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Special Issue
"Social Order and Art Sources of Imaginations"

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The *Russian Sociological Review* is an academic peer-reviewed journal of theoretical, empirical and historical research in social sciences.

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- To foster developments in social sciences by enriching theoretical language and vocabulary of social science and encourage a cross-disciplinary dialogue.
- To provide educational materials for the university-based scholars in order to advance teaching in social sciences.

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СОЦИОЛОГИЧЕСКОЕ ОБОЗРЕНИЕ

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«Искусство как ресурс социологического воображения»

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«Социологическое обозрение»—академический рецензируемый журнал теоретических, эмпирических и исторических исследований в социальных науках. Журнал выходит четыре раза в год. В каждом выпуске публикуются оригинальные исследовательские статьи, обзоры и рефераты, переводы современных и классических работ в социологии, политической теории и социальной философии.

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- Формировать корпус образовательных материалов для развития преподавания социальных наук.

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Журнал «Социологическое обозрение» приглашает социальных исследователей присылать статьи, в которых рассматриваются фундаментальные проблемы социальных наук с различных концептуальных и методологических перспектив. Нас интересуют статьи, затрагивающие такие проблемы как социальное действие, социальный порядок, время и пространство, мобильности, власть, нарративы, события и т. д.

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Журнал ориентирован на академическую и неакадемическую аудитории, заинтересованные в обсуждении фундаментальных проблем современного общества и социальных наук. Кроме того, публикуемые материалы (в частности, обзоры, рефераты и переводы) будут интересны студентам, преподавателям курсов по социальным наукам и другим ученым, участвующим в образовательном процессе.

Подписка

Журнал является электронным и распространяется бесплатно. Все статьи публикуются в открытом доступе на сайте: http://sociologica.hse.ru/.

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Social Order and Art Sources of Imaginations*

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In a novel published in the middle of the 1960s, the famous Soviet science fiction writers, the brothers Arkady and Boris Strugatski described an experiment; the character of the novel travelled into a *depicted future*, or, better yet, a series of futures ordered according to the time of the appearance of the corresponding works of fantasy. With a time-machine of the imagination, he started with the first antique dialogues on the ideal state, and continued through the technological utopias of the recent past. Finally, he landed in the rather dark fantasies of mankind divided by an iron wall into hostile worlds, attacked by savage robots, and colonized by extra-terrestrial creatures. All of these images were familiar to the fans of the sci-fi literature of that time. With bitter sarcasm, the Strugatski brothers mentioned the "half-translucent" (i.e., poorly and unconvincingly depicted) inventors of clever machines, parodied the unnatural talk of the "people of the future", and mocked stereotyped stories. Back in his "real" world, the narrator (by the way, he is a software developer in the research institute "of sorcery and magic")[1] finds his colleagues vividly discussing *inter alia* the quasi-scientific ideas formulated in the observed fictions. Whereas they find what he saw during his journey interesting, he has a small talk with one of his colleagues: "When I finished my story he asked, 'Didn't this Sedlovoi [the experimentator] try traveling in the described present? In my opinion that would have been much more amusing . . .'" (Strugatski, Strugatski, 1977: 113).

Well, to put it bluntly, the idea of this special issue was this: *try traveling in the described present*, or, better, in the many presents re-presented through works of art and literature. The multiple worlds visited can be full of strange talks and characters that would hardly be met in real life. They would not only be the worlds of the present in

* The results of the project "Between Political Theology and Cognitive Sciences: New Alternatives, New Challenges, or New Resources for Social Theory" carried out within the framework of the Basic Research Program at the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE) in 2020, are presented in this work.

1. "Thaumaturgy and Spellcraft" in the cited translation.

the narrower sense, but also reach into the deep past or, alas, into the imagined future again. However, they would belong to our time in the broader sense, contain ideas worth discussing, report facts, and contain narratives of significant value for sociology. They all would be worth analyzing as attempts at the comprehension of reality, and they are, in themselves, an important part of this reality.

This may seem to be the most painful moment and the point of vulnerability of our position. Is it not an outdated understanding of literature and art a kind of mirror to reflect reality? Does it not look as if we have re-imagined and inverted the situation of classical sociology competing with the literature in a rather naïve vein? In fact, thanks to the brilliant research of Wolf Lepenies, we know this paradigmatic situation of sociology just by its start as a discipline: "As soon as sociology had advanced its claim to be a self-sufficient discipline it saw itself confronted not only by the ill will of the established disciplines but also by competition on the part of literature . . . some branches of literature claimed a status equal to many scientific disciplines so far as the advancement of knowledge was concerned" (1992: 6). For Lepenies, sociology oscillated between science and literature: it tried to imitate the natural sciences but failed to become "a true natural science of society"; it abandoned its scientific orientation and moved "perilously close to literature" (Ibid.: 7). More than a century after this paradigmatic situation came to the fore, Robert Nisbet could keep comparing sociology and art as mutually complementary: "I have also been struck repeatedly by the number of instances in which visions, insights, and principles native to sociology in its classical period were anticipated, were set forth in almost identical shape and intensity, by artists, chiefly Romantic, in the nineteenth century". He counted such names as "Burke, Blake, Carlyle, Balzac, and a score of others whose reactions to the democratic and industrial revolutions created a pattern of consciousness that the sociologists, and others in philosophy and the sciences, fell into later" (Nisbet, 1976: 8). Even today in a perhaps more modest and critical way, a certain consensus concerning sociology and fiction would be stated, for example, in using non-sociological resources for teaching sociology: "This consensus is evident in the collection of readings of fiction for sociological purposes and the growing corpus of articles highlighting the usefulness of individual works of fiction. That is, there is a consensus that non-sociological resources are useful and a consensus that particular non-sociological resources are useful for teaching particular aspects of sociology" (Carlin, 2010: 212). The word *consensus* can be misleading. Today's use of non-sociological sources is far from the situation of the competition between literature and social science of the 19th century. What we need is clarity of the change of the attitudes of modern science against both art *and* its ambitions of the past. To demonstrate this, we simply compare the arguments of Howard Becker, one of those who belongs to the tradition of social ethnography with a very sensitive attitude towards the writing and literary features of research texts. One of his arguments is outlined in his book *Telling about Society*, in which he lists different types of narration. Novels, dramas, films, and photography are placed in a list with geographical maps, statistics, etc. (2007: 8ff.). Literature and art can be informative and instructive: this is true, this is a common place, and we have stated a consensus about this.

However, in his classic earlier book, Becker (1982: xxiv) said something very substantial, and even though he himself called it common place by only considering the conclusions from it not being obvious, we will quote his words at some length:

> I think it generally true that sociology does not discover what no one ever knew before, in this differing from the natural sciences. Rather, good social science produces a deeper understanding of things that many people are already pretty much aware of. This is not the place to pursue that argument. But I should say that whatever virtue this analysis has does not come from the discovery of any hitherto unknown facts or relations. Instead, it comes from exploring systematically the implications of the art world concept.

Becker's 1982 work, *Art Worlds*, is not a theoretical work: it is an attempt to present a simple analytical framework for the sociological analysis of what is considered to be art in society. This analysis does not restrain itself to specific domains of reality, but instead it can be read as an invitation to look beyond what the sociology of art traditionally focuses on. Although, for Becker, the *worlds of art* are networks of people, not provinces of meaning: we can use the concept in both senses to reformulate our position.

We want to keep a distance from the conception of art-as-reflection that was basic for several generations. Seeing social science and literature as mirrors leads to the endless discussion which is better in terms of reflecting 'real life'. This was the subject of the outdated competition! Today, we can hardly share any version of reflection theory as described by Milton Albrecht, for example, in his influential paper from more than half a century ago: "The historical emphasis on reflection has naturally tended to distract attention from the question of the influence of literature on society, but the two concepts have frequently been regarded as mutually influential or as opposite sides of the same coin" (1954: 431).

We are too far from those times: neither does sociology finds itself in competition with literature, nor does literature compete with a new ambitious science, imitating, on their own, the hard sciences. In literature, we can find characters called sociologists; in sociology, we know few branches that can be identified as the sociology of literature (or literature and arts). Both, sociology and literature, observe each other not without interest but with rather-distracted, unfocused attention: both make use of each other as sources, although not as sources of certain, reliable information, but rather as sources for social imagination and the reconfiguration of knowledge. In fact, this is the problem of an observer: if someone compares sociology and literature as two mirrors of the same society, the mirror can be a looking glass, but it can be a burning glass as well. Literature (and sociology) can reflect, and it can influence people, inspire them, and inform their actions and behavior. But, who compares these two mirroring domains? Who is the observer holding both mirrors or both sets of mirrors? Who is enabled to compare not only reflections or effects on society, but also the reliability of those reflections and intentions of those who try to influence society? Well, we know the answer: it is no one or everyone. There is no position of privilege in society: there is no chance to find any means to

discriminate between the different forms of knowledge according to their adequacy or effectiveness. This is why sociology does not come closer to understanding reality, even if it tries to use more and diverse resources including arts and literature. It comes closer to its own task, which is to produce other arguments and forms of the self-description of society through the temporary distancing from itself, i.e., from its own ways of reproducing knowledge. If sociologists stay in their professional 'province of meaning', they will hardly be able to reach the reality as seen without their professional optics. If they are not so alien to their tradition, or the way of serious comprehension and analysis of the world of arts and works of art, sociologists will enrich their own science and their capacities to reconfigure knowledge that society needs to better understand itself.

In the call for papers, we argued that we would like to frame our endeavor as cultural-sociological, focusing mainly on how culture and arts, being autonomous, shape social action. Interestingly, anthropology has become an important foundation for cultural sociology. While sociological thought after 1945 was more concerned with how the discipline of the sociology of culture and arts should be established in contrast with aesthetics and art/literature theory, anthropology has been open to collaborations with non-sociological disciplines and aesthetic practices. The aesthetic realms have always been a way to understand social life from an anthropological perspective. In particular, one can mention the works of Clifford Geertz and Victor Turner, both having approached arts, poetry, and theatre from the anthropological perspective in order to produce coherent sociological knowledge. Geertz's essay "Art as Cultural System" (1976) seems to be the most relevant for the research perspective proposed in this special issue. The CfP contains the following passage:

> In "Art as a Cultural System" (1976), he [Geertz] wrote that "to study an art form is to explore a sensibility" and "such a sensibility is essentially a collective formation, and that the foundations of such a formation are as wide as social existence and as deep". Furthermore, he argued that the relation between art and society should be treated as ideational, not mechanical, meaning that art is a primary document (not a mere representation) since it does not illustrate the dominant ideas (the ideas of dominant class, as Bourdieu would put it). Instead, artworks are conceptions along with other conceptions (including philosophical, sociological, and political).

Arguing that artwork, literature, music, and other forms are conceptions, we suggest that the analysis of particular examples would be at least comparable to the analysis of other forms of social, political, expert, and mundane forms of the knowledge of society, social order, and social action. In a similar way, scholars such as Robert Witkin and Tia DeNora used the cases from the historical sociology of arts. Witkin provided the analysis of Manet's *Olympia*, following how the constraints and dichotomies of bourgeois society (discourses of values vs. discourses of motives, female home vs. male market, etc.) were enacted via the iconic painting. He wrote that "Olympia takes its place as one among a number of cultural resources that serve to unmask the pretense and illusion involved in the politics of desire and in the spiritual claims of a sphere of purely personal relations in

modern society" (1995). Tia DeNora studies music, and in her case, explores the musical culture of Vienna of the early 18th century. Her materials include philosophical, musicological, and practical knowledge as resources for the new models of social agency to emerge, and in particular, the form of agency that extrudes females from the practice of piano performances. What we received from the authors of this issue may be seen as a series of contributions to this fruitful tradition.

The RSR special issue includes eight contributions. They vary in topic and the research focus. In what follows, we provide a brief overview of the contributions that are included in the issue.

There is a group of papers that deal with literature as empirical material. Jana Váňa's contribution opens the issue, and sketches out a cultural sociological theory of literature. He focuses on the interactions between literature and sociological knowledge, and begins with the discussion of examples of sociological and anthropological studies to reveal their aesthetic grounds. At the same time, literature can be viewed as a sociological resource. Here, Váňa identifies two sociological phenomena often addressed via literature, those of the existential experience (often dismissed in sociological writing) and Zeitgeist. The paper concludes with the outline of the next conceptual steps towards the meaningfully-oriented sociology of literature.

The second paper on literature is Werner Binder's study of the popular science-fiction book series *Culture*, by Ian Banks. Being a literature construction, *Culture* is a liberal utopia and realm where Banks considered various contradictions of the liberal myth. Binder's analysis proceeds from the cultural sociological theory of civil society as outlined by Jeffrey Alexander. Following his theory, Binder argues that science-fiction literature contains a specific liberal myth that underlies the narrative, referring not only to the fictional realm of specific writing, but also to the existing liberal order.

Vladimir Kamnev's and Vladimir Bystrov's research paper is an example of how to create sociological theory with science fiction. Approaching science-fiction, they revisit one of the fundamental problems of sociological theory—the problem of the Other. They begin with establishing connections between the examples of science-fiction literature and social philosophical concepts (e.g., Ivan Efremov is put together with Edmund Husserl, while Max Weber's ideas can be found in Sergey Snegov's and Clifford Simak's oeuvre). Generally speaking, Kamnev and Bystrov identify two ways sci-fi literature constructs the Other. One way is based on the rational possibility of establishing relations with the Other, while the second way proceeds from the irrational foundations of the Other, and therefore, on the impossibility of getting in touch with the Other. The conceptual distinction applied by Kamnev and Bystrov in the analysis of Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles* reveals a postcolonial meaning of science-fiction literature.

The next paper approaches the song-poetry of the Soviet *estrada* and its cultural meanings. Anna Ganzha provides a cultural sociological program of song studies in which she combines Adornian analyses with a recent, meaningfully-oriented perspective. Her main concern is to put mass song back into the realm of culture, i.e., the relationship of cultural policy with the song form itself. Using a number of examples from the history of Soviet

mass song, Ganzha explores how the form was a "public presentation of social topos". According to Ganzha, Soviet songs did not merely transfer ideological messages since their role was significantly broader than to sing out the social world.

Andrey Adelfinsky's contribution focuses on Soviet cinema to study how movies represented the transformation of sports in the USSR. He systematically classifies primarily the movies of the 1950s–1980s into three groups. The first group of movies constructs the sportsman as a hero, while the second group of movies puts sport practice in the realm of irony and comedy. The third group of movies represents the transformation of sport institutions as close as is possible to what actually happened. Adelfinsky shows the changes of the function that movies had. After ceasing to be a propaganda tool to promote a healthy lifestyle among all Soviet citizens, cinema turned to the promotion of elitist and professional sport as a performance. Yet, these representations had nothing in common with what changed in sports institutionally. In this respect, sport movies were (and maybe still are) establishing an autonomous realm.

The next two papers look at the history and interactions of cultural and social thought. Maria Chernovskaya's essay traces the reception of Walter Benjamin's ideas in the USA with the help of the theory of cultural transfer as proposed by Michelle Espagne. Walter Benjamin's intellectual legacy has become a foundation for many contemporary disciplines and artistic practices. He himself may be considered as the one who analyzed aesthetic phenomena, and through his analysis, grasped the tendencies of modern life. In this particular paper, Chernovskaya argues that Benjamin's image in the USA was far broader than that of a left-wing cultural theoretician, and thus his writings had a deeper impact on the research configuration and interests of American cultural scholars in the aesthetics of everyday life.

In his paper, Boris Stepanov reviews the interdisciplinary field of cinematic sociology and revisits the relations with cognate disciplines such as film and cultural studies. Stepanov questions the marginal place of cinema as a resource for the study of social imagination, and attempts to provide a coherent explanation of the state of art. He argues that cinema may occupy a more significant position among the aesthetic objects in sociology once the relation between the disciplines is mediated through an anthropological turn in contemporary culture studies.

The issue closes with the book review. The book under consideration is titled *Roads to Music Sociology* (2019), and celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Department of Music Sociology at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. In the review, Nail Farkhatdinov discusses the theoretical agenda of contemporary music sociology and considers the empirical promises of the discipline.

With the publication of the special issue, it is now clear that the initial idea of the special issue was probably too narrow since the contributions, strictly speaking, fail to stay within the methodological limits imposed by the editors. Yet, this confirms that the task of using artworks as sources of imagination and of doing what Geertz called the "ethnography of the vehicles of meaning" requires multiple perspectives.

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Искусство как ресурс социологического воображения

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Fiction and Social Knowledge: Towards a Strong Program in the Sociology of Literature

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Following the strong program in cultural sociology, I propose a *strong program in the sociology of literature*, which treats literary pieces rightly as relatively autonomous cultural entities and "independent variables". To outline the epistemological foundations of the new research program, I compare how social knowledge comes into existence through the sociological text and the text of literary fiction. I discuss the representation of social reality in interpretive research, with Isaac Reed's book *Interpretation and Social Knowledge* as a starting point. To claim literary autonomy, I outline some of the aspects which social theory shares with literary fiction. I am mainly interested in how social theory and literary fiction mediate social knowledge to their readers via the *aesthetic experience*. I identify two main categories of social knowledge mediated by literature: existential understanding and *Zeitgeist*. Discussing the sociological treatment of several novels, I look at how these two categories intertwine and support each other to create colorful, sensitive, but also robust and deep social knowledge, which condenses aesthetic, existential, and non-discursive aspects of social experience together with the "big picture" of whole societies. I argue that only by overcoming the often-assumed inferiority of literature in sociological research can sociology realize its full potential in understanding the meanings of social life.

Keywords: sociology of literature, cultural sociology, social knowledge, social theory, theorizing, aesthetic experience, fiction

Introduction

> "Novels . . . tell us different things about social life from the things a piece of sociological research can tell us about social life, and to the extent that they tell us these different things, they tell us more things. … The knowledge they can convey about society is no substitute for the methodical knowledge of social science; but neither is it inferior or subordinate to the latter." (Harrington, 2004: 3f.)

I advocate for an innovative approach of looking at cultural meanings in a society of a given time and space *through the lenses of literary fiction*. Literary texts communicate social experience using a form of phenomenological reduction, which brackets out certain phenomena and emphasizes others. This is based on several factors such as the author's intentional and non-intentional choices in the writing process, decisions made by various

actors in the production chain of the book, and the socio-cultural background of the involved actors. All these factors are concentrated within an activity that I call *imaginative theorizing*, a process that transforms certain social experience into the resulting fictional text through a set of intuitive and conceptual tools and literary devices. Then, the literary meaning is communicated in the form of *aesthetic experience*. Readers who initiate the reading of a novel can access this experience through emotional engagement with the text maintained by literary devices such as metaphors, simile, rhythm, pace, and phonetic aspects. Due to the aesthetic experience of reading, literary fiction—unlike historical, social scientific, or journalistic accounts—is well suitable for studying socio-cultural phenomena with special emphasis on their aesthetic, experiential, and existential qualities. Immersed within the aesthetic experience, the readers of literary fiction can understand how it is to live in a particular society by *feeling* it, rather than knowing it.

However, if sociologists of literature want to access these volatile features of social life mediated by the aesthetic experience of reading, they must profoundly scrutinize the epistemological foundations of currently dominating paradigms. In the past, the sociology of literature has treated literary texts as reflections of supposedly more substantial social forces. The Marxist heritage developed into several schools, such as the field theory of Pierre Bourdieu (1996), the "art worlds" of Howard Becker (1982), and the cultural industry within the British cultural studies, which approach literature as a "product" subordinate to social interactions and institutions (see Váňa, 2020b). Even studies declaring the priority of cultural meaning over institutional arrangements look at literary works as rather mysterious black-boxes subordinated to their social context, such as Wendy Griswold's (1987) "fabrication of meaning", or the "cultural sociology of reading" recently established by M. Angélica Thumala Olave (2018). Sadly, the predominance of these paradigms prevents sociology from looking at literature as an autonomous agent that actively shapes cultural meanings and has a great potential to provide full-fledged and self-dependent social knowledge.

In this article, I outline the epistemological foundations of a new "research program which would be a powerful alternative to mainstream paradigms in sociological studies of literature" (Váňa, 2020b: 2). Following the strong program in cultural sociology (Alexander, Smith, 2003), I propose a *strong program in the sociology of literature* which treats literary pieces rightly, as relatively autonomous cultural entities, "independent variables" resisting the judgmental eye of an analyst, while allowing strong explanatory theories to infer knowledge about general social phenomena.

Jeffrey C. Alexander and Philip Smith (2003: 15) introduced the strong program to remedy the "numbness toward meaning" from which sociology "has suffered" for "most of its history". The three principal pillars of the strong program are: a commitment to *cultural autonomy*, which calls "for a sharp analytical uncoupling of culture from social structure" (Ibid.: 13); a requirement to bracket-out the "wider, nonsymbolic social relations" driven by the Geertzian "thick description", which allows for a reconstruction of an "internal pattern of meaning"; and an "imperative of identifying concrete mechanisms through which culture does its work" (Ibid.: 23). As I will show, with the help of

Isaac Reed's (2011) conceptualization of social knowledge, literary works function like texts written by cultural sociologists in many ways. They fulfill the principle of analytical "bracketing out" borrowed from Husserlian phenomenology as well as Clifford Geertz's (1973) thick description to communicate "a social phenomenology" (Felski, 2008: 88), which allows for a reconstruction of "internal pattern of meaning"—that is, a creation of "the analytically autonomous culture object" (Alexander, Smith, 2003: 14). Also, literature fulfills the imperative of probing for deep and unconscious cultural structures. Literary works mediate deeper understanding through complex systems of fictional and real references through "semantic mapping of their contents upon the actual world" (Pavel, 1986: 84), but not only that. Literary fiction provides access to hitherto inaccessible qualities of social life; it can "communicate thoughts [about social life] that scientific discourse could not" (Harrington, 2002a: 55).

My claim is that literary fiction does not need to be gutted by sociological theory in order to provide social knowledge. The task for a strong program in the sociology of literature is to recognize the social knowledge which is *already implicitly present in literary works* without translating it into sociological discourse. "Cultural sociologists can find in literature a powerful ally for understanding the social world, but only if they respect that in this complex organism 'the meaning emerges of its own volition' (Hoggart, 1966: 281) and cannot simply be dissected without being damaged. What is essential is that the literature must speak for itself" (Váňa, 2020a: 195).

To claim for literary autonomy, I outline some of the aspects that social theory shares with literary fiction. Particularly, I am interested in, first, the ways *how both social theory and literary fiction come into existence*, and second, how can they mediate social knowledge to their readers. I argue that only by overcoming the assumed inferiority of literature in sociological research can sociology realize its full potential in understanding the meanings of social life.

Social Theory and Aesthetics of Social Experience

Social Theory and Theorizing as a Craft

> "Theories are nets cast to catch what we call 'the world': to rationalize, to explain, and to master it. We endeavor to make the mesh ever finer and finer." (Popper, 2005/1934: 37)

Gerard Delanty (2009: 19f.) claims that the emergence of social theory[1] "coincides with the emergence of modernity" and it properly "begins with the recognition that society is a reality in itself". The roots of social theory are connected with enlightenment, which was, on the one hand, positively embraced as a way of looking for rational solutions for press-

1. My position is different from Sanderson's (2005: 2f.) suggestion that "sociological" theory is more concerned with understanding society while "social" theory with "criticizing and rebuilding". I use the terms "social" and "sociological" theory interchangeably, based on the context and the theorists I refer to. When it comes to my original claims, I follow Reed (2011) in using "social" theory.

ing social issues of modernity (e.g., Comte's positive sociology), and on the other hand, criticized as a knowledge-centered ideology (most significantly by Marxism). Either way, the development of social theory has been revolving around questions of social order, social action, and social change, and the principles of their functioning (Joas, Knöbl, 2009: 18). Piotr Sztompka (2004) asserts that one of the primary goals of a theory is explanation. Especially "in times of change" there is "a pressure on sociologists from both the common people and politicians to provide explanations of the chaos"—to answer questions such as "where we have come from, where we are, and where we are going" (Ibid.: 26off.).[2] One of the main tools for answering such questions, which sociology borrowed from the natural sciences, is a testable hypothesis. Hence Karl Popper's (2005/1934) famous criterion of falsification (cf. Baert, Rubio, 2009: 63f.).

However, later it was argued that the idea of empirical evidence and theoretical knowledge as two discrete systems, which was adopted from the natural sciences, is too simplistic for social sciences (see Reed, 2010: 21f.). This statement is related to the argument that *theorizing* as a way of making theories is not an exclusive discipline of scientists but a facility of every individual. "[T]he construction of theories, of generalizing statements" is not only a "significant component" of science, but it "is a common human ability to make sense of disorderly flow of everyday experience"; theories in everyday life are "necessary" as they are "unavoidable" (Joas, Knöbl, 2009: 4ff.). It is then impossible to distinguish purely "empirical" entities from purely "theoretical" assumptions. General presuppositions, models, concepts, etc., blend with empirical observations, correlations, and methodological assumptions so that they mutually influence and co-constitute each other. That is why Alexander (1982: 2) talks about the "epistemological continuum" rather than a binary opposition. To say that theorizing is a general facility of every individual neither decreases the value of scientific theorizing, nor does it imply that there is no difference between scientific and non-scientific theorizing at all. Surely, social scientists have their institutionalized ways to ensure that their theories will be acclaimed by the scientific community as reliable and valid. Nevertheless, the scientific rigor is not what renders the scientific finding more "realistic" or truthful. There is a crucial ingredient without which any theorizing would merely be patching old ideas together. This ingredient is (sociological) *imagination*.

Since C. Wright Mills (1959) wrote his seminal piece, sociologists praised sociological imagination as almost a miraculous power. According to Sztompka (2004: 255ff.), sociological imagination is a "complex skill or ability" allowing its owner, among other things, to "understand deep, hidden, structural, and cultural resources and constraints that influence social life . . . perceive social life in its 'social becoming'" and "recognize the tremendous variety and diversity of the forms in which social life may appear." Sztompka (Ibid.: 256) recognizes "the training of the sociological imagination . . . to be absolutely crucial for the education of sociologists". There is a very close relationship between theory and sociological imagination, which lies in "using theory" as a "concrete experi-

2. This has always been a crucial endeavor of literature, too. In its early stages, sociology competed with literature in being the leading voice for modern society (cf. Lepenies, 1988).

ence" (Ibid.: 257). That is why Mills (1959: 224) talks about sociological imagination as a "craft"—a practical knowledge sociologists learn by executing it. The "craft of theorizing" (Swedberg, 2014: 16), as a craft of creating and using theories, is not something we can achieve through following sociological rigor, but something we need to absorb through our experiencing the social world.

In the social sciences, theory-making is often reduced to following formalized steps of scientific procedure, which is, nevertheless, only a (less interesting) part of the story. The other part is connected to tacit knowledge, intuition, and implicit proficiency (Knorr Cetina, 2014: 33). This side of theorizing relies much more on unintentional and unconscious activities, as we often do not know "what we may be doing when we don't follow procedures and yet come up with theoretical knowledge" (Ibid.: 30). These processes are not navigated by a method but by the researcher's intuition and feelings. Karin Knorr Cetina (Ibid.: 55ff.) suggests that theorizing requires "full concentration" as well as "pleasurable feelings and emotional rewards", which are brought together in a flow of research activity. Emotions are fundamental for theorizing, as they not only provide motivation for the research, but they navigate us through "moment-to-moment processing and decision making" (Ibid.: 58). Emotions are our very compass, which leads us through the immensely broad sea of possible research choices.

According to Richard Swedberg (2014: 12), the unconscious part of theorizing stems from an "object of perception" with "great associational potency", which arouses in the perceiver a "tendency to call up ideas" (Peirce, 1992: 182). Charles S. Peirce illustrates this in his observation of an impressionist painting. At first, the painting "has a very disagreeable look and seems very meaningless", but after he immerses himself into it, Peirce (1992: 182) finds himself "sniffing the salt-air and holding up [his] cheek to the sea breeze". The act of contemplating upon the painting brings up new, unexpected associations, which widen the horizon of its creative interpretation, or, in other words, of *creating a theory* about the painting. Etymologically speaking, Swedberg (2014: 12) claims that "theorizing according to the Greeks means that you concentrate on a phenomenon and stay with it, in this way trying to understand it". In his famous article, Robert Nisbet (1962: 69) reminds us that the word *theory*, in its original sense, stands for *contemplation* and is closely allied with *imagination*, that is, "internalising the outer world to an image" through the "detachment" of the author. Imagination allows for a conceptual understanding of the world "in the process of semantic innovation", which occurs through a perpetual oscillation "between distance and proximity, between remoteness and nearness" (Ricoeur, 1978: 148f.). Theorizing is an ability to delineate "[b]ackground, detail, and characterization" of a particular social phenomenon and transform it "into something that is iconic in its grasp of an entire social order" (Nisbet, 1962: 72). According to Nisbet (1962: 71), the ability to understand the social world through imagination is more of an art than a procedure because it relies heavily on an "intuition" and "imaginative grasp", which are "only partly conscious".

Metaphors and Aesthetic Devices: Writing Social Experience "Down and Up"

Classical sociologists like Durkheim and Simmel could arrive at their influential theories only through "ways more akin to those of the artist than those of the data processor, the logician, or the technologist" (Nisbet, 1962: 72). That is also why we find it hard or even impossible to condense, generalize, and systematize the writings of sociological classics. What we read in their texts is the way they were theorizing (i.e., contemplating, thinking through) social phenomena to understand it. This is especially apparent in Simmel's work. The texts of famous sociological "impressionist" (Lepenies, 1988: 240) are so compelling and well-acclaimed as they rely heavily on the aesthetic dimension of the text rather than an effort to rigid systematization (cf. Adorno, 1991). However, the imaginative and aesthetic dimensions are necessarily present in other sociological works as well, be it great sociological founders or contemporary thinkers. The most telling example is the sociological use of metaphors. Charles Turner (2010: 2f.) reminds us of well-known metaphors such as Weber's "shell as hard as steel",[3] Marx's "womb of the old society", Isaac Newton's "on the shoulders of giants" thoroughly inspected by Merton (1993), or master metaphors "in which society 'itself' is imagined 'as' something: organism, cybernetic or autopoietic system, drama, game, text". Turner refers to Geertz's (1983: 22) definition of metaphor as "a way of talking that works well in one field of inquiry and that is employed in an attempt to make sense of something in another field of inquiry". For sociology, the metaphors of organism and system, which have been taken from biology, serve to comprehend society despite its general elusiveness (Turner, 2010: 3).

Metaphors in sociology do not make us understand something *better*, but they are necessary to understand something *at all*. Unlike natural sciences, which according to Turner (2010: 7) are governed by the logic of argumentation and discovery, social science cannot do without "the logic of invention" based on metaphors. The "original basic intuitions", which the social scientist has about the social world, must drive the "original impulse" towards the creation of a social theory (Ibid.: 7). Metaphor, then, is not a "mere decoration"—a "witty aside or pregnant summary"—but it is a crucial constituent of the whole theory; the metaphor might even organize an "entire body of inquiry" on the level of discourse, such as Erving Goffman's metaphor of "drama" (Ibid.: 23). In this sense, Paul Ricoeur (1976: 67) suggests, the language of social science has in common with *poetic language* that "it only reaches reality through a detour that serves to deny our ordinary vision and the language we normally use to describe it" (cf. Brady, 2004: 629). When authors like Goffman write about social life metaphorically (e.g., society as a theater), they use a "heuristic fiction" to reach a "reality more real than appearances" (Ricoeur, 1976: 67). In other words, similar to literary authors, social scientists invent new metaphors to address phenomena that are real yet hitherto inaccessible.

Importantly, this applies not only to metaphors but to aesthetic devices of the text in general. The structure of sentences, the order of words, the concrete use of word forms

3. Originally translated from German by Parsons as "iron cage". However, this translation changes the meaning of Weber's original term "stahlhartes Gehäuse".

(passive and active verbs, prepositions, adverbs, etc.), and the rhythm and pace of the text make it possible that the author communicates an experience of social phenomena to the reader. A good example of such communication is ethnographic research. According to Paul Atkinson (1990: 60f.), the ethnographers' account of social phenomena results from two steps: in the first step, the ethnographers "write down" their experience of the field and in the second step, they "write up" the notes into an interpretation. It might seem that the first phase is somehow closer to the unreflected sense of experienced reality, while the second phase is more of a construction. However, both phases "involve the creation of textual materials" and both "are equally matters of textual construction" (Ibid.: 60). There is no purely descriptive writing. By taking a note, the ethnographers already filter their experience through presuppositions, selection criteria, a particular style of textual construction, etc. An impression of reality and authenticity, which is often valued in ethnographic texts, results from skillful construction rather than a rigidly realistic description. What we might think of as a mere aesthetic garnish (the style) decorating a more fundamental content (the "real" description), as a matter of fact, "contains within it the *analytic* message of the sociology itself" (Ibid.: 62).

Aesthetic Experience of Reading the Social

> "What [cock fight] does is what . . . *Lear* and *Crime and Punishment* do; it catches up these themes—death, masculinity, rage, pride, loss, beneficence, chance-and, ordering them into an encompassing structure, presents them in such a way as to throw into relief a particular view of their essential nature." (Geertz, 1973: 443)

A prominent example of an ethnographic account that greatly relies on its aesthetic form is the famous work by Clifford Geertz (1973), "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight" (hereafter *Deep Play* in italics). Although an iconic anthropological text, Geertz's piece served as a platform on which literary critics in the 1980s developed the research program entitled the *New Historicism*. In a detailed analysis of Geertz's text, the literary historian Stephen Greenblatt (1997: 20) shows that it is not the anthropologist's method that makes his text so powerful but rather "the lived life that he managed so well to narrate, describe, and clarify". The pleasing aesthetic experience of a reader who engages Geertz's work has a considerable impact on what Greenblatt calls a "reality-effect" (Ibid.) and is the reason why we read *Deep Play* as truthful. The notion of the "reality-effect" has important implications for literary studies: "[Geertz's] thick descriptions of cultural texts strengthened the insistence that the things that draw us to literature are often found in the nonliterary, that *the concept of literariness is deeply unstable*, that the boundaries between different types of narratives are subject to interrogation and revision" (Greenblatt, 1997: 21; emphasis mine).

According to Melissa Freeman (2014: 829), a key to the interpretation of *Deep Play* is an "aesthetic experience", which takes place when the ethnographer enters a *dialogue*

with the field. The aesthetic style of the ethnographic text is, to a considerable degree, driven by the ethnographer's *interpretive engagement* with the field. "An image, fiction, a model, a metaphor, the cockfight is a means of expression; its function is neither to assuage social passions nor to heighten them . . . but, in a medium of feathers, blood, crowds, and money, to display them" (Geertz, 1973: 444). What Geertz once experienced and conserved by his thick description can be revived and experienced in a new way in a dialogue with his text. It is only thanks to the "aesthetic manifestation" of his essay that we can get closer to the meaning, which was once part of the unique circumstances and now is inaccessible (Freeman, 2014: 832). The engagement of the reader, the author, and the topic triggers the aesthetic experience, which, consequently, facilitates the *interpretive dialogue of understanding*.

In *Deep Play*, the use of aesthetic devices for conveying the social scientific account is exceptionally visible, but we can find the same in other ethnographic texts, too. Ivan Brady (2004: 629f.) likens ethnography to poetry, as they both "metaphoriz[e] experience" in "a self-revealing, self-constructing form of discovery". This metaphorization of experience occurs as the ethnographers, just like poets, are immersed in their sensual perception of the social surrounding. When put into a text, the ethnographic account, just like the lyrical, relies on the ethnographers'/the poets' ability to process their experience imaginatively so that the reader can touch, smell, hear, taste, and see the scene just like the author did.

The key term here is *emotional engagement* (Abbott, 2007). The author of the text, be it a poet or an ethnographer, is emotionally engaged with the concerned social phenomena. Then, to communicate the experience to the reader, the author writes for the reader to be emotionally engaged with the text. The emotional engagement is important because it elicits the *indexical here and now* of the communicated experience. Thanks to the author's skillful use of metaphors and other aesthetic devices, the reader, who *makes an effort to read*, gets immersed within the text. Losing distance from a "mere description" channels the *feeling of the researcher's here and now* to the reader. This is what Andrew Abbott (2007: 94) calls an "indexical emotion", an "intense engagement" of the author and the reader in the "indexical, located quality, the transitory and particular nature of [the text's] present here(s) and now(s)". The "indexical emotion" is a link that enables the reader to relate to the subjective experience and feeling of the author. At the end of the day, the indexical emotion is what evokes in the reader the feeling of truthfulness—a "reality-effect" (Greenblatt, 1997: 20)—a deeply subjective experience of knowing the world outside the text through reading the text.

Social Knowledge in Literary Fiction

Social Knowledge in Pride and Prejudice

> "Both the artist and the scientist are driven by the desire to understand, to interpret, and to communicate their understanding to the rest of the world." (Nisbet, 1962: 69)

I have shown that sociology embraces intuition, emotion, and aesthetics—the attributes usually connected to literariness and lyricism—to mediate social knowledge to the reader. Now, the argument with literature goes the other way around: I will show how literary texts, through their imaginative theorizing, can come at a kind of knowledge which is *equally, if not more*, valuable for sociologists as knowledge provided by sociological studies.

In a chapter called "Jane Austen: The Novel as Social Analysis", Becker (2007: 241) observes how in *Pride and Prejudice* "Austen has presented us with a well-constructed analysis of the marriage customs of a particular group of early-nineteenth-century English country gentry". The well-known novel follows a short period in the lives of the Bennet daughters, who are subject to the social conventions and expectations connected with women's role in society, family, and partnership of a specific social class and cultural milieu. Austen's realistic style makes it easy for the reader to identify with the storyline, even though there is no clear "evidence" that the stories happened. The "complex web of connected observations" (Ibid.: 242) is conveyed in such a way which, on the one hand, gives the readers an impression of situations well-known from their lives, while, on the other hand, transcends these particular situations and experiences into something more general with a quality of "the larger truth" (Ibid.: 247).

To make his point that "novels can have, in addition to their qualities as literary works, qualities as social analyses", Becker (Ibid.: 250) makes a few observations. First, the realistic account of social life conveyed by *Pride and Prejudice* creates the sense of a truthful social analysis not because of its method or reliable source of data but because of its ability to "make sense" (Ibid.: 248) via its fictional writing. The sense of authentic reality—the "verisimilitude" (Ibid.)—is ensured by using fictitious entities and textual devices in combination with a plenitude of realistic details and observations. Second, Austen does not present the analytical findings in the form of "neatly labeled conclusions to which she then attaches probative evidence" (Ibid.: 249). Rather, "the reader performs an analysis" as he or she "absorbs [the presented] details and thinks about them, about how they are connected" (Ibid.). The analysis is not reducible to content or information. The social knowledge that we obtain through the novel does not have easily "paraphraseable" (Ward, 1986: 335) meaning. "As we read the stories of the various couple's finally getting together," says Becker (2007: 245), "we see how contingent the process is, how many

things can go wrong, how many misunderstandings can prevent a union, how many disapproving relatives can intervene".

The social knowledge, which we get through the reading, is *indexical* in the sense of Abbott (2007) as outlined above. But it is also *general and abstract*, as it tells us about the respective social system and principles of its reproduction. Both the indexical and the general unfolds within the reading process in the dynamic interaction between the reader and the novel. The social knowledge is accessible through the reading of the novel. It develops with every new sentence we read, as we "look to the clues Austen gives [us]" (Becker, 2007: 249). We "assess likelihoods, develop expectations that may or not be fulfilled" (Ibid.)—we are challenged and puzzled. Simply put, social knowledge emerges in an active dialog between *Pride and Prejudice* and its reader.

Social Knowledge in Literary Fiction: Problem of Explanation

In what way can we claim that literature provides social knowledge? Following the paradigm of meaning-centered interpretive sociology, I am interested in a kind of social knowledge that Reed (2011: 10) defines as "interpretive social knowledge". Theorizing, which can generate social knowledge, is a perpetual intersecting of two meaning-systems—the *theory* and the *evidence*. This intersecting occurs according to the principle of "epistemological continuum" as introduced by Alexander (1982) (see above). The entities which belong to the meaning-system of evidence are never "verifiable by literal observation but must be inferred and understood in a dialogue about what is happening or has happened"—they are always already constructions of some sort (Reed, 2011: 16).

Here, Reed (2011: 130) comes with an elegant solution to the interpretation/explanation dilemma,[4] stating that the two are not mutually exclusive.[5] Rather than looking for a causal effect between forces, the investigator *interprets the meaningful surroundings* of a particular inquired social fact. Then, the investigator comes to an explanation of the social fact as an understanding of that *unique constellation of meanings*, which allowed for that social fact to happen. The contextually-rich interpretation of a case—as in the sense of Geertzian thick description—provides an explanation that makes sense within the interpretive framework of that case.

Such a definition of social knowledge has an important implication for literary fiction. Through her imaginative theorizing, Jane Austen describes "the arrangements of signification and representation, the layers of social meaning, that shape human experience" in order to reconstruct "the meaningful context of social action" (Reed, 2011: 10). The thick description allows Austen to portray the marriage customs of a social group as *forming factors*,[6] through which she can explain repertoires of people's actions. When reading

4. Interpretation in the sense of hermeneutic understanding, explanation as searching for causality (further see Reed, 2011: 123–162).

5. Interpretation is often unjustly claimed as not being able to provide social knowledge (Reed, 2011: 92).

6. Originally, Reed (2011: 143) talks about "forming causes". However, I agree with Dominik Bartmański's and Werner Binder's (2015: 508) suggestion to replace Reed's notion of "cause" with a "more nuanced repertoire" of language.

Pride and Prejudice, the reader approaches the thickly described social reality as an interpretation of characters, events, and actions within a specific spatio-temporal setting.[7] This usually occurs implicitly (supposing that the reader is not a literary scientist) in the course of the reading experience as the pace and the rhythm of the text lead the reader through paragraphs, sentences, and word combinations. The explanatory dimension of social knowledge emerges continuously as the reader encounters the text.

Literature as Existential Understanding

> "How, at last, has someone solidified what has always escaped—and made it too into this beautiful and perfectly enduring substance?"
> Virginia Woolf on behalf of Proust's iconic saga (Zhang, 2014: 66).

Numerous social scientists suggested that the ability to theorize the social is common both to sociologists as well as artists and literary authors (e.g., Alworth, 2015; Erasga, 2010; Harrington 2004; Kurakin, 2010; Kuzmics, 2015; Nisbet, 1962; Swedberg, 2014). Overall, we can distinguish such definitions into two main categories: first, literature is a way to grasp the emotional, subjective, and tacit aspects of social experience, which are prone to slip unnoticed by sociological analysis; second, literature is a way to access a deeper understanding of social phenomena, which is representative of the collective life in a broader socio-historical milieu. The former channels the *existential understanding* of social experience, while the latter anchors this experience in more general cultural patterns of social life—i.e., what we usually understand by the term *Zeitgeist*.[8]

As for the existential understanding, cultural sociologist Thumala Olave (2018) conducted her project "towards cultural sociology of reading" with an interpretive analysis of women's reading experience in the UK. She focused on "the subjective and existential meanings of the experience of reading" (Ibid.: 419), which allowed her to see how "the aesthetic and the cognitive work together" (Ibid.: 429). As the readers get immersed into the reading process navigated by the aesthetic devices, they experience enchantment and pleasure of reading. Simultaneously, these alternate with moments of "recognition", which invite the readers to see their inner self and their position in the world with a new perspective (Ibid.). The understanding that comes into play is different from a cognitively acquired knowledge, as it is triggered in the flow of reading experience and to a great extent anchored in the readers' "emotional reflexivity".

However, in contrast to social knowledge, Thumala Olave's perspective is too focused on the "self-knowledge" of the reader, such as "self-understanding," "ethical reflection and social bonds," and "self-care" (Ibid.: 429–432). However, there is much more to the literary fiction than a mere "reinventing myself" (Macé, 2013: 215) agenda. Literature mediates existential knowledge, which is *inherently social and intersubjective*. The emotion

7. This setting can be highly "fictitious" or unspecified, yet it always relates to "real" concepts in the authors' and the readers' minds.

8. For a more systematic elaboration on *Zeitgeist* as a sociological concept, see Krause (2019).

bound to the reading process is a part of a "structure of feeling" (Williams, 1960: 42) referring to a broader socio-historical background. In this sense, Rita Felski (2008: 91f.) talks about "deep intersubjectivity".[9] *Deep intersubjectivity* connects the reader's "self-understanding" facilitated by emotions in the reading process with the intersubjective aspect of the emotional experience. "The technique of deep intersubjectivity," claims Felski (2008: 92), let us see "particular societies 'from the inside'; we come to know something of what it feels like to be inside a particular habitus, to experience a world as self-evident, to bathe in the waters of a way of life".

Reading serves not only for "literary experience [to become] a resource for stylizing the self" (Macé, 2013: 222) and a tool for "introspection" (Zhang, 2014: 58), but it is a way of learning about the experience of people living in a given time and place, who are *different* from us. Austin Harrington (2002b: 62) points out that writers "are important for sociology because their stories and depictions tell us about aspects of social life . . . in the context of individual life experiences". Smith (2004: 106) demonstrates this claim reading Marcel Proust (2002), whom he proposes "as a phenomenological corrective" for Bourdieu, who has been criticized many times for "stripping away all the existential depth" (Lahire, 2015: 405) in literary works he studied. According to Smith (2004: 108ff.), we can "detect in Proust's work . . . the prototype for Bourdieu's inquiry," which Proust develops to "a systematic phenomenology of human action and mental life as well as an implicit cosmology of class". Through the aesthetic devices of irony and cynicism, Proust depicts social life as a power struggle of social actors motivated to maintain and reproduce their wealth and social status (social and economic capital in Bourdieusian vocabulary). However, the existential depth with which Proust endows his fictional characters is different from Bourdieu's account of the actors' subjectivity. Bourdieu has been criticized for seeing the existential reality of people occupying various positions in the field of power struggles as just actors' subjective idea of their positions and dispositions underlaid by objective structures (e.g., Lahire, 2015; cf. Smith, 2004: 105f.). Proust's model of stratification does more than giving actors an illusion of agency. "Bourdieuvian themes" of class distinction exhibited through "differing uses of the body, language and diversified systems of taste" in *Remembrance of Things Past*[10] are intertwined with "a more thoughtful theorization of contingency, change and identity"; while in Bourdieu's theory, the existential is subsumed to the structuring logic of habitus, Proust offers "a more balanced picture of life, with oscillations between habituated action and reflexive self-awareness" (Smith, 2004: 109f.).

The existential understanding mediated by literary fiction is closely related to sensitivity and empathy through which the author can document the "fleeting experiences" (Harrington, 2002a: 57) of social reality and communicate them through delicate work with language. To mediate such an understanding is a matter of *theorizing as a craft* as introduced above—a skill to be learned by practicing it. The sensitivity in writing fiction requires that the author be capable of distinguishing more stable patterns of human behavior from its transient manifestations. That is why social scientists, but also readers

9. A term originally coined by Butte (2004).

10. I follow the first English translation of the saga's title used by Smith.

in general, often say that writers "sensitize us to certain aspects" of social life "that would otherwise remain in the dark" (Petersen, Jacobsen, 2012: 115). Through skillful writing, the authors can convey their sensitivity towards a topic to the reader engaged in the reading process.

David J. Alworth (2014) reminds us how Goffman (1962) used Herman Melville's novel *White-Jacket* (1956) in his seminal piece *Asylums*. Goffman refers to Melville's novel in several ways: as an example of his total institutions; as a "kind of evidence" and "repository of sociological data"; and as "means of apprehending sociality" through micro-situational textures of social experience (Alworth, 2014: 237). However, Goffman was mainly impressed *by the aesthetic qualities* of Melville's novel and how they portrayed social interaction in a condensed, yet very subtle way. Goffman, who "was drawn to the novelist as an intellectual ally: a fellow student of the interaction order", recognized Melville as "unusually sensitive to sociality and social typologies" (Alworth, 2014: 246–255). This sensitivity is, first of all, expressed in Melville's use of aesthetic textual devices. And only through these aesthetic devices was Goffman able to adopt Melville's sensitivity "to construct [his own] conceptual vocabulary" (Ibid.: 241). That is, the social knowledge that Goffman acquired through Melville's text was to a great extent based *on the way Melville wrote*. "[T]he ebullient voice of the narrator; the striking imagery of the ship; the embellished descriptions of character; the thematic structure", says Alworth, deploy *White-Jacket* "toward the production of sociological knowledge" (Ibid.: 235).[11]

Literature as Representation of Zeitgeist

The second category of social knowledge provided by literary fiction is the literature as a representation of broader social phenomena—an expression of *Zeitgeist*. This category is well exemplified in *The Man Without Qualities* by Robert Musil (Harrington, 2002a, 2002b) and sociological interpretation of Milan Kundera's *Immortality* (Atkinson, Silverman, 1997), but we can find it also in Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*. In what sense can a novel represent social life as a general phenomenon?

Harrington (2002b: 67) states that the "world" of *The Man Without Qualities* (Musil, 1953) can be read "as a fictional representation of the many aspects of complexity and interconnectedness, of 'forms of sociality' and 'stylization of life', of reification, and aestheticism that Simmel describes in *The Philosophy of Money*; as well as from Peter Berger's (1970) analysis of perspectivism and 'multiple realities' in Musil through the lens of Schützian phenomenological sociology". At the same time, Harrington (2002a: 57) argues that he chose the novel for his analysis because it "articulates a whole range of political changes and cultural discourses emerging from the fault-lines of central Europe and the crumbling Austro-Hungarian empire around the time of the First World War". As we can see, the enumeration of "qualities" of *The Man Without Qualities* is rather long. There is a reference to a particular time frame and place which implies large societal

11. I conceive Alworth's notion of "sociological knowledge" as interchangeable with the term "social knowledge" as used by Reed, which I believe is more suitable since it does not imply that such knowledge is obtained exclusively through the methods of sociological inquiry.

changes on many levels. There is also a list of more abstract attributes of the "world", which the novel "represents", such as "complexity", "reification", and "stylization". Harrington uses these abstract terms to point out that Musil does not merely describe the 1910s Europe inhabited by his fictional characters, but he goes way beyond historical facts. Musil combines historical facts with his intuitive understanding of the world—his *theories* in terms of Reed (2011). Harrington admires Musil's ability to "captur[e] Zeitgeist," to "captur[e] the sense of immense space-time contraction in modern social life" (Harrington, 2002a: 57), and "to explore the psyche of his age" (Harrington, 2002b: 66). All of these terms—"Zeitgeist," "space-time contraction," and "psyche of an age"—refer to Musil's ability to mediate a deeper understanding (in the sense of forming meanings) of the 1910s Austro-Hungarian Empire's social milieu. Through his intuitive theorizing, Musil employs "theoretical signifiers" upon historical "facts" and events in order to produce heavily condensed claims about these historical facts and events. The evidential signifiers (or, as Reed says, "minimal interpretations") are re-signified into maximal interpretations, which mediate "deeper understanding" (Reed, 2011: 23). We can also allude back to Geertz's thick description to stress the immense "thickness" of Musil's text: it is a skillful description of a specific, micro-situational behavior of fictional characters that makes it possible to mediate a deeper understanding of whole societies.

In Kundera's *Immortality* (1991), the social representativity mediated by the novel is a bit different. Rather than grasping society in its complexity and multiplicity, Kundera (1991: 127) invents his own theoretical concept, "the imagology", to analyze a particular social phenomenon he considers symptomatic for the whole of Western society. Paul Atkinson and David Silverman (1997: 306) then examine Kundera's "discussion of how the subject is constructed in literary biography and mass media imagology" and compare it with their own conception of "the interview society and an analysis of styles of the self". Similar to Musil, Kundera depicts his characters in micro-situations such as visiting a swimming pool or having dinner in a restaurant. Yet, while Musil writes about a specific milieu, Kundera's text brings together anecdotes of characters living in different times and places.[12] The novel's structure is navigated by a single concept, which is elaborated upon from diverse situational perspectives. In this sense, the novel resembles an anthropological study: it focuses on an abstract conception of a social phenomenon common for a particular society (the Western consumerist society in this case), which is then illustrated by diverse situational "vignettes". These vignettes, nevertheless, are not of a merely illustrative character, but they are crucial for understanding the phenomenon. Kundera's imagology is "conceptualized" as a whole bundle of anecdotes, images, impressions, metaphorical depictions of experience, dramatized scenes, etc. We cannot merely paraphrase (Ward, 1986: 335), digest, or translate Kundera's novel as a coherent set of definitions based on sociological discourse. *Immortality*'s ability to represent a general social phenomenon is established by a specific formal arrangement of every single paragraph, sentence, and word, and their aesthetic effect upon the reader.

12. Such as Wolfgang Goethe and Ernest Hemingway.

Existential Understanding and Zeitgeist Coming Together

Inspired, along with other texts, by Goffman's adaptation of Melville, Alworth (2015: 2; emphasis mine) asks "*How* does literary fiction *theorize* social experience?" When answering this question, Alworth (2015: 2–4) suggests that sociologists should eschew the "symptomatic reading" based on "hermeneutics of suspicion" and instead seek to apprehend "the way that literary texts assemble an impression of the social form". It is in the reading where the specificity and generality of perspectives—the experiential evidence and abstract theoretical interpretation in the sense of Reed—are entangled into a single sensation of social form. It is *in* the reading, not *before* or *after* the reading, where social knowledge in literature comes into existence. Any ideologies involved cannot be addressed outside of the reading itself. Alworth (2015: 11) suggests "to discover the sociology *in* literature", because sociology is "to be found in the way that literature itself grounds social experience, the way that it imagines sociality in situ".

To tackle the problem of "social form" mediated by literature, Alworth (2015: 10) brings to light György Lukács' (1970/1936: 115) treatment of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, where, according to Lukács, "the minute description of setting is absolutely essential to . . . the comprehensive exposition of the social milieu". Here, the question of social form—"how to represent society and its constituents"—is approximated with the question of realistic prose favored by Lukács of "how to represent the palpable world" (Alworth, 2015: 10). The comprehensive account of social phenomena is delivered through the realistic and detailed description of Emma Bovary's country house and her possessions, furniture, garden, clothing, etc., carefully orchestrated into a condensed impression mediated to the reader. Just like in Geertz's *Deep Play*, it is a thick description of the myriad of tiny details that altogether bring about a meaningful interpretation of broader social life. This aesthetically pleasing thick description, a blend of facts and theoretical constructs cemented together by textual devices, is Flaubert's way of *theorizing* the social world in his novel.

This way of the coming together of the abstract and the detailed is well visible in the realistic genre. *Madame Bovary* and *Pride and Prejudice* reach the effect of "vraisemblance" (Atkinson, 1990: 39) upon the reader via depicting realistic sceneries and events, so "there is the extent to which the text masks its own textual conventions, appearing to conform to a 'reality'". Here it is instructive to recall a well-known critique of Lukács' conception of representativity (Harrington, 2004: 124–129; Laurenson, Swingewood, 1972: 53–56). Lukács considered writers such as Proust and Musil as incapable of depicting society "as a whole" because he found modernistic writing to portray "man as fragmented and partial"—thus replacing realistic "totality" by modernistic "subjectivity" (Ibid.: 55f.). However, Lukács did not see that by depicting ambivalence and elusiveness of human existence, authors like Musil strived to grasp the general qualities of modern societies. As Peter Berger (1970: 213) suggests, "[w]hat Musil attempted in his gigantic work was nothing less than a solution of the problem of reality from the perspective of modern consciousness". By inventing new formal means that most adequately grasp and mediate social life in a given time and place, the literary texts keep up with changing reality.

Perhaps the most famous example of such an account in modern literature is James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1992/1922). This voluminous piece tells a story of a single character, Leopold Bloom, pacing through his ordinary day in the city of Dublin. Although the spatio-temporal framework is very limited—a single day in a single city—the novel's representativity goes way beyond that. Franco Moretti (1996) calls this phenomenon "modern epic". While the epic is traditionally connected with folk narratives and oral cultures, the *modern epic* shifts some of these pre-modern qualities into modern literature. The mythical narratives such as the Homeric epics of ancient Greece or epic poems of the Middle Ages contained in itself a social experience fundamental for the whole collectivity—the codification of a cosmological order. The modern literature, on the other hand, "by describing subjective phenomena" poses a question "about the unsharability of experience during a period of social fracture and epistemological uncertainty" (Zhang, 2014: 53). Even though modern literature is only capable of fragmented and subjectivized accounts of the social world, it can nevertheless communicate "cosmic, infinite and mythical" through "the minutiae of everyday life and the finite fleeting experiences of an insignificant individual" (Harrington, 2002a: 57).

Modern literature takes account of subjective feelings and sensations through perpetual tension. The effort to describe the "feeling of being unable to describe what one is feeling" (Zhang, 2014: 55) fuels the imaginative powers of literary authors and encourages them to invent new means of communication: new metaphors, new textual forms, and new sounds and rhythms. The artistic practice, that is, the way *Ulysses* is written, is an indivisible part of Joyce's theorizing the sociality. Joyce's "recreation" of social life "is so complex, alternately baffling and fascinating to so many readers, precisely because of how Joyce constructs setting as a *relation* between the metropolis and mental life, between the commotion of midmorning Dublin and Bloom's processes of cogitation" (Alworth, 2015: 17; emphasis original). *Ulysses*, just like *Man Without Qualities* and *Remembrance of Things Past* can "communicate a specific feature of our experience of transience and temporality in the modern world: the sense in which the merely apparent, transitory and local can at the same time encapsulate the collective and universal" (Harrington, 2002a: 58). We can see how the two types of social knowledge—existential understanding and representation of social phenomena—are intertwined and support each other. The texture of social life, aesthetic, and non-discursive aspects of social experience facilitate the understanding of the "big picture" of whole societies.

Conclusion: What Needs to be Done Next

> "Like theories, fictional texts refer as systems, and just as in physics it is often impossible to set apart 'genuinely' referential elements from the mathematical apparatus, in fiction one does not always need to keep track of pretended and genuine statements, since global relevance is apparent in spite of such distinctions." (Pavel, 1986: 25)

Dmitry Kurakin (2010: 230) talks about literary fiction as a "meaningful life laboratory, which makes it possible to observe purified situations of strong emotional involvement within concrete meaningful structures in order to disclose those mechanisms". The laboratory metaphor is useful in our thinking of literature as an artificial space occupied by creatures and entities invented by the author. Just like in a real laboratory, there is a certain degree of constructedness involved, which nevertheless does not prevent the experimenter from claiming knowledge about the non-artificial world outside the laboratory. A worker in a laboratory creatively combines natural samples with all kinds of tools, measuring devices, artificial substances, etc., to bring about interesting new findings. Similarly, the literary author employs imagination to combine real-life experience with various formal means of textual communication, such as metaphors, descriptions, word pace and rhythm, etc., to reveal something new.

Kurakin (2010) illustrates this with a short story "Funes, the Memorious" by J. L. Borges (1962). The main character, Funes, has a memory that remembers everything about his "inner experiences as well as outer", so he remembers not only "every leaf of any tree ever seen, but every time he thought about it" (Kurakin, 2010: 228). By granting him this special feature, Borges shows how the life could look without the capacity to forget and without the ability to emotionally mark and hierarchize our memory. Borges sets an artificial arrangement of characters, things, and events to direct reader's attention toward an abstract conception of a phenomenon, which is inherent to every human.

As Ricoeur (1976) stresses, the ability to communicate findings about real things does not happen *despite* the fictional character of the text but *because of* it. The artificiality involved in making a fictional story is analogous to the artificiality in conducting sociological research. In this sense, metaphors, aesthetic devices, and fictional entities serve the same purpose as a theory in sociological research. Thanks to the theory, the scientist can isolate and focus attention on the phenomenon of interest. The literary writer does nothing else. The "purified situations" Kurakin (2010: 230) talks about are but artificially created situations in which the author concentrates on a particular issue and "magnifies" it. From the phenomenological point of view, the author "brackets out" unnecessary noise and pays full attention only to the things relevant for the project. That is when the author brings "evidential" and "theoretical" signifiers together in order to tell of abstract and general (deeper understanding) through concrete and particular (thickly described facts) (cf. Reed, 2011: 92ff.).

Should cultural sociology take literature seriously, it must abandon the false hierarchy between "real" and "fictional". A necessary epistemological step towards a *strong program in the sociology of literature* is to acknowledge that literature has an ability to come up with social knowledge by means of its own *autonomous* ways of communication. Sociological studies of literature have hitherto embraced two major attitudes towards the lyrical: either absolute ignorance (in favor of production and reception) or sacred reverence (making literature somewhat detached, strange, almost untouchable) (see Váňa, 2020b). However, this syndrome of lyrical exceptionalism can be overcome. We can start by recognizing how exactly the "aesthetic knowing" (Reed, Alexander, 2009: 31) through literature is different from—but also similar to—the more "rationalized" and "rigorous" knowing in social sciences. To stress that literature and sociology embrace a similar kind of imaginative theorizing is not to claim that literature and sociology are alike (cf. Nisbet, 1962: 73). However, if we want to access the abundance of social knowledge lingering within fictional texts, we cannot simply reduce literature to its social surrounding or translate it into sociological discourse. Cultural sociology has the potential to use the specificity of literary communication to its advantage—to access subtle and ambiguous but also highly condensed and abstract accounts of social life, which are often elusive to social scientific inquiry. The next task for developing a *strong program in the sociology of literature* is to find the theoretical-methodological key[13] to unlock the wealth of social knowledge mediated by literature's unique forms of expression.

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13. Part of this project was elaborated in Váňa (2020a).

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Художественная литература и социальное знание: на пути к «сильной программе» в социологии литературы

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Следуя «сильной программе» социологии культуры, я предлагаю сильную программу социологии литературы, которая рассматривает литературные произведения как культурные объекты, обладающие относительной автономией, и «независимые переменные». Чтобы обрисовать эпистемологические основы новой исследовательской программы, я сравниваю, как возникает социальное знание через социологический текст и текст художественной литературы. Основываясь на книге Айзека Рида «Интерпретация и социальное знание», я обсуждаю представление социальной реальности в интерпретативных исследованиях. Для обоснования литературной автономии, я обрисовываю некоторые аспекты, общие для социальной теории и художественной литературы. Меня в основном интересует, как социальная теория и художественная литература передают своим читателям социальные знания через эстетический опыт. Я выделяю две основные категории социального знания, опосредованного литературой: экзистенциальное понимание и *Zeitgeist* (дух времени). Обсуждая социологическую трактовку нескольких романов, я смотрю на то, как эти две категории переплетаются и, в сочетании друг с другом, создают красочное, чувствительное, но также надежное и глубокое социальное знание, которое объединяет эстетические, экзистенциальные и недискурсивные аспекты социального опыта вместе с «большой картиной» обществ целиком. Я утверждаю, что только преодолев предполагаемую в социологии неполноценность литературы она может полностью реализовать свой потенциал в понимании смыслов социальной жизни.

Ключевые слова: социология литературы, культурсоциология, социальное знание, социальная теория, теоретизирование, эстетический опыт, художественная литература

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A Liberal Order Beyond Earth? Civil Sphere, "The Culture" and the Future of Liberalism

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Starting with George Orwell's liberal problem of meaning, this article investigates liberalism as cultural structure and myth, drawing on the theory of civil sphere by Jeffrey C. Alexander and the science fiction novels of Ian M. Banks. Following Alexander, it is argued that liberal societies are built around a sacred core described by the cultural structures of the civil sphere, which are structures of meaning as well as feeling. Civil discourses and movements in liberal (and not so liberal) societies mobilize powerful symbols of the sacred and profane and are thus able to inspire an almost religious devotion. The article then continues to explore the meaning structure, cultural contradictions and possible future of the liberal order discussing Bank's Culture series. These novels are set in the borderlands of "the Culture", a galactic civilization and liberal utopia. It is precisely this utopian setting, which allows Banks to probe the internal dilemmas of liberalism, for example between pacifism and interventionism, while addressing issues of contemporary relevance, such as the liberal problem of meaning, the allure of authoritarianism or the social status of artificial intelligence. With their literary imagination, science fiction writers construct "a myth of the future" (Banks), which may often reflect the myths of their time, but which can also—as in the case of Banks—reflect on those myths, their implications and contradictions. Finally, the fictional possibilities of social order in science fiction can be a valuable source for our imagination as sociologists contemplating the very possibility of social order.

Keywords: cultural sociology, civil sphere, liberalism, authoritarianism, science fiction, "The Culture", Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ian M. Banks

Introduction

On March 2, 1940, the English (science-fiction) author George Orwell published a remarkable review of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. In this short piece for *The New English Weekly*, Orwell (1940) not only predicted that "the Russo-German Pact represents no more than an alteration of time-table" and that "Russia's turn will come when England is out of the picture", but also offered a Christological reading of Hitler as an iconic collective representation: exhibiting "the face of a man suffering under intolerable wrongs" reproducing "the expression of innumerable pictures of Christ crucified", Hitler stylizes himself as a martyr, victim, and "self-sacrificing hero who fights single-handed against impossible odds". Linking suffering to meaning, Orwell (1940) continues to develop a lucid reading of the contemporary crisis of liberalism:

> [Hitler] has grasped the falsity of the hedonistic attitude to life. Nearly all western thought since the last war, certainly all "progressive" thought, has assumed tacitly that human beings desire nothing beyond ease, security and avoidance of pain. In such a view of life there is no room, for instance, for patriotism and the military virtues. The Socialist who finds his children playing with soldiers is usually upset, but he is never able to think of a substitute for the tin soldiers; tin pacifists somehow won't do. Hitler . . . knows that human beings don't only want comfort, safety, short working-hours, hygiene, birth-control and, in general, common sense; they also, at least intermittently, want struggle and self-sacrifice, not to mention drums, flags and loyalty-parades. . . . Fascism and Nazism are psychologically far sounder than any hedonistic conception of life. The same is probably true of Stalin's militarised version of Socialism. All three of the great dictators have enhanced their power by imposing intolerable burdens on their peoples. Whereas Socialism, and even capitalism in a more grudging way, have said to people "I offer you a good time," Hitler has said to them "I offer you struggle, danger and death," and as a result a whole nation flings itself at his feet.

While opposing fascism to capitalism and socialism, Orwell suggests an affinity between "Stalin's militarised version of Socialism" and the former. Thus, the "culture war" described by Orwell is probably better conceived as a conflict between liberalism ("'progressive' thought") in its capitalist and socialist variants, and what can be called "conservative" thought, authoritarianism, or even totalitarianism—the latter being iconically portrayed in Orwell's famous science fiction novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). In his review, Orwell criticizes the flawed anthropology of liberalism which disregards the fact that humans are driven by meaning, and not by pleasure. Orwell concludes with a warning to his readers not to underestimate the "emotional appeal" of fascism, but also offers hope that after "a few years of slaughter and starvation", the star of liberalism might rise again—at least for some time.

I believe that Orwell's brief but lucid analysis not only speaks to his time, but may also be able to shed some light on the contemporary crisis of liberalism which has been challenged by authoritarian movements across the globe, not only in Russia and China, but also in Europe and the United States. In the 1990s, after the "revolutions" of 1989 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, many observers predicted a world-wide triumph of liberalism, and with it, the "end of history" (Fukuyama, 1992). Since the 2000s, however, we are witness to a rise of religious fundamentalisms and authoritarian nationalisms which oppose the liberal order as hedonistic and decadent, attacking its apparent lack of meaning. At the other end of the political spectrum, "progressives" have tried to discredit the universalist claims of liberalism, portraying the propagation of liberal values as an ill-disguised form of colonialism or even imperialism.

Nowadays, even self-proclaimed liberals do not shy away from calling liberalism "the light that failed" (Krastev, Holmes, 2020). This failure is not confined to Eastern Europe but also shows in the heartlands of Western liberal democracy. Arguably, liberalism did not live up to its core promise of providing the "Greatest happiness of the greatest number" (Orwell, 1940); now, the promise itself seems compromised. Liberal apologists of

"the last man" (Fukuyama, 1992) have succumbed to the Nietzschean critics of liberal decadence, of a hedonistic and carefree life. The unfounded belief in the "natural" superiority of the liberal order—often equated with free markets and democratic elections, the latter conceived in the image of the market in which atomized voters "buy the product" that serves their individual interests best—left liberal-democratic societies on shaky foundations. Even worse for a supposedly "progressive" movement, liberalism does not seem to offer a compelling vision of the future any longer.

The following article addresses the foundations of the liberal order and its possible future. My theoretical reference point will be Jeffrey C. Alexander's work on *The Civil Sphere* (2006). As a cultural sociologist, he is one of a few contemporary authors that recognizes the importance of (collective) emotions and (cultural) meanings for liberal-democratic societies, since not only fascism, but liberalism also has to rely on its "emotional appeal". According to Alexander, liberalism is not primarily about free markets and democratic elections, but about the way a "common good" is culturally constructed in public discourses and further implemented by social institutions.[1] In order to thrive, a liberal society not only needs to define a collective interest or "common good" transcending the individual interest of its members, it also needs to create symbols and myths that facilitate a collective emotional attachment. Indeed, Alexander's sociological theory of liberalism can be described as a liberal myth, a utopian ideal whose closest empirical approximations are incomplete and contradictory at best, but an ideal worth fighting for, nevertheless.

The core argument of this article explores liberalism as a literary myth in the Culture series of the science-fiction writer Ian M. Banks. Set in the borderlands of the Culture, a galactic civilization living a liberal utopia bordering on anarchy, these novels address the liberal problem of meaning, the dilemmas of liberalism, as well as the allure of authoritarianism. Under the social and material conditions of the Culture as a post-scarcity society whose miraculous technologies have freed humans (and machines) from almost any conceivable external constraint, the external contradictions of the civil sphere have vanished (along with social divisions based on class, wealth, race, gender, and religion) while its internal contradictions have become more pronounced. With his Culture series, Banks created the myth of a liberal future that not only brings the possibilities, but also the contradictions of liberalism to the fore. The artistic imagination of science-fiction writers is a valuable source for us sociologists by not only illuminating the very possibility of social order, but also in expanding our own sociological imagination in regard to the countless possibilities of (fictive) social orders.

1. It should be noted that Alexander (2006) almost never uses the term "liberalism", preferring "democracy" and "civil society" instead. Nevertheless, the normativity implied in his concept of a "civil sphere" is decidedly liberal and not really compatible with "illiberal" democracies and "reactionary" civil society associations.

Jeffrey C. Alexander: The Civil Sphere and the Myth of Liberalism

Liberal thinkers have seldom addressed the liberal problem of meaning so vividly described by Orwell in his review.[2] Is there something that can hold a liberal society together, aside from hedonistic pleasure-seeking and the pursuit of individual interest? In this regard, Alexander's sociological approach to liberalism is rather exceptional, being informed by the "religious", collective, and cultural understanding of society of the late Émile Durkheim (1995/1912), who himself was an engaged liberal intellectual with socialist leanings (cf. 1969/1898). According to Durkheim, liberal societies are never cut off from the "sacred", which he viewed as the source of all powerful meanings and emotions, but in fact cultivate their own symbolism of the sacred, for example, regarding the sacredness of "the individual" (1969/1898: 21ff.), or "the principle of free discussion" (1995/1912: 215). Likewise, Alexander's cultural sociology (cf. 2003) provides an intellectual testimony to the power of the sacred in modern societies, which is also true for his theory of the "civil sphere" (2006), a sociological reflection on liberalism and democracy in which meanings, emotions, and symbols play a central role.

In contrast to other apologists of liberalism praising the virtues of the free market or functional differentiation in general, Alexander draws his inspiration mainly from civil struggles within Western democracies, (e.g., the civil rights movement) and outside of them (e.g., the "revolutions" of 1989), which led to the rise of "civil society" as a key concept in public as well as academic discourses. For Alexander (2006), it is precisely the existence of a civil society, or the autonomy of a "civil sphere" respectively, that is the hallmark of a liberal-democratic society. Civil society and its discourse embody the orientation towards a common good deemed indispensable for the proper functioning of a liberal order. Civil discourses and movements mobilize powerful symbols of the sacred (and profane) and weave modern myths about salvation (and damnation), thus inspiring devotion akin to religious movements. Civil actors often engage in righteous acts, making sacrifices and taking risks on behalf of others (Tognato et al., 2020). Far from being decadent, hedonistic and shallow, flourishing civil societies are rooted in deep cultural structures. The "civil sphere" at the center of any liberal-democratic society is foremost a "structure of feeling"—shaped by powerful cultural binaries and narratives which link actors, relations, and institutions to the sacred and its profane counterpart—with the function to promote solidarity among its members.[3]

Despite its mythical underpinnings and utopian aspirations, every civil sphere is a "real" instantiation and concrete manifestation of ideal liberal principles under specific historical circumstances, which inevitably leads to shortcomings and contradictions. In its day-to-day business, a civil sphere has to rely on specialized institutions, such as communicative institutions like the press and mass media on the one hand, and regulative

2. John Rawls (1999), for example, simply assumes that his version of utilitarianism is able to provide the basis for a liberal order which can be agreed upon between rational individuals (cf. Alexander, 2006: 13–15).

3. Here, the theory of the civil sphere is clearly indebted to Parsons and his conception of "societal community", a societal sub-system that facilitates the integration of society via the inclusion of its members as citizens.

institutions like political offices, elections, and the law on the other hand. Often, these institutions operate under non-civil pressures (e.g., to make profit or secure power), which may threaten the autonomy of the civil sphere. Furthermore, there is an inevitable clash between the civil sphere and other spheres (such as the market, race, or religion), which can lead to civil intrusions and backlash movements (Alexander, 2019). While some contradictions arise due to external constraints, some seem to derive from the internal logic of civil discourses themselves because their universal aspirations are always bound to particular communities, and in promoting inclusiveness, they unavoidably produce exclusion.

Alexander's theory of the civil sphere has to be viewed as part of his broader cultural sociology with the self-proclaimed task "to bring the unconscious cultural structures that regulate society into the light of the mind" in order "to reveal to men and women the myths that think them so that they can make new myths in turn" (2003: 3f.). In some sense, Alexander is not just an analyst of cultural structures shaping contemporary political discourses but he himself became the creator of a cultural sociological myth of liberalism whose aim is to empower liberal activists world-wide. It is not only sociological theory, but also literature that can become part of the mythical structure of society, which accounts for Alexander's recurring interest in literature in *The Civil Sphere* (2006), not primarily as a mirror of society, but as a cultural force challenging prevailing myths and creating new ones. According to the author Banks, science fiction can be described as an attempt "to construct a myth of the future" (Branscobe, Banks, 2007). Nevertheless, science fiction as a genre, with the possible exception of dystopian works like Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, is often dismissed as adolescent wish-fulfillment and not regarded as literature in the proper sense. Furthermore, much of science fiction, once it was no longer just about adventure stories in space, has been overly focused on technology and the "hard sciences", which unconsciously tended to reproduce the "myths" and ideological presuppositions of their time. In contrast, with his Culture series, Banks created an artificial myth that allows us to reflect on the myths of contemporary society, exploring their implications and contradictions, and may also help us to shape its future.

Iain M. Banks: The Culture as Myth of a Liberal Future

Iain Menzies Banks was a Scottish novelist (1954–2013) who wrote mainstream fiction under the name of Iain Banks, and science fiction as Iain M. Banks. Already in the 1970s, he started to work on three science fiction novels, two of which were later published as part of his Culture series, but he made his debut with *Wasp Factory* (1984) and other mainstream fiction novels. It was only in 1987, after he had established his reputation as a "serious" writer, that he was able to publish his first science fiction novel *Consider Phlebas*, the first of nine Culture novels (plus one novella and a short story). As a novelist, Banks not only won critical acclaim—he was listed by *The Times* in 2008 as one of the "50 greatest British writers since 1945" (The Times, 2008)—but also gained considerable scholarly attention (e.g., Colebrook, Cox, 2013; Kincaid, 2018). In the following, I will

limit my discussion of liberalism in Banks' work to his Culture series, although many of its themes and topics appear in his mainstream novels as well, and vice versa.

If there is something that literary critics and scholars can agree upon, it is the fact that Banks' writing is deeply political, his Culture novels in particular. Banks' political views might be more influential than many people think,[4] but they do not fit easily into established categories, and the same can be said of the politics of the Culture. Banks' science fiction utopia has been rightly called liberal, communist, and anarchist, but also wrongly described as "monolithic totalitarianism".[5] While such characterizations often reflect the political bias of the reader, I believe that the Culture has to be understood in its own terms—or at least in those of Banks.

Critics seem to have a strong inclination to read fantasy novels such as Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* or science fiction novels like the Culture series as historical and political allegories. Orwell's *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* have both been read allegorically, with diverging plausibility.[6] Similarly, many critics and scholars have read Banks' Culture novels—at least in part—as historical-political allegories. Patricia Kerslake, for example, identified the Culture with the liberal West, arguing that "the warlike Idirans violently oppose the Culture, a position highly reminiscent of the Soviet Union and the United States during the Cold War" (2007: 176; also Nussbaum, 2018). Others have likened Banks' Culture to the post-Stalinist Soviet Union (Mendlesohn, 2005: 122); more to the point, his Scottish colleague Ken MacLeod (2003) argued that *Consider Phlebas* (1987) has been influenced by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan—favoring the Communist infidels over religious fanatics (and thus a critique of Frank Herbert's *Dune*). Others have noted influences and parallels to the Gulf War and the Iraq War (Duggan 2007); *Look to Windward* (2000), which is dedicated to "the Gulf War Veterans", could even be read as a prophetic anticipation of 9/11 (Jones, 2001).

While historical experiences have certainly informed Banks' Culture series, an allegorical reading does not do it justice. The Culture series does not just offer a mirror image of our world and its history but constitutes a universe of its own. In this regard, Banks' Culture series is on par with the world-building of J. R. R. Tolkien in *The Lord of the Rings*, in whose foreword to the second edition we find the following rebuttal of an allegorical reading of his work: ". . . I cordially dislike allegory in all its manifestations, and always have done so since I grew old and wary enough to detect its presence. I much

4. The richest man on the planet, Jeff Bezos, described Banks' Culture series as "a huge personal favorite" (February 21, 2018, on Twitter), while the current number two, Elon Musk, called himself "a utopian anarchist of the kind best described by Iain Banks" (June 17, 2018, on Twitter), and even named two SpaceX drones after spaceships from the Culture series; cf. Stubby the Rocket (2015).

5. Stuart Kelly, thus demonstrating his own flawed understanding of Banks (2018).

6. *Animal Farm* can and indeed should be read as a parable of the Russian Revolution; the use of animals as protagonists is a literary convention that clearly signifies the genre of the fable which can be considered an invitation for allegorical readings. An allegorical reading, however, is not warranted in the case of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which some (conservative) critics have considered as a political commentary on English post-war socialism (btw., like "The Scouring of the Shire", the last chapter of *Lord of the Rings*). While inspired by historical facts, the totalitarian dystopia of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has to be regarded as a literary ideal-typical construction in its own right—not unlike the Culture novels of Banks.

prefer history—true or feigned—with its varied applicability to the thought and experience of readers. I think that many confuse applicability with allegory, but the one resides in the freedom of the reader, and the other in the purposed domination of the author" (1995/1965: xvii).

The same argument can be applied to Banks' Culture series, which revolves around the liberal struggle of freedom against domination. While some of its themes echo the dark sides of human history such as slavery, exploitation, and colonialism, they primarily have to be read as part of the universe constructed by Banks. Nevertheless, his writing can be applied to historical events, partly because its abstractions and idealizations are rooted in historical experience. For example, the resemblance of the plot of *Look to Windward* (2000), in which a suicide bomber attempts to destroy a Culture orbital, to 9/11 and the American-led War on Terror is not merely coincidental (as falsely suggested by Kincaid, 2018); the timing might be, but the issues that are addressed are not. The problem of terrorism and the dilemmas of the liberal response are structurally implied in the conception of technologically advanced societies and the logic of liberalism. Otherwise, it would have been impossible for a sociological thinker like Niklas Luhmann (2008/1993) to discuss what later would be called the "ticking-bomb scenario". Like sociological thinking, literature allows for abstractions and idealizations that can be applied to historical and contemporary events.

So what is the Culture if not simply a historical or political analogy? In an interview with Tim Metcalfe in 1989, Banks explained the rationale behind the creation of the Culture as follows:

> I wanted to say, "Look, there is a possibility of something really good in the future. Here's a genuine, humanist, non-superstitious, nonreligious, functioning utopia where absolutely no-one is exploited; where they don't have money, where they don't have laws to speak of, my idea of a perfect society—and it's obviously not capitalist—but it's so communist it's beyond anything in a way. Something like the Culture could just about evolve from capitalism" (quoted in Martingale, 2013: 441).

Like Orwell, who called himself a socialist but was opposed to Stalin, Banks transcends established political binaries. His Culture series is neither an apology of 20th century capitalism or communism but offers an idealized image of a liberal society centered on personal freedom and non-exploitation which is projected into the far future. Like Orwell in his review (and in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, a dystopian image of an illiberal totalitarian society), Banks is primarily interested in the contrast between liberal and authoritarian societies. In his first Culture novel, *Consider Phlebas* (1987), the authoritarian faction, the Idirans, are religiously motivated; in subsequent novels, we also find authoritarian societies based on capitalism or caste systems. For Banks, it seems, all liberal societies are alike, converging on an ideal that looks like the Culture, while each authoritarian society is repressive and exploitative in its own way.

In comparison to Orwell's totalitarian dystopia *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), Banks' construction of a liberal utopia faces unique narrative challenges. To tell a captivating

story that ultimately matters in a utopian setting is incredibly difficult, so the plot of a Culture novel is usually situated at the fringes of the Culture; while it is certainly possible to tell a story entirely *within* the Culture, it would cease to be a story *about* the Culture (cf. Jacobs, 2009). For the same reason, Culture novels are often narrated from the viewpoint of outsiders. An example is Horza in Consider Phlebas (1987), who detests the Culture for being run by machines. In contrast to "authoritarian fiction" (Suleiman, 1983), in which outsider protagonists are usually converted into true believers, Banks' "liberal fiction" refrains from such rhetoric devices,[7] blurring the boundaries and empowering the reader instead. While the latter learns to sympathize with Horza, the main protagonist, who finds himself collaborating with machines and Culture citizens, is finally betrayed by his Idiran allies. Nevertheless, at no point in the story does Horza disavow his beliefs. Instead, it is the Culture citizen Balveda who questions her involvement in the "just" war against the Idirans in the epilogue of the book. Although consistently portrayed as a liberal utopia, the narrative progression in the novels tends to highlight its inner contradictions of the Culture.

It is still possible to read the Culture novels as a political *Bildungsroman*, as we will see later, its most important lesson being the "diabolic" nature of politic: a recognition of the fact that bad things can come from good intentions (cf. Weber, 1949). Contrary to the assertions of critics (e.g., Kincaid, 2018), Banks never abandoned the Culture as a liberal utopia, but purposively choose to play the devil's advocate: "Right from the start I was trying not to proselytise. The Culture's not perfect, but it's as close to perfection as you can get with anything remotely human (and still probably far better than we can expect)" (Branscobe, Banks, 2007). It is this refusal to proselytize which allows Banks to probe the inner contradictions of liberalism in his Culture novels. They do not result from "imperfections" or "bad" intentions on the side of the Culture, but from the paradoxes built into the very foundation of a liberal order. Banks pushes the utopian genre to its limits, relentlessly exploring the contradictions and tensions of liberalism. This excerpt from a eulogy for Banks sums it up perfectly: "Because the Culture is an abstracted, idealized version of our own liberal societies, extrapolated out into a situation in which all problems of material scarcity have been solved through automation and machine intelligence on a scale of which we can only begin to dream, the dilemmas that the Culture faces are our dilemmas, sketched on a fabulous canvas that allows Banks to explore them in ideal-typical purity" (Jackson, 2013).

Banks' Culture novels are not historical-political allegories, but literary thought experiments which dissect contemporary myths of liberalism, probe their far-reaching implications, and offer their own liberal myth of the future. In order to analyze the meaning structure and dilemmas of liberalism in Banks' Culture series, we first need to investigate his world-building informed by his own theoretical considerations, which allows him to construct the Culture as a plausible, although fictional, embodiment of the liberal order.

7. With the possible exception of Gurgeh in *The Player of Games* (1989), a dissatisfied Culture citizen who comes to terms with his own society at the end of the story after beating the authoritarian Azad at their own game.

The *Nomos* beyond Earth: The Culture as a Spacefaring and Space-Dwelling Civilization

As the name suggests, science fiction as a literary genre has always had an interest in scientific theory, especially pertaining to natural sciences such as physics. The proper use of scientific theory is still regarded in fan circles as the distinguishing feature between "hard" and "soft" science fiction, despite the fact that the binary was originally created to single out science fiction which had a focus on human "soft" sciences, such as psychology, anthropology, and sociology (cf. Prucher, 2007: 191). According to both criteria, Banks' Culture series qualifies as "soft" science fiction. Banks' "liberal" use of science and technology does not confine itself to known or even remotely plausible science, featuring "impossible" technologies such as faster-than-light travel (and faster-than-light communications, crucial for a galaxy-spanning civil sphere), and a fantastic speculative cosmology (including multiple dimensions and universes as well as spaces between and beyond them). At the same time, Banks devoted much of his effort to theorize the mental, social, and cultural aspects of space-faring civilizations. In order to outline the social and political theory implied in the Culture novels, we will have to discuss the role of (outer) space in shaping the form of life and the civil sphere of the Culture.

Even cultural sociologists who emphasize the autonomy and internal logic of culture and society have to concede, at some point, that real societies are partially shaped by their history and external circumstances, with civil society being no exception. Talking about its contradictions, Alexander comments in a brief section on "The Geography of Civil Society" on the territorial aspect of the civil sphere, which "is not just some place, or any place, a "center", a place that is different from places outside this territory" (2006: 196). Even liberal-democratic societies with universal aspirations have their homeland and their own national myths of origin. The spatial instantiation and territorialization of the civil sphere gives birth to a multitude of more-or-less civil societies with their own laws and conceptions of the sacred.

The thought that political order is always also a spatial order originates in the works of Carl Schmitt. In *Land and Sea* (1997/1942), Schmitt explores the cultural-political differences between seafaring and land-dwelling civilizations, a dichotomy superseded by the discovery and conquest of the third dimension with airplanes. He develops this conception of a spatial-political order further in the *The Nomos of the Earth*—the Greek word *nomos* meaning "territory" as well as "law"—investigating the changing spatial-political orders in history: "Development of modem technology has robbed the sea of its elemental character. A new, third dimension—airspace—has become the force-field of human power and activity. Today, many believe that the whole world, our planet, is now only a landing field or an airport, a storehouse of raw materials, and a mother ship for travel in outer space. That certainly is fantastic. But it demonstrates the power with which the question of a new nomos of the earth is being posed" (2003/1950: 354).

According to Schmitt, a new *nomos* of the earth, reflecting the impact of modern technology on the spatial order, has yet to arrive. While Schmitt's last "fantastic" example,

that of spaceship Earth, touches upon the possibility of a *nomos* beyond the earth, he treats it as a mere extension of the airspace. Following in the footsteps of Schmitt, other authors have shown how the old *nomos* of earth, characterized by territorialization, is challenged by the compression of space via technology and the transgression of territorial boundaries in an age of globalization and climate change. Peter Sloterdijk (2015) showed how the imagination of the earth has been transformed from an open territory into an ever-closer globe, while Bruno Latour (2017) has argued that the climate catastrophe of the Anthropocene led to the emergence of a new political conflict between the humans and their successors, the "earthbound". Latour devotes a lot of attention to a paragraph towards the end of Schmitt's foreword to *The Nomos of the Earth* which is also of eminent interest for us:

> The traditional Eurocentric order of international law is foundering today, as is the old nomos of the earth. This order arose from a legendary and unforeseen discovery of a new world, from an unrepeatable historical event. Only in fantastic parallels can one imagine a modern recurrence, such as men on their way to the moon discovering a new and hitherto unknown planet that could be exploited freely and utilized effectively to relieve their struggles on earth. The question of a new nomos of the earth will not be answered with such fantasies, any more than it will be with further scientific discoveries. Human thinking again must be directed to the elemental orders of its terrestrial being here and now. We seek to understand the normative order of the earth. (Schmitt, 2003/1950: 39)

Schmitt—like Latour—stresses the inescapable character of a terrestrial spatial-political order. For Schmitt, the possibility of extraterrestrial colonization is no more than a fantasy that entails the mere extension of the old *nomos* of the Earth into space. Most of modern science fiction, indulging in such "fantasies", seems to support Schmitt's thesis by combing futuristic technologies with star-spanning empires and other neo-feudal elements (Asimov, Herbert, etc.). There are a few exceptions, notably Banks, who posed the question of a *nomos* beyond Earth, perhaps in the most radical way. According to Banks, the vastness and hostility of outer space leads to very different conceptions of the spatial-political order compared to the ones we know from human history. Humanity, once it becomes a spacefaring and space-dwelling civilization, will eventually move beyond the *nomos* of the earth. The Culture exemplifies one possibility for such a *nomos* of space, as explored by Banks in his novels.

The rationale behind Banks' world building and his conception of the Culture finds its clearest expression in a short online commentary from 1994 titled "A Few Notes on the Culture" (Banks, 1994). Here, Basks argues that spacefaring and space-dwelling societies will develop social and political orders that are radically different from seafaring, land-dwelling, or even planet-bound civilizations due to the constraints and affordances of their environment: "The Culture, in its history and its on-going form, is an expression of the idea that the nature of space itself determines the type of civilisations which will thrive there. . . . Essentially, the contention is that our currently dominant power systems

cannot long survive in space; beyond a certain technological level a degree of anarchy is arguably inevitable and anyway preferable" (Ibid.).

According to Banks, living in space entails self-sufficiency and mobility, which makes it almost impossible to control large territories or prevent dissenting groups from breaking off. At the same time, the vulnerability of space habitats and ships reinforces the dependence of the crew on each other and their technology, which facilitates a strong cohesion within groups: "The theory here is that the property and social relations of long-term space-dwelling (especially over generations) would be of a fundamentally different type compared to the norm on a planet; the mutuality of dependence involved in an environment which is inherently hostile would necessitate an internal social coherence which would contrast with the external casualness typifying the relations between such ships/habitats" (Ibid.).

Consequently, the social structure within autonomous groups in space and the social relations between such groups will diverge drastically, resulting in what Banks dubs "socialism within, anarchy without". The Culture is an acephal society, without a center or even a territory, composed of autonomous units each representing the Culture as a whole. Like the monads of Leibniz, each unit mirrors the Culture in its own way, but without a central monad, which is Leibniz's God. The members of separate groups, usually sharing the same space-habitat or spaceship, can move freely between these groups as it suits their individual needs and political views, or even defect from the Culture altogether. What holds the Culture together is neither domination nor territory, but solidarity facilitated by a shared structure of meaning.

According to Banks, the *nomos* of space, the social-spatial order of a spacefaring and space-dwelling civilization, views planets and stars mainly as sources of material and energy to be exploited for the construction and maintenance of ships and artificial habitats, a more efficient and thus superior mode of existence than planet-dwelling, according to the Culture. This reductionist view of celestial bodies is counteracted by the Culture's appreciation of complexity, biological and cultural diversity in particular. "Terraforming" is not only rejected as inefficient but also as "ecologically unsound" (Ibid.). Planets are treated as nature preserves, something to be visited and studied, not to be colonized and exploited. The sheer abundance of material and energy in the galaxy renders the act of "land-appropriation" (Schmitt, 2003/1950: 80ff.) superfluous, and the control of vast territories unnecessary.[8]

The vast majority of the citizens of the Culture lives on artificial habitats and ships. The spatial order of the Culture might not have a center in the political sense, but it is divided in multiple centers and peripheries in a social sense, mirroring the urban-rural divide. As *The Player of Games* informs us, "the Culture's real cities were its great ships,

8. It should be noted that Banks mentions the scarcity of resources and energy as a rationale behind the creation of digital afterlives by many galactic civilizations in Surface Detail (2010). However, these limitations seem not to apply to the Culture, maybe for technological reasons (the Culture is able to generate energy from the fabric of the multiverse itself) or cultural reasons (despite de-facto immortality, either as an organism or in digital form, voluntary death is a common practice for the biological members of the Culture).

the General Systems Vehicles", sometimes populated by billions of people, "Orbitals were its rustic hinterland, where people liked to spread them out with plenty of elbow room" (1988: 49). Even the huge orbitals, with a surface area of multiple Earths, are mobile in principle, which is not only important in times of armed conflict but gives the entire Culture a nomadic character. In contrast to other galactic civilizations, which often revere their home planet (or other celestial bodies) as sacred, the Culture—a melting pot of several humanoid species—has no home planet and is not attached to any particular place in the galaxy (although some of its members might be).

The *nomos* of space as imagined by Banks highlights some peculiar limitations of the terrestrial civil sphere. While the existence of several territorially bound societies and states allows for an exit option in principle, there is no such option for the whole Earth as a globe. We are earthbound, as Latour says, and, as Schmitt attests, all land on the planet has been appropriated and divided politically. People can flee certain territories but there is no escape from the logic of territorialization. In contrast, the abundance of resources and the vastness of space always allows for exit options encouraging people to form like-minded communities. While the Culture shares a common structure of meaning, its civil sphere is not policed centrally and becomes fuzzy at the edges. Not only is defection a possibility, but individual groups may also slowly gravitate away from what most Culture citizens deem appropriate, though only in rare cases does this warrant policing or even military action on part of the Culture.

The Culture as a Civil Sphere and its Citizens

While its individual constituents may be internally socialist and externally anarchic, the Culture as a whole can be described as a civil sphere based on liberal principles, expression of freedom and absence of exploitation in particular. Nevertheless, this cultural structure is also applied to other societies since its principles are regarded to be universal. While Banks himself may have tried his best not to proselytize in his novels, the Culture itself is portrayed as driven by a missionary zeal to spread its liberal values throughout the galaxy. It engages in a civilizing mission, which is precisely the opposite of Star Trek's "prime directive" (based on the principle of non-interference), as many commentators have noted. It is the fundamental conflict between liberal and authoritarian values and the often-unintended consequences of liberal interventions which drives the plot in all Culture novels. Before we address the problem of liberal interventionism, it is necessary to provide a brief outline of the Culture as a civil sphere.

According to Alexander (2006), the "inclusion" or "incorporation" of the members of a society as "citizens" is one of the most important functions of the civil sphere. Civil spheres have to balance "solidarity" and "difference", social cohesion and cultural diversity, the requirements of social order with calls for individual autonomy. Alexander suggests there is a tendency in modern liberal societies to shift from assimilation to a multi-cultural mode of incorporation (2006: 395–457), which reflects these premises. The liberal order stands and falls with the assumption that achieving this balance is not a

zero-sum game: we do not lose in solidarity what we gain in recognition of difference; cultural diversity is not a threat to social cohesion in itself; and increasing demands for individual autonomy can not only be integrated into the social order but can even form the basis of such an order.

Being a fusion of several humanoid species, it can be argued that the Culture has inclusiveness and diversity in its DNA. Due to the mastery of genetics and bioengineering, the Culture effectively has erased the boundaries of gender and race, either of which can be chosen and altered by its members at will. Gender chauvinism and racism are primarily encountered in other more authoritarian societies, such as the empire of Azad in which a third gender ruthlessly dominates and exploits its male and female counterparts (Banks, 1989). Along with liberal freedoms comes a set of normative expectations, too: not only is a sex-change easy, one is also expected to have at least one in their lifetime; one is also expected to give birth to a child, which is only possible as a female. The male protagonist of *The Player of Games*, Gurgeh, is treated with suspicion for sticking to his birth sex and for not trying out homosexual relationships (28). While these normative expectations are not strongly enforced, they demonstrate that the lifestyle of the Culture not only promotes diversity on a societal level but also in its members, who are constantly encouraged by their fellow citizens to have diverse experiences and live life to the fullest.

It can be argued that a specific genetic and bodily makeup is crucial for being a citizen of the Culture. Endowed with above-average intelligence, powerful drug-glands, the ability for self-repair, the capacity to change their sex and other aspects of their body at will (although this takes time), and practical immortality, the humanoids of the Culture are superhuman entities. Banks notices that with such a biological setup it is potentially easy to subjugate populations of less developed populations, which is why the Culture reserves the right to withdraw the birthright of a Culture citizen, if there is a danger of illiberal abuse (Banks, 1994). Such a bio-technical devolution is the equivalent to the withdrawal of citizenship. On the flip side, humanoids and other beings that decide to become citizens of the Culture are entitled to a biological upgrade. The biological setup of Culture citizens, especially their improved sexual capacities and drug glands, make them the object of admiration of other species, even though they may otherwise despise the Culture.

Not all citizens of the Culture are biological, though. While artificial intelligence of sub-human, human, or even superhuman levels exists in all developed civilizations of the Culture universe, the unique thing about the Culture is that it grants all "sentient machines", as it prefers to call AIs, full citizenship status. The liberal principles of freedom and non-exploitation also apply to the sentient machines, which Banks renders plausible by the following argument (Ibid.):

> No machine is exploited, either; the idea here being that any job can be automated in such a way as to ensure that it can be done by a machine well below the level of potential consciousness . . . Where intelligent supervision of a manufacturing or maintenance operation is required, the intellectual challenge involved (and the relative lightness of the effort required) would make such supervision rewarding and enjoyable, whether for human or machine.

In other words, there is no exploitation of the sentient labor force in the Culture because every work requiring a certain level of sentience is intrinsically "rewarding and enjoyable" and thus "indistinguishable from play", if not by all, at least by some Culture citizens. Given the trillions of inhabitants of the Culture, it is just a matter of logistics to find the right person, regardless of whether it is humanoid or a human-level "drone", for a job that it will find "rewarding and enjoyable", a task that the artificial-super-intelligences of the Culture, the god-like "minds", seem to find "rewarding and enjoyable". The minds not only operate the orbitals and spaceships of the Culture; they can also be described as its de-facto rulers. Horza, the main protagonist of *Consider Phlebas*, despises the Culture precisely for this reason: "I don't care how self-righteous the Culture feels, or how many people the Idirans kill. They're on the side of life—boring, old-fashioned, biological life; smelly, fallible and short-sighted, God knows, but real life. You're ruled by your machines. You're an evolutionary dead end" (1987: 29).

It is the luddite fear and hatred of machines that replaces racism in the setting of the Culture. While many galactic civilizations are racial supremacists regarding their own species, what unites them against the Culture is their belief that machines should stay in their place and do as they are told. Thus, Banks not only offers a reflection on racism and inclusion in contemporary societies, but also a controversial contribution to ongoing debates on artificial intelligence which tend to portray autonomous AI as an existential threat. On January 12, 2015, Nick Bostrom, Stephen Hawking, Elon Musk, and others signed an open letter acknowledging the tremendous potential of artificial intelligence, but also cautioned that "our AI systems must do what we want them to do" (Future of Life Institute, 2020). This eerily echoes the conservative criticism of liberalism, which doubts the capacity of human beings to make free choices for their own good and the good of others. Such reasoning is an anathema for the Culture, which advocates freedom for all sentient matter.

Nowadays, many liberals are willing to extend rights to other living beings, but this usually stops at machines which need to be controlled. Those authors that otherwise reject Hobbes' dark anthropology of "homo homini lupus est" nonetheless subscribe to the statement "machina homini lupus est". Banks' literary thought experiment radicalizes the presuppositions of liberalism and envisions a solidarity between biological and mechanical life: why shouldn't it be possible for machines created in a liberal society to share the reasoning, emotions, and idealism of their fellow humanoid citizens? Banks questions the human impulse to dominate machines and appeals to our faith in liberalism, arguing that its principles will also appeal to sentient machines. It should be noted that the decision to empower and grant autonomy as well as citizenship to their machines is portrayed as the single most important reason behind the Culture becoming a superpower. This mirrors liberal arguments throughout the ages that the inclusion and empowerment of the masses provides a distinctive advantage to liberal societies.

In the post-scarcity society of the Culture, there is little room for tensions and clashes between the civil sphere and other spheres. The economic sphere of the market has been replaced by economic planning and an economy of gift-giving and voluntary work, which

is basically an extension of the civil logic to the material realm. Similarly, the Culture does not exist as a state, only as groups of individuals, each and no one representing the Culture as such. Culture citizens act according to their own reasoning and have to reach a consensus every time anew in what could be called political or legal matters. Other spheres mentioned by Alexander (2006), for example religion, race, and gender, play no role at all as these distinctions no longer serve as bases for social divisions.

Even the civil sphere of the Culture is only weakly institutionalized. There are communicative institutions, such as entertainment media and news services, as well as regulative institutions such as political offices and popular votes, but they operate on an informal basis and not as formal organizations. What is most striking is probably the absence of law. The Culture has no laws, only social conventions whose enforcement relies on individual participation and public consensus every time. "The court of informed public opinion" (Banks, 2010: 155) is literally the highest authority. On contested matters, conflicts are resolved through voting. The principle of "one man, one vote" does not hold: greater weight is given to votes on the basis of sentience (which privileges the Culture minds) and concerned-ness (e.g., in human matters, human votes are given a larger weight). Most voting takes place at the local level, among the inhabitants of a specific community, ship or orbital; in the rare case of matters concerning the Culture as a whole, such as the declaration of the Idiran-Culture war, there is civilization-wide voting. While the outcome of the voting determines the collective course of action, it is individually non-binding. There is always the option to leave the community and even the Culture as such, which, for example, resulted in the split-off of the pacifist faction in the Idiran-Culture War.

The Liberal Problem of Meaning

As a post-scarcity society, the Culture has overcome the Hobbesian state of nature where life was "nasty, brutish and short". All material needs of Culture citizens are effortlessly satisfied, the labor they provide is "indistinguishable from play, or a hobby", and they enjoy extended lifespans or even immortality. At the same time, the humanoids that created the Culture are no longer really needed: they "are unnecessary for the running of the starships, and have a status somewhere between passengers, pets and parasites" (Banks, 1994). In a society in which "the greatest happiness of all" has become a real possibility, the liberal problem of meaning addressed by Orwell moves to the foreground, on a personal as well as on a societal level. The following passage from Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* offers a seemingly accurate portrayal of life in the Culture (2006: 10):

> "What is love? What is creation? What is longing? What is a star?"—thus asks the last human being, blinking. Then the earth has become small, and on it hops the last human being, who makes everything small. His kind is ineradicable, like the flea beetle; the last human being lives longest. "We invented happiness"—say the last human beings, blinking. They abandoned the regions where it was hard to live: for one needs warmth. . . . A bit of poison once in a while; that makes for pleasant

> dreams. And much poison at the end, for a pleasant death. One still works, for work is a form of entertainment. But one sees to it that the entertainment is not a strain. One no longer becomes poor and rich: both are too burdensome. Who wants to rule anymore? Who wants to obey anymore? Both are too burdensome.

While Culture citizens are biologically superhumans, they live the life of Nietzsche's last man, as fleas in the fur of mighty spaceships and orbitals, tailored to and caring for their needs, enjoying drugs, entertainment, and a life without burden in an egalitarian society. It seems that the Culture as a society has not much to offer to its citizens in terms of meaning. In the "Notes on the Culture", Banks states that "Philosophically, the Culture accepts, generally, that questions such as "What is the meaning of life?" are themselves meaningless" (Banks, 1994). In the end, the quest for meaning is delegated to the individual: "we make our own meanings, whether we like it or not".

The liberal problem of meaning as a personal issue is best reflected in *The Player of Games* (1989). The novel starts with Gurgeh, a dedicated player of all kinds of games, talking about what could be called his midlife-crisis with a befriended drone: "Everything seems gray at the moment, Chamlis. Sometimes I start to think I'm repeating myself, that even new games are old ones in disguise, and nothing's worth playing for anyway" (22).

The problem of meaning contemplated in the Culture novels is not something completely foreign to members of today's affluent societies but is exacerbated by the long lifespan of Culture citizens and the fact that even extravagant material desires can be easily satisfied. What is the point of betting, Gurgeh asks, if you can have anything? In contrast, games outside of the Culture are often portrayed as barbaric and risky. An example is "Damage" (Banks, 1987), where players not only bet fortunes but also have to bring real "lives" to the table, that is, sentient creatures which are willing to die in their place; in the game of "Azad" (1989), which determines one's place in an authoritarian society, bets often involve the amputation of limbs. The authoritarian societies portrayed in the Culture series are based on suffering and sacrifice, which Banks condemns but also recognizes as powerful sources of meaning. Chamlis, the drone conversing with Gurgeh, points out that his desires cannot be fulfilled within the liberalism of the Culture: "We're well free of that. You want something you can't have, Gurgeh. You enjoy your life in the Culture, but it can't provide you with sufficient threats; the true gambler needs the excitement of potential loss, even ruin, to feel wholly alive" (22).

In the course of the novel, the hero embarks on a quest to beat the authoritarian Azad at their own game, played with high stakes, while simultaneously compensating for the lack of meaning in his life and advancing the goals of the Culture. Despite the entertainment and distractions that perfect virtual environments can offer, there is a longing for the "real" in the Culture, even if it entails suffering or the risk of death. In *Consider Phlebas*, we meet the Culture citizen Fal who has a passion for unsupervised hiking trips, the last of which ended with her lying "in the snow with a shattered leg for a day and a night before a search party had discovered her" (1987: 88). In *Look to Windward* (2000), we

see Culture citizens engaging in various dangerous activities and sports, not only risking their lives but doing so without recent digital backup.[9]

At times, Banks seems to offer a critical portrayal of Culture citizens as easily bored thrill-seekers, which are willing to throw away their lives for a kick because nothing else matters. Nevertheless, without any doubt, he would have preferred to live in an affluent society where people can freely risk and even end their lives. We may not do without "tin soldiers" (cf. Orwell, 1940), but replacing involuntary suffering and war with dangerous sports and war games is definitely an improvement from a liberal perspective. Despite their otherwise comfortable lives, citizens of the Culture are not shallow hedonists, but value hardships, risks, and even sacrifices as sources of meaning for their personal life, as long as they are freely chosen and self-imposed. Other civilizations may regard these practices as the pinnacle of decadence, but the Culture views them as the embodiment of its sacred principles.

The liberal problem of meaning has not only a private and personal but also a public and political dimension. According to Banks (1994), the education of Culture citizens raises awareness of the fact that its liberal achievements should not be taken for granted:

> Part of their education, both initially and continually, comprises the understanding that beings less fortunate—though no less intellectually or morally worthy—than themselves have suffered and, elsewhere, are still suffering. For the Culture to continue without terminal decadence, the point needs to be made, regularly, that its easy hedonism is not some ground-state of nature, but something desirable, assiduously worked for in the past, not necessarily easily attained, and requiring appreciation and maintenance both in the present and the future.

The seemingly care-free life of Culture citizens is based on the work of previous generations and requires the ongoing care of the Culture minds and all other Culture citizens, which at least have to maintain their civility in everyday life. In order to endow their liberal utopia with strong meanings, the Culture relies on a liberal/authoritarian binary, on the remembrance of barbarisms in its own past and the recognition of the suffering of others in the present. For Alan Jacobs (2009: 49)—recalling the suffering of the innocent child in Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*—the fact that Culture citizens seem to rely on the suffering of others to experience their lives as meaningful casts a dark shadow on the Culture. From a cultural sociological perspective, especially one informed by Durkheim's theory of the sacred, this seems rather unavoidable: meanings arise only through distinctions, and strong meanings emerge from emotionally charged oppositions. The strong meaning structure of the Culture, its sacred core, is the driving force behind its missionary zeal, its open and hidden efforts to undermine authoritarian rule throughout the galaxy, and to liberate those suffering from it.

9. As we learn in *Surface Detail* (2010), the technology of "backing-up" the mind-state of a person does not reverse death: if I die, a digital copy of a previous mind state of mine will continue to exist, but is that copy actually me, whose stream of consciousness is upended by death?

The war of the Culture against the Idirans, which is the immediate context of *Consider Phlebas* (Banks, 1987) with a fallout which runs like a thread throughout the whole series, is the paradigmatic exemplification of the Culture's militant belief in the moral superiority of liberalism. While the authoritarian Idirans are no direct threat for the Culture, non-interference would have meant "the loss of its purpose and that clarity of conscience; the destruction of its spirit; the surrender of its soul" (452). Banks makes it clear that it was not the Idirans that had to fight this war, but the Culture, which "knew from the start" that this was "a religious war in the fullest sense" (451). Nevertheless, there are those who doubt, even within the Culture, that a liberal, anarchic, and hedonistic society such as the Culture can ever be fit for war. Not only do its adversaries mistake its lavish lifestyle for a sign of decadence and weakness, some of its citizens are also susceptible to such a flawed reasoning. In *Consider Phlebas*, a young boy lectures his fellow citizen Fal about the authoritarian virtues of the enemy: "'I'm not so sure,' he said, rubbing his chin. 'I'm not sure we have the will'. 'The will?' Fal said. 'Yes. The desire to fight. I think the Idirans are natural fighters. We aren't. I mean, look at us . . .' He smiled, as though he was much older and thought himself much wiser than she, and he turned his head and waved his hand lazily towards the island, where the boats lay tilted against the sand" (274).

Banks wants to make the point that authoritarianism is not intrinsically superior to liberalism, even in military matters, although initially it might prove difficult to mobilize an otherwise peaceful society into a full-scale war. After initial setbacks and withdrawals, the Culture is bound to win the war against the Idirans, thanks to the military might of their fully autonomous ships. For Banks, this victory is not just the result of technological superiority, but a triumph of the liberal order as such. The Culture was able to realize the technological potential of its ships to the fullest only by including machines as citizens and granting them full freedom and a sense of purpose. It is not hard to find parallels in human history: certainly, egalitarian societies and democratic governments have not been less successful at war than their illiberal counterparts.

Nevertheless, the Culture had to pay a price for its victory. Those who refused to participate in the war, machines and humanoids alike, formed the pacifist faction which left the Culture altogether. Confronted with the suffering caused by the war, millions of Culture citizens protested by putting themselves in digital hibernation, "only to be revived once the Culture could statistically 'prove' the war had been morally justified" (465), which happens hundreds of years later, when the suffering that the war supposedly prevented is considered to outweigh the suffering caused by it. Nevertheless, there is an insurmountable gap between the public meaning of the war and personal meanings, especially for its veterans. Balveda in *Consider Phlebas* (1987), a veteran of the war suffering from a trauma that she refuses to treat medically, is one of those revived but chooses to auto-euthanize several months later. The personal experience of war not only affects humanoids but also the sentient machines of the Culture. In *Look to Windward* (2000), the traumatized mind of a former warship that now runs a Culture orbital threatened by a terrorist attack voluntarily self-destructs. For Banks, suicide is an exit option that a truly liberal society needs to respect.

Diabolic Politics and the Problem of Liberal Interventionism

The cultural structure of the Culture is characterized by a "religious" fervor to promote their own liberal values, occasionally through acts of warfare like the Idiran-Culture war in *Consider Phlebas* (1987), but mostly in the form of covert action which is, in one way or another, part of the plot of most Culture novels. It is a telling feature of the Culture that its society exhibits higher degrees of institutionalization in the boundary zones with other societies; it is as if contact with other societies confronts its liberal utopia with illiberal necessities of authority, elitism, and confidentiality. The necessity to interact with other civilizations led to the formation of the Contact section, a loose institutional network which serves as the diplomatic service and, if necessary, as the military arm of the Culture. Since its inception, it has spawned several independent subsections, most notoriously Special Circumstances (SC), Culture's "euphemism for military intelligence" (238). While only a minuscule part of the Culture, SC plays an important role in most Culture novels, and is frequently used by Banks to reflect upon the dilemmas of liberal intervention, and what I call, following Max Weber, the "diabolic" nature of politics.

In his "Politics as Vocation" (1949), based on a lecture delivered to the liberal Free Student Union in Munich on the 28th of January, 1919, Weber calls for an ethic of responsibility (*Verantwortungsethik*) within the limits of realpolitik: "Also the early Christians knew full well the world is governed by demons and that he who lets himself in for politics, that is, for power and force as means, contracts with diabolical powers and for his action it is not true that good can follow only from good and evil only from evil, but that often the opposite is true. Anyone who fails to see this is, indeed, a political infant" (123).

Weber rejects any "ethic of ultimate ends" (*Gesinnungsethik*), not only because it disregards the consequences of action but also because it is ultimately non-sustainable in the real world. The political experiment of "radical pacifist sects" in North America which "renounced violence towards the outside" took, according to Weber, "a tragic course, inasmuch as with the outbreak of the War of Independence the Quakers could not stand up arms-in-hand for their ideals, which were those of the war" (1949: 124). Radical pacifism is ultimately self-defeating; it can only persist if pacifist communities are protected by a larger, more belligerent society. The same can be said about liberalism, which may not be spread or even sustained without occasionally violating liberal principles themselves. Rather surprisingly, the utopia of the Culture ultimately serves to highlight the diabolic realpolitik of liberalism.

The Contact section in general and SC in particular serve as institutional buffer-zones of moral and political ambiguity, which absorb the diabolic qualities of liberal politics so that the rest of the Culture can enjoy its clear conscience. As "the elite of the elite, in a society which abhor[s] elitism" (1987: 30), SC agents have an ambivalent reputation in the Culture, being dismissed as immoral but also envied for their exciting lives. In the Culture, SC represents the ambivalence of the liberal sacred, and their transgressive acts can be regarded as polluted and sacred at the same time (cf. Kurakin, 2015). While the Culture in general and SC in particular think of themselves as being on the right side,

they readily admit that there is no such thing as moral certainty. As the SC agent Zma in *Use of Weapons* confesses, ". . . in Special Circumstances we deal in the moral equivalent of black holes, where the normal laws—the rules of right and wrong that people imagine apply everywhere else in the universe—break down; beyond those metaphysical event horizons, there exist . . . special circumstances" (Banks, 1990: 284f.).

While this sounds like "a good excuse for bad behavior", the agent adds: "at least we need an excuse; think how many people need none at all" (Ibid.: 285). What allows Banks to pose the liberal dilemma in ideal-typical purity is precisely the fact that the Culture is conceptualized as a post-scarcity society, which does not have any kind of material interest in the rest of the galaxy. No mundane interests interfere with the politics of the sacred and the profane, although the chaotic nature of reality twists and warps even the most ideal intentions to unanticipated ends. According to Banks, the liberal order, even in its most utopian expression, is necessarily contradictory, or even incomplete. Normative orders such as morality contain within themselves a Gödelian paradox, which lies also at the core of the liberal dilemma regarding the use of torture at the beginning of the 21st century (Binder, 2014, 2016). The exclusive inclusion of SC is one way to deal with this paradox, keeping the subsection at the margins of the Culture where they cannot contaminate the clear conscience of most Culture citizens, who readily distance themselves from the deeds of SC agents in case one of their interventions fails.

In the Culture's liberal utopia, the conscience of the individual reigns supreme. Unable to avoid the Gödelian paradox of morality and the decisionism it entails, the Culture delegates moral decisions to individuals as the ultimate authority on these matters. Regardless of the Culture's efforts to justify wars and interventions, its citizens always have the option to dissent, join a separate faction, or leave the Culture entirely. Individuals also have the freedom to act as they seem fit, which includes the powerful minds of the Culture. No wonder that some of the sinister plots in the Culture novels are attributed to a conspiracy of "hawkish" minds which aim to shake things up—for the best of the Culture, of course. In his Culture novels, Banks tends to highlight ambivalent moral decisions and liberal interventions with catastrophic consequences. This does not mean, however, that he gave up on the Culture as a liberal utopia, nor does it mean that he opposes liberal interventions in principle.[10] It just means that Banks is no "political infant" (Weber, 1949: 123), and neither is the Culture. It is in this sense that the Culture series can be read as a political *Bildungsroman*.

The Culture is not only a liberal society, but it is also a society that has demonstrated a capacity for learning: first, in the war against the Idirans and its fallout, and later, from its less-successful liberal interventions. In the last novel of the series, *Hydrogen Sonata* (2012), the Culture adopts a more cautious interventionist approach, which finds its symbolic expression in the piece of fictional music that gave the book its title. Originally written for a music instrument yet to be invented, the Hydrogen Sonata is incredibly difficult

10. Banks and his wife allegedly ripped up their passports and send the pieces to Tony Blair out of protest against the British involvement in the Iraq war—a gesture that made it difficult for Banks to promote his novels abroad.

to play and sounds rather unpleasant. Nevertheless, one of the protagonists of the novel commits herself to learning the instrument and the sonata, growing two additional limbs to be able to do so. Her struggle to master the tune not only depicts what near-immortal beings in a post-scarcity society might spend their time on, but also serves, according to Ivaylo R. Schmilev, as a metaphor for the Culture's engagement with the real:

> The titular *Hydrogen Sonata* she slowly and painstakingly learns to play is a symbol of attachment to a limiting, painful, sometimes even torturing reality which nevertheless brings rewards. . . . The *Hydrogen Sonata* is then—just like every one of Banks' sf novels—not a tragedy, but a tribute to the unbroken engagement with the limitations of reality and to the triumphs of those who, under the direst of circumstances, persevere in this engagement (2016: 67f.).

Banks makes this point repeatedly in his Culture novels, which is rather ironic considering the fact that they belong to the genre of science fiction and to the genre of literary utopias, which are both genres under the—not entirely unfounded—hermeneutic suspicion of serving primarily the function of "wish-fulfillment". Paradoxically, the liberal utopia of the Culture is used by Banks to reflect on liberal realpolitik, its aspirations and limitations.

Conclusion

Banks' Culture series offers a liberal myth of a distant future that nonetheless strikes close to home. It is a literary myth that brings "the unconscious cultural structures that regulate society into the light of the mind" (Alexander, 2003: 3f.), and that uses the artistic imagination of a writer to dissect the foundations and explore the implications of the liberal order, thus addressing the contemporary crisis as well as the eternal dilemmas of liberalism. We may not live in a liberal utopia, but the dilemmas that the Culture faces are our own. Even Banks' reflections about living a meaningful life in a post-scarcity society are not so far away as it sometimes seems, at least for members of the affluent middle and upper classes of our societies.

Some of his concerns might even become more relevant in the near future with the progress of artificial intelligence and emerging debates about Universal Basic Income (UBI). It is striking that the discourse about UBI shows the same cleavage between liberal and authoritarian thinking which we find in Banks' novels (and Orwell's review of *Mein Kampf*). Leaving the technical questions concerning the economic feasibility of UBI aside, here we see another theater of a "culture war" in which conservatives (though some call themselves liberals or even socialists) claim that wage labor, which necessarily entails suffering, domination, and exploitation, is indispensable for a meaningful life—not for all people, of course, and the critics of UBI usually exclude themselves, but surely for the masses. This eerily mirrors antique discourses on slavery, according to which some humans are simply unfit to cope with the freedom that is the prerequisite of being a citizen.

Arguments like this—and the doublethink accompanying them—show up frequently among the representatives of authoritarian societies in the Culture novels: the Azad empire enforces strict hierarchies and norms for the good of the "common people", while its ruling elite enjoys transgressing them (Banks, 1989); Paluvean conservatives instill the fear of artificial hells, which exist in (virtual) reality, in their people to keep them in line (2010). Fear, pain, and sacrifice may be necessary to sustain an authoritarian order, but they are an anathema to the liberal order. As a self-conscious liberal, Banks rejects such arguments and the dark anthropology they entail. Instead, liberals need to put faith in their fellow citizens and the future.

Liberals and authoritarians indeed have different anthropologies. While both are centered on meaning, they differ in their structures of meaning. Liberals engage in a "discourse of liberty" while authoritarians favor a "discourse of repression" (cf. Alexander, 2006). Authoritarians stress the importance of domination, suffering, and sacrifice, while liberals promote freedom. Liberals do not deny that suffering and sacrifice are important sources of meaning but consider them only permissible if they are the result of an exercise of freedom. Nevertheless, as Banks demonstrates in his Culture series, the reality of politics and morality does not always match these neat binaries. As liberals, we have to accept the fact that politics is diabolic. Alexander argues: "We need narratives if we are to make progress and experience tragedy" (2003: 4); Banks' Culture novels suggest that progress and tragedy are inextricably linked.

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Либеральный порядок за пределами Земли? Гражданская сфера, «Культура» и будущее либерализма

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Начиная с либеральной проблемы смысла Джорджа Оруэлла, эта статья исследует либерализм как культурную структуру и миф, опираясь на теорию гражданской сферы Джеффри К. Александера и научно-фантастические романы Иэна М. Бэнкса. Вслед за Александером утверждается, что либеральные общества строятся вокруг сакрального ядра, описываемого культурными структурами гражданской сферы. Они же являются структурами смысла и чувства. Гражданские дискурсы и движения в либеральных (и не очень либеральных) обществах мобилизуют мощные символы сакрального и профанного и, таким образом, способны внушать почти религиозную преданность. Далее в статье исследуется смысловая структура, культурные противоречия и возможное будущее либерального порядка на основе обсуждения серии «Культура» Иэна Бэнкса. Действие этих романов происходит в границах «Культуры» — галактической цивилизации и либеральной утопии. Именно в этой утопической среде Бэнкс исследует внутренние дилеммы либерализма, например, между пацифизмом и интервенционизмом, обращаясь и к актуальным вопросам, таким как либеральная проблема смысла, очарование авторитаризмом или социальный статус искусственного интеллекта. С помощью литературного воображения писатели-фантасты конструируют «миф будущего» (Бэнкс), который зачастую соответствует мифам современности, но также — как в случае Бэнкса — переосмысляет их, их противоречия и последствия. Наконец, воображаемые вариации социального порядка в научной фантастике могут быть ценным источником для воображения социологов, рассматривающих саму возможность социального порядка.

Ключевые слова: социология культуры, гражданская сфера, либерализм, авторитаризм, научная фантастика, «культура», Джеффри К. Александер, Иэн М. Бэнкс

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The Other in Science Fiction as a Problem for Social Theory[1]

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The paper discusses science fiction literature in its relation to some aspects of the socio-anthropological problem, such as the representation of the Other. Given the diversity of sci-fi genres, a researcher always deals either with the direct representation of the Other (a creature different from an existing human being), or with its indirect, mediated form when the Other, in the original sense of this term, is revealed to the reader or viewer through the optics of some Other World. The article describes two modes of representing the Other by sci-fi literature, conventionally designated as *scientist* and *anti-anthropic*. The *scientist* representation constructs exclusively-rational premises for the relationship with the Other. Edmund Husserl's concept of truth, which is the same for humans, non-humans, angels, and gods, can be considered as its historical and philosophical correlate. The *anti-anthropic* representation, which is more attractive to sci-fi authors, has its origins in the experience of the "disenchantment" of the world characteristic of modern man, especially in the tragic feeling of incommensurability of a finite human existence and the infinity of the cosmic abysses. The historical and philosophical correlate of this anti-anthropic representation can be found in Kant's teaching of *a priori* cognition forms, which may be different for other thinking beings. The model of an attitude to the Other therefore cannot be based on rational foundations. As a literary example where these two ways of representing the Other are found, we propose the analysis of *The Martian Chronicles* by Ray Bradbury, which, on the one hand, offers the fictional extrapolation of the colonization of North America and the inevitable contacts with its indigenous population. On the other hand, The *Martian Chronicles* depicts a powerful and technologically advanced Martian civilization, which disappears for some unknown reason, or ceases to contact the settlers. The combination of these two ways of representing the Other allows Bradbury to effectively romanticize and mystify the unique historical experience of colonization, thus modifying the Frontier myth.

Keywords: science fiction, the Other, monster, representation, scientism

Multiple Realities and Science Fiction

Alfred Schutz elaborated one of his most widely known and still-intriguing and promising ideas in his 1945 essay "On Multiple Realities", and discussed it later in several papers quite persistently. The very idea, related to the notion of the sub-worlds or sub-universes

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of the encompassing universe, had been originally proposed by William James in more psychological terms. Schutz, as a phenomenologist, preferred to call these universes *finite provinces of meaning*, "each of which may be conceived as reality after its own fashion" (1976: 229). He continued by writing that "Hence we call a certain set of our experiences a finite province of meaning if all of them show a specific cognitive style and are—with respect to this style—not only consistent in themselves but also compatible with one another" (230). The world of fantasy can be seen as such a province. However, Schutz was definitely prone to use the plural instead of the singular; "fantasy worlds", he wrote, "since it is a question not of a single but rather of several finite provinces of meaning. Although, in direct contrast to the life-world, they appear to be closely related to one another, since they all bracket determinate strata of the everyday life-world, they are nevertheless heterogeneous and not mutually reducible" (1974: 28). Schutz, as far as we know, never paid attention to or even mentioned the world of sci-fi as a special sub-sub-universe in this large and diversified province of meaning. It would be reasonable to do it now by following him on his way, not only pointing to the large provinces of meaning but also separating the sub-universes in the world of fantasy. However, it is difficult and hardly possible to indicate what sci-fi, not as a mere collection of works of literature, art, and cinema but as a world, is.

Classifications of SF genres often seem to reduce the description of the field to simple enumerations of its sub-genres, without any governing principle at the basis. George Mann, in his *Mammoth Encyclopedia* (2001: 163)[2], frankly confesses that

> . . . SF, by necessity, is an open and wide-ranging genre whose definition can have as much to do with the way in which a book is written as with its content. It also incorporates the more fantastical Space Opera, which, although it has its proponents who insist on claiming a "scientific" foundation for the intergalactic conflicts and militaristic alien invasions, for the most part prefers to concentrate on the end result—spectacular action—rather than the means—convincing extrapolation. This inclusiveness *makes any binding definition hazardous* . . .

He nevertheless attempts a kind of descriptive definition that in no way reveals anything about the meaningful unity of sci-fi—he writes (Ibid.: 167–169):

> SF is a form of fantastic literature that attempts to portray, in rational and realistic terms, future times and environments that are different from our own. It will nevertheless show an awareness of the concerns of the times in which it is written and provide implicit commentary on contemporary society, exploring the effects, material and psychological, that any new technologies may have upon it. Any further changes that take place in this society, as well as any extrapolated future events or occurrences, will have their basis in measured and considered theory, scientific or otherwise. SF authors will use their strange and imaginative environments as a testing ground for new ideas, considering in full the implications of any notion they propose.

2. Since we have access only to the Kindle Edition of this book, we refer here to Kindle locations instead of page numbers. In this quotation, italics are added.

These arguments sound reasonable and, in a sense, are very useful for those who try, as we are going to do in this paper, to trace the line between the imagined worlds of sci-fi and the real world where these imagined worlds were created. What is disturbing, nevertheless, is the variety of the keywords for the genres Mann mentions: alien, alternative world, alternative reality, android, anti-gravity, antimatter, artificial environment, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, black hole, cloning, comic SF, crime, cryonics, cyberpunk, cyberspace, dimensions, Dyson sphere, dystopia, ecology, eugenics, evolution, far future, future history, gender, generation starship, genetics, hard SF, hardware, horror, humanist SF, militaristic SF, nanotechnology, near future, overpopulation, planets, political SF, post-apocalyptic SF, science fantasy, scientific romance, shared world, soft SF, space opera, space travel, stars, steampunk, terraforming, time, transcendence, utopia, and virtual reality.

The same can be said about the *Encyclopedia* written by Don D'Amassa. For him, "[s]cience fiction is one of the three subdivisions of fantastic literature, the other two being fantasy fiction and supernatural horror. Although definitions vary and some individual works may blur the distinction between one branch and another, most fantastic or speculative stories and novels can—by general consensus—be placed in one of the three categories" (D'Amassa, 2005: iv). Here we see even less unity in the descriptions. D'Amassa mentions the following sub-genres: alternate history, change war, cyberpunk, dystopian, first contact, future history, gestalt, hard science fiction, lost race, military science fiction, near future, parallel world, psi powers, sentience (artificial intelligence systems), shapeshifter, sharecropping, soft science fiction, space opera, terraform, time travel paradox, uplift, utopian novel, and we should admit that it is probably the shortest list (2005).

This valuable list, as in the previous case, is evidently not a scientific classification, and fails to demonstrate logical coherence based on a "general consensus". We offer our own list of sci-fi topics, perhaps more consistent but not so extensive:

— hard fiction, where the center of a storyline is formed by the theme of the conquest of space (not exclusively of the outer cosmic space, but also, for example, of the unexplored Earth territories, the ocean depths, etc.) by means of as-yet-unknown scientific and technological discoveries;

— chronofiction, i.e., time travel;

— social utopias and dystopias, including apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic fiction, through which social and political regimes of future societies are modeled;

— contact with alien civilizations resulting in both technical and cultural mutual enrichment and military conquest;

— parallel worlds, including alternative history and steampunk fiction;

— cyber-fiction, artificial intelligence, androids, replicants, and cloning;

— the enhancement (by means of scientific and alternative technologies) of hidden human abilities.

We can see that some of these sub-genres are directly related to various aspects of a sociological and anthropological problem known as the "representation of the Other".

Among the examples might be alien contact, or the relationship between a human being and an android, but a closer look will allow the same idea to be extended to all other subgenres. Indeed, in all cases, we are dealing either with a direct representation of the Other (a being other than human) or with its mediated form revealing the Other World to the reader or viewer, and through this World, the Other, in the original sense of the term.

It should be stressed that we are not talking about any special sci-fi works, such as those that critics in the US and England call "anthropological science fiction" (Clute, Nichols, 1993a: 41–43). Such literary pieces as *No Enemy but Time* (1982) and *Ancient of Days* (1985) by Michael Bishop, *Rite of Passage* (1954), *Field Expedient* (1955), and *Between the Thunder and the Sun* (1957) by the professional anthropologist Chad Oliver, or *The Word for World is Forest* (1972; 1976) by Ursula K. Le Guin (anthropologist Alfred Kroeber's daughter) constitute a "speculative anthropology" which does not have any parallels in scientific writings since it depicts humans as they might have been. Besides, there are also works obviously dominated by the topics of multiculturalism, racial or gender equality, and tolerance, including Octavia Butler's *Xenogenesis* collection, Iain Banks' series of novels called *Culture*, or *The Expanse*, a literary cycle by James S. A. Corey along with the eponymous television series. We argue that this representation of the Other in sci-fi is not limited only to these and similar writings; we affirm it to be the characteristic of any literary text in the genre. It is this representation that constitutes the unavoidably essential feature of the genre.

The SF universe is inhabited by a variety of creatures, human-like and non-human, friendly and aggressive, lagging developmentally behind the earthlings, or, on the contrary, being well ahead of them. It might seem that this alone is enough to conceive of the diversity of the SF universe as an extrapolation of the ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity of contemporary mankind. The models of coexistence in the Universe would then be the models for the possible construction of relations between various civilizations, and models for the optimal solution of political, religious, and other conflicts. Given the specific nature of the SF audience, i.e., the fact that the most part of its readers and viewers are teenagers and young people, we can argue that among the most important tasks of SF is the task of education and upbringing consisting in the formation of specific patterns of thinking and behavior for the contemporary world. In other words, SF literature shapes the tolerance myth, which prepares humans for a decent life in a new, poly-centric world (Salnikov, 2017).

This understanding of SF clearly explicates the historical time for the emergence and propagation of this kind of literature. Globalization processes that unfolded in the twentieth century led to a religious unification and a weakening of traditional forms of consolidation. The concept of tolerance, previously associated mainly with practices of religious toleration, is now gradually expanding its scope to include such issues as racial, age and gender inequality, post-colonialism, multiculturalism, sub-alternity, minority identities, etc. This expansion takes place both in theoretical concepts and practices designed to deal with new conflict situations. Surely the theoretical justification for this new idea of

tolerance is not limited to academic treatises but is accompanied by a wide-ranging thematization of the Other, including the art forms provided by the sci-fi genre.[3]

The main theme is surely devoted to the stories of interplanetary communication, but in fact, all branches of sci-fi can legitimately be regarded as types of artistic representation of the relation towards the Other. Some features of the sci-fi genre render these representations extremely effective. First, SF as a reflection and representation of a new (not typical for an ethnically-consolidated society) attitude towards the Other always has the "sanction" of conventionality, which allows to avoid the direct accusations brought forward by religious and other forms of conformism; secondly, SF not only reflects this new attitude towards the Other, but also is the tool of its verification and social promotion. This tool is more effective than academic theories for it reaches a much wider audience; this audience is a specific segment of society (youth and teenagers) who have not yet developed a critical attitude towards the information they receive, who are characterized by "genetic" non-conformism, a tendency to reject everything outdated just because it is so, and to accept everything new just because it is new.

There might be an objection that any fantasy fiction, if it is, as defined by Darko Suvin, ". . . a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition" (Clute, Nichols, 1993b: 313), or is a representation of the Other (an other sentient being, an other world, etc.). In the same way that the uniqueness of sci-fi genre can be reduced to some "fairy tale reality" (to which "the spirit of science" or "scientific attitude" is attached) (Neelov, 2008), the ways in which the Other is represented in SF are identical to all three derivations of fairy tale folklore, the literary fairy tale, fantasy, and science fiction. Indeed, the above list of SF sub-genres would seem to argue in favor of the maximum stretching of the chronological boundaries of fantasy literature since travels to unexplored lands, to distant planets, and contacts with their inhabitants have been depicted since antiquity. However, *From the Earth to the Moon: A Direct Route in 97 Hours, 20 Minutes* by Jules Verne and *The First Men in the Moon* by Herbert Wells are genuine SF works. This definitely cannot be said about *A Voyage to the Moon* by Cyrano de Bergerac, though the techniques of interplanetary travel described in all these three writings are very far from any scientific probability.

The problem of SF chronological boundaries has a direct relevance to the question of representing the Other, since the question of whether its mode is fantastical or realistic is always determined by social and cultural context of a particular historical period. Neelov continues by saying, ". . . the novel *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* by Jules Verne belongs to hard science fiction, but its fantasy will never find its real embodiment since Captain Nemo's 'Nautilus' is sailing in the ocean of the nineteenth century and it is on this linking of unlikable (and not on the submarine's image, which originally is not fantastic at all) that the novel's fantasy is constructed" (2008: 103). Now, we will try to describe the two most typical modes to represent the Other as proposed by sci-fi literature.

3. Cf. on the general problem of the Other in social theory Bankovskaya (2007).

We may roughly define the first way as the *scientist* one since it is based on the idea of the dominant role of scientific worldview and generally remains within the boundaries of the definition of "scientifiction" as given by H. Gernsback (1926: 3):

> By "scientifiction" I mean the Jules Verne, HG Wells . . . type of a story—a charming romance intermingled with scientific fact . . . Not only do these amazing tales make tremendously interesting reading—they are always instructive. They supply knowledge that we might not otherwise obtain—and they supply it in a very palatable form. For the best of these modern writers of scientifiction have the knack of imparting knowledge, and even inspiration, without once making us aware that we are being taught.

Gernsback emphasizes that *scientifiction* is an essentially new art form, which (before Edgar Allan Poe and Jules Verne) simply could not exist previously (Ibid.):

> It must be remembered that we live in entirely new world. Two hundred years ago, stories of this kind were not possible. Science, through its various branches of mechanics, electricity, astronomy, etc., enters so intimately into all our lives today, and we have become rather prone to take new inventions and discoveries for granted. Our entirely mode of living has changed with the present progress, and it is little wonder, therefore, that many fantastic situations—impossible 100 years ago—are brought about today. It is in these situations that the new romancers find their inspiration

There is a certain similarity between Soviet literary criticism (leaving aside its ideological rhetoric) and Gernsback's understanding of *scientifiction*'s specific nature. B. Mikhailovsky, the author of the "Fantastic Fiction" entry in *The Literary Encyclopedia* of 1929–1939, proposed to distinguish between a materialist fiction (as written by J. Swift, N. Gogol, M. Saltykov-Shchedrin, or V. Mayakovsky) and an idealist fiction (A. Strindberg, or G. Huysmans), defining the status of "science fiction" (he uses quotation marks) as follows (1939: 585):

> The conventional nature of "science fiction" is clearly manifest in Edgar Poe, sometimes in Herbert Wells; in Jules Verne it might be veiled by scientist language. However, in other cases the artist's hypothesis and technological or scientific foresight are so close to each other, the degree of artistic conventionalism and deviation from likelihood are so slight that the work ceases to be perceived as fiction and goes beyond it, into the realm of credible prediction (Jules Verne's submarine, hydroplane, etc.). It should be kept in mind that utopia, whether technological or social, can be constructed not only on "real possibilities", but also on "abstract, formal, empty possibilities" (Hegel). On the basis of such "empty possibilities" Wells has sometimes misinterpreted the prospects of social history in idealist and reactionary terms (degeneration of humankind under socialism, etc.).

In other words, for the Soviet ideological orthodoxy, science fiction was the realm of artistic hypotheses, scientific foresight, and descriptions of technical inventions which, due to relentless logic of scientific and technical progress, should arise in the nearest future. We just want to emphasize it now: scientific ideas, technical imagination should find their place in the science fiction. One could even imagine the consequences of technical innovation in socialist and capitalist societies. However, any extrapolation of "science fiction" as understood in this way into the field of social forecasting was seen as politically rather unreliable, since the communist future as a form of social organization of humanity could not be discussed. It was the best and it was inevitable in only one universal form. There was no place for fantasy and fantastic in this realm.

"Truth is One and the Same": Ivan Efremov meets Edmund Husserl

The *technological and scientist* attitude can be found in the works of the founders of the Soviet version of science fiction. For them, sci-fi was a new literary genre that had no parallels in the past. Ivan Efremov (1908–1972), one of the most influential writers and thinkers of his time, once formulated (1971: 5) that

> . . . science fiction is a product of our century, and it is sharply different from pure fiction, fairy tales or other types of previous literature, it is not akin to any works of the past. What is the basis of science fiction? Where is the criterion for distinguishing it from other types of literature? Only in one thing: in attempt at scientific explanation of the phenomena described, in revealing causality by scientific methods, without referring to a mysterious destiny or the will of the gods. As soon as religion ceased to satisfy the intellectual, science took up its place in his general outlook. There could be no emptiness here for a thinking, intelligent being. This gave inevitable rise to a special type of literature where the explanation of incentives and accidents, morals and goals was abandoned not to empirical observation, not to a mysterious combination of circumstances, but to the regularities of world structure, society, and historical development. This path requires from the wordsmith huge erudition, discovery of new ways in the analysis of real-life situations, pursuit of other means of expression.

It is this fundamental scientism that predetermined Efremov's attitude towards Ray Bradbury, his great American contemporary, whose writings, he believed, were wrongly attributed to sci-fi, but were in fact testimonies to his distrust in science and its achievements and his disbelief in its positive impact on humanity. In his later writings, Efremov modified his views. In a large narration of *The Bull's Hour*, he contemptuously mentioned the "antlike false socialism in China", and described "another future" for a part of the mankind that admittedly left the Earth on the eve of the great era of cosmic expansion and organized another form of political civilization somewhere. Their names would seem "Chinese" for an untrained reader,[4] but they could not overcome their technological

4. It was the time of the most acute conflicts between the Soviet Union and Mao Zedong's People's Republic of China. However, semiofficially, the book was estimated as politically suspect and even as a hidden parody of the Soviet regime. It was removed from public libraries near the end of the 1970s.

backwardness as compared with the Earth, etc. However, it was an attempt to demonstrate another possible (dead-end) human future.

A scientist representation of the Other in most of his earlier writing is remarkably optimistic and allows for a variety of intelligent life-forms in the SF universe, which can only confirm the efficiency of this model of relating to the Other. The sci-fi universe is being inhabited according to certain logical patterns, and contacts between earthlings and the inhabitants of exo-planets are effective when these patterns are understood and strictly observed. All inhabitants of exoplanets pass in their development through the Era of Disunity, the Era of World Unity, the Era of Common Labor (it consists of the Ages of Simplification, Realignment, the First Abundance, and Cosmos), and the Great Circle Era (2016). At this last stage, civilizations forming a galactic alliance start to exchange their scientific and technological advances by means of radio communication. Much of this information still remains incomprehensible to earthlings since some Great Circle civilizations are millions of years ahead of our planet, but the heroes of Efremov's *Andromeda Nebula* have no doubt that these achievements will also be mastered due to the unity of historical development (and the efficient operations of the "Memory Machines").

The fact that this galactic progression is based on the general laws of logic and mathematics is not questioned by anyone. Trying to contact with the creature discovered on the exo-planet, the captain of the Earth's spaceship draws "Pythagoras' Trousers" in the sand, because all sentient beings should understand geometry since its laws are the same for our entire Universe (Gurevich, 1968). A starship crew sends out radio messages containing Mendeleev's Periodic Table to distant exo-planets, believing that rational beings of any species will necessarily comprehend its contents (Snegov, 2010). Based on the unity of mathematical principles (in the sense that there can be no different mathematics since mathematics is one and the same), the engineer from our planet, having at his disposal the time traveling device left by aliens, creates a similar machine, while at the same time fixing some shortcomings of the replicated prototype. He is convinced that whatever the highest level of development that electronics and cybernetics may have reached in the alien world, their foundations are inevitably the same. Mathematics and logic cannot differ and therefore the mind of space aliens is identical to the mind of earthlings (Martynov, 1966).

All this cannot but remind us of Edmund Husserl's famous formula: "What is true is absolutely, intrinsically true: truth is one and the same, whether men or non-men, angels or gods apprehend and judge it. Logical laws speak of truth in this ideal unity, set over against the real multiplicity of races, individuals and experiences, and it is of this ideal unity that we all speak when we are not confused by relativism" (2001: 79). But while grasping this uniform truth, Husserl sets up a certain hierarchy (Ibid.: 95):

> As adults stand to children, as mathematicians stand to us laymen, so a higher species of thinking beings, e.g., of angels, could stand to men. Such words and concepts have no achievable sense for us, since certain peculiarities of our mental constitution stand in the way. A normal man takes about five years to understand the theory of Abelian functions or even to grasp its concepts. It might be the case that a mil-

> lennium would be needed for a humanly constituted being to grasp angelic functions, though he can hardly hope to live as long as a century. But such an absolute unattainability, rooted in the natural limits of a specific constitution, would not be the one that absurdities and senseless statements offer.

Here we can see the possible collision of the human mind with two types of contradictions: in the first case, what we are still not capable of comprehending will seem contradictory and incomprehensible to us; in the second case, we will perceive things as contradictory since they are naturally so. In this second case, our mind is equal to the minds of non-humans, angels, and gods, for they also cannot but face such contradictions. Angels engaged in mathematics may use other methods of comprehending mathematical truths, but their foundations and theorems are identical to ours. Angels or extraterrestrial creatures, as well as the members of the *Great Circle*, will be dealing with the same mathematics. The idea might seem strange, but it was quite natural for those who organized missions of the automatic spacecrafts Voyager 1 and Voyager 2 to meet nonhuman civilizations somewhere in deep space: they engraved mathematic formulas and drawings on golden plates, being inspired, as we dare to admit, not only by their sciences, but also by the hard science fiction of their youth.

The Universe Disenchanted: Max Weber visits the Space Opera

We shall roughly call the second mode of representing the Other in sci-fi literature *anti-anthropic*. Here, it is important to emphasize that the mere depiction of sentient beings or monsters does not form a sufficient basis for attributing such sci-fi works to the *anti-anthropic* mode of representing the Other. In those works, where the first *scientist* mode is clearly dominant, one can find hippos from Aldebaran, arachnids from Altair, or snake-men from Vega (Snegov, 2010). Their contacts with earthlings, though highly problematic, are universally valid in every mathematically possible world. Even if mankind encounters a clearly hostile extraterrestrial civilization, it turns out that this hostility is caused exclusively by social conditions, for example, by a political regime based on tyranny, while the common ground of rational mathematical foundations is, on the contrary, the key to reconciliation and cooperative action.[5]

5. In the third part of his trilogy *Men as Gods,* Sergey Snegov narrates the story of the *Ramirs* civilization, which is superior to humanity in its capabilities (both technical and mental), but the attempts of earthlings to contact them are met either with hostility or indifference. At the end of the story, the protagonist comes to a guess that the attempts of contact were used by the *Ramirs* for their own purposes, as part of an experiment where earthlings were assigned the role of experimental ants or rabbits. A similar form of representing the Other is described by Clifford Simak in the story called *Immigrant*, where a more developed civilization organizes something like school-lessons for earthlings with outstanding abilities. In both cases, a rational explanation of the actions of a more developed civilization proves to be inaccessible to earthlings, but there is no doubt that these actions have, nevertheless, a rational basis. Such sci-fi plots can be viewed as a correlate of religious and philosophical providentialism, as the Bible's passage of ". . . not a single hair will fall from the head of a person without the will of God" to Hegel's "cunning of the world Reason"—where the rationality of higher powers is postulated, but the foundations of this rationality are obviously hidden from ordinary human understanding.

The distinctive feature of this *anti-anthropic* mode of representing the Other is associated not with external manifestations of SF works, which could be objectified, but with their inner side with what can be called the specific message of this genre. The sci-fi message, in turn, is a reflection and crystallization of certain social processes and radical changes in the European mentality, defined by Max Weber as the "disenchantment of the world". Weber characterizes the world of European modernity by the process of "intellectual rationalization", but points out that this rationalization does not necessarily mean that modern man, unlike primitives, has more knowledge about the conditions of his existence. According to Weber (2008: 35), this rationalization means something different:

> It means the knowledge or belief that *if we only wanted* to *we could* learn at any time that there are, in principle, no mysterious unpredictable forces in play, but that all things—in principle—*can be controlled through calculation*. This, however, means the disenchantment of the world. No longer, like the savage, who believed that such forces existed, do we have to resort to magical means to gain control over or pray to the spirits. Technical means and calculation work for us instead.

Thus, the "disenchanted" world is a calculated world, and it is well known that the word ratio also has, among other things, the meaning of "calculation".[6] At the same time, the ideal of scientific knowledge in modern societies is inextricably linked to the "exact" sciences, where accuracy is ensured by the use of a mathematical apparatus, that is, by means of "calculation". Calculation, according to Weber, replaced modern man's appeal to magic or spiritual prayers, and that is why he uses the term "disenchantment of the world". Here one can find a direct clue to the mentality that is reflected in sci-fi. In many regards, it accounts for the popularity of this genre. The very name of the genre—*science fiction*—perfectly conveys the dual, intermediate, or transitional nature of this mentality; *science* indicates the completeness of "intellectualistic rationalization", *fiction* is the preservation of a magical view of the world. To assert, as Ivan Efremov does in the above sci-fi definition, that the element of fiction plays a role strictly subordinate to a scientist "rationalization" of the world, means, as the history of the genre has shown, a substantial impoverishment of its subject matter, that is, a simplification of its diversity. The spirit of SF presupposes the maintenance of a balance between these two elements. However, the achievement of this balance, which should ideally approach harmony, is significantly complicated not so much by the questionable "rationalization" of fiction, but by the fact

6. In pre-modern societies, the prospect of universal calculation was well known and feared, as evidenced by the numerous citations of Verses 25–27 from the Book of Daniel ("God has numbered your kingdom, and finished . . . You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting . . . Your kingdom has been divided"), interpreted as a prediction of imminent death (of the individual or society as a whole). Calculation is understood in traditional societies as an omen of imminent doom: "Much could be said about the prohibitions formulated in certain traditions against the taking of censuses . . . , if it were to be stated that such operations . . . , have among other inconveniences that of contributing to the cutting down of the length of human life, but the statement would simply not be believed; nevertheless, in some countries the most ignorant peasants know very well, as a fact of ordinary experience, that if animals are counted too often far more of them die than if they are not counted; but in the eyes of moderns who call themselves 'enlightened' such things cannot be anything but 'superstitions'" (Guenon, 1972: 144).

that the magical relation retained here is a relation to the world already "disenchanted", to the world, after the words of Friedrich Hölderlin, out of which "the gods have gone". The visible image of the "disenchanted" world is a cosmic abyss, its scale disproportionately huge if compared to the human dimension, and was gradually disclosed through the destruction of the previous methods for the domestication of the inhuman universe such as geocentric illusions, the attempts to build constellations out of chaotic clusters of stars, or to relate the movement of heavenly bodies to the vicissitudes of human destiny, and so on. The dramatic experience of the inhumanity of the Universe, which, nevertheless, remains the only human abode, is sci-fi's keynote which is so obvious and undeniable that it is easily forgotten not only by critics looking for a precise definition of the genre, but even by sci-fi authors themselves.

Transcendental Aesthetics and the Black Abyss of Cosmic Horror: Kant and Lovecraft

The same dramatic experience may be discovered in Kant's famous statement concerning the harmony between the starry sky overhead and the moral law residing in the depths of the human soul. This statement is mostly understood in the sense that moral law is just as amazing as cosmic harmony. Indeed, a moral law is impossible without at least three premises, each completely implausible. As one may know, what is necessary is the absolute freedom of human choice between good and evil, for if this freedom is limited by some thing (by external coercion, or by human nature itself), then human beings will not be able to perform actions due to their free choice, whereas moral law is based on freedom. Additionally, human immortality is necessary, since it alone can ensure the triumph of the retribution principle whose absence turns the moral law into mere wishful thinking. Finally, only the existence of an Almighty God can guarantee the availability of the first two premises. Therefore, the moral law is as amazing as the harmony of the starry sky.

However, if we quote Kant in full (2002: 203), something else is revealed:

> Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and reverence, the more frequently and persistently one's meditation deals with them: the starry sky above me and the moral law within me. Neither of them do I need to seek or merely suspect outside my purview, as veiled in obscurities or [as lying] in the extravagant: I see them before me and connect them directly with the consciousness of my existence. The first thing starts from the place that I occupy in the external world of sense and expands the connection in which I stand into the immensely large, with worlds upon worlds and systems of systems, and also into boundless times of their periodic motion, the beginning and continuance thereof. The second thing starts from my invisible self, my personality, and exhibits me in a world that has true infinity but that is discernible only to the understanding, and with that world (but thereby simultaneously also with all those visible worlds) I cognize myself not, as in the first case, in a merely contingent connection, but in a universal and necessary one. The first sight, of a countless multitude of worlds, annihilates, as

> it were, my importance as an animal creature that, after having for a short time been provided (one knows not how) with vital force, must give back again to the planet (a mere dot in the universe) the matter from which it came. The second sight, on the contrary, elevates infinitely my worth as that of an intelligence by my personality, in which the moral law reveals to me a life independent of animality and even of the entire world of sense, at least as far as can be gleaned from the purposive determination of my existence by this law, a determination that is not restricted to conditions and boundaries of this life but proceeds to infinity.

It is clear that Kant does not unite the starry sky and moral law, but opposes them, and does so twice. The second opposition is particularly consonant with what we have said above: the starry sky "annihilates . . . my importance as an animal creature that . . . must give back again to the planet (a mere dot in the universe) the matter from which it came". The enormous scale of this annihilation where the human being is endowed with a gift of life only for a moment and then gives it back to the planet, which is no more than a point in the universe—as well as a shocking perception of infinity, of worlds over worlds and systems over systems,—saturates this hypnotic image with pathetics similar in tonality with the famous confession of one of the founders of science fiction in America, Howard Phillips Lovecraft (2005: 167):[7]

> The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age.

The analogies between Kant's agnosticism and Lovecraft's merciful ignorance are thoroughly explored in the book written by a prominent contemporary philosopher, Graham Harman (2012). We should note right away that in the already mentioned text, Lovecraft speaks not only of the black seas of infinite outer space, but also of the depths of time that defy any rational calculation. He wrote that "Theosophists have guessed at the awesome grandeur of the cosmic cycle wherein our world and human race form transient incidents. They have hinted at strange survivals in terms which would freeze the blood if not masked by a bland optimism" (Lovecraft, 2005: 167). Evidently, Lovecraft refers to the four Yugas of Hinduism, whose duration is measured in tens of thousands of years, and which, in turn, form one era of Manu, or Manvantara. There are 14 such Manvantaras,

7. Lovecraft is often referred as a horror-fiction writer, but ". . . his later works—those of his stories belonging to the Cthulhu Mythos—attempted to develop a distinctive species of 'cosmic horror', employing premises drawn from SF: other dimensions, invasion by aliens, and interference with human cultural and physiological evolution. He tried to convey a sense that the Universe is essentially horrible and hostile to humankind by means of a distinctive prose style which extends by gradual degrees from a quasiclinical mode into passages of dense, highly adjectival description" (Clute, Nichols, 1993c: 736–737). In addition, Lovecraft's influence on the subsequent development of various sci-fi genres is evident.

and therefore, from tens of millennia in terms of time, one should proceed to hundreds of thousands and even to millions of years (Haudry, 2014; Thiriet, 2001). For Lovecraft, such a mind-boggling scale of time measurement is, nevertheless, a futile attempt to order, to harmonize, and to mask the revealed darkness of time, suggesting a bland optimism in a situation where sheer horror would be a more adequate response.

The doctrine of the "awesome grandeur of the cosmic cycle wherein our world and human race form transient incidents" opens up, regardless of its truth or falsity, impressive perspectives for the artistic representing of the Other (other sentient beings, other worlds, etc.), including those completely unknown to contemporary science fiction. Indeed, from the point of view of this doctrine, the question is quite legitimate: is the Manvantara, in which we all reside, confined within our Solar System, or does it encompass the whole of the material universe? In other words, if we take some solar system that is very distant from us as an example, will it have a different Manvantara or the same type as ours? The humankind inhabiting the Globe may form only a tiny fragment of the "humankind" in the whole Universe, stretching to the scale of cosmic infinity. Each of these countless "fragments" of universal humanity is located around one particular star and on one particular planet, which finds itself in the same unique and specific conditions as the Earth does, each has its own psychology and anatomy (not necessarily the humanoid one). If the logic of the cosmic cycles unfolding is that of top-down degradation, then it follows that every mankind will belong to a different period of the cycle, to a "golden" or an "iron" age. In other words, it is possible to admit the existence of an infinite number of "extraterrestrial Manvantaras" unfolding within the space-time continuum. In this case, the "cyclical condition" of some planets will be reduced to the infra-human condition, while on the contrary, other planets will be the center of superhuman condition where their unfolding can take place in various directions. Lovecraft himself, referring to the doctrine of cosmic cycles, highlights its quantitative rather than qualitative aspect: it is important for him to focus the reader's attention on the fundamental incomprehensibility of ancient cycles, and to demonstrate the entire known history of mankind as only an insignificant moment in comparison to the scale of cosmic cycles. The infinity of space and time is contrasted with the finitude of the human mind:

> The actual cosmos of pattern'd energy, including what we know as matter, is of a contour and nature absolutely impossible of realization by the human brain; and the more we learn of it the more we perceive this circumstance. All we can say of it, is that it contains no visible central principle so like the physical brains of terrestrial mammals that we may reasonably attribute to it the purely terrestrial and biological phaenomenon call'd conscious purpose; and that we form, even allowing for the most radical conceptions of the relativist, so insignificant and temporary a part of it (whether all space be infinite or curved, and transgalactic distances constant or variable, we know that within the bounds of our stellar system no relativistic circumstance can banish the approximate dimensions we recognize. (Lovecraft, 2013: 927–928)

Only Lovecraft's imitators pay attention to the qualitative aspect of cosmic cycles, linking some of them to the emergence and dominance of the characters in his mythological pantheon. It should be noted that Lovecraft's fiction is so convincing that a considerable number of his fans are sure that the creator of Cthulhu and other ancient gods was indeed coming in contact with them by means of magical operations (Steadmen, 2015).

However, Lovecraft's heroes, faced with these manifestations of the ancient gods, hardly thought of drawing "Pythagoras' Trousers" in the sand. The point here is not that the representation of the Other takes on an obviously threatening form, since even in its milder versions (Weinbaum, 2008), the behavior of mysterious barrel-shaped creatures with tentacles and chains of eyes upon their bodies remains completely inexplicable. The question as to which of the cases described above by Husserl we are dealing with here (with a contradiction that we cannot yet grasp, or with a contradiction within reality itself) loses its meaning when confronted with such representations of the Other. These creatures probably have other mathematics ("one and one, two, yes, two and two, four, no"), but how is it possible?

For an explanation, one may turn to Kant's transcendental aesthetics with his decisive conclusion is that all our contemplations are possible only when combined with two *a priori* forms of our sensibility—space and time. These two forms, generated neither as a result of our experience nor as a reflection of real space, are independent of our senses, and time has the same degree of reality. These forms precede every possible experience in the sense that with everything we feel, we always feel as residing within some space and time. We cannot conceive of anything that would not take up any space and would not have any duration of existence. This, according to Kant, is the best proof that space and time, which we are dealing with, are "pure", i.e., transcendental forms of our sensibility. Since these forms precede every possible experience, they are the same ones for every human being, and serve as the basis for geometry (space) and arithmetic (time).

However, they are only universally valid for either human beings or for all living creatures whose *a priori* forms of sensibility are space and time. Kant, however, admits exceptions to this rule common to mankind: "For we cannot judge at all whether the intuitions of other thinking beings are bound to the same conditions that limit our intuition and that are universally valid for us" (1998: 160). The human mode of perceiving things is not binding for every sentient being; one can imagine creatures that have a pair of alternative *a priori* forms of sensibility, not space and time. In addition, there are possibly creatures having only one a *priori* form, or more than two forms. Obviously, for beings of this kind (Kant speaks of the "thinking being") human mathematics and its propositions will not have their universal validity and necessity they have for humans. No mutual understanding between a human and a thinking being of another constitution would be possible. SF authors just try to design and to study the chances for communications without any underlying forms of *a priori* synthesis with the means of artistic imagination. To support this argument, Wolfe suggests that "Since monsters symbolize the unknown, the encounter with the monster is often caused either by humans breaching the barriers that separate them from the monster's realm, or *vice versa*" (1979: 187).

To the extent that the Other is indispensable for the individual to perceive himself as a human, the Other should be portrayed as distinctly inhuman. The differences between the Human and the Other should be manifest, and in this respect, the depiction of monsters by SF is more fruitful than that of alien humanoids differing from humans only by their position on the evolutionary staircase. Critics have observed that the signs of rotting flesh, often accompanying sci-fi descriptions of monsters (e.g., in the *War of the Worlds* by Herbert Wells), are intended to evoke not only a natural disgust in the reader (i.e., to emphasize the difference between the human and the Other), but also to inspire him with a subconscious superiority of a living being over a dying one (Kerslake, 2007).

Is It Possible to Contact the Other? Ray Bradbury as a Postcolonial Writer

We shall call another way of representing the Other as "vibrational", drawing on an argument formulated by Guenon (2004: 157–158) in his criticism of occult theories of the first half of the twentieth century:

> If we admit the theory that explains all sensations by more or less rapid vibratory movements, and if we consider a chart showing the vibrations per second corresponding to each kind of sensation, we are struck by the fact that the intervals representing what our senses transmit to us are very small in relation to the whole. They are separated by other intervals wherein nothing is perceptible to us; and further, it is not possible to assign a determinate limit to the increasing or decreasing frequency of the vibrations, so that we must consider the chart as subject to prolongation on both extremes by indefinite possibilities of sensations, which for us correspond to no actual sensation . . . If such beings are of such a nature that nothing which provokes sensation in us provokes sensation in them, then so far as we are concerned these beings are as if they did not exist, and conversely. Even if they were at our side we would be no better off for it, and probably would not even perceive their presence, or in any case would probably not recognize them as living beings.

One of its most striking examples is *The Martian Chronicles* by Ray Bradbury (1979). The earthlings and the Martians commit strange encounters that cannot be conceived in customary terms of a co-bodily presence (as the common pictures of the contacts of humans with the extraterrestrial monsters presuppose). Martians do vibrate as humans probably do vibrate for them, being here and nowhere at the same time. This theory, if we dare to follow Guenon in calling this argument a theory, explains many things in *The Martian Chronicles*; however, it is only partially significant for what follows in a sociological sense.

There is a direct historical and sociological explanation of the Other in *The Martian Chronicles*, where a fantastic extrapolation of North American colonization and the inevitable contact with the indigenous population comes to the fore. *The Martian Chronicles* might be interpreted as a collection of stories about the first Europeans who arrived in North America and then advanced to the West of the continent. The Indians turn into Martians, whereas the wilderness, which impressed the first settlers, turns into exotic

Martian landscapes. Ultimately, *The Martian Chronicles* convey the uniqueness of the historical experience of exploring new territories, although they romanticize and mystify this experience at the same time, clearing it from the rudeness and cruelty entirely unacceptable in the twentieth century (Wolfe, 2001: 103–123). This interpretation is obvious, and Ray Bradbury has expressed both direct and indirect agreement with it in his many interviews. At the same time, the picture of a Martian civilization that is quite powerful, technologically advanced, and then, for reasons unknown to the colonizers, disappears (or ceases to make contact with them), bears very little resemblance to North American Indians and their traditional way of life.

It is well known that Ray Bradbury called *The Martian Chronicles* "an accidental novel", referring to the fact that their publisher, his namesake Walter Bradbury, refused to accept the stories for publication separately, proposing to compile them into the one volume. From the publisher's point of view, it would have been advantageous to do otherwise, but this random amalgamation explains the literary heterogeneity of *The Martian Chronicles*, as repeatedly pointed out by critics. At first glance, this heterogeneity is especially evident in the descriptions of the Martian civilization since the stories where the reader can get this fragmentary information (only eight out of the whole of twenty eight stories)[8] contain obvious contradictions.

They tell the reader an "official" history of Martian civilization: having lost three expeditions to Mars (the circumstances of their loss are known only to the reader, but not to the characters of *The Martian Chronicles*), the fourth expedition discovers a huge number of deceased Martians in the homes of an abandoned Martian city who have died, as tests show, as a result of chickenpox. There are only a very small number of Martians (about 150) who have not been infected, so they try to avoid any contact with the colonists. If a reader accepts this version of events as true, there are only minor inconsistencies that can be easily ignored. For example, Sam Parkhill (*The Off Season*), fleeing from the Martians that chase him, kills some of them with pistol shots, but fails to notice that the dead are crumbling like some kind of glass constructions. In addition, the Martians inform Parkhill of the nuclear disaster on Earth before it has even occurred.

Perhaps the reader can find the clue to these eight plots in the Bradbury story called Night Meeting. Here, the hero of the story, the truck driver Thomas Gomez, meets a Martian on a mountain road. Although he talks to him, he cannot touch his hand and sees the stars through his body's outline. Here we see the above-described case of crossing the boundary values of perceptive intervals. Both are experiencing this borderline condition: "'There was a thing to the light, to the hills, the road,' said the Martian. 'I felt the strangeness, the road, the light, and for a moment I felt as if I were the last man alive on this world'. 'So did I' said Tomas" (Bradbury, 1979: 92).

Thus, an encounter with the Other (a Martian) is possible only in a special "borderline" condition, and the reader sees that the meeting of Martians with the first three expeditions takes place in conditions close either to dreaming (the first expedition), or to

8. *Ylla, The Earth Men, The Third Expedition,—And the Moon Be Still as Bright, Night Meeting, The Musicians, The Martian, The Off Season.*

madness and hallucinations (the second one), or to mass suggestion (the third). It should be noted that the inhabitants of the mental asylum, where the second expedition arrives, demonstrate the ability to create a sheer variety of creatures and objects (Ibid.: 32):

> A man squatted alone in darkness. Out of his mouth issued a blue flame which turned into the round shape of a small naked woman. It flourished on the air softly in vapors of cobalt light, whispering and sighing. The captain nodded at another corner. A woman stood there, changing. First, she was embedded in a crystal pillar, then she melted into a golden statue, finally a staff of polished cedar, and back to a woman. All through the midnight hall people were juggling thin violet flames, shifting, changing, for nighttime was the time of change and affliction.

It is the ability demonstrated by the Martians who came to Sam Parkhill (*The Off Season*). By following the members of the second expedition, the reader may assume that it is this ability that is the sign of deviation for the Martians. However, another assumption that this deviation is not the ability to create illusory creatures and objects, but the madman's inability to control them is also possible. Taking the astronauts wearing the identical overalls to be the captain's replicants, the Martians, first of all, see that these replicants do not disappear, do not change, and therefore are not controlled by their creator. In addition, the story of the third expedition induces an attentive reader to accept this version. The Martians create an illusory image of a typical American town assuming the appearance of the deceased relatives and friends of the crew members. After eliminating sixteen members from the third expedition, the Martians return to their authentic appearance.

Of course, we need a more detailed and comprehensive analysis of *The Martian Chronicles* finest details, including the so-called "apocrypha" inserted in the last "complete" edition approved by Ray Bradbury, to obtain solid conclusions. At this stage, we will just limit ourselves to assumptions: first, the Martians, unlike earthlings, had the ability to put themselves deliberately into the "borderline" conditions. This fact is also confirmed by the story of the first expedition, where Ill K kills astronauts in the dimension of reality as seen by his wife, Illa, in her dreams. Second, this ability was probably used as a weapon (the story of the third expedition) to protect themselves (*The Martian*).

Of course, if we consider *The Martian Chronicles* in terms of representing the Other, the Frontier Myth used in this book should come to the fore: "Bradbury's novel is, at heart, a critical rereading of the Conquest of the West, an attempt at giving a voice to the conquered people who Western literature so frequently frames as fundamentally 'Other'. The miniseries seems, on the surface, to be an attempt at conveying the same message, echoing many of the same story beats and capturing the same Conquest narrative" (Cote, 2013: 193). However, if the goal of *The Martian Chronicles*, like many other SF works, was to give a voice to the conquered people or to a minority, then Bradbury had to find a way to intrigue his audience. The image of the Martian civilization that he created, which kept its mystery away from earthlings, was the best means to achieve this.

One might suggest that our next logically consistent step would be an attempt to proceed from describing the two modes of representing the Other in sci-fi to the disclosing

of their social or cultural and historical preconditions. In other words, it would be necessary to explain why the first mode, the *scientist* one, was predominant in Soviet science fiction, while the second, the *anti-anthropic* mode, inspired the authors from the United States and Great Britain to a much greater extent (although authors such as Isaac Asimov, Robert Sheckley, and the majority of contemporary hard sci-fi authors should, of course, be classified as scientists). However, this step requires a special study, which would be premature without the problematization of the topic of the Other in SF done in this article.

Another crucial aspect of the theme must be emphasized here. Since the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978, the concept of the Other, which had been the domain of various phenomenological theories in philosophy and sociology, has acquired distinct political connotations. This is due to the fact that the connection of this concept with the problem of identity came to the fore. Every "We" needs a "non-We" or an "Other" for its existence. Since the publication of Said's seminal book, post-colonial as well as de-colonial theories have come a long way, opening up great prospects for using their critical tools in the study of science fiction.

While drawing a demarcation line dividing what belongs and what does not belong to a given culture, it is crucially important to marginalize everything that resides outside of it. An opposition is necessary between the "We" and the "Other", which takes the guise of opposition between "Human" and "Inhuman". Voltaire's famous formula "If the Other did not exist, he should have been invented" is fully applicable to the figures of the Savage, the Alien, etc., as outlined in literature, the visual arts, the cinema, and in everyday life. When a culture imposes its perception of the Other on another one, it starts to see the Other not as he really is, but as he should be.

The Other therefore occupies a privileged place within science fiction. Sci-fi offers the broadest opportunities for the search for new forms of cultural identity, a search associated with the boldest experiments in politics, ethics, and anthropology. The SF connection with various forms of military, political, and cultural imperialism is highly problematic (although the fact that SF is born primarily in the mightiest world powers, such as the USA, USSR, Great Britain, and France is certainly not accidental). The exploration of the cosmic depths, the discovery of new planets, and the ambiguous desire to discover extraterrestrial sentient life—key themes of SF—can be viewed as a specific refraction of the political and cultural doctrines of imperialism.

This, perhaps, is explicated in Western SF through the exploitation of the theme of space commerce, whereas it is nowhere described in Soviet science fiction. However, even the altruistic missions of space explorers can be viewed as a depiction of religious missions of past centuries. Modern society cannot exist without defining itself through its relationship to the Other, whose figure, therefore, becomes an integral element of cultural development. To the extent that modern society changes its perception of what it is and what place it occupies in the world, the Other becomes a social reality whose function is to confirm (or refute) what this society expects of itself. Modern society needs its own

distinction from the Other because it is through the perception of this distinction that it can guess either at the effectiveness of its growth or at the depths of its fall.

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Социальная проблематика Другого в научной фантастике

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В статье научно-фантастическая литература рассматривается в связи с некоторыми аспектами такой социологической и антропологической проблемы, как репрезентация Другого. При всем многообразии жанров научной фантастики исследователь всегда имеет дело либо с непосредственной репрезентацией Другого (существа, отличного от актуального человека), либо с опосредствованной формой этой репрезентации, когда перед читателем или зрителем раскрывается Другой Мир, а через него и Другой в первоначальном смысле

этого термина. Дано описание двух способов репрезентации Другого в научной фанастике, которые условно обозначены как сциентистский и анти-антропный. Сциентистская репрезентация конструирует исключительно рациональные условия отношения к Другому, и ее историко-философским коррелятом может рассматриваться учение Э. Гуссерля об истине, одинаковой для людей, не-людей, ангелов и богов. Анти-антропная репрезентация, более привлекательная для авторов научной фантастики, берет свой исток в характерном для человека модерна переживании «расколдовывания» мира, в частности, в трагическом ощущении несоизмеримости конечного человеческого существования и бесконечных космических бездн. Историко-философским коррелятом анти-антропной репрезентации Другого можно считать учение И. Канта об априорных формах чувственности, которые у других мыслящих существ могут быть иными, и поэтому модель отношения к Другому не может строиться на рациональных основаниях. В качестве литературного примера, где обнаруживаются эти два способа репрезентации Другого, рассмотрены «Марсианские хроники» Рэя Брэдбери, которые, с одной стороны, представляют собой фантастическую экстраполяцию колонизации Северной Америки и неизбежных контактов с коренным населением. С другой стороны, в «Марсианских хрониках» изображена могущественная и технически развитая марсианская цивилизация, которая по непонятным причинам исчезает, или перестает контактировать с колонизаторами. Комбинирование этих двух способов репрезентации Другого позволяет Брэдбери эффективно романтизировать и мистифицировать уникальный исторический опыт колонизации, модифицировать миф о фронтире.

Ключевые слова: научная фантастика, Другой, монстр, репрезентация, сциентизм

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The Soviet Song Statement of the 1960s–1970s in the Perspective of the Strong Program in Cultural Sociology

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The article considers the potential of a strong program of cultural sociology in the research of the Soviet song policy in the 1960s and 1970s. Mass musical genres of the cultural industry era are usually considered in the historicist optics of emancipation and diversification. With such optics, institutional contexts serve only as a background against which the evolution of the post-folklore unfolds. The disadvantage of this approach is the uncritical mixing of the tools of classicist criticism with modern tools of social theory. The Soviet song Estrada formed its own type of song statements by simultaneously rebuilding the institutions of social performance, musical political economy, and aesthesis that served these institutions. Non-reductionist optics, which, from Alexander's point of view lie at the intersection of structuralist and hermeneutical tools, have a pronounced specificity when applied to mass musical genres. The system of intonation combined with the poetic word brought to a state of pure mechanical self-reproduction, according to Adorno, somehow pushes us to describe and decipher the system of meanings of such a product. In order that the search for thickness in the description of musical phenomena does not lead to new reductions, it is necessary to abandon what, at first glance, connects sound with culture, and replace the concepts of "song" and "music" with "song statement" and "musical statement". Using the concepts of "nobility", "authenticity", and "depth" that occupied post-war song discourses, we demonstrate the mechanisms of their circulation within the institute of Estrada in connection with the topoi of song statement that induce social imagination. To do this, we add the attitude for a thick description, in which the cultural meanings supplied by song statements appear in close connection with the Soviet social imagination, to the usual pattern of analysis of the Adornian sociology of smash hits and chamber music forms.

Keywords: late Soviet Estrada, late Soviet mass song, song statement, cultural policy, the strong program in cultural sociology, thick description

This study is an attempt to revise various versions of the history of the Soviet mass song. Here we can identify a number of authoritative approaches, each of which exhaustively performs its own interpretive function, but does not grasp the main thing, that is, the relationship between song form and cultural policy. Because of this, the most interesting cases that demonstrate the geometric progression of the topics of the Soviet song Estrada from the 1920s to the 1970s remain out of sight. This is a bizarre symbiotic fusion of cultural industries with academic practices, the appropriation of jazz forms and their combination with a conservative request for song statement, the connection of the crooning style of singing with the request for a renewed and sanctioned spirituality of the

post-Stalin era, another reinvention of folklore, the formation of the image of a folk diva, and so on.

Research interest in this topic is complicated by the fact that the ideological implications of numerous memoirs, interviews, and essays easily penetrate the research field itself and infect the research lasnguage. Almost all Russian studies of Soviet song, with the exception of rare post-perestroika works, suffer from this fatal flaw. The reasons for this lie in the failed transition from dialectically radical methods of cultural research to more flexible and specific approaches related to micro-sociology, micro-history, cultural anthropology, and cultural studies. It is impossible not to take into account the insidiousness of the theme itself—the meaning of the song area was confirmed not only by musical methods and means of direct cultural policy, but also through public discussions which turned into a series of polemics disguised as memoirs, essays, "direct speech", instructions to youth, and political statements.

Another problem is that studies of Soviet song in Russia[1] fall into the trap of being falsely categorized as "Estrada studies". The difficulty of studying such seemingly simple areas as "Estrada", "jazz", "children's creativity" or "film music" is that there is a symbiosis of self-naming, commercial naming and subject area, which, depending on epistemological intentions, turn different sides each showing us completely different phenomena. The concept of "Estrada" is fraught with the danger of false objectivism, which, under the pretext of fixing and interpreting pseudo-historical events and trying to avoid critical modes of consideration of these phenomena, does not add anything to their true understanding and definition of their real place in the cultural system. From an institutional point of view, studies of Soviet songs fall into a philological and musicological trap: the musical part becomes the object of musicological analysis (however, musicologists themselves avoided such analysis since the song's musical text is usually banal), the poetic part is the subject of philological analysis, which demonstrates its impotence facing the secondary nature of such texts in such cases.

The official censored Soviet song culture of the late 1960s was neither a constructed nor a self-developing phenomenon. It was the product of a complex mix of Soviet cultural policies, public statements, and performative practices. With a few illustrative examples, I'm going to demonstrate that a strong program in cultural sociology (Alexander, 2003, 2006) can be used with a high degree of productivity to frame the concept of a song. Following the guidelines of a strong program should free the field of study of Soviet song and

1. Among the successful works about the song, resorting to a thick description, is the book by Artjoms Šela (2018), dedicated to the genealogy of folk songs in the first half of the 19th century. Oksana Bulgakova (2015) focuses on Soviet timbral and voice politics in her research on the Soviet voice medium. Her optics is based on the fact that the system of power and coercion, combined with technical media and borrowing of Western models, changes voices and creates their special history. Bulgakova creates her own type of thick description of the transformation of Soviet voices, bypassing the moment when public singing turns into public speech. In a strong paradigm, Sergey Zhuk (2010, 2011) writes his works about music in the system of Soviet society, creating a kind of phenomenology of the rock industry in a single city. Daria Zhurkova (2019) sums up the Soviet tradition of studying mass musical genres, without going beyond its language and highlighting not only the song genres themselves, but also separating art from manifestations of sociality, high from low, mass from non-mass, thus acting within the framework of the weakest theories. See also: Fahretdinov, 2018; Raku, 2017.

songwriting from the trap of naturalism, which, on the one hand, puts the researcher on the side of the carriers of song discourse and makes him a hermeneutist of poetic-ideological-musical fantasies, while on the other hand, locks him in an art-criticism ghetto. The unprecedented Soviet song project was supervised by various administrative authorities who produced a specific discourse, the study of which also requires a strong theory.

Let's see to what extent a strong theory can be applied to a particular phenomenon. For the study of musical processes, weak theories such as reductionist or schematic are traditionally used, with a large number of empirical examples compensating for the weakness of statements. Here is a gap between the sparse field of theory and the oversaturated field of practice. They are held together by force, or mechanically. If such a weak cultural sociology is quite applicable to traditional forms of musical reproduction, then, in relation to the artificial products of cultural policies, it does not have any heuristic benefits, and actually engages only in self-legitimization, parasitizing on sociologically-rich material. It is the phenomena of mass culture and media phenomena that, like no other, attracts research that replaces the productive structuralist-hermeneutical fusion with an unproductive hybrid of the exegesis of the inner voice of the composer/director/poet with a formal textual analysis. "Thickness" is intentionally eliminated. Sohor's and Asafyev's works on song are an "honest" example of weak cultural sociology. Asafyev, who in his early period was influenced by neo-Kantianism and Bergsonism, describes the musical form as a process of crystallization of selected intonations passed through the public body. The actors in this selection are both composers and listeners themselves. The song is not just a mass product, but an objective result of certain acoustic social processes and social consensus, for "there is a struggle for a new meaning of music, and therefore a proof of recognition of its ideological significance" (1971: 305). This approach can be strengthened if we rethink the role of media: the song was not only passed through public ears, but also changed its characteristics in the process of rhetorical suggestive design as a public statement, the subject of which has a certain rhetorical ethos and pathos.

In his post-war works, Sohor tries to strengthen weak explanations by using the concept of "the mode of being-ness": the genre completely changes its functions depending on the field of application, whether it is ritual, concert, mass-everyday, or theatrical (1959, 1974). To use Sohor's terminology, the post-war mass song tried to cover all four functions, destroying the specifics of its being-ness, or returning to it in a new quality.

To move away from the functionalist and naturalistic strategies for understanding song and song culture, I will focus on the concept of song statement as a public presentation of a topos. I will understand the formation of a song statement as a process of emancipation and the autonomization of cultural meanings. Using the construction "cultural sociological theory of mystery" (Kurakin, 2019), we can similarly refer to the cultural sociological theory of song statement. Like a mystery, song statement is at the intersection of the rational and irrational, and the affective and normative; it has its own temporality because it acts with delay, and its consequences for society are not at all those that were planned in the course of cultural policies that regulate song practices and song creativity. At first, it seems that the song artist "expresses" himself with the help of a song. But there

are "favorite songs", "song hits from movies", "songs at the request of radio listeners", all prerequisites and fruit of a symbiosis of cultural and media policies. Everything is ready to turn the song with its pathos of improvisationality, theatricality, and intimacy into an impersonal, abstract public song statement.

In this article, I will try to outline and solve a range of issues related to the Soviet song topics of the post-war period and the connection of the emerging song-thematic canons with Soviet cultural policy. At the beginning of the article, I will demonstrate how the formation of a song statement took place in the early Soviet period, under the influence of what factors and how the conditions for song propositionality were formed. This should lead us to a wide range of questions related to the understanding of song as a special kind of secular religion which acquires the features of universality as a result of the purposeful deconstruction of the system of song genres in the post-war period. The final result of this deconstruction is the persistent cultivation of thematic and performative self-reference as a paradigm of a song statement. The most important issue here is the internal changes in the social ontology of the song, which is determined by the ratio of private and public. These changes can be seen in the example of the transformation of the ethos of the Soviet performer in the movement from the natural-conditioned to the cultural-universal. The obvious timbre-acoustic patterns of male, female, and child are in fact not directly related to gender, age, or any other identity. Such concepts as "nobility", "sincerity", "restraint", and "soulfulness" are more important for constructing the performing ethos. The bearer of these characteristics becomes the ideal medium of the song statement, cleared of all "vulgar" and fully corresponding to the ideal type of "good song". Using the example of Lyudmila Zykina, I will show that the material equivalent of a "good song" is the boundless space of Russia itself, reflected in the bottomless depth of a woman's soul. In the final part of the article, I will indicate the connection of late Soviet discursive practices, which focus on the concept of "good song", with the process of the final formation of the song public sphere.

The Formation of a Song Statement in Early Soviet Musical Culture

The discussion about mass song after the 1917 revolution has its fixed beginning in Lunacharsky's problematic articles (1981), and the polemics between members of various musical unions and organizations (Nelson, 2004: 95–124; Ganzha, 2014a). This discussion was inspired not only by the declared new tasks facing the new society, but also by a number of implicit circumstances, including an ambivalent attitude to the romantic project, openness, and radicality of the early Soviet cultural policy, and the growth of the theoretical level of adherents of the tradition of melodism, etc.

In the process of its crystallization, the form of the song statement incorporates several varieties of performativity that are closely related to the cultural policies of the Soviet state. First, it is the performativity of the hero of the national-romantic plot. The performative canon of romantic singing is hesitation and uncertainty when entering a song. The singing hero has doubts, refusing for a long time, but if the song draws him into its vortex,

he cannot stop; his voice becomes stronger, it soars to the heavens, and his face and figure are transformed (cf. Franklin, 2014; Elliott, 2006: 251–266).

Another type of performativity is musical and scenic. Here, the singing shows not a falling-out of everyday life, but a stopping of the narrative, like a caesura in action. The meaning of this stop is to present a social and psychological portrait of the character; it is a play of the mask and the actor's personality, the shining of one persona through another.

Another type of performativity is crooning. Crooning includes the manner of microphone singing, performing with a damped and light sound, singing in swing phrasing, like the singing style of musical's artists and pop-jazz performers (Stephens, 2008; McCracken, 2015). Soviet pop and theater genres add their own specifics here, focusing on the ratio of timbre, intonation, and the manner of highlighting individual phrases and words, clearly or imperceptibly referring the listener to the authority of Western stars. This is a manner of emphasized performativity: before our eyes, a simple song text passes the verification of authenticity which is obtained when the performer passes the word through his heart, when the musical intonation is imprinted in the verbal suggestion.

In general, this fusion of cultural and political interventions, the rhetoric of common sense, the essentialist concept of song, and the fact of universal singing created powerful incentives for songwriting, inventing or re-inventing new song genres, and adapting "bourgeois" pop and jazz forms. The discussions of the 1920s and the confrontations between the RAPM[2] and the ASM[3] were not only a struggle for a correct understanding of the goals and objectives of musical composition, but also accompanied by the crystallization of music as a statement. There is a unique form of "musical response to criticism", in the form of justification, compensation, and correction. One of the most striking cases is Shostakovich's 5th Symphony, with which the composer "responded" to accusations of formalism (Huband, 1990). Both Shostakovich and Prokofiev always did something in response to the accusations, which consolidated the formula-stating modality of the presented work.

The formation of a song statement as a public presentation of a topos is accompanied by the institutional design of such figures as a composer-songwriter, a poet-songwriter, a civic singer, an Estrada performer, a song diva, or a child soloist. The song meaning is separated from everyday practices and becomes an object of rhetorical design. Song topoi cover all areas of the Soviet natural and social world, and their nomenclature is subject to control and administration. The agents of this control were not only administrative and ideological institutions of cultural policy, but also the songwriters and performers themselves, as well as the publicists and journalists associated with the sphere of culture.

From the moment of appearance of a professional song addressed to the general public and intended for performing replication, the processes of separation of the signifier from the signified begin to occur in it. This is also expressed in an increased level of reflexivity when the song becomes the signified itself. The gap between the signifier and the signified is reduced to a minimum, so the song becomes a sign. This process is well

2. Rossijskaja Associacija Proletarskih Muzykantov [Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians].

3. Associacija Sovremennoj Muzyki [Association for Contemporary Music].

illustrated by the description of the process of composition of the *March of Merry Lads* (Petrov, Kolesnikova, 1982: 36–37): the music of the march was written in advance, but all the texts that could turn this march into a song seemed bad until the lead actor of the film *Merry Lads*, Leonid Utesov, persuaded the poet Vasily Lebedev-Kumach to come up with new text:

Нам песня строить и жить помогает,
Она, как друг, и зовет, и ведет.
И тот, кто с песней по жизни шагает,
Тот никогда и нигде не пропадет[4].

In the same film, the main character of the shepherd Kostya Potekhin performs a song that is an appeal to the Heart. Songs that are built around the topos of the Heart that show similarities to the canso of medieval troubadours (Zumthor, 2003: 192–223) occupy an important place in the Soviet song topics[5].

"The Religion of Song" and the Deconstruction of the System of Song Genres

Synchronizing with changing political cycles and different agendas, the work of shaping song discourse and transforming pop and mass genres has not stopped, reaching its peak of ethical significance during the Second World War and the early Thaw, and has been transformed in a bizarre way since the mid-1960s. Alternatively, this process can be described as the emerging "religion of song". The song is placed on an unattainable pedestal, becomes overgrown with additional systems of meanings, and serves as a tool for individual and collective introspection. A song is spoken of as an animate and, at the same time, a spiritualizing object; an attachment to songwriting and performance is declared as a measure of humanity and universality. In these kinds of discursive formations, one can trace the reduced techniques of Marxist dialectics which implicitly deals with the essence of man. What is freedom for a person and what is a person for freedom? Is a person looking for a song, or does the song find the person? Does the person live in the heart of the song or does the song live in the heart of the person? Where are the origins of song and singing? What is the mystery of the song's *narodnost'* (rooted-ness in the folk), and why is this *narodnost'* being immediately visible? What is the soul of the folk, the song itself or something else? As we can see, any reflection on the song in the post-war period leads to a flurry of questions that do not require any answer. It would be a mistake to call it demagogy or verbal juggling. This collective aesthesis includes "simple workers", composers, poets, journalists, professional performers and amateur participants. The answer

4. The song helps us build and live, / She calls and guides us like a friend. / And the one who walks through life with a song, / He will never be lost anywhere.

5. Cf.: ". . . it is typical that numerous reviews often contain headlines where the word 'heart' is present: 'Song of the heart', 'From heart to heart', 'Song that penetrates the heart',—including foreign ones" (Uspenskaya, 1985: 19).

is not required; instead, they offer to listen to the song, join in, and touch the song (cf. Bulgak, 1977).

It is noteworthy that each of the publications of the 1960s and 1970s devoted to song and singers, that is, any monograph, pamphlet, digest, or preface to an anthology, repeats the entire range of questions each time. If we do not consider this to be the ornamentation of random rhetorical devices, then we can assume that this is an act of neutralizing the subjectivist principle that post-Stalinist song entails. Radical discourses refer to song universality:

> You and I, reader, are witnesses to the birth of the Soviet classics. What will be called this high name is being created before our eyes: in the visual arts, in music and cinema, on the concert Estrada and in the theater. We know the main criterion, the main sign of such phenomena: their universality. They are addressed only to you or me, and yet they belong to many. They have emerged today, before our eyes, and are therefore even more dear to our hearts (Pistunova, 1974: 3–4).

Developing in a socially isolated and, at the same time, aesthetically saturated environment, the Soviet song never tired of reflecting on the problem of the purity of the genre and its relevance to the current situation. The recognition of the social conditionality, fluidity, and flexibility of the song phenomenon did not cancel the close control over the content and design of the song statement.

The Soviet mass culture of the 1960s and 1970s is also notable for the unusual dominance of forms that fall under the category of "synthetic genres". Synthetism here is not just a combination of certain "pure" genres, but—more importantly—a progressive marginalization, or a departure from the conventional canon. Marginality is becoming a new mainstream, a cultural norm that constitutes a shaky reality called "Soviet society". A typical example is the so-called "author's" (the "bard") song, whose emphasized opposition to official song genres is a powerful symbolic resource that shifts the boundaries of the cultural norm, and sets guidelines for the collective reflection of the entire post-war generation. A bard song synthesizes not so much the "pure" genres of urban romance and the mass composer's song, but different, previously incompatible forms of social semiosis—the production of social meanings. The "heroic" mode of understanding and constructing reality is organically and consistently combined with the "lyrical" mode. The non-canonical and marginal here is not the performance style or poetics as such, but the very ease and freedom in transitions between different meaning-generating registers. The typical bard does not tell the listener anything ideologically alien or ambiguous; his message is different: "Look, I'm a geologist, but I'm a soldier, and a hero-lover, and a philosopher, and an ascetic, and a hedonist, and anyone else, and all this is me, but also you and us". Sociality here is constructed not through the belonging to a closed community with its own special values, but through the freedom to belong to any communities or groups and clubs, including quite "official" ones, and through its marginality and cross-border nature which becomes a new social norm. We would like to contrast our point of view with those researchers who consider the bard movement as a "fight against official-

dom" (Djagalov, 2009). When the author's song has lost its function of opposition to the official song discourse, it became clearly noticeable that the alternative nature of the bard song statement was exaggerated, and the degree of reverse influence on the form of the "official" song statement was underestimated.

If we turn to the narratives that began to sum up the author's song movement in the second half of the 1980s, we will immediately notice that the main motive shines through even in them; it is the opposition to official song structures and topoi, but with the right to preserve the formal character of song statement, even for a specially defined and selected audience.

Yuri Andreev, a historian and activist of the bard movement, tries to define what sincerity is in a positivist way in his 1991 book. He uses the same patterns as the official song rhetoric, but looks for his own arguments, realizing, that without delineation from the Estrada, a dangerous mixing will occur:

> The peculiarity of our song and the listeners of our song is that the various channels through which qualitatively different information—rational and emotional—enters our consciousness are constantly correlated with each other . . . The content of the beginning of our song is immediately, simultaneously with entering the brain, compared with its spiritual meaning, tested not only for truth, but also for sincerity. And it is this truthfulness of feelings, which either manifests itself or does not, that is the highest evaluation measure. The falseness that cuts the ear during the indifferently mechanical performance of, say, a political oratorio will not be compensated in any way even by a perfectly delivered voice of the highest Conservatoire standard. Words about grief that are not supported by a sincere sense of their own grief, words about great love, uttered with a palpable inner yawn, are murderous, according to our criteria, for the work . . . Thus, I want to say that the property of lovers and connoisseurs of the author's song to instantly correlate semantic and emotional information is a universal property, only littered and obscured by the average "art professionals" . . . (Andreev, 1991: 7–8).

In the end, Andreev concludes that the meaning of the bard movement was to teach a lesson of sincerity and morality to musical figures from another camp: "The strength of our bards is in their desire for truth. In their time, they unobtrusively helped the best of professional composers and songwriters to become in this sense adequate to the requirements of the time. In what way? First of all, in the humanization of their intonation, in their transition to the position of a truly humanistic attitude to a complex person" (237).

For all the inconsistency and heterogeneity of what is called the Soviet cultural policy, the persistent and purposeful cultivation of a system of song genres stands out within its contours. In the post-war years, the appeal to the song gradually turns into a gesture of presentation of the topoi of confession, monologue, plea, an appeal to higher powers, and ballad narration. In the 1960s, two divergent forces became noticeable: the crystallization of song with an endless multiplication of its thematic blocks, and the deconstruction of the song genre. The deconstruction of the Soviet song was not limited to the usual breaks in the film narrative by invading it with song monologues, but also concerned the organi-

zation of the musical and poetic text itself. Paradoxically organized marginal-mainstream practices of home and friendly music making, which included, for example, Okudzhava (Bulat Okudzhava, 2004), turn into an influential force that Soviet film directors use as an alternative suggestive field, opposing, on the one hand, the usual film suggestion with its inevitable montage, audiovisual obsession, and narrative bias, and on the other hand, the very system of Soviet film policy allowing the use of such self-neutralization gestures. This can be seen in comparing the author's performance of Okudzhava's songs with the arranged orchestral version. The Soviet film policy of the 1960s and 1980s doubles the system of musical and poetic performativity. This is especially noticeable in the works of Okudzhava and Yuli Kim: their seemingly improvised "silent songs" and "ditty" are loaded with semiotically-complex timbral meanings of jazz and pop-symphonic origin. The vocal style (Potter, 1998) and, as a result, the rich topics of Okudzhava are included in the circulation of Soviet song statements. In his most popular poetic texts in the film industry, we see a variety of types and figures—the fruit of cultural selection of early and late modernity. The Ballerina, the soldier, the trumpeter, the drummer, the sentry, the pirate, and the hussar,—all of them take their places in the auto-reference system of song topoi.

Self-Reference as a Paradigm of a Song Statement

Soviet narratives focused on the problems of creativity and genres hide the reality of song statement becoming a public presentation of the topoi system. This development was made possible by several factors. The first of these, of course, is connected with the so-called lyric origin and the lyric hero who is instructed to speak and sing in the first person. Up to a certain point, lyrical outpourings were associated only with the presentation of their subjectivity, but in the post-war Soviet period, the possibility of a double statement opens up, raising the "lyrical subject" to the height of true universality. This change was facilitated by the cultural officials who began to dispose not only of song material, but also forcibly form and format various types of musical statements. In the 1920s and 1940s, the subject finds himself in the forms of a sentimental lover and a hero-fighter, ready to give his life for his Motherland and for a bright future. The heroic and love modes are mixed to form a canonical song topos that connects the images of mother, mistress, and Motherland.

We are more interested in another stage, the Thaw and post-Thaw, when many varieties of song statements are formed. It is not the lists and nomenclatures of these forms and types that are of interest, but the conditions of their cultural and political production. So, their declared functionality was often the justification for the existence of certain song genres. It was argued, for example, that amateur songs are needed to fully reveal the inner world of the Soviet man. This song empire, consisting of countless composers and amateur authors, was served by an equally large crowd of art critics and journalists. Its task was to naturalize hidden cultural policies. By wishful thinking, they formed a utopian song world with their actors, creative results, the agony of writing, and all of that was called "working on a song". Addressing the problems of genre diversity and aesthetic

expression served as a tool for reducing and hiding the true meaning of the song form as a generator of social meanings and institutions.

The song's expressive arsenal is so sparse and monotonous that, at some point, the interpretive, hermeneutical part began to seriously outweigh the poetic-musical part. Since the late 1950s, singers and songwriters have been given opportunities for public reflection. A new genre appeared, the "reflections of the song", or the "meditations on the song". This self-explanatory part has grown so much that not only does every composer or performer have to ask themselves what a song really is, but also includes their thoughts in the songs themselves. A "song about a song" was developed, a new type of statement that grew out of the *March of Merry Lads*. In addition to turning a song or musical number into a formula or performative statement during the Great Patriotic War, important events and discussions begin to occur from the end of 1953. On December 24, 1953, at the Seventh December Plenum of the Board of the Union of Composers of the USSR, the question of the role of light music in the life of Soviet people and new song tasks was raised in a new way for the first time in the history of Soviet composers' plenums. The main report, "On the State and Tasks of Song Art", was read by Vladimir Zaharov, Secretary of the Union of Composers. It begins with the declaration that "the people demand from composers and artists a genuine abundance of musical art in all genres" (1954: 3), and continues:

> It is necessary to intensively develop all genres of song art. We need songs that are heroic, lyrical, dancing, and humorous. There are no bad genres—each genre can have real artistic achievements… In our song should sound fun, and joy, and sadness, and love longing,—we do not have the right to regulate the reflection of the living, natural feelings of Soviet people in the song. Both satirical songs and sharp topical verses that attack negative phenomena in our life should sound in full voice. You can't ignore the huge variety of requests and artistic tastes of Soviet people (18).

A long post-Stalin discussion about light music begins. Now, the semantic emphasis is shifting towards its ideological neutrality, non-danger, and even beneficence. Sailors, workers, and residents of the hinterland are represented by excerpts from letters where they either err in their understanding of light music, or find important and correct words to justify it (Muzyka i byt, 1954; Diskussija o pesne, 1954). The participants of the discussion agree that life opens up new limitless opportunities for mastering the sphere of light music and song. Poets associated with the decadent tradition and composers who transfer echoes of Cantorial and Klezmer music culture (cf. Loeffler, 2010) are the first to identify song zones sensitive to expansion, and strengthen the rhetorical, melodic, and affective part of a musical statement. In the biography of the master of Soviet song, Isaac Dunaevsky, an important point is the inheritance of Jewish musical traditions from older relatives. The cantor is not only a lyrical performer who should touch the audience, but also a toastmaster, presenter, and master of the conversational genre. Making this fact of his life hidden, Dunaevsky and many of his colleagues involved in the formation of the Soviet song empire somehow transmitted a tradition that allowed to place a message in

the song that could comment on the surrounding reality in a universal way. Dunaevsky is one of the first to notice the crisis in the post-war song:

> I got a feeling that our Soviet song is on the eve of a big and important leap into a new quality. It is difficult for me to confirm this feeling with facts, but as a person who listens to the song a lot and knows it well . . . it becomes clear to me that much of the arsenal of our creative tools and techniques is beginning to go through a stage of serious re-evaluation . . . I think on the agenda of our creative day is the question of a story song, a ballad, a romance . . . Life expands the scope of . . . schemes (cit.: Pistunova, 1974: 88).

Specialized cinema magazines also write about crisis phenomena: it seems to everyone that the cinema has become silent and stopped singing. It is important for us to note that we are not actually talking about a decrease in song production, but about the redundancy of pure singing and the lack of songs as authoritative statements with a formula structure. Petrov and Kolesnikova write that:

> After *Kuban Cossacks* and *Tales of the Siberian Land*, the song on the screen stopped. And it was impossible to return it by any appeals. There was no room for it until the drama broke the deadlock of conflict-free and varnishing and a living person appeared on the screen again. Then the screen started singing again, but, of course, it was a completely different style of song . . . Composers and film critics persistently and unsuccessfully tried to persuade each other to return the song to the screen. . . . The post-war Soviet song should have been different. The spirit of citizenship, high heroic and Patriotic feelings inherent in it no less than in the pre-war years, required other means of expression (1982: 114).

The new song statement was intended to replace the prevailing "mood of dull melancholy" (Kabalevsky, 1960: 15) melodically, poetically, and thematically from the musical life of the Soviet people, that is, everything private, intimate, and existential.

In the second half of the 1980s, the song statement loses its place and effectiveness. The history of song of the 1960s and 1970s is revised, discursively framing it as a movement towards complication, and explaining this by the request of listeners to expand the song content. The song, if we follow this logic, tried to leave the narrow confines of the Estrada and the entertainment world and equalize it with the experimental and academic types of musical statements. The new cult of the performer is not a consequence of borrowing Western practices and trends; it follows from a new type of responsibility of the subject of this complicated song statement (Yasnetz, 1988: 53). The complication refers to the dominance of the ethical and political component which can no longer have the character of a direct ideological statement, but shifts the burden of proving its authenticity to the performer himself.

The Social Ontology of Song Statement: From Private to Public

Since the end of the 1960s, major Soviet publishing houses have been publishing a significant number of books featuring biographies of song performers and authors. Among these books, there are also monographs about national song schools, comprising French, American, Russian pre-revolutionary, etc. (Nestyev, 1970; Erismann, 1973; Shneerson, 1977). Their pathos is that a good song is declared international, and a bad, bourgeois, ugly, no-longer-humanized song is an instrument of manipulating and corrupting the tastes of young people. A "good" song is one that is responsible and meaningful. If we are talking about pre-revolutionary Russian song, it should grow from the very depths and represent the folks in its entirety. This completeness is verified by whether the song statement contains the fullness of a restrained experience of suffering or unrestrained and sincere joy. In the songs of American people, traces of political statements are also found. A meaningless and useless song is usually a gesture, while a meaningful, hard-won, and heartfelt song is a statement. Special attention, starting with the Thaw, is paid to the French song. The French song, unlike other phenomena of mass culture and songs of other capitalist countries, appears to be absolutely safe. It is credited with a strong tradition: it is guided not only by individual performers, but also by the organizers of ideological control. French artists come to major cities on tour, their records are published by the record label *Melody*, and their songs are regularly broadcast on Soviet radio. Sentimentalism, a focus on clear recitative articulation and intimate whispering into the microphone not only serves as a reason for its copying by Soviet artists, but is also absorbed as a genuine model. Guy Erismann's book, published in Russian (1973), is perceived as ideologically close and understandable. Its main lesson, from the point of view of the editor and author of the preface (Grigori Shneerson), is the victory over the temptation of entertainment, and the entertainment format is a rejection of the opportunity and the right to speak (5–12).

Public comments about song and singing at this time are reduced to the fact that the soulful and sentimental within reasonable limits can help strengthen the ideals of society, and establish a reasonable and spiritual life. There is no reason to reject the intimate. In the anthropological perspective, a sincere, vulnerable, emotional person is closer to the civic ideals of the Thaw and post-Thaw time:

> The propaganda of the ideas of communism should be close and understandable to the workers, should have a sincere character, reach the mind and heart of every Soviet person, and awaken in him the brightest and noblest thoughts and feelings . . . And here we can refer to the last Plenum, which showed that false ideas are still common among some composers, forcing them to treat the warmth, sincerity, and immediacy of emotional expression with some incomprehensible shyness. It is as if they deliberately do not allow a living feeling to break out, hiding it under the armor of deliberate cruelty, contrivance or a pose of gloomy profundity, pretentiously called "the tragic mood" . . . (Vysoko nesti znamja kommunizma, 1960).

Here it is appropriate to ask why traditional sociological, cultural-anthropological, philological, and historical methods in the study of post-war songs work so poorly, and why do they require increased research attention to the life and meaning horizons of participants in the cultural process? The answer to this question requires a presupposition of the ontological heterogeneity of the subject of the song process. Many actors participated in the creation of the Soviet song. These are not only a composer, a poet, a performer, and a listener, but also an official of the supervisory authority, a representative of the party leadership, a journalist, an editor of radio and television broadcasting, and any Soviet person as a representative of their professional community, formal or informal movement, or organization. The judgment of the song statement was made simultaneously from different sides: the same person could speak from different positions and present hardly reducible points of view. Behind the visible collective-song body lies the struggle, opposition, combination, and balancing of various interests and practices under the pretext of singing, writing, managing collective emotionality and taste, preaching, propaganda, entertainment, distraction, mobilization, and so on. In some cases, the song is the collective name, or a phenomenon, or a poetic metaphor, or a therapeutically-political instrument.

I argue that in all cases, high and even inflated requirements for the words, music, and performance of a song are based on a single criterion, that of the need to turn a flowing and self-moving song into a verified and refined statement. This intention can be direct, and then we witness the unification and reduction of the role of the melodic beginning, or it can be hidden, and then we can observe an avalanche-like increase in the requirements for the song. This is felt by the participants themselves—performers and songwriters, as well as journalists, art critics, and other creators of meta-narratives. They feel it, but they articulate it in their own ways. It is important not just to expose these narratives and meta-narratives, but also to show how these processes preserve the horizons of cultural meanings—in other words, to make sure that we are still talking about the song, and not about something else. The Soviet song statement is just such an object where "structuralism and hermeneutics can be made into fine bedfellows. The former offers possibilities for general theory construction, prediction, and assertions of the autonomy of culture. The latter allows analysis to capture the texture and temper of social life. When complemented by attention to institutions and actors as causal intermediaries, we have the foundations of a robust cultural sociology" (Alexander, 2003: 26).

Take, for example, a popular science booklet about lyrics written by the philologist Galina Lubyanskaya (1990). The author writes about the lyrics after the end of the era of Soviet song. She understands lyrics extremely broadly and ascribes all the poems of songwriters to lyric poetry, without making any distinctions for the representatives of academic and mass songwriting. Using the rapidly-losing popularity of the Hegelian methodology, she identifies a certain agitation-lyric style in poetry. This style is problematic for her, so she makes a reservation that by agitation she simply understands the intention of motivation: "Propaganda lyric verse differs in that its hero consciously acts on behalf of a certain social group and offers solutions to socially significant problems.

At the same time, his individuality, originality as a person is preserved, the lyrical hero is not relegated to the background, but on the contrary, as a 'people's guide' is enlarged to the scale of a social type" (16).

Lubyanskaya calls Mayakovsky the prototype of such poetry, and his successors in the workshop of "agitation-lyric poetry" are the type of texts by Rozhdestvensky, Voznesensky, and Yevtushenko which were actively transferred to songs in the post-Thaw period. Lubyanskaya notes that the Great Patriotic War was the turning point when the poetic-song word undergoes a radical transformation, legitimizing suggestion (26). Finally, describing the situation of impending or accomplished by the 1990 collapse, Lubyanskaya suggests to throw all the forces to keep the lyrics in the public space; she writes that:

> The stylistic flow of the classical tradition continues its movement in the vastness of Soviet poetry. Trends in social development now favor it (and lyrics in general). Today, the signs of the spiritual life of the country are the desire to understand the laws that govern the course of events, a return to the original meanings of fundamental concepts, courage and looseness of assessments. In this situation, the price of a personal beginning in the lyrics, creative originality, and extremely sincere expression increases (50).

Thus, there is a generally accepted opinion that poetic-song suggestiveness, which borrows its techniques from decadent experiments, acquires the right to publicity precisely during the war years. From pre-war experiments, this literary technique in a complex combination with post-war cultural policies turns into a common place, gaining new opportunities in various cultural practices while remaining a unique tool for forming and asserting one's own subjectivity (cf. Kukulin, 2019).

The Ethos of the Soviet Performer: From the Natural to the Culturally Universal

Now let us look at the ways in which the child, female, and male elements were involved in the orbit of translating a song into a song statement. In the pre-war period, the characters of plays and musical performances most often sang on behalf of the child/animal. In the post-war period, with the development of children's cinema, children's theater, and children's radio and television programs, these subjects were emancipated. They are not given the right to vote—their voice is replaced by an adult or even an adult-female one. The children's solo voices, as they could be heard on radio or television, were carefully calibrated, normalized, and moderated from the timbral, intonation, and performative points of view (Ganzha, 2012). There are a large number of related reasons behind this substitution, but the main one is the refusal to recognize the child's right to have a voice other than the right to make a statement.

The system of children's song statements was formed thematically: by the 1970s, there was a canon of song topoi including environmental, military, revolutionary, pioneer, school, friendship, sports, and animalistic. The special topoi were humorous and satirical.

The satirical ones exposed the unfortunate consciousness of the *dvoechnik* (a straight-F pupil) and were constructed in the form of a self-revealing, self-educational monologue. Jokes could have an existential character and turn into their complete opposite, telling about the expectation of the New Year, holidays, weekends, the arrival of parents from work, hiking, swimming in distant lands, and the dream of finding a pet.

The simplest and most transparent case is the monologues on behalf of a child. These monologues do not coincide with the structure of the children's life or world; amateur children's songs are a rare phenomenon and are usually represented by short songs-games. To direct the child's subjectivity in the song channel, consistent and purposeful steps are necessary. In the 1920s and 1930s, there was an endless stream of complaints about children singing decadent and vulgar songs. Two tasks are set: the first is to direct children's performances towards getting acquainted with revolutionary and military songs, and the second is to initiate the creation of a dense children's repertoire that meets all the needs of building a new society and educating a new person. The endowment of song subjectivity is not performed out of a desire to make the invisible visible and inaudible audible, but for the sake of granting the right and obligation to make a statement. Here, the suggestion of a song should echo the discovery of the possibilities of this suggestion in one's own voice. If the recording organizer or music director did not confirm the fact of such self-discovery, the song was passed on to an adult woman who now had to find in herself the child who has discovered the suggestive potential of persuasiveness, sincere remorse, infectious joy, and so on. No tasks of socialist construction or education of a harmonious personality, as examples, could in themselves become the basis for the emergence of individualized children's singing.

Throughout the Soviet period, the "natural" part of such social and aesthetic activities was represented by the phenomenon of songs by children-vagabonds, orphans, and beggars. This phenomenon, invisible to the public and not confirmed by the authorities, became visible only in the formats of song and film narration, and most often in their collaboration. The song form in this case is not a frame for creating images, but a way to legitimize the phenomena of suffering, poverty, orphanhood, loss, fear of death, feelings of loss, and a huge range of feelings in the register of the sublime that do not fit into the visible social field. Socialist aesthetics offered crude versions of the sublime as monumental and heroic. On the contrary, the suggestion of the song plays a distancing and performative role here.

The male song statement was formed differently. It may seem paradoxical that it is after the death of Stalin and the Seventh Plenum of the Union of Composers that male singers change into suits and ties. They refuse anything that hints at stage roles, a carnival, or a "musical number". Unusual shirts or trappings and products of designers' imaginations will now only appear on the representatives of the so-called VIA[6], which, being a sterilized version of the rock movement, are bifurcated by the need to choose between the performative-topical and subjective modalities of the song message. If we use the optics

6. Vokal'no-Instrumental'nyj Ansambl' [Vocal-Instrumental Ensemble].

of Alexey Yurchak (2006), the singer's performance and the citizen's performance now enrich each other with performative elements. The singer "performs", i.e., when he enters the stage, he reveals himself and his work to the public, and at the same time, speaks on behalf of a certain social group or raises his voice in defense of something. This speech may contain notes of confession, accusation, presentation, prophecy, visionary, or conversion.

The "diversity" of the Soviet song[7] which is presented as a task, as a fact, and as material for research (cf. Evans, 2011; Ganzha, 2014b; Cornish, 2019) can actually be considered as a set of possibilities for filling the space of a non-subjective statement that adjures reality. As a unit of such a sacred spell, any verbal formulas could serve; "have you heard how the blackbirds sing?", or "what a good lad you're, Natashka!", or "we have a hunk of bread—and that in half!". Witnesses and contemporaries of this endless song intervention often point out that sometimes they did not understand by ear what these words meant, confused them with others, but sang with pleasure at every opportunity.

If you look at the structural elements of the song statement system, you can clearly see all their conjugations. Whatever aspect we take, whether it is the question of the correct juxtaposition of poetry and music, the permissible measure of vulgarity and a tilt towards a smash hit, stage presentation, work on song material, or the song selection, we can see traces of a consolidated process of giving a song a propositional function. The melodic-rhythmic formulas that Asafyev (1971) or Adorno (1977) concentrate on are also interesting. For Asafyev, the homophonic-harmonic type of melodism is a repeatedly verified and confirmed as the "true formula". This formula-melody is absolutely objective because it is entirely social. For Adorno, the formula of a smash hit is one of the stages of emasculating the content, and an illegal way to fight against time. When Soviet song commentators speculate about where "good songs" come from, they also somewhat repeat similar arguments for objectivity.

In the post-war period, the expression of the "public figure" is increasingly imperceptibly transferred to the expression "music figure", and then to the "Estrada figure". In this case, the performer's responsibility to the trade union, to the public, to citizens, and to the people is emphasized. However, Estrada singers were often recruited from *samodejatel'nost'* (amateur performance activities) and built their career as an alternative to the main specialty of a turner, locksmith, engineer, so the expression "Estrada figure" refers to the ethos of the song performer as a public presenter of the Soviet topoi system.

Since the 1960s and throughout the 1970s, there has been a powerful reinterpretation of the pre-war and (partly) pre-revolutionary song heritage. In this process, it can be seen how the song is forcibly given the features of a formula statement. The performer himself can become such a conductor of revision of his own heritage. This happened to Utesov and Shulzhenko, who, endlessly recalling their pre-war and military experience, spent

7. Cf.: "Our people are a singing people. We need different music, different songs. We need different orchestras, from a folk instrument orchestra to a jazz orchestra. We need songs about life, about the fate of people—our people, Soviet people and people of another world, songs about love, about the joy of life, about a beautiful world where peace should reign" (Utesov, 1976: 358).

the rest of their lives acting as re-actualizers of "old songs". In the pantheon of sacred pop figures, Utesov together with Bernes occupy a special place. In the post-Thaw period, critics emphasize their humanism and ability to convey "quiet" existential truths to the public. The conductor of these truths is the Heart, that is, the substance of song which is electrified and magnetized by suffering and accomplishment. Before preparing to present a song to the public, the late-Soviet singer must allow the song to lie down and mature within himself. Only then will the song substance begin to perform its irreplaceable work and be prepared to become a statement. The statement is a pure form; its content, though important, is only a historically evolving rhetorical convention. The content should not be vulgar since vulgarity can also affect the form.

Since the late 1960s, no one has been shy about talking about the ideal of Estrada intelligence. The singer's intelligence is modesty, depth, and nobility. These three are the qualities of Soviet artists from the "Western" artists. Restraint, nobility, self-control, sincerity, seriousness, soulfulness, and later, spirituality, integrity, complexity, the ability to create spatial images ('song space') and even intelligence are the main features of the rhetorical ethos of the Soviet Estrada singer. Composers whose songs quickly spread among the people and are not a vulgar version of a romance or a thug song are said to be "addressed".[8] The problem of the addressee in the widespread post-Thaw genre of books about Estrada and circus figures is central, although the wording of this problem looks completely different. For example, biographers of the composer Alexander Kolker (who was able to maintain an effective balance between creativity and business trips to Soviet plants, use jazz and folk elements in a song, combine smash hits with melodic innovations, and form his own thematic policy based on general directions recommended for a specific historical segment) name narrativity and the ability to diffuse (characteristic of the so-called "earworm") among the positive characteristics of his work. The composer himself credits the successful addressing with the scale of the song's diffusion: he would say that "the composer feels joy in any case. But it's especially nice when the song is hummed . . . When your song is sung not by a professional performer, but by someone on the tram platform, just on the street—I think this is the highest bliss! It can't be higher than that" (cit.: Yasnetz, 1988: 32).

Lyudmila Zykina: the Russian Woman as the Body of Soviet Song

In the 1970s and 1980s, special attention was paid to the mysterious characteristics of the ability to create song spaces and draw spatial images. Indeed, some of both men's and women's songs are so meaningless that they can only be said to "paint" space. This is the space of Russia or of the native land. Lyudmila Zykina has a unique ability to "sing out" the space. Pistunova writes that: "And in fact, she sings only those songs in which there is spatiality . . . It conveys the elements—with a pagan delight in their power and beauty,

8. Cf.: "Kolker is attracted to a song with a built-up plot—a story song, a tale song, a narration song. It is always addressed to the audience, unthinkable outside of the addressee. The narrativity grows out of the tradition of Russian Soviet song classics" (Yasnetz, 1988: 31).

with a civilized knowledge of the power of man over them . . . She reincarnates in these elements, which she sings about, she herself seems to be the Volga, the Russian field, or the snowy steppe. Playing off in her singing the space of Russia itself, she endows it the status of a legend" (1974: 123).

To speak out about one's native land is to sound out simply by pointing out its existence. It should be noted here that the Khrushchev Thaw, as an alternative to dissident movements, provided unlimited opportunities for the cultivation of national and cultural identities through the recombination of cultural meanings circulating in society. This adapted folk wave had a wide variety of manifestations while legitimizing itself, including through echoes of Western neo-folklore and playing with musical "nationalisms" (Olson, 2004). The late 1960s and early 1970s were a time of not only an aestheticized folk revival, but also of a softening of the laws on childhood and motherhood, a new stage of women's urban emancipation, and informal quotas for women's leadership positions in the direction of increasing them. With the example of Zykina, you can see how the female song statement was formed during these years.

It should be noted that it was in the 1970s that a curious phenomenon formed—a concert was held for the delegates to the party Congress, members of trade unions, and representatives of various departments. It was an honorable, responsible, and monetary mission, which, in addition, allowed the establishing of informal relations with regional and central functionaries and officials. The candidates vying to become singers had to meet the requirements of seriousness and representativeness; they had to be charming, sociable, sincere, simple people, but most importantly, have the ethos of a song rhetorician who set the tone for the performance from the tribune to others. Zykina fit all of these characteristics perfectly. She, like any other Soviet singer who was "given the road" and being promoted, attracted successful and approved composers and poets. This allowed her to maintain some financial and personal freedom and uphold the highest degree of personal and creative inspiration. Zykina recalled that while performing the duties of an ordinary chorus girl in the Pyatnitsky choir, they were taught not so much to sing as to speak. To speak was to use the song as a public platform:

> The Pyatnitsky choir became a school for me in learning Russian songs and the secrets of their performance . . . I was very lucky—my first teachers were such experts in folklore as the leaders of the Pyatnitsky choir—composers Vladimir Grigoryevich Zaharov and Pyotr Mikhailovich Kazmin. Zaharov . . . demanded that we comprehend not only the plot of the song, but its meaning, its deep content, which is formed on the basis of the organic unity of words and music... Zaharov demanded that we comprehend the wisdom of the song . . . Zaharov said: a song is a great public tribune, a song can lift people, inspire them, express their feelings and dreams. . . . in a song, you need to be able to reflect. . . . From the very beginning, you need to know for sure: what is most exciting for you in life? What do you want to say? What problems are you being touched? What is the theme of your work, or, in the language of dramatic art, what is your "supertask"? (Pistunova, 1974: 71–75).

Critics declare Zykina a researcher of the depths of the female soul. This characteristic is given to the majority of late Soviet official song divas. Zykina reflects on the song, and the process of this reflection never stops. She consistently cleanses the song of any vulgarity that may lurk in its depths: "My way of understanding the soul of a song, if I may say so, is that I live with it, constantly think about it. Slowly I enter its world. Oh, how difficult to sing a song in a right way . . . The song invisibly accompanies me everywhere: at home and on the street . . . I don't leave it for a minute. At some stage, the song begins to sound in me, and I am intently listening to this constantly ongoing and mysterious process" (80).

All these internal processes of melting the internal into the external have the highest expression in the act of turning the intimate into the public, and in making public the declaration of love. From a deeply personal sense of shame, Zykina's love becomes a universal possession. Zykina herself uses visionary metaphors because she sees the fate of the Russian woman immediately and completely. She is a researcher of life, and in this way, also forms her own type of song statement. In terms of content, this statement is dedicated to the denial of the Sovietism of women—under the Soviet shell, Russia is hidden[9]. Zykina sets the tone in a female song, emphasizing that the song is an invitation to a conversation, the conversation itself and the expression of the unexpressed: "I always want the song to sound like a confession—heartfelt, pure, free from sentiment, so that in every sung thing there was a heart-to-heart conversation with the listener" (Ibid.).

At the same time, the ecstatic is legitimized on the Soviet stage. It is likely that this is due to the influence of Western music, rock operas and rock musicals gradually penetrating into the auditory world of the Soviet man. This manner gives rise to an interesting collaboration with the civic pathos of the Soviet. In addition, the policy broadcasting deformed the song or rock ballad to pure statement, which in turn, distilled to pure ecstasy: the wave of the chorus of the song *Swan Fidelity* could sound off in the most unexpected moment—at the construction site, in a kindergarten, or a village house with a rickety roof. Some Estrada singers try to break out of the circle of those who were ready to bear the burden of public statement, and they succeeded. Monologues by Pugacheva and Ponarovskaya are jazz monologues, or romances based on poems by Tsvetaeva or Mandelstam. They present only the personality of the performer, and everything else is carefully etched (MacFadyen, 2001).

9. The article by Günther (1997) about the mother archetype in Soviet mass song explains the types of representations of Soviet women's policies using post-folklore approaches and operates with the concepts of folklore semiotics, hybridized with the revealing strategy of song as a manipulative tool and a tool of myth-making, where the beneficiary is the power and authorities of a totalitarian society. Nevertheless, this post-folklore approach is the most intense, productive and in a sense "strong". This approach is also presented in the article by Uspensky and Fedotov (2019), however, in relation to the age before emergence of the culture industry.

The "Good Song" and the Construction of the Soviet Song Public Sphere

A special place in the production of song statements is occupied by the arguments about the origins and criteria of a "good song". We can say that each of the participants in the process had to report on what they understand by a good song, how they make a selection of the vulgar, and what sources they fall to in order to create it. Composer Nikita Bogoslovsky writes that "so far, all attempts by critics to define what a good song is have come to nothing. I think that a good song is not necessarily one that everyone sings, it can also be one that you want to listen to" (cit.: Tarnovsky, 1984: 40). Mikael Tariverdiev talks about the alchemy between poetry and music, which must find each other in order for the song to "take place":

> Some profess the complete primacy of poetry, which carries the idea of the work, and in music they see only an "assistant", contributing only to the disclosure of meaning. As a rule, this kind of music is unprofessional . . . I believe that vocal music is born from the combination of two equal images—the poetic image and the musical image. When they connect, they must acquire a completely new, third quality, which is not inherent in separate poems and separate music, when they live independently. It is clear that in this case the verses should be verses, not text (cit.: Petrov, Kolesnikova, 1982: 34).

Tikhon Khrennikov talks about the song always in terms of insufficiency: "Our poets, unfortunately, give few good song lyrics. It is difficult to find such poems that arouse the desire to sing, write music . . . Let one, even a small topic be taken, but if it is deeply revealed, it can reflect the essence of our wonderful and joyful life. One main theme, deeply felt and exciting, will cause the composer to respond to the main melody. I think a song is born just in that way" (cit.: Grigoryev, Platek, 1983: 136).

The argument about a "good" song now hides not the task of creating an ideologically perfect product, as in Stalin's time, but the task of forming raw song material that, if entrusted to a properly tuned medium, can circulate "from heart to heart":

> The art of Georg Ots was distinguished by impeccable taste, simplicity and natural manner of singing. Here's what Georgy Karlovich said: "On stage, I try to show not myself, but the song. After all, a song is a naked human soul . . . A singer can be masculine or gentle, harsh or lyrical on stage, but he has no right to be false. Psychological emptiness, pretentiousness, imitation of meaningfulness kills the song in the bud. Then it is not saved by a beautiful melody or a beautiful gesture. My commandment . . . to be myself anytime. Time changes, people change, but such qualities as sincerity, soulfulness, and spiritual depth are always valuable for a person" (Uspenskaya, 1985: 14).

An important question is how does the consensus mechanism for recognizing the impermissibility of the vulgar work? Pre-war narratives based on dialectical tools and the influential theories of Asafyev and Lunacharsky helped here. From this point of view, the

composer should become a knight of the melody—classical and at the same time modern, original and at the same time easily recognizable from the first time—a melody that is immediately ready to become the anthem of today. During the Thaw, the breadth of choice of song material became the basis for a full commentary on reality: the more song topoi, the wider and more complete this commentary. However, the song itself, and this is very important, is able to speak to the audience—you just need to give it the conditions for this. Feltzman writes, "The best examples of Soviet song are characterized by extreme sincerity and soulfulness. This means that they should be sung without any pompous affectation, sentimentality and extravagance. Only the truth of feelings can deeply move the hearts of listeners" (1985: 5).

The general requirement for such performers is restraint. However, in some cases they can use their own strategies—for example, give themselves to the song entirely or carry it like a precious cup:

> Performed by Rashid Behbudov folk song becomes an Estrada song and vice versa, it does not seem a paradox . . . "Like a precious stone, like a brimming horn filled with old wine, I hold it in my hands when I touch a folk song. It takes your breath away from happiness, from the power contained in it, and delight is replaced by fear: not to break it, not to spill it, to bring every drop of it to people, to turn it so that the sun is reflected in every facet of it" (Koshkin, 1985: 27).

Solving the "riddle" of the song, the agents of song reflection identify the carriers of a concentrated song nature, namely, Leonid Utesov, Mark Bernes, Gennady Belov, Lev Leshchenko, and Iosif Kobzon. They are united by the principle of carrying a noble and intelligent manner of singing. They are reserved, but at the same time, they are at the limit of sincerity, their heart is open to people, their pathos is justified, but they are modest, and they are distinguished by static and a minimum of expressive means with a huge internal intensity. This intensity and this burning gut of the singer allows them to broadcast and express the song itself in any words and any music—to present the song topos as it is. The melody can also be meaningful, so the composer also makes a big contribution here: "The composer's ear discards all the pretentious, sophisticated, and exaggeratedly sensitive things that befits the romance melodism in countless amateur compositions, and selects only the simplest, naturally-sung melodic phrases, subjecting them to light polishing" (Katz, 1988: 202).

These polished melodic phrases together with the suggestive poetic text immediately begin to be replicated and multiplied, filling the Soviet audio-social universe with a complex of hierarchical topics of song statements. They create a song empire that not only comments on any social configurations, events, and even the passage of time itself, but also constructs the Soviet song public sphere.

Conclusion

The late Soviet song empire is a complex self-referential system for producing social meanings. The autopoietic nature of this system has not been identified and properly thematized in domestic studies of "popular music", "mass culture", "Estrada art", or "low genres". Any attempts to analyze this phenomenon in art criticism, musicology, or biography inevitably lead to a reduction of the most important component of Soviet song—its propositional and performative functions, and its focus on public presentation of the social topos. No less helpless are research strategies that critically deconstruct the ideological and political content of Soviet song lyrics. As I had hoped to show in this article, the social significance of the Soviet song statement is not limited to delivering an ideological message. The substance of this statement is the entire voiced and sung social world, the architectonics of which is based on the moral and rhetorical design of performative practices, the timbre-acoustic construction of socio-mimetic patterns, and the collective testing of intonation textures of public communication.

The research setting for a thick description of this song world needs methodological optics that correspond to the intentions of the strong program in cultural sociology. In these optics, the most significant characteristics of the late Soviet system of cultural reproduction become visible—the performativity of the practices and institutions included in this system; the structuration of the field of social meanings as a framework of topoi; the universalization of private socio-cultural perspectives in the public sphere of sociopoetic communication; the focus of cultural policy on the modernization of separate, self-preserving cultural practices; the reflexive nature of collective aesthesis; the dialectical interdependence and synergy of "official" and "unofficial" culture; and the ethical legitimation of the aesthetic, etc. Turning to a strong program in the research of the late Soviet cultural and social world will allow us to abandon outdated dichotomous and reductionist approaches, discover new thematic areas, and attract empirical material that has not yet been mastered by anyone.

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Советское песенное высказывание 1960-х — 1970-х в перспективе сильной программы культурсоциологии

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Статья посвящена рассмотрению потенциала сильной программы культурсоциологии в исследованиях советской песенной политики 1960–1970-х. Массовые музыкальные жанры эпохи культуриндустрий принято рассматривать в историцистской оптике эмансипации и диверсификации. В такой оптике институциональные контексты выступают лишь фоном, на котором разворачивается эволюция постфольклора. Недостаток такого подхода — в некритическом смешивании инструментов классицистской критики с современными инструментами социальной теории. Советская песенная эстрада формировала свой собственный тип песенных высказываний путём одновременного отстраивания институтов социального перформанса, музыкальной политэкономии и обслуживающего эти институты аистезиса. Нередукционистские оптики, которые, с точки зрения Александера, лежат на пересечении структуралистского и герменевтического инструментария, имеют выраженную специфику, если применять ее к массовым музыкальным жанрам. Система интонации в сочетании с поэтическим словом, доведенная, по словам Адорно, до состояния чистого механического самовоспроизводства, так или иначе подталкивает нас к описанию и дешифровке системы значений такого продукта. Чтобы поиски насыщенности в описании музыкальных феноменов не привели к новым редукциям, необходимо отказаться от того, что, на первый взгляд, связывает звучание с культурой, и заменить понятия «песня» и «музыка» на «песенное высказывание» и «музыкальное высказывание». На примере оккупировавших послевоенные песенные дискурсы понятиях «благородства», «подлинности» и «глубины» мы демонстрируем механизмы их циркуляции внутри института эстрады в связи с индуцирующими социальное воображение топосами песенного высказывания. Для этого к привычной схеме анализа адорнианской социологии шлягера и камерных музыкальных форм мы прибавляем установку на насыщенное описание, в котором культурные смыслы, поставляемые песенными высказываниями, предстают в тесной связке с советским социальным воображением.

Ключевые слова: позднесоветская эстрада, позднесоветская массовая песня, песенное выказывание, культурная политика, сильная программа культурсоциологии, насыщенное описание

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Creating a Hero . . . Laughing at Clowns? Representations of Sports and Fitness in Soviet Fiction Films after the Olympic U-Turn in Politics

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In the 1940s–1960s, the USSR made an ideological turn from leftist sports politics to the struggle for Olympic achievements. How has this U-turn affected the social order in Soviet sport and its artistic representation? The article offers a systematic review of Soviet sport fiction films. The study of sport and fitness imagination is conducted through a correlation between artistic performance and social context. Focusing on the 1950s–1980s, we found three different types of representation: № 1 is the creating of a hero (for an elite athlete). This is the lion's share of all sport movies where the "Myth of a Hero" in Olympic sport was constructed. In praising elite sport, modern Russian movies continue the well-known Soviet tradition; № 2 is the laughing at clowns (for mass sportsmen). These are mostly episodes in feature films on themes, where mass sport (i.e., non-elite, grassroots, recreational, fitness, and ordinary) is mentioned. Surprisingly, this sport is presented in a comic sense (except hiking and mountaineering); №3 is sport reality. This type comprises the tiniest selection of movies where art reflects the real situation inside the Soviet sport industry. Elite athletes are presented here as antiheroes with social adaptation problems; additionally, such issues as *shamateurism* are severely criticized. The conclusions are following: since the 1970s, sport films ceased to function as propaganda of fitness and recreational sport. On the contrary, elite sport (as an art branch), its representations in official arts and media jointly constructed the great "evangelical myth" about itself, which became the part of public consciousness. However, this myth had little to do with a new reality. Elite sport's positive representation acted only as a propagandist tool that created a fictional social world. The existing social order's irrationality was critically reflected only by the comedy genre.

Keywords: sport policy, sport in art, Soviet cinema, social order, Soviet sport, sports pyramid, elite sport, sport for all

The Hero Returns

Naming a few, *Legend No. 17*, *Going Vertical*, *The Match*, *The Champions*, *The Coach*—over the last decade, Russian cinema has produced an impressive collection of sport movies. The filmmakers' interest is a consequence of the last decade's series of mega-events in Russia, and, in the meantime, it is the continuation of official policy. Top-class sport and its artistic representation are positioned as a means to motivate citizens to physical activities, a production of role models, and a reason to be proud of Russian national history. As Russian President Vladimir Putin said at the *Legend No. 17* premiere, this is "a good movie that will certainly find its audience both among sports fans, and those who

are proud of their country's achievements" (2013). How does an artistic ideal correspond to the real state of affairs? What was Soviet sport like in reality? How was it presented in Soviet cinema?

The relationship between the reality of Soviet sports and its artistic reflection has been studied in the Mike O'Mahony monograph (2006). However, the main focus here was made on the visual arts of the 1920s–1940s, while the cinema of the 1950s–1980s has remained behind the scenes. Some works of Russian authors only marginally close this gap. Accordingly, our study, perhaps the first of today's attempt at a systematic review, reveals more than 80 Soviet fiction films variously related to sports. The results extend the theoretical view of art as a "barometer" of the attitudes and tensions within ideology and culture as well as the view of Soviet sports movies as a propaganda tool for the production of a "Heroic Myth". This "Myth" was actually produced, but the overall picture was different and not at all uniform. Our work is also a contribution to the contemporary polemic around the "evangelical myth" of the "inspiring" function of elite sports for the mass sports engagement (Grix, Carmichael, 2012).

The purposes of our research are to discuss the difference between the artistic performance and the existing social order, as well as the contribution of the former to the production of this "evangelical myth" by studying the sports and fitness representation in Soviet fictional films from 1950s–1980s.

The structure of this article is as follows: as a starting point, we describe the "Olympic" metamorphosis of the social order in Soviet sports, when the USSR, instead of the struggle against "*recordism* and *championism*" as "*bourgeois perversions in sports*", proceeded to their promotion. What follows is an overview of the academic studies exploring the artistic, and particularly the cinematic, representation of Soviet sport. Then, we outline the results of our systematic review, distinguishing three different types of sports representation in the Soviet cinema. Finally, we conclude by summarizing and discussing our findings.

The Olympic Order and Its Alternatives from the "Left" in the 1920s–1930s

The modern order in global sport resembles the feudal model a bit, where the Sovereign, being the source of honor, majesty, and glory, possesses the exclusive right to grant noble titles. Likewise, the International Olympic Committee (the IOC), is the "source of Olympism" with the exclusive right of co-optation into the Olympics, and the same right to recognize a solitary governing body for each athletic discipline. By managing its Olympics, the IOC positions them as the number one event in global sports. This is a championship of championships, where only the best athletes, the so-called *Elite*, compete. The steps below are the Championships and Cups: first the "World", then the "Continents", and then the "Nations". The base of this construction is the grassroots, or the mass level sport. According to the IOC's logic, the sport as a whole is a pyramid of qualifying competitions, with the Olympics at the top.

Today, national governments support this "Olympic order" and invest in high sports performance for reasons of international prestige, trying to encourage and strengthen the identities of their nations by means of sport achievements. Moreover, this is typical for rather diverse political regimes: it is as true for the contemporary UK and Russia as it was for East Germany and the USSR in the recent past (Dennis, Grix, 2012; Adelfinsky, Anashvili, 2018).

During the inter-war period, however, the IOC was neither the monopoly-owner of the Olympics, nor the sole source of social order in global sports. There were two more "sovereigns": the Lucerne or Socialist Workers' (LSI/SASI) and the Red (RSI) Sport Internationals. Regarding the sport under the IOC's auspices as a "reactionary" bourgeois phenomenon, these two "sovereigns" promoted an alternative view of sports from the "left". Moreover, they held their own international Olympics and Spartakiads (Krüger, 2014; Physick, 2017; Strożek, 2018). Left-wing sports ideologues criticized the IOC for promoting nationalism and an addiction for records, and, as a result, effectively turning sports into an elite engagement (in terms of athletic performance), which slides into professionalism. Declaring the ideals of amateur sport, the IOC has practically contributed to the rise of *shamateurism* (i.e., pseudo-amateurism) (Llewellyn, Gleaves, 2012). The order of "Left" sports was discussed and actively put into practice in the 1920–1930s. For example, the Soviet Industry of Physical Culture and Sports (with the abbreviation of FKiS) was conceived as a sub-sector of the Health industry in the USSR. Its initial purpose was to develop mass-grassroots sport engagement whose tasks were to prepare army reserves and to provide health awareness. Both *Recordism* and *Championism* were declared to be "bourgeois sports perversions" that had to be overcome (Kedrov, 1928). These two sources of sports order from the left shared the similar ideological vision. The split took place along the line of political views of socialist reformism vs. communism. The rise of Popular Fronts as left-wing, anti-fascist international coalitions brought these two organizations closer. The RSI joined the unified SASI People's Olympics in spite of the IOC Berlin Olympics 1936, which were considered to be pro-Nazi.

Soviet Sport: From Struggle against "Perversions" to Their Propaganda

However, Soviet leaders decided to join the IOC Olympic movement in 1948, having put its recent past into oblivion. The decision of 1948 and a number of subsequent ones taken in the same vein led to the total degeneration of the previous Soviet sports order. Previously-criticized *shamateurism* had become an unspoken norm. Gradually, the functional meaning of the entire Soviet sport industry was reduced only to "setting records" and the best results at the IOC Olympics. Yuri Vlasov described the new order imposed by the end of 1960s as "Everything, even the formation of sport classes in small provincial towns, is brought to the achievement of the main task: records, gold medals" (1986). At the same time, the initial purpose of achieving mass sports involvement outside the dependence upon skills and talent was lost. The still-declared course of "mass sport development" had become just an empty phrase, a familiar figure in official rhetoric. The

allegory of "Turn left then drive right" was used by Sergei Pavlov, the head of Soviet sports from 1968–1983, when he was describing the real policy of his ministry in private conversations (Adelfinsky, 2018: ch. 1). The pressure from the top gave rise to the weird phenomenon of "double" *shamateurism* when the grassroots sports executives hired elite athletes to fake local low-level participation in order to demonstrate the desired sports achievements.

The "Olympic" transformation of Soviet sport was promoted from the top for reasons of international prestige. However, the new order was criticized from below by reflective industry insiders as early as the 1960s. With the beginning of the period of Perestroika, this criticism intensified so that the discussion among specialists continued even in the 2000s. Most experts (Alexander Vlasov, Yuri Vlasov, Pyotr Vinogradov, Anatoly Isaev, Lev Matveev, Oleg Milstein, and many others) agreed that the degradation of mass sports development in the late USSR was the result of an excessive concentration on Olympic success. The problem had an institutional and economic background and was caused by the changes in the distribution of resource flows, as well as "the rules of the game" (i.e., institutions). Using Thomas Mores' allegory, elite athletes "ate up and swallowed down" the mass sportsmen (Ibid.).

In addition to the negative impact of elite sports on mass grassroots sporting activity, a number of problems were pointed out in this discussion, such as extremely high maintenance costs and the overproduction in elite sports, as well as actual professionalization already at the level of reserve training (i.e., for school-age athletes). Among the consequences were the loss of the civic socialization of elite athletes, and failures in their education and upbringing. Together with "fame's burden", this resulted in a low cultural intelligence and the flawed morality of "sports heroes", even more often in their social alienation after their bright but brief athletic careers. Another consequence was the issue of the low level of intelligence among trainers and coaches recruited from the same environment. The doping problem was also in this "education pack" due to lack of scientific knowledge (Ibid.).

So, although sport is sometimes described as "an ideal of social order" (Katzer, 2018), the conclusion from the experts' discussion above is that the established "pro-Olympic" order in the USSR was not recognized either as fair or reasonable. The real "sports heroes" were not at all the "role models" one would expect as a side-effect of their production.

Sport Visualizations in Soviet Art

How was the "Olympic" transformation of Soviet sports reflected in art? Mike O'Mahony argues that the popular image of Soviet physical culture and sports depended as much on its actual practice as on its artistic representation. His research distinguishes clear periods within this artistic depiction of Soviet sports. The first period is the 1920s–1930s. Sports were promoted in the artworks of such masters as Alexander Deineka, Alexander Samokhvalov, Elena Yanson-Manizer, Alexander Rodchenko, Gustav Klutsis, Joseph Chaikov, and many others. Visual images glorify athletic engagement, but not rooting, cheering, or

spectatorship. The portrayed heroes of sports are non-elite athletes, ordinary sportsmen and women (so-called *fizkulturniks,* i.e., physical-culturists, or exercisers), unnamed-but-real physically-strong people, the future defenders of the Land of Soviets and the working class: "You might not all be athletes, but to be a *fizkulturnik* is your duty"—proclaims the slogan on the famous advertising poster *Sportswoman* (Deineka, 1930). In the front of the poster is a shapely girl in a tight T-shirt and shorts, throwing a discus. A little bit further, a young man is preparing to shoot a rifle. In the background, a group of athletes is running, while the motorcyclists are racing.

O'Mahony pays the most part of his attention to the artworks of this period due to their large number in the whole body of identified works. He notes that the lion's share of countless Soviet articles on art during the 1980 Moscow Olympics was also focused on the "masters of the past", like Deineka and Chaikov (2006: 185). Discussing the propagandist intentions of this era of artworks, O'Mahony writes that, in fact, it was hardly coercion since people really liked doing sports (10).

The next period begins with the struggle for Soviet dominance in international sports in the post-war period. As an exemplary depiction of a new era sports hero, O'Mahony mentions *The Awards of World Champion Maria Isakova* (Nikich, 1951). Having triumphantly opened the count of Soviet international victories in 1948–1950, this speed-skater was awarded the highest Soviet award, the Order of Lenin. However, there is no real sportswoman in the picture, only her bronze statuette and numerous awards, her gold medals, prize cups, and magnificent view from the window of her prestigious apartment. Another early talent is a young girl-athlete as a symbol of top sports reserve, doing morning exercises in the painting called *The Morning* (Yablonskaya, 1954). The portrayal of sport spectators, previously discouraged, also received its artistic legitimacy. The painting *Football Fans* may serve here an example (Tikhanovich, 1952). The final period of the USSR is the era of its steady success in Olympic sports, but this success no longer inspired the masters of painting and sculpture. O'Mahony writes: "from the mid-1960s . . . the [sports] theme all but disappeared from the work of official artists" (2006: 176). All samples he mentions are the pieces of kitsch and satire performed by non-conformist artists such as Grigory Bruskin, Boris Orlov, Vitaly Komar, and Alexander Melamid. This thesis of a predominantly kitschy portrayal of sports in Soviet art since the mid-1960s can probably be challenged by further research, but the presented timeline is, in our opinion, quite true.

Cinema as a Propaganda Tool

What about the representation of sports in cinema? Vladimir Padunov argues that both Western Slavic studies and film criticism regarded Russian and Soviet films as *terra incognita* until the last decades of the twentieth century. It was only in the 1990s that certain works by Western authors were published (2011), and the journal *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema* appeared. Alexander Fedorov presented a number of valuable reviews (2018, 2020, 2021). However, the topic of sports in these sources was not covered enough.

In his monograph, O'Mahony mentions only a couple of films, one being the well-known movie, *Goalkeeper* (1936), based on the novel by Lev Kassil (1934), as well as the documentary *Man with the Movie Camera* by Dziga Vertov (1929). Dufraisse, while studying Soviet "sports heroes", briefly mentions only a small number of movies (2019). The cinematic material discussed in the works of Soviet and Russian authors is much more extensive. There are more or less detailed studies on specific film topics. Andrey Apostolov studied the goalkeeper's image together with the the transformation of the spectators' role in Soviet sport (2014a, 2014b). Other research topics include the myth and actual reality in elite gymnastics (Tsyrkun, 2007), sports television broadcasting as a show (Averkova, 2011), the image of a "new man" in 1930s' cinema (Fisheva, 2020), etc. The film critic Denis Gorelov presented a selection of fitness episodes in Soviet films (2019). His thesis of a kitschy fitness depiction in 1970s–1980s' Soviet film echoes that of O'Mahony.

There were some attempts to write reviews. Studying the on-screen image of an athlete in the array of ten Soviet and seven post-Soviet films, Ligostaeva noted its compliance to the social orders in different periods of Russian history. The "totalitarian" Stalinist sportsman-hero was gradually replaced since the Khrushchev Thaw by the image of a "reflective intellectual". In the late 1980s, the image of an athlete is already presented as a "crisis hero", whose mindset reflects a "sense of hopelessness and loss of values" in the whole of society. Later post-Soviet cinema practically does not produce sports movies. Then, in the last decade, Russian cinema creates the image of a "triumphant sports hero". In general, according to Ligostaeva, the athletic images of different eras have one common feature in that "All of them are heroes of their time and country". Her conclusion is that feature films about sports "are endowed with a clearly pronounced function of education, sometimes propaganda" (2020).

The propaganda tasks of art, however, were not concealed during the Soviet period. The sports film "propagandize the best human qualities: bravery, courage, determination". Its heroes are "the best representatives of our youth, whom sport helps to be agile, strong, and healthy"—writes Zlodoreva in the work *Sports through the Eyes of Cinema*, possibly the first Soviet catalog of sports films (1968). In his guidelines for the use of cinema in the propaganda of sports, Vinogradov indicates its principal mission. This is "the formation among the general population the idea of sport and physical culture (FKiS) as organic parts of the socialist way of life, a conscious attitude to physical exercises" (1979).

However, the artistic representation and the object of propaganda were markedly different. "The hero in sports film does not have a complex personality, he is as static and positive as possible," argue Isaev and Pozhidaeva, discussing three recent Russian biopics of last decade. They are writing about the films *Match*, *Poddubny*, and *Legend No. 17*. The researchers emphasize that the desired result of "positive identity formation" is a break with the academic knowledge that allows the highly-selective choice of facts, which simplifies the task of "myth construction" (2016).

The gap between sports films and reality was criticized in the Soviet era against the backdrop of rich cinematic material. Sports movies live "under the common hood of one and the same plot" since the days of Kassil's *Goalkeeper* (1936), as filmmaker Alexander

Maryamov noticed critically in 1986 in the *Soviet Culture* newspaper, the official press of the Soviet Ministry of Culture and the Central Committee of Soviet Culture Employees Union. He stated the stable reproduction of a simple pattern in fictional sports films: "Somewhere a new sports talent was spotted. Someone brought this talent into the sport. Somehow, almost immediately this talent falls into arrogance and catches star sickness. Somehow, almost entirely on his/her own, this talent was re-educated and set on the right track back. In the end the talent surely wins by overcoming both his rivals and himself" (1986). It is noteworthy that the theoretical framework to which Ligostaeva refers is the popular mono-myth theorized by Joseph Campbell (1949), and explicated nowadays in Christopher Vogler's works (Vogler 1985). However, we believe that the Maryamov's slightly caricatured pattern seems to be a little more appropriate for the Soviet sports cinema. Also we cannot but help mention Vladimir Propp's *The Morphology of the Folktale* (1928). So, having outlined the theoretical framework, let us proceed to our review.

Research Design

According to Thomas Hobbes' prominent logic, the social order is maintained in a top-down manner by the power of the mighty *Leviathan*, whom subjects must obey in the name of the common good. However, the stability of social orders in the logic of Talcott Parsons, Jürgen Habermas, and Jeffrey C. Alexander depends on their "inner justice", that is, legality, morality, i.e., on the degree of their recognition and support from below (Turkulets, 2010; Kildyushov, 2016). Obviously, O'Mahony adheres to the second position: he considers art to be the "barometer" of sentiments, relations, and tensions within ideology and culture. At the same time, he challenges the common opinion of sports and physical culture propaganda in the USSR as just "totalitarian pressure" from authorities who forced the masses to exercise (O'Mahony, 2006: 9). In turn, the Russian authors reviewing Soviet sports cinema concluded that the art was a propaganda tool. However, the obvious disadvantage of previously known reviews is the coverage of the material is relatively small. As we will show below, the art had not only promoted the social order as imposed by authorities, but it also was the source of reflection on existing imperfections. Additionally, this order was sometimes ridiculed, and in some cases, even served as a tool of social criticism.

Our study is methodically based on a systematic review. The materials made by Zlodoreva and Vinogradov allowed us to identify 27 feature movies, each touching the subject of Soviet sports to some extent. In studying the catalogs of Soviet film studios and press materials, we found another forty-three movies on the theme of sport in the 1950s–1980s in compiling our own catalog. The review is also supplemented by episodes of sports from eleven films on other subjects. Pushing from the available sampling of fitness episodes (Gorelov, 2019), we supplemented it with a large number of top-grossing films (Fedorov, 2021). Note that our selection of episodes does not yet pretend to be a systematic one, rather serving as an additional illustration. Moving through this catalog, we identified the plot (more precisely, the *fabula*) of a movie (or an episode), classifying

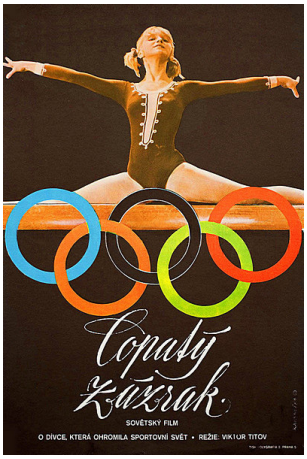
the material through two main questions: is it a recreational sport or an elite one with its reserves? Are we dealing with a "heroic myth" production, or with an actual reflection of social order (taking into account the "Olympic" transformation of the Soviet sport industry described above)?

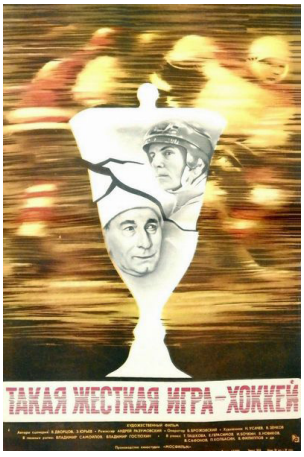
As a result, we have distinguished three conceptual blocks. Selection № 1 gives a very brief description of the films wherein the myth of the athletic hero is actually constructed. Moreover, feature films depict the "Olympic order" here, that is, the world of elite sport and its reserve training. Selection № 2 is devoted to the topic of mass non-elite sports. The sole identified film (*Seven Old Men and a Girl*) is supplemented with several episodes' descriptions from general topics movies, where the theme of mass non-elite sports was somehow mentioned. Selection № 3 contains feature films that present criticism of Soviet sports, taking into account the "Olympic" transformation described above.

Selection № 1: The Elite Athletes

The central narrative of practically every Soviet sports movie is the victorious road to triumph in either international competitions or directly at the Olympics. The hero is an amateur athlete, professionally employed elsewhere. *World Champion* (1954) tells the story of a young blacksmith from a rural area somewhere in Russia who turns out to be a talented wrestler, and eventually wins the title. *Rings of Glory* (1962) is also a story of a blacksmith, but from an Armenian village, who became a world champion in artistic gymnastics. *The New Girl* (1968) is the story of a young florist-girl from a Moscow landscaping public utility who is fond of gymnastics, and becomes a member of the USSR national team. The film's opening and its promising conclusion suggest that the protagonist will be a worthy successor to the gold-winning Soviet Olympic gymnasts of the 1950s–1960s. *Miracle with Pigtails* (1974) is about the same sport in the 1970s when female gymnastics teams were starting to be made up of schoolgirls. The lead character, a young girl, and her coach put cutting-edge performances and extremely complex, over-the-top elements into the practice. Overcoming resistance from retrogrades, they eventually achieve recognition and the highest marks from the judges. *A Center from the Skies* (1975) is a musical comedy about a young shepherd gifted in basketball, who plays for the team called "Student", and beats his American opponents in the last three seconds of the game. *Faster than Your own Shadow* (1980) tells the story of a student runner training hard for world-class competitions, and then for the Olympics. *The Girl and Grand* (1981) is about the joint road of a horse and a young lady-groom who then becomes a jockey achieving success at an international tournament. Movies with teenagers as main characters allow some local victories. *Lost Summer* (1964) is the story of a schoolboy who unexpectedly wins a cycling race. *Tigers on Ice* (1971) tells about a youth ice hockey team and their way to victory.

The obstacles on the hero's journey are usually his or her undesirable personal qualities in need of correction. Usually these are properties peculiar to young characters. They are about emotional instability, uncertainty, and weakness. Or, on the contrary, they are





Typical view on Elite sport: "The Soviet Hero with a Thousand of Faces": *World Champion* (1955), *Winner* (1960), *White Queen's Move* (1971), *Miracle with Pigtails* (1974), *Centerline from the Skies* (1975), *It's a Moment* (1978), *The Girl and the Grand* (1981), *Such a Tough Game—Hockey* (1983)

excessive self-confidence, arrogant on the verge of rudeness and impudence, or poor moral fiber. The logical consequence of overcoming this obstacle is a victory. *Individual Championship* (1963) is about the "eternal runner-up" boxer with an insufficient will to win. It is only the moral support of his rival-friend which allows him to become a champion. The drama may be based on the contrast of the characters or personal conflict. *Blue Ice* (1969) begins with a pair of figure skaters who lose a competition as a consequence of their mutual discord, but ends with their reunion. The storyline of *A Royal Regatta* (1966) is also built up from initial failure to final triumph.

Soviet sports movies actively promote the theme of the relationship between mature and young top-level athletes. One of main qualities of the social order displayed in these movies is the warm attitude of venerable athletes towards their young successors, and a smooth generational change. In the early comedy *The Old Rider* (1940), an experienced jockey retires to his native village, where he prepares the new horse-race winner out of a young groom. In *The Winner* (1960), a veteran speed-skater sacrifices his glory of an invincible champion for the sake of a new absolute track record set up by the young athlete, his trainee. *Strict Game* (1964) tells about the fate of a thirty-four-year-old retired soccer player who finds his new vocation in training young people. *The New Girl* (1968) also finds herself protected by an eminent female gymnast who becomes her mentor and friend, and then gives up her way on the podium and joins the audience. A veteran-rower in *Light Water* (1972) has long-term plans to end his sporting career. Only the absence of young successors makes him stay and, at the cost of a great effort, wins international competitions. In *The Lot* (1974), a senior hockey goalkeeper advice to junior one. *Vocation* (1975) tells the story about an experienced cyclist who dreams of coaching. He cedes his place on the team at a prestigious international race to a novice athlete. In *Iron Games* (1979), the world record becomes a farewell chord as a logical retribution for his generosity for the outgoing veteran, against the backdrop of his arrogant young rival.

The symbol of overcoming obstacles is the social class of coaches and trainers. Usually their characters serve as an embodiment of wisdom, great experience, and the ability to find an approach to their trainees. The support of a coach allows a teenager to master *The Large Hill* (1973). *It's a Moment* (1978) gives an example of empathetic leadership allowing the 15-year-old female swimmer to cope with the excitement of international competition. The head soccer coach is the central character of *Eleven Hopes* (1976), whose work in selecting and managing the USSR national team ultimately brings the desired success. Skiing in *White Queen's Move* (1971), soccer in *Such a Game* (1975) and *Kick! Another kick!* (1963) are also lined up around coaches as central figures. Sports leaders, heads, functionaries, and managers are closely connected to the class of coaches. The main narratives are discerned talent, brought up in a community, the road to success given to young people, invaluable help provided, etc. These managers of Soviet sport are the most serious and respectable characters in the early sports comedies like *The First Glove* (1946), *Sporting Honor* (1951), and *The Reserve Player* (1954).

Sport as an aid to everyday life is probably the educational motive of *The Ring* (1973). Its genre is unusual because it is both a sports film and a detective story. The main char-

acter was an elite boxer five years earlier: he was a five-time national, world, and Olympic champion. Now, he is a police major investigating a robbery case, but the method of investigation is rather sophisticated. Since the robber is presumably a boxer, too, the boxer-detective must come back to the elite ring to fight for the champion title once again. According to the plan, this will cause a sensation and lure the robber- boxer in as a spectator. The boxer-major starts training again, gets in the ring, wins his first fights, and this unusual plan works. The hero's final knockout becomes his triumph—the robber-boxer has been lured in and arrested. Smart way to use your head, isn't it?

Devotion to the Motherland and the bravery of Soviet athletes is the leitmotif of *The Third Half* (1962). The film depicts the feat of the Kiev soccer players who reportedly did not agree to lose to the Nazi team, and were eventually shot (the so-called "Death Match"). However, this seems to be the only sports-specific example. Movies such as *Yachts at Sea* (1955), *The Boy with the Skates* (1962), *The Silver Coach* (1963), *Long Distance Runner Tactics* (1978), and *The Invincible* (1983) should be attributed to other genres such as adventure, post-war, military, and the Soviet western. Exclusions from the "hero's way" are two films about auto racing, which are non-Olympic practices. These are *Speed* (1983) and *Racers* (1975), both without glorious victory in final.

In the last decade, Russian cinema just goes on with Soviet traditions in praising elite sports, and, in some cases, remakes them. However, there are quite a few differences. In *Eleven Hopes,* the female doctor has a romantic affair with a soccer player, whereas in *The Coach* (2018), the same situation happens with the trainer. *Poddubny* (2012) mythologizes only the eponymous champion, although *Wrestler and a Clown* (1958) had two main characters. *The Match* (2012) added a love affair to the feats of a soccer player, although a love affair is absent from the *Third Half*. *The First Swallow* (1975) smiles romantically over the past, while *Garpastum* (2008) paints it in more dramatic colors. *Rings of Glory* (1962), *The Right to Jump* (1972), and *The Invincible* (1983) were dedicated to individual athletes whose on-screen incarnations received fictitious names. Today's *Streltsov* (2020), *White Snow* (2021), or *Legend No. 17* (2013) do not use pseudonyms, but treat historical facts rather loosely. *Going Vertical* (2017), on the contrary, is much closer to historical reality than *The Center from the Skies*. However, in general, although the on-screen sport-heroes of the last decade are not young blacksmiths or florist girls any longer but only elite athletes, the master narrative of sports cinema remains the same. *Champions* (2012), *Champions: Faster, Higher, Stronger* (2016), and the others continue to win, just as they did half a century ago.

The Soviet films mentioned above describe the sphere of elite sport with its training of prospective top champions, include youth level. However, a logical question arises: where is the mass non-elite sport that "aids ordinary citizens to be agile, strong, and healthy"?

Selection № 2: The Non-elite Athletes

Recreational, non-elite sports are sometimes mentioned in general-theme movies, usually as an episode or as a detail that describes the character's appearance. It is noteworthy

that sports here are presented in a totally different manner. Unheroic heroes, antiheroes, and antagonists are a notable cohort of on-screen, non-elite athletes. Forced to run is translator Buzykin, the unheroic-hero of the *Autumn Marathon* (1979). He is a talented but weak person, entangled in romantic affairs, and forced into constant deception. His jogging in the mornings is also a consequence of his spinelessness—he finds it inconvenient to refuse the company of his foreign colleague, who is also a jogger. In the finale, the fit Professor Hansen in his elegant sportswear and the absurdly dressed Buzykin run down the empty morning street.

The music critic Zuev, the antagonist from the melodrama *Start All Over Again* (1985) also jogs. He is a confirmed retrograde who has no sense of fresh currents in music and the tastes of the youth. We hear of his divorce from reality even in his daughter's remark: "But dad is not here, he is running around the ponds." There he is caught by the protagonist, the rock-singer Kovalev, who persuades Zuev to withdraw his police complaint against a fan girl. "Damned running, after each circle my heart stops and my leg twists" confesses the critic, and eventually gives in to the musician's genteel request.

Within this cohort of non-elite Soviet athletes, one also can find characters "infected with bourgeois morality". A passion for aerobics symbolizes a fashionable life for the "trickster" saleswoman Nadezhda in the lyrical melodrama *The Blonde Around the Corner* (1984). During the Soviet era, the activities of such heroes were on the verge of economic crimes, which might bring them imprisonment.[1] Olga, another representative of the economically successful Soviet social strata and the character in the spy television drama *TASS is Authorized to Declare . . .* (1984), also plays tennis. She is the wife of a Soviet foreign trade official; it was an economically attractive and fancy job in the USSR. The elegant KGB investigator pursues her in his search for a spy, but suddenly the young woman is poisoned by her sports partner who turns out simultaneously to be the wanted CIA agent and her lover.

The production of a comic effect seems to be the main "function" of recreational sports filmed by Soviet cinema. The discrepancy between a royal-majesty suit and a sport-suit is played out in the sci-fi comedy *Ivan Vasilievich: Back to the Future* (1973). Due to an error in a scientific experiment, the Russian Tsar Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible) accidentally arrives in Moscow of the 1970s. Thus he, the Grand Duke of Moscow, and all of Rus' is forced to dress in modern clothes. The scene where he enters wearing the "Dynamo" sport club uniform together with his royal regalia (Monomakh's Cap, the royal belt, and scepter) gives rise to a burst of laughter, even among contemporary viewers. Another humorous scene is that of gymnastic exercises in the Soviet adaptation of the comic novel *Three Men in a Boat (To Say Nothing of the Dog)* (1979). In the original, Jerome K. Jerome described the journey of three thirty-years-olds up the Thames. In the Soviet film, instead of rowing against the current, we see a lazy-rafting down the calm water. The protagonists

1. Critic Gorelov puts on the same list Citizen Koreiko, "a man in his last fit of youth", a secret Soviet millionaire and plunderer of national property, who exercises with dumbbells (2019). However, the comedy *The Golden Calf* (1968), based on the classic eponymous novel by Ilya Ilf and Evgeny Petrov, describes a different historical era.

are three 40-year-old burly gentlemen. Their rounded bellies are effectively accentuated by tight-fitting maillots.

The famous song *Morning Gymnastics* was conceived for the Moscow Satire Theater. The Soviet bard Vladimir Vysotsky wrote it for the comedy play *Last Parade* (1968). Waking up the morning after, the sailors go to the table with alcoholic drinks "to cure themselves from hangover", but when they hear *Morning Gymnastics* on the radio, they immediately decide in favor of physical exercises—thus achieving the desired comic effect.

The protagonist of *The Blonde Around the Corner* (1984) amusingly runs away from his own wedding. A man, in a jacket and tie but no trousers, follows two young joggers out somewhere into the night. The element of buffoonery within the melancholy melodrama *Life on Holidays* (1980) is the physical-exercise scene together with its organizer. Bouncing and dancing, the elderly animator Lisyutkin takes his equally elderly and bored team out to do some gymnastics. The comic element is underlined by the song played to an accordion tune. This is Count Boni's song from *The Gypsy Princess* operetta.

A jogging episode from the popular comedy *Gentlemen of Fortune* (1971) became a well-known satirical sporty meme. A group of criminals escapes from prison. Instead of an empty truck, they find themselves in a tank of liquid cement, their clothes ruined. The gangsters are forced to run in their underwear imitating athletes. At the end of the race in the hotel's lobby, a conversation is started between the "reluctant athletes" and a well-informed sports fan: "'What club are you from, comrades?' 'Labor Reserves!' 'And what about "Dynamo", are they running?' 'Everyone's running.'" This phrase has become a widely used joke—it has been said in the wake of usual joggers.

The fitness comedy *Seven Old Men and a Girl* (1969) requires a detailed description as the only film dedicated to recreational sports. A young but tough girl who has graduated from the Institute of Physical Education gets a job in the Sports Palace. She dreams of training Olympic "princes", anticipating great victories and gold medals. Instead, she is assigned to the so-called "Health group for the middle-aged and elderly people" of

Comical view on Fitness: *Seven Old Men and a Girl* (1968)

Clear exception from laughing at non-elite amateurs:
Journey to Youth (1956), *Vertical* (1966), *Bicycle Tamers* (1968)

seven "old men" in poor physical shape. The belle is annoyed: this is not the material to "forge" Olympic champions. She tries to get rid of the imposed "elders' by any means in order to get a normal coaching job, where she could find a "prince". This is the comedy's opening line, which in its own way reproduces the story #709 from Aarne-Thompson-Uther's fairy tale index. The film itself is close to The Marx Brothers' "absurd comedies", but instead of circus tricks, it demonstrates ridiculous physical exercises performed by old men.

The belle mocks them in every possible way, giving either extremely heavy, or, on the contrary, ridiculously low physical exercise loads. Instead of sports games, the young lady prefers the so-called general physical fitness training: "'Madame Elena, shall we play in Russian skittles?' 'No! Let's do toes bouncing. Let's go!' 'The old men don't like this. . . . Women are already playing volleyball, whereas we are just hanging around. This is an insult to the males!'"

However, the young lady is adamant and the complaints continue: "'It's ridiculous somehow. The women are already swimming in the pool, and we are . . . it does not look nice'. 'But the women are already . . . playing water polo!'"

The other guests of the Sports Palace are not friendly, either. After a short dialogue: "'Daddy, please stand up'. 'What do you want, sonny?'" a teenage-wrestler knocks an elderly man to the ground. "Nice trick", comments another lad approvingly, as the daddy "scrapes" himself off the floor. The upshot is loosely connected to the main plot, but also looks rather grotesque. After the old men have allegedly improved their vitality and gotten stronger after some physical training, they successfully disarm a gang of equally clown-looking robbers in the same vaudeville style.

Exclusions from the tradition depicting non-elite athletes as "clowns" and anti-heroes seem to be few. Noteworthy is the eclectic comedy *The Bicycle Tamers* (1963), where the three main characters decide to prefer their romantic conquests over ephemeral sport

glory. The film is the third remake based on the previous two, *Dangerous Turns* (1960) and *Naughty Turns* (1959), where the background of the romantic action is not cycling, but motorcycle racing. Another notable exception is the movies depicting non-Olympic practices. These is the drama *Fox Hunting* (1980) where the hero's hobby is radio sport, as well as the mountaineering dramas *Vertical* (1966) and *While the Mountains Are Standing* (1976). The theme of amateur hiking, vocation tourism, and "wild", undeclared outdoor recreation is deployed as a positive background in a number of comedies such as *Journey to Youth* (1956), *Three Plus Two* (1963), *Sportloto-82* (1982), etc. Moreover, it is a trail-hiking experience that is vividly demonstrated as a paradigmatic sport practice for the canonical Soviet "student, Komsomol girl, sportswoman and just a beauty", the protagonist of the famous comedy *Kidnapping, Caucasian Style* (1967).

Selection № 3: Realities and Criticism of Soviet Sports

The tiniest category of fictional sports films is those where art sought to reflect the real situation in the Soviet sports industry. The comedy *Penalty Kick* (1963) criticizes the practices of *shamateurism* and the weird "double" *shamateurism* which took root in the USSR. The film's main antagonist is Kukushkin, the sports manager in some rural district. He offers a fee to a group of elite athletes for the performance at the regional Spartakiade, where they should pretend to be the "rural amateur athletes from Petrovsky district". The expected high score of the district team is supposed to earn the manager a promotion. After some bargaining over the pay's size, the elite athletes agree to the fraud. The world-class hockey player Kovalev becomes "combine operator Semyonov", the top-boxer Sizov turns into "irrigation engineer Dubrov", the prize-winning runner Goncharov is the "specialist in mechanics Kalachev", the speed-skater medalist Kuzin pretends to be "stock-breeder Ptitsyn", whereas the internationally-recognized male gymnast Nikulin becomes "poultry-farm chief Maslyukov". Moreover, the "poultry man" gymnast admits that he "only cared for chickens when they were fried", while the manager Kukushkin is familiar with sports in a similar way. The filmmakers turn the supposed "Spartakiad heroes" into clowns through unexpected plot twists. The eloquent sports manager is offered to take up skiing himself in order to "shake out some fat". An elite gymnast has to ride a horse while a prize-winning runner has to jump off a ski ramp. The result is disastrous: a serious performance turns into a comedy. In the finale, the fraud is exposed, and the manager along with his inglorious "sports heroes" are condemned and ostracized.

The film *Male Games in the Open Air* (1979) is unusual in a number of aspects. It is a feature movie filmed in a pseudo-documentary manner with non-professional actors in the lead roles. In fact, they play themselves as elite athletes. According to the plot, a group of filmmakers makes a documentary about athletics. It focuses on the already-known duel between the young and the distinguished top-level decathletes, but the heroes do not behave heroically at all. Dirty tricks are used even at the stadium: an accidental discus-throwing directed at an opponent, grabbing his hand while hurdling, etc. No less acute a struggle for economic resources goes outside the stadium at the backstage. It is note-

Critical view on Soviet sport: *Penalti Kick* (1963), *A Little Doll* (1988)

worthy, that according to Viktor Gruzenkin who played one of the main roles, the film was released in a greatly reduced form. The original script by German Klimov described the life of elite athletes, coaches, and managers in its true colors: heavy alcohol consumption, promiscuity, backstage games, money affairs, smuggling during the foreign trips, etc. However, the film was censored by two thirds of its original length (Kutakov, Gruzenkin, 2012).

The *Hockey Players* (1962) could have been classified as a typical sports heroic film, if not for two points. It challenges the "natural character" of generational changes, while disputing the sacred thing—the authority of the coach. This character is exposed as an incompetent anti-hero. This conflict of "coach vs. team captain" is reproduced later in *Such a Tough Game—Hockey* (1983), but with more expurgations. *The Second Attempt of Viktor Krokhin* (1977) also stands out from this heroic line. The path to victory in the European Championships is not depicted here as a "hero's journey" but as a compromise with one's conscience. It is noteworthy that the film was "laid on a shelf", its release happened only in 1987.

The problem of social adaptation for "sport heroes" was mentioned in the Oscar-winning melodrama *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* (1979). One of the secondary characters at the beginning of the story is the world-famous hockey player Sergei Gurin, an enviable bridegroom and a polite, modest person. Twenty years later, though, he is a devastated drunkard, a barfly regularly wined by his former fans. In the finale, the ex-hockey player seems to give up alcohol and plans to start coaching. According to the film's director, Vladimir Menshov, this open final with a hint at happy ending was imposed by censorship, who decided not to shame the "ex-member of the USSR national team". The removed scene depicts the ex-hero who, having "unleashed the demon", comes to his ex-wife to ask for three rubles, then the price of a vodka bottle. He is already malty and dusty and is accompanied by some drunkard. The ex-wife kicks out the ex-hero with abuse. His

companion objects: "How are you talking to him? This is Gurin, I've been grown up on his games!" (Pavlov, 2014). This sports hero Gurin never existed, but he is a generalized character combining many prototypes: "Former soccer stars are on duty at the beer-stalls, asking for a fistful of change, they are well known to local drunkards, who willingly serve them beer and vodka" (1980) (Tolstoy, 2014). Perhaps this description given by journalist Sergei Dovlatov was movie-inspired, but it was an unpleasant truth. The social adaptations problem of the elite athlete is also played up in the drama *Lucky* (1987), but in a gentler fashion.

The drama film *A Little Doll* (1988) tells the story of sixteen-years-old ex-world champion (she is also the movie's antihero), who is unable to fit into real life after retiring from elite sport. Her career in gymnastics came to an abrupt end due to an injury. Trying to "be the first" as she was taught in sports, the ex-star does not take either the circumstances or the feelings of other people into account. This only brings her into conflict with those around her. The sad finale refers to the tragic story of Elena Mukhina, a famous gymnast who was disabled at the age of nineteen due to the pressure of her coaches (Tsyrkun, 2007). The message of the film concerns topics unpleasant for sports, such as unjustified injuries, early professionalization, and, de-facto, the exploitation of child labor.

The late-Soviet perception of sport as the sphere of professional occupation is unexpectedly found in the popular comedy film *Afonya* (1975). Its main character is a thirty-four-year-old locksmith-plumber from the public service engineering office, Afanasy Borshchev, cheerful by nature, partly a ne'er do-well, partly a superfluous man. Although he makes good money taking bribes from his clients, his life is pointless. Trying to have fun through alcohol, he periodically gets drunk, gets involved in fights over women, and is even temporarily detained by the police. His co-workers condemn him, though strive to get him back on the right track. The film contains Afanasy's short monologue about sports, inspired by the picture of weightlifter training in a nearby house. It turns out that the hero was once a sub-elite volleyball player, the team captain, saying "I reached the first level [i.e. highest sub-elite]. I was promoted to masters [i.e. national elite]. Now I would be a coach. I would travel abroad. If I hadn't quit."

We believe that this is not the Afanasy's prototype to quit sports. Rather, the sport itself has changed, having rejected the masses of enthusiastic amateurs like Borshchev. Until 1966, the efficiency of the Soviet sports industry's work among grassroots sports teams was assessed by quantitative credit, so sports managers were still interested in real amateurs. Then the grassroots teams began to be evaluated only against the backdrop of the individual top athletes' success. Soviet sport was finally integrated into the global "Olympic order", having ceased to be a "quest for excitements" for the multitude of former amateurs. The film demonstrates, perhaps unwittingly, a kind of inversion of the classic dichotomy of "sports versus alcohol, violence and fights". However, particularly in Afanasy's case, a happy ending was proposed for the final. The pretty nurse Katya, whose brother played on the same team with Afonya, is in love with the hero. Our superfluous man will find a way to salvation if he accepts her love and her proposal: "We can go along the Yenisei River this summer, on a hike." Well, is this amateur hiking again?

Mythologizing, Reflecting, Criticizing, Ridiculing?

Let us summarize and discuss the representations of sports in Soviet cinema that we have distinguished. Most feature sports films of 1950s–1980s construct the "heroic myth". The athlete is portrayed as a model citizen, his trainings are hard work, a manifestation of will, dedication and devotion to the Fatherland in striving for the highest goal. Usually it is about success at international competitions where an elite athlete represents their country. A more modest level is typical only for teenage characters. Portraying the Soviet elite sports system and the Olympic reserve training system in a positive light, these movies depict the desired order, but not the real situation.

The gradual transformation of the Soviet sports cinema genre is noteworthy. In the Stalinist era, the myth of the heroic athlete had been created in the genre of comedy. In the Khrushchev Thaw era, *The Hockey Players* (1962) became a breakthrough film since it was probably the first time when cinema switched from comedy to drama, actively discussing specific problems within the sports industry. With the rise of the Brezhnev era of stagnation, sports movies progressively took on the features of a stamped cliché. One can find a very illustrative scene in the *Challenge* (1986), where the female protagonist, a fencer, with a casual poignancy tells her friend the story of her awards: "Medal for labor, medal for pain . . . medal for the coach's heart." Elite sports are shown as a kind of a standard-feat reproduction, and the sports movie genre itself acquires the industrial dramatic features (as with firefighters, rescue workers, doctors, etc.).

The portrait drawn of the "heroic athlete" turned out to be quite different from the model. The real costs of "sports heroes" production (the early professionalization, social exclusion, etc.) negatively affected their education, upbringing, and cultural intelligence. The glorification of the "military feat" performed by elite athletes was also controversial. The so-called "Death Match", though artistically famed, proved to be mere literary fiction.

It is also noteworthy that the overall quality of the cultural product being made (sports feature films) was not too high. If more than thirteen sports films were among the ones with highest box-office before 1966, only a few achieved later screen success. Among them were the *Seven Old Men . . .* comedy, and only three "hero-athletic" movies of mixed genres: the musical *Center from the Skies . . .*, the detective story *The Ring*, and the Soviet western *The Invincible*. We believe that the filmmaker Maryamov was correct in stating the following in 1986: "Both sports and films of it are experiencing today an acute shortage of viewers". He saw the reasons for this in the lack of intrigue in stadiums, the stereotypical nature of sports cinema, and the inherent flaws of the genre. He considered the film *Sport, Sport, Sport* (1970), where a talented selection of documentary episodes was sided with "far-fetched" fictional inserts, to be a relative success (1986). His opinion supports the view of elite professional sports as a subspecies of art well-known in academic circles (Stolyarov, 1997). In general, we believe that the Soviet sports cinema of the 1970s–1980s had already served, in social terms, as a means of the stereotypical positive representation of elite sports in public opinion. We believe that such an artistic image of sport actively contributed to the creation of the "evangelical myth" about the motivating

role of elite sport. A number of recent works have been devoted to its debunking, such as Gleyse et al. (2001), Payne, et al. (2003), Grix, Carmichael (2012), Weed, et al. (2015), and Seguí-Urbaneja et al. (2020).

Attempts to critically reflect on the realities of Soviet sports were relatively small in the total array of film production. Key examples here are the comedy *Penalty Kick* (1963), where *shamateurism* is ridiculed, or *A Little Doll* (1988), the drama of social alienation of ex-elite athletes. It should be noted that these movies were filmed during the Khrushchev Thaw and Gorbachev's Perestroika. Others films, challenging the positive image of "sports heroes", such as *Male Games in the Open Air* (1979), were heavily censored.

Since the late 1960s, recreational, non-elite sport in Soviet cinema, as it may seem, is either predominantly represented in the comic sense, or complements the images of antagonistic characters. We are talking of the unique example of the fitness-comedy *Seven Old Men and a Girl* (1966), but also of many characteristic episodes in general-theme films. The obvious question here is what is the reason for this artistic reflection? Explaining the clown-looking fitness episodes in late Soviet movies, the film critic Denis Gorelov believes that "by the 1970s, physical culture, like any noble cause, promoted in the top-down manner, had finally discredited itself" (2019). A similar opinion was previously expressed by Mike O'Mahony (in the Russian edition of his book): "In the Stalinist era, the physical culture was taken as a very serious theme, while in the 1970s–1980s . . . depicting physical culture and sports meant political and ideological conformism" (2010: 27).

Discussing the topic of Soviet sports cinema, we would like to challenge this view. In fact, the Soviet sports industry underwent a gigantic transformation from the 1940s to the 1960s. Western researchers have noticed a significant change in the goals of Soviet sports policy. However, it does not mean the factual disappearance of genuine (competitive) mass sport. Soviet sport industry insiders (Anatoly Isaev, Pyotr Vinogradov, and many others) observed, in their turn, the confidential situations from within also being directly involved in critical discussions. The director and screenwriter of *Seven Old Men* . . . , Evgeny Karelov, was also a sports industry insider, having graduated from the Sports Institute and initially planning to work as a coach.

We think that the comedy trick of throwing of an old man to the ground by a teenager athlete may serve an obvious allegory for the shaking-out of genuine sports heroes of the 1920s–1930s, which finally took place in 1966 due to "Olympic" changes in the system of work with sports at the grassroots level. "Bouncing on toes" instead of sports games is a clear allegory of the well-known thesis of sports significance, which was voiced by the Soviet health minister Nikolai Semashko in 1927. Physical exercises "for the sake of health" were considered pointless, but health was an industry goal, achieved through the mass sport involvement. The "Malt o'meal of hygienic gymnastics" proposed instead of sports looked really ridiculous. The criticism of *Penalty Kick* as pathetic does not require any explanation. The scriptwriter was Yakov Kostyukovsky, a professional ironist and well-known connoisseur of Soviet sports, as well as a big fan of the Central Army Sports Club (CSKA) since 1937. German Klimov was also an industry insider: the screenwriter

of *Sports, Sports, Sports* and *Male Games . . .* was initially an elite decathlete. The famous weightlifter Yuri Vlasov, a rigorous critic of the industry, needs no special introduction.

The portrayal of individual non-elite amateurs as "infected with bourgeois morality" probably reflected the usual economic inaccessibility of recreational sports in the late-Soviet period. At the same time, Soviet cinema portrayed the practice of mountaineering and off-trail hiking positively. These activities, however, were autonomously organized and almost independent of the official sports industry. Thus, the ironic representation of non-elite sport by artistic means is difficult to reduce to a common denominator.

In fine

In summary, we may propose the following conclusions. Since the late 1960s, Soviet sports cinema was no longer a propagandist tool for promoting a healthy lifestyle and recreational sporting activity for non-elite amateurs (if we exclude amateur hiking practices). At the same time, the top sport (which is itself an art form) as well as its artistic representation, as if two arms acting together, constructed the great "evangelical" myth of elite sports, which became a part of the public consciousness. However, this myth had little to do with the reality transformed during the second half of the twentieth century. The art, creating a hero out of an elite athlete, was not reflecting reality any longer, but acted as a propagandist tool on behalf of the "Olympic ideology", creating fictional social worlds. The existing social order's irrationality was critically reflected only in the comedy genre.

Note that the satirical exposure of "certain shortcomings" in the USSR was a permitted form of social criticism. A typical example thereof is the Soviet satirical magazine *Crocodile*, which has devoted many cartoons to "sports heroes". It ridiculed the attitude of sports managers to elite athletes as a scarce resource, educational problems among "sports heroes", etc. Thus, it is not a question of "non-conformism", or of a "complete decline of previously existed values in society as a whole", or of "physical culture [that] finally discredited itself". It concerns the obvious criticism of the social order in a specific area of public life, which changed its course by 180 degrees in favor of "glorious Olympic goals". However, the array of Soviet sports films studied in our paper outlines the contours of a solid propaganda for grassroots sports to some degree. The Hero should dramatically climb the mountain (run a marathon, a triathlon, etc.), or prefer a romantic victory over the sporty one.

Appendix

I. Soviet fiction movies based on Olympics sports

1936. The Goalkeeper. [Russ.: Вратарь]. Dir.: Tymoshenko Semyon. Writ.: Kassil Lev, Yudin Mikhail. Stud.: Lenfilm. Sport: soccer.

1946. The First Glove. [Russ.: Первая перчатка]. Dir.: Frolov Andrey. Writ.: Filimonov Alexander. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: boxing.

1947. Center Forward. [Russ.: Центр нападения]. Dir.: Derevian Semyon, Zemgano Igor. Writ.: Laskin Boris, Pomeshchikov Evgeny. Stud.: Dovzhenko Film. Sport: soccer.
1951. Sporting Honor. [Russ.: Спортивная честь]. Dir.: Petrov Vladimir. Writ.: Volpin Mikhail, Erdman Nikolay. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: soccer.
1954. The Reserve Player. [Russ.: Запасной игрок]. Dir.: Tymoshenko Semyon. Writ.: Tymoshenko Semyon. Stud.: Lenfilm. Sport: soccer.
1954. World Champion. [Russ.: Чемпион мира]. Dir.: Gonchukov Vladimir. Writ.: Ezhov Valentin, Soloviev Vasily. Stud.: Gorky Film. Sport: classic wrestling.
1955. Yachts at Sea. [Russ.: Яхты в море]. Dir.: Egorov Mikhail. Writ.: Vasiliev Arkady, Likhobabin Nikita. Stud.: Tallinnfilm. Sport: yachting.
1958. Wrestler and a Clown. [Russ.: Борец и клоун]. Dir.: Barnet Boris, Yudin Konstantin. Writ.: Pogodin (Stukalov) Nikolay. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: classic wrestling.
1960. The Winner. [Russ.: Победитель]. Dir.: Sadovsky Victor. Writ.: Nagibin Yuri. Stud.: Lenfilm. Sport: speed skating.
1962. The Third Half. [Russ.: Третий тайм]. Dir.: Karelov Evgeniy. Writ.: Borschagovsky Alexander. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: soccer.
1962. Rings of Glory. [Russ.: Кольца славы]. Dir.: Yuri Yerzinkyan. Writ.: Filimonov Alexander, Kocharyan Yakov. Stud.: Armenfilm. Sport: artictis gymnastics.
1963. The Silver Coach. [Russ.: Серебряный тренер]. Dir.: Ivchenko Victor. Writ.: Kushnirenko Georgy. Stud.: Dovzhenko Film. Sport: artictic gymnastics.
1963. Penalty Kick. [Russ.: Штрафной удар]. Dir.: Dorman Benjamin. Writ.: Bakhnov Vladlen, Kostyukovsky Yakov. Stud.: Gorky Film. Sport: few olympic sports.
1963. Individual Championship. [Russ.: Личное первенство]. Dir.: Skachko Elena. Writ.: Nagibin Yuri. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: boxing.
1964. Strict Game. [Russ.: Строгая игра]. Dir.: Lipshits Grigory. Writ.: Pomeshchikov Evgeny. Stud.: Dovzhenko Film. Sport: soccer.
1964. The Hockey Players. [Russ.: Хоккеисты]. Dir.: Goldin Raphael. Writ.: Trifonov Yuri. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: hockey.
1964. Lost Summer. [Russ.: Пропало лето]. Dir.: Bykov Roland, Orlov Nikita. Writ.: Zach Abner, Kuznetsov Isay. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: cycling.
1964. Bicycle Tamers. [Russ.: Укротители велосипедов]. Dir.: Kuhn Julius. Writ.: Kuhn Julius, Ozerov Yuri, Erdman Nikolay. Stud.: Tallinnfilm. Sport: cycling.
1966. A Royal Regatta. [Russ.: Королевская регата]. Dir.: Chulyukin Yuri. Writ.: Vasiliev Boris, Rapoport Kirill, Sheets Semyon. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: rowing.
1968. Kick! Another kick!. [Russ.: Удар! Ещё удар!]. Dir.: Sadovsky Victor. Writ.: Kassil Lev, Sadovsky Victor, Kunin Vladimir. Stud.: Lenfilm. Sport: soccer.
1968. The New Girl. [Russ.: Новенькая]. Dir.: Lyubimov Pavel. Writ.: Lyubimov Pavel, Tokarev Stanislav. Stud.: Gorky Film. Sport: artictic gymnastics.
1969. The Coach. [Russ.: Тренер]. Dir.: Bazelyan Yakov. Writ.: Lapshin Alexander. Stud.: Gorky Film. Sport: artictic gymnastics.
1969. Blue Ice. [Russ.: Голубой лёд]. Dir.: Sokolov Victor. Writ.: Nagibin Yuri, Solodar Caesar. Stud.: Lenfilm. Sport: figure skating.

1970. Sport, Sport, Sport. [Russ.: Спорт, спорт, спорт]. Dir.: Klimov Elem. Writ.: Klimov German. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: few olympic sports.

1971. Fast Seconds' Cost. [Russ.: Цена быстрых секунд]. Dir.: Chebotarev Vladimir. Writ.: Chebotarev Vladimir, Smirnov Edgar, Yusin Anatoly. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: speed skating.

1971. Tigers on Ice. [Russ.: Тигры на льду]. Dir.: Kozachkov Valentin, Osipov Albert. Writ.: Merezhko Victor, Gorbunov Nikolay. Stud.: Odessa Film. Sport: hockey.

1971. White Queen's Move. [Russ.: Ход белой королевы]. Dir.: Sadovsky Victor. Writ.: Kassil Lev, Sadovsky Victor. Stud.: Lenfilm. Sport: cross-country skiing.

1972. Light Water. [Russ.: Легкая вода]. Dir.: Vinnik Vyacheslav. Writ.: Rizin Leonid. Stud.: Odessa Film. Sport: rowing.

1972. Right to Jump. [Russ.: Право на прыжок]. Dir.: Kremnev Valery. Writ.: Lapshin Alexander, Brumel Valery. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: athletics.

1973. The Large Hill. [Russ.: Большой трамплин]. Dir.: Martynyuk Leonid. Writ.: Braslavsky Leonid. Stud.: Belarusfilm. Sport: ski jumping.

1973. The Ring [Russ.: Ринг]. Dir.: Novak Villen. Writ.: Leonov Nikolay. Stud.: Odessa Film. Sport: boxing.

1974. Miracle with Pigtails. [Russ.: Чудо с косичками]. Dir.: Titov Victor. Writ.: Lapshin Alexander. Stud.: Mosfilm / Belarusfilm. Sport: artictic gymnastics.

1974. The Lot. [Russ.: Жребий]. Dir.: Voznesensky Igor. Writ.: Maryamov Alexander, Nilin Alexander. Stud.: Gorky Film. Sport: hockey.

1975. The First Swallow. [Russ.: Первая ласточка]. Dir.: Mchedlidze Nana. Writ.: Chelidze Levan, Mchedlidze Nana. Stud.: Georgian Film. Sport: soccer.

1975. Such a Game. [Russ.: Такая она игра]. Dir.: Popkov Vladimir, Maletsky Nikolay. Writ.: Vinnik Vyacheslav, Tokarev Stanislav. Stud.: Dovzhenko Film. Sport: soccer.

1975. Vocation. [Russ.: Призвание]. Dir.: Baltrushaitis August. Writ.: Mashkin V., Egorov S.. Stud.: Lenfilm. Sport: cycling.

1975. The Center from the Skies. [Russ.: Центровой из поднебесья]. Dir.: Magiton Isaac. Writ.: Aksyonov Vasily. Stud.: Gorky Film. Sport: basketball.

1976. Eleven Hopes. [Russ.: Одиннадцать надежд]. Dir.: Sadovsky Victor. Writ.: Ezhov Valentin, Sadovsky Victor. Stud.: Lenfilm. Sport: soccer.

1977. Moment of Luck. [Russ.: Миг удачи]. Dir.: Plotkin Vsevolod. Writ.: Priemykhov Valery. Stud.: Sverdlovsk Film. Sport: downhill skiing.

1977. The Second Attempt of Viktor Krokhin. [Russ.: Вторая попытка Виктора Крохина]. Dir.: Sheshukov Igor. Writ.: Volodarsky Edward. Stud.: Lenfilm. Sport: boxing.

1978. It's a Moment. [Russ.: Всё решает мгновение]. Dir.: Sadovsky Victor. Writ.: Ezhov Valentin, Sadovsky Victor. Stud.: Lenfilm. Sport: swimming.

1978. Long Distance Running Tactics. [Russ.: Тактика бега на длинную дистанцию]. Dir.: Vasiliev Evgeniy, Fruntov Rudolph. Writ.: Klimov German. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: athletics.

1978. Male Games in the Open Air. [Russ.: Мужские игры на свежем воздухе]. Dir.: Kalninsh Roland, Piesis Gunar. Writ.: Klimov German. Stud.: Riga Film. Sport: athletics.

1979. Iron Games. [Russ.: Железные игры]. Dir.: Martynyuk Leonid. Writ.: Kunin Vladimir. Stud.: Belarusfilm. Sport: weightlifting.

1980. Faster than Your Own Shadow. [Russ.: Быстрее собственной тени]. Dir.: Lyubimov Pavel. Writ.: Orlov Dal. Stud.: Gorky Film. Sport: athletics.

1981. At the Beginning of Game. [Russ.: В начале игры]. Dir.: Mastyugin Yuri. Writ.: Stepanov Anatoly. Stud.: Gorky Film. Sport: soccer.

1981. The Girl and Grand. [Russ.: Девушка и Гранд]. Dir.: Sadovsky Victor. Writ.: Ezhov Valentin, Sadovsky Victor. Stud.: Lenfilm. Sport: equestrianism.

1982. Eighth Wonder of the World. [Russ.: Восьмое чудо света]. Dir.: Samsonov Samson. Writ.: Kapitanovsky Vladimir. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: basketball.

1984. And a Beautiful Moment of Victory. [Russ.: И прекрасный миг победы]. Dir.: Vinnik Vyacheslav. Writ.: Vinnik Vyacheslav. Stud.: Dovzhenko Film. Sport: handball.

1985. Rivals. [Russ.: Соперницы]. Dir.: Sadovsky Victor. Writ.: Ezhov Valentin, Sadovsky Victor. Stud.: Lenfilm. Sport: rowing.

1986. Challenge. [Russ.: Вызов]. Dir.: Kolovsky Igor. Writ.: Antipova Faina, Milova Eleonora. Stud.: Belarusfilm. Sport: fencing.

1987. Lucky. [Russ.: Везучая]. Dir.: Shukher Oleg. Writ.: Slutsky Ganna. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: athletics.

1988. A Little Doll. [Russ.: Куколка]. Dir.: Friedberg Isaac. Writ.: Ageev Igor. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: artictis gymnastics.

II. Soviet fiction movies based on Alpinism/Hiking, Fitness, Martial arts, Military-technical

1940. The Old Rider. [Russ.: Старый наездник]. Dir.: Barnet Boris. Writ.: Volpin Mikhail, Erdman Nikolay. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: horse racing.

1956. Journey to Youth. [Russ.: Путешествие в молодость]. Dir.: Kraynichenko Vladimir, Lipshits Grigory. Writ.: Filimonov Alexander. Stud.: Dovzhenko Film. Sport: mountaineering.

1960. Dangerous Turns. [Russ.: Озорные повороты]. Dir.: Kiisk Kalyo, Kun Julius. Writ.: Normet Dagmar, Stern Sandor. Stud.: Tallinnfilm. Sport: motorcycle racing.

1961. Naughty Turns. [Russ.: Опасные повороты]. Dir.: Kiisk Kalyo, Kun Julius. Writ.: Normet Dagmar, Stern Sandor. Stud.: Tallinnfilm. Sport: motorcycle racing.

1966. Vertical. [Russ.: Вертикаль]. Dir.: Govorukhin Stanislav, Durov Boris. Writ.: Tarasov Sergey, Rasheev Nikolay. Stud.: Odessa Film. Sport: mountaineering.

1968. Seven Old Men and a Girl. [Russ.: Семь стариков и одна девушка]. Dir.: Karelov Evgeniy. Writ.: Karelov Evgeniy, Ivanov Albert. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: recreational fitness.

1972. Racers [Russ.: Гонщики]. Dir.: Maslennikov Igor. Writ.: Olshansky Iosif, Rudneva Nina, Maslennikov Igor. Stud.: Lenfilm. Sport: auto racing.

1976. While the Mountains are Standing. [Russ.: Пока стоят горы]. Dir.: Mikhailov Vadim. Writ.: Mikhailov Vadim, Shulgina Albina. Stud.: Lenfilm. Sport: mountaineering.
1980. Fox Hunting. [Russ.: Охота на лис]. Dir.: Abdrashitov Vadim. Writ.: Mindadze Alexander. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: radio sports.
1983. Speed. [Russ.: Скорость]. Dir.: Dmitry Svetozarov. Writ.: Zvereva Maria. Stud.: Lenfilm. Sport: auto racing.
1983. The Invincible. [Russ.: Непобедимый]. Dir.: Boretsky Yuri. Writ.: Lungin Pavel. Stud.: Gorky Film. Sport: martial arts.

III. Selected Soviet films containing scenes of Sports and Fitness (mostly box-office)

1962. The Boy with the Skates. [Russ.: Мальчик с коньками]. Dir.: Gippius Sergey. Writ.: Yakovlev Yuri. Stud.: Lenfilm. Sport: recreational fitness. (Note: wrongly attributed as a Sports film by Zlodoreva).
1963. Three Plus Two. [Russ.: Три плюс два]. Dir.: Hovhannisyan Henrikh. Writ.: Mikhalkov Sergey. Stud.: Gorky Film / Riga Film. Sport: tourism.
1967. Kidnapping , Caucasian Style. [Russ.: Кавказская пленница]. Dir.: Gaidai Leonid. Writ.: Kostyukovsky Yakov, Slobodskoy Maurice, Gaidai Leonid. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: hiking.
1968. The Golden Calf. [Russ.: Золотой телёнок]. Dir.: Schweitzer Mikhail. Writ.: Schweitzer Mikhail (based on novell by Ilf Ilya and Petrov Eugeny). Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: fitness / weightlifting.
1968. Last Parade. [Russ.: Последний парад]. Dir.: Pluchek Valentin. Writ.: Stein Alexander. Stud.: Moscow Satire Theatre. Sport: fitness. (Note: theatre play).
1971. Gentlemen of Fortune. [Russ.: Джентльмены удачи]. Dir.: Gray Alexander. Writ.: Danelia Georgy, Tokareva Victoria. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: jogging.
1973. Ivan Vasilievich: Back to the Future. [Russ.: Иван Васильевич меняет профессию]. Dir.: Gaidai Leonid. Writ.: Bakhnov Vladlen, Gaidai Leonid. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: fitness.
1975. Afonya. [Russ.: Афоня]. Dir.: Danelia Georgy. Writ.: Borodyansky Alexander. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: volleyball.
1979. Three Men in a Boat (To Say Nothing of the Dog). [Russ.: Трое в лодке не считая собаки]. Dir.: Birman Naum. Writ.: Lungin Semyon. Stud.: Lenfilm. Sport: fitness.
1979. Autumn Marathon. [Russ.: Осенний марафон]. Dir.: Danelia Georgy. Writ.: Volodin Alexander. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: jogging.
1979. Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears. [Russ.: Москва слезам не верит]. Dir.: Menshov Vladimir. Writ.: Chernykh Valentin. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: hockey.
1980. Life on Holidays. [Russ.: Из жизни отдыхающих]. Dir.: Gubenko Nikolay. Writ.: Gubenko Nikolay. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: fitness.
1982. Sportloto-82. [Russ.: Спортлото-82]. Dir.: Gaidai Leonid. Writ.: Bakhnov Vladlen, Gaidai Leonid. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: tourism.
1984. TASS is Authorized to Declare…. [Russ.: ТАСС уполномочен заявить …]. Dir.: Fokin Vladimir. Writ.: Semyonov Julian. Stud.: Gorky Film. Sport: tennis. (Note: TV).

1984. The Blonde Around the Corner. [Russ.: Блондинка за углом]. Dir.: Bortko Vladimir. Writ.: Chervinsky Alexander. Stud.: Lenfilm. Sport: fitness / jogging.
1985. Start All Over Again. [Russ.: Начни сначала]. Dir.: Stefanovich Alexander. Writ.: Borodyansky Alexander, Stefanovich Alexander. Stud.: Mosfilm. Sport: jogging.

For reasons of brevity, the article does not mention few films, which related to Selection № 1. There are *Fast Seconds' Cost* (1971), *Eighth Wonder of the World* (1982), *And a Beautiful Moment of Victory* (1984), etc.

Source of posters: http://www.kinopoisk.ru/posters/

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Создавая героя… смеясь над паяцами? Репрезентация спорта и физкультуры в советском кино после олимпийского разворота в политике

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В 1940–1960-х гг. СССР совершил «идеологический» поворот от левой спортивной политики к борьбе за олимпийские достижения. Как это коренное изменение повлияло на социальный порядок советского спорта и его представление в искусстве? В работе представлен систематический обзор советских спортивных игровых фильмов. Изучая репрезентации физической культуры и спорта, мы соотносили взгляд искусства и социальный контекст. Сосредоточившись на 1950–1980-х годах, мы нашли три разных презентации. № 1: Создавая героя (элитные спортсмены) — художественные фильмы о спорте, в которых строится миф о герое. Прославляя элитный спорт, российские фильмы 2010-х гг. фактически лишь продолжают старую традицию. № 2: Смеясь над паяцем (атлеты-любители) — художественные фильмы на общие темы, в которых упоминаются рекреационные занятия спортом (т.е. фитнес, неэлитный спорт). Удивительно, но этот спорт представлен в комическом смысле (исключая альпинизм и туризм). № 3: Реалии спорта — это наименьшая подборка фильмов, где искусство отражало реальную ситуацию в советской спортивной

индустрии. Критикуется практика лжелюбительства, глубоко укоренившаяся в СССР; экс-чемпионы представлены как антигерои, неспособные вписаться в реальную жизнь, и т.п. Мы полагаем, что с 1970-х гг. спортивное кино уже не работало на пропаганду массового спорта. При этом элитный спорт (сам по себе как ветвь искусства), его репрезентации в официальном искусстве и медиа — совместно сконструировали великий «евангелический» миф о себе, который стал частью общественного сознания. Однако этот миф не имел ничего общего с преобразованной реальностью. Представление элитного спорта было лишь инструментом пропаганды и создавало вымышленный социальный мир. Иррациональность существующего общественного строя критически отразилась только в жанре комедии.

Ключевые слова: спортивная политика, спорт в искусстве, советское кино, социальный заказ, советский спорт, спортивная пирамида, спорт высших достижений, спорт для всех

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Walter Benjamin as the "Last European": The Transfer of Walter Benjamin's Ideas to American Cultural Studies

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Walter Benjamin's posthumous reception was significantly broader than the one during his lifetime, particularly in the one country he had never succeeded to visit (although he had intended to), the United States of America. In the current article, we suggest, that while beginning to widen in American intellectual circles, the acknowledgment of the philosopher's legacy happened later in a narrower academic context, rehabilitating the philosopher who had never had the chance to work in a university due to a failed 1925 habilitation. The majority of Benjamin's works were disseminated in various non-academic journals and magazines, making the process of translation and publication of his texts more difficult than it usually is for scientists. We suggest that, firstly, Benjamin's reception in the USA established his image as a provocative essayist stepping far beyond Marxist frameworks (as opposed to how his first publisher and friend Theodor Adorno presented him through a thoroughly-selected collection of writings that had been translated into English for the first time), exploring such topics as Messianism, mass culture, and everyday practices. Our second suggestion is that Benjamin's legacy appeared to be fruitful for American cultural studies whose representatives rejected ideas of the teleology of culture embedded in the original British program, and turned to "practice theories" which presented everyday practices significant in themselves, not as privileged sites of ideology.

Keywords: Walter Benjamin, cultural studies, Theodor Adorno, practice theories, American cultural studies, cultural transfer

In the present study, the hypothesis that the German philosopher Walter Benjamin helped American researchers in the field of cultural studies abandon an idea of teleology, then advanced and legitimized the interest in everyday life, common practices, and local subjects is defended. Interpretations of Benjamin's ideas that were presented in American cultural studies played a role in Benjamin's images existing in American humanities nowadays. However, it is important to consider that the reception of the ideas of the German thinker greatly influenced the development of the field of cultural studies in the USA. These intertwined and interdependent processes will be the subject of the current paper. The stylistics of Benjamin's works, which in a certain moment of development of the humanities and social sciences appears to be marginal, becomes a part of a mainstream line of "cultural turn" in the second half of the 20th century.

The most relevant methodology to solve this problem is a theory of cultural transfer as developed by the French cultural historian Michelle Espagne. A polysemy of the no-

tion of "transfer", used both in the humanities and in economics (as a transfer of financial currents), is of great importance for Espagne. This being said, Espagne considered intellectual and artistic life to be a priority for the research of the possible inter-weavings of people and objects, and their symbolic interpretation. The phenomena chosen for analysis are not isolated, but constitute a part of the historical process. Espagne's theory is aimed at breaking down a well-established idea of homogeneity and the closedness of space. Besides this, while analyzing a cultural transfer, it is incorrect to merely study the "influences" that one author can have on another, as the import of certain ideas is as important in defining their new meaning and their export.

Currently, the theory of cultural transfer is well-established and its principles are renowned. As S. L. Kozlov wrote (2019: 15–16), we assume

> as given all conclusions and formulae, which were revealed during long-standing discussions of issues of cultural transfers . . . : (1) cultural transfer is a process, based not on a passive, but an active role of importer-recipient, consciously choosing and broadcasting one or the other element of foreign culture; in this sense cultural transfer is always based on preliminary construction of image of foreign culture, its Gestalt; (2) cultural transfer is a process, determined not by a passive reception of foreign impact, but primarily by importer-recipient's own problems . . . ; (3) as a result of a cultural transfer imported (or designed to be imported) element from foreign culture undergoes a more or less deep transformation: in the process of integration of this element to a new cultural system composition, structure and cultural function of this element is deformed; in this respect result of the transfer is never entirely congruent with the original project.

The subject of our investigation will be the reception of Walter Benjamin's ideas in the American context. This transfer was launched in the 1950s after Benjamin's 1940 death, in an intellectual context that was significantly different from the one in Europe in the 1930s. Walter Benjamin never visited the USA and never wrote in English; his native cultures were German and Jewish (Benjamin was deeply interested in issues of Jewish social and political self-identification and Jewish mysticism throughout his life). Benjamin was engaged in the research of French culture and Paris (his mega-project *Arcades* was devoted to 19th century Paris), and the philosopher fled from Nazi Germany to Paris in 1933. Benjamin's life was cut short in 1940: he committed suicide while attempting to cross the France–Spain border (any attempt of crossing the border was terminated by the Nazis). His tragic death formed an image of a victim of the Nazi regime around Benjamin. As Arendt remembers, Benjamin called himself the "last European" in the eyes of a hypothetical American public in case of his relocation to the USA.

Let us characterize the main stages of the intellectual biography of Benjamin, and outline the key contexts of the spread of Benjamin's ideas during his lifetime. The first context is academic. Benjamin tried to build a university career, but this attempt was not successful. In 1919, he earned his Ph.D. cum laude with the dissertation *The Concept of Art Criticism in German Romanticism*. By 1925, Benjamin had prepared the text of a

second dissertation *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. His second habilitation (thesis defense), which was expected to take place in Frankfurt University, opened a potential possibility for teaching in the university, but it never happened. Professor Franz Schultz (the chair in German literary history) told Benjamin, after reading the text of his dissertation, he would withdraw himself as advisor, and recommended Hans Cornelius (the chair in aesthetics and art theory) for the role. Cornelius evaluated the work negatively, claiming that "Benjamin's work was "extremely difficult to read," something no doubt experienced by every subsequent reader" (Eiland, Jennings, 2014: 231). After that, the Faculty of Philosophy recommended Benjamin to call off his application, which he did. Benjamin did not make any further efforts to continue his scientific academic career.

Later, Benjamin concentrated on a career in German journalism, and this period concurred with the blossoming of the press in the Weimar Republic. Benjamin was published in such editions as the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, the *Berliner Tageblatt*, the journal *Die Literarische Welt*, and signed an agreement with Rowohlt Verlag for the publication of three of his works, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, *Goethe's Elective Affinities*, and *One-Way Street*. As a result, (until the arrival of the Nazis in 1933), Benjamin held a solid place of a critic for some time, while not burdened with academic liabilities. Benjamin's critique was dedicated to literature and the cinema; Benjamin paid special attention to French culture, hoping to establish himself as "the leading German commentator on French culture" (251). His notes belonged to the genre of feuilleton: "The *kleine Form* or 'little form' that resulted came rapidly to be identified as the primary mode of cultural commentary and criticism in the Weimar Republic" (258). After his trip to Paris in the mid-1920s, Benjamin turned to the analysis of popular urban practices and mass culture, where "the turn to the popular brought with it a reconsideration of what it meant to write criticism in a politically and historically responsible fashion" (257).

Nevertheless, Benjamin's writing preserved an imprint of the academic style, which allows us to ascribe a variety of his works to classical texts in social theory. Benjamin realized his academic aspirations not in a university, but within the framework of The Institute for Social Research (the Frankfurt School), collaborating with Theodor Adorno. The Institute for Social Research was founded in 1923, its first director was Karl Grünberg, and the research of the Institute was focused on the history of the labour movement and socio-economic studies. After Max Horkheimer became director in 1931, the Institute became oriented towards a more-theoretically profound scholarly endeavor since "economics and history were substituted by social philosophy, whose overall goal was a 'philosophical interpretation of the vicissitudes of human fate—the fate of humans not as mere individuals, however, but as members of a community'" (Dmitriev, 2004: 339). Under Horkheimer's supervision, *The Journal for Social Research* was created, in which Benjamin was published (he became a fellow of the Institute in 1935). In the winter of 1926–1927, Benjamin travelled to Moscow (his *Moscow Diary* was written as a result of this trip). The pretext for the trip was a nervous breakdown of his lover, the Latvian actress, Asja Lācis, who lived in Moscow during that period. The trip became possible thanks to VOKS, the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries,

and motivated Benjamin to reflect about the necessity of joining the Communist Party. The reasons against such a decision must have outweighed the supposed benefits, for Benjamin never joined the Communist Party.

From the beginning of the 1930s and until the end of his life, Benjamin was published in the *Journal for Social Research* and thanks to the Fellows of the Institute, obtained the possibility to emigrate to the USA in August, 1940 (they helped him get a visa, which is an invitation to the Institute for a position of a research scholar). In the meantime, certain intellectuals labeled Adorno's harsh editorial policy on Benjamin's works as censorship. For example, in 1938, Adorno wrote a letter to Benjamin that The Institute for Social Research refused to publish his work *The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire*. Adorno "judged the essay's aggregate method of construction a failure" (Eiland, Jennings, 2014: 622), and accused Benjamin of positivism and "vulgar marxism" peculiar to Brecht. Consequently, the middle section of the essay was published as a separate paper in the *Journal*, titled "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire".

Adorno understood Benjamin's full dependence on the Institute at the end of the 1930s as Benjamin's only source of income: "he felt he could dictate not just the choice of subject matter but the intellectual tenor of Benjamin's work . . . he calmly and firmly pressured Benjamin . . . to produce writing that would in fact approximate his own" (624). In addition, since 1939, Benjamin had expressed a wish to emigrate to the USA (The Institute for Social Research had already moved to New York by that time) due to the growing concern of war and the rise of anti-Semitism in France; only Adorno and his colleagues could facilitate this transfer. In 1955, Adorno published a two-volume edition of Benjamin's writings (1955). The meaning of the publication of this edition, as important as it was, was twofold. On the one hand, its publication inaugurated a history of the posthumous reception of Benjamin's works. On the other hand, since the 1960s, Adorno's position towards Benjamin (in the first place, his selection of Benjamin's works for an edition) had begun to be criticized in the German Federal Republic. The writer Helmut Heissenbüttel, in the July 1967 issue of the journal *Merkur*, accused Adorno of controlling Benjamin's legacy, and Arendt agreed with that statement (678).

"Saturnine Hero": The Transfer of Benjamin's Ideas to the USA

Benjamin's reception in the USA was launched by the 1968 publication of an anthology of selected essays titled *Illuminations*, from the American publishing house Harcourt, Brace & World. The book also included an introduction by Hannah Arendt, published beforehand in the same year in the *New Yorker* magazine. In this article, "Walter Benjamin (1892–1940)", the critic was included in a broad American intellectual context for the first time.

Arendt constructs the image of Benjamin as a thinker who is trespassing the borders of one genre of writing or professional occupation. While describing the academic twists of his career, Arendt ascribes a nearly-mystical meaning to the element of bad luck in Benjamin's biography. Arendt laid the foundation for the mythologization of Benjamin's

biography, turning the reader's attention to the tragic parts of his life and his lack of belonging to a specific literary or scholarly genre. Arendt wrote that "posthumous fame seems, then, to be the lot of the unclassifiable ones" (Arendt, 1968: 3).

Fredric Jameson's essay, "Walter Benjamin, or Nostalgia", was published in the American literary journal *Salmagundi* practically simultaneously with Arendt's essay in the winter of 1969–1970. It was significant as one of the first essays in English about Benjamin, "marking one of the first essays in English on Benjamin by someone who did not know him, and one of the first to be published in an English-language literary journal" (Grossman, 1992: 419). Jameson considered Benjamin's allegorical thought as his principal feature and saw revolutionary potential in his nostalgia, "a lucid and remorseless dissatisfaction with the present on the grounds of some remembered plenitude" (68). From Grossman's perspective, due to the emphasis on the allegorical nature of Benjamin's thought, Jameson assimilates it with the model of Marxist hermeneutics that he later pursues (its more refined development is found in the 1981 book *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*).

In 1979, the American critic Susan Sontag dedicated the essay "Under the Sign of Saturn" to Benjamin, which was published in *The New York Review of Books* magazine, and was included as a preface to a collection of selected essays, *One-Way Street and Other Writings* (1979), in the same year; in 1981, a collection of Sontag's criticism *Under the Sign of Saturn* was published, which included a homonymic essay. In Sontag's opinion, melancholy profoundly influenced Benjamin's intellectual work. Like Arendt, Sontag observes an unusual historical approach of the critic. If such an approach is the equivalent of Benjamin's attention to quotation that does not require analysis and is a self-sufficient category for Arendt,[1] the transformation of temporal categories into spatial ones in Benjamin's autobiographical works is significant (for example, in *Berlin Childhood Circa 1900*) for Sontag.

Sontag's essay about Benjamin is addressed to a wider audience than Arendt's. Sontag was regularly published in such magazines as the *New Yorker* and the *New York Review of Books*, and maintained contact with a large number of writers, artists, and rock musicians. Sontag is said to be the only celebrity among American critics,[2] and her influence on a wide audience was exceptional.

Sontag refused to consider Benjamin as a representative of merely Marxist thought. While speaking about his autobiographical works, she creates an image not of a Marxist

1. "From the Goethe essay on, quotations are at the center of every work of Benjamin's. This very fact distinguishes his writings from scholarly works of all kinds in which it is the function of quotations to verify and document opinions, wherefore they can safely be relegated to the Notes . . . The main work consisted in tearing fragments out of their context and arranging them afresh in such a way that they illustrated one another and were able to prove their raison d'être in a free-floating state, as it were" (Arendt, 1968: 47).

2. "In our time, how many American critics have been celebrities? How many have had the kind of name recognition that allows them to be casually mentioned in a mainstream Hollywood movie, or enough star power to be featured (along with their apartments) in *People*, the magazine which pretty much invented today's celebrity culture? Not many. Almost none. Maybe, when you get right down to it, only one. Susan Sontag" (During, 2012).

theorist, but of a European intellectual with an outstandingly rich cultural background and tendency for self-destruction, intensified by tragic historical circumstances: she wrote, "At the Last Judgment, the Last Intellectual—that Saturnine hero of modern culture, with his ruins, his defiant visions, his reveries, his unquenchable gloom, his downcast eyes-will explain that he took many 'positions' and defended the life of the mind to the end, as righteously and inhumanly as he could" (1981: 134).

Sontag, Arendt, and Jameson published their essays in literary magazines aimed at wide intellectual circles, but the recognition of Benjamin's legacy in the academic landscape happened afterwards. In the 1980s, the Harvard University Press took an interest in Benjamin's works. Right after having been assigned as an Executive Editor of the publishing house, Lindsay Waters began negotiations with the head of Suhrkamp Verlag, Siegfried Unseld, about the possibility of publishing a selective edition of Benjamin's writings in English.

Waters first heard about Benjamin from his colleague, the literary critic and a representative of deconstructionism, Paul de Man. It is evident from Waters' recollection about meeting the Board of Syndics that, if Benjamin was known to anyone from American Academia, it could be only in narrow circles of neo-marxists and deconstructionists (such as Fredric Jameson and Paul de Man) not represented in the Board. Waters would write that "But when we got to the Syndics meeting I was overwhelmed by worry. How could the august Syndics approve the publication of volumes of a man whose dissertation at the University of Frankfurt was turned down? Who was this schlemiel[3] Walter Benjamin, the little rag-picker? How could publishing thousands of pages of this slacker-dude's essays and notebooks be grand enough for Harvard University Press?" (2011). However, according to Banks, the sociologist Daniel Bell demonstrated the necessity of publishing full volumes of Benjamin's selected writings, saying "Because he is a critic, and he's not a theorist. If he were a theorist, he'd have presented his ideas systematically, and we could publish a well-chosen selection of his work that would represent his thinking beautifully, but he's a critic, not a theorist, which means his ideas are scattered across all the pages of his work, and the only way to publish his work adequately is to publish hundreds and hundreds of pages of it so readers can see how his ideas emerge as he gets caught up in analyzing hundreds of concrete situations" (2014).[4] After the publication of the book *The End of Ideology* in 1960, Bell was a rather influential thinker, and his voice could influence the decision of the Board.

Sontag's and Arendt's essays were used as prefaces to Benjamin's first volumes of selected writings in English. Daniel Bell did not write about Benjamin, but from recollections of his colleague Lindsay Waters, we can see how he promoted translating and publishing the philosopher's works in English.[5] Waters considers Bell a cultural conservative,

3. A "Schlemiel" is a Yiddish term meaning an "incompetent person" or "fool" (Yidish-English-Hebreyisher Verterbukh, cited by https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schlemiel).

4. We cannot guarantee a precise transcription of Bell's speech by Waters as the cited phrase is not a stenograph of Bell's direct speech, but is reconstructed by Waters in a memoir.

5.Arthur [Arthur Rosenthal, director of Harvard University Press from 1972 until 1990.—*M. Ch.*] was convinced and the Board was convinced, and we have now published about three thousand pages of Benjamin's

but Bell's resemblance to Benjamin could be in an overlapping scientific methodology: Bell was not interested in grand explanatory theories like Talcott Parsons' models. On the contrary, "Dan was an essayist who focused on particulars, like Benjamin. In some way, though he'd have denied it, he was in tune with the postmodern—he certainly analyzed it as well as anyone with his idea of the post-industrial age" (Waters, 2011). In his book, *The End of Ideology*, Bell criticizes a theory of mass society (belonging to such grand theories) that Arendt and Adorno stood by, considering it not as a description of Western society, but as an ideology of Romantic protest against contemporary life.

The Director of the New York Institute for the Humanities, Eric Banks, notices, in the article "Walter Benjamin's Afterlife", that "the complicated publishing history of Benjamin's writings in many ways was tied up with the reception and popularity of *Work of Art*" (2014).[6] Due to the public's focused interest in this work, Benjamin was considered primarily as a representative of Marxist aesthetics, and as an intermediary between the stricter thinkers of the Frankfurt School and the "troublemaker" Bertolt Brecht. The volume of *Illuminations*, edited by Arendt and containing only 10 essays, was sold out soon after publication and "students could be seen with photocopied versions of Benjamin's essay on the fate of art in the wake of the invention of photography and film" (Ibid.), which at that time signified both the obscurity of the critic (it was a small print run of the volume) and the relative popularity of his media theory, compared to his other scientific interests.

The publication of the separate works of the critic in New Left Books publishing house was "a fascinating set of essays and books, but one that failed to give the full scope of Benjamin's interests and writings" (Ibid.).[7] According to Banks, it was Lindsay Waters as Harvard University Press's executive editor who did "as much as possible to ensure that every inch of Planet Benjamin, craters and all, is visible" (Ibid.).

In 1996, the first volume of the author's selected writings was published; three years later, a second one was published, which, however, caused material losses for the publishing house: "After the accolades piled on the press for the first volume of the collected writings, and with *Arcades* in the works, Waters figured that the public was ready for a massive dose of Benjamin. Volume 2 was almost 900 pages, covering Benjamin's fecund output between 1927 and 1934, and it shocked Waters to see how poorly it did" (Ibid.). In 1999, the Harvard University Press published a translation of Benjamin's unfinished project *Arcades*, to which he had devoted the last 13 years of his life. Despite financial misfortunes from the accompanying publication of the second volume of selected writings,

writings, including an edition this spring of his Early Writings, 1910–1917. I could not have done it without Dan. Arthur would not have been convinced, nor would the Syndics have been" (Waters, 2011).

6. The essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* was published in 1968 in the first collection of Benjamin's essays in the English literary journal *Illuminations*, prefaced by Arendt and translated by Harry Zohn.

7. From 1973 till 1979, from the English publishing house New Left Books, four editions of Benjamin's essays, translated in English, were published: *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (1973), *Understanding Brecht* (1973), *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (1977), and *One-Way Street and Other Writings* (1979). Stanley Mitchell and George Steiner, to name a few, contributed to the publications.

the Harvard University Press continued translating and publishing various essays by Benjamin, his correspondence with Gershom Scholem and Theodor Adorno, and, in 2014, published the critic's most detailed biography in English to date (Eiland, Jennings, 2014).

To a large extent, Benjamin's reception in the wider intellectual environment occurred due to these translations. As well, Arendt's and Sontag's essays introduced the figure of Benjamin to broader circles in the USA. In Benjamin's case, the history of his publications matters, because his works during his life were published not in academic issues, but in various journals and magazines as essays.[8] In the following section, I will examine Benjamin's reception in American academic circles, mainly among researchers specializing in cultural studies.

The History of Walter Benjamin's Reception in American Cultural Studies

During the discussion of the future of the public intellectual that took place in 2001, the American journalist and founder of the online-journal *Feed*, Steven Johnson, named Benjamin a role model due to his eclecticism, the interest in combining high and low culture, and his attention to the transformations in technology and media. Calling Benjamin and American intellectuals of the new generation funny, Johnson rejects giving such a definition for Adorno (Donatich et al., 2001). An opposition of Adorno and Benjamin (in favor of the latter) in their approach to the research of culture characterizes the tendencies of cultural studies in the USA.

British cultural studies have their own history of the reception of Benjamin (the most notable work, reflecting on Benjamin's heritage, is a book by Terry Eagleton *Walter Benjamin; or, Towards a Revolutionary Criticism*, published in 1981).[9] Nevertheless, for British researchers, Benjamin rather stays in the Marxist framework than crossing its borders. Ioan Davies, in his *Approaching Walter Benjamin,* demonstrates this difference in the example of the selection of Benjamin's works for translation in Britain and the USA: "In Britain the task of compiling and issuing translations has been largely in the hands of the *New Left Review*, and, to a lesser extent, *Screen*; in the United States the works have been published by Helen Wolff at Harcourt Brace Javonovich and occasionally by the *New German Critique*. The approach to publication has displayed dramatic differences. New Left Books has issued collections of Benjamin's work which explore themes of his own which appear to be part of a wider Marxist debate: *Understanding Brecht, Charles Baudelaire, The Origin of German Tragic Drama, One-Way Street*, and *Aesthetics and Politics* (debates between Bloch, Lukács, Brecht, Benjamin and Adorno). Helen Wolff has published collections of a random nature, *Illuminations* (issued in Britain by Jonathan Cape) and

8. As Jeffrey Grossman notes, "an archaeology, in Foucault's sense of the word, of Benjamin's emergence as a literary figure after World War II must therefore take into account the rather problematic history of his publications" (1992: 414).

9. As Grossman demonstrates, "Eagleton adopts Benjamin's discursive style in his struggle to wrestle a neo-Marxist practice from the hands of such 'post-Marxists' as Michel Foucault" (1992: 421–422). This being said, Benjamin's messianism symbolizes for Eagleton (despite the fact that he discovers positive moments in messianism) a lapse into idealism, symptomatic of Marxist cultural theorists in the 20th century.

Reflections, which emphasize the eclecticism of Benjamin's imagination. Thus, while New Left Books has attempted to put Benjamin in the context of a European political-aesthetic debate, Harcourt Brace has delivered the provocative (Jewish) essayist" (1980: 67). Davies notes that each new publication of Benjamin in English reveals to readers not only the critic's new dimensions, "but the ideological proclivities of those writers who adopted him" (68).

Before defining Benjamin's relevance in American cultural studies, it is worth exploring the difference between the American and British versions of cultural studies. On the one hand, it does not seem to be the easiest task, as the project of cultural studies implies both inter-disciplinarity (or even an anti-disciplinarity[10] as some researchers insist) and internationality. Nevertheless, it is possible to record certain distinctions. Firstly, numerous researchers notice a higher level of institutionalization of cultural studies in the USA compared to Great Britain, which is a consequence of a general cultural turn of a large part of academic research in the country. As Bender and Schorske note, "in the 1930s, the national crisis was economic. Depression vaulted economics and the social sciences to center stage, to lead the academy's response to society's ills and needs. In the 1960s, with capitalism returned to strength and ethnic and gender questions challenging the status quo in fundamental ways, culture replaced the economy as the crisis area. Therewith the humanistic disciplines—especially English and history—became the principal carriers of the academy's social-critical function" (1998: 9). Cultural studies are well-financed and hold an important position in the university world. In 1992, Stuart Hall discussed the dangers of the "'explosion of cultural studies' in the USA, their rapid professionalization and institutionalization" (1992: 285). According to Hall, the institutionalization of cultural studies leads to their de-politization: in his understanding, cultural studies were initially aimed at challenging established academic practices built on the elitism of academia.

Besides this, American cultural studies are connected with a tradition of new ethnography, "rooted primarily in anthropological theory and practice" (Nelson, Treichler, Grosberg, 1992: 14). Although cultural anthropology is a separate field from cultural studies, it is also engaged in issues of identity, history, and social relations. The American anthropologist James Clifford announced that anthropologists can nowadays contribute to a "genuinely comparative, and non-teleological, cultural studies, a field no longer limited to 'advanced', 'late capitalist' societies" (1992: 104).

Cultural studies were influenced by diverse intellectual and political traditions, the frameworks of which discussions were held about the notions of modernity and mass society. In the USA, cultural studies emerged institutionally in the sphere of communications because this disciplinary field was affected by the debates about the role of mass society in the USA after World War II. The British tradition of cultural studies is also tied to the research of communications (Stuart Hall's work *Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse* can be remembered, for example), but it was born within the "new left".

10. "Indeed, cultural studies is not merely interdisciplinary; it is often, as others have written, actively and aggressively anti-disciplinary—a characteristic that more or less ensures a permanently uncomfortable relation to academic disciplines" (Nelson, Treichler, Grosberg, 1992: 1–2).

American cultural studies distance themselves from a Marxist doctrine, although a disposition to turn to cultural practices was laid in the initial program of cultural studies by the founders of the program, Raymond Williams, Richard Johnson, E. P. Thompson, and Stuart Hall. In the article "Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms", Hall outlines the two foundational paradigms of cultural studies: culturalism and structuralism. Both paradigms object to a Marxist metaphor base/superstructure and an 'economistic' definition of determinacy. This being said, a culturalist paradigm "stands opposed to the residual and merely-reflective role assigned to 'the cultural'. In its different ways, it conceptualizes culture as interwoven with all social practices; practices; and those practices, in turn, as a common form of human activity . . ." (1980: 63). According to Hall, the future of cultural studies lies in the synthesis (and mutually reinforcing antagonisms) of the two paradigms, neither of which is a self-sufficient mode of research. Hall's article can be considered a historical milestone in a general turn to practice theories in cultural studies as described by Andreas Reckwitz. In Reckwitz's opinion, this turn began in the 1970s with the emergence of dissatisfaction "with both classically modern and high-modern types of social theories" (2002: 1). As culturalism, in Hall's opinion, "constantly affirms the specificity of different practices" (Hall, 1980: 69), practice theory ". . . 'decentres' mind, texts and conversation. Simultaneously, it shifts bodily movements, things, practical knowledge and routine to the centre of its vocabulary" (Reckwitz, 2002: 259).

Summing up, "grand theories", built in the form of structuralism, become insufficient for an explanation of social reality, and estrangement from such theories is interdisciplinary and joint—it happens both in the social sciences (the social constructivism of Berger and Luckmann against structural functionalism, for example) and in the humanities (the "cultural turn").

Having outlined the main particularities of American cultural studies that are partly embedded in the original conception of this program, I can move to the role of Walter Benjamin's reception in this academic field. The upswing in interest in Benjamin's works in the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in the 1970s did not last for a long time. Despite some evidently-Marxist works ("Author as the Producer"), for Birminghamians, Benjamin was not an author sufficiently interested in the relationships of power and the economic determinants of culture. At the end of 1980s, in both Britain and the USA, interest in Benjamin's heritage was renewed. In cultural studies, a transition is made (under the influence of post-structuralism) to a less teleological conception of science—without "the notion of history as moving inexorably to socialism" (McRobbie, 1992: 149). In studies of popular culture, new possibilities are opened when this culture begins to represent a self-sufficient interest for researchers, and is not seen as an instrument of ideology and propaganda;[11] thanks to feminism, an importance of biography

11. In the book *What is Cultural History?*, as an example, Peter Burke uses an approach of Michel de Certeau that he used in the book *The Practice of Everyday Life* about everyday life in France in the 1970s: "The practices he analysed were those of ordinary people; everyday practices such as shopping, walking a neighbourhood, arranging the furniture or watching television . . . Where earlier sociologists had assumed that ordinary people were passive consumers of mass-produced items and passive spectators of television programmes, Certeau, by contrast, emphasized their creativity, their inventiveness" (2004: 77).

and autobiography increases in cultural studies. Benjamin's works meet all these requests in cultural studies.[12] An interest in everyday life in urban modernity was a source of attention in Benjamin's *Arcades*, where the figure of the flâneur, an aimlessly walking city dweller, becomes the focus of the research. As for (auto)biographical works, one can name *Berlin Childhood Circa 1900, One-Way Street and Other Writings*, or *Moscow Diary*, since these works are of interest not only as texts, but also as self-sustained cultural objects.[13]

As McRobbie observes, German and American scientists also began taking interest in Benjamin's contribution to modern Jewish messianism. The discrepancy between Benjamin's views and orthodox Marxist tendencies of his time—from Soviet to German—later contributed to a more detailed interest to his figure in American academia. In the 1930s and 1940s, Jewish intellectuals immigrated to the USA, but they were either non-Marxists to begin with (Hannah Arendt, for instance) or they changed their views drastically, albeit conserving a genetic connection with Marxism (as did Adorno). These thinkers consequently implanted German (or, if you will, Jewish-German, due to its cultural genesis) left-liberal thought to American academic science, which was a cause of attention to Benjamin's heritage.

If the most renowned of Benjamin's works was *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (interpreted as a contribution to the Marxist theory of art), such autobiographical works as *Moscow Diary* (published in the American journal *October* in 1985) and *A Berlin Chronicle* (1979) were also translated and published in the 1980s. As McRobbie notes, in the 80s, Benjamin was both "a representative of and critic of that moment which was so formative for the new left generation of the late 1960s who turned away from the anti-intellectualism of the 1950s and 1960s" (1992: 154).

In the 1950s and the 1960s, a discussion about the value of modern mass culture emerges in the USA. Hohendahl wrote that ". . . Adorno and the Frankfurt School did not play a central role; still, their arguments were picked up and utilized by the 'cultural' camp,[14] while their opponents, mostly social scientists, branded the defense of high culture as elitist and ultimately undemocratic . . . Even Clement Greenberg, not known for his admiration of mass culture, felt that the media provided 'some sort of enlightenment' for the masses" (1992: 95). On the contrary, sympathy is drawn to Brecht's and Benjamin's art, for whom "low culture was already recognized as a powerful force offering many opportunities for political intervention [to a social life]" (McRobbie, 1992: 154).

Unlike Adorno, Benjamin was not willing to "profess a faith in Marxism" (155) while analyzing modern culture. He was interested not in history as a progress, but in the ruins,

12. As Angela McRobbie notes, "the loss of faith in Marxism has been replaced by a concern for the previously uninvestigated broad cultural setting for the texts and images whose analysis took up so much time precisely because they were seen as being the privileged sites of ideology" (1992: 149).

13. "*One-Way Street*, for example, is generally seen as a kind of literary montage strongly influenced by the visual work of John Heartfield rather than a critical essay in the traditional sense" (McRobbie, 1992: 150).

14. "Cultural camp" is regarded as American intellectuals, who saw mass culture as a threat due to its impersonality and lack of standards (see the essay "A Theory of Popular Culture" by Dwight MacDonald, published in the *Politics* journal in 1944).

remains, and souvenirs of the past. Benjamin "developed a cultural vision of the city as layered and labyrinthine rather than as being simply the highest expression of bourgeois civilization" (Ibid.). An essence of this approach can be seen in an unfinished project *Arcades*, criticized by Adorno, but consequently taking an important place in the history of cultural studies: *Arcades* was translated in English by Harvard University Press, and Susan Buck-Morss dedicated a book to analysis of this work (Buck-Morss, 1989). Benjamin worked on *Arcades Project* from 1927 till his death (there is a legend that the last version of *Arcades* was in Benjamin's heavy suitcase that he carried during a difficult hike of the Pyrenees mountains while attempting to cross the Franco-Spanish borders, and that the suitcase vanished after his death). This project resulted in a massive text, divided into chapters—"Fashion", "Boredom", "Dream City", etc. It is not fully clear whether Benjamin planned to restructure the text, or it was to be published like this. His *Arcades Project* was meant to be "a theory of modernity, philosophy of history, a verbal montage of urban imagery, and a reflection on the meaning of consumer culture from the viewpoint of memory and experience" (McRobbie, 1992: 156).

As Angela McRobbie notes, despite some incoherency of Benjamin's ideas in the sphere of analysis of culture (for example, in the research of fashion), he speaks about the polysemy of the cultural symbol and forming a precise denotation only at the stage of reception of a cultural product. Benjamin is engaged in the archaeology of commodities and the images of consumer culture, and this makes his approach similar to practices of semiology and cultural history. Benjamin's objects of attention were urban practices, such as promenades and the coffee-shops culture, which did not constitute a conventional subject of academic research at the time, but are presently included in the sphere of research of everyday culture. An attention to practices is one of the mottos of the "New Cultural History" that impacted all spheres of cultural history[15] (Burke, 2004: 57–58). Such a turn was caused, among other things, by the convergence of history and anthropology. Burke's observation about the cultural historians' withdrawal from the Marxist approach to "an alternative way to link culture to society, one that did not reduce it to a reflection of society or a superstructure, the icing on the cake" (40) can be equally attributed to Benjamin, but in this case, we are talking not about the 1960s, but the beginning of the 1930s.

A distinct place in the American reception of Benjamin's heritage is his aesthetic theory. In Susan Buck-Morss' opinion, Benjamin returned the original (ancient Greek) meaning to the word "aesthetics" as "perceptive by feeling", making its field of inquiry not art, but reality (1992: 6). If the essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* was traditionally considered Benjamin's most important contribution to aesthetic theory, Buck-Morss focuses the readers' attention to his book *The Arcades Project*, whose central theme is a "structural transformation in the relationship of consciousness to reality—specifically, fantasy to productive forces" (1989: 125). If Adorno considered bourgeois art separate from reality, which helped sustain its utopian impulse, Benjamin insisted that modern industrialism fused art and technology. In *The Arcades Project*, Ben-

15. Cultural practices were an important object of the research of Norbert Elias, Pierre Bourdieu, Roger Chartier, etc.

jamin analyzed public spaces of the 1930s as modern phantasmagorias—the perception of Paris arcades or World Fairs was "natural" from a neuro-physical point of view, but their function was flooding the senses of a spectator and causing the collective experience of sensory overstimulation. Buck-Morss considered that the actuality of Benjamin's observations of the arcades, urbanism, and expositions only increased in the second half of the 20th century (340). Alexander Gelley noted that Benjamin's aesthetic focus was "the perceptual and experiential potential of the social collective" (1999: 953), and considered his aesthetic theory as "extraordinarily prescient", since "current theoretical discussions deal exhaustively with aesthetic dimension of media technologies or, inversely, with analogues to older aesthetic categories" (954).

To summarize, we can say that Walter Benjamin became a popular figure both in academic sphere and in a broader intellectual context after his death. Despite the fact that Benjamin was a notorious critic during his lifetime (especially between 1925 and 1933), one could hardly have predicted such a rise of his popularity in the second half of the 20th century. As a result of the transfer of Benjamin's ideas to American culture, a paradoxical phenomenon emerged—a tendency that was marginal for 1920s–1930s German academic research (even among neo-Marxists), but in the 1970s, appeared to suit a period of conflict with "grand theories". A transfer occurred not just to a different cultural environment, but also to another period of the conception of sociocultural and cultural-scientific knowledge.

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Вальтер Беньямин — последний «европеец»: трансфер идей Вальтера Беньямина в американские культурные исследования

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Несмотря на то, что Вальтер Беньямин был известным критиком при жизни (особенно в период 1925–1933 годов), вряд ли можно было предсказать такой рост его популярности во второй половине XX века, особенно в стране, которую ему так и не удалось посетить (хотя именно туда он планировал иммигрировать) — в США. Рецепция творчества Вальтера Беньямина началась в широком американском интеллектуальном контексте, а затем интерес к его наследию возник и в американских академических кругах, что способствовало академической реабилитации философа, не получившего возможность работать в университете по причине неудавшейся габилитации в 1925 году. Большинство оригинальных работ Беньямина были опубликованы в многочисленных неакадемических газетах и журналах, что создало дополнительные трудности при переводе и публикации его текстов на английском языке. В нашей статье мы, во-первых, выдвигаем гипотезу о том, что рецепция Беньямина в США способствовала созданию образа провокативного эссеиста, шагнувшего далеко за пределы строгих марксистских рамок (в отличие от образа Беньямина, представленного первым издателем и другом Беньямина Теодором Адорно посредством тщательного подбора материала для первого англоязычного собрания сочинений Беньямина), который исследовал такие темы, как мессианизм, массовая культура и повседневные практики. Во-вторых, мы предполагаем, что наследие Беньямина оказалось плодотворным для американских культурных исследований, чьи представители отвергли идею телеологии культуры, заложенную в оригинальной британской программе, и сконцентрировались на теориях социальных практик, рассматривавших повседневные практики не как выражение определенных идеологий, а как обладающие самостоятельной значимостью.

Ключевые слова: Вальтер Беньямин, культурные исследования, Теодор Адорно, американские культурные исследования, культурный трансфер, социальные практики

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"Coming Soon?": Cinematic Sociology and the Cultural Turn

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Throughout the 20th century, cinema has played, and, to some extent, continues to play a key role in shaping the social imagination and anthropology of modern human. Nevertheless, as a review of English scholarly literature shows, cinema, unlike art and music, remains a marginal subject of analysis for sociologists. The article attempts to consider the state of sociological reflection on cinema in the context of the cultural turn in sociology in both the international and national contexts. By reconstructing the history of the interaction between sociology, film studies, and cultural studies, the author not only proves the scarcity of interest among sociologists in the analysis of cinema, but also discusses the ways by which sociological perspectives were involved in film research at the turn of the 20th–21st centuries, and the potential of the latter for the study of social imagination. A survey of communities of Soviet sci-fi cinema fans demonstrates one possible way of developing of the sociologically oriented program of cinema studies.

Keywords: sociology of cinema, cultural sociology, film studies, cultural studies, social imagination, film practices, cinematic experience, cinema fandom

Dmitry Kurakin's article "The Sociology of Culture in the Soviet Union and Russia: The Missed Turn" marked a milestone for the discussion of Russian sociology of culture against the backdrop of general tendencies in sociology around the world. On the whole, Kurakin's assessment of the state of affairs seems quite plausible. It is, however, worth discussing the criteria for this kind of assessment not only as it applied to Russia, but also in a broader context. The cultural turn, missed by both Soviet and Russian sociologists, is embodied in the program of American cultural sociology as articulated by Jeffrey C. Alexander et al. Based on the distinction suggested by Alexander and Smith, Kurakin proceeds to differentiate between cultural sociology as a general sociological theory and sociologies of culture as sectoral sub-disciplines, that is, a sociology of literature, of art, or cinema (2017: 12, 17). This definition is a bit of an oxymoron, considering that American sociologists themselves admit that the construct of culture as an autonomous object necessitates borrowing interpretative techniques from the humanities ("from Aristotle to such contemporary figures as Frye (1971/1957) and Brooks (1984)" (Alexander, Smith, 2003; 14)). In this sense, culture's image as an object of sociological research is determined not only by those general declarations regarding culture's significance for the interpreta-

tion of social action, but also by a researcher's ability to interpret texts[1] produced by the respective humanities. Accordingly, a systematic characterization of the cultural turn is only possible upon analyzing the development in respective sectoral sub-disciplines where sociology intersects with research into literature, art, music, cinema, etc.[2]

This idea is implicit in Kurakin's inquiry into the Soviet sociology of culture. Whereas most research into the sociology of art and cinema does not stray far from the positivist approach and manifests a weakness of theoretical reflection (and a detachment from the international scholarly context), works by the Levada circle, including those by Lev Gudkov, Boris Dubin, and Abram Reitblat study literature as a social institute, and build upon literary studies, the sociology of knowledge, social psychology, and a number of other disciplines. Starting from the sociology of literature, Gudkov and Dubin mapped out a project of a social and anthropological analysis of culture. This project not only "to a certain extent foreshadowed the culturally sensitive perception of Durkheim's later work in sociology and the foundation of the 'strong program' in cultural sociology by Jeffrey Alexander and his colleagues in the mid-1980s" (Kurakin, 2017; 11), but also seems more interesting than the works by Gudkov's and Dubin's American counterparts.[3] Meanwhile, other fields of the Russian sociology of culture have nothing comparably significant to boast about.

In the present article, I would like to address the state of another sectoral sub-discipline, the sociology of cinema (or cinematic sociology). According to Kurakin, works in this field are generally representative of the state of Russian sociology of culture: he writes that "the majority of those studies were conducted using a narrow positivist approach and made little attempt to engage seriously with any sociological theories" (13). In this case, labeling this a "missed turn" makes a lot of sense. However, in the international (primarily English-speaking) scholarly context as well, research into cinema in light of the "cultural turn in sociology" is rather problematic. As I am going to try and show later on, the sociology of cinema is not exactly viewed as a separate sub-discipline. Unlike sociological reflection on music (DeNora, 2000) and art (Heinich, 2001), a sociological reflection on cinema has but a tenuous connection to the project of cultural sociology. The question of how the sociology of cinema, both Russian and international, correlates to the cultural turn will be in the focus of my attention.[4] For this, I am going to characterize the interaction between cultural sociology and film studies/cinema studies, which subsequently should let me define the historical perspectives and contemporary conditions for the es-

1. As Alexander successfully demonstrates in his perusal of Parsons' sociological theory (1990).

2. This idea is derived from the multifaceted nature of the concept of culture that includes such meanings as an individual self-improvement and lifestyle, as well as various forms of aesthetic activity as succinctly articulated already by Raymond Williams (1985: 87–92). For an endeavor to apply a similar concept to the sociology of art, see Farkhatdinov (2010). For a balanced characterization of the relationship between the sociology of culture and cultural sociology, see Inglis (2016a).

3. For more on the gist and fate of this project, see Kaspe (2015), Stepanov (2015).

4. It is worth noting that my study will be limited predominantly to the English-speaking branches of the sociology of culture / cultural sociology in general, and the sociology of cinema in particular.

tablishment of a sociological reflection on cinema. Then, I am going to try and show how this reflection helps shape the premises of contemporary cinematic research.

"The Lost Horizon": Cinema in Contemporary Cultural Sociology

I will begin my discussion of sociology's interaction with film studies/cinema studies by perusing the works that form the canon of the cultural sociological project. By systematically defining the place of cultural problematics in the structure of sociological knowledge, works by Jeffrey Alexander and Philipp Smith have played a key role in the critical re-conceptualization of the discipline of sociology, and created a new system of theoretical references. Nevertheless, a present-day student of cinema as a phenomenon of contemporary culture, one who is familiar with the evolution of cultural studies in the humanities, is bound to feel awkward when perusing these texts as they present outdated knowledge about culture. Such a researcher would find it strange for the task of developing and mastering various textual interpretation techniques that were largely fulfilled over the course of the twentieth century to be presented in the early twenty-first century as not just relevant, but also as innovative. One of the most systematic attempts at reflection of this kind was made by British cultural studies, which Alexander and his colleagues are rather ambivalent about. While acknowledging the contribution of British cultural studies to the progress of theory of culture and, at a certain point, even using the term cultural studies in reference to their own project, Alexander and Smith repeatedly disqualified them as reductionist (2003: 17–18). It seems indicative that this criticism is based primarily on their assessment of the collective works published by Birmingham-based researchers in the 1970s. This means that American sociologists have largely ignored the best practices developed in Birmingham in the 1980s–2000s in the sphere of media text analysis and daily culture, along with the theoretical development of subjectivity issues, as well as the discussion of the studies of popular culture that was key to the establishment of cultural studies as a discipline (Johnson, 1986; Stepanov, 2015).[5]

In some cases, it is the cultural sociologists' unwavering focus on the tradition of sociological theory, which they accuse cultural researchers of neglecting, that hinders their exchange with the tradition of the humanities (Sherwood, Smith, Alexander, 1993). What is notable in this sense is the explanation of why turning towards the visual is indispensable, as given in the introduction to the collective volume entitled *Iconic Power: Materiality and Meaning in Social Life* (Bartmański, Alexander, Giesen, 2012). Stating that sociologists have neglected studying visual texts for a long time, the authors write that "The founders of critical social theory, from Karl Marx to Max Weber and Walter Benjamin, have insisted too much on disenchantment. We need to look much more to Emile Durkheim's notion of totemism if we are to capture the enduring parameters of material symbolism and the role materiality plays in social classification and boundary making. The French founder of cultural sociology insisted that "collective feelings become fully

5. For a critical survey of interpretation of the tradition of cultural studies in the works of J. Alexander see, e.g., McLennan (2005: 2–3), Oswell (2010: xxviii–xxix).

conscious of themselves *only* by settling upon external tangible objects" (1995: 421). With this volume, we build upon this classical insight, connect it with contemporary currents in cultural sociology and aesthetic philosophy (see Boehm, Belting, and Giesen, this volume), and demonstrate how a theory of iconic power can be put to work in an explanatory way. We suggest that iconicity allows us to see enchantment as a continuing presence despite tremendous historical change" (4). As we can see, the fact of visual imagery's impact, axiomatic for any student of today's visual media, requires invoking not only the thesis of disenchantment for its legitimization, but also the Durkheimian notion of archaic totemism.[6] This way of thinking leaves all studies of visual imagery's captivating power outside of our scope (as exemplified in works by the previously mentioned Walter Benjamin, as well as Siegfried Kracauer, Rolan Bart, and other classics of media studies) and studies of social imagination (from Cornelius Castoriadis, Benedict Anderson, and from Arjun Appadurai to Henry Jenkins and Michael Saler), which substantiate the possibility of studying imaginary universes and the various forms of "enchantment" as something of fundamental importance for the functioning of contemporary society. This certainly does not necessarily mean that the above-mentioned scholars have no works devoted to these issues,[7] but the use of this argument in itself seems symptomatic.

The very status of cinema as a field of references in the works of cultural sociologists turns out to be quite marginal. While proponents of critical theory like Slavoj Žižek and Fredric Jameson[8] keep making recourse to cinema in order to conceptualize the processes taking place in contemporary society, for cultural sociologists, cinema as one of mass media is, unlike theatre, music, and literature, neither a theoretically significant object, nor a source of metaphors and examples. Even leaving aside the question of how this depends on a specific individual cultural sociologist's intellectual, theoretical, and aesthetic values, one can see that the status of cinema as an object of sociological analysis is marginal. Cinema-related publications in leading cultural-sociological periodicals (such as *Cultural Sociology* and the *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*) can be counted on the fingers of one hand, which is especially striking against the backdrop of dozens of publications in the field of the sociology of music. There are just as few monographs that aspire to consider cinema as a phenomenon of significance for today's society. Compendia on the visual sociology and the sociology of media (e.g., Emmison, Smith, 2000)[9] also offer scarcely any texts on the sociology of cinema.

6. Tia DeNora also begins her work by criticizing an invocation of the Durkheimian tradition (2000: 3).

7. Notably, when turning towards media analysis, Alexander immediately finds himself compelled to refer to Stuart Hall's works.

8. John Urry may serve as an example of a classical sociologist who actively introduced cinema into the space of reflection (2016).

9. It merits saying that this situation is, to an extent, typical of other social sciences as well. For example, Wolf Kansteiner describes the failed attempt in the 1990–2000s to incorporate a reflection on cinema into the practical work of a leading American historical publication, *American Historical Review* (2018: 131–132).

"Pride & Prejudice": The Sociology of Cinema—Cultural Studies—Film Studies

Researchers have many a time written about the paradoxical situation of the sociology of cinema. The sociologists Tatiana Signorelli Heise and Andrew Tudor noted that, having emerged alongside sociology and grown to be the most influential communication channel in contemporary society, cinema has never been an object of sociological investigation in its own right (2016: 481). Although social studies of cinema, occasionally involving classics of sociology (Herbert Blumer in particular), began as early as the 1910s, respective projects never became part of mainstream social sciences or the humanities. This was because they were mostly quantitative studies (related especially to marketing), designed to figure out the parameters of the audience and the films' success factors and document the effects of cinema's impact on the audience (Signorelli Heise, Tudor, 2016: 485)).[10] As cinema gained academic recognition in the 1960s-80s, a number of works were published with an expressed purpose of establishing the sociology of cinema (Huaco, 1965; Jarvie, 1970; Tudor, 1974; Prokop, 1982). However, this is where the development of the sociology of cinema as a sub-discipline actually halted.[11]

The coming-together of film studies, as well as cultural studies on the whole, had to do with the distancing from the above-mentioned models of sociological inquiry. In their exploration of culture, generally-speaking, and cinema in particular, the new disciplines were guided by structuralist and semiotic approaches aimed at establishing the peculiarities of film as a text. These approaches are not exactly foreign to sociological problematics. Nevertheless, by following the critical tradition, they opposed mainstream sociology with its structural and functionalist perspective and the respective methods of empirical analysis. Worth noting is the position of a leading theorist in film studies, Dudley Andrew, who, in his 1984 publication, remarked on the specifically humanitarian nature of film studies' conceptual apparatus, and doubted that the sociology of cinema would ever be able to incorporate it (8–9).

An important contribution to the success of sociological reflection in the framework of film studies was made by cultural studies claiming to be an alternative to the sociology project for the study of modern society (Inglis, 2016: 313; Stepanov, 2015). This contribution is at least twofold. Firstly, films could now be seen as a form of a representation of social reality. This not only relativized the aesthetic evaluation and allowed including the broadest possible body of films, but also consistently turned cinema into the source material for probing into society's notions about itself, representation of various groups and communities, and social confrontations and conflicts (Turner, 1993; Turner, 2008). Thanks to cultural studies, issues of identity have become one of the key lines of research in various human sciences, including film studies. Secondly, re-thinking cinema's impact and its reception by the viewer played an important role. One of the turning points for cultural studies was their debate with the structuralist-minded theorists of the

10. Today, this research is described in the context of history of the film industry (Ohmer, 1999; Sklar, 1999).

11. For an overview of these works, see do Nascimento (2019).

journal Screen about how the cinematographic apparatus should operate.[12] While theorists upheld the notion of a passive beholder whose position is derived straight from the cinematic impact, cultural studies insisted on spectator autonomy and active potential, and the possibility of a different reception of cinematic texts by different audiences. This would then shift the issue of impact and reception into the plane of social and cultural diversity. Notably, cinema was not a priority research object for the Birmingham school and their followers: studies into TV-viewers' receptive activity played a much greater role in the development of problems of studying popular culture (Pribram, 2005: 160).[13] It nevertheless seems indicative that it was mostly proponents of cultural studies (Turner, 1993; Tudor, 1998, Denzin, 2002; Miller, Stam, 2004) and like-minded scholars who, in the 1990–2000s, published summary works on cinema as a social phenomenon.[14]

However, the expansion of identity issues, seen as an expression of the postmodernist crisis in academe (Readings, 1996), was also perceived as a symptom of the crisis in film studies as a discipline in the 1990–2000s. One of the features of crisis, in experts' eyes, was the scattering of film scholars across the departments of literature and language studies, media, etc. (Chow, 2001). An even-more momentous process to instill the sense of crisis in the discipline was the transformation of media space in the late 1990s—early 2000s. New media technologies not only changed cinema's cultural status, but also undermined the future of film studies. It seemed that, having lost the radicalism of their original impulse, film studies found themselves marginalized along with the object of their research, which increasingly lost not only its classical form, but also its relevance as a form of media consumption. Tom Gunning poignantly described this situation in his review of this field of knowledge when he wrote "Has the era of film studies come to an end? Should the study of film simply be absorbed, if not replaced, by the larger discipline of media studies or even visual studies? Has a scholarly preoccupation with film or cinema studies become a limited paradigm, appearing a bit out-moded, even a bit embarrassing, like an outfit once considered trendy? The future, to coin a phrase, is not what it used to be. A medium that spent most of the twentieth century trying to establish cultural credentials and often apologizing for its cultural youthfulness (or even immaturity) now has to defend itself from charges of incipient Alzheimer's syndrome. Could it be the fate of cultural studies that embrace modernity and its products that they pass too quickly from youthfulness to senility, displaced by the latest academic fashion?" (2008, 185).[15]

At the same time, efforts to re-conceptualize cinema as an object of study in the works of the leading representatives of film studies bear witness to the fact that the situation

12. To be fair, this journal, too, published articles on the sociology of cinema. For instance, Terry Lovell's piece adapting the classical sociological toolkit for the analysis of cinema (1971).

13. Nevertheless, Dana Polan recently proclaimed a renewed interest in the writings of Raymond Williams on film (2013).

14. Norman Denzin's works (1995) stand out from the rest in that they attempt to use (Hollywood) cinema as the lens for an investigation of life in American society, as well as devise a quality methodology for an analysis of "cinematic society".

15. See also Samutina (2011). On a similar temporal situation in the evolution of cultural studies, see Stepanov (2015).

of crisis has become time to develop new perspectives in this field of knowledge that are driven by the evolution of sociological reflection. Of utmost interest here are not so much the endeavors to rehabilitate the sociology of cinema in light of a certain theory (for instance, that of Pierre Bourdieu)[16] or an approach (e.g., a study of how identities are constructed on-screen),[17] as the reflection by leading representatives of film studies that turns the situation of crisis into a source of theoretical, and sociological, reflection. For theorists, issues of cinema's specifics as a medium, on the one hand, and the diversity of its social contexts, on the other, come together in the task of conceptualizing cinema as an experience (not only purely semantic, but also physical (Gunning, 2008, 201), and, accordingly, boost their interest in the figure of a viewer and its historic transformations in the culture of the twentieth century. Among priority topics for debate is that of cinephilia as the quintessence of a positively meaningful cinematic experience (Andrew, 2009).[18] According to Natalia Samutina, it is indicative that, in describing the present state of film studies, theorists "find it appropriate to make a sort of "personal confession" and reminisce about how different their own experience of watching and studying films used to be earlier" (2011).

It is precisely cinema's specifics as a medium and problems of the cinematic experience that serve as the criteria to assess the significance of one or another theory. Here, let us recall Michael Turvey's oft quoted statement, "we have to use our expertise—gained from watching large numbers of films, observing them and the response of viewers to them carefully, and learning about the contexts in which they were made and exhibited—to evaluate the theories we take from other disciplines in terms of whether they successfully explain (or not) film" (2007: 120; cit.: Andrew, 2009: 904). Dudley Andrew also stresses how important it is for scholars to match their work up with cinephiles' activities by recognizing the relevance of intellectual exchanges between the academe and broader public, and the endeavors to conceptualize cinema originally undertaken outside of the academe, but commonly accepted as classical today (2009: 879–888). This also includes attempts made over the course of the twentieth century to introduce cinema into the educational context that have given a significant impetus to the establishment of film studies (see, e.g., Bolas, 2009; Grieveson, 2009).

One more aspect of the problems of the cinematic experience has to do with new conditions of film reception and the production of knowledge about it in contemporary culture. These problematics have been marked out systematically in the concept of pos-

16. This may be illustrated by works by Tatiana Signorelli Heise and Andrew Tudor (2016) that have articulated the strong program project in the sociology of cinema based on Pierre Bourdieu's concept. Remarkably, in formulating this program, its authors do not make references to Jeffrey Alexander et al. Additionally, S. Baumann's works from the 2000s have marked a notable milestone in the development of cinema analysis within the traditional sociological framework. Starting from Bourdieu's concept, as well as works by Howard Becker and Paul DiMaggio, Baumann describes the process of cinematic production acquiring the status of art (2009).

17. For instance, the collective volume *Cinematic Sociology* (Sutherland, Feltey, 2013) presenting samples of research into identity representations in cinema.

18. That's said, as Jeff Sconce (2007) and Tomas Elsaesser (2005) demonstrate in their works, this experience may be based on a cinephile's specific disenchantment.

sessive spectator as formulated by Laura Malvey, who described the possibilities of taking possession of cinematic imagery thanks to the new ways, in which cinema exists "on DVD or a computer screen, thus allowing for any degree of distraction from the action and making it possible to pause it, differently organize space before the screen, endlessly rewatch any film fragment, make one's own rearrangement, watch while checking emails or instant messaging" (Samutina, 2011). This situation has radically transformed the work of a cinema researcher by raising the significance of empirical work not only with films, but also with various sources reflecting the diverse aspects of cinematic imagery's creation and consumption (Gunning, 2008: 190–191). Pure theory's loss of authority against the backdrop of the growing interest in media archeology, a historicized and contextualized knowledge about cinema, bears witness to a transformation of the image of society shaping the perspective of film studies. As noted by Dudley Andrew, the disappearance of references to Louis Althusser from the texts of film students is emblematic of the radical revision of the notion of cinema as a single object to be critically analyzed as a manifestation of mass culture (2006, 2009).

A historical projection of the above-mentioned interest in the cinematic experience was the discussion of cinema's contribution to the establishment of a modern person's anthropology. In terms of theory, this had to do with a re-discovery within film studies of Walter Benjamin's and Siegfried Kracauer's theories which have played a key role in conceptualizing exactly how cinema, as a new widely accessible medium, shaped the typically modern experience of space, time, materiality, etc. (Murphet, 2008; Moltke, 2018). The context of modernity reveals both cinema's positive political potential, and its aesthetic potential as cinema continues shaping visual language in the era of new media (Manovich, 2001). For instance, Miriam Hansen, drawing on Habermas' concept, considers cinema of the first decades of the twentieth century as an embodiment of the public sphere (1994). It is worth noting that the discussion of cinema's role in modern culture was accompanied by a revision of film studies' canon and of the priority of narrative cinema. An interest in early cinema, where the presentational moment of pure showmanship as an attraction prevails over the narrative component, has been the most important tendency in the evolution of film studies in the 1990s–2000s (Samutina, 2010). This shift of scholarly attention resulted in the development of an alternative model of cinema consumption that implies cinema's involvement in a contemporary urban environment. The retrospective nature of conceptualizing the connection between cinema and modernity notwithstanding, a study of this kind was not purely antiquarian. The model of a cinematic attraction has proven useful for the understanding of present-day blockbusters. In terms of historical sociology, this research program could be seen as a contribution to the success of the problematics of multiple modernities (Savelieva, 2012). The inquiry into competing models of cinema and their significance for modern culture has given relevance to the metaphor of "invention",[19] which invites a new perspective on cinema's transformations on the cusp of the twenty-first century (Gunning, 2008).

19. Cf. typical collective volume titles: *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life* (Charney, Schwartz, 1996), *Inventing Film Studies* (Grieveson, Wasson, 2008).

Historicity is becoming the overriding characteristic of cinema as an object of research. The factors of the growing significance in the context of the digital revolution of archives containing not only films but also related artifacts (from media publications to amateur trailers), the conceptualization of canons that forms alternative perspectives on the cinematic process, the transition of problems of filmic realism into the plane of discussing the status of film as a document, the examination of viewer reception as a specific form of collective memory, and the debates about the cultural potential of analog cinematograph and its fate in the digital future all testify to the role historical reflection plays in the exploration of the state and the fate of cinema as a medium.

If this perspective was used in evaluating the domestic sociology of cinema, one can state that Russian researchers are still largely guided by the theoretical and methodological benchmarks of the 1960s and 1970s when cinema was seen as a performing art, filling out questionnaires was the principal research method, movie theater attendance was assessed primarily by respondents' social and demographic characteristics, and one of the main goals of research was gauging peoples' artistic taste (Fokht-Babushkin, 2005; Vorobieva, 2017: 12; see also: Semenkov, 2002). The post-Soviet sociology of cinema crystallized the ideology of police science typical of Soviet sociology that produces a concrete, empirical, and applied knowledge catering to the tasks of state administration (Filippov, 2015). To give a quintessential example from a recent article by the leading Russian sociologists of cinema Michail Zhabsky and Konstantin Tarasov, "The practical cinematic policy of the Russian state has every chance to yield a positive result if only it relies on the intellectual resource of the revamped science of cinema with a powerful sociological core" (2019; cf. also Marshak, 2019).

In contrast to Anglo-American academia, the theoretical-backwardness of sociological analysis of cinema in Russia has not yet been sufficiently compensated for by progress in cultural studies and film studies. Akin to many other fields of research into popular culture, film studies in Russia are still in the state of dispersion.[20] Several fields may be named conditionally as suitable for the maturation of sociological reflection on cinema.[21] Along with standalone projects shaping the tradition of film studies in Russia and creating benchmarks for examining cinema as a contemporary cultural phenomenon and the types of sociality cinema forms (above all, works by Oleg Aronson, Natalia Samutna, Nikolay Izvolov, Dmitry Komm: Aronson, 2003, 2007; Samutina, 2005, 2009; Izvolov, 2005; Komm, 2012 and others), attempts at research into cinema are made in the framework of social philosophy (Kurennoy, 2009; Pavlov, 2015; Raskin, 2019, Filippov, 2006, and others) and critical theory (Yarskaya-Smirnova, 2001; Ousmanova, 2010; Gornykh, 2013, and others).[22] These studies expand the aesthetic limits of cinematic legacy and

20. Meanwhile, engaging endeavors in the social history of cinema were occasionally undertaken in the Soviet humanities (Zorkaya, 1976), and some of them even acquired the status of classics in the western academic tradition (Tsivian, 1994).

21. This overview is only preliminary and lays no claim to presenting an exhaustive bibliography.

22. Particularly, I should mention here the special issue of the Logos journal (2014, no 5/6), dedicated to Cinema Studies (guest editor—Alexander Pavlov). In this issue, we can find the insightful collection of the works concerning the phenomenon of "bad cinema".

increase the analytical potential of studies into social imagination. Western Slavic studies and the related domestic research into problems of genre ideology and the construction of identity based on Soviet cinematic material (e.g., Kaganovsky, 2008), studies into the presentation of social institutions (on fashion representation, see (Dashkova, 2016)) and the functioning of Soviet cinematic culture (Roth Ey, 2011)[23] also play a major role here. However, research into contemporary cinema is largely related to the analysis of cinematic presentation and visual ideology (cf., e.g., Norris, 2012). Meanwhile, only a handful of works are devoted to the empirical investigation of transformations in the practices of cinema consumption. In the next section, I am going to try and mark out the outlines of sociological reflection as presented in contemporary film studies, and demonstrate its potential for use in the study of Russian cinematic culture.

"The Beginning of a Beautiful Friendship": The Cinematic Culture and Sociological Imagination

While Jeffrey Alexander's texts declared the logic of autonomization of the cultural from the social, film studies, as transpires above, describe the perspective of saturating the cinematic with the social and making the social an integral element of film studies' object of research. In characterizing changes in the field of film studies in the era of media convergence, Dudley Andrew states that "Not only were new modes and genres dredged up for discussion, films themselves were increasingly set aside in favor of other objects of study (audiences, television, advertising). As for cinema studies, it has lost much of the vague definition it had, yet as an institution, a 'society', it swelled with new types of scholars, many of whom found movies and related phenomena to be a fine—even an exceptional—site to monitor social processes" (2009: 910)[24]. This definition reflects the fact that film is progressively seen less as a self-sufficient object of analysis, and more as an instrument of social scrutiny and is viewed in the institutional context. Tom Gunning's text demonstrates another strategy related to establishing the social nature of the object of film studies. In his article on film studies as a form of cultural analysis, he suggests describing this object as "film practices" and gives it the following definition: "Film practices include both theories and filmmaking, but also the many other discourses and actions that surround films, understanding these as social actions having effects, and influencing the cultural role of film" (Gunning, 2008: 190). The concept of "film practices" implements a flexible approach to identifying forms of cinematic existence in agreement with the growing diversity and segmentation of today's society. One could say that this concept consistently instrumentalizes the model of "culture circuit" developed by cultural studies (Johnson, 1983). This model implies that a cultural phenomenon is examined

23. Some scholars' works feature fascinating examples of applying sociological theories of Norbert Elias (Bulgakova, 2005), Harisson White (Kaspe, 2017) and others, to film analysis.

24. See also: "Movies—or at least special movies whose significance I hope to justify—are perceptual spaces in which interpretive practices are enacted, modified, and carried over into non-filmic social practices" (Patton, 2007: 3).

from an institutional perspective, taking into account the different forms of its existence, that is, from the creation of a cultural product to its reception / consumption and inclusion in daily life of various communities.[25] Following this logic, Gunning writes that, in analytically differentiating between a film's production, its textual peculiarities, and its presentation and reception strategies, the interrelations between these aspects of a film's existence must also be borne in mind (191).[26] Evidently, this requires not only combining different disciplinary perspectives,[27] but also perfecting those approaches that would serve as empirical extensions of the film practices theory, such as ethnography (including digital ethnography), receptive studies, studies of physicality, etc.

Consequently, one could say that contemporary film studies reveal the multilayered nature of the cultural turn and manifests a variety of points of entry into non-reductionist sociology. As shown above, the problems of cinema as an experience, which may be examined empirically on the material of various "film practices", become the focal point of re-conceptualizing the field of culture in contemporary society. Carrying this program out is contingent on the sociological critique of aesthetic biases, which serves as normative limitations blocking the work of sociological imagination, and thereby preventing a proper understanding the place of certain phenomena in the cultural field. As Tim Corrigan aptly phrased it, in pointing out both the relativity of aesthetic forms and the diversity of practices of cinema consumption, "We go to the movies for many reasons: to think, not to think; to stare at them, to write about them. We may go to a movie to consume it like cotton candy; we may go to a film where that candy becomes food for the mind" (1994: 2). Adaptation studies that have now become an independent field of research may serve as a poster child for the constitutive role of relativizations of this kind. This field of studies emerged from rejecting the presumption of the priority of literary texts and the idea of faithfulness to the original. This allows researchers to examine an interaction between cinema and literature, to scrutinize the strategies of interpreting classical texts and their reception by different audiences, and the social implications of this cultural work. At the same time, today, new forms of the cinematic experience (live cinema) based on the interaction of cinema and theater, cinema, and opera, etc., are also being studied from this perspective (see, e.g., Barker, 2013; Atkinson, Kennedy, 2017).

Reflecting on the aesthetic presumptions of a cinematic experience paves the way for the analysis of the formation and functioning of assessment categories used in public discourse, which makes the toolkit of pragmatic sociology relevant (Lamont, Thévenot, 2000).[28] For example, to rate a new film, viewers describe their impressions not only by

25. In essence, this entails a rehabilitation of the previously marginalized investigative strategies. Gunning gives an example of reception studies, which ought to acquire an equal footing with other lines of research, saying that "reception does not simply add a dimension to a film—it is the reason the film is made" (191).

26. In this connection, he criticizes the thesis by a classic of film studies by Kristian Metz, regarding the need to distinguish film as a cinematic text from cinema as a concept denoting everything to do with films, but external to them.

27. For an attempt at surveying an interdisciplinary interaction as an explication of the "circuit of culture" model, see Johnson et al. (2004).

28. Not coincidentally, a significant number of works by contemporary sociologists is devoted to the figure

addressing traditional aspects of the cinematic narrative (plot line, visuals, characters, music, etc.), but also by invoking manufacturing determinants ("blockbuster", "3D"), historical projections ("genre", "life-like realism"), and the film's purpose ("entertainment" or "educational value"), and so on. The correlation between the different appraisal categories selects the mode of historicity of cinematic consumption that characterizes different formats of cinema's existence in the conditions of media convergence, as well as the specifics of individual film practices (cf. Samutina, 2009).

The multiplicity of evaluation criteria is just a singular expression of the diversity of today's cinematic experience. The democratization of the cinematic culture manifested in the present-day viewer's cinematic competence, their proficiency at using techniques of taking possession of films (from VHS and DVD to a smartphone) and collecting information about them, as well as in the heightened reflexivity and citationality of contemporary cinema make cinema a more fundamental part of daily life and blur the lines between "average" spectators, fans, and cinephiles. The most crucial process in this sense is that of the privatizing of the cinematic experience (Klinger, 2006; Tryon, 2009), and bringing about not only new types of cinema consumption, but also new forms of sociality related to cinema.[29]

The sociological analysis of films per se is no less relevant, either. As noted above, its development received a great boost from the perspective of viewing feature films as representations of social reality and acknowledging the role films play in constructing identities and reflecting on the semantic resources of social action. Today, a wide range of thematic vectors for the social exists in cinema; along with conceptualizing problems of identity (ethnic, gender, class, etc.) which is a priority for the tradition of cultural studies, representation of various institutions, such as school, sport, fashion, the army, medicine, etc., is also becoming a major research object. In this respect, films are an indispensable source for the diagnostic reflection on anthropology and the institutional organization of contemporary societies, and for the construction of social roles and frameworks of social interaction.

It is, however, becoming increasingly clearer that when a cultural dimension is introduced into the analysis of criteria, the concept of representation does not allow us to describe the potential of cinematographic fiction. This notion has a residual connotation of the cinematic text's correlation with reality. Cultural studies reconsidered the concept of realism from the standpoint of criticizing the naturalization of ideological meanings (Turner, 1993: 180–182). Meanwhile, the development of sociological textual analysis, whether literary or cinematic, had to do with a turn to studying genres as structures of social imagination. This shift was premised on rejecting the negative image of cinematic genres as presented by the criticism of mass culture (both conservative and progressive),

of a film critic (Kersten, Verboord 2014; Duval, 2015).

29. For example, communities for the discussion, archiving, and creation of amateur cinematic content that used to engage predominantly in networking, but also organized online gatherings ("house parties"), serving as an alternative to going to the movies as well as to a private viewing (Tryon, 2009: 83–124).

and on refusing to view them only as primitive and archaic cultural forms.[30] In the works of Will Wright, John Cawelty, and other scholars, generic constructs of the cinematic narrative are interpreted as systems of conventions representing persistent forms of dramatic enactment for the axiological conflicts that are essential for today's spectator. The logic of studying genres had to do with giving up a presumption of pure entertainment, illusion, and the conservative nature of generic narratives. This led to questions about the nature of imagination as a sphere that plays a salient role in the anthropological constitution and social self-actualization of a contemporary person, about the character of the cinema recipient's inclusion into an imaginary world, the specifics of conventions and realistic allowances in that world, and the means and the limits of respective narrative constructs and their transformations (Gudkov, Dubin, Strada, 1998: 22–24). Putting together a toolkit to examine generic narratives that would combine techniques for the analysis of recipients' experiences with the methods of objectification to allow assessing the significance and function of a certain genre within the space of culture paves the way to understanding cinema as part of the public sphere, as pointed out by Miriam Hansen, and later by Michael Saler. At the same time, genre problems also bring about other perspectives of sociological reflection. On the one hand, this is a question of how the category of genre functions as an ideal type construct in the process of discursive identification of cinematic pieces and how it correlates not only with the narrative's peculiarities and the presence of formulaic elements, but also with factors of institutional context. On the other hand, turning to the viewer's experience allows us to single out non-narrative elements in the experience of cinema reception linked to, for instance, the perception of movie star images and, ultimately, an understanding of specific practices of cinema reception, which represent a transgression of the viewer experience and which entire communities gather around today. These presuppose moving beyond the boundaries of both the narrative and the filmic, and are related to freeing the viewer's imagination, and its expansion into the various spheres of daily life. This means studying both the multiple forms of film reception, with the transformative reception in particular, and exemplified by practices such as film tourism (Reijnders, 2016) or cosplay. Then, the matter of cinematic literacy is linked to the scrutinizing of the significance of film viewing skills in the contemporary person's anthropological constitution, and the transformation of cinema-inspired imagination into a socially and politically meaningful sphere of communication.

I am going to illustrate the potential for the development of sociological reflection on cinema by using a project to study communities of Soviet science-fiction cinema-lovers as an example. This project emerged as a continuation of a study of the cult movie phenomenon, aimed at scrutinizing Soviet cinema as an object of nostalgic attachment in the context of global changes in the filmmaking culture (Stepanov, Samutina, 2009). Contrary to the notion of nostalgia for all things Soviet as a prevailing conservative form of the mass post-Soviet cinematic experience, the concept of a "cult movie" was meant

30. In his book, Tudor cites a noteworthy example of such interpretation of a western by W. J. Barker: "The cowboy's faithful horse—the object of such solicitude, pride, and respect—probably represents the hero's narcisstically overvalued phallus and also the father as totem animal" (2013/1974: 182–183).

to denote the sum-total of practices of emotionally loaded and, simultaneously, reflective cinema consumption which was becoming ever more important for the post-Soviet viewer in the new media context. The construct of a cult-like reception was more likely to indicate a variety of possible grounds for an affinity to Soviet cinematic texts (from the extravagant plot lines and daily life realities estranged through historical distance, to the forgotten artists and novel subtexts), which could stand in direct opposition to their ideological message. Studying the reception of Soviet cinema in the framework of this project compelled us to also look into the strategies of forming personal archives and the forms of viewer activity (which was more of an ideal type model of the alternative consumption of Soviet cinema than an efficient means of gauging the scale of its dissemination). These days, 10 years later, the popularity of the idea of a cult, generally, and the Soviet as a cult object, in particular, is gaining visibility, and is no longer limited to practices of cinephile communities; it is also being appropriated by the media industry[31] and is becoming a benchmark for film critics (Gorelov, 2018; Anurov, Vasiliev, Komissarova, 2018; Trofimenkov, 2019). Studying this phenomenon is crucial for the understanding of how Soviet cinema functions as a form of cultural legacy.

Endeavoring to transfer the work of analyzing the contemporary reception of Soviet cinema onto the empirical plane, one turned to studying communities of Soviet sci-fi cinema-lovers, which gained considerable prominence on the cusp of the 2000s. The key role of sci-fi cinema-lovers' communities in shaping the practices of contemporary fan culture is widely recognized (Hellekson, 2018, 66). It is no wonder, that in this sense, the phenomenon of active audiences in the post-Soviet culture was represented by these very communities. Moreover, they offer a unique example of self-organization among Soviet cinema-lovers: no other genre produced such a well-defined fan community. Simultaneously, sci-fi is a key object for the understanding of imaginary worlds that are not only becoming ever more important for contemporary culture (Saler, 2012), but are also in constant interaction and convergence which cannot help but affect the fluidity and permeability of fan communities' boundaries (Bury, 2017). As noted above, fan communities receive recognition in film studies: the relevance of a film geek figure is a sign of democratization of the cinematographic culture in connection with the arrival of the DVD and cinema's expansion into the system of new media (Staiger, 2005: 95–115; Klinger, 2006: 17–53). In this sense, analyzing the activities of Soviet cinematic sci-fi cinema-lovers' communities does not only allow us to examine the forms of receptive activity in connection with a particular cinematic genre, but is also indicative in terms of the cinematographic culture's evolution on the whole.

Online discussion boards attest to the various techniques of appropriating the Soviet cinematic legacy depending on the distribution mechanisms available, from reproducing films on videotapes and DVD, exchanging information about television programming, collecting film production data and information on favorite actors, to designing virtual

31. As exemplified by the channel Dom kino which takes advantage of the "gold reserve" of Soviet cinematic legacy (films by L. Gaidai, E. Ryazanov, G. Danelia, V. Menshov, etc.), but presents these pieces like western blockbusters in its teaser ads.

models of cinematic spaceships, creating elements of computer interface, remixes, and movie-inspired videoclips. Demand for these techniques and changes in the intensity of activity allows us to draw conclusions regarding their connections to specific media and social situations. New media and social network development and the appearance of thematic film portals and internet archives in the latter half of the 2000s—early 2010s led to a gradual extinction of typical earlier forms of communication (Stepanov, 2020).

Finally, a study of communities of cinema fans is of interest from a historico-sociological perspective. Whereas in sociology and cultural studies, fandoms have acquired legitimacy as an object of research, Slavic studies have little to say on this particular subject, or on the reception of Soviet cinema in general. Not coincidentally a scholar of Soviet and post-Soviet cinematographic culture Sudha Rajagopolan, when commenting on the state of this field, asks a question, "Is there room for fan?" (2013). In film studies, the question of the fans' place in the evolution of the international film industry is quite actively discussed in the context of audience research. Kristin Roth-Ey touches upon this matter while examining cinematic culture's development during the Thaw period (2011), but the question of how visible fan practices were under the specific conditions of the Soviet film industry has not been systematically answered yet. The cinema fan communities under discussion here are a source of fascinating material in this respect, as their activity, to a great extent, relates to the popularity of the Soviet cult films they were fans of—*Guest From the Future* (1985, P. Arsenov), *Kin-dza-dza* (1986, G. Danelia), *Moscow—Cassiopeia* (1973, R. Viktorov), and *Teens in the Universe* (1974, R. Viktorov), which were enjoyed from the moment of their appearance on the big screen.[32]

Following the principle of the primary construction of a cultural object, let us consider the issue of cinematic sci-fi identification as an object of attachment of the communities under scrutiny. These fan groups' peculiarities are evident in comparison with a diverse and highly organized community of fans of literary science-fiction, who quite quickly made themselves at home on the internet and launched a large-scale internet archive of texts representing the tradition of Russian and Soviet literary science-fiction.[33] Cinema's lack of cultural authority in this community determines the ambivalent status of the cinematic sci-fi fan community.[34] Emerging mostly on the periphery of a literary sci-fi fan community, participants of cinematic sci-fi fandoms engage in some very peculiar forms of fan activities. Most striking in this respect is the phenomenon of Alisomania/Natashamania that characterizes fans' obsession with the image of the protagonist of the *Guest from the Future*.[35] That said, this is also a typical media fandom that actively displays its cinematic experience in new digital formats.

32. It is worth noting here that a certain conditionality of the first part of the concept of "cinematic sc-fi", as the latter includes not only movies screened in theaters, but also TV shows.

33. A further study should allow one to give a more detailed description to the role of scholarly and technical intelligentsia representatives in forming these fandoms.

34. For considerations regarding the reasons for this, see Pervushin (2019).

35. A colorful description of this phenomenon can be found in the internet encyclopedia, Lurkmore (2018). This phenomenon's significance is due to the predominance of males among the members of the communities under scrutiny.

Content-wise, the notion of Soviet cinematic science-fiction describes a cinematic experience uniting the members of these communities with a certain degree of conditionality. Firstly, we are talking about certain examples of the cinematographic genre targeting mostly, but not exclusively, a young audience. Notably, the corpus of favorite films expanded through the addition of a number of other films produced abroad, but included in the cinematic experience of late Soviet generations (e.g., such as the Hollywood film *Flight of the Navigator*). At the same time, films that garnered international acclaim for Soviet science-fiction (such as *Road to the Stars* by P. Klushantsev, and *Solaris* and *Stalker* by A. Tarkovsky) are, rather, of little interest to fandom participants. In contrast, G. Danelia's non-children's film *Kin-dza-dza*, which had a cult following as soon as it premiered, made the cut and entered the corpus of fan favorites. Thus, in considering the conceptual limits of the phenomenon under discussion, we have to bear in mind how fandom participants redefine the limits of the genre and construct their own hierarchies within it. It is also important that this work concerns not only the Soviet cinematic legacy proper, or the experience of Soviet cinema reception, but also the contemporary cultural experience of fandom participants. Indicative in this respect is the appearance on fan websites and discussion boards of anime sections, which may be seen as evidence for these fandoms' inclusion in the transnational and trans-fandom context.

Their attachment to Soviet cinema makes these fan communities an appealing object of analysis in the context of discussing the significance of nostalgic sentiments for contemporary society. Research into nostalgia generally, as well as in Slavic studies in particular, has come a long way from developing general models explaining nostalgia's significance for modern times to establishing the necessity of studying these phenomena in context (Nadkarni, Shevchenko, 2004; Mihelj, 2017). The study of nostalgia in connection with cinema, originally related predominantly to analyzing contemporary cinematic interpretations of the past, offered various interpretations of nostalgia: this emotion may stem not only from a sense of belonging to a "great history", but also from an assertion of a clean break from the past embodied in constructing a private outlook on grand historical events (Samutina, 2005).[36] Works interpreting nostalgia in connection with problems of cinema consumption mostly emphasize the positive role of nostalgic sentiments providing contemporary viewers with psychological support (Klinger, 2006: 135–190; Hunt, 2011).

The problems of cinematic nostalgia have already caught the eye of both domestic and foreign scholars within the framework of research into the representation of Soviet cinema on Russian TV (Borusyak, 2010), on the DVD market (Pravdina, 2009, 2010), and studies into its reception by users of nostalgic online-discussion boards (Rajagopalan, 2012). Discussions among members of Soviet cinematic sci-fi fans allows one to outline specific features of a nostalgic experience, and shed light on the internal conflicts that are absent from the above-mentioned studies. As has transpired from the previous characterization, nostalgia here refers to a childhood cinematic experience, which regains

36. This matter is studied on the material of contemporary Russian cinema in Norris (2012) and Levchenko (2013).

relevance in opposition to the "toxic" media context of the post-Soviet era, and becomes a cornerstone for a positive generational self-identification. Important here is the through line dramatized in the films of this genre, an ideology of optimistically looking-forward to the future that plays a crucial role in constructing this positive self-identification. Different correlations between a futuristic impulse and strife to preserve the Soviet experience, the need for its generalized conceptualization, and its significance for the understanding of the present can be distinguished as applied to different communities at various stages of their development. That said, these communities' genre orientation is not without internal conflict due to the need to inscribe a childhood cinematic experience into the contemporary cultural context. A considerable part of intellectual work undertaken by the members of these communities has to do with placing favorite films in the context of international, particularly Hollywood-produced sci-fi cinema, presenting a wide range of fantastic imagination and better-quality special effects. Another related topic is whether remakes or sequels of favorite films are possible under the present-day Russian film industry conditions.

The example I have chosen has to do with the problems of cinema reception, but at the same time, seems representative of the sociological problematics of contemporary film studies. Thus, it is the experience of cinema reception, formed in a certain aesthetic and historical framework and communicated by means of a certain system of value judgments and a complex of film practices, that is subjected to scrutiny. The examination of this cinematic experience presupposes a re-conceptualization of the aesthetic hierarchies and dispositions existing in the field of cinema (as well as in fan community), as well as the notions about the emotional attitudes towards Soviet cinema. It can also be seen in correlation with the structural characteristics of this community, from the members' ages to their professional activities. The interpretation of this experience involves revealing its mutual dependence on cultural transformations at different levels that take place in the Russian-speaking context and, simultaneously, in sync with global changes in media consumption. This offers an opportunity for the analysis of what mechanisms today help cinema function, and how the related sphere of imagination forms new communities and sets benchmarks for their members' lives.

Conclusion

My considerations set out to reveal the value of film studies as a starting point for the understanding of the cultural turn in sociology. The above insights attest to the fact that a medium that is key to the development of contemporary culture (at least during most of the twentieth century) is of marginal interest to the discipline of sociology as compared to other forms of cultural activity. By tracing down the history of interrelations between sociology and film studies, I tried to discover how this situation came to be. It is, however, clear that this issue merits further exploration. At the same time, my analysis shows exactly how, thanks to cultural studies' mediation, sociological reflection on cinema becomes a prerogative of film studies in the 1990–2000s, and an indispensable part of rede-

fining cinema as a research object undergoing transformations under the conditions of changing visual and media culture. The logic of this re-definition has to do with the shifting away from rigid critical interpretations and with revealing cinema's anthropological input into the formation of contemporary culture, and the role of cinematic imagination in shaping the public sphere of modern society. The realization of how problematic the boundaries of this phenomenon are in the context of current media culture essentially frees cinema as an object in relation to other media and, in a broader sense, to the various contexts of its existence. An empirical investigation of cinema as an experience necessitates incorporating an analysis of a sociological questionnaire into the program of cinema aimed at a meaningful interpretation of cinema's functioning as a medium, and a rejection of reductionist models of sociological interpretation of this phenomenon.[37] An awareness of a complex interplay between the industry, text, and audiences, and of the non-homogenous dynamics of the cinematic process increases the weight of the historical sensibility in social analysis.

The shapelessness of the sociology of cinema in this situation is hardly fatal. There is also little reason to expect this field to be burgeoning any time soon. As my inquiry shows, this would entail evaluating the state of affairs and the mechanisms of reproduction in such disciplines as film studies, media studies and cultural studies, sociology, history, and ethnography, which, as demonstrated earlier, is especially relevant to the Russian situation. The word "sociology" attracts questions addressed to the various fields of knowledge and, accordingly, to different institutional structures. As applied to the sociological profession, this means incorporating theoretical perspectives and research methods in our scholarly toolkit that are aimed at analyzing the subjective dimension of social processes and their media- and symbolical mediation. This in turn necessitates an acknowledgement—no longer a declaration, but a practical acceptance—of the sphere of imagination as an independent and fully-fledged object of sociological interest. For the humanities, this term offers opportunities to discover cinema's anthropological potential and its usefulness for the study of various forms of social experience not only today, but also in the past seen from a novel perspective, thanks to the cinematograph.

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37. It is needless to say that the sociological reflection on cinema has only been briefly described above.

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“Coming soon?”: социология кино и культурный поворот

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На протяжении XX века кино играло и до некоторой степени продолжает играть ключевую роль в формировании социального воображения и антропологии современного человека. Тем не менее, как показывает обзор английской научной литературы, кино, в отличие от искусства и музыки, остается для социологов второстепенным предметом анализа. В статье предпринята попытка рассмотреть состояние социологической рефлексии о кино в контексте культурного поворота в социологии как в международном, так и в национальном контексте. Реконструируя историю взаимодействия между социологией, киноведением и культурными исследованиями, автор не только приводит свидетельства недостаточного интереса социологов к изучению кинематографа, но также обсуждает пути разворачивания социологической проблематики в киноисследованиях на рубеже XX–XXI вв. и использования кино для изучения социального воображения. Пример исследования сообществ любителей советского научно-фантастического кино демонстрирует один из возможных путей развития социологически-ориентированной программы изучения кинематографа.

Ключевые слова: социология кино, культурсоциология, киноведение, культурные исследования, социальное воображение, кинематографический опыт, фан-сообщества

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New Roads and Old Promises of Music Sociology*

SMUDITS A. (ED.) (2019) ROADS TO MUSIC SOCIOLOGY. WIESBADEN: SPRINGER. 158 P. ISBN 978-3-658-22278-9

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Musical sociology is perhaps the only discipline among the many sociologies of the arts that attempts to construct its identity and to propose a kind of general research program. There is a set of common theoretical and methodological problems which have been discussed for the last couple of decades which can be traced back to the studies of Max Weber and Theodor Adorno, and are considered to be the classics of the theoretical sociology of music.

The collection *Roads to Music Sociology* provides us with the opportunity to review the problems and to see how the research agenda of the discipline has changed and advanced during the last several decades. However, the main assumption common to many scholars still remains unquestionable. It is the rejection to give any essential definition of music. The contributors do not define music. Instead, they suggest using the conventional definitions of music circulated in society. These definitions are usually broader than the ones accepted by musicologists and musicians themselves; this fact is a traditional point of tension between sociology and music. Instead of speaking of one Music (with a capital letter M, i.e., Music as art), sociologists study "musics", exploring the social hierarchies that make one kind of music art while neglecting the rest.

The collection is edited by Alfred Smudits, and is part of the series *Music and Society*. The formal aim of the volume is to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Department of Music Sociology at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, Austria. To celebrate the Jubilee in 2015, the Department organized a two-day conference entitled "50 Years of Music Sociology in Vienna. Historical Roots. Current Approaches. Future Perspectives".[1] The second purpose of the meeting, as indicated by Alfred Smudits in his "Introduction", was to reflect on the contribution of the Austrian musicologist, Kurt

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1. 50 Years of Music Sociology in Vienna: Conference Program. Available at: https://www.mdw.ac.at/ims/50yearsims/ (accessed 13 December 2020).

Blaukopf, who founded the Department in 1965. Blaukopf was a prominent scholar who is famous for his works on Mahler,[2] and for the introduction of sociological ideas to the field of music research and an interdisciplinary approach with a focus on what he termed "musical behavior" rather than "music as art".[3] He considered music broadly as a phenomenon related to any sound production and reception activities, and thus understood that musical sociology should have contributed to the general sociological problems of action and order. Here lies a key difference; it is an epistemological divide typical to the sociological studies of music, and almost absent in the studies of other forms of art. Musical sociology has always been more than a sociology of one form of art, and its ambitions were more profound. This is what may attract the attention of other sociologists and theoreticians to the music sociological scholarship.

Before proceeding to the overview of the contributions, I would like to present a brief reminder of an important theoretical distinction between musical sociology and the sociology of music. The distinction can be framed as follows; there is a problematic preposition "of" which implies that there is a particular aspect of an object, which in the case of music is its social nature that sociology should study. The key problem with the sociology *of* music has been its reductionism of music to the social conditions of its production and reception. This problem has been widely discussed since the institutionalization of the sociology of music as a discipline, i.e., debates in academic journals, conferences, and books have been dedicated to this problem.[4] One of the ways to go beyond the reductionist perspective is to focus on the musical work itself, since it embodies the specificity of the musical experience and practice.[5] An additional suggestion is to reconsider the foundations of the discipline, and to see the sociological studies of music in a general sociological way. It implies the focus will shift to how music (and other arts) contributes to social order and shape social actions. This method was proposed by Tia DeNora, Antoine Hennion, and other scholars. In this aspect, these scholars do not contribute to the sociology of music (the industry, organizations, production and reception, etc.) but to musical sociology, that is, a general sociology that focuses on music as a unit of social order and system of social action. In this perspective, there is a clear emphasis on the processes of music creation, its perception, and on the way music mediates social action. Consequently, the methodology proposed in accordance with this theoretical perspective is a close and detailed observation of actions and actors (similar to ethnographic and ethnomethodological ways to follow what actors do, and how they interact).

Of the nine chapters, four contain theoretical contributions. These chapters are written by Tia DeNora, Antoine Hennion, Howard S. Becker, and Peter J. Martin, all of whom are famous for their studies in music sociology and the sociology of music.

2. Blaukopf K. (1973) *Gustav Mahler* (transl. P. Hamburger), New York: Praeger Publishers.

3. Blaukopf K. (1992) *Musical Life in a Changing Society: Aspects of Music Sociology* (transl. D. Marinelli), Portland: Amadeus Press.

4. E.g.: Hennion A., Grenier L. (2000) Sociology of Art: New Stakes in a Post-Critical Time. *The International Handbook of Sociology* (eds. S. Quah, A. Sales), London: SAGE, pp. 341–355.

5. E.g.: Zembylas T. (ed.) (2014) *Artistic Practices: Social Interactions and Cultural Dynamics*, London: Routledge.

The contribution by Tia DeNora is the most systematic one. It is a theory-oriented study of how music works as "a medium of social ordering, a dynamic and powerful ingredient of social life" (p. 134). Starting with the discussion of the dualities in music sociology—music vs. society, micro vs. macro, subject vs. object—DeNora shows that these dichotomies are no longer relevant since they reproduce older theoretical frameworks of the sociology of music. Newer frameworks take the music's specificity and focus on the emergent nature of music experience into account. The shift towards a more nuanced approach enables the integration of music sociological findings into music therapy practice. DeNora provides an example from her research practice of how a specific musical practice can enhance the human experience and reframe the situation during therapy sessions. DeNora argues that music sociology understood and practiced in this way can claim to contribute to general sociological theory. She wrote that "the study of what can be done with music points us to a new way of pursuing sociology's core questions and one that follows culture as it gets into action, emotion and perception (the 'internal' aspects of sociation) in ways that make our worlds and the realities that are about them" (p. 134).

Antoine Hennion reflects on his theoretical and methodological trajectory of building up "a sociology of art that is far removed from today's reigning scientism—a sociology of art that ensures it is equal to the works produced, and especially to what those works call for: the worlds whose possibility they affirm" (p. 42). Hennion says he is not as interested in doing music sociology as in doing sociology with music. To explain what he means, he revisits his notion of mediation and reveals the theoretical influences of Michel de Certeau and Louis Marin on his studies. Hennion shows how he came up with the idea that returning to musical work does not mean the return to the music as an object. Instead, it suggests seeing music as an activity, literally as doing. For Hennion, a musical object is to be unfolded and can be only be grasped in the process of performing; he wrote that "We have to actively make the objects of our pleasure emerge in all their differences and make ourselves aware of those differences" (p. 50). To illustrate the way it happens empirically, he discusses two cases: improvisation in jazz music, and the auto-ethnography of singing lessons. Both cases support his main argument that musical work is something unstable and needs "to-be-done" in order to be treated as music. In this respect, his cases serve as insights on how action is organized and social order emerges.

Then, Howard Becker shares his personal reflections of his own contribution and implications of music scholarship. In particular, he pays attention to the idea of musical language. In his typical straightforward manner, he argues that the main problem of music sociology is that often the outcomes of socio-musicological studies are either too sociological or too musicological. In the former case, therefore, the studies do not require any musical competencies on behalf of the readers, while in the latter case, sociologists usually should have some musical background in order to understand the technical language of music. Sociologists face the problem of a popular presentation of their results to a wider audience which may lack such knowledge. Becker continues, writing that "Musicians talk about music in a language quite divorced from common language: special words for the physical and aural objects they use to make music, and for the sounds, and the kinds

of sounds they make when they're 'making music'" (p. 96). He argues for the importance of possessing technical knowledge by referring to two research cases. The first case is his own study of how jazz musicians can play together without rehearsals or even knowing each other. To answer the question, Becker and his colleague Robert Faulkner carried out auto-ethnographic research, discovering that the answer was that the players should be aware of the part of the song that is played and the time signature, while the rest can be grasped in practice and through conventions. The second case that shows the benefits of musicological knowledge is an ethnomusicological study by Simha Arom who researched the music of the Ngbaka, an ethnic group from the Central African Republic. In order to lay the foundations for the emergence of the national music museum, he recorded folk music, particularly versions of the same song performed by different people. Through the ethnographic and musical analysis of the variety of the performance of the same song, he was able to theoretically reconstruct the musical practice of the Ngbaka. As shown previously, the use of the technical language of music and the ability of ethnographers to look into it along with the ability to master it contributes much to the understanding how music works from a sociological perspective.

The contribution of Peter J. Martin goes into the exploration of the digitization of music, and reflects on the theoretical and research perspectives of "new musicology" and popular music studies. The "new musicology" emerged in the 1980s, and, as Martin puts it, kept some of the assumptions of the old musicology by being mostly preoccupied with decoding the meaning of musical works, their social and cultural significance, and the linear understanding of how society impacts music. These assumptions were challenged both by Kurt Blaukopf and other popular music scholars who focused on the uses of music in everyday life, and the variety of musical forms and genres. For Martin, it is important that music sociology will be able to consider the processes of digitalization through popular music studies, a key challenge for understanding the role of music nowadays.

The next group of papers consists of the contributions that apply the notions of contemporary sociology to the realm of music, and therefore are more concerned with the sociology of music rather than music sociology.

The essay of Alfred Smudits relates music sociology to the times of "mass modernity", a term he introduces to describe the era between the end of WWII and the fall of the Berlin Wall. According to Smudits' views, music sociology has always fallen behind the general sociological situation, and in order to keep its relevance it "has to be aware of the new challenges emerging from the latest socio-cultural and media developments" (p. 19). Among the many changes that became important in the era after "mass modernity", he mentions the increasing role of technologies in the recording and production industries (along with the popularity of listening to music via smartphones), the transformation of the economic and symbolic values of music due to a sharing economy and the increase of the role of digital distribution channels, the emergence of local scenes that exist along with the global musical scene, etc. For Smudits, if the sociology of music wants to keep its relevance, it should "not only need to have a broader knowledge of sociology, but also of neighboring disciplines, including—not least—musicology" (Ibid.).

The next contribution is a review essay by Marie Buscatto that is dedicated to the way gender still matters in the field of music. She identifies several domains of possible research: social stereotypes regarding gender and musical genres, social networks in the musical fields that are generally considered to be male-dominated, the role of families in the musicians' careers, public regulation and institutional frameworks that guides the operation of the field, and, finally, the marginal segments of the field where gender may be a source for action. Yet, a significant focus on gender issues in the field of music production, as Buscatto notes, may lead to the neglect of other aspects (such as race, age, class, etc.) and "to over- interpret the extra-musical realities" (p. 75).

The account of how cosmopolitan culture is reflected in music belongs to Motti Regev. He follows the idea of cosmopolitan bodies that are inscribed with a cosmopolitan aesthetic culture. For Regev, it is pop-rock music that enables the global transmission of cosmopolitan culture on the corporeal level. This study may be considered as a way to address musical specificity with a focus on the bodily level, but since the paper lacks specific examples of how pop-rock music is embodied in practice, the term "cosmopolitan bodies" is often used in a metaphorical and general way. After the analysis of the typical features of pop-rock music, Regev concludes that "we may assert that pop-rock music has constituted its listeners as aesthetic cosmopolitan bodies, that is, as bodies inscribed with musico-aural knowledge that affords a sense of being local and translocal at the same time" (p. 90).

The last chapter by Christian Kaden takes a particular place in the volume. It is a historical overview of the development of music sociology in East Germany and its contexts. Kaden describes the informal network of scholars who worked in the field of musicology at that time, and reveals their relations with other fields of knowledge (cybernetics, system theory, etc.). This essay also reflects on the contemporary transformation of academic practices, for as Kaden writes, "Today there is no real will for cooperation in German musicology. And the discipline as a whole is governed by the feudalist tendencies of establishing domains of scientific power" (p. 155).

The celebratory idea of the volume implies an inevitable peculiarity: the volume may seem unbalanced because conceptual reflections go along with personal and review essays but often fail to correspond to each other. Alfred Smudits, who served as an editor, writes that the volume is "selective and therefore intends to highlight certain themes" (p. 2). It also means that it is more oriented to a specific national tradition of music sociology—the German tradition, probably one of the most fruitful in terms of finding common ground between the sociological thought on music and musicology.

Additionally, three features characterize the volume. First, though the anthology addresses key issues of contemporary studies of music from a sociological standpoint, it clearly follows the socio-musicological perspective theoretically, and therefore almost completely neglects the studies of the consumption of music in a more conventional way. Second, the papers in this volume do not look at specific musical pieces, and thus do not consider them as a way to understand social order. Turning towards the musical object in this respect means to look at its effects, and to what Adorno metaphorically called "physi-

ognomics" in his contribution to the Radio Project.[6] Alternatively, American cultural sociology would have focused on iconic musical objects. Third, the political dimension and the contribution of arts and music to the emergence of political order is overlooked. This may sound surprising because politics is one of the domains where social order comes from.

These features may be seen as limitations or even as drawbacks of the volume, yet the book shows that music sociology is well-established and specified in terms of theory. However, its agenda is still not articulated on the level of empirical research, and is often replaced by more conventional cases of empirical research. In this regard, empirical music sociology is still a promise.

Новые маршруты и старые надежды музыкальной социологии

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6. Adorno T. (2006) *Current of Music: Elements of a Radio Theory*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.