

Conference Paper

Part 2. Magic/Mania of History: The Past instead of the Present and the Future

Editor's Note

International research conference ***Magic/Mania of History: The Past instead of the Present and the Future*** took part in the Ural Institute of Humanities (Ural Federal University) on May 22–23 2019. The conference brought together researchers and academics working at the departments of philosophy, philology and history in Ural Federal University.

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The full list of the participants included 52 scholars from Russia (Ekaterinburg, Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Tyumen, Saratov, Chelayabinsk, Yaroslavl, Kazan) and from the United State. The conference's main research area was retro-orientation of contemporary Russian culture. Russian cultural production of 2000s and 2010s rejects the present and obscures the future seeing to justify the current politics, becoming a source of nationalistic ambitions and a guideline for the future. Contemporary 'retromania' largely builds upon an interest in the forbidden Soviet history that increased sharply during the *perestroika* years. It has also become a logical continuation of the rewriting cycle of Russian historical narrative that started in the post-Stalinist era.

The articles gathered in this collection reflect the main research themes of the conference. A number of the articles analyse the new historical narrative of the 2000s as an eclectic mashup of contradictory discourses (Soviet, nationalistic, imperial, conspirological etc.). Among these are L.Zaks's 'The Power of the Past. Socio-Cultural Foundations of Retromania in Russia at the Turn of the 20-th and the 21-st Centuries' (Ural Federal University), Ilya Kalinin's 'Decontextualization of History: Fantasmic Rebuilding of the Soviet Past' (Saint-Petersburg State University), T. Kruglova's 'Grand Exhibitions of the 2010s in Russia: Affirming the National Project Through Realist Art' (Ural Federal University); S.Oushakine 'Second-Hand Nostalgia: Composing a New Reality out of Old Things' (Princeton University, USA).

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The new narrative is predominantly transmitted by mass culture, especially TV shows and cinema. This is the focus of M.Lipovetsky's article 'Retromania as the Symptom of Trauma: The Past and Present in Sergei Loznitsa's "Schast'e Moe"' (Columbia University, USA), O.Turyшева's 'Comic Representation of the Tragic Past in Alexey Krasovsky's Film *Feast*' (Ural Federal University), L. Nemchenko's 'Strategies for Working with Soviet Past in the Post-Soviet Cultural Space (The Cases of TV-series *Thaw*, *Kolyma Tales* Performance by Yeltsin Centre's "V tsentre" theatre studio and Yury Dud's YouTube film *Kolyma – Birthplace of Russia's Fear*)' (Ural Federal University) and Bradley A. Gorski's 'The Battle for (Pre-)Modernity: Medieval Festivals in Contemporary Russia' (Vanderbilt University, USA).

Russia's past stirs particular interest in Soviet period, in the age of Catherine the Great and in the medieval history (from Vladimir the Great to Ivan the Terrible). This is the focus of E.Sozina's article 'Unconfusedly but Separably: The "Others" in Contemporary History of Russia' (Russian TV Series of the 2000s and 2010s) and E.Prikazchikova's 'Crazy about Catherine: Representations of Catherine the Great in Contemporary Russian Cinema (Temptations of Power and Legitimation of the Present)'.

Some of the articles deal with the problems of retromania in literature. This is the theme of N.Barkovskaya's 'Retro-Utopia in *Temptation of Archangel Mikhail Groys* by Vadim Mesyats, E.Nikkareva's 'Mastering the Great Purge Trauma: Mythopoetic Strategies in Contemporary Russian Literature for the Young' and S.Novikova's 'Resisting "Recumbency on the Past": Literary Strategies for Overcoming Retromania (Maria Stepanova's Novel *In Memory of Memory*, 2017)'.

Another group of the articles focuses on the metahistorical aspects of research, analyzing the ways in which Soviet past is presented in regional narratives influenced by retromania. This is the theme of A.Ovchinnikov's article 'Socio-Political Mechanisms of Constructing Contemporary Regional Myth: The New Past for the Republic of Tatarstan', G.Yankovskaya's 'Presentism, Public History and Contemporary Russian Art' and V.Zapariy's and V.Kamynin's 'Postmodern Alternative to "Mainstream" in Historical Science of the Urals in the 1990s–2000s'.

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