

SOVIET IDEOMYTH: STRATEGIES OF MYTHOPOETRY, CULTURAL HEROES, FORMATION OF AESTHETIC CANON

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The Soviet mythological system is tied with the ideology of socialism and communist utopia. Soviet mythology relies on universal, classical mythological structures, modifying them and creating new models in accordance with its ideological doctrine. Redefinition and transforming classical schemes of eschatological, cosmogonic and heroic myths can be traced in the Soviet culture of the twentieth century.

The classical model of eschatology is based on the prophecy about the end of the world in the future. The socialist myth in the late 1910's and early 1920's announces the end of the Old World as an urgent aim of the present. Salvation, resurrection, the revival of the Old World is impossible, it is destined to die. The Old World – Chaos is deprived of the life-giving function and not able to create a New World. The Old World – Chaos is excluded from the cosmogonic function.

The traditional eschatological model is based on the idea of cycling – the periodical destruction and recreation of the Cosmos. Unlike the Soviet mythological model breaks a cycling scheme: the periodical destruction of the Cosmos – it's out of the question and there is no space for it at all. In Soviet mythology, the cycling model of development is replaced by a linear one, where the Beginning of history and its Present marks the struggle for the destruction of the Old World the end of history in the future is correlated with of socialist "paradise on earth" (desacralized, secularized).

The functions of the destruction of the Old World and the creation of the New World are performed by a person who now realizes himself to be similar to a Creator and even above God.

The heroic myth and the mythology of struggle, in the Soviet myth, become actual. The struggle with the Old World marks the battle of light and darkness, good and evil, and acquires the features of holy battle outcome of which determines the fate of humankind.

If in the traditional heroic myth the heroic deed and self-sacrifice of a hero should prevent a future catastrophe, then in the Soviet ideological myth – just to bring the "earth's paradise" and "bright future" closer. In Soviet mythology, the idea of self-sacrifice in the name of the ideal is being posed and shared. The cultural hero in the Soviet heroic myth plays the traditional role of a hero – defender, a hero – the fighter who opposes the forces of Chaos.

The main cultural heroes of Soviet mythology are the proletarian worker, the peasant, and Bolshevik (a member of a faction of the Marxist Russian Social Democratic Labour Party). A stable reception of portrayal of cultural heroes is a hyperbole (exaggeration), is present in the works of artists of different artistic styles. Heroes often appearing as titans, heroes, giants and serve as Demiurgos – creators, but not only of cultural objects but also of the elements of the universe. The idea of a cosmic scale of activity becomes common, the myth of the transformation of all spheres of an existence and consciousness becomes relevant, wider – the whole Universe.

Starting from the 1930s, the cosmogonic model in the variation of creation, the building of the New World – the Soviet Cosmos, the world of harmony starts to dominate and becomes central. The mythology of the transformation of reality is being developed. At the same time, the focus is on the process of creative creation and construction. The "Great Constructions" of the epoch are reflected in various forms of the Soviet art. Starting from the middle of the 1920's, the dominant cultural heroes of the Soviet myth are the heroes-builders, fathers-creators, and the emerging community – the Soviet people. The heroic myth is becoming increasingly associated with a labor feat and self-sacrifice.

Synthesis and exaggeration will become a stable canon of aesthetics of the socialist's realism. The formation of a new aesthetic ideal is noticeable, where the "beautiful" is interpreted in a harmonious combination of internal and external strength and power (clearly seen - in Soviet painting, sculpture, architecture). The idea of emancipation, equality of man and women is being solved in Soviet painting and sculpture in increasing of masculinity, exaggeration of images. Soviet gender equality is being affirmed in the social and professional spheres, including in a hard, physical labor of women. Female road builders (a series of painting canvases, Metro (underground) builders, etc.) are becoming common images and themes in Soviet art. A "typical attributes" of a Soviet female often become a shovel, a sledgehammer, a jackhammer. The standard of a Soviet woman, who embodies the idea of health and a healthy lifestyle, becomes the sculpture "Girls with a paddle", which, since the 1930s, are being massively replicated and become a kind of a symbol of the Soviet era, a common kitsch and artefact of park design in the USSR.

In the architecture of Stalin's era in the 1930's – 1950's, an exaggeration forms the main structure-forming method. It was embodied in a significant increase in scales, which should emphasize the enormity of changes in all spheres of life. It was realized in the spread of the monumental style, where the aesthetic idea of the "sublime" presents gigantic dimensions, volumes, and forms ("Stalin's gigantism").

Another important cultural hero of the Soviet era is the collectively organized society, the collective. Transformation of the unorganized human's thoughts into an organized collective, the rallying of the mass, a gathering of collective around the leader – one of the central themes of Soviet literature, beginning from its early period.

The stable model in the Soviet myth is the necessary presence of an antagonist enemy, who personifies the destructive forces of Chaos and Evil. Images of enemies – antagonistic are represented by both: external enemies (capitalism, imperialism, etc.) and internal enemies: insidious pests, traitors, elements of an unorganized nature, as well as "internal Chaos" – own conscience, laziness, selfishness, etc. The victory, of course, is reserved by the cultural hero – the Demiurge – Creator of the Soviet Cosmos – by the Soviet person and the Soviet people.

The usage of universal mythological models in the structure of Soviet ideology and mythology partly ensured their successful functioning in the mass consciousness.

Gradually, the gap between the socialist ideal, which was pretended to be a reality and the realities of true reality, increased. It contributed to the activation of deconstructive models of pre-postmodernism and later, post-modern complexes in the culture of the twentieth century.

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