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A proposal for a dualistic ontology of art

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A Proposal for a Dualistic Ontology of Art

Abstract

While pluralism in ontology of art improves on various monistic views, through its eclectic approach it lost a lot of their simplicity, parsimony, unity and intuitiveness. The dualistic theory presented in this paper offers an alternative – it shares the advantages of the monistic views while retaining the wide scope of pluralism, and thus should be preferred for methodological reasons. On this view all artworks are at the same time abstract universals which are called recipes, and particular physical objects – realisations. The fact that various artworks seem to differ in their ontology is due to certain fairly consistent culturally determined biases which cause people to prioritise the above compounds differently in cases of different arts. Thus the diversity of arts should not be considered on the level of ontology, as the pluralists would hold, but epistemology, or even further – socially determined phenomena concerning customary perception of various artworks.

1. Introduction

It is the 'common practice' to distinguish some works of art as *types* and others as *tokens*¹. Some theories, which Wolterstorff calls *uniform*, 'develop ontologies of artworks that are uniform across the distinct arts'. Most of those are also *unitive* – 'they deny any fundamental ontological distinction as that between types and tokens'². Such unitive theories are ontologically monistic – they ascribe all artworks to single ontological category of either physical objects, mental objects, nominal objects, or hold that all artworks are universal types³.

Pluralism, on the other hand, is a non-uniform theory – it holds that some artworks are tokens and others are types. The most influential arguments for

¹ N. Wolterstorff, "Ontology of Artworks", in: S. Davies et al. (eds.), *Blackwell Companion to Aesthetics*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2 edition, Oxford 2009, p. 454.

² *Ibidem*, p. 455.

³ Respectively, physical: C. Bell, *Art*, Frederick A. Stokes, New York 1913; R. Fry, *Vision and Design*, Chatto & Windus, London 1920; E. Hanslick, *The Beautiful in Music*, The Liberal Arts Press, New York 1957; S. I. Witkiewicz, "New Forms in Painting and the Misunderstandings Arising Therefrom", in: D. Gerould (eds.), *The Witkiewicz Reader*, Northwestern University Press, Illinois 1992; mental: R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1958; B. Croce, *Aesthetic*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1992; nominal: N. Goodman, *Languages of Art*, Hackett Pub Co Inc, Cambridge 1976; J. Margolis, *Art and Philosophy*, Harvester Press, Brighton 1980; type: G. Currie, *An ontology of art*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 1989.

pluralism have been formulated by Jerrold Levinson and Richard Wollheim⁴. Their strategy is to show that the monistic views can be simply falsified – the physical-objects view has trouble explaining why no particular physical object has any bearing on the identity of works of literature or music, while the ideal-object and universal views are falsified with paintings or sculpture, where the work clearly is identified with a particular object in the world. Because some works are clearly universals rather than objects, and others are objects rather than universals, the sensible solution is to acknowledge that difference and incorporate it into the theory⁵. Thus for the pluralists artworks can be just physical objects, or universal indicated structures, or classes of objects, or norm kinds, or possibly belong to yet different ontological categories (none of these authors, as far as I know, excludes such possibility)⁶.

But does the ontology of art require pluralism? It certainly is far more accurate than monism in grasping what works of different arts are. However, the dualistic view I will propose can combine this accuracy with the qualitative parsimony of monistic theories, retain comparable simplicity and, rather than introducing divisions between different arts, explain how they are ontologically similar, thus providing the basis for the intuitive treatment of all artworks as members of one category. The originality of this view lies in shifting the burden of explaining the apparent diversity between arts from the level of ontology (where it is placed by the pluralists) to the level of culturally determined social phenomena – while different artworks seem to have different ontologies, this is due to our biased (culturally determined) perception of them, not actual differences. (Note also that while some notions central to my view, notably ‘the recipe’, have been discussed before, neither a detailed exposition nor its application to more than just performative arts has been ever attempted, to my knowledge.) In short, I offer a uniform, yet non-unitive theory, and argue that all artworks are both types and tokens. Importantly, I do not take this account to be complete – I am sure that it might be somewhat ambiguous in details and requires polishing. However, all this can hardly be done in one paper, and what I want to present here is a stem of a theory, which could be further developed in the future.

2. Recipe-realisation dualism

The heart of my proposal is fairly simple. While we are accustomed to treat a given painting or a musical piece as a single thing, it is actually a compound consisting of two distinct but inseparable elements – the particular object and the universal. From this point I will call the universal aspect – a *recipe* – and the particular – a *realisation*.

⁴ J. Levinson, “What a Musical Work Is”, in: *Music, Art and Metaphysics*, Cornell University Press, London 1990; R. Wollheim, *Art and its objects*, Penguin, Harmondsworth 1978.

⁵ For original arguments against different kinds of monism see: R. G. Collingwood, *op. cit.*, D. Davies, *Art as performance*, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford 2004, 127ff.; R. Wollheim, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-26, 52-59.

⁶ Respectively: J. Levinson, *op. cit.*, N. Goodman, *op. cit.*, N. Wolterstorff, *Works and Worlds of Art*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1980.

2.1. The Recipe

The 'recipe' is an *intersubjectively communicable abstract universal structure which provides a set of instructions of how to produce physical objects which instantiate this structure*. This understanding is very intuitive and straightforward – it is quite like the common-sense notion of a recipe in cooking. In the simplest sense, it is just a description of the thing to be realised, containing a set of directives for how to produce this realisation. The closest philosophical comparison concerns what Ingarden called the *foundation of existence* – something that, although embodied by the artist in some material object, transcends this and any other embodiment. He argued that this foundation 'must be opposed to its particular *concretisations* which emerge in particular readings of the same work (...) The literary work itself, as opposed to its concretisations, is a schematic construct'⁷. Yet at the same time this schematic construct can only be read and communicated through the concretisations⁸.

Let me now focus on the particular elements of the above definition. Firstly, the recipe is a *structure*. I understand this term as Levinson does – he defines the structure of a musical piece as 'the sound structure [which] is basically a sequence of sounds qualitatively defined [and] the performing-means structure [which] is a parallel sequence of performing means specified for realizing the sounds at each point'⁹. Such a structure, playing the role of a type, can be tokened in a performance which brings about the desired sounds by following the composer's instructions concerning the performing means. However, as I want to broaden the scope of application of such structures to all arts, I generalise it as a *qualitatively defined sequence or arrangement of materials typically used in a given art, together with a parallel sequence of performing directives specified for realising the arrangement at each point*. The recipe then is a universal which contains instructions for producing particular objects (or performances).

Additionally, I would like to underline the important fact which is not stressed enough by Levinson – a structure is independent in its shape from any specific way in which it is realised. Thus it is of no importance to Beethoven's Fifth Symphony itself whether it is played by the Berliner Philharmoniker or by an amateur school orchestra even if the performances differ considerably. Moreover, it would make no difference even if it were never performed at all¹⁰. I infer from this that the structure can be thought of or expressed in a number of natural and artificial languages and can typically be translated, without significant loss of meaning, from one language to another, e.g. a musical piece can be played, hand-written as a score in the universal musical notation language,

⁷ R. Ingarden, "Studia z estetyki", in: *idem, Dzieła filozoficzne*, PWN, Warsaw 1966, vol. I, 9. This and the following quotations from Ingarden are my own translations of the Polish originals, with technical terms translated after R. Ingarden, *The Ontology of the Work of Art*, Ohio University Press, Ohio 1989, and J. Mitscherling, *Roman Ingarden's ontology and aesthetics*, University of Ottawa Press, Ottawa 1996.

⁸ The same applies to other arts, see: R. Ingarden, "Studia...", vol. II: 131-2 (painting and architecture) and 240 (music). Although Ingarden preferred to call the foundation of existence a purely intentional *object*, since it could in principle be understood by anyone and did not depend on any particular understanding or concretisation of it, it can just as well be treated as a universal.

⁹ J. Levinson, *op. cit.*, p. 78; Levinson further requires the structures to be *indicated* – the need for such a complicated exposition will be discussed below.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 64; R. Wollheim, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

typed into a computer program and saved in a form of digital language, or even described in detail in any natural language – all of these are notations of the same structure¹¹.

Secondly, the recipe is *abstract*. A musical score where a 'recipe' for a symphony was written down, a sketch for a painting, a diagram showing steps of a dance – none of these are actual recipes. A recipe can be read out from them, but as they are themselves physical not abstract, they are already realisations of a recipe.

Thirdly, the recipe is a *universal*. The recipe is not only no single physical object, but generally no object at all. I follow the pluralists in their critique of idealistic and nominalistic monism – as embracing such views would lead into unbearable problems, we should rather accept that structures must be universals¹². Again, I understand this universality similarly to Levinson. As he recognises, this seems to have very counterintuitive consequences – for universals exist independently of humans, and thus 'compositional activity is not necessary in order for a certain sound-structure type to exist'¹³. It seems that even as complicated structures as Beethoven's *Kreutzer Sonata* could have, by pure accident, been played long before Beethoven. If so, the awkward conclusion looms, that at least in the case of some works there is no meaningful way in which one can say that they were in fact *created* – for they existed long before the person we regard as their author wrote them down, i.e. Beethoven did not create Beethoven's *Kreutzer Sonata*. The best one can say in this case is that artists *discover*, rather than *create*, their works. To resolve this problem, Levinson develops the theory discussed in the following paragraph, which I only partially accept¹⁴.

Fourthly, a recipe can be *realised in an object* – its realisation. This characteristic of a recipe is parallel to what Levinson described as indicating structures, however, while he claimed that abstract structures can be indicated by an artist in a process we call artistic creation to form a universal, but indicated structure, I explain the same by saying that the process of indicating a structure is a process of creating an object – the realisation of a recipe. Thus I concur that, as Levinson wrote, the artist cannot create an abstract universal which is eternal and human-independent, and yet that his 'discovering' of the structure is still an act of creating – but while Levinson says that what the artist creates is a *structure-S-as-indicated-by-the-artist-X-at-the-time-t*¹⁵, I say that what is created is a *realisation-of-a-structure-S-as-made-by-X-at-t*. This treatment has

¹¹ Whether all these notations are similarly adequate, or whether the structure can be described by all of them with the same accuracy will be discussed below.

¹² Notably, the universal character of recipes does not place them in some imaginary or Platonic realm. I will not discuss what or where exactly my recipes and other universals are, leaving this to metaphysics. All I need for the purpose of this theory is for them to be in the same place where laws of physics, mathematical equations and DNA structures are – wherever it actually is.

¹³ J. Levinson, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

¹⁴ It should be noted that some authors defend the idea of artworks as universals which are discovered rather than created. Julian Dodd (2007) presented an interesting Platonic ontology of musical works as types. However, it seems that his theory would only be applicable to music and possibly some other performative arts without much hope for explaining the ontology of painting or architecture. As such it would only introduce another option for pluralists, and while I generally agree with Dodd's characterisation of types, I want to argue that artworks are *not only* types.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 79f.

the advantage of eliminating the somewhat obscure notion of an indicated structure which is disposable once it is agreed that every artwork's structure has to have a physical realisation, thus making my view more parsimonious and yet retaining the same explanatory power¹⁶.

Similarly as in Levinson, were a realisation of the same recipe realised by another artist at another time, a different object would have been created – *realisation-of-S-by-Y-at-t'* would have different contextual properties, and thus the compound would also have different aesthetic properties, and, by Leibniz's law – be a different artwork altogether. To give an (deliberately non-musical) example, the *Oath of the Horatii* is a paradigmatically neoclassical painting, created by Jacques-Louis David in 1784 and has certain distinctive properties, e.g. being heroic, elegant, depictive of strength and pride. However, were an identical painting created after the French Revolution by, say, Eugene Delacroix, it would likely have the properties of being ironic about the Ancien Régime and depictive of smugness and arrogance. Thus while there is an artist-and-time-independent structure of the *Oath of the Horatii* – the abstract arrangement of shapes and colours on canvas – the painting as we know it is the *Oath of the Horatii-as-realised-by-David-in-1784* – a realisation of a structure which is different from the would-be *Oath of the Horatii-as-realised-by-Delacroix-in-1800*.

In practice the universal structures can be only accessed through particular objects – particular paintings, particular performances of a symphony, particular copies of a book. There is no way to avoid this – even a general description of the structure of a novel is still a particular general description. In fact, it seems that it is only through physical objects or phenomena that the universal structures can be communicated or shared among people. Thus lastly, if an artwork is to be *intersubjectively communicable* – and given Wollheim's anti-idealist critique, it had better be – every single structure that is to be an artwork *has to be realised* in at least one object¹⁷.

2.2. The realisation

The realisation of a given recipe is *any physical object(s) or action(s) created by the performer(s), which instantiates this recipe, is not guided by any other recipe and from which this recipe can be extracted*. My understanding of it is again very similar to Ingarden's notion of the *ontic foundation*, which is how he called the concretisation of the foundation of existence. The ontic foundation is an object through which an artwork is communicated, the thing which is presented to the audience. As Ingarden argued, no artwork can exist just as a mental process or ideal object, or a universal, without having a 'being' in the physical world¹⁸. Artworks can only be appreciated (and implicitly – communicated) through aesthetic concretisations, physical objects, and they are no longer available once these objects are destroyed and forgotten. However, while for Ingarden the concretisation was a mere 'carrier' of the actual object of

¹⁶ For a convincing critique of indicated structures see D. Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

¹⁷ R. Wollheim, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-9; cf. F. Sibley, "Why the *Mona Lisa* may not be a painting", in: *idem*, *Approach to Aesthetics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2001.

¹⁸ R. Ingarden, "Studia...", vol. II, p. 131f.

aesthetic appreciation – the intentional object or the ‘content’, the foundation of existence – I claim that this carrier is also an important part of the artwork.

Let me now clarify the definition. Firstly, every realisation *instantiates a given recipe*. Again, an intuitive and straightforward parallel with cooking is most appropriate – just as a particular dish instantiates the recipe which was followed to prepare it, a performance of Beethoven’s 5th instantiates the structure it follows. I understand the term *instantiation* in a relatively loose sense, i.e. allow for slight deviations from the recipe provided that the realisation can be recognised as an realisation of this recipe, as e.g. in a poor performance of Beethoven’s 5th¹⁹. I also permit the practical allowances our culture²⁰ makes for some realisations of artworks – e.g. a reproduction of Leonardo’s St Jerome, even though it is clearly not by Leonardo, differs in size and materials used, etc., is nevertheless an instantiation of the recipe which Leonardo himself first realised. The accuracy requirements will be discussed in more detail below.

Secondly, the realisation cannot be guided by another recipe, i.e. it cannot stand in a genetic relation to any other recipe but the one it is a realisation of. It may happen that a person ignorant of a certain work of art by pure chance creates an object that resembles it – in this case this object does instantiate the recipe which was already realised by some artist. However, it is not a realisation of this artist’s recipe, nor is it a copy of his artwork, rather it is a completely new artwork altogether. However, as our culture gives priority to the person who was the first to create something, others are forgotten – an artist will rarely be praised for creating a work identical to one somebody else has already created. I use the term ‘based on’ to indicate realisations which both instantiate a recipe and are guided by it.

(Note also that sometimes objects which look the same can nevertheless be different and instantiate different recipes. For example, *Brillo Boxes* as created by James Harvey, Andy Warhol and Mike Bidlo may seem identical, but they have different contextual properties – only Harvey’s boxes are commercial objects rather than art, only Warhol’s question the distinction between art and commercial objects, and only Bidlo’s explore the difference between originals and copies. They inspired one another in a way similar to how Paganini’s works inspired Rachmaninov’s *Variations on the themes of Paganini* (though in their case the way the ‘variation’ looks is extremely close to the original), but still, they are different objects which instantiate different recipes, and thus – separate works.)

Now, to invert the above definition of the structure, the realisation is a *certain amount of materials, assembled in a sequence or arrangement qualitatively defined by the recipe and created accordingly to a parallel sequence of performing directives specified by the recipe, and not guided by another recipe*. Thus to instantiate a recipe is simply to follow its directives in creating a physical

¹⁹ I trust that the vast literature on what a valid performance of any given musical piece is provides us with at least an intuitive understanding of what it means to be able to recognise Beethoven’s 5th in a poor or even incorrect performance of it (see for example: N. Wolterstorff, *Works...*); I will discuss this below.

²⁰ By ‘our culture’ I mean the general cultural context of modern Western world, which perhaps could be better specified by social scientists. Note that this category merely explains how artworks are commonly seen, not what they actually are, i.e. it has no bearing on the universally dualistic ontology of artworks.

object. In this way the object becomes a 'carrier' of the recipe, and because it instantiates the recipe with a good enough accuracy, the recipe can be known through it. Note that while the recipe specifies an arrangement of materials *typically used in a given art*, a realisation does not have to be composed of typical materials, even though realisations composed of typical materials usually enjoy a privileged status – this issue will be discussed below.

Thirdly, from every realisation one can *extract a recipe*. This is a process inverse to the described above – just as a recipe can be instantiated in a realisation, so it can be read out of that realisation. While it may require a fair amount of analysis of the particular object, essentially from every realisation a structure can be read out, and later instantiated again in another object – one can learn the structure of a musical piece just by listening to its performances and play it again; one can analyse a painting in the slightest detail, discover its structure and copy it; one can inspect an existing building to study its structure and build another identical one. In practice, since we can only gain access to recipes through their realisations, we can often only tell that somebody extracted a structure once they realise it again in that form or another. This is not to say that from every realisation one can read out the same structure as the one that particular realisation is a realisation of. In some cases, e.g. in a case of a poor performance of Beethoven's 5th, a person familiar enough with the work through other performances, scores, etc. can, through ignoring the mistakes, extract Beethoven's original recipe; but at the same time one can extract another recipe, that which may be called *the-recipe-for-Beethoven's-5th-as-played-by-X-at-t* (this issue will be expanded on below).

Finally, *any* object which is based on a given recipe is its realisation. Not only the actual sound waves produced during the playing of Beethoven's 5th are the realisation of the composer's recipe, and the paint-covered canvas called *View of Toledo* created by El Greco around 1600 is not the only realisation of the painter's recipe. Actually, any object whatsoever which has been created on the basis of the recipe and from which the recipe can be extracted, is this recipe's realisation. Moreover, different realisations of the same recipe can have different authors. Thus for example, the original bronze *Discobolus* is Myron's realisation of his recipe, its many marble Roman copies are various unnamed artists' realisations of Myron's recipe, a 3D scan of the sculpture is a programmer's realisation of it, and a very detailed written description of it is the person's describing realisation of the same recipe. In short – if an object is created based on the recipe and this recipe can be read out from it, it is a realisation of this recipe.

However, this does not mean that every realisation is actually treated the same way. The main reason for introducing the above all-inclusive treatment is its parsimony – given how difficult it is to tell why a painting or sound waves in performance should be a realisation of the recipe and the sketches or the score not, it is simpler not to introduce artificial boundaries and to say that they are all realisations. While this seems very counterintuitive, it can be easily explained by the fact that certain realisations are privileged. There are two ways in which this preference can be accounted for. Firstly, artists typically intend their works

to be realised in some ways rather than others, e.g. while Beethoven did intend his symphony to be performed by an orchestra, he did not intend us to appreciate it through looking at the indentations on a CD. However, the category of the artist's intentions is an unbearably obscure one²¹ and the issue can be explained in a much simpler way with the use of methods of social sciences, in particular, the notions of physical, cultural and historical determination²². Thus while ontologically speaking a performance of Beethoven's 5th, the score for it and the indentations on a CD are all equally realisations of the same structure, we are: (1) physically determined not to appreciate the indentations, because we simply cannot see them (possibly if our senses were different, we would be treating CDs similarly as reliefs); (2) culturally determined not to appreciate the score itself, as most people cannot read it (note that new works sent to composers' competitions are judged *before* they are played, i.e. the jury can appreciate them without hearing them – thus if in our culture everyone were as musically educated as those judges, musical works could well be appreciated in the form of scores); (3) historically determined to only appreciate the sounds, as this is the traditional way to appreciate music (this may of course also be determined by our physical constitution and culture, but note that after Pythagoras and in the Middle Ages proper appreciation of music was often thought to be not listening, but analysis²³. It is now a subject for the social sciences to trace the exact reasons why certain societies have a preference for these rather than other realisations of recipes. Overall, all artworks are a compound of a recipe and its realisation, but in our society only some compounds of a recipe and its realisation are treated as artworks – i.e. the relation is that of necessity, not sufficiency.

3. Defusing possible problems

3.1. Why have two if one will do?

The simplest way to challenge my view is to falsify it with examples of works which consist of only the recipe or only the realisation. Thus firstly, let me assume that there is a possibility of a recipe with no realisation. What about a poem that has never been written? It seems that it should have a universal structure, thought by a certain individual at a certain time, just never instantiated in any object whatsoever. Although such a claim should be distinguished

²¹ Even the most careful treatments of the problem, e.g. Davies's notion of interpretative intentionalism (D. Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 89), are vague and thus it seems methodologically right to, if possible, substitute them with a more reliable alternative.

²² The social theory I implicitly draw on is Jerzy Kmita's; *Kultura i poznanie*, PWN, Poznań 1985; "Towards a cultural relativism with a small 'r'", in: *Poznań Studies in the Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities*, 47 (1996), pp. 541-614. However, the notions I use are present in many modern theories and can be derived from Émile Durkheim's views on social constraints; *The Rules of Sociological Method*, Free Press, London 1982. In aesthetics this view is present in historical and functional theories of art, see G. Currie, "A note on art an historical concepts", in: *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 40.1 (2000), p. 187.

²³ See J. McKinnon, "Christian Antiquity", in: *idem, Man & Music: Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, Palgrave Macmillan, London 1992.

from the mentalists' view that such poems or symphonies are "'internal" or "mental" things', which would treat them as individuals rather than universals, my argument against it will be parallel to the argument against mentalism²⁴. Allowing for such artworks would mean severing the link between the artist and the audience, and render determining the characteristics of such artworks virtually impossible²⁵.

Secondly, it seems that there could be a realisation without a recipe. And indeed, intuitively what El Greco created when painting *The View of Toledo* is the very object, the paint-covered canvas that currently hangs in the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, and not some abstract structure. However, a dualist would never deny that, but merely state that while it is clear that El Greco created the object, it is less intuitive but no less true that with it he authored a recipe, and *The View of Toledo* is a compound of both. Imagine the following: were *The view of Toledo* scanned and re-created as a perfect 3D hologram, it would clearly not be the same object – while the painting consists of paint and canvas, the hologram would be a series of magnetised clusters on a computer's hard drive. It would not share all the properties of the painting, e.g. it could not be touched. It would be, however, a hologram of exactly this painting, and an intuitive way to understand what this *of* means is: it instantiates the same recipe. Moreover, it seems perfectly possible that were the actual painting lost, it could be re-created on the basis of the hologram – i.e. a recipe could be extracted from the hologram and instantiated in a painting. Obviously it would not be painted by El Greco and would lack a number of contextual properties, nevertheless it would still be El Greco's *View of Toledo* – an intuition explained by the fact that it is created according to El Greco's recipe. Now compare this with any case concerning musical pieces, all of which, the pluralists would agree, do have (or: are) universal structures. When a composer indicates the structure of his work, he is actually creating something, a particular object – the score. Treat it as the composer's realisation of his recipe. On the basis of this score, musicians play the piece – however, the object they create, the sound waves, etc., is ontologically nothing like the ink on the paper left by the composer – clearly the musicians are not just re-creating the composer's work (otherwise they would all sit on the stage rewriting the score), but read out the universal structure of the piece which the composer instantiated in the score, and instantiate it again in the form of sound waves. My question is – how is that different from re-painting the El Greco on the basis of its hologram?

The most appropriate metaphor is that of translation – when a text is translated from one language to another, the translation is utterly different from the original in most of its physical qualities – it sounds different, it looks different when written down, etc. However, something is preserved in it, and this is the overall sense of the original. For Ingarden translation of a literary work is a mere change of one of the layers the work consists of – the layer of word sounds – while the meanings, schematised aspects and presented objects remain the

²⁴ R. G. Collingwood, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

²⁵ R. Wollheim, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-59.

same²⁶. Now think of translation as realising an artwork in a different medium (making a marble copy of Discobolus, a hologram of a painting, playing from the score) and of the thing that is preserved through the translation as the universal structure – the recipe.

3.2. What about intuitions?

It looks like the pluralists could now simply shake their heads – that is just not what we commonly think artworks are. Rather, it is intuitive that paintings, sculptures and buildings are just objects, and that we do not praise Picasso for devising a recipe for *Guernica* – we praise him for painting it. Thus the charge is that the dualistic theory makes things more complicated than they are and thus is unparsimonious.

Defusing this charge is surprisingly easy. To begin with, common intuitions concerning the ontology of art (or indeed most other philosophical problems) are not a particularly good guide to the truth about the actual nature of artworks. In fact, our intuitions are very easily misguided and thus are often biased²⁷. The bias in this case is caused by the cultural and social environment in which art has evolved through centuries, and concerns the above-mentioned preference for some realisations over others. Two biases in particular obscure our view²⁸.

Firstly, because we can only perceive artworks through particular objects we have a simplifying preference for assuming that those objects are all that artworks consist in. Because art is supposed to be *aesthetic*, i.e. given to the senses, we often simplistically assume that what is given to the senses is art, and that the author of what is given to the senses is the artist. Moreover, the process of creating artworks often proceeds in stages leading to an end product, and we are accustomed to treat only the end product as the artwork. Collingwood and others managed to show that some artworks are something over and above the physical objects, and Levinson explained it in more detail – thus Beethoven strictly speaking is not the author of the sounds we hear in a performance of his 9th (which are the object and end product of his creative work) – what he created is a realisation of the structure in the form of a score, which only later is realised by other artists, the musicians, to present us with a sense-experience²⁹. This much seems quite intuitive and the same is true of other arts.

Secondly, art as a social practice is implicitly governed by the same basic economy as most branches of human activity, including the determination of

²⁶ For a detailed exposition of his multilayered theory of a literary work of art see: R. Ingarden, *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 1973.

²⁷ See B. Weatherston, "What good are counterexamples?", in: *Philosophical Studies*, 115.1 (2003), pp. 1-31; I will not argue for that view here, and nothing rests on my methodological convictions, as long as one allows intuitions to be falsified when a bias which underlies them is exposed. Note that although this article often refers to intuitions which favour the dualistic view, they serve as mere additions to main arguments and nothing relies on them.

²⁸ A similar point has been raised by Sibley, who argued that perhaps the reason why we have conflicting intuitions about whether paintings are objects or structures capable of multiple realisation, is because we treat them differently in different social contexts – as art historians or curators we are interested in particular objects, while as non-owning connoisseurs we focus on the structure (F. Sibley, *op. cit.*, p. 271). The biases I describe work in similar ways.

²⁹ Levinson would say that he indicated a structure, and the above is my re-interpretation of his view.

value by supply and demand. Assuming that the demand for two products is comparable, A is worth more than B if there are less people willing or able to produce A than B. E.g. because not many people have the abilities and will required to study medicine, an hour of a doctor's work is worth more than an hour of a cleaner's work, which does not require as much skill and knowledge, and thus is easier to supply. Apart from being worth more materially, the work of a person who is less easily replaceable is also thought more valuable³⁰. For example, in science often when a certain discovery results from collaboration, and the difference between the skills of different members of the team was significant, the authorship of the product is often ascribed to the more difficult-to-supply scientist(s) only, e.g. even though many students worked in Faraday's lab repeating the experiments, the discovery of the laws of electrolysis are ascribed to Faraday alone.

The same applies to artistic practice. It is hard to think of a discipline in which the author of the work is more difficult to replace. Upon first seeing *The View of Toledo* a knowledgeable viewer instantly knows that it must have been created by El Greco – there just was no other person who could or wished to paint in that way. Although largely exaggerated (and easy to falsify with examples of copies and forgeries), this simplified judgement reveals the common social conviction that artists provide things which are extremely rare and thus valuable. At the same time, some of the work related to creating artworks is carried out by artisans who often do not need a comparably great skill – works of architecture are built by masons and construction workers, works of literature as they reach the public are printed by printers, bronze sculptures are cast by metalworkers – the list of underappreciated professions is long. They, however, are easily replaceable. In practice, it often turns out that the more difficult to supply and thus higher-valued person is he who can come up with a new recipe.

3.3. Can it be applied to all arts?

The dualistic theory has the ambition to be uniform – but can it really account for all arts? It not only can, but it also helps to explain why we think that various arts are different and what they should be valued for.

3.3.1. Architecture and some painting and sculpture

The easiest case can be made for architecture. On one hand, people who appreciate a work of architecture typically look at the finished building, e.g. the church of Santa Maria della Consolazione in Todi, and believe that this building itself is the artwork created by an artist. On the other hand, however, while they must realise that the construction itself has been carried by a great number of workers, they do not ascribe them the authorship – instead they say that the church was created by Bramante. Manifestly, though, most probably not a single stone has been laid by Bramante himself, and thus it is simply wrong to say that he is the creator of the object – instead, his role was to create the recipe. The economic mechanism described above causes

³⁰ G. Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, Routledge, London 1990, p. 66f.

us to find his unique planning and designing work to be more valuable than the work of the easily replaceable construction workers, and ascribe him the finished product. Thus technically speaking, if works of architecture were just objects, what we appreciate when looking at Santa Maria della Consolazione is an artwork created by a multitude of unnamed masons. At the same time, if we were to appreciate the work of Bramante (again, assuming that what architects create is objects), we should be looking at his blueprints only – and although we sometimes do, this is clearly not the typical way of appreciating a work of architecture. The biases cause us to appreciate the object, which is not directly created by the artist, and to appreciate the artist who created something we do not commonly appreciate.

The case of sculpture is often parallel – it is only on rare occasions that bronze sculptures are actually created by artists. What the sculptor creates is a clay model which is later cast in bronze by a metalworker. However, what is displayed in a gallery is the bronze cast – technically speaking, a creation of the artisan metalworker – while the realisation actually created by the artist, the model, is often forgotten or destroyed.

Works of architecture, most cast sculptures and some paintings (explanation to follow) are *compounds of a recipe and its privileged end-product realisation, such that those elements are created by different persons at different times, and the authorship of the whole is ascribed to those who create the element socially regarded as most difficult to create*. Bramante is the author of the recipe which he realised in the form of blueprints, from which it was extracted by the masons who then realised it in a form of a building – a privileged realisation. Since we do not value the workers, we follow a thought shortcut and take the church itself to be an artwork created by Bramante who actually is the author *of the church* rather than just the plans for it, because the church partially *is* the abstract structure Bramante realised in his plans. While technically speaking the church has other authors, taken our culturally determined bias we just do not credit them for their work.

Some intuitions, for what they are worth, are confirmed by this view: (1) while on the physical-object theory one seems to be forced to admit that because Bramante never laid a single brick of Santa Maria della Consolazione, he is not the author of it, in my view one can easily ascribe him authorship, as the church as an artwork is a compound of the realisation he may have never even touched, and his recipe for it; (2) in some cases we do value the work of the construction workers after all – when the construction requires extraordinary skill or is particularly difficult (e.g. building bridges over particularly deep valleys) the number of people who could do it is much more limited and thus their authorship of the end-product is more likely to be noticed.

3.3.2. Most painting and sculpture

In painting a similarly obvious split of roles of the creator of the recipe and the creator of the realisation is less common, however, again, examples can be given: the frescoes in the Loggias of Rome's Villa Farnesina are said to have been painted by Raphael – however, in fact the artist merely completed one

of the figures before he became too engaged in a romance with 'la Fornarina' and left the completion of the work after his design to his students³¹. Other painters relied on their students excessively – Rubens often did no more than put his signature on a painting realised by his apprentices, who often remain unnamed³². In fact, Rubens' works were often created in exactly the same way as works of architecture: the master limited himself to preparing a small coloured sketch which presented some ideas that his pupils would then transfer on to a larger canvas or a fresco³³. Those cases are parallel to architecture and cast sculpture.

Clearly, however, these examples are easily overrun with a huge amount of other artworks which were wholly created by one artist. Leonardo would never put his signature on a painting created by somebody else, even after his design, and virtually all marble, wooden, terracotta, and even some bronze sculptures are realised by the artists themselves. Nevertheless, the above examples show that there is an actual difference between creating a recipe for a work of fine arts (which for the purpose of communicating it to others is realised in a form of a blueprint, model or sketch) and realising it in a form of an object which will be displayed. At least in some cases it is clear that these two things can be and actually are distinguished, and that on the basis of one recipe an arbitrary number of (not necessarily privileged) realisations can be created.

An argument which exposes this dual nature is offered by Sibley³⁴. It is common that paintings are only appreciated through their copies – in fact, copies are created precisely to allow people who cannot travel to see the original, to still appreciate the painting. Although I am not entirely sure whether the transference of aesthetic values is as straightforward as Sibley suggests, I agree that if it is possible to appreciate the original through copies, there must be something that they share, a structure which can apparently be multiply realised. While the original might enjoy a privileged status for both practical and logical reasons (only the original has some contextual properties, the accuracy of copies is checked against the original, etc.), the possibility of multiple realisation suggests that it is more than just a physical object. A dualist can easily follow Sibley's argument and say that all this is due to the fact that both original and copies are realisations of the same recipe, and one can appreciate the original through the copies by inferring from them the recipe first instantiated in the original. Following this, Leonardo's paintings can be treated the same way as Rubens' – the only minor difference is that while in one case the author of the recipe was different from the author of the realisation, in the other they are the same person – Leonardo.

³¹ F. Hartt, "Raphael and Giulio Romano: With Notes on the Raphael School", in: *The Art Bulletin*, 26.2 (1944), pp. 67-94. The supposed Raphael's authorship is quoted by many sources, from Wikipedia to reliable articles, e.g. A. Rauch, "Painting of the High Renaissance and Mannerism in Rome and Central Italy", in: R. Toman (eds.), *The Art of the Italian Renaissance*, Ullmann & Könemann, Cologne 1995, p. 336.

³² K. van Lil, "Painting in the Netherlands, Germany, and England in the Seventeenth Century", in: R. Toman (eds.), *The Baroque: Architecture, Sculpture, Painting*, Ullmann & Könemann, Cologne 1998, pp. 438-9.

³³ E. Gombrich, *The story of art*, Phaidon Press Ltd., London 1995, p. 398.

³⁴ F. Sibley, *op. cit.*, pp. 268-70.

The obvious counterargument is that while in Rubens' case the authors of the realisation did in fact work on a basis of a recipe previously provided by the master, other artists do not do that – they proceed straight to painting, i.e. creating the object. This argument seems especially powerful in avant-garde art examples – the whole point of Miró's automatic painting is that it is done without any previous preparation whatsoever. Similarly in music, the jazzmen improvising their lines just 'make it up as they go'. Are these not good enough examples to show that certain artworks are just particular objects not created according to any universal recipe?

Yes and no. It is a different thing to say that they are not *created according* to a recipe than to say that they do not *consist of* a recipe as well as its realisation. I concur that such artworks are not created following a recipe, but this cannot challenge my view. There is no reason why the recipe and the realisation cannot be created *at the same time* – while Miró might not have worked according to any recipe, he created a recipe together with its realisation, he 'indicated' a universal structure and realised it in a particular object simultaneously, and similarly jazzmen create structures while creating sounds. That there is a structure in what is created in this way follows from the fact that it can be extracted from the realisations in precisely the same way as in the previously described cases – just as Rubens' students could paint a full-scale painting basing on the structure 'carried' by his sketch, so one can take Miró's *Figure with red sun*, extract the structure of it and re-create it, in a form of a copy, an accurate description, a hologram, etc. This may be even clearer when musical improvisations are considered – the fact that they are not following a score does not mean that a score cannot be created for them. Actually, it is precisely through such a practice that most cadenzas for baroque and classical concertos came about – while the performers were expected to improvise them, some wrote down their improvisations and it is those improvisations that are now played by modern musicians, e.g. Benjamin Britten's cadenzas for Haydn's Cello Concerto in C, or Fritz Kreisler's for Beethoven's Violin Concerto.

To conclude, such works are *compounds of a recipe and its privileged end-product realisation, such that both those elements are often created by the same person and at the same time*. Because the elements are often made simultaneously and by the same artist, due to the biases described above there is an urge to conflate them and treat these artworks as what is presented to the senses only – objects. However, the distinction becomes apparent when we realise that even though the artist might not have created the recipe separately from its realisation, those two elements can be easily separated. Granted that, there is no reason why a theory which worked well in cases of more obvious separation should not be applied here as well.

3.3.3. Literature

A work of literature is a *compound of a recipe and its realisation, such that those elements are usually created by different persons and the authorship of the whole is ascribed to the author of the recipe only*. Because the work of a printer is easy and the number of objects which instantiate the structure of,

say, the *Ulysses*, is vast, and moreover – because it hardly ever matters whether we read a copy printed by this or that printer – there is no reason to value his work. Instead, all the credit is given to the author of the recipe. Note, however, that when creating a copy of a book was not as easy as it is now, i.e. before the invention of the printing press, the work of the copyist (as well as the illuminator) was valued very highly.

Additionally, there is also a possibility of realising the recipe differently than in the form of a book – a poem can be recited, and a play or a novel can be acted out. In these cases we value the author of such realisation of the recipe much higher, similarly as in the case of musical performance or theatrical play.

3.3.4. Music, dance and theatre

Performative arts present us with a slightly more complicated model, because in their case the work of those who create the privileged realisation is valued similarly to the work of the artist who creates the recipe. However, even though this model may seem more complicated, actually it is extremely qualitatively parsimonious – it operates on combinations of the same two aspects of an artwork, and applies them in a very regular and predictable way. As in most aspects performative arts are similar, I only discuss their ontology on the example of music, noting when the other arts differ from it.

A musical work is a compound of a recipe and its realisations, such that those elements can be created by different persons and both the author of the recipe and the author of the privileged realisation are ascribed authorship of their respective parts, and moreover, the author of the realisation has the power of modifying the original recipe within prescribed or socially accepted limits.

When he was writing his *Die Kunst Der Fuge*, Bach realised the recipe of this work in a form of a score. When he played it himself, he realised it again in a form of sounds produced accordingly to the recipe's instructions, and his performance of it was a privileged realisation of the recipe, which in our culture is treated as the artwork itself. When a printer copied Bach's score, he created a number of realisations of Bach's recipe which he read out from the manuscript – itself a realisation of the same recipe. However, as this realisation is not privileged in our culture, the printer is not credited for his work and the scores are, through simplification, taken to be Bach's work only. When another performer played BWV 1080, he produced a realisation of the recipe which he extracted from the score in which it was realised by a printer who previously extracted it from the manuscript in which it was realised by Bach. In this case the author of the realisation is different from the author of the recipe, yet both are credited with the authorship of the two elements of the work respectively. When Glenn Gould played *Die Kunst Der Fuge*, he not only realised Bach's recipe, but also modified it in a substantial way, thus through his playing creating a new recipe (issue discussed below), slightly but significantly different from the original. Here the author of the original recipe is different from the author of the realisation, both are credited for their respective parts, but the latter is also an author of a new recipe, which is commonly referred to as an *artistic interpretation* of the original recipe. Now, to skip one step and limit the number

of reiterations, when a recording is produced of another pianist playing Bach's work in the style of Gould, we deal with a recording company's realisation of the recipe extracted from this pianist's realisation of Gould's modification of Bach's recipe, extracted from Gould's interpretative realisation of Bach's recipe in the form of a performance, which he extracted from the printer's realisation of the same recipe extracted from the original realisation – Bach's manuscript.

While the levels can be multiplied, they are merely reiterations of the same model. Moreover, those reiterations have the advantage of always invariably pointing at the original author of the recipe – Bach, who is thus always credited with his work. It is also easy to see how some realisations are more valued than others.

In theatre this mechanism is very much the same, and especially in modern plays the divergence from the original recipe in artistic interpretation of old dramas can be very substantial. Dance, on the other hand, rarely operates with very detailed recipes – in virtually all cases the dancers are forced to create an artistic interpretation of a recipe, because the original recipe only provides very general guidelines rather than detailed description of what to do. This can be explained by the fact that dance recipes are much more difficult to communicate, because no unified notation for them was ever developed. Thus dance is often more similar to musical improvisation discussed before.

3.4. Problems with the recipe

There might be situations in which even if objects are created according to a recipe, this recipe cannot be later read out from those objects. Umberto Eco's *Name of the Rose* is a postmodern novel created according to very strict compositional rules, concerning among other things the use of quotations from medieval and modern documents. However, these rules have never been disclosed by the author, and as he wrote in the *Postscripts to the Name of the Rose*, he himself does not remember what they exactly were, or which part of the book quotes which document. Thus it seems that in this case the original recipe has been lost even though there still exist its realisations, while according to my theory it should always be possible to extract the recipe from the realisations. A similar case can be made for Iannis Xenakis' stochastic music formed in a process of mathematical computations which cannot be heard in the performance.

Artists seem to realise that problem as well and often attempt to clarify their recipes by providing comments, programmes or other forms of explanation to the realisations. Thus even if the exact recipe cannot be read out from the realisation, it is clear that the artists do stress the fact that it exists nevertheless. This suggests that this problem is epistemological rather than ontological – the recipe is there, but not available for our perception. In this case the answer is to simply bite the bullet – yes, there are works for which the recipe cannot be easily read out from the realisation, and thus it is to some extent undetermined what those works are, which in practice makes them difficult to interpret. This might not be as much a problem as a feature of art – it is commonly accepted that some of it is rather hard to understand and interpret, and perhaps a part of why this is, is because its realisations do not allow for easy access to the recipe.

However, while we may not be able to extract *the* recipe, we still do extract *a possible* recipe, or many of them, thus interpreting a work in different ways, i.e. as if there was more than one work in it. Some artists actually suggest that this is perfectly eligible – as Eco wrote in his *Postscripts...*, he himself cannot remember the exact recipe, but this is because, although it existed, it has been deliberately obscured so that the readers can come up with their own recipes for what they are presented with, very much as Gould created a number of recipes in his interpretations of Bach.

A related problem may arise concerning the ‘instructions for realisation’³⁵. While it seems most appropriate to incorporate them as a part of the recipe in the case of music or theatre, there might be little point in doing so with fine arts. Some of Rembrandt’s paint effects, for example, have been achieved using a technique which has not been fully understood in spite of years of studies. Although his works definitely have a determined object- and structure-component, we know little about the means by which this structure was instantiated in that object. Nevertheless, it does not seem that we need to – we can even extract the structure from the object and copy it atom-by-atom without knowing anything about how it was first produced. Thus there is no point in incorporating the ‘instructions for realisation’ into the artwork itself.

However, the fact that we may not know what the instructions were does not mean they are not there. In fact, when we do know about them, we tend to individuate artworks precisely by how they were created – for example, if Roy Lichtenstein created a second, identical *Brushstroke*, but instead of printing it, actually took a huge brush and made a single stroke on the canvas, we would likely say that these are two separate works which differ in nothing but the way in which they were created. While in the Rembrandt case we might not know his exact method, were we to find out that some of his paintings were created through an extremely lucky spillage of paint that just happened to form the shapes we see, we would likely differentiate them from his other works. If in some cases we do not or even cannot know the method, we have to admit that we do not fully know the work – which is confirmed by the fact that historians of art still study Rembrandt.

3.5. Accuracy

Finally – what is the level of accuracy required for an object to be a realisation of this rather than that recipe? How much can two realisations of the same recipe differ? Where is the borderline beyond which an object is no longer a realisation of a given recipe? If it cannot be determined what the accuracy with which the realisation has to instantiate the recipe is, the argument would run, the link between the two elements is severed. Moreover, it is not clear whether the recipe can be extracted from an inaccurate realisation of it.

The initial answer to that argument can simply be: *tu quoque*. While it may be true that the problem is especially difficult for a dualist, as it applies not only to performative, but to all arts, pluralism faces it as well, and I could rely on the

³⁵ I am thankful to Berys Gaut for pointing this out.

methodological superiority of my view to outweigh this difference. However, there is a better solution. I refer to Ingarden again – on his view one of the main characteristics of the structure of a literary work of art is that it contains ‘places of indeterminacy’ which are ‘filled’ in the concretisation of the work (Ingarden 1966 I: 9). Not all and not always are those places filled in the same way and thus the concretisations can differ, but as long as they only diverge within the places of indeterminacy, they are still concretisations of the same structure. Because it is in many cases (especially in performative arts) impossible for a recipe to be perfectly precise as to how it should be realised, different realisations are permissible. Furthermore, the indeterminacy may be much greater than one would initially assume. Sibley argued that even in fine arts a great deal of detail is quite unimportant for the identity of a work – this includes things which could not be intended by the author due to physical limitations (e.g. an identical copy of *Mona Lisa* differing only in chemical structure is irrelevantly different, as Leonardo knew little about the chemistry of his paints and could not have intended the work to be created only with the use of those particular compounds), but also rather major discrepancies which would have no influence on the intended aesthetic properties (it might not matter at all for the artistic or aesthetic value of *Mona Lisa* whether Lisa Gherardini has straight or curly hair, or what is the exact shape of the rocks in the background, or whether it is painted or printed). If it is the case that a great deal of quite major details of many works do not matter much, then all realisations which differ only in such details qualify as their realisations. In this context, various realisations can be closer or further away from the first, original realisation, however they might all be equivalent in how they realise the recipe. Thus a print of *Mona Lisa* may be like an e-book of *Divine Comedy*: they differ hugely from what the originals were like, yet for the sake of realising the structure of the respective works, they are equivalent to the originals.

However, in many cases we go beyond filling the places the author left undetermined and actually change those which were determined. The artistic practice cannot be explained by philosophy here – what society finds permissible in that matter is rather determined culturally and historically. Nevertheless, the dualistic theory can deal with this problem better than others – it can treat *every single realisation which goes beyond the places of indeterminacy* of the original recipe as a creation of a new recipe, just as in the case of Gould’s interpretation of Bach. The crux is: not every single realisation is *different enough* or *important enough* to be treated as different. Thus while we are ready to credit Gould with creating a new recipe, we may not similarly treat Ton Koopman whose playing is far more faithful to the score, or a poor student for whose erroneous performance we simply do not care. For different arts different levels of accuracy apply, e.g. a copy of a painting can only diverge from the original in slight details (e.g. the thickness of the layer of paint) while various performances of a play can differ substantially from the script. What exactly is ‘different enough’ can change with our culture and in time and the details of the change should be explained by sociology rather than philosophy.

4. Conclusion

The recipe-realisation dualism is an alternative to pluralism. While pluralism is far better than any of the monistic views, by criticising these overly simplistic theories it becomes overly and unnecessarily complicated. Dualism combines the explanatory power of pluralism with the parsimony and simplicity of the monistic paradigms to form an ontology which is, after Wolterstorff, uniform but not unitive. All artworks share the same dualistic ontology in which they are all indivisible compounds of the recipe – the universal aspect – and its realisation – the particular aspect. The seeming difference amongst different arts which causes us to believe that while e.g. musical works might be universals, paintings are simply physical objects, follows from the physically, culturally and historically determined fact that in cases of different arts we value one of these aspects more than the other.

The main advantages of my view are of methodological nature. Firstly, it is more parsimonious than forms of pluralism which assume more than two ontological categories, or employ mysterious notions such as indicated structures. Secondly, the dualistic theory is simpler – it does not need one to consider which ontological category should be applied to which works, and in the more complex set-ups, as in the described case of music, it is very predictable. Thirdly, the dualistic view is more unified – even though it assumes the existence of two ontological categories, these are applied to all artworks, and no sub-theories are needed for different types of works. Fourthly, in a way my theory has a wider scope than pluralism, as although both theories can deal with all (or at least most) artworks, pluralism does that by combining many theories of limited scope, while on my view all artworks are brought under a single, dualistic category which is applied across the board. To reach the same scope pluralists need to construct a disjunctive definition, and disjunctive definitions should only be accepted when there is no better alternative. The dualistic view is such an alternative. Additionally, the dualistic view has some significant intuitive support – apart from the minor points described above, it primarily concurs with our intuitive treatment of all arts as a single group, by providing an ontology that shows how they are similar, instead of differentiating them as pluralism does. It also explains why we intuitively value artists both for their ideas and their skills.

All these amount to a greater explanatory power of my theory. The main problems which arise can be relatively easily dealt with, while similar issues may present a greater threat to other ontologies. While the theory, as it is offered here, might require some more work to polish the details, I believe that it could be a promising alternative to pluralism³⁶.

³⁶ With thanks to Prof. Berys Gaut.