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**The Laughter of the New Person,  
Modernization Problem: the Film “Jolly Fellows”  
by G.V. Aleksandrov<sup>1</sup>**

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*The article analyzes the phenomenon of laughter, especially the laughter of the Soviet people. Basing on the materials the author makes conclusions about interrelation of the funny and ideological in the Soviet epoch. An archaic and avant-garde interpretation of the film “Jolly Fellows” is given.*

*Keywords: laughter, “Soviet people”, laughter of the Soviet people, comedy, “Jolly Fellows”, OBERIU (the Union of Real Art), socialist realism.*

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Society can be modernized only by people and nothing else. Any kind of social metamorphosis needs human resource and a person, who would get some knowledge, skills, and habits. Including quite certain flesh, emotions and will. In different epochs people walk, speak, watch and laugh in a different way. It goes without saying that they even look differently. They laugh at certain things and for a certain reason. Laughter, sense of humour, ability to make jokes, understand them and respond to them: all these merits, abilities and characteristics have been demonstrated in various cultural contexts in various periods of history.

As we talk about the metamorphosis of contemporary Russia in economic and political sense, it is necessary to understand the metamorphosis that happen to a person, who

lives in this country and intends to change it. All these inner personal metamorphosis also concern the laughter one laughs with. And, in order to mark out and describe this reformed laughter, for sure, it is necessary to explore the laughter of the previous epoch, which is the epoch of Soviet modernization. The fact that the Soviet society of the first five-year plans was a society of birth and development of a new person is evident for all of us.

No matter how sceptical and critical about the mentality and feelings of the Soviet person we are now, we should not forget that it was the Soviet person, who won the war, listened to music by Shostakovich and Shnitke, read books by Brodsky, Solzhenitsyn and Venechka Erofeev.

That Soviet person laughed with an absolutely special laughter, they understood

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jokes of Ostap Bender and Bulgakov's characters, responded to the hints of Arkady Raykin and acting of Yuri Nikulin. In this context it is interesting and important to explore some aspects of the laughter of the Soviet epoch.

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The object of study in this article is the laughter<sup>2</sup> of the comedy "Jolly Fellows" by Grigory Vasilievich Aleksandrov. The main undersense of the research is that the laughter of «Jolly Fellows» is absolutely special, concentrated, and in the end it is divided into various funny episodes and elements, which would appear in other Soviet films afterwards.

Some jokes of the film are directly quoted in the Western cinematograph<sup>3</sup>. The peculiarity of the JF laughter is in its contrariety. Perhaps, only now, when many years have passed by, we can find out and comprehend the nature of this laughter. In inexplicable way this natural, comedy laughter turns into a weird, absurd, and artificial one. Probably, these characteristics are revealed because here we are dealing with the beginning. Every beginning has this sort of contradiction. After Hegel, «existence» and «nothing» are mixed in it. It is full, but at the same time it is absolutely empty, or, according to Hegel, "absolutely negative". The existence of the JF laughter is connected with the absolute opposition, which is not laughter, and which, according to various points of view, can act as «tears», «shame» or «lack of freedom»<sup>4</sup>.

JF is a comedy composed of sketches, jokes, dance and musical episodes. In «Jolly Fellows» G. Aleksandrov used his teacher's famous principle of «attraction assembly». At first sight it seems that the film is assembled of funny musical episodes and sketches. But in the structure<sup>5</sup> of it, in the way the characters laugh one can feel something which is not funny at all; something that is scary, heroic, tragic.

To reinforce the abovementioned idea of the contradiction of JF laughter and the consequences that follow, it is relevant to divide all the information into several points. Under this research, each of them can be marked out and explored.

1. «Jolly Fellows» and socialist realism.
2. «Jolly Fellows» and archaic.
3. «Jolly Fellows» and avant-garde.
4. «Jolly Fellows» and the laughter of the Soviet people.

The result of the research is an attempt to explain the role of laughter in forming and strengthening the image of the new Soviet person.

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It is necessary to recollect the plot of the film, and also to mention some events and facts important for understanding it<sup>6</sup>.

It is significant that G.V. Aleksandrov was a follower of S.M. Eisenstein and that in "Jolly Fellows" he actualized his teacher's theoretical convictions of cinematograph, editing, creating to maximal extent. There is a cinematographic legend which says<sup>7</sup> that after he watched the movie, S. Eisenstein said to G. Aleksandrov that he made a real "revolutionary film". In one word<sup>8</sup> S. Eisenstein managed to unite "revue" and "revolution", wishing to point it out that Aleksandrov turned from real revolutionism to the light genre of revue, a sort of comedy show. The joke of S. Eisenstein was also based on the fact that he himself had refused the screenplay of JF when it had been offered to him, while G. Aleksandrov approved it at once and, in the end, made the film. And if this funny neologism is deciphered as "revolutionary", then the revolutionism should not be underestimated, though, at first glance, it is less radical than that of "Strike" or "The Battleship Potemkin" by Eisenstein<sup>9</sup>.

The story told in JF is extremely simple.

**Shepherd Kostya Potekhin, played by Leonid Utyosov, coincidentally finds himself in a rich resort house that belongs to Lena, who in the titles is called "the Child of Torgsin"<sup>10</sup>. In the house, there works a maid called Anya, played by Lyubov Orlova. Kostya the shepherd falls in love with Lena and does not pay any attention to Anya who listens to his songs every time Kostya marches through the village with his flock. After they find out that Kostya is not the one he was first taken for, they throw him away from the house. After a while, Kostya moves to town and becomes a jazz band conductor. Accidentally, he meets Anya and explains everything to her. After this happy end, both of them, Kostya and Anya, perform on the stage of the Bolshoi Theatre.**

This simple story would have been absolutely boring, if not the musical episodes that accompany the plot, and which are, basically, the core and the main subject of interest in the film. It was what the audience saw at first.

It was a sound film, and it came out in the year 1934, after the long trip of Aleksandrov and Eisenstein around Europe and America, which lasted for around three years. There they got acquainted with American musical, the principles of sound cinematograph (Charlie Chaplin and S. Eisenstein were bound by their love for tennis), and S. Eisenstein even concluded an agreement with an American studio to shoot a film version of a novel by Theodore Dreiser. But the agreement was abrogated and both directors were told to come back. After the arrival in the Soviet Union, the first film by S. Eisenstein was "Bezhin Meadow", which was not approved and for this reason cannot be found any more, and the first film by G. Aleksandrov was "Jolly Fellows". In the year 1938, S. Eisenstein shot "Alexander Nevsky", and G. Aleksandrov continued the

musical comedy series with "Volga-Volga", "Circus" and "Spring".

After "Alexander Nevsky" S. Eisenstein worked on "Ivan the Terrible" in three parts, and his interests become mostly theoretical. He began teaching, became a professor, wrote and painted a lot. And his successors G. Aleksandrov and I. Pyryev made some popular, large-scale films, widely shown in Soviet cinemas.

This was traditional and common for the cultural world division, when the teacher formulates the idea, grasps it intuitively, and the successors develop the idea and convey it to the reader or the viewer. Socrates is the one to create the theory and formulate it in words, Plato writes the idea down and systematizes it, Aristotle<sup>11</sup> adjusts the idea, improves and modifies it.

Of course, the success of JF was conditioned not only by the influence of S. Eisenstein as a theorist and teacher, and not only by the direct adoption of the principles of American musical comedy by G. Aleksandrov. The success and the impact of JF on the audience and the later Soviet cinematograph are conditioned by a series of reasons. None of them can explain the success and peculiarities of JF as an independent fact of art in a direct, linear, plain way. For example, it is known that G. Aleksandrov and L. Orlova decided to get married while shooting the film. This contributed the atmosphere of lightness, love and celebration, which the film has now.

L.P. Orlova, who had classical music and acting education, performed all the songs herself. She played the role of a maid, with her star appearance and other talents of a real star, which were typical for that time: from great command of foreign languages and conservatory education, to the myths of being blessed by the art coryphées<sup>12</sup>. L.O. Utyosov, who played the role of a composer shepherd, in the film conducts a jazz band, which, in that pre-war time, was extremely avant-garde

from the musical point of view, and politically was quite controversial<sup>13</sup>

. These facts and circumstances made JF very interesting back then, but they did not guarantee the success and the love of the whole nation.

It is remarkable that the success of JF was not clear and evident when the film came out. Here is what a modern historian of the Soviet cinematograph writes: "...when "Jolly Fellows" came out, the opinions about it divided. If ordinary viewers, mostly, loved the film and were excited about it, the high-brown critics were not. None of the films shot that time had ever seen such amount of negative reviews, which descended upon "Jolly Fellows" in all Soviet mass-media... Here is what "Literaturnaya Gazeta" wrote: "Having created a mix of a shepherd pastoral and an American action movie, the authors believed that they were faithfully fulfilling the social need for laughter. While it is, comrades, a real mockery at the audience and at art on general..."<sup>14</sup>. The author of the article in "Literaturnaya Gazeta" starts an argument with the author of the positive reference published in "Komsomolskaya Pravda". "In the pages of this newspaper<sup>15</sup>, some lyrical birds seem to be chirping next to international news that smell gunpowder and blood, next to the messages of TASU that make the reader, one nice evening take his Nagant out of the drawer, clean and grease it, and then put it back"<sup>16</sup>.

In the year 1934, no one threatened the Soviet Union. For this reason the journalist of "Komsomolka" allowed himself to let out this romantic expression, «nice evening». But here is the comparison of it with another thing which will be mentioned in the present article several times. The same year, Arkady Gaidar wrote a novelette called "Military Secret", famous for its story of Malchish Kibalchish. The story of the courageous boy who dies fighting against the enemies was told in every pioneer camp, where Soviet children went on holidays. All day children

were engaged in meeting pilots, sailors, officials from Moscow, they studied the structures of airplanes etc. Besides all that, they were taught how to shoot small-bore rifles at targets from the distance of 50 meters. They played cops and robbers, catching imaginary enemies, made wars with the local boys. In other words, the pioneers lived the intensive life of preparing for a soon danger. In the end of the novelette, the boy called Alka, the one who was the first to tell the story of Malchish, became a victim of an evil drunk man. The everyday life of the pioneers, who were enjoying their holidays at the sea shore, did "smell gunpowder" in the proper sense of this word, as "Komsomolskaya Pravda" wrote.

The first song of JF is sung in the marching style, as Kostya walks across the Southern village at the shore of the Black Sea, past the peasants, past the workers, past the people in camouflage uniforms, and past the girls picking grapes: past all this ideal world and space in which the Soviet person used to live. There are some boys flocking around him, helping him to count cows, pigs and goats. Both in JF and in "Military Secret" the action takes place by the sea, at a sunny sea shore, between magnificent mountains.

However, the space of JF is careless, dynamic; there is room for laughter and jokes, for spontaneous joy. There is a plenty of grapes, falling out of huge baskets that Kostya Potekhin sees as he passes by. The character played by L. Orlova spills several litres of newly drawn milk as she is trying to see her beloved Kostya. The space of "Military Secret" is tense, even though it is populated with children. There is no dynamite needed for making a tunnel, there people steal spades, there is no space in sleeping tents, there Alka is killed.

Against the background of S.M. Kirov assassination, the national socialist party's rising up to power in Germany, against the background of W. Churchill's worries as he warned the

Parliament about the German threat, the clearly pro-American musical looked silly, empty, politically provoking. The laughter, with which the jolly fellows laugh and with which they force the audience to laugh with, was relaxing for the Soviet person, luring them away to some fantastical dreams and pastoral fantasies.

In the place where people laugh, there is no place for concentration, wholeness, mobilization. It is not coincidence that "tickles" can physiologically kill a person, and mythological mermaids could tickle one to death and then drag them to a whirlpool.

Was such silly, comedy kind of laughter necessary for the Soviet person of the first five-year plans' time? Laughter at drunken piglets, fighting musicians, talentless girls? At first glance, this laughter lacked the revolutionary inspiration, the revealing impulse. It did not even have any main characters. It makes no sense to regard Kostya and Anya as such, as they are not the main characters of the film. The main characters are the funny atmosphere and the laughter created by the songs, dances and clownishness of all the jolly fellows, without exception. The question that arises is why these characters remained on the Soviet screen, why they were not cast down and destroyed according to the laws passed in the USSR in those years<sup>17</sup>.

### **1. Jolly Fellows» and socialist realism**

At the First Congress of the Soviet Writers the film "Jolly Fellows" by G. Aleksandrov was accused of vulgarity and copy-cat approach<sup>18</sup>. It was quite specific that the Congress of writers discussed a work of cinematograph. The principles, formed within the limits and framework of literature, were transferred on art as a whole and on cinematograph in particular.

The canon of socialist realism formed in the literature of the years 1932-1934 began

influencing the other genres of art, no matter how specific it was in respect with literature.

According to the modern German researcher H. Gunther, the first "level" of socialist realistic discourse can be considered as generally ideological<sup>19</sup>. The further ones, according to Gunther, are literary, meta-literary, etc. It is evident that the methodology of socialist realism is applicable not only to literature. "Socialist realism requires that the artist depicts the reality in a historically true way and in its revolutionary development... verity and historical accuracy... combining the task of ideological modification and re-education of the workers in the spirit of socialism. Socialist realism provides art with an exclusive opportunity to express the creative initiative, to choose between various forms, styles and genres"<sup>20</sup>.

Following this and similar definitions and spreading them among all the genres and styles of art, the Soviet cinematograph had to conform to the mentioned principles: "historical verity", "re-education of the workers", "revolutionary development", "domination of the socialist ideas".

The peculiarity of cinematograph as a kind of new art in comparison with literature, is the fact that the socialist principles can be applied to it only as to visual art (graphics or painting). But as a method socialist realism can be applied to cinematograph in a quite conditional way, unlike the way it can be applied to literature, for example. Besides being a kind of art and creation, cinematograph is production, it is an industrial factory. Making the socialist ideas come true in the imagination (just like in poetry or prose) is much easier than it is in a film. But this peculiarity also gives some freedom to cinematograph<sup>21</sup>.

Anyway, we can apply the term in respect with cinematograph as well. Especially if we speak of the Soviet one. Even though some

methodological complications still may occur, they are not so radical and refer to the peculiarity of cinematograph as a new artistic form, as we shall explain below.

Why is it so important to find the connection between cinematograph, especially JF, and socialist realism as an artistic method?

If we admit the existence of such connection, the main idea of the present article can be considered to be partially proved, as socialist realism as a method continued dominating in the Soviet art up to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Consequently, the first popular comedy that includes the principles of the dominating method inevitably influences the following comedy films due to its temporary antecedence.

However, this temporary factor is not the only reason. Coinciding with the formation and formulation of the canon, JP introduced the example of the laughter the Soviet person can and should laugh with. Remarkably, it was in the beginning of the 30's<sup>22</sup> when Soviet comedies began being widely shown, which leads us to the conclusion on some conscientious centralized government order for laughter<sup>23</sup>.

But it is only the laughter of JF that becomes popular, universal, in other words, it becomes "canonical", but, of course, in the strict sense of this word this term can hardly be applied to the phenomenon of laughter.

Nevertheless, the next films by G. Aleksandrov and L. Orlova, their special place in the Soviet cinematograph, together with the true long-lasting popularity of this film let us suppose that it includes a canon, a beginning, a condensation of laughter which was later spread on other films, scenes and plots as rings on the water or as chips of a broken mirror. The most significant thing is that this laughter could be the indicator and the typical feature of the new Soviet person of the second five-year plan, which began back in the year 1934. As

we know, the first five-year plan was fulfilled in such a brilliant way that the XVII Congress of the Party left its mark in the history as "the Triumphant Congress".

One of the decrees issued by the XVII Congress of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks<sup>24</sup> mentions the expression "pathos of the new construction". What can it be besides the laughter that can increase, create, support and strengthen this socialistic "pathos"? Pathos of the films by S.M. Eisenstein was too gloomy and sophisticated for the Soviet audience, just like the pathos of FEKS (Factory of Eccentric Acting) of Blauberger and Kozintsev.

Socialist realism that first appeared in the year 1932 as a term and then received its official ideological status at the First Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934, became the method, the standard and the model of creating any kind of artistic narration, including cinematographic narration, and the characters of the narration.

One of the appendices to the book by K. Clark "History as Ritual"<sup>25</sup> introduces a list of exemplar novels, based on the reports of the Congresses of Soviet Writers. Even some random names of writers and novels from this list can briefly remind us of what a socialist realistic novel is. There are: "Cement" by F. Gladkov, "Mother" by M. Gorky, "Time, Forward!" by V. Kataev, "The Zhurbin Family" by V. Kochetov, "How the Steel Was Tempered" by N. Ostrovsky, "Story of a Real Man" by B. Polevoy, "The Young Guard" by A. Fadeev, "Chapaev" by D. Furmanov. The total list includes 27 novels. The author remarks, that she intentionally did not mention any poetic or drama works of the Soviet epoch.

It is significant that all of the mentioned novels and the majority of those included into the list of K. Clark were brought to screen during the Soviet epoch. For example, "Mother" was cinematized back in 1926, "Chapaev" in 1934,

"The Young Guard" in 1948, "Iron Stream" in 1967, "Cement" in 1975.

Considering the impossibility and the irrelevance of literal transition of a novel to the cinema screen, the result of such adaptation was usually a new, independent piece, created according to all formulated socialist realistic canons. Let us notice that there was no novel "Jolly Fellows"; it explains the special place of the film among the others. If we follow the connection with literature and the research by K. Clark, we can also notice one more condition.

If JF were the first, this antecedence remains relevant in respect with the later comedies, just like the antecedence of "Mother" by Gorky which was written long before the appearance of the term "socialist realism". K. Clark writes: "Mother" in 1906 is not the "Mother" of 1936; "Chapaev" 1923 is not equal to "Chapaev" 1933 etc."<sup>26</sup>. In other words, the novel "Mother" as a canon of socialist realistic literature became a canon much later after it had been written. Classics become classics in the process of historical development, as they are studied and understood. The situation with JF is the same. G. Aleksandrov did not intend to create a canon or an example; he made a funny film, but its influence spread all along the whole Soviet cinematograph.

To support the introduced thesis it is necessary to find the features of socialist realism. From the definition quoted above, let us point out such features of socialist realism as "**the reality in a historically true way and in its revolutionary development**", "**ideological modification and re-education of the workers in the spirit of socialism**". Let us also use the definition given in the later Soviet epoch: "Socialist realism... is an artistic method... that is the expression of the **conscientious** conception of the world and the person"<sup>27</sup>, and the article "On Socialist Realism" by M. Gorky published in the year 1933 in the magazine "Literary Studies", No.1. In this work

Gorky emphasizes that a young Soviet writer has to disclose **the bourgeois cosiness and passion for money-making**<sup>28</sup>. Now let us find the mentioned features, properties and characteristics in "Jolly Fellows".

The disclosure of bourgeois cosiness and money-making begins with the titles, where the Soviet bourgeois Lena is introduced as the "Child of Torgsin". One of the key scenes of the film is the invasion of pigs, cows and goats into the house of Lena, and the chaos the animals create. Piglets walk on the table, bull gets drunk with wine punch, Anya gets astride on the bull and tries to drive it away. The bourgeois life is desolate, cast down; its hypocritical gist is unmasked, when Lena's mother gives Kostya some money for him not to tell anyone that he is a shepherd, not a famous composer. This is the climax of hypocrisy, though Kostya himself does not feel like laughing in this situation.

The small bourgeoisie embodied in Lena and her mother is also unmasked in respect with art. Lena wants to become an opera singer, but she cannot sing; the only thing she does is drinking raw eggs, breaking them against the nose of Lomonosov bust. Anya is a great singer, and the talents of these two girls cannot be compared.

If we briefly study the criterion and characteristic of "consciousness" in socialist realism and then try to find it in JF, we can come up with a plenty of wonderful examples and proofs. K. Clark considers the opposition of spontaneity/consciousness even more significant in socialist realism than the opposition of social classes<sup>29</sup>.

The demand for rationality, consciousness is present in socialist art as a heritage, aftershock, echo of Marxism, ideas of Hegel philosophy and mentality of the Enlightenment. It is no coincidence that the expression "unconscious element" in the Soviet epoch became a common ideological stamp comparable to the ominous "enemy of the

people". The famous cinematographic character Stierlitz can control the duration of his sleep, and Sergey Ganin, the participant of the Civil War from "Military Secret", can control not only the duration, but also the quality of sleep and content of his dreams.

The "consciousness" of Kostya Potekhin is revealed in the fact that he, being a shepherd, learns playing violin, "works on Beethoven" and finally becomes an orchestra conductor. When in the house of Lena they find out that he is not a famous composer, but just a shepherd, he utters: "Today I am a shepherd, tomorrow I will be a composer". The phrase means that becoming a composer is a conscious target for Kostya, that he strives to achieve it as we will see it in the second part of the film. This phrase presents the dialectic discontinuity and the "Hegelian" change of subject.

The "consciousness" and culture of Kostya are manifested not only in his social status, but also in the way he actualizes it. Kostya is a shepherd, the one who organizes and controls nature. Kostya makes a roll-call for his cows, pigs, goats; Kostya teaches the animals how to listen to music and how to respond to the sounds of his reed pipe. This way, Kostya arranges the order in nature in the truest sense of the word, and in the scenes of fighting the animals he reaps the fruits of his exaggeratedly conscious attitude to his work of a shepherd. He arrives at Lena's house together with cows and other animals. He is a "conscious element"; he cannot leave the flock unwatched. Let us also remark, that the flock is a social, kolkhoz, socialistic phenomenon. There is another example which is worth coming back to is the man in white, the hearse driver who says to the passengers: "Comrades, be conscious!"

If we search for "the reality in a historically true way and in its revolutionary development" and "spirit of socialism" in JF, the first difficulty we face concerns the revolutionism and especially

the spirit of socialism. Both "specificity" and the "socialistic verity" are more than enough in the film. The "development" is also evident. Kostya develops from a shepherd to a composer, Anya develops from a maid to a singer, their relationship evolves to love. All film is a dynamic motion from one musical sketch to another, from a march across a Southern village to the streets of Moscow.

The revolutionism of JF has already been jokingly marked by S. Eisenstein, and we have already pointed it out. In the artistic and linguistic point of view, JF is a really revolutionary film. As it has been mentioned above, it is compiled of funny sketches, dialogues and songs. The film begins with a march on the country road and finishes on the staircase of the Bolshoi Theatre. At the same time the integrity of the film is not broken, and the characters preserve their psychological reality. The stylistics of this kind equals to some radical creative innovation, a breakthrough, which is one of the most important indicators of revolutionism itself.

If we apply the terms of "revolutionism" and "socialist" in the political and social aspects of the film, then we see that the film conforms to the requirements of the new method. "Spirit of socialism", "pathos of new construction", enthusiasm of the first five-year plans needed a support for this emotional background, the personal emotional impulse. The politic censorship of the Russian Proletarian Writers' Association<sup>30</sup> did not provide an impulse of this kind, while the laughter of JF could easily demonstrate it.

**Conclusion for the first part.** The film "Jolly Fellows" can be considered to be a socialist realistic film. This cinematographic version of socialistic realism possesses a sufficient level of controversy and depth. These features prevent us from calling "Jolly Fellows" an ideological stamp or pure propaganda. For example, "The



Swine Girl and the Shepherd" by I. Pyryev can be qualified as such.

The reason why "Jolly Fellows" belongs to the trend of socialist realism is not the fact that it was made strictly within the framework of its stylistics or mentality. Socialist realism is developing, its canon is being formed, and "Jolly Fellows" made a contribution into forming the canon. The new socialistic mentality takes "Jolly Fellows" as a work of socialist realism. At the same time, as a result of numerous discussions the film could get stamped as pro-American or bourgeois. There were enough reasons for that. But the Soviet ideology gave the "green light" to the film and it turned into an exemplary Soviet comedy.

## 2. "Jolly Fellows" and archaic

K. Clark suggests that a socialist realistic novel combines two times: the utopic time and the real, historical one. Basically, this is one of the major mysteries of such novels. It is the utopic time, as K. Clark writes, with the reference to M.M. Bakhtin (and his work "Epic and Novel" in particular), that contributes the mythological character to the novel (or the film, in our case). Such kind of time, so-called Primary-Time, can be the time of revolution, important geographic discoveries, wars, birth dates of famous people, depending on the community. In this case we can speak of a specific Soviet mythology. And if a society wishes to create something similar to the ancient archaic mythology, which includes the stories of the first people, strict taboos, great celebrations, ceremonies of sacrifice or initiation, then the society also needs its own mythological time and space, together with the mythological regulations and rules of life. The specificity of the Soviet society and cinematograph of that time was determined by the fact that the mythological time and space were being constructed.

Of course, it was done with the support of some true existing events. For example, for the viewers of the film "Chapaev", shot and shown in the year 1934, the times of the Civil War have already become "the time", though the participants of the military conflicts were still alive and could remember what the situation was like in reality. For the viewers of "The Elusive Avengers" "the time" of the Civil war acquires the fundamental mythological traits. The Avengers are the reds, they are good, while the whites are the enemies, bandits, the embodiment of the worst, of all mean and low. To the fore come the details ("Valerka's glasses"), certain phrases ("...and along the road stand corpses with scythes..."). The Primary-Time itself becomes mythological as something that apriori cannot be doubted or reflected on.

The fact that cinematograph is close to the prehistoric syncretic ritual was mentioned by V.N. Rudnev in the "Dictionary of Culture of the XX Century". V.N. Rudnev refers to Vyach. Vs. Ivanov<sup>31</sup>, who pointed it out numerous times in another work of his dedicated to the theory of film editing<sup>32</sup>, that the modern thinking of film editing can be historically reduced to pralogue, to the bricolage of archaic. In his book, Vyach. Vs. Ivanov points out that the director of "The Battleship Potemkin" in particular used this kind of reduction in the scene of the eyeglasses dangling on the tackles<sup>33</sup>.

In other word, the admittance of the fact that the artistic methodology of socialist realism presupposes some idea of archaic time and space, has the following meaning for "Jolly Fellows". The structure of the film, its text (film editing, connection between the scenes) and characters have to include the elements of such mythological life.

If, according to K. Clark, "The main function of the Soviet novels was storing the state myths"<sup>34</sup>, then the mythological elements of JF claim not to state, but to pre-state commonness,

which is true archaism. It is true that in very few films of that period of the Soviet history we can face almost total absence of ideology, as "Jolly Fellows" are surrounded mostly with the films with the ideology surplus ("The General Line" by S. Eisenstein, "The Shining Path" of G. Aleksandrov himself).

At the more attentive watch of "Jolly Fellows" these mythological components begin to determine the meaning of the laughter the characters of the film laugh with. Let us study the motives of **shepherd** and **death**, and also briefly point at the connection of JF with other mythological and wonder tale elements.

The film begins with the opening gates with a large inscription "Clear Springs"<sup>35</sup> and the drawing of the sun. Kostya the shepherd and a small orchestra begin the march as they appear in the gate. The gate that forestalls the whole action, is, no doubt, symbolic within the framework of the film, with no additional hints at all. To prove it let us mention that behind the gate there is nothing special. There is no road, no houses, no yards, no fields, no cattle-pens, which would be natural. Behind the gate, on both sides we can see the same landscape, which emphasizes the uselessness of the gate. For example, in the opening scene of "The Swine Girl and the Shepherd" the main character enters a cattle-pen. Animals live there, and their living space is therefore limited. The gate from JF is a place of transition, or, to be precise, of arrival, of appearance of the one who comes out. And the one to come out is Kostya the shepherd, who bears a symbolic and sacred status. The camera angle lets us see a river, some woods and mountains behind the gate. It means the plenty, the richness of the natural landscape. The only thing that is harder to understand is what is hidden behind the gate. Here we should emphasize that the reason for it is the symbolical, not factual meaning of the gate.

At first, Kostya is walking with some animals, accompanied by musicians. But then he turns to a narrow path and continues his march alone. Like a celestial, he came out of the house, the doors of which are the gate with no walls or roof. The walls are the water, the woods and the mountains. It is the literary depiction of the classical wonder tale image of the "flowing land of milk and honey". The inscription over the gate claims, that their owner is clear and has some keys (in Russian, there is wordplay between "kliuchi" as "springs" and "kliuchi" as "keys": translator's remark), which are the codes to decipher the mysterious celestial knowledge. Because it is the sun that is drawn on the gate.

The ancient semantics of the gate in the history of culture is pointed out by O.M. Freidenberg in his work "Poetics of Plots and Genres"<sup>36</sup>.

**«The victory of the sun, the appearance of the totem coincides with the arrival through the heaven-sepulchral gate, the triumphal arch. The arch is a high wall that divides the world of darkness and death from the world of the heaven light; there are three doors: one high door in the middle and two smaller ones on the sides; on top of the wall, there is a dome as the symbol of the concave. Tsar the conqueror arrives through the middle doors, as they symbolize the sunrise, the dawn, the gate of heaven... We can observe this victorious march and the arrival of the deity not only outside, but also in the temple; the house of darkness, the Sancta Sanctorum, with three similar doors, and through them the representative of God in white shiny clothes arrives. "The opening of the doors" means the appearance, the arrival of the celestial deity; "taking off the gate", "breaking the wall" means opening the horizon for the triumphantly marching god. Therefore, this deity which is made of light, which rises from the dead, is personified as a gate; its image, in its turn, is placed over the czar's entrance in the church, over the entrance**

**door, over the doors of the house, and this image can replace the iconostasis. The gate, door, window, arch have the meaning that has been revealed by the science as a "yoke"; there are numerous ceremonies of walking through it as the most primitive kind of arch. The wide-spread legs, under which the modern primitive peoples march under, represent a more ancient kind of boundary and horizon, which also has the semantics of productivity".**

This proof of the significance and symbolism of the gate for the archaic life, for sure, supports our hypotheses. Together with the text quoted above, we need to consider that during his first march Kostya Potekhin does not only sing, he also smiles and laughs, cheering everyone he meets on the way with his joy and smile. In fact, he is not just walking down the road, he supervises everything everywhere. As he smiles, he pays some of his attention to the people, he salutes everyone, checks how their work is going, and encourages them. The gesture with which Kostya pets the first girl he meets on the cheek is the same as that made by Adolf Hitler, caught by the documentary chronicles in the end of the War, as will be seen later by millions of people.

"K o s t y a - W h o - C a m e - F r o m - T h e - M o u n t a i n s", as he replies to Lena on the beach, pointing at the place where he came from. Let us add that this laughing, mistake making celestial, which can also be awkward and almost vulgar in the scene of conducting the orchestra, looks even more alive, true and dear.

In the first part of this work we have already mentioned how meaningful it is that Kostya Potekhin is a shepherd. He rules nature, consciously penetrates into its depth, teaching animals how to listen to music. We need to emphasize it and say it again that a shepherd in mythology and in the history of archaic communities is an extremely significant figure.

There are so many examples proving this that we can mention only several of them.

For example, in the Old Testament "The word *shepherd* is often used in its allegorical meaning, sometimes towards the governors or people, to priests, and sometimes towards God himself... The reason of this is the similarity between the attitude of the shepherd to the flock and that of the governors to their subordinates"<sup>37</sup>.

Kostya Potekhin is more than a shepherd. He is the Shepherd, who calls his animals by names: Maria Ivanovna, Chamberlain. He is the leader of an orchestra, a mystical conductor who can head the orchestra without knowing the scores. In the scene of meeting the friends of Lena he plays them a simple melody on his reed pipe, as though he was trying to charm them so that they do not guess that he came with his flock. The analogy with the medieval Pied Piper naturally occurs to the audience. However, the connection between Kostya and the Pied Piper of Hamelin is evident from the very first minutes and scenes of the film, as the animals follow the shepherd's reed pipe, they march along the road, obeying the magic sounds.

The Bible Encyclopaedia claims that shepherds were not respected in some cultures, for example, in the Egyptian one. A shepherd cannot sit at one place; he has to move, wander around all the time. The dynamics of the revolutionary movement in this case coincides with the natural need for a shepherd due to this eternal nomadism. The character of JF is also nomadic. He moves along the road, moves from the village to the city, moves from being a shepherd to being a composer, moves from false infatuation to real love.

Here is a quotation from the Book from Ezekiel:

**"... behold, I myself, even I, will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. // As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his**

**sheep that are scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep; and I will deliver them out of all places whither they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. // I will feed them with good pasture; and upon the mountains of the height of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie down in a good fold; and on fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. // I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord Jehovah. // I will seek that which was lost, and will bring back that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick; but the fat and the strong I will destroy; I will feed them in justice**<sup>38</sup>.

Ezekiel, who made his prophecy for Israel before Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and all people were captured, became the prophet of "lamentations, and mourning, and woe"<sup>39</sup>.

In the quoted extract the prophet reproaches the shepherd of Israel (i.e., the authorities) of lack of care for their flock: "Woe unto the shepherd of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the sheep?" Being a shepherd is a responsibility; it requires attention and care for the flock. The work of a shepherd is the welfare of the community, of the people.

In the film Kostya Potekhin acts as a shepherd in several modes at the same time. He is a shepherd of sheep. He is a shepherd (conductor) of a jazz band. He is able to conduct a classical orchestra, without learning it. The combination of these three modes creates a funny character. And no matter how paradoxical it is, though everything that concerns humour is usually a paradox, in the end the audience laughs at the shepherd-like form of authority represented in such a comic way.

This hidden orientation of the laughter, the orientation of the authorities either to their subordinates or to themselves, is very important

for understanding the nature of the JF laughter. As it brings the wholeness to the laughter, contributes the reason to "laugh out loud", without any looking back at any political or ideological factors. Just like revelation and unmasking has no borders; the laughter of "Jolly Fellows" is overpowering and limitless. We have already mentioned it above that the absence of psychologism makes laughter the main character of the film. So, it makes us laugh not at someone or something, as the film shows no complete images; we laugh in general, we laugh at the laughter itself.

To make an example of laughter of the opposite kind, let us recollect laughing at "Sasha from Uralmash" in the film "Two Soldiers". The character of M. Bernes gets digs at the character of B. Andreev, a strong man, but a blimp and a slowcoach. The audience laughs at the innocent jokes of the witty guy from Odessa and the hapless guy from the Urals. The reflexivity and psychologism of this kind of laughter is evident, as its objects are real, full-fledged characters. The laughter of JF is anti-psychological, first of all, because on one hand the characters are sketchy, and on the other hand because they embody some archaic and mythological roles and stories.

It is extremely interesting to apply the V.Ya. Propp's understanding of the tale of Princess Nesmeyana here, to define the nature of the shepherd in JF and of the laughter it causes<sup>40</sup>.

V.Ya. Propp takes the full, unabridged variant of the tale. The structure of the plot is well-known and very simple: the shepherd recognizes the princess and makes her laugh. In this plot it is especially relevant for us to see, **why the princess laughs, what this laughter brings, and also why the absence of this laughter is so undesirable for everyone around.**

Let us skip the plot of the tale itself, but present the plot we get in the result of our research. It looks a little surprising, but in everything that

concerns folklore we totally rely on the authority of V.Ya. Propp.

This is how it is. For some reasons, the princess does not laugh. If there is no laughter, there is no life on the earth, the nature fades. Making her laugh means marrying her after. And she offers herself as a wife to anyone who would recognize her face and make her laugh. The happy one is the shepherd with his magic reed pipe and a flock of dancing pigs. The shepherd makes the princess laugh and marries her. The nature brings fruit; the laughter of the princess restores the order in the world. In the "Conclusion" of the work, V.Ya. Propp writes:

**"All this gives us the right for the following conclusion: the tale of Nesmeyana reflects the magic of laughter. The earlier form of the laughter magic is based on the idea that the dead do not laugh, only the living people do. The dead who come to the nether world... must not laugh. On the opposite, any introduction into life, let it be birth of a child or a symbolical birth reproduced at initiation ceremonies or similar actions, is always accompanied by laughter, which is ascribed the power of not only accompanying, but also creating the life itself. This is why introduction into life is accompanied with some compulsory laughter"<sup>41</sup>.**

Answering the questions about why the princess does not or does laugh, why it is so important, and what makes her laugh, and trying these answers on JF, according to the existing analysis of the tale, we can come up with the following explanations.

It is needed to make the princess laugh to restore the fertility of the earth, as the princess from the tale is, historically, structurally and ontologically equal to Demeter, the ancient goddess of the harvest. Demeter is looking for her daughter Persephone (Kore), and only the vulgar gesture of her servant Iambe makes her laugh.

This way, having reduced the tale to the three of its basic motives, we see: the motive of fertility, the motive of a vulgar gesture and the motive of laughter.

The "obscenity" of the tale shepherd is expressed in various signs: the reed pipe, about which V.Ya. Propp writes that "this issue should be avoided here...", the presence of the pigs, the behaviour of Nesmeyana herself and finally the method the shepherd uses to make the girl laugh.

As for the reed pipe, let us treat it in the same way as the author of the "Problem of Laughter and the Comic", and for the pigs, we need to remind you that they are the symbol of fertility. "In Greek mythology a pig was connected to family life..."<sup>42</sup> V.Ya. Propp finds some direct erotic meaning in the etymological roots of the Latin word "porca" (pig)<sup>43</sup>.

The behaviour of Nesmeyana in the old authentic versions of the tale is quite explicit, as according to one of them, she demonstrates a birth mark on her leg, to another, she shows a hair under her gown, and to the third one, she openly offers herself as a wife for one night. "The Tsar called out that the one who spends a night with his daughter can marry her"<sup>44</sup>. The trial is reduced to the demonstration of virile strength and ability to make the princess laugh. Two actions run into one another. And one should not think that getting with a girl like Nesmeyana is an easy matter. One of her "modes" is the Bogatyr Girl, who can sleep "nine days with her bogatyr sleep". And "spending a night" with her actually means being able to wake her up, to make her stay up, which is easier to do with jokes and laugh.

Coming back to the myth of Demeter and the gesture the servant makes to make the goddess laugh, let us compare the meaning of the gesture and the behaviour of the tale shepherd. The gesture after which Demeter laughs, and, therefore, the earth begins to bring fruit, the flowers bloom and the nature comes alive again,

is the gesture of showing the naked body. The stimulus for such gesture is the desire to reproduce life. V.Ya. Propp finds that Clement of Alexandria explains the gesture as the fury at Demeter's indifference. It is true that in a blaze of anger we can do uncommon or indecent acts, utter improper words, give random answers. For example, when Lena asks Kostya on the beach, how he became a genius at such a young age, he answers: "That's my habit". After this, Kostya begins to laugh in an unnaturally wild way, surprising and scaring Lena. Later we see that the reason was the fish that got into his swimming suit (trunks), which he throws right on the frying pan.

V.Ya. Propp interprets Clement of Alexandria, shifting the emphasis from "fury" to "challenge and invitation". If we "substitute" the servant with the shepherd, then, of course, challenge and invitation are more natural and understandable. In both cases, both in the myth and in the tale, we deal with laugh as a result, which resolves a disadvantageous situation.

This way, if we consider Kostya from the film through the symbolic and the archaic function of the shepherd as the One who brings fertility to the earth by making it laugh, his role and function in the film become more evident and precise.

The laughter of Kostya Potekhin is the manifestation of the healthy, fertile<sup>45</sup>, wealthy society. He plays reed pipe, surrounded by pigs in the truest sense of the word. In the tale of Nesmeyana there is a motive of competition, as the shepherd is the only one of many rivals who managed to make the girl laugh. In the film we also see the competition. The shepherd is taken for a composer, and in town he is confused with a Paraguayan conductor Costa Fraskini. Let us remark that for a Soviet person Paraguay was just as mysterious as the wonderful land of Faraway Kingdom.

The question that remains, is who in the film "plays the role" of Nesmeyana, though literally

the answer has already been given. Who does the shepherd make laugh, for the prosperity and the age of the radiant (sunny and, according to O.M. Freidenberg, funny) future to begin? Who is expecting him to play the magic music on the reed pipe? No doubt, it is the viewer who lives in the Soviet country and who laughs throughout the whole film, who is hypnotized, who is magically fascinated to laugh, accepting the challenge and the invitation of the director to laugh for an hour and a half. Once again let us remark that the success of the film was not guaranteed, and the laughter was the best proof that the authors did manage to make the viewers laugh.

\* \* \*

As it has already been said in the beginning of the current part, let us pay some attention to the theme of death, which is present in the film in the most evident and even obtrusive way. It makes us expect that the theme and motive of laugh is always somehow connected with death. Because, where laugh is, there is the confirmation and surplus of life. If there was no "death" in the film, we would have to look for it somewhere, so to say, in the allegorical way. But death is present in JF, in the very plot, in the story of it.

After the musicians from the jazz band begin a fight and they are left without a place for rehearsal, they start working at funerals. From time to time, due to the surplus of life and energy in them and for the sake of practice, instead of the slow funeral march they play some jazz melodies. This mockery at funerals is close to sneering and extreme cynicism. However, this short episode takes up only several minutes of the film; a longer and a more significant role in respect with understanding the film is that of the hearse on which the musicians arrive at the theatre. The last twenty minutes of the film<sup>46</sup> are in this or that way connected either to the hearse,

or to its driver. In the titles of the modern film copies this person is presented as a "light-man", not as a "driver of a hearse" or an "undertaker", which would have been more precise. This understatement and distortion of the character points at the exaggeratedly evident presence of death in the last twenty minutes of the film and also at the fact that the authors did not want to advertise this theme before the beginning of the film.

The hearse and its driver appear when it turns out that the musicians are late for the concert. Kostya emphasizes it: "Fifteen minutes left!" From the point of view of death, which is to be embodied by the carrier of the dead, such emphasis looks like evident irony at the eternity. The passengers and the undertaker begin to bargain, which also downgrades death and makes the vehicle connected with something more pragmatic and common. However, on the other hand, the procedure of bargaining puts the emphasis on the comparison of the driver to Charon. The hearse runs into Anya, which means her death in her previous status; due to the accident, Kostya meets Anya and they go to the concert together. During the trip, the purifying rain begins, and when the musicians leave, and Anya stays to wait for them, it turns out that there is a live man in the coffin on the hearse. Anya puts on some clothes, which is basically not clothes at all, but serves as covers and accessories for the funeral ceremony. The bond between death and the hearse is emphasized by the cold and darkness in the street.

Wearing this weird attire, hand in hand with the light-man undertaker in a long white gown, Anya and Kostya sing their final chastushka about the iron. As they try to kiss, between them the light-man undertaker appears again, and in the end he gets kissed in both cheeks. At the end of the film the viewers forget that the lovely dancing old man, who has been asking the "thirty

roubles as the transport fee", is a messenger from the after world.

This explicit inclusion of the death theme into the plot of the film and such a grotesque, rude mockery at it, is a strive for a serious and important target. And the target is achieved in the fact that the laughter of the film can conquer death in all its senses and qualities. Jazz, the music of freedom, lightness and improvisation, is played at the funeral. The hearse turns out to be an intermediary between two lovers who have been driven apart. Inside the death, literally, inside the coffin, a live man called Philemon is found<sup>47</sup>. The messenger of death does not leave the viewer till the very end of the film, till the final kiss of the lovers, demanding the payment.

The victory of laughter over death in the final twenty minutes of the film supports and confirms everything that has been said about Kostya Potekhin as of a symbolic shepherd. To our mind, the long emphasis on the attributes of the dead (hearse, coffin, white colour of death in the clothes of the driver and Philemon, sepulchral cold and darkness, the green serpent) is intended to underline the presence of death and its significant presence in the world modelled by the film. If it begins with the sun, mountains, streams, the springs of life, it finishes in hell, night rain, the dead man rising from the coffin, the kiss of death. But this "bottom", this night and this absurd infernal ambience, just like the bourgeois life and money-making, can be conquered by laughter, jokes, happy dances of daring raggy musicians and the meeting of two lovers.

**Conclusion for the second part.** In the mythological space and time of the Soviet person there is land, sky, river, sea, rain. There is death, stupidity and offence. But like ether, the laughter is over it all, the laughter that can overcome everything, that is able to transform, turn the dead into live, that accompanies lovers and finally brings them together.

### 3. Jolly Fellows and avant-guard

In this point let us analyse the influence of JF on the film laboratories of Factory of Eccentric Acting (FEKS) and try to compare the laugh of JF and some aspects of the member of OBERIU (the Union of Real Art), Daniil Kharms.

Theatre Laboratory FEKS<sup>48</sup> (Factory of Eccentric Acting) that existed in the beginning of the '20s in Petrograd was the representative of cinematographic futurism and expressionism in the Soviet environment. The slogans and theses of FEKS, in their rhetoric, resembled the manifests of the Italian futurist T. Marinetti. In comparison with T. Marinetti, FEKS seems even more radical, as they act only in theatre and cinematograph, in other words, they are concentrated on the single object: "audience/stage".

They manifest themselves through a mix of styles, genres, languages: circus, obscene words, and sounds of cars passing by. Classical art and theatre in particular are desperately criticized. L. Blaumberg and G. Kozintsev begin with theatre performances, later they begin to direct films, the most famous of which are: "The Overcoat", "The Devil's Wheel", "The New Babylon", and "Alone". On the border between the twenties and the thirties, FEKS as an organization becomes a part of "Leningradkino"<sup>49</sup>, and L. Blaumberg and G. Kozintsev begin teaching.

It is still hard to evaluate the influence of FEKS on the films by S. Eisenstein, but we consider it evident and proved that this influence really did take place. S. Eisenstein was an observer during the setting of "Marriage" performance by L. Blaumberg and G. Kozintsev<sup>50</sup>. The theses of "attraction assembly" by S. Eisenstein and "trick combination" driven forward by the FEKSers are very close. As O.L. Bulgakova writes, the "trick combination" is one of the steps of attraction assembly<sup>51</sup>.

We can say that within the framework of attraction a trick becomes its constituent

part; the trick is an individual case of the attraction.

And still, to our mind, trick is a single unit, which is more independent and more eccentric. If we look for the historical continue of the attraction, it is more likely to be a show or a spectacular performance in the modern vision that has formed itself under the influence of concerts, films and advertising.

According to the circus tradition, a trick is made by one actor or a small group of actors, and is more directed at the personality of the viewer. Not at the mass, not at the group, as it is the attraction is, according to S. Eisenstein. The class power of an attraction is stronger, but trick hits the audience right in the heart, taking their breath away.

**"The theatre program of FEKS assumed the cascade development of the story line from one trick to another, with the support of the visual bonds, looking back to the circus experience. The first night of "Marriage", a trick in three acts, was the practical demonstration of their system... Along with the story of Miss Agafya's wedding and the selection of candidates, a detective intrigue that existed somewhere on the "edge" of the performance was also developing. Basically, the performance was constructed as an entrée of two clowns, Serge and Taurek, named Albert and Einstein by the directors, who were forced to speak with a heavy foreign accent, repeating the same line: "Everything in the world is relative". The detective story was unwound from its end. For the clown entrée a corpse was needed. For this reason the villain killed Charlie, Agafya's fiancé. The clowns brought him back to life by connecting him to the electric plug (instead of the old farce clyster they put a plug with a cable into Charlie's bottom). During clowns' gag and the "inside-out logic" the performance was constructed, interrupted by the action of the characters, not connected to any of its**



**parts... Sometimes a scandal between the viewers would arise...»<sup>52</sup>.**

The trickery of FEKS theatre was transferred to the cinematograph, because there tricks are easier to perform: every scene can be shot several times. A trick is individual performance of an actor, his own psychological game. A trick is intended to amaze, to be remembered for a long time; a trick influences a person as a whole.

The ideological potential of a trick and the mechanism of its influence on the person are similar to those of laughter. It is the manifestation of the numerous paradoxes of laughter, for example the one claimed by Aristotle, that laugh is a kind of "harmless ugliness". We realize that ugliness is bad, but we can laugh at it, turning ugliness into something else. This is the amorality of laughter, as any kind of ugliness is always a punishment and disgrace. Anyway, we can involuntarily laugh at it. Circus does not only support and allow this kind of reaction; it lives with it. The best example of this is performances of midget groups. Or a well-prepared trick of a rope-dancer or a juggler. We know that behind the seeming easiness of such performance there is a lot of work. But the performer demonstrates it with a smile, showing that he feels happy and easy. The circus tricks of illusionists are also based on the same paradox. We know that there is a clue and that it is possible to find it, but the trick is made in such a smooth and beautiful way that we feel happy, as though a real miracle is going on. In other words, let us repeat that the trick bears a powerful manipulative and personal charge.

The comedy circus tricks are one of the most ancient kinds of performance; the modern laugh still owes its existence to this kind of performance. Before becoming the theatre we know, it was a ritual, it included obscene words,

conflicts, and puppet shows were the constituent part of the whole funny performance.

Even the most approximate comparison of the laugh one can hear at a circus, at a theatre or at a modern TV show indicates, first of all, the power and intensiveness of the personal component of the circus laughter. In the modern TV shows we can often hear someone else's laughter behind the screen, which tells us to laugh just because we are supposed to.

The circus, trick component of the funny performance was adopted by FEKS from the history of archaic, old culture. Here is a description of a show booth used for performing comedies, given by O.M. Freidenberg.

**"Like a temple, circus is surrounded by benches, and under its dome, in the external galleries, in the same building, there are some trading stalls. At the same place, there are eateries, where people eat and drink; flesh-peddlers, illusionists, acrobats do their work, by their side; there are astrologists, fortune-tellers, crystal-gazers, prophets, like a farce reply of an oracle-prophet-magician. The show booth is as independent and ancient variant of everyday life-cosmos as a circus; not accepted by the high-class society, it was left for further development in the lowest strata. Here theatre is a tent, a real skene. A ship and a carriage, brightly illuminated and decorated with glass beads, rapidly whirl to some music: it is a sort of orchestra and arena, where asters shaped as a "carriage", "ship", "horse" run around, taking over each other in the rapid run, which does not really move, but stays at the same place. Here we see one more ancient type of a half-temple, half-theatre, a raree show and puppets, Punch and a tame performing bear. Acrobats and illusionists, fools and clowns who demonstrate their art"<sup>53</sup>.**

Now, after reading these lines, it seems surprising how close the performance created

by FEKSers was to the traditional performance types.

The closeness and the similarity of the performances created by "trick combiners" and the archaic performances, is, of course, not in the surrounding atmosphere or the appearance. The similarity is in the kind of laughter they cause. But if the acrobats and illusionists of the old comedy shows really did do miracles, and it was no coincidence why the profession of an actor remained tabooed for a long time, then the acrobats and illusionists of FEKS did miracles of artistic trickery.

This artistic trickery manifests the strong side of the Soviet acting, no matter what roles the actors play. The important is not "what" and "why", but "how". Such attitude towards cinematograph was defended by S. Eisenstein in his work "Fourth Dimension of Cinematograph", where he emphasized the techniques and editing effects, as he saw them as a powerful revolutionary resource of the new sound films. FEKSers, in their turn, drew more attention to the tricks, illusions, acrobatics, amazing the audience with something unusual and scandal, finally arriving at the personal eccentricity.

In the previous paragraphs of the present work it has been noticed that JF are antipsychological. It is explained by the fact that the work was under greater influence of S. Eisenstein, than that of FEKS. But in his next work, "Circus" in the year 1936, G. Aleksandrov returns to the FEKS-style eccentricity. The famous critic Sergey Dobrotvorsky wrote: "As a masterful stylist, Aleksandrov had to understand that in its formal performance, richness of cultural analogues and in its one-hundred per cent conformity to the social mandate, "Circus" is much superior to the burlesque "Jolly Fellows", the dancing musical "Volga-Volga" and the explicitly clichéd "The Shining Path"<sup>54</sup>. The selection of the circus theme and the image of circus as a world also points

out the universality of the circus trickery, the universality of its influence, and, therefore, the totality and universality of the circus laughter in this new Soviet world. For this transformation of the world into circus to happen, he needed the burlesque "Jolly Fellows" with its purifying archaic laughter without looking back at any ideological reflections. In "Circus", the social mandate gets closer to the trickery eccentricity, which also increases the personal inner potential of acting and of the sympathizing audience. The same thing happens to the laughter. If at the beginning the viewer feels sorry for the Western prima donna Marion Dixon from "Circus", later they feel happy for her, sympathize her. Anya from JF does not provoke any kind of such emotions.

Avant-guard experiments and eccentricity of the FEKSers continued in the classics of the Soviet cinematograph. Moreover, such avant-guard became demanded and necessary to the new cinematograph of socialist realism. One of the FEKSers, G. Kozintsev, brought to screen two plays of Shakespeare: "King Lear" and "Hamlet"<sup>55</sup>. The Fool played by O. Dahl and Hamlet of I. Smoktunovsky seemed to be the top of existentially psychological interpretation of these characters.

Doctor Snout in "Solaris" directed by A. Tarkovsky was played by Jüri Järvet, actor of specific appearance and inner expression; this fact was the doubtless sign of recognition of "King Lear" by G. Kozintsev, where J. Järvet played the role of the King. The ideological eccentricity, which was absolutely strange to A. Tarkovsky, turned out to become a psychological kind of eccentricity, psychologism of inner kind, existential, almost religious. And eccentricity of this sort is fully represented in films by A. Tarkovsky. Just recollect several desperate scenes of Vladimir battle from the film "Andrei Rublev". It is no coincidence that the

role of the Monk in this part of the film is played by clown actor Yuri Nikulin. Here the expected and demonstrated comic elements (as he is a clown) turn out to be scary, cruel, physiologically (visually) unbearable.

Evidently, the stylistics of FEKS is also present in JF. But here we do not see revelation or disclosure of the social faults, the bare desire to surprise or amaze the viewer any more. The artistic eccentricity of FEKS school, the editing method of S. Eisenstein are redirected to the person, or personality. To the loving person, the person "with a heart which is like a bird in his chest", with a heart which "wants no peace". To the person who "knows how to live and love", "who is never ever lost", in other words, to the alive, cheerful, laughing person.

For example, unlike Mustafa in the film "Road to Life", who is also a cheerful person, a good singer, a very bright individual, but later becomes a victim, gets prostrate and murdered, Kostya and Anya from JF are alive in all meanings of the word. Both in the truest sense of it, unlike Mustafa, and in the figurative sense: they are in love, happy, and joyful.

In the final scenes of JF we see the "Jolly Fellows' March" played on the stage of the Bolshoi Theatre. In the tradition of FEKS authors, there are some plump ballet-girls holding their short ballet skirts like vaudeville dancers and even try to wave them, which makes the movement even more absurd as the ballet skirt is short enough to demonstrate the legs. Their moves, as they switch from foot to foot, remind us of cabaret style. The general impression of the scene is very ridiculous, it has something of Tom Waits' "manic cabaret" and "Popular Science" by S. Kuryokhin. Against this background, Anyuta-Orlova sings along with the jazz recitative of Kostya-Utyosov in a trained operetta voice. The jazz band musicians look absolutely indecent, someone in

their underpants, someone wearing loose torn trousers; all of them play and dance. In one of the scenes, trumpeters in maritime caps march down the staircase. The techniques of "trick combination" practiced by FEKS and "attraction assembly" of S. Eisenstein have been connected to each other by G. Aleksandrov in this scene of incredible eclecticism and absurd.

This genre patchwork of music and dance is watched by the audience of the Bolshoi Theatre, and all of them sing along with the happy lovers. The final scenes are shown from the theatre balcony. The camera is slowly moving backwards, first behind the viewers' backs, then out of the theatre window, and in the end we, the real viewers, see only a small square of the stage from the street, or, to be more precise, from the space outside the theatre. We see Apollo's quadriga, the theatre columns, and, behind its window of the film that has just finished.

It is a very modern trick of mixing realities, pure manipulation, the precursor of films like "Matrix" and "Existenz". For G. Aleksandrov himself it is a step towards the next film, "Circus". Life is theatre, life is acting, artistic trickery watched by the celestials.

\* \* \*

Kostya Potekhin reminds a lot of Daniil Kharms in his appearance. If we do not think of the JF laughter in its theoretical, abstract sense, then the appearance of the character himself reminds us of the eccentric poet, avant-guard writer D. Kharms.

In the introduction to his large research "Daniil Kharms and the End of Russian Avant-Guard", J-F. Jaccard writes: "Looking into the past with the eyes of a historian, with bitter clearness we begin to understand that the creation of OBERIU (the Union of Real Art) in the year 1927 became the fight of Russian avant-guard for its honour, as it did not wish to be condemned to

death by the "great architect" of new life and his lieutenants"<sup>56</sup>.

In our opinion, stating the question of Kharms, his work and avant-guard as a whole in this manner exaggeratedly oppose the authority of the Soviet epoch to the avant-guard. For example, in 1926, after the film "The Battleship Potemkin", FEKSers issue the avant-guard film "The Devil's Wheel" about the adventures of a sailor from the revolutionary "Aurora". The role of the Question Person, illusionist, head of the gang is played by S. Gerasimov, future famous Soviet film director, order bearer, laureate of Stalin's awards, Doctor of Arts. The film is made in the style typical for FEKS: grotesque, eccentric, explicit.

The connection between the mentality of Kharms as an avant-guard writer and the creative process of that Soviet time should not be decreased to contrasting, revealing and unmasking "the architects of new life". His work was close both to the stylistics of FEKS and the editing thinking of S. Eisenstein. The laughter that occurs as a result of reading D. Kharms' works is present in that time in a natural way, thanks to it, not against it. Moreover, the laughter carries on, for example, in the modern publications of the children's books by Kharms. If the books make children laugh, it means that the laughter is still relevant in our times.

Here we make an attempt to point out the connection between the laughter and the poetics of Kharms and the laughter of JF, in the maximum concentrated and therefore brief way. Let us consider two themes in Kharms' works, which in the end simplify the understanding of JF.

**First: fragmentariness** of Kharms' language. Basically, fragmentariness is the attraction assembly and the trick combination. In Kharms' works tricks and attractions are the phrases, words, sentences, paragraphs.

Some certain scenes, situations, occasions can be also called fragments. In some of his texts,

especially in the poetic ones, the fragments are usually word combinations. Here is an example from the poem "Incident on the Railroad":

**"One day granny waved her hand // Momentarily a train // Came to children, telling them // Drink the porridge and the chest // In the morning coming back // Children sat upon the fence // and they said, hey you black horse // you go work and I will not, // Masha is of different kind // As you wish, who knows perhaps // We can lick that sand and also // Everything the sky expressed..."**

Here the fragments are granted the basic significant meaning, as the whole meaning of the text without these separate fragments, without every uttered word, does not exist from the very beginning. The meaning of the intonation, of the certain words and their combinations, first of all depends on this fantastic citation the author makes. This combination of cites creates the image of chaos that can be observed at any, even at a modern railway station. The important point about the poem is that among the single events, situations, facts and other units that we call a fragment, there are some words that create the integrity of the text and bear the function of forming the general image. "One day granny said..." makes the impression that everything that follows is a long boring story told by the granny. Or, in the middle of the poem we see: "So, and then...", which we usually say when too much has been told and the story seems too long.

Here are the thoughts of Kharms himself, dated back to 1931:

**"The power hidden in words needs to be released. There are some word combinations that make the effect of this power easier to see. It is not good to think that it is a kind of power that makes things move. Even though I am sure that the power of**

**words is capable of it as well. But the most valuable effect of the power is almost impossible to define. The rough idea of this power we can get from the rhythms of metric verses. Such complicated methods of feeling this power as, for example, moving a limb to the rhythm of the verse, should not be considered as nonsense. It is the roughest, but, at the same time, the weakest manifestation of the verbal power. The further force of this power is hardly available to rational understanding. Thinking of a method to research this power only makes it clear that it has to be absolutely different from any other methods applied by the modern science. First of all, neither facts nor experience can be the proof here. I... have difficulty saying how to prove and to confirm everything I said. At the moment I know four types of verbal machines: verses, prayers, songs and spells. These machines are made not by calculations or rational thinking, but in another tool, the name of which is the ALPHABET"<sup>57</sup>.**

We can only try interpreting and come up with our own ideas about what the Alphabet can be, but it is evident that the "power of the machines" Kharms writes about is not only in the Alphabet, but also in the way it is applied. It is no coincidence that Kharms who considered himself to be a follower of V. Khlebnikov, after several years of poetic and artistic work indirectly refuses to admit the influence of Khlebnikov on his creativity. V. Khlebnikov creates the alphabet in the truest sense of the word, and Kharms manipulates it, making it work in a non-standard, uncustomary way.

Of course, in Kharms' literature we can see some unknown new words, neologisms and word combinations, but usually they are not invented by Kharms himself but adopted. For example, in children's folklore: "People sleep, heagles-meagles // over people fly the eagles"; "Only tossing their hats // crying out // "Ga-ra-rar". In those cases when the futuristic "educanto" chimes

through, Kharms looks like a copy-cat and loses his originality<sup>58</sup>.

The Alphabet for Kharms consists of simple everyday words, descriptions of situations and events, hidden and explicit quotations, clichés, fixed expressions, names of well-known objects. The power of the verbal machines he writes about in the extract quoted above, is in the total freedom of putting the Alphabet elements into an order. In the sequence, combination, bonds. The author of a verse or a work of literature becomes the full-powered creator of the reality he describes, its full-powered authorized "architect". This is the understood Reality, described by the members of OBERIU. The reality can be created, its fragments can be directed, its tricks can be combined.

Kharms intentionally calls his poems "verbal machines": this way he brings his understanding of literature to cinematograph as a kind of industrial activity or a factory. A machine is started up, it is not easy to stop it, the results of its work can be unpredictable.

The fragmentariness of Kharms' reality where some domestic everyday situations, subjects and words clash with each other is similar to the fragmentariness of JF. Let us illustrate it with the scene at the sea shore, when Kostya Potekhin meets Anya and she tells him that Lena has left.

**Anya: – I see you every morning. /waves her hands /.**

**Kostya: – crazy.**

**Anya: – there is a mosquito on you.**

**Kostya: – why didn't she come herself?**

**Anya: – do you live here all the time?**

**Kostya: – is she angry with me?**

**Anya: – who taught you to play like this?**

**Kostya: – where is Lena?**

**Anya: – I am leaving tomorrow.**

During the whole conversation Anya is waving her hands around, trying to swat the

mosquito. She is in lyrical mood. Kostya is furious, even though he has just sang a song about "how beautiful it is to live in this world". The scene looks typically Kharms-like. Let us compare it with a fragment of the play "Elizabeth Bam".

**Elizabeth Bam: – Who got whom last?**

**Ivan Nikolaevich: – I, ha-ha-ha, in my pants!**

...

**Daddy: – Copernic was an outstanding scientist.**

**Ivan Nikolaevich: (falling on the floor): – I have some hair on my head.**

...

**Ivan Ivanovich: – I am totally lying on the floor!**<sup>59</sup>

In the works by D. Kharms we can find a lot of similar fragments and phrases that demonstrate the fragmentary world outlook and fragmentary thinking. The same we can see in the works of the FEKSers, and in the films by G. Aleksandrov. The trick, the attraction itself makes us forget what it was that connected them. They are self-sufficient and spectacular. However, D. Kharms demonstrates a personal, auteur, artistic attitude towards this kind of total circus-like fragmentariness. While the cinematograph fulfils the social mandate for reproducing something out of fragments. This is the difference between the approaches that at first glance may seem identical.

What is allowed to the social factory, social apparatus and total circus, is not allowed at the individual level. The tragedy of Kharms' literature (why it was suppressed and underestimated for a long time) is the fact that it was and it still is quite an adequate reflection of the fragmentary Soviet reality built on the "assemblies" and "combinations". This reality can be shown and described only within the framework of a social

factory. Where "Kharms and Co" have never been welcome; it brought the illusion of their "fighting" against the existing regime.

**Second: the connection to mythology** of Kharms' literature is brightly manifested due to its "childishness". This trait can be seen both in the works by Kharms written specially for children, and in those made for adults. The specificity of Kharms as a children's writer requires separate analysis as his "childishness" is special; it is similar to that of the Chinese wise men and the child who "always tells the truth". Let us have a brief look at this characteristic.

It is well-known that children see the world around them as a cycle, for example, they often confuse between "yesterday" and "today". A child can easily say, for example, "tomorrow we went to the theatre" or "yesterday we shall go to visit someone". The world of a child is full of single events, situations, stories. The immediatism of their understanding dominates over the memory and reflection. Kharms understands, realizes, perceives and reproduces this important trait of children.

**"Valery Sazhin is right when he claims that in some cases the word "story" in Kharms' works is used as a synonym of the word "incident". The numerous "Stories" that always occur in the titles of Kharms' texts ("Story", "Story of the Fighters" etc.) can have some connection to the word play used by Gogol as he describes Nozdrev: "Nozdrev was, as it were, a man of incident. Never was he present at any gathering without some sort of a story occurring thereat"**<sup>60</sup>.

The children's love for repetitions, looping, ritualization of the order around them is well-known, too. Things need to be kept in their places, the same tale or song can be listened to over and over again as many times as possible, the same questions can be asked numerous times. Both in

the children and adults' works by Kharms there are constant repetitions, returns, looping of words and meanings.

**«Ivan Ivanych Samovar // Was a paunchy Samovar // A three-bucket Samovar». Or: «Here the house flies. // Here the dog flies. // Here the dream flies. // Here mother flies. // Here the garden flies. // The horse flies, // The banya flies // The balloon flies // Here the stone flies...»**

For a child and for an adult myths are different, but for Kharms they are tightly bound into one knot. The adult myth is created with the children's language, or, to be more precise, with the pseudo-children's language. Even A.S. Pushkin, V.A. Zhukovsky wrote wonder tales, saying nothing of L.N. Tolstoy or N.N. Nosov. In all these cases we, as readers, can draw a strict border between those intended for children and for adults. For example, in the adventures of Dunno (Neznayka), especially in "Dunno on the Moon", there is much more of adult than children's traits. For Kharms, the children and adults are almost never separate<sup>61</sup>. The adult elements, especially the feeling of chaos and total fragmentariness of the world, its absurdness, are shown and demonstrated with the "children's" means. Among such means there are endless repetitions that are usually needed for supporting memory. "Memory in the texts by Kharms are extremely weakened", writes M. Yampolsky<sup>62</sup>. It is the memory which is the obligatory condition for history. With no memory the history falls apart, the historical becomes occasional, incidental, coincidental. In our case, it is specifically mythological.

The mythology created by Kharms does not coincide with the mythology in its archaic meaning; in the meaning K. Clark understands it. In some cases, it does not coincide with it, but in some cases it serves as its condition.

For "Chapaev" to be perceived as a film about a really mythological character, the sense of history needs to be "weakened" so much that it would require restoration with films like "Ivan the Terrible" and "Alexander Nevsky".

If we search for explicitly childish mythology and childish laughter in JF, we find it in the scene of the musicians' fight. The musicians are fighting, but the residents of the dorm where they practice think that it is a little boy next door making noise, preventing them from rehearsing. The hint is explicit: the fight has to be taken in a childish naïve, placable way. Let us recollect how vigorously and how aggressively the teenagers from "The Road to Life" break their machine tools. The conventionality is minimal. In JF, vice versa, the symbolism of the fighting scene is raised to the maximum. No one is hurt, everyone runs to another place to continue the rehearsal. The final phrase of the whole scene is also made in Kharms' "spirit". To the question of the dormitory head, "What happened here? the response is, "We were re-we-re-we-rehearsing". The visual image is transferred into the articulation of the character, as though the visual impressions of the scene were not enough. But the director prefers to use a better-structured alphabet of letters and sounds (cinematograph is secondary, literature is primary).

The final frame before the jolly fellows leave the room shows a man hanging between the ceiling and the floor against the background of the window. He seems to be hanging between the sky and the ground, and the viewer feels that if he falls, he will fall outside the window, not just on the floor. Such position of the characters is very typical for stories by Kharms. His characters fall out of windows, jump into them, they run, they fly, they disappear into thin air etc.

In some cases, poetic mythology of Kharms gets close to that archaic mythology that was thoroughly analysed in the second part of the

current research. In particular, it happens in his literature anecdotes. In one of them, Pushkin speaks about Petrushevsky's broken clock: "Stop the engine". In this anecdote, the anti-historical attitude to the classic (futuristic ostentatious disrespect to traditions" and attitude to the stopped time (clock) as a mechanical process are combined. Pushkin is also mentioned in JF, when the light-man undertaker utters the phrase which now became a popular quotation: "And who's gonna pay me, Pushkin?" The stopped clock and the stopped hearse are brought closer by the mentioned name of the classic. In both cases the name is manipulated for the sake of a funny response. Manipulating classics is a standard ideological procedure necessary for the fulfilment of the social mandate.

If time is a mechanical process, and if verses are verbal machines, time can be changed, stopped, accelerated. In other words, it obeys the human: we can find the Primary-Time in it, we can find the mythological characters in it, or we can set the direction of the history. In this new created Time death dances hand in hand with lovers, and a shepherd plays Beethoven on his violin. It looks natural and even funny.

#### **Conclusion for the third part**

JF is a film made in avant-guard style. In its laughter it connects the funny and the scary, the shameful and the funny, the funny and the fatal. The ideological social mandate for laughter and the traditions of literature and theatre Russian avant-guard of humour should not be opposed to each other. The works of such personalities as D. Kharms, which include the motives of social folly, no doubt, made their effect on the laughter of JF. This avant-guard component of laughter which was later manifested and increased in the Soviet cinematograph made it a powerful weapon, a tool of cinematograph. This new mythological laughter, strengthened with eccentric gestures and tricks, knows no

limits, boundaries or borders. The only thing we should add is that having acquired such a powerful weapon, the Soviet person becomes almost invincible.

#### **4. "Jolly Fellows" and the laughter of the Soviet people**

In the final part of the research let us make an attempt to answer the following question: how could and how still can the diversified, multi-aspect laughter of the film be perceived by the audience. Why did generations of Soviet people laugh at this film, along with the "circles" and "chips" the film created and reproduced in the Soviet cinematograph?

The answer is based upon the fact that the laughter of "Jolly Fellows" had a quite strict target direction: its target was the person, the person's heart. The kinds of laughter that have already been analysed, namely: revolutionary unmasking laughter, archaic laughter and avant-guard laughter, could be only perceived by a whole, complete person; in their turn, the person needed to have a heart to be alive and able to perceive.

The main feature of laughter is that it cannot be classified as strictly intellectual, mental or rational. Laughter is a physiological phenomenon, but we cannot say that it is just a physiological reaction, similar to the joy of an animal or a smile of an ape. Laughter is only inherent for humans. To state that laughter is a "harmless ugliness", as did Aristotle in "Poetics"<sup>63</sup>, it is necessary to know and feel its criteria.

Here are some lines from the first song sung by Kostya Potekhin: "A joyful song makes your heart feel so easy..." "And if the country orders to become a hero // Any one of us can become one", "Like children we shall sing and laugh // As we vigorously work and fight // This is the way we were born in this world // We never ever give up", "It is the song that helps us live and love..."



The lyrics of the second song of Kostya address directly to the heart: "Heart, you want no peace // Heart, it is so beautiful to live in this world // Heart, it is so good that you are like this // Thank you my heart for the love I feel".

Throughout the film, Anyuta sings: "My heart is like a bird in my chest..."

In the lyrics of these songs the heart "is responsible" for love, for heroism, for happiness, for laughter, for the sense of life. Perhaps, the shepherd from the tale of Nesmeyana managed to make the princess laugh and then married her because he could touch "the strings of her heart". Together with the music by I. Dunayevsky the "heart", the metaphor and lyrical phenomenon, turns into a meaningful symbol. It is a symbol of new life, new person, new happiness. Concerning religious experience, I.A. Ilyin writes: "...the heart contemplation has... the ability to join any other cultural or creative act and contribute a special depth and innocence to it, a special rootedness, spiritual significance, vital force and richness of content"<sup>64</sup>. To our mind, it is extremely important that the "heart contemplation", after I.A. Ilyin, is trained, worked out. In this meaning it is not only religious, though without contemplation of this kind spirituality is unthinkable. Besides, "heart contemplation" is different from empty fantasy or imagination. "The difference between contemplation and fantasy is in its responsibility and certainty; it does not fantasize, it gets concentrated, it gives its international energy to any kind of spiritual content"<sup>65</sup>.

Concerning JF, the found "motive of the heart" has the following meaning. Laughter is not only a matter of intellect and conscience as it is formed and driven to functioning by some other mechanisms that cannot be defined as purely sensitive or physical, then the laughter of JF tangles these mechanisms together and in the end creates a synthesis of maximal density and intensiveness. The synthesis can be only

perceived by a whole, complete personality, who is created by the laughter of this kind, who is being created by the laughter of this kind right here and now, and the person who is capable of perceiving the laughter of this kind.

The new world vision of the new Soviet person of the mid-thirties can be caused mythological, or false, or heroic, or exaggeratedly political. All these characteristics are true, and this research did not set a task to describe the ideology of the Stalin's epoch. No matter how the JF laughter looked from the point of view of the social mandate, it was sincere laughter; it was not evil or cynical. It was the laughter of love, laughter at death and the old world, laughter at classics; it was the laughter of the person who had a heart, who had shame and had fears. This person contemplated on the curse that followed treason, like the Young Guard of A. Fadeev, and laughed in the face of death, like Malchish Kibalchish. The new Soviet person was capable of the heart contemplation, and it made this kind of laughter possible. Here is one more typical example.

**In his poem "Prophet", A.S. Pushkin describes the replacement of the old feelings and sensations with the new ones: "With fingers so light and slim // He touched my eyes as in a dream: // And opened my prophetic eyes // Like eyes of eagle in surprise. // He touched my ears in movement, single, // And they were filled with noise and jingle: // I heard a shuddering of heavens, ..." "And he bent down to my chin, // And he tore off my tongue of sin, // In cheat and idle talks aroused, // And with his hand in bloody specks // He put the sting of wizard snakes // Into my deadly stoned mouth. // With his sharp sword he cleaved my breast, // And plucked my quivering heart out, // And coal flamed with God's behest, // Into my gaping breast were ground. // Like dead I lay on desert sands, // And listened to the God's commands: // "Arise, o prophet, hark and see: // Be filled with utter My demands, // And,**

**going over Land and Sea, // Burn with your Word the humane hearts".**

The seraph touches the eyes, the ears and tears the tongue out. What else is needed for the new Word? For this Word to be heard and for this Word to burn the humane hearts, the new tongue needs a new heart. A new, even a wise tongue is not enough. The connection of the tongue (word, speech) and the heart means not only the meaningfulness of the said, but also the emotional background of it. Heart becomes a specific tool for "contemplation", it becomes the tool of processing the knowledge and motivating the new person. There is a temptation to say that this heart is heroic and strictly revolutionary, and so that the new person is also a hero and a hermit. It can be fair and partially true with only one remark. This person is capable of laughing, this person likes laughing, and in the laughter they find the resource for the heroism.

Let us remember Malchish once again. In "Military Secret" by A. Gaidar, in the episode when the brave Malchish gets captured, it is said that he never let the secret out. His word is so tough that the enemies cannot make him speak<sup>66</sup>. In this case, the tough word is also associated with the tough spirit of Malchish. Instead of speaking, he begins to laugh, which irritates the enemies even more, and they order to torture Malchish with Terrible Tortures.

In this case, laughter saves from treason, it is a means of preserving the honour when it is impossible to use any other kind of weapon.

Let us make a brief analysis of the film "The Young Guard" by S.A. Gerasimov, shot in the year 1948. In this film we can find some interesting structural connection with JF. The laughter, music and joy are present in "The Young Guard" either as hidden quotations from JF, or as modifications of the kinds of laughter we have mentioned in the

previous paragraphs. It is remarkable that "The Young Guard" is not a musical comedy, but a heroic saga of a heroic deed of a young Soviet person. The director of the film got Stalin's award. Several actors, who in the future became very famous in the Soviet cinematograph, played their first roles in the film.

Here are some memories told by the famous director and actor M. Kozakov about his occasional encounter with the actor Sergey Gurzo, who in the film played the role of the desperate Sergey Tyulenin. M. Kozakov writes that everything connected with "The Young Guard" was perceived by the Soviet youth with all seriousness and admiration. The encounter with one of the "young guard" was a "miracle"<sup>67</sup>, and young M. Kozakov was worried that the friends would not believe him when he tells them how he met a real hero.

The deeds of the young guard inspired many generations of readers and viewers of the Soviet Union with such power that even the actors who brought the characters of A. Fadeev to life became mythological.

In the film by S. Gerasimov, Lyubka Shevtsova, a beautiful and a brave komsomol girl, works as an actress. She flirts with Germans, laughs and smiles more than other young people. Even her name if Lyubka, not just Lyuba or Lyubov. Gromova is always addressed to with her full name, Ulyana. Oleg Koshevoy is usually called by his last name. It leads us to the conclusion that Lyubka Shevtsova symbolizes the desperately joyful, brave, and at the same time informally sensual component of the film. She is beautiful; Germans flirt with her and make approaches to her. In the town of Lugansk where she lives she is considered to be a traitor, a flesh-peddler actress.

It is remarkable that L. Shevtsova gets her first task from the party the same night when she learns about her father's death. "Let his memories

live forever in the hearts of our people", says the underground communist, the messenger of death. The same night the German officers come to the Shevtsovs' house, and Lyubka has to talk to them politely, smile and look like a German girl. Anyuta-Orlova on a hearse, wearing burial gowns, eighteen years later will play her role in a totally different film. But in this one death is different, and the actress has to sing not in the Bolshoi Theatre, but on the stage of a city club, under the Fuhrer's portrait.

Lyubka Shevtsova carries out the tasks given by the party as an actress, under the mask of laughter. The acting of Inna Makarova makes the two-part film look psychologically true and real. In comparison with I. Makarova, "the acting of Oleg Koshevoy"<sup>68</sup> is significantly inferior. O. Koshevoy looks primitive and ostentatious, just in the manner of FEKSers. Lyubka who is laughing out loud is trying to convince the viewers that the young guard really did live and fight; they were not invented by the writer A. Fadeev against an ideological mandate.

The laughter of Lyubka and Gaidarov's Malchish gave the historical fundament and verity to the myth. In the film by S. Gerasimov the young guard swear to "keep the common secret", and be fairly cursed and punished if they fail. Let us also mention that their historical, actual fate and sacrifice and their fictional fate reproduce the life of Malchish in a wider scale. The millions of readers and writers see the laughter of Malchish and Lyubka as the only weapon of opposing "the dark forces" and the "goddamn horde". This is how the fascists are called in the song by V.I. Lebedev-Kumach "Get Up, the Huge Country!" "I don't eat after the first shot", says the captured Soviet soldier Sokolov to the camp officer in the film "Destiny of a Man". This bitter humour and this manly grin are the only things he can use as an opposition to the enemy. The heroism and the heroic deed are actualized through humour,

which, in this case, appears at the table, drinking vodka, and looks typically Russian.

"The Young Guard" is also remarkable for the episode of the November 7 celebration, which is accompanied with dancing, citing romantic verses and playing musical instruments. The night before the holiday, a red flag with a title "Beware of mines" appears. It is a joke. It accompanies the celebration and the heroic deed of the Komsomols. The young people agree to arrange some music parties at the club, and at the same time they keep discussing their underground activity. O. Koshevoy's grandmother also takes part in the dancing party and asks the musicians to play "our gopak". The traditional bond between generations (archaic bond) is actualized in a more convincing way with the mother and grandmother of Koshevoy than the bond with the Communist underground.

Dancing, especially the dance of L. Shevtsova, is full of joy and fervour, along with some eroticism. The young guards do the tap dance, just like Kostya Potekhin during his first march along the village road or the sailors on the stage of the Bolshoi Theatre. At the same time there is double security around the house, and it is very scary to stay out in the street. After the celebration everyone stays for the night at the Koshevoys' house, and in the morning we see the sleeping and waking boys and girls. At the same angle and in the same tempo the camera shows the musicians rising up after the fight in JF. This festive and musical component of the film continues in the club where the Komsomols come for rehearsals, and finds its climax on the stage during Lyubka's dance which coincides with the exchange house arson. Setting the exchange house on fire means saving the compatriots, destroying the German statistics, graphs and tables where the data of the Soviet people to be deported to Germany is kept. The exchange house is the concentration of this diabolic bureaucracy. The

dance and the laugh of the young people are their weapon of resistance and fight.

The joy and the laugh of the young guard are not as harmless, though, from the formal point of view, they are extremely absurd. At first Lyubka dances something that reminds of Spanish flamenco against the background of Adolf Hitler's portrait made by Sergei Tyulenin, after which she performs in the genre of cabaret. The musical and "funny" part of the film takes up almost forty minutes (!), which is a half of the whole film.

In the prison, young boys and girls cite poems by A.S. Pushkin and sing a Ukrainian song about a falcon. The fee for the hearse ride, which is to be paid "by Pushkin", turns out to be paid with the life, in which the last words of the characters are the lines by A.S. Pushkin: "Deep in Siberian mines..." The song of a falcon: "...why am I not a falcon, why don't I fly..." is an almost literal repetition of the words of Anya's song: "My heart is like a bird in my chest..." The final scenes of the young guard's death are made under a direct influence of S. Eisenstein and the teachers of S. Gerasimov, L. Blauberger and G. Kozintsev.

It is not only the external coincidence of the episodes, elements and angles of JF and "The Young Guard" that hits the eye. At the partial coincidence of the stylistics and the general motive, we can observe the shift of the funny/joyful/musical from comedy to the joyful/musical and heroic. The "ability to join any cultural and creative act" I.A. Ilyin writes about lets the "heart contemplation" become a new form for the new content. And this form, again, contains something funny, musical, mythological, revolutionary and cordial.

In the film "Height" by A. Zarkhi I. Makarova plays the role of a swinger girl. At a great height she performs a tap dance, singing a chastushka: "I don't belong to mother, // I don't belong to father, // From an egg I was born // I

grew up on my own". The character of Lyubka is also present in this role of the actress. She seems to be a snickerpuss, a fashion-monger, a light-minded restaurant-goer. Later we find out that she was brought up at an orphanage and the lyrics of her chastushka have a literal meaning. At the gathering when she is accepted to Komsomol, the character of I. Makarova recollects the story of stolen sheets at the orphanage. She speaks of it sincerely, in everyone's presence, in a cordial and open way.

In all these examples, the secret of Malchish, the laugh and pain of Lyubka Shevtsova, the address for "the hearts and memories of the living", the sincere confession of the swinger girl and her chastushka, there is the echo of the mood and the laughter that was created by JF in the minds of the Soviet audience.

\* \* \*

After JF, laughter of the Soviet cinematograph took various forms, shapes, it got modified in numerous ways.

If we accept the classification by B.Ya. Propp, we can outline the following kinds of laughter: kind, evil, cheerful, bacchanalian, ritual, cynical. All these kinds of laughter together with the more sophisticated ones can be found in cinematograph. In "The Irony of Fate" we see some bitter laughter, in "Kin-Dza-Dza" and "Autumn Marathon" we see sad laughter, in the films by L. Gaidai there is the clownery and burlesque of JF. The tragic and the paradox are always present in the films by A. German. In "I am Twenty" by M. Khutsiev laughter is represented by the First-of-May smiles and celebrations. There is little laughter in the film itself, but it shines through its atmosphere. Just like in "The Young Guard", it merges with heroism, with the military deeds, but without the expression, the gestures, the tricks. Laughter becomes individual, delicate, personal; it is not for everyone any more. Some episodes cannot

be understood as funny by the whole audience. For example, the laughter of "From the Life of Vacationists" by N. Gubenko is understood and evaluated only from a certain context. Those who do not know or feel the context may not understand the laughter.

In other words, there is a process of classifying laughter depending on the target. It is not the complete personality who becomes the viewer of the new films. And it is not the heart of the person that becomes the organ perceiving the laughter, as "heart contemplation" of the modern person is undeveloped, and we cannot say which cultural or creative act it is to join. Now we observe that the laughter is thinning. As one of the modern authors writes, "... the laughter has reduced..."<sup>69</sup>. It has reduced to the TV shows, political rhetoric, Internet humour, films like "Scary Movie". The paradoxical situation occurs when there is nothing to laugh at. Kostya Potekhin as a symbolic figure has reduced to actors, musicians, artists, who can behave themselves like Kostya Potekhin in reality, on the stage or in the street. Politicians, ordinary people, or any other representatives of the modern society can behave the same.

If we regard laughter in its opposition to the unfunny, official, "in Bakhtin style", then the level and indicator of the funny is an indirect indicator of the severe, manly, strict. Laughter of the official culture demonstrates its real power. According to the laughter we can understand how the person behaves in anger or fury. If laughter is the transition from captivity to freedom, then it is logical to set the question in the same way as it was done by S.S. Averintsev: "A free person does not need to be released; only the one who is not free yet needs it"<sup>70</sup>. JF is the product of the Soviet political regime, but due to the lack of freedom this regime could produce the films where laughter could manifest itself with maximum of freedom. Released from the political captivity, one would lose the ability to laugh at all. However, it does

not happen; not because freedom is endless and practically unreachable, but because as a person strives for completeness, to the integrity of the sensuous and the rational, the emotional and the volitional etc. In other words, because laughter is the indicator and the characteristic of human nature.

Only the moving person who can move from captivity to freedom can have a good hearty laugh, laugh out loud, like Kostya Potekhin. The modern film character does not laugh this way. Particularly, the reason is that they have been convinced that they are already free, and the freedom can only be expanded.

Here is another good example. It demonstrates an attempt to restore the completeness of the modern film character. In the series "Cop Wars"<sup>71</sup> the name of the main character is Roman Georgievich Shilov. Shilov is a peculiar police officer who has a good car, knows how to court a lady, speaks French. Shilov's father never appears either in or behind the scene. However, Shilov's mother often calls from abroad to ask about the work and health of her son. The absence of father points at the actual fatherlessness of Shilov, but we need to emphasize it once more that in general he is a free person. He has his own apartment with an exotic interior. It is remarkable that the last name of Shilov coincides with the name of a character from the film by N. Mikhalkov "At Home Among Strangers". That Shilov is in search of the gold which he has accidentally lost and cannot recollect how it happened. The first Shilov, whose name is Egor (Georgy and Egor are very close names) for the sake of restoring his completeness joins the bandit gang, and in the end identifies himself and returns what has been stolen from him. The modern Shilov is a psychologically complete person who embodies the idea of a free strong man. At the same time he looks unreal, as he catches criminals with absolutely fair methods, speaks French and rides

on an expensive "Alfa-Romeo". To make Roman Shilov look a little more real and convincing, the creators of the film make him an heir of Egor Shilov, the hero of the Civil War, in the truest sense of the word, and also give him some traits of Captain Gleb Zheglov, the hero of the Great Patriotic War. Just like G. Zheglov, R. Shilov is brilliant at playing billiards.

Such examples demonstrate the attempt to connect a modern character with that of the previous generations through the actual, explicit coincidence of their traits. It is required in order to return the trust for the deeds, thoughts and feelings of the characters. So that the laughter at these phantoms, just like the sympathy for them, remain the same.

Let us finish the research with the memories of the writer L.B. Lebedinskaya, who saw the film "The Swine Girl and the Shepherd" by I. Pyryev in the war Moscow<sup>72</sup>. In this research the film has already been classified as a socialist cliché. It is worth mentioning that the connection with JF is direct. It is manifested in the title of the film. The laughter of the film contains many ideological, typically Soviet elements. "The Swine Girl and the Shepherd" is a simplified variant of JF. Here pigs act as a symbol of harvest, fertility, presence of fat and meat in Soviet shops. The swine girl played by M. Ladygina is a beautiful but simple girl in a sarafan, looking like a matryoshka.

**"It was the time when the famous October 16<sup>th</sup> had just passed; the October 16<sup>th</sup> when the whole Moscow was on the run, burning papers were flying in the air because all establishments were moving away, and Lubyanka was covered with ashes... The Germans were in Zvenigorod and in Golitsyno. It was my shift at the hospital, I was looking after the wounded here, on Tretya Meshchanskaya Street. ... And you know how you feel when you take the wound dressing off, when you change the plasters, the smell of bloody dressing, I can still feel it. And**

**the film was on; it was the time when I just came home from the hospital, then took a nap, and then suddenly a friend of mine called me and offered going to the cinema... the new comedy was on. It was so pleasant to hear the word "comedy" itself. Moscow was so cold, hungry, dark, there were no lights in the streets, and all windows were also shaded, the electricity was always off so we had to sit with candle lamps. I and my friend went to the cinema; we bought the tickets as you always do, took our seats. In the very beginning of the film, right after the first titles the air-raid warning began; the dim light was on, but no one forced us to run to the shelter, we were just sitting there quietly, though the film was interrupted. It happened three or four times during the film, or maybe even five; the session was badly overextended. But I need to say that even though it had not been long since the beginning of the war, the film gave us a nostalgic feeling. It was the nostalgia for the peaceful life that had been taken away from us,... and when we saw it on the screen it felt like a trip to another life. We did not care much about the content, we knew it was flat..."**

This memory tells about something that happened very long ago, so it is natural that it demonstrates the distant and calm attitude to the film. For a person living during the war even ordinary pigs, saying nothing of those fat and well-bred ones, were the symbol of peaceful life and restored life order. It was the order they had to return to, the order that had to be fixed and protected. The obedient musical pigs of Kostya Potemkin became big domestic pigs of the peaceful life. And, according to the film, they had to force the return to this life, to peaceful days.

The same attitude to pigs we can see in "Odyssey" by Homer: when Odysseus comes back to Ithaca, first of all, as the King, he goes to the shepherd to check his white-teethed and "strong-fanged" pigs. The swine shepherd Odysseus talks to, is referred to as the Godlike<sup>73</sup>.

- <sup>1</sup> Sometimes the name of the comedy “Jolly Fellows” can be abbreviated as JF.
- <sup>2</sup> In his work «Wit and Its Relation to The Unconscious” S. Freud differentiates between the laughter of that who makes up the joke and the laughter of that who laughs at the joke. Here we assume that the viewers of the comedy laugh because it was planned so by the screenplay writer and the director according to the general idea of the film.
- <sup>3</sup> For example, in the film “Once Upon a Time in America” by S. Leone a beautiful girl rises up from a coffin standing on the hearse just in the same way as a man with a bottle appears in “Jolly Fellows”. A girl is also present, but she is sitting by his side.
- <sup>4</sup> Read more: Karasev L.V. *Filosofia smekha* [Philosophy of Laughter]. Moscow, 1996, P.63-89 (Chapter “Antithesis of Laughter”), and especially Averintsev S.S. *Bakhtin, Smekh, Khristianskaia Kul'tura* // Bakhtin kak Filosof [Bakhtin as a Philosopher]. Moscow, 1992. P. 7-19.
- <sup>5</sup> The elements to be edited.
- <sup>6</sup> In this work we used the materials of a radio program “Russkaia Kinodvadsatka [Russian Films Top-Twenty]”, made and presented by S. Yuryinen. Access at: <http://archive.svoboda.org/programs/cicles/cinema/russian/>. In the following footnotes the material from the program is indicated as “Russkaia Kinodvadsatka”.
- <sup>7</sup> See: “Russkaia Kinodvadsatka”.
- <sup>8</sup> Such combinations of words are thoroughly studied by S. Freud in the work “Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious”. See.: Freud S. *Ostroumie i Ego Otnoshenie k Bessoznatel'nomy* [Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious], Saint-Petersburg, 2007.
- <sup>9</sup> Where G. Aleksandrov performed the functions of an assistant director, a co-director and an actor.
- <sup>10</sup> Torgsin is an association of shops that sold goods to foreigners for foreign currency without checking their documents. In the later Soviet society shops of this kind are called “Berezka”.
- <sup>11</sup> In the epoch of Augustine Aristotle was considered to be one of the numerous followers of Plato.
- <sup>12</sup> F.I. Chaliapin and L.N. Tolstoy.
- <sup>13</sup> The Soviet “hipsters” of the fifties had to fight for their right to love jazz music.
- <sup>14</sup> Razzakov F. *Gibel' Sovetskogo Kino* [Death of the Soviet Cinematograph] Moscow, 2008, P. 58.
- <sup>15</sup> “Komsomolskaya Pravda”.
- <sup>16</sup> Acc. to: Razzakov F. *Gibel' Sovetskogo Kino* [Death of the Soviet Cinematograph] Moscow, 2008, P. 58.
- <sup>17</sup> “The USSR introduced some amendments into the legislation: for treason and escape abroad, execution by a firing squad; 10 years of prison for failure to report; the criminal investigation for cases on terroristic actions cannot last for longer than 10 days; court trials can be carried out without the presence of the parties; all death penalties are to be executed immediately” (“Russkaia Kinodvadsatka”).
- <sup>18</sup> Poet A. Surkov.
- <sup>19</sup> Gunther H. *Zhiznennye Fazy Sotsrealisticheskogo Kanona* // Sotsrealisticheskii Kanon [Social Realism Canon]. Moscow, Akademicheskii Proekt, 2000. Available at: [http://www.fedy-diary.ru/?page\\_id=4539](http://www.fedy-diary.ru/?page_id=4539).
- <sup>20</sup> The definition approved by the First Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934. Acc. to: *Slovar' Literaturovedcheskikh Terminov* [Dictionary of Literature Criticism Terminology]. Moscow, Prosveshchenie, 1974. P. 365.
- <sup>21</sup> Paradoxically, it makes it common with music.
- <sup>22</sup> In the year 1933. within the Council of People’s Commissars the Head Directorate for Cinema and Photo Industry (HD-CPI) of the USSR, the head authority for all film studios of the Union.
- <sup>23</sup> “Marionettes”, “Harmonica”, “Hectic Days”, “The Great Paraclete”. Read more: Razzakov F. *Gibel' Sovetskogo Kino...* P. 56.
- <sup>24</sup> The Congress that took place in the beginning of the year 1934.
- <sup>25</sup> Clark K. *Sovetskii Roman: Istoriia Kak Ritual* [Soviet Novel: History as Ritual], Yekaterinburg, Izdatel'stvo Ural'skogo Universiteta, 2002. P. 223-224.
- <sup>26</sup> Clark K. ...P. 33.
- <sup>27</sup> *Filosofskii Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar'* [Encyclopaedia of Philosophy], Moscow, Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia, 1989. P. 607.
- <sup>28</sup> Emphasized by the author.
- <sup>29</sup> Clark K. ... P. 24.
- <sup>30</sup> Russian Proletarian Writers’ Association is a radical political body of the Soviet writers.
- <sup>31</sup> Rudnev V.P. *Cinematograph* // *Slovar' Kul'tury* [Dictionary of the XX Century Culture ], Moscow, Agraf, 1997. P. 133.
- <sup>32</sup> Ivanov Vyach. Vs. *Montazh Kak Printsip Postroeniia v Kul'ture Pervoy Poloviny XX Veka* [Film Editing as a Construction Principle of the Culture of the First Half of the XX Century] // *Montazh. Literatura. Iskusstvo. Teatr. Kino*. Moscow, Nauka, 1988. P. 119-148.
- <sup>33</sup> Ivanov Vyach. Vs., P. 140.
- <sup>34</sup> Clark K. ... P. 9.
- <sup>35</sup> “Gate” and “keys” are also the elements of the wonder tale “The Golden Key” by A.N. Tolstoy. It is remarkable that A.N. Tolstoy adopted the story of Pinocchio for the spirit of socialist realism.
- <sup>36</sup> Available at: <http://culture.niv.ru/doc/poetics/freydenberg/index.htm>.
- <sup>37</sup> *Bibleyskaia Entsiklopediia* [The Bible Encyclopaedia], Moscow, Terra, 1990. P. 552.
- <sup>38</sup> Ezekiel 34: 11-16.
- <sup>39</sup> Ezekiel 2: 10.
- <sup>40</sup> Propp V.Ya. *Ritual'nyy Smekh v Fol'klоре (Po Povody Skazki o Nesmeyane)* [Ritual Laughter in Folklore (to the tale of Princess Nesmeyana)] // Propp V.Ya. *Sobranie Trudov*. Moscow: Labirint, 1999. P. 220-256.
- <sup>41</sup> It is extremely interesting, and, for sure, it is no coincidence that V.Ya. Propp was pushed to write the work “Problem of Laughter and the Comic” and to analyse the tale of Nesmeyana by the statement of O.M. Freidenberg that “laughter ... acquires semantics... of the shining of the new sun, of the sun’s birth”.

- 42 Propp V.Ya. ...P. 254.
- 43 To be more precise, a “breeding sow”.
- 44 Propp V.Ya. P. 248.
- 45 The film has no explicit eroticism, though sometimes it shines through, for example, in the phrase, “Lenochka, it looks like the eggs shot it! Now they will accept you to the Bolshoi Theatre”. Lena’s mother says it after Anya demonstrates her ability to take some really high notes instead of Lena. “Laughter – erotic hints – creativity” get mixed with each other.
- 46 Total duration of the film is an hour and a half.
- 47 From Greek, “Beloved”.
- 48 See general information about FEKS: Tynyanov Yu.N. *O Feksakh* [About FEKSers] // Tynyanov Yu.N. *Poetika. Istoriia Literaturny. Kino. M., 1977. P. 346-348.*
- 49 Bgrov P. *Kinomasterskaya FEKS* [FEKS Cinema Workshop] // *Kinovedcheskie Zapiski*, 2003, №63, P. 226-243.
- 50 Bulgakova O.M. *Montazh – V Teatral’noy Laboratorii 20-kh Godov* [Film Editing in the Theatre Laboratory of the ‘20s] // *Montazh. Teatr. Literatura. Kino. Moscow, Nauka, 1988 P. 106.*
- 51 Bulgakova O. M. ...P. 105.
- 52 Bulgakova O. M. P. 103 – 104.
- 53 Available at: <http://culture.niv.ru/doc/poetics/freydenberg/100.htm>.
- 54 Dobrotvorskyy S. *Shest’desiat Let Pod Kupolom Tsirka* [Sixty Years Under the Big Top] // Sergey Dobrotvorskyy, *Kino na Oshchup’*, Saint-Petersburg, SEANS, 2005, P. 371.
- 55 Years 1970, 1964.
- 56 Jaccard J.-F. *Daniil Kharms i Konets Russkogo Avangarda* [Daniil Kharms and the End of Russian Avant-Guard], Saint-Petersburg, Akademicheskii Proekt. 1995, P.8.
- 57 Acc. to Jaccard J.F. ... P. 32.
- 58 For example, in a small poem “Revenge” written in the year 1930.
- 59 Kharms D. *Polet v Nebesa* [Fly to the Sky]. Poems. Prose. Drama. Letters. Leningrad, 1988. P.185.
- 60 Sazhin V. *Tysiacha Melochey* [A Thousand Trifles] // *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie*. 1993. No.3. P.201. Acc. to: Yampolsky M. *Bespamiatstvo Kak Istok. Chitaia Kharmsa* [Deliriousness as a Source. Reading Kharms]. Moscow, Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie. 1998, P. 5.
- 61 In this he is close to A.S. Pushkin.
- 62 Yampolsky M. *Bespamiatstvo Kak Istok. Chitaia Kharmsa* [Deliriousness as a Source. Reading Kharms]. Moscow, Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie. 1998, P. 11.
- 63 Aristotle. *Poetika* [Poetics] // Aristotle. *Selected Works in Four Volumes. V. 4.* Moscow, Mysl’, 1984. P. 650.
- 64 Ilyin I.A. *Aksiomy Religioznogo Opyta* [Axioms of Religious Experience]. Moscow, Rarog, 1993. P. 106.
- 65 *Ibid.*...P. 106.
- 66 Read more of the interpretation of this work by A.P. Gaidar and this issue in particular: Chernov L.S. *Skazka I Mif: “Tri Medvedia” i “Voennaia Tayna”* [Wonder Tale and Myth: “Three Bears” and “Military Secret”] / Chernov L.S. *Zhivot Kul’tury*. Yekaterinburg, 2009. P. 81-101.
- 67 Kazakov M. *Soshedshie s Ekrana* [Those Who Came Down from the Screen] // *Iskusstvo Kino*. 2005. No.3.
- 68 Actor V. Ivanov.
- 69 Kozintsev A.G. *Smekh i Antipovedenie v Rossii: Natsional’naia Spetsifika i Obshchechelovecheskie Tsennosti* [Laughter and Anti-Behaviour in Russia: National Peculiarities and All-Human Regularities] // *Smekh: Istoki i Funktsii*. Saint-Petersburg, 2002. P. 170.
- 70 Averintsev S.S. ... P. 8.
- 71 Made by: “Panorama” studio and LLC “Novyy Russkiy”. Directed by P. Mal’kov. The first episodes were issued in the year 2004 and broadcast on NTV channel. In total, 40 episodes and one full-length film were made. The series still remains popular and is repeated from time to time on several Russian TV channels.
- 72 “Russkaia Kinodvadsatka”.
- 73 Homer. *Odyssey*. Moscow: Moskovskiy Rabochiy, 1982. P.173 (translated by V.A. Zhukovskiy).



## **Смех нового человека, к проблеме модернизации: фильм Г. В. Александра «Весёлые ребята»**

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*В статье анализируется феномен смеха; исследуется смех советского человека; на материале кино делаются выводы о взаимосвязи смешного и идеологического в советскую эпоху; предложена архаическая и авангардная интерпретация фильма «Весёлые ребята».*

*Ключевые слова: смех, «советский человек», смех советского человека, кинокомедия, «Весёлые ребята», ОБЭРИУ, социалистический реализм.*

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