



Metafolklore, Volume 3: The Surreal Diary of an Unwilling Spy, Fourth Edition

Alexander V Avakov

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This book is a fictionalized diary. This three-volume edition of the book has parallel texts both in English and in Russian; English text is in black, Russian text is in red. The book is written in a very unconventional way and describes an unconventional experience. It is about the collision of cultures, which any new immigrant may experience. But it is also about the life of a particular kind of newcomer — a highly ideological, even idealistic, political refugee from a country that is the main geopolitical adversary of America. The narrative is a mixture brewed from the high-minded expectations of a former Soviet dissident contrasted with the world of “folklore” where insinuation is reality and with the daily prejudices and outright spy mania found in the various strata of American society. At the same time, this book has an aspect of a folklore study. Elements of folklore — folklore units — are analyzed both from the point of view of an immediate meaning and from the point of view of a broader meaning. The immediate and broader meaning is uncovered through interpretation in contexts. In the process of this interpretation the book navigates in contexts on two levels: (immediate) Contexts and (broader) Metacontexts. These Contexts and Metacontexts are built with the use of citations, which exemplify folklore in the world of ideas (hence the title of this work, Metafolklore). Books used as sources for these citations are primarily those of literature, philosophy, and law, but also of other areas of human knowledge. The Metacontexts are presented in three distinct perspectives: anthropological, psychological, and humanistic. Plus there are Metacontexts representing a dialogue of the author with his daughters who give the perspective of second generation immigrants. Strictly speaking, this book falls in between fiction and nonfiction; not accidentally it is called "a fictionalized diary." But even so it leans towards nonfiction in the genre of ethnographic surrealism. The book covers the life of immigrants from the U.S.S.R. in the U.S., remembers life in Russia, describes personal experience of a dissident in the Soviet Union and then, after emigration from the Soviet Union, with the Western intelligence and counter-intelligence organizations. It gradually concentrates on the modus operandi of the Committee for State Security (KGB), Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), New York Police Department (NYPD), National Security Agency (NSA), ECHELON, Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISC), Department of Homeland Security, MI5 (British counterintelligence), Mossad, Saudi Intelligence, and ISI (Pakistani military intelligence). It covers frontiers of legal theory of surveillance and of citizen's rights versus such surveillance and how modern surveillance can lead to electronic totalitarianism. What distinguishes this book is the intensely personal account of the events and issues. Because of its coverage of surveillance in America this book has run into certain resistance from some part of the public in the United States. An archetypically hostile reaction to this book was expressed by William Askins, ex CIA Clandestine Service Senior Operations Officer: "This book is chock full of secrets. The public doesn't need to know this stuff and it should be suppressed!" These words, representing usual criticism from certain circles to this kind of literature, were written about one of the sources, which is cited in the book; actually “Metafolklore” has much more “secret” information and the opposition to the cumulative effect of this book is more acute.

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