Zoia Barzakh, "Entry on: Odysseus, the Son of Laertes. Book 2: The Man of Kosmos [Одиссей сын Лаэрта. Книга II: Человек Космоса (Odissei syn Laerta. Kniga II: Chelovek Kosmosa)] by Henry Lion Oldie [Dmitry Gromov and Oleg Ladyzhensky] ", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Elizabeth Hale. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/460. Entry version as of September 13, 2026.

Henry Lion Oldie [Dmitry Gromov and Oleg Ladyzhensky]

Odysseus, the Son of Laertes. Book 2: The Man of Kosmos [Одиссей сын Лаэрта. Книга II: Человек Космоса (Odissei syn Laerta. Kniga II: Chelovek Kosmosa)]

Russia (2001)

TAGS: Achilles Agamemnon Alkimos Anticlea Athena Autolycos Cronus / Kronos Diomedes (Son of Tydeus) Eumaeus / Eumaios Eurycleia Hades Helen Hera Heracles Hercules Iolaus Iphigenia / Iphigeneia Laertes Menelaus Mentor Odysseus / Ulysses Palamedes Paris (Trojan Prince) Patroclus Penelope Poseidon Priam Telemachus Tyndareus Zeus

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General information	
Title of the work	Odysseus, the Son of Laertes. Book 2: The Man of Kosmos [Одиссей сын Лаэрта. Книга II: Человек Космоса (Odissei syn Laerta. Kniga II: Chelovek Kosmosa)]
Country of the First Edition	Russia
Country/countries of popularity	Russia; Ukraine; Belarus; Moldova
Original Language	Russian
First Edition Date	2001
First Edition Details	Henry Lion Oldie, *Одиссей сын Лаэрта. Книга II: Человек Космоса* [*Odissei syn Laerta. Kniga II: Chelovek Kosmosa*]. Moscow: Eksmo-Press, 2000, 377 pp.
ISBN	5040065086
Genre	Fantasy fiction, Mythological fiction, Novels
Target Audience	Young adults (15–25 years)
Author of the Entry	Zoia Barzakh, Bar-Ilan University, zoia_barzakh@mail.ru

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Creators

Henry Lion Oldie [Dmitry Gromov and Oleg Ladyzhensky] , b. 1990
(Author)

Henry Lion Oldie is the pen name of Ukrainian fantasy fiction writers Dmitry Gromov and Oleg Ladyzhensky. Both authors reside in Kharkiv, Ukraine, and write in Russian.

Dmitry Evgenievich Gromov was born on March 30, 1963 in Simferopol (Crimea, Ukrainian Republic, Soviet Union). In 1969 he moved to Sevastopol (Crimea), and in 1974 – to Kharkiv, where he lives until now. In 1980, after graduating from high school, he enrolled at the Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute. After the Institute he worked as a chemical engineer. He started writing fantasy in 1976, in the age of 13. By the beginning of the 1990th he almost completely left engineering for the sake of literary activity.

His hobbies are hard rock music (he is an author of the first and, to my knowledge, only Russian monograph on the history of “Deep Purple") and karate (II kyu, brown belt).

Gromov is married, has a son (born 1989).

Oleg Semenovich Ladyzhensky was born on March 23, 1963 in Kharkiv. In 1980, after graduating from high school, he enrolled at Kharkiv State Institute of Culture, where he acquired a profession of theater director. Since 1984 he has been working as a director of the Pelican Theater Studio, one of the actors of which is Dmitry Gromov.

Ladyzhensky has a black belt, II dan in karate, and a title of internationally certified referee in martial arts. He is a member of the International Association of National Contact Karate-Do Societies and the senior instructor of Gōjū-ryū school.

Ladyzhensky is married, has a daughter (born 1985).

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"The birthday of sir Henry Lion Oldie" is November 13, 1990, when Gromov and Ladyzhensky subscribed the first story they wrote together, "Cinema unto death and..." ("Кино до гроба и..."), by this name. For the last name they took first two letters from each of their names ("Ol" from "Oleg" and "Di" from "Dima", Russian pet name from "Dmitry"), and the name of Henry the Lion, medieval German prince, served as the first names.

At Eurocon 2006 in Kiev, the European Science Fiction Society named Gromov and Ladyzhansky Europe's best writers of 2006 (see here, accessed: April 23, 2018). Among other awards of Oldie are the Award of Dniestrian Moldovan Republic Writers Guild (1997, for the novel *A Hero Must Be Alone*), two «Golden caduceus» (award of Kharkiv International Festival of Fantasy "Star Bridge") for 2000 and 2005 and "Golden Roskon" (award of International Conference on Fantasy and science fiction "Roscon", held in Moscow) for 2006.

Sources:

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И. Солунский, "Меч против неба", http://www.fandom.ru/ (accessed 02.01.2022)

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Additional information

Summary

This is a heroic fantasy fiction based on the myth of Odysseus, aimed at young adults, in novel format. This book, together with the first book of the same novel, belongs to Oldie's *Achaean cycle* [*Ахейский цикл*]. The plot of the novel is reframing and reinterpretation of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

The Nomos of Odysseus and his friends Mentor and Diomedes breaks out into Cosmos – or, strictly speaking, into *The Caldron of Cronus*. The famous problem of classical epic – the absolute and relative age of its heroes and the "real" length of the Trojan war – gave rise to the image of this mysterious "caldron", where time runs in different way than in the other places. The walls of this caldron separate doomed heroes from the rest of the world, and even those who survive will not be able to return to their families and homes – they cannot stay there for a long time, since, while only a year – the last year of the Trojan war, described by Homer – passed for them, for the rest of the world it was ten years. Twenty-years-old boys, returning from the war, meet their aged wives and grown-up children. And, worst of all, these boys are not boys any more, but war survivors.

Analysis

This book develops further the problem of conventional vs. true masculinity raised already in the first book. The conventional heroism is presented as completely useless and even dangerous, in contrast with down-to-earth rationality Odysseus gradually developed in himself. Looking at his comrades in arms, he recollects the lessons of his late teacher Alcimus (from book 1): "Even if you gather a whole army of heroes, each of them will fight for himself. It will not be a real army; it will be a crowd of single heroes. Terrible formation, when you come to think of it, terrible and combat-ineffective." Seeing this danger, he allots himself a task "to learn to fight as a man, not as a hero" and to teach the others around him to do so.

There is nothing heroic in the Trojan was as it is presented in this book. The war is presented as a dirty and useless job, in the best case, a waste of time, in the worst, senseless sacrifices of human lives for alien pride.

The book is full of reflections about combat trauma, its forms and

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consequences – another common topic of contemporary youth literature. That is how Odysseus expresses his view of war's effect on a human character and behaviour: "War for me is, primarily, people. And secondarily – people. Not weapons, horses, trees, towers of the city – only people… War pulls out a genuine nature. Nobility or meanness, courage or cowardice – it pulls them out, multiplying threefold. Tenfold."

Perhaps it is especially clear in the example of Agamemnon. Towards the moment of capture of Troy he is completely devastated and broken by war. At the beginning of the second book the leader of the Greeks is an arrogant and confident youth, full of imperial ambitions. But gradually a personality breakdown starts to be felt in him. He feels utterly discouraged by the burden of power and responsibility, which is too heavy for him. If we recall his later fate, it becomes partly understandable why he lost to Aegisthus and Clytemnestra. By the end of the war he is already a broken man, so he had no strength to defend himself even against his own wife.

By contrast, Menelaus, his brother, presents the rare example of possible positive – or at least non-destructive – effect of war experience on the personality. The mollycoddled, the cookie-pusher, who always wanted to please everyone, the young Atreides, suddenly turns into a stern and noble avenger of his desecrated honor. His growing self-awareness as the avenger of desecrated family honour and destroyed family can be viewed as a development of masculinity – and, significantly enough, it is presented in a character who seems most unmanly at his first appearance.

The positive image of masculinity is closely connected to the loyalty towards one's *nomos* and readiness to defend or to avenge it. This is the case with Odysseus, too – his only goal in this war is to return to his family, to his wife and a newborn son, of whom he sees himself as a protector. But the other heroes are seen by him as a part of his bigger *nomos*, which tends to broaden itself to the size of *cosmos*. That is why he usually acts as a protector towards them as well – even when they need to be protected from their own folly.

This leads us to the motif of nationhood vs. cosmopolitanism, which also appeared already in the first book and finds its further development here. One of the central ideas of the book is impossibility to save and preserve one's own *nomos* without becoming "the man of

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Cosmos".

"The man of Cosmos", as it is explicitly explained by one of the characters, is the translation of the word "cosmopolite". Cosmos is seen in this context as a conglomerate of individual *nomoi*, which encompasses not only Hellas but also its neighbours and enemies. Odysseus, whose initial goal in this war is not to win, but to return home, gradually comes to the sense of interconnection of all parts of Cosmos and his personal responsibility for its state. Thanks to his connection to supernatural forces, which is seen by others as mental unbalance at best, being in a special position to perceive the state of Cosmos, he eventually saves his own *nomos* by virtue of accepting this universal responsibility.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Achilles Agamemnon Alkimos Anticlea Athena Autolycos Cronus / Kronos Diomedes (Son of Tydeus) Eumaeus / Eumaios Eurycleia Hades Helen Hera Heracles Hercules Iolaus Iphigenia / Iphigeneia Laertes Menelaus Mentor Odysseus / Ulysses Palamedes Paris (Trojan Prince) Patroclus Penelope Poseidon Priam Telemachus Tyndareus Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adolescence Child, children Coming of age Conflict Death Family Friendship Gaining understanding Heroism Identity Justice Love Masculinity Memory Morality Nation Parents (and children) Past Psychology Relationships Sexuality Tricksters Violence

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