

From a Work to an “Open” Work: Research Experience

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Abstract: The subject of this study is the concept of “open” work, proposed by U. Eco. Based on the ideas of U. Eco, the authors interpret the “open” work in several aspects: compositional, semantic, and compositional-semantic. Compositional openness emerges in aleatoric works. The tendencies to openness are found in compositions written with the use of “non-deterministic” notation. Works that are “open” in the semantic sense have encoded meanings, the decoding of which requires the involvement of contextual meanings. Compositional-semantic openness emerges in Net Art. Cognition of the specifics of “open” works required a study of the history of the traditional “closed” work, its becoming and evolution in a historical perspective. The concept of “work” is investigated in conjunction with the concepts of “authorship”, “creativity”, “musical text”, “performance”, “perception”, etc. It was demonstrated that the meaning of these concepts substantially changes in the context of dynamic history and culture. In modern culture, these concepts have lost their usual shape and have substantially transformed due to rapid development of computer technology and the Internet.

Keywords: Musical text, creativity, authorship, aleatory music, Net Art.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important tendencies of our time in humanitarian knowledge is the reinterpretation and transformation of concepts and categories, which for a long time, within the borders of the culture of the Renaissance, the New Age, and the first half of the 20th century, were considered to be quite stable. In musicology and aesthetics, such concepts include “musical composition”, “authorship”, “musical text”, “composer creativity”, “individual creativity”, “performance”, “performer”, “perception”, “mastery”. They started gradually taking shape and establishing themselves in the European cultural consciousness in the Middle Ages and finally gained a foothold in the traditional understanding during the Romanticism era.

The content of these concepts somewhat varied in a dynamic historical and cultural context, but within the XVII-XX centuries the invariant meaning remained unchanged, which ensured their long life in European musical culture. Currently, these concepts reveal the properties of semantic ambiguity. On the one hand, they continue existing in their usual meaning. On the

other hand, intramusical and extramusical factors contribute to their substantial transformation. These factors include, first and foremost, the regular evolution of the musical language and the emergence of new compositional techniques in 20th century music. The most important role is played by the development of computer technologies that generate phenomena, which hardly fit into the framework of established meanings. All this challenges researchers to comprehend and develop an adequate conceptual framework and analysis mechanisms.

The concepts that have significantly transformed within musical art of the second half of the 20th and 21st centuries include the “work”. N. Gerasimova-Persidskaya (2012) names a few “axioms” necessary for the emergence of a “work”. This is the author’s creative process, the result of which is the “work”; fixation, which defines “timeless (in a certain meaning) stability and inevitable processuality”; polyphonic composition, as a prerequisite for European music (Gerasimova-Persidskaya 2012). Thus, based on the composer’s experience of the Renaissance, New Age and the first half of the 20th century, “work” means a material object as a result of individual (author’s) creative process, fixed in a musical text. However, modern composing practice offers us a sufficient

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number of phenomena that do not fit this definition or correspond to it only partially. Therefore, it would be advisable to refer to the concept of "open work", which is introduced into the scientific everyday life of literary studies and research on the semiotics of texts by U. Eco (1979). In musicology, the problems of "open work" remain fragmented to date, which determines the relevance of our paper.

The phenomenon of "open work" is investigated in the work of U. Eco (1979). He emphasises that the concepts of "openness" and "closedness" should be clarified, since any work of art is an "open product" due to the possibility of various interpretations by performers and recipients, which open up new semantic perspectives in the act of communication with it. This is conditioned by the cultural context, tastes, personal preferences of the recipients. With that, according to U. Eco (1979), the work remains a complete and closed form of uniqueness, its unique specificity is not modified. In fact, an "open work" implies a compositional incompleteness, an openness of form, where the performer becomes a co-author at the moment of performing the work, experiencing it in an aesthetic plane.

N. Gerasimova-Persidskaya (2012) also draws attention to the fact that a fixed text was also subject to interpretation in music of the New Age. The early stages of the development of European professional musical art (Middle Ages) and the second half of the 20th century introduced the possibility of transforming the text (Gerasimova-Persidskaya 2012). Thus, according to U. Eco (1979), the concept of "open work" implies a compositional incompleteness that is overcome at the moment of performance and perception, giving it a formal and aesthetic completeness. With that, it appears to us that the concept of "open work" can be projected onto a wider scope of phenomena in the musical art of the second half of the 20th century and interpreted not only in a narrowly formal and compositional aspect. This predominantly refers to the conscious composer's parting of the meaning of their work in the cultural and historical context. It is also advisable to use the concept of "open work" when studying artistic phenomena generated by computer technologies, in particular, in audio-visual art and Net Art.

Study of the Concept of "Work" in the Context of History and Culture

A study of the interpretation of the concept of "work" shed light on its relative and historical nature. In the

Middle Ages, the originality of the "work" was conditioned by the lack of a clear distinction between the concepts of "own" and "someone else's", "individual" and "collective". The professional skill of the composer was determined by the ability to process a given "subject", usually prepared as a "foreign" material. The basis for the creators of musical texts was the corps of hymns of the Gregorian choir, which, apart from secular sources, was also addressed by Renaissance composers. Similar phenomena were observed in other types of arts: there were stable religious subjects in painting, and typical images and situations were developed in the literature, which justified the borrowing of other people's texts with their subsequent reformatting.

Accordingly, the concepts of "authorship", "individual creation", and "original work of art" had a slightly different meaning than in later eras, when authorship was associated with innovation and creativity at all stages of the creative process, from the creation of the source material, the subject of composer works (themes) until its final design into a composition with fixing the result in a musical text that can be defined as an author's text. Creativity in the Middle Ages was more likely to be associated with craft, acquiring a semantic connotation of artful work and production. It is no coincidence that T. Adorno (2006), reproaching composers for craftsmanship, dates the genesis of such an attitude towards creativity back to the Middle Ages. Back then, authorship did not appear as a significant category in the artistic consciousness of the era at all, which was due to anonymity of any work. The latter, according to V. Tatarkevich (2001), was interpreted by the attribute of God as the Creator.

Meanwhile, the concepts of "work", "authorship", and "creativity" are interconnected and interdependent. A change in the meaning of one in a dynamic historical and cultural context leads to changes in the interpretation of others. This can be explained by the fact that a work of art as the final result of creativity is a carrier of culturally significant information and culturally defined semantics, it is a representative of a certain worldview mode, a model of cognition in the context of a particular culture (Savchenko 2009).

Since the late Middle Ages in European musical art, there has been a tendency towards an increasingly strict fixation of the spatiotemporal parameters of a musical text in view of the invention of the five-line notation by Guido of Arezzo (Savchenko 2009). Under

the influence of Renaissance and humanistic attitudes, the individual beginning started manifesting itself in musical composition more and more clearly, although the use of the “someone else’s” would be present for a long time in the composer’s, by then author’s creative process of the New Age. For example, in the Baroque era, the practice of working with “someone else’s” material that was “appropriated” and processed in the creative process remained relevant.

The tendency of the gradual assertion of individual author’s creativity, which accompanied the desire to record its result – the work – in all its details found its completion during the classic romanticist era. In this period, and especially in the 19th century, art was conceptualised as the highest creative activity aimed at designing an individual innovative product. According to V. Tatarkevich (2001), it begins to be interpreted as an attribute of the artist. It appears to us that the works of composers and romanticists do not have three semantic (worldview) types: era, fixation on the game, fixation on universality and its close attention to the subjective and personal sphere of a person. All three modes (cognitive models) are inextricably linked: a subjective romanticist “I”, which is comparable and contrasts itself with the Universe, which often chooses a game, a paradox as a cognitive model that interprets the world and itself in the categories of game logic. The art of the romanticists, therefore, appears in three, often interrelated, forms: as a game, an intimate statement (in the name of “I”) and a holiday (action) (in the name of “We”).

Various semantic modes of romanticist worldview are represented by the genre system of musical romanticism. The comprehension, embodiment of the Universe in its integrity, all-inclusiveness is carried out within the boundaries of major conceptual secular and spiritual genres – symphonies and masses. That is why, apart from the immanent-musical reason for preserving the classical-romanticist musical language with a generic genre system for it, these genres do not lose their relevance in the Romanticism era. The sphere of subjective, intimate and personal expression and the game, which is interpreted in a rather broad semantic range, are localised in large genres (for example, in symphonies), but above all in small genres of instrumental and vocal music so favoured by romantics (miniatures, songs, romances, often combined into vocal and instrumental cycles). And while conceptual genres act as a link between romanticism and the previous (and subsequent) stages

in the development of musical art, then small genres, as is known, are symbolic for romanticists.

The interpretation of creativity as a game, holiday (action) and lyrical intimate expression is not only the creation of game, lyrical, and solemn images. This is a special attitude of the creator and recipient towards the work of art as to the carrier of certain artistically and culturally significant information, which is encrypted in its structure through the “units” adopted in this language context and their relations. This is a specific understanding of the purpose and tasks of art – “what for” this work is created, what purpose the artist pursues by invoking this genre, this type of statement. This is also a special attitude towards the process of creativity, more precisely, to the process of creating a work, “faceting” of the material, encryption of the information transmitted.

Art as a game manifests itself in various perspectives, at different levels. It appears that the game fixation involves a special attitude towards the process of designing the text, its generation and development. Thus, game logic will initially manifest itself in a combinatorial method of working with material, in operating with thematic blocks, in dramatic methods of abrupt switching, contrasting, antithesis, substitution. In the stylistics – in the use of quotes and self-quotes, “replay” of other people’s styles, texts, languages, in the appeal to certain textured, harmonic, timbre techniques. Deciphering the text in such cases requires a certain emotional and intellectual fixation of the recipient, ability and readiness for the game, the ability to follow the game logic of the text, to “read” all the ingenious “messages” encrypted therein.

In this regard, we shall note that the interpretation of creativity as a way of implementing the game principle is also found in the works of Baroque and Classicism. The semantic layering of a baroque musical work, which is designed for a significant cultural and musical thesaurus of the listener, the ability to embrace the rhetorical logic of the composition and “see” the rhetorical figures is evidence of this, not to mention the recognition of “someone else’s” material in the work. The relevance of the game as a worldview mode is also evidenced by the emergence of the concert genre in various versions, where the game is embedded in the code itself. The game in various forms is also not alien to classicism, as evidenced by the enormous role of concert and ensemble genres.

With that, the contours of the musical work recorded in the author’s text remained pristine. In the musical art

of the New Age, it was "closed" in terms of semantic structure and dramatic composition. The mainstreaming of its being was carried out in a situation of execution in real time-space, and this option coincided with the invariant in notes, with the exception of minor performing details. It should also be noted that in the musical art of the New Age, the separation of functions between the composer and performer as an intermediary between the creator and the recipient gradually took place.

The mainstreaming of a musical work presupposed the creation of a multilateral dialogue between the creator, performer(s) and listeners, in which the latter did not interfere with the compositional integrity of the "closed" work. As for interference with meaning, the recipient, through the mediation of the performer, only perceived the artistic integrity drawn up in the author's text and created their own "meaningful perspectives", relying on their personal thesaurus. We shall emphasise once again that such a transcript of meaning does not violate the contours of the work and does not involve the listener in its inner space.

Specifics of "Open" Works in Modern Culture

"Closed" work remained relevant in the first half of the 20th century. It is also relevant at present. However, in the second half of the 20th century, new compositional techniques emerged, which blur the clear outline of the work from within the musical art itself, transforming it into an "open" work. Aleatory music, in its wide range from controlled to free, involves such a construction of the composition, where either the entire or fragmentary composition is constructed in the process of execution. Thus, the performer becomes a co-author of varying degrees of activity and involvement in the composer process, which modifies the interpretation of the author's work.

In this case, creativity transforms from individual creative activity into collective creative activity with the purpose of creating a new product in each case based on the invariant fixed in the musical score. Thus, art increases the importance of creativity and innovation, while the concept of individual authorship is being reinterpreted. The degree of deviation from the invariant given in the notes, which contains the potential multiplicity of implementation, is set by the composer and can be very distant for different indicators: the sequence of fragments, their various combinations of vertical and horizontal, playing time, etc.

In any case, the game logic of combination manifests itself in aleatory music, which to some extent is a rethinking of the romanticist interpretation of art as a game in a new context. With that, we shall emphasise that in this case the game is understood not as a chaotic combination of elements, but as a conscious modelling of the game situation with the purpose of creating free space for the implementation of the variant multiplicity of the invariant specified in the notes. Each time, the listener is offered a new combination of ready-made elements, but the recipient himself remains outside the boundaries of the "open" work. As in the case of "closed" works, the listener is invited to build their personal semantic perspective.

The erosion of the work from the inside also takes place in musical notation, which constitutes the most adequate way of graphic recording of the idea as opposed to the arbitrariness of the composer. If the moment of variability of realisation is laid in the concept itself, it will inevitably be reflected in the sheet music. Thus, in the second half of the 20th century, different types of notation were used, among which the proportion of "non-deterministic" types (Dubinets 1999) is very high. As an example, we can mention the so-called fluctuating notation, which in the conditions of an unfixed meter relies on a countable rhythmic unit and playing time.

Freedom space for the performer is also created by fuzzy recording of the duration, pitch, playing time, etc. Such fuzziness does not indicate the unequivocal "openness" of the work, but serves as a means of building a certain communicative strategy between the composer and the performer(s), in which the latter is involved, albeit insignificantly, in the creative process, in the "completion" of the design, offering variant possibilities for its implementation. Non-deterministic musical notation, the extreme expression of which is graphical notation, also contributes to the reinterpretation and transformation of the sustainable concepts of "authorship", "art", and "work".

In our opinion, another way of being an "open" work is its semantic versatility, plurality with an unambiguous fixation in sheet music. Such a multiplicity is laid down by the composer in the design itself and involves the encoding of hidden meanings in it, the presence of semantic subtexts and add-ons. Deciphering secret codes involves entering a musical and cultural context. Contextual semantic connections are mainstreamed by means of including quotes and self-quotes, fragments of "someone else's" texts, language elements (motives,

intonations, textured formulas, chords, rhythms) that act as signs of individual or definitive styles, genres, and refer to specific works or personalities. The use of such signs “aggravates” the semantic content, requires the listener to invest sufficiently high intellectual efforts, and activate the thesaurus (Kalashnyk 2013). It is also a mechanism for involving the listener in a fruitful dialogue with a work, as a result of which, while maintaining compositional integrity, the work’s border is overcome: as though the listener is placed in the context of the text. Such approach to the “open” work erases the impassable line between the composer and the recipient, since without the active involvement of the latter, the design will remain undeciphered.

The development of contemporary art forms, which are closely related to computer technology, also fits in with the problem of an “open” work. Several creators are involved in creating the audio-visual product: it can be a screenwriter, director, composer. In fact, large musical and theatrical genres have always been created by a team of authors, and the work of the librettist was no less significant than the composer. However, a feature of audio-visual art is the possibility of a separate being of the components, its components, most often – the musical plan. The predicted ability to remove components indicates the possibility of violating the synthetic compositional integrity, that is, the potential “openness” of the work, even if it will not be fulfilled.

The existence of the Net Art product (Internet Art, Web Art) in time and space is very peculiar, the study of which demonstrates that all conventional concepts in the context of this type of art production are radically reinterpreted and transformed. In its creation, individual author’s creativity loses its relevance, giving way to co-authorship of many, impersonal “creativity” of those who are part of this communicative space. The outline of the work becomes flexible and adaptive, not stable in time and space under the influence of the communicative process, into which, in fact, the work itself is transformed.

There is no need to perform the work, its text constitutes its actual being. In this regard, the division of those involved in its creation by functions into creators and performers loses its meaning. The perceivers, upon becoming involved in communication, can cross the line between work and reality and take part in the communication process, intruding into the time-space of an interactive product. As a result, the boundaries between artistic creativity as a professional

activity and amateurship are blurring due to the loss of clear criteria for professional excellence. The location of the work on the time axis at the point of the past, present, or future also makes no sense, because it is placed outside of time in the space of the Internet, always in the current present, and its mainstreaming and perception is conditioned by our entry into, connection to this communicative process. Thus, there are no clear spatiotemporal boundaries of being of the work, the condition for which is interactive space. A fixed author’s work transforms into an adaptive work, capable of transformations without losing its uniqueness and individuality in various configurations. Instead, transformation and adaptivity become conditions for its uniqueness.

CONCLUSIONS

Summing up, we shall note that modern computer technology and the Internet have fundamentally changed the aesthetics of art, the conditions for the existence of a work of art in time and space, the role of the recipient in dialogue with art. Net Art provides the possibility of creating potentially endlessly “open” works.

The specifics of the “open” work in the musical art of the second half of the 20th century is revealed in the following aspects:

- 1) in the aspect of semantic openness in the context, which involves attracting contextual meanings to decipher the vertical-horizontal semantic layering of the work;
- 2) in the aspect of compositional openness, which receives the finished design at the time of execution, which constitutes a condition for involving the artist in the co-authorship;
- 3) in the aspect of a significant transformation of all parameters of the work and the concepts and categories involved therein (author, text, recipient, performer, etc.) in conditions of an interactive space.

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