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Soviet Cartoons Media Texts in *Cold War* Times: Hermeneutic Analysis

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Abstract

The author uses the hermeneutic analysis – a study of the process of interpretation of media texts, cultural and historical factors influencing the views of the agency / author on the media text. This analysis suggests media text comprehension through comparison with historical, cultural tradition and reality; penetration of its logic; through comparison of media images in historical and cultural context by combining analysis of the structural, plot, ethical, ideological, iconographic / visual, media stereotypes and analysis of media texts' characters. As a result, the author concluded that the era of the *Cold War,* which spawned mutual ideological confrontation of the communist and capitalist countries, covering all categories of media texts, including animation / cartoon. Cartoons were used as levers of power required reports confrontational ideas in attractive folklore, fairy package in order to influence not only adults but also on children's audience.

Keywords: media literacy, film studies, cartoons, media education, animation, cartoon, cold war, ideology, media text, cold war.

Introduction

In my previous works (Fedorov, 2008; 2011), I have repeatedly appealed to the technology hermeneutic analysis of media texts (Eco, 1998; 2005; Eco, 1976; Silverblatt, 2001, p. 80-81). This time I use as an example of the Soviet cartoons media texts on the topic of *Cold War*. This data analysis of media texts, in my opinion, will be useful for the training of future culture & art historians, sociologists, linguists, psychologists and educators.

Materials and methods

Technology hermeneutic analysis of Soviet cartoons media texts on the topic of "cold war".

The historical, cultural, political, ideological context

Historical Context

- the place of media texts' actions: the United States, an unnamed country;
- the times of creation of media texts: these cartoons were created in the second half of the 1940s.
- the era of the *cold war* was the source of the creation of the set as the anti-Soviet / anti-communist and anti-western / anti-bourgeois media texts within the time period 1946-1991 years (since March 5, 1946, when Winston Churchill made his famous Fulton speech, sharply criticized the policy the Soviet Union, and since August-September 1946, when Stalin's regime adopted "anti-

cosmopolitan" resolution "On the magazines "Zvezda" and "Leningrad", "On the repertoire of theaters and measures for improvement" and "On the use and discharge Foreign Literature").

General socio-cultural, political and ideological context of the second half of the 1940s:

- the restoration of the war-torn Russian economy through the exertion of all human resources;
- the rapid development of military industry, nuclear development;
- the establishment of totalitarian regimes (completely dependent on the Kremlin) in almost all the countries of Eastern Europe;
- a return to the practice of mass repression (the struggle against cosmopolitanism, anti-Semitic campaign, etc.).

Discussion

I agree with Russian philosopher and political scientist D.P. Konchalovsky, who come to the conclusion that Russia in the 1930s - 1940s, has turned "in hierarchically structured society absolutist police-type class division, hierarchical bureaucracy, strict discipline, lack of freedom and personal rights. As if stricken 19th century. Return to the 18th and even the 17th century. This is the essence. But apparently, this regime, for the sake of the era and the recent habits, created and supported in every possible way scenery of democracy and freedoms. It is necessary for both internal and external use. To create this duality and contradiction have to befuddle, to confuse people. Hence the propaganda reinforced at every turn (to prevent people to recover and to think again), here the suppression of contact with people who saw the West, they neutralized as much as possible, hence the "iron curtain" (Konchalovsky, 1969, p.24-25).

Undoubtedly, even in the era of peak "cold war" - as in the United States and the Soviet Union - were the media texts with positive characters from the country of "potential enemy". A positive foreign characters mostly appear in the Soviet film adaptations of literary classics, which is set in the past (at least - until 1917). As for western characters of the second part of 1940s, they met in the Soviet media texts if they are anti-imperialist, anti-bourgeois attitudes and actions, and even better - direct support of communist ideas.

But, of course, most of the Soviet media texts on the theme of modern Western life in the times of "cold war" was created with the aim of exposing and accusations of imperialism and the bourgeois world.

In this respect, it is very interesting of real events on both sides of the "Iron Curtain." Yes, we can agree with that the atmosphere of mutual suspicion, rudeness, cynicism, fear, complicity and disunity in last years of Stalinism completely displaced from the domestic themes, could be realized only in the construction of the "enemy image (Turovskaya, 1996, p.106). But, alas, a very similar atmosphere, in spite of all the American democratic tradition, there was in the process of "witch hunt", launched at about the same years of Senator George McCarthy in relation to many of the Hollywood director and screenwriter, accused of sympathizing with communism and the Soviet Union.

At the same time these two mutually hostile media trends are similar version where the true facts (in varying degrees) combined with ideological and aesthetic falsification.

I confidently assert that the Western enemy media image was formed in the Soviet Union (as, indeed, the image of the Soviet enemy in the Western media texts aimed against the USSR) back in 1920s-1930s and later operated effectively for many decades: the vast majority of it was the image of the aggressor / aggressor alien / spy / criminal barbarian / degenerate, and if intellectual, then again, hostile, spiteful and cruel.

In addition, the external threat was "a convenient excuse for domestic problems and contradictions in the socio-economic and political system, which could otherwise be seen as evidence of the inhabitants of the Soviet Union its imperfections" (Fateev, 1999). It was typical for the Stalinist socialism with the because “the dominance of a ruthless and all-consuming state” (Konchalovsky, 1969, p.17).

In this context, the so-called Marshall Plan, developed in 1947 by US Secretary of State James Marshall, was treated by Soviet propaganda as a threat to the socialist camp. The Marshall Plan worked in Western Europe (Britain, France, West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands) from 1948 to 1951 and became known to be one of the most effective economic projects to revive the war-torn

states. Of course, billions of dollars of investment in the development of Europe were associated with the political conditions of the anti-communist orientation.

Hence it is clear that the Marshall Plan in the Soviet Union was perceived hostility and Soviet media of late 1940s were awash with articles against this action.

Ideological propaganda of the Cold War could not circumvent and artistic sphere of life in the USSR. So in addition to the decision of the Politburo of the Communist party "On the magazines "Zvezda" and "Leningrad" (Decision ... 1946),"On the repertoire of theaters and measures to improve them" (Decision ... 1946) the Resolution "On the opera "The Great Friendship" of V. Muradeli" was published in February 1948. This Resolution accused the Soviet composers' works in which “the most clearly presented formalist perversions, anti-democratic trends in music, alien to the Soviet people and their artistic tastes. Characteristic features of this music is the denial of the basic principles of classical music, preaching, atonality, dissonance and disharmony, which are supposedly an expression of "progress" and "innovation" in the development of musical form, the rejection of the essential foundations of a musical work, which is a melody, passion chaotic, neuropathic combinations that turn music into cacophony, a chaotic jumble of sounds. This music gives much the spirit of contemporary modernist bourgeois music of Europe and America displaying insanity of bourgeois culture, a complete negation of the musical art, its dead end” (Decision ... 1948).

Moreover, in April-May 1949, the Soviet Union developed a special "Action Plan to strengthen the anti-American propaganda in the near future," provides for "the systematic printing materials, articles, pamphlets exposing the aggressive plans of US imperialism, anti-national character of the social and political system of the United States, debunks the fable of American propaganda about the "prosperity" of America, showing the profound contradictions of the US economy, the falsity of bourgeois democracy, the insanity of bourgeois culture and mores of modern America" (The plan ... 1949).

Results

And it should be noted that all three of anti-Western cartoon, shot in 1949 - *Ambulance, Mr. Wolf* and *Alien Voice* - fully meet the objectives of this plan.

The first of these was exposed perfidy of the Marshall Plan, the second - the greed and deceit of the American bourgeoisie, and the third - noxiousness formalism and jazz music.

The ideological, political context

The term *Cold War* is closely related to such concepts as *psychological war, ideological struggle, political propaganda, ideological propaganda, propaganda* (under the *propaganda* I understand purposeful regular a media introduction into the mass consciousness of this or that ideology to achieve a particular social effect planned) and the *enemy image*. According to the just determination A.V. Fateev, "*enemy image* is an ideological expression of social antagonism, dynamic character hostile to the state and the citizen forces, a policy tool of the ruling groups of the society. ... The *enemy image* is a crucial element of *psychological warfare*, which is a deliberate and planned use of *propaganda* by political opponents, among other means of pressure for the direct or indirect influence on the opinions, moods, feelings and behavior of the enemy, allies and their populations in order to force them to act in pleasing to the government directions"(Fateev, 1999).

In this sense, animated film *Ambulance, Mr. Wolf* and *Alien Voice* noticeable clear message of propaganda aimed at convincing the audience that:

- The Marshall Plan is built on the evil designs of the US imperialists in the guise of economic aid to rob and plunge into poverty population of the European countries (*Ambulance*);
- Even pretending for a while pacifist Western bourgeois sooner or later finds its aggressive, greedy nature (*Mr. Wolf*);
- Imposed by the West and disharmonious cheeky "music of thick" (jazz, etc.) must be uncompromisingly rejected the true connoisseurs of classical music, folk tunes and genuinely (*Alien Voice*).

In general, the ideological and political context of world, depicted in the anti-Western Soviet cartoons in 1949, can probably be described as follows.

Ideology and political context of world depicted in the anti-Western Soviet cartoons of the *Cold War* times.

Ideology of the world represented in the media text: the imperialist bourgeois ideology, the ideology of survival in the world of the wolf (*Ambulance, Mr. Wolf*), the ideology of the struggle for traditional music against harmful foreign influences (*Alien Voice*).

The hierarchy of values of the world in the media text: wealth - power - fun, entertainment (*Ambulance, Mr. Wolf*), enjoy of jazz melody (*Alien voice*).

The recipe of a success for the characters of the media text: to be aggressive imperialist, greedy and deceitful bourgeois (*Ambulance, Mr. Wolf*), to be alover of discord and disharmony in the music (*Alien voice*), to be able to survive in the world of the wolfs (*Ambulance, Mr. Wolf*).

Characters seek to achieve this success by any means available to them - false propaganda, armed aggression, persistent implementation of the masses modernist music.

In general, these cartoons have stereotyped characters, but some characters may also have individual characteristics (eg, Mr. Wolf first puts on the mask of a pacifist).

Cultural Context

As a product of mass / popular culture, Soviet 1949's cartoons on the theme of confrontation with the Western way of life relied on folklore and fairy sources, including traditional fabulous presentation about wolves as a negative and evil beings, a hares like eternal victims of predatory animals and so on. Thus, in the *Ambulance* and *Alien voice* folk-fabulous images of animals and birds were transferred to Western and Soviet values representation, helping to strengthen the image of the West as hostile and alien to the Soviet Union.

In particular, the *Alien voice* quite clearly resonates with the base of the era of the "cold war" Soviet book with the eloquent title *Music of spiritual poverty*, which clearly states that "the task of modern jazz is directly opposed to the tasks of the people's dance songs and music. It does not excite strong, cheerful feelings, but rather dampens and suppresses them. It does not carry the impetuous passion, but mesmerizing deathly cold of their mechanistic rhythms disastrous monotony and scarcity of musical material. And even when its purpose - to act as a pathogen, it is used only to stun the hysterical cries of" (Gorodinsky, 1950, p.81).

Genre modification: basically - satire.

The main dramatic stereotypes of media texts:

- The representatives of Western values invade in the peaceful world of positive characters (*Ambulance, Alien voice*) in an attempt to deceive, entrap, rob, spoil the artistic taste; but - sooner or later - positive characters realize deceit of these shares and begin to deal with them.

- Western bourgeois characters may at some time to pretend to be pacifists (*Mr. Wolf*) or benefactors (*Ambulance*), however, their negative, bestial essence is found...

Methods of representation of reality (iconography) - furnishings, household items, etc.

The modest appearance of positive characters; luxurious furnishings life of the Western bourgeoisie. Western capitalists (*Mr. Wolf*) is shown with a significant share of grotesque.

The typology of the characters (their values, ideas, ethics, clothes, physique, vocabulary, facial expressions, gestures)

Character Age: 50-60 years (Mr. Walk and his wife), the age of the characters, animals are more difficult, but at least they are not old...

The appearance, clothes, physique: characters dressed according to social status, although the poor bunny gets first of the new bourgeoisie expensive suit).

Appearance of a positive characters are usually attractive, the appearance of bourgeoisie and their henchmen, by contrast, - repellen...

Social status, profession characters: social position for bourgeois characters and poor characters (regardless - people or animals) is significantly different.

Marital status characters also depends on the specific plot of the media text.

Negative characters' traits: greed, cruelty, meanness, dedication, hostility, cunning, strength.

Positive characters' traits: gullibility, naivety, the ability to resist bourgeois influence.

Bourgeois characters shown angry, rude and violent, with a primitive vocabulary, active gestures and unpleasant tone of voice.

The positive characters, in contrast, has a pleasant voice (especially of the Nightingale from *Alien voice*.

The whole character of all characters mentioned above is depicted by a dashed media texts, without going into psychology.

Value orientations (ideological, religious, etc.) of characters: in all three "confrontational" cartoons negative characters clearly manifested bourgeois, imperialist, modernist values, coupled with a focus on violence as a means of solving problems. Values of positive characters are similar to the "traditional folk".

The actions of the character, his methods of conflict resolution: the actions dictated by the development of the characters mentioned above storylines stereotypical media texts.

A significant change in the plot by the media and lives of the characters, problems encountered, solutions to the problem.

Negative characters interrupted of ordinary life of positive characters. A problem: the life (*Ambulance),* or artistic values (*Alien voice)* of positive characters are threatened. And there's only one way to solve it – the struggle with negative characters, their foreign influence.

Conclusion

So, I tried to specific examples make hermeneutic analysis - a study of the process of interpretation of media texts, cultural and historical factors influencing the views of the agency / author on the media text. Hermeneutical analysis suggests media text comprehension through comparison with historical, cultural tradition and reality; penetration of its logic; through comparison of media images in historical and cultural context by combining analysis of the structural, plot, ethical, ideological, iconographic / visual, media stereotypes and analysis of media texts' characters. As a result, I concluded that the era of the *Cold War,* which spawned mutual ideological confrontation of the communist and capitalist countries, covering all categories of media texts, including animation / cartoon. Cartoons were used as levers of power required reports confrontational ideas in attractive folklore, fairy package in order to influence not only adults but also on children's audience.

Filmography:

1. *Mr. Wolf*. USSR, 1949. Directed by V. Gromov. Writers: V. Dlugach, S. Romanov (author of the play "Island of Peace" – E. Petrov). Operator M. Drujan. Composer Y. Levitin.
2. *Ambulance*. USSR, 1949. Directed by L. Bredis. Screenwriter A. Medvedkin. Operator E. Petrova. Composer N. Peyko.
3. *Alien voice*. USSR, 1949. Directed by I. Ivanov-Vano. Writers: D. Tarasov, M. Kalinin. Operator N. Voinov. Composer Y. Nikolsky.

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Советские анимационные медиатексты во времена холодной войны: герменевтический анализ

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Аннотация. Автор этой статьи использует герменевтический анализ – исследование процесса интерпретации медиатекста, культурных и исторических факторов, влияющих на вид на агентство / автора медиатекста. Этот анализ предусматривает анализ через сравнение с исторической, культурной традицией и реальностью; проникновение в логику медиатекста; анализ аудиовизуального ряда медиатекста в историческом и культурном контексте, сочетая структурной, этический, идеологический, иконографический, семиотический анализ. В результате, автор приходит к выводу, что эпоха холодной войны, которая породила взаимную идеологическое противостояние коммунистических и капиталистических стран, охватывало все категории медиатекстов, в том числе анимационных / мультипликационных. Мультфильмы были использованы в качестве рычагов власти для пропаганды конфронтационных идей в привлекательной фольклорной, сказочной упаковке, для того, чтобы влиять не только взрослую, но и на детскую аудиторию.

Ключевые слова: медиаграмотность, мультфильмы, медиаобразование, анимация, холодная война, идеология, медиатексты, холодная война.