

## **Marija Maglov**

*Teaching assistant, Faculty of Media and Communications,  
Singidunum University, Belgrade*  
marija.maglov@fmk.edu.rs

**Marko Đorđević, *Institucionalna kritika i problem subjektivizacije u savremenoj umetnosti [Institutional Critique and the Problem of Subjectivization in the Contemporary Art]*, Belgrade, Faculty of Media and Communications–Orion Art, 2015. 128 pp, ISBN 978-86-87107-41-0 (FMK)**

In 2014 the Faculty of Media and Communications, Belgrade, and Orion Art launched a new collaboration in publishing which resulted in several editions and which continues to grow. As part of this project the edition *Nova humanistika [New Humanities]* was established to present distinguished MA and PhD theses in the fields of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary humanities and art and media studies, but also to boost and solidify the contemporary domestic and regional theoretical scene in those fields. The book by Marko Đorđević, *Institucionalna kritika i problem subjektivizacije u savremenoj umetnosti, [Institutional Critique and the Problem of Subjectivization in the Contemporary Art]* was published in the first series of the edition, which contains five works in total. Đorđević's book consists of a slightly-revised Master's thesis, which he defended at the University of Arts, Belgrade (Interdisciplinary Studies Programme, Art Theory and Media Studies Group) in 2014, under the mentorship of Dr. Miodrag Šuvaković.

In his book, Đorđević enters the arena of institutional theory and institutional critique as one of many critical artistic approaches to “the concept of art as an instrument of social critique and emancipation” (7). By taking a metatheoretical position, he chooses to focus on a less-examined, but basic problem of the key concepts of “institution” and “subject” and their mutual relations. The author offers his reading of these concepts, as understood in various discourses coming from analytical philosophy, structuralism (mainly Althusser's structural Marxism), poststructuralism and post-Marxism. He then goes on to question the adequacy of these theoretical approaches for analysis of institutional relations and processes of subjectivization in the contemporary art world, having in mind particular relations between artistic and theoretical practices.

Đorđević develops his research and argumentation through four chapters, preceded by introductory notes (*Uvodna razmatranja*) and completed with a bibliography and summary in English. In his introduction, the author very precisely presents his thesis, methods, structure and basic concepts, anticipating methodologically clear and firm research. The decision to round out each chapter with its own conclusion, summarizing the discussed thesis and leading to the next thematic area, speaks of author's cautious approach and gradual development of the research, and adds to the overall comprehensibility of the book.

In the first chapter, *Od institucije ka subjektu: Mapiranje pojmova u društvenim i humanističkim naukama* [*From Institution to Subject: Mapping Concepts in Social Sciences and Humanities*], Đorđević examines John Searle's theory of institutional facts and the concept of subjectivization through interpellation in the Louis Althusser's theory of ideology. Searle's thesis that the language is fundamental social institution has been subjected to closer look (26), and some of its problematic spots have been criticized, with Đorđević stating that "with Searle, there is no thought of the institutional fact called capitalism" (32). In order to revise Searle's thesis, Đorđević turns to Althusser's structural Marxism and the role of language as a mean for interpellation in his theory of ideology. Although aware that differences between two philosophical approaches and authors' political positions shouldn't be avoided, Đorđević focuses on its mutual concern for the role of language, maintaining that while Searle's concepts are useful in the analysis of institutions when the individual is concerned, the idea of "collective intentionality" should be revised with Althusser's critique of constitution of subject through language and ideology via state apparatuses in mind (44–45).

The following two chapters concern themselves with questions on the meaning of the above conclusions in the context of concepts of artist theory, institutional critique, artworld and installation of art. In the chapter titled *Preispitivanje Althusserove teorije ideologije teorijom i praksom umetnika* [*Reexamination of Althusser's Theory of Ideology via Theory and Practice of Artist*], Đorđević uses the theoretical activity of the group *Art Workers' Coalition* to reconsider applicability of Althusser's theoretical concept in understanding its actual concretization in artistic practices. Having concluded that real examples of relations between subject (in this case, artist) and institutions are more complex than Althusser's theory suggests, Đorđević goes on to address revisions of this theory and emphasize three of its critiques. Those are the critiques of subjectivization (with examples of artistic practices and Eagleton's reading of Althusser), of reductionist reading of institutions (as seen in analysis of particular artistic practices) and of the concept of materialization of ideas (understood through the reading of Marxist studies of culture). Through commenting on these revisions, the author illustrates how Althusser's concept of ideology could be more attainable for the analysis of social facts in contemporary capitalism. In a metatheoretical sense, for Đorđević it serves as a path towards poststructuralist understanding of subject and institution as effects of the production of knowledge in the existing power relations, but also as active forces in articulation of those same relations (71).

Within the third chapter *Svet umetnosti, svetovi umetnosti, nestajanje sveta umetnosti* [*Artworld, Artworlds, Disappearing of Artworlds*], the author embraces the diachronic approach, in contrast to the previously-applied synchronic one, in order to put examined concepts in the particular context and in relation to actual artistic practices. Đorđević begins with presenting Danto's and Dickie's theories and recognizing that commonality between them is the idea of the artworld as a closed symbolic space (84). He goes on to look at artistic practices of institutional critique, aiming to present examples that led to the opening of the artworld to other contexts and offered solutions for the reform of the system. Also, he pays considerable attention to the transformation of capitalism and its implications to the above-mentioned practices. As a result of "the double articulation between processes characteristic to the institutions of art and [the] wide spectrum of socio-economic processes in the other half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century", Đorđević sees deconstruction of the essentialist philosophy and theory of arts, ascent of the immaterial labor and the crisis of representation (110–111).

The final chapter (*Zaključna razmatranja*), features the author's conclusive notes, while Đorđević, based on his three conclusions developed from three presented metatheoretical approaches to different aspects of institution-subject relations, suggests possible directions for further examination of the problem, stating that he advocates for an eclectic and antireductionist approach, although aware of the risk this approach may bring (115). This acknowledgment of his own position, his rich list of references and the broadness upon which the author pretends with his eclectic approach (resulting with occasional excursions in the main text) imply an exemplary Master's thesis, but also insightful study on the important questions of contemporary art and society.