

Review of: "The “Bird of Paradise”: Heller and Márkus"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

First and foremost: I am not a philosopher, and have just the barest of knowledge regarding the “Budapest school”, so many of my observations should be read with this information present: that I am an outsider to the discipline.

I found the article to be interesting and thoughtful. I think it contains a great deal of information, and that it covers a lot of ground. I found the brief overview of the Budapest school informative enough, even though I would have appreciated an overview of its principal ideas and tenets.

The biographical sketches of both Márkus and Heller do well to set up the stage and to explain where they came from and where their circumstances took them.

However, I found the discussion over “high culture” and what it entails a bit muddled. I would have liked a brief paragraph explaining which intellectual influences and historical processes brought Márkus to conflate the arts, philosophy and hard sciences into the concept of “high culture”. A one line reference to “Hegel's Absolute Spirit” is not enough for people who are not a part of the discipline. Particularly, I would have appreciated a longer explanation of the why of putting the hard sciences into high culture. I assume this is related to the way that they produce “the new”, but I have a different conception of High Culture, which goes along the lines of “the best that the society of a certain time has produced” and is usually associated with the fine arts.

I also found that the latter paragraphs, concerning the political positions both philosophers adopted late in their life, could be longer and more detailed. It seems like a fascinating topic, and I am sorry to feel that the articulation between political positions and philosophical beliefs is not articulated so thoroughly.

On a different note, I spotted some grammatical issues that could stand to be corrected.

Overall, I think this is a meaty and rich article, but I believe those ideas could use a little bit more stretching out, a little bit more of historical context. This could make this article clearer and more appealing for a broader readership beyond philosophers.