

Description for the general public: Mass Art from the Point of View of the Concept of Narrative Identity

The subject matter of the project is positioned at the meeting of ruminations in the field of human philosophy, philosophy of culture and aesthetics. The starting point is the concept of narrative identity. Katarzyna Rosner notes that the concept of narrative has become one of the frequently used terms in the contemporary reflection on human and culture. The author draws one's attention to the fact that what connects the selected concepts (primarily including the theories by Alasdair MacIntyre, David Carr, Anthony Giddens and Charles Taylor) is the understanding of narrative as a cognitive structure. Identity is constructed in the process of self-understanding, which is narrative in nature. People integrate their life experiences into a story. They understand themselves, their place in the world, the events in their lives and the way other people behave through the prism of stories. They interpret their actions and create descriptions while maintaining the continuity of their sense of identity. The main characteristics of the narrative structure are consistent with Heidegger's *Dasein* and include thoughtfulness, temporality and immersion in the everyday world (Rosner 2006). From the perspective of the present project, most important is the last characteristic of those mentioned above, i.e. immersion in the everyday world.

One of the elements of culture, which most people have usually contact, is the mass art. Patterns provided by mass art are socially accepted, they are not shocking and they refer to stereotypes, which makes them a valuable source of information about the standards prevailing in a given culture. Mass art most often supports well-known stereotypes and does not change until a given society does. Art provides every person with clear information about the kind of behaviour acceptable for him- or herself. A question arises as to why one should follow such recognised examples. One of the reasons for that is the human need to adapt, to affiliate. Another one may be our tendency to treat each other according to our respective social roles. Social relations squeeze individuals into pre-defined roles determined by the descriptions functioning in a given culture.

The concept of narrative identity helps to better understand people and the way they perceive the world. Still, this tool may be refined. I will demonstrate that the factor of mass art has not been sufficiently taken into account and I will present argumentation in favour of the significance of the impact of mass art for the development of identity.

In the project the most recent literature on the subject of philosophy, sociology and psychology will be collected and analysed. While systematising the views of individual narrativists, I will try to point out the instances where attention is drawn to mass art. In addition, a conceptual network will be developed as necessary to compare the selected standpoints. The definitions of the narrative identity concept used by different authors will be discerned. I will also use hermeneutics to investigate personality patterns and human relationship models found in mass art. The underlying assumption will be the hypothesis that we can distinguish a finite number of such patterns and models, recurring in individual mass artworks, thus allowing us to treat mass art as whole. Using statistics on viewership and revenue of pieces, I will extract a representative samples of works of art for the audience divided into three age groups (children, youth, adults).

The concept of narrative identity will be creatively used to the analysis of modern phenomena. The results of the proposed research will contribute to increased awareness of consumers by showing the possible impact of mass art on them. The strength of its impact on shaping one's identity requires further empirical research. Still, the results of the present considerations may serve as an introduction and a theoretical background for such studies. Even if subsequent research shows that the impact of mass art is smaller than one might expect, the present paper will provide new theoretical tools to describe structure of self and recognition of other selves. The problem of the effect of commercial works also opens a discussion in the field of ethics, regarding the responsibility of both artists and consumers.