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PrahaTHE MYTH OF KEYWORDS AND
CROSS-QUOTATIONS

In the fifties, it was almost impossible to publish a study in the sphere of Czechoslovak musicology without the keyword "socialist realism" and without any quotations from Stalin's treatises on linguistics. In the sixties, it was rather inevitable to manifest the new rational trend with the aid of tables and quotations of scholars, especially from the region of cybernetics and the theory of information. In the seventies, with the spreading of semiotics, it became nearly inconceivable to publish a study without the keywords: meaning, sense, or semantics, semiotics, etc., and without quotations from the American and English scholars of this orientation.

These manifestations, each in its respective period, represented some kind of models of expertness solidly entrenched in the consciousness of the expert, sometimes even of the wider public (in the fifties) and often nearly acquiring the character of standards. The consequence of such models was the spreading of group opinions professed by larger interdisciplinary, or smaller — branch or even working-place — teams of scholars. This spreading of the group opinion necessarily led to two phenomena: first, the stabilization of groups and intragroup discussion, and second, the sifting of views inside the group. This process, developing spontaneously and scarcely ever being reflected upon, resulted in the fixation of specific thought models functioning as patterns.

These "patterns" however, could escape their own genesis and sense during the process, once they had become fixed and were exposed to the pressure of the intragroup or intergroup exchange of views; they began to serve not as possible models of specified phenomena representing some partial knowledge, but as objects of imitation. Thus, fashions were being born.

The process then reached the next stage where the frequency of imitation increased and, in the course of time, the imitation itself converted into a new standard of expert concept and in to one of expertness. Keywords and cross-quotations were then used as labels; they began to fulfil the function of a guarantor of the only possible "correct" interpretation. In this way, a myth has been created in which the keywords and cross-quotations represent the objects of faith.

Keywords and cross-quotations are two important characteristics presenting a text from the viewpoint of theme, method, and orientation.¹ Keywords are created as

¹ Les dictionnaires du savoir moderne. La communication, Paris 1971. Entry: Contenu (Analyse du), 163—5.

a denotation for the important phenomena of the period, or for their features, and their frequency in the texts studied is significant. Cross-quotations are such references which appear in the prevailing majority of the works dealing with a specific branch and of specific orientation. They are the indices of the effect of the authorities quoted. Keywords and cross-quotations characterize a text as to its content; hence, they can become the source from which the knowledge of the mentality of the period and its presentation are drawn. Apart from this, however, they can fulfil other functions as well.

The fine arts are subjected to fashions just like material products. Consider, for example, the wave of interest in archaeology which, in the seventies, started permeating the programmes of the publishing houses either in the titles of expert and popular-science literature or those of crime novels, but also the programmes of the concert halls in the texts of vocal and vocal instrumental compositions.²

Fashions in the life style, be it the car of the year, dress novelties, children's toys, or other assortment of consumer goods, are reflected just like the artistic fashionable waves (let us remember, for example, the wave of the theatre of the absurd in the late sixties, or the "stream of consciousness" in the literature of the present period), but the fashions in the fine-arts history, and probably also those in the social history, are usually reflected much less frequently, or not at all.³ We shall not investigate the reasons, but rather concentrate on the manifestations, that is, on the analysis of specialized texts.⁴

The problem of the content analysis of a text has been "new" for about half a century.¹ The fundamental reference works in this field have been presented by B. Berelson.⁵ Of the Czech literature, undoubtedly, one has to mention the study by J. Volek "K otázce předmětu a metod estetiky a obecné teorie umění" (On the problem of the subject and methods of aesthetics and the general theory of art),⁶ where the analysis of the keyword "understandability" appears for the first time in the Czechoslovak context; likewise the work by I. Osolobě, who has been systematically working out the theory of modelling,⁷ and the studies by V. Karbusický⁸ where some content analyses of the text have been used, but with another orientation.

2 C. W. Ceram: *Oživená minulost* (The past made alive), Praha 1971; B. Brent: *Zlatý věk lidstva* (The golden age of mankind), Praha 1973; see also: J. Doubravová: Two Works of the "Neue Musik" Composed on the Languages of Ancient Cultures, *Muzikološki zbornik*, 17, 1981, 1, 41–47.

3 *Les dictionnaires du savoir moderne. La communication*, Paris 1971. Entry: Mode, 394–99.

4 This work has originated as a reflection on the material prepared. It was an analytical bibliographical project for the computer processing of the bibliography on "Czech music since 1945". The author of the project was St. Vohník, Head of the computing laboratory of the Institute of philosophy and sociology of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences.

5 B. Berelson: *Content Analysis in Communication Research*, New York, Free Press 1952; see also: J. Khol: *Člověk v systému řízení* (Man in the system of management), Praha, Svoboda 1975, S. 22; also: *Reader in Public Opinion and Communication*. Ed. B. Berelson and M. Janowitz, II. Ed., New York 1966.

6 Praha 1963. *Acta Universitatis Carolinae*.

7 I. Osolobě: *Ostense jako mezní případ sdělování a její význam pro umění* (Ostensis as a limit case of communication and its meaning for the art). *Estetika* 4, 1967, 1, 2–23; id.: *Divadlo, které mluví, zpívá a tančí* (Theatre that speaks, sings and dances), Praha. Supraphon 1974.

The source material of the present paper consisted of about 800 recordings of articles and studies published in Czech specialized periodicals since 1945 and dealing with the problems and personages of the contemporary music. The periodicals studied in this manner were: *Hudební rozhledy* (since 1948), *Hudební věda* (since 1961), *Opus musicum* (since 1969) and *Estetika* (since 1964), that is, from the time of the first appearance of the periodical until the end of 1986. Of the total number of 788 items recorded, 348 dealt with music and thinking about music (the latter 197), and the rest concerned personages (profiles, etc.).

A closer study of the material analysed revealed interesting features of both fundamental characteristics. There are authors the quotations of whom in some specialized connections are so evident that they are not informative any more: for example, the quotations of Silbermann in sociological studies. Quite exceptionally, however, quotations of Bertalanffy or Blondell are to be found in such studies. These exceptionally appearing quotations are, then, highly significant for the content characteristics of the text because they indicate the orientation of the author, while the quotations of the first kind — they are mostly clusters of quotations — wander from one study to another as mere guarantors of expertness.

There are also keywords wandering from one study to another, often without any connotation or context: they function then as labels. This was very outstanding in connection with the world-wide fashion of semiotics and abstract concepts committed to it. Their permeation of the specialized texts was that aggressive also because they were creating a fiction of the capacity to observe all and everything. Moreover, it was probably connected with the social practice: consider merely the use of such words as innovation, retardation, disfunction, etc.

Now, we shall attempt to study and describe the process of the change of an opinion into the fashion of an opinion. We shall discuss the subjective part of this process and shall not investigate the reason why this is so (this is not a problem of textual analysis), even if some answers are self-evident (tendency to keep abreast with the times; to be "on the level"; fear of being isolated; responsibility for one's own reputation; tendency to affiliate one's own opinion to that of a distinguished group, personage, etc.).

The self-manipulation first proceeds in the sphere of negation: the preceding contexts of one's own work have to be forgotten, or at least more or less consistently suppressed. In the next stage, new vocabulary, new quotations, and new connections have to be mastered. This stage, however, is inherent in any learning: one could not speak of manipulation at all without the preceding stage. Now, if both these stages have been passed, the subject does not refer in his quotations only to the authority or opinion quoted, but he demonstrates that he knows the author, he knows what to quote, he "unvoluntarily" proclaims his own new orientation. He ostensibly defines his allegiance to this new orientation. Undoubtedly, not all authors who have decided to change towards a new orientation, will act in this manner, because, if for no other reason, not all of them will be conscious of the processes in progress. But, regardless of this fact, a new social phase of the existence of the new intellectual model will take place. The group opinion will be stabilized, a new standard of expertness, and, consequently, of objectiveness, will form.

⁸ V. Karbusický: *Jak jsme manipulovali s realismem* (How we manipulated with realism), *Hudební rozhledy*, 1966, 18, 545–550; id.: *K technologii pamfletů o hudbě* (On the technology of pamphlets in music), 1948–52, *Hudební věda* 9, 1969, 3, 281–311.

This process is wholly independent of the activity, aims, and intentions of the protagonist, even if it may be intentionally exploited in the direction indicated. Then, hyperbolically, the subject could become "non-objective", or even "inexpert", if, for example, he did not use the cluster of the keywords: popular, understandable, socialist-realist, as was the case in the fifties; if, in the sixties, he did not use tables as proof of the rationality of his points of departure; or, if his vocabulary in the following decades did not swarm with such words as denotation, connotation, designation, etc.

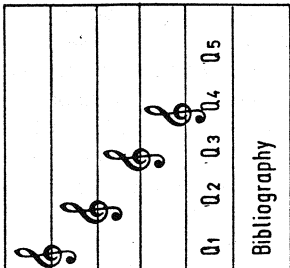
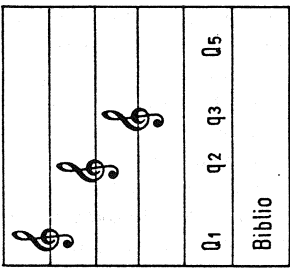
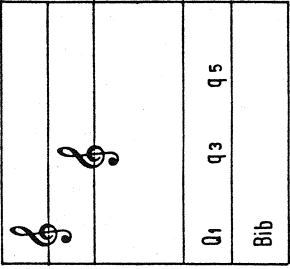
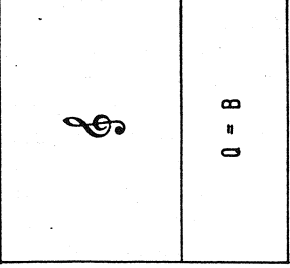
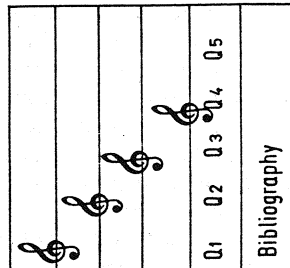
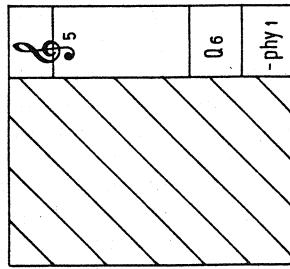
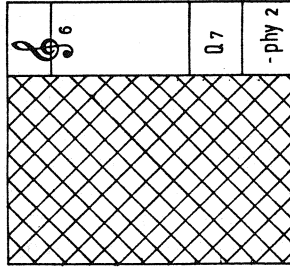
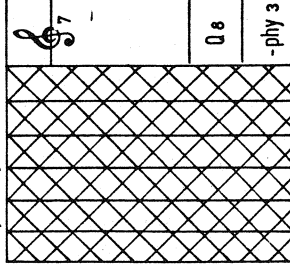
Here it should be stated that the change of fashion into the process of disinterpretation is accelerated by some mechanisms of expert work, superficial studies, discussions, studies of the classical kind, and non-functional bibliography. These studies employ general methods common to all scientific branches: they start from the reference texts on the subject, they formulate a hypothesis, which they verify analytically (textually, historically, or experimentally), and arrive at conclusions which make the formulation of the hypothesis more accurate. The processes spreading the group opinion and forming fashion, however, have the nature of a law; moreover, they need not necessarily terminate in disinterpretations, or the level of disinterpretation need not be low. The "pattern", the subject of imitation, which plays the role of the guarantor, or of "correct" orientation, in the following processes is not decisive either. The subject of imitation can be represented by highly original, unique and "inimitable" models, as well as by too banal, self-evident models (for example, Zhdanov's theses) This nearly magic attractiveness is achieved by persuasiveness. The models of the second kind will not be discussed here. In the discussed kind of expert model, persuasiveness follows from two interconnected features — historical and organic. Every original model has an origin and an aim. Its internal development (an image of the internal development of its author) from the concept to the theory is irreplaceable and has a consequence: it stops at a specific point because to continue would require a change in the points of departure. The logical sequel of the originality of a model is that it becomes conservative in the course of time. Secondly: every original model is subjective, developing from specific disposition in a specific organic manner, more or less the only possible method for the given subject. The organic character may have external systematic features in the expert work (or the features of a latent or rationalized system in art); never, however, a logic, devoid of development, of repeated inorganic systems of intelligent paranoid creating an anti-fear safety mechanism in the systems.⁹ The original model, thanks to its historical and subjective character, is able to develop up to the limit given by the organic cohesion of the system and the points of departure.¹⁰ Beyond this limit, it may become a starting point of polemic continuation.

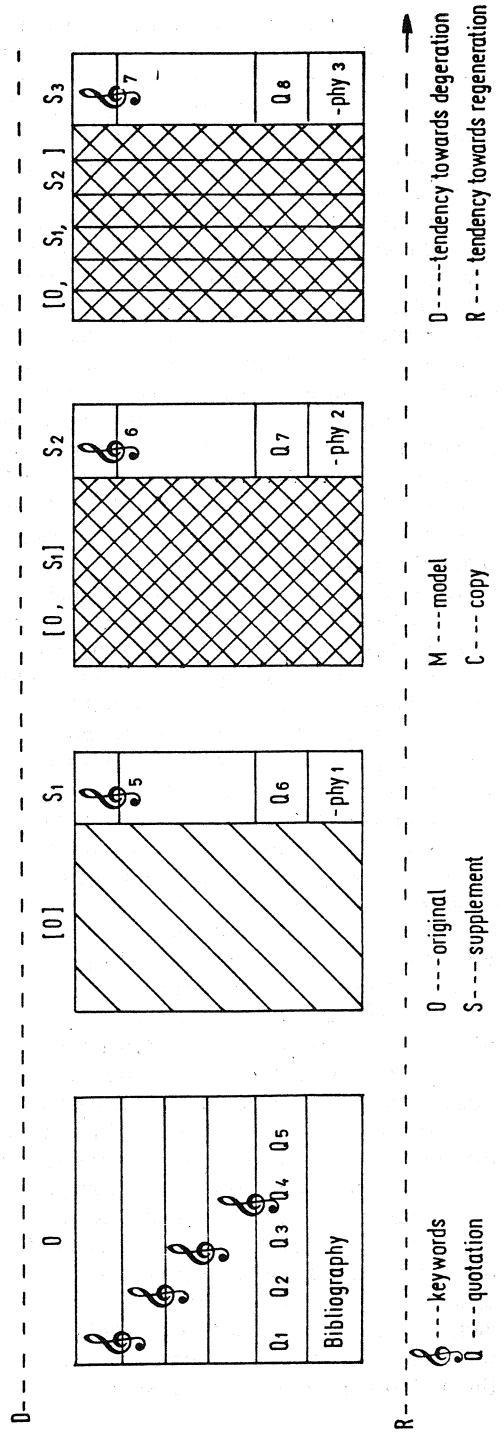
The position of a model, then, may be taken up by Zhdanov's theses just as well as by Asafiev's theory of intonation, or by structuralism. The social territory is substantial for the formation of fashion, because, in their final form, all fashions actually are also mental means for the existential self-assertion of influential social groups. The lower the level of historical consciousness, intragroup discussion and demands on expertness, the higher probability of the formation of fashions, labels, myths, disinterpretations, and, last but not least, of blind alleys of historical errors.

⁹ J. Riegel: *Osobnost a emocionální problémy* (Personality and emotional problems). Praha 1981.

¹⁰ T. S. Kuhn: *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, 2nd ed., Chicago 1974; review: *Filosofický časopis* 22, 1974, 5, 676—96.

CHINESE WHISPER and RELAY

O → M	C ₁	C ₂	C ₃
 <p>Q₁ Q₂ Q₃ Q₄ Q₅ Bibliography</p>	 <p>Q₁ Q₂ Q₃ Q₅ Biblio</p>	 <p>Q₁ Q₃ Q₅ Bib</p>	 <p>Q = B</p>
O	S ₁	S ₂	S ₃
 <p>Q₁ Q₂ Q₃ Q₄ Q₅ Bibliography</p>	 <p>Q₅ Q₆ -phy 1</p>	 <p>Q₆ Q₇ -phy 2</p>	 <p>Q₇ Q₈ -phy 3</p>



Let us now attempt to model two kinds of communications in specialized texts: Chinese whisper and relay, with the aid of the concept of the paradigm and the following symbols: the G clef sign for the keywords, the Q sign subscripts for the quotations, and the symbols B for bibliography (referring to the Table). The concept of the paradigm was discussed in the Czechoslovak context by some writers in the field in connection with the above-quoted publication by T. S. Kuhn: *The Structure of Scientific Revolution* (see reference No. 10). These writers considered this concept to be more bearing than other terms employed in this sense, such as the style of thinking, the manner of explanation, interpretation, etc. Kuhn's basic idea connected with this concept may be approximately formulated in the following way: Every scientific branch had to pass regularly through a period of chaos of the prescientific stage, where all theories appeared as mutually equivalent, and therefore rivalling. This chaotic scattering vanished due to the victorious appearance of the paradigm, that is, of the constitutive stage in which a specific canon of theoretical presuppositions was installed, together with a style of thinking, a manner of explanation and interpretation, and a set of respective methods. The acceptance of the paradigm meant constituting a scientific branch knowing its subject and methods. The absolute majority of specialists works within the framework of this "normal science". The framework of the paradigm delimits interesting and uninteresting (untopical, not pertaining to the branch, fanciful, etc.) problems. In the course of time, however, there appear anomalies unsolvable within the framework of the existing paradigm. A crisis develops essentially by the following methods: it appears that the anomaly is solvable in spite of all within the framework of the existing paradigm; the problem is transmitted to future generations; a new paradigm is formed and legalized. The paradigm of every branch manifests itself as to its content, but it has also its external indices. Some of them are just the keywords, the cross-quotations, the distribution of genre kinds in the production of periodicals, and the exploitation of the apparatus of documentation as well as both of the basic models of the transfer of communications in specialized texts.

The model of Chinese whisper tends towards degenerative changes, that is, it omits some keywords, reduces the quotations and the bibliography, up to the instant when a single quotation represents the entire bibliography, and a single keyword the entire theme; on the other hand, the regenerative model of relay essentially means taking over the preceding structures, that is, knowledge, cognizance, information and their intentional complementation by relatively new pieces of knowledge represented by a new keyword, new quotation, functional expansion of bibliography. The regenerative model may mean strengthening the historical memory, forming directional stratification, creating schools; the degenerative model may end as far as in mystification.

In expert practice, however, both these models are interconnected just like two sides of the same phenomenon: cumulative and synthesizing on one side, and reducing and analysing on the other side. The connection of both these polarities is a sign of the normally functioning paradigm; contrariwise, outstanding extreme tendencies indicate that the awareness of the paradigm is so weak that it has to be strengthened by a set of opinions already published and by the existing literature, or that the paradigm has to be changed. The dialectics of Chinese whisper and relay (that is, the reduction and preservation of communications) are independent of the awareness of individuals, but the awareness of dialectics may influence the participation in the paradigm of the branch, in its fixation, criticism, etc. In spite of the still prevailing opinion that the social-scientific branches, and the Fine Arts in particular, are connected with the performance of the individual more than other scientific branches, the opinion as-

serts itself gradually that only the history of a specific branch forms its system, hence also the most important starting point for further theories.¹¹ The "pigeon-hole character" of every theory, in other words, the limited character of every paradigm ceases to be covered up or concealed being considered as a regular phenomenon. Syntheses also cease to be an instruction how to solve the insolvable, that is, how to choose vague and eclectic completeness instead of incompleteness precisely defined.

The discussions on the paradigm and its investigation with the aid of keywords and cross-quotations, or a model of the transfer of communications, may have a meta-character, but every paradigm has evident and clear practical consequences, especially in two regions: in teaching and in publishing. This connection of theory and practice, however, need not always be desirable.

Conclusions

It appears that the study of the content characteristics of a text, that is, of keywords and cross-quotations, allows us to analyse the mentality of the period and its transformations, including the transformations of opinions and theories into fashions and, conceivably, their transformations into myths. These processes develop regularly, because they are conditioned socially, and they may pass through reinterpreting stages (imitation of the original models up to the formation of fashions) as well as disinterpreting stages (belief in the „correctness“ of the original models changing into a myth). The disinterpreting stage is assisted by some mechanisms of the expert publishing activity (lack of reflected studies, discussions and studies of the classical kind), besides the laws of universal character. Keywords and cross-quotations cannot be considered as content characteristics of the text analysed without the reconstruction of the historical awareness of the development of the branch.

The two models of the transfer of communications called "Chinese whisper" and "relay" demonstrate the dialectical contradictions serving the formation and erosion of the paradigm of the branch.

POVZETEK

Kaže, da nam preučevanje vsebinskih značilnosti besedila, tj. gesel in citatov omogoča analizo miselnosti časa in njenih preobrazb, tako tudi preobrazb naziranj in teorij v razne mode ter, kot se zdi, njihovih preobrazb v mite. Ti procesi se stalno odvijajo, ker so družbeno pogojeni; lahko gredo skozi faze reinterpretiranja (posnemanja prvotnih modelov pa vse do samega oblikovanja raznih mod) kakor tudi dezinterpretiranja (prepričanja o „pravilnosti“ prvotnih vzorov, ki se spreminjajo v mit). Fazo dezinterpretiranja podpirajo razen zakonov splošnega značaja nekateri mehanizmi strokovne publicistične dejavnosti (pomanjkanje razmišljujočih študij, razprav in študij klasične vrste). Gesla in citati ne morejo veljati za vsebinske značilnosti teksta, ki ga analiziramo, ne da bi rekonstruirali historično zavest razvoja stroke.

Dva vzorca posredovanja sporočil, ki ju imenujemo „kitajski šepet“ in „prenašanje“, nazorno pojasnujeta dialektična protislovja, ki rabijo oblikovanju in spodkopavanju paradigme stroke.

¹¹ C. Dahlhaus: Musikästhetik, Köln 1967.