

IDEOLOGY, HUMANNES, AND VALUE. ON ADORNO'S STRAVINSKY

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ИДЕОЛОГИЈА, ЉУДСКОСТ И ВРЕДНОСТ. О АДОРНОВОМ СТРАВИНСКОМ

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ABSTRACT

Theodor W. Adorno's critique of Igor Stravinsky has itself been repeatedly criticised. Following the same line, the present article takes as its point of departure the philosophical anthropology of Helmuth Plessner, which challenges the premises of Marxist anthropology, on which Adorno based his critique of Stravinsky. Far from regressing to the inhuman and primitive, Stravinsky's music affirms, in historically adequate modern terms, the constitutive reflectivity of the human embodied condition, thus becoming more "human", i.e. meaningful and expressive, than Adorno could have even conceived. Additionally, an account is provided of some groundbreaking musical qualities that underpin the artistic value of Stravinsky's music, which Adorno also contested.

KEYWORDS: Theodor W. Adorno, Igor Stravinsky, Helmuth Plessner, philosophical anthropology, musical value.

АПСТРАКТ

Адорнова критика Стравинског и сама је претрпела бројне критике. Пратећи ту исту линију, овај чланак као полазиште узима филозофску антропологију Хелмута Плеснера, која оспорава премисе марксистичке антропологије, на којој Адорно заснива своју критику Стравинског. Не регресирајући у нељудско и примитивно, музика Стравинског потврђује, у историјски адекватним модерним терминима, конститутивну рефлексивност људског отелотвореног стања, постајући тако више „људска”, тј. смислена и изражајна, него што је Адорно могао појмити. Осим тога, пажња је посвећена и неким револуционарним музичким квалитетима који подупиру уметничку вредност музике Стравинског, коју је Адорно такође оспоравао.

Кључне речи: Теодор Адорно, Игор Стравински, Хелмут Плеснер, филозофска антропологија, музичка вредност.

In a broad Marxist sense, all critique of ideology, understood as a process of uncovering and denouncing false forms of thought and action that appear as true, is performed, explicitly or not, in the name of a true human condition impeded in its materialisation by these very forms of thought and action. Theodor W. Adorno conceives this true human condition as a society of rational, emancipated, autonomous and thus truly free human individuals (Wilson 2007, 96 f.; O’Conor 2013, 190–191). In Adorno’s view, a fundamental precondition of human emancipation is the awareness of the essentially non-binding nature of the norms and values by which humans are raised; for, the sole function of norms and values is the reproduction of precisely that unfree social reality that the critique has the duty to uncover and denunciate (1973, 90, 95, 275, 355).

Within this philosophical frame, the aim of all great art is to reproduce in its own sphere the logic of human emancipation. The emancipated artist does not impose extraneously – and for this reason violently – to the artistic material established techniques, norms and conventions that contradict the nature of the material and impede the development of its possibilities, but follows the tendencies of the material, its internal logic, in a way that enables the creation of binding or authentic² works, which “could not be otherwise” (Adorno 2006, 105–106). Achieved through the conformity of the artistic subject to the demands of the material, true artistic objectivity or authenticity is not only compatible with the freedom of that subject, but it is a precondition of her/his freedom, since only such objectivity can ensure the independence of the artistic subject from purposes or norms imposed on it extrane-

2 Adorno defines authenticity as “[...] the characteristic of works that gives them an objectively binding quality, a quality that extends beyond the contingency of mere subjective expression, the quality of being socially grounded” (Adorno 2019, 199).

ously, in a state of heteronomy.³ For it is the conviction of Adorno, who in this matter faithfully follows the tradition of German Enlightenment, that only the autonomous subject is truly free (O'Connor 2013, 130–135).

Adorno traces the ideological element in Igor Stravinsky's music in the latter's attempt to achieve the status of aesthetic objectivity, authenticity, and bindingness by aesthetically false means, that is, by means incompatible with the principle of the autonomous treatment of the musical material in terms of its own logic (van Eecke 2014). Although Stravinsky rightly rejects the formal conventions of both classicism and romanticism, he restructures musical form in terms of subjective arbitrariness. According to Adorno, Stravinsky juxtaposes irrationally, i.e. without mediation and internal necessity, either musical fragments (2006, 113) or complexes (Ibid., 115) that are not only thematically unrelated, but each of them is structured on the basis of rhythmically varied reiterations of melodic and harmonic elements (Ibid., 132) and not on the basis of rational motivic-thematic development: "The formative process that is envisioned has nothing to do with musical dynamics, and least of all with the creation *ex nihilo* of large, self-motivating musical forms that constitute one of Beethoven's leading ideas right up to the first movement of the Ninth Symphony" (Ibid., 122). Musical form comes about as an incoherent sequence of "reflex gestures" (Ibid.), whose purposely dissonant character turns it into a sequence of shocks (Ibid., 117–118, 142). By violently transfixing the listener and by paralysing reflection, these shocks annul freedom towards the musical object, rendering the listener the docile receiver of the actions of an arbitrary subjective will that appears as binding. Once the musical object obeys not its own logic but the dictates of the arbitrary artist (Ibid., 125), it is as much unfree as the listener, the musical subject, who is thus peremptorily deprived of its right to a rational understanding of musical form.

In contrast to Arnold Schoenberg, whom Adorno opposes to Stravinsky (Padison 2003), the contestation of the formal and tonal conventions of tradition – a contestation that lies at the core of all new music – does not lead to the emancipation of the musical material and the liberation of its formative possibilities, but to its manipulation through an authoritarian artistic behaviour, ideologically appearing as the embodiment of liberty. Here we are dealing with false aesthetic objectivism, a "realism of the facade" (Adorno 2006, 128) behind which the subject is merely concealed instead of becoming an element of the form itself and an inherent factor of its coherence. The retreat of the subject from musical form brings with it the retreat from musical expression (Ibid., 131–132). According to Adorno, Stravinsky's justified critique of the falsity and hypocrisy of romantic sentimentalism leans not toward the seeking of a true sentiment as the emotional response to a true consciousness of reality, but toward the rejection of all sentiment as something always already false. Deprived of emotional subjectivity, his music behaves as a body disjoined from

3 See, especially, Adorno 2002, 269: "It [art] rescues subjectivity, even subjective aesthetics, by the negation of subjectivity. The subject, convulsed by art, has real experiences; by the strength of insight into the artwork as artwork, these experiences are those in which the subject's petrification in his own subjectivity dissolves and the narrowness of his self-positingness is revealed".

soul and mind, as the body of the neurotic or the mentally ill (Ibid., 125 f.), in other cases as that of the savage or the child. Yet, the calculated primitivism and infantilism of Stravinsky's music, instead of working as an indictment of bourgeois hypocrisy in the interests of true, emancipated humanity is, in fact, nothing but a kind of aesthetic regression pleading in favour of modern inhumanity. Formal discontinuity, emotional destitution and mechanistic frigidity, disconnection and spatialisation of time modelled upon painting, fetishisation of musical means and absolutisation of instrumental craft (Ibid., 128–129) – all these negative qualities banish the subject from both sonic structure and expression and, with it, they also banish soul, mind, and humanity, notions inextricably intertwined in Adorno's thought: "All that remains to this music after having successfully exorcised the soul is the empty shell of the animate" (Ibid., 133). The negation of the subject in Stravinsky's music becomes eventually the sonic symbol of an archaic collectivity where the individual is sacrificed rather than truly individualised. As the sonic symbol of the inhuman, Stravinsky's music contributes by way of its own aesthetic means to the deepening of modern social barbarism.

The fact that at the core of Adorno's ideological critique of Stravinsky lies the concept of the inhuman poses the question about his own conception of the human. Adorno's anthropology is essentially Marxist (Marković 1991). Marxist anthropology thinks of humans as lacking an invariable, unhistorical nature. Being the result of their history and social conditions, humans can only define their own concept in terms of historical self-understanding. This leads Marxists like Adorno to consider every adoption by modern humans of attitudes historically bygone or ontogenetically precursory, every conscious imitation of primitively collective or infantile behaviour as something that actually belies in an ideologically charged manner their self-understanding as autonomous subjects and mentally mature individuals. By depressing historically formed humanness, all conscious behavioural regression becomes a byword for conscious de-humanisation. Contemporary humans cannot be but modern, that is, self-conscious, rational and critical individuals and, most importantly, masters of their drives and corporeality. All regression to the pre-modern or anti-modern, all loss of self-consciousness and self-determination renders them inhuman in this particular historical sense.

Nevertheless, the simple fact that Marxist anthropology, upon which Adorno's critique of Stravinsky is largely based, is not the only theory of human nature that exists (Stevenson and Haberman 1998), would suffice to relativise the validity of this critique. In the philosophical anthropology of Helmuth Plessner, to give a little-known example, self-consciousness and self-determination are structural aspects of human nature. As such, they do not perish even in cases of primitive or infantile behaviours, all the more when such behaviours are voluntarily and reflectively adopted, as in the case of Stravinsky's music. Self-consciousness and self-determination are here considered essential properties of a special, human form of life characterised by "eccentric positionality" (Fischer 2016, 115–135), a term used to signify the double distance of the living thing from itself. Only in the case of humans do we face a living thing standing in the paradoxical situation of *being* a body, being *within* a body, and at the same time *having* a body from that transcendental standpoint

from which it cognises to be both (Plessner 2019, 272). This double distance from the body, this “eccentric positionality,” being the structural property of human beings, the *a priori* of the human condition, can never be lost. Healthy adult humans are always aware of what they do; they remain subjects of their bodily movement even when they decide to embody behaviours that characterise lower levels of consciousness.⁴ In structural correspondence with the properties of being a body, being within a body, and having a body from an eccentric standpoint, human existence is structured in the form of an outer or physical world, an inner or psychic world, and a shared or social world, the world of shared meanings or “spirit” (*Geist*) (Ibid., 272 f.).

Even more important as regards the present issue is the fact that these three dimensions of the human condition, the physical, the psychic, and the spiritual – the latter standing in a transcendental relationship to the others – are always already present in all human perception: for us humans, every object, here every musical object, possesses conjointly material form, expression, and meaning, even if this meaning is a simple name or the concept under which the object is subsumed. In our case, whether Stravinsky’s music is expressive or not is to be decided independently of the intention of Stravinsky or his listeners for the simple reason that expression, considered as the manifestation of something internal, even elusively internal, as in the case of abstract expressiveness, constitutes a permanent feature of the human perception of any kind of thing whatsoever, including the intentionally non-expressive music of Stravinsky. Contrary to Adorno’s assumption, the notion of expression includes far more than the manifestation of emotional states, even when it comes to the pain caused by the true consciousness of the historically real and which all non-ideological music, as Adorno believes, should express (Adorno 2006, 131).⁵ Beyond emotional states, the content of expression could be attitudes, outlooks, intentions, ideas, and, as far as art is concerned, aesthetic qualities. The latter are re-

4 Plessner’s description of the fact is striking: “The human, however, is subject to the law of excentricity, according to which his being in the here/now – that is, his absorption in what he experiences – no longer coincides with the point of his existence. Even in the execution of a thought, a feeling, a volition, the human stands apart from himself. How can we explain the existence of false feelings or sham thoughts or the fact that it is possible to work ourselves into something that we are not? How can we explain the existence of (good and bad) actors, the transformation of one human being into another? How is it possible that those watching him, but more significantly the individual himself, cannot always say with certainty whether even in moments of the greatest abandon and passion he is not merely playing a role? The testimony of inner evidence does not dispel doubts as to the truthfulness of one’s own being. Such evidence does not overcome the incipient split that, because it is excentric, cuts through the human’s being-himself, so that no one can know of himself whether it is still he who laughs and cries, thinks and makes decisions, or this self that has already split off, the other that is in him, his counterimage or perhaps even antithesis” (2019, 277).

5 Even Adorno himself avows that “There are passages in Stravinsky that in their bleak indifference or their cruel harshness do more honor to expression and its foundering subject than do passages in which it overflows with exuberance because it does not yet know that it is dead: In this compositional attitude, Stravinsky in fact brings to term Nietzsche’s struggle against Wagner. The empty eyes of his music are sometimes more expressive than the expression” (2006, 132).

lated to comportment which, as Kant has already noticed, is distinguished by inner purposiveness or teleology (2000, 105–106). This teleology is not identical with that of the purposeful or rational activity which Adorno has in mind when he deplores Stravinsky's music for being deprived of dynamic temporality in such a way as to resemble dancing movement.

Surprisingly, here we have to do with praise rather than reproach; for it is precisely in dancing movement, namely in a movement not goal-oriented yet intrinsically meaningful, that the humanity of humans is manifested with the utmost clarity. This is all the more evident in a dancing movement like that of Stravinsky's music, where the irregularity and variability of metre and accent necessitate the greatest possible control over the dancing body. Here the eccentricity of human nature, the ability of the living thing to fully instrumentalise the body which the thing itself is,⁶ becomes itself an aesthetic idea. Perhaps Stravinsky's music is more human than Adorno could even imagine. It is endowed as much with "soul" as with "spirit." We need only consider, along with Plessner, that spirit is not something separate from life, another substance added to those of the body and the soul, but a property of a living body eccentrically positioned against itself and its world, a property of a body fully reflected in itself (2019, 281 f.).

Debatable is further Adorno's criticism of the alleged irrationality of Stravinsky's music. Adorno understands as rational that music for each and every single element of which an answer can be given as to the why of its particular placement within the form and the how of its relation to every other element. Rational in this sense is Bach's, Beethoven's, Brahms's, and Schoenberg's music, not Stravinsky's. In music like his all answers as to the why and the how of its elements lie in the mind of the composer, not in the music itself. Yet, how true is this notion of musical rationality? More than a century before the publication of Adorno's *Philosophy of New Music* Hegel, in his lectures on music, notes that musical forms lack the organic necessity conditioning the relations of the particular elements in a sculpture, especially when it represents living beings, or the logical necessity conditioning the relations of the particular elements in a representational painting. Due to the non-representational nature of music, its forms are alien to the rationality of the real (Hegel 1975, 895–898). Being unable to be rational in itself, music can but *imitate* rationality. After all, Adorno himself admits this when he avows that "music in fact never achieved a pure logic" (2006, 105). How could it anyway? Thus, if music is only by approximation and *mutatis mutandis* rational, then the rationality of Stravinsky's music as compared with that of Schoenberg's is a matter of degree rather than of kind. This is all the more evident when we realise that both the formation of dodecaphonic rows and their subsequent treatment are in the last analysis issues of free, "irrational" artistic

6 The instrumentalization of the body is for Adorno kind of an anathema: "The animosity against the anima, which pervades Stravinsky's oeuvre, is of the same nature as the desexualized relation of his music to the body. The latter is itself treated as a mere means, as a thing that reacts with precision; the music demands of it the most extreme performances, as vividly appear on stage in *Rite*, in the 'Jeu de rapt,' and in the 'Combat des tribus'" (Adorno 2006, 129).

decision. Contrary to Adorno's conviction, artistic choices are ultimately dictated by taste, the very thing for which he derides Stravinsky (Ibid., 116), and not by the alleged necessity of the thing itself or by pure logic.

Corporeality in Stravinsky's music is likewise a matter of degree rather than of kind. In his musical writings Plessner demonstrated the privileged relationship of music with human behaviour as manifested in bodily attitudes and gestures (Tsetsos 2020). Contrary to optical data, colours, and shapes, which are always distal, sounds are both distal and proximal, envelop the body and homogenise space. The power of sounds to penetrate the perceiver's phenomenal body due to their voluminosity (*Voluminosität*) together with the fact that they share with the phenomenal body the same property of being both distal and proximal to itself renders sonic configurations homologous or isomorph to bodily attitudes and gestures: "music applies to the stratum of human behaviour" (Plessner 2003a). Contrary therefore to the common belief that it is the art of interiority *par excellence*, music is rather an art of corporeality, which in the case of humans is corporeality as much soulful as spiritual, as much expressive as meaningful. Stravinsky's music is simply concerned with a form of corporeality not articulated as an embodiment of emotional states, as is the case with the kind of music represented by Schoenberg and his followers, a kind of music which after all is closer to the aesthetic tradition of romanticism.⁷

All these considerations problematise Adorno's ideological critique of Stravinsky and ideological critique in general. The latter is particularly problematic when used for questioning the value of generic artistic programmes and individual works of art. As a matter of fact, Adorno acknowledges the artistic quality of only a handful of Stravinsky's works. As a rule, these are works that somehow do not faithfully follow the aesthetic premises of the Russian and Neoclassical periods. Beyond that, Adorno's strategy is firm: from the totality of the properties instantiated by Stravinsky's music he picks out the ones that seem to support his philosophical predilections. The properties mostly targeted by Adorno are rhythmic irregularity, displacement (van den Toorn 2004), literal repetition, lack of motivic-thematic development and teleological dynamism, unmediated (mechanistic or non-organic) parataxis of fragments, emphatic display of technical means, derivation of musical material from earlier periods of music history. Adorno appears selective not only as far as musical artistic properties are concerned but musical works as well. Very likely on purpose he does not mention works like *The Nightingale*, *Les noces* or *Symphony in C*. Each of these works could somehow undermine Adorno's critical narrative: *The Nightingale* insofar as "its transcendent, beautiful music can be read as symbolizing the autonomous artist at odds with mundane, mass taste present in the court's preference for the mechanical nightingale presented by wealthy visitors to the court" (Marsh 1983, 155); *Les noces* insofar as its detached representation of the wedding ritual and especially of the brides laments (Mazo 1990) objectively works as a critique of the social reality and the patriarchal practices of peasant Russia (Banes 1998, 118, 120); and *Symphony in C* insofar as it masterly handles the tension between "ontological"

7 Further on Plessner and Adorno as far as music aesthetics is concerned, cf. Dworschak 2021.

(clock-measured, quantitative) and “psychological” (dynamic, qualitative) time (Williams 1973), a tension which Stravinsky’s music is supposed to ignore.

The fact that ideological critique operates selectively as regards musical artistic properties and works together with the fact that the artistic value of Stravinsky’s music survived its ideological critique motivates the recourse to a comprehensive theory of musical value free of distorting preconceptions (Tsetsos 2021, Appendix). Preliminarily stressing that the incorporation of a composition in the canon does not guarantee its artistic value in advance, one could here provide the essentials of such a theory. Thus, each historically delimited artistic practice is constituted and reproduced on the basis of sets of conventional norms and rules that enable the instantiation of particular artistic properties. Depending on the particular artistic treatment, any possible violation of the norms and rules could either lead to unsuccessful works, or to the establishment of new sets of norms and rules enabling the instantiation of new artistic properties. Precisely the latter happened with the music of Schoenberg and Stravinsky, and the same happened with the music of Debussy prior to them. By replacing the set of norms conditioning the music of the common practice with new norms, Stravinsky achieved the advancement of some novel musical artistic properties. Let’s discuss in closing some of the most significant of them.

By far the most striking is rhythmical irregularity. It concerns both the irregular alternation of different kinds of musical metre and the irregular division of and accentuation within musical metre. Adorno tries to downplay the importance of Stravinsky’s irregularity of rhythm for the world history of music by describing it as a mere regression to collectivist archaism (Adorno 2006, 118). Yet, in fact, no matter how complex or even irregular the rhythmical patterns of “primitive” non-Western music may themselves be, their reiteration is invariably regular (cf., for instance, Rechberger 2008; Clayton 2000). It should be obvious therefore that Stravinsky’s rhythmical irregularity, far from being archaic or primitivist, is a ground-breaking achievement of Western modernity representing in music a corporeal individuality full of mind and control in view of a novel horizon of unlimited rhythmical possibilities. As James L. Marsh aptly comments, “It does not seem too far off the mark to read the playful, variable, rhythmic dynamism as an expression of subjectivity and individuality rather than their negation. Instead of a monotonous pattern of repetition, we have individuality moving out of universality and in dialectical tension with it” (1983, 153). Pieter van den Toorn confirms the same idea in psychological rather than philosophical terms: “Not just meter but meter internalized is the subject of the disruption. That to which meter attaches itself physically is affected and, in this way, brought to the surface of consciousness. [...] And this may be what alertness is, of course: the heightened sense of engagement brought about by disruption. By means of disruption, we are brought into closer contact with what we are internally, so to speak, with what we are, deep, down, and under” (van den Toorn 2004, 495).

Another significant novel musical property is the recognisable identity that dissonant chords and sequences of such obtain through repetition. As a modernist, Stravinsky was perfectly aware that the emancipation of dissonance made artistically useful an unlimited number of harmonic qualities. Yet, at the same time, he seems to realise that when no individual harmonic quality is perceivably repeated, what

results is the levelling of all harmonic qualities and the rendering of qualitatively dissimilar dissonant chords into interchangeable entities. In his fervent defense of atonality, Adorno overlooked the fact that the repetition of dissonant chords and chordal sequences reinforces rather than weakens their effectiveness. Together with polytonality, polyrhythmics, and multilayeredness or stratification ("dissociation" according to Rogers 1992), a noticeable musical property is further the harmonic movement produced through homorhythmic conjunction of independent parts, melodic as well as chordal. Here too Adorno failed to notice the unlimited harmonic possibilities of homorhythmic counterpoint, where the melodic dynamism of the parts involved compensates for the loss of harmonic tensions characterising non-functional tonality.

On the level of musical form what Stravinsky essentially intends and achieves is the articulation of musical structures that result from the impulses and the interplay of their own elements beyond considerations of motivic-thematic elaboration, developing variation or formal teleology. Considering that in this free unfolding involved are individual sounds as well as sonic structures and formal sections, musical form in Stravinsky (Cone 1962; Kramer 1978; Kielian-Gilbert 1987) could be understood as an alignment of musical events not subsumed to extrinsic formal patterns or established compositional methods but deploying what Kant calls "the free play of the imagination and the understanding" (Kant 2002, 102 and elsewhere). Again J. L. Marsh gives us a clue. In discussing *The Rite of Spring* he notes:

In other passages where there are changes in color, rhythm, and harmony, we do not hear the next note as pre-determined by the preceding set or sets of notes, but this note is at least one legitimate realization of the possibilities presented by these sets. The next note is rational enough to stay within the range of possibilities created by the preceding development but surprising enough to delight us. Such I would argue is true of the color variation in "Mystic Circle of Young Girls" and of the rhythmic variation in "The Dance in Adoration of the Young Virgin". Not mere necessity nor mere contingency is present, but a union of necessity and contingency, determination and indetermination" (Marsh 1983, 156).⁸

Replace "necessity" and "determination" with "understanding", and "contingency" and "indetermination" with "imagination" and the Kantian, playful nature of Stravinsky's art will be brilliantly revealed.

Finally, what Adorno reproaches as "fetishism of means" and concerns, among others, the turning of the technical possibilities of the musical instruments into a decisive factor of musical composition, is actually the manifestation of Stravinsky's will to open up an unlimited horizon of sonic combinations that renders a factor of

8 See, again, van den Toorn (2004, 491): "Alignment and harmonic coincidence are stabilized, with the disruption of the earlier bars (Adorno's 'shocks') capable of being heard and understood as part of a larger plan of action, one with a beginning and an end. Far from being isolated and isolating, the disturbances may be reconciled within a larger, evolving structure".

aesthetic relevance not only the intervallic, but also the timbral articulation of harmonic complexes or simply “the fusion of harmony and timbre” (Deliège and Lamb 1988, 87). In this artistically fertile fusion of musical parameters, Stravinsky clearly develops further a fundamental trait of musical impressionism. Adorno should have been aware that this is as contrary to the idea of regression as can be. Besides, isn’t Adorno in contradiction with himself when he turns what is actually an emancipation of artistic means into a token of fetishism?

If one just thinks of Stravinsky’s musical works as bundles of such and many other novel artistic properties, one should not be surprised that these works survived their ideological critique and entered the canon of Western art music masterworks. Even if this does not necessarily refute the importance of ideological critique, it surely indicates its limits. Perhaps the reason behind it is rather trivial and far from disinterested:

what can seem old-fashioned and even absurdly naive in Adorno’s writings about Stravinsky is a critical judgment that fixes musical value with a single style (with all other styles weighed accordingly), verification with a single method of analysis (drawn from the single style), and musical expression with the terms and concepts laid down by that single style. Add to this a view of metrical displacement and its implications that are invariably one-sided [...], and an aesthetics and sociology that, even if ultimately detachable from his critical judgments, purport to be founded on those judgments all the same, and the making of a large critical and aesthetic edifice in deep, wobbly trouble is surely unmistakable (van den Toorn 2004, 502).

Adorno’s retroactive self-criticism (Adorno 1998) could hardly alter this normative prejudice (Paddison 2003, 198 f.).

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МАРКОС ЦЕЦОС

ИДЕОЛОГИЈА, ЉУДСКОСТ И ВРЕДНОСТ. О АДОРНОВОМ СТРАВИНСКОМ

(РЕЗИМЕ)

Усвајајући марксистичко разумевање људске природе као нечега што је историјски варијабилно, Адорно сматра да Стравински, оповргавајући у својој музици модерни облик ове природе на идеолошки бременит начин, потврђује аспекте нељудскости и варваризма. Ипак, према филозофској антропологији Хелмута Плеснера, самосвесност и самоопредељење, наводно аспекти модерне хуманости, у ствари су неваријабилни аспекти сваке људскости. Као такви, они не нестају чак и у случају „примитивног” или инфантилног понашања, нарочито када је такво понашање добровољно и рефлексивно усвојено, као у случају музике Стравинског. Самосвесност и самоопредељење овде се разматрају као есенцијалне карактеристике специјалног, људског облика живота који се карактерише „ексцентричним позиционирањем”, термином који се користи како би се означила структурална дистанца живог бића у односу на себе. Структурална дистанца људи од њихових тела омогућава истовремено прагматичну и естетску контролу њихових тела и структура њихове перцепције у погледу материјалне форме, експресије и значења. Тако је музика Стравинског увек – већ експресивна и смислена, има „душу” и „дух”, без обзира на интенције композитора или било кога другог. Осим тога, управо се у плесном ставу – који није оријентисан ка циљу него има суштинско значење – хуманост показује с највећом јасноћом. То је још очигледније у плесним ставовима као оним у музици Стравинског, где неправилности и варијабилност метра и акцента изискују највећу могућу контролу над телом које плеше. У сваком случају, ритмичке неправилности, препознатљив идентитет који дисонантни акорди и секвенце тих акорада постижу кроз репетицију, слободно обликовање форме у погледу структуре које резултира импулсима игре њених елемената

изван мотивско-тематске елаборације, развојних варијација или формалне телеологије, отварање неограниченог хоризонта звучних комбинација које дају фактор естетске релевантности не само интервалској, него и тимбралној артикулацији хармонских комплекса, само су неки од нових уметничких особина које подржавају уметничку вредност музике Стравинског и чувају је од напада пристрасне критике.