

Supervisor's Report

Louis Armand, PhD

MA thesis:

“Brophy, Deligny, and Guattari: The Avant-garde as Subsumption and Stratification”

by Valeriya Sabitova

It is my view that Ms Sabitova's submission fulfils the standard requirements for an MA thesis in the Department of Anglophone Literatures & Cultures. In it she examines the transverse, intersectional fields of “literature” & “theory” as mapped-out in Félix Guattari & Gilles Deleuze's *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) & exemplified in the works of Brigit Brophy (e.g. *In Transit*) & Fernand Deligny (e.g. *The Arachnean*).

The thesis investigates a range of interrelated topics, from the idea of a “multidimensional avant-garde” to the evolution of concepts like subsumption & stratification (from Kant, via Hegel, to Marx), & their convergence in the thinking of transversality & recursive assemblage in 20th-century cultural cybernetics (Guattari, *The Machinic Unconscious*).

The thesis examines the emergent character of cultural signification in the figure of the avant-garde & forms of “communication” on the margins of sense; their divergence from institutional forms & their subsumption within the ongoing evolution of the “culture industry”; & situates these within a broader 20th-century critique of humanism contemporaneous with post-structuralism.

Certain strands of revolutionary (dialectical) thought are thus shown to intersect with tendencies both within the avant-garde & certain counter-institutional movements such as those of anti-psychiatry, in which – in a broadly Foucauldian/Derridean movement – elements of subversion (negation, non-communication, etc.) assume an “affirmative” function in the deconstruction of cultural norms.

The implications of Ms Sabitova's arguments concern not only “theory” & “literature” but “culture” as a whole & its relation to how we define the human within a broader ecology of sense (Deligny's work stems from experimental observations of severe autism, while Guattari & Brophy are both concerned with the transverse character of subjectivity as an experience of the limits of signifiability).

In view of the standard of the work submitted by Ms Sabitova, I recommend that the thesis proceed to defence.

I propose that the thesis be awarded a grade of EXCELLENT (1) provisional upon the resolution of any questions that may be raised by the opponent or during the thesis examination.



Louis Armand, PhD

24 August 2021