

Myths – the precursor of fakes in the modern media space

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Abstract. Each change of power is also a change in its mythology. Finding a new style of communication, rebranding a myth is not an easy task, which can be solved through a lot of trial and error. The emergence of mechanisms of the impact of fakes on the audience that have not been studied in the scientific environment, the study of the genesis of the problem of predecessors of fakes - myths in a situation of collision of different systems-states, methods of identifying fakes in modern realities determine the purpose of the study.

Keywords: media space, news feed, millenarian myth, myth-rebranding, fakes, pandemic, Covid-19.

The modern media space functions under conditions of active circulation of fakes. So, one of the most "dangerous" for the health of citizens of the fake, "fresh hedgehog", was the order of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation, which appeared in May, allegedly telling about the recommendation to treat coronavirus with alcohol-containing drinks, in particular, vodka. Fake was actively distributed in messengers and was fixed by users in many regions. The delusional message was widely circulated, but the Ministry of Health promptly denied the information¹. The news feed was supported by a young man from Tyumen, who introduced himself as an Italian doctor speaking Russian. He voiced the method of treatment with alcohol-containing substances (ingestion and inhalation of steam), referring to the research of American and Japanese doctors, which "the authorities are hiding"². The Covid-19 pandemic became a shock stage in the coverage of space by fakes. Quarantine measures have limited many areas of production, including journalism. Access to information verification was hampered by the mass hysteria of the population. The emergence of

¹ The Ministry of Health speaks about the treatment of coronavirus with vodka // Tengrinews.kz. : [Electronic resource] – URL: https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/o-lechenii-koronavirusa-vodkoy-vyiskazalsya-minzdrav-406151/ (appeal date: 06.06.2021).

² Another fake about the treatment of coronavirus: the charlatan calls on to breathe vodka // News: [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.vesti.ru/article/2407476> (appeal date: 06.06.2021).

mechanisms that have not been studied in the scientific environment for the impact of fakes on the audience, the study of the genesis of the problem of predecessors of fakes - myths, especially in a situation of collision of different systems-states, methods of identifying fakes in modern realities (pandemics) determine the relevance of the study.

90s: strengthening of the myth-making component in media channels

In Soviet society (1917–1991), the millenarian myth dominated, accompanying any sacralization of a 1000-year period of time. The basis of millenarianism is the beliefs, views, theories of a religious, social or political group or movement in the cardinal transformations of society associated with millennial cycles. It corresponded to the logical laws, the logos of communist and capitalist thinking, contained within itself two components: the demiurgic and the trickster. As a result, the use of the functional features of myth-making in society had destructive consequences for the spiritual culture of the entire social organism, the collapsed and plundered Soviet society. Despite the seemingly radical changes that shook the country, society continued to live in the old ideological settings and coordinates. Some elements of the economy, social preferences and moral values have changed, but the myth-constituent of the statehood of the new Russia has remained the same.

The media of all levels persistently and purposefully convinced Russian citizens of the futility of the ideology of the proletariat; consumer myths that simplify reality, level out contradictions, and take away from real problems came into use and took a leading place. Modern political ritual automatically copied foreign models, national archaism. Not the fundamental principles of mythmaking technology, but technological nuances constituted a decisive part in the mythmaking technology of various political forces influencing the modern political process. The newest myths, performing certain functions in the communication space, were modified and, according to the laws of "anti-myth", were reduced to the level of "black and white simplification", formed in the heat of the struggle against old dogmas, incorrectly, with the help of falsifications. For the practical and universal application of the scheme explaining the impact of myth on the mass consciousness, on the activities of political institutions, there was one obstacle: the researcher who turned it into an instrument of political analysis must a priori agree that the "technique" of mythmaking is fundamentally the same both in totalitarian and in democratic societies, despite the fact that the political process is developing according to a different scenario. Offering a given picture of the world to a person, mythological symbols formed a distorted idea of the surrounding reality, gave negative ideas about good and evil, etc. Accordingly, new mythical images contributed to

negative human behavior, nihilistic thinking, since they did not correspond to the realities of social life. The artificially created myth-making really influenced the functioning consciousness, which can never be completely rid of formations mythological in origin. At one time, mythology yielded a leading role to a number of specialized forms of social consciousness, at the turn of the third millennium its revival takes place, but not as a system of world explanation, but as a kind of method of thinking, which is associated more with a destructive than a creative function. None of the proposed official myths was able to take on the full function of the nucleus of the new social ideology in the near future. So, the old melody of the anthem with revived new words, patriotic songs, etc. confirm the idea of the complete absence of a symbolic mobilization system in modern society. With the help of the media, the translators of myths, there was a struggle for the minds of people, in which not every individual was able to grasp the hidden, latent ideological level of a particular party or association. Myth-making and mythologization are becoming a convenient means of realizing a hidden political effect, they play a certain role in the psychological "unloading" of a person, save and protect, help not to lose faith in the rationality of the world. The myth was redefined by introducing into it a new, frank, changing the meaning of the original image, the destruction of the traditional image. It was this position that most accurately corresponded to the crisis worldview, in which the experience of generations was destroyed, instead of individualization, personality degradation took place, traditions were considered as unnecessary for society. This has resulted in so-called "relaxed behavior", which has become a model for media channels. They broadcast a special reality and a special myth, inscribing it into their laws of the genre; they substitute the choice of a particular social concept for the choice between advertising texts.

The 1991 nomenklatura revolution marked the collapse of the authoritarian-bureaucratic system and the collapse of the USSR. During Yeltsin's "bloodless revolution", there was no change of "powers", no fundamentally different ideology was developed. B.N. Yeltsin, being within the old millenarian myth, did not feel the need to find a mythological basis for ideology, he simply gave the old myth a new look, being for a short time a "creator", a remake-trickster of political bricolage.

Political myths were born, died, but none of them received a logical form, did not grow into a holistic mythology. The birth of the mythologemes "freedom of speech" and "glasnost" was a consequence of the law "On the Mass Media" adopted in October 1991. The press was actively introducing the image of a democratic leader into the consciousness of

citizens, accompanying it with the clarification "Yeltsin is freedom of speech". The "freedom of the press" myth was supplanted by the "oligarchic mediocracy" myth. The introduction of the ideology of a democratic social order required relying on sacred thinking. The mechanisms of sacralization were aimed at strengthening the existing political structure. The new myths carried latent meanings that depended on the political moment. The press was perceived as the territory of individuals: E. Yakovlev, V. Korotich, V. Tretyakov et. al. Their images were introduced into the consciousness of the masses as a complex and multidimensional product of their individual psyche and creativity. This is how the myth of "a free journalist" was born.

The manipulators of consciousness did a lot to achieve their goals, since they had various funds received from corporate and government budgets. But they could not prevent the growth of understanding of the true essence of the existing system, since manipulation is incompatible with dialogue and public debate.

The phenomenon of active myth-rebranding in the press has activated the change of the brand of the myth of a political hero and political parties. The brand was set ambitious goals, which included: brand differentiation (strengthening its uniqueness); strengthening the brand (increasing consumer loyalty); increasing the target audience of the brand (attracting new consumers). A successful rebranding took the outdated myth brand to a new level of development, helped it evolve, made it attractive to public attention, and increased loyalty to it³. Researcher G. Pocheptsov asserts: "Neither fakes nor simple information carry a "key" that reveals the truth. The widespread dissemination of false information is associated with the dramatically increased ways of delivering such information, one of the reasons for which was social networks. They broke the mandatory credibility of the messages we dealt with. The number of such information players with their differing goals has grown dramatically. As a result, the world has become not only more information-dependent than before, but also a variety of information sources have become more accessible. As we gain more information, we have become not only less discerning about the truth, but also less interested in information"⁴.

Fake news replaced myth-rebranding

³ See: Vasilieva L.A. Myth-making and mythology in print media: retrospective and modernity. Diss. for app. sci. degree of dr. philol. sci. SPbU, 2017.

⁴Pocheptsov G. How fakes and myths conquer the reality of the media.// http://noravank.am/rus/articles/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=18135.20.05 2020

The current propaganda operates in a dialogue mode, its background is a variety of opinions, which it tries to replace with one and only one. It learned to win in such ambiguous conditions for her. Features in the processes of information dissemination are as follows:

- false information is disseminated not for the sake of spreading the truth, but for political reasons or for the sake of making money on Internet traffic,
- false information is spread by journalists who do not understand that it is a lie,
- there is always at least a grain of truth in false information, providing it with an element of reliability⁵

The very word "propaganda" began to carry a negative connotation. New designations have been introduced into scientific circulation - "strategic communications", "operations of influence", "strategic narrative". According to G. Pochenptsov, "today there are many truths, and this gives rise to problems not only of the fight against fakes, which are abundant in any conflict situation, from the Russian-Ukrainian conflict to the presidential elections in the United States. The volumes of false information that circulates on an equal footing with fair information is simply off scale today. Today's propagandists are not going to follow the truth at all, they live in a post-truth world. For them, this means that the main component is the correspondence not to reality, but to the model of the world. Hence the "crucified boy" as a classic example of a fake created by Russian television. We have before us a weak mechanism of action; on the contrary, it is very powerful, since all of its narratives strictly follow the model of the master narrative: everything bad - is only with them, everything good - is only with us"⁶.

Fakes are a subject of constant discussion, they were information hoaxes, targeted misinformation in the media and social media. That is, the purpose of fake news is to give importance and meaning to the false information. They contain information that the recipient (the object of receipt) must perceive as a fact. According to the statements of the researcher N.B. Berdigulov, the fake is accompanied by a loud sensation, is presented under a "noisy" title"⁷. The sources of fakes are certain myths, especially in a situation of collision of different systems-states. That is, the problem goes beyond the scientific and media discourse, affecting the direct interests of ordinary citizens. Be it "fake", lie, hoax or misinformation, theoretical

⁵ See: Pocheptsov G. Genesis and new forms of propaganda communications in the global information space. №3[321]03.15.2017. Scientific and cultural journal. №3 08. (386). 01.08.20021.//<http://www.relga.ru/Environ/WebObjects/tgu-www.woa/wa/Main?level1=main&level2=articles&textid=4910>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Berdigulova, N.B. Factchecking – a new kind of information space // Ilimium-pedagogical zhana methodicaly journal. – 2019. – № 3–4. – P. 25–28.

comprehension of the phenomenon, its structural functions, did not happen immediately. Researcher O.E. Golovatskaya focuses on the lack of an exact semantic definition of the fake news phenomenon. Indeed, the now generally accepted definition - information hoax - was introduced into circulation by the Internet encyclopedia "Wikipedia" (without citing the source), but does not have a clear definition in philological textbooks. The term itself was approved in 2018 at a meeting of the Commission of the Public Chamber of Russia⁸. In the same year, an urgent problem appeared, taking into account the exacerbation of false or manipulative information messages. For example, in March 2020, National Geographic Russia released the article "Putin released 500 lions into the streets to enforce quarantine."⁹ An emergency message plaque was attached to the photograph of a lion walking alone through the city streets. The image is accompanied by the Live logo and timestamp, giving the impression of a screenshot of a TV news. It was possible to debunk the myth thanks to the social network Twitter - the user turned to subscribers and launched a hashtag, according to which the original source of the photo was found. The lion turned out to be tame, the scene was in Colombia, and a video of a commercial was recorded on it.

Conclusions. The power of the 90s turned out to be weak in terms of "mythologizing" statehood, which it had never been involved in; the Communist Party was responsible for the ideological component in Soviet times. Updated mythological interpretations acted as one of the means of "pulling" reality to the desired level, positive or negative. The myth gains new strength, acquires new qualities, becomes more attractive to society. However, each change of power is also a change in its mythology. Finding a new style of communication, rebranding a myth is not an easy task, which can be solved through numerous trials and errors of many specific people. This renewal is impossible without updating personalities, since totalitarian propaganda acted in a monologue mode and this is the weakest point in the politics of modern Russia, which has a reputation in the world as one of the corrupt states.

The 2017 slogan is "fake news". The main patterns of interaction with the audience can be radically different, and the spread of fake news can be both manipulative disinformation and the spread of fake out of ignorance. Just as fakes launch counter-myths,

⁸ The Public Chamber of the Russian Federation discussed the dissemination of fake information // RAEK [Electronic resource]: <https://raec.ru/live/branch/10393/> (appeal date: 08.01.2021).

⁹ "Putin released 500 lions into the streets to enforce quarantine." Fake news out of control // NatGeo Russia: [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://nat-geo.ru/accidents/kitajskij-koronavirus-2020/fake-news-putin-vypustil-na-ulitsy-500-lvov/> (appeal date: 07.06.2021). <https://nat-geo.ru/accidents/kitajskij-koronavirus-2020/fake-news-putin-vypustil-na-ulitsy-500-lvov/>

statesmen try to operate on counter-myths. They see the more positive side of reality, while the population sees the negative. political forces. Fakes have become the most important discourse in the journalistic environment. The problem goes beyond the scientific and media discourse, affecting the direct interests of ordinary citizens.

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