

Title: Lay Psychotechnics and the Sublimation of Soviet Emotion in Zoshchenko's *Youth Restored*

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Like many Soviet writers during the First Five-Year Plan, Zoshchenko struggled to find a voice harmonic with the heightened pathos of the period. Intensive generic experimentation and psychological research led him to conclude that his trademark irony and ambivalence were symptoms of false consciousness. Apart from making him unhappy, this ideological illness prevented him from writing the optimistic book he believed his readers demanded. Zoshchenko's search for a cure culminated in *Youth Restored*, a 1933 novella depicting an aging Leningrad professor's attempts to recapture the vitality and life-affirming worldview of his youth. In this paper, I uncover the origins of Zoshchenko's "rejuvenation" project in contemporary Soviet psychotechnic studies of chronic exhaustion and pre-mature aging among the revolutionary generation. In 1930 and 1931, Party psychologists led a crusade against the "mechanist" psychotechnicians, denouncing their equilibrium-based defense of labor as sabotage and forcing them to recant. According to the victorious dialectical model of human development, the will, self-mastery, and subjective factors like revolutionary consciousness of the socialist laborer actually made work at increased tempos beneficial to the health of the Soviet worker. Positioning himself within the debates on mental hygiene, Zoshchenko insists on the equilibrium and moderation then politically taboo in Soviet sciences. At the same time, he advances distinctly dialectical theoretical frameworks for inspired creative production, restoring mental health and happiness, and the process of "re-forging" (*perekovka*) demanded of Soviet subjects. I argue that Zoshchenko employs Nietzsche's model of sublimation to recast the dialectical concepts of enthusiastic production and *perekovka* in the more familiar Nietzschean terms of self-overcoming. In this way, Zoshchenko cultivates an authorial personality whose zeal for utopian psychology is at once authentic and consonant with the times.