



Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University Journal.
Philosophical Sciences. Vol. 1(85)

Вісник Житомирського державного
університету імені Івана Франка.
Філософські науки. Вип. 1(85)

ISSN: 2663-7650

UDC 17:130.2:111.852

DOI 10.35433/PhilosophicalSciences.1(85).2019.103-110

**AESTHETICS OF THE UKRAINIAN AVANT-GARDE:
ENERGY-INFORMATION DIMENSION**

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The article deals with the object, nature and artistic forms of Ukrainian avant-gardism of the first third of the twentieth century which are highlighted on the basis of energy-informative aesthetics' ideas analysis. This determines the specific theoretical and methodological basis of this article, therefore, hermeneutic method as well as the semiotic analysis when considering works by world-known Ukrainian avant-garde artists are important methods of our research work.

We worked out a hypothesis about the connection of energy-information searches for avant-garde aesthetics with the spiritual practices of isychasm in art. In addition, we sought to identify or deny its "ideological bridges" with the traditions of national iconography, symbolism, as well as with the ideological ideas and values of modernity.

In the research work energy-information ideas as motives in the works by K. Malevich, O. Bogomazov, V. Yermylvov, V. Tatlin and other Ukrainian avant-gardists are outlined. The enioesthetics of avant-garde follow from its insights into the transcendental sphere of sacred, "karmic", energy-information interactions. It is related to the discovery of the connection between the macrocosm and the microcosm, entire noosphere universalism and each individual human "monad", cumulative information impact of their synergy. The outlook of the Ukrainian pictorial avant-garde, with its tendency to complex symbolism, humanism, etc., is highlighted in the article. It is also found out that in their experience, information potentials of artistic imagery are at the forefront, and they are manifested through a specific artistic discourse, an updated sign language. "Energeida" of expressive form is crucial in their creations; it constitutes not only "sineme" of image-sign but also its "phoneme" audio or visual semiotics. In other words, it is perceived as a kind of "energy-information sound" of the work and as an incentive for the viewer to take some action. We come to the conclusion about the importance of the energy-information approach for understanding not only the ideological motives of the "historical" avant-garde of the beginning of the last century, but also the modern post- and trans-avant-garde in art. It is pointed out that such analysis of avant-gardism seems valuable for a better understanding of the origins of the changes that are taking place now in artistic practices in particular, and in the symbolic production and exchange of society in general.

Key words: K. Malevich, O. Bogomazov, Artistic Practices, Energy-Informative Aesthetics (Enioesthetics), Isychism, Symbol, Avant-gardism in Art, Modernist (Secession)

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ЕСТЕТИКА УКРАЇНСЬКОГО АВАНГАРДУ: ЕНЕРГО-ІНФОРМАЦІЙНИЙ ВИМІР

В. А. Личкова*

Як об'єкт, сутність і художні форми українського авангардизму першої третини ХХ століття розглядаються у цьому дослідженні на основі аналізу ідей енерго-інформаційної естетики. Це визначає специфіку теоретико-методологічної основи цієї статті, відтак важливими методами нашого дослідження став герменевтичний метод, а також метод семіотичного аналізу при розгляді творів всесвітньо відомих українських митців-авангардистів. Нами опрацьовувалась гіпотеза про зв'язок енерго-інформаційних пошуків естетики авангарду з духовними практиками ісихазму в мистецтві. Крім того, ми прагнули виявити чи заперечити її "ідейні містки" з традиціями вітчизняної іконографії, символізму, а також з світоглядними ідеями й цінностями модерну.

У дослідженні з'ясовані енерго-інформаційні ідеї як спонуки в творчості К. Малевича, О. Богомазова, В. Єрмилова, В. Татліна та інших українських авангардистів. Еніоестетика авангардизму впливає з його прозирнь (інсайтів) у трансцендентну сферу сакральних, "кармічних", енерго-інформаційних взаємодій. Вона пов'язана з виявленням зв'язку макрокосму та мікркосму, вселюдського універсалізму ноосфери та кожної окремої людської "монади", сукупним інформаційним впливом їхньої синергії. Розглянуто світоглядні пошуки українського живописного авангарду, із його тяжінням до складного символізму, гуманізму та ін. Також з'ясовано, у їхньому досвіді на перший план висуваються інформаційні потенціали художньої образності, які виявляються через специфічний мистецький дискурс, оновлену знаково-символічну мову. Вирішальне значення в їхніх творах набуває "енергеїя" виразної форми, що конститує не тільки "синему" образо-знаку, а й його "фонему", аудіо- чи візуальну семіотику. Іншими словами, вона у сприйнятті постає як своєрідне "енерго-інформаційне звучання" твору та як спонук для глядача до певної дії. Зроблено висновок про значущість енерго-інформаційного підходу для розуміння не лише світоглядних спонук "історичного" авангарду початку минулого століття, а й сучасного пост- і трансавангарду в мистецтві. Указано, що здійснений аналіз авангардизму видається цінним для кращого розуміння витоків тих змін, які відбуваються зараз у художніх практиках зокрема та символічному виробництві й обміні суспільства загалом.

Ключові слова: К. Малевич, О. Богомазов, художні практики, енерго-інформаційна естетика (еніоестетика), ісихазм, символ, авангардизм у мистецтві, модерн (сецесія)

Introduction. Among the boundless diversity of aesthetic and art schools, concepts, trends of avant-garde we would like to find that common stream, creative "spirit", nourishing any artistic form-seeking, providing a "vitaism" of avant-garde art.

No matter how formal, technical, stylistic, compositional, coloristic features of the New Art of the early twentieth century differ, all of them, to my mind, are based on that eternal relic of the "Leverkjun soul" of the avant-garde, which is characteristic of the "energeia" of a turning point in the history of civilization.

It seems to be related to the energy and informational content of culture, especially in the times of its crisis and revival, decadence and revolutionary transformations.

The experience of avant-gardism seems valuable to understand the origins of the changes that are taking place now in artistic practices in particular and in the symbolic production and exchange of society in general. Therefore, analysis of the worldview motives of the Ukrainian avant-garde, with its attraction to complex symbolism, humanism, often ideas of "philosophy of the heart", "antheism", "vitaism", as well as interesting formative

searches will be useful for finding effective ways of harmonizing the life of a modern person.

Current state of the issue. For a long time the aesthetic consciousness of national non-classics was known only to a rather narrow circle of experts and admirers of non-classical art.

Only in the late twentieth - the first decade of the twenty-first centuries, research of the essence, history and socio-aesthetic significance of the avant-garde in the works of aesthetics, art critics, culturologists:

L. Levchuk,
O. Onyshchenko, D. Gorbachov,
O. Petrova, O. Sidor-Gibelynda,
O. Fedoruk, M. Karanda, A. Rudyk,
O. Tarasenko, G. Sklyarenko, O. Tytarenko,
O. Osmak, O. Maidanets, Y. Demydenko,
G. Mednykova, the author of these words,
and others is developed in Ukraine. They all relied on the first works on the history of the Ukrainian avant-garde that appeared in the Diaspora [1:31].

The first non-figurative work of the Ukrainian avant-garde is considered to be Vasyl Kandinsky's drawing on the cover of the catalog of the exhibition *Salon of Izdebsky in Odessa* (1910), but the first theoretical mention of Ukrainian avant-garde with the introduction of the relevant concept is the exploration of Andrei Nakov made for the exhibition *Tatlin's Dream* in London (1973). The aesthetics of the Ukrainian avant-garde gained its second breath thanks to the ideological crisis of social realism, the revival of interest in the history, traditions and new forms of Ukrainian ethno culture. At present it is a "vigorous paradigm" of social life and social activity which Sergei Khoruzhy derives from the phenomenon of synergy in his religious, philosophical and aesthetic values [2]. Such an approach to the analysis of artistic practices, the philosophy of art is new. But it seems fruitful to understand not only the causes of innovation in the arts but also the search for reasons for the popularity or, conversely, the unpopularity of the artist's creativity. However, it gets especially

important when trying to find reasons for gaining popularity of certain trends, directions, schools or groups in a society.

The outline of unresolved issues brought up in the article. On this basis, we aim to show the value of enioesthetics for understanding the worldview basis of contemporary trends and currents of art. It can be assumed that an energy-information slice of the analysis of the impulses and consequences of artistic creativity makes it possible to explain the phenomenon of popularity / unpopularity of the innovator from the social praxis point of view, when not only novelty in form-making matters. The hermeneutical method as well as the semiotic analysis method are used in this study when considering the works of Ukrainian avant-garde painting of the late XIX - the first half of the XX century.

As **the purpose** of the research work, we aim to reveal the energy-informational dimension of the aesthetics of the Ukrainian avant-garde which explains its philosophical and artistic connection with the scientific and cultural paradigms of the early twentieth century.

Results and discussion. In post-classical aesthetics, there takes place the synthesis of traditional ideas, principles and categories of philosophy of art with the ideological and conceptual apparatus of modern sciences, with a discursive thesaurus of computer, information, and digital technologies. It is in this wave of new spiritual syncretism, the neo-Renaissance synergy of "humanism" and "transhumanism" that energy-information aesthetics emerges. It reveals itself as a transposition into the realm of the philosophy of art and the theory of the sensory culture of outlook ideas about the close relationship of human being with the energy-information processes of nature. Recently, eniology studying energy-information processes in the Universe and in the human world has already acquired its own scientific status and legitimacy [3]. However, the formation of its disciplinary specifications is only beginning to develop,

giving rise to ambiguous attitudes and differing assessments. In my opinion, from the point of view of the analysis of energy-information interactions in public life, it is possible to more adequately categorically and conceptually reflect the new realities of sensual culture and art that have emerged in the aesthetic sphere of the information and post-information society.

Today, computer technologies and the modern media space have dramatically changed not only the information and communication environment, but also the ways of thinking, feeling, perception, creativity.

"Actual (contemporary) art" subtly responds to these changes, transforming artistic discourse and imaginative language towards digital technologies and multimedia. Alongside with these processes post-non-classical enioesthetics of media art is also formed [4]. Informative potentials of artistic imagery, which are highlighted by specific artistic discourse and updated sign and symbolic language are in the foreground. Let us point out that the decisive importance is the "energeia" of expressive form which constitutes not only the "sineme" of image-sign, but also its "phoneme", audio or visual semiotics.

Then the "energy of information" saturates any semiotic discourse, perceived as a kind of "energy-information sound" of the work. That is, the latter is not only a source of information for the reader, listener or viewer, it often acts as a certain impetus for action. The work of art itself or the artistic image here acts as an "ergon" (the embodied "energeia" of discourse and creativity). More precisely, as the sign-symbolic "body" of the signifier, which has self-sufficient substantive existence with the relevant informational power, energy as a stimulus to action (e.g. concept art, object art, ready-made art, etc.).

When Marcel Duchamp chose the ordinary things of daily life, such as a wheel or a wine bottle rack, he sought to draw attention to the intellectual or / and informational aspect of a work of art, not material. Thus, his works *The Bicycle*

Wheel (1913) or *The Fountain* (1917) become an example of ready-made art. Duchamp's artistic search has interested many. But it is not always the author's innovation that interests the public or other artists. That is why Duchamp's artistic innovations are also an example of energy and information interaction between the author and the public. What is its essence? (As we remember, energy does not originate from nothing and never disappears; it changes from one form to another. Thus the first law of thermodynamics is postulated as fundamental, in the natural sciences). We should note that such an idea is a clear embodiment of the principle of equivalence. In the case of Duchamp, his efforts were apprehended by critics and the public in accordance with the author's aspirations, that is to say, equivalent to the concept-action-information-evaluation chain". It concerns the energy-information aspects of the artist's work and evaluating his efforts by a stranger.

From this point of view, let us turn to consider the vanguard's aspirations. Its birth in the early twentieth century is already directly linked to the desire for dialogue in culture. Thus, the "energy-information dimensions" of avant-gardism in Ukraine and Poland were most influenced by the stylistics of symbolism, secession, and early modernism. There is even a direct connection between Ukrainian and Polish artists at the turn of the century, when they together adopted from Western Europe aesthetic ideas and artistic methods of the newest trends in post-classical, non-academic art. (That is, such rapid dissemination of ideas and methods testifies to the equivalence in the "social search-art search" chain). Thus, Krakow's symbolism and secession were represented by S. Vispiansky, J. Megofer, W. Tetmeier, J. Stanisławski, who defined the modernist aspirations by M. Zhuk, O. Novakivsky, M. Sosenko, and P. Kholodny [5]. New ideas were promoted by the theorists of both Young Poland and the Ukrainian House, which justified the need for the modernization of artistic

culture, its transition from academic to modern forms. It should be emphasized that the focus was on the connection of Person with space, the inner experience of a person, especially in existential "boundary" situations. In particular, these themes were clearly reflected in the work of young Ukrainian artist and graphic artist Konstantin Piskorsky (1892-1922).

According to Olga Lagutenko, in Ukraine the Art Nouveau (Secession) style started its movement in Lviv on the basis of exchange of artistic ideas with Krakow. There appeared *The Society of Red Art Lovers* (1895-1914), the first Ukrainian-language art-journal *Artistic Bulletin* is published. Lviv (Ukrainian-Polish) secession is represented by O. Terletsky, Polish artist, book illustrator S. Dębicki, Lviv art critic M. Olszewski, Ukrainian painter I. Severin ("Hutsul" version of modernity). In the organic and ethno-cultural content of their images one can see, in particular, "worship of the forces of the elements", appeal to "symbols of living creative energies" [6: 231]. In other words, the symbolism and decorative and ornamental forms of modernity in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe embody certain connections between man and nature, the inner forces of human spirituality.

Thus, in the national version of the modernism motifs of mythology and folklore (V. Krychevsky), mystical sensations of "transparency" of the material world (V. Zamyraïlo), the reproduction of cosmic rhythms in the harmony of the universe (K. Piskorsky), exalted-romantic moods that acquire cosmic sound (Y. Mikhailiv) are widespread.

At that time folk ornaments, old Ukrainian icon and engraving, art of medieval Europe and ancient East gain increasing aesthetic value.

It is necessary to pay attention to this, as well as to find the answer to the question why such a topic, such ideas became incredibly interesting for many contemporary representatives of the creative art elite. It is possible to claim the

"ergon" as the embodied "energeya" of the discourse and creativity of these artists. That is, about the energy-information dimension of the aesthetics of the Ukrainian avant-garde. All this will influence the appearance of neoprimitivism in the works by Georgy Narbut, Mykhailo Boychuk, Maria Synyakova, Olena Kulchytska, Olexandr Sayenko.

Ukrainian Art Nouveau combines secession art language with symbolic content, techniques of "Naive Art", Byzantine iconography and admiration for the art of the East, especially in connection with archeological finds in Egypt, Mesopotamia, India. We can see in the ideological and formative searches of Ukrainian avant-garde representatives their interest in Impressionist heritage, fascination with the aesthetics of Zen Buddhism and Japanese engraving. It is also possible to claim interest in the Theosophical searches by O. Blavatska, M. Roerich and O. Roerich.

In short, thanks to its reliance on symbols and symbolism, secession and early modernism prepared in Ukraine stylistic and energy-informational ground for the emergence of the national avant-garde, its enioesthetics, which, despite the declaration and the manifestation of the "Great Refusal" of classic and academicism, absorbed the spiritual potentials of previous artistic epochs, transposed Ukrainian Sacrum into new non-classical forms.

Ukrainian AVANT-GARDE

Archipenko and Semenko
VAPLITE, Plow and Garth
Academic N-co
They pushed into the vanguard
Hook to all canons
An Art classic is "kayuk"
Delighted by futur-laws
David Davidovych Burluk...

Not from a formal point of view, but from a substantive one, avant-garde refers to the profound metaphysical, religious, mystical aspects of art. Ukrainian authors, who are concerned with the study of the aesthetics of the national avant-garde problems, note its internal, ideological and

aesthetic connection with the ideas of cosmism, theosophy, anthroposophy, Gnosticism, etc. (For example, the author's creative concept of "Global Energy" by the artist-cubo-futurist Olexandr Bogomazov). But no less, and perhaps more, cultural potential was created by mystical-religious ideas through their aesthetic transposition into avant-garde imagery. In particular, the energy-informational aspect of the aesthetics of avant-gardism is also connected with the traditions of Christian isychasm – the religious-mystical doctrine of the higher manifestation of Sophia's wisdom, the Gnostic (energy-information) communication with the world. The isychastic practice of "clever prayer" cultivates a person's appeal to the illumination, revelation, ascetic-aesthetic experience of religious chronotopes. Byzantine and domestic isychasts, with their refusal to talk, speak, "the word of the ordinary," ascetically approached the comprehension of the value of the sacred content of silence, the inner comprehension of the Word of God through synergy and synesthesia as a kind of merging of the energy flows of everyday life of man and the universe.

After all, the spoken word loses its transcendental meaning and spiritual suggestion, becomes an empty sound shell.

The most telling is the statement of contemporary British art critic J. Bowlt (Cambridge), that the artistic avant-garde of the early twentieth century on the territory of the Russian Empire had many points of contact with the Orthodox tradition in general, and icon painting in particular [7]. Indeed, strange to say, the aesthetic phenomenon of the Orthodox icon was culturally "rediscovered" by the Russian avant-garde movement at the beginning of the last century, as Y.Trubetsky wrote in *The Three Essays on Russian Icon* in 1916. The transgressive denial of academism with its realistic "illusionism" brought innovative artists back to archaic forms of image, to conventions, symbolism, mysticism of Christian art, in particular iconography.

In energy-information searches of the

avant-garde, emptiness, transparency, "background", but not "figure", are especially significant in the "Zen" or "Isychast" image. The backgrounds of the drawing, the pause in the melody seem more valuable than the artistic matter that stands out. Marginal meanings become dominant.

The higher task of perception in this case is to penetrate precisely this sacred (energy-information) Nothing, into a "nirvana" of image. Enioesthetic sensuality seems to merge with the mystical one (some of these paintings by Amaravella artists are designed for such guidelines, works of monochrome painting, in which perception becomes illusion or hallucination, and visual hyperreality leads to perspective oblivion).

Gnosis in avant-gardism reproduces the spiritual energy of the ontological unity of Being and Nothing, "Cosmos" and "Chaos" synergetics as a modern scientific paradigm that derives from the metaphysics and mysticism of isychasm. It is with the Hesychastic tradition that S. Khoruzhy connects the "energetic" paradigm of national culture, and T. Grigorieva compares the Eastern mystical notions of Non-Being, Before-Being, Emptiness with it, which form the basis of the enioesthetics of Zen Buddhism [6].

Thus, the enioesthetics of avant-garde flows from its insights and penetrates into the transcendental sphere of sacral, "karmic", energy-information interactions. It is connected, so to say, with the discovery of the "pulsating energy" of the macrocosm and microcosm, the universal humanism of the noosphere and each individual human "monad", the combined informational influence of their interconnection.

In Ukraine, the basic ideas of energy-information searches for the avant-garde were formulated by Bogomazov when he spoke about the combination of internal and external energy fields of an image, about the dynamic energy of the field of painting. He embodied his aesthetic "energy" in many works of the cubo-futurism period, from the forest landscapes of

Boyarka to 'Tram' and 'The Pilars'. While teaching at the National Academy of Arts of Ukraine, the theorist and avant-garde critic spread his enioesthetic ideas to a wide audience of young artists.

Casimir Malevich's concept of suprematism is, in fact, a Ukrainian kind of enioesthetics. The development and implementation of the "five dimensions" of art, the aestheticization of the principle of "economy" are of an aesthetic nature, since they appeal to the ontic and spiritual structures of the suprematic image.

Archetypal geometric shapes (square, circle, cross), and dominant pure colors (white, black, red) carry the energy of the eternal cosmos, constitute the information code of the cultural being of mankind. They are energy-informationally related, as noted above, to Byzantine iconography, even to isychasm, as well as the folk traditions of "naive" arts and crafts, especially in their decorative, ornamental and colorful expressions. Suprematism, therefore, revived "zero-forms" of an artistic view of the world, energy-informational foundations of the Ukrainian "holy-attitude" which the world is perceived as a holiday and even holiness.

Energy of folk, including Carnival culture permeates the futuristic images of David and Volodymyr Burluk, constructs elements of neo-primitivism. The local variants of Ukrainian futurism are related to the traditions of folk painting that originated in the village Skopytsia and village Verbivka in the works by M. Synyakova. So we can see artist's departure from elitism in their art. On the contrary, it is not just a daily routine, but a "holy daily routine" in national culture becomes an incentive to art. The enioesthetics of national neo-primitivism also developed on the basis of the so-called "Byzantine restoration" (in "Byzantineism" of the monumental painting of Mykhaylo Boychuk and his famous school).

Apparently the artist and his followers were inspired by the spiritual component of Byzantine art, its' greatness, an appeal to the intuitive comprehension of the

mysteries of life, that is, the energy of vitalism. Energy-information ideas also permeate the aesthetics of Ukrainian constructivism, especially in Vasyl Yermilov's cubo-futurism and design and Volodymyr Tatlin's "machine art". In the wake of European Dadaism in Ukraine "Constructivists-Spiralists-Dynamists" appeared [5: 192].

The most striking example is Tatlin's *Tower of the Third International* which is still regarded today as the energy-information model of "The Third Millennium", plastically embodying the enioesthetics of post-industrial society, as it once did the Eiffel Tower of an industrial one. In general, the enioesthetics of the Ukrainian avant-garde reveals, according to O. Fedoruk, "the energy of emotional enthusiasm" [5: 214] through the transformation of visual forms and "the energy of color" [5: 199].

From the energy-informational dimensions of isychasm and traditional folk vitayism, suprematism, "color painting", "poetry-painting" and "Scythian-Polovtsian plastics", new meanings and forms of national avant-gardism are added which complement the ideas of "New Art" in Europe.

Conclusions and research perspectives. When considering works of art from the standpoint of energy-informative aesthetics, the information potentials of artistic imagery are put to the forefront, which are revealed through the specific artistic discourse, the updated symbolic language of innovation.

Attention is drawn here to the "energeia" of expressive form (it constitutes not only the "sineme" of image-sign, but also the "phoneme", audio or visual semiotics of the work). That is, in perception, it appears as a kind of "energy-information sound" of the work, and also as an incentive for the viewer to take some action.

The energy-informative approach to the analysis of the essence and features of the aesthetics of avant-garde makes it possible to reveal its connection with the concepts of synergy, isychasm, naivism, symbolism.

In Ukraine the enioesthetics of avant-

garde manifest itself in the phenomena of neo-primitivism, "Byzantineism", suprematism, "color painting", "poetry-painting" through the vitalism of the ethn-national holy-attitude in their contents and artistic forms.

The brightest representatives of the enioesthetics of the avant-garde were Malevich, Bogomazov, Yermilov, Tatlin, the Burlyuk brothers. For the Ukrainian avant-garde, the ornamental and colorful features of folk crafts, which also capture the energy-information component associated with the worldview of everyday life, were also of great importance in painting.

It should be pointed out that that the energy-informational dimensions of avant-garde aesthetics can become scientifically fruitful for the analysis of contemporary artistic trends and multifarious art practices. This will be the perspective of our further research work.

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Receive: September 16, 2019

Accepted: October 15, 2019