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The Life and Death of the Avant-garde on the Battlefield of Rhetoric - and Beyond

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The following article was originally conceived and presented as a contribution to the “Avant-garde Now?! Fourth Ghent Conference on Literary Theory” at the University of Ghent on March 17, 2005, which addressed the supposed “death of the avant-garde” in art and literary theory. As the conference flyer announced: “Many have pronounced the avant-garde dead. H.M. Enzensberger, Eric Hobsbawn, Roland Barthes, Susan Gablik, Andreas Huyssen, James S. Ackerman, George T. Noszlopy, Frank Kermode and Robert Hughes are but some scholars and critics who have relegated the avant-garde to the past.”¹

The question of whether there can be any life for the avant-garde, after all the theories proclaiming its “death” and demise in the past decades², can be answered in many different ways: partly due to the many different “death theories”, but, even more so, due to the many different ways in which the label “avant-garde” is used. Although we tend to use the term generally as denomination for a configuration of isms, of movements, of artists and works of art (visual, textual, and musical) from the first half of the twentieth century, or as short form for what others call “historical avant-garde”, “classical avant-garde” or “first avant-garde”³, and although most definitions or concepts of “avant-garde” include this configuration of isms from the first half of the twentieth century, the label “avant-garde” often has a much wider scope, both in past and current usage.

As far as the contemporary state of the arts is concerned, a brief look on the internet, in current newspapers, in more specialized art and literary magazines and at announcements by galleries and museums shows that these so-called “death theories” may have had, and may still have, some impact or – put differently – may indeed reflect the opinion, not confined to these theories only, that “the avant-garde” (whatever the author in question wants to regard as “avant-garde”) is dead, buried and *passé*.

A search in Google on January the 14th 2005 showed that the term “avant-garde” could be found on the web 2,670,000 times on that day. If one adds the same term in other languages, for example “vanguardia” in Spanish, the number rises considerably – “vanguardia” gives another 1,690,000 hits on the same day. Many Google hits don’t involve any form of aesthetic avant-garde, but even if one reduces the one-and-a-half million hits by the additional search terms “art”, “kunst”, “konst” some 1,520,000 hits remain. And that’s quite some more than the 618 hits that one finds if one searches for the exact formulation

“death of the avant-garde” – even if one adds the 9 hits with “mort de l’avant-garde”, 16 hits with “mort des avant-gardes”, 19 hits with “tod der avant-garde” or the 447 hits with “ende der avant-garde”. Some may believe that “the avant-garde” is dead, but they still have to convince the rest of the world, as it seems. And to add two completely arbitrary examples here: the *Cultureel Supplement* of the Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad* of October 15th 2004, contains an article entitled “Mona Lisa met kamelenkop. Chinese avant-garde bloeit in Shanghai” – “Mona Lisa with camel’s head. Chinese avant-garde flourishes in Shanghai”; the first issue of 2005 *gM Museumkrant* of the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague announces an exhibition showing work by the Dutch design bureau Droog under the title: “simply droog. 10 + 1 jaar [year] avant-garde design.” Despite all the theoretical “avant-garde bashing” of the past decades, then, it seems that the rumour about the death of the avant-garde hasn’t reached all corners of the cultural field.

These examples may not be regarded as definitive proof that “the avant-garde” is still alive and kicking. They show, however, that the term is still quite popular and certainly not only as an invective, as designation for something to be rejected or to be regarded as dead and buried. On the contrary, as is proved by the many cases in which the term “avant-garde” is used today – at the start of the twenty-first century – in commercials, in advertisements or even as the name of a product to be marketed and sold: the label obviously still possesses a generally positive connotation. And despite all the “death theories” the same seems to hold true for the label in the cultural field with capital C. Even though these theories observe, proclaim, or postulate the “death” of “the avant-garde”, this theoretical death doesn’t seem to prevent many others from presenting themselves or letting themselves be presented as “avant-garde” without any sense of morbidity or suicidal death-wish.

Enough said, however, about the current usage of the label “avant-garde” for contemporary artistic and other – in the widest sense – cultural phenomena. In the rest of this paper I would like to focus on *one* specific understanding of “avant-garde” in its relation to the “death theories”: “avant-garde” as denomination for the so-called “historical avant-garde”. My question will be: how do these “death theories” relate to this avant-garde of the first half of the twentieth century? Or more precisely: when these theories proclaim, postulate or claim to observe the supposed death of this early-twentieth century avant-garde, are they indeed to be regarded as necrologies, in memoriams, obituaries, funeral orations or – if you prefer – death sentences for this avant-garde? Or, are these theories rather to be understood as something else? The way, in which this question is posed, already may suggest that I tend to believe the latter.

First of all, I believe that it is at least remarkable that the “death” of the “avant-garde” is proposed, proclaimed and discussed quite frequently, whereas, for example, the death or the end of the Baroque, of French or German classicism or of the European fin-de-siècle is not. In the second place, I think, it’s important to observe that the label “avant-garde” as designation for the configuration of isms we now tend to call the “historical avant-garde” only became fashionable in the aftermath of this “avant-garde”. Certainly, some of these avant-garde movements had a self-understanding in which they defined themselves in spatial metaphors suggesting or claiming that they were holding a position more forward, more advanced than other sections, if not the rest of the artistic and literary field. There can be no doubt, however, that the spokesmen of these movements preferred their own labels and brand names, like futurism, expressionism, Dada, constructivism, surrealism, *Zenit* or *De Stijl*. But, what is at stake here, is not the self-understanding of the so-called “historical avant-garde”, but “avant-garde” as a notion.

When Clement Greenburg published his essay “Avant-garde and Kitsch” in 1939 in the *Partisan Review*, he was, in fact, one of the first to use the label as a standing term (if it is already a standing term in his article).⁴ The term “avant-garde” functioned differently in different languages and in cultural configurations: notably in French, where the term “avant-garde” was more frequently utilised than in other languages; and in French or, for example, in Spanish or in Polish avant-garde publications, the terms “vanguardia” and “awangardny” can be found as self-denominations or, frequently, as ostentatious (self-)designation used by the artists and congenial critics to position themselves in their respective artistic and literary fields and as such, one might argue, as a standing term.⁵ In most European languages and cultural configurations, however, the term “avant-garde” is – at least as a standing term, as colloquial common denominator – virtually absent until the 1940s and 50s. To take the Dutch example, one can find in the 1910s and 1920s indeed some publications, in which the term is used by avant-garde artists, among others by Theo van Doesburg, notably in his frequently quoted series of articles “Revue der Avant-garde” in the Dutch modernist review *Het Getij* in the early twenties, as well as by the expressionist writer Hendrik Marsman and the constructivist printer Hendrik Nicolaas Werkman.⁶ The latter used the label, however, only once or twice, and –outside of this series of articles – the same can be said for Van Doesburg.

If we change our focus and look at the German situation, something comparable can be observed. In Germany too, the label “avant-garde” was virtually absent in an aesthetic context before 1945, and this is not only due to the rule of fascism, which disabled any proper discussion of aesthetic avant-gardism after 1933. Also in the previous period one can observe,

as Ulrich Weisstein has noted in a 1975 essay “Le terme et le concept d’avant-garde en Allemagne”, that the label “avant-garde” was quite rare in decades before the Second World War and the enthronement of Hitler.⁷ It is certainly not accidental that the German art historian Richard Hamann in his *Geschichte der Kunst*, in which he shows a profound knowledge of what we now tend to call “historical avant-garde”, doesn’t use the term “avant-garde”, but, instead, “expressionism”.⁸ In fact, the first German-written book addressing in its title something called “avant-garde” in a cultural context is a collection of essays, *Europäische Avantgarde*, edited by Alfred Andersch in 1948-49, with essays by among others Sartre, De Beauvoir, Silone, Spender, Koestler – so not directly “avant-garde” in the sense we use it today.⁹ The first title addressing the “historical avant-garde” in German stems from 1961: an exhibition catalogue on *Der Sturm* with the subtitle *Herwarth Walden und die europäische Avantgarde*.¹⁰ In the case of the Russian avant-garde, the label “avant-garde” was also only attributed to the movements, groups, artists and works of art at a later stage: in the 1910s and 1920s other umbrella terms were used.¹¹ In an English-speaking context, moreover, one finds the same constellation, as Paul Wood’s introduction to *The Challenge of the Avant-Garde* (1999) indicates:

“Avant-garde” became pervasive as a synonym for “modern art” during the boom in culture after World War II. But many of the movements it is loosely used to refer to predate World War II by several decades, and at the time when they first flourished, the term “avant-garde” was not nearly so often used to describe them. Far more widespread were blander terms such as “modern art” itself or the “modern movement”. Yet, there were also others in the early twentieth and nineteenth centuries, which have since slipped from general use: terms such as “futurists”, “intransigents”, and “independents”. The writings of the American critic Clement Greenberg (1909-94), whose first major essay titled “Avant-garde and kitsch” had appeared in 1939, were important in establishing the modern currency of the idea. The concept achieved a kind of dominance or “hegemony” in the period from about 1940 to about 1970. [...] In artistic terms, these were the decades in which a conception of artistic “modernism” was consolidated, whose most important centre was New York. Modernism, as a specialized critical discourse in art, declined in influence after about 1970, but in wider and less specialized thinking about art during the years since, the term “avant-garde” carried on bearing the meanings it assumed then, and to an extent it continues to do so. “Avant-garde”, then, became not just a synonym for modern art in the all-inclusive

sense of the term, but was more particularly identified with artistic “modernism”, and hence shorthand for the values associated with that term.¹²

The virtual absence of the label “avant-garde” as standing term in what we now tend to call “historical avant-garde” had probably four reasons. In the first place, a Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, a Herwarth Walden or a Theo van Doesburg may be regarded nowadays as representative of “the avant-garde”, they saw themselves, however, primarily as representatives of their own avant-garde projects, as futurist, as expressionist, as constructivist et cetera. And one can observe here that, for example, Marinetti not only referred to his own circle as “futurism”, but subsumed, e.g. in his manifesto “Le futurisme mondial” more or less the whole contemporary avant-garde under his own label “futurism”,¹³ although one can also see that among the isms of the “historical avant-garde” notably the Italian futurists, due to their predilection for the military, actually used the term “avant-garde” quite frequently. And one can see that the same configuration is presented by Herwarth Walden under his ultimate umbrella term “expressionism”¹⁴ and by Tristan Tzara as “dada”¹⁵, whereas Van Doesburg presents artists, we now tend to associate with other isms, as “exemplary collaborators” of the constructivist *Stijl*.¹⁶

In the second place, when Charles Baudelaire, in the early 1860s, had already rejected “the Frenchman’s passionate predilection for military metaphors”¹⁷, not least for the term “littérateurs d’avant-garde”, this military connotation of the term “avant-garde” might have been another reason that at least some sections of what we now call the “historical avant-garde” consciously abstained from using the term (e.g. Schwitters might be an example here). In the third place, one can, from contemporary publications by and on the “historical avant-garde”, gather that other standing terms existed, other fixed denominations such as “new art”, “modern art”, “ultra-modern art”, “young art”: these terms were far more fashionable, or, more precisely, which were, in the first half of the twentieth century, the more general common denominators for the configuration of “isms of art” we now tend to call “avant-garde”.¹⁸ Last but not least, there is probably another reason for the fact that the notion “avant-garde” became a colloquial label only after the demise of the early avant-garde of the twentieth century, as Hans Magnus Enzensberger pointed out in his essay “Die Aporien der Avantgarde” from 1962:

Das Modell, an dem sich die Vorstellung der Avantgarde orientiert, ist untauglich. Das Voranschreiten der Künste in der Geschichte wird als lineare, eindeutige

übersichtliche und überschaubare Bewegung gedacht, in der jeder seinen Platz, Spitze oder Troß, selber bestimmen könnte. Ungedacht bleibt, daß diese Bewegung vom Bekannten ins Unbekannte führt; daß mithin nur die Nachzügler angeben können, wo sie sind. Was vorn ist, weil niemand, am wenigsten, wer unbekanntes Terrain erreicht hat. Gegen diese Ungewißheit gibt es keine Versicherung. Mit der Zukunft kann sich nur einlassen, wer den Preis des Irrtums zu erlegen bereit ist. Das *avant* der Avantgarde enthält seinen eigenen Widerspruch: es kann erst *a posteriori* markiert werden.¹⁹

Although the notion “avant-garde” was not completely absent before this period, much favours, at least as far as the “historical avant-garde” is concerned (after the Second World War the label becomes more and more fashionable as a self-denomination as well), Enzensberger’s thesis that the label in particular functioned as a posthumously applied category. “Avant-garde”, thus functions as a category, a label, which, due to its posthumous application, was quasi-automatically associated with the death of the phenomena, of the movements labelled as such. In other words: the emergence of the category, of the label “avant-garde” as standing term in Western art and literary criticism, was almost from the start accompanied by rumours about the supposed death of “the avant-garde”.

An interesting case, at this juncture, is the reflections on contemporary cinema by the Dutch film critic L.J. Jordaan in the Dutch weekly *De groene Amsterdammer* in the late twenties and early thirties. Jordaan was at that time one of the editors of the Dutch review *Filmliga*, which can be regarded (and presented itself) as the main platform of “avant-garde” film in the Netherlands; one of its prominent contributors was Joris Ivens. As said, the term “avant-garde” did not play any substantial role as designation for what we now tend to call “the historical avant-garde” in the Netherlands until the period after the Second World War. Jordaan provides an exception, or maybe rather a forerunner, in the application of label “avant-garde” as a standing term referring to what we now still tend to call “avant-garde”. He used the designation frequently in his reviews, as a label for filmmakers like René Char, Luis Buñuel, Walter Ruttmann, Man Ray, Sergei Eisenstein, to name just a few. What is remarkable now, is the fact that, in his contributions to *De groene Amsterdammer*, Jordaan quite often stresses that this avant-garde should be regarded as a phenomenon of the past, as movement, which should be regarded as “dead”. For example, an article on the problem of commercialization of French cinema from November 24, 1928, Jordaan used the subtitle “Morituri...” (from the famous Latin gladiator greeting “Morituri te salutant”), and ended

with a quote from an interview with the French film director Germaine Dulac: "Avant-garde meurt, mais elle se ne rend pas."²⁰ A quote, which Jordaan recycles in the title of another critique from July 25, 1931: "L'avant-garde meurt...."²¹

In the case of Jordaan, one can take from his criticism that he indeed regarded "the avant-garde" as a phenomenon of the past (from the *early* twenties), but, by the way in which the term is embedded in his articles, the textual context also shows that he associates "avant-garde" with "death" for another reason, more or less as a side effect of the aesthetic notion, of the artistic label "avant-garde" as a military metaphor – and it that respect, not much seems to have changed after Jordaan's critiques.

The word, the term "avant-garde" might be fashionable as a fixed, standing term in some segments of the historiography of Western art and literature of the previous century (as well as the late 19th century). At the same time, there can be no doubt that the term "avant-garde" in these segments too is still or even basically a metaphor. Unlike many other terms in literary and art history, which are originally metaphors as well, for example: "movement", "current" or "school" (maybe not terms specifically related to modernity and the modern, yet still metaphors by origin as well), the term "avant-garde" is accompanied or even introduced in many, in most, historiographic accounts and theoretical assessments by an - often quite extensive - detour to remind the reader of the concept's military resonances - to quote from the 1886 edition of the German encyclopaedia *Brockhaus*:

Vorhut, Vortrab, der Teil eines Heeres, welcher vor dem Gros der Armee marschiert, Hindernisse beseitigt, im Fall eines Angriffs aber den Feind so lange aufhält, bis die nachfolgende Kolonne gefechtsbereit ist (Avantgardengefecht).²²

Aspects of this original military meaning of the term "avant-garde" are then frequently mobilized to legitimize the subsumption of these phenomena under the denomination "avant-garde", in a way as a parameter for the qualification of these phenomena as "avant-garde". The forward position of the "avant-garde" in a military context, the fact that this avant-garde is in the forefront, preceding the main sections of the army, operating rather isolated as the annunciation of something larger still to come, its operations in enemy territory, its function as a reconnaissance unit: all these and other aspects are then related in the cultural field to the emergence of supposedly new movements, new currents, new schools heading towards a new art, a new literature, new cultural practices, which have to explore these new ways and tackle resistance of existing, traditional old forces in the cultural (and political) field first. When

successful, they can then establish themselves as a new - be it cultural, be it political - order or paradigm in these fields, as part of a linear understanding of history ruled by progress, by constant innovation, by the continuous replacement of the old by the new and - one might add - by an understanding of cultural history as a theatre of war, as a battlefield. And there needs to be no doubt that a battlefield, any serious, any real battlefield, where arms are crossed, is inconceivable without the smell of death. Even when this smell of death wasn't or isn't the prime reason to refer to certain artistic movements as "avant-garde", this smell is - as it were - a free bonus, which comes *nolens volens* with the metaphor.

Turning back now to the "death theories", those proclaiming the "death" of the "avant-garde", I believe that it is important that these theories might indeed focus on something labelled by the respective authors as "avant-garde" and that they should be seen as part of a discourse with a much wider scope. The smell of death clinging to the term "avant-garde", as a military metaphor stemming from the battlefield, may have made the reflection on the particular configurations of artistic movements which we now tend to refer to as "avant-garde" and - what's quintessential here - which are referred to by the respective authors of these "death theories" as "avant-garde", more susceptible to "death" claims than, for example, reflections on the same configurations which use instead the competing term "modernism". Yet, at the same time there can be no doubt whatsoever that while these theories proclaiming "the death of the avant-garde" might indeed focus primarily on something called "the avant-garde" or "avant-garde art and literature", they can be seen simultaneously as part of a discourse focusing not only on "the avant-garde", but also on modernism as well as on post-modernism and, what's more, on art as such.

To return to Google once more, we can see that the exact word combination "death of the avant-garde" is indeed more frequently used on the web than "death of modernity", "death of modernism" or, for example, "death of postmodernism" (on January 15th 2005 these four searches resulted respectively in 617 hits for "death of the avant-garde", 227 for the "death of modernity", 491 for the "death of modernism" and 267 for the assumed "death of postmodernism"). However, a search with the exact combination "death of art" shows that this last word combination is far more common than the other four deaths together: 11,900 hits. As Eva Geulen, among others, has pointed out, in her 2002 book *Ende der Kunst. Lesarten eines Gerüchts nach Hegel*, theories about the death of the avant-garde, modernism et cetera can be seen in a way as small narratives being part or extensions of this rumour about the end, about the death of art.²³

If we consider that most of the “death theories” proclaiming specifically the death of the avant-garde, elaborate quite extensively on the metaphorical dimensions of the term “avant-garde” in order to substantiate the claimed “death”, the fact that most “isms of art” from the first half of the twentieth century summarized under the caption “historical avant-garde” did either *not* refer to themselves as “avant-garde” at all, or used the term only as self-denomination or self-definition in exceptional cases, becomes important. It can be taken as an indication that the “death of the avant-garde” in these “death theories” is, to a considerable extent, not primarily (if at all) the observation of the factual death of the avant-garde, but rather a circular argument generated by these theories themselves. Firstly, they label – posthumously – certain aesthetic practices as “avant-garde” (or alternatively, as in the case of more recent “death theories”, pick up previous posthumous qualifications of the “historical avant-garde” as “avant-garde”) and then conclude that the supposed “avant-gardism” or rather the superimposed “avant-gardism” of these apparent avant-gardists, who didn’t present or define themselves as “avant-garde” (at least not explicitly) must be regarded as outmoded, outdated and dead. In short: first they call the avant-garde posthumously avant-garde and then take this, their own attribution as a starting point for criticizing this avant-garde for being “avant-garde” and proclaiming its death. To give just one example: in an article by Rachel Schreiber, which pops up as first hit in Google when searching for the exact word combination “death of the avant-garde”, entitled “The (True) Death of the Avant-garde”, written in 2002.²⁴ Schreiber first takes the assumption that the “historical avant-garde” defined itself as “avant-garde” as a given fact. She, then, elaborates on the military metaphor, stressing – in the footsteps of Rosalind Krauss²⁵ – the claim of being “original” as an aesthetic translation of the geographic position of the military avant-garde on the battlefield, to continue and conclude with the assumption that this form of “avant-gardism” in the sense of forwardness has become impossible in the digital age, which she then labels as “the true death of the avant-garde”.

Is this theory and are other current-day “death theories” indeed an indication or even the proof of the “true death the avant-garde”? As far as the term “avant-garde” refers to the so-called “historical avant-garde”, I believe that these theories are rather a proof for the contrary. The “historical avant-garde” emerged almost a century ago and dissolved some seventy, eighty years ago. It is, to my mind, quite remarkable that a cultural phenomenon, a set of artistic movements that disappeared more than half-a-century ago, apparently still necessitates that its death has to be certified again and again after so many years discussion of its demise. The “historical avant-garde” might be dead, but it apparently still possesses an

extremely tenacious afterlife. And in its afterlife this avant-garde apparently still provokes in such a way, that even now, at the start of the twenty-first century, fearless vampire killers set out to exorcise the phantom of the avant-garde, be it only theoretically.

¹ Here quoted from: http://www.oei.nu/avantgardenatet/sidor/Avant-Garde_Now.pdf. The following contribution is partly based on discussions with Walter Fähnders (Osnabrück).

² Cf. for the trope of the supposed "death" of the avant-garde notably the by the conference organizers in their flyer unmentioned book by Paul Mann: *The Theory-Death of the Avant-Garde*. Bloomington 1991.

³ Peter Bürger: *Theorie der Avantgarde*. Frankfurt/M 1974, passim; Matei Calinescu: *Five Faces of Modernity. Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism*. Bloomington/Indianapolis 1977:140; Jean Weisgerber (ed.): *Les Avant-gardes littéraires au XXe siècle*. Vol. 1. Budapest 1982:13 and 71; Miklós Szabolsci: *Le reflux 1930-1960*. In: Jean Weisgerber (ed.): *Les Avant-gardes littéraires au XXe siècle*. Vol. 1. Budapest 1982:562-572, here p. 562.

⁴ Clement Greenberg: *Avant-garde and Kitsch*. In: *Partisan Review* 6 (5) 1939:34-49.

⁵ Cf. for the implementation of the term 'avant-garde' in the French literary and artistic field in the early twentieth century notably: Pierre Bourdieu: *Les règles de l'art. Genèse et structure du champ littéraire*. Paris 1992; for the Spanish situation cf. Guillermo de Torre: *Literaturas europeas de vanguardia*. Madrid 1925; for Poland as example cf. the Polish constructivist art journal *Blok. Czasopismo awangardy artystycznej* (1924-1927).

⁶ Theo van Doesburg: *Revue der Avant-garde*. In: *Het getij* 6/1 (1) 1921, pp. 109-112 (first of sequence of articles under the same title); Hendrik Marsman: *Over Franz Marc (Aanteekeningen)*. In: *De nieuwe kroniek* 2 (24) 1923, n.p.; Hendrik Nicolaas Werkman: *The Next Call ondergoudt...*. In: *The Next Call* (6) 1924, n.p.

⁷ Ulrich Weisstein: *Le terme et le concept d'avant-garde en Allemagne*. In: *Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles* (1) 1975:10-37.

⁸ Richard Hamann: *Geschichte der Kunst von der altchristlichen Zeit bis zur Gegenwart*. Berlin 1933.

⁹ Alfred Andersch (ed.): *Europäische Avantgarde*. Frankfurt/M 1949. Noteworthy is here an on first sight not visible relation with Greenberg. This book is a product of covert operations by the CIA in the European cultural field, partly behind the façade of the so-called Congress for Cultural Freedom. As advocate and principle critic of American "abstract expressionism", Greenberg was involved in the promotion of this genuine American contribution to avant-garde art in the same constellation, cf. Frances Stonor Saunders: *The Cultural Cold War. The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*. New York 1999.

¹⁰ Leopold Reidemeister (ed.): *Der Sturm. Herwarth Walden und die Europäische Avantgarde*. Berlin 1912-1932. Berlin 1961.

¹¹ Gérard Conio: *Les Avant-gardes entre métaphysique et histoire. Entretiens avec Philippe Sers*. Lausanne 2002:9-14.

¹² Paul Wood: *The Challenge of the Avant-garde*. New Haven 1999:10.

¹³ Cf. unpaginated reprint in: Giovanni Lista (ed.): *Marinetti et le Futurisme. Études, documents, iconographie*. L'Age d'homme: Lausanne 1977.

¹⁴ Cf. Herwarth Walden: *Expressionismus. Die Kunstwende*. Berlin 1918

¹⁵ Cf. Tristan Tzara: *Quelques Présidents et Présidentes*. In: *Dada* (6) 1920, n.p..

¹⁶ Cf. Theo van Doesburg: *Principieele medewerkers aan De Stijl*. In: *De Stijl* 8 (85/86) 1927:59-62.

¹⁷ Baudelaire as quoted in Calinescu, *op. cit.* (note 3), p. 110-111.

¹⁸ Cf. Hubert van den Berg: *Kortlægning af det nyes gamle spor. Bidrag til en historisk topografi over det 20. århundredes avant-garde(r) i europæisk kultur*. In: Tania Ørum/Marianne Ping Huang/Charlotte Engberg (eds.): *En tradition af opbrud. Avantgardernes tradition og politik*. København 2005:19-43, here p. 26-28.

¹⁹ Hans Magnus Enzensberger: *Die Aporien der Avantgarde*. In: Hans Magnus Enzensberger: *Einzelheiten II*. Frankfurt/M. 1984:50-80, here p. 63.

²⁰ L.J. Jordaan: *Bioscopy. Parijsche notities*. In: *De groene Amsterdammer* (2686), November 24, 1928:4. The French line is a variation on a famous (apocryphal) remark by the French general Cambonne, who rejected the surrender of the French Imperial Guard after Napoleon had fled the Waterloo battlefield with the words: "La garde meurt, mais se ne rend pas."

²¹ L.J. Jordaan: *Bioscopy. L'avant-garde meurt...*. In: *De groene Amsterdammer* (2825), July 25, 1931:12.

²² *Brockhaus' Kleines Conversations-Lexikon. Enzyklopädisches Handwörterbuch*. Vol. 1. Leipzig 1886:174.

²³ Eva Geulen: *Ende der Kunst. Lesarten eines Gerüchts nach Hegel*. Frankfurt/M. 2002.

²⁴ Rachel Schreiber: *The (True) Death of the Avant-Garde*. August 8, 2002. In: <http://www.mica.edu/schreiber/TrueDeathOfTheAvantGarde.pdf>

²⁵ Rosalind Krauss: *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*. Cambridge (Mass.)/London 1986: 151-170.