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HIST 329

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Traktoristī

The attitude of this film portrays the shift of gender in the Russian mainland in a similar way that Botchkareva situates herself in her memoir, insofar that workers were considered to be equally eligible for industrial work and the “Gone With the Wind” utopian glee that comes with the rural lifestyle. There is no reason why the portrayal of these characters in their collective society is different than what was hoped to be in the minds of political theorists. However, the depiction of the Soviet Union during the Stalin years, in this case 1939, and the depictions through other works are contradictory in that the implications of fear and paranoia are not present. Therefore, I suggest the work is propaganda with the intent to entertain. The film creates a framework of national support through subtle prods at Soviet attention and develops inclusion and a sense of desirability for women in the workplace.

Maryana, the main protagonist, is presented as an intense, compelling figure. It is unclear if the gender norms are shifted due to the perspective of the culture in the decade - but there is an apparent sense of androgyny between her and the mailman in the 2nd-3rd bicycle scene. The fact that she is an operator of machinery and rides a motorcycle amongst bicycles is a power-play of her presence among other men (0:10:40). Ideals of her masculine youth are supported when compared to the traditional garments of other

women. In fact, her outerwear does not have much variation from the clothes of other men out of uniform. Maryana is even mistaken for a man when she is discovered at a motorcycle wreck and immediately treated differently upon recognition of her gender as the damsel in distress in need of a masculine “geroi” (0:20:00). Upon her return home after receiving care, the hair that she pent up in her hat falls revealing her to seem more feminine—Note, she also appears to be the only woman so far to not wear a headscarf, which symbolizes differentiation from the Pravoslavnic customs. It’s a subtle suggestion that one’s appeal to the Soviet Union is simultaneously dissociative from the church and tradition.

Maryana is confronted with the social dynamic of a desirable, successful person in the eyes of the state while being an object of the heteronormative nuclear family. She is the subject of male attention, and her counterpart Klim is the subject of female attention, both receiving commentary of marriage and plans of commitment (05:00, 14:00, 26:00, 45:00). The men collectively joke about being the most appealing, who dances well, or be the most fit, to the ladies whom also group-identify together. Both women and men were competitive about who can be the most efficient and valuable to the Red Army. The competition among peers is an idea similar to the Leonidov’s proposal- an explicit notion that supporting the state is an end goal.

The competition between males seems Shakespearean due to the way the men are believed to be equally compatible under values of friendship or talent in the workforce. Specifically, a “Comedy of Errors” seems to be a comparable model in the manner of character flaw and erroneous social situations. Allegorical language play is

Shakespearian where discourse about a machine is metaphor to the qualities of a woman, similar to the later classic “Поворот” by Машина Времени. Except, the tractor is metaphor for the elite combat machine, the tank, and Maryana’s aphrodisiac (1:05:22).

Subtle hints of nationalism are flashed at the audience when the attention is directed at the newspapers throughout the film, their titles being “Pravda,” the newspaper of the Soviet Union (5-7:00) and the use of Soviet-only vehicles with YH- model numbers in the camera’s focus. The camera is later used addressing the vigilance of women as engineers; Maryana breaks the fourth wall to the audience. This felt like a clear propagandized statement from the Soviet Union (50:00). In the conclusion, the men successfully, collectively make the tractor functional and find a Kaiser’s helmet in the brush, appealing to anti-German sentiment, praising the 1918 victory in Ukraine, and fantasy of future defense of the land.