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Reflexivity in Aesthetic Situation Management

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Abstract: The article deals with reflexivity in the context of the aesthetic situation from two perspectives: self-management and management of the components in the aesthetic situation. All considerations are based on the theory of the aesthetic situation (Gołaszewska, 1984), transcribed into the management field (Szostak, 2023a) with the use of a metaphor of an organisation as a work of art (Szostak & Sułkowski, 2020). Emphasis on reflexivity in specific components of the aesthetic situation – especially

the creator and the recipient perspectives – brings a new light into the process of self-awareness and prediction of potential consequences of activities before their appearance. The following issues are addressed by exploring the intersection between reflexivity and aesthetic situation management: aesthetic decision-making, reception process, cultural and social contexts, transcending aesthetic boundaries, artistic collaboration, ethical considerations, self-critique, and historical context.

Key words: humanistic management, management aesthetics, reflexivity, artistry, creativity

Introduction

Reflexivity – understood as the fact of being able to examine one's feelings, reactions, and reasons for acting (motives) and considering how these issues influence activities and thoughts in a situation ("Reflexivity," 2023) – is a commonly analysed phenomenon in social sciences discourse from different perspectives (Alvesson et al., 2008; Jackson, 2017; Sutherland, 2013).

Many of these considerations can be structured well and receive a new lens by applying the theory of the aesthetic situation (Gołaszewska, 1984) in a broad context and using it as a central component of the metaphor of the organisation as an artwork (Szostak & Sułkowski, 2020) which allow to analyse management and organisations from the aesthetic perspective. Transferring the aesthetic situation theory into the field of management and considering a creator as the manager of an aesthetic situation (Szostak, 2023a), it can be said that reflexivity plays a crucial role in the process of self-management and aesthetic situation management. Adding the lens of aesthetics and my practical experience in performative arts, I would like to look into the reflexivity problem from a new perspective.

The methodology of the following considerations is based on a qualitative literature review (databases: EBSCO, Google Scholar, JSTOR, Mendeley, Scopus, Web of Science) and an autoethnography of my 20-plus-year

experience as a performative artist (instrumentalist performing dozens of recitals around the world annually), a manager (in an international environment), and as a researcher in this area. The literature review results are discussed with the results of empirical research undertaken by me in the last years when the investigations of certain aspects of the aesthetic situation were under my particular interest. The applied research approach is based on an interdisciplinary and multi-paradigm slant in the areas of arts, logic, humanistic management, management aesthetics, psychology, and sociology. Accordingly, the following research questions were set:

1) What are the places for reflexivity in the aesthetic situation?
2) How can the creator benefit from reflexivity in the aesthetic situation management process?
3) What are the intersections between reflexivity and aesthetic situation management?

The Aesthetic Situation Components

Maria Gołaszewska, a Polish philosopher and aesthetic, based on the achievements of Roman Ingarden's phenomenology (Ingarden, 1970, 1981), translated her theory of the "axiological situation" (Gołaszewska, 1986b, pp. 23–38) into the area of aesthetics. The essential components of the aesthetic situation are the creator, the artwork, the recipient, the natural world and the world of values. The fundamental relationships between the listed components can be abbreviated in the following shape: the creator in the creative process creates an artwork; the recipient receives the artwork in the reception process; all these components connect and interact with the world of values, but at the same time they happen in the real world (Gołaszewska, 1984, pp. 27–30). Analyzing every component of the aesthetic situation is crucial for the subsequent considerations on management within this context, and then reflexivity as another level of self-awareness.

Creator

A creator is the central person who plans, organises and creates the basic features of every aesthetic situation. His virtuosity, creativity and artistry are the main competencies that allow him to "tell a story" to the recipient via artwork (Szostak, 2022e).

A contemporary dictionary definition describes virtuosity as outstanding (above average) technical perfection in performing certain activities and presenting eminent craftsmanship in a specific range ("Virtuosity," 2023). Art research shows that virtuosity is still not an unambiguous phenomenon. Professional musicians assess the ease of meeting the artwork requirements and the level of technical skills as the most essential characteristics of virtuosity. Self-identification as a virtuoso, personal qualities, mastery in one's field, self-confidence and uniqueness were graded further down with minor importance. On the other hand, musical arts students explain virtuosity mainly through technical skills, mastery in their field and personal characteristics (Ginsborg, 2018). There is also a relationship between the creator's intelligence and virtuosity, which requires adaptation, anticipation, awareness, imagination, mental navigation, and speed (Stachó, 2018). Research performed on musicians demonstrates how many factors form the phenomenon of virtuosity in the consciousness of the art creator. There are a few main problems and several possibilities within each of them: 1) aspirations: considered as a prerequisite; personal perfection; something that should be achieved but at a later stage; the utter needlessness of aspiration; 2) relationship between virtuosity and "magical" artistry: artistry considered superior to virtuosity; the crucial relationship between virtuosity and artistry; virtuosity as a tool of artistry; a complete lack of relationship between virtuosity and artistry; 3) characteristics of virtuosity: technical skills; component of mastery in its field; constitutive of self-confidence; ease of movement in the matter of the art discipline; virtuosity as an expression of the artist's personality; virtuosity that gives the artist uniqueness; relativity of virtuosity as a function of definition; 4) ways to achieve virtuosity: hard and systematic work; as a natural gift, talent; as a result of an experience in a given

field; as a combination of the above elements; 5) communication: artist with co-performers; the artist with the audience; spectacularity; the critical role of the recipient's activity in the reception process; as carrying a message from the creator to the recipient (Ginsborg, 2018).

The term "artist" has a tighter sense than the term "creator" in the meaning of a creative individual. An artist is a man who produces works of art, while a creator produces scientific, cultural, and artistic results (Gołaszewska, 1986a, p. 7). Artists' creative process may be divided into conceptual, experimental, implementation and post-implementation phases, and it allows the creation of a distinction of creative personalities (Gołaszewska, 1984, pp. 176–189): 1) the intuitive type; 2) the reflective type; and 3) the behavioural type. It should be noted that the distinguished types of creative personality do not appear in pure forms but as a mixture of individual types in various proportions (Gołaszewska, 1984). These facts also imply that looking at the aesthetic theory of **creativity** may be of primary importance here instead of looking for correlations with dimensions of secondary importance. The sources of artistic creativity may result from (Arbuz-Spatari, 2019; Gołaszewska, 1984, pp. 189–198; Jung, 2014): 1) inspiration; 2) the act of creating in the image of nature; 3) discovering timeless ideas and incorporating them into the work; 4) imitation of divine creativity; 5) meeting the needs of a social group; 6) excess energy that remains after satisfying basic needs; 7) the condition of culture and the attempt to artistic ideals at a given stage of human development; 8) the sum of the socio-economic conditions in which the artist lives; 9) expressing the creator's personality. The psychological theories of artistic creativity, which may be crucial in the analysis of the phenomena of managerial creativity, include creativity as inspiration, creativity as a work, creativity as an expression of personality, and creativity as an essential component of wisdom (Dai & Cheng, 2017; Ekmekçi et al., 2014; Gołaszewska, 1984, pp. 189–204; Shi et al., 2017; Sternberg, 1985, 2003; Tarnopolski, 2017). Dictionary definitions of creativity define it as a multifaceted phenomenon that creates new and valuable products. As can be seen, creativity refers to the component of creativity (novelty) and the component of quality (valency of the effect). Creativity applies to both the creation process and the creative

output, i.e., the totality of works created by the creator. Creativity is usually defined from the perspective of its effects, which can be classified according to the specificity of the creator's domain. Four types of values are proposed, which can be assigned to the corresponding domains of creativity (Nęcka, 2000): 1) cognitive values, 2) aesthetic values, 3) pragmatic values, and 4) ethical values. Art, as a domain of creativity, is in this classification related to aesthetic values connected with the search for and creation of beauty. Unfortunately, the perception of these aesthetic values is ephemeral, changeable, and individualized, so their blurred boundaries are not clearly defined (Mendecka, 2010, p. 15).

Artistry, as a third crucial competence of a creator, focuses on incorporating universal values into the artwork. However, the literature does not broadly describe this phenomenon, focusing on the person considered an artist. According to the dictionary definition, an artist is "someone who creates results with great skill and imagination" ("Artist," 2023a). Its synonyms are master, expert, geek, guru, virtuoso, and wizard, while the antonyms are amateur, inexperienced, and non-expert ("Artist," 2023b). The artist's concept has changed over time, and there are opinions about the loss of constant features that allow capturing the essence of an artist's concept in the form of a stable definition (Sztabiński, 2002). Early aesthetics distinguished some key issues that defined the artist: 1) imagination, 2) thought, 3) knowledge, 4) wisdom, 5) idea in mind, and 6) ability to use the rules of art (Tatarkiewicz, 2015). Enlarging this list with the subsequent eras' optics, one cannot forget about such features as 1) creativity, 2) sensitivity, 3) intuition, 4) "getting lost" in the creative process, 5) devoting entirely to the creative process, 6) self-analysis (being the clou of reflexivity) and 7) self-correction (Gołaszewska, 1984, 1986a). Also, the artist's goals have changed over time, although the most unchanging are: 1) materialisation, 2) giving form to universal ideas, 3) conveying values, 4) giving satisfaction and pleasure to the recipient, 5) enabling the recipient of the experience to a state of catharsis, 6) transforming ugliness into beauty. Going further, we can distinguish the features of an artist necessary for the effective implementation of artistic goals: perseverance/consistency, hard work from an early age and throughout life, self-discipline,

mental toughness, responsibility, the ability to set goals, the ability to achieve goals, the ability to observe the world, perceptiveness, openness. A contextual approach may also be used here: to see the artist in the system of all the phenomena that influenced him and those he somehow formed. After all, an artist is an individual from a particular community, subject to the same laws, and at the same time grows into someone separate and unique due to an individual creative personality. An artist can be seen as a model example of a creator (Gołaszewska, 1986a, pp. 5–6). The manifestations of the artist's exceptionality can be characterized by the following issues: making the improbable a reality; knowledge without arguments; generalized sensitivity; absolutized freedom; objectivized subjectivism; self-destructive awareness; functional; rationalisation of the non-rational (Gołaszewska, 1986a, pp. 51–56).

Creative Process

Although the most visible symptom of creativity is the work of art itself, it is in the person (mind, consciousness, subconsciousness) of the creator that the most critical processes that make up the phenomenon of creativity take place. Several conditions influence artistic creativity, collectively called a creative disposition or attitude: personality determinants, social conditions, and richness of experience. In order for a work to be created, there must be a direct impulse to undertake the creative process, i.e., mental stimulation through an external or internal stimulus in the form of 1) lack of perception in a world that allows or requires fulfilment; 2) fascination with the world and reality; and 3) the excess of his own experiences from which the artist wants to free himself (Gołaszewska, 1984).

The sum of the previous components in the form of internal coercion directs towards the ultimate decision to start the creative process; then, there is real preparation for creative work and the first efforts. Sometimes, the artist begins work immediately, but more often, the creation of the work is preceded by three stages: conceptualisation of the work, its artistic vision and crystallisation of the artistic intention. The physical process of realisation begins when the artist begins to objectify his intention by shaping the material

to realize a specific aesthetic value; the critical phases at this stage aim to shape the material so that the work is equivalent to the artistic vision. It is worth paying attention to circumstances unforeseen in the concept of the work (the so-called accidents at work) and resulting from chance, coincidence or even a mistake at the stage of implementation (e.g., unnecessary but irreversible movement of the sculptor's chisel); injecting the unintended result of action as a valuable and immanent part of the work of art requires the artist's reflexes, observational skills and creativity.

After the physical creative process is completed, there is a post-implementation (post-implementation) phase consisting of verifying the work in terms of materializing the intended artistic concept. With time, from the end of the creative process, there is a process of gaining the artist's distance from the work, the purpose of which is for the artist to break the creative bond with the work to become the recipient of his work. This distance of the artist from his work has a twofold character: 1) short-term – a musician hears a piece performed by him/her differently during the creative process and differently when listening to a recording of the same performance; 2) long-term – it usually takes much time for the creator of the work to forget all the analytical activities that he carried out during the creative process (usually it is a catalogue of mistakes, searches, problems and adversities) so that he can give himself over to his work as a creatively unbound recipient.

Work of Art

A work of art is an object made by an artist with outstanding skills, a product of one of the fine arts or something that gives the recipient high aesthetic satisfaction ("Work of Art," 2023). The work is an element between the artist and the recipient. A work of art is a closed whole, separated from the environment (e.g., through a picture frame); it is an object deliberately created by the artist but persists among other objects of the real world, although endowed with a special meaning due to its aesthetic value. Resulting from the essence of the creative process, a work of art concentrates the artist's effort, which aims to give the work the perfect form so that it speaks for itself,

creating its world through the implemented artistic structures (Gołaszewska, 1967, p. 19). The work is separate from the creative process, and the creative process is separate from the creator's basic personality (Gołaszewska, 1984).

The following definitions of a work of art appear in the literature: any creative composition of one or more media (means of expression) whose primary function is to communicate an aesthetically valuable purpose (Lind, 1992); something created with the intention of conveying the possibility of satisfying aesthetic interest (Beardsley, 1983); an artefact that, under standard conditions, provides the recipient with an aesthetic experience (Schlesinger, 1979); physically embodied and culturally embodied being (Margolis, 1986); the object was created only as one of the critical forms of its time to fulfil the function of art at a given time (Gaut & McIver Lopes, 2001, p. 176).

The work is a unique phenomenon, containing a message which could not be formulated in any other way. In order to read and understand this message, a specific attitude of the recipient is needed, which is a function of many factors: knowledge, experience, sensitivity, and openness. A work of art, constituting a closed space filled with specific meanings, is perceived by the viewer who – saturated with his everyday problems – must show an activity that often requires much effort (Gołaszewska, 1967, p. 271). Looking at a work of art only from the perspective of the real world, without embedding the entire process of cognition in contexts, the recipient may have a real problem distinguishing a work of art from ordinary objects – especially when we consider avant-garde art (Danto, 1991).

Recipient

The recipient of art is the one who is not indifferent to art, who – due to the values of art – feels the need to commune with art and strives to realize his aesthetic interests (Gołaszewska, 1967, p. 29). The main interest of aesthetics is the current recipients of art. However, one should not forget about the potential recipients appearing in the future.

From the recipient's point of view, the reception process focuses on the work, which contains the artist's intentions regarding the message of the work (taking

into account specific values) materialized in elements of the real world – depending on the art discipline (colours, movement, stone, sounds, words).

Although the creator stands outside the work of art (except, of course, the performative work), because the work is independent and it is in it that the creator has included everything he wanted to – or managed to – convey, often the recipient does not stop at contemplating the work itself, but tries to get to know the interesting the person of the creator. The creator may also interest the recipient when the work lacks the artistic potential to convey a message, or the recipient cannot understand it. On the other hand, a work that confuses the recipient is incomprehensible, fails the recipient's expectations, and implies the process of searching for reasons for this state by the recipient; here, the list of potential reasons is short: 1) an artist who did not realize his intention, 2) defective work or 3) unskilful perception of the recipient. In such a situation, the recipient has the following options: 1) condemn the artist, 2) reject the work, and 3) undertake the process of understanding the work (Gołaszewska, 1967, pp. 19–20).

Since the recipients of art constitute a large community, it is natural to divide them into smaller groups, which facilitates the possibility of reaching the individual with the artistic message. However, sociological attempts to divide, i.e., based on age, gender, and education, do not work because the individuality of the art reception process is based on more qualitative factors that determine the recipient's attitude towards art. Among these factors should be mentioned: 1) frequency of the recipient's contact with works of art; 2) theoretical preparation and knowledge of the recipient; 3) mental characteristics of the recipient; and 4) the degree of the recipient's activity in the reception process (Gołaszewska, 1967, pp. 68–69). Considering the factors mentioned above differentiating the recipients of art, recipients can be divided into four types: naive recipient, inauthentic (secondary) recipient, critical recipient, and art lover (Gołaszewska, 1967, pp. 69–72).

The psychological distinction assuming the existence of pre-reflective, reflective and secondarily non-reflective awareness in man has significant consequences for explaining the formation of awareness of aesthetic phenomena – in particular, subjective conditions of the aesthetic situation and various forms

of beauty. Depending on the level of consciousness on which the aesthetic experiences of the recipient take place, the aesthetic experience and contact with aesthetic values are shaped in different ways (Gołaszewska, 1984, p. 77).

Reception Process

The reception process of a work of art is complex, which results from the need to meet many conditions for the recognition of the quality and artistic value of the work to be accurate (Gołaszewska, 1967, p. 271). The recipients of a work of art are specific people (when the work was done according to a specific order) or all potential recipients who come into contact with the work intentionally or accidentally. In art, the artist, noticing reactions to his work, can associate his intentions with the actual reception and use this knowledge to create new works or modify the analysed work. The reception process (called the aesthetic process) consists of the sensual reception of the message located in the work. Receiving a work of art begins with ignorance and ends with an interpretation (Woodward & Funk, 2010).

It is worth distinguishing a work of art as a product of the intentional actions of the creator from the concretisation of the work by the recipient, which is a reconstruction of the work which takes place in the process of reception. This concretisation of the work concerns the reconstruction of what the author included in the work, but also partial completion and updating of the work with contexts and meanings contemporary to the recipient. It is through concretisation that the work acquires its full or fuller face; it can be said that each work appears to the recipient in some concretisation. A work of art can be perceived on two levels: 1) non-aesthetically – e.g., scientifically or consumptively, in order to get maximum pleasure from communing with the work or to learn something about a topic; and 2) aesthetically – in the development of aesthetic experience (if concretisation occurs in the aesthetic attitude, an aesthetic object). At both levels, the recipient decides whether the reception process will be directed at concretisation as faithful to the author as possible or at self-concretisation, consistent with one's preferences (Ingarden, 1981, pp. 266–287).

The essence of the process of receiving a work of art is the aesthetic experience, which is the experience of a human interacting with works of art or creations of nature, thanks to which he reaches the aesthetic values inherent in them. Contemplating the quality of sensual things is a necessary condition for an aesthetic experience (Ossowski, 1949, pp. 282–292). The key in the reception process is interpretation, a contextual study aimed at extracting and explaining the phenomenon's inner meaning. It juxtaposes the analysed phenomenon with specific traditions and conventions and considers mutual relations (Ossowski, 1949, pp. 17–22). The selection of the contextual background on which the phenomenon is interpreted depends on the adopted research method. The process of interpretation is related to the deconstruction approach, drawing attention to the multiplicity of possible interpretations of cultural products (Nycz, 2000). Deconstruction can be analytical to understand the meaning of the whole or the nature of the action itself, multiplying the meanings of the interpreted phenomenon, which ultimately does not lead to understanding the whole.

The Real World

The most widely-described component of the aesthetic situation is the real world, i.e., the material side of the aesthetic situation that can be felt with the senses directly. It includes all physical matter used by the creator within a given discipline of art (colours, gestures, movement, sounds, textures, words, visual materials), as well as the entirety of material reality, providing reference points, contexts and inspiration necessary for both the creator in the creative process and the recipient in the process of reception. Before becoming a recipient of a work of art in a specific aesthetic situation, man belongs to the natural world and comes into contact with the world that shapes him physically and emotionally, but also intellectually and spiritually. Some experiences resulting from contact with the real world are accumulated in a person, and some fall into a state of unconsciousness, although they manifest themselves in the form of intuition or consolidated experience (Gołaszewska, 1984, p. 77).

The World of Values

The problem of values in art is not homogeneous and can be considered in various ways. Roman Ingarden distinguished three areas of values: 1) vital values and related utilitarian and pleasure values, e.g., health, age, strength, satiety; 2) cultural values, which include cognitive values (e.g., wisdom, colour, size), aesthetic values (e.g., beauty, ugliness, grace, sublimity, harmony), social (custom) values (e.g., what is appropriate and what is not appropriate), and moral values (e.g., goodness, responsibility, justice, generosity, courage, and nobility). According to Ingarden, none of the listed categories is superior to the other categories, and attempts to determine what distinguishes some values from others are also unsatisfactory. Moreover, value is not the same as the attitude in which the value is perceived (Ingarden, 1970, pp. 220–257).

The objectivistic approach to values says that whatever their categorisation, values are not something in themselves but are the characteristics of something (Ingarden, 1970, p. 228). The primary status of values is their "should-ness" – values are not something that "is" but something that "should be" and at the same time "must not be." Man realizes values; values exist concretely but differ from ideals and ideas (although Plato recognized values as ideal beings) and intentions and intentions. Values and their use distinguish conscious beings from unconscious ones; thus, they are an essential determinant of humanity. Similarly, individuals who reject values (e.g., truth, goodness, beauty) reduce themselves to animal, extra – or anti-human beings. There is also a particular paradox here that a person cannot directly realize values (e.g., being good) because then he focuses on himself (pharisaism) and not on actually doing good; values are realized indirectly, e.g., by recognizing the needs of others and helping them (Gołaszewska, 1986b, pp. 23–26; Ingarden, 1970, p. 242).

In addition to the objectivist approach, there is also a relativistic approach to values. It is characterized by the statement that value is not a property of things but is a relation between one thing and another, for which the first thing performs some services. If the other thing is a person or a society, one can speak of a social sanction that gives value to a worthless thing. In the extreme case, the relativistic approach to values contradicts the objectivist approach

to values and refers to the subjectivity of values (Ingarden, 1970, pp. 229–230). The values' description, analysis and interpretation can be made using dialectics, i.e., opposing thesis and antithesis to emerge the essence of the studied phenomenon based on this discourse (Gołaszewska, 2005, p. 147).

Simplifying the considerations of the world of values, Plato's triad of values (truth, good, beauty) can play the role of fundamental comparisons.

Management in the Aesthetic Situation

Managerial issues in an aesthetic situation can be considered from two perspectives: the self-management of a creator and the whole aesthetic situation management by the creator. The following definition of management places the subsequent analyses on a common denominator: management is the art of achieving goals efficiently (Szostak, 2023a, p. 60).

Self-management

Deliberations regarding managerial issues in the creator's activity can be located in the subject of interest of the so-called "occupy management" concerning self-organisation and self-management, where self-awareness and the capability to reflect play a key role (Kostera, 2014).

The creators' identity challenges the typical notion of creators as disorganized individuals working in chaotic environments. Furthermore, it pertains solely to the surface-level and readily observable aspects of reality without delving into the core of the creative process's organization. To comprehensively understand the artist's organizational aspect, one should analyze the previously mentioned aesthetic situation, its constituent elements, and their interconnections. It is important to note that the sequence of topics discussed below is not intended to pass judgment. According to the aesthetic situation theory, the artist's organisational activities take place on three levels: the world of values (artistry), a work of art (creativity), and the real world (virtuosity) (Szostak, 2023a, pp. 107–109).

Adding the lens of management levels, referring to the time perspective and focus on details, managing at the creator's artistic level within the realm of values (artistry management) can be likened to a strategic approach. It entails establishing the organization's vision, mission, and strategic objectives. Choices made at this level chart the course for ongoing processes. Artists often focus on specific values, dedicating extensive periods of creativity to exploring them, or they may adapt their creative interests based on various internal and external factors. The strategies for attaining these objectives can be enduring or adaptable, tailored to the prevailing circumstances. On the level of a specific work of art (creativity management), the comparison is with tactical management. Defined objectives and strategies are translated into tactical decisions guiding the creative process, culminating in creating the work while considering how the recipient engages with the work. It is vital to note that the artist's intent is not merely to produce the work itself but to influence the recipient consciously through the work, connecting them to the values embodied in the piece. This aspect significantly impacts the artwork's reception, subject to many factors discussed earlier. Managing at the practical, real-world level (virtuosity management) parallels the management of operational activities. It involves making choices regarding the content and form of the work, as well as selecting the specific materials (e.g., sculpture, colours, structures, musical scales, gestures, language) and the techniques employed in its creation. Most literature and didactic processes within the arts primarily concern this management level. This focus is understandable because this level is the most tangible, observable, and amenable to modelling, with measurable outcomes resulting from this modelling.

Management of the Aesthetic Situation

To analyze the management of the aesthetic situation from the creator's perspective, it is crucial to understand the components of the aesthetic situation and how they interact with one another. In this context, the artist assumes the role of the aesthetic situation's manager, as the content of the message (the selection of values and their incorporation into real-world elements) and

its form (utilized patterns, styles, or formal solutions) are contingent upon the creator's choices. To accomplish this, the creator has three avenues of influence: virtuosity, artistry, and creativity. A conscious creator exercises control over these avenues in developing their competencies and, more importantly, their application during the creative process. Not every work necessitates highly virtuosic solutions; creators often employ raw, unrefined materials, such as rough sculptural elements, to draw the recipient's attention to specific issues. Similarly, not every work requires many intricate references to the world of values; often, the simplicity of the message carries more weight. Likewise, creativity need not be a hallmark of every work, as innovative forms are not always more comprehensible than traditional solutions.

The creator, functioning as the manager of the aesthetic situation through work design, also shapes the work's reception process. However, the extent of influence a creator has on the reception process varies across different art disciplines. Playwrights and opera composers have a considerable say in defining the requirements for creating a work, although directors also wield significant influence in its realization. Play/show directors are creators in their own right, managing both their creative process and the reception of the work, often exerting a more significant impact on the outcome than the original playwright or composer. Conversely, in the realm of visual arts, once the work is completed, the creator distances themselves from it and cannot directly influence the reception process. Recipients can determine the circumstances of their contemplation, including factors like the duration of exposure and the context. It is evident that the creator's influence on the reception process is not absolute, as it depends on numerous factors beyond their control, with the recipient's level of engagement being paramount among them.

The results of two broad research can be mentioned as an empirical examination of these considerations. The first research on the role of a creator in aesthetic situation management in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic limitations (or determinants) showed different aesthetic situation strategies applied by the creator knowing about the way the artwork will be perceived by the recipients (in a traditional way or digitally/virtually). Forced virtualisation and digitisation considerably affect the creative process quality within

the aesthetic situation, varying on the form of participation in art. The research results show that exact components of the aesthetic situation are subject to varied modifications by the musical arts creator (Szostak, 2022c) and visual arts creator (Szostak, 2022a) due to the form of participation in the aesthetic situation. Among many factors related to reflexivity being significantly redesigned by musical arts creators were an inspiration to create (7.9% of the difference between traditional and virtual methods), internal motivation to start the creative process (9.7% of the difference), and motivation to continue and finish the creative process (21.2% of the difference) (Szostak, 2022c).

The COVID-19 pandemic context was the axis of a second extensive research on the reflexivity of recipients based on the way they perceive the artwork in a traditional way or digitally/virtually. The form of participation in the arts influences the level of participation quality in the aesthetic situation differently for male and female receivers (Szostak, 2023b), recipients from Poland and other-than-Poland countries (Szostak, 2022b), recipients from post-communist and no-communism-affected countries (Szostak, 2022d), recipients belonging to different generations (Szostak et al., 2023); reflexivity must be applied to assess differences in particular forms of participation in art types.

Reflexivity in the Aesthetic Situation Management

The following issues may be addressed by exploring the intersection between reflexivity and aesthetic situation management: 1) aesthetic decision-making; 2) reception process; 3) cultural and social contexts; 4) transcending aesthetic boundaries; 5) artistic collaboration; 6) ethical considerations; 7) self-critique; and 8) historical context.

Aesthetic Decision-making

In the realm of aesthetics, decision-making is a pivotal aspect of the creative process. Creators often find themselves at a crossroads as managers of aesthetic situations where their choices influence artwork's creation,

presentation, and interpretation via aesthetic experiences. Reflexivity plays a fundamental role in this decision-making process, as it encourages individuals to introspect, engage with their own experiences, and remain cognizant of the multifaceted factors influencing their artistic choices. From this perspective, an aesthetic situation manager plays the role of a leader trying to gather the followers and guide them in a chosen direction (Bathurst et al., 2010; Sutherland, 2013).

Reflexivity in aesthetic decision-making encompasses a dual perspective. On one hand, it involves self-awareness – a deep understanding of one's artistic identity, motivations, and biases. Artists-managers must grapple with their personal experiences, values, and cultural backgrounds when making aesthetic decisions. This self-awareness enables them to tap into their unique perspectives, infusing their creations with authenticity. Artistic choices often emerge from an intricate interplay between the individual and their surroundings. Reflexivity encourages creators to reflect on their roles with their recipients and to seek feedback from them. It opens the door for dialogue and critique, enriching the creative process. By considering external viewpoints and engaging in a reflexive dialogue, managers of aesthetic situations can refine their ideas and adapt their approaches, resulting in more comprehensive and thoughtful aesthetic experiences. Furthermore, reflexivity in aesthetic decision-making extends beyond the creator's internal world and the immediate community. It incorporates an acute awareness of the dynamic relationship between creators and their audiences. Art is not created in a vacuum; it is intended to resonate with and provoke responses from recipients. This understanding calls for an ongoing reflection on how audiences perceive and interact with the artistic work. It might mean adjusting artistic choices based on audience feedback or expectations. However, reflexivity does not imply abandoning the creator's vision; rather, it entails a balanced consideration of personal artistic integrity and audience engagement. By thoughtfully incorporating reflexivity, managers of aesthetic situations can create works that reflect their unique artistic voices and establish connections with diverse recipients, leading to a richer, more inclusive aesthetic experience.

Reception Process

The relationships between managers of aesthetic situations and artwork recipients are dynamic and transformative. The reception process of artistic creations holds profound significance, as it can influence the impact and interpretation of the work. In this intricate interplay, reflexivity emerges as a critical tool, guiding managers of aesthetic situations to navigate the nuances of audience engagement (Ross, 2014). Audience reception is not a passive process but an active and often subjective interpretation of artistic work. This subjectivity can lead to various responses, ranging from adoration to criticism and everything in between. Reflexivity, in the context of audience reception, involves creators reflecting on the diversity of these responses and adapting their approach accordingly. For creators, reflexivity invites them to consider how their work is perceived and its emotional or intellectual impact on recipients (Kjeldsen, 2018, pp. 4–6). This introspective process encourages creators to question their artistic intent, ensuring their creations remain meaningful and relevant. It allows for an ongoing dialogue with recipients, fostering an environment of continuous improvement and adaptability.

Cultural managers and curators (who also act as managers of aesthetic situations) also engage in reflexivity when considering the reception process. They must make informed decisions about how to present and contextualize works of art to ensure they resonate with the intended recipients (Kjeldsen, 2018, pp. 61, 103). This might involve curatorial choices such as exhibition layout, interpretive materials, or interactive experiences. By reflecting on how different audiences might interpret and engage with the art, these managers can create a more inclusive and accessible space for aesthetic experiences. Moreover, the application of reflexivity to audience reception acknowledges that art is not confined to a single perspective. Different individuals or groups may bring their unique backgrounds, experiences, and cultural contexts to their interpretation of the work. Reflexivity fosters an appreciation for this diversity and encourages artists and managers to engage with it meaningfully. This could mean adjusting artistic or curatorial choices based on audience feedback and varying interpretations. Creators and cultural managers, rather than rigidly adhering to

their original vision, become more flexible and responsive. This, in turn, creates a more inclusive and participatory aesthetic experience where the audience plays a role in determining the meaning and impact of the work (Glapka, 2017).

Cultural and Social Contexts

In the multifaceted realm of aesthetic situations, applying cultural and social reflexivity is pivotal in navigating the intricate web of cultural dynamics, identities, and societal contexts. Cultural and social factors play a thoughtful role in shaping artistic narratives and aesthetic experiences. Reflexivity in this context involves acknowledging the intricate interplay between the aesthetic situation manager's background, cultural milieu, and the broader societal landscape (Roberge & Chantepie, 2017).

Aesthetic situation managers can also be considered products of their cultural and social backgrounds. Their experiences, values, and beliefs are deeply intertwined with their artistic choices. In this sense, reflexivity encourages individuals to critically examine and acknowledge how their cultural identities shape their artistic perspectives. This self-awareness is a crucial foundation for creating art that authentically reflects the richness and diversity of cultural experiences (Kjeldsen, 2018, pp. 268–269). Cultural reflexivity also extends to recognising the broader societal contexts in which art and aesthetics are situated. Aesthetic situation managers must consider how their work interacts with and potentially challenges prevailing cultural norms, narratives, and power structures. By engaging in social reflexivity, they can be more conscious of the social implications of their work and how it contributes to more significant dialogues and movements (Holz, 2018). Moreover, cultural and social reflexivity calls for an acute understanding of the complexities of cultural appropriation and representation in art (Emontspool & Kjeldgaard, 2012). Aesthetic situation managers must reflect on the potential impact of their choices on marginalised communities and ensure that their work is culturally sensitive and respectful.

In practice, cultural and social reflexivity might manifest as a conscious effort to diversify artistic narratives, engage in meaningful cross-cultural

dialogues, or facilitate art that challenges social inequalities and injustices. Aesthetic situation managers, when reflecting on their roles within these broader contexts, become cultural agents, actively shaping and redefining the cultural and social landscape. According to the mentioned empirical research on the role of the form of the aesthetic situation (traditional or virtual), musical art creators from Poland assess the difference to immense the topics related to the society as 9.6% different than musical art creators from other (non-Polish) countries (Szostak, 2022b).

Integrating cultural and social reflexivity into creating and managing aesthetics is an ethical imperative and a means to foster inclusivity, diversity, and social awareness (Taliep et al., 2022). It ensures that art resonates with a global audience while respecting and celebrating the multiplicity of cultural identities. By embracing cultural and social reflexivity, art and aesthetics transcend mere forms of expression, becoming powerful catalysts for cultural understanding and social change (Longerbeam & Chávez, 2021).

Transcending Aesthetic Boundaries

An aesthetic situation is a space of limitless creative possibilities, often defined by established boundaries, norms, and conventions. Transcending aesthetic boundaries is an essential aspect of artistic innovation and cultural evolution. Reflexivity in this context empowers aesthetic situation managers to challenge and expand these boundaries, pushing the frontiers of creativity (Harper, 2022). Aesthetic boundaries can take many forms, from artistic traditions and genre conventions to societal expectations and thematic limitations. Reflexivity encourages aesthetic situation managers to self-reflect, critically examining their role in perpetuating or challenging these boundaries. Doing so allows them to identify and interrogate their preconceived notions about what is possible or permissible within their chosen artistic domain (Han, 2022).

One of the key ways in which reflexivity enables the transcending of aesthetic boundaries is by fostering a willingness to experiment and take risks (Thompson et al., 2018). Artists who engage in self-awareness and critical reflection are likelier to step beyond their comfort zones, exploring new

techniques, mediums, and thematic territories. This willingness to embrace the unknown can lead to groundbreaking innovations that redefine traditional artistic categories and expectations. Cultural managers and curators (also belonging to the group of aesthetic situation managers) may play a pivotal role in transcending aesthetic boundaries. They can curate exhibitions, events, or experiences that intentionally challenge preconceived notions of what art or aesthetics should be. By thoughtfully engaging with reflexivity, cultural managers can provide platforms for artists to explore uncharted territories, bridging the gap between established artistic traditions and emerging forms of expression. Moreover, reflexivity can facilitate the fusion of diverse cultural elements and perspectives, resulting in hybrid artistic creations that transcend traditional boundaries. Creators who engage in self-awareness and cultural reflexivity may incorporate various cultural influences into their work, leading to new, cross-cultural aesthetics (Aschieri, 2016).

In practice, transcending aesthetic boundaries might involve artists experimenting with new technologies, breaking free from the constraints of traditional mediums, or creating art that defies established genre classifications. It could also involve cultural managers curating exhibitions that deliberately challenge prevailing artistic norms, encouraging artists to enter uncharted territories and explore the unexpected.

Artistic Collaboration

Artistic collaboration, a harmonious fusion of creative minds, often results in the most innovative and compelling works of art and aesthetic experiences. Reflexivity in collaborative contexts enhances the dynamic interplay between individuals and groups, creating and managing aesthetic situations. It instils self-awareness and adaptability within collaborators, fostering an environment where the collective creative process flourishes.

Reflexivity in aesthetic collaboration encourages each contributor to acknowledge their unique creative identity, strengths, and limitations. Aesthetic situation managers engage in introspective self-assessment in a collaborative setting. This process allows individuals to recognize their role

in the collaboration, appreciate their specific contributions, and communicate their creative preferences and visions. As artistic collaborators embrace reflexivity, they become more receptive to external perspectives and receptive to dialogue. They foster an environment where ideas are exchanged, questioned, and refined. The result is a collective creativity that benefits from the diverse viewpoints of participants. The collaborators remain open to constructive critique, enabling them to adapt and evolve their creative processes to achieve a more comprehensive and cohesive aesthetic vision (Campbell et al., 2022). Furthermore, aesthetic collaboration necessitates a deep understanding of the synergy between contributors, their cultural backgrounds, and their artistic narratives. Cultural reflexivity is vital in collaborative settings, encouraging individuals to acknowledge the group's potential cultural biases and sensitivities. This awareness can guide the collaboration in creating work that resonates with a broad and diverse audience (Smith et al., 2021).

Practically, artistic collaboration and reflexivity may entail regular feedback sessions, open and transparent communication, and collective decision-making processes. Aesthetic situation managers who engage in this type of collaboration may become more adaptable, empathetic, and responsive to the evolving needs of the collective creative endeavour. The synergy of diverse minds, enhanced by self-awareness and cultural sensitivity, leads to more profound and inclusive aesthetic experiences.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are prominent in aesthetic situations, as aesthetic situation managers are often tasked with navigating the delicate balance between creative expression and ethical responsibility. Reflexivity is a powerful tool for ensuring that the creation and management of aesthetics align with ethical principles, fostering an environment where art can provoke thought, challenge norms, and promote social awareness while maintaining respect and responsibility (Cain et al., 2019).

Aesthetic situation managers practising reflexivity in the context of ethical considerations engage in critical self-examination regarding

the potential impact of their work. This introspective process allows them to explore the ethical dimensions of their artistic choices, mainly when dealing with controversial themes, sensitive subjects, or provocative statements (von Unger, 2021). Reflexivity encourages creators to ask the following questions: How might different audiences perceive my work? Does my art inadvertently perpetuate stereotypes or prejudices? Am I respecting the cultural or personal boundaries of those represented in my work? By reflecting on these ethical dilemmas, creators become better equipped to make informed choices that consider the implications of their creative decisions. They can develop works that challenge societal norms or provoke thought while avoiding harm or insensitivity (Gilbert & Venturi, 2016).

Furthermore, reflexivity can lead to ethical considerations surrounding cultural appropriation (Pearson, 2021). Aesthetic situation managers must engage in introspection and cultural reflexivity to avoid misappropriating cultural elements and experiences. This involves acknowledging the privilege and power dynamics that might influence artistic narratives and, when necessary, collaborating with individuals or communities to ensure accurate representation and mutual respect (Mosley et al., 2023). Ethical considerations guided by reflexivity might involve artists seeking input from individuals or communities represented in their work, conducting ethical impact assessments, or crafting creators' statements explaining their creations' ethical intentions and considerations. Aesthetic situation managers, meanwhile, can develop exhibition and programming policies that reflect ethical guidelines, ensuring that their institutions operate with integrity and responsibility.

Self-critique

In the world of art and aesthetics, the journey of self-critique is a continuous and vital process for aesthetic situation managers. Reflexivity emerges as a powerful tool, facilitating critical self-examination, personal growth, and the evolution of artistic and management practices. Reflexivity as a tool for self-critique involves a deep and honest exploration of one's creative choices,

motives, and practices (Mers, 2013). Aesthetic situation managers engage in introspection, analyzing their work discerningly. This process invites questions such as: What are the underlying motivations behind my artistic choices? How do my personal experiences and biases influence my creative direction? Am I challenging myself to innovate and evolve?

Self-critique guided by reflexivity provides a mechanism for continuous improvement and growth (Krause, 2021). Creators who regularly reflect on their work can identify areas where their creative expression can be refined or extended. This introspection encourages them to acknowledge both strengths and weaknesses, embracing a mindset of adaptability and a commitment to the evolution of their artistic practices.

Cultural managers and curators also benefit from using reflexivity as a tool for self-critique. They can evaluate their curatorial choices, exhibition strategies, and the cultural impact of their work. Reflexive self-critique allows them to question whether their practices align with their cultural and ethical principles. By actively engaging in self-reflection, they can fine-tune their approaches and improve the accessibility and inclusivity of their cultural initiatives. In practice, reflexivity as a tool for self-critique may entail regular portfolio reviews, creators' statements that explain the thought processes behind their work, and open dialogue with mentors, peers, and critics. Aesthetic situation managers may engage in self-critique through audience feedback analysis, evaluation of exhibition design and interpretive materials, and development of inclusive cultural programming.

Historical Context

The appreciation and understanding of aesthetic situations are deeply intertwined with their historical context. Reflexivity offers a unique and illuminating perspective for aesthetic situation managers when applied to the historical dimension. It encourages a critical examination of how creative narratives, styles, and traditions have evolved and how contemporary works fit into this broader historical continuum (Suddaby et al., 2015; Wittrock, 2020). Reflexivity within historical context prompts creators to acknowledge their

artistic predecessors and the cultural heritage from which their work emerges. It encourages them to consider how their creative choices draw from or challenge established artistic movements and conventions. This introspective process invites questions such as: What artistic traditions have influenced my work, and how do I relate to them? How does my work contribute to or disrupt the narrative of art history? In what ways does my work speak to or reflect the historical and cultural shifts of our time?

Creators position themselves within a broader artistic and cultural landscape by engaging with historical reflexivity. They can draw inspiration from historical periods or movements, reinterpreting them through a contemporary lens or challenging them with innovative perspectives. This process enriches the creative tapestry, fostering a dialogue between the past and the present. Cultural managers and curators can also employ historical reflexivity to curate exhibitions and cultural experiences that resonate with the historical narrative. They reflect on how the works they select fit within the broader artistic and cultural history and consider the impact of presenting art within a historical context. This reflexivity can lead to thoughtful exhibition design, contextualisation, and interpretation. In practice, historical reflexivity may manifest as creators researching and referencing historical artistic movements, seeking inspiration from art history, or consciously positioning their work concerning specific historical narratives. On the other hand, curators may incorporate historical perspectives into exhibition narratives, provide historical context for viewers, and consider the historical significance of the artists and works they represent.

Conclusions

A matrix incorporating contexts of reflexivity in aesthetic situation management from the creator's and recipient's perspectives may conclude the above considerations (Table 1). It shows two main perspectives of reflexivity in aesthetic situations: the creator's (within the creative process) and the recipient's (within the receiving process).

Table 1. Contexts of reflexivity in aesthetic situation management from the creator's and recipient's perspectives

Aesthetic situation component	Space for reflexivity	Context of reflexivity in aesthetic situation management
CREATOR and CREATIVE PROCESS	• creative personality type • inspirations for the creative process • conceptualisation phase of the creative process • realisation phase of the creative process • post-realisation phase of the creative process	• aesthetic decision-making and reflexivity • cultural and social reflexivity • transcending aesthetic boundaries • artistic collaboration and reflexivity • ethical considerations and reflexivity • reflexivity as a tool for self-critique • historical context and reflexivity
RECIPIENT and RECEIVING PROCESS	• an optimal time for artwork reception • selection of artworks being optimal for the current mood of the recipient • explanation of the artwork • analysis of the artwork (comparisons, classifications)	• reception process and reflexivity • cultural and social reflexivity • ethical considerations and reflexivity • reflexivity as a tool for self-critique • historical context and reflexivity

Source: Author's elaboration.

Answering the first research question (What are the places for reflexivity in the aesthetic situation?), it can be said that the two main spaces for reflexivity in the aesthetic situation lay in the creator's and recipient's perspectives. A creator – considered a manager of the aesthetic situation – designs an artwork in the creative process but also sets the main rules for the reception process. The reflexivity of a recipient is also central to the perception of values incorporated in the artwork by the creator.

Regarding the second research question (How can the creator benefit from reflexivity in the aesthetic situation management process?), it can be stated that the reflexivity of a creator can be a kind of measure of his qualities.

Self-awareness and the ability to predict the circumstances of the receiving process determines the success of the artwork considered as the efficiency in touching the soul of a recipient.

Regarding the third research question (What are the intersections between reflexivity and aesthetic situation management?), the following issues may be listed: aesthetic decision-making, audience reception, cultural and social reflexivity, transcending aesthetic boundaries, artistic collaboration, ethical considerations, self-critique, and historical contexts.

Among the limitations of this research can be listed: 1) subjectivity and interpretation: while the creator may intend a specific message or meaning, recipients may interpret the work differently, which can lead to a wide range of responses and understandings that the creator cannot fully control; 2) cultural variability: what is considered meaningful, aesthetically pleasing, or significant can vary significantly across different cultures, and the creator's intended message may not always resonate with all audiences; 3) evolving perspectives: the creator's role in shaping the reception process assumes a static intent and message; however, over time, the creator's perspective, as well as the societal and cultural context in which the work is viewed, change; it leads to shifts in how a work is understood and appreciated, making it difficult for the creator to predict or manage long-term reception; 4) recipients engagement: it is a factor beyond the creator's control and its dynamics vary widely, and it affects the reception of the work; 5) evolving art forms: the considerations focused on traditional forms of art (visual arts, plays, and opera)may not fully address the complexities and nuances involved in more contemporary and evolving art forms (digital art, interactive installations, and new media) where the boundaries between creator and recipient are often blurred in new ways.

As the **perspectives** of future research based on the above considerations may be listed: 1) interdisciplinary research: they could explore interdisciplinary approaches, involving fields like psychology, sociology, and cultural studies, to gain a deeper understanding of the multi-layered nature of reflexivity in management of the aesthetic situation; 2) cultural studies and artistic expression: comparative studies of how different cultures and societies perceive and engage with art could shed light on the cultural dimensions of

artistic communication; 3) longitudinal studies: by tracking the changing interpretations and meanings of specific works of art could provide insights into the dynamics of art appreciation, e.g. how societal shifts, changing artist perspectives, and audience reactions impact the reception of art; 4) recipient engagement and technology: it could explore how new technologies (virtual reality, artificial intelligence, social media, interactive platforms) influence recipient's engagement and the creator's ability to shape artwork reception; 5) cognitive and emotional responses: how viewers process and emotionally react to artwork, and how these responses align or diverge from the creator's intent, could provide valuable insights into the aesthetic experience.

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