

Sancho Panza and Don Quixote: The Documentary and the Phenomenological Methods of Analyzing Works of Art

Amalia Barboza

There are different methods and perspectives in the social and historical sciences for investigating art phenomena. According to Jochen Dreher and Michael D. Barber, in their introduction to this book, the subjective point of view of artists and interpreters is given special attention by the perspective of phenomenology. By contrast, emphasizing the historical and social conditions of art production and art acquisition is characteristic of the perspective of the social sciences. And art history tends to observe art from yet another perspective by analyzing the work of art itself, in terms of its contents and its formal components.

These different analytical methods of investigating art represent ideal-typical scientific attitudes that rarely exist in pure form. There are art historians, for instance, who are interested in the social conditions of the development of art works that require sociological analysis. And phenomenologists often consider not just the subjective point of view, but in addition also analyze the world of art as a province of meaning with its own rules independent of the subjective perception of the producers or the consumers. As Dreher and Barber point out, the significance of Alfred Schutz lies precisely in attempting to combine different methodological perspectives: a phenomenological and a sociological approach. In this essay I attempt to compare two different methods of analyzing works of art: the documentary method of the sociologist Karl Mannheim and the phenomenological approach of Alfred Schutz. These two sociological perspectives are, however, concerned with quite different issues. Both approaches not only take account of the subjective point of view regarding art, but also introduce the sociological dimension: While the method of documentary interpretation concentrates on the *Weltanschauung* of the subject, usually the artist, Schutz is especially interested in the way the subject becomes involved in the style immanent to art when entering its realm. As we will see, while both Mannheim and Schutz employ the concept of style, the actual meaning of their

A. Barboza (✉)

Universität des Saarlandes, Saarbrücken, Germany

e-mail: a.barboza@mx.uni-saarland.de

concepts of style is so different that comparing them may at first seem like a futile undertaking. I will nevertheless argue that contrasting Mannheim's and Schutz's sociological approaches, emphasizing their unique features, offers a good strategy to map the fundamental differences between them. I will first present the method of documentary interpretation, and then compare it with the phenomenological method of Alfred Schutz.

1 The Documentary Method of Analyzing Works of Art

The method of documentary interpretation was developed by the sociologist Karl Mannheim and has been applied in both sociology (Barboza 2005, Bohnsack 1991, 2009a, b) and in art history (Panofsky 1957). This method looks for a synthesis of methodological approaches. But the synthesis is not limited to just two approaches: phenomenology and sociology, as with Schutz. Documentary interpretation has the ambition to integrate a third perspective as well: the methodological perspective of the art historian. Documentary interpretation therefore aims to bring together three different perspectives of analyzing a work of art: The perspective of art history, the perspective of phenomenology, and the perspective of sociology. To put it in another way: style analysis of the work of art, analysis of the artist's intention, and analysis of the social and historical context. This synthesis must not be produced in a cumulative manner, for example by applying the three methods separately and then assembling the different investigations of the same phenomenon as different parts. Quite the opposite, the aim is a deeper understanding beyond those three approaches: the "documentary meaning," (Mannheim) or the "iconological meaning," (Erwin Panofsky) as it has become known in the history of art. This method, as we shall see, attempts to analyze a work of art in the manner of the art historian, not restricting itself to a formal description of a work, but also aiming to capture the deeper meaning, the *Weltanschauung* (world view) of the artist expressed in the work of art.

2 The Three Levels of Meaning of Works of Art

In "On the Interpretation of '*Weltanschauung*'" (Mannheim 1952 [1921–1922]). Karl Mannheim distinguishes between three interpretative levels: the objective meaning, the expressive meaning, and the documentary meaning.

1. The *objective meaning* is the interpretation typically provided by art historians. Comprehension of the objective meaning of a work of art requires familiarity with the "visual universe" (*visuelles* "System") (Mannheim 1952, p. 51) in which the work was created. This means to move immanently, within this system. In certain epochs, for example, representations of space cannot be represented by way of perspective, but only by respecting the rules of a hierarchical order. To

grasp the objective meaning of a work of art requires that the art historian knows in which “visual universe” the work was created. This involves visual analysis of a work of art, in which both its theme and its style are reconstructed.

2. The objective meaning can be expanded by a second level of meaning, the *expressive meaning*, if we see the “visual universe” as a carrier of an intentional meaning and of ideas and feelings the artist presumably wants to reveal. What Mannheim calls the “historical structure of consciousness” (Mannheim 1952, p. 55) makes possible the comprehension of this expressive meaning; Mannheim presupposes that there is a homology between the culture of the artist to be interpreted and the interpreter’s culture that permits understanding the artist’s mental and spiritual environment. If there were no such shared structure of consciousness, the scientist would have to be instructed by historical documents about the artist’s mental and spiritual environment, in order to understand her intentions. We have here an interpretation that is of primary interest to phenomenology: the subjective point of view of the artist.
3. *Documentary meaning*: the interpretation of a cultural phenomenon does not conclude with the disclosure of the objective meaning and the intentions of the artist, but continues onto a third level. It is possible to reveal the fundamental principles of approaching reality in a work of art, so that the work becomes understandable as a document of a certain *Weltanschauung*. This deeper hidden meaning is called “documentary meaning” by Mannheim. The third level of meaning evolves when the objective meaning is not merely understood as an intended expression of an individual, but as documenting the *Weltanschauung* of the artist. With this third level of interpretation Mannheim aims for a sociological interpretation that transcends the objective and subjective meanings, in order to emphasize the sociological element that is documented.

The third level of interpretation is not just a matter of plain reference to the historical and social context of art. This context is included in the documentary interpretation because the third level of meaning includes as many documents of the time, the generation, or the artist’s environment as possible. In all these materials that which is most characteristic is documented and can thereby be grasped. The more materials one possesses, the easier it will be to understand the artist’s *Weltanschauung*: her fundamental attitude.

3 The Sociological Interpretation of Works of Art

Documentary interpretation has provoked a number of methodological debates. For instance, some authors have argued that it remains unclear what documentary meaning exactly is. Max Horkheimer and other representatives of Critical Theory (Lenk 1961; Neusüss 1968) have suspected a metaphysical entity behind this *Weltanschauung* (Horkheimer 1993 [1930]). From this point of view, Mannheim is charged with searching for metaphysical entities. Other authors, for example the art historian Ernst Gombrich, have interpreted the documentary meaning

psychologically, not as an explicit intention of an artist, an individual, but as explicit intention of a group of individuals, a group subject (Gombrich 1991). In Gombrich's view, Mannheim - like other cultural scientific interpreters of *Weltanschauung* such as Karl Lambrecht, Wilhelm Dilthey, or Alois Riegl- has psychologized the Hegelian *Geist* (Gombrich 1991, p. 64). According to Gombrich, these authors refer neither to the work of art itself nor to a spirit outside the work, but to a social psyche beyond the work.

Other critics, especially art historians, dismiss the method of documentary interpretation as mere sociology, concerned only with the historical and sociological background of the work of art, thereby neglecting the analysis of the actual work. These art historians, however, usually do not refer to Mannheim directly, but to the art historian Erwin Panofsky, who was influenced by him (Panofsky 1957). Here we are dealing with an indirect comment on Mannheim's method. As already mentioned, when Mannheim's paper on documentary interpretation was published, it did not attract the attention of many sociologists, but was instead embraced by art historians. It was the art historian Panofsky who introduced Mannheim's documentary interpretation to other art historians. Panofsky refers explicitly already in the 1930s to Mannheim's theory of interpretation when developing his famous method of "iconology."¹ Like Mannheim, Panofsky distinguishes between three spheres of interpretation: the pre-iconographical, the iconographical, and the iconological. The latter, iconology, corresponds to the interpretation of *Weltanschauung*, i.e., Mannheim's documentary interpretation.

Numerous critics of Panofsky's method have pointed out that iconology derives from a method developed by a sociologist, a method that does not analyze the work of art itself. Oskar Bätschmann (1985), for example, charges that Panofsky uses a genetic method that *explains* art by way of a *Weltanschauung* situated *outside* the work of art. Hence iconology cannot provide interpretations, but only explanations. The art historian Otto Pächt also criticizes iconology as a way of "unmasking occult things" *outside* the realm of works of art. He equates iconological interpretation with an "unacceptable disregard of the style aspect" and with an unwarranted engagement with matters peripheral to art (Pächt 1994, p. 356). For Pächt the analysis of style is in conflict with documentary interpretation.

4 The Documentary *Weltanschauung* as Interpreter's Construction

Documentary meaning, this documenting *Weltanschauung*, is not so easy to understand. What exactly is this *Weltanschauung* that is to be comprehended by documentary interpretation? A metaphysical entity, as Horkheimer (1993 [1930])

¹It should be pointed out that Mannheim's theory influenced sociology only indirectly, through its reception by Panofsky. Bourdieu first adapted his notion of habitus from Panofsky's *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* (Panofsky 1976 [1951]), in his book *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (Bourdieu 1984 [1979]).

and Critical Theory (Lenk 1961; Neusüss 1968) imply; or an intended group experience, as Gombrich (1991) argues; or something that proceeds behind the works, for example the social and economic conditions of their production, as the art historian Bächtmann (1985) or Pächt (1994) understand them?

The documentary *Weltanschauung*, I think, should be understood as originating from the interpreter's perspective. When an interpreter speaks, for example, about a "modern *Weltanschauung*," the reference is not to the spirit of modernity in some real sense, as a totality existing somewhere, but instead to particular stylistic characteristics that are seen as typical for modern culture (Mannheim 1952, p. 56). "Modern *Weltanschauung*" does not refer to a really existing collective subject, but to a *constructed subject*. We employ this interpretative method everyday, for example when attempting to show somebody that certain of his expressions or acts display a typically conservative attitude, although he has never thought of himself in that way. By using this interpretation, we "produce" a hermeneutic totality that allows us to comprehend the essential meaning of those acts. *Weltanschauung* is therefore a heuristic entity produced by the interpreter in order to name a characteristic attitude documenting itself in art, as well as in other related phenomena.

Art historians proceed in the same way when, because of certain stylistic features, for example they classify a work of art as "impressionist." They refer thereby neither to a particular state of mind of the artist nor to an existing totality in the sense of a substantialized spirit, but they employ a heuristic category in order to capture the essential characteristics of a work of art. The interpreter wants to come up with a precise interpretation and is convinced that the researched human group indeed lived according to the *Weltanschauung* described. But the resulting interpretation might not be infallible. It could well be that the behavior of a particular person is interpreted as a sign of a conservative *Weltanschauung*, but that this interpretation is in fact the result of misunderstandings by the interpreter. That is why documentary interpretation must be constantly verified anew. Taking additional documents into consideration can contribute to a better understanding of the *Weltanschauung* of a particular person, and an interpreter's interpretative skills are frequently subject to change. In a later stage of life an interpreter might, for example, have access to understanding a particular *Weltanschauung* inaccessible to him until then; or different circumstances might permit the interpreter to see a *Weltanschauung* from a different point of view and grasp it in a new way. Mannheim calls such interpretations that depend on the existential standpoint of an interpreter "conjunctive knowledge." (Mannheim 1982) This peculiarity should not be seen as a difficulty or as a problem, but rather as a particularity of all interpretative or qualitative methods.

5 *Weltanschauung* as Style

In order to understand the documentary method, it is also important to emphasize that it must be understood as an analysis of style (Barboza 2005). My intention here is to refute the claim of Bächtmann and Pächt, that documentary interpretation is

incompatible with an analysis of style. There is a profound difference between the merely formal analysis of style of the art historian and a sociological style-analysis aiming at establishing a documentary meaning. The documentary method performs a purely aesthetic analysis of style, in order to understand the formal characteristics of a work of art as document of a particular *Weltanschauung*. The documentary interpretation of style, in other words, is a methodological approach that focuses and builds on an analysis of style. It is more than a straightforward formal analysis, but emphasizes the sociological significance of formal differences.

To understand the sociological concept of style, it is also important to see it as a synthesizing category that refers to the documentary meaning of a work of art as well as to other cultural phenomena. That is why, after having grasped the underlying *Weltanschauung* in a cultural phenomenon such as a work of art, for example, the interpreter should take into consideration other cultural phenomena of the same period or of same social group. The aim is to uncover other cultural phenomena that document the same *Weltanschauung*. In this way the researcher may be able to trace the *Weltanschauung* of artists in their works as well as in their everyday lives and even in their religious beliefs.

The concept of *Weltanschauung* is a synthesizing category that refers to the documentary meaning of different cultural phenomena. With the concept of *Weltanschauung* and the concept of style, sociology has at its disposal synthesizing categories that trace different phenomena from various areas of life (religion, politics, art, economy, etc.) to a common denominator, insofar as the sociologist can detect the same stylistic features across these differences.

6 The Concept of Style of Alfred Schutz

Alfred Schutz too employs the concept of style.² Unlike in the documentary method, his concept of style is not used to describe the characteristics of a *Weltanschauung* in all areas of life. Rather, Schutz's notion of style refers to the characteristics of a particular area of reality or *Sinnprovinz* (province of meaning).

According to Schutz's theory of *Lebenswelt* (life-world), multiple realities consist of different "finite provinces of meaning." (Schutz 1962a, pp. 230ff, 340ff.) Schutz provides different examples for those provinces of meaning: the world of daily life, the world of art, the world of play, and the world of science. People

²In "On multiple realities," Schutz refers to "style of existence." (Schutz 1962a, pp. 207, 229) Schutz's theory is based on William James' "Principles of Psychology." While James describes the spheres of reality as "sub-universes," Schutz prefers "provinces of meaning." Schutz thereby wants to underline that the issue is not an ontological structure of objects, as "sub-universe" seems to indicate, but rather the meaning of our experience of what constitutes reality. In this way it is made clear that we deal here with constructions of meaning and not with real facts (Schutz 1962a, p. 230).

move in their lives between these provinces of meaning. They mostly spend their time in the world of daily life, but they occasionally leave this sphere to enter other provinces of meaning. This is the case when they go to sleep and switch from the reality of everyday life to the reality of dreams, when they go to church to attend a mass and shift into the province of meaning of religion, or when they go to the theatre and the curtain falls and the world of dramatic art opens. For Schutz all those provinces of meaning involve different styles of existence (Schutz 1962a, p. 207), and people constantly jump from one province of meaning to another. In transiting from one province of meaning to another, they change the logic of their actions and thinking. The world of action and the world of “being awake” characterize the style of daily life, for example, and both belong to the standard time-consciousness that all people share with each other throughout their everyday lives.³

Other parameters apply to the world of art. That is why people, according to Schutz, experience a leap when they move from the world of daily life to the world of art. Such a leap occurs in the theatre with the opening of the curtains, or at an exhibition because the eye moves to an image that is separated from daily life through frames. The world of art transports us into a sphere where practical motives are no longer relevant. While we are engaged in admiring the work of art, no pragmatic motives play a role. This absence of any practical meaning characterizes the phenomenological structure of any aesthetic experience, according to Schutz. That is why people may forget all that moves them in their ordinary daily life and submerge themselves in aesthetic contemplation while being deeply involved in viewing a work of art.

Schutz sees the different provinces of meaning as distinct and closed areas that do not overlap. That is why we experience a leap or even a shock (Schutz 1962a, p. 231) when we move from one province of meaning to another.

Unlike Schutz, who builds his theory of multiple realities on a differentiation (*Ausdifferenzierung*) of the *Lebenswelt* (life-world) and uses the concept of style to describe the logic of each province of meaning, documentary interpretation tries to overcome this differentiation through the concept of style. Documentary interpretation wants to show that despite fundamental differences between the provinces of meaning (e.g., between religion, science, and art) there is a higher reality (the *Weltanschauung*, the style) that brings together all those provinces and moves them in a unified direction. For example, the perception and consumption of art differ when we consider art from the perspective of a highly qualified and well-paid art collector, who buys at important galleries, and from that of a farmer whose only pictures are probably family photos (Bourdieu 1996). Different *Weltanschauungen* are documented in different perceptions of art. Comparable

³Schutz also mentions other stylistic features of the provinces of meaning of daily life: for example, “a specific tension of consciousness, namely wide-awakeness”; “a prevalent form of spontaneity, namely working (a meaningful spontaneity based upon a project ...)”; “a specific form of experiencing one’s self (the working self as the total self)”; “a specific form of sociality (the common intersubjective world of communication and of social action)”; and “a specific time-perspective (the standard time ...)” (Schutz 1962a, p. 230f.)

dissimilarities exist also in other domains of their lives: in their religious beliefs, economic practice, daily life, etc.

According to documentary interpretation, it can be shown that different social groups experience and understand the provinces of meaning in different ways, depending on their *Weltanschauung*.⁴ Schutz also considered this possibility of different social perceptions of the provinces of meaning. In “Symbol, Reality and Society” (Schutz 1962b, pp. 347–355) he remarks that the fundamental world of everyday life is not always understood in the same way by different people (Schutz 1962b, p. 347). While one’s “own group” experiences the reality of daily life in a particular way, “other groups” may have quite different perceptions of daily life (Schutz 1962b, p. 355). Schutz refers to a number of possibilities of understanding social belonging: He speaks of social roles, gender, age, profession, and position and status (Schutz 1962b, pp. 350ff). Because of these social distinctions it could be, for example, that what a particular social group perceives as everyday life, belongs for another group to the area of religion or of art. In “Symbol, Reality and Society” we find only this one brief comment about the possibility of analyzing different social perceptions. In Schutz’s inquiry into “Don Quixote and the Problem of Reality,” (Schutz 1964, pp. 135–158) however, we can find a more detailed analysis of how two different persons belonging to different social groups can diverge in their perception of the provinces of meaning.

7 Don Quixote and Sancho Panza as Representatives of Provinces of Meaning

Schutz’s analysis of “Don Quixote de la Mancha” concerns the problem why people perceive the same reality in different ways. The novel presents at least two ways of seeing the world. There is Don Quixote who sees the world in terms of his own *Weltanschauung*, his own sub-universe. And then there is Sancho Panza who perceives the world and the provinces of meaning that constitute it in a very different way. These different *Weltanschauungen* seem to be contained in one person and not to belong to different social groups. Though Schutz primarily

⁴Along similar lines, Mannheim demonstrates in his sociology of knowledge inquiries that a competition between different styles is characteristic of modern society. He mainly analyses the competition between two important currents: between a conservative and a liberal style. And he shows how this competition takes place in different areas or provinces of meaning. In politics it is easier to locate the competition between the liberal and the conservative orientations. This competition also occurs, according to Mannheim, in science in the form of a competition between different scientific styles, and especially ideal-typically in the struggle between the natural sciences (as embodiment of a liberal way of thinking) and the human sciences (as embodiment of a conservative way of thinking). Instead of speaking of a style of science as Schutz does, Mannheim speaks of a plurality of scientific styles that can be traced back to social, economic, and cultural differences.

refers to single subjects, he also alludes that they may belong to different social groups: Don Quixote represents the knighthood, chivalry, while Sancho Panza is described by Schutz as “neo-positivistic empiricist” (Schutz 1964, p. 143) and as “the great methodologist.” (Schutz 1964, p. 152) We are all “Sancho Panzas of the common-sense-world.” (Schutz 1964, p. 150) The world of chivalry is described in Schutz’s short comment as a closed sub-universe, comparable to a *Weltanschauung* in the sense of the documentary method, the starting point for interpretations of *all* provinces of meaning. This sub-universe delivers a particular way of conducting life: The knight’s divine mission in everyday life is to remedy and to mitigate affronts. The sub-universe of chivalry has its own scientific perception too. The knight can practice all sciences: He can be judge, theologian, physician, or meteorologist; he can master anything. He is armed with his own disposition towards the law and the economy. His thinking too, and his perception of space and time, follow their own logic: Worlds that are far apart can be moved closer together, time periods can be shortened or extended, and magic can bring disorder into regularities.

However, Schutz only assigns Don Quixote to a particular social or historical group in this particular instance. Don Quixote’s sub-universe is almost always regarded by Schutz as a private sub-universe (Schutz 1964, p. 156). Don Quixote stands for those who do not perceive the world the way ordinary people do, thereby representing all outsiders. Schutz shows how this outsider takes different positions in the course of the story. The three expeditions of Don Quixote describe three different possibilities for the stranger to conduct himself in his relations with himself and with others. In the first expedition Don Quixote remains faithful to his sub-universe of the knighthood. He is “an undisturbed master in his sub-universe.” (Schutz 1964, p. 141) In the second expedition he is forced to reveal his own world and he is compelled to harmonize it with the common-sense world of the others. It is mainly through Sancho Panza, who represents the world of common-sense, that Don Quixote is confronted with a different world perception and a different sub-universe, to which he must constantly react so that communication and understanding become possible. Schutz investigates the negotiations of the characters of the novel between their own sub-universe and that of the others in the different interpretations of the provinces of meaning and of everyday reality. Don Quixote’s world of everyday life is for Sancho Panza a world of dreams or even madness. Some congruities become possible when, for example, Don Quixote realizes that what he has experienced as everyday life is perhaps not real after all, because it may have been the result of magic.

In the third expedition, Don Quixote no longer defends his own world and experiences a crisis: He becomes self-reflective and realizes that much of what he has believed is breaking apart, that it does not belong to the realm of reality, but instead to the realm of fantasy: “God pardon you my friends,” says Don Quixote, “for you have robbed me of the sweetest existence and most delightful vision any human being ever enjoyed or beheld. Now, indeed, I positively know that the pleasures of this life pass like a shadow and a dream.” (Schutz 1964, p. 156) Don Quixote now accepts that his sub-universe is a mere fantasy. Sociologically speaking, one might say that he discovers the reality of social construction or the

“ideological character” of reality. Schutz refers to Hegel’s “unhappy consciousness” to describe Quixote’s tragedy. What leads Don Quixote into crisis and eventual ruin is that he no longer believes in his own *Weltanschauung*.

But what is the referent of the different characters in the novel? Who are the ordinary people and who are the outsiders? Schutz’s analysis makes evident that Schutz is not especially interested in locating these different characters in specific social groups. His real aim is to design a kind of grammar of the different possibilities of the coming together of the established and the outsiders. Moreover, Schutz remains faithful in his entire inquiry to his theory to the differentiated and closed provinces of meaning. That is why he is especially concerned with analyzing those parts of the novel where the characters leap from one province of meaning to another, from one style to another, and with how the different interpretations of the provinces of meaning are brought together by way of a discursive sub-universe. The sub-universes of Don Quixote and of Sancho Panza, furthermore, are regarded as representatives of the provinces of meaning: Sancho represent the world of everyday life and Don Quixote represents the world of phantasy. The passages where the social connectedness of these different sub-universes are discussed (Don Quixote as representative of chivalry and Sancho as representative of the common people), as already mentioned, occur as mere remarks in passing. But it is exactly here that a sociologist who works with the method of documentary meaning would begin his interpretative analysis.

8 Don Quixote and Sancho Panza as Representatives of Social Groups

For the method of documentary interpretation, the *Lebenswelt* (life-world) is not structured in terms of provinces of meaning, but as *Weltanschauungen* that depend on real social carriers and historical constellations. And those *Weltanschauungen* define how the provinces of meaning (of everyday life, art, religion, etc.) are perceived. The provinces of meaning are therefore not self-contained independent spheres, but different realms that depend on the *Weltanschauung* of a time or a social group. If Don Quixote and Sancho Panza are described as having two different *Weltanschauungen*, documentary interpretation would look for the real social actors and then show how these *Weltanschauungen* structure the whole *Lebenswelt* and all provinces of meaning from a particular point of view. There are a number of instances in sociology where the work of Cervantes is analyzed in a documentary way, inquiring about the different *Weltanschauungen* of the protagonists of the novel and of the social groups to which they belong.

In his sociology of literature, Georg Lukács (1994 [1920]) analyzes the work of Cervantes as a chronicle in which two historical epochs and *Weltanschauungen*, represented by the protagonists of the novel, are in competition with each other. Don Quixote represents an era and a social world, the one of chivalry, that has lost

its significance. An old world lies in ruins, but instead the arising of a new stable order, fall and decline become prevalent as a result of the rise of the bourgeoisie. The main protagonist of the novel is, for Lukács, someone in search of a new world while still longing for the old order. In a similar way, Leo Lowenthal analyzes the work of Cervantes in "Literature and the Image of Man." (1986)⁵ Lowenthal understands the analysis of Cervantes in his book as a diagnosis of the historical and social transformations of his time. The novel depicts the rise of the bourgeoisie, the decline of aristocratic society, and the hope of some citizens, Don Quixote's as it were, for a new and better world. For Lowenthal Quixote is a figure who represents neither the past nor the present but a hoped-for future. The speech of the knight is understood as a "typical document of the intellectual of the Renaissance." His beliefs and ideals motivate Don Quixote to fight against the peasants and the emerging bourgeoisie whose lives are merely governed by common sense and by self-interest: "Merchants, minor functionaries in the government, unimportant intellectuals – in short, they are, like Sancho, people who want to get ahead in the world and, therefore, direct their energies to the things which will bring them profit." (Lowenthal 1986, p. 28)

In these two examples from the sociology of literature, the work of Cervantes is interpreted as a document of a time in which the intellectuals struggle against the petit bourgeoisie in an attempt to make their ideal world of books prevail against the everyday life of pragmatism. Cervantes is regarded as a chronicler and researcher of his time, as someone who analyzes the conflict between the intellectuals and the citizens in a fragmented society undergoing change. In our own world, art, economy, science, as well as the provinces of meaning also are perpetually changing, but they are perceived by competing social groups in different ways. While the ordinary citizen, for example, merely expects to be entertained by a theatre performance, Don Quixote sees art as potentially capable of changing life, as having emancipatory potential. In Cervantes' book there is a scene where during a puppet show Don Quixote fights with the puppets. This scene well captures Don Quixote's implicit attitude to art as an instrument for awakening people from their lethargy and as a call for justice.

The two main characters in Cervantes' novel could be also analyzed from the perspective of the documentary method, without reference to the concrete historical constellation of sixteenth century society that provides the novel's setting. Don Quixote and Sancho could be understood as representatives of our own modern society. This is what Pierre Bourdieu attempts to do in his important analysis of French consumer culture, in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of*

⁵It should be pointed out, however, that there are major methodological differences between the documentary interpretation of Karl Mannheim and the approach that was used by Lukács and Lowenthal in their sociologies of literature. Both are committed to a Marxist critical approach. According to such a methodological approach, the social scientist should not only analyze different *Weltanschauungen* in art, but at the same time show which of those *Weltanschauungen* allow a realistic representation of reality and which are based on false consciousness. On the argument between Critical Theory and the approach of Karl Mannheim in his sociology of knowledge see: Barboza 2009.

Taste (1987). Here Bourdieu shows that the perception of what is accepted as art is different in different social strata. Already in his work on photography as illegitimate art, written before *Distinction*, Bourdieu had discovered that the understanding and the use of photography as art differs greatly in the social classes (Bourdieu 1996). While the middle class conceives photography as autonomous and as not serving any particular purpose, for the lower classes and for farmers photography has a clear purpose: to portray the family and the family environment. The lower classes see art not as an autonomous realm without clear purpose, but instead as something that is tightly integrated into their living arrangements.

In *Distinction*, Bourdieu extends his inquiry into consumption to the most diverse arts and cultural heritages. But his main thesis remains unchanged. As an illustration of his work, Bourdieu uses the well-known figures of Cervantes' novel (Bourdieu 1982, p. 24).⁶ Sancho and the peasants are described as representative of the lower class and Don Quixote as a representative of the intellectuals. Bourdieu refers to the episode where Don Quixote struggles with and destroys the puppets at a puppet theatre performance, as if the puppets were real. He sees this episode as a paradigmatic example of the controversial attitude of the people and the intellectuals towards fiction. He wants to show how such conflicting attitudes are manifest not only in the consumption of a work of theatre, but also in the consumption of other cultural goods. Popular taste takes interest in the pragmatic: The plates are filled with nourishing and inexpensive food. This contrasts with upper class taste, its reluctance to devour food unceremoniously and to eat until feeling full, and its greater concern with manners and with proper behavior at table (Bourdieu 1982, p. 26).

Aesthetics, in other words, is not understood as a closed province of meaning, but as a sphere that is perceived differently by different social groups. This also applies to the other provinces of meaning.

9 Conclusion

The fundamental difference between the documentary and Schutz's phenomenological method of analysis of art is that Schutz regards art as a closed province of meaning, and as an autonomous sphere, while for Mannheim art is a document of the time. And as a document of the time, art cannot be autonomous; it is in various ways linked to all other spheres. It may also be read as manifestation of a *Weltanschauung*.

Both methods aim at reading works of art in a sociological manner. While the documentary method overcomes the merely subjective point by reference to the *Weltanschauung* of the subjects, Schutz goes beyond the subjective perspective by pointing to the provinces of meaning as all-encompassing realities.

⁶This reference to Don Quixote is not present in the "Preface to the English-Language Edition" of *Distinction*. In the English Edition I find only one reference to Don Quixote: Bourdieu 1984, p. 109.

The documentary method analyzes works of art to highlight the particular styles that can also be detected in other spheres. Schutz's phenomenological perspective views art as a closed system, as a province of meaning with its own particular style. Although the concept of style is employed in both approaches, the same term refers to different realities. Schutz's concept refers to provinces of meaning; the documentary method refers to *Weltanschauung*.

In regard to the work of Cervantes, we have seen that neither Schutz nor Lukács or Lowenthal analyze it directly. In order to analyze the work in a sociological manner, according to the method of documentary interpretation, the first step must be a content analysis and a formal style analysis, unlike the tendency of the art historian or the literary critic to remain satisfied with a straightforward style analysis, and to interpret the style too as documenting the *Weltanschauung* of a particular time and social group. Alfred Schutz could also have analyzed Cervantes' book as a work of art to find out how readers experience this world of fantasy as soon as they open the book.

As we have seen, Schutz, Lukács, and Lowenthal do not offer an interpretation of Don Quixote as literature, instead, they use the novel to illustrate their own methodological approaches: as a way to investigate the competition between different *Weltanschauungen* (Lukács and Lowenthal) or to explain the concept of the provinces of meaning (Schutz). Schutz uses Cervantes' novel to exemplify his own idea of finite provinces of meaning and how the novel's figures move from one province of meaning to another. The documentary method uses the work of Cervantes in a different way: as a treatise on the competition between two *Weltanschauungen* on the sovereignty of interpretation (*Deutungshoheit*) regarding the reality of the world and its provinces of meaning. These two *Weltanschauungen* are so different that what is routine for one social group belongs to the world of phantasy for the other. The combat over interpretative predominance comes to a conclusion at the end of the novel, when Don Quixote, as the last representative of his class, is no longer able to defend his position, not even to himself. And what was all along phantasy in the eyes of others, now becomes phantasy also for him.

From the point of view of both sociological approaches presented here, there are different possible readings of the work of Cervantes. The most exciting moment is surely when both approaches begin to complement each other.

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