THE MYTHOLOGIES OF MODERNITY

WITH A SCHIZOPHRENIC NETWORK DYNAMIC

by

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The Mythologies of Modernity with a Schizophrenic Network Dynamic

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It is well documented that the attempts of various societies to modernize themselves lead not only to appropriations of modernity, but also to popular disillusionment: the loss of hope for quick positive changes or even realization that those changes were unnecessary. Using the case study of Gorbachev's perestroika, this thesis shows: The seeds of popular post-revolutionary frustration should be sought in pre-revolutionary discourses on democracy, market, liberalism, and other concepts of Western modernity that are produced outside local contexts and introduced through the channels of global communication and the interpretations of journalists, politicians, activists, and experts. Through such interpretations, the mythologizing of these concepts takes place: they transform into empty forms to be filled with new mythical signification. This thesis also suggests that such re-significations do not necessarily bring new stable and coherent meanings, as Barthes projected; often they combine irreconcilable and shifting fragments, more in accordance with the logic of postmodernism.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to Lyosha, my dear husband and my most faithful friend.

Without his love and understanding, nothing would have been possible.

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The four and a half years that I spent at the University of Colorado at Boulder were not easy. In Ukraine, I left my mom and dad, sisters, and friends; after one year of staying in the U.S., my son Gleb moved back home, unable to assimilate to American culture; and, finally, two years ago Lyosha, my dear husband, moved to LA in a search for a better job. To make things worse, an old chronic disease did not let me go. I was a permanent patient of the university health center, and medical personnel joked: "It's time for you to move your office here."

Too often during my time at CU, I felt sick and desperately alone. And I feel deep gratitude to people who helped me to cope with this permanent stress. I will never forget my medical doctor Nancy McElwain whose humanness and kindness were beyond any professional standards. I will always remember my friend and committee member Prof. Deserai Crow, who agreed to work with me distantly when I struggled with post-hospital depression. And there will be always a place in my heart for Prof. Echchaibi, who agreed to substitute for me in my classes immediately after he received my helpless message, "I need help."

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energy that I put into my doctoral study and my dissertation research. From the bottom of my

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CONTENTS

The Mythologies of Modernity with a Schizophrenic Network Dynamic

Introduction

What do the Arab Spring of 2011, the Ukrainian Orange Revolution of 2004, the Georgian Rose Revolution of 2003, and the Soviet perestroika of 1986 have in common? Despite the differences in social and political circumstances, each of these events has been an attempt to appropriate modernity, as it is known in the West with its discourses of democratization, civil society building, and the liberalization of economic relations (Brown, 2009; Karumidze & Wertsch, 2005; Weddady et al., 2012; Wilson, 2005). It is probably too early to make judgments on the social consequences of the Arab Spring, but it is well documented that revolutionary transformations in the former Soviet republics led not only to the appropriation of modernity but also to popular disillusionments: the loss of hopes for quick positive changes (Kukhianidze, 2009; Motyl, 2008) or even realization that those changes were unnecessary (Nikitin, 2012; White & McAllister, 2009).

This dissertation suggests that the seeds of popular postrevolutionary frustration should be searched in prerevolutionary discourses on democracy, liberalism, and other concepts of Western modernity that are produced outside local contextsand introduced through the channels of global communication:through the interpretations of journalists, intellectuals, and social movement leaders. Through such appropriations, the concepts of modernity are being mythologized: in accordance with Barthes's (1972) prediction, the meanings of these concepts transform into empty forms to be later filled with new mythical signification. However, as this dissertation attempts to illustrate, such resignifications do not necessarily bring new *stable and coherent* meanings, as Barthes implied, but often only irreconcilable and shifting fragments – more in accordance with the logic of postmodernism or hypermodernity, to use Beck's (2010)

term. I argue that in order to deconstruct postmodern mythological constructions and to reveals their paradoxically illogical nature and the potential to produce the schizophrenic effect on audiences' perceptions, we should analyze different levels of discourses – intellectual/elite/expert vs. vernacular/non-elite/layperson – and the dynamic relations that exist between them.

In Part I of this dissertation, I review theoretical literature relevant to my research. In Chapter 1, I discuss scholarship on how non-Western societies discursively appropriate and creatively reinterpret the ideas of Western modernity, from theories of modernization[1] to postmodern (late modern or hypermodern) network outlooks.[2] Chapter 2 presents the discourse of modernization as a mythological narrative: here, I discuss Barthes's method of deconstructing mythologies and reformulate this method in accordance with the requirements of the postmodern imagination. In order to situate Barthes within the context of postmodernism, I use framing analysis, which I explicate in Chapter 3. Framing analysis helps me to show how frames that are irreconcilable from the point of view of common logic can be combined in schizophrenic mythological constructions.

In Part II of this dissertation, I present the historical and social context of my research. Chapter 4 discusses the Soviet project of modernization as an alternative project of modernity. It reviews briefly the successes of Soviet modernization, the crisis of Soviet statism, and the reasons for Gorbachev's reforms. Chapter 5 focuses on perestroika discourses related to *democracy* and *market* – important concepts of modernity as it is known in the West. This

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[1] Hereafter, I use the term "modernization" to denote the attempts to achieve the modern condition or the condition of modernity, as presented in Chapter 1.

[2] Although I realize that each of these concepts – *late modernity*, *hyper modernity*, and *postmodernity* – has its specific distinctive characteristics, for the purposes of this research, I use them as synonyms.

chapter also discusses the construction of the United States as a leader of the "civilized world" through the discourses of perestroika.

In Part III, I present my own empirical findings. After discussing research methodology and design in Chapter 6, I analyze how two Ukrainian local newspapers mythologized the concepts of *democracy* and *market* in 1989-1991 – the years of the USSR's disintegration. Chapter 7 discusses the mythologizing of democracy and Chapter 8 the mythologizing of the market. Chapter 9 focuses on how the newspapers constructed the mythology of an ideally democratic, egalitarian, just, and prosperous United States. In Chapter 10, I summarize my research findings, discussing how schizophrenic mythologies constructed through globalized networks can lead to disorientation and the sense of uncertainty and insecurity on the part of mass publics. I situate my findings within the context of two theories: (1) the theory of the world risk society by Ulrich Beck and (2) the theory of schizophrenia as communicative disorder by Gregory Bateson.

In the P. S. section of the dissertation, I discuss my personal journalistic experience acquired during perestroika and try to evaluate how this experience may influence my own perception of the empirical findings of this research.

PART I. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Chapter 1

Modernity and Its Projects

Modernity, Colonization, and Globalization

Modernity is an evasive and paradoxical concept. It is about eternity and fleetingness, immutability and transience, continuity and change – "a unity of discontinuity," as Marshall Berman (1982) put it. It is about democracy, science, legal culture, industrialization, rationalization, and education; and it is also about bureaucracy, inequality, atomization, alienation, and abjection. It is about differentiation of identities, outlooks, attitudes, lifestyles, and beliefs; but it is also about intolerance, racism, exploitation, inequality, and exclusion. As Björn Wittrock (2000) has noted, "there was never one single homogeneous conception of modernity" (p. 58). Rather, there is an ongoing debate on how its various constituents manifest themselves in different Western and non-Western societies (Kaviraj, 2000).

There is one characteristic of modernity, however, that can hardly be questioned: its Western lineage and its inherent connection to Western expansion over the world, which started with the discovery of Amerindia by Columbus and continued with Anglo-German colonial enterprises (Dussel, 2001). In order to manage the immense world-system suddenly opening itself to the European metropolitan center, European colonizers must have increased their efficacy through simplifying and rationalizing subjugated lifeworlds. Rationalizing political life (bureaucratization) and the capitalist enterprise (administration), suppressing practical-communicative reason, and validating individuality that negates the community – according to Dussel, all these manifestations of modernity, as it is understood in the West, were necessary for the management of the huge world opened for European expansion.

The very concept of civilization, according to this critical outlook, acquired a universal status once Europe began to expand over the globe, repressing ruthlessly all pre-existing forms of social organization. Civilization, as Walter D. Mignolo (2001) notes, "became a trademark of Christian Europe and a yardstick by which to measure other societies" (pp. 32–33).Thomas McCarthy (2010) agrees: Racial ideologies, he claims, spread across the world through the works of modern European philosophers such as John Locke or Immanuel Kant. McCarthy shows how Kant's humanism goes hand in hand with his theory of racial hierarchy, which is deeply embodied in the philosophy of the Enlightenment: "The familiar enlightenment metanarrative of universal principles discovered at the birth of modernity and gradually realized ever since fails to acknowledge the impurity of the demands that have historically been made in the name of pure reason…." (p. 38). As McCarthy and numerous other critical scholars highlight, the political values of liberal justice, which the philosophers of the Enlightenment exalted, were inseparable from justifications of inequality and subjugation made by the same philosophers: denying the state of slavery for Europeans, Kant, Hegel, and other outstanding figures of the Enlightenment supported it for "savages." Hegel's "Philosophy of History," which relocated people in chronological hierarchy rather than in geographical places (Mignolo, 2001), became an important philosophical justification for unfolding the Western colonizing enterprise on a global stage.

The enormous space and population of colonized societies provided Europeans not only with the Eurocentric sense of superiority but also with colossal economic and geopolitical resources that European powers grabbed from their colonies. Together with colonial communication infrastructure laid out to manage provinces, this material advantage helped the Anglo-American world to strengthen its global dominance in post-colonial times (Go, 2008).

Through colonization, Europeans also gained invaluable knowledge on how to manage the global world. As Immanuel Wallerstein (1996) notes, from 1850 to 1914, most scholarship had originated in, and was about, five countries: France, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, and the United States. The rest of the world served as a huge field for Western anthropological or Oriental studies, through which Western power constructed the peripheral world as a passive spectator, "barbarian" and "premodern'" (Dussel, 2001, p. 17). By ascribing the barbarian status to non-Western world, Western scientists and intellectuals also constructed the necessity of barbarians' modernization.

Elaborated in the middle of the twentieth century in U.S. universities, modernization theories embodied many of the Eurocentric assumptions that underlay Western efforts to civilize the outside world through Christianization, colonization, or development. In *The Passing of Traditional Society*, Daniel Lerner claimed that Western society provided "the most developed model of societal attributes (power, wealth, skill, rationality)" and that "from the West came the stimuli which undermined traditional society that will operate efficiently in the world today" (Lerner, 1958, p. 47). Lerner assumed that media could play a central role in spreading Western modernity to the newly independent countries of the South. Wilbur Schramm (1964), the author of *Media and National Development*, also believed in the great potential of media to modernize and, thus, civilize. According to Schramm, media had a potential not only to introduce non-Western populations to the ideas of a Western-style modernized life but also to encourage them desiring that life and be willing to work for it.

The authors of modernization theories failed to acknowledge that capitalist modernization, imposed on the "underdeveloped world" from the outside, can destruct local social fabric, redistribution national wealth unfairly, and impoverish national economies. By

assuming that mass media could serve as a neutral developing force, they also failed to recognize that media on both sides of the development process – in the developing "core" and developed "peripheries" – are tightly built into the system of global and local power relations (Boyd-Barrett, 1977; Schiller, 1976) and thus can hardly serve as impartial providers of better lives for all. Another critical deficiency of modernization theories was their assumptions that the modern and the traditional lifestyles were mutually exclusive, that local cultures were "underdeveloped," and that there was no other way to live but to follow the Western lead. As Joseph Stiglitz (2003) put it, "The colonial mentality – the 'white man's burden' and the presumption that they knew best what was best for developing countries – persisted" (p. 24). Euro-Atlantic superiority, with its deep belief in western-like progress as humankind's universal road to the civilized condition, left its deep mark on the theories of modernization.

Many early theories on globalization that emerged at the end of the 20th century were also marked with explicit or implicit acknowledgment of the superiority of Western modernity over non-Western cultural patterns: political theorists saw globalization as a force bringing "the end of history," that is, the global triumph of liberal capitalism (Fukuyama, 1992) or "cosmopolitan democracy" that would come to life through the expansion of the global public sphere (Archibugi & Held, 1995). Although many theorists on cosmopolitan democracy insisted that a global public sphere should be characterized by the duty to listen to the views of others and to alternative versions of events (Garnham, 1992) or by "dialogical attentiveness" to other cultures (Bohman, 1997), they also implied the necessity of forming a global political culture upon the model of Western political liberalism. This is how Homi Bhabha comments on this issue: "A transparent norm is constituted, a norm given… by a dominant culture, which say that 'these other cultures are fine, but we must be able to locate them within our own grid" (Rutherford,

1990, p. 208). Imagining the global public sphere in line with the Western ideal of political communication that is rational and inclusive (Habermas 2001), many theorists of cosmopolitan democracy, albeit greeting cultural diversity, actually denied the possibility of cultural difference.

It is through criticism of the Eurocentric tradition of social research that realization gradually came: Cultural differences matter, and cross-cultural interactions lead not to homogenization of cultural patterns (political or not) but to more complex interactions (Appadurai, 1996; Tomlinson, 1999). This culture-centered outlook has made it possible to see global modernization not as a one-directional spread of Western modernity on a global scale but as the hybridization of modernity projects (Bhabha, 1994; Eisenstadt, 2000). If the former perspective might imply that globalization is either the diffusion of Western modernity from Euro-Atlantic center to its peripheries or the new version of western cultural imperialism (Waters, 1995), the latter suggests that global communication is not a one-way traffic but rather a clash of contraflows where new modernity projects can emerge (Thussu, 2006).

Multiple Modernities and Cultural Hybridization

Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt (2000) argues that the best way to understand the contemporary world and explain the history of modernity is to see modernity as a continual constitution and reconstitution of multiple cultural programs. "One of the most important implications of the term 'multiple modernities," he claims, "is that modernity and Westernization are not identical. Western patterns of modernity are not the only "authentic" modernities, though they enjoy historical precedence and continue to be a basic reference point for others" (Eisenstadt, 2000, p. 2). According to Eisenstadt, non-Western societies choose selectively and continuously

reformulate the Western ideas of modernity. As a result, new cultural and political programs emerge with novel ideologies and institutional patterns.

Many scholars agree with Eisenstadt: Multiple modernities emerge as a result of interpreting and reformulating Western ideas with local social, economic, political, or cultural nuances. Dipesh Chakrabarty (2008), for example, states: "An abstract and universal idea characteristic of political modernity elsewhere – the idea of equality, say, or democracy or even of the dignity of the human being – could look utterly different in different historical contexts" (p. xii). According to Chakrabarty, this happens because no human society is a tabula rasa, and the universal concepts of modernity inevitably encounter pre-existing concepts through which they are interpreted and assimilated. Thus, for him, the appropriation of Western ideas of modernity by non-Western societies cannot be seen as just a problem of historical transition; it should be contemplated as a problem of translation as well.

Gradually, the belief that modernity and Westernization are not identical has become one of the dominant outlooks within contemporary sociological research. Presenting the story of modernizing Latin America, Renato Ortiz (2000), for example, argues that Latin American societies did not uncritically take all Western ideas of modernity as more progressive; they discussed these ideas and reinterpreted them in accordance with local cultural and political realities: "Latin American intellectuals argued vehemently at the turn of the century about the relative values of Europeanization and Americanization, as if it were necessary to choose one or the other" (pp. 251-252). Ortiz believes that this centuries-long process of interpretation has formed a unique Latin American version of modernity, albeit problematic and controversial.

Presenting the story of India's encounter with British colonial modernity, Sudipta Kaviraj (2000) gives another example of how colonized societies discursively transformed and

reformulated the ideas of modernity brought by European colonizers. The author believes that British authorities introduced to India an idea of sovereignty that was fundamentally different from the traditional governing of Indian social life. In order to be effective, colonial authorities had to adapt this idea to local realities, and, as a result, the colonial structure of political power followed the British example only in some respects; in others it developed according to a different logic. As Kaviraj (2000) claims, "the colonial state gradually instituted an enormous discursive project – an attempt to grasp cognitively this alien society and bring it under intellectual control" (p. 144). Later, according to Kaviraj, Bengali society produced its own intellectual class able to decide on what to take and what to reject of the proposals of Western modernity.

Research on other cultural sites comes to similar observations: translations, interpretations, and reformulations within national public spheres are crucial for appropriating and reformulating propositions about modernity. Jiirgen Heideking (2000), presenting the case study of North America's transition to independence, stresses the importance of "a vigorous public sphere where the clash or 'collision' of different opinions could strike out 'sparks of truth'" (p. 231). Liu Kang (2001) discusses how Chinese intellectuals, critically reexamining the legacy of Western theory in prestigious national media, contributed to the emergence of China's alternative modernity combining communism and capitalism. Sean Phelan (2007) shows how the neoliberal version of modernity is constituted in Ireland through media representations of political leaders' speeches. Shiraev and Zubok (2000) point to the decisive role of intellectuals' and media's interpretations of liberalism in Russia's transition to a market economy. A complete list of examples would be endless.

It goes without saying that in the contemporary world the ideas associated with Western modernity are disseminated and interpreted through global communication networks incorporating not only global but also local media resources (Couldry et al., 2010). It is this border between the global and the local that constitutes a potential site of translation, interpretation, resistance, and intervention. Emphasizing the creative possibilities that global communicative networks offer, Arjun Appadurai (1996) is in line with the multiple-modernities outlook: He believes that globalization does not necessarily lead to capitalist homogenization, as David Harvey (1990) and many other critical thinkers suggest. For Appadurai, global media networks can create an environment of creative selectivity and resistance: "There is growing evidence that the consumption of the mass media throughout the world provokes resistance, irony, selectivity, and, in general, agency" Appadurai writes (1996, p. 17). Situating the possibility of local resistance within the sphere of the social imaginary, Appadurai conceptualizes it as a "space of contestation," which is "neither purely emancipatory nor entirely disciplined" (p. 4).

Many researchers studying global networks support Appadurai's belief in "vernacular globalization" (1996, p. 10) discussing "indigenization" or "creolization" of cultural patterns (Cohen, 2007; Kwok-Bun & Peverelli, 2010; Pieterse, 2001). In communication studies, these terms often go under the common heading "hybridization" (Jameson, 2001). According to this media-centered hybridization outlook, non-Western countries do not passively consume cultural and ideological products of the West delivered to them through media: they always "bring their own cultural resources and 'horizons of expectations' to bear in a fully dialectical and often unexpected way upon the imported goods and images of cultural capitalism" (Archer et al., 2007). In other words, this outlook echoes the basic assumption of the multiple-modernities

paradigm: Non-Western societies discuss and appropriate Western ideas of modernity with regard to their local cultural and ideological environments, and out of these discussions, new cultural patterns and modernity projects emerge.

Taberez Ahmed Neyazi's (2010) research on the rise of the local press in India can serve as a perfect example of research on the emergence of vernacular modernity in non-Western sites through appropriating the ideas of modernity by local media. Neyazi has found that Hindi-language newspapers were able to "present and sustain alternative discourse in the public arena which is parallel to the elite discourse mediated through English-language news media" (2010, p. 908). According to Neyazi, Hindi newspapers were able to accomplish this by drawing from local cultural resources and being sensitive to indigenous culture and values. As a result, Hindi media produced a hybrid form of modernity – a mixture of "global and local, foreign and indigenous, elite and vernacular" (p. 912). Nayazi concludes that such "hybridization strategies have enabled the producers of Hindi news media to fight against the dominance of English-language news media by creating a vernacular modernity" (2010, p. 912).

It is clear from Nayazi's presentation that he conceptualizes "vernacular" Hindi newspapers as the opposite of "elite" English-speaking outlets – that is, he views the difference along national lines, as do many other scholars (e.g. Appadurai, 1996). It is also clear that Nayazi does not problematize the hybridization of the local and the global, the foreign and indigenous, and the elite and the vernacular – something that some critical scholars suggest doing: "What needs to be questioned is where and under what conditions cultural hybridity, translation, inflection, deflection, and so on, is inherently destabilizing and disruptive of the cultural powers of the nation state and neo-liberal capitalism" (Archer et al., 2007, p. 8). Albeit from a different perspective, Fredric Jameson (2001) also argues against uncritical celebration of cultural

borrowings enabled by globalization, calling this outlook a "vital utopian vision" of an "immense global intercultural festival." Jameson suggests that "this view needs a little more economic specificity and is rather inconsistent with the quality and impoverishment of what has to be called corporate culture on a global scale" (2001, p. 66). Ulrich Beck (2007) points to the fact that the multiplicity of modernities is "at best manifested in visions of alternative capitalisms rather than in alternatives *to* capitalism" (p. 55). For Beck (2010), therefore, a central problem of the hybridization outlook is that "the unity in diversity of different forms of capitalism and modernity is often no longer thematized" (p. 183). This criticism suggests that simple mapping of different combinations of various elements of modernity within various cultural, social, and political environments is not enough. In order to grasp the *meaning* of these configurations, one has to situate cultural analysis within the web of power relations and answer some really important questions: Who are the winners and the losers within the emergent reality of hybridized projects? Whose interests do they represent? Who sets the rules of the new power game and who is excluded? How do various hybrids of modernity projects fit into the global network of neoliberal power relations?

Despite the obvious importance of this line of inquiry, none of the writers on multiple modernities cited above problematizes the hybridizations of modernity projects by putting these questions forward. Claiming, for example, that the selection and reformulation of various ideas associated with Western modernity are carried on by "specific social actors in close connection with social, political, and intellectual activists" (p. 2), Eisenstadt (2000) does not analyze how non-elite and non-intellectual publics receive the interpretations of "special social actors": Do they approve or disapprove proposed ideas? The same is true about Shiraev and Zubok's (2000) presentation of how Soviet intellectuals attempted to appropriate capitalist modernity in the

1980s, when "the faint voices of dissent and their hand-copied samizdat publications reached an audience of millions" (p. 22). Shiraev and Zubok do not ask how their "audience of millions" appropriated the messages of dissenters: Did they uncritically adopt, critically evaluate, or even reject them?

I think, this lack of attention to power dynamics within national public spheres may result from the practice widely adopted within social studies to define the vernacular along national lines and to see the nation as a coherent whole. Not only does this oversight obscure the complexity of interrelations between the global and the local, it also masks the unequal access of different social groups to media resources, different class interests of national "interpreters" and their mass audiences, and other important factors of the power dynamics within national borders (Fraser, 1990; Krishnaswamy, 2002; Toor, 2000; Winant, 2005). Hauser and McClellan (2009) see a similar trend in the rhetorical studies of social movements. "In the communication tradition of rhetoric," they claim, "studies of social movements mostly have focused on the discourse of leaders, on single events, or on movement strategies" (p. 25). According to Hauser and McClellan, such exclusive attention to leaders or intellectuals is problematic. Not only does it lead to a "skewed picture of the public sphere by defining it in terms of privileged voices" (p. 25), it also fails to illuminate the formation of genuinely vernacular (non-elite) meanings and their dialectical interaction with the meanings presented through official or elite discourses. As Beck (2010) points out, "the antagonism among social actors within and between institutions, political and subpolitical fields of action, and social movements becomes a fruitful source of possible alternatives" (p. 210). In order to see these alternatives and to grasp tension that exists between them, one has to differentiate between experts possessing the power of definition and laypersons dependent on expert judgments.

Ignoring dynamic interrelations between non-expert/non-elite/non-intellectual and expert/elite/intellectual discourses within society veils the fact that all discourses on problematic issues associated with modernity are always situated in structural inequalities, different class interests, and power struggles. Where Western scholars or local westernized intellectuals see the triumph of "alternative modernities," local people may discern only the failure of their hopes for the improvement of living conditions (Ferguson, 2006). In order to recognize this dynamic and to see how local publics form unrealistic expectations that further lead to disillusion and frustration (Donham, 1999; Fergunson, 1999), it is not enough to analyze elites' "promissory notes" – a set of valid and legitimate expectations that different political institutions of society formulate at different points of time – as Björn Wittrock (2000) suggests. We also need to understand what meanings *non-elite* local publics attach to the idea of modernity presented to them through elite discourses and analyze how elite and non-elite meanings interact and form different combinations.

Modernization through Internal Colonization

Why is this differentiation important? Because, as Latour (1993) points out, the advent of modernity "designates a combat in which there are victors and vanquished" (p. 10). The translations of modernity conducted by chosen elite and intellectual voices on behalf of the whole of society are exercises where "translators" have much more power than those who consume their work: "He translates them; therefore, he may betray them" (Latour, 1993, p. 28). Intellectual translators of the ideas of modernity have more opportunities to leave the battlefield of modernity as victors, defeating their powerless fellow citizens. In fact, there is a lot of empirical evidence to suggest that local intellectuals who associate themselves with progress and modernity often betray their "barbarian" and "uncivilized" compatriots. Homi Bhabha (1994),

for example, points out that Indian colonial authorities managed to implement their strategy of mimicry – the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite (p. 86) – thanks to the presence of "mimic men," a class of interpreters who represented the local in terms of blood and color, but who represented the colonizer in terms of tastes, morals, and opinions.

Differentiating between "external" and "internal" colonization, Walter Mignolo (2001) argues that the latter is carried out by the intellectuals of the colonized societies who assume that the local culture has "to be improved by the growing and expanding European civilization" (p. 34). Mignolo follows Frantz Fanon claiming that

> The colonialist bourgeoisie, in its narcissistic dialogue, expounded by the members of its universities, had in fact deeply implanted in the minds of the colonized intellectual that the essential qualities remain eternal in spite of all the blunders men may make: the essential qualities of the West, of course. The native intellectual accepted the cogency of these ideas, and deep down in his brain you could always find a vigilant sentinel ready to defend the Greco-Latin pedestal. (Fanon, 2004/1961, p. 46)

According to Fanon, local intellectuals often demonstrate fidelity to the cultural values of Western colonizers although those values have nothing to do with the real conflicts in which local populations are engaged.

Leo Riegert (2009) gives another example of local intellectuals (in his case, German Jewish intellectuals) participating in cultural subjugation of their compatriots. His literal analysis explicates how Karl Emil Franzos, a popular German Jewish writer, aligned himself with the dominant German culture by presenting it as a superior culture that needed to be imitated. In Riegert's presentation, Franzos thus becomes a "conscious non-pariah" who "sees through the

colonizing, hegemonizing mechanisms of the (Germanliberal) discourse of his time" (p. 348). From his position "in-between" – simultaneously the colonizer and the colonized – Franzos chooses the former.

Liu Kang (2001), presenting the success story of Chinese alternative modernity, highlights the problem of "the self-righteous intellectual elites who choose to ally themselves with the international anticommunist forces" (p. 181). Uğur Ümit Üngör (2008), discussing the story of Young Turks' social engineering in Eastern Turkey in 1913-1959, argues that it was their implicit faith in modernization that legitimated the violence of Young Turks against other groups of Turkish society who rejected modernization. Subramani (2001), discussing the "special" relationship between transnational corporations and the intellectual elites of non-Western societies, points out that the latter represent the interests of global capital to the detriment of their populations.

Not all the scholars of modernization are inclined to see malicious intentionality in the failure of local intellectuals to defend the interests of their societies. Discussing the appropriation of modernity within Indian society, Sudipta Kaviraj (2000) makes an interesting observation:

> Precisely because the new elites who emerged into political power are quite often without the education that the colonial elite enjoyed, their understanding of the precedents of European modernity is tenuous, if not entirely absent. As they try to improvise and act reflectively on these institutions, their character is likely to change even further in uncharted and unexpected ways. (p. 157)

This line of reasoning implies that internal colonization, which is achieved through imposing foreign values on local cultures, is not necessarily intentional. Without good understanding of the

ideas of Western modernity, non-Western intellectuals may misinterpret the propositions of Western modernity *inadvertently*.

In fact, this may also happen within hyper-modern Western societies where people are losing the grip of reality, being unable to make sense of what is going on the surrounding world. Commenting on the "enforced Enlightenment" of hyper-modern society, Ulrich Beck (2010) points to the fact that people in contemporary hyper-modern societies "are thrown back upon themselves," being "unable to escape the definitional power of expert systems whose judgment they cannot, and yet must, trust" (p. 54). Referring to Aaron Wildavsky's empirical research on how environmental groups mislead their publics through willful omissions, mistakes, errors, exaggerations, or dogmatisms, Beck argues that many social movements fall prey to the dogmatism of counter-expertise, often with the good intention of politicizing issues. That is why, according to Beck, the illusions and fantasies of experts, intellectuals, and activists are of particular interest for sociological research. This is the central theme of this dissertation.

Chapter 2

Modernity as Myth

The Myth of Enlightenment

The relationship between myth and modernity is ambivalent. On the one hand, the potential for emancipation through disenchantment and the appeal to reason has been regarded as one of the central characteristics of Western modernity stemming from the Renaissance, Reformation, and Enlightenment. The "disenchantment of the world" associated with these developments (Weber, 1946/1918, p. 139) has been traditionally understood as "the loss of the overarching meanings, animistic connections, magical expectations, and spiritual explanations that had characterized the traditional world, as a result of the ongoing 'modern' processes of rationalization, secularization, and bureaucratization" (Saler, 2006, p. 695). On the other hand, as Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno show in their *Dialectics of Enlightenment* (2002/1944), the narrative of Enlightenment, being inherently irrational, has become a myth itself: "Just as myths already entail enlightenment, with every step enlightenment entangles itself more deeply into mythology" (*Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002*, p. 8). In line with Horkheimer's and Adorno, Beck (2010) also notes that

> Science, which displaces God and religion from the centre, operates with a 'mythology' of its own that captures the old distinction between the sacred and the profaneas a distinction between lay opinion and expert rationality, and this becomes the source of secular and religious visions of deliverance (p. 212).

In other words, the rational process of Enlightenment, which was intended to secure freedom, has turned instead into various forms of domination – social, political, and cultural.

The subjugating potential of Enlightenment narrative has become one of the central themes within postcolonial studies. Its scholars argue that the binary imagination of Western modernity – the oppositions between tradition and progress, religion and science, faith and rationality, the collective and the individual, democracy and autocracy, and so forth – is ideological rather than real. It is through such constructed oppositions that the marginalized objects of modernization and development appear (*Gregory, 2004*). Through the discourses of development and modernization, ideological apparatuses of the West – both in the past and in the present – create not only "underdeveloped" subjects for their interventions but also promises that they cannot satisfy: of "the roads that were never built, the schools that never arrived, the jobs that never opened up; in other words… the material and economic progress that was promised but only arrives in their dreams" (De Vries, 2007, p. 26).

Discussing the systematic failure of various developmental projects, De Vries (2007) argues that

> The development apparatus has become part of an illiberal system of global governance and securitisation intended to stop the spread of irrationality of the South. In the process it constitutes networks of complicity between international aid agencies, warlords, NGOs, military interests, drug and weapon mafias, etc. Yet, while the discourse of development continuously changes and its field of governmentality has expanded, Third World peoples' desire for development persists. Thus the gulf between the promise of development and its actualisation has never in history been so large. (p. 31)

Situating his analysis within the context of Lacanian psychoanalysis, De Vries also maintains that developmental apparatus – "desiring machines" – produce and reproduce themselves through generating, spurring, and triggering the desires of non-Western people whom they

finally betray. By stimulating unrealistic fantasies, the developmental apparatus also produce the subject of development – the "subject of lack" – whose desires are produced outside the subject's consciousness. This "desiring" and "decentered" subject is constantly searching for a utopian development that is always "out of place" (De Vries, 2007, p. 33).

Developing his theory, De Vries draws on James Fergunson's (1999) famous observation that "the apparatus of development… produces a reified world of (discursive) practices dissociated from the actual struggles and aspirations of the subjects involved" (De Vries, 2007, p. 34). De Vries also agrees with Fergunson that

> Coexistence between these two different realms—the actual life-ways, dreams and aspirations of local populations and the virtual realm of development rhetoric, routines and procedures—is something to be analysed on its own terms, not something to be reduced to some external logic of capital, or to the institutionalisation of some liberal desire to construct a humane world (2007, p. 34).

With this suggestion to analyze the "coexistence" between the realms of local lifeworld and developmental routine, both De Vries and Fergunson invite us not only to look at different fantasies and desires of these two discursive levels but also at the their dynamic interrelations. Therefore, they return us to the arguments of those scholars in communication research who advocate the necessity of analyzing both elite and vernacular discourses in order to discern contradictions, tensions, antagonisms, and possible alternatives (Hauser &McClellan, 2009).

Discussing the unfulfilled promises of modernization in Africa, Fergunson (1999) argues that they are an integral part of capitalism's globalization where "the flexibility of investment and market options is matched by a wholly new flexibility in disinvestment and abandonment" (p. 241). According to Ferguson, "abjected, redlined spaces of decline and disinvestment in the

contemporary global economy are as much a part of the geography of capitalism as the booming zones of enterprise and prosperity" (1999, p. 242). The basic problem, for him, is that modernization mythology, under the premise of which traditional life is often being ruined, tells local people nothing about this inherent logic of global capitalization. Its narrative is always about "progress, according to which the native population was moving rapidly along the avenue leading to 'civilization,' later styled 'Westernization' or 'modernization'" (p. 34).

Ferguson argues that the discourses of "globalization," "democratization," "civil society," and "economic growth" are just contemporary invocations of the old mythological narratives of social evolution "that reduce a complex and differentiated global political economy to a race for economic and political 'advance'" (Ferguson, 1999, p. 16). Drawing on the imaginary of biological evolution of species, this grand narrative of social progress leaves aside the obvious fact that in the biological word different forms continue to coexist: "For invertebrates do not disappear once fish arrive, no more than fish become any less representative of life on earth once mammals appear" (Ferguson, 1999, p. 42). Ferguson suggests to conceptualize changing social realities not as "ladders or trees defined by sequences and phases but as 'dense bushes' of multitudinous coexisting variations, continually modified in complex and nonlinear ways" (p. 42). Ferguson insists that instead of simple evolutionary dualism, prescribed by the mythological imagination of Enlightenment, we should deal with complex multidirectional shifts over time.

Despite his conviction that "the modernization narrative was always a myth, an illusion, often a lie" (p. 253), Ferguson points to the necessity of distinguishing between two different meanings of the myth that can be understood either as "a false or factually inaccurate version of things that has come to be widely believed" or as a myth in "an anthropological use of the term, which focuses on the story's social function" (p. 14). In order to analyze how modernization

myths, becoming parts of people's lifeworld, transform into a socially constructive or destructive force, Ferguson points to the realm of popular imagination where *imagined modernities* take shape. Only by accounting popular imaginaries will we be able to see both the feeling of loss that people experience when modernization lies become apparent and the continuing affective attachment to them: "That the development story was a myth, and in some respect a trap, does not make the abrupt withdrawal of its promises any easier to take, or any less of a tragedy for those whose hopes and legitimate expectations have been shattered" (Ferguson, 1999, p. 249).

Ferguson's suggestion to conceptualize modernization mythology in broader sociological terms are in line with Edward Said (1979), who warns against treating myths as simple lies: "One ought never to assume that the structure of Orientalism is nothing more than a structure of lies or of myths which, were the truth about them to be told, would simply blow away" (p. 6). Because Orientalism is a sign of European-Atlantic power over the Orient – not just a prejudice – Said thinks it necessary to analyze myths' "very close ties" with dominant socio-economic and political institutions.

Albeit from a different perspective, Arjun Appadurai (1996) also invites us to broaden the frame of reference to modernization myths by arguing that in the globalized world we can hardly talk of their centralized production. Rather, we need to conceptualize mythologizing as a collective process, which now "is no longer a matter of specially endowed (charismatic) individuals, injecting the imagination where it does not belong. Ordinary people have begun to deploy their imagination in the practice of their everyday lives" (p. 5). Differentiating between *fantasy*, which "carries with it inescapable connotation of thought divorced from projects and action" and imagination, which "can become the fuel for action" (p. 7), Appadurai believes that imagination "has become an organized field of social practices, a form of work (in the sense of

both labor and culturally organized practice), and a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility" (p. 31). In Appadurai's presentation, imagination becomes a key component of the new global order; it is central to all forms of agency.

Discussing the multilevel nature of imagination, Appadurai refers to the work of James Rosenau (1990), who suggests to replace the idea of events with the image of "cascades" – action-sequences in the multicentric world that "gather momentum, stall, reverse course, and resume anew as their repercussions spread among whole systems and subsystems" (p. 299):

> Macroevents, or cascades, work their way into highly localized structures of feeling by being drawn into discourse and narratives of the locality, in casual conversations and low-key editorializing of the sort that often accompanies the collective reading of newspapers in many neighborhoods and on many front stoops of the world. Concurrently, the local narratives and plots in terms of which ordinary life and its conflicts are read and interpreted become shot through with a subtext of interpretive possibilities that is the direct product of the workings of the local imagining of broader regional, national, and global events. (Appadurai, 1996, p. 153)

The long-term interactions of local and global cascades of events produce local discourse fields where, as Appadurai suggests, "the explosive rumors, dramas, and speeches of the riot can take hold" (p. 153).

Obviously, not only the explosive rumors, dramas, and speeches of the riot but also the explosive myths of modernity can take hold within these local discursive fields. It is in these fields that *imagined* modernities emerge, drawing on various elite and intellectual mythologies spread through cascades. It is in these local discursive fields that the sense of loss and betrayal

emerge when the myths reveal their lies, and it is in these fields that new myths are born, which are in service of the local populations who remain affectively attached (Ferguson, 1999). In order to see the cascade dynamics of mythologizing, one needs to grasp how local (vernacular) and elite discourses interact.

The reviewed literature allows making several observations. First, the concepts of modernity, colonization, and globalization are inherently connected. It is through its colonial expansion that the West was able to imagine itself as a progressive social force – the embodiment of modernity and civilization – and present this image to the non-Western world. Simultaneously, the outside, non-European world, was constructed as uncivilized, barbarian, deprived of agency, and, therefore, needed to be assisted on its way to progress – a central mythological trope of modern imagination. Its dualism, expressed in juxtapositions between the progressive and the backward, the civilized and the barbarian, the modern and the traditional, deeply permeated not only the philosophy of the Enlightenment but also political, social, and economic imaginaries of the post-colonial globalized world.

Second, the spread of modernity over the globe is secured not only through military and economic policies of power centers (of both colonial and postcolonial times) but also through the activities of "mimic men" – a class of interpreters who represent the local by blood and color, but who represent colonizing power centers by tastes, morals, and opinions. Aligning themselves more often with Western "civilization" than with local "barbarism," these elite interpreters often betray their own compatriots under the premise of progress and modernization. As a result, local intellectuals empowered with the mission of translation, often internally colonize the underprivileged groups of their societies, depriving these groups of a right to be included into their visionary projections of the modernized future.

Third, the mythological imagination has always been and remains central to the expansion of modernity over the globe. Borrowing these myths from the Western culture, where they are produced, non-Western intellectuals of various calibers further disseminate them across their societies. By stirring popular imagination, the myths of modernity push traditional and "underdeveloped" societies toward attempts to appropriate modernity as it is known in the West. Thus, the mythology of modernity becomes a powerful social force able of inspiring people's desires for modernization. It is also true, however, that, although performing a social function of mobilization, those myths are nothing else but lies in their very essence. Promising a happy a-la European future that can be achieved through progressive modernization, these myths never tell the truth of the unattainability of promised illusions. The result is the sense of betrayal, lost hopes, and factual abjection on the part of local populations.

I do not wish to claim that this is what *always* happens. However, this happens often enough to put forward the following questions: How exactly do the myths of modernity work? If they are lies, why do so many people around the world allow themselves to be duped? What makes these myths look credible in eyes of people? How do people from "underdeveloped" societies or social groups come to believe in the idea of progress as a road to everyone's success? Are there any other mythological elements that make this basic trope work? How exactly do they function to bolster it? How do different mythological elements come into play together to produce results desirable for the interested developmental forces? What interferes with people's ability to recognize the unattainability of modernizing promises if they are able to resist global forces of neoliberalism, as some authors suggest? If people can successfully resist, indeed, why is there so much despair in the post-colonized globalized world?

In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to analyze how the ideas of Western modernity are being mythologized through both elite and vernacular discourses of modernization. To cope with this task, I employ Roland Barthes's method of deconstructing mythologies, which I explicate in the following section.

Roland Barthes's Mythologies

For Barthes (1972), mythology is a Janus-faced phenomenon: it is both a part of semiology that deals with the system of signs and a part of ideology as a historical science: "it studies ideas-in-forms" (Barthes, 1972, p. 112). Referring to semiology, Barthes calls upon the semiological theory of Ferdinand de Saussure (1998/1916) who investigates the system of signs that express ideas. For Saussure, *sign* is a double entity made up of the signifier (an object or a sound image) and the signified (meaning). The bond between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary – there is no natural connection between them. However, the signifier is fixed, not free, with respect to the linguistic community that used it (Saussure, 1998/1916).

Working with this structure, Barthes shows that myth is a *second-order* semiological system that emerges from a semiological chain that existed before it. Myth appears when an additional meaning is added to a sign that already exists: in this case, the *meaning* of a preexisting sign transforms to a *mythical form*. In the course of this transformation, the conceptual richness of the sign – its value that belongs to history and its memory of a particular order of things – evaporates. The new mythical form does not retain long historical traces: it impoverishes meaning, putting its history at a distance, but not totally destroying it: "The meaning is always there to present the form; the form is always there to outdistance the meaning. And there never is any contradiction, conflict, or split between the meaning and the form: they are never at the same place" (Barthes, 1972, p. 123).

Barthes's classical example of mythology is a front cover from *Paris Match*, showing a young black soldier in French uniform saluting the French flag. Although the signifier, a saluting soldier, is a picture of a *particular black soldier*, *Paris Match* does not tell us anything about either the conceptual meaning of the *soldier* or the personal history of the particular soldier portrayed by *Paris Match*. All the complexities of conceptual meaning associated with the original sign are outdistanced by the new mythical *form* being filled with new signification: the greatness of France and the faithfulness of its servants. As Barthes put it,

> On the cover, a young Negro in a French uniform is saluting, with his eyes uplifted, probably fixed on a fold of the tricolour. All this is the meaning of the picture. But whether naively or not, I see very well what it signifies to me: that France is a great Empire, that all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under the flag. (Barthes, 1972, 127)

For Barthes, this mythical signification fulfills an important ideological mission of justifying colonialism by showing the zeal of colonized people in serving their French oppressors.

Because myth is a historical formation, Barthes allows for a diachronic study of myths, "whether one submits them to a retrospection (which means founding an historical mythology) or whether one follows some of yesterday's myths down to their present forms" (Barthes, 1972, p. 137). Barthes also argues that myth possesses its own geography, which allows drawing "what linguists would call the isoglosses of a myth, the lines which limit the social region where it is spoken. If this region is shifting, it would be better to speak of the waves of implantation of the myth" (p. 150).

The latter observation, fluently presented by Barthes in the last pages of his *Mythologies*, deserves special attention, given the globalized nature of today's world and the emergence of

unrestricted communication flows that do not respect the regional boundaries that Barthes

mentions. His spatial metaphor of "waves," which can "implant" the myth outside of its region

of origin, looks hopelessly outmoded for the global network society that is characterized by "the

development of a complex mosaic of differently sized, overlapping, and interconnected public

spheres… which are not tied immediately to territory" (Keane, 1995, p. 8) and by

communication flows that "transgress the local without being necessarily focused on territoriality

as a reference point of their meaning articulation" (Couldry & Hepp, 2010, p. 9). These

transformations, however, do not make Barthes's theory of myth irrelevant or outdated. On the

contrary, with the advent of globalization, the pace of the transplantations of meanings to foreign

territories accelerates enormously and the significance of mythical communication, as Chapter 1

of this dissertation shows, thus increases as well. For any transplantation of a concept to a

foreign territory would inevitably deprive this concept of its long and complicated intellectual

history, transforming it into a dead form. In the course of time, this empty form can acquire new,

mythical, signification informed by specific local imaginaries.

What requires rethinking in regard to the networked globalized world is Barthes's

conceptualization of myth as a more or less logical and thus stable construction where a stable

form acquires an additional stable meaning that is not incommensurable with the prior one. In

postmodern network society one can hardly talk of static meanings that are logically attached to

stable forms: rather, we can expect that their fragments will illogically merge in different

transient configurations. Barthes's example would look perfectly postmodern if the sign of the

black soldier acquired not the meaning of French military might (after all, the latter is quite

logically connected with the former) but the meaning of pacifism or monasticism. The

impossible combination of incommensurable meanings is a distinctive sign of the postmodern

schizophrenic[3] imagination.

The Schizophrenia of the Network

Although network imagination traces its origin as far as to the classical sociological

works of Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emil Durkheim (Featherstone, 2008), it was French

structuralists who explicitly formulated the idea of the network first, highlighting the reality of

symbolic interrelations that affect the meanings of the lifeworlds (Dosse, 1998).

Poststructuralists went further: They accepted the structuralist claim about the reality of symbolic

organization of society but argued that the relationship between the signifier and the signified

was not as tight as structuralists believed. Poststructuralists saw this relationship as unstable and

fluid. For them, any unity of the form and the meaning was situational and temporal; the

conjunctions between the signifier and the signified continually broke apart only to re-emerge in

new unpredictable combinations (Derrida, 2006/1993). According to poststructuralists, meanings

are not immediately present in signs. Since the meaning of a sign is the matter of what the sign is

not, its meaning is always in some sense absent from it, too. "It is scattered along the whole

chain of signifiers. Constant flickering of presence and absence together" (Eagleton, 1996/1983,

p. 110). Meaning is never absolutely the same. There is no concept that is not embroiled in an

open-ended play of signification. Because the network can always deterritorialize itself in a new

unpredictable way, it is beyond human control: It can never be contained or controlled by

people's will and, thus, by traditional power (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Acknowledging the

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[3] Within this chapter, I use the concept "schizophrenia" in its postmodern meaning discussed by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) – not as a medical condition but as a freedom of deterritorialization. In Chapter 10, I return to this term to use it with a different meaning, as a communicative and psychological disorder described by Gregory Bateson (1972). In this final chapter, I reconcile the two meanings, showing that the schizophrenia of deterritorialization can end up with the schizophrenia of psychological disorientation.

illogical, paradoxical, contradictory, disorienting, and, thus, schizophrenic nature of the network, poststructuralists nevertheless remained optimistic about the network's ability to liberate people from the structural constraints of society.

The problem with postmodernists' enthusiasm about the network's schizophrenic freedom became apparent later, with the advent of globalized networks not only expanded the horizons of possibilities and extended freedom but also increased the fear of the unknown, the scale of which is unprecedented. As Featherstone points out, "today we inhabit a strange situation whereby we can no longer cope with the lighting-fast technological world we have built for ourselves" (2008, p. 187). How much network schizophrenia can humanity stand? In a way, this question becomes central to Rüdiger Safranski's (2005) book *How Much Globalization Can We Bear?* Presenting globalization in philosophical terms that emphasize individuals' striving for freedom and meaning, Safranski discusses the tension between the ego, which always searches for identity in time and space, and the permanent deterritorializatin (expansion) of global society. According to Safranski, people's attempts to comprehend the endless network opened with globalization can lead to serious psychopathological effects.

Introducing his "world risk society" (which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 10), Ulrich Beck (2010) also points to the "sense of crisis" manifesting itself in fears of a lost security, inability to know, to control, to make sense, or to establish a simple cause-effect relationship. "A basic feature of life in world risk society," Beck claims, is "the expropriation of senses, and hence of common sense, as an anthropological precondition of self-conscious life and judgement" (p. 116). It is this loss of common sense and "a deep-seated fear of the unknown" associated with it that, according to Castells (2010b), makes people unite in various anti-globalization movements such as Islamic or Christian fundamentalism in search for a "lost

innocence" (p. 29). Anxiety and fear associated with the loss of everything that is familiar and known become a central issue for "hyper," "radicalized" or "liquid" modernity – "a condition in which social forms… can no longer (and are not expected) to keep their shape for long, because they decompose and melt faster than the time it takes to cast them, and once they are cast for them to set" (Bauman, 2007, p. 1).

By stressing the unpredictability and uncontrollability of the network and human anxiety associated with this, contemporary sociological theory returns us to Emile Durkheim's (1984/1893) concern about disunity and anomie that would accompany the emergence of the organic society and Siegmuns Freud's (2010/1929) warning that advances in science and technology, together with other cultural pressures of modernity, could eventuate in humanity's self-destruction. The loss of orientation within contemporary networks discussed by the scholars of globalized society also refers us to Gregory Bateson's (2000/1972) theory of schizophrenia as communicative disorder, which develops from a "double bind situation" where two conflicting injunctions are present and where people cannot win no matter what they do (I explicate this theory in more detail in Chapter 10). This also reminds us about the tension between classical sociological works and postmodermism: while the former warns against the disintegration and dislocation of the human self, the latter embraces the chaos of the postmodern condition, greeting its ephemerality, discontinuity, and fragmentation. A similar tension is discernible in contemporary theorizing on global networks. Presenting his "risk society" as self-organizing and self-transforming – "where it sees a world coming to an end the world order is in fact being transformed" (p. 95) – Beck (2010) points to the fact that this renewal grows up simultaneously with the self-destruction of modernity. This is a process that, according to Beck, reveals the dialectics of modernity, the potential for change and destruction.

Without intending to dispute the potential of modernity to dialectically renew itself through destruction, this dissertation, however, emphasizes another aspect of the issue: the fact that the destruction of modernity described by Beck is not the destruction of abstract theoretical networks; it is the destruction of the common sense of human beings lost within these networks. These human beings still strive for order and coherence of meanings and try to make sense out of spreading schizophrenia, treating it as a medical condition – not a necessity of their lives.

Contemporary media research also concerns itself with the problem of social disorientation as an integral part of the postmodern condition. In 1992, in *Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History*, Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz presented their conception of media events as "high holidays of mass communication" (Dayan & Katz, 1992, p. 1) that interrupt routine by monopolizing media communication across different channels and programs. Those "festive television ceremonies" (Dayan & Katz, 1992, p. 1), according to Dayan and Katz, united people in their sentiments toward their common past or values, evoked images of a better world, a more fraternal or equal society, and hinted of the possibility of peace (Dayan & Katz, 1992, p. 141). Those media performances that failed to maintain the unity of viewers were considered pathological, atypical, or abnormal. Today, the ability of media events to foster civil solidarity looks much more problematic. What seemed pathological in 1992 now looks perfectly normal. "Media events have stopped being 'irenic,' stated Dayan in 2010, "Rather, they could be characterized by Gregory Bateson's notion of 'schismogenesis' (1935), that process through which one provokes irremediable hostility, fosters divides, and installs and perpetuates schisms" (Dayan, 2010, p. 26).

During recent years, the problematic of social disenchantment, cynicism, and division as manifestations of media effects has become a separate area of inquiry within cultural media

studies. Instead of the media "torrent" (Giltin, 2002), media events produce media "clutter" and media "plenty" (Ellis, 2000), in which the emergence of anything coherent, ceremonial, and festive becomes rare or even impossible. Late modern rituals may not only fail to counterweight but even sharpen the forces of social disruption – those of tribalism, partisan polarization, segmentation, and alienation. However, some scholars warn against the oversimplified vision of postmodern media as simply the purveyors of destruction. Peter Csigo (2010) argues, for example, that it would be more productive to inquire into unanticipated ways in which "the opposed forces of disruption and integration may coalesce in different contexts" (p. 143). He also proposes to switch focus from the old question of whether rituals can bring people together to whether people can bring together what has fallen apart.

This shift puts people in the center of Csigo's inquiry. Now, they are not just spectacles but active actors as well. Following Erving Goffman's line (1974), Csigo argues that modern social life is characterized by permanent tension between the integrative forces in the Durkheimean sense and the disruptive forces of postmodernity, where the individual jumps from one situation to another, switching roles and masks. The main question that people ask for themselves in this new ever-shifting environment is "Can we believe in anything at all?" (Csigo, 2010, p. 146). Scrutinizing the real intentions of performers that come to light, new active audiences try to make sense of what is going on and to repair the breaches of meanings.

If Csigo is right, then we may hypothesize, as applied to the interests of this dissertation, that in order to make sense of postmodern mythological constructions, people should disassemble them and reassemble them again to restore some common sense or "original" meaning. However, as this dissertation attempts to show, this creative remythologizing does not necessarily repair the breaches of meanings. Instead, it can produce new schizophrenic

constructions that make the original substance even more inconceivable and that only contribute to radical states of fear, anxiety, or paranoia, described by the theorists of the globalized world.

How can we grasp the schizophrenia of postmodern mythological constructions in terms of people's attempts to make sense of them? In order to cope with this task, I suggest deconstructing mythologies simultaneously at two different discursive levels – elite/intellectual and non-elite/vernacular. This will allow us to single out the building blocks of mythological constructions and see how they are combined in each of the discursive levels. In order to do so, I propose to reformulate Barthes's method of deconstructing mythologies as an analysis of frames. After presenting framing analysis in the next chapter, I explicate my point in more detail.

Chapter 3

Frame Analysis of Modernization Myths

The Idea of Framing

Frame analysis, which was originally elaborated in the field of cognitive psychology, has been widely adopted within a broad range of social disciplines: sociology, communication, economics, linguistics, public relation, and so forth. Its popularity can be explained by its ability to trace the communication process not only across disciplinary boundaries but also across the boundaries of various social fields: political, journalistic, business, and so forth. The potential of frame analysis to pass boundaries and trace communication across them stems from the fact that similar frames can be located in several points of the communication process: in culture and ideology, in the mindsets of political sponsors, activists, journalists, or audience members, in strategically created messages, and in the responses of those who are involved in communication exchange (Scheufele, 1999).

According to Irving Goffman (1974), a frame is a schema of interpretation that enables people "to locate, perceive, identify, and label" (p. 21) occurrences of their daily lives; it is through framing that people assign meanings to what is going on in the world, thus organizing their life experiences. Frames are cognitive structures that guide the perception and representation of reality. In the ideal lifeworld that is located outside of strategically organized systems, frames are not consciously manufactured; rather, they are unconsciously created and adopted in the course of communication exchange. However, because the lifeworld is increasingly colonized by the system of power and money (Habermas, 1985), frame analysis has become central to research on strategic rather than genuine communication, be it management and organizational studies (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), social movement studies (Snow et al.,

1986), political communication or media research (Ryan, 1999), or media analysis (Entman, 1993).

Discussing frame alignment – the linkage of the frameworks of individuals and social movements – as a necessary condition for strategic communication, Snow and colleagues (1986) present four types of such alignment. The first type – frame bridging – refers to aligning ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames. The second type – frame amplification – denotes the clarification and invigoration of an existing interpretive frame. The third type – frame extension – is about extending the boundaries of the preexisting framework in order to encompass the interests of potential adherents. And the final type – frame transformation – refers to implanting new values and jettisoning old beliefs. According to Snow and colleagues, frame bridging is a modal type of low-demand professional movements; frame amplification is typical for reactive and conservative movements; and frame transformation is good for movements with world-transforming goals and tasks. Although Snow and colleagues discussed frame alignment as a strategic tool of social movement organizations, the implications of their analysis are much broader, since they are relevant to all kinds of strategic communication aimed at influencing public opinion.

Discussing the question of why framing processes succeed in some cases but not in others, Snow and colleagues (1986) point out two basic factors: the content of frames and their degree of resonance with life experiences of target audiences. Snow at al. propose that "the higher the degree of frame resonance, the greater the probability that the framing effort will be relatively successful, all else being equal" (p. 477). On the other hand, discussing the vulnerabilities of framing, they note that frame amplification may lead to discrediting highlighted values while frame extension may cause a suspicion of manipulation.

Expanding on the relationship between the framing efforts of social movement organizations and the mobilization of their potential constituents, David Snow and Robert Benford (1988) argue that this relationship is highly dialectical because "there is no such thing as a tabula rasa or empty glass into which new and perhaps alien ideas can be poured" (p. 204). Snow and Benford discuss several constraints that may lead to dissonance between the frames of social movement organizations and their potential followers: if there is no empirical credibility, the fit between strategic frames and events in the world, or if there is no narrative fidelity, the fit between strategic frames and the cultural heritage of target publics.

With little direct knowledge on the broader world that stretches far off our native states and societies, we often rely on the sponsors of information campaigns (hereafter, information sponsors) – from social movement organizations to political parties to media organizations – to understand the complexities of this world. Increasingly, dissidents or challengers to the political establishments in societies have recognized framing as a central political activity. Callaghan & Schnell (2001), for example, claim: "Control over political rhetoric is an essential tool to influence public opinion, and the entrenchment of some terms, and the disappearance of others, is often a signal of political triumph and defeat" (p. 184). To control political rhetoric, as Snow and Benford (1988) show, in essence means to control three core framing tasks – a diagnosis of a problem, a proposed solution, and a rationale for engaging (p. 204) – and to ensure that they resonate with the cultural and ideological frames of targeted audiences.

Because in the overwhelming majority of cases information sponsors deliver their messages to target publics through media, the latter are acknowledged to be especially powerful in framing reality for their readers, listeners, and watchers. It is well documented that media frames can shape how audiences interpret ambiguous political issues (Entman, 1993) or attribute

responsibility (Iyengar, 1991). Some researchers go as far as arguing that "how people think about an issue, especially a political issue that is inherently ambiguous, is dependent on how the issue is framed by the media" (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 94), although there is an increasing awareness that the interaction of media frames and audience responses are much more complicated and can be conceived only dialectically (Schaffner & Sellers, 2009).

The tradition of media research offers its own elaboration of framing. Gamson and Modigliani (1987) define a frame as "a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events…. The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue" (p. 143). According to Entman (1993), to frame means "to select some aspects of a perceived reality to make them more salient, thus promoting a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (p. 52). Iyengar (1991) differentiates between episodic and thematic frames. Episodic framing depicts public issues as noncontextualized events that result from individual actions; thematic framing, on the contrary, reports events as parts of societal systemic problems.

According to media scholars, in communication flows, frames manifest themselves by means of framing and reasoning devices. Framing devices (metaphors, catchphrases, exemplars, depictions, and visual images) suggest a framework within which to view the issue, while reasoning devices (roots, consequences, and appeal to principle) provide justification or reasons for general positions (Gamson & Lasch, 1983, p. 399).

Because frames are related to culture, their use looks so natural that the process of social construction remains invisible and can be regarded as a mechanism of reproducing the political status quo (Lewis, 1999). As Gorp (2007) argues, "the notion of a cultural stock of frames more easily leads to the idea that there are more frames than those that are currently applied" (p. 63).

Alternatives to the existing frames can lead to different problem definitions, causal interpretations, moral evaluations, and treatment recommendations. Gorp's observation leads to an important implication: it follows that critical frame analysis needs to distinguish the currently applied frames from their alternatives in order to be able to explain the persistent employment of specific frames. For this endeavor, it is especially useful, I think, to keep in mind the definition of frame as "a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events" by Gamson and Modigliani (1987, p. 143) and the idea that such "story lines" are created through making some aspect of a perceived reality more salient (Entman, 1993). Critical frame analysis needs to restore all possible story lines to see which of them are systematically ignored and which stressed as important. This approach is also needed to see how different interpretations of the same phenomena or concept can be strategically combined to influence public opinion.

Frame Analysis and Mythological Deconstruction

Gorp's reminder that "there are more frames than those are currently applied" corresponds to Barthes's idea that in mythologies, the history evaporates as soon as meaning's history is distanced and meaning transforms thus into an empty form (Barthes, 1972, p. 123). If we reformulate this statement in terms of framing, we come to the following proposition (*Proposition #1*): *If some of the frames that are relevant to the issue at stake are systematically ignored and if only a few relevant frames are constantly made salient, then we can say that the rich history of the concept, to put it in Barthes's language, "evaporates" and the concept becomes a pure mythical form.* This kind of mythology appears when various sponsors of strategically tailored information frame the issues for their publics through what Snow and colleagues (1986) call frame bridging and amplification.

Then what happens if social movement activists or political strategists tailor their messages in order to extend frames? According to Snow et al., this happens when the programs and values that information sponsors promote do not resonate perfectly well with the moods of their potential audiences. "When such is the case," Snow et al. tell us, the sponsor "may have to extend the boundaries of its primary framework so as to encompass interests or points of view that are incidental to its primary objectives but of considerable salience to potential adherents" (p. 472). But what if the interests of the interested parties and their target audiences are incommensurable? In this case, frame transformation takes place. Such transformation, as Snow et al. (1986) explain, "redefines activities, events, and biographies that are already meaningful from the standpoint of some primary framework, in terms of another framework, so that they are now "seen by the participants to be something quite else" (p. 474).

If we reformulate this in accordance with Gorp's suggestion to account for all existing frames, even those that are constantly ignored, we get *Propositions #2*: *In order to extend or redefine frames, an information sponsor needs to employ the frames popular among its target publics even if these frames do not serve the sponsor's own aims*. Here, we can make an important distinction. In the case of *extension*, the emergent combination of frames *may or may not* bring tensions; in the case of *reformulation*, the mixture of original sponsor frames and the frames borrowed from target publics is likely to be potentially explosive, since these frames are most probably incommensurable in essence. It is in this case that we can speak of the mythologies of the *postmodernist dynamic* – with all the schizophrenia of unstable meanings that are formed not according to some inherent logic but to the logic of strategically shifting plans.

It is this crazy dynamic that Pieter De Vries (2007) seems to address when speaking of the production of desires that modernization cannot fulfill because "development points out to a

utopian element that is always out of place" (De Vries, 2007, p. 30). And it is this schizophrenic dynamics that James Ferguson seems to imply when he claims that the promise of modernization conceals that "the flexibility of investment and market options is matched by a wholly new flexibility in disinvestment and abandonment" (p. 241). This observation suggests that, presenting the impossible combination of the interests of transnational corporations and the interests of poor people as if they are not incompatible, the rhetoric of modernization produces the schizophrenic mythology that is deeply illogical and thus explosive. In the course of time, this explosiveness can manifest itself in the loss of orientation, the loss of security, despair, and other social pathologies.

A similar outcome may also occur when *in order to makes sense of the strategically framed discourses, people, in line with Csigo's (2010) observation, disassemble the combinations of frames and reassemble them again, constructing new combinations. There is no guarantee that such attempts to restore the original meaning will lead to a meaningful reconstruction and not to another szhizophrenic myth*. This is my *Proposition #3*. After all, what is the initial meaning in the world where numerous information sponsors incessantly bombard the same audiences with various incommensurable frame combinations?

To show how the stated propositions may work in real life, I present the case study of the USSR's disintegration when Soviet pro-liberal intellectuals persuaded their mass audiences that only market liberalism would bring them prosperity and social justice. In order to see the difference between intellectual and lay frames of reference to the late Soviet transformation, I analyze two levels of discourses – "intellectual" and "vernacular." In the next chapter, I situate my case study within the broader context of Gorbachev's reforms, understood as an attempt at modernization.

PART II. HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

Chapter 4

Soviet Modernity

An Alternative Project

Many currently believe that the Soviet project was not a counter-modernity enterprise, as the anti-communist rhetoric of the Cold War suggested, but one of multiple modernities – one version of the Western modernity project. From this perspective, the Bolshevik revolution appears not as a unique and radical rupture in the historical current, but as merely another link in a long chain of attempts to modernize Russia, originating with Peter the Great's reforms in the second part of the 17th century (Ivakhnenko, 2006). Johann Arnason (2000), for example, sees the Bolshevik project as a mixture of Marxist ideas and borrowings from Russian traditions, which combined a critique of the established patterns of Western modernity with 'an imaginary projection of their potential beyond present limits' (p. 70). Jennifer Turpin (1995) also pays attention to the fact that Bolsheviks rejected a capitalist economy but supported the idea of technological and scientific progress, reformulating other concepts associated with Western modernity – freedom of human agency, democracy, political participation – with regard to traditional Russian values and norms.

The Russian tradition… emphasized the communal nature of human life rather than individuality. This tradition was partly shaped by the Russian Orthodox Church. Separated from the Reformation and the Scientific Revolution, Russian political culture remained outside the Western movement toward individualism and autonomy. The church remained a dominant force

for subordinating the individual to God's will, to the tsar, and to the collective. These cultural imprints prefigured the ethic of partinost, or loyalty to the party (pp. 13-14).

In other words, Soviet leadership appropriated the ideas of Western modernity very selectively: while the capitalist economy was omitted, the idea of progress, both technological and scientific, was retained. Other concepts associated with the western notion of modernity – freedom of human agency, democracy, or political participation – were reformulated with regard to the traditional values and norms of the society "inherited" by Bolsheviks from tsarist Russia.

In Chapter 1, I discuss the important role of intellectuals for the projects of social engineering that are perpetrated in the name of progress. In this respect, Soviet modernity was an exception. The revolution accomplished by Bolsheviks – radically leftist intellectuals – and the following industrialization were characterized by the internal colonization of peasants who composed about 85 percent of Russian Empire's population in 1917. The world of peasants, with their respectful attitude to tradition (Tsar, church, communal relations, and so forth) had always been an enigma for revolutionaries inspired by the ideas of Western modernity with its secularism, industrialization, education, and rupture with the past. As Viola Lynne (1996) explains,

> The Communists represented an urban, working-class (in the abstract), atheistic, technological, deterministic, and, in their minds, modern culture, while the peasantry represented (to Communists) the antithesis of themselves, the negation of all that was considered modern. Before they were Communists, even before they were Bolsheviks, Russian Marxists were implicitly antipeasant. (p. 14)

In the eyes of Bolsheviks, rich peasants, *kulaks*, looked like class enemies, who undermined the revolution by opposing the forced requisition of grain, which was necessary to feed towns, support the army, and launch the country's industrial transformation.

In order for their "great transformation" towards modernity to succeed, Bolsheviks had to get rid of the private-owner peasantry – "avaricious" and "bestial," as Lenin characterized it – and to transform it into waged working class, rural proletariat. Lenin realized, however, that this process of transformation would take a long time; only gradual persuasion, he thought, was able to change the mentality and habits of the farmers. But the problems of the young revolutionary state could not wait. The god of industrialization, deified by Bolsheviks, demanded all agricultural resources immediately, without delay. Increasingly, after Lenin's death, Stalin insisted that the only solution to this problem would be the collectivization of private farms. The beginning of the "great turn" was proclaimed by Stalin on November 7, 1929 – the anniversary of the October Revolution – when the collectivization started. The scale of this social experiment can be illustrated by the ever-increasing numbers of collectivized peasant households: June, 1928: 1.7%; October, 1929: 7.5%; January, 1930: 18.1%; February, 1930: 31.7%. In some regions, the pace of collectivization was even greater: in February 1930, the number of households that were collectivized reached 57.2% in the Moscow region, 83.3% in the Central Black Earth Region, 75.6% in the Urals, and so forth (Lynne, 1996, pp. 26–28).

A special commission created by the Politburo divided kulaks into three categories. The most dangerous heads of households (about 60,000) were to be executed or interned to concentration camps. Another 381,026 families were exiled to remote areas of the Northern Region, Siberia, or Kazakhstan. Among the arrested were not only rich peasants but also priests and members of the rural intelligentsia, whose voices often represented the village against

collective farms. These voices were silenced by creating an environment of fear, and traditional local leaders were replaced with the new leaders from town.

By ruthless repressions and harassment, Bolsheviks managed to stifle peasant rebellions. Through collectivization, they transformed the countryside into an internal colony whose resources were used to finance the industrialization, modernization, and defense of the country. The price of this modernization policy was enormous: in 1932-1933, millions of peasants (from 3.5 to 7.5 million, according to different estimations) died from made-man famine (Davies & Wheatcroft, 2004; Mace, 1984). In this respect, the history of Soviet modernization is comparable with the history of Western modernity that brought considerable sufferings to peoples of Africa, Asia, and Americas through destructing their lifeworlds.

If we ignore human sufferings, however, and concentrate only on material outcomes of modernization calculated in terms of economic growth, we see the story of Soviet modernity as a story of success. As Manuel Castells (2000c) explains in the last book of his trilogy, *The End of Millennium*,

> We have become so used to demeaning accounts of the Soviet economy in recent years that it is often overlooked that, for a long period of time, particularly in the 1950s and until the late 1960s, Soviet GNP grew generally faster than most of the world, albeit at the price of staggering human and environmental costs. (p. 9)

Analyzing the reasons for the final decline and fall of the Soviet experiment, Castells presents a comprehensive picture of Soviet modernization successes. Overall, he claims, for the most of Soviet history, the economic growth of the USSR was faster than that of the West. The pace of Soviet industrialization was the fastest in world history. From a backward agrarian country, the

Soviet Union quickly transformed into an industrial and military giant able to maintain strategic military parity with the United States.

The successes of Soviet modernization and the ability of the USSR to compete with the United States in the military sphere look even more astonishing if we remember that "at the end of the Second World War, America possessed two-thirds of the world's gold reserves and three-quarters of its invested capital… In 1945, the gross national product of the United States was three times Soviet Russia's and five times Great Britain's" (Gordin, 2009, p. 27). Despite the huge discrepancy in economic possibilities, the Soviet Union managed to detonate its own nuclear bomb in 1949 and to launch Sputnik in 1957, to the tremendous shock of Western governments that were enslaved by their own mythology about the backwardness of Soviet science and Soviet inability to build an advanced industrial economy.

The Soviet Union was not only a military superpower. Until its demise, it remained the third largest industrial economy in the world, "the world's largest producer of oil, gas, and rare metals, and the only country that was self-reliant in energy resources and raw materials" (Castells, 2000c, p. 5). In the 1980s, it produced substantially more than the US in a number of heavy industrial sectors such as steel, cement, oil, iron, and so forth. Soviet science also kept its leading positions in such fundamental fields as mathematics, physics, and chemistry. Despite the shortages of consumer goods, the living conditions of Soviet citizens were overall better in the 1980s than a decade earlier. As Joseph Stiglitz (2003) maintains, "The Communist system, while it did not make for an easy life, avoided the extremes of poverty, and kept living standards relatively equal, by providing a high common denominator of quality for education, housing, health care and child care services." In the 1980s, the Soviet Union was a country with no homelessness, unemployment, and a "legacy of inherited inequality," as Stiglitz put it. The

excesses of Stalinism had been also left far behind: "Political repression was limited and highly selective, and ideological indoctrination had become more of a bureaucratic ritual than an ardent inquisition" (Castells, 2000c, p. 6). Political dissidence was confined to isolated intellectual circles. Within broader strata of Soviet society, it manifested itself through kitchen gossip deeply rooted in Russian tradition.

The Crisis of Soviet Modernity

For all its economic and social stability and relative wellbeing, the Soviet Union went through a deep structural crisis that made Gorbachev's reforms necessary. The central reason for this crisis was the statism of the Soviet project of modernity. The rigid system of centralized planning was wasteful and extremely ineffective. Its ineffectiveness became even more apparent with the transition of Soviet society from the state of emergency to a society trying to satisfy the consumer needs of its citizens: "When the population was allowed to express consumption preferences above the level of survival… the command economy started to be plagued by systemic dysfunctions in the practice of implementing the plan" (Castells, 2000c, p. 19). Prioritizing the needs of the military-industrial complex brought chronic imbalances between the sectors of the Soviet economy. The lack of adjustment between supply and demand led to omnipresent shortages of consumer goods and agricultural products. The demolition of rural life, perpetrated by Bolsheviks in the name of modernization at the beginning of the century, boomeranged against the communist system at the end of it: "agricultural deficits became an onerous burden on the state budget and on Soviet imports, gradually taking away resources from industrial investment" (Castells, 2000c, p. 19).

The structural imbalances of the Soviet economic system also gave rise to a gigantic shadow economy in which the highest ranks of the state and the party – so-called nomenklature – were deeply immersed:

> The shadow economy, which grew considerably during the 1970s with the compliance of the party's nomenclature, deeply transformed Soviet social structure… the dominant interest of "gatekeepers" throughout the administrative apparatus was to collect their shadow rents rather than to receive their bonuses from the fulfillment of planned targets. (Castells, 2000c, p. 21)

The excessive bureaucratization of Soviet economic management and its consequence, the shadow economy, had to be corrected by changing the system of planning and control over distribution. This is what Gorbachev had in mind when he initiated his perestroika structural reforms.

Despite the fact that the excesses of Stalinism were left far behind, Soviet science remained under tough ideological control, which hampered innovation. The system of bureaucratic control over scientific research provoked technical lagging precisely at the critical moment when world's production system experienced technological revolution shifting towards electronics, chemicals, and biotechnology. Functioning in a closed economy, Soviet scientific and industrial enterprises were simply cut off from these revolutionary innovations. The very notion of "personal computer" could not get acclimatized within the Soviet system of control over printing, copying, and all kinds of information processing. As a result, highly educated Soviet intellectuals felt increasingly entrapped within the system that could not satisfy their intellectual needs.

At the beginning of Gorbachev's perestroika, two basic kinds of popular grievances were easily discernible across different strata of Soviet population: the lack of goods, the lack of equality (nomenklatura), and the lack of freedoms: to speak out, to express oneself, to create, and to innovate. While working people were predominantly concerned with the bread-and-butter problems of their daily life and the chronic shortages of consumer goods, Soviet intelligentsia grumbled mostly about the violation of freedoms and the lack of self-expression. In the end of the day, as my following chapters show, this difference in prioritizing problems led further contradictions within Soviet society, many of which remain unsolved even now, two decades after the demise of the USSR.

Gorbachev's Reforms

Gorbachev sincerely believed that he could improve the Soviet system without ruining it. He also believed that he would be able to overcome the resistance to his reforms on the part of nomenklatura, the military-industrial complex, the oil generals, and the bosses of the shadow economy. Believing in the possibility of improving socialism and reforming the communist party, he appealed to civil society to mobilize in support of his reforms. This opened the way for democratization, bringing to life freedom of uncontrolled expression that manifested itself in public meetings of many thousands, loud disputes, and passionate discussions.

Obviously, not all of the discussants were equally potent to shape public opinion: the most successful were those who had access to new media free from party censorship. Uncontrolled newspapers, radio stations, and television companies, which appeared in the course of glasnost, became nourishing milieu for the formation of new intellectual elites favoring liberal values: "Glasnost allowed the development of a radical intelligentsia committed to broad scale social change," who advocated "the development of a market economy, democratic legal

practices, and the expansion of human freedom" (Turpin, 1995, p. 125). Through new media, those Soviet liberals introduced their mass Soviet audiences to the mythology of laissez-faire as a magic self-regulating force capable of granting equality, freedom, justice, and happiness for all (Åslund, 2007; Krausz, 2007; Ryvkina, 2007; Shlapentokh, 1993). It is well documented that in order to push their liberalizing reforms, the advocates of market transformations, praising to the skies the advantages of liberalization, systematically obscured its undesired consequences (Krausz, 2007; Shlapentokh, 1993).

By uncritically supporting the agenda of liberalization, these new media contributed significantly to the deplorable results of Gorbachev's perestroika. They are well known. Through the privatization of state property conducted with no transparency, scarce control, and unreliable accounting, "all valuable assets in Russia were sold for ridiculous prices for whoever had the money and the power to control the transaction" (Castells, 2000c, p. 188). Those "whoever" were party nomenklatura, red directors, and other members of the Soviet establishment who were able to accumulate wealth during the era of stagnation by making money on systemic shortages and during perestroika through delivering state funds into personal bank accounts abroad. It is through this dirty accumulation of capital that governmental officials, ex-nomenklatura, and organized crime came together. The working class of the Soviet Union, which had created the economy of the biggest and one of the richest country of the world, was robbed of all resources.

As a result of Soviet liberal transformations, Russia was transformed from an industrial giant whose pace of economic growth was faster than that of the West, which was able to achieve strategic military parity with the United States, and to launch Sputnik, into a natural resource exporter:

The radical reform strategy did not work: gross domestic product in Russia fell, year after year…. The devastation – the loss in GDP – was greater than Russia had suffered in World War II. In the period 1940-46 the Soviet Union industrial production fell 24 percent. In the period 1990-98, Russian industrial production fell 42.9 percent – almost equal to the fall of GDP (45%). (Stiglitz, 2003, p. 143)

In 1989, only 2 percent of those living in Russia were in poverty. By late 1998, that number had soared to 23.8 percent, using the $2 a day standard. More than 40 percent of the country had less than $4 a day, according to a survey conducted by the World Bank. (Stiglitz, 2003, p. 6)

Without legacy of inherited inequality, former Soviet republics transformed into poor states with enormous social stratification. This tragic outcome of perestroika reforms was a logical consequence of the historical activity of Soviet pro-liberal intellectuals, who not only disseminated the liberal mythologies but also demanded that market reforms be implemented as quickly as it was possible to imagine.

The attempt of Soviet intellectuals to appropriate capitalist modernity in the late 1980s was not as bloody as Bolsheviks' attempts to establish communism: nobody was executed and nobody was officially excluded from participating in the discussions of the reforms. But was it colonizing? My answer is "yes," although the mechanisms of colonization were different – instead of physical coercion it took the form of psychological disorientation. In the Part III of this dissertation, I show how, through the extension and transformation of frames, Soviet neoliberal intellectuals created schizophrenic mythologies that disoriented their audiences, depriving them of common sense.

Chapter 5

The Discourses of Perestroika

Democracy

In order to understand mythological transformations of the meaning of democracy in the course of perestroika reforms, it is important to remember that Gorbachev's policies of glasnost' and democratization were not an object of theoretical analysis before perestroika started or during its initial stage. Rather, these policies came as results of practical politics – as reactions to concrete social, economic, and political problems stemming from the necessity to implement economic reforms. It is also important to keep in mind that Gorbachev initiated those reforms with the goal of increasing the welfare of the Soviet people by improving their living conditions: providing them with higher quality of food, industrial goods, services, health care, culture, and education (Gorbachev, 1986). In other words, the economic reforms of perestroika were conceived within the socialist imagination, which was natural for the Soviet socialist state.

To implement his plans of modernizing the Soviet economy, Gorbachev needed to neutralize the opposition of the old party establishment that continued to occupy strong positions in the Soviet hierarchy of power and who were against economic reforms initiated by Gorbachev. As Mau (1995) explains,

Encountering opposition to the economic reforms, clearly recognizing that the balance of forces in the top party leadership was unfavorable for implementing his policy, and recalling the sad political fate of Khrushchev, the General Secretary and his closest associates reached the decision that it was possible or even necessary to neutralize the

influence of the conservative majority among the party-state elite by initiating processes

of democratization, above all glasnost', openness. (p. 17)

In other words, Gorbachev did not conceive glasnost as a self-reliant end of perestroika; he and

his closest collaborators imagined democratization as a means of defeating conservatives'

resistance by mobilizing public support for reforms. Believing in the future of socialism and in a

reformed Communist party, Gorbachev appealed to civil society to mobilize in support of his

economic initiatives. Perestroika thus became dependent on glasnost, which opened the way for

broad democratization.

In a short course of time, however, glasnost and democratization became dominant

constituents of perestroika's political discourse. Very soon after the reforms started, economic

transformations came to be seen as only one part of a broad liberalization process. Absorbing

more and more participants from various strata of society, the whirl of democratization finally

wandered away from socialist paradigm of Gorbachev's imagination:

> Between 1987 and 1991, in a social whirlwind of increasing intensity, intellectuals
>
> denounced the system, workers went on strike for their demands and their rights,
>
> ecologists exposed environmental catastrophes, human right groups staged their protests,
>
> the Memorial Movement reconstructed the horrors of Stalinism, and voters used every
>
> opportunity in parliamentary and local elections to reject official candidates from the
>
> Communist party, thus delegitimizing the established power structure…. The most
>
> powerful mobilization, and the direct challenge to the Soviet state came from nationalist
>
> movements. (Castells, 2000c, p. 57)

Unexpectedly for Gorbachev and his close colleagues, who envisaged resistance to reforms

mainly from the conservative circles of the CPSU, different anti-Communist political forces

emerged, and new power centers developed. The elections for the new body of deputies that took place in March 1989 and the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR became the culmination of the process: parliamentary mandates were distributed among orthodox Communists, reformers who sought democratization within the socialist paradigm, and dissidents with outright anti-Soviet views. Needless to say, those different groupings, although using the same conceptual terms associated with democratization (as they imagined it), had far from identical views on the political and economic development of the Soviet system. The situation was even more complicated because many active participants in perestroika, including Gorbachev himself, reconsidered their views in the course of reforms significantly, filling the same conceptual forms with totally different meanings at different time points of perestroika.

In his unpublished 1989 book of *Perestroika – Ispitaniye Zhiznyu: Dnevnikoviye Zapisi*, Gorbachev, for example, defended one-party pluralism; only several months after the book was written, he reversed this position completely and welcomed a competitive party system, accepting check and balances and the separation of power – anathema for orthodox Communists (Brown, 2009). As Brown maintains, "He [Gorbachev] came also to believe that a social-democratic conception of socialism provided the basis for a more just, more humane, and more economically efficient system than the political and economic model that had been adopted in the Soviet Union" (2009, p. 235). Gorbachev's shift from Leninism toward social democracy of the Western type manifested itself in his gradual acceptance of a multi-party system, free elections, the rule of law, and the discourse on human rights. By 1991, Gorbachev concluded that Marxism-Leninism has been totally distorted and could nolonger serve as a source of inspiration. In his speech commending the draft party program to the Central Committee on July 25, 1991, Gorbachev claimed:

In the past the party recognized only Marxism-Leninism as the source of its inspiration, whilst this doctrine itself was distorted to the extreme to suit the pragmatic purposes of the day and was turned into a kind of collection of canonical texts. Now it is necessary to include in CPSU's ideological arsenal all the riches of our and the world's socialist and democratic thought. Such an approach is dictated by the fact that the realization of the socialist idea and movement along the path of economic, social and spiritual progress can be successfully implemented today only in the channel of the common development of civilization. (Sakwa, 2005, p. 236)

This statement demonstrates clearly Gorbachev's personal transformation in the course of perestroika: from Marxism-Leninism to social-democracy and from a special historical path to the "common development of civilization." It also shows that Gorbachev has finally accepted the main rhetorical line of modernization discourse – there is only one way to civilization and, in order to achieve progress, nations and states need to move rapidly along the avenue leading to Westernization.

For many observers today, it is quite obvious that by 1990 Gorbachev was "no longer thinking in Leninist terms and had accepted the justice of Eduard Bernstein's revisionist arguments" (Sakwa, 2005, p. 258). It is important to realize, however: What looks clear today was not necessarily transparent in 1990. As this dissertation suggests, the transformations of views of perestroika's ideologists may have remained either invisible or incomprehensible for many citizens of the Soviet state. Under the pressure of quickly changing reality, Gorbachev and other reformers were unable or willing to explain those metamorphoses even for themselves, not to speak of broader publics.

What Gorbachev and many other ideologists of perestroika systematically failed to acknowledge in their public pronouncements was the fact that in the real world the highest achievements of "civilization," which they suggested joining, were represented by capitalist economic systems. Through all Gorbachev's public pronouncements, perestroika appeared as the process of "updating socialism"; the interests and needs of working people were systematically presented as the main goals of the reforms (Brown, 2009). The most important part of Gorbachev's ideological metamorphoses remained hidden under the form of democratization, which he initially introduced to Soviet people with a different meaning. This mutation of meaning with the preservation of form led not only to mythologizing of the perestroika discourse but also to people's later disillusionment and frustration.

The Market

In order to comprehend different meanings that various publics in the late USSR attached to the concept of *market*, one has to take into account Soviet political environment in late 1980s - early 1990s. First, it is necessary to realize that from the very beginning of perestroika, two main approaches to property issues were formed within the Communist Party of the USSR. The "conservatives," mainly represented by party nomenklatura and orthodox communists, advocated the maintenance of state socialism (the ownership of the enterprises by the state); the "democrats" stood up for reforms in the form of the self-management of enterprises by working collectives (Krausz, 2007). As those democrats believed, only through workers' self-management could a new economic system appear in which workers' interests would be ensured. By fortifying movements of workers through self-management (the elections of industrial managers were a part of this), Gorbachev's chief economic advisor, Abel Gezevich Aganbegyan

(1988), also hoped to destroy the Soviet bureaucratic machine and enforce economic progress. Such developments were imagined to ensure the socialist direction of economic reforms.

In the course of time, however, the situation in the country changed significantly, pushing many "democrats" to migrate from their pro-socialist position to the liberal free-market stand. Various factors conditioned the evolution of their views. One of the most important was deep contradictions in Gorbachev's economic reforms – his attempts to unite free market and socialism – and the inability of his associates to foresee the consequences of their deeds. As Krausz (2007) writes,

> Recently opened archive sources clearly show that even as late as spring 1990 the leadership did not fully appreciate the social, political and economic consequences of their 'revolution' and that, despite their initial intention, perestroika was fast becoming the means of an anti-socialist 'change of system'. (p. 12)

As a result of that lack of strategic vision and the inability to foresee the consequences of the reforms, some important preconditions were formed for the emergence of new elites who were interested not in the improvement of socialism but in the transition to pure market relations.

One of the most crucial developments that led to the appearance of new, liberally minded, elites was the Law on Companies. It came into force on January 1, 1988, placing about 60% of Soviet industrial enterprises on hozraschot – a new system of independent self-accounting, which weakened central control and allowed for the introduction of market mechanisms. Self-accounting provided enterprise managers with the considerable freedom to control enterprises' profits. With the introduction of that law, the directors were no longer interested in sharing power with anybody else, least of all with workers. Following the collapse of the Soviet state in 1991, in the course of post-Soviet privatization, enterprise directors together with local political

elites acquired the majority of industrial shares, expropriating thus the labor of at least three generations of Soviet people (Åslund, 2007).

One of the most interesting aspects of that late-Soviet transformations was the fact that the change in the course of perestroika, from social to neoliberal, was not accompanied by a similar change in the vocabulary of perestroika discourse. Old concepts acquired new meanings, and not many people were able to recognize this. Krausz's (2007) description of the debate that took place during the Central Committee's plenary session on February 5 - 7, 1990, illustrates well enough the confusion on economic concepts that existed at that time even at the highest political level:

> In respect of the property question, G. Razumovski read the following statement from the draft document: 'The Communist Party of the Soviet Union considers that the current state of the country's economic development does not exclude the ownership of property, including the means of production, by individual workers or by groups [of workers]. Irrespective of what form property takes, the exploitation of human beings cannot be countenanced'… Gorbachev's reaction to this passage was to reject the idea of private property because 'many comrades from workers' collectives, secretaries of Party committees and those working with them will raise the question of whether such a move will lead to a negative reaction among the people, among the masses'….

> Eventually the document approved by the plenary was written to reassure the public without actually explaining the true state of things. It endorsed the principle of different forms of property – the leading role of public property, the 'de-bureaucratization' or socialization of state property and support for workers' and collectively owned group property alongside the harmonious regulation of both a planned and a market economy.

At the same time it sought the Soviet Union's integration with the global economy, the convertibility of the rouble and the development of market incentives. In other words, it packed together items that could not be made compatible, either in theory or in practice. (Krausz, 2007, pp. 13–14)

As this passage shows, the semantic confusions on the most essential concepts related to the Soviet economic transformations stemmed from the highest level of Soviet political establishment responsible for strategic policy development. Partly, those confusions occurred because of the naivety and inexperience of many Soviet high-rank officials, including Gorbachev, in economic issues (Beschloss & Talbott, 1994); partly, Gorbachev and his surrounding strategically employed vague linguistic formulations because they wanted to mollify public opinion unfavorable to the introduction of private ownership (Aage, 1991).

The same confusion in meanings was fixed in draft amendments to the country's constitution, discussed in March 1990, which stated, for example, that the economy of the USSR was moving toward the "socialization of state property." The concept "private property" was omitted while the concept "civil property" was introduced instead. That "civil property," however, allowed for "the pursuit of independent economic activity not prohibited by law." As Krausz (2007) notes,

There was no mention of surplus value or capital income, only of 'income derived from labour' and 'other legal sources'… Alongside various associations, societies and communities of workers and citizens, 'joint stock companies' were also listed among the forms of collective property without any mention of income that would accrue from the ownership of capital in such a company. Collective property would materialize as part of the 'transformation of state property' through the 'voluntary amalgamation of the assets

of citizens and organizations'. Accordingly, privatization (i.e. the private appropriation of state property) had no place in the amended Soviet constitution. (p. 16)

Under such profound contradictions even within the official discourse at the highest state level it is no wonder that privatization ultimately came to Soviet life not through the back door: not through a transparent and "voluntary amalgamation of assets" but through fraudulent and forced expropriation of state property. The mythology of market transformations, where conceptual forms were filled with divergent and contradictory meanings, had a lot to do with the obscurity of that process.

The first Soviet program for the transition to a free market system, "500 Days" prepared by Stanislav Shatalin in 1990, appeared in the culture of strategic linguistic manipulations that Gorbachev's surrounding had already initiated. On the one hand, Shatalin's (1990a) program explicated its goal clearly – the creation of institutions necessary for establishing a new economic system based on the principles of the free market. The program identified eight main principles of the new economic system:

1. Maximum freedom for economic subjects (an enterprise or an entrepreneur).
2. Full responsibility of an economic subject for the results of the business, based on legal recognition of all kinds of property, including private property.
3. Competition of producers as a major source of incentives to business activities, improvement in the variety and quality of goods to meet market requirements, cost reduction and price stabilization.
4. Market [determined] prices
5. Market relations should be extended to all spheres that are more efficient than the state

6. The economy of the USSR should be open and consistently integrated into the world economic system.

7. A major responsibility of state authorities at all levels, primarily at Republican and local ones, was to provide a high standard of social security of the people, which is to be understood, on the one hand, as a guarantee of equal opportunities for all people to earn their own living, and on the other hand, as state support to disabled or socially vulnerable people.

8. All government bodies relinquish their direct engagement in business (with the exception of some special fields). (cited in Dorn, 1991, p. 183)

Those principles, fixed in Shatalin's program, signaled clearly: The time has come to abandon the initial economic conception of perestroika as a transition from the system of state property to a system of collectively owned enterprises and to embrace a new conception of the transition to private ownership.

Although the program set a goal of transition to a market economy, its wording also produce an impression that the main purpose of the program was to establish economic equality and to introduce the self-management of state enterprises:

> The program sets forth the task of taking everything possible from the state and giving it over to the people.... Through Perestroika and the redistribution of property through denationalization and privatization, the right to property is realized by the transfer of state goods into the hands of citizens. It is precisely the transfer of property to the people that primarily demonstrates the social orientation of the economy. This is not an act of revisionism, but of restoring social justice, strengthening the human right to receive a proportion of national wealth. (Shatalin, 1990a, p. 3)

Thus, while the program clearly proclaimed its goal of capitalist transformations, the language that conveyed those intentions remained the same: the idea "to take from the state and giving it over to people," stated by Shatalin, clearly referred to Gorbachev's and Agabegyan's pro-socialist visions on reforms during the first phase of perestroika.

The problem of the divergence of meanings under the convergence of language worsened even more with the intensification of political struggle in the former USSR and Gorbachev's attempts to maneuver between different political forces. The more political maneuvering was needed, the more language games were employed. It is sufficient to mention that from 1985 to 1991, Gorbachev announced at least ten radical plans for economic restructuring, none of which were fully implemented (Boettke, 1993). All of those programs addressed liberalization and privatization and employed the same terms relevant to them, but each of them filled those concepts with different meanings, which reflected the views or the interests of the programs' authors (Dorn, 1991).

The semantic confusion of meanings at the level of high-rank political discourses was further diffused across Soviet society by intellectuals of various calibers. As Shlapentokh's (1993) analysis of the intellectuals' discourse shows, leading Soviet economists could never agree on either the meaning or the form of the market transformations initiated by Gorbachev, interpreting the term privatization in different ways: basically, they divided on what form this private ownership should take. Some of them envisaged collectives of workers owning enterprises – so-called "neo-collectivists"; others considered market collectivism as utopia and adhered to a classical market model – so-called "pure liberals" or "individualists." The latter cohort claimed that the collective owners of enterprises would "eat up their income" and that collective ownership would never stimulate productivity. Some "individualists" also maintained

that collective privatization would grant privileges to the workers of large industrial enterprises, thus depriving other sectors of population of the right to become industrial owners (Shlapetnokh, 1993).

Shlapentokh (1993) mentions several reasons that accounted for the popularity of collectivist privatization among Soviet intellectuals. Some of them were purely practical: neo-collectivists believed that workers would work much better if they owned their enterprises and that collective privatization could be accomplished quickly. Other reasons belonged to cultural and ideological spheres. At the beginning of perestroika, many Soviet intellectuals were under the strong influence of socialist ideas. The adherence to socialism was even stronger among the working people of the USSR – a factor that both the ideologists of the reforms and their supporters among intellectual circles could not easily ignore. As Dorn (1991) put it, "Perhaps the biggest roadblock to developing a private free-market system is the anti-capitalist mentality that still persists in the CIS [the Commonwealth of Independent States]. After living off the state for their entire lives, most people in the CIS have become conditioned to socialism and fear the risks of capitalism" (p. 188). So many advocates of market transformations had nothing to do but to puzzle how the ideas of the capitalist market and the realities of socialist culture could be successfully married.

To reformulate this problem in terms of strategic framing, discussed in Chapter 2, they puzzled themselves with how to extend their frames of references to reforms and reformulate them taking into account the anti-capitalist mood of their mass audiences. While presenting the idea of collective privatization, they thus tried to marry the efficiency of capitalism and the popularity of socialist ideas. That is why the term privatization was replaced sometimes with the term collectivization (Shlapentokh, 1993).

In "Perestroika and the Redistribution of Property in the Soviet Union," Tamas Krausz (2007) discusses the trend among political and intellectual elites (domestic and foreign) to hide the plans to liberalize the Soviet economy under the veil of collectivistic discourse (2007). Describing the presentation of economic reforms at the founding congress of the anticommunist opposition movement Democratic Russia on 20–21 October 1990, she notes, for example, that "the problem of privatization and the protection of the welfare of workers were discussed as if the two were not incompatible" (p. 26). Krausz also points out that the IMF, in its program for the regime change in the USSR, also employed the same ambivalent language. With the aim to proclaim a capitalist market economy, the IMF avoided any reference to capitalism: "the term 'capitalism' itself was hardly used in the document" (Krausz, 2007, p. 28). Both Shlapentokh (1993) and Krausz (2007) came to agree that the proponents of laissez-faire reforms strategically extended and transform their frames in order to take into account the anti-market and anti-privatization mood of the mass Soviet population.

According to Shlapentokh, "pure liberals" started openly propagating their ideas only after 1991, when it became clear that the Soviet Union could not be reanimated and that the attempts to marry socialism and capitalism – even at the level of discourse – could be finally abandoned. At that point, when the Soviet economy and the Soviet state had already been ruined, it became safe to promote "pure" market ideas, which reserved no place for collectivism. At this period (late 1991–1992), when Moscow initiated radical economic reforms, many former advocates for collective privatization revised their previous views in favor of establishing private ownership over state property. As this chapter shows, to revise views on privatization – from collectivist to individual – was not so easy for common Soviet people, who went on believing in the collectivist myths of liberalization even when the authors of those myths – high-rank officials

and intellectuals serving them – had already abandoned their own mythology. It was also not so easy for common Soviet people to change their views on other myths created under the umbrella of market progressive transformations that perestroika generated.

The United States

One of the most interesting parts of the story of how Soviet intellectuals appropriated the ideas of capitalist modernity was their exploiting the image of the United States to construct arguments in favor of democratization and liberalization. Those constructions were created through accentuating only positive aspects of U.S. realities and ignoring other, less favorable dimensions. As a result of that framing, an image of a perfectly just, democratic, wealthy, and egalitarian USA came to life where all people enjoyed equal political opportunities and equal access to material resources. In order to understand how that mythology could appear and look realistic the late USSR, it is necessary to briefly review the history of Soviet-American relations starting from 1920s, when Bolsheviks placed themselves at the head of the former Russian Empire.

It is well known that the United States' rise to world power in the course of the 20th century was inextricably linked with its global cultural expansion, the dissemination of images of affluence, consumerism, middle-class status, individual freedom, and technological progress. As Rosenberg (1996) describes this, "American mass culture came to provide the very definition of what was 'modern': assembly line production for a broad market, consumerism fed by advertising, and media packaging of identity, lifestyle, and taste" (p. 695). This vision of the U.S. as a model of modernity was not alien to the authors of the Bolshevik project, whose attitude toward the United States illustrated their selectivity regarding different elements of Western modernity discussed in chapter 1. Despite their contempt for capitalism, many Soviet leaders

admired its flagship, the United States, for its efficiency, the scale of its industrial development, and other features of American culture that made the U.S. look like a model of modernity and progress:

> The reference to America in Stalin's 1924 definition of Leninism (a combination of 'Russian Revolutionary Sweep' and 'American Efficiency') was typical of post-revolutionary Bolshevik culture: the symptoms range from Lenin's enthusiastic acceptance of Taylorism to less significant speculations about the new man as a 'Russian American.'" (Arnason, 1993, p. 118)

As Peter Beilharz (2009) explains, Soviet enthusiasm for America was an example of mass modernism: "All the motifs were there – speed, efficiency, the machine: locomotion, automation and automobile, progress and more progress, giganticism, growth at Americanski tempo" (p. xii). Bukharin called for Marxism plus Americanism; Trotsky demanded Bolshevism in the form of Soviet shoes with American nails; Lenin promised Soviet power plus American technology, American-like organization of trusts, American public education, and American tractors. "Vladimir Mayakovsky loved the Brooklyn Bridge, and almost everybody admired Henry Ford… Stalin was happy to acknowledge that fully two-thirds of the nation's large industrial establishments had been built with American assistance" (Beilharz, 2009, p. xii). This Bolshevik admiration for the United States – the leader of the Western world – looked only natural against the long history of Russian elites' admiration for the West and vision of their country as "backward" and "lagging" in comparison (Ivakhnenko, 2007, p. 599). Yet, the myth of the U.S. as a model of modernity outlived the Bolshevik project and the USSR itself.

After the Great Patriotic War, Stalin, realizing that the U.S. had become the USSR's main competitor, aimed Soviet propaganda at "Uncle Sam" (Shiraev & Zubok, 2000, p. 11). However,

because of the ambivalence of Soviet attitudes toward Western modernity – from admiring its technological progress to condemning its exploitative economics – the image of the United States and the West in the eyes of the Soviet people remained inconsistent and conflicting. Nikita Khrushchev, known for his friendship with U.S. millionaire Roswell Garst, his famous denunciations of capitalism, and his public acknowledgment that the USSR was far behind the U.S. in terms of economic development, was a perfect personification of the contradictory attitudes to the United States that existed in Soviet society.

Khrushchev's Thaw, which released political prisoners and raised the Iron Curtain so that Soviet citizens could travel abroad, allowed many to see the positive sides of Western modernity not only in terms of technological or scientific progress but also as happy consumerism. Khrushchev's slogan "catch up and overtake America" illustrates the centuries-old striving for westernization by Russia's elites. However, the historic peculiarity of his catchy words lay in the fact that they started the tradition of imagining Soviet modernity not in terms of social justice, as Bolsheviks always tried to present it, but in terms of consumer happiness – a frame more pertinent for a Western consumer society than for a Communist ideological state. Starting in the 1960s, Western commodities flooded the Soviet black market:

> The spread of American material and cultural symbols – like blue jeans, cigarettes, and
> jazz and rock music – was a healthy reaction to the monotony, uniformity, poverty, and
> duplicity of Soviet life. Music and clothing styles, idolization of cult stars, and beatnik-
> like behavior became the core elements of this counter culture that, for some reason, took
> root first among the children of the Soviet nomenklatura… In the mindsets of many
> young, trendy, and educated Soviets, John F. Kennedy, Ernest Hemingway, and Marilyn

> Monroe replaced the hackneyed icons of traditional Soviet heroes... America became "a cool place to be." (Shiraev & Zubok, 2000, p. 19)

As Shiraev and Zubok note, this swing toward pro-American views was based on romanticism, mythology, and creative imagination: "Most of the Soviet youth elites never met or personally knew many Americans, and never traveled to the United States. Nevertheless, they had a choking hunger for American mass culture's artifacts and information" (Shiraev & Zubok, 2000, p. 20). Shiraev and Zubok also testify that "there was a crucial link between the tiny group of 'out-of-the-closet' dissenters and Western – mostly U.S. government-funded media, from the *Voice of America* to *Radio Liberty*. Through this linkage, the faint voices of dissent and their hand-copied samizdat publications reached an audience of millions" (p. 22). These observations point to the important link between the ideological part of the U.S.-centered mythology of modernism popular in the USSR and its cultural component, rooted in the specific problems of Soviet people, who lived in a society with strong ideological control over all cultural spheres. The Cold War alliance between the Western media – primarily the dominating American media – and the anti-Soviet dissidents remained a noticeable phenomenon of Russian social life through the 1980s.

At the end of the 1980s, when Communist ideology was jettisoned at the highest official level, liberal ideas of the U.S. type reached full flower. Many of those reformers who supported Gorbachev had lived half of their lives fighting against Stalinism and "absorbed with their mother's milk the ideas of renewal and reform and grew up with them" (Abalkin, 1995, p. 6). For many of them, as Shiraev and Zubok (1999) testified, "pro-Americanism was part of their social identity, a symbol of rejection of the Communist past and a promise of Russia's integration into the international community of developed nations" (p. 28). Not only did those pro-American

Soviet intellectuals present the U.S. to their mass audiences as a manifestation of freedom, democracy, and prosperity, they also constructed those concepts in terms of political and economic egalitarianism, claiming that America's distinguishable characteristic was its collective ownership of the means of production.

Vladimir Shlapentoch (1993) provides a useful overview of these intellectual fantasies. Vasilii Seliunin, a famous Soviet publicist, for example, argued that 60% of Americans owned stocks in the enterprises they worked for. Svyatoslav Fedorov, an outstanding Soviet doctor and the leader of *The Party of Workers' Self-Rule*, believed that 30 percent of all stocks in the USA belonged to the workers – the stock holders of their enterprises. Vladimir Patrikeev, a Soviet writer, managed to observe that the USA had experienced a transformation from classic ownership of property by one or two owners to the new ownership by workers' collectives. Ruslan Khasbulatov, a Soviet economist, praised *American Employee-Sponsored Ownership Program* (ESOP) and invited its participants to Moscow to propagate the idea of collective privatization. In general, those intellectuals tried to persuade the Soviet people that "workers' enterprises were the leading, most promising form of property in the U.S. that would soon dominate its economy (Shlapentokh, 1993).

By referring to the experience of the USA as a "model" of collective ownership of means of production, Soviet reformers provided their audiences with the proof of their basic thesis: privatization, deregulation, and liberalization were necessary measures to achieve a "normal" human condition that was equated to the condition of private owners. The myth of a wealthy and prosperous American economy owned by workers was called to illustrate: the dream could come true, and the Soviet Union could also become prosperous as soon as it would privatize state enterprises. During the first stage of the privatization debate, the idea of collective privatization

was popular among Soviet intellectuals, who tried to persuade their mass publics that collectively owned enterprises not only existed in the U.S. but were the dominant part of the American economy. Through referring to the USA as a model of egalitarian democracy, freedom, and prosperity, Soviet intellectuals made their audiences believe that democratization and liberalization could bring prosperity and egalitarianism not only in theory but in practice as well.

As my following chapter shows, the myths created by Moscow elites are strikingly similar to those in the pages of the Kharkov *O*. For *O* writers, the United States also was an embodiment of freedom, equality, prosperity, humanism, civilization, and progress.

PART III.THE VERNACULAR VS. THE ELITE: EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Chapter 6

Research Design

The Choice of the Newspapers

This dissertation analyzes the content of two Kharkov newspapers, *Orientir* and *Vecherniy Kharkov*, from the beginning of 1989 to the end of 1991. That was the most crucial period of Gorbachev's perestroika, when heated debates on the country's future took place within the Soviet public sphere. Many of those debates were spinning around such vital historical events as the last elections of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (May 25, 1989) or the first free elections of the Supreme Parliament of Ukraine (March 13, 1990). The culmination of these discursive attempts to imagine the future was the parade of sovereignties of the Soviet republics and the demise of the USSR, which was officially recognized with the Belavezha Accords signed on December 8, 1991.

I have chosen for my analysis these two newspapers – *Orientir* (hereafter *O*) and *Vecherniy Kharkov* (hereafter *VH*) – because of their distinctly different readership orientations. Although both of the outlets were published in Kharkov, their content differed significantly. The major part of *O's* materials was articles or interviews by famous figures of perestroika as Yegor Gaidar, Grigoriy Yavlinskiy, Anatiliy Sobchak, Valeriya Novodvorskaya, Vitaliy Korotich, and others of their ilk. The predominant majority of them lived in Moscow and represented the highest level of perestroika's intellectual discourse. In contrast, *VH* specialized in publishing materials by local authors, where the letters to the editor written by workers of Kharkov industrial enterprises occupied a special place.

Within the indicated time period, from the beginning of 1989 to the end of 1991, I analyze letters to the editors, interviews, feature articles, and published opinions that discussed late Soviet democratic and market transformations. By selecting commentaries rather than hard news, I conceptualized the newspaper not as a "vendor of news" but as a "dealer of public opinion" (Habermas, 1974/1964, p. 53). In other words, I considered the papers as media of the local public sphere, which was only a smaller part of the all-Soviet discursive universe. Within this local public sphere, local publics discussed and reinterpreted ideas expressed at the national, Moscow level. With this conceptualization, I also address Rosaneu's (1990) idea of cascades (see Chapter 1) that reflects the interactions between national and local imaginations and lead to the creation of local discursive fields.

The Choice of the Locale

The main reason why I selected Kharkov to be my research site is my personal experience with this city: there I was born, attended school and university, and worked as a reporter at a local television company during and after the disintegration of the USSR. I believe that my knowledge of local culture – understood both as a total "way of life" (Williams, 1977, p. 19) and as a professional journalistic culture (Bourdieu, 1988) – will allow me to make this analysis deeper and subtler. I present my personal reflections on the matter in the final section of Chapter 10.

There are some other, no less important, reasons why I think Kharkov is a good choice for the kind of analysis I attempt to perform. First, Kharkov's political discussions at the end of the 1980s were not nationalistic, as in many other peripheral parts of the Soviet state. This factor seems important to me because the national question is not in the focus of my research. Kharkov is a borderline city where not ethnic Ukrainian but "multiple" or "hybrid" identities prevail

(Rodgers, 2006, p. 682), and this peculiarity has its historical explanation. The settlements of Sloboda Ukraine were founded in the mid-seventeenth century by both Ukrainian migrants from central parts of Ukraine who tried to escape religious and social violence in the regions controlled by Poland and Russian people whom Russian Tsar sent to the southern steppes to establish a defense line against the raids of Crimean Tatars. The fortress of Kharkov – the center of Sloboda Ukraine – was erected in 1654, and from the very beginning it was inhabited by both Ukrainians and Russians (Kevorkyan, 2007). Because of Sloboda Ukraine's close relations with Russian people, its official integration into the empire in the eighteenth century encountered little controversy or protest (Leckey, 2002). More than that: when in 1658 hetman Vigovsky called the left-bank Ukraine to join his rebellion against Moscow, Kharkovites refused. Tsar Alexiy Mikhailovich showed his gratitude by granting Kharkov numerous economic privileges (Kevorkyan, 2007, p. 14). As Rodgers (2006) testifies, "Under tsarist rule, Kharkiv developed rapidly, being considerably larger than Kiev" (p. 686). This state of things lasted until 1934, when Kharkov gave way for Kiev to become the first city of Ukraine.

The capital of Soviet Ukraine from 1919 until 1934, Kharkov was a major cultural, intellectual, and transport center of the USSR. It also became a major center for the military-industrial complex, a model modern city of the Soviet Ukraine: "The world communist movement was on its rise, and it was a rare month when a delegation of European revolutionaries and sympathetic to them cultural figures such as Romain Rolland or Anri Barbus would not have visited Kharkov" (Kevorkyan, 2007, p. 91). With the help of American specialists, the Kharkov Tractor Plant, the second of three Soviet industrial giants (including Stalingrad and Cheliabinsk enterprises) was built in 1933 (Ball, p. 125). On the whole, during the years of the first five-year

plan periods, more than one thousand industrial enterprises were erected in the first capital of Soviet Ukraine (Kevorkyan, 2007, p. 94).

Kharkov was also one of the leading educational and scientific centers of the former USSR, with 60 scientific institutes, 30 establishments of higher education, and 8 military academies. This contributed to the cosmopolitan image of Kharkov: thousands of students from so-called "developing" countries, as well as from the countries of the Warsaw Bloc, studied there. Because of the flow of new images and ideas, which visitors from more prosperous Socialist countries such as Yugoslavia, Hungary, or Czechoslovakia brought to the USSR (Crowley & Reid, 2000), Kharkov quickly became not only a model proletarian city but also a city where many ideas of Western modernity spread and became popular.

Kharkov prides itself on being the first city in the former USSR where a television program free from Communist party control was established (this news program was launched by the private television company *Tonis* in 1989). During 1989–1991, dozens of other private media companies appeared in Kharkov as well. Former state media changed their status: in the many cases, the collectives of journalists became their new owners. It was not until the middle of 1990s, when oligarchs formed new media system establishing control over journalism (Kulyk, 2010, p. 305). During 1989–1991, Kharkov newspapers, magazines, radio stations, and television companies (as well as the whole media system of the USSR), were free to openly express their ideological preferences.

Taken together, all these factors present Kharkov as a modern city that has been always open for new ideas and developments and whose vibrant public sphere allowed it to expectinteresting interpretations of the concepts of Western modernity in the course of perestroika reforms.

Chapter 7

Mythologizing Democracy

Intellectual Myths

The highway of civilization. Many Soviet intellectuals shared Gorbachev's late-perestroika vision that broad democratization of Soviet society would lead to progress and civilization. Like Gorbachev in the final phase of perestroika, they also accentuated not a transition from socialism to capitalism, but a transition from non-democracy (or defective democracy) to real, true democracy, which they presented as the "natural" state of things. Here is how Vitaliy Korotich, a famous Soviet publicist and a deputy of the USSR Supreme Soviet, imagined the process:

> The party has done a lot, indeed, but it needs reforms. But until the opposition appears, until debaters go on, the party will be in trouble… In Russia, we have always confused two notions – the opposition and the enemy. Oppositionists are people who go to the same aim through a different path. The enemy is the enemy. But for us, these two notions are synonyms. Until we abandon this stereotype of thinking, we will achieve nothing. We should not block natural process. If we have come to this state of pregnancy, let us allow for a normal delivery of a democratic society. (Korotich, 1990b, p. 2)

As is evident from this statement, Korotich imagined democracy as a natural occurrence. The metaphor of pregnancy, which he employed, stressed the idea that democratic transformations were nothing but a natural impulse to new life, new beginning, new hope, and new future.

What Korotich's metaphor of "naturalness" obscured was the fact that democracy was not an abstract ideological construct but a system of beliefs that had been formed as a result of

complex historical, social, cultural, and philosophical developments within the *Western* world.

As is well known, the transformation of European feudal societies into bourgeois liberal

constitutional systems was an outcome of complex societal processes of the separation of public

and private realms, the differentiation between state and society, the growth of a literary public

sphere, the formation of public opinion, the flourishing of the European philosophy of liberalism,

and the development of pre-industrial capitalist economic relations. It is through these processes,

specific to European societies of the 17th - 19th centuries, that the bourgeoisie learned to

critically reflect upon its role in society and came to the realization of its political rights

(Habermas, 1989/1962). In other words, democracy in the West appeared when European

societies became socially and culturally complex to an extent sufficient for the emergence of

democratic forms of governance. As Robert D. Kaplan (2000) put it, "The lesson to draw is not

that dictatorship is good and democracy bad but that democracy emerges successfully only as a

capstone to other social and economic achievements" (p. 66). Those achievements were anything

but "natural" – they were socially and culturally predisposed. By presenting democracy as a

natural occurrence, Korotich deprived the concept of its intellectual history, signifying it with the

mythical meaning of a universal civilizational condition.

Korotich's conceptualization of the opposition – a necessary prerequisite for successful

democratization – deserves attention as well. As he claimed, oppositionists differed from

enemies because they were "people who go to the same aim through a different path." He

explained nothing, however, about that mysterious "aim." Was it an updated socialism of the

Marxism-Leninism type, as Gorbachev suggested at the beginning of perestroika, or was it its

social-democratic version, which Gorbachev favored later? Did going "to the same aim through a

different path" mean retaining socialism of Marxist-Leninist type by improving the system of

social relations within it, as was declared at the beginning of reforms? Or did Korotich imply the eradication of the socialist system altogether, as actually happened? There was no answer to these questions in Korotich's writing. He used the form "democracy" as an empty conceptual form, without explaining what he really meant by it. Instead, he constructed the inevitability of moving to that unclear democracy by means of presenting it as a natural occurrence of pregnancy, which could apparently be interrupted only by a forced abortion.

The main problem of the Soviet Union, which Korotich and other Soviet liberal intellectuals constructed within the framework of progress and movement to civilization, appeared through their writing as the attempts of Communist conservatives to step aside from this natural road, to interrupt "pregnancy," and to kill, thus, all hopes for rebirth and renaissance. They presented the Communist party as a totally immoral force diverting from the road of humanism and civilization:

> The party of Bolsheviks suffered a historical defeat because it stepped aside from high principles of humanism. It had invented a "revolutionary morals" that abolished simple Biblical truths "don't kill," "don't steal," and "don't lie." Without hesitation, Bolsheviks answered Dostoyevsky's question "Is it possible to found happiness for humankind on the tears of one tortured child?" by saying "Yes." The logic of this perverted moral has turned it into a monstrous generator of evil. It doesn't matter what is written on the banner – "Deutschland, Deutschland, uber alles!" or "Forward, to the victory of Communism!" if the greatness of ends justifies the baseness of means. The moral pivot of the current revolution, in my opinion, is the return to humanness and the priority of high ethical laws. (Tirnov, 1990, p. 2)

Like Korotich, the author of this article followed a metaphorical framework of a super

humanistic highway along which all progressive humanity had been moving to a moral and

ethical future. The metaphor implied that, in contrast to Soviet and fascist renegades (most

likely, by referring to "Deutschland, Deutschland, uber alles," the author meant the Nazi regime

that used the first stanza of the song in its anthem), the true followers of the democratic highway

lived according to the highest standards of "morality," "virtue," and "high ethical laws."

The author constructed this mythical frame through several strategic omissions. First,

referring to the Nazi regime, he failed to mention that Hitler came to power through democratic

procedures and, therefore, democracy does not always bring "civilization." Second, the author

also failed to acknowledge that in complex differentiated societies, where the plurality of

competing conceptions of the good replaces the homogeneousness of tradition, one can hardly

talk about morality or ethics in singular terms; it is even more difficult to do so on a global scale,

where many cultures have moral standards that differ radically from those that people in the

West usually take for granted (Adeney-Risakotta, 1995). Third, the author ignored the fact that

not only the bigots of communism and fascism but also the zealots of Enlightenment often

followed the logic of a "perverted morality" allowing huge human sufferings for the sake of

some alleged "happiness" of humankind. In other words, the author forgot to mention that the

political and cultural history of "progressive" Europe is inseparable from "the bloody history of

imperialism, of colonialism, of subjugations, wars, attacks and defences, the history of

perpetrator societies which see themselves as perpetual victims" (Beck, 2007, p. 41). This

suppressed dark side of Western history was anything but the Biblical principles "not to kill" and

"not to steal": colonization brought people throughout the world physical and moral sufferings,

ruining of their native cultures, and deprivation of their wealth. (Fanon, 2004; Go, 2008; Said, 1979; Taussig, 1984)

Instead of recognizing the complexity in which the past and present of the "uncivilized" world are intertwined with the past and the present of Western civilization, pro-liberal Soviet intellectuals preferred to simplify the story, separating its parts and reducing the narrative of global history to a primitive theme of a fight between the forces of good and evil – the agents of the future and the past. This is how the chief editor of *O*, Valeriy Dashevkiy, metaphorically described the battle of the obsolete, which conservative party forces represented, and the nascent, personified by "the people of good will":

> The clock stopped in the era of stagnation[4]; squares and workshop appear before us as arenas of struggle between the past and the future, the nascent and the obsolete. We believe in the inevitability of changes, in the triumph of democracy, and in the solidarity of people of good will. (Dashevskiy, 1989, p. 2)

The metaphor of the stopped clock that Dashevsky employed illustrated the emptiness of Soviet times, the anomality of its being. This construction suggested that the changes were inevitable, normalizing, and healing: the flywheel would start up and justice would triumph, to the joy of all people of good will.

Several strategic omissions played an important role in this mythical construction. First, the author claimed that the clock stopped in the era of stagnation. This means that his basic concern was not political but economic: during Brezhnev's era of "stagnation" political repressions stopped being a burning issue: they were "limited and highly selective, and

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[4] "Stagnation" is a period of economic, political, and social stagnation in the Soviet Union, which began during the rule of Leonid Brezhnev and continued under Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko.

ideological indoctrination has become more of a bureaucratic ritual than an ardent inquisition" (Castells, 2000c, p. 6). Instead, economic problems came to the fore: "shortages of everything became a structural feature of the Soviet economy" (Castells, 2000c, p. 20). However, as it is evident from Dashevsky's deductions, he saw the solution of these economic problems in the democratic "triumph." By filling the conceptual form of "democracy" with the meaning of "economic success," he left aside the experience of the societies whose economic successes were associated with anything but democratization. The most successful among those societies were the "Asian tigers," whose swift economic development was secured through severe political repressions (Castells, 2000c). As the histories of the successful modernization of Singapore, South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China show, economic achievements do not always stem from democratic developments. On the contrary, "democracy can be not only risky but disastrous: during the last phases of the post-First World War German and Italian democracies, for example, the unemployment and inflation figures for Germany and the amount of civil unrest in Italy were… abysmal" (Kaplan, 2000, p. 62). Nothing of this kind did the chief editor of *O* present for his readers; all negative aspects of the relationship between democracy and economic success were left out of his dominant frame.

There was a consensus among liberal Soviet intellectuals regarding who should be considered as "people of good will" representing "the nascent" and who would be the forces of evil representing "the obsolete." Here are some examples from various *O* commentaries that addressed the issue:

The conservatives from the CPSU do not have a future. They don't have a solid program for how to overcome the crisis. (Smirnov, 1990, p. 5)

The plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU has once again demonstrated its

unwillingness to agree to radical changes in the party and society. (Belostotskiy et al.,

1990, p. 2)

We need to eradicate the power of bureaucracy and to ruin the mechanisms of the

administrative command system. (All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, 1989, p.

3)

As is clear from these passaged, *O* authors, like the readers of *VH*, were confident that

Communist conservatives, party nomenklatura, and bureaucracy symbolized the past and that

destroying administrative-command system was necessary in order to move to a democratically

radiant future. But what kind of state organization did Soviet liberal intellectuals envisage

instead of the administrative-command system and the party bureaucracy?

O intellectual contributors imagined their future state as a free society of independent

individuals. As Anatoliy Sobchak, one of the most prominent activists of perestroika, out it:

There is only one way to the future – the creation of normal civil society [emphasis is

mine], in which any person can make his/her own political and economic decisions, while

the state provides only surface [внешние] conditions of existence. (Sobchak, 1990, p. 15)

Sobchak did not explain how exactly such a state with mysterious "surface" conditions would

look like. Would it provide means for reconciling the competing interests of its citizens, such as

an open public sphere? Would it provide such public goods as collective security and welfare?

Would it regulate markets in the public interest and defend this interest against the threats of

monopolization? Would it control the educational and scientific spheres to develop human

capital and competitive advantages in the international arena? Would it sustain an effective

system of law? As is well known, governments in the contemporary world have to deal with all

these problems (Giddens, 2000, p. 47), the list of which is so impressive that to suppose that the state and government can perform only a "surface" function makes no sense: neither market forces nor civil society can replace governments in any of these areas.

By ignoring all these complex issues and stressing the importance of civil society alone, Sobchak's writing produced an impression that the state is not an important agent of social life – an outlook that contradicts completely the evidence provided by such economically successful societies as Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, or China. As Manuel Castells (2000c) shows, "behind the economic performance of Asian tigers breathes the dragon of the developmental state" (p. 276). But not only Asian tigers' economic success is associated with the interventionist policies of the state. Analyzing the great transformation of European civilization from the preindustrial world to the era of industrialization, Karl Polanyi (2001/1944) came to the conclusion that, "There was nothing natural about laissez-faire…. The thirties and forties [in Great Britain] saw… an enormous increase in the administrative function of the state" (p. 145). The experience of the United States, despite its liberal culture, also shows that the state played a "vital role in shaping the evolution of the economy" (Stiglitz, 2003, p. 21). Avoiding any reflections on the crucial role of the state institutions in societal life, especially during the periods of transition, Sobchak also drew the attention of his audiences away from the fact that economic success can hardly be achieved without social stability in a society that lacks effective state institutions. Under these circumstances, democracy can actually weaken societies and lead to anarchy, disintegration, and economic collapse – an outcome of democratization that many African, Latin American, and later post-Soviet societies saw with their own eyes (Castells, 2000c; Kaplan, 2000).

On the other hand, by appealing to a normal civil society, Sobchak created an illusion of the existence of some mythically universal norm, according to which civil societies can be arranged. In stating this, he ignored the fact that the philosophical and historical roots of the concept of civil society have its Western origin, being intrinsically related to the development of capitalism, the formation of national bourgeoisies, and the transformation of societal consciousness. Presenting civil society as an abstract norm, not as a product of specific social and cultural developments, Sobchak produced an impression that it could be easily borrowed and successfully implanted in any socio-cultural milieu. By forming such an impression, Sobchak failed to consider one crucial question: What are the prospects of the emergence of a "normal" civil society in a country that lacks private ownership, a middle class, and mass public consciousness that would tolerate the social inequalities imposed by the market? As it is known from the history of democratic Western countries, all these constituents were vital for the development of their civil societies (Sievers, 2010).

To kill the dragon. Not all *O* authors ignored the importance of this question, however. In her interview published by *O* in September 1990, Valeria Novodvorskaya, a famous Soviet dissident and the founder of the Democratic Union, openly acknowledged that the advent of the "progressive future" was blocked not only by conservatives from the CPSU but by many common Soviet people who valued the egalitarian culture of their collective life. She also acknowledged that the roots of popular Soviet egalitarianism lay not so much in the ideological as in the cultural sphere:

Bolshevism is the prolongation of the autocratic history of Russia. Faithful. Servile.

Collectivist. In order to transform to democracy, we need to overcome not only Soviet

history but Russian history as well. We need to change our consciousness….To become

different and to scramble out of our skins....We need to kill dragons in ourselves…

Bolsheviks would have never won but for… the sea of egalitarianism and the desire for

leveling that had always existed here. (Novodvorskaya, 1990, p. 3)

In comparison to other contributors to *O*, Novodvorskaya set up a much more challenging task:

not only to weed out state bureaucracy but also to eradicate the culture of Soviet people, whose

egalitarian mood blocked the possibility of modernization.

Interestingly, while talking about the necessity of changing collective consciousness,

Novodvorskaya used "we," implying that she was one of the dragon's heads. She was hardly

sincere, however: Unlike many Soviet people who shared the egalitarian culture and valued the

egalitarian principles of their communal life, she strived to ruin those principles. Novodvorskaya

recognized that the dragon of totalitarianism derived its strength not from the "command

administrative system" per se but from people who gave the strength to that system:

"Totalitarianism is not a dragon that tortures unfortunate people; totalitarianism is such a social

state when the dragon has the same number of heads as it has people" (Novodvorskaya, 1990, p.

3). She was ready to fight those dragon's heads even though that they were in fact human: "It is

great to fight with them. It is wonderful to fight with them. It is cool to fight with them. It is not a

boring enterprise. In principle, it is fun…" (Novodvorskaya, 1990, p. 3).

Why it was such fun for Novodvorskaya to fight her own compatriots? Because, like

other pro-liberal intellectuals, she revered democracy piously, as if it were not a social practice in

the service of public good but a God whom people should worship. Everything that was against

her whole-hearted faith ought to be eradicated like a weed: nomenclature, people's culture, or

even people themselves. The backbone of her Democratic Union, as Novodvorskaya boasted,

were the activists "who are ready to sacrifice their lives for democracy" (Novodvorskaya,1990,

p. 3). So, according to Novodvorskaya, it was not democracy that served people's needs; on the contrary, people should serve democracy by sacrificing their lives or, at least, their ways of life. What is clearly discernible in her message is the "mission of conversion" that has been always present in all attempts of modernization: "To formulate the issue in modern terms: 'developing countries', or 'traditional societies', can be 'modernized', they can attain the salvation of Western universalism through the baptism of the market and democracy" (Beck, 2007, p. 24). For Novodvorskaya, as for many other bigots of modernization, democracy was not a living reflexive method on how to improve common societal life but an ossified ritual, or "the dead God," as Ulrich Beck put it (2007, p. 306).

Dissatisfaction with the human condition of the Soviet people is discernible in the writings of other *O* contributors as well. Sobchak, for example, complained:

Ligachev[5] is not a specific man, it is a phenomenon. We have hundreds of thousands of ligachevs multiplied at republican, regional, district, and other levels… They are not gifted with understanding of philosophical problems. And such people have formed our society! (Sobchak, 1990, p. 15)

Like Novodvorskaya, also recognized that communist orthodoxy represented by Ligachev was not the root of the problem: the real problem was Soviet people, many of whom shared Ligachev's views. From Sobchak's point of view, they did so because they were unable to evaluate the problems of their society philosophically; rather, they looked at their problems from very practical, bread-and-butter, perspectives. That seemed to be very frustrating for Sobchak,

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[5] Yegor Ligachev is a high-ranking official in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Originally a protégé of Gorbachev, Ligachev challenged his leadership by opposing Perestroika reforms.

who saw those down-to-earth people as intellectually inferior to him and those of his ilk – the progressive propagandists of democratic reforms for the sake of the civilized future.

The theme of the darkness of the "masses" was further developed by Sergei Mitrohin (1990), another famous activist of Gorbachev's era. His article appeared in *O* under an eloquent title, "A Treatise on the Crowd":

> The culmination of the tragedy is not so much the demise of the CPSU as its inevitable resurrection. And here we approach the scariest: all that has matured and started seeing clearly will be ruined by the inevitable outrage of the crowd, while all that is bigoted – bloody and monstrous – will go on living and winning in hopelessly fecundated people's souls…. This is the time when each thinking individual has to ask her/himself: am I lonely enough not to become a crowd? The future of the country depends on the answer of this question. The crowd is a soil on which the most dreadful and ugly things in our history have grown. (Mitrokhin, 1990, p. 13)

Mitrokhin continues the theme of a strong bond between Soviet popular culture and Communist ideology. Confident in the "inevitable resurrection" of the CPSU, he anticipates the return of the "bloody" and the "monstrous." In Mitrokhin's presentation, the Soviet "crowd" is nothing else but a soil for "the most dreadful and ugly things," which Soviet "democrats" equated with Bolshevism. Because many Soviet people supported Communists, the progressive activists of democratization saw those people as a dark force impeding progress, enlightenment, and civilization. The difference between Novodvorskaya and Mitrokhin was only the level of their bloodthirstiness: while Novodvorskaya suggested to "kill the dragon" with human heads, Mitrokhin suggested opposing "the crowd" without explaining how exactly this "opposing" could be achieved.

What united Novodvorskaya, Sobchak, Mitrokhin, Korotich, and other democratically minded Soviet intellectuals was the denial of the right of Soviet working people to preserve their familiar way of life. They refused to understand this desire on its own terms; instead, they interpreting it as a manifestation of an underdeveloped condition that needed to be eradicated or at least improved. Against this intellectual inferiority of their compatriots, they presented themselves as enlightened and progressive – that is, aligned with the civilized Western world. What they systematically failed to acknowledge by constructing this mythical frame of reference to democratic transformations is that such an exclusion of their own compatriots from the ranks of "worthy" people who deserve of being listened and understood was anything *but* democracy, where all opinions should matter. This finding goes in line with Robert Kaplan's (2003) observation that

> Some of the Russian market reformers (as well as their Western supporters and advisers) had very little faith or interest in democracy, fearing that if the Russian people were allowed to choose, they would not choose the "correct" (that is their) economic model…. It is not surprising that many of the market reformers showed a remarkable affinity to the old ways of doing business…. It is as if the market Bolsheviks, native true believers, as well as the Western experts and evangelists of the new economic religion who flew into the post-Socialist countries, attempted to use a benign version of Lenin's methods to steer the post-communism, "democratic" transition." (p. 136)

By excessively stressing the positive role of independently thinking individuals, Soviet pro-liberal intellectuals left aside the complex history of intellectual thought on the interrelation between the individual and the collective – one of the central issues of social philosophy (Smith & Little, 1931).

The distance that separated late Soviet democrats from those people who adhered to more traditional views on their collective life is evident in the case of Leonid Sukhov, the former taxi driver whom his working collective elected to be a parliamentary deputy. Sukhov opposed the idea of a multi-party system, arguing that the division into different parties would harm people's common good:

> I like an old parable about a broom that the father asked his sons to break. They could not do so. Then, they loosened the broom and broke each of its twigs easily… A multi-party system now is not in society's good. It only harms now. Many deputies defend the interests of their parties and think less about the interests of voters. If there is a fire in a neighbor's house, one needs to help without asking about the membership of a party, I think. (Sukhov, 1990, p. 2)

As it is clear from this message, Sukhov rejected the multi-party system, a sacred cow of liberal democrats, arguing that it would harm the interests of "voters," ordinary working people who delegated him to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. It is also clear that Sukhov did not imagine any other party, other than Communist, that would defend the interests of workers. With his metaphor of "the broom," Sukhov also opposed individualism, seeing society as a community of people – not an accidental assembly of individuals.

As I have already pointed out, by rejecting individualism, defending collectivism, and supporting Communist ideology, Sukhov and others of his ilk, in the eyes of pro-liberal intellectuals, personified the feelings of the "the crowd" – "a soil on which the most dreadful and ugly things" happened. No wonder that Sukhov, as one of *O's* commentators stated, was like a square peg in a round hole among the intellectual elites of perestroika:

Judging from the deputy's mail, many of his voters (not only Kharkovites) support

Sukhov entirely. However, his figure is considered odious in the circles of intellectuals.

An obvious signs of popularity is that Leonid Sukhov has become a character of

anecdotes. Here is one of them: "The question: 'How does the Supreme Soviet differs

from the British Parliament?' The answer: 'By Sukhov'." (Sukhov, 1990, p. 2)

The reason why many voters supported Sukhov was the simple fact that he expressed their own

views. Some of the letters to *VK* provide evidence that many Kharkovites also rejected a multi-

party system. "The project of a far-fetched Rukh[6], which has been created by Kyiv writers,

brings confusion into a clear program of perestroika," a team of metal-workers wrote (1989, p.

1). To the question "What is your opinion on informal movements?"[7] (Editorial, 1990a) 17.7%

of the readers of *VK* answered that "that was a constituent of democracy," 19% thought the

alternative movements were extremists and should have been outlawed, and 16.4% hesitated,

choosing to say that the party needed to conduct a dialogue with those movements. Although this

opinion poll did not represent the opinion of all Kharkovites, it pointed to the fact that there were

people in the declining USSR who could not understand why they needed any other party but the

CPSU to represent their economic interests.

As I have already shown, it was this adherence to the socialist system on the part of the

masses of Soviet working people that annoyed Soviet pro-liberal intellectuals most: they

presented people's unwillingness to move to democratic standards of the Western world as

ignorance, and darkness. They failed to acknowledge that there was a lot of sense in people's

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[6] "Rukh" means "People's Movement of Ukraine." It was founded as a civil movement in 1989 because all *parties* alternative to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union were forbidden.

[7] "Informal movements" here refers to all non-Communist and nonofficial social and political organizations.

opposition to the implementation of the multi-party system under the condition of the weakened Soviet state and social instability. Through their common sense, many Soviet people at the beginning of 1990s came to the ideas that some educated Western writers expressed much later, trying to make sense of what had happened to the USSR:

> Democracy often weakens states by necessitating ineffectual compromises and fragile coalition governments in societies where bureaucratic institutions never functioned well to begin with…. Because democracy neither forms states nor strengthens them initially, multiparty systems are best suited to nations that already have efficient democracies and a middle class that pays income tax, and where primary issues such as borders and power sharing have already been resolved, leaving politicians free to bicker about the budget and other secondary matters. (Kaplan, pp. 69–70)

As the history showed, people's fear that twigs can be broken easily if the broom is loosened was not unjustified. This is exactly what happened with the Soviet Union.

Some contributors to *O* from pro-liberal intelligentsia circles realized well enough: many people in the USSR did not support the multi-party system because they still believed that perestroika was not about the refusal of socialism but about the eradication of injustice (inequality) within the socialist system. Leonid Korobka, for example, wrote:

> On the one hand, CPSU, being the vanguard of proletariat, has already turned into a nationwide party. But the existence in our society of other classes will inevitably lead to the situation when each class will defend its interests, especially if democratic forces in our country further develop. Then, the possibility of the transition to a multi-party system will be real. On the other hand, what is the reason for peasants and workers to create their

parties if many representatives of these classes, including non-party people, share the

ideology of the CPSU? (Korobka, 1990, p. 6)

Korobka's reflections are interesting because he spoke of the possibility of the developing of

"other classes" without stating directly what he meant by this. Instead, he drew a veil over the

issue by equating "other classes" with "democratic forces." By making the development of

democracy the most salient aspect of his construction, Korobka obscured the fact that "different"

classes could hardly automatically emerge out of democratic politics of glasnost and that they

would rather appear through the economic stratification of society that would follow so-called

"big" privatization (described in the next chapter) – something that many working people of the

USSR did not want to happen (Aage, 1991).

Realizing well enough the negative attitudes of many Soviet people toward the multi-

party system, some of the intellectuals avoided calling things by their proper names, inventing

instead new mythological constructions. Speculating on the issue, deputy Yevtushenko, a famous

Soviet poet, suggested, for example, that, instead of producing "party blocks against non-party

blocks," it was necessary to create "the block of those who are indifferent against those who are

not" (Yevtushenko, 1990, p. 1). What Yevtushenko suggested was drawing a line between those

who were "indifferent" to democratic changes in the name of civilization and progress and those

who were against this – the chosen and all others. As we already know, the latters were

represented by working people who still believed in communism and the formers by intellectuals

who strived for "civilizing" no matter what.

Calling for progress for the sake of progress, Yevtushenko echoed Novodvorskaya,

whose party Democratic Union, as she claimed, was founded on "not on a statute, but on… the

stern air of revolt" (Novodvorskaya, 1990, p. 3). "We invite people to the fiesta of

disobedience," she boasted. "We invite them to join our common happiness. Because we are happy. We are free, and there is highest happiness in freedom. We have found ourselves" (Novodvorskaya, 1990, p. 3). Stressing not specific ideas related to democratic transformations but emotional conditions presumably associated with them ("indifference," "fiesta," "disobedience," "happiness," "freedom," and alike), Novodvorskaya, Yevtushenko, Korotich, and other activists of the reforms transformed democracy into a religious cult, which did not presuppose either critical evaluation or deliberative dialogue with political opponents; instead, what they invited for was democracy worship and bigoted intolerance to non-believers.

Summary. As this analysis shows, the propagandists of democratization among late Soviet intellectuals constructed the necessity of democratic transformations using specific discursive techniques. First, they presented democratization as a natural state of things that inevitably happens if no evil forces interfere with this natural development. Second, they presented democratization as a vehicle to achieve a civilized and moral condition, which they equated with belonging to the Western world. Third, they filled the conceptual form of democratization with the meaning of economic success, promising automatic solving of Soviet economic problems through the implementation of democratic procedures. By constructing this mythical democracy as a vehicle for achieving progress, success, and civilization, the proponents of reforms systematically left aside all the pertinent frames that had a potential to complicate their narrative. They systematically ignored the fact that democracy is not an abstract ideological construct but a product of western socio-cultural development and, thus, cannot be simply "borrowed." They also systematically failed to acknowledge that there is no positive correlation between democratization and economic success. They ignored that many non-Western societies

achieved economic success without democratization and, vice versa, many non-Western countries ruined their economies by means of democratic procedures.

Constructing the necessity of democratization and, thus, the conjunction with the "civilized world" for the sake of progress and economic success, the proponents of liberal reforms constructed their political opponents, including working people who shared egalitarian views, in religious metaphorical terms – as forces of evil who hampered the progress of the good. By decorating their frames of reference to democratic reforms with mystical colors, Soviet liberal "democrats" forgot to inform their mass publics that such non-rational and exclusivist framing has nothing to do with a normative end of the democratic project: to make political deliberation on important societal issues informed and inclusive (Fraser, 2007; Habermas, 1989/1962). Soviet liberal democrats failed to acknowledge that depriving the concept of democracy of its rich and complex meaning and transforming it into an empty shell filled with mythical signification, led not to the liberation but to the enslavement of mind. Such rhetorical strategy may help to gain a public support and defeat political enemies, but it cannot serve the purposes of genuine democratization, where all the arguments, pro and contra, should be presented in order to make publics aware of the lived contradictions of the complex political world and provoke their participation in public debates on the most important issues of societal life.

Finally, what the proponents of democratic reforms systematically hid from people's view was the fact democratization according to Western templates meant not the improvement of socialism, as Gorbachev promised at the beginning of perestroika, but movement to capitalist economic relations and class stratification. The reformers also failed to inform their public that the multi-party parliamentary system of the Western type is inherently interconnected with the

existence of different economic interests of stratified capitalist societies. Language games with the two meanings of democratization – as improvement of socialism and implementation of capitalism – allowed them to count on public support even among those publics that did not want to break off with socialism.

Vernacular Myths

Parliamentarians without political programs. The speeches of Kharkov candidates of the Supreme Soviet published in *VK* before the elections of 1989 provide a good view of the extent to which the meaning of democratic elections was unclear to many people of the late USSR. "I haven't developed an agenda yet because I did not expect people would show such a high level of trust," confessed one of the candidates (Kuranova, 1989, p. 1). "If I am trusted to be a deputy, I will work out my program with you," promised another one (Khripacheva, 1989, p. 1). "Dmitro Henrihovich does not offer any program yet – he is just not ready for it," a newspaper's observer commented on the pre-election "program" of a deputy candidate (Editorial, 1989a, p. 1). These statements reveal that parliamentary candidates to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR shared a very vague understanding that a democratic electoral process should be about the clash of different positions; however, it was difficult for them to make sense of what exactly those positions should look like. At that point, to put it in Barthes's terms, the concept of democracy seemed to be a pure form to them – a form that had already lost its historical meanings and needed to be filled with new significations.

Because of their vague understanding of what democracy was about, Kharkov parliamentary candidates filled their speeches with mundane promises that were clear and understandable not only for their electorate, but for themselves as well. Usually, those promises were related to problematic economic and social issues of the late USSR such as the shortages of

consumer goods: foodstuff, clothes, or household goods. "I want at the state level to solve the problem of sending scientific workers to agricultural fields," promised one of the candidates (Logvinenko, 1989, p. 1). Another echoed: "To liquidate the practice of sending students, schoolchildren, and workers to agricultural works" (Zvyagin, 1989, p. 1). Those promises reflected Soviet people's discontent over *kartoshka*. Literally, this Russian word means "potatoes"; however, in the late Soviet Union, it came to denote all compulsory works at agricultural fields where students, schoolchildren, engineers, or other categories of city dwellers were involved (on the problems of Soviet agriculture see, for example, Malish, 1984). No matter whether they gathered in harvests of beet, carrot, or cabbage, it was called *kartoshka*. There was a huge economic necessity in that kind of urban-rural collaboration: without attracting the cheap working force from the city, it was impossible to gather in the harvest. The Soviet village was lacking both the modern agricultural equipment (to gather harvest mechanically) and human resources (to do this manually). However, city dwellers were not excited about their *kartochka* duties. The resentment was so huge that parliamentary candidates had to promise to eradicate this policy.

Other candidates' promises also reflected bread-and-butter problems of Soviet life: shortages of both essential and not-so-essential goods. A famous poet Yevgeniy Yevtushenko promised his potential voters to build for them a house with a swimming pool (Yevtushenko, 1990) – an inconceivable luxury for the citizens of the Soviet Union, which had faced a shortage of high-quality housing since WWII, when many of its cities were totally ruined. To supply the massive number of units required as quickly as possible, the Soviet Union relied almost exclusively on the mass production of standardized parts. As a result, the majority of Soviet people had to live in single-type apartment buildings that could be hardly distinguished from one

another. Because the real estate market did not exist and the state or state enterprises distributed all apartments among their citizens, the problem of quality housing was acute (Grant, 1980, p. 1). The overwhelming majority of Soviet standardized apartment buildings lacked any sign of "luxury" such as ordinary architectural decorations, not to speak of swimming pools (Ramsey, 1980).

At one of the electoral meetings, poet Yevtushenko also informed potential supporters about his agreement with Nikolai Rizhkov, the head of the USSR Council of Ministers, to provide Kharkov with more laundry detergent (Yevtushenko, 1990). For an outside observer, it might look ridiculous that a famous Russian poet negotiated with the head of the Soviet Council of Ministers on laundry detergents; for a Soviet citizen of the late 1980s, such abnormality had already become normal. Because Gorbachev's reforms enormously weakened the executive power and undermined its ability to control the state, any sings of previous normality, including essential goods, vanished. This is how Shiraev and Zubok (2000) describe the transformation:

> Barren supermarket shelves and huge lines sporadically popping up near stores resembled the worst images of wartime. In the summer of 1990, cigarettes vanished from stores and street booths, thus depriving two-thirds of Russians of their favorite "bad habit." Amateur entrepreneurs in Leningrad and Moscow began to pick up cigarette butts on the street, stuff them in glass jars, and sell them to particularly desperate nicotine addicts. Crime became rampant. Extortion and burglaries flourished. To own a VCR or video camera meant to run the significant risk of being burglarized. People who kept valuable items in their apartments began to install additional locks and doors. (p. 27)

It is no surprise that under such conditions popular imagination vested parliamentary deputies with the duty to solve their mundane problems.

In the majority of cases, people asked their deputies to assist them with solving housing issues or job placement (Editorial, 1989d, p. 6). Often, people also asked parliamentarians to help with the provision of pensions or complaints about courts and public prosecutor offices (Editorial, 1990d, p. 9). There were a lot of lower-scale requests, as well: to install telephones, repair bathrooms, plant trees, and so forth:

> For six years, I have been asking our housing and communal department to repair my bathroom, but its heads change monthly. Nobody is responsible for anything. (Editorial, 1989e, p. 9)

> Our men have asked for several years to make tables and benches for games: domino, chess, and draughts. But nobody listens and nobody wants to do anything. (Editorial, 1989e, p. 9)

> According to the operating budget, there must be cast-iron bathtubs 170x75 cm, but they are installing iron bathtubs or cast-iron of a smaller size. There must be closet basins "Compact," but they install different kinds. (Editorial, 1989e, p. 9)

"They" in these messages referred to the representatives of housing and communal services who were responsible for fixing all problems with state-owned apartments, where the overwhelming majority of city dwellers lived (Attwood, 2010; DiMaio, 1974).

One common theme united all the complaints and requests that the Kharkovites addressed their Supreme-Soviet deputies via local newspapers: a belief that deputies' job was to assist them in solving their everyday problems, starting from toilets and finishing with benches for games. As an *O* observer put it, "The belief in a mighty representative of the people is akin to a medieval belief in miracle." "Why," he asked, "should complaints about housing and communal service be

addressed to a parliamentary deputy?" (Editorial, 1989d, p. 9). Like any rhetorical question, this one was left without an answer.

To answer this question, one needed to realize to what extent life in the Soviet Union was regulated and organized by different authorities of various calibers. As Grant (1980) explains,

> Centralization of decisionmaking in the Soviet Union has been the price paid for standardization and long-range planning. It is indeed the political sine qua non of the entire Soviet system, permeating all aspects of life in the U.S.S.R. In that nation, the land has been nationalized, the government handles virtually all urban construction, and there is no openly functioning private sector of the economy to supplement and assist the public sector. (p. 1)

It is not easy to acknowledge to what extent the omnipresent centralization and planning of all the aspects of Soviet life changed people's habitus: many of them could hardly decide by themselves on either the size of their bath tubs or the color of their lavatory bowls (on the private and public lives of Soviet people see Shlapentokh, 1989). A specific Soviet culture, characterized by reliance on authorities and lack of personal initiative, had been formed long before perestroika started.

This peculiarity of the Soviet way of life explains how many Soviet people came to imagine the meaning of their parliament in managerial, not political terms. Only with regard to this everyday culture of living is it possible to understand how the pure linguistic form deputy acquired new – mythical – signification. As many letters to deputies published in the Kharkov newspapers or the letters to editors show, parliamentarians did not bear political or ideological connotations; rather, they were imagined to be "managers of the regions they represent," as deputy Sukhov put it (Sukhov, 1989b, p. 1). As a result of popular imagination, the parliament of

1989 reminded of a service gathering rather than of a legislative body. As Sukhov (1989c) noted, "Under the pressure of their voters, each deputy tries to solve some specific issues. Sometimes, I have an impression that I am at a session of a municipal council" (p. 2). On another occasion, he observed, "Deputies are turning into expeditors and suppliers – to get wood, to get funds, and so forth, while deputies have to solve the problems of the country as a whole" (Sukhov, 1990, p. 7).

Nomenklatura[8] no pasaran![9] Another part of the explanation of why Soviet people often imagined parliamentarians' duties in managerial, not political, terms rests with the ideological heritage of Leninist doctrine on the dictatorship of the proletariat. According to Lenin, whose teaching became a civil religion for Soviet society (Thrower, 1992), the proletariat was the true ideological leader of true democratic forces, which was able to unite different levels of society under its proletarian hegemony that manifested itself in the Soviet state (Lenin, 1970/1905). In popularized ideological doctrine of Soviet society, Lenin's theory got acclimated as a simple idea that the interests of the working class should be of first priority for the socialist state.

By the end of the 1980s, after decades of living under the Soviet power and after Gorbachev substantiated the necessity of perestroika in terms of improving the living conditions of working people, many dwellers of industrial Kharkov could hardly imagine any other deputies' responsibilities other than representing their needs. Judging by the pre-election promises published in *VK* in 1989, Kharkov parliamentary candidates also shared this vision of their responsibilities:

To use the profit of industrial enterprises to build more hospitals for children and their mothers. (Mironenko, 1989, p. 1)

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[8] "Nomenklatura" refers to the high-rank officials in the Soviet Union who had a right to appoint individuals to the most privileged positions within the Soviet hierarchy of power.

[9] "No Pasaran" means "They shall not pass" – a popular slogan of the anti-fascist struggle in Spain.

To use the income of industrial enterprises to build more housing for people.

(Slyusarenko, 1989, p. 1)

To increase pensions, ensure better medical services for pensioners, and allow pensioners

to obtain medications for free. (Matviets, 1989, p. 1)

To increase the paid leave for workers up to 24 days. (Sukhov, 1989a, p. 2)

and so forth.

As these promises made before the parliamentary elections of 1989 demonstrate, candidates' agendas did not differ much. All of them were about solving housing, food, medical, and other social problems that were determinative for the life of Soviet society in its last years. It is worthy to note that all of those problems were supposed to be solved by means of not reducing but increasing the welfare function of the state. Especially representative in this respect were candidates' promises related to "maternity defense." In this sphere, state obligations were imagined to be even bigger than in other aspects of social life. Here are some examples of candidates' election propositions:

Women with children should be paid salaries until their kids are 10 years old.

(Batyushko, 1989a, p. 1)

Mothers should be supported financially until their children are 7 years old. (Bronitsky,

1989, p. 2)

Maternity should be acknowledged as socially useful work; women with children should

be guaranteed financial support; and a law should be adopted that would defend women's

right to get such state assistance. (Batyushko, 1989b, p. 1)

These statements, at minimum, reveal people's inability to imagine how their fundamental social

problems could be solved in any other way than through state intervention.

Following Gorbachev's discourse on perestroika as necessity to improve the living conditions of working people, candidates called for eradicating "the lawlessness of deformed socialism" (Voskresensky, 1989, p. 1) and implementing "human, democratic socialism" (Editorial, 1990b, p. 1). There were no signs in local candidates' statements that would have hinted at the desire or necessity of capitalization. It looks that candidates' voters also believed that perestroika was nothing else but the attempt to improve the socialist way of life: in January 1990, only 5.8% of *VK*'s respondents believed that perestroika was about capitalism. More than 50% of them believed that it is about a "social discussion" of how to transform socialism (Editorial, 1990b, p. 1).

Thus, as the analysis of the newspapers' pre-election content shows, the popular imagination of Kharkovites signified the concept of democracy with the meaning of satisfying working people's material needs (housing, food, salaries, pensions, subsidies, and so forth), delegating deputies to the Supreme Soviet to discuss people's problems, and solving these problems by state welfare interventions. The needs and desires of working people were in the center of this imagining process; *VK* contributors believed that "deputies should have social and political experience and know the moods and needs of people" (Editorial, 1989b, p. 2) and that the directors of enterprises should not be deputies because their life experience did not allow them to realize workers' wants (Logvinenko, 1989). Again, what is discernible in these statements is Lenin's vision of Soviet democracy, "which for the first time becomes democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the rich" (Hill, 1971, p. 86). Only the role of "the rich" is played here by the directors of the enterprises – the representatives of Soviet top-ranking functionaries, or *nomenklatura*, as people in the USSR called them.

As is evident from the letters to *VK*, by the end of the 1980s, many its readers considered party nomenklatura and other Soviet elites like the directors of big enterprises (so called "red directors") the enemies of Lenin's "democracy for the people." On Feb 22, 1989, *VK* published the results of an opinion poll where 54% of respondents gave negative answers to the question "Do you believe that the regional party committee works toward democratization of all spheres of life and the development of glasnost?" (Editorial, 1989c). Why? Were the respondents against socialism? Or did they disapprove only those who represented the Soviet socialist system? People's letters to the newspapers help to clarify the issue:

Nomenklatura does not want to leave convenient ruling armchairs, to part with undeserved privileges, different benefits, and special goods. (Milantyev, 1989, p. 2)

Some people in the party enjoy privileges and they discredit the whole party. I am a CPSU member for 50 years. Throughout all my life, I have had only one God – labor. (Malaya, 1990, p. 3)

Despite people's indignation, we observe an increase in salaries of party and nomenklatura members. And this goes along with their appeals to tighten belts of common workers! (Sokolov, 1990, p. 9)

Nomenklatura is a party in the party. We need to take power from nomenklatura peacefully. Let's sign the verdict for nomenklatura on March 4, the elections day. (Kushnaryov, 1990a, p. 1)

Not everything for nomenklatura! Conservatives "No Pasaran!" (Editorial, 1990c, p. 1)

It is evident from these statements that their authors were not against communist or socialist ideas; what they did not want to accept was the privileged positions of high-rank party officials who enjoyed undeserved privileges, benefits, and other social goods. This reveals not the

rejection of socialist egalitarianism but, on the contrary, the desire to eradicate non-egalitarian and, thus, non-socialist elements from Soviet society. The employment of Spanish "No Pasarán!" ("They shall not pass") expression is representative. It came to the popular culture of Soviet people with the history of anti-fascist struggle in Spain, which Soviet propaganda presented as a heroic struggle of working Spanish people for freedom and socialism (Payne, 2004; Radosh et al., 2001). Within this historical context, the usage of "they" implied that nomenklatura was an enemy of working people; in order to fight for equality and freedom, one needed to fight against it.

The egalitarian mood was especially evident in people's indignation over the privileges of the newly elected parliament. "I have read that the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet distributed among parliamentarians food packages with products that one can never see in grocery stores," one of *O's* readers writes to the newspaper. "This is not only an act of social injustice, I think… People who are giving and receiving these packages will never struggle for the abolition of privileges on the all-union scale. I would like to know their names" (Sokolov, 1990, p. 9). The same theme is exploited by deputy Sukhov:

> Not so long time ago, a special buses were arranged so that deputies could buy hard-to-get goods[10]. We were allowed to buy items for 880 rubles. I refused, and as a result I received scowling glances from my colleagues. But I think that, as an elected representative of the people, I should live as my voters live. To use privileges means to follow nomenklatura route. Trips abroad and expensive hardware have become widespread among the deputies of the current convocation. But if you are clad and shod, how can you understand the problems of common people? (Sukhov, 1990, p. 7)

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[10] In the late Soviet Union, special warehouses existed where the privileged groups of Soviet society could buy hard-to-get consumer goods.

These two statements made by a deputy with a working-class background and a reader of *O* support my previous observation that in the end of 1980s many people in the Soviet Union were dissatisfied not with egalitarian socialist ideas in general but with the distortions of their implementation. By democratic transformations, they meant the eradication of social inequality between high-rank party officials and common party members or between party elites and common working people. In other words, popular imagination filled the form of democracy with a meaning that derived not from the history and culture of Western parliamentarianism but from the history and culture of Soviet egalitarianism.

Power to people! It is we who decide! As I have already discussed above, there is a substantial evidence to suggest that many working people in the late USSR did not want to eliminate socialism; what they wanted was the elimination of injustice in terms of social inequality. Because of that, some of them understood democracy in Lenin's terms: as empowering working people through transmitting full authority from party nomenklatura to people. As one *VK* contributor noted, "people believed: it was them who decide; the times when somebody decided for them had passed" (Editorial, 1989a, p. 1). As other publications testified, people applied that belief in their right to decide to all possible aspects of their life: the elections of industrial managers, voting on the permission to conduct business activity, and so forth. Here is a scene of electing a plant director, described by one of *VK*'s issues:

Ivan Grigorievich Kiuila went to the tribune and said frankly: "Comrades! There is such a mess at your enterprise! In our aviation plant, people would not tolerate this for a single day! If you entrust me with your glass factory, I don't promise miracles, but I will put things in order." It is unclear whether the honesty of the applicant for the director's armchair plays its role, or was it overt aggression toward him by the representative of the

Ministry of Hardware, but about 90 percent of the participants of the meeting voted for

the applicant. As one of the workers from the workshop #6 told me, "We are working for

eight hours instead of six, and they spend their time in hairdresser's and shopping

centers." (Bozhedai, 1990, p. 6)

The workers of the glass factory did not mind that the applicant to the director position had not

have any previous experience with the glass industry. What they really cared about was the

confrontation between the Ministry of Hardware – the nomenklatura – and the applicant for the

director position; apparently, it was this confrontation that made the workers support his

candidature. It is noteworthy that the workers' referred to the Ministry's representatives as

"they," contrasting them thus to common people: when the latter work, the former visit

hairdressers. It was this "social inequality" that irritated working people most.

Judging from the newspapers' materials, confrontations between working people and

nomenklatura, as well as all other representatives of state authorities, were typical for the late

years of the Soviet power. Here is an excerpt from the interview of a manager of a state-owned

construction company:

Group egoism of people has emerged. They demand compulsory agreements at meetings

on all constructions in micro-districts… Now, we observe the diktat of the councils of

working collectives... Previously, we were running caps in hands in Moscow and Kiev

ministries; today, we are begging everybody in our native city. (Zelenskiy, 1990, p. 8)

The word "diktat" used by the complainant is reminiscent of Lenin's views on the dictatorship of

proletariat. The activities of councils of working collectives, which approved or disapproved the

business of state managers or private entrepreneurs, were permeated with the idea that the

interest of working people – true exponents of democracy and justice – should be in the center of the universe.

Another interesting report on how people imagined "people's democracy" appeared in *O* in December 1989. That was a story on how a workers' meeting decided on whether to allow some local cooperatives[11] to work or not:

They entered the same doors letting to the same hall but they were deeply estranged: old formal masters of the country's economy and new ones… The working collective investigated two types of cooperatives. "Why do you sell meat at an exorbitant price? Where do you buy it, in the market? Why are there high extra charges for other products? Are you making a profit out of us?" The responses of the cooperatives' representatives were stunning: "We are buying surplus meet from village workers 4.8 rubles per kilograms, and sell it for 5 kg." "What is the sense?" one of the workers asked, after calculating transport expenses and payments for suppliers. "We want to improve provision. Profit will come later." "Will you sew three pairs of boots for my kids?" – a mother of a large family asked the representative of a production cooperative. "Yes!" Then, the clarification was made: the cooperative produce boots from the waste products of a tannery, which had used to throw them away. The decision of the workers was unanimous: these cooperatives are useful, they should go on working, and nobody should hinder their production. (Volodin, 1989, p. 8)

It is clear from this excerpt that in 1989 working people understood democracy, among other things, as people's right to decide on who was eligible to conduct private business activity and

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[11] "Cooperatives" were small private enterprises allowed in 1988 by the Soviet law "On Cooperation in the USSR." Cooperatives' imagined mission was to implement the systems of the private property and to make working collectives the owners of private enterprises. In reality, cooperatives set down roots through shadow economy; their activities contributed to the pillage of state property.

who was not. A central criterion for those judgments was the "public good" understood as the interests of working people. A decisive background was people's unwillingness to create revenues for those who wanted to make profit out of them. This intolerance for "unearned income" – a popular expression in the USSR – was more than just a desire to save money; it revealed a more profound egalitarian mood that by the end of 1980s had formed a part of the Soviet culture.

The mess of democratization. I think we can interpret people's unwillingness to allow wide-scale private entrepreneurship and thus accept profound social changes as their impulse – probably, unconscious – to defend their familiar way of life and their collective culture. Then their attacks against "the permissiveness of perestroika," which constantly appeared in the pages of Kharkov newspapers, become more understandable. Here is an example of such an attack, expressed in an open letter by war veterans[12] to Vitaliy Korotich – the chief editor of the mouthpiece of perestroika, *Ogonyok* magazine (on the role of *Ogonyok* in the transformation of Soviet society see Korotich, 1990):

> Your "Ogonyok" has quarreled people…. It created such a mess.... It has "opened people's eyes" to our leaders, party secretaries, respected writers, and other figures. It has turned everything upside down: enemies now are not enemies at all; those who escaped abroad at the most difficult times for our people now turn out to be the best personalities. Traitors – those who were against the government – now are not traitors… They are heroes now…. All this is sad and poor. Thanks to the philosophy of "Ogonyok," we have

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[12] In the Soviet Union, the veterans of the Great Patriotic War against Nazi Germany was an influential strata of Soviet population who enjoyed people's respect and various social privileges.

youth fascist organization throughout the country, Karabakhs[13], and so forth. We think

that "Ogonyok" only harms perestroika because it not only fails to unite the people of our

country but does its best to disunite them. (War veterans, 1990, p. 9)

As it is evident from this excerpt, its authors are indignant about the fact that *Ogonyok* "turned

everything upside down," messing up popular heroes with anti-heroes – the good and the evil. As

such, form the authors' point of view, *Ogonyok* contributed to the spread of misunderstanding

among people, which culminated in such by bloody events as Nagorno Karabakh and the spread

of fascist movement. It is noteworthy that the authors of this letter accused Korotich and his

Ogonyok of "harming" perestroika, which reveals that their understanding of Soviet

transformations differed from that of Korotich: while the veterans, together with many other

ordinary people, interpreted these transformations as the attempt to improve their socialist way of

life (Gorbachev's initial interpretation), Korotich, together with other liberal intellectuals, argued

for the liberalization of all the spheres of Soviet life.

I can also interpret the resistance of the veterans to the revelation of *Ogonyok* in

Durkheim's terms, as an attempt to defend their collective consciousness, which Durkheim

(1984/1893) understood as the totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average

members of a society. The task of society and any authority, according to Durkheim, is to defend

this collective consciousness from enemies, internal and external, because "every strong state of

consciousness is a source of life; it is an essential factor in our vitality. Consequently all that

tends to weaken it diminishes and represses us" (Durkheim, 1984, p. 53). If we look at the letter

of veterans from Durkheim's perspective, we will see in it an attempt to defend their collective

consciousness against "enemies" – intellectuals who tried to ridicule and ruin all the most

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[13] Karabakh is a geographical region in present-day southwestern Azerbaijan and eastern Armenia. The authors of the letter mean Nagorno-Karabakh war that started in 1988 within the context of perestroika.

important rituals and symbols that constituted Soviet popular culture, related to the history of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the Great Patriotic War, and other milestones of Soviet history.

Summary. Several frames of reference to democratization characterized vernacular imagination during the period of the disintegration of the Soviet Union in Kharkov. First, people imagined that process as a means to improve their well-being within the socialist imagination, as Gorbachev suggested at the beginning of perestroika reforms. Through electing their representatives to democratic bodies of governance, they hoped to solve problems that became unsolvable in the course of perestroika: food supplies, housing, security, and so forth. The interests of working people were in the center of this process of imagination.

Second, while imagining that the improvement of their living conditions could be achieved through democratic representation in governmental bodies, many Soviet people, as their letters to local newspapers suggest, did not want to change the system of governance altogether. On the contrary, what they envisaged was strengthening Soviet welfare system and increasing state interventions in social life.

Third, in democratization, many Soviet people saw not an opportunity to ruin the socialist system but, on the contrary, to improve it by eradicating social inequality, which manifested itself in the privileges of party nomenclature and the directors of industrial enterprises. In other words, they wanted the "improvement of socialism," which Gorbachev proposed in the middle of the 1980s, but not the establishment of capitalism, which many Soviet intellectuals advocated.

Finally, through democratization, many Soviet people hoped to achieve true socialism or real governing by working people, as Lenin envisaged. They simply imagined that through democratic procedures such as direct voting they would be able to decide on who would deserve

to be a manager of their enterprise, who would be allowed to trade, or what should be built – in other words how to live in general.

As the next section of this chapter will show, in their attempts to make at least some sense of societal transformations that were going on, Soviet people received little or no meaningful assistance from their intellectual leadership. The latter was preoccupied with the fantasies at a higher level – political projections that had little to do with the living problems of Soviet workers.

Chapter 8

Mythologizing the Market

Intellectual Myths

The invisible hand. In September 1990, *O* published excerpts from Shatalin's program for the transition to the market, introducing them with a laconic editor's note that the conception was "prepared by a working group that had been formed by a joint decision of Yeltsin and Gorbachev" (Shatalin, 1990b, p. 4). Indeed, the group was formed by a joint decision by the two Soviet leaders. However, it was worth noting that by September 1990, when *O* published Shatalin's program, the tension between Yeltsin and Gorbachev was at its peak. Behind, there had already been a long history of confrontation between the two leaders on tactical and strategic issues of perestroika and, ultimately, the creation of a new Russian center of power led by Yeltsin. By introducing the program as "prepared by a working group created by a joint decision of Gorbachev and Yeltsin," *O* mentioned nothing about those problematic relations between the two leaders and the fact that "over the course of 1989 Yeltsin gradually abandoned the idea of a self-managing, anti-bureaucratic socialism for that of an unqualified market economy" (Krausz, 2007, p. 10) while Gorbachev was still faithful to socialist ideas.

By leaving this ideological confrontation aside, *O* failed to draw its readers' attention to any potential meaning confusion within the program, which could have stemmed from incommensurability of the two leaders' political and economic standings. Without any critical comment, the newspaper focused on the progressive potentials of market liberalism:

Mankind has not managed to create anything more efficient than the market economy, It gives strong incentives to materialize a man's abilities, to activate labor and business, and

to expedite greatly the progress of science and technology. Its own self-adjustment and self-regulation gears take care of the best possible coordination of activities of all economic subjects, rational use of labor, material and financial resources, and the balance of the national economy. Obviously, transition to an economic system based on market relations is the only way to solve the country's most acute problems, to develop natural links between our economy and that of the world, to ensure production growth according to people's needs and thus the economy's social orientation, to eliminate shortages, and to make the achievements of world civilization accessible to our people. (Shatalin, 1990, p. 4)

As it is evident from this excerpt, Shatalin and his coauthors presented the market as a power able to enforce human development, stimulate economic activity, accelerate technical progress, coordinate resources, eradicate the shortage of goods, and satisfy people's needs. They conceptualized market as a self-regulating power able to provide the described activities and goods without regulative interference of non-market forces like the state. In other words, what we see in this paragraph is an explicit reference to Adam Smith's everlasting metaphor of the Invisible Hand, which implies that market pressures direct the activities of individuals in capitalist society as if by the invisible hand transforming individuals' selfishness into social useful source (Smith, 1991/1876).

The next paragraph added some important reservations, however. Quite unexpectedly, after presenting the market as an all-powerful force, the authors of the conception introduced the state as an indispensable player in fields where market forces, from the perspective of the program's authors, were insufficient:

At the same time, a substantial non-market sector is going to be kept. It will encompass those kinds of activities that cannot be subdued to market criteria (defense, part of public health, education, science, and culture). The most important aim of state power at all levels… is ensuring a high level of social security. On the one hand, it should be understood as guaranteeing all citizens equal possibilities to ensure a decent life by labor. On the other hand, it is state support of disabled and socially vulnerable members of society. (Shatalin, 1990, p. 4)

As one can infer from such a construction, the authors of the conception considered state regulations as a necessary element of market transformations in such spheres as defense, public health, education, science, and culture, but not economic activity, where market was seen as a self-sufficient force. It remained unclear from both Shatalin's program and *O* introduction to it how a pure liberal, that is, self-regulated, economy could go hand in hand with such state welfare functions as "guaranteeing all citizens equal possibilities to ensure "a decent life by labor" or supporting "disabled and socially vulnerable members of society." Despite the obvious contradictions, *O* editors failed to discuss that controversy and to point their readers' attention to the fact that a self-regulating economic system freed from state interventions could not provide them with social security and welfare (Friedman, 2003).

O also failed to inform its readers that from the very beginning, capitalism was characterized by a tension between the laissez-faire, which represented its economic drive, and interventions, which reflected its democratic political orientation. In other words, the newspaper failed to point to the fact that in reality pure market liberalism existed only at the level of theoretical abstractions. As Heilbroner & Thurow (1987), point out,

Within a few years of Adam Smith's time, the idea of leaving things alone was already

breached by the English Factory Act of 1833, establishing a system of inspectors to

prevent child and female labor from being abused….In our own day the same political

desire to correct the unhampered working of laissez-faire capitalism has given rise to the

Social Security system, which provides a social floor beneath the market, and to

environmental legislation that limits the market's operations in certain areas. (p. 24)

Thus, by representing Shatalin's market program without any attempt to critically evaluate it, *O*

simply contributed to the dissemination of the liberal myth that the pure laissez-faire in economic

relations was possible at all. *O* concealed from its readers that "unfettered markets without

reliable institutions and regulations are tantamount to pillage, speculation, abusive, private

appropriation, and ultimately chaos, if the lessons of history are of any value" (Castells, 2000c,

p. 326) and that many government activities, such as social security, unemployment, or disability

insurance systems, arose because markets had failed to provide those services. Even the IMF, in

its original version, was based on a recognition that markets often do not work well: "they could

result in massive unemployment and might fail to make needed funds available to countries to

help them restore their economies. The IMF was founded on the belief that there was a need for

collective action at the global level for economic stability" (Stiglitz, 2003, p. 12).

In other words, *O* made invisible the fact that pure markets always create new risks and

uncertainties, the heavy burden of which is laid on people. Without state well-fare interventions,

this burden can become unmanageable and ruinous for the social contract that binds citizens

together and with their government. All these considerations were absent in both Shatalin's

program and *O* short introduction to it.

This observation is in line with Shlapentokh's (1993) analysis of intellectual discourse on the market in the late 1980s – early 1990s. As he notes, many proponents of privatization among intellectuals totally rejected any role of the state in economic processes and were strongly against the state's welfare function. Some of them wanted to privatize health, education, pension systems, and other social and state institutions along with industrial enterprises (Shlapentokh, 1993, p. 27), totally ignoring the role of government that "remains essential in providing the human resources (that is, education at all levels), and technological infrastructure (particularly, accessible, low-cost, high-quality communication and information systems)" (Castells, 2000a, p. 127). The faith of some liberal reformers in the omnipotence of the god of the market was unshakably blind.

At the lower depths. As was evident from the materials of other authors published in the same issue of *O* (Sep 1990), they shared Shatalin's view on market as a self-regulating and all-powerful force able to save the economy of the country. As some citations from those materials illustrate, the total commodification of economic life was imagined as a panacea for all social evils and sicknesses: bureaucracy, the shortage of goods in stores, social injustice, economic backwardness, or the lack of individual freedom:

> For us, there are some urgent problems of different kind: whether there will be products in stores, heat in apartments, and civil peace in the country. If the President is able to implement his program of the transition to the market, this will mitigate the acuteness of these problems.... (Editorial, 1990g, p. 2)
>
> Alexander Yemen, the head of the committee on human rights in the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine… supports the transition to market economy... considering it the best method of

ruining the old command and administrative system and party apparatus. (Editorial,

1990f, p. 4)

Poor nations cannot be free. We need to become rich as soon as possible. Because we live

in the most fertile place of Europe, we should be ashamed of the absurdity in which we

exist. (Korotich, 1990c, p. 3)

We need to ensure a level of independence of people from the state and a nonintervention

of power into private lives of citizens that exist in the West…. (Ponomarenko, 1991, p. 2)

and so forth.

To prove the necessity of market transformations for their audiences, liberally minded

intellectuals made negative sides of Soviet life salient, focusing on them much of their attention

and leaving aside any positive aspects of Soviet reality. Here is one such creation:

Every month, every working person at the plant produces normatively pure goods for

1,700 rubles. As a salary, he/she gets more than two hundred, from which income tax,

trade union fees, and other payments are deducted. Another 1,500 rubles are deducted

monthly as a bureaucratic and state quitrent… It goes without saying that a Roman slave

two thousand years ago was in a much better position than modern worker in LBMP.

(Korobka, 1990, p. 6)

For the author of this statement, it went without saying that a slave in Roman Empire lived a

better life than a Soviet worker. The author focused his and his readers' attention on the amounts

of monetary deductions without explaining how exactly those deductions were used. What he left

out of his construction was that the lion's share of workers' taxes went to support the system of

free medical service, free education, free housing, and so forth (Cook, 1993). As Stiglitz (2003)

maintains, "The Communist system, while it did not make for an easy life, avoided the extremes

of poverty, and kept living standards relatively equal, by providing a high common denominator of quality for education, housing, health care and child care services" (p. 154). The absurdity of comparing a social system that lacked the legacy of inequality with the slave system of ancient Rome was justified strategically – as a means of negatively constructing the Soviet way of life and positively presenting liberal economic system.

Not only did such framing distort the reality of the Soviet system, it also suggested the inevitability of changes and pushed people to abandon state welfare policies in favor of laissez-faire economic reforms. Since the latter was presented as the only power able to modernize Soviet society and the former was constructed as an inhuman system equated to slavery, the necessity to move from socialism to liberalism became obvious. In this respect, the interview with Vitaliy Korotich, published in *O* in January 1990, looks demonstrative:

> Correspondent: Has the congress become a point of departure downwards?

> Korotich: No, it hasn't. We are at such a low point that further movement down is impossible. It is only possible to move upwards. (Korotich, 1990a, p. 5)

What Korotich and *O* correspondent discussed was the decision of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to delay adopting Shatalin's program of market reforms. The parliamentary decision reflected the resistance of so-called "hard-liners" or "conservatives" to the radical decentralization of economic and political life that would occur if the Shatalin program were implemented. Instead of Shatalin's program, the Supreme Soviet adopted the compromise governmental plan that "took a piecemeal approach to reform, had no timetable, and left the division of economic power between the center and the republics uncertain" (Dorn, 1991, p. 185). From the perspective of the proponents of radical reforms, the governmental plan was harmful to society because it hampered economic transformations.

Korotich's reply to the correspondent's question sounded interesting in relation to the confrontation between the conservatives and the radicals: his claim about the impossibility of moving downwards because of the extreme bottom position of the USSR suggested that any change to the exited system could be only positive or "upward." One the contrary, any preservation of the present state of things could be only negative because that preservation meant preserving the bottom line of existence. By employing the metaphor of "the bottom," Korotich referred to the well-known heroes of Maxim Gorkiy's *At the Lower Depths* who were forced into the social depths primarily because of the lack of the will and indifference on the part of society (Gorky, 1973). History has shown that Korotich was not right. In 1990 – the time when he answered the questions of *O* reporter, the people of the Soviet Union had not yet reached the lower depths. They saw them later, after the politics of radical market transformations were put in motion, and mass poverty became an integral part of Soviet life.

To delay is fatal. Judging from *O* materials, many of its contributors shared belief in the magic force of immediate market changes. This is how the deputy to the Supreme Soviet Smirnov commented on the decision of the Soviet parliament to adopt a moderate program of government instead of Shatalin's radical plan:

> The decision to approve the governmental program has frozen economic reforms for at least two years. I am sure that we don't have such a long period of time and that such politics will not lead to improving the economic situation in the country. It is fraught with unpredictable consequences. (Smirnov, 1990, p. 5)

The author of this passage presented the delay in market reforms as a loss of opportunities to improve the economic situation in the country. According to Smirnov, it is "fraught with unpredictable consequences." The construction suggests that immediate reforms are not fraught

with either unpredictable consequences or any other risks. By focusing all his attention on the poor economic situation in the country and the necessity to implement radical reforms in order to improve it, Smirnov left out of his frame another very important consideration: When undertaken prematurely, liberalization can only worsen the situation, as had happened in some countries of Latin America, where the attempts of quick market reforms brought to the increased misery and heightened the sense of insecurity. As Stiglitz (2003) explains,

> The market system requires clearly established property rights and the courts to enforce them; but often those are absent in developing countries. The market system requires competition and perfect information. But competition is limited and information is far from perfect – and well-functioning competitive markets cannot be established overnight. The theory says that an efficient market economy requires that all of the assumptions be satisfied. In some cases, reforms in one area, without accompanying reforms in others, may actually make matters worse. (p. 74)

When the old system of regulations is ruined and a new one is not yet established, when there are no mechanisms of implementing transparent accounting and reliable control, radical market reforms can lead to plundering the national economy, as happened in many African countries (Castells, 2000c).

By stating that liberal reforms would "improve the situation in the country," Smirnov failed to mention that such liberal transformations could worsen the living conditions of Soviet people because of the weakening of state welfare system, unemployment, and its social consequences: increased crime, urban violence, and social unrest. What looks even more important, like many other Soviet liberal intellectuals, Smirnov also failed to acknowledge that market reforms would inevitably bring social stratification into the classes of the propertied and

the propertyless. Given the anti-capitalist and pro-welfare mood that dominated among the working people of the Soviet Union that kind of omission seems to be conscious and strategic.

Not only did Smirnov leave those important considerations out of his frame of reference to market transformations, he also argued that quick pro-liberal changes were absolutely necessary. Implicitly, then, he suggested that no serious societal deliberation on the issue of reforms was needed. By employing manipulative framing of market reforms through the omission of the most important aspects of suggested transformations, Smirnov failed to acknowledge that public deliberation on most important societal issues is normatively central to all sorts of democratic models, no matter whether they are liberal, republican, or deliberative in Habermas's sense (Habermas, 1994). Smirnov's call for immediate reforms is reminiscent of Lenin's (1972/1924) vision of revolutionary expediency expressed in his famous "To delay is fatal" (p. 235). This similarity reveals how deeply the Soviet political culture of illiberality and disrespect for other opinions had penetrated the Soviet societal matrix.

The same sense of urgency is also evident in the writings of other prominent activists of liberalization. In 1991, shortly before the demise of the USSR, *O* published an interview with Grigoriy Yavlinsky, famous not only for coauthoring the *500-Day* plan with Shatalin but also for creating his own program, the so-called *Grand Bargain*. According to Yavlinsky's plan, each stage of the grand market transformation should be linked to specific types of Western assistance. Together with his advisers from Harvard and MIT, he formed a "Joint Working Group on Western Cooperation in the Soviet Transformation to Democracy and the Market Economy" (Dorn, 1991). Speaking against "mafia privatization" controlled by the directors of state enterprises and corrupt local elites, Yavlinsky advocated turning state property over "to those who have vision." In this respect, as Krausz (2007) stated, "Yavlinsky was the acolyte of

international capital, aiming to restore the responsibilities of management towards the 'true' owner" (p. 26). Here is Yavlinsky's blitz interview given to *O*:

> Correspondent: There is a collapse of the command and administrative system now. Don't you think that this collapse could be followed by a counter collapse of privatization or the liberalization of prices?

> Yavlinsky: I suggest swift but coordinated measures for immediate liberalization of the economy. (Yavlinskiy, 1991, p. 3)

This brief exchange between an *O* correspondent and Yavlinsky looks like a dialogue between the blind and the deaf: the correspondent, who revealed his total blindness in terms of the inability to predict the outcomes of the reforms, asked Yavlinskiy about possible consequences of liberalization, but the latter did not pick up the theme. Instead of answering directly the correspondent's question, he pushed forward his own agenda: liberalization should go on no matter what. Again, what we see in Yavlinsky's answer is the repetition of the theme "the delay is fatal" and total disregard of the correspondent's legitimate concerns about the consequences of privatization. It is this unconditional support of liberalization, deregulation, and privatization by Soviet reformers that ultimately created the situation when

> All valuable assets in Russia were sold for ridiculous prices for whoever had the money and the power to control the transaction. This is how and why government officials, ex-nomenklatura, and organized crime, Russian and international, came together, willingly or unwillingly. (Castells, 2000c, p. 188)

By pushing for an accelerated transition to the market economy without social and institutional control and without analyzing any negative consequences of such a rapid transformation, Soviet

liberal intellectuals created the conditions for plundering one of the wealthiest countries in the world and dooming its people to misery, poverty, and moral degradation.

Pure socialist market. Another technique that the proponents of liberalization often employed in their speeches was constructing the illusion that the welfare system did not contradict deregulation, liberalization, and privatization. This is how publicist Korotich presented this theme:

> Even if in some eastern European states non-communist forces come to power, it doesn't mean that they refuse initial communist ideas as basic values… The memories of positive results of pre-crisis development are lasting among masses, and it is hard to believe that people will refuse these memories easily… The slogan "back to capitalism" that is heard here and there (in Baltic states, in particular) seems more than primitive for me, because there are no repetitions in history. This means that we need to search for another route, the one that we call now "an updated socialism"…. (Korotich, 1990b, p. 2)

Korotich acknowledged the pro-socialist mood of the Soviet population and the necessity to take this mood into account. Only within this context does his claim that "anti-Communism does not mean capitalism" and his appeal to look for "another route" make any sense at all given his admiration for Shatalin's program of liberalization, expressed in another interview for *O*, published two months later, in September 1990: "He offers us not a program of a radiant future but concrete '500 days'… Poor nations cannot be free. We need to become rich as soon as possible" (Korotich, 1990c).

Only in two months after the first interview, Korotich seemed to abandon his idea about the impossibility of repetitions in history and his belief in the primitivism of the slogan "back to capitalism." It is hard to believe that one of the most well-informed people of perestroika times,

Vitaliy Korotich, could fail to realize that Shatalin's program suggested a move away from socialism, even "updated" socialism. It is even more difficult to believe in Korotich's naivety taking into account the hot political discussions of the *500-Day* program (Dorn, 1991). It is much more reasonable to suggest that Korotich played the same game of strategic not calling things by their proper names, which other perestroika activists employed as well. If this is correct, then Korotich realized well enough what would be the outcome of the *500-day* program (the return to capitalism), and he welcomed such a development; however, because anti-capitalist mood among the "masses" was strong, he discursively transformed "capitalism" into "updated socialism." As such, he contributed to the construction of the myth of the liberal market economy that could coexist with the same level of social welfare that people of the USSR had before market transformations.

As other *O* materials show, other prominent perestroika activists also employed the mythology of the successful marriage of pure market liberalism and the strong welfare system. Here is how Yevgeniy Kushnaryov, a leader of the Democratic Platform within the Communist Party of Ukraine, framed the issue:

> I don't agree with those who claim that the market contradicts socialism. Socialism is in contradiction with empty shelves and poverty of people... I am for coexistence of all forms of ownership that would enjoy equal rights but exclude the exploitation of men by men. (Kushnaryov, 1990b, p. 2)

It is noteworthy that before perestroika Kushnaryov was responsible for agitation and propaganda issues in one of the district committees of the Communist party of the USSR. During perestroika, he founded his Democratic Platform to support Gorbachev's reforms. Later, however, Kushnaryov joined those elites who recognized the economic advantages of the pure

market system, which allowed them "to preserve their own positions, maintain their luxury life-style, and to ensure their control over state property in perpetuity" (Krausz, 2007, p. 27). For the sake of that new power, based on the control over orphaned state property, Kushnaryov used all his propagandist skills, acquired during the service in CPSU, to persuade Soviet people that socialism was not about collective property over the means of production but about full shelves in stores. What Kushnaryov failed to mention is that in liberal economies, where shelves are full, somebody's pockets happened to be always empty: because of low salaries, unemployment, and the necessity to pay bills for medical services and education (Iceland, 2012). These aspects of the problem were not included into Kushneryov's narrative.

It is also noteworthy that Kushnaryov advocated "the co-existence of all forms of ownership that would enjoy equal rights but exclude the exploitation of men by men." He did not explain what forms of ownership, if they were not communal or collective, would exclude the exploitation of men by men and how those mythical forms of property could coexist with the market. If, according to Kushnarev, capitalism was not about exploitation, then what he was talking about? Kushnaryov's ambiguity on this question is reminiscent with Gorbachev's famous conversation with George Bush at the Malta summit, which Michael Beschloss and Strobe Talbott (1994) retold in their *At the Highest Levels: The Inside Story of the End of the Cold War*. According to Beschloss and Talbott, Gorbachev told Bush that property owned by more than one person was not private property and therefore there was almost no private property in the USA, where millions of people possessed shares of different companies. From Beschloss and Talbott's perspective, that conversation revealed Gorbachev's incompetence and even naivety about economic issues. Was Kushnaryov naïve about those issues as well? It is quite possible, given the general inexperience of Soviet people with market economy and property issues. But at the

end of the day, the motives of those who created the myth of the successful marriage of liberal market and socialism do not matter. What matters is the fact that by means of their fantasies – no matter whether genuine or strategically constructed – they filled the conceptual form of market with the meaning that had been foreign to it.

Full shelves. As *O* publications show, Kushnaryov's emasculation of socialism by equating it with happy consumerism was not unique. Other contributors also tended to deprive socialism of its structural and ideological essence by focusing exclusively on the material side of the issue. In his interview for *O*, Henrih Borovick, another famous publicist of perestroika times, claimed that people in the USSR were not so much concerned with the structural essence of late Soviet transformations as with the saturation of the Soviet market with essential products:

> During the fourth congress of people's deputies I asked Mikhail Sergeevich [Gorbachev]: "Why is power shifting to the right wing so quickly?" He responded, "Power is becoming right-wing together with society." But society does not know whether it should shift left or right. It needs shelves full of goods in stores. (Borovick, 1991, p. 6)

What we observe here again is the theme of "full shelves" that, according to Borovik, was the biggest concern of Soviet society. If taken literally, his claim that "society does not know whether it should shift left or right" implied that all the means – capitalist or socialist – were good for saturating the consumer market.

When an *O* reporter asked Borovick about his own views on the ideology of the Soviet transformations, he received a vague and ambiguous answer, typical for political speeches of perestroika times:

> Correspondent: Do you personally still believe in socialist ideas?

Borovick: I don't believe in socialism as a preliminary step to communism. But I do believe in socialist ideas as the maximum of justice. The ideas of socialism have brought many good things. Many Western democrats employ socialist ideas…

Correspondent: Then, as the Patriarch of All Ukraine Mstislav has noted, the most perfect among all constitutions – the constitution of Christ – is also socialist?

Borovick: Why only the constitution of Christ? Humanity has always strived for justice…. (Borovick, 1991, p. 6)

On the one hand, there is nothing especially untrue in Borovick's response about "many Western democrats" who employ socialist ideas, because, as it is well known, there are considerable variations among Western capitalist states with regard to de-commodification, which refers to the degree to which people in these countries can uphold socially acceptable standards of living independently of market participation: "The Nordic countries are, in particular, consistently de-commodifying, while the Anglo-Saxon countries tend to be consistently least so" (Esping-Andersen, 1990, p. 51). On the other hand, however, Borovick failed to acknowledge that "Over the period since the mid-1970s… social democracy was increasingly challenged by free market philosophies, in particular the rise of Thatcherism or Reaganism – more generally described as neo-liberalism" (Giddens, 2000, p. 5).

This omission was important because it was this ideological onslaught of neoliberalism that urged European social democracies to reconsider their attitudes to such crucial aspects of the social-democratic outlook as pervasive state involvement in social and economic life, the comprehensive welfare state, full employment, and so on. It was generally acknowledged, for example, that "The welfare state, seen by most as a core of social democratic politics, today creates almost as many problems as it resolves" (Giddens, 2000, p. 16) and that unemployment

benefits "should carry the obligation to look actively for work, and it is up to governments to ensure that welfare systems do not discourage active search" (Giddens, 2000, p. 65). In other words, in order to survive under the rise of liberalism, for opportunistic reasons, European social democracies had to adopt some of the values of the right to the extent that people started losing the ability to differentiate between the right and the left.

By leaving aside the complexity of the transformation of European social democracy towards the center, Borovick aimed at producing an impression that market reforms would not deprive Soviet people of the social security they used to have. Yet, by summer 1991, it was clear enough to competent elite circles (to which Borovick definitely belonged) that the liberalization of economy could hardly be stopped after Yeltsin signed two laws that transformed Soviet assets into Russian property in the interests of privatization (Krausz, 2007). It was also clear that the privatization of Soviet state property would ruin the welfare system of the USSR and deteriorate the conditions of life of Soviet people significantly. In February 1991, a working group of the Central Committee of the CPSU acknowledged this in a special report on the economic and political consequences of Yeltsin's property laws. In that report, the members of the Central Committee recognized that what was at stake was the survival of the socialist system:

> Luchinski and Baklanov [members of the Central Committee of the CPSU] pointed out that 'these [Russian] laws conflict with the interests of tens of millions people, with many thousands of workers' collectives, and decisively affect the process of perestroika and the fate of the country. (Krausz, 2007, pp. 19–20)

Under Yeltsin's "shock therapy" of total de-regulation, which gave all power to former directors of state enterprises and their corrupted partners from the nomenklature, one could hardly expect the preservation of a state welfare system. Against this pillage of the people's property and the

devastation of their welfare state, Borovick's reasoning about preserving socialism and justice looks like nothing else but a language game aimed at masking the reality.

Real owners. One can observe similar manipulations through strategic omissions in the materials of other *O* authors as well. Here is how Valentin Medvedev, the head of the society *Rus*, explained the necessity of the transition to capitalism without actually calling things by their real names:

> Some words on the issue of "capitalist" and "socialist" ways of our development, which caused a lot of hysteria lately. Thanks to free economic management under the conditions of the free market, by the end of 1924, the Russian peasantry achieved the same results as collective state farming with investments running into billions was able to achieve only after 65 years…We need to think: what kind of property do we need? Obviously, any kind with a real owner. (Medvedev, 1991, p. 5)

It is notable that at the beginning of the paragraph, Medvedev introduces the popular controversial issue "capitalism vs. socialism" calling capitalism by its real name. However, by the end of the paragraph, presenting his own suggestions, Medvedev avoids doing this, preferring a more abstract "any kind of property" "with a real owner." Nevertheless, it is clear that Medvedev contrasts the ineffective collective property and the state economy to the effective capitalist entrepreneurship.

Like other proponents of liberalization, Medvedev shifted the focus of the discussion away from the structural to the material side of the issue. His construction suggested that the choice should be not between socialism and capitalism on the structural level; capitalism should be chosen over socialism just because private entrepreneurship was much more effective economically than state-run economy. Medvedev's argument, if taken out of the context, was

correct: the Russian peasantry at the beginning of the 20th century was much more efficient than at the end of it. What Medvedev left out of his frame was the fact that the structure of Soviet society at the end of the 20th century differed radically from the structure of Russian society at its beginning. When Bolsheviks seized power in 1917, the industrial proletariat in Russia accounted for little more than 3% of the population, while the peasantry constituted no less than 85% (Lynne, 1996, p. 15). Stalin's industrial transformations and the introduction of collective farms ruined peasants' culture, annihilated well-off peasants as a class, ravaged the countryside, and brought it to ruin. Further experiments with the "agricultural sector" undertaken by Khrushchev and other Soviet leaders only worsened the situation: not only was the village exhausted economically, it was also exhausted culturally (Denisova, 2010). By 1980s, agricultural crisis became chronic (Malish, 1984). One could hardly argue against the fact that Soviet politics of collectivization were at the root of the problem. But could it be solved by simple rejection of collective farms in favor of private owners at the end of the 20th century? How should the property of collective farms be redistributed? Who could become the new owners of Soviet agricultural enterprises if at the end of the 20th century Soviet peasants lacked any resources? These were the crucial structural questions that Medvedev, in line with other activists of liberalization, totally neglected.

Summary. As my analysis suggests, the liberally minded intellectuals who formed public opinion in the late USSR constructed a very specific frame of reference to market transformations, hiding some very important aspects of those transformations from public view. First, they presented the market as a self-regulating powerful force able to boost economy, fill shop shelves with consumer goods, liberate people from party and state control, and give them access to the achievements of world civilization. Stressing the advantages of liberalization, they

left without consideration at least two important aspects: that the pure laissez-faire economic system had never existed in practice and that the economic success of Western countries in the 20th century was much more about the ideas of John Keynes that of Adam Smith. Soviet pro-liberal intellectuals totally ignored the importance for the Western world of Keynes's historic discovery that that there was "no self-correcting property in the market system to keep capitalism growing" and that, therefore, "government spending must be an essential economic policy for a depressed capitalism trying to recover its vitality" (Heilbroner & Thurow, 1987, p. 40). By the Keynesian legacy and all intellectual discourse associated with it out of their frame, they deprived the concept of market of a substantial part of its intellectual history and, thus, eviscerated it, preparing for stuffing with new mythical meanings.

Second, by advocating for the purely laissez-faire version of capitalism where the state had no influence on economic issues, pro-liberal intellectuals of the late Soviet times argued that capitalism did not contradict socialism and social justice, pointing to the experience of Western countries. By doing this, they obscured that fact the level of de-commodification in Western countries was different and, thus, the level of "socialism," by which Soviet intellectuals meant the level of de-commodification, was different as well. By constructing that frame, they systematically failed to acknowledge that their version of capitalism, which did not presuppose active state interventions in economic life, could not lead to the same level of de-commodification as the countries of Northern Europe had already achieved. What they also failed to disclose for their publics was the fact that "where there is a shortage of capital, privatization could take place only through raw expropriation" (Krausz, 2007, p. 30). Thus, Soviet pro-liberal intellectuals failed to point out that privatization of Soviet state enterprises by

their former directors and nomenclature could hardly lead to the establishment of any socially just system.

Third, Soviet pro-liberal intellectuals stressed the fact that market-based economic system was economically much more efficient than socialist one and, as such, it would inevitably lead to material wellbeing. However, they failed to acknowledge that under the conditions of capitalism material resources are never distributed equally and that the transition to market relations would inevitable bring to stratification into propertyless and propertied classes. They failed pointing out that the prosperity of one class does not mean the prosperity of another one, even under the well-developed welfare systems of Nothern European countries, not to talk about the United States. Thus, Soviet pro-liberal intellectuals failed to acknowledge that the full shop shelves that exist in advanced capitalist economies do not exclude people's poverty and their inability to satisfy their consumer needs.

As a result of such strategic omissions, Soviet pro-liberal intellectuals constructed a mythical conception of the market economy, where the system of the pure laissez-faire gets along together with a strong welfare function of the state; where private ownership goes hand in hand with the lack of classes; and where the social achievements of socialism peacefully coexist with the economic achievements of capitalism. In other words, Soviet pro-liberal intellectuals created a mythical conception of the market where the wolves would be sated and the sheep intact. The sense of urgency for capitalistic transformations, which they constructed through denigrating all the aspects of the Soviet way of life, presupposed no serious analytical deliberation, which might have helped to deconstruct the myth. Without any critical analysis, the popular media of perestroika disseminated that myth across late Soviet society.

Vernacular Myths

Collective privatization. *VK* provides a good idea of how the common people of Kharkov imagined market transformations. First of all, many of them agreed with their intellectual leaders that market reforms were necessary. Here are some excerpts from people's letters to *VH* that support this claim:

> I believe that in order to saturate the market with commodities, we should not use administrative methods. We need economic stimuli. (Akhmetov, 1989, p. 2)
>
> We need to ruin the administrative-command system, to reduce administrative apparatus, and to break up the dictatorship of ministers. (Volchenko,1990, p. 4)
>
> We need a transition to market economy. We don't need a center. Market will dictate everything to enterprises. (Pokroyev, 1990, p. 4)
>
> Quick and total defrosting of prices is inescapable. (Natanzon, 1991, p. 2)

However, people's inability to imagine democracy in any other way other than as a direct representation of their needs in supreme state institutions and the state's responsibility to satisfy these needs (discussed in the previous chapter) resulted in their failure to imagine market reforms outside of this dominant socialist paradigm. Judging from the materials of *VH*, in the popular interpretation, the denationalization of state enterprises meant nothing more than an attempt to improve workers' conditions of life and solve workers' problems. This is how some of the *VH*'s contributors imagined the meaning of privatization:

> Privatization will allow increasing the role of working collectives in the distribution of enterprises' profits. (Polonsky, 1989, p. 2)
>
> Privatization will make worker real owners of their enterprises. (Nalivaiko & Sirenko, 1990, p. 3)

Privatization will allow workers to get income from what they produce. (Dolukhanov, 1991, p. 1)

In other words, many Kharkovites imagined that privatization of industrial enterprises would make them the owners of their factories and plants.

It is also clear from the newspaper's articles and stories that many people imagined that by means of privatization they would regain their property, appropriated by the state, and social justice would ultimately triumph:

The workers of plants, factories, firms, and other enterprises have a right…to become shareholders of their enterprises, to get an income out of what they produce. (Berdnik, 1991, p. 1)

We demand that all privatization problems be solved in a just way, with respect to the desires of working collectives, not behind workers' backs. (Dolukhanov, 1991, p. 1)

We are not against privatization. We even want to take over our enterprise as a collective property. If not, we won't be owners but hired workers again. Again, we will work for somebody. (Logvinenko, 1991, p. 1)

Today, our institute is a state enterprise. But we are preparing for privatization, and we are not going to sell ourselves. No matter whether we'll be speaking about a joint-stock enterprise or any other form, we are going to work for our collective, not for somebody else. (Goryanov, 1991, p. 1)

It is clear from these passages that many people in Kharkov did not imagine privatization in terms of private ownership even in 1991, when the authors of market reforms had already publicly revealed their anti-socialist aspirations. In the popular imagination, the state ownership of industrial enterprises associated with the power of party nomenklatura, not working people. In

collective privatization many working people saw an opportunity to establish social justice and egalitarianism by eliminating party dictatorship but not establishing private property.

Privatization without dirty money. It is quite clear that the people of Kharkov managed to imagine privatization in such peculiar non-private terms following Gorbachev's discourse on "socialization" of state enterprises, which he initiated in 1986 in order to lessen the power of the nomenklatura. Because Gorbachev's ideas on updating socialism resonated with workers' egalitarian mood, they accepted them without resistance and easily adopted for their own usage. This popular vision became problematic after many Soviet intellectuals moved from collectivist to liberal views on market reforms. As Krausz (2007) explains,

> In the second half of 1990 many groups of experts, intellectuals and politicians that had formed the core of centralized Soviet power gradually abandoned Gorbachev for service in the new Russian centre of power led by Yeltsin. Ideologues of perestroika such as Aganbegyan and Zaslavskaya ditched the original language of perestroika, suddenly 'realizing' that economic self-management and the democratization of a self-regulating society were incompatible with a market economy. According to the custom of 'realpolitik', they too became champions of the so-called 'unconditional' market economy. (p. 16)

However, as I showed in the previous section of this chapter, the change of course to "unconditional market economy" or laissez-faire was not accompanied with a change in vocabulary: the same conceptual forms were used and the change in their meanings was almost indefinable for non-elite publics. For working people, inexperienced with political manipulations, it was almost impossible to discern the trick.

At the end of the 1990s, there was a huge social distance between Soviet intellectuals who changed their views in favor of pure liberal market and Soviet working people who seemed to have remained faithful to the ideas of collective self-management proclaimed by Gorbachev. Fundamentally different economic interests were behind the divergence of their views. As Castells (2000a) maintains,

> The catastrophic management of the Russian economic transition cannot be understood without considering its overarching logic: the formation of a government-protected financial oligarchy, which rewarded personally many of the leading Russian liberal reformers…, in exchange for the privilege of being the intermediaries of Russian riches and global trade and investment. (p. 146)

In other words, many "progressive" Soviet intellectuals, who catered the emerging class of the owners of former state property, realized that liberalization opened for them unprecedented possibilities for personal enrichment and business commuting with the outside world.

For the working people, the liberal version of privatization had a different meaning. Judging from the letters of workers to *VH*, the privatization of state enterprises on private terms meant for them not market reforms but the usurpation of those enterprises by mafia, criminals, profiteers, and corrupted nomenklatura. For the working people of the USSR, whose grandparents built Soviet industrial enterprises during Stalin's industrialization, whose parents rebuilt the Soviet national economy after the Great Patriotic War, and whose own lives were parts of their enterprises, "pure market" denationalization was pillage, not privatization (on the history of the Soviet industrialization see Naum, 1961). Culturally and historically developed understanding of social justice did not allow many Kharkovites to imagine how their enterprises could be given away to those who had not built them, who had not worked at them, and whose

lives had not become a part of enterprises' lives. Because of that specific understanding of social justice cultivated within the socialist state, the popular imagination of Kharkovites was able to envision privatization without the participation of "non-labor elements" of society such as profiteers, cooperators, or black economy dealers. In popular representation, reflected in the pages of *VH*, the representatives of "non-labor" social groups usually appeared as immoral creatures making their fortunes on people's misfortunes:

> It is important not to admit to privatization the moneymakers of the shadow economy, the mafia, and the corrupted part of the party apparatus who possess, according to different estimations, from 150 to 300 billion rubles. (Mogilevkin, 1990, p. 2)

In the imagination of Soviet working people, who spent their lives in the social state working for state salaries without any possibility to earn extra material resources, such huge sums of money could be only a result of illegal or immoral activities. According to this logic, state enterprises built by collectives of people should not be allowed to be privatized by those immoral profiteers.

Business without profiteering. One can observe similar negative attitude in relation to co-operatives, which were granted the same rights as state enterprises by the *Law on Co-operatives* in May 1988. These new forms of economic organization were small private enterprises whose imagined mission was to "to place representative bodies of workers' collectives into a position of power vis-à-vis the bureaucracy and technical management" (Krausz, 2007, p. 8). In reality, however, co-operatives turned into private enterprises that were able to set down roots through the existence of the shadow economy. During 1989, some restrictions were imposed on cooperative activity as a result of pressure from the mass public. Soviet working people were resentful about co-operatives' prices that were 50-100% above state shop prices for identical, but

largely unavailable goods: "Cooperatives were accused of bringing `almost nothing but high prices'" (Aage, 1991, p. 18). The same mood dominated *VH* publications:

> The cooperative of seven persons in the city of Dneprodzerzhinsk take from Simferopol a 12-ton trailer, which contains up to 20,000 bottles of Pepsi-Cola bought 45 kopecks each. On their way, they sell these bottles 55 kopecks each…. One trip gives them pure profit of 2,000 rubles, and they do 5-6 trips a month. Isn't it illegal?… It is necessary to close such cooperatives. (Volgov, 1990, p. 8)

Because of people's unwillingness to approve the business of buying and reselling at higher prices, cooperatives were subjected to stricter price controls and the practice of buying goods in state shops and reselling them was prohibited.

Here, an important question arises: how did people's disapproval of co-operatives' business of buying goods in order to resell them at higher prices – a quite normal business activity – go in line with their approval of market reforms? There is only one plausible answer to it: many people of the former USSR understood the concept of market in very peculiar terms that drew on their cultural background. As Aage (1991) explains,

> An instrumental attitude towards wages and prices is basically alien to the Soviet mentality. Morality is always involved, and more so than in other cultural settings. Wage differentials could not be considered purely as an incentive without regard to fairness, and a price offer is not neutral but subject to a moral standard, even if everybody is free to take it or leave it. A high price at the kolkhoz market is not a welfare-augmenting increase in the range of options, but an insult. The concepts of `unearned income', `illegal income' and `spekulyatsiya' as distinct from `market clearing' derive their existence from these cultural values. (p. 16)

According to this explanation, for many Soviet people co-operatives' business of buying goods in order to resell them was not a matter of profit per se but a matter of morality. In order to be moral, the profit had to be earned, not just turned. This distinction between moral (earned) profit and immoral (nonlabor) profit lied in the bottom of privatization controversy as well: for many Soviet people, collective privatization was appropriate and non-collective immoral.

As many observers noted, this strong dislike of pure moneymaking was a characteristic feature of popular public opinion in the late USSR (Dorn, 1991; Aage, 1991). Part of this dislike had come from Orthodox Christendom, where usury and similar activity oriented at pure profit was a sin (Persky, 2007). The motif of condemning such immoral activity is evident in many publications of *VH*. Here is another example:

> I am against cooperators… Why do they have such a huge income? I agree, the quality of their work is high, but it is aimed at just personal enrichment. They do not stimulate the development of the social sphere. Their policy is just to snatch quickly. Often, anti-social elements are grouping around cooperatives. (Patoka, 1990)

Again, what this statement reveals is a specific cultural interpretation of collective social justice, acquired through the years of the Soviet power: Not everything should be for sale and for profit. In their creative signification of the market, a concept unfamiliar to them, Kharkovites filled its form with new meaning – the market should exist in some perfect form, where social justice reigns, where profit is achieved only by ethical means, and where morality matters.

As positive role models, the newspaper presented individuals who were able to preserve kindness, compassion, unselfishness, and disinterestedness even under the pressure of the market. Here are some examples:

A director of a research institute who takes care of employees: "We have raised salaries

for our employees. The construction of a new apartment building is almost over. Now,

we are preparing vegetables and fruit for winter. The institute's trade union committee is

providing people with flour, textiles and knitted wear." (Goryanov, 1991, p. 1)

A farmer who provides food for the workers of "Stoma" medical enterprise: "I have three

sons… Here is a lake – we'll raise fish in it. Then, we will supply 'Stoma' with honey,

buckwheat, and vegetables." (Zamyatin, 1991, p. 5)

As these examples show, people considered business activities aimed at personal enrichment

reprehensible. Its blameworthiness is contrasted to the praiseworthiness of an activity aimed at

the stimulation of the social sphere. Thus, the collective interest is valorized while the individual

one is devalued. Everything that is anti-collective or anti-social is constructed in negative terms,

and co-operatives, whose aim is pure personal profit, serve as manifestations of those negative

constructions.

Uncivilized cooperators. Interestingly, many contributors of *VH* tended to believe that

co-operatives' unwillingness to serve collective interests and their striving for pure profit was not

an inherent feature of all market-driven enterprises but a by-product of the rudimentary,

underdeveloped, and "uncivilized" stage of market transformations. Such a vision allowed some

of *VH*'s contributors to differentiate between "non-civilized" and "civilized" co-operatives. The

former, according to that perspective, strived for pure profit while the latter oriented for the

public good:

We are for the civilized cooperation that works for people's good… At the same time,

trade unions will go on struggling decisively against any perversion in the cooperative

movement and speculation, which discredits useful business. (All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, 1989, p. 3)

As it is evident from this statement, its authors believed in the existence of some ideal "civilized cooperation" that would work for people's good; it was contrasted to "perverted cooperation" and speculation. But where does this "civilized" cooperation exist and how exactly does this "useful" business emerge?

I have found an interesting answer to this question in another *VH* opinion piece published in February 1990. Its author – a Kharkov intellectual - was confident there was only one way toward "civilized co-operation" – the establishment of commodity-money relations:

People are against cooperatives today, and we could hardly expect anything different. The cooperator, as well as the trader, becomes civilized, if market circumstances push him/her to this. Nothing of this kind happens. What exists is the distorted, mutually beneficial alliance of the market and the command administrative system… The alternative would be the transition to commodity-money relations. (Volchenko, 1990, p. 4)

Arguing that "distorted cooperation" is a logical outcome of the alliance of market and the command administrative system, the author suggests that only the elimination of the latter would bring a civilized condition of cooperation. It is remarkable that civilization is equated here with the social responsibility of business, which, as we know from the history of Western capitalist modernity, occurs rarely on its own terms, without state interventions. Thus, the author of this statement repeated the myths created by high-rank intellectuals without recognizing the basic contradiction hidden in them – the contradiction between the market's conceptual history and the mythological meaning attached to it in the course of perestroika reforms.

Volcanic disruption. Other authors, however, were inclined to see the hampering of reforms not only in the command-administrative system per se but in the specific structure of feeling within Soviet society, recognized by many other observers as the popular egalitarian or anti-capitalist mood (Dorn, 1991; Aage, 1991). Some *VH* contributors described that mood in much more negative terms, recognizing in it the remnants of Stalinism and the repressive way of thinking:

> The rejection of wage leveling and the transition to commodity-money relations are unacceptable for many people. Which reaction should we expect from millions of our citizens whose occupation has been to spy on their own people, tell them how to live, and organize them for a radiant future? Stalinists group together, search for an outcome. We need to be watchful. (Volchenko, 1990, p. 4)

> Our problem is that no other country in the world has a similar experience. Where else the transition to the real market, which demands audacity, qualification, and initiative, was accomplished by the people whose most audacious, qualified, and mobile ancestors were annihilated? To expect the development of production under these circumstances and believe that we will need for this only four or five years is utopian. (Kirsh, 1991, p. 2)

As it is evident from these passages, their authors interpreted Soviet egalitarian culture in strictly negative terms: as a cultural formation that became possible only as a result of Bolshevik totalitarian rule under which the most talented people were killed and those who survived turned into spies and lickspittle followers of the regime, who were called "Stalinists."

What the authors of those passages ignored was a much broader cultural heritage of village communities with their egalitarian culture, which existed in former Soviet lands long

before Bolsheviks came to power. According to Krausz (2007), "the survival of village communities was dependent on Russia's place on the semi-periphery of the 'modern global system', for which the industrial states of the 'centre' allocated Russian agriculture the role of grain supplier in the European 'division of labour'" (p. 3). Not all the people, of course, were KGB informers, or stukachi, as informers were informally called in the USSR. Like not all of those who lived in the late USSR approved Stalin's politics and, thus, could be called "Stalinists." What we observe in these passages is the simplification of the issue for the sake of promoting the liberal agenda. By doing so, the *VH* contributors exploited the same motif that leading pro-liberal intellectuals used in their mythical constructions: in order to achieve a civilized condition, Soviet society needs to overcome its own history and culture and, thus, "to kill the dragon in itself," as Novodvorskaya suggested.

People's letters to *VH* illustrate perfectly well how difficult it was for them "to kill the dragon." As those letters testify, it was a painful experience for Soviet people to adapt their familiar way of life to the changes required by liberal reformers. It was not easy for them, for example, to get accustomed to the idea that the "exploitation of other people's work" could be a legitimate and morally appropriate enterprise. This is an excerpt from a letter by a woman who was shocked by the discovery that the women of Georgia (a Soviet republic) had habitually used the labor of housemaids:

> I spent my vacation in Yesentuki where I met a nice Georgian woman. Of course, we discussed the eternal problems of Soviet women who work hard from morning till night at her enterprise and then from night till midnight at her home. How do some of us manage to remain women, to be attractive? It turned out that in Tbilisi every working woman can hire a domestic servant to clean a house for a relatively low fee. Since then, I

have been thinking over the story of my new friend and over the fact that we are not

accustomed to "exploit" the labor of others, that this is immoral…. (Galaur, 1991, p. 5)

This passage, along with other examples, shows that market transformations initiated by

Gorbachev required from Soviet people even more psychological effort than is usually

acknowledged. For several generations, people in the USSR were used to think that the

exploitation of other people's work was bad. Was it possible to change their habit of thinking

easily, just because somebody declared market reforms? Did those habits ultimately change? Or

were they just repressed by the pressure of new times? Popular nostalgia for the USSR, recorded

by the latest sociological research (Democratichni Initsiativi, 2011), testifies for this proposition.

Another story revealing the psychological difficulties of market transformations was

published in *VH* under the eloquent title "A Place Under the Sun." Its main character was a

female profiteer, Yolka, who, as the reporter said, "made a profit out of the biggest problem of

our society, deficit" (Zolotikh, 1991, p. 4). Here is Yolka's story:

Officially, Yolka is a worker of one of the small technical organizations that are abundant

in our city, with a monthly salary of 160 rubles... Several times a month she travels by

plane to this or that location of now the former Soviet Union just to reappear in a couple

of days with overstuffed bags… Yolka makes profit out of the biggest problem of our

society, deficit …[but]… Yolka never takes anything extra from friends or neighbors.

She sells them goods for the original price – Yolka has her own rules. Money does not

fell on Yolka from heavens. "I am becoming a horse," she sighs. And I see from the

expression of her eyes and drooped shoulders (only in public does Yolka always smile

and never whimper) how difficult is Yolka's economic independence and well-to-do life.

Strong Yolka wants to be weak so much! (Zolotikh, 1991, p. 4)

What we see here is an attempt to justify Yolka's profiteering. The reporter portrayed Yolka as an unfortunate woman whose husband was not able to financially support her and their child. That is why Yolka had to take a divorce and to devote all her energy for making money by travelling across the former USSR, buying goods that were in short supply in her native city and reselling them for higher prices. According to the logic of this story, Yolka had nothing to do but to start profiteering – otherwise, she could not have survived. Having noted that Yolka made a profit on people's misfortunes, the reporter, however, depicted her positively – as a person who earned her money by her own efforts and who "never takes extra from friends and neighbors." In other words, she did not exploit other people and she did not make profit on her friends, relatives, or neighbors – Yolka's close community. It is obvious that in order to portray Yolka positively, the reporter needed to stress those important aspects of Yolka's humanity. "Yolka has rules," concludes the journalist.

One can see similar attempts to rehabilitate profiteers or cooperators – the negative characters of the new times – in *O* pages as well. In May 1991, it published, for example, a story about the owner of a cooperative restaurant who fed lonely old people. "There are old people in every district and in every apartment building," the cooperator told an *O* reporter. "I don't say that I am an altruist. But there should be some people who will not allow them to die from hunger!" (A.K., 1991, p. 4). Then, the old people whom the cooperator fed for free were interviewed, and they told the reporter that people in the district didn't like the cooperator no matter what:

Old woman: People are angry.

Reporter: Why? Is it because he feeds you?

Old woman: Because this is cooperative. That's why they are angry.

Reporter: Because of envy?

Old woman: Because of hate. This is a cooperative, after all!

Reporter: What if the café were owned by state?

Old woman: Well, probably, they wouldn't mind then. (A.K., 1991, p. 4)

As it is evident from this dialogue, popular disapproval of cooperators was so great that even their kind and benevolent behavior did not change people's attitudes for better.

It is important to realize that this conversation happened in May 1991, only half a year before the Soviet Union stopped to exist. At that point, people's hate for cooperatives was of a different character than popular disapproval of cooperatives fixed in 1989 (see in previous chapters). By 1991, the mood of disillusionment with market transformations was omnipresent, and people's hate of cooperatives was only a part of their annoyance with what was going on in the state. By 1990-1991, the realization came that by means of democratic procedures, not role models of high morality and moving altruism but irresponsible chatterboxes and avid grabbers managed to grasp political and economic power. The interests of working people had been forced off from the agendas of governmental bodies:

We observe now how the underground economy functions, how moneymakers concentrate in their hands more and more material resources, more and more power. (Gavrilenko, 1990, p. 2)

Privatization, denationalization, corporation, self-sufficiency, bankruptcy, indexation, unemployment. All of this is in the air. Everything is messed up, and every day something unexpected happens. What is waiting for us tomorrow? Are we the owners of the enterprises, plants, and organizations where we have worked for decades, or just hired

workers and servants? What do people possess in the collective house to which all their conscious lives have been devoted? Deputies argue about percentages, certificates, and bonuses, while people wait with the anxiety: what will happen to their enterprises?

(Goryanov, 1991, p. 1)

As these passages show, by 1990–1991, the realization came that instead of updated socialism and improved social contract people got the savage market where one could hardly find social security or justice. Not only does this passage reveal people's disillusionment with market reforms, their loss of orientation, and inability to make sense of what was going on, it also displays the cleavage between working people and intellectuals. While the former cared about their "collective house," the latter were concerned with their individual material interests manifested in the discourse on "percentages, certificates, and bonuses," as the author of this passage suggests.

Summary. As my analysis shows, the popular imagination expressed at the level of vernacular discourse differed from the discourse of intellectuals on several important terms. First, although many people agreed on the necessity of market reforms, they often imagined those reforms in collectivist forms, as Gorbachev suggested at the beginning of perestroika. This was expressed in people's beliefs that privatization would make them real owners of their enterprises, allow them to participate in profit distribution, help to eliminate the power of nomenklatura, and ultimately bring social justice. While in the course of time many Soviet intellectuals abandoned the idea of marrying socialism and capitalism, Soviet working people never did so. For them, the meaning of the market reforms of perestroika never lost their initial sense of self-managing economy by working collectives, not selling enterprises to private owners.

Second, vernacular discourse was permeated with the strong dislike by working people of cooperatives and any kind of "nonlabor" profit reaped through re-selling goods. Such a motif was definitely absent in the discourse of intellectuals, who welcomed any kind of economic activities that existed in the "civilized" Western world. For many working people of Kharkov, as their letters to the newspapers show, it was important to keep business "moral": free from the exploitation of men by men and making profit for the sake of profit. "Moral" business, according to popular belief, should also be community oriented. The latter requirement, as many researchers noted, was a product of not only Soviet culture but has a longer history of communal village life that characterized the countryside of the Russian empire. Among other factors, that collectivist structure of feeling shaped people's attitudes to privatization, which were imagined in exclusively collective terms.

Finally, vernacular discourse revealed much more tension between collective culture and the requirements of new times. In their letters or interviews to *VH*, people often confessed that it was very difficult for them to change their attitude to such things as the "exploitation of men by men" or "nonlabor profiteering." In contrast, Soviet pro-liberal intellectuals never expressed similar concerns. For them, adopting money-based relations was a matter of "fun," as Novodvorskaya confessed in her interview for *O*, or a matter of changing an intellectual perspective. For the working people, adopting money-based relationships was a matter of changing cultural habits and their familiar way of life – "a volcanic disruption to time-honored routines of life," as Heilbroner & Thurow (1987, p. 13) put it.

Chapter 9

Mythologizing the United States: Intellectual Myths Only

A Democratic Heaven

The founding fathers. My analysis reveals one peculiar characteristic that distinguished *O* articles related to the United States from other stories in *O*: many reports about American life published in the newspaper were written by American writers, some of whom were the authors of the U.S. information Agency's (USIA) propagandistic brochures. Richard Pawelek, for example, whose *The Discovery of America* was published in several *O* issues of 1991, was an author of *The Portrait of the USA* (United States Information Agency, 1997). Introducing the USA to *O* readers, Pawelek could not find a better way to characterize his country than referring to Lincoln's famous expression about America as a nation "conceived in Liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." He also maintained that

> The respect for liberty, rights, and equality has cultivated among U.S. citizens a deep-
> rooted sense of independence, self-respect and even the opposition to discipline along
> with the conviction that everybody has a right to live the way he or she wants, if the
> rights of other people are not infringed. (Pawelek, 1991, p. 6)

For Pawelek, the tradition of individual independence, self-respect, and the right to keep to an individual lifestyle had been laid out by the first European settlers in American colonies. As he maintained, "an urgent need for collaboration together with the belief in individualism strengthened the idea that all people are equal in the New World and that nobody should have special rights and privileges" (Pawelek, 1991, p. 6). As evidence of this democratic egalitarian culture, Pawelek provided *O* readers with the following anecdote: "At the beginning of the

1880s, President Thomas Jefferson started shaking hands with anybody he met because he considered an old European habit to bow antidemocratic. Since that time, Americans are used shaking hands" (Pawelek, 1991, p. 6). As it is clear from this excerpt, Pawelek signified the sign of hand shaking with the meaning of democratic egalitarianism. In the context of the non-democratic USSR, Pawelek's signification looked dubious, however: in the totalitarian Soviet Union, hand shaking was a habit shared across all the layers of society, from Communist party bosses to ordinary people. Despite the obvious mismatch, *O* editors left Pawlek's story without comments or explanations, as well as many other mismatches, inaccuracies, omissions of American contributors.

O editors left without comment, for example, the fact that the United States was conceived not only in liberty, as Pawelek stated following Lincoln, but also in slavery, which was protected by the American constitution (Perry, 2011). They also left without consideration Pawelek's silence on the disastrous consequences of Jefferson's "empire of liberty" for Native Americans (Reynolds, 2009) and the fact that American women had to wait for their right to vote until the end of the 19th century (Olwell, 2011). But what is even more important, *O* editors failed to inform their readers that all the problematic issues associated with the history of American democracy (racial segregation, sexual inequality, and class stratification) and public deliberation on them transformed American political life into a permanent process of reflexive change and adaptation (Heideking, 2000). In other words, *O* editors failed to point out two most important facts related to the history of American democracy: first, the U.S. political system was imperfect from the beginning and, second, it was far from a stable ideological or institutional formation that had been established once and forever (Dahl, 2006).

In other words, *O* systematically failed to acknowledge that American democracy was a vivid and ever-changing social organism the development of which had permanently drawn from local historical, cultural, social, and political circumstances – because of this, its democratic system could not be just "borrowed." Instead of commenting on the complex nature of the development of U.S. political system, *O* editors uncritically reprinted U.S. propagandist materials like this one borrowed from "American Legion" magazine: "We saw the statue of Liberty… Many fell to their knees and praised God in different languages. One man was crying: 'Finally! Finally!' Immigrants set their feet on the land that belonged to common people" (Oxford, 1991, p. 9). Such one-dimensional snapshots transformed the complexity of issues related to democratic culture and government of the United States into a beautiful myth of an American fairyland where democracy and freedom ripened as exotic fruits, ready for exporting to the most remote sites of human civilization.

Not only did *O* editors contributed to the global dissemination of this mythology by failing to comment on the propagandistic writings of USIA authors, they also created their own mythical constructions. In one of his articles, Dashevskiy, the chief editor of *O*, stated: "We need to acknowledge that Emerson [!] and other founding fathers established the USA when Count Tolstoy did not think yet to release his serfs" (Dashevskiy, 1991, p. 6). The implication of the statement was clear: Americans had managed to establish a free democratic order when even the most progressive Russian thinkers could not imagine such a possibility. Not only did Dashevsky traditionally fail to acknowledge that the establishment of the USA was accompanied by the constitutional strengthening of the slavery system, he also obscured the fact that the Russian empire had a history totally different from that of the United States and, therefore, it was naive to expect the emergence of similar political systems within these two heterogeneous socio-cultural

milieus at the same point of time. Instead of presenting this matter in terms of different histories and socio-cultural traditions, Dashevsky constructed it within a frame of superiority of the United States and inferiority of Russian Empire. By ignoring the differences of historical and cultural contexts, Dashevsky followed the line that was employed by the modernizers of all times: there is only one way to the civilized condition (which is suitable for all human societies), and the powerful Western nations have already passed it.

Racial problems as the remnants of the past. From 1989 until 1991, *O* published no single article that critically evaluated the claim that the United States could be considered a model of social equality. Although some of its contributors touched upon problematic aspects of racial relations, they never made these aspects central. Bruce Oatman, another author of the USIA's *The Portrait of the USA*, acknowledged, for example, that "poverty and unequal conditions complicate the access of Black Americans and Puerto-Ricans to education and the possibilities of acquiring social habits" (Oatman, 1991, p. 7). He added right away, however, that "Black Americans are beginning to overcome the consequences of slavery that lasted for 250 years" and that "nowadays, at all administrative levels, help for the deprived and the perfection of laws against discrimination are an important sphere of governmental activities" (Oatman, 1991, p. 7). By stressing only the *past* part of the story, Oatman aimed to create an impression that all the causes of ethnic inequality and racial injustice were located *only* in the *history* of slavery, not in the present system of social relations that constantly *reproduce* inequality through structural constraints (Reynolds, 2009). By leaving Oatman's construction without comment, *O* failed to inform its readers that even at the end of the 20th century there were regions in the prosperous U.S. from which, "statistically speaking, there was no escape from the pain and destruction

inflicted on the human condition" (Castells, 2000c, p. 162) – inner-city ghettoes, Black and Latino.

O failed to inform its readers that a complex set of linkages exists between the prosperity of one America and the misery of another one. They did not tell their readers that late capitalism, although bringing affluence to selected publics, inflicts additional injuries on those who are already excluded (Castells, 2000c). O also failed to acknowledge that racism's eradication is difficult not only because of structural constrains but also because racism is rooted in collective consciousness – that is, because cultural intolerance is interrelated with systemic institutional exclusions (Better, 2007).

Flag burning. O never commented on obvious incongruences between the claim that the United States valued equality and freedom so much and the fact that this is "a society with the most extreme levels of inequality in the developed world" (Giddens, 2000, p. 25) or that "America has the dubious distinction of being the country with the highest percentage of prison population in the world" (Castells, 2000c, p. 145). Without these issues, the United States looked a model of egalitarianism and free choice. For some O authors, it was exactly the respect for freedom that inspired Americans' patriotic attitudes to their country and its national flag:

> In democratic countries, governments don't tell people how to celebrate national holidays; meetings and demonstrations are private business of citizens and social movements. That's why Americans love their flag so much… Nobody ever forced them to bring flags to demonstrations, and the U.S. Supreme Court cannot decide that the desecration of the flag is a crime because it would contradict the freedom of individuality. (Ponomarenko, 1990, p. 3)

Referring to a famous effort of the Bush Administration to "protect" the flag with a constitutional amendment and the Supreme Court's decision to uphold the First Amendment right of citizens to burn flags in protests, the author of that article significantly simplified the issue. He failed to mention, for example, that despite all the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court, notorious for its stand for political freedoms, "flag desecrators continue to be prosecuted, persecuted, and harassed throughout the country" (Goldstein, 1994, p. 84).

By framing the issue of flag burning in exclusively legal and political terms, as a means of freedom of expression, the author failed to recognize that the same issue could be interpreted within a different, cultural, paradigm: a flag could be seen predominantly as a symbol of national unity and self-respect while its burning as a symbol of national humiliation (Garbus, 1989). The author ignored the fact that many Americans were actually in favor of a constitutional amendment to make burning of the national flag illegal (Carroll, 2006). Leaving aside the complicated context of the flag burning issue and presenting it as a simple and incontestable manifestation of the freedom of political expression, *O* deprived this concept of its real, rich and complicated, meaning. By emasculating the content of the conceptual form, *O* also deprived its readers to realize that the freedom of expression can never be absolute; the limits of freedom are always a matter of interpretation, negotiation, and compromise. In other words, *O* failed to inform its readers that real democracy could be hardly imagined as a set of eternal rules that can be borrowed; rather, it should be normatively understood as a political process where people's opinion matter, where cultural predispositions are taken seriously, and where the ongoing public deliberation shapes the forms of democratic government (Habermas, 1985).

USIA's "New Ideological Presence." Not only did *O* uncritically reprint USIA's propagandistic literature on the past and present of U.S. system of government; the newspaper

also reprinted without comments a speech that USIA's head Bruce Gelb gave before U.S. senators, where he acknowledged the propagandistic purposes of the agency:

> Nowadays, USIA is facing new challenges of importance in Eastern Europe because the new forces of liberalization appeal to Western values, the exponent of which has always been in the United States… We need to maintain a new, ideological American presence, instead of the passing one, which has been historically based on the military force… The agency will strive to get rid of its image of the instrument of the Cold War and to acquire an image of a conductor of democratic values. (News Information Agency, 1991, p. 11)

O published this passage without putting forward a critical question of how the goals of this propagandistic agency go together with the freedom of consciousness and speech propagated by the United States? Why did Mr. Gelb think his agency had any right to impose its strategic version of reality constructed by USIA specialists on the rest of the world? Why did the United States need to maintain a new kind of presence and what did this term actually mean? Why did the United States need to create a new "image," that of democratic values conductor? What was the purpose of such a "creation"? And, finally, if a democratic image of the United States had to be created, what is the proportion of real democracy in the created image of it?

Today, 20 years after the disintegration of the USSR, these questions look naïve – at least, for those who believe that "democracy was Washington's most effective weapon to increase its control over the emerging nations of the former Communist bloc in Europe" (Engdahl, 2009, p. 3) and that it was a special kind of democracy, "'a totalitarian democracy' welding American economic, political, and cultural hegemony together under the military control of NATO" (Engdahl, 2009, p. 4). Today, many people of the former USSR, who experienced colossal sufferings in the course of liberalizing post-Soviet economy under the

U.S.'s supervision (Shiraeve & Zubok, 2000; Stiglitz, 2003), would easily agree with these claims – many Russians and Ukrainians nowadays believe that the United States ruined their country by means of democratic discourses in order to achieve its geopolitical goals (Kara-Murza, 2000). These questions would not have sounded so naïve if the Soviet intelligentsia had critically examined them before the Soviet Union seized to exist. If Soviet intellectuals had informed the people of the Soviet Union about all possible meanings of democracy and freedom within American and Soviet cultural, political, and social contexts, we would have probably had to deal with the different versions of modernity across post-Soviet states.

The Horn of Plenty

A smiling nation. If some of *O*'s authors, as has been already shown, believed the U.S. citizens loved their country primarily for its free and egalitarian spirit, others were inclined to think that the source of Americans' patriotism and happiness were predominantly in the material side of U.S. reality. As one of *O*'s contributors presented it, "People say that Americans differ from us by their benevolence and smiles at their faces. Definitely, they can smile… Cold and hungry winter does not threaten them, and they don't know what deficit is about" (Sternina, 1991, p. 10). Some *O* authors went as far as arguing that not only racial problems but all kinds of social inequality, insecurity, and unrest had been left by American society in the past. According to Sergei Aleksandrov, for example, U.S. working people did not celebrate the 1st of May – the international day of workers' solidarity – because of total satisfaction with their lives. "Today, almost nobody celebrates the proletarian holiday," Aleksandrov wrote. "Prosperity is the best way to stifle the working movement" (Aleksandrov, 1991, p. 2). This is how he described American workers:

Who are they, working people of the USA, now? The image of the worker in a greasy

uniform has obviously gone out of date. Approximately in the middle of the 1970s, the

U.S. working class became predominantly "white-collared" In 1985, 55% of all hired

workers in America were "white collars," who performed managerial, administrative, and

other high-ranked duties…. (Aleksandrov, 1991, p. 2)

According to Alexandrov, "96 percent of the workers who work at industrial enterprises enjoy

prepaid vacation leaves; for 41 percent of workers, their enterprises cover sick leaves; and 96

percent of workers had health and life insurance" (Aleksandrov, 1991, p. 2). To make the

impression even greater, *O* editors bolstered Alexandrov's report with an old picture of a U.S.

workers' protest and a comment attached to it, "Once upon a time, they also liked to protest."

Another photograph illustrated a laughing American woman with the caption, "In their place,

everybody would laugh."

Alexandrov did not mention that the percentage of Americans covered by health

insurance actually declined from 1980 to 1991 and the structural transformation of the American

working environment, which Alexandrov described as a positive shift from "greasy" to "white-

colored" uniforms, was a part of the problem. From 1980 to 1991, as Levit et al. (1992) explain,

The industrial composition of the United States shifted toward service industries in which

the provision of employer-sponsored insurance is less likely to be found. Simultaneously,

the percentage of workers offered and/or able to afford insurance through their

employment declined in almost every industrial sector. (p. 2)

Second, Aleksandrov did not inform his readers that because income had remained the most

important factor in the decisions of U.S. citizens to purchase or not purchase health insurance

plans, many Americans remained uninsured: "From the 1980 to the 1991 CPS, the percent of the

non-elderly population in poverty increased, and the percent with insurance coverage decreased"
(Levit et al., 1992, p. 2). Third, he did not mention that the lack of insurance coverage among the
poor people of the United States was only a small part of the problems associated with that
system (Health Care Financial Review, 1996) – problems that might have been incomprehensible
to Soviet people who were used to free medical care. Not only did Alexandrov omit from his
presentation all the problematic "nuances," he also excluded the existence of poverty per se,
making American reality sterile in its perfection.

It is worth noting, however, that not all *O* authors constructed the affluence of the USA in
such simplistic and overtly unrealistic terms. Pictures of American prosperity presented by
Richard Pawelek, for example, were more sophisticated. He also presented the U.S. as a "society
of affluence," but acknowledged that "14-15 percent of the population live beyond the poverty
line": "The United States are used to be called society of affluence, and despite big numbers of
poor Americans, this definition is correct. At the beginning of 1980s, the average income of the
American family was 24,500 dollars a year…." (Pawelek, 1990, p. 6). For the average Soviet
citizen, who earned 100-200 rubles ($12-$30) a month, an annual income of 24,500 dollars was
an inconceivable sum of money. Without a detailed explanation of the differences in money
values, it was difficult for them to realize how poverty could coexist with such generous
remunerations. In other words, it was not easy to believe that poverty existed in the United States
at all. An average Soviet citizen, who enjoyed free housing, free education, and free medical
service, could hardly conceive that monthly payments for insurance, housing, and education
could swallow up the worker's monthly income.

It was not easy for *O* readers to see the true, multi-dimensional, picture of American life
because the newspaper systematically presented only its attractive features. Describing, for

example, the American credit system, Pawelek (1990) focused only in the convenience and easiness of borrowing, saying nothing about the difficulties of paying debts back: "Many Americans possess credit cards, which allow them to acquire on credit all they want, starting with the suit and finishing with the air ticket" (p. 6). Pawelek simply forgot to mention that "since World War II the increase in bankruptcy filing in the USA has been relentless" because

> In a market that provides access to almost unlimited amounts of consumer credit, some people will accumulate a debt load that eventually takes on a life of its own – swelling on compound interest, default rates, and penalty payments until it consumes every available dollar of income and still demands more. (Sullivan & Warren, 2001, p. 3)

In a way, as Sullivan and Warren show, U.S. economic prosperity is driven to a large extent by consumer debt. Pawleck, as well as other *O* authors, avoided to analyze the relationship between U.S. prosperity, the credit system, the indebtedness of American population, and bankruptcy rates.

Both American writers and *O* editors systematically left out of their dominant frame the extreme levels of inequality that characterized the United States and the ever-growing gap between the rich and the poor: "The richest 1 percent increased their wealth by 28.3 percent in 1983-92, while the bottom 40 percent of American families saw their assets decline by 49.7 percent during the same period" (Castells, 2000c, p. 132). For the working people of the Soviet Union who appeared at the crossroads of capitalism and socialism, it would have been interesting to know that the American poverty had a class structure: first of all, it affected working people and their families, "who simply cannot maintain a livelihood on the basis of their earnings" (Castells, 2000c, p. 136). It would have been also useful for them to know that "one of the most striking faces of this new poverty is homelessness, which skyrocketed in the 1980s in American

cities," that in the second half of the 1980s, between 5 and 9 million Americans lived without roofs over their heads, and that "the fastest growing segment of the homeless population comprises families with children" (Castells, 2000c, p. 136). If Soviet people had a chance to see the opposite side of American prosperity they would probably have thought twice before giving their silent blessing for radical liberal reforms upon the American model. But they did not. For many of them, the United States seemed to be a perfect embodiment of prosperity – an image constructed for them by U.S. propagandists and their own compatriots – liberally minded intellectuals.

Hard-working Americans. It was also evident from *O* publications that nothing else but capitalism provided former European emigrants with the opportunity to live the lives they preferred, to be free, independent, rich, and happy:

> The majority of Americans believe that their country would not have been able to occupy the leading position in the production of industrial and agricultural goods and services under any other system but capitalism. One could hardly deny the fact that the capitalist system has serious flaws. But nobody would deny as well that the American economic system provided (or can provide potentially) high level of living standards for any member of its society….
>
> In the modern American economy, although it still suffers from abuses and inequality, one can observe what Adam Smith expected from market competition. In general, Americans have high buying capacity and broad selection of services and consumer goods… There are dozens of different soaps, tinned food, radio and television sets, and great numbers of other goods. (Pawelek, 1990, p. 6)

As I have explained earlier, against the average American salary of $24,500 the claims about "sufferings and inequality" might sounded just like an excessive honesty of a progressive American writer. Who in the Soviet Union of 1990, where the shortages of consumer goods were omnipresent, would actually believe in social inequality within a country whose grocery stores offered dozens of different soaps? If all U.S. citizens could easily buy a soap of their choice, wasn't this a sign of equality and free choice?

For the readers of *O*, it should have become obvious also that the secret of American success was not only following Adam Smith's economic advices but also the exceptional qualities of American people: their diligence, integrity, vitality, and so forth. These freedom-loving people – European immigrants – came to their happiness through hard work, firm belief, and heroic endurance:

> They [immigrants] took up any job and strove to do it in the best possible way. They dug trenches, sewed clothes, felled trees, scrubbed floors, hacked coal, laundered… Some lived in hovels, hardly making ends meet. They tasted difficulties, failures, and despair. But they didn't give up. They survived, settled down to married life, and did not refuse their dream. It came true if not for them then for the children of their children. The grandchildren won. America accepted everyone. (Oxford, 1991, p. 9)

This story line, which *O* borrowed from another American propagandist, Oxford, revealed clear marks of American exceptionism - "benign national distinctiveness" and "republican purity and innocence," as David Wrobel (2006) put it – that continued "largely intact in the broader public consciousness despite the weight of scholarly reservations" (Wrobel, 2006, p. 438).

If *O* had discussed at least some of these "scholarly reservations," its readers would have discovered that the hard work of the immigrants to the New World went hand in hand with their

pillage of resources that belonged to native populations and the exploitation of slaves. This story, which can be found not only in academic writings but in travel books of the 19th century, has not become a part of American national consciousness. As Wrobel (2006) explains, "The myth of a manifest destiny has endured so well because it provides such incredible comfort to the national psyche. Better for the national mental health to believe that the world's greatest democracy had grown naturally" (p. 435). As Wrobel suggests, the American people internalized the myth of their own exceptionalism in order to cope with numerous historical challenges that the new nation had to accept. Why did *O* need to reproduce that kind of mythology on its pages without an attempt to reconstruct it? The answer seems to be obvious. *O* uncritically reproduced the American national mythology to provide their readers with a simple recipe of success: abandon socialism, work hard, endure difficulties, and you will be as happy and prosperous as U.S. people are. As history shows, Soviet people followed the advice: they abandoned socialism, worked hard, stood difficulties, and became as poor and miserable as the most disadvantaged American populations hidden from the view of *O* readers.

Homo Sovieticus

Against the exemplarily democratic, egalitarian, and prosperous United States constructed in the pages of *O*, the Soviet way of life looked awkward in all its aspects. Predominantly, *the American* was associated with progress and civilization; *the Soviet* with underdevelopment and barbarism. Here is how one of *O* contributors presented this contrast:

> The new historical community – Soviet people – that has been formed during the last 70 years – possesses a rare quality from the point of view of the world experience: their indefatigable need to count money in somebody else's pocket turns out to be much stronger than any desire to make their own money… "Swindlers" who produce

something necessary but who sell this at a high price – high from the point of view of
honest toilers – will always be treated as swindlers, even if they support by their taxes all
state sectors. But how many swindlers do we need in order to feed this horde of honest
toilers?

…The threat of a civil war is more and more real – this is the only chance for latter-day
lumpens to expropriate and share everything…

Should we just wait until the market will bring us prosperity? Won't it be better… to
invite America here? To create joint companies, to make the cheapest and the most
unqualified working force producing something useful, for the application here of the
products of world civilization, technology, the art of management, for the appearance in
our country of products and other most necessary things and at the same time cheap
import goods, in the production of which we will participate as well. (Kirsh, 1990, p. 8)

As it is evident from the passage, the author imagined the majority of Soviet people who worked
at state enterprises to be "the horde of honest toilers" unable to produce anything useful at all. By
contrast, he saw entrepreneurs, treated as "swindlers" by mass opinion, as those who were able to
produce, to pay taxes, and thus to feed "the horde" of workers. The opposition between these two
groups was presented as a class struggle in which workers acted as lumpens striving to
"expropriate and share everything." The author saw the solution of that contradiction in
"inviting" the progressive America to the USSR to help it moving toward modernity,
civilization, and economic success.

It is interesting to observe how the author discursively transformed working people into
"lumpens" who wanted to "expropriate and share." With that choice of words, he referred his
readers to the events of 1917, when communists conducted the policy of expropriation. He also

referred to the terminology of Marx, who coined the term of *lumpenproletariat* to denote the layer of the working class that had lost its socially useful role, was unlikely to achieve class consciousness, and, thus, was not useful for the proletarian revolution (Marx, 2005/1852). The problem with both of those references lied in the fact that in 1990 the property of workers, not capitalists, had to be expropriated by means of privatization. Because many of the Soviet people were against that expropriation through privatization, they actually did not lose their class consciousness in Marx's sense of the term and could not be called "lumpens." That discrepancy did not embarrass the article's author, whose idea was not to engage his readers into a philosophical debate on the legacy of Marxist tradition. By filling Marx's concepts with a foreign meaning, he created a myth whose aim was to prove: Soviet people who opposed liberal transformations were useless beggars whose historical role had been over.

Another part of the mythology on the "regressive" role of Soviet people in the history of humankind was the author's claim that they were not able to produce anything "useful at all" or anything that would be equated to "the products of world civilization." Not to talk about the scientific and cultural achievements of the Soviet people that had gained world acknowledgement and reputation, the author also failed to acknowledge that the Soviet planned economy "performed inadequately, but it employed nearly every working person of working age, and the Soviet standard of living, though disappointing, was tolerable for most people" (Kotkin, 2008, p. 27). He also failed to mention that "for most of the existence of the Soviet Union, its economic growth was faster than that of the West, and its price of industrialization one of the fastest in the world history (Castells, 2010c, p. 10). By focusing his attention on happy consumerism, the author of the article failed to address a more important question: "Was life simply a question of washing machines, refrigerators, private cars, TVs, popular music, and

jeans, and, if so, what did that portend for socialism's struggle against capitalism?" (Kotkin, 2008. p. 43). By framing civilization exclusively in terms of consumer happiness, the author of the article simply equated modernization with consumerism: the production of "something useful," the art of management for the sake of this production, and, which was even more revealing, the import of cheap consumer goods. Profit, not social justice, was in the center of his imagination, which did not coincide with the structure of feeling of many Soviet citizens, as discussed in Chapter 8.

The superiority of the United States, which signified progress and civilization, ran all through many other articles of *O*. Here is how its chief editor, Dashevskiy, described the encounter of a director of a Kharkov plant and the representatives of U.S. governmental bodies who came to Kharkov to stimulate the conversion of Soviet military enterprises:

> The director slips his hands into pockets…. He has a lot of offers. Finns. Spaniards. The third world. To produce what Americans want means to export metal. He is not interested… Daler [an American] looks at me with a pleading glance and slight irony. We are wasting their [Americans'] time… Probably, the local press has not informed the directors of military-industrial enterprises that on the eve of the XVIII CPSU congress, Washington asked Gorbachev about the safety of our warheads. "This director is a proud man," says Thomas in Russian, "but his time is over." (Dashevskiy, 1990, p. 11)

Dashevsky presented the director of a Soviet military enterprise as an unfortunate retrograde who dared to oppose the conversion even though Washington [!!] insisted on it. What is especially interesting, the author of the article – a Soviet citizen – was entirely on the side of Americans, whose self-constructed superiority manifested itself in the statement "his time is over." It was obvious from the article that Americans' time had come, and this new time should not be wasted.

Any economic considerations of the director who might have been concerned about the economic instability of the enterprise under conversion[14] were left by the author out of his civilizational frame.

Dashevskiy produced a similar report on the visit of the same U.S. team to another Kharkov enterprise. Here, Americans were watching a presentation video clip, which did not impress them, however:

> The video displayed a surgical removal of malignant neoplasms and impressed Izolda Savelyevna Karpenko and Luda Kornienko greatly. The Americans watched from the beginning to the end emotions. Then, Thomas Daler winked me stealthily. (Dashevskiy, 1990, p. 11)

By presenting the scene in such a manner, Dashevskiy explicitly aligned himself with Americans, who, in turn, expressed their favor to him by winking. By doing so, he set himself off his own compatriots, represented by Izolda Savelyeavna and Lyuda, who, unlike the Americans, were impressed by the presented video. In such a construction, against "progressive" and "civilized" Americans, their admiration was presented as a sign of backwardness and the lack of taste.

In those reports, Americans represented all progressive Westerners, who, according to Dashevskiy, "are considerably thankful to us for the past and the present: emissions, hijackers, immigrants, debts, ecological imbalance, potential fascist-mindedness, and universal threat" (Dashevskiy, 1990, p. 12). According to Dashevskiy, emissions, hijackers, immigrants, debts, ecological imbalance, and even fascism were the exclusive products of the Soviets. His constructions implied that there were no emissions, hijackers, immigrants, debts, ecological

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14

imbalances within the Western world – by definition, because of its civilizational mission the West could not emanate any "universal threat."

The Messengers of Peace

According to *O* authors, even the fact that a civilian, not a military, person headed the U.S. Ministry of Defense was a sign of civilization: "The Persian Gulf events confirmed that the civilian in the role of the minister of defense is not an obstacle for successful operations… In the West, as a rule, the ministers of defense are civilians – for us, this is unthinkable" (Tsirlin, 1991, p. 3). For the author of that article, Cheney signified civilization because he was not only a civilian but also a democrat who "repeatedly spoken on the necessity… to control military forces." The progressivism of Cheney was also constructed by means of juxtaposing him to Soviet general Yazov, whom *O* presented in terms of lacks. Yazov was not a civilian and he was not a democrat: it was difficult to find in Yazov's speeches "any sympathy to democratic processes" in general and in the North Atlantic Block in particular. "Yazov," Tsirlin claimed, "never stresses the changes that are taking place in NATO and always insists on the preservation of military threat" (Tsirlin, 1991, p. 3). Not only did the author of the article fail to explain what exactly he meant by "the changes that are taking place in NATO" – they were presumed to be positive a priori – he also failed to acknowledge that in the anarchical realm of international relations, overemphasizing military threats is a professional duty of all chief commanders, no matter whether they are democrats, conservatives, or dictators (Waltz, 1959).

Another *O* author, Alexander Letov, constructed a civilizing image of NATO by arguing that it played a crucial role in transforming the German Federal Republic into a democratic state after WWII: "Allocated in Western Europe, American, British, and Canadian troops had transformed from occupational to allied forces. As a result, Germany, which was successfully

"restrained" by NATO allies, not only reconstructed its national economy destroyed by the war but has also created the modern economy that is competing with the American economy on equal footing" (Letov, 1991, p. 2). Stressing an exclusively altruist character of the Marshall Plan, the author left out of his frame all political considerations on why it was so important for the United States and its allies to strengthen and democratize Germany: U.S. imperial ambitions (Gallagher & Robinson, 1953), the fear of communism (Kolko & Kolko, 1972), the desire to split the European labor movement and to introduce the U.S. liberal mode of business (Cox, 1987), or interest in building a unified Western European capitalist bloc (Ivanova, 2007). In other words, the author failed to acknowledge that the Marshall Plan, amid ostensibly noble intentions, was also a powerful device of U.S. expansion and a hegemonic project of previously unthinkable magnitude. The recovery of Western Europe meant simultaneous locking into the geo-economy governed by the USA.

O systematically presented both the U.S. Army and NATO as progressive forces that guarded world peace and defended the oppressed – that is, fought for only just causes. Sergei Goroshko, for example, maintained:

The American magazine "Defense" notes: "In the Persian Gulf our volunteers showed how well they were coping with their tasks… What about reservists, they served so enthusiastically!"... Why wouldn't they, for heaven's sake? … They go fighting for a just cause. They know: their own forces will not betray, they will rescue and save them, if necessary. If you are captured, they will get you out no matter what. If you are wounded or sick, God forbid, you will get proper treatment and compensation. Because they are backed not by a step-motherland… but by a country that values the well-being of each person…(Goroshko,1991, p. 8).

In reality, American veterans had a lot of problems such as homelessness (Chen et al., 2007), the inability to obtain disability pensions and benefits (Offen et al., 2010), the lack of access to lawyers (Kors, 2008), and, as a result of all these, ever-increasing rates of suicides among veterans (Keteyan & Malbran, 2008). These annoying nuances did not deflect author's attention from the main purpose of his creative work: to construct a dove-like image of the U.S. military machine, the whole mechanism of which had been allegedly designed for preventing wars.

Because of its peaceful mission, according to Goroshko, the Pentagon created and successfully tested "a 'humane' bomb able to reach the target from the height of several thousand meters without harming anything unintentionally. "Without any doubt," Goroshko concluded, "The Pentagon trains its military forces for the war of the future. Exactly because of this, the third world war most probably will never happen" (Goroshko, 1991, p. 8). It is interesting that Goroshko's article appeared in *O* exactly at the same time when numerous articles on U.S. war against Saddam Hussein were published across the world. Some of them were very critical toward to approach offered by Goroshko: "The U.S. war against Iraq…was always about reestablishing the U.S. military dominance, reasserting control over oil supplies and prices, and opening markets for U.S. military contractors" (Editorial, 1991b, p. 7). Even for polemical reasons, *O* never published an article with such a critical perspective.

Against the image of Americans who did their best to strive for peace, Soviet people, looked disadvantageously. "From the bottom of his heart, Zhvanetskiy amuses us making jokes about fight for peace, while at this time somebody in America lies on rails to stop a military train and to stay without legs" – this is how *O* chief editor Dashevskiy (1990, p. 12) contrasted Soviet people, represented by a very popular comic writer and performer Michael Zhvanetsky, and U.S. citizens. Zhvanetskiy was presented here as a chatterbox who substituted real fight for peace

with idle talks on it; in contrast, Americans were portrayed as people who were able to sacrifice their lives for the sake of peace building.

Even the fact that American women had a right to serve in the military forces of the U.S. was also presented by *O* writers as a signification of progressivism that other countries could only dream of. "Having looked at the emancipated transoceanic representatives of the fair sex," one of *O* articles stated, "women of Saudi Arabia realized all the pettiness of their existence and started fighting for their own rights" (Editorial, 1991a, p. 2). By presenting non-Western population as a homogeneous mass dreaming of westernization and modernization, *O* author put another brick into the global power structure in which Western nations under the leadership of the USA symbolized civilization while other societies had nothing to do but to follow their lead.

Forward, to the Victory of U.S. Capitalism!

Because the U.S. appeared in the eyes of Soviet people in the late 1980s–early 1990s so ideally democratic, egalitarian, prosperous, progressive, and civilized, many Soviet citizens decided not to wait until the seeds of American-like democracy and market would sprung in their land: "By the end of 1990, the number of Soviet citizens who applied to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow for immigration visas was 1.6 million" (Teryohin, 1991, p. 2). Such information only contributed to the general mood of admiring the USA that reigned throughout the USSR. If not for immigration, many Soviet citizens rushed to the U.S. in order to learn how to do business and achieve the U.S.-like modern conditions:

> The representatives of the Soviets – the executives of legislative bodies and five
>
> businessmen – have arrived here to learn how to reorient Soviet military industry for civil
>
> needs by using the capitalist methodology of accounting and management. The Soviets
>
> are learning capitalism... Soviet people are getting an idea on the way of life that is

necessary to become a capitalist… This group is only a drop in the current of Soviet

people who anatomize all the spheres and sides of American life in order to get an idea of

how to create a new modern society. (Mitchel, 1991, p. 6)

Interestingly, the American author of this excerpt realized: capitalism was not only about

accounting or business keeping. He acknowledged that in order to appropriate capitalist

modernity, Soviet people needed to abandon their habitual way of life and their habitual norms

of behavior. In other words, the author pointed at profound societal transformation. What he did

not mention was a simple fact that such cultural metamorphoses never go smoothly: they

inevitably bring sufferings and pain.

Like many other *O* authors, Mitchel failed to mention that different versions of modernity

existed even across Western societies (Giddens, 2000, p. 6). By ignoring the complexity of the

concept "modern society," the author implied that the U.S. version of capitalism, with its

profound culture of suspicion and hostility to the welfare state (Giddens, 2000), was the only

version of capitalist society that could serve a model for imitation. This view, which *O*

systematically imposed on its readers, deprived them of the possibility to imagine that there were

other models of modern society that would have probably complied with Soviet egalitarian

culture much better than the American dream.

Instead of speculating on various complexities associated with the search for an

appropriate modernity project, *O* authors concentrated on reporting the excitement of the first

Soviet visitors to the U.S.:

Magazine publishers asked American reporters for free articles. Teachers were begging

for extra teaching material. "Videocassette. Send us tapes," asked Elena Belyaeva, the

teacher of English in Voronezh State University. "This is what we need. The sounds of American music and American speech." (Mitchel, 1991, p. 6)

Everything that was American was in huge demand now: music, speech, tapes, videocassettes, articles, advice, and, of course, money.

"Let's not return party cards to partcoms [party committees] – in the U.S. one card costs 15 bucks!" – this is how one of the characters of *O* reports, a speaker at a street meeting, urged his listeners to sell their Communist-party tickets (Editorial, 1990e, p. 5). The act was of deep symbolism: the speaker discursively re-signified the party ticket, transforming it from an ideological sign to a devalued commodity. This example can serve as a symbol of omnipresent commodification, marketization, and depreciation of all non-market values that characterized the transformation of the Soviet society. Everything was measured by dollars now, party tickets or labor force:

> Four and five American dollars… This is not change from a minor purchase and not the price of a lunch in a cheap restaurant in New York. This is – according to the market rate – the salary of a Soviet librarian with high education. (Gorin, 1990, p. 7)

What did this focus on dollar measurements ignored was the fact that the price of labor in the USA and its price in the Soviet Union could not be compared in dollars without taking into account different levels of commodification within those two societies. Soviet librarians did not need to pay from their meager salaries for medical services, education, housing, and so forth. It was also illogical to compare the restaurant prices in the United States and salaries in the Soviet Union. But *O* did not seem to care about logic. What it did seem to care about was the accelerated transition toward modernity and progress, where hard currency reigned:

The wisest decision would be to make the US dollar a reserve currency, because the US dollar is a basic unofficial currency in the Soviet Union. In order to obtain necessary reserve dollar fund, the Soviet Union can transfer its gold reserve and reserve currency to approximately 20 billion of dollars. More 20 billion can be borrowed on favorable terms from the governments of Western countries and International Monatory Fund. Advantages would appear without delay. Ruble would become a hard currency, acceptable in international trade. The Soviet Union and its citizens could not but need Western goods, necessary for their economic development. The representatives of Western business would be more favorable for investments. (Hanke & Shuler, 1990, p. 7)

This is an excerpt from the *International Herald Tribune* which *O* reprinted, as usual, without comments. The assertions of the American writers went without questioning: How can ruble become a hard currency just because gold reserves of the USSR are transformed to dollars? Why do Soviet citizens necessarily need Western goods for their own development? Are there any other possible ways to solve Soviet economic problems without borrowing money from the International Monetary Fund and transferring gold reserves to dollars?

If asked, these questions would have probably started a fruitful discussion on the role of Western governments and the International Monetary Fund in the market transformations of non-Western societies. Such discussion might have pointed to the experience of the countries that ruined their economies because they followed the advices of the IMF and others that remained afloat because they followed their own common sense. As Joseph Stiglitz (2003) testifies: "Liberalization [in Latin America] has thus, too often not been followed by the promised growth, but by increased misery…Yet… China, which received the largest amount of foreign investment, did not follow any of the Western prescriptions (other than macrostability)" (p. 66). If *O* had

addressed the experiences of other countries that had already undergone structural

transformations, its readers would have obtained an opportunity to weigh the pros and cons, to

form informed opinions, to participate in qualitative public discussions, and, finally, to influence

the policy of the state – not as members of passive masses charmed by the fairy tales of market

miracles but as members of active publics, well-informed and responsible. Nothing of this kind

happened. As a result,

> The contrast between Russia's transition, as engineered by the international economic
>
> institutions, and that of China, designed by itself, could not be greater: While in 1990
>
> China's gross domestic product (GDP) was 60 percent that of Russia, by the end of the
>
> decade the numbers have been reversed. While Russia saw an unprecedented increase in
>
> poverty, China saw an unprecedented decrease. (Stiglitz, 2003, p. 6)

As this dissertation suggests, not only Western missionary institutions, which often look at

modernizing other societies from the perspective of their own interests, are responsible for the

crash of hopes of the Soviet people. Soviet liberal intelligentsia, who aligned themselves with the

"progressive" West much more than with their own compatriots, must share the blame: for

dissemination of liberalization myths, creating the prerequisites for pillaging national wealth, and

condemning their compatriots to misery and despair.

A Little Bit of Criticism

It would be wrong to say, however, that *O* did not allow for criticism toward the United

States. From time to time, it published critical articles like the speech of a KGB officer at the

Congress of the all-Union association "Soyuz," which was reproduced by *O* as a whole. Here are

some excerpts from it:

The United States possesses an inherent fear of other great states. They do not need any other great state in the territory of the USSR – neither communist, nor democratic, nor monarchic. Listen for the programs of the radio "Liberty"… They literally emit spite toward out common nation. Read the articles and speeches by Zbigniew Brzezinski… He is pathologically obsessed with the ruining of the USSR as a single country. In essence, we are dealing with the program of partitioning the existing Union…. (Leonov, 1991, p. 2)

The problem with this message was the personality of the speaker. At that point of time, in the eyes of many Soviet citizens, KGB had discredited itself to such an extent that the more its representatives sent negative messages about the United States to the masses, the more those masses admired the United States.

Another weakness of KGB officer's criticism was the editorial policy of *O*. Although the newspaper published his speech in total, the editors accompanied it with a sarcastic comment:

Yes, these American scoundrels are watchful. They are ruining the Soviet Union by all accessible means. They have built for us our terrible roads, and the worst railway transport is also their work. They have bred and sent out to us dimwits and bureaucrats. They organized Chernobil and moved the Earth crust for the earthquakes in Transcaucasia. They hate us alive or dead, young, old, bold, smart, or stupid…. (Editorial, 1991c, p. 2)

As this passage shows, when it was necessary for ideological reasons, *O* did not leave opinions of their contributors without comments, as we have observed in the case of U.S. writers. More than that, those comments were constructed in manipulative manner. The editors changed the subject of discussion from territorial division of the USSR expressed by Zbigniew Brzezinski

(1987) to the inefficiency of the Soviet (Socialist) economy (government) to deal with modern challenges and be effective. Their comment, thus, was not a direct response to the officer's concerns but a trick that changes the subject of discussion stealthily. This manipulation made the criticism totally ineffective.

Another critical article on the USA published by *O* in September 1990 dealt with the problems of U.S. agriculture. "Why," its author asked, "there were 6.5 million firms in the USA 60 years ago, while now there are no more than 2.2 million? Do only unlucky people become bankrupts?" "We need to think many times before adapting such "wonderful" farming experience of the USA," he warns (Dvirniy, 1990, p. 11). The questions posted by the author were critical and the author's warning about the adaptation of U.S. agricultural experience was serious. What looks surprising, however, is the fact that the author expressed his criticism in the forms of questions and the editors of the paper left those questions without answers although the answers had been already well known: there was a permanent trend toward the decline of the independent, small business – with its self-employed worker – as a main form of enterprise not only in agriculture but in all the spheres of U.S. economy. They just could not stand the competition with giant firms and corporations that possessed incomparably more resources for growth (Heilbroner & Thurow, 1998). Is it possible to assume that *O* editors did not have an access to that knowledge? Judging from abundant reprints from U.S. books, magazines, and newspapers, they had some access to U.S. sources of information. They just preferred to leave those questions without answers, not to darken a glowing picture of unproblematic U.S. life.

Finally, in May 1991, *O* reprinted a critical article from *Newsweek* on violence in U.S. culture. Commenting on the connection between the unprecedented rise of violence on U.S. screens and the unknown pace of conglomeration and amalgamation of media corporations,

which "obligingly churn out increasingly vicious movies, books and records," the authors of that article put forward a set of really important questions:

> What kind of people finds it fun to drop a violence cassette into the tape deck? What kind of people cheer lustily when Bruce Willis pokes an icicle through an eye socket into a baddie's brain? Or, to elevate the level of discussion, what value is it to have as talented a writer as Paul Theroux write "Chicago Loop," about a man who ties up a woman and literally gnaws her to death: "[He] snapped at the ragged flesh like a mastiff. (Plagens et.al., 1991, p. 15)

The authors of the article left those questions without answers as if inviting *O* editors to speculate on them in the context of *O* own construction on the life in the U.S: did that blood-loving audience consist of the same people who always smiled, as *O* claimed? Did those bloodthirsty audiences comprise the same nation that strove for global peace, as *O* told its readers? Was that nation the model of democracy, with the ability for self-criticism? If yes, why did it love blood and sufferings so much? *O* never touched upon these questions; it never took an opportunity to assemble scattered pieces of fragmented reality into one broad picture of American way of life. Violence in American culture, discussed by the Newsweek, remained unconnected to democracy, peace loving, and civilization, which, according to *O*, triumphed in the United States.

Summary. First of all, it is interesting to observe that the abundance of articles on the USA published by *O*, corresponded to the total lack of similar interest in the United States on the part of *VK*, which was preoccupied with local and mundane problems of Soviet people much more than with the nuances of life in the United States or any other country. This does not necessarily mean, however, that the working people of the former USSR were not interested in

how the United States was able to succeed in its economic and political development. I would rather assume that their silence on the issues could be better explained by their total inexperience with the life of other cultures. Because of that inexperience, they had nothing to do but to learn about the United States and other Western countries from intellectuals, who had a significant power to frame and mythologize U.S. "reality" for their publics.

The basic technique of the United States' mythologizing, which *O* contributors employed was quite simple: only positive features of U.S. life were included into stories while all negative aspects were totally ignored or minimized significantly. Among the issues that *O* authors constantly ignored were such important dimensions of U.S. social life as extreme social inequality, inadequate medical and social insurance, unemployment, indebtedness, homelessness, institutional and cultural racism, social exclusion, and so forth. Presenting the freedom-loving spirit of Americans and their diligence as basic sources of U.S. prosperity, *O* also systematically failed to acknowledge that the history of U.S. democracy and successful economic development is inherently connected with the history of colonists' exploitation of slave labor and pillaging resources that belonged to Native Americans.

Another technique that *O* writers often employed was the juxtaposition of a perfectly democratic, efficient, progressive, and prosperous United States and an undemocratic, inefficient, retrograde, and poor Soviet Union. *O* writers presented Soviet people as losers who were unable to reach a civilized condition of U.S. sort because of their laziness, stupidity, and envy. The more miserable the Soviet people looked in *O* creative writings, the more glorious Americans appear: as people who possessed some exceptional qualities that allowed them to cope with all historical challenges and climb the heights of civilization. For the construction of this frame, *O* writers had to omit all the achievements of Soviet modernity: an enormously quick

transition from an agricultural country to an industrial giant, space exploration, the lack of social inequality, and so forth. In combination with the mythically ideal image of the United States, which did not reserve space for criticism, this mythically horrible image of the Soviet Union, which did not leave room for praising, worked perfectly well for *O*'s main goal: to illustrate how effective and humanizing liberalism is and how ineffective and dehumanizing socialism is.

In presenting the United States as a model of capitalist modernity, *O* also ignored to acknowledge that the liberal culture of the United States is not the only one model of capitalist state organization. What *O* failed to acknowledge was the fact that Western capitalism is not a homogeneous set of institutions and that it has many variations along the line of the relationship between state and society. At one end of this line, there are states having a very high tax base and providing general benefits and well-funded state services, including health care; at another end, there are states that are notorious for their distrust of any governmental intrusions in societal life and that are paying much lower levels of state support. By ignoring this complexity, *O* aimed at producing an impression that Soviet people did not have any other route to a civilized condition but an American one – through total liberalization and deregulation of their economic life.

And, finally, by pushing its readers to accept the necessity of adopting the U.S. model of democracy and market, *O* concealed one very important aspect: a "U.S. model," ready for adoption or borrowing, simply did not exist. Both the U.S. versions of democracy and its liberal economic system are the outcomes of its very specific and sociocultural historical development, the products of ongoing reflections, negotiations, and adaptations. Thus, *O* failed to tell its readers something really important: in any democratic society, freedom, either political or economic, can never be absolute. Its limits are always a matter of compromise: between state and society, group and individual, past and future, new and old. In other words, *O* failed to inform its

readers that real democracy could be hardly imagined as a set of eternal rules that can be just borrowed and adopted; rather, it should be normatively understood as a political process where people's opinions matter, where cultural predispositions are taken seriously, and where ongoing public deliberation shapes the forms of democratic government. By ignoring all the complexity of the issue, *O* deprived the USA of its rich and multidimensional meaning and transformed it into a beautiful but delusive and thus dangerous fairy tale.

Chapter 10

The Schizophrenia of the Soviet Transformation

The Crash of Hopes

Deep contradictions between the interpretations of the reforms by Soviet intellectuals and working people finally led to popular disillusionment and frustration, the evidence of which can be found in many articles of the Kharkov newspapers. Because the expectations were so high and the myths of democracy so unrealistic, disillusionment with the first results of democratic and market transformations appeared painful:

> What we observe today is the fomentation of low passions, lying, extremism, and so forth. It started with the calls for renewal and ended with anti-Soviet calls and disorder, hooliganism, and pogroms. (Central Committee of the Communist Party, 1990, p. 1)
>
> For two years, the debates on color of the flag are going on. The house is being ruined, the roof is burning, but deputies are thinking of the name of the building that is going to be built in future. (Lisnyak, 1991, p. 3)
>
> The main problem now is social defense of people, especially the old and incapable. Instead, deputies for hours talk about nothing. (Lisnyak, 1991, p. 3)
>
> We are becoming tired of these anti-Soviet performances. What we are making fun of is inside all us. We are eating the inside of ourselves. (Gusev, 1991, p. 13)
>
> We need to stop puttering about the renaming of cities, streets, squares, the ruining of monuments. History cannot be changed: we had not only bad things but good as well. If we have some extra money, let's spend it for the needs of old and incapable people and child-orphans. (Glagolov, 1991, p. 2)

>Euphoria about the elections of the first composition of the USSR Congress of people's
>
>deputies has been replaced with the sense of spiritual bankruptcy, disillusionment, and
>
>indifference…The volatile ephemerality of people's hopes for quick changes savors of a
>
>sweetish smell of cemetery hopelessness… (Tirnov, 1990, p. 2).

By 1990, this "smell of cemetery hopelessness," as a *O* contributor poetically put it, became

omnipresent. The utopian visions of free and prosperous society that marked the beginning of

perestroika had evaporated. The problems of Soviet society that perestroika boasted to solve only

worsened: the scarcity of basic foodstuff and household supplies grew. Freedoms that perestroika

brought did not make the lives of ordinary people easier: the abundance of various political

fantasies that new media disseminated was disorienting. It was even more disorienting, as Ries

(1997) noted, " to face the future with no clear idea of what that future would resemble or

whether it would bring increasing prosperity for all or civil war in the streets" (p. 17). It was only

clear that the familiar world was cracking and some incomprehensible chaotic reality was

emerging instead, with no stability, no security, and no common sense – an outcome that Soviet

people could not imagine when they supported Gorbachev's reforms.

By 1990, for many Soviet citizens, it became clear that instead of the heaven of improved

socialism they got into the hell of the unregulated market, with soaring inflation, skyrocketing

prices, massive unemployment, and rampant delinquency. As *VH* contributors put it,

>Perestroika has brought not only glasnost and pluralism but also – let us call things by
>
>their real names – the collapse of the economic system. Everybody realizes that we
>
>cannot live like this, but nobody knows how to live…. (Gavrilenko, 1990, 2)
>
>About four years ago, I, like, probably, the majority of my compatriots, thought like this:
>
>we will abolish the bureaucratic system, establish glasnost, give self-determination for

enterprises, and that's it – the socialist heaven is guaranteed. How naïve were these images! Our life has not become sweeter…. (Patoka, 1990, p. 5)

Realization came that the marketization of Soviet life was not about the representation and defense of people's needs and that it could lead not to prosperity but to impoverishment. Not only the impoverishment of material conditions, but the impoverishment of mind, spirit, morality, ethical norms, and collective bonds – everything that had been part of people's life for years and decades:

We've lost the ability to look at each other's eyes. We judge people by their clothes or their posts…. (Sisoev, 1990, p. 4)

Look around at what is going on: children try to get rid of their incapable parents, mothers leave their kids… We are losing kindness and compassion. (Malaya, 1990, p. 3)

What is going on with us? Lines, anger, hatred, frustration… We hate people who surround us and we hate ourselves…. (Nikityuk, 1991, p. 2)

The country is affected with a monstrous illness – moral degradation. Against moral lapse such traditions as mutual readiness to help, sympathy, and beneficence have stepped aside into the shade. (Storozhenko, 1990, p. 7)

The reality of modernization not only killed the romantic hopes about the market bringing social justice, happiness, and prosperity to Soviet people but also ruined many of the aspects of their collective life that they valued greatly – equality, community, selflessness, altruism, friendship, ethical relations, safety, education, work, creativity, and concern for the future (Yurchak, 2006). Without an intention to do so, they ruined their own, non-official socialism – the system of human values that allowed Soviet people to live the full-fledged life even under the press of the totalitarian ideological machine.

The Twilight Zone

People's confusion and the loss of orientation, manifested in these examples, refers us to Ulrich Beck's theory of the world risk society, which I mentioned in Chapter 1. In the Beck's world risk society, people lose "their grip on reality" (2007, p. 292) and search "for lost security" (2010, p. 79). Such a debilitating human condition, according to Beck, occurs because "the twilight zone between the passing of the national era and the emergence of the cosmopolitan era" takes shape (2007, p. 2). This dusk zone manifests itself in the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous, the hybridization of 'no longer' and 'not yet,' and the replacement of the "either/or' linear logic with the "both/and" nonlinear scripts. It brings together "what used to seem mutually exclusive – society and nature, social science and material science, the discursive construction of risk and physical threats" (Beck, 2010, p. 27). It unites the existent and nonexistent, present and absent, and near and far. It eliminates the barriers between the good and the evil or the normal and the deviant; it replaces the variants of the ethical with the gradations of the risky. It also dissolves the distinction between possibility and reality, subjectivism and objectivism, equilibrium and disruption.

In other words, the twilight zone described by Beck is a grand cultural transformation in which old conceptual meanings are contested and reformulated: "Different understandings of nature and its relation to society, of ourselves and others, of social rationality, freedom, democracy and legitimation – even the individual – are developing" (Beck, 2010, p. 15). In the course of this transformation, old concepts with stable meanings turn into "zombie categories," whose ostensible stability is nothing but an illusion – a remnant of the modernist imagination.

The "Babylonian confusion of political concepts," described by Beck (2010, p. 281) makes it difficult to work out who is on whose side. Everything seems to turn upside down:

corporations defend anti-corporate movements, financial speculators condemn speculations, peace rhetoric generates the possibility of wars, and "the call for justice and human rights becomes a sword that is used to invade other countries" (Beck, 2010. p. 17). In the twilight zone of transition, implementing something and criticizing something are two sides of the same coin: "The absolutist power of definitions possessed by the cosmopolitan regime is manifested not least in the fact that it does away with key distinctions, undermining them, merging and recombining them. Everyone is a 'proponent', everyone is in the both/and category" (Beck, 2007, p. 190). This is a zone with no enemies, no boundaries, no truth, and no lies – a grey zone that "devours both actors and counteractors in its huge belly and even feeds off resistance: it cuts the ground from under the feet of resisters by eliminating the principle of opposition" (Beck, 2007, p. 190). The elimination of opposites, which is elevated to the level of a principle, undermines the common sense of people searching for shared identities and meanings for the sake of security and certainty.

The state of uncertainty is facilitated both by lies of the states and corporations engaging in "a strategic use of the truth" (Beck, 2007, p. 242) and by the advocatory strategies of anti-corporate and anti-state movements that also try to transform the perceptual frameworks of public controversies with a "good intention" to challenge officially constructed "truths." In either case, the globalization of risk that the "twilight zone" denotes is driven by not fire and the sword but by "the unforced force of the better argument," as Beck (2010, p. 17) notes. Here, Beck distinguishes between groups with the power to impose their definitions and interests on the will of other groups and those "other groups" that do not possess such "means of definition":

Institutionalized norms potentially equip specific groups with the power to impose their definitions and interests against the will of other groups…. Relations of definition also

rest on control over the 'means of definition,' in other words over scientific and legal rules. There are owners of the means of definition – namely, scientists and judges – and citizens 'bereft of the means of definition', who have the dependent status of 'laypersons' and are subjected to the power of definition and decision of experts and judges who decide on behalf of all.... (Beck, 2010, p. 33)

In other parts of his writings, Beck seems to include in the list of those who possess the means of definition media and social movements – by "translating" the definitions of experts and presenting these translations to lay publics, they have power to impose their own versions of truths (2010, p. 116).

The peculiarity of the historical moment of the transition from national to post-national stages of modernity is not, however, about the superiority of the expert vis-à-vis the layperson, which has probably always existed. It is about the fact that different "experts" contradict each other on a permanent basis: "Insurance experts contradict safety engineers. Where the latter diagnose zero risk, the former declare it to be uninsurable" (Beck, 2010, p. 111). Every postulate is contested, every claim is questioned, every prognosis is challenged, and every conclusion is problematized: "What used to count as knowing is becoming non-knowing and non-knowing is acquiring the status of knowledge" (Beck, 2010. p. 116). The falsification of expert knowledge by mass media "experts" and other "translators" like social movements is only one of multiple combinations of the knowledge/non-knowledge of the world risk society, which delegitimizes the authority of traditional institutions and erode the rationality of science.

Although the term "world risk society" implies that the state of uncertainty and insecurity is a common condition for everybody, Beck believes that some world regions are more victimized than others because they know even less than others:

> The victim nations or victim regions become collective points of risks and harms not least because of the prevailing lack of knowledge or willful ignorance…. The more extensive is non-knowledge or partial knowledge concerning the possibility and reality of unexpected threats, the greater is the communicative and political turmoil before, and especially during the catastrophe. Because nothing is known, or nothing precisely, cultural and political problems pile up, rumours run wild and hostile stereotypes are revived. (Beck, 2010, p. 168)

The state of non-knowing in such regions is chronically self-reproducing: the export of threats and labor create the lack of a professional environment able to deal with globalized threats. As a result, "victim regions" become excluded in a double sense:

> They are excluded from potential benefits of the decision and from the conditions under which the decision is made, and often even from the information concerning the effects on their health or chances of survival against which they are helpless… The poorest of the poor live in the blind spots, and hence the most precarious lethal zones, of the world risk society. (Beck, 2010, p. 141)

Because of the blindness of their being, reality for the victimized people disintegrates into conflicting worlds. On the one hand, modernization is presented to them and imagined by them as a chance of improving their human condition. On the other hand, modernization appears as a threat to their existence created by the uncontrolled decisions of powerful others. Usually, these decisions are taken without any public discussion and without a possibility to question the rationale behind modernizing reforms by putting forward the critical "Why?" It is the elimination of this critical "Why?" that gives way to totalitarianism.

It is in this twilight zone, where no space for a critical "why?" is reserved, that new modernizing myths are constructed. In line with Horkheimer and Adorno, Beck argues that the collapse of critical reflexivity sets free the self-destructive possibilities of modernity. The anti-modern condition "springs from the totalitarian anticipation: beyond the 'why' everything is possible!" (Beck, 2010, p. 227). It is beyond the "why" that the rhetoric of evil and other modes of anti-thinking proliferate. This leads to the dialectics of anti-modernity and fears associated with it:

> What worries people nowadays is the premonition that the anthropological certainty of modernity is founded on quicksand. It is the temptation and horror of anti-modernity, the panic stricken fear that the fabric of our material dependencies and moral obligations could rend and the delicate functional system of the world risk society collapse. (Beck, 2010, p. 232)

The fear described by Beck denotes the decline of the modern sensibility – its belief that everything can be under control. It also reveals social neurosis, which cannot differentiate between real risk and the perception of risk.

The Collapse of the USSR and the Decline of Modern Sensibility

The formation of the "twilight zone" described by Beck is exactly what was happening to the USSR in the late 1980s and early 1990s: it plunged into the transition state between the Soviet autarky and network neoliberalism. In line with Beck's (2007) prediction, this cultural transformation marked itself with the confusion of categories, plays, and scripts. Actors switched their roles, constantly reformulating and renegotiating them. Enemies turned into friends and yet remained enemies; those who were against transformations supported them and yet remained opponents. That was a grey zone of grandiose misunderstanding, where the old concepts

acquired new meanings, where the boundaries between good and evil blurred, and where people, having lost their grip on reality, desperately searched for security and understanding.

The grand transformation that Soviet people went through marked itself with the emergence of diverse hybrids replacing the "either/or" linear mode of thinking with "both/and" non-linear scripts. As my previous chapters show, this "both/and" logic permeated all pro-liberal mythological constructions that Soviet intellectuals created. Here are some examples:

1. *The hybrid of the social and the natural* presented democratic transformations as a natural occurrence, obscuring the fact that democracy is a political-and-cultural formation that has been shaped in the course of complex historical, social, cultural, and philosophical developments within the Western world. This hybrid eliminated the line between human deeds and natural phenomena.

2. *The hybrid of good and evil* depicted the Western world as an embodiment of morality, neglecting its history of colonization, imperialism, and neo-imperialism. This hybrid of morality and the logic "winners are not judged" made the distinction between good and evil impossible.

3. *The hybrid of democracy and the market* filled the conceptual form of "democracy" with the meaning of "economic success," leaving aside both societies whose economic successes were associated with anything but democratization (e.g., "Asian Tigers") and states where democratization brought economic collapse. This hybrid ruined the distinction between humanism and economic success.

4. *The hybrid of the past and the present* presented the state bureaucratic system as a remnant of the totalitarian past (to which Soviet liberal intellectuals assigned the Soviet Union), ignoring the fact that bureaucracy exists not only in totalitarian but also in

democratic societies. The hybrid of the past and the present made it difficult to decide on what was "progressive" and what was not.

5. *The hybrid of modernization and westernization* presented civil society as a normal society that can emerge within any sociocultural milieu, with or without private property, middle class, and specific societal consciousness. This hybrid blurred the line not only between the West and the rest but also between different countries within each of the categories, making irrelevant cultural and social analysis.

6. *The hybrid of politics and religion* presented democracy as an object of worship worthy of human sacrifices, ignoring the fact that democracy can hardly be an end in itself. Rather, democratic procedures are *means* of achieving social justice and improving living conditions. This hybrid of the religious and the cultural suggested blind imitation instead of critical analysis.

7. *The hybrid of ideology and culture* portrayed Soviet people as retrogrades unable to appreciate civilization, ignoring an important Durkheimian motif: in order to survive, society needs to stand up for its cultural symbols, values, and beliefs. The hybrid of ideology and culture made any attempts to preserve traditional cultural patterns undemocratic and, therefore, illegitimate.

8. *The hybrid of the laisser-faire and welfare* depicted the economically successful democratic state as such an organization of society where the state does not interfere with people's lives and where, nonetheless, all people enjoy the privileges of a full-fledged social security system. This hybrid did not allow for a choice since the difference between laissez-faire and welfare was eliminated as such.

9. *The hybrid of socialism and capitalism* described capitalism as a co-existence of all forms of ownership that would enjoy equal rights but exclude the exploitation of men by men and the emergence of antagonistic classes. By failing to acknowledge that surplus value and social stratification are intrinsic features of capitalist relations, this hybrid of capitalism and socialism made pointless ideological confrontations between the right and the left.

10. The hybrid of justice and consumerism presented conceptualized social justice in terms of consumer happiness. Leaving aside such dimensions of social justice as equality, security, fairness, and so forth, this hybrid of justice and consumerism made those dimensions of minor importance.

The murky zone of late Soviet transformations brought together what had used to be mutually exclusive for Soviet people – socialism and capitalism, politics and religion, morality and material success, justice and venality, and so forth. By eliminating the barriers between the good and the evil, the normal and the deviant, and just and the unfair, it filled familiar conceptual forms with contradictory meanings, thus destroying the principle of opposition and corrupting people's common sense.

As my analysis shows, Soviet liberal intellectuals – created the state of uncertainty and insecurity expressed in the "Babylonian confusion of political concepts." In order to achieve their goals, perestroika opinion leaders framed their messages strategically, stressing positive aspects of suggested transformations, ignoring their negative sides, and combining the irreconcilable aspects. To ensure their frames' resonance with the frames of their audiences, Soviet liberal intellectuals extended the boundaries of their individualistic liberal frameworks by incorporating socialist and collectivist frames of reference to the transformations. In other words,

they actively engaged in frame amplification and frame extension, to use the language of Snow and colleagues (1986).

Through different techniques of strategic framing, the Soviet proponents of liberal reforms constructed two basic types of mythologies. The first type mythologized the concepts of Western modernity in line with Barthes's conception of mythologies – through systematically ignoring diverse frames of reference to the ongoing reforms. What we observe in this case is confirmation of my *Proposition #1*, presented in Chapter 3: *If some of the frames that are relevant to the issue at stake are systematically ignored and if only a few relevant frames are constantly made salient, then we can say that the rich history of the concept, to put it in Barthes's language, "evaporates" and the concept becomes a pure mythical form*. This type of mythology appeared when various sponsors of strategically tailored information frame the issues for their publics through what Snow and colleagues (1986) call *frame bridging*.

Another type of mythologies that the Soviet liberal intellectuals actively employed was *the mythologies of a postmodernist dynamic* – with all the schizophrenia of putting together incommensurable perspectives, blurring boundaries, eliminating oppositions, and creating unstable meanings that are formed not according to some inherent logic but according to the logic of strategically shifting plans. In this case, we observe the confirmation of Proposition #2 from Chapter 3: In *order to extend or redefine frames, an information sponsor needs to employ the frames popular among its target publics even if these frames do not serve the sponsor's own aims.* This type of mythology corresponds perfectly to Beck's vision of the world risk society, where people are losing the grasp of reality being unable to differentiate between enemies and friends any more.

Another was the mythologies of postmodernist dynamic – with all the schizophrenia of putting together incommensurable perspectives, blurring boundaries, eliminating oppositions, and creating unstable meanings that are formed not according to some inherent logic but to the logic of strategically shifting plans (Propositions #2, Chapter 3). It is the latter type that corresponds perfectly well to Beck's vision of the world risk society where people are losing grasp of reality being unable to differentiate between enemies and friends any more.

Judging from people's letters to *VH*, this is exactly what many of them experienced: the inability to understand the meaning of the transformations, to make judgments on what was wrong and wright and who was on whose side. People's frustration was not only about mythologies constructed by their intellectual leaders but also about their own fantasies. In line with Csigo's (2010) observation, mass consumers of intellectual myths dissembled them and assembled again, confirming Proposition #3 from Chapter 3: *In order to makes sense of the strategically framed discourses, people, in line with Csigo's (2010) observation, disassemble the combinations of frames and reassemble them again, constructing new combinations.* As I hypothesized in Chapter 3, there is no guarantee that such attempts to restore the original meaning will lead to a meaningful reconstruction and not to another szhizophrenic myth. The analysis of people's letters to VH shows that this prediction was correct.

. Imagining democratization, many working people of Kharkov saw it as a means to improve their elementary conditions of living (Chapter 3). Instead of weakening the state's welfare function, as intellectual contributors to *O* suggested, *VH* readers envisaged strengthening welfare system through state interventions in social and economic life. In other words, working people imagined not establishing capitalism, as many intellectuals implied, but improving socialism, as Gorbachev initially suggested.

Although many readers of *VH* agreed on the necessity of market reforms, they often imagined those reforms in collectivist forms (Chapter 8). Unlike liberal intellectuals, who quickly abandoned those collectivist ideas, working people believed that privatization would make them real owners of their enterprises, allow them to participate in profit distribution, help to eliminate the power of nomenclature, and ultimately bring social justice. For many working people of Kharkov, it was important to keep business moral, just, and community-oriented. These vernacular creative constructions were not just passive adoptions of intellectuals' myths but as their creative appropriation – an attempt to make sense of the reforms.

The Schizophrenia of the Network and Schizophrenia as a Communicative Disorder

In his theory of world risk society, Ulrich Beck suggests that some world regions are more victimized than others because of the "prevailing lack of knowledge or willful ignorance" (2010, p. 168). In the case study presented in this dissertation, we observe both parts. On the part of liberal intellectuals, we deal with the "willful ignorance" since they intentionally stressed only some portions of truth, disregard others, and shuffled together heterogeneous portions into illogical and irreconcilable combinations. On the part of mass audiences, we deal with the chronic state of "non-knowledge" because of their inexperience with how to make sense of schizophrenic mythologies of intellectuals. Because of this loss of orientation, in the course of the reforms, Soviet people came to completely conflicting attitudes to them: On the one hand, they imagined modernization as a chance of improving their living conditions; on the other hand, they saw it as a challenge to their collective existence: the disruption of their communal life and the erosion of its ethical foundations.

Gregory Bateson (2000/1972) describes such internally irreconcilable "no-win" state of affairs as a "double bind" – a situation in which no matter what the person does, s/he cannot win,

"an experience of being punished precisely for being right in one's own view of the context" (p. 236). Bateson argues that a person caught in the double bind may develop schizophrenic symptoms that manifest themselves in the difficulty of performing the following functions: (1) assigning correct communicational mode to the messages s/he receives from other persons; (2) assigning the correct communicational mode to those messages which s/he himself utters or emits nonverbally; and (3) assigning the correct communication mode to his own thoughts, sensations, and percepts (Bateson, 2000, p. 205).

Bateson discusses several "necessary ingredients" for a double bind to occur: it should involve two or more persons, the experience should be repeated, the victim should not be able to escape the field of communication, and two conflicting injunctions, primary and secondary, should be present. The primary injunction may have either of two forms: "(a) 'Do not do so and so, or I will punish you,' or (b) 'If you do so and so, I will punish you'" (p. 206). The secondary injunction have a variety of forms: "Do not see this as punishment," "Do not submit to my prohibitions," and so on (p. 207). According to Bateson, schizophrenic symptoms develop along with the development of the double bind situation: "If an individual has spent his life in the kind of double bind relationship described here, his way of relating to people after a psychotic break would have a systematic pattern" (Bateson, 2000, p. 210).

Being unable to judge accurately the meanings of what is going around her/him, such a victimized person may try to defend herself/himself by choosing one or more of several alternatives. S/he may become suspicious and deviant, continually searching for meanings behind what people say, may accept literally everything pronounced, or may find it necessary to avoid communicating altogether:

This is another way of saying that if an individual doesn't know what sort of message a message is, he may defend himself in ways which have been described as paranoid, hebephrenic, or catatonic. (Bateson, 2010, p. 211)

Without being able to make sense of what people mean, the victimized person produces responses that spiral into the schizophrenia of never-ending communicative distortions.

If we look at Beck's risk society through Bateson's prism, we see that both Beck and Bateson discuss the same phenomena: What Beck calls the "both/and principle" leading to disorientation, Bateson calls the "double bind" that may end in schizophrenic symptoms. Having hybridized what had used to be mutually exclusive – good and evil, the collective and the individual, the communist and the capitalist, and so forth – the Soviet intellectuals created recurrent double binds from which their mass audiences could not escape. To exploit somebody's labor and still be moral, to privatize collective enterprises and nevertheless remain collectivist, to support the multiparty parliamentary system and nonetheless believe in the dictatorship of proletariat, to desire efficiency and to reject unemployment, and so forth – it is the conflicting disjunctions of strategically framed hybrids that prevented many Soviet people from grasping the correct meanings of late Soviet reforms.

By presenting themselves as the bearers of civilizational knowledge, by describing Soviet people as historically "underdeveloped" and thus "uncivilized," and by pushing them to modernization, Soviet liberal intellectuals acted like Bateson's mother who developed schizophrenia in her child by simulating love and giving contradictory directives. Liberal intellectuals simulated love for the socialist and collective values of Soviet people in order to secure popular support for their liberal agenda. As a result, the mass receivers of the manipulating messages of the intellectuals got into Bateson's double bind – in which no matter

what they do, they cannot win. If they correctly identify the simulation, they would face the fact that their intellectual leaders deceive them. In this case, they would be "punished" for learning to discriminate messages accurately – their correct estimation of the situation will immediately lead to disillusionment and despair. Therefore, according to Bateson's logic, people would rather accept the schizophrenic mythologies of the intellectuals – not to recognize the deception. But in this case people deceive themselves about their own internal state.

According to Bateson, what is crucial in the developing of such double bind is the participants' inability to use metacommunication – communication about communication, which people normally use to correct their perception of communicative behavior:

> The ability to communicate about communication, to comment upon the meaningful actions of oneself and others, is essential for successful social intercourse. In any normal relationship there is a constant interchange of metacommuniative messages such as "What do you mean?" or "Why did you do that?" or "Are you kidding me?" and so on. To discriminate accurately what people are really expressing, we must be able to comment directly or indirectly on that expression. This metacommunicative level the schizophrenic seems unable to use successfully. (Bateson, 2000, pp. 215–216)

When the Soviet liberal intellectuals disseminated their myths on democracy and liberalism through mass media, their mass audiences were unable to put forward questions like "What do you mean?" or "Are you kidding me?" because of the one-directional specificity of mediated communication. However, as my analysis shows, neither did the editorial and journalistic staff of the newspapers raise such questions despite their technical ability to do so. Schizophrenia spread because the newspapers did not perform their function of "watchdogs" – not in the sense of imposing ostensibly democratic dogmas but in the sense of questioning them by putting forward

critical "Why?". This observation returns us to the role of media in the public sphere, where deliberation on important societal issues is going on.

Media and the Public Sphere

As is well-known, Jürgen Habermas (1974/1964) conceptualized the public sphere as "a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed" (p. 49), which can transform into a political action. To reach its full potential value, this "realm" has to possess two basic characteristics: the discussion of public matters should be rational, and all citizens should have free access to it. To be counted rational, negotiations on public matters should take the form of an exchange of arguments. According to this classical model, mass media, in order to be the media of the public sphere, should be accessible to the general public and contain rational discussions of matters dealing with public concern. Nobody's opinion should be excluded from the discourse. Although widely criticized for its overemphasis on the rational character of discourse and its neglect of other forms of communicative action not directed toward consensus (e.g., Keane, 1995), as well as for its inability to conceive of a public sphere in pluralistic terms (e.g., Fraser, 1992), Habermas's public sphere nevertheless remained a normative reference point for any discussion on democratic self-government of society during the decades after hi *Structural Transformation* was first published in 1962 (Calhoun, 1992).

The relevance of the public sphere as a fundamental normative concept of democracy was put into question with the advent of globalization due to the fact that public sphere theory has been informed by a theoretical understanding constrained by the borders of the nation-state. Thus, concerns were put forward about whether the concept of the public sphere could be reconstructed to suit a post-Westphalian frame (Fraser, 2007). As Keane (1995) put it,

Public life is today subject to 'refeudalization,' not in the sense in which Habermas's Strukturwandel der Ŏffenflichkeit used the term, but in the different sense of the development of a complex mosaic of differently sized, overlapping, and interconnected public spheres that force us radically to revise our understanding of public life and its 'partner' terms such as public opinion, the public good, and the public / private distinction. (p. 8)

Among others, the following questions appeared: How can the controversies within these transnational discursive areas can be translated into a political action, if they are not legitimately related to any sovereign state? How can global public opinion be critical if states, corporations, and other interested parties control global communication by being able to tailor strategically all publicly accessible information? Can any kind of global agreement be achieved if those who seek it don't share a common political culture? (Fraser, 2007; Habermas, 2001).

The question of legitimacy comes first. Indeed, how can controversies within these transnational discursive arenas can be translated into a political action, if they are not legitimately related to a sovereign state? As this dissertation shows, the controversies within "transnational discursive arenas" can be translated into a political action within a peripheral state even if these controversies are not directly related to this state. The transition of the Soviet Union into the neoliberal space of the global market was only one episode – albeit an important one – of huge global transformations and the global debates associated with them that took place at the end of the 1990s. Public discussions of these transformations within the Soviet public sphere were only a part of global discussions within global communication networks; the latter informed the former. Under the influence of global discursive agendas related to neoliberalism, Soviet public opinion took shape and transformed into a legitimate political force to be

materialized in political decisions. Thus, although global debates on the Washington neoliberal consensus did not legitimately relate to what was going in the late USSR, they legitimized Soviet political decisions indirectly, being adopted by the local establishment and transformed by it into a legitimate political force.

The second major question is the quality of discussions. As this dissertation suggests, all information on neo-liberalism and democracy that Soviet people received through their local media was framed strategically: complex intellectual issues transformed into dead mythologies that left no space for critical deliberation on them. Positioning themselves as progressive civilizational forces, social movements for democracy and modernization can also act as storytellers who care for profit (political or not) more than for truth. As a result, mass public may remain misinformed, disoriented, and unable to judge critically about what is going on.

The third question, about the lack of a common political culture, is central to the globalization of the ideas of Western modernity – in order to deliberate on them, the participants of a global public sphere need to share a common understanding on the concepts related to those ideas. As this dissertation shows, this does not necessarily happen. Although mass Soviet opinion agreed with the necessity of liberalization and democratization, many Soviet people misunderstood the meaning of these concepts imagining them in familiar cultural terms of collectivism and socialism. As a result of this misunderstanding, Soviet people, without recognizing this, participated in the global dispute on the future of socialism on the side of those who rejected socialism altogether. In the course of time, this misunderstanding brought not only disillusionment and the loss of orientation but also negative feelings toward the whole of the Western world. From the perspective of many Soviet people, it was the West that was to blame in the collapse of the Soviet economy and the demise of the Soviet state (Shiraev & Zubok,

2000) – an outlook that some critical Western observers, at least partly, share as well (Castells, 2000c, Kaplan, 2000; Stiglitz, 2003). I do not wish to deny the role of the West in the economic collapse of the Soviet Union. I only want to point to another aspect that is usually left without consideration. I want to stress that it was not Western financial institutions and Western governments but Soviet intellectuals and especially Soviet media that were *directly* responsible for disseminating various liberal myths and thus creating a schizophrenic "twilight zone" at a place where the democratic public sphere had to emerge.

This claim is in conflict with numerous popular books and academic papers that present Gorbachev's glasnost as a triumph of democracy (Aron, 2012; Cohen & Heuvel, 1991, Gibbs, 1999). A universally accepted cliché is that Perestroika brought Soviet people freedom – of opinion, expression, speech, and so forth. I do not want to argue with this. I only want to stress that at the end of the day this freedom turned out to be not a freedom of *informed opinion*, *responsible expression*, or *respectful speech*; it was a schizophrenic freedom of confusing meanings, shifting boundaries, and denying common sense. It was not a freedom of rational discussion for the sake of finding a common good in the sense of Jurgen Habermas; neither was it a freedom of emotional outburst on the part of excluded publics in the sense of Chantall Mouffe (1999). Rather, it was a freedom of calm framing games for the sake of political profit – a freedom that was marked by a total disrespect for "uncivilized" masses of the common Soviet citizens. In other words, this was a freedom of irresponsibility and permissiveness on the part of those who possessed the "power of definition" and freedom of schizophrenia on the part of those who lacked this discursive resource. This freedom has nothing to do with the normative ideas of democracy that remain unknown for many post-Soviet locales even today.

In order for a true democratic public sphere to flourish, it is not enough to incorporate local media resources into global communication networks; it is not enough to guarantee anybody's inclusion in deliberation; and it is not even enough to establish a political system that would guarantee the transformation of public opinion into a legitimate political force. It is also crucially important that all, not only strategically selected, aspects of reality be presented for public consideration – something that Beck suggests while discussing the mission of his "cosmopolitan left":

> It [cosmopolitan left] has to disarm others by presenting all the arguments, and this is precisely where its persuasive power might lie. If a person presents all arguments both for and against what they are arguing for, they will provoke curiosity and elicit people's trust, while also making them aware of the lived contradictions that constitute the fascination of the cosmopolitan outlook. (Beck, 2010, p. 276)

Beck's ideal cosmopolitan public sphere is free not only from the narrowness of nationalistic thinking but also from the narrowness of ideological framing.

I agree with this conceptualization of the ideal public sphere. As this dissertation shows, language games lead to the disintegration of common sense and other pathologies stemming from this: schizophrenia, apathy, or anomie. In order to restore their ability to judge on what is right and what is wrong, the participants of the ideal public sphere should avoid strategic framing; rather, they need to present all the arguments, both for and against their preferred position. Talking globally, this is especially important for participants from disadvantaged regions that do not have cultural experience with the modernity in its Western sense. Before making historic decisions of the future of their societies, they need to learn what all this mess is about: globalization, liberalization, modernization, democratization, and so forth. Without

learning the real meanings of these important concepts, their appropriation will lead not to improving people's conditions of life but to worsening them; not to enlightenment but to spiritual debilitation; and not to social stability but to unstable pathologies.

Although this dissertation investigates the role of communication in the development of societal pathologies within the late Soviet Union, the questions that it raises are relevant to any other non-Western society that tries to catch up with the modernization pace of the West. Modernity is fleeting: "All that is solid melts into air" (Berman, 1988). What is modern? What will be anti-modern next moment? What anti-modern ballast should we abandon today in order to stay afloat tomorrow? What kind of heritage do we need to keep no matter what? These are the questions any society with a modernization agenda incessantly tries to contemplate, lending an attentive air to the voices of those who possess the power of definition – intellectuals, social activists, and experts of any sort. It is their opinions, strategically framed and presented, that predominantly shape public discourse on most important matters of societal transformations. In the course of strategic framing, some important aspects of suggested transformations are systematically ignored; others are reshuffled in such a way that people simply lose the sense of reality. For the sake of societies' mental health (not to speak of global democracy), it is critically important to restore the integrity of reality, the wholeness of choices available for people, and the critical stance of deliberation on these opportunities. Without this, we will have to deal not with a global public sphere but with a global madhouse – a schizophrenic virtual space where people do not have a slightest chance to understand each other and where intolerance and animosity proliferate, intensifying global injustice and spreading multicultural chaos.

Conclusion

The purpose of this dissertation is to show that in order to understand popular disillusionment with democratization, liberalization, and other transformations associated with the attempts of non-Western societies to appropriate Western ideas of modernity, we need to consider how these ideas are mythologized in the course of such appropriations. In doing so, I propose to take seriously the argument of critical and postcolonial studies about the mythological nature of the Enlightenment, whose narrative can be subjugating. To bring this theoretical claim to bear on empirical reality, I propose to reformulate Barthes's method of deconstructing mythologies in terms of frame analysis, simultaneously applying it to elite and vernacular discourses in order to see how they interact. With this procedure, I support the observation of communication scholars who argue that concentrating attention on elites exclusively fails to consider how popular opinions and meanings take shape, and how they dialectically interact with or challenge elite frames. Developing this argument, I claim that only through the dynamic between the elite and the vernacular can we discern the schizophrenic nature of postmodern mythological constructions that, by uniting the incompatible, make the promises of modernity impossible. By making this argument, I follow the line of those theorists who see in expanded global networks not only the promise for further human emancipation but also the potential for developing new anxieties, fears, and other psychological disorders.

I find this line of research theoretically promising because it allows us to move beyond Barthes's conception of myth as a second-order signification with an emergence of a new stable meaning, and see how a new postmodern mythology with a schizophrenic dynamic can emerge instead. I also find this research practically important because it enables us to discern people's frustrations with modernization not only at a post-revolutionary stage, when it is difficult to

return what is lost, but before modernizing revolutions put societies in motion, transforming

stable and familiar meanings into a schizophrenic kaleidoscope of broken pieces. It is important,

I think, to diagnose schizophrenia before it is unleashed, since even in its discursive form it can

bring and perpetuate social injustice and human suffering on a global scale.

P. S. Personal Reflections

More than two decades have passed since the Soviet Union ceased to exist, but many of those who used to be "Soviet people" still cannot make sense of what happened to them and their motherland. Today, twenty years after the USSR's disintegration, the nostalgia for "Sovok"[15] is an integral part of the structure of feeling within many post-Soviet states. I am not speaking of the rising popularity of post-Soviet communist parties – popular nostalgia cannot be reduced to pure politics or ideological confrontations. Many people of post-Soviet Ukraine do not have warm feelings to the party nomenklatura overthrown by Gorbachev's reforms or post-Soviet communist leaders. What they do have warm feelings about is the times when they did not have to worry how to feed children, pay for their education, cure them or how to live the old age without an adequate pension or health system. The memories of the old good times when people were not concerned with how to live their old age without an adequate pension or health system cannot evaporate. For my grandmother, Alexandra Fedotovna, these memories come up any time the faces of "new elites" appear on TV screens: well-fed, complacent, and blind to people's needs. Any time these nouveau riches promised another breakthrough toward the prosperity of the masses (their usual occupation), my 96-year-old grandma gave the figs to her TV screen and called them everything she could lay her tongue to. She could not forgive, and she could not forget. Through their shameless privatization, they had stolen *her* mines, *her* metallurgical works, and *her* quarries.

Throughout all her long life, my grandmother had been living and working in Krivoi Rog – a center of a heavy industrial region of Ukraine, the Krivbas Iron Ore Basin. It was her labor and the labor of thousands other workers that was embodied in the infrastructure of the whole

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[15] Although "Sovok" used to be a derogatory term of reference to the Soviet Union, it loses its negative sense nowadays and can be used to denote everything that is Soviet.

region. Workers gained nothing, however, when, form the 1990s until 2004, once united and state-owned industries went through the scandal-ridden process of privatization. It was a real pain for my grandma to see how the value of collective property went to the pockets of "swindlers," "stinkers," "rogues," and "dirty thieves." She did not have other words for new capitalists and new politicians.

This was not an isolated personal sentiment of one old lady. Any time I came to visit her – first from Kharkov, then from Kiev – I received more and more evidence that the bitter feeling about the dishonesty of privatization did not go away. Any time I came, relatives and neighbors took seats around a big table under a huge apple tree in my grandmother's yard, drank vodka, sang songs, and tried to find answers to eternal Russian questions: who was to blame and what should be done. For my grandmother, the first question was easy: it was "them," the new rich and the West assisting them in their robbery of people's assets, dignity, and hopes for future. The second question was not that simple: What should be done? My grandmother shook her head: she did not believe in changes for the better. Year after year, she wrote letters to *Krivbas Communist*[16] fighting against the opportunism of new communist leaders, she made donations to the communist movement from her meager pension, she did her best to persuade people that it was necessary to struggle, but she did not believe in good changes. "You, young people, have lost you mind," she used to say sorrowfully. "You don't have wisdom and dignity. You are not able to distinguish between good and evil. You are ready to sell yourself for money. Money is your God. Don't even dare to speak with me about it!" Here, our conversations used to stop. My grandmother stubbornly refused to accept my simple argument that "all civilized people throughout the Earth live like this." She did not believe in capitalist civilization and she did not

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[16] A regional Communist newspaper

believe in the humanity of capitalism. She believed in collectivism, in people's support of each other, and the people's ability to sacrifice their small egoistic interests for the sake of a collective good.

For my grandmother, I personified the insanity of the new times. Against my own interests, as she saw them, I defended the idea of "being exploited," that is, the readiness to sell my labor to a capitalist "grabbers." For her, that was unacceptable. What was unacceptable for me was her stubbornness, her unwillingness to join civilization, and her crusade against progress. I loved my grandmother, but for me she had already had her day: she symbolized the past needed to be disregarded for the sake of the future. I was a typical young person of perestroika times. I wanted freedom, but not from capitalist exploitation, as my grandmother imagined it. Like millions of young people of the late USSR, I wanted freedom to express myself. We wanted bright clothes, jean trousers, catchy decorations, crazy hairstyles, rock music, and loud parties. We wanted fun in the same fashion as young people "there" had it – thanks to U.S. movies that flooded the USSR during its last years of existence, we had already had a good idea how "real life" should look. Everything that was Soviet was so boring. Everything that was Western, or better American, was fun.

In 1990, the first television company free from party control was established in my native Kharkov; soon, its first news program went on air. By this time, I had already graduated from Kharkov University with a diploma, and I was out of job. One day, I met my old university buddy who told me that the director of this news program was looking for journalists. Next day, without prior experience, I started reporting; in a couple of months, I was a news presenter. My "meteoric" career was not an exception. New uncontrolled media, the number of which was increasing at a huge rate daily, demanded more and more media workers. In the overwhelming

majority of cases, they were young ambitious people without any journalistic education or life experience. What united us was the desire to westernize, a lack of understanding of the societal contradictions complicating the reforms, and deafness to the concerns of those people who opposed them. In our eyes, the latter were "retrograde": they did not understand what civilization was about; we were a revolutionary vanguard and chosen progressive reformers.

It was easy for us to feel that way. In 1990, my salary as a journalist was ten times bigger than the salaries of my mom and my dad, who worked engineers at a regime enterprise producing space equipment. The Soviet Union lived its last days, and many military and space programs lived their last days as well. With their termination, many Kharkov industrial enterprises came to a halt. Dozens of thousands of people found themselves jobless. What saved them from starving were small plots of land distributed among the employees of state enterprises in the late 1980s. At these pieces of land, in order to live through winter and feed their families, both industrial workers and highly educated specialists cultivated potato, and other vegetables.

We journalists did not need to cultivate crops. We were a privileged caste. We always had salary payments on time while the overwhelming majority of other people experienced permanent overdue wages or were already out of jobs. Our television company *Tonis* had money, and – what a symbolism – this money was taken from people. After broadcasting American movies during several months for free, the company announced that now, in order to still have access to these movies, people needed to buy special technical devices, *deshifratori* (decipherers). The desire for everything American among Soviet people was so great that thousands of Karkovites paid for deshifratori in advance. Quite often, they paid their last rubles. These rubles laid down the foundations for the prosperity of *Tonis*, but the deshifratori have never been installed – a typical story of late Soviet times.

Paradoxically, it was people's money that provided us with the power to define reality, to tell the fairy tales of liberalization, and, finally, to deprive these very people of *their* power. Through the people's money, we received the power to express ourselves even when we had nothing to express. How could we have really meaningful ideas? Educated in Soviet universities, we did not have an adequate knowledge on the nuances of the historical choice between socialism and capitalism that the Soviet people had to make. Of course, we were taught that capitalism was about exploitation, but who believed in those scary communist tales? By the end of the 1980s, the nomenklatura had discredited itself to such an extent that not so many people in Soviet state still believed in its ideological creations, least of all we – young people reading *Samizdat* and listening to the *"Voices."*[17] The propagandistic and unmasking products of those media were not designed for an unprejudiced and rational deliberation about the transition from socialism to capitalism. In our imagination, that transition was simple: it was simply about moving from the past to the future and from subjugation to freedom. It was a transition where flag stations did not existed: where there were no halftones, complexities and details, where the heroes and the villains were well known. The heroes were Novodvorskaya, Sobchak, Yavlinsky, Korotich, Yevtushenko, and other "messengers of freedom"; the villains were party nomenklatura, orthodox communists, and retrogrades defending everything that was Soviet.

I know almost all of the reporters who worked in *O* in 1989-1991. Since that time, some of them have undergone profound intellectual transformation, as I did. Today, we understand that reality is much more complicated than we imagined it in the late 1980s and early 1990s. As far as I remember, it was not our deliberate aim to conceal the truth; rather, we did not see any other truth but its liberal version. We believed in the liberal myth because it looked so desirable: to

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[17] The "Voices" were "The Voice of America," Radio Liberty," "BBC Russian Service," and other propagandistic media that broadcast for Soviet audiences from abroad.

follow the Western lead and to achieve a civilized condition. Today, many of us realize how naïve we were. But who has paid for this naivety? Not we. The overwhelming majority of us – those who fantasized at the expense of the working people in the 1980s-1990s – are doing perfectly well. Some of us work for oligarchs as PR advisors; others direct oligarchic media enterprises; and the least successful still toil as reporters. Those who paid the whole price were Soviet working people, who gained very little, if anything at all, from the scizophrenic freedom of post-Gorbachev liberalization.

By claiming throughout this dissertation that the discourses of modernization were strategically constructed during the disintegration of the Soviet Union I mean first and foremost a deep strategic interest of the intellectual workers of all times – to free themselves from any kind of control, to liberate creativity, and to express oneself. "To have fun," as Novodvorskaya put it. The Soviet state was hostile to creative and uncompromising voices. We did not know any other state system, and we could hardly imagine that state apparatuses ("repressive machines," as we knew from Leninism) could support intellectual creativity. This made us hostile to any state interventions regardless of their aims. And this made us uncritically friendly to Moscow gurus who disseminated their liberal mythologies through our media.

Pursuing our class interests of liberating our means of production – creativity and self-expression – we did not bother ourselves to think of any negative consequences for other social groups or classes of society, least of all for workers whom we did not understand and did not want to understand. They seemed to be people from the past unable to recognize the joy of liberalization and individualism. Our interests, as we saw them, were fundamentally different from the interests of the working people, whose first priority was the security of welfare system. Our gains from the reforms also differed radically from what the working people had got:

providing us with money, power, and prestige, the schizophrenic freedom of perestroika deprived the working class of all its previous power and material resources.

Before I completed my dissertation research, I did not see the story of the Soviet transformations in such terms. Being interested in the theory of the public sphere and departing from it, I tried to understand if any genuine public sphere in Habermasian terms appeared during perestroika in Ukraine. In order to answer this question, I analyzed whose voices were present in media discourse on the future of Ukrainian modernity and whose were not. In the course of this analysis, however, an unexpected and shocking discovery came to the surface: Although I had found that nobody's voices were technically excluded (each social group at least had its own medium where it could express its views), I also discovered that the basic concept of modernization discourse were interpreted radically differently. Only at this point, after more than twenty years of the USSR's disintegration, did I realize how big was the abyss that separated us, young Soviet intellectuals, from the working class. I did not expect to get these results.

My dissertation made me remember my grandmother: her premonition about the craziness of capitalist desires and the inhumanity of commodification. Definitely, she did not know such words. But she knew life. Like many other "ordinary" people, she lacked theoretical knowledge but she had wisdom – something that we, young and poorly educated parvenus, were definitely lacking at the beginning of the 1990s. Through this dissertation, my grandma has returned to me. But will the dignity of the working people come back to them? I wish I could know the answer. After 1989, many people in the former Soviet Union and beyond its borders have been viewing capitalism as triumphant. But this triumph was based on *the repression* of the millions of those who has been robbed of their collective property, human dignity, and hopes.

The unsolved questions of social justice, which made Soviet people support Gorbachev's reforms, remain and stubbornly persist. Pure liberalism, which we childishly advocated at the daybreak of the 1990s, cannot satisfy the repressed desires for justice. They return, and the spectre of communism comes back again. In fact, it had never disappeared completely. Hadn't it, indeed? Or is this just another fantasy of a schizophrenic intellectual? I wish I could know the answer.

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