

---

# English Summary

---

Sztuka i Dokumentacja nr 2, 26-27

---

2010

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej [bazhum.muzhp.pl](http://bazhum.muzhp.pl), gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

# **THE MODEL OF LOGIC AND THE LOGIC OF A MODEL**

**(Some critical notes on the theory of 'art as contextual art')**

The aim of this article is to critically analyse the theory of 'art as contextual art' by Jan Świdziński. To define what that means, we should start with determining the scope of the problems mentioned here, as well as providing the characteristics of the work method employed. This is not simple however, and it brings about a lot of misunderstandings. The misunderstandings stem from the fact that the theory of 'art as contextual art' has not been reconstructed sufficiently in terms of its logical constitution, to be precise its formal assumptions. The area that should be analysed, through the means of logic, becomes analysed per analogian: that is through searching until we find the simplest and the most obvious comparisons with other contemporary, or past art theories...

Świdziński claims that the *game logic*, described by him, is a useful depiction of processes taking place in the reality surrounding us. Whereas, the theory of 'art as contextual art' contains itself within the event class referred to as 'the logic of game'. This text attempts to answer the following question: What do we need to verify the above assertion? (as well as others posted by Świdziński.)

The existence of a glass of water is certainly perceived in a different manner to the way we comprehend the existence of a model of logic. In this aspect, we seem to qualify the variable - 'to exist' - as being different for both sets of objects. We are more inclined to say that the model of logic is a postulated entity - that assertion relieves us from the obligation of discussing whether there could be anything else attributed to it except for language (however, this asser-

tion should also be reconsidered somewhere further in the discussion).

Not taking into account all aspects of the studied data, whilst surfacing only common features, leads to simplifying facts (to take it even further, it leads to simplifying the described reality). By ignoring some aspects of events, which in turn may result in establishing crucial features from the context perspective, we arrive at the formulation of a code: a system of rules to which the event is subjected so that it may be described by the model. This is a simplification and impoverishment of the reality which stems from a particular point of view - [...] *the structure, distinguished in such a way, does not exist by itself, since it is the creation of our own actions directed in a particular way. The structure, then, is a qualified by us approach to an object that enables us to use an analogous naming for things which are different from each other.*\*

Świdziński attempts to employ the models, outlined above, to reveal the conflicts brought on by the misunderstandings of concepts used to describe the worlds we live in. As such, the models are inscribed in the long tradition going back to Hegel. They are also present in the writings of Marquard, Habermas, Welsch and Foucault; this is irrespective of the fact that the scopes of their conceptualisation differ within the writings of these writers. These models are one of many ways in which reality may be encompassed. Their usability is determined by some particular aims.

Finally, the models serve for Świdziński a role of rationalising the crisis in

art. It seems rather obvious that the ability to verify them is periodical – the facts, inasmuch, may both support and refute them.

On the other hand, it seems that there are some motions suggesting that logical models are nothing more than yet another entity substituting reality, the sources of which are inaccessible. They are not a method of acting upon, or a new norm which we would benefit from if accepted. Yet, by pointing to those norms, they are succumbing to the temptation of valuing and estimating. Where is this tendency coming from?

Paradoxically, the reason should be sought in a rather static description of reality suggested by Świdziński in the game logic. The paradox is to be found in the fact that Świdziński, persistently and strongly, accentuates the dynamism characterising our world. He, however, seems to overlook the fact that according to the game logic, actions, pragmatic and relative to the chosen aim, do not make the world static – on the contrary the world remains always changing and moving. It is the rules of the game (as in a poker game) which are fixed by their history, practice and probability.

There is no claim that this is what actually happens and the world is a place univocally determined and described. However, it doesn't escape our attention that there are some hidden assumptions within the theory of 'art as a contextual art'. They seem to be disguised as popular statements about the relativity of reality, or postmodernist de-fragmentation of meaning.

In other words, each attempt to describe the dynamism of the world by Świdziński is based on an assumption concerning a defined perception of the world. The assumption offers a rather fixed, static view concerning past time. Therefore, while describing the logic of some model of reality, Świdziński does not mention some central and basic issues of his considerations - such as the dynamism of the processes, rationalisation of the reality or historicity of

phenomena. He simply accepts a certain way of understanding them which he attempts to support, from time to time, with some facts from the 'world' of reality. It seems, however, that parallel to this process, there should be a critical verification of his own assumptions. This, unfortunately, is missing in Świdziński.

Our considerations seem to support the view that the above may be a result of an imprecisely described relationship between the theory of 'art as contextual art' and the reality it is supposed to pertain to. In fact, we need far more than the knowledge concerning the conditions for some action or the situation in which they occurred.

What if the categories used by the theory of 'art as contextual art' have the ability to describe reality, but only in relation to the past which is being negated and refuted by them? Doing so, they do not directly determine what the current state is, but what it is not in relation to what has become to be accepted as such. This is a deductive method and what is more, a negative one (it is defined by negation). In this approach the theory of 'art as contextual art' turns out to be yet another archive, another collection of truths and norms. The worst that we could have done is to treat it as true. It will never be true, it will never be fully refuted, just like in the case of truths, aspiring to the status of righteousness, which will never be verified. Perhaps, what matters here is simply to remember never to accept anything as true out of belief or habit. And perhaps persistently, gear yourself to refute, verify and redefine those truths.

**Bartosz ŁUKASIEWICZ, 03.2009**

**THE QUOTATION COMES FROM:**

Umberto Eco, *The Absent Structure*. The book has never been translated into English, however parts of it have been incorporated into two other books by this author; *A Theory of Semiotics* (Indiana University Press, 1976, ISBN 0-253-20217-5; Paperback) and *The Open Work* (Harvard University Press, 1989, ISBN 0-674-63976-6; Paperback)