

Art in International Relations

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Introduction

Artists – whether writers, painters, musicians, architects, sculptors, dramatists, dancers, or filmmakers – and artworks – whether poetry, literature, visual arts, solid forms, music, theater works, photography, or cinema – contribute to building peaceful, vibrant societies and can inspire relations among societies and between societies and nature that are characterized by appreciation and harmony. They have vital roles to play in addressing tyranny of all kinds. Presently, art is assigned to “re-enchant” the world. Many artists rely on their creative capacities to project ideas nurtured by intuition and imagination that may be unfittingly or narrowly engaged within the framework of scientific rationality, and even irrelevant to the notion of material progress, but which are nevertheless essential for the well being of society.

Some people hold that all art is political in so far as it is controversial in its reflections and imitations of the human condition. But such generalities provide few insights into the subject at hand, which is the impact of art on international politics with reference to relations between peoples of different nations and life experiences, and to all humanity confronted by many critical challenges. These include threats to peace and security; widespread and massive violations of political, civil, social, and cultural rights; and the deterioration of the biosphere.

To address such problems, artists offer inspiration and perspective. Over centuries, artists have described, borne witness to, interpreted, incited, and accompanied political action. In various ways, artists have stirred the human spirit – inspiring courage and raising hopes – when the physical senses had grown accustomed to the dull tedium and stresses of everyday living. Artists have supplied voices of revolution and made vivid the pain of denigration, starvation, violence, and disappointment (Phinney in Baudot 2002). Artists’ soft diplomacy have opened doors to wider communications and understanding among many societies, even those that have been politically sealed off from the international community. Artists have generated fresh visions of socioeconomic and scientific progress shepherded by beliefs that defy rational calculation but nevertheless offer alternatives for assessing and resolving international tribulations through the illumination of alternative sources from which to acquire knowledge and base moral estate. As has been true in the past, modern societies cannot afford to lose the enormous wealth that artists offer. In his play *Back to Methuselah*, George Bernard Shaw wrote, “Without art, the crudeness of reality would make the world unbearable.”

There is no standard definition of “art.” The concept has been treated variously by classical philosophers (Horace 1961; Aristotle 1984; 1997; Plato 1997; St. Augustine 2006; remove reference to Stefanescu I have taken out Lao Tsu – and by philosophers from Kant to Derrida in the modern era (Kant 2005; Hegel 1998; Schopenhauer 1966; Nietzsche 2000; Baudelaire 1997; Okakura 1956; Kuki 2004; Lukacs 1975; Heidegger 1975; Maritain 1953; Adorno 2002; Gadamer 1986; Derrida 1984). It is grist for critics (e.g. Schiller 1954; Barthes 1995) and artists themselves (e.g. Tolstoy 1995). Contemporary usages of the term, offered in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, attach to art the idea of the exercise of skill as opposed to the objectives of the scientific disciplines. Art includes figurative and nonfigurative expressions of these skills, the former relating to imitation, replication, and design—painting, engraving, sculpture, and

architecture— and the latter to subjects of taste and expression—poetry, music, dance, drama, oratory, and literary composition— which identify art with form and the expression of emotion.

To give focus to the topic of art and international relations, this essay adopts a framework for classifying and distinguishing different ways art and international politics intersect. This schema distinguishes the instrumental, extrinsic, and intrinsic values of art to players in international relations. As conceptualized here, instrumental value refers to art as a means to attain particular political objectives. Extrinsic value is found in the ideas, feelings, and emotions about political phenomena that are contained in works of art for no explicit purpose but nevertheless convey political messages of import. Intrinsic value refers to the charismatic power of the work of art itself to ennoble and inspire political thinking and action.

It is not the aim of this paper to cover all ways art communicates internationally relevant political ideas. Nor can it give full geographic and historical coverage. It seeks nevertheless to illustrate how art can influence international relations in different ways and uses illustrative examples drawn from works of art, including objects, literature, musical works, and commentaries and studies by social, literary, and/or art critics, or by political figures for whom art has borne particularly strong meaning or influence over the ages.

The Instrumental Value of Art in International Relations

Art for Change is aimed at sharing strategies related to ways in which communities and governments can deliberately use art to promote changes in their own social contexts.

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The most direct and easily perceptible contribution of art to international relations is of an instrumental nature. By “instrumental” is meant the deliberate use of art to obtain certain objectives such as awakening a sense of patriotism, or stirring people’s emotions to take action against a perceived problem such as climate change. The obvious measure of a work of art’s instrumental value is the degree of perceptible change causally attributed to it. But the impact of artistic input on an issue can also be significant if not obviously perceptible or otherwise measurable. Also, the artwork itself may meet the highest standards of the most discriminating art critic or be of a mediocre quality but accessible to mass culture; it is not the quality of the artwork per se that counts here, but its efficacy in delivering the desired message to a particular audience, whether that be marginalized peoples, citizens of a country, or the population of the world at large. The impetus for the message may come from the artist’s own sense of social responsibility and commitment to public well-being, from an artist’s quest for fame and fortune, or from the artist’s engagement in the service of a government to achieve some desired political end.

This approach to art is the most familiar one today in international relations. Governments, political factions, and commercial interests, among others, have all engaged artists who willingly

or unwillingly serve their patrons by producing artworks used as promotional or propaganda materials. The instrumental use of art is particularly evident in books, films, and art exhibitions that draw attention to the need to address particular crises – for instance hunger, disease, or global warming. Many artists are engaged in commercial advertising, which has an indirect but important impact on relations between countries. These artists may promote sales of goods and services in international trade or marshal against such trade in the interests of the planet or of protecting markets in materially poor countries. There are many different facets to instrumentalizing art. Related to this value is the wide-ranging debate on the role of art and the artist in society.

Art for Social Ends or Art for Art's Sake?

In his essay entitled “Artistic Commitment,” Isaiah Berlin treats the historic debate between the doctrine that attaches social responsibility to the work of the artist and the doctrine of art for art’s sake, with its denial of social responsibility as a function of the artist (Berlin 1996). The former doctrine dates back to Plato, if not earlier, while the latter is more recent. Debate on the role of artists as political actors responsible for bearing witness to the ills of society – its injustices and poverty – was ongoing in nineteenth century among the European and especially Russian intelligentsia. The leading proponent of social commitment was Vissarion Belinsky, who wrote that “every intelligent man has the right to demand that a poet’s work either give him answers to the questions of the time or at least be filled with the sorrow of these weighty, insoluble questions” (Berlin 207, 1996). To avoid these issues in which the heart and mind and the full spectrum of the artists’ talents had to be involved was to indulge in egoism and frivolity, both of which were destructive to the artistic calling. Belinsky wrote:

To take away from art the right to serve the public interest is not to elevate it but to debase it, because it means to deprive it of its most vital force – of thought – to transform it into the object of some kind of sybaritic enjoyment, the plaything of lazy idlers.

And further on:

A good many people [. . .] do not understand that in the sphere of art, in the first place no commitment is worth anything at all unless there is talent, and in the second place that commitment itself must be not only in the head but above all in the heart, in the blood of the writer, it must above all be a feeling, an instinct, and only then perhaps a conscious idea (Berlin 208, 1996).

Socialist Realism

Instrumental use of the artist and of artistic works is clearly observable in the application of socialist realism. Officials of communist regimes impressed artists in the cause of promoting this ideology through the arts. The concept began with literature and spread to all of the arts. This subject is comprehensively treated in the book by John and Caron Garrard entitled *Inside the Soviet Writers' Union*, in which the keynote address to the first Congress of the Soviet Writers' Union by Andrei Zhdanov, chief spokesman on cultural affairs in the Party Secretariat (later the Politburo) is quoted and elaborated: “Comrade Stalin has called our writers engineers of human souls.” In commenting on this address, Garrard paraphrases explanations offered by Zhdanov:

to the extent that Soviet literature would be openly tendentious, it would abandon old-fashioned romanticism for a new revolutionary romanticism that would show the way to the communist future (Garrard and Garrard 34-35, 1990).

All writers in the Soviet system were warned to be guided by the new method of socialist realism and work toward the greater good of the Soviet people and of all mankind by molding the new Soviet man from lumps of proletarian clay. This meant that the historical concreteness and truth of artistic portrayal in works of fiction, drama, and poetry were to be combined with the ideological remolding and education of the people in the spirit of socialism and to feature the historic struggle of the members of the party for the benefit of the working class (Garrard and Garrard 35, 1990).

This philosophy would be exported. In the opening statement of the Writers' Union Statute, formally adopted in 1971, is written "Soviet multinational literature of a new historical epoch, struggling for high ideals of socialism and communism, for the creation on earth of a truly just society on whose banner will be peace, work, freedom, equality, brotherhood and happiness for all nations" (Garrard and Garrard 35, 1990; see also articles on the 5th Soviet Writer's Congress).

In the USSR and abroad, socialist realism also informed music by Reinhold Glière, Sergei Prokofiev, and Dimitri Shostakovich. Adherence to this "realism" is attributed to famous international writers friendly to the socialist cause, including Germany's Bertolt Brecht, France's Louis Aragon, and Chile's Pablo Neruda. The pictorial arts and sculpture produced by the socialist systems not only in Russia but also in other communist countries [and also produced in Nazi Germany] idealize the human body in relation to industrial efforts pursued in these countries (Shaw and Pryce 1990). The government of China under Chairman Mao imposed rigid controls on the artist that forced dance, music, literature, sculpture, and the visual arts into a mold that promoted the Chinese political agenda in ways that paralleled developments in the Soviet Union.

Other Examples of the Instrumental Use of Art

There are multiple examples of official and unofficial international cultural exchanges and exhibitions related to global concerns or troubled relations that feature artwork— paintings, poetry, films, sculpture and musical events—designed to foster better understandings of the critical issues facing the modern world or to foster more pliable or cooperative relations between peoples.

Music

A recent example of the use of musical events to improve relations, widen understanding, and open conversations between countries is the visit of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra to North Korea in February 2008, signaling a desire on the part of the United States and North Korea for warmer and friendlier relationships between their peoples. The theme of the concert was shared musical values. The concert featured classical music that portrayed American traditions as captured by composer Antonin Dvořak in his Symphony no. 9 in E Minor, the *New World Symphony*. This symphony was written while Dvořak was in the United States to reflect the folk music of Native Americans and African Americans. The North Korean concert also

featured George Gershwin's *An American in Paris*. The political highlight occurred when the orchestra played the national anthems of both countries and also featured the beloved North Korean folk song "Arirang" (Walkin 2008). This concert is reminiscent of earlier visits by the Boston Symphony Orchestra to the Soviet Union in 1956, and by the Philadelphia Orchestra to China in 1973, with similar motivations albeit different impacts.

Another dramatic example of the instrumental power of music took place in Estonia in the 1980s. The story is told in a documentary produced by James and Maureen Tusty entitled *The Singing Revolution* (2007). This film documents how from 1987 until 1991, thousands of Estonians gathered publicly to sing forbidden patriotic songs as a way to proclaim their desire for independence from the tyranny of the USSR. These stirring songs sung by thousands of Estonians in a national stadium anchored Estonia's struggle for freedom.

In Mali, and other African countries political occasions are regularly accompanied or at least opened by songs sung by choruses, often of women, to music performed on traditional instruments. This music expresses honor to guests, to participants, and to the occasion. It is a talisman for good outcomes. In many African countries formal and informal musical performances are staged as well at airports to welcome and honor passengers as they arrive from foreign countries.

Sculpture

To raise awareness of the changing world climate, renowned Norwegian artist Vebjørn Sand built a replica in ice of Leonardo da Vinci's 1502 "Golden Horn" bridge design and placed it in the Visitors' Plaza at the United Nations. The gradual melting of the 30-foot Leonardo's bridge was intended to serve as a powerful reminder of the devastating effects of global warming and the melting of the world's ice in areas like Antarctica, the Arctic, and Greenland. It was the centerpiece for a 2007 exhibition entitled *Antarctica: On Thin Ice*, showing artistic renditions and scientific images of the fragile beauty of polar regions (United Nations 2007).

Paintings

In 2008 an international art exhibit and seminar was hosted by the United Nations, featuring artists from Bahrain, Ghana, India, Japan, the United States, Peru, and Monaco. According to the UN Office of Public Relations:

The event aims to demonstrate to the international public that the universal language of art serves as a catalyst that can unite people in thought and action, and can empower individuals, communities, and leaders to incorporate environmental values into social, economic, and political realms. Art provides the tools for an inspiration based approach to global climate change by evoking an emotional connection between humankind and nature to help raise environmental awareness, foster environmental values, and inspire reverence and concern for the earth

Second session of UN Seminar on Art Changing Attitudes Toward the Environment, 8 May 2008 <http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/tolerance/info.html>

Most recently, the global “UNite to Combat Climate Change” campaign was inaugurated with the unveiling of an exhibit and auction of children’s art advertised as “Paint for the Planet.” This event featured a selection of paintings from the United Nations Environment Program’s (UNEP) International Children’s Painting Competition, showcasing children’s fears and hopes for the planet. The paintings expressed a powerful plea for leadership on climate change before it was too late (United Nations Environment Program 2009 <http://www.unep.org/paint4planet/UNite.aspx>).

During the event, UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner, introduced six of the young artists and stated that: “The world is in the hands of old people, but the future is in the hands, minds and imagination of the young,” He also encouraged environmental action plans to “look to young people to be part of the solution to climate change.” He presented these children as “powerful ambassadors” on behalf of the climate. One of the young artists, Malta’s Andrew Bartolo, delivered opening remarks on the children’s fears for the environment. “My painting is a comical view of climate change,” he said, referring to his artwork that shows penguins moving from a beach to live in a refrigerator. “It shows penguins having to migrate due to difficult living conditions. Such conditions also affect humans and cause humans to have to leave their homes too.” (<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=28692&Cr=unep&Cr1>) This art campaign is a prelude to the world climate change talks that begin in earnest in Copenhagen in December 2009.

The Extrinsic Value of Art

The writer’s language is not expected to represent reality, but to signify it. This should impose on critics the duty of using two rigorously distinct methods: one must deal with the writer’s realism either as an ideological substance (Marxist themes in Brecht’s work, for instance) or as a semiological value (the props, the actors, the music, the colors in Brechtian dramaturgy). The ideal of course would be to combine these two types of criticism; the mistake which is constantly made is to confuse them: ideology has its methods, and so has semiology (Barthes 1995).

Extrinsic value is a measure of the knowledge, ideas, inspirations, and sympathies of international political relevance that can be derived from a work of art by the discerning reader, listener, or observer. It often falls to the art or literary critic to ferret out and interpret the stories told by, and the political messages conveyed in, different works of art. In fact, extracting the extrinsic value of art for international relations is a hermeneutic project, as described, for example, by H.G. Gadamer (1986). The messages that the critic seeks to explore and interpret may be found in veiled attitudes or in explicit visual or verbal imagery, revealing strong political feelings encrypted in works of art. Key differences between instrumental and extrinsic value of art for international politics lie in the intent of the artistic effort. In the former case, the quality of the work is of secondary importance to the exogenous objective of carrying out the work; in the latter case the impetus for the work comes from the inner desire of artists to express their own observations and feelings. In other words, while the work intended as some form of political persuasion is clearly an example of the instrumental use of art, this cannot be said of a piece of art where the political content is discernible but serves no ulterior promotional objective.

Painting

Examples of art that have extrinsic value for international relations include the expansive Mexican mural paintings of social realists Diego Rivera and Jose Clemente Orozco. These enormous murals evoke calls for social justice, anger over abuse of power, the rights of indigenous peoples, and the plight of the peasants; at the same time they implore courage and willingness to sacrifice oneself for larger political values. Orozco believed that the role of art was to bear witness to history, not to celebrate it or its heroes. Thus he rejected propaganda and ideology in his work; nevertheless his paintings give expression to his opposition to tyranny and intolerance. Mexican art in the early half of the twentieth century had wide implications for politics in Mexico and Latin America, interpretations thereof surely playing a role in the evolution of the Dependencia theory articulated subsequently by Latin American economists in the United Nations, particularly Raoul Prebisch.

French social and literary critic Roland Barthes extracts contemporarily relevant environmental messages from classical Dutch paintings. He perceives in these pictures a portent of environmental disaster resulting from humankind's ignorant disregard for nature. A particular classical Dutch painting Barthes describes has no religious or spiritual overtones. Humankind

[humankind] stands now, [their] feet upon the thousand objects of everyday life [. . .] Behold them, then triumphantly [. . .] at the pinnacle of history, knowing no other fate than a gradual appropriation of matter. No limit to his humanization, and above all, no horizon [. . .] As if the destiny of the Dutch landscape is to swarm with [human beings], to be transformed from an elemental infinity to the plenitude of the registry office.

Barthes sees in these paintings canals, mills, trees, birds – all of which are somehow linked in the image drawn around a crowded ferry – closing

the movement of trees and water by the intention of a human movement, reducing these forces of nature to the rank of objects and transforming these forces of Nature to the rank of objects and transforming the Creation into a facility (Barthes 1995).

A curious example of the extrinsic value of art consistent with other aspects of modern international political culture is provided by Andy Warhol's work. Warhol's portraits of American presidents and presidential candidates, queens, communist leaders, and other political figures strongly suggest relationships between international politics and celebrity culture in late twentieth-century America. To many spectators, his work shows a lack of interest in the character of his subjects but reflects his fascination with fame and power. Having begun his career as a commercial artist in the 1960s, Warhol became a central figure in the pop art movement. Responding to images from popular culture—particularly advertisements—Warhol began creating works that first shocked audiences with the similarity between the appearances of his political subjects and commercial images. His choice of celebrities is indiscriminate, and the political process is denigrated in his work like everything else. He communicates the idea of the world as a mono-institutionalized society controlled by the economic sector.

Warhol's images of powerful political figures are elaborately colored in hues that reveal something or nothing about the person, depending on Warhol's instinct at the particular creative moment. As a critic in the *Boston Globe* wrote:

If Warhol's politically related imagery still has the power to fascinate, it is not because of any ideology or conviction behind the work. It is because its mechanical, affectless, but immensely seductive nature mirrored developments in political presentations that we are all heir to today. He saw politicians as human brand name images – exactly how many politicians have come to see themselves (Smee 2008).

http://www.boston.com/ae/theater_arts/articles/2008/09/07/power_surge/

Literature

There are many literary works that reveal nationalist or imperialist attitudes of countries or other ideologically rooted feelings towards critical issues of the time.

One can discern in D.H. Lawrence's *St. Mawr* a powerful warning concerning the erosion of humankind's empathy with Nature. It emerges in the text of the novel, where the owner of a magnificent stallion is reflecting on the behavior of her horse which had just thrown another rider. She asks "What does this act say? Is it meanness?" But her thoughts drive her further and she perceives instead the animal's innocence and the reality of humankind's unworthiness of the nobility of the wild creature:

[I]gnoble men, unworthy of the animals they have subjugated, bred the woe in the spirit of the creatures [. . .] but now where is the flame of dangerous, forward pressing nobility in men? Dead, guttering out in the stink of self-sacrifice [. . .] and laissez faire. Man invents motor cars and other machines [. . .] The horse is super-annuated for man. But alas man is even more superannuated for the horse.

Then, as grief floods the owner, she comes to realize more clearly: that "the horse, born to serve nobly, had waited in vain someone noble to serve. His spirit knew that nobility had gone out of man and this left him [. . .] in a sort of despair" (Lawrence 75-76, 1953). Lawrence uses the vehicle of the novel to express his view of the decadence of modern Western society, and conveys this universal concern from the perspective of nonhuman life, sadly abused in the technological age by Promethean man.

Another powerful message is implicit in the literature of Mariano Azuela, a Mexican doctor and writer in the early decades of the twentieth century. He is most famous for his vivid novels capturing the life, interests, and struggles of the peasants at and around the time of the Mexican revolution in 1910 (*Los de abajo*, 1916). As Emile Zola and Charles Dickens had done in France and England, Azuela's characterizations of the lives of peasants implicitly denounce social injustices and hardships suffered by the underclasses in industrializing societies. The much more recent revolts in Mexico, notably in the Chiapas, by peasants suffering similar hardships, currently attributed to the rules instituted by NAFTA, indicate that not so much has changed for the Mexican peasant.

More recently, in his book *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said reveals a wealth of inferences of political bias in literary texts and operatic scores. He explores the imprints of ideological attitudes, particularly nationalism and imperialism, on cultural works. To illustrate his propositions he probes the works of Western artists, including Joseph Conrad's *Heart of*

Darkness, Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida*, and Albert Camus's *L'Étranger*, which he considers significant in their expressions of nationalism and the formation of imperial attitudes, references, and experiences. He explains:

My method is to focus as much as possible on individual works, to read them first as great products of the creative and interpretive imagination and then to show them as part of the relationship between culture and empire. I do not believe that authors are mechanically determined by ideology, class, or economic history, but authors are, I also believe, very much in the history of their societies, shaping and shaped by that history and their social experience in different measure (Said xxvii, 1993).

Via his analysis, he illustrates how these literary works willy-nilly intertwine culture and politics in a system of societal domination and submission. He also examines opposing visions in works by writers representing oppressed countries, in which they expose cultural imperialism, report struggles for cultural self-determination, and suggest alternative ways of conceiving history. Said finds Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* "a brilliant book revealing the liberating imagination of independence itself, with all its anomalies and contradictions working themselves out." Rushdie's effort to enter into discourse with the imperialists of the West, to challenge and "transform it [the West] and to make it acknowledge the marginalized [. . .] or forgotten histories," Said considers illustrative of resistance writing of the nature carried out by numerous writers in the peripheral Third World – the global South today (Said 216, 1993).

Music

The extrinsic value of art finds another expression as it is conveyed in music. According to semiologist Vyacheslav Ivanov, the development of archaic religious traditions was based on the use of oral language combined with singing, musical performance, and other artistic forms. For many thousands of years cultural memory was mostly connected with singing and music (See Ivanov in Baudot 2002). The opera is a modern art form of this nature and can bear strong messages of a political nature with or without intention.

In his book *Opera: The Extravagant Art*, humanities professor Herbert Lindenberger discusses the politics of power, which has universal import in Verdi's *Aida*, Wagner's *Ring Cycle*, and Mussorsky's *Boris Gudonov*. All three works project dramatic falls from power and the fate of empires. Each invokes the grandeur of power and the powerlessness of individuals in the affairs of state. They also predict, in various ways, a new and better order based on love, that is an order governed by a humane set of values.

Lindenburger points out with respect to all of these operas, as well as to Bizet's *Carmen*, their potential to project images of the history of their times as much as they reflect the images which historians have projected of these times. He adds that some operas have even done more than project historical images and have actually engaged in the world without the collusion of their creators. He cites as an example *La Muette de Portici* by Auber, which supposedly set off the revolution that ended in the independence of Belgium from the Netherlands (Lindenberger 1984).

The power of opera to foment revolution, without the collusion of its creator, rests in the magnitude of the musical and dramatic forces as well as the rhetorical power it commands over spectators. Giordano's opera *Andrea Chenier* expresses an emotional protest against the violence of revolutions and a celebration of the powers of the poet to envisage a brighter future. It is, of course, common knowledge that Verdi's operas were feared in Austria because of their revolutionary innuendos, and that Hitler was mightily impressed by Wagner's operas.

More generally, human tragedies described or otherwise recorded by artists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are now the substance of world concern and debate. The voices of the poor and oppressed in industrial societies and throughout the global South may be heard in the forums of the United Nations and in scores of other international debates between protagonists of those 'who have' and those 'who have not.' Their messages are conveyed in the pathos of their music, paintings, poetry, and stories.

The Intrinsic Value of Art

Art like Science is free from everything that is positive or established by human conventions [. . .] For whole centuries now philosophers and artists have shewn themselves occupied in plunging Truth and Beauty into the depths of vulgar humanity: they themselves are submerged there, but Truth and Beauty struggle with their own indestructible vitality triumphantly to the surface. [. . .] As noble Art has survived the noble nature, so too she marches ahead of it fashioning and awakening by her inspiration. Before Truth sends her triumphant light into the depths of the heart, imagination catches its rays, and peaks of humanity will be glowing when humid night still lingers in the valleys (Schiller 1954).

In Schiller's aesthetics, the artwork is infused by poetic inspiration and intuition, by the mystical, the muse, and by religious revelation. And its appeal is not only to sensory faculties but to the soul, the heart, the emotions of humanity – an attraction to the beautiful or the ugly, in contrast to science, which seeks the rational "what is" stripped as far as possible of any particular human perspective. The artist then illuminates, imitates, and interprets reality through the prism of the soul. This metaphysical approach can give a work of art the potential to evoke feelings of peace, revelations of wisdom, and the perceptions of beauty that ease life's hardships and suggest relations between manifested life and its ideal forms.

The intrinsic value of art is perceptible in many fine works with universal appeal. These masterpieces communicate feelings and ideas that are universally perceivable and enchant the sensitive observer because they bridge the world of the phenomenon with that of the noumenon. Such works reveal life freed from what can be described as the blur of a material finitude that obscures the vision of many political actors today. Essentially, these works can influence the affairs of nations by bringing into relief, ennobled visions that draw together imagination, intuition, and objectivity.

The sculptress Barbara Hepworth was referring to the intrinsic nature of art when she wrote to the then Secretary General of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld:

the nature of art reflects the laws and the evolution of the universe – both in the power and rhythm of growth and structure as well as the infinitude of ideas which reveal themselves when one is in accord with the cosmos and the personality is then free to develop (Fröhlich 24, 2001).

From the perspective of many philosophers, the artist of such masterpieces draws on the powers of inspiration – intuiting the unseen but present idea, and admits the impressions of senses and human experience, viewing them, however, from a transcendent perspective. Introduced into the discourse on problems confronting contemporary societies – affluent or destitute – the thoughts that ennobled art evokes can enrich reflections and policy perspectives, revealing higher aspects of humanity as well as new avenues for political action. In the words of Hammarskjöld: “A work of art cleans your soul and straightens out your will [. . .] A work of great art sets its own standard and remains a continuous reminder of what should be achieved in everything” (Fröhlich 2001). Letter to Barbara Hepworth, 7 July 1961, appended to Fröhlich.

Works of art having intrinsic value reflect poetic knowledge, beauty, and the power of universal communication. Each of these qualities is treated by French philosopher Jacques Maritain; German poet, playwright, historian, and philosopher Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller; and Russian writer Leo Tolstoy, respectively. These thinkers share the view that intrinsically valuable masterpieces have transcendent qualities and are independent of the constraints of fashion, ambition, taste, conformity, and political exigency.

Poetic Knowledge

The view that – whatever has no meaning for the scientist has no meaning at all – has practically dominated the intellectual landscape since the beginning of the twentieth century. The monopoly of the physical sciences and instrumental rationality in the human view of things has all but condemned to obsolescence and irrelevance knowledge stemming from metaphysics, including philosophical and intuitive thinking about the grand issues of life. Jacques Maritain offers that rehabilitation of the relevance of metaphysical and “connatural” knowledge in the modern world is necessary for sensitivity to the power of fine works of art.

The enquiries of Jacques Maritain build from his study of the writings of Aristotle and their broader interpretation by Thomas Aquinas. Maritain’s research focuses on perceptible and imperceptible ways of knowing and being. He distinguishes types of knowledge acquired in the natural sciences from types of knowledge derived either from metaphysics or from “connatural” sources, the latter including religious faith, mysticism, poetic inspiration, and moral inclination. According to Maritain, each of these types of knowledge is essential, not to be substituted for any of the others, because each deals with a different but vital dimension of human life – including the physical individuality and the spiritual essence of the person (Maritain 1938). To a society in awe of its own growing capacity to control and reform Nature, Maritain offers a much more extensive vision of reality, one over which humankind could have very limited control.

Maritain confronts the same problems as Max Weber and others in their concern for the ignorant discounting of the inspirational value of art in the modern political economy and the dearth of

enchantment in the world, attributed to mechanism, bureaucratism, and excessive materialism. While giving virtual monopoly to knowledge derived from the physical sciences, the sages of modernity have also discredited knowledge that had for centuries fed the rivers of artistic inspiration. In Maritain's view, the philosopher and the poet must continue to bear witness to the supreme dignity of inspired thought and emphasize the eternal qualities in humankind. To do so, the knowledge that fuels moral inclinations—the visual arts, literature, poetry, and music—had to be restored to its noble place in the social esteem. He writes that poetic intuition and knowledge are basic manifestations of humankind's spiritual nature and the sources of creativity of the spirit steeped in imagination and emotion (Maritain 116, 1953).

The generalized acceptance of scientific reasoning and empiricism as the principle interpreters of the world is a controversial legacy of the Enlightenment and trivializes the role of poetics and art in international political affairs. Long before the Vienna school of philosophy had pronounced itself on the preeminence of the physical sciences at the beginning of the twentieth century, the German philosopher Johann Georg Hamann (1730–85) chastised Enlightenment thinkers, deploring the imperialism of human reason's artificial, abstract treatment of the unseen and unclassifiable (Berlin 1993). To the contrary, because nature worked the senses and emotions, reality had to be multi-dimensional.

Although history has virtually ignored Hamann's thinking, his views on the limitations of reason informed by the physical sciences are shared today among thinkers on many levels. Even as secularism, materialism, and subjectivism dominate modern thinking and popular art, the debate on what sources of knowledge are to be considered legitimate continues. (see, for example, Snow 1998; Shlain 1991). A recent book on the philosophy of art by Jean Marie Schaeffer, explores the writings of well-known Western modern philosophers from Kant to Heidegger, demonstrating their commonly held approach to art, which Schaeffer calls "speculative theory," or the theory that "art offers a special kind of intuitive, quasi-mystical knowledge, radically different from the rational knowledge that informs science and empiricism." Further, according to Schaeffer, "this view encourages theorists to consider artistic geniuses the high priests of humanity, creators of works that reveal the invisible essence of the world" (Schaeffer 2000). Schaeffer's aim is to reject this theory, partially at least to legitimize a wider spectrum popular art. Given this motivation, Schaeffer's effort does not convincingly discredit the convictions the "speculative theorists."

It is difficult to categorically deny that some works of art have mystical capacity to move the heart and soul of humankind: the inspiration and knowledge for them being reasonably assumed to transcend visions confined to existential empiricism. Openness to this idea may be fundamental to appreciating the transformative qualities of masterpieces of art and their power to unite nations in commonly uplifting experiences such as those awakening sentiments of empathy and compassion.

Beauty

The concept of beauty is a principle concern of Schiller, whose writings give prominence to the essential aesthetic character of art – the embodiment of beauty. For Schiller, the intrinsic value of art lay in the powers of beauty to dissolve tensions binding persons in constraints imposed by sensations or ideas and to energize persons who languish or are lethargic (Schiller 82-83, 1954).

Beauty consists in the absolute inclusion of all realities and is a twofold experience that achieves balance in human nature. Schiller characterizes beauty as “living shape,” the object of the “play impulse”: it is the play between the “life impulse” or life expressing all material being and sense impressions and the “form impulse” or shape in a figurative or literal sense – a concept which includes all the formal qualities of things and their relations with the intellectual faculties. Because human beings are neither exclusively matter nor exclusively spirit, beauty, by bridging the two impulses, is the consummation of their humanity. (Schiller 77-86, 1954).

Neither reason nor experience teaches beauty. Schiller’s advice to artists in quest of beauty is to free themselves from the artifices of their epoch: to look upward in consciousness to dignity and to the higher laws of nature and not downwards to fortune and everyday needs. The artwork directs the world toward the good if by the work the world’s thoughts are elevated to the necessary and the eternal, if the work transforms the necessary and the eternal into the object of humanity’s highest impulses.

The power of beauty is measured in the effects of a true aesthetic experience. While giving no individual result or serving a particular purpose, it restores a sense of freedom, imparts serenity and freedom of spirit as well as strength and vigor. The more universally these moods are imparted, the nobler in value is the work of art that inspires them (Schiller 1954).

The Power of Universal Communication

For Tolstoy the universality of art’s power of communication as well as its capacity to raise humankind from material personhood into awareness of the universal life are measures of intrinsic worth. Art can satisfy humankind’s innate love of images and introduce ideas into those images inherently pleasing or painful to its senses. Tolstoy distinguishes true art from counterfeit art. The former evokes an aesthetic experience whereby artists and perceivers unite in mind to such a degree that all see the work as something that they have created themselves. The quality of art is measured by its infectivity. Tolstoy writes: “The stronger the infection, the better the art is as art, regardless of its content and independently of the worth of the feelings it conveys” (Tolstoy 121, 1995).

In sum, art is a means of communication the purpose of which is progress in humankind’s movement toward religious consciousness. By religious consciousness, Tolstoy means awareness that the good of humankind— spiritually and materially, individually and collectively, temporally and eternally— consists in solidarity or a union of love between all people. Tolstoy thus invokes the notion of the transcendent in his conceptualization and evaluation of “true art” (Tolstoy 1995), as do Schiller and Maritain. In Tolstoy’s view there are only two good kinds of art: religious art and universal art conveying the simplest everyday feelings of life shared by everyone in the world.

The intrinsic value of art as shared experience is most exquisitely articulated by Okakura Kakuzo in *The Book of Tea*. He writes:

Nothing is more hallowing than the union of kindred spirits in art. At the moment of meeting, the art lover transcends himself. At once he is and is not. He catches a glimpse of Infinity, but words cannot voice his delight, for the eye has no tongue.

Freed from the fetters of matter, his spirit moves in the rhythm of things. It is thus that art becomes akin to religion and ennobles mankind (Okakura 81-82, 1956).

In this observation, Okakura shares the perspectives of Tolstoy on the oneness between the artist and the spectator. He sees the living shape of Schiller and breathes in the same inspiration of poetic knowledge articulated by Maritain. Describing the highest intrinsic value of art, Okakura writes:

The masterpiece is a sympathy played on our finest feelings [. . .] Hopes stifled by fear, yearnings that we dare not recognize, stand forth in new Glory. Our mind is the canvas on which the artists lay their color; their pigments are our emotions; their chiaroscuro the light of joy, the shadow of sadness (Okakura 78, 1956).

Okakura contrasts the sympathetic union or communication of spirit between the master of art and the art lover, with the cold, modern commonplace characterized, in Okakura's view, when the spectator offers a formal salute to the artist engrossed in technique, who rarely extends his feeling above himself. "His works may be nearer to science, but are farther from humanity." (Okakura 81, 1956)

The Intrinsic Value of Art and International Relations: Dag Hammarskjöld

In the twentieth century, a leading exponent of the intrinsic value of the arts to international relations and politics is the second Secretary General of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld. As had Maritain, Schiller, Tolstoy, and Okakura, Hammarskjöld isolates from the body of art those works which emerged from the noblest and sincerest motives of the inner person and attaches to them a noble cause. This is evident in his following statement:

The more faithfully you listen to the voice within you the better you will hear what is sounding outside. And only he who listens can speak. Is this the starting point of the road towards the union of your two dreams – to be allowed in clarity of mind to mirror life and in purity of heart to mold it? (Hammarskjöld 171, 1964)

Faced with the responsibility for commanding the "global ship of state" in a turbulent and divided world of rich and poor, the latter struggling for independence from the yoke of colonialism, the former locked in a cold war kept cool by the mutual threat of nuclear annihilation, this poet-statesman— convinced that strong links bind the spheres of art and politics— likens the role of the United Nations in international politics to that of the modern artist. Hammarskjöld is quoted as follows:

In modern international politics aiming toward that world of order which now more than ever seems to be the only alternative to disruption – we have to approach our task in the same spirit which animates the modern artist. We have to tackle our problems without the armor of inherited convictions or set formulas, but only with our bare hands and all the honesty we can muster. And we have to do so with an unbreakable will to master the inert matter of patterns created by history and sociological conditions (Fröhlich 18, 2001).

Hammar skjöld distinguishes the art of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries from the modern art of his epoch. As to the value of the latter, secularized societies could not equal that of the former, with its time-honored values going back to antiquity. Modern art was like the United Nations sailing on uncharted waters, having lost its moorings in the religious consciousness that fueled the idealism of yesteryear's noble works of art. He states in his address at the Museum of Modern Art:

Even in the political sphere we are likely to look to the creations of the past with nostalgia. But we know that those creations can never be brought back to life, that ours is the duty to find new forms, starting often from nothing. (Frohlich 18, 2001)

By “nothing” he is referring to the loss of values that underpinned the old societies that were no longer governing in the predominately secularized societies of the 1960s. The message of modern art for Hammar skjöld lay in the new reality that the artwork conveys in terms of experience:

In its search for the basic elements of the world surrounding us and in its fight for mastery of these elements, modern art has revealed to us also where lies the real victory of the great artists of the past. Without making us eclectics [. . .] modern art has helped us to understand [. . .] what has been achieved in the best works of the past. Modern art has forged the keys to a perfection it has not yet achieved. It teaches us to see by forcing us to use our senses, our intellect and our sensibility to follow it on its road of exploration. It makes us seers like Ezra Pound when in the first of his Pisan Cantos, he senses the “enormous tragedy of the dream in the peasant's bent shoulders.” Seers and explorers – these we must be if we are to prevail (Hammar skjöld 2005).

Hammar skjöld holds that music reflects the basic harmony of the universe. Its language is universal and timeless. In this writings on music, Hammar skold quotes from Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* written around 1635:

[in music] there is something of Divinity more than the ear discovers: it is an Hieroglyphical and shadowed lesson of the whole World, and creatures of God; such a melody to the ears as the whole world, well understood, would afford the understanding. ... There is no man alone, because every man is a Microcosm, and carries the whole World about him (Hammar skjöld 212, 2005).

Traditionally, great musical performances have taken place in the General Assembly Hall of the United Nations in celebration of the creation of the organization. It was an early tradition of the organization that these concerts include the final movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, which combines Beethoven's music and Schiller's poetry. In 1960, the symphony was played in its entirety and tragically again, in 1961 for Hammar skjöld's memorial service after his untimely death while on a mission in the Congo.

In his address to the audience before the concert in 1960, Hammar skjöld likened the movements of the symphony to the struggles of the United Nations:

When the Ninth symphony opens we enter a drama full of harsh conflict and dark threats. But the composer leads us on, and in the beginning of the last movement we hear again the various themes repeated, now as a bridge to the final synthesis. A moment of silence and a new theme is introduced, the theme of reconciliation and joy in reconciliation. A human voice is raised in rejection of all that has preceded and we enter the dreamt kingdom of peace. New voices join the first and mix in a jubilant assertion of life and all that it gives us when we meet it, joined in faith and human solidarity [. . .] The road of Beethoven [. . .] is also the road followed by the authors of the Preamble of the Charter. It begins with the recognition of the threat under which we all live [. . .] It moves on to a reaffirmation of faith in the dignity and worth of the human person and ends with the promise to practice tolerance and to live together in peace (Hammarskjöld 214-215, 2005).

The vision given rise in the powerful Ninth Symphony is similarly evoked in Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem, "Locksley Hall." The poem captures sentiments of a soldier weary of death and war, returning to his imagined home. It conjures a vision of human advance and conflict, of commerce and naval combat, which culminate in a world of federation, peace, and universal law. Tennyson wrote among the many verses of "Locksley Hall" the following lines:

*For I dipped into the future, far as human eye could see.
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be;
Saw the heavens filled with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilot of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;
Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew
From the nations' airey navies grappling in the central blue;
Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the thunder-storm
Till the war drum throb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were furl'd
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the World.
There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapped in universal law.*

This 19th century poem had power to inspire famous 20th century political leaders, including Winston Churchill and Harry S. Truman, whose imaginations were captivated by the poem's noble and prophetic vision. Truman is said to have carried the poem in his lapel pocket for many years as a reminder of his own world view. Both leaders were engaged in the formation of the United Nations while their countries were in the exhausting throes of world war.

Looking to the Future

In modern times, social progress and great societies are equated with rising incomes, rates of production, and mass consumption. Democracy is commonly equated with elections and successful political campaigns are driven by money and the commercialization of art in advertising, media sound bites, and photo opportunities – campaigns strategically packaged by experts to appeal to pecuniary self-interest and individual security.

Certainly, increasing income gaps between rich and poor, the rapid deterioration of the global environment, and ubiquitous insecurity stoked by fears of terrorism, economic disintegration, climate change, and nuclear proliferation indicate that all is not well with human civilization, which is out of sync with the “music of the spheres.” Moreover, educational programs that fail to emphasize the arts and budget cutting that targets the arts would seem to deprive future societies of sources of ideas, inspiration, and imagination they need to confront the most intractable sociopolitical issues challenging them.

The culture of Promethean man and material reification is, like the bubbling brew of Goethe’s Sorcerer’s Apprentice, leaping out of its Western cauldron and flowing around the globe. All of this indicates that the public and their leaders would be wise to look beyond economics and material affluence to seek a better future for the world by re-enchantment. A recognized way to re-enchantment in today’s secular society is through the Arts (Elkins and Morgan 2009).

The political discourse that would encourage a society to seek re-enchantment and the full flourishing of its democratic culture characterized by its citizens’ capacities to realize their potential and to interconnect empathetically with each other and other countries and societies, must be informed by the arts as well as the sciences. Schiller wrote:

If man is ever to solve that problem of politics (to learn to live free in the modern world) in practice he will have to approach it through the problem of the aesthetic, because it is only through beauty that a man makes his way to Freedom (Schiller 1954).

The politically inspired artist may conceive his work so as to stimulate the expression of the intangible principals and values that inspire ideals in a society. Both truth and beauty – both science and the arts – as sources of knowledge are indispensable for a balanced and creative society. Modern societies must offset creeping commercial reification and restore the arts to their proper place as the highest expression of human intelligence and spirit.

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Online Resources

Americans for the Arts. At www.artsusa.org. Americans for the Arts is the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America. With 45 years of service, we are dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts.

World Forum for Acoustic Ecology. At interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/wfae/home/index.htm. The World Forum for Acoustic Ecology is “an international association of affiliated organizations and individuals, who share a common concern with the state of the world's soundscapes. Our members represent a multi-disciplinary spectrum of individuals engaged in the study of the social, cultural and ecological aspects of the sonic environment.”

International Arts Resources from Artslynx. At www.artslynx.org. Artslynx is designed as a portal to the best information on the arts available on the web. Its curated link libraries and extensive original material (especially in the areas of theatre and dance) are specifically optimized for researchers, scholars, educators, students, and professionals working in the arts.

International Association of Music Information Centres (IAMIC). At www.iamic.net. The International Association of Music Information Centres (founded in 1986) is a worldwide network of organizations that document and promote the music of our time. IAMIC currently (2008) supports the work of 41 member organizations in 38 countries.

International PEN. At www.internationalpen.org.uk. Originally founded in 1921 to promote literature, today International PEN has 144 centres in 102 countries across the globe. It recognizes that literature is essential to understanding and engaging with other worlds; if you can't hear the voice of another culture how can you understand it? Our primary goal is to engage with and empower societies and communities across cultures and languages, through reading and writing.

Paint for the Planet Exhibition at UN Headquarters in New York. At www.unep.org/paint4planet/Exhibition.aspx. Paint for the Planet launched on Thursday, October 23, with the opening of the exhibit at the UN Headquarters. The original artwork, which was chosen from a collection of nearly 200,000 paintings, was exhibited for the very first time. The Paint for the Planet exhibition was open to all. At the opening, several of the young prizewinning artists shared their message for the planet with decision makers, corporate leaders, and the media.

Poetry Society of America. Poetry Criticism: Poetry and Politics. At www.poetrysociety.org/journal/offpage/poetry_politics.html. On October 26, 2000 the Poetry Society of America hosted the second debate in its continuing Poetry and Criticism series. The panel discussion, which featured Thomas Sayers Ellis, Marilyn Hacker, Erica Hunt, and Ron Silliman, focused on the ways in which contemporary poets manifest political and social thought.

Poet and critic James Sherry provided opening remarks and presided over the dynamic discussion that followed.

POLARTS. At www.jyu.fi/yhtfil/polarts. The international ECPR Standing Group on Politics and the Arts (POLARTS) aims to advance understanding of the particular contribution that the arts – literature, theatre, television and radio, music, the visual and plastic arts, film, architecture – bring to politics. POLARTS is committed to the comparative and interdisciplinary study of art as a form of political discourse, of art as descriptive and interpretative of the political, or of the interpretation of art in terms of its political significance.

UNESCO-CULTURE. At portal.unesco.org/culture. Preserving and respecting the specificity of each culture, while ensuring that it preserves and respects the specificities of another culture, and involving it in an approach that bring them together and extends beyond them in a more interactive and interdependent world, is the challenge which must be met by the international community and, on its behalf, by UNESCO and its partners.

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