

The Myth of Saint-Petersburg in Modern Russian Cinema

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Mythmaking can be regarded as one of the essential instruments of a community's memory that helps the community to evaluate and adapt different historical events to its self-identification and world view (see Schöpflin, 1997). The myth of Saint-Petersburg is probably one of the most complicated, interesting and significant myths of the Russian history. But the field of this phenomenon's research field was usually confined to studies of the myth of the city and its rethinking and revising within the Russian literature only. Among the most famous and fundamental works in the area we should mention the books by Nikolai Antsiferov (Antsiferov, 1990) and Vladimir Toporov (Toporov, 1995). A more or less serious work investigating the myth of the city in cinema was made in a number of articles by Leonid Muratov (Muratov, 1977, 1978, 1986) where he is mainly discussing fiction films about Russian revolution and the siege of Leningrad.

The present study is concentrated on the perestroika and post-perestroika period in the Russian cinema. The role of Saint-Petersburg as a mythopoeic space in the modern films is analysed and an attempt is made to regard the modern Russian films about Saint-Petersburg as a *visual Petersburg text* (see Toporov, 1995 for explanation of the term *Petersburg text* in literature). As an illustration to the presentation a well-known film by Aleksey Balabanov "Brat" ("Brother") (1997) is taken.

Literature:

Antsiferov, Nickolai, *Dusha Peterburga*, Leningrad, 1990

Muratov, Leonid, *Peterburg-Petrograd-Leningrad v istoriko-revolutsyonnom filme*, Leningrad, 1977

Muratov, Leonid, *Ekranny obraz Peterburga-Petrograda-Leningrada*, *Neva*, no. 1, 1978

Muratov, Leonid, *Obraz blokadnogo Leningrada v sovetskom kinematografe*, Leningrad, 1986

Schöpflin, *The Functions of Myth and a Taxonomy of Myths, Myths and Nationhood*, Hurst & Company, London, 1997

Toporov, Vladimir, *Mif. Ritual. Simvol. Obraz. Issledovanija v oblasti mifopoeticheskogo*, Moscow, 1995