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Advocates: Art and Philosophy *

Approaching the 'Relations' of Philosophy and Art in the 20th Century

Introduction: Advocates

There exist quite different and incomparable cases of the relation between

* The lecture entitled »Advocates: Art and Philosophy. Approaching the *Relations of Philosophy and Art in the 20th Century*« was given in collaboration with dancer and philosopher Jill Sigman. The paper that is now before you wasn't read; I presented to the audience its main theses instead. During my talk Jill Sigman performed an improvised dance. Between the dance and the speech there were some necessary and some incidental correspondences and reactions.

I began my talk with an introduction that was not written down and was therefore 'advocating' my relation towards presentations by other participants of the congress. Here is a written reconstruction of this introduction:

Who am I? I am not Boris Groys, Mikhail Epstein, Komar and Melamid, or NSK.

My grandmother was a story-teller. She liked to tell private and public stories. I am a story-teller and am telling public stories. Her favourite story was about my grandfather and his schoolmates, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and, maybe, Adolf Hitler. I am not sure if this was a true story. She said that my grandfather and Ludwig Wittgenstein, and, maybe, Adolf Hitler, attended the same primary school. ... Why I am telling you this? Why am I returning to narrative speech?

Today, here and now, my task is to return philosophy and aesthetics to thinking and speaking. I have to separate them from the 'paper' (text) and return them to the body, thinking and voice. And I do it in the way as this was done by Ludwig Wittgenstein, for example, or in some other way, by Martin Heidegger. Wittgenstein once said »Philosophy is hell to me!« And just now, in front of you and for you too, to think and speak in English about 'advocating' between art and philosophy is hell for me too; I show you my hell. The hell of my thoughts and my mind. My task is to return voice and thought to philosophy, to return the body to it.

Our task was to return voice and body to philosophy, wasn't it, Jill? This was Jill Sigman, the dancer and philosopher. I thank her for her endless assistance. Thanks to all of you!

And this was the introduction. Later, someone from the audience asked why I returned to family stories and why was I telling the story? One possible answer would be that because this is the way of building history and tradition – these are the mechanisms in which postsocialist cultures build a phantasm of their own reality. I come from such a world (from the world of dramatic and tragic postsocialism) and reveal to you the relation of the voice to the body. Then another person noticed that the body of dance and voice of the lecture were in contradiction, that they took the focus away, be it from dance or voice (the spoken word). I hope my answer was clear, that the relation between the

art and philosophy, and it is therefore, according to Morris Weitz,¹ unnecessary to give generalizations of a certain relation between art and philosophy in order to explain some other relations which are quite different and incomparable. I shall designate these different relations with the vague term 'advocating' which can, among other things, designate the following:

- (i) The use of art in philosophy or the use of philosophy in art in the manner in which philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein argued that »the meaning of a word is its use in the language.«² Similarly the painter Marcel Duchamp claimed that by the ready-made he called the choice and the naming of an ordinary and mundane object an artwork.³
- (ii) The claim, closely related to that of philosopher Louis Althusser, that philosophy doesn't possess its proper object of cognition, but is constituted instead as the subject of the desire, as a realm of combat, domination and intervention. It therefore does not exist as a domain of knowledge, but is, instead, an advocate of politics in the domain of science, separating the imaginary from the scientific, etc.
- (iii) Identification, description, and explanation of 'activity' instead of pointing to the ontological disciplinary essence. Thus the poet Charles Bernstein claimed: »Another traditional distinction between philosophy and poetry now sounds anachronistic: that philosophy is involved with system-building and consistency and poetry with the beauty of the language and emotion. Apart from the grotesque dualism of this distinction (as if consistency and the quest for certainty were not emotional!), this view imagines poetry and philosophy to be defined by the product of their activity, consistent texts in the one case, beautiful texts in the other. Rather, philosophy and poetry are at least equally definable not as the product of philosophizing and poetic thinking, but, indeed, as the process (or activity) of philosophizing or poetic thinking.«⁴
- (iv) It could designate Jacques Lacan's definition of signifiers: »The signifier is something that represents a subject for another signifier,« or: »For one signifier every other signifier can represent a subject,« or: »One

body and the voice was external to the effect of the 'paper' (text) and that I worked with difficulties in concentration – with confrontation among thought, voice and body.

¹ Cf. Morris Weitz, »The Role of Theory in Aesthetics«, in J. Margolis (ed.), *Philosophy Looks at the Arts* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), pp. 150-153.

² Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), § 43.

³ Michel Sanouillet, Elmer Peterson (eds), *The Essential Writings of Marcel Duchamp* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), pp. 32, 141-142.

⁴ Charles Bernstein, »Writing and Method«, in *Content's Dream. Essays 1975-1984* (Los Angeles: Sun&Moon Press, 1986), p. 218.

signifier represents a subject for all other signifiers.«⁵ In other words, 'an artwork is something that represents a subject for all other artworks'; 'an artwork represents subject for philosophical discourse'; or 'a philosophical discourse represents a subject for all artworks'; or:

- (v) To point to the relation between art and philosophy resembles the situation of a legal proceeding (trial) in which 'advocates' speak in the name of the accused as well as the victim, but also in the name of the metatext which is represented by the 'people', the 'sovereign', 'God', 'universal justice' or 'truth'.⁶

Such options are but a preparation for approaching the examples of 'advocating' art and of advocating 'philosophy'.

An-Artwork Precedes the Discourse of Philosophy

It is often claimed that an artwork precedes the theoretical (philosophical) discourse. The starting point is the belief that an artwork is an expression or an effect of an individual, intuitive and original artistic act of creating. Art emerges from the 'opaqueness' of artist's intuitions. The painter Jackson Pollock said that an artist creates as nature does. According to Charles Harrison, »In this voice, the individual artist is celebrated for that wilful extension of cultural and psychological boundaries which he (or very rarely she) achieves in pursuit of newness of effect. Thus, for, example, the work of the American 'First Generation' painters, and particularly of Pollock, is associated with the liberation and purification of art's resources of expression, and with the possibility of a greater spontaneity and immediacy in painting.«⁷ In this model an artwork is described as being similar to nature (a natural object, situation, or event). An artwork is thus external to the theoretical or philosophical discourse.

Philosophy (theory) (a) names; (b) describes and translates from non-discursive into the discursive; (c) explains the intentions, the concept, or an artwork in relation to another discourse; (d) mediates in the communication within cultural frameworks; and (e) interprets what cannot be enunciated of the artistic the 'sensual', 'material' or 'vital', highlighting what can be said and enunciated in philosophy. The philosophical or theoretical discourse appears as an excess of meaning, sense and value in relation to an artwork.

⁵ Jacques Lacan, *Écrits* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1966), p. 819.

⁶ Names such as Barthes, Lacan, Derrida, Wittgenstein, Rorty spring to mind.

⁷ Charles Harrison, »A Kind of Context«, in *Essays on Art&Language* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), pp. 4-5.

At the same time the ontology of the work (of the art) and the ontology of the discourse (of philosophy) are two different and incomparable 'worlds of existence' which can only partially be brought into a certain descriptive, explanatory and interpretative correspondence with the aid of a third metadiscourse, that of philosophy on philosophy and on art.

An Artwork and the Public Metatext of Culture

An artwork exists in relation to the public metatext of culture. The starting thesis is that an artwork is a human and social product which, by this very fact, engenders and carries specific (differential) meanings. These meanings are not something originating in the artist or in the object that he/she made or in the 'mirror nature' of the object in relation to the world, but originating in the necessity that what an artist has made is in a certain 'intertextual relation' with cultural metatext(s).⁸ In other words, a painting by Caravaggio or Kandinsky does not represent the world, i. e. a musical composition by Haydn or Schoenberg does not express the human spirit or emotions because it resembles 'the world' or 'spirit', but because it is in an intertextual interpretative relation with the public metatext of an epoch or a civilization⁹ or in relation to particular texts of a certain culture, an art, a philosophy, politics, a religion, or even, 'private languages' that after a certain time enter into the domain of cultural 'public language'. The relation between a cultural metatext and a particular artwork in 20th-Century art is often not a stable and invariant one; one that would be legalized by a social contract. It rests, on the contrary, on a case-to-case basis and is open to transformations (to the 'penetration of the signifier into the signified').

The Artworld

Art is not only an artwork, but an 'artworld'. In the mid-sixties Arthur Danto expressed a characteristic thesis about the 'transcendent' nature of art. He wrote: »To see something as art requires something the eye cannot deny - an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art:

⁸ Jean-François Groulier, »Reading the Visible«, *Art Press*, no. 177 (Paris, 1993), pp. E15-E17; Louis Marin, »Questions, Hypotheses, Discourse«, in *To Destroy Painting* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 15-29.

⁹ In European tradition such a text is the Testament; in countries of »real socialism« such a text was Marx's or Lenin's.

an artworld.«¹⁰ In other words, art is not an object (a painting, a sculpture, a building) or a situation (an environment, a scenic arrangement, an installation), or an event (a musical artwork, a cinema projection, a dance), but a constitutive relation of an 'artworld' in which the very object, event, or situation appears as an artwork: »The world has to be ready for certain things, the artworld no less than the real one. It is the role of artistic theories, these days as always, to make the artworld, and art, possible. It would, I should think, never have occurred to the painters of Lascaux that they were producing art on those walls. Not unless there were Neolithic aestheticians.«¹¹ Such an approach could be designated as 'transcendent' for it implies an 'ontological' presence of an artwork as such by that which is not in artwork itself, although it is 'crucially overdetermining' it. Hence an African mask in the British Museum, Duchamp's snow-shovel or a porcelain urinal exhibited in the Georges Pompidou Centre or whichever painting by Henri Matisse do not share common morphological characteristics which would constitute them as artworks: a mask belongs to the 'world' of ritual, a shovel was made as a utilitarian object (as a tool for removing snow), and Matisse's painting was made as an artwork (as a painting appertaining to the realm of painting).

All these cases are identified as 'artworks' only in that historical world which offers a specific (not any other) theory of the 'artworld' and the 'artwork': a theory of existing (ontology), a theory of looking (reception), a theory of creation (poetics), a theory of interpretation (philosophy) and a theory of use (the use is a 'practical' phenomenal interpretation of the relation between an object, art, and philosophy). This continuum does not exist in other historical or geographical 'cultures', but only in the culture of Western hegemonic modern art in relation to religion, magic, politics, utilitarian function, etc. Arthur Danto therefore identifies his 'ontological art' by the following words: »My view, philosophically, is that interpretations constitute works of art, so that you do not, as it were, have the artwork, on one hand, and on the interpretation on the other.«¹²

Transgression, Art, and Philosophy

Avant-garde transgressions in art are 'deviations' (subversions,

¹⁰ Arthur Danto, »The Artworld«, in J. Margolis (ed.), *Philosophy Looks at the Arts*, p. 162.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

¹² Arthur C. Danto, *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 23.

violations, disruptions, transitions, innovations, experiments, revolutions) in relation to the dominant hegemonic hierarchical power in art, aesthetics, culture, and society. In avant-garde art in the late 19th and early 20th century the avant-garde transgressions signified:

- (i) a critique (subversion) of the dominant (mainstream) institutions of the aesthetic (of the values of the sensual and of reception), of the artistic (of the creation of an artwork), of the existential (of forms of behavior, and the function of art in a specific historical society and culture), and of the political (of the model of carrying out of the social ideology as a power structure); and
- (ii) a projection of the 'new' as a dominant characteristic of the present (modernity) or the future (the utopia of the optimum projection).¹³

The avant-garde transgression is therefore the 'avant' of the dominant modernist culture and, simultaneously, its immanent critic and its transgression in the name of the 'new' or 'different'.

The philosophy of 'transgression' was anticipated by Georges Bataille who pointed to the two characteristic transgressions of the discourse of reason. The first transgression introduces lower elements (a cry, a howl, silence, failures). The second one points to the higher elements (provokes a symbolic code from within, problematizing the guarantees and the legitimations of sense).

By opposing these two transgressions Bataille provoked and questioned the 'gap' (hiatus) between the high and the low. Jacques Derrida,¹⁴ following Jacques Lacan,¹⁵ suggests that transgression of the discourse rules implies transgression of the general Law. According to Bataille, transgression is an 'inner experience' in which an individual or, in the case of ritualized transgressions such as communal celebrations, the community transgresses the borders of rational, mundane behavior governed by profit, production and self-preservation. In transgression the power of the taboo manifests itself.

Transgression employs the power of the forbidden (of 'crazy Law'). A post-Bataillean definition of transgression includes:

- (a) subversion, disruption, rupture and revolution - literally, of subversion, disruption, rupture, and revolution in an individual existence;
- (b) a parody of transgression for, according to Marcelin Pleynet, »in our time, there is no more transgression, no more subversion, no more

¹³ Cf. Aleksandar Flaker, 'Optimalna projekcija', in *Poetika osporavanja. Avangarda i književna levica* (Zagreb: Kultura, 1984), pp. 62-72.

¹⁴ Cf. Jacques Derrida, »De l'économie restreinte a l'économie générale«, in *Écriture et la différence* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1967), pp. 373-384.

¹⁵ Cf. Slavoj Žižek, *Filozofija skozi psihoanalizo* (Ljubljana: Analecta, 1984), p. 18.

rupture, « only » a parody of transgression, a parody of subversion, simulacrum, a repetition of rupture;»¹⁶

- (c) the absence of the meaning;
- (d) matter devoid of metaphysics (*bas materialisme*);
- (e) ecstasy and anarchy;
- (f) intervention of the body in the text (*écriture corporelle*);
- (g) a theory of the need for a deficit or a loss, but not a theory of a deficit or a loss;
- (h) sliding (*glissement*);
- (i) the fear of the sublime;
- (j) horizontal vs. vertical;
- (k) entropy vs. creation and production;
- (l) the lack of the sourceless and homelessness;
- (m) architecture against architecture;
- (n) eroticism;
- (o) opposition between perversion and normality,
- (p) functions of interpretation and the 'blind spots' that every interpretation reveals;
- (q) formlessness (inform, formless);
- (r) transparency;
- (s) an open work;
- (t) trauma;
- (u) entrance into a project;
- (v) transgression of bodily dimensions;
- (w) promised elimination of symbols, metaphors, and allegories, and
- (x) entropy of the sense.¹⁷

Art and philosophy are thus neither two separate worlds nor two complementary ones. They are instead a realm of arbitrariness and transgression in relation to what emerges as the Law of art, or Law of philosophy, or Law in relation to art and philosophy.

Representation of Art in Philosophy

An indicative case is that of Heidegger, for he with the philosophical discourse, which is a picture (mimesis) of 'thinking', points to art. The art

¹⁶ Marcelin Pleynet, «Les problèmes de l'avant-garde», *Tel Quel*, no. 25, Paris 1966, p. 82.

¹⁷ Cf. Yves-Alain Bois, Rosalind Kraus (eds.), *L'informe. Mode d'emploi* (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1996), p. 7.

that Heidegger speaks about is neither concrete historical art, nor an ideal (ideal figure) of the desired art. He speaks about art for philosophy's sake. It is art that is represented by philosophy within the language invented within philosophy, and which consists of the traces of philosophical metaphysics. Not without reason, Heidegger writes: »What is art should be inferrable from the work. What the work of art is we can come to know only from the essence of art. Anyone can easily see that we are moving in a circle.«¹⁸

Or: »What happens here? What is at work in the work? Van Gogh's painting is the disclosure of what the equipment, the pair of peasant shoes, *is* in truth. This being emerges into the unconcealedness of its Being.¹⁹ Here, the pair of shoes painted by Van Gogh's hand is not in question. Neither is the fact that these are not the farmer's shoes, but those of the artist or of the artist's friend.²⁰ The real shoes in the real artwork are in question. And a 'real artwork' is not an historical concrete art, but the fictional (theoretically formed) artwork with the help of which philosophy for its own purposes (i.e. for the purpose of philosophical truth or speech about philosophical truth of art) projects the artwork which mediates for philosophy, or philosophical questioning the wariness or even horror of the 'baseless' nature and 'homelessness' of Western thought.

Discourse of the Artists: From Van Gogh to Malevich

Let me consider a specific story about theory and art, for example, that told by Lawrence Alloway.²¹ Writings by artists could be traced in the past up to the 15th century examples such as Ghilberti's *Commentaries* or Alberti's *Treatise on Art*. The first interview comes from the 16th century when Brendetto Varchi questioned artists (Michelangelo, Bronzino). In the 17th century artist's correspondence (Rubens, Poussin) and artist's books (Charles Le Brun) appeared. A polemic between writers (Diderot) and artists (Falconeti) is well known. In the 19th century artists wrote letters (Pissarro, Van Gogh), traveler-diaries or memoirs (Hunt, Gauguin). Writings from the late 19th century are neither technical treatises, nor tractates, but a discourse in the first person by the artist about himself, art and the world.

¹⁸ Martin Heidegger, »The Origin of the Work of Art«, in *Basic Writings* (San Francisco: Harper, 1977), p. 149.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

²⁰ Cf. Meyer Shapiro, *Selected Papers. Theory and Philosophy of Art: Style, Artist, and Society*, vol. 4 (New York: George Braziller, 1994), pp. 138-139.

²¹ Lawrence Alloway, »Artists as Writers, 1: Inside Information«, in *Network. Art and the Complex Present* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984), p. 208.

What does this little story tell us? It points to specific changes in the status of the artist and his identity from the Middle Ages through the Renaissance to the modern age and modernism. Speaking schematically we could say that an artist in the Middle Ages was plunged into a Christian totalizing metalanguage, a legitimizing metalanguage which offered an unspoken and self-understandable continuum between the world, the artist, and the artwork. The abandonment in which the modern artist finds himself/herself, an artist who is no longer plunged into the great unifying-homogenous metalanguage of the world, the society, and the power of religious totalizing transcendence, forces him/her to identify and advocate himself/herself. Michel Foucault wrote that the subject is a historical phenomenon.²² The 'artist' is theoretically anticipated in the 19th century private writings (letters, diaries, correspondence, journals) of various artists. In the 20th century it is formulated as a *pas tout* metalanguage for specific use. (This use can be personal, as in an artist's poetics; specific, as in pedagogy; or specialist, as in philosophy of art).

What, then, does 'theory of the artist' mean if we are aware that:

- (i) the idea of theory of the artist appeared in a certain epoch of art (painting, sculpture), and in a certain epoch of discourse (the way in which a thought was expressed, the way of producing a text);
- (ii) the theory of the artist is thought of and expressed as an idea, a concept, and a project in discourse which structurally and axiologically included certain relations between speech (and writing) and the appearance of an art object (object, situation, event);
- (iii) the theory of the artist is not just a secondary tool in the process of creating or producing an object, a situation, or an event (artwork), instead it is, primarily, in the service of establishing and making work an artwork, an artworld, and an art history.

I will now point to the difference between the stage of discourse in the time when Vincent van Gogh wrote letters to his brother,²³ and the suprematist 'philosophy' of Kasimir Malevich.²⁴ The letters are the 'speech' of the modern subject who is constituted as a hypothetically autonomous 'Self' in the domain of the necessity of identification of intuition, of the private nature of his existence and auto-poetic spelling of 'the truth in painting'. Van Gogh becomes 'van Gogh' through parallelism of his practice, existence

²² Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Science* (New York: Random House, 1970).

²³ Cf. Ronald De Leeuw (ed.), *The Letters of Vincent Van Gogh* (New York: Penguin, 1996).

²⁴ Cf. T. Anderson (ed.), *Malevich: Essays on Art 1915-1933* (Chewster Springs: Rapp and Whiting; London: Dufour Editions, 1969).

and thinking. In Malevich's case the situation is rather different. He works under the circumstances of a social revolution (first the bourgeois and then the Bolshevik), of decentred eclectic modernism and at a time of emergence of particular discourses: that of the Bolshevik revolution, of literary theoretical formalism, of allegorical theosophy, and the discourse of a self-observing autonomous modernist painter. In paintings such as »Black Square« (1913-15?) and »White on White« (1917-18) the fundamental practical (poetical) questions of suprematism are solved.²⁵

During the twenties Malevich posits theoretical questions which finally drove him out of art altogether, towards mediating the 'idea of suprematism' in relation to philosophy.

His questions were:

- (i) the question of the science of painting (of a theory of the 'additional element');
- (ii) that of an artistic education; and
- (iii) the question of the possible 'suprematist world'; painting, sculpture, architecture and applied arts that appeared in the twenties, are not art in its creative literal sense, but an attempt to show that the painting, sculpture, architecture and applied arts advocate the philosophy of suprematist world.

The Troubles with Wittgenstein's Philosophy

It is paradoxical that the great philosopher, who believed solved all philosophical secrets and paradoxes (in *Tractatus*), is today read and interpreted in the artworld and in the synchronically theoretical worlds (in criticism, aesthetics, philosophy of art) as a paradigmatic model of writing (*écriture*) in art.²⁶ It is this example that I will discuss here. Wittgenstein's books *Tractatus* (1922) and *Philosophische Untersuchungen* (1953) are not written as poetical studies, books on the aesthetics or philosophy of art. On the contrary, they are written as books about the ultimate questions of philosophy, of philosophy which is akin to scientific thinking (that of the natural or formal sciences). But since Dada and Fluxus, i.e. from the end of the fifties (cf. notes by the painter Jasper Johns, ideas by the composer John

²⁵ »By suprematism I understand supremation of pure feeling in visual art« – Kasimir Malevitch, *Die Gegenstandslose Welt* (Berlin: Florian Kupferberg, 1980), p. 65.

²⁶ Cf., for example, Marjorie Perloff, *Wittgenstein's Ladder* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Jorn K. Bramann, *Wittgenstein's Tractatus and the Modern Arts* (Rochester: Adler Publishing Company, 1985).

Cage) through minimal and conceptual art of the sixties (cf. works by the painter Mel Bochner, choreographer Yvonne Rainer, conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth and the group Art&Language or the group Kod) to postmodern strategies of the seventies, eighties and nineties (cf. poetry and theory of the American movement 'l=a=n=g=u=a=g=e poetry', film experiments by Derek Jarman, 'deconstructivist' prose by Kathy Acker), his philosophy is read in a quite different way. It could be said that this way is an asymmetrical one in relation to the philosophy understood as a philosophy of science.

Let me offer some examples. Jasper Johns destroyed the critique of the modernist Greenbergian autonomous pictorial painterly plane (ranging from abstract expressionism to postpainterly abstraction) by introducing nonaesthetic conceptual relations between the words and the painting (i.e. painting »Fool's House«, 1962), modelling this procedure after Wittgenstein's discussion of the use of the word in his *Philosophical Investigations*. The instrumental power of taste (of Kantian judgement based on taste) is dramatically confronted with the critical powers of conceptual analyses of painting and of conceptualization of the manual-pictorial analysis of painting.

Within the context of conceptual art Joseph Kosuth based the idea of working within art as a form of theoretical investigation of 'propositions' on the analogies with Wittgenstein's investigations of 'propositions' in philosophy.²⁷ He saw his own artistic work as an art appropriating philosophical competences, as 'art after philosophy'. Art is thus defined thanks to the mediation of the language 'art games' which represents a way of critical self-reflective healing of art from the illusions and illnesses of aesthetics as a philosophy of taste. The confrontation of theory (i.e. Wittgenstein's philosophy) and art does not lead towards an understanding of an art work as a central element of art, but to art as an activity or explicitly as a practice of a specific conceptualization of the function of an artwork as the product and of art as a context of such a production.

I would like to begin my discussion of the status of Wittgenstein's philosophy within the interpretative frames of art by remarking that Wittgenstein does not offer a slogan or a statement which would support the beliefs (taste, intentions) of an artist or a theoretician of art, i.e. that he does not speak about art or artistic at all. But what is it, that Wittgenstein's philosophical writings do? It demonstrates how a self-reflective observation, analysis, discussion and production of a system of the 'language of art' are possible and how it is possible to represent art in a discursive manner for

²⁷ Cf. Joseph Kosuth, »Art after Philosophy«, *Art after Philosophy and After. Collected Writings, 1966-1990* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), pp. 13-32.

art in relation to philosophy and theory. In other words, how philosophy advocates philosophy for philosophy.

What Wittgenstein's philosophical writings offer art is an open analogy: how to observe, analyse, discuss, and produce, from within art, a system of an 'art language', i.e. how can art be discursively advocated in the name of art and in relation to philosophy and theory. This is the basis on which artists from the late fifties on raised the question of philosophy, but not within the philosophy that speaks of art, but in art (painting, music, dance, poetry, film) itself and therein started to employ the languages of art to speak about the nature of their work (of the subject in the process). Wittgenstein's philosophical work was a promise of such a paradigmatic approach: not to philosophize about philosophy, but to ask oneself and to demonstrate one's questioning by employing a special active language used by the speaking, writing, painting, sculpting, singing, playing, or dancing subject, i.e. and hence advocates for other 'texts' of culture and history.

From an Inquiry into Music to the Theory at Work

Arnold Schoenberg carried out an extraordinary revolution: he questioned the tonal system and offered a creative and theoretical answer to it with the idea of atonal music. What I am interested in here is the intertextual relation of his discussion of music with his composing. This relation is not a philosophical one and directed against aesthetics as it was understood at the end of the 19th and in the beginning of the 20th century: »If I should succeed in teaching the pupil the handicraft of our art as completely as a carpenter can teach his, then I shall be satisfied. And I would be proud if, to adopt a familiar saying, I could say: 'I have *taken* from composition pupils a bad *aesthetics* and have *given* them in return a good *course in handicraft*'.«²⁸ Carl Dahlhaus²⁹ thought that Schoenberg discarded the metaphysical discourse of musical beauty as unnecessary, and offered a quite different discourse on music: a discourse of pedagogy, that of a musical theoretician, a discourse of musicology, of a composer and, of course, a discourse of advocating a conceptualization of the metamorphosis (a deconstruction) of tonal into atonal music. However, Schoenberg is a real modernist for his theory is an autonomous 'system' of articulation of a discursive

²⁸ Cf. Arnold Schoenberg, *Theory of Harmony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p. 12.

²⁹ Karl Dahlhaus, *Estetika muzike (Musikästhetik)* (Novi Sad: Književna zajednica Novog Sada, 1992), p. 5.

sense which follows after the creative musical act and is exterior to it. Schoenberg's work is autonomous in relation to his discourse, and his discourse is a discussion of music exterior to music itself, an almost scientific discourse.

In John Cage's music³⁰ the process is quite different from the forties until the nineties, for therein we see theory at work. His work leads Cage outside of music. Music hence develops as an 'extended activity' which can exist in an intertextual relation with music of the Other, of other arts or discursive forms of expression and representation.

What is created as a theoretical discourse could be described as:

- (a) 'Metamusic' - Cage speaks of a fundamental transformation of musical ontology (intentional expression with sounds) into a theoretical discourse on music which is realized in the location and under the circumstances in which the performance of a musical work is expected (the intentional creation of sounds). It appears as if the music advocates a certain 'philosophy' or 'theory' within the context of music in relation to the philosophical and theoretical discourse that is exterior to it.
- (b) 'Lecture poetry' - Cage speaks of the displacement from one art discipline (music) into another (poetry). This poetry is not just any poetry but that of the avant-garde sort, in which the poetic (expressive) character of the discourse is confronted with fragments or traces of metalanguage on art, politics, existence, religion, and textual production.
- (c) 'Textual production' is the production of a text which is neither music nor poetry, but 'textual productivity' in art. To claim that a text is productivity (let us approach this definition gradually, first from outside, through its normative aspect) means that textual letter (*écriture*) presupposes, as its tactic, the defeat of the descriptive orientation of language and the emergence of a device that creates conditions for a full development of its generative capability.³¹ In other words, a certain text of art advocates music for other texts of music, other arts (poetry, literature), theories of art and culture, philosophy, etc.

And yet another difference! Schoenberg builds his autonomous metatext on music which has a relatively consistent structure of description, explanation, and interpretation. The 'discourse of a composer' is constituted in the interspace of a differentiating discourse of music, musicology and

³⁰ On Cage see, for example, Marjorie Perloff, Charles Junkerman (eds.), *John Cage. Composed in America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994); John Cage, *Silence* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1967).

³¹ François Wahl, »Autour d'une critique du signe«, in O. Ducrot & T. Todorov (eds.), *Dictionnaire encyclopédique des sciences du langage* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), pp. 445-446.

philosophy. Cage, on the contrary, presents the productivity of the text as an open eclectic intertextual relation between:

- (a) a letter (*écriture*) from 'music as an artworld' which through artistic procedures (of a certain open and undefinable discipline of representation, expression, and acting) takes over the voices of a religion as a world of existence (Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki),
- (b) politics as world of existential and behavioral beliefs (David Thoreau), and
- (c) philosophy as a world of procedures in language (Ludwig Wittgenstein).

But what does appropriating the VOICES of religion, politics and philosophy signify? This is neither the postmodern citation (an arbitrarily appropriated and quoted voice of the Other, taken from the archive or a labyrinth of textual hypotheses), nor a modernist explication of slogans (statements, beliefs or discursive verification of an act). It is instead an act or action performed within a text, an analogy of a performative act or speech act. It is therefore possible to speak, in the case of Cage's texts (letter/*écriture*/) or lecture (speech), of 'theory at work'. The meaning of a certain text, of the »Lecture on Nothing« (1959),³² for example, is neither the meaning of a text as a closed system of consistent meanings, nor closed meaning of a text which establishes arbitrary or necessary relations with other texts of art, culture, or theory. It is a meaning of the words that gain their meaning by the performing act (of writing down, speaking out, of mentally representing, semantically, syntactically, or of typographically advocating in writing or in reading).

The Entryway Between Philosophy and Literature

In Jacques Derrida's writings there is no equivalence between literature and philosophy, between writing in literature and writing in philosophy. Instead, there is an open and postponed promise: the promise of a 'close' (intimate) relation between literature and philosophy, or the promise of crossing the entryway which separates philosophy and literature.

What is philosophy if not thinking? The answer could be, for example: philosophy is writing. But where is the 'source' of writing, and what does writing demonstrate? To whom or to what does the writing show itself: to the thinking, the spirit, the other text - to the very writing - or to the essence of writing, the essence of philosophy? Heidegger might have said: »We ask about the essence of art.« If we return from Heidegger to Derrida, the answer

³² John Cage, »Lecture on Nothing«, in John Cage, *Silence*, pp. 109-127.

is posited as a 'flow of questions': »What is literature? And first of all, what is it 'to write?' How is it that the fact of writing can disturb the very question 'what is?' and even 'what does it mean?' To say this in other words, (...) when and how does an inscription become literature and what takes place when it does? To what and whom is this due? What takes place between philosophy and literature, science and literature, politics and literature, theology and literature, psychoanalysis and literature? The question was doubtless inspired in me by a desire which was related also to a certain uneasiness: why finally does the inscription so fascinate me, preoccupy me, precede me? Why am I so fascinated by the literary use of the inscription?«³³ The questions are not just about the 'inscription', they are the inscription 'performed' in such a way that it is not possible to separate clearly the inscription (writing) of literature from the inscription (writing) of philosophy. What is at stake is not the diachronic play of questions and answers about the primacy of literature or philosophy, or whether literature becomes philosophy, or whether philosophy by its letter (*écriture*) crosses the entryway of the inscription of literature. The production of inscription is the question at stake here, which causes the complex nature of the differentiation between the 'sources' and 'outfall' of the inscription or leaving the trace (of writing). No, this is not the epochal turn of philosophy in pre-philosophical or post-philosophical writing of prose, poetry or essay. It is the 'unstable inscription' at the entryway between philosophy and literature.

Conclusion

What do these examples, and there could have been many more, demonstrate? A critical and suicidal relation between art and philosophy or, on the contrary, an ecstatic and eclectic richness of the 'pleasure in the senses' (*jouissance*) of the possibility of advocating art and advocating philosophy, or a nomadic displacement from 'one possible world of advocating' into 'a possible world'? At a time when nothing is self-evident when it comes to art and to philosophy, some of the relevant questions are:

- How to define and describe openness, the specific nature of examples, and eclecticism or nomadism so that we acquire a systematic view of art and philosophy?³⁴

³³ Jacques Derrida, quoted in David Carroll, *Paraesthetics. Foucault Lyotard Derrida* (New York: Methuen, 1987), p. 83.

³⁴ Heinz Paetzold, »How to Bridge the Gap between Philosophy of Art and Aesthetics of Nature. A Systematic Approach«, *Anthropos*, no. 3-4, Ljubljana, 1996.

- How to show that our 'baselessness and homelessness'³⁵ are a 'normal' human condition? It is not just now that it became evident that nothing which has to do with art is evident by itself, even its right to existence.³⁶ Nothing that has to do with art or philosophy was ever evident by itself.
- How to be an 'advocate' in relation to a signifier which advocates a subject for another signifier, or for all other signifiers?
- How is it possible HERE and NOW to destroy with one's mortal and vulnerable body the 'advocating' or 'mediating' screen of the signifieds³⁷ which separates art and philosophy, and then to face one's own experience of the destruction of that break?

³⁵ Martin Heidegger, »The Origin of the Work of Art«, p. 149.

³⁶ Theodor W. Adorno, *Estetička teorija (Ästhetische Theorie)* (Beograd: Nolit, 1979), p. 25.

³⁷ Roland Barthes, »Rasch«, *The Responsibility of Forms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 308.