

ARTICLES

“Hedgehog in the Fog” as a Maidan Hero

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Abstract

Norshtein’s “Hedgehog in the Fog” is a Soviet cartoon about a little hedgehog making his way through a scary world of fog. This film has generated its own lore, and there is also a monument to the hedgehog in Kyiv. During the Maidan events, the hedgehog cartoon acquired a new meaning; the everyman/hedgehog became first a symbol of searching for the right path and then of protest. Maidan brought the destruction of Soviet monuments, but not of the Kyiv hedgehog statue; it was modified to convey these new senses as a part of Kyiv’s cultural heritage. This paper explores the Hedgehog cartoon as the focus of a new lore. The paper is based on the author’s presentation at the American Folklore Society Annual Conference 2014 and her MA thesis, *Maidan on Facebook: Sensitive, Expressive and Interpretative Protest Lore*.

Conceptual Notes

This paper explores the role of protest lore in the formulation of new symbols and attitudes, and the re-conceptualization of the Soviet heritage in contemporary Ukraine based on the example of the Soviet cartoon *Hedgehog in the Fog* and its characters as discussed in social media, particularly on Facebook, during the *Maidan Nezalezhnosti* ‘Independence Square’ protests in Kyiv, Ukraine in the winter of 2013-2014 (simply called “Maidan” or “EuroMaidan” or in Ukrainian: Майдан / Євромайдан [The Square] or [The Euro[pean] Square]). (1) Celebrations and protests located on Independence Square have usually focused on national issues, rather than municipal affairs. During the protests the word “Maidan” gained additional meanings, including the act of public

politics itself. Based on my research, Western media and researchers outside of Ukraine used the name “Euromaidan” more often than did Ukrainian citizens and participants in the protests; the latter preferred to use the name “Maidan.” This difference reveals the varied perceptions of the cause of the protests and makes clear whether a particular author refers to the events as focused on international relations or had an internal locus. I will use “Maidan” in this paper, since the focus is on Ukrainian attitudes toward the events.

The protests started as a rally on the night of November 21, 2013 on the *Maidan Nezalezhnosti*. Protesters objected to the government’s decision to forego signing an Association Agreement that had been in preparation for a year and would have paved the way for the possible integration of the country into the European Union (EU). Instead of signing it, Yanukovich arranged for a loan from Russia. This drew Ukraine closer to the Russian sphere of influence. The rally was patterned on the Orange Revolution of 2004, a protest against electoral fraud. Just as protesters then had succeeded in overturning the results of the 2004 election, so too protesters in 2013-14 sought to oust the government. The scope of the protests later expanded, with many calling for the resignation of President Viktor Yanukovich and his government. Ultimately Yanukovich fled to Russia, although he did not resign the presidency. Great upheaval followed his departure, including Russia’s annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Donbass. Many additional protestors joined the rally after the violent dispersal of the crowds on the night of November 30, 2013.

At this point, the term “*Maidan*” began to refer to a political movement, not only to a location in the capital city. Protesters used the term accordingly. (2) A number of posts in my collection discuss the perception of *Maidan*, a term whose original meaning was simply a location, but grew to convey political attitudes even after people had dispersed from the square.

Protests against authoritarian power rooted in the suppression of freedom of speech and persecution of political dissenters often include symbolic and indirect language transmitted through images and symbols of folk and popular culture. The speech of fictional

characters allows for indirect and ambivalent humor as a response to suppression of political speech. (3) Lev Loseff argues that such Aesopian language in Russian literature emerged against ideological censorship that impeded open critique of higher authorities in the Russian Empire since the 18th century [Loseff, 1984]. Hinting and circumlocution in text supplanted straightforward depiction of certain details of real life, and developed into an aesthetic approach in East Slavic literature. This phenomenon is common to many writers from countries with totalitarian regimes and is used as a form of implicit critique in the hope of avoiding persecution [Onatsky, 1957]. We also see this practice in pop culture and material folklore that may be classified as constructive lore. Examples include adapting cartoons, as has been documented in the Russian political protests of 2011-2012. During those protests, photographs by Vadim Lurie and the Soviet cartoon *Adventures of Mowgli* were used to convey political dissent [Akhmetova, 2014]. This article will explore textual and visual representations of informal protest lore in social media through the prism of the characters in *Ёжик в Тумане* [*Hedgehog in the Fog*]. This Soviet-era cartoon by Iurii Norshtein features an everyman figure (the hedgehog) who struggles to find his way through fog literally and figuratively. In the context of the *Maidan*, this character was appeared in memes that expressed the growing assertiveness of ordinary Ukrainian citizens. This paper will focus on the symbols depicting the meanings of the characters embodied by opposing sides in the confrontation.

More broadly, topics from known literary works, television programs, and other products of mass culture served as the source for jokes in my collection of Facebook posts collected day by day several hours per day from my newsfeed for the period January 19 – February 28, 2014. *Hedgehog in the Fog* is only one topic, but is one that reveals a great deal about social and cultural life during the period of political upheaval. Many of Facebook authors in my collection at the time exhibited the characteristic elements of the “liminal phase” described by Victor Turner [1969]. This spontaneous group placed participants on an equal footing instead of a typical hierarchy with the privileges, norms and prohibitions intrinsic to social structure. It creatively combined cultural elements

from diverse sources, including instances of high (or official) and popular (or commercial) culture. The newly formed group of protest supporters were in need of discussion of their values and facilitated these liminal-state negotiations with humorous and expressive devices common to this stage of a rite of passage.

I consider the texts and visual images on Facebook to be examples of contemporary Internet folklore or “Newslore” as identified by Russell Frank, citing Alan Dundes’ and Carl Pagter’s [1987:7] definition of “Xeroxlore” as “folklore from the paperwork empire,” “folklore by facsimile,” “white-collar folklore,” and “folklore of bureaucracy” [Frank, 2011]. Frank notes that Newslore, like Xeroxlore, possesses different attributes than folklore texts in the earliest conceptualizations of folklore:

its longevity can be measured in presidencies rather than generations, and it circulates remotely rather than face-to-face, among people who are likelier to live in an urban apartment or a suburban house than on a family farmstead. [Frank, 2011:7]

These texts generally retain other attributes of “classic” folklore, including variability, anonymity, communalism, and remain largely intact.

In “Maidan folklore 2004,” Natalia Lysiuk [2005:2] defines the material she gathered as a “postfolklore” phenomenon of spontaneous groups and assemblies formed with the free will of the participants and for limited period in time. She notes that no age, social, confessional, regional or ethnic distinctions were inherent to this gathering. I argue that Lysiuk’s definition applies to the protest folklore on Facebook related to Maidan 2013-2014 as well. (4) I use examples from Facebook only because this social media was my primary “field” of research for material collected at the time of the protests. Because social media settings prevent me from gathering more material from other sources corresponding to the time frame of the Facebook research, I have not included other social media in this analysis. (5)

The Plot of the Cartoon

Iurii Norshtein’s 1975 cartoon, based on Sergei Kozlov’s tale [1989], tells the story of a little hedgehog who walks through the forest to visit his friend, a bear cub, to have evening tea together and count the stars. That day, Hedgehog got some raspberry jam for evening tea and sets out to meet his friend. He finds himself in a surreal and frightening world inhabited by unknown shapes and various creatures, from predators to friendly animals in silence and sounds, darkness, tall grass and enchanting stars. Occasionally an unseen distant voice calls out for him. On his way through the woods, he sees a sinister looking eagle-owl following him, encounters a beautiful white horse standing in a fog, as well as a dog. He is frightened in the fog, nearly gets lost and is rescued from drowning. Along the way, he loses and then finds his pot of raspberry jam. Finally, Hedgehog arrives at the campfire where the bear cub is brewing tea. Bear explains that he was calling for Hedgehog, worried that he was late. They sit having tea while Hedgehog is thinking about the horse.

The cartoon producer, Iurii Norshtein, characterizes the plot as follows:

Там нет никакой интриги в действии, там нет никакой динамики действия. Вполне вероятно, что в “Ёжик в тумане” произошёл счастливый случай совпадения всех элементов.

[It has no intrigue in the action, no active dynamic in the plot. It is most likely, that “Hedgehog in the Fog” simply brought together a happy coincidence of all the elements].
[Margolina, 2002]

While the cartoon actually is not particularly dramatic, it contains important elements typical for folktales as defined by Propp [1968]. The hero (Hedgehog) has to reach his destination (to visit Bear Cub). He faces obstacles on his way (fog, falling into the river, the loss of the pot of jam) and an antagonist (the eagle-owl), and sees some positive figures (a white horse, a dog). Not surprisingly, these events

represent the basic human existential need to overcome fear of the unknown often encoded in folktales from different nations. The cartoon gained international fame and with it, additional meanings and cultural symbolism. (6)

Vita Iakovlieva in her doctoral research about post-Chernobyl childhood in Ukraine discusses her informants' recollections of the "Chernobyl Hedgehog," a pejorative directed at children from Chernobyl area that implied physical or intellectual incapability, or inability to adjust to new circumstances [Iakovlieva, 2015]. (7) She suggests that the Hedgehog's image serves as a metaphor for feeling lost and searching for a right path in complicated circumstances. In addition, Marina Dmitrievskaia, editor of *St. Petersburg Theatrical Journal*, refers to how the hedgehog exemplifies the general situation of post-Soviet countries:

[...] наверное, вся наша жизнь тех десятилетий, что с нами Ежик, это тоже сплошной туман, в котором мы карабкаемся. Нам страшно. Мы хотим кого-то обрести — мишку. И мечта обрести мишку и сквозь этот туман как-то пройти [...]. Наверное, тоже как-то ложится на душу тем зрителям, которые бесконечно "Ежика" смотрят и любят.

[[...] probably, all our life of those decades that the Hedgehog was with us, that's also the total fog that we have clambered around in. It is horrible for us. We want to find someone – a bear cub. And the dream to find the bear cub and to get through this fog [...]. That's probably also the reason the audience that takes this to heart keeps watching and loves "Hedgehog"]. [Ivakhnenko, 2009]

Social media also provides examples of using the cartoon and its characters to discuss daily life. For example, Facebook users refer to the cartoon characters when they post personal stories or comments about travel experiences and weather conditions, for example:

Кирилл Говорун, November 27, 2014



Image 1. A statue to Hedgehog in the Fog in Kyiv. [Katja Lutska, 2013]

The idea for the statue came from *Kyiv Landscape Initiative Association*, whose members have created figures of animals and characters of folktales and popular culture works to adorn tree stumps in the downtown of the city. The Hedgehog is mounted on

old pine stump near the metro station Zhytomyrs’ka. Vice-President of the *Kyiv Landscape Initiative Association* Volodymyr Kolin’ko stated that the primary idea of the statue was to make people smile and elevate their mood:

“Ёжик в тумане”, может быть, один из наиболее удачных таких символов для увековечения. [...] Вообще говоря, Ёжик похож на сегодняшний Киев. Киев такой же вечный, он такой же “всех времен и народов” и такой же беззащитный, как “Ёжик в тумане.”

[*Hedgehog in the Fog* is probably one of the best symbols of immortality. [...] In general, Hedgehog is similar to today’s Kyiv, Kyiv is likewise eternal, it is the same, ‘for all time and all peoples,’ and just as defenseless as *Hedgehog in the Fog*]. [Ivakhnenko, 2009]

Kyiv is not the only place with a statue of Hedgehog; similar artworks to this cartoon characters may be found in in Starobel'sk in the Luhansk region, [TripAdvisor, 2015], and in several cities Russian cities: Krasnodar in 2010 [Avstryiskaia, 2011], and Ivanovo in 2015, [Ivanovo Novosti, 2015]; a project is being discussed in Penza [TRK Ekspres, 2015].

The statue in Kyiv is located in the area of many well-known historical sites and popular tourist attractions and is in the close proximity to two ancient historical landmarks: the Golden Gates and St. Sophia Cathedral. (8) The sculpture in Kyiv likewise became a popular tourist attraction soon after it was erected. A Facebook account under the name of Hedgehog (its original name is *Ёжик*) was created in August 2013, where texts and pictures about visitors, events related to the statue, or stories related to the hedgehog as a species are posted in the name of the cartoon character. (9)

Ёжик, October 3, 2013

Продолжу вас знакомить с моими подружками. Вот Оля Клименко. Очень добрая и хорошая девочка! Однажды, когда мы болтали, пошел дождик. Так Оля почти час держала зонтик у меня над головой! А сама промокла до

нитки! Я ежик воспитанный и просил Олечку не утруждаться... Все равно не бросила меня... Спасибо!

[I will continue to introduce you to my girlfriends. This is Olia Klimenko. She is a very kind, good girl! Once when we were chatting, it started raining. So, Olia held an umbrella over my head for nearly an hour! And she was soaked to the bone! As a well-brought up hedgehog, I asked sweet Olia not to trouble herself... Nevertheless, she did not abandon me... Thanks!]

The page administrators provide no information about the personnel or about the inspiration for the page, and the images and posts on Facebook are ascribed to the cartoon character himself. Other Facebook users make comments, “like” or share posts from the page. For example, in one post the page administrators provide contextual interpretation of the site where the statue stands.

Ежик, January 8, 2016

[...] Сижу, конечно, на стратегическом перекрестке. С одной стороны, пограничникам помогаю, с другой стороны Софию прикрываю. И Золотые Ворота, естественно, на мне. [...] For sure, I sit on a strategic crossroad. On one hand, I help border guards; on the other hand, I protect Sophia. The Golden Gates are definitely also my responsibility.]

The mention of the “border guards” is no coincidence; it is yet another marker illustrating the complex intermixing between popular culture and politics. Both in the text above and in the material embodiment on the square, the reference to “border guards” has its connection to the figure of the horse from the cartoon. It is not clear whether its position on this square was chosen with this fact in mind, but there is a monument to a rider on a horse just across the street. The equestrian statue depicts a Cossack holding a drawn saber in his right hand. The monument was installed on May 26, 2004 and bears the inscription: “To the guardians of the motherland’s borders of all generations.” This statue was the first

monument erected in honor of the Border Protection Forces since Ukraine’s independence in 1991 in front of the entrance to the Administration of the Border Protection Forces of Ukraine [KievFoto, 2016]. (10) The architecture of the square allows the Hedgehog statue to “see” the horse, but not vice versa.



Image 2. A statue to Hedgehog in the Fog facing the monument to the Border Protection Forces of Ukraine. Photo credit: Iryna Bezborodova

Likewise, in the cartoon, Hedgehog had no contact with the horse, only viewing it from afar.



Image 3. Screen capture from the cartoon of Hedgehog and Horse in the fog. [Norshtein, 1975a]

To make sure the visitors are aware of the interaction of Hedgehog with Horse/the Border Forces monument, the Hedgehog's statue has a plaque with the name *Horse* rather than Hedgehog (see Image 4). The statue's visitors are aware of the implication of the plaque, as in the example of this comment from Hedgehog's Facebook account:

Roman Zavorotniy, September 2, 2013

Кто бы знал, что композиция называется "Лошадка" не просто так. Еж-то смотрит на лошадку под казаком напротив пограничной службы! [Who knows, the composition is not simply called *Horse*. The Hedgehog is looking at a horse ridden by a Cossack across from the Border Guard Service!]



Image 4. The title of the Hedgehog statue. The inscription reads: “‘Лошадка’ [Horse], Sculptor Skrytutskiy K.V., Kyiv Landscape Initiative.” [Mokosii, 2009]

As we can see, the historical monument to the Border Protection Forces has acquired a new interpretation from popular culture. Whereas the statue of Hedgehog has gained political meaning. It is regarded as a victim, or as a witness, of Ukrainian protests in Kyiv, of the Russian-Ukrainian war in the east of Ukraine, or in internal processes in the political life of Ukraine. Some of these implications are connected to this virtual interaction between the hedgehog and the Border Protection Forces monument (discussed in more detail below).

Locals and tourists alike, regardless of their political attitudes, visit the statue often. Visitors often leave coins inside the statue, a practice common at many tourist sites worldwide (see Image 5).

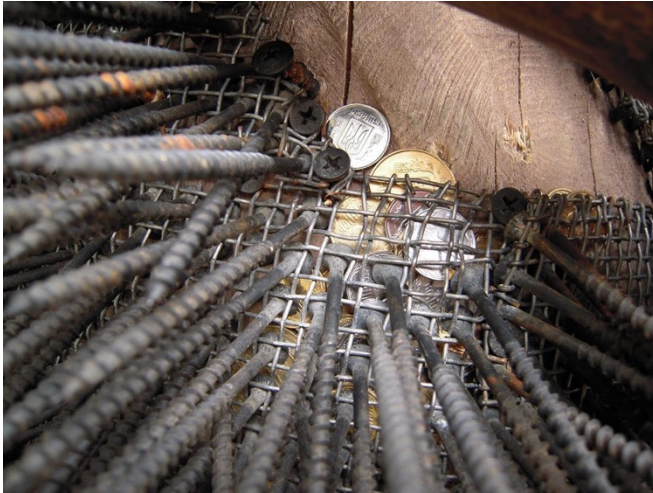


Image 5. Coins inside the Hedgehog statue. [Mokosii, 2009]

The statue is also associated with student folk practices; they believe that visiting the Hedgehog a day prior to the exam will result in good grades.

Ежик, October 11, 2013

Все время забываю вам рассказать, что студенты из Университетов Шевченко и Карпенко-Карого считают меня своим покровителем. Я, конечно, стараюсь их не подводить. Все- таки коллеги, ведь я тоже артист, снимался в одном Великом Мультфильме. [I keep forgetting to tell you that students of Shevchenko University and Karpenko-Kary (Theatre, Cinema and Television University) consider me to be their patron. Certainly, I do my best not to let them down. After all, we are colleagues, I am an actor too, I acted in one of the Great Animated films.]

Так вот, Аня Мамалига, моя подружка, ни один экзамен без моей помощи не хотела сдавать! А ведь умняшка, каких поискать! Почему умные девочки так не уверены в себе? Ведь все-все знают, а робеют! [So, Ania Mamaliga, my girlfriend, refused to take a single exam without my help! She is such smart girl, you can hardly find a smarter one!]

Why are these smart girls so lacking in self-confidence?
They know everything, but are timid!]

В результате, в дни экзаменов, я, как памятник Ленину, весь в цветах! Перед Лошадкой даже неудобно... [As a result, on exam days I got a lot of flowers, like a monument to Lenin! It’s embarrassing for the Horse...]

The popularity of the statue has its downside. From time to time, the statue to Hedgehog suffers damage and requires restoration. During these periods, messages on Facebook and other media outlets regarding the restoration retain the connection to the cartoon’s plot and images (see Images 6 and 7).



Image 6. Screen capture from the cartoon of Hedgehog and Bear Cub counting stars. [Norshtein, 1975b]



Image 7. The poster near Hedgehog's tree reads: "I went to count stars, will be back May 26." [Hau Kiev, 2012]

The date of the statue's return mentioned in image 7 carries significance as well; since 1992, May 28 has been the official day of the Border Protection Forces of Ukraine. On the anniversary of that day, the statue of the Hedgehog receives more visitors than usual. This date keeps the Soviet-era cartoon connected to Ukrainian national narratives and perpetuates further re-conception of the city's folk geography.

Hedgehog's Facebook account also provides additional information about the damage to the statue within the framework of the cartoon's plot elements. Facebook narratives are consistent with the first-person account in Hedgehog's name, and he refers to his designer and sculptor as "dad:"

Ежик, August 22, 2013

[...] Тут многие спрашивают, кто на меня напал. Не помню.

Помню только, что под утро кто - то начал вырывать у меня из лапок узелок с вареньем. Я зашипел и хотел укунить воришку, но получил по мордочке чем -то острым и потерял сознание... Я сейчас у папы Кости в мастерской, чувствую себя здесь в полной безопасности

и стараюсь забыть нападение. Папа Костя обработал мои ранки столярным клеем и они перестали болеть, только немножко ноют. В гости приходил Медвежонок. Мы попили чай из блюдец. Жаль, что без варенья, но у Кости в мастерской оказался липовый мед. Медвежонок меня ругает, что я до поздней ночи засиживаюсь на пенке. Я привык, ведь по ночам ко мне приходят влюбленные. Я немножко стесняюсь порой, что невольно подслушиваю их щебетание, но под него так сладко засыпать! Я так люблю киевскую ночь! [...] Обещаю, что вернусь в свой скверик, как только поправлюсь.

[[...] Many ask who assaulted me. I don't remember. The only thing I remember that just before morning someone tried to snatch the pot with raspberry jam out of my paws. I hissed and wanted to bite the pilferer, but felt something sharp stab my muzzle, and I fainted ... Right now I'm at my dad Kostia's studio; I feel totally safe here and am trying to forget the assault. My dad Kostia treated my wounds with carpenter's glue and they have stopped hurting, they only ache a little bit. Bear Cub came to see me. We drank tea from saucers. It is a pity that we have no jam, but we found some linden honey in Kostia's workshop. Bear Cub scolds me for staying up until late at night on the stump. I've gotten used to that, because lovers come to visit me at night. I feel a bit embarrassed sometimes, because I inadvertently overhear their chatter, but it is so sweet to fall asleep listening to them! I love Kyiv at night so much! [...] I promise to come back to my square as soon as I feel better.]

The damage to the statue and its restauration are also the subject of publications in Ukrainian and Russian media outlets [Segodnia, 2013; Channel 1, 2013]. Posts from Hedgehog prompt reactions from other Facebook users and they appear to be dialogic in nature. Messages about damages of the statue usually provoke emotional comments that demonstrate audience concern about the statue remaining in place and being properly preserved. A message about

possible removal or relocation of the statue after yet another attack received the most responses.

Ежик, March 10, 2015

Меня опять обворовали :(Уеду! [I have been robbed again :(I'm leaving!]

Tanya Tretyakova: Не нужно, Ежик, ты нам нужен!
(8 “likes,” 10 березень 2015 р.) [No need, Hedgehog, we need you! (8 “likes,” March 10, 2015)]

Helen Galyabarda: не уезжай...давай найдем и надаем по попе тем негодьям...? хочешь, я принесу тебе варенье? только не уезжай...мы тебя очень любим
(3 “likes,” 10 березень 2015 р.) [don't go... let's find those scoundrels and give their butts a spanking...? do you want me to bring you jam? just don't go... we love you very much (3 “likes,” March 10, 2015)]

Olga Yosyrchuk: сцукииии, знову любиму кроху образили
(2 “likes,” 10 березень 2015 р.) [bitches, they hurt again my beloved baby (2 “likes,” March 10, 2015)]

Николай Вишняков: лайкать рука не подымается
(1 “like,” 10 березень 2015 р.) [I cannot “like” this (1 “like,” March 10, 2015)]

Олексій Сухий: Да, у меня дети страдали вот, изучали место преступления
(10 березень 2015 р.) [Yes, my kids suffered and went to investigate the scene of crime (March 10, 2015)]

Julia Nikolskaya: Бедняга((
(10 березень 2015 р.) [Poor thing (((March 10, 2015)]

Andrii Cherninskiy: видеокaмеры надо ставить
(3 “likes,” 10 березень 2015 р.) [surveillance cameras

should be put up (3 “likes,” March 10, 2015)]

Татьяна ГРУшко: как так
(10 березень 2015 р.) [how come (March 10, 2015)]

Olga Shusta: Шкода як (
(10 березень 2015 р.) [So sorry ((March 10, 2015)]

Илья Харченко: Предоставим убежище от вандалов на
Русановке. Тем более, что ёжик для нас больше, чем
символ! Опёку гарантируем!
(3 “likes,” 23 червня 2015 р.) [We will provide a shelter
from vandals on Rusanovka. (11) Especially because
Hedgehog is more than a symbol for us! We guarantee you
protection! (3 “likes,” June 23, 2015)]

Andriy Lontkovsky: Ежичек! Переезжай к нам на
Русановку! у нас тут твоих сородичей очень много, ты
будешь оберегать их - а мы тебя
(1 “like,” 23 червня 2015 р.) [Sweet Hedgehog! Move to
us in Rusanovka! We have many of your tribe here, you
will protect them, and we [will take care of] you (1 “like,”
June 23, 2015)]

Салоид Лариса: А мы тебя давно ждем! У нас для тебя
и природа получше, и все островитяне тебя
ЗАЖДАЛИСЬ!
(24 червня 2015 р.) [We have been waiting for you for so
long! We have a better natural environment, and all island
people ARE TIRED OF WAITING for you! (June 24,
2015)]

Anton Vasylevich: [picture of a weeping individual]
(30 грудня 2015) [(December 30, 2015)]

The last instance demonstrates the level of emotional involvement and significance of the statue to residents of the city. The last case that resulted in the statue’s temporarily relocation also evoked

political implications associated with the events after the protests (discussed in detail below).

Near the beginning of the protests in 2013, the statue was being restored again. The Hedgehog's Facebook account reposted a publication from a participant of a media seminar focused on the anticipated agreement with the European Union. The seminar took place at a location close to the Hedgehog statue. The author of the publication tagged the sculptor in her text.

Katja Lutska, October 27, 2013

Ось вона популярність! Неподалік від вул. Рейтарська, в перерві, на семінарі “Євроінтеграція: шляхи до аудиторії українських медіа” усі учасники говорили не про ці “шляхи”.. а про те, куди ж подівся Їжачок в тумані.

Kostia Skrzetuski.

[That is fame! Not far from Reitarska street, during a break in the seminar “European integration: Paths toward a Ukrainian Media Audience,” all the participants were not talking about these “paths” ... but were wondering about the disappearance of Hedgehog in the Fog. Kostia Skrzetuski].

The Facebook examples discussed above demonstrate that the statue of Hedgehog is closely associated with the character in Norshtein's cartoon. It carries positive emotional connotations and has also acquired symbolism associated with within Kyiv's cultural heritage. It has become an object of the city's folk geography, familiar and symbolic to the city residents as both a tourist attraction and as a mediator of social construction.

Hedgehog on the Maidan

At the beginning of the rally against postponing the agreement with the European Union that unfolded on November 21, 2013 on the Maidan, the statue of the Hedgehog was still absent from its usual location for restoration. The symbolic meaning of the cartoon character I have outlined above influenced Internet-memes about the statue (and the character) that spread via social media. (12) Its role

in the protest lore was also influenced by its location in close proximity to the Maidan along the path from there to one of the city’s subway stations.

As noted above, the figure of Hedgehog in Russia and Ukraine has taken on the role of a searcher through a frightening reality. During the protests, internet users used the Hedgehog to evoke this feeling of developing uncertainty that the unsigned agreement represented. A still from the cartoon of Hedgehog walking in the fog was used in popular memes to connote this feeling (Image 8).



Image 8. Screen capture from the cartoon of Hedgehog in the Fog. [Norshtein, 1975c]

Internet memes spread in social media applied to this original image and appended with messages representing mediation of the meaning of the protests and their representations in mass media (see Images 9, 10).



Image 9. Internet meme reads, "Could you tell me, how to get to Hrushevsky street?" Novyi Region. [Lenta.ru, 2014]

Image 9 refers to a significant location for the protests located across the Maidan square from the Hedgehog statue and suggests that the Hedgehog is on the way to protest against the government. Hrushevsky street was the location of the first serious escalation of the conflict between the riot police and protestors occurred. The conflicts there ceased on January 19, 2014, three days after the (procedurally suspect) adoption by the Parliament on January 16 of eleven laws that allowed for the imprisonment of any protester for up to fifteen years [Parliament of Ukraine, 2015; The Guardian, Snyder, 2014]. Victor Yanukovich signed the laws on January 17, and they came into force on January 21. Protesters called them "dictatorial" [UNIAN, Ukrain's'ka Pravda, 2014] or "Black Thursday" laws [Kyiv-Post, 2014]. By January 22 people had been arrested on the basis of these laws, and governmental forces shot several protestors dead.

Image 10 was published early in March 2014, when protests in Kyiv ended after Victor Yanukovich had fled the country and Russia's invasion of Crimea had begun. At that time, many media outlets were pre-occupied with the issue of right-wing groups that had participated in the protests. The poster intimates that the presence of right-wing protesters had actually been greatly

overestimated and was insignificant at best.



Image 10. Internet meme reads, “Hey! Did anyone see a Banderite?! A Banderite is like Chupacabra. No one has seen him, but everyone is terribly scared of them!” [Ежук, 2014]

Referring to mysterious “vampire-like” animals of folk beliefs [Radford, 2012], the meme points out that the protests evoked symbols of Soviet-era narratives about WWII in Ukraine. The words “Bandera” and “Banderite(s)” are among the most frequent words in my collection of Facebook narratives during the protests period appearing 86 times. They are examples of a reflected narrative, of “what they say about us.” Anti-Maidan supporters used the term Banderite, derived from Stepan Bandera’s name, as a rule, to signify the threat they expected from the pro-Maidan side. Stepan Bandera was one of the most well-known figures of the nationalist struggle in Western Ukraine during WWII. There are many beliefs about the Ukrainian Insurgent Army and the nationalists’ confrontation and cooperation with both the communist and fascist regimes as well as with the military forces of neighboring Czechoslovakia and Poland. In this context, Stepan Bandera was one of the most controversial figures, associated with the purported danger and excesses of the nationalist movement of that time [Narvselius, 2012; Struve, 2014].

Валерій Пекар, February 1, 2014

Слово “жидобандеровцы” прочно вошло в лексикон титушек. Эта обширная группа включает в себя следующие категории “чужих”: 1. Все, кто живет западнее Востока и поэтому попали под тлетворное влияние Европы. 2. Все, кто носит украинскую символику и поэтому предали идеалы, за которые деды воевали. 3. Все, кто чему-либо учился и тем самым проявил свою чуждую классовую сущность. 4. Очкарики. Явно сильно умные, а значит, не наши. 5. Украиноязычные. Очевидно. 6. Киевляне. Ну не наши они, какие-то не наши, нутром чую. 7. Евреи. Тут всё понятно. 8. Велосипедисты.

[Valerii Pekar, February 1, 2014 The word “Jew-Banderites” became a part of *titushky* vocabulary. (13) This broad group includes the following categories of “aliens”: 1. Everyone residing west of the East [of Ukraine] and due to this fact has been corrupted by Europe. 2. Everyone wearing Ukrainian symbols and betraying all ideals their grandfathers had fought for [in reference to the Soviet era narrative about the World War II-author’s note]. 3. Everyone who has studied something and in this way revealed the nature of one’s alien [social] class. 4. The Bespectacled. They are evidently too smart, so they are not ours. 5. Ukrainian-speaking [people]. Obvious. 6. Kyivans. Well, they are just not ours, somehow not ours, I know that instinctively. 7. Jews. It’s all clear. 8. Cyclists.]

Maidan supporters used the same expressions ironically and sarcastically in response, as the example below illustrates:

Александр Бабич, January 26, 2014

Я - фашист! Я всеми возможными способами поддерживаю Майдан!!! [[Aleksander Babich, January 26, 2014 I am a fascist! I support the Maidan in all possible ways!!!]

А ещё я - “бандеровец”, “тупой, недоучившийся, дебил”, “американский запродавец, люто ненавидящий всё русское”, “националист и западэнец”, “укуренный малолетка”, “идиот, не понимающий ситуации”, “футбольный ультрас, мстящий ментам”... Ведь Я ПОДДЕРЖИВАЮ МАЙДАН!!!! [...] [Also I am a “Banderite,” “a stupid and non-educated moron,” “an American paid agent fiercely hating all things Russian,” “a nationalist and someone from the extreme West of Ukraine,” “a drugged teen,” “an idiot, not understanding the situation,” “a soccer fanatic who wants to revenge on the cops”... After all I SUPPORT THE MAIDAN!!!! [...]]

Я - бандеровец! Как историк, я пишу книги об истории советского подполья в катакомбах. Все тиражи разобрали ветеранские организации, музеи и школьные библиотеки Одессы. Но я поддерживаю Майдан - я - бандеровец! [...] [I am a Banderite! As a historian, I write historical books about the Soviet underground in catacombs. All copies are distributed to veterans’ organizations, museums and school libraries of Odessa. However, I support the Maidan – so, I am a Banderite! [...]]

The narratives and visual images of the time provide many versions of these cartoon characters involved in the protests and were used to mediate and formulate the attitudes of the opposing sides. The memes shown in Images 11 and 12, for example, use Hedgehog both as an active protestor (Image 11) and a person scared by the protests represented through the character of the Eagle-owl (Image 12).



Picture 11. Internet meme. The title translates, "Hedgehog on the Maidan." [VanGenechten287, 2013]

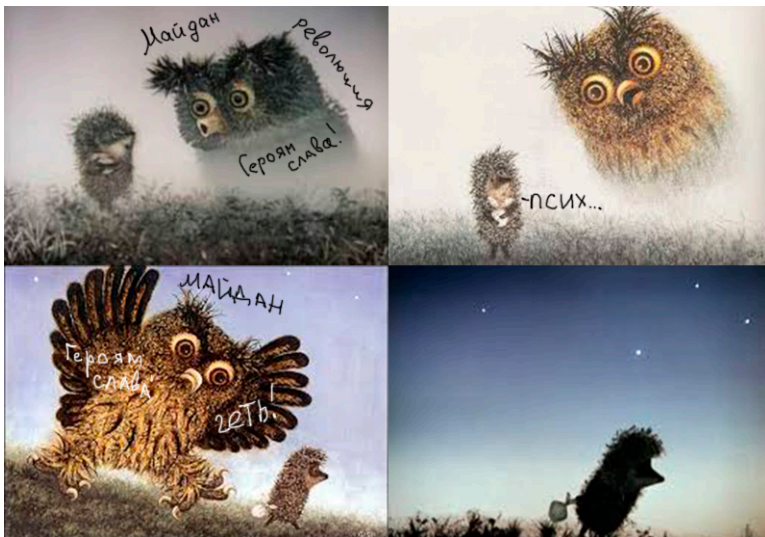


Image 12. Internet meme. The texts of Eagle-owl translates, "Maidan. Revolution. Glory to the Heroes! Get out!" Hedgehog: "Weirdo..." [Тайный муж Алюсика, 2014]

During the protests the figure of Hedgehog was represented only virtually, since it was absent from its square for restoration. The statue was re-installed on March 11, 2014, just at the beginning of the Russian invasion of Crimea. At that point, in addition to his pot of raspberry jam, Hedgehog received a toy submachine gun decorated with the stripes of Ukrainian national flag and the symbol of the European Union (Image 13). The same day a message at Hedgehog’s Facebook account was published that stated: “Тепер я озброєний таким автоматом і дуже небезпечний для будь-яких зелених чоловічків. [Now I’m armed with this submachine gun and very perilous for any little green man.]” (14)



Image 13. Hedgehog at his regular place with a toy submachine gun. Photo credit: UNIAN

The return of the Hedgehog in the context of political turmoil became a subject of the evening news reported by media outlets and national TV-channels [Kiev-TV, 2014; Rudiachenko, 2014]. The next day’s disappearance of the toy submachine gun was the topic of messages both in social and official media [Obozrevatel’, 2014].

Ежик, March 12, 2014
Друзья! [Friends!]

Не волнуйтесь! В скверике все спокойно! Все стали переживать, что у меня, якобы, пропал автомат. Спешу всех успокоить, это не так. Вчера вечером возле меня гулял один соседский мальчишка. Он так восхищался моим игрушечным оружием! [Don't worry! Everything is fine on the square! Everybody started worrying that I the submachine gun had supposedly disappeared. I want to reassure everybody, it's not true. Last night a neighbor's boy was walking nearby. He so admired my toy weapon!]

Мальчишка пожаловался мне, что его бабуля и мамуля смотрят телевизор, читают новости и очень боятся всего, что происходит, а он совершенно не может их защитить. Я так расчувствовался, что передал ему свой игрушечный автомат... Малыш был счастлив... Уверен, что из нынешних мальчиков вырастут настоящие защитники Родины! [The boy complained to me that his granny and mommy watch TV, read news and are so afraid of everything that's happening, but he couldn't protect them at all. I so was deeply moved that I gave him my toy submachine gun... The kid was happy... I'm sure that our today boys will grow up to be real defenders of our Homeland!]

Хочу вас всех попросить! Мне все время несут подарки (даже очки недавно подарили). Не могли бы вы, мои взрослые друзья и друзья друзей, приносить к пеньку ваши ненужные игрушечные вооружения? А я буду передавать ваши подарки! И пусть игры в “войнушки” останутся только играми! [I wish to make a request of all of you! I get gifts all the time (recently I even got glasses). Could you, my adult friends and friends of friends, bring your extra toy weapons to my stump? I will pass on your gifts! Let these “war playing” games remain only games!]

The political interactions with the statue were not limited only to toy weapons. On the May 28, 2014, the holiday of the Border Protection

Forces of Ukraine, the statue of the Hedgehog wore an officer’s cap (Image 14) and the Hedgehog’s Facebook page had a post about keeping his connection with border protection officers. By that time, tension in the Donbass region had grown, and pro-Russian forces seized several state administration buildings in the region. [Channel 5, 2014; NewsRU, 2014]. These events were implied in the post as well.

Ежик, May 28, 2014

Сегодня неплохо “посидели” с пограничниками. Поздравил офицеров с их с Днем! Они ребята смелые, такие же, как и я. Но их много. А я один. Поэтому не всегда могу за себя постоять. Вот, днями, воевал с вандалами. Лапку оторвали. Сепаратисты бескультурные! А погранцы на праздник мне фуражку подарили! Украдет кто то, конечно же...

[Today we “had a sit down” with border guards. I congratulated the officers on their Day! They are courageous guys, the same as me. They are many. And I am alone. Therefore, I cannot always stand up for myself. So, for some days, I have been at war with vandals. They tore off my paw. Uncouth separatists! (15) And the border guards presented me an officer’s cap for the day! Someone will steal it, of course...]



Image 14. Hedgehog with a border protection forces peak-cap. Photo credit: Inna Bulkina.

Although Hedgehog's Facebook account has had several thematic posts related to the political events in the country, they are not the predominant topic. The site still has a variety of posts focused

mostly on the image of the cartoon character and about actual hedgehogs, though occasionally comments on the most resonant political events do appear. After the damage to the statue in March 2015, media outlets again commented on the situation, especially because the sculptor announced that the statue would be permanently removed. In stories about this decision, Ukrainian media outlets provided resident reaction towards his statement [Marushchak, 2015; Vyrchenko, 2015; Obozrevatel', 2015], while others (predominantly Russian media) provided their own interpretation to the removal. The latter suggested the statue embodied the politics of the Soviet era and was thus similar to socialist monuments, and that association was the primary reason authorities had sanctioned its removal [CentrAsia, 2015; Sydorchyk, 2015]. However, these interpretations were roundly ignored by city residents. The statue was relocated to Shevchenko Park in downtown Kyiv [Vesti, 2015], but, within several weeks, it was restored to its original location. The following message from Hedgehog about the re-installation appeared on its Facebook account:

Ежик, December 28, 2015

Дождался снежка! [I waited so long for the snow!]

Вернулся домой, на любимый пенек. Погостил у Тараса, уютно у него – много деток и студентов гуляет, а возле меня только и происходит, что пьянки у ларька да кофейбус барыжный ;(. [Just came back home, on my beloved stump. I stayed for a while with Taras [Shevchenko], so lovely at his place – many kids and students around, while I had only boozers at a stall and a fence's coffee-bus ;(.]

В парке было весело, деток много меня навестило, посмотрел новогодние концерты, познакомился со Святым Николаем... [I had fun in the park, many kids visited me; I saw some New Year's concerts, and met St. Nicolas...]

В общем, всех с наступлением зимы и жду друзей в гости, соскучился! [So, my best wishes for the winter, and I'm waiting for the friends to visit me, I missed you!]

During the protests and their aftermath, the figure of Norshtein's Hedgehog in the Fog became the focus of a new lore as a means to mediate political conflict. Because of its physical manifestation as a statue and its embodiment of positive symbolism, despite its Soviet heritage, it was able to take on new significance by articulating the meaning of the protests and political transformations in the country. Hedgehog, already known for being a symbol of finding the right path in a confusing situation, was adopted as a mediating symbol in this situation and then was further associated with both sides of the protests and the war in the country.

Facebook posts on the Hedgehog's page illustrate this process. They referred to existing symbols of their own culture and both traditional and contemporary urban folklore. The Maidan narratives in virtual communication functioned to convey high expectations for significant changes in the political and social spheres. The examples considered above connect an animated character to the internal affairs and international relations of a nation. These texts and visual images convey indirect and subtle meanings that might harken back to the tradition of ideological censorship, a common phenomenon for authoritarian societies, as a form of implicit critique. A symbol like the Hedgehog is characterized by humor and, according to Rostyslav Semkiv, helps to create a sense of belonging to a particular group or to a community that shares and understands the joke. Positive types of humor give rise to the pleasure of self-identification, a sense of belonging, and relief after a potential threat that did not cause any harm. Satire and sarcasm imply opposition that usually include "me vs. others," "us vs. them," "nice vs. ugly," "good vs. evil," etc., [Semkiv, 2014]. My data provide examples of both types of humor as well as posts that include both forms. I suggest that the Hedgehog helped the Facebook users formulate their self-representations as well as formulate a distinction between pro- and anti-Maidan forces. The cartoon site served as a communicative and interpretative tool that is consistent with

Jennifer Dickinson’s [2014] description of the functions of social media during the Maidan.

The Hedgehog transformed from a Soviet cartoon symbol into a figure representing both sides in contemporary protest narratives and distinct from its Soviet heritage. This transformation exemplifies the concept “cultural complexity” that requires understanding culture as a “collective phenomenon to belong primarily to social relationships and their network and only derivatively and without logical necessity to particular territories” [Hannerz, 1992]. In sum, the Hedgehog defies its origins within the context of the Soviet political and cultural legacies by becoming part of contemporary social networks and a knowable figure in the folklore they created in response to the political protests.

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NOTES

1 The Ukrainian word *maidan* is derived from Arabic ميدان [maydān] meaning “square” or “field.”

2 Timothy Snider suggests that the word *maidan* has now gained the meaning of the Greek word *agora* in English, it is not just

a physical place, but also a meeting with a purpose “to deliberate, to speak, and to create a political society.”

3 Symbolically written texts with indirect and subtle meanings are used to be called Aesopian language, after Aesop’s (620–564 BC) fables depicting society and relationships in Ancient Greece re-set the animal world. Fables in Russian-speaking countries and former parts of the Russian Empire arose as a genre after the publication of Ivan Krylov’s fables (1769-1844) whose works are, to a great extent, based on Aesop’s and La Fontaine’s fables (Jean de La Fontaine, French fabulist, 1621-1695), often with a satirical bent.

4 Consistent with this understanding of folklore, Dundes redefined the concept of folk as any group of people “whatsoever who share at least one common factor.” Examples of factors that define folk groups include families, localities, religious and ethnic groups, hobbyists, and occupational groups [Dundes, 1980:7]. Frank speaks of folklore as “a kind of informal or spontaneous or homemade communication in which members of all groups engage at least some of the time” [Frank, 2011:8]. The concept of “postfolklore” suggested by Sergey Nekliudov as a kind of urban folklore prompted discussion among Slavic folklore theorists [Neklyudov, 1995]. Pozdnev characterizes the beginning of the twenty-first century not as “postfolklore,” but rather as “postfolklore culture” in which “all traditional genres are secondary and borrowed from literature.” Panchenko suggests: “village culture of the new times is not much more ‘folkloric’ or ‘traditional’ than the mass culture of the modern city [McCormick, 2011:1017]. East European definitions of “postfolklore” presume the contemporary research approach differs from the 19th century concept of folklore as ancient rural oral tradition. The variety of concepts emphasize different nuances in contemporary urban folklore. I will follow Dundes’ and Frank’s concepts inherited by the North American tradition of folklore that include the possibility of diverse groups.

5 Frank [2011:10] argues that internet folklore is important for three reasons: (1) the phenomenon is widespread; (2) the phenomenon reveals widely held attitudes and widely shared preoccupations; and (3) the phenomenon is largely ignored and

should not be, given (1) and (2). He [2012:12] claims that the function of internet folklore is mainly to highlight social and political problems and to “free [people] from tensions and frustration.” He also suggests that the role of political folklore is “like a sneer, the weapon of the weak,” referring to Gregor Benton [1988: 35], who wrote: “[...] the political joke will change nothing. [...] It is not a form of active resistance. [...] It will mobilize no one. [...] It is important for keeping society sane and stable.” On the contrary, Jennifer Dickinson described the internet-activity of the protesters as a means to reinforce their actions on the square [Dickinson, 2014: 79]. My research shows that Dickinson’s characterization is a more accurate reflection of the Maidan lore, but additional consideration of this issue is beyond the scope of this paper.

6 The cartoon was awarded The Best Animated Film Award of Frunze USSR Film Festival, 1976; The Best Animated Film Award of Tehran Children's and Youth Film Festival, 1976; Outstanding Film of the Year, London, UK, 1977; Winner of the Third Prize, Chicago, USA, 1977; Winner of the Second Prize, Sidney, Australia, 1978; No.1 Animated Film of All The Time, Tokyo, All Time Animation Best 150 in Japan and Worldwide, 2003. The cartoon legacy includes: a popular Soviet-era Counting-out game, The Hedgehog Went out the Fog [“Вышел Ежик из тумана | Стихи о ежиках” 2016]; production of 7 more animated films based on Sergei Kozlov’s tales; titles of academic papers referring to confusion or disarray in society [Agafonova 2002; Rodnianskaia 2001; Mil’china 1993]; the reference in the third episode of the eighth season of the animated comedy series Family Guy, “Spies Like Us,” 2009; Russian sitcom-melodrama, The Hedgehog Went out the Fog, 2010, etc.

7 [*Editor’s Note*: Folklorica privileges spelling of foreign words and places names that are common to English readers. The author prefers the transliteration from the Ukrainian *Чорнобиль* [Chornobyl]].

8 The Golden Gates of Kyiv was the main gate in the 12th-century fortifications of Kyiv, then the capital of Kyivan Rus' and were named after the Golden Gate of Constantinople [Tymoshenko,

2010]. St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv is an architectural monument dating back to 11th century. The cathedral is one of the city's best known landmarks and the first site in Ukraine to be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List (along with the Kiev Cave Monastery complex) [“Софія Київська – собор і заповідник у Києві”].

9 Hedgehog’s Facebook account [https://www.facebook.com/ежик-1383608415201387/]. Media outlets report about Hedgehog’s Facebook account and a vandal action against the statue [Kraievaia, 2013].

10 The Cossack is a significant symbol of Ukrainian national identity, a fact that has been widely discussed in connection to the protests of 2013-2014. According to Serhii Krymsky, national archetypes are essential components for collective memory and national identity construction, and these symbolic structures may have different interpretations in different epochs. He suggests an ethnos can become a nation when it becomes a subject of history and he considers the Ukrainian nation was formed in the 17th century, “when Cossacks became the main military power and warriors of Europe for defence from the Ottoman invasion.” [Krymsky 2014]. Serhii Plokyh argues that the Ukrainian Cossack depicted in 19th century work, *History of Rus’*, became the most influential source for the historical myth of the Ukrainian nation. [Plokyh 2012]. Some media outlets after the Maidan made reference to the nation’s defensive structure having continuity with Cossack times [Espresso-TV, 2015].

11 Rusanovka is a residential area of Kyiv not far from downtown. It is located on an island close to the left bank of Dnipro river.

12 A meme is an idea, behavior, or style that spreads from person to person within a culture, according to Dawkins [Dawkins, 1989].

13 Titushky is the collective name of street hooligans whose purpose was to perform illegal acts such as beating, carjacking, and kidnapping; they were under protection of the Berkut and authorities. They earned the name after Vadym Titushko, who, together with two other men, had attacked journalists from the

television Channel 5 on May 18, 2013. However, during the protests, Vadym Titushko declared his anti-government position and supported the Maidan.

14 “Little green men” is a nickname for officers of Russian regular army out of official uniform on the streets of Crimea that arose early in March 2014.

15 “Separatists” is the folk term for pro-Russian supporters.

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