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Moving to Soviet-hood with Help from Classical Myths

The Soviet Union paid special attention to childhood and the formation of ideologically right adults. It aimed to create a proper culture, common for all citizens, across the furthest territories of the country and belonging to various national and social backgrounds. New Soviet culture based first of all on Russian culture and literature. At the same time, great importance was placed on “classical” literature and culture, including Greek and Roman antiquity. In the 1960s and 1970s classical mythology became an object of Soviet animation, making myths a part of popular culture accessible to wider audience.

Focusing on the animations of Aleksandra Snezhko-Blotskaia, Aleksei Simukov and others, I would like to analyse what ideological concepts were communicated through the movies, how they were connected to classical mythology and/or Soviet ideology. It is my special interest to investigate how these movies were perceived by children with different backgrounds and what was their influence on the implementation of common myth of the Soviet hero. Looking at the contexts of these films shows how Soviet animators used classical myth to mobilise specific aspects of Soviet ideology to young viewers across the state.

Films under discussion:

Labirint. Podvigi Teseia [Labyrinth. The Deeds of Theseus]. Directed by Aleksandra Shezhko-Blotskaia, Script by Aleksei Simukov. “Legends and Myths of Ancient Greece.” Moscow: Soyuzmultfilm, 1971. 20 min 03 sec.

Argonavty [The Argonauts]. Directed by Aleksandra Shezhko-Blotskaia, Script by Aleksei Simukov. “Legends and Myths of Ancient Greece.” Moscow: Soyuzmultfilm, 1971. 20 min 03 sec.

Persei [Perseus]. Directed by Aleksandra Shezhko-Blotskaia, script by Aleksei Simukov. “Legends and Myths of Ancient Greece.” Moscow: Soyuzmultfilm, 1973. 20 min 24 sec.

Prometei [Prometheus]. Directed by Aleksandra Shezhko-Blotskaia, Script by Aleksei Simukov. “Legends and Myths of Ancient Greece.” Moscow: Soyuzmultfilm, 1974. 19 min 24 sec.



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