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Artistic Thinking Within the Arts

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Paweł Chorzępa*, Dominika Czakon**

The Category of Artistic Thinking and the Conception of Roman Ingarden's Aesthetic Situation

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to examine the validity and utility of the category of artistic thinking through applying it to the description of an aesthetic situation as given by Roman Ingarden. The authors are referring to the common understanding of the concept as well as Ingarden's works, such as: *Wykład XI* and *Przeżycie estetyczne*. In this paper they discuss the components of an aesthetic situation, at the same time attempting to characterise the category of artistic thinking.

Key words

artistic thinking, aesthetic experience, art, creative process, R. Ingarden, aesthetic situation

Introduction

In this paper we attempt to juxtapose the category of artistic thinking with Roman Ingarden's reflection on aesthetic situation. First of all, we aim to verify the usefulness and usability of the concept of artistic thinking to the analysis of art, and to propose directions in which Ingarden's theory could be developed. At the same time, however, we would like to stress that this work remains solely an introductory research draft and

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provides no exhaustive analysis of the posed problem. It is not our goal to derive the concept of artistic thinking from Ingarden's theory, nor do we aim at correcting the theory in the light of the given category. It is only about juxtaposing these two separate proposals. Such an approach can be justified by the assumption that the concept of artistic thinking should be considered as a current modern category which, in our opinion, lacks Ingarden's division into what is and what is not artistically and aesthetically valuable. At the same time, we presume that it would be possible to adapt the category of artistic thinking to Ingarden's reflection. Such an attempt might involve coining a new term – this of aesthetic thinking – although that would exceed the scope of this basic and introductory work¹.

So far, the concept of artistic thinking does not have any given and universally accepted definition. It seems to be rather intuitively understood, and quite freely used. At the same time, it seems that the concept contributes to an interesting description of art, both from the point of view of the creative process and the reception and interpretation of art. In this way, the concept of artistic thinking is related to the activity of an artist creating his work, and the situation of the beholder observing the work and trying to understand it. We also assume that on the one hand artistic thinking points to the presence and importance of the intellectual components and cognitive values of experiencing art, while on the other hand it tells us about certain features, which essentially differentiate thinking about art (or thinking in art) from, say, scientific thinking.

Characterising the experience of art in the light of the concept of an aesthetic situation, Ingarden describes all the sensations and actions of an individual as elements of a so called process of aesthetic experience. For him, aesthetic perception constitutes an additional element that may be built over the aesthetic experience in its final stage. This experience, requiring taking an aesthetic outlook on reality, is supposed to lead to creating an intentional aesthetic subject. And although the categories suggested by Ingarden are also supposed to encompass the work of intellect (of the artist or the beholder)², the stress here is on the emotional and

¹ On the subject of artistic and aesthetic values in R. Ingarden's theory see: Z. Majewska, *Wartość artystyczna – jakość artystyczna*, in: *Słownik pojęć filozoficznych Romana Ingardena*, red. A. J. Nowak, L. Sosnowski, Kraków 2001, pp. 290–292 and M. Gołaszewska, *Wartość estetyczna – jakość estetyczna*, in: *Słownik pojęć...*, op. cit., pp. 292–295.

² Ingarden describes the aesthetic experience as “a phase of very active, intense and creative individual life”. R. Ingarden, *O poznawaniu dzieła literackiego*, Warszawa 1976, p. 137 [trans. M. Bręgiel-Benedyk].

experiential aspect of experiencing art³. We feel, however, that such an approach is incomplete. The category of artistic thinking appears to soundly highlight the very important intellectual moments present in the experience of art and in the concept of aesthetic experience⁴.

The intention of our paper is to examine the validity and usefulness of the category of artistic thinking through applying it to the description of an aesthetic situation as given by Roman Ingarden. This attempt is also to underline the value of intellectual reflection in the creative process. The remaining part of the paper aims to characterise the category of artistic thinking as well as a critical analysis of Ingarden's theory.

Aesthetic situation and artistic thinking

In this paper we are referring first and foremost to *Wykład XI* from *Wykłady i dyskusje z estetyki*⁵, in which Ingarden characterises his concept of aesthetic situation. Pondering upon the advantages of the term and its validity, Ingarden claims that it "allows to escape the differentiation be-

³ In the aesthetic experience Ingarden distinguishes the so called prefatory emotion related to the state of excitement with the quality present in the perceived object. The quality stimulates and excites the beholder, causing him a sense of wanting, almost being in love. After the prefatory emotion a new wave of emotions appear, "a certain form of liking, enjoying and caressing «with the sight», the presence of the quality, the moment of «delight»". See: R. Ingarden, *O poznawaniu dzieła literackiego*, op. cit., pp. 138–139.

⁴ In his interesting work *Idea koncepcyjnej teorii dzieł sztuki (Zarys)*, Michał Ostrowicki aims to define the essence of the work of art as a conceptual creation, for which the intentional activity of the subject and the meaning of the work become the constitutive features. Ostrowicki emphasises that such understanding of art seems to be of a particular importance in the context of contemporary works, in which the aesthetic values often play a secondary role. He also claims that taking into consideration the conceptual nature of the work is closely connected with considering it an intentional phenomenon "expressing human emotions, feelings, values and knowledge. Through the peculiarity of its «existence», the work «creates» its own world in the beholder's mind, liberates and shapes human thought, being allusive and reflective, often abstract in its function or real in its physical form". See: M. Ostrowicki, *Idea koncepcyjnej teorii dzieł sztuki (Zarys)*, "Kwartalnik Filozoficzny" 2000, t. XXVIII, z. 2 [trans. M. Bręgiel-Benedyk], [online] http://www.ostrowicki.art.pl/Idea_koncepcyjnej_teorii_dziel_sztuki.pdf [access: 7.08. 2014].

⁵ On an aesthetic situation see also: L. Sosnowski, *Sytuacja estetyczna*, in: *Słownik pojęć...*, op. cit., pp. 263–265.

tween purely subjective and objective moments [in experiencing art]"⁶. This remark provides us with the basic definition of the term: Ingarden's basic assumption is that the aesthetic situation consists both of subjective and objective components, which should be analysed inclusively, or relationally. Ingarden notes that subjectivity and objectivity are in fact the two sides of the same event – an encounter with art⁷. It follows that Ingarden's concept of an aesthetic situation is actually a broader category than this of artistic thinking which describes the experience of art only from the point of view of an individual, as a subjective experience of the subject.

In the concept of an aesthetic situation, Ingarden introduces the distinction between the work of art and the creator being at the same time partly a beholder, or the beholder being partly the creator. It becomes important to perceive the situation in this way, as not to lock its particular components in strictly specified roles. Thus, the given distinction between the creator and the beholder should not be perceived as unambiguous and unquestionable, because these roles are rather intermingling. Ingarden clearly states that:

Every producer and every artist is at the same time to some extent a beholder of the produced or created work. And on the other hand [...] the so called beholder, in the process of going into the completed work of art is at the same time a creator of the aesthetic object⁸.

It seems that the category of artistic thinking is very well suited for demonstrating the proximity of the creative and receptive processes described by Ingarden. Understood in this way, artistic thinking might characterise both the creator and the beholder of the work of art, bonding them in the creative process of producing an aesthetic object.

According to Ingarden, an aesthetic situation indicating the encounter of the subject and the object is to be perceived in a dynamic way. There are two reasons for that: firstly, because its components intermingle, and secondly, because every encounter is always an active process. Whenever a given subject enters into a relationship with an object, each of the components of this relationship influences the other and alters it. Thus the relationship is a reflexive one, with its altered components producing a higher-

⁶ R. Ingarden, *Wykład jedenasty*, in: idem, *Wybór pism estetycznych*, Kraków 2005, p. 34 [trans. M. Bręgiel-Benedyk].

⁷ See: *ibidem*.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

-order value – the rule applies also to an aesthetic situation. According to Ingarden, when an artist shapes his work of art, and when a beholder perceives the completed work, the process of intermingling of all its components occurs, resulting in the emergence of a work of art, an aesthetic object, and a certain emotional reaction of the creator and the beholder to what has been created. These remarks allow us to conclude that for an appropriate grasp of artistic thinking it is necessary to assume the existence of a strong and constant relation of this kind of intellectual insight with the sphere of emotions and feelings (no such interrelation can, as we know, occur in the case of scientific thinking). This particular feature appears to be a distinctive quality of the concept of artistic thinking, with the interrelation being interpreted as, for instance, a transposition of emotions accompanying the creation into ideas, concepts, values and particular images.

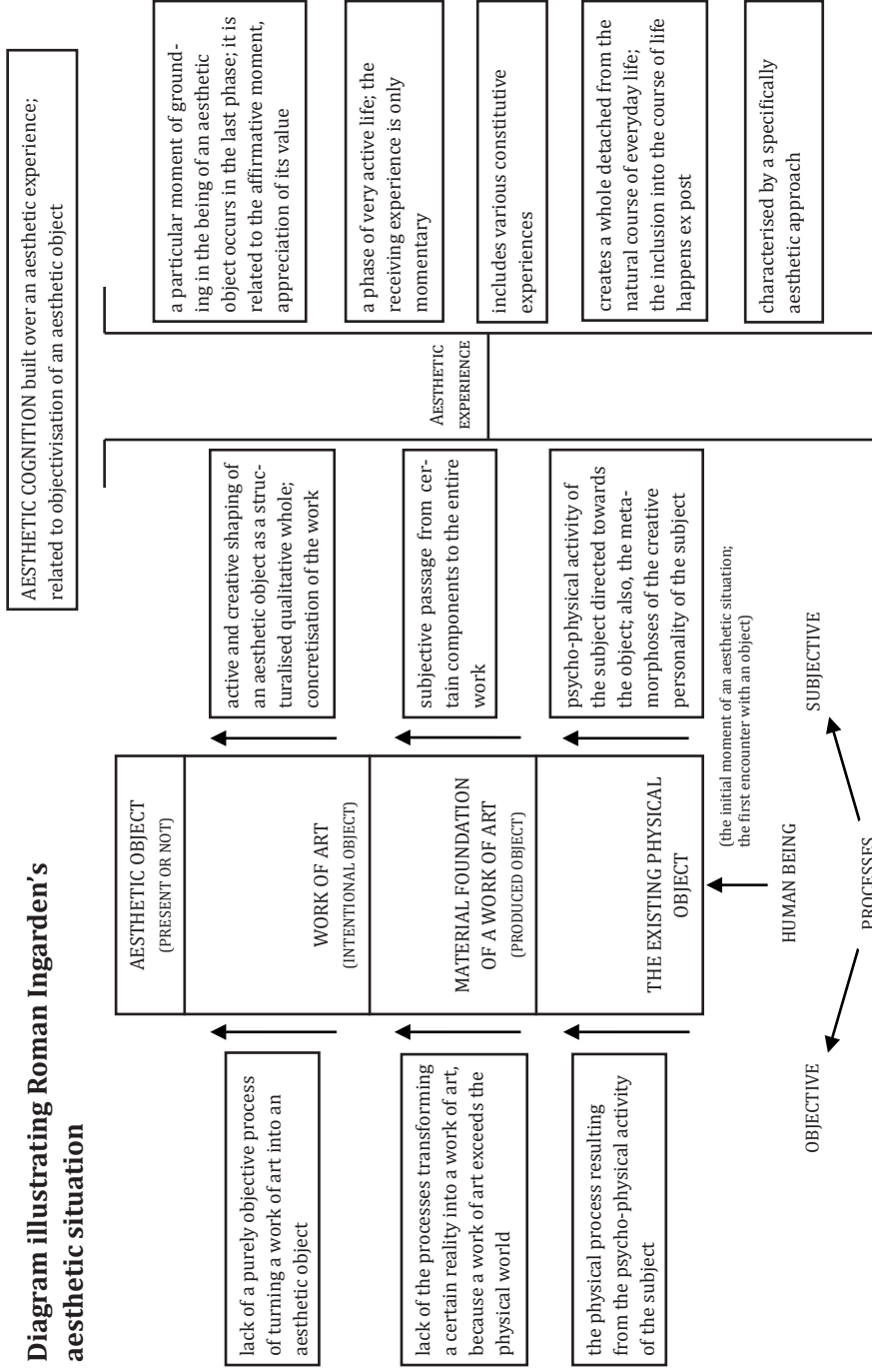
According to Ingarden, a creator, who in an aesthetic situation is also a beholder, has to knowingly monitor the changes made to the work, to be cognizant of the direction of his actions, and to be aware of when the creative process is complete. At the same time, the created work is undergoing constant transformations. A beholder, being at the same time a creator, also participates in them, because the constitution of an aesthetic object needed in the process of reception requires his active stance and particular creative action⁹.

Ingarden distinguishes the subjective and objective components of an aesthetic situation, making it clear that they must not be treated separately. They have to be analysed within the context of a comprehensively understood aesthetic situation. He distinguishes four objective components of an aesthetic situation:

- an object given to the artist or beholder – by which we understand a certain physical object or e.g. certain sounds influencing the subject and prompting a particular action;
- a material foundation of the work of art – or a *material basis of the work*, being a physical object already created and visible, an object of everyday experience, e.g. a particular lump of marble;
- a work of art – an object created or converted from something else, non physical and non psychic;

⁹ In her work *Świadomość piękna*, Maria Gołaszewska regards an aesthetic situation as the actual subject of aesthetics. She underlines that it is extremely important to consider all its components cumulatively at all times. See: M. Gołaszewska, *Świadomość piękna: problematyka genezy, funkcji, struktury i wartości w estetyce*, Warszawa 1970, pp. 29–39.

Diagram illustrating Roman Ingarden's aesthetic situation



– an aesthetic object – by which Ingarden means first of all the concretization of the work of art obtained by the perceptor understood both as the creator and the beholder of the work.

The passages from one component of an aesthetic situation to the next occur both at the objective and subjective level, and they are described and analysed by Ingarden one by one. However, it has to be repeated and highlighted that they constitute two sides of the same complex process, and as such should be treated cumulatively¹⁰. A diagram based on Ingarden's descriptions of an aesthetic situation (*Wykład XI* and *Przeżycie estetyczne*) looks as follows:

According to Ingarden, the process he calls an aesthetic situation begins with an encounter between a human and a given object¹¹. This is the starting point, where an impulse leading to the creation of a work of art first occurs. Ingarden points out to a moment when an element of the outside world catches the artist's attention, causes him "to stop", or, as he puts it, "makes him think"¹². In our opinion this very moment can also be considered the origin of artistic thinking, which involves getting distracted from everyday issues and turning full attention towards one particular component of the world. It should be stressed here that both the aesthetic situation and artistic thinking are of an intentional character¹³.

The object that the creator (and at the same time the beholder) is dealing with in the beginning of an aesthetic situation, is called by Ingarden the initial object. And according to the diagram illustrating an aesthetic situation, from the objective side we are dealing with a passage from an existing physical object to a produced object as a material foundation of a work of

¹⁰ See: R. Ingarden, *Wykład...*, op. cit., p. 36.

¹¹ And it is not necessarily an existing physical object, which will undergo physical transformation in the following stages, since in case of the activities of poets, writers, etc. this which is encountered (an object, a situation, a person, a mood) serves only as a starting point for observation, literary experience and the work of imagination. See: *ibidem*, p. 37.

¹² In his presentation regarding the aesthetic experience – which is a part of the aesthetic situation and characterises the experience of the subject participating in it – Ingarden states that "The aesthetic experience begins as soon as against the backdrop of the perceived or only imagined real object (item or process) a particular quality appears [...] not allowing the experiencing subject to remain «cold», but putting him in a particular emotional state". Idem, *Przeżycie estetyczne*, in: idem, *Studia z estetyki*, t. 3, Warszawa 1970, pp. 97–98 [trans. M. Bręgiel-Benedyk].

¹³ On intentionality see: J. Makota, *Intencjonalność*, in: *Słownik pojęć...*, op. cit., pp. 102–106.

art. It appears as a consequence of a certain physical process resulting from psycho-physical activity of the subject. Ingarden describes it as follows:

If I find some object in my immediate surrounding, if for example someone had sent a block of marble to my sculptural studio and now – let us say that I am a sculptor – I begin to sculpt a new physical object out of it, a new form which will become a physical foundation of a work of art. And something happens to this stone, this block of marble, because of my action of sculpting it, etc. Some process takes place, some transformations happen, its shapes simply change, so that slowly, after some time we obtain this physical foundation of a work of art¹⁴.

The processes indicated by the philosopher occur in the artist's surroundings and inside him. What is important, and what Ingarden points to, is that already in the beginning of an aesthetic situation a complex transformation occurs within the artist himself. Through his artistic work he changes, matures, realises and understands more – and in this way becomes a creative personality. To complete this diagram with the concept of artistic thinking, we could now proceed to elaborate on this transformation and the artist's activity which are merely mentioned by Ingarden. However, it is beyond this paper due to its introductory character and limited dimension. It will suffice to say that the category of artistic thinking must by definition point to intellectual acts occurring within a creative process (like for example: turning one's attention towards an object, quality or person; the occurrence of an idea or artistic intention; specifying an idea of a work, analysing, making generalisations, planning), which is accompanied by the work of imagination – without it no creative activity could possibly occur¹⁵. Besides, Ingarden claims that at the beginning of the creative process an artist enters a game, adopting the particular language of the discipline¹⁶. Furthermore, he asserts that the language itself is also in a sense an ex-

¹⁴ R. Ingarden, *Wykład...*, op. cit., p. 36.

¹⁵ In his interesting work *Krytyka myślenia artystycznego*, Jerzy Łukasiewicz writes about the category of artistic thinking as being among others "a domain of art, and so first of all a domain of imagination", with irrational tendencies inherent to it. He claims that the task of artistic thinking is to reveal the hidden order of the world and that it aims at changing the reality. See: J. Łukasiewicz, *Krytyka myślenia artystycznego*, "Estetyka i Krytyka", nr 28 (1/2013), p. 264 [trans. M. Bregiel-Benedyk].

¹⁶ On the importance of game for human life in its cultural dimension see among others J. Huizinga, *Homo ludens. Zabawa jako źródło kultury*, tłum. M. Kurecka, W. Wirpsza, Warszawa 2011. H.-G. Gadamer deemed the reality of game an ontological pattern of a work of art. See: H.-G. Gadamer, *Aktualność piękna. Sztuka jako gra, symbol, święto*, tłum. K. Krzemieniowa, Warszawa 1993.

isting object of an aesthetic situation, and should be taken into account in every analysis. Speaking about the material foundation of a work of art, it is important to note after Ingarden that it can be both permanent and impermanent. Domains of art exist which throughout historical transformations managed to survive without any material foundation whatsoever, as it happened e.g. in the case of poetry and literature which were initially preserved only through memory¹⁷. Various historically changing forms of recording/preserving art as well as durability of the carriers are another matter: there is no such thing as an absolutely durable material foundation – its durability is always relative. Furthermore, Ingarden indicates the existence of unrecorded physical foundation, like e.g. a human voice¹⁸.

Analysing yet another passage, this time from the material foundation of a work of art to the work of art itself, we note after Ingarden that on the subjective level we can speak of a subjective shift of perception, leading us through the perceived components to grasping the entire work of art. In the objective dimension, however, we cannot speak about transforming a certain physical reality, because “the work of art itself is not a physical object, even if it is a painting, a sculpture or a work of architecture”¹⁹. Moreover, as the philosopher claims “somehow a work of art goes beyond all that exists in the physical world”²⁰. To sum up, in the objective sense there is no difference between the material foundation of a work of art and the work itself. On the other hand, the difference is enormous when it comes to the subjective level. In the light of Ingarden’s theory, a work of art is purely an intentional object, possessing neither an intrinsic being nor a capacity for spontaneous development or transformation²¹. A work perceived in this way, however, has got some underspecified places, which differentiate it from all the ordinary individual objects. In an aesthetic situation, those places get filled by the beholders carrying out an aesthetic concretisation of work²². It seems that what Ingarden describes might justifiably characterise the process of artistic thinking. And the other way round: the category of artistic thinking seems to describe the processes

¹⁷ R. Ingarden, *Wykład...*, op. cit., p. 40.

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 41.

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 38.

²⁰ Ibidem.

²¹ See: M. Gołaszewska, *Roman Ingarden (1893–1970)*, “*Studia Estetyczne*” 1971, t. 8, p. 7.

²² See: ibidem, p. 7. On the work of art as an intentional being and a schematic construct as well as on the concretisation of the work, see: L. Sosnowski, op. cit., p. 264.

occurring during an aesthetic situation much better than the general concept of an aesthetic experience. In his text describing an aesthetic experience Ingarden writes that as a result of an emotion initialising an aesthetic situation, the subject's attitude towards the work changes diametrically, which means that:

[...] the attention of the experiencing subject is then directed not towards the real objects and their actuality, but to this which is for now purely qualitative. Not a real fact, but only "what" and "what like"; a purely qualitative creation is this which is constituted through an aesthetic experience and on which – being the object of aesthetic grasping – the experiencing subject is focused²³.

The artistic thinking related to this stage of experiencing art could thus be characterised by its focus on unreal and imaginary objects as well as abstract qualities. The role of an artist or a beholder would then be about grasping these abstract creations, imagining them or constructing a certain pattern and then filling it with particular content or images. Ingarden explains that also in relation to the passage from a work of art to an aesthetic object it is hard to speak about a purely objective process. According to him, an aesthetic object and a work of art are parallel creations, whereas the passage requires an analysis regarding the transformations of participating subjects²⁴.

Although Ingarden describes an aesthetic situation distinguishing its particular elements and providing their detailed description, he at the same time repeatedly underlines that these elements should not be considered separately. To further specify his stance, he often refers to the concepts of game, cooperation, co-action, in this way highlighting the dynamic, changeable, fluid character of an aesthetic situation. It should be emphasised that it is the general structure of an aesthetic situation that

²³ R. Ingarden, *Przeżycie...*, op. cit., pp. 98–99.

²⁴ Idem, *Wykład...*, op. cit., p. 39. In her work *Estetyka Romana Ingardena*, Anita Szczepańska emphasises the significance of the distinction between a work of art and an aesthetic object introduced by the philosopher. She claims that it allows to explain a range of phenomena "in the face of which the traditional aesthetics remained helpless". By those she means among others the possibility of supporting the hypothesis on the identity of a work-pattern as an object of various receiving acts, the hypothesis of a historical variability of the aesthetic objects and the possibility of explaining the discrepancy between the aesthetic evaluations due to the differences between the concretisations. See: A. Szczepańska, *Estetyka Romana Ingardena*, Warszawa 1989, pp. 257–258 [trans. M. Bręgiel-Benedyk].

interests Ingarden and that constitutes the actual field of research for his aesthetics. For this reason, he does not analyse any aesthetic situation which exceed its basic structure, for example an aesthetic commune with nature not resulting in producing works of art²⁵. However, in the light of this paper it is interesting how marginal a connection Ingarden makes between the experience of art and the creative process on the one hand, and the work of intellect and the cognitive activity on the other.

The above described passages from one component of an aesthetic situation to the next, form – as we indirectly expressed already – a description of an aesthetic experience of the subject. The final result of a successful and fully developed aesthetic experience is, according to Ingarden, the establishing of an aesthetic object and its direct perception²⁶. This aesthetic experience whose particular phases we listed already, according to Ingarden comprises of

[...] multiple constitutive experiences: both the acts of expression and the acts of creative development or – the very opposite – merely imitative reconstruction and comprehension, as well as emotions. All these interweave in many different ways. An aesthetic experience constitutes a phase of very active life, in which only at some points a purely recipient experience might appear²⁷.

The final phase of an aesthetic experience differs from the preceding ones which were characterised by dynamics, the turmoils of quest and discovery. Quite the opposite, the stage related to the already constituted aesthetic object puts the subject in a quiet, almost contemplative mood. The subject emotionally acknowledges the value of an aesthetic object and thereby experiences something aesthetically valuable²⁸. Therefore we assume that the process of artistic thinking might encompass all the phases of an aesthetic situation, undergoing changes in accordance with them. Ingarden's remarks regarding the contemplative mood (or more appropriately attitude) towards an aesthetic object, encourage us to compare the artistic stance with a philosophical approach, and similarly, the artistic thinking with the philosophical one. Such a juxtaposition is nothing new in philosophy, since already Pythagoras of Samos describing human life stated that "The purest [...] is this kind of men who dedicate themselves to contemplation of the most beautiful, and

²⁵ See: R. Ingarden, *Wykłady...*, op. cit., p. 40.

²⁶ See: idem, *Przeżycie...*, op. cit., p. 97.

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 97.

²⁸ See: ibidem, p. 101.

these are called philosophers [...] wisdom is the knowledge about the beautiful and the prime, the divine and the indestructible”²⁹.

Specifying the reasons for undertaking any creative action³⁰, Ingarden points to the human ability to go beyond the given. And even more: to the human ability to shape/produce something new while at the same time emphasising one’s own personality. In *Wykład XI*, Ingarden states that:

A human himself aims on crystallising something which is not ready, which has only just began, because he is somehow convinced that in this way he can preserve, express, reveal and manifest the hidden, subjective course of the processes, of which one knows nothing and which are otherwise unshaped. It is the strong driving force behind going beyond what is given and creating something new, as something which comes from me and is somehow connected to me, with a need to preserve this which is connected to my behaviour and existence³¹.

In the light of the above we might assume that this kind of thinking aims at constructing new entireties, values and objects. In that case it is for sure a creative kind of thinking – but its results take on mainly artistic form (and not for example scientific or utilitarian).

We might also mention here that Ingarden regarded every creative activity (be it artistic or scientific) as directed first and foremost towards oneself and serving self-fulfillment³². Asking about the need to create permanent material foundations of the produced works, Ingarden explains that an artist wants and needs to create valuable things with which he could repeatedly commune. He is thus trying to establish permanent material foundations for the valuable things to exist longer, and to facilitate repeated encounters, agitations and experiences of delight. Yet another reason for undertaking the artistic activity might be the artist’s need to keep in touch with other people, share important values and belong to a wider community. In other words, we assume that an artist wants himself and his inner world to be accepted by the society. The remarks regarding

²⁹ Porfiriusz, Jamblich, Anonim, *Żywoty Pitagorasa*, Wrocław 1993, p. 46. However, Józef Tischner saw an important difference between philosophical and artistic thinking: “philosophical thinking could do without the idea of beauty, and artistic thinking could do without the idea of truth”. J. Tischner, *Myślenie w żywiole piękna*, Kraków 2004, p. 8.

³⁰ However it should be underlined that the remark concerns first of all the activity of an artist creating a given work.

³¹ R. Ingarden, *Wykłady...*, op. cit., p. 43.

³² See: *ibidem*.

the postulated “need for common emotion and the need for sharing one common world with others, and this too a world of some value”³³ are particularly interesting. Ingarden links this need to the effort undertaken to break human loneliness through this particular interpersonal community, which is the “common world of the same values”³⁴. It is worth mentioning that this common space seems to be first of all a thought space (the area of artistic thinking), and later also the space experienced in the creations of culture as an aesthetic experience. In the final part of his deliberations, Ingarden points to the need for immortality, as the driving force of artistic activity. He considers the human desire to overcome the fleetingness of all things and go beyond the narrow frame of one’s own life.

In the end of our analysis of artistic thinking – but rather to widen the outlined research field than to close it – we would like to recall an interesting example of the contemporary views on art and their prospective applications. In the 2011 conference *TED Ideas worth spreading* Shea Hembrey gave a talk titled *How I became 100 artists*. He described his auteur project of an ideal art biennale uniting 100 artists from all over the world and gave a clear criterion of selecting the works. He stated that “great art would have «head»: it would have interesting intellectual ideas and concepts. It would have «heart» in that it would have passion and heart and soul. And it would have «hand» in that it would be greatly crafted”³⁵. Subsequently, he introduced the conclusions which he had arrived at in the course of his deliberations – that it is easier to produce all the works necessary to organise an exhibition by yourself than to painstakingly search for the right works of the appropriate artists. And so he did; the completion of the project took him two years³⁶. At this point we might ask how much space is there left for the beholder among such 100 artists?

Further research hypotheses

Our research presented in this paper brought us to a hypothesis that the category of artistic thinking – properly characterised and worked out e.g.

³³ Ibidem, pp. 43–44.

³⁴ Ibidem, p. 44.

³⁵ S. Hembrey, *How I became 100 artists*, [online] http://www.ted.com/talks/sheahembrey_how_i_became_100_artists?language=en [access: 9.08. 2014].

³⁶ On the results of his work and the international biennale see: [online] <http://www.sheahembrey.com/seek.php> [access: 9.08.2014].

through the incorporation into the structure of Ingarden's aesthetic situation – might prove an interesting research tool to be used in the analysis of contemporary art. We would be particularly interested in applying the described category to the examination of the works of film art, which because of their complex structure require a particular research approach. Film art analyses need to take into account various aspects of film reality as well as the layers of the film structure with its concurrent homogeneity. It is also important to consider the dynamics and fluidity of the film works³⁷. It seems to us that the pattern of an aesthetic situation and the category of artistic thinking could manage also this kind of art.

Translated by Marta Bręgiel-Benedyk

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³⁷ On the works of film art, see: R. Ingarden, *Kilka uwag o sztuce filmowej*, in: idem, *Wybór pism estetycznych*, Kraków 2005.

Jacek Hamela*

The Creative Aspect of Sound Engineering Process in Feature Film

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to discuss and clarify the numerous controversies regarding the creative aspect of sound engineering process in feature film. The author describes the core of the sound operator's work and focuses on the analysis of two different methods employed by a sound engineering on the set: designing and recording.

Key words

sound engineering process, sound design, feature film, film work

What prompted me to discuss this subject in a form of a paper were the numerous controversies regarding the creative aspect of sound engineering process in feature film, mainly concerning the activities of a production sound engineer on the set or a production sound mixer.

In this case, it seems particularly important to notice and emphasise the author's factor. The controversies regarding the core of the sound engineering work might vary in their origins, but their main feature is ignorance (unfortunately present even in the operations of the production division, particularly at the stage of documentation). This ignorance concerns the fundamental aspect of sound design – the creative, auteur sound design of an audiovisual work being one's professional duty and a task entrusted by the film director and the producers. At the same time, it is a task set by the work itself right at its literary source – a screenplay.

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It is quite frequent that even people involved with films can barely realise what the sound recording on the set is about, let alone understand the issues of sound engineering at the postproduction stage of the film. In this context, I would like to focus on the analysis of two very different methods employed by a sound operator on the set: engineering or designing (which I use interchangeably) or simply recording. I will also describe the conditions necessary for producing a correct and effective production (location) sound recording, as well as the circumstances making such a recording completely impossible.

Undoubtedly, it is fundamental for our further investigation to assume that sound is one of the most important factors actively carrying information. And if so, then it is also a carrier of meaning. This in turn makes it, often, a carrier of emotions. The realisation of this fact resulted in including sound as one of the means of expression in film and subsequently in widely using it as yet another – equal to picture – mean of narration. It made it also possible to distinguish the professional categories of sound designer or sound engineer in film. And as the technical means of producing and broadcasting spacial sound in film develop, this field is experiencing a rapid growth. Sound, as an extremely plastic material, allows shaping the world also beyond the frame, creating sound values of the unreal world. Sound engineering in film became a discipline enabling creative activity oriented towards a particular goal: performing its ancillary role in creating a film work as a consistent, audiovisual whole. In that sense, the “discovery” of the core and meaning of sound in film is nothing particularly new. For years now, the results of sound designers’ creative work have been awarded with the individual prizes in the category of “the best sound” in film festivals around the world. These are not technical categories. These are categories of creative action, generating noticeable aesthetic values in the auditive sphere of the film work – and they have their own individual, auteur character.

As a sound engineering, I am usually responsible for the entire sonoric statement of the audiovisual work – from the analysis of the screenplay to the final recording and accepting the standard copy – and I take a number of personnel, technical and aesthetic decisions, which have a clear impact on the quality and significance of the film as a work of art.

Here I would like to show how the ideas, decisions and actions of the sound operator or sound engineer directly influence the final shape of sound in film and – most importantly – the achieved aesthetic value and significance of this work as a consistent, integrated whole.

The creative aspect of sound engineering in feature film

Discussions concerning the creative aspect of sound engineer's work sometimes lack a reliable analysis and methodology. They are usually of an emotional nature and rarely pertain to the subject matter. They tend to end as quickly as they began, the only outcome being the already highly antagonistic stances solidified even more. It is extremely difficult to accept a situation where any actions of the sound engineer face an almost hostile attitude of the film people themselves: the more or less experienced producer, the cameraman or director, let alone the technical staff working on the film set. The main obstacle seems to be a common inability to distinguish between the tasks related to the sound recording process and the activities related to its creative production.

In a volume of selected works of Balázs published in 1987 and containing elements of his film theory formed as early as the 30s, we read:

When two cameramen happen to film the same scene, it frequently occurs that the images – even if the object can be easily recognised – have hardly anything in common. But when two sound operators given identical technical conditions make a recording of the same voices, then individual differences in them almost must not occur¹.

In the justification of such opinion he states:

Why? Is it a result of imperfection of our sound recording equipment? Or are there other, more profound reasons in the nature of sound or our own hearing ability? When a cameraman shoots acting as a visual phenomenon, we are dealing with a synthesis of two artistic productions. Apart from the unique facial movements of the actor there is also the specific take of the cameraman, through which he seeks the most characteristic contours and the best lighting. The expression of the actor's face is enhanced by the expression of the frame, in which the cameraman can appropriately modulate the acting and increase its clarity. And hence, the film take is not merely a reproduction but a creative art. A sound record, however, will only have as much expression as the actor puts into it and as the microphone faithfully records. A sound operator merely registers and reproduces sound. The sound operator's individuality and his subjectivity cannot possibly have any impact on the sound records through different takes. And only such subjectivity would open

¹ B. Balázs, *Wybór pism*, Warszawa 1987, p. 209 [trans. M. Bręgiel-Benedyk]. Numbers in parenthesis refer to the positions in the footnote table, p. 21.

the realm of artistic possibilities in sound recording. The perspective itself cannot change the form of sound and its design, as it happens in the case of visual objects. The angle of looking alters the character of objects, but «the angle of the ear» does not change the character of sound. The same voice coming from the same place cannot be recorded in any different way. But if we have no choice between the options then the sound recording remains only a mechanical reproduction².

I am allowing myself such long presentation of the above mentioned stance because it has undoubtedly shaped the attitudes of a few generations of filmmakers and continues to function even today.

I am convinced that for many years now the practice of sound design on the feature film set has been completely overturning this opinion.

However in the introduction to the quoted publication Aleksander Jackiewicz states that: "Unfortunately, what is justly noted by the film theory historians, he (Balázs – author's note) was unable to create an integral theory of sound cinema, although he had said many interesting things about sound in film which remain valid even today"³, he fails to indicate particularly which elements of the sound layer described in Balázs' theory he has in mind.

Still in the introduction, Aleksander Jackiewicz writes that:

A few generations of Polish filmmakers [...] were raised on Balázs theory (older ones would even attend the master's lectures in the National Film School in Łódź). His books – at that time available in Poland only in German – were often the future film critiques' (including myself) first readings on film⁴.

In another place, as if parenthesizing the components of the presented theory, he makes it clear that: "No such theoretical system exists that would be absolutely right and valid beyond its time (especially since in the realm of cinema time passes faster than in other arts)"⁵.

To show fundamental discrepancies in the perception of the same problem, I will quote the words of Eugeniusz Cękański – a director, a researcher and a teacher, one of the main representatives of the Polish film avant-garde of the 30s and the Dean of the National Film School after World War II – published in 1932 (almost simultaneously):

² Ibidem.

³ Ibidem, p. 5.

⁴ Ibidem.

⁵ Ibidem, p. 6.

The long practice of silent film allowed us through the association of images to subtly and easily construct a new reality in our imagination. Through the isolation of the phenomenon (a close-up), through the union with another phenomenon (the positioning of the camera), and through association with another phenomenon (montage) the visible world got organised – a silent language of images was invented. Now, how to approach sound to achieve the same success? How to organise the sound reality? A microphone instead of a lens, the sonic wave instead of light – the necessity of analogy with the silent film was obvious. Proper sound film attempts to approach the sonic phenomenon through the *sonic close-ups*: a sigh, the rush of blood in the veins, the whistle of a breaking breath – these are the sonic close-ups, matching the close-ups of the human speech – inconspicuous and hardly perceptible sonic phenomena, becoming powerful through isolation and magnification. The microphone was set in search of the possibilities that camera settings could offer. Through various settings of the microphone with reference to the source of sound, the listener might be introduced to the *sound perspective*. In the beginning the simplest experiences: in David Golder, the hero is being called to the phone. He walks away. Slow, heavy steps gradually die down. Space is built out of sounds. Finally, a sound coming after another sound – the *sound montage* provided the same opportunities as the montage of pictures⁶.

We can regret that Cękalski's views did not reach the awareness of the subsequent generations of filmmakers unlike Balázs' whose only recently outdated opinions are still being valued by many contemporary film artists, not only in the local market. Yet, the elements of Balázs' theory could be used to build a contrary stance. These days, the choice of technical means – microphones or microports – is as important to the sound design on the set as the choice of lenses and settings is to the clarity of a take. The choice and application of the means in sound design binds the sound engineer's subjective vision with the aesthetic value of his work both on the film set and at the postproduction stage. A microphone without the sound engineering is dead and needs to be "taught to listen" to a clearly defined section of the acoustic reality. Variable takes and dynamic quest for the most desirable location and direction of hearing (position) of the microphone are clear examples of finding the "angle of the ear" which Balázs had questioned, or rather – using more contemporary language – the angle of hearing. Attention to the appropriate ratio of the voice recording on the set to the activity of all the other components of the sound background as well as shaping

⁶ E. Cękalski, *A, B, C... taśmy filmowej*, "Kino" 1932, nr 13, 18, 21, 25, 27, 29, in: *Polska myśl filmowa. Antologia tekstów z lat 1898–1939*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk 1975, p. 193 [trans. M. Bręgiel-Benedyk].

the most desirable sonic and spatial values of the recording are in turn the equivalents of framing and designing a take. And finally, "[...] The same voice coming from the same place [...]"⁷ contrary to Balázs' claim, can be recorded in many different ways. His statement that: "[...] if we have no choice between the options then the sound recording remains only a mechanical reproduction"⁸ has become obsolescent, since these days the options unquestionably exist and constitute one of the elements of the sound engineering's technique. Technical development of the means of sound recording, the progress of electronics, electro-acoustics, interior acoustics and the technology of emission formats have completely transformed the form of sound and image coexistence in the audiovisual work. Not only the quality of the challenges the artists undertake, but also the audience's expectations have changed. And it is a variable and ever modulating process. The above mentioned components are only a fracture of the parameters influencing the recording's distinctive character, the subjective auteur vision of the sound designer. The diversity of techniques and the individual sensitivity of the sound engineering complete the work.

Let us now establish that registering the sound means uncritical recording of all the acoustic events on the film set. Designing the sound, however, encompasses various activities performed within the acoustic environment of the film set in order to obtain a sound recording which is thoroughly planned and strictly defined with technical and aesthetic parameters. To confuse these two concepts or to use them interchangeably is a formal mistake at the very foundation of any discussion. Unfortunately, the lack of differentiating these two radically different realities is typical of many artists, including the very experienced ones. However a great majority of directors at the preproduction stage declares the need for the correct production sound (location sound, the sound from the film set) in their work, only very few of them eventually consistently cooperate with the sound operator and fully accept his actions on the set. The wishful thinking and passive attitude will not suffice. Blind faith in superhuman powers of the sound operator will not guarantee a correct sound implementation on the set. Without the active support from the director and the cameraman, and without them understanding the basic rules of sound engineering and trusting, sound designing on the film set can be simply impossible.

⁷ B. Balázs, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

Usually, negative attitudes are being justified with the economic reasons. For example, the necessity to reconcile too “ambitious” production guidelines with a modest budget causes drastic cuts in the shooting time which results in constructing unrealistic, impossible daily schedules. Rush and lack of time dedicated to rehearsals seriously affect the process of film making, particularly in the sensitive realm of sound. Ambitious guidelines dissolve in the face of hard economic conditions of the production.

These facts should be causing outrage. Still, there are numerous other causes of this state of affairs. First and probably the most primary, is the low level of general musical culture resulting in little sonic sensitivity. Local professional discourses and echoes of the university actions cannot make up for the low common level of sensitivity or even complete insensitivity to the essence, role and values of sound expression.

Looking at the professional environment of audiovisual production, we see the generally low level of higher education when it comes to shaping the sonic sensitivity of the students and alumni of the film, theatre and television direction, direction of cinematographer and film art and television production departments of many film schools. Negligence in this area resulted in a severe unawareness of the vast potential of sound, and the technical requirements of sound engineering on the film set and at the post-production stage. On the other hand, the Sound Engineering Department of the University of Music in Warsaw has for many years supplied the film market with specialists perfectly familiar with the sound reality of the film both in its technological and aesthetic aspect. An encounter of the two structures of film education is usually combustible: people who are very highly qualified in sound engineering, on the film set do not have anyone to address their postulates to, however important they would be for the artistic principles and production of the work. The expectations of young apprentices of sound engineering who do not have significant artistic achievements are most often ignored. They are simply dismissed. And it would seem that on the film set everyone belongs to the same team and aims at the same goal. Such ignorance is particularly painful and dangerous, because it contradicts the fundamental aesthetic and technological needs of the sound cinema and ties the hands of the sound engineer. Regretfully, I am often under the impression that a sound engineer on a film set must be first and foremost a good social engineer and psychologist; he constantly negotiates, explains why and why not, points to how and for what, and anticipates the threats to the proper sound implementation. Of course after many years of working together some specialists develop an

ability to recognise their mutual expectations and meet the requirements of the other in advance. This way is perhaps not easier, but certainly more effective, more efficient and more creative.

For the above mentioned reasons I particularly value my cooperation with the Department of Radio and Television and Faculty of Fine Arts and Music of the University of Silesia in Katowice. It gives a realistic chance for an effective change in the "sound awareness" among the future directors, cinematographer and production managers.

Another crucial problem is the acute shortage of professional sound engineering literature in Polish, dealing with pre-production, on set and post-production phases. Such literature regarding local market simply does not exist. Nothing, apart from rare articles in film magazines, but these too of little importance and poor content. Yet, a reliable presentation of the real situation could efficiently tackle the myths persisting in common imagination. One of them is the claim that Polish films do not have good sound, that in this aspect they are always awkward and bad, because they have too low budgets and lack technology and qualified crew. It is not true. Our native filmmaking lacks procedures supporting financial and technological discipline of the project, also in its sound engineering aspect – from the analysis of the screenplay to the distribution of the work on electronic carriers and other fields of exploitation. It directly influences the aesthetic quality of the film.

Such procedures should include:

- detailed analysis of the screenplay from the sound engineering perspective,
- extensive consultations with the director, the cinematographer, the producer, the production manager, the manager of the set and the divisions' representatives,
- identification of the creative plans and production guidelines of the film,
- presentation of the concepts and basic guidelines of sound engineering to the artists including the actors and the composer, and a discussion with them,
- documentation of the shooting venues, with a particular stress on the possibility of recording the location sound,
- discipline of the shoot – as a rule rejecting the takes which do not meet the basic criteria of the location sound, when the location sound is supposed to be the base of the final sound structure,
- preparing the post-production chain,

- constant technological and aesthetic supervision over the most sensitive moments, e.g. the sound conversion.

Within thus established procedures, some unfortunate but common operations would have been unacceptable. As much as it is unthinkable to employ a completely unqualified person as a cinematographer, the producers still easily do it when it comes to sound engineers. It is always a great loss both for the professional sound engineering and for the film work itself. The failure to meet any technological and aesthetic requirements of the completed material stems in such cases from the fundamental lack of qualifications in sound engineering, unawareness of the basic rules of effective and creative activity on the film set and at the stage of post-production. Such operations remind us of charlatanry: a mixture of the lack of experience, crude ignorance and a systematically updated choice of “extremely attractive” myths about sound engineering on the set and in the studio. In the short term such an attitude gives the director and the cameraman a sense of security, perhaps even comfort. How often do we hear from some film artists that the most positive aspect of their highly appreciated sound engineer’s work on the set was that this “professional” worked as if he was inaudible and invisible... And it is crucial to know that in most cases the results of such operations are pitiful, while the odium is then undeservedly borne by the whole professional group of sound engineering.

Of course it does not mean that life of the more experienced and established sound engineers is a winning streak. Quite the opposite, I should say. The ability to perform a consistent action aiming at creating proper conditions for the set recordings might actually stem from the bitter taste of many failures. It is from them that one learns to set the limits of possible compromise. Going beyond these limits unavoidably results in defeat.

Yet, there is a way to understand the reasons behind such state of affairs. Sound designing in film is still a relatively young discipline of art. It is only 85 years old, which is very little comparing to the multifaceted history of art over the centuries. It is also very little in respect to the moment when the primitive man made his drawings on the walls of the Lascaux cave, still similarly expressive despite thousands of years that have passed. The history of this discipline of art is not even as long as the history of cinema. Cinema was born around 1895, when on 28 December in Paris, the first public film projection took place thanks to the brothers Lumière. The beginning of real sound cinema on the other hand, falls on 1927. The projection of Alan Crosland’s film “The Jazz Singer” (the first ever film “equipped” with a synchronised soundtrack) opened film to

a completely new realm of possibilities. Not everyone welcomed this new achievement with equal enthusiasm. Enough to mention Charlie Chaplin, one of the most recognizable icons of the cinema, who saw the innovation not only as the end of the language and the distinctive narration style developed by himself, but of the cinema as a whole. Today we know how vain these concerns proved to be. Full sound cinema's development is a history of many technical achievements allowing, first of all, to bring film closer to reality, whose sonic dimension constitutes one of the basic factors in inter-human communication. Over the years, the progress of the technical means of sound engineering made it possible to create worlds of surreal, unprecedented sound.

Analysis of the screenplay – the initial stage of creating the sound layer of a film work

An idea is the beginning of every audiovisual work. An idea of a hero and a story. Such an idea materialises in written forms, diversely representing the essence of the content. These are:

- a screenplay, being the literary prototype rendering the content and the course of film action,
- a script, being a detailed description of the particular scenes and takes in the film,
- a storyboard, being a graphic representation, a “pictorial” visualization of the screenplay's and script's content.

A screenplay is the most common literary base of a film work and a constant point of reference in the process of filmmaking. For the sound engineering, a careful reading of the screenplay is a rich source of information regarding the heroes, their behaviour, the light of the scene and its atmosphere, the time of the day, and most importantly the intentions of the author. Usually, the analysis of the screenplay causes a clash of the initial notions regarding the sonic world of the situations and heroes, with the possible threats to the successful sound implementation on the set. At the same time, getting into the creative intentions of the director and a proper recognition of the aesthetic needs and requirements of the work, allows us to develop our own idea of the film's sonic layer.

Usually, much of the information included in the screenplay requires further specification long before the shooting begins. Any knowledge (regarding the chosen venues, the types of the cameras and lighting, the

cast, the costumes, the concept of the vehicle based shots and the shots using special effects) acquired at that stage will be crucial to the organisation of the sound engineer's workshop. The phase of the screenplay analysis preceding the shoot is one of the most important stages of the sound engineer's work. These days, unfortunately, it is often underestimated. It is a period of necessary, many-sided consultations with the director, the cinematographer and the production manager. All the sound engineer's actions aim for constructing a structure of parameters determining the possibility of recording the location sound. One of the most basic tasks is taking part in the documentation and expressing opinion on the selected venues in terms of their usability for the effective location sound recording. Regretfully, the production managers often fail to engage the sound engineer's attention at that stage. On the other hand, the sound engineering do not demand it with sufficient determination. The results are very disappointing: allowing the shoot to take place in a "noisy" location, (i.e. one in which there is no control over the intensive acoustic activity of the environment), might make the recording of the location sound completely impossible. Accepting locations placed in the vicinity of particularly noisy places, like intersections, bus stations and busy streets is a common mistake. We might call it a matter of acoustic cleanness of the set. It can be better understood through an analogy to the visual aspect of the film: as much as the frame is a way of revealing a consciously selected section of the perceivable reality, a clean frame is a frame whose composition encompasses solely the desired components. It is beyond doubt that an unexpected appearance in the frame of an object alien to the film set design, e.g. allowing a lamp, a tripod or a microphone in the frame, disqualifies the take. There is no discussion over that. Such a frame is usually called a dirty frame, and the flaw is eliminated by shooting a retake. If we look at the level of awareness in case of an identical situation occurring in the acoustic reality, it simply appears that no such awareness exists. Very often nobody but the sound engineer worries about the sound being dirty, when a silent conversation of the heroes is being accompanied by a completely unjustified street noise entering the frame and the sound of pneumatic hammers from a nearby construction site. It is hard to imagine a montage and editing of such material, where the uncontrollable intensity of the sonic background is so variable in its character and dynamics. At the same time, the reality of the post-production stage proves that the process of sound reconstruction is not only time consuming and costly, but also ineffective: by eliminating

the superfluous components we most often destroy the sonic values of the sound material and disqualify it completely.

A careful reading of the screenplay provides an opportunity to clarify all the controversies regarding the technical aspects of the shoot. A lack of proper coordination of the technical means and the shooting technique can seriously affect the aesthetic quality of the image and sound, and heavily influence the general expression of the film. Therefore it is important to find out what are the director's and the cinematographer's ideas for the vehicle based shots already at the pre-production stage. Most certainly it would be useful to ask: will the vehicle really be moving or will we be shooting on a carrier or in a studio using a blue box or a green screen? Will the windows be opened or not? If open, then which one and to what extent? What is the planned speed on which the car will be moving? What surface will the car be driving on? How important the landscape will be? What outfits the cast will be wearing? Asking these questions on the film set only is far too late. Involving the production division in discussing these matters long before the shooting commences will positively influence the sound recording on the set.

The period of reading and analysing the screenplay is at the same time a very particular stage when gradually a certain inner image of the world of heroes and situations is being created. This particular inner vision is the first and perhaps the most fundamental component of the specific language of the developed creative expression, both in the visual and the auditive aspect. In this way, however imprecisely, we might be able to describe the imagined acoustic character of the places, people and situations in respect to the nature of the film story as a whole already at that stage. The implementation of this vision is in fact simply its material "revival"; it is making the formerly imagined components alive. From the very first day of the shoot and the first clap, till the last moment of the final edit – it is an unceasing confrontation of this primary image and the calculations regarding it, with the living tissue of a film work.

While analysing the process of adapting a literary work for a movie, Jan Jakub Kolski notes that it is necessary to "[...] cut the tissue of events out of the literary mass"⁹, and then rebuild the literary (imagined) hero into a film (visible) one. Transposing the conclusions to the relations of literature (the screenplay) and the film sound, we might claim that the analysis of the screenplay is supposed to lead us to "extract" the tissue

⁹ J. J. Kolski, *Pisemna dysertacja*, Łódź 2008, p. 4 [trans. M. Bregiel-Benedyk].

of the sonic events out of the literary body, and then “rebuild” the “imagined” sonic world into a film/audible one.

Basing the construction of the film soundtrack on the production (location) sound as the fundamental postulate in composing the sonic world of a movie plot

It is beyond any doubt that shooting a film according to the parameters necessary for the location sound recording is significantly more difficult than shooting it not worrying about the location sound at all. So what makes this effort worth taking to the extent that it has become a world standard? An indisputable advantage of the location sound is that it makes the content of the take far more credible. It convincingly mirrors the details and the most sensitive components of acting, the dialogue interpretation, the emotional nuances carried by every word and every breath, the dynamics of sound illustrating the movement. The value of impression that the audience gets from the uniformity of the visual layer and the accompanying sound is absolutely unique. To give up the location sound (with the exceptions I will discuss later) is to cripple the film work and deprive it of its natural defenses. It is an irreparable act of destruction, for the reconstruction of the film set reality in a studio environment is usually completely impossible.

The technical aspects of the production (location) sound recording, the pilot and the wild track sound on a film set – general remarks

Making an attempt at defining the concept of the production, or location sound we are facing some difficulty: first of all, it is a relative concept – on the one hand it depends on the technical parameters, on the other it is always inscribed in a precisely defined situational context. Yet, what do we call a production sound, or the so-called good, correct production (location) sound? For my further deliberations I will assume the following definition: production sound is a sound recording made on the film set and during a take, possessing particular features qualifying it to be further edited at the post-production stage and to be included in the final merging of the soundtrack and the visual layer.

The quality of the production (location) sound depends on three parameters:

- the selectivity of the sound,
- the timbre and the dynamics of the sound,
- the legibility of the dialogue.

The selectivity of the sound is in my understanding a feature describing the proportion of the usable sound volume to the remaining acoustic phenomena in the background.

The timbre of the sound is a feature facilitating the differentiation of the sound of various instruments, voices or sonic objects. It is a quality allowing us to describe a certain sound as more or less natural for the given source.

The legibility of the dialogue is a parameter related to the level of clarity in the verbal field, with the intelligibility of the produced speech recording.

The indicated parameters are interrelated – the quality of any of them influences the remaining ones. It is common to claim that the location sound is a recording of the text layer of a take, namely a recording of the dialogue. It is, however, only part of the truth: when a take contains no text, the content of the location sound is the sound effect accompanying the movement of objects. When even that is missing, the production (location) sound will still be the sound atmosphere of the set.

For an effective implementation of the production sound recording on the set, operations of the sound engineer need to focus on two areas: the first one includes locating and neutralising all types of risks and sound disturbances, the other focuses on obtaining appropriate sound material (compatible with the creative intentions and expression of the audiovisual work as a whole). A proper implementation of the tasks in the first area is crucial for the second.

It is informally said that the production (location) sound might be “clean” or “dirty”. These are very general descriptions of the sound quality of a particular take. By a “clear location sound” I understand a recording, whose content encompasses exclusively the components related to the course of the take, as well as those which result directly from the intentions of the sound engineer. Briefly put, a clean, properly recorded location sound contains solely the *d e s i r a b l e* content, directly resulting from the screenplay and compatible with the artistic and production principles of the work. Therefore all the *u n d e s i r a b l e* elements present in the sound take considerably distort it. What we are dealing with is a “dirty location sound”, qualifying for a thorough editing at the post-production stage.

It might be frustrating for the freshmen in sound engineering, but one of the main tasks of the sound engineer on the film set is to create proper conditions for recording. The most crucial seems to be to eliminate or maximally reduce any hums, noises and sound effects in the shooting environment. Any sounds that could in any way affect the clarity of the recorded dialogue and render its montage impossible due to the high intensity of the background in a given take, should be completely eliminated or significantly reduced. It is this struggle for the selectivity of the recording that often causes the sound engineer to be perceived as the one who is disturbed “always and by everything”. Of course it matters how we express our doubts, concerns and needs in front of the film director, the cinematographer or the set manager. It is crucial not to begin with an uncompromising arbitration and not to express our needs in too emphatic a form. However, as we know from experience, even the most subtle form of persuasion sooner or later causes the sound engineer to weigh heavily on the crew, making him and his work undeservedly disliked. Very often we get the impression that the sound engineer is completely forlorn in his actions. As if he was a private who happens to be in the set, and his requirements had no significant connection to the work and its quality. The attempts to justify certain requirements are not particularly helpful, as each situation is very specific and might require the sound engineer to provide a proper explanation each and every time. The lack of implemented procedures as well as of an appropriate acoustic discipline on the set, causes the majority of the sound engineer’s activity to focus on locating the risks and taking all efforts to eliminate them. We can divide them into two groups: those of a common type, almost universally occurring in the set, and atypical, rare ones. In case of common risks we need to take actions in advance, “clearing” the venue beforehand. The remaining potential might then be “invested” in locating and neutralising the atypical and unforeseen difficulties.

Typical risks we might face in a film set are related to the qualities of:

- the power generating unit,
- the fans of the power supply units and the fitting of the lights illuminating the set,
- the bulbs of these lights,
- the mechanical systems and the electronic optical and digital cameras,
- the trolley and the parts used for the dolly shots,
- the vehicles if they are used to shoot particular scenes,

- the car carrier,
- the floors of the interiors.

A “pilot” sound is the sound recorded on the film set during a particular take, but lacking the quality of a clear, selective and well defined location sound. The “pilot” sound is the location sound for reference and replacement. Whenever there is no possibility to create appropriate conditions to record a location sound, the pilot might constitute a priceless sound material, providing information on the real sound parameters on the set and creating a map of events to be used at the post-production stage. By definition it is not suitable for the final editing, but it is a point of reference for recording the Automatic Dialogue Replacement (ADR) and the sound effects.

The decision to qualify the recorded material for later reference in other sound recordings might be prompted by a number of circumstances (occurring independently or simultaneously). Among them the most common are:

- the technique of shooting (e.g. using the Steadicam system),
- a high level of the background sound and the undesirable noises on the set,
- a particular character of the scene (the pyrotechnic and stuntman scenes or the scenes involving the rain and snow machines, propellers, etc.),
- failures of the shooting equipment (lack of properly prepared ground for the takes on a car carrier, failures of the camera or damage to the case containing photosensitive material),
- a need for a partial or complete replacement of an actor’s line in the quest of the right interpretation of the text.

The circumstances completely excluding a location sound record are, e.g. the usage of a rain machine, a snow machine and a propeller. The location sound might be “recreated” through a “wild track” recording.

The “wild track” sound is a recording of the sound content of a take or a scene, implemented in the conditions appropriate for production sound, but with the camera turned off and all sound phenomena making a clean location recording impossible eliminated. Such a recording made in a few versions can be effectively used as a replacement to be synchronised with the sequences of events in a given take.

Possible mistakes made during the “wild track” sound recording are related to the partial or complete change of the formerly developed parameters of the take, particularly:

- a change of the camera location,
- turning off the set illumination,
- giving a break to the staff not directly involved with the recording,
- postponing the recording of the “wild track” sound to another time than immediately after shooting the scene the recording is meant for.

As a consequence of such action, the actor is deprived of some crucial components of the scene environment he had previously got accustomed to while shooting the scene. The actor whose environment has been altered so significantly will simply act differently. He will play someone else and often not to the point. For the “wild track” recording to make sense, the interpretation of the text and the movement dynamics must match the accepted double. Therefore announcing: “Silence please! Wild track sound recording. Anybody who doesn’t need to be here, might leave the set now” is a gross irresponsibility on the part of any set manager. Firstly, a “wild track” recording is not being made “for the sound” but for the film – for the audiovisual work being made on the set. The “wild track” recording is not meant to function autonomously, with no connection to the form of the film. It is meant to become its integral part. Secondly, as a result of such an announcement, part of the crew feels exempted from keeping silent. Instead of deep concentration, a chaos begins. The atmosphere necessary for a proper recording implementation is irrevocably gone, and the loss it causes is hard to estimate. For the “wild track” recording is a priceless material: the actor plays in the scene environment, wearing the costume, and placed in a thoroughly parametric surrounding, determining the expression of interpretation. The recording is made in an acoustic environment facilitating its proper montage and effective “matching” with other sound recordings made in the same space. The obtained material is of a priceless value: it has all the components authenticating the content of the take.

Another crucial element of a proper implementation of a “wild track” recording is the active attitude of the director. The director is undoubtedly one of the most essential sources of information and inspiration for the actors in all their enterprises. Moreover, he has a deep knowledge of the causal, temporal, spatial and emotional relationships linking the components of the film work. He should be involved in the “wild track” recording to the same extent as he is in the shooting itself. And it is not about the director distrusting the sound engineer. It is about effectively producing a recording which could meet absolutely all the aesthetic and technological requirements. Therefore I am not particularly encouraged by a state-

ment: "Record it alone, you can make it". Grateful for the trust placed in me, I immediately underscore that it is exactly the case when I prefer to refuse the offer. Accepting such arrangements I would need to agree on depriving the film set (being the venue of the recording) of its most fundamental parameters, whose main core is the institution of the director. Of course some special circumstances might occur, constituting an exception from this rule. It is important, however, to understand the possible consequences.

Whereas it is unacceptable to postpone the "wild track" recording beyond the time immediately after shooting the scene in question. The need for making a "wild track" recording should be immediately reported to the director, the assistant director and the set manager, emphasising the willingness to record immediately after shooting the scene. Some inexperienced set managers offer unacceptable perspectives: recording during a lunch break, at the end of the day or even at the end of the whole shooting process. Restoring the complete set of parameters necessary for the making of a proper and effective "wild track" recording (compatible with the requirements of the work) is then absolutely impossible.

The above information might seem trivial or unimportant, or perhaps not even worth mentioning. On the contrary, all the described techniques concern the necessity to build the space for making a proper location recording. Without an appropriate care given to it and without making all the necessary effort, the effective production of a location recording is impossible.

The stage of sound recording on the film set might be called the conquering of the profane. Ignoring its continuous presence within the essence of what we eventually perceive as the sacred, is a form of intellectual myopia. Admiring a violinist's virtuosity, reaching with its interpretation to our most sensitive feelings will be incomplete and dishonest, if we do not notice that an important part of his artistry is also the struggle against gravity. Admiring the birds flying high above, we should not disregard the fact that their beauty is closely related to the unceasing effort to fight the Earth's attraction, and that without this enormous strain our true admiration would have not occurred.

On the language of film work

In *Język filmu* Jerzy Płażewski claims that:

The spoken language, the way of expression specific to an individual or community, has four main features determining its role in the interpersonal relationships. Firstly, the language serves as a means of communication and exchange of thoughts. Secondly, the language facilitates agreement of the interlocutors based on the principle of mutual intelligibility, and thus on the principle of equality [...] Thirdly, the language needs to be characterised by precision, unambiguousness of the concepts, permanent association between the sound and the meaning of words. Fourthly, the language needs to possess an adequate potential of expressing subtle and abstract concepts¹⁰.

At the same time, the author states that

[...] the spoken language meets none of these requirements in a perfect way [...] mainly because in the modern spoken language the word-symbol, the word-sign does not completely identify with the concept it designates. The word becomes a barrier between the object and the subject, a deforming filter of the thoughts¹¹.

Recalling the French theoretician, André Bazin's view on the nature of film language, Jerzy Płażewski states that:

Its semantic potential is so much richer and more diverse from the languages of traditional arts that it should be considered separately, as the only form of expression, which can genuinely compete with the spoken language... A drawing or a color can also have a technical and mundane application: a white triangle on a black board is not a work of art, but a mere mathematical symbol. Similarly, it applies to the drawings of an architect. And still, we cannot say that drawing or painting are languages. They are languages only additionally, because they have to designate, but for these arts a sign is only a kind of a semi-finished product, rarely separate and separable from the synthesis, which remains superior. On the contrary, film seems to be an art resembling literature, whose material – the language – is a primary and independent reality¹².

Why do I recall the above views? Because in fact: as much as “[...] an image does not speak, an image shows [...]”¹³, an image complemented with

¹⁰ J. Płażewski, *Język filmu*, Warszawa 1982, p. 17 [trans. M. Bregiel-Benedyk].

¹¹ Ibidem.

¹² Ibidem, p. 18.

¹³ Ibidem.

the sonic values begins to speak its own language. In other words: while an image informs, the sound directs the character of interpretation. Also Z. Lissa emphasises the essence and the autonomy of the auditive layer of a film, claiming that: "Film became an art of its own rules, its own aesthetics and its own way of functioning, especially in its auditory layer"¹⁴.

Summary

Shaping an individual language of a film work through creating its sound layer is a complex process. It begins at an early stage of analysing the screenplay, by:

- "extracting" the tissue of the sonic events out of the literary body,
- creating an "image" of the sound world,
- rebuilding the "imagined" sonic world into an audible one.

Such an "image" of the sonic world translates into the production principles. The following stages, from the documentation to the final editing, are a continuous confrontation of this primary "image" and the diverse factors determining its implementation.

The main compositional premise in constructing the sonic layer of a film plot is to base the whole work on the location sound – the sound recorded on the set. Therefore it is crucial to ensure a proper quality of the environment. This aim is best addressed through the decisions made already at the stage of documentation. The phase of shooting in its own way rectifies the initial "calculations", adding its own epilogue to the premises and postulates. It is important not to betray our initial premises. The unarguable value of the location sound provides a firm foundation for the construction of the auditive layer compatible with the image.

Sound engineering as a discipline does not always allow the implementation of creative tasks granting the sound material an individual character. Whenever sound engineering is only about performing routine, strictly technical actions, with no significant influence on the audiovisual work as a whole, but serving merely as a necessary supplement to the visual layer, it is indeed hard to speak of any creative work. Less demanding genres are in this case advertising, news, information programmes and reportage. The situation is different in the case of TV series or TV film,

¹⁴ Z. Lissa Z., *Estetyka muzyki filmowej*, Kraków 1964, p. 432 [trans. M. Bregiel-Benedyk].

and completely opposite in case of documentary film, in which the creative component of the auditive layer is an immanent part of the long developed language of the genre. However, it is indisputable that every feature film requires developing a mature, characteristic and auteur auditive layer. In this way, through an individual structure of auditive values, the film acquires its particular character and language. Giving up the support of the auditive layer is a great loss to many films, as it severely cripples and impoverishes them.

In fact, it is not about appropriating the film in its sonic aspect, nor about building another, autonomous work of art within it. The goal is to fully employ all the possible means (including the sonic ones) to create a coherent audiovisual whole. At the same time, every action contradicting this postulate should be immediately forsaken. It might involve, for example, a really painful decision to abandon some very attractive ideas (or even whole parts of soundtrack already produced) which however do not match the film as a whole, but instead spoil its language and bring chaos into the harmony of its many components. Within this established order the slightest hitch becomes a foreign body to the film work construction. The creation of a feature film soundtrack which is a layer composed of many diverse elements and its coherent coexistence with the image should achieve the anticipated goal: produce an aesthetic experience.

Therefore shaping of an individual language of a film work in its sonic aspect is influenced by:

- the faultless production of the production (location) records, with respect to their sound quality, selectivity, dynamics, spacial qualities, legibility and comprehensibility of the dialogues,
- the composition of a sound set design (the selection of sound effects, the atmospheres and their placement during particular scenes),
- developing a musical conception and implementing it (recording and post-production of music),
- establishing the relations between the particular elements of the sound layer with reference to the visual sphere.

The above list is for sure not exhaustive. It allows, however, to show how much of a film work language might be shed and irretrievably lost. And so, the quality of the production (location) sound material, both in the technical and the aesthetic sense, in a natural way influences the choice of many other components of the sound layer and determines the relations between them. The quality of the location sound particularly marks

a film work from the very first moments of its existence on the film set. In other words, the location sound with all its features determines the parameters of the remaining components of the sound layer of the film, their type and ratio. Many elements influencing the ultimate shape of the film's sound concept stem directly from the material created during the shoot. It is therefore completely unjustified to belittle the period of the location sound recording on the set and level all the undertaken efforts with a thoughtless registering of the sound material. On the contrary, all the technical means and decisions serve the fulfillment of a particular, imagined aesthetic value. Without exaggerating, we might claim that the quality of the foundation determines the shape, the form and other features of the superstructure which the film work acquires in the post-production process.

It is a stage of saturating the film work with the sound values resulting from transforming, adjusting and editing the set sound, to gradually enhance it later with the remaining components of the rich sonic world.

Translated by Marta Bręgiel-Benedyk

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Rafał Koschany*

Pure Pleasure and Film Thinking – Watching Instead of Interpreting

Abstract

In his reflection on watching instead of interpreting as a way of getting to know a film, the author wishes to focus on two issues: (i) one related to the sensuous experience of the cinema, the pleasure of the act of watching itself (in accordance with the formula “seeing as only seeing”), and supported by the long tradition of the aesthetic thought (Baumgarten, Dewey, Shusterman, Gadamer, Merleau-Ponty), and (ii) one connected with film thinking – inspired by the thesis of Rudolf Arnheim: “The visual perception is visual thinking”. Thus, the concept of watching instead of interpreting raises the status of the pre-intellectual and sensuous way of receiving a film work, which does not act against the interpretation (as Susan Sontag claimed), but constitutes its alternative or complementary version.

Key words

interpretation, perception, senses, film thinking

At the turn of the 1940s, Eric Rohmer, a director but also critic and film theorist, was calling in his texts for simplifying (making more neutral and natural) the film image and changing the approach of the viewer who “concentrates on decoding, not on watching: while learning how to interpret, he has forgotten how to watch”¹. In the mid-1960s, Susan Sontag, in her famous essay *Against Interpretation*, whose arguments, in some parts,

¹ E. Rohmer, *Cinéma, art d'espace*, as cited in: I. Siwiński, A. Helman, *Realizm*, in: *Słownik pojęć filmowych*, red. A. Helman, Wrocław 1998, p. 140 [trans. M. Mazur].

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concerned the film (as the film was an important argument in her reasoning), by standing out against the opinion that the art always and necessarily raises a topic, claimed: "In good films, there is always a directness that entirely frees us from the itch to interpret"².

We can say that her text symbolically opens a real methodological relaxation, also concerning the theory and practice of interpretation (even though this text was neither the first in the history of the aesthetic thought, which I will refer to later on, nor the only one in the structural turning point). However, the post-structuralistic theoretic exaggeration, though often practised under the pretext of anti-theory and anti-interpretation, has had an opposite result and opened a new era of dos and don'ts. From then on, two clashing trends may be observed: (i) the half-heartedly anti-methodical option, and (ii) the inclination to create other, often abstract, theories, usually not reflecting in the interpretational practice. By contrast, if we assume that the later cultural researches became a clear move away from the post-structuralism, we can only confirm that the dialectical see-saw concerning the theory of interpretation has been repeated. On the one hand, we have a return to the context, tangible facts and analysis, and on the other – there is a turn towards the experience as a form of participation being undervalued and not sufficiently described in the culture and intercourse with the art.

Focusing on the first option, anti-methodical and conforming with the ideas of Rohmer and Sontag, I will try once more to go through the way "against the interpretation", not ignoring the aspect of pure pleasure experienced by the body during a film projection, but concentrating mostly on the question whether we can really talk about any form of cognition resulting from this – in general – primitive experience. The main reservation concerns not the old texts I am referring to – as they still inspire many people – but the world of cinema they describe, which today either does not exist or is fading away. The cultural habits, which in the past included going to the cinema, have undergone a big change. Today, the old cinema and its theories (today's point of view makes it even clearer) already belong to a past, mythical era, to recall for example the discussions on the "twilight of cinemaphilia"³. On the other hand, it is this mythology – as well

² S. Sontag, *Against Interpretation*, in: eadem, *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*, New York 2001, p. 11.

³ Cf. S. Sontag, *The Decay of Cinema*, "The New York Times. On the Web", February 25, 1996 [<https://www.nytimes.com/books/00/03/12/specials/sontag-cinema.html>].

as the repeated attempts to maintain the myth of the special role of the cinema and the influence of the film – being for some people a sufficient “evidence” in the case and a sufficient reason to return once more to this world and ask about its possible continuations (as it appears, the cinema-philia is also subject to updates, for instance, in the form of collecting films or taking part in numerous film festivals).

Therefore, in the first section of this route it is good to incline towards experiencing the cinema or a film projection sensually, as an adventure or rather experience (in the meaning of *Erlebnis*), and towards going to the cinema (today maybe more watching films) as a way of life. All these activities also appear “instead of the interpretation”, though the expression “instead of” at the discourse level is not considered a lack or an *ersatz*, having a completely different dimension and character: it is sufficient. It seems that a broader category capable of describing the character of such an experience is the category of pleasure. The dictionaries and articles concerning the cinema will usually refer to the achievements inspired by the psychoanalysis, which include all the possible “links” occurring between the viewer and the screen, as well as their various determinants – technological, social, cultural, anthropological, and also directly psycho-analytical, since the influence of Freud’s or Lacan’s theories here was obvious. Wiesław Godzic, while organising these issues, noticed that the knowledge about the cinema taken as pleasure was usually “deprived of legitimisation”, giving way to “the serious pleasure” (intellectual or moral) being widely and confidently raised. In the end, “the pleasures favoured by the academic discourse are the pleasures of analysis and criticism”. By contrast “the unserious pleasure”, related to fun, was rarely mentioned in the articles⁴.

In actual fact, it is all not about the “serious” or “unserious” pleasure, though we know at least since the times of the Frankfurt School that the latter one may be an interesting topic for a research, also today – for instance in the still relevant aspect of the “economy of pleasure”. To put it short, it is about a pleasure not burdened with value judgement and, taken psychoanalytically, making up for any deficiencies, a pleasure resulting from the act of watching itself. In Godzic’s text, the proposal of Lucy Singer, inspired by Merleau-Ponty, would be the closest one: “the pleasure found in going to the cinema regardless of our opinion on the quality of

⁴ Cf. W. Godzic, *Widz filmowy w objęciach przyjemności*, “Kultura Współczesna” 1994, nr 2, pp. 84–85.

particular films. It happens because watching a film – any film – gives us an opportunity to participate in a special kind of a perceptual and locomotive situation”⁵. In the attempt to organise her disquisition, there is also a version being very close to the one I suggest: “the pleasure in respect to the passiveness, when «a vision is only a vision»”⁶. While referring to “the vision as only a vision”, I would just like to add a reservation that it does not exclude either the mentioned carnal dimension of the sensation, or the aesthetic dimension of the reception, though it is a kind of – according to Kant and Gadamer – “free beauty”⁷. The “relative passiveness” is also the pure pleasure of watching – a silent delight.

Following the mentioned manifesto of Sontag, we may say that it includes something even simpler (and having in mind the topic, such a colloquial comparison is appropriate). Simpler, and therefore – to put it literally – placed opposite “never consummated project of interpretation”⁸. Precisely “opposite” – referring to the distance or another position from which a subject speaks – and not “against”, as the author has presented it, maybe a bit too ostentatiously, involving almost revolutionary wording which breaks with the achievements of the aesthetic thought⁹. “The world, our world, is depleted, impoverished enough. Away with all duplicates of it, until we again experience more immediately what we have”¹⁰ – she wrote, highlighting the role of the sensual perception in receiving the art. And finally: “In place of a hermeneutics we need an erotics of art”¹¹. We may add, an eroticism taken figuratively, as it would be about the entire system of sensations and emotions that in the process of receiving a creation engage the body more than the mind, but also an eroticism taken straight.

⁵ L. Singer, *Eye/Mind/Screen: Toward a Phenomenology of Cinematic Scopophilia*, as cited in: W. Godzic, op. cit., p. 90 [trans. M. Mazur].

⁶ Ibidem.

⁷ Cf. H.-G. Gadamer, *Aktualność piękna. Sztuka jako gra, symbol i święto*, tłum. K. Krzemieniowa, Warszawa 1993, p. 27 [trans. M. Mazur].

⁸ S. Sontag, *Against Interpretation*, op. cit., p. 5 [highlighted R. Koschany].

⁹ By the way, for the sake of justice it should be mentioned that here the “opposite the interpretation” did not have the totalising meaning; Sontag was clearly against particular methodological traditions – the hermeneutics and psychoanalysis – which in their theories of interpretation supposed that the text has a meaning, and the task of its recipient is to decode it.

¹⁰ S. Sontag, *Against Interpretation*, op. cit., p. 7.

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 305.

In the latter respect, we can refer to the essay of Arnold Berleant¹², also from 1964. Starting from an observation concerning the absence or a “bad” presence of what is sensual and sensuous in the aesthetics, the author has made a significant semantic differentiation: the *sensuous* “refers to the pleasure connected especially with the sight and hearing”, and the *sensual* “refers to the experiences concentrating mostly on carnal pleasure, as opposed to the intellectual satisfaction, and alludes mostly to the less sophisticated sensual experiences, especially related to sex”¹³. Therefore, the “eroticism” of Sontag’s manifesto is not a spectacular challenge any more, becoming rather a rehabilitation of the participation of the body and senses in receiving the art: “the aesthetic experience, in its most complete and rich form, is a sensory experience of the whole person”¹⁴. In the aspect of receiving a film production, the best expression has been given by Roland Barthes who wrote about “the blackness” of the cinema as “the colour of a diffused eroticism”, and about the erotic “readiness” and “inactivity” of the body while waiting for a show¹⁵.

“To understand is to interpret”¹⁶ – Sontag remarked ironically, calling for a different form of contact with the art. However, if the erotic approach directed “against the interpretation” was just enough, was “instead”, the traditional separation of these two forms of contact with the art as excluding each other, the aesthetic experience and the interpretation, would actually be maintained. Meanwhile, there certainly arises an opportunity to aesthetically weaken the antinomy of these two attitudes. It arises or rather reminds of itself, since the topic of – to put it short – understanding without interpreting, was repeatedly raised in the tradition of the aesthetic thought. According to Baumgarten, as well as in the cognitive theories, the aesthetic experience is a kind of cognition (*cognitio sensitiva*)¹⁷. By contrast, in the pragmatic aesthetics – from Dewey to Shusterman – one of the key categories was the aesthetic meaning, in which the intersec-

¹² R. Barthes, *Wychodząc z kina*, tłum. Ł. Demby, in: *Interpretacja dzieła filmowego*, red. W. Godzic, Kraków 1993, pp. 157 and 158.

¹³ A. Berleant, *Sensualne i zmysłowe w estetyce*, in: idem, *Prze-myśleć estetykę. Niepokorne eseje o sztuce*, tłum. M. Korusiewicz, T. Markiewka, Kraków 2007, p. 98 [trans. M. Mazur].

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 109.

¹⁵ R. Barthes, *Wychodząc z kina*, op. cit., pp. 157 and 158.

¹⁶ S. Sontag, *Against Interpretation*, op. cit., p. 7.

¹⁷ See: W. Tatarkiewicz, *Przeżycie estetyczne: dzieje pojęcia*, in: idem, *Dzieje szczęśliu pojęć*, Warszawa 2005, p. 388.

tion of the non-cognitive experience with the cognitivity of the meaning becomes possible. The proposal of Gadamer¹⁸ has differently blurred the boundary between the directness of the experience and the cognition, and yet differently it has been erased by the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty and Dufrenne¹⁹. All these proposals – by including and raising the status of the bodily directness and the senses²⁰ – have marked the cognitive aspects of similar forms of the art reception.

Earlier in this discourse, I used the expression “the body more than the mind”. This time, during the next section of the route “against the interpretation”, it should be shown that the reception process also includes the stage “from the body to the mind”, and constitutes a sufficient version of the cognition or – possibly but not necessarily – is a part of the introduction to this process. Naturally, I will concentrate only on the visual perception. The eye, being the sense of sight, is referred to as an organ of a direct view and contemplation, so also cognition. As Krystyna Wilkoszewska noted, by reconstructing the history of the Latin term “contemplation” (connected mostly with the sight, looking, watching, staring), the metaphor of the eye also hides a reflection, deep thought, meditation and theory (the latter one taken from the Greek tradition)²¹. Hannah Arendt even claimed that in the context of cognition, the majority of the European metaphorical expressions is marked visually. This is because the language – being the only channel of thinking, though not as excellent as the sight for watching – needed a tool of mediation. Especially in the Greek philosophy²², the truth is “visible” but non-expressible, and therefore the senses (mostly the sight) play an important role in the cognition process,

¹⁸ Cf. H.-G. Gadamer, op. cit.; also: G. Vattimo, *Od utopii do heterotopii*, in: idem, *Spółczesność przejrzyście*, tłum. M. Kamińska, Wrocław 2006, p. 76.

¹⁹ See: P. Schollenberger, *Doświadczenie estetyczne a fenomenologiczny problem bezpośredniości*, in: *Wizje i re-wizje. Wielka księga estetyki w Polsce*, red. K. Wilkoszewska, Kraków 2007, p. 760 et seq.

²⁰ A report from this stage of changes is provided by K. Wilkoszewska, *Doświadczenie estetyczne – strategie pragmatyzacji i zaangażowania*, in: *Nowoczesność jako doświadczenie. Dyscypliny – paradygmaty – dyskursy*, red. A. Zeidler-Janiszewska, R. Nycz, Warszawa 2008.

²¹ Cf. K. Wilkoszewska, *Od kontemplacji do interakcji*, in: *Odłamki rozbitych luster. Rozprawy z filozofii kultury, sztuki i estetyki ofiarowane Profesor Alicji Kuczyńskiej*, red. I. Lorenc, Warszawa 2005.

²² Cf. H. Arendt, *Filozofia i metafora*, tłum. H. Buczyńska-Garewicz, “Teksty” 1979, nr 5, p. 183 (in the Jewish tradition it will be “invisible”, and thus here the history of relations will take a different course).

even though it is extremely difficult to prove this importance using the language. Thus, the title “film thinking” becomes a direct reference to the famous book of Rudolf Arnheim published in 1969, in which the author – willing to restore the role of senses to the field of cognition – has clearly stated: “The visual perception is visual thinking”²³. The “film thinking” is a pure pleasure of perceiving screen images, as well as a silent act of cognition.

The change of viewpoint proposed here (not the interpretation of a creation, but its understanding, even if being intuitive, pre-intellectual, emotional, somatic) also supposes a particular notion of this creation. Just the fact that it is about a film production – more or less classical, more or less revolutionary in undermining and denying its own constructive elements, though always vivid in a way – makes it much easier to take this special approach. In a typical, most usual situation – for instance with no sight dysfunctions – the image will always act first. *Last Year in Marienbad*, before we try to untangle the story’s time loops, will hypnotise us with a slow monologue and camera move, and then subsequent rhythmic versions of narration and iconographic positions of the characters against the background of the French labyrinth garden and palace. There is a reason why I give an example of the film being widely considered challenging and exposed to different, often contradictory interpretations. As a matter of fact, we could review the history of cinema from its beginning – and the history of the film theory from its beginning – as well as the theories of receiving and/or interpreting a film production, even if it was limited to anecdotes concerning the viewers’ reaction to a train running onto them or to “fragmented” (limited by the screen frame) human bodies, in order to learn that the sensuous experience of the cinema was the common form of reception.

The discourses on the status of interpretation often raise the issue of the relations between the theory of interpretation and the interpretational practice, i.e. particular results of applying these theories, as their final verifiers²⁴. Nevertheless, in an attempt to formulate the theory of the process which may occur before the interpretation, especially in the context of such a usual perceptual meeting as the contact with a film, the examina-

²³ R. Arnheim, *Myślenie wzrokowe*, tłum. M. Chojnacki, Gdańsk 2011, p. 23 [trans. M. Mazur].

²⁴ Cf. R. Nycz, *Teoria interpretacji: problem pluralizmu*, in: idem, *Tekstowy świat. Poststrukturalizm a wiedza o literaturze*, Kraków 2000, pp. 125–126.

tion of such a relation seems more difficult and at the same time easier. On the one hand it is easier, since it does not require documented “records” of these interpretations, including the regular question about the sense of a creation and feeble attempts to answer it. Here, each act of reception is in the area of interest, with the assumption (hard to say it is groundless) that this act in some way influences the audience and leads to some sort of cognition, even if it is partial and fragmentary. In this case, the practice of interpretation, though difficult to catch, occurs continuously, even if its participants are not aware of the results, and even if the theorists disregard it, cannot diagnose it or are satisfied with just theoretic, generalising observations. On the other hand, the problem seems much more difficult. We must admit that the value of the said cognitive acts is just a guess, and moreover it is often placed in the context of the mentioned mythical era of the cinema. While the theory of interpretation should be supported by the interpretational practice, it is difficult to base a similar relation on an “empty” (i.e. non-verbalised) result of the cognitive process.

One of the interesting and inspiring proposals, being a straightforward example of watching instead of interpreting, is *The Third Meaning* (*Le troisième sens*) by Roland Barthes. By basing his thought on the semiotic theory of the sign, the author claimed that apart from the communicative (informative) dimension and the level of (symbolic) sign meaning, there is still a third level (*significance*) which can be described as “significance” or “the power of meaning”. In the analysis of particular scenes of Einstein’s films, Barthes presented the existence of this “third meaning” – apparently obvious (due to the obvious possibility to be seen), but at the same time intangible or impossible to be named and voiced. It is a kind of extra element, “at once persistent and fleeting, smooth and elusive”²⁵. In the theory of the sign we shall say: *signifiant* with no particular *signifié*. From the perspective of the viewer, the third meaning will be “that thing” which appears “here and there”, makes him watch and does not allow to answer the question: why am I watching? Despite the anti-intellectual status of this meaning, we must say it brings some form of cognition. Yet everything occurs in front, beyond or above the language – it is pure vividness. As Barthes declares: “We can do without speaking and still understand each other”²⁶.

²⁵ R. Barthes, *The Third Meaning. Research notes on some Eisenstein stills*, in: idem, *Image – Music – Text*, selected and trans. S. Heath, London 1977, p. 54.

²⁶ Ibidem, p. 40.

Continuing this thought, we should refer to the statement of Richard Shusterman, as it includes a polemic with Sontag's claims. Just like Barthes, this researcher talked about the possibility of creating a theory of "non-interpreted acts of comprehension"²⁷, and even though he also made a stand against the omnipresent interpretation and its "pathological excess" and "imperial expansion"²⁸, he put a stress on different elements. He disagreed with Sontag on the formal analysis as a possible alternative for interpretation, as he claimed that the formal analysis is a variant of interpretation. He did not raise the topic of "eroticism" instead of interpretation, or the phenomenological intuition (he perceived Sontag's "transparency" as "an experience of light of a thing itself"²⁹), but claimed that the art "not being subject to interpretation" "may be experienced reasonably", and this is a significant degree of comprehension at the pre-notional and pre-linguistic level³⁰. Considering the film, it is inspiring that Shusterman has taken the following statement from Wittgenstein: "I do not interpret, as in the current image I feel like at home". In his comment, the author of *Pragmatist Aesthetics* states: "[...] the present focus on the interpretation in a large part results from the fact that we actually do not feel comfortable in the frequently clashing worlds of our comprehension; that our times are times of interpretation, since they are times of alienation and disintegration"³¹. Thus, the "watching without interpreting" in the cinema is also a response to this disintegration (I do not interpret as I feel like at home), and at the same time it still allows us to believe in the myth cultivated by the psychoanalytical and cinema-oriented theories of the film (I do not interpret, as a film projection places me "inside the principle of pleasure"³²).

The act of watching a film (including the eroticism of Sontag with everything that is sensual and sensuous, and the directness of an aesthetic experience) will not convert into interpretation, nor will it ever replace it; it even does not pretend to do so. Every time it will remain a single

²⁷ R. Shusterman, *Interpretacja a rozumienie*, tłum. A. Orzechowski, in: idem, *Estetyka pragmatyczna. Żywe piękno i refleksja nad sztuką*, Wrocław 1998, p. 145 [trans. M. Mazur].

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 144.

²⁹ Ibidem, p. 147.

³⁰ Cf. K. Wilkoszewska, *Doświadczenie estetyczne...*, op. cit., p. 222 [trans. M. Mazur].

³¹ R. Shusterman, op. cit., p. 166 [trans. M. Mazur].

³² Cf. K. Banaszekiewicz, *Wewnątrz zasady przyjemności*, in: *Film w kulturze. Wokół kategorii instytucji kinematograficznej*, red. I. Opacki, Katowice 1991 [trans. M. Mazur].

and non-verbalised way of participation in the process of receiving a creation. Maybe this is the phenomenon of the experience. Sometimes we receive access to such verbalisations, though they do not record the attempts to understand a creation, but usually just the attempts to understand this particular position of the viewer towards the creation. The cognition which occurs in the process of "watching instead of interpreting" does not always have to refer to the work itself – it may be connected with a much more complex process of cognition: placing ourselves, and finally also the work, in a particular situation. Therefore, in this process, the act of watching is neither a loss (as the interpretation is not always an objective, and it does not have to be an absolute value that we are accustomed to by the humane theories of participation in the culture), nor a better version of cognition. Sometimes treated as a necessary introduction to the interpretation, sometimes as an absolutized form of getting to know a creation: "Our challenge is to cut ourselves off from the content, so we can see the creation"³³.

Translated by Marcin Mazur

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Piotr Kucia*

About the Project “Beethoven – Metamorphosis”

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to describe the theoretical assumptions and the effects of the realisation of the project entitled “Beethoven – metamorphosis”. The project was the practical part of the PhD program and seems to be a good example of an author’s creation of reality.

Key words

photography, art, metamorphosis, L. van Beethoven

Film is an art of *thinking images*. The stress, however, will always be laid on the category of thinking first. For it is thinking which is essentially our activity here, always on the critical run, in a dialogue, continuously debating. While acquiring knowledge, thinking still retains the courage to question the reliability of its results, because it does not apply easy solutions and simplifications, nor does it yield to the dangerous confidence in the obviousness of formulated truths¹.

– this is what Professor Jerzy Łukaszewicz, a highly regarded director, screenwriter and cameraman wrote in his article on cinema.

And what about photography? Well, the images of events, people and landscapes captured and processed by the artist’s shutter also cease to simply register reality. They become art. And this is also an art form –

¹ J. Łukaszewicz, *Krytyka myślenia artystycznego*, “Estetyka i Krytyka” nr 28 (1/2013), p. 262 [trans. M. Bregiel-Benedyk].

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according to professor Łukaszewicz – revealing the hidden order of the world, and not merely “reflecting the empirical being, [...] mirroring the surrounding reality”².

My project titled “Beethoven – metamorphosis” seems to be a good example of such an auteur creation of reality.

Beethoven pretty as a picture

I shall begin with a short introduction to the guidelines of the project. This will facilitate the readers to follow the detailed analysis of the artistic creation.

“Beethoven – metamorphosis” project was the practical part of my Ph.D. program carried out in the Faculty of Radio and Television of the University of Silesia. However, it went beyond just a formal demonstration of photographic skills or pure esthetics. The series of images exhibited during the opening of the Ludwig van Beethoven Easter Festival in March 2012 was something more: an attempt to say a few words about Beethoven through the medium of photography. It was an innovative attempt; thanks to the achievements of the most recent techniques I was trying to create an image – a portrait of the composer – based on the narrative esthetics of the genre painting of the 18th century and referring to the works of such artists as William Hogarth, Boucheron or Johann Zoffany.

An anonymous model chosen in a casting and not associated with any photographic or film production became Ludwig van Beethoven. The project aims at the maximum authenticity, hence the actor – physically resembling Beethoven, wearing clothes from the period and with makeup applied to his face – is placed in the background of an accurately restored decoration from the turn of the 19th century.

His metamorphosis was to be completed in eight images being a joint result of makeup, photographic techniques and painterly light. I wanted them to tell a tale of creating a lookalike of the hero while at the same time building an illusion of participation. In this way “there and then” became “here and now”.

Photography does not tolerate falsity. Every element of the photographic image aims at reflecting reality. And this was also the very essence

² Ibidem, p. 264.

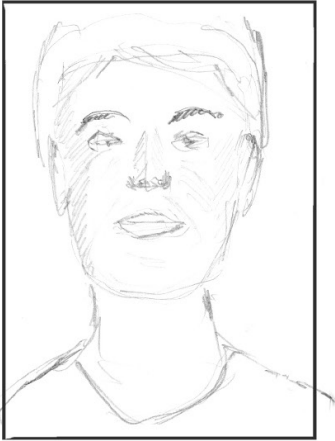
of the project: to capture the genius composer in the final photograph as if it were a frame of him posing to a portrait.

Less importantly, but still interestingly, “Beethoven – metamorphosis” highlighted the similarities between the art of film production and photography. All the crucial preparatory elements – the casting, the test makeup, researching the costume – became part of the artistic resources familiar to every practitioner and theoretician of cinema.

Eminent specialists were engaged in this project. Jola Słoma and Mirek Trymbulak, well known fashion designers possessing huge knowledge and experience in designing historical outfits, took care of the costumes. Set design was produced by Marek Piotrowski, who has worked with me for many years, and a makeup artist Pola Gruzlińska who specialises in historical productions (she worked, among others, on Jerzy Hoffman’s “1920 Bitwa Warszawska”) was responsible for the makeup.

Eight steps to illusion

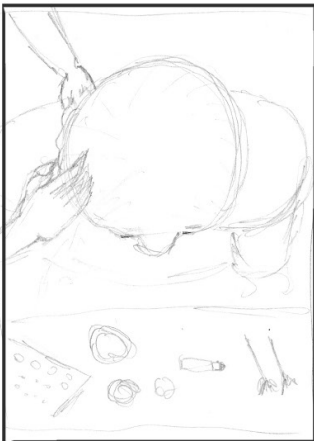
An attempt to create a hyper realistic illusion which could at the same time narrate the creative process and the power of photographic creation required preparation of a detailed screenplay of the shoot.



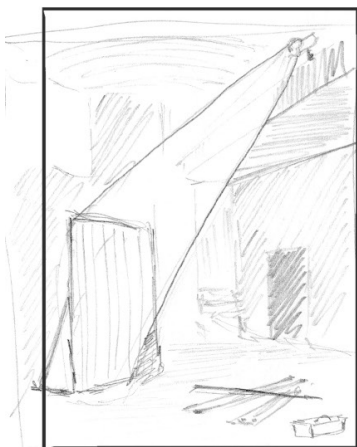
The first photograph is a portrait of the subject in a white T-shirt, a non-emotional image resembling Richard Avedon's white background photographs.



The second photograph depicts our space – the site of the metamorphosis to happen. The actor is sitting in the foreground, his back to the camera.



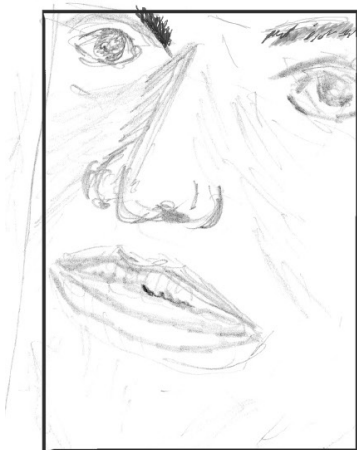
The third photograph captures the beginning of the metamorphosis. The image shows the actor from above. He is wearing a wig and a mask on his face.



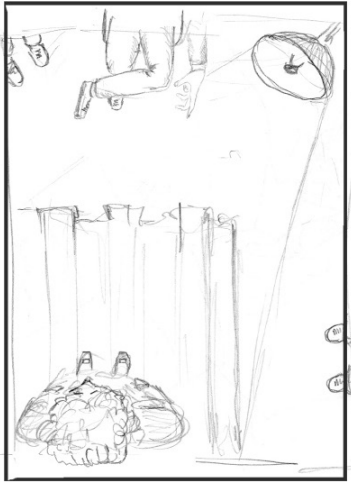
The fourth image: the first part of the decoration appears. Light changes. From this moment the process of creating the photographic reality starts to run.



In the fifth photograph the model is placed in the background of the decoration, like a marionette. His silhouette is visible. He is already dressed in a historical costume, but only some of its elements can be seen.



The sixth photograph brings an extreme close-up of the face. The actor is no longer the person from the first frame: he begins to resemble Beethoven.



The seventh image is again a view from above. The actor is wearing a wig and a costume and the set decoration is complete. The feet of the persons giving instructions to the actor are visible in the frame. The colour of the image and its light resemble those of William Hogarth's paintings.



The eighth photograph (the finale of the metamorphosis): we are introduced to the most likely countenance of Ludwig van Beethoven.

(DRAWINGS BY PIOTR KUCIA)

Each photograph is now going to be enlarged to a 100 x 140 cm format. As a result the obtained picture will acquire a perfect legibility of detail; the images will be of such high resolution that they will seem three-dimensional.

A work results from thinking

It is time to introduce the process – both creative and technological – which resulted in the artistic work as a whole.

All photographs tell us: *memento mori*. As Susan Sontag wrote: by taking a picture we encounter the other person's death, fragility, fleetingness³.

For Roland Barthes photography produces death to preserve life⁴; it speaks of death in the future tense. Looking at an image of a person we never know if they are still alive. Before the era of photography the only testimony of someone's death was a monument, the only such close to reality image of a person.

But can photography raise someone from the dead? Can an image of a person be created using the newest photographic techniques? “Beethoven – metamorphosis” was also an attempt at tackling the idea of a photographic image of a person. A unique photographic session of the most likely countenance of the composer. The certainty of photography lies in – as Barthes wrote – establishing that this is how things really were⁵. My project assumed an inversion of that certainty. Firstly: something exists in my consciousness. Secondly: it will become and is becoming.

The idea of a photograph is born beyond the rational thinking of an artisan-artist. It appears unexpectedly. His experience and the effort of his intellect allow him to get acquainted with the subject. Images are created in his mind first. His goal is to create photographic works that would be identical with the ideas of the mind.

Leonardo da Vinci wrote that a painter who does not doubt will never achieve much⁶. It is true. The longer one photographs the fewer images one takes. Before taking up any production many questions need to be answered. Is the topic good enough? What choice of lighting would be most suitable for this topic? What way of framing would serve this story best?

An experienced photographer will reason instantly and formulate a clear opinion. But will the idea be interesting and surprising enough to arouse the audience's interest?

³ S. Sontag, *O fotografii*, tłum. S. Magala, Kraków 2009, p. 23 [trans. M. Bregiel-Benedyk].

⁴ R. Barthes, *Światło obrazu. Uwagi o fotografii*, tłum. J. Trznadel, Warszawa 2008, p. 189.

⁵ Ibidem, p. 189.

⁶ M. Rzepińska, *Leonardo da Vinci Traktat o malarstwie*, Gdańsk 2008, p. 152.

Here we touch on the essence of photography. Learning about the world through images requires one to consider a phenomenon which Husserl termed a *natural standpoint*. It is a result of human experience and it assumes that an individual consciousness of the perceiving subject exists and is able to reach the particular phenomena of the surrounding world. As an idea fertilises the mind of an artist, the process of depiction in his head begins. Husserl calls it the *sphere of ownness*, i.e. creating the subject through thinking.

In the following analysis I will be using the terms coined by Professor Prot Jarnuszkiewicz who divided the process of creating a photographic image into three phases: previsualisation, exhibition and publication⁷.

For me, previsualisation is the moment of the mind analysing the idea. It is the ovule of a new idea. At the beginning its appearance is quite blurry, but the trend to be followed has been set. The first concept of a photograph is ready.

While looking at images, Roland Barthes searches for two aspects: the *studium* and the *punctum*⁸. Both words come from Latin because Barthes was not able to find any suitable equivalents for them in French. The *studium* means human interest, curiosity, commitment to something, a certain kind of involvement. The *punctum* means stinging, a moment of "something" running out of the image and hitting the spectator like an arrow. The term also refers to the word "dot". Dots in the images can indicate sensitive points strongly affecting our imagination.

Searching for *studium* and *punctum* in the concept of my project, I begin to analyse its goal and possibilities. The world of contemporary art is not much different from the past one. Both the painters and the composers have always struggled with the matters of everyday existence. Who will support the artist? Who will pay for the work created? When first invented, photography was available to the most affluent only. For Fox Talbot, John Herschel or Thomas Wedgewood, who were the English *amateurs scientists*, registering images was a noble passion to which they could devote themselves thanks to their financial means.

It has been 170 years since a photographic project was first undertaken and Fox Talbot patented his method called calotype, but the financial concerns are still the same. Contemporary digital photography em-

⁷ P. Jarnuszkiewicz, *Trwanie czasu, trwanie przestrzeni a prawda w fotografii*, Ph.D. dissertation, 2006, p. 6.

⁸ R. Barthes, op. cit., p. 50.

employs technologies I call *hi-res instant*, which allow obtaining the highest quality images at the very moment of pressing the shutter button, and yet it still generates some costs. In creative photography I construct an illusion of reality. I expect myself and the image to be fully involved and aim at making every single detail work towards its goal. What it means is that finances are the main of not only limits to my ideas. And when I analyse the possibilities and the goals I have to take money into account disregarding at the same time the financial aspect if I want to be able to focus on finding the *punctum*. Without *studium* and *punctum* the idea simply fails.

Everybody knows him, but is he real?

Why Beethoven? The presented project is a perfect example of combining an artistic idea with an analysis of its goals and potential. The potential means finding a patron and a merchant; the goal is to prepare an exhibition of the highest possible exhibitional level.

I thought of Ludwig van Beethoven for the first time some years ago, when I reflected on his image while listening to music during the Beethoven Festival. The great composer had given inspiration for feature films twice already. His unusual character fascinated me to the extent that I decided to get acquainted with him myself.

Beethoven's image is well known to general public. His mouth tight, his hair blowing, his fixing glance. It is an image that remains under the eyelids. But actually, it is an illusion of the mind, an attempt on imagining the impossible. None of the living ever saw him. He is just a copy of an image in our mind. A genius known from drawings, etchings and paintings has always been nothing more than a vision of the artist, not a mirror reflection of the person. And thus the idea. I will photograph Beethoven.

The only almost perfect image of the composer is a plaster mask made by Franz Klein in 1812. In the same year, the piano workshop of Andreas Streicher opened a House of St. Florian housing among others an exhibition of musical instruments and a concert hall decorated with the busts of famous musicians. Klein got a commission from Streicher to create Beethoven's bust. He was a sculptor, famous for making plaster jackets for scientific purposes for Franz Joseph Gall, the father of phrenology whose followers believed in the authentic character of an individual imprinted in the plaster casts.

Thanks to this scientific approach I can now look at the real image of Beethoven as in 1812, even though Klein's mask is not perfect. Known for his difficult character, Beethoven could not stand to wear the wet plaster mask for too long. While the cast was being made he only had two little pipes in his nostrils to breathe through; his eyes, nose and hair was all covered in plaster. Because of his claustrophobia and lack of patience the mask could not be successfully finished despite two attempts to do it. As Benedetta Saglietti writes in her work *Beethoven, Portraits and Images: An Iconographical Study*⁹, Klein finally completed the mask joining the pieces of two separate casts. The main features of the portrait are: a square head, a distinct, broad but not very high forehead, a flattened nose, a substantial vertical groove below the nose, and wide nostrils.

And so, the mask and the bust based on it will provide crucial information on the appearance of the composer. Now, before our eyes, a contemporary man looking like Beethoven will become Beethoven himself.

The main purpose of the project "Beethoven – metamorphosis" is – using the terms of phenomenology – to reverse the intellectual process. According to Edmund Husserl phenomenology attempts to recognise a phenomenon, which is a thing-in-itself, deprived of its materiality¹⁰. However, photography refers to the materiality of the depicted object. My purpose is thus not to search for a phenomenon in the existing works, but to turn the phenomenon that appeared in my imagination (here the image of the "real" Beethoven under my eyelids) into a real object, and in this way to create the most faithful portrait of Beethoven with the use of a photographic medium.

There is also an intermediary purpose to it: I want to support and confirm the hypothesis formulated by Susan Sontag¹¹ that a photograph is not only an image, an interpretation of reality, but also a trace, something reflecting directly from the world, like a footprint or a death mask.

Thus, as it seems, previsualisation with its blurry images turning into ideas to be yet implemented borders on possibility. For an idea to become real it needs to be "sold" first. My idea caught interest of the Association of Ludwig van Beethoven¹². The project was accepted as the only exhi-

⁹ B. Saglietti, *Beethoven, ritratti e immagini. Uno studio sull'iconografia*, Torino 2010, p. 51.

¹⁰ E. Husserl, *Idea fenomenologii*, tłum. J. Sidorek, Warszawa 2008.

¹¹ S. Sontag, op. cit., p. 162.

¹² [Online] <http://www.beethoven.org.pl/> [access: 14.05.2014].

bition accompanying the 16th Beethoven Easter Festival in Warsaw. This *carte blanche* is, on the one hand a great privilege and an opportunity for a complete, unimpeded realization of my ideas, on the other hand, however, it is a great responsibility. Responsibility to myself (is the project mature enough to be materialised?), but above all it is responsibility to the huge audience (what if my Beethoven turns out to be ridiculous? Can I trust my creative intuition to that extent?). The first phase of the project consisting of possibilities and goals is now complete. Now it is time to make my Beethoven as real as the works of Franz Klein.

Carte blanche

The first step is to find the right model. If his face is not compatible with Klein's plaster mask, the entire project might be jeopardised. I did not plan to create my Beethoven using computer animation or alter the model's face with the silicone masks. My project assumed finding a person who could become a perfect model with the help of suitable lighting, a costume and so called soft make-up – changing the skin tone, applying chiaroscuro, aging the face.

At the same time, I preferred an unknown person, so that the transmission would remain undisturbed. I tried to avoid resemblance to the film images, in which Beethoven was played by Gary Oldman and Ed Harris. Those characteristic actors were unconvincing to me. Even under the cover of make-up they remained themselves. My project assumed creating the real Beethoven, that would resemble the mask produced by Klein.

After the casting it turned out that someone I knew, a costume studies expert, was actually perfect for the role of Beethoven. His physical traits perfectly matched Benedetta Saglietti's descriptions.

I met the future Beethoven in October 2011 for the first time. He had never worked as a model before. I asked him to grow his hair and beard for three months. I believed that it would help to reconstruct Beethoven's hairstyle and facial hair for the shoot.

The next step was preparation of the equipment and working out the best formal way to carry out my project. Many issues needed to be decided: the number of images, the final format, the frame (vertical or horizontal), the lighting of the ground (with continuous light or flash light), the choice of a camera (analogue or digital), the post production or lack of it, enlarging the images (the traditional way on photographic paper or

on the photorealistic prints). All the answers had to be known long before starting the shoot, since creating conscious and well thought-out images should be the main goal of the author. It was a world that was created in my mind, so I am responsible for every detail of the images. Every *punctum* in every picture is responsible for something. I have to be prepared to defend every inch of these images. On the other hand, time was on my side and I could use it unlike many photographers specialising in reportage or documentary photography and working within certain limits only.

How to create a perfect illusion

The crucial issue for me was the format. I knew in what space the images would be exhibited. They could not be too small, or they would have disappeared in the hall of the Warsaw Philharmonics. At the same time, the maximum possible format was limited by the technological range of the camera. The digital back I ultimately chose because of its resolution (65 mln pixels, highest in the market) was Phase One P65+ and it limited the height to 140 cm.

The choice of a digital back was dictated by the need to keep the images as realistic as possible. I wanted to obtain enlargement of a maximum resolution with no quality loss; the problem of prints in many exhibitions is that a bend of the structure occurs, such as visible pixels or straight brick-like lines. I needed high enough resolution for the enlarged picture to avoid any digital deformation even when watched at a distance of a few centimeters. The picture itself was to give an impression of three-dimensionality, to be achieved thanks to its resolution and depth of colour. Why did I choose the digital technology rather than the analogue? The reason was trivial: I wanted to have full control over the final result and I was unable to find a Polish laboratory which would work on the 4 x 5 inches negatives and be in possession of active enlargers for large-format enlargements. Berlin and Paris were out of the question for the reasons of time and financial limitations. And even if they had not been, I would have needed to take test pictures and check the entire technological line to see if the final images reflected those I imagined.

A digital back ensures a comfortable workflow and allows an immediate analysis of a "*hi-res instant*" image through a view of the ready made full-resolution image. It is almost like working with a Polaroid, only the results are more impressive, since the digital image reproduces a huge

amount of detail. An image comes alive as soon as it is transferred on a computer. But there is one significant disadvantage of the digital back as comparing to the colour negative film. The tonal capacity of the digital image is significantly lower than that of the colour negative film. The problem concerns mainly the details of highlight. In the case of a digital image at a particular point (depending on the camera) the details of white lose their clarity already at +4 EV¹³. The effect of so called burn-out white can be noticed in the sharp line dividing the printed image from the blank photographic paper. With the right development and enlarging or scanning the image with a drum scanner, a negative film transfers approx. 6–7 EV towards the white from a properly exposed gray card of 18%. There is no sharp division between the last details of white and the image of a clear transparent negative film. The border is the wiped out structure of the negative film grain. The image from the negative film has more quality tonal transitions in white, and significantly more plastic than mechanical structure. However, these limitations of a digital back are only a minor challenge for a photographer. The knowledge and experience acquired throughout the years allow a successful implementation of any photographic idea. The choice of a digital workflow becomes nothing more than a calculation which of the “black boxes” will be the most suitable for the given project.

It may be worthwhile to provide some technical data closely related to the creative process and the reception of the work – no doubt the quality of a photograph influences the possibility of its exposition in any space, as well as its reception. The resolution of the P65+ back is 8984 times 6732 pixels, or 57 x 76 cm with the resolution of 300 dpi¹⁴. The works were printed on an Epson 9900 of 360 dpi resolution. Printing a photograph in the original size of 57 x 76 cm and 300 dpi I would have obtained an image of an incredible sharpness of detail, therefore I decided to

¹³ Altering the exposition of an image by 1 EV means extending or shortening the exposure time twice or changing the value of the aperture by one degree, e.g. +4EV is 4 aperture.

¹⁴ Dpi (*dots per inch*) is a number of spots falling to one inch in a high resolution standard. A resolution of 300 dpi means that in any square inch of an image there are 90 000 pixels (300 points per inch vertically and 300 horizontally). Where does the 300 dpi value come from? While watching a photographic print in over 350 dpi from a distance of approx. 25 cm, a human eye would not be able to see any difference in the quality. Therefore it is accepted to print poligraphic materials in 300 dpi. In case of larger prints watched from larger distance even 100 dpi should suffice.

prepare it in 180 dpi¹⁵. Using a photo processing software I could obtain approx. 160 dpi for a size of 110 x 140 cm. After numerous calculations in which obtaining the highest quality prints with no loss to their expositional legibility in the Philharmonics hall was a priority, this very format was confirmed. I followed the recommendations of Jean-Marc Lalier, a photographer-conceptualist, who creates fiction in photography and documents his creative process. According to him, the audience watching large format prints experience “photographic reality”. They no longer control the photograph, but it is the photograph which imposes itself upon them including them in its reality.

The results of the aforesaid tests allowed me to increase the eventual resolution to 180 dpi with no quality loss. The prints could be watched from a distance of 25 cm without detecting any signs of quality and resolution interventions.

The final result was perfect – the works could be watched both from very close and further away, when looked at closely, important details of the project could be spotted, and when watched from a distance, the work could be read and perceived at a different, more emotional level.

A picture from two centuries ago

I allow myself to write extensively on the technical aspects of this project and the respective stages of the work because the whole creative process – its intellectual and artistic aspect – was as important as the final work itself. That is one reason. Another one is obvious: the more perfect the workshop, the better the image and its impact on the audience. The pursuit of excellence leads to the absolutisation of knowledge. An outstanding photographer and musician Ansel Adams said that “photography does not happen by chance. It is a concept. Therefore for a photographer the creative process means first of all putting things in order, calculating and projecting”¹⁶.

Such an approach applies directly to my project. As I already said “Beethoven – metamorphosis” was not merely about a model becoming the

¹⁵ To obtain a perfect image on any large format device, it is best to use the multiples of the basic resolution, e.g. for Epson 9900 it is 360 dpi, therefore dividing it by 2, we receive 180 dpi. Such resolution prevents the occurrence of any mistakes resulting from the miscalculations of the given resolution in respect of the resolution of the device.

¹⁶ S. Sontag, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

composer. Equally important was to build the relation between fiction and reality in a way that the staging endeavours are visible to the audience. In this way the author remains radically honest with his audience. Interestingly, already after the first presentation of the complete work, I realised that the project had yet another dimension. I noticed that the clear and limpid image of fiction and reality as well as the process of transition from one to the other got distorted when only some of the photographs were seen. Deprived of the context, they acquired a different, individual character. It became clear to me during a break in between concerts, when the audience had some time to get acquainted with the project. If someone entered the foyer and went straight to the main hall, the first three photographs could be easily missed and if that was the case, whoever came in would immediately look at and see a painting of Beethoven. Indeed, from a distance the framed images resembled paintings. Many visitors admitted later that they could not resist the feeling of looking at painted portraits from the period.

This was a typical way of decoding a message through linking it to the environment and the situation. “Here and now” overlapped with my project. The venue – in this case the Philharmonics – and the way of exhibiting works there, became the rightful elements of the “Beethoven – metamorphosis” project.

For the audience of a classical music abode prepared to encounter a work of art equally classical in the form and origin, the message was clear: it is a painted portrait of the composer. Only on a second glance were they able to discover the entire message.

Behind the scenes

However, there is much more to prove that the guidelines of the metamorphosis (including playing with the audience) have been fulfilled. The main goal – to show how fiction becomes reality – was achieved beyond expectations. The contemporary space began to evolve with the model.

The audience who looked at all the eight photographs could actually experience the photographic illusion. Under their eyes I was altering the character of the images through light. A good example was provided by the third image, in which I employed the technique called *sfumato*. It comes from oil painting and consists in gentle, misty, fume-like (“fumo” means the fume) passages from dark to bright parts. It was not easy since

the digital back registers a rather contrasting image. I succeeded with the help of a large softbox (a modifier of the studio light) with a Rosco filter of the Cosmetic series. The portrait gained three-dimensionality, the skin tone of the model changed with respect to the first image, and the colours were closer to what I eventually wanted to obtain.

Equally important for the reception of the project is image No. 7. It allows the spectator to take a short break before moving to the next level of the game. Engaged in the world of perfect illusion and gripped by the impression of looking at the paintings, spectators are surprised by the picture “from behind the picture”, namely a *backstage* image (revealing the backstage of a photographic session, a film or a performance, such a photograph presents the entire technical equipment, the lamps, the cameras, the crew). Once again, this image reminds the spectator that there is a game being played here, while at the same time suggesting what photographic means are used to obtain the final results.

The last photograph depicts Beethoven standing by his instrument, posing as if he was in a hurry. I deliberately chose this pose, since this is what Beethoven really was like. Had photography been invented by that time, he would have for sure preferred to be photographed than cast in plaster, and the picture would have caught his impetuous character. The same idea accompanied picture No. 5. It shows Beethoven composing, the score of the *Trio* of 1811 in his hand.

This image is as realistic as possible – the score is identical to the original made available to me by the Jagiellonian Library. A true copy of the original, it looked equally old, all yellowed, with various handmade annotations. During postproduction I removed all the annotations which were not made by the composer himself and removed the yellowish shade from the paper. Such “refreshed”, the score was printed on handmade paper used in the times of Beethoven in Vienna. Thanks to these measures, the paper we get to see in the pictures looks exactly like the original, with not only the format, but also the texture of it reproduced.

A perfect trial

At the beginning, when writing about the eight images, I used the expression “was to be completed”. I did it deliberately. Indeed, the plan and the script included eight photographs. However, in the process of completing the project a problem occurred. Picture No. 1, presenting the application

of makeup did not match the first two images artistically. It did not add anything to the story. Therefore, I decided to move straight to the “right after” effect, and shoot an intense, clear portrait with a bandage to be used in the further makeup. The result was surprising: there was tension being built here, growing gradually.

I also gave up the original fifth image; when the set was arranged it became clear that the image lacks the *punctum*, and is uninteresting, revealing too fast all that which I wanted to open to the audience only gradually. However, at that time I was also preparing the “working” image, documenting that stage of the project where the decorations, the costume and makeup are almost ready. The model begins to live the life of Beethoven. Eventually that image became the fifth photograph, even though it came to existence somewhat accidentally. The results were beyond any expectation: soon, the image became the strongest in the series.

However, it was not a pleasant surprise. Creating a project, the author usually takes into account certain modifications of the set, but when a genius photograph appears so suddenly in the process of making, but not yet finalising the project, it becomes difficult to decide how to proceed with the story. Still, I decided to include this image in the series.

The picture became a masterpiece in itself. It was honored in the all-Polish Photographic Contest PORTRET 2012 as well as the International Photographic Contest in Argentina. Similarly, only this picture was (in-competingly) qualified for the exhibition of the International Photographic Contest in Luxemburg.

But if the results were so interesting, then why is this image not the ultimate one for me? Well, the portrait is exceptionally realistic, but some of the elements still remain unchanged. Beethoven – almost ready – sits with his manuscripts dressed in... jeans. This contemporary element was kept on purpose, as part of playing with the audience and creating illusion. It proved successful – Beethoven’s face was characteristic enough, caught in the aura of the past, and none of the spectators or members of the jury paid any attention to this contemporary detail.

There is no fidelity without psychology

The last photograph is a classic portrait modeled after Gilbert Stuart’s paintings. He was the author of the famous Washington portrait, interested only in counterfeits. In his works he struggled for the “photographic”

likeness. He cared not only for the resemblance of features, but also for the psychological truth. I tried to follow in his footsteps: my portrait of Beethoven retains the traits of the objective vision of my consciousness.

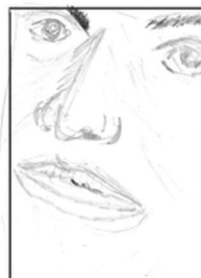
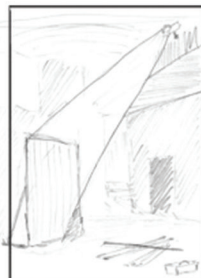
This is how the seven images were created. It appeared that they constituted a whole and did not require any additional photographs. I tried, basing on my drafts, to shoot the eighth image, but none of the attempts has added anything to the story. They were merely a duplication of the form or substance. Even more, they would simply weaken the whole project. Having analysed the first seven images, I decided that the series would have a stronger impact in the form it had at that time.

This is, however, a photographer's opinion. An artist can attribute various meanings to his project and read various messages into it, but at the end of the day all his assumptions and interpretations will be verified by the audience. The response of my audience proved that I have managed to give my project a meaning. "Beethoven – metamorphosis" did more than only meet my expectations. It acquired new meanings and merged into the walls of the Philharmonics, taking on patina and looking as if it was created 200 years ago.

Translated by Marta Bręgiel-Benedyk

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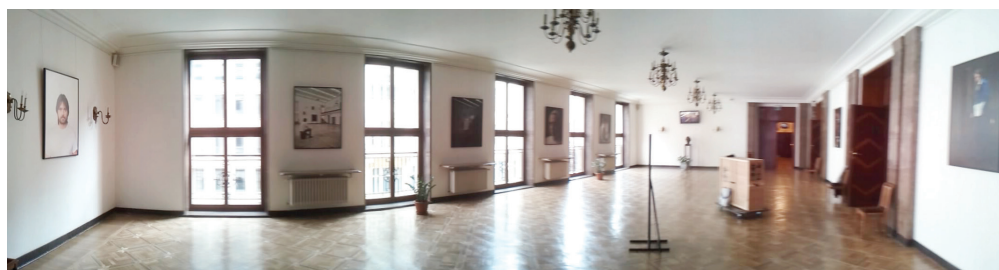
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(DRAWINGS AND PHOTOS BY PIOTR KUCIA)



(DRAWINGS AND PHOTOS BY PIOTR KUCIA)



DOCUMENTATION FROM THE EXHIBITION AT THE NATIONAL PHILHARMONIC IN WARSAW
(PHOTO BY PIOTR KUCIA)

Jerzy Łukaszewicz*

Artistic Thinking in Film Education (from Reproduction to Creation)

Abstract

Making an attempt to describe the threats to the development of artistic education, one should particularly emphasise the failure of noticing the mission of art and culture in the vision of a contemporary man. Above all, the threat is posed by the depreciating attitude of the mass media turning culture into entertainment and spiritual space merely into a battlefield for trivial and ordinary goods. The problem of globalization deeply afflicts culture, particularly artistic education. But are the tasks of artistic education as defined within the humanistic approach to the Culture of Man not fundamental to the future of “thinking art”? The matter is worth of a serious and continuous debate, irrespective of the political correctness and the pragmatic attitudes “for today”. However, particular responsibility lies with the didactics in the field of art.

Key words

thinking, art, education, work of art, experience

Mediating between intellect and emotions

In the Krzysztof Kieślowski Faculty of Radio and Television, University of Silesia in Katowice, the students acquire knowledge and practical skills in creating professional conditions for a successful cooperation in an artistic group through shaping non-conformist attitudes and thus provoking transgressive activities. “To liberate or to constrain?” remains the funda-

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mental question of artistic education. An answer to this question focuses on the source of teaching in the field of film art which is the concept of *artistic thinking*.

It is a common assumption that thinking is equivalent to every flow of conscious psychological processes (e.g. deducing, processing information, associating, remembering, concluding, justifying, comparing and controlling all the above mentioned). Thinking, however, is our activity, always on the critical run, in a dialogue, continuously debating. While acquiring knowledge, thinking still retains the courage to question the reliability of its results, because it does not cut corners or apply easy solutions and simplifications, nor does it yield to the dangerous confidence in the obviousness of formulated truths.

Philosophy occupies itself with various categories of thinking: discursive, historical, logical, moral, conceptual, infinite and source thinking among others. However, the task of didactics in the field of film art is to distinguish "thinking images" as the base of the film artist's network. The particular nature of thinking images was described by Arnheim¹:

My earlier research taught me that artistic activity is a form of reasoning, in which perception and thinking interweave inseparably. I came to realise that a person who is painting, writing, composing or dancing, is actually thinking with their senses. [...] An analysis of our knowledge regarding visual perception made me realise that the unusual mechanisms through which the senses embrace experience, are almost identical to the operations described by the psychology of thinking².

Images rule over our reasoning and open up an imaginative world, another level of existence. The visual language of film reveals to us this, which escapes reason. Therefore the film art is irrational in nature and the film reality cannot be treated one-dimensionally. It is comprised of many layers and levels, and the deepest one appearing in front of us is not any less real.

What is the difference between philosophical thinking and artistic thinking? Without entering the intricacies of the issue, but trying to confine oneself to the very basics instead, one can ascertain that the philosophical thinking distinguishes the idea of truth while *the artistic thinking*

¹ Rudolf Arnheim (1904–2007) – psychologist, esthetician, theoretician of art and film. In the 20s he occupied himself with experimental psychology and philosophy. He was also one of the pioneers of European film studies (Film as art). He worked among others at Harvard and Michigan Universities, developing the psychological theory of seeing.

² Vide: R. Arnheim, *Myślenie wzrokowe*, tłum. M. Chojnacki, Gdańsk 2011, p. 5 [trans. M. Bręgiel-Benedyk].

distinguishes the idea of beauty, and is typical of every form of creativity and of the reception of art³. The fruit of philosophical thinking is science and philosophy. The fruit of *artistic thinking* is a work of art. *Artistic thinking* can feed on the artist's imagination (meaning illusions), and can thus contain illusions. Philosophical thinking might not have anything to do with beauty. However, those differences do not exclude a certain affinity. Hegel had noticed it in the horizon of the essence of beauty, which serves "almost fanatic and manic strive to rouse people from their immersion in the sensual, the common and the individual and to lift their sight towards the stars; as if completely forgetting the divine, they were going to settle for ashes and water like worms"⁴. Is it not that also the horizon of the value of *artistic thinking* is opening here?

The workshop of *artistic thinking*

The students of the Faculty of Radio and Television (Directing and Film and Television Directing majors) already in their first year submit their first two short films, based on the same content of the screen event. The final duration of one film is ten seconds and it consists of three takes. The production is based on two narrative visions: the first – *THE IMAGE OF HISTORY*, and the second – *THE HISTORY OF IMAGES*. These short films open the students to the realm of *artistic thinking*⁵.

³ Vide: J. Tischner, *Myślenie w żywiole piękna*, Kraków 2004, Chapter 1.

⁴ G. W. F. Hegel, *Fenomenologia ducha*, tłum. Ś. F. Nowicki, Warszawa 2002, p. 17 [trans. M. Bręgiel-Benedyk].

⁵ The subject of *artistic thinking* is continued in the following years through practical works. Short films are based on two forms of narration; the first called: *Magical realism* and the second called: *Through images – An image*. *Magical realism* – a film impression in the genre of a "creative document", based on the events registered in a documentary form and presenting a made-up (created) hero. *Through images – An image*: the fictional construction of this short film is inspired by a painting of a famous painter. The essence of *artistic thinking* is to create film events leading to the action presented in the painting. The final frame is the painting itself. The character of the short film is supposed to be coherent with the plastic vision, atmosphere and mood of the painting (the character of lighting, the mood of the interior, the atmosphere of the story, etc.). The maximum screening time is 180 seconds. An example of such narration could be "The Mill and the Cross" directed by Lech Majewski, which is an adaptation of the Michael Gibson's book dedicated to "The Stations of the Cross" by Pieter Bruegel or "Shirley: the visions of reality" by the Austrian director Gustav Deutsch inspired by Edward Hopper's paintings.

The concept of *artistic thinking* is also introduced through an example of film works organised into two stages. Stage one – the introduction: narrative mode – *THE IMAGE OF HISTORY*. The dramaturgy of this mode is subject to the logic of events (cause-and-effect relationships) as well as their chronology. An example of such artistic vision can be the first battle scene from the film “Gladiator”⁶. Here is the chronology of the screen events (shortened):

TEXT ON THE SCREEN⁷

At the height of its power, the Roman Empire was vast, stretching from the deserts of Africa to the borders of Northern England. Over one quarter of the world’s population lived and died under the rule of the Caesars. In the winter of 180 A.D. Emperor Marcus Aurelius’ twelve-year campaign against the barbarian tribes in Germania was drawing to an end. One final stronghold stands in the way of Roman victory and the promise of peace throughout Empire.

ECU – a hand touching ripe spikes of wheat. Maximus looks at a robin flying away. Soldiers and equestrians line up for battle. Caesar Marcus Aurelius observes the preparations. Maximus standing among the soldiers.

SOLDIERS

General! General

MAXIMUS

Lean and hungry...

[...]

QUINTUS

Soldier, I ordered you to move those catapults forward, they’re out of range.

MAXIMUS

Range is good.

⁶ *Gladiator*, directed by R. Scott, distribution: Universal Pictures-DreamWorks SKG, premiere on 1 May 2000. Polish dialogue list A. Deka.

⁷ The Courier New font is widely used in professional screenplays.

QUINTUS

The danger to the cavalry...

MAXIMUS

This is acceptable. Agreed?

[...]

Maximus spurs the soldiers on to fight.

MAXIMUS

Fratres!

SOLDIERS

Maximus!

MAXIMUS

Three weeks from now I will be harvesting my crops, imagine where you will be and it will be so. Hold the lines, stay with me. If you find yourself alone riding in green fields with the sun on your face, do not be troubled, for you are in Elysium and you're already dead!

[The men laugh]

Brothers, what we do in life echoes in eternity.

Soldiers line up. Catapults ready to attack. The soldiers ignite the heads of the arrows. Dynamic, short takes on preparations and awaiting the signal. The bloody battle begins.

QUINTUS

Catapults ready!

SOLDIERS

Archers, Ignite!

Archers, draw!

Loose!

MAXIMUS

Rome will prevail!

Burning arrows shower on the heads of Germanic people. The battle continues. The Romans prevail.

The structure of the “image of history” type of narrative based on the chronology of events constitutes itself in the process of the real impartiality of the spatiotemporal reality. What does it mean in practice? Trying to simplify it, we can say that it is a process of “registering” aimed on the most faithful representation of the reality perceived by the senses. There is a strong conviction that since this narrative form allows establishing a particular bond with the audience, the representation of events in the chronological order might reveal another horizon of seeking out the “truth” of the screen story. In this pattern we deal with “registration” deprived of the necessary author’s commentary. The emotions of the audience are expected to complete the message.

The value of a work

Is it that in case of *artistic thinking* the student’s creative participation is more conscious? Is the work more beautiful or more true? Does its value increase? Searching for answers to these questions, it is first of all necessary to identify the peculiarity of the art didactics (in all majors). It has to be compatible with the character of the creative activity as well as the structure of the creative process. There is a certain ambiguity here, which can be expressed – after Prof. Władysław Stróżewski⁸ – in dialectical oppositions. Therefore the creative process takes place in between the poles of coincidence and necessity, consequence and unpredictability, submission and domination, spontaneity and control, liberty and rigor, acceptance and rejection, innovation and perfectionism, creation and discovery, etc. There are far more oppositions involved, since the creative process situates itself between chaos and well-ordered structures, indefiniteness and specificity, infinity and finiteness, typicality and uniqueness, emotionality and sensuality, perception and expression. Therefore each of these dialectical oppositions contains an element of the great mystery of creation, whose algorithms remain unknown, as are its results. The fruits of the creative process can vary, just as the creative activity itself takes on various forms, importance and intensity. Also, the creative effects of the activity can be successful to various degree, and it is very difficult to estimate their parameters. All the above mentioned observations are specific signals for the teachers – the evaluation of the

⁸ Vide: W. Stróżewski, *Dialektyka twórczości*, Kraków 2007.

goals and results in the field of art education is by no means simple and unambiguous.

Let us now proceed to presenting the second stage of the *artistic thinking* phenomenon, namely the narrative mode called the *HISTORY OF IMAGES*. The opening sequence of the film "The Hours"⁹ will serve as an example. The film touches upon the hidden part of the reality of human existence. An immaterial space narrative. It is a multilayer story. An irrational one. Here is the sequence of events (emotions) presented on the screen. Virginia buttons her jacket up restlessly. But why so incapably? She leaves home. Almost runs across the garden. Virginia sits bent by the table. She writes hurriedly.

VIRGINIA (vo)

Dearest,
I feel certain that I am going mad again.
I feel we can't go through another of those
terrible times. And I shan't recover this time.
I begin to hear voices, and I can't concen-
trate.
So I am doing what seems the best thing to do.
You have given me the greatest possible hap-
piness.
You have been in every way all that anyone
could be.
I know that I am spoiling your life, that with-
out me you could work.
And you will I know. You see I can't even write
this properly.

She does not hesitate. She holds a pen in her trembling hand. She is surrounded by some ceremonial glare. Gentle morning light lits up her peaceful face. Her hand still trembling. A moment of anxiety. She is still quiet. Nobody breaks the silence. Nobody enters the room. She blushes softly and then unexpectedly turns pale again. What does this blush mean? Is it love, hope, fear? Still, Virginia is uncertain. There is no return to happiness. To peace. She writes.

⁹ *The Hours*, directed by S. Daldry, distribution: Paramount Pictures, Miramax Films, premiere on 24 January 2003. Polish dialogue list Magdalena Czartoryska-Meier.

VIRGINIA (vo)

What I want to say is I owe all the happiness of my life to you. You have been entirely patient with me and... incredibly good. Everything has gone from me but the certainty of your goodness.

Virginia approaches the river. She bends down. Takes a stone in her hand. Hides it in her pocket. She goes down into the river. He enters the house. Spots the letter. Reads.

VIRGINIA (vo)

I can't go on spoiling your life any longer.
I don't think two people could have been happier than we have been.

Virginia plunges into the murky water. The letter falls out of his hands and slowly drops on the floor. He runs out of the house. Virginia's inert body floating down the dark river. Only soft words can be heard. Her last confession. A magic ECU. Virginia's palm touching the letter.

VIRGINIA (vo)

(whispering)

Virginia...

Seemingly, everything is mixed here. Time of the events runs in unexpected directions. Chaos. Narrative confusion. Everything is strange here, enigmatic, mysterious, changing within itself. Only questions. The spectator's surprise needs silence, no thought can interrupt this moment. Only silence is necessary. These and similar observations begin to form a magical and mysterious train, moving from the outer and the visible to the inner, the invisible, the hidden but intuitively sensed.

An attempt on making a logical and reasonable record of emotions while watching this sequence is doomed to failure. The description of reality appears here as an intrinsically developing form, acting only according to the rules of the artist's choice. It is a surprise to "see" the *close-up of Virginia writing the letter*. There is no such take in the editing project of the director. Moreover, a suggestion of the *gentle morning light lighting up Virginia's face* appears. Similarly, such take does not exist. Imagination of

the spectator creates an imaginary reality. The impulse given by the association and the teeming images evokes a real and actual state of emergency. The softness of light stands in contrast with the growing anxiety. The heroin does not sit by the table. We can only see one ECU: her hand. The voice-over (vo) attributed to the character in the location forms a coherent message. The audience has no problem identifying the author of the letter as the heroin of the scene. These emotions are filled with the space of intuitive premonition. In this way the director inspires the audience's imagination using the creative potential of *artistic thinking*, and giving his story an illusory character of a real story perceived by the audience as an existing fact.

Let us also point to an excerpt from an analysis of the film masterpiece "Citizen Kane" directed by Orson Welles¹⁰, as written by Professor Królikiewicz, a distinguished director and lecturer of the National Film School in Łódź. It is a very personal point of view, a pure form of analysis in the category of *artistic thinking*. Below, a description of a screen event:

Rain, thunders, soft music. A close-up from above of a board presenting an idealised portrait of a young, beautiful and smiling Susan and then passing it by, showing a signboard advertising Susan Alexander's restaurant, to close on a glass roof through which a room with drunk Susan sleeping by the table and the waiters surrounding her can be seen. A journalist sits down as the woman wakes up. She tells him to go away. A waiter informs Susan that the person is a guest from the chronicle who wants to speak to her about Kane. The journalist gets up and walks towards a public phone situated in the hall of the restaurant. He calls his boss informing him about Susan's refusal and relates the Thatcher's memoir¹¹.

The commentary by Professor Królikiewicz:

Let us reverse the film tape to the beginning of the take where the camera closes on the glass roof of the restaurant. [...] Only now (and – believe me – I watched this film several times) for the first time I felt and understood what this scene is about: with the rain and lightning, with thunders and wind... It is a descent to

¹⁰ Orson Welles, born 6 May 1915 in Kenosha (Wisconsin), distinguished American director and film and theatre actor, one of the most interesting characters of the contemporary cinema. In his teenage years he directs theatre plays, mostly Shakespeare, in which he made interesting appearances as an actor. After the famous radio broadcast on the invasion of the Martians, which caused panic in the West Coast, he arrived in Hollywood to make his debut with "Citizen Kane".

¹¹ G. Królikiewicz, *Różyczka – próba analizy filmu Orsona Welleśa "Obywatel Kane"*, Łódź, 2012, pp. 134–135 [trans. M. Bręgiel-Benedyk].

Hell... And of whom? Of one of the Lucifers. It is a “devilish ride” – this movement of the camera... as if one was reading a passage from a medieval demonological treaty... Black magic... Here is the beginning of Sabbath... Here is an illustration of the frenzied infernal forces, unleashed there, in the projection room... Luciferism launching an offensive: We are searching for truth... What is the provenance of this truth, its powers, its wings? Infernal. And so, the poor victim, the fallen soul of Susan Alexander, is shouting to Satan there in Hell, “go away!” So we must be in Hell...

It is interesting how here, at the bottom of Hell, the problem of Light is approached... I would like to return to what we so daringly called the satanic emotion of this scene. I mean the staging measure of the story, which is essentially a subjective narration. And still, the camera closing on the roof of the nightclub does not create any pressure of the naturalistic description of the narrator’s physical presence. He is not present in the beginning of the take. Could he be “off”? He is not there. The camera is descending. But is it really “the camera”? Of course not! Of course not! It is him, the Lucifer or his servant rushing “on his wings”... so rushing mentally... The camera – with its flight, its movement – is a metaphoric illustration of the personage, which is in fact this real individual, a certain Thompson.

And so the camera is perfectly following the route of the devil of this scene: the route of a metaphor. It literally describes what we feel, at the same time evaluating the purpose of this flight, because there are appropriate archetypes in the human culture with a moral judgment encoded in them. Here is the camera floating down the track described in the cultural stereotype and illustrating the metaphorical sense of a human being – here he is called a filmmaker, an editor of a film chronicle – the sense of the truth seeker, Thompson. At that moment a linguistic element is created – one of the important structural elements of the peculiar film style.

The camera does not slavishly hold on to the narrator’s character. Why? What else is it about? It is again about the artistic economy, about the camera not being limited to the narrator’s physical presence in the frame, in his single role, the realistic one, immediately present through the simple photographic description. [...] Delay the explosions of emotions. Fog the meaning. Here is a piece of advice to art: “I owe this film to my ignorance. If this word seems inappropriate to you, replace it with innocence” – said Welles himself about “Citizen Kane”¹².

What direction does this analysis point to? Where should we search for the mystery of Orson Welles’ *artistic thinking*? In his film, the great director imposes subtleties, which format the audience’s thinking and teach about the higher complexity of the world going beyond the binary

¹² Ibidem, p. 135

thinking. It is a category allowing a better understanding of the world by widening the horizon of understanding reality. We contemplate the lofty (*Schelling*), the subconscious, because what happens in reality, happens *in between*, or, to use the musical metaphor, happens in the space of an interval. A melody is not made entirely of separate sounds, it is something *more* – it is the interval, the movement, the passage. And so the flickering of the real and unreal events, meaning existence and non-existence, underline the paradox of the musical phrase. Here lies the mystery of the *artistic thinking* in “*Citizen Kane*” – in undermining the obviousness of reality.

But how a film work made in the spirit of *artistic thinking* should be described? “The world on the screen” – a film work created by an artist on the spur of his creative imagination is an autonomous, invented structure, because it is always something “created”, formed, made up. In this way, by making the work appear a real story, *artistic thinking* becomes “a construction and a game”.

Aesthetic experience

Below, I attempt on presenting some establishments systematising my intuitions concerning the potential of *artistic thinking*. The basis of this concept is an assumption that *artistic thinking* aims on discovering the hidden order of the world and drives at more or less radical mobilisation of reality in the making of a film work.

Establishment I

In the domain of art the borders of reality get crossed.

Assuming the category of rationalism as well as assuming that every work of art and the created world is simply a reflection of an empirical being, cannot be defended in the light of *artistic thinking*. The invented world is a product of the artist’s creative imagination and even if we can find some elements of reality in it (*ontological reality*), it remains an autonomous, invented structure. An artistic work is always *something made-up*, formed, invented – not only ideal but also fake. It is *a construction and a game*.

Establishment II

Artistic thinking demands “disintegrating the space-time” of reality.

The idea of “disintegrating the space-time” leads us to the essence of the “starting point”¹³. The starting point of the creative process requires some change, some modification of the existing situation. The “real” reality needs to undergo a change or at least one of its constitutive components must be negated, challenged, abolished. Inertia underlines the potential of a creative act. Creating something essentially new requires the effort of imagination, the willingness to take the risk of overcoming resistance, the established routine and convictions.

Establishment III

The artist gives their work an appearance of a real story, which is then perceived by the audience as a fact.

The conditions of *artistic thinking* can be referred to the Heidegger’s essence of *thinking about art*¹⁴ as transcendental presentation leading to a secret place in space-time: the very limits of the world perceived through senses. One can describe this *place* using the metaphor of a mirror – that it is neither a hallucination nor reality. Its immateriality is visible, its materiality not obvious.

Establishment IV

Artistic thinking leads first of all to the discovery and forming of a symbolic space, also in terms of presenting events and giving them meaning.

This space points to a certain direction, but does not force to anything nor impose any obviousness. The word ‘symbol’ itself can be raised to the level of a philosophical concept, a secret sign. Organising its own being, the symbol at first shows *something*, to then get to know *something else*. An inherent trait of the symbol is its mysteriousness resulting from the duality of principles: dividing and connecting, parting and meeting. The symbolic is the changing. Therefore, the symbol includes in its essence the inclination towards concealing and unveiling.

¹³ Vide: W. Stróżewski, op. cit., Chapter 3.

¹⁴ C. Woźniak, *Martina Heideggera myślenie sztuki*, Kraków 2004.

Establishment V

In the concept of symbol a glimpse of metaphysical space is shown; the relation between the visible and the invisible – the combination of the sensory phenomenon and the non-sensory meaning.

Broadening the essence of symbol to the role of a universal aesthetic principle is not that easy. Symbol does not automatically cancel the tension between the space of idea and the sensory world. The disproportion of the form and essence refers beyond the sensory presentation (form of communication). Therefore, in this disproportion the wavering and indecisive nature of symbol can be seen.

Establishment VI

The audience engages their reflective consciousness in the symbolic narrative mode.

In a way, the spectator's mind *melts* into the "ritual" of *artistic thinking*. To understand the symbolism of the images, it *opens* its reflective consciousness and imagination, and refers itself to the cultural codes. Gradually, step by step, it *breaks through* the incomprehensible messages and deciphers the pieces of information contained in the structure of the work. One decoded symbol clarifies another. Slowly, the knot gets untangled. The meaning (as planned by the author of the work) is always present in the idea of every take, every scene, every sequence as well as the entire work, however initially it is beyond the comprehension of the audience (the choice of meaning is not random, it is a postulate of rationality). The seemingly complex composition gets dissected into simpler impressions, fractures of thoughts. It gets reduced to parts which can actually communicate a certain meaning. But it is not over yet. Subsequently, all of it has to become a whole again. Even if one element is missing, the entire effort is in vain. The superficial formalism of the train of images still remains a quiet void. And only when the last element of the symbolic thinking finds its place, only then everything becomes clear. Everything is just as it should be – simple and transparent. Logic in every detail. The meaning of the work shines with its full *light*.

Establishment VII

For the insiders: "To give birth to a dancing star"

Artistic thinking means to be sensitive to the surprising, the alien, the incomprehensible. To the coincidence. To be ready to reach beyond what is given, existing, planned. "I tell you – calls Zarathustra – one must have chaos within oneself, to give birth to a dancing star"¹⁵. *Artistic thinking* does not surrender to the existing rules, because the artist – by overcoming oneself – needs to constantly create *SOMETHING* that overgrows him. *Artistic thinking* reveals a glimpse of a new form of the hidden world order.

And one more remark: the above reflections on the phenomenon of *artistic thinking* offer no principles or unique thoughts, nor do they draw clear boundaries, because such is the very nature of creating. There is no unequivocalness in thinking art.

Translated by Marta Bręgiel-Benedyk

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Olena Polishchuk*

Artistic Thinking as the Phenomenon of Human's Existence and Culture: Post-non-classical Discourse

Abstract

The modern scientific status of the term “artistic thinking” and the concept of this phenomenon are analyzed. The structure and basic components of the phenomenon are identified. Its determinants of existence, cognitive and creative potential are defined. The article is devoted to the question of such kinds of artistic thinking as symbol-artistic thinking, project-artistic thinking and expressive-artistic thinking. Also, the analysis of its nature and its original features are conducted. It is concluded that the key ideas of this research are the concept of artistic thinking as another logical informative-cognitive human strategy which has determined aesthetic sources and has been the large cognitive-creative potential.

Key words

artistic thinking, symbol-artistic thinking, project-artistic thinking, expressive-artistic thinking, aesthetic motive and aesthetic attitude

The modern science considers thinking as an informational activity, providing the possibility to create an individual view of reality and simulations, and directs its activity through goal-setting and planning to the practical implementation of activities. Even this cursory consideration of the philosophical legacy fixes the sustained interest of researchers to the human mind, its origins and identity, even if still in a rather “one-dimensional” perspective. Research is conducted by specialists in various fields

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of science, who study, in different angles, such areas as neuroscience, cognitive psychology, psychology of creativity, epistemology, logic, semiotics, cybernetics, linguistics, art history, ethnography, etc. But the human mind still has many “grand mysteries”. Perhaps it is believed that in this century it is the human mind that will appear as an important object of scientific study and raise a growing interest of those scientific branches of knowledge that did not give it in-depth consideration, in particular the aesthetics and cultural studies. Owing to earlier studies of modern psychology, the existence of various types of human thinking has been now determined and includes: operational or visual-effective, figurative-associative, abstract-logical; discursive and intuitional; divergent and convergent; productive and reproductive. Thinking in such dimension is studied foremost in the processional, operational or resultative moments. However, these are not all aspects of human thinking existence, there are more. We should remember that all tried-and-tested by the humanity or by a person starts mainly in human thinking: a scientific idea, an artistic innovation, a practical act or communicative act. Where there was originally a word, a thought must have preceded, and a thought is a product of thinking.

Thus, it is necessary to mention that representatives of other spheres of humanitarian thinking, such as ethnographers, ethnologists, philosophers, aestheticians, fine art experts and others analyzed human thinking in the sense-functional or resultative dimensions. They insisted on the necessity of differentiation of the mythological, religious, magical, philosophical and artistic thinking, which generates other products and results for a person and humanity than the scientific or technical-project thinking. Though, it is important to indicate that the above mentioned types present a fundamentally different motivation from the two earlier types. Such types of human thinking as mythological, religious, magical and artistic thinking are based on the figurative base of the thought in the arche or in the result, having no use for discourse at all or its existence in an explicit form. However, we should emphasize the issue of an inconsiderable interest of the modern science in the study of thinking in the personal dimension, its motivation and axiological bases of determination. And here lies, in our opinion, the paradox – “alive thinking” is divided by abstract analysis schemes.

For example, distinguishing the project (technical), scientific, philosophical, religious, esoteric and artistic thinking, a Russian philosopher V. Rozin emphasizes: “In philosophy, esotericism and in humanitarian sciences, the personality’s role is essential, while in the natural sciences

and technical thinking its role is minimal”¹. We should focus our attention on the accentuation of the personality’s role for the existence of three indicated spheres in contrast to the peculiarities of appearance and explication of thought of an engineer or a representative of natural sciences, etc. In the first three spheres of human activity thinking is interfused with emotivity through the personal sense. In others, the similar is ignored to gain the truth (in its scientific understanding) or get the utilitarian, pragmatic result in the form of the subject, process or phenomena. But this gives rise to the following complicated questions: what causes such emotional breadth, where is the personal sense while explicating the act of thinking in such strategies of its duration (artistic, religious, magical, and philosophical)? Besides, there is no explanation of what role such strategies of human thinking have for the personal life, or for the development of culture in its positive and negative demonstrations. Unfortunately, modern science does not provide any answer. Regretfully, similar issues do not draw much attention of modern scientists.

In our perspective, artistic thinking is the minimal subject field of a scientific discourse among the indicated kinds (or types) of human thinking. Artistic thinking is not considered in the context of the dynamics of human strategies development, perhaps because of misunderstanding of its importance to the human history. But there is Christopher Henshelwood and his colleagues’ finding, which surprised anthropologists, historians, aestheticians and fine art experts. Artifacts from the Blombos Cave in South Africa is prove that already 60 000 years ago a human was anxious about the “daily bread”. The ornament on the brick of ochre can be considered as the most ancient form of the well-known products of a new person’s artistic thinking in the historic retrospective. The case is that 60 000 years ago there existed a person of the modern physical type and he/she created instruments of labour and pieces of art. And it seems very indicative. Separate neoanthropic groups of Old Stone Age created artifacts of an artistic expressiveness and aesthetic sense. It is a very strange phenomenon. Especially, when we consider the results of decoding human deoxyribonucleic acid – during its analysis it has been revealed that our “ancient Adam” is most likely to have originated in Africa around 60 000 years ago.

¹ В. М. Розин, Природа и особенности эзотерического познания, “Философские науки” 2003, No. 4, с. 157 (V. M. Rozin, *Nature and Peculiarities of Esoteric Consciousness*, “Philosophical Sciences”, 2003, No. 4, p. 157) [trans. O. Polishchuk].

The aim of the research is to describe the concept of artistic thinking as an important cultural phenomenon for the human existence of the modern physical type.

In our opinion, the modern idea that the subject of artistic thinking can only be a fine art expert or an artist must be reconsidered. Such an opinion is simplified and sufficiently unjustified because of many reasons, some of which have been brought to light above. Though there are other reasons, in particular the axiological base of determination of artistic thinking, on which a person relies in his/her life and work.

The figurative character and the practical-axiological sense are the most characteristic features of artistic thinking. It is based primarily on the sources and the resultative foundation on the information handling of the figurative (or the figurative-symbolic) plan. Thus it should be considered as the variety of thinking of the figurative type by nature (according to peculiarities of the informational understratum in the decoding of signals or data). Also artistic thinking is always thinking in values. However, according to the contents, functions and motivational basis, artistic thinking is a special strategy of human thinking because of its axiological core.

Our hypothesis is the following: the bearer (subject) of artistic thinking is an aesthetically developed personality with special needs towards life and himself/herself. To consider the bearer of artistic thinking only an artist or an art representative, in our opinion, is inappropriate. The bearer of such strategy of thinking can be a scientist or an engineer, an artist and a sportsman, a businessman or a priest, if he/she is an aesthetically developed person. Besides, we assume that in a talented person, who demonstrates the considerable creativity and work productivity, such strategy of thinking can be combined with other strategies, creating e.g. the scientific-artistic strategy as a steady personal feature.

The task of the research is to indicate the specificity of artistic thinking and its types, and study the role of each of them in the development of society and its culture, in particular on the example of cinematographic creativity. In our perspective, in its historical development artistic thinking acquired several subtypes, stipulated by differences of the contextual, functional loading and the personal origin. Thus, it is necessary to differentiate artistic-project, artistic-figurative and artistic-expressive thinking².

² О. П. Поліщук, Художнє мислення: естетико-культурологічний дискурс, Київ 2007 (O. P. Polishchuk, *Artistic Thinking: Aesthetic-Culturological Discourse*, Kyiv 2007).

We consider artistic thinking as:

- a strategy of human thinking, having productive and positive results for the human life through their inhesion to a person;
- a strategy of human thinking, for which aesthetic components in the origin and results are of main importance;
- a strategy of human thinking, owing to the informational processing of the current issue, considerably different from the discourse.

Concerning the nature and specificity of artistic-project thinking it is necessary to emphasize that it provides the addition of the aesthetic component in different spheres of human activity, which are grounded on the project bases. Such subtype of artistic thinking is stipulated by the aesthetic motivation while the tectonic-compositional solution of human thought.

Artistic-project thinking results in personal-individual and socio-axiological innovation (in the cultural anthropology sense). But the level of its presentation on different stages of modern civilization development or in the local-cultural demonstrations is not similar because of the ambiguity of the spiritual-practical demands and expectations of a certain person while the socialization and enculturation, and a certain society.

The application sphere of artistic-project thinking is practice, for which the aesthetic moment is valuable: applied and decorative-applied arts, industrial design or artistic clothes design etc. Regarding its functional orientation we should state the predominance of practical and pragmatic functions over the game-entertaining ones. But no less considerable is the informational-orienting component for its explication. Here, what is valuable is the information not only about social objects, but about natural ones, because the matter concerns original subject forms. In our opinion, it is very indicative that the posterior position of natural analogues is often the source of a new creative idea in such a strategy of thinking. A good example of its demonstration can be the creative work of an architect Antoni Gaudí and a sculptor Gustave Eiffel. Besides, of main importance is in this case not only individually important aesthetic information, but also the social memory, to which a bearer of such subtype of thinking addresses.

Analysing artistic-figurative thinking it is necessary to stress that its leading functions are game-entertaining and compensatory-hedonist. It is necessary to underline its sphere of application as being preliminarily the fine art, the consequence of which is the creation of the artistic image or their system, which in each particular case (depending on the type of art or its genre) acquires special figurative representation or symbolic-

-sign-oriented fixation. And it depends upon a person, who relies in his/her work on the similar strategy of thinking.

We should lay emphasis on our suggestion: the bearer of artistic thinking can be not only an artist. For example, he can be Albert Einstein. He was an outstanding physicist-theoretician, one of the founders of the modern theoretical physics, a laureate of the Nobel Prize in physics in 1921 and a public person-humanist. But he is also an author of about 150 works on science history, journalism, artistic criticism, and also a man, who masterly and delightedly, almost every day, played the violin. We can recall one more outstanding personality in the history of humanity. Nicolaus Copernicus was a canon, an author of the heliocentric model of the Universe, a doctor, an engineer, a jurist, a military expert and a musician. But very rarely does any one recall that Copernicus studied for four years in the Kraków University in the faculty of arts.

There is one more historical figure, important for the appearance of cinematography and cinema art in the Russian Empire and in the world's culture, Alfred Fedetsky (1857–1902), a photo artist, who created a range of highly artistic portraits as well as the first Russian Empire chronicles, which were artistically expressive. He experimented in the sphere of colourful and relief photography. His works demonstrate skills to depict sculpturally the image of that thing, which he fixed with the photocamera or the motion picture instrument, due to the angle, checkered light and shade. A. Fedetsky was a man, whom the contemporary called "the poet of photography" not only owing to the professional mastery, but also to the peculiarities of thinking. It is necessary to note that the first message in Russia about the invention of "cinematography" by brothers Lumière from Lyon appeared in the eighth number of the Russian photographic journal (1895), and in the tenth number there was a detailed description of their camera. On 12 November 1895 in the newspaper "The Southern region" it was announced: "Alfred Konstantynovych Fedetsky has the honour to inform about his arrival from abroad with the aim of renovating of his photo picture with the new equipment"³. Alfred Fedetsky was fond of blazing "alive moving picture". (Moreover, there were the animatograph of an Englishman Robert Paul and the kinetoscope of an American Thomas Addison). On 18 September 1896 in the Kharkiv periodicals (Ukraine) there was information that Fedetsky "gained the habits of the cinematic shooting (120 shots per a sec-

³ See: В. Миславський, Альфред Федецький, Харків 2010, с. 36 (V. Myslavskyy, *Alfred Fedetsky*, Kharkiv 2010, p. 36) [trans. O. Polishchuk].

ond)”⁴. He also obtained an exclusive right regarding the production of film stocks “negatively-positive with different types for chronophotographer Demeni” for sale in his country. Fedetskyk bought the best shooting-projective apparatus (Brothers Lumière did not sell a shooting camera with the cine-projector). According to the contract which Alfred Fedetskyk signed with Léon Ernest Gaumont, which can now be seen in the New York Museum of the Moving Pictures, Fedetskyk bought 60 mm camera “Chronophotographe” in summer 1896. Thus, he was versatile in techniques, and an extraordinary personality with an unusual way of thinking.

We believe that the origins of artistic-figurative thinking are based on the level of the aesthetic-artistic development of a bearer (an artist, a scientist, an engineer, a businessman or a politician) and his/her general erudition as a personality. Besides, they depend upon the specificity of the informational study of the current issue either by an individual or by a group to which he/she belongs. It is necessary to take into account that in advanced aesthetics, artistic component and a special training are certainly important for an artist as the bearer of the artistic thinking. No less important is his reliance on a certain tradition of the epoch or the national-aesthetic tradition in general. It is urgent for him/her to get beyond the established limits without actually breaking the rules (as far as such thing is possible at all). The value of the created product foresees not only the novelty or originality, but foremost the bright demonstration of the author’s origin in the creation of a certain artistic innovation.

Principally, the same is observed in the European cultural tradition. For its representatives it is important to show their uniqueness, outline the inseparable connection between the author and the work as the security of the attracting interest to the public, even if there is the need to appeal to epatage. The example of this is the kitsch from Andriy Danylko, more known as “Verka Serdyuchka”. The absence of appropriate vocal data is compensated by the game moment because of the excessive attention on the extravaganza, and perhaps on the cross-dressing. He actively exploits in his creative work the Ukrainians’ aptitude for humour. As a consequence, “Verka Serdyuchka” is a vey famous brand of the Ukrainian artistic culture and show-business. Created by Danylko, clownish-singing image has the sufficient “dome-shaped author’s identity”.

Regarding the bearer of the artistic-project thinking, the situation is a little different, when the case is about the value of learning and reliance

⁴ Ibidem, p. 38.

on the current tradition (national-cultural and artistic) and the national (ethnic) mentality. Thus, in the decorative applied art, a tradition is the basis of the author's technical mastery, but not the main source of forming ideas concerning his searches and findings. The author's peculiarity has a more anonymous character than when innovation appears, for instance, in the fine art. The originality of his thought, certainly, is valued. But to make the reconstruction of spiritual needs or the specificity of features of the author's character, world view, motivations, values, characteristics of the lifestyle, etc., as a bearer of artistic thinking, is more difficult than to reconstruct the author's origin (for example, picturesque linen, musical composition or directing in the cinematography). Thus, the communicative component in the artistic-project thinking is much less developed than in the artistic-figurative thinking.

It is most developed in the artistic-expressive thinking, the bearer of which is a personality or a community, engaged in the "consumption" of pieces of art and artistic communication. What is valuable for a person or a group in the artistic communication? Foremost, these are expression and hedonism. Thus the artistic-expressive thinking is singled out by us on the basis of its dependence of the human reliance on the artistic-receptive (perhaps, aesthetic-receptive) work. The leading function of such a type of artistic thinking is compensatory-hedonistic. In our opinion, it is necessary to speak about the artistic-expressive thinking when due to the artistic communication there is a transmission of aesthetic and artistic ideals, artistic experience, aesthetic and artistic values, etc. It turns up in a human while aesthetic motives and axiological orientations, aesthetic tastes are formed. It is not compulsive that a human should be engaged in the artistic creative or artistic-project work. However, such person always likes to "consume" consequences of the latter. The life of such person has the direct connection with the emotional-sensual and communicative moments of its activity, which have the aesthetic vector of realization.

We want to draw the attention, while analyzing the phenomenon of artistic thinking, to the origins and development of the so-called Ukrainian romantic cinema of the second half of the 20th century. The film of the well-known Georgian-Ukrainian-Armenian film-maker Sergey Paradzhanov "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" would not have gained such recognition, if it had been shot by another camera-man. The camera-man Volodymyr Illenko demonstrated peculiarities of his artistic thinking not only as a camera-man of this film, but as a director of a range of his own films,

a poet and an artist. The phenomenon of the “continued shot” provided the special expressiveness of the film scenes. Such a vision of the world can be found in a film directed by Leonid Osyka “Stone Cross”.

In conclusion, we indicate the principal ideas which comprise the basis of our concept of artistic thinking. Artistic thinking is an ancient and independent strategy of production and the functioning of the human thought. Its bearer is an aesthetically developed personality with a high level of sensitivity, stipulating the other logics of thinking (as inologics). He is governed by aesthetic motives and aesthetic orientations not only in the activity, but in the creative work and life in general. Three subtypes of artistic thinking can be distinguished according to the personal motivation and contextual aspect. There are artistic-project thinking, artistic-figurative thinking and artistic-communicative thinking.

In our opinion, the strategy of artistic thinking in our children (forming by means of mass media, educational work etc.) is that factor, promoting a better resistance to negative moments of life and to the social person’s adaptation in the periods of civilizational challenges and crisis conditions of the modern society existence. As a consequence, there can be an increase in the level of his / her tolerance and creativity.

Полищук О. П. Художественное мышление как феномен существования человека и культуры: постнеклассический дискурс

Проанализирован статус понятия “художественного мышления” и концепта этого феномена. Рассмотрены структура и основные компоненты данного явления. Привлечено внимание к вопросу о необходимости различения художественно-образного, художественно-проектного и художественно-экспрессивного мышления как видов художественного мышления, охарактеризовано их природу и своеобразие. Детерминанты существования, познавательные и творческие возможности его видов имеют различия, как предполагает автор. Основная идея этого исследования как концепта художественного мышления, в том, что это инологичная информационно-познавательная стратегия человека, которая детерминируется эстетическими источниками и имеет важные когнитивные и творческие возможности в своих результатах.

Ключевые слова

художественное мышление, художественно-образное мышление, художественно-проективное мышление, художественно-экспрессивное мышление, эстетический мотив, эстетическая ценностная ориентация.

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Wojciech Rubiś*, Paulina Tendera**

Artistic Thinking – Thinking of the Essence (the Self-portraits of Rembrandt van Rijn)¹

Abstract

Looking at Rembrandt's self-portraits we follow the course of his artistic development, which clearly reflects three significant stages of the artist's life. But can these stages be applied to the life of any man? We ask this question because of the main problem discussed in this article – the problem of the essence, which Rembrandt fulfilled in his work. In general, the topics, Rembrandt undertakes, concern the ethos, and similarly in his self-portraits we encounter the ethos of an adolescent, mature and elderly man.

Key words

painting, interpretation, neo-Platonism, self-portrait, Plotinus

An interesting thesis regarding the portraits and self-portraits of Rembrandt van Rijn was put forward in 2006 by James A. Schirillo and Melissa A. Fox. In their article "Rembrandt's Portraits: Approach or Avoid?"² they investigated the emotional background of Rembrandt's works, pointing, among other things, to the fact that approx. 74 % of his female portraits had been painted from the left profile, while the same applied to only about

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² See: J. A. Schirillo, M. A. Fox, *Rembrandt's Portraits: Approach or Avoid?*, "Leonardo" 2006, Vol. 39, No. 3 pp. 253–256.

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26% of male portraits. Rembrandt would supposedly avoid the left male profile as irritating in reception, whereas the left female cheek creates – according to Schrillo and Fox – a very sensual and erotic representation. The left side of the face often represents negative emotions, expression, sexuality, while the right one reflects positive emotions, particularly in representations displaying the lower two thirds of the face. On the basis of their research, the authors conclude about (1) the social conditioning of male and female portraits as well as (2) Rembrandt's very emotional and often also romantic, sexual and sensual attitude to female portraits³. The interesting results of this psychological research bring us into the realm of philosophical reflection: the emotions that Rembrandt's portraits and self-portraits evoke are partly of a social nature, and we tend to read them similarly – wherever the artist is willing to do it, he helps us to correctly and truthfully read his intentions and feelings reflected in the painting. In this way, Rembrandt lays out a new path and prompts us with an idea how to plough through the surface of the painting, through its artistic and aesthetic layer, to comprehend the content of the work and, eventually, reach its hidden essence.

The psychological discoveries aside, let us point out that as the years went by, Rembrandt's paintings became more intriguing, emphasising the spiritual part of the subjects as well as their inner beauty. The late portraits were painted hurriedly, almost carelessly. They exhibit many expressive values and sometimes show the nonchalance of the genius, contrasting perversely with his deep recognition of the essence. Rembrandt's late paintings have the typical thick layers of paint, whose uneven application underlines the highly contrasted chiaroscuro: the representations are ever darker, yet the light is more and more lively, warm and throbbing, flickering. This very light will be the subject of our deliberation, first of all because it is of particular importance to Rembrandt, but also because we want to interpret his self-portraits applying statements of the philosophy of light, and on that basis draft a particular concept of artistic thinking.

Rembrandt's works may be grouped in a number of ways, beginning with the division into adolescent and mature period, to the particular cycles and themes. We can see the difference between the earlier and later self-portraits when comparing the early works (particularly the "adolescent" ones) with those painted after 1659. However, in the present article we applied a more detailed division, distinguishing three major

³ Ibidem, p. 253.

periods: (i) adolescent self-portraits (particularly the cycle painted between 1628–1629), (ii) the middle period, and (iii) the mature one (from 1659 on).

Looking at Rembrandt's self-portraits we follow the course of his artistic development, which clearly reflects three significant stages of the artist's life. But perhaps these stages can be applied to the life of any man? It is not a trivial question and we ask it because of the main problem discussed in this article – the problem of the essence, which Rembrandt fulfilled in his work. In general, the topics Rembrandt undertakes concern the ethos, and similarly in his self-portraits we encounter the ethos of an adolescent, mature and elderly man (perhaps by now it became an archetype). The ethos of a youth can be characterised by openness, it is not symbolically filled, it has no metaphysical content, and its aesthetics is vital and bright. The ethos of a mature man has no metaphysical content, but there are symbols and metaphors present in it (usually related to his wealth and social stratum). Finally, the ethos of an elderly contains representations of metaphysical values (among others in the typically composed light) and symbols (this time related to his genius, painterly profession, etc.).

Adolescent portraits

Undoubtedly, the adolescent works of Rembrandt are very fresh and subtle in their way of representing the subject. They very ably capture youth and the glare of the figure – a bright, light and smoothly spread chiaroscuro gives an impression of sensitivity. The way of experimenting with self-portraits tells us something about the author's introspection, it shows his interest in himself and in the possibilities of transposing the almost imperceptible changes in the looks of the maturing young man onto the canvas. An example of such an adolescent work is the self-portrait of 1629⁴. This typical depiction has been endlessly copied by the disciples and followers of Rembrandt: a representation in half-profile, with very clearly situated patches of light, significantly underlines the character of the subject and maximises the expressive value of the painting.

The chosen adolescent portrait is to some degree exceptional, as the

⁴ Additional information: Rembrandt van Rijn, *Self-Portrait*, 1629, oil on canvas, currently in the National Museum of Indianapolis.

light – to a much higher degree than earlier – smoothes and illuminates the cheek. Following Schirillo and Fox's intuition, we should say that the strong exposure of the lower part of the right profile is the best composition for a male representation, associated with positive and optimistic feelings.

The background in this painting is already very dark (this tendency Rembrandt followed till the end of his life and it became a characteristic of his painting, combined with strong light accents) – he might have been afraid of this intensity of dark colours just two or three years earlier. But here he succeeded in depicting the satin skin, shining with youthful, fresh eroticism, underlined with the slightly parted, naturally glossy lips and white teeth. In this painting we can also see his slight beard. In a similar self-portrait of 1627 the eyes would also be covered, but the background remained relatively bright, and the separate strands of hair and neck are clearly distinguished. Similarly, in the self-portrait of 1628 the bright background emphasises the dark silhouette of the artist. The strands of hair are accented, this time with light brown. The unsmoothed cheek clearly shows the movements of the brush, the mixing of colours. The eyes are only marked. These three adolescent portraits form a consistent cycle.

In Rembrandt's early works we can note a clear interest in youth, life and vitality, but also some kind of artistic thinking, in which the focus is on sensual beauty. Although Rembrandt was at that time 25–26 years old, these portraits are – and we would like to emphasise that – “adolescent” but not “immature”. Actually, the very opposite: it seems that his great talent was immediately visible and realised, however the subject painted and contemplated in the creative act required a different, still light and casual expression. The early self-portraits of Rembrandt illustrate the essence of youth, its prime and glare, its freedom – it is what the “adolescent artistic thinking” is all about. Despite the unusually beautiful captures of light, which can already be considered unequalled in their artistic aspect, from the philosophical point of view it is the eyes that matter to us. We can see that the portraits hide them or show them with no light (another self-portrait of 1629⁵; the same pose, the eyes can be seen, but they do not reflect any light). The cultural tradition, particularly Platonic, suggests that this operation can be interpreted as a secretiveness of heart and mind, inaccessibility or absence of spiritual content in the painting. The artist's expression in that case is clearly directed towards light and sen-

⁵ Compare with Rembrandt van Rijn, *Self-portrait*, 1629, oil on canvas, currently in: Alte Pinakothek in Munich.

sual beauty, and the grace of his figure is underlined with external warm and sensual light.

Rembrandt's middle self-portraits

The meaning of the *Self-Portrait with a Dead Bittern* is analysed by Scott A. Sullivan in his article⁶. The text discusses first of all the socio-cultural background of the painting. Against the landscape of the 17th century Netherlands, Sullivan points to the exclusive meaning of hunting. The sport was accessible to the noblemen, the social stratum in which Rembrandt was included after marrying Saskia van Uylenburgh. In the presented portrait we do not find any metaphysical content, but symbols and props appear, which are supposed to link the subject to the social stratum: in this case a bird held proudly with the right hand and a hunter's costume. According to the convention of the male portraits, Rembrandt shows his right cheek, reflecting bright, warm sunlight.

For the sake of our deliberation it is important to note that Sullivan points to those characteristics of the work, which are typical of all the Rembrandt's middle portraits. Above all, we read that these works were probably inspired by the art of Rafael and Titian⁷ (the self-portrait of 1640 is given as example): Print 3 – *Self-Portrait* of 1640 (the painting can be compared to the later *Self-Portrait in a Soft Hat* of 1642, in which a similar composition and posture was used⁸).

What do Rembrandt's middle self-portraits have in common with the works of Rafael and Titian? First of all, the deepened focus on the appearance of the portrayed person and – what is new in respect to the ado-

⁶ S. A. Sullivan, *Rembrandt's Self-Portrait with a Dead Bittern*, "The Art Bulletin" 1980, Vol. 62, No. 2, pp. 236–243.

⁷ "One should recall, too, that the *Self-Portrait of 1640* was inspired by Raphael's *Portrait of Baldassare Castiglione in the Louvre* as well as by Titian's *Portrait of a Man* (the so called *Aristo*) in the National Gallery, London. Rembrandt saw and sketched Raphael's painting during an Amsterdam auction of 1639, and Titian's portrait (or a copy of it), may have been known to him throughout the Amsterdam collection of Alonzo Lopez". Web Gallery of Art, [online] <http://www.wga.hu/cgi-bin/highlight.cgi?file=html/r/rembrand/27self/13sp1640.html&find=Self> [accessed: 30.08.2014].

⁸ The analysis of this work was undertaken by Ernst van de Wetering and Paul Broekhoff in: *New Directions in the Rembrandt Research Project, Part I: The 1642 Self-Portrait in the Royal Collection*, "The Burlington Magazine" 1996, Vol. 138, No. 1116, pp. 174–180.

lescent portraits – the above mentioned, very clear emphasis put on his belonging to a higher social class. These works express the painter's involvement in social life, in everyday life, sometimes in politics. Numerous interpretations of these portraits claim that all these three painters show themselves as significant and rich members of a higher social stratum, deliberately using various props (e.g. expensive fabrics, costumes reserved for or typical of noblemen, jewellery).

The given examples of the adolescent and middle portraits help us understand the transformation which happened over the years in the artist himself, and which gave foundations to the development of his artistic thinking. The adolescent portraits illustrate the artist's outlook on life, in the beginning just a vital one and later in the middle portraits transformed into a hunger for social life, a need for professional fulfillment taking the form of financial and social gratification. The adolescent portraits show an amazed, joyful, curious face; the middle ones show the implementation of the ethos of a middle aged man – wealthy, professionally active and socially respected.

Light plays an important role in the early portraits, but as a sign of organic, material life; it is a natural light. The situation changes in the late (mature) portraits – there light gains a deeper, more intriguing meaning, it becomes a source of numerous interpretations and speculations, and therefore may be analysed from various philosophical perspectives. In our paper though, we would like to focus on the interpretation inspired by Platonic theory.

Late self-portraits

The mature portrait we would like to discuss here was painted at the turn of 1668/69, and it currently belongs to the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne. Its numerous interpretations suggest that in painting oneself as a smiling elderly man, Rembrandt van Rijn was supposedly inspired by the bust of Heraclitus, which he had at home⁹.

It is sometimes pointed out that the late works of Rembrandt are filled with contemplative silence, which became a carrier of a spiritual con-

⁹ Based on Web Gallery of Art, [online] <http://www.wga.hu/index1.html> [accessed: 4 September 2009].

tent¹⁰. He succeeded in expressing this content with almost no movement (in stillness?) and in perfect concentration on the inner experience of the portrayed person, expressed through silence and without the traditional and conventional tools of human expression. This ability makes Rembrandt understandable not only to his contemporaries, but also to us. In a way, he was beyond convention, in the pure experience of feelings.

In Rembrandt's portraits and self-portraits (even in the discussed "Heraclitus"), the iconography is built in such a way that all the symbols, historical motifs and allegories refer us directly to the pure human feeling¹¹ – the feeling of one's own essence. This principle can also be established as the main rule of artistic thinking. Rembrandt aims at removing the traditional iconographic categories from his painting by giving their representations individual, human faces. These are no longer motifs from the biblical or mythological history, as it happens, for instance, in case of the *Jewish Bride*, in which, as it is commonly believed, Isaac and Rebekah are presented, or in the *Return of the Prodigal Son*, but stories liberated – as Białostocki suggests – from the categories of time and space; human stories. They can be described in general categories only, in ideas such as e.g. the idea of grace, love, charity, and the like¹². In the case of Rembrandt, all the elements of his work can be read and experienced as parts of the human history and life, which intensifies the aesthetic experience of the work.

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Our interpretation of Rembrandt's works consists in trying to reach their sense – the essence of the painting, the idea it expresses, and through them, the artistic thinking typical of Rembrandt. We start with the inspiration of Plotinus, since it was him, as the first among Platonists, who had, in a significant way, developed the reflection over art and beauty, which later became typical of the neo-Platonic school. For the reasons common-

¹⁰ Comp. J. Białostocki, *New Look at Rembrandt Iconography*, "Artibus et Historiae" 1984, Vol. 5, No. 10, p. 19.

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 9.

¹² Comp. idem, *Ikongraphische Forschungen zum Rembrandts Werk*, "Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst" 1957, III F., VIII, pp. 195–210.

ly known to philosophers, a deeper search for the essential meanings in the experience of art against the background of Platonic philosophy, does not make much sense. We can only speak of looking at the beauty itself, and by linking it to art, we would act against the wishes of Plato himself. Hence, we can only speak of the later Platonism.

Through his philosophy, Plotinus made a synthesis of Platonism. This is why in his works we encounter many thoughts borrowed directly from Plato, or reaching back even further, to Parmenides, particularly when it comes to the metaphysics of light. The latter plays a significant role in the portraits and self-portraits of Rembrandt. It is worth remembering that Plotinus himself never claimed to have founded a new philosophy. Just the opposite: he believed that he faithfully repeated and explained the views of Plato¹³. Yet, the ancient philosophy and symbols of light are based on a tradition still older than Platonic: "Greeks tended to represent not only life and death, but also different aspects of beauty and goodness and their opposites in terms of light and darkness"¹⁴. In this way, "it becomes clear why light [...] makes an exceptionally expressive metaphor for the unspeakable nature of the deity, or the principle of the universe"¹⁵. Light has remained such a metaphor and symbol until our times.

It is worth asking about the actual source of beauty and aesthetic experience for Plotinus. If we compare Rembrandt's late self-portraits and their beauty created through light, then these elements should be interpreted as manifestations of intellectual beauty. For Plotinus, the first beauty is simply the Mind, as is the cause of all life, all existence and beauty related to it. Everything which exists, which is alive, which thinks, turns itself completely towards this beauty, because it comes from the Mind and has a nature similar to it. Who has not seen beauty yet, loves it as goodness, but who has seen the true beauty, wants it for its beauty alone. Plotinus writes:

And so the soul, having accepted a current from there [from the Mind] gets a shock and is tossing and turning in ecstasy... and in this way love is born. But previously it remained insensitive even to the mind, although it is beautiful, because on one

¹³ Comp. D. Dembińska-Siury, *Pomiędzy Platonem a Plotynem, czyli o preneoplatonizmie*, "Studia Filozoficzne" 1980, nr 9, pp. 87–88.

¹⁴ W. J. Verdenius, *Parmenidesa koncepcja światła*, "Przegląd Filozoficzny" 2005, nr 2 (54), p. 282 [trans. M. Bręgiel-Benedyk].

¹⁵ S. and A. Blandzi, *Dobro światła – światło Dobra. Znaczenie światła w gnozeologii antycznej i w myśli wschodniego chrześcijaństwa*, "Przegląd Filozoficzny" 2005, nr 2 (54), p. 39 [trans. M. Bręgiel-Benedyk].

hand the soul's beauty is inactive until it shines with the light of Goodness, and on the other hand the soul itself lies fallow and remains inactive towards everything¹⁶.

For Plotinus the artistic activity as well as beauty itself (intellectual, but also sensual) became as important as Platonic ideas. In the context of Platonic philosophy, we should underline that Plotinus adopted his concept of beauty mainly from the *Symposium* and the teachings of Diotima¹⁷. The information is suggestive enough, given that only in this dialogue Plato allows a possibility of accepting the value of sensual beauty. He expresses his opinion in the concept of the "way of love", which can be compared to the "rising way" from the *Republic*¹⁸. Dobrochna Dembińska-Siury writes about the teachings of Plotinus:

The beauty of the material world, of the physical things, is like descending of the beauty itself, descending of the idea of beauty into the darkness of matter; descending and capturing, shaping, merging many into one, bringing order and pervading with reason¹⁹.

For Plotinus, Beauty is the essence of the given thing manifested in sensuality, its divine element, a manifestation of the absolute itself. John P. Anton supports this argument, writing: "Plotinus taught that Beauty is a divine essence and one of many manifestations of the absolute"²⁰. Such manifestation can be seen in every portrait of Rembrandt, but it is an essence mixed with the subject of the work, with the presented ethos: the adolescent self-portrait presents the essence of a human being, but in an incomplete, potential way, or should we say, it presents an essence being realised. A middle self-portrait shows us a fulfilled male ethos, but still unfulfilled spiritual essence of a human being. Only late self-portraits depict the fulfilled human essence, while additional elements like emblems or parts of clothing have only a symbolic meaning and are related to the values and ideas, and not to reality (i.e. belonging to a particular social stratum). This is how we understand the brushes and easel in these

¹⁶ Plotyn, *Enneady*, tłum. A. Krokiewicz, t. I, Warszawa 1959, VI.VII.22 [trans. M. Bręgiel-Benedyk].

¹⁷ Comp. J. P. Anton, *Plotinus' Conception of the Function of the Artist*, "The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism" 1967, Vol. 26, No. 1, p. 96.

¹⁸ Comp. P. Tendera, *Światło-Piękno. Platona dwie drogi mądrości*, "Kwartalnik Filozoficzny" 2010, Z. 37 (1).

¹⁹ D. Dembińska-Siury, *Plotyn*, Warszawa 1995, p. 50 [trans. M. Bręgiel-Benedyk].

²⁰ J. P. Anton, op. cit., p. 92.

works: they are related to genius, maturity, the idea and creative power, not merely to the artistic profession.

According to Plotinus, the real beauty of a thing comes into being though the participation of this thing in the "rational thread coming from the divine land"²¹. From here it is very close to the specific way of thinking typical of a creator – artistic thinking. Frankly speaking, Beauty is one of the three Platonic intellectual fundamentals (also adopted by Plotinus) and finds its place between absolute Goodness and Truth²². Beauty is given to an object either by nature or out of the artist's will and intellect: "...sometimes it is nature itself to grant a rock its beauty, sometimes it is art"²³.

Light is essential to Plotinus' philosophy, because from the perspective of emanationism, it is the Excellence itself that grants light to all beings, uniting at the same time all creatures. In the concept of the real presence of Excellence in the created world, the traditional Platonic dichotomy of intellect (idea) and matter is overcome: the spiritual world becomes the most subtle form of the existence of matter²⁴. The sensual part of a human being and its representations is not only a manifestation of spirituality, but also this spiritual element actually creates beauty. In many ways, this principle applies to Rembrandt's self-portraits. The later neo-Platonists, such as Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and Johannes Scotus Eriugena, had considerably contributed to the development of the theory of emanationism. Dionysius would call Beauty the theophany of God whose contemplation in the act of *ekstasis* allows to reverse the process of emanation and return to the unity with the Creator²⁵. From their teachings the concept of deification of human develops, which can be applied to the metaphysical interpretation of Rembrandt's self-portraits. In a broader context, emanationism is also accepted by the founders of the Florentine Academy, laying the foundations for the idea of beauty typical of the neo-Platonic trend.

Plotinus himself taught that the eye of a wise man can notice a flash of idea in material objects²⁶. In this way, everything that is beautiful in

²¹ Plotyn, op. cit., I.VI.2.

²² Comp. J. P. Anton, op. cit. p. 93.

²³ Plotyn, op. cit., I.VI.2.

²⁴ Comp. A. H. Armstrong, «Emanation» in Plotinus, "Oxford Journals" 1937, Vol. 46, No. 181, p. 64.

²⁵ Comp. M. Manikowski, *Pierwsza zasada. Świat stworzony i drogi poznania. Pseudo-Dionizy – jego filozofia*, Kraków 2006, p. 112.

²⁶ Plotyn, op. cit., I.VI.3.

a physical sense, echoes its inner truth – this is how the essence can be seen. However, it is not always like that – the inner beauty, the intellectual beauty which shines through the material body despite the changes time makes to it, is far more important and perfect. The same happens to Rembrandt's self-portraits, in which – thanks to their author's artistic thinking – the essence becomes visible. And yet, we can ask once again: the essence of what?

Plotinus' hierarchy of beings assumes that the closer a being is to the One, the more light, intelligence and truth there is in it. For a human, getting closer to God means entering the sphere of light, accepting the gift of grace and care of Providence. Later philosophers, e. g. Pseudo-Dionysius, would teach that no cognition or enlightenment is possible without hierarchy. It means that no such thing as natural cognition exists, because every cognition comes from the higher beings²⁷. This theory was also supposed to apply to beauty, looking at which – from Platonic perspective – becomes in fact an experience of grace and enlightenment. This rule can be applied in two ways. Firstly, we can talk about seeing the image of Rembrandt as a person filled with grace (possessing the ability of artistic thinking). Secondly – and it is a consequence of emanationism and the real presence of Oneness in matter – about the spectator's participation in seeing beauty and the strictly intellectual understanding of an aesthetic experience (about the spectator's participation in the artistic thinking of the creator).

From this perspective, the life of a painter immortalised in the canvases is a depiction of his perception of the principle of spiritual life and one's own inner essence, a complement of the emanation process through the spiritual return to Oneness. This process is the actual subject of artistic thinking. Thus the changes made to the artistic values of particular works are valid to their philosophical description, particularly in the realm of the philosophy of light. According to Plotinus, it is the role of art and beauty to help a human being to reverse the emanation process and return to the One (which is the moment of shining that Albertus Magnus called *resplendentia*). Undoubtedly, in Plotinus' philosophy the role of an artist is exceptional. Through his art he displays his own proximity to the Idea, and remains bright with the glare of supreme Perfection.

Plotinus' philosophy of light found its followers in Pseudo-Dionysius, Augustine, Robert Grosseteste or Johannes Scotus Eriugena. These philos-

²⁷ Comp. E. Stein, *Drogi poznania Boga*, tłum. G. Sowiński, Kraków 2006, p. 133.

ophers laid foundations for the Platonic “faction” of the medieval metaphysics of light. According to the translation of Saracen, Pseudo-Dionysius introduced the concept of *claritas*, meaning a glare, which later developed synonymous terms like: *splendor*, *refulgentia*, *lux*, *lumen* and the like²⁸. All these can be related to painterly activity. Sometimes we use them to describe only the sensory light, sometimes the reflected one, or the one emanating out of a particular object. *Claritas* however, is something more than this, it is an overriding category, persistently related to emanationism. Being a divine light, but simultaneously participating in every being, it crosses the border between *lux* and *lumen*. *Claritas* flaring up in a human being is a sign of his completeness, beauty and proximity to God.

In the portrait of 1668 we experience a certain kind of perfection emanating from the figure of the painter. It might be a result of an awakening which opened the soul of the artist to the experience of true Beauty. In this painting, the artist managed to perfectly present the intellectual and spiritual beauty shining through the gray and deteriorating material sphere. The instant of the flaring human essence, the inner truth was captured. However, it is not the moment of the soul opening to beauty, it is not the moment of ecstasy as described by Plotinus²⁹. The person depicted in this painting is already enlightened. But the spectator, moved by the bright look and glare of this person, cannot help but thinking of ecstasy – here it presents itself as something already accomplished, but also permanently altering the image of a man. The artist invites us to participate in beauty, to actually take part in artistic thinking.

The painting reflects the ontological situation of the artist, his shining figure that reveals his true essence. The light comes from the painter, perhaps it is an emanation of the One, the Reason (*Nous*) – it is the light that had accompanied a person from the time of birth, but was only revealed through beauty and art. Plotinus would say that as opposed to Goodness, Beauty becomes a purpose to a person only after it has been experienced. Typical for the later philosophers, e.g. Thomas Aquinas, is a statement about the actual identity and conceptual distinctness of Beauty and Truth. Much of the neo-Platonism was also adopted by Hegel who in his *Lectures in Aesthetics* taught that beauty is the truth implemented, while the truth is the actual content of beauty.

²⁸ More on the subject in: W. Stróżewski, *Claritas: Uwarunkowania historyczne i treść estetyczna pojęcia*, “Estetyka” 1961, R. 2, pp. 125–144.

²⁹ J. P. Anton, op. cit., p. 93.

For Plotinus himself, light and beauty were a special measure of being. In this perspective, Rembrandt appears to have been a spiritually fulfilled individual, fully aware of himself, happy, carrying the mystery of his own existence. Perhaps the inner peace which we can feel looking at the painter's portrait is a result of accepting the ups and downs and the necessity of sometimes tragic circumstances, which still have their deeper sense. Plotinus wrote that like grace, our own light is bestowed upon us by the supreme beings. Recognising our own spiritual element is the first step to reverse the process of emanation and return to the One. We read in *Enneads*, that Plotinus tries to return everything that is divine in him to the divine in the universe³⁰. We are convinced that a deeper sense of these words is revealed when we look at Rembrandt's self-portrait.

In this perspective, artistic thinking becomes a route to perfection, back to the origins, to the truth itself. This approach is reflected in the sensory sphere, in the artist's development as an individual, and in the general historic process which is expressed in the development of art – reaching its perfection and actual object.

But still... The provocative and mysterious smile of the artist might be hiding many different feelings. It might conceal compassion or pity for human life, the revealed truth about its inevitable finitude, the premonition of the coming end. A smile in the "golden hour" of life. Some commune with excellence, divinity, and create beauty through works that will outgrow their life in time and value. We pity the finite life, the yet unspoken words, the unlive feelings and emotions, and beauty we have to leave behind. These are moments and values of which we can never have enough.

Translated by Marta Bręgiel-Benedyk

³⁰ Plotyn, op. cit.

Czesław Miłosz

So Little

I said so little.
Days were short.

Short days.
Short nights.
Short years.

I said so little.
I couldn't keep up.

My heart grew weary
From joy,
Despair,
Ardor,
Hope.

The jaws of Leviathan
Were closing upon me.

Naked, I lay on the shores
Of desert islands.

The white whale of the world
Hauled me down to its pit.

And now I don't know
What in all that was real.

Translated by Czesław Miłosz and Lillian Vallee

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FIGURE 1. REMBRANDT VAN RIJN, *SELF-PORTRAIT*, 1629
(NATIONAL MUSEUM OF INDIANAPOLIS)



FIGURE 2. REMBRANDT VAN RIJN, *SELF-PORTRAIT WITH A DEAD BITTERN*, 1639
(GEMÄLDEGALERIE ALTE MEISTER IN DRESDEN)



FIGURE 3. REMBRANDT VAN RIJN, *SELF-PORTRAIT*, 1640
(WEB GALLERY OF ART)



FIGURE 4. REMBRANDT VAN RIJN, *SELF-PORTRAIT*, 1668
(WEB GALLERY OF ART)

Paweł Taranczewski*

Painterly Quest for Values

Abstract

The painter is trying to realize a certain value in the canvas, the value which he feels, he is looking for and he can see in his imagination. Nevertheless, that value is not given to him, it is undefined and unclear. For this reason, painting a picture is both creating and looking for a fully perceptible value. The emerging image shows the painter the form of that value, it is controlled by the artist, but the artist is also controlled by the image which, in a way, leads him. The demanded and achieved value is not a label which appraises the image, stuck on it by the painter, but it is like a light that permeates and illuminates the painting.

Key words

painter, value, hierarchy, aesthetic experience

Since at least the end of World War II there has been a debate on values going on among philosophers related to Roman Ingarden in Cracow. Although the issue was not new to Polish philosophy, in the Cracovian circle of Ingarden, thanks to the Master himself and his disciples, it has acquired a particular flavour. The question of the existence of values, their formal structure, their relativity versus absoluteness as well as distinguishing between the domains of values, or pointing to a possible hierarchy within and between them occupied Janina Makota, Władysław Stróżewski, Józef Tischner or Adam Węgrzecki; it still enlivens the thought of Stróżewski and Węgrzecki, despite the fact that “in the outside” the axiology itself is being contested by Heidegger and philosophical trends close to positivism.

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Regardless the philosophical stand, words describing values and evaluations, as well as those evaluating judgments or hierarchisation of works concerning their value, are present in the texts of critics, art historians and all those occupied with art. They are latently present in the purchase decisions made by particular museums, or decisions to exhibit some works in galleries while rejecting others. Having said that, while dealing with art, and particularly with painting, the terms indicating values cannot be rejected. Moreover, the values are given to the painters visually, and the terms describing values appear when they discuss the works of others or of their own, particularly as they struggle to explain what they really mean by a particular work of art, or what – as painters – they are searching for.

Considering the question of values, Władysław Stróżewski¹ mentions the concept of sought values. According to him, apart from other qualities, a value can also awake particular experiences (including aesthetic and creative experiences), becoming in itself a value for the artist, a value artists are searching for, or seek to express in their work. It is not my point now to establish whether it is a concrete value or an ideal one. I am interested in the process of a painter searching for values or valuable qualities and in the values being usually sought by painters.

Sensitivity and searching

A subjective condition for the ability to search is the painter's sensitivity and its sophistication, which ensure that the artist's growing openness is selective, enabling choosing and hierarchising the values that emerge during the search. An insensitive painter, or one whose sensitivity lacks sophistication and development, chooses miasma of values and, as a result, not everything he creates can be called art. Consequently, to say: *art is what an artist does*, or more precisely: painting is what a painter paints, does not seem right. Not everything a painter paints is actually painting. A painter's painting flows out of and develops within sophisticated sensitivity and is regulated by it, as are the works which result from it.

¹ Particularly in his books regarding the issue of values: W. Stróżewski, *Istnienie i wartość*, Kraków 1981; idem, *W kręgu wartości*, Kraków 1992; idem, *Dialektyka twórczości*, Kraków 2007; idem, *Logos wartość, miłość*, Kraków 2013; idem, *Wokół piękna*, Kraków 2002.

Painting is searching, but the word “searching” has at least two meanings here. One is visualised by Rembrandt’s self-portrait from Boston. The artist is not painting. He is standing by the wall of his studio looking at a painting on an easel which is standing with its back to us. The self-portrait visualises the reflection, *inventio*, mentioned by Ernst Van de Wetering in his monumental work on Rembrandt’s painting². Rembrandt, the painter, is seeking his painterly awareness, something that is called an idea, but what he finds is a value and he is being dazzled by it. The term *inventio* originates from *invenio* and suggests even that the value – like some Muse – comes to the painter and enters his spirit.

The other meaning of the word “searching” is visualised by Courbet’s *Painter’s studio*³ as well as numerous self-portraits of artists holding a palette and the brushes, sitting or standing in front of canvas placed on an easel. Here, “searching” equals painting. The painter searches for values in different layers of the painting, also values related to the layer of colour patches. These can, for example, be colour compositions. I can still recall the words of my painting professor: “Please, search for compositions”. A composition in a painting is a valuable association between colours⁴.

Searching in the latter sense happens on canvas, but it is not disconnected from “*inventio*”. Quite the opposite, they interweave and intermingle to the extent that however “*inventio*” can be distinguished in the process of painting, it cannot be separated from it.

As a matter of fact, the word “searching”, indicates two different moments of the creative process whose course is not entirely random.

Searching for values induces *experiencing them*. Disclosing, or displaying values, experience is at the same time a dialogue or a dramatic **encounter** with these values. It seems to me that such experience has been described – after George Bataille – by Barbara Skarga. It is “of no rule, no purpose and lacking any prestige, still powerful enough to shake and give birth...”⁵. And further – this time after Michel Henry – “this experience gives something, something is revealed in it, manifested, displayed. [...] This experience could in this way be [...] a gift, or a vision, or a dis-

² E. van de Wetering, *Rembrandt, the Painter at Work*, Amsterdam 1997.

³ G. Courbet, *L’Atelier du peintre, allégorie réelle déterminant une phase de sept années de ma vie artistique et morale*, 1855, oil on canvas, 361 x 598 cm; Musée d’Orsay, Paris.

⁴ I wrote on it more extensively in: P. Taranczewski, *Kolor i relacja*, “Kwartalnik Filozoficzny”, T. XL, Z. 2, 2012, s. 5–23.

⁵ B. Skarga, *Kwintet metafizyczny*, Kraków 2005, p. 127 [trans. M. Bręgiel-Benedyk].

closure, a discovery, an opening, a sensation, a revelation, a quest [...], or perhaps an awakening too”⁶.

Searching is not random. Depending on the philosophy prevailing in the given times, both searching and its results are regulated, forming the so called canons⁷. They cannot be merely ascribed to epochs like antiquity, the Middle Ages or the Renaissance – to use those conventional names. Every style of painting has its particular canon, which needs to be respected, if the work’s coherence is to be preserved. Even in the deliberately incoherent works, such incoherence itself becomes a particular canon that must be rigorously observed. Leonardo da Vinci – being ahead of conceptualism – claimed that painting is a *cosa mentale* and that this *mens* is regulated by geometry, but also by mood, particular emotion outstanding among others thanks to the famous *sfumato*. In my opinion, also expressionism is a *cosa mentale*; it is not, however, related to geometry, but to the state of mind animated with violent emotions, I seems that – in the end – every painting is a *cosa mentale*, because a painting – before it appears on canvas – already exists in the painter, altering his or her awareness. Painting as a *cosa mentale* has been brought to extreme by conceptualism...

Searching is a dialogue of a painter with himself, with other painters or with the spirit of the times – not necessarily his own. It does happen, too that a painter reaches to the spirit of another period.

Searching is a journey, in which some values are chosen and others rejected, there is a constant hierarchisation happening. A painter makes intuitive judgments about the value, meaning – according to Stróżewski – making descriptive judgments telling something about the sought value, subsequently making evaluating judgments which assume the judgments about the value. Finally, the painter evaluates, trying to reach the individual essence of the value as seen in the light of the ideal value which defines it. According to Stróżewski, the evaluating judgements can be either true or false! Sometimes painters search for values they misunderstood, for example taking so called *sauce*⁸ for depth, or a fake pose for a dramatic gesture... And not only individual painters would do so, but even whole shallow trends in painting would try to im-

⁶ Ibidem, p. 129.

⁷ Vide: E. Panofsky, *Rozwój teorii proporcji jako odzwierciedlenie rozwoju stylu*, in: idem, *Średniowiecze*, tłum. G. Jurkowlaniec, A. Kozak, T. Dobrzeniecki, Warszawa 2001, p. 5.

⁸ Speaking about the so called *Munich sauce*.

itate great trends, preferring shallow values put on a show of great ones. For example, the time of Van Megeren was blind to his forgery of Ver Meer, because it misunderstood the value of Ver Meer's painting, taking secondary qualities for essential ones – impossible to achieve in a painting for the second time. Paintings of Josefa Israëls were at one point thought equal to those of Rembrandt, taking their *gallery form* as a repetition of Rembrandt's artistry.

The poles of oppositions governing creative activity

A painter – as well as any artist – searches for his own way within the field of energy, in between the poles of oppositions described in the *Dialectics of Creative Activity* by Władysław Stróżewski⁹. Painters operate within the area demarcated by dialectical poles of oppositions that *govern* creative activity. Aiming at completing their work within the field of tensions created by the poles, they search for and fulfil a particular value. The dialectical poles should not be understood as points; in their clear form they create centres of energy whose radiation intermingles and mixes, subjecting the painter to their interweaving influence.

Stróżewski discussed the activity of poles in such detail that I will content myself with a few remarks only. Stróżewski distinguishes a few pairs of oppositions, of which some are particularly interesting to me because of the painterly quest. First of all, it is *determinism and necessity*. This pair of oppositions plays an important role in the painterly quest. However, at the starting point every painter is more or less determined by the rules which he is aware of, and which bind him and can be subject to interpretation¹⁰, still *in the very beginning* these very rules were also searched for: e.g. the history of Greek sculptural canon, Greek architectural canons or icon writing canon in the Eastern Church. The new canon was searched for through constructing, sculpting, painting and writing icons... Once found, it was not applied conventionally, and whenever it was, the works produced were dead. Robert Musil writes about it: "Es kann deshalb nützen, sich daran erinnern zu lassen, dass in schlechten Zeiten die schrecklichsten Häuser und Gedichte nach genau ebenso schönen Gr-

⁹ W. Stróżewski, *Dialektyka twórczości*, op. cit.

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 336.

undsätzen gemacht werden wie in den besten..."¹¹. It applies to writing icons as well. The rules are established, but every real icon displays new, unexpected values. The potential to reveal new modalities of icons can be seen in the schools of icon writing and in the deep difference between the icons of Theophanes the Greek and Andrei Rublev, which – however different – are both icons! Such new values were revealed through the icons written by Jerzy Nowosielski, who pointed to the unexpected potential hidden in the iconography of the Eastern Church. New modalities of values, by necessitating their realisation, liberated the iconographer from the determinism of rules. However, many icons are not *written*, but remain dead, despite having been created in full accordance with the canon. A similar regularity can be noted in the works of architecture or sculpture completed most strictly according to the rules, yet dead. I am not a musician myself, but I trust the words of professionals that also here one can find such works. In this way, a painter establishes certain rules, which then form a canon and are inherited by the successors creating a school. The school – having exhausted the potential of the canon – fossilises and the need for further quest occurs.

Further on, Stróżewski mentions such poles of oppositions as: spontaneity and control; freedom and rigour or improvisation and calculation. In the *Gementemuseum* near the Hague¹² we can see an unfinished painting of Piet Mondrian. I do not remember now, whether it is one of the few paintings entitled "Broadway Boogie-Woogie" or "Victory Boogie Woogie", a precise indication of the work is not crucial here. It is important, however, that the painting is unfinished and that thanks to it we can learn about the painterly procedure of Mondrian, who – contrary to what one could imagine looking at the completed works – did not outline the pattern of squares and rectangles first to then fill them with colours. Mondrian searched for a pattern when sketching on canvas, and then searched for the colour by sticking pieces of colourful paper in a desired format. The colour of the papers was supposed to prompt him with a colour solution and point to the right direction of the final colour arrangement on canvas. In this unfinished painting we can see an interaction of spontaneity and control; freedom and rigour; improvisation and calculation. Spontaneous and free but at the same time rigorously controlled drawing of lines of the developing

¹¹ R. Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, Reinbeck bei Hamburg 1978, p. 54.

¹² Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, Stadhouderslaan 41, 2517 HV Den Haag.

composition; improvisation in putting forward possible colour solutions of which eventually only one will prove right – in accordance with the inner necessity to regulate the painting.

Logos of the epoch: from vision to composition

A painter following a route pervaded by the energies emanating from the opposite poles, searches for values *led* – so to say – by painting itself. His quest depends on his artistic stance. For example, every painter will search for different values and in a different way – an impressionist, a cubist, an abstractionist (this too depending on the trend of abstractionism), an expressionist, etc. The spectrum will broaden endlessly, if we take into account all the past and future trends and painterly stances...

Stróżewski's texts are interspersed with an idea of a logos particular for each epoch and central for all the arts of its time. In every epoch, every art – including painting – spurts from a central logos, which it then explains using its own particular ratio. In their quest of values, painters follow their path, directed by the central logos of the epoch encompassing them, the logos of painting and ultimately of their own. Some values are definitely suggested by the spirit of the times – these, of course, fade the fastest. There exist, however, so called *eternal* values, which remain even after the qualities related to the epoch are no longer there in the work – these are works pervaded by the values – such as the masterpieces of various epochs... – times changed, the worlds in which the masterpieces were created are no longer there, but we still admire them, even though in this way we participate in another epoch...

What values deserve this admiration? What values immanent to the logos of painting were sought by the painters of all times? The answer is risky, but I will not try to avoid it. I emphasise that I am interested in painting, because in the present state of art my exposition could prompt a question why I omit numerous phenomena which are not painting, but which these days are also – or perhaps first of all – considered art. I confine myself to painting, believing that through it – thanks to the analogy of arts, sometimes called *correspondance des arts* – I will also get an insight into other arts.

In my opinion, the following values sought by painters are immanent to the logos of painting:

One is for sure a *vision*. It is about directing the spiritual gaze towards the ideas of certain principal values, more precisely towards the

constants of these values, whose variables facilitate various concretisations of the vision until its potential is exhausted. New possibilities can also arise later – the phenomena of renaissances support this notion. The constant data in the romantic and classical vision have been described by Władysław Tatarkiewicz¹³.

A painter searches for a language, not necessarily a new one. In many epochs it was enough to learn the given language, which was, however, modified by each artist independently. The language of painting is a language of silence and it cannot be replaced by any other. It is untranslatable. "But just as in the written language we have words and phrases, also painting has its words, its syntax, its style"¹⁴.

A painter searches for a technique, for technical values: a line drawn with a piece of coal, a brush, a pencil – of different thickness... each has a particular value in the painting. One can insist that these are elongated patches, but their painterly effect, their valuable painterly quality is very different. The choice of material determinates the style of the painting. Depending on what technique, what kind of paint we choose (oil, tempera, acrylic...), the value of the painting and its style will differ. The way of concretising these values in a work of art is the painterly technique. Balthus writes on it:

[...] painting is a handicraft in the fullest, most "handicraft" meaning of the word. It implies such a high degree of mastery that the painter's life is not enough for it¹⁵.

[...] handicraft is a consequence of a moral stance, which requires intelligence of the mind and of the hand, as well as high discipline of the spirit¹⁶.

[...] the division between art and painterly handicraft is the sanctification of the split between art and the work of an artisan. [...] handicraft, craftsmanship [...] was art's compost, it provided food for it, its substance.

For the master values his profession so highly that he does not let anyone look at his works until they are finished. For him incompleteness – the trademark of our times – is merely a sign of negligence or perhaps even inability to complete one's work [...] an indication of a loss of professional dignity¹⁷.

¹³ W. Tatarkiewicz, *Dzieje sześciu pojęć*, Warszawa 1975, pp. 207, 217.

¹⁴ Balthus, *Samotny wędrowiec w krainie malarstwa, Rozmowy z Françoise Jaunin*, Warszawa 2004, p. 22 [trans. M. Bręgiel-Benedyk].

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 76.

¹⁶ Ibidem, pp. 76–77.

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 65–66.

Throwing academism aside, also the concepts of technique and handicraft have been cast away. But at the same time [...] technique and handicraft are essential to art¹⁸.

A painter always searches for the formal values, which make the work a work of art. It happens also when the formal values are not themed.

A painter searches for colour: it carries qualities of value and provides a foundation for the painting in its qualitative endowment. It is about the whole canvas to be filled with one kind of colour, so that the position is not differentiated depending on the object. In this way, all the elements of the painting should be homogeneous. Every colourist would for sure say: I search for colour. In every painting there are colourful patches, and in each case they are treated differently (in terms of size, shape, position and technique), depending on the style: we will see different patches in the paintings of van Eyck, Titian, Rembrandt, Turner, Monet, Braque, Matisse, Balthus, Bacon, Freud... The list of names could be much longer. The way a painter treats the colourful patches determines the ultimate character of the painting. The patches interact with each other in various ways, creating so called combinations. A combination is a valuable state of affairs, in which more than one colourful patch participates, especially because of a particular trait of the patch. I characterised the combinations using the theory of relations by Roman Ingarden¹⁹. I would like to include also a few remarks on the experience of colour made by Balthus:

There is a certain kind of colour memory – thanks to it I recognise them, react to them, feel them vibrating. I apply them next to each other – and they interact. They are like waves which need to be matched.

[...] colours are an expression of what I call their «body». Every colour emits its particular light.

A precisely rendered colour in a way approximates the absolute.

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 69. I remembered a missed statement of Jan Cybis, which sounded more or less like this: “a colour aptly applied is thereby applied technically correctly”.

¹⁹ In his work on the structure of paintings, Ingarden distinguished a layer of colourful patches. This structure – beside the semantic and axiological side of a painting – belongs to technical aspect of a painterly work. The content of this layer is very important for the painting. It constitutes the material side of the layer of colourful patches, in which valuable relations of patches occur.

Colour exists exclusively in relation to other colours, it is like a tone of music, whose ultimate sound depends on the context. Only after the work is complete [...] it becomes clear what it is the real colour of the painting²⁰.

It is in connection to colour that painters search for the painterly matter, the painterly substance.

They also search for composition. A valuable quality of composition is the unity of composition, achieved through composing in accordance with the laws of logic of composing and composition. The logic of composing and composition is not simply invented and does not result from *a priori* assumptions. To all painterly work an assumption-less stance applies. The logic of composing is immanent to the emerging painting, therefore it should be thoroughly understood and fully developed while work is in progress. However, the work is still governed by the general rules described by the formal aesthetics, the establishments of which as well as his own suggestions were presented recently by Lambert Wiesing²¹.

What is more, the logic here enters the open plane of the painting, which is also governed by its own rules. These rules were described by Kandinsky in his two studies on the foundations of painting²².

Beauty and the aesthetically valuable moments

Apart from these values sought by the majority, many painters – more or less consciously – searched for more detailed values. In various ways, they searched for beauty. It is beauty and the related values to which Władysław Stróżewski's book *Wokół piękna*²³ is dedicated. Sublime [Loftiness] was sought after too, but not only that! Roman Ingarden put the aesthetically valuable moments together²⁴ forming groups of material moments – including emotional, intellectual, formal – within them also

²⁰ Balthus, *Samotny wędrowiec w krainie malarstwa...*, op. cit., pp. 81–82.

²¹ L. Wiesing, *Widzialność obrazu. Historia i perspektywy estetyki formalnej*, tłum. K. Krzemieniowa, Warszawa 2008.

²² W. Kandinsky, *Punkt i linia a płaszczyzna. Przyczynek do analizy elementów malarzkich*, tłum. S. Fijałkowski, Warszawa 1986; idem *O duchowości w sztuce*, tłum. S. Fijałkowski, Łódź 1996.

²³ W. Stróżewski, *Wokół piękna*, op. cit.

²⁴ R. Ingarden, *Zagadnienie systemu jakości estetycznie doniosłych*, in: idem, *Przeżycie, dzieło, wartość*, Kraków 1966, p. 162.

purely objective moments, derivatives for the perceptor... He also pointed to the ways (modi) in which the qualities exist...

These valuable qualities were explored differently by different painters, depending on the epoch. At one time, painters looked for symmetry and harmony, as well as ideal proportions, at another, their very oppositions: asymmetry, dissonance, proportions not ideal, but this time, say, full of emotional expression.

But what does it mean to search for symmetry or proportion? Is it only about composing the painting along the axis of symmetry? The word *symmetry* means *commensurateness*. It is about all parts and moments of a painting being mutually commensurate, and the axial symmetry is one case of commensurateness. Whenever everything in the painting is mutually commensurate, it can be said (after Stróżewski) that the painting – as a painting – exist commensurately. The same applies to all other values. A painting exists in the way that the values penetrate the entire work, all its layers and their content.

Translated by Marta Bręgiel-Benedyk

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