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Artworks, Context and Ontology

Horgan believes that the truth of the statement "Beethoven's fifth symphony has four movements" does not require that there be some "dedicated object" answering to the term "Beethoven's fifth symphony". To the contrary, the relevant language/world correspondence relation is less direct than this. Especially appropriate is the behavior by Beethoven that we would call "composing his fifth symphony".

Our objections go along two directions: (1) is the process ontology (a) really a right kind of ontology for artworks (symphonies, novels) and, (b) more important, is this kind of ontology compatible with Parmenidian approach to ontology? The answer to (a) is negative. With reference to point (1b) we might say that Parmenides was a typical staunch advocate of substance metaphysics rather than process metaphysics. Traditionally, substances are individuated by their properties, namely, there are assumed two sorts of properties: primary and secondary. Primary properties describe the substance as it is in and by itself; secondary properties underlie the impact of substances upon others and the responses they elicit from them. (2) The claim that it is most unlikely to suppose that we can have some kind of cognitive contact "with an entity which has no spatio-temporal location and does not causally interact with anything" does not hold. We underpin the claim that there is some cognitive access to entity such as Beethoven's fifth symphony with Bender's theory of realization relation between musical work and performance.

Keywords: contextualism, process metaphysics, ontology of art, type/token.

According to Horgan there are certain statements which display the following set of characteristics: (i) they mention, and quantify over, would-be entities that should not be allowed within the correct naturalistic ontology; (ii) they are unproblematically true; and yet (iii) they cannot suitably be paraphrased into a more austere idiom that avoids reference to the would-be entities in question. Here are some examples of statements that putatively exhibit all three characteristics:

(a) Beethoven’s fifth symphony has four movements.
(b) The University of Maribor is a public institution.
(c) Chomsky’s *Syntactic Structures* is an influential book.

Horgan believes that the right ontology (sufficiently sparse and sufficiently naturalistic) will not contain neither such things as symphonies (as abstract, multiply instantiable, musical works of art as distinct from concrete entities like performance-events) neither would-be entity like *Syntactic Structures* supposed to be a single entity over and above the many objects we call “copies of *Syntactic Structures*” neither various kinds of socially constructed entities like universities.

One fundamental claim of his contextual semantics is: although truth is specifiable in terms of language/word correspondence, often our language functions in such a way that the relevant kind of correspondence is *indirect* rather than direct, that is, sentences like (a)-(c) are all correctly assertible even if there are no actual entities in the world answering to the terms “Beethoven’s fifth symphony”, “University of Maribor”, or “*Syntactic Structures*”. The truth of the statement (a) above does not require that there be some “dedicated object” answering to the term “Beethoven’s fifth symphony”. To the contrary, the relevant language/world correspondence relation is less direct than this. Especially appropriate is the behavior by Beethoven that we would call “composing his fifth symphony”. But we need to take into account also a wider range of goings-on: in particular, Beethoven’s earlier *behavior* in virtue of which his later *behavior* counts as composing his *fifth* symphony and also a broad range of human *practices* in virtue of which such behavior by Beethoven counts as “composing a symphony” in the first place.

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