Zoya Kosmodemianskaya between Sacrifice and Extermination

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Abstract The article considers the posthumous representation of an eighteen year-old Soviet partisan, captured and executed by German forces during the Battle of Moscow in 1941. As the first woman honoured with the Hero of the Soviet Union award during the war, Kosmodemianskaya's story and image were deployed across the country as mobilisational propaganda, and she subsequently became a central figure in the pantheon of Soviet heroes, enduring in public consciousness to this day. My analysis focuses on moments of ambivalence in textual and visual representations of Kosmodemianskaya, specifically regarding the dialectic of gender and attitudes to the exterminatory violence of the war. I draw on psychoanalytical and anthropological models in my readings.

Keywords Zoya Kosmodemianskaya, stalinism, world war two, gender, Lacan, revolution, militancy

It is a photograph that begins the work of mourning: Zoya Kosmodemianskaya, a young Soviet partisan who was captured, tortured, and executed by German forces during the offensive on Moscow in 1941 (fig.1). The picture, taken by Sergei Strunnikov, first appeared on page three of *Pravda* on 27 January 1942 and was subsequently reprinted numerous times. The striking beauty of the executed woman, along with the uncomfortable eroticism of the harrowing image, made it one of the most memorable of the war. How should one read it? The erotic content suggests itself immediately - especially considering Stalinist culture's notorious prudishness - but it appears in a decidedly ambivalent way. This beautiful young girl has been savagely laid waste; her body appears horribly exposed, both to bestial violence and to the cold out of doors. At the same time, the bared breasts and thrown-back head suggest another kind of exposure as well - to consuming passion. The ambivalent conflict of these two readings is eerily reflected in the terrible binary of Kosmodemianskaya's right breast - inviting to a desirous gaze - and the left one, which has been 'lost', leaving a much more corporeal bareness, blocking erotic fantasy. The right breast beckons but can never be touched, establishing Kosmodemianskaya as a lost erotic object; the left breast marks the obscene enjoyment of her Nazi captors (as confirmed in a later poster based on the photograph - fig.2). Statues of Kosmodemianskaya often restore the left breast and clothe the right one, as if 'borrowing' the breast of fantasy to screen the wound (fig.3). But,

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again, such interpretations are only half the story. The missing left breast might also mark the trace of Kosmodemianskaya's own suffering passion, a *jouissance* of pain beyond pleasure.

In this essay I will first consider each of these two possible attitudes to Kosmodemianskaya's death, exploring the contexts that support them. Next, I will examine the ambivalence that allowed both attitudes to circulate in her myth, at times combining in striking ways. Stalinist culture has traditionally been interpreted in terms of a decline in revolutionary militancy, and the 'retreat' to more normative gender attitudes is typically seen as a central part of this tendency. However, the story and representation of Kosmodemianskaya suggest a more complex attitude. Through a reading of the anthropological models behind these images (informed in part by Lacanian psychoanalysis and its feminist elaborations), I hope to show how militant fidelity persisted through the post-revolutionary transformations of the 1930s such that it could be summoned up again, with renewed intensity, for the fight with fascism. The war, and not Stalinist Thermidor, was the final nail in the coffin of October, and Kosmodemianskaya can in many ways be called the last Soviet militant.

SACRIFICED FEMININITY

The most natural reaction to the Kosmodemianskaya myth is to read it as a story of female victimisation designed to motivate male soldiers. Such a message is clearly intended by 'Tania', the article by Petr Lidov that originally accompanied Strunnikov's photograph. Lidov enumerates Kosmodemianskaya's torments at the hands of the Nazis at great length -

Fig 1: *The corpse of Zoya Kosmodemianskaya* (S. Strunnikov)

Fig 2: Kill the Fascist Monster! *(V. Deni, 1942)*

Fig 3: (O. Komov, 1986)

beatings with a belt, lips burned with a kerosene lamp, a saw drawn across her back, forced marches through the snow undressed and barefoot, and finally hanging followed by the desecration of her corpse. Amid all this, Lidov devotes almost no attention to the partisan girl's activities as a combatant. When photographs of Kosmodemianskaya's execution were found among the effects of a killed German soldier, the filmmaker Aleksandr Dovzhenko wrote commentary for them, lingering on Kosmodemianskaya's suffering, feminine frailty (although she 'resembles' a male-gendered fighter):

> Zoya is cold. Her hands, swollen from the frost and the beatings, are clenched into fists like a fighter's [*как у бойца*]; her bare feet, only in stockings, have turned black from the frost during the terrible night. Her lips, bitten until bleeding, are swollen: two hundred blows from German belts tried to beat confessions out of these tender, girlish lips all night, but they did not succeed. She did not cry out, did not weep, did not groan. Mindless German violence, amorality, cruelty, and impotent hatred for the Russian people fell upon this girl with everything - but her young Russian soul withstood it all.[1]

Soviet soldiers responded as hoped. They wrote letters to Kosmodemianskaya's mother promising to avenge her daughter's death. They inscribed the partisan girl's name on their tanks and planes, and they made a special point

1. Aleksandr Dovzhenko, 'Smotrite, Liudi!' *Pravda*, October 27, 1943, p3.

of hunting down the German regiment that had killed her. They carried photographs of the girl - even *that* photograph - in their breast pockets as they went into battle. It is also worth mentioning the particularly fierce libidinal economy of the Eastern front in general. Atrocity propaganda like the Kosmodemianskaya story no doubt played its role in the mass rape of women in East Prussia in the spring of 1945.

All of these facts impart a clearly gendered logic to the Kosmodemianskaya story. Its stark division between female sacrifice and male killing represents a classic example of how gender stereotypes are typically reinforced during wartime. Valorisation of military virtue may define codes of masculinity, but the actual experience of warfare tends to threaten male gender identities. This has doubtless always been the case, linked to men's assumption of domestic duties during wartime - preparing food, mending clothes, caring for the sick and wounded. However, in modern warfare -mass and mechanised - soldiers' heightened vulnerability is even less conducive to feelings of masculine power, and the Nazi-Soviet conflict was one of the most emasculating ever known. Gender thus becomes a central concern of wartime propaganda. The state promotes clearly defined roles for men and women, complementing images of masculine valour and aggression with, on the one hand, portraits of mothers dutifully sending their sons off to war, and, on the other hand, the horror (potential or actual) of women targeted by enemy violence.[2] Gendered images like these urge soldiers to defend not only their homes and families but the very social order that undergirds their power and authority as men.

Despite the changes of mechanisation, the continued manipulation of gender in modern war-making societies suggests the abiding influence of pre-modern cultural paradigms. Warfare arguably threatens men most by making them 'custodians of death' in a way that is typically reserved for women in peacetime. In a study of funerary practices in Madagascar, the anthropologist Maurice Bloch describes a gendered relation to death which he finds paralleled 'in all societies where authority is linked to an ideal, unchanging order'. In such societies, individual death is feminised:

It is women who take on mourning for death. This they do […] sitting on a pile of rubbish outside the home of the deceased, their hair undone, their clothes loose about them. It is they who receive the condolences of others and weep with the female visitors. It is women also who are associated with the pollution of death. It is they who must wash the corpse and then wash themselves and all the things in the house, and it is mainly they who ritually take on pollution by throwing themselves on the corpse. Individual burial is, therefore, a time of sadness, of pollution and of women.[3]

And yet, as the mourning process nears completion, it is men who make speeches and ask for blessings from the dead, placing the corpse into a familial tomb. The ultimate goal of such gendered practices is to overcome death's pollution, returning the spiritual substance of the dead to a patriarchal realm of ancestral memory and controlled, collective fertility. Feminist critics

2. Joshua S. Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2001.

3. Maurice Bloch, 'Death, Women and Power', in *Death and the Regeneration of Life*, ed., Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1982, p223, 215.

like Elisabeth Bronfen have elaborated such anthropological observations, arguing that the formation and exchange of symbolic value itself demands the containment of death's indeterminate power through feminization. Bronfen further links the foundational suppression or sacrifice of the feminine other to such psychoanalytic concepts as Freud's death drive, the Lacanian Thing, and Kristeva's semiotic chora.[4]

4. Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic*, Manchester, Manchester University Press 1992.

If mourning rites domesticate death in peacetime, the unavoidable proximity of men to its polluting effects during war requires something more dramatic. Indeed, atrocity propaganda depicting violence against women suggests another mythic subtext. Anthropologist Walter Burkert - also cited by Bronfen - has described how the ancient ritual of maiden sacrifice has historically been used to launch military or hunting campaigns (most famously reflected in the myth of Iphigenia and the Trojan War). War requires a redirection of libidinal energies, deferring fantasies of sanctioned sexual union (love, marriage, children) to invest desire into the male collective's pursuit and slaughter of the enemy. Burkert explains why women are sacrificed to found this abstinent homosocial order:

> Man declines to love in order to kill: this is most graphically demonstrated in the ritual slaughter of the 'virgin'. […] An irreparable act transforms an erotic game into fighting fury. Desperate 'searching' turns into 'hunting'. […] In hunting myth, the sacrificed virgin becomes the bride of the quarry, […] as a preliminary, maiden-sacrifice stands in contrast, and provides a balance, to the main sacrifice that supplies the food. It is a ritual of giving in order to get: in the main sacrifice fulfillment comes in the *sparagmos*, in cutting up and eating; during the preliminaries, however, there is an anticipatory self-denial which consequently requires other forms of destruction - submerging in water, hanging from trees.[5]

5. Walter Burkert, *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*, (trans) Peter Bing, Berkeley, University of California Press 1983, p64. (Hereafter *Homo Necans*).

Burkert goes on to note that the great sacrifice of war or the hunt could also be 'motivated as a punitive expedition, as vengeance for the maiden's death' (*Homo Necans*, p65). Viewed through the interpretative lens of this tradition, the Kosmodemianskaya story seems all the more clearly designed to motivate male troops through a manipulation of the dialectic of gender. Indeed, Lidov's 'Tanya' was only the most notable of a series of articles in *Pravda* about young female partisans captured and killed during the defence of Moscow. As the Soviet press struggled to make sense of the horrific onset of war, the death of 'maidens' occupied a central place in the public imagination.

Here it is important to recall that war and ritual sacrifice are closely connected as sanctioned violations of the taboo against bloodshed. The dialectic of gender in maiden sacrifice is interwoven with that of transgression. As Bataille reminds us, transgression 'suspends a taboo without suppressing it'.[6] The prohibition against murder marks the 'threshold beyond which murder is possible; and for the community war comes about when the threshold is crossed. If transgression […] did not have this limited character it would be a return to violence, to animal violence. But nothing of the kind

6. Georges Bataille, *Erotism: Death and Sensuality*, (trans) Mary Dalwood, San Francisco, City Lights Books 1986, p36. (Hereafter *Erotism*).

is so. Organised transgression together with the taboo make social life what it is' (*Erotism*, p64-65). René Girard similarly sees sacrificial violence as a ritual purification of blood, resisting explosions of violence that might threaten social distinctions with a free-for-all of contagious, reciprocal aggression. 'As long as purity and impurity remain distinct, even the worst pollution can be washed away; but once they are allowed to mingle, purification is no longer possible'.[7] Here Burkert's description of maiden sacrifice as a preliminary echo of the quarry's dismemberment acquires a precise chronotopic contour. The death of the maiden opens the extraordinary zone of ritual transgression in which war is waged. To return home and earn the right to a more ordinary, individual love, the members of the hunting party must complete the sacrifice and slay the beast.

From this perspective, whether Kosmodemianskaya is seen as the tragic victim of her Nazi captors or perhaps their polluted bride, the story of her death exposes Soviet soldiers to sacrificial guilt, binding them together with the spectacle of an irreparable act of violence. The feminine work of mourning is not sufficient to sublimate the maiden's loss into renewed fertility and the reaffirmation of social, symbolic codes. Instead, retribution is required - ultimately a vengeance against the self - traversing the extraordinary zone of transgression, suffering war's luxurious expenditure of life to re-establish the purity of social, territorial, and psychological distinctions through their ritual suspension.

7. René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, (trans) Patrick Gregory. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press 1977, p38.

AN OTHER JOUISSANCE

However, there is also much about the Kosmodemianskaya story that suggests this gendered, sacrificial reading is not enough. First, it is important to note the peculiar militarisation of Soviet women - unique amongst the combatants in the Second World War. Anna Krylova has documented the emergence of an 'alternative - non-oppositional - gender system' in the 1930s, when military readiness was taught on an integrated basis in schools, in the Komsomol (Communist Youth League), and in paramilitary organisations like OSOAVIAKHIM (Society for the Assistance of Defence, Aviation, and Chemical Construction). Film characters like the machine-gunner Anka in *Chapaev* (1934) and the sword-swinging Vasilisa in *Alexander Nevsky* (1938) provided captivating images of women willing, able, and eager to kill. In a contradictory way quite characteristic of 1930s Soviet social policies, combat emerged as a shared gender space even as pro-natalist policies (like the 1936 law against abortion) encouraged women to define themselves as mothers first and foremost. When the war broke out, this contradiction was not resolved, and the state pursued a policy of 'discouragement without prohibition' with regard to female volunteers. [8] Many young Komsomol women (like Kosmodemianskaya) were thus able to make their way into combat, even though the mainstream press agitated for women to assume more traditional

8. Anna Krylova,*Soviet Women in Combat: A History of Violence on the Eastern Front*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2010, p70, 114.

wartime roles on the home front or, at most, as medical orderlies. As the war progressed, however, more and more women were directly (if quietly) mobilised for combat, and many even assumed command roles.

Furthermore, while the *Pravda* articles on tortured partisans seem focused on narratives of female victimisation, the decision to make Kosmodemianskaya the first female Hero of the Soviet Union of the war suggests the recognition of gender-neutral forms of heroic self-sacrifice as well. Indeed, many treatments of the Kosmodemianskaya story also display non-oppositional gender dynamics, emphasising (even exaggerating) her military contributions rather than downplaying them in the manner of Lidov and Dovzhenko. For example, the earliest statues of the partisan, by sculptor Matvei Manizer, give her a steely, androgynous look and equip her with a rifle (fig.4). Lev Arnshtam's 1944 film *Zoya* contains several scenes of Kosmodemianskaya's life as a partisan, including one in which she shoots a German at point blank range to save a male comrade. In a subsequent montage sequence, the young woman is shown hurling grenades and firing an automatic rifle, superimposed over the flames of explosions she has caused.

It is this current of the Kosmodemianskaya myth that evokes associations with a different image of maiden sacrifice - Joan of Arc. Unlike the drowned or hanged virgins that initiate aggressive pursuit of the quarry, Joan of Arc represents an ecstatic, mystical defence against an invader. Moreover, while her power emerges from a feminine position, it ultimately transcends gender as the androgynous warrior unites a popular collective that is not specifically male. Unconditionally devoted to her king, enthralled by divine voices, the 'maid of Orleans' rallies the people behind her, leading them into war by example, rather than simply sending them off to avenge the death of an innocent. Her betrayal, capture, and execution do not mark the beginning of war, but the sublime limit of self-sacrifice that ensures victory if imitated by all who love France. Kosmodemianskaya is often called the Russian Joan of Arc, and she has always been surrounded with something of a mystical aura. Two central wartime depictions of her time in captivity - Arnshtam's film and Margarita Aliger's play, *A Fairy Tale about Truth* - show the partisan girl on the eve of execution visited by loved ones who bring her strength, culminating in a semi-divine visitation from Stalin:

Fig 4: (M. Manizer, 1942-47)

> Who is that standing by the window? (*She looks tensely into the darkness.*) I cannot stand, Iosif Vissarionovich, my legs are burning, but I will listen to your order. Today, 5 December 1941, the divisions of the Red Army around Moscow have launched a general offensive. This means they will not take Moscow, they will never take Moscow! Thank you, Iosif Vissarionovich, for coming to tell me about this, now nothing can frighten me.[9]

9. Margarita Aliger, *Skazka o pravde*, Moscow, Iskusstvo 1947, p105.

As with Joan of Arc, the death of the maiden here marks the crucial turning of the tide from defence to attack, drawing on hidden resources of passion, enduring pain and even death to realise the will of the party.

The impulse to undermine rather than enforce gender oppositions has a rich pedigree in early Soviet culture. As several scholars have noted, this tendency typically manifests itself in the 1920s as a kind of revolutionary misogyny.[10] Polluted, feminised nature - the indeterminacy of death - must be rationalised and overcome to make way for the new culture of Soviet Man. For many Soviet subjects, this utopian rejection of femininity no doubt disguised the same denigration of women that traditionally undergirds the patriarchal order. For others, however, it reflected something different - a longing for a collective body free from fragmentation across the fissures of sexual difference. In the Stalinist period, even as more traditional feminine roles were being championed, this ideal of a genderless utopia remained actual in a number of ways, with integrated military readiness training as only one example. To be sure, as Krylova notes, female combatants did not abandon but often maintained feminine identities during the war (e.g. decorating their planes with flowers). Krylova thus interprets the policies she describes as 'regendering' rather than 'degendering'. In her view, the alternative system led not to gender's dissolution, but merely suspended the dialectic that defined masculine valour in opposition to feminine frailty. While this is certainly true, it is important to remember the overarching logic of Stalinism as a simultaneous struggle with left and right 'deviations' from the general line. It was just as important to avoid racing ahead too precipitously toward communism as it was to avoid stifling forward-looking impulses among the masses. In this way, the contradictory policies that allowed for the partial gender remapping Krylova has identified may suggest a similar attempt to steer between the Scylla of premature radicalism and the Charybdis of stifling conservatism. Non-oppositional gender may have only been a stage on the way to something more radical - the elimination of sexual difference - even if this utopian dream was still being actively resisted in the 1930s in many ways.

10. Eric Naiman, *Sex in Public: The Incarnation of Early Soviet Ideology*. Princeton: Princeton University Press 1997. Eliot Borenstein, *Men without Women: Masculinity and Revolution in Russian Fiction, 1917-1929*, Durham, Duke University Press 2000.

Perhaps the most significant manifestation of this degendering impulse in the 1930s is the emasculated hero of many socialist realist narratives - the mutilated proletarians and pilots Lilya Kaganovsky describes in *How the Soviet Man was Unmade*. As Kaganovsky writes, quoting Kaja Silverman:

> More than a matter of displacement or return of the repressed, the blind, limping, paralysed, hysterical male body seems to be offered by Stalinist art as a new kind of masculinity, one that does not, at least on the surface, depend on 'collective make-believe in the commensurability of penis and phallus'- that is to say, of the male subject and power - but rather, one that stages the radical incommensurability of the two. [11]

11. Lilya Kaganovsky, *How the Soviet Man was Unmade: Cultural Fantasy and Male Subjectivity under Stalin*, Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press 2008, p22.

Yet, while Kaganovsky sees the uncanny, zombie-like drive of Pavel Korchagin (from Nikolai Ostrovsky's *How the Steel Was Tempered*) as the relentless pursuit of his own castration - to discipline and interpellate himself into the symbolic order (surrendering *jouissance* to claim the phallic signifier, however unavailable it proves to be) - it is possible to read this drive and the wounds such heroes suffer as the mark of a different kind of passion. In his twentieth seminar, *Encore*, Lacan introduces the possibility of an 'other *jouissance*,' distinct from the two forms of phallic pleasure that typically define masculine and feminine desire. Lacan's well-known dictum that 'there is no such thing as a sexual relationship' describes the incommensurability of masculine fantasy, pursuing metonymic surrogates for *objet petit a*, and feminine interest in men who possess the symbolic phallus of social power. The other *jouissance*, by contrast, is available to feminine (but not necessarily female) subjects who reorient themselves away from the phallus, turning toward a different signifier - S(Ⱥ), 'the signifier of lack in the Other'. Lacan associates this other *jouissance* with a mystic ecstasy (as in Bernini's famous statue of St. Teresa of Avila) 'beyond the phallus' and, by implication, beyond the pleasure principle, entering the domain of the death drive.[12] Instead of 'the idiotic enjoyment' of phallic pleasure, the other *jouissance* is localised much deeper in the body than anything produced by the cut of an erogenous zone. Ultimately, the subject encounters the *jouissance* of the Other itself, an unspeakable, unnamable, 'non-totalisable' truth (where 'God' is no longer the master signifier that founds the discursive order as a constitutive exception to the Law, but where, conversely, it marks the limit at which order and the Law collapse, and anything is possible). With this alternative in mind, I would argue that the hysterical masculinity Kaganovsky sees in Stalinist art in fact represents a subjectivity that emerges from the position Lacan describes as feminine, but which turns away from the phallus to encounter (witness, endure) the asexual *jouissance* of the Cause itself.

12. Jacques Lacan, *On Feminine Sexuality: The Limits of Love and Knowledge: Seminar XX (Encore)*, (trans) Bruce Fink. New York, Norton 1998, pp74-76.

The fact that the mutilated Stalinist hero is a non-phallic subject, rather than a masculine one, is supported by the frequent association of Kosmodemianskaya with this figure. The partisan's various biographers make much of a diary entry in which she quotes Korchagin's famous words from *How the Steel was Tempered*: 'A man's most precious thing is life. It is given to him only once and he must live it so […] that in death he can say: I have devoted all my life and all my powers to the most wonderful thing in the world - the struggle for the liberation of mankind'.[13]These words were

13. L. □. Kosmodem□ianskaia, *Povest' o Zoe i Shure*, Leningrad, Lenizdat 1951, p182.

emblazoned on Kosmodemianskaya's tombstone when she was buried in Novodevichy Cemetery, and they also feature in Arnshtam's *Zoya*. In a related scene from the film, the young Zoya is deeply affected by the deaths of the crew of a stratospheric balloon. Asking her mother to explain the meaning of the word 'hero,' Kosmodemianskaya learns: 'A hero is someone who is always brave. Who is not afraid even to die in order to make others happy' (*Zoia* 1944).[14] Similar images of Kosmodemianskaya's captivation with heroic death can be found in the memoirs of her mother. In an article published in the spring of 1942, for example, Liubov Kosmodemianskaya recalled a funeral for martyred 'partisans' of the collectivisation campaign (i.e. activists killed by resisting peasants):

> They constructed the tomb in the centre of the village, near the local party headquarters. The coffins were placed in the crypt. They built a fence around the monument and set up benches, and children were the most common visitors to this tomb. […] Sometimes Zoya would stand on a bench like it was a stage, and she would start declaiming in her childish way, remembering the speeches of the grownups. The kids fired pop-guns, pretending it was a salute. The marched off singing partisan songs.[15]

At the very least, such motifs confirm that Kosmodemianskaya's martyrdom was not only viewed as female victimisation. In my view, they also suggest that the partisan girl's death fit the gender-neutral paradigm of a Stalinist subject who invites (or even pursues) self-destruction in order to enter the 'life beyond life' of the Cause. Rather than Iphigenia, this position is more reminiscent of Sophocles' Antigone - a central example for Lacan, which Žižek has linked to Joan of Arc - who pursues her desire beyond the Law, beyond the limit of symbolic death, remaining ever faithful to an impossible calling.[16]

THE STALINIST IMPULSE TO CHRONOTOPIC HYBRIDITY: Ф/A AND S(Ⱥ)/A

The duality of the Kosmodemianskaya myth - in which she is at once a female victim and a degendered (or at least alternatively gendered) hero - did not persist after the war. Images of the partisan become increasingly feminine in post-war years, following a general trend that demobilised women and suppressed the non-oppositional gender system of the 1930s.[17] This tendency continues in many representations of Kosmodemianskaya today, as can be seen in two monuments, erected recently in Kiev and Volgograd, which focus on the partisan girl's forced march through the snow, depicting her barefoot and scantily clad. With the Soviet ban on erotic imagery long forgotten, these statues raise the partisan's skirt line significantly higher than a 1957 statue on the same theme (figs. 5 and 6).[18] It is also interesting that the version of Arnshtam's *Zoya* shown after destalinisation in the ealry 1960s cuts both the

14. In Lidov's account, Kosmodemianskaya cries from the scaffold: 'It is happiness to die for one's people'.

15. L. T. Kosmodem'ianskaia, 'Moia Zoia', *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, May 21, 1942, p3.

16. Slavoj Žižek, 'From Antigone to Joan of Arc', *Helios* 31 2004, 1-2, pp51-62. This figure also recalls Alain Badiou's description of the mystical 'fourth discourse', the discourse of 'unutterable utterances' which can 'only be experienced by the subject who has been visited by a miracle' in Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundations of Universalism*, (trans) Ray Brassier, Stanford, Stanford University Press 2003, p51. In a more pragmatic vein, one may note that a principal goal of the Kosmodemianskaya story was to teach soldiers how to behave if they were taken captive - demonstrating total commitment to the cause through death. I am grateful to Aleksandr Semenov for this insight.

17. Adrienne Harris, *The Myth of the Woman Warrior and World War II in Soviet Culture*. PhD dissertation, University of Kansas, 2008.

18. For the Volgograd monument, see: http://nezabudem.net/obelisks/1788.

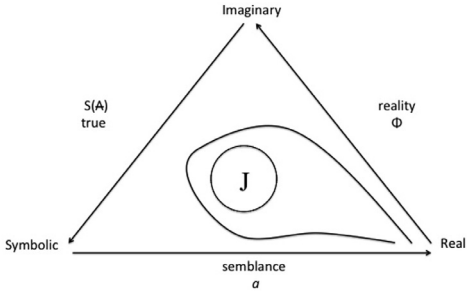
Figs 5 and 6: Monuments on the Minsk Highway (1957) and Kiev (2006)

reference to Ostrovsky's Korchagin and the line about a hero's willingness to die for the happiness of the collective.

What changed? How did the suppression of the non-phallic elements of Kosmodemianskaya's story affect the myth as a whole? Here it is useful to elaborate the Lacanian theory of sexuation in somewhat greater - and more speculative - detail. In *Encore*, Lacan offers the following diagram, relating the algebraic symbols for the phallus, *objet a*, and the signifier of lack in the Other to the three orders of the Symbolic, the Imaginary, and the Real. In the centre of the diagram, *jouissance* bubbles forth from the vertex of the Real toward S(Ⱥ):

The structures represented by these three symbols share a fundamental similarity. Each in its own way describes an effect (or an opportunity) brought about by the gap in being suffered by speaking, desiring subjects - the gap between the subjective time-space of one's being - towards - death and the objective way in which one appears or is 'given' to another subject, as if already dead. It is the gap of incommensurability between these two positions that defines the Other as lacking, the subject as split, the *jouissance* of death as unknowable, and desire as insatiable. Indeed, all three symbols refer

Fig 7



to the symbolic order's lack of that one signifier that would complete (and destroy) it - the subject herself, if she could choose her own name and bridge the gap that prohibits *jouissance*. *Objet a* represents the fantasy (or non-specular 'semblance') of a lost object left over from primordial separation (e.g., the maternal phallus). This object would complete the Other, but it can exist for the subject only as a hole in the Real that 'suffers from the signifier'.[19] The phallus, by contrast, is the signifier of this suffering - the *Non/Nom-du-Père* which founds the Law of castration, and which, if accepted, allows the subject to assume a place in the symbolic order and to desire (pursuing not the impossibility of *objet a*, but tracing a circuitous detour of fantasy around it). As mentioned above, the meagre (Lacan would say masturbatory) *jouissance* of normative, gendered sexuality depends on the interplay of these two figures. The masculine subject seeks metonymic shadows of the unnameable object in his partner, while the feminine subject urges hers to seize the phallus, the paternal name, as a metaphorical substitution for foreclosed *jouissance*. In either case, *objet a* remains as an intractable disturbance, preventing the consummation of phallic desire.

19. Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis: Seminar VII*, (trans) Dennis Porter. New York, Norton 1992, pp118-121. (Hereafter *Seminar VII*).

What then is S(Ⱥ), especially since Lacan also calls the phallus 'the signifier of the Other's desire' in his essay 'The Signification of the Phallus'?[20] Perhaps it is a different kind of signifier, one more reminiscent of the logic of sublimation and, in some ways, fetishism. In his description of Antigone's 'sublime splendor' in the seventh seminar, Lacan associates her position - when she is entombed for her crime, banished from the life of the Law, yet still biologically alive - with that of an object raised 'to the dignity of the Thing,' the latter term usually taken as a predecessor of *objet a* (*Seminar VII*, p112). Lacan further describes this sublime object as a signifier beyond the pleasure principle - i.e., not a mere link in the signifying chain, but a signifier created *ex nihilo*, fabricated around the Thing and thus capable of representing it. What then does it mean for a feminine subject to orient herself not on the master signifier of desire (the symbolic phallus) but to turn toward this different signifier - that of the Cause - Thing beyond the Law. I would argue that it represents a simple chronotopic inversion - seeking not to claim the phallic signifier but to become one that is 'martyred'. In other words, it is a militant, eschatological subject position - truly inhabiting the gap of impossible desire rather than veiling or domesticating it. This place of martyrdom is also 'unconsummated' - it still marks the place of *objet a*, but it reverses the trajectory of phallic subjectivity. Antigone's position 'between two deaths' (symbolic and biological) is remarkable not for the position itself - which can be traced in the same gendered burial rites discussed above, in which one first surrenders bodily life to nature (mourned by women) and then spiritual life to the collective (mourned by men). Rather, it is the fact that Antigone uncannily dies in the symbolic order *before* she gives up her biological life. As a result, her second death is beyond the phallus, beyond gender, and in a sense truly 'authorised' by herself alone.[21]

20. Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*, (trans) Bruce Fink, New York, Norton 2006, p583. (Hereafter *Ecrits*).

21. Here it is worth noting Judith Butler's reading of Antigone as the queer subject *par excellence*, born beyond the incest taboo and staking her claim to the rights or 'aberrant, unprecedented future' of such a position. Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship between Life and Death*, New York, Columbia University Press 2000, p82.

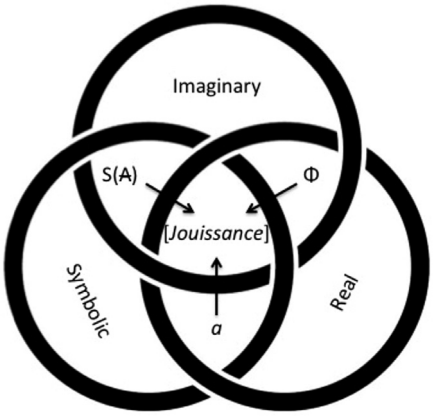


Fig 8.

Although it requires taking some liberty with Lacan, it is useful here to superimpose the above diagram onto another one from later in the twentieth seminar - the Borromean knot, which also depicts the interrelation of the Symbolic, the Imaginary, and the Real (fig. 8). What this diagram represents, first of all, is the impossibility of absolute *jouissance*, the non-lacking Other or Thing. The central place where all three rings intersect is inaccessible, preserving the separation of the orders as well as their links. The places where two of the three rings overlap represent different 'pressure points' from which the subject may approach or organise herself around that impossibility. An orientation on the suffering of the Real under the Symbolic leads one to *objet a* - the lost object or semblance of being, present in the Imaginary only as the various 'part-objects' (like the breast). An orientation on normative 'maturation' from the Real to the Imaginary leads to the promise of the symbolic phallus - the master signifier of desire that does not complete the Other, but subdues its lack, or at least attempts to. The final pressure point would then be S(Ⱥ) - the non-phallic signifier of lack in the Other, of the Other's own castration and desire, or of the fact that 'the Other does not exist'. The subject position corresponding to this point would be structured around the incommensurability of 'reality' (the Imaginary and the Symbolic orders taken together) and the Real, inhabiting the point of maximal tension between them, oriented on the Cause (of absolute *jouissance*) only as a truth-to-come, a truth defined by its untotalisable inactuality.

One could use the three subject positions in this account to produce a catalogue of gender, labelling them masculine, feminine, and 'other' respectively.[22] It is somewhat more interesting, however, to contemplate the difference between the phallic interplay of Φ and *a* and an inverted, 'non-phallic' interaction between S(Ⱥ) and *a* (where an orientation on *objet a* would no longer represent a masculine position because of the lack of a feminine other). The importance of *objet a* as the common denominator of the phallic and non-phallic structures is to indicate the ambivalence and incommensurability they share. The bourgeois 'master' of modern life - the boss, family man, teacher, etc. - can never possess the phallus so completely that *objet a* ceases to haunt his subjectivity as the cause of desire.[23] Similarly, the militant subject of resistance can never fully become the signifier of the Other's lack. *Objet a* will always remain as the bodiless incarnation of the gap that makes subjectivity and desire possible, perhaps accounting for the signifier's unnamed status, as if anything could potentially fill its role. Again, the difference between the two structures is ultimately a simple inversion. The phallic structure of normative gender relations depends upon a foundational authority - the Law that condemns the subject to choose one of two genders and suffer the impossibility of their ever coming together to produce the

22. Here the masculine position would be oriented on the suffering, feminised other, while the feminine position would be oriented on getting 'her man' to 'grow up' and claim the phallus. Such a categorisation only seems relevant to bourgeois modernity, however. By contrast, one might imagine a medieval gloss of the three pressure-points of *objet a*, the phallus, and S(Ⱥ) as respectively referring to sin, tradition, and faith three different strategies for coping with the impossibility of absolute *jouissance*.

23. Claude Lefort, 'Outline of the Genesis of Ideology in Modern Societies', in *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism*, (ed.) John B. Thompson, Cambridge, MIT Press 1986, pp205-14.

One. By contrast, the non-phallic structure, affording a mystical ecstasy beyond gender, looks ahead toward a signifier that cannot yet be uttered. The subject cleaves to the lacking Other but can never dissolve completely in an obliteration that would announce the realisation of the Cause. Elsewhere I have described these two structures - Φ/*a* and S(Ⱥ)/*a* - as the central chronotopes of modernity, referring to them respectively as ambivalent forms of monumentalism and eschatology.[24] As I see it, the guiding impulse of Stalinist culture (at least until the tide turned in the war in 1943) is to invoke both structures simultaneously, as if using the vacillation between them - and occasionally their hybridisation though chiastic superimposition - to create a makeshift, surrogate experience of absolute *jouissance* ('communism'), suppressing the disturbing effects of *objet a* without eliminating them (because without these effects the 'engine' of modern ambivalence would stall).

24. Jonathan Brooks Platt, 2015. 'Snow White and the Enchanted Palace: A Reading of Lenin's Architectural Cult'. *Representations*, 2015, 129: 86-115. (Hereafter *Snow White*).

This, therefore, is the theoretical explanation for the vacillation between 'phallic' and 'non-phallic' representations of Zoya Kosmodemianskaya during the war - a vacillation that did not continue after Soviet militant subjectivity was exhausted by victory in 1945.

FOUR AMBIVALENT MOMENTS AND TWO AWKWARD MEMORIES

Beyond this overarching impulse to chronotopic hybridity in Stalinist culture, there was clearly something specific about the war years that promoted Kosmodemianskaya's ambivalent gendering. There is much to suggest the source was an equally ambivalent relationship to violence. Both sides of the Nazi-Soviet conflict believed they were involved in a 'war of extermination' (*Vernichtungskrieg*, *istrebitel'naia voina*), that is, in the words of a recent study, 'a war locked in a state of exception, in which each side fights (or insists it must fight) until one side is utterly and completely subjugated, incapable of renewing itself on its own devices. The victor survives as the 'last man standing'; the vanquished is not only dead, but also ravished'. The Eastern front's exterminatory character no doubt compromised its ability to serve as a purgative act of ritual transgression. Instead of reaffirming polluted boundaries through their temporary suspension, the conflict was more likely to foster a wholesale sense of chaos and indistinction. Even in strictly military terms, the Nazi-Soviet war was waged along a front that was more a zone of ambiguity than a clear division between combatants. This was 'a war that reached inside to remake the respective war-fighting society in a war of excisions much as it reached outside in order to subjugate and [...] exterminate the enemy'.[25] In other words, radical violence was practiced both internally and externally - a fact horrifically manifested in the Holocaust and perhaps best epitomised by the 'blocking units' used by both sides to deny doomed soldiers the possibility of retreat.

25. Mark Edele and Michael Geyer, 'States of Exception: The Nazi-Soviet War as a System of Violence, 1939-1945', in *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared*, (eds.) Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2009, p350, 348.

It seems possible, therefore, that sacrificed femininity did not exhaust the semantic potential of the Kosmodemianskaya story because it could not

overcome the exterminatory excess of the violence that had been visited upon her, a violence against bare, degendered life - as wordlessly spoken by the wounds on her exhumed body. Instead, Stalinist subjects drew on their own close acquaintance with exterminatory violence, having long expected to endure such pain as the cost of exposure to the *jouissance* of the Cause. After the war was won, Soviet society strove to forget this exterminatory excess (much like the Cause itself, one could argue).

These claims are highly speculative. However, I believe they justify further consideration of the ambivalence of Zoya Kosmodemianskaya as more than a sign of Stalinism's confused ideology. If we accept that during the war two distinct attitudes were available both to Strunnikov's photograph and to Kosmodemianskaya's story in general, the next logical step is to ask how these attitudes interacted with one another. In asking this question, I will now examine four different moments in which a certain unresolved conflict surfaces in the memorialisation of Kosmodemianskaya. I will first describe all four of the moments and then analyse them together.

1. *A large painting of Kosmodemianskaya's execution by the Kukryniksy collective.* The original painting, first exhibited in 1942, depicts the exact moment at which the box is kicked from under Kosmodemianskaya's feet (fig. 9). After the war, the artists revise the image to show the moment directly prior to this - presumably when Kosmodemianskaya is making her famous speech from the scaffold, urging the villagers to fight and promising Stalin will save them (fig. 10). The feeling of a captured moment in time is central to the painting, thematised by the German soldiers photographing the hanging. The position of Kosmodemianskaya in the 1942 version closely resembles Strunnikov's photograph.

Fig 9: Kukryniksy, Tania *(1942)*

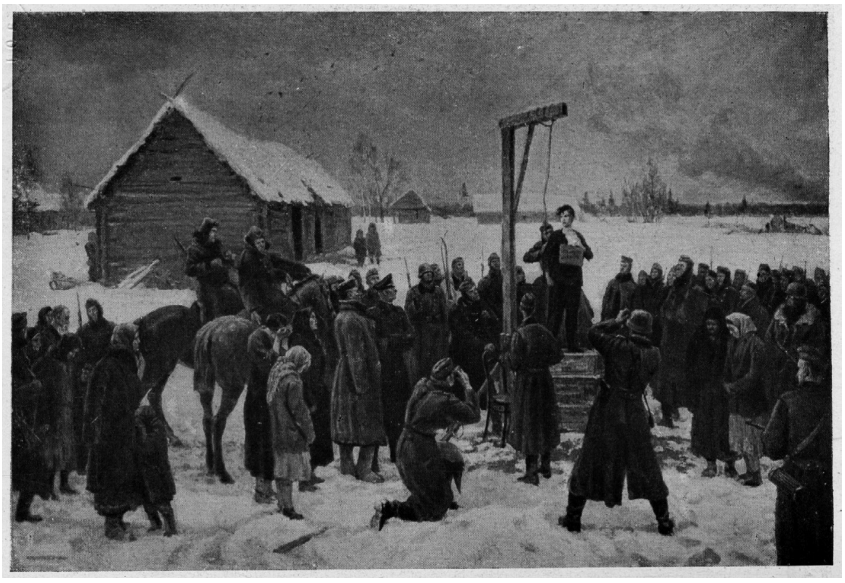
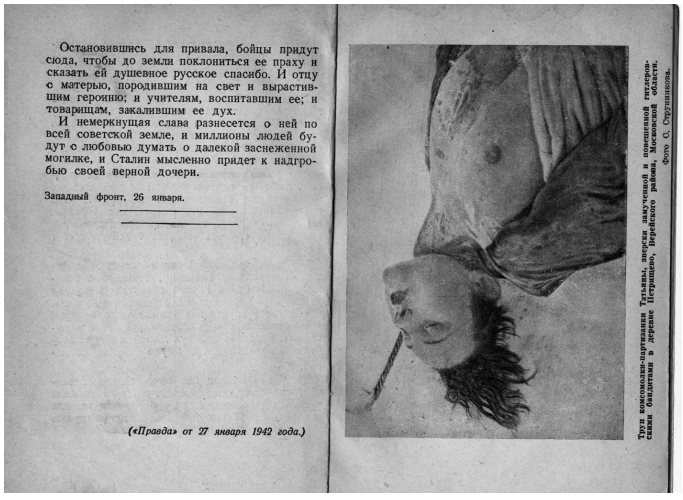


Fig 10: Kukryniksy, Tania *(1947)*

2. *A strange impression created by the juxtaposition of Strunnikov's photograph and the last lines of Lidov's article*. The impression is strongest in one of the pocket-sized editions of materials about Kosmodemianskaya put out by *Pravda* and presumably distributed to soldiers at the front. Lidov ends his article with a description of the modest grave, under a weeping willow, in which the villagers laid the partisan girl's mutilated body. The final sentence of the article reads: 'And her unfading glory will spread across the entire Soviet land, and millions of people with think about that distant, snow-strewn grave with love, and Stalin will come to the grave of his loyal daughter in his thoughts'. In the pocket-sized edition, however, these lines appear directly opposite Strunnikov's photograph, revealing how the grave has been disturbed by exhumation and thus putting Stalin in a somewhat peculiar position (fig. 11). This moment is further complicated by the fact that, according to Lidov, Kosmodemianskaya's last words were 'Stalin will come!'

Fig 11: From Tania *(Pravda, 1942).*



Остановившись для привала, бойцы придут сюда, чтобы до земли поклониться ее праху и сказать ей душевное русское спасибо. И отцу с матерью, породившим на свет и вырастившим героиню; и учителям, воспитавшим ее; и товарищам, закалившим ее дух.

И немеркнущая слава разнесется о ней по всей советской земле, и миллионы людей будут с любовью думать о далекой заснеженной могилке, и Сталин мысленно придет к надгробью своей верной дочери.

Западный фронт, 26 января.

(«Правда» от 27 января 1942 года.)

Труп комсомолки-партизанки Татьяны, замученной и повешенной гитлеровскими бандитами в деревне Петрищево, Чаплинского района, Смоленской области.

Фото О. Струтинского.

3. *A peculiar echo at the end of Margarita Aliger's narrative poem*, Zoya. Aliger ends the third and final chapter of her poem, written in 1942, with an ekphrastic description of Strunnikov's photo:

Keep the photograph of Zoya forever.
I don't think I will ever forget it.
This girl's body,
neither dead
nor alive.
It is Zoya made of marble
lying quietly in the snow.
There is a strange power in your thrown-back face [*в запрокинутом лике*].
That's how one waits for a lover,
glowing with a secret beauty,
from a mysterious feminine fire within.
Only you didn't wait for him, snow bride.

Then, in the final lines of the poem's epilogue, Aliger imagines a sculptor chiseling the head of a statue after the war has ended:

What does he want to say with his chisel?
Why did he choose the most difficult stone?
He abandoned his home, work, and peace,
he fought alongside thousands of thousands,
to return and carve the face of victory
with the hand of one who has become a man.
What distant horizons are you gazing at,
still unknown,
already great.
But we recognise Zoya's features
In the thrown-back,
Marvelous,
Eternal face [*в откинутом... лике*].[26]

4. *A new funerary monument erected for Kosmodemianskaya in 1986 by sculptor Oleg Komov (fig. 3).* If one is not familiar with Strunnikov's photograph, the statue appears to depict the partisan girl falling in flight, 'like the cry of a bird, halted at its most sonorous note' as one journalist put it.[27] However, upon closer examination, it is clear that the statue is modeled directly on the photograph. Komov has simply raised the supine body into a vertical position and reversed its left-right orientation (fig.12).

What generalisations can be made about these four moments? In my view, each reveals the tension between the two available attitudes to Kosmodemianskaya outlined above. If we recall the model of double sacrifice in Burkert's description of ancient Greek hunting myth, the two sacrificial acts - the slaughter of the maiden and the dismemberment of the quarry - delineate a spatio-temporal zone of the extraordinary. This is the zone that must be traversed by the male collective if they are to return

26. Margarita Aliger, *Stikhi i poemy*. Moscow: GIKhL 1944, p170, 174. (Hereafter *Stikhi*).

27. I. Teplitskaia, 'Tvoi sled na zemle', *Kommunar* 1987, May, p1, 4.

28. Robert Hertz, 'A Contribution to the Study of the Collective Representation of Death', in *Death, Mourning, and Burial: A Cross-Cultural Reader*, ed. A.C.G.M. Robben, London, Blackwell 2004, p203.

29. For more on this structure, see Jacques Lacan,*The Ethics of Psychoanalysis: Seminar VII*, (trans) Dennis Porter, New York, Norton 1992, pp220-21, 247-49; Giorgio Agamben's

home, renewed and purified by the ritual. A similar structure can be seen in many burial rites. In the gendered practices Bloch describes, for example, the mourning process demarcates a specifically feminised period of pollution through which the deceased must pass before being reincorporated into the patriarchal order. The chronotopic aspects of this structure are even clearer in the related practice of double burial. Here the corpse undergoes decomposition in a temporary grave, after which the bare bones are exhumed and deposited in an ossuary. As Robert Hertz notes in his classic study of this practice, double burial treats the temporality of death as a zone of putrescence separating two bodies. In Hertz's words, the bifurcation of the funerary rite reflects a belief that 'death is not a mere destruction but a transition: as it progresses so does the rebirth; while the old body falls to ruins, a new body takes shape, with which the soul - provided the necessary rites have been performed - will enter another existence, often superior to the previous one'.[28] Thus, a first body, the body of death, departs from natural life, while a second body - sublime and deathless - achieves a new life beyond the natural cycles of transient being.

Fig 12: Komov's statue and Strunnikov's photograph.

Might we then think of the two attitudes to Kosmodemianskaya as distinct approaches to this zone of putrescence between the two bodies, or to the similar zone of transgressive pollution dividing Burkert's two sacrifices? One attitude - the 'phallic' one - distances itself from the extraordinary zone, domesticating it from outside through the work of mourning and memorialisation. The 'other,' non-phallic attitude, by contrast, identifies with the position inside the zone, where Kosmodemianskaya remains as long as the system has not completely 'digested' her bare life (*zoe*), returning her symbolic life (*bios*) to the collective.[29] From another perspective, one could say that the phallic attitude is interested only in what Kosmodemianskaya becomes after death - a sacrificial victim monumentalised in order to spur others on to avenge and redeem her loss, honoring her memory. By contrast, the non-phallic attitude focuses on Kosmodemianskaya's actual experience of exterminatory violence, going even so far as to contemplate (witness) the ecstasy of her suffering, as exposed in Strunnikov's photograph.

discussion of the Roman ritual of consecration in Giorgio Agamben, 1998. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, (trans) Daniel Heller-Roazen, Stanford: Stanford University Press 1998, pp91-103; and Bronfen's essay on the death of Mérimée's *Carmen* in Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic*, Manchester, Manchester University Press 1992.

Each of the four moments can be seen to vacillate between these two positions, either inside or outside the extraordinary zone. Such a shift is most evident in the two versions of the Kukryniksy painting. During the war, the painters identify with Kosmodemianskaya inside the zone and thus seek to capture the very threshold of her consummation and transcendence. By aligning this threshold with the moment of death, the extraordinary zone is marked as the span of time Kosmodemianskaya spends in captivity, and her torments can be mapped to the decomposition of the flesh. After the war, however, this position becomes too difficult to contemplate, and the painting must be revised. Now the image is itself a monumentalisation of the already 'digested' Kosmodemianskaya.

With the juxtaposition of Lidov's final paragraph and Strunnikov's photograph, vacillation occurs on a single page. Lidov clearly seeks a position outside the extraordinary zone - which is again the time of the partisan girl's torture and execution. However, the awkward contradiction with the photograph thrusts the reader back inside, revealing that Lidov's prediction of Stalin mentally visiting the grave of his devoted daughter has in fact already taken place. Stalin *did* come, just as Zoya promised. The ecstatic pose of her body is evidence of this fact.

Such awkwardness becomes somewhat more rigorous in Aliger's poem, which seems to strive for a full hybridisation of the two positions, doubling the sublime body that marks the end of the extraordinary zone. Linked by the motif of the thrown back head, the monument in Aliger's epilogue is shown to be a copy of Strunnikov's ecstatic corpse. Kosmodemianskaya thus simultaneously dons the peaceful body of monumental stillness and the convulsed body of suffering, non-phallic passion. Indeed, something similar can also be seen in the 1942 version of the Kukryniksy painting, in which Kosmodemianskaya again appears in a position that resembles her exhumed body. The Nazi photographers capture the partisan girl at the moment of death, and for them the picture will no doubt serve as a perverse memento of the atrocity. How is this memorialisation linked to the Soviet painting, which performs a similar, if nobler function? On the one hand, it suggests the artists' discomfort. Can they endure the guilt of having survived Kosmodemianskaya's sacrifice to transform her suffering body into a monumental image? Perhaps not, and thus they are drawn toward the ecstatic corpse, as if hoping to infuse their meager representation with its uncanny life. Like Aliger, the Kukryniksy move in both directions at once - inside and out - at least until after the war, when the monumentalist attitude becomes dominant.

Finally, Komov's sculpture is interesting because it seems to revive this impulse toward chronotopic hybridity some forty years after the end of the war. Again the ecstatic corpse serves as a model for the monumental image. The impression that Kosmodemianskaya is falling suggests identification with the moment of death even though the ostensible function of the sculpture is to provide an enduring 'afterlife' for the partisan girl, ensuring her memory is

preserved. Yet here there is also a feeling that hybridity is somehow awkward and unintentional like the juxtaposition of Lidov's article and Strunnikov's photograph. Komov's plan seems murky - almost approaching a kind of *stiob* - rather than fraught with the conflicting desires that haunt Aliger's poem and the first Kukryniksy painting.[30]

The tendency to hybridise internalising and externalising attitudes to the zone of putrescence is in fact very characteristic of Stalinist culture in the 1930s. One need only think of the discourse and practices surrounding Lenin's embalmed body, for example (*Snow White*). With reference to my discussion of Lacan in the previous section, the external attitude depends on the phallic interplay of Φ and *a*, producing a monumental image of mastery over death. As the immortalised memory of a lost erotic object, Kosmodemianskaya comes to stand for the sacrifices required to uphold and exist within the symbolic order. By contrast, the internal attitude depends on the non-phallic interaction between S(Ⱥ) and *a*. Now Kosmodemianskaya assumes the position of an eschatological subject, martyring herself not for the sake of the existing order but for a more sublime truth to come. Both attitudes are ambivalent. The monumental image requires the suppression of indeterminacy, domesticating the horrors of the partisan girl's torments, veiling the wound of her missing breast. Though hidden, this place of trauma remains a constituent part of the image, unsettling the work of mourning and demanding its repetition. The devotees of the Kosmodemianskaya cult must periodically return to the site of her sacrificial victimisation, recalling the obligation it entails. From the internal perspective, the partisan girl's martyrdom is also incomplete. Her body remains frozen in ecstasy, much as her corpse reportedly remained hanging for a month after her execution.[31] As long as the body of nature is suspended in this way, the full sublimity of truth must be deferred. Stalin may have come, making the partisan girl a witness to the Other's *jouissance*, but she is nonetheless still 'waiting for her beloved', as Aliger evocatively interprets Strunnikov's photograph in *Zoya*. Again, there is a suggestion of repetition here. One exterminated witness will not be enough to realise the Cause. All must imitate Kosmodemianskaya's descent into the extraordinary zone.

It is the shared ambivalence of the two attitudes - the common denominator of *objet a* - that enables their chiastic superimposition. First, the inversion can be examined in terms of violence. The external, monumentalist attitude finds its depiction of heroic sacrifice undermined by the trauma of exterminatory violence. Conversely, the internal, eschatological attitude must endure the fact that this violence did not run its full course. As long as Kosmodemianskaya's body lingers, her death has not yet truly been accomplished. Second, the relationship can be examined in terms of the extraordinary zone of putrescence. Here the monumentalist attitude treats the zone as if closed but is compelled to return again and again and reopen it. The eschatological attitude, by contrast, thrusts itself into the zone as into

30. *Stiob* refers to a common form of late socialist irony, typically deadpan.

31. In the final scene of Aliger's play, *A Fairy-Tale about Truth*, the male lead promises to avenge Zoya's death while bizarrely standing next to the shadow cast by her hanged body.

an abyss, but finds it can never open it all the way. At most it can repeat the act of Kosmodemianskaya's martyrdom, enduring the interminable 'not yet' of the truth-to-come alongside her (*Stikhi*, p168).[32] Thus the same wound haunts both attitudes in opposite ways. One mourns and veils it, while the other awaits its totalisation. As a result, the simultaneous embrace of both attitudes becomes imaginable, if paradoxical, enabling the pursuit of total mastery and martyrdom at once.

As noted above, the examples I have presented do not all suggest a willful impulse toward such hybridity. In the juxtaposition of Lidov's article and Strunnikov's photograph, the coalescence of the two attitudes seems almost accidental; it could even be read as a kind of revealing parapraxis. In Aliger's two endings, however, the doubling constitutes a genuine part of the poem's aesthetic fabric. When Kosmodemianskaya's monument and corpse are fused to produce a sublime body of undying ecstasy, the ambivalence that haunts both attitudes is subdued. It is as if the extraordinary zone were at once opened to engulf the entire symbolic order and closed completely, never to threaten the subject again. Somehow it is through the monumental image that the martyr achieves her dream of consummation and resurrection in the Cause. By the same token, the monument no longer hides the wound of castration but embraces it ecstatically as exposure to the power that founds the Law. Desire mingles with drive, and preservation of the lacking Other becomes identical to its totalisation and supersession.

At the same time, this paradoxical fusion of monumentalism and eschatology is not an actual accomplishment, but only a tragically optimistic image of total mastery and martyrdom. As suggested above, the true realisation of this paradox would mean both returning home from the great sacrifice of the war and enduring its exterminatory excess in full - as the total expurgation of collective guilt, ushering in the new age through self-immolation. Indeed, it is the manifest impossibility of this dual achievement that produces the impulse to chronotopic hybridity. Zoya's ecstatic monument is in the end only a makeshift surrogate for the sublime body that would simultaneously open and close the extraordinary zone in total consummation. Hybridisation arises as a strategy of subduing ambivalence without eliminating it, projecting an image of total victory while still waging the war.

With the Kukryniksy we see how Soviet culture tended to efface the traces of this tendency after the war was won. The 1942 painting suggests a hybridity similar to Aliger's, contaminating the moment of sacrificial victimisation with the ecstatic body of Strunnikov's photograph, suspended between life and death. After the war, however, ecstasy is dampened, and only the trauma of the partisan girl's suffering remains, veiled behind the enduring stillness of the lull before death. Nonetheless, in Komov's 1986 sculpture, some element of the old Stalinist logic still seems to be operative. It is hard to explain this resurgence, although one is tempted to associate it with the attempt to renew the Soviet experiment one last time before its final collapse with

32. In the section of *Zoya* preceding the description of Strunnikov's photograph, Aliger imagines such accompanying the partisan in this way: 'Burn me, suffering of the other, / become my own torture. / I would like to write about Zoya / in such a way that I might be strangled with her. / I would like to write about Zoya, / so that Zoya could begin to breathe, / so the famous Russian mother / would become stone and mean' (*Stikhi*, p168). The association in these lines of Zoya's position between life and death with the defeminisation of the mother is striking.

perestroika. Whatever the source, it is interesting that Kosmodemianskaya's image is still capable of producing uncanny effects today. On the anniversary of the October Revolution in 2011, the Zaporozhe regional committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine erected two statues to decorate their headquarters. The three-quarter figures stand in the windows on either side of the building's entrance - to the right is the generalissimo, Stalin, and to the left is Kosmodemianskaya, honored for her 'immortal, prophetic words: 'Stalin is with us! Stalin will come!' Unlike other recent monuments, the image of Kosmodemianskaya is martial and androgynous rather than feminine and frail. Whatever the intentions of the communists, it is fascinating how Kosmodemianskaya - standing in the traumatic position of the building's 'left breast' - is both immortalised by her sacrifice and yet still waiting for the ecstatic fulfilment of her prophecy. Stalin, meanwhile stands beside his loyal daughter, as if patiently waiting for the new life in which she will become his bride. But where does the door these sentries are guarding lead?[33]

Another recent appropriation of Kosmodemianskaya's image, also in Ukraine, appeared in an article written for the online news site, ridus.ru, about the artist-activist group, FEMEN. One of the photographs for the article, taken by Sergei Polezhaka, features three of the women standing in front of a recent statue to the Soviet partisan and mimicking her pose (fig.13). The point of identification for FEMEN is clearly Kosmodemianskaya's bound hands - symbolising the oppression of women.[34] Yet the peculiar resonance of their trademark topless attire at the various actions they stage and Kosmodemianskaya's own signature trauma is striking. While the women are clothed in the picture, one of them, Inna Shevchenko, wears a shirt with the image of Eugène Delacroix's famous painting of the bare-chested *Liberty Leading the People*. The connection to revolutionary violence is thus

33. The two statues were erected inside the building after a first version of the Stalin figure was blown up by members of the right-wing Svoboda party. In this context, Kosmodemianskaya's role is to guard her father-husband against fascists.

34. http://fototelegraf.ru/121405-pryamoj-razgovor-s-femen.html.

Fig 13.

directly implied. To lead the people to victory, the nurturing maternal breast must be transformed into its own kind of phallic weapon. Yet, what of Kosmodemianskaya's wound? What of her exposure to that other *jouissance*, the passion of Joan of Arc, ecstatically driven beyond the phallus? By inadvertently evoking the clash between these two feminine postures, the photograph seems to hint at the political awkwardness of the group's ideology - resisting male oppression without rejecting phallic norms of feminine beauty.[35]

Like Komov's statue, both of these recent Ukrainian flirtations with chronotopic hybridity do not seem fully thought out and tested in the manner of Aliger's poem or even the 1942 painting of Kosmodemianskaya's execution by the Kukryniksy. And yet, at the same time, they reveal the persistence of the impulse toward that hybridity in post-Soviet culture, despite the efforts to monumentalise the partisan girl as a feminine victim after the war. Does this mean that the Stalinist strategy of projecting a makeshift surrogate of communist victory upon the continuing struggle to achieve it still has its place in the post-Soviet imaginary? Perhaps - especially if one considers that the catastrophe of the war in the context of 1917. Stalinist culture in the 1930s waited with great eagerness for its total war of revolutionary consummation. Was the Nazi-Soviet conflict a missed opportunity to achieve this dream? Or did the dream in fact come to pass, halting the progress of bourgeois modernity and at last ending the 'heroic age' of revolutionary politics in industrial Europe? In either case, the meaning of this event remains unrecognised, and the extraordinary ambivalence of Zoya Kosmodemianskaya remains open.

35. In May 2010, FEMEN lovingly washed the Kiev statue of Kosmodemianskaya in preparation for Victory Day. The group described the gesture as commemorating all women who fought in the Second World War. See http://femen.livejournal.com/2010/05/07/.

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