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Mythical Paradigms of the Avant-garde and its Era

Mytické paradigma avantgardy a její doby

Disertační práce

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Prohlašuji, že jsem disertační prácí vykonala samostatně s využitím uvedených pramenů a literatury.

Tatjana Micić

Devoted to my parents Mirjana and Ratko Micić

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Introduction and Acknowledgements

The paper titled *Mythical Paradigms of the Avant-garde and its Era* was written during many years of dealing with the issues of the avant-garde and its relation to religion, language and mythology in the context of an overall development of aesthetic, philosophical and spiritual questions of the twentieth century. The author of this paper has been interested for a long time in the issues of the internal driving forces of the avant-garde artistic movements which deeply influenced the development of modern European culture.

Dealing with the avant-garde it gradually came to the author's knowledge that for a more profound comprehension it was necessary to link it with the philosophy and theories dealing with mythologies. Of great help were the consultations with the mentor Doc.PhDr.Tomač Glanc, Ph.D who referred the author to the work of Prof. PhDr. Zdeněk Mathauser who, during his life-long dealing with the Avant-garde, brought phenomenology into connection with the avant-garde as two mutually complementary and explanatory phenomena of the same period. It particularly gave freedom to connecting the avant-garde works to the works of phenomenologists Ernest Cassirer, Aleksey Losev and Mircea Eliade in particular, whose approach to religion and mythology is primarily phenomenological. A definite guiding idea, which is associated with the research of the avant-garde, was focused on an opinion that a quest for the internal driving forces of the avant-garde artistic movements was actually a quest for the eidos of its work.

This paper was written in Prague, in the Czech academic and cultural milieu, but relied on the author's studies and researches done in Belgrade, the time when the author had been a student and had worked with Russian and Yugoslav avant-garde texts, theoretically elaborated on in the works of Professor Aleksandar Flaker and Gojko Tešič as well as at the Institute of Literature and Art. The author's knowledge of literature and literary theories, both Czech and European ones, was especially enriched during her attending seminars given by Prof. PhDr. Vladimír Svatoň, Csc intended for students of doctoral studies at the Institute of Slavonic and European Studies at the Faculty of Philosophy in Prague. Of great importance to arousing author's interest was also the stay in China where she became interested in the relation of the avant-garde artists to Chinese and

Oriental poetry, religion and philosophy in general, which is also reflected to a certain extent in this paper.

Comment on Bibliography and Cited Literature

We have tried to cite all literature in the original or its direct translation into English. Exceptions have been made in the case of two books. The only accessible source of the book of Vyacheslav V. Ivanov about Khlebnikov was in Serbian, translated from the Russian of the writer's original manuscript. It was not possible for us to find the printed version in Russian, so we have quoted the available source: Vyacheslav V. Ivanov: *Hlebnjikov i nauka*, translated by Radmila Mečanin, Narodna knjiga - Alfa, Beograd, 2003. Olso Jaccard's book on Daniil Kharms, originally written in French, is cited in the Russian translation: Zhakkar, Zhan Filip: *Daniel Kharms i konec russkogo avantgarda*, Gumanitarnoje agenstvo Akademičeskij projekt, Sankt-Peterburg, 1995 (Original: Jaccard, Jean-Philippe: *Daniil Harms et la fin de l'avant-garde russe*, Berne, Peter Lang, 1999. If this paper should be accepted for publication, these flaws remain to be corrected.

In the footnotes there occasionally appears certain literature not mentioned in the bibliography at the end of the paper, as it was not of primary importance for this paper but was

mentioned in providing additional arguments or cited in reference to further reading which is not directly connected to the theme of this paper.

Russian names have been transcribed in the Latin alphabet according to the standard English usage of the Chicago Manual of Style,[1] but for the works which were published according to other standards of transliteration we have not made any changes. All literary works quoted in this paper are translated by Zdenko Filipović and Tatjana Micić, if not stated otherwise.

1. Theoretical and Methodological Approach

1.1. Why We Speak About Paradigms

It is necessary to explain what we imply by **paradigmaticity,** regarding the fact that we took this word for the theme of our paper.

The notion of the *paradigm* was used within modern linguistics by De Saussure in speaking about the syntagmatic and associative sequence, and corrected by Louis Hjelmslev, who substituted it for the syntagmatic and paradigmatic sequence in order to avoid psychologization.[2] The Greek word παράδειγμα (paradigm) means pattern, or example.

The idea of a paradigm is widely used. In his modern theory of sciences, Thomas Kuhn implies by referring to the paradigm those principles which, in a given science at a particular moment, are considered standard for successfully acquiring new information. When one paradigm is exhausted and crisis is inevitable, there occurs a change, which he named as the *paradigm shift*, sometimes known as revolutionary science.[3] Hans Jauss (who singles out paradigms in the history of literature) or F. Jameson (in speaking about paradigms as possibilities of combining certain elements freely) understand paradigms in their own idiosyncratic manner.[4]

Nevertheless, in this paper we rely on the heritage of De Saussure's linguistic current of thought, broadly accepted in modern semiotics, so we imply that *paradigm* refers to a class of

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[1] Internet edition: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html
[2] IVIĆ: 1965, §. 408.
[3] Kun, T. S.: *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, University of Chicago press. Chicago 1962.
[4] Jauss H.R. *Paradigmawechsel in der Litteraturwissenschaft*; in Linguistiche Berichte, 3, 1969; Jameson, F.: *The Prison-House of Language*. Princeton University Press. Princeton 1972.

elements with similarities. Alternatively, patterns or models found in the inherited literary and cultural tradition but which are later altered and enriched – this is how we understand the relationship of the avant-garde to the mythical heritage.[5] By their structure and content the avant-garde texts oppose tradition but still consist of the same substance which produces tension in regard to tradition.

Aage Hensen-Löve notices that within the Russian avant-garde there is a radical orientation to paradigmatics, that is, anti-syntagmatics, so that it stands in opposition to the positive aesthetics of Gustav Shpet oriented to syntagmatics, composition and the wholeness of expressive acts or thinking processes.[6] In his *Theory of the Avant-garde* Peter Bürger similarly describes certain procedures and techniques.[7] For example, he speaks about the procedure of *chance* (poems made up of Tristan Tzara's newspaper cut-outs and modern happenings) or *montage*, which is a kind of paradigmatic connection. Bürger stresses that, on the one hand, the syntagmatic structural pattern is characterized by having the end (such was a work of art before the time of the avant-garde), but on the other hand that the paradgimatic structural sequence is principally unclosed.

Although syntagmatics is of secondary importance in this paper, it is also partly present. Therefore, we connect phenomena which are culturally and horizontally interconnected. For example, *Dada* is a European phenomenon but is, in this paper, connected to the Russian *zaum* poetry. The works of Russian artists classified as Futurists–Archaists (Khlebnikov, Kruchënykh and Malevich for example) are connected and analyzed together with those of the Serbian avant-garde, Rastko Petrović and the *Zenithists*. When we speak of the horizontal interconnection of culture, we first of all think of *analogous* phenomena which are connected on the principle of adjacency, that is, *metonymity* in the Jakobson sense. So we have thus relied on Jakobson's identification of substitution, paradigm, and metaphor, on the one hand, and of combination, syntagm, and metonymy, on the other. The understanding of metonymy as defined by Jakobson is accepted by modern semiotics, which determines metonymic connection as *relation in absentia* – in our case there is no true relationship between the representatives of *zaum* and other avant-garde movements but there are similarities in sense and appearance.[8]

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[5] In *Oxford English Dictionary* paraddigm is defined as: pattern or model. See: http://www.oed.com/
[6] HENSEN-LÖVE: 1990, p. 9.
[7] BÜRGER: 1984, p. 64 - 65.
[8] JAKOBSON: 1987, *Two Aspects of Language...*, p. 109 – 114.

1.2. Searching for Eidetic Forms

A question is therefore raised of how to describe the phenomena we shall talk about, since these communicate with us through symbols and have no other form of appearance.[9] If we have registered changes on the essence of art and literature, then how, when describing them, to connect them to similar changes happening on the plane of the philosophy, mythology and religion of their age?

The symbolic forms we shall talk about in this paper live in a separate world of images. Empirical reality is not reflected in them and they create their own world on the basis of independent principles. Those are different ways by means of which something typical of spirit develops, in other words, the manner of its self-appearance.

In many of his works Zdeněk Mathauser points to the connection between philosophy and literature. He thinks that: " (...) the angle of the view of poetic texts reminds of the angle of the view of philosophy from the same period: in that period the similarity is felt in the air and exists somewhere on the boundary of both cultural forms".[10]

Stressing the importance of publishing Edmund Husserl's book *Logical Investigations* in 1901, Mathauser presented some significant parallels between phenomenology and Cubism, and in particular Russian Cubo-Futurism.[11] In his opinion phenomenology and the aforementioned avant-garde movements share the following:

- the neo-Platonic ideal of "pure essences"[12]
- anti-psychologism;
- a rejection of empirical trivialities and banal feelings;
- a rejection of Naturalism and its perspective;
- acceptance of a simultaneous view of things, from all sides (regardless of empirical limitations);
- in general, *the return to things* – in that things are cleansed of all unnecessary layers.

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[9] Cassirer raised the same question in *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1957).
[10] MATHAUSER: 2005, *K pomezí filozofie...*, p. 17. „(...)zorný úhel připomínal zorný úhel dobové filozofie: taková příbuznost bývá v určité době ve vzduchu, kdesi na hraně obou kulturních útvarů".
[11] MATHAUSER: 1964, p. 225.
[12] Ibid. In Czech: "čiré podstaty".

We shall try to clarify those connections between phenomenology and the avant-garde. Materials for the fundamental description of "things themselves" Husserl defines as *essences* which represent the objects of "intuition" and non-perceptual "sight". The yearning of the avant-garde for pure art (Malevich), pure poetry, the pure word (*zaumnists*) is the same as Husserl's yearning for building such cognitive methods which do not add anything new to the subject of thinking, but make it possible for it to appear in our consciousness in its most essential form. So, the phenomenological method ought to show how things authentically appear in our consciousness.

A great innovation brought by the avant-garde art and literature is a conscious, exploratory relation to the most complex phenomena of the human mind – myths, language, religion, colour, form, space etc. For example, Khlebnikov's valence of the initial consonant is a conscious process, which later acquires an aesthetic function.

The consciousness in which essences are shown is called *eidetic consciousness*. By using *eidetic reduction*, phenomenology discovers that this consciousness, or so to say, this thinking of essences, happens spontaneously; it is intuitively available as an immediate event.

Avant-garde art, as we shall elaborate on in this paper, carries out a certain reduction in its approach to the world, as well as to art, myth and language. To a certain extent it uses a similar method as phenomenology: the aim of the avant-garde reduction is to re-achieve a direct and primitive contact with the world as we experience it rather than as we conceptualize it.

Phenomenologist Losev defines the nature of eidos as differential. In his opinion each eidos carries the moment of differentiation.[13] So in this paper we attempt to show, by speaking about the paradigm of the avant-garde, how its eidos appears, eidos here being understood as something active in its appearance whit the quality of being different from others.

1.3. Presumptions of the Avant-garde

1.3.1. Definition of the Avant-garde

Prior to embarking on writing about the avant-garde, it is still necessary to explain what is implied, as there is still uncertainty about acceptance of the term, including the notion it refers to.

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[13] Losev: 1993(b), p. 272.

The warning given by Aleksandar Flaker in 1978 on the occasion of defining the appearance of the avant-garde is still in effect. On using the word "avant-garde" in *Style Formations* he writes, inspired by Lotman's text about Mayakovsky,[14] that a text built and intertwined with incompatibilities (*nesovmestimostyakh*) does not create structure, but that its structure is transparent; it is not a composition but a non-composition, and the meaning of a composition is attributed to, thus making it chaotic from inside. Flaker paraphrases Lotman to a certain extent: "The avant-garde does not create wholly structured texts and does not tend to create complete style formations as structures of structures; it is anti-formative and as soon as its metohs and procedures are incorporated in larger structured complexes – they cease to be avant-garde. Therefore, the meaning of the avant-garde principle is more important than its achievements, the zone of its influence on the 20th century literature is greater than its core, so that we can only talk conditionally about the avant-garde as a style formation, always start anew emphasizing its opposites within the unity in overvaluing a system and resisting building any other new and closed system."[15] Flaker emphasizes that the avant-garde was for "the revolution of the spirit" but does not go into any more profound socio-religious or philosophical analysis of its phenomena.[16]

Renato Poggioli in his *The Theory of the Avant-garde*[17] tries to observe the artistic avant-garde as a sociological fact as he is interested in what the avant-garde discovers inside and outside art itself, in its psychological and ideological side. Guillermo de Torre, to a certain extent, also describes phenomena beyond aesthetics connected with the avant-garde,[18] but it is Adriano Marino who approaches the aspects of the avant-garde which are of interest to us in this paper.[19] Marino speaks about the avant-garde as some kind of holy barbarism which primarily consists of non-acceptance of the destiny of man and his culture.[20]

The term avant-garde was hard to adopt because it remains difficult to define this phenomenon in terms of giving it an appropriate name when the very notion which it was

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[14] FLAKER: 1976, p. 207. Yu. M. Lotman: *Analiz poeticheskogo teksta*, Leningrad, 1972, p. 255.
[15] "Avangarda ne stvara cjelovito strukturirane tekstove, pa ne teži ni stvaranju cjelovite stilske formacije kao strukture struktura, ona je antiformativna, a čim njezini postupci uđu u veće strukturirane cjeline – one prestaju biti avangardnim. Značenje načela avangarde znatnije je stoga od njezinih ostvarenja, zona djelovanja na književnost 20. stoljeća daleko je vjeća od njezina jezgra, pa će biti da o avangardi kao stilskoj formaciji možemo govoriti samo uvjetno, uvjek iznova naglašavajući njezine suprotnosti unutar jedinstva u prevrednovanju sustava i opiranju izgradnji bilo kojeg novog i zatvorenog sustava."p. 208.
[16] Ibid. p. 204.
[17] POGGIOLI: 1962.
[18] TORRE: 1965.
[19] MARINO: 1973, p. 177-224.
[20] MARINO: 1973, p. 177-224; 1984, p. 633-791 and other works.

supposed to define is not clear. Here we come to an essential characteristic of the avant-garde – the heterogeneity of its phenomena. It seems we cannot talk about *the avant-garde*, but about *the avant-gardes*, which means that behind the same verbal mark hides a large number of quite different manifestations and programs, most often opposite and such that they cannot fit in any whole. The heterogeneous avant-garde eludes description, classification or definition; however, numerous heterogeneous Avant-garde movements are connected by the singular period of time in which they came into existence. The appearance of the Avant-garde is inseparable from the time in which it came into existence.[21]

It is useful to accept the notion of an *historical avant-garde* introduced by Petar Bürger and to separate it from all neo-avant-garde attempts characteristic of Western Europe in the 1950s and 1960s.[22]

Avant-garde movements are not connected by a single artistic style but by the joint time in which different artistic styles and movements emerge into existence. Here we come to a significant factor in determining the avant-garde art - **the question of time**. In that sense, we can talk about *the spirit of time* (Zeitgeist), or of a "new era" as was felt by many. In his program poem

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[21] We are not going to speak in detail about how different theoreticians have understood and defined the avant-garde. The term was more easily accepted for the describing the Russian than the Western European avant-garde with the exception of the Spanish and Italian ones. So it is used by Khardzhiev, Kovuton and Andrey Krusanov; in Czech literary theory by Matahuser and Tomáš Glanc. There was an attempt to apply the term Expressionism for the whole of the Serbian and Croatian movement between two world wars, especially in the theoretical works of Radovan Vučković, who was influenced by German theory and critics. However, in that literary environment the term avant-garde prevails and is widely used by Aleksandar Flaker and Gojko Tešić.
Some theoreticians use the term avant-garde as a superior notion and that is accepted in this work. For example Georg Bollenbeck in the text *Avantgarde* (in: Moderne literatur in grundbegriffen. Herausgegeben von Dieter Borchmeyer und Viktor Žmegač. 2., Neu bearbeitete Auflage, Max Niemeyer Verlag Tübingen, 1994, 41-47) , says that avant-garde movements such as Futurism, Cubism, Expressionism, Constructivism, Dadaism, Surrealism etc. manly have their national centers, which especially applies to the lesser known *–isms*, while the avant-garde is an international event which connects different forms of art, literature, architecture, music, design etc. As an historical event it lasted from the beginning of the century until the 1930s; but after the year 1945 the neo-avant-garde movements appeared.
For the period of the avant-garde – we take that the year of its first appearance was around 1910, with the emergence of Italian Futurism, German Expressionism and French literary Cubism; also the first works of Khlebnikov and Kruchěnykh's; while the end of the avant-garde is marked by the writings of Daniil Kharms, who wrote until the year 1939. In Serbian and Croatian literature, Gojko Tešić marks the avant-garde period as lasting between 1911 and 1934, nevertheless, from the 1930s a leftist orientation was already dominant (Tešić, Gojko: *Srpska avnagarda & polemički kontekst*, Svetovi i Institut za književnost i umetnost, Novi Sad, Beograd, 1991).
[22] BÜRGER, 1984. The same suggest GLANC: 2005(b) in the preface that avant-garde should be understood «as a temporal term», p. 13.

Yesterday and Today, Rastko Petrović wrote: "We want to renew time".[23] The literary critic Milan Bogdanović claims that people should first "reconcile with the new time and then with the new literature".[24] Nikolay Berdyaev wrote that at the beginning of the twentieth century the modern period finished and the new Middle Ages began.[25]

However, it is quite justifiable, even indispensable, to observe the appearance of the avant-garde as a phenomenon which is natural within the process of cultural and social existence, or we can also say that this development appears periodically, and even always exists, in those forms of popular culture described as the carnival by Mikhail Bakhtin.[26]

It is also important to point out that it is possible to describe as *avant-garde* those phenomena whose nature is not directly aesthetic, but belong to the field of philosophy and theology. Tomáš Glanc calls our attention to this in determining the work of Pavel Florenskiy as avant-garde theology.[27] There, Glanc further warns that it is important to study the avant-garde within the framework of philosophy by explaining that it is not the concrete context of a work but that some parallelisms exist between artistic and philosophical phenomena.

1.3.2. The Avant-garde Did Not Only Create Works, but Manifested Ideas

Peter Bürger notices this phenomenon with avant-garde art and in his *Theory of the Avant-Garde* he says: "Duchamp's Ready-Mades are not works of art but manifestations."[28] Individual avant-garde works can be observed as artistic, but it seems that there is much more sense to observe the avant-garde within the totality of its complex phenomena and manifestations, behaviour of individuals or artistic groups or, even further, within the framework of general cultural, scientific or political changes at the beginning of the century.

It is often pointed out that, with its works and the behaviour of its artists, the avant-garde wanted to alter the status of art in society, but what is even more important was its registering

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[23] SKG, book IV/1, 1. IX 1921, p. 53-54
[24] Bogdanović, Milan: *Novo vreme, nova litertura*, Veme, IX/2530, 6-9. I 1929, p. 19.
[25] Berdyaev, Nikolay: *Filosofiya tvorchestva, kul'turyi iskustva*, Iskustvo, Moskva, 1994
[26] BAKHTIN: 1984.
[27] GLANC: 2005(b), 40 – 41.
[28] BÜRGER: 1984, p. 55.

larger changes that Losev calls *the change of mythology*[29] as well as anticipating greater civilizational changes as a visionary force.

1.3.3. A Break in Continuity or Inversion?

In modern civilizations, historical cultures begin by having inversions of immediately previous cultures at their centre. Not only did the avant-garde negate the previous positivism and rationalism, but also it *inverted the entirety of European culture and its leading institutions.*[30] So, the avant-garde does not discard individual artistic methods from earlier periods but the past of entire art, thus causing a radical break with tradition. *Zaum*-language was a project of poetic language to bring about the most radical inversion of the central institutions in European art and culture in the field of poetic language - the institutions of logical thinking and expression with the usage of natural linguistic signs.

In this paper we emphasize that the methods of inversing traditional cultures and institutions were periodically indispensable in popular and carnival culture, where they formed part of "status reversal" and their function was one of *positive negation,* behind which was hidden a need for renewal and regeneration. The avant-garde develops in opposition to some existing system (literary, artistic or social) but its rebellion turns into the total and substantial break with each possible continuity, integration and solidarity. That is why Marino claims that the avant-garde contains something anarchic in its great variety of forms, which gave birth to the surreal closeness to Communism.[31]

1.3.4. Destruction, Negation or the Power of Entropy?

The destruction carried out by the avant-garde can be observed in different ways. If we are talking about avant-garde painting, on the phenomenological plane it appears to be a chaos shattering the organization in structure of its medium. The structural analysis of avant-garde art shows that inside there is an element of dynamic instability which could corroborate and confirm the universal catastrophe theory (which emphasizes the discontinuities of phenomena) as the

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[29] LOSEV: 1999, p. 205 – 423. We shell later discuss this in more details.
[30] BÜRGER : 1984, p. 20-27.
[31] MARINO: 1973, p. 177-224.

primary law of whole morphogenesis, by René Thom's definition, and which also forms one of the laws of esoteric and many Oriental philosophies, especially Taoism.[32] This would mean that modern art in essence refutes basic principles of dialectics on the transition from quantity to quality and in the centre of evolution puts one model of catastrophe, an aspiration of each form to self-destruction. Modern painting offers examples of René Thom's theory as published in the work *Structural Stability and Morphogenesis*.[33]

With this we go deeper into the theory of culture as formulated by Pavel Florenskiy. His theoretical presumptions on the law of entropy are of great importance to understanding avant-garde art and the time when it appeared. Florenskiy himself writes that the world is governed by *severance* concerning *connections* and *discretion* concerning *reality itself*. He deepens his philosophy of culture by applying the second principle of thermodynamics – *the law of entropy*, which is accepted more widely as the law of Chaos in all fields of space. Contrary to this basic law of the world is Logos, *the law of ectropy* understood here as the change towards organization, complexity, that is, in the direction opposite to entropy leading to chaos and degradation.[34] The Russian semioticians Lotman and Uspenskiy generally accepted Florenskiy's theory, thinking that in human society there is an aspiration and need for surmounting and overcoming general entropy (disorder, chaos) and it is one of the rudimentary goals and purposes of culture.[35]

It can be also said that Florenskiy had a hunch that the law of entropy would prevail and, therefore he proposed a return to the medieval model of culture as salvation. The new art which emerged in Russia and Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century contained in its system elements of destruction, so that a frightening question was raised of whether the destiny of art and our civilization was fatal and whether there were ways to prevent it.

Malevich introduced the word *catastrophe* as one of the basic notions in his philosophy of art. Sooner or later each system experiences disintegration or catastrophe in order that a new, more perfect system can then be created on its foundations. In his case we can certainly speak about Oriental influences; however, while Malevich thinks that in that dynamic development of everything there is gradualness, that is, a certain evolution, this concept is totally alien to Taoism

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[32] About Taoism in: Fung Yu-Lan: *A History of Chinese Philosophy* , translated by Derk Bodde, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1983.
[33] RENÉ: 1989. His *catastrophe theory*, was originated in the 1960s.
[34] Ibid.
[35] LOTMAN – USPENSKIY: 1971, p. 144 – 166. The understandings of culture on the part of Russian semioticians were close to Florensky's theories and presumptions. The notion of *entropy* was also used by semioticians.

and other Oriental beliefs.[36] On Malevich's catastrophe theory Padrta speaks as a legacy of the time.[37]

We can also observe catastrophe theory in the context of modern art – if we, for example, accept Bürger's assertion that the project of the avant-garde to revive art was unsuccessful – that entropy developed to such extent that it questioned the existence of art and acknowledged Hegel's prediction about the end of art. In that case avant-garde art would serve as an image of destiny self-denial.[38] Or we need to see whether the avant-garde led to the revival and regeneration of art and its functions in the long run, since we think that the laws of entropy, which we have presented here, could refer to it.

1.3.5. Internal Antagonisms of the Avant-garde

Each program of the avant-garde implies one counter-program, a leap forward and essential negation. Movements are thus born in order to be negated. The avant-garde subverted itself in order to yield its place to some other emerging avant-garde. This phenomenon of the avant-garde tells quite paradoxically about its *negating negation.*

A permanent solution from inside is reconstructed anew and that is why it is not strange why one of the later avant-garde movements was called Constructivism. The list of the discarded on the part of the avant-gardists would be long but, as an illustration, we may cite the Futurists' rejection of Cubistic museums and the Surrealists' rejection of Dadaism. Malevich rejected Futurism back in 1916 (in: *From Cubism and Futurism to Suprematism*), the Zenitist Micić rejected Dadaism, the Dadaists rejected everything etc. Dadaism was the only movement to completely understand this internal logic. In 1922 Tristan Tzara stated in his *Conférence sur dada* that in the process of separating the Dadaists he was the first to resign.

The avant-garde moves along the thin line between these opposites, and because of that it occasionally falls from one extreme into the other. We can observe the avant-garde as a constant

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[36] LEONIR: 1999, p. 118str.
[37] PADRTA: 1996, p. 144.
[38] An example of that self-denial is declarative in Malevich's text *Suprematism* (MALEVICH: 1995, p. 185-189) where he writes that in Suprematism we cannot talk about painting. Malevich states that even the idea of the artist was the prejudice of the past. He transposes painting and Suprematism to space, to architecture, even to the creation of a suprematistic apparatus similar to present-day satellites.

play and assimilation of opposites. This is the only way we can understand its profound contradictions.

1.3.6. The Avant-garde as the Culmination and Zero Point of European Culture

The systematic break of the avant-garde is actually a positive act of total liberation, a radical revolt in the name of absolute freedom. The condition of the avant-garde is reflected in its paradoxical situation of being an opposition which is becoming constructive and thus turns negation into affirmation. The protest of the avant-garde is the triumph of emancipation, the Promethean liberation of the spirit. The *Dadaist Manifesto* written by Tristan Tzara in 1918 deals with the destruction which gives way to rebirth. It is a kind of aggressive form of spiritual rebirth, an explosion shattering and crushing apathetic and listless forms and celebrating a sheer essence of humanity. After the massacre it carries a hope in pure humanity, which is the basic message of this Dadaistic manifesto. As a symbol of the avant-garde we see the flame purifying the idea embedded in many mythologies.

In critical literature on the avant-garde there was too much insistence on those negative, insolent aspects of the avant-garde with little stress on its activistic, regenerative sense. The ultimate goal of the avant-garde rebellion and sensibility is the regeneration of all existence, introducing a new sense and life which will be purer. According to Marino, the avant-garde dream is extremely idyllic, virtually inconcievable, and that was the new Arcadia of the twentieth century.[39]

1.3.7. Three Models of the Avant-garde

National avant-gardes, both European and non-European, have on the whole had more currents and periods. Generally accepted is the division of the Russian Avant-garde made by Aage A. Hansen-Löve in the text *Utopia / Apocalypse* (Utopija/Apokalipsa) and we cite it here, not only

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[39] MARINO: 1984, p. 633-791.

because we shall strictly adhere to this division, but also for the sake of creating a particular typology in listing the movements we are talking about:[40]

I. Futurism, of Kruchĕnykh and writers from around 1910, seen in terms of negative aesthetics;

II Archaism (Neo-Primitivism) of Khlebnikov and Malevich and the avant-garde from the latter half of the 1920s, is presented as a positive program;

III Synthetic Avant-garde of OBERIUT and Kharms, as the third model of the avant-garde

I. Kruchĕnykh's radical *zaum* nihilism is close to European Dadaism. His method is called "the *sdvig* of sense". In the 1923 manifesto "Declaration of a Letter as Such" Kruchĕnykh proclaims the radical liberation of language: if general language creates relationships between words, then free language enables man to fully express himself. The texts of the formalists Jakobson, *New Russian Poetry* (*Noveyshaya russkaya poeziya*) and Tynyanov, *Problems of Poetic Language* (*Problema stikhotvornoga yazyka)*, deal with this avant-garde program. What was important for Kruchĕnykh and other *zaum* artists was that they felt the word was broader than its sense.

This model of the avant-garde appears as the *destroyer of a gnoseological sign and traditional civilization based on the sign*. Apart from the creator of the term *zaum*, Kruchĕnykh, here belong also the verses of Elena Guro and Vasiliy Kamenskiy, the zaum poetry of Kazimir Malevich and other Russian poets, and the Cubo-Futurists above all. Here belongs Dadaism wherever it appeared in various European national surroundings (some of Huelsenbeck's poems, also South Slavic Dadaist poetry such as Dragan Aleksić's, Boško Tokin and others). These poets developed anti-referential, anti-representative and anti-performative functions (as opposed to natural and communicative gnoseological language).

II. The second model is well represented by Khlebnikov, who abandoned the early avant-garde primacy of signans over signatum. Khlebnikov, through his verbal experimentation, invented a trans-logical language. From 1915 until his death in 1922, the main preoccupation of Khlebnikov was the creation of a universal language using the *initial consonant* system. By discovering the *new word*, Khlebnikov's main goal was to make *zaum* language reasonable. This model of the

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[40] HANSEN-LÖVE: 1993, p. 39. This is accepted in: GLANC: 1999; ORAIĆ-TOLIĆ: 1996; ZHAKKAR: 1991/in Russian, 1995.

avant-garde Hansen-Löve regards as constructive, but also utopian; the latter adjective refers to Khlebnikov's creation of a new ontologic language for a future civilization and, generally speaking, to the project of mastering the world through the help of poetry and art. This is how the arbitrariness of a linguistic sign is negated and orientation is focused on the mythical understanding of the sign which, by its very structure, represents objects. The examples of such artistic creation are Khlebnikov's poem *Bobeobi* (1908 – 1909) and Ball's sound poem *Caravan* (1917). Ball's poem consists of the words hinting at the meaning – *jolifanto* is an elephant; it is a word of pictures in which the sounds of a caravan are imitated.

III. The third model of the avant-garde appears at the zenith of Russian Avant-garde. Kharms's understanding of language is close to some religious and philosophical language theories. He appears as a metaphysicist who realized that man can only approach language and the Absolute through renunciation. This model also brings about disillusionment because of its abandoning the promethean project in order to master the techniques of creating language and the world by means of art.

1.4. Philosophical Presumption on the Avant-garde *Condition*

1.4.1. The Avant-garde within the Conception of *Modernism* and Modernity

The period of *Modernism* is determined as the age lasting from the last decade of the nineteenth century to the end of the 1960s. Within Modernism, the avant-garde in literature and art appear as its culmination point.

Modernism developed from the nineteenth century and inherited many of the ideas and discoveries of that age, but does not contain the characteristics of the "decadent imagination" characteristic of the nineteenth century. Hugo Friedrich thinks that the roots of Modernism in literature lie in Baudelaire's modification of the poetic subject.[41] Modernism, in conquering literature and partly art, was an expression of the aesthetic dominance of the *idea of the New*.

In *The Structure of Modern Poetry* Hugo Friedrich sees the entire nineteenth century in Western Europe as an eschatological crisis – a typical Romantic feeling is the feeling of finality

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[41] Friedrich, Hugo: Hugo Friedrich: *The Structure of Modern Poetry*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1974. Also on Baudelaire as the first modern poet see: Adorno, Theodor: *Aesthetic Theory* (1970), trans. R. Hullot-Kentor, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997;

and pathos. In this context, Baudelaire is the first writer after Romanticism while the avant-garde represents the condition *after*. It represents an absolute end, one which was prepared for a long time in European art and literature, but also brings an element of the new.

1.4.2. The Question of Christian Modernity

Within this paper it is quite useful to explain the question of Christian modernity. The first appearance of modernity we call Christian was perceived in the fifth century A.D. – the first modernism. This was the first time that from the Latin word *modo* (engl: now) was derived the term *modernus*, in order to stress the difference between Classical and Christian civilization. That modernity is not the same as the one which appeared later, but it is important to emphasize that until the end of the nineteenth century this word referred to the Christian epoch.[42] The history of the word *moderne* is in the nineteenth century was also determined by the clash between the old and the new concerning the nature of tradition. However, even then no one rejected the old art.

What is the essence of Christian modernity? Christian modernity abolishes its contradictions in the experience of the Son of God's mission and salvation. Salvation is impossible in life but possible through religion. Religion appears as a form of life in which everything impossible is realized.[43]

So, the whole period of Christianity, all of two millennia, appears as the time of modernity in relation to the previous period preceding it and having culminated in the Classical period. The avant-garde brought this to a climax with an aspiration to master and present the *impossible*.

1.4.3. The Crisis of Science at the Background of the Crisis of Mythology

In his brilliant book *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* [44] Husserl explains that the crisis which began with the nineteenth century was reflected in all

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[42] Further clash between the old and the new took place in the twelfth century, which was described in details by Ernst Robert Curtius in his *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* Translated by Willard R. Trask. New York: Harper Row, Publishers, 1953
[43] Lyotard, Jean- François: *The Postmodern Explained to Children*: Correspondence 1982-1985. Transl. Pefanis J & Thomas M. Sydney: Power Publications. 1992.
[44] HUSSERL: 1982.

spheres of human life. His idea was that European science was generally in crisis because the age of positivism had reduced science to *fact science*, which brought into question its own life importance. Husserl warned that there were questions that transcended the purely factual and this was the problem of God, which encompasses the question of "the Absolute" intellect as a theological instrument of general intellect in the world, as the "sense" of the world.[45] He put forward that the crisis of science was a proof of the crisis of cultural life and the existence of Europeans.[46]

Husserl, followed by Losev, claimed that a crisis was reflected in the multitude of opposing scientific theories and philosophical systems. The lack of a unique scientific basis had thus created the *relativism* of scientific knowledge and socio-ethical values.[47]

It can be said that Husserl over-emphasized the role of philosophy and underestimated the mythical and practical moment in European culture. There was a significant wave of influence on European culture and philosophy which Husserl largely pushed aside – the question of creating the Aryan ideal with the help of Indian culture which, at the turn of the eighteenth century, created a very important spiritual atmosphere, opened discussions about primordial language and caused the crisis of the values of what is called *ancient regime* (it is thought that this period lasted from 1600 to 1789, whereas the year 1800 can be taken as the beginning of modernity, the time when Rationalism replaced Christianity in Western Europe). It is then that the *clash between mythologies* in Western Europe began, that the idea of race was formed in opposition to the ideas of modernity, something which had far-reaching consequences on European culture, political and social relations.

Unlike Husserl, the neglect of the importance of mythology was not the case with Losev. In *The Dialectics of Myth* he wrote that each science was mythological and stressed that a basic way of understanding social and scientific trends was through the sociology of mythology.

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[45] Ibid, p. 7.
[46] Ibid, p. 10 – 11.
[47] European discussions about the problems of intellect started by Husserl were continued by postmodernists as a question of logocentrism. During the twentieth century, Western European philosophy continued to see and understand itself through the prism of the logocentric paradigm.

1.4.4. Philosophies Which Discuss the Importance of the Pagan-Mythical Background of European Culture

At the beginning of the twentieth century and later, the leading Western European philosophers rejected Platonism and metyphysical tradition in general. The rejection of Plato's metaphysics in Western European philosophy seems to have started in the works of Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger. At that time, there were also attempts in Russia to retain Plato's philosophy but to interpret it in a new way. In the tractate *Universal Human Roots of Idealism* (Obshchelovecheskie koreni idealizma) Pavel Florenskiy pointed to the mythical and universal origin of Plato's philosophy.

In a way close to avant-garde art, Nietzsche's philosophy expressed a similar need in some of its aspects – the need for the sensual revival of the world. According to Nietzsche, metaphysics is a fundamental human delusion which is presented as the grandest of truths. In *The Twilight of Idols* (1889) he speaks about the split of culture due to the rule of metaphysics. According to Nietzsche, the division of the world into *true* and *illusory* in both the Christian and Kantian manner is just a sign of decadence – the sign of waning life. After 2000 years of mistakes, Nietzsche saw an inevitable appearance of nihilism which, in his opinion, could be both active and passive. For him art appeared as a substitute for the lost security of life. Nietzsche announced great changes and drama for the following 200 years. He even says, quite in the spirit of the avant-garde, that the importance of all things will have to be determined again.

Nietzsche's position is one of defense of Eurocentrism, not from the standpoint of Christian or Enlightenment Europe, but from the standpoint of pagan-mythical origin. It is quite clear that he felt the gradual revival of mythical thinking which was awakening in Western Europe during the nineteenth century. Nihilism is dealt with by Nietzsche to a great extent, reflecting the influence of Arthur Schopenhauer. We can also find traces of Schopenhauer's philosophy, which is about will and nothingness, in the works of Malevich and other avant-gardists. His philosophy was deeply permeated with Buddhism, which he adapted to his philosophy and adopted partially.[48]

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[48] Abou that in: LENOIR: 1999. For example, Schopenhauer was the most influential philosopher among Serbian writers prior to the appearance of the avant-garde. Pero Slijepčević published two studies on Buddhism before the First World War. Later, in 1917 he defended his doctoral dissertation titled *Buddhism in German literature*. Srđan Damjanović or Ilija Marić wrote that in the 1920s three more doctoral dissertations dedicated to Schopenhauer were defended in Serbia. Radovan Vučković writes in *Poetika srpskog i hrvatskog ekspresionizma* (Poetics of Croatian and Serbian Expressionism), Svjetlost, Sarajevo,

Like Nietzsche's, Heidegger's interpretation of metaphysics also opposes European metaphysics. According to him metaphysics deals with *being* (Sein) but does not place its origin in metaphysics.[49] He wondered how to return to the authentic beginning, and set this as the European task. He demands that philosophy, Christianity and modern science be substituted by a spiritually historical identity which emphasized a pagan-mythical-poetic framework. Unfortunately, in his case his philosophical convictions led him into difficult political delusions.

As opposed to the philosophers Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, as well as the aspirations of the avant-garde artists, Heidegger believed that Europe still could not enter into dialogue with the East, so he did not propose that European culture should turn to that side. However, the hidden influences of Chinese philosophy on Heiddeger's philosophy were discovered.[50]

This turn to the pagan-mythical layer of European culture, frequently inspired by the experience of acquired knowledge of Oriental philosophy, represents a kind of searching for answers to the spiritual crisis of that age. It in turn opens a series of questions we may consider important for avant-garde art and literature, as well as the philosophical background against which they developed.

1.4.5. Jung's Interpretation of the Crisis in the First Decades of the 20th Century

Jung in his book *Aion* (1951) connected his discoveries with the ancient Gnosis, intending to describe the changes which happened in the fields of culture, art and civilization in the first decades of the twentieth century.[51]

He raised the question of "the spirit of the age". Jungian psychologists think that if we wanted to study the religions and myths of all ages and all the countries in the world in detail, we would have to examine the manifestation of each great archetype or each "spirit of the age". Besides Jung and his associates, George Frazer, Joseph Campbell, Erich Neumann, Mircea Eliade

1979, that in the magazine *Zabavnik* most foreign literature supplements were derived from Indian literature and philosophy. The avant-garde magazine *Zenit* (Zenith) published Expressionist-cosmic poetry inspired by Oriental beliefs (the authors were S. Stefanović, S. Miličić, T. Manojlović and others).
[49] Heidegger: 1996.
[50] See: Reinhard May: *Ex Oriente Lux: Heidegger's Werk Unter Ostasiatischen Einfluss* (1989, German), into English by Graham Parkes as Heidegger's Hidden Sources: East Asian Influences on His Work, 1996.
[51] JUNG: 1995. Jung borrowed the notion of *eona* from Plato's philosophy and further dealt with it in his book of the same title (Greek: aion, αιόν). "Eon" can mean the longest division of geological time, but for Jung it also meant the two-thousand-year Christian eon, which coincided with its astrological sign, Pisces.

and others also dealt with it.[52] The notion of "the spirit of the time" remains problematic for us, but being at a loss for better and more adequate terms, we shall use it to explain the great changes which happened in human consciousness during the twentieth century.

The changes which happened in the consciousness of people are explained by Jung with an assertion that metaphysical ideas are changeable. He states that metaphysical notions occasionally lose their ability to evoke primordial experiences, so that they become not only useless but also a possible obstacle on the way of further development.

To return to the term "the spirit of the age": those who follow the esoteric sciences of our age say that during the twentieth century, as was the case with the other transitional periods before Christianity, there appeared an incredible number of visionaries, prophets, defenders of new utopias, new sectaries and religions.[53] Avant-garde art and literature contain numerous visions and predictions: Khlebnikov's Zangezi prophesies and does not expect a throng of people to understand him since it is too early for this; Malevich and Kandinsky announced their new art in a visionary way, etc.

Jung wrote a lot about the problem of evil in Christianity considering that this religion covered up the existence of evil. Enantiodromia, or crisis, as Jungs calls it, is a phenomenon of the insufficient integration of opposites. That is why, says Jung, that this situation leads to occasional spiritual crises. One such great crisis happened during the Renaissance, the next similar phase was the Enlightenment in France and the resulting French Revolution.

Jung writes that for a Christian, God cannot have been paradoxical and therefore had to be monosemous. The intolerance of opposites present in Christian psychology, Jung palces in opposition to Oriental religions in which as an essential knowledge there appears the conscious acceptance of internal opposites.[54]

In his works Mircea Eliade agrees with Jung in many things but not with the fact that Christianity had collapsed, since it still existed in its original form in many Eastern European villages.

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[52] Jung's assistant Marie-Louise von Franz: *The Passion of Perpetum*, 1949, diploma work; Frazer, George: *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, New York: MacMillan, 1972; Campbell, Joseph: *The Masks of God: Creative Mythology*.Viking, 1968; Neuman, Erich: *Die grosse Mutter. Der Archetyp des grossen Weiblichen*, Zürich, 1956; and Mircea Eliade in: *Traité D'historie des Religions*, Payot, Paris, 1959.
[53] GREEN:1977.
[54] Ibid, p. 80.

1.4.6. Losev's Judgement of the 1920s – the Return to Paganism

The avant-garde somehow represents a return to paganism – especially as it rejected the institution of Christianity, and explored the nature of religion through an examination of pre-Christian European mythologies, beliefs and rites; it also demonstrated a longing for uniting with the Absolute in the way that this was seen as possible in the pagan past, which it then connected to its experiences in the field of esoteric cultures and religions.

In the 1920s Losev elaborated on the phenomenon of the return to paganism. Like Jung and other theorists and philosophers, Losev observed that the Renaissance was the first return to paganism.[55] He also speaks of Platonism as the leading pagan religion in Western Europe, and regarding the situation in Russia, mentions the inter-mingling of the Platonic paganism which was then coming into existence with the appearance of materialism in intellectual life, and also with Russian popular culture which was itself pagan in many aspects. Losev openly criticized this mingling of mythologies, which he argued could not be combined together.

In the cultural and intellectual climate of the 1920s, Losev saw the question of materialism as a fundamental one. At that time this question occurred in the cultural, philosophical and religious spheres of life, and the main historical issue of that confrontation at the turn of the centuries, concealed behind intellectual and philosophical disputes, was the confrontation between Christianity and paganism – which was at the time penetrating (not even covertly) into Russian and Western European culture.[56] Losev wanted to solve the question of the degree and form of matter justifiability, similar to how Kandinskiy, in the realm of artistic theory, also touched upon the question of matter and spirit and suggested that they should not be separated; that is, to avoid establishing a sharp boundary between them.[57]

This is how one can, to some extent, explain the aspirations of part of the avant-garde. By returning to paganism, it aspired to the substantial identification of man and the Absolute, not only by returning to its European pagan tradition, but also in turning to the East, to different pagan traditions, while Losev searched and found solutions in Christian and Classical tradition.

The end of the 1910s and the beginning of the 1920s, in Russia, the period of the Revolution and the Civil War – were the result of an overall confusion of mythologies and the

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[55] LOSEV: 1993 (b), p. 65.
[56] Gogotishvili, afterword in: LOSEV, 1993 (b), p. 925.
[57] KANDINSKIY: 1966, p. 23 – 24.

mythological chaos in social life, according to Losev. Generally speaking, like European culture as a whole, Losev was tortured by the disharmony between the Clasical and Christian-European spiritual heritage.

1.4.7. The Return to Essences and Pure Forms

The avant-garde sense of negation and destruction was often undertaken for the sake of a return to essences and original purity, which opens many possibilities for interpreting the avant-garde within the framework of the idea of a return to mythical time. While Losev criticizes that return to "paganism", Eliade finds this productive.

Art is constantly exposed to some pressure from *the new* and for that reason it always returns instinctively to its primary, pure state. Numerous examples in Mircea Eliade's works show that this is not only a trait of art, but also of all other lively forms. The nostalgia of Cubist painters, Suprematists, Zaumists and others for "pure forms", "pure painting", "pure literature" and "pure art" is part of man's general need to regenerate and rejuvenate by returning to a primordial state. Marino determines this phenomenon of the avant-garde as an aspiration to reconstruct the genetic moment, which is quite in the spirit of Mircea Eliade's philosophy of religion and mythology.[58] It is quite correct to say that the avant-garde identified itself with this mythical-genetic moment – in his *Program of Hypnism* Rade Drainac, one of the founders of Hypnism, claimed that Hypnism "has lived from time immemorial"![59]

In a certain sense, the art of the avant-garde was the continuation of the aspirations of western Romanticism and the so-called *Oriental Renaissance*, the return to primordial values, ancient and folk mythologies, Oriental religions and languages. However, the question arises of how we should speak about the mythologies of modern art. Mircea Eliade posed a similar question in his book *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries* (first published in French, 1957) – what is the difference between the religions, myths, dreams and mysteries of modern (European) man and the ancient and Oriental cultures (archaic and Oriental societies)? Eliade thinks that it was this comparison to Oriental and primitive cultures that was most important to modern man in the process of self-understanding. He also adds that if Western culture was not to become provincialised it would be

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[58] MARINO: 1973, p. 177-224
[59] TEŠIĆ: 2001, p. 109.

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obliged to carry on a conversation with other, non-European cultures, and take care not to be mistaken too often about the meaning of their terms.[60]

The avant-garde itself fulfilled this belief of Eliade to some extent, which explains why it was so heterogeneous, having borrowed from different mythologies, and this is also why it is not possible for us to now make a synthesis of its mythology.

1. 5. Theories of Myth

We shall cite the most important theoretical assumptions from the theories and philosophies of myth that this paper relies on. We will rely on the conceptions of myth defined by the philosophers Ernst Cassirer and Aleksey Losev in their writings and also the historian of religion Mircea Eliade's cultural-phenomenological approach to myth.[61]

Cassirer and Losev have very similar attitudes to myth. Both of them were formed as Neo-Kantians, and their conceptions of myth are based on philosophy and philology. Both rely on phenomenology and neither accepts the structuralist-syntagmatic notion apparatus of modern scientists. Their starting point is the idea of myth as an arch-linguistic category, and they consider that myth as a proto-phenomenon of the spirit rests on words, an idea which dates as far back as archaic cultural performances. This approach allows them to compare language to the world of mythological poetic pictures. They think that one of the characteristics of mythical consciousness is that the name of each thing contains its essence.[62]

Both of them agree that myth and language are symbolic forms of man's self-discovery and the discovery of the world that surrounds him. Likewise, both of them think that the question of the origin of language is impossible to solve as long as the question of the origin of myth remains unsolved.

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[60] ELIADE: 1970, p. 10 – 11.
[61] Main works used here are: Cassirer: *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* and *An Essay on Man*; Losev: *Dialektika mifa*, *Problema simbola i realisticheskoe iskusstvo* and *Ocherki antichnogo simbolizma i mifologii*; Eliade: *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries* and *Traité D'historie des Religions*. See the bibliography at the end of the paper.
[62] Their works dedicated to myth were written at about the same time and represent an attempt at a synthesis of the results of many linguistic and mythical researches. Cassirer's predecessors are Kant and Humboldt, de Saussure, also Schelling Max Müller and Usener. Losev followes the line: Schelling, Husserl, Shpet, Vyacheslav Ivanov, Solov'ëv and Florenskiy.

The most important differences in Cassirer's and Losev's understanding of myth rest on the fact that Losev links myth with a being, while Cassirer thinks that myth cannot depict the being as a whole. For Cassirer, at the time of writing *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (1923–29), myth remained as a *kind of fiction*, which meant that only in archaic times it was linked with naming. In his works, mythical consciousness is set within the the framework of historical development. According to him, myth had only in archaic times the social function of collective thinking. However, Losev understands myth as a historically rooted social formation. For him, myth is not only a theogonic but also a sociological phenomenon – in *The Dialectics of Myth* (1930) Losev wrote that myth cannot be imagined without sociology. Losev also dealt with modern myths and discovered the mechanisms of social myth by means of which society is manipulated (fetishism, the absolutization of knowledge, atheism as a form of dogma, etc). However, after the experience of Nazism, Cassirer became aware that entire nations could fall victim to political myths. During that time, Cassirer came to understand that mythical thought was not something that belonged only to the archaic past, but was also a source of the type of strength which could destroy the whole of man's cultural and social life. When he wrote in the United States *An Essay on Man* (1944), his theory of mythical thinking became closer to Losev's sociology of myth.

Another important difference in the opinions of these two philosophers rests on the fact that Cassirer thought that myth and learning were in opposition; that at the very worst, myth was abolished by science. Losev polemicized with this prejudice, in his book *The Dialectics of Myth* in the following way: myth is neither a scientific nor a primitive-scientific construction; mythology is not science at all. Quite contrary to Casssirer, Losev claimed that science did not emanate from myth, but that science was always followed by mythology and fed from it by drawing its starting intuitions from it. To summaries: **science does not originate from myth, but cannot exist without myth; science is mythological.**[63] However, science as such does not have any attitude to mythology.

Further criticism of Cassirer is reduced to the fact that it is absurd to assert that myth does not distinguish the true from the illusory. Losev adds that myth has its own mythical truthfulness and credibility, and that it distinguishes the imaginary from the real, but in a mythical way.

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[63] LOSEV: 1999, p. 215 – 230. If we can imagine a pure science which is not mythological, then it is an abstract science, a system of logical and numeric principles – a type of pure science that never exists.

Therefore, he concludes: *myth is neither a scientific nor a primitive-scientific construction, but a living subject-object of mutual unity containing its own non-scientific mythical truthfulness.*

1.5.1. Cassirer on Mythical Consciousness

From Cassirer's philosophy we also borrow various interpretations, by means of which it is possible to link linguistic and mythical-religious consciousness. His derivation of the genesis of basic forms of spiritual culture from mythical consciousness is nowadays generally accepted. However, Cassirer remained active primarily in the field of ancient religions and mythologies and we choose to apply his research to the avant-garde and its era.

In his work *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (Vol. 2, *Mythical thinking*) Cassirer shows that the best way of exploring mythical consciousness is by using the categories of **time, space, language and number**. In forming these ideas he relies on Schelling's understanding of myth as elaborated in his *Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie.*[64]

From the standpoint of consciousness, mythology appears through an indispensable process, which means that is not a supplementary science of gods, according to Cassirer.[65] Myth has its own origins and life forms, it is free from unilateral subjectivity. So, the development of myth necessarily corresponds to the development inside the Absolute itself, wrote Schiller, inspired by Neo-Platonism, adopted by Cassirer and Losev.

Cassirer goes on to solve the problem of how to list and explain that world of mythical representations: myth "must be defined not thing-wise but functionally."[66] He also writes that myth is objective "as it is recognized as one of the determining factors by which consciousness frees itself from passive captivity in sensory impresion and creates a world of its own in accordance with a spiritual principle".[67]

He underlines an important fact in relation to the origin of mythology: the development and flourishing of science in Babylonian civilization brought forth the fact that mythology must be

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[64] Printed in: Sämmtliche Werke, (Stuttgart and Augsburg) 1856. Cassirer warns that Schelling in *Philosophie der Mythologie* (Philosophy of Mythology – lecture, 1842) relys on Creuzer's *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker* (1810-23) where all mythology is thinking in terms of the theory and history of the gods. This was also supported later by the ethnologists Andrew Lang and Wilhelm Schmidt, but it become clear that this interpretation of myth,was not acceptable.
[65] CASSIRER: 1955, p. 6.
[66] Ibid: p. 14.
[67] Ibid.

of *astral origin*. He states that it was discovered that myth could not have been born from simple magic images and faith in spirits, including various superstitions, but that for the creation of myth there first had to exist an idea of a world, as an organized whole. This further means that myths, if of astral origin, also must be calendaric in nature. Of all scientists Jung was closest to this idea because he himself used astrology in his practice. Reconstructing mythical consciousness, the avant-garde artists discovered this on their own accord, and they thus dealt with astrology and numerology, studied Kabbalah and the like – as is evident in the works of Khlebnikov, Kharms and others.

However, Cassirer explains that by no means can astrology, which is such a perfect system in the understanding of the cosmos, represent the beginning of mythical thinking and, although being its part, it is a later product.[68] Mythical thinking emanates from a narrow circle of the **sensual understanding of spatial existence** and in time, space itself expands on celestial phenomena and cosmos.

Starting from Kant's understanding of the transcendence of the object, Cassirer gives examples according to which an attitude to the world is the result of a basic and conscious reception of space. Any breaking down of space implies also some breaking down in judgment (size, distance, etc) – and in this way we get a different *meaning*. "This has already been shown by the example of *spatial consciousness,* and what is true of space is no less true of the other ordering principles by which the 'empirical object' is constituted," writes Cassirer.[69]

We could almost say that **avant-garde art began to develop from a new feeling for space,** which was itself an important act of assessment and evaluation. This can be clearly seen in comparing the avant-garde paintings to the paintings of Renaissance masters or icons.[70] Based on the relation of the avant-garde to space, we can conclude that at that time some change of thinking took place. To this we add also its feeling for **time and numbers** we have taken into consideration and borrowed from Cassirer's theory of myth.

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[68] Ibid: p. 90.
[69] Ibid, p. 34 – 35.
[70] FLORENSKIY: 1999. c. 46 – 98; USPENSKIY: 1967, p. 178 – 222.

1.5.2. Losev's Definition and Explanation of Myth

Losev's philosophy of myth is very complex and has been presented with a fine degree of philosophizing. In this paper we primarily derive benefit from his theory of the sociology of myth. Nevertheless, we shall present only those postulates which we consider useful for the theme we are writing about.

In his work *The Dialectic of Myth* Losev determinates myth in this way: myth is not fiction (for mythical consciousness is actual reality), myth is not metaphysics, and nor is it primitive science, poetry, or any of other things. **Myth is a primordial reaction of consciousness to things, from which we can infer that myth represents the simplest, most basic, pre-reflexive, intuitive mutual relationship between man and things.**

We have to pose one important question: can objects of the technological society possibly be understood as myth? Robert Bird explains that in Losev's understanding, inanimate objects, such as blood, hair, and the heart and other organs, can be mythic (the same explanation is also given by Mirche Eliade) because they are understood and constructed from the perspective of the personal-mythic consciousness.[71] But can the soulless objects of technological society appear as myth, we ask? If mythic objects participate in history and are endowed not only with functional significance, but with factual-historical meaning for concrete persons – then this is possible (we may think of machines, airplanes, cars, etc).

1.5.3. Losev's Sociology of Myth

In his work *The Dialectics of Myth*, Losev presents his significant point of view – that there occurred a *change of mythology* in the early decades of the twentieth century. We wonder how this happened. As the science is mythological, in Losev's understanding, when science destroyed myth, this only meant that one mythology was competing with the other. A question which Losev suggests is raised – that of how to understand such changes.

First of all, it is necessary to know that Losev determines the *social being as symbolic* – in this way its being, reduced to the direct reflection of a purely divine sphere as well as to a purely material and creative sphere, is denied. Sociality is the symbolic unity of this and the other, with

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[71] BIRD: 2004, p. 86 and 99.

all their specific principles. For Losev symbolic unity is *myth*. ***History is goverened and driven by mythological forces, whereas the spiritual and secular side of history, visible on the surface, are in a subordinate position in relation to it.*** Losev further stresses: history is not governed by economy, science, politics, or the church but by mythological forces which reflect different variants of this mixture of personal being – and its simultaneous aspirations to the eternal and transitional. **Losev teaches us that mythological forces are not chaotic they do not appear from nowhere and do not happen without consequences** – to know the laws and principles of the appearance of those and other mythological forces on the stage of history, to see their covert intention, means to penetrate the secret of history.

According to Losev mythology provides everything for man: the idea of his life, global spiritual values and tiny life details, all man's actions and thoughts (Eliade wrote about archaic time in the same manner). Consequently, *the real position in relation to mythology is not the struggle against mythology as such nor a utopian desire to be liberated from it, but the real position lies in a transition from the ignorance of mythology to getting to know it to a possible extent*; then mythology would become a treasure for man.[72]

Losev thinks that the end of mythology is inevitable and that it will come with the end of history in general. *Man as a free personal being can affect the walk of history not by theologizing the unlearnable but by cognitive mastering of mythological being.* The whole philosophy of history is shown as a discovery of the principles of mythological being.

So we can thus conclude: for Losev, *the basic impulse of historical development and its driving forces are transcendental to the world.* Social being does not create a mythological activity and history by itself but it is done by *some transcendental principle*. In this very complex segment we can find an analogy between Losev's and Cassirer's philosophy of myth.

1.5.4. Mircea Eliade's Understanding of the Morphology and Functions of Myth[73]

Eliade stresses one of the basic functions of myth: cosmogonic myths serve as exemplary myths. As an illustration he gives the example of a Polynesian myth in which the same words

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[72] Not only does Losev speak of partial mythology such as, for example, the one which appeared in the 1920s, but also of absolute mythology which could relieve the tragic tension of history. Of course, the renunciation of mythology means the renunciation of life as well as the destruction of the very historical feeling. Losev thinks that history is a gift to our senses from mythology.

[73] ELIADE: 1959, p. 350 and further.

uttered during the creation of the world are repeated in all important life situations (insemination, war, death).[74] This *myth shows that the main function of myth is to give examples of all rituals and all significant human actions.* That main myth, the cosmogonic myth, differs from other categories of magic-religious experience because the other myths are only latent and condensed myths.[75]

Eliade thinks that myth should not be identified so much with the notions of *word* or *narration* but should be understood as a holy act or original event. From a certain viewpoint, each myth is cosmogonic because it is an expression of a new cosmic situation or original event which, because of the very fact that it has appeared, becomes a paradigm for every other future time.[76] Because of the fact that myth is always a *precedent*, that is, being something that precedes and provides **patterns for imitation**, there is a need for people to repeat it in acts and actions. He gives an example from Satapathabrahmana (VII, 2, 1, 4) where is written that we must do what gods did in the beginning.[77] The avant-garde also discovered the importance of that act of imitation.

Man always remains in the grasp of his archetypal performances, thinks Eliade, and they were born at the moment when man realized his own position in space. It is possible to see man's yearning for paradise in the most banal behaviour and acts of modern man. **The Absolute is not easy to eradicate**. He can only fall to a lower plane (legends, fairy tales, stories etc). Eliade further suggests that *archaic spirituality* ruminates in man not as an act or a possibility for man to achieve, but as a form of *creative nostalgia* appearing through art, science, mysticism, etc. It will be interesting to trace how this creative nostalgia appeared at the time of the advent of the avant-garde, which at the same time was going through a *creation crisis*. Man's incessant need to realize archetypes does not cease to exist even at a time of crisis, and the longing for transcendental forms is clearly shown on the lowest levels.

In the book *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries* Eliade explains the difference between myth and dreams. ''Each myth discovers a mystery'' and further states ''because its own mode of being cannot be particular, private or personal''[78]– which is why individual myths created by individual artists like Khlebnikov or Rastko Petrović do not generally have a wider resonance. Myth can establish itself as myth only to the extent that it reveals the existence and the activity of super-

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[74] Ibid: p. 353. Here he quotes many works on this subject.
[75] Ibid: p. 353. He gives the example of a cosmological egg – all examples show that an egg in condensed form shows traits of the repetition of the original act of creation
[76] Ibid: p. 355.
[77] Ibid: p. 355 – 356.
[78] ELIADE: 1970, p. 16 – 19.

human beings behaving in an *exemplary manner,* and for a primitive spirituality that is *universal manner,* so this it is how myth becomes a role model for the whole world and eternity.

Dreams do not have an ontological status in Eliade's opinion.[79] But he wrote that "it has been possible to show continuity between the oneric and mythological universes, figures and events", meaning through research of psychology.[80] He also says: "It has been shown that the categories of space and time become modified in dreams, in a way which to some degree resembles the abolition of Time and Space in myths."[81] Pavel Florenskiy proved the same thing in his works, particularly in *Reversed Perspective,* and his researches in that field inspired many avant-garde artists.

For the purpose of this work, in choosing the concrete myths to be connected with the avant-garde, we rely on Eliade's book *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries.*

2. The Mythical World of the Avant-garde

2.1. Space

2.1.1. Development of a New Cosmology and New Sciences

The beginning of the 20th century elicited a crisis in the European consciousness, similar to that of the late 16th century when the geocentric model was gradually replaced by the heliocentric model of Copernicus, Galileo and Kepler.[82] When studying the history of science and philosophical thought in the 16th and 17th centuries, one sees that during this period the human mind underwent a far-reaching revolution which changed patterns of thinking.[83] Much the same happened at the beginning of the 20th century.

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[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Eventhought, geocentric cosmology still survives in the Christianity.
[83] About that in: KOYRÉ: 1957.

2.1.2. Space-Time

For a painter at the beginning of the 20th century, the world was not a static and permanently fixed place of emptiness that could be seen only from one angle. Intending to discover the truth about the object, the painter moved around it, finding its various visions and projections, and then placing them side by side or folding them on top of one another. This sense of motion around an object, understood as a new dimension of *time,* together with width, height and depth, provided a complete idea about the object. The artistic observation from each side was inspired by non-Euclidean geometry, also called hyperbolic geometry and elliptic geometry. Space - outside and inside - can be perceived as it is only in the consciousness of the observer. That is approximately how phenomenology understood the object, and that is how the computer presents it today.

In his study *Space and Time,* (Raum und Zeit, 1909, Leipzig), Minkowski was the first who worked on a conception of the fourth dimension, by adding the point *m* to spacious coordinates *x, y, z* in order to determine *the time* when something had happened. He created the idea of a union between space and time, known as *"Minkowski space-time",* with four equal dimensions. Within the framework of four-dimensional space-time, the Lorentz geometry of special relativity can be represented.

The work of American theosophist Charles Hinton, *The Fourth Dimension* (1904)[84] opened numerous discussions in science and philosophy, but had even more influence among artists. Hinton explained parascientific phenomenon, and this especially fascinated the theologian and philosopher Pavel Florenskiy, who connected the discovery of the fourth dimension with religion – for him, the new dimension opened and explained new spiritual spaces. Florenskiy used the conception of the fourth dimension to explain parapsychological phenomena in the field of supersensory perception, something not adequately explained, even nowadays, by classical science. Pëtr D. Uspenskiy was most responsible for spreading these ideas in Russia. He published a translation of Hinton`s *"The Fourth Dimension"* in Petrograd in 1910. Later he elaborated in detail on the fourth dimension, conceiving of it as a method for self-conversion. He used to state

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[84] HINTON: 1904.

that one could enter a six-dimensional space that led to the seventh dimension of pure imagination.[85]

For the Cubists, however, Hinton's discoveries were a type of artistic science, grammatical geometry in painting, which opened the possibility to create a form of *super-realism*. With the fractioning of painting in Cubism, consciousness of the new space in painting matured.

The new understanding of space is what interested artists the most about the fourth dimension. For painters, this new discovery meant the appearance of two new phenomena - static and dynamic spatial system (space *in* and space *around*). On the question of whether the object had absolute form, the Cubists answered – no. There were as many forms as there were means of observation. A further question was if time and sizes had the same value in both directions, if the second one was moving in relation to the first. The Cubists answered – no, and also evoked the theory of relativity. Lengths in space and duration in time do not have an absolute but a relative character, since they are replacing or increasing their dependence on speed, moving direction and the point from which the system is observed. Therefore, each system has its own time and its own space. The world of the picture is one, reality is the other, and when passing form one to another a contraction of length occurs.

2.1.3. Artists and the Fourth Dimension

If we try to systematize who of the main avant-garde artists was interested in the fourth dimension, it would look like this:

In the West, as has been mentioned, the Cubists were fascinated by the idea of the fourth dimension. Jean Metzinger and Albert Gleizes wrote about it; then Marcel Duchamp and the founder of De Stijl, Theo van Doesburg, as well. Later on, the American Max Weber, the Italian futurists Umberto Boccioni and Gino Severin dedicated texts to it. All of these conducted certain research in this field in its artistic manner – the Cubists from 1907-1914, the Futurists after 1910, the Russian Avant-garde 1913-1922; individually Piet Mondrian, Kazimir Malevich and Mikhail Matyushin were interested in the fourth dimension. Matyushin published a text about the book *Du Cubisme* by Jean Matzinger and Albert Gleizes. In his review of this book, he used the ideas of

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[85] More in: HENDERSON: 1975/1976, p. 97–108. Also: Freemantle, Christopher: *Ouspensky*. In: *Man, Myth and Magic: An Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Supernatural* , London: Pinell, 1972, p. 2092–2093;

Pëtr Uspenskiy from *Tertium Organum*.[86] Aleksei Kruchënykh in his text *New Ways of the Word* (Novye puti slova) explained the fourth dimension and *zaum*. Kruchënykh`s ideas about zaum, language liberated from the addiction to the real world, can certainly be connected with the ideas about the language of future prophetically predicted by Uspenskiy.

The fourth dimension influenced Malevich, especially in the period 1913-1915, the time when his cubistic explorations were finished and he was working on the opera *Victory over the Sun*. The constructively spacious organization of form in certain Malevich`s paintings and scenic drawings is similar to the structure of the diagrams in Hinton`s book on the fourth dimension.[87]

Interest for the fourth dimension also existed among Yugoslav avant-garde artists, mostly among the Zenitists.[88]

2.1.4. Further Work on the Fourth Dimension and the Widening of Space

Non-Euclidian geometry helped artists to imagine forms in motion outside of time and earthly space. Even in his early period, between 1915 and 1918, Malevich felt that Suprematism should be developed according to laws of motion that exceeded the natural laws of this world. The titles of certain paintings, such as *Two Dimensional Painted Masses in the State of Movement*, illustrate such tendencies within Suprematism.

Malevich wrote in its tractate *Suprematism: 34 Drawings* (1920),[89] at a time when Suprematism was at full strength, about a sort of Suprematist satellite, rounded and included in the organization of nature. That is in fact a prediction of the actual satellite, or other even more contemporary technology.

The equivalency of the macro- and micro-cosmos was characteristic for Malevich, especially in *God is Not Cast Down* (1922). Malevich compared human skull with the greater universe.[90] He stressed that the same processes were happening in the human sphere as in the cosmos (the predomination of terrestrial space, liberation from the power of gravity, etc).

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[86] Matyushin, Mikhail: *O knige Metsanzhe - Gleza (Jean Metzinger, Albert Gleizes) Du cubisme*, Soyuz molodezhi, No 3, 1913.
[87] Compton, Susan: *Malevich and The Fourth Dimension*, in: Studio international, Vol. 187, no. 965, april 1974. Also: HENDERSON: 1978, 171-203.
[88] See: *Manifest zenitizma* (Manifesto of Zenitizm) in: TEŠIĆ: 2002, p. 117-119.
[89] MALEVICH: 1995 (1920b), p. 185.
[90] Ibid: (1922) p. 236 – 265.

Florenskiy, Boris Uspenskiy and Jean-Claude Marcadé, among others, wrote about the new space of the avant-garde as a break with the Renaissance approach to space and its perspective, and located the relationship between the use of space in avant-garde painting and in the Byzantine icon.[91] This comparison is very beneficial, as it says a great deal not only about the reversed perspective of the icon, but also about the open space of the avant-garde canvases.

Other avant-garde artists were also spreading the idea of the fourth and other dimensions. For example, the *Zenitists* Micić, Goll and Tokin, in their *"Manifesto of Zenitism"*, speak about outer dimensions and eternity:

"Zenitism is only a spirit = the fourth dimension

Zenitizm is outdimension = ∞ = or the tenth dimension =

Eternity"[92]

Kandinskiy, as well as Malevich, connected the universal with the individual. In his book *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1911), cosmic laws of painting are developed. He emphasized certain mystical necessities in painting – stating that the painter creates under the influence of some higher force which is changeable, that he is aware of certain movements in the universe that influence him, as well as his era and art, and he proposed that with apstract painting the soul derived from some superfluous and highly developed vibration. Each new understanding of space in painting was an expression of a specific mythology, as Losev would say. The mythical image is one in which being appears, for each time it is created anew, which is what Kandinskiy understood very well when he wrote that each artist created under the influence of time.

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[91] FLORENSKIY: *Obratnaya perspektiva*, 1999. p. 46 – 98; USPENSKIY: 1967, p. 178 – 222; MARCADE: 1978,
p. 182-196.
[92] TEŠIĆ: 2001, p. 118. From the *Manifesto of Zenithism*:
„Zenitizam nije samo duh = č e t v r t a   d i m e n z i j a
Zenitizam je vandimenzija = ∞ = ili deseta dimanzija
Večnost"

2.1.5. New Space – Depth and Plato's Myth of the Cave [93]

After Cézanne had ceased to imitate depth on canvas, the Cubists began to wonder **if depth could be reconstructed in the consciousness of the observer instead of in the painting.** According to the theory of the fourth dimension, which describes factor time, painters were thinking that if one could expose many different aspects of object, this would provide enough data for observers to reconstruct the shape in space and to create the equivalent of depth.

This notion of *depth* that painters were dealing with, provoked by similar discoveries in mathematics and physics, became one of spiritual depth for Florenskiy. His philosophical tractates developed the new spiritual potential discovered by artists. Florenskiy`s *Reverse Perspective* (Obratnaya perspektiva, 1919) influenced both the avant-garde artists and later developments in Russian semiotics. The depth of spirit that Florenskiy was writing about, was an attempt of reconstructing the long-disregarded potential within man, as a call for a conscious widening (but not with the method Hinton used, which Florenskiy considered as an attack on the mental organism).

Florenskiy developed the theory of the fourth dimension, which related to his teaching about *reversed perspective.*[94] He analyzed various works of art, both modern (Picasso's) and ancient (icons) as he tried to discover the roots of the perspective presentation in the fine arts. He made the crucial step in his deduction when he applied the concept of *synthetism*, and in that way he brought in a higher reality. In fact, the artistic face (image) receives a higher reality because it synthetically accumulates impressions made in different moments of time and from different positions of space. Careful analysis shows that every perception is the synthesis of a perceived thing in different moments of time.[95] With works of art this synthesis is realized at once. In the pictures of Picasso, for example, *Still Life*, the inner and outer parts of the violin are visible at the same time.[96]

Is this complete perception really possible? Florenskiy recalls in *Iconostasis* the idea of experience from dreams and visions where it was possible to see at once the object from the inside

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[93] From the seventh book of the *Republic*.
[94] FLORENSKIY: 1999, Vol. 4, p. 46 – 98; FLORENSKIY: 1999, *Smysl idealizma*, p. 100 - 103.
[95] This research of Florensky had influnced Lotman's understandnig of portraite. See for example: Lotman, Yuriy: *Ob iskusstve*, 1998. p. 50.
[96] FLORENSKIY: 1999, *Smysl idealizma*, p. 102.

and from all other sides as well.[97] This kind of synthesis does not have one angle of being seen; it is without any perspective, impersonal and objective. Unfortunately, we see things as misshapen in our three-dimensional space, but in our minds we can possibly correct this, and see things as liberated from perspective.

He finds the proof for his hypothesis in St. Paul's *Epistle to the Ephesians* (3: 14-18) where together with three dimensions – breath, length and height – the fourth dimension is mentioned, that is, *depth* - which reveals itself to an *inner person*. He also explains the visible and non-visible worlds on the mythos of the cave. According to his interpretation: "Ideas, the Mothers of everything that exists, live in *depth,* or in the direction which is the depth of our three-dimensional world". He further analyses the *depth* of the world through the Plato's ideas from *Timaeus* (37d) about the time, which Florenskiy brings near to the, kinetic theory of the time, the theory of relativity, Minkowski's and Hinton's, works.[98]

Florenskiy suggests that the nature of our sensual organs is such that we have no ability to perceive the four dimensional reality.[99] He sees, hypothetically, *similarity* of the things in the three-dimensional world like this: mass of things of the same kind could be the result of the projection of the consubstantial being from the four-dimensional world into the three-dimensional. The tree from the four-dimensional world projects itself in many trees, the forest, in the three-dimensional world. If our eyes can be opened to the fourth dimension, for the *deep* we would see the whole forest as one being, one tree; all horses we would see as one horse, etc. He arrives to Plato's idea that to see the idea means to see: «μίαν διά πολλων» (Phileb, 14d, e, 15d; etc) *one in many,* or «εν καί πολλά» (Sophist, 253d) *one and many* which solves the basic question in Florenkiy's philosophy. This also means – to see the endlessness and boundlessness of the divine and limitation of the concrete being.[100]

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[97] FLORENSKIY: 1995.

[98] Florensky quotes these sources: Uspenski, P.D: *Chetvertoe izmerenie,* SPB, 1910, p. 7-10; also: *Tertium Organum,* SPB, 1911, p.21-24, p. 56-61.

[99] FLORENSKIY: 1999, in *Obratnaya perspektiva* and *Smysl idealizma.*

[100] It is possible to connect Khlebnikov's work with Florenskiy's idea that *one is many,* Khlebnikov spent the large part of his life looking for the connection between this two. We have found one source that explains this connection: IVANOV: 2003. p. 67.

2.1.6. Multidimensional Space in Literature

The idea of multi-dimensional space guided Khlebnikov when he invented the *supertale* (sverkhpovest'). He proclaimed that he wanted the word, in its liberation and creation of new dimensions, to follow painting. The key manifesto, in that sense, is *The Word as Such* (Slovo kak takovoe). Khlebnikov arrived at such discoveries in 1908 when he came to St. Petersburg. From that point, science and scientific discoveries formed part of his aesthetic. His famous poem *Bobeobi...* (1908-1909) ends with the words: *"With no dimesions lived the face"* ("Vne protyazheniya zhilo Litso"). Ivanov warns that "with no dimensions" is a mathematical term and that in mathematics it is related to the point.[101] According to Ivanov, Khlebnikov wanted to show that it was possible to create poetry as a Cubist painting created a portrait, by using sounds and colors. The poem *Bobeobi...* is a synthesis that equates the visual and the sonorous – colors and sounds. Khlebnikov developed a complete alphabet on the basis of **synesthesia** (*B* was fiery red - lips are *bobeobi, V* was blue – eyes were blue or *veeomi, Z* was gold and that is how the necklace was gleamimg, or *gzi, gzi, gzeo* etc.)

For a long time, Khlebnikov had been thinking of how to realize the idea of multi-dimensionality in literature. The final realization of that idea was conducted through the new genre of the *supertale*. Each part of *Zanzegi* wass called a *plane* (ploskost'), and the whole opus was an assemblage of planes. *Zangezi* even permits simultaneous presentation of different types of structure.[102] That is how he creates a work analogous to Cubist painting, using montage as a meaning for composition. In the supertale *Otter's Children* (Deti Vydry) montage units are called *sail* (parus).

Khlebnikov came to one interesting discovery – namely, that space ran on both sides, as time runs *"from the end"* ("mirskontsa"). Again, this was about the breaking of Euclidian space and spatial relations established on earth as left-right. That is how Khlebnikov created palindromes

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[101] IVANOV: 2003, p.73.

[102]*Zangezi* is composed from different literary genres: prose, lyric, elements of drama and semi literary genres (glossary). It is written by different languages created by Khlebnikov as "star language" (zvëzdanyy yazyk). Plane I, onomatopoeic type of *zaum* – language of birds; Plane II and XI - language of gods, has as a model children's language and pre-civilizational incantation; Plane IX – neologisms with *–um*; Plane X substitution of the initial consonant in the words with *B* – with *star* (russ: zvëzdanyy) consonant *M* . This is how the new world order is created, but at the same time a certain nostalgia for the ancient mythological world is expressed. Plane XIII – Sort of language montage; neologisms created analogically or by contrasting, or by homology with the natural language.

(perevertni). These rhymes can be read from both sides, as in the beginning of the poem *Razin,* (1920):

"Setuy utes!

Utro chortu!

My, nizari, leteli Razinym.

Techet i nezhen, nezhen i techet.

Volgu div neset, tsen vid uglov.

Oleni. Sinelo.

Ono." [103]

2.1.7. Sensuously Perceived Mythical Space

The art works produced by the avant-garde offered many different materials for the analysis of space. We wish to say something here about Ernst Cassirer's understanding of space and its central position in sensual perception.[104] Euclidian space, as a part of science that preceded the avant-garde, is characterized as: a) persistent, permanent; b) endless and c) homomorphous. This is all in opposition to sensual perception. This perception is not acknowledged with the idea of infinity; it is connected with boundaries and determined area of space. Homogenous space is something that has never *been* (in reality) but is only a construction. That idea is constructively created; it is impossible in space of direct sensuous perception.[105] Mythical space is connected with a space sensuously perceived and it is opposite of abstract geometry space. In mythical geography and cosmography, the construction of the world was described as a magical anatomy in which separate parts of the human body corresponded to certain parts of the world.[106] The avant-garde was interested in the mythical understanding of space, but tried to experience it by employing new scientific discoveries.[107]

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[103] KHLEBNIKOV: 2001, Vol. 2, p. 189.
[104] CASSIRER: 1955, p. 83.
[105] Ibis: p. 84.
[106] That is well-known subject of postmodern. It is used in *Dictionary of the Khazars* (Hazardski rečnik) of Milorad Pavić (translated by: Christina Pribicevic-Zoric, Vintage Books, 1989) which represent an attempt to reconstruct the body of Adam.
[107] Theosophists were among the first ones who spread the same ideas.

Learning about language showed that phrases for *up/down* and *fornt/back* are often created based on human body observation.[108] The avant-garde discovered that language hides secrets as a first orientation in space. Based on the essence of the sound, Khlebnikov was able to discover the spatial image.

Cassirer quotes the work of Immanuel Kant regarding orientation, *What is Orientation in Thinking?* (Was heißt: sich im Denken orientieren? 1786). Kant shows that each orientation starts with a sensual feeling of difference, for example feeling the difference between the right and left hand. This is later transferred to the sphere of purely mathematical thinking, so that it coan lead towards an orientation in thinking per se, through pure reason. We could conclude that in its delivered form, this is one of the essential feelings, projected onto pure thinking as on language and other fields of symbolic thinking, and that it is a feeling for symmetry and binarity.[109]

2.1.8. Spatial Alphabet

Khlebnikov's research in the field of spaciously understood language were not scientific, more quasi-scientific, but they certainly dis not remain only in the field of aesthetics.

Khlebnikov explained language – the meaning of particular voices or syllables, using spacious and time relations, as **the inner form of the voices,** expressed with spacious or mathematical-geometrical definitions that enable the graphical presentation of voices. Khlebnikov (re)constructs the moving of consonants through space. He felt that the power of gravitation had an influence on language. The consonant *H* (Kh) is, for example, the partition between two points. With this consonant begin names of buildings that protect people from tempest and animals *little cottage, cottage* (khizhina, khata). With such a reading of the alphabet, Khlebnikov reached a space beyond the borders of the conscious mind, which in the current level of consciousness did not permit it to be understood, rather functioning as an echo in our subconscious as was the case with the language of swearing or fortune-telling

In the programmatic text (manifesto), *Artist of the World!* (Khudozhniki mira!) Khlebnikov systematically makes an inventory of the spacious understanding of the letters of the alphabet. He

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[108] CASSIRER: 1955, p. 90.
[109] And not only language - Roman Jakobson wrote that poetry, especially folk poetry, hid the feeling for space; that this actually have its own geometry, as he named it in his article *The Poetry of Grammar and the Grammar of Poetry* (1961). JAKOBSON: 1987, p. 121

stated: "the sounds of the alphabet – they are the names of different shapes of the space,"[110] and "the alphabet, universal for many people, is a short dictionary of the spatial world."[111] This spacious quality, which language carries within it, places it closer to art and painting. The spacious alphabet is abridged here, in English translation:

1) *[V]* in all languages means the rotation of one point or another round in a circle or part of its arc upward and backward.

2) What *H* means is a closed curve separating the barrier of one point from the movement to the other points (defensive line).

3) What *Z* means is moving at a reflection of the characteristics of a mirror at an angle equivalent to the corner of the fall. The impact of a beam on a solid plane.

4) What *M* means the disintegration of some magnitude for the infinitesimal, within the limits of equal value as a first whole. [112]

In the same text *Khlebnikov* went even further and for particular alphabetical letters he created geometrical signs, for example: *"V for me appears to be a circle with a dot in it."[113]*

2.1.9. Sacral Space

In his book *The Sacred and the Profane*, Eliade argued that the manifestation of the sacred ontologically founded the world.[114] The traditional man, 'homo religiosus', had a strong will to live

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[110] "Zvuki azbuki — sut' imena raznykh vidov prostranstva."
[111] "Azbuka, obshchaya dlya mnogih narodov, est' kratkiy slovar'prostranstvennogo mira."
[112] Russian original in: KHLEBNIKOV: 2001,Tom, 3, p. 240.
Translation from: http://www.rvb.ru/hlebnikov/mat/contents.htm Downloaded in 2007.
1) *V* na vseh yazykakh znachit vrachchenie odnoy tochki krugom drugoy ili po celomu krugu ili po chasti ego, duge, vverkh i nazad.
2) Chto *Kh* znachit zamknutuyu krivuyu, otdelyayushchuyu pregradoy polozhenie odnoy tochki ot dvizheniya k ney drugoy tochki (zashchitnaya cherta).
3) Chto *Z* znachit otrazhenie dvizhushcheysya tochki ot cherty zerkala pod uglom, ravnnym uglu padeniya. Udar lucha o tverduyu plokost'.
4) Chto *M* znachit raspad nekotoroy velichiny na beskonechno malye, v predele, chasti, ravnye v celom pervoy velichine.
[113] Ibid. "Mne *V* kazhetsya v vide kruga i tochki v nem."

within the sacred, or near sacred objects. A sacred place possesses a unique existential value for religious man, but for the non-religious man, space is neutral. Although modern man seems to experience the world as completely profane, ancient myths, taboos, and rituals still nourish life in the West, but in a corrupted form, according to Eliade.

Everything that has been previously stated about the avant-garde understanding of space leads us to the question of whether the avant-garde artist was searching for a specific type of space as a substitution for sacral space. Eliade wrote that one always returns to his own sacral space, to the cradle of the ancestors, in order to renew personal energy and vitality.[115] Many avant-garde artists and movements demonstrated the need for a return – conditionally speaking – to the cradle of humankind. We might ask ourselves if there lies a wish for renewal, and eventually, for what kind of renewal? Was the avant-garde searching for a new sacral space or space for a newly rebuilt world?

All sacral places express sorrow for a lost paradise, says Eliade. Based on all of the examples he cites in *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (Traité d'histoire des religions) he goes on to say that there exists an archetypal sacral space, which attempts to conjure up hierophany or to initiate some ordinary space. Elide's works show that hierophanies (holy trees, holy water and the like) can be repeated in freely chosen forms, even in quite rough approximations.

Let us take Malevich's famous square as an example. The square and circle can be understood as *imago mundi* (micro-cosmos) which the artist is trying to establish. While Jung studied the symbolism of the square and the mandala (always *quadratura circuli*) he thought that they presented the struggle against chaos and a search for the center that keeps man in balance; the square is also symbolic of the *pantheon* and is a symbol of the transformation of chaos *into the whole.*[116]

The first significant appearance of the square in the work of Malevich was on the curtain in the opera *Victory over the Sun*. The curtain was presented as a diagonally cut, half-black square, as the beginning of all possibilities, which comes to possess incredible power during its development.[117] In 1913, the square was a sign of *Victory over the Sun*, and in 1915 it was a zero

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[114]Eliade, Mircea: *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask; New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1959. The same in: ELIADE: 1959.
[115]ELIADE: 1959, p. 316.
[116]JUNG, C.G: *Psychologie und Alchemie*. Hrsg.von Dieter Baumann, Lilly Jung-Merker & Elisabeth Ruef. Walter-Verlag,1972.
[117] Details about Malevich's work on *Victory over the Sun* in: DOUGLAS: 1974, p. 45-51.

form or zero point from which Malevich started painting. In *The Last Futurist Exhibition in* Saint Petersburg, *0.10* held in 1915, Malevich exhibited his Suprematist works and then the square was positioned in the place of the icon. Malevich's square is a basic element whose disintegration creates other elements, firstly the circle and cross, and then others.[118] The square is connected with the symbolism of the center, especially in Tibetan Lamaism. Malevich would have known something about this from his study of the Theosophists or other sources.

For an avant-garde artist, sacral space might seem to be any place where he could create it – as it could be painted, it seemed that it did not necessarily have to be physical, and thus could also be free of geocentrism. It seems that avant-garde artists created a new relationship of *me-space* – the middle point being man, and corresponding with a macro system which considers it as part of the self.

2.1.10. One Step Beyond – New Relationships of Subject and Object in Space

Novica Petković wrote that the perception of nature in Crnjanski's novel *Migrations* (Seobe) by the main character, Vuk Isaković, caused nature to change and move.[119] That is not Impressionism, according to Petković, where nature leaves an impression on character; it is rather the perceptual activity of character that changes nature's own outlook. This is the innovation that Crnjanski brought to Serbian literature. Petković brought a similar approach in connection with Cubist painting and Futurism, which rendered the object movable. Crnjanski went one step further, so that his literary hero moved nature and objects around himself, and thus achieved an entirely new relationship between subject and object. In his poem *Poem* (Pesma), the first two lines consist of a Sumatran picture of nature, an idea later developed further in *Diary of Čarnojević* (Dnevnik o Čarnojeviću): "And when they remember me, the forests cheerfully are blushing shamefully."[120]

Here nature is in an erotic relationship with the poet. That is a rather unusual moment in the poetry of Crnjanski; although present in Chinese and Eastern poetry in general, it is not typical for the European poetic heritage. Furthermore, in the same poem, the poetic subject narcissisticly reflects its power in the brightness of old icons. Here also, as in the passage above from *Migrations*, the subject changes the perceived object simply by observing it:

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[118] MALEVICH: 1972, p. 100.
[119] CRNJANSKI: 1987. PETKOVIĆ: 1994, p. 10.
[120] CRNJANSKI: 1993, Vol. 1, p. 144. "I kad me se sete,/ šume radosno, stidno zarumene".

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"Old icons glitter in turbid gold

When they see me." [121]

One can say that this change of relationship between subject and object in the poetry of Miloš Crnjanski represents the beginning of a new feeling in art, which was later developed by phenomenology, especially Merleau-Ponty, at the moment when he discovered a shift of perception by noticing that the *picture was watching him.*

2.2. Time

2.2.1. The Exhaustion of the Old World or Time

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Western world, Russia and also in part the other peoples of Europe, felt a sense of exhaustion and the end of an epoch and form of civilization, and the avant-garde attempted to change that condition.

The cultural historian of Russia James H. Billington indicated that *apocalypticism* was one of the landmarks of the first and the second decades of the twentieth century in Russia.[122] This type of feeling appeared in almost all of the areas where the Judeo-Christian ethic was the prevailing one, as testified by the works of Mircea Eliade[123] although, in Russian philosophy in particular the difference was emphasized between the *feeling of the end* in Russia and Europe.[124]

The apocalyptic feeling appears strongly in numerous works by Russian authors. Vladimir S. Solov'ëv published his *A Short Story of the Antichrist* (Kratkaya povest' ob antikhriste) 1899-1900), which was imitated by many. Dmitriy S. Merezhkovskiy wrote the trilogy *Christos and Antichrist* (Khristos i Antikhrist, 1896 – 1905). Andrey Belyy wrote a poem entitled *Christ Has Risen* (Khristos voskres) in 1918. In his *The Twelve* (Dvenadtsat', 1918), Alexander Blok also wrote that Christ had returned. Vasiliy Rozanov wrote *Apocalypse of our Times* (Apokalipsis

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[121] Ibid: „A ikone stare zasjaje u mutnom zlatu/ kad vide mene."
[122] BILLINGTON: 1966, p. 478 – 504. The other two landmarks are Prometheanism and sensualism.
[123] ELIADE: 1970, p. 232 – 246.
[124] For example in: Berdyaev, Nikolay: The Meaning of History, trans. by George Reavey; London: G. Bles, 1936. The writer emphasizes that the Russian feeling of the end was apocalyptic in nature.

nashego vremeni, 1917). One of Kandinskiy's recurrent themes was that of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse and the Last Judgement, especially during the crises of 1912-1914.

This apocalyptic feeling was prevalent in Russian art at the time of Symbolism coming into being, whereas the avant-garde attempted to transcend that feeling. Utopias and anti-utopias were written of extensively prior to and immediately after the Russian Revolution. Hansen-Lëve distinguishes apocalyptics (Symbolists) from those directly opposing them – anti-apocalyptics (Kruchënyh) and archaic utopians (such as Khlebnikov).[125] That is quite correct and certainly makes the typologization of these movements in Russian literature more clear.

The avant-garde in the West, as well as other parts of Europe, was then undergoing a profound crisis at the end of an epoch and form of civilization. Filippo Marinetti's appeal for the destruction of museums and libraries was connected to the feeling that the end of the world and history was at hand. The Futurists were oriented to the future, Cubists to the relativity of time, and Expressionists were prone to see the apocalyptic end, whereas the Dadists announced the end of the world by ridicule, grotesque sarcasm and the total negation of everything that had existed in European culture until that point.

2.2.2. Avant-garde Discovers Inhomogeneity of Time

It is said that the avant-garde discovered "the factor of time" just as philosophy did during that period, especially Heidegger in his work *Being and Time.*

When three distinct forms of thinking – the gnoseological, the ontological and the avant-garde – are generally observed, we can notice the following differences: gnoseological time is an irretrievable process, where time flows chronologically in terms of the past, present and future; ontological time is that of eternity; the avant-garde understanding of time is that of awareness of a distant past, a prehistorical, precultural or unknown future, of a post-cultural or post-historical time.[126]

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[125] HANSEN-LÖVE: 1993. However, Hansen-Löve has been criticised by Tomaš Glanc, in his dissertation work (GLANC: 1999, p. 82), because of his attitude towords the utopians. Hansen-Löve rules out the possibility of vision and intuition, while Glanc stresses that Mlaevich's Suprematism might be a utopia but was, above all, a visionary project. He stresses that intuition is necessary for vision.
[126] About that in: HANSEN-LÖVE, 1993, p. 13; ORAIĆ-TOLIĆ, 1996, p. 14. In these works the avant-garde is called utopian; in the avant-garde, time is called utopian time but we avoided this determinant.

However, we want to emphasize here that the avant-garde understanding of time is mythical, *not necessarily because it takes us back to the distant past*, but because it **discovers the nature of mythical time** and visits the spheres of such an understanding of time. It can be best seen from a comparison between the avant-garde and the description of the dialectics of time in *The Dialectics of Myth* by Aleksey Losev. He accepts modern science (theory of relativity) and revives ancient classical knowledge according to which *real time is always inhomogeneous* – that it can be prolonged and shortened, that it is relative and conditional. He even adds that it seems to him that "since 1914 time has somehow condensed and has started to flow more quickly".[127]

Losev stated that apocalyptic expectations in the past could be explained by the condensation of time which was near completion, and which afterwards began to leak. Like space, time has its curves and breaches. Sometimes three seconds seems to last like a year, and the other way round. Time can even be a recurrent phenomenon. Losev reminds us of instantaneous agings and rejuvenations in fairy tales. The universe is, he claims, diverse in regard to its time structure. However, it is vital to highlight that he does not speak of subjective times, but of time as such.

According to Losev, a dialectical approach was necessary for the understanding of mythical time. Dialectical necessity, urge us to see that time is not merely time, that is, sheer duration, because duration sometimes ends and sometimes does not.[128] If it ends sometimes, then it, by its nature, contains something that is the absence of time. If it does not end, then it is eternity. In other words, *time* plus *something else* equals *something what is the absence of time*. So time is always something which *is* and *is not* eternity; by Losev's definition it is an **actual infinitude**.

The avant-garde also felt that time oscillated between the categories of finite and non-finite, that it was dialectical, containing simultaneously two opposites. To the question of what lay beyond the end of time, the avant-garde answered: time again. Khlebnikov's *utopianism* is actually the abolition of the *chronotops*. He no longer thought of the end, for him **the end has already happened**, as there were no longer any restrictions and constraints regarding time and space. In the *Victory over the Sun* Kruchënyh declared what many had not discerned, except for Kruchënyh: that the end had already occurred.[129] So, by realizing the law of dialectical necessity, that the time must become inhomogeneous the avant-garde started to shorten, accelerate and turn time around.

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[127] LOSEV: 1990, p. 281 – 288.
[128] About that in: *Ancient Cosmos and the Contemporary Science* (Antichnyy kosmos i sovremennaya nauka, 1927) and *The Dialectics of Myth*.
[129] KUSHNER:1999, p. 212 – 228.

2.2.3. The Idea of Rhythm and Lunar Symbolism

The idea of rhythm is connected to lunar metaphysics. The Moon is connected to life and the metaphysical destiny of the Moon is to live on and stay immortal. It knows death only as a form of respite and regeneration, never as an end. **Man attempts to merge himself with that destiny through his rites, rituals, symbols and myths.**

Mythical-religious traditions connected with cosmic-historical cycles, with that tradition originating from the phases and rhythms of the Moon, have a notion of the destruction and regeneration of both short and longer cycles of time.[130]

In Sanskrit, time is *black* (sansk: *kala,* means black, dark, soiled) as it is irrational, hard and merciless. Indian tradition has it that the one who lives mastered by time is exposed to all possible sufferings, and the deliverance from that state rests in the abolition of time.[131] In accordance with Indian tradition, humanity is going through a period, of a Dark Age, one of horrendous chaos and complete spiritual decline, with the final phase of a cosmic cycle finishing along with it. After that, the disintegration of space (mahápralaja) will ensue and a new era will begin, in the spirit of rebirth, regeneration, and renewal.

Mircea Eliade, in an interesting way, speaks of those times of the great fall, to which our era also belongs. He thinks that it is possible to **speak about the values of those dark ages,** the epochs of great degeneration and disintegration. Such ages get transhistorical meaning because it is precisely in such moments of history that there is the largest accumulation – although the balance has been disturbed in many ways, the share of people is too big, all laws are lost; still, a dark age is **symbolic of a larva** in the darkness that will later make the creation of new forms possible.[132]

Eliade counts all forms of lunar symbolics: fertility (water, shrubbery, woman, mother, mythical order), constant regeneration (water catastrophe as induced by the Moon, initiation death, the rise from the dead etc), time, destiny (The Moon measures, dreams of destinies), change caused by the dichotomy between light and darkness (the upper and the lower worlds, good and evil). The symbolism of the hidden (dark night, darkness, death, seeds and larvae) also belongs here. In all mentioned examples **the idea of rhythm** prevails and its basis is the change of opposites, of a

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[130] ELIADE: 1959, p. 163.
[131] Ibid. Also about that in: Eliade, Mircea: *La concezione della libertà nel pensiero indiano,* Asiatica 1938, p. 345-354.
[132] ELIADE: 1959, p. 164.

development achieved through the change of modalities (being-non-being, form-latency, life-death etc).[133]

However, Eliade says that lunar symbolism also has some kind of pathos in the idea of perpetual return or perpetual regeneration. Therefore, some tantric techniques are an attempt to bind together the Sun and the Moon, thus surpassing the polarity and attaining the original (primordial) Oneness. It means that man, having realized his position in space, started to crave the transcendence of his human condition in some concrete ways (by means of religion, magic etc). There are many myths depicting the human need for transcending the lunar way of existence.

The avant-garde also created in the spirit of lunar rhythms, demonstrating an interest in lunar symbolism as well as a tendency to transcend or **ignore the lunar state.**

2.2.4. The Reflection of Lunar Rhythms in the Avant-garde

Lunar Symbolism in the Work of Crnjanski

Lunar symbolism was particularly revived in the works of Miloš Crnjanski, as was the idea of rhythm, constant repetition (regeneration) and the change of modalities in life-death.

The moon is a dominant motif in many poems of Miloš Crnjanski and is often accompanied by the blossoming tree, at home in the springtime. This is a very "Chinese" feature of the work of Crnjanski. In Chinese lyrical poetry, these two contrasted motifs symbolize the homesickness of the trevaler.[134] The moon is an important indicator of the poet's feelings, a symbol of loneliness, abandonment and insensitivity. The feminine principle is also stressed in the works of this poet: the mother, mistress, prostitute, Virgin Mary, and Michaelangelo's mother are all inevitable characters of his prose and poetry.

He was very much interested in the idea of rhythm on the syntactic and semantic level. He spoke of it as the most important element of poetry. What supports this statement is his continually emphasized idea of time being a cyclical phenomenon. Lyrical parallelisms, rhythmic repetitions (as in the poem *Serenata*) and the circular composition of his novel *Migrations* (1929) all indicate this.[135]

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[133] Ibid.
[134] More about that in: MICIĆ: 2004.
[135] A parallel can be drawn between this novel and the novel *Finnegans Wake*, (1939) by James Joyce, which also brings the reader from the end to the beginning.

<u>Khlebnikov – Taming Time</u>

Calendar, time rhythms and numbers themselves, all of which were of great interest for Khlebnikov, are connected to lunar cycles. The real king of the the world was he who rules time and not space, as understood by Khlebnikov. Mythology has it that Zeus himself could not oppose the laws of time and destiny. This was unacceptable for Khlebnikov! Studying the laws of numbers and the rhythms of time, he wanted to master these.

In the manifesto *Trumpet of the Martians* (Truba marsian, 1916) he called for the creation of *the kingdom over time* (gosudarstva vremeni), which was to replace the kingdoms fighting for wide earthly expanses. In that realm, *active beings* (tvoryane) would replace the *nobility* (dvoryane) and the *inventors* (izobretateli) would replace the *acquiers* (priobretateli).

It is quite certain that he used numerology, the Kabbalah, and mathematical number theories as well as Pythagorean numerology. He was keenly interssted in Oriental cultures, Indian culture in particular, and in the Egyptian as well as Ancient Slavic past and the role of temporal rhythm in their folklore and religion. Many historical writings were preserved in Khlebnikov's notebook during the last few years of his life. He intended to write a text which would describe the effects of laws and the cyclical nature of time he himself formulated.[136] Vyacheslav Ivanov attempted to connect these to Khlebnikov's interest in science and the research of mathematicians and economists who located the presence of cycles of rises and falls in the economy (N.D. Kondratjev discovered the existence of so-called "Kondratjev's waves", which were named after him).[137]

It is possible to understand Khlebnikov's interest in **historical rhythms** as part of an overall European interest in history or as the consequence of an interest in spiritualism and occultism (it is not known whether he was a member of any such society, however). This interest in cyclical history could be part of an interest in Oriental religious systems, Indian, Chinese, and Buddhist. To some extent, Khlebnikov understood time and destiny in the Chinese way, meaning that he wanted to discover the rhythms of time in order to enable humanity to live in accordance with them. In Taoism, man's destiny depends on the movements of the *tao*, whereas man himself,

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[136] More about that in: BARAN: 2002, p. 298.
[137] IVANOV: 2003.

with help of the *Book of Changes* (or I Ching), can learn how to live in accordance with those rhythms.

In the tractate *The Tables of Destiny* (Doski sud'by, 1922) he points out the basic elements of this future mastery over time and discovers the laws by means of which renowned people appear in the history of an empire. Here he equated himself with the pharaoh Amenhotep IV (in Russian: Ekhnaton) and Omar Khayyám. As Lobachevskiy replaced Euclid, thus Khlebnikov replaced Pushkin's geometry of Euclid with Khlebnikov's geometry of Lobachevskiy.[138]

In the text *Our Foundations* (Nasha osnova, 1919) Khlebnikovs further asserts that events and people distant in time can be mutually much more similar than those who are closer in time:

"What results from our relationship to time is *zdvig* (displacement). (...) A new relation to time gives priority to the effects of division claiming that distant points can be more similar than two adjacent ones as well as that the points *m* and *n* are similar if *m* – *n* is divided without the remainder on *y*. According to the law of birth, $y = 365 - 48 = 317$ years."[139]

In this text it can also be seen that he thought that man should master numbers and the laws of time in order to better know and believe in himself:

"An accurate and precise study of time brings about the disintegration of mankind. By studying time we achieve a mankind which believes in mankind, just as by assimilating characteristics previously attributed to divinities, we achieve the study of ourselves."[140]

Khlebnikov's poetry reflected his scientific and quasi-scientific research, as well as his philosophy of the future. In the brochure *Time and the Measure of Peace* (Vremya mera mira, 1916) he mentions William Hamilton (1805-1865) who considered algebra to be a form of teaching about time (in Russian: o vozhmozhnosti vremeni).[141]

The following lines from *Otter's Children* support this (there he repeats that historical cycles are determined by the number 365±48):

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[138] See: KHLEBNIKOV: 2001, Vol. 3., p. 577, 590, 606.

[139] KHLEBNIKOV: 2001, Vol. 3., p. 244. „Vmeste s tem proiskhodit sdvig v nashem otnoshenii k vremeni. (...) Novoe otnoshenie k vremeni vyvodit na pervoe mesto deystvie deleniya i govorit, chto dal'nie tochki mogut byt' bolee tozhdestvenny, chem dve sosednie, i chto tochki *m* i *n* togda podobny, esli *m* — *n* delitsya bez ostatka na *y*. V zakone rozhdeniy *y*=365 godam, v litse voyn *y*=365 — 48=317 godam."

[140] Ibid. „Tochnoe izuchenie vremeni privodit k rozdvoeniyu chelovechestva, tak kak sobranie svoystv, pripisyvavshikhsya ran'she bozhestvam, dostigaetsya izucheniem samogo sebya, a takoe izuchenie i est' ne chto inoe, kak chelovechestvo, veruyushchee v chelovechestvo."

[141] KHLEBNIKOV: 2001, Vol. 3., p. 564.

"We have a future sharp-sighted,

Times want to see further."

"You - the same: <u>300, 6 and five,</u>

Teeth shine again.

They, together with you, 48." [142]

Khlebnikov attempted to write poems which would belong among didactic agricultural poetry, portraying life in lunar cycles (calendar poems). In the poem *The Rus Singing in the Month of Ay* (Rus' pevuchaya v mesyatse Ay) he depicts which agricultural chores are to be done in which month of the year. There, the rhythm of human existence on Earth is determined by a cosmic rhythm.[143] He also had a calendar with a list of holidays, primarily the Roman ones. There is also a text entitled *Poet and the Calendar* (Poet i kalendar') which calendar was made up by Khlebnikov himself while visiting Persia (Iran) in 1921.[144]

2.2.5. The Abolition of Lunar Rhythms

<u>Relative Time</u>

In the spirit of the new scientific discoveries of the age, the avant-garde, came to the conclusion that there were as many forms of time as of things, whereas there were as many things as senses and ideas, partly we already spoke about this.

In Khlebnikov's *super-tales* (in Russian: sverkhpovests) as well as numerous postmodern works from the second half of the twentieth century, many of the discoveries connected to the relativity of space and time apply. That is how literary works written in the form of a lexicon came into being - Pavić's *Dictionary of the Khazars* (Hazardski rečnik) cannot be read in a linear fashion. Khlebnikov, for example, in the story *Ka* (1915) mixes the chronological order of time.

Malevich pondered and wrote about how the feeling for an object could awaken art after revealing that objects contain a multitude of moments in time.[145] He stresses the importance of time aspects within Cubism: "All of those aspects of time, things and anatomies (layers of trees)

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[142] KHLEBNIKOV: 2001, Vol. 2., p. 77. „My stali k budushchemu zorki, / Vremen khotim uvidet' dal'." /
„Vy – te zhe: 300,6 i pyat, / Zubami bleshchete opyat'. / Ikh, vmeste s vami, 48."
[143] More about that in: BARAN: 2002, p. 239.
[144] Ibid: p. 276.
[145] MALEVICH: 1995 (1915), p. 50

became important for their very essence and sense."[146] Malevich also speaks about the power and tension created by an artist while painting in accordance with new principles - thus attaining a new beauty or energy, as Malevich says. "So energy is created when a painter frees himself of the impression of the wholeness of objects; energy is created by observing parts of object at different times. Having attained a new form of beauty or, simply, energy, we lost the impression of the wholeness of things."[147] In this way, an emerging moment in the new aesthetic formulated by Malevich in his essay *Suprematism* (1919) is emphasized: a system is constructed in space and time, independently of any aesthetic notion of beauty.[148]

Mirskontsa – Initial Future Time

An idea thought of jointly by Kruchënykh and Khlebnikov, articulated in the form of the neo-mythologem "*mirskontsa*", is particularly worth mentioning. Here the future emerges as initial principle which, from its end, seems to be retroactive to the present. The notion of *mirskonca* can be understood in the spirit of our writing about inverse perspective in the understanding of space - as a notion meaning an inverse perspective in time. The hand-written book by Kruchënykh and Khlebnikov *Mirskontsa* opens with the verses:

"It is hard to resurrect the dead,
  Just as it is hard to resurrect oneself!" [149]

With this concept of initial future time Kruchënykh and Khlebnikov opposed the idea of eschatologism and the finality of symbolism, and, more generally, all the apocalyptic theorists of their time.

In *Lyalya at Tigres* (Lyalya na tigre, 1916)[150] Khlebnikov cites the words of Kruchënykh from the opera *Victory over the Sun*: "The world will disappear, but we shall continue living."[151]

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[146] Ibid, p. 50. "Vse eti vidy vremeni veshchey i anatomiya (sloy dereva) stali vazhnee ikh suti i smysla."
[147] Ibid, p. 51. "Dostigaya etoy novoy krasoty ili prosto energii, my lishilis' vpechatelniya cel'nosti veshchi."
[148] MALEVICH: 1995 (1919), p. 150.
[149] KRUCHËNYKH, A., Khlebnikov, V.: *Mirskontsa*. See also: Kruchënykh, 1913, Novye puti slova, In: *Troe*, Sankt Peterburg. „Kak trudno mertvykh voskreshat', / Trudnyy voskresnut' samomu!"
In: BARAN, 2002, p. 319; explained that Khlebnikov, with this concept of time, argues with Darwinism.
[150] KUSHNER: 1999, p. 208.
[151] KHLEBNIKOV: 2001, Vol. 3., p. 214. „Mir pogibnet, a nam net kontsa."

Here we can see an important moment for the avant-garde – as past and future aspects of time are both refracted in it. It is a victory over finality, a proclamation that there will not be any end but, in case it happens, only in inverse sense, as a beginning, a source of an inverse flow of time.[152]

The appearance of these avant-garde writers is connected to the time which is at the same time the climax and end of the past as well as the first moment of the future; the moment when time was inverted. The work of of Kruchënykh and Khlebnikov registers the moment when an inversion, or inversed flow, of European culture began.

The notion of *mirskontsa* was seemingly first used by Kruchënykh, whereas near the end of his life Khlebnikov also wrote a play *Mirskontsa* in which time was inverted and the characters became rejuvenated instead of growing older. In the end, all of them finish the play in baby prams: "Polya and Olya, silent and frowning, balloons in their hands, go to their prams."[153]

Future Time

Much has been written about the new time of the *budetlyans* (budetlyane) and Futurists. Here we shall mention some of Khlebnikov's visions of the future. He wrote futurological essays about the possible evolution of mass communication, *The Radio of the Future* (Radio budushchego) and transportation and housing, *Ourselves and Our Buildings* (My i doma). He described a future world in which people could live and travel comfortaebly and in harmony, with the help of modern technological instruments and vehicles. His discovery of the *laws of time and destiny*, as in modern technology, and the proper languages of the future did not make for science fiction, since in his feeling for time the archaic (mythical) and the future blend together. The master of time, Khlebnikov, not only erased the causality of time, but also, in some ways, even abolishes time altogether. That need for reconstruction of the mythical in the future can also be seen in his experiments with language. Hasen-Löve even notices that, regarding the work *The Rock From the Future* (Russian: Utes iz budushchego) Khlebnikov's utopia consists of the constant archaizing of the future. [154]

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[152] More about this in: HANSEN-LÖVE: 1993, p. 18.
[153] KHLEBNIKOV: 2001, Vol. 2., p. 422. „Polya i Olya s vozdushnymi sharami v ruke, molchalivye i vazhnye, proezzhayut v detskikh kolyaskakh."
[154] HANSEN-LÖVE: 1993, p. 35.

<u>Infinity-Zero</u>

Daniil Kharms also worked his way through time to infinity. Kharms has two texts, *Nul and Nol* and *About the Circle* (Nul' i nol', O kruge) [155] where he speaks about the symbol of zero and the circle, which he considered to be the most perfect of all geometrical shapes. There he predicted that: "Learning of the infinite will become the learning of zero."[156]

In *Nul and Nol*, he writes about the symbol of the circle, which with the motion of the sun, should evolve into a closed circle in the future, which, for Kharms, equals zero. So infinity appears as a closed circle. We could interpret this with the help of Taoism - when the whole circle turns around, the *tao* turns as well – which could also correspond to the avant-garde notion of *mirskontsa*.[157] On the other hand, quite correct is also an interpretation in the spirit of Daniil Kharms's poetics and conception, that in the way we abolish time, zero is nothing, so therefore is no time.

With this understanding Kharms also approaches Malevich's ideas from his *Suprematist Mirror* (Suprematicheskoe zerkalo) where he states that if someone has met the Absolute, he has certainly met zero as well.[158]

Yugoslav avant-garde writers also spoke about infinitude: Micić, Goll and Tokin, in their *Manifesto of Zenitisms* (Manifest zenitizma), wrote that Zenitism was eternity.[159]

Time having been abolished by the avant-garde, the postmodern period was later left to elaborate on the idea of the end through repetition – that is, perpetual return.

2.2.6. *L'éternel Retour* of the Avant-garde?

If we consider the avant-garde as a unique phenomenon in European and related cultures, in other words, if we leave out all its heterogeneous forms and think for a moment about what the appearance of the avant-garde phenomenon should have meant in the context of culture and history, we may draw the conclusion that *it has manifested something*. As we have seen, it represented a reaction to the *exhaustion of a culture, maybe an entire civilization*. It manifested the

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[155] About that in: ZHAKKAR: 1995, p. 85.
[156] Ibid: "Uchenie o beskonechnom budet uchenie o nole."
[157] See for example in: Fung Yu-Lan: *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, Transl. by Derk Bodde, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.
[158] MALEVICH: 1995 (1923).
[159] TEŠIĆ: 2001, p. 117-120

need for transcending time by studying historical rhythms. Numerous themes covered by Mircea Eliade, with the aim of depicting religious and mythical thinking, can be observed within the appearance of the avant-garde. The phenomena we are describing here existed before and after the avant-garde, but it was reflected through them deeply, and because of that we are using them for our own purposes.

In *The Sacred and the Profane* Mirce Elidae distinguishes between these two: opposed to modern man, archaic man experienced time in a different way.[160] He thinks that archaic man could change archaic time into the sacred during a ritual, or as a repetition of a myth. Basic characteristics of magical-religious time are periodicity, repetition, and eternal presence, but these characteristics help us to explain the sense of unhomogeneity of kratophanic and hierophonic time in relation to profane time.[161]

We shall explain in later chapters exactly what was of specific importance for the avant-garde in their return to mythical time. It is sufficient here to say that **mythical time is a creative age,** and in that sense, it is *in illo tempore* that everything is possible. At that time, species (plant and animal) were not differentiated, whereas forms were fluid. Mircea Eliade identifies this mythical time with the rule of Uranus in Greek mythology.[162] During the rule of Uranus there was no differentiation, clear boundaries or rules. It was a time when today's people did not exist, only monsters and hundred-armed, fifty-eyed giants.

In many myths unlimited freedom, manifested on all levels, appears as an important feature of Edenic time. Certain beliefs, having it that many freaks and monsters (it is impossible not to remember that there are many of these even in later myths and tales) were created in the beggining, may be connected to this concept. **That fluidity of "form" that Eliade registers at the beginning of time also appears at its opposite end.**

The blending of species, confusion of forms, the lack of rules - all of this might remind us of avant-garde art. Forms become diluted somehow in the avant-garde, as literary genres and narrative threads lose themselves, language is lost while turning itself into original onomatopoeic sounds and the stammering of a man who has not learnt grammatical rules yet; in painting clear forms are lost, in the painting itself, formless figures blend with the space surrounding them.

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[160] ELIADE: 1959 (a).
[161] ELIADE: 1959, p. 334 – 335.
[162] Ibid: p. 76 – 77, 337- 338.

In archaic cultures, rituals, performed for the sake of the renewal of time, are connected to this dissolution of time. Festivities were held by archaic people in sacred time, which also signified eternity. Many festivities and carnivals enact the atmosphere of the disappearance of profane time and the beginning of a "new time". In other words, festivities closed one cycle and began the renewal of time. The time of festivities occurs between two times - the outgoing one (darkness, cosmic night in which all forms lost their outlines and contours and merged together) and the incoming one. It is a state as if between two cosmoses, the time when the meeting between the living and the dead is possible (let us mention that just before the appearance of the avant-garde, spiritualist and similar societies had appeared in many parts of Europe and Russia). In that paradoxical time between two times happens the meeting of the forms that has already been realized and those still in the stage of formation, termed larval by Eliade.[163]

Regarding the archaic understanding of time, Eliade summarizes that the predominant idea is one of overall regeneration. The same happens in myths and the teachings about cyclical time, and he himself wrote about this in his book *The Myth of the Eternal Return: Or, Cosmos and History*.[164] Belief in cyclical time, in eternal return, but also in an adequate destruction of space and people preceding the creation of a new Space and a newly regenerated mankind - all of these beliefs represent a yearning for regurlar renewal and the hope that all this will actually come true. The cycle we are talking about is actually *the Great Year* (the name used by the ancient Greeks). That Great year lasted from the Creation of the World and finished with Chaos, that is, with the simple blending of all things. In many mythologies, the cosmic cycle includes: Creation, Existence (history, spending, and destruction), the Return to Chaos (*ekpyrósis* in Greek, *ragnarök* for the Germanic cultures, *pralaja* in Hinduism, and *apokalipsa,* in the Christian conception). The Great Year **behaves to a year as a year to a month or a day.**[165] **So in the case of the avant-garde, it is possible to talk about the announcement of a transition from a great time cycle to another one and, on the macro plane, to show the same semioticity as the those rituals do on the micro plane.**

What Mirce persists in is a hope in the general regeneration of time. Each cycle begins absolutely - each past and history is demolished by this return to chaos and each new beginning starts again from scratch. This was also announced by the avant-garde. What we termed a zero

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[163] ELIADE: 1959, p. 340 – 341.
[164] *Le Mythe de l'éternel retour,* Gallimar, Français, 1969.
[165] ELIADE: 1959, p. 347.

point corresponds to the state Mirce describes as larval, the state in which darkness and new light meet, the state of time repeated by the carnival. That is why we shall dedicate the next chapter to the interpretation of the avant-garde as a carnival.

2.3. Carnivalisation

2.3.1. Bakhtin's Theory of the Carnival – a World Turned Upside-Down

In modern science there is a theory of "two cultures".Two basic models of culture can be classified as such: leading and subordinate, large and small, educated and traditional, elite and popular. The avant-garde showed a great interest in folklore and popular culture, both of its own time and also of earlier periods. A very fertile comparison between the avant-garde and the work of François Rabelais is worth menitioning. Rabelais was born at the tun of the fifteenth century, at a time when the influence of Gothic culture was declining in France and popular culture was strengthened.

A general theory of the carnival as an **inversion of binary opposites** was postulated by Mikhail Bakhtin. This theory is supported by contemporary ethnological researches dealing with social status reversal.[166] Russian semioticians elaborated on the theory of binary opposites in Russian culture.[167] In the context of the avant-garde we can connect these theories and works to Petar Bürger's theory that defined the avant-garde as a **totally inverse culture** and which we have already mentioned.

Here we shall touch upon the question of *positive negation*, on which using the example of Rabelais Bakhtin expounds in his master-piece *Rabelais and His World,*[168] while Mathauser warns about the same phenomenon in avant-garde art.[169] The "world tunred upside-down" *of which* Bakhtin speaks regarding Rabelais' creative work is a downward motion. Real earthly time does not require the "up", but the "down", which in official culture was the direction towards hell. But negation in popular culture is always affirmation. Carnival celebrates the destruction of the old and the birth of a new year, the coming of spring, empire etc. Many things are turned inside out - men

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[166] About that in: IVANOV: 1977, p. 65-89. Similar work of this author: Iz zametok o stroyenii i funktsiyakh karnevalnogo obraza; in: Probelmy poetiki i istorii literatury, Saransk, 1973.
[167] LOTMAN, USPENSKIY: 1985, p. 30-60.
[168] BAKHTIN: 1984.
[169] See for example: MATHAUSER: 1964, p. 60 – 64.

dress as women and vice versa, costumes are worn back to front, and the outer pieces of garment worn in place of underwear.[170]

What Bakhtin describes concerning carnival, Ivanov and Eliade located in mythology. Ivanov wrote that there were mythologies which had a cosmogonic and eschatological scheme according to which things were inversely set at the beginning of time in relation to today's attitude, and that these would be inversed once again by the end of time.[171] Those are typologically related mythologies possessing the inversion of the binary **opposition of masculine-feminine**. Ivanov warns that the same *reversal* forms part of carnivals and rituals repeating throughout the year, or happening when a tribe *is endangered*, examples of which he cites regarding some ethnological work undertaken in Africa.[172]

Everything we are talking about is connected to the rituals described by Mircea Eliade - the behaviour of peoples during carnival is a return to mythical time. When comparing the behaviour of the avant-garde to that of carnival, the first thing we notice is that there is no carnivalesque sense of laughter in the avanat-garde, no festive picture of eating and drinking etc. - many of the things belonging to popular culture are lacked by the avant-garde. We could say that it does not have an essential contact with life, but still feels a great need for it. The avant-garde sometimes contains the element of laughter Jaccard writes about concerning Daniil Kharms. However, the laughter of Kharms is not the one Bakhtin described as carnivalesque, but a frightening one.[173] It is here that we can see the tragedy of the avant-garde – in that it tends to reveal the mythical and to interpolate it in its work, but does so only on the level of a text or image, thus making it distant from life which might give it its essence.

The avant-garde consisted of many of the carnival elements, but without the element of laughter indispensible for a carnival. It was all of the following: *popular* - artists took to the streets and squares, especially in Russia and in Dadaist performances; *universal*, or at least aspiring to be, inclusive of something of its own and somebody else's; *ambivalent*, both negating and confirming, able to destroy and gives birth; and *directed to the sublime* – it ousted divinities, civilization, institutions, and common sense.

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[170] BAKHTIN: 1984, p. 410 - 411
[171] IVANOV: 1977, p. 65 – 89.
[172] Ibid.
[173] ZHAKKAR: 1995, p. 253.

On the basis of Bakhtin's classification of the carnival culture we have made our own. When we single out the most characteristic forms of carnivalesque behaviour common to both the avant-garde and the carnival we get the following classification: *ritual spectacles*; *parodies*; *the grotesque*; *vulgarity, swear words and free street jargon in literature*; *de-hierarchization*; *ousting and devaluation*.

2.3.2. Carnival Forms of Life and Creation

Ritual Spectacles

Bakhtin list of ritual spectacles and similar celebrations characteristic for the popular culture as holidays devoted to jesters (festa stultorum), holidays devoted to donkeys, Easter laughter (risus paschalis), grape-picking feasts, the celebration of tournament victories etc., where phenomena that can be to a certain point compared with avant-garde spectacles. What was dominant in these celebrations was the sensual element, so that they were close to the theatre and other artistic forms. But they did not belong to the realm of art. They rested on the border of art and life, that is, they represented life itself.

Carnival is a popular phenomenon which everybody takes part in. During a carnival there are no restrictions, neither time nor spatial, people abide by the law of freedom. Roman saturnalias were conceived as a real and complete, although temporary, return of the golden age of Saturn. This was part of the desire for an overall Earthly renewal. The abolition of all hierarchical relations was of vital importance.

All carnivals and similar holidays cherish a clear relation to time. These holidays always had a special relation to natural-cosmic, biological or historical time. They were connected to *critical*, crucial moments during the natural lifetime as well as in human societies.

What is characteristic of carnivals is their logic of distortion, something contrary, opposite, the reversal of what is upside-down; parodies, travesties, degradation, profaning and ousting – the sense of a total, clear negation which appears in some works of the avant-garde (particularly Kruchĕnykh and the Dadaists) is completely foreign to popular culture.

We will try to comapare this with the works of the avant-garde. In the avant-garde, everything happened in squares, public places, in groups or masses - as in a popular holiday carnival game. However, a bitter taste in the mouth remained instead of laughter, and provocation replaced mirth. Camilla Gray speaks about the savage and crazed scenes of Dada in Zurich and futuristic performances which managed even to provoke the apathetic audience - they roared, gestured, or acted classical dramas in their overalls.[174]

If we try to single out the most important spectacles and public events during the time of the avant-garde, the following would be worth mentioning:

1. *Victory over the Sun*, the first *zaum* spectacle – created by Kruchenykh, Malevich and Matyushin, 1913 in St. Petrsburg.

2. Dadaist spectacle: the *simultaneous poem*, Richard Huelsenbeck, Marcel Janco, and Tristan Tzara, performed in the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich, 1916.

3. Hugo Ball dressed in "Cubist costume" with shamanic hat, in 1917 performed his *Karawane* and other *zaum* poems from the same cycle.

4. Khlebnikov had already in the year 1909 founded differential plays that he later realized within the genre of the super-tale (nadpripovest); also *Zangezi* (written 1920-22) with scenography by Tatlin (1923).

5. "Misteriya-buff" by Mayakovskiy (1918, 1921) production by Meyerhold, scenography by Malevich.

6. Kurt Schwitters' performances of his pre-sound sonata, *Ursonate*, with the final version appearing sometime between 1926-32.

At the time of the Russian revolution in 1917, people lived in the streets. The collective release of psychic energy had many carnivalesque characteristics.[175] The revolution was like the realization of some futuristic dream of large machines, great dynamism, war and industrialization. The abolition of all hierarchical relationships was very important. The prospects of a new life and collective society induced the avant-garde to action - it penetrated the masses in order to somehow enoble their struggle for the new world. Street life implied meetings, recitals, house and tree

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[174] GRAY: 1962, p. 219 – 234.
[175] Ibid.

painting, concerts on public squares, and public games; unfortunately, part of that spectacle were also trials of "peoples' enemies" and open-air theatre performances of these - those were everyday forms of communication where the masses collectively released their energy. The street became the school, hospital and cultural center - a slightly different square from the popular-carnival one, but still very similar.

The decoration of Natan Al'tman square in Saint Petersburg in 1918 to mark the first anniversary of the October Revolution is well-known. A construction was covered with Futurist and Cubist canvases. Afterwards, in Saint Petersburg in 1920, for a repeat performance Ivan Puni and Kseniya Boguslavskaya prepared a mass happening – an onslaught of the people and the army on the Winter Palace with a cacophony of instruments and factory sirens.[176]

Life in the streets and on squares continued even during the time of the propagation of revolution and the socialization of art by means of propaganda trains and ships. This siginified the need of art to return among the people and to be socially useful.

An important difference between Dadaist and Futurist appearances, or of others from the time of the Russian Avant-garde, is that the Dada carnival was something like a final spectacle before death. Dada did not believe in the revolution and rejected it as it did the war itself. The freedom it gave itself turned into anarchy. But Dada, just like the mass declarations by Russian artists, erased hierarchical and other differences among people. That is why we can say that Dada was the first international brotherhood of artists: artists from different nations acted in different places on behalf of this movement. In the Yugoslav Avant-garde there were two such goups: Dada-Jok and Dada Tank.

Parodies

It is instructive to say something about the role of parody in the Christan world. One of the oldest and most popular parodies in the Christian world is *The Supper of Cyprianus* (Coena Cypriani) – a carnival-feast travesty of the entire Holy Writ. There were many parodic liturgies (parodia sacra), the litugry of drunkards and the liturgy of gamblers. In the late Middle Ages there were also parodies of Gospel texts, prayers and even the holiest texts such as the *Paternoster* and *Ave Maria*, psalms, travesties of Gospel sayings etc. Many parodic bequests have been also

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[176] Ibid, p. 221.

preserved - the bequest of a pig, or donkey, including parodic epitaphs. In the Middle Ages the Church tolerated all of these phenomena - it often happened within Christmas or Easter carnival celebrations or was connected to a holiday of jesters.

In France there was also a form of parodic literature in which the texts of the Holy Writ or prayers started with "do not" (*ne advertas* – do not avert, *ne revoces* – do not invoke etc). This type of literature in Latin ended during the High Renaissance with *In Praise of Folly* by Erasmus and von Hutten's *Letters of Obscure People*. However, the same literature existed and was equally rich in popular languages. It was also full of parodic prayers, Christmas carols, and hagiographies (the lives and legends of Christian saints).[177]

From the age of the avant-garde, as an example we can take parodies in Serbian literature and try to compare them with the aforementioned parodies. Miloš Crnjanski, in his collection of lyrical poetry *Lyrics of Ithaca* (Lirika Itake, 1918) parodies a large number of lyrical genres. He wrote *Ode to the Gallows* (Oda vešailima) and *Toast* (Zdravica), made up of a sequence of oxymorons by means of which the poet toasts misfortune, disease and everything directly opposing the theme of this genre. In the poem *Prayer* (Molitva) he parodies *Paternoster*. Generally speaking, this is a parody of the prayer genre. In the first stanza the attributes of Father are set in the deceptive world of Don Quixote's illusions:

"Our Father

the grey bent shadow of the world

on a wooden nag.

With a broken pot on your head,

and eyes full of blue windmills."[178]

Stanislav Vinaver, the avant-gardist who was the translator of Rabelais into Serbian, parodied almost all of Serbian poetry, including popular, romantic and modern translations, and collected them in his *Panthology of New Serbian Absinthelyrics.* (*Pantologija novije srpske pelengirike*, 1920). This outstanding book turns upside-down and ridicules the whole of the Serbian poetic heritage.

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[177] BAKHTIN: 1984, p. 15.
[178] CRNJANSKI: 1993, Vol. 1, p. 139. "Oče naš / senko sveta seda pogurena / na drvenoj ragi. / Sa loncem razbijenim na glavi, / i očima punim vetrenjača plavi."

In many works of Rastko Petrović there are elements of parody, especially in his avant-garde novel *Burlesque of Lord Perun, Thunder God* (Burleska gospodina Peruna, Boga groma, 1922) in which he parodies the Serbian realist short story, but also Slavic and classical cosmogonies and myths.[179] There are two narrators - the first one is a folk narrator who makes mistakes and the second one is a destructive narrator who breaks the illusion of oral narration.[180] Rastko Petrović in Burlesque quotes the Despot Stefan Lazarević, his *The Word of Love* (Slovo ljubve) – the work from Serbian medieval literature that signed the beginning of eastern Renaissance. A quotation form *The Word of Love*, on the other hand, has as its subtext the Biblical *Song of Songs* – so Petrović creates a relationship with medieval and Biblical tradition making a parody of them and destroying them at the same time.[181]

In the context of the Russian Avant-garde Kruchënykh's parodies of holy texts are famous. Those were not parodies in the real sense, but they represented the destruction and denigration of canonical texts. He wrote a *Paternoster* (published in the manifesto *The Declaration of the Word as Such*) as a phonemic sequence of consonants:

o e a

i e e i

a e e ъ [182]

The same thing was done by Hulsenbeck in his text *Chorus sanctus*, where, based on a text from the Bible, he wrote a poem out of vowels and the onomatopoeic sounds of laughter and noise. [183]

The Grotesque

Bakhtin has a very particular interpretation of the grotesque image. He explains that it has to do with death and birth. The grotesque has a special relation to time and is ambivalence, it is

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[179] More precisely, it is a pseudo-parody, as it does not relate directly to the parodied text but only in reminiscences.

[180] It is interesting to emphasize that Stanislav Vinaver parodized Rastko's *The Burlesque* – the book he defended among literary critics. Vinaver's work is a parody of parody – it is a statement of the avant-garde spirit.

[181] That is why we can compare this work with Aristophanes, Lucian of Samosata, the Greek cynic Menippus, Rabelais, Jonathan Swift and finally Jorge Luis Borges.

[182] MARKOV: 1967, p. 63.

[183] DADA: 1987, p. 63.

tied to phenomena like death and life, winter and spring – the biocosmic circle of cyclical phases and changes, and has a feeling for history and historical changes. Hence it appears in those eras which are touched by historical change, as was the case with the Renaissance. The grotesque art possesses something of the new historical feeling permeating the traditional content and providing a new sensibility. The tendency of the grotesque portrayal of the body is to depict two bodies in one - such as a woman's body in most of Crnjanski's poems from *Lyrics from Ihtaka* and his avant-garde novel *Diary of Čarnojević*. The depiction of the body in his poems reflects the internal contradictory process.

The avant-garde often depicted the grotesque body. However, it had inherited the values of the 19th century which, unlike the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, when the grotesque was connected to popular culture, expressed a subjective, individual relationship to the world. It was then that the role of laughter was reduced and took on the shape of irony and sarcasm; there was no longer joy in it and the laughter principle became degenerated.

Bakhtin exemplifies this in relation to the fearful – popular culture is not afraid and switches everything to the mode of laughter. But the grotesque of Romanticism was an expression of fear of the world. He also illustrates as an example the motif of insanity - the avant-garde, especially Surrealism, is filled with this. Popular culture finds the grotesque as a festive insanity, and Romanticism as a tragic individual disunity. Also, the element of death does not include the element of the comic in the avant-garde, as it did when portrayed in Holbein's and Dührer's paintings. Distorted and deformed grotesque figures, whose bodies had decomposed in the war, permeate the works of Crnjanski and Petrović.

However, the avant-garde did possess grotesque characters containing the moment of the comic, but, above all, the tragicomic: clowns, harlequins, and especially Charlie Chaplin, who was a great idol of both Dada and the Yugoslav Avant-garde. In Czech literature Karel Teige wrote about clowns, the Dadaists' grotesque laughter and Charlie Chaplin.[184]

The carnival and the grotesqaue can be estranged from life, lose the element of laughter or become only a part of literature, or their form can be used for, to a certain extent, deformed purposes; however, what is conspicuous in such cases is some sense of being unfinished. Let's take as an example the behaviour of the Dadaists: Hugo Ball and Marcel Janko wore paper clothes,

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[184] TEIGE: 1928. It is significant that Teige noticed that Music-hall was a kind of saturnalia. Unfortunately, he did not develop this comparison.

George Grosz turned to death, Marcel Duchamp into a woman (Rose Sélavy), Hannah Höch disguised herself as a puppet, Johannes Baader as a prince, Francis Picabia rode a wooden hobby (Dada) horse. There are many reasons why they did this and their main aim is to shatter all conventions and to abolish differences between art and life - it is a primary need - to return to life. An artist consents to do anything in order to be part of life.

Vulgarities, Swear Words and Free Street Jargon in Literature and Public Life

The avant-garde time brought into literature the public display of vulgarities and free popular carnival speech in which swear words often had a positive regenerating meaning. Let's take as an example mentioning *a donkey*, which, according to Bakhtin, was one of the oldest and liveliest symbols of the material-corporeal ''down'', which devalues but also regenerates.

There was a Russian avant-garde artistic group known as *Donkey's Tail* (Oslinyy khvost), created from the most radical members of the *Jack of Diamonds* (Bubnovyy valet, 1909) group. The group included such painters as Mikhail Larionov (who invented the name), Natal'ya Goncharova, Kazimir Malevich, etc. They took this name from an inspiration by the scandal at the 26th *Society of Independent Artists* (Salon des Indépendants) in the year 1910. A painting was exhibited there as created by a donkey, concretely by his tale. In spite of calling the avant-garde "a laughterless carnival," we must admit that this name, like the very act of the French artists, has a touch of humour about it- the rude, uncouth, popular, vulgar humour which was an irreplacable part of popular festivities.

Bakhtin cites many examples from carnival life and medieval literature which were dominated by *a donkey*: besides the holiday devoted to jesters, there was also a holiday devoted to donkeys; even donkey masses were said and each part of such a mass was accompanied with braying "Hee-haw!" In the Middle Ages there were attempts to connect such holidays devoted to the donkey to a Christian legend of the escape of Mary and Jesus to Egypt on a donkey. However, during the holiday devoted to a donkey these figures did not appear and the central figure remained that of a donkey. In the novel *The Life of Gargantua and Pantagruel* (La vie de Gargantua et de Pantagruel) François Rabelais described the uncrowning of two kings (of Gargantua in Book 1 and

of Pantagruel in Book 2). In the scene of the toppling the king, Bakhtin sees an echo of ancient saturnalias, where a donkey was the symbol of both Gospel humility and regeneration.[185]

As we have said, not only does the period of the avant-garde period remind one of Rabelais's time, but also of other transitional periods of European history - for example, the period of Christianization, in about the 2nd and 3rd centuries, when Oriental influences mixed with local beliefs, and popular culture with the official one as well as with religions of different origin.

The work which outstandingly represents the state of spirit and culture before the official adoption of Christianity is Lucius Apuleius's fantastic satirical novel in 11 books, *Metamorphoses* – or as it is also called, *The Golden Ass* (or: The Golden Donkey). This work is a serious and grotesque satire on the vices of the age. It is considered that it best reflects the governing spirit on the territory and borders of the Roman Empire and Northern Africa in the 2nd century. For mystics, especially Platonists, a donkey represented the most basic instincts.

Another common characteristic of the periods under comparison that should be emphasized is that the language of Apuleius, as with that of Rabelais and the avant-garde later, was extremely rich and diverse, with many coinages and many words belonging to common popular speech derived from various areas of the Empire. The influence of Apuleius on European literature was considerable - he influenced Boccaccio, La Fontaine, and Molière; a great admirer of his language was Baudelaire, the forerunner and inspiration of avant-garde experiments with language and verse, and one of the idols of the avant-garde artists.

The avant-garde abounds in examples of swear words: *Go to hell* (Идите к черту) - the name of the Cubo-Futurist manifesto. The Zenitists had swearwords like *Hell's teeth!* (Stotinu vam bogova)[186] and terms of abuse like: "We hate you."[187] Crnjanski also used vulgar words in the above-mentioned poem entitled *Toast*.

Marino writes about scandals at Dada exhibitions and spectacles, with trivial humour, absurdity and the grotesque. In the manifesto *Manifesto of Mr. Antipyrine* (Manifeste de Monsieur Antipyrine, 1916) he says, "'You are all idiots".[188] Polemics and insults in magazines of that time were common among Dadaists, as were street fights, and even the bringing of criminal charges, as

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[185] BAKHTIN: 1984, p. 198 – 199.
[186] *Stotinu vam bogova* (1922), a prohibited collection of poems, was published the same year titled *Kola za sapasavanje*
(A Rescue car) and also prohibited.
[187] TEŠIĆ: 2001, p. 119.
[188] MARINO: 1973, p. 177-224

well as pamphlets and counter-pamphlets written against the various factions of a movement, numerous open insults, etc. This is characteristic of both the Western European and Eastern European avant-garde. There are too many examples of this in Serbian literature to list. Gojko Tešić collected, above all, polemics about literature which are not that trivial in the book *The Serbian Avant-garde & its Polemic Context.* [189]

The genesis of swear words, in the conditions of primitive communication, mainly had a magical and witchcraft-derived character. What was of particular importance is that during this ancient period there were swear words addressed to deities which were part of the laughter-based religious cults. Those swear words were ambivalent – in shattering and destroying they simultaneously regenerated and renewed. However, during a carnival, swear words lost their magical or practical character. They became part of the general atmosphere of laughter. In the avant-garde we constantly come across the same problem - the avant-garde does not regenerate but expects it to happen, employing imitating older forms of communication, but does not manage to, through its art, create the regeneration to suit its own taste, except in some individual cases. By their origin, swear words are similar to swearing or curses (jurons), which the avant-gardists and Florenskiy in particular examined during their research into the magic powers of language.

De-hierarchization, Ousting and Devaluation

The periodical ousting of rulers or those in power, the devaluation of everything that was culturally valuable, the annulment of social condition and relations, were as we have said always part of saturnalias and similar festivities. The shattering of all prohibitions and at the same time the emergence of their opposites were aimed at the decomposition of the world (by demolishing the society which represented that world) and its renewal; that is, *illud tempus*, the phenomenom often explained by Eliade, the mythical moment of uniting the beginning (chaos) and the end (the deluge, ekpyrósis, Apocalypse).

During the annual performance of saturnalias, the olden times, past and recollections were shattered. Cosmogony would appear symbolically - in other words, after a symbolic sprouting of a new world the old time was renewed. A regular part of saturnalias were ousting and bludgeoning. During a carnival the ousted ruler became a slave.

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[189]TEŠIĆ: 1991.

Here, devaluation is a process in which everything that is spiritual, ideal, and abstract in the usual order, becomes material-corporeal.

Within the avant-garde carnivalization and de-hierarchization of culture, it is worth mentioning the perversion and devaluation of the greatest Christian values.

In the above-mentioned poem *Prayer* in which Crnjanski parodies the *Paternoster*, Christ is described as Don Quixote. We have also mentioned Kruchënykh's *Paternoster*. Dadaists, Expressionists, Futurists and Surrealists carried out the process of ousting and destroying texts which were canonized, or had been used for a long time, at the very top of official culture. That is why the avant-garde poems were highly provocative in nature - successful provocation led to the demolition of the entire official culture.[190]

In *Hymn* (Himna) the poem represents a genre in which gods and rulers are glorified. Crnjanski, a poet broken down by the events of the war, does not have anyone to glorify:

"We have nothing. Neither God nor master.
Our God is blood."[191]

In the poem *Caricature* (Karikatura), which relies on the New Testament, the poet deforms the bewailing on the cross. The title of the poem makes sure we read it the right way.

In the poem *Plague* (Kuga) he identifies Christ with leaders who deceive the people:

"Christ, then Nero, then Lenin.
Taste changes, taste changes:
Only rogues are the same.
They have been pulling our legs for thousands of years,
Poets, messiahs, emperors and communists."[192]

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[190] About this see: BÜRGER: 1974.
[191] CRNJANSKI: 1993, Vol. 1, p. 21. „Nemamo nikoga. Ni Boga ni gospodara. Naš Bog je krv."
[192] Ibid: p. 148. "Hristos, pa Neron, pa Lenjin. / Ukus se menja, ukus se menja: / samo su hulje sve isti. / Hiljade godina vuku za nos, / pesnici, mesije, carevi i komunisti."

The climax of this process of de-hierarchization and the ousting of Christian values in the poetry of Miloš Crnjanski is the poem *Ditiramb* - here the outpourer of Myrrh is proclaimed to be a murderer, a wicked man:

"Centuries have risen you crucified.

Oh, old friend, blessed pain.

I have sung for the glory of holy myrrh,

Poured by a vicious killer."[193]

One of the central features of old Orthodox liretature and culture is Myrrh, a highly symbolic substance, turned from the positive to the negative side. These verses represent first-class blasphemy in Orthodox culture.

The poem *Grotesque* (Groteska) bears a grisly image of a white temple with a contrasting black sphinx on top of it instead of a cross. It is a grisly, eerie, spooky grotesque, as the name of the poem itself suggests.[194] It is the revolt of a warrior who has experienced the suffering of the Serbian people.

In his text-manifesto *Zenithosophy* (Zenitozofija) the Zenitist Micić evokes universal human roots and religion, confronting them with Christianity:

"We renounce desecrated old Christianity.

We preach a new and pure Barbarism.

Old Christianity is cannibalism.

New Barbarism is brotherly love!"[195]

There are many examples similar to the de-hierarchization or ousting of Christian values, including total desacralisation, in all of the European avant-gardes. Guillermo de Torre illustrates such an example in Dadaism – on the cover of his magazine *"391"*, Francis Picabia applied a

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[193] Ibid: p. 121. "Stoleća Te digla razapetog. / O Rode blagosloven bol. / Slavu sam peovo mira svetog, / koje toči ubica ohol."

[194] The poem is a reaction to a concrete event – the construction of St Vitus temple (by Meštrović).

[195] TEŠIĆ: 2001, p. 127. „Mi se odričemo oskrnavljenog starog hrišćanstva. / mi ispovedamo **novo i čisto varvarstvo.** / staro hrišćanstvo je ljudožderstvo. / **novo varvarstvo je ljubobratstvo!** (Typed in bold by the Manifesto writers.)

splotch of ink and called it the Virgin Mary.[196] In the *Dada Manifesto* (1918)   Tristan Tzara mocks Christianity, thinking it hypocritical.

Concerning the analyzed verses by Crnjanski and, more generally speaking, within the overall context of the avant-garde, we are made to cast a glance at the question of the ambivalence of mythical thining. Eliade warns about an interesting phenomenon, namely that, in the mythical and religious world, *the holy* very often changes into something that is forbidden, as if disgraced or something impure.[197] Even the Latin word *sacer* contains the opposite meaning: sacred and accursed. The Greek word *hagios* (άγιοσ) can be interpreted in different ways but can have two opposite meanings. So, what surfaces is the question of whether there are clear differences in mythical thinking as there are in logic or ethnical evaluation.

Hansen-Lëve writes about another function of the holy and religious, that is, about another function of secularization; only here within the revolutionary Russian Avant-garde. Comparing the avant-garde to Symbolism in the Russian context he points out the differences: in Symbolism, art became a religion; however, in revolutionary Russian Avant-garde utopiansm took the place of art, where the utopia, just like society, was aesthetized. What is characteristic of a utopia is that it secularizes religious, and even mythical motifs; that is to say, they reappear with new functions and become part of rhethoric and style.[198]

Binary Opposites - Even/Odd

On the end can be mentioned that what is characteristic of the avant-garde period is the reviving of the idea of binary opposites. Here we might only mention a question opened by the avant-garde, which requires a detailed and thorough investigation.

Florenskiy took up the principle of anti-nomianism as one of the basic principles of his philosophy. Khlebnikov came up with the idea of binary opposites, thus influencing the theory of phonology developed by Roman Jakobson, who used the concept of 'binary features'. We speak

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[196] Just as Marcel Duchamp signed a reproduction of La Gioconda adorned with a long moustache. TORRE: 1965, p. 329.
[197] ELIADE: 1959, p. 101.
[198] HANSEN-LËVE: 1993, p. 9 – 39.

here about binary opposites, the principle of contrast between two mutually exclusive terms: up/down, left/right, on/off, etc. [199]

Solivetti, writing about Khlebnikov's researches into language, calls Khlebnikov's experiments with binary opposites a special Pythagorean table of opposites representing the pattern of the rhythm of space, time, history, language and poetry and **coinciding with the notion of a carnival** as an inversion of two different elements of a system (including two contradictory poles of existence).[200] Khlebnikov himself discovered in words and numbers the ancient Slavic belief in "the even-odd" (we have already given an example of *dvoryan/tvoryan*).

How did those beliefs in binary opposites come to the avant-garde? Khlebnikov and Florenskiy must have found them while studying Slavic and other related mythologies and folklores, or through ancient Greece sources. However, this belief is also typical of the Far East and could have entered the avant-garde consciousness from that side. In the East, knowledge connected to the augural sciences is part of official culture and philosophy, especially the book of the *I Ching* in China, and in those countries which accepted Taoism.[201]

2.4. Chaos

2.4.1. The Avant-garde Writers and "Chaotic" States of Spirit

The avant-garde writer consciously induced a state of chaos. They created this chaos on various levels - by means of linguistic games whose aim was to destroy communication, through automatic writing in which they destroyed the text; in performances where they provoked the audience with their personal behavior, and so on. A great event of that type was the Futurist opera *Victory over the Sun,* first performed in St. Petersburg in 1913, when the audience reacted violently to the chaos created by Mikhail Matyushin's music and Aleksey Kruchënykh's nonsensical text.

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[199] This concept has been extended to anthropology by Claude Lévi-Strauss (in such oppositions as nature/culture, raw/cooked, inedible/edible), and to narratology by A. J. Greimas.
[200] Solivetti: 1985, p. 223 – 235.
[201] The first translation of the *I Ching* into Latin is considered to have been done for the European audience by Nikola Trigo (1577-1628), but this translation was lost. In the 19th century, Richard Wilhelm's translation into German, considered bad and literal, contributed to the popularity of this book in Europe. However, Khlebnikov could not have read it in Russian, as the first translation into Russian was done in 1935 (prev. Щискй, Ю).

The Dadaists, from the Cabaret Voltaire to their Parisian performances, often had the same aim – to create chaos which would provoke the public. When the public got used to them and stopped being provoked, their performances lost any sense.

We will try to explain this need and the purpose of the creation of chaos.

Mirche Eliade wrote many pages explaining that basic need of primitive and ancient societies to protect themselves from chaos and to restore the sate of chaos, which depended on actual condition. Eliade compares the sate of *chaos* with *cosmos*. By speaking about this he explains some basic features of religious experiences.

Every existential crisis brings once again the question of the world and the presence of man in the world. Religious experience is always a totality, and for all primitive mankind, it is religious experience which lays the foundations of the World. It is ritual orientation, with the structures of sacred space which it reveals, that transforms "Chaos" into the "Cosmos" and, therefore, renders human existence possible, it saves form the danger of foundering in the 'Chaos' of total relativity, where no 'Center' emerges to ensure orientation.[202]

Here it is important to point out that Eliade shows that each "relative state", "without a center" which would provide orientation, represents the state of chaos for man. What can writers, who were creating at the time of general relativization, say about this? Some of them endeavoured to support the state of chaos by deepening it, often without conscious knowledge of why they were doing so, while others tried to rearrange that chaos and create a new world with new spatial and temporal relations. During the avant-garde period many quasi-religious, individual or group systems came into being, which Eliade considered to be practically impossible. He sees the importance of religion in, among other things, uniting man with the universal and the general and thus elevating him beyond his individuality.[203]

The avant-garde writers wished to find religious and mythological systems which would be universal and imply a particular sense of the Absolute (Khlebnikov, Malevich, Kharms, Crnjanski and others). On the other hand, many avant-garde predecessors, like the avant-garde writers and artists themselves, led themselves into the state of *chaos*, the destruction of their own personality or morality (or some other destruction) through a need to cause a return to the state of creation, a state of creativity. This is a profoundly mythical way of behavior, which reflects nostalgia or the

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[202] ELIADE: 1970, p. 19.
[203] Ibid, p. 20.

recollection of an Earthly paradise, an experimental eternity that man believes to be available to him. Many of those ways of behaviour are connected to, as we have already mentioned, lunar symbolism, rituals having to do with periodic destruction and renewal, familiar to man since time immemorial. Those phenomena **actualize the mythical chaos anteceding the creation of the world, thus making the repetition of the act of creation possible**. In that ritual man goes through regression attitude, chaotic attitude, night attitude, etc., in order that he can be reborn in his daily form. What can be also connected to this is the interest of avant-garde painters like Paul Klee, Pavel Filonov in Russia, and later the Surrealists, in the art of the insane and young children.

The painters who hinted at the appearance of the avant-garde, such as Paul Gauguin and Vincent Van Gogh, led themselves into a state of "chaos" (let us term this state in that way) in order to feel the essence of creation and life in this manner.[204] Here on an individual level we can trace a phenomenon Eliade described in his works, that of the return to the state of chaos is "equivalent to the preparation for a new *Creation*".[205]

The word '"chaos" was widely used in the Yugoslav avant-garde by both artists and critics. For instance, Sima Pandurović, who himself was a poet, wrote that "chaotic time of the war" even afterward him brought about the appearance of the "impossible" in avant-garde literature. He drew a parallel between socio-political and literary currents in all times and with all peoples. "The *chaos* reigning on the battlefields during the war was transferred to social life, especially literature, after the war."[206] The appearance of the avant-garde was conditioned by the internal development of art itself, at least in larger milieus, but this socio-political explanation of the avant-garde coming into existence is also acceptable, especially for the areas affected by the First World War.

Stanislav Vinaver, in his antology of poems *The Town of Evil Wizards*, mentions that the avant-garde chaos is a release from chaos: "The frightened will fly towards chaos and, in horror, will feel there is no chaos any more."[207]

The same writer wrote in the preface of the book *Journey through Chaos* (Put kroz haos)[208] about the procedure used by Expressionist artists, which by its description, reminds us of shamanic trances or sojourns in some surreal worlds; the feeling seizing them he terms a "great

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[204] About this in: Exibition Review: *Gauguin – Tahiti: l'atelier des tropiques*, by Patricia Boccardoro, Paris, 22, December, 2003.
[205] ELIADE: 1970, p. 79.
[206] TEŠIĆ: 1991, p.78.
[207] TEŠIĆ: 2001, p. 31.
[208] Ibid.

insanity". Vinaver had also experienced that chaos could be a great release from the manacles and vices subduing art, in order that it might develop freely.

In his article *In the Atmosphere of Miracleus* (U atmosferi čudesa) Boško Tokin experiences the procedure of Kandinsky's artistic analysis as an analysis of chaos that brings up the notion of construction.[209]

Alongside chaos, Mircea Eliade also mentions atrocious phenomena such as cannibalism, a phenomenon also described in the works of some avant-garde writers: in the collection *Revelation* (Otkrovenje, 1922) of R. Petrović (this collection was named after a Christian notion, but means the revealing the world of savagery).[210] Cannibals are also mentioned by Micić, in *Airplane without an Engine* (Aeroplan bez motora, 1922) who sees them around himself, also mentioning ''cannibal states''- meaning Western European ones.[211]

2.4.2. Collective Rituals Following the State of Chaos

In the chapter headed *Time*, we highlighted the topics we mean to speak about here. We identified the avant-garde period within European art and civilizationas a cycle within the *Great Year*. We said that the *Great Year* behaved to a year as as year to a month or a day, so that the avant-garde shows on the macro plane the same semioticism as those rituals on time micro plane.

In the ancient past, and even later, in many cultures until the present time, carnivals and festivities were performed in *sacral time* by archaic people. Eliade writes that in some festivities it can be felt that profane time has disappeared and that a "new time" has started (again, a favourite expression of the avant-garde writers).[212] In other words, periodical festivities close a cycle and start the renewal of time.[213] The end and beginning of a year were times when rituals occurred, which, when compared to the behaviour of the avant-garde writers, show interesting similarities.

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[209] Ibid, p. 67str.
[210] Rastko, Petrović, published by S.B. Cvijanović, Beograd, 1922.
[211] TEŠIĆ: 2001, p. 125.
[212] Eliade quotes: Hubert. H., Mauss., M: *La représentation du temps dans la religion et la magie,* Mélanges d'historie des religions, 1909, s. 190-229.
[213] Briefly about this in: ELIADE: 1959, p. 340 – 341. Here Eliade quotes works of Frazer, Wensinck, and Dumézil; the bibliography gives other sources. Eliade specifically wrote about ritual schemes which announced the end of the old year and the beginning of a new one in his work *Le Mythe de l'éternel retour.* The works of Russian semioticians, especially V.V. Ivanov and V. N. Toporov on Slavic mythologies prove conclusions made by Mircea Eliade. See for example: *Slavyanskaya mifologiya: entsiklopedicheskiy slovar'.* Moskva: Ellis Lak, 1995.

The following rituals were performed in archaic and primitive cultures: 1. cleansing, renunciation of sin, exorcism of demons, banishing evil from a village, discarding everything evil from the past; 2. extinguishing and rekindling a hearth, by processes of fire, etc; 3. processes with masks (masks represent the souls of the dead), a ritual of meeting the dead which peasants serve and then escort to a lake, river etc; 4. a clash between two enemy groups; 5. at the end of festivities, carnivals, or saturnalias, the inversion of usual order, and orgies.

It is very significant that we can identify the procedures used by the avant-garde writers, both in written text and public life, with the following procedures:

1. Renunciation of the past, tradition, everything that was bad and old-fashioned;

2. Proclamation of the end of literature, culture and art; the Italian and Russian Futurists wished to burn down libraries and pull down museums (unfortunately, the fires of Nazism and Bolshevism actually burned the European cultural heritage)

3. Both Futurists and Dadaists disguised themselves during various events and happenings, but also in their private life (this behaviour also conceals a need to change identity, to be *someone else*).

4. The constant struggle of opposing teams - Hugo Ball and Tristan Tzara, Malevich and Tatlin, or groups constantly changing and renouncing one another - Futurists renounced Cubists, Suprematists renounced Cubists, Zenitists renounced all of them, Surrealists renounced all of them, etc;

5. Their declarations were quite contrary to what might be considered cultural and decent, and they did everything erroneously. They shocked the audience, used unconventional language, drew without any form, and proclaimed and practised different sexual freedoms.

Of course, as Eliade says, the scenario of the end of a period of time never involves all of these rituals. Fire, masks and everything we have talked about all represent a return to the cosmic night in which all forms have lost their outlines and merge together. They also signify the breaching of all boundaries and filling them with a mixture of all modalities. That time is as if between two cosmoses. In that paradoxical time between two times **comes to an encounter of the forms which have already been realized and those being in the stage of formation, the stage Eliade calls** *larval*.[214] He also describes that all forms merge in darkness and chaos at the time of the

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[214] ELIADE: 1959, p. 341.

liquidation of the old year, thus enabling, without making any effort, some automatic *coincidencia oppositorum* (union of opposites) on all levels. **Many phenomena in the avant-garde were possible only because it came into existence "in the period between".** The avant-garde was a bond of opposites not only on the level of poetics, but also on a much wider scale.

2.5. The Myth of the Fight against the Sun

In Futurist opera *Victory over the Sun*, first performed in St. Petersburg in 1913, the sun represents not only the recent past, and the art of the Symbolists, but also the past of mythology and religion. The sun, symbol of masculine principle, symbol of ego, father, rational thinking was also locked, it had a funeral (then, perhaps contrary to expectations, one character of the opera appears - *The Traveller in Time*, to declare that the future is masculine).

This opera is a collective work of Russian avant-garde artists who were interested in the fourth dimension, there is an obvious influence of P. Uspenskiy and Hinton. The opera can be seen as an artistic manifesto, pointed against old sense and logic, old art and its language, and the old order in general.

With the lithography exhibition on *Victory over the Sun* held in Hannover in 1923, El Lisitskiy tried to understand and show the Futurist opera as a celebration of man's technological capabilities. The act of overthrowing the sun he understood as the expression of replacing the old world energy by a technologicaly superior energy source, created by the new man.

The deposing of the Sun was a significant act for avant-garde mythology. It also fits in with other avant-garde art products. Malevich, in one of his earlier texts *Kor re rezh...* (1915)[215] writes at the end that the Era of new beginning, in which there is neither the Sun nor stars, neither light nor paradise, had begun. The oprea sholud be read in the context of these statesments – if celestial bodies represent some co-ordinate points of each mythology, their deposition can represent the beginning of a new onthology, proclaimed by man.

What is harder to explain in the opera is Kruchenykh's statement that the "masculine" world is coming. Hansen-Löve writes that in the domain of cosmic symbols, the antisymbolism and anti-apocalypticism of the Futurist is revealed: entire structures of cosmogonical and teurgical

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[215] MALEVICH: (around 1915), 1978, p. 27-31.

symbolism were exposed to humiliation.[216] *Victory over the Sun* was a victory over eshatology and apocalypse. Hansen-Lëve quotes lyrics which ilustrate victory over the Moon, and that represents also victory over lyricism and feminism in Symbolist poetics. It is well known that in the second phase of Russian Symbolism, in the poetry of Blok, Bely and Ivanov, complementarity of the Sun and the Moon (*coniunctio solis et lunae*), and myth about the conjunction of feminine and musculine principles, dominated.[217]

For mythical thinking, the diference between the Sun and the Moon lies in the fact that the Sun is always the same, that there is no development, while the Moon succumbes to general rules of birth, development and death. The Moon is therefore like man. In the chapter *Time* we spoke in details about lunar symbolism, clearly represented in the time of the avant-garde.

The revival of lunar symbolics and representation of *the fight against the sun* can appoint the change, or maybe the fight between two opposite cosmic principles.

2.5.1 The Sunfight Myth in Khlebnikov and Works of Zenitists

Khlebnikov`s super-tale *Otter's Children* (Deti Vydry, 1911-1913) works on one known myth of the fight against the sun. In the first part, the Son of Otter has the role of cultural hero which places him into a fight against three Suns. After killing two of them, one Sun remains and the new order starts. Those three suns Khlebnikov describes as: "One larger sun and one smaller one – a red one with blue circles shining and the third one – black in a green crown." [218]

It is obvious that this is about the struggle of a hero against celestial bodies, which provides characteristics of cosmogonial myth. In the fifth and the sixth part of the *super-tale,* the poet equates himself with the hero, which makes Khlebnikov`s lyrical subject the creator and also the destroyer of history, as he takes over the divine role. We can add that there are also other religions which feature multiple Suns. In one Mexican myth there are five Suns, each of them representing one rulling era. According to this mythology, we now live in the fifth Sun, the Sun of Fire (others

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[216] HANSEN-LËVE: 1993, p. 16-17.
[217] Ibid.
[218] KHLEBNIKOV: 2001, Vol. 2., p. 63. „Odnoe beloe solntse, drugoe men'shee, - krasnoe s sinevatym siyaniem krugom i tret'e – chernoe v zelenom venke."

were Suns of Tiger, Wind, Rain and Water). All those Eras, also called *Suns*, ended with cataclysm, and according to that mythology – so will this one.[219]

Henryk Baran, in trying to reconstruct Khlebnikov`s mytholgy, describes in detail Khlebnikov`s sun fighting myth.[220] According to Baran, Khlebnikov could have known about the myth of a fight against three Suns that appeared among the people of lower Amur in Asia.[221] Later on in Khlebnikov`s works, this motif of the romantic hero fighting against the Sun changes (after 1915). Baran writes about the transformation of the sunfighting myth into one of earth-fighting in Khlebnikov, which comes as a contribution to the thesis that avant-garde reflects a fight between musculine and feminine.[222]

The sunfighting myth appears in Khlebnikov even in the lyrical *Plamëna* (1912). The same sunfighting subject appears at Mayakovskiy in the work: *Vladimir Mayakovskiy. A Tragedy* (Vladimir Mayakovskiy. Tragediya, 1913) where the lyrical subject stands against the Sun. Mayakovskiy also wrote in *Me and Napoleon* (Ya i Napoleon, 1915) the line: "I take the sun and kill it!"[223]

The same motive – the killing, deposing, or death of the Sun – we can also meet in other European avant-gardes. Stanislav Vinaver, at the end of the *Manifesto of the Expressionist School*, rejects each fear of changes which bring the revolution of spirit, for him it is sufficient to be afraid and to stop someone in that revolution because "the old Sun died".[224] Micić, Goll and Tokin in *The Manifesto of Zenitism*[225] have lines in which man is raising to *Zenit*, where he flies up, overcomes gravity, reaches the Sun and kills it. Further they write: "Stop the fall of the Man. That is our greatest work. That is the vertical line which will stab the vaults of heaven. **The Solar blood will flow - solar blood**".[226]

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[219]See the chepter *Sun* in: CHEVALIER: 1982.

[220] BARAN: 2002, p. 50.

[221] Ibid.

[222] BARAN: 2002, p. 67.

[223] MAYAKOVSKIY: 1915. „Voz'mu i ub'yu solntse!" Verses download in May, 2008 from: http://www.stihi-rus.ru/1/Mayakovskiy/59.htm

[224] TEŠIĆ: 2001, p. 36

[225] Ibid, p. 119.

[226] "Zustavite padanje Čoveka. To je naše najveće delo. To je okomita linija koja će probosti nebeske svodove. **Poteći će sunčana krv**." (the Zenitists themselves underlined those words).

However, in the lines of poem *The Work of Zenitism* (Delo zenitizma) the Zenitists say that: "the Zenitist projects Man and Life on the Sun". [227] Man will be on the Sun, says this Zenitistic vision.

A brief resume of the new cosmogony of the avant-garde appears like this: man comes to the place where in ancient religions gigantic gods and heroes were positioned, those who embody life strenght and light (represented by: Atum, Osiris, Baal, Mithras, Helios, Apollon). Also, one more element appears – lunar symbolism revives, which marks the strenghtening of feminine principle.

2.5.2. The Sun and the Fire

When describing Khlebnikov's individual mythologies Baran followed Roman Jakobson's method used in the essay *The Statue in Pushkin's Poetic Mythology*[228]. Jakobson's method understands the finding of a strong semanthic layer presented as *invariant*, although it passes through different transformations. Baran rightfully considers *the Sun* and *the Fire* as elements of the same paradigmatic order. He finds, in Khlebnikov's sunfighting myth, the moment of the death of the main hero important. He calls it the **fiery death of lyrical subject**, for which the hero voluneers. [229] Baran analyzes *Otter's Children*, *Plamëna* and the prose work *Enya Voeykov*. The motive of death through fire, given in the example of Giordano Bruno, fascinated Khlebnikov in a positive sense; additionally, the figure of Jan Hus appears in the second part of *Otter's Children*. This unusual prose text, which mixes different narative forms, begins with lines talking about man's struggle *against eyesight*. Examples of such liberation of eyesight and relying on inner sight are provided.

The self-immolation in the lines of *I went one boys* ...(Ya vyshel yunoshey odin , 1922) is reminiscent of the act of shamanic initiation, in which the person of the shaman becomes one with images and energies in the world around him. That is how Khlebnikov's lyrical subject overcomes the state of seperation between spirit and world:

Khlebnikov's field was burning,

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[227] TEŠIĆ: 2001, p. 122. „Zenitista projicira Čoveka i Život na Sunce."
[228] JAKOBSON: 1987, p. 318.
[229] BARAN: ibid, p. 55.

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And the fiery I was burning in darkness.

Now I depart,

With burnt hair,

And instead of I

There was - We.[230]

Eliade describes fire as the element through which the shaman hardens or tempts man through great spiritual and mystical intentions. Khlebnikov himself understood the symbolism of fire in that way. In the narative text *Lubni - a kind of deaf city* ... (Lubny – sveobraznyy glukhoy gorod, 1912-1913), the subject of fire is mixed with the image of fire and the sounds of trumpets and much else that recalls imagery of Judgement Day and the Apocalypse:

"Those trumpets do not know you with all your personal passions but they know people and coil themselves round their will, like snakes, and fling them over the fire in the name of victory."[231]

In the end Khlebnikov introduces the return of the *fiery mankind* – mankind hardenend in fire is another example of, in a certain measure, the transformative myth of Prometheus. A remarkable example of the *self-burning of books* also exists in Khlebnikov's other works. In the poem *Aza from the Bond...* (Азы из Узы, 1919-20-22) the first part, entitled *A Single Book* (Edinaya kniga), actors appear as the holy texts of world religions, preparing themselves for the funeral pyre and announcing the coming of *The Only Book*. The self-burning of books in this poem also announces the coming of the new and more universal religion:

"I saw that black Vedas,

Koran and the Gospel,

Books of Mongols

From the ashes of the steppes,

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[230] KHLEBNIKOV: 2001, Vol. 1., p. 447. „Gorelo Khlebnikova pole, / I ognennoe Ya pylalo v temnote. / Teper' ya ukhozhu, / Zazhegshi volosami, / I vmesto Ya / Stoyalo – My!"
[231] Ibid, Prose, p. 48. "Eti truby ne znayut vas, s vashimi lichnymi strastyami, no oni znayut lyud i gnut ego volyu, kak zmeyu, i brosayut dlya pobedy nad ognem."

(...)

Lay down fire

And lie down on it --

White's widow in a cloud of smoke hiding,

To speed up the arrival

of The Only Book ." [232]

2.5.3. Fire in the Serbian Avant-garde

In *The Town of Evil Wizards*, Vinaver sings about the self-immolation of the spirit persecuting the evil wizards, who are avant-gardists, wizards and aliens:

"And looking into endless fire

He sees that Small town

of evil Wizards does not burn

but his very own wings."[233]

The Zenitist Micić, in the poem *We are the Kids of Flame and Fire* (Mi smo deca požara i vatre) has lines which in the spirit of Biblical rhetoric announces the coming of a new age: "We bring firesticks with our wounds"; "We bring fire and we are sowing flame", "We are burning the Old for the New to be born: / great and strong New resurrection." [234] These lines,through their Biblical imagery, announces a new salvation.

In *The Manifesto of Zenitism* Micić, Goll and Tokin call themselves "the kids of fire and flame."[235]

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[232] KHLEBNIKOV: 2001, Vol. 2., p. 306. „Ya videl, chto chernye Vedy, / Koran i Evangelie, / Knigi mongolov /
Iz prakha stepey, / (...) / Slozhili koster / I sami legli na nego – / Belye vodovy v oblako dyma skrivalis', / Chtoby uskorit' prikhod / Knigi edinoy."
[233] TEŠIĆ: 2001, p. 31. "I gledajući u beskrajan požar / on vidi da to ne gori / varoš zlih Volšebnika / već njegova sopstvena krila."
[234] Ibid, p. 117. „Mi nosimo baklje sa ranam našim"; „Mi nosimo požar i sejemo vatru"; „Mi palimo Staro da se
rodi Novo: / veliko i silno Novo vaskrsenje".
[235] Ibid, p. 117. „Deca požara i vatre."

To conclude – in the mythical world of the avant-garde, as it is in many other myths and mythologies – the old spirit of time will be overcome only when it burns in flame. The highest purification almost always happens through fire.

2.6. The Myth of the Noble Savage

As fas as we know this myth has been present in Europe since the time of the Enlightenment, changing forms during Romanticism, the avant-garde and again later during the 20th century. The very expression *Noble Savage* is an oxymoron, its meaning is very similar to the neologism *barbarogenius* (Serb: barbarogenije; *barbarian* + *genial)* created by the Zenitist Ljubomir Micić.

The life of natural man is very relevant to certain forms of the avant-garde, manifesting itself in its primitivism, as celebrated by Russian artists like Larionov, Malevich and Kandinsky, who had their own phase of primitivism; Gauguin and the Fauvists in the West; the Cubists and Expressionists; Rastko Petrović and the Zenitists in Yugoslavia etc. This myth also influenced Baudelaire's understanding of language.

For avant-garde art and philosophy of that time, the turn to primitivism and interest in a primitive way of life meant the restoration of contact with nature and the revival of its senses. In European mythology, the Noble Savage was the man of nature who lived according to the dictates of natural law, thought according to natural reason, and understood God and creation by means of natural religion. The savage was a primitive man, remote from Europe in either the most ancient past or the New World or Africa, even in India during the nineteenth century. This concept became popular among philosophers of the Enlightenment who sought a sort of universality of all humankinds which they understood as "human nature". For Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), the Noble Savage possessed something of "natural reason" and this was why the concept matched well with the philosophy of the Enlightenment.

In literture, the Noble Svage appears to be as an idealized creature which does not need anything else except that what he acquires himself, without work. By being so completely "natural" he is rather different from those who are "social". Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau each

referred to this subject, for the most part on the basis of reports by travellers. Rudyard Kipling's Mowgli (from the *Jungle Book*) is one notable representative of this fabled character.[236]

This mythical archetype played a significant and important role in Germany at the turn of the 18th century, at the time when the ***oriental renaissance*** began to flourish, as it was called by Raymond Schwab.[237] All of this in a certan way influenced the development of the avant-garde.[238]

2.6.1. The Return to Paganism

At the beginning of this paper, we mentioned that the time of the avant-garde could be observed as a return to paganism, that is, the period before the receiving of Christianity. In the works of some avant-garde writers the myth of the Noble Savage blends with that of the pagan world - in the works of writers of Slavic origin it becomes part of the ancient Slavs.

Billington, who took as a landmark of the Russian period between the two world wars the idea of *Sensualism*, wrote about the awakening of paganism and the need of Russian authors to find a way towards the ancient mythology of pre-Christian gods, and locates this in the work of Igor Stravinsky, Balmont, Khlebnikov, Mayakovskiy and others.[239]

The return to paganism and the myth of the Noble Savage reflect, in the mythical feeling of the world, an omnipresent *nostalgia for paradise*. This is also reflected at the level of literary genres. Khlebnikov, for example, wrote *bucolics*, by means of which he attempted to express a need for the poetic realization of an ideal world, the world of nature, forests and groves, a world repeating the beauties of life in paradise – in the poems *Shaman and Venus* (Shaman i Venera), *Nymph and Savage* (Vila i leshiy) and *Countryside Friendship* (Sel'skaya druzhba) – it connects Khlebnikov, at least according to the themes of that genre, to the bucolic tradition, a poetic style

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[236]For literature about this: Rousseau, Jean-Jacques: *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*. Translated by Maurice Cranston. Harmondsworth, U.K., 1985; Boas, Georgie: *Essays on Primitivism and Related Ideas in the Middle Ages*. Baltimore, 1948; Fairchild, Hoxie Neale: *The Noble Savage: A Study in Romantic Naturalism*. New York, 1928.

[237] SCHWAB: 1984.

[238] Rousseau's myth of *l'homme de la nature et de la verite* significantly influenced the development of linguistics in the 19th century, according to Jakobson in his lectures from the year 1934, *The Formalistic School and Today's Russian Literary Science* (Formalistická škola a dnešní literární věda ruská, Academia, Praha, 2005).

[239]BILLINGTON: 1968, p. 492.

cherished by the Hellenistic poets Theocritos (3rd-2nd century BC), the Roman poet Virgil (1st century BC) and others.[240]

2.6.2. Khlebnikov on the Ancient Slavs

In Khlebnikov's works there often appear Slavic deities and historical characters from the Russian past. Khlebnikov knew Slavic mythology and deities from the time of Kievan Rus. In his drama *Snezhimochka* (1908) appear various forest creatures drawn from Slavic mythology, testifying to a deep feeling and great knowledge of Slavic mythology on the part of Khlebnikov, although that mythology had not been much studied before him. It may have been a product of his travels through Russia and Ukraine, as the pagan Russia was still alive at the time. In his drama *Deviyi-bog* (Девий-Бог, 1912) Khlebnikov tried to portray pagan priests, temples and the cult objects of the Western Slavs.

Baran considers that what is characteristic of the early Khlebnikov is his creation of opposite pairs, that is, *antithetic constructions* [241], showing examples of this in an early work, the poem *Mariya Vechora* in which Khlebnikov opposes the Slavic and German traditions with the character of a woman (as Khlebnikov believed) of Slavic origin. Ancient Slavic myths are menitoned in the dialogue *Teacher and Pupil*; in *Otters's Children* there appear a series of figures from the Slavic past.

As Baran noticed, this creation of opposites within the framework of time and spatial dimensions enables Khlebnikov to idealize the Slavic past and to contrast it with the modern period, which is depicted as ironic and negative. The mythological time of the ancient Slavs was *illud tempus*, that is, a kind of sacral time. This time was inhabited by heroes as protectors of the tradition and the whole Slavic world. The protectors (Russian: zashchitniki) of a real historical character, given as mythical, are Razin, Pugachov and Lomonosov.

2.6.3. The Slavic *illud tempus* of Rastko Petrović

Many avant-gardists and their predecessors were interested in the "wild" worlds of Africa or the "exotic" worlds of the Orient, but few of them had been in those regions - as for as travels

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[240] BARAN: 2002, p. 239.
[241] Ibid, p. 35.

go, Arthur Rimbaud and Andre Gide were the exceptions in the French milieu. Rastko Petrović, as a great traveller, managed to actually do it.

In the French milieu, where Rastko Petrović was educated in the 1920s, negrophilia was in fashion. This provoked the writer to travel through Africa in order to find the Savage who had attracted him so much. That journey was for him a return to mythical time, a return to habits and people living in oneness with nature with free senses.

This journey can be surely linked to his idealization of the life of the ancient Slavs – the theme he devoted his entire life to. The African experience in combination with the pagan life of ancient Slavs led to one of the greatest scandals in the Serbian newspapers between the two world wars, commented on by the patriarch himself. This happened in 1922 when Petrović published his poem *The Monument to Roads* (Spomenik putevima)[242] in which, in a stressed naturalistic way, he portrayed a fetish from sculptural black art, which could easily be connected to Christ.

Petrović's understanding of poetic language is also deeply connected to his enthusiasm for the natural man who lived a social and collective life, smelling of freshness and vitality.

Rastko Petrović divided the life of the ancient Slavs into the periods prior to and after receiving Christianity. A Slav who lived prior to Christianity, some pre-Slavic type, was his Noble Savage. That his Slav was *happy* because he was not persecuted by anyone, was not imposed on by any restrictions, flowed from his free savage nature. The space and time of Petrović's Savage lived in reminds us very much of the description of the prehistoric state, the one Eliade sees as the age of Uranus in ancient mythology, when everything was possible; the time when there was no difference between good and the evil; the time when it was possible to commit murder, incest, bacchanalia - all of those things were only manifestations of life. In Rastko Petrović's works, the receiving of Christianity is often identified with exile from the Garden of Eden. What attracts special attention is Petrović's frequent setting of Slavic gods within the Christian framework, thus trying to also portray Christianity as merry, materialistic and hedonistic; in other words, as a kind of epicureanism. Each of these things is contained in his essays, poetry and, to a great extent, the avant-garde novel *The Burlesque of Mister Perun, the Thunder God.*

It is how he created the Slavic Arcadia, which also contains certain elements of racial ideology (the concept of "the spirit of a race" is insufficiently and clearly formulated). The life of

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[242] In: Putevi, No. 1, 1922. Rastko wrote two commenatries as an answer to this scandal. One was a letter published in: Samouprava, 26. 2. 1922; the other in: Putevi, No. 2, 1922.

the ancient Slavs is linked to pastoral life: a Slav is peaceful to the point of servile obedience, but also anarchical, living in small tribes which had united under great diffilculty; he reared sheep and oxen, drank mead, and liked to play and sing. What could have contributed to creating this image was the folk poetry Petrović studied. Otherwise, it is not clear at all who the Slavs were - sometimes the writer would say that those were South Slavs or Serbs, but often Slavs in general.[243]

Rastko Petrović further thought that Slavs could not understand Christianity, particularly its apocalypticism, he claimed in his essay *Popular Word and the Genius of Christianity* (Narodna reč i genije hrišćanstva).[244] He stated that they also could not understand "the suffering of Calvary" or "Original Sin" – probably those who themselves lived in a constant Arcadian state could not understand the certainty of "Fall" and "Sin".

Rastko Petrović was enthralled by the bodies of Africans of both sexes. His photography from Africa demonstrates aspects of voyeurism. In his photos, the body is in the foreground, uniquely without background, and authentic - in complete harmony with the poetics of the avant-garde. His obsession with the body did not always have to do with Africa but also appeared in stories dealing with Christianity. Two stories are of special importance here: *The Hermit and "Medenica"* (*Pustinjak i medenica*)[245] and *The Tale of Father Pantalaimon from his Youth* (*Priča oca Pantelejmona iz mladosti*).[246] The first story contrasts a polytheistic Epicureanism with Christian asceticism. Asceticism is seen ambiguously - as coming to one's senses or losing one's vitality. In his anthology of lyrical poetry, *Revalations* (Otkrovenjima), the very anthology which caused a scandal in society and even described some parts of human body in an obscene manner, particularly the hips and the belly, Petrović uses many images of dancing bodies in a trance state or being present at one's own birth, etc. There are even verses in which he describes the physiological functions of the body in a carnivalesque way: "And that gorgeous transformation of food, / And that captivating belly which his a machine."[247]

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[243] JANJIĆ: 1989, p. 342.
[244] PETROVIĆ: 1972, p. 290 – 329.
[245] Published in: SKG [Srpski književni glasnik], 1921, No. 8, p. 578-588.
[246] Published in: Misao, 1923, p. 87-88.
[247] In: TEŠIĆ: 2001, p. 82 – 107. " I to divno preobraženje hrane, / I taj zanosni trbuh što je mašina".

2.6.4. Tokin on the Slavs

There are also different routes along the turn to Slavism. Boško Tokin was one of the Zenitists who glorified the Slavic spirit, but more as part of an artistic or political programme, and like Petrović, he dealt with ethnopsychology or mythology. Tokin's attitude to Slavism was similar to the one held by other Zenitists and Micić himself; in other words, this atttitude was within the framework of Orthodox elitism and Serbian nationalism. His paper *The Expressionism of the Yugoslavs* (Ekspresionizam Jugoslovena) is nationalistic, speaking openly against Europe and affirmatevely about Russia and the United States, representing a combination of Cosmism and Slavism.[248] He states that just as people were looking for God, so did the Slavs discover themselves (the Serbs and various Zenitists went through the same process). Tokin glorifies the return to oneself and one's own roots. In the Slavs he saw a synthesis of the East and the West. He called the Zenitists "cosmics", whereas the road to Cosmism led across Slavism.[249]

2.6.5. Micić's *Barbarogenius*

Barbarogenius is an oxymoron by means of which the support of barbarism and the opposition to Europe and European civilization are expressed. It is one of the basic concepts of Zenitism, the original Yugoslav movement accepted by Boško Tokin, Ivan Goll, Stanislav Vinaver (at one stage), and whose creator was Ljubomir Micić.

The main landmark which went hand in hand with the notion of *barbarogenius* is that of the *decivilizator.* In the magazine *Zenit*, Tokin published his explanation of the notion barbarian: "To be a barbarian means beginning, possibility, creation (Nietzche, Whitman, Dostoyevsky are barbarians since they signify the beginning)."[250] And: "We advocate new and pure barbarism," wrote Micić in his *Zenitosophy (Zenitozofija).*[251]

Barbarogenius is a decivilizator, as he wants to destroy Europe and to create a new man and a new order. He is against European civilization, just as his friend and fellow-traveller the Zenitist, who set himself the task of reaching for the heavens and the sun at its zenith. Micić's

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[248] See this paper in: TEŠIĆ, 2001, p. 62.
[249] Ibid, p. 63.
[250] TEŠIĆ: 2001, p. 120. „Biti barbar znači: početak, mogućnost, stvaranje. / (Niče, Vitmen, Dostojevski barbari su, jer su počeci.)"
[251] Ibid, p. 127. „Mi ispovedamo novo i čisto varvarstvo."

barbarogenius is not a real Noble Savage, but has certain common characteristics – he behaves wildly, arrogantly and haughtily; his basic instincts function but, unlike the classical Noble Savage, this one is filled with hatred as he despises Europe. Europe is the area he should knock down or, possibly, fertilize, later to expand to all continets. Futhermore, he is not a classical "savage" because he flies on a plane and gets carried away with the cutting-edge of technique and electricity. He is also not very happy with life in the wilderness and nature because he aspires to a "zenith", a peak, a sublime ecstasy of spirit, a state impossible of being reached by a simple barbarian without being a Shaman or *a chosen one* in some way. In essence Micić's barbarogenius is the chosen one. The following verses illustrate well that barbarogenius but also the avant-garde man who sets himself between the two fields of contemporary science and myth:

"Barbarian scrambled eggs
Here the barbarogenius comes
Crazy zenitist barbarogenius
Barbarogenius: a wonderful picture and opportunity of a turbulent thought
Barbarogenius: a rescuing pilot of barbarian *idea*planes"[252]

Micić does not accept the return of primitivism as carried out by the Western avant-garde, because in the background of its behaviour there lies the same European culture it destoys. He supports instead the unconscious, congenital (inborn) primitivism, elementary creation made by a naive savage.

Barbarogenius has another form, which in essence the same. After separating from Micić, Tokin created his own concept of barbarogenius. In the text *My Zenith* (Moj zenit) he wrote his manifesto, in which he states: "The core of my manifesto is barbarism (dynamism)".[253] Barbarism and dynamism are often synonymous – the drawing of inspiration from Italian Futurism is evident, which is characteristic of Zenitism in general. For him barbarism meant a beginning, a basis of initiality in the mythological sense and also something elementary.

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[252] Ibid, p. 124. „*Varvarsku kajganu* /Ide barbarogenije /Ludi zenitista barbarogenije / Barbarogenije: divna slika i prilika burne pomisli /Barbarogenije: spasonosni pilot varvarskih *idea*plana . (Typed in bold by Ljubomir Micić.)
[253] Ibid, p. 64. „Jezgro mog manifesta je barbarstvo (dinamizam)."

2.7. Nostalgia for Paradise

One of the most basic and universal feelings in art arises from the universal *paradisiac myth*. This myth is widely spread and present, although often in degraded form. It has many different forms and characters, however, only those that came to be expressed in a manner that we consider significant to the time of the avant-garde will be quoted here. The avant-garde artist has a need to poses certain *specific marks*, much the same as the men of the paradisiac epoch; he also demonstrates a certain amount of *nostalgia for paradise*.

2.7.1. Characteristics of the Paradisiac Condition

Mircea Eliade, in his work *Myths, Dreams & Mysteries*, quotes the paradisiac myth. In the time of paradisiac life men knew nothing about death. The supreme paradisiac element is immortality. Eliade enumerates the **specific marks of the men of the paradisiac epoch**: "immortality, spontaneity, freedom; the possibility to ascension into Haven and *easily meeting* with the gods; friendship with the animals and knowledge of their language".[254] These freedoms and abilities have been lost as a result of an event which was also primordial, that is the "fall" of man – "it happened as an ontological mutation (change) of man's condition, as well as a cosmic schism."[255] The return to this state in archaic religions is possible only for the shaman because he: knows the secret language of animals; can play the drums and dance; is capable to reach states of ecstatic trance (real and simulated) in which the soul abandons body.

There are several important moments when the shaman is preparing for trance, and among these is the usage of a secret language; sometimes he imitates animal sounds, especially those of birds, while sometimes he produces certain mysterious sounds.[256]During these imitations of voices, the shaman should meet the animal he calls in order to reveal some secrets. Contact with the animal world for primitive man is not regression; it actually enriches his spiritual life. Eliade explains that before the fall, *in illo tempore*, or in paradisiacal time, man and animals communicated – the shaman thus returns to that primordial situation, by transmitting himself into *that time*. Here an unusually important moment occurs, a moment that obsessed the avant-garde,

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[254] ELIADE: 1970, p. 58.
[255] Ibid.
[256] Ibid, p. 60.

especially the greatest researcher in area of poetical-mythical language, Khlebnikov. His bird language, star language and all the others he invented were his own shamanic attempts to reconstruct these primordial languages, which would then make the return to the paradisiac state possible for poets, in a way that creation was possible.

2.7.2. Reanimated Mystical Sensitivity

Certain shamanistic practices, with ecstatic condition, and therefore the return to the paradisiac situation, as a final goal, are especially similar to some of the artistic actions present in European art, from the work of Gauguin and the French Symbolists. This is also significant because of the way the avant-garde reflects them. We firstly think about actions that make *artistic synestesia* possible – feelings for colors and sounds, depending on senses, that these feelings do not belong to. This manifestation was possible, in the ancient past as it is today, for people capable of awakening in themselves a certain level of higher sensitivity. Eliade describes that "to obtain such 'mystical sensitivity' all shamanistic practices consist of this: to destroy the 'profane' kind of sensibility, monotonous chants, endlessly repeated refrains, fatigue, fasting, dancing, narcotics, etc., and end by creating a sensory condition which is wide-open to the 'supernatural'."[257]

The condition described above, with all those elements or at least some of them, is known in many religious traditions. The philosophically religious beliefs of Pavel Florenskiy deeply imbued his researches into such conditions and actions, which were mostly rejected by Christianity. The awakening of interest for such manifestations in the time of the avant-garde is connected with Hinton's researches into the fourth dimension, as we have already talked about in detail. The *Zaum* poets also wanted to have a power others did not have, and Malevich wanted to see the invisible and to create images of something reachable only through spiritual contemplation (sozertsanie); Kandidnskiy's *The Blue Rider* can be understood as a metaphor for the shaman; the interest for pagan ecstatic games which delighted Rastko Petrović is also part of this tendency.[258]

Hansen-Lëve explains how archaists-neoprimitivists, especially Khlebnikov, were interested in the organic connectivity between everything that exists in the world, and why it is not strange that these artists were mixing the senses – that simply everything in everything could be

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[257] Ibid, p. 85.
[258] About Kandinskiy in: Weiss, Peg: *Kandinskiy and Old Russia*. The Artist as Ethnographer and Shaman. Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1995.

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expressed. An example of that is the prologue to the dramatic opera *Victory over the Sun* where Khlebnikov says: "Be by hearing (ear-ing) sensible observer! And see." (1914)[259]

2.7.3. Artistic Synesthesia as a Sort of Change in the Organization of Sensory Experience

The relationship of colors and vowels, colors and tones, colors and consonants – all those sorts of synesthesia were elaborated on by Kandinsky, and partially by Malevich, and it is of special importance how Khlebnikov gave sensual and meaningful characteristics to voices.

The manifestation we here call synesthesia is part of the philosophical-religious speculation of the East and especially India. It spread to Europe in the 19th century, when the Impressionists abundantly made use of it, specialy Baudelaire and Rimbaud. Science helped these explorations in painting. Michel-Eugène Chevreul published *The Law of Simultaneous Contrast of Colours,* (1839), in which his optical research showed that light consisted of basic colors and their complementary colors. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe summarized these ideas and many personal observations on color in *The Theory of Colors* (Zur Farbenlehre, 1807). Goethe's theory was further elaborated on by Rudolf Steiner, Kandinsky and others from the *Bauhaus* were familiar with it.

The French Symbolists also first started to listen in colors (audition colorée). In the poetry of Charles Baudelaire, best represented by the poem *Correspondences,* synesthesia is in the basis of experiencing nature and its poetic expression. There is, however, also a mystical explanation of synesthesia, which Baudelaire took as a basis for learning about the equality and unity of the world, which he named the universal analogy (*l'analogie universelle*). That is a concept that speaks about the unity between man and universe. The avant-garde, in its first phase, formed as a reaction to the poetics of Symbolism, but at a later phase it continued to elaborate these understandings.

Arthur Rimbaud in *A Season in Hell* (Une Saison En Enfe, 1873), in the poem *Vowels* (Voyelles), cried out that he had invented the colors of the vowels, in the same way Khlebnikov spoke about the conformity of sounds and colors. In the poem *Bobeobi* (Бобэоби, 1908 - 1909):
Bobeobi – is red

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[259] KHLEBNIKOV: 2001, Vol. 3., p. 470. „Bud' slukhom (ushast) sozertsal'! / I smotryaka."

Veeomi - is blue

Gzi-gzi-gzeo–is yellow-golden[260]

In sonorous – colorist harmonies could be found also the feminine face. Synesthesia is in Khlebnikov of great importance, as he was willing to believe that only one sense existed, not five, and that in that one perception these were not separate.

2.7.4. Paradisiac Place - Language

We will try to briefly explain the mythical background for the destruction of language in the first phase of the avant-garde, or the actual need to *change the world using language* in the second phase, especially visible in Khlebnikov's work.

The avant-garde, as far as mythical language is concerned, inherited one condition deeply rooted in the European Judeo-Christian sensibility. This concerned the idea that the creation of the world was a linguistic act (Geneses, 1:3-5, 8). Therefore, according to Judeo-Christian myth, the world was created by a linguistic act, that divine language was the first medium for communication between man Adam and his Creator.

One believed that language of paradise expressed harmonic accordance between words and things. Many European poets and philosophers had worked on that topic, however, from the 16th to the 17th century in Western Europe, Hebrew as a primordial language was hardly sustainable, after the first knowledge about the Indo-European linguistic community came to Europe. Mythologists, anthropologists, and ethnologists speak about the significance of the loss of religiously cultural center (allocentrism) – from the 7th century, due to Arabic expansion Jerusalem was beyond the Christian territory.[261] The *center* renews rituals and cultural values, and contains *holy space*, and in each archaic society it is of great importance and makes up an important part of geographical images, as it is important for creation of identity. It is, for sure, one of the reasons for the constant turning of Europe towards the East and searching in that direction for its paradisiacal space and primary language. The key reason for India to win out in this regard, in terms of the West European turning toward the East, rather than China or Egypt, was the discovery of Sanskrit.[262] The primordial language was seen in it, and from that time the tormented glottogenetical

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[260] Bobeobi ...Veeomi ...Gzi-gzi-gzɔo in: KHLEBNIKOV: 2001, Vol. 1., 111.p.
[261] SCHWAB: 1984; also: BUDIL: 2002.
[262] Ibid. Also: LENOIR: 1999.

speculations began. Searching for the primary language was connected with the idea of *revitalization* of society.

Everything we have spoken about in this context so far looks, at first sight, far from the avant-garde, but it also constantly wanted to enlighten the secrets of language, and primary language, with the same intention - the renewal of the world. In Khlebnikov's work as well as that of other Futurists-archaists-neo-primitivists[263] it is possible to follow Russo's line of worshiping the precultural world of wild and child, especially at the level of language. That *real* world of nature is opposite to the world of culture and civilization.

Hansen-Lëve also explains that in the constant destruction of the world and its new reunion, Khlebnikov is making use of language for what it reveals in one magical and mythological motif, which is the need for the reconstruction of mythical age, in which the first act of Creation by Word occurred. Khlebnikov was not looking for the *center* as others did before him, in **space**, but rather in **time.** Time would be completed for him when everything returned to the stage when earth was eatable, and language was totally natural, universal, and creative; a stage in which people and animals were friends – it is the finding of the lost paradise. For Khlebnikov *language is that mythical tree,* that *center* which plays a considerable part in every religion, making it possible for man to enter into Heaven.

2.8. The Search for the East

2.8.1. Eastern Influences

We already compared the avant-garde with one of the transitional periods of European culture, around the 2nd and 3rd centuries, often called the *period of crisis.*[264] The Middle East was at that time a religious and cultural kettle in which several opposing beliefs were mixed. This period is compared by Jung to the time around the year 1000, when numerous sects appeared.[265] From these periods we know very little about the spread of eastern religions because that remained

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[263] HANSEN-LËVE: 1990. There he uses this determinant.
[264] Also, that was the time, European mythology and religion weakened, and at the same time Eastern religions spread: Egyptian, Persian, and Semitic, especially in the areas around the borders of kingdoms. Often these Eastern elements amalgamated with Greek ones. Sylvian Levy wrote that the whole Neo-Platonist school supports Patañjali (famous yoga teacher). Cited from: BUDIL: 2002, p. 63: Lévi, Sylvian: *Abel Bergaigne et l'indianisme*, in: Mémorial Sylvain Lévi, p.10.
[265] JUNG: 1995, p. 162 – 163.

a hidden process. A similar process was happening in Europe and Russia in regard to the spread of Buddhism and other Eastern religions and techniques at the beginning of 20th century.

Nostalgia for paradise led avant-garde artists, philosophers and theologians occasionally to the ancient past and the mythical age of their nations, and sometimes also to the contemporary cultures of East, India, and Egypt. Myths about the **search for a transcendent country**, constant in European tradition, were where also present in the avant-garde In Khlebnikov's works these myths become fully expressed. That transcendent space he searched for in Egypt, the Slavic past, and in Buddhism. Khlebnikov's idea about euro-asiatism is connected with this.

At one of well-known exhibitions of avant-garde paintings initiated by M.F. Larionov was *Target* (Mishen', 1913), were exhibited old Russian icons as well as Chinese, Persian and Japanese naïve paintings. The music of nature that Nikolay Kul'bin spoke about could have had an Eastern origin. Malevich's Supermatism can be possibly connected with different religions and spiritual techniques – Buddhism, various Eastern beliefs, Theosophy, the Gnostics, etc.[266] Inner-physical seeing (vnutrifizicheskoe videnie) can also be connected with the avant-garde studding of the Eastern mystic and philosophy. *Pure contemplation* (sozertsanie) present in the poetry of Kharms and Malevich's paintings, Jaccard brings in a connection with Schopenhauer.[267] It is essential that Schopenhauer's philosophy was imbued by Buddhism, such Buddhism as he had understood and adjusted to his philosophy.[268]

Khlebnikov was also interested in Buddhism, but it probably did not reach him through the medium of Schopenhauer's philosophy. Chinese and other Asian nationals lived in Astrakhan, the place of his birth. In the poem *I am carried on (by) elephants* (Menya prenosyat na slonovykh, 1912), there is a line "*me-Bodhisattva*" where he thinks about his reincarnation. It is certain that he had read literature about Buddhism.[269]

Khlebnikov shows, in his work, that he was interested in voices as they were known and used in Eastern techniques. He wrote many words on *om/um/oum* in later years of his life. In

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[266] Padrta wrote about that with no concrete comparations. PADRTA: 1996.

[267] ZHAKKAR: 1995, p.35 and in commentaries p. 286/7.

[268] Here we cannot speak in details, but "pessimistic Buddhism" does not exist. To the Orient in general, any kind of pessimism is foreign and it always finds a *middle road* between good and evil, rationalism and spiritualism, between asceticism and hedonism, etc. However, Schopenhauer's philosophy is deeply pessimistic. In general, his ideas were the last result of Romanticism characterized by *indomania,* which is, among other products of Western-European society, an intention to liberate itself in the simplest way from Judeo-ChristianityAbout that see: LENOIR: 1999, p. 103.

[269] BARAN: 2002, p. 109 and elsewhere.

Znagezi, he gives words on *–oum* and in his dictionary he explains the semantics of these *–oums,* determined, as usual for Khlebnikov, by the initial consonant. Since *–oum* for Khlebnikov means *sense,* all new words produced by the valence of the initial consonant represent different senses. *Om* is the basic sound Buddhists pronounce, the sound of the forehead chakra (that is *aum* which phonetically gives *om*).

Buddhism and yoga, as with many other Eastern techniques, work with the conscious mind during meditation. In that factor one should search for the reasons for the attraction of these Eastern techniques and beliefs during the time of Avant-garde – when the need for widening of consciousness was clearly expressed, and generally for the receiving of knowledge consciously cultivated – *zaum* is not unreasonable, as it is needed for the development of higher conscious. It is further considered that Buddhism is suitable for atheistic times because it can be applied to both religious and atheistic systems. Buddhism does not deal with the Absolute, but deals with energies, especially in its more practical part, and energy was from the beginning of the previous century the main word for explanation of man's spiritual life. The beginning of the previous century showed the need (among other things, some completely opposite) for such systems of thinking which explain the essence of existence but without a belief in the Absolute.

It is also significant that, at the beginning of the century, interest in Heraclitus revived. His philosophy expresses eternal truths about the movement of the Universe, similar to Eastern belief systems, especially Taoism. Mikhail Gershenson who spread his philosophy among Russian artists, published the book *A Triple Image of Perfection* (1918) in which he elaborated that man discloses some universal substance in himself while losing his own individuality what had an influence on Kharms, among others.

2.8.2. Theosophy

So far, we talked about influences from the East; however, it is necessary to mention when, for the first time, certain ideas of Eastern religions became widely spread in Europe and America, with the help of an officially registered society. This started with the Theosophical Society, founded in 1875 in New York City by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, Henry Steel Olcott, William Quan Judge, and others. These were the first white Westerners to accept Buddhism in India.

Madame H.P.Blavatsky created a sort of semi-religion and an eclectic philosophy, which were at the same time presented in her work *The Key to Theosophy* (1889). The program of the society was to study ancient and modern religions and philosophies, nature and the hidden spiritual abilities of mankind, but was later discredited. One of the postulates was a belief in the existence of multi-dimensional spaces, whose identification moves away from our rational methods of knowledge. That is certainly one of the elements of this teaching which we may find in the avant-garde artists, as with its concept of a holistic universe. This teaching was very much influenced by Hinduism, but also borrowed from spiritualism, the Jewish Kabbalah, neo-platonism and hermeticism.[270]

Theosophy had an influence on Merezhkovskiy and the Symbolists, and also on Florenskiy, who was close to Symbolism, and then on numerous prominent avant-gardists such as Malevich and Kandinskiy. In Khlebnikov's works, its influences are possible, although Baran thought that this could be firstly talked about in terms of the influence of spiritualists (researchers have clearly showed that Khlebnikov was working on question of the migration of soul which has an Egyptian origin, as present in the poem *Ka,* and in questions of reincarnation).

Theosophy was enlightened in the best way within the spiritual life of the time. Many turned to the Theosophical Society because it gathered free-minded and creative people, precisely because they cultivated a certain intellectual curiosity.

Another teaching of the time that had influence among artists (very much on the Symbolist poet Andrey Bely) was the anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner. While the Theosophical Society was oriented toward an Eastern and especially Indian approach, Steiner attempted to develop a course that embraced Christian tradition and natural science. Kandinsky was a theosophist, but at the time he was writing *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* he did not make any significant differentiation between theosophy and anthroposophy.

2.8.3. Guru instead of God

An important fact to note is that in the European avant-garde movements formed man appears in the leading role: the avant-garde artist wanted to solve the human problem and the

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[270] BLAVATSKY: Online edition: http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/key/key-hp.htm. See this about theosophy: LENOIR: 1999; also: René Guénon. *Theosophy: History of a Pseudo-Religion,* translated by Alvin Moore and Cecil Bethell, Sophia Perennis, 2004.

destiny of the world using the Promethean way, praising and glorifying man over God. Many of the spiritual movements at that time, had the shared institution of the teacher, or important spiritual leader.

The concept of a spiritual leader, teacher, or guru who follows spiritual development and prepares the laiety for spiritual uplifting is an institution known in both Christianity and Eastern religions. However, at the beginning of the previous century, some individuals arrived who were at the same time creators or interpreters of new religious or quasi-religious systems, who in a certain way were substitutes for the Absolute, or God. One could say that theosophy and anthroposophy, and also Buddhism, made the subject of God irrelevant. In such belief systems a man comes into God's place, the teacher who creates an unavoidable couple with its student (eventually with a group of students). One of the well-known couples of teacher-student from that period was Uspenskiy – Gurdjieff (Russian: Gurdzhiev).

All of the spiritual teachers of the time had many things in common; they traveled a lot, they had visited Egypt, they gave the knowledge gained to their pupils and followers – as Gurdjieff, Blavacky and Uspenskiy did.

Hansen-Lëve quotes the Russian philosopher Federov, who mentions that in the time of the avant-garde the teacher-professor became a substitute for the monk; the teacher was accepted as a model and ideal of human personality. [271] That is an interesting moment of that time; something similar reveals Uspenskiy in his book *In Search of the Miraculous: Fragments of an Unknown Teaching*, where he says that the roots of Orthodox liturgy were in ancient Egypt, and that the role of the monk used to be the teacher's role.[272]

In Khlebnikov, teachers and students as main protagonists appear often, for example in the dialogue *Teacher and Student* (Uchitel' i uchenik, 1912), or in *The Analysis of the Word* (Razlozhenie slova, 1915-1916). There are many heroes and wise men as Zangezi and Amenophis – who serve as prophets and reformers who save humankind. Baran notices that around 1915 an evolution in thinking occurred in Khlebnikov's work, where instead of warriors and heroes he has as a hero Amenophis, a religious reformer, pacifist and poet. Khlebnikov was especially attracted by religions that cultivated institution of teacher, spiritual leader, that is why, he was attracted by Sikhism. His lyrical hero Zangezi is a prototype of the prophet and, to a certain measure, the guru.

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[271] HANSEN-LËVE: 1993, p. 11.
[272] USPENSKIY: 1949.

He lives on a mountain, he is a poet and philosopher (the inter-textual connection with Nietzsche's Zarathustra is clear). The song of birds, the incomprehensible speech of God and a bunch of student or accidental passengers surround him. He resembles a prophet or genius as Kandinsky depicted them, especially in the factor of the incomprehensiveness of crowd.

In Kandinsky's triangle, which illustrates the scheme of spiritual life, in the last, highest segment there is a man, a lonely individual, a man-genius, not God. The cheerful seeing of genius, connected with an immeasurable sorrow as no one understands him, even those closest to him – as what happened with Beethoven. Kandinsky says that artists are prophets move humankind one step forward.[273]

2.8.4. The Far East in the Work of the Avant-gardists[274]

As is well-known, Cubists and Fauvists, and in general all the French painters who initiated modern painting, had a significant influence on avant-garde painting. The Eastern inspiration for these painters led in turn to the Far East. At the beginning of the 20th century, significant translations of Chinese and Japanese poetry were published. This was the other wave of Eastern influences, different from the Buddhist and Theosophical. At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, Japanese woodcarvings were in vogue, especially among the Post-Impressionists.

In the field of literature, at the beginning of the previous century in many European counties, the situation was such that a poet, and not a Sinologist, introduced Chinese and Japanese poetry to a wider public. Ezra Pound was the first one to include Chinese poetry in his own poetic vision in the West by using Ernest Fenellosa's text *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry* (1908) for his poetic program – so-called *Imagism,* and by publishing in English a collection of Chinese poetry, *Cathay,* in 1915. The same happened in the South Slavic literatures, where first translations of Chinese and Japanese poetry were published in *The Anthology of Chinese Lyrical Poetry* (1920) selected and re-translated manly from French and English sources by Miloš Crnjanski.[275]

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[273] KANDINSKIY: 1966, p. 27.s.
[274] This part of the text is partly taken from the paper: MICIĆ: 2004.
[275] CRNJANSKI:1993, Vol. 1, books: 1 – 4.

The salient question is: what did an avant-garde writer, such as were Pound and Crnjanski, discover in Chinese poetry and what attracted them to it? [276] For Pound the most attractive element of Chinese poetry was in its language and in the letters through it was created, as the consequence of studying of Fenelossa's text, while for Crnjanski was attractive studying Chinese religion and philosophy. This could be a separate topic for analysis, as Crnjanski was a very spiritual man whose idea of God and universal values did not really correspond with Christianity; additionally, he was an avant-garde artist who in fighting tradition renounced older European religion as well. [277]

Here we will mention the basic idea of Sumtrism, the original avant-garde movement of Crnjanski. The poem *Sumatra* originated from the feelings that the poet experienced during the war, which resulted in nihilism and transcendentalism. We learn from the *Explenation of "Sumatra"* (Objašnjenje "Sumatre", the writer's manifesto of Sumatrism)[278] that after the sudden enlightenment provoked by this suffering and pain, a completely new idea emerged to the writer, to which he gave the name *Sumatrism*. It represents writer's spiritual and emotional ability to rise above the cruel reality and a belief that everything in the world was interlinked, and this realization brought him significant consolation. In the writer's ideal imagination the far places, both Northern and Eastern, brought him spiritual calmness and tranquility. He specifically developed the concept of the physical transmission of energy from one place to another by which places are spiritually connected.

In the Serbian Avant-garde, a certain number of writers searched for inspiration in the East: Zenitists contrasted the positive values of the East with the negative values of the West in the poem *Airplane with no Engine* (Aeroplan bez motora);[279] Rade Drainac for example founded *Hypnism*, an Avant-garde movement directly inspired by Buddhism. *The Program of Hypnism* (Program hipnizma) proselytized meditation, peace, and spiritual ectasy.[280] It is said in the *Program* that the Balkans should be spiritually burnt and then turn to the East. The titles of avant-garde magazines often have exotic names: *Hipnos, Ozon, New Light, Zenit, Roads.*

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[276] Here we rely on the source: MICIĆ: 2004.

[277] On this subject he had insights into various books, such as those written by P.L.F. Philastre and H. Federmann, and works by the outstanding Sinologists of the time.

[278] Published in: Srpski književni glasnik, IV, October, 1920.

[279] TEŠIĆ: 2001, p. 125.

[280] Ibid, p. 109.

2.9. Patterns of Imitation

The magic origin of creativity is testified by the position of the artist thus far. He used to be regarded as an arch-priest or shaman, and it was believed that deity was created through him. This lasted as long as the age of cursed poets, that is, until the middle of the nineteenth century. It can be said that by the time of the avant-garde, artists were the least understood and artists themselves cherished an ambivalent relationship to self-understanding.

What does art actually want? Let us ask ourselves – possibly to create? If it wants to create, then we must ask ourselves what sort of creation, and whether creation is possible. Mircea Eliade, whose conclusions are cited abundantly in this paper, states that man is incapable of performing the act of creation.[281] The myths of the creation of the world reveal the character of the creation - it requires a "revival", that is, a total surrender of life, of the essence of life – which is why man is incapable of creating beyond his own reproduction (in many societies this was even attributed to powers transcending human understanding).

Avant-garde art felt that art carried the potential for creation and that the mythical age, *illo tempore*, concealed a secret of creation. Regarding this, it developed the following procedures and necessities: it returned to the mythical age to revive the act of creation (Khlebnikov did this with the help of language), learned from nature, imitated this because it saw that the power of creation was hidden in nature (*Letatlin*), and located in itself the power to create *ex nihilo* (Malevich). We have already mentioned that the avant-garde artist returned to the state of chaos, to the state before the creation of the world, and now we think that he did so because he wished to create, in the original sense of the act.

Let us examine the need of the avant-garde to "create".

In Vinaver's *Manifesto of the Expressionist School* the need for creation is mentioned: "We are the creators, just like nature,"[282] or: "All people, in their prime, created the world and did not reconstruct it, they built the universe and did not cross out anything to which another builder had provided at least the foundation." [283] Furthermore, he rejects realism and the faithful imitation of

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[281] ELIADE: 1959, p. 363 – 364.
[282] TEŠIĆ: 2001, p. 32. "Mi smo stvaraoci kao što je i priroda."
[283] Ibid, p. 32. "I svi su, kad su bili najveći, stvarali svet, a ne rekonstruisali svet, gradili vaseljenu a ne precrtavali ono čemu je u najboljem slučaju drugi neimar dao polazne mogućnosti."

nature, that is, *mimesis.*[284] For Vinaver the liberation from reality is one of the key events of Expressionist art (which is how he termed all of the Yugoslav Avant-garde).

Malevich was particularly interested in creating *ex nihilo.* He set himself and art a very serious task - to transform the world. Among his earliest works is a triptych from 1907, a draft for fresco painting in tempera, a portrait of young Malevich surrounded by figures with nimbuses presented to him.[285] That act of self-worship and substitution of the superhuman for God may express a relationship to the world which represents an unsuccessful creation which should be altered. In his tractate *God is Not Cast Down,* Malevich stresses many times that: "God didn't work, but created."[286] He further states: "He created the world with the help of his thoughts without working a single minute."[287]

Acording to Suprematist theory, creation must be without subject, without aim and without any role models; it is kind of pure creation which transcends the boundaries of the human mind. In many texts, Malevich wrote that he created *out of nothing,* that he *started from scratch* as, for example, in the text *From Cubism and Futurism to Suprematizm* (Ot kubizma i futurizma k suprematizm). In this paper he writes: "To create means to eternally create anew."[288] The title of one of his paper is "*I am the Beginning*", written around 1915.[289]

Now we should ask ourselves: **what is artistic creation**? We shall briefly determine the notion of creation on the basis of European aesthetic understanding. We rely on the work *A History of Six Ideas*[290] and emphasize two facts: firstly, art was in essence seen as without creativity until the nineteenth century; secondly, the notion of creation entered European culture and art through religion.

The ancient Greeks did not have terms for words like *creator* or *create,* but only used the word *poein.* Plato (The Republic, 597) thought that an artist was someone who abided by rules and laws, who reproduced and did not create freely. The ancient Greeks also had the term *demiurgos*; in *Timaeus* Demiurgos creates the world, he is thus a *builder.*[291] A change occurred in the Middle

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[284] Ibid, p. 33. „Realnost nije u stvarima, već je realnost u dejstvu stvari na nas."
[285] KOVTUN: 1990, p. 88.
[286] MALEVICH: 1995 (1922), p. 263. „Bog ne trudilsya, on tol'ko tvoril."
[287] Ibid.
[288] Ibid, (1915), p. 40. „Tvorit' znachi zhit', vechno sozdavat' novoe i novoe."
[289] MALEVICH: 1978.
[290] TATARKIEWICZ: 1980, p. 244 – 266.
[291] There was a Latin word for *creation - creatio*; for *to work – facere,* but they were essentially the same.

Ages, at the time of Christianity, when the expression *creatio* was used for the activity of God, for *creatio ex nihilo*. Then art was not a field of creativity either. This can be seen in Dionysius Areopagite as well as in St. Augustine. Pseudo-Areopagite states in (De eccl. Hier. IV. 3) that an artist should *imitate* and not attempt to *create*.

Renaissance artists of course had a flair for the freedom of creativity but they did not use the term creator for an artist either.[292] In the eighteenth century, the human mind was considered to be incapable of creating, and this idea remained current until the nineteenth century, when there was a great turning point. In the nineteenth century, not only was art considered as creativity but also only art was considered as creativity. Later in the twentieth century, Bergson (in *L'Évolution créatrice*, 1907) began to speak about creativity in nature, and his fellow philosophers and theorists went even further. Consequently, today all of man's actions and activity can be considered as creativity.

What is creation *ex nihilo*, if religious historians, theologists and philosophers all speak about this in a different way? There are three basic views of the origin of the world: dualistic, emanational and creationist.[293] We cannot say which of these views is most prominent in the works of the avant-gardists. They create from the legacy of Christian culture. That is why Malevich speaks about some painting as *creationism*. It is quite different with Constructivists such as Tatlin, who wanted to create but was also interested in matter as well the machines and technical appliances working with that matter.

If the creation in art is not possible what in Eliade's opinion is possible is *imitation*. That is why the function of myths is to help people create what Eliade calls: *imitation patterns* (models). So, avant-garde artists wonted to learn about the primordial state, in order to discover the secret of the very creation, however, in their effort to identify themselves with the Creator they essentially imitate his act.

Further question would be does one participate in being by imitation? Certainly yes, answers Florenskiy[294] and for Eliade also, participation in being is achieved by imitation. In revealing the history of what come to pass *in illo tempore* is at the same time revealing of an

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[292] For example, the philosopher Fachino stated that an artist made things up (excogitatio) or he was thought to form (formatura) or transfigure (transigurazione). Ibid, p. 247.
[293] Ibid, p. 254 – 255.
[294] FLORENSKY: 1993.

eruption of the sacred into the world.[295] Thus we can infer that by imitating the act of creation, an artist himself can somehow participate in creation.

So, does the avant-garde deviate from mimesis or not? The avant-garde deviates from mimesis if we understand mimesis as the artistic copying of reality. It is necessary to say something about mimesis as one of the aesthetic categories of European art. We shall use Tatarkiewicz's and Losev's works as examples.[296]

Tatarkiewicz distinguishes three variants of the use of the word mimesis in the Classical period:

1. Mimesis as the imitating of priestly and cultic acts, probably originating in the rites and mysteries of the Dionysian cult. This would correspond to what Eliade calls *imitation patterns*, the repetition of actions provided by a myth. The acts of a priest called *mimesis* consisted of dance, music and singing (without any use of poetry and painting). That original imitation wasn't an imitation in the sense of copying but an expression, similar to the function of an actor, not a copyist. So the original mimesis was a shamanic act. A shaman imitated the act of creation by returning through that act *in illo tempore*. **The avant-garde was interested in this, and in that sense, its "art" is mimetic.**

2. Mimesis as the act of copying the external world. This is fully expressed in Democritus. He wrote that people emulated nature when dealing with art: a spider in weaving, a swallow in building and a nightingale in singing (Plutarchos, De sollert.anim. 20. 974 A) **This kind of mimesis is also present in the avant-garde** and, by example we have already mentioned *Letalin* in which a modern aircraft is made by imitating nature.

3. In the 5th century B.C. the Athenian philosophers formulated mimesis as a repetition of the appearance of things. Such mimesis was inherited by European art in later epochs, each in a different way, but the **avant-garde rejected that form of mimesis.** [297]

Let us conclude: imitation was an essential part of religious behaviour in ancient times, but when this entered art it lost its original meaning. The avant-garde was against mimesis in art but understood that it was necessary to master the techniques of imitation of cultic and shamanic acts

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[295] ELIADE: 1970, p. 17.
[296] About that in: TATARKIEWICZ: 1980; LOSEV: 1965.
[297] Losev summarises the understanding of mimesis throughout the history of art as the imitating of a perfect cosmos in Ancient Greece; in the Middle Ages as imitating the ontologized deity; in the Renaissance as imitating pantheistically understood nature but also imitating antiquity; in neo-Classicism as imitating rational nature, with the nineteenth century introducing the imitation of the inner world of man, understanding mimesis individualistically.

in order that the act of creation could be reconstructed. As a result, Malevich's criticism of art is similar to that of Plato. Malevich's understanding of mimesis is to some extent similar to that of Medieval Art as well, because he sought to imitate the onto-world through art.

What the avant-garde disliked in the artistic undestanding of mimesis was the prohibition of free forms of spiritual acting. In imitation, *I* remains closed in the external impression while avant-garde art shows a strong desire for liberation and free creation in many of its forms. Of course, the question remains as to how much this is possible – Khlebnikov created language in a certain sense, but in that act he imitated existing methods (which he discovered ingeniously). Kandinsky felt that forms taken from nature could become an obstacle; that is why he rejected classical mimesis, but was not able to say more than the fact that art would continue in this way in the future.[298]

2.10. The Myth of Prometheus

The myth of Prometheus has a great variety of interpretations. The time of the avant-garde and avant-garde art itself were often called *promethean*. We will here give a shorter review of our knowledge about this myth based on ancient mythology and literature and art of later centuries. Thus, we will be following transformation of this myth during history until the time of the avant-garde and during the age of the avant-garde. Many interpretations of this myth point out that Prometheus is a symbol of sense, and thus it means the overcoming of *sense* over myth.[299] Prometheus, at the beginning of the 20th century, can be seen as a revolt of matter (mother-earth) against the spirit, similar to the first discord and the act of betraying of heaven, but now is the rebellion of the conscious being (against spirit).

In the time of the Russian revolution, the symbolism of the myth of Prometheus is dominant if understood as the victory of a "new man", and its active participation in the creation of world using technique.[300] **In this work, we shell not speak about works of art that explicitly use**

[298] KANDINSKIY: 1966, p. 67 – 69.
[299] See for example: Diel, Paul: *Le Symbolisme dans la mythologie grecque*, Payot, Paris, 1966.
[300] The idea that man, who is completely aware of his true power, can transform the world was developed in Russia around the time of the revolution. This idea fitted closely to ideas concerning future religions, as regrading future art and revolution, and it went well with Marxism. Merezhkovsky translated Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound*; the work of the Swiss Nietzschean Carl Spitteler *Prometheus and Epimetheus* was widely read in Russia. V. Ivanov wrote the tragedy *Prometheus* (1919), Alexander Scriabin his *Prometheus: Poem of Fire* composition (1910), a publishing house operated under that name, etc. There are

this myth but about certain a *Prometheanism* of the avant-garde as the need of the man-artist to be lifted above destiny, a rebellion against the previous order of things, the need to liberate, to elevate, to overcome his earthly existence and to get closer to cosmic powers.

Billington contrasts Russian Prometheanism with its Western variant, considering that it brought about religious drunkenness – that it had elements of utopia and poetic phantasm, numerous heresies, mystics, and contained the sectarian prophets that appeared constantly at that time with an intention of leaving traditional Christianity and immediately creating the heavenly kingdom on earth. Western Prometheanism he considers optimistic because it spoke about the utilitarian scientism of contemporary Europe. This can be problematic, but it is true that Russian Prometheanism, if we adopt this determination, caries religious elements which are often foreign to the West. Nevertheless, Prometheus also appeared later in the West as the image which could represent the religious imagination in the secularized world.[301]

Aleksey Losev analyzed in detail the transformation of the myth of Prometheus within European cultural heritage in his *Question of Symbol and the Art of Realism* (Problema simvola i realisticheskoe iskusstvo).[302] In this book Losev uses the myth of Prometheus to present a socially-historical conditionality of symbols. Actually, he considers the character of Prometheus as one of the main cosmic-historical symbols of our civilization and identifies it as the materialistic political ideology of his age, which he criticized. We will shortly analyse the meaning of this myth.

Historians of mythological development of past consider *fire* as symbol of everything man discovered in nature and society. According to this Prometheus can be understood as fiery fetish, completely elemental (stikhiynyy) and pre-humane. Losev steps into dialogue with Paul Lafargue's interpretation of this myth.[303] Lafargue speaks about Prometheus as divinity of fire and gives argumentation that the character of Prometheus is connected with the period of matriarchate. Losev thinks that Prometheus in his relation towards fire is still suspicious and indistinct. The name "Prometheus" etymologically has nothing in common with the word for fire, moreover, generations of divine essences previous to Prometheus had already dealt with fire. Nevertheless, numerous sources speak about respect for fire in connection with the domination of woman in

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numerous places in Maksim Gorky's works as well in the works of other ideologists of Communism where Prometheus is mentioned. The most extreme Prometheanism, according to Billington, was represented by the "God-building" (Bogostroitel'stvo) in St. Petersburg in 1918-1921. BILLINGTON: 1968, p. 478 – 492 and p. 486 – 487.

[301] About that in: LYNCH: 1970.

[302] LOSEV: 1976.

[303] LOSEV: 1976, p. 226 - 229.

gender community.[304] However, Zeus in defeating the Titans, or matriarchal divinities, becomes a patriarchal divinity, that is way on Olympus he also has his own source of fire or Hestia, which is the result, or maybe symbol, of his victory over the Titans. From the moment of victory, the fire is in the hands of the father, and since that moment he becomes the symbol of patriarchy. So, according to Losev, fire had belonged to the feminine principle and divinities, before Zeus mastered it and took over the fire.

Now Losev asks the question of what in this case the stealing of fire by Prometheus means. Above all, this act cannot be considered only as the theft of fire, because an attentive reading of Aeschylus also puts understanding of dignity, power and honor in place of the fire. Lafarge concludes that Prometheus's act of stealing fire was committed because he wanted to give back to people that previously collectivistic equality which existed during the matriarchate, and thus give to people consciousness, will and free development, for which it is necessary to abandon the authority of the father and create again. Basically, Losev accepts with bitterness Lafarge's idea about abandoning the father's authority, but it is definitive that the beginning of the 20th century brought about the idea of a return to matriarchy, the abandonment of heroism, of giving up God and the Absolute, so in that context Prometheus can be understood as a symbol of matriarchal historic forces.

From the early Classical sources we learn that there is no reconciliation between Zeus and Prometheus. So, for the New Europe it was very important that, based on Aeschylus, there was no reconciliation. Aeschylus presented in the dramatic trilogy *Oresteia* the opposition of two principles, two great epochs – the matriarchate of the Erinnyes and the patriarchate as presented by Apollo. It can be supposed that reconciliation between Zeus and Prometheus would be the same, but there is no such tragedy. That means that the question of their dispute remains for us unresolved and in this way, also the question of these two divine principles.

It is worth mentioning how Plato understood this myth.[305] He does not reject, in the dialogues of Protagoras, the achievement of Prometheus (mentioned in the dialogues Gorgias, 523d, and Politics, 247c, d). The wise Plato reasonably explains that people did not obtain everything from Prometheus but also from Zeus, especially in socio-political life, while he first of all **sees Prometheus as the founder of technical civilization.** This is a very important

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[304] In ancient times, she personified the soul of the whole of home and property; the soul of the fireplace was Hestia, for the Romans Vesta (the sister of Zeus).
[305] About that also: LOSEV: 1976, p. 234.

interpretation, because in the period of the avant-garde that we are analyzing here, it revives again, through the Prometheanism of its age, the changing nature of man's situation on Earth beginning with the start of his using technical-scientific discoveries.

It is of significance, that there are many myths from the Caucasus that work from a character similar to that of Prometheus.[306] These result from the folk tradition. They speak about heroes bound to rocks, rich in spirit, protectors of certain ideas, justice, who are not called Prometheus but have local names. These myths originated independently of Greek tradition and were created by the peoples of the Caucasus. The common line of all of these characters would be as follows: pride, an unbreakable spirit and a heroic bearing of suffering, and thus they are similar to the ancient myth of Prometheus. So Prometheus is here the **symbol of a proud and disobedient humanity** which can not be frightened by any elementary forces of nature or spirit.[307] Losev explains that the Titans had a bad reputation because they were opposed to Gods and treated people violently; however later on, to the contrary they were understood as friends of people and their representatives.

Characters even more similar to the Greek tradition are present in Serbian fairytales and stories. The most highly Promethean characteristics and similarity of destiny belong to *Baš-Čelik* – and it is not a coincidence that Stanislav Vinaver, the avant-garde poet, remembered him and wrote about him in his avant-garde works.

A new era for the myth of Prometheus began, according to Losev, with Vyacheslav Ivanov's tragedy *Prometheus* (1919).[308] What news does this tragedy bring about Prometheus? It has a cosmogonical interpretation and is thus close to the myth of antiquity. It is presented as the way for overcoming that Titanism and moving toward fullness of being.

On basis of this we can conclude: whereas once Prometheus was a fire fetish, the protector of people and thus the presenter of matriarchy, he is then given as a Titan or as son of Titans, who were for the ancient Greeks the direct descendents of the earth. He then passed through Antiquity to the progressive, earthly and purely human civilization in the 20th century, where in the work of Ivanov (and Scriabin, as well) the character of Prometheus is a mature symbol of the European Prometheus, united with cosmic wholeness, although he remains an apostle of individualism and rationalism and contains all of the elements Plato had once given him, where he was understood as

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[306] LOSEV: Ibid, p. 248 – 249.
[307] About those myths see: A. Veselovskiy: *Etyudy i kharakteristiki*, M. 1912. p. 114-116.
[308] Vyach. Ivanov: *Prometey*, Pg./peterburg/, 1919

a symbol of technical civilisation. Prometheus was once in opposition to the divine principle as personified in Zeus, but since the authority of Zeus on earth has finished, Prometheus could fight only against the Absolute spirit. That is certainly its most significant characteristic since the time of the beginning of the avant-garde.

In Marinetti's work, a certain type of mechanical-technical Prometheanism appears with the machine, car or anything that moves by the help of modern technical forces of liberation that could transform society and art. According to Camilla Gray, this is very similar to the Russian Futurists, who rejected nature and created a vision of the machine as a liberation force. The culmination of that was the aesthetics of Constructivism. Billington calls Tatlin's Prometheanism *utiltary-constructivistic*, as it personifies the effort of art to overcome earthly space. In essence, Malevich's *cosmic Prometheanism* is similar – he predicted the overcoming of energies which control man on earth and help overcome man's history with the vision of a new cosmic age.

2.11. Deliverance from Gravity

The Promethean deliverance from "chains" is often explicitly emphasized in the works of the Serbian Avant-garde. Vinaver, writing in *The Manifesto of Expressionism*, describes entire cosmological drama in artistic way:

"Expressionism is revolutionary" and "It starts from the position that balance is disturbed. Gigantic forces which were kept in balance started with deliverance. Nature was directed, navigated by one small complex of forces. The biggest part of energy was used for one to inhibit another." Further: "As soon as great forces started to lose their balance, the role of deities became more difficult. Now, greater power is needed and the power is for the one who controls creation."[309] He even says in the *Manifesto*: "Balance, even at the beginning, is not what the Bible thinks it was."[310]

In the work of Stanislav Vinaver, the disorder of balance and the need for deliverance are one of the central motives. He even publsihed a collection entitled *Stories that Lost their Balance*

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[309] TEŠIĆ: 2001, p. 35. „Ekspresionizam je revolucionaran." „On polazi od toga da je ravnoteža poremećena. Ogromne sile koje su se držale u ravnoteži počele su se oslobadjati. Prirodom se upravljalo, krmanilo, pomoću jednog vrlo malog kompleksa sila. Najveći deo energije bio je upotrebljen da jedno sputava drugo." Further: „Čim su velike sile otpočele da izlaze iz ravnoteže, uloga božanstva postala je teža. Sada se traži mnogo veća snaga i moć za onoga koji kontroliše stvaranje".
[310] Ibid. „Ravnoteža nije čak ni u početku bila kao što misli Biblija."

(Priče koje su izgubile ravnotežu, 1930). In the *Manifesto* he explains what the loss of balance meant for him: the objects, terms and words were kept in balance until the advent of Expressionism; however, avant-garde writers were combining and crossing words so freely that this disturbed the balance.

The disorder of balance is illusory in that it leads into chaos, writes Vinaver, **but that chaos is necessary because it leads further on, to a deliverance that gives man more space to create**. That significant moment – the deliverance of elemental forces, Vinaver symbolically presents in the character from national literature - *Baš Čelik,* the symbol of a repressed element which delivers in contact with water. Vinaver writes: "It is our duty, of our strength and intuition, to forestall element, to liberate *Baš Čelik,* before he even asks for it (...). We are going before the wave of deliverance. We are not hurt by the lost of balance, because we need to be more elemental, from the very element." [311] *Baš Čelik* is here a synonym for Prometheus.

So, Vinaver assigns the task to avant-garde art to provoke that fearful disorder of balance, which will have, as it says in *Manifesto,* a further influence on ***general deliverance* in the Universe.**

Miloš Crnjanski, in his literal manifesto, *Explanation of "Sumatra"* also speaks about this ***general deliverance*.** With Crnjanski it has been spoken about in terms of deliverance of tradition, rules, chains, and the deliverance of poetic metre and languages: "We liberated language from its banal chains and we hear it, liberated, as it reveals its secrets."[312]

Deliverance in the literary works of Crnjanski often leads to a certain ***state of weightlessness*** in which the rules of gravity cease to prevail. That feeling is described well in the aforementioned manifesto, as a sort of enlightenment in which the *poetic subject* is lifted above this world:

"I felt endless distances, (...) I have lost the fear of death, connections with our surrounding, and as if in some crazy hallucination I was lifting myself up into the endless morning

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[311] Ibid, p. 36. „Naša je dužnost, naše snage i intucije, da preduhitrimo stihiju, da oslobodimo Baš-Čelika, pre no što nas je on za to i zamolio, (...). Mi idemo ispred oslobodilačkog talasa. Nas ne boli izgubljena ravnoteža, jer mi moramo biti stihijniji, od same stihije."
[312] TEŠIĆ: Ibid, p. 46. „Oslobodili smo jezik od banalnih okova i slušamo ga kako nam, slobodan, on sam otkriva svoje tajne."

fog, to reach out my hand and fondle the distant, tall Urals, the Indian seas." "And all that complication became one giant peace and endless comfort."[313]

In the chapter about space we wrote that Crnjanski in his work experiences space as something relative and changeable, which is sometimes possible to connect with the feeling of *losing gravity*, and that further points to the need to escape from everything physical, painful and mortal.[314]

Boško Tokin, in his program article *Theatre in the Air* (Pozorište u vazduhu) brings out his understanding of *vers libre*, as the deliverance of words from the chains – he writes similarly about Futurism, which aimed to reach total deliverance.[315]

On the subject of "fight against gravity" or the deliverance from the force of gravity in avant-garde art are important in particular the writings Jevgenij Kovtun.[316] Kovtun writes that Petrov-Vodkin has "the fight against the gravity force", Malevich the "division of weight in weightless structure", Judin the "transformation of weight into non-weight", etc. Tatlin's *Letalin* was supposed to give man the freedom of flying, of conquering of new spaces and also of overcoming the Earth's gravity: all of which looks like an alchemical project, or as a Titanic struggle against God, against the human limitations which it has by nature.

Kovtun shows that Malevich, in the period between 1911 and 1914 created the cycle of paintings he called *Alogism* or *Zaum realism,* overcoming, for the first time, the sense of gravity. A plastic sense of non-weight is vivid in those pictures (for example the paintings *The Cow and the Violin* or *Portrait of the Artist Ivan Klyun)*.[317] Kovtun considers the appearance of Suprematism as a radical break with the then-current geocentric tradition in painting. He further underlines several significant moments in the superfluous (non-objective) paintings of Kazimir Malevich: there is no earthly orientation, which means that the image of direction within space has disappeared; thus all directions are equal as in space, or what is the view of Earth from outer Space, or the voice of the *inner space* of the painter. The space of Malevich's paintings is no longer geocentric but becomes the special sort of space analogous to cosmic space. In his letter to Matiushin, Malevich wrote that

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[313] Ibid, p. 47. „Osetio sam neizmerne daljine, (...); izgubio sam strah od smrti, veze za okolinu našu, i kao u nekoj ludoj halucinaciji dizao sam se u te bezmerne jutarnje magle, da ispružim ruku i pomilujem daleki, visoki Ural, mora indijska." „I sva ta zamršenost postade jedan ogroman mir i bezgranična uteha."
[314] That also in: CRNJANSKI: 1987 and CRNJANSKI: 1993. About that in: PETKOVIĆ: 1994.
[315] TEŠIĆ: 2001, p. 63.
[316] KOVTUN: 1990, p. 85-93
[317] Ibid, p. 85.

his new painting did not belong strictly to the Earth and that in human nature lays an aspiration toward deduction from the planet Earth.[318]

Kovtun supposes that Malevich, guided by the idea of overcoming Earth's gravity, was relying on the ideas of the Russian philosopher N.F.Fedorov, who had proposed the idea that mankind should go out into earthly space to organise its existence, contrary to the "forces of the fall".[319] Kovtun speaks about him as the first man who in the history of aesthetic sciences saw the essence of artistic creation in the struggle against gravity. For Fedorov, the proofs of that rebellion against the fall were found in works of architecture and sculpture – by using them man was lifting himself thoughtfully and creatively.[320]

Fedorov influenced Khlebnikov's work as well (he felt as we know the influence of the gravitation on language).[321] The poet created in the spirit of his poetics opposite the pairing of *earth gravity - star gravity*, and explained it like this: as the things attracted by the gravity are falling on the ground, thus the thoughts overcome by star force are flying toward the sky.[322] Khlebnikov spoke about flying cities and architecture which had overcome the forces of gravity in his *The Rock from the Future* (Utes iz budushchego, 1921-1922):

"Through the path of absence of weight, people are walking, as if on an invisible bridge. From both sides it slopes to an abyss, a black earthen line showing the way (...) the building in the shape of inverted G is breaststroke swimming through the air."[323]

One of the main subjects in Malevich's brochure *God Is Not Cast Down*[324] is that gravitation is in the state of weightlessness. He writes that in the divine act of creation the world was perfectly *weightless,* in perfect harmony, until the moment when some error occurred. Man since that time has built and created "difficult" constructions of practical object world, guided by

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[318] Malevich: *Pis'ma k M. V. Matyushinu*, edit. E. F. Kovtun in: Ezhegodnik Rukopisnogo otdela Pushkinskogo doma na 1974 god, Leningrad. 1974, p. 192.
[319] KOVTUN: Ibid, p. 87.
[320] Fedorov, N.F: *V čem naša zadača?* In: Filosofija obščego dela, t. II, Moskva 1913, p. 254.
[321] In the letter to M.V.Matjušin from the 18th of July 1913 he writes about gravity and aerostatic. See in: KHLEBNIKOV: 2001, Vol. 3., p. 341 – 342
[322] KHLEBNIKOV: 2001, *Otryvok*, Vol. 3., p. 548.
[323] KHLEBNIKOV: 2001, Vol. 3., p. 121. „Po tropinke otsustviya vesa khodyat lyudi tochno po nevidimomu mostu. S obeikh storon obryv v propast' padeniya; chernaya zemnaya cherta ukazyvaet dorogu (...) po vozdukhu grud'yu plyvaet zdanie, pokhozhee na perevernutoe G."
[324] MALEVICH: 1995, (1922).

the desire to reach a previous weightless state – this is Malevich's description of the consequences of *man's fall*.

Malevich was interested in partially similar questions in his brochure *Suprematism. 34 Drawings* (Suprematism. 34 risunka). He connects the idea of a struggle against the gravitational pull with the understanding of the *work of art* as an individual planetary world. The painter is here a visionary predicting the coming out of mankind into the Universe.[325] Padrta in the chapter *Weightlessness* (Bestíže)[326] writes that the painter attributed several of the classical physical laws of mechanics onto psychic life, as other idealistic theories of knowledge did at that time.

2.12. The Myth of the Magic Flight

The avant-garde revived the well-known and widely dispersed myth of the *magic flight*, which most probably has Eastern origins, as described in the book of Mircea Eliade *Myths, Dreams & Mysteries*. Primordial man, as Eliade writes, could easily go up into Heaven by climbing a Mountain, a Tree or a Pillar that was *in illo tempore*, but later only the shaman could fly to the Center of the World which connected Earth with the Heavens. Eliade describes this myth as the need to establish communication between heaven and earth, thus annulling consequences of *the fall*, and it forms a part of human desire to return to the heavenly state.

Eliade reminds us that many cultures have spoken about *the wings of the soul*. He also says: "A great many symbols and significations to do with the spiritual life and, above all, with the power of intelligence, are connected with the images of *flight* and *wings*. The *flight* signifies intelligence, the understanding of secret things and metaphysical truths." Eliade quotes Pañcavimça Brâhmana (IV, I 13) where it is said "He who understands, has wings."[327] This myth has different transformations in different cultures, but Eliade separates the common moment: "Both transcendence and, at the same time freedom are to be obtained through the 'flight'."[328]

Yugoslav avant-garde artists offer numerous examples from which this myth can be analysed. Boško Tokin, in the article *Yugoslav Exspressionism* (Jugoslovenski ekspresionizam), in

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[325] KOVTUN: Ibid, p. 85 – 93. He says that Malevich was the first one who used the expression "*Earth satellite*" (sputnik Zemli) thus marking cosmic flying device.
[326] PADRTA: 1996, p. 145.
[327] ELIADE:1970, p. 105-106.
[328] Ibid.

which he celebrates Slavism and Cosmism, describes the way in which the young avant-garde creators arrived at some superhuman, half-divine state:

"We young people do not need roads, because we can fly, because we are the beginning and means and purpose of everything that exists."[329]

In the article *Theatre in Air*, he describes the ideas of the pilot-Futurist Fedele Azari, quoting his words that flying should become a form of artistic expression of futuristic mental conditions. Delighted by the advent of the airplane he wrote, "The aeroplane is complex art: drama."[330] He was fascinated by the airplane as a complex technical achievement; for him the airplane was the synthesis of matter, material, phantasm and poetry. Furthermore, he wrote: "Spiritualization of matter is possible".[331] The airplane was an important symbol for Zenitists who aiming toward the heights, and believed that by using the plane they could get closer to the *Zenith*, not only spiritually but also materially.

Tokin goes even further and suggests that flying is itself art:

"Air productions create new emotions, even lyrical ones. People - invincible Icaruses – found themselves flying and in movement, in liberation from the earth, and people in the air who were dancing and moving with the sounds of airplane have to provoke new emotions."[332]

Tokin experiences this as a dance in height, as a liberation from space, as dancing on a giant stage that had huge "width and depth". The sense of movement he describes as "Dynamic 'volume' that moves and turns in three-dimensional space."[333]

In the Russian Avant-garde, Tatlin is especially notable for his occupation with the idea of flight. His three-dimensional constructions were getting waves, wings, and directions that they might fly; similar was his unusual flying machine that looked like a giant insect, the so-called *Letalin*. Tatlin's Prometheanism was, as we said, utilitarian-constructivist, so his art was created from real materials in real space, and according to this criteria, it is directly opposite to the

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[329] TEŠIĆ: 2001, p. 62. „Nama mladima putevi nisu mnogo ni potrebni, jer mi možemo i da letimo, jer smo mi i početak i sredstvo i cilj svaga što jeste."
[330] Ibid. „Aeroplan je složena umetnost: drama."
[331] Ibid. "Spiritualizacija materije je moguća."
[332] Ibid. „Vazdušne produkcije stvaraju nove emocije čak i lirske. Ljudi – Ikarusi nepobedjeni koji su našli sebe u letenju u pokretu i oslobodjenju od zemlje, ljudi koji se u vazduhu igraju i plešu uz zvuke aviona, moraju izazvati nove emocije."
[333] Ibid.

superfluous non-objective art of Malevich. However, both artists created works that presented the Promethean tendency to go out from limited terrestrial space and to rule new spaces.[334]

Letalin, a conceptual project of Vladimir Tatlin, was created between 1928 and 1932. This project is totally suitable to our hypothesis that the **avant-garde developed the line that connected the mythical past and the technically perfect future.** This project was the predecessor of many contemporary planes and robots working on the same principle as insects and birds. For the conducting of the experiment, Tatlin found a very symbolic place - the, highest tower in Moscow, the church tower of the Novodevichiy convent. The tower derived from medieval culture, especially in the sense of alchemy, and as a symbol of unusual experiments, astrological research, and spaces connecting the terrestrial and heavenly. It even presented "the door of heaven."[335] This project connected the avant-garde with the ancient Greek myth of Icarus and Dedalus, and with Leonardo's similar projects form the 16th century.[336] (Accordnig to Khlebnikov's big "historical wave", after a long 365 years, Leonardo was reincarnated as Tatlin.) *Letalin* was not only an artistic work nor a technical invention, but was first of all the embodiment of the principle of building, logic and a way of life; the project spoke about a new relationship between art and life and offered a certain sort of liberation from the limitations of life with the help of art, and on the other hand used organic constructions.[337]

The "Myth" of Speed

Speed is used to overcome space and time, similar to flying, as several avant-garde artists wrote. As part of the myth of deliverance and separation from the Earth's gravitational pull and the myth of flying, also appears a futuristic obsession with the notion of speed. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti was the first to produce an artistic philosophy of this in his *Manifesto of Futurism* (1909), which espoused a love of speed. The car and the plane for him represented the technological triumph of man over nature.

The myth of speed is connected to the new, urban world, to technical advances in industry and technology – a reflection of the belief that the machine would change the world. Julese

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[334] About Letalit in: u: BRISKI-UZELAC: 1990, p. 171 - 183.

[335] CHEVALIER: 1982.

[336] There were similar projects even before the Renaissance; for example one conducted by the humanitarian, technologist, and chemist Abbas Qasim Ibn Firnas (810 – 887).

[337] One preserved version of Letalin is kept in the Central State Aviation and Aeronautics Museum – probably the version which had a trial jump off of the Salkov hill. It was not Tatlin who flew it but the pilot Mikhail M. Litvinov.

Romainse, who collaborated with Marinetti in his first collection *L'âme des homes* form 1904, celebrated the beauty of the machine in his poem ***Ode à la machine.***

2.13. The Revival of Mother Earth: the Creation of a New Relationship between the Heavenly and Earthly Principles

Mircea Eliade dealt with the issue of the relationship between matter and the Earth in the European and world cultural tradition as well as with the issue of the relation to female deities in myths and religions, a subject mentioned numerous time in previous chapters. In his book *Myths, Dreams & Mysteries*, Eliade draws some conclusions, including one according to which female deities were considered non-essential at the ancient beginnings of our civilization, but when man later learned how to cultivate land these became more frequently expressed – in other words, they were tied to the Earth.[338] Eliade also stresses that there are variations of the sex of the Earth, but the Earth as a Women, or as the Mother, was the most well-known image in the Mediterranean religions (as she give birth to all things). In Chinese mythologies the Earth was usually in the *yin* category, but was primarily not distinctly either a female or male deity.[339]

As example, Eliade also cites a Native American myth explaining the origin of the world. According to the myth, in the beginning all beings lived in the bowels of the Earth, like an embryo in the mother's womb. Some variants of the myth have it that people first lived underneath the Earth, but that there was not any light. We can suppose that Plato's myth of the cave might have a similar origin. Some myths say that the Earth-Mother produces human beings in the same manner that she now produces bushes or reeds.[340]

By expressing an interest in the mythical age, the avant-garde demonstrated a need for a return to the Earth and original matter or, we can also say, the need for establishing a new relationship to them. Eliade warns of that we have already mentioned, namely that "nostalgia for a return to the Earth-Mother sometimes becomes a collective phenomenon; and then it is a sign that the society has given up the struggle and is nearing complete disappearance."[341] It is hard to say whether we can talk about such a phenomenon within the framework of the avant-garde and their

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[338] ELIADE: 1970, p. 174.
[339] Ibid, p. 170.
[340] Ibid, p. 165 and further.
[341] Ibid, p. 164.

time, but it is certain then and possibly shortly time earlier that a kind of new interest in the Earth and in the earthly, feminine principle appeared.

The relation of avant-garde artists to language also changed established beliefs or brought them into question. For example, in the European tradition, language is of heavenly origin, the work of the father, while in Khlebnikov is emphasized linguistic research within the *real* world, as a part of organic life, the fruit of the Earth and the Mother. Hansen-Lëve wrote about this in fuller detail. As in most his works, he contrasts the Futurist and Symbolist poetics and opposes the Futurist emphasis on the Earth, and on the body and language of the Earth to be precise, to the Symbolist glorification of the sun and abstract metaphysical principles. He said that the abstract, metaphysical idea of the Apocalypse had been replaced by concrete, physical, 'rough' earthly powers and the idea of their infinitude.[342] In the drama *Victory over the Sun*, the representative of the earthly utopia for Kruchënykh is *Strong Man* (in Russian: silach), the victor over intellectual and sublime ideals, which are ridiculed. Similarly, in his text *From Cubism to Suprematism*, Malevich wrote that there had occurred a great change and that the Symbolists' heaven had been replaced by the Futurists' Earth.

If we search for examples in avant-garde literature where the Earth is associated with language, we may find numerous examples in the works of Khlebnikov. He often identifies words with stone, or "sheets" of paper with the "leaves" of a tree. In his work *Zangezi* writes that a narrative is made up of words, which are like building blocks: "A story consists of words which are constructive units of an edifice. The units are small stone-letters of equal size."[343]

The Futurist *petrification* of language had much more of an adverse effect than we might expect, which Hansen-Löve explains by citing Kruchënykh.[344] Namely, stone language, that is, a language made up of primordial language and culture, confronted the *petrification* of practical and literary language; on the one hand, words were dying, but on the other the world remained eternally young. Hansen-Löve also cites numerous examples from the works of Khlebnikov in which we can see how the poet compares words to the fruits of the Earth.[345] He adds a very interesting comparison -- the poet, "plays with words", creating with words, just as God played

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[342] HANSEN-LÖVE: 1990, p. 17.
[343] KHLEBNIKOV: 2001, Vol. 2., p. 314. „Povest' stroitsya iz slov kak stroitel'noy edinitsy zdaniya. Edinitsey sluzhit maliyy kamen' ravnovelikikh slov. "
[344] HANSEN-LÖVE: 1990, p.19.
[345] Ibid, p. 20.

with stones, that is, with things in the process of creating the world. We can find deeper roots of Khlebnikov's identification of words with stone, leaves or plants in various mythologies.

As far as avant-garde art is concerned, we can talk about the replacement of the masculine and feminine principle in different ways. That phenomenon can certainly be understood as the work of the avant-garde's carnivalesque dancing, in which it turned the system of former values upside down, but it can also signify the changes which penetrate most deeply into the sociology of mythology of its time.

The most important world philosophy which developed its entire tradition on the basis of establishing equilibrium between binary opposites is Taoism. In Chinese tradition there are numerous examples which represent settling the differences between binary opposites, some of them cited by V. V. Ivanov. [346] However, it is generally known that Chinese tradition is dominated by the feminine principle, whereas the Indian tradition, like the ancient Greek that is considered the basis of European tradition, was prevailed over by the masculine principle. [347]

Marcel Duchamp, was for example interested this two principles. He himself changed his sexual identity for the sake of photographs, conducted a very interesting and illustrative research in the field of gender. This radical Dadaist, who had a powerful influence on the creation of modern art, was in his private life interested in old books, alchemy and Taoism. One of his unusual machines *The Large Glass* (called a love machine, but actually a machine of suffering) was probably made in accordance with his mysterious inner life. *The Large Glass*, or *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors*, became like the blueprint of a machine, albeit a symbolic one, that embodied his ideas of man, woman, and love. The true meaning of this machine is a secret but it is clear that its two parts represent the two principles Yin and Yang. These two parts of the machine make very complex movements and the whole project resembles a mythical anthropomorphic machine. This is one of the important connections of myth and the machine, similar to *Letalin*; however, the seriousness of this project is brought into question. First of all, the whole myth should be observed as a complex avant-garde play of meanings, a

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[346] About this in Ivanov in: *Semanticheskyja kategoriya malosti-velichiny v nekotorych jazykach Afriki i tipologicheskiye paralleli v drugich jazykach mira*, in: Problemy afrikanskogo jazykoznaniya, Moskva, 1972. Also in: IVANOV: 1977, p. 65-89.
[347] Comparative study about Chinese and Indian tradition in: Linnart Myall: *Svetliy put' i t'omniy put'*. TPZS, 16, 1983, p. 106-114.

mystification which sought to demystify the world and art, because with this project Duchump does not celebrate the machine in the Futurist manner but instead has a cynical attitude to it.[348]

In Serbian literature, Rastko Petrović's prose works (particularly *Burlesque* and his stories), apart from abounding in bacchanalias and self-indulgence in a dissipated lifestyle, as in Greek and Roman saturnalias, also deal with the themes which were taboo in official European literature and culture such as the change of sex. He often shows men as women and women as tomboys. In the literary works of Rastko Petrović, a resistence to heroes and generally to patriarchal cultural values is distinctly expressed.

We have already spoken of how the age of the avant-garde revived the myth of Prometheus with which the time of Titanic matriarchy and the mutiny against God, the Creator and Supreme Ruler returned to European literature. For the Serbian Avant-garde, including some European Dadaists, the protest against the heroic principle, the one prone to dominance, terror and leadership, was at the same time a form of protest against the First World War and the politics of the period. In his book *Russian Literary Postmodernism*, Vyacheslav Kuricin interprets Jacques Derrida's criticism of logocentrism in the post-modern period in the same manner.[349] Kuricin also adds an important moment – that Jean Baudrillard spoke of a new epoch in which no great difference is made between the sexes, which has already begun; in other words, the point is that one principle is not changed by the other one but that this opposition has ceased to exist.[350] Like the post-modern philosophers, we could ask ourselves here as to how meaningful it is for European culture and whether this means that this model of European culture, in some vital segments of its mythology, approaches Oriental beliefs.

2.14. Object/Thing – Reification – Object and Objectlessness

The period of the avant-garde, opened questions concerning matter, materials, objects, objectness, things, the real world, the reification of art, the reism of language and many other similar questions. Here we shall partly classify them with the emphasis on the mythical relationship to things and the real world. Primarily we shall rely on the researches of Aage A.

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[348] See about Duchamp: HAMILTON: 1973. Also: Robert Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp*, New York: Grove Press, 1959.
[349] KURICIN: 2000, p. 24 – 25.
[350] Ibid: p. 22. He quotes a fragment from the Baudrillard's book *Seduction*, 1979 (in Russian translation: O sablazne, 1994).

Hansen-Löve, who highlights a distinction between objects and things (in Russian: predmet / veshch') at the time of the avant-garde. Regarding Neo-Primitivists, that is, archaic Futurists and myth-oriented artists such as Khlebnikov, Kruchënykh, Jelena Guro and Kamenskiy, he speaks about *reism*, or thing- orientedness; likewise, regarding the theory of formalism he speaks about reism as objectlessness.[351]

Hasen-Löve differentiates between the notions of "object" and "thing" although they are often referred to one and the same thing in theory and everyday usage. When referring to one and the same thing they appear as substitutes for the object, which is set against the subject. Diferentiating objects from things was possible in the avant-garde, but Hansen-Leve thinks that this idea does not apply to all avant-garde artists nor for all discourses about the avant-garde, although there is a strong tendency of opposing terms in theoretical papers on the art and aesthetics of the 1910s and 1920s, between Cubo-futurism, Neo-Primitivism, Suprematism, Abstractionism, Factographism, Constructivism, early Formalism and the philosophical works of the representatives of so-called Formalist-philosophical school.

Here we can clearly notice the opposition of the notions "object" and "thing" as well as the mutual action of reism and objectlessness in art, and in all semiotic acts within culture.[352]

What is the similarity between the notions of "object" and "thing"? Within man's creativity these notions are *acts, facts* and more or less passive objects or, as the Formalists would say, the *material* of "processing", that is, of transformation, deformation, wonder, manipulation, metamorphosis, etc.

What are the differences between the notions of "object" and "thing"? The differences are as follows: what is often inferred by the notion of *thing* is some object of reality (especially the *natural* or surreal world) before its integration and transformation into culture or the practical sphere of human world. So *thing* is thus placed within the semantic circle of notions of pre-culture and the archaic world, and of immediate reality; that is, "things" as such. It is only after being transformed into cultural, contemporary "realias" by means of which man communicates, does an exchange or represents something that they becthe ome *notions*.

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[351] HANSEN-LÖVE: 1990. On the other hand, about *objectness,* which at the same time represents a criticism of *reism,* he speaks within the aesthetics of a Formalist-philosophical school (the phenomenologist Gustav Shpet appears as the central philosopher) and within Osip Mandelstam's poetics of "objectness".

[352] Ibid, p. 10.

Within the poetics and theory of the archaic Futurists, or Neo-Primitivists (we accept the term Hasen-Löve used) as well as within Futurism, Formalism and Suprematism, the "thing" is considered a more important phenomenon than the "object" because the "real sphere"(in Russian: veshchnaya sfera) is considered something original, natural, primordial, innocent and divine. Unlike the previous one, the "objective world" is considered secondary, unreal, and only semiotic or relative.[353]

Hasen-Löve points out, just as we did in a separate chapter *The Myth of the Noble Savage*, that the origin of respect for things, nature and pre-cultural world of savages has been in contrast to the world of culture and civilization ever since the time of Rousseau and the Enlightenment tradition, and that this tradition was very important for estrangement and reism in the work of the Futurist-archaists and archaist-Futurists.

Just as we explained the roots of choosing the *real world*, in certain artists' beliefs we also find that, under the veil of modern civilization and the objective world tied to it, is hidden a truer world, or more precisely, *the body of the Earth*, Mother Earth, which does not consist of dead, mechanical objects but of the live limbs of the universal body. The Earth consists of things just as the body (of man or beasts) consists of limbs and organs or a word (text) consists of morphemes, phonemes, and letters. In ancient mythology and folklore, Mother Earth does not speak the objective language (of signs and symbols), but represents the totality of all *personal names of things* or *words-things*.[354]

Hasen-Löve gives the following formula which could show a relationship between the world of objects and the world of things (that is, the objectless world):

world : object : objective language = the Earth : thing : name

It is stressed that it was not the Futurist conception of the "word as such" that was interested only in the aesthetic and poetic, but also the Neo-Primitivist (Khlebnikov and others) attempt to build, or to reconstruct, mythical thinking where *words* or *things* are two aspects of one

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[353] Ibid.

[354] There are some avant-garde movements which see this as quite the contrary: in Functionalism, Constructivism and the Left Avant-garde – where everything is contrary – the *object* (predmet) takes on positive characteristics as the result of production or work, the turn of events, or as a fact (*fact literature*), etc.

and the same body of the Earth. The *reconstruction* of the mythical world is taking place, and avant-garde archaists crave the **live word, the one that can make and create.** In the chapter Imitation Patterns, we spoke about the need for *revival* in order to reconstruct creation, in the sense of divine creation.

3. The Mythical Word of the Avant-garde as the Background for Experiments with Poetic Language

We have already said that since the avant-garde period, we have had to associate art with philosophical, religious and mythical theories of language, art and culture in general, just as artists themselves did, regardless of the fact that their attempts often remained in the realms of quasi-science and quasi-philosophy. In this chapter, we shall speak about several phenomena pertaining to avant-garde creation in the field of language, making a continuation of the elaboration we have listed so far on the mythical world of the avant-garde and which will inevitably lead to the question of transcendency and the avant-garde onto-world. We shall try to explain selected phenomena by means of the theories they correspond to in a certain manner by accepting mythical thinking.

As the central question of avant-garde language appears the avant-garde's Promethean need to overcome the constraints regarding language being divided into *ergon* and *energy* (we accept Humboldt's terminology), as well as a maximum focus on language energy, that is, the acting and naming understood as the activity of a subject.

On the langauge plane appear the heritage of mythical thinking we have already eleborated on: a discovery that language has something to do with space, a need for creativity by imitating divine acts of creation, negation of the authority of language as an act of almighty God (the Absolute, one superior principle); the creation of a universal language of the free and new; a need for aesthetic change of the world by means of language, identifying words with things, etc. The theories we shall mention demonstrate the achievements and limitations of the avant-garde experiment in an interesting way.

In its later phase, the one we marked as the third phase in Russian Avant-garde (in the works of Daniil Kharms), the avant-garde language project shows signs of abandoning the avant-garde project altogether, of giving up the desire to conquer the transcendental world in the

spirit of pagan rituals and accepting the fact that apophatism is indispensable for the poetic-philosophical understanding of language. This is how the word remains a secret although the avant-garde, with its *play* and free research approach, fully approached that secret.

3.1. Once Again– Spatial Language

In this paper we have stated that one group of avant-garde artists, the so-called Futurist-archaists, made a direct contact with the external world by substituting transcendental thinking with the touch, feeling and empiricism of pre-culture, primitive, naive and savage man. Instead of metaphysics there appeared the old perspective of seeing the *physical carrier of signification*, that is, the phonetic materiality of words – in other words, the body of language. As Lotman said – the poetic word of Futurists aspires to be the equal to things.[355] In Khlebnikov it was noticed in the second phase of his creation. He overcomes the first Futurist phase between 1912 and 1920, the period when he wrote a great majority of his theoretical works and developed the "alphabet of notions" and the "alphabet of mind".[356] Poetic attempts at the creation of a universal language, in Khlebnikov's case a regenerated proto-language, are justified by our knowledge of the mythical thinking about language.[357] Indeed, this poet penetrated deeply into the secrets of language creation by discovering that language expresses an opinion about space and his research has been scientifically confirmed.

We shall try to briefly compare Cassirer's and Khlebnikov's research. Cassirer made a typologization of language according to which language developed from mimetic to analogical (which exists today) and later to symbolic as its final phase.[358] Cassirer experiences mimetic

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[355] Lotman, Yury: *Natyurmort v perspektive semiotiki* (1986), in: Veshch v iskustve. Materialy nauchnoy konferencii, 1984, Moskva, p. 6 – 14.

[356] Those attempts in Khlebnikov's works rely on the following procedures: inner word declension, paranomasia, dealing with Slavic roots, *Zaum*-language and the like. The most significant texts in which Khlebnikov's linguistic understanding and mathematical calculations of historical laws of time are presented are: *Uchitel' i uchenikh* 1913, *Razgovor dvukh osob* 1913, *Neizdannaya stat'ya* 1913-4, *Razgovor Olega i Kazimira* 1914, *O pol'ze izucheniya skazok* 1914-5, *Razlozhenie slova* 1915-6, *O prostykh imenakh yazyka* 1916, *Perechen'. Azbuka uma* 1916, *Vtoroy yazyk* 1916, *Khudozhniki mira!* 1919, *O sovremennoy poezii* 1920, *O stikhakh* 1919-1920, *Nasha osnova* 1920.

[357] About language treatment in Khlebnikov's works, in: Westseijn, W.G.: *Velimir Chlebnikov and the Development of Poetic Language in Russian Symbolism and Futurism*, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 1983; Grigor'ev, V. P.: *Paranomičeskaja attrakcija v russkoj poezii XXV.*, Sbornik dokladov i soobščenij lingvističeskogo obščestva; SOLIVETTI: 1985, etc.

[358] CASSIRER: 1957, p. 190.

linguistic expression as the closest to *the beginning of the word*, the field Khlebnikov intensively dealt with.

Today we know many roots and sounds which, by their meaning, are the same in all Indo-European languages: the *st* – cluster means something permanent and firm, *l* means melting and flowing, *w* means unsteady movements; the vowels *a, o* and *u* show a longer distance, whereas the vowels *e* and *i* show a shorter distance etc. Likewise, labial resonant sounds signify a direction towards the speaker, whereas explosive linguals signify a direction from the speaker. The sounds *m* and *n* show an inward direction, whereas the sounds *p, b, d* and *t* show an outward one (demonstrative pronouns reflect this meaning of sounds); in other word, the former signify a movement towards the subject, whereas the latter signify a movement towards the external world. This explains why all children in the world use the same words in the beginning. Some African languages form a preposition by means of words signifying parts of the body. Prepositions *for* and *behind* are signified by the words *back* or *bottom*; the preposition *in front of* represents human *eye*, preposition *in* is the *belly* etc.[359] Language sometimes creates categories and groups based on the forms of the objects they describe. In some Indian languages, objects having a round form make up one group – so that the words for the Sun, the Moon, ear, and some species of fish and canoes – were put in the same linguistic group. Nose and tongue were a different linguistic group.[360]

In the chapter *Space* we gave some examples from Khlebnikov's work *Artists of the World!* where he systematizes many of his researches and proposes a system according to which a future universal language ought to be formed – geometrical, that is, spatially determined form having an adequate colour. Two basic procedures that he uses for a creating of a new language were: 1. inner declension - that is, the semantic valency of vowels (his example is: *bobr/babr*); 2. construction of „star language" - which is basically a semantic valency of initial consonants. These procedures implied certain phases: firstly, vowel stripping (denuding), and then a particular *parascientific logization* by means of which stripped sounds are given abstract contents (for example: the meaning of each consonant is explained - *m* is a whole which is divided into parts like poppy, fly, moth – all this word in Russian bigin with consonant *m*) and finally *ontologization*

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[359] Ibid. p. 159.
[360] Ibid. p. 268 – 269.

which cannot be explained by our present knowledge of language but it approaches etnological discoveries associated with mythical language awareness.[361]

Khlebnikov discovered what etnology and linguistics later spoke about – the existence of some common traits of language hidden in words from time immemorial. That is why Khlebnikov's ambition in his research to transcend the bounds of Slavic languages, and to uncover the unity of all world languages based on *the units of the alphabet* had sense. Something else is the question whether he, by discovering those laws, can create words which could be adequate for life as were words *during the first days of creation* – something he believed in.

3.2 Initial Consonant and Name - Participation and Imitation

In his article *Non-published Article* (Neizdannaya stat'ya)[362] Khlebnikov provides tables showing the meanings of certain sounds which determine the fates of people and folks (for example, Germans have many names beginning with *G* and *Sh*) which can certainly be compared to the name analysis made by Florenskiy in his book *Names* (Imena), where he tried to determine man's character or destany based on names.[363] Starting from the presumption that each consonants hides a certain form behind itself and represents a name and that original sounds from the Russian language can have the same meaning in all languages in the world, Khlebnikov regards individual phonetic units as notion carriers. Each initial consonant is linked to a *fateful meaning* in relation to other phonemes of the same word. As a result, all words beginning with the same consonant are semantically connected just as, according to Florenskiy's procedure, all people having the same *name* are similar, that is, have similar destanies. Through such reading of the alphabet on the part of Khlebnikov or interpretation of names in the aforementioned Florenskiy's work, we come to a spheres beyond the limits of our consciousness. On the other hand, they echo within ourselves just as is the case with the language of swearing and spells.[364]

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[361] Khlebnikov wrote about his procedures in: KHLEBNIKOV: 2001, Vol. 3.: *Neizdannaya stat'ya*, p. 178, *Razlozhenie slova*, p. 206, *O prostykh imenakh yazika*, p. 217, *Nasha osnova*, p. 244.

[362] KHLEBNIKOV: Ibid, p. 178.

[363] FLORENSKIY: 1999, *Imena*, p. 171 – 234.

[364] About that in: SOLIVETTI: 1985, p. 223 – 235.

We shall shortly present here how Florenskiy understood the relationship between the name and Plato's idea with the hope that this analysis can help us to understand Khlebnikov's discoveries about the initial consonant and avant-garde beliefs in the "magic" of language.[365]

In the paper *Universally-Human Roots of the Idealism*, Florenskiy searches for the roots of Plato's philosophy and says that it is deeply rooted in universally human beliefs and magic practices (in contemporary language, *occultism*). He compares the mystical-magical perceivability of the world with Platonic philosophy and shows that Plato's belief in the power of human spirit is a direct reflection of people's beliefs into the creativity of the power of thoughts. As an example of this lively contact with nature he gives the *Books of Herbs,* a compendium
of folk beliefs, sorcery and fortune telling in which all of nature is alive and in which everything reflects one another.

Florenskiy tried to understand the act of spelling and concludes that the magician thinks of the *idea* (that should be) and, in order to create it, he uses a *word,* because it can be objectified and reached only through the word.[366] He also says that the word contains creative, substantional character.[367] In Florenskiy's understanding the word of the magician is real, it is a *thing* and that is possible because the magician is a part of the nature (by being such he is able to use its energy), able to use *authentic names* and the correlation between *authentic names* and *ordinary names* is the same as the correlation between Plato's ideas placed in comparison with empty rational notions.

There is a problem in presenting the world of magic and Plato's abstract philosophy. The difficulty lies in the fact that the former are not on the rational level, and therefore the presentation of their systems does not seem to be complete.[368]

In brief, here is how Florenskiy understands, in his tractate *The Meaning of Idealism,* the correlation of the Platonic and magical systems is presented in the point of the coexistence and mutual affectation of two worlds – visible and invisible.

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[365] Florenskiy's analysis of the relationship between the name and the idea was taken, with a minor abridgement, from the paper: MICIĆ: 2005.

[366] FLORENSKIY: 1999, Vol. 3 (2), p. 145 – 168.

[367] Ibid.

[368] For example, Plato's idea regarding the ratio has two different points on which to rely – they are instruments of knowledge but at the same time they are the reality which is going to be known. Ideas are objective and subjective at the same time, ideal but also real as well. In the magical system, names have the same reality as Plato's ideas – they are instruments of the magical prophesying of reality, but they are also the mystical reality that is going to be known.

The relation between idea and appearance was determined differently by Plato:

- *similarity* between the appearance and the idea; also *imitation* of the idea by the appearance (μίμησις), but in the sense that the ideas of the thinker served as the final cause of the appearance, and thus appearances have the aspiration towards the idea similar to that of love;

- *participation* (μετέχειν), of the appearance in the idea; in this point only the idea is real, and the appearance is real only if it participates in that essence;

- *presence* of the idea in the appearance (παρουσία); appearance becomes similar to the idea when the idea "comes to it", and loses this feature when the idea is "going from it"; at the same time the idea is not gnoseological principle, but ontological, as the cause of the being (αἰτία). Ideas are shown as powers (δυνάμεις) through which the appearance is explained.

All these ways of the mutual relating of the ideas and the appearances exist in the primitive beliefs in the relation between the *name* and the *named* (person):

- between the holder of the name and the name itself *similarity* is admitted; this similarity is sometimes understood as an *imitation* of the name by the named, (the child receives the name with a special meaning, with the purpose of imitation of the name, or to have a life in accord with that name); but even if this rational meaning of the name exists, the name has special mystical content and the named (person) unconsciously imitates that content;

- moreover, the named (person), besides imitating the name, also *participates* in it; this is the case when all family members participate in the surnames;

- and vice versa: the name that is *present* in the named (person), *enters* into the person and in that sense it appears to be the inner form of the named (person).

To answer the question – and also examine how this similarity appeared – Florenskiy says that there is no doubt that the roots of Platonism can be deducted from the mysteries, or the orphic and Pythagorean teachings, something which was emphasized even by the Neoplatonists. So we can infer that something that was universally human in mythical thinking or belief arrived at through mysteries entered philosophy and continued to live on in that new form.

It is possible to include Khlebnikov's researches of the meaning of the initial consonant in the above-described relations. If we make an effort to interpret Khlebnikov's usage of initial consonant in Florenskiy's way, we would see that all words that begin with the same sound are

similar, ad that this can be understood in the sense that the word *imitates* the meaning of the initial consonant, or this can be understood as **participation** – that is to say, that all other parts of the word participate in the meaning of the initial consonant. There are many –*oum*-s in *Zangezi* but each imitate or participate in the meaning of the concrete initial consonant. So *goum* contents the meaning of *high, decoration of the sky, like stars,* because *g*, means high; but at the same time *goum* participates in the meaning of all other words that begin with the consonant *g*. And finally, the process can be described that the initial consonant *enters* into the word so become **present** in the word and it appears to be the inner form of the word.

We are dealing here with the question of language as mimesis and that question unavoidably leads to the question of transcendence and divinity – the philosophers of Plato's heritage and semioticians would also both agree with this.[369]

One thing is certain – for Khlebnikov the most important is the *initial principle* – that which in the first place "gives name" and thus determines the meaning of a word. The initiality principle was discovered by Jakobson as well.[370] The initiality principle is also relevant for mythical thinking – what is first, original, behaves as an *exemplary model,* forms and gives meaning to the world for the sake of everything coming later and continues to exist in life due to imitation, that is, continual repetition.

Florenskiy reveals a secret of the connection between the name and the named and hints that naming can influence man's destany, which was the moment of greatest importance to Khlebnikov – he wanted to discover the laws according to which an initial consonant determines the meaning of words and, by means of them, influences the world. For instance, in his poem *Ladomir*, Khlebnikov shows how *dvoryane* become *tvoryane* – and that this was how language regulated social relations. In the "super-tale" *Zangezi,* in *Plane 10*, a neological model is presented of the susbstitution of the inital consonant in words beginning with *b*, like *Bog, bogatyr', bozhar'* with the "star" consonant *m* (whose semantic field is divided into small parts or powers) – thus forming units like *mog, mogatyr', mozhar'*. In this way, Khlebnikov creates through the use of

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[369] Something about that in: GRIGORYEVA: 2003.
[370] JAKOBSON: 1956, p. 3. In this work he speaks of *distinctive feature theory* in language, often regarded as his greatest insight. He probably drew these conclusion under the influence of Khlebnikov's linguistic experiments. Jakobson gives examples of New York surnames like Bitter, Chitter, Ditter, Fitter, Gitter, Hitter, Litter, Mitter, Pitter, Ritter, S..., emphasizing the fact that those family names differ in their starting unit. That minimal starting unit of diffeence is characteristic here (somewhere it is only a b/p or d/t difference – the former consonants are voiced, whereas the latter ones are unvoiced).

poetic language a new order and a new realm of power established by Zangezi among his disciples, ousting the exhausted order of the old gods as well.

3.3. The Relationship between Number and Language

Ontologization, which is the key element in the valency of initial consonants, later spread to Khlebnikov's number theory. Khlebnikov derived the meaning of numbers from letters and for him the number *three* meant a negative movement, because it began with the consonant *t*, whereas number *two* means positive movement because it starts with the consonant *d*. Let us exemplify it:

Trata i trud i trenie, ,(Expenditure and labour and friction,)
Tekite iz ozera tri! (Flow from lake number three!)
Delo i dar – iz ozera dva! (Deed and gift – from lake number two!)[371]

It can be said that after the discovery of numbers, Khlebnikov started to give an advantage to numbers over words. In his as well as in Kharms' understanding of numbers, we can also find a feeling for the meonic element of numbers, as the unique numeric matter, something that plays an important part in Neoplatonism, for example.

Khlebnikov used numbers to discover the laws of history as well as to influence the future as he did with sounds. So, Khlebnikov's relation to numbers is the same as in mythical consciousness, as described by Mircea Eliade, in whose works numbers and measurements (linked with the Moon and the understanding of time as we have already written) express man's aspiration to be part of the cosmic rhythm. There are numerous works in which Khlebnikov describes his researches of numbers: in *The Teacher and the Pupil* (Uchitel' i uchenik) he writes about the rhythms the fates of peoples surrender to; in *The Conversation Between Two Persons* (Razgovor dvukh osob) he explains an ontological relationship between numbers and words: the number 7 is explained by the word *family* (Russian: number seven – *sem'*, family – sem'ya); in *The Law of Generations* (Zakon pokoleniya) he again speaks about time rhythms, etc.

In his book Henrik Baran writes how Khlebnikov obtained information that the number of the letters of the alphabet is connected to the phases of the Moon and postulates that Khlebnikov

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[371] KHLEBNIKOV: 2001, Vol. 1., p. 447.

read works by Gérard Encausse (usually known by his pseudonym "Papus") in Russian.[372] Whether Khlebnikov himself became connected with the more occult walks of life is not clear.

From the standpoint of the mythical function of the number, Cassirer regards the number as a sheer emanation of the laws of thinking. The understanding of the number in the Classical period, Neoplatonism and the Middle Ages mostly originates from Plato, who differed between mathematical and ideal numbers. Plato thought that numbers caused the appearance of sensory things (starting from Pythagoras and his understanding) – each number is the idea which has become sense when we interpret it in a shortened form.[373]

The question is thus raised of how to explain the relationship between words and numbers, illustrating theoretically Khlebnikov's poetic-philosophical works. There are many theories dealing with it, but here we shall adhere to the researches of Pavel Florenskiy, a spiritual fellow traveller of the avant-garde.

Florenskiy's number theory is inseparably connected to his onomatological research. It is also deeply permeated with Platonism. His starting point is that (Plato's) idea is not the abstraction, something separated, or some isolated being, yet it is like actual reality, something that connects and unites *many* in *one*. Very often the point of departure for his analysis is Plato's remark that the idea is: "μίαν διά πολλων" (Phileb, 14d, e, 15d; etc) *one in many*, or "εν καί πολλά" (Sophist, 253d) *one and many*.

In the book *Names*, Florenskiy writes: "The *number* is, from cosmological point of view, the same as is the *idea* from the ontological point, while the *name* expresses the idea from the pneumatological[374] point of view.[375] The material side of the number – *quantity*, in relation to its formal side – *quality*, is the same as for the idea: the material side of the idea is *number*, the formal side of the idea is *name*. The same duality develops the name. The name's material side is usia and formal hypostasis. We have four principles, so far, two in the outer world and two in the inner world: quality and quantity, usia and hypostasis. Above them, in pairs, stand two more principles that are in fact, supreme principles of these worlds. These are *number* and the *name*. And, finally, the last two principles are hierarchically subordinated to the supreme ontological principle – to the

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[372] About that see: BARAN: 2002, p. 264. Gérard Encausse, usually known by his pseudonym "Papus". Author of books on magic, the Kabbalah and the Tarot, and member of various occultist organizations at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Transalted into Russian in 1912, by A.V. Troyanovskiy, under the title *Magicheskie rasteniya*.

[373] Regarding the interpretation of the number in Plato's philosophy see: LOSEV, 1993(b), p. 606, 614.

[374]Term used by Florensky to express the divine presence in the name.

[375] FLORENSKY: 1993, p. 221.

idea. These altogether seven principles of knowledge are also principles of the being."[376] These categories are further deduced and connected with other universals, and develop a very complex system which goes from the top down, and by this descent becomes more particular and further from the original universality. So, by deducting from the high to the low, these universals become more and more abstract. Yet, all these parts in the same manner again become one – the idea from which they come from. Florensky presents this in the following way:

IDEA

Invariant of objectivity   Invariant of subjectivity

NUMBER   NAME

Quantity   Quality   Usia   Hypostasis

Such a system Florenskiy refers to as "negative philosophy". In this point we have to remember the apophatic theology of Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite, because Florensky most probably found the inspiration for his writing in these Neoplatonic-Christian texts.[377]

Florenskiy himself explains this phenomenon in the book *Names* as an "organic structure" in which the heart is the center of the blood system, and the closest veins have the biggest quantity of oxygen, while the farthest veins in this ramified system have less oxygen. But the blood from these far veins connects and flows creating thicker and bigger blood vessels and veins that, at the end, unity becomes obvious again. The same applies for the organic system that exists between the Absolute (the Supreme Idea) and the name, or language, believed Florenskiy.

Florenskiy **did not write on what was beyond the name or number**, as he thought that when a person went beyond intellect he found himself in the absolute silence of thoughts and of words. He stressed that the name is the highest level of knowledge achievable by words, while all other expressions of language are on the lower level of knowledge.

So, neither does Florenskiy try to discover *the source of all knowledge* nor to master it, as opposed to the avant-garde which aspires to it. He also stresses that word is not at the same ontological level as name; and that the Supreme Idea is neither name nor number. But, Khlebnikov and other avant-gardists did not see a difference between names and words, just as they could not

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[376] Ibid, and furter 222 – 223.
[377] In the third chapter of *The Mystical Theology* (MT, III)

determine the relationship between names and numbers but they believed, in accordance with mythical thinking, that there existed some *homologia entis,* a homological principle of family similarities of all existing thing, so that all words could be reduced to one *proto-word* or *proto-thing* all words and names develop from, which is possible to discover and by means of which it would be possible to create again. In the avant-garde poetics, that *proto-word* is equal to the *idea* shown on Florensky's scheme. **What was characteristic of the avant-garde is that it equalled the Absolute, Supreme Idea or Supreme Principle with the** *word* **and** *number.*

3.4. The Necessity of Stopping before the Apophatic Point

On the one hand, the second phase of the avant-garde longed for uniting with essence, and wanted to master *the proto-word, supra-word, original creative* word, but on the other in the last third phase, represented by the work of Daniil Kharms, the avant-garde showed a necessity of stopping before the apophatic point as demonstrated by Losev in his symbolic-apophatic theory of language. However, here we find similarities and differences between Losev's language theory from the book *Philosophy of the Name* and Kharms ideas. On the one hand,
Losev's apophatism is symbolic and he understands it as if some unknown X were behind it, but on the other hand Kharms discovers *zero* – behind which there might be nothing, thus corresponding more to some Buddhist renunciation or, conditionally said, "nihilism".

Through his works, Kharms expresses the thought that only by complete devaluation can man unite with the universe. His works represent the abandonment of the avant-garde project of "pagan" unity with the Absolute. As opposed to Khlebnikov, who believed in the possibility of discovering the secret of language creation, that is, the identification with the essence (like the second phase of the avant-garde), Kharms (like the third phase of the Avant-garde) believes in *the existence of separatedness* (sushchestvovanii v rozdelnnosti). What is also characteristic of Kharms is the idea of cognition through renunciation (ob soznanii posredstvom otricaniya) expressed in Kharms' "NET":[378]

I am the cause of everything, if I am NOT,

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[378] ZHAKKAR: Ibid, p. 255. „Ya prichina Vsego etogo, esli ya NET, / Ya znatok Vsego etogo, esli ya NET, /
Ya lyubovnik Vsego etogo, esli ya NET. / Absurdno byt', no ne byt'NET.“

I am the expert in everything, if I am NOT,

I am the lover of everything, if I am NOT,

It is absurd to be, but it is NOT not to be,"

That Kharms' renunciation reminds us of Malevich's Suprematist mirror (Suprematicheskoe zerkalo, 1922)[379], where we can also see one special form of apophatism which, it must be conditionally said, approaches Buddhism. Here Malevich proclaimed that God, soul, spirit, life, religion, technique, art, science, intellect, philosophy, endeavour, movement, space and time – ZERO. In Kharms and Malevich, renunciation gives a negative result: unlike in Losev and Neoplatonists, this renunciation does not produce joy due to an encounter in eternity but leads to an immobile void encompassing individum and in which he has freedom and where no hope is hinted at.

Kharms' apophatism is connected to the quest for God who, as in Khlebnikov, is equated with language. His apophatism is about the impossibility of finding the absolute word. In Kharms can be noticed two periods: first he goes through the dynamism phase and later through the phase of the shattering of all hopes. What we are talking about will best be illustrated by a letter, which Jaccar cites, written by Kharms in 1931 to Raisa Polyakova where Kharms writes of a sleepless night when he expected the relevation of words:

''Once I couldn't sleep the whole night (...). I knew that I should write something but I didn't know what. (...)

The night has already passed and trams have started to run but I haven't written a single word yet.

I got up and came to the window. I sat and started to look out of the window. At that moment I told myself: I am sitting and looking out of the window ...

But what am I looking at? I remembered: ''the window through which I am gazing the star". But I am not gazing the star now. I don't know what I am looking at. But what I am looking at is that word I couldn't write down."[380]

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[379] MALEVICH: 1923, p. 273.
[380] ZHAKKAR: Ibid, p. 256. „I vot odnazhdy ya ne spal tseluyu noch'. (...). Ya znal, chto mne nado napisat' chto-to, no ya ne znal chto. (...)
Uzhe noch proshla i poshli tramvai, a ya vse eshche ne napsal ni odnogo slova.
Ya vstal i podoshel k oknu. Ya sel i stal smotret' v okno. I vdrug ya skazal sebe: vot ya sizhu i smotryu v okono na ...

„Kharms was looking for that word all his life", even in the darkness of the 1930s and was afraid of losing it forever, Jaccar comments.[381] Jaccar noticed that Kharms's works cannot be observed as an attempt of *modernism to express the unexpressible,* but as *a successful expression of limitations and impossibilities of such work.* In other words, Kharms's works show a necessity of stopping in front of the apophatic point, as Losev spoke. But, we should immediately make a difference between idealistic philosophy and avant-garde thinking – on the one hand, Losev implies the Divine word as something unavoidable, just as Areopagite did, and does not despair of not being able to express it because it is enough for him just to know it in his mind, but on the other the Avant-garde poet remains disillusioned and hopeless. The Divine word can neither be found nor written and can be only attained through mystical experience with the Almighty. Kharms felt that but, as an Avant-gardist who initially craved for the unity in the Absolute and the penetration into the secret of creation, was not content with this discovery. However, as we have pointed out many times, his feeling of the world and the Absolute could be compared to both Christian and Oriental, particularly Buddhist, ones, with certain limitations which necessarily appear.

3.5. The world is me, but I am not the world

Like Malevich, Kharms felt unusually well the *game* of converting being into non-being as well as the relationship between essence and its energy; in general, that closeness to Neoplatonistic dialectical understanding imposes a possibility of comparing Kharms's opinion to Losev's philosophy of the name and language. We take the text which Jaccar cites emphasizing its importance.[382] It is the written work *World/Peace* (Мыр) which, at the time of the writing of Jaccard's book, was not published in Russian, only in Serbo-Croatian and French.[383] The work is dated 5th May 1930.

Jaccard explains that the very title *World/Peace* means "we" plus "peace" (мы + мир) and that it is about merging man with the universe:

No na chto zhe ya smotryu? Ya vspomnil: „okno, skvoz' kotoroe ya smotryu na zvezdu". No teper' ya smotryu cne na zvezdu. Ya ne znayu, na chto ya smotryu tepr'. No to, na chto ya smotryu, i est' to slovo, kotoroe ya ne smog napisat' ".

[381] Ibid. „Kharms iskal eto slovo vsyu zhizn'."

[382] ZHAKKAR: Ibid, p. 110, 111 and 112 and commentaries p. 344

[383] According to Jaccard it is the last text in the Kharms manuscript: OR RNB. F. 1232. Ed. Khr. 371.

"The World/Peace

I told myself that I see the world.

But the whole world was not available to my view and I could only see its parts.

Then I realized that I did not see separated parts but that I could see everything suddenly. In the beginning I thought that it was NOTHING.

But then I realized that it was the world and what I had seen before had not been the world. I always knew what the world was but what I had seen before I did not know even now. (...)

Then I realized that wherever I looked – there was the world around me. But there is no world any more. Only me.

Then I realized that I was the world.

But the world is not me.

Although, at that time, I was the world.

But the world was not me.

But I am the world.

But the world is not me.

But I am the world (...)"[384]

Jaccard explains this as an absurdity: first of all, the world is inaccessible to man in its universality, wholeness and man can only see its separated parts. This observation of the world can express what Mikhail Matyushin called a *broadened observation* (rasshirenoe smotrenie).

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[384] "MYR

Ya govoril sebe, chto ya vizhu mir. No ves' mir byl nedostupen moemu vzglyadu, i ya videl tol'ko chasti mira. (...)

No tut ja ponyal, chto ya ne vizhu chastey po otdel'nosti, a vizhu vse zaraz. Snachala ya dumal, chto eto NICHTO. No potom ponyal, chto eto mir, a to, chto ya videl ran'she, byl ne mir. I ya vsegda znal chto takoe mir, no, chto ya videl ran'she, ya ne znayu i seychas. (...)

Togda ya ponyal, chto pokuda bylo kuda smotret' – vokrug menya byl mir. A teper' ego net. Est' tol'ko ya.

A potom ya ponyal, chto ya i est' mir.

No mire to ne ya.

Khotya, v to zhe vremya, ya mir.

A mir ne ya.

A ya mir.

A mir ne ya.

A ya mir. (...)"

Here lies a danger because this can lead to the dispersion of man – the subject becomes the world and when he sees himself in that position he feels a fear of his own catastrophe. It is a stage in which man sees „nothing" or „everything suddenly". Kharms calls it *the endless non-being* (beskonechnym nebytiem). Kharms' *The World Not Me* (Mir ne ya) Jaccad interprets as a cry of despair - the subject has become part of infinitude but at that moment it approached zero, which leads to Kharms' feeling of absurdity.

However, we do not have to understand this as absurd. We can understand the lines cited from Kharms as an understanding of life dialectics in the spirit of Losev's philosophy. For Losev that dialectical relationship *I and the World* is harmonious; Losev knows that essence is uncomprehensimble and believes that the connections between the two are only *via energies*, never substantial and complete. So, if we explain Kharms's discovery using that philosophy, he simply speaks dialectically and accepts apophatism which is indispensable: *The world is me, but I am not the world.*

Religious apophatism differs from scepticism but in Kharms we can speak about both of them. Apophatic logos has a privileged relation to experience in which the personality of *the other* appears, in otherness which is unexploitable and cannot be exploited in the language-logical definition either. *The other* appears on the other and remains *the other* if the other does not reduce it to itself and vice versa; in that relation takes place the "radiation" of the idea.

3.6. Energetism, Communication, *Play*

In conclusion about Losev's philosophy of language and differences in relation to the poetics and art of the avant-garde, it is sufficient to note that Losev introduces the notion energitism which is very problematic, as indicated by Vladimir Mechenkov, particularly in the aspect of communication. In other words, it is not completely clear or is not an easily comprehesible concept in which *energy communicates*.[385] However, Losev introduced this notion in the works *Philosophy of the Name* and more in *The Thing and the Name* in order to, to some extent, bridge the gap which existed in his time, the age of the Avant-garde, between man and the Absolute or cosmos. The abandonment of the idea of the Absolute, and the overemphasizing the role of the subject Losev saw as a danger to man. That is why in his works he demonstrates how

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[385] MECHENKOV: 2004. 173–186.

the being "communicates". Finally, for him language is an ontological-communicative reflection of the personal nucleus of the being, which connected the Absolute Person of the Creator with the substational person of the human being.

From the philosophical point of view, we may regard the avant-garde linguistic procedures and the discoveries it made as unfinished or mostly unacceptable but, from the aesthetic point of view, its achievements are acceptable, as Jakobson asserted.[386] *Zaumnists* and Futurists studied poetic language and demonstrated an interest in a creative approach to language which can be considered as a kind of *play*. From the perspective of the microworld and the subject, we can understand the avant-garde way as an attempt at abandoning the traditional view of the word, particularly the poetic word or as a creative act enriching aesthetic expression. The avant-garde sense of the word brought a new moment in seeing reality, a freer relation to reality, which is quite a justifiable view.[387]

Dia – the Logical Nature of Avant-garde Creations

The avant-garde discovered that it could create and *play* only because everything it touched was *prepared in advance*. It returned to old tales which dealt with the idea that it was possible to treat the entire universe as a set of languages and messages (this was the idea of the Russian Symbolists as well). The idea of the universe that can be read in the languages of signs and symbols belongs to the most ancient mystical tradition, which includes the cognitive mysticism of Gnosticism and the Kabbalah, but this idea constitutes the very basis of contemporary semiotics as well.

The avant-garde faced a paradoxical situation in the world and language. It wanted to boycott language, but it happened to uncover certain secrets in language it had not had an inkling of. What happened was that language boycotted Dada and Kruchënykh. The semantic mechanism was at work. Khlebnikov's aim was achieved to a certain extent. The whole universe seems to be working as a mechanism producing languages and composing messages in them.

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[386] For Jakobson about that see: GLANC: 2005(a), p. 39. Many brought Khlebnikov's language understanding in connection to Potebnyas. See for example: W.G. Weststeijn: *Velimir Chlebnikov and the Development of Poetic language in Russian Symbolism and Futurism*, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 1983.
[387] MATHAUSER: 2005. p.15.

The mythical world of the avant-garde which we have tried to reconstruct in this paper illustrates an attempt at creating a universal language, an attempt of substituting man for the Creator, at making equal the Absolute and the word, an attempt of releasing man from the Earth's gravity, an attempt of changing man's state on the Earth, an attempt of regenerating the nature of art, etc. How was this all possible, or impossible? We have often cited the works of Mircea Eliade and showed the avant-garde as the product of an encounter between already realized forms and new forms in the stage of forming, in the *larval* stage as he terms it.[388] In the period of the liquidation of old time, all forms merge in darkness and the resultant chaos enables, without making any great effort, an automatic *coincidencia oppositorum* at all levels. The avant-garde felt that the moment of transition from one time and state into another had arrived and *played* with this.

We shall conclude by making an unusual comparison between the avant-garde and Indian religious thought. Indian philosophy understands space as a free manifestation of the divine and, finally, as its sense of *play*, states Eliade in his book *Méphistophélès et l'androgyne*. So, what appears as a paradox of Indian thinking regarding the idea of freedom coincides with the notion of "maya" - illusion and slavery. Eliade states that, in essence, it is enough to discover a deep sense of *divine play,* in order that man could find himself on the road to final liberation.[389] The avant-garde art and poetry also felt that it was necessary to *play* in order to be liberated.

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[388] ELIADE: 1959, p. 340 – 341.
[389] ELIADE: 1962, p. 40 – 41.

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RÉSUMÉ

This paper is trying to present how changes of mythology, in Losev's sense, influenced art, literature and attitude towards poetic language. The study presents the Avant-garde movements in all theirs heterogenic forms, as the art of the period of crises, which appears in European culture and brought big changes in the consciousness of people. By describing an artistic attitude towards space and time we give examples how this new consciousness dealt with the spatial and time relations. Also this paper deals with the universal myths that are shown on the examples of the Avant-garde works of art. The chosen myths should present a desire of the Avant-garde movements to rebuilt, reconstruct and understand the very essence of the language of art and poetry.

The Avant-garde art and literature cannot be understood if separated from the time when they appeared. Nevertheless, these movements carry in essence something that is generally characteristic of mythical thinking as well – that is, the periodical, instinctive return to essence and original purity with an aspiration to reconstruct the genetic moment and the act of creating. This phenomenon we analyze through myths that are omnipresent in European and other cultures and which appear in Avant-garde works as well.

In the first chapter *Theoretical and methodological approach* we explain the basic theories of the Avant-garde, its historical and cultural conditions and philosophical background as well as the theories of myth that we use to create a certain methodology to rely on.

The yearning of the Avant-garde for pure art (Malevich), pure poetry (Crnjanski) and pure word (Zaumnists) is the same as Husserl's yearning for building such cognitive methods which do not add anything new to the subject of thinking but make it possible for it to appear in our consciousness in its essential form.

This paper speaks about the Avant-garde as *historical Avant-garde* that appeared around the year 1910 and lasted until thirties years of the 20th century. We are aware, as Aleksandar Flaker and Yuriy Lotman were writing, that the Avant-garde does not create wholly-structured texts and does not tend to create complete style formations as structures of structures; it is anti-formative in its essence. However, a very important landmark that we want to stress, as Peter Bürger noticed, is that the Avant-garde does not create works but manifests something. Also, one of the essential characteristics of the Avant-garde is the heterogeneity of its phenomena. It seems we cannot talk

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about *the Avant-garde*, but about *the Avant-gardes*. We also present it in all of its varieties of forms as a sort of "the revolution of the spirit".

When we speak about historical Avant-garde and stress that it reflects the crisis of consciousness of its time, that enables us to talk about *the spirit of time* (Zeitgeist), as a sort of a "new time" felt by many. The spirit of the time brought the idea that the old world, old culture and old art had collapsed, even that they need to be destroyed, with an inherent need for renewal and regeneration. The whole Avant-garde can be understood in the framework of European culture according to *the law of entropy*, which is accepted more widely as the law of Chaos. That "chaos", which is often consciously created by artists, is understood here as a sort of positive negation. That opens space for accepting theories that speak about the necessity of the appearance of this law of entropy, described in the theories of René Thom, works of Pavel Florensky, semioticians Lotman and Uspenskiy and which is also one of the laws of both esoteric and many Oriental philosophies, especially Taoism.

In the chapter *Philosophical presumption on the Avant-garde condition* we try to see the Avant-garde within some wider changes that appeared in European culture and were recorded by some philosophies or described by psychologist Carl Gustav Jung.

The Avant-garde idea of the *aesthetic revolution* of the art and world had, as its background, two opposite processes that occurred in European culture: the Enlightenment project of general rationalization of man's world and also the *Oriental Renaissance*, in Gustav Shwabs terms, especially in western societies, which was followed by philosophies that discovered the importance of pagan-mythical background of European culture. In this paper we take into consideration Friedrich Nietzsche's attitude to the defense Eurocentrism, not from the standpoint of the Christian or Enlightenment Europe but from the standpoint of pagan-mythical origin and Martin Heidegger's speculations how to return to the primordial beginnings.

This study brings to light the period when the Avant-garde appears as a period of the crisis of science, as Husserl writes, and the crisis of mythology, in Losev's sense of understanding. All these theories and philosophical ideas explore the possibility to see that background of the Avant-garde art as it is moving along the *ratio – myth* axis. In its many forms the Avant-garde art recovers mythical thinking with a need to explain it consciously and use it for aesthetic purposes.

It is possible to speak that about the time of the Avant-garde as a sort of return to 'Paganism', or pre-Christian period, which Losev criticizes (within the framework of Russian culture), while Mircea Eliade considers it to be productive. Consequently, this study deals with both these attitudes.

Jungian concept of archetypes to a great extent explains big changes which occurred in the consciousness of people at the beginning of the twentieth century. Jung explains them with an assertion that metaphysical ideas are changeable and to understand these changes, it seems to be very useful to compare them with ancient, primitive and non-European cultures, religious and philosophical ideas. This is suggested in the works of Jung and Eliade and that is what many Avant-garde artists did. In the process of understanding the big changes that we are speaking about and the process of self-understanding, artists and poets borrow from Oriental and primitive cultures and religions. That is a big heritage that they left to later European cultures because today it is more clear that European culture will be obliged to carry on a conversation with other, non-European cultures if they do not want to be provincialised and limited to their own traditions.

In the *Theories of myth* is explained that this work establishes its methodological approach mainly on the basis of the works of Ernst Cassirer (*The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*), Aleksei

Losev (*Dialektika mifa, Problema simvola i realisticheskoe iskusstvo* and *Ocherki antichnogo simbolizma i mifologii*) and Mircea Eliade (*Myths, Dreams and Mysteries* and *Traité D'historie des Religions*).

From Cassirer we borrow form the *Mythical Thought,* the second volume of *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* his study on the forms of myth, especially mythical conception of space and time. His derivation of the genesis of basic forms of spiritual culture from mythical consciousness is generally accepted nowadays. However, Cassirer remained in the field of ancient religions and mythologies and we apply his researches to the Avant-garde and its age.

We accept Cassirer's idea that an attitude to the world is the result of basic and conscious reception of space. Any breaking down of space implies some breaking down in judgment (size, distance) -- in this way one gets a different meaning. The Avant-garde artists bring us back to those elementary facts of mythical thinking by studying their own sensual understanding of spatial existence (cubists, Khlebnikov) and by expanding this study to celestial phenomena and cosmos (Khlebnikov, Kharms, Vinaver etc). Artist and poets dealt with astrology and numerology (Khlebnikov, Kharms), studied Kabbalah and theosophy (Malaveich and many others), Taoism (Duchamp) etc. The reason why artists were so much involved in these studies lies in the desire to discover and consciously explain cosmic laws and their influence on human destiny and existence.

From Losev we borrow his theory of myth itself. For him – myth is a primordial reaction of consciousness to things, so that we can infer that myth represents a basic, the simplest, pre-reflexive, intuitive mutual relationship between man and things. This is exactly how the Aavant-garde art in many of its forms wanted to react to the world and art. Avant-garde thinking has a strong desire to establish and rebuilt, in that basic and intuitive way, at many levels, mythical unity that existed between the man and the world.

Further from Losev we borrow from his theory of the sociology of myth, from *The Dialectic of Myth*, what enables us to speak about Avant-garde, to a certain level, as about sociological phenomena. For him myth is not only a theogonic but also sociological phenomenon. Losev's conception of the sociology of mythology helps us to understand the Avant-garde works of art not only as an attempt to rebuilt some mythical thinking and establish that intuitive relationship between man and thing, but much more to understand the phenomenon of the Avant-garde movements as a part of the time when there happened a *change of mythology.*

Losev stresses that history is not governed by economy, science, politics, or the church but mythological forces which reflect different variants of the Being itself -- its simultaneous aspirations to the eternal and transitional. *History is governed and driven by mythological forces, whereas the spiritual and secular side of history, visible on the surface, are in a subordinate position to it,* thinks Losev. We accept Losev's ideas that real position in relation to mythology is not struggle against it as such nor a utopian desire to be liberated from it, but the real position lies in a transition from the ignorance of mythology to getting to know it to a possible extent.

The analyze of time and space in the works of the Avant-garde shows as that artists and writers felt and tried to understand the change of mythical forces and they special merit was in an attempt to work with these changes and to explain them consciously to some extent.

We borrowed from Mircea Eliade's phenomenological approach to the religion the idea that
the meaning of religion is "sui generic" and that it is irreducible. Based on his history of
religion researches there is no essential discontinuity in the religious life of mankind, so that

did not happen during the period of Christianity either. If accept Eliade's statement that each crisis is religious, than crisis that reflect the Avant-garde can be observed as a crises that have to do something with the onto-world of European culture.

Contrary to Cassirer and Losev, Eliade thinks that myth should not be identified so much with the notion *word* or *narration* but to understand it as a holy act or original event, that is why individual myths created by individual artists like Khlebnikov or Rastko Petrović principally do not have a wider echo – and that is why we do not describe that in this paper.

However, we rely on the other idea of Eliade that *the archaic spirituality* ruminates in man not as an act or a possibility man could achieve, but as a *creative nostalgia* appearing through art, science, mystique etc. We tried to trace how this creative nostalgia appears at the time of the Avant-garde which at the same time is going through *creation crisis*.

For the purpose of this work, in choosing the concrete myths to be connected with the Avant-garde, we rely on Eliade's book *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*. Myths or phenomenon with the mythical traits we formulate like this: the myth of the fight against the Sun, the myth of the Noble Savage, nostalgia for paradise, searching for the East, imitation patterns, the myth of Prometheus, deliverance from gravity, the myth of the magic flight and the revival of Mother Earth.

In the second chapter **Mythical world of the Avant-garde** in the first two sub-chapters we speak about how changes of mythology and science were reflected in the artistic presentation of **Space and Time** in visual art and literature.

The theory of the forth dimension, especially presented in the work of an American theosophist Charles Hinton, *The Fourth Dimension* (1904), opened numerous discussions in science and philosophy, but it had even more influence among artists who started to speak about the new space-time dimension. For painters, this new discovery meant the appearance of two new phenomena - static and dynamic spatial system (space *in* and space *around*). On the question – if the object has absolute form, cubists answered – no. There are as many forms as there are observation plans. Lengths in space and duration in time do not have absolute but relative character since they are replacing or increasing dependence on speed, moving direction and the point from which the system is observed. Therefore, each system has its own time and own space. Cubists were the first to start thinking that *depth* could be reconstructed in the consciousness of an observer instead of a painting. The depth that painters are talking about, provoked by the same discoveries in mathematics and physics, becomes spiritual depth for Florenskiy. The depth of spirit Florenskiy is writing about is an attempt of the reconstruction of long disregarded potentials in man and represents a call for widening people's consciousness.

The idea of multidimensional space guided Khlebnikov when he invented *super saga* (sverkhpovest'). He disclaimed that he wanted word, in its liberation and creation of new dimensions, to follow painting. His famous poem *Bobeobi...* represents this attempt to imitate cubistic techniques by words.

Khlebnikov explains the *inner form of voices* using space and time relations that enable graphical presentation of voices. Khlebnikov (re)constructs moving of consonants through space. His researches in the field of spaciously understood language are not scientific, they are more quasi-scientific but certainly do not remain only in the field of aesthetics.

As the spirit of relativity spread throughout the 20th century, numerous typologies of space have been made until now according to character, dimensions, structure, psychological content, spiritual content etc so that space has become heterogenic.

The study of the time in the works of the Avant-garde is even more complex. We dare to speak that around the time when the Avant-garde appears, some sort of exhaustion of the old world and time was felt by many.

James H. Billington indicates that *apocalypticism* is one of the landmarks of the first and the second decades of the twentieth century in Russia. Moreover, that feeling appeared in almost all areas prevailed by Judeo-Christianity, testified by the works of Mircea Eliade. As opposed to this, for Khlebnikov and Kruchënyh the end has already happened, as they present in the concept of the "time from its end" (mirskontsa). With this concept of initial future time Kruchënyh and Khlebnikov oppose eschatologism and the finality of symbolism and, generally, all apocalyptic ways of thinking of their time.

When three forms of thinking - gnoseological, ontological and avant-garde, are generally observed, we can notice the following differences: gnoseological time is an irretrievable process, time flows linearly like the past, present or future; ontological time is eternity; avant-garde time is a distant past, prehistorical, precultural or unknown future, post cultural and post historical time.

However, here we want to emphasize that the Avant-garde discovers *the very nature of time* partly thanks to the theory of relativity and revives ancient classical knowledge according to which *real time is always unhomogeneous* – it can be prolonged and shortened, is relative and conditional. The Avant-garde felt that time oscillates between the categories of final and non-final, that it is dialectical, containing simultaneously two opposites. To the question - what is beyond the end of time - the Avant-garde answered: time again. Realizing that the Avant-garde started to shorten, accelerate and turn time in its works of art.

We also reflect on Eliade's description of time. He states that the mythical-religious traditions are connected with cosmic-historical cycles and originate from the phases and rhythms of the Moon. These traditions carry an idea of the destruction and regeneration of both small and big time cycles. Calendar, time rhythms and numbers themselves, being of great interest for Khlebnikov, are connected to these lunar cycles. Lunar symbolic is dominant in Crnjanski's literary works as well.

Nevertheless, the Avant-garde creations shows interest in lunar rhythms and symbols as well as a tendency to transcend or ignore lunar state – for example, by studying the laws of numbers and time rhythms Khlebnikov wanted to overcome time. It is quite certain that he used numerology, Kabbalah, mathematical number theories as well as Pythagorean numerology. He was keen on oriental cultures, Indian in particular, or Egyptian as well as Slavic ancient past and time rhythm in their folklore and religion.

From Eliade's studies we borrow the description of big and small time rhythms well known to many mythologies. There is a cycle of time known as the *Great year* (the name used by ancient Greeks). That Great year lasted from the Creation of the World and finished with Chaos, that is, with simple blending of all things. In many mythologies cosmic cycle includes: Creation, Existence (it is history, spending, destruction), the Return to Chaos (*ekpyrósis* in Greeks, *ragnarök* in Germans, *pralaja* in Hinduism, *apokalipsa,* in Christians). The Great year behaves to a year as a year to a month or a day.

In many myths unlimited freedom, manifested also in carnivals and similar holydays, appears as an important feature of Eden time. We believe that to a certain extent it is possible to speak about the Avant-garde, as about the art of a transition from a great time cycle to the other one. By relying on theoretical works of Eliade and Bakhtin in the sub-chapters **Carnival and Chaos** we speak about the Avant-garde movements in this way.

Many unusual phenomena appear at the beginning and also at the opposite end of time. Blending of species, confusion of forms, lack of rules - all of that reminds us of the Avant-garde art. Forms dilute somehow in the Avant-garde, in literary genres and narrative thread lose themselves, language is lost turning itself into original onomatopoeic sounds and stammering of a man who has not learnt grammatical rules yet; in painting clear forms are lost, painting itself formless figures blend with the space surrounding them.

All these phenomena manifesting a transition from one time cycle to the other occur periodically in carnival festivities which themselves signify the end of one period and the beginning of the new one. If we understand the Avant-garde as an art which occurs between two (great) time cycles, then we shouldn't be surprised if the art contains many forms of carnival art. Petar Bürger's theory, as many others, defined the Avant-garde as a *total inversion* of European culture and institutions.

Mirce Eliade, in an interesting way, speaks of those dark eras, the epochs of great degeneration and disintegration. He described them with the symbolic of a *larva* in darkness that will later make the creation of new forms possible. Such ages get transhistorical meaning because it is in such moments of history that there is the largest accumulation, although balance has been disturbed in many ways.

However, when comparing the Avant-garde behaving with carnival's behavior, we notice that it does not have that essential contact with life, but feels a great need for it. One thing they have in common - negation in carnival culture is always affirmation and so is it with the Avant-garde in most of its forms.

On the basis of Bakhtin's classification we have made our own classification of carnival forms and manifestations common to the Avant-garde and carnival. We get the following classification: *ritual spectacles*; *parodies*; *the grotesque*; *vulgarity, swearwords and free street jargon in literature*; *dominancy of feminine, material and corporeal*; *dehierarchization*; *ousting and devaluation*.

For example, the Avant-garde in Serbian literature revived parody. Miloš Crnjanski, in the collection of lyrical poetry *Lyrics of Ithaca* (Lirika Itake, 1918) parodies a large number of lyrical genres. Vinaver's *Panthology of new Serbian Absinthelyric* (*Pantologija novije srpske pelengirike*, 1920) turns upside-down and ridicules the whole Serbian poetry.

The Avant-garde brought into literature public display of vulgarities and free popular carnival speech in which swearwords often have a positive regenerating meaning. The symbolism of *a donkey* which, according to Bakhtin, is one of the oldest and liveliest symbols of the material-corporeal "down", which devalues but also regenerates is present in avant-garde. In the Russian Avant-garde there was an artistic group called *Donkey's Tail*, (Oslinyy khvost) created from the most radical members of the Jack of Diamonds (Bubnovyy valet, 1909) group.

The genesis of swearwords, in the conditions of primitive communication, mainly had a magic and witchcraft character. What was of particular importance is that during ancient period there were swearwords addressed to deities which were part of laughter religious cults. Those swearwords were ambivalent - shattering and destroying they simultaneously regenerated and renewed. The Avant-garde use them in its artistic communication with the same aim.

The periodical ousting of rulers or those in power, the devaluation of everything that was culturally valuable the annulment of social condition and relations was always part of Saturnalias and similar festivities. The shattering of all prohibitions and, at the same time, the emergence of their opposites, were aimed at the decomposition of the world and its renewal, that is the phenomenon often explained by Eliade, the mythical moment of uniting the beginning (chaos) and

the end (deluge, ekpyrósis, Apocalypse). Here devaluation is a process in which everything that is spiritual, ideal, abstract in the usual order, becomes material-corporeal.

Within the Avant-garde carnivalization and dehierarchization of culture, it is worth mentioning the perversion and devaluation of greatest Christian values. *Prayer* in which Crnjanski parodies Paternoster (Our Father), Christ is described as Don Quixote. Concerning the analyzed verses by Crnjanski we are made to cast a glance at the question of the ambivalence of mythical thinking.

In the chapter Chaos we continue to speak about some sort of carnival behaving by artist and when they consciously created the state of ''chaos'' or supported the very idea of chaos. That was widely used in the Yugoslav Avant-garde. This actualization of the mythical chaos is aimed at creating the state from which the act of creation is possible. Masks and performances of Dadaist for example, represent to a certain extent ritual return to cosmic night in which all forms lost their outlines and merge together.

We spoke here about the *Myth of the Fight against the Sun* in the context of Oprea *Victory over the Sun*. Celestial bodies represent some coordinate points of each mythology, their deposition in avant-garde works can represent beginning of new ontology, proclaimed by man, as by Russian futurists. In this opera man openly takes over the act of creation of onto-world, something unknown to human civilization till then. In addition, *Victory over the Sun* one can read as a victory over eschatology and apocalypse. Further in this paper we consider *the Sun* and *the Fire* as elements of the same paradigmatic order (in Khlebnikov and works of Zenitists).

Reviving of lunar symbolic and appearance of the sun fighting myth can appoint the change or maybe the fight between two opposite cosmic principles represented by the Sun and the Moon.

The figure of the **Noble Savage** became important for the Avant-garde art which was turned into primitivism. This mythical archetype played a significant importance in Germany at the turn of the 18 century, the time when *oriental renaissance* began to flourish, as called by Raymond Schwab. The Noble Savage perfectly fits in the ideology of Johann Gottfried von Herder and his predecessor Giambattist Vico who justified Barbarism, admired folk poetry as a primitive language of humanity and believed in the revitalizing potential of primitivism. All of that is possible to find in the Avant-garde works.

Khlebnikov and Rastko Petrović link this mythical archetype with the Slavic past. In their writings mythological time of ancient Slavs was *illud tempus,* that is, a kind of sacral time. Rastko Petrovic's Noble Savage was a Slav who lived prior to Christianity and was a sort of pre-Slavic type. This poet also had an idea to search for a similar type of Savage in his contemporary time and this brought him to Africa, as negrophilia was in fashion in the French milieu where Petrović was educated in the 1920s.

The space and time Petrović's Savage lived in reminds us very much of the description of the prehistoric state, the one Eliade sees as the age of Uranus's rule in ancient mythology, when everything was possible. In that Petrović's *illud tempus,* like in the mythical time explained by Eliade, the good and the evil were not distinguished - it was possible to commit murder, incest, bacchanalias - all those things were only manifestations of life. In his stories appears a phenomenon Eliade links to Uranus's age, and calls it *original Chaos*, we have talked about.

The Noble Savage appears as the most important figure in the movement Zenitizm, that is, a figure of *Barbarogenius* whose main attribute is *decivilizator.* He is against European civilization just as his friend and fellow-traveller Zenithist who sets himself tasks of reaching for heavens and the sun at its zenith. But unlike the classical Noble Savage, this one is filled with hatred as he despises Europe.

Further we explain some elements of the Avant-garde **nostalgia for paradise** as some of the artist had a need to pose certain *specific marks,* the same as *the men of paradisiacal epoch.*

Eliade explains that before the fall *in illo tempore* man and animals communicated. Later only a shaman was able to step into that primordial world of man's oneness with Nature, the garden of Eden. Here an unusually important moment occurred, the moment that obsessed the Avant-garde, especially Khlebnikov, the greatest researcher in the area of poetical-mythical language. His *bird language, star language* and all other he had invented, are his 'shamanic' attempts to reconstruct these primordial languages, which will make the return to paradisiac state possible.

Constant destruction of the world and new reunion Khlebnikov is making by using language, representing by that the need for reconstruction of mythical age, in which first act of Creation by Word occurred. Hansen-Löve also explains that for Khlebnikov the time will be completed when everything returns to the stage when earth was eatable and language was totally natural, universal, creative; the stage in which people and animals were friends – it is finding of the lost paradise.

In the sub-chapter **Searaching for the East** is explained that Nostalgia for Paradise lead Avant-garde artists, philosophers and theologians sometimes to the ancient past and mythical age of their nations, and sometimes to contemporary Oriental cultures and India. The myths of the quest for a transcendental country, omnipresent in European tradition, are also present in the Avant-garde. The knowledge about Oriental philosophies and religions came to the Avant-garde directly through Oriental poetry (the Avant-garde poets, like Crnjanski and Ezra Pound, were among the first translators of Chinese and Japanese poetry) theosophy, Schopenhauer's philosophy etc.

In the chapter Chaos and some others we mentioned that the Avant-garde crated the state of chaos sometimes with the idea to reconstruct the first act of creation. The need to create is obvious in the Avant-garde works. So in this paper, in the sub-chapter **Imitation patterns** we asked the question whether the creation, the act of creation, was possible in man.

In Vinaver's *Manifesto of the Expressionistic School* is mentioned a need for creation, Malevich was particularly interested in creating *ex nihilo,* and many other were writing and thinking of this argument. That is way we go back to the history of aesthetic ideas in European culture to see what is the origin of the idea of artistic creation and whether it is possible to create through art or a destiny of artists is just to imitate. We can infer that imitation was an essential part of religious behavior in ancient times but when it entered art it lost its original meaning. The Avant-garde was against mimesis in art but understood that it was necessary to master the techniques of imitation of cult or shaman acts, in order that the act of creation could be reconstructed. As a result, Malevich's criticism of art is similar to that of Plato from the The 10th chapter of *The Republic.*

Tatarkiewicz's and Losev's works on the history of the aesthetic ideas explain that original imitation wasn't an imitation in the sense of copying but an expression, similar to the function of an actor, not a copyist. So the original mimesis was a ritual act. A shaman imitated the act of creation returning through that act *in illo tempore.* The Avant-garde was interested in that act and, in that sense, it accepts mimetic in art.

We take it that some forms of the **Prometheanism** were one of the basic marks of the period around revolutions in Russia, as for example the need of the man-artist to be lifted above destiny, rebellion against the Absolute and previous order of things, the need to liberate, to elevate, to overcome his earthly existence and to get closer to cosmic powers.

We bring to light that Prometheus, who was previously considered as a fire fetish and the protector of people, presents matriarchate as a son of Titans, who were direct descendents of earth in the Classical period. This Apostle of individualism and rationalism in the Avant-garde time gets elements Plato once gave him when he was understood as the symbol of a technical civilization.

During the Avant-garde different types of Prometheanism can be classified. In Marinetti's works, certain *mechanical-technical* Prometheanism appears with the machine, car or anything that moves by the help of modern technique liberation force that should transform society and art. Tatlin's Prometheanism is *utiltary-constructivistic*, it personifies the effort for art to overcome earthly space. In essence, Malevich's *cosmic Prometheanism* is similar – he predicted overcoming the energies which control man's existence on earth and help to overcome man's history. He also had a vision of a new cosmic age.

Promethean deliverance from „chains" is often explicitly emphasized in the works of Serbian Avant-garde. Vinaver, writing *The Manifesto of Expressionism* describes entire cosmological drama in an artistic way: disorder of balance leads to chaos, but that chaos is necessary because it leads further in to deliverance that gives man more space to create. That significant moment – deliverance of elemental forces, Vinaver symbolically presents in the character from national literature - *Baš Čelik*, who is Serbian national Prometheus.

Especially on the subject of "fight against gravity" or, deliverance from the force of gravity, we speak about Malevic's and Khlebnikov's work as well. The poet created in the spirit of his poetics opposite pair *earth gravity - star gravity*, he explained it like this: as the things attracted by the gravity are falling on the ground, thus the thoughts overcome by the star force are flying toward the sky.

With the idea of deliverance we further connect the **Myth of the Magic Flight** that the Avant-garde revives. It is a well known and widespread myth which, most probably, has eastern origins, described in the book of Mircea Eliade as the need to establish communication between heaven and earth, thus annulling the consequences of *the fall* and it is part of human desire to return to heavenly state.

In the sense of new Prometheanism, Zenitists use modern technique to fly. An airplane was an important symbol for the members of this movement whose goal was to soar high into the sky, and believed that by using the plane they could get closer to the *Zenith* not only spiritually but also materially. With that logic they spoke that the spiritualization of matter is possible. *Letatlin*, a project by Tatlin, is a part of the same paradigm, and it is totally suitable for our hypothesis that the Avant-garde develops the line that connects mythical past and technically perfect future.

In one of the sub-chapters we spoke about the revival of **Mother Earth** and, in connection to this, about the establishing a new relationship between heavenly and earthly principles. By expressing an interest in the mythical age, the Avant-garde art shows a need for the return to the Earth and matter or, we can also say, a need for establishing a new relation between heavenly and earthly principles.

Nevertheless, Eliade warns that the nostalgia for a return to the Earth-Mother sometimes becomes a collective phenomenon; and then it is a sign that the society has given up the struggle and is nearing disappearance. It is hard to say whether we can talk about such a phenomenon within the framework of the culture were Avant-garde movements appear, but it is certain that some kind of new interest in the Earth and earthly, feminine principle appears.

For example, in European tradition, language is of heavenly origin, the work of the Father, while in Khlebnikov's works is emphasized a language research within the *real* world, as part of organic life, the fruit of the Earth and Mother.

Just as we explained the roots of choosing the *real world*, in artists' beliefs we also find that, under the veil of modern civilization and the objective world tied to it, is hidden a true world or, to be precise, *the body of the Earth*, Mother earth, which does not consist of dead, mechanical objects but of live limbs of the universal body. The Earth consists of things just as the body (of man or beasts) consists of limbs and organs or a word (text) consists of morphemes, phonemes, letters. In ancient mythology and folklore Mother Earth does not speak the objective language (of signs and symbols), It represents the totality of all *personal names of things* or *words-things*. This is obvious in literary works of Russian futurist-archaists.

In the last chapter we briefly bring into connection **the mythical word ofthe Avant-garde as the background for the experiments with poetic language.**

The Avant-garde experiments in the field of poetic language inevitably lead to the question of transcendence and the avant-garde onto-world. We tried to explain the selected phenomena by means of the theories they correspond to in a certain manner, by accepting mythical thinking.

For Khlebnikov was characteristic the need for aesthetic change of the world by means of language, which is close to a need for mastering the magical function of language, identifying words with things. But in the later phase of the Avant-garde in the works of Daniil Kharms there are signs of abandoning the Avant-garde project, giving up a desire to conquer the transcendental world in the spirit of pagan rituals and accepting the fact that apophatism is indispensable for the poetic as well philosophical understanding of language.

For example, we tried briefly to compare Cassirer's and Khlebnikov's researches. Cassirer made a typologization of language according to which a language developed from mimetic to analogical (which exists today) and later to symbolical as its final phase. Cassirer experiences mimetic linguistic expression as the closest to *the beginning of the word*, the field Khlebnikov intensively dealt with.

Khlebnikov discovered what ethnology and linguistics later spoke about – the existence of some common traits of language hidden in words from time immemorial. For example: labial resonant sounds signify a direction towards the speaker, whereas explosive sounds signify a direction from the speaker. He uses this knowledge in two procedures when he created new language: in the inner declension - that is, semantic valency of vowels (his example is: *bobr/babr*); and for the construction of „star language" - which is basically a semantic valency of initial consonants.

We also briefly bring in contact initial consonant in Khlebnikovs understanding whit Florenskiys onomatology. Each initial consonant is linked to a *fateful meaning* in relation to other phonemes of the same word. As a result, all words beginning with the same consonant are semantically connected just as, according to Florenskiy's research all people having the same *name* are similar, that is, have similar destinies. So, we connected Platos theory about the idea and it appearance, whit the magical word of names, as Florenskiy did, and we compare this with Khlebnikovs poetic experiments with the initial consonant.

Ontologization, which is the key thing in the valency of initial consonant, later spread to Khlebnikov's number theory. He derives the meaning of numbers from letters. To explain the relationship between words and numbers in Khlebnikov's poetic works we again apply researches of Pavel Florensky. While Florenskiy does not try to discover the Supreme Idea, in Plato's sense the source of all knowledge, nor to master it, Khlebnikov aspires to it. While Florenskiy stresses that *word* is not at the same ontological level as *name*; and that Supreme Idea is neither name nor number, Khlebnikov and other Avant-gardists did not make a difference between names and words

just as they could not determine the relationship between names and numbers but they believed, in accordance with mythical thinking, that there exists some *homologia entis,* a homological principle of family similarities of all existing things, so that all words can be reduced to one *proto-word* or *proto-thing,* which is possible to discover and by means of which it is possible to create again. In the Avant-garde poetics that *proto-word* is equal to the idea shown on Florenskiy's scheme. The possible conclusion appears that it was characteristic of the Avant-garde to equal the Absolute, Supreme Idea or Supreme Principle with the *word.*

To some extent, as we said, the Avant-garde had the phenomenological view of the essence of language, things and phenomena. It discovered that every essence has its own forms of self-understanding. In the Avant-garde exist ''word itself'', ''art itself'' and, especially in Kharms's works, ''object itself''.

While one stream in the Russian Avant-garde longed for uniting with essence and wanted to master *the proto-word, supra-word, original creative word* (Khlebnikov did this in particular), the other stream, appeared in the last phase of the Avant-garde, represented by a Daniil Kharms's work, showed a necessity of stopping in front of the apophatic point as demonstrated by Losev in his symbolic-apophatic language theory. However, here we also find similarities and differences: on the one hand, Losev's apophatism is symbolic and he understands it as if some unknown X were behind it, but on the other Kharms discovers *zero* – behind which there might be nothing, thus corresponding more to some Buddhist renunciation or, conditionally said, ''nihilism''.

Even though the Avant-garde project whit language was not successfully accomplished, it faced a paradoxical situation. In the first phase of avant-garde it wanted to boycott language but it happened to uncover certain secrets in language it had not had an inkling of. What happened was that language boycotted Dada and Kruchёnykh because some semantic mechanism is working in language which is still hard to explain. Khlebnikov's aim has been achieved to a certain extent because zaum-language echoes in us.

RÉSUMÉ

Tato studie se snaží ukázat, jak změny mytologie, v Losevově pojetí, ovlivnily umění, literaturu a přístup k básnickému jazyku. Studie prezentuje avantgardní hnutí ve všech jeho heterogenních formách jako umění času krizí, které se objevily v evropské kultuře a přinesly velké změny do lidského vědomí. Popisem uměleckého postoje k prostoru a času uvádíme příklady, jak toto nové vědomí zacházelo s prostorovými a časovými vztahy. Tato studie se také zabývá obecnými mýty, které jsou ukazovány na příkladech avantgardních děl. Vybrané mýty by měly ukázat touhu avantgardních hnutí přestavět, rekonstruovat a pochopit podstatu jazyka umění a poezie.

Avantgardní umění a literaturu nemůžeme pochopit bez znalosti dobových souvislostí. Tato hnutí nicméně obsahují ve své podstatě něco, co je charakteristické pro mýtické myšlení jako takové - periodický, instinktivní návrat k základní a původní čistotě se snahou o obnovení významu vývoje a procesu tvorby. Tento fenomén analyzujeme prostřednictvím mýtů, které jsou všudypřítomné v evropských a dalších kulturách a objevují se také v avantgardních dílech.

V první kapitole *Teoretický a metodologický přístup* vysvětlujeme základní přístupy avantgardy, její historické a kulturní předpoklady a filozofické pozadí, jakož i teorie mýtu, kterých využíváme k vytvoření metodologie, o kterou se můžeme opřít.

Touha avantgardy po čistém umění (Malevič), čisté poezie (Crnjanski) a čistém slově (Zaumnisté) je táž jako Husserlova touha po vybudování takových kognitivních metod, které by zkoumanému jevu nic nepřidávaly, ale naopak mu umožňovaly zjevit se v našem vědomí ve své prapůvodní formě.

Tato studie mluví o avantgardě jako o *historické avantgardě*, která se objevuje kolem roku 1910 a trvá až do třicátých let 20. století. Jsme si vědomi, jak napsali Aleksandar Flaker a Jurij Lotman, že avantgarda nevytvořila plně strukturované texty a nesměřovala k vytvoření celistvých stylových útvarů jako struktury struktur, je ve své podstatě anti-formativní. Nicméně velmi podstatným principem, který chceme zdůraznit a kterého si povšiml Peter Bürger, je, že avantgarda nevytváří díla, ale cosi manifestuje. Jedním z hlavních charakteristických rysů avantgardy je také heterogenita jejích projevů. Zdá se, že nemůžeme mluvit o „avantgardě", ale o „avantgardách". Také ji představujeme ve vší její rozmanitosti forem jako druh „revoluce ducha."

Mluvíme-li o historické avantgardě a zdůrazníme-li, že odráží krizi vědomí své doby, umožňuje nám to mluvit o „duchu doby" (Zeitgeist) jako o řádu „nové doby", který mnozí pociťují. Duch doby přinesl myšlenku, že starý svět, stará kultura a staré umění se zhroutilo, že dokonce musí být zničeny se základní potřebou obnovy a regenerace. Celé avantgardě můžeme rozumět v rámci evropské kultury podle *zákona entropie*, který je přijímán více jako zákon chaosu. Tento „chaos", který často vědomě vytvářejí umělci, je tady chápán jako druh pozitivní negace. To otevírá prostor pro akceptování teorií, jež mluví o nutnosti zjevení tohoto zákona entropie, popsaného v teoriích René Thoma, pracích Pavla Florentského, sémioticích Lotmana a Uspenského, a který je také jedním ze zákonů jak esoterické, tak mnoha orientálních filozofií, především taoismu.

V kapitole *Filosofické předpoklady podmínek avantgardy* se pokoušíme vidět avantgardu v rámci širších proměn, které se objevily v evropské kultuře a které byly zaznamenány některými filozofiemi nebo popsány psychologem Jungem.

Avantgardní myšlenka *estetické revoluce* umění a světa měla jako své pozadí dva protikladné procesy, které se vyskytly v evropské kultuře: všeobecný racionalismus osvícenského světa a také *orientální renesanci* podle terminologie Gustava Schwabe, zejména v západní společnosti, která byla následována filozofy, kteří objevili důležitost pohansko-mytického původu evropské kultury. V této studii také bereme zřetel na Nietzschův přístup k obraně evropocentrismu, ne z hlediska křesťanského nebo z hlediska osvícenství v Evropě, ale z hlediska pohansko-mytického, a na úvahy Martina Heideggera o tom, jak se vrátit k prvotním počátkům.

Tato studie objasňuje období, ve kterém se avantgarda objevuje jako období krize vědy, jak píše Husserl, a krize mytologie, v Losevově pojetí. Všechny tyto teorie a filosofické ideje otevírají možnost vidět původ avantgardního umění jako pohyb po ose *ratio – mýtus*. Ve svých mnoha podobách odkrývá avantgardní umění mytické myšlení s potřebou vysvětlit ho vědomě a využít jej k estetickým účelům.

O avantgardním období je možné mluvit jako o způsobu návratu k pohanství, nebo k předkřesťanskému období, což Losev kritizuje (v rámci evropské kultury), zatímco Mircea Eliade to považuje za vhodné. Proto tato práce pracuje s oběma těmito přístupy.

Jungovo pojetí archetypů ve velké míře vysvětluje velké změny, které se objevují v lidském vědomí na počátku dvacátého století. Jung je vysvětluje tvrzením, že metafyzické ideje jsou proměnlivé a k porozumění těchto změn se zdá být velmi výhodné je porovnat se starodávnými, primitivními a neevropskými kulturami, náboženskými a filozofickými myšlenkami.
Toto navrhují Jung a Eliade ve svých pracích a přesně to mnoho avantgardních umělců dělalo.
Při snaze o porozumění velkým změnám, o kterých mluvíme, a v procesu sebeporozumění umělci a básníci čerpají z orientálních a primitivních kultur a náboženství. Zanechali tím velké dědictví pro pozdější evropskou kulturu, protože dnes je mnohem zřetelnější, že evropská kultura bude nucena pokračovat v komunikaci s dalšími,
neevropskými kulturami, jestliže nebude chtít být provinční a ohraničenou ve svých vlastních tradicích.

V *Teoriích mýtu* se vysvětluje, že tato práce postavila svůj metodologický přístup hlavně na pracích Ernsta Cassirera *(Filosofie symbolických forem),* Alexeje Losova *(Dialektika mifa, Problemy simvola i realističeskoje iskustvo* a *Očerki antičnogo simbolizma i mifologii*) a Mircey Eliadeho *(Myths, Dreams and Mysteries* a *Traité D'histoire des Religions*).

Od Cassiera si z druhého dílu *Filosofie symbolických forem* vypůjčujeme jeho studie o mytických formách myšlení, zejména pojednání o mytickém chápání prostoru a času. Jeho odvození vzniku základních forem duchovní kultury od mytického vědomí je dnes obecně

přijímán. Cassier nicméně zůstává na poli starodávného náboženství a mytologií a my používáme jeho výzkumy pro studium avantgardy a její doby.

Přijímáme Cassierovu myšlenku, že přístup ke světu je výsledkem základního a vědomého vnímání prostoru. Jakékoliv rozbití prostoru implikuje nějaký omyl v úsudku (velikost, vzdálenost) – tímto způsobem se vytváří jiný význam. Avantgardní umělci nám přinášejí tato základní fakta mytického myšlení studiem svého smyslového porozumění prostorové existenci (kubismus, Chlebnikov) a rozšířením této studie k nebeským úkazům a kosmu (Chlebnikov, Charms, Vinaver atd.). Umělci a básníci se potýkají s astrologií a numerologií (Chlebnikov, Charms), studiem kabaly a teosofie (Malevič a mnoho dalších), taoismu (Duchamp) atd. Důvod, proč se umělci tak zapojují do těchto snah, spočívá v touze prozkoumat a vědomě vysvětlit nebeské zákony a jejich vliv na lidský osud a existenci.

Od Loseva si půjčujeme jeho teorii mýtu. Pro něho je mýtus primární reakcí vědomí na věcí, proto můžeme vyvodit, že mýtus reprezentuje základní, nejjednodušší, před-reflexivní, intuitivní vzájemný vztah mezi člověkem a věcmi. To je přesně způsob, jakým chce avantgardní umění v mnoha svých formách reagovat na svět a umění. Avantgardní myšlení má silnou touhu vytvářet a přestavovat, v základní a intuitivní podobě, na mnoha úrovních mýtickou jednotu, která existuje mezi člověkem a světem.

Dále si půjčujeme od Loseva jeho teorii sociologie mýtu z *Dialektika mifa* (*Dialektiky mýtu*), což nám umožňuje mluvit o avantgardě do určité míry jako o sociologickém jevu. Pro něj mýtus není pouze teogonický, ale také sociologický jev. Losevova koncepce sociologie mýtu nám pomáhá porozumět avantgardním dílům nejen jako pokusu o přestavbu nějakého mýtického myšlení a o vytváření intuitivního vztahu mezi člověkem a věcí, ale také mnohem lépe porozumět fenoménu avantgardních hnutí jako součásti doby, ve které došlo k proměně mytologie.

Losev zdůrazňuje, že historie není řízena ekonomií, vědou, politikou nebo církví, ale mytologickými silami, které reflektují různé varianty bytí samotného – jeho souběžnou snahu po věčnosti a přechodnosti. *Historie je řízena a vedena mytologickými silami, zatímco duchovní a světská stránka historie, viditelná na povrchu, je k němu v podřízeném vztahu,* domnívá se Losev. My přijímáme Losevův názor, že správný postoj ve vztahu k mytologii není ve sporu s ní. Ani utopická touha se z ní osvobodit není reálná. Ale správný postoj spočívá v přechodu od neznalosti mytologie k jejímu poznání v co největším rozsahu.

Analýza času a prostoru v dílech avantgardy ukazuje, že umělci a spisovatelé cítili a zkoušeli porozumět změně v mytických silách a jejich mimořádně zásluha byla v přístupu k práci s těmito změnami a v jejich do určité míry vědomém vysvětlení.

Od Eliadeho jsme si vypůjčili fenomenologický přístup k náboženství a myšlenku, že význam náboženství je „sui generis" a že to je neredukovatelný. Podle jeho dějin náboženských výzkumů neexistuje v náboženském životě lidstva podstatné přerušení. Nedošlo k němu ani během křesťanského období. Akceptujeme-li Eliadovo tvrzení, že každá krize je náboženská, potom krizi, kterou odráží avantgarda, můžeme vnímat jako krizi, která musí mít něco společného s „onto-světem" evropské kultury.

Na rozdíl od Cassirera a Loseva si Eliade myslí, že mýtus by neměl být natolik identifikován s pojmem *slovo* a *narace*, ale měl by být chápán jako svatý čin nebo původní jev. A proto individuální mýty vytvářené individuálními umělci jako Chlebnikov nebo Rastko Petrović nemají širší ohlas, a tudíž je v této studii nepopisujeme.

Spoléháme se nicméně na další Eliadův názor, že člověk přemítá o *archaické spiritualitě* ne jako o činu či možnosti, které by člověk mohl dosáhnout, ale jako o *tvořivé nostalgii,* která se objevuje napříč uměním, vědou, mystikou atd. Pokusili jsme se sledovat, jak se tato tvořivá

touha objevuje v době avantgardy, která ve stejné době prochází obdobím *krize tvoření*.

Pro účel této práce se ve výběru konkrétních mýtů tak, aby byli spojené s avantgardou, spoléháme na Eliadovu knihu *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries* (*Mýty, sny a mystéria*). Mýty nebo fenomény s mytickými rysy formulujeme takto: mýtus zápasu se sluncem, mýtus ušlechtilého divocha, stesk po ráji, hledání Východu, vzory napodobování, mýtus o Prométheovi, vysvobození z přitažlivosti, Mýtus o magickém letu a obrození Matky Země.

Ve druhé kapitole *Mýtický svět Avantgardy* v prvních dvou podkapitolách mluvíme o tom, jak se proměny mytologie a vědy odrážely v uměleckých podáních **času a prostoru** ve výtvarném umění a literatuře.

Teorie čtvrtého rozměru, představená zejména v práci amerického teosofa Charlese Hintona *The Fourth Dimension* (1904), otevřela množství polemik v oblasti vědy a filozofie. Velký vliv měla pak především mezi umělci, kteří začali mluvit o nové časoprostorové dimenzi. Pro malíře tento objev znamenal vznik dvou nových jevů – statického a dynamického prostorového útvaru (prostor *uvnitř* a prostor *okolo*). V otázce, zda má objekt absolutní podobu, kubisté odpovídali záporně. Podob je tolik, kolik je úhlů pohledu. Vzdálenosti v prostoru a trvání v čase nemají absolutní, ale relativní charakter, neboť se mění či zvyšují v závislosti na rychlosti, směru pohybu a bodu, ze kterého je systém pozorován. Každý systém má tedy svůj vlastní čas a prostor. Kubisté byli první, kteří začali uvažovat o tom, že *hloubka* může být místo v obraze rekonstruována ve vědomí pozorovatele. Hloubka, o které hovoří malíři, motivovaná stejnými objevy v matematice a fyzice, se pro Florenského stává hloubkou duševní. Hloubka duše, o které Florenskij píše, je pokusem o rekonstrukci dlouho zanedbávaných možností člověka a představuje touhu po rozšíření lidského vědomí.

Myšlenka vícerozměrného prostoru vedla Chlebnikova k tvorbě „sverchpovesťi". Usiloval, aby slovo ve svém osvobození a vytváření nových prostorů následovalo malířství. Tento pokus o imitaci kubistických technik pomocí slov je reprezentován v jeho slavné básni *Bobeobi*....

Chlebnikov vysvětluje *vnitřní formu hlasů* pomocí vztahů prostoru a času, které umožňují názornou představu hlasů. Chlebnikov (znovu) vytváří pohyb souhlásek prostorem. Jeho výzkum v oblasti prostorově chápaného jazyka není vědecký, spíše kvazi-vědecký, ale rozhodně nezůstává pouze v oblasti estetiky.

S tím, jak se myšlenka relativity šířila dvacátým stoletím, vznikaly a vznikají až do dneška podle charakteru, rozměrů, struktury, psychologického obsahu, duševního obsahu atd. četné typologie rozměru, takže rozměr se stal různorodým.

Studium času v pracích avantgardistů je ještě komplexnější. Dovolujeme si tvrdit, že v době, kdy se objevili avantgardisté, mnozí cítili jisté vyčerpání starého světa.

James H. Billington ukazuje, že *apokalyptika* je jedním z mezníků prvních dvou dekád dvacátého století v Rusku. Toto přesvědčení se navíc objevuje téměř ve všech oblastech ovlivněných židokřesťanstvím, o čemž svědčí práce Mircey Eliadeho. Naproti tomu pro Chlebnikova a Kručonycha konec již nastal, jak ukázali v pojetí „čas od konce" (mirskonca). Tímto konceptem počátku v budoucnosti Kručonych a Chlebnikov oponují eschatologismu a konečnosti symbolismu a obecně všem způsobům apokalyptického myšlení ve své době.

Při pohledu na tři podoby uvažování – gnoseologické, ontologické a avantgardní – můžeme pozorovat následující rozdíly: gnoseologický čas je neodčinitelný proces, čas plyne lineárně jako minulost, současnost nebo budoucnost; ontologický čas je věčnost; avantgardní čas je vzdálená minulost, prehistorická, předkulturní nebo neznámá budoucnost, postkulturní a posthistorický čas.

Avšak zde chceme zdůraznit, že avantgarda objevuje *přesnou podstatu času* částečně díky teorii relativity a oživuje pradávné klasické poznání, že *reálný čas je vždy nehomogenní* – může být prodloužen a zkrácen, je relativní a podmíněný. Avantgarda cítíla, že čas kolísá mezi kategoriemi konečný a nekonečný, že je dialektický, obsahující současně dva opaky. Na otázku, co je za koncem času, avantgarda odpověděla: znovu čas. Po tomto zjištění začala avantgarda ve svých dílech čas zkracovat, zrychlovat a obracet.

Uvažujeme také o Eliadově popisu času. Tvrdí, že myticko-náboženské tradice jsou spojeny s kosmicko-historickými cykly a pocházejí z fází a rytmů Měsíce. Tyto tradice nesou myšlenku destrukce a obnovení malých i velkých časových cyklů. Kalendář, časové rytmy a samotná čísla, o které se Chlebnikov velmi zajímal, mají vztah k těmto měsíčním cyklům. Lunární symbolika dominuje také v literárním díle Crnjanského.

Nicméně avantgardní výtvory se kromě zájmu o měsíční cykly a symboly vyznačují také sklonem k překonání nebo přehlížení měsíčního stavu – například studiem zákonů čísel a časových rytmů chtěl Chlebnikov překonat čas. Je téměř jisté, že používal numerologii, Kabalu, matematické teorie čísel i Pythagorovskou numerologii. Byl nadšený pro orientální kultury, zejména indickou, egyptskou i slovanskou pradávnou minulost a časové rytmy v jejich folklóru a náboženství.

Z Eliadových studií si vypůjčíme popis velkých a malých časových rytmů, dobře známých mnoha mytologiím. Existuje časové období známé jako *Velký rok* (název používaný v antickém Řecku). Tento Velký rok trval od Stvoření světa a skončil Chaosem, tj. splynutím všeho. V mnoha mytologiích kosmický cyklus obsahuje: Stvoření, Existenci (což je historie, trávení času, destrukce) a Návrat k chaosu (*ekpyrósis* u Řeků, *ragnarök* u Germánů, *pralaja* v Hinduismu, *apokalypsa* v křesťanství). Velký rok se má k roku jako rok k měsíci či dnu.

Věříme, že do určité míry je možno o avantgardě mluvit jako o umění přechodu z jednoho velkého časového cyklu do jiného. Při takovém popisu avantgardního hnutí se opíráme o teoretická díla Eliadeho a Bachtina v podkapitolách **Karneval a Chaos**.

Mnoho neobvyklých úkazů se objevuje na začátku a také na opačném konci času. Míšení druhů, zmatení podob, nedostatek pravidel – to vše nám připomíná avantgardní umění. Formy se v avantgardě rozplývají, v literární produkci a naraci se vzájemně proplétají, jazyk se ztrácí v obratu k onomatopoetickým zvukům a koktání člověka, který se ještě nenaučil gramatická pravidla, v malbě se ztrácejí čisté formy a beztvaré postavy se prolínají s okolním prostorem.

Všechny tyto jevy, projevující se jako přechod z jednoho časového cyklu do druhého, se objevují pravidelně v karnevalových slavnostech, které samy znamenají konec jedné doby a začátek nové. Pokud chápeme avantgardu jako umění, které nastává mezi dvěma (velkými) cykly, neměli bychom být překvapeni, obsahuje-li mnohé formy karnevalového umění. Teorie Petera Bürgera, stejně jako další, definuje avantgardu jako naprosté převrácení evropské kultury a evropského zřízení.

Mircea Eliade mluví zajímavým způsobem o těchto temných dobách, epochách velké degenerace a dezintegrace. Popisuje je symbolem larvy v temnotě, která později umožní zrod nových forem. Taková období dostávají nadčasový význam, neboť v takových chvílích dějin spočívá největší nakupení, ačkoliv rovnováha byla různými způsoby porušena.

Nicméně srovnáme-li chování avantgardy s chováním karnevalu, zjistíme, že nemá ten nutný kontakt s životem, nýbrž pociťuje jeho značnou potřebu. Jednu věc mají však společnou – negace karnevalové kultury je vždy ujištěním a stejně tak je to i u avantgardy ve většině jejích projevů.

Na základě Bachtinovy klasifikace jsme provedli vlastní klasifikaci karnevalových

forem a projevů společných avantgardě a karnevalu. Dostáváme následující klasifikaci: rituální výjevy; parodie; grotesky; vulgarity; nadávky a pouliční žargon v literatuře; převaha ženskosti; hmotné a tělesné; dehierarchizace; vyloučení a znehodnocení.

Například v srbské literatuře avantgarda obrodila parodii. Miloš Crnjanski ve sbírce lyrické poezie *Ithacká lyrika* (Lirika Itake, 1918) paroduje velké množství lyrických žánrů. Vinaverova *Pantologije nové srbské absintoliriky* (Pantologija novije srpske pelengirike, 1920) převrací a zesměšňuje celou srbskou poezii.

Avantgarda vnesla do literatury veřejné zobrazení vulgarit a svobodný lidový karnevalový projev, ve kterém mají nadávky často pozitivně obrozující smysl. V avantgardě je přítomna symbolika *osla*, který je – podle Bachtina – jedním z nejstarších a nejživotnějších symbolů hmotně-tělesného "sestupu", jenž znehodnocuje, ale také obrozuje. V ruské avantgardě se vyskytovala umělecká skupina *Oslí ocas* (Oslinyj chvost), vytvořená z nejradikálnějších členů skupiny *Kárový spodek* (Bubnovyj valet, 1909).

Zrození nadávek mělo v podmínkách primitivní komunikace převážně magický a čarodějnický charakter. Zvláště důležitý fakt je, že v dobách antiky existovaly nadávky adresované božstvu, které byly součástí náboženského kultu smíchu. Tyto nadávky byly ambivalentní – při rozbíjení a ničení současně i obrozovaly a obnovovaly. Avantgarda je používá v umělecké komunikaci se stejným účelem.

Pravidelné vyhánění vládců či vládnoucích, znehodnocení všeho, co je kulturně cenné a boření společenských vztahů bylo vždy součástí Saturnálií a podobných slavností. Rozbití všech zákazů a ve stejnou chvíli jejich opačné projevy byly zaměřeny na dekompozici světa a na jeho obnovení, což je jev často vysvětlovaný Eliadem, mytická chvíle sjednocení začátku (chaosu) a konce (potopa, ekpyrósis, apokalypsa). Zde je znehodnocení procesem, v němž se vše spirituální, ideální, abstraktní podle obvyklého řádu stává materiálně-tělesným.

V rámci avantgardní karnevalizace a dehierarchizace kultury je nutno zmínit i zvrhlost a znehodnocování křesťanských hodnot. *Modlitba*, ve které Crnjanski paroduje modlitbu *Otče náš*, popisuje Krista jako Dona Quijota.

V kapitole Chaos mluvíme dále o některých druzích karnevalového chování, mezi které patří i vědomé vytváření stavu "chaosu" či podpora této myšlenky chaosu. Toto bylo široce používáno v jugoslávské avantgardě. Taková aktualizace mytického chaosu má za cíl vytvoření stavu, ve kterém je možný akt tvoření. Masky a představení dadaistů například do určité míry reprezentují rituální návrat ke kosmické noci, ve které všechny tvary ztratí své obrysy a navzájem se spojí.

Pojednáváme zde o **Mýtu o boji se Sluncem** v kontextu opery *Vítězství nad sluncem*. Nebeská tělesa představují jakési styčné body každé mytologie, jejich pojetí v avantgardních dílech může představovat začátek nové ontologie, vyhlášené člověkem, podobně jako u ruských futuristů. V této opeře na sebe člověk otevřeně přejímá akt stvoření nove kosmogonie i ontologie. Navíc můžeme *Vítězství nad sluncem* číst jako vítězství nad eschatologií a apokalypsou. Dále v této práci považujeme *Slunce* a *oheň* za prvky stejného paradigmatického řádu (u Chlebnikova a v pracích zenitistů).

Obrození lunární symboliky a objevení slunečního mýtu nám může ukázat na proměny či sváry dvou opačných vesmírných principů reprezentovaných Sluncem a Měsícem.

Postava **ušlechtilého divocha** se stala důležitou pro avantgardní umění, které se obrátilo k primitivismu. Tento mytický archetyp hrál značnou důležitost v Německu na konci osmnáctého století, v době, kdy začala bujet *orientální renesance*, jak jí nazval Raymond Schwab. Ušlechtilý divoch dokonale zapadá do ideologie Johanna Gottfrieda von Herdera

a jeho předchůdce Giambattisty Vica, který ospravedlnil barbarství, obdivoval lidovou poezii jakožto primitivní jazyk lidstva a věřil v oživující potenciál primitivismu. Toto všechno můžeme najít i v avantgardních dílech.

Chlebnikov a Rastko Petrović spojují tento mytický archetyp se slovanskou minulostí. V jejich dílech byl mytologický čas starých Slovanů *illud tempus*, tedy druh sakrálního času. Petrovićův ušlechtilý divoch byl Slovan, žijící před křesťanstvím, a také trochu předslovanský typ. Tento básník měl v úmyslu hledat podobný druh divocha ve své současnosti, což jej dovedlo do Afriky, neboť negrofilie byla ve francouzském prostředí, ve kterém byl Petrović ve dvacátých letech vychován, módou.

Prostor a čas, ve kterých žil Petrovićův divoch, nám značně připomínají popis prehistorického státu, toho, který Eliade pojímá jako věk Uranovy vlády v antické mytologii, kdy vše bylo možné. V tomto Petrovićově *illud tempus*, stejně jako v mytickém čase vysvětleném Eliadem, se dobro a zlo nerozlišuje – bylo možné spáchat vraždu, incest, bakchanálie – všechny tyto věci byly pouze projevem života. V jeho příbězích se objevuje jev, který Eliade spojuje s Uranovým věkem a nazývá jej *původní Chaos*.

Ušlechtilý divoch se jako nejdůležitější postava objevuje v hnutí Zenitismu, to jest jako postava *Barbarogenia*, jehož hlavním atributem je *decivilizátor*. Je proti evropské civilizaci, stejně jako jeho přítel a spolucestovatel Zenitista, který si pokládá za úkol dosáhnout na nebe a slunce v jejich zenitu. Avšak na rozdíl od klasického ušlechtilého divocha je tento naplněn nenávistí a pohrdáním k Evropě.

Dále vysvětlujeme určité prvky avantgardního **stesku po ráji**, jelikož někteří umělci cítili potřebu oživit *specifické schopnosti*, stejně jako *lidé v epoše ráje*.

Eliade vysvětluje, že lidé a zvířata před pádem *in illo tempore* komunikovali. Později byl schopen vkročit do tohoto prvotního světa lidské jednoty s Přírodou, rajské zahrady, pouze šaman. Zde proběhl nezvykle důležitý moment, jímž byla avantgarda posedlá – zvláště pak Chlebnikov, největší badatel básnicko-mýtického jazyka. Jeho *ptačí jazyk, hvězdný jazyk* a všechny ostatní, které stvořil, jsou jeho "šamanskými" pokusy zrekonstruovat tyto prvotní jazyky, které umožní návrat do stavu ráje.

Používáním jazyka způsobuje Chlebnikov neustálé ničení světa a zároveň novou jednotu, čímž představuje potřebu znovuvytvoření mýtického věku, kdy se udál první akt stvoření světa. Hansen-Löve rovněž sděluje, že pro Chlebnikova je čas dokončen, když se vše vrátí do stavu, kdy byla země jedlá a jazyk naprosto přirozený, univerzální, tvůrčí; do stavu, v němž jsou člověk a zvíře přáteli – to by znamenalo nalezení ztraceného ráje.

V podkapitole **Hledání Východu** vysvětlujeme, že stesk po ráji někdy vedl avantgardní umělce, filosofy a teology do dávné minulosti a mytického období jejich národů, jindy do současných orientálních kultur a Indie. Mýty o pátrání po transcendentální zemi, všudypřítomně v evropské tradici, jsou přítomny i v avantgardě. Vědomosti o orientálních filosofiích a náboženstvích přešly do avantgardy přímo z orientální poezie (avantgardní básníci, např. Crnjanski a Ezra Pound, byli jedni z prvních překladatelů čínské a japonské poezie), teosofie, Schopenhauerovy filosofie atd.

V kapitole Chaos a jiné zmiňujeme, že avantgarda spojovala stav chaosu často s myšlenkou obnovy prvotního aktu stvoření. V podkapitole **Vzory napodobování** se ptáme, zda stvoření, akt stvoření, je možný v člověku.

Ve Vinaverově *Manifestu Expresionismu* je zmíněna potřeba po tvorbě. Malevič se obzvláště zajímal o stvoření *ex nihilo* a mnozí další o tomto argumentu přemýšleli a psali. Tím se dostáváme zpátky k dějinám myšlení o estetice v evropské kultuře, původu myšlenky umělecké

tvorby a otázce, zda je možné tvořit skrze umění, anebo spočívá osud umělců v pouhé imitaci. Můžeme se domnívat, že napodobování bylo základní součástí náboženského chování v dávných dobách, ale v momentě, kdy vstoupilo do umění, ztratilo svůj původní význam. Avantgarda odmítala mimesi v umění, ale chápala, že právě ta byla důležitá pro zvládnutí napodobovacích technik v kultovním chování, důležitých pro obnovení aktu stvoření. V důsledku toho se Malevičova kritika podobá Platónově v 10. kapitole *Republiky.*

Tatarkiewiczova a Losevova díla o dějinách estetiky zmiňují, že původní imitace nebyla imitací ve smyslu napodobování, nýbrž vyjádřením ve funkci aktivní účasti. Tudíž originální mimese byla rituálním aktem. Návratem *in illo tempore* imitoval šaman akt stvoření. Avantgardu tento akt zajímal, a proto v tomto smyslu mimesi v umění přijímá.

Rozumíme, že některé formy **prometheanismu** byly jedním ze základních znaků revolučního období v Rusku, jako na příklad potřeba člověka-umělce vyzvednout se nad osud, vzpoura proti Absolutnu a předchozímu řádu věcí, potřeba osvobodit, zvednout a překonat svou pozemskou existenci a přiblížit se kosmickým silám.

Objasňujeme, že Prometheus, který byl dříve považován za ohnivou modlu a ochránce lidí, představuje matriarchát jako syn Titánů, přímých potomků země klasického období. Tento apoštol individualismu a racionalismu v avantgardě získává prvky, jež mu přiřkl Platón, když jej označil za symbol technické civilizace.

Během avantgardy byly definovány různé druhy prometheanismu. V Marinettiho díle se projevuje jistý *mechanicko-technický* prometheanismus ve stroji, autě nebo čemkoli, co se pohybuje pomocí moderní techniky, jako osvobozující síla, která by měla přeměnit společnost a umění. Tatlinův prometheanismus je *utilitárně konstruktivistický*, personifikuje snahu umění překonat zemský prostor. Malevičův *kosmický prometheanismus* je v podstatě podobý – předpověděl vítězství nad silami kontrolujícími lidskou existenci na zemi, které pomáhají zdolat lidskou historii. Měl dokonce i vizi nového kosmického věku.

Prometheovo osvobození z "řetězů" je často explicitně zdůrazňováno v dílech srbských avantgardistů. Vinaver umělecky popisuje ve své knize *Manifest Expresionismu* celé kosmologické drama: nerovnováha vede k chaosu, ale chaos je nutný, protože vede k osvobození, a to dává člověku více prostoru k tvoření. Tento důležitý moment – osvobození od elementárních sil – Vinaver symbolicky prezentuje v postavě národní literatury – *Baše Čelika*, srbského národního Promethea.

V tématu "boje proti přitažlivosti", či osvobození se od gravitačních sil, se také zabýváme Malevičovými a Chlebnikovovými úvahami. V duchu své poetiky vytvořil básník dvojici protikladů *zemská přitažlivost – hvězdná přitažlivost*, což vysvětluje takto: věci přitahované gravitační silou padají na zem, tedy myšlenky tažené hvězdnou silou letí k nebi.

S ideou osvobození rovněž spojujeme **Mýtus magického letu**, který avantgarda oživuje. Je to známý a rozšířený mýtus, zřejmě pocházející z Východu, popsaný v knize Mircey Eliadeho jako potřeba zřídit spojení mezi nebem a zemí a tím zrušit důsledky *pádu* a jako důsledek lidské touhy vrátit se znovu do božského stavu.

Ve smyslu nového prometheanismu popisují Zenitisté moderní způsoby létání. Letadlo bylo důležitým symbolem pro členy hnutí, jejichž cílem bylo vznést se do nebe a kteří věřili, že letadlem se přiblíží *Zenitu* nejen vnitřně, ale též materiálně. Podle této logiky mluvili o tom, že oduševnění hmoty je možné. Sem patří Tatlinův projekt nazvaný *Letatlin,* který se přesně hodí do naší hypotézy, že avantgarda rozvíjí tezi, která spojuje mýtickou minulost a technicky dokonalou budoucnost.

V jedné podkapitole pojednáváme o oživení **Matky Země** a v souvislosti s tím o utváření nového vztahu mezi božskými a pozemskými principy. Vyjádřením zájmu o mýtické období ukazuje avantgardní umění potřebu navrátit se k Zemi a hmotě, či jinak řečeno potřebu ustanovit nový vztah mezi božskými a pozemskými principy.

Nicméně Eliade upozorňuje, že stesk po návratu k Zemi-Matce se někdy stává kolektivním úkazem; a to je potom znamení, že společnost vzdala zápas a blíží se zániku. Je těžké říct, jestli můžeme mluvit o takovém jevu v rámci kultury, kde se objevilo avantgardní hnutí, ale je jisté, že se objevuje jakási forma nového zájmu o Zemi a pozemský, ženský princip. Například v evropské tradici má jazyk božský původ – byl stvořen Otcem. Chlebnikov ve svých
pracích ale klade důraz na zkoumání jazyka v *reálném* světě jako organické součásti života, plodu Země a Matky.

Stejně tak, jak jsme vysvětlili důvod výběru *skutečného světa*, nacházíme v názorech umělců, že pod rouškou moderní civilizace a s ní spojeného objektivního světa je skryt opravdový svět, nebo přesněji *tělo Země*, Matky země, jež se neskládá z mrtvých nebo mechanických objektů, nýbrž ze živých údů univerzálního těla. Země sestává z věcí, stejně jako tělo (lidské nebo zvířecí) sestává z údů a orgánů, či jako se slovo (text) skládá z morfémů, fonémů a písmen. V antické mytologii a bájích Matka Země nemluví objektivním jazykem (pomocí znaků a symbolů), ale představuje souhrn všech *osobních jmen předmětů* nebo *slov-věcí*. To je patrné v literárních pracích ruských futuristů-archaistů.

V poslední kapitole krátce probereme **mýtický svět avantgardy jakožto pozadí pro experimenty s básnickým jazykem.**

Avantgardní experimenty na poli básnického jazyka nevyhnutelně vedou k otázce transcedence a ontologie. Přijetím mytického myšlení jsme se pokusili vysvětlit vybrané jevy prostřednictvím teorií, které s nimi určitým způsobem souvisejí.

Pro Chlebnikova byla charakteristická potřeba estetické proměny světa jazykovými prostředky, což se blíží potřebě ovládnout magické funkce jazyka, označení věcí slovy. Avšak v pozdější fázi avantgardy najdeme v pracích Daniila Charmse znamení, že projekt avantgardy opouští a vzdává touhu ovládnout transcendentní svět v duchu pohanských rituálů a přijímá skutečnost, že apofatismus je pro poetické i filozofické chápání jazyka nemyslitelný.

Snažili jsme se například stručně srovnat Cassirerovy a Chlebnikovovy výzkumy. Cassirer vyvinul typologizaci jazyka, podle níž se jazyk rozvinul z mimetického v analogický (který existuje i dnes) a později v konečné fázi v symbolický. Cassirer zakouší mimetické lingvistické vyjadřování jako nejbližší *začátku světa*, tedy oblast, v níž velmi intenzivně pracoval Chlebnikov.

Chlebnikov objevil to, co později připadlo etnologii a lingvistice – existenci běžných vlastností jazyka skrytých od pradávných dob ve slovech. Například labiální rezonantní zvuky vyjadřují směr k mluvčímu, zatímco explozivy vyjadřují směr od mluvčího. Používá tento poznatek ve dvou postupech při tvorbě nového jazyka: ve vnitřním skloňování – tj. sémantické valenci samohlásek (jeho příklad: *bobr/babr*); a pro vytvoření "hvězdného jazyka" – který je v podstatě sémantickou valencí začátečních konsonant.

Taktéž se stručně zabýváme začáteční souhláskou ve Chlebnikově chápání Florenského onomatologie. Každá začáteční souhláska souvisí s *osudovým významem* ve vztahu k ostatním fonémům téhož slova. V důsledku toho jsou všechna slova začínající na stejnou hlásku sémanticky spojena, stejně jako podle výzkumu Florenského všichni lidé, kteří nosí stejné *jméno,* jsou si podobní, tzn. mají podobné osudy. Tak jsme spojili Platónovu teorii o idejích a jejich vzhledu s magickým slovem jmen, jak činí Florenskij, a to srovnáváme s Chlebnikovými básnickými experimenty a teorií začátečních konsonant.

Ontologizace, která je klíčová ve valenci začátečních konsonant, se později rozšířila do Chlebnikovy číselné teorie. Odvozuje smysl čísel od písmen. Abychom vysvětlili vztah slov a čísel v Chlebnikově poezii, znovu využijeme prací Pavla Florenského. Zatímco se Florenskij nesnaží odhalit ani ovládnout nejvyšší ideu, která je podle Platóna zdrojem veškerého vědění, Chlebnikov se o to pokouší. Zatímco Florenskij zdůrazňuje, že *slovo* není na stejné ontologické rovině jako *jméno* a že nejvyšší idea není ani jméno ani číslo, Chlebnikov a jiní avantgardisté nečinili rozdíl mezi jmény a slovy, neboť nemohli určit vztah mezi jmény a čísly, ačkoli v souladu s mýtickým myšlením věřili, že existují nějaká *homologia entis*, homologický princip rodových podobností všech existujících věcí, takže všechna slova mohou být redukována na jedno *proto-slovo* nebo jednu *proto-věc*, které je možné objevit a prostředky k tomu určenými znovu vytvořit. V avantgardní poetice je toto *proto-slovo* rovno ideji podle schématu Florenského. Možný závěr odhaluje, že pro avantgardu bylo charakteristické srovnávat
Absolutno, nejvyšší ideu nebo nejvyšší princip se *slovem*.

Jak jsme již předeslali, do určité míry měla avantgarda fenomenologický pohled na podstatu jazyka, věcí a jevů. Objevila, že každá podstata má své vlastní formy sebechápání. V avantgardě existují "slova sama o sobě", "umění samo o sobě" a, zvláště u Charmse, "objekt sám o sobě".

Zatímco jeden proud ruské avantgardy toužil po sjednocení s podstatou a tíhnul k ovládnutí *proto-slova, nad-slova, původního slova stvoření* (zvláště Chlebnikov), druhý proud, který vznikl v poslední fázi avantgardy a je reprezentován prací Daniila Charmse, ukázal potřebu zastavit se před apofatickým bodem, jak ukázal Losev ve své teorii symbolicko-apofatického jazyka. I zde nacházíme podobnosti a odlišnosti: na jedné straně je Losevův apofatismus symbolický a chápe jej, jako by za ním bylo neznámé X , a na druhé straně Charms objevuje *nulu* – za kterou by mohlo být nic, což spíše směřuje k jakémusi buddhistickému odříkání neboli, podmínečně řečeno, "nihilismu".

I když nebyl avantgardní projekt jazyka úspěšně dokončen, čelil paradoxní situaci. V první fázi avantgardy chtěl bojkotovat jazyk, ale podařilo se mu v něm odkrýt taková tajemství, o nichž neměl ani zdání. Nakonec jazyk bojkotoval Dada a Kručonycha kvůli určitému sémantickému mechanismu fungujícímu v jazyce, který je stále těžké vysvětlit. Chlebnikovovův cíl byl do určité míry dosažen, neboť se v nás ozývá zaumnyj jazyk.

ABSTRAKT

This paper is trying to present how changes of mythology, in Losev's sense, influenced art, literature and attitude towards poetic language. The study presents the Avant-garde movements in all theirs heterogenic forms, as the art of the period of crises, which appears in European culture and brought big changes in the consciousness of people. By describing an artistic attitude towards space and time we give examples how this new consciousness dealt with the spatial and time relations. Also this paper deals with the universal myths that are shown on the examples of the Avant-garde works of art. The chosen myths should present a desire of the Avant-garde movements to rebuilt, reconstruct and understand the very essence of the language of art and poetry.

The Avant-garde art and literature cannot be understood if separated from the time when they appeared. Nevertheless, these movements carry in essence something that is generally characteristic of mythical thinking as well – that is, the periodical, instinctive return to essence and original purity with an aspiration to reconstruct the genetic moment and the act of creating. This phenomenon we analyze through myths that are omnipresent in European and other cultures and which appear in Avant-garde works as well.

ABSTRAKT

Tato studie se snaží ukázat, jak změny mytologie, v Losevově pojetí, ovlivnily umění, literaturu a přístup k básnickému jazyku. Studie prezentuje avantgardní hnutí ve všech jeho heterogenních formách jako umění času krizí, které se objevily v evropské kultuře a přinesly velké změny do lidského vědomí. Popisem uměleckého postoje k prostoru a času uvádíme příklady, jak toto nové vědomí zacházelo s prostorovými a časovými vztahy. Tato studie se také zabývá obecnými mýty, které jsou ukazovány na příkladech avantgardních děl. Vybrané mýty by měly ukázat touhu avantgardních hnutí přestavět, rekonstruovat a pochopit podstatu jazyka umění a poezie.

Avantgardní umění a literaturu nemůžeme pochopit bez znalosti dobových souvislostí. Tato hnutí nicméně obsahují ve své podstatě něco, co je charakteristické pro mýtické myšlení jako takové - periodický, instinktivní návrat k základní a původní čistotě se snahou o obnovení významu vývoje a procesu tvorby. Tento fenomén analyzujeme prostřednictvím mýtů, které jsou všudypřítomné v evropských a dalších kulturách a objevují se také v avantgardních dílech.

Content