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THE INVENTION OF THE ETHNIC CULTURE SEMANTICS: FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM

This article is devoted to the ethnic culture semantics transformations that are initiated by modern social actors. These transformations perform different functions: cognitive, entertainment, ideological. In the article the typical way of such cultural "inventions" are described.
Key words: *semantics, traditional culture, transformations, traditionalism, Neopaganism.*

In the space of contemporary Ukrainian mass culture and in its sub-cultural filiations that in certain way appeal to traditional forms we can periodically notice *the invention of the ethnic culture semantics*. Unlike to the phenomenon that was described by E.Hobsbawm and his colleagues [5], the invention of tradition itself (its forms and the way of their transfer) here doesn`t take place, but the ethnically marked elements of traditional material and spiritual culture are attributed with new, extrinsical for them before, meanings.

The possibility of such phenomenon is determined by specific character of the traditional culture – by variability and heightened semioticity of its texts and objects. That`s why the desire to "decrypt", to "decipher" emerges not only among experts, but also among numerous amateur reconstructors (these "inventions" are usually presented as "semantic reconstruction").

The aim of this article is to describe different variants of such phenomenon and to define common features of them. That`s why in the totality of the ethnic culture semantics inventions we will distinguish some classes according to their functions. Then we will try to describe a technique of the semantics invention. The case of Neopagan manipulations with the semantics must help us to reveal specific features of this phenomenon quite deeper.

The good example is the book of V.Pidhirnyak (the architect by his education, businessman in the sphere of realty) "The textual em-

broidery. Writing of Brody" [14]. The author represents the symbolic code of the schematized embroidery as "encoded alphabet". Using it, you can "write" words, numerals, note the moon phases and constellations, months and seasons, days of the week. V.Pidhirnyak claims that he knows how to "read" the embroidery code and even offers the technique of embroidery "texts" construction. It must be noticed that the scanned fragments of this book are distributed first of all in the Internet, where they lose the authorship and can be perceived and reproduced in the mass consciousness easily.

In particular cases the invention of the semantics can be purely a product of the Internet-folklore (as a complex of folklore forms that exist and are distributed predominantly or only in the Internet [1]). In the Russian-language social networks some graphic and textual (text + image) files for facetious test "What demon by the zodiak are you?" are spread. The variants are represented by the characters of Slavic demonology and folklore (wood and water spirits, mermaid, Baba-Yaga, Solovey-Rozboynik etc.) with schematic description of their "tempers", which are adapted to the modern life conditions. In this example the functions of the semantic`s invention are reduced to the entertainment.

More seriously and widely spread are those semantic inventions that we can find in the (pseudo)documentary films, connected with the national memory and ethnogenetic myths construction. Ethno-art film of S.Marchenko "Echo of the forgotten sky" («Відгомін забутого неба», 1998) [4]: there such a famous spring song (vesnyanka) as "A my proso siyaly" is compared with the "acoustic cultivation of grain" and some attention is paid to semantic relations construction in the triangle "Milky Way – folk astronomy – chumak crafts". The author`s creativity hear doesn`t spoil the image (previous examples also have certain authors), because new meanings can stay in the audience`s consciousness as its structural elements. For example, the demonstration of the films "Searching the Truth" («В пошуках істини»), created by Ukrainian TV channel "STB" had such consequences. Some of these films in half-documentary style are constructing myths around Ukrainian national symbolic, pages of national history and also offer the "sensational" review of the semantics of some traditional culture

elements (episode "Magic mysteries of Easter" / «Магічні таємниці Великодня» [12]). To measure the influence of such mediapractices by sociological methods is a challenging task, but the author of this article has repeatedly heard from different people`s observations, directly or indirectly inspired by them (for example, about the "true" form of the national flag with the yellow color above).

The invention of the ethnic culture semantics is familiar to the phenomena of the "secondary mythologization" and "secondary folklorization", although both of them can apply not only to the sphere of ethnically marked culture [8; 16]. The technique of the invention is similar to the folk-etymology practices: the reality and forms of the traditional culture for contemporary reconstructors are externalized, "foreign" (even if they perceived as the heritage of "their own" culture), that`s why they must be adapted to the contemporary conditions, "decoded" by understandable language according to the accepted system of views (apparently, it is the cause of the tendency to explain the ritual and game forms by scientifically reasoned pragmatics). We want to put the emphasis on the way of the semantic processing: from the folklore mass consciousness – to the externalized sources of information, and then – again to the verbal or to the virtual anonymous existing. On the border of the second and the third phases the elements usually acquire new meanings.

The vivid example of this phenomenon is noticed in Olevsk district of Zhitomyrska region in 1984: "Kupalo is the god of milk. During the spring meeting men worship the old god too, not Jesus Christ" [2, p. 39]. O.Belova and V.Petrukhin assume that such statement of the informant was formed by the influnce of the "popular literature". Kupalo, originally a folklore character, the personification of the summer holiday, by the means of the Soviet popular-science literature had returned to the folklre consciousness with visibly transformed meaning.

It`s quite possible that the ethnic culture semantics begin to be invented every time, when traditional interpretation become forgotten or senseless. In the previous examples we can see both the forgetting of traditional interpretations and the absence of the ethnic tradition a priori, because the "inventors" are often the persons, successfully socialized in the de-ethnizated space of the industrial or post-industrial

society. It`s suitably justified to remember one of the E.Hobsbawm`s remarks: "the appearance of "traditionalistic" or even some other movements indicates the gap [in continuinty = inheritance]" [5, p. 18].

There are quite different functions in the invention of the ethnic culture semantics in the Neopagan practices. On the post-Soviet space there exists certain literature, devoted to the Neopagan historical myths construction [17; 18], but very few researches are devoted to the specificity of the functioning and rethink of the traditional culture elements in such practices. Earlier we had described, how Ukrainian Neopagans actualize ethnicity in the different kinds of their subculture art [10]. The technique here is similar to the previous examples, except those cases, then Neopagans try to use fragmentary ethnic practices, really inherited by them from their parents, - rethinking the sense of these practices or reproducing them as a custom.

Let`s consider the practices of the semantic`s invention in the Neo-pagan calendar rituality. This cycle of rituality is the most developed in all of the active Neopagan movements in Ukraine, that`s why it can be the most representative in analitical aims.

First of all, one the premiss of Neopagan calendar rituality bases on the view that behind each major folk-Christian holiday and even single calendar days (such as the days of Zosym Bdzhilnyk or Hera-sym Shpakivnyk) are hidden original Pagan holidays. Neopagan theo-reticians usually try to find the "original senses" of such holidays by comparing Christian saints, whom these days are devoted to, folk ritu-ality of the day and images of Pagan god or goddess that are known from the sources. For example, H.Lozko in the article, devoted to the image of Svarog, asserts the connection between this Slavic god and two holidays of Kuzma and Damian [11]. Furthermore, Neopagans try to choose by the different features the patron for each month, day of the week and separate periods of the year (they distinguish "Velestide" /as Christmastide/ before the day of st. Vlas [7], "the week of Perun" before the day of st. Illya etc.).

In such a way numerous folk rituals, known from the traditional calendar rituality, are rethought by them: the kolaydky become to be devoted to Bozhich ("newborn" sun) or Dazhbog; the bull sacrific-ing during the Illya`s feast is interpretated as the sacrificing to Perun

(though, haven`t been recorded any such immolations by Neopagans); children gifting on the day of st. Mykola is connected with the functions of Veles as "the all people patron" [3].

As we know, many ethnographers and folklorists have acknowledged relations of "interchangeability" between Pagan gods and folk-Christian saints almost since the XIX ct. Considering such possibility complicates the image of semantic trasformations. From our point of view, it is insufficient to represent it as "the dialogue of cultures" between Paganism and Christianity [6], because Neopagan images of the gods obviously differ from original pre-Christian images. Moreover, the saint which "perceived" the functions of certain god, could have his own ones, and exactly the latter of them can be removed on the "reconstructed" by Neopagans image of the first. On the other hand, the functions of the god could be "perceived" by several saints and, on the contrary, the functions of several gods – by the single saint. Some Neopagans realize the complexity of all this image, that`s why they argue against rigid connection between their own calendar rituality and the folk-Christian calendar [13].

Let`s consider one more curious example, connected with the invention of the ethnic culture semantics by Neopagans. Ethnographers of the XIX – early XX ct. left some evidences about the "Rakhmans` Easter" on the fourth week after orthodox Easter. Children and older people were throwing the Easter eggs` shells into the river water and in that way were sending them to "the rakhmans". The B.Hrinchenko`s dictionary gives such definition of "the rahman" in the traditional Ukrainian folklore: "the inhabitant of the mythological terrain, righteous Christian" [15]. Neopagans essentially have seen in "the rakhmans" the allusion to the Indian varn of Brahmins, so this rite, in their point of view, comprises the memory about the Proto-Indo-European society separation (according to the "Kurgan hypothesis" of M.Gimbutas, where the part of Ukrainian territory was engulfed by the Indo-European Urheimat) [9]. Unfortunately, we haven`t come across the literature, devoted to the genesis of "rakhmans`" image in Ukrainian folklore. It would be very interesting, if it was really connected to fragmental messages about the Indian Brahmins, perceived by the folklore consciousness through the means of medieval scribers [cf. 2, p. 57-66].

As for the functions of this phenomenon in the Ukrainian Neopaganism, we assume that they consist in the Neopagan "world image" construction: new semantics helps to fill the "white spots" in their vision of the Slavic traditional culture, to provide the integrity and coherence of their world outlook so as to implement into it new meanings that more successfully satisfy Neopagans` identity.

So it can be summed up that the invention of the ethnic culture semantics is present in the space of the ethnic practices in contemporary Ukraine. Critical analysis of its filiations allows to distinguish the functions of each of them. First of all, it is the naive cognitive function – attempts to "decode" symbolic codes of the traditional culture without appropriate competence. Also there are entertaining and ideological functions among the reasons of manipulations with the traditional culture semantics. We propose one of the possible explanations of the technique of such inventions. This phenomenon is additionally complicated by the commercial demand on some of its filiations that are being used by popular media. In our point of view, the most adequate position concerning this phenomenon is to evaluate each concrete manifestation in accordance with the influence that it has or can have on the public concept about the traditional culture (to deform, distort it or, conversely, popularize it).

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ВИНАЙДЕННЯ СЕМАНТИКИ ЕТНІЧНОГО: ДО ПОСТАНОВКИ ПРОБЛЕМИ

Дана стаття присвячена трансформаціям семантики етнічної культури, що ініціюються сучасними акторами соціального простору. Такого роду трансформації переслідують різноманітні функції: пізнавальні, розважальні, ідеологічні. У статті описано один з типових способів подібних культурних «винайдень».

Ключові слова*: семантика, традиційна культура, трансформації, традиціоналізм, неоязичництво.*

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ИЗОБРЕТЕНИЕ СЕМАНТИКИ ЭТНИЧЕСКОГО: К ПОСТАНОВКЕ ПРОБЛЕМЫ

Данная статья посвящена трансформациям семантики этнической культуры, инициируемым современными акторами социального пространства. Такого рода трансформации преследуют различные функции: познавательные, развлекательные, идеологические. В статье описан один из типичных способов подобных культурных «изобретений».

Ключевые слова: семантика, традиционная культура, трансформации, традиционализм, неоязычество.

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О. В. Демченко

РЕКОНСТРУКЦІЯ ПІЗНЬОМЕЗОЛІТИЧНОЇ – НЕОЛІТИЧНОЇ ІСТОРІЇ ДНІПРОВСЬКОГО НАДПОРІЖЖЯ. ПАЛЕОЕКОЛОГІЧНИЙ ПІДХІД

В статті розглядається природне середовище Дніпровського Надпоріжжя в пізньому мезоліті – неоліті як фактор створення специфічної адаптивної стратегії населення. Прослідковується вплив різних палеоекологічних чинників на принципи влаштування поселень, господарсько-економічної направленості та інших матеріально-побутових аспектів життя, формування духовної культури.

Ключові слова: мезоліт, неоліт, природне середовище, адаптація, стратегія, Дніпровське Надпоріжжя.

Для розуміння сутності культури надзвичайно важливий природний фактор її формування та розвитку. Людина та соціум здійснюють свою діяльність в певному природно-географічному середовищі. Це середовище має свої закони розвитку та свої цикли. До них людина, як біологічна істота, активно пристосовується і в певній мірі їм підкорюється.