referential shift.

² All the ensuing quotations of Vecsey's work belong to the same article.

to state facts that are, characteristically, not part of the fictional story (as when claiming “Holmes is an interesting character” or “Holmes does not exist”).³

More specifically, when an author introduces a fictional name in the process of creating a fictional narrative, she can be taken to open a mental file for a fictional character. In as far as that file is going to be tokened (or instanced) many times throughout the creation of the narrative, the different tokens (or instances) give rise to a certain *type of file*. Introducing a fictional name involves establishing a correlation between a name-type and a file-type that will end up being part of a fixed system of correlations between sentence-types involving that name and thought-types involving the corresponding file – a system that constitutes the *conceptual world of the fiction* at stake. That correlation (between a name-type and a file-type) can be construed as a referential relation, featuring on an unusual sentential context, namely, one in which *the speaker’s (namely, the author’s) referential intention targets not a typical material object but a character*, given that she is involved in creating fiction. Likewise, when someone reads, memorises, recites or critically approaches that narrative, she will be taking part in a communication chain leading to that file-type, namely, she will be borrowing the name’s referent by inserting himself in a chain originated by the author’s creation.⁴

A clarification point is in order. The previous thesis does not amount to the claim that the author has a conscious intention to refer to her mental file: she has the conscious intention to refer to a fictional character, her invention, a figment of her imagination, which can be theoretically construed, unbeknownst to her, as a mental file. In other terms, *the author has an intention concerning an object that is, as a matter of fact, a mental file but is not represented as such in the author’s mind*.

This idea can be rendered, more technically, in terms of the *transparent/opaque* distinction (Quine, 1956): according to this distinction, the linguistic ascription of a complex mental state (namely, a propositional attitude) to a subject can be interpreted in two different ways. On the transparent interpretation, also called *de re*, it expresses a relation between the subject and a certain particular, independently of how the particular is characterised (in the ascription). On the opaque interpretation, also called *de dicto*, it expresses a relation between the subject and a specific characterisation of a (purported) particular (included in the ascription). To take a simple example, if Mark believes, concerning a certain painter, Caravaggio, whose real name, Michelangelo Merisi, he ignores, that he was the best Baroque painter, the belief ascription “Mark believes that Michelangelo Merisi was the best Baroque painter” comes out true on the transparent interpretation, since the painter he is related to in having that belief was as a matter of fact Michelangelo Merisi, but is false on the opaque one, since Mark cannot characterise that painter by his real name, ‘Merisi’, but can only use his pseudonym, ‘Caravaggio’. Likewise,

³ For the difference among fictive, parafictive and metafictional uses, also called ‘textual’, ‘paratextual’ and ‘metatextual’, see, for instance, Bonomi (2008) and García-Carpintero (2015).

⁴ Throughout this note, I will use the feminine pronoun for the author and the masculine pronoun for the reader/critic.

when I claim that the author of a fictional narrative can be ascribed the intention to refer to her own file for a character, I mean that she can be ascribed an intention directed towards an object which, as a matter of fact, is a mental file but would not be described by her in those terms – given the fact that she is a creator of fiction, not a philosopher of language, and, as such, may have no particular metaphysical conception of fictional characters. The ascription to the author of a referential intention directed towards her own file must be interpreted in the transparent, not in the opaque, sense – in other terms, it is true on the transparent, not on the opaque, interpretation. In my opinion, it is the fact that Vecsey does not take this distinction into account that leads him to the misunderstanding that transpires in the following quote:

Perhaps the first token occurrence of ‘Sherlock Holmes’ in the novel *A Study in Scarlet* refers already to a mental representation. Although this token occurrence seems to refer to a person within its host sentence, this is only a surface semantic effect. Actually, Conan Doyle introduced the name of his protagonist to refer to its mode of presentation (i.e., the HOLMES file). So the argument may go. This would be a more plausible explanation for the alleged referential shift in the semantic profile of the name. If it is correct to assume that the profile of names depends, at least in part, on the semantically relevant aspects of their introduction, for example, in the semantic or communicative intentions of their introducers, then it can be imagined that instances of a certain kind of name are designed so that they refer to mental objects. The question is whether authors of fictional works introduce character names into their narratives in this manner. Regretfully, a definitive answer would require a lengthy excursion into the cognitive/psychological theory of artistic creation, which is beyond the scope of this paper. (p. 40)

To emphasise my previous point, the application of Frege’s *Referential Shift* thesis to sentences containing fictional names has not been proposed as a psychological hypothesis about what creators of fiction have consciously in mind when writing their narratives, and, in particular, when they introduce names for their characters: it is a *semantic hypothesis*, more specifically, a hypothesis concerning both the referential status of fictional names and the ontological status of the corresponding referents, namely, something they might be completely unaware of *qua* competent speakers. From my perspective, not only the author but also the readers and critics of *A Study in Scarlet* can be considered to be referring to a fictional character, Holmes, in the intuitive sense of ‘referring’ and the intuitive sense of ‘fictional character’; but the theoretical status of that relation and the metaphysical nature of that fictional character can be, and usually are, beyond their ken.

Moving now into Vecsey’s second objection, it is summarised in the following terms: on my account, “character names are supposed to perform two conflicting functions in fictional narratives.” (p. 40) The following fragment of the text expands on this idea:

[...] On the one hand, there is a semantic relation between the character name ‘Holmes’ and the HOLMES file. On the other, there is a semantic relation that relates ‘Holmes’ to the Holmes character. And this is

something that cannot be integrated into a coherent semantic picture because 'Holmes' is related at once both to a concrete particular (i.e. HOLMES file) and to an abstract object (i.e. the Holmes character). (p. 42)

This is an important objection that presses the need for clarifying a metaphysical point concerning mental files, namely, for giving a precise answer to the question about what kind of object a mental file is from a metaphysical point of view. The core of the answer is that there is no conflict because the HOLMES file is the HOLMES character, namely, a *type of concept* (or a *concept-type*), and, as such, an abstract object of some sort.

As previously explained, on my proposal, the HOLMES file, namely, the referent of 'Holmes', is conceived of in terms of a type of file that originates out of the many instances of the file tokened in Doyle's mind during the process of creating his novels – namely, it is grounded on many file-tokens. There is nothing else to the Holmes character than that very file-type. So, the Holmes character is a type of concept, grounded on multiple tokens of concepts, which are, as pointed out by Vecsey, concrete particulars. But the type at stake is an *abstract* object, in the same sense in which types of things in general – in particular, word-types and sentence-types – can be considered to be abstract objects.

Moreover, as stated before, I have proposed to conceive of a fictional narrative in terms of a set of sentence-types semantically correlated with a set of thought-types, which are grounded on the tokens entertained by the author during the creation process.⁵ Thought-types are constituted by concept-types, among which we find the individual and the indexical ones, namely, mental files. Accordingly, *A Study in Scarlet* can be construed as a set of correlations between sentences-types and thought-types, among which, there are the ones containing the (individual) file-type HOLMES.

Given that literature is an allographic art (Goodman, 1968), literary artworks, as opposed to paintings and sculptures, are some sort of abstract object with multiple concrete instances. An author creates a fictional narrative by creating an instance or exemplar of it: in my terms, by semantically correlating, at a particular time and a concrete place, a certain set of sentence-types with a certain set of thought-types, grounded on her own thought-tokens. The initial literary exemplar is thus a set of sentence-tokens that gets semantically correlated with an author's (set of) thought-types; literary exemplars might thus be construed as semantic vehicles of thought-types. In as far as our main topic, fictional names, is concerned, a certain name-type gets semantically correlated with a certain file-type, which thereby becomes its referent.

In footnote 11 of his article, Vecsey claims that my main thesis about the reference of fictional names is in tension with the externalist conception of reference that I favour. With regard to this, I would like to point out that there is a sense in which 'the external world' can be thought to encompass both the usual material particulars and the concepts (however conceived of) that are common to the members of a certain linguistic community (or, for that matter, of different

⁵ As should be clear, this characterisation is restricted to so-called purely linguistic fictional narratives, among which we find literary artworks.

linguistic communities), in as far as both kinds of entities belong to a public or shared domain. Likewise, artworks (however conceived of) are also public and, as such, can be considered to be part of ‘the external world’.

Finally, Vecsey’s last objection is epitomised in the following sentence: “the mental file framework is incompatible with the antirealist view of fictional objects.” (p. 42) I think this is also an interesting piece of criticism, which deserves to be answered in some detail. First of all, Vecsey is right in claiming that “Orlando’s mental file framework was designed to demonstrate that the antirealist theory of fictional objects can be reconciled with the claim that fictional utterances express propositions that are not imaginatively true, but instead true in the real world.” (p. 43) But, as I see things at present, I agree with him that this is a mistake. I no longer consider all uses of fictional discourse to be truth-assessable. As explained with some detail in my article (Orlando, 2021), I tend to think that fictive uses (namely, uses of the sentences constitutive of a fictional narrative either by the author or by its subsequent readers) are not assertions, and hence not susceptible of being true or false, but speech acts with a *declarative force*, namely, those acts whose illocutionary point is to create something, “cases where one brings a state of affairs into existence by declaring it to exist.” (Searle, 1969, p. 358) The general point is that if an author successfully performs the act of creating a narrative in which certain characters are featured in a fictional story, then there is such a narrative.

More specifically, the speech act involved in the fictive use of a sentence by the creator of a fiction might be assigned two illocutionary points, along the lines of *the promulgation of a law by a legislator*: “Promulgating a law has both a declarational status (the propositional content becomes law) and a directive status (the law is directive in intent).” (Searle, 1969, pp. 368-369) Likewise, an original fictive use has also both a *declarational* status, since its content becomes part of a literary artwork, and a directive status, since that content has a normative function in relation to future uses by readers and critics. They cannot then be classified as true or false. As for subsequent fictive uses by readers, they also have a declarative force but they seem to follow the pattern of *the application of a law by a judge* – rather than its promulgation by a legislator: they enforce the narrative as much as a judge’s decision enforces a pre-existent legislation, to which she must be faithful. Both kinds of declarative acts are regimented, by the pre-existent law and the pre-existent fictional narrative, respectively. Subsequent fictive uses are thus to be classified not as true or false but as faithful or unfaithful to the conceptual world of a (pre-existent) fictional narrative. Finally, parafictive uses (those conveying the fictional story facts from an external perspective, in words that are different from the original ones) could also be ascribed, at least in part, a declarative status akin to a judge’s application of a pre-existent legislation. But, given that they involve a *reformulation* of the author’s original discourse, they can be assimilated to those cases in which the law is not directly applied but involves the judge’s previous interpretation.⁶

⁶ A more detailed explanation of the grounds for ascribing a declarative illocutionary force to fictive and parafictive uses of fictional sentences can be found in Orlando (2021).

It is worth pointing out that this hypothesis concerning the speech act status of fictive and parafictive uses of fictional discourse is not in tension with the core thesis that fictional names refer to individual concepts, since the presence of a reference relation is compatible with different kinds of speech acts: fiction may involve reference even if it does involve assertion and, hence, truth.

Vecsey goes on by claiming that mental files are “‘hybrid’ existents, which satisfy the standard criteria both of concreteness and abstractness.” (p. 43) As explained above, mental files are individual concepts, which, along with cognitivist lines, can be understood as *mental representations*. Another option is, as is known, going Platonist, and construing concepts in terms of universals; but, as Vecsey himself acknowledges, this is not the tradition, characteristic of Fodor (1990) and Perry (1980), I explicitly identify myself with. Without intending to go deep into metaphysical waters, I would like to point out that mental representations are *concrete particulars* that typically give rise to *types*, which, as claimed above, are not concrete particulars but abstract entities of some sort: there is a sense in which different people (or, for that matter, the same person at different times) can be considered to share a mental representation, namely, a representation-type that plays a certain role or has a certain content, even if it can be tokened in different minds (or in the same mind at different times). As is known, this type-token ambiguity is also present regarding linguistic entities such as words and sentences. If this is what Vecsey means by ‘hybridity’, I agree with him, but it is necessary to take into account that this is a phenomenon that conspicuously affects other entities besides mental files.

Vecsey then concludes that “the central claims of the mental file framework are incompatible with the antirealist view.” (p. 43) More specifically, he voices the following complaint:

She [that is, I] contends that if readers want to talk about the protagonist of a fictional work, then their referential intention is directed to something that belongs to the conceptual/abstract realm. And, on her view, this conceptual/abstract something exists contingently: it comes into being through an author’s storytelling activity. But this is precisely what certain advocates of fictional realism claim. (p. 43)

He is right in demanding an explanation of why I take my position to be a version of antirealism – or, as I called it in my (2021) paper, an instance of ‘moderate fictionalism’.⁷ Although the difference between my position and a realist one, in particular, abstractism, may not be considered to be significant, I think the two kinds of positions are in fact different enough.⁸

As pointed out before, my proposal involves an ontological commitment to descriptive concepts and mental files, thoughts made out of them, and fictional narratives, constituted in part by those thoughts (and in part by the sentence-types chosen by their respective authors). Fictional narratives, conceived of as sets of pairs of sentence-types and thought-types, are some kind of abstract

⁷ For a radical version of fictionalism, see, for instance, Predelli (2020).

⁸ For abstractism about fictional entities, see, for instance, Thomasson (1999), Salmon (2002), Voltolini (2006). I have also defended a version of abstractism in Orlando (2016).

object. In as far as fictional names are taken to refer to mental files, they refer to parts of the abstract objects that are the fictional narratives in which they occur. But those narratives' parts are *concept-types*, which in turn need not be conceived of as universals but can be construed in terms of *relations of resemblance among particulars*, i.e., relations among qualitatively similar mental representations tokened both in the author's and the readers and critics' minds. Consequently, the only ontological commitment it involves, aside from the commitment to narratives, is the relatively uncontroversial *commitment to concept-types* partly constitutive of them, which might be in turn conceived of in terms of resembling mental particulars.⁹ Be that as it may, there is a long path to go from those types to peculiar or *sui generis* abstract entities that are created *simultaneously* with fictional narratives (hence, on top of them), as is the case with the cultural artefacts with which typical abstractist approaches identify literary characters. The main point of my proposal is pointing to the possibility of combining the notion of reference to concepts with antirealism about fiction, on grounds of the fact that concepts are not a peculiar or *sui generis* kind of abstract entities but the ubiquitous constituents of our thoughts. An antirealist about fiction, or a moderate fictionalist, need not deny that there are concepts and thoughts, need she?

References

- Bonomi, A. (2008) 'Fictional Contexts', in Bouquet, P., Serafini L. and Thomason, R.H. (eds.) *Perspectives on contexts*. Stanford: CSLI Publications, pp. 215–250.
- Fodor, J. (1990) *A theory of content and other essays*. First edition. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Frege, G. (1892) 'On Sinn and Bedeutung', in Beaney, M. (ed.) *The Frege reader*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 151–171.
- Frege, G. (1918) 'The Thought: a Logical Inquiry', *Mind*, 65, pp. 289–311.
- García-Carpintero, M. (2015) 'Is Fictional Reference Rigid?', *Organon F*, 22 (Supplementary Issue), pp. 145–168.
- Goodman, N. (1968) *Languages of art. An approach to a theory of symbols*. First edition. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company Inc.
- Jeshion, R. (2009) 'The Significance of Names', *Mind & Language*, 24(4), pp. 370–403. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0017.2009.01367.x>
- Jeshion, R. (2010) 'Singular Thought: Acquaintance, Semantic Instrumentalism and Cognitivism', in *New essays on singular thought*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 105–40.
- Korta, K. and Perry, J. (2011) *Critical pragmatics. An inquiry into reference and communication*. First edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Orlando, E. (2016) 'Fictional Names and Literary Characters. In Defense of Abstractism', *Theoria* 31(2), pp. 143–158. <https://doi.org/10.1387/theoria.15193>
- Orlando, E. (2017) 'Files for Fiction', *Acta Analytica*, 32, pp. 55–71. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12136-016-0298-8>
- Orlando, E. (2021) 'Fictional Names and Fictional Concepts. A Moderate Fictionalist Account', *Organon F*, 28(1), pp. 107–134. <https://doi.org/10.31577/orgf.2021.28106>
- Perry, J. (2001) *Reference and reflexivity*. First edition. Stanford: CSLI Publications.
- Predelli, S. (2020) *Fictional discourse. A radical fictionalist semantics*. First edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Quine, W. (1956) "Quantifiers and Propositional Attitudes", reprinted in *The ways of paradox and other essays*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp. 185–202.

⁹ For a clear exposition and defence of Resemblance Nominalism, see Rodriguez-Pereyra (2002).

- Recanati, Francois (2012) *Mental files*. First edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rodriguez-Pereyra, G. (2002) *Resemblance nominalism. A solution to the problem of universals*. First edition. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Salmon, N. (1983) *Frege's puzzle*. First edition. Cambridge: the MIT Press.
- Salmon, N. (2002) 'Mythical Objects', in Campbell, J., Rourke, M.O', and Shier, D. (eds.) *Meaning and truth. Investigations in philosophical semantics*. New York: Seven Bridges Press, pp. 105–123.
- Searle, J. (1969) 'A Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts', in Gunderson, K. (ed.) *Language, mind and knowledge*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 344–369.
- Simpson, T. (1964) *Formas lógicas, realidad y significado*. First edition. Buenos Aires: Eudeba.
- Thomasson, A. (1999) *Fiction and metaphysics*. First edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vecsey, Z. (2020) 'Fictional Objects within the Theory of Mental Files: Problems and Prospects', *ESPEs*, 9(2), pp. 32–48.
- Voltolini, A. (2006) *How ficta follow fiction. A syncretistic account of fictional entities*. First edition. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Walton, K. (1990) *Mimesis as make-believe: On the foundations of the representational arts*. First edition. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Eleonora Orlando

Instituto de Investigaciones Filosóficas-Sociedad Argentina de Análisis Filosófico-CONICET

University of Buenos Aires

Freire 335, U4, (C.P.: 1426) Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, Argentina

eleonoraorlando@sadaf.org.ar



INTERVIEW

Art and Aesthetics in Human Life: An Interview with Jana Sošková

Lenka Bandurová

Jana Sošková, Professor at the University of Prešov, Faculty of Arts, Institute of Aesthetics and Art Culture, is an important scientific personality in Slovakia. In her research, she works within the field of the philosophy and aesthetics of art and has greatly contributed to the development of Slovak aesthetics in the wake of a Kantian-inspired approach to artistic creation and to the problems of contemporary art.



You studied philosophy, German language and literature in Prešov, Slovakia, in 1969-1974. Could you tell us what motivated you to choose this field and why you subsequently moved to aesthetics?

Since childhood I have loved to read, ideally anything that came into my hands – fiction, historical works, and gradually also scholarly texts. In high school, I became interested in philosophy in addition to foreign languages – German, English, Latin, and Russian were compulsory. My liking for philosophy mainly developed through the study of philosophical texts. The reason was simple: philosophy offered me a picture of the world as a whole – nature, society, human thought and feeling; the order of things in past history and in the present. It allowed me to reflect on the logic of statements, their truth and falsity, but also on the verifiability of knowledge and its validation. I got my basics in philosophy during high school and continued to develop them following my own motivation to learn more about the thought of the authors I was reading.

Paradoxically, during the five-year program in philosophy at my university, we only had one semester of aesthetics. However, when revisiting the works of

philosophers up to the 20th century – as my father, who himself was not a philosopher, had advised me to do – I suddenly had a quite clear idea of the kind of problems that aesthetics raises as a philosophical discipline. Not only did I like the way in which aesthetics investigates the arts, but I was also very interested in experiencing art more directly, and was not afraid to spell out my own point of view about it.

In the former political regime, despite everything, studying was good. We had plenty of books to read and our teachers allowed us to express our ideas. Some of them were very inspiring. I also had a chance to study at the University of Greifswald, in Germany, which greatly influenced my vision of the world. It allowed me to get in touch with many different cultures and nationalities, and this largely affected my own world view. This experience of multiculturalism shaped me and changed my relationship to the artistic production of other nations. Art back then represented an important means of communication through which borders could be blurred.

Which thinker most influenced your philosophical thinking and why did you eventually decide to pursue a career in aesthetics?

My interest in art was certainly profiling. I was active in recitation competitions and I would often go visit theatres, galleries, and movies. It was, however, mostly by reading philosophy that I was driven to investigate more theoretical approaches as regards the arts. This curiosity directed me towards aesthetics, although my interest in aesthetics and in philosophical aesthetics only deepened with time. As a university student, I read not only Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, but also the Critique of Judgement and similarly Hegel's Lectures on Aesthetics.

Another important role in my education was played by the compulsory Latin class that was part of the German studies curriculum, and brought me to read and translate Latin texts. In the library of Prešov Evangelical College I found a work, the *Compendium Aestheticae*, written by Michal Greguš (a teacher and later the headmaster of Prešov Evangelical College). I translated part of this book, especially where Greguš referred to Kant, which helped me to pass the Latin course, but more importantly, also gave me a chance to get to know Greguš' work, a work I returned to many times later on in my life. The *Compendium Aestheticae*, published in 1826, was in fact the first comprehensive and professionally written textbook on aesthetics in the territory of what was then Hungary. My continuous re-reading of Greguš' *Compendium* throughout the years has convinced me of its relevance as a timeless work that can have theoretical applications even today.

My final dissertation was also conceived within the framework of aesthetics. After graduating from college (1974), I began working in the philosophy department, where I taught aesthetics, among other disciplines. I supervised theses with a philosophical-aesthetic orientation and theses in the philosophy of art. In 1994, the Department of History and Theory of Aesthetics was founded at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Prešov in Prešov. Later on, the department was transformed into the Institute of Aesthetics and Art Sciences, where I have been working until the present day.

In your research activity, you initially addressed the relationship between art, religion and philosophy. Eventually you devoted all your efforts to aesthetics. What was your motivation for doing so?

One main motivation is my interest in the aesthetics of Immanuel Kant, who has always exerted a strong appeal on me. I was particularly interested in his recurring idea that aesthetic judgment is a free, subjective judgment, and yet it can have general validity. This is precisely the position that suited me the most in aesthetics. Unlike Hegel – who, by defining what beauty is, also expects his theory to be respected by artists in their search for the ideal – Kant’s aesthetics seemed to me to be more liberal. Nowhere does Kant prescribe how the artist should create (while Hegel does!). Kant provides room for more individual freedom, the same freedom he provides the artist with.

In Slovakia, but also in the broader Central European environment, you are known for your study of the history of Slovak aesthetics. What was the impetus for you to start looking more deeply into Slovak aesthetic thinking?

I believe that it was the experience of my study period abroad what ultimately contributed to my willingness to explore the scholarly literature originating in our territory. With huge dedication, I devoted myself to the study of Michal Greguš, Karol Kuzmány, Andrej Vandrák and Svätopluk Štúr. Each of these authors is unique and distinctive and all their works are worth reading. Greguš interpreted Kant excellently, but at the same time he also went further by providing an even more convincing explanation of aesthetics as applied to the arts. What I share with Greguš is a respect and an understanding for Kant’s aesthetics; Kant’s contribution, I think, is still unpaired in its attempt to account for the reception and judgments about art and the validity of those judgments, an attempt which can be fully applied to 20th and 21st century art as well. Compared to other authors, Štúr described the nature of modern art very analytically without condemning it and also showed a possible way to appreciate and assess modern art, including Czech and Slovak art. Both thinkers acknowledge and respect the artist’s right to decide on how to make their own art, but also recognise the perceiver’s right to judge the artistic creation without imposing their own approach on other recipients. In a nutshell, this is what I find fascinating about Kant, Greguš and Štúr.

Your field of interests is very broad. Among other things, you have investigated the problems of the interdisciplinary relation between art, aesthetics, philosophy and other sciences; questions related to the aesthetics of art, as well as the critical and theoretical examination of the notion of the end of art. Which of these topics has never left you during your academic career?

All these topics were important to me, but recently I have been very intrigued by the idea of the end of art. In my opinion, the end of art occurs every time aesthetic theories are unable to respond adequately to the dynamic changes happening in art, and aesthetic theorists and art historians cannot make sense of these changes. Our most recent grant at the Institute was focused on

exploring the problems of the end of art in aesthetic, art historical, as well as philosophical theories throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Although the topic was defined negatively by referring to the 'end' of art, the aim of the project was in fact to look for methodologies that would prove this notion as but a temporary and transitory concept. In the phase of the 'end of art', aesthetics searches for more adequate approaches and methodologies that might be able to pinpoint emerging art forms as ways of creating art that do not resemble any previous stages in art previous development. At the same time, via new languages and forms, the traditional forms of art making, appreciating and evaluating art, and art's self-reflective impact on both the creator's and the recipients' thinking and feeling are preserved.

By examining what happened in people's experience of art in the last century we may be able to anticipate possible changes and developmental transformations both in the creation and in the perception of art in subsequent periods. The so-called 'end of art' is always a temporary problem, one that vanishes away as soon as theorists, artists, and critics start recognizing the changes in art and in art's reception and are able to anticipate art's next developments.

What is your view of contemporary art and society as an experienced Professor? What do you think is the biggest problem of contemporary art?

Looking at the history of art, we can assume that art will exist on this planet as long as human beings exist. The forms of art, the nature of its expression, the way of receiving and appreciating it, however, will certainly transform over time, as we learn from existing theories on the history and prehistory of art. The language of art, the techniques of its creation, the way art is perceived and judged, as well as art's place in the life of individuals and societies may all change, but we know that these changes have always happened ever since the prehistoric age. Sometimes images acted as warnings and were perceived and judged as such. Other times, these images were seen as a proof of some incapacity of the artist or the absence of art altogether.

Theoretically, it cannot be ruled out that the end of art may recur in the future. A time may come in which we won't be able to distinguish art from other objects or identify the specific language of art; understand the intention of the artist or the impact of art reception in the mind of recipients; or identify what is in front of us an intentional art object, rather than a signifier of reality.

Several scientific events attended by philosophers, aestheticians, artists, art critics and other experts alike have been focused recently on the essential question of what art should be, how art should be perceived and judged, why society needs artists and art at all, and whether, in the age of digital media, it is still necessary to create art or to appreciate and evaluate it.

My intuition leads me to the opposite conclusion: the more virtual reality penetrates into people's life and is taken and accepted as the 'true reality', the more we need art as we are used to conceive it traditionally. Through art, we

can learn to distinguish more accurately the real from the ir-real, probability from illusion and improbability, truthfulness from falsity. The aesthetic appreciation of art tends precisely towards this freedom of feeling, thinking, and judging, which can also provide a positive basis for action.

You are a member of many editorial boards in Slovakia and abroad and a member of various committees, and you also have acquired extensive experience from your long-term work in academia. In your opinion, how has the status of aesthetics and aesthetics as a discipline changed in recent years?

Coming back to my previous answer, let me briefly comment that I think society is in urgent need of aestheticians nowadays. It seems to me that a person who is able to make aesthetic judgments is one who is aware of the distinction between the real world and the imaginary one and is also capable of differentiating between reality and its interpretation. An aesthetically thinking person knows how to distinguish between reality and 'images that look like reality'. These images are not only created by artists, although they have some primacy. This kind of images are also created by politicians and other people who want to have an impact on their audience, for example businessmen who want to sell a product, or politicians who want to get power, and so on. Learning how to deal with one's own imaginary and feelings (regardless of whether these have been evoked by an existing reality or by a work of art) is equally a discovery of aesthetic potentiality, and aesthetic responses do not only evoke unconscious and spontaneous evaluations in the forms of 'like' or 'dislike' reactions; aesthetic responses rather have their own reason - i.e., they are not isolated from thinking, although they are based on feeling. This connection is often forgotten. The 'aesthetic' is automatically considered 'unreasonable', but this seems to me to be one of the greatest misunderstandings of the principles of aesthetics – both of aesthetic perception, judgement and thinking.

Since prehistoric times, artists have created their works as statements about the world, nature, human beings, their own viewpoints, nightmares, mistakes, downfalls and triumphs. Contemporary art, I think, does the same. The question is whether contemporary recipients are willing to accept the artist's offer to enter into dialogue with the work, to think and feel through the work and reflect on the relationship they may have with the work's author. This may lead them to engage with something that lies beyond or behind the artwork itself, a reality that exists here and now, but that discloses a world of different possibilities that might or might not be.

What would you recommend to the young scholars of aesthetics, given your long career as a researcher and a teacher?

I am pleased when students ask questions and we can discuss them together. The greatest reward and satisfaction for me is when I see that students have their own opinion, that they can argue for and defend it with their arguments, and that they can analyse different theories but also have a personal position that they know how to support, verify and refine.

There are people who have cultivated aesthetic sensibilities and spontaneously apply aesthetic criteria in their job, which may not be related to aesthetics at all. Knowledge of aesthetics can contribute to address problems in different fields, and the knowledge students gain from studying aesthetics can be used in communication with people, art, other cultures, and so on. I think that everything depends on how the young colleagues, the graduates of aesthetics, will put their own minds in order. They have to ask themselves many questions about what they study and why they study it, what the knowledge they get offer them, how they think what they read, which authors they identify with, which ones they criticise, and what they actually want to do and achieve in their research life.

Lenka Bandurová
University of Presov, Faculty of Arts
Institute of Aesthetics and Art Culture
17. novembra 1, 080 01 Prešov, Slovakia
lenka.bandurova@unipo.sk



TRANSLATIONS

The Ugliness of Banal Truths

Jana Sošková

The paper deals with an analysis of the controversial novel *Truismes* by Marie Darrieussecq. In this work, the author sensitively maintains an oscillation between the plausibility of truth, hidden behind metaphors and symbols, and the implausibility of the whole story in its individual components. The occurrence of ugliness as a decisive aesthetic dimension is continual, graded into almost all its shapes and forms, until it finally fills in the entire space and time of the fictional story. The astonishing horror of the author's aesthetic world does not lie in the brutality of the language she uses, but rather in the similarity of the real and the imaginary, in the way she makes cruelty appear visible though the fictional narrative. The paper thus shows that classical aesthetic views fail when used as tools for understanding the nature of the aesthetic world modelled by Darrieussecq. | *Keywords: Banality, Everyday Aesthetics, Marie Darrieussecq, Truismes, Truth, Ugliness*

When we feel the being of certain objects in our mind, we say we are seeing beauty... when we then feel the feeling of being in itself (sense), we call it the feeling of sublimity, we then call the sublime what causes the effect of this sense, i.e., the observation of the feeling of the being itself of a certain object that we feel.

1. Introduction

These words by the Slovak aesthetician Karol Kuzmány capture the essence of the aesthetic experience and the process of artistic creation. The artist shares with the audience her journey in the aesthetic world in a comprehensible way and thus offers recipients an opportunity to undergo the process of aesthetic experience, not only by feeling truth through beauty, but also by sensing their own transformation into human beings.

What can the philosopher grasp from accepting the offer to live in an aesthetic world constructed by an artist? How will she be able to feel the existence of the objects represented, embodied, marked, symbolized by a work of art? How does

The translation is an outcome of the research project KEGA 016PU-4/2018 *Compendium Aestheticae: An edition of learning texts for the study programme Aesthetics* supported by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic.

she cope with the 'truths' she must at first uncover via beauty? What will she think after she observes her own state of consciousness? Will her consciousness and thinking change? Will the philosopher heed the warnings of contemporary art or will she say once again: 'postmodernism has failed'?

In 1996, the controversial and scandalous book *Truismes* by the young author Marie Darrieussecq was published in France. Already the title evokes the 'game' that the author engages with her readers. In French, *la truie* means the sow, while *truism* is a philosophical term denoting a banal, self-evident truth a philosopher should not even deal with as she should be interested in the truths of being. The book's title in English is *Pig Tales*. Everyday truths, composed into a fictional story, are expressed in everyday language. Even the very essence of the story – the transformation of a human being into an animal, is nothing original in the history of literature. It has always metaphorically referred to a being, for whom it was impossible to be or become a human being. The author creates a stock story that depicts possible fragments of everyday life for thousands of people. It is a metaphor of a person who lives an insignificant, uninteresting life, bordering on elemental survival – even though the story takes place in a luxurious environment. The person as well as her life are simply 'out of the interest'. The reader is getting a signal: this story is about someone else, it is not about me.

2. Aisthēsis and Participation. Real and Unreal

What is the nature of the aesthetic world created by the author of the novel? Her colloquial, ordinary language refers to well-known, banal 'truths' that can occur every day, anywhere and to anyone in the world: humiliation, physical and psychological violence, political terror, an Orwell-like organized society, the loss of human dignity, the consequences of 'playful rationality' in the form of power and its victims, the abuse of people and the taking away of their 'human face', the exclusion of these (non)people and their being confined to the margins. So far, it is the real world, known and understood by the author, symbolically represented by a constructed story. Its fictionality and improbability arise when a common metaphorical labelling of a human being through an animal term (pig) begins to take place in the story by gaining new physical changes. The transformation of a human being into an animal in the literal sense is unrealistic, but in the context of fiction it acquires logically necessary contours. The reader distances herself from banal truths by entering the logic of fiction. The distance felt by the recipient is reinforced by the personal traits of the protagonist, who is poorly educated, pretty, and unaware of the 'rules' of life, and naively refuses to earn money for her beauty and youth, is unwilling to make a 'career', to sacrifice and lovingly fulfill the needs of her loved ones and to complicate other people's lives with her selfish interests. She is a *healthy girl*, according to her partner Honoré, a junior high school teacher of philosophy, who preferred her to clever and complicated high school girls. The author sensitively maintains an oscillation between the plausibility of truth, hidden behind metaphors and symbols, and the

implausibility of the whole story in its individual components. Every time the author directs the readers to consider the truthfulness, possibility or credibility of the situation, emerging from the individual experience of the readers, and forces them to compare and to try to place the real situations (of particular people, real space and time) into the indicated, thus incomplete, space and time, she leads them back to sense the implausibility of the story depicted and confirms its fictionality with new unreal details related to the transformation of a person into an animal.

The retention of fictionality and implausibility evokes the necessary distance and 'disinterestedness' of the reader, which is, in Kant's spirit, disinterestedness in the real existence of objects. The transformation into an animal cannot really happen. However, the author does not allow disinterestedness to turn into indifference. The fictional story shocks the reader's experience. What causes stress is that the author is moving on the edge between the everyday truth that is metaphorically depicted – affecting everyone as everyone has their individual and unique experiences with everyday truth – and the fictional horror that is shockingly described, which emerges slowly and sneakily in the daily banal situations of the protagonist's existence. The setting of the story is only hinted at and little specified. Although the perfumery boutique has a name, the imagination and experience of recipients is necessary as it is not localized. Similarly, no other places are located (the protagonist's apartment, her birthplace, the psychiatric hospital, the clinic, the cathedral, the city, etc.). Uncertainty and impersonality are also present in relation to characters who do not have names, and thus are faceless – e.g. the mother, doctor, customers, co-workers, or random people entering the story. Only her two partners, Honoré and Yvan, have names, as well as Edgar, a politician who embodies power through its debauchery and arrogance. There is also the character of an African marabout, a guardian of faith, a shaman who has a symbolic and at the same time metaphorical designation. Neither space or time are specified. It is only at the end of the story that Paris and the end of the third millennium are mentioned. Filling in the missing information unnoticeably 'engages' the recipient and forces her to unconsciously change her attitude: from a 'disinterested', non-participating observer who is not affected by the story, she becomes a participating one. By completing the missing information, the reader creates her own experience of the novel. At first in small things: the readers imagine a luxury perfumery; Aqualand – a place for relaxation and entertainment – then the election campaign; the posters; the winners, but also the rules set by the new authorities; a psychiatric hospital; a cathedral; catacombs. Eventually, readers are faced with a detailed description of the forms of humiliation and abuse they 'know about' from movies, literature and made-up or real stories told by television. Helplessness, injustice, cruelty, violence, etc. also have their records in the reader's experience. The perceiver gradually participates in the formation of the real-unreal story. Page by page, the reader creates her own 'experience' by complementing possible and fictional information. The position of the reader as a non-participating observer changes to a participating co-sufferer, and the banal truths of 'others' begin to affect the reader intrinsically.

It does not matter whether the recipient moves in the discourse of reality or in the discourse of fiction, whether she only wants to 'fill in' the missing information with the known reality, or let herself be carried away by fantasy and continue to multiply fictional and unlikely situations. The effect of horror, disgust and ugliness is the same.

The author fundamentally changes the valence of aesthetic experience with respect to traditional aesthetic approaches that recommended not to cross the borders between the two types of discourses, the theoretical and the aesthetic, or more precisely, between cognition and aesthetic assessment. Either the recipient finds herself in a world of observation and cognition and applies the corresponding 'rules', or she finds herself in a fictional aesthetic world. The released emotions of both worlds had a different basis, intensity and also outcome. Darrieussecq envisages a different approach. By creating an effect of resistance and disgust, that e.g. Carolyn Korsmeyer takes to be not aesthetic emotions but real emotions (1999, p. 53, 57), she moves the reader's experience to a position of constant switching, i.e. to the oscillation between real and aesthetic discourse, to the constant transition between a possible world and an unlikely, fictional and unrealizable world. The result is not only an increased intensity of the aesthetic experience, but also a mental attunement, and finally an awareness of the similarities and differences of the world of truth and the world of beauty (it is rather ugliness in this case). Released emotions of disgust and resistance acquire an aesthetic and noetic dimension. They are characteristic emotions in both the real and the fictional discourse, because they accompany the experience of a real as well as a fictional world. The distinctiveness of both worlds is enhanced by the author's playing with the ambivalence of meanings that are tied to both real and unreal discourse. The author deconstructs the fluidity of the ideas of both the literal meaning of a 'sow' and the metaphorical designation of a 'sow'. In the European cultural context, the meaning of the word 'pig' is linked to the designation of a source of pleasure of various kinds, but also to a greedy man, a man longing for power who does not shy away from using any practices to achieve the very egoistic goals. M. Darrieussecq's 'sow' deviates from the usual contexts. The sow is rather a victim of the piggish treatment of people's depraved selfish tastes, and the human being becomes an animal only physically. Although the author leaves rapists and executors of 'piggish' practices physically in human form, she sharpens the insurmountable contradiction between the physical form of a human being and an animal, between piggish tastes and beastly behaviour. Both lines lead to the 'death' of the human being. Even selfless, kind, non-egoist behaviour is rewarded by the loss of the human being and selfish, predatory, violent, brutal behaviour is completed by the loss of humanity.

3. Ontology of Ugliness

This increased aesthetic effect is caused by the fatal conflict between beauty and ugliness. The unsolvable opposition between beauty and ugliness, beauty, ugliness and good, beauty, ugliness and truth is the dominant aesthetic reality emerging from the background of the possible reality that the author offers to

the recipient. The consequences of external beauty (the physical beauty of the protagonist, her appeal: “[...] Honoré said that with a body like mine and such a blooming appearance, I would get all the ritzy boutiques I wanted” (Darrieussecq, 2000, p. 8)) as well as mental beauty (modelled by her ethical attitude, refusing to degrade her love as a source of income, or to take a side income for her work) are terrifying or even monstrous. Beauty evokes degrading and violent reactions from the environment. It irritates power, provokes possession, brutal treatment, destruction and leads to the brutal ‘Neronian’ murdering of young and beautiful people by representatives of power out of sheer entertainment. The entrance of ugliness as a decisive aesthetic dimension is continual, accurately depicted, graded into almost all its shapes and forms. It begins with unnoticed physical changes and ends in terrible disgust, monstrosity and even devilishness. Ugliness is equally created physically and mentally, until it finally fills in the entire space and time of the fictional story. In this case, the author guides the readers very precisely. She draws their attention to details, to individual shades of ugliness, lets readers enjoy all the emotionality that follows, makes returns to the already described ugliness, which she enhances with a small novelty and does not allow them to achieve a new harmony or even to overcome ugliness in their consciousness via a new beauty and form. Paraphrasing Adorno: “Powerlessly the law of form capitulates to ugliness” (Adorno, 2002, p. 46). In the grey everydayness, the effect of banal truths changes the norms of external and internal beauty. The protagonist firstly observes the loss of body shape by fattening. The shapeless body acquires an inhuman colour – pink. The deformed proportions of her body are complemented by hairs, by walking as a quadruped, by a characteristic ‘smell’, etc. These forms only confirm deviation from human norms: her face turns into a snout, she acquires a tail, instead of hands and feet she has trotters and she loses fingers. In line with these changes, she loses her sense of inner stability and identity, and with each humiliation and abuse, she becomes more and more a sow and identifies more and more with her animal form. Any attempt of the protagonist to make a change to a human being (e.g. with the help of new clothes from Honoré and a visit to Aqualand; working on Edgar’s pre-election poster as the embodiment of the pre-election slogan ‘*for a healthier world*’; in the privacy of the hotel Formula 1 with the help of a dumb understanding of a nameless African immigrant; reading books in the attic of the psychiatric hospital as an escape from life threatening situations; in the crypt of the cathedral) is ‘rewarded’ with a new and even more brutal humiliation. Returning to a human form has its formal features: she regains speech and human bodily curves, her hair begins to grow, she loses weight, washes regularly, stops stinking, and becomes physically and mentally human. However, the beauty she only can gain with considerable effort, becomes again an obstacle for her and thus is cruel and monstrous. Overcoming ugliness in a new form and harmony – by restoring the order of beauty – is impossible. On the contrary, a new form of ugliness reinforces and develops. In contact with people, the protagonist always takes the form of a sow and is also humiliated like a sow – she burrows in rotten and wormy meat, eats her own vomit, digs into excreted excrement, causes disgust and fear in the surroundings with a

defensive reaction (either in a shelter for animals, a prison or a psychiatric hospital), or she escapes to the catacombs between rats and crocodiles or to the crypt of the cathedral.

Classical aesthetic theories allowed art to depict the ugly. Aristotle and, reacting to him, Lessing or Rosenkranz (see Rosenkranz, 1990) emphasized the importance of portraying the ugly as a way of intensifying the effect of art. The ugly, perfectly depicted by art, loses its effects in the whole of the work of art. It is only an 'imperfect' beauty, an intermediate stage, which eventually results in the confirmation of beauty. All the forms that Rosenkranz describes in his 'metaphysics' of the ugly (deformation, disharmony, formlessness, disruption of the unity of form, incorrectness and disruption of the conformity of the idea with reality, etc.) are aimed at this. Greguš also conceives the ontological status of the ugly as the opposite of beauty (respecting aesthetic principles of form but also content). According to him, "whatever is confused and imperfect, and in relation to us disturbs the harmonious activity of our mental powers and insults the feeling of senses, but also of reason and even more the moral and social feeling, rightly deserves to be called 'ugly'. Therefore, there is no beauty in obscenity and depravity..." (Greguš, 1998, p. 166). Greguš envisages not only an artistic, a fictional depiction or creation of the ugly, but also the (real) existence of the ugly. Both evoke resistance against and abolition of the harmonious action of mental forces.

In a sense, Darrieussecq goes beyond these classical conceptions and questions their productivity. For example, she enhances the ugly so much that it becomes a surplus or a deficiency (as in William of Auvergne) in the form of a thing, in its expediency. The protagonist of Darrieussecq's novel either loses some shape and elements of the human figure and expressions or shows increasing animal physical symptoms. She also testifies to Augustine's idea that the ugly is only a loss of the good in a thing. The author depicts the loss of good embodied in a person, in human behaviour, or in an action in a way that substantiates ugliness itself as something necessary, independent, irrevocable, insurmountable by another harmony or by the possibility of 'gaining some more good'. Like beauty, 'good' is put into question. The good deeds of the protagonist are 'balanced' by an increase in violence and abuse, the verbally declared 'good' by the powerful represent a refined arrogant brutality. Ugliness exists on its own. The author gives it a shape, form, faces, situations, she gives it existence but also a form of being. The effects of ugliness do not disappear either in the integrity of the work, in the perfection of artistic language, or in response to aesthetic experience meant as a 'promise' of a new harmony. In this sense, the book is a continuation of the thinking of modernity. In this context, Adorno writes: "The harmonistic view of the ugly was voided in modern art, and something qualitatively new emerged. The anatomical horror in Rimbaud and Benn, the physically revolting and repellent in Beckett, the scatological traits of many contemporary dramas, have nothing in common with the rustic uncouthness of seventeenth-century Dutch paintings. [...] That is how completely dynamic the category of the ugly is, and necessarily its counterimage, the category of the beautiful, is no less so." (Adorno, 2002, p. 46). Just as modernity has become 'disliked art' compared

to the ideals of classical aesthetics, so should Darrieussecq's work be 'disliked'. Its 'indecenty' lies not only in the fact that the well-known truths are shouted out in public, thus violating the norm of a 'decent' society (and society punishes the perpetrator of the taboo appropriately!), but also in preventing the possibility to overcome the ontological status of ugliness. Postmodern art, to which *Truismes* belongs, is cruel. "But ugliness and cruelty are not merely the subject matter of art. As Nietzsche knew, art's own gesture is cruel. In aesthetic forms, cruelty becomes imagination: Something is excised from the living, from the body of language, from tones, from visual experience. The purer the form and the higher the autonomy of the works, the more cruel they are." (Adorno, 2002, pp. 49–50). The astonishing horror of the author's aesthetic world does not lie in the brutality of the language she uses, but rather in the similarity of the real and the imaginary, in the way she makes cruelty appear visible through the fictional narrative.

4. Reinterpretation of Existentialism

The transformation of the protagonist into a sow is in many ways reminiscent of Kafka's novella *Metamorphosis*. But it is neither a paraphrase of nor an allusion to it. In Kafka's work, the metamorphosis into an insect causes a shock to the changing individual and people around him. It happens unexpectedly, all at once, without warning and it disrupts any possibility of communication with the world, real life and people. The man-insect remains alone, thrown into an existential, unsolvable situation, without the chance to communicate. The insect's condition is a borderline situation in which the man-insect retrospectively searches for the possible causes of the transformation, but does not understand them. The state of the man-insect disrupts former identities, ties, and communication. It is a state in which a hidden, long-acting truth is revealed to the insect-man. Here too, however, the path to uncovering the truth is mediated by the abolition of beauty (the human form) and intense experience of ugliness, disgust and resistance. In the borderline situation, the insect-man can no longer make decisions like a human. He decides like an insect.

In Darrieussecq's novel, the transformation into a sow is gradual, visible in every new detail. The change is recognized by the protagonist as well as by the people around her. Some even sympathize with her, warn her of the 'goal' of her transformation and give her advice on how to deal with it. Each new trifle that brings the protagonist closer to a sow is noticed by the protagonist herself, as for example the blue spots or bruises that, after being stung by customers, gradually change into more breasts or dugs, the thickening of the skin, the decreased sensitivity of fingers and increasingly deformed small hooves, the loss of articulated speech, or the emission of unarticulated sounds.

These slowness and continuity of changes denote the insignificant, barely perceptible, but as a result of the complete transformation, frightening effect of banal truths in their monstrous ugliness. The problem is that this almost unnoticeable change, even if perceived (a pink spot on the cheek, the hair

growth, a bruise on the chest) does not cause any corresponding action or activity on the part of the protagonist. The next day she performs exactly the same activity as before. She communicates with the environment in exactly the same way, does not change her attitude towards her own existence nor towards people. It is a slow, detailed 'killing' of the human entailing a 'disinterested' observation from the victim herself. From a psychological point of view, it is the position of a 'victim' of violence, who is not able to say 'no' to the abuser, and is only passively 'watching' the 'increase' of the manifestation of violence on her own body and soul. From the distance provided by her self-reflective attitude, she observes the 'simulacra' of humiliation, use and abuse, and killing.

The author offers two forms of metamorphosis of the human being into an animal. In a sense, these forms of metamorphosis metaphorically designate two possible options for solving terrifying existential situations. The first is an involuntary, gradual and willingly uncontrollable and unstoppable transformation resulting in a reconciliation with a new identity. The price is reasonable and can metaphorically be understood as the death of the human being. It is based on escaping from society, on total isolation. Although the identification with the new, animal identity is the acquisition of freedom, of independence from the rules of torture and humiliation, it is a path of loneliness, loss of beauty and acceptance of ugliness as its starting point. The second metamorphosis is an early recognition of the danger of the transformation; the person can control it with her own will, so that only from time to time does she allow herself to escape from the prison of human rules and become a bloodthirsty, free animal. This is represented by Yvan's transformation into a bloodthirsty wolf, killing an innocent man. The wolf does not carry the hidden pains of man. He is a wolf in the true sense of the word because his communication is killing. The sow escapes from the human world, but does not endanger the human world in any way, nor does she endanger the new animal world. The bloodthirsty wolf is a threat to humans. While the female sow feels like a human in both physical forms, the male wolf in the form of an animal feels like an animal whose only way to communicate is to kill people. Yvan turns to the moon once per month to put on wolf's fur and get terrible fangs. The woman-sow turns to the moon once per month in the denouement of the narrative to find her human form for a while and to be able to write her 'ordinary' (?) story.

The method of metamorphosis (the loss of the original identity and acquisition of the new one) has an existential dimension too. It is a borderline situation that is not coming suddenly but 'dragging' slowly. It is rather a sequence or multiplication of existential situations whose smallness (although they are observable) does not evoke any necessary knowledge that would become the basis for free choice and action. 'Small' truths are not recognized as 'Truths'. They are negligible. Everydayness dictates that we do not pay attention to them, that we do not react to them, that we only notice them. The author re-raises the question of the relationship between truth and Truth, existence and Being, evidence, observation and Knowledge, knowledge and Action. She

recalls Sartre's understanding of truth, which is based on the premise that truth is human, because "[k]nowledge of whatever form is a relation between man and the world around him, and if man no longer exists this relation disappears" (Sartre, 2004, p. 26). The transformation of a human being into an animal (as a symbolic expression of a person's death, forced by existence, ultimately chosen) can mean an escape from those truths that are unbearable, ugly, hurtful. "Existence precedes essence", writes Sartre (2007, p. viii) and it is therefore necessary to proceed from subjectivity. Can a change in subjectivity also mean a change in 'truth'? Darrieussecq offers a cruel opportunity to change the protagonist's identity as the only way to free herself from devastating truths: her death as a human being and her exclusion from community, a complete loneliness, and the acceptance of new animal identity but in isolation from people. Sartre purposely espouses subjectivism. He says that "[s]ubjectivism means, on the one hand, the freedom of the individual subject to choose what he will be, and, on the other, man's inability to transcend human subjectivity" (Sartre, 2007, pp. 23–24). According to Sartre, truth is actually 'people's event', it is formed by them by totalization, unification or synthesis of individual experiences. Darrieussecq ironizes and deconstructs a similar reasoning. In the logic of her fiction, truth as 'people's event' is ugly, dramatic, disgusting and nasty, and it is a source of humiliation and violence. Both 'truth' and 'good' kill people directly, or indirectly as accomplices. Elsewhere, Sartre recalls that both knowledge and truth are a dialectical process that presupposes the 'internalization of the external' on the basis that the subject becomes a part of the object (and vice versa) and this experience is "the very experience of living, since to live is to act and be acted on" (Sartre, 2004, p. 39). In Darrieussecq's case, this existentialist position is reinterpreted. In her understanding, too, existence precedes essence and truth depends on the experience of life, on existence. However, it is possible to destroy (or come to terms with truth) not by 'fluid rationality', or by a manifestation of Dialectical Reason (Sartre, 2004, pp. 19–20) but by leaving the human world, by transformation and by a new identity. The world of Beauty and Truth are strictly distinguished by Sartre. Beauty is possible only in the imagination and is cancelled by the onset of the discourse of reality or Truth. Darrieussecq also questions this alternative of thinking. Her aesthetic world parasitizes on the real in such a way that the real world is fulfilled almost with an unreal, fictional world. Completing reality with fiction fundamentally changes the status of Beauty, Good, Truth and the subject itself.

5. Criticism of Traditional Aesthetics from the Position of Art

Darrieussecq irreversibly breaks the classic myth of the unity of truth, beauty and good. Beauty is monstrous, it evokes rather a mythical horror, and its consequence is not only a 'loss of the good in man' (Augustine), but his irreversible liquidation. If we, in the mental attunement that the author deliberately evokes in her work, applied a classic aesthetic knowledge of the type: beauty is in the father's ratio to good (Plato), beauty and good have the same basis (Aristotle), beauty is an exposition of the truth of being

(Heidegger), the truth of the self-conscious absolute spirit is embodied by art (Hegel), the idea of the absolute and relative beauty of Diderot, or beauty as a convention in Descartes, etc., we would only exacerbate the destroying irony. Classical aesthetic views fail when used as tools for understanding the nature of the aesthetic world modelled by Darrieussecq. The cruelty of her aesthetic construction lies in the drastic gesture of destroying this myth, which has always served as a hope for human beings to recognize the various forms of evil and truths of human existence and being. As an ideal and a hope, this myth has enabled people to cope with the cruelty of truisms, to overcome their ugliness by striving for harmonization and humanization. In the newly acquired form, i.e., in beauty, a human being can find an impulse to create, to live, to reveal the very meaning of being. In *Pig Tales*, 'beauty', combined with renewed love and marked by ugliness, is the same as disgust and brutal violation of all 'normal' norms. The protagonist's partner Yvan acquires a beautiful physical body during the transformation from wolf to man. He is also physically 'beautiful' in the wolf's skin, but he cruelly and brutally kills people. He loves the protagonist both as a sow and as a human. The bestial wolf and the sow are playing in bed. In relation to such a 'reality', Adorno's claims seem more effective, when he says that art "must take up the cause of what is proscribed as ugly, though no longer in order to integrate or mitigate it or to reconcile it with its own existence through humour that is more offensive than anything repulsive. Rather, in the ugly, art must denounce the world that creates and reproduces the ugly in its own image." (Adorno, 2002, pp. 48–49). The author creates 'almost' a reality (Feitosa, 2001, p. 44) that is not justifiable even as an aesthetic phenomenon.

Darrieussecq undresses truth and changes it into the ugly and evil. The truth in her 'game' acquires an unexpected 'added value'. It is (or becomes?) ugliness in itself, in its essential destiny, not only as the opposite of beauty – form, but as the embodiment of being itself in its truth. Even 'Dasein' is disgusting, brutal. Truth is rolling in the dirt, and just as a new order of beauty cannot be established, so a mythical order of truth that could be uncovered into beauty and good cannot be established.

6. Change of Understanding of the Tragic, the Sublime, the Comic

Truisms do not give the reader a chance to experience catharsis, although several layers of the text create tragic conflicts. A dominant conflict is that between the individual and an Orwell-like organized society, where everyone watches everyone. It is an ironic completion of the ideal of 'freedom' and individualism. It is a society that wants to get rid of all the 'small', inadaptable, 'ignorant' to participate in the 'games'. The position of the individual is not given by individual free choice, but by the 'fatal' and thus unchangeable action of the invisible hydra, whom everyone serves, everyone is afraid of, and who can ultimately destroy everyone – the former rapist as well as his victim. Powers alternate but, according to the rules of 'playful rationality', they are producing new victims all the time. Even the marabout

is eventually the victim of a game of power and turns into a horse. Edgar, the embodiment of power, is defeated and turns into an elephant and a mentally insane becomes a guardian of the faith. The 'stability' of values, morals and the socially desirable good is guaranteed by mass media, controlling people and manipulating their behaviour in accordance with Orwellian power. Institutions such as 'Animal Rights' or 'For a healthier world' have a similar 'impersonal' status, guiding people's 'moral' action into well-defined and predetermined lines. The institutions take care of the 'cleanliness', or more precisely, of the liquidation of all those who are 'out'. For example, the institutions do not provide food or caregivers to the psychiatric hospital, in which the 'waste' of society is concentrated, and spend the saved money on programmes such as 'For a healthier world', 'Animal Rights', etc. It is here that the conflict between beauty and ugliness ironically escalates, but it also dramatically breaks the classic unity of beauty, truth and good. The protagonist finds herself in a psychiatric hospital as the only way out of total degradation. But even here and in the form of a 'sow', she must defend herself from becoming food for starving convicts and from losing her newly acquired identity in 'usability'. The author 'intensifies' the existential experience of tragicness, for example by eliminating the tragic turn and removing its suddenness and unexpectedness. The author does not rely on an unprepared and surprised victim. On the contrary, the victim can slowly observe her own murder, her own killing, every day. The time when the subject can realize the 'borderline' of the situation as well as the possible turn, and thus the denouement of the tragic conflict, is left to herself. The sow herself must determine which 'changes' announce the borders of the transformation into another identity (the death of the human being). The transformation into a sow (the human death) does not really come as 'a tragic climax of the narrative tension', but as 'a necessary, practically obvious consequence of destinies' (Marcelli, 2002, p. 76). Would death be less tragic only because it concerns the 'most ordinary' people? The whole 'banal' life of the protagonist is tragic, shamefully and slowly moving towards a tragic end. Eventually, her attempt to seek solace in her mother, who constantly urges her to return in the broadcast (as an attempt to return to some stable and undeniable value), is devastating. The protagonist's fatal mistake is that for a while, in loneliness after the loss of her only beloved being (the wolf-human), she believes in humanity, only to eventually be turned to a new greed again. Her being and her existence in the tragic conflict makes her a murderer. She kills her mother and the deviser of her humiliation – she is a murderer and a victim at the same time. It is her final death in the form of a human and her final departure into the animal kingdom. Matricide as the climax of the tragedy represents purgation. However, this purgation is not aimed at the recipient, as in classical aesthetics based on classical art, but at the protagonist of the story. It is a 'Sartre's trap' for the recipient. Catharsis is impossible: neither as an establishment of a new harmony (of beauty, form, arrangement, unity), nor as knowledge of the truth, nor as a possible 'addition' of the good in things, nor as a renewal of the 'tragic spirit' by establishing the dominion of metaphysical truths.

The postmodern re-modelling of essential ugliness has not only tragic but also noble dimensions. The truth of being has traditionally been revealed (or uncovered) by beauty thanks to which it gained its shape and form. It descended in beauty from its infinity into an observable form through which it could be sensed for a moment (see: Kuzmány, 1838). In the sense and in the feeling of this sense, the subject can emerge from the boundaries of existence, her own unique experience, and transcend the finite or temporal. In the aesthetic world of Darrieussecq, truth is uncovered through ugliness. The oversizedness, absolute size, majestic monstrosity in the versatility of this world represent an overlap. The sublimity here lies in the temporary unrecognition of the new form, in the impossibility of establishing a new order of beauty–truth–good, but also in the signs of an increased disruption of the harmonious activity of the mental forces (see: Greguš, 1998). It is the overlap (or fall?) into... nothingness. The only meaningful ‘answer’ to such ‘transcendence’ is irony. Only irony can somehow allow the subject to step out of her own subjectivity (pace Sartre!) and reorganize her own experience at an ironic distance. (Compare in more detail: Sošková, 1998). But this is the task the artist assigned to the recipient.

7. The Emergence of the Philosophical World from the Aesthetic–Art World

By embodying multifaceted forms of the ugly, the author has intensified the aesthetic expression of the artificial world she has created and strengthened the aisthēsis. The ugly in its ontological status exists on the border between the real and the fictional, and its constant retention in the work of art by a multiplication of various and yet similar manifestations requires the recipient to transcend the real and the fictional discourse, what fundamentally changes the character of aisthēsis. The reader’s journey into reality reveals a total failure of beauty as a positive value, a desired ideal, a form by which the certainty of truth is confirmed, which leads her to scepticism and to question classic explanations of existence and being of truth itself. This sense of uncertainty and the inability to find a satisfactory answer lead the reader to confirm the doubts she has in the real world by participating in fiction. But even a journey in the fictional world, which could have been a hope for at least an ‘aesthetic’ confirmation of the traditional certainty of truth (in its beautiful form and good action), does not bring any ‘knowledge’. The failure of beauty and the revelation of its inability to show truth and good is confirmed and complemented by aesthetic fascination in fiction. Noesis, loosened by the fictional discourse and leading to the same conclusion, reinforces the experience of horror and ugliness in their essence. In the intensity of the experience of ugliness, the reader finds out the ‘similarity’, probability, ‘truthfulness’ of the two different worlds, which prevents or disrupts the possibility of the flow of philosophical thinking in a traditional way, as if the philosophical solution of the truths of life and the truths of Being did not exist. The philosophical understanding of beauty as a value is ironized; the good, as a rational realization of truth, is in its essence a violence that breeds both the

abuser and the victim. The philosopher must erase, disrupt the order of her thought experience, and start again. She has to get to the very sources of her thought, so that she can at least resolve the relationship between the individual and the universal, the unique and the general, the relationship between the truth of existence and the truth of being and discover the sources of free mind and free action. Notorious truisms are appalling. If she does not want to realize that truth is dirty, ugly, disgusting, and that truth is the evil that degrades a human being deep under the situation of an animal, she has to distance herself (and thus to acquire an aesthetic position!) from the world modelled by Darrieussecq. Notorious truisms can happen to anyone. They happen in ordinary everydayness. We can even observe them. Neither the tragic nature of aesthetic expression, nor the aesthetic intensity of ugliness, nor the ironizing play with ideals that the author offers allow the reader to experience catharsis. The banal truths that philosophy has excluded from its interest, by considering them 'low', or by tabooing them, have become 'metaphysical' in Darrieussecq's fictional world as she has given them sense. The artist 'puzzled' the philosopher: How is it possible to deal with 'small' truths, 'small' lives, destinies, 'small' evils, tiny violent manifestations? At which point do these banal truths turn into metaphysical ones, small life into universal destiny, and insignificant death into tragic resolution? The philosopher has to deal with it again from the beginning, i.e., post-historically. That is why Darrieussecq's work is, in the true sense of the word, post-modern. The completion of the reader's self-transformation cannot take place in the same way as in the classical work during its perception by cathartic purgation in contemplation. Self-transformation requires action. Not an imaginary, fictional, imagined, or thought act but a real one. The reader knows that to restore the order of truth, beauty and good can be done only by real (banal?) action.

When Krug was explaining Kant's importance for aesthetic and philosophical thinking, he emphasized that aesthetics is a propaedeutic to philosophy. With that in mind, we could contend that Darrieussecq's artistic creation was informed by her own aesthetic experience of reality (through the a priori forms of sense, space, and time), which made the free 'play' of fantasy, imagination, thinking and sensation possible in the first place. Only the aesthetic ideas she experienced in this way were embodied in the work of art. The world of art is then the 'marking' (through form) of the aesthetic world that is created. It is the embodiment of the reflective power of judgment, in which judgment is no longer only about sensations, but about the connection of the individual and the particular, and about communication, expression of concepts as well as ends and feelings. According to Kant, "[f]or beautiful art [...] imagination, understanding, spirit and taste are requisite" (Kant, 2000, p. 197). In art, it "must not be a pleasure of enjoyment, from mere sensation, but one of reflection; and thus aesthetic art, as beautiful art, is one that has the reflecting power of judgment and not mere sensation as its standard" (Kant, 2000, p. 185). This is why art can prompt us to transcend the world of aesthetic (subjective) judgments and lead us to the world of cognition, as well as to the world of reasonable action in the form of a moral maxim. Darrieussecq's book *Pig Tales*, in the embodiment of aesthetic ideas, frees the need for a philosophical knowledge of truth, good and beauty, but

at the same time represents a challenge to create and rationally justify a moral imperative that could guide particular human action. However, both philosophical knowledge and the norms of moral conduct are outside the work of art – in the attunement of the mind of the philosopher and the recipient and their readiness to act.

Translation: Sandra Zákutná¹

References

- Adorno, Th. W. (2002) *Aesthetic Theory*. Translated by R. Hullot-Kentor. London/New York: Continuum.
- Darrieussecq, M. (2000) *Pig Tales. A Novel of Lust and Transformation*. Translated by L. Coverdale. New York: The New Press.
- Greguš, M. (1998) 'Rukoväť estetiky' ['Compendium Aestheticae'], in Sošková, J. (ed.) *Kapitoly k dejinám estetiky na Slovensku: Studia Aesthetica I [Chapters on the History of Aesthetics in Slovakia: Studia Aesthetica I]*. Presov: FF PU in Presov.
- Feitosa, Ch. (2001) 'Alterity in Aesthetics: Reflections on Ugliness', in Sasaki, K. (ed.) *International Yearbook of Aesthetics*. Volume 5. Tokyo: International Association for Aesthetics.
- Kant, I. (2000) *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant), Guyer, P. (ed.). Translated by P. Guyer and E. Matthews. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Korsmeyer, C. (1999) 'Disgust', *Filozofski Vestnik*, 20(2), XIVth International Congress of Aesthetics. *Aesthetic as Philosophy. Proceedings. Part I*, pp. 53–57.
- Kuzmany, K. (1838) *O Kráse [On Beauty]*. Banská Bystrica: Hronka.
- Marcelli, M. (2002) 'Smrť bez tragiky, smrť pozoruhodná' ['Death without Tragedy, Death Remarkable'], in Marcelli, M. and Petříček, M. *Dublety [Doublets]*. Bratislava: Kalligram, pp. 75–77.
- Rosenkranz, K. (1990) *Ästhetik des Häßlichen*. Leipzig: Reclam.
- Sartre, J.-P. (2004) *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. Vol. 1. Translated by A. Sheridan-Smith. London/New York: Verso.
- Sartre, J.-P. (2007): *Existentialism is a Humanism*. Translated by C. Macomber. New Haven/London: Yale University Press.
- Sošková, J. (1998) 'Ironický obrat vo filozofii. (Alebo: Podiel umenia a estetiky na poľudštení filozofa)' ['An Ironic Turn in Philosophy. (Or: The Role of Art and Aesthetics in the Humanization of a Philosopher)'], in Mihina F. (ed.) *Kriza filozofie a metafyziky – Zrkadlo filozofie krízy [The Crisis of Philosophy and Metaphysics – The Mirror of the Philosophy of Crisis]*. Presov: FF PU in Presov, pp. 229–240.

Jana Sošková
University of Presov, Faculty of Arts
Institute of Aesthetics and Art Culture
17. novembra 1, 080 01 Prešov, Slovakia
jana.soskova@unipo.sk

¹ The translator's special thanks go to Adrián Kvokačka for many consultations, Lisa Giombini for fruitful comments and proofreading and Jana Migašová for making this translation happen.

Neuroveda a imaginácia. Význam diela Susanne Langerovej pre psychoanalytickú teóriu

Margaret M. Browning

This paper presents the work of philosopher Susanne Langer and argues that her conceptualization of the human mind can provide psychoanalysts with a unique framework with which to theoretically combine interpretive and biological approaches to their work. Langer's earlier work in the philosophy of symbols directs her investigation into the biological sciences along the lines of sentience and imagination, which in turn become the cornerstones of her theory of mind. Langer's understanding of the continuing transformation of affect into language is a decisive contribution yet to be built upon by others. | Keywords: *Feeling, Symbol, Mind, Psychoanalysis, Neuroscience*

Úvod

Popri postupnom včleňovaní prehlbujúcich sa poznatkov objavených v neurovedách - osobitne v neurovede zaoberajúcej sa cítením, do psychoanalytickej teórie, ostáva pre ňu veľmi dôležitou aj možnosť oprieť sa o psychologické úvahy Sigmunda Freuda, ktoré sa vyznačujú charakteristickými názormi. Zatiaľ čo vrchol práce tohto autora spočíval vo výskume v oblasti moderných vied, zaoberajúcich sa nervovou komplexnosťou, kde sa pokúšal pochopiť šablónovité dynamické formácie najkomplexnejšieho samoregulačného systému vo vesmíre, ostal zároveň takpovediac zachyteným aj v inej doméne psychológie - hermeneutike. Ako rigorózný empirický vedec prenikol Freud do tejto oblasti publikovaním diela *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) a nehľadiac na pokroky, ktoré by ho v sfére súčasnej neurovedy dokázali naozaj potešiť, ostáva pre nás ako autor aj naďalej mysliteľom spájajúcim svoj prístup s touto oblasťou filozofie.

Publikované so súhlasom *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly, Inc.* (Taylor & Francis Group) a *Margaret M. Browning*.

Aj napriek rozvíjaniu účinnej psychoterapeutickej liečebnej metódy za pomoci interpretácie významu, Freud nevyzeral byť s jej výsledkom nikdy dostatočne spokojný. Zdalo sa, že nikdy nepochopil, povedzme, že filozoficky, ako sa mu podarilo zlúčiť s tak očividnou nevyhnutnosťou vedecký, ale aj svoj osobný, teda historicky podmienený, alebo tiež literárny prístup k skúmaniu ľudskej mysle.¹ Deliaci filozofická línia medzi prírodnými vedami a humanitnými odbormi, neponúkajúca žiadne trvalé premostenie biológie ľudského druhu s jeho kultúrou, je aj dnes preto v skutočnosti rovnako ostrá, ako bola v 19. a 20. storočí.

Práve Susanne Langerová však ponúka za účelom vzájomného preklenutia týchto dvoch oblastí ich vnútorné dynamické spojenie. Jej poukázanie na našu *ľudskú schopnosť neustále a nápadito transformovať svoju biologickú stránku prostredníctvom symbolov, t. j. vyjadrovať svoje citové popudy do podoby nového kľúča*, poskytuje psychoanalýze filozofický základ pre prináležiace umiestnenie významu a interpretácie v procese chápania ľudských životov. Dôležitým faktom je aj to, že filozofka zachováva túto jeho pozíciu aj popri súčasnej tvorbe priestoru pre tzv. 'pravdy', ktoré sa postupne odhaľujú prostredníctvom rozrastajúcich sa neurovied.

Susanne Langerová vytvára svojou prácou, nadväzujúcou na integratívnu filozofickú tradíciu Cassirera, ktorého isté diela aj preložila, umiernenú filozofickú cestu medzi logickým pozitivizmom Viedenského krúžku a ontologickou prácou Heideggera². A hoci pracuje v rámci objektívne založených vied o evolúcii, nachádza pritom aj spôsob pre zachytenie a vymedzenie ľudskej subjektivity ako základnej témy svojho výskumu. Ako bývalá filozofka umení, venovala počas svojho výskumu značnú časť pozornosti aj vedeckej problematike, a tým zaujala unikátnu pozíciu spočívajúcu v zjednotení vedeckých a umeleckých oborov. Aj napriek zastaranosti istej časti jej teórie sa užitočnosť jej filozofického rámca pre pochopenie ľudskej mysle rovnako z vedeckých, ako aj umeleckých náhľadov v rámci jedného kontinua nijako nevyčerpáva. Základné hľadisko pre skúmanie ľudskej mysle nie je u tejto filozofky predkladané za účelom vedeckého testovania, ale pre konceptuálnu použiteľnosť. Pravdou síce je, že jej literárny spôsob, slúžiaci jeho výstavbe, môže niekoho vyrušovať, no ja osobne verím, že práve on umocňuje neobvyklý jednotiaci model, ktorý táto autorka vytvára.

Pochopenie procesu transformácie ľudskej mysle našou unikátnou schopnosťou uvažovania prostredníctvom symbolov a súčasného udržiavania si základu v našej pred-symbolickej animálnej prirodzenosti je pre psychoanalýzu naozaj výzvou. S istým odstupom vieme povedať, že práve

¹ Ricoeur (1970, s. 65), spájajúc dve „freudovské“ epistemológie nasledujúcim spôsobom, by však nesúhlasil: „Freudove diela sa predkladajú ako zmiešaný, či dokonca dvojznačný diskurz, ustanovujúci konflikty sily niekedy predmetom skúmania pre energetiku a niekedy zase vzťahy významu ako predmet skúmania pre hermeneutiku. Dúfam v poukázanie na to, že pre túto zdanlivú dvojznačnosť existujú dostatočné dôvody a že práve tento zmiešaný diskurz je teda *raison d'être* (zmyslom bytia – pozn. prekl.) psychoanalýzy.“

² Profesionálna filozofia je dnes neustále rozštiepená medzi analytickými a kontinentálnymi tradíciami, ktoré S. Langerová, naopak, prepája. (Friedman 2000)

Langerovej konceptualizácia logického rozlíšenia medzi týmito dvoma aspektmi ľudského intelektu jej naopak umožňuje priam pôsobivo vysvetliť ich bezproblémovú neoddeliteľnosť v celkovom pôsobení a prejavoch človeka. A hoci sa jej práca venuje navonok jednoduchej myšlienke *cítienia*, práve táto jej črta sa v kontraste so súčasným myslením, týkajúcim sa jeho podstaty a vzťahu k vedomiu (tak, ako je rozobrané ďalej v tomto texte), ukazuje ako naozaj funkčná. Langerová totiž nedefinuje pocity ako niečo, čo zvieratá *majú*, ale ako niečo, čo *činia*, pričom práve túto aktivitu porovnáva s vedomím. Konať teda znamená pre ňu cítiť a cítiť je tým, čo znamená byť si vedomý. Neustálym sprostredkovateľom medzi tým, čo je v našej nenapodobiteľnej ľudskej mysli pred-symbolickým a čo je už symbolickým, sú preto pre ňu animálne pocity.

Tam, kde iní končia nezdarom, Langerová ponúka vo veci zjednotenia empirických a interpretačných, teda teoretických vied, síce *jednoduchú, ale zároveň obsažnú a všestrannú konceptuálnu perspektívu*, tzn. kritickú celostnosť. Hoci nedokážeme skúmať psychológiu človeka *simultánne* z empirickej a zároveň interpretačnej pozície, uvedomujeme si, že bez ohľadu na to, ktorú z konkurenčných metód si pre analýzu vyberieme, rozpoznávame našu schopnosť pociťovať za ústrednú.

Od roku 1982, kedy bol vydaný posledný diel jej práce *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling*, objavuje sa v neurovedách narastajúci výskum typický jednoznačným úsilím o zachytenie problému biologického základu vedomia. Bez ohľadu nato, či diela tejto filozofky vedci čítali, alebo nie, rozlíšenia, ktoré učinila prostredníctvom filozofie a tie, ktoré urobili súčasní neurovedci empiricky, preukazujú nepopierateľné paralely. To odzrkadľuje samozrejme skutočnosť hovoriacu o tom, ako dokonale predchádzala Langerová dnešnému mysleniu. Ešte dôležitejšou je však u nej existencia tých náhľadov, ktorých rozpoznanie neurovedu ešte len čaká, pretože práve tieto by mohli nielen značne prehĺbiť snahy tejto vedy pochopiť vedomie a ľudskú myseľ, ale dokonca by mohli neurovedu pre psychoanalytikov ešte viac zatriktívniť.

V súčasnosti ešte stále platí, že neurovedci dostatočne nerozoznávajú kvalitatívne odlišnú povahu ľudského vedomia vznikajúcu jeho transformáciou prostredníctvom imaginácie a aktivity spätej s vytváraním symbolov. Aj keď na úrovniach vedomia spoznávajú mnohé rozdielnosti, ešte vždy nerozumejú tejto aktivite dosť dobre nato, aby uznali aj radikálny posun, ktorý vytvára vo vedomej skúsenosti. Jedinečným prínosom Langerovej je preto práve snaha rozlišovať a presne zostavovať na základe kvalitatívneho rozdielu v symbolicky uvažujúcej mysli, a to dokonca aj bez nutnosti opustenia sféry biológie. *Ak si to zoberieme z Langerovej filozofickej perspektívy, znamená to, že táto filozofka vytvára vlastne v celostnej prirodzenej histórii miesto pre unikátny ľudský cieľ vytvárania významu.* Inak povedané: Langerová poskytuje neobvyklý filozofický rámec, pomocou ktorého je možné premostiť neurovedu a psychoanalýzu.

Prvá a najdlhšia časť tejto štúdie pojednáva o vývoji Langerovej uvažovania, vrcholiaceho v jej konečnom, trojzväzkovom diele *Mind: An Essay on Human*

Feeling (1967, 1972, 1982). Výsledkom takéhoto postupu je kratšia sekcia venovaná len nedávnym zisteniam v oblasti neurovied a psychoanalýzy, týkajúcim sa vedomia, a to osobitne prácam Damasia (1994, 1999, 2003), Edelmána (1989), Edelmána a Tononiho (2000), Modella (2003) a Pankseppa (1998, 1999).

Pôvod

Súhrn tvorby S. Langerovej

Ústredným motívom poslednej Langerovej publikácie je *cítanie*. Je to centrálny bod, ku ktorému vedie jej teória biológie, a z ktorého sa odvíja jej teória symbolizmu. Prvým zásadným krokom tejto filozofky je využívanie rámca pocitu na konceptualizáciu všetkého vedomého. Značne členitý systém zmyslových vnemov, ktorý zakúšame ako *qualia*, pochádza z *pocitov vplyvu*, teda od tzv. podnetov, ktoré vytvárajú náš objektívny svet.³ V obrátenom zmysle to značí, že *pocity autogénnej činnosti* zahŕňajú všetky naše tzv. subjektívne reakcie na podnety predstavujúce náš *subjektívny svet*. Premýšľať o našom vnútornom rozpoložení prostredníctvom pocitov nie je pre nás síce ničím nezvyčajným, no myšlienka, že aj poznanie sveta tak, ako ho takpovediac „vidíme“, je rovnako založené na pocite, sa nám zdá byť veľmi zvláštnou. Práve ona je však jednou z Langerovej najvýznačnejších konceptualizácií, čo je predstavené ďalej v tomto texte. Zároveň je aj dosť podobná Freudovým myšlienkam o paralelách medzi externým a interným vnímaním, či, inak povedané, o kontinuu subjektívnej skúsenosti (Solms a Nersessian 1999).

Ďalším Langerovej polemickým krokom je rozpoznanie osobitosti a pozície imaginácie v ľudskom chápaní. Predstavovať si znamená podľa nej spontánne cítiť. Imaginácia môže fungovať *mimovoľne* - to robí v snovom vedomí, alebo *riadene*, a to tak, ako je tomu v prípade rozprávania. Rozprávať totiž znamená podľa Langerovej vyjadrovať, či prepisovať svet a samých seba prostredníctvom symbolov do tzv. „nového kľúča“ za pomoci našej imaginácie. *Práve spôsobilosť riadene kontrolovať našu imagináciu je základom našej symbolistickej aktivity a podnetom nášho hľadania významu*. Langerová preto tvrdí, že naša ľudská schopnosť premýšľania prostredníctvom symbolov sa nevyvinula za účelom prežitia, ale skôr sebavyjadrenia.

Langerovej „nový kľúč“ sa v jej prvej a najviac čítanej knihe *Philosophy in a New Key* (1942), vzťahuje na posun v samotnej filozofickej otázke, spočívajúci na smerovaní od pravdy k významu, pričom to spočíva na novoprijatom filozofickom uznávaní autonómnych systémov symbolov v činnostiach človeka, pre ktoré, na rozdiel od znakov u zvierat, je typická intencionálnosť.⁴ Langerová nás presvedča o rozlišovaní medzi používaním seba-určujúcich, teda autonómnych symbolov a prirodzene sa objavujúcich znakov, čo vlastne

³ *Qualia* je termín používaný filozofmi na označovanie neobvyčajných aspektov našich mentálnych životov, napríklad kvalitatívnej skúsenosti červenosti vo videní červeného objektu. Podstata *qualia* je pre filozofické debaty týkajúce sa vedomia a problému vzťahu mysle a tela ústrednou.

⁴ Používaním termínu „seba-vytvárajúcich“ nenaznačujem, že jednotlivci tvoria samotné systémy symbolov.

vytvára kontext nášho ľudského správania a vedie aj k tomu, že vo svojich symbolistických transformáciách sveta žijeme my ľudia v radikálne odlišnom, t. j. jedinečnom prostredí. Jej rozvinutie tohto typu rozlišovania na podklade rôznorodosti symbolických foriem v knihe *Feeling and Form* (1953) je zároveň tým, čo vedie aj k jej skúmaniu biologických základov tejto schopnosti (premýšľania prostredníctvom symbolov) u človeka. Vo svojom finálnom, trojzväzkovom diele (1967, 1972, 1982) načrtáva potom táto filozofka prirodzenú evolúciu cítenia, alebo vedomia, ktorá utvára základy tejto jedinečnej vlastnosti ľudského intelektu.⁵ A v úvode k svojmu poslednému dielu o mysli sa následne na základe tvrdenia, že „hodnota filozofického postoja nespočíva na jeho výhradnej pravdepodobnosti, ale na jeho použiteľnosti.“ (Langer 1988, s. xv), zrieka akéhokoľvek pokusu dokázať jeho „výhradnú správnosť“.

Langerovej práca predchádzajúca dielu *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling*

Langerová dospieva k svojmu chápaniu mysle založenej na transformácii pocitu/cítenia na základe svojich predošlých prác, ktoré sa týkali logickej analýzy znakov a symbolov (1942) a vývoja filozofie umenia (1953). Hlavný princíp filozofického uvažovania spočíva pre ňu v priamom adresovaní „úžasného problému symbolu a významu“ (Langerová 1942, s. viii), pričom takýmto spôsobom sa pridrižiava okrem iných aj tradície Whiteheada, Russella, Wittgensteina, Freuda a Cassirera.

Evolúcia jedinečnej ľudskej emocionálnej potreby vyjadriť, alebo koncipovať myšlienky, bola príčinou objavenia dôležitosti symbolu a významu pre činnosti človeka. Samotná podstata prvotných prejavov človeka, spojených so symbolmi, bola podľa Langerovej v prirodzenej histórii ľudských druhov nepraktická – príkladmi sú rituál alebo umenie, čo nám v jej očiach napovedá o tom, že používanie symbolu sa nevyvinulo na princípe rozšírenia, či nadstavby praktickej, teda úžitkovej činnosti. Symboly využívajú síce podľa nej zmyslové údaje, no nie za účelom toho, aby túto praktickú činnosť zdokonalili. To, čo robia, je vyjadrovanie myšlienok. Vraví: „Znak je niečím, na základe čoho konáme, alebo, inak povedané, prostriedkom na usmerňovanie činnosti; symbol je nástrojom myslenia.“ (Langerová 1942, s. 63). Slová sú teda podľa Langerovej produktmi našej kolektívnej imaginácie. A zatiaľ čo plnia rolu sprostredkovateľa medzi naším ja a svetom, prostredníctvom vedľajších konceptuálnych významov, alebo myšlienok, ktoré o svete projektujú, vykonávajú súčasne túto rolu vo funkcii symbolov aj nepriamo. Zlyhanie filozofov jazyka prvej polovice 20. storočia, spočívajúce na nepochopení tejto úlohy jazyka ako imaginatívnej tvorby podobnej ostatným tvorbám, týkajúcim sa použitia symbolov, bolo podľa S. Langerovej poopravené takými filozofmi ako Sapir, ktorý, naopak, podľa nej rozpoznal, že

⁵ Gary Van Den Heuvel publikoval skrátené vydanie Langerovej trojzväzkového diela v jednej knihe a to s „cieľom predstavenia osobnosti a diela S. Langerovej širšej verejnosti a s presvedčením, že jej opus magnum si zaslúži širší čitateľský okruh než aký dosiahlo.“ (Langerová 1988, s.viii)

[...] najlepšie je priznať, že jazyk je primárne takpovediac vokálnou aktualizáciou našej tendencie vidieť realitu symbolicky... a to, že bol daný a vybrúsený do formy, v ktorej ho dnes poznáme, spočíva v konkrétnych kompromisoch sociálneho styku. (Langerová 1942, s. 109-110)

Filozofi jazyka počiatku 20. storočia nedokázali uspieť rovnako ani vo svojich úsudkoch o intelektuálnom význame nevedeckého, napríklad umeleckého spôsobu premýšľania. Na rozdiel od nich však Susanne Langerová trvá na formálnej podobnosti medzi diskurzívnymi (tzn. vedeckými) a nediskurzívnymi (tzn. nevedeckými) symbolizmami, pričom nediskurzívny symbolizmus pozdvihuje na úrovni tým, že naň nahliada ako na seriózne módy premýšľania a diskurzívny symbolizmus kvalifikuje ako *intelektuálne* výtvyry. Aj my ľudia síce používame, rovnako, ako všetky zvieratá, na usmerňovanie svojho správania v prostredí nám vlastnom inteligentné znaky, no zároveň sa javíme byť jediným druhom, konajúcim v používaní symbolov za účelom bezproblémového usmernenia svojho správania *intelektuálne*.

V knihe *Feeling and Form* obracia táto filozofka svoju pozornosť smerom k povahe a významu symbolickej projekcie v umeniach, ktorých symbolizmus, v protiklade k tomu *diskurzívnemu*, označuje ako *prezentačný*. Aj keď mnohí vo všeobecnosti súhlasia, že umenie odráža niečo z našej subjektívnej prirodzenosti, iní sa zase domnievajú, že sa pokúša stimulovať (alebo zjemňovať) pocity u pozorovateľa, či symptomaticky vyjadrovať pocity zažívané v skutočnosti umelcom počas procesu tvorby umeleckého diela. Langerová však chápe umenie skôr ako *projekciu koncepcie subjektívneho pocitu*. Prezentačné, teda nediskurzívne umelecké formy predstavujú podľa nej *intelektuálnu* formuláciu myšlienky, robia pre rozum vnímateľným to, čo síce pociťujeme, ale zmyslovo nevnímame.

Primárnou funkciou umenia je donútiť pociťované pnutia života, a to od rozličných rozptýlených somatických foriem, ktoré sú pre náš život nevyhnutné, až po tie najintenzívnejšie napätia spájajúce sa s našou mentálnou a emocionálnou skúsenosťou aby „stáli v tichosti za účelom našej možnosti pozrieť sa na ne...“ práve vyjadrenie takýchto myšlienok odhaľuje však podstatu toho, čo je vyjadrené spôsobom, ktorý, naopak, bežnej skúsenosti otvorený a dostupný nie je: ide teda o nepociťovanú aktivitu charakterizujúcu každú udalosť vstupujúcu do stavu cítenia. (Langerová 1988, s. 51; 66)

Langerovej pojem mysle má pôvod v jej teórii umenia: podstatou je neustále sa posúvajúci, t. j. meniaci sa stav cítenia vyplývajúci z nepociťovaných hĺbok nášho bytia, ktorý je neustále transformovaný prostredníctvom symbolov.

Langerová nazýva pocity vonkajšieho vplyvu *objektívnymi*, pretože tvoria základy našich symbolistických opisov sveta, ktoré bežne chápeme ako tzv. „prirodzené“, vo svete nachádzané znaky. Ako ľudia sme v živote priam zvädzaní k tomu, aby sme uverili, že naše opisy sveta sú založené na prirodzenom jazyku znakov, ktoré sa učíme čítať. Rorty (1989) dokonca tvrdí, že ani náš zdravý rozum nám nepripomína skutočnosť, že svet, existujúci aj mimo našich opisov, neprezentuje sám seba v žiadnom jazyku; porozumieť tomu v nejakom jazyku znamená v rámci neho žiť práve prostredníctvom

symbolov. Tým však nie je povedané, že prirodzené znaky vo svete azda nečítame rovnako, ako to robia ostatné zvieratá, ale to, že ak my ľudia o svete rozprávame, tak to znamená, že ho poznáme prostredníctvom symbolov. Pocity vonkajšieho vplyvu môžu byť považované za „objektívne“ aj kvôli absencii nutnosti či intenzity, ktoré, naopak, pripisujeme tomu, o čom premýšľame ako o „reálnych“, „subjektívnych“ pocitoch našej vlastnej odpovede na podnety.

Zatiaľ čo individuálna, jednotná a často jednoznačná projekcia jazyka robí z neho silný nástroj pre prax, dokonca aj mimo dosahu jeho prvotného pôvodu, spočívajúceho v expresívnosti, presne z toho istého dôvodu je jazyk vo svojej spôsobilosti vyjadriť komplexnosť autogénnych pocitov napätia a rytmu zároveň obmedzeným. Práve bohaté dvojznačnosti umeleckých obrazov sú však tým, čo nám, na druhej strane, priam vyčaruje dokonalý zmysel všetkých hlbok nepocítovanej organickej aktivity, z ktorej naše pocity vyvstávajú. Zároveň však platí, že presne tieto nepocítované hĺbky vytvárajú vnútorné pnutia, ktoré *pocítujeme* ako vskutku silné a ťažko vyjadriteľné slovami.

Prvé dve knihy S. Langerovej ustanovujú naozajstnú priepasť medzi prirodzeným svetom znakov, v ktorom sa zvieratá správajú *inteligentne* a imaginatívnym svetom symbolov, v ktorom ľudia riadia svoje životy *intelektuálne*. Vo svojom poslednom, trojzväzkovom diele posudzuje táto filozofka vyčerpávajúcím spôsobom naozaj široký rozsah odborných textov - od biochémie a evolučnej biológie, až po antropológiu, estetiku a matematiku, a vytvára tým základy pre rozvíjanie obrazu mysle, ktorý začala tvoriť v snahe premostiť medzeru medzi znakom a symbolom.

Mind: an Essay on Human Feeling

To, čo ma viedlo k súčasnému odhodlaniu vypracovať biologickú teóriu cítenia, ktorá by mala logicky viesť k adekvátnemu konceptu mysle so všetkým, čo vlastne myseľ značí, bol objav, že umelecké diela sú obrazmi foriem cítenia a že ich expresívnosť môže dospieť k prezentovaniu všetkých aspektov ľudskej osobnosti. (Langerová 1988, s. xiii)

Biologická teória cítenia rozvinutá v tomto diele predstavuje filozofický i konceptuálny základ pre naozaj hodnovernú vedu o ľudskej mysli. S. Langerová totiž verí, že akademická psychológia vo svojej snahe čím skôr dosiahnuť „vedecký“ (t. j. objektívny a merateľný) status, vynechala dôležitú fázu filozofickej gestácie, nevyhnutnej pre formuláciu akejkoľvek generatívnej myšlienky, čo vyústilo do akejsi pseudovedy správania. Koherentný obraz je to, čo podľa nej získavame vďaka filozofickému rozvrhu generatívnych pojmov a „iba obraz nás dokáže priviesť ku koncepcii celostného fenoménu, na pozadí ktorého môžeme vyhodnocovať adekvátnosť vedeckých termínov, ktorými ho opisujeme.“ (Langer 1988, s. xii)

Knihá *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling* je čítaná ako „prezentačné“ a zároveň „diskurzívne“ literárne dielo, patriace ako do oblasti umenia, tak aj do oblasti vedy. Ako sme už spomenuli, veľa z tejto vedy by bolo potrebné aktualizovať a niektorí z čitateľov by mohli aj namietat proti názoru, že literárne použitie

jazyka zvyšuje hodnotu diela. Navzdory tomu ostáva Langerovej myšlienkový rámec filozofie mysle relevantným dokonca aj pre súčasnú vedu. Jej filozofická integritivnosť ponúka unikátne riešenie hlavných teoretických problémov, ktoré zamestnávajú psychoanalytickú teóriu. Tá sa dnes zameriava na otázku významu emocionálnej neurovedy pre psychoanalytický výskum významu. Teória S. Langerovej poskytuje spôsob ako tieto dve oblasti vedy spojiť a pritom ich súčasne chápať ako oddelené. Zatiaľ čo bezvýhradne uznáva afektívne základy nášho ľudského intelektu, predpokladá súčasne aj kvalitatívne odlišnú formu prežívaného významu, ktorý je vytváraný prakticky v rámci našich na princípe symbolov dôsledne založených myslí. A práve toto jej uznávanie logiky emocionálneho procesu symbolizácie je ešte aj dnes tým, čo ju robí pre psychoanalytickú filozofiu významu tak jedinečnou a dôležitou .

Koncept cítenia

Cítiť neznamená pre S. Langerovú niečo *mať*, ale niečo *konať*. Pociťovanie opisuje ako psychologickú fázu organického procesu, vznikajúcu z veľkého komplexu celej organickej aktivity konštituujúcej živý organizmus; je to dynamický stav napätia, neustále premieňaný zapájaním predošlých, človekom nezaznamenaných/neuvedomených procesov do aktuálne vnímaných zážitkov. A hoci máme stále ďaleko k porozumeniu neurobiologickým procesom, ktoré utvárajú subjektívny pocit, predsa len existuje nádej, že neuroveda bude azda jedného dňa schopná špecificky opísať neurodynamiku, ktorú v sebe zahŕňajú. Langerovej deskripcia síce nezačína vysvetlením mechanizmov, ku ktorým môže veda jedného dňa dospieť, no stále ostáva intuitívnym a presvedčivým vysvetlením, ktoré, keď na to raz príde, bude budúcej vede s veľkou pravdepodobnosťou vyhovovať. Toto jej vysvetlenie je významný prínos, ktorému by mali psychoanalytici venovať pozornosť.

Langerová pokračuje v rovnako poetickom, ale zároveň konceptuálne hodnotnom spôsobe vyjadrovania, keď popisuje neustávajúcu dynamickú aktivitu organizmu, ktorý neprestajne interaguje s okolitým prostredím. Prostredie určuje to, čo je v tejto aktivite dané, činnosť organizmu zasa to, čo je v nej ponímané. Pocity vyvstávajúce v tejto vitálnej aktivite sú teda zažívané jedným z dvoch spôsobov: ako pocity vonkajšieho vplyvu, alebo ako pocity autogénnej činnosti. S rozvíjaním špecializovaných zmyslových orgánov nie je sensorická aktivita pociťovaná iba ako vonkajší vplyv, ale aj ako kvalitatívne *odlišné druhy* vplyvu. Ako náprotivok k tejto dostredivej činnosti (a v skutočnosti aj so zdanlivo oveľa väčšou intenzitou, než ako je iba jej finálny výsledok) stojí samotný centrálny nervový systém organizmu. Ten je aktívnym dokonca aj bez akejkoľvek vonkajšej stimulácie a túto jeho odstredivú činnosť zakúšame ako štruktúru v podobe tkaniva emotívnych napätí. Presne tieto dve oblasti – oblasť senzitivnosti a oblasť emotívnosti – môžu byť označené aj ako objektívne a subjektívne podoby našej skúsenosti. Langerová (1988, s. 13) však pripomína aj to, že „Akýkoľvek pociťovaný proces môže byť raz subjektívny a inokedy objektívny a neustále obsahovať meniace sa elementy oboch týchto druhov procesu.“

Koncept činu

Základná filozofická kostra pre výstavbu celej biologickej podstaty pocitu u S. Langerovej sa opiera o dynamiku samotného procesu. Aj tú opisuje táto filozofka síce skôr literárnejším, než prísne vedeckým spôsobom, no aj napriek tomu je pre ňu charakteristická konceptuálna predvídavosť. Vyobrazenie života u S. Langerovej hovorí o kontinuu aktivity, teda procese, ktorý nie je komponovaný z nejakých prerušovaných epizód, ale z jej odlišných a zároveň neoddeliteľných fáz a vzorcov. Elementy tejto aktivity môžu byť pomenované ako *činnostné jednotky*. Tento termín chápeme v zmysle uskutočňovania biologických procesov, pretože dosiahnutie narastajúcej koncentrovanosti, intenzity a jasnosti vzorcov biologickej aktivity, postupujúcich až kým nie je dosiahnutá fáza ich plného pociťovania, spočíva práve vo vzťahoch medzi týmito jednotkami. Analýza týchto činnostných jednotiek vedie k

...ďalším a ďalším pochodom včleňujúcim sa pod takmer akýkoľvek čin, ktorým si človek volí empiricky začať...[spletité životné procesy] ukazujú rytmy v rámci rytmov, blokujúce načasované sekvencie chemických zmien, elektrických polí a prúdov vyvolávajúcich chemické pochody, alebo, naopak, uvoľňovaných (vytváraných) týmito pochodmi. To znamená, že pod celostnou sústavou homeostatických riadiacich postupov ide v podstate o tie najrozvinutejšie procesy fyzického charakteru. (Langerová 1988, s. 108-109)

Aj napriek jej tvrdeniu, že kauzálne poradie činnostných jednotiek môže byť stanoviteľné teoreticky, ak nie dokonca aj prakticky (presne to je cieľom, ku ktorému nás jedného dňa môže neuroveda priviesť), autorka súčasne navrhuje, že vzťahy medzi nimi sú lepšie a pochopiteľnejšie zobrazované skôr ako vzorec impulzu. Každá takáto jednotka sa pritom ukáže, teda vzniká v celkovej konštelácii tých ostatných, a to prostredníctvom mechanizmu indukcie. Potenciálny biologický proces nemusí teda síce dosiahnuť aj fázu svojho završenia, ale môže prispieť takpovediac k celkovej matici života ako impulz, ktorý bol v možnosti svojej konečnej expresie zrušený. Langerovej vyobrazenie života je dynamickým nielen čo sa týka prítomnosti aktivity, ale aj všetkých napätí, ktoré sú obsiahnuté v potenciálnych činnostných jednotkách. V rámci tejto celostnej sústavy impulzov existujú aj také, ktoré sa završujú samé a tým sú následne zretazené do akýchsi sérií, teda sekvencií neustále sa opakujúcich procesov rozpoznateľnej formy. Tieto samoregulačné sekvencie vytvárajú svojím procesom samohybné rytmy, tvoriace našu biologickú pôsobnosť organizmu vo svete ako takú.

Práve motív aktivity organizmu u S. Langerovej je tým, čo stmeluje dohromady celú jej filozofiu, opäť prostredníctvom viac literárneho ako vedeckého spôsobu vyjadrovania. Procesy ako také sú teda pre túto filozofku zjednocujúcou formou, pričom o nich usudzuje v rozmedzí od „chémie protoplazmy až po psychológiu človeka.“ (Langer 1988, s. 159) Langerová (1988, s. 146) uvažuje o biologickej evolúcii „skôr ako o vzorci procesov, než ako o anatomických zmenách formujúcich záznam biologických pochodov jedinca.“ A podobne tomu aj vraví:

...zárodočná bunka nesie „genetický kód“ nie ako nejaký „detailný plán“, ktorého sa má držať, či ako súbor „inštrukcií“, ktoré má vykonať, ale ako organicky vyvolaný zhluk podmienených aktivít, pripravených pokračovať v postupe vždy, keď je to možné a akýmkoľvek následne nato možnými spôsobmi. (Langer 1988, s. 142)

Stručne povedané, „každý nový objav poukazuje na to, že živý organizmus vyzerá skôr ako akási stelesnená dráma vyvíjajúcich sa, minulosťou síce spleteno pripravovaných, avšak súčasne smerom k celkovému dovŕšeniu sa prispôbujúcich procesov, než ako nejaký už vopred načrtnutý obraz.“ (Langer, 1988, s. 143). To, čo organizuje a usporadúva tieto mnohopočetné zrefazenia procesov, sekvencií v rámci sekvencií, udržiavaných pohromade v dočasnom vzorci, je rytmus. Výsledkom toho je, že celá biologická aktivita organizmu môže byť „pochopená ako vzorce napätia, ktoré sú vyjadrené v hmote, udržiavajúcej ich formu ohromným komplexom rytmizovaných procesov“ (Langer 1988, s. 159-160), pričom každý z týchto procesov sa pripravuje na svoje opakovanie v kadencii svojho dovŕšenia.

Individualizácia a evolúcia cítenia v inštinktívnom správaní

Evolučný obraz života S. Langerovej je charakterizovaný dialektickými procesmi individualizácie a včleňovania, teda takpovediac dvoma extrémami celého veľkolepého, dokonalého rytmu samotnej evolúcie ľudského druhu. „Najprimitívnejším procesom individualizácie je izolovanie protoplazmatickej jednotky dokonale celostnou membránou, selektívne preniknuteľnou pod osmotickým tlakom.“ (Langer 1988, s. 128) Podľa Langerovej prebieha však súbežne s procesom individualizácie jedinca aj dynamika procesu reprodukcie, ktorá, naopak, prepája každý organizmus s tými ostatnými.

Spolu s evolúciou periférnej deliacej línie medzi individualizovaným organizmom a jeho životným prostredím, sa za účelom vyvolania psychickej fázy objavuje aj potenciál dostatočne intenzívnej aktivity. S. Langerová vraví, že ide o ten: „moment, kedy sa tento potenciál objavuje vo vnútri organizmu ako vnem.“ (Langerová 1988, s. 157). S postupným zintenzívňovaním psychickej fázy v konaní živočíchov narastá priamoúmerne aj počet aktivít celkového fungovania každého stvorenia, spadajúcich do rámca tých jeho stretov s okolím, ktoré sú už „pocitované“. Vytvára sa celý repertoár preň typického správania, riadeného následne pocitom. Správanie zvieratá, vyplývajúce z podnetov, rozvíja potom akoby na oplátku organizáciu takej intenzity, ktorá je dostatočná na vyvolanie psychickej fázy, t. j. k podnieteniu prežívania emócie. Celkové pochopenie rozdielu medzi vnútorným organizmom a jeho vonkajškom sa preto podľa S. Langerovej objavuje u živočicha práve prostredníctvom týchto uvedených postupných krokov.

Spolu s evolučným vývojom života, s nárastom procesov vo veľkosti a intenzite a s vyústením vnútornej organickej fázy do podoby individualizovanej biologickej aktivity, stáva sa aj posun v prirodzenej histórii postupne porovnateľný s tým, ktorý sa udial v prípade celkovej evolúcie života ako takého. S. Langerová vraví, že súčasne so zrodom cítenia, tzn. vedomia, vystala v prípade ľudského druhu aj

hodnota - „Pretože hodnota existuje iba tam, kde je vedomie. Tam, kde nie je pociťované vôbec nič, nie je nič, čo by oplývalo významom.“ (Langerová 1988, s. 165). Okrem opäť raz skôr literárnej, než vedeckej konceptualizácia tejto autorky, samotní psychoanalytici môžu na tomto mieste oponovať aj jej myšlienke o tom, že iba veci, ktoré sú pociťované aj takpovediac zavážia, teda majú význam. Určite niet pochýb o tom, že z hľadiska evolúcie existujú aj tak hodnotné procesy, ktoré síce nie sú nikdy až priamo pociťované, no aj napriek tomu význam majú. Avšak emocionálne procesy, t. j. procesy *hodnotenia*, zahŕňajú v sebe vo všeobecnosti vždy skúsenostný subjektívny stav, a to dokonca aj vo svojej najprimitívnejšej forme (pozri Panksepp 1998). Práve v tomto rozsahu chápania cítenia môžeme preto dôjsť aj k záveru, že hodnotovo „zavážia“ – má význam - iba to, čo je pociťované.

Organizmus, ktorý sa neustále vyvíja, robí všetko, čo počas celého kontinua internej a externej aktivity v rámci hraníc určitého prostredia urobiť vlastne môže. Repertoár inštinktívnych štruktúr správania a celkového fungovania daného živočicha je rozšírením jeho už zdedených organických štruktúr, ktoré sú spredmetnené vo vyvíjajúcich sa podnecujúcich vzorcoch, zdokonaľujúcich sa postupne v meniacich sa prostrediach. S. Langerová tento proces opisuje takto:

U rastlín, kde je celková aktivita na nízkej a zvyčajne čisto somatickej úrovni, podnecujú strety s environmentálnymi podnetmi nerovnocenné miery metabolizmu a mitózy, takže ich korene rastú intenzívne smerom k zdroju potravy a pupene sa otvárajú najrýchlejšie tam, kde ich svetlo a teplo dosahuje v najväčšej miere, atď. Pre živočichy je však už typické, že svoje správanie rozvíjajú osobitne pod vplyvom externých udalostí, takže viac či menej prudké vonkajšie zmeny sa odrážajú aj v motivácii ich priamych činov a spôsobujú, že sa javia v prípade podnetu byť jeho priamymi mechanickými dôsledkami. (Langer 1988, s. 171)

Langerová vidí inštinktívne správanie zvierat vždy skôr ako proaktívne, než reaktívne, a správanie ako také - vyžadujúce si často značné prispôsobenie sa tým najprísnejším obmedzeniam prostredia - je v podstate vždy záležitosťou postupujúceho dovŕšenia procesov. Keď je inštinktívne správanie uskutočnené vedome, tak je riadené centrálnym aj periférnym cítením. Avšak iba u ľudského tvora je tento pocit podľa nej transformovaný aj do *konceptie účelu*.

My, ľudskí činitelia, udržiavame svoje činy pokope práve koncepciou účelu a prostriedkov... V prípade živočíšnej aktivity je celkové nervové napätie formované predbežne už v impulze a čine, a nie je teda zjavne kontrolované obrazom externých podmienok, ktoré by mali byť dosiahnuté, ale stálym interným tlakom, smerujúcim k jej dovŕšeniu... v prípade ľudských životov sa takéto kompletné vzorce ale neobjavujú; všetky elementy sa v nich síce zjaviť môžu, ale tie sú už vopred takpovediac rozkúskované tlakmi konceptuálnych procesov. Neexistuje žiadna automatická sekvencia, ani žiadne prejavenie sa nejakej detailnej a nezamýšľanej, teda neúmyselnej činnosti. (Langerová 1988, s. 189-190, 193)

Takýmito úvahami Langerová dospieva k premosteniu biológie cítenia s prežívaním významu, ktoré je typické pre človeka prostredníctvom jeho kultúry. Týmto premostením je u nej teda koncepcia účelu.

Sociálne správanie

S. Langerová obsiahlo rozoberá štúdie o sociálnom a komunikačnom type správania u živočíchov, a hoci nezvádza boj s empirickými zisteniami, nesúhlasí súčasne s ich interpretáciami. Správanie zvierat je pre ňu totiž založené na inteligentnom čítaní prirodzene sa objavujúcich znakov v ich životnom prostredí, a to vrátane čítania sociálnych znakov produkovaných ostatnými členmi daných zvieracích druhov. Emocionálne vnímajúce zviera je podľa nej z hľadiska evolúcie síce vysoko rozvinuté, ale aj nekonceptuálne (tzn. prostredníctvom symbolov nepremýšľajúce) a subjektívne a objektívne pocity uňho nie sú rozlíšené. To znamená, že zviera si mylí to, čo vidí s tým, čo pociťuje. Výsledkom je potom ľahká ovplyvniteľnosť ďalšieho zvierata spôsobená akosi nákazlivou motiváciou, plynúcou preň z takpovediac emóciami nabitého správania jeho súkmeňovca. Zvieratá reagujú na seba empaticky, na rozdiel od sympatickej odpovede vyskytujúcej sa u druhov, ktoré používajú symboly. A to je aj dôvod, prečo je spolužitie zvierat založené skôr na zdieľaní, ako na skutočnej vzájomnej komunikácii.

Evolúcia imaginácie

Evolúcia ľudskej mysle tak, ako ju koncipovala Langerová, má svoj počiatok síce v súbore schopností objavených u nižších druhov, no zároveň sa jedinečným spôsobom napája na tie z nich, ktoré sú už ľudskými, pričom účelom tohto postupného procesu je dosiahnutie práve tých mentálnych schopností, ktoré nazývame ľudským myslením. Príkladom môžu byť prudké pohyby očí počas spánku u cicavcov, čo môže naznačovať neustále prítomnú mozgovú aktivitu rovnako u všetkých príslušníkov tohto rodu, príznačnú intenzívnu nervovú aktivitou vyvinutou u vyšších druhov a vedúcou podľa všetkého k značnému zdokonaleniu a urýchleniu každého druhu periférneho a centrálného cítenia. Nervové mechanizmy pre vytváranie obrazov sa mohli vyvinúť u týchto zvierat ako obrana proti priam neznesiteľnému nárastu nervovej stimulácie hroziacej tým, že mohla nad organizmom dokonca úplne prevládať. „To vyhybavé dovŕšenie začatého impulzu vo výslednom správaní je nahradené osobitne v kôrovej časti mozgu formáciou obrazu vo vizuálnom systéme, alebo nejakou porovnateľnou, čisto senzorickou udalosťou.“ (Langer 1988, s. 253)

Spájanie sa senzorických obrazov s emocionálnym zafarbením môže vysvetliť aj príčinu vzniku jedinečnej pôsobivosti ľudskej imaginácie:

Pretože my ľudia sme preťažení nielen nadmernou senzitivnosťou, ale aj prílišnými emotívnymi impulzmi. Ich počet je totiž v porovnaní s tým, než koľko ich môže byť otvorene a obzvlášť ešte v sociálnom kontexte ľudského života využitých, jednoducho nadmerný. Takže zatiaľ čo vízie u zvierat (ak nejaké existujú) vstupujú (do mozgu zvierata – pozn. prekl.) pravdepodobne kaleidoskopickým spôsobom bez akéhokoľvek iného zámeru než je ich prostá zmena (ich objavenie sa, následné vyjasnenie a teda oslabenie a nakoniec postúpenie ďalej), vízie u človeka majú, naopak, sklon priberať aj emocionálne hodnoty. (Langerová 1988, s. 262)

Objavenie sa snívania ako fyziologického procesu pre reguláciu rozsiahleho senzorickeho pôsobenia je u ľudských druhov spojené s reguláciou autogénnych emotívnych impulzov. Tie sú u komplexne sociálne zameraného ľudského zvierata rozvinuté naozaj do hĺbky a pre správne fungovanie celého organizmu si vynucujú preto ukončenie prostredníctvom imaginácie. Práve tieto intenzívne emotívne impulzy sú teda tým, čo poháňa obrazovú projekčnú dynamiku celkového správania založeného na vytváraní symbolov.

Úplne poslednou súčasťou evolúcie imaginácie bol pravdepodobne posun od mimovoľného k riadenému spôsobu ovládania tohto procesu.

Imaginácia bola pravdepodobne počas celých vekov ľudskej (alebo praludskej) existencie úplne mimovoľnou rovnako, ako je ním dnes vo všeobecnosti snívanie. Istým spôsobom ju dokázalo kontrolovať - raz ju potlačiť, inokedy vyvolať - aktívne alebo pasívne správanie. To, čo však nakoniec v evolúcii z celého tohto procesu vystalo, bola práve schopnosť vytvárania obrazu. (Langerová 1988, s. 265)

Neurovedecké pochopenie imaginácie je nám podľa všetkého ešte veľmi vzdialené, pričom bude závisieť na spôsobe, akým bude definované. Ak bude totiž imaginácia stotožňovaná s poznávaním, založeným na prelínaní sa rozličných modelov tak, ako to definuje Modell (2003), bude aj ľahšie neurologicky preskúmateľnou. Ak si však, naopak, vyžiada neurologické pochopenie subjektívnej skúsenosti, bude zase ťažšie ju vysvetliť. Langerovej opis sa síce vzdaluje vedeckosti, no stále v ňom existuje súznenie s našou ľudskou skúsenosťou, ktorú prežívame a práve to jej umožňuje fungovať efektívne v konceptuálnom rámci vybudovanom za účelom pochopenia ľudského intelektu.

Evolúcia mysle človeka založenej na vytváraní symbolov

Včlenenie imaginácie do rodiaceho sa života vedomého pociťovania a kontroly a rozširovanie tejto schopnosti od tých vyslovene súkromných až po jej verejné prejavy a použitia, ktorých príkladom je zdieľaný jazyk, tvorí základ na symboloch založenej ľudskej mysle.

Symbolizmus je znakom samotnej podstaty človeka. Jeho evolúcia bola asi pomalá a kumulatívna a trvala až dovedy, kým sa z nevedomého procesu, pomenovaného Feudom ako snová práca, nevynorila do podoby vedomej skúsenosti príznačná mentálna funkcia, teda inak povedané, sémantická intuícia, t. j. vnímanie významu. (Langer 1988, s. 268)

Spolu s objavením sa humanoidného tvora sa okrem nemennosti praktického správania vynorila aj nová, prebúdzajúca sa schopnosť projekcie emocionálneho zafarbenia na ním zachytené vnemy, ako aj predvídanie významu. Práve tieto uchopené vnemy udávajú celkový zmysel bázne, či úžasu, ktoré my ľudia precitujeme, a to nasledovne: „Toto je veľmi závažný krok smerom od vnímania formy k samotnej podstate významu.“ (Langerová 1988, s. 270) Schopnosť vytvárania konceptov sa mohla zrodiť z prvotných hlučných sprievodných prejavov rituálu. Tie boli totiž podľa nej najprvotnejším verejným vyjadrením formalizovaného cítenia. Ďalším dôležitým faktom bolo to, že práve

spolu s vývojom rituálu sa ľudská spoločnosť ako taká posunula od telesného kontaktu, gesta a emocionálnej vokalizácie k kontaktu mentálnemu. V prípade tanca mohol napríklad každý/á tanečník/čka vyvolať vo svojom vlastnom symbolistickom procese aj svoje vlastné obrazy - predstavy. Samotné zvukové schémy, t. j. vzorce typické svojím vlastným tónom, sa potom mohli nezávisle od samotného tanca hodiť v oslave aj na vykúzlenie naozaj mnohopočetných individuálnych predstáv, nesúcich svoj vlastný pocit. No a keď už raz odzneli tieto zvukové vzorce aj verejne a spoločnosť ich spoznala, mohol sa následne objaviť posun, ktorý definuje Susanne Langerová takto:

Práve obraz je tou skutočnou koncepciou. Svoj objekt totiž nesignalizuje, ani si ho nevyžaduje, ale naopak, on ho priamo značí. Táto samotná koncepcia nie je síce komunikačná, pretože nie je otvorená a jej charakter je výsostne osobný, avšak zapamätané veci, teda pohyby, sú verejné presne tak, ako aj zvuky aktivizujúce individuálne obrazy, teda predstavy u každého človeka. Tieto pohyby a zvuky evokujú totiž obrazy vyburcovaním spomienok zhruba tých istých momentov tanca aj u iných osôb... a symbolická funkcia sa tak zrazu posúva od niekoľkých obrazov súkromného charakteru k vokálnemu fragmentu, ktorý ich sprievodne evokoval, takže význam pripadá právom k tej fráze, ktorej rozumejú aj ostatní ľudia. (Langerová 1988, s. 276)

Presne takýmto spôsobom sa zvuky posúvajú od znaku k symbolu, teda od činu k mysleniu a spájajú v evolúcii jazyka osobné i verejné, t. j. spoločné aspekty našej mysle.

Prenikanie používania symbolov do života človeka

Použitie symbolu transformuje každý aspekt ľudského života. Už ľudské dieťa sa vyvíja ako používateľ symbolu v symbolmi definovanom prostredí; inštinktívna mentálna celistvosť mláďaťa u zvierat, ktorá, naopak, chýba ľudskému dieťaťu, je uňho nahradená používaním symbolov. My ľudia vyrastáme spolu s princípom používania mien, ale zároveň bez toho, aby sme vedeli, čím vlastne pomenovávanie je. Keď sa totiž naučíme už raz rozprávať, nedokážeme potom konať inak – už naša samotná percepcia sa rôzni v závislosti na našom jazyku, ktorý je pre každého z nás osobitý:

Jazyk, aj napriek faktu, že si jeho počiatkový vývoj v prvotných rokoch každého individuálneho života vyžaduje vplyv hovoriacej spoločnosti, nie je nadobúdaný postupne výlučne iba pre jej účely. Už počas procesu jeho učenia preniká totiž celkovým systémom mozgových činností, takže percepcia, fantázia, pamäť, intuícia, ba aj snívanie nadobúdajú svoju špeciálnu ľudskú formu práve pod jeho neustálym a zvyšujúcim sa vplyvom. (Langerová 1988, s. 294-295)

Aj keď sa zdá, že slová, ktoré používame, sú odvodzované prirodzeným spôsobom, t. j., že samotnému slovu je pridelené označenie, v skutočnosti tomu tak nie je. Zatiaľ čo totiž svet, do ktorého patríme aj my, existuje určite aj mimo naše opisy, to, že ho my ľudia poznáme, je umožnené práve našimi opismi (Rorty 1989). Táto naša znalosť je doslova ustanovená v určitom čase a na určitom mieste:

Čas je novou dimenziou udelenou prostrediu, v ktorom človek žije jeho vlastným vyjadrovaním sa slovami, ako aj jeho mentálnym následkom, ktorým je uvažovanie prostredníctvom symbolov. Čas učinil teda z ľudského prostredia svet s homogénnym priestorovým rámcom a históriou...Spoločnosť, rovnako ako tento priestorovo-časový svet sám, je výtvorom špecializovaných spôsobov cítenia človeka: percepcie, imaginácie konceptuálneho myslenia a jeho porozumenia jazyku. (Langerová 1988, s. 288, 298)

Čin a myslenie, ako aj cítenie predchádzajúce tomu, ktoré je založené na symboloch a samotné cítenie prostredníctvom symbolov, stali sa teda podľa S. Langerovej v evolúcii ľudského druhu nerozlučne spojenými.

Dialektika subjektívneho / objektívneho

Ľudská skúsenosť je tvorená trvalým včleňovaním vnútorných a vonkajších vplyvov, a teda subjektívneho aj objektívneho cítenia. Pre koncept mysle načrtnutý Langerovou je umiestnenie opozície medzi subjektivitu a objektivitu v rámci jednotnej oblasti cítenia, alebo vedomia, naozaj zásadné. Rozlíšenie subjektívneho / objektívneho bolo v myslení západnej civilizácie vytvárané ako rozlíšenie medzi ľudským vedomím a svetom, v ktorom bol svet chápaný ako objektívny a naše vedomie sveta ako subjektívne. Veda však nevenovala vedomiu pozornosť, pretože ho považovala iba za prostú subjektivitu a kvôli tomu aj za niečo pre vedecké štúdium nedôležité. Langerová však naopak tvrdí, že už samotné vedecké štúdium je formou vedomia a začína práve s vedomím ako s neodvratným štartovacím bodom, v rámci ktorého môžeme identifikovať aj empirické rozlíšenie medzi subjektívnym a objektívnym. To, čo pociťujeme ako svoju vlastnú aktivitu, označujeme potom podľa nej ako *subjektívne* a to, čo cítime, t. j. všimame si ako aktivitu vo svete, označujeme ako *objektívne*. Práve dialektika medzi týmito oblasťami je potom základom pre dynamické procesy imaginácie vytvárajúcej symboly:

Dialektika, ktorá vytvára tento život, je skutočným a konštantným mozgovým procesom – súhrou medzi dvoma základnými typmi cítenia: postranným, nepriamym vplyvom a autonómnou činnosťou a objektívnym a subjektívnym cítením. Len čo objektívne vplyvy zasiahnu naše zmysly, stávajú sa emocionálne zafarbenými. V mozgu spôsobilom symbolickej aktivity, akým je ten náš, má potom každý vnútorný pocit tendenciu vyústiť do podoby symbolu udávajúceho tomuto pocitu, aj keď len dočasne, status objektívnosti. Tento proces je presne tou hominidnou osobitosťou, ktorá, aj bez akéhokoľvek nebiologického dodatku, utvára skutočnú priepasť medzi človekom a zvieratom. (Langerová 1988, s. 292)

Neoddeliteľnosť neurovedeckých a psychoanalytických teórií o mysli: Langerovej dôraz na jednotnú vednú disciplínu

Susanne Langerová a jej filozofické rozpoznanie logickej osobitosti symbolistického správania a prejavov poskytuje psychoanalýze nosnú konštrukciu pre zahrnutie pokrokov v neurovedách, a to aj bez toho, aby sa znevažovala sféra významu, ktorý vzniká jedinečne práve u človeka jeho

imagináciou a môže byť pochopený procesmi interpretácie. Neurovedecké a psychoanalytické výskumy Damasia (1994, 1999, 2003), Edelmana (1989), Edelmana a Tononiho (2000), Modella (2003) a Pankseppa (1998, 1999) vysvetľujú teórie mysle, ktoré sú síce bohaté na opisy emocionálnych základov empirického „ja“, avšak neberú do úvahy transformáciu afektu prostredníctvom ľudskej predstavivosti. Zatiaľ čo napríklad Modell uznáva za kľúčovú dôležitosť imaginácie, jeho definícia ju už nevystihuje dosť náležite. Damasio, Edelman, Modell a Panksepp sú síce, či už vedome alebo nie, motivovaní hodnotením založeným na emocionálnom základe, no vo svojich teóriách sa nedostávajú za hranicu ľudského konania. Hodnota ako taká im preto slúži síce dobre, ale iba čo sa týka rozmedzia činu.

Pre Langerovú je však imaginácia práve o tom nekonaní. Ide o vlastnenie ideí kvôli nim samým, pričom tie sú podľa nej pre náš život samozrejme veľmi dôležité. Myšlienky sú v očiach tejto filozofky síce nepretržite utkávané z nášho neustáleho emocionálneho prepojenia so svetom, no získavajú zároveň aj svoj vlastný život, a tým, čo nám môže dopomôcť porozumieť tomu, čo sme vytvorili, je práve psychoanalytický proces.

Evolučná teória

Všetka práca v neurovedách i v psychoanalýze je ukotvená v evolučnej teórii a kladie dôraz na aktívnu myseľ. Nie inak je to u Langerovej, ktorá presadzuje tézu, že evolúcia schopnosti človeka *tvoriť myšlienky o svete* bola jeho adaptáciou danou samou osebe, pričom nešlo o účely praktickej aplikovateľnosti, ale expresie. Darwinova teória sexuálnej selekcie podporuje tento druh ľudskej adaptácie. Človek by sa mohol domnievať, že ľudská schopnosť kontrolovať imagináciu a vykresliť svet pomocou symbolov do podoby ľudského prostredia, typického komplexným významom, je *nadobudnutím úplne novej funkcie*; že je to teda akýsi „*prepájací oblúk*“ - vedľajší produkt už skoršej adaptácie týkajúcej sa prežitia.

Geoffrey Miller predstavuje presvedčivý opis Darwinovej teórie sexuálnej selekcie v diele *The Mating Mind: How Sexual Choice Shaped the Evolution of Human Nature*, kde vysvetľuje jasný rozdiel medzi Darwinovými myšlienkami o prirodzenej selekcii za účelom prežitia a sexuálnou selekciou prostredníctvom voľby partnerov. Vraví:

Väčšina ľudí zrovnáva evolúciu s „prežitím tých najsilnejších“ a väčšina teórií o evolúcii sa pokúšala v skutočnosti nájsť výhody týkajúce sa prežitia pre všetko, čo robí ľudí tak osobitými... A hoci sa tento takpovediac na faktore prežitia postavený uhol pohľadu zdá byť od čias Darwinovskej revolúcie jedinou vedecky korektnou možnosťou, tá ostáva stále neuspokojujúcou. Bez vysvetlenia ponecháva totiž až príliš mnoho hádaniek. Ľudský jazyk sa napríklad vyvinul vlastne v omnoho prepracovanejší, než ako je pre základné funkcie prežitia nutné. Umenie a hudba sa z pragmatického biologického uhla pohľadu zdajú byť zasa iba nezmyselným mrhaním energiou... Táto kniha však tvrdí, že naše mysle sa nevyvinuli iba ako „stroje“ pre prežitie, ale ako takpovediac stroje na vytváranie známosti... Tí praludia, ktorí nepýtali sexuálny záujem, nezáležiac

prítom na tom, akí dobrí v prežití boli, sa našimi predkami nestali. (Miller 2000, s. 1-3)

Podstatou sexuálnej selekcie je výber partnerov, ktorí budú prispievať k potomstvu. Tie charakteristiky druhov, ktoré sa vyvinuli prostredníctvom nej, boli uprednostňované práve preto, že boli „chápané“ ako indikátory reprodukívnej vhodnosti (samozrejme nevedome). V skutočnosti tomu tak aj bolo - typickým príkladom je páví chvost; ten schopnosti prežitia samotného páva kvôli veľkosti, váhe a *prílišnému* vyčnievaniu vlastne prekáža, no zároveň je aj ukazovateľom akejsi robustnej podstaty, ktorú môže pávica použiť na identifikovanie dobrého partnera. V otázke ľudských druhov Miller poznamenáva:

Naši predkovia sa inteligentným výberom svojich sexuálnych partnerov na základe ich mentálnych schopností stali inteligentnou silou ukrytou za evolúciu ľudskej mysle... Sexuálna selekcia, zdá sa, posúva v priebehu ľudskej evolúcie svoj primárny cieľ od tela k mysli. (Miller 2000, s. 4, 10)

Spomínané „prepájacie oblúky“ sú *automatickými* vedľajšími produktmi evolučnej adaptácie a preto sú aj vzhľadom na svoj pôvodný status pre súčasnú činnosť neprispôsobiteľné a nadbytočné (Gould 1997). Takéto postranné funkcie, či vlastnosti sú ale prístupnými následne k udeleniu novej funkcie, kvôli náročnosti ktorej sú však často aj nesprávne zamieňané za primárnu adaptáciu. Gould vraví, že práve „prejav hľadania partnerov“ je funkciou schopnou osvojenia si spomínaných „oblúkov“. To je už sexuálna selekcia. Imaginácia znamená však podľa všetkého primárnu adaptáciu pre neuroregulačné účely a nie je vedľajším produktom nejakej inej adaptácie. Aj napriek tomu bola ale pravdepodobne následne pridelená účelom „prejavu hľadania partnerov“.

Presne táto biologická schéma sexuálnej selekcie je pre psychológiu človeka dokonalým doplnkom teórie mysle Susanne Langerovej. Ponúka totiž evolučný základ pre všetky druhy kultúrnych symbolizmov transformujúcich ľudskú spoločnosť prostredníctvom jej imaginácie.

Základný neurovedecký rámec

Dielo Damasia (1994, 1999, 2003), Edelmána (1989) a Edelmána a Tononihó (2000) je pre túto štúdiu osobitne relevantným. Títo autori sa o svoj rozsiahly neurovedecký výskum, týkajúci sa vedomia, podelili v mnohých knihách určených pre verejnosť, ktorá sa o túto tému zaujíma. Damasio píše:

Vedomie je akýmsi udržiavaním postupu, umožňujúceho organizmu, vyzbrojenému schopnosťou regulovať svoj metabolizmus, teda organizmu s vrozenými reflexami a s formou učenia sa známou ako podmieňovanie, stať sa podvolenia schopným – t. j. takým druhom organizmu, v ktorom sú jeho reakcie na podnety utvárané mentálnym podielom prevyšujúcim aj samotný život organizmu. (Damasio 1999, s. 25)

Na rozdiel od mnohých počítačových modelov mysle v kognitívnej vede, ktoré

charakterizujú mentálnu aktivitu ako naprogramované informačné spracovanie, Edelmanova teória o mysli hovorí o trvalom seba-regulačnom procese kategorizácie a rekategorizácie (táto charakteristika vlastne vytláča tieto počítačové modely mimo evolučný rámec). Modely spracovania informácií v nej závisia na vopred dohodnutých, vo svete sa nachádzajúcich kategóriách, a na presnom nervovom „softvéri“ určenom na manipuláciu s kategorizovanými informáciami. Práve podľa týchto modelov sú potom robené aj replikované, uchovávané, získané a aktualizované kópie informácií získaných zo sveta. Podľa Edelmana (1989) teda svet poslúcha síce zákony fyziky, ale nie je a priori kategorizovaný. Mentálna aktivita sa vyvinula podľa neho preto na základe neustálej dynamiky, v dokonalej zhode s touto schopnosťou kategorizovať a rekategorizovať.

Ja verzus okolie

Edelmanov výskum podstaty vzťahu mozgu a mysle sa opiera o konceptualizáciu biologicky založeného rozlíšenia ja/nie ja, ktoré je neoddeliteľnou súčasťou ľudského nervového systému. Toto rozlíšenie zahŕňa rozdielne štrukturálne a fungujúce časti mozgu, podporujúce na jednej strane hodnotové (seba/ja), a na druhej percepčné (kategorické, alebo nie ja) pôsobenie. Edelman píše:

Zatiaľ čo nervové časti prvého druhu [hodnota] (napríklad hypotalamus, hypofýza, rozličné časti mozgového kmeňa, amygdala, hipokampus a limbický systém) fungujú v rámci vývojovom daných parametrov, tie, ktoré sa týkajú druhého druhu [kategória] (napríklad mozgová kôra, thalamus a mozoček) fungujú zväčša prostredníctvom neprestávajúcich extero(re)ceptívnych (týkajúcich sa vnímania podnetov zvonka – pozn. prekl.) sensorických interakcií so svetom, t. j. skúsenosti a správania. (Edelman 1989, s. 94)

Neustála interakcia medzi týmito dvoma systémami fungovania nervovej sústavy je základom pamäte i učenia sa a je vylepšená evolučným výdobytkom vedomia. Edelman zobrazuje vedomie ako postupujúcu, samozavádzajúcu skúsenosť, ktorá sa objavuje vtedy, keď sa momentálna *bezhodnotová* kategorizácia odohráva v spojení s *hodnotou ovládanou*, t. j. *hodnotovou/kategorickou pamäťou*.

V zmysle dostupnosti a bohatosti „topografického mapovania“, je homeostatický, alebo tiež hodnotu udržiavajúci nervový systém, nepodobný tomu percepčnému. Stav hodnoty, teda významu, sú síce „jedným z hlavných základov primárneho vedomia, no nezabezpečujú jeho hlavný obsah.“ (Edelman 1989, s. 101) To, čo sa do mozgu dostáva z tohto interného homeostatického hodnotového systému dominuje nad tým, čo doňho prichádza zvonku, t. j. zo sveta, prostredníctvom percepcie. Deje sa to pomocou blokovania a súčasného uvoľňovania, utlmovania alebo redukovania týchto externých podnetov podľa interných potrieb.

Podľa Damasia môžu byť dve veci, ktoré musia byť vysvetlené na to, aby sme pochopili vedomie, označené tiež ako ja verzus nie ja, a tie definuje takto: (1)

„film“ v mozgu, alebo tiež filozofický problém qualia a (2) vedomie o sebe v akte poznania. Konkrétne hovorí: „Priekopnícka novosť poskytovaná vedomím, bola vlastne možnosťou spojenia vnútornej svätyne späť s reguláciou života, so spracovaním obrazov.“ (Damasio 1999, s. 24). A hoci o našej skúsenosti, týkajúcej sa sveta, nepremýšľame zväčša ako o „filme“ v našom mozgu, alebo ako o filozofickom probléme qualia, aj tak presne rozumieme tomu, čo má týmto Damasio na mysli. Rovnako vieme aj to, čo je mienené jeho vyjadrením vedomia o sebe v akte poznania.

Teória Langerovej obohacuje práve toto rozlíšenie medzi skúsenosťou týkajúcou sa nás samých (svojho ja) a tou, ktorá sa ho netýka (okolie). Dosahuje to jeho odstránením už na istom základnom stupni. Kým o poznaní seba samých premýšľame totiž z perspektívy prvej osoby, o poznaní toho, čo už nie je nami samými zase z perspektívy tretej osoby - oba tieto spôsoby poznania závisia na rovnakom procese - S. Langerová ho označuje ako *vnútorne organický* stav cítenia, ktorý sa objavuje spolu s dostatočne intenzívnou mentálnou aktivitou. Intuitívne, ale zároveň často problematické rozlíšenie medzi sebou a tým, čo už nie je mnou, medzi subjektom a objektom, je v konceptuálnom rámci Langerovej jednak uchovávané, no súčasne eliminované dôrazom na jednotný charakter schopnosti cítiť, ako základu pre oba typy tohto nášho ľudského poznania.

Primárne vedomie verzus vedomie vyššieho rádu

Pankseppova práca v oblasti neurovedy zaoberajúcej sa emóciami zdôrazňuje ich význam ako trvalých základných opôr psychológie človeka, ktorej neustále podliehajú naše prepracované intelektuálne poznatky. Okrem nich kladie však tento autor v celom diele dôraz aj na význam emocionálneho cítenia. Zatiaľ čo emocionálne systémy ako také (Panksepp pripomína existenciu mnohých rozličných emocionálnych systémov) fungujú očividne veľmi podvedome, Panksepp sa opakovane vracia k dôležitosti vnútorne prežívaných emocionálnych stavov pre celkové vytváranie správania. Nepokúša sa dostať za hranicu tohto primárneho vedomia, takže vo svojej práci nezabíha ani do problému riešiteľného pre toľkých teoretikov mysle práve filozofickým rámcom nastoleným S. Langerovou⁶, ktorým je posun od primárneho k sekundárnemu vedomiu a teda od skúsenosti k slovám. Pankseppov opis primárneho vedomia je zrkadlením jeho podania u S. Langerovej, pričom tento autor poznamenáva, že prostá prítomnosť, alebo skúsenosť pocitov je tým, čím vlastne vedomie v skutočnosti je, takže rozprávanie o *vedomí pocitov* je preto podľa neho nevyhnutne nadbytočné. Opis pocitov u oboch týchto autorov sa dosť podobá, no Panksepp o nich teda nehovorí iba ako o emocionálnych stavoch, ale prirovnáva ich aj k takým veciam, akými je napríklad „červenosť“ -

⁶ V prvom vydaní diela *Neuropsychanalysis* (1999), kde je Panksepp vyzývaný k tomu, aby sa venoval potenciálnym spojeniam medzi psychoanalytickými a neurovedeckými záznamami, naznačuje tento autor nasledovným spôsobom pochopenie komplexností obsiahnutých v pohybe od primárneho k sekundárnemu vedomiu - tých, ktorých sa tak jedinečne chopila aj Langerová: „Moderná neuroveda nebola bohužiaľ zdatným adeptom na konceptualizovanie toho, ako utkávajú interné neurodynamiky mozgu scelovaním evolučne poskytnutých schopností s neurodynamickými symbolizáciami pokračujúcich svetových udalostí psychologické skutočnosti.“ (Panksepp 1999, s. 33).

čo je originálny príklad qualia. Vraví:

Červenosť, podobne ako všetky ostatné subjektívne skúsenosti, je evolučným potenciálom nervového systému, t. j. takým, ktorý bol „naprojektovaný“ na to, aby nám umožnil posúdiť zrelosť ovocí, sexuálnu vyspelosť, či dokonca násilie a vášň v krvi, vedúce k jej preliatiu. (Panksepp 1988, s. 14)

Edelman rozlišuje popri Langerovej spôsoboch uvažovania o mentálnych schopnostiach založených na znakoch a tých, ktoré sú naopak založené na symboloch, aj medzi primárnym vedomím a vedomím vyššieho rádu, pričom to druhé charakterizuje ako *vedomie vedomia*. Pre tohto autora predstavuje však dané rozlíšenie iba *kvantitatívny* dodatok zdokonalenej fonologickej schopnosti, ktorá produkuje *kvantitatívny* dodatok k poznaniu vo forme syntaxe pridanej k sémantike.

Avšak Langerová si, naopak, predstavuje myseľ, používajúcu symbol, ako *kvalitatívne* odlišný druh intelektu. Jej konceptuálny skok zdôrazňuje práve evolúciu imaginácie, pričom presne u tejto ľudskej schopnosti ide osobitne o upriamenie pozornosti na vznik *ľudskej potreby vyjadrovať myšlienky*, ktorá je pre človeka jedinečná. Takáto potreba je biologicky zhodná s Darwinovou teóriou o sexuálnej selekcii, alebo pridelovaním neuroregulačnej adaptácie (imaginácie) pre účely zlepšovania procesu hľadania si partnera. To, ako sme teda navzájom k sebe priťahovaní, závisí podľa Langerovej na spôsobe, akým premýšľa naša myseľ.

Edelman uznáva síce posun vo vedomí a mentálnych schopnostiach, ktorý sa vyvíja v princípe z procesu používania symbolov, no tomuto vedomiu zároveň chybné prisudzuje iba dokonalejšiu funkciu prežitia. Tento autor si totiž nikdy neuvedomuje aj na imaginácii postavený aspekt symbolistickej mysle človeka, pretože preňho poskytujú symboly iba presnejšiu nástrojovú podporu pre naše praktické činnosti. Edelman teda nechápe, že fungovanie človeka prostredníctvom symbolov, ktoré je od podstaty založené na imaginácii, vyjadruje vlastne skutočne odlišný cieľ: hľadanie významu.

Na Langerovú nadväzuje, hoci nie až tak presvedčivo, Damasio vtedy, keď premýšľa o rozdielnosti vývoja vedomia. Odlišuje (1) emóciu, (2) pocit emócie a (3) uvedomovanie si stavu, kedy človek pociťuje emóciu, pričom práve s touto poslednou pozíciou zrovnáva vedomie - to je preňho teda poznaním toho, že človek niečo cíti. Langerová prináša rozhodujúcejšie stanovisko prostredníctvom jednoduchej myšlienky, podľa ktorej vedomie nie je ničím viac, než iba prítomnosťou cítenia, Schopnosť niečo cítiť je pre ňu teda naozaj niečím silným. Ak človek tvrdí, že „vie“, že cíti, tak je to podľa Langerovej stanovisko, ktoré je možné formulovať iba v zmysle vyššieho usporiadania vedomia, čo samo osebe hodnotí táto autorka ako čin imaginácie. Ani Damasio a ani Edelman neuznávajú teda radikálny posun vo vedomí, ktorý sprevádza u človeka nástup jeho symbolického premýšľania. Títo dvaja vedci nechápu, že cieľom takéhoto premýšľania je spraviť svet *explicitne zmysluplným, kedy nezáleží na akýchkoľvek, na prežitie zacielených výhodách, získaných z konceptualizácie sveta a nášho miesta v ňom.*

Imaginácia

Rovnakým otázkam imaginácie a významu, do ktorých sa púšťa Langerová, sa venuje Modellova posledná kniha (2003). Ani tento autor sa však nedostáva ďalej, než iba k pochopeniu radikálnych transformácií vytvorených našimi symbolistickými myslami v procese používania imaginácie a za účelom vytváranie explicitného významu z afektu. Okrem značného využívania Edelmanovho diela, robí Modell to isté aj s filozofickou prácou Lakoffa a Johnsona (1999), pričom práve tá má uňho osobitý význam.

Lakoff a Johnson tvrdia, že ľudská myseľ je neodmysliteľne stelesnená, že myšlienka je väčšinou nevedomá a že abstraktné koncepty sú z väčšej časti metaforické. Títo autori dokazujú, že ľudské rozumové zdôvodňovanie – predmet skúmania západnej filozofie – sa opiera o prirodzenosť našich tiel, mozgov a telesných skúseností. Rovnako namietajú, že zdôvodňovanie je schopnosťou, ktorá sa vyvinula u zvierat, že je tesne spätá s emóciou a že sa zrodila zo senzorických, motorických a iných nervových systémov prítomných u všetkých ich druhov. Modell sa sústreďuje aj na myšlienku metafory v ich diele a schopnosť jej vytvárania chápe ako niečo pre ľudskú myseľ unikátne a zároveň definujúce imagináciu. Pri metafore ide teda podľa neho o prenášanie našich zmyslových skúseností na svet, t. j. konštruovanie významu, ktorý je založený na našich pocitovo, emocionálne motivovaných činoch.

Ja osobne mám však s Modellovým návrhom dva problémy. Prvý z nich súvisí s mojím presvedčením, že Lakoff a Johnson považujú metaforickú konceptualizáciu za základný kognitívny proces kategorizácie, založený na fyzickej skúsenosti a charakteristický pre mentálne poznávanie späté s celou zvieracou ríšou. Druhým problémom je, že obmedzovanie imaginácie a významu na oblasť poznávania a činu spôsobom, akým to robí Modell (aj keď ide o pocitovo motivované poznávanie a čin), je presne tým obmedzením, ktoré Langerová v prípade intelektuálnych schopností človeka prekonáva. Táto filozofka totiž pretvára stelesnenú ľudskú myseľ do takého stavu, ktorý Lakoff, Johnson a ani Modell nerozpoznávajú. Pripomeňme si teda ešte raz fakt, že títo teoretici mysle nechápu skutočnú rolu imaginácie v ľudskom myslení. Práve to, že ľudská myseľ umožnila človeku (fyzicky) nekonať, ju viedlo k podnecovaniu cieleného hľadania významu a rozkvetu ľudskej expresie.

Filozof Rorty (1989) pokladá myseľ za ironické použitie jazyka na osvojenie si nepredvídaných skutočností v našom živote, čím vlastne v imaginácii vytvárame samých seba. Toto plne zodpovedá aj Langerovej vysvetleniu ako produktu transformácie, teda imaginácie. Na rozdiel od tejto filozofky nie je však Rorty, rozoznávajúci síce vnútorné i vonkajšie obmedzenia týkajúce sa výtvorov našej imaginácie, ani tak zaujímavým sa a ani tak schopným, aby ich naozaj aj určil. A podobne nedokáže vidieť ani to, že naša imaginácia je založená na našej biologickej schopnosti cítiť. Rorty totiž nedoceňuje skutočnosť, že naša ľudská potreba utvárať seba samých aj mimo hraníc inštinktívnych činností bežnej skúsenosti, t. j. obvyklých metód, teda naša

potreba nájsť explicitný význam, je súčasťou našej prirodzenej evolučnej histórie. Práve nedostatok tohto filozofa upriamuje však znova pozornosť na jedinečný význam Langerovej práce pre súčasné teórie mysle – práve ona totiž dokáže skombinovať humanistické aj vedecké tradície výskumu, považované až doteraz za nesúmerateľné.

Záver

Ako sme uviedli na začiatku, výzvou pre psychoanalýzu je pochopiť, ako je ľudská myseľ popri udržiavaní si svojho základu v živočíšnej prirodzenosti, predchádzajúcej v evolúcii našej unikátnej symbolistickej schopnosti ňou zároveň transformovaná. Langerová využíva ako centrum svojej teórie mysle síce prostý, no silný pojem pocitu, čím rozvíja rámec pre vzájomné včlenenie týchto dvoch veľmi odlišných aspektov ľudských intelektových schopností. Práve cítenie vykonáva medzi týmito dvoma oblasťami mysle nielenže akéhosi vyjednávača, ale premostuje zároveň medzeru medzi objektivitou a subjektivitou. Obe pochádzajú z našej schopnosti pociťovať vlastnú aktivitu, nezáležiac pritom na tom, či už ju pociťujeme ako vonkajší vplyv a nazývame ju tak objektívnym svetom, alebo ako schopnosť reagovať na podnety a nazývame ju preto našim vlastným subjektívnym Ja.

Langerovej rozvíjanie konceptu cítenia poskytuje presvedčivý rámec pre vzájomné prepojenie viacerých schopností, ktoré sú tak ľahko a prirodzene kombinovateľné v našej ľudskej mysli. Zatiaľ čo študentom psychológie tvrdia, že biologické a kultúrne štúdiá sú pre štúdium ľudského správania rovnako relevantnými, psychológovia v skutočnosti vidia tieto domény ako izolované, nesúvisiace entity. Iba psychoanalytici, rovnako ako sám Freud, pojali istým zložitým spôsobom obe oblasti, avšak ani v psychoanalytickej teórii nie je most medzi biológiou a kultúrou nateraz ujasnený. Práve Langerová však jasne ozrejmuje neproblémovú vzájomnú integráciu biológie a kultúry, ktorá je založená na jednote celej vyššie opísanej „drámy“ prítomnej pri každej pociťovanej aktivite. Pre Susanne Langerovú sú teda telá tým, čo nám umožňuje cítiť a naše pocity tým, čo nám umožňuje tvoriť naše charakteristicky ľudské mysle.

Translation: Agáta Košičanová

Literatúra

- DAMASIO, A., 1995. *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*. New York: G. P. Putman & Sons.
- DAMASIO, A., 1999. *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co.
- DAMASIO, A., 2003. *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co.
- EDELMAN, G., 1989. *The Remembered Present. A Biology Theory of Consciousness*. New York: Basic Books.
- EDELMAN, G. a G. TONONI, 2000. *A Universe of Consciousness: How Matter Becomes Imagination*. New York: Basic Books.

- FREUD, S., 1900. *The Interpretation of Dreams*. S. E., 4/5.
- FRIEDMAN, M., 2000. *A Parting of the Ways: Carnap, Cassirer, and Heidegger*. Chicago, IL: Opne Court.
- GOULD, S., 1997. *The exaptive excellence of spandrels as a term and prototype*. Proc. Nat. Acad. Sci., 94:10750-10755.
- LAKOFF, G. a M. JOHNSON, 1999. *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought*. New York: Basic Books.
- LANGER, S., 1942. *Philosophy in A New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press.
- LANGER, S., 1953. *Feeling and Form*. New York: Charles Scribners & Sons.
- LANGER, S., 1967. *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling*, Vol. 1. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins Univ. Press.
- LANGER, S., 1972. *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling*, Vol. 2. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins Univ. Press.
- LANGER, S., 1982. *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling*, Vol. 3. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins Univ. Press.
- LANGER, S., 1988. *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling*, abridged by G. Van Den Heuvel. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins Univ. Press.
- MILLER, G., 2000. *The Mating Mind: How Sexual Choice Shaped the Evolution of Human Nature*. New York: Doubleday.
- MODELL, A., 2003. *Imagination and the Meaningful Brain*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- PANKSEPP, J., 1998. *Affective Neuroscience: The Foundations of Human and Animal Emotions*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press.
- PANKSEPP, J., 1999. *Emotions as viewed by psychoanalysis and neuroscience: an exercise in consilience*. Neuropsychoanal., 1: 15-38.
- RICOEUR, P., 1970. *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*. New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press.
- RORTY, R., 1989. *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- SOLMS, M. a E. NERSESSIAN, 1999. *Freud's theory of affect: question for neuroscience*. Neuropsychoanal., 1: 5-14.

Margaret M. Browning
 Independent scholar
 408 Merry Oaks Road
 Streamwood, IL 60107
margaret.browning@comcast.net

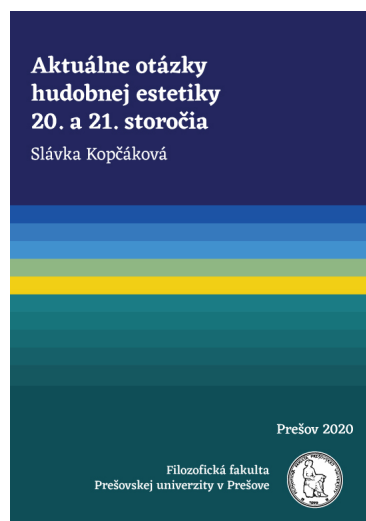


BOOK REVIEWS

Aktuálne otázky hudobnej estetiky 20. a 21. storočia

Lukáš Makky

Kopčáková, S. (2020) *Aktuálne otázky hudobnej estetiky 20. a 21. storočia*. Prešov: Prešovská univerzita v Prešove, 225 s., ISBN 978-80-555-2522-8.



Slávka Kopčáková začína svoju publikáciu *Aktuálne otázky hudobnej estetiky 20. a 21. storočia* slovami „Hudobná estetika ako filozoficky fundovaná vedecká disciplína prechádza v posledných desaťročiach procesom svojej sebaaktualizácie, čo je do veľkej miery výsledkom rýchlosti a naliehavosti, s akou sa vynárajú nové témy, nové médiá a nové civilizačné problémy ovplyvňujúce tvorbu, vnímanie, apercepčné návyky a samotnú recepciu hudby.“ (Kopčáková, 2020, s. 5) Vytyčuje tak problémy hudobnej estetiky súčasnosti, ktoré považuje za hodné skúmania, zároveň ilustruje komplexnosť problematiky, ktorou sa dlhodobo zaoberá. K problémom, ktoré sú mapované v recenzovanej publikácii, sa za poslednú dekádu pravidelne navracala a vlastné pozície neustále prehodnocovala, transformovala a dlhodobo a systematicky rozvíjala.

Predkladaná publikácia predstavuje logické a premyslené vyselektované zhrnutie autorkou doteraz skúmaných teoretických problémov, ktoré považuje za ústredné oblasti hudobnej estetiky, estetického myslenia ale aj hudobnej

vedy, čomu zodpovedá aj ich usporiadanie do vlastného systému. V priereзовom horizonte neustále, avšak veľmi erudovane 'balansuje' medzi empirickým (muzikologickým) výskumom, ktorého výsledky sú následne zhutnené jej estetickými úvahami o abstraktných konštantách a ústredných problémoch estetiky, s dôrazom na jej špecializáciu prioritne na teóriu, systematiku a dejiny hudobnej estetiky. Autorka je výrazne formovaná slovenskou hudobnoestetickou tradíciou, čo je potrebné v kontexte publikácie a problémov, ktoré sú tu diskutované, rozhodne vyzdvihnúť ako pozitívum a silnú stránku monografie. Zaraďuje sa tak do úzkej skupiny pokračovateľov našej myšlienkovvej tradície, založenej najmä Jozefom Kresánkom, v novšom období Renátou Beličovou a Markétou Štefkovou. Súčasťou tejto tradície je neustály dialóg s nemeckou muzikológiou a jej autormi, ktorí sa koncentrovali prednostne na estetické otázky hudby (Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, Carl Dahlhaus). Komplementárnym prvkom je komparácia s výsledkami angloamerickej tradície prezentovanej filozofmi ako Jerrold Levinson, Roger Scruton a i.

Monografia je rozčlenená na štyri hlavné kapitoly mapujúce ústredné problémy a samostatné teoretické celky súčasného diskurzu: *1 Hudobná estetika* (s. 8 – 52), *2 Hudobné myslenie* (s. 53 – 80), *3 Hudobné dielo* (s. 81 – 123) a *4 Hudobná ontológia* (s. 124 – 168). Metodologicky autorka avizuje fokusový prístup namiesto obvyklej cesty prezentácie historizujúcich rekapitulácií známych faktov. Pomocou starostlivo vybraných príkladov, ktoré predstavujú funkčne zacielené historické sondy, publikácia ponúka autentické a neschematické skúmanie. Kapitola *1 Hudobná estetika* obsahuje historicko-reflexívnu rekonštrukciu vývojevej trajektórie, v rámci ktorej sa chápanie, obsah a metódy hudobnej estetiky formovali: v zásade ide o historický prierez od antiky vo forme rozvíjania priorizovaných tém. Kopčáková síce nesľubuje 'dejepis' hudobnej estetiky (a ani k nemu neskľzne), ale bez toho, aby zobrala do úvahy základné kontúry historických kontextov vývoja disciplíny, pochopiteľne, skúmanie tak, ako ho designovala, by nebolo možné. Historický exkurz je nasledovaný pokusom o definíciu hudobnej estetiky, ktorej bázou je primárne pomenovanie jej predmetu (kap. *1.2 Hudobná estetika – predmet, aktuálne témy a výzvy*). Hudobná estetika sa podľa Kopčákovvej (2020, s. 15) „prezentuje ako teoretická filozoficky a súčasne muzikologicky fundovaná veda, [...] je vedou čiastočne nomotetickou, [...] a čiastočne idiografickou [...] usiluje sa o prepojenie oboch prístupov.“ Komentovaná časť textu vrství vo veľkom množstve faktografickú bázu a názorové konfrontácie, čím vzniká hutný logicky usporiadaný celok, ktorý je aj napriek svojej šírke a hĺbke systematický a prehľadný. Autorka hľadá odpovede na dvojicu otázok („či si hudobnú estetiku stále 'prajeme' [...] alebo či ju reálne potrebujeme“, Kopčáková, 2020, s. 25), ktoré aktualizujú perspektívu hudobnej estetiky.

Provokatívnu a odvážnu optiku volí Kopčáková v nadväzujúcej kapitole *2 Hudobné myslenie*, keď sa usiluje skúmať hudobné myslenie ako jednu z podôb estetického myslenia. Hudobné myslenie definuje ako „viacznačný teoretický pojem označujúci proces, superdisciplínu, či teoretický konštrukt, ktorý je pojmovým konceptom a produktom výlučne európskeho hudobnoestetického

myslenia.“ (Kopčáková, 2020, s. 54) Dôležitú rolu v ponímaní a vysvetlení hudobného myslenia zohráva jeho verbalizácia, nie jeho procesualnosť. Pod vplyvom Wolfganga Welscha a jeho koncepcie estetického myslenia, kde vnímanie, myslenie, imaginácia a reflexia nestoja proti sebe, autorka sumarizuje a naznačuje, že v prípade hudobného myslenia by mohla hrať dôležitú úlohu „mobilizácia vnímavého myslenia a rozvíjanie podnetov reflektujúceho, uvažujúceho vnímania.“ (Kopčáková, 2020, s. 63) Opiera sa súčasne aj o exaktnejšie hudobnoteoretické tézy Hansa Heinricha Eggebrechta, čím vnáša do problému systematické teoretické rámce, keď tvrdí, že „hudobné myslenie je nielen prameňom či pôvodcom hudobného produktu samotného, [...] ale aj teórie.“ (Kopčáková, 2020, s. 69) Hudobné myslenie (ako sumarizuje autorka) predstavuje potom druh umeleckého myslenia, ktoré nie je myslením teoretickým, ale výsledkom spätnej rekonštrukcie výsledkov umeleckej tvorby. Sprostredkovateľom hudobného myslenia je hudobný jazyk, ktorý má svoje pravidlá, limity a potenciál. Výsledkom jeho použitia je „hudobné dielo (kompozícia) ako koncentrát a zároveň zdroj či návod (sled inštrukcií) smerujúci k zážitku estetická.“ (Kopčáková, 2020, s. 80)

Ontologické otázky hudby, ktoré sú autorkou vytýčené a starostlivo vyselektované, sú rozvíjané v posledných dvoch kapitolách práce: v jednej explicitne, v druhej implicitne. Kapitola 3 *Hudobné dielo* má za cieľ objasniť pojem hudobné dielo z viacerých hľadísk, keďže sa na prvý pohľad zdá, že v ére dominancie inštitúcií, umeleckej pluralite a fúzovania ako modu vivendi, stratil svoje opodstatnenie resp. prekonal cestu terminologického metamorfovania ako rozostrenia svojich významov. Autorka si súčasne uvedomuje, že ak je hudobné dielo uchopiteľným produktom a do určitej miery aj cieľom, predmetom a výsledkom estetického myslenia, nemožno súhlasiť s poukazmi na jeho neopodstatnenosť ako pojmu a so spochybňovaním jeho existencie, čo sa sporadicky vynára v teóriách ako napr. fikcionalizmus, nominalizmus etc.

Na základe historických prístupov možno hudobné dielo vnímať na jednej strane ako niečo statické (uzavreté, definované), na strane druhej ako niečo, čo je procesuálne, dynamické, plynúce a najmä interpretačne a významovo 'otvorené'. Rovnako ako v prípade umenia (ako jeho pojmovej nadmnožiny) ide o pojem, ktorého definícia nemôže byť nikdy dostatočne uspokojivá pre všetky zainteresované strany, hlavne z dôvodu rôznorodej metodológie, teoretických prístupov či dynamiky umeleckého vývoja. Autorka si je vedomá aj tejto skutočnosti, čo dokazuje snahou o hlbšiu kategorizáciu, teoretické preverenie pojmu hudobné dielo a hudobného artefaktu ako jeho existenčného komplementu, vydávaného pomerne často (avšak nesprávne) za jeho ekvivalent či až synonymum. Otázku umeleckosti a problematiky takéhoto statusu rozvíja Kopčáková ďalej, minimálne keď komentuje 'pomínavosť' umeleckých produktov, alebo keď konštatuje, že „nie každý umelecký výtvor musí nevyhnutne nadobudnúť status umeleckého diela. Prílišné akcentovanie 'dielovosti' nivelizovalo pojem a vytrhlo ho z jeho pôvodných kontextov.“ (Kopčáková, 2020, s. 106)

Ontologické otázky hudby (ako predmet subdisciplíny hudobnej filozofie, ktorou je hudobná ontológia) sú v súčasnom prostredí dynamickej

transformácie umeleckej praxe veľmi aktuálnou a živou oblasťou výskumu, keďže ponúkajú metodologicky pomerne dobre uchopiteľné nástroje, napomáhajúce vyrovnáť sa s (ne)existenciou hudobného diela. „Hudobné dielo sa stalo niečím, čo môže existovať aj za predvedením a mimo predvedenia, pretrváva v čase v textovej forme (notácia, partitúra), čím nadobudlo významný stupeň objektivity.“ (Kopčáková, 2020, s. 126) Ontológia musí skúmať a vyhodnocovať samotnú existenciu 'predlohy', ktorá je nemenná a jej hudobnej interpretácie, alebo transformácie, ktorá sa odlišuje od predvedenia k predvedeniu. Hľadanie arbitra v podobe jednej alebo druhej úrovne umeleckého diela rieši autorka textu odkazom na autenticnosť, ktorá predstavuje ďalšiu kľúčovú (významami nasýtenú) estetickú kategóriu. Autenticnosť však problém nerieši, len ukazuje a naznačuje možné čiastkové problémy, riešením ktorých sa pojem môže teoreticky objasniť, ako sú autenticnosť notácie, autenticnosť interpretácie, autenticnosť pocitov, autenticnosť predvedenia, autenticnosť ako otázka pravdy, autenticnosť ako vernosť notovému záznamu a jeho realizácie atď.

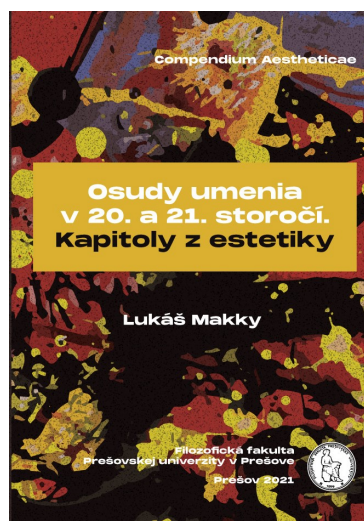
V prípade publikácie *Aktuálne otázky hudobnej estetiky 20. a 21. storočia* ide o ambiciózne projekt, ktorý mapuje širšiu sféru hudobnej estetiky, a to zámerne systematicky, aby čitateľ nestratil nič a dokázal uchopiť obsah textu natoľko, aby sa s ním dokázal stotožniť alebo s ním aj (na základe ďalších vlastných argumentov čitateľa) nesúhlasiť. Autorka prináša viaceré užitočné a originálne sumarizácie pohľadov na problém a obohacuje diskurzívne kontexty súčasnej hudobnej estetiky. Presvedčivo dokázala, že estetika a muzikológia sú na podobných špecializovane orientovaných skúmaníach závislé a na lepšom prieniku a teoretickú verifikáciu jednotlivých skutočností potrebujú prístup špecializovaného hudobného estetika, ktorý z inštrumentára filozofických a muzikologických metód skúmania dokáže navrhnúť či odporučiť metodologické nástroje pre adekvátne skúmanie hudby ako estetického, umeleckého (ale zároveň aj ontologického) problému. V rovnakej miere, v akej je táto monografia zásadná pre hudobnú estetiku ako dvojdomú vedeckú disciplínu (súč subsdisciplínou estetiky a súčasne aj muzikológie v ich starších systematikách), môže byť v mnohom inšpiratívna aj pre estetiku, ktorý pri riešení všeobecnejších teoretických otázok hľadá vhodný spôsob ako preniknúť do konkretizovaných diskurzov umeleckého estetického v oblasti hudobného a zvukového umenia. Monografia *Aktuálne otázky hudobnej estetiky 20. a 21. storočia* je v našich podmienkach (nakolko komunita estetikov hudby na Slovensku je prakticky spočítateľná na prstoch jednej ruky) priekopníckym činom, ktorý prináša podnetné a inšpiratívne závery. Dokladuje autorkino dôsledné syntetické a celostné estetické myslenie ako spôsob uchopovania problémov umenia, čím ju zaraďuje medzi popredných reprezentantov disciplíny.

Lukáš Makky
University of Presov, Faculty of Arts
Institute of Aesthetics and Art Culture
17. novembra 1, 080 01 Prešov, Slovakia
lukas.makky@unipo.sk

Nový učebný text v prešovskej edícii *Compendium Aestheticae*

Slávka Kopčáková

Makky, Lukáš: *Osudy umenia v 20. a 21. storočí. Kapitoly z estetiky*. Vysokoškolský učebný text. Opera Philosophica. Prešov: Filozofická fakulta PU v Prešove. 2021. 190 s. ISBN 978-80-555-2670-6.



Uplynulá dekáda (2011 – 2021) tvorivej činnosti pracovníkov Inštitútu estetiky a umeleckej kultúry Filozofickej fakulty Prešovskej univerzity (ďalej IEUK FF PU) sa nesie v znamení zverejňovania výsledkov vedeckovýskumnej činnosti intenzívne transformovaných aj do vzniku učebných textov a vysokoškolských učebníc pre študentov estetiky. Vyžiadali si ich inovačné trendy v edukácii vysokoškolákov v učiteľských aj teoretických neučiteľských študijných programoch a realizované boli zvyčajne za výraznej podpory edukačnej grantovej agentúry KEGA. Iba letmo spomeniem texty venované bezprostredne interpretácii umeleckého diela a estetickým teóriám potrebným pre ich analýzu a evaluáciu: *Interpretácia hudobného a výtvarného diela* (Kopčáková – Dytrtová, 2011), *Reflexie divadla, divadlo reflexie* (Kušnírová et al., 2011), *Hudobná estetika a populárna hudba* (Kopčáková, 2015), *Úvod do interpretácie obrazu* (Makky, 2020), *Úvod do štúdia divadelného umenia* (Kušnírová 2021).

Dovolím si konštatovať, že tento typ textov je veľmi žiadúcim, ale pomerne nedostatkovým a sporadicky vznikajúcim artiklom, a to aj v celoslovenskom

meradle. Ešte viac ma teší, že stredná a najmladšia generácia pracovníkov IEUK FF PU v Prešove sa veľmi zodpovedne postavila k novým výzvam. Akýkoľvek teoretický návod, ponúknutá metóda na zmysluplnú realizáciu esteticky fokusovanej analýzy, verbálnej a zážitkovo-estetickéj interpretácie umeleckého diela sú viac než vítané a užitočné. Opodstatňujú zmysel teoretického bádania realizovaného v odbore estetika a jej špeciálnych estetík, ktoré skúmajú estetiku jednotlivých druhov umenia. Iba na margo dodávam, že v prípade Lukáša Makkyho v tejto recenzii ide už o druhý učebný text autora, publikovaný v rámci novozaloženej edície *Compendium Aestheticae* (edícia učebných textov pre študijný program estetika na IUEK FF PU v Prešove) ako výstup rovnomenného grantu KEGA vedenom na tomto pracovisku v rokoch 2018 – marec 2021.

V učebnom texte autor obracia svoju pozornosť na estetické otázky vizuálneho umenia eventuálne aj filmu, presnejšie na estetické teórie, sprevádzajúce problém definície a konca umenia, ktorým autor v minulosti venoval rozsiahlu monografiu *Od začiatku po koniec a ešte ďalej: umenie v definičných súradniciach* (2019). Tu sa práve ukazuje, ako všetko so všetkým súvisí, aká dôležitá je permanentne rozvíjaná výskumná aktivita v oblasti teoretickej verifikácie najnovších poznatkov pre napĺňanie poslania univerzity a potrieb jej študentov. Je veľmi sympatické, že sa autor drží svojej bádateľskej línie a špirálovitým pohybom rieši a navracia sa neustále k otázkam, ktoré ho zaujímajú, znepokojujú, inšpirujú a súčasne ich považuje za dôležité. Recenzovaný vysokoškolský učebný text *Osudy umenia v 20. a 21. storočí. Kapitoly z estetiky* (2021) v podstate prináša kapitoly z estetiky vizuálneho umenia a hovorí o variete prístupov najvýznamnejších teoretikov k jeho estetike, reflektujúc štýlové zmeny vo vývoji umeleckých prejavov v poslednom poldruhu storočí, ich dopady v recepcii a definovaní nových prístupov k edukácii vnímateľa súčasného umenia.

Najprv malá reakcia na názov učebného textu. Slovo 'osudy' v názve je trošku zavádzajúce, veď čo je osudom umenia? Umenie – čo ako by sme ho personifikovali – osud nemá, majú ho umelci, inštitúcie, niektoré umelecké diela, ale aj teoretické koncepcie. Teórie a ich proponenti totiž môžu byť prijímané, nasledované, korigované (aby adekvátnejšie zachytili estetickú situáciu, estetické objekty a subjekty v estetickéj komunikácii), rovnako však môžu byť aj ostro odmietané, vyvrátené z dôvodu ich čiastočne chybných predpokladov a pod. Pokúsime sa názov textu chápať v prenesenom význame a teda z hľadiska didaktického ako snahu upútať pozornosť študenta. Z existencie protikladných teoretických postojov a ich východísk vznikajú vo filozofickom a umenovednom diskurze mnohé polemiky. Polemický tón je z času na čas prítomný aj v mladíckom zápale autora, keď cíti, že je potrebné povedať vlastný názor. Nikdy však nepresahuje ani nezatieňuje didaktické zámery a ústretovosť voči potrebám, intelektuálnym možnostiam a predpokladanej empírii študenta.

Jedna z mála vecí, ktoré by sa dali vyčítať autorovi je, že ak vo svojich monografiách (2017, 2019) a učebných textoch (2020, 2021) v ich názvoch deklaruje, že hovorí všeobecne o umení, v skutočnosti je jeho výklad

po obsahovej stránke vždy redukovaný viac-menej na vizuálne (praveké, výtvarné, okrajovo fotografické či aj filmové) umenie. Ale to len na margo. Na druhej strane vysoko oceňujem, že autor veľmi originálnym spôsobom uvažuje o problémoch, ktoré rieši v oboch svojich vedeckých monografiách, krúživo sa objavujúce motívy, témy a problémy (estetické, interpretačné, umenovedné a i.) dokáže priliehavo didakticky transformovať do formy učebného textu. Postoje, východiská a názory najrešpektovanejších teoretikov dokáže podať voči originálu o čosi stráviteľnejšími, jasnejšie formulovanými blokmi textov, oprostenými od vedeckej hantýrky a pojmových zaklínadiel.

Didaktizácia učiva je práve tým skúšobným kameňom, ktorý vždy preverí vlastný odborný, vedecký a bádateľský vývoj autora samotného, ruka v ruke s cibrením svojej pedagogickej zručnosti. Možno povedať, že tentoraz to bola naozaj úspešná cesta. V recenzovanom učebnom texte sa Lukášovi Makkymu podarilo zložité témy prerozprávať menej zložitým jazykom a viac-menej systematicky. Vyšiel v ústrety potrebám a záujmom študentov, hladných po takomto type textu, modernom, neopakujúcom chronicky iba historické poznatky a fakty, ale ktorý ich vedie k vlastnému uvažovaniu a kritickému mysleniu. Nie je cieľom recenzenta knihu teraz vypreparovať po častiach, či uvádzať, s ktorými názormi či teoretickými parafrázami autora nesúhlasí, prípadne popísať jej obsah s emfázou na to, čo sa podarilo lepšie a čo horšie. V snahe priblížiť obsahovú náplň učebného textu, teda problémy, o ktorých pojednáva a vysvetľuje, za najefektívnejšie považujem ilustrovať obsahové zameranie cez názvy hlavných kapitol, čo zaiste vytvorí potrebný obraz. Ide o state: *1. Umelecká produkcia 20. a 21. storočia ako historický a morfológický problém; 2. „Odbočka“ k problému populárneho umenia/populárnej kultúry; 3. Umenie ako interpretačný problém; 4. Umenie ako definičný problém; 5. Koniec umenia ako teoretická reakcia na problém a kritiku umenia.*

Za mimoriadne vydarenú a 'čítavú' považujem druhú kapitolu, kde autor racionálne vyseletoval ním favorizovaných teoretikov (Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Umberto Eco, Richard Shusterman a i.) a študentom zrozumiteľne sprostredkoval základné tézy ich názorovej sústavy. Ako bonus ju ukončuje poučné pojednanie o problémoch populárnej kultúry. Podobne vysoko oceňujem piatu kapitolu, platí pre ňu podobná charakteristika, navyše autor ako lokálpatriot čitateľa upozorňuje aj na práce a výsledky „prešovskej estetickej školy“ (Jana Sošková, Adrián Kvokačka a i.), v oblasti reflexie otázok „konca umenia“ a jej inšpirátorov zo spolupracujúcich pracovísk (Peter Michalovič, Marián Zervan, Bohumil Fořt a i.), hoci iba v malej mozaike. S trochu menším pochopením prijímam fakt, že ak autor v prvej a štvrtej kapitole rieši také závažné problémy, akými sú historicita, dejiny umenia, definícia umenia, funkcie umenia, teórie (koncov) umenia atď., neposkytuje študentovi osvedčené, alebo najmenej defektné definície týchto pojmov k osvojeniu. Považovala by som to za veľmi užitočné, najmä z dôvodu, že pri diskusiách so študentmi na seminároch, skúškach či kolokviách je študent spravidla vyzývaný k tomu, aby pojem, jav, fenomén najprv zadefinoval, historicky zaradil a až potom následne vyjadril aj svoj postoj a interpretáciu.

Vysoko oceňujem obrázkové prílohy *Galéria 1* a *Galéria 2* vhodne zvolené

a zaradené za prvou a druhou kapitolou učebného textu. Tu vidno, že autor tomu, o čom hovorí rozumie, sám aktívne vyhľadáva recepčné situácie ako vnímateľ umenia, vyhľadáva ich aj pre svojich študentov. Kontrolné a motivačné otázky na konci každej kapitoly nevyzývajú študenta k šablónovitému zopakovaniu povedaného, ale vyzývajú ho uvažovať o probléme ďalej a hľadať vlastné stanoviská. To je veľmi sympatické a približuje nás to k absolútnej priorite (nielen) vysokoškolskej pedagogiky 21. storočia, ktorou je rozvoj kritického myslenia, ako schopnosti tvorivo, samostatne a autenticky uvažovať o informáciách všetkého druhu. Je ich taká záplava, že neostáva iné, než dôsledne viesť nastávajúce generácie k tomu, aby boli schopné ich triediť, selektovať, filtrovať, slovom oddeľovať zrna od pliev. Tento trend nastolil aj Makkyho vysokoškolský učebný text, zaslúži si preto pozornosť študentov, ale aj odbornej verejnosti.

Zoznam bibliografických odkazov textu možno súčasne chápať aj ako register literatúry odporúčanej k ďalšiemu štúdiu pre záujemcov o prehĺbenie svojich vedomostí. Učebný text má vďaka Tomášovi Timkovi, doktorandovi IEUK FF PU, peknú grafickú úpravu, pútavú obálku a obrázkový materiál. Týmto textom (v rámci menovanej edície) prešovská estetická škola naberá akoby „druhý dych“. Okrem toho, že sa vzmáha vedecky, vzmáha sa aj v skvalitňovaní a napĺňaní svojho poslania v duchu humboldtovského ideálu univerzitného vzdelávania – viesť dialóg so študentom, bádať do určitej miery spolu s ním, robiť z neho partnera, nielen toho, kto je učený a poučovaný. Príprava moderne koncipovaných učebníc, učebných textov, didaktických materiálov, audiovizuálnych materiálov a e-learningových modulov radí prešovské pracovisko a jeho strednú a nastupujúcu najmladšiu generáciu vedecko-pedagogických pracovníkov medzi lídrov v estetickom vzdelávaní vysokoškolákov na Slovensku. Tomuto cieľu podriadil svoj učebný text aj Lukáš Makky, inšpiratívny pedagóg, angažovaný a ambiciózný teoretik, svojou komplexne uchopenou snahou o realizáciu výchovy k umeniu a výchovy umením v rámci vedného odboru estetika. Filozofickú disciplínu, v minulosti završujúcu viaceré filozofické systémy, dnes však rovnako naslúchajúcu otázkam každodennosti, environmentu a mimoumeleckého estetična, Lukáš Makky ako tému uchopil v nasvietení otázok vizuálnych odborov. Učebnici želim veľa vnímavých a zvedavých študentov, verím, že ich bude motivovať k prehĺbeniu záujmu o štúdium, vizuálne odbory a vlastný rozvoj.

Slávka Kopčáková
University of Presov, Faculty of Arts
Institute of Aesthetics and Art Culture
17. novembra 1, 080 01 Prešov, Slovakia
slavka.kopcakova@unipo.sk