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The Bourgeois Public Discusses Art III

Transnational Media, Mediators and Art Practices in Central Europe

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ABSTRACTS

Polemics and Autonomy of Art in the Pre-March Period

Demian Berger *(University of Zurich)*

This presentation seeks to examine the role of polemical procedures in the process of differentiation and increasing politicization of the bourgeois-literary public sphere in the 'Deutscher Bund' between 1815 and 1850, based on selected literary texts and letters. In the course of this politicization and the intensifying practice of censorship, literary practice was faced with the paradoxical task of having to meet the demands of an aesthetic postulate of autonomy and the factual autonomy of the literary field, while having to position itself politically in a often polemical manner in the face of an increasingly self-confident bourgeoisie. That leads not only to a potential dissolution of aesthetic autonomy, but also to a hybridization of genre boundaries, which could make it difficult for authors to survive against the competition on the literary market. But 'autonomy' is not only a normative demand or a descriptive term for the actual differentiation of the literary field and the corresponding aesthetic codes, but also a flexible polemical concept itself, which is used both by the bourgeois side against political encroachments by the authorities in the form of acts of censorship, but also by the censoring authorities as ideological legitimization for the suppression of politically unpopular, i.e. 'tendentious' bourgeois literature. The article is dedicated to the

tense relationship between polemics and autonomy in the course of a complex bourgeois-literary public sphere structure. In this respect, an author such as Karl Gutzkow proves to be an interesting figure, whose early literary products not only take a striking political stance and take up the battle with censorship, but also seek to inscribe themselves in a bourgeois-classical German national tradition in contrast to literary 'Pfennigdemokratismus'.

Private Collections on Public Display: The Practice of Art Loans and Bourgeois Reception

Lucie Česká *(Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences)* – Ondřej Kubáček

This paper explores the practice of loaning artworks from private collections for public exhibitions during the 1840s to 1860s, a formative period in the development of exhibition culture in Central Europe. At a time when institutional structures for presenting art were still emerging, private collectors played a vital role in shaping public displays through temporary loans. The study examines the motivations of lenders, the organizational and curatorial strategies employed by exhibition organizers, and the institutional frameworks that enabled such cooperation. Special emphasis is placed on the media dimension of these events – particularly the role of the press in mediating the exhibition experience and shaping public discourse. Drawing on archival sources, exhibition catalogues, and periodical literature, the paper analyzes selected case studies in which private loans significantly influenced the scope and reception of exhibitions. Attention is given to the expectations, judgments, and reactions of contemporary bourgeois audiences, as well as to the broader cultural debate surrounding the public display of private property. By focusing on these dynamics, the paper aims to demonstrate how the practice of loan exhibitions contributed to the emergence of art exhibitions as spaces for public dialogue and social identification in the multilingual and socially diverse environment of 19th-century Central Europe.

Viennese Magazines of the Early 19th Century Between the Literatures of the Monarchy/National Literatures

Dalibor Dobiáš *(Institute of Czech Literature of the Czech Academy of Sciences)*

The paper attempts to present Viennese magazines of the first quarter of the 19th century as unique media for negotiating not only national literatures in Central Europe, but also the functions that literature plays in modern society.

Vienna offered the most developed media scene in the contemporary Habsburg Monarchy, and local periodicals discussed more or less systematically also literature from the 'provinces', often connecting and integrating anonymous and later signed correspondents. The network emerged in the relevant scholarly journals, later also entertainment magazines, such as *Annalen der österreichischen Literatur*, *Vaterländische Blätter für den österreichischen Kaiserstaat*, *Der Sammler*, *Archiv für Geschichte, Statistik, Literatur und Kunst*, *Wiener allgemeine Literaturzeitung*, *Jahrbücher der Literatur*, etc., and was initially based on post-revolutionary ideas of literature useful to the state. In this respect, fiction stood in the shadow of late Enlightenment scholarship, especially in the case of smaller, non-German literatures in the monarchy. Romantic nationalism, on the other hand, not only encouraged comparisons, study of translation and the expressive possibilities of languages, but also raised the question of relatively free, artistically autonomous literature in national languages, its special expressive values and social functions, which these public-oriented magazines could not ignore.

The paper offers an insight into these processes, especially the moments of 'Gleichzeitigket des Ungleichzeitigen' (simultaneity of the non-simultaneous) that appeared in the magazines, and attempts to explain them using examples from criticism of Czech- and German-language literature.

The Body as Medium in Jewish-Polish Visual Culture

Karol Jóźwiak *(University of Wrocław)*

This paper examines representations of the body in Jewish-Polish visual culture during the modernist period (1860–1914). The depiction of the Jewish body in 19th-century art was closely tied to issues of identity, national self-awareness, and the search for distinct markers of Jewishness. These themes were further

explored in early 20th-century cinema, art, and popular culture. Notably, these representations often depicted bodies in transitional states, reflecting a liminal existence between two worlds. Examples include depictions of deceased bodies in pogrom imagery, students in cheder and yeshiva scenes, wanderers symbolizing exile (golus), the local fool, and the dybbuk. These body representations, which proliferated in Jewish-Polish visual culture, can be understood as symptoms of the unstable status of Jewry, which was searching for its identity-oscillating between Zionism, the Bund, Orthodox Judaism as well as assimiliation within the Polish and internatinal contexts.

From the perspective of medium theory, these representations position the Jewish body as a conduit between realms, embodying the connection between the material and the spiritual, the living and the dead – the quintessential medium. This paper explores the relationship between these visual representations and the specific cultural transition on the eve of modernity, within the broader framework of media theory. It thus considers Jewish-Polish art and visual culture as a response to this cultural shift, from the era of traditional media to the age of technological reproducibility.

The Transnational Constructions of National Arts: The case of Liszt's Chopin

Krisztina Lájosi Moore *(University of Amsterdam)*

Romantic cosmopolitanism as a phrase has not established itself in scholarly literature despite a few seminal explorative studies in the realm of philosophy and literature (see Earle 2005, Esterhammer 2009, Heydt-Stevenson and Cox 2005, Kleingeld 2008, Wohlgemut 2009). Given the omnipresence of cosmopolitan intellectual and cultural spheres in an era of political and social transformations at the beginning of the 19th century, the concept as well as the cultural and vernacular cosmopolitan practices deserve more attention.

In this paper I will illustrate this dynamics between the national and the cosmopolitan with Franz Liszt's biography of *Chopin*. I will read Liszt's work not only as a biography, whose merits have been notoriously declared useless and untrustworthy, but mainly as an aesthetic and political manifesto in which the national and the cosmopolitan overlap and complement each other. I will

argue that Liszt's emphasis is on the inclusion of national particularities in the totality of the universal or cosmopolitan. Art is the gateway to both the national and the cosmopolitan; the aesthetic experience transforms the cultural horizon of the recipient, making it more open to difference, and thus orients it towards cosmopolitanism and democratic ideals.

Education and Popular Leisure in Exhibiting

Pavla Machalíková *(Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences)*

Exhibiting art became during the first half of the 19th century one of the important educative activities directed at the public in a broad sense. Viewing artworks, on the other hand, became one of the fashionable activities of modern society, comparable to popular consumption. Spectatorship was therefore recently described as 'one of the visual pleasures of modern life' (Amy M. von Lintel). The question this paper reposes is, how accessible were art exhibitions in Central Europe to larger publics and what other pastimes offered themselves for viewing? We know of various different types of exhibits in the first quarter of the century, ranging from official academic exhibitions to popular spectacles. While the former educated the taste and judgement of the upper classes, the latter were offered for amusement and popular leisure: panoramas, dioramas, topographic cabinets, cabinets of curiosities, wax galleries etc. How did contemporary press comment upon their publics? Did it distinguish between mass and elite spectatorship? And was there any effort by the exhibition organizers to approach the strategies of these two groups of shows in order to attract larger publics? Based on critiques and reports in contemporary press, the paper will examine how were specific publics described and addressed, and also what can be learned from them about modern spectatorship as a social activity in Central Europe.

Bürger, Mitbürger and Weltbürger: How Central-European Media Shaped a Bourgois Audience after the Napoleonic Wars

Taťána Petrasová *(Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences)*

Art and industrial exhibitions became a medium that built a network of organizers, exhibiting artists and manufacturers or entrepreneurs. Almost

every year, they attracted several thousand local and foreign visitors to private or public halls (ballrooms or stock exchange halls). Critics and organizers of events at the time were well aware that public evaluation is an important part of testing artistic and economic competition. However, without a media network, this 'texture' of actors would not be very successful in its efforts. Using examples from local and transregional media (*Prager Zeitung, Schlesische Provinzial-Blätter* and *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Mode*), the paper analyses the strategy of creating cultural public as communities of citizens, fellow citizens and international audience (world citizens) after the Napoleonic Wars in Central Europe.

Explaining Poetry in Romanticism. Stanko Vraz's Epitextual Dictionary

Marina Protrka Štimec *(University of Zagreb)*

In the long 19th century, the role of the bourgeois public determined the development and progress of the 'spring of nations' that gripped post-revolutionary Europe. The Slavic peoples, mostly within great monarchies such as the Habsburgs, developed their literature as a form of resistance to the hegemony of imperial power. The relationship between revolution and Romanticism, which are inextricably linked in the changing relations across different cultures, is often interpreted through the prism of the social and political changes that motivate and influence them, at least when it comes to small literatures and languages such as Croatian. On the other hand, the actual artistic character of these changes, i.e. the process of cultural mediation and translation (Casanova), is bypassed. In my lecture, I will refer to the recognizable Romantic universalism, innovation and self-referentiality, using the example of the famous poetry cycle *Đulabija* (1837, 1840) by Stanko Vraz. Through its textual and epitextual strategies, I will show how it functions as an example of the transnational and artistic character of the Romantic movement, which confirms its historicity, media and genre innovation (Curran).

Art or Spectacle? Painting and Urban Entertainment in the 1870s and 1880s

Margaret Samu *(The New School, New York)*

What is the difference between an art exhibition and a show? In the 1870s and 1880s, new audiences across Europe were attracted to displays of art that blurred the boundaries between fine art and popular entertainment. This paper offers a comparative study from the Russian Empire, where innovative artists from Central and Western Europe captured the attention of a new viewing public in Saint Petersburg. In 1879 a trompe-l'oeil head of Christ by Bohemian painter Gabriel von Max apparently tested whether the viewer's faith was real. The next year, Ukrainian painter Arkhyp Kuindzhi's moonlight scene of the Dnipro River seemed to glow from within. In 1881 a panorama of the Battle of Plevna by French painter Paul Philippoteaux promised to transport visitors to the very site of the clash. Before long, Galician painter Marceli Suchorowski opened a sensational display of his provocative *Nana*. Local media did more than simply publish listings in their weekly chronicles and paid newspaper advertisements. They offered art reviews, descriptions of the events, and extended discussions of the social spectacle surrounding these displays, as a public with little exposure to art now saw paintings for the first time. To art world insiders, some of these events looked less like art exhibitions and more like lowbrow commercial entertainment. Concerns over the public response to these exhibitions reflected larger worries about the dissolution of social and cultural boundaries in an era of urbanization and social transformation.

The Forgotten Curtain: Adolf Liebscher's Painted Theater Curtain and Czech-Slovene Artistic Connections in the 19th Century

Miha Valant *(University of Ljubljana)*

This contribution will explore a relatively little-known topic: the painted theater curtain of the Provincial Theatre in Ljubljana (today's SNG Opera and Ballet Ljubljana). In 1891, the theater's construction committee announced a competition, inviting several local artists from Carniola to participate. However, for various reasons, this prestigious commission was not awarded to a local artist but instead to Adolf Liebscher from Prague.

The contribution will examine the connections and possible motivations behind the decision to seek an artist beyond the borders of then-Carniola, situating it within the broader context of Czech-Slovene collaboration in the second half of the 19th century. Additionally, it will analyze the curtain's iconography, which, rooted in the idea of Slavic unity, linked two geographically separate but culturally emerging nations within the former monarchy. The study will also consider how the artwork was received in Ljubljana and the underlying issues with its iconography that ultimately led to a complete redesign.

Modelling the Bourgeois Theatre as a Public Institution. August Wilhelm Iffland as a Public Persona, Mediator and Performative Agent around 1800

Meike Wagner *(Ludwig Maximilian University Munich)*

The actor, theatre manager, dramatist and critical writer August Wilhelm Iffland (1759–1814) held a central position in the theatrical landscape in Berlin around 1800. From 1796, he was the directing manager of the Royal Theatre and its main actor. On and off stage, he was considered an outstanding ‚man of the theatre' who through his manifold writings about theatre and its relation to dramaturgy and to an emerging bourgeois society, and not least through his artistic presence on all important stages of German speaking countries. Consequently, he partook greatly in the modelling of bourgeois theatre as a public institution. Iffland published articles, books and produced his own widely-received theatre almanac (1807–1811), and hence not only reached a readership of theatre professionals but also of theatre afficionados and amateur practitioners. The latter particularly appreciated his accessible introductions to the art of acting and hailed his performances on the stage of the Royal Theatre as ideal model for their own amateur acting. Through letters and printed pamphlets, Iffland also engaged in conversations with his theatre audience, discussing dramaturgical issues and also legitimating his artistic and institutional choices. Through his artistic, social and communicative practices, Iffland hence contributed to shaping public theatrical discourses and modelling the bourgeois theatre of the time.

Song Editions and Music Periodicals as Transnational Media of Constructing Patterns of a Polish-Language National Identity in the Long 19th Century

Aleksandra Wojda *(Université de Lorraine, Nancy)*

In my presentation, I will propose an analysis of the transnational aspects of the circulation of selected Polish-language songs from the 19th century and of musical criticism in periodicals accompanying them. I will focus on three aspects of this phenomenon. The first will be the multilingual education and multicultural competences of the authors/mediators of such artistic and editorial projects as *Selected Beautiful Musical Works and Polish Songs* (J. Elsner), *Historical Songs* (J. U. Niemcewicz) or *Home Songbook* (S. Moniuszko) ; according to my hypothesis, this factors shape their strategies of organizing its circulation and of constructing their new publics. The second issue will be the close relationship between the circulation of their editions and their critical commentaries in the (trans)national music periodicals. The connections between these two media will be treated as a specific example of building an intermedia discursive network that facilitates an immersive impact of vocal music on its public. The third point will be the question of how the intermedial and transnational dimensions of this artistic and editorial projects (re)shape the social and gender identity of the recipients in the context of the increasing role of bourgeois patterns in the territories of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

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