The Concept of 'Authenticity' in Musical Interpretation: An Ontological Perspective

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Abstract: In this paper I attempt a brief analysis of the concept of 'authenticity' from musicological and philosophical perspectives. This term bears important metaphysical presuppositions. A good example is the complex meaning and the central role this term has in one of the most influential philosophy books in the 20th century: Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time*. This term appears in a crucial point of the treatise: when man (*Dasein*) must turn his existence toward his intimate self in order to truthfully understand his own being. Notably, in this philosophical context, 'authenticity' refers to essential, hidden traits of one individual being in accordance with their way of thinking, feeling and overall behavior. When you are not authentic you submit yourself to impersonal existence. These connotations have common cultural roots with those within musicology, in the latter referring to contemporary debates concerning theoretical difficulties about the *historical informed performance* movement as held especially by the musicologist Richard Taruskin. In this case, 'being in accordance' would mean that certain characteristics considered essential to a musical work are satisfied by the interpretation of the work. The ontological problem concerns the manner in which we conceive the reference of the expression 'musical work' and the nature of musical experiences in general. The well-known aesthetician T.W. Adorno, following remarks by Walter Benjamin, criticized Heidegger's treatment of the concept of 'authenticity' for the reason behind it is simply cultural presuppositions from that time, not metaphysical truths. I will argue that, philosophically, neither can fully sustain strong theses and instead propose 'authenticity' to mean 'accordance' between internal characteristics of a musical work and the interpreter's personal, but at the same time informed, vision of the same work.

Keywords: authenticity, history, (musical) work, aura, unity.

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of interpretation associates itself by nature with the problem of mediation between two different entities. Consider, for example, the classical cases of an anthropologist who mediates between two dissimilar views upon the world, or, that of a translator who mediates between two different languages with unlike historical and cultural roots. Thus,

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interpretation is generally a complex process through which we seek to appropriate an otherness. In the case of musical interpretation this 'otherness' is the musical work. The interpretative act is executed either by a specially trained musician in performing or by the audience, whose opinions are based mostly on perception and subjective taste. In this essay I will consider the professional interpreter, my decision being motivated by two reasons: first, for any creation to be actually 'musical', it must be sonorous brought into aesthetic perception, and the musician-interpreter is the first to decode the score; secondly, while accomplishing the technical traits of a work, an interpreter expresses or applies a way of thinking about music and about how to approach a musical work.

Hence, the practical dimension of the musical art is organically bound with the theoretical dimension. By 'theory' I am referring to the ensemble of concepts and ideas about music that an interpreter consciously or unconsciously projects into his internal view of his own activity. Beginning with the historical contextualization and going on to the determination of cultural structures, *the theoretical is already present in any practice*. How the concept of 'authenticity' is used today in many domains, like psychology, philosophy, cultural journalism or aesthetic debates, speaks loudly about how metaphysical presuppositions hidden behind concepts can shape our thinking about fundamental processes. The arts — not only the classical, but also contemporary arts like cinematography and multimedia performances — are originally techniques. However, at the same time, they are not solely artistry. The arts also have an astonishing capacity to penetrate profound and refined ideas and emotions about life that human beings are dealing with. For rendering only the syntactical aspect of a score, execution is the only level required. Yet for a 'truthful' interpretation to be brought to light, *epistemological and emotional involvement* is required of an interpreter. To deepen the relationship between epistemological and emotional elements of an interpretation, I will analyze the debates concerning 'authenticity' in musical performance practice.

2. Interpretation and authenticity in music performance

The way of being of a musical work has a specific characteristic that essentially differentiate it from a painting: *every interpretation is at the same time an instance of the archetype that is the work itself* [1]. A painting is unique and can be distinguished sharply from a reproduction. It can be authenticated against its reproductions, while, in the case of a musical-work its interpretations are not, from the beginning, the same as its reproductions. First

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[1] This distinction was expressed in analytical terms with Nelson Goodman's classical distinction between *autographic* and *allographic* art.

of all, there is not one, unique, interpretation; there are multiple interpretations, different in detail, but at the same time non-contradictory with each other. Secondly, we cannot verify the correctness of an interpretation by comparing it with a standardized one. This can be the case only for didactical purposes, when the important aspect is to learn, not to interpret. The peculiarity of this situation, as far as performing arts are concerned, appears when we realize that, although we don't have such a model in a concrete form — like a painting which you can actually see and touch —, we need a mental model to work with when we are striving to produce a well-founded interpretation. A musician can look in the score and find there the fundamental structure of the work. He can also find in the score indications of important semantic properties, like tempo and dynamic indications. Even the title is, when it has descriptive features, a suggestion of the overall meaning of the work. But *everything that can be found in the score represents only a complex of indications, which is not the work itself*. The issue in music ontology is finding an answer to the question: "Where does the work lie?" Is it in the score, in our mind, in some platonic realm of ideas? Or maybe nowhere, the word being just a useful concept. The interpreter needs to find the unity of the work through strange means yet unknown to us because only by finding it can his own vision of the work have unity itself. The complex of indications provided by the score does not do more than it says it does, namely it gives indications. Thus, in order to fully understand the ontology of the musical work, we must find where its unity lies. Hence, in the case of performing arts, we can observe *the existence of a conflict or tension between two needs of the interpreter*. On the one hand, to the extent that an interpretation is *an act of reconstruction*, this reconstruction presupposes knowledge of specific details such as: historical background of the composer, the biography of the composer, elements of style — the personal style of the composer and the 'mainstream' style of the time — and elements regarding the specificity of the musical language in the compositional context. On the other hand, to the extent that an interpretation is *an act of creation*, the interpreter allows himself the liberty of self-expression, the liberty — offered by the opportunity which is the work itself — to assign a certain meaning to an *adagio* or to a musical phrase. According to Professor Soreanu, the *vitality* of a work is reinforced by a contemporary rendering of it, it becomes alive only within an act of interpretive revival which must be personal, but also correct (Soreanu, II, 2013, p. 5).

The contemporary direction in music interpretation known as *authentic/historically informed performance practice* considers only the first aspect, the epistemological one, as essential, at least when dealing with works of early music. The supporters of this movement are treating the work by focusing on elements like: the instrumentation of the age, the number of musicians in the orchestra or in the choir, the keeping of the tempo and

dynamics of the period and the equalization of the work-identity with the score-structure. Only manuscript research and information gathered from epoch source-materials can modify the perspective over a work, any 'subjective' initiative being frowned upon (Beard and Gloag, 2005, p. 17). In accordance with this ideal, *the archetype of the work is understood mainly in concrete terms*, considering mostly physical and syntactical components of a performance, while semantics is reduced to historically proven utterances of sound structures.

The central concept used in the argumentation of this group is that of 'authenticity'. This term has two principal definitions in philosophy: on the one hand, it refers to the *accordance* with our inner being, with our possibilities, aptitudes and vision about world and art; on the other, it refers to *faithfulness/authentication* towards an object, model or set of properties (Varga and Guignon, 2017). Authenticity, according to Richard Taruskin — the most well-known theoretician who dealt with this issue in music — is understood in the second manner, as fidelity towards a model, in this case towards the score. Following the cultural and philosophical engagements of the German concept *Werktreue* — translated as 'fidelity towards the work' —, Taruskin observes that "(…) the notion of work, and of fidelity to it, has narrowed over the course of the twentieth century, squeezing the spiritual or metaphysical dimension out of the work-concept until work-fidelity did finally become coextensive with text-fidelity" (1995, p. 12). Taruskin discovered that although the *informed performance movement* seems to bring homage to the past, in fact their 'puristic' attitude and central claims are the fruits of modern-formalist aesthetics. It is a 'positivist' view, who accepts as values scientific objectivity and order, opposed to an 'idealist' view, described as filled with too much emotional expressiveness and subjectivity (1995, p. 99). All these traits are presented here only in general terms, while the movement has all kinds of followers, more or less perfectly categorized by these theses. As Dorottya Fabian briefly demonstrates in a paper:

> "The question of authenticity in performance is manifold. Most commonly — as the above Harnoncourt citation — it is associated with 'Werktreue', with the recreation of a score in a manner reflecting the composer's intentions and the work's original performance. On a more complex level this manner of recreation is debated in terms of what it should comprise in itself: only instrumental designation, size of performing ensemble, and a decision on which score represents the 'definitive version'; or, ultimately, interpretation as well. The collected statements on 'authenticity' show that these layers in the meaning of the term have not always been considered with equal emphasis. Those musicians and scholars who concerned themselves with the more complex issues of interpretation as well as the recreation of historical artifacts tended to regard authenticity as utopia." (Fabian, 2001, p. 156)

This kind of 'authenticity' does not render the hermeneutical possibilities of a musical work, it only speaks about the exterior conditions of a performance. According to Taruskin, similar ideas regarding interpretation were held by one of the most important modernists: Igor Stravinsky, who even avoided using the term 'interpretation' because it bears too much subjective implication. In this context interpretation is, groundless, understood as the same with arbitrariness. However, from a philosophically point of view, the act of interpretation is the fundamental hermeneutical act and is associated originally with the phenomenon of understanding. Making hermeneutics already implies having a degree of knowledge about the subject. In ancient Greek the word *hermēneuein* meant: 'to say', to express in words orally; 'to explain' a situation; 'to translate'; all these words are suggesting the process of bringing something from obscurity to intelligibility, from conceptual confusion to understanding (Palmer, 1969, p. 13). The first action, the fact of 'saying', is correlated with the action 'to express' and expression is closely associated with art in the history and philosophy of culture (Palmer, 1969, p. 15). In the field of hermeneutical research from the last century it was gradually recognized and grounded the importance of historical knowledge for the 'decoding' of a work of art — if we look at Dilthey or at Gadamer. *Understanding presupposes knowledge*, it has a cognitive-epistemic dimension by itself. This means that also in the situation of interpreting a musical work we never have a direct, unmediated, access to its semantic richness. This is the case of a person from the audience, who needs to look in a concert description, even more in the case of the professional musician. A well-formulated theory about the relation between objective and subjective dimensions in approaching a musical work was given by the Romanian composer and musicologist Pascal Bentoiu. He thought that any morphological or syntactical element taken over from a preexisting style, with the same meaning, is objective, while any morphological or syntactical element invented must be subjective. In a work we cannot, and should not, establish the superiority of one type of elements over the other. There are historical periods when the subjective side is more accentuated than the objective one, and periods when the objective one is valued more than the subjective. He also says explicitly that the authenticity of a message cannot be established by making a kind of percentage of the subjective and objective elements (Bentoiu, 1973, pp. 62-63). Hence, 'interpretation' must not have pejorative connotations regarding the balance between objectivity and subjectivity.

The cultural tradition, with all that has to offer us as a *datum* for our cultural experiences, can have either *a museum meaning* — of displaying objects, habits, symbols and ideas without any connection with our way of life — or it can have *a vital meaning* — as a source for our self-understanding and

as a source for elements with which we can construct our identity as cultural beings. The hermeneutical concept of 'interpretation' incorporates both the musicological-research dimension and the personal-creational dimension. For example, interpretive recreations as those made by Glenn Gould for Johann Sebastian Bach's harpsichord pieces, or Nicolaus Harnoncourt's recordings, are a model for such a sense of 'interpretation' (Sandu-Dediu, 2013, p. 237). Also, Ferruccio Busoni's rendering of Bach's *Well Tempered Clavier* at the piano is another example of adaptation to modern instruments, adaptation which does not impend upon the identity of the work (Soreanu, I, 2013, p. 13). Arnold Schönberg's orchestration for the *Quartet with piano op. 1 in G minor* by Johannes Brahms is another kind of example, this piece being played in the last George Enescu Festival in Bucharest (Cojocaru, 2019, pp. 6-7). All these examples force us to rethink the relation between essential musical parameters as form, harmony and timbre. At the same time is a sign that the discussion about authenticity has deep implications for our way of thinking about music ontology.

3. The concept of 'musical work' and the idea of 'aura'

The value density of the concept 'work of art' had been grounded with the philosophy of romanticism and with the institutions associated with it. In music, like in other traditional 'great' arts, the 'work' has a necessary linkage with the 'creator'. The work is what justifies the special condition of the creator. But, unlike in painting — the most valued art form of that time —, in the case of the 'musical work' we cannot find a concrete reference for the word. Still, there was a need for proving that in music we do have 'works' like in any other substantial art. This is how we can explain the reifying attitude towards music that took place, an attitude which tried to adapt to pictorial characteristics traits of an art defined by its development in time. The score was the central help in this matter because the score is an actual object, is a visual support you can come back to whenever you need. The informed performance practice group, treating the musical work as if you could authenticate it by recreating its original exterior conditions and by remaining only to 'the letter' of the score, has a similar view upon the ontology of music. Taruskin himself compares their perspective with the situation of a restorer in painting (1995, p. 150). He also uses the expression 'reified structure' to suggest the idea that music is thus objectified in analogy with painting (1995, p. 17).

Lydia Goehr, in her philosophical essay *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, proposes a different way of making ontology, namely a historical way. In her book she follows the cultural genealogy of the 'work' concept with the aim of revealing hidden metaphysical presuppositions that shape this fundamental aesthetic concept and, maybe even more important, of

finding the reason why it became regulative for essential modern institutions and practices regarding music. Her overall conclusion is that the 'work' concept is a regulative concept, which means that is has cultural domination over other concepts, but it does not have a reference in reality. We cannot point towards a musical work, but we can see the concrete impact of this regulative concept in every aspect of our contemporary musical life: the way we write and speak about music; our image about what is a concert and how it should be organized; the way we conceive musical interpretation and many other tacitly constitutive elements of our musical experiences. If we realize the power of a regulative concept and how it operates, we can reformulate fundamental questions about music (2007, p. 4). Lydia Goehr mentions also the issue of authenticity in connection with the German concept *Werktreue* — as Taruskin did:

> "(…) Finally, regarding the term *Werktreue*, it first entered the discourse of music before entering discourses relating to other performance arts, notably theater, unless of course we count Bayreuth, as we should, as part also of the history of theater. The point, however, is that even if an interpreter can be faithful to a painting or to a sculpture, the term has rarely if ever been used in relation to the plastic arts even after these arts ceased being 'true to nature'. Thus, I would suggest, *Werktreue* is a demand not generically for a work as such, nor even for interpretation per se, but, first off, for a specific sort of performance because a particularly authoritative idea of the work is *already held firmly in place*." (Goehr, 2007, pp. xxxi-xxxii)

Taruskin wrote the Foreword to Lydia Goehr's revised edition of the book and he recognized there that her philosophical research was very useful in providing him further arguments for his thesis against 'authenticity' as it is understood by the informed performance movement (Goehr, 2007, p. v). *The core of the problem is that you cannot find an original with which to establish what is correct and what is not* in musical interpretation.

Interpreters and theoreticians from the musical field are not the only ones who are using the concept of 'musical work' in this reified manner. Analytic philosophers, from Roman Ingarden to Jerrold Levinson, preoccupied with music ontology are basing their reflections about music upon the properties which the 'work' concept attributes to a musical event. For example, Jerrold Levinson, discussing the issue of authentic performance, agrees with Stephen Davies that authenticity in an interpretation is a matter of "faithfulness to the determinative intentions publicly expressed in a score by a composer", (Levinson, 2011, p. 393), while he adds that we must distinguish between the sonic aspect of a composition, i.e. its sound structure, and its identity. The original instrumentation is essential for a work's aesthetic character, but not only because of the sonorous reason — the specific acoustic stamp of

instruments — but also because of the means by which we produce a sound: "(…) Part of the expressive character of a piece of music *as heard* derives from our sense of how it is *being made* in performance, and our correlation of that with its sonic aspect — narrowly speaking" (Levinson, 2011, p. 395). Levinson's full theory, analyzed by Lydia Goehr (2007, p. 47), is an example of how terms as 'authenticity', 'faithfulness', (composer's) 'intentions' and 'interpretation' are linked in an ontological account of musical 'works'. What we can meaningfully observe is that the central value in this kind of reflection is identity, which is a structural-logical value. *Musical experience is left aside*. We consider musical works in a museum like manner, as objects arranged and displayed in our minds like artifacts exposed to be admired from distance and with a solemn attitude. Virtuosity and mechanical recognition are the principal elements of delight at a 'classical' concert. Lydia Goehr thought that Adorno was one of the first to rightly expose this reified commodity character of the modern musical work (2007, p. iii). Adorno also is, maybe, the philosopher who made the most virulent critique against the word 'authenticity'.

Previous to Adorno we find an important reflection connected with the concept of 'authenticity' at his colleague Walter Benjamin. In his famous essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Benjamin raises the problem about how serial reproduction of works[2] can change our perception of reality itself. He argues that what the dissemination of reproductions eliminates first of all is the 'aura' of the work. The aura is a kind of sacral emanation that irradiates from the uniqueness of the work of art. It is the element which assures the impression of 'transcendence' that a work transmits to a viewer. The 'aura' is, in Benjamin's terms, what we call the 'authenticity' of a work:

> "The presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity. (…)
> (…) The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced. Since the historical testimony rests on the authenticity, the former, too, is jeopardized by reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter. And what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the object.
> One might subsume the eliminated element in the term 'aura' and go on to say: that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art. This is a symptomatic process whose significance points beyond the realm of art. One might generalize by saying: the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence." (Benjamin, 2007, pp. 220-221)

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[2] He is referring mainly to paintings and cinematography, but it applies also to musical works recorded;

Describing the influence of the concept *Werktreue*, I think both Richard Taruskin and Lydia Goehr would agree that the term 'aura', with the connotation Benjamin gave it, seems an appropriate connection to it. First of all, it suggests perfectly the phenomenological specificity of the romantic way of perceiving a work of art. Secondly, it implies the idea of authority: authority of the work and of its creator. It is indeed a clear example of the manner in which conceptual structures shape even our perception. We would think that perception is a direct matter, unmediated, but in fact it is determined by ideas and words. Benjamin thought that technique and reproduction are a step forward in our way of dealing with art because 'authenticity', 'contemplation' and 'aura' are all atavistic terms from the bourgeoisie which preserve the religious roots of art. Following Walter Benjamin, in *The Jargon of Authenticity* Theodor W. Adorno mentions the concept of 'aura' in a similar context:

> "The fact that the words of the jargon sound as if they said something higher than what they mean suggests the term 'aura'. It is hardly an accident that Benjamin introduced the term at the same moment when, according to his own theory, what he understood by "aura" became impossible to experience. As words that are sacred without sacred content, as frozen emanations, the terms of the jargon of authenticity are products of the disintegration of the aura." (Adorno, 1973, pp. 9-10)

The explicit target of his remarks is the Heideggerian terminology as it unfolds in the treatise *Sein und Zeit*. From Adorno's point of view the word 'authenticity' was abused in the German culture from the first half of the last century, thus becoming an empty word and by these means a manipulative one. It generalizes a fake philosophy, a formal one, used only to impress and to carry on emphatic metaphysical pretensions. The entire study, initially planned to be part of the *Negative Dialectics*, is a vivid and harsh critique against the kind of language for which Heidegger's philosophy is an icon. Heidegger thought that the state of authenticity is the way through which we can understand what it means to be a complete *Dasein*[3]. Without this completeness, there would be no possibility for grasping the meaning of our own being. By being 'falled' in the world — an unavoidable trait of our ontic existence —, any *Dasein* submits himself to unauthenticity. But there is a moment of authenticity in our existence, when we are in a state of hearing a 'call of conscience' and thereby our intimate meaning of our proper being reveals to us

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[3] *Da-sein* is the word Heidegger uses to refer to a human being as the only kind of being that has access to the being of beings and means, literally, that being which stands in the enlightening openness and can grasp the meaning of being.

(Heidegger, 2003, §60, p. 391). This is the kind of account that Adorno thinks is too abstract and authoritative because, for example, the 'call of conscience' as Heidegger describes it is something that although you cannot clearly put into words or trace its source it has necessary demands upon you. In Adorno's words: "What is essential in phenomena, and what is accidental, hardly ever springs straightforwardly out of the phenomena" (1973, p. 122). About the word 'authenticity', Adorno thinks that the language itself is misleading us by substantiating, using the suffix "–ity", something in its essence relational. At this point he refers again to the 'aura':

> "In many cases the distinction between essential and inessential, between authentic and inauthentic, lies with the arbitrariness of definition, without in the least implying the relativity of truth. The reason for this situation lies in language. Language uses the term 'authentic' in a floating manner. The word also wavers according to its weightiness, in the same way as occasional expressions. The interest in the authenticity of a concept enters into the judgment about this concept. (…) But at the same time, the essential element of a thing has its *fundamentum in re*. Over and against naïve usage, nominalism is in the wrong to the degree that it remains blind toward the objective element of meaning in words, which enters into the configurations of language and which changes there. This element of objectivity carries on an unresolved struggle with those acts that merely subjectively gives meaning. (…) The essence of a thing is not anything that is arbitrarily made by subjective thought, is not a distilled unity of characteristics. In Heidegger this becomes the aura of the authentic: an element of the concept becomes the absolute concept." (Adorno, 1973, pp. 123-124)

The 'informed performance movement' began its ascension in the same period as that to which Adorno refers in his study. It was not called by using this label, but it existed as a category of persons from the musical life with the same predispositions and ideas. In *Introduction to the Sociology of Music* Adorno describes seven types of music listeners. Among them is one type named by Adorno 'the resentment listener'. The profile of the 'resentment listener' corresponds to the contemporary image of the 'authentic' performer: it seemed a group with a perspective upon music attractive for young listeners; it was also compounded by musicians very well trained and with admiration especially for early music; they were isolated in their ideas and artistic preferences: "They are well-trained in their special sphere, also in active music-making, which proceeds like clockwork; but everything is coupled with *Weltanschauung* and twisted. The inadequacy consists in the jettisoning of entire musical spheres whose perception would be crucial" (Adorno, 1976, p. 10); they were characterized by a 'reactionary ideology' and by historicism; faithfulness to the work was the central value as opposed to the spectacular;

order was preferred against exaggerate emotion; and, finally, they did not have a developed sense for musical nuances (1976, pp. 10-11).

Although this modern movement in music has a set of properties to which it refers when it speaks about authenticity — the historical and structural properties of a musical work —, it disseminates a way of thinking that reifies the musical experience as such through the excessive authority it prescribes to the musical work. The philosophical observations about the relation between 'aura' and 'authenticity' are important in this discussion because it enlightens theoretical difficulties about the concept of 'authenticity' which otherwise would remain hidden. In the following section I will argue that we should not use further the word with the meaning of authentication — implying the reification of musical events and the authority of the score as the source for the work's structural identity —, but we should remain at the meaning of authenticity as the aura of a work — a meaning grounded in the work's intimate unity and proved uniqueness.

4. The unity of the musical work and the need for its aura

How can an interpreter realize a unitary and cohesive interpretation if we consider the 'musical work' only a regulative concept? The structural characteristics and the aesthetic indications found in a score are not sufficient for assuring the organic unity of an interpretation. This unity comes, on one hand, from the musician-interpreter conceived as the subject of musical understanding and, on the other hand, at the same time it comes from an intimate unity of the composition itself. Likewise, there are many interpretations of the same work which do not contradict with each other, this fact being also explainable by presupposing a unity of the work. If this unity of the composition exists — and it must exist since the interpreter is forming this unity in his mind for the purpose of rendering the work organically —, the ontological question is: "Where and how it exists?" The answer to this fundamental question cannot be a nominalist one, or a historical-cultural one. As Adorno mentioned in the last quote from *The Jargon of Authenticity* (1964), any nominalism forgets 'the objective element in words', the fact that any conceptual construction has a meaning related to something sensed or perceived in reality. As Husserl would put it, perception is the fundamental strata of any act of the conscience. The philosophical problem consists in the difficulty of explaining how and why perception is always bounded with the hermeneutical capacity of human mind, with the need for giving conceptual sense to the world as a whole. Anything depends upon the way we define 'reality'.

The fact that the unity of a musical work cannot be accounted fully from a structural/nominalist point of view can be otherwise putted into discussion, by using some ideas from one of the last public lectures Adorno gave before

his death, a lecture entitled *On the Problem of Musical Analysis*. In this complex text, among the first observations Adorno makes is one about signs. Adorno is saying that the signs and the music they signify are never directly one and the same thing. Even for the act of reading a notation, so that the result can be named 'music', an act of interpretation is always necessary. In this context 'interpretation', for Adorno, implies analysis: "Already in such elementary processes as these, analysis is always essentially present." (1982, p. 72) He moves further by saying that analysis concerns herself with structural problems and, by these means, with 'structural listening'. This way of listening defines a professional musician. It is a specific capacity for this category of listeners, in *Introduction to the Sociology of Music* being named 'structural hearing' (1976, p. 5). Yet what Adorno understands by 'structure' is not the usual meaning in music, namely that of 'form': "By structure I do not mean here the mere grouping of musical parts according to traditional formal schemata, however; I understand it rather as having to do with what is going on, musically, *underneath* these formal schemata." (1982, p. 173) This process, which takes place 'underneath', is mediated by the formal schemata while at the same time it constitutes a 'deviation' from it. This deviation cannot be understood otherwise but in relation to the formal schemata, analysis being the essence of investigating this dynamic between them (1982, p. 173). The idea of 'dynamic processes' is linked by Adorno with the concept of something being a 'coherence'. This observation is *fundamental*:

> "But it is exactly in this direction that the way — the idea of analysis — really does lie: that is to say, composition understood as 'coherence', as a dynamic set of interrelationships [*Zusammenhang*]. And it is within this set of interrelationships — if anywhere at all — that the meaning of the composition resides." (Adorno, 1982, pp. 175-176)

Adorno specifys that analysis concerns with the "abundance" which unfolds during the analyse. This 'abundance' comes to proove that analysis deals with more than 'facts' (1982, p. 177). Thus, analysis does not describe, but reveal *the problem of a musical work*. The problem is the core of a musical work, is its center: "«To analyze» means much the same as to become aware of a work as a *force-field* [*Kraftfeld*] organized around a *problem*." (Adorno, 1982, p. 181)

As we can see, the problem or the meaning of a composition cannot be revealed only by studying the formal[4] aspect presented in the score. The phenomenological side of music comes in when we need to hear the dynamic relations that takes place underneath the form. He does not speak about

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[4] I will apply the difference betwwen 'form' and 'structure' that Adorno made to not make any confusion.

interpretation, but anything that is labeled 'dynamic' presupposes a factual movement. In this complex case Adorno seems to refer to a complex relation between formal, phenomenological and mental elements that together are forging what we call a 'musical work'. The unity of the work resides in its problem or meaning and — the important aspect for my thesis — is something that seems to transcend both phenomenological/physical and formal traits of the work. In *The Jargon of Authenticity*, as Benjamin in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, the term 'reality' is used in a narrow way, to refer only to brute/empirical facts. From this perspective such capacities of the work of art as 'expression' or as 'hermeneutical openness' are not possible. Also, if we deny the linkage between art and a form of transcendence — which, yes, connects art with religion, but not until identification because, as we know from the history of philosophy, they are only in a kinship relation — then all that remains to be said about the semantics of o work of art is only a matter of ideology. As Benjamin put it: "But the instant the criterion of authenticity ceases to be applicable to artistic production, the total function of art is reversed. Instead of being based on ritual, it begins to be based on another practice – politics." (Benjamin, 2007, p. 224) I think is another way of accepting a positivistic philosophy of music, if we leave aside the contemplative, idealistic, expressive side of art and if we try to find only an empirical reference to the musical 'work'. We need a bit of aura… And I am saying 'a bit' because we cannot accept the entire, already traditional, romantic philosophy of art, but we also cannot declare it only a historical momentum, a culturally relative view, for the simple reason that an objective meaning must be found in such important concepts — which do express something real and meaningful about art. Art, in this case music, is not only a political instrument, as a Romanian musical semiotics professor and theoretician is arguing — taking into account the semantics of a musical work: "Music is a mirror through which a culture sees its soul." (Ciocan, 2012, p. 48, my translation) We should look for an objectivity which is not only pragmatic or historical, but resides in the potentiality of musical experience.

Such an alternative ontology can be found, for example, in Hans Georg Gadamer's philosophy. It is a hermeneutical philosophy which continues reflections from Dilthey and Heidegger, the latter being the explicit object of Adorno's harsh critique against authenticity. In arguing about the ontology of the occasional and the decorative in art, Gadamer describes in his manner the dynamics between a historical occasion which offers a work the possibility to come into being through performance and the work's internal properties or structural identity:

> "Hence the stage is a political institution par excellence because only the
> performance brings out everything that is in the play, its allusions and its

echoes. No one knows beforehand what will 'hit come' and what will have no impact. Every performance is an event, but not one in any way separate from the work — the work itself is what 'takes place' (ereignet: also, comes into its own) — in the event (Ereignis) of performance. To be occasional is to be essential to it: the occasion of the performance makes it speak and brings out what is in it. The director who stages the play displays his skill in being able to make use of the occasion. But he acts according to the directions of the writer, whose whole work is a stage direction. This is quite clearly the case with a musical work—the score is really only a set of directions. Aesthetic differentiation may judge the performance against the inner structure of sound read in the score, but no one believes that reading music is the same as listening to it." (Gadamer, 2004, p. 141).

If the score presents only a set of indications or directions, and if we don't have a standard model to assure a correct interpretation in comparison, then authenticity is not possible with the meaning of authentication. It is also true that the concept of musical 'work' became regulative on a specific historical and cultural moment. Notwithstanding, from this historical character of the 'work' concept and from the performative character of a musical event, we should not deduce the absence of its aura, which means its uniqueness and its organic unity that transcends phenomenological, formal and mental elements of a composition. This uniqueness and unity is what brings together the different hermeneutical layers of a composition. It constitutes its problem or meaning and justifies to a degree the 'work' concept. *An authentic interpretation, in this case, is realized as an accordance between an interpreter's personal vision of a work and the problem, in Adorno's sense, of the work*. It is a reading of the word 'authenticity' that directs the interpreter not to external or concrete conditions of a work, but to its inner and intimate meaning/problem.

5. Conclusions

The semantics of a work expresses deep cultural and philosophical meanings about existence, history and lifelong experiences. Any art is politically engaged by the very nature of a human being as a community member. Reducing art to politics is the same mistake, I think, as reducing it to evolutionist accounts or to realistic sources. Finding the problem, in Adorno's terms, of a musical work is not a matter only of form or of phenomenology. It is by itself an occasion for the interpreter to dive in the complexity of the work while at the same time finding his own vision. On the other hand, the interpreter is an occasion for the work to reveal itself in a different manner. The informed performance movement has the same concept of 'reality' as Adorno in *The Jargon of Authenticity* and Benjamin in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, which is a very factual-empirical concept. *I think the way we conceive artistic reality is the main philosophical issue in all this discussion about authenticity*. If we pay attention to

the unfolding of a musical experience, we will remark that the composition we are listening to — or the sonorous flux we are listening to, a word-structure good in avoiding the dominance of the 'work' concept — has an 'aura', has a set of dynamic relations between many hermeneutical layers centered around a problem. This set of dynamic relations can be rendered in more than one interpretation, while preserving its organic coherence. Hence, we can imagine and propose an ontology that manages to harmonize epistemological constraints — structural and historical elements — with personal expressiveness in the aim of creating a meaningful musical experience.

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