Does Actual "Artistic" Communication Exist? Contributions from Sociology

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Abstract

There is something called "art" that distinguishes some existent objects from all the other objects. Why do these particular objects, touching our senses, present themselves as "different"?It exists a way of "treating" each single unit of language adding spontaneously an additional significance to what the term would have if it was used "in a colloquial conversation or in a scientific discussion" (Schutz 1996). When we are in front of a complex concept, symbols are manipulated in such a way that they evoke a variety of meanings, a polysemy that "wants" to be ambiguous (Griswold 1997).

Keywords: Artistic communication**,** Artistic socialization, Open and closed symbols

Art and Languages

Can we say that art is a form of language? Can you identify key features able to discriminate this type of language from others? We are going to anticipate in explicitly the two theses we are dealing with. Then we will analyze them in-depth, showing their opposite hypotheses.

a) Art is a "language" and, as such, it shares characteristics, conditions and potentialities of all other languages. Therefore, we can consider it as a special type of "communication".
b) The artistic communication shares the milestones of any other type of communication (issuer, message, code, channel, receiver, context, noise, feedback). In particular, and perhaps even in a stronger way, artistic communication is based on use of "pieces" of reality (objects, concepts, shapes, sounds, movements, etc.) associated with the idea that they «can be seen as expressing, or representing something else» (Griswold 1994, it. transl.1997: 25). Our hypothesis is that the language of art is a "special" way of representing this reference. That means in any artistic production there is a completely original way of using "symbols", those signs that give sensitive objectivity to things that are only in the personal experience and in our relationships.

The most distinctive features of the artistic language must be identified, in our opinion, in both the way of using symbols (i.e. codes) and interpreting them (in recipients), as well as in a special type of "noise" related to "interpretive filters". An important role in the process of artistic signification must be recognized with the "context": in fact, cultural object and receiver are always anchored to a particular area that we call social world.

«Art is a communication and signification phenomenon, and as such can be examined» (Calabrese 1986: VI). This statement opens up some issues, as soon as you try to deepen its "linguistic" nature. It is precisely at the level of distinction between language and linguistics that complex problems are sited. Is language only what follows the linguistic dynamics? We analyze some positions about, past and recent.

According to Dewey, "artistic language" differs from spoken language due to its greater universality and this feature is inferred from the greater facility with which art languages can be understood by people belonging to different cultures. In contrast to the above cited idea, Hauser considers art as one of many idioms, a dialect rather than a universal language. At the end of his analysis, Strassoldo (unlike Calabrese) concludes that «art can not be analyzed and defined with the formal tools of communication and information sciences and is not a particular language» (2001: 57).

For Arnheim, finally, «the artistic activity is a form of reasoning, in which perceiving and thinking of things are inseparably intertwined» (1970, it. transl.1974: IX). In other words, you cannot separate mind from sensitivity in the understanding of art works. «Who paints, writes, composes, dances, thinks through his own senses» (ibid.). The modern difficulty in understanding artistic languages would reside then in a gap between senses and thought.

This strange combination of perceptive and intellectual channels could be the basis of a *sui generis* status of artistic communication, so much to speculate with Passeron (1962) (and with Suzanne Langer) that it is possible and even necessary to distinguish a communication function (delegated to verbal language) and an expression function (typical of artistic languages, instead). Although still very general, this distinction may explain why general linguistics models are not *ipso facto* applicable to art, which always keeps some "residual", that resists to the analysis)[1].

More interesting are, in our opinion, the recent American currents, which relate the communicability of an artwork to its inner qualities, in its functioning mechanisms, in particular to its symbolic nature. In this case, the discriminatory aspect of the artistic act would be the particular "symbolic action", which «is a peculiar way to "talk",that sets it apart from common as scientific language» (Calabrese 1986: 16). After all, Parsons has already, considered the artist «as a specialist in the creation and manipulation of expressive symbols» (Gattamorta 2006: 112).

Precisely because of its characterization, we can consider, along with Uspensky, that the development of art is similar to that of language, «i.e. tending to a condition of rules stability, which, however, is continuously accompanied by a tendency to deviation ... deviations from already formed norms constitute the foundation of art, which is nevertheless able (depending on the frequency of deviations) to return rule itself» (Calabrese 1986: 166). In this sense, the status of art would be very similar (as mentioned in Durkheim) to that of crime, which continually contradicts rules, but it contains in itself an extraordinary prophetic force.

Therefore this strange power, that breaks down and, at the same time, carries new regulative logics, originally refers to the particular symbolism own by artistic language. It is necessary to make a brief discussion about this topic. Mead has already said that what distinguishes human from animal communication is exactly the use of symbols itself. In fact, «animals communicate through "natural signs" without requiring any interpretation, but a mechanism of stimulus-response» (Gattamorta 2006: 110); men instead, using "significant symbols", cannot understand (through instinctive reaction) complex meanings that require "interpretation".

For our investigation it is functional to adhere on the distinction (more or less accepted by all) where there are two broad categories of symbols that work according to "closed" or "open" trajectories. Now, we can agree with Jiranek when he states that «all of the contents of art are open systems» (1987: 80). In other words, we can say that the artistic symbol can be identified as one arrangement, process, system in which the "back" ends in a certain vagueness, with a not obvious, forced and not even unique connection between signifier and signified. The artistic language reaches a level of "opening" wider than normal and daily interpersonal communication. In the language of art, therefore, is exacerbated one of the components present in any communication processes, we often forget: communication is always (at various levels) an "unlikely" process to come out. As such it is the result of several "translations-traditions-betrayals" of a life, the communication cannot be compared to a simple "transport" of "informative" material and therefore it implies, a particular "performative" activity of the reader.

With all the above mentioned, we can say that art is a language, but, as Francastel affirms, a language with similarities and differences to natural languages. Indeed, «the reading a painting or monument deciphering does not happen all at once, thank to a spontaneous learning. If we stand in front of a painting, we need hours - or days - in order to grasp its real significance» (1970, it. transl.1976: 16). We can add that art is a language that moves away from usual and time-worn languages and that, even where these languages are based on linguistic logics, they are deliberately disregarded, generating a primordial or disorienting result.

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[1] It is necessary here to try to clarify the mentioned distinctions. The artistic languages can not give rise to a system of meaning comparable to the rigorous one of linguistic because the minimum units of meaning can not be organized at a level of upper logic (so-called "double articulation"). Pedler noted, in this area of research, the importance of scholars such as Luis-J. Prieto (*Messages et signals*, Paris, PUF, 1966) adopting the opposition of the two articulations described by André Martinet. The first articulation has an autonomous value of significance, i.e. it uses units having a sense, able to vary the signification of an utterance. The second articulation instead is made by simple distinctive units, the "phonemes", whose unique function is to allow the distinction of the monemes themselves. The critical point of this type of linguistic analysis is its conclusion. Wherever this trend is not possible, a "language" does not exist. It follows that «if a non-verbal language does not possess the essential characteristics of verbal language, it can not be called language» (Calabrese 1986: 119). Even Pedler shares this perplexity against radical positions when he states that «if the existence of a double articulation seems indisputable for a verbal language, it does not mean that we cannot consider the other sign systems in order to observe whether they are organized as codes, and to see how these are disposable to be articulated» (2005: 98).

Here comes the poet allowed, or even required, to reinvent the language, such as Mallarmé proudly says, when he endeavors to *donner un sense plus pur aux mots de la tribu*, a «verse in which the expressive recovery of evoked word is condensed, opposed to the word worn by mediator use" (Braga 1985: 179).

The Communicative "Noise" as a Resource

From the foregoing, it is evident that the artistic communication always requires a significant and decisive intervention by the reader (on this it is based what is called "reception theory"). With the intervention of this "second author" increases the likelihood of misinterpretation, of misunderstanding, of "noise". Gadamer notes that «when two men meet and communicate witheach other, they always represent two different worlds, two points of view be and two images of the world that compare eachother» (1960, it. transl. 1995: 177). For this reason, it is comprehensible that the two poles of a communicative relationship can start out from inhomogeneous codes and that this limited ability in the use of codes can generate misunderstanding. However, it happens the same, (and this is what we are more interested in) «to other emotions and feelings, such as love or affection, or to the experience that can come out from artistic expressiveness» (Gili 2007: 156).

For this reason, since «works of the imagination are in the form of complex networks, consisting of repetitions and variations, they are full of what information theory brands as "noise"» (McGann 2001, it. transl. 2002: 193). First of all we will focus on what are the basic principles of this theory and then we will report how the noise becomes an indispensable resource in artistic communication.

For the mathematical theory of information of Shannon and Weaver, noise must be considered as the whole factors that threaten, hinder, imperil, distort communication. Therefore, the maximum of "informativeness" of a message depends on whether the code is the most possible unique and unambiguous one and it implies a "closure". As a result, between information and noise there is a relationship of inverse proportionality: «If this model can answer to the communication among machines, it is much more problematic when it is applied to human communication» (Gili 2007: 180).

In fact, here approaching the heart of our interest, «for many other types of human communication, information and noise are not contradictory or opposite terms» (ibid.: 181). Iser had already realized that in some cases you might voluntarily «decrease the denotation of a message/text in favour of a greater connotation» (1971, it. transl. 1989: 46). Such specific cases are identified in the aesthetic communication, in literary, musical and artistic works, where ambiguity and polysemy are not only a limit, but also a wealth: they stimulate and require the "productivity" and "interpretative cooperation" of the recipient. We are, therefore, in the presence of «a derived and latent meaning, a "double meaning", that the issuer can show or hide while the recipient can discover and affirm beyond the original intention of the issuer» (Gili 2007: 182).

Artistic communication flows carefully avoiding the two opposite banks of in one side the "obvious" and in the other the "incomprehensible". There is the constant risk of moving too far from the ideal line that is the only terrain in which artistic communication can exist. In fact (and this is a another data of the information theory) there are limits beyond which the ambiguity of a message becomes pure noise and it does not communicate anything. While, there are also limits beyond which the displeasure kills aesthetics, because it resets the "interest" of the reader and it leads to a simple and immediate consumption. This thin line has been faced by Moles in his book *Théorie de l'information et perception esthétique* (1958). The aesthetic information coincides with the "originality" and it is a function of the "improbability" of the message. In this sense, «information and meaning are really opposite, since the meaning is placed on the facility where the dilemmas are immediately composed and the message is decoded: message loaded of information instead requires a complex and adventurous decoding» (Eco 1984: 191).

Once again, the reader is being strongly pulled into the scene, he is the one who has to get the aesthetic object "working": the energy you need in order to have this process depends on the effect that the text is able to arise to attract the reader until engaging him in this effort, the effort that we have to accept whenever there is an ambiguous, uncertain, "possible" proposal. So, in this case, there is the need to re-establish an order that is not the usual one: «to compose looms as a series of attacks on the redundancy system inside of a certain style» (ibid.: 190).

Art is therefore a "controlled noise" useful to get out of what you already know. Basically this is what distinguishes it from scientific discourse or everyday conversation, which perceive the noise as a problem, essentially with a negative meaning. Now, the operation of the imagination, as the writer Alberto Moravia called it, can be clear and rational, but it is always a bit ambiguous; however, «science is not so: if it states one thing, it is that and that's it. This is the kind of language that ensures to the literary work the ambiguity which art can not do anything without» (Camon 1973: 21). It is certainly not a recent discovery: we can consider the whole classical rhetoric (and not only the linguistic one) a sort of "encyclopaedia of noise", with its figures, its rules, its limitations, which once achieved, they just ask to be exceeded.

The most promising noise in the arts is assuredly the "metaphor". Goodman uses a splendid series of metaphors in order to explain it: «It is something like teaching new tricks to an old word ... it's an affair that takes place between a predicate with a past and an object that condescends protesting ... wherever there is metaphor, there is conflict» (1969, it. transl. 1976: 67). The conflict, that lights the fire between predicates and objects, drags on the field an absolute and final referee, that is no longer, now, the creator, but the one who reignites the battle, reconvening and renaming the elements in the game: the reader.

The researched outcomes of the metaphor can be of two types: the first is the selective one. The whole classical literary tradition is set onto more or less "dedicated" codes to a target audience more or less limited. The starting point of taking into account the audience level of culture was already imposed in classical rhetoric, and even the medieval preachers had learned to vary the style of their homilies, depending on the social level of the public. One of the scholars that paid a lot of attention to the social and relational reading of oratorical styles was a sociologist, Erich Köler. With his *Sociologia della fin'amor*(1976) he has developed a powerful and exemplary analysis of the relationship between language and social structure. The choice of *trobar leu* and *plan*, as opposed to *clus*, *cobert* and *escur* depends not only on the argument treated but also on the need to adapt your style to different audiences. *Entrebescar los motz* serves to deflect understanding on the one hand and it requires more attention than the other one. In this way, the poem becomes a *status symbol*, which represents and betrays the cultural membership of a particular social class, and so it is able to understand its own unique language. The more is widespread the more it becomes vulgar. As a result, precious things cannot be accessible to all, as well as explicitly the troubadour Raimbaut declares: "Because more difficult verses make deaf the fools".

It is impossible to not notice the similarity of situation with the pages of the Gospel, in which the parables are justified by the consideration "he that hath ears to hear, let him hear" or even "because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear": this a bit eccentric connection leads us to understand the second wanted outcome of metaphor. To not exclude, but, on the opposite, to give the opportunity to understand things that otherwise would be completely unintelligible. Lakoff and Johnson define the metaphor as "a way of understanding one thing in terms of another"; "understanding" would be its primary function. This process is realized all the times that, through the metaphor, «we transfer dimensions that we recognise as our practical experience into dimensions which, by their nature, appear less easy to define» (Crespi 2005: 19). We could say that it is an unintelligible talk because speaking about obscure or confused things, which can be only "metaphorically" approached, through an attachment they have to something more familiar. This, perhaps, is the main feature of artistic languages, even if just for the fact that the clash with "obscure and confused" things is pretty much daily, it can be said that «the metaphor is now included in all the ways we have of thinking about reality» (ibid.: 21).

The Reader as Co-Author

Recently, art sociology has applied to aesthetic fruition what in the field of mass media communication has been called the "reception theory". Starting from the studies of the Birmingham School, the interest of scholars focuses on the fact, previously underestimated, that the outcome of communication is strongly linked to the "activity" of the recipient. This trend quickly found fertile ground in the field of art, ready to receive it favourably. In fact, for a long time (especially with C.S. Elliot) they were aware of the fact that «every work of art, once completed, exists as entity endowed with meaning, regardless the personal life of its creator» (Schutz 1976, it. transl. 1996: 103). Adorno himself had found «the inadequacy between the aesthetic object and its reception» (1962, it. transl. 1971: 104), a process in which, however, the German sociologist could see only a «permanent deterioration dynamic of the forms in the social consciousness that keeps them» (ibid.).

Shortly, we begin to admit that any cultural object is destined, on its nature, not to return ever as a once for all established event, frozen. On the contrary, it asks to be "revived" and therefore it is subject to infinite small revisions every time it is taken into consideration by the reader. This happens precisely because of the fact that the object is always present and only in relation to a living being that "estimates" it: an event always completely new (different contexts) and completely personal (different experiences).

The perceptive process implies a very interesting "background" on which it may start running. It is not correct, in fact, considering a perceptive act as an isolated event, since «it is not that the most recent phase of a stream of countless similar acts, carried out in the past and surviving in the memory» (Arnheim, 1970, it. transl. 1974: 96). And so, events perception is strongly influenced by our own experience of life, to which we are inevitably led to compare what is happening to us. We expect the new through an immediate comparison with the old. It is fair to say, with Arnheim, that no form of previous experience can "exhaust" what you see in the present time.

But the individual (henceforth "the reader"), on his side, can not be considered "isolated" as well, even just for his memory where he starts for each critic act towards reality. Here the most proper sociological aspect of the theory of the reception comes into play: it is useful to distinguish the "perception", individual contact of the listener with a work, from the "reception". This one includes «the totality of characteristics of the perception that are common to a particular group, determined in a historical, national or social sense, and that can be distinguished from those of other groups" (Lissa 1989: 70). Thus, while perception is a psychologist's specific interest because it deals with the practice of signification of a concrete reader, reception is the subject of sociology because it has as its objective the identification of the «result of the experiences of many individuals belonging to a particular social group» (ibid.). In other words, the goal of the research on the reception is to «find out how people give meaning to a particular media product» (Sorice 2007: 86).

Texts, especially the multimedia ones, are characterized by a rich polysemy «because the more there are possible meanings, the more there are chances of attracting different audiences and different social categories» (McQuail 1987, it. transl. 1996: 224). Thus, text can be understood as a network of semantic connections that the reader assembles, a network that correlates it with countless other texts. In fact, it stands in a close and determining relationship with everything that had preceded it, and, at a higher level, with the general system of practices and cultural symbologies (Barthes 1984).

Proceeding logically from these assumptions, we get to the inevitable consequence of a revision of the real dynamic of communication processes: in this rich network of references, in this "galaxy of meanings", «however, there is a place in which multiplicity meets together and such place is not the author, as it has been stated so far, but the reader» (Barthes 1984, it. transl. 1988: 56). Awareness of the importance of the reader in the reconstruction of message had been known since ancient times. Now, however, things get much more pronounced. We assume that without the reader there would be no text because the latter one, according to the well-known metaphor of Sartre, is «a strange whirligig that exists whenever it is moving. To bring it alive, we need a concrete act called reading, and it lasts as long as the reading can last» (1947, it. transl. 1995: 33).

Viewed in this perspective, the work loses the character of timeless and a historical self-sufficiency: its meaning is not that fixed one in a rigid and unquestionable way by its author, «but it "materializes" itself from time to time in connection with its interpreter» (Borio and Garda 1989: 3).

For Sartre (as we have seen), the writer always writes for an audience and without it there would not even be the work itself: in fact, the operation of writing implies the reading as its dialectical correlative. The reader, therefore, gradually begins to occupy a central position for any communication process, and for any analysis of this process. This kind of attention, of course, is not limited to the artistic phenomenon: it is an awareness derived from other areas of communication. From research in Palo Alto onwards, there are questions about the "intentionality" as basic condition of communication. In fact, even if the issuer has not communicative intentions, he cannot avoid them, because "every act is communicative". Still «there is no communication without intentionality: the recipient's intentionality» (Gili 2007: 147). Only if the recipient wants/is able to interpret the symbols, there can be a communication.

Since a bit of time, we have been significantly involved in the deepening of the reading mechanism, understood as the act of interpreting of the "reader" in front of a "text". There is a growing realization that this mechanism is a complex phenomenon that involves various body parts and covers both the psychic and social development of the individual.

Thanks to this reason, it is increasingly understood that the artistic communication, at a radical level even more deep than the ordinary communication one, requires the reader an intervention of his whole personality. In this process, artist and audience of the aesthetic object do not share simply information, but they start «a process of negotiation, a "battle", metaphorically understood, between the meanings inscribed in the text and those assigned to the text by the reader» (Livolsi 2000: 146). In this particular communicative situation, more than in others, we must then keep in mind that inevitably upstream prospects (the artist) and downstream ones (the reader) are strongly asymmetric. The business purposes of the first and the pure enjoyment of the second one make the decoding ontologically different from the initial coding. This situation, photographed with precision by the Birmingham School, poses even more problems in the definition of a hypothetical "right" or "correct" reading. With Stuart Hall, we can start from the certainty that «the ideology issued is not the same as the received one, although there may have been a "privileged" reading, proposed from above» (McQuail 1987, it. transl. 1996: 113).

In the artistic field, this "risk" of communication, however, is perceived, in different times and different ways, such as an "opportunity", as a resource: and so we should not be surprised when a discerning reader discovers, «in the writings of others, perfections that stand outside of those which the author has put and wanted, and lends them richer meanings and images» (Montaigne 1580, it. transl. 1982: 148). More recently Ingarden denied that the interpretation of the author should be a valid yardstick, claiming the existence of a transcendence of the meaning of the work compared to the intention of the author himself (Borio and Garda 1989: 21); and so the public can find what it wants into the work, even what the author did not want: «It is a betrayal, of course, but a creative betrayal» (Escarpit 1958, it. transl. 1977: 108).

Every time we re-read a text, we re-actualize it and every time we become "authors" of a "creative misunderstanding" able to charge certain cultural products of «meanings that, in another time and in another place, they could never have» (Sorce Keller 1996: 62). It is interesting, now, to try to deepen the dynamic by which this process takes place and how it can remain inside a virtuous perspective. We could briefly say that the creative misunderstanding, on the one hand, is provided by the author, on the other, it happens by putting into play, by the reader, his "pre-judgments" (Gadamer), when he starts to interpret. Let us dwell on the first perspective, to devote then more space to the second one.

The opportunities for a creative misunderstanding are offered voluntarily by the author, who sows (we will deepen it) the story of "blanks" to be filled, and the code itself, as well as the used terms can multiply these alternative readings. We now ask, what are the dynamics by which these opportunities are normally used by the reader? What logic such a process is permitted or provided by? Linguistic, psycholinguistic, logic and sociology are supported effectively by a useful distinction between *connotation* and *denotation* in order to understand open codes. Charles Sanders Peirce can be considered a trailblazer when he clarifies that denotation is "the direct reference of a symbol to its objects" while connotation is «the reference of a symbol to its base through the object, the reference to the common features of its objects» (Maddalena 2005: 14), (but adding a third level called "information implied by the symbol").

Jauss, with the School of Konstanz, considers reception as an "updating of outdating", which happens «whenever the reader fills in the blanks» (Iser 1978, it. transl. 1987: 249). These exact "blanks" are the ones that work «as a kind of hinge on which the whole text-reader relationship rotates» (ibid.). Along this direction of textual analysis, Umberto Eco uses the popular metaphor of «lazy (or economic) mechanism that lives on the surplus of meaning introduced by the recipient» (1979: 52).

The reader, therefore, the public, ill-treated by artists and critics of the '900, seems to regain a pivotal role in the process of artistic production and communication. All of this contributes to build that net of question, of tensive background that Jauss calls "horizons of expectation", which the work of art is proposed to and they consist of the collective experience and they constitute the criterion of aesthetic appreciation.

If, therefore, any cultural object «tells a story» (Griswold 1994, it. transl. 1997: 26), we must say that the reconstruction of the story is not a mechanical process, or a predictable and unique one. In fact, many factors are involved in offering possible variants, variations, deviations. Among them, first of all, the polysemic richness of the terms used and the particular way they are ordered by. In fact, in a polysemous code, each term has already «a more or less broad halo of uncertainty and ambiguity ("semantic halo") that makes it possible to assign different meanings to the same word or phrase» (Gili 2007: 23).

Over time, this scheme has been taken up, revised and reshaped by some linguists, De Saussure, Hjelmslev and Barthes, in the specific function of a theory of reading specific open texts, like art. Especially after the analysis of De Saussure, it has become a custom to consider the denotation as a sort of "first degree of signification" that has «universal characteristics (the same meaning for everyone) and objectivity (the referents are true and they do not offer themselves to evaluations)» (McQuail 1987, it. transl. 1996: 232), an immediate, unambiguous and explicit symbol. On the other hand, the connotation concerns the second level of meaning, accessory, implicit, unspoken signification of the word: «The circle of other meanings that can be brought into relation with it» (Marothy 1980, it. transl. 1987: 120). The connotation, which is important, finds its fertile soil in the "reaction" of the reader "experienced" life with his impact with the text: in fact, it is based on the possible associations and it obtains its raw materials mainly from personal background of the receiver.

To enrich the reference plane, multiplying the possible ways of interpretation, the concept of "myth" used by Barthes comes in action to deepen the understanding of the dynamics of connotative reception. Myths are ideas generated in the collective imaginary (i.e. by the socio-cultural context of reference) that are in the reader's mind, thus constituting a pre-existing grid for a text evaluation. As a result, every sign which the reader encounters will be immediately placed in a wider system of meanings: the system can be very wide, but also limited to family or couple (like many recent ethnographic investigations have shown). This second level of understanding is called by Tönnies "connective knowledge" that directly derived from personal, community social relationships.

Barthes further says that these existing ideas are transmitted along with the messages in the communication process: this involves a multiplication of possible interpretations. The polysemy that results is in great demand in the mass media communication, since more the myths reactivated by the message are, greater the range of potential affected public is. For example, let's think about how much skill and cunning recently cartoons are produced with, which are able to nail down for hours the public from 3 to 90 years, so that everyone can find exactly what they are looking for.

In conclusion, we may observe that the rootedness of the connotation is twofold. The first can be called "internal" that is linked to previous and subjective experiences, fundamentally of emotional and psychological nature. The second type of rootedness is the "external" one instead which, with time and repetition, tends to become internal. What Zofia Lissa says about the musical reception can be extended to any kind of communication process: an I that enjoys a cultural product doesn't enter in it without bias (myths), but guided by his own «collective musical consciousness of an environment and of a time»(Lissa 1989: 70). In addition, «this collective influence is not limited to the discursive elements of judgment, but also affects the emotional sphere» (Borio and Garda 1989: 7).

Art and Sociality

Artistic communication seems to have a very specific ability to facilitate or create ties, relationships, sociality, as well as having its own peculiar dynamics of meaning.

Certainly, Duvignaud is one of the most careful scholars in trying to understand this challenging aspect of the research. For the French sociologist, imaginary, which is the cognitive energy that is the basis of all art forms, is not just a dream. Indeed, these creative attitudes in the plot of real concrete life «are perpetually in search of social frameworks and tend to create "sociality"» (1967, it. trasl. 1969: 62). From this point of view, the artistic work, can be read as the evidence of the original aspiration towards an impossible brotherhood, that, for this reason, often takes the form of a «nostalgia for a lost communion, as prohibited dream, constantly enlivened by an irrepressible desire of affective fusion» (ibid.). This desire of communication, rather of participation, it is behind every act of the so-called "atypical" individual (the artist) who «seeks and finds sometimes in painting, in the execution of masks, in music or dance, the means to express his sense of isolation ... a sign of virtual participation, not yet realized, of which the individual, against his will, is the source and the matrix» (ibid.: 54). Only from these considerations, according to the French sociologist, you can also restore a sense of those expressions that at first sight are incomprehensible, only justified through that "violent and dissatisfied urge of participation", which can be translated into religious, magic, political, and especially artistic practices.

Even Jauss gives a personal contribution on the topic, drawing conclusions not unlike those of Duvignaud: you must have the courage to reiterate, in the technological and digital era, an *Apology of aesthetic experience*. Today we run the risk of stigmatizing the experience of "pleasure" as a category without any cognitive potential, purely consumerist.

By doing so, you are likely to expropriate the aesthetic experience of its "primary social function": consumerist enjoyment, in fact, reduces the aesthetic dynamic, not allowing it to reach the fulfilment of his original trajectory. When the aesthetic enjoyment is limited to the interaction between artistic object and subjectivity, it prevents the true fulfilment, because it captures the most rich and interesting dynamic, «that experience of the other individual which is always fulfilled in aesthetic practice through those moments of primary identification such as admiration, shock, emotion, pity, laughter, and that only an aesthetic snobbery can take it vulgar» (Rondini 2002: 155).

One of the risks of contemporary sociology, and the classical one as well, is to construct social reality analysis systems that can function perfectly well without contemplating human action, if not as a mechanism responsive to inviolable laws: the comtian dream of a "social physics" which, appropriately "oiled", removes the error from the system. The outcome is that the social is no longer conceived «as the place where the human lives. The human is increasingly seen as a character, impulse, stress, disturbance, external "noise" with respect to system of the behaviour, mechanisms and rules that "make" the society» (Donati 2006: 22).

Especially in the field of aesthetic and creative disciplines, «it is a serious mistake to believe that the objectification of value judgments can be achieved by eliminating the subject of assessment, simply starting from the object. This is possible only with reference to the predispositions of the "primary experience"» (Zenck 1989: 105). It is useful, at this point, to wonder about the properties of this "primary experience", nowadays very shabby, after an ideological campaign that, in the last century, has greatly undermined the hypothesis of its own existence. Adorno, probably, was one of the most lucid supporters in this complaint: «Today, and since a bit of time, the unity of the person who once was thought superior to any doubt, is threatening to be disintegrated, supported by the neutralization of the art, in a consumed cultural good without perceiving the binding element of its aesthetic content, which goes beyond the same content» (1956, it. trasl. 1990: 146).

But what is it about? How and where can we find this supposed "primary experience"? For Crespi this level of experience is critical to the distinction between man and animals. In fact, the loss of the instinctual automation caused by thinking marked the definitive break between the two natures. But, since then, this ability to "think", to consider their own experience and not just to live it, compels man to act in a totally own way: «He is from the beginning constitutively the being that arises questions: "Who am I?", "Where am I going?", "What do I do?", "What is the meaning of life?", "What is there after death?" and so forth» (2005: 6).

If this is the level at which a man becomes such, then you can also review the concept of culture and art in relation to this perspective. Therefore, culture can be considered as a set of «response mode, by sensitive men, to the central deep questions that confront the human groups with the consciousness to exist. Those questions are how to deal with death, the meaning of tragedy, the nature of duty, the character of love – these recurring problems, that are, I think, cultural universals, must be found in all societies where men have become aware of existence» (Bell 1977: 428). And so, if scientific knowledge allows undeniable progress on the path of mastery over nature, existential problems remain the same. Even though attempts to answer vary from context to context, all cultures «"understand" each other, since they arise in response to common situations» (ibid.). It is proper, therefore, to support with Tenbruck that «every music retains its original meaning... only to the extent that the fundamental ideas and ideals of life of culture of the past find confirmation in our current cultural aspirations» (2002: 215). But it is also reasonable to assume, on the basis of the above considerations, that some "concepts" or "fundamental ideals of life" can maintain their stability through every kind of cultural variance: at least, it should be recognized that the history of culture seems to give some confirmation in this way, even on wide-ranging.

Another aspect to be conceived in this "primary experience", particularly important for its influence on the aesthetic or, more properly, artistic dynamic, is finally detected by Duvignaud where he questions the motives of the creative impulse, or "imaginary". The perpetuation of such "extravagant" dynamic is justified by the consideration that «if our substance was really given to us, and we had it on hand, undoubtedly we would not project ourselves beyond what limits us. But we are insufficient to ourselves» (1967, it. trasl. 1969: 134). This "failure" is then regarded as an act not cultural, but a structural one and as primary impulse inherent in man to "project" himself beyond what limits him: the "transcendence". In other words, at this point there is a humanly unavoidable dynamic, an essentially anthropological question.

In this perspective, let us now look at the last of these general considerations: how is possible to "outsource" this "primary experience"? Can we consider art as the "least inappropriate" language for this particular type of communication?

We must keep in mind, how Crespi does while analysing the thought of Mead, that if it is true that language plays a key role in the formation processes of individuality, it is equally true that «the character, ultimately unobjectifiable of the I, shows a limit to the ability of linguistic definition» (2005: 141). Perhaps, just the intention and the artistic endeavour should be placed in this final and total "unobjectifiability" of human experience through the linguistic definitions.

For J. Marothy, if language, writing, conceptual generalization are a great achievement, they can also become a source of strong ambiguity where they claim to exhaust the described object. It is clear, however, «that the "information" contained in the words brings to the surface only some fragments of a certain object and of our relationship with it; a lot of human meanings remain in the sensory channels, conceptually not generalized, immediately undecodable» (1980, it. trasl. 1987: 120).

Even artists, in the vast majority, are aware of this dynamic. For the poet Giuseppe Ungaretti, for example, experience has shown that between the word and what it actually means there is always a huge gap, even when it seems minimal: «Language corresponds badly with what you have in mind and with what you would like to say: sure, it does not correspond, if not quite roughly. Therefore, I would say that I was looking for the least inaccurate approximation, reduction, as far as possible, of that unavoidable gap» (Camon 1982: 11). For many scholars, it is this "least inaccurate approximation" to the experience that characterizes the artistic communication. Similarly, Roland Barthes argues that «poetry tries to find an infrasignification, a pre-semiological language stage. In short, it strives to reconvert the sign in meaning: its ideal trend would not be to reach the meaning of the words, but the meaning of the thing itself. For this reason, poetry upsets the language, because it can increase the abstraction of the concept and the arbitrariness of the sign as well as it stretches to the extreme the binding between signifier and signified. This is why our modern poetry is always emerging as a killing of language» (Ragone, 1996: 313).

The artistic expression, therefore, intervenes where ordinary communication demonstrates clearly its limits. It compensates an "unavoidable gap" between "perception" and "expression" that seems to irreducibly characterize human experience.

Taking into account the above mentioned, you can go through all the available communicative ways and use increasingly sophisticated and active codes and channels, but in the end, when it comes to outsource the experience «it is frequent to name the connotation of such experiences as "unspeakable", "ineffable" or "indescribable"» (Braga 1985: 121); and yet, despite this obstacle, «our intelligence is organized in a way that we attempt to represent the unrepresentable» (Sloterndijk 2003: 106).

In this condition of "linguistic suffering", poetic language «is what tries the most to escape the need to determine, often using words with different meanings from the current ones, relying on the evocative power of sounds and using the power of allusive terms in unusual contexts» (Crespi 2005: 24).

This is, perhaps, the peculiarity and the great opportunity offered by the "artistic communication" compared to any other "ordinary" way to communicate.

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