

**“Derivative Replication” in the Soviet Art of the 1930–1950s
(as Seen through the Examples of Friedrich Ermler’s Film
“She is Defending the Motherland” and
Gavriil Popov’s Symphony N. 2 “The Motherland”)**

The canons of Socialist Realism, which had become indisputable already toward the mid-1930s, created the foundation for an optimal retransmission by the Soviet totalitarian art of a “*quasi-religious worldview*”, having transformed art itself into part of the “*quasi-religious*” picture of the world. As a result, the methods and style of Stalinist art began to imitate the features of the methods and style of *religious art*.

How was this expressed? First of all, the method of Socialist Realism brought out the requirements of moving “in line” following the common regulations. This lowered from the start the dynamism of the main impulse of artistic creativity: the aspiration towards novelty of content and stylistic inimitability. Nevertheless, it created the preconditions for the formation of an arsenal of stable means and techniques aimed at expressing “religious” mythological content.

Secondly, the style itself turned into a limited amount of formal schemes, which presented sort of stylistic “calques”, which “returned” to the sphere of method as objects for “copying.” This circumstance presents an apparent confirmation of Igor Golomstock’s well-known idea: “In its monolithic nature, the collateral subordination of separate parts to the unified whole, with its hierarchy of values, totalitarian art had the propensity <...> towards those much more remote times when religion was the main object for art...” (see 3).

Thirdly, Stalinist art, similarly to any religious art (for instance, that of Russian Orthodox Christianity) was based on strict regulations and a standardization of utilized means, and also demonstrated an aspiration towards the so-called “synchronous correspondences” (to use the expression of Dmitri Likhachyov) between the various forms of art. The latter aspect is remarkably illustrated by the principle which we call *derivative replication*. *Close in its meaning to “derivative replication” is the concept of calking, implying an inexact copying of a canonical original example. Nonetheless, the term “derivative replication” seems to us to be more appropriate in relation to Stalinist art, since as a result of derivative replication the material is not only copied but displays itself through the prism of invariant features. In other words, it turns out to be discernable in a multitude of similar artifacts (including those in other forms of art). At the same time, the original, in the context of Stalinist art, must be understood not as any concrete artifact, but rather the ideal model, the invariant of the manifestation of any particular Soviet mythologem (the Leader, the Motherland, the People, the Party, etc.), expressed by the sum total of the primary artifacts. Derivative replication is a “reaction” of a later date to the primary replications, which have become the canons.*

I cite an example here of one “masterpiece” of Stalin-era poetry, which presents in a concentrated form the characteristic features not only of the myth itself (in this case, the myth of the October Revolution), but also the references to the primary examples of interpretation of this myth.

This is an extract from Vera Inber’s poem “The Ocean”.

Stalin was walking past the Winter Palace.
The ornament of cast-iron moulding was showing black.
It seemed that there was no end
To this grating with the tsar’s eagles.

.....

And may some luckless historian
From far-away countries remember
That Peter the Great is a drop in the sea,
While Lenin is an entire ocean...

... The night was waning. Half the sky was aflame.
The Neva lightened up. The street lamps were going out.
The “Aurora” was illuminated by the fire of the dawn.
And Stalin said: “So, it’s time to do our job!”

The metaphorical line of Imperial St. Petersburg (night, the cast-iron grating and the Tsar's eagles) has much in common with the visual images of Sergey Eisenstein's movie "October", which became for the Soviet cinema one of the examples of mythologizing history (for example, the scene of the shooting at the demonstration is copied in Mikheil Chiaureli's movie "The Great Dawn", the scene of "The Taking of the Winter Palace" obviously finds its continuation in Vladimir Serov's painting "The Winter Palace is Taken", etc.). In all other aspects the poem represents the clichés that are characteristic for the representation of this given myth in the literature, music and cinema of the Stalin era (particularly the myth of the significant role of Stalin in the October uprising – a mould from the conception of the aforementioned myth of Chiaureli, and the metaphor of "the fire of dawn" is an obvious connotation with the title of the film).

The principle of derivative replication made it possible to place a single sign in various contexts, with virtually no change in its meaning. Thus the system of the particular kind of "verbal-semantic consistencies" was worked out (which, strictly speaking, were the ones that generated the "synchronous correspondences" between the arts), in which one and the same sign corresponded with a narrow circle of meanings. This characteristic limitation of the semantic field created the preconditions for the swift reduction of vocabulary and the formation of the Socialist Realist "newspeak" (see 1). With a special obviousness this process was manifested in literature, which at that time could operate with a comparatively limited set of verbal symbols. A similar situation arose in the domain of visual arts, music and cinema, where the circle of expressive means for the depiction of Soviet mythology likewise narrowed down considerably. The primitivization of the language led, in its turn, to the state of affairs when the principle of derivative replication itself was not perceived as something extraordinary, even in the cases of the most banal plagiarism. After all, calking of a model, which brought back the principles of canonic religious art, was aimed at reproducing, first of all, of the model of a well-known content of any particular canon. In this regard, let us cite examples of usage of the mythologems of fertility and richness in Pavlo Tychina's poetry (a fragment of his poem "Shine, our sun!") and Evgeny Dolmatovsky (from the text of his cantata "The Sun is Shining over our Motherland"):

We are rich in bread, coal and everything else,
We are mighty in our health and winged in our thought...

The grain fields, gardens and factories of our kolkhoz (collective farm)
Is the wealth of the people.
Under the sun of liberty we became winged, strong and rich.

The virtual identity of the texts demonstrates how in Stalinist literature the instruments of derivative replication and "verbal-semantic consistencies" were applied.

Nonetheless, the principle of derivative replication sometimes could also promote the creation of genuine masterpieces. This included that sphere of subject matter in which "synchronous correspondences" were applied most frequently. This was one of the most canonic subjects: the subject of the Soviet Motherland. It is well-known that one of metaphoric clichés of Socialist Realism was the identification of the *Motherland* with the image of a *woman*. In this guise, similarly to the way it was in the art of the Third Reich, the woman, which symbolized the Motherland, that is, one who gave life to the people, at the same time personified by itself the *totalitarian utopia* (the image of perfection), as well as *history* by means of establishment of a direct connection of establishing a direct connection with the past, including the remote *pre-social, mythological strata*. In the history of the Stalin era the redirection towards the later was especially important, since in the *supra-ideological* light it resented one of the most significant mythologems of totalitarianism: *the aspiration towards self-sacrificing*. As a result, one of the most called-for subjects of Socialist Realist art was the modernized archaic myth of the Mother-Wife-Woman, sacrificing herself and her kindred to a great cause. Among the absolute artistic masterpieces of the interpretation of this subject matter is Friedrich Ermler's film "She is Defending the Motherland" and Gavriil Popov's Second Symphony, "The Motherland", created on the material of the music to this film. The principle of derivative replication is inherent in both works. The film incorporates the canonic representation of the image of the Mother, rising to both the sources of socialist realist art (as in Maxim Gorky's novel "The Mother", as well as Vsevolod Pudovkin's film with the same title), as well as the sacrificial pathos of the art of the wartime years (such as Irakly Toidze's poster "The Motherland is Calling"). Considering the circumstance that the principle of derivative replication is based on already existing canons, it becomes quite obvious that Ermler deprives the main heroine of the film, Praskovya Lukyanova, of psycho-

logical characteristic features. Her actions are stipulated by the situations in which she finds herself. In their turn, each of the situations is none other than a facet of the totalitarian myth. In the beginning of the film Praskovya is a happy wife and mother. Towards the middle of the film, she becomes a widow, deprived of her husband, child and home. Towards the end of the film she already presents a symbol of an almost religious, fervent self-sacrifice, a leader of popular avengers. This kind of broken line of the plot did not demand either from Ermler or of the actress performing the main role, Vera Maretskaya, similar inner motivations. In the first case it sufficed to establish allusive correspondences with the heroines, performed by Marina Ladygina, Lubov Orlova (in the film “Happy Journey”) and Maretskaya herself (in the film “The Member of the Government”), whereas in the second case – to accentuate in a placard manner the loss of loved ones (this requiem accent was widely used in the Soviet art of the 1920–1930s, including the aforementioned “Mother” based on Gorky’s novel). Finally, it was necessary to show Praskovya in the image of the Motherland, in a black kerchief, with a fiery gaze. “The tragic story of Praskova Lukyanova”, I. Sapman wrote “attracted the producer not by its individual inimitability, not by its opportunity of examining in detail the heroine’s inner evolution, but particularly by her characteristic features, the overall significance of everything which had occurred with her. <...> For Ermler especially important was the supply of agitation which permeated the fate of Praskovya. She essentially represented a bare appeal for struggle” (see 7). As can be seen here, derivative replication made it possible to achieve the indispensable result in a rather effective way, drawing an already existing arsenal of artistic means for the strengthening of the main idea of the work.

The Symphony of Gavriil Popov transfers verbal and visual images into the platitude of musical dramaturgy, preserving a direct connection with the movie screen’s bipolar dramaturgy, as has been demonstrated by Inna Romashchuk in her monograph work on Gavriil Popov. But this is not all. If Ermler’s movie epopee gave the perception of a typical character from the time of the war: a woman mourning and a woman inflicting punishment (reproducing on a new stage of history Gorky’s epopee about the growth of personal self-consciousness), Popov’s symphony raised these images to the level of mythological generalization. If one is to separate the subject of the symphony from the subject of the film, the music became a tragic narrative, this time about the fate of the Motherland – happy for its children, mourning them and, finally, avenging their enemies.

Written in 1943, the symphony, on one hand, absorbed into itself the visual images of the movie, as has been stated before. On the other hand, Popov’s composition revealed in itself an artistic phenomenon, the musical dramaturgy of which was only indirectly connected with the initial visual cinematic program. At that, the principle of derivative replication was active here on two levels, creating a rather tense collision between them.

The first level is the concordance with the classical symphonic utopia (according to the definition of Mikhail Aranovsky) and its (the utopia’s) semantic “restart” on the level of the overall content. The symphony of Popov could have been interpreted into the mythological language of totalitarianism approximately thus: the first movement (“The Introductory Song”) is a display of the actively heroic image of the Russian people (the epic beginning, the “activization” according to Aranovsky); the second movement is a demonstration of the moral superiority and the power of spirit of the folk heroes (a festive, dancelike picture, “playing”); the third movement is the “death of the hero” and the foretaste of victory (a mournfully solemn reflection, “contemplation”) whereas the fourth movement is the victorious apotheosis, the achievement of the “splendid future” through a struggle (unity with society). In other words, Popov’s symphony calked the dramaturgical and, to a certain extent, the stylistic algorithm of the Russian epic symphony (Borodin, Balakirev, Gliere, etc.).

The second level is that of the language and dramaturgy, which corresponded to the canonic requirements of Socialist Realism during the time of its flourishing, readdressing them to many musical works of Popov’s contemporaries, who had disclosed the mythologem of the heroic “today” which aspires to a perfect “tomorrow.” Indeed, if one applies the foundational canons of Socialist Realism, then the context in which the mechanisms of “derivative replication” and “verbal-semantic consistencies” will become even clearer.

For example, the well-known categories of *popularity and ideology* clearly correspond to the “quasi-citatory” and even the citatory intonational potential of the symphony, as Gavriil Popov himself wrote about the symphony (see 6), based on sources related to vernacular genres, as well as the monolithic quality of the form, based on a consistent transformation of *one* theme, which carries the function of the mythological “leitmotif sign” in the symphony, that of *the theme of the Motherland* (Example 1). Its genre-related basis is the Russian lyrical song. At the same time, the theme turns out to be a mirror reflection (in terms of its scalar modes and instrumental range) of the theme of the “Motherland” from Shostakovich’s 7th Symphony. The second movement of which makes use of intonations of “harmonica tunes” and street-song ditties (Example 2), which gradually expand into a dashing, swashbuckling dance melody (Example 3). This presents a sign of acknowledgement to the

numerous songlike and dancelike suites from the Soviet times (Knipper, Koval, Korchmarev and others). The third movement is of the character of a mournful lamentation (as was stated before, presenting the “requiem” episode of the composition, mandatory for the music of Socialist Realism). In its aspect of genre and intonation its musical material brings out two mutually complementing images: the “lamento” cry (the introduction, in which contours of the Motherland become perceptible on the level of the reference tones) and the tragic, lyrically drawn-out quasi-lullaby melody, which is also close in its intonation to the theme of the Motherland (Example 4), gradually expanding into something resembling a heartrending groan (here Popov turns out to be closest of all to the style of the tragic climaxes in Shostakovich’s symphonies). The Finale, on one hand, immerses the listener into the force of a tense motion, elaborating on the dramatic impulses of the first and third movements (such is the content of the thematicism of both sections, which present respectively a prelude and a fugue). On the other hand, by its incorporation of themes of *all* the previous sections, it brings out into the foreground a summary – namely, the reconceived theme of the Motherland, expanding as a vengeful force, which provides a basis for a swift fugue (Example 5) and the solemn and stern, heroic and epic code; at the end of the latter, as P. Vulffius notes, this theme acquires the “semantics of a victorious, exulted, heroic hymn” (2, 174). Thus is formed the dramatic, elevated apotheosis, which articulates the central *idea* of the composition – that of the historical invincibility of the Russian people, of the indestructibility of the Russian state. In other words, the dramatic interaction of two levels of derivative replication was created by an independent context, in which the past resonated in the present. Within this construction the traditional symphonic model acquired new semantic nuances. The first movement (representing the past) presented in itself a powerful “bogatyir”-type song-like element (describing the image of the Motherland, its vast space, its lasting history and, simultaneously, the history of the sufferings of its people). The present was depicted by the festive, jocular content of the second movement (describing the power and sportive spirit of the people) and the plaintive, lamenting third movement (presenting the traditional “sacrificial rite” for the sake of the

Andante con moto e molto espressivo $\text{♩} = 60$

Example 1

Presto giocoso $\text{♩} = 90$ (96)

Example 2

Example 3

Largo $\text{♩} = 60$
1/2 delle V-le

V-le
V-c
C-b
V-ni I
V-le
V-c
C-b

Example 4

Fuga
Più presto e molto risoluto giocoso $\text{♩} = 108$

V-c, C-b.
V-ni II
V-c.

Example 5

happy future). The Finale, gradually expelling the negative “information” with its message of will, brought to the self-disclosure of the great victorious future on the basis of a thematic synthesis of all the different sections of the symphony. In the final outcome, the aesthetically beautiful image of the *arrived, victoriously achieved* future, as a great victory over time and the forces of evil.

Thus, the Second Symphony of Gavriil Popov demonstrates both the standard and the phenomenal characteristics of the principles of derivative replication. On the one hand, the principle of derivative replication limits the resources of the language of the music itself in this work. This was stipulated by its primary conditions: the symphony was composed on the basis of music for a film. This results in the accessibility of the symphony’s musical language, the illustrative quality, the placard style of its images and the allusive traits of its style. On the other hand, the same principle created the background factor for the complex interaction between various dramaturgical, stylistic and semantic levels in the composition. At the same time, there was also an expansion of the communicative features of the symphony. For Popov’s contemporaries his symphony possessed the phenomenal quality of “visualization” of the tragic events of the war “described” by the music, being “reinforced” by the visual “memory” of the cinema.

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Santrauka

Kartotinis tiražavimas XX a. 4–6 dešimtmečių sovietiniame mene (remiantis F. Ermlerio filmu „Ji gina Tėvynę“ bei G. Popovo 2-ąją simfoniją „Tėvynė“)

Tarp neginčijami, socialistinio realizmo kanonai jau ketvirtą dešimtmečio viduryje buvo viską parengę tam, kad totalitarinis menas galėtų optimaliai retransliuoti „kvazireliginę“ pasaulėžiūrą, patį meną pavertę „kvazireliginio“ pasaulio paveikslu dalimi. Galiausiai stalininio meno metodas ir stilius pradėjo imituoti *religinio meno* metodo ir stiliaus ypatumus: pirma, socialistinio realizmo *metodas* suformavo griežtas priemones ir būdus, skirtus „religiniam“ totalitarinės mitologijos turiniui reikšti, antra, socialistinio realizmo meno stilius virto keletu stilistinių „kalkių“ ir trečia, išryškėjo totalitarinio meno siekis, kad tarp skirtingų menų atsirastų „sinchroniška atitiktis“ (D. Lichačiovo terminas).

Trečiąjį čia minėtą aspektą puikiai iliustruoja principas, kurį mes vadiname *kartotiniu tiražavimu*, t. y. *vienų ar kitų jau kanonais tapusių temų* (turimos galvoje visos meno rūšys) *meninio interpretavimo kopijavimu*. Tokio kopijavimo procese susiformavo „verbalinių-semantinių stereotipų“ sistema; tie stereotipai migruodavo iš vienos meno rūšies į kitą išlaikydami labai ribotą savo reikšmių ratą. Dėl tokio prasmio lauko ribojimo pradėjo sparčiai mažėti tos srities žodyno ištekčiai ir ėmė formuotis socialistinio realizmo *naujakalbė*. Tačiau, laikantis kartotinio tiražavimo principų, būdavo sukuriama ir tikrų šedevrų – beje, ir tos tematikos sferoje, kurioje kaip tik dažniausiai buvo vartojama „sinchroniška atitiktis“. Tai – viena iš pačių kanoniškiausių temų: tarybinės Tėvynės tema. Kaip žinome, vienas iš įsigalėjusių metaforinių socialistinio realizmo šampų buvo *Tėvynės* tapatinimas su *moterimi*. Kaip ir Trečiojo reicho mene, Tėvynę simbolizuojanti moteris reiškė tautos gyvasties versmę, kartu ji buvo ir *totalitarinės utopijos* (tobulybės paveikslas), ir *istorijos* įkūnijimas pasitelkus tiesioginį ryšį su praeitimi, taip pat ir su giluminiais *ikisocialiniais mitologiniais klodais*. Mene peradresavimas į šiuos klodus buvo itin svarbus, kadangi tai duodavo galimybę be ideologinio prieskonio pateikti vieną iš svarbiausių totalitarizmo mitologemų – *pasiuokojimą*. Tai vienu iš pačių dažniausių socialistinio realizmo meno siužetų tampa modernizuotas archajinis mitas apie Motiną–Žmoną–Moterį, vardan kilnaus tikslo paaukojančią savo artimuosius ir pačią save. Tarp kitų neabejotinų šios temos interpretavimo meninių viršūnių minėtinas F. Ermlerio kino filmas „Ji gina Tėvynę“ ir G. Popovo 2-oji simfonija „Tėvynė“, sukurta muzikos minimam kino filmui pagrindu. Kartotinio tiražavimo principas būdingas abiem kūriniams. Filme matome kanoninio Motinos paveikslą reprezentavimą, siekiantį tiek socialistinio realizmo meno šaknis (M. Gorkio romanas „Motina“), tiek karo meto menui būdingą aukojimosi patosą (garsusis I. Toidzės plakatas „Motina Tėvynė šaukia“). G. Popovo simfonija verbalinius ir vizualiuosius vaizdus perkelia į muzikinės dramaturgijos sferą išlaikydama, kaip parodo I. Romaščiuokas savo monografijoje apie G. Popovą, tiesioginį ryšį su bipoline kino juostos dramaturgija.

Tai galima teigti, kad G. Popovo simfonija demonstruoja tiek įprastinius, tiek fenomenalius kartotinio tiražavimo principo ypatumus. Šis principas riboja pačios muzikos kalbos išteklius. Tai lemia pradinės sąlygos: simfonija kuriama remiantis filmo muzika, tai yra kūrinio kalbą veikia kita meno rūšis – kinas. Tuo paaiškinamas simfonijos kalbos demokratiškumas, tam tikras paveikslų iliustratyvumas, plakatiškumas, dramaturgijos montažiškumas. Nemenką įtaką darė pats Ermlerio kino filmo žanras (herojinis-patriotinis), sąlygojantis bendrą turinį. Kita vertus, tas pats principas išplečia komunikacines kūrinio galimybes. Popovo bendraamžiai jo simfoniją vertino kaip turinčią fenomenalią savybę „vizualizuoti“ muzikos „aprašomus“ tragiškus karo įvykius – mat jie tuos įvykius aliuziškai susiedavo su žinomo filmo vaizdais.