

prowadzących do wniosku unieważniającego tę pseudo-odmianę gatunku. Podobnie cenne jest spostrzeżenie, że na temat mitu powiedziano sporo głupstw, np. w *Mitologiques* Barthes'a, gdzie do mitów zaliczono zarówno Brigitte Bardot jak i frytki, a przecież — jak zaznaczono — mit to ani bohater, ani przedmiot, lecz system, który przywracany stanowi w literaturze część reguły gry. Również wartościowa jest polemika nad postacią powieściową, ukazuje bowiem sposób jej traktowania przez twórców. Natomiast poglądy na perwersyjność powieści informują o różnych sposobach rozumienia funkcji powieści w jej dziejach, lecz nie stanowią żadnego odkrycia.

Po stronie cienia trudno nie odnotować banalności wielu wypowiedzeń, niedostatków teoretyczno-językoznawczej podbudowy, arbitralności niektórych uwag i braku precyzji wyrażen, np. zaskakujący, bo sprzeczny z teorią de Saussure'a, sposób pojmowania *langue* i *langage*: *langage* jako język — słownik i gramatyka, a *langue* jako mowa (s. 131). Tak samo kształtowanie się świata fikcji, powstawanie wyobrażeń — w języku czy obrazach — stanowiło pasjonujący dylemat dla dyskutantów, podczas gdy został on dość dokładnie zbadany we współczesnej psycholingwistyce<sup>2</sup>. Wreszcie mniemania o językowej nośności powieści i strukturalnych ograniczeniach sztuk obrazowych były nadto jednostronne i kategoryczne, ponieważ pozbawione niezbędnych zastrzeżeń lub dopowiedzeń. Niejednokrotnie trafne obserwacje zostały zniweczone przez arbitralność ich formy. Zapewne jedną z przyczyn tego faktu był roboczy i swobodny typ dyskusji pociągający za sobą brak dbałości o precyzję wypowie-

dzi. Ich dookreślenie pozwoliłoby uniknąć oświadczeń niezbyt ostrożnych. Nota Redakcji, podpowiadająca czytanie tej dyskusji jako powieści, nasuwa pomysł, iż gdyby rzeczywiście była ona fikcją powieściową, to otrzymalibyśmy wariant powieści autotematycznej: o powieści w powieści wypowiadają się jej postacie. Na tle twórczości choćby T. Parnickiego byłaby to wersja rzeczywiście o tyle nowa, o ile wieloautorska i zarazem wielopostaciowa.

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Grzegorz Gazda, AWANGARDA — NOWOCZESNOŚĆ I TRADYCJA, W KRĘGU EUROPEJSKICH KIERUNKÓW LITERACKICH PIERWSZYCH DZIESIĘCIOLECI XX WIEKU (THE AVANT-GARDE — MODERNITY AND TRADITION. IN THE CIRCLE OF EUROPEAN LITERARY TRENDS OF THE FIRST DECADES OF THE 20TH CENTURY), Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, Łódź 1987, 290 pages.

In order to evade the dangers of ambiguity the author in the very beginning clearly defines the term "avant-garde" as it is understood in his work — it is defined as a universal name given to all modern artistic currents which appeared at the beginning of the 20th century and went on developing and transforming up until the thirties. In this sense the avant-garde is also sometimes called the historical avant-garde, the classic avant-garde or the great avant-garde of the present century. The main task of this book is to interpret, analyse and describe the genesis and development of modern art with special stress on literature which is perfectly understandable if one takes into account the interests, competence and knowledge of the author. Although the work in question contains basic and fundamental problems concerning the avant-garde (not restricted to the Continent only, but also including other spheres of influence of European langu-

<sup>2</sup> Por. I. Kurcz, *Psycholingwistyka*, Warszawa 1976; I. Kurcz, *Język a reprezentacja świata w umyśle*, Warszawa 1987. Autorka była na podoktorskim stażu w USA, prowadziła później wykłady na uniwersytetach europejskich, japońskich, amerykańskich i australijskich. Jest też członkiem redakcji wydawnictw psychologicznych, m.in. i francuskiego „L'Année Psychologique”.

ages) it is not a monograph work. If historical reconstruction of a given movement inside the avant-garde was called for, the author used monographs of particular avant-garde artistic currents which had been written, published and already well acknowledged by scholars.

The book is divided into five chapters. In the first one the author tackles two problems: he presents the history and the haping of the concept of avant-garde both in literary criticism and in the field of the theory of literature; on the other hand this chapter includes also a wide description of the evolution of the theoretical consciousness of understanding, interpretation and meaning of the term under discussion—it offers a view on the present form and state of scholarly research concerning this problem.

Chapter Two is devoted to the social and cultural origins of the avant-garde. As the author points out, it should be read as a supplement to the fourth chapter, which deals with the avant-garde and its attitude towards tradition. In spite of the fact that all avant-garde artists wanted either to do away with tradition altogether (Marinetti and the futurists) or to break away from the past and simply build anew culture, life and art, as they declared in their magazines and artistic manifestoes, the famous and notorious anti-traditionalism characterizing the historical avant-garde remained mainly in the form of wishful postulates. The author analyses and presents separately those factors which made the avant-garde movements truly fresh and original, and goes on to discuss those which were a simple consequence of the old and linked the avant-garde with the neglected past.

In the third chapter the author synthetically groups together and discusses those features of the avant-garde formation which make for its specificity and particularity in the course of the evolution and development of European literature. The chapter deals with

the consciously programmed methods of activity and affecting the public, forms of cultural, artistic and social campaigns and happenings producing the desired effect on the audience and readers in accord with the previously formulated theories. The strategies of the avant-garde movement, as the author frequently stresses, had some important artistic motivations, and in the second part of this chapter he successfully attempts to list and reconstruct the common elements of different artistic tendencies inside the avant-garde which constitute the philosophical and artistic canon of the avant-garde as a whole. In his analytical description of rules, conventions and principles created, accepted and put to practice by the artists the author referred basically to formulated poetics, which from the methodological point of view seems to be the soundest choice, inasmuch as it offers the widest and the most clear ground for this type of comparison.

Chapter Five deals with the avant-garde and Marxist philosophy. The author shows how and why it came about that many avant-garde leaders and many trends of the avant-garde art were strongly attracted by radical and leftist political movements, Marxism being by far the most outstanding and influential as it was duly put to practice in Russia, and discusses the ideological and aesthetic inspirations of Marxist philosophy in the art and literature of the avant-garde formation. Following closely related ideas of social, political and artistic revolt (still cherished in our times by the new avant-garde in France, for instance) the author concludes convincingly that the history of the avant-garde was largely determined and directed by Marxist-oriented theory and ideology.

The author's approach to the problems contained in this book is characterized by a careful and meticulous distinction of the various interpretative aspects of the avant-garde literary phenomenon of the first thirty years of



the 20th century in Europe. The avant-garde movement was not only interested in art in its pure form, but also in life—politics, philosophy, ideology—and dynamic activity in all spheres of existence and creation. The analysis undertaken and conducted by the author is therefore concerned with the richness and variety of the numerous aspects of the avant-garde formation. It is described on the philosophical level as a cluster of ideas, beliefs and postulates referring to reality as a whole, to social and human conditions of the times and the roles art was to play in the rebuilding of the world in the new mode, invented by the artists. On the level of the history of art and aesthetics the avant-garde is described as the movement which strived to abolish the old aesthetic values (beauty, art, the comprehensibility of art, to name but a few) and the traditional approach to literature, but at the same time created new canons and rules of its own, forcing the scholars to re-evaluate their concept of aesthetics. In this respect the eclectic nature of the avant-garde stands out, its transgressive programmes and the revival of the romantic concept of the correspondence of arts, which the avant-garde artists carried far beyond the limits of the original idea, from theory into practice.

The problems of the avant-garde are further analysed from the sociological standpoint with special regard to the social and political contexts of artistic experiments and campaigns conducted in an overwhelming atmosphere of a deep cultural crisis undermining European civilization. As the author observes, progressive and revolutionary ideologies determined many an avant-garde manifesto, persuasive in manner and aimed at convincing the masses of the urgent need for a new order in life, art and culture. Even though the problematic layer of the book is arranged synchronically, the avant-garde is also described and analysed diachronically on the level of the history of li-

terature, where the evolution and development of such supranational artistic currents as futurism, expressionism, dadaism or surrealism is presented, treated as a sequence of specific facts and cultural phenomena occurring at their particular time. And finally the avant-garde formation is approached from the point of view of poetics, consisting of ideas, preferred themes and means of literary expression. Formulated and immanent poetics may be compared in this respect, as well as the dynamic, postulative theory and the practical realizations of the declarations and discourses. The real place of the avant-garde in the process of complex literary history is described on this level, too, taking into account the exceptional consciousness of the self of avant-garde leaders and artists, its urge to explore the mechanisms of language and linguistic or extra-linguistic creation, and the vast contents of its artistic utopias, complementary to the utopias of the social and political sphere. The examples which the author copiously presents are taken mainly from the abundant treasury of avant-garde poetry, which is perfectly justified and understandable, as prose and its leading genre, the novel, were not subject to such fierce changes and attacks as the art of verse in the first thirty years of the 20th century.

Owing to the fact that the styles and forms of avant-garde art possess a clearly visible supranational character, and on the other hand they are also determined by different national contexts and conditions, the analytical description employed by the author in his book calls for the methodological basis of comparative literature. Moreover, due to the structural interference of various kinds of art of the avant-garde period the author's deep and careful analysis becomes all the more penetrating and sound as he includes in his work various interpretative aspects necessary for a full and open understanding of the problems, tackling as complex

a structure as avant-garde art and literature. Judging from the final outcome, the correct methodological choice of scholarly attitude towards the questions posed by the avant-garde formation of the thirties seems to be one of the highest advantages found in the book. Another significant point of interest is an exceptionally wide substantial scope of problems adopted by the author, who does not restrict himself to Western literatures and tries to re-evaluate the accepted hierarchy of cultures by means of describing and analysing the literatures of nations and cultures usually omitted in similar works, completing and supplementing in this way the complicated picture of the achievements of the classical avant-garde. Obviously the proletarian culture of Soviet Russia had long before been equalled in importance and meaning with futurism, dadaism, expressionism and surrealism, trends that are the major points of in-

terest to the author here; however, the reader is also presented with ample information and a wide view of Hungarian, Yugoslavian, Czechoslovakian and Bulgarian literatures, to name but a few. The influence of the avant-garde phenomena reached far beyond the borders of the countries of Western Europe (even as far as Brazil and other South American states) and the author has eagerly exploited this fact in order to balance and broaden his analysis.

The imposing bibliography gives the reader a rich list of books and essays for further critical research. And although the book will be of interest mainly to the specialist, its significant cognitive values shall undoubtedly be also appreciated by laymen and students, thanks to the simplicity and clarity of style and sheer beauty of the language.

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