

Anticipation of art

‘The best way to predict the future is to create it.’¹

Currently, mass media tend to present ‘catastrophic visions’². Disturbing and apocalyptic information creates a sensation to arouse the viewer’s interest. The mechanism of creating threats by focusing on everyday events also distracts attention from general matters. In this way, contemporary problems are usually unnoticeable in the thicket of information. Sensational information also becomes a certain potential creating conditions for the emergence of factors that influence the prevention of threats resulting from the processes of socialization of the natural environment and society. There is therefore a difference between a ‘terrible and a tragic’³ event. Civilizational dangers are accidental or result from unpredictable consequences of decisions made.

Counteracting threats should focus on correcting existing errors or preventing their occurrence. Combatting emerging dangers usually involves searching for factors that will help to avert a crisis in the dominant system that creates a new reality. It is forgotten that these new conditions may cause changes in the organization of ways of life, and even their small correction significantly affects the shape of the new reality.

Anticipating the future involves creative thinking. It significantly influences culture and provides the opportunity to accelerate changes in the process of

¹ This quote is attributed to many people, such as Abraham Lincoln and Peter Drucker.

² This way of creating information is usually not limited to the use of literary hyperbole intended to expose the events that occurred.

³ Referring to Anatoly Lunacharsky, tragedy can be defined as a misfortune resulting from the normal development of things, and what is simply terrible is nothing instructive. For more see: Anatolij Łunaczarski, *Pisma wybrane*, Vols. I – III, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1963.

socializing reality. Currently, it is conditioned by the course of creative activities in consumer culture and focuses on the relationship between reification and objectification. Reification resulting from the capitalist system forces the dominance of commodity exchange that influences social relations. Evolved forms of objectivity (the world of things) and social awareness, based on the market- and commodity-related way of being, influence the behaviour of individuals in a community. The reification process is perceived as a permanent feature of the social structure owing to its common nature. Adopting a creative attitude by superficially commenting on everyday life leads to the reification of the content. It makes it possible to create visions of presumption, but only within a given system. Hence, visual works that fit into the above model quickly devalue themselves and ultimately maintain the existing and established rationality. As a consequence, it is difficult to maintain objectivity while abolishing reification which involves treating creativity in terms of commodity.⁴ This model intensifies when the creator tries to objectively (without subjective factors) reproduce cultural phenomena. In creative activity based on the contrast between the subject and the object, objective and subjective ways of knowing are separated, leading to the subordination of partial knowledge to general laws. Individual observations in the formation of general rationality that go beyond cognitive subjectivity are treated with a grain of salt as insignificant and non-objective. Therefore, the creator can instrumentally submit to general laws (dominant rationalization) or refer to a specific, individual cause of a fragmented view of the world. In the first case, the creator adapts individual social and natural phenomena to a conservative thought system. This results in forcible submission to

⁴ Considerations on the reification process can be found in the article *Rewolucja jako odpowiedź na pytanie jeszcze nie zadane. Próba rekonstrukcji zapomnianych idei młodego György'a Lukácsa* by Bogusław Jasiński and in: György Lukács, *Toward the Ontology of Social Being*, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lukacs/works/ontology/ontology-social-being-vol2.pdf> (accessed on 25 October 2023).

the changing reality or in limiting the range of possibilities that a given system is to cover (neo-positivization).⁵ In the second case, the creator subordinates themselves to cognitive individualism, thus adopting an individual point of view (epistemological perspectivism). Both ways of constructing rationality are situated in 'total isolation from the whole of social life'⁶ and do not take account of a dialectical approach that allows for going beyond directness. Therefore, the anticipatory nature of creative activities refers to the phenomena of reality more intensively when it takes into account the process of abstraction and 'not phenomenalist, but essential' exploration.⁷ Adopting the concept of the culture-forming role of art means that it is not limited to just summing up observations, but it also takes account of analyses and searches for new solutions. In this case, the creative process, often veiled and intuitive, results from concentration on a given object and the desire to show its complex structure. An attempt at mimetic reproduction of reality forces a decision to be made in the context of the adopted semantic framework, which helps in discovering new ways of articulation and thus organizing the perceptual image differently. Art thus participates in creating a future vision of reality, considering new possibilities for social existence. The work, which is a new visual model, influences a different way of thinking about the effectiveness of artistic interventions. In particular, these concern contemporary, useful activities that focus on the unconventional possibilities of art and consider them as a potential for solving supra-individual issues.⁸ The usefulness of the work does not undermine its symbolic values, thanks

⁵ For more see: György Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1971.

⁶ Bogusław Jasiński, *Rewolucja jako odpowiedź na pytanie jeszcze nie zadane. Próba rekonstrukcji zapomnianych idei młodego György'a Lukácsa*, p. 4.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ A reference to applied art, for more see: Stephen Wright, *Toward a Lexicon of Usership*, Eindhoven: Van Abbemuseum, 2013.

to which it shows the rules of interpersonal behaviour.⁹ This allows for including creative processes in the mechanism of conceptualization, going beyond the form of an empirical fact and locating it in the structure of relationships and social dependencies.¹⁰ Resigning from the phenomenalist position makes it possible to avoid superficiality and reach the essence of the content. Creative anticipation understood in a classical sense refers to transcendental, utopian visions of a universal nature. In neo-positivist culture, it alludes to immanent ones, limited to individual representations, which are treated superficially and subjectively, and are rather focused on correcting reality – introducing changes within the existing order. With such a scheme of conduct, the teleological side of anticipation is strongly emphasized, detaching itself from causal factors and resulting in simplifications. In relation to art, this scheme shows that the designated goal of creative activity does not have to be clearly emphasized to fulfil its role.

The combination of form and content in a work of art makes it possible to show the full essence of the presented phenomenon. However, where the means of expression used can be completely separated from the conveyed content, the topic is simplified, often resulting in distortion of hidden influences. Giving up superficial simplifications, appearances and common beliefs (fetishization) encourages creative searches aimed at real changes and influences the creation of new social relations.

⁹ For more see: Claire Bishop *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, London: Verso, 2012.

¹⁰ With respect to science, focusing 'solely on phenomena that are "visible" on the surface' distorts research. ... 'limiting research to this phenomenal layer of reality is not only insufficient in science if it wants to properly solve its tasks, but in total it gives knowledge that is deformed, if not outright false'. Jerzy Topolski, *Dyrektywa formułowania praw idealizacyjnych*, [in:] *Elementy marksistowskiej metodologii humanistyki*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1973. p. 26.