

Reception of the Icarus myth in the mass art of the late 20th-21st century

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Abstract

This article was prepared within the context of a larger research project on the analysis of public demand for the reception of the historical past and the study of creative practices through exploring how past social and cultural realities are understood in the modern world. The main object of the research is to show modern Russian sociocultural reality as a construct embodying the synthesis of social needs in accessing the historical past through representations of historical phenomena and the images of historical personalities. Through this approach, the reception of the past can be seen as a way of updating, interpreting and representing historical experience in contemporary Russian society. One of the most popular periods in the history of mankind is the period of antiquity, a fascination with which began in the Middle Ages and has not diminished up to the present day amongst societies with European cultural roots. The goal of this article is to present the dialectics of symbol, sign and image through the example of the representation of the mythical character Icarus, as an example of the reception of ancient mythological characters generally in modern culture. Beyond the ancient myth itself, the narratives of ballets about Icarus created in the 20th century and the rock poetry of Russian bands in the 1980s, 90s and 2000s are used as source material in this research. The study concludes that due to the artistic conventions of ballet language, the evolution of the Icarus image runs from the symbol to the sign: the interpretation of the symbol neither extends nor deepens its "ancient" content. In Russian rock poetry of the late 20th-early 21st centuries, however, the symbolic character of Icarus acquires the features of an image: the symbol is extended through the contemporary interpretation of this "ancient" character, since the image is always broader than the symbol.

Keywords

Ballet, Classical reception, Daedalus, Icarus, Image, Interpretation, Mass art, Myth, Reception of antiquity, Representation, Russian rock poetry, Sign, Symbol