THE MODEL OF AN "ARTISTIC SITUATION"

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ABSTRACT: The essay investigates the possibility of a closer connection of Husserlian phenomenology and that tradition in semiotics of art which originates mainly with Schelling and Goethe. The affinity between semiotically approached tropology and phenomenology is supported if a symbol is conceived not only as an analogy of the designated, but also as its direct grasping. This grasping shows some features of rational contemplation as understood by phenomenology. Modelling symbol as a synthetic trope enables us to proceed to the model of an "artistic situation" as a square generated by a decomposition of the triangle of reference. The complexity of the processes within the "square" results from a fusion of the effects of the linear, natural circuit and the feedback, culturally historical circuit.

Keywords: semiotics of art, phenomenology, symbol, artistic situation, model.

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1. Introduction

In this essay we are going to investigate that model of the work of art which follows the tradition of Goethe's and Schelling's theory of symbol (Goethe 1953; Schelling 1927). Symbol as a dynamic, synthetic and autonomous entity is contrasted with static, one-dimensional, unilateral, speculative, purely subservient and illustrative allegory. Of course we take into account that one cannot compare symbol and allegory on the tropological level without reservation. First, allegory is not always counted

among tropes. Second -and importantly, as can be seen from H.-G. Gadamer's key work *Truth and Method* (Gadamer 1965)- allegory has its origin in rhetoric, exegesis and hermeneutics; it was always an *explanation* of the divine. Symbol, on the other hand, strove for *participation* in the divine; it possessed a gnostic function and a metaphysical basis. This genetic difference left its trace on the distinction between the two figures.

In the course of the last decades, Eastern European countries have showed an eminent interest in this ancient poetical tradition and its revival. The reason is easy to see: under the totalitarian regimes, it was of particular importance to expose the fundamental issue of cultural politics, that of freedom in the arts, by means of the contrast between symbol, i.e. an artistic phenomenon principally independent from anything purely illustrative, and the principle of a subservient, utilitarian and illustrative artistic creation, i.e. allegory. It has to be stressed that our topic here is general principles, not, for instance, those great work of arts which are called, often imprecisely, allegorical.

2. Contemporary attempts to fuse symbolism and phenomenology

The major interest in Schelling's and Goethe's standpoint to the theory of symbol, however, appears much earlier in Central and Eastern European countries. In Bohemia, it comes to the fore in manuals of poetics from the last century; in Russia, it found firm roots after the advent of symbolism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Thanks to, among others, the book *Symbolism* (1910) by poet and theoretician Andrey Biely, the orientation on the symbolist thought in Russia was so powerful that symbol as a characteristic was even proclaimed to be the common denominator of German and Russian culture. This tradition also supplied the framework for Russian philosopher and aesthetician A. F. Losev (1893-1988, a long-time concentration camp prisoner who became blind in later age) whose intellectual roots belonged to the era of symbolism. In his book *Symbol, its Problems, and Realistic Art* (Losev 1976), he developed on Goethe's and Schelling's lineage in the theory of symbol, but did more than that. He also combined this tradition with Husserl's concept of intentionality. In Losev's book, paragraphs devoted to symbols alternate with passages on phenomenology, especially on intentionality. He concentrates primarily on eight acts of consciousness: the thetic act, the objectifying act, the intentional act, the noematic act, the noetic act, the significant act, the semiotic act, and the semantic act.

The Georgian philosopher and aesthetician K.A. Swasyan is another author of works on symbol and phenomenology (Svasjan 1980, 1987). In the Czech Republic similar analyses were published by the author of this essay (Mathauser 1989, 1995, 1999). During the last International Slavistic Congress, organized in Krakow in 1998, several speakers -mostly, again, from post-communist countries[1]- adopted precisely this methodology combining the theory of symbol with phenomenology in order to supply an interpretation of great poetic figures. The common denominator seems to be the idea that although the act of consciousness does firmly grasp the intended "object by itself", in consequence of the above-mentioned *variety of the acts of consciousness* in a polyphonic symbolist context, the symbol emerges with its inner freedom by virtue of which it differs from allegory which is less richly equipped in terms of acts of consciousness.

An important consequence of the combination of both lineages, I believe, could be the ability to transcend an old misunderstanding between symbolism and phenomenology. This misunderstanding consists in the view that in contrast to the immediate intending of an object and in contrast to direct contemplation of the essence (as phenomenology describes these two operations), the reception of a symbol demands a detour: according to this view, the step from consciousness to the *truly intended* object has to go through the detour of a symbolic object as a completely different entity. The reception is supposed to proceed only by way of parallel or analogy with the real object. Semiotically oriented poetics (Wallon 1942, Barthes 1965), however, has already admitted many times that symbol -in contrast not only to allegory but also to other two-stage processes (such as index or analogy)- is a one-stage figure. The reception of a symbol cannot be reduced to a detour; the symbolic object contains in itself that to which it refers. The symbol of a sceptre not only refers to the royal majesty, but also contains the quality of being noble in itself. This "containing in itself" means more than just a psychological association connecting an index with the being which has left the trace. Index is analytic and two-stage; symbol is synthetic and one-stage.

In the symbolic synthesis of various components, in which the one-sidedness of particular components is being transcended by the opposite ones, the main roles belong to the metasign (allegory) and the metareferent (metaphor).

3. Allegory as the first point of departure to a model of symbol

To obtain a model of an "artistic situation", let us perform several decompositions of the original apices of Ogden's and Richards's *referential triangle*, which for good reason will be slightly modified.[2]

Re

S - sign
R - referent
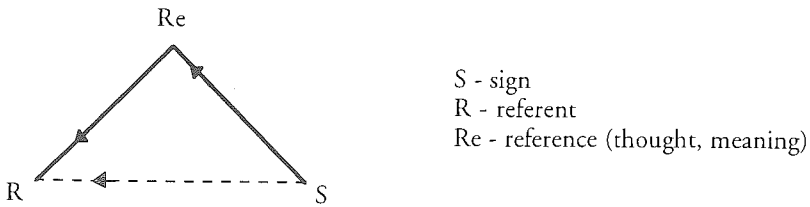Re - reference (thought, meaning)

R   S

Fig. 1

It is generally recognized that if the conditions of *real* relations have been fulfilled, i.e. the relation between sign S and reference Re is *correct* and the relation between reference Re and referent R is *adequate*, then the relation which occurs between the sign and the referent is not a real one. Rather, it is an *implicit* or *inserted* relation of *representation* (captured by the dots in the drawing).

If we take the triangle of reference, or actually its secondary - metasignificatory or connotational- replicas (in relation to which, the original referential triangle is a model of the first denotation), and capture in it those new relations that are described in the semiotics of art -e.g. by L. Hjelmslev (1961), R. Barthes, and others- we discover more figures. The first is a *model of the metasign*:

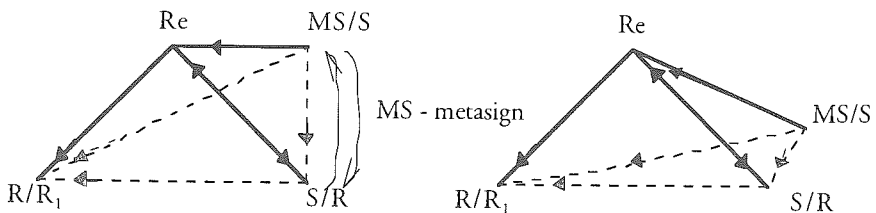in the commonly used shape of a pyramid

Re   MS/S   Re

MS - metasign   MS/S

R/R$_1$ S/R   R/R$_1$ S/R

Fig. 2 (metasign, allegory)

One of the ways of interpreting this scheme is to see it as a *model of allegory.* For example, the picture of a bee as an allegory of industry and frugality looks differently on the fronts of different savings companies -and the difference does not concern only the mutual comparison of the various depictions but also their relation to the ideal, imaginary and normative picture of a bee, or perhaps their relation to the postulate of such a picture. In such a relation, the ideal picture possesses the validity of the sign S (tending to abstraction), while the real depictions, treating the norm in all different manners, constitute the metasigns MS. The unique element is the referent R -industry and frugality. In the case of an advertisement and of an ironical realization of the metasign (a frequent element of contemporary advertising), the referent is ultimately fully unequivocal again, just as the address connected with it: Buy our goods!

The address is an urgent one; nevertheless, whenever we talk about a referent in an artistic situation or about its objective sphere in this essay, we always mean the correlate of an intention, not a "represented object" from the concept of an "isomorphic reflection of reality" neither an object within the "similarity-based" or "causally based" conception of image. (Cf. the profound criticism of several antiquated concepts made by Munich philosophers C. Ulises Moulines (1996), Th. Mormann (1997), U. Wink (1996) and J. Steinbrenner (1996).)

Of course, metasign is not connected only with allegory. The role of a metasign is particularly apparent in works where the central figure is, at least partially, constituted by a word, a saying, or a number. Let us take the hero of the famous novel *The Adventures of Good Soldier Schweik During the Great War* (1923) by Jaroslav Hasek; the role of a relatively abstract sign which functions as a triggering mechanism belongs here to the naive words of Baroness von Botzenheim: "Der brave Soldat Schweik." In fact, all Schweik's stories are ironical treatments, ironical metasigns of this sign which was used as the title of the novel.

Similar ironization by means of numerous subject metasigns occurs with respect to the title of Remarque's novel *Nothing New on the Western Front* (*Im Westen nichts Neues*) which is a stock slogan from war news. Or let us consider Gogol's *Dead Souls!* In bureaucratic slang, the phrase denotes serfs who have died in the meantime between two censuses but are still listed among the living; metaphorically, it describes the mental state of the farmers which bargain with the price of these fictitious "souls". Primarily, however, there is the "metasignificatory" concentration on the literally

taken sign of a "dead soul". There is a bitter irony in this -for how could a human soul be dead?

4. Metaphor as the second point of departure to the model of symbol

The other model stemming from the referential triangle is the *model of metaphor.*
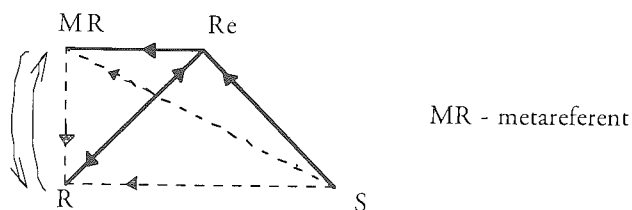

MR - metareferent

Fig. 3 (metareferent, metaphor)

   Unlike in the model of allegory, the sign S is, I believe, unique. This agrees with, among others, Richards's thesis that that which corresponds to a new idea in a metaphor is an old word, an old vehicle (Richards 1936). Obviously, in particular cases the poetic word can also be conditioned by a certain norm of its times, but ideally and unlike the sign of an allegory it demands no norm and often it even cannot tolerate it. In the ideal case, the word is fully free, fully arbitrary. We perceive precisely the word which has been used in the poem. (From the standpoint of intertextuality, we can also recollect a word from a different text by whose prism we receive the new text; this, however, does not occur on the guideline of a norm of a synchronic system, as it did in the case of allegory.)
   The verbal sign of a metaphor, on the other hand, points to several referents (R, MR), at least to two. The verbal sign "birch" points simultaneously to the referent "tree" and the referent "slim maid". This is well known. What needs to be stressed is that in poetry up to the 19th century usually only one of the referents was relevant, while the other was subservient; it served to shed light on the *comparatum.* In 20th century modern poetry, however, both *comparatum* and *comparans* have the same validity. In Bohemia, V. Nezval talked about this double relevancy in the program of the Czech poetism; in Russia, the topic was treated by O. Mandelstam and in France by J.-P. Sartre. To characterize modern metaphor, all three independently used the image of a *flower* and contrasted it with the very same

metaphor as understood in the past -different, even though it has the same objective equipment.

Our phenomenologically minded essay stresses the way an object is being intended. Thus, we want to mention that in some theories of metaphor (which are otherwise quite plausible, the interactive theory in particular) one puts metaphor in an excessively close connection with the momentum of simile. Simile is clearly apparent in the structure of metaphor; nevertheless one cannot say that all stages of metaphor are identical with this momentum. There are two aspects at issue:

a) Unlike allegory which is, by its nature, aprioristic, the best metaphors in an artistic text are felt as being *a posteriori*. [It is no accident that V. Zuska (1993), a Czech esthetician, connects the concept of metaphor with the temporal dimension of becoming.] The language of *a posteriori* is meant to suggest that metaphor is, as it were, unplanned; it only *occurs* spontaneously. While in ancient fables the image of a fox is always aprioristic (allegory of cunning), in later literary texts which develop in an *a posteriori* manner, one can find two lines of events progressing independently, namely that of a particular fox and that of a human being (e.g. the hunter). Only *a posteriori*, spontaneously and as their comparison, the metaphoric intertwining of their fates and natures comes to light. (What we mean is the feature of being unintentional from the standpoint of the text and its reception, not from the standpoint of the author and his or her personal biography which is not at issue here.) So much for the postulation of a conceptual couple *a priori-a posteriori* in the theory of metaphor, namely in connection with the case when the momentum of simile emerges at the end of the temporal dimension of the metaphor.

b) A feature connected with the previous, temporal standpoint is the *ontological* aspect. We will show it on a case which is extremely typical in modern poetry: a metaphor reaches climax at the moment when it fully separates from simile and from the comparative "like" (implicit in a metaphor), while instead it acquires the validity of an *ontological thesis* (including its poetic absurdity). That is the case, e.g., of the versified novel *Manon Lescaut* (1940) by V. Nezval (which is obviously a reworking of the prose work of abbot Prévost) and its metaphor "Manon is a bee, Manon is a rose thrown into a church". The recipient no longer perceives a simile here, but rather the double, ontically fully valid "is" which, in the air of poetic geniality, connects the religious and the erotic echo (church-rose, bee). The momentum of simile constituted only a preliminary supposition

allowing the identification of a human being with a natural phenomenon. In the poetry of this poetic trend, namely poetism, the "identification" itself is not established by the comparative (or explanatory, indeed exculpatory) word "like", but rather by the co-ordinating "and": not "girls like roses", but "roses and beautiful women" (Nezval 1928).

One aspect of the so-called "co-ordinating connection" is treated with great erudition by J. Jiroušek (1997) in his study on parataxis with respect to Czech literature. Concerning the co-ordination which contributed to differentiate Czech associative poetry from older, discursive poetic language, I would like to mention here a translator's puzzle. What I have in mind are Nezval's poetic *globals* (written without punctuation, with nouns only freely juxtaposed) such as *Cock the metalworker of time* (from the poem *All creature*). In Fühmann's translation of this *global* into German -*Hahn: Klempner der Zeit*- the colon testifies to the translator's worry that one should preserve the parataxis, but at the same time one should not, in the course of reception, hear the composite *Hahnklempner* (Fühmann 1978). In this manner, however, some features from the works of an avant-garde trend planning to create a language of *spells* (globals can be, as it were, read from both sides), transform into one-directional *poetic definitions*. It is true we know these from modern poetry as well, but rather from modern expressionism than from modern poetism and surrealism.

The rounded arrows in the model 3 suggest oscillations between two stages of metaphor. During the first, the metareferent seeks in the referent the common denominators of both: both the referents are being compared or they even partially fuse (the rounded arrow aims down). The second stage, on the contrary, occurs when metaphor neglects all comparison, the relation of similarity or dissimilarity plays no role, while metareferent acquires independence; following the above-mentioned rule of "coordinative connection", it, e.g., becomes a noun (the rounded arrow rises again). Yet we have to ask now: what is the relation of symbol to the two tropes we have considered so far, namely allegory and metaphor?

5. The model of symbol

Symbol as a synthetic figure represents the connection of a number of aesthetic (even logic -cf. the concept of syllogism) phenomena; in the first place, however, it connects the allegoric and metaphoric principle. (Thus in the case of the allegoric principle, we admit its transition from an opposite of symbol to its element.)

R - referent
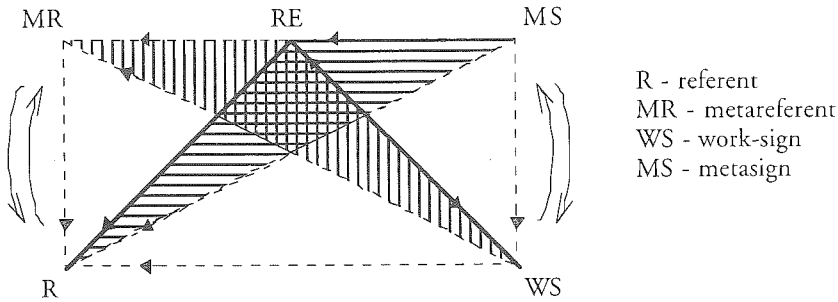MR - metareferent
WS - work-sign
MS - metasign

Fig. 4 (symbol)

Unlike both the model of allegory and of metaphor, in the model of symbol oscillation occurs on both sides of the scheme, on the side of sign as much as on the side of referent. *Symbol waves with both wings.* From the potential of allegory, symbol exploits the ability of exposed rational generalization [in which, following de Man (1989), we could also see estrangement, distance], while allegorical discursivity is simultaneously transcended by metaphoric wit, ambiguity and intuitiveness.

Regarding the image of a fox, we have talked about its use both in allegory and in metaphor. Fox as a *symbol,* however, is a yet richer phenomenon. Symbol shares the quality which is ascribed to particularly artistic segments, namely the impossibility to exploit it fully by any interpretation. In the famous opera *Cunning Little Vixen* by the Czech composer Leoš Janáček,[3] the heroine is a wild beast of the forest and at the same time a well-bred foster-child from the gamekeeper's lodge, a shy bride and at the same time a saucy bargainer, etc. In fact, the vixen is not the only ambivalent entity. This symbolic, indeed mythic image (the vixen can be seen as a myth of freedom), spreads an atmosphere of good will and independence; it does not seem to be an accident that the experienced gamekeeper has never shot the vixen and that the teacher and the parson have missed their erotic opportunities.

Or let us take *Sabeth*, the drama of German playwright Günther Eich! While in the opera of the Czech composer, the main creature is a vixen transformed from an allegory (cunning) into a polyvalent symbol, in Eich's play (originally a broadcast script) such an appearance is a *rook*, originally again an allegoric image (wisdom) which, in a similar way, changes into a

symbol. In the circumference of his being, in which -in contrast to a simple allegoric plot- a complicated love-story is experienced, there occur the human fates of the lady teacher and the headmaster; though the rook does not influence them directly, they bear the seal of his kindness.

Let us return to the image of a bee, which we have referred to so far as either an allegory of industry or as a metaphor of female unaccountability. To speak of a bee as a *symbol* becomes legitimate only in the case of, e.g., the movie *A Thousand-year-old Bee* by Slovak director Juraj Jakubisko. Throughout the movie, one can follow a magnificent image of a gigantic bee as the grandmother of an industrious family of village bricklayers (that is the *allegoric* axis of the movie), but this image is intertwined with a number of *metaphoric* excursions using -in a lyrical, grotesque and erotic manner- the sweetness of honey as the product of the bees. The bee world becomes *symbolic* thanks to the combination of *a priori* allegoricity with *a posteriori* metaphoricity.

So far, we have been speaking of metasign and metareference, or of allegory and metaphor, and especially of symbol. The latter especially brought us close to the goal of this essay which throughout has been the model of an artistic situation as such.

6. The linear model of an "artistic situation"

In the early 1940s, the system of Jan Mukarovsky (the founder of Czech structuralism in literary science as a trend dating back to the 1920s) came to exhibit an important additive feature. While a deep decomposition on the side of the signifier had already been apparent (instead of a unique and isolated object, there was the whole life experience of the recipient stretching above the apex R), now the decomposition started also on the side of the sign: there was not only the work-sign, but also work-thing as a newly emerging concept (Mukarovsky 1943).

EO - aesthetic object
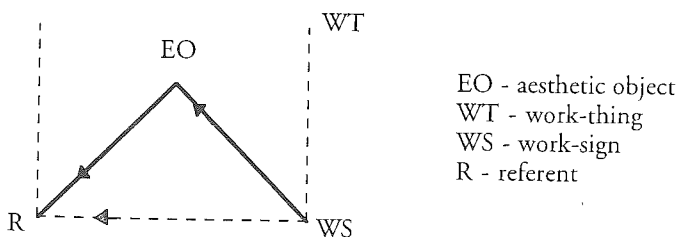WT - work-thing
WS - work-sign
R - referent

Fig. 5 (J. Mukarovsky)

We can see *work-thing* as an acme of decompositions during which intentionality, characteristic of work-sign, slowly disappears. Once again the issue is not the intentionality of the author with his or her personal biography but rather of the text: its semantic unity decreases while that which is not-united increases and eventually it triumphs at the apex of "work-thing".

Let us come back to the decompositions on the side of the signified. I believe that as a correlate of the work-thing from the axis of the sign, we find here -as a similar conclusion of the decompositions- the *material* in the broad sense. This "dispositional universe" stands on the verge of transparent instrumentality which will belong to it on the *material-work-thing* axis; however, with respect to its relation to the *referent*, the *material M* remains a conclusion of the thematizable objectivities of a work of art. Evidence of this thematizability is, e.g., the awareness of the transformation of the material (with respect to the original) which has occurred in a copy of a statue, or a very clear awareness of the language of a lyrical poem which has been translated into another language. Thus, the material M is an extreme case of thematizable objectivities.

If we want to draw conclusions from these presuppositions, then the only way is to connect the apex of the material M with the apex of the work-thing WT. We acquire a square which, unlike the triangle of reference, corresponds to the *whole of an artistic situation*.
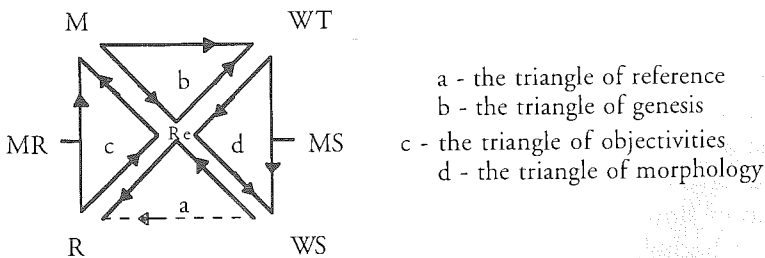

M   WT   a - the triangle of reference
                              b - the triangle of genesis
MR   c   d   MS   c - the triangle of objectivities
                              d - the triangle of morphology
R   WS

Fig. 6 (linear shape of an artistic situation)

The most important parts of the model are two mutually crossing figures. The *vertical figure* (*a, b*) consists of the *triangle of reference a* and of the *triangle of genesis b*, the latter being turned upside down in relation to the former. While the first triangle supplies a scheme of semiotic, synchronically referential reception, the other triangle is a scheme of real,

diachronically genetic creation of the text (by the author as much as in the consciousness of the recipient). In a similar way, the *horizontal figure (c, d)* consists of two complementary triangles. On the right side, we find the *triangle of morphology d* (pertaining to this triangle is all that in the text which can be characterized as proper either to work-sign or to work-thing). Apposite to it, there is the *triangle of objectivities c* -the domain of, first, all that which is intended by the morphology of the work, by both its *signs* and its *things*, and, second, all that which is spontaneously understood as "source" or "model" of the morphology of the work in question. (The quotation marks suggest that one cannot deduce from these terms an ontological or similarity-based theory of the creation of image; all we refer to is the manner of intending in general.)

The sides of the square which we have found outline a *linear cycle*. It is common to progress from work-sign WS to referent R, from here on to material M, and hence (as from the means of representation of the referent) ultimately to work-thing WT. The last stage of the cycle is a step from this semantically not fully explicated entity to semantically united and explicated work-sign, i.e. a return to the point of departure of the whole cycle.

The principle of the examples thus far introduced had been recognized by theoreticians; what was new were rather some of the models. But it has to be said now that the model of the situation of art with a purely linear cycle suffices only for a certain level of literary and artistic development. In particular, it suffices for the symbol which is often formulated by the slogan: "What would it be, if it were at all?".

In this way, Czech writer Bohumil Hrabal (currently the most translated author in the language) in his prose *Noisy solitude* (1994) compared Jesus Christ and the philosopher Lao-Tze. If they had both been popular, Christ would have been a top tennis player, Lao-Tze a rich businessman who does not know how to live; socially, the former would have been a playboy, the latter a bachelor; with respect to one's neighbours, the former would have been Love, the latter Emptiness, etc. Although the simile is permeated with symbolist atmosphere, the semiosis remains unidirectional, linear: whatever the equipment of the given situation, it is still true that the semiosis progresses from the signs *Christ* and *Lao-Tze* to expected referents. In spite of all oscillations (cf. fig. 4), this model of symbol is still governed by clear logic. Contemporary, especially post-modern art and literature, however, confront us with more complicated cases, e.g. with an a-logic reversal of the relation between the sign and the referent.

7. The feedback model of an "artistic situation"

One of the first steps towards the description of this fact was made by Russian formalism which proclaimed the artistic text to be *self-valuable* (Jakobson 1922), and from Prague structuralism which talked of poetic language as being a "self-purpose" (Mukarovsky 1936).

Contemporary art performs steps which we might call "reversals of semiotic paradigms" and which need new theoretical explication. In Fellini's movie *Roma*, we look at a fashion show of church costumes. First there is a village parson riding a bike, then an equally poor nun, but the positions in the church hierarchy slowly rise and the models eventually represent a cardinal and ultimately even the pope. But we see that when the "pope" comes in his wonderful carriage, the audience is already kneeling. The signs -the model and his robe- stop serving as signs; the sign identifies with the signified. The case in question, however, profoundly differs from the commonly referred to mythical or magical fusion of the signifying and the signified. To give an example, feelings of sacred awe (especially in the audience present at the fashion show) get mixed with equally strong feelings of irony (in the audience in the cinema).

Fellini turns the semiotic paradigm: the semiosis, as it seems, no longer progresses from the sign to the referent but rather the other way round -from the referent to the sign. In contrast to the spontaneity of myth, the shift in the semiosis is clearly felt and also the dominating idea will differ from the above-mentioned slogan: "What would it be...?". Now, it could be, for instance, the Möbius's stripe: we progress on its outer side and suddenly we find ourselves on the inner side.

The example of a modern work of art, however, could make it clear retrospectively that even in traditional text structures, particular elements are frequently freer in this sense than we normally admit. We should therefore attempt to use our model to systematize a number of disparate insights brought forth by older artistic and literary criticism. We may also find it useful to take up some other concepts employed by phenomenologically influenced aesthetics.
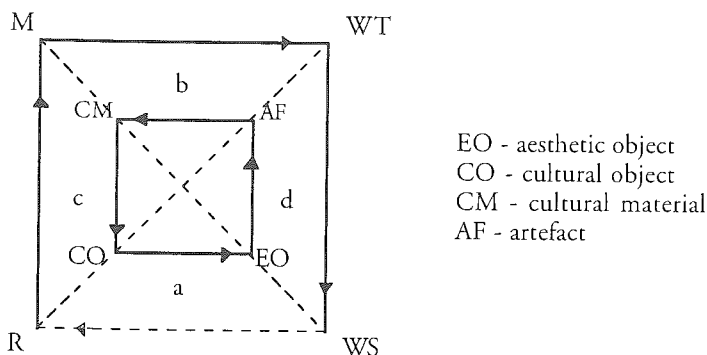
EO - aesthetic object
CO - cultural object
CM - cultural material
AF - artefact

Fig. 7 (Two-directional figure of the model of an artistic situation)

8. On the conceptual couples of the feedback model

First, there are two Mukarovsky's concepts, namely *aesthetic object* (EO) and *artefact* (AF). The term *aesthetic object* as used for a work of art was adopted by Jan Mukarovsky from the phenomenological context of B. Christiansen (Christiansen 1912). Unlike the rather scientist concept of *sign*, the aesthetic object was interpreted primarily in a culturally historic manner in the Prague school. Just as the aesthetic object cannot be confused with work-sign, nor is the concept of *artefact* always identical with the concept of work-thing in Mukarovsky. It shares the stage of consummation of the creative process, but while artefact is a reality perceptible by the senses and intentionally created by the author, work-thing is rather a sum of principles (the principle of unintentionality, semantic non-unity, etc.).

With respect to the aesthetic object, the most important fact is that precisely through it the artefact becomes truly visible: only after the work has been experienced as an aesthetic object, does the artefact become visible in its artistic qualities -cf. the direction of the link from EO to AF in fig. 7. It is exactly in this relation between the aesthetic object and the artefact that the reversal of the linear cycle (fig. 6) occurs; thus it also contributes to restricting the illustrative concepts of art. What happens in fig. 7 is that within the purely linearly based model of an artistic situation, there appears a parallel model but one oriented on the reverse cycle, i.e. on feedback.

Thus, we have discovered that two apices of the *inner square*, namely the aesthetic object and the artefact, are cultural twins of two apices of the

outer square, namely of work-sign (the twin is EO) and work-thing (the twin is AF). A similar feature is also exhibited by the two remaining apices of the inner square. *Cultural material* (CM), in fact, is not natural material -unlike the apex M, which concerns, e.g., colour conceived with respect to its chemical composition- but rather pigment mixed once and once only for a certain motif of a particular painting; it is that which can be discovered on the way to artefact only as *its own material.*

Nor is the connection between *cultural material* (CM) and *artefact* (AF) as unidirectional (from left to right) as is the case between natural material M and work-thing WT in the outer cycle. It is not sufficient that material M (hyle) be absorbed by shape WT (morphe) and, thus, virtuosity (*super-habilitas*, perfectness) be achieved. The other direction is also relevant, that is, the return from the artefact (AF) to the original dispositional universe, to the cultural habitat of human beings (CM). Though the once achieved virtuosity of the work-thing remains preserved (Picasso is an example here), the artefact at the same time becomes singularly humanized, open to human imperfections and errors as much as to differring interpretations. The subject of the described treatment (i.e. of "ironization" in the formalist sense of the word) is the superability; that is why in respect to this new stage following superability, we use the term *meta-ability.*

A reversal in comparison to the relation between the referent R and natural material M occurs also in the relation between the *cultural object* (CO) and *cultural material* (CM). *Cultural material* no longer occupies a subservient position (i.e. as a means of reproduction of the referent R) such as natural material M exhibited with respect to the referent R. On the contrary, "cultural object" rather supplies an opportunity for "cultural material" to show itself, a chance to exhibit itself.

"Cultural object", however, does not remain passive in this. Its activity is depicted by the last feedback link in the system of the inner square, namely the one between the *cultural object* (CO) and the *aesthetic object* (EO). "Cultural object" is not a natural referent only to be reproduced or depicted; rather, "cultural object" is subject to a *portrait.* It possesses the *gift of being captured in a portrait;* it is not only *represented* by the sign, but it is also a signifier itself. The landscape of the aesthetic object itself is being observed from the standpoint of the cultural object which is on the portrait.

Thus we have arrived at the last of the reversals introduced by the inner square in the model of an artistic situation, and we have completed our

argumentation showing the structure of an artistic situation proceeding from the non-subservient, anti-illustrative nature of art.

Notes

[1] Speakers presenting papers on the relation between aesthetics and philosophy, especially phenomenology, included: A. Han from Hungary (on the work of B. Pasternak), M. Cymborska-Leboda from Poland and M. Grabar from France (on the work of V. Ivanov), J. P. Locher from Switzerland (on the work of J. Kolar, V. Popa and G. Ajgi), D. Ksicova from the Czech Republic (on the poetics of Russian and Czech modernists) and the author of this essay (on the work of J. Mukarovsky, R. Ingarden and A. F. Losev).

[2] The terminology of the Czech aesthetics belongs to those which, instead of the term *symbol* as a name for one of the apices of the referential triangle, use the term *sign* (consequently also in combinations *metasign, supersign, work-sign*). In this, they follow the tradition of another triangle, that of Ch. Bally. This terminological usage is connected with Bally's positing of the apex *sign* to the right. The habit of reading from left to right extends also on schemes and this positing is especially advantageous in times when the link of sign and meaning enters into connection with *secondary* triangles of metasign and connotation.

[3] The opera was composed on the basis of the novel *Cunning Little Vixen* by Rudolf Tesnohlidek from 1921 and staged for the first time in 1924.

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