

AUTHENTICITY OF *OEUVRE* ANALYSIS: A RE-EXAMINATION OF THE ANACHRONISMS

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Spart-Hoxha (2003) has argued that the *oeuvre* of the metamusical group The Anachronisms is inauthentic for two reasons:

- the instrumental nature of the group's work has changed over time, and
- the members of the group differ in the likelihood of writing songs about politics.

She disputes the work of earlier researchers (Herpes, 1985, Ange, 1986) which showed that the characteristics of the Anachro-*oeuvre* are independent of each other rather than formulaic. In fact, she has dismissed Ange's statistical analysis as merely a failure to refute a null hypothesis, which she attributes to a small sample size.

The authenticity, however, of rejecting a demonstration of authenticity because it fails to satisfy the scientific standards of bourgeois research is highly questionable. The Procrustean effort to force *oeuvre* analysis into the inauthentic mould of contemporary bourgeois social science seems unlikely to produce any valid generalizations about authenticity.

Perhaps the chief technique of contemporary bourgeois research that Spart-Hoxha exploited to reach her conclusion was the artificial distinction. The only change she noted in the group's instrumentation was in the frequency of use of steel guitar. However, she offers no reason for considering steel guitar separately from other guitars. She classified guitars into three categories - acoustic, electric, and steel - as if they were three different types of instrument. They are, however, *all guitars*. If we inauthentically (and absurdly) claim that a guitar is not a guitar is not a guitar, we cannot be surprised if we finish by concluding that an authentic guitar is not an authentic guitar is not an authentic guitar.

Similarly, her conclusions about the lyrical component of the Anachro-*oeuvre* are founded on an artificial distinction of politics from other song topics. Spart-Hoxha concerned herself with four song topics: "non-political" social commentary, politics, love, and individual existence. According to Spart-Hoxha, only the political songs are authentic. Clearly she assumes that politics plays no role in society, individual existence, or love. She clearly also concludes that love is unrelated to society, society to existence, and existence to love. Our individual existence, she clearly implies, has nothing whatever to do with society, love, or politics!

Authenticity of Oeuvre Analysis

Finally, Spart-Hoxha ignored a crucial aspect of the Anachro-oeuvre: the large number of songs written by the entire group. The topics of these songs will tell us the subjects with which an authentic musical repertoire will concern itself. The purpose of the current research was to restore authenticity to the investigation of authenticity by re-examining a now larger oeuvre with methods which respect its integrity *and* diversity.

METHOD

The database (Zither & Herpes, 2006) used by Spart-Hoxha was expanded so that all albums released by the Anachronisms through September 2006 were included.

Lyrics. Information about lyrics was available for 245 songs. The subjects of lyrics were initially classified in the following categories:

- Art
- Bowels
- Economics
- Existence
- Food
- Love
- None
- Philosophy
- Politics
- Religion
- Revulsion
- Science
- Society
- Sport
- Iraq
- Imperialism

Some examples of social commentary (category: Society) are “Great Big Rolls,” “I Wanna Be Blond,” “Say Goodbye to the One-Eyed Monster,” and “I Really Love Me.” Examples of political commentary are “Re-election Reggae,” “We Are Tories,” “Putin and Blair,” and “Sensational and Humiliating.” Examples of love lyrics are “Maggie T.,” “Love Sow,” “I’m the One for You,” and “Dam Ugly Feet.” Examples of lyrics about individual existence are “This is Not My Body,” “Prom Sluts from Mars,” and “Who Will Smell My Feet for Me?”

Instrumentation. Instrumentation was supplied for 134 songs (one song was sung *a capella*). The following categories were used to classify instrumentation:

- guitars

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- keyboards
- violin

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the numbers and percentages of the Anachronisms' songs whose lyrics were written by each member of the group, whose lyrics were a collective effort, or whose lyrics were written by someone else.

Table 1

Numbers and Percentages of Songs by Lyricist

| Lyricist | No. | % |
|----------------------|-----|--------|
| Carlos Carlos | 45 | 18% |
| Sid Herpes | 113 | 46% |
| Hector LaPaunche | 35 | 14% |
| Dulcimer Zither | 15 | 6% |
| The Anachronisms | 32 | 13% |
| C. C. Thistlethwaite | 3 | 1% |
| Ezra Gram | 3 | 1% |
| George Weiss | 1 | < 0.5% |

Table 2 shows the numbers and percentages of songs in each category of subject.

Table 2

Numbers and Percentages of Songs by Subject

| Subject | No. | % | Subject | No. | % |
|-----------|-----|-----|-------------|-----|--------|
| Society | 60 | 24% | Sport | 3 | 1% |
| Existence | 51 | 21% | Philosophy | 3 | 1% |
| Politics | 49 | 20% | Food | 2 | 1% |
| Love | 45 | 18% | Art | 2 | 1% |
| Religion | 11 | 4% | Science | 1 | < 0.5% |
| Iraq | 6 | 2% | Revulsion | 1 | < 0.5% |
| Economics | 5 | 2% | Imperialism | 1 | <0.5% |
| Bowels | 5 | 2% | – | – | – |

Authenticity of Oeuvre Analysis

Principal components analysis revealed a relationship between subject and lyricist. Carlos Carlos was more likely than the other Anachronisms to write on political themes. Songs on political themes constituted 47% of his 45 songs, while they constituted only 14% of Sid Herpes' 113 songs and 14% of Hector LaPaunche's 45 songs, and did not appear at all among Dulcimer Zither's 15 songs.

Table 3 shows the subjects of songs which the group wrote co-operatively.

Table 3

Numbers and Percentages of
Co-operatively Written Songs
by Subject

| Subject | No. | % |
|-----------|-----|-----|
| Love | 8 | 26% |
| Society | 7 | 23% |
| Politics | 6 | 19% |
| Existence | 3 | 10% |
| Bowels | 2 | 6% |
| Other | 4 | 13% |
| None | 1 | 3% |

Because the group songwriting efforts of the Anachronisms can be expected to be authentic (since, even if we accept Spart-Hoxha's speculation that Sid Herpes' work is inauthentic, in a group effort any inauthenticity would wither when exposed to the bright sun of the other members' authenticity), this distribution was used to establish the characteristics of a *normative authentic distribution* of song topics. A normatively authentic distribution of song topics was defined as one in which 8 of every 31 songs will be about love, 7 will be about society, 6 will be about politics, and 10 will be about other or no topics; the last catch-all category was constructed to ensure reasonable cell sizes for the statistical test.

Table 4 on the next page shows the number of song lyrics which each member of the Anachronisms composed in each category.

Table 4

Numbers of Individually Composed Songs
by Subject and Composer

| Subject | Carlos | Herpes | LaPaunche | Zither |
|----------|--------|--------|-----------|--------|
| Love | 3 | 29 | 2 | 3 |
| Society | 14 | 28 | 1 | 1 |
| Politics | 21 | 16 | 5 | 6 |
| Other | 7 | 30 | 27 | 5 |

Goodness-of-fit chi-square tests were used to compare the distributions of each composer's song topics with the normative distribution. Carlos Carlos's and Hector LaPaunche's distributions differed significantly from the normative distribution ($p < .01$). Carlos Carlos's songs differed in being more frequently about politics, while Hector LaPaunche's songs differed in being more frequently about other topics or none.

A mean of 1.5 guitars was used on the earlier 67 songs, and a mean of 1.8 on the later 67; this difference was not statistically significant. A keyboard was used on 57% of the earlier 67 songs and 73% of the later; this difference was not statistically significant. A violin was used on 28% of the earlier 67 songs and 21% of the later; this difference was not statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

The replacement of Spart-Hoxha's inauthentic categorization of guitars by a more authentic one showed that her finding of a change in instrumentation in the *Anachro-oeuvre* over time was spurious. To persuade Spart-Hoxha that her initial finding was spurious may require provision of a bourgeois scientific explanation of the type she manifestly favours, so it should be noted that the reduction in the number of statistical tests due to the adoption of the authentic category also reduced the probability of finding a spurious significant difference.

The analysis of lyrics revealed that, rather than being inauthentic, Sid Herpes' contribution to the *Anachro-oeuvre* accurately represented authentic lyrical concerns. Dulcimer Zither's contribution also had this characteristic. Unlike Spart-Hoxha, though, we will not leap to the conclusion that Carlos Carlos and Hector LaPaunche are inauthentic because their contributions *did* differ significantly from the norms of authenticity.

Authenticity of Oeuvre Analysis

The Anachro-*oeuvre* cannot be seen as simply the sum of the work of four individuals writing songs in isolation. It is a collective effort and must be examined as one. When we do that we discover a complex web of inter-relationships which ensures authenticity of the *oeuvre* while at the same time guaranteeing the individual freedom necessary not only for authentic creativity but also for responsible participation in an authentic community. Carlos Carlos's interest in exploring politics in all its detail is balanced by Hector LaPaunche's interest in exploring other topics.

Spart-Hoxha herself noticed a similar relationship between Sid Herpes and Dulcimer Zither, but because of her inauthentic prejudice against Sid Herpes she had to categorize it as exploitation of Dulcimer Zither. The current results reveal that it is in fact another aspect of the complex interplay of interest, interpersonal relationships, and the guiding ideal of solidarity of the creative proletariat which act together to produce an authentic *oeuvre*. Spart-Hoxha's denigration of the Anachro-*oeuvre* is revealed by the current study to be simply a rationalization of her inability to think outside the confines of comfortable bourgeois ideology. We advise her to consider the possibility that the pain she feels in part of her anatomy is the sensation of an authentic *oeuvre* biting it.

REFERENCES

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