

Conference Paper

Cultural-Psychological Origins of the First Avant-garde: The Tiredness from Culture

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Abstract

The article deals with the aspect of the First Avant-Garde phenomenon – its cultural-psychological origins – that remains rather poorly explored. The author introduces a hypothesis that one of significant reasons for the avant-garde to be born as a radical innovation (and, at the same time, as denial overcoming the artistic past) was a persistent and all-embracing spiritual and psychological state of artistic and overall cultural consciousness of the mainly young generation of art creators. It was the tiredness from the past and dominating culture. There is a brief analysis of semantics, pragmatics and the roots of a sociocultural phenomenon of tiredness as well as its modification, the tiredness from culture. The paper considers a key reason behind the emergence of the tiredness from culture, the internal spiritual and mental exhaustion of the very culture ("culture fatigue"). It is culture fatigue that causes the state of its own inutility, outdatedness, senselessness, intolerability, which can be integrally expressed by the state of the tiredness from culture, on the one hand. On the other hand, there is an aspiration to overcome this tiredness, the "protest", "polemic" will of the creators regarding to the culture fatigue, their vitality, enthusiasm, strengthening spirit, hanger for new, free of tiredness, "fresh" in terms of form, contents and psychology and attractive for the society state of creativity. The author highlights that avant-garde denial of the past and desire for the new is distinguished by its great ontological value reflecting the avant-garde consciousness and creativity focused on culture as a whole. There are two ways to realize the denial of the previous culture "as a whole": the constructive endeavor for new culture as a specific way of people's existence and attempts, even more radical, to overstep the culture's frames, to break away from tiresome "civility"; in practice, this may mean never feasible moving to "clear" or "absolute" naturality.

Keywords: Avant-garde; The First Avant-garde; culture; tiredness; culture fatigue; tiredness from culture; semantics and pragmatics of tiredness in culture; reasons for the tiredness from culture; modernism in the arts; radical innovativeness; avant-garde denial of the past and aspiration for the future; ontological value of avant-garde consciousness; culture creation as the avant-garde denial of the previous culture and constructive endeavor for the new culture; avant-garde denial of "culture as a whole" and moving to "clear" naturality; free of cultural vestiges

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Received: 26 April 2018
 Accepted: 25 May 2018
 Published: 7 June 2018

Publishing services provided by
Knowledge E

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Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the ISPS Convention 2017 Conference Committee.

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1. Introduction

The avant-garde as the phenomenon of the art and the whole culture of the 20th century has been the subject of research interest so far. The possible reason is, on the one hand, that its experience is essential for understanding and realizing contemporary sociocultural processes: its radical urge to renovate, accumulated and manifested by “avant-gardes”, was integrated into modern life, which is marked by a growing tendency towards innovations. On the other hand, the avant-garde creative works made considerable contributions to the world’s cultural heritage and became classics of culture – the vivid and exciting classics. This is particularly true with regard to the First Avant-garde that created innovative works still impressing with its bold artistic novelties, eternal aesthetic youth, vitality and freshness. All this sustains the scientific interest in the First Avant-garde, which, over time, has acquired a greater topicality in terms of cultural values.

The explanation of the First Avant-garde’s nascence, its peculiarities observed at the very moment of its birth are still the major problems that the research efforts face despite the huge corpus of knowledge on the topic. It is clear today that a one-dimensional explanation reducing the backgrounds of the First Avant-garde to the only one cause, no matter how actual it is, cannot be relevant. While recognizing different versions of the First Avant-garde’s genesis, the current article, however, draws attention to the aspect yet insufficiently explored – the *cultural-psychological* one. All things that people do, being the creatures with mind and consciousness, their actions, moves, attitudes, both regular and irregular, local or large, professional/specialized or household/everyday, are based on psyche, i.e. they always have psychic representations and mediations. What is essential here is not only the informational “contents” of mind and consciousness (perceptions, values, goals and projects, “the picture of the world” on the whole), but also the internal “states” of psychic reality affecting the nature of activities, which are always interrelated, mutually objectified and mediated with somatic status. They sometimes determine people’s attitudes toward the world, life, culture and create the specific “meaning” of values and, based on the latter, feelings, experiences, interpretations-understandings of reality and, after all, people’s activity in real life. Meanwhile, such states, particularly when we say of collective mentality and mass psychology, are not random and “voluntary”, they are objective and socio-culturally determined.

The hypothesis presented in this article suggests that one of the First Avant-garde's essential roots was the universal, deep and constant state of collective (cultural) psychology at the beginning of the 20th century, which I define as *tiredness from culture*. The proof of this idea can be seen in the strong correlation between the specific features of the tiredness from culture and the peculiarities of the avant-garde worldview and creative works, which it was embodied in.

2. Main Part

The starting point should be the conceptual foundation of the article, the phenomenon of tiredness from culture. Tiredness was initially understood as the state of living systems accompanied by the loss/exhaustion of their material (physical, biological) powers/forces. This prevents them from being active and adaptive, particularly responding to environmental impacts (as a remedy against tiredness they require their forces accumulated). Later, these perceptions were replicated in psychology that deals with psychological tiredness understood as loss/exhaustion of psychic energy (the example of this is the phenomenon of "psychological burnout"). Transferring the idea of tiredness to the areas of people's social and individual lives, i. e., to the world of culture, implies further expanding and correcting the previous concepts of tiredness. To comprehend the place and role of tiredness in culture, there is the need for culturological analysis of various manifestations of the tiredness in sociocultural world.

It should be mentioned that albeit the high prevalence and the growing popularity of evaluating different aspects and sides of social and individual life in terms of "tiredness", one can hardly find culturological analysis of the latter, theoretical and historical analysis of the tiredness with regard to the culture. The author of the article is working on the monograph on the topic. Here I intend to highlight the main points to understand the tiredness from culture necessary for explaining the nature of the First Avant-garde in the art.

Substantiveness ("contents", semantics) of the tiredness from culture and, strictly speaking, the tiredness in general, as a phenomenon of culture. A few points should be clarified:

1. "Subject" or an intentional object: the tiredness can emerge and, respectively, the fatigue reaction can cover all phenomena sociocultural by nature in all areas of social and personal life – in this respect, tiredness from culture is as versatile as culture itself.

2. Tiredness from culture is a spiritual-psycho-somatic phenomenon according to its immanent "composition". It is a condition that can be described as a) spiritual-intensional: value-semantic; b) psychic: characterized by mental "tone", i.e. tension/energy of cognitive and emotional-volitional activity/passivity; c) somatic-energetic: intensity (power filling, energy resource) of material bodies (their "habituas"), actions and conduct.

Spiritual fatigue is vapidness of ideas, emptiness of senses caused by different culture phenomena and even overall cultural development. It comprises awareness of exhaustion, inanity, "repletion" and otioseness of the previous ideas and the absence of new, attractive and productive conceptions, sustainable solutions to pressing problems, vital goal-setting that reinforces culture creation. Moreover, there are value tautologies, stereotypization, persistence and vulgarization of values and ideals, prevailing "decadence" thought forces: degradation, hopelessness, disenchantment, faithlessness, cynicism, escapism and pessimistic worldview. *Psychic fatigue* is a marked emotional-volitional atonia and a decrease in strength/intensity of intellectual potency, dominating psychological states neutral to activities, such as spiritual bankruptcy, indifference, apathy, and even counterproductive negativist forces: boredom (Using the word "boredom" as a peculiar manifestation of psychic fatigue, irrespective of what provokes the latter, either everyday matters or specialized cultural phenomena, I would refer to J. Brodsky who, in my opinion, quite reasonably attributes a wholeseries of congenerous psychic states. to boredom, which is, in his expressive words, a "psychological Sahara". "Known under several aliases – anguish, ennui, tedium, doldrums, humdrum, the blahs, apathy, listlessness, stolidity, lethargy, languor, accidie, etc – boredom is a complex phenomenon..." [2, 86]. Brodsky, as a reader can see, also reckons among boredom the states that I considered above as "neutral", "indifferent". Boredom per se can hardly be called indifferent: any modus of it represents negative values. Meanwhile, in this case it is far more important that all the "modes of boredom" mentioned by Brodsky are definitely based on psychic fatigue and serve as the ways of its subjective existence.), disappointment, as well as resentment, nihilism, aggressiveness, and other destructive forms of tiredness. *Somatic fatigue* includes physical weakness resulted in disinclination for practical activity. If this activity is a must and likely to be inevitable, it possesses alienated, constrained and obliged character with retarded and disorganized exercise and low effectiveness/poor performance (in terms of productivity and quality).

Pragmatics of the tiredness from culture is an important feature that underlies the possible different types of response to cultural phenomena entailing the tiredness,

and respectively to diverse practical and behavioral consequences of this fatigue reaction induced by sociocultural phenomena. Thus, tiredness from culture manifests itself through reducing intensity of people's activity relating to these phenomena, interactions and "work" with them. There are also growing negative attitudes towards these phenomena: a sort of "pushback" to deal with them, "eluding" or *sui generis* release from their enforceability, norms and patterns. The examples of this are various forms of escapism and downshifting; semantics of the word makes explicit reference to the trend of decreasing activity. But even the phenomenon of procrastination which is universally accepted as exclusively individual psychological one, can appear due to fatigue reactions such as the reluctance to perform annoying and meaningless activities, cultural structures and norms. The tiredness from culture can also take the form of direct destructive activity concerning its underlying causes; here we deal with a distinct sociocultural energy compensation where exhausted energy resources of one level – the level of positive acceptance and freewill subjecting to culture phenomena – are replenished by the peculiar "overcoming energy" of the process. With this, the very "overcoming" can act as resistance to the source of tiredness, fight with it and its destruction, as well as creation of alternative cultural phenomena, structures and mechanisms. By the way, we can see this in the artistic avant-gardes in more detail below. Therefore, the "tiredness" from one phenomenon (or a class of culture phenomena) can manifest itself not only in a decreasing but also, vice versa, in an increasing level of people's activity (energy). However, this activity is an alternative to direct destructive potency; it aims at other objects, also alternative. In this way, football supporters tired of intensive feelings towards the match ("rooting" for their team *per se*), especially in case when their team is losing, actively demonstrate hooligan conduct against the players and fans of the rival team or even policemen. Tired of welfare, recurrent and predictable organization of life, people of the "golden billion" countries put all their enthusiasm into various "extreme sports".

Grounds (sources) of the tiredness from culture. The arising and "overpassing" tiredness from culture (that sometimes has anticipatory effect) has revealed itself throughout history of culture. This appears to indicate plurality of grounds for the tiredness from culture, on the one hand, and their sustainable and reproducible in sociocultural environment nature, on the other. Now I can indicate three main causes contributing to the tiredness from culture:

1. Functional imperfection of culture itself, which is often regarded as ideal. On the one hand, culture is not able to develop optimal solutions of particular urgent problems of life, it does not fully respond to personal and social demands,

endeavors and expectations. On the other hand, which is more significant, from the origins to our times culture has been sorting out its own objectives in apparent contradiction to biological nature of a human being by overpowering and repressing this nature, making people accept this “anti-natural” logic. All this evokes both the discontents of civilization first mentioned by J.-J. Rousseau and then described by Z. Freud, the author of the term, and the tiredness from culture –from its particular phenomena and from culture as a whole.

2. Undoubtedly, one of particular aspects of culture imperfection is worth distinguishing as a separate group of grounds for the tiredness from culture due to its fundamental and repeated character. It should be recurrence of cultural processes, forms, mechanisms and structures, normative programmes-matrices, etc. It was the very reason that J. Brodsky suggested in his essay “In Praise of Boredom” which was quoted above; the essay was not the first attempt to “reconcile” people with their monotonous existence. Boredom, in Brodsky’s words, is “by large a product of repetition”, “for life’s main medium is precisely repetition” ([2], 86). According to Brodsky, the existence of inventiveness and originality – repetition antipodes – just emphasizes and accentuates the primacy of repetition that the poet generically referred to as boredom, “For should we divide history of our species by scientific discoveries, not to mention ethical concepts, the result will not be in our favor. We’ll get, technically speaking, centuries of boredom. The very notion of originality or innovation spells out of the monotony of standard reality, of life, whose main medium – nay, idiom – is tedium.” ([2], 86). Indeed, all this is the boredom’s strength, its source of operating efficiency as a way of self-organization, stability, integration and socialization of individual and groups both in space and in historical time. However, the creative (“excentric” in H. Plessner’s terms) and psychic nature of a human being constantly require diversity, renewal and move beyond the limits prescribed by culture. As another poet, B. Pasternak, once said, “Everything palls on”. In its repetition, monotony, regularity, culture is tiring, boring and produces tedium and repulsion.
3. One of frequent in history and thus important grounds for the tiredness from culture is decrease in functional activity and effectiveness of the culture “maternal” to particular subjects. We have here something like spiritual-mental-somatic “breakdown” of culture as a whole, first and foremost, its “producing” or creative mechanisms in all or particular areas of sociocultural life, from economy and policy to morality and ethics, world outlook and the arts. Culture “falls” into

empty rhetoric, scholastics, extreme subjectivism, fundamentalism and idealized archaicism, renewed myth-creation, utopianism, and/or cynicism, historical pessimism. It does not find appropriate answers to the challenges of the time, does not perform its critical functions of adaptation to the transforming reality, social and personal development, self-organization and integration. This is its own "immanent" tiredness – *culture fatigue or cultural fatigue*, as it were.

The cultural and psychological phenomenon of the tiredness from culture may also be tied up with the First Avant-garde – the art phenomenon of the first half of the 20th century. But that requires reiterating some important and recognized characteristic features of the First Avant-garde.

The avant-garde is a specific type of artistic consciousness and creative work, a concept unknown until the 20th century, though C. Castoriadis starts the avant-garde's history from the previous century, from Charles Baudelaire with his "Flowers of Evil", "Olympia" by Edouard Manet and the poems of Arthur Rimbaud ([3], 171). Castoriadis seems to have homologated implicitly the avant-garde and the artistic modernism with its subjectivity, new worldview, new moral and aesthetic values, quite often an "affront" to society and middlebrows. Yet, there is no sufficient evidence of such identification. The avant-garde is a special part of the artistic modernism, however, not all the modernists, the great Baudelaire among them, can be included into the category of vanguardists. Pioneer work as such – a sign most commonly used to distinguish the avant-garde – has been an integral part of the arts for ages. Even "revolutionary" romanticists with all their striving towards radical innovations and the future (compare with "futurism") cannot be attributed to vanguardists, if only because the values of Romanticism's culture and artistic consciousness address the future and the past equally. Moreover, the future for romanticists presented mainly the idealized Christian, medieval, patriarchal past that they could see and find in "tomorrow" (as in case of R. Wagner identified as a vanguardist by C. Castoriadis).

The historical time of the avant-garde birth is vital for its understanding and explaining. Yet, no understanding and explaining is possible without general notions, be they hypothetical, of what the avant-garde is. This is its essence, its key, systemically important characteristics-signs which help conceive why "something" in the artistic culture can be treated as the avant-garde and the other "something" cannot. The issue correlates closely with another fundamental question: *why the avant-garde?* That is, what are the grounds, the general sociocultural necessity for the vanguard artistic (or common cultural) consciousness, worldview, creativity, communication or even conduct to appear? What were the prerequisites, accumulated by history and culture, which

triggered similar artistic aspirations and practices in the vast area at approximately the same time that makes the avant-garde an overwhelming phenomenon? Certainly, the backgrounds that had brought the avant-garde to life differed considerably; they came from different "spheres". But was there any single line of logic for them? Did they follow this line creating a unified causal system? What was "feeding" the avant-garde and what the avant-garde repelled that, in its turn, facilitated its uprising as well? The avant-garde itself suggests the answers to these questions via its mere existence in history, its own rich phenomenology and some common "phenotype" of different vanguard trends. Here they are, reduced to several key assumptions.

1. The avant-garde is a movement in the art of the first third of the 20th century characterized by radical innovations.
2. As a philosophical matter, the avant-garde radicalism is a fundamental (antagonistic) opposition of the future art (and culture) to the past (The First Avant-garde practice proved to have been far richer and wider. It included the creative work involving various elements of the previous artistic experience, especially if it was remote forgotten or ignored by the vanguardists' immediate predecessors. But from ideological perspective, it was a resolute, uncompromising denial of the past treated as the dead past that dominated in the avant-garde.), and, consequently, it implies denial, breaking their natural links and continuity.
3. The axiological basis of this opposition and break-up is the absolute devaluation, total negation of the past by the vanguard consciousness, especially with regard to the historical past immediately preceding the avant-garde. And, at the same time, there is the appreciation and postulating of the future as a supreme, true and exemplary value, an absolute reference point and criterion for goals, processes and results of creative work. That is why there were the "futurism" and the neologism by V. Khlebnikov designating the vanguardists as *the people of the future* – "budetlyane" ("will-beings").
4. These break-up and opposition are reflected, on the one hand, in radical negation, rejection of the "old" art's meaningful and formal values (and their destruction) regardless of the fact that they are ingrained in traditions and mental habits of mass consciousness recognized as the "classic" or even the "sacral". On the other hand, the opposition and break-up resulted in seeking extraordinary, totally new values, congenial to unprecedented innovations and values of the coming future reinforced by vanguardists' efforts.

5. Another important aspect of the vanguard consciousness (worldview) is the unprecedented magnitude of “intentional” object that was rejected or, respectively, established. Thus, the art being a “private” territory” and the goal of the vangardists’ activities undergoes radical transformations in a comprehensive and systemic manner. First, it expresses itself as a way of relation to the world (its representation and development), second, - as a means of people’s communication –languages and images, the system of perceptions and meanings, as a cultural value among other values and a mode of behavior among other modes of the latter. Insight into what the art is and can be has changed fundamentally and systemically alongside with the ideas of relationships between the art and the non-art and, consequently, the limits of the art. These new limits established by the avant-garde are marked everywhere, as M. Bakhtin ones subtly commented. They outline the frames of representations inside the very realm of language and images – the example of that are cubism, supremacism and abstract expressionism – and delineate the complex, dynamic, functional and polysemantic relations with their addressees and all non-art areas as in the experience of M. Duchamp, Dadaists, some surrealists and Russian futurists. But they go far beyond the art itself. Even if vanguardists seem to speak of mere artistic, subjective, “superficial” matters, the artistic practice of a definite kind of art, the avant-garde’s revolutionary radicalism, in fact, turns to be all-encompassing. One way or another, transparently or implicitly, directly or indirectly, negatively or positively, it covers main fundamental structures of culture and cultural consciousness in relation to them. Primarily, these structures are language and consciousness, the image of the world and basic norms, creativity, cognition and communication, ideals and norms of organizations and identities, morality and sacrality, and, after all, “naturalness” with all its culturally important modes and attitudes toward culture, etc. Ontological magnitude, the “cosmism” in terms of the Russian philosophy, was not inherent to the Russian avant-garde exclusively while it was the first in the row. It manifested itself both “extensively”, as in Mayakovski’s, Malevich’s or Filonov’s opuses, and “intensively” in the works of cubists, surrealists or P. Klee.

The overall magnitude of vanguard revolutionarism encompassed all basic aspects of real human worldview: ontology, epistemology, axiology, praxeology, societal matters, ethics, aesthetics, personology. All this definitely witnesses the genuine *culture-creating nature* of the First Avant-garde, its overwhelming cultural impact on the world. Simply put, the vanguard denial of the past was no more, no less than negation of the previous culture, overcoming-destructing practice, while the avant-garde’s gust to the

future aimed/intended to create new culture or a breakthrough to true nature. Thus, the avant-garde practice as a whole presents historically unparalleled experience of the revolution in culture conceived and carried out in the art, through the art and its transformative impact on the key points of culture.

What generated this magnificent, inherently intuitive and systemic attitude toward culture within particular artistic activities; *inter alia*, radical negation of the previous culture? This attitude expressed itself both in conscious practical intentions and in the artistic self-consciousness of the vanguardists who identified themselves through breaking up with “sacral” classic traditions; see, for example, a famous Russian futurist manifesto “A Slap in the Face of Public Taste”. Russian futurists thought of themselves and their activities on the global level of universe, history, consciousness, language, society, deed and human being. My answer to the question is the following: the previous culture – with all its tremendous achievements and “merits” – was no longer the organic base of normal, i.e. seminal existence (this is exactly how B. Pasternak defined culture) for a new European generation of creators, it contravened new trends, advances, opportunities and needs which matured due to the culture’ own development. The innovations were such as the progress in cognition of the world and people, technological advances, the democratization of social life, “masses” taken into historical arena, relations between nations and peoples, new threats to overall peace due to increasing world competition and inventions of lethal weapons. However, the culture as all-encompassing authority rooted in social structures, traditions, normative systems and mentalities dominated in the consciousness and life of common people and creative elites, including artistic. The latter had an increasing negative perception of the culture understood as what was hopelessly outdated *in essence* and no longer able to develop itself and society, to meet the social and personal needs yet remaining an authority, even a repressive force. In addition, it was treated as what had become, *in subjective, psychological sense*, psychologically unbearable for the most talented and creatively active representatives of new generations, intolerable in most aspects and especially in its repressiveness, which was losing its legitimacy. All that was an unproductive, vitally, mentally and spiritually onerous burden on subjectivity. It started to suppress spirits, minds and even the bodies of new people, induced the needless and tiresome waste of their vital, mental and spiritual potencies. That was just what made them weary, what resulted in their irritation, aggression, boredom, ennui, and other negative states of fatigue.

Sometimes, the culture phenomena completely different in contents, functions, time of birth and historical life, conditions and areas of their work turned out to

be equal to “tiresome” and boring things. One of the main old culture phenomena, subjected to denying by vanguard consciousness and creative works, became a multi-millennial principle of lifelikeness understood as the compliancy of artistic images with particular sensual forms of reality. Two other peculiarities of the avant-garde worldview/creativity proved to be intrinsically linked to it. The reason for rejecting the sensual lifelikeness, or realism, was the ontological presumption of the other, *non-* or *supersensual* reality (Kandinsky, Malevich, Filonov, surrealism). This previously formed attitude was followed by the exclusively avant-garde’s attitude/aim – forwarded by Cézanne and cubism – to clear the vision of this “supreme” reality from the old-fashioned illusions that inevitably accompanied it and, after all, from any culture. This aspect will be commented on further. As the consequence of the entire vanguard-worldview complex, there was the radical destruction of any traditional languages of culture resulted in creating the fundamentally new modes of discourse, namely, the avant-garde trends in all arts, exemplified by composers of New Vienna School, Lipshitz’, Zadkin’s, Moor’s, Tatlin’s sculptures, neologisms and transcendent poetry in vanguard literature. I would also like to mention, in a particular context of modernity, the avant-garde nihilist principle of shocking defiance-breakout of the bourgeois, philistine “burgher” mentality and lifestyle. Of course, the vanguardists radically rejected the symbols of the old “classic” system of values, their ideological and emotional-volitional content. Among them were images and meanings, world attitude, world perception and world outlook. They got rid of conventional psychological “tone”- intonations and accents, definite types of pathos, irony, belief and keenness, hope and disappointment, etc. – right down to social class signs, values and status including the traditional status of “high” art hidden in the “ivory tower». A. Borovskiy illustrated this using the example of “Partial Eclipse” (1914) by Malevich who, in fact, disparaged the image of Gioconda included into the complicated “palimpsest” text structure. Why did he do this? The Borovskiy’s idea is that “Malevich is too persistent in demonstrating his provocative impassion, offensive indifference to it [the Gioconda’s portrait – L.Z.]”. Let me add to the above-mentioned “disparaging” techniques the fact that the portrait is presented as a replica, i.e. it portrayed what has already been pictured, and thus, it is double mediated. What is the hidden agenda? I think, in liberating painting *per se*, “logism” was not the only thing that Malevich intended to break through. He also rejected the high-status beauty, the sublime, the spiritual, that intelligentsia’s consciousness associated with highly appreciated world art images (today we would say “icons”) by default. Later, he stated straightforwardly, “I do not want it [the art – A. B.]to be disguised as something highly creative. This position

is opposite to, say, the concept of the most well-known then G. Uspenskiy's essay, "The Straightened", where the Louvre's Venus spiritually "promoted" the personage. The prosody of common compulsory cultural piety needed to be reduced. And all the above-mentioned operationality, so vigorously expanded by Malevich, aimed at eliminating the problem. It was polemical to the core" ([1], 14). Hence, the avant-garde's values, subduing and game-oriented, blurred the boundaries between the art and the non-art (Duchamp, Malevich, Kruchenykh, Larionov, Dadaists) at that altering the phenotype and functioning of culture as a whole.

It is clear that the denial, so systemic and radical, of the previous culture, the urge to create something new determined by the repulsion with the old, the imperative to break through the updated, dead for many people, culture – all this was due more to the systemic state of the mainstream ("old") culture. Its practical, mental and spiritual (un)viability was enshrined in its "power" conditions, at the level of its immanent energy. At the turn of the century, this systemic state faded to overall *exhaustion (energy deficiency) of the culture itself*. And the emerging avant-garde was a response to this state, i.e. tiredness from exhaustion.

Spiritual and mental life provoked this culture fatigue. The peculiarities of spiritual culture, arts and social psychology at the turn of the century highly affected by degrading values and attitudes were good examples of a cultural decline. Both the Western and the Russian modernism organically inherited decadence as a form of culture fatigue. Such was the case of expressionism – the artistic movement appeared in poetry, visual arts, music before the First World War (G. Trakl, G. Benn, E. Munch, O. Kokoschka, E.L. Kirchner, E. Schiele, A. F.W. Schoenberg). Spiritual fatigue expressed itself in the value ideas of worldview deadlock, people's powerlessness in the face of antihuman forces of alienation and tragic fatality of human existence; dominance of degrading/collapsing and dying forms of life; the triumph of the hideous, the ugly, the vile; devaluation and/or uselessness of traditional moral values; increasing influence of the Nietzschean idea "God is dead". Mental fatigue appeared in the overall decreased emotional arousal and creativity, growing apathy, disbelief, total disappointment, mental weakness and lack of ability/wish to cope with the magnitude of life, increasingly fearful and perceived as entropy, mindless and hostile, chaos.

Here are several examples of the Russian modernist poetry of the early 20th century with the spiritual-mental fatigue visible to the plain eye.

Prostrating languor,

Revening anguish,

Reigns in pale tired valleys,
With ill clouds in the sky.

(Fyodor Sologub)

To burn the boats ahead and behind,
To lie in bed and gaze at nothing,
To fall asleep without any dreams
And, for a change, wake up in a hundred years

(Sasha Cherny)

However, the artistic summit of this crisis and profound feeling of world tiredness amounting to impressive apocalyptic synthesis is coined in Aleksandr Block's verses,

Is happiness a moment, brief and solid?
Is it oblivion, a dream, and peace and quiet?..
As you wake up - it's flight again, so horrid,
Touching your heart, unknown crazy flight...

When will it stop? We won't be able, really,
To listen to this din without end...
How terrible it is! How wild! Extremely! -
Give me a hand, forget it all, my friend!

Here the tiredness and the need in rest, its antipode, a remedy for fatigue compared to happiness of all things, are represented as the dominance of existence.

Interestingly, some vanguardists also shared modernist worldview ideas and mentation, for instance, early Mayakovsky in his tragic theomachy, Alban Berg in his totally worldview- pessimistic operas "Vozzek" and "Lulu", which definitely indicates the artistic avant-garde's involvement in a general modernist trend in the art. Meanwhile, the vanguardists, unlike classic modernists, had the pursuit and energy to endure spiritual and mental crisis, culture exhaustion. In this sense, they were antipodes of classical modernists considering energy ideas and senses. Mayakovsky defied the Heaven and all "system of life", its everydayness, as well as its foundations and "social organization". His challenge is full of vital and spiritual power, passion, brutal titanism, shocking boldness and confidence in the strengths of those who are, supposedly,

ready to have the weight of the world on their shoulders. The negative of a negative is a positive, as is well known. The tiredness from tiredness led to the opposite, positive effect – the spiritual-mental one – moreover, to the spiritual-psychosomatic burst of “passionarity”. What illustrates best this energy uprising/burst of a vanguard generation, quite contrary to decadents and modernists’ culture tiredness, is the verse by David Burlyuk, the leader of the Russian futurists (1913),

Each of you is younger younger
In your stomachs devilish hunger
Walking so you follow after....
Glancing backwards
I cast a proud call
This curtailed caterwaul!
We will swallow stones and grasses
Poisons bitterness molasses
Stuff our mouths with emptiness
Depth and height we will consume
Birds beasts monsters fish and glue
Wind clay salt and ripples too!
Each of you is younger younger
In your stomachs devilish hunger
All things on our path we meet
May comprise our daily meat.

Here obvious spiritual active energy, the rush and recovery of emotional power and will come from apparently vital forces: juvenility and health, the sound and vivacious “animality” of new culture subjects, asserting themselves. There would not have been any avant-garde without this psychological background; it would not have been possible to maintain revolutionary ambitions of the radical change of the world, creation of new culture and establishment of new man’s place in cosmos, universe, Nature without huge stamina and colossal “cosmic” energy. The tools of the avant-garde reasoning were ultimate categories, claiming/invading the fundamental restructuring of the world and the Man. In this sense Mayakovsky spoke about the revolution of spirit. That is why the Mayakovsky’s natural, allegedly “primordial” and very artistical

cosmism (his poetry appeals and devotes itself to “centuries, history and universe”) thoughtfully incorporated new dimension and energy of poetical subjectivity – “magnitude of love, magnitude of hate”. Thus, Mayakovsky is not the exception but the norm. Despite very different basic assumptions of their artistic consciousness, the vanguardists reveal a surprising convergence of two aspects of their world attitude: both its global, ultimate ontological magnitude and the highest energy, which brings about the “exulting stream” (A. Tolstoy) of vital, mental, spiritual creative powers, the inspiration capable of innovative culture-creating. To understand fully the avant-garde’s elation, power of feelings, passionate life-asserting might, it is enough to see – as a whole thing, at one go – a comprehensive collection of young Kandinsky’s pictures in the Lenbachhaus gallery in Munich, bright in colours, innovatively expressive, mostly no longer figurative (“abstract”) symphony of life. The vanguardists are related to the romanticists by their emotional excitement, fullness, enthusiasm and even entrancement. However, on the intellectual front they are similarly possessed, afflated, creatively active and tireless indeed, which is extremely important to them (cubist painters, V.Khlebnikov, P. Mondrian, A. Webern).

And, the final conceptual point forcedly presented in brief. Since the tiredness – as the basis of the vanguard consciousness and creative work, as a negative stimulus, a “repulsing” factor – was caused by the previous, “exhausted” culture, the tiredness from culture’ overriding suggested creating something fundamentally new. It would be fresh and vital with respect to being, energize people’s spirit, mentality, practice and exert an attractively inspiring influence on creativity. The avant-garde found two paths, and results at the same time, to solve this problem, two ways of coping with the tiredness from culture, which does not preclude possibilities of combining them in various “proportions”, as it were. The first one could be called “*culture-creating*” or “*countercultural*”. Overcoming the previous culture took place in the course of creating, building up fundamentally new culture. This program generated radically new language, consciousness, world of images, creative and everyday psychology, life-creating, i.e. producing new forms of life, human relations, communication, aesthetic transformation of objects and everyday behavior. It started, of course, with radical renewal of the entire art system, all its modes: its subject, activities, object and results, as in case of the early forms of the First Avant-garde – cubism, “the Blue Rider”, futurism. At the end, there were great and mainly utopian in terms of actual history projects in industrial, organizational, social-ritual, communicative, environmental, family and household areas. Such were the vanguard movements in the USSR of the first years of

Soviet era: the Proletcult, LEF, the Industrial Art, constructivism, as well as the Western architecture functionalism, the Bauhaus School in its peculiar forms and surrealism.

The second way was even more marginal, for all intents and purposes. It can be regarded as “*anti-cultural*” or “*naturalistic*”. The maximal tiredness from culture is thought to be traced there, turned into overwhelming culture disappointment and repel. Not a particular type of culture, but the culture as a whole, *as a matter of principle*, stirred up these reactions. And this disappointment-repel was certain to drive the vanguardists to nature *and naturality*. These artists treated *nature and naturality* as the living and fresh alternative (“golden tree of life that springs ever green”, according to the famous Goethe’s quotation) to the dead, “weary”, devaluated and extremely tiresome “culturality”, the world of degenerative, artificial, empty, and often hostile to people conventionalities. The way was as clear and historically reasonable as difficult and could hardly come to a logical end. But that was just how a genial visionary V. Khlebnikov dreamed of “implanting” naturality, natural grounds into each and every culture strata and “mastering” culture via cosmos, nature and energy. P. Filonov who was willing to “clear out” his worldview from culturality termed his artistic method as “naturalistic”. The vanguardists who chose this path had to scraped out their narratives-texts from any cultural content, the slightest signs of any culture influence. Since any objectiveness is a product of culture, the way to true naturality suggested eliminating the objectiveness. It was Kandinsky and especially Malevich who followed this path. As K. Ichin formulates this approach, there are “objectless words, objectless paintings – transcending towards Absolute. But only there one can find new cosmogony, objectless universe” ([4], 9). From ideological point of view, this drive is manifested in the futurist idea of “the world from scratch”, “the world from the end”, “and the world for the first time” ([5], 120-122).

3. Conclusion

I made an attempt to show, that one of the essential prerequisites and the source of the First Avant-garde was the tiredness from culture, borne out by the culture at the turn of the 20th century, which reflected the all-encompassing cultural psychological state of many individuals unsatisfied by real life. And one of main grounds of this fatigue and frustration was the deep spiritual and mental exhaustion of the very culture of that time. As a result, there appeared the massive rejection of the tired culture, and it determined counter-fatigue vanguard states and processes, the stream of vital, mental and spiritual forces, creative growth, radical denial of the old and establishment of the

new. Tiredness from the previous culture and its rejection, the drive to overcome it and to return a human being to a solid and well-deserved place in the world determined the contents of the avant-garde innovations: the ways to creating new culture and, on the other hand, radical moving from culture to “virgin”, free of cultural influence nature.

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