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# English Summaries

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English Summaries

**Bogusław JASIŃSKI**

**THE IDEA OF DEMOCRACY IN KARL R. POPPER'S SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY - THE RATIONALISTIC MYTH OF MODERN EUROPE**

The article presents a sketch of Karl Popper's philosophical opinions. Popper belongs to those philosophers who came to strictly philosophical questions from problems concerned with the natural sciences. This development of their thought has particular consequences for their philosophical style. On the one hand – as one can note in Popper – their philosophy is one which is low on poetic turns of phrase and high on logical rigor. On the other hand, their thought is characterized by a greater dose of certainty, of an apodictic tendency even, than is that of those philosophers who, educated in the traditions of the humanities, are more burdened by the weight of tradition. Such an attitude has perhaps two consequences: it leads either to the trivial repetition of other people's insights or to a certain unquestionable originality. The author maintains that, in the case of Popper, we are dealing with the second eventuality. In the article he presents chosen elements illustrative of the originality of Popper's thought.

In Popper philosophy the rational is always contradicted by the irrational. And the 'despair of reason', as he states, always leads to limitation of freedom and closed society. So the alternative is based on dramatic choice: 'reason or violence' or/and 'reason or revolution'. The reason for Popper is - in fact - the same as humanities. Historicism, the way of thinking in historical categories, is exempt from thinking because it is based on firm rules and thus its result is totalitarianism. Here is the focal point of Popper's thinking - his *a priori* established faith in reason implies a certain type of humanism; the one who believes in the unlimited possibilities of man whose chief weapon becomes reason. We believe in reason – that is a dogma. And reason enables criticism (critical rationalism), that is a falsification of (any) theory. That's why the social science has an inevitable conjectural character. Popper's methodological individualism that is based on belief in his own reason is a dogma as well. The only way out to deprive reason of its irrationality is to place it in the horizontal and not the vertical perspective, on the level of practical life, in between individual men. After the Holocaust there is nothing 'above' or 'beyond'. Our decisions are rooted in already reason-guided life, and so are the political institutions – not in a meta-level rationalism.

**Edward KAROLCZUK**

**CONTRADICTIONS IN THE FUNCTIONING OF ATHENIAN DEMOCRACY**

Contemporary advocates of the democratic system often refer to the Athenian democracy functioning in ancient times. While speaking about democracy, they often overlook social conflicts affecting its emergence. However, one of the main reasons determining its development was an interest in the use of demos (the people) in the fight between the competing social groups of the aristocracy and oligarchy and of the participation of demos in wars waged. Thus, democracy was both a form and a plane for the clash of interests between the people and the oligarchy. The latter tried also to use democratic institutions for their own good.

Although the origin of Athenian democracy is attributed to the reforms of Cleisthenes, in fact its rise was the effect of a complex process. His reforms prevented a direct clash between the people and the oligarchy, which gained a strong position after the reforms of Solon and saved the aristocracy from the distribution of their land. Therefore, the democratic system didn't mean widespread consensus and harmony, but only introduced a new way of putting an end to the fiercest and the bloodiest social struggles. When in 507 B.C Cleisthenes introduced popular vote, it by no means aimed at contradicting conflicts dividing the society of that time, but was about ending them in a peaceful way and finding rules for solving social problems that would be acceptable for the majority of citizens. The struggle between demos and the aristocracy and oligarchy took place throughout the whole lifetime of the democracy and influenced its defeat. The relationship between democracy and social struggle is still an issue of considerable controversy. Contrary to the popular idea of the functioning of Athenian democracy, the majority of officeholders were selected by lot and not elected. It was regarded as an expression of the divine will and the equality of all citizens and incompetence was counterbalanced by other virtues. The contradictions of this system are visible also in the functioning of the people's courts. Politicians' remuneration was varied with regard to different political figures and office holders and in different periods and corruption was a structural element of Athenian democracy.

Iwona SZMELTER

**PHENOMENA OF THE SOCIAL ROLE OF ART AND DEMOCRATIZATION - FROM THE DAWN OF CULTURE TO KANTOR AND ABAKANOWICZ. PERCEPTION, CARE AND PROTECTION**

Art is not a collection of objects but a form of human activity with great social impact. It is in constant process with the next audiences and their successive generations. Based on Gadamer's hermeneutic circle it can be interpreted as an action in the democratic sense, a kind of game. The following principal case study is analyzed:

Tadeusz Kantor (1915-1990), an excellent painter and interdisciplinary creator organized a programme of conceptual art called *Multipart* (multiplication and participation). The first exhibition in the series was held in the Foksal Gallery in Warsaw on February 21st 1970 as an "exhibition of one image in 40 copies". Numbered copies of a single picture, entitled *Parapluie-emballage*, were made according to the artist's instructions. A big broken umbrella, (at that time an symbol associated with the art of Kantor) was glued onto canvas on a stretcher measuring 110cm × 120cm and everything was painted white. At the launch of the exhibition, all the pictures were sold for a symbolic price. Buyers had to sign a contract with Kantor, according to which they could add to the image: "Insults, expressions of approval, praise, sympathy, swear words, (...) erasures, deletions, drawings (...) changes to the image according to their own tastes (...) pierce it, burn it (...) sell, buy, speculate, steal it". The important thing was that the buyers were obliged to re-exhibit the works in the Foksal Gallery after a year of such treatment. Thus, on 20 February 1971, a second exhibition of works by Kantor was held, *Multipart 2*. This presented the year-old participatory works *parapluie-emballage* and there were surprising forms of 'participation'.

One unique form of 'participation-democratisation' included in the programme *Multipart*, was the picture which was bought by the "Zuzanna group". They sowed cress seeds on the image, then treated it as a dish at banquets. Moreover the picture that they had bought was used as a banner in the May 1<sup>st</sup> communist parade in 1970, where students chanted 'Kantor' instead of 'Lenin', which was then risky. The event was immortalized in the artistic film *Multipart* by Christopher Kubicki and Mark Młodecki, which was shown during the exhibition at the

Foksal Gallery in 1971. Kantor was positively surprised by the democratisation of his project.

This was not the end of the participation of owners. After the exhibition the picture was officially buried in the earth along with a 'procession' to the accompaniment of string instruments.

After 44 years, at the request of a group of architect-owners, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 2015 conservators undertook the careful exhumation of the object under the title *Multipart in process*. The remains were removed from the ground and conserved, making reference to documentation of its state before burial and was reassembled on a mount.

Very important is the sense of *Multipart*. Kantor, by departing from his personal creation of the works, questioned and redefined the very concept of a work of art, traditionally treated as the creation of specific authors, the effect of the artist's work. In this case, the idea of these works was his and he created and presented their concept and their technical description. Denying the uniqueness of works of art, at the same time Kantor challenged the position of museums, galleries and collectors – directly to democracy in art. The action *Multipart* is one of the best-known projects organized by Kantor. It opened a new chapter in thinking about art in the world and in Poland. Paradoxically the *Multipart* continues (!) as does interest in it among collectors and museums. Due to the unusual character of the work and the need of dissemination, the arrangement of the 'learning zone' explains the conceptual design of Kantor and presents his ideas and their consequences in terms of the fate of an object called *Multipart in process*.

Other case studies are devoted to the spectrum of time, starting from a democratic sense of paleolithic art as well as from the contemporary sense of Magdalena Abakanowicz's art in public space. The phenomena of art, which consists in its constant inclusion and conservation, allows various forms of social roles to be presented and preserved. Finally, the idea of democracy is based on a paradoxical antinomy: 'art in process - process in art'. It also requires maintenance for subsequent generations, protection, conservation and sometimes reconstruction.

**Jerzy HANUSEK**

### **THE POLITICS OF JERZY BEREŚ'S ART IN A POLITICAL CONTEXT**

The oeuvre of Jerzy Bereś (1930-2012) is considered to be one of the most politically engaged in the Polish art scene of the second half of the twentieth century. Its interpretation is facilitated by the context of post-war events, which led Poland to lose its real independence. A massively distorted image of that time was propagated for nearly half a century and nowadays the aftereffects are still noticeable. After the second Soviet invasion of Poland in 1944, public awareness of a threat to the country's independence was widespread. The process leading to the annihilation of this knowledge took over a dozen years, tens of thousands of people were killed and hundreds of thousands repressed in various ways.

After the tragic experiences of German occupation, Polish citizens desired to return to the life they once had. Nevertheless, the society was terrorized and subjected to total indoctrination. They began to slip more and more into torpor, a lethargy that was a sort of self-preservation as well. People dreamed a dream whispered by the communist regime. Security Services were preventing any disruption of this sleep, using thousands of secret agents and collaborators. Bereś wanted to break that false dream. He engaged himself in disputation with the totalitarian reality through the field of art.

Assuming that an important role of art is, among others, to make apparent what is invisible, the artist gave himself the most challenging task out of all possibilities. In the Polish People's Republic, the issue pushed most deeply into the realm of shadow and invisibility was the lack of real independence. Bereś constantly strove to remind the public of it and he bitingly criticized socio-political mechanisms prevailing in Eastern Bloc countries. The aim of his art was to provoke and induce the public to judge the reality around them. The artist elaborated in numerous sculptures and actions a unique method of universalizing local experiences. An emblem of his relationship to the world was the image of a white and red penis, present in his artworks through almost his whole artistic career. His attitude was unique since most Polish artists of that time understood freedom in art as being unconnected with politics. He had the opportunity to witness a process that seemed impossible to happen: the transition from a totalitarian system to democracy. The latter had been an idealized myth for decades, an elusive paradise with

social freedom and wealth. After the fall of communism in 1989 this myth collided with the realities of the market economy. Then, the politics of Bereś's art gained a new and different meaning.

**Przemysław CHODĄŃ**

### **EVERYDAY LIFE AND POLITICS. THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF NEW SPIRITUALITY IN POLISH CONTEMPORARY ART**

Current interest in religion, religiosity and spirituality may be viewed as belonging to a post-secular turn, representatives of which are related to critical, social and philosophical, leftist theory. Literary studies of the Bible, traditional religious iconography and contemporary art have become sources of extra-ecclesiastical, feminist and queer theology. Post-humanist thought is an equally significant theoretical context or the so-called 'new spirituality' in Polish contemporary art as post-secularism. In her essential study, *Bio-transfigurations. Art and Aesthetics of Posthumanism*, Monika Bakke argues that it is impossible to speak today about a single posthumanism, however, for Rosi Braidotti, the leading spokesperson for posthumanism, post-secularism seems to be a notable point of reference. It is also note-worthy that numerous tenets of Braidotti's posthumanism seem to correspond with extant conceptualisations of posthumanism in academic discourse: the struggle for emancipation of subjects (new spirituality speaks of transgression and transcending individual limitations); immanentism (sacrum accessible in earthly life); deconstruction of oppositions and a tendency towards holism, or even monism (in posthumanism, Spinoza-inspired new/vitalist materialism of Braidotti); emphasis on the affective dimension of cognitive processes (including, in social sciences); importance of experience; and connecting a critical with an affirmative approach.

The work by Ola Koziół, Honorata Martin and Magdalena Starska provides examples of individualised spirituality, focused on everyday life, with an interest in interpersonal and inter-species relationships. The political in these artforms is expressed in an examination of risks and direct

formulation of postulates for social change (Kozioł), but its primary expression is a commitment to everyday life, opening an individual to a search for meanings beyond themselves, in group activities, in a dialogue with others, with nature and in inter-species relationships (Kozioł, Starska, Martin). A posthumanist perspective points at new forms of spirituality, manifested in a very different realm than the religion of the future, proclaimed by the pioneer of sociology, Emil Durkheim, or 'the cult of the individual'. It presupposes a communality and a relational construction of meanings; it has feminist aspects and sometimes reiterates counter-cultural postulates, resembling those put forward by the 1960s counter-culture.

**Emilia ZIMNICA-KUZIOLA**

#### **THEATRICAL CRITICISM - BETWEEN MAINSTREAM AND DEMOCRATIC HYDE PARK**

In the age of the Internet, theatrical portals and theatrical blogs, professional critics writing about theatre are not the only circles shaping public opinion. Traditional criticism is enclosed in a hermetic world, into which the common spectator rarely peeks.

In the field of theatre criticism, one can talk about the process of 'de-distanciation' (a term coined by K. Mannheim), the decreasing distance of the legally valid culture and the one that is not institutionally legitimized. On web portals, qualified critics (theatre theorists, theatre makers) conduct discussions with theatre goers, bloggers provide information on what is worth seeing in Polish theaters and express synthetic opinions that are relevant to people interested in theatre repertoire. This phenomenon can be called a diversification of criticism, although I prefer to talk about the process of the democratization of theatrical discourse. Blogs in a sociological sense are a manifestation of individuals' grassroots activity. The advantage of this communication platform is independence (freedom from 'content guards', that is, 'gatekeepers'), non-hierarchical structure, the possibility to publish content quickly, the practical realization of participatory culture. Blogs fulfill informational, documentary, unmasking, popularization and integration functions. They promote institutions,

events, publications, symbolic content; they embark a critical reflection, animate interest in culture, build communities of people who initiate dialogue, focused around the blog. The distinctive feature of this on-line journal is the interactivity and the possibility of post graphics and multimedia content.

**Marta KOSIŃSKA**

#### **THE PEDAGOGICAL BODY. PERFORMATIVE SCRIPT AND ART BASED RESEARCH**

The subject of the investigation is the theatrical performative action treated as a para-exploratory, para-analytical practice. The questions posed relate to the possibilities and consequences of pragmalinguistic analysis used in artistic practices concentrated on the institution of school and its social subjects. On the basis of *The Pedagogical Body*, a performance created by a group of school teachers from the Theatrical Institute in Warsaw, the author analyzes the collective mechanisms for the creation of a performative script and on that basis – for further cultural scripts generated for Polish school institutions. The performative action is treated here as a reflexive practice, focused on the professional activity of teachers and operating within the category of mime. The social aspects of participation in projects of this kind are analyzed in terms of paranoid reactions and mechanisms of exclusion in the work places.