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MYTHOPOETICS AND PRAGMATICS OF THE SOVIET ANECDOTE

Ilinska N. I.

INTRODUCTION

In the mid-1980s, in the former Soviet Union cultural space the legalization of the modern folklore genre – the anecdote has taken place. Having escaped "from the underground", it soon becomes a "respectable" subject of academic research. There are several reasons for this, which include:

– interest in cultural and anthropological plots;
– interdisciplinary nature of the anecdote;
– its rootedness in culture and everyday life;
– extensive interpretative potential, peculiar to phenomena that exist on the "boundaries" of culture;
– and finally, the absence of ideological censorship. Although it should be mentioned that there is some ambiguity of this factor, since the anecdote loses the "forbidden fruit" aura, which is so necessary for its pragmatics.

It should be stated that at the present time the folklore anecdote as well as the literary one is an issue of current importance to study of which extensive literature is devoted. However, theoretical and methodological approaches applicable to the 19th century literary anecdote do not "work" in the study of the modern one due to the difference in their genre nature and pragmatics. Most scholars, although considering the anecdote of the 19th century "a semi-folk-semi-literary genre" (N. Tamarchenko), nevertheless refer it to "small genres of memoir narrative prose" (Ye. Nikanorova). The Soviet and post-Soviet anecdote, in contrast to the literary one, is a product of the oral democratic tradition and folk culture of laughter. However, the affinity between them of course exists.

1. Definition and Genre Modus of the Soviet Anecdote

The modern anecdote is understood as "a short oral funny story about a fictional event with unexpected witty ending and regular

characters known to all native speakers"[1]. This definition conceptualizes such genre features of the anecdote as conciseness, contextuality, seriality, the presence of aningenious turn or a pointe. In addition, its paradoxicality, acute political or topical household content are also noted[2]. Due to some resemblance between the anecdote and other genre forms, literary critics may call it a mini-novel[3], a peculiar humorous, often grotesque parable[4], a mediator genre, a marginal genre[5]. Particular attention is paid to the communicative situation of anecdote telling. Its peculiarities involve the special "confidentiality of communication" between the narrator and listeners[6]. Furthermore, the scientists examine the communicative-pragmatic nature of a political anecdote, its function as a tool of PR[7].

Certainly, the Soviet anecdote has a special status in folkloristics – this is the only genre existing in the industrial period in exclusively oral form. At present, the anecdote exists both in the primary form of the oral narrative and in the secondary one which is a written fixation. We could agree that the oral character of the mini-narrative is the most natural form of its existence. However, as sociocultural situation has changed, the anecdote increasingly "lives" in the territory of Guttenberg or on the Internet, which signals both the formation of the genre and modifications of its communicative and pragmatic strategies.

Perhaps, while losing in terms of "performance", the presentation in a situation of direct communication "in the kitchen", the anecdote wins due to its spreading and the involving of more participants in communication. As a result, the creative potential of the anecdote is realized more productively. Like any other folklore genre, it proves its viability, being enriched by its variants and paraphrases. And here it is

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[1] Шмелева Е.Я. Русский анекдот: Текст и речевой жанр / Е.Я. Шмелева, А.Д. Шмелев. М. : Языки славянской культуры, 2002. С. 20.

[2] Литературная энциклопедия терминов и понятий: Под ред. А.Н. Николюкина. Институт научн. информации по общественным наукам РАН. М.: НПК «Интелвак», 2003. С. 34–35.

[3] Анекдот / Літературознавча енциклопедія : У двох томах. Т. 1. / Авт.-уклад. Ю.І. Ковалів. К. : ВЦ «Академія», 2007. С. 68.

[4] Литературный энциклопедический словарь / Под общ. ред. В.М. Кожевникова и др. М. : Сов. Энциклопедия, 1987. С. 28.

[5] Руднев В.П. Прагматика анекдота. *Даугава*. 1990. № 6.

[6] Поэтика: Словарь актуальных терминов и понятий / Гл. науч. ред. Н.Д. Тамарченко. М. : Издательство Кулагиной; Intrada, 2008.С. 22.

[7] Карпчук Н. Політичний анекдот як інструмент PR. URL: http://www.nbuv.gov.ua/portal/natural/Nvvnu/misnarod_vidnos/2007_7/1/4

appropriate to emphasize the similarity of the anecdote and the myth, manifested in the recipient's co-creation.

The inexhaustibility of the anecdote definition can be confirmed by at least one of the last known. It sounds like this: an anecdote is a "verbal game for the right to signify a referent by substitution of components in fractionated signs" [8]. By the way, there is a Soviet anecdote concerning this.

"Идет Василий Иванович, встречает Фурманова. – Куда идешь? – Диссертацию защищать. – А как она называется? – 'Как решетом воду носить'. – Кто ж так диссертацию называет? Назови ее лучше так: «Анализ проблем транспортировки вещества в жидком агрегатном состоянии в сосудах с перфорированным дном».

Пошел Василий Иванович, защитил диссертацию, выходит и видит – стоит Петька. – А ты чего здесь делаешь? – Диссертацию защищал. – Как называется? – «Влияние русских народных музыкальных кнопочных инструментов на развитие религиозно-философской мысли России конца XVIII – начала XX века». – Фурманова встречал? – Ну, да. – А как твоя диссертация до него называлась? – «На хрена попу баян»."

There are several versions of this anecdote, including those one that do not contain the reference to the fixed couple of characters – Vasilii Ivanovich and Petka. This permits us to define such a quality of anecdote as variability and prevalence. Moreover, the pragmatic relevance of the anecdote should be mentioned, which is chiefly marked with special metatextual phrases meaning "As they say in that anecdote", "There is an anecdote about this", "And here is another anecdote concerning this", etc.

To conclude our terminological review, it should be clarified that like other researchers, the notion of the "anecdote" we comprehend in slightly broader sense that includes not only mini-novels or funny stories, but also various "alterations", the acting-outs of the official speech cliches, ideologically loaded lyrics of songs, etc.. These as a rule include the Soviet ideologems, which in the anecdote serve as subjects to deconstruction. The basis for such a broad interpretation is in the genetic kinship between the anecdote and another genre form: the apophthegm (a short moralizing or witty statement), since the Soviet anecdote is a

[8] Буркин А. Дополнения к разысканиям в области анекдотической литературы / Вопросы эстетики. Страницы, посвящѐнные вопросам филологии, эстетики, истории культуры. URL: http://aesthetica.narod.ru/anekdotos.htm.

mock controversy of the ideological, primarily linguistic, reality. Authoritative researchers write about this (A. Losev, A. Siniavskii), confirming the mythical and magical effect of the word in the anecdote[9], which is its main character: "The anecdote is a product of the Soviet official clichés that explodes itself"[10].

According to this principle, the following anecdotes are built: "*Плакат у обкома: «Кто у нас не работает, тот не ест»*" Or: "*Лозунг: «Встретим столетие со дня рождения Ленина досрочно!»"*. Another example: "*Давеча перечитывал Ленина. Заснул на третьем «учиться»".*

2. Sociocultural Specificity and Poetics of the Soviet Anecdote

When trying to define what a "Soviet anecdote" is, a certain paradox appears. Most researchers (O. Smolitskaia, M. Vorobieva) regard the Soviet anecdote as "a special modification of the folklore anecdote genre generated by the culture of Soviet society. To the Soviet anecdotes those ones are ranked that emerged during the Soviet period of Russian history, that is from 1917 to 1991." [11] Based on the chronological principle of this definition, the corpus of the Soviet anecdotes includes its various types, represented by thematic groups (of every day life, national, political, etc.) and cycles (anecdotes about Lenin, anecdotes about Vovochka, etc.). Although, if we proceed from the semantics and pragmatics of sufficiently wide range of political mini-texts, it seems correctly to call them anti-Soviet. Though the anecdote loses this unambiguity by virtue of its ambivalence, which fixed the double or even triple morality peculiar for society: public "approval", backstreet "disapproval" and at the same time self-mockery for such a kind of behavior.

Consider the next example from Stalin's time: "*ЦК ВКП(б) принял постановление о всеобщем сечении. Всюду проходят митинги. Выступающие от имени своих коллективов приветствуют это мудрое великое постановление. Вдруг до зала заседаний ЦК доносится с площади оглушительный шум. Сталин спрашивает:*

[9]Лосев А.Ф. Диалектика мифа Из ранних произведений. М. : Правда, 1990. С. 446.

[10]Синявский А. Основы советской цивилизации. М. : Аграф, 2002. С. 290.

[11]Воробьева М.В. Анекдот как феномен повседневной культуры советского общества (на материале анекдотов 1960-1980-х годов) : автореф. канд. культурологии. Екатеринбург 2008. 20 с. URL: http://cheloveknauka.com / anekdot-kak-fenomen-povsednevnoy-kultury-sovetskogo-obschestva

«Что это там?» Ему докладывают: «Это Академия Наук рвется без очереди»."(In another version– "*Союз советских писателей лезет без очереди.")*.

The anecdote of Khrushchev's Thaw: "*На XX съезде Хрущев получил из зала записку: «Где же вы были при Сталине?» Хрущев спросил: «Кто это написал?» Никто не ответил. Он сказал: «Вот и я был там же».*

The anecdote of the late Soviet period is quiet demonstrative in this aspect: "*Мы говорим «Ленин» – подразумеваем «партия», мы говорим «партия» – подразумеваем «Ленин». И так 70 лет – говорим одно, а подразумеваем другое*" (the anniversary of the October Revolution varies depending on the time of telling the anecdote).

Despite the social status and epoch in which a Soviet man lived, he has these features strongly rooted in his personality. By this the anecdote rates the anthropological project "a Soviet Man" as a defeat and an existential failure. The mirror of the anecdote reflects the well-known and understandable realities, which can be hinted with a wink, as well as their cynical evaluation, devoid of any illusions. Indeed, one cannot but agree with D. Bykov that "the anecdote is not only courageous, but also in some ways cowardly!"[12]. Equally important is the fact that the functioning of the anecdote outside the official culture and ideology, where other laws and priorities are in place, contributes to the sober self-identification of the "man of the masses" against duplicity and hypocrisy of the state.

The flourishing of the Soviet anecdote took place in the 1960s-1980s, that is in the periods of Khrushchev and Brezhnev. Among the thematic varieties of the genre, the most representative is a political anecdote, although it should be recognized that to differentiate official part of the Soviet everyday life from its private one is sufficiently complicated. Precisely in the striving for the liberation of the "sovok" from the dictates of ideology, and for the help in the realization of the uniqueness of human existence–though deprived of civil rights, reduced to "biopolitics" (M. Foucault) of the "bare" life" (G. Agamben), the significance of the anecdote cannot be overestimated.

The Soviet anecdote subtly notices and ridicules the ideological pressure in all its spheres, from human existence to the household. Here are a few anecdotes about this: "*Рабинович с женой едет в*

[12] Быков Д. Возвращение анекдота. *Огонек.* 2005. № 11. С. 58.

плацкартном вагоне. Он шумно вздыхает. – Сколько раз я просила, – говорит мадам Рабинович – на людях о политике ни слова!". Or another example: "*100-летний юбилей вождя пролетарской революции предприятия встречают новыми трудовыми свершениями: мебельная фабрика выпустила трехспальную кровать «Ленин всегда с нами», парфюмерный комбинат – мыло «По заветным ленинским местам»; духи «Запах Ильича» и пудру «Ленинский прах»*".

Apparently by the means of pun, parody repetition of common speech clichés, grotesque sharpening of those ones to the edge of absurd, the anecdote cleverly destructs the ideologemes of the Soviet myth, defending human right for the privacy and freedom of his personal space. And this itself was considered to be politics. The Soviet anecdote has been for decades one of the productive channels of informal communication on political and topical issues of the day.

The corpus of studies of the Soviet anecdote consists of articles, dissertations, monographs by E. Kurganov, A. Arkhipova, M. Melnichenko, E. Shmeleva, A. Shmelev, O. Smolitskaia, R. Yanhirov, V. Razuvaiev, M. Vorobieva, A. Kirziuk, V. Rudnev, essays by A. Siniavskii. The authors – folklorists, specialists in literature, linguists, culture experts – deal with the poetics, specifics and functions of the Soviet anecdote as an urban folklore genre, reveal its genesis and correlations with the literary anecdote, their similarity and difference, genre transformations of the Soviet and post-Soviet anecdote, analyze themes, characters, principles of cyclization. In the works, it is studied the specificity of communication, sociocultural significance of the anecdote as a phenomenon of culture of laughter and a document of the epoch, its part in the Soviet everyday life.

The problem we have declared – the mythopoetics and pragmatics of the Soviet anecdote –has not been the subject of a special study. Since, due to the specificity of the genre, it is rather difficult to separate the pragmatics of the anecdote from its literary and aesthetic characteristics, these categories are considered in synthesis. A case study of the collections of Dora Shturman and SergeiTiktin's "The Soviet Union in the Mirror of a Political Anecdote"[13], the monograph of

[13] Штурман Д., Тиктин С. Советский Союз в зеркале политического анекдота. London: Overseas Publications Interchange Ltd, 1985. 469 с. URL: https://www.twirpx.com

Mikhail Melnichenko[14], "The Staliniada" by Yurii Borev[15], and special Internet sites was conducted.

3. Typological Convergence of the Myth and the Soviet Anecdote

The theoretical basis for the formulation of the problem of our research appears to be reflected by L. Stolovich "convergence and divergence of the myth and anecdote phenomena, though apparently unequal, are for sure significant for the human culture history"[16]. An analysis of L. Stolovich's article "Anecdote and Myth" makes it possible to single out several of its conceptual positions. Firstly, the scholar notes the myth-creative potentialities of the anecdote; secondly, it is stated the similarities between the myth and the anecdote at the pragmatic level: both phenomena are thought to bean authentic reality for the believers' consciousness. Without this faith, as we know, the myth turns into a fairy tale. Concerning the anecdote, it is also perceived as reality, despite its strong aiming at fiction, conventional plot or the absurdity of the situation, since the anecdote "exists in life, becoming the part of it" [ibid.]. The existence of the anecdote on the border of culture and anticulture produces its special characteristic: the reality in the anecdote is reliable primarily in psychological and value aspects (V. Vatsuro, Ye. Kurganov, V. Khimik). As a result, "a zone of absolutely unique credibility appears, revealing the dominion of foolishness, madness and idiocy, that in the anecdote are the most common and stereotyped mover of human society"[17].

The comparability of the myth and anecdote in the field of pragmatics is noted by V. Rudnev, who considers its function to diffuse a situation and to eliminate contradictions between the disputing parties, to be purely mythological, mediational (asA. Piatihorskiistates)[18]. Stating further, the mediation of the anecdote is also revealed in its mediation between ideology, official and unofficial cultures.

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[14] Мельниченко М. Советский анекдот (Указатель сюжетов) М. : Новое литературное обозрение, 2014. 1104 с.

[15] Борев Ю.Б. Сталиниада. М : Советский писатель, 1990. 408 с.

[16] Столович Л.Н. Анекдот и миф. *Анекдот как феномен культуры :* материалы круглого стола 16 ноября 2002 г. СПб.:, 2002. С. 46.

[17] Курганов Е. Похвальное слово анекдоту. СПб : Звезда, 2001. С. 208.

[18] Руднев В.П. Прагматика анекдота. *Даугава.* 1990. № 6. С. 101.

The functions of the mediator are also performed by the trickster hero, who forms an ambivalent discourse, disclosing plurality of meanings instead of the only one which is definite, and none of them can claim to be true. Thus, it destroys the authorities, undermining the official foundations of the "only true doctrine", in which no one has long ago believed. One cannot but agree with M. Lipovetskii's statement that "the Soviet trickster, apparently in the most adequate way, embodied the power of cynicism, so necessary for survival in the constantly changing, incomprehensible and opaque social conditions of the Soviet society, reflecting – in a comic, game form – the real sociality, which was formed as a result of the Bolshevik experiment and which did not fit the binary structures of both official Soviet and unofficial discourses"[19].

The myth and the anecdote sometimes have one basis which is the past. Its rethinking by descendants contributes to the mythologization of their consciousness, organizes a world image from chaos to outer space. But if in the myth the past is modeled in earnest modus of "memories of the future", in the anecdote it is often unpredictable, as well as the political history itself ("history is written"), or rethought ironically and comically. For example,"*Хрущев ввел в Конституцию СССР новую статью: «Граждане СССР имеют право на посмертную реабилитацию»*". The anecdote sarcastically responds to the events of recent political history, rewritten according to each new general secretary: "*Мальчик спрашивает: «Папа, Ленин хороший?» – «Хороший». – «А Сталин плохой?» – «Плохой». – «А Брежнев?» – «Не приставай: умрет – узнаешь»*". And there is an earlier version of the anecdote: "*– Бабушка, а Никита Сергеевич хороший человек? – Подожди, внучек, помрет, тогда узнаем*". There are some later variants, in which the name of Brezhnev is changed to Gorbachev, which indicates that this anecdote was deeply rooted in the mass consciousness.

This allows us to consider the Soviet anecdote (which fully applies to the myth too) as a source of historical and cultural memory that preserves the mythologemes and ideologemes of the Soviet period mass consciousness, which are typical equally to the official, unofficial culture and everyday life. In this case, the duality of semantics and pragmatics of the anecdote should be stated: its realities and implications remain in the

[19] Липовецкий М.Н. Трикстер и «закрытое» общество. *Новое литературное обозрение.* 2009. № 100. С. 227.

memory of descendants due to the living speakers of the Soviet culture "language", and the necessary time distance creates conditions for its objective study without excessive evaluation and the polemical enthusiasm of contemporaries.

As well, another common feature of the myth and anecdote should be noted – their anonymity, or rather the presence of a collective author. According to C. Levi-Strauss, "myths do not have their authors: at the very first perception of them as myths, whatever their origin is, they have already existed only embodied in tradition. When the myth is told, individual listeners receive a message that comes out of actually nowhere."[20].

A similar mechanism determines the reception of the anecdote, although in some cases the folklore tradition attributes to it an authorship (for example, according to rumors, the anecdotes for the Armenian radio were written by the theoretical physicist, Nobel Prize laureate 1962, academician L. Landau), and sometimes preserves it. The latter refers to K. Radek too, who was a Trotskyist, an oppositionist to Stalin, the writer as well as the character of the anecdotes. The most famous of them is the following: "*Сталин говорит Радеку: «Товарищ Радек, я слышал, что ты сочиняешь политические анекдоты. Анекдоты – это неплохо. Только обо мне не надо сочинять анекдотов. Я ведь вождь». «Ты – вождь?! Этот анекдот сочинил не я», – ответил Радек.*" Written fixation of this anecdote is often accompanied by some emblematic speech characteristic – Stalin's Georgian accent (other individual markers of the anecdote characters are also demonstrative in this regard – Lenin's burry, national speech clichés, for example, "*однако*" in the Chukchi, etc.)

K. Radek's real fate can serve as an illustration of the thesis about the blurring of the boundaries between an anecdote and reality. Filling out a form in prison in 1937, Radek to the question about what he did before the revolution wrote: "*Сидел и ждал".*The next question was: "*Чем занимались после революции?*". Radek's answer was: "*Дождался и сел*"[21]. It is obvious that the anecdote is determined by reality, as well as to some extent it is projected on it.

[20] Леви-Стросс Клод. Мифологики. В 4 т. Т I. Сырое и приготовленное. М.; СПб.: Университетская книга, 1999. С. 26.

[21]Эйдельман Д. Карл Радек – автор и герой анекдотов. URL: https://relevantinfo.co.il/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/16-2.jpg

In this aspect, a mention should be made about M. Berg's review with the interesting title "Myth, Anecdote and Reality. Chapaev and Furmanov". This is a response to P. Kupriianovskii's book about the legendary divisional commander, published before the 110th birth anniversary of Vasilii Chapaev[22]. According to M. Berg, among the rather sluggish materials, the most interesting are the fragments of D. Furmanov's unpublished completely diary, in which the triangle consisting of Chapaev, Furmanov's wife Anna Nikitichna (who is in the anecdote Anka-Puliemotchitsa "The Machine Gunner"), and D. Furmanov is shown. In the novel of the writer who created the ideological myth about the revolutionary epoch and its heroes, not a word was said about it. And then the author of the review states that "the creators of anecdotes were interested in the very different truth – assuming the impossible, they thus reconstructed the history".[23] In other words, the anecdotes dealt with the problems of what most likely could have happened.

It is significant that the brothers Vasiliiev chose another way of mythologization – in Stalin's way as opposed to D. Furmanov's heroic-monumental narrative about the civil war. In the first Soviet blockbuster "Chapaev" (1934), they create the myth about the national hero, which completely replaced the reality. Even though the novel and the film have a common basis which is the real past, Chapaev becomes a character of the urban folklore in many respects due to the film. The anecdote acts as a mediator between the socialist-realistic myth of D. Furmanov, who depicted "reality in its revolutionary development," and the myth of the brothers Vasiliiev about the cultural hero, whose demythologization generates a huge number of anecdotes about Vasilii Ivanovich and his "retinue" – Petka and Anka-Puliemotchitsa.

In an anecdote, the legendary division commander is embodied in the cultural archetype of the trickster. He vividly manifests the dual nature of the cultural hero with its ambivalence and ethical dualism reflected by E. Meletinskii. As the researcher notes, on the one hand, the myth sets the rules and regulations, which does not always allow the cultural hero to violate them and be the representative of anti-behavior.

[22] Берг М. Миф, анекдот и реальность. Чапаев и Фурманов. URL: http://sad.ucoz.ru/publ/1-1-0-3

[23] Ibidem.

On the other hand, it gives the cultural hero the features of a cheat-prankster (the trickster) capable of various tricks, deception, abduction[24].

The combination of cultural hero and trickster in one person, the anecdotes' hero Vasilii Ivanovich, similar to the archaic myth, serves as an antidote to the total regulation of ideology. It could be therefore, that a great amount of anecdotes about Chapaev, which arose immediately after the appearance of the film of the same name, are still inexhaustible. These represent the heroic personality as a typical trickster: a prankster, a liar, a rogue, not always successful womanizer, but at the same time light-hearted and in a way artistic. In contrast to the officialdom, as if protesting the imposed ideological schemes and dogmas, the mass consciousness actualized these very features of his personality, while clearly admiring him. For example, "*Петька: – Василий Иванович, какая-то сволочь в соседней деревне всех девок перепортила! Василий Иванович (игриво подкручивая ус): – Так уж и сволочь!*"

According to M. Lipovetskii, the Soviet man's love for tricksters relates to the "schizophrenic multiplicity and mercury mobility of the Soviet subject"[25] – the trickster has parallel lives and easily changes one role to another. This trickster characteristic is also inherent in Vasilii Ivanovich, who successfully combines several, sometimes incompatible, roles. Adding to this, Chapaev from the anecdotes is endowed with boldness, spirit generosity, drinking and having-good-time skills, adventurism, lack of ideology. These are in other words features admired by the mass person who are far from the ideologically correct image of the Red Army commander.

The element of anti-behavior is realized in carnival laughter by images of the material and physical basis, trickster signs are the moments that describe Vasilii Ivanovich's dressing in the skin of animals (masking). As a rule, play on words and pun are the dominant techniques in the poetics of this cycle of anecdotes. For example: "*Построил Чапай дивизию и говорит: – Бойцы-красногвардейцы! Как вы думаете: птицам деньги нужны? – Никак нет, товарищ комдив! – Так вот, орлы, вашу зарплату я пропил! Подбегает Анка: – А мою, Василь Иваныч? – И твою, ласточка, тоже.*"

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[24] Мелетинский Е. Культурный герой / Мифы народов мира. Энциклопедия : в 2-х т. / гл. редактор С.А. Токарев. М. 1997. Т. 2. С. 25–27.

[25] Липовецкий М.Н. Трикстер и «закрытое» общество. *Новое литературное обозрение*. 2009. № 100. С. 235.

All this confirms the interaction of the trickster "with the archetype structures of thinking and consciousness, which are purely mythological in nature. Every time, since the connection between a new comic image and its oldest archetype is captured, we may claim the presence of the mythological dimension in the work"[26]. The analysis conducted allows us to state the mythopoetic element of the Soviet anecdote as a product of mass consciousness, realized in the culture of laughter.

Attention should be drawn to another aspect, which makes it possible to assert "the convergence of the phenomena of myth and anecdote" (L. Stolovich) in the culture of the twentieth century. This implies anthropological and sociological factors that influenced the actualization of myth-creation and anecdote as a folklore genre in a transitional era. In this regard, we may single out several intersection points of myth and anecdote. It is known that the myth- creation of the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was a reaction to the crisis of the rationalism of modern times, breaking the "already formed balance between collective and individual forms of consciousness"[27]. As a result of global cultural and historical shifts (splits of empires, growth of cities), a change in the center and periphery characteristic of transitivity occurs in the hierarchy of modern values. Collective forms of creativity, marginalized by the previous development, in the unstable situation of the collapse of the traditional culture and the birth of a new one, begin to occupy dominant positions.

The element of myth-creation embraces various spheres of culture – the elite and the mass, the official and the local, and violates the boundaries between the literary and the non-literary. While the urban population growing, a new anthropological type emerges – a man of the masses who gains his voice in the activities where not individual, but the collective creates. Myth-creation and folklore as the most immanent forms of collective consciousness in the culture of the twentieth century, were developing simultaneously, basing on an invariant foundation –

[26]Хренов Н.А. Личность лиминарного типа как субъект российской цивилизации и институционализации ее картины мира в культуре / Пространство жизни субъекта : Единство и многомерность субъектообразующей социальной эволюции / Отв. ред.Э.В. Сайко ; Науч. совет «История мировой культуры». М. : Наука, 2004. С. 387.

[27] Хренов Н.А. От эпохи бессознательного к эпохе рефлексии о мифе. / Миф в художественном сознании XX века / отв. Ред. Н.А. Хренов; Гос. Ин-т искусствоведения. М. : «Канон+» РООИ «Реабилитация», 2011. С. 52.

mass consciousness. Possessing myth-creative potencies, as L. Stolovich notes, "the anecdote creates an aesthetic and literary reality, transferring into mass consciousness (the image of the "Land of fools", existing in every nation, "Radio Yerevan", "the Englishman" or "the Chukchi man", Lenin, Pushkin, Chapaev, Stirlitz, Brezhnev as the characters of anecdotes, post-war "general's wives" and post-Perestroika "the New Russians", etc.)[28]. In anecdotes, the mythologized mass consciousness finds simple explanations of a complex set of the surrounding world facts and processes. In the broader sense, an anecdote, as well as a myth, is an indirect manifestation of the collective unconscious.

Concurrently, we indicate the difference between anecdote and myth. According to L. Stolovich, it lies in the seriousness of the myth as opposed to the playful, witty-comic nature of the anecdote. M. Kagan also writes about this, claiming that the literary value of the mini-narrative is determined by its ability to cause a smile or laugh, even if it is "laughter through the tears"[29]. As a phenomenon of unofficial culture, the anecdote trifles with all regulatory institutions: ideology, culture, social stereotypes, national preferences and values, tightly embracing everyday life. There are no hierarchies for it. He freely crosses the established boundaries, destroys rituals and taboos, inverts the norms and rules, "turning the minside out". The anecdote as if tests their strength, thereby provoking the recipient's awareness of relativity, and sometimes the illusiveness of official norms greatness and firmness. Regarding the ordinary reality, the world image in an anecdote is an anti-world, where the norm is a kind of a deviation from the standpoint of the dominant ideology and morality. Thus, in the Soviet anecdote it is embodied not only the axiological coordinates of the "silent majority", but also the "portraits" of its manipulators – the communist leaders, the pantheon of heroes, iconic images of official and mass culture, and the representatives of the media.

The Soviet anecdote is well known as a product of urban laughter culture, "folklore of intelligentsia". The notion of "folklore of intelligentsia" is conceptualized by Yu. Borev."In totalitarian societies," writes the scholar, "where the intelligentsia could not entrust their life experience to paper, a

[28] Столович Л.Н. Анекдот и миф. *Анекдот как феномен культуры :* материалы круглого стола 16 ноября 2002 г. СПб.:, 2002. С. 46.

[29] Каган М.С. Анекдот как феномен культуры / Материалы круглого стола 16 ноября 2002 г. СПб. : Санкт-Петербургское философское общество, 2001. С. 6.

whole layer of culture emerged –folklore of intelligentsia, giving an alternative to the history image created by documents".[30]

Using all means of the comic, namely sarcasm, irony, frank mockery, pun, and humorous implications, "folklore of intelligentsia" in its favorite anecdote genre deconstructs the lexicon of the communist ideology. Its slogans, appeals, texts of official culture are filled with new semantics. Their recoding appears as a result of corrupted citation, travesty, parody foregrounding, language distortion. For example, to the slogan "*Да здравствует советский народ – строитель коммунизма*" ("*Long live the Soviet people – the builder of communism*"), an anonymous author adds an epithet meaning "eternal". The achieved ironic effect: the people is "*вечный строитель коммунизма*" ("*the eternal builder of communism*") – destroy the "official" meaning and pathos totally. The widely replicated Marxists' formula "*от каждого по способностям, каждому по потребностям*" ("*from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs*"), as a result of parodic foregrounding, receives a new semantics: "*if they don't give according to the needs, we'll steal according to our abilities*".

Due to the laughter nature, the anecdote deprives the Soviet era rituals and myths of sacredness, creating its own neo-myth, which allows us to signify their secondary mythologization in the mass consciousness. This feature is most clearly realized in the demythologization of the "pantheon" of the Soviet era leaders and heroes. The hero of the anecdote is not Chapaev, Lenin, Stalin, Brezhnev as historical figures or literary-cinematic characters, but their anti-cultural parodies. "*Идет Василий Иванович пьяный, грязный, оплеванный, в соломе. Навстречу ему Петька. – Василий Иванович, ты откуда такой!? – Из анекдотов, Петька, из анекдотов"*. The motive of dirt, dominant in the image of the divisional commander, goes back to the mythological trickster. According to L. Hyde, "the main thing that the trickster prefers to do is to obliterate or violate the line between dirty and clean," including "returning to life with the help of dirt". In this regard, continues Hyde, the cultural function of the trickster is similar to the carnival functions in the M. Bakhtin's description. Undoubtedly, for the people as a language and anecdote maker to burden himself with knowledge of mythological or

[30] Борев Ю. Интеллигентский фольклор. URL: http://www.ng.ru/style/2002-04-24/16_folklore.html

culturological conceptions was the last thing to do. In this case it is a vivid illustration of the way archetypical structures of the myth being manifested through collective creative work in the modern anecdote.

The bidirectionality of the anecdote is manifested in its functions and pragmatics: on the one hand, it reflects the values, stereotypes and moods of the mass consciousness; on the other hand, opposing the official ideology, it forms a new evaluative position, thereby freeing man of the masses from ideological dogmas. "Uncensored" political laughter performs a compensatory function, since it serves to create a laughter catharsis, to remove contradictions, thus giving the narrator and listener the possibility of verbal "satisfaction", originally embedded in the anecdote. Exemption from anger and dissatisfaction caused by the actions of the authorities allows an ordinary citizen to adapt to ideological and social "doublethink", as it is precisely stated in the slogan from the anecdote: "*Колебался, но вместе с линией партии*".

A similar compensatory function is performed by the myth, which is considered by its authoritative researchers (R. Caillois, F. Cassidy, O. Rank, S. Freud). As N. Khrenov notes with reference to R. Caillois, it is the myth that "shows to consciousness an image of such a behavior to which it feels inclined"[31]. There it is significant the analogy between compensatory function of the myth and of the anecdote. Identifying themselves with gods or heroes (which is characteristic of the myth reception) or with a clever and witty anecdote hero who can defeat influential authorities, both the narrator and listener are thereby ousting from consciousness negative experiences and conflicts, as if it happened in reality.

In the deconstruction of the Soviet mass consciousness mythologemes, the pragmatics of anecdote is of special importance. The totalitarian government understood this, having banned it from the mid-1920s. For the spreading of political anecdotes criminal penalties followed, up to the highest measure in the period of Stalinism. Nevertheless, the anecdote does not leave the culture of laughter, which, according to Bakhtin, is always oppositional to the official culture. This is revealed by numerous variations of this plot. For example, "*Знаете, кто строил Беломорско-Балтийский канал? С одного берега те, кто рассказывал политические анекдоты,*

[31]Хренов Н.А. От эпохи бессознательного к эпохе рефлексии о мифе // Миф в художественном сознании XX века / отв. Ред. Н.А. Хренов; Гос. Ин-т искусствоведения. М. : «Канон+» РООИ «Реабилитация», 2011. С. 31–32.

а с другого – те, кто слушал".Or: "*Новенького привели в тюремную камеру. «За что тебя? – спрашивают старожилы» – «Да за лень…». «Как это – «за лень»?» – «Ну, встретился с приятелем, он мне анекдотик, я ему анекдотик, он позвонил, а я поленился*". Researchers noted another paradox: "the 'lower classes' of society (peasants, workers, etc.) sometimes did not notice the political sense in their narratives and songs and learned about the latter only in the dungeons of the GPU / NKVD"[32]. The anecdote promptly responded to the weakening of censorship and persecution of dissent in the late Soviet period: "*Что такое уцененный анекдот? – Это анекдот, за который раньше давали 10 лет, а теперь только семь*".

It is known that the Soviet ideology and culture, as well as a whole its society, are hierarchical. At the top of the hierarchy it is found the sacred ideologeme "the bright path to communism". The culture of socialist realism mythologizes historical periods of the Soviet country, which received the cliché name "stages of a long path". The myth about the imminent coming of the Golden Age for some time becomes an effective means of controlling the mass consciousness. In accord with social realism, the idea of the Soviet world, when the wish is mistaken for the reality, is widely embedded in the mass consciousness. However, in the periods of Khrushchev and Brezhnev, the idea of a utopian future is subjected to the greatest demythologization: "*Самый короткий анекдот – коммунизм*"; "*Самый длинный анекдот – программа строительства коммунизма*."

Soviet ideology activates one of the leading myth functions – the function of psychological compensation, which is associated with new cosmogonies. The mass consciousness is made to believe the idea of the social model uniqueness of the new world – "heaven on earth" – which has no analogues in the history of mankind. However, the anecdote responds to this mythologeme too: "*На том свете встретились Христос и Маркс. – Почему твое антинаучное учение существует уже почти 2000 лет, а мое научное рассыпается через полтора столетия? – спросил Христа основоположник научного коммунизма. – Твоя основная ошибка в том, что ты свой рай показал*".

[32] Панченко А.А. Политический фольклор как предмет антропологических исследований. *Антропологический форум.* 2012. № 12. URL: http://anthropologie.kunstkamera.ru/files/pdf/012online/12_online_panchenko.pdf.

The structural principle of this anecdote is an agon, understood in its mythological meaning as a contest, a verbal, effective duel. The idea of agon is realized in the pragmatics of the anecdote, in its model of the world, built on a semantic contrast. Cultural variations of the contest, when the characters engaging in dialogues, betting, asking each other tricky questions and riddles, are one of the steady features of the Soviet anecdote poetics. For example, the anecdotes of the Second World War, where Stalin argues with Churchill and Roosevelt and wins the duel (one of the few cases representing Stalin rather positively), disputes and actions in the so-called "national" anecdotes, etc.

In the ideological myth about the communist tomorrow, there have been modified two universal myths: the story of the search for an earthly paradise, as a kind of ideal world in which all desires are fulfilled, and a monomyth about "a thousand-face hero". "The thousand-face hero" is the people who undergo initiation, leaving the world of everyday life in the realm of the higher and sacred. The final stage of the journey, its apotheosis and reward will be the embodied dream of an ideal society with its concern for common wealth and prosperity. However, in the Soviet anecdote, the ideologeme "the bright path to communism" is surrounded by everyday life marks and profaned openly. The need to solve ordinary everyday issues appears to be an annoying obstacle on the path of the victorious people to communism. Contrary to the official myth about universal satiety and prosperity, the masses are captured by the quite prosaic dream of gastronomic abundance in the real life. And when the food crisis comes once again, the anecdotes' authors remind the Soviet people that "*по дороге в коммунизм кормить не обещали*".

Using the gap between ideology and everyday life, the anecdote deconstructs ideas of "beautiful outward appearance" in favor of the true nature. So, referring to the artifact of the Stalin period "The Book of Tasty and Healthy Food" – beautifully illustrated and far from ordinary everyday people (recipes with artichokes, lobsters, profiteroles, etc.) – the anecdote offers its own, equally absurd, one: "*Новое издание «Книги о вкусной и здоровой пище». Рецепт первый: «Отвари потихоньку калитку...»*". So the comic effect is created by means of incomplete homonyms ("*отвори*" meaning to open, and "*отвари*" – to boil) in reminiscences from the popular romance "Kalitka "(lyrics and music written by A. Obukhov); allusions to the constant care of the ordinary person for their daily bread; ironic implication arising from the

juxtaposition of two daily occurrences (the romance and the anecdote) and the collision of these worlds.

The intertextuality of the anecdote given above, taken from the world of culture, visually fixes its belonging to "folklore of intelligentsia". The anecdote of the 1950s in the traditional question-and-answer form, in which the recipient will easily recognize the immortal quotation from G. Orwell, has the same book character: "*Are the Soviet people equal? – Yes, equal. But some are more equal than others*." The appearance of the anecdote chronologically coincides with the publication of the Dystopia of G. Orwell's "Nineteen Eighty-Four", which suggests its literary origin as another source of "folklore of intelligentsia".

CONCLUSIONS

The study of the mythopoetics and pragmatics of the Soviet anecdote covers a significant problem field. The "easy" genre is far from a simple subject of research. This can be explained by its "composite" nature, existence at the boundaries of speech and laughter culture, the mediator position between the official and local laughter culture, features of pragmatics and communicative strategies, poetic characteristics.

The Soviet anecdote is a kind of speech genre, which develops in the sphere of laughter culture. Its belonging to urban culture allows us to consider it as a genre of urban folklore too. The Soviet anecdote reflects the mental world of a man of the masses, his hierarchy of values, attitude to official authority structures, sociocultural processes and everyday life.

A comparison of myth and anecdote makes it possible to state a typological resemblance and difference between these two cultural phenomena. The similarity of myth and anecdote is fixed at the level of their myth-creative potencies and pragmatics, in the ability to be a source of memory, in common compensatory functions; it is marked its anonymity, or rather a collective author; the creative potentiality of myth and anecdote, producing from a word new reality, their connection with the mass consciousness. It is revealed that the trickster hero, typical for the anecdote, correlates with the archetype structures of thinking and consciousness, going back to the mythological ones. In the mythologeme of the trickster as well as in the trickster hero of the anecdote, such a common feature as ambivalence is clearly manifested.

While studying the poetics of the Soviet anecdote, comic manifestations were identified such as sarcasm, irony, unconcealed

mockery, pun, parody, humorous implications, play on words, semantic inversion. The poetics of the anecdote performs the pragmatic function of the ideological myth deconstruction. A special part in the Soviet reality demythologization is played by the pragmatics of the anecdote implemented in communicative strategies.

SUMMARY

The article focuses on the mythopoetics and pragmatics of the Soviet anecdote as a speech genre as well as a genre of urban folklore, its definition, genre modus and sociocultural specificity. A case study of "the folklore of intelligentsia" (Yu. Boriev) has been conducted. Much attention is given to the typological convergence of the phenomena of a myth and an anecdote. In the article the myth and the anecdote are revealed as a repository of historical and cultural memory, a product of mass consciousness, which is manifested in the anonymity, myth-creative potential, compensatory function. The hero of the anecdote is the ambivalent figure of the trickster, which goes back to the traditional myth. The emphasis is drawn to the metatextuality inherent in "the folklore of intelligentsia". The Soviet anecdote poetics performs pragmatic function of the ideological mythdeconstruction.

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Information about the author:
Ilinska N. I.
Doctor of Philology, Professor,
Head of the Department of World Literature
and Culture named after professor O. Mishukov,
Kherson State University
27, 40 rokiv Zhovtnya str., Kherson, 73000, Ukraine