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## Art history research in scientific discourse

### Investigación en Historia del Arte en el Discurso Científico

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### Abstract

It is noted in the article that art historical research occupies a prominent place in the scientific discourse. The work on the identification of obscure views on music as a phenomenon in the cultural and anthropological tradition of music is carried out. It is proved that scientists interpret the painting as a semiotic system with its special image code, the information of which can be decoded. The secondary verbal expression of such messages in the text of art is possible due to the mechanism of interpretation. It is concluded that the non-verbal type of artistic creativity is comprehended by the subject in the form of the inclusion of the mechanism of reception, evaluated, transformed into a verbal code, and thus interpreted.

**Keywords:** art history discourse, ethnomusicology, interpretation, mechanism of reception, decoding of art, structural and functional method.

## Resumen

Se advierte en el artículo que la investigación histórica del arte ocupa un lugar destacado en el discurso científico. Se realiza el trabajo de identificación de visiones oscuras sobre la música como fenómeno en la tradición cultural y antropológica de la música. Está comprobado que los científicos interpretan la pintura como un sistema semiótico con su código de imagen especial, cuya información se puede decodificar. La expresión verbal secundaria de tales mensajes en el texto del arte es posible gracias al mecanismo de interpretación. Se concluye que la creatividad artística de tipo no verbal es comprendida por el sujeto en la forma de inclusión del mecanismo de recepción, evaluado, transformado en código verbal y así interpretado.

**Palabras clave:** discurso de la historia del arte, etnomusicología, interpretación, mecanismo de recepción, decodificación del arte, método estructural y funcional.

## 1. Introduction

Contemporary art has greatly expanded its boundaries. After the famous "readymade" object by Marcel Duchamp, almost a century later, the artist Tracey Emin was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2000, the most popular award given to British artists annually at the Tate Gallery in London, and she presented an unmade bed to the audience. Of course, the viewer is not called upon to appreciate the beauty of this object. The artist was challenging, shocking the audience and forcing them to find their explanations for this provocative work: for this "frankness". It was also for the largest number of viewers that this work attracted that she was awarded the Prize. In 2001, the prize was awarded to Martin Creed for his work "Lights turning on and off", which was exactly what the title says. With this work, the artist raised the question of conventions in the gallery space.

Looking at all these innovations in art, we realize that we need scholarly literature that explains these phenomena. New texts interpret contemporary art and put it in context, making it understandable. At the beginning and middle of the 20th century, art texts were written in the most serious scientific language of a specialist who had received a classical art history education. He analyzes a work of art only from a classical point of view, attributing it to a particular trend and allowing the viewer to see the main thing in the work. The critic tried to develop the viewer's taste and ability to understand beauty.

Contemporary criticism about art (Adams, 2002), (Birnie Danzker, Jassenjowsky & Kiblitck, 1993), (Boas, 887), (D'Alleva, 2008) has a different character: its authors argue, question, persuade, and offer different interpretations using different artistic means. They may take the form of a dialog with the reader, have features of colloquial speech, be expressive, and use stylistic devices that are not typical of the scientific works of art historians. Their authors are not always art historians: more and more, compared to the beginning of the twentieth century, journalists, artists, curators, and gallery owners write about art ("gallery owner" is a new profession of the late twentieth century, meaning "the owner of the gallery" or "a person engaged in the gallery business, i.e. selling works of art through exhibitions in his or her gallery"; this word is not yet in the Ukrainian language dictionary, but it is widely used in the field of fine arts) (Herzog, 1934, 1936). The approach to the interpretation of works of art has changed due to the emergence of completely

new phenomena and forms in art. Furthermore, the circle of authors who create these texts has expanded. R. Jones creates a model of institutional discourse consisting of four features:

- constitutive features of the discourse (including participants, conditions, organization, methods, and material of communication);
- signs of institutionality (record the role indicators of clients of institutions);
- signs of the type of institutional discourse (revealed in its type);
- neutral features (including general discourse characteristics typical for any communication) (Jones, 2011).

The model of institutional discourse includes genres and their subtypes, strategies, goals, values, and deliberately selected texts. Discursive formulas, under which V.I. Karasyk understands a kind of functionally determined speech turns, based on the above principles of discourse types, are dynamic following the transformation of the world picture and socio-cultural practices.

Other researchers in the field of art history define discourse as a special sociolinguistic type, emphasizing its dual nature, verbal and non-verbal. The characteristic features of the interaction between these two forms of communication include respondents, topics of discussion, channels of communication and information transfer, and format, (Malinowski, 1935), (Nettl, 2005, 2010).

Scientists talk about the complex nature of the processes that take place in the verbalization of art historical discourse and describe their essence as follows: "The material is transformed into a linear model that creates non-linear images in the mental space." The scientist considers "poly-cord education" to be the main factor and distinctive feature of art historical discourse, its essence. An art critic, verbalizing, describing, and analyzing works of art, introduces the audience to the paintings on display and their authors (Reed, 1993).

Based on indirect communication in art historical discourse, other scholars view art historians as a link in this communication system. They characterize art historical discourse as a specific linguistic space in a special communicative situation, its conceptual sphere, expressed by vocabulary, a thematic set of emotionally colored and professional vocabulary (Rusted, 2006), (Seeger, 1977), (Asieieva, 1984, 2006, 2011), (Markhaichuk, 2006), (Petrova, 2004), (Skrynyk-Myska, 2010).

The main objective of the paper is to examine the peculiarities of the construction of art historical discourse of different generations and to identify the peculiarities of the new generation of art historical discourse, as well as the extra-linguistic factors that led to the emergence of these peculiarities.

The material for the study was chosen from texts by British art historians of the second half of the 20th century and the late 20th and early 21st centuries, who are the most reputable authors in the field.

## 2. Methodology

As a methodological basis, the research uses comparative historical methodology and the structural-functional method to study scientific texts and further process and generalize the theoretical constructions of art historical discourse. In the course of the work, the method of

continuous analysis of texts was used, and a lot of information of a cultural, philological, and social nature was involved.

### 3. Theoretical background

Art historical discourse is a certain linguistic space, a verbalized set of relevant linguistic knowledge and strategies used for communication. The scientific community believes that the core of the subject of art historical discourse is art. Some scholars understand art historical discourse as an allusion to the name of the science of art. They explain this by the fact that the creator of a verbal work about art tries to analyze art to understand the intention of the work of art under study, often completing the author's thought.

The term "art historical discourse" implies a direct attitude toward art and the Institute of Art History. However, scholarly texts in this subject area constitute only one micro-field of art historical discourse.

Other scholars talk about the great variability of the selected properties of the text belonging to the discourse of art history. The text of the discourse of art history, which does not necessarily refer only to the scientific one, is general and abstract, contains detailed or extended explanations, and differs in terminological and lexical content. The totality of an art history text is a structural, semantic, thematic unity, grammatical coherence, and compositional construction. All this forms the "nature of discourse. One aspect of the nature of discourse is textuality of discourse.

### 4. Results

Currently, the concept of works of art includes many artistic forms. Among them, objects of art and painting are usually objects of special interest for linguistic researchers. This area is characterized by a wide variety of genres and a significant amount of material for research. This kind of art is non-verbal in itself, but in art historical discourse it takes on a verbal form.

Some scholars in their linguistic works on the conceptualization of knowledge in art historical discourse study the terminology of the concept. They define discourse as a verbalized experience of thinking about objects that exist as works of art. Thus, in their opinion, discourse is organized within the framework of strategies of perception, authority, evaluation, and other art historical strategies.

Interpreting the discourse from the standpoint of language proficiency and the strategy necessary for communication, it is worth emphasizing the characteristic features of using a fairly large amount of foreign language vocabulary of artistic terms (etude, pastel, masterpiece, etc.). Among the main features, scholars emphasize the importance of the perception strategy and note the flexible and non-linear structures in the organization of this type of discourse.

Communicative interaction with an aesthetic message is a kind of "highlight" of this discursive field, which manifests itself in a comprehensive assessment, perception, verbalization, and interpretation of a particular work. At the same time, the interpretation will depend not only on the interpreter's picture of the world, his/her life experience, cultural level, and socio-cultural factors but also on the meaning laid down by the author (the artist of the picture). All of this indicates the multiplicity of verbal interpretations of one work of art in the form of a correlation between language and culture.

We can conclude that classical art history discourse is resistant to language changes, containing a large amount of commonly used vocabulary, as well as a bookish, foreign language, and borrowed vocabulary. Foreign language vocabulary is represented by French, Greek, and Italian expressions. This emphasizes the authors' orientation toward classical authorities and has aesthetic and emotional and sensual themes. An important role is played by combined terms that are expressive and descriptive with a predominance of mental, emotional, artistic, and sensory vocabulary.

The conceptualization of classical discourse reflects its aestheticization, subtle emotional perception, and delineation from the everyday sphere of life.

Contemporary art historical discourse is unstable to linguistic changes. Its vocabulary is very diverse and reflects phenomena from various spheres of life. It is characterized by the use of reduced vocabulary along with specialized book vocabulary; a tendency to colloquialism and spontaneous speech; the creation of new lexical items; the use of irregular rhythm and "understopping". Moreover, the composition of borrowed and foreign language vocabulary is changing: German expressions appear, as well as Americanisms associated with the world of commerce and market relations; features of media discourse appear. Combined terms, in addition to emotionally expressive ones, have colloquial coloring and also contain terms from other fields (science, cinema, etc.).

The conceptualization of contemporary art historical discourse reflects a new perception of the art world. The emphasis is shifting from emotional and sensory concepts to existential ones, which are borrowed from areas of life that have nothing to do with art. One of the main features of contemporary discourse is the constant ability to form concepts from new areas and to view art objects through their prism. The distinction between art and everyday life is being lost. The analysis reflects two sides of the discourse: a constant process of change, contradiction, and the desire for the eternal, and the temporary.

Anthropologists often compare the understanding of culture, including its aspect of music, to the process of writing novels that cover the histories of entire nations, eras, or generations. The work of an anthropologist or novelist is primarily to translate entire musical meanings for distant audiences that are outside of a particular cultural discourse. This is certainly not an easy task for a scholar, partly because of the complex nature of the symbolism exchanged between people in communication. The same goes for interpreting the meaning of human social interaction from an anthropological perspective, which is as challenging as writing novels or plays that depict the spirit of a society. Thus, the key to social interaction, as they say among anthropologists, lies in its symbolism, which is primarily seen as a type of action, given the fact that the participants in the exchange form perceptions of each other during the interaction, which influences the following actions (Shmahalo, 2007), (Shumylovych, 2006), (Yakovets, 2014), (Yatsiv, 2009).

One of the most eloquent anthropological writers, once summarized this sentiment. He said that culture is a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited ideas expressed in symbolic forms through which people communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge of and attitudes toward life. Language provides one of the main layers of symbolism, as each word consists of a series of sound patterns that together carry meaning, as with the words "dog," "cat," and "love." Things become much more complicated when the music creates a picture and the singer begins to modulate his voice with changes in the field, distributing

these words in layers of musical significance.

The analysis in terms of narrativity/non-narrativity allowed us to identify methods of influencing the reader in art historical discourse at two stages of its development. In "classical" texts, it is carried out through a combination of non-narrative and narrative, according to W. Chafe's classification of "strategies of engagement" and "strategies of alienation". Non-narrativity is aimed at conveying the necessary knowledge in the key of a scientific and authoritative approach, while narrativity is aimed at conveying the emotional qualities of a work of art. As a result, the narrative focuses on the work of art, the description of which is aimed at describing the properties of the work of art through non-narrative and narrative. Non-narrativity as the dominant way of conveying information makes it difficult to understand the text, making it less interesting.

In contemporary texts, the influence on the reader is exercised through the realization of narrativity, which dominates contemporary art historical discourse. It is represented by many ways of representing the position of the "I": sharply negative evaluative vocabulary, colloquial style, use of slang expressions, as well as vocabulary with erotic themes, and new ad hoc lexical units. This, in turn, leads to a reduction in the distance between the addressee and the addressee, and a loss of scientific approach. The individual discourse becomes the center of the narrative.

One of the earliest substantial references to music within anthropology appeared in F. Boas's 1888 monograph "The Central Eskimo", which contained transcriptions and some analysis of two dozen Eskimo songs in the context of a comprehensive ethnography. This not only laid the foundation for anthropologists' Czech approach to the study of non-Western music but also represents a scientific endeavor in comparative musicology. Boas worked with his colleague Stumpf to collect and analyze the music of the indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast, which was later published in 1886 in the "Vierteljahresschrift für Musikwissenschaft", one of the first journals of comparative musicology. Therefore, it would be a mistake to assume that comparative musicologists and anthropologists acted in isolation from each other. However, the general approaches to the study of non-Western music by musicologists and cultural anthropologists differed in many ways. Comparative musicologists were motivated by theories about the origins and structure of music and analyzed the relevant materials of Boas and Stumpf. Boas's work on music lacked this type of theory, instead fitting into the framework of scrupulously detailed and ethnographic descriptive work.

In addition to the music contained in *The Central Eskimo*, Boas published articles on Kwakiutl, Chinook, Eskimo, and Sioux music between 1888 and 1925. Each of these, focusing on music, contained elements that have come to be associated with Boas's cultural anthropology. The article "On Certain Songs and Dances of the Kwakiutl of British Columbia" contains several musical transcriptions of songs (presumably made by Boas himself), including records of rituals, lyrics, and a very large amount of mythology relating to the songs. His article "Chinook Songs" contains three short notations along with 38 song lyrics and a glossary of several dozen words. Two articles, both titled "Eskimo Tales and Songs," present the lyrics of songs along with explanations of the dozens of words that appear in them. The article "Teton Sioux Music" discusses musical form, including rhythm, phraseology, and structure, and contains 11 fairly detailed musical inscriptions. Although he does not focus on the technical and analytical details of some comparative musicologists, Boas was on par with many, and his work on music is underestimated, perhaps because of the enormous volume of work on other subjects.

While the early generation of anthropologists included music in their ethnographic work,

ethnomusicology largely reversed this former emphasis, making music the main object of study, albeit with a focus on local cultural characteristics. Thus, new subfields were born that were specifically devoted to the study of one of humanity's greatest talents, the ability to create music. Boas's student George Herzog (1901-1983) pioneered the new intellectual discipline, passing on a holistic vision of ethnomusicology to many future generations of scholars. While studying at the Royal Conservatory in Budapest, he was strongly influenced by the folk music studies of Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály. From 1923 to 1925, Herzog worked for Erich von Hornbostel at the Berlin Phonogram Archive, the most important archival institution for comparative musicology before World War II. In 1925 he emigrated to the United States and studied anthropology under Boas. Herzog was faced with the problem that anthropologists writing about music and ethnomusicologists as specialists in this field have to think about the issues of methodology and the problem of subjectivity in representing the musical experience of other peoples. Ethnomusicologist Mantle Hood (1918-2005), for example, argued that bi-musicianship, or fluency in the musical traditions of at least two cultures, potentially provides an epistemological basis for understanding these traditions from an insider's perspective. This claim has been controversial, however, given that insiders can also speak for themselves and be cited by anthropologists about their subjectivity. Over the past century, sociologists and anthropologists have repeatedly demonstrated the position that to interpret any one aspect of human behavior, such as language or music, one must look beyond this single feature of social interaction, to consider all the other ways people communicate, thus shaping its meaning. Thus, to understand music, one must look far beyond it, to uncover the many hidden layers of its meaning as they are reflected elsewhere in the social interaction of the community. Based on this position, even when watching and listening to a gifted musician in the context of, for example, an opera or a philharmonic, the music must be considered together with everything else that surrounds the performance. That is, we are talking about all the symbolic connotations of life, in addition to the purely musical ones, which contribute to perception and experience.

Verbal language, gestures, facial expressions, and even the spatial layout of the stage can also play a role in interpreting what is happening during a performance, even in terms of interpreting the music itself. Consider, for example, the intimate nature of a religious performance, where the words of the chant are wrapped in the specialized meanings of their scriptures. At the same time, every movement among the performers takes on a sacred connotation. The blood, crosses, or sacrifices thus occupy a prominent place in American gospel music, creating a context by drawing directly from the Bible as the main source, while the audience enjoys its imagination.

## 5. Conclusion

Thus, the term "art historical discourse" as a separate element in modern linguistics is not yet well studied, so its consideration is relevant. Scientists pay attention to the characteristic features of discourse: cognitive, lexical content, pragmatism, evaluation, and perception strategies. Moreover, they emphasize the subjective nature of the interpretation of this concept, and its determinism, caused by external factors. These factors include personal experience, the nominative-communicative aspect, double communication, and lexical and terminological variability as the main factor and distinctive characteristics of the polycoded communication process.

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