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**The Total Artwork in Comparative Literature Analysis:
Belletristic and Scientific Positions from Wagner’s Operas
and Tolstoy’s Art Philosophy to Business Branding
and the Olympic Games**

1. Introduction

The total artwork has been defined since the mid-1800s as the artistic integration, within one piece of artwork, of all (or at least many) of the major art forms, such as drama, music poetry, dance, and architecture. Its definition and application is currently, in the 21st century, afresh debated in international scholarly literature from various academic fields (such as comparative literature, art history, philosophy, linguistics, and music).

This research studies the total artwork under theoretical, methodological, and empirical key aspects, via a comparative literature analysis and transdisciplinary investigation. This research coincides with the renewed scholarly interest, an ever more widespread access of artists to potential media of expression, and a rising popular demand for works of art that might be considered as “total”. Therefore, the area of this research is located in both comparative literature and contemporary art history, the nature of the research is both theoretical and applied, while the methods of the research are firmly taken from comparative literature, Comparative literature’s methodological potential is shown with references to systems theory as well as to feminist and cultural studies, supporting this research to include the relationship between artworks, literature, and society.

Conceptually, the research first develops a comprehensive and itemized definition of the total artwork, which also allows to engage with its contentious aspects, before molding it into a concise and compact working definition for subsequent empirical applicability; all of which is based on critically reflected and transparent criteria.

Empirically, a selection of examples of total works of art, as exemplified and referred to in scholarly literature. is then assembled and compared according to the developed definitions and the conceptual framework, and cataloged in an expandable list for which theoretical and structural alternatives are also offered.

Then, recent scholarly claims of total works of art are investigated from academic areas that have by tradition considered to be outside of the field and of the understanding of art, such as business and sports. Presented are two literary voices that hold their cases worthy to be considered works of art, namely firstly the branding of an automobile, and secondly the athletic achievements in the context of Olympic Games.

Overall, this research aims to contribute in terms of its developed conceptual framework for total works of art, in terms of its offered methodological approaches within the field of comparative literature, as well as in terms of its empirical investigation and analysis of recent literature from fields traditionally considered outside of art. On that basis, this research proposes further comparative and transdisciplinary investigation, both qualitatively and quantitatively, on the total artwork in the fields of art, literature, and humanities. It further suggests the consideration and inclusion of applied research in areas traditionally considered outside of art, such as, but not limited to, business or sports.

2. Historical Background and Contemporary Terminology

Tracing its originally Germanic-language roots, the term “Gesamtkunstwerk” was first mentioned in a literary context by the German philosopher and writer Karl Friedrich Eusebius Trahdorff in his 1827 treatise *Ästhetik oder Lehre von Weltanschauung und Kunst* [Aestheticism or Theory of Belief System and Art] (see for this source and background Borchmeyer 1994: 181). The German composer Richard Wagner employed similar terms in two 1849 treatises, namely *Die Kunst und die Revolution* [Art and Revolution], and *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* [The Artwork of the Future] (see for this source and background Ellis 1993: 35, 52, 88), and provided further details in his 1851 treatise *Oper und Drama* [Opera and Drama] (see for this source and background Kropfger 1986).

The literature does on the one hand agree that the notion of the “Gesamtkunstwerk” is one of Richard Wagner’s main overarching legacies, yet also points out that it has developed such strong and wide-ranging theoretical and practical implications since then that it can be considered as transcending his own renowned pursuit for new artistic forms and expressions within his musical dramas and operas (Finger 2006: 10-11; Fornoff 2004: 239; Smith 2007: 5, 187-188).

For that reason, scholarly writings that link Richard Wagner with the total work of art, even if themselves deep and detailed (as instance the works of Bermbach 2004, or Klein 2001) are discussed only if they fit the research conceptually or empirically; otherwise, they are taken as one of the artistic and historical bases for this investigation. Two exceptions are the below more extensive quotations and analyses of Leo Tolstoy discussing of Wagner’s conception and practical expression of the total work, namely in his novel *Anna Karenina* (1878) as well as in his monograph *What is Art?* (1897).

The reason for this special inclusion of Tolstoy’s discussion of Wagner is fivefold: firstly, including an artistic contemporary of Richard Wagner and one of the most eminent representatives of world literature, heightens the authenticity of our contemporary comparative literature analysis. Secondly, Tolstoy’s viewpoints go directly to the heart of the conceptual understanding of the total work of art. Thirdly, Tolstoy’s literary treatment in form of both belletristic (*Anna Karenina*) and philosophical (*What is Art?*) form addresses theoretical, practical and contentious issues of the total artwork that still resound in modern

scientific sources. Fourthly, Tolstoy unites both theoretical reflections and practical, first-hand impressions of one of Wagner's stage productions in complex and compact passages that illustrate the interwovenness of the total artwork's conceptual and empirical aspects. Tolstoy's writing can thus serve, at the same time, as a contemporary historical source, as a comprehensive literary introduction to the total artwork's development, as a link to modern literary examples, and as a counterpoint to recent claims of total artworks from areas traditionally considered outside of art. Finally, and maybe most importantly, many of Tolstoy's ideas and wordings still reverberate in current scholarly literature, as discussed in the below conceptual and empirical parts.

Terminologically, scholarly literature in the German language consistently uses the term "Gesamtkunstwerk", as reflected in the titles of recent comprehensive monographic analyses and treatments, such as by Fornoff (*Die Sehnsucht nach dem Gesamtkunstwerk*, 2004) or Finger (*Das Gesamtkunstwerk der Moderne*, 2006).

Academic usage in the English language seems to switch without fixed guidelines between the two possible translations, namely of "total work of art" or, linguistically more concise and grammatically more compact, of "total artwork". This can be seen for instance in the titles of several recent comprehensive monographic or edited volumes that favor the longer expression, such as by Smith (*The Total Work of Art*, 2007), Roberts (*The Total Work of Art in European Modernism*, 2016), or Imhoof, Menninger and Steinhoff (*The Total Work of Art: Foundations, Articulations, Inspirations*, 2016). This contrast with recent works that prefer the shorter expression, for example by Finger and Follett (*The Aesthetics of the Total Artwork*, 2010).

Finally, scholarly literature in the Romance languages adopts, as its English-speaking contemporaries, the adjective "total" rather than a simile of the German prefix "gesamt": for Spanish, as used by Carandell (*Una Obra de Arte Total*, 2002), for French, as expressed by Lista (*L'Œuvre d'Art Totale*, 2006), or for Italian, as by Trimarco, (*Opera d'Arte Totale*, 2001). For reasons of brevity and clarity, this research, from here on, only mostly the term "total artwork".

For the sake of linguistic authenticity and source transparency, and in the spirit of comparative literature, every source title, literary quote, or scientific term in another source language (German, French, Italian or Spanish) is first rendered in its original form, and then fully translated into English.

3. Tolstoy's View on Wagner's Conception of the Total Artwork in *Anna Karenina*

Leo Tolstoy prominently discusses Wagner's conception of the total artwork in two of his works, namely in a passage of his 1878 novel *Anna Karenina*, and then in a chapter in his 1897 book-form treatise *What is Art?* Both these instances are quoted here in extensive detail, for several reasons: firstly, they are reflected in voices of modern and

specialized literature on the total artwork. Secondly, as those modern sources do not refer to Tolstoy, this research builds bridges between belletristic and scientific literature as well as across time, in the tradition and self-understanding of comparative literature analysis. Thirdly, Tolstoy's treatment is still surprisingly and convincingly relevant and insightful, even if read side by side with current specialized and comprehensive literary treatments of the total artwork.

The specific location and context in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* is Levin's attendance of two matinée concert performances, namely the fantasia "King Lear on the Heath" followed by a string quartet dedicated to the memory of Bach. Tolstoy allows his characters an explicit discussion of the combination of the art forms of music, poetry, painting, and sculpture (quoted below from E.B. Greenwood's 1999 annotated English edition, pp. 675-676):

"During the interval Levin and Pestov began a discussion on the merits and defects of the Wagnerian tendency in music. Levin maintained that the mistake of Wagner and of all his followers lay in trying to make music enter the domain of another art, and that poetry commits the same error when it depicts the features of a face, which should be done by painting, and, as an example of this kind of error, he mentioned a sculptor who tried to chisel the shadows of poetic images arising around the pedestal of his statue of a poet. 'The sculptor's shadow so little resembled shadows that they even clung to a ladder,' said Levin. [...] Pestov argued that art was all one, and that it can only reach its highest manifestations by uniting all the different kinds of art. Levin could not listen to the second part of the concert, for Pestov, who stood beside him, talked all the while and found fault with the piece because of its unnecessary and sickly affectation of simplicity, comparing it with the simplicities of the pre-Raphaelite school of painting."

This passage is end-noted by the editor of the English edition as follows (Greenwood 1999: 812; original emphases): "The German composer Richard Wagner (1813-83) wanted to combine music, poetry and scenic representation in one art form. Tolstoy attacked Wagner's art in *What is Art?* (1898)." Regarding the sculptor mentioned by the character Levin in the above passage, the editor comments in another end note (Greenwood 1999: 812): "This may allude to M. Antokolshy's design for a sculpture of characters from Pushkin around the statue of the poet submitted to the Academy of Arts in 1875. Levin's views on art are similar to those of the German critic Gotthold Lessing (1729-81) in his *Laokoon* (1766)."

4. Tolstoy's View on Wagner's Conception of the Total Artwork in *What is Art?*

Leo Tolstoy discusses Wagner's conception of the total artwork, and his position on Wagner's ideas and practices, in much more detail in his 1897 book-form treatise *What is Art?* (quoted below from Aylmer Maude's 1904 English translation). The passage starts

out with theoretical reflections on the relationship between the different art forms, and on their stage realization and transformation by Wagner (Tolstoy 1904: 127-131; original emphases):

“Wagner [...] considered that music should serve poetry, expressing all the shades of a poetical work [...] to correct the opera by letting music submit to the demands of poetry and unite with it. But each art has its own definite realm [...] and therefore [...] the demands of the one art will make it impossible to fulfil the demands of the other. [...] Wagner wishes that musical art should submit to dramatic art, and that both should appear in full strength. But this is impossible, for every work of art [...] is an expression of intimate feelings of the artist, which are quite exceptional, and not like anything else. Such is a musical production, and such is a dramatic work [...] If they coincide, then either one is a work of art and the other a counterfeit, or both are counterfeits. [...] Works of this kind, adjusted to one another, are [...] only imitations of art, like the music of a melodrama, signatures to pictures, illustrations, and librettos to operas. And such are Wagner's productions. [...] Wagner's new music lacks the [...] entirety and completeness that the smallest alteration in its form would disturb the meaning of the whole work. In a true work of art – poem, drama, picture, song, or symphony – it is impossible to extract one line, one scene, one figure, or one bar from its place and put it in another, without infringing the significance of the whole work. [...] But in the music of Wagner [...] it is possible to make all kinds of transpositions [...] without altering the musical sense [...] because the sense lies in the words and not in the music. [...] Wagner is not only a musician, he is also a poet, or both together; and therefore, to judge of Wagner, one must know his poetry also – that same poetry which the music has to subserve.”

Tolstoy then embarks on a detailed and in-depth description of a personal experience of the Wagnerian production and performance of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (most closely rendered in English as *The Ring of the Nibelung*, a cycle of four German-language epic music dramas based loosely on Norse sagas combined with an epic poem in 12th-century Middle High German). Tolstoy evaluates the effects of this opera both on stage as well as on the spectator. The harshness of Tolstoy labeling Wagnerian productions as “counterfeit works” can be understood as contemporary artistic and linguistic license, and as a vivid and passionate expression of Tolstoy's position on the purity and preferred separateness of art forms (Tolstoy 1904: 131-140):

“The chief poetical production of Wagner is *The Nibelung's Ring* [...] It is a model work of counterfeit art, so gross as to be even ridiculous. [...] The success of Wagner's works [...] I explain to myself in this way: thanks to his exceptional position in having at his disposal the resources of a king, Wagner was able to command all the methods for counterfeiting art which have been developed by long usage, and, employing these methods with great ability, he produced a model work of counterfeit art. [...] In no other counterfeit of art known to me are all the methods by which art is counterfeited – namely, borrowings, imitation, effects, and interestingness – so ably and powerfully united. From the subject, borrowed from antiquity, to the clouds and the risings of the sun and moon,

Wagner, in this work, has made use of all that is considered poetical. We have here the sleeping beauty, and nymphs, and subterranean fires, and gnomes, and battles, and swords, and love, and incest, and a monster, and singing-birds: the whole arsenal of the poetical is brought into action. Moreover, everything is imitative: the decorations are imitated and the costumes are imitated. [...] The very sounds are imitative, for Wagner [...] invented just such sounds as imitate the strokes of a hammer, the hissing of molten iron, the singing of birds, etc. Furthermore, in this work everything is in the highest degree striking in its effects and in its peculiarities: its monsters, its magic fires, and its scenes under water; the darkness in which the audience sit, the invisibility of the orchestra, and the hitherto unemployed combinations of harmony. [...] The interest lies also in the relation of the music to the text. The rolling waves of the Rhine – now how is that to be expressed in music? An evil gnome appears – how is the music to express an evil gnome? – and how is it to express the sensuality of this gnome? How will bravery, fire, or apples he expressed in music? [...] Besides, the music [...] diverges from all formerly accepted laws, and most unexpected and totally new modulations crop up [...]; the dissonances are new, and are allowed in a new way.”

Overall, Tolstoy evaluates Wagner’s work as hypnotizing and thus manipulating its audience, and rejects such an understanding and realization of art. Tolstoy’s passage anticipates our discussion of modern literary conceptualizations of total artworks, including critical features that reside in precisely those psychological and emotional elements that mark its “totality” (Tolstoy 1904: 140-142):

“And it is this poeticality, imitativeness, effectfulness, and interestingness which, thanks to the peculiarities of Wagner’s talent and to the advantageous position in which he was placed, are in these productions carried to the highest pitch of perfection, that so act on the spectator, hypnotising him as one would be hypnotised who should listen for several consecutive hours to the ravings of a maniac pronounced with great oratorical power. People say, “You cannot judge without having seen Wagner performed at Bayreuth: in the dark, where the orchestra is out of sight concealed under the stage, and where the performance is brought to the highest perfection.” And this just proves that we have here no question of art, but one of hypnotism. [...] And thus, thanks to the masterly skill with which it counterfeits art while having nothing in common with it, a meaningless, coarse, spurious production finds acceptance all over the world, costs millions of roubles to produce, and assists more and more to pervert the taste of people of the upper classes and their conception of what is art.”

Interestingly, it seems to be just this all-inclusive dimension (or, in Tolstoy’s sense, “hypnotic effectfulness”) which the forwarded examples of total artworks in the modern scientific literature seem either to lack or self-consciously shy away from, as shown below. In this respect too, Tolstoy’s two analyzed works can arguably be considered predictive as well as timeless.

5. Research Field and Research Nature

While this research is about *art* (the total artwork), it investigates *literature* (on total artworks). The concept of the total artwork originating in the 19th century, and the use literature from the 20th and 21st centuries locate the research within contemporary, or modern art history. Decisive, however, is that the analyzed literary treatments of the total artwork (both scholarly and novelistic), and their various source languages, place the research firmly in the *literary* realm. Besides, literature is itself an acknowledged art form, and as shown below, even one of the possible mediums of expression of total artworks. Finally, our methodology section references definitions and self-perceptions of the comparative literature that traditionally allow this field to analyze all art forms. Therefore, an investigation of the total artwork can combine the disciplines of art as well as of literature, as we do in this comprehensive and comparative research.

For this research to have also an empirical dimension, it would have to measure “observable phenomena” (McNealy 1991: 6), occurring in the “real world” or “in the field” (Robson 2002: 4), and be “based on [...] evidence [...] which can be inspected by anyone” (Peer, Hakemulder and Zyngier 2007: 7). It is thus worthy to reflect whether, without physical and concrete works of art to point to, this research might not address “real”, but only “literary” phenomena. However, our compared and investigated literature already contains all the required phenomena and data, in form of references to concepts as well as to real-life examples and claims of total artworks.

Thus our analyzed literature is at the same time the field and also the evidence of the research, containing the conceptual and methodological frameworks as well as the references to the investigated artworks. This understanding of the relation between total artworks and its describing and analyzing literature is supported by Fornoff (2004: 22) when he labels as “empirical” his own study of *historical* examples of total artworks. In sum, for a comparative literature investigation of total artworks, the term “empirical” also allows to assemble, analyze and compare artistic and literary theories about total artworks, together with literary references to examples or claims of total artworks.

6. Comparative Literature as Framework for Analyzing Art and Literature

Our research focusing on artworks and their literary reflections does not yet determine the area and choice of methods: textbooks on qualitative methods in the social sciences tend not to differentiate between the many possible fields or disciplines they enable to investigate (see just Berg 2008; Bryman 2004; May 2001; Neuman 2006). For investigations that combine art and textual sources, textbooks on art history methods tend to allow the texts to be the tools for art analysis, such as the respective frameworks, codes and signs provided by semiotics (see D'Alleva 2005: 28-42) or by structuralism or deconstructivism (see Schneider 2009: 133-178). Finally, methodology textbooks that

combine art with social sciences tend to make art the toolbox for those many other social sciences fields, as does for instance arts-based-research, an approach to qualitative social science issues via tools and methods from the arts, especially the six genres of narrative inquiry, poetry, music, visual arts, performance, or movement and dance (Leavy 2009: ix, 2-3). Hence our research may apply methods either from art itself, or from the social sciences, but also and especially from other literary approaches and fields.

This begs the question of whether we can directly use methods from the field of comparative literature. To consider here is this field's long-standing concern of lacking a clear own definition and methodology (dating back to Wellek 1963: 282; reiterated by Bassnett 1993: 1-2; Damrosch 2003: 284-285; Perloff 1995: 176). In remedy of this concern, Tötösy de Zepetnek proclaims ten "general principles of comparative literature" (1998: 4-18), the second of which can be considered the field's central tenet, namely to bridge "languages, literatures, and disciplines" (1998: 4). The fourth, the "comparative principle", links literature "to other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences" (1998: 6, 79). The eighth, the "principle of method", is the field's "methodology in interdisciplinary study", namely relating literature to "other areas of artistic expression such as film, music, the visual arts, etc." (1998: 8, 79).

Thus comparative literature can investigate literature together with art forms and expressions. The investigated literature does not need to be belletristic (Chow 1995: 115; Damrosch 2009: 6-7). Furthermore, this research can investigate art through literature *especially* on the total artwork, as clarified by Finger (2006: 7, 10), who argues for "ein Neu-Lesen eines zentralen Konzeptes der Moderne, Gesamtkunstwerk" [an anew reading of a central concept of modernism, total artwork], and even reverses the approach, so as for the total artwork to analyze literature: "Wie läßt sich das Konzept Gesamtkunstwerk auf die Literaturanalyse innerhalb der cultural studies anwenden?" [How can the concept of the total artwork be applied to literature analysis within cultural studies?]. We can thus argue *e fortiori*: if the total artwork can be applied to analyze literature within any field of cultural studies, then literature from any field of cultural studies can all the more be applied to analyze the total artwork.

Our research can thus apply methods of comparative literature for multiple reasons and from various perspectives. Among the four traditional methodological areas of comparative literature, namely literature theory, translation theory, cultural studies, and feminist studies (see Tötösy de Zepetnek 1998: 121, 173, 215), cultural studies and feminist studies seem to be the most relevant here. For instance, the below analyzed current claims of total artworks that originate from the realms of business and of sport could now be revealed by cultural studies or feminist studies to advance interests and agendas that are unrelated or even alien to art, such as the invocation of artistic appeal to raise a company's or product's public profile and customer attraction, ultimately targeting economic profits. While deeper engagements with such interests and agendas lie outside the scope of this research, their possible investigation in later research serves to fortify our use of comparative literature methods.

7. Systems Theory as Methodological Approach within Comparative Literature

Searching for suitable specific methods within comparative literature, as well as for cultural and feminist studies, it seems that comparative literature's mentioned concern about its own delineation and methodology is compounded by authors who treat "literature" and "theory" separately (see just Culler 1997: 1-17, 18-41). Also, many broad literary theory approaches seem challenging to relate to the total artwork, centering instead on intra-textual concerns such as formalism, structuralism, historicism, postmodernism, gender studies, ethnic studies, or psychoanalysis (see just Ryan 1999), or on hermeneutics, phenomenology, reception theory, or political criticism (see just Eagleton 2008).

More suitable for analyzing the aesthetic and structural elements of the total artwork, then, seems the approach of "systems theory", especially considering our later discussion of claims of total artworks from areas seemingly unrelated to art, such as business and sport. At a first glance, systems theory approaches to literary studies appear to focus more on literature that engages with itself, or with the reader, rather than with works of art outside of it, as in these approaches of systems theory: literature as interaction, information and literary meaning; psyche and environment; psychological configurations; needs and human nature; or, the evolution of literature itself (see Sadowski 1999).

However, a promising and suitable specific approach within systems theory might be a branch that specializes on the relationships between art, literature, and society, as founded by the German transdisciplinary art sociologist Niklas Luhmann and his works on codification, reception, and fictional reality of art and literature, all issues taken up in his two best-known works, namely on the relationship between art and society (*Die Kunst der Gesellschaft* [The Art of Society], 1997) and between art and literature (*Schriften zu Kunst und Literatur* [Writings on Art and Literature], 2008). Hence with a specific systems theory approach within comparative literature, we could combine comparative literature's two traditional methodological areas, cultural studies and feminist studies, with the specific approach of systems theory.

The resulting possible methodological permutations between art, literature, society, and the total artwork are not all explorable, much less exhaustible within this one piece of research. But their evident potential for transdisciplinary and comparative literature analysis constitutes one of this research's methodological insights, contributions, and recommendations for future investigations.

8. Research Lacunae in Recent Literature

Some of the 20th-century sources that try to establish "a central theory" for the total artwork forward empirical examples that are however only as recent as the Third Reich, totalitarian states, the former Soviet Union, or the pop singer Madonna (see Günther 1994). Only two comprehensive 21st-century writings have been found that attempt a

detailed conceptual treatment of the total artwork, but firstly do so in a very abstract and philosophical manner, and secondly by providing either just four (Fornoff 2004: 20-21) or even just three (Brock 2002: 6-7) defining elements of the total artwork. These writings are summarized and simplified below, while enhanced and re-formulated with own critical thinking.

By contrast, only one source seems to propose an itemized and detailed definition of what constitutes a total artwork (Franzen and Moriarty 2009: 512), and even then is still found too abstract and fragmented for immediate empirical use. Hence below it is re-structured for a more concise and empirically usable working definition. For an own working definition, we will seek to combine the literary definitions' advantages (depth and itemization) and remove their disadvantages (abstraction and complexity), shaped further with critical thinking. Such a working definition should firstly allow to differentiate and select convincingly among the forwarded literary examples of total artworks, and secondly to assemble a catalog of total artwork examples that, while still subjective, is conceptually and empirically solid. On that basis, we can finally investigate recent literary claims of total artworks even from areas traditionally considered outside of arts, such as business or sport.

9. Philosophical and Complex Definitions of the Total Artwork

Roger Fornoff (2004: 20-21) attempts "den Begriff des Gesamtkunstwerks erstmals in umfassender Form zu entwickeln" [to develop the concept of the total artwork for the first time in comprehensive form]. Phrased and enumerated in a complex manner, he requires for a total artwork "vier grundlegende Strukturelemente" [four basic structural elements] (below numbered and reduced to their most essential features):

1) "inter- oder multimediale, also unterschiedliche Künste oder ästhetisch-mediale Elemente" [inter- or multimedial, therefore different, arts or esthetic-medial elements]

2) "eine Theorie oder zumindest eine bestimmte Vorstellung von der idealen Vereinigung der Künste" [a theory or at least a certain imagination of the ideal unification of the arts]

3) "eine geschlossene und festgefügte Weltanschauung bzw. ein in unterschiedlicher Weise, etwa gesellschaftstheoretisch, geschichtsphilosophisch oder metaphysisch-religiös akzentuiertes Bild vom Ganzen" [a close and firmly established belief system, or a differently accentuated, societal-theoretical, historical-philosophical or metaphysical-religious bigger picture]

4) "eine in unterschiedlichem Maße konkretisierte, ästhetisch-soziale oder ästhetisch-religiöse Utopie" [an esthetical-social or esthetical-religious utopia, substantiated in different degrees].

Even these essential requirements still appear verbally very complex. Hence in own further simplification and rephrasing, the total artwork would require:

- 1) Different Art Forms, sustained by a
- 2) Unifying Theory, held together by an
- 3) Aesthetical Utopia, and embedded in a
- 4) Overarching/Undergirding Belief System.

By contrast, Bazon Brock (2002: 106-107) stipulates a comprehensive condition and specifies three aspects of a total artwork, but does so too in abstract and philosophical wording:

“Von Gesamtkunstwerken wollen wir [...] dann sprechen, wenn Individuen ein gedankliches Konstrukt übergeordneter Zusammenhänge als bildliche oder epische Vorstellung oder als wissenschaftliches System oder als politische Utopie entwickelt haben. [...] Ein Aspekt ist, das Ganze zu denken und zur Sprache zu bringen. Diese Bilder und Gedanken über ‘das Ganze’ auch selbst zu verkörpern, also in die eigene Lebensrealität aufzunehmen [...] ist der zweite Aspekt. Der dritte verweist auf das ebenso unabdingbare Verlangen, auch andere – möglichst viele, gar alle – Menschen [dieser] Wahrheit zu unterwerfen.”

[We wish to speak of total artwork [...] when individuals have developed a mental construct of superordinate connections as pictorial or epical imagination, or as scientific system, or as political utopia. [...] One aspect is, to think and to verbalize the whole. The second is, to embody oneself these images and thoughts of ‘the whole’, to absorb them into the own life reality [...] The third refers to the likewise indispensable desire, to subject also other – as many as possible, even all – people to [this] truth.]

Brock (2002: 107) considers total artworks mostly to be verbalized mental constructions of a “whole”. Historically decontextualized due to this challenging “wholeness”, they tend to mutate and be sublimated into fictional myths:

“Gesamtkunstwerke existieren also nur als fiktive Größe, als zur Sprache gebrachte gedankliche Konstruktionen eines Ganzen. [...] Wenn sie ein ‘Ganzes’ zu erfassen behaupten, bleiben ihre Aussagen nicht an ihren historischen Urheber gebunden, sie werden [...] urheberlose Erzählungen, also Mythos.”

[Total artworks thus exist merely as a fictitious entity, a verbalized mental construction of a whole. [...] When they claim to capture a ‘whole’, their statements do not remain tied to their historical author, but they become [...] author-less stories, that is, myths.]

Hence according to Brock, and again in own simplification and rephrasing, the total artwork would likewise require for elements, namely:

- 1) Mental Constructs, that are necessarily
- 2) Verbalized, but as such always
- 3) Elements of a Wholeness, before being
- 4) Transformed or Sublimated into Myths.

Fornoff's and Brock's models, each synthesized to just four points, still read rather differently. They would probably also produce different empirical results. Above all, their definitions still appear incomplete, in need of vital and palpable ingredients, such

as physical embodiments and audiences' sensory perceptions of any produced artworks. The only literature source found that appeared to contain more itemized, even if not yet directly empirically usable ingredients, is analyzed below.

10. Detailed and Itemized Definition of the Total Artwork

Remarkably, that itemized even if not yet completely concise definition of the total artwork has been found *only* in literature of fields traditionally considered outside of art, namely of business, marketing and branding. This is all the more remarkable since the legitimacy of such claims to total artworks is yet to be examined and established. Here, we begin by analyzing Franzen and Moriarty's conceptualization in their book *The Science and Art of Branding*, especially its last chapter, "Gesamtkunstwerk: The Art of Brand Integration" (2009: 512, original emphases):

"[For a] *Gesamtkunstwerk*: the following elements can be distinguished [...]:

1. *A utopia*: This is an abstract central idea, a mental construct, a philosophical or even metaphysical ideal that inspires an attempt to (re)create material reality.

2. *A visionary*: A spiritual father (or mother) takes the utopia beyond an abstract idea, puts it into words, embodies it, sees the shaping of reality to match this idea as a primary mission.

3. *An audience*: This is not only the sum of individual observers, but melts into a community that participates in the realization of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

4. *Multimedia orientation*: The *Gesamtkunstwerk* employs several interrelated disciplines.

5. *Control*: This represents the subordination to the utopia of the artists who form the group. They recognize and accept the ideal and are willing to submit themselves to its realization. The resistance against it, as is the case with free artists and applied arts such as those in the communication industry, forms the greatest obstacle to the attempt to give shape to the *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

6. *Consistency*: The vision – its central values and core concept – is shared by everyone in the group.

7. *Interdisciplinarity*: The co-creating professionals coordinate their contributions in such a way that the mental construct is expressed in all the material aspects of the work. The "doubling effect" is to be avoided, and the disciplines are to be made as complementary as possible.

8. *Continuity*: The *Gesamtkunstwerk* is approached not as a project that is subject to a system of planning and execution, but as a permanent design and consummation of the work of art in time, based on the starting points of the ideal.

9. *Synesthesia* (literally, co-perception): The members of the group realize that the activation of the five senses merges into an integrated perceptual oneness.

10. *Interactivity*: This is about mutual involvement between the member artists and an audience. The audience serves as a sounding board for artists.

In sum [...] *Gesamtkunstwerk* is the external manifestation of an inner body of thought that can claim to be a coherent and appealing whole [...] as unity of spirit or design.”

Noteworthy is that point 7) of this definition seems diametrically opposed to Tolstoy's conviction of the singularity of art forms: while both opinions agree that a duplication of art forms is to be avoided, Franzen and Moriarty wish them to be as complementary as possible. Left unfortunately without further explanation is Franzen and Moriarty's noted resistance of contributing artists in the communication industries against submitting to their creations. This might have added points of reflection and comparison with Tolstoy's position.

Else, this definition still seems lengthy and fragmented for direct empirical use. Its ten points and key characteristics are thus below synthesized, condensed and re-categorized in four sense-giving dimensions (namely of artwork, artist, subordination, and audience) for a smoother, operationalizable working definition. Again in own rewording, a total artwork could now be considered as:

1) (Artwork [4, 7, 8]:) *A continuous work expressed in several interrelated disciplines,*

2) (Artist [1, 2]:) *that constitutes a visionary utopia,*

3) (Subordination [5. 6]:) *demands complete subordination by all involved artists,*
and

4) (Audience [3, 9, 10]:) *interactively challenges and merges all the audience's senses.*

As a continuous sentence and operational working definition, the synthesized and condensed version of Franzen and Moriarty's definition would thus read: *A continuous work expressed via several interrelated disciplines, that constitutes a visionary utopia, demands complete subordination by all involved artists, and interactively challenges and merges all the audience's senses.*

On its basis, we can now first examine the general reflection of total artworks in the literature, then investigate a range of discrete literary examples, before analyzing them for their “totality”, and finally comparing them to claims of total artworks from areas traditionally considered outside of art.

11. The Fragmented Literary Reflection of Total Artworks

Several items and issues remain striking across more than one and a half centuries of the concept of the total artwork: Firstly, that only a few dozen examples of it seem to have been put forward in the scientific literature. Secondly, that those literary examples rarely coincide on the same alleged total artworks. Thirdly, that the rate of literary indication seems to decrease from the late 19th century towards the end of the 20th and into the 21st century. Fourthly, that a large part of the most recent, 21st century claims of total artworks

come from areas traditionally outside of art, whose legitimacy is still to be established below. This all results in an empirically fragmented image of the total artwork, scattered in the specialized literature, and compound its conceptual challenges. The remainder of this section illustrates these issues with an overview of total artwork examples as they have been forwarded in recent comprehensive literary treatments (some sources already introduced):

Among recent monographs, Brown's *The Quest for the Gesamtkunstwerk and Richard Wagner* (2016), qualifies the landscape garden, romantic drama, and the visual arts as total artworks, but has doubts for Goethe's drama *Faust* (2016: vii, 17-37, 38-58, 59-86). Roberts's *The Total Work of Art in European Modernism* (2011) mentions broad artistic periods, streams or movements, such as Festivals of the French Revolution, Modernism during the Long Nineteenth Century, the Spiritual in Art as exemplified by Kandinsky and the *Blaue Reiter*, or the Avant-Garde's Breakthrough to Totality (2011: vii-viii, 19, 77, 154, 232).

Among recent edited books, Imhoof, Menninger and Steinhoff's *The Total Work of Art: Foundations, Articulations, Inspirations* (2016), rather than concrete artworks, mentions artistic groups, periods or collective concepts such as the epic, music drama, memorial music, musical film, song-ballets, the aesthetics of sound, mass culture, or epistemic space (2016: vii-viii).

Other recent edited books, such as Finger and Follett's *The Aesthetics of the Total Artwork: On Borders and Fragments* (2011), discuss the German Romantic poet Friedrich Schlegel together with the German postwar writer Thomas Bernhard, the German-Jewish art historian and avant-garde influencer Carl Einstein together with the Swiss-German expressionist, cubist and realist painter Paul Klee, the Jewish-Hungarian painter, photographer and Bauhaus school professor László Moholy-Nagy in the context of his lumino-kinetic sculpture *Light Prop for an Electric Stage*, the German composer of aleatoric, serial and spatial music Karlheinz Stockhausen in the context of his opera cycle *Light*, or the art forms of Performing Avant-Garde Theater and Interactive Multimedia.

Among recent monographs, Finger (2006) treats German and American novelists and filmmakers besides multimedia; Smith (2007) discusses German and American artists besides artistic expressions from theatre, film, architecture, entertainment, and cyberspace; Lista (2006) discusses Italian, German and Russian Avant-Garde painters, sculptors and musicians between 1908 and 1914; while Fornoff (2004) includes German and Eastern European artists, among them Kandinsky, and their projects between Romanticism and the 20th century.

Between these comprehensive literary works, the only overlaps of mentioned areas or artists occur between Smith, Finger, and Finger and Follett, even if these three authors do not share any specific artwork or artist, but merely coincide on the broad areas of cyberspace and multimedia, while Lista and Fornoff do so only in mentioning the artist Kandinsky.

Other recent treatments seem not even *coincidentally* to agree on the same examples of total artworks, and mention them within such general criteria as art history, art form, geographical location, or artists' personalities. For example, some qualify as a total work of art the whole movement of expressionism between the years of 1905 and 1925, including, yet without further specification, the art forms of visual art, literature, film, theatre, dance, and architecture (Beil and Dillman 2010). Others pick from different art forms by mentioning a German mansion built in a hybrid style between Art Nouveau and expressionism (Metz, Richter and Minckwitz 2002), or Antoni Gaudí's building *Casa Milà* in Barcelona, also known as *La Pedrera* (Carandell and Vivas 2002), or Gustav Klimt's personal artistic quest for the creation of an uncontested *Gesamtkunstwerk* (Kallir and Weidinger 2009), or Stalin in compound with the culture of the former Soviet Union (Groys 2008), or the 1968 Broadway musical *Hair* (Krüßmann 2007), or the 1980 film *The Shining* (Marnat 2009), or the world of the contemporary clown Dimitri (Gschwend and Heitmann 2010).

Some authors focus on selected retrospectives: Block et al.'s 2001 volume takes its name *Der Hang zum Gesamtkunstwerk: Europäische Utopien seit 1800* [The Inclination towards the Total Artwork: European Utopias since 1800] from a preceding international art exhibition (and that exhibition's catalog; see Szeemann 1983) by displaying photos of alleged total artworks mostly as buildings, cathedrals, or sites (for example Gaudí's *Sagrada Família* in Barcelona, German artist Kurt Schwitters's *Merzbau* [Merz Barn] erected in multiple Northern European cities and countries, or *Monte Verità* [Mountain of Truth] in Ascona, Switzerland).

Finally, some writers allege several examples of total artworks from the early second half of the 20th century, namely between 1958 to 1975, but mostly limit themselves to quoting the respective artists' publications or statements about their own works (see Trimarco 2001: 21-33, 88).

12. Discrete Literary Examples of Total Artworks

It seems that no single writing to date has collected and organized the literary claims and examples of total artworks in an all-inclusive, convincing system. Whether that is even feasible, given the conceptual challenges and empirical insecurities, does not need to be answered here. This research tries to provide the foundation for a coherent and transparent system of ordering and structuring literary cases of total artworks. Furthering, completing and applying that system would be tasks and recommendations for further research. Aware that such a first collection and catalog of total artworks might not be coherent with every single element and point of the earlier developed theoretical frameworks, alternative ways of structuring total artworks are also offered.

For conceptual clarity, to align with our working definition, and for empirical transparency, we require any literary example of a total artwork to be described as

physically contained in the real world and as perceivable by any of the five senses. Hence for instance literary examples referring to the whole movement of expressionism (see Beil and Dillmann 2010), or Gustav Klimt's personal quest for the total artwork (see Kallir and Weidinger 2009), or the narrative techniques of the Russian and German filmmakers Sergei Eisenstein and Alfred Döblin such as their "Montage" (see Finger 2006: 123-140), or Brecht's "Epic Theatre" (see Smith 2007) are not included, lacking either specific artworks (such as specific paintings or films), or physical substantiation as per the provided literary information.

While this requirement excludes about half of all examples and references to total artworks in recent literature, it usefully differentiates between artworks for their physical and sensorial substance. On that basis, below we offer sixteen examples of total artworks, between 1813 and 2005, all taken from specialized late-20th-century and early-21st-century literature. We name artist(s) and their artwork(s), the author(s) who forwarded the respective example, and basic data about the surrounding artistic orientation or movement. According to our research orientation, only one literary reference to Wagner's work is included, namely the Bayreuth Festspielhaus (Smith 2007). For literary examples of films or musicals, the director(s), composer(s) or screenwriter(s) are indicated:

1) Richard Wagner (1813-1883): *Bayreuth Festspielhaus* [Festival Theater], concept of the 'Total Stage', constructed 1877-1876 (Smith 2007).

2) Henry van de Velde (1863-1957): *Villa Esche in Chemnitz*, Jugendstil [Art Nouveau], built 1902-1904 (Metz, Richter and Mickwitz 2002).

3) Antoni Gaudí (1852-1926): *La Casa Milà*, also known as *La Pedrera* [The Quarry], Jugendstil [Art Nouveau], built 1906-1912 (Carandell and Vivas 2002).

4) Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915): *Prometheus: The Poem of Fire*, complex dissonant symphonic work, 1910 (Lista 2006).

5) Arnold Schönberg (1874-1951): 2 Operas: *Erwartung* [Expectation], 1909; *Die Glückliche Hand* [The Fortunate Hand], 1913 (Lista 2006).

6) Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944): *Der Gelbe Klang* [The Yellow Sound], abstract color/sound/movement composition, 1912 (Lista 2006).

7) Bruno Taut (1880-1938): *Gesamtkglaswerk* [Total Work of Glass], temporary glass pavilion near Cologne, Germany, 1914, only photos preserved (Anger 2016).

8) The Bauhaus (1913-1933): *Bauhausbühne* [Bauhaus Stage], also known as *Bauhaus Totaltheater* [Bauhaus Total Theater], 1920s (Smith 2007; Trimmingham 2016).

9) Carl Einstein (1858-1914): *Bebuquin oder die Dilettanten des Wunders*, novel, 1912 (Finger 2006).

10) Gertrude Stein (1874-1946): *Americans*, novel, 1925 (Finger 2006).

11) Lázló Moholy-Nagy (1895-1946): *Light Prop for an Electric Stage*, luminous-kinetic sculpture, 1930 (Finger and Follett 2010).

12) Disney Company (founded 1923), Resorts Division (founded 1971): *Disney Theme Parks*, concept of 'total entertainment', first opened in Anaheim, Florida, 1955 (Smith 2007).

13) Galt McDermot (music), James Rado (lyrics): *Hair*, musical, Broadway, classical and epic theater forms in modern and musical adaptation, 1968 (Krüßmann 2007).

14) Stanley Kubrick (director), Diane Johnson (co-writer): *The Shining*, film, Kubrick uses music, architecture, and mixes myth, thriller and horror genres, 1980 (Marnat 2009).

15) Jakob Dimitri ('Dimitri the Clown (1935-2016): *The Swiss clown Dimitri's life*, with the performer as author, stage artist, educator and activist (Gschwend and Heitmann, 2010).

16) Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928-2007): *Light*, Opera-Cycle consisting of 7 Operas, altogether extending over 29 hours, 1977-2005 (Finger and Follett 2010).

It is probably fair to consider this list as an extremely eclectic mix of artists, forms, genres, movements, media, and modern historical and political eras. It also seems irregular, without clearly discernible pattern. That seems however less surprising, given the analyzed lack of a conceptual basis in the literature, without which common ground for empirical coherence about the nature and existence of total artworks appears indeed challenging to establish.

On the basis of this research's developed conceptual framework and working definition, the literary examples and their attributes as total artworks might need to be reconsidered. While a point-by-point evaluation and critique of all the mentioned artworks and their literary proponents is beyond the scope of this research, below we analyze the literary examples' most prominent types and discernible characteristics, before evaluating recent literary claims of total artworks from areas traditionally considered outside of art.

13. Analysis of Literary Total Artwork Examples: Totality?

The above sixteen chronological total artwork examples could be re-categorized according to nine types of total artworks (with their above number in square brackets for convenient comparison). These artwork types are then ranked according to the frequency of their literary mention:

- 1) Symphonic Works, Operas, or Complex Compositions [4, 5, 16];
- 2) Architectural Buildings and Structures [2, 3, 7];
- 3) Theater, Opera or Performance Stages [1, 8];
- 4) Films and Musicals [13, 14];
- 5) Novels [9, 10];
- 6) Paintings [6];
- 7) Sculptures [11];
- 8) (Disney) Theme Parks [12];
- 9) Performance Art [15].

The maybe most surprising aspect of comparing both lists concerns the total artwork's arguably most eminent aspect, namely its "totality", since even the most

shorthand definitions still require a synthesis of all, or at least several major art forms. Yet from the (admittedly elementary) information on the respective total artwork in the first list, only few of them seem to satisfy that requirement, namely:

- 1) Wagner's *Bayreuth Festspielhaus* [Festival Theater] [1]
- 2) The *Bauhausbühne* [Bauhaus Stage] [15],
- 3) Stockhausen's opera cycle *Light* [16],
- 4) The musical *Hair* [13],
- 5) (Disney) *Theme parks* [12], and
- 6) Kandinsky's color/sound/movement composition *Der Gelbe Klang* [Yellow Sound] [6].

These six examples all unite at least several artistic elements. The first four example arguably unite all major art dimensions when in live performance (including visual, sound and physical components such as painting, music, drama, and sculpture in form of stage scenery), The fifth example, (Disney) theme parks, is probably familiar to everyone, at least from the media, for carefully crafted attractions such as fairy tale castle miniaturizations, which, if only for commercial reasons, are artistically evocative and multidimensional. The sixth example, Kandinsky's painting plus movement and sound elements, unites at least some visual and acoustic elements.

While qualifying Kandinsky's work as total art could be justified with its combination of art forms, it seems surprising that novels are included (numbers 9 and 10 in the first list, and number 5 in the second). However memorable their content and evocative their style may be, are they not "only" books, without additional or surrounding artistic elements? One might then just as well wonder why no drawing, sketch or full painting of Leonardo da Vinci is considered as a total artwork, since he openly tried to achieve a mystic union of spirit and matter, declaring painting to be largely "una cosa mentale" [a spiritual thing] (see Charles et. al. 2006: 103). By contrast, theme parks, even if an art form and expression that might find its most ardent supporters among children, are at least uncontested in their inclusion of many art forms, and yet mentioned only once in the literature (by Smith, 2007). This begs the question and comparison of what constitutes an artwork's "totality".

Smith (2007: 11, 75) describes the essence of the modern total artwork as a technologized and totalitarian (as well as nightmare) environment, founded on cultural massification, uniformization and hypnosis. This resembles traditional and popular criticisms of Wagner's ideal of the total artwork, namely its potential for totalitarian abuse, from political dimensions, as in the German Third Reich, to technological ones, as in current cyberspace misconduct. It also reflects Tolstoy's critique of Wagner's artistic conceptualization, philosophy, and on-stage realization.

Yet the comparison of all three lists suggests that many alleged artworks rather *lack* such (positive or negative) totality. It seems that an artist needs to risk either committing

to a total artwork so artistically encompassing and expressive as to be overpowering or hypnotic (as in Tolstoy's view), or settling for a work much less diverse in its components, less compact in their integration, less contentious in its intensity, thus less threatening – but therefore also less “total”.

14. Comparison of Literary Total Artwork Examples: Western 20th Century?

The obligatory mention of Richard Wagner's opera and stage conception constitutes the only literary 19th-century example of a total artwork in the first list [1]. It is followed by thirteen literary examples of 20th-century total artworks [2-14], but by only two of 21st-century artworks [15 and 16]. While our limited sample does not allow to generalize this quantitative feature, and given the youth of the 21st century and its literature, it however suggest either a limiting focus of the literature on the 20th century, or a dearth of newly created total artworks in the 21st.

In the latter case, one might ask: why do total artworks seem to thin out over the last decades? It could hardly be for the economic or artistic availability of expressive media forms, since those keep being created in the 21st century (such as recently in multimedia or cyberspace). Other factors might play a role. This research contributes to this question with the below investigation of recent claims of total artworks from areas traditionally considered as outside of art, such as business and sport.

Also striking is that all literary examples are located in, or created by artists from the United States and Europe, especially Germany. The latter might be explained with the concept's genesis and a national and cultural predilection, but even so seems hard to justify in today's globalized world. To consider are Eurocentric or Westernized prejudices, defined as “theoretizations which...perpetuate old regimes of thinking...into a hegemonic future” (Abou-El-Haj 1991: 139; Lewis and Wigen 1997: 10), or other biases of global Western hegemony (see Dussel 1998: 3-4; Mignolo 1998: 32-33). Hence the literary examples might cause concern simply for their conspicuous absence of non-Western artists or artworks. This then recommends postcolonial research approaches, or attitudes and cultural identities of worldwide inclusion and open-mindedness, as for instance cosmopolitanism (see just Fullinwider 2001: 341; Gunesch 2008: 234).

The comparative analysis of the above three lists is thus considered as a step towards more conceptually convincing and empirically comprehensive classifications of total artwork examples. The here offered ways of structuring, according to chronology as in the first list, or according to artwork types as in the second list, already suggest many alternatives, such as: geographical location (especially non-Western artists and artworks), materials of creation (such as whether visual, sound, or performance forms predominate), media of expression (such as whether in form of theater, opera, or film), number of artists involved, price or commercialization of artworks, and many possible others, each corresponding to fresh perspectives for future research.

15. Total Artworks From Areas Traditionally Outside of Art?

Before we investigate specific business and sport claims of total artworks, it helps to clarify whether such areas, traditionally considered outside of art, can legitimately claim to create any (total works of) art. On a popular level, we are familiar with marketing, multimedia and related products that flood our worlds and senses in literary or graphic form, in that they might claim to qualities of art. As it is on that popular level, this issue is also contended in the specialized literature. Some authors declare the notion of the total artwork to be open not just to artistic, but also to “economic-political” or “scientific” productions and areas, while others consider this to overstretch the concept.

For Brock (2002: 105), since the time of the Renaissance – which heightened the social status of both art and artists – the concept was not any more a privilege of either art or artists, but open to all realms of life, including the economic:

“Dennoch ist das Konzept ‘Gesamtkunstwerk’ nicht den Künstlern vorbehalten – schon gar nicht den bildenden Künstlern. [...] Es gibt also Gesamtkunstwerk-Konzeptionen sowohl im ökonomisch-politischen wie im wissenschaftlichen als auch künstlerischen Bereich.”

[However, the concept of ‘total artwork’ is not reserved to artists – and much less to fine artists. [...] There are thus concepts of the total artwork in the economical-political and in the scientific as well as in the artistic area.]

For Fornoff (2004: 16), Brock’s inclusiveness overstretches the concept:

“Die bei Brock feststellbare Überdehnung des Gesamtkunstwerk-Begriffes [...] gestattet, neuzeitliche politische Utopien ebenso wie dadaistische Soirées, den spanischen Bürgerkrieg ebenso wie städtische Einkaufspassagen als Gesamtkunstwerke aufzufassen [in der] wahlweise die Stadt Wien, das Dritte Reich oder der Mensch selbst als Gesamtkunstwerk klassifiziert werden.”

[Brock’s detectable overstretching of the concept of the total artwork [...] allows to perceive modern political philosophies as well as Dadaistic soirées, the Spanish civil war as well as urban shopping malls as total artworks [in which] optionally the city of Vienna, the Third Reich or humankind itself are classified as total artworks.]

Most authors imply Brock’s inclusive position, as when naming Disney’s theme parks as total artworks (Smith 2007: 114-133), whose business and entertainment character evokes Brock’s “economic area”. For this stance speaks that *a priori* denying traditional out-of-art areas any potential to produce (total works of) art would also deny them a corresponding artistic creative potential without stringent conceptual or philosophical justification.

In summary, it seems the discussion should less center on whether certain realms of social life should be excluded from producing (total works of) art, but rather which concrete productions or claims arising from those areas would fulfill the artistic requirements and definition of a (total) work of art. Thus we proceed to investigate such recent claims from the realms of business and sport.

16. 21st Century Claims of Total Artworks from Business and Branding

In the mentioned chapter “Gesamtkunstwerk: The Art of Brand Integration” of their book *The Science and Art of Branding*, Franzen and Moriarty (2009: 510) apply their concise 10-Point definition of a total artwork first to the branding of an automobile – exemplifying the German firm *BMW* – as well as to athletic achievement – exemplifying the American firm *Nike*. Differentiating between these two global enterprises’ business practices and processes, they argue for both of them to create total artworks, along these argumentative lines and quoted key statements:

Accordingly, *BMW*’s automobile brand began establishing itself in the early 1960s. By the 1980s, its “worldwide power brand [...] stood for one thing: sheer driving pleasure [...] combined with peerless design to create a unique appeal”, based on combining flawless technology with fashionable design and a firm philosophy that considered its cars not just “utilitarian machines” but rather “moving works of art”. This claim was strengthened via strong public relations with the art world, such as sponsoring well-known artists, or creating an “Art Car that is exhibited in museums”, or in the whole management concept and practice of the brand’s style, ranging from manufacturing facilities over trade showrooms and up to the firm’s slogan “*BMW* – the ultimate driving machine” (Franzen and Moriarty 2009: 517).

Similarly, *Nike*’s “marketing machine” philosophy pushes for its products to be constantly changed and updated, while the brand behind these processes stays essentially unchanged (2009: 527). The management of this complex relationship between constant brand image yet changing products is based on two pillars: The first, “Integrated Branding”, is the full consistency of operations throughout the company, from selecting suppliers over targeting customer to servicing after-sales, all conforming to the firm’s philosophy and core values (2009: 515). The second pillar, “Integrated Marketing Communication”, includes for example information policy or mission statements (2009: 521).

Franzen and Moriarty end that chapter, and with it their book, with this statement (2009: 528):

“A powerful brand [...] is based on understanding that the art of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, with its perfect vision and perfect union of brand and customer, is the magic that surrounds the management of the complex brand system. Through integration, the science and art of branding create brand strength, brand relationships, brand value, brand equity and, ultimately, shareholder value.”

Academics and aficionados from the fields and backgrounds of art or literature might find it ideologically challenging to consider the technology-driven and business-oriented approaches, values and practices of automobile or sports companies as (total) works of art. Also, our methodological inclusion of cultural and feminist studies might be concerned with concomitant opportunities of industries or businesses to introduce hidden agendas when claiming total artworks, such as using art to mask mainly profit-

oriented interests. While such interesting concerns are outside the scope of this research, and whichever one's position on such areas and their motives for claiming total artworks, it seems safe to say that Franzen and Moriarty's analysis of the marketing and branding processes within the exemplified companies BMW and Nike, and their claims that both of them create total artworks, highlights a complex web of business and artistic, aesthetic and commercial values and principles.

Tolstoy's detailed discussion of Wagner's conception of the total artwork can be referenced once more, for its predictive power of one common criticism of advertisements in the style of BMW and its advertisement videos, namely the potential of hypnotizing audiences. This critique can even be generalized in view of similarly seductive multi-dimensional, multi-media influences.

Such intricate relationships between large academic fields seem to require a host of separate research projects and approaches. They are thus recommended as yet further areas and directions of future research. Important is that they all can take advantage of our offered conceptual framework and empirical catalog of artwork examples, for own use or for critical engagement.

17. Recent Claims of Total Artworks from the Realm of Sport

A variation of the debate on the general legitimacy of traditionally out-of-art areas to claim total artworks concerns sport. (This term is used in this research in the singular for physical activity in general, and in the plural form for specific types or branches.) Especially German, English and French literature sources debate whether sport itself can be considered as art (see Charreton 1990; Clark and Guttman 1995: 85-110; Frayssinet 1968; Lenk 1985). If yes, then arguments like the above between Fornoff and Brock would become obsolete for sport, which would be *a priori* considered as qualified to produce (total works of) art. If not, sport might be less qualified than business to do so, since not an "economic-political" area in Brock's sense.

It seems however uncontested that already the Ancient Olympic Games featured prominent political elements, as the military truce in Elis (the Greek province hosting the Games) guaranteeing safe conduct of participants across the Greek world during the Games' quadrennial celebrations (Lamm 1996: 246-247). Additionally, some sports already have in-built and official artistic elements (ice skating or gymnastics, for once). Finally, while sport has its own specialized and recognized scientific branches (as sports science or medicine), it can be (also reduced to) a business, or used politically (as in Olympic boycotts). All of these would fulfil Brock's "economic-political" element.

Consequently, recent literature on the intersection between sport, social and cultural sciences advances the view that sport can produce total artworks, especially in the athletic performance and on the level of Olympic Games. Especially the German sport philosopher

Sven Goldenpfennig maintains that even seemingly simple sports are, on closer scrutiny, highly difficult to perform and train for, and thus highly artificial. Particularly any form of Olympic sport should be considered as an elitist cultural production, whose aesthetical expression resides in its physical movement, even if framed as games or plays. Hence top-level competitive and especially Olympic sport culminates and succeeds in the production of a total artwork. Such art could even lay claim to be part of the common heritage of mankind, and then deserve special consideration and protection. Goldenpfennig (2004: 17) emphasizes that his argument does not try to reinvent the Olympic idea, but just to analyze and highlight Olympia's and sport's core elements and functions in their wider sociocultural dimensions.

In other writings, Goldenpfennig (2010: 830) holds that sport is generally an art form and expression, without particular reference to the Olympic Games. He defines art as an integral element of sport in the first place, boldly claiming: "Sport ist eine Kunst, oder es ist kein Sport" [Sport is an art, or it is no sport]. Four of his arguments especially aim at underlining common traits between sport and art, in that sport is: 1) apparently useless; 2) an end in itself; 3) creating artificial resistances and realities; and 4) enriching the world despite its ephemeral and playful characteristics (2010: 91-95).

In yet other writings, Goldenpfennig (2006: 143-188) discusses the cultural relevance and influence of some of the major sports events of the 21st century, apart from the Olympic Games, such as the 2006 Football World Cup. This body of work by one single author suggests that the connection between sport and art in general, and their coincidence in the creation of total artworks in particular, can be pursued in many further directions and dimensions. This aspect is therefore also entrusted and recommended to future research, to be analyzed with the help of the developed conceptual framework, and investigated within or beyond the catalog of provided literary examples.

18. Conclusions, Contributions, and Recommendations

Conceptually, this research has developed a comprehensive yet concise working definition of the total artwork. This working definition furthers the literary definitions' detailed yet often abstract and philosophical considerations. Our definition offers concrete elements of operationalization. For instance, certain substantial and minimum quality standards are specified for total artworks to be deemed independent works of art, such as that the whole work should be concretely and physically perceivable with one or more of the senses.

Methodologically, comparative literature methods within the arts, such as cultural studies, feminist studies, or systems theory, have been shown on a variety of levels as supporting approaches to investigate the relationships between art and society, as well as between art and literature. The possible methodological permutations between art,

literature, society, and the total artwork could only be hinted at within this research. The resulting methodological variety and transdisciplinary potential can be commended to future research on the intersection of literature, art, and the social sciences.

Empirically, this research has been able (based on the conceptual framework) firstly to extract an appropriate sample of literary examples of total artworks, and then to analyze it for salient features. Several of these features are recommended for future research, such as the question of the totality of total artworks, or the reasons for their apparent rarified appearance across the 20th and into the 21st century. Secondly, this research has offered two concrete ways of structuring and systematizing total artworks, according to chronology and according to artwork types or genres, but has suggested several other ways, such as by the art's location, creators, materials of creation, or media of expression.

In particular, on the developed conceptual and empirical bases, this research has investigated and considered in depth two recent claims of total artworks from areas considered traditionally to be outside of art, namely from business with a focus on marketing and branding of automobiles, and from sport with a focus on Olympic Games and high-level athletic performance. Future comparisons and evaluations are recommended into the broader concern of whether, and to what extent, areas traditionally considered outside of art can produce total artworks, and could then include for instance modern marketing, design, or interactive media methods and expressions. This would also raise new questions about the relationship between the historically established and the upcoming new examples of total artworks.

Finally, it has been shown, with eminent voices from world literature, that future research can consider new cases, creations, directions or dimensions in the understanding of the total artwork, and still confidently analyze and compare them with classical literary sources, including belletristic and novelistic expressions. In representation of those, two of Tolstoy's works have been found to be as insightful, valid and applicable across epochs and genres as ever. Their timelessness, too, is suitable to further the transdisciplinary character of future research endeavors on the total artwork, in the humble but ever so strong self-understanding and spirit of comparative literature.

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კონრად გუნემი
(არაბთა გაერთიანებული ემირატები)

ხელოვნების ტოტალური ნიმუშების შედარებითი ლიტერატურული ანალიზში: ბელეტრისტული და სამეცნიერო პოზიციები ვაგნერის ოპერებიდან დაწყებული, ტოლსტოის ხელოვნების ფილოსოფიით, ბიზნეს ბრენდინგითა და ოლიმპიური თამაშებით დამთავრებული

რეზიუმე

საკვანძო სიტყვები: ტოტალური ხელოვნება; კომპარატივისტული ლიტერატურა; ხელოვნების ფორმები; რიჩარდ ვაგნერი; ლევ ტოლსტოი, ბიზნესის ბრენდინგი; ოლიმპიური თამაშები.

მე-19 საუკუნის შუახანებიდან მოყოლებული, ხელოვნების ყველა ნაწარმოები განისაზღვრება როგორც ხელოვნების ერთ ნიმუშში ინტეგრირებული ხელოვნების რამდენიმე ძირითადი ფორმა, როგორებიცაა: მუსიკა, დრამა, ცეკვა, პოეზია და არქიტექტურა. ასეთი გაგება და პრაქტიკა ამჟამად კვლავ განიხილება საერთაშორისო ლიტერატურაში, ხელოვნების, ლიტერატურის, ფილოსოფიის, ისტორიისა და ენათმეცნიერების სფეროებში. ბელეტრისტული ლიტერატურის წყაროების ანალიზი, როგორცაა, მაგალითად, ლევ ტოლსტოის „ანა კარენინა“, მისივე ფილოსოფიური ტრაქტატები, თანამედროვე სამეცნიერო ბიზნესისა და სპორტული ლიტერატურის ჩათვლით, მათი დისციპლინათშორისი კომპარატივისტული ლიტერატურული კვლევა ხელს უწყობს ტოტალური ხელოვნების გაგებას კონცეპტუალურ, მეთოდოლოგიურ და ემპირიულ დონეებზე.

პირველ რიგში, ის გამოიმუშავებს ხელოვნების მთლიანი ნაწარმოების ყოვლისმომცველ და, ამავე დროს, მოკლე სამუშაო განმარტებას, მეორეს მხრივ, აერთიანებს ლიტერატურულ, მხატვრულ და სოციოლოგიურ მეთოდოლოგიურ მიდგომებს, მესამეც, – შეკრებს, ადარებს და აანალიზებს ხელოვნების ყველა ნიმუშის ლიტერატურულ მაგალითებს და მეოთხე – იკვლევს და აფასებს უახლოესი დროის მტკიცებულებებს ხელოვნების ნაწარმოების მთლიანობის შესახებ, რომლებიც, ტრადიციულად, ხელოვნების სფეროს არ მიეკუთვნება.