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## Dissertation Assessment

of

### Neo-mythologizing Tendencies in Visual Culture of the XX–XXI centuries

written by

Stroeva Olesia Vitalyevna

Without a doubt, myths and mythological thought have always been key issues in the evolution of human culture. They are, at the same time, paths towards discovery and enigmas themselves. The essence of what may be called ‘mythologism’ does not die, although there are in modern times strong tendencies to ‘de-mythologise’ alongside phenomena that can be called ‘neo-mythologising’. And these are the core of this excellent and exciting dissertation written by Olesia Vitalyevna Stroeva.

Due to the fact that there are no universal definitions of the key terms of her dissertation, she discusses possible terminology and uses – in a highly pertinent way – a form of combined creative, empirical and literature-based (e.g. from post-classical philosophy) definition to delineate ‘neo-mythologism’ and further expressions which mirror the essence of her research.

Focusing on the phenomenon of what is here called ‘neo-mythologising’ and ‘re-mythologising’, her multifaceted and multidimensional analyses bring about novel terms such as ‘transgression-profanation’ and shed light on the enormous inner cultural tension between de-mythologisation and re-mythologisation. This involves most important anthropological issues, which also touch upon evolutionary-psychological questions about the nature of human experience, recognition and creation of cultural living spaces.

Broadly speaking, the methodology of the present dissertation is importantly based on a sort of ‘heuristic cultural-philosophical screening’ in the following sense: Stroeveva’s research is completely the opposite of what we find, e.g., in quantitative empirical research of evidence based medicine, which uses standardised research methods to estimate effect sizes – and only effect sizes. By contrast, the topic of the present dissertation can neither use standardised methods nor must it be limited to only one research parameter. These requirements, however, call for a scientific approach that is precisely tailored to the research object, hence the need for what we could call heuristic cultural-philosophical screening.

Although the dissertation mirrors elaborated results, we can imagine the previous process of Stroeveva’s research which ranks around mythologism in visual arts, the discovery of its nature and facets, and finally centres of its manifestation. This leads to the identification of the subchapters of part 2: the artist as ‘bricoleur’, street art and ‘Soviet Pop Art’, cultural urbanisation, deconstructivism and novel cross-over phenomena such as bioart. What she discovered is radical in the etymological sense of the word: it goes to the roots of the human mind and the yearning for discovery, self-realisation and experience of ultimate life. In this context, her research also reveals important tendencies against official aesthetic and epistemological doctrines, in other words: the inner freedom of the arts.

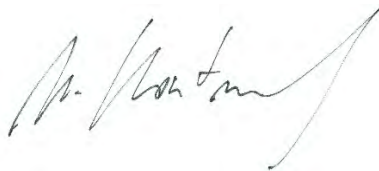
This dissertation follows strict scientific criteria and the scientific confession of revelation of truth – and yet it is of high sociocultural and ideology-critical relevance. This research debunks and unmaskes mythological clichés, which are in sharp contrast to mythological manifestations of ontological entities, and deconstructs heroism. Reading this dissertation may also trigger self-reflection – not arbitrarily she mentions psychoanalysis – when dealing with fascination, projection and escapism in the context of fantasy series or the realm of dystopias.

Particularly dealing with 'neoliberal values' this dissertation is of crucial political relevance as well, for instance when the author states (3.4.) that 'as a form of science fiction, dystopia has traditionally been aimed at demystifying the relationship between the state and the individual. Modern totalitarianism is acquiring new features and is no longer a specific organization of state power in a particular country, but is associated with globalization, the development of macro-business and digitalization'.

The dissertation comprises both the broad meta-perspective of the theme, e.g. tendencies of neo-mythologism in the cyber space, as well as important single features such as narcissistic tendencies in the 'selfie-cult'. Moreover, the dissertation also makes clear why so many regimes are afraid of the freedom of the arts and the self-organisation of artistic cultures: Here we encounter worlds that are no longer controllable and transcend official and statutory frames.

In philosophy as well as in modern physics we encounter notions such as the near-infinity of universes or all superimposed worlds. From a cultural scientific perspective, this excellent dissertation importantly contributes to such 'many world theories' and suggests that this is not only a view but a reality without limits and borders.

The anti-plagiarism clause mentioned in # 11 of the <Procedure for awarding academic degrees of Ph.D. and Doctor in St. Petersburg State University> has not been violated.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Mastnak', written in a cursive style.

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