

Philosophers, Epigones, and Aesthetes. At the Interface of Ideological and Aesthetic Statements on Music Production

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ABSTRACT: This paper explores various (even contradictory) evaluations and perspectives on musical works that originated in a variety of cultural and geographical areas in the 20th century. It presents opposing views (coming from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, from different ideological positions, political groups or establishments, etc.). It analyses what Theodor W. Adorno's negative dialectics, Grigori M. Schneerson's aesthetic disorder, Władysław Malinowski's theologizing of socialist

realism, and Arthur C. Danto's expression about abuse of beauty have in common. At the same time, it demonstrates how particular philosophical, aesthetic, and ideological conceptual frameworks affect music production and reception. The philosophical conceptual framework and contemporary theoretical ideologizing views have a broader scope and document the mutual interactions of arts and ideology at both poles of the Euro-Atlantic culture axis in the 20th century.

KEYWORDS:

arts, ideology, socialist realism, Theodor W. Adorno, Władysław Malinowski, Grigori M. Schneerson, Arthur C. Danto

INTRODUCTION

The mission of the arts and culture is to cultivate the public environment and public opinion. The ideological regimes of the second half of the 20th century treated it in a sophisticated manner. They had at their disposal the already established model of the 1930s Russian arts, in which a thin dividing line between understanding avant-garde first as progress and later as a hostile “force” turned out to be a threatening indication of the future of the arts and artists in the socialist camp.¹ Even at that time, it started to be clear that the pressures of the totalitarian regime on the arts could be pursued through requiring committed works, and the censorship or self-censorship could accommodate the striking power of propaganda into the arts. In composing, socio-political requirements were manifested either as guidelines and norms or as attempts to misinterpret the already composed works (even those of earlier periods) in line with the dominant ideology.

The pressures of the totalitarian regime in Central Europe had some effect on the nature of musical pieces of its leading as well as less talented representatives. Musical historiography has already in part explored the causes and consequences of the pressures – where it was possible to prove it by means of primary sources (musical works), yet more so by means of secondary sources (all other traces in the life of society). The past cannot be changed; thus, it is more appealing to learn whether the arts could be used for spreading and supporting ideology today. It may represent a potential threat in particular in regimes that appear to be democratic but have arisen through revolutionary movements on the ground of the original totalitarian regimes in Central, Southeastern, and Eastern Europe.² It is there – primarily in newly established, but not yet fully developed democracies – that the attempts to influence culture and in part new works, occasionally appear even today. However, they are not voiced as direct explicit requirements for artistic works to coincide with political moods. Rather, it happens indirectly, through statements and pressures of government departments’ leaders belonging to certain political groups, usually nationalist or extremist in nature.³

ARTS AS A POLITICAL MATTER?

If we consider the recent past of the 20th-century totalitarian regimes, it can be

1 In the 1920s – 1930s, during the development of socialist arts in the USSR, three model types of artistic views were present: 1. traditionalism (relying on tradition as a guarantee of continuity of development); 2. almost polar avant-garde consciousness demanding revolutionary arts for revolutionary times (inevitable innovation of content and form); 3. anti-modernism (an effort to reduce the complexity of works in order to increase their communicativeness), or proletarian arts (so-called Proletkult). See BURLAS, L. *Pohľady na súčasnú slovenskú hudobnú kultúru* [Views on Contemporary Slovak Music Culture]. Bratislava : OPUS, 1987, p. 61.

2 A typical example is the so-called Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia, which began on November 17, 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall (November 9, 1989) and the subsequent unification of Germany (October 3, 1990), or the collapse of the USSR (December 26, 1991).

3 Experts qualify them as efforts to ossify such artistic manifestations that lack potential to develop further. A typical example is musical folklore.

affirmed that the so-called “soft” or “non-aggressive” ideologies embodied in the (desired) artwork were quite instrumental at that time; internally, though, they did not enjoy as much recipient satisfaction and acceptance as it was manifested outwards. However, totalitarian regimes would take reprisal actions and would pursue their ideological demands quite aggressively. At times, it was almost an existential threat; yet, in the states of the socialist bloc⁴, the impact was not as harsh as in the then USSR. The use of economic tools to support ideologically desirable arts was quite common in totalitarian regimes. In his study *Ornament revolúcie* [The Ornament of the Revolution] (1972), Czech musicologist Vladimír Karbusický describes how much the authorities corrupted composers and artists in Czechoslovakia by providing them with high remuneration after the first building euphoria has come to an end so that they would continue to write mass songs, cantatas and opera librettos “on suitable topics.”⁵ The crisis of the “consent” to such works began after Stalin’s death; throughout the 1960s, it passed into the stage of disillusionment so that finally the aesthetic ideal of ceremonial ornamental arts was artificially kept alive by strong corruption⁶ in this sphere in the normalization era⁷.

Today’s post-totalitarian regimes aiming for democracy can no longer afford reprisal action. If there is effort to suppress opposing attitudes, this is done in some secrecy, especially by reducing the flow of money for certain groups of artists. Outwardly, the fight against freely-expressing artists translates into the establishment’s pretended effort to “improve” laws or the functioning of support funds. The arts which please the powerful usually express their personal taste norms, and these can be indirectly promoted through exercising their powers in support allocation. Frequently, the arts favoured by them have properties that can be well adapted to the requirements of the propaganda of a certain ideology or political ideas. In the 20th century, we see many examples of committed arts. They can serve as evidence that propaganda in the actual artistic practice and in the social reception of arts does not stimulate artistic work; it may as well corrode arts, corrupt artists, and declare freedom of expression but only on the surface. The struggle for the dominance of a certain type of values in music cannot be pre-determined. However, the “artist,” usually a second-rate or third-rate one (very rarely first-class artist), is able to trace it somehow and connect with people influencing financial mechanisms.

4 An eloquent and relatively well-known example in Slovak music is troubles that Eugen Suchoň’s opera *Krútnava* (1949) encountered, which negatively impacted both the future of the work and the composer, who suffered from the condemnation of the work and from the requirements for its modifications practically throughout his life. For more see: ŠTEFKOVÁ, M. Cesty k autentickej Suchoňovej *Krútnave* [The Path to Suchoň’s Authentic *Krútnava*]. In *Slovenské divadlo*, 2022, Vol. 70, Issue 2, pp. 132–157. DOI: 10.31577/sd-2022-0010.

5 KARBUSICKÝ, V. Ornament revoluce. In *Hudební věda*, 1991, Vol. 28, Issue 4, pp. 341–359.

6 Corruption means announcing competitions for composing new mass songs, a new libretto for an opera, etc., while each act like this was exhaustively defined, i.e. the financial remuneration was announced, i.e. how much a composer will earn if he will be “successful.”

7 The period of “normalization” of social conditions by the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia came after the aggressive invasion of the Warsaw Pact troops (August 1968) and the failure of the revolutionary years 1968 – 1969. During the 1970s, it was basically a reaffirmation of the direction of the Communist Party, including arts.

Another attribute of today's mechanisms of ensuring the "desired" production and reception in culture is the media dictate, which has replaced the former dictate of the so-called proletariat, the actually ruling class represented by the Communist Party. Its requirements were seemingly (and also quite illusory) met in the art of socialist realism. However, capitalism as a new alternative to the social order of post-totalitarian states and its economic laws no longer corresponds to the possibility of exchanging loyalty or false respect for money. For so-called capitalist realism, in which the invisible hand of the market determines the fundamental rules, the economic and media factors have become dominant features. Both have great persuasive potential and replace the model of the past, in which the primary factor was the ideological one. It tried to change the world, or at least the attitudes towards the world in which the majority, on which the regimes tested the impact of their cultural policy, was involuntarily trapped.

SOCIALIST REALISM IN MUSIC – FROM DEFINING TO QUESTIONING ITS EXISTENCE

Socialist realism was a frequent term in its time, which rigidly determined its conceptual anchoring. Its conceptualization, justifiably, differed from that which appeared during its historical reassessment in the 1990s. However, if we want to understand its original content deriving from the commissioners' intent and also how it was used to guide the production, we need to look into the contemporary thinking and its boundaries. The following definition can serve the purpose; it presents the Slovak composer and music theorist Ladislav Burlas pretended belief: "We understand socialist realism as an artistic and programmatic concept, denoting a socialist attitude, a socialist relationship to the reality and a socialist awareness of the artist's responsibility. It is an artistic articulation of the working class's interests and needs as well as those of its allies led by a communist party in accordance with Marxist-Leninist teachings. It is an art that promotes human life and world peace."⁸

If we wanted to provide an overview of how ideology impacted culture in the totalitarian regimes of mid-20th century Europe, we would classify them as goals and employed methods.⁹ The denial of creative individuality, traditionally considered the greatest enemy of totalitarianism or other repressive ideology, came to the fore. At this point, it is not my intention to further clarify particular goals, methods, and phenomena. However, one important concept deserves due space, namely formalism; it was persistently used to cover all kinds of resentment towards artists, but in fact few people understood what exactly it meant.

The Polish composer Witold Lutosławski asks what could have been the goal of the so-called fight against "formalism," which he considered to be a primitive operation accompanied by intellectual vulgarity and an attack on the truthfulness of arts. He

⁸ BURLAS, L. *Pohľady na súčasnú slovenskú hudobnú kultúru* [Views of Contemporary Slovak Music Culture], p. 60.

⁹ See, e.g., MALINOWSKI, W. 2006. Socialistický realizmus? Čo to naozaj bolo? Príspevok k dejinám sacrum v umení [Socialist Realism. What Was It for Real? Contribution to the History of Sacrum in the Arts]. In *Slovenská hudba*, 2006, Vol. 32, Issue 1, pp. 42–64.

infers that achieving full power over a group is difficult if there are exceptional creative persons, talented, unifying, and diverting attention from the promoted topics. Thus, the goal was to neutralize their potential impact, eliminate them as competition for less talented but aspiring artists, and eliminate them from public life: "It is assumed that the 20ths century instigated the degrading of arts, which is an upshot of bourgeois culture. Stravinsky's, Bartók's, Schönberg's works or Prokofiev's inter-war works, and many others should be recognized as 'formalistic' and we should put an end to everything that these works conveyed, annul them and forget them. A return to the simple language of the 19th-century, based on a tonal system, is the only way of how to create music of today, accessible to the broad masses and realistically expressing our time. Vocal music based on appropriately selected propagandist texts must have primacy over instrumental works."¹⁰

Marxist-Leninist historiosophy, so-called historical materialism, often used the term social superstructure in arts-related issues, which also included the arts. The superstructure was ideological in nature, i.e. it served the interests of the currently ruling social class. The theory of socialist realism as an art serving the people's interests drew on this. Although it was never properly systematically formulated, it nevertheless worked quite well as a system of per partes implications scattered in many theoretical works. The Polish musicologist and music critic Władysław Malinowski tried to reconstruct the theory of socialist realism in the 21st century. He summarized its doctrine in six points, which I present here in an abridged form: Music is a semantic art, it reflects reality. Music belongs to the superstructure, is ideological in nature, [it] expresses the efforts of certain social classes. Music associated with the ruling social class, with progressive forces, is music that correctly reconstructs reality in terms of its historical dynamics – it is progressive music; it is realistic music that has such properties.¹¹

Each economic formation had its realistic music, a certain type of music embodying the progressive part of the spectrum of the given era: realistic music thus dynamized the formation of a new society, while the music of the previous ruling formation retreated from the leading position and took a decadent and reactionary position. The decline of bourgeois music is manifested by the dominance of compositional craft and technique over the ideological and social message, by the dominance of form over content, i.e. so-called formalism. The emergence of realistic music of the socialism era is appealing to both the main progressive force (the working class) and, for the first time in history, also to the entire society, which in the future (under communism) will be a classless society.

¹⁰ LUTOSŁAWSKI, W. Otázka pravdy v umeleckom diele [A Matter of Truth in an Artwork]. In *Slovenská hudba*, 2006, Vol. 32, Issue 1, p. 18.

¹¹ W. Malinowski draws attention to the specific purpose-made understanding of the concept of realism, which in this theory is not in opposition to the concept of abstraction, but to concepts like bankruptcy, backwardness, and the concept of formalism at the stylistic level. MALINOWSKI, W. Socialistický realizmus? Čo to naozaj bolo? Príspevok k dejinám sacrum v umení [Socialist Realism. What Was It for Real? Contribution to the History of Sacrum in the Arts]. In *Slovenská hudba*, pp. 47–48.

In the second half of the 19th century, the German philosopher Karl Marx (1818 – 1883) dealt with the relationship of arts to the reality and criticized the association of arts with religion. He emphasized the cognitive function of arts, he understood artistic work to be such an aesthetic mastery of the world that is capable of capturing beauty; even so, his perspective was that an artwork should be a priori or exclusively approached in a materialistic way. In Marxism, the analogy between the economic production and aesthetic and artistic issues of life experiencing was simplified, and it derived from the class principle.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels's (1820 – 1895) followers were Russian revolutionary intellectuals. The first Russian Marxist engaged in arts was Georgi V. Plekhanov (1856–1918). The founders of Marxism inspired him, and he took over their ideas on the negative influence of the bourgeois system on arts consistently proclaiming that in a civilized society the development of fine arts is determined by class struggle. His associate in the circle of Marxists, Vladimir I. Lenin (1870–1924), like Marx and Engels, did not write any coherent aesthetic work, but his statements on economic and social relations became the starting point for the elaboration of Marxist views in aesthetics and arts. He outlined his theory in *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* (1909), which provided the base for tackling Marxist noetics. On the one hand, Lenin admitted the artist's right to freedom of expression; on the other hand, he demanded a clear worldview and conforming to the idea that the communists must studiously manage the artistic process and shape its results.

The doctrine of socialist realism was of historical-sociological and historiosophical origin but lacked any aesthetic argumentation. This actually helped it avoid many ambivalences inherent to aesthetic interpretations and gain the status of a closed system, thus making it very attractive, which brought many followers. Basically, however, no one had a precise and comprehensive idea of how the music of socialist realism should sound in real artistic creative practice; in the category of style and technique, all that was known was that music should not bear resemblance to formalism.¹² The practical postulates that emerged from the doctrine became an aid for proactive and obedient composers who agreed to the demand to prefer vocal and programmatic forms and to write utility music and mass songs.

SOCIALIST REALISM – PSEUDO-REALITY, SOFT IDEOLOGY, OR PSEUDO-RELIGION

In socialist arts, the boundaries of realism were pushed in line with a belief that the artist does not imitate reality, rather they create it in their work. Thus, in addition to speaking truthfully, an artist should also portray one's opportunities, provide an outlook for the better: "The current understanding of the concept of mimesis, depiction, conveys not only an artistic reflection of things observed from life, but also

¹² The pejorative notion of formalism, suggested by Andrei A. Zhdanov (1896 – 1948), who in 1946 was entrusted with the management of cultural policy in the USSR, was used to characterize the arts of almost the entire 20th century – from impressionism to dodecaphony and serialism.

the creation of specific (non-observed) things.”¹³ There is also a funny statement referring to philosopher Albert Camus, who accused socialism of considering, as its object, something that is not yet a reality: “Arts are socialist in so far as they are not realistic.”¹⁴ Thus, socialist arts created pseudo-reality or a model of reality that could not be achieved. New perspectives emerged during the reassessment of this stage of arts development in the cultural and geographical circle of the countries that after World War II became satellites of the USSR. As a matter of fact, a question can be raised whether socialist arts existed at all. According to Polish musicologist Andrzej Mencwel, “in music, socrealism does not exist at all.”¹⁵ Contrariwise, Polish musicologist Michał Bristiger affirms that the interlinkage of socrealizmus – music – sacrum reminds him of a “sematic earthquake.”¹⁶

Typical efforts of dogmatic aesthetics caused that the arts were reduced to ideology. In his study *K technologii pamfletů o hudbě z let 1948–1952* [Towards the Technology of Music Pamphlets from 1948–1952], Vladimír Karbusický examined the common features of ideology and artwork from the perspective of the ontology of arts. He arrived at an interesting finding: although the associating of science with ideology is meaningless, the parallel of arts – ideology has some sense. The resignation to the actual cognitive function as a distinctive feature of arts, which does not aim at perfect knowledge, but often remains unfinished, indicated knowledge, makes arts a “non-aggressive ideology.”¹⁷ The arts do not represent a knowledge of reality (perfect and empirically provable), rather a reaction to reality, free and non-binding – while science proves, the arts show. Such a non-aggressive ideology presents a vision of reality; yet, it does not impose it, nor does it enforce any system of values and ethical appeals. However, if this “vulnerable ideology” becomes part of the “ideology as a weapon,” it ceases to be arts, it becomes propaganda;¹⁸ propaganda that voluntarily “bends reality” and is just a kind of magic and ritual “casting a spell on the reality.”

True arts have always resisted canonization, they have never been represented by only one style; on the contrary, they have always tried to evade, abandon structural patterns as soon as they have become stereotypical and thus similar to the “systematized” ideology. In effort to create a binding artistic style, Zhdanov’s statements on arts were implemented: it was required that the structures be nicely arranged, clear and understandable, preferably iconic, with proven and tested patterns for designing positive and negative characters, etc.; it was required to implement

13 MALINOWSKI, W. Socialistický realizmus? Čo to naozaj bolo? Príspevok k dejinám sacrum v umení. [Socialist Realism. What Was It for Real? Contribution to the History of Sacrum in the Arts]. In *Slovenská hudba*, pp. 47–48.

14 Cit. according to BURLAS, L. *Pohľady na súčasnú slovenskú hudobnú kultúru* [Views of Contemporary Slovak Music Culture], p. 58.

15 For more see MENCWEL, A. Socrealizmus? Redakčná diskusia [Socrealism? Editorial discussion]. In *Slovenská hudba*, 2006, Vol. 32, Issue 1, p. 67.

16 For more see BRISTIGER, M. Socrealizmus? Redakčná diskusia [Socrealism? Editorial discussion]. Ibid., p. 68.

17 KARBUSICKÝ, V. *K technologii pamfletů o hudbě z let 1948 – 1952* [On the Technology of Music Pamphlets from 1948–1952]. In *Hudební věda*, 1969, Vol. 6, Issue 2, p. 308.

18 Ibid., p. 309.

a “non-artistic” ideology which was embodied in a dreamt-of – actual reality. Unlike mass culture, which never claimed exclusivity, socialist realism in its core considered itself exclusive. It had a devastating effect not due to what was recommended but what was prohibited, not due to what was demanded to be present, but what was excluded: “The dark moment in the history of the communist European culture is not the presence of socialist arts, but merely the absence of other contemporary arts.”¹⁹

In response to Władysław Malinowski’s theory of socrealism as the art of The New Faith, other Polish theorists start to question whether socrealism is an artistic category at all. They viewed this sociological and historical category as a parareligious phenomenon and resolutely refused to associate it with the sacral or sacrum.²⁰ The propagandistic and panegyric art of utopian socialist realism, as outlined by Malinowski, was parareligious in nature. The author considers its results to be paradoxical, because the functions and mechanisms of this new art showed features inherent to religious art: “The matter of socrealist music seems to be more the issue of faith than that of art – The New Faith, to which socrealist non-art works exclusively referred.”²¹

Władysław Malinowski used this to refer to the ideological expression of the need for final salvation present in the atheistic “faith,” which made communism conspicuously reminiscent of religious movements. Similarly, the musical works of socialist arts fulfilled the religious decorum: the artist did not describe reality, rather declared a kind of new faith, bringing a truth of a higher degree, faith in a better reality represented by smiles, rites, the sun, successfully completed work, a satisfied face of the leader.²² On the example of Theodor W. Adorno’s (1903–1969) views, a prominent figure in the 20th-century philosophy of music, I show that the metaphor of socialist realism as The New Faith, or the parallel between propaganda and parareligiosity in Malinowski, also has its significant connotations in philosophy.

Religion has enjoyed renewed attention in the humanities since the 1990s, in particular by reversing the trend of secularization in sociology and changing philosophical attitudes towards religion. In philosophy, this shift is also seen in influential thinkers, such as Richard Rorty or Jürgen Habermas. A large part of critical attacks on religious faith is the past, even the so-called “turn to religion” or “post-secular turn” has become topical in critical theory. The representatives of the Frankfurt School (Theodor W. Adorno, Jürgen Habermas and others) are also the subject of these considerations²³. The religious element contained in Adorno’s work, interpret-

19 MALINOWSKI, W. Socialistický realizmus? Čo to naozaj bolo? Príspevok k dejinám sacrum v umení [Socialist Realism. What Was It for Real? Contribution to the History of Sacrum in the Arts]. In *Slovenská hudba*, p. 58.

20 For more see MENCWEL, A. Socrealizmus? Redakčná diskusia [Socrealism? Editorial discussion]. In *Slovenská hudba*, pp. 65–67.

21 Ibid., p. 43.

22 Ibid., p. 46.

23 The Czech philosopher Karel Hlaváček partly sees the religious-theological element in Max Horkheimer or Walter Benjamin. See HLAVÁČEK, K. *Od Adorna k Habermasovi. Studie ke vzťahu kritické teorie a náboženství* [From Adorno to Habermas. A Study on the Relationship between Critical Theory and Religion]. Brno: Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury, 1999, p. 92.

ed both negatively and positively, has attracted the attention of several analysts of his work. The Czech sociologist Karel Hlaváček maintains: “Adorno, on the one hand, presents himself as a mortal enemy and critic of religion, but on the other hand, he can actually be seen as an almost religious thinker in the sense that his work can be taken to be a form of ‘theology,’ more specifically ‘minimal theology’ dealing with ‘contemplative eschatology.’”²⁴

Adorno’s work has always resisted straightforward interpretations. He is rather viewed as a secular and anti-religious author, yet there are philosophers who understand his social theory and philosophy as a form of “theology,” in a sense to be “spiritual” or “religious.”²⁵ In eminent works including *Negatívna dialektika* and *Estetická teória* [Negative Dialectics and Aesthetic Theory] etc., they can see “negative theology” below the surface, although Adorno himself never articulates this concept. In *Negative Dialectics* (1966), he claims that he aims for “redemption” (Erlösung), which in his understanding embodies the “reasonable state of society.” He also uses terms, such as “resurrection of the body,” “revelation,” “transcendence,” “contemplation” and others. Nonetheless, he criticizes religion and by “redemption” he means primarily the pursuit of a reasonable state of the society. For Adorno, the use of the negative side of theology is a tool for criticizing the contemporary society.²⁶

Adorno called this secular theology “inverse.” He understands criticism as a negation of the state of the society; for this purpose, he uses theological concepts, albeit in the secular sense of the word. Hlaváček draws attention to theological interpretations of Adorno’s philosophy: “While secular interpretations confine Adorno to materialism, theological interpretations attempt to find connections between Adorno and the turn to religion.”²⁷

This brief insight to Adorno’s philosophy and its possible reading as theology or utopian eschatology with an imprint of negativity (free of theism and teleology) aimed to point out the existence of parallels between non-aggressive ideology (arts) and religion (sacrum). According to the political scientist and columnist Tomáš Zálešák, Christianity was in disfavour in totalitarian regimes (especially communist ones), because it represented one of the few barriers against the abuse of secular power. The churches of the main denominations always confronted the 20th-century totalitarian movements (Nazism and Communism). Communism was atheist. Atheism can be understood as the root of the evil of communism, or even as its symptom. Communism was not bad just because it was atheist, rather, it was atheist because it is bad.²⁸

²⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

²⁵ According to Hlaváček, this context then mitigates their Marxism and also their alleged postmodernism. Ibid., p. 17.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 30–33.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 36. The most influential interpretations of this type include mentions in Pope Benedict XVI’s theoretical works (pontiff 2005–2013).

²⁸ ZÁLEŠÁK, T. Kresťanstvo v pokušení [Tempted Christianity]. In *týždeň*, 2024, Vol. 18, Issue 7, p. 31.

MIRRORING OF PHILOSOPHICAL AND PROPAGANDA IDEAS IN THE EAST AND IN THE WEST

Adorno's irreconcilable struggle for the nature of the society in his personal commitment of a philosopher, took place in a collective manner after World War II in that part of the world which he called "progressive."²⁹ In 1948, the Second International Congress of Progressive Composers and Music Critics met in Prague. On the eastern side of the barricade, contemporary music journalism stated that the congress confirmed the cultural and political orientation aimed at the broad masses, pointed to the crisis symptoms of contemporary (the then) music. In Ladislav Burlas's view, the congress drew attention to the danger of "increasing individualism and subjectivism, the danger of overcomplexity and constructivism at the expense of propositional density and communicativeness."³⁰ As a starting point of overcoming the crisis of music, it was proclaimed that the tendencies of subjectivism and cosmopolitan tendencies need to be abandoned. At the same time, a fierce struggle for the "propositional density" of music began; it was primarily anchored in the text of vocal and vocal-instrumental works inspired by the 19th-century programmatic music.

The congress was also attended by prominent figures of Western and East German musicology; besides Theodor W. Adorno it was also Hanns Eisler or René Leibowitz whose views differed from those presented by the Soviet delegates. Adorno later subjected the document to sharp criticism – his article in the book *Prismen – Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft* [Prisms: Cultural Criticism and Society] (1955) thoroughly analysed the tendency to evaluate the specific content of music by means of its text and not by the mere musical form. Similarly, he saw the favouring of vocal music only as an abuse of the propagandistic effect of the text, which, however, is not the message of the mere music.³¹ After ten days of negotiating, the Soviet delegates succeeded in their effort to include the statements of "a focused inclination towards socialist realism" into the resolution and plea of the Congress, thus closing Eastern Europe off from the Western world.³² At that time, in the Soviet Union, an irreconcilable struggle against the decadent modern bourgeois trends began.

In 1949, Theodor W. Adorno's book *Philosophy der neuen Musik* [Philosophy of New Music] was published; in the book, the philosopher evaluates two key figures of 20th-century music – he supports Arnold Schönberg while subjecting his imaginary

²⁹ The term "progress" was one of the important mantras of socialist ideology. It covered the overall designation for technological, social, cultural development directed to its higher and more advanced level (under communism as a promise for the future). The socialist realism terminology included terms such as progressive composer, progressive artist, progressive music, progressive social forces, and progressive worldview. The synonym for the word progressive was the word revolutionary, socialist, etc. Progress denoted innovations in compositional style and technique, represented the victory of reason, all within the ideological patterns, schemes and verbal expressions established for Soviet arts and the artistic development of the satellite states of the USSR (the so-called socialist camp).

³⁰ BURLAS, L. *Pohľady na súčasnú slovenskú hudobnú kultúru* [Views on Contemporary Slovak Music Culture], p. 94.

³¹ See ADORNO, T. W. *Hudba na provázku* [Music on a String]. In *Hudební věda*, 1969, Vol. 6, Issue 1, pp. 92–101.

³² For more see HRČKOVÁ, N. *Dejiny hudby VI. Hudba 20. storočia (2)* [History of Music VI. 20th-Century Music (2)]. Bratislava: IKAR, 2006, p. 38.

opponent, Igor Stravinsky, to relatively harsh criticism. "Stravinsky's fundamental impulse was to develop a disciplined command over regression; this impulse determines his infantile phase perhaps more decisively than any other phase of his work. (...) It is not that schizophrenia is directly expressed therein, but the music imprints upon itself an attitude similar to that of mentally ill.

The individual brings about his own disintegration. (...) The schizophrenic demeanour of Stravinsky's music is a ritual which attempts to overcome the coldness of the world.

His work goes vehemently to battle against the insanity of the objective spirit."³³

However, the term "regression" is not used in its literal or skin-deep sense, as the Czech philosopher Josef Fulka explains when considering the relationship between atonality and unconsciousness in the work of both great musicians.³⁴ Adorno does not directly refer or admit to the theory of the unconscious mind anywhere; however, its traces are seen in his interpretation of Schönberg's monodrama *Erwartung op. 17* (1909) in which he searches an analogy with atonality while using the terminology of psychoanalysis. These sources give rise to the term "regression gesture" that Adorno uses to describe Igor Stravinsky's music. The employment of psychoanalysis in his reflections on Schönberg differs from that in his reflections on Stravinsky, though this comparison had some consequences.

In the arts and aesthetics of the USSR and its satellite states, there was an even more aggressive way of criticizing Western music in the name of the irreconcilable struggle for the nature of society – negating, insulting, unphilosophical and unaesthetic. It was one of the ways of promoting the new cultural and political orientation, propaganda, and socialist-realistic orientation of the arts. Soon, in response to Adorno's bestseller, Grigori M. Schneerson's book *Hudba v službách reakcie* [Music in the Service of Response] (1953)³⁵ appeared. The author was deeply convinced that by adhering to the Leninist theory of imperialism, he revealed the origins of the severe crisis of the West, i.e. the general decline of musical life in the USA, France, England, and other bourgeois countries.

Schneerson saw the cause of the severe crisis of the West in the clash between the spiritual interests of the broad masses and the decadent work of formalist composers. His claims build upon quotes from Zhdanov's speeches about the service to the "dollar democracy," "obscurantism" and "parsonage," rotten idealistic philosophy, perverse bourgeois arts, full of "pathological obsession."³⁶ He described Schönberg as "mentally blind," and he called Stravinsky "the most striking example of a sterile supporter of cosmopolitanism in the arts, an extreme reactionary

33 ADORNO, T. W. *Philosophy of Modern Music*. London – New York : Bloomsbury Academic, 2007, pp. 117–118.

34 FULKA, J. *Kapitoly z filosofie nové hudby* [Chapters from the Philosophy of New Music]. Praha : Karolinum, 2023.

35 Certainly, G. M. Schneerson could not admit that he had read Adorno's *Philosophy of New Music* unless it was a partisan task. Here, it is a working hypothesis or the modeling of possible reality.

36 SCHNEERSON, Grigori Mikhailovich. *Hudba v službách reakcie* [Music in the Service of Response]. Bratislava : SAVU, 1, p. 14.

and obscurantist.”³⁷ Schneerson categorizes the modernism of the first half of the 20th century as a musical reaction, anti-folk sound production, and supports it with his, as a matter-of-fact shallow, definitions: “Neoclassicism is a reactionary direction in contemporary bourgeois music employing ancient musical forms to create meaningless and cacophonous works... atonalism disposes of music as art, it represents the decline of bourgeois musical culture, its anti-folk cosmopolitan essence... neoprimitivism is a reactionary attempt to bring the development of arts back to the most primitive forms of artistic thinking.”³⁸

Such a negativistic approach to discussing musical work and authors also influenced and gave rise to the vocabulary used by contemporary Czechoslovak musicology and aesthetics.³⁹ The Soviet scholars’ work was constantly taken to be a model that should be followed, scholars were instructed on what writings they should study. As Vladimír Karbusický points out, Grigori M. Schneerson’s work conveys a non-empirical way of thinking. It introduces selected facts that do not evidence relevant sections of reality; rather they are just motifs and images for composing the “new reality” of a work of art.⁴⁰ Not only does it manifest aesthetic disorders (foul language, deceptions, etc.), but – like other works of this type – it claims absolute truth and proclaims it with incredible ease. Such pamphlets of “raving ideologists” are unconscious artistic formations (novels, symphonies, legends) that pretend to be scholarly solutions, but in fact they only convince themselves of their own consciousness as the “objective measure” of all things, as the source of “scientific ideology.”⁴¹

However, the opposite side of the barricade, the western Euro-Atlantic culture also offers many examples of making beauty a matter of politics and of eagerly pointing to its counterparts. In the 1960s, beauty became increasingly rare in the definitions of arts; as a concept, it gradually disappeared from the discourse on arts or philosophy. The American philosopher and aesthetician Arthur C. Danto, slightly exaggerates when he observes that since the 1960s, it has been rare for the category of beauty to appear in the arts periodicals and simultaneously not to ridicule in a deconstructive manner.⁴² In his study, commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts, the arts historian and critic Michael Brenson states that already in 1965, in the USA, “[its] sponsors saw artists as sources of ideas which might be of value in the national agenda of winning the Cold War.”⁴³

³⁷ Ibid., p. 22.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 84, 85.

³⁹ V. Karbusický offers a very interesting and thought-provoking structuralist analysis of Schneerson’s book in his work *K technologii pamfletů o hudbě z let 1948 – 1952* [Towards the Technology of Music Pamphlets from 1948–1952]. This and similar books (by other authors such as V. G. Gorodinsky, M. Barvík, Z. Lissa, E. H. Meyer, A. Sychra) are called pamphlets countering Zhdanov’s statements, and are filled with so-called traveling motifs passing from a book to a book.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 303.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 309.

⁴² For more see DANTO, A. C. *The Abuse of Beauty. Aesthetics and the Concept of Art*. Open Court Chicago and La Salle Illinois: Carus Publishing Company, 2003.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 26.

In those years, American Congressman George A. Dondero and his political contemporaries and supporters rejected modern arts as something subversive, destructive, and essentially anti-American. Dondero asserted: "Modern art is communistic because it is distorted and ugly, because it does not glorify our beautiful country, our cheerful and smiling people, and our material progress. Art which does not beautify our country in plain simple terms that everyone can understand breeds dissatisfaction. It is therefore opposed to our government and those who create and promote it are our enemies."⁴⁴

According to Michael Brenson's analysis, the newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst "equated any form of artistic radicalism with communism and assumed that of the works produced in a non-traditional manner was a disguised means of communist propaganda."⁴⁵

PHILOSOPHERS, EPIGONES, AND "AESTHETES" AND THEIR STATEMENTS ABOUT MUSICAL WORK

Based on the comparison of evaluations and perspectives on the results of musical production within various cultural and geographical areas in the 20th century, it can be concluded that this is some kind of mirroring based on hostile attitudes not only within one's own society or state ("we"), but also within others ("they"). The philosophical positions of the mentioned authors cannot be generalized on the basis of a few examples. Moreover, philosophical systems in the 20th century are, on the one hand, too diversified, while on the other hand, they influenced one another more than is admitted. However, on the basis of certain philosophical or ideological positions of selected authors, it is worth seeking some concurrency points or a common thread. What do Theodor W. Adorno's negative dialectic, Władysław Malinowski's view of the religious nature of socialist realism, Grigori M. Schneerson's "aesthetic disorder," and Danto-Brenson's reference to the misuse of arts for ideological purposes have in common?

1. They call attention to the fact that on both sides (Atlantic Ocean, ideological positions, camps as political establishments, etc.) we can find a similar type of thinking and mental attitudes, which yields very similar, if not almost identical conclusions.
2. They demonstrate a high level of effort to influence the process of music production and reception through adopting specific philosophical, aesthetic, and ideological frameworks.
3. They show that the philosophical goal of negation served different purposes: Adorno adopted such rhetoric to aim for the revival of the society, while in Schneerson it only added to brutality, vengeance, false awareness in his society.
4. They confirm that not only ideological and existential factors but also economic factors have proved equally powerful and forceful – corrupting or refusing support in non-democratic regimes, as well as enforcing one's taste norms as a prerequisite

⁴⁴ G. A. Dondero cit. according to DANTO, A. C. *The Abuse of Beauty. Aesthetics and the Concept of Art*, p. 26.

⁴⁵ M. Brenson cit. according to DANTO, A. C. *The Abuse of Beauty. Aesthetics and the Concept of Art*, p. 26.

of financial support in capitalist democracy (Danto-Brenson's example). In both cases (socialist realism versus so-called capitalist realism), however, these factors can result in ideological schemes and modelling of requirements with the aim to ossify the traditional and verified by means of "carrot and stick."

5. The interconnection of philosophy (as a view of oneself and the world) and world-view (as a set of political, legal, moral, and philosophical ideas about the world), whether a religious or materialistic one, can be demonstrated by using the same means. It is a verbal apparatus characterizing ritualism, worship, acclaim, manifestations of faith in redemption, progress (Theodor W. Adorno's "negative" theology and Władysław Malinowski's concept of "pseudosacrum" or para-religiosity) or their negativistic evaluations (e.g. Grigori M. Schneerson's "pastorality" and George A. Dondero's "opposition to the US government").

6. While Adorno's views are presented through the language of scholarship – philosophy, sociology, and aesthetics, and derive from a deep knowledge of the development of arts and society, Schneerson's ones approximated second-rate fantasizing fiction. American political representatives, who also had an impact on the promotion of contemporary arts, used the language of ideologies, without the need to correct their negativistic statements.

Schneerson's language and selected statements of American sponsors of culture represent, or rather only resemble the language of aesthetes that is the result of an effort to point out the self-indulgent and inauthentic (socially undesirable) way of life of those whose work they condemned (as socially and ideologically undesirable). The authors of these views blamed progress for the decline or misrepresentation of moral values; anything progressive, which represented the unhindered development of arts in the Western culture, was thought to embody decay and hostility. If Schneerson read Adorno and aimed for his very own "bestseller," as an epigone he did not admit that his persistent effort to imitate negative dialectics with the help of curses, insults, unscholarly abbreviations was a mere "aesthetic disorder" and a pamphlet simulating scholarship. He created his own "negative dialectics of socialism," negative and negating, evil and malevolent.

Philosophers, but especially aesthetes and epigones, viewed the borderline between ideological and aesthetic statements about musical production as no one's territory, which allowed them to avoid unambiguous and logical conclusions with ease. It sufficed to use expressive adjectives, redundant established metaphors, ornament, and decoration as aesthetic disorders. In this way, they created a quasi-aesthetic reservoir of phrases and weasel words, which gradually became part of the lexicon of the culture and society, the education and upbringing of youth and adults (the so-called newspeak). Totalitarian regimes relying on hard and soft ideological tools after World War II seemingly managed to direct artistic tendencies and mere production, but they could not mortify or destroy real creation as an act of the individual's free artistic voice. Even the state formations that were considered to be liberal democracies of the second half of the 20th century did not resist the ideological

view of musical production. However, the interests were always primarily economic, then political, and only in the end there were real aesthetically motivated views.

CONCLUSION

Although the fall of the communist regime in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe replaced one type of hard ideology with an effort to build democracy, it also weakened – yet not completely eliminated – the potential of “soft ideologies.” In a positive sense, it is about the impact of arts on the society and its culture; in a negative sense, it is about the types prioritizing norms and guidance on ideas, the selection and evaluation of what is right and what is not, etc. Existentialist and existential threats were replaced by more sophisticated ways of limiting or even halting the flow of funds for “non-cooperative” artists. The tendency to provide money (in order to corrupt) took turns with the tendency not to provide or to withdraw money.

The tendency to intimidate and eliminate has now been replaced by the dictate of the audiovisual media (television and its more modern alternatives, the Internet, YouTube, podcasts, the dissemination of artwork via the Internet and NetArt). This shows that, today, artists living in democratic societies can no longer be intimidated, as people have developed a certain degree of resistance to the ideological demands of the ruling political representations. I have indicated how specifically the “competition” of ideologies and cultural policies presently translates into decision-making competences. From the perspective of the further development of musical culture after postmodernism, the only possible way seems to be the freedom of artistic work, supported by good decisions of authorities that will respect diversity, knowledgeability, and culture. Creating, performing and listening to music with affinity for complementary non-musical parameters, such as empathy challenging prejudice or a sense of justice, is a task for those responsible for the further development of musical culture. If the 1990s are referred to as a period of “religious turn,” along other turns in philosophy, arts, and social sciences,⁴⁶ then, more broadly speaking, a “spiritual turn” can be a compass for us today. It is the spiritualization of all areas of life that is actually taking place.⁴⁷

What we consider music in culture, as the Slovak music aesthetics expert Renáta Beličová asserts, “[it] latently reveals the musical philosophy of the whole society, and this is more than many musicological analyses of current musical works can reveal.”⁴⁸ Music philosophy is primarily interested in the critical analysis of music

⁴⁶ In the 20th-century theory of humanities and social sciences, concepts such as linguistic turn, educational turn, philosophical turn, post-secular turn, performative turn, psychological turn and others are known.

⁴⁷ The Slovak philosopher and composer Roman Berger continually discussed the path to spirituality: “Our task is to set on a path of spiritualization of arts, culture, and everyday life. Everything has been made profane.” BERGER, R. *Dráma hudby. Prolegomena k politickej muzikológii. Výber z textov z rokov 1990–1999* [Drama of Music. Prolegomena to Political Musicology. A Selection of Texts from 1990–1999]. Bratislava : Hudobné centrum, 2003.

⁴⁸ BELIČOVÁ, R. Medzi hudobnou estetikou a hudobnou filozofiou [Between Musical Aesthetics and Musical Philosophy]. In *O interpretácii umeleckého textu 24. Autentické a univerzálne v tvorbe a interpretácii umenia* [On the Interpretation of the Artistic Text 24. The Authentic and the Universal in the Interpretation of Arts]. Nitra : Univerzita Konštantína Filozofa, 2009, p. 370.

within worldview systems and the analysis of the philosophical systems that have influenced reflections on music.⁴⁹ The primary interest of aesthetics in the service of ideology and propaganda was to control the society through eliminating the best that contemporary artistic development contributed. Currently, the growing interest of philosophy in aesthetics is a consequence of its constant efforts to explain the essence of arts and its place in human life. In the future, however, without spiritual stimuli, it will probably be difficult to distinguish the aesthetic from ideological core of statements on music. Nevertheless, it is clear that if music, instead of performing aesthetic functions, fulfils other social functions having not necessarily desirable impact on the individual's freedom, it cannot serve the revival of the society, and is potentially abusive.

Translated by Alena Kačmárová

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