

Evaluating a doctoral thesis as an example of the discourse of literary criticism seems quite appropriate, whereas starting the evaluation with an analysis of its particular rhetorical strategies might seem rather rigorous. Nevertheless, the author of the thesis gives an incentive to doing so by stating the prism she adopted to observe her object prior to stating the problem that induced it. In other words, she says (both in the introduction and in the summary of her research) that there is a scheme (primarily Losev's concept of myth) that may be applied to inquire into the complex phenomenon of the avant-garde - again, prior to identifying the questions arising from the phenomena itself. As a result, the questions may seem to emerge from the scheme chosen (or may be prone to being adjusted to it) than from the object of inquiry. Further incentive to be mentioned here is the initial survey of the concepts of paradigm, including (to my initial surprise) also the meaning and usage coined by Thomas Kuhn. Whether the doctoral thesis applies to the current paradigm of human sciences will be judged later on.

Obviously, the author is experienced enough to avoid the typical scheme of surveying a number of well-known concepts, presenting innovations or adjustments of her own and applying them to a number of particular cultural phenomena (such as works of literature or visual arts) eventually. Instead, she prefers to focus on general topics (such as philosophical background of the avant-garde concepts, theories of myth, spatial and temporal concepts of the first decades of the 20th century etc.) that she intertwines with the tendencies and particular examples of the avant-garde art. This attitude promises a dynamic balance of the relations between theoretic structures and the living body of art and human activities connected with it.

Several comments on the first part the explication:

- while the author accuses Husserl of overestimating the role of philosophy in the crucial cultural changes of the first decades of the 20th century, she herself adheres to the same device, omitting the technological changes that brought about deep social changes of that time and exercised influence upon the artistic view of contemporary life and its future in particular
- while omitting the aspects of cultural communication at the same time, i.e. the distribution of art, its perception and institutional evaluation, such as mentioned, though sometimes in a rather simplified way, in Bürger – a concept Micić appreciates, saying it is worth exploring the avant-garde not only as an artistic movement, but also as a complex sociological phenomena; in spite of this, Micić usually restricts her observations to a description of the qualities of singular works, and the intentions of the artists or their personal pursuit of topics or problems of artistic techniques (such as multidimensionality in Chlebnikov and the like);
- the notion of time (p. 10) may serve here as an example of a rather easy-going treatment of notions: the author speaks of “the question of time” (meaning, so far I could understand, the question of temporality of human experience and its representation) together with “the spirit of time” (which may be rather understood as a number of tendencies typical of a relatively limited period, though never proclaimed or agreed on by a particular community);
- further, a more inquisitive attitude towards the opinions of the renowned historians and theorists of the avant-garde may be recommended: the author quotes, for

example, Bürger's statement that Duchamp's works are not works but manifestations; there is hardly anything surprising about it: every work of art is intended to fulfill a certain communicational function: while a traditional work of art is intended to confirm the traditional qualities (and the taste of the recipient, and, particularly, of the future owner of the work) an avant-garde artifact may be considered a "material rupture" of the communication mentioned above.

The chapter on philosophy (1.4) may serve as an example of a general tendency that may be observed in the expository strategy of the thesis: Nietzsche's cogitations of the 1880s are presented, followed by a late Jung of the 1950s to be changed for Losev's crucial work on myth of 1930, i.e. a simple chronology of the philosophical resources and their foregrounding in the avant-garde is omitted, while the inner logic of this succession remains rather unclear. A similar implicit order seems to rule the quoted concepts of the avant-garde: the fact, that some of them may be considered programmatic manifestos, while others fulfill the task of a contemporary reflection, whereas other ones (such as those of Poggioli and Bürger necessarily mirror the temporal distance of the observers, as well as the fact that they came into existence during a period facing the rise of a new avant-garde). A simple chronologic order may sometimes inhere more interpretive potential than expected, or, at least, provide the reader with a simple clue to start with.

The same chapter (p. 20) focuses on such notions as *pure form*, *pure art* etc. as mentioned within artistic programs, not only within philosophical concepts. Another question arises here: what made the author rather suppress the notion of *program*, if not exclude it from her considerations, though it seems to be a typical avant-garde form of communication? (I admit that I might have omitted some of its occurrences within the analysis; the ones I have recorded concern mainly simple exemplifications such as p. 24, *Program of Hypnism*, or p. 41 *Chudožniki mira* and the like). A program may be considered not only a kind of *poiesis* within the scheme applied here, but also a set of instructions making it possible to *repeat* the act of poiesis, in other words, to secure its replication, to make "art for all" possible.

Revisiting the notion of avant-garde seems crucial in such an interpretive enterprise: Micić relies on Bürger's term of "historical avant-garde" and its classification as presented by A. Hansen-Löve (and based, so far I could understand, on the relatively limited scope of the Russian avant-garde, which may not seem a scheme universal enough). As a result, the scope of the avant-garde in question might have been distinguished more clearly.

Let me also mention another chance, offered by Hansen-Löve's inquiry, is that of identifying the crucial importance of *interart* relations: while referring to the notion of *intertextuality*, Hansen-Löve arrives at the notion of *intermediality*, providing a tool of understanding particular qualities of the avant-garde, that is its ability to surpass the borderlines of individual arts. In fact, Micić does include the interart relations in her research, without identifying the topic, by constant references to verbal and visual art (p. 34, ff) when referring, for example, to the new feeling of space. The question is, whether the main reason for the transformations of visual representation is the changed "space" or rather a changed attitude towards the recipient of a work of art and his or her possible interaction with the work?

A question concerning the processes of perception and particularly aesthetic effects arises here as well: when Chlebnikov's attempts at a verbal multidimensionality are mentioned, both the possibilities of perception, the aesthetic effects and the response of his contemporaries are omitted.

This may be considered a typical case again: the author usually gives a general scheme or topic (backed by canonic texts by scholars such as Cassirer, Eliade, and the like) followed by an example or illustration of an individual work (while Russian exemplifications seem to

prevail). Sometimes, the individual works appear “mere examples”, described (i.e. not interpreted) to illustrate an umbrella notion or a principle. Thus, the reader of the thesis may miss a more complex interpretation of an avant-garde work, or an analysis of more examples that may result in enunciating a hypothesis on a general tendency. The references to traditional mythological schemes are mostly inherited already in the titles of the chapters in the second part of the thesis, which makes them seem to be “ready-made”. It would be very helpful, if the author could give an explanation of how she arrived at her inventory of mythological topics.

Though we may accept the mythological model(s) as the foucauldian “*epistémé*” of the doctoral thesis, we may object to the fact that the archetypal schemes and emblematic works of the European cultural tradition (such as Coena Cypriani etc.) tend to *disrupt the potential scheme that may emerge from the present exposition* and distract us from understanding the inner dynamics of the avant-garde, which is necessarily subject to development in time and a differentiation due to the particularity of individual cultures that produce individual avant-gardes. Thus, one part of the potential of the present inquiry, to reveal some aspects of the artistic contribution of the avant-garde, remains unexploited. Eventually, a more complex image may be reconstructed only by those whose knowledge of the avant-garde exceeds by far the sum of knowledge presented here. (The author of the review admits she does not belong to them, which makes her seek the more for further explanations.)

In a singular case, myth is mentioned in quotation marks (the “myth” of speed, p. 115), which obviously refers to a specific usage of the term (usually associated with Roland Barthes’ concept of “*mythologies*”, a set of beliefs constructed by the modern society, and employed in the functioning of the modern society in order to exercise control over certain communities of this society); is there any explanation for this brief passage?

Similarly, could the author illuminate the difference between mimesis (rejected by the avant-garde) and imitation (accepted by the avant-garde, as she states)?

Further, what is the use of introducing the Bachtinian notion of carnivalization? And what is the relation between nostalgia for paradise and modern exotism?

Arriving at the end of our observations, the following has to be recorded: the author has obviously succeeded in presenting us with a text that applies to the rules of the contemporary discourse of literary criticism, involving a confrontation of philosophic concepts (both frequently discussed and less known but valuable ones), and legitimizing the myth as a possible scheme of representing reality and its experience that is also capable of providing us with means of reconciliation with reality (a view shared by Zdeněk Neubauer for example). The fact, that the method of exposition is ruled by superior schemes provided by theories of myth or myth itself, and a limited employment of bottom-up strategies, is confirmed by a rather brief closure of the text that lacks a clear survey of the results of the inquiry. Due to this, the findings do not seem to differ enough from the initial hypotheses; this lack of difference needs to be compensated – at least by reconsidering some (definitely only a few selected ones) of the above mentioned topics.

And, last but not least: on p. 65, Karel Teige is said to have compared music hall to *saturnalia* without having developed this comparison: no wonder, since his uttering does not have to be taken gravely as a reference to ancient mythology but allows us to consider it simply a rhetorical device. As we have observed here, rhetorical devices work wonders...

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