

PATHOGENIC TEXT IN POST TOTALITARIAN SOCIETY

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PATHOGENIC TEXT IN POST TOTALITARIAN SOCIETY

Violence in the media can be looked upon as just a kind of pathogenic text. And it is dubious whether it is the most dangerous one. Apart from it there are other kinds - more or less harmful to the human psychics.

A comparative analysis of these different kinds will enable us to identify the nature of the pathogenic text in the first place and stemming from this - to sketch out ways of neutralizing violence in the media.

The post totalitarian society, which Ukraine is at the moment, is rewarding material for such comparative analysis.

The psychology of the average recipient of Mass Media in Ukraine features certain changes brought about by totalitarian practice of the former USSR. This makes our psychology more vulnerable. And we shall see why.

Western mass culture which used to be banned under Soviet rule, has taken on a mesmerizing attraction for those who had been denied it. But following the break-up of the Soviet Union and collapse of the Iron Wall the cheapest and very often most vulgar cultural output of the West including violence in the media flooded the East. So, for an ordinary recipient the West gets associated with these cheapest samples. In this I see a peculiarity of the post totalitarian situation in Ukraine.

Other lineaments, in our view, can be well traced with the totalitarian propaganda to which Ukrainian people were exposed over a protracted period of time and which we are inclined to perceive as the most detrimental kind of pathogenic text.

Thus, Ukraine, like other post totalitarian societies, which emerged as a result of the break-up of the Soviet Union (Russia, Belorus, Georgia, Kazakhstan and others) is an arena where the impacts of at least two kinds of pathogenic text criss-cross each other and interpenetrate: the one that came from the West and the Eastern one which originated in Russia and was cultivated in Ukraine over seven decades

In view of time restrictions we will leave out all other kinds of the pathogenic text, such as pornography, racist propaganda etc.

So, what is the interplay of violence on Western mass media and Eastern totalitarian propaganda which is weakened, but, as the swinging of the political pendulum indicates, still alive and well, fraught with ?

What can two things so seemingly remote from each other as TV violence and totalitarian ideology in action possibly have in common?

What preventive measures can be taken to bypass untoward consequences of the pathogenic text?

But before we venture an answer to these questions we should dwell briefly upon the methodological grounds of our investigation. If to be short, we can

outline them within the framework of the ecology of the noosphere, or if to narrow it down still more, the ecology of mass communication.

First of all about our seeing of the subject-object relations between man and the text.

Informational processes, in particular a build-up of textual mass seem to be the most substantial manifestation of the functioning of the noosphere. Man is surrounded by texts and these surroundings are no less important than the natural ones, i.e., biosphere.

Only a small amount of information, in particular the very first words (or the Word, which according to the Bible, was original) can be looked upon as a pure act of will. All subsequent words, are, as a rule, the offspring of two parents - man and that previous information, that previous Text, which has in a certain way affected human consciousness, impregnating it. It may be true that man keeps the text under control. But another statement, which is no less true, is that the text in terms of the surrounding information has control over the man, programming his psychics in its way and stimulating its thinking.

In this sense one can speak of the enthrallment by the text. The word does not necessarily mean something negative. We can easily imagine 'sweet enslavement' i.e. desirable. It is exactly the kind of enslavement inherent in, say, the relationship defined by the word 'love'. If I were to give a string of associations aroused by this word, there would inevitably be such term as a

'slave of love' or a 'voluntary slave'. The latter of the two phrases is an apt description what the relationship between the man and the text is about .

Let us attempt to trace the history of their relations.

The most plausible fact is that the first text was the product of someone's creation. In our case it does not matter whose: the God's or man's. What does matter is that it was born. But further on, the text like a newly-born baby, in the course of time, becomes increasingly autonomous, gains more rights and gets to be an independent agent.

I do not know whether my reader /listener will be able to overcome the negative connotation of the words 'parasite' or 'virus'. Let us try to look at the virus as the God's creation, not worse, and even maybe better in some way than other creatures. It is simply programmed with the view of survival. And survival of species, however, is invariably connected with its reproduction.

The virus is incapable of multiplying on its own. It knows how to do it, i.e. it possesses the necessary information contained in the DNA molecules. But it does not have the necessary energy resources. So it is compelled to penetrate into the cells of higher organisms and subordinate their functioning to the interests of their own genus, alter the operational program of the invaded cell. Instead of serving its own organism the latter is made to produce building material and generate energy for the aggressor, making its propagation possible.

The text, just like the virus, is incapable of multiplying on its own. Just like the virus , the text penetrating into human consciousness, stimulates

the mind to produce new textual masses, i.e. multiplies exploiting human resources. The textual build-up has been taking place throughout the whole of the mankind's history and now its rate seems to be rapidly growing, almost by the geometric progression - the bigger the textual mass is, the faster it grows. Today mankind has gotten to the point which has come to be called the "informational age".

The global informational network together with the electronic and satellite mass media enable the world text to exist as a peculiar organism. Coming back to the analogy with the virus, one can assume that in all its varieties it has multiplied to acquired such gigantic proportions that it has nearly taken the shape of a superstructure powerful enough to dictate terms to higher organisms.

The text, like the virus, finds its way into our consciousness in early childhood and remains there, at least as part of the inner speech or thinking up till death. The only exceptions may be states of nirvana in yoga.

Very few, however, would claim that any text may be harmful. Amplifying the analogy with the virus further you surely remember that there are microorganisms which on finding themselves in a man's body cause diseases and can even lead to its death. But on the other hand, there exist certain, the so called bacteriophages, that kill bacteria. Microbiologists indicate that there is no such kind of bacteria which would not have its own bacteriophage.

Tentative as this comparison (of the text with the virus) may sound it, in our opinion, does let us determine some significant peculiarities of the text.

The notion of the Pathogenic text thus, there will probably be no objections to the assertion that the man's textual environment can be salutary, wholesome or at least harmless on the one hand and detrimental - on the other. In other words we are getting around to the issue of the pathogeneity of the text.

The problem of the detrimental nature inherent in the word is as old as history and of course, as the language itself. But with the appearance of written language, the invention of printing and, at last, the advent of electronic media the problem has assumed another aspect. Technical inventions have opened up entirely new possibilities of enhancing the impact of the word in time and space. In this connection the problem of the pathogenic text has deteriorated.

Incidentally, it is worthwhile to ascertain the correlation of the notions 'pathogenicity' and 'harmfulness'. The former more often than not tends to be detrimental, i.e., pathogenic as most always spells harmful, the reverse is hardly true. A word of truth can be harmful to a criminal's interests. But the word can be hardly called 'pathogenic'. Thus, what is harmful is not necessarily pathogenic.

One can attempt to solve the problem of the pathogenic text going by the legislation passed by a country. From this point of view a harmful text would be the one which is forbidden by law (racial enmity or war propaganda, pornography etc.).

But an approach by the 'all harmful what is forbidden' formula is temptingly simple and convenient. But on a closer inspection one will see that this kind of approach would too one-sided and this is not difficult to prove.

Let us take as an example text of the totalitarian journalism under the Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union. Can they be referred to as pathogenic? If taken together, their pernicious effect on the psychic well-being of the nation is sufficiently apparent. In view of these regimes' aggressiveness, their intentions of invasion and wars provoked by them, no one can be left in doubt as to the ruinous effect of this kind of journalism on a global scale. And at the same time, these texts did not go counter to the legislation of the countries.

On the other hand, in Ukrainian Legislation, like in other countries of CIS, there exist no restrictions to the import of thrillers. Of all the films released annually in Ukrainian cinematography only one per cent are Ukrainian-made.

Now let us attempt to draw parallels between violence as one of the most noticeable and, in our opinion, very essential, component of the mass communication of the West and totalitarian propaganda which is, too, one of the most distinctive features of the mass communication in the East in the Soviet era.

PARALLELS

West.

Action thrillers which have flooded Ukrainian TV and cinema screens, by the very fact of featuring incalculable killings demonstrate a total disregard for a man's life, to say nothing of a personality.

Researches in the West keep stressing the danger of getting used to violence which leads to blunted sensitivity, habitualized perception of evil.

East.

Russian explorer L. Vasiliev points out that totalitarianism as a fixed entity though having certain historical background, belongs to the 20-th century and is characterized by three major features:

- 1/ absolute sway of the ideological and sociopolitical system over man, unbounded domination of the state over the society;
- 2/ indoctrination which is based primarily on myths, and which appeals to the emotional rather than rational and makes people believe in the rightfulness of an goals and slogans of the ruling ideology. In this, the system is a kin to religion, while they do differ on the most essential point, i.e.
- 3/ overall amorality and total disregard for man. Whatever would straighten the system is considered moral, no matter how many millions of human lives it can take;

Another argument favoring the expediency of the persecutions even of obedient, loyal-to-the regime citizens, journalists in particular, consists in an almost inevitably creative character of their job. If creative activity is defined as bringing something new into being, the kind of thing which cannot be preplanned it is invariably attached to a personality 'sprouting' out of all its features combined is, in fact, a peculiar synthesis of them. Thus, it is not difficult to see why strong personalities, esp. intellectual deviants, are so unpalatable to the regime. So, neither creativity nor personality fits in the mechanistic philosophy of totalitarianism which is 'mechanization of social relations, technization of the mode of thinking, machinization of man'.

West.

Action movies feature a tendency to simple solutions of complex life problems, namely through violence; they are based on ready-made formulas, certain schematic patterns.

East.

Very much the same we can observe in theory and practice of totalitarianism. In 1917 the Bolsheviki started with a merciless surgery to physically exterminate all their opponents and political deviants. This tendency to simple solutions of the problem reveals itself at every turn. Let us take the following fact as an example. Just before World War II a new threat to the communist propoganda in the shape of radio voices from abroad loomed on the horizon. But they were 'done away with' in a perfectly Bolshevik way.

When printed produce could be easily disposed of or locked away in special archives, the radio voices 'from over there' were a much more difficult matter to handle. But they did find the way out. In 1939 first radio devices to hinder reception were set into gear. Their number kept growing until 1980 when over two thousand jamming stations were taking care of the air. Radiodefence was being put up in every Union republic, to be more exact in a hundred major cities of the Soviet Union. It was until 1987 that the BBC and The Voice of America stopped being jammed. The next year Soviet citizens, who had been denied truthful information for so long, gained access to all the rest of the world's broadcasting stations.

By the same token, they handled the problem of efficiency of mass media, which impovered with administrative and controlling functions as well as the

problem of readership when people were forcibly made to subscribe to and read the newspapers through carefully enough to be able to discuss them afterwards.

The cult of the communist zealots and dogmatic maximalist, which is also built upon a primitive pattern, has a lot in common with the 'tough guy' of a Hollywood movie.

West.

The protagonist of the 'shoot'em up' kind is, as a rule, intellectually and emotionally and spiritually primitive.

East,

The methodological doctrine of totalitarian propaganda was based on a citizen being taken for something kind of a 'tabula rasa', on which those authorized to do so inscribed slogans to live by.

Even if there had been nothing wrong about that kind of attitude, which was not the case, its very character-directive and compulsory nature seemed to go counter to the laws of human nature. Back in the nineteenth century F. Dostoyevski was well aware of this when he pondered a possibility of the existence of a righteously-organized socialist or communist society. In his 'Notes From the Underground' he maintains that if it were possible to mathematically work out some accurate system of well-being and happiness in which everyone would be assigned their own role to play, as though in the theater (assuming, that were possible), any ordinary man would defy that

system only not to be 'a puppet' and obliged to follow the course, however straight and righteous, but set by somebody else.

Totalitarian propaganda in the USSR basically worked in the way Dostoyevski described. And, of course, people unwilling to surrender to the primitivism of the communist propaganda would turn up. We will dwell upon how they were handled a little later.

Soviet mass media, in fact, ignored their readers' interest in philosophical and moral problems. From the thirties up, Soviet official Philosophy would countenance a view that the increasingly better welfare, plus the principle of collectivism, rid people of a complex and painful search for a sense of life, obviously implying that the builders of a new life can have no doubts whatsoever.

West.

The works (of cinema-art, first of all) featuring violence advocate the 'I might is right' principle, teach to worship the cult of the stronger and the mightier. They are antimoral, on the most part, denying basic Christian values.

East. By deliberately getting certain words out of use, the regime made an effort to stamp out in people's minds the things they denominated. You may be interested to hear the following list of words on whose substitution an official of a publishing-house once insisted. The book dealt with the theater. Here are the words: 'symbol', 'inspiration', 'intuition', 'subconscious's',

'liturgy', 'the Bible', 'ritual', 'divine', 'revelation', 'the Virgin mother', 'charity', 'sacrament'.

To use the word 'God' was under a ban, to say nothing of capitalizing it. The strengthening of the outright atheism was just another link in the chain of steps in subordinating people's minds and emotions. In many instances it was driven to absurdity, as one might guess. The magazine writer L. Batkin once related his experience of writing an article about Leonardo da-Vinci in which the genius himself would say that an artist gives birth like 'the God'. The editor of the magazine crossed the phrase out.

One cannot resist the temptation to draw parallel with the famous anti utopia '1984' by G. Orwel, where Amplefort, the poet, was arrested only on the grounds that when preparing Kipling's poems 'canonic edition' for publication he left the word 'prayer' at the end of a line.

Disdain for such essential Christian notions as 'kindness', 'compassion', 'pity', etc., were constantly cultivated. And that is not surprising as the above-mentioned categories did not in any way fit in, say, the atmosphere at the thirties i.e., atmosphere of fear, reciprocal denunciations and atrocious repressions. Homo sovieticus was made to believe that he had built a just social system incompatible with charity. So more that charity cannot be separated from compassion towards the suffering one (and when there is a sufferance there invariably arises the problem of justice).

As back as 1975 the famous Russian publicist Eug. Bogat in his essay 'The Lessons of the Lesson' related the following episode. Two elderly people on a

walk in the park, seeing a teenager being harassed by a group of ruffians, tried to have ago.

Taken by surprise because they did not expect anybody to intervene, the attackers left the teenager and encircled the unbidden protectors, but, apparently, because of their age, let them go, too, in a few minutes. But before leaving one of them flung a scornful: 'Some Baptists or what?' This astonished the journalist. He thought: 'Were did the boy get this notion about Baptists? Who told him that love for one's neighbor and hence, compassion and pity, are a prerogative of religion or church?'

It is now a theoretical question. Twenty years ago it was out of the question to be honest enough to answer it in official Soviet press. To call a spade a spade was made possible only in late 1980s. One of the first to do it was D. Granin. He wrote, in particular, that it was not accidental that a stream of people's charity had shallowed. During the hard times of the dispossession and mass repression people were not allowed to help each other. They were forbidden even to give shelter to children whose parents had been arrested. Even compassion for those arrested without guilt was under a ban. And feelings such as of clemency were considered suspicious and even a kind of transgression as it were. Being nonpolitical, non-class at the time of an overall struggle they were alleged to have a discouraging effect.

Mass media operated accordingly. The education of a 'new man' was done by way of the schizophrenic ideas of looking for an enemy.

And apparently just because of it, Christianity with its loving and forgiving God was being so persistently stamped out. But, as it often happens, what is

out right negated tends to leave its track on the negating one. Jose Ortega-i-Gasset once aptly remarked that it would be too easy if we could bury the past with a single 'No'. But the past is apt to return'.

That is why the sweeping atheism presently acquired the attributes of a certain religiosity. By the irony of history Stalin found himself in the role of a god. Experts point out that it was a religion of a lower, pre-Christian, pagan level. The hero in Christianity is a sufferer. According to the E. From he is a direct opposite to the pagan protagonist, whose chief ambition is conquest, victory, destruction, and afterwards, - power, fame and glory.

West.

Special attention needs to be paid to the language of an action film featuring violence. It is characterized by the following features:

The vocabulary is much simplified and primitive as the action is usually set out of educated circles. It is intended to convey the physical rather than rational. Constructions are mostly unsophisticated syntactically and grammatically.

The vocabulary is stylistically marked (it is primarily comprised of slang (low colloquialism, vulgarism, jargon, swearing). Invariably dealing with lower walks of society, this kind of film abounds in the language of the underworld (criminals, gangsters, drug-dealers).

The vocabulary is emotionally marked. But those are a different kind of emotions. They are, so to speak, low emotions. The tension of a car chase, anticipation of death, scenes of slaughter and merciless killing - all of them call for a certain language to carry them. Sentences have to be short, clipped, elliptical, unambiguous.

Of course this kind of language gives rise to a concrete stereotype of behavior.

East.

The process of language impoverishment worked in different ways. The major one was dissociation from a considerable (often the best) part of art and literature, which were branded as nationalistic and reactionary. In the upshot, in Ukraine, like in all the other soviet republics, a whole array of talented writers and cinema directors were withdrawn from literary and cinema circulation, retired into the shade.

On the whole, mass communication was aimed at lowering of the intellectual level of an individual.

Returns of the pathogenic totalitarian text can be seen in communist and extreme nationalistic publications. In style and array of abusive language some of them do not differ much from the crushing articles of the communist ideologies of 30 Es or 70 Es of which the following passage may be typical: 'All this savage pack of vultures intermittently set upon Ukraine, robbed and left it in ruins in an effort to enslave the Ukrainian nation. Home-made vampires - insatiable and sleazy traitors have always held a knife at the ready behind the Ukrainian people's back. But the Ukrainian people were rather quick to find them out and come on to their Cain nature, who would stop at nothing to achieve their goal. To squash the vermin is a unanimous demand of the working people of this country.

Investigators of totalitarianism point out that in the former Soviet Union there existed the so called semi-language. Its essence revealed itself in

devaluation of the upper strata responsible for preserving basic moral values and a considerable promotion of the vile language as a peculiar language lubricant.

West.

Action and horror films are based, on the most part, on certain stereotypes, stenciled patterns and clichés.

East.

To precipitate the education of a new man would have an integrating effect. The regime understood it perfectly well. As far back as the mid thirties that role was taken on by the so-called 'sympathetic character - a stereotype, which during the subsequent decades wandered from book to book, from one newspapers to another. 'For the new epoch, - V. Kostikoff writes in this regard,- a novel hero seemed to be called for. The Stalinist science was unable to speed up the evolution. One option was left and that was to concoct this 'novel hero". And this new man 'broad-shouldered' with a dazzling smile and a gymnastic step' was to become entirely different in form and content'.

The invented image, in the journalist's view, proved to be a regular find for the Stalin -made administrative system and its propagandistic apparatus: 'It did not persist in getting better housing, was proof against heat or cold, not liable to diseases. By force of his socialist character he humbly put up with bread-lines, did not resent price-raising, which was done in compliance with the request of the Soviet people. Neither was he exasperated when another Sunday was to be made a working day. At Stalin's first beck he was game to condemn and rail at the 'enemies of the people', and later on at the

dissidents. Made-up in mid thirties 'the master of the land' over almost six decades held sway over us fascinating the soviet people with his bogus drive, bogus optimism and beliefs. And we have got used to these made-up leaders, made-up well-being, made-up past and future.

It might be interesting to compare these observation with what experts in totalitarianism, philosophers have to say, v.a. Zakharov, for example, regards the placard hero as a peculiar disguise indispensable to any totalitarian regime. And, indeed, what were the activists of Hitler's Women' Union - those 'red caps' with revolvers under their skirts, - he asks,- What stands behind the main personages of the Stalin epopee: 'iron people's commissars' and 'Voroshilov's riflemen? Are they normal human personalities? There is definitely something artificial and concocted about them'. Zacharov further comes up with a tentative conclusion that the disguise may be the universal reality under whose conditions a totalitarian system can exist.

The investigators note that the paintings and stamps of the Hitler time had much in common with the works of socialist realism: the same youths brimming over with health, buxom peasant girls and factory workers.

So, the fact of the stereotype 'placard hero' in mass communication can be regarded as a universal phenomenon of a totalitarian regime.

West.

It is a commonly-held opinion that over-indulgence in action films (shoot'e ups etc.) can in a way brings about an intellectual degradation.

East.

In contrast with the ancient despotic societies, which were oriented backward, i.e. at the conservative, traditional values, a totalitarian society is directed forward - to the education of a 'new man', building of a new, yet unseen society. That is to say, totalitarian ideology always leans on the masses. To spread it, say, by the channels of mass communication media everyone for whom it is intended needs to be literate.

But at the same time, this literacy has to be at an elementary level. Too much knowledge is fraught with doubts as to the ideology.

In view of this statement it becomes clear why in totalitarian countries the leadership tried to level all the citizens' educational standards and intelligentsia were persecuted which facilitated their replacement by the pseudointelligentsia.

In the 1930 s the leadership of the country stepped up efforts transparently aimed at lowering the educational level of the people engaged in mass communication. A telling example of this may be the decree of the All-Union Communist Party Central Committee of 1926: 'The Immediate Party Tasks in connection with the Workers' and Peasants' movement'. The decree noted that as a result of the expanded activity of the intelligentsia the Workers' and Peasants' Movement had come to contain a very high ratio of the professional people. The fact was, evidently, regarded as objectionable and was interpreted as the penetration of the Kulak and anti-Soviet influences into the Worker's and Peasants' environment. It further pointed out the necessity

to more actively involve poor and middle peasants as well as farm labors in the Workers' and Peasants' movement.

Later in the 1960 s and 1970 s such outright directions pointing to the intelligentsia's harmful influences are unlikely to be faund. Those were the times when the old intelligentsia was replaced by the new, far less dangerous one. Although educational leveling was intermittently taking place, the process which is objectively in keeping with the nature of totalitarianism.

In order to make mass media its tool the regime needed to confine their freedom, which is, in fact, their spiritual foundation, to a minimum. Only one, the 'Basic Party Line' was declared the right one and there could be only one truth, the one authorized by the Party and State leadership. There could be no deviations from the 'Basic Party Line' and the canonized truth.

The Party did all the decision-making while the people were left with one option - to put those decisions into practice. But, as the Russian essayist L. Batkin once aptly remarked, to have only one thought and live with it means not to think at all.

West.

An invariable element in an action or horror film is a feeling of fear.

East.

One of the Congresses of the Russian Communist Party expressed concern over a very small number of editors with the record of underground party activities. "This is a drawback which can be easily set right", the Congress

stated, thus giving the green light to, however incompatible with reason, to say nothing of the professional expediency reshuffles. An editor with no background of underground Party activities was supposed to feel guilty a priori.

The feeling of guilt is inevitably linked with fear which, in fact, induced people to prove their loyalty and commitment to the party coerce in every way. We do not mean to say that this mechanism of a peculiar social regulation was an invention of the Stalin time, but the fact that just at that time it was brought to perfection and got widely spread leaves no doubt. The skillfulness with which they could implant a sense of guilt was unsurpassed. There is a story related by a newspaperman of the 1930 s E.Aleksandrovykh, the former picture editor of the 'Bolshevik Poltavshchyny' magazine: 'Once the editor sent for me and another journalist and said: Listen, boys, from now I discourage - no, more than that, - I forbid you to ever come up with the pictures of trees, bushes. 'There' when they get the issue every picture is carefully scrutinized with the view of spotting amidst the designs of boughs a swastika or Trotsky in spectacles. Later, this editor underwent repression too, although the paper did not carry any more photographs of trees and bushes. It seems that 'there' they thought up a new way to discern sedition in the paper.

For a man whose outlook took shape in late 20 th century the thing we have been talking about might seem the product of morbid imagination. But the logic of the evolution of a totalitarian societies inevitably brings forth this kind of phenomena. V.A. Podoroga writes in this regard that the Stalin regime perceived power as 'some holy text'... Selection and build-up of the

mass are possible only on condition of the right reading of the text. Incidentally, petty slips, even language one were not looked upon as accidental but as a fault against the state'.

Hence, we come to the conclusion that the absurdity of persecutions of the subjects loyal enough to the regime does not seem so absurd at a closer inspection, as it is conditioned by the functional peculiarities of a totalitarian regime for whose successful activity extreme conditions and the atmosphere of a nightmare are vital. Even in peace time this atmosphere needs a recharge in the form of repressions and purges.

It is only too natural that as the regimes grew stronger it became increasingly difficult to find real opponents. That is why the opponents were fabricated. This seems to be the most rational explanation which stems from Stalin's concept of the aggravation of class struggle as new socialist structures evolve and gain ground.

West. Action films over saturated with violence envisage that their characters as well as their audience take a certain delight watching it. That is to say, we are talking about a kind of sadism.

East.

Fromm spoke about the authoritarian and sado-masochist character of a totalitarian regime. According to Fromm, these sadists characters fall into three types. The first is characterized by the desire to subordinate people, to have exclusive sway over them. The second type, apart from all this, is characterized by desire to exploit them, to 'suck them dry' primarily

intellectually and morally. The desire to inflict pain onto people, either physical or emotional, indicates the third type.

Can this classification be applied to account for the large-scale unwarranted repression ? Surely one could not agree that they were carried out by exclusively sadists. Responding to this, one needs to mention that E. Fromm speaking of the sado-masochist or authoritarian character had in mind a very common type, just like , perhaps, Theodore Adorno who in his book 'Authoritarian Personality' made an attempt to figure out Hitlerite Germany while watching and studying Californian students in the U.S.A.. That is to say , we speak about some features peculiar to the average man, i.e., such when put under favorable social and political conditions may lead to the beginning of a totalitarian regime.

Sufferings can perform another role as the philosopher and explorer of totalitarianism ,George Orwell notes, putting his thoughts into one of his characters' mouth. The party functionary from his novel '1984' tells the imprisoned hero: "There is more to it than just obedience...If a man does not suffer there is no way of knowing that he is at our will and not his own. The force of power is in giving people pain and humiliating them. And also in tearing their minds to pieces and then put them in the order we think best.

We have attempted to look at the kind of text which is characterized by the utmost degree of pathogenecity, i.e. capable of causing millions of human being to be put to death. this is the text at totalitarian propaganda.

We have good reason to assert that totalitarian propaganda and violence in Western mass media have basically very much in common. And although

the latter is no match for totalitarian propaganda in terms of pathogeneity, we can presume that totalitarian ideology may feed on violence in mass communication.

Both the former and the latter are an expression of aggressiveness in different types of society . Both of them keep up aggressiveness at a certain level and nourish the 'fighting spirit' of the said societies.

Coming back to our analogy with the virus we can say that the totalitarian propaganda is a textual virus which ultimately destroys its carrier. Violence and pornography represent far less pathogenic forms . In this view, preventive measures against them do not need to be as resolute.

As we have noticed at the beginning the psychology of the average recipient of Mass Media in Ukraine features certain changes brought about by totalitarian practice of the former USSR. These are, among other things, blunted perception of extensive application of violence exercised by the state, heightened susceptibility to suggestion, frustration engendered by the transition to the market system economy and, which is the main reason, basic similarity between both kinds of pathogenic texts - media violence and totalitarian propaganda . All this makes psychology of posttotalitarian society more vulnerable to the violence in the media.

All quotation were taken from Ukrainian and Russian-language sources. For a more detailed survey of the totalitarian journalism see: B.Potiatynyk, Totalitarian Journalism. Lviv, 1992.