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## **THE STRENGTH OF THE WEAK: THE WOMANLY FACE OF WAR (FEMININE ARCHETYPE IN MASS CULTURE OF WORLD WAR II YEARS)**

Since ancient times, the image of a woman has been a symbol of the Motherland, Motherhood, Fertility, and Nature. The War added to this list another image, unusual for a woman – a Woman-Protector and Liberator. The mass culture of the wartime once again reminds us of the constructive role of women in this cruel and complex world and makes us think about the true value and sense of life.

The interest in the role of women in War is driven not only by the emergence of feminist methodology, which allows to look at history from a different angle, but also by the appeal to memory and perpetuating the difficult and tragic experience of War. This raises a question: “Is the female image really a part of the image of the winner? Or is the public consciousness focusing only on masculinity?” This work tackles the problems that are relevant today: the attitudes towards war and woman, the problem of memory and responsibility for the future, the dedication and heroism of women. The study makes it possible to see the potential of female fortitude and reveals a set of humanistic, spiritual and moral values.

The mass culture of the War years in the USSR, Great Britain and the USA created a female archetype based on real events and people. It has become a multidimensional image, which is characterized by the features of Mother, Wife, Motherland, and God (which means the Feminine Sacred). Nowadays, the works of mass culture of the Second World War with a supporting female image are a mirror that reflects not only female characters, but also the ideas, experiences, hopes and aspirations of women, who along with men, went through a difficult path to victory.

The study explores the tools of representing the feminine archetype in popular culture of wartime, in particular in cinema and poster art and documentary photography.

A survey among students “The Role of Women in War” was conducted and we focused on visual art materials (cinema, posters and photographs from the Second World War) with a supporting female image. The study of documentary materials about women participants in military events made it possible to create a series of virtual excursions for the Gymnasium Museum of Partisan Glory. Furthermore, as the artistic team, we developed a script and staged the play “White Wings of Memory” with the supporting female image endowed with practically all characteristic traits of the feminine archetype of World War II.

The theoretical aspect of the study was connected with the study of the concepts of “archetype”, “cultural archetype” and visual art materials.

We came to the following conclusions:

1. The female archetype in popular culture during the Second World War can be called a “universal cultural archetype”, because it captured the general basic structures of human existence during the largest and bloodiest war. In military propaganda, female images are a visual marker of the impact on public consciousness.

2. At the same time, we can distinguish the archetype of the Soviet woman as ethnocultural, because it determines the features of the Soviet worldview, character, artistic creativity and historical fate of the Soviet people.

3. In the Soviet cinema, female characters are given a significant part of the plot. Archetypal traits are Mother, Motherland, Retribution, and Memory. According to E. Meletinsky, we can say that this is a “heroic archetype.” There is

almost no female attractiveness, especially in the cinema of the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, because the main goal is to convey the tragedy and collision of the concepts of Woman and War.

4. American and British cinema present the archetype of a woman-friend, wife, and comrade-in-arms, beloved. The Mother archetype is missing. But, such archetypal features as Femininity, Female attractiveness, Beauty are clearly expressed.

5. Posters of the USSR are not distinguished by a wide range of colours. However, on military posters with images of American and English women, artists use more diverse and bright colours.

6. In Soviet military posters, as a rule, there is an image of a heroic woman, whatever circumstances she is in. The images of women on posters of other countries have femininity, sexuality (often not just emphasized, but also specially demonstrated), and flirtatiousness.

7. Soviet documentary photography is black and white, as a rule, most often not staged, demonstrating all the hardships of the war, which Soviet women shared equally with men.

8. A significant part of American documentary photography is made in the best traditions of colour and production. The main propaganda goal is that women can do man's job well, remaining feminine and attractive.

9. The female archetype of the Second World War became a multidimensional image, which was intended to create ideological meanings and motivate society to fight the enemy.

Having formed the awareness of the concept of female archetype in Mass culture of World War II years, we created female images in the play.

The play was intended for the senior school students. The participants of the creative team became actors and costume designers, co-authors and co-directors, searched the gymnasium museum and family depositaries for stage props, looked for soundtracks and thought about the sets. The play appeared to be bilingual, for the action is set in two countries, in Scotland and in Belarus. Iris, a young girl from Scotland speaks English, while Ivan is from Belarus and speaks the Russian language.

Man and Woman are always together. But Iris is not supplementary to the Hero. She is not deprived of the usual "womanly" traits. She sees the blood and dirt of war, she feels pity for the injured, she deals with hardships and death, she is vulnerable, she is scared deep in heart, but she "does her duty", for the time will come for "sniffing salts" and "girlish whims", the war is the time for being strong, disciplined and professional. And, she is. The character of Iris has both the strength and will-power of a woman-warrior, woman, who fights for her home, Motherland, family, as we see it in Soviet movies and posters, and the warmth and sacrifice of a decent, dedicated wife, partner and daughter, the image worshipped in American and British films and posters.

In the play, we have another female character, and that is the prisoner of the camp. We wanted to show how many women were massacred in gas cameras and burned in crematoriums, how many kids were never born, and how many “nests” were never built.

Alongside with the word picture of Woman we created Her documentary image having studied family achieves of Gymnasium students. A series of virtual excursions “The Strength of the Weak” can be found on the Internet:

Guns and Muses <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uI4iFqEQDUE>

Пушки и музы <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q82WyzsYxh4>

Lady with a Lamp <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bidoc04OuF4>

Леди с лампой <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YWVQ88baIBQ>

A Long Way Home <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPByjxn3edk>

Долгий путь домой <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dufzO13jOZA>

Atlanteans and Caryatids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5YuBMre-ZHQ>

Атланты и кариатиды <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7SHFc3KUG4>

Princesses and Dragons <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJ-iFiYf1KM>

Принцессы и драконы <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjc1VXGat3E>

The representation of feminine archetype in Mass Culture of World War II years gives the opportunity to understand the role of Woman at War at its full depth.