

THE REGULAR LAWS OF THE PROCESS OF ART HISTORY¹

When studying the great works of art, we make wide usage of the term *epoch*, in order to delineate various stretches of historical time during the course of which the phenomena pertaining to one of the arts or even all of them are endowed with a certain commonality, a complex of discernible traits. This makes it possible to speak of a unity of ethical and aesthetical goals, about the closeness of artistic manners and techniques.

For the time being, we shall not touch upon such historical dimensions as the Ancient World, Antiquity or the Middle Ages, since they exceed by far the temporal boundaries of single epochs and consist of a number of the latter. The Middle Ages were followed by the Renaissance epoch, which, most likely, presents the most deep-rooted and paradigmatic notion of an epoch of art history as such.

Next follows the Baroque epoch, but it shall not be forgotten that this is the definition of an entire epoch, and not of one of the styles of that time (the latter endowed with the corresponding term starting with the lower-case letter – baroque) has become established relatively recently and not without some polemical predicaments.

Following this, we seem to run across much more familiar definitions: the Enlightenment, Romanticism... But here rather serious stipulations are indispensable. Nonetheless, first of all, it is necessary, on the occasion, to turn our attention to a disappointing confusion of terms. The spelling of only two epochs absolutely requires us to start writing their names with capital letters: the Renaissance and the Enlightenment – most probably, in order to discern them from the customary words meaning the *renaissance* of something and the *enlightenment* of somebody. For the same reasons at times the words Antiquity and the Middle Ages are also spelled with capital letters.

Has not the time finally arrived for the community of musicologists to agree with each other that the latter present specific names, which require capital letters, due to their status? Moreover,

in a number of cases we would be able to achieve the distinctions of spelling of the epoch and the style, the latter due to its definitive meaning has given its name to the entire epoch. For example, we would differentiate *Baroque* (with the capital letter, indicating the epoch) from baroque (with the small letter, indicating the style), bearing in mind that along with the baroque style that epoch was noted for classicism, realism, “the Grand Style,” mannerism and Rococo.

But let us return to more essential moments. Thus, we are aware of the Enlightenment and Romanticism. As usual, we perceive them as independent epochs, while even from a purely chronological-quantitative position we may be confused by their incommensurability with the epochs preceding them: the Enlightenment took place for the most part in the second half of the 18th century. Romanticism (if we follow the conventional perceptions) spanned the 19th century, whereas the Baroque period extended for two and a half centuries and the Renaissance covered over three centuries.

The solution to this discrepancy (and a solution that is far from being a formal one) lies in rejecting the customary juxtaposition between the Enlightenment and Romanticism. In reality, these two epochs presented contrasting links of a unified historical chain, and their succession contained more of an unswerving incremental motion, rather collisions or interruptions.

In the first place I would like to cite the opposition between the early 19th century Romanticists and the ideas of the Enlightenment, which at times is excessively highlighted. One of the concrete testimonies of this is manifested in the evolution of the artistic works of such titans as Goethe and Beethoven. Having been outstanding representatives of the art of the Enlightenment, at the outset of the 19th century they both proceeded to discover the horizons of Romanticism.

Moreover, meticulous analysis demonstrates that the Enlightenment and Romanticism, in their

turn, must be divided into their composite periods, which differ from each other on a qualitative level (their chronological lengths will be mentioned later). Within the period of the *Enlightenment* two periods are clearly discernible, which may be labeled as *Early Enlightenment* (the mid-18th Century) and the *High Enlightenment* (the second half of the 18th century and early 19th century).

Within the framework of what is usually defined by the word Romanticism, it is necessary to discern three periods: *Romanticism* (the first half of the 19th century), *Post-Romanticism* (the second half of the 19th century) and the concluding period (the late 19th and early 20th century), which may be labeled the *late Classical*, and even more frequently the *late Romantic* period).

The five indicated divisions present themselves in their historical functions particularly as periods, although in the quantity of their artistic content they may be perceived as entire epochs. However, these five periods are transformed into an epoch in a literal and precise meaning of this word only when they are all joined together. We shall label this conglomeration as the Classical epoch for two basic reasons.

First, it was particularly during the span of time from the mid-18th century until the advent of the 20th century the main massif of those aesthetic values was created, which we appreciate for pertaining to the great artistic classics (this applies, first of all, to literature and music), the leading musical genres (from the long poem and the novel to the sonata and the symphony), types of imagery, conceptual models and compositionally-technological principles took shape.

And second, what is most important for us in this case, the multi-stage quality of the process of art history appeared in explication of this time period with complete clarity and apparentness. Most notably, only then did the semantic role of such generic types of artistic thinking as *romanticism* and *realism* have its effect: the first one of them received its appellation and was realized to its full effect in the first half of the 19th century, and the second – in the second half of the aforementioned century, which is connected with their respective predominance during the corresponding temporal span.

The foregoing induces us to proceed to ascertain the regular laws of the process of art history in particular with the Classical epoch. During the course of its evolution there arose essential differences between one period and another – these

distinctions in particular give ground for their division into a number of successive stages. And, as has been noted earlier, the consideration of the most significant factors of differentiation makes it possible to single out five periods, the length of each of which comprised approximately four decades. In order to present the image of their motion with sufficient palpability and at the same in a maximally compact way, we shall limit ourselves to listing the most significant names of the composers.

The first period (the mid-18th century, approximately from the 1730s to the 1760s) is the area of interaction between the concluding stage of the Baroque period (manifested in the late works of Vivaldi, Bach and Handel) and the initial stage of the Classicist period; this stage may be called the *Early Enlightenment* (exemplified by the early music of Gluck, Haydn and Mozart).

The second period (the second half of the 18th century, from the 1770s to the 1800s) presents the flourishing of the Classicist style of the period of the Enlightenment; in this case it would be appropriate to term it the *High Enlightenment* (featured in the main phase of the music Gluck, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven).

The third period (the first half of the 19th century, from the 1810s to the 1840s) saw the advancement of *Romanticism* (we shall make use of this indication, in this case distinguishing the given epoch from *romanticism* in general); romanticism as the predominating style of this period may be described as being classical, since all the attributes of this artistic method appeared during those decades with a crystalline precision and completeness (in the music of late Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Berlioz, Chopin, Glinka, the early works of Liszt, Wagner and Verdi).

The fourth period (the second half of the 19th century, from the 1850s to the 1880s) may be labeled more appropriately as Post-Romanticism, since many characteristic features in art were determined by realistic tendencies (this applies to music to a lesser degree – as can be observed in the main phase of the musical oeuvres of Liszt, Wagner, Verdi, Brahms, Bizet, Grieg, Mussorgsky, Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov and Tchaikovsky).

The fifth period (the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and the early 20th century, from the 1890s to the 1920s) presents an area of interaction between the concluding stage of the Classical epoch (this stage is frequently defined as Late Romantic or, more broadly, as Late Classical: the final

phase of the musical heritage of Brahms, Grieg, Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky, Mahler, Richard Strauss, Debussy, Puccini, Taneyev, Glazunov, Rachmaninoff and Scriabin) and the initial stage of the present, contemporary period (Ravel, Schoenberg, Berg, Webern, the early phase of the music of Honegger, Hindemith, Bartok, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Myaskovsky and Shostakovich).

It is necessary to add here that the aforementioned time periods may be subdivided rather concisely into constituent *phases*, each lasts for about two decades. The first period is comprised of two phases: from the 1730s to the 1740s and from the 1750s to the 1760s. The second period contains two phases: from the 1770s to the 1780s and from the 1790s to the 1800s. The third period contains two phases: from the 1810s to the 1820s and from the 1830s to the 1840s. The fourth period contains two phases: from the 1850s to the 1860s and from the 1870s to the 1880s. The fifth contains two phases: from the 1890s to the 1900s and from the 1910s to the 1920s.

At the same time, in the outer periods we observe identical dynamics typical to “epochal” development: Just as in the 1730s and 1740s the late Baroque style was *still* predominating, likewise in the 1890s and 1900s the late Classical style was *still* predominating. Just like in the 1750s and 1760s the early Classicist style was *already* of a determinant significance, likewise in the 1910s and 1920s the early Modern style was *already* of a determinant significance.

The greatest complication for a researcher of the Classical epoch is presented particularly by these outer (beginning and concluding) periods, because of their transitional character, i.e., as a result of the complex intertwining of the gradually subsiding traditions of the previous epoch and the emergent phenomena which in their sum formulate the image of the succeeding epoch.

When examining the period of the mid-18th century, we must take into consideration that in research works on the history of literature and the plastic arts the 18th century has been distinguished up to the present day as an independent epoch, as the result of which the artistic process of the first decades of the 18th century is involuntarily “hauled up” towards the Enlightenment, the real development of which began only in the 1730s, although separate breakthroughs toward the new tendency may be discovered in the previous decade as well.

Regarding the period of the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and the early 20th century, one may

witness an opposite slant: very often excessively too many musical aspects are attributed to the phenomenon of 20th century music, while neglecting to evaluate objectively the constructive adherence to many of the artistic tendencies of the previous century. However, it must be acknowledged that many things on that stage worked to enhance in one way or another the perspective of that epoch, the most becoming appellation for which is perceived to be that of the *Modern style* (in this respect, the most indicative phenomenon is that which grew out of the classical period, known as the *style moderne*).

The last of the aforementioned considerations may apply to any period that turns out to be at the confluence of two epochs of art history, where involuntarily the overlapping of the phenomena of the previous “departing” epoch (its late, final, concluding period) and the emergent subsequent epoch (its early, initial, opening period).

And, obviously, these phenomena do not only superpose on each other, they coexist, interact, intertwine with each other and stand up against each other. Notably, their coinciding may occasionally generate such indissoluble image-related and stylistic syntheses and symbioses, that it becomes possible to separate the previous from the subsequent, the past from the future only from a purely theoretical stance.

We must also call to our attention another difficulty, connected with the fact that for any period of time in general and for a period at the confluence of two periods in particular a dilemma always arises: whence must its count must be taken – from the initial germs and sprouts of the new, or when this new phenomenon begins to run in a “flow”? Furthermore, we must also consider the circle of inevitably appearing, superseding and delaying phenomena.

If we take as an example the period of the turn of the 19th and 20th century and the early 20th century, the chronology of which has been previously set as running from the 1890s to the 1920s, it turns out that within the sphere of the visual arts certain traditions of the Peredvizhniki [Itinerants] arising in the second half of the 19th century, were maintained on Russian soil until as late as the early 1930s, while, on the other hand, the horizons of the world-perception of the 20th century could be perceived as early as the mid-1880s, not only in Van Gogh and Vrubel, but in late Rodin.

Here is a comparison from the musical field: Stravinsky, already in his opera-oratorio “Oedipus

Rex” (1927) and Ravel in his “Bolero” (1928) made a breakthrough to the aesthetics of the period lasting from the 1930s to the 1950s, while early Shostakovich in 1933 composed his Preludes opus 34 and the First Piano Concerto, which pertained entirely to the aesthetics of the 1920s.

Therefore the boundaries of each of the time periods turn out to be rather approximate, vague and relative, and it is virtually impossible to make a precise divide. Nonetheless, it is necessary to trace at least conditional landmarks, even from considerations of convenience of direction in historical spaces. It is most natural to mark them relying on analysis of *generalizing thoroughfares*, which particularly is what comprises the main task of scholarship related to art history.

Let us bring out one of such thoroughfares, stemming from the proceeding arguments. If we presume that the aforementioned five periods of the Classical epoch, approximately equal in length to each other, may also be found in the chronological structure of any other epoch, it is logical to bring in the analogy with the steps of development of any living organism and, first of all, the human being as such. Consequently, similarly to the cycle of human life, the trajectory of an epoch may be perceived in the following way: the first period corresponds to birth and childhood, the second – to adolescence and juvenility, the third – to youth and the primary maturity, the fourth – to subsequent maturity and advanced years, the fifth – old age and demise. The expressions *primary maturity* and *subsequent maturity* are quite conditional, but within the hierarchy or the states of human life some division of the sort certainly exists.

It must be noted that in works of art, in a way unmeasurably stronger than in organic life, each phase of evolution demonstrates not only its peculiar aspects, but also its capabilities and accomplishments. This also applies to the fullest degree to the final period, when it would seem that old age and regression comes, however at this period in the life of artistic movements it is not possible to apply the well-known saying “*If only youth knew how to do the job, if only old age was capable of carrying it out.*”

Another important parallel relegates us to the principle of waves. In truth, in the linear “graphics” of any of the epochs one can hardly miss perceiving the historical rhythm, reminding of the motion of waves: swell – rollback, high tide – low tide. It is possible to document the “swells” of the first and

third periods and the “rollbacks” of the second and fourth periods. On a most general plane the “swells – high tides” of the first and third periods present stages of fermentation and active renewal, which sometimes possesses a radical, innovatively-fulminating character. The “rollbacks – low tides” of the second and fourth periods are marked by an alleviation of the ethical-aesthetical paradigms, gravitation towards equilibrium, stabilization, a return to steady traditional values and artistic paradigms. The peculiarities of the fifth period will be discussed separately.

The actions of the wavelike principle are closely connected with the interactions of the aforementioned two fundamental methods of artistic thought – romanticism and realism, with the alternating predominance of either one or the other. The periodicity of their advancement to the forefront in the most direct fashion forms the configuration of the given epoch, which creates the necessity of essentially clarifying the comprehension of each of these types of artistic creativity.

Let us begin with romanticism. “The Past and Future of Romanticism” – this is how Yuliy Kremlyov titled one of his works, rightfully emphasizing thereby the invidiousness of associating this phenomenon only with the temporal areal of the 19th century (or, to be more precise, with its first half). One of the most astute estimations about the constant presence of the corresponding mentality belongs to the famous Russian poet, Alexander Blok, who claimed that the romanticism of the first half of the aforementioned century is only “*one of the stages of that motion that appears at all epochs of human life. We have the right of talking about world romanticism as one of the main propelling forces of life and art*” [2, p. 122].

In the context of such an approach the emphatic necessity arises of initiating the search for a universal definition of romanticism. It must be a universal approach, i.e. one that overcomes local and partial definitions of this phenomenon, stemming from its perception and localized chronological coordinates.

In the formation of such an integrating definition of romanticism, the concept of *extremum* is perceived as being crucial. Romanticism as a brand of world-perception and as a method of artistic creativity is, first of all, the ethics and aesthetics of the ultimate and the extreme, inspired by an aspiration towards the absolute.

The maximalism of criteria and radicalism of motivations induce the romanticists to reevaluate in

a categorical fashion the integral paradigms and to engage in a most intensive artistic search, which, for example, is expressed in the special role played by various types of innovations and experiments, and frequently results in a type of “emission” of principally new ideas and conceptions reflecting the qualitative separation of the horizons of life from those of art.

Such historical stages frequently possess an atmosphere of fermentation and fluctuation, the blustery, explosive, impulsively intermittent character of development, at times expansively-belliose forms of manifestation (including insurgent-rebellious moods, sometimes transforming themselves into the pathos of total destruction).

Romantic temperament is frequently linked to such characteristic features as emphatic acuteness of expression, heightened expression, pathos, affectation and states of ecstasy. The aspiration towards extreme states also makes itself known through an inclination towards the particular, the unusual, the exceptional and the unique, which essentially explains to a certain degree the disposition towards hyperbole, paradox, fantasy, alogism and the absurd.

This derivation and consequence of extremity transforms itself into the principle of *antitheses*, which are formed as a result of coarticulation of polarized meanings of the extremum: “left” and “right,” “high” and “low,” the maximal and the minimal, etc. (one of the variants of such an contraposition was placed on record by Alexander Scriabin in regard to his own music with the formula “the highest grandiosity and the highest finesse”). This is how the system of binary oppositions, which is peculiar to romanticism, is formed.

One of these may be indicated by the juxtaposition of *subjectivism* – *objectivism*: subjectivity as a acknowledged norm of the romantic consciousness is capable of obtaining accentuated forms, in its outermost expression leading to subjectivism; the opposite aspiration (the greatest possible deviation from the personal principle and the full assertion of the summarized and the massive) leads to objectivism.

The other pair of romantic antinomies, *emotionalism* – *rationalism*, is deciphered as follows: the broad amplitude of romantic emotionalism stretches from quivering excitement of lyrical utterance to confessionary characteristics and unbridled seething of passions; on the other hand,

romantic rationalism draws a veil over the display of feelings in every way, cultivating the primacy of intellect, sober calculation, harsh pragmatism and abstracted logic.

The prerogative of the romanticist is also presented by the following antitheses: the boundless enthusiasm of modification, “*the aspiration to live a decuple life*” (according to Alexander Blok) – apathy and melancholy; acute psychological response to the least oscillation of inward and outward life – conscious indifference to them; the sensation of flagrant despondency and irrationality of the surrounding world – an idealized perception of it; the cult of invention, free play of fancy – a naturalistic mould of reality, its perfunctory registration, etc.

In relation to history it may be asserted that romanticism as a type of world perception and artistic thought emerged as long ago as the formation of *homo sapiens* and with the primary origins of art. This is an elemental category the existence of which in its “anthropological” variant is guaranteed to us all the way until the occurrence of an eschatological catastrophe, if such has been prophesied to humanity. And until the latter occurs, romantic mentality shall remain an indispensable constant of being, a most crucial motive for its immanent development.

The alternative to romanticism has been most often labeled by the term *realism*, although in the character of its motivations it may also have been described by the word *positivism*, while in relation to separate periods of time the definition of *classicism* is appropriate (in the art of music is especially apparent in regards to the High Enlightenment in general and to the Viennese Classicist School in particular).

The ethics and aesthetics of realism-positivism correlate most distinctly with the concept of *optimum*. This includes the gravitation towards moderation, gravity of manifestation, towards the stable forms of existence with their measured incremental evolutionary type of development. This includes the aspiration toward objective remodeling of life “as it is,” the desire of understanding and explaining the world emanating from itself, which determines the orientation on the absolute veracity and detailed motivation.

While romanticism “runs” to polar extremes (the centrifugal tendencies generating the preeminent plurality of planes and angles), realism shows a preference for the principles of “common sense” and the “golden mean” (the centripetal

tendencies providing for sufficient centeredness and unity).

And finally, realists experience underlying interest in the “mundane,” ordinary, everyday states and perceptions, so that, to paraphrase Friedrich Engels, it is possible to speak of “*ordinary characters in ordinary circumstances.*”

The duality of romanticism and realism, remarkable in itself, presents itself as being even more important, in view of the fact that during the course of their alternate predominance the cycle of the various epochs is formed. As has already been made clear, the second and fourth periods of an epoch undergo their development under the aegis of realism, while romanticism gains its own momentum during the epoch’s initial, middlemost and concluding stages. At the same time, at each of its respective stages the latter tendency manifests itself most variedly.

Romanticism in the first period of an epoch, which sets up the “program” of the epoch, is distinguished by its saturating amount of energies and potentialities, manifestations of blustering enthusiasm and primeval bloom. Romanticism in the third period instigates a new, exceedingly strong impulse of motion of the time period, most often placing the greatest emphasis on individual and personal motives.

Romanticism in the fifth period, as a rule, is characterized by a perceptible reduction of activity, dividing into two distinctly different channels – the “golden sunset” and the “black twilight.” However, it must be emphasized again and again that in reality late romanticism and early romanticism (i.e. the romanticism of the fifth and the first periods) become reconciled in time, coexist and compete with each other, implementing the dialectical process of the decline of the preceding epoch (its final phase) and the birth of the subsequent epoch (its initial phase).

To be sure, this is only the most general scheme, the invariant paradigm, one that is filled each time with specific historical content. Consequently, what we are inquiring about is the generalizing tendency, the strict regularity of which may be interrupted by activities of spontaneous historical circumstances, as well as confrontation with all sorts of anomalies.

Moreover, it is conceivable to fathom an extremely “pure” type of romanticism or realism mostly on the level of abstractions – in living practice these types of cognition and artistic thought are usually presented in a variety of nuances and

combinations. During the period when one of them predominates, the other does not disappear entirely, but merely departs for the time being into a shade and continues its presence in a complementary capacity.

However, for all that, it is precisely the interaction between romanticism and realism (positivism, classicism), their mutual rhythmic pulsation and interchange, which present the “directing” factor and the operating principle in the development of the evolution of art and everyday life, bringing in a discreet multi-stage character to the historical process.

Everything that has been discussed earlier essentially dealt with structure, the multi-stage model and trajectory of each epoch was examined separately and illustrated on the example of the Classical epoch. At present it becomes possible to go beyond its limits to describe another regular occurrence of the process of art history – its unswerving acceleration in time and the gradual narrowing of the time frames.

This narrowing of time also occurs during the evolution of each epoch, but for the most part it does not demonstrate itself in such a perceptible manner, which makes it possible to disregard it for the sake of greater simplicity and clarity of the overall picture. The only thing which we must consider undoubtedly is the chronological area where two epochs overlap with each other, in which the initial period of the successive epoch is equal in its time duration to the concluding period of the preceding epoch. This area seems to balance between the past and the future, so according to the calculations presented further on in the text it spans approximately a decade longer than the periods succeeding it.

Thus, we have ascertained that every one of the five periods of the Classical epoch lasts about four decades each, which would comprise the chronological areal of a span of two centuries or a little longer for the entire epoch, if the count were held from the 1720s, rather than from the 1730s.

The Classical epoch was preceded by the Baroque, with its constituent periods lasting half a century each (with the exception of the first one, to which we have added an “extra” span of ten years): from the 1510s to the 1560s, from the 1570s to the 1610s, from the 1620s to the 1650s, from the 1670s to the 1710s, and from the 1720s to the 1760s. It must be reminded that at the phase spanning from the 1510s to the 1560s the Late Renaissance epoch coincides with the Early Baroque, whereas

at the phase between the 1720s to the 1760s the late Baroque epoch coincides with the Early Enlightenment. Altogether we come up with the span of over two and a half centuries.

The periodization of the Renaissance epoch already involves six decades in terms of the “counting unit” (once again, barring the first period): from the 1260s to the 1320s, from the 1330s to the 1380s, from the 1390s to the 1440s, from the 1450s to the 1500s, and from the 1510s to the 1560s. An exception was made for the area of overlap between the final phase of the Late Middle Ages and that initial period of the Renaissance epoch known by its name of *Proto-Renaissance*. This results in a time period of over three centuries.

Let us bring to a halt our migration across the centuries and turn our attention to our current time period, which has succeeded the Classical epoch. The suggested appellation of the Modern epoch, despite all its conventionality, highlights the fact that the processes which started at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, have continued up to the present time, the early 21st century. The chronology of these different time periods is approximately as follows: from the 1890s to the 1920s, from the 1930s to the 1950s, from the 1960s to the 1980s, from the 1990s to the 2010s and, getting a glimpse of the future, from the 2020s to the 2050s. In other words, we have here stretches of thirty years (with the exception of the four decades of the overlap of the Classical epoch with the Modern), altogether spanning about one and a half centuries.

Let us compare the numerical figures, moving from the present to the past: the Modern period lasts approximately 1.5 centuries, the Classical epoch— 2 centuries, the Baroque epoch— 2.5 centuries, and the Renaissance – 3 centuries. There could hardly remain any doubts that before the Renaissance the epochs pertaining to art history were even lengthier in duration, while after the termination of the Modern period they will become even shorter.

After having expressed such a conjecture, it makes sense to conclude this construction of this integral periodization within art history. As has been stated before, an *epoch* consists of five periods, in each of the latter two *stages* may be singled out, and furthermore even more detailed differentiation is conceivable.

The movement towards fragmentation of time has been demonstrated, and logically this infers the possibility of motion in the opposite direction – along the line of augmentation of the respective time

periods: from the *micro* level (the stage), through the period and the epoch, leading to the *macro* level, which would be taken up by the *era*.

The science of history is all too familiar with the so-called Early Modern Period and in its temporal projection into the domain of history of art it spans the duration of three epochs – the Renaissance, Baroque and Classical. It is possible that future explorations in research would demonstrate that the eras more distant from us in time also consist of three epochs – namely, the Middle Ages and Antiquity (apparently, it would be more difficult to try to solve this question in regards to the Ancient world). However, already today we have the ability of demonstrating on the example of the respective eras the same type of narrowing of the chronological dimensions when time progresses forward.

The departure into such a boundless domain of time as an era makes it possible to approach yet another regular law in the evolution of art history. This refers to a certain “token” which each preceding time seems to bestow onto the successive time period. Naturally, this takes place during the overlap of two time periods, and thus the *final summation* of one time period transforms itself into the *source* of the following one.

Most apparently the aforementioned regular law is manifested in the rhythmic succession of what may be metaphorically described by the terms of “*light*” and “*shade*,” if the former is to be interpreted as a relative harmoniousness and equilibrium, and the latter – as displacement and ruptures, which sometimes acquire a catastrophic character. Thus, it turns out that the “dawn” or the “dusk” occurring at the end of the preceding time period possesses the ability of “programming” the predominating characteristics of the succeeding period.

It is true that the “dawn” of the late period of the Ancient world affected the “light” of Antiquity, while the “dusk” on the Late Antiquity – the “shade” of the Middle Ages, the “dawn” of the Late Middle Ages – the “light” of the Renaissance, the “dusk” of the Late Renaissance – the “shade” of the Baroque, the “dawn” of the Late Baroque – the “light” of the Classical epoch, the “dusk” of the Late Classical period – the “shade” of the Modern period.

Moreover, there are grounds for anticipating that the Late Modern period with its “dawn” should pave the way for the “light” of the subsequent epoch. And if this subsequent epoch, which is supposed to begin in the middle of the present century (the period singled out earlier, from the 2020s to the 2040s),

will in truth manifest itself as a more or less organic one, then there is a hope that, notwithstanding all the gloomy prophecies made about the immediate future, humanity and its art would “hold out” at least until the mid-22nd century. Nevertheless, the subsequent “dusk” may lead to the final “shade,” i.e. to the final “end of the world”...

In conclusion the following must be noted. It hardly makes sense to dispute with the rather well-known postulate, that art is immanent only to a certain limited extent, and that its self-development is conceivable only up until certain boundaries. Ultimately it becomes clear that the artists living in a certain given historical period are people who are inseparably connected with their time. This gives rise to their sufficient amount of like-mindedness of perception, despite the entire outwardly fathomless spectrum of positions of world-perception and types of thought. Likewise, it gives rise to the sufficient amount of concordance of their aspirations, motivations and reactions.

The result of this state of affairs in the domain of art is the bounteous quantity of similarity of aesthetical platforms, artistic currents and possible rapprochements, to which we give terminologically

such labels as *style of the epoch*, *artistic direction*, *school*, *association*, *group*, etc. In other words, everything that is the most essential in the life of art is determined in one way or another with the advancement of the overall processes that characterize the life of the human being and humanity at a certain historical phase.

All of this is elaborate at the present for the sole reason of leading us to the following thought: everything that is documented in the art works of a given historical period reflects that which takes place in real life of the corresponding time. As a result, everything discussed earlier about the regular laws of the evolution of art history may reasonably be unfolded into the platitude of the process of general history.

In such a manner, the deductions addressed to the world of art may also be considered to apply to phenomena of life in general, whereas the previously arrived at conclusions in regard to the evolution of art history may be successfully extended to any of the spheres of ontological methods, including being applied with the goals of predicting the proximate and distant perspectives of existence of civilization on Earth.

NOTES

¹ Translated by Dr. Anton Rovner. Another version of the article was published in *Problemy muzykal'noj*

nauki/Music Scholarship issue 2011/2 (9).

ЛИТЕРАТУРА

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The Regular Laws of the Process of Art History

When studying the great works of art, we make broad use of the concept of the *epoch*, applying it to define a certain segment of historical time within the framework of which the various arts are endowed with certain common features. Let us take as a certain model the epoch which may be called the Classical era. During the course of its evolution, considerable distinctions between the various stages occurred in a natural way – those distinctions in particular are what provide grounds for dividing the epoch into a set of phases succeeding each other. The first period (approximately between the 1730s and the 1760s) presents a stage of interaction between the concluding phase of the Baroque period and the initial stage of the Classical epoch; this phase may be called the *Early Enlightenment* period. The second period (from the 1770s to the 1800s) presents the flourish of the Classical style of the time of the Enlightenment; in this case the definition of *High Enlightenment* is most appropriate. The third period (from the 1810s to the 1840s) features the advancement of *Romanticism*. The fourth period (from the 1850s to the 1880s) should be most appropriately termed as *Post-Romanticism*, since at that time many things in art were determined by realistic tendencies. The fifth period (from the 1890s to the 1920s) presents a stage of interaction between the concluding phase of the Classical epoch and the initial stage of the present-day epoch; this stage is frequently defined as *Late Romantic* or, more broadly – as *Late Classical*. It is most natural to define the boundaries of any period by relying on analysis of generalizing thoroughfares, which is particularly what comprises the main task of artistic-historical scholarship. The most important one of them is connected with the interaction of two fundamental methods of artistic thought – *Romanticism* and *Realism*, with alternate predominance of one or the other, and the periodicity of bringing out of them onto the forefront in the most direct way shapes the configuration of the epoch. The other natural law of the artistic-historical process is its unswerving acceleration and the gradual compression of temporal frames.

Keywords: the artistic-historical process, epoch, era, stage, period.

Закономерности художественно-исторической эволюции

Изучая художественное творчество, мы широко пользуемся понятием *эпоха*, отграничивая им тот или иной отрезок исторического времени, в рамках которого различные искусства наделяны некой общностью. В качестве определённого эталона возьмём ту эпоху, которую можно назвать Классической. В ходе её эволюции естественным образом возникали существенные отличия одного этапа от другого – именно эти отличия и дают основание для деления эпохи на ряд сменяющих друг друга стадий. Первый период (приблизительно 1730–1760-е гг.) – зона взаимодействия завершающей стадии эпохи Барокко и начальной стадии Классической эпохи; эту стадию можно назвать *Ранним Просвещением*. Второй период (1770–1800-е гг.) – расцвет классического стиля времён Просвещения; в данном случае уместно обозначение *Высокое Просвещение*. Третий период (1810–1840-е гг.) – выдвижение *Романтизма*. Четвёртый период (1850–1880-е гг.) уместно обозначить понятием *Постромантизм*, так как многое в искусстве определяли реалистические тенденции. Пятый период (1890–1920-е гг.) – зона взаимодействия завершающего этапа Классической эпохи и начального этапа текущей ныне эпохи; эта стадия часто определяется как *позднеромантическая* или шире – как *позднеклассическая*. Границы любого периода намечать естественнее всего, опираясь на анализ *генерализующих магистралей*, что как раз и составляет основную задачу художественно-исторической науки. Важнейшая из них связана с взаимодействием двух фундаментальных методов художественного мышления – *романтизма* и *реализма*, с попеременным преобладанием то одного из них, то другого, и периодичность их выдвижения на передний план самым непосредственным образом формирует конфигурацию эпохи. Другая закономерность художественно-исторического процесса – его неуклонное ускорение, постепенное сжатие временных рамок.

Ключевые слова: художественно-исторический процесс, эпоха, эра, этап, период.

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