

The Mystery of Art History: Patočka and Ingarden

Jan Josl

ABSTRACT

To come up with a satisfactory explanation for the gradual shifts between artistic styles and eras in art and architecture would be like finding the holy grail of art history. Winckelmann, Riegl, Wölfflin, and Semper, for example, attempted to go beyond simple description of composition and theme in art, suggesting, instead, that changes in style could be explained by means of general principles. This step transformed art history from simple expertise into genuine scholarship. In his articles from the 1960s Jan Patočka sketched his own phenomenological conception of art history. He did so by frequent reference to Hegel and Heidegger. Nevertheless, Patočka's categorisation of art into periods of imitation and periods of style seems incompatible with his other categorisation of art history into the artistic and the aesthetic era. Moreover, his essays leave one question unanswered – namely, whether the difference between any two periods originates exclusively from various interpretations and cultural contexts or rather from more profound ontological reasons. In this article, I suggest that the critical reception of Ingarden's aesthetics in Patočka's essays from the 1970s deals with some of the problems of his previous conceptions of artistic styles and eras.

ABSTRAKT

Tajemství dějiny umění: Patočka a Ingarden

Winckelmannova snaha vysvětlit změny stylu v umění proměnila odbornou znalost v samostatnou vědeckou disciplínu. Jeho následovníci se na tomto nově otevřeném poli dějiny umění pokoušeli překročit pouhý popis změn k vysvětlení pomocí hlubších, často filozofických příčin. Ve svých textech z šedesátých let se o svůj vlastní fenomenologicky založený výklad dějiny umění pokusil i Jan Patočka. I on se odvolává, přestože kriticky, na Winckelmanna a některé další významné teoretiky dějiny umění, jmenovitě na Riegla, Wölfflina, a Sempera. Filozoficky se pak Patočkův pokus rýsuje na pozadí Hegelovy *Estetiky* a Heideggerovy fenomenologické koncepce uměleckého díla. Patočkův vlastní pokus z šedesátých let nicméně trpí řadou nedostatků. Patočkovu rozdělení dějiny

umění na období umělecké a estetické nevykazuje na první pohled žádnou souvislost s druhým dělením, které Patočka zavádí, s dělením na období stylu a imitace. Patočka rovněž nechává nedostatečně zodpovězenou otázku, zda přechody mezi jednotlivými érami pramení pouze z rozdílného kulturně společenského kontextu, či jsou podle způsobeny hlubšími příčinami ontologického rázu. Ontologický charakter uměleckého díla pak nechává pouze naznačen. Cílem tohoto článku je ukázat, jak Patočkova kritická recepce některých momentů Ingardenovy estetiky pomohla vyjasnit a zodpovědět některé problémy jeho vlastní koncepce.

KEYWORDS

Jan Patočka, Roman Ingarden, history of art, style, phenomenology, truth.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Jan Patočka, Roman Ingarden, dějiny umění, styl, fenomenologie, pravda.

There is a clear change in style between archaic Greek art and the works of Praxiteles (c. 390 to c. 320 BC). The move from medieval painting to depictions using perspective in the Renaissance is as clear as the change from realistic painting to Impressionism. Yet the variety of styles in the catalogue of Western art cannot convincingly be explained solely by the development of technique. This difficulty has motivated modern attempts, that is to say, since Winckelmann, to explain these changes by turning to more profound principles. For Winckelmann, art history follows the same pattern as a human life, going from childhood in the Archaic style of Egypt, ancient Greek and Roman art through adulthood in the high style of Phidias and the “beautiful style” of Praxiteles and Apelles (fourth century BC) to its decline and old age in Late Roman art (WINCKELMANN 2006). Heinrich Wölfflin and Alois Riegl (RIEGEL 2004) based their theories on formal analysis and *kunstwollen* (artistic volition or intention), which was observably repetitious in works of art alone. These modern attempts to find deeper principles in stylistic changes helped to turn art history from mere connoisseurship into genuine scholarship.

In “Art and Time” (PATOČKA 2015) Jan Patočka outlines his own phenomenological conception of art history. He divides art history according to the prevailing tendency, either into the periods of imitation and style or into the artistic era and the aesthetic era. Whereas the difference between the periods of imitation and style is the difference between symbolic depiction without its real counterpart, as in Assyrian, Roman or early Gothic art, and naturalistic mimetic depiction in the Renaissance, the difference between the artistic era and

the aesthetic era concerns the difference in the reception of art. In the artistic era, art is a gateway to another world and often serves religious, ritual purposes, whereas in the aesthetic period reception is reflexive and conceptual. In “Art and Time”, however, Patočka leaves unanswered the question whether the difference between the two periods and the eras in both cases (style – imitation; artistic – aesthetic) originates only in the different ways of interpreting and in cultural context or is, instead, rooted in more profound ontological causes. Furthermore, since we find examples of imitation and style in both eras, we have to admit at least that “Patočka’s statements on the relationship between classical and modern art are to some degree ambiguous” (ŠEVČÍK 2015: 86). In other words, Patočka’s attempt to explain phenomenologically the transition from classical to modern art leaves much unanswered.

In this article I propose that the critical reception of Ingarden’s aesthetics in Patočka’s essays from the 1970s deals with some of the problems of his previous conception. I pursue this goal in five sections: (1) Patočka’s critical reception of Wickelmann’s, Riegel’s, Wölfflin’s and Semper’s conceptions of art history. (2) His thoughts on Hegel’s philosophical system of art history. (3) Attempt to present a phenomenological history of art and his critique of his own system. (4) His attempt to clarify his position on the critical reception of Ingarden’s aesthetics.

1. Patočka’s reception of Wickelmann’s, Riegel’s, Wölfflin’s and Semper’s conceptions of art history

Most approaches to art history can usefully be categorized into two groups. Those in the first group look at the history of art from the perspective of aesthetic categories like beauty, harmony and the sublime. Those in the second group look at style as latent expressions of cultural, psychological and historical determinants. For the former, changes in style follow the history of a certain aesthetic concept. Winckelmann conceived of art history as the development and decline of form with respect to the aesthetic ideal of the classical style.

The latter approach sees the history of art as the development of more objective conditions. Practitioners of this approach, Patočka believes, include Gottfried Semper, Alois Riegl and Heinrich Wölfflin (PATOČKA 2004a: 490–491).

For Semper, changes of style are changes resulting from the purpose of art, available material, and technique. Riegl sees art history as the history of changes in *kunstwollen* (will-to-form), that is, determining the historical intentionality of a certain period. For Wölfflin, changes in form reflect the psychological history of our perception of space (WÖLFFLIN 1932).

Patočka is critical of both approaches. In his essay “Winckelmannovo pojetí stylu” (Winckelmann’s conception of style), Patočka sees Winckelmann’s theory as resting upon the following line of thought: art is *mimesis* (in this sense of the imitation of nature) and *mimesis* is beauty, since nature is, in the eyes of the ancient Greeks, beautiful. Mimetic art is therefore beautiful. A major weaknesses of Winckelmann’s theory, according to Patočka, is that it puts too much emphasis on beauty and aesthetic qualities and draws our attention away from the problem of truth in art, which, in Winckelmann, is *mimesis*. By contrast, Hegel postulated a universal yet historical definition of beauty as the “sensuous appearing of the Idea”. This will be important for Patočka in two ways, as I aim to show in the second part of this essay. First, it opens up the relationship between art and being. Second, beauty is an objective quality, rather than a result of subjective judgement (PATOČKA 2004b: 259–264).

Although much closer to Hegel’s approach, Wölfflin’s and Riegl’s conceptions did not entirely satisfy Patočka either. The Vienna School, according to Patočka, did avoid the pitfalls of aesthetic subjectivism and was closer to the problem of truth in art, yet its members ended up in psychologism, trying to explain the objectivity of style as resulting from the subjective development of our representations of space (PATOČKA 2004a: 491). In Patočka’s view, the Vienna School failed in this for two reasons – first, its ontology of the work of art was unclear and, second, it was unaware of the structure of the work of art. Ingarden’s objective ontology could, Patočka believes, serve as the basis of the objectivity of style (PATOČKA 2004a: 492).

Thus, in Patočka’s view, the answer to the mystery of art history has two parts. The first is the relation of art to truth. The second is the ontology of the work of art. Whereas the answer to the second part is found in Ingarden, the answer to the first part is provided by Hegel.

2. Patočka on Hegel's philosophical system of art history

In Hegel's philosophy of art Patočka finds both important features. Hegel sees truth as essential to art and he offers a firm metaphysical framework for his description of art history. In Hegel's system, art has gone through various stages in relation to absolute truth. Early ornamental art is, in Hegel's view, an imperfect manifestation of the truth in art, since the ornaments of early art can easily be given any meaning. Ornamental art thus lacks specificity in its relation to the truth. It is in the art of classical antiquity that form and meaning are in harmony. The last years of Romantic art prove that art cannot keep up with the development of the spirit and its role in expressing absolute truth is taken over by religion.

Hegel's approach to art from the perspective of truth offers an objective measure by which we may reasonably define what art is and is not, what great art is and is not, and we can gain knowledge of how the artistic universe is organized. Hegel also maintains that art has a metaphysical significance and it is not disinterested in the world and Being.

But the metaphysics of the Absolute, Patočka argues, is no longer credible (PATOČKA 2004c: 329). We are therefore, he claims, faced with a new task – namely, to find truth in art, “liberating human beings without elevating them to the Absolute, which, as the truth, avoids the pitfalls of arbitrariness and subjectivism, so that we judge the work of art fairly, and do not violate it” (PATOČKA 2004d: 225). To maintain the relationship of art and truth and avoid the problems of his predecessors, Patočka must find a new conception of truth in art, free of any metaphysical assumptions.

Patočka's quest for a conception of truth in art is based on his training in phenomenology. He starts with an interpretation of the practical, theoretical and aesthetic attitudes in Husserl's terminology. Practical and theoretical attitudes are certain kinds of intentional activity for which a belief in the objective character of things and their independent existence is essential. Without this belief, we cannot properly study them or use them. By contrast, the aesthetic attitude is similar to the phenomenological attitude – *epoché* (bracketing). Yet Patočka's conception of *epoché* is different from Husserl's (“What is essential in *epoché* is the ability to separate”, PATOČKA 2004c: 341). Patočka continues to use the word “death” metaphorically to express the radical dividing line present

in this attitude. Unlike Husserl's traditional *epoché*, Patočka argues that it is not only the object but also the subject that "dies", is freed, bracketed in the *epoché* of the aesthetic attitude. Free from any metaphysical assumptions about the subject and the object and their existence, we can, in the aesthetic attitude, glimpse universal a priori features of the world which enable the manifestation of objective reality as well as our subjective experience of it, before it conceals itself behind what is manifested (PATOČKA 2004c: 329–344).

In this, Patočka has moved from Husserl to Heidegger, adopting the latter's conception of truth as *aletheia*, the unconcealment (or disclosure) of things. As Ernst Tugendhat has aptly pointed out, Heidegger aims to overcome Husserl's transcendental conception of truth. At the level of an assertion, it means that the truth should not be understood as the 'functionless and rigid self-presentation of an objectivity, but dynamically as that which allows us to see', as a relationship to truth and not as truth itself (TUGENDHAT 1998: 253). The second difference between Husserl and Heidegger is the latter's widening of the truth beyond the area of assertion, where neither subject nor object is the primordial location of truth. It is the disclosedness of the world in general which can be understood as the truth in Heidegger's sense. Yet the disclosedness does not exhaust itself in any given conception of the world. The way the world is disclosed makes possible, for example, a certain *Weltanschauung* to be expressed in the architecture of ancient Egypt. Truth in the phenomenological sense must therefore not be understood as *Weltanschauung*. It is the *Weltanschauung* that is result of this primordial disclosedness of the world, understanding Being. The Egyptian worldview, expressed in geometrical form and the importance of the afterlife, is thus only a visible result of a way the world was disclosed at that time. Tugendhat summarizes Heidegger's conception of truth thus:

[W]ithout denying the relativity and lack of transparency of our historical world, it once again made possible an immediate and positive relation to truth: an alleged relation to truth that no longer stakes a claim to certainty, yet which also no longer poses a threat to uncertainty (Tugendhat 1998: 261).

Contrary to Hegel, Patočka's phenomenological conception of truth as *aletheia* does not look "for the pre-existent idea in art, but for the conditions of unconcealment and our ability to record them" (BLECHA 2018: 109). This relation to truth is not exclusive to art (since philosophy, politics, simple crafts, in fact everything, has this relation to truth) nor is it yet completely clear how exactly

it should work in art. Nevertheless, in “Art and Time” Patočka builds his own interpretation of art history around the concept of *aletheia*.

3. Patočka’s phenomenological history of art

In “Art and Time” Patočka divides history into two eras separated by a transition period. He calls the first “artistic”. In the artistic era, art is not separated from the practical everyday world, but is, instead, its inherent part; thus, “the caveman in Lascaux, the citizen of Athens in front of the Parthenon, or the medieval Christian in front of a Romanesque tympanum does not see works of art in them” (PATOČKA 2015: 103). The function of art is to serve as a gate to the other world. To put it less metaphorically: art is a place of transcendence from the everyday to the universal disclosedness of the world.

On the other hand, the second era is governed by what Patočka calls the “scholarly” (*vědecká, wissenschaftliches*) conception of truth as correspondence. In the tradition of Heidegger and Gadamer, Patočka is convinced that this conception of truth is only derivative and that it conceals the original phenomenon of truth. Hence, in the aesthetic era, art was removed from the everyday world and was at the same time examined under the new paradigm of scholarly (or scientific) truth. The emergence of aesthetics, with its purely scholarly interest in art, lends its name to this period. To demonstrate this in “Art and Time”, Patočka relies on Arnold Gehlen’s and Roman Ingarden’s theories (PATOČKA 2015: 104). What Patočka finds appealing about both thinkers is the system of layers which allows him to demonstrate the changes in style throughout history:

[W]hen it dominates, the art of the period communicates to the viewer a ‘metaphysical quality’ comporting with the essential transcendence of the work of art that aims at something else, that lets the festive, ceremonial aspect of the world shine through. [...] But it is logical that art of dominant intellectuality loses this harmonic dominance (PATOČKA 2015: 104–105).

Using Ingarden’s layer theory, Patočka explains the transition between the artistic era and aesthetic era as the change in the hierarchy of layers in art. In the artistic era, a metaphysical quality in the form of harmony or *mysterium tremendum* (a fascinating horror or alien, haughty, majesty) is the key to art, whereas because of the new understanding of Being in the natural sciences the

metaphysical quality loses its prominent position or disappears completely in the aesthetic era.

But Patočka's approach in "Art and Time" raises several difficulties. (i) First, in this essay he uses another division of art history, comprising periods of style and of imitation. Examples of the former are periods of primitive, Babylonian, Roman, Gothic, and twentieth-century art. The period of imitation, for Patočka, begins with the Renaissance and ends in the nineteenth century. Clearly, there is no correspondence between these two divisions – the Aesthetic and the Artistic era on the one hand and Imitation and Style on the other. Rather there are periods of style and imitation in both eras. How do these two divisions fit together and what are we to do about the remaining discrepancies?

(ii) It is in the layer of ideal representations or the metaphysical quality of work that Patočka locates the relation of art to the truth. But Tugendhat's interpretation of Heidegger's conception of truth shows that the worldview expressed in this layer or quality is only the result of a certain unconcealment of the world. Not *aletheia*, it is only the result of the work of disclosedness somewhere in the background. Again, it is unclear in "Art and Time" where one should look for truth in art.

(iii) Patočka himself was not satisfied with his phenomenological sketch of art history. In his "Ad 'Umění a čas'" (PATOČKA 2004g), he wonders whether the historical difference of art is caused only by different understandings of what the work of art is or by deeper ontological changes in what it is. "Either we accept that a work of art truly is a gate to reality (and when this gate is open, art exists) or we accept that a work of art is an 'autonomous sign' and all its 'metaphysical qualification' of art is an illusion" (PATOČKA 2004g: 214). Patočka is in a dilemma: one must either look for the truth of art outside art (in traditional metaphysics, religion, myths) or sacrifice the deeper meaning of art and reduce it to an autonomous sign. Can we get out of this either-or situation?

4. Patočka's critical reception of Ingarden's aesthetics

In "Ad 'Umění a čas' (Ad 'Art and Time')" Patočka remarks that he himself was dissatisfied with his phenomenological version of art history (PATOČKA 2004g). And yet he never did completely abandoned this project. His writings in the early 1970s – "Problematika filosofie dějin umění u Václava Richtera" (The philosophy of art history in Vaclav Richter's thinking), published in 1970

(PATOČKA 2004f), “Winckelmannovo pojetí stylu” (Winckelmann’s conception of style) (PATOČKA 2004b) and “Rieglovo pojetí antického umění” (Riegl’s theory of ancient art) (PATOČKA 2004i), both published in 1972 – suggest that he was still concerned with problems of art history. Despite his reading of the classic works in the field, it was Roman Ingarden’s theory that led Patočka to finalize his conception. The influence of Ingarden on Patočka is particularly strong in the late 1960s. One year after the publication of “Art and Time” (1966), he finished a short essay summing up Ingarden’s philosophy: “Roman Ingarden: Pokus charakteristiky filosofické osobnosti a díla” (R. I.: An attempt to describe the philosopher and his works, 1967) (PATOČKA 2004j). Three years later Patočka wrote an obituary for Ingarden, mentioning that he had been in touch with him in recent years (PATOČKA 2004k). Lastly, in 1972, Patočka published two essays on Ingarden’s philosophy of painting with respect to the problem of style: “K Ingardenově filosofii malířského díla” (Concerning Ingarden’s philosophy of painting) (PATOČKA 2004a) and “K Ingardenově ontologii malířského díla” (Concerning Ingarden’s ontology of painting) (PATOČKA 2004e).¹

The problem of the classic theory of art history is, according to Patočka, the absence of a precise answer to the ontological question of what a work of art is. Unless we have a clear answer to that question, he argues, we cannot begin to answer the most important question of art history: Where should we be searching for style-making features? Riegl, Wölfflin, and Worringer sought them in the psychology of our perception of space. In Patočka’s view they were wrong for the reasons discussed in first section of this article. But, as Ševčík rightly points out, Patočka, in “Art and Time”, “does not offer any explanation of the nature of ‘art in general’” (ŠEVČÍK 2015: 86). The absence of a precise answer to the question of the ontology of the work of art was therefore also a problem of Patočka’s own conception. Ingarden’s phenomenological conception of the work of art helps Patočka to avoid the psychologism of the traditional approaches and to fill the gap in his own approach. I shall now briefly highlight important aspects of Ingarden’s theory for Patočka. As we have seen, the first important point is the objective conception of the work of art. Based on Husserl’s analysis from section 111 of *Ideen*, Ingarden applies the division to the painting and the picture. While a painting represents the physical object (a thing), the picture (our consciousness of depicted things and persons) is a purely intentional object.

1) Both were written in German and were originally published as “Zu Roman Ingardens Philosophie des malerischen Kunstwerks” (PATOČKA 2004l) and “Zu Roman Ingardens Ontologie des malerischen Kunstwerks” (PATOČKA 2004m).

This means, first, that the picture is related to our noematic acts and has, in Ingarden's conception, no existence independent of them, and, second, though the existence of the picture is dependent on the activity of consciousness, the picture itself is not in these acts. The picture is a noematic correlate of these acts and as such it transcends noetic acts of consciousness. Since the things seen are not in the acts of seeing, the picture is different from the acts of consciousness which constitute it. What is particularly important here is that the picture cannot be reduced to subjective acts and is thus not susceptible to psychologism.

The second important point is Ingarden's layer theory. This allows one to find in the picture the specific part responsible for the changes in style. Put together, thanks to Ingarden, the history of art could be something other than a history of the psychology of perception or a description of painting. The subject matter of art history is intentional objects (pictures). Moreover, these intentional objects have different layers within which we can fruitfully search for the style-making dimension.

But, in Patočka's view, Ingarden's inspiring conception needs a few adjustments. His first objection concerns the ontological status of the picture. He disagrees with Ingarden's thesis that the picture is ontologically dependent on our intentional activity. Patočka points to the fact that it is the material, the painting, that keeps the picture in existence, waiting for intentional activity to disclose it. Intentionality is rather like light that makes present but otherwise unseen things visible. The existence of the picture is thus based not on our intentional activity, but on the material. With explicit reference to Heidegger, Patočka calls this material the earth (PATOČKA 2004e: 309). The material of the painting, like technique, brushstrokes, and the means of applying the paint, keep the picture in existence. Ševčík has insightfully remarked that this is how the painting and the picture are connected, for the picture exists only because of the material transformed by the artist's work. The period in which the work was painted is thus imprinted in its material, since what was considered to exist naturally in certain periods is unintentionally present in the method and technique of the work of art (ŠEVČÍK 2014: 129–133).

Ingarden, in Patočka's view, did not recognize the full importance of the first layer (*der rekonstruierten Ansichten*). It is because of Kant's legacy, Patočka believes, that Ingarden put such emphasis on aesthetic qualities in his work and why, for Ingarden, the work of art results in a metaphysical quality (Patočka 2004a: 302). Patočka argues that layer of *rekonstruierten Ansichten* is even more important than Ingarden thought. This layer opens all possible topics and ways

of depiction in higher layers. The layer of *rekonstruierten Ansichten* is, Patočka argues, the key to the whole picture. It is this layer, then, which is the primary source of all changes in style. This view allows Patočka, contrary to Ingarden, to gain a full appreciation of the formalism of early twentieth-century art. In his notes on Biemel's evaluation of Picasso's work, Patočka defends multiperspectivity in Cubism against Biemel's accusation of the violation of things in the name of absolute objectification. Patočka interprets Picasso's work "not only as an effort to master the *visible* dimension, but also, indeed mainly, as an effort to master the *creative possibilities* present in the ability to create meaningful shapes in two dimensional space" (PATOČKA 2004h: 33), that is, to master, and to demonstrate, the link between the key layer of technique (including brush-stroke and use of colour) and meaning disclosed in the picture.

We should now be able to see that for Patočka changes in style are not merely changes in technique, but are:

[T]he whole way of understanding Being and the world, which are changing in this layer. It also the reason why it manifests itself in the unreal, imaginary picture of Beings of fundamentally different kinds. "Painterly style" does not give us the same things differently from "linear style"; rather, it gives us *different things* (PATOČKA 2004e: 508).

This is also the reason why this layer is ontologically so important. The key layer discloses not only a certain meaning, but also a certain understanding to the Being of that time which is imprinted in the material and the artistic process.

In conclusion, the object of art history is the picture. The layer of the picture which is responsible for changes of style is the layer of *rekonstruierten Ansichten*. These changes are not mere changes of technique or psychology; they are changes in the *aletheia* of the ways that the world and Being are being disclosed in certain eras. Patočka calls this an "ontological *a priori*" (the understanding of Being and the world) of the time (PATOČKA 2004a: 300).

5. Conclusion

In "Ad 'Umění a čas'", as we have seen, Patočka is highly critical of his earlier essay. Most of his criticism arises from the question "How can a work of art be an autonomous sign while also having metaphysical meaning?" In this essay, he

faces a dilemma: either the conception of two eras and two periods is wrong, and there is only the acme and the decline of the same essence of art, or the metaphysical significance of art is nothing but an illusion (PATOČKA 2004g: 214).

Considering his later essays, it is fair to say that the problem of “Art and Time” arises from Patočka’s earlier, uncritical adoption of Ingarden’s aesthetics. In “Art and Time”, the difference between the artistic and the aesthetic era is the absence of a metaphysical quality in the latter. Yet in his later essays it is clear that the metaphysical quality is not what is metaphysically significant in the work of art. It is therefore also reasonable to say that in “Art and Time” Patočka is searching in the wrong place for a metaphysical qualification of art. This error is the source of all the irreconcilable contradictions of this essay. If we understand, as Patočka later did, that the true metaphysical factor of art is the layer of *rekonstruierten Ansichten*, art will never lose its metaphysical significance. Since the first layer is present in every picture no matter how many more layers there are, art will never be only an autonomous sign with no metaphysical dimension. On the other hand, possible mythical, religious, ideological themes in art do not make art merely a gateway to a transcendental world independent of the work of art. Since any metaphysical theme or quality is possible only thanks to how the key layer opens, disclosing possible meanings in other layers, then all higher layers always refer to the key layer. The metaphysical quality of art is no exception. It refers back to the work of *aletheia* in the key layer. Art thus maintains its autonomy and is not dependent on external metaphysical truth. From the point of view of Patočka’s later essays, there is no opposition between autonomy and metaphysics in art, because art, for Patočka, is a sign of Being:

[T]he manifestation of the understanding of Being and the world, without the addition of opinions and theories, is what makes possible the revealing of the imaginary object in the picture, shrouded by the glow of Being and the world (PATOČKA 2004e: 509).²

We may still have different periods in art which are defined by differences in the key layer, but the art of the aesthetic period would lack the metaphysical meaning of art, but only the metaphysical quality or symbolic layer of the picture.

2) “Das sich rein, ohne Vermischung mit Meinungen und Theorien ins Werk setzende Welt- und Seinsverständnis, welches den imaginären Bildgegenstand vom Glanz des Sinns der Welt umhüllt erscheinen läßt” (PATOČKA 2004m: 313).

I have argued so far that in his later essays on Ingarden's aesthetics Patočka tried to clarify some problems of his own conception of the phenomenological history of art. I believe that he successfully adhered to the logic of his tradition and addressed the problems in "Ad 'Art and Time'". Yet, the wave of philosophical interpretations of the history of art reached its peak and end in Hegel's work and the nineteenth-century Vienna School of Art History. Since then, the historicist approach to art has been widely and rightly criticized. In his "Theses on the Philosophy of History" (BENJAMIN 1968: 217–252) and "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (BENJAMIN 1968: 253–264), Walter Benjamin rejects art historicism. Adorno, in his *Negative Dialectic*, is convinced that any philosophy of history died in Auschwitz (ADORNA 1970). Arthur Danto has argued that the history of art ended the moment technology developed to the point where it was possible to make a perfect copy of reality (DANTO 1984). Whether Patočka's clarified version, with its roots in nineteenth-century theories, can stand up in this more contemporary context remains to be seen from future research.

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Mgr. Jan Josl, Ph.D., josl.jan@ujak.cz, Jan Amos Komenský University, Department of Special Education, Prague, Czech Republic / Univerzita Jana Amose Komenského, Katedra speciální pedagogiky, Praha, Česká republika



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