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PLURAL DISCOURSES OF MUSICOLOGY

Tatjana Marković, PhD, *Transfiguracije srpskog romantizma – muzika u kontekstu studija kulture*, Univerzitet umetnosti, Beograd, 2005
- a review -

Tatjana Marković based the book *Transfiguracije srpskog romantizma – muzika u kontekstu studija kulture* (*Transfigurations of Serbian Romanticism – Music in the Context of Culture Studies*) on the doctoral dissertation she defended in 2004 at the University of Belgrade's Department of Music. The book was published by the University of Art with the support of the Ministry of Science and Environmental Protection. It runs to 288 pages, including a summary in English (pp. 279-281) and excerpts from reviews by Zdravko Blažeković, PhD and Miško Šuvaković, PhD.

Tatjana Marković has written a scientifically conceived and theoretically elaborated monograph 244 pages long. The study focuses on two relevant theoretical demands:

1. Emphasizing the innovative role of culture studies in the historical musicological studies of national music, and
2. Presenting specific historical problems and discussions from Serbian history through a theoretical naturalization of the historical musicological discourse using the procedures and protocols of culture studies.

These two demands are elaborated on a scientific and theoretical platform that can be represented as a scheme of transfigurations of historical musicology and musicological stylistics, based on semiological and post-semiological interpretations, into a field of musicologically orientated culture studies related to studies of *new musicology*. In other words, Dr. Marković has made a scientific shift from the mostly positivistic studies of history and stylistics of 19th century Serbian music into the area of critical theory that observes the concepts of semiological modelling of historical music identities, post-semiological comparative research and analysis of the relationship of the *actual* musical with the social, political, ideological and cultural aspects of historical epochs, as well as aspects of selected and identified contexts. This enables the introducing of methods and procedures characteristic of new

musicology into the analysis of and, consequently, a discussion on 19th century Serbian music, which first and foremost means pointing to the social, cultural and political aspects of the esthetic and formal-musical formations of Romantic music within the national framework. A major consequence of her methodological shift – a Copernican revolution – within contemporary musicology led to a transfiguration of the epistemological consideration of the concept and, more importantly, the role of musical style in the interpretations of 19th century music. In the histories of various arts and, by extension, in music history, an artificial construct such as “style” had long been understood and empirically regarded as the fundamental scientific *amalgamation* of formal-analytical, esthetic-musicological and historical approaches to musical work and music. Tatjana Marković has realized a “theoretical transfiguration”, meaning that she has shown how the interpretative theoretical *amalgamation* of the formal-analytical, esthetic-musicological and historical is presented, explained and then interpreted from the standpoint of semiology and culture studies. Her “transfigurative demand” was not meant to include semiologically orientated culture studies as a fourth member in the triad model of formal-analytical, esthetic-musicological and historical interpretation of 19th century music. On the contrary, taking a great deal of courage and theoretical risk, she drew attention to culture studies as a discourse which is used to problematize and *externally* present the problematic, poetic and, most certainly, political triad amalgamation of style. The concept of style and the roles assigned to the concept of style in the field of 19th century music interpretation are thereby presented as a cultural problem of semiologically orientated praxes. In other words, the formal-analytical, esthetic-musicological and historical approaches are no longer presented and discussed as a *source* of the musical or as *music truths*, but rather as models of constructing music and of its true understanding under the determining conditions of culture and society. The author argues that style is not “inherent in music”, i.e. that music truth is not crystallized in the formations and manifestations of style, but rather, that style is a scientific and theoretical concept of and a platform for presenting, that is, constructing and performing the ideological transparencies or non-transparencies of observing and representing musical works and music in the history of political identifications and power structures. Style issues are, therefore, not autonomously esthetic, but, first and foremost, social and political in character. According to English esthetician and culture theoretician Terry Eagleton, esthetics and esthetic interests have always been an exclusive *commodity* for the

middle and high social classes who modeled themselves *through* them, aspiring to form their identities, illusions of freedom and indulgences in creation, rather than to *live itself*.

The book *Transfiguracije srpskog romantizma – muzika u kontekstu studija kulture* was written and structured around six major chapters: “Romantizam u re/definisanju: ka metodološkim odrednicama” (Romanticism Re/Defined: Towards Methodological Points of Reference), “Romantizam u istorijskim perspektivama” (Romanticism in Historical Perspectives), “Ideološki modeli muzičkog diskursa: filozofija, estetika, retorika romantizma” (Ideological Models of Music Discourse: Philosophy, Esthetics, Rhetoric of Romanticism), “Tehnički model muzičkog diskursa romantizma / Diskursni muzičkog romantizma” (A Technical Model of the Music Discourse of Romanticism / Discourses of Romanticism in Music), “Strukture značenja – stilska analiza” (Structures of Meaning – Stylistic Analysis) and “Romantizam kao početak novih puteva” (Romanticism as a Beginning of New Paths). One of the relevant problems and critical points in analysis and discussion developed in the study of Tatjana Marković, PhD is addressing the comprehensive topic of *Romanticism* and its almost unquestioned interpretations delivered in extensive and diverse international and national literature. Musicological interpretations of Romanticism in national literature have been thus far examined by Stana Đurić-Klajn, Marija Bergamo, Roksanda Pejović, Sonja Marinković, Dragana Jeremić and others. What Dr. Marković did was juxtapose two perspectives on Romanticism:

- the inner perspective of musicology itself, and
- the outer perspective on the relationships between musicology and the music of Romanticism.

In doing so, the author established a different perspective on the history of Serbian music and 19th century Serbian society, that is, a perspective on another, perhaps unexpected, insight into the epistemology of music and the political role of music in building the modern bourgeois identities of 19th century Serbian societies and cultures. An extremely important aspect of this book is the pointing to the possibilities of discursive and cultural analysis of musical works and music life in the section “Strukture komunikacije” (Structures of Communication), where the author draws a distinction between “discourse of folklore”, “discourse of patriotism” and “discourse of lyrical sentimentalism”. Stylistic idioms of Romanticism in the discourse of

folklore are presented through a discussion on the oeuvre of Stevan Mokranjac. Stylistic idioms of Romanticism in the discourse of patriotism and lyricism are presented through a discussion of the oeuvre of Josif Marinković.

The reader is presented with a thought-provoking book which makes use of analytic-synthetic approaches to problematize the concepts of *Romanticism* and its influences on 19th century national culture/s, which until very recently have been regarded as conclusive. On the other hand, an important innovative value of this book is that it proves that history is written from the perspective of topicality, and that the image of the past and the image of tradition are, according to some British culture theoreticians, constructs within topical political, theoretical and life struggles and interests. History and tradition are never a discovery of a misplaced *narrative* about the sources or universal identities of music and life, but rather topical praxes of constructing and performing the versions of the past. Tatjana Marković, PhD has not only written another version of the history of Romantic music in Serbian culture, she has also explicitly demonstrated how this and any other versions are scientifically and theoretically constructed and performed for topicality.

Translated by Dušan Zabrdac