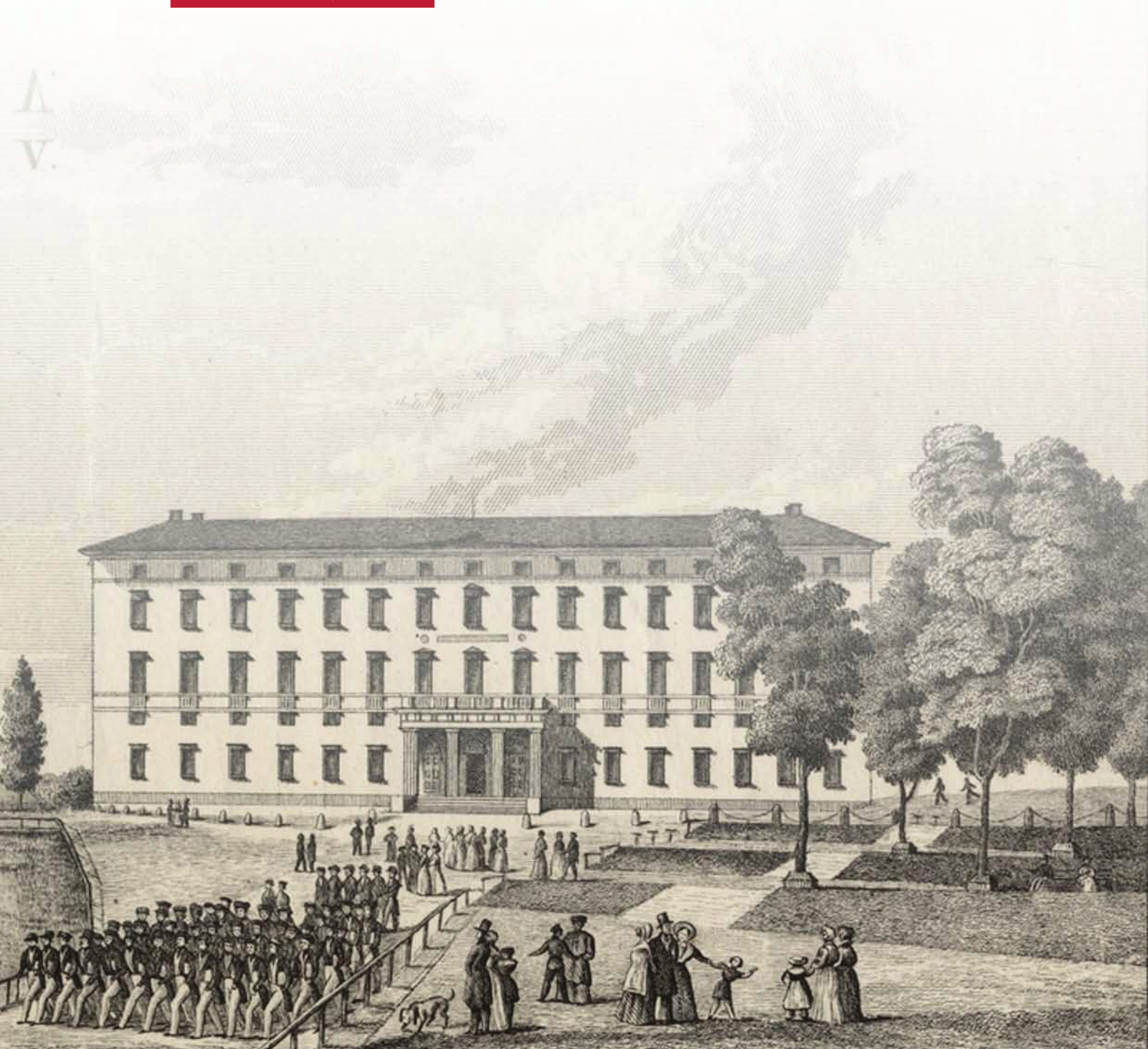


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Front cover: Uppsala University Library Carolina Rediviva with marching students
in the foreground. Johan Way, 1842 (UUB)

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Editorial

Dear reader,

the current issue of SLOVO – Journal of Slavic Languages, Literatures and Culture is a truly special one. In addition to our usual format with research articles and essays, we are trying a new concept, namely including thematic clusters. This year it is a cluster entitled “Late Soviet and Post-Soviet Necro-Aesthetics” edited by Prof. Andrei Rogatchevski from Tromsø and our own Prof. Maria Engström. The cluster includes four research articles.

In addition to the cluster on Necro-Aesthetics, there is a surprise – four articles, two essays and a number of short messages from colleagues that celebrate the 60th anniversary of a member of the Slovo advisory board, Andrei Rogatchevski. We congratulate Andrei and are grateful to our colleagues from Tromsø, Svetlana Sokolova, Yngvar Steinholt and Tore Nettet for putting together this wonderful collection of works.

As always, we welcome articles and essays on a wide variety of topics related to Slavic linguistics, literature, culture, history and society. All research articles, no matter whether they are part of a thematic cluster or not, undergo a double-blind peer-reviewing process. Essays are less formal in style and do not go through the same reviewing process, instead, the editorial team decides whether an essay can be published in Slovo. We would like to thank all the authors and reviewers for their contributions. We invite proposals for thematic clusters for future issues of Slovo.

The editors of Slovo

Redakcijska hipoteza o varijaciji u tekstu hrvatskoglagojskih brevijara: svjedočanstvo *Prve knjige o Samuelu*

Original research article

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Abstract

This article examines the “redaction hypothesis,” the idea that the division of Croatian Church Slavonic (CCS) liturgical texts into *A* and *B* versions, and of the liturgical books (missals and breviaries) into *A* and *B* groups, arose through a comprehensive redaction during the first half of the 14th century. Following an overview of the origins of the redaction hypothesis, the article surveys critical questions that it raises. Finally, it summarizes data on the consistency of binary variation between the *A* and *B* versions of the CCS *First Book of Samuel*. The high proportion (50%) of binary variation in the overall corpus of textual variation supports the redactional origin of observed variation. Definitive conclusions will require more exhaustive quantitative and qualitative studies.

1. Nastanak i razvoj redakcijske hipoteze

Tijekom dvadesetoga stoljeća i prvih godina dvadeset prvoga, učvrstila se spoznaja da se hrvatskoglagojski liturgijski kodeksi 14./15. stoljeća dijele, prema verzijama¹ tekstova koje sadrže, u dvije skupine nazvane „sjevernom“ i „južnom“, „starijom“ i „mlađom“, ili jednostavno *A* i *B*. Te se skupine određuju jednostavno kao skupine (Pantelić 1967:69), ali sve češće i kao redakcije (Badurina-Stipčević, Mihaljević & Šimić 2012:262), što bi podrazumijevalo svjesnu, promišljenu reviziju tih knjiga, odnosno tekstova koje one sadrže. Izražena su mišljenja da je do redakcije moglo doći početkom ili sredinom 14. stoljeća (Reinhart 1990:203; Mihaljević 2009), kao i uvjerenje da je ona vjerojatno izvedena u Zadru (Pantelić 1964:82; Corin 1991:23;

¹ Da se ne bi zamaglila semantička razlika koja je važna za ovu temu, umjesto danas već uobičajene hrvatske riječi *inačica* zadržavam terminologiju: (a) *verzija*, uglavnom za *A* i *B* verzije pojedinih tekstova; i (b) *varijanta* za različita prevoditeljska rješenja odnosno omaške na pojedinim mjestima u tekstu u različitim kodeksima. Varijante mogu biti parovi, ali ponekad tri ili čak više različitih riječi, oblika, ili fraza.

Mihaljević 2009; Šimić & Vela 2021:155). U ovome ću radu ukratko skicirati razvoj te ideje. Onda ću oblikovati niz pitanja koja ta „redakcijska hipoteza“ nameće, pa ću na kraju iznijeti ograničen skup podataka koji je podržava.

Prvo, međutim, treba precizirati što točno podrazumijevam pod pojmom „redakcije“. U ovome radu, taj termin označava proces svjesnog revidiranja teksta u cilju uspostavljanja ispravnije verzije, odnosno verzije koja bolje odgovara određenoj svrsi. Ovako definiran pojam redakcije bit će ograničen na cjelovite redakcijske pothvate poput onih koji su stvorili dvije glavne „recenzije“ hrvatskoglagoljskih tekstova i kodeksa, a neće uključivati ograničenije aktivnosti pojedinačnih redaktora-pisara (redactor-scribes), kako su opisali Šimić i Vela (2021). Težište ovoga rada je recenzija *B* hrvatskoglagoljskih liturgijskih knjiga, ali treba imati u vidu da je recenzija *A* ovih knjiga također rezultat ranijeg redakcijskoga pothvata (Corin 1997). „Recenzija“ dakle u ovome radu označava revidirani tekst koji je neposredni proizvod redakcije – tj., recenzijski prototip, zajedno sa tekstualnom tradicijom koju taj tekst započinje. Usvajam ovo shvaćanje pojma redakcije (pa i pojma recenzije) uvjetno, sukladno dosadašnjim zapažanjima.

Termini „redakcija“ i „recenzija“ nemaju univerzalno prihvaćene definicije. U slavistici, osobito u diskusiji o crkvenoslavenskim tekstovima, redakcija najčešće označava jednu od nacionalnih inačica crkvenoslavenskoga jezika, na primjer: „pod utjecajem različitih slavenskih jezika nastaju lokalne inačice crkvenoslavenskoga koje se zovu »redakcije« ili »recenzije«“ (Gadžijeva i dr. 2014:10). Redakcije u ovom smislu razlikuju se od najstarijega starocrkvenoslavenskoga odnosno staroslavenskoga jezika desetog i jedanaestog stoljeća time što su djelomično prilagođavane narodnome jeziku područja u kojima su se koristile.

Nasuprot tomu, u klasičnoj i biblijskoj filologiji redakcija često označava postupak antičkog ili srednjovjekovnog urednika odnosno redaktora određenoga teksta koji ga je modificirao, često radi adaptiranja u skladu sa određenom ideološkom, političkom ili nekom drugom namjerom. Primjerice, može se govoriti o deuteronomističkoj redakciji povijesnih knjiga Hebrejske Biblije (od strane takozvanog deuteronomističkoga redaktora).² Autori koji su do sada označavali *A* i *B* verzije hrvatskih crkvenoslavenskih tekstova ili knjiga kao redakcije (Tandarić 1993; Corin 1991, 1997; Badurina-Stipčević, Mihaljević & Šimić 2012, vjerojatno i drugi) mogli su imati u vidu ovakvu definiciju pojma redakcije, ali u smislu jednostavnijega stilskoga poboljšanja teksta ili ispravljanja kako bi vjernije reflektirao značenje latinskoga (ili grčkoga) teksta umjesto svjesnoga mijenjanja njegova značenja. U sličnome značenju Šimić i Vela (2021) koriste termin „redactor-scribe“, ali u odnosu na pojedina mjesta u tekstu a ne na cjelovite revizije

² U biblijskoj kritici, redaktor je također osoba koja uzima dva ili veći broj odvojenih tekstova, ili više inačica jednog teksta, i ugrađuje ih u jedan kombinirani tekst, te do određene mjere redigira taj tekst kako bi pomirila unutarnje nesuglasnosti koje su nastale tijekom kombiniranja.

tekstova. Upravo u značenju cjelovite revizije radi stilskoga poboljšanja ili korigiranja teksta primjenjujem termin „redakcija“ u ovome radu.

Termin „redakcija“ u ovome smislu često označava i sam revidirani (modificirani) tekst koji je nastao redakcijskim pothvatom, zajedno sa njegovim kasnijim prijepisima. Ponekad se taj revidirani tekst označava terminom „recenzija“, a to je praksa koju primjenjujem u ovom radu radi razlikovanja između pojmova redakcije kao pothvata i recenzije (to jest teksta) koja je rezultat, odnosno proizvod redakcije.

Termin „recenzija“ može imati i druga značenja, što ponekad može dovesti do zabune. U slavenskoj filologiji „recenzija“ se ponekad koristi gotovo sinonimno sa „redakcijom“, za označavanje nacionalne inačice crkvenoslavenskoga jezika (Gadžijeva i dr. 2014:10). U književnoj, klasičnoj i biblijskoj filologiji taj se termin, međutim, često koristi u posve drukčijemu značenju. *Enciklopedija Britannica* (u skladu s Lachmannovim pristupom) definira recenziju kao „the operation of ... reconstructing ... the earliest form or forms of the text that can be inferred from the surviving evidence“.³ To se postiže uspoređivanjem sačuvanih kopija ili verzija teksta, uz primjenu izvora izvan samoga teksta kada su dostupni. Recenzija u ovom smislu identificira skupine verzija teksta („version-groups“) i, ako je to moguće, *stemma codicum*.

Iako redakcijska hipoteza izgleda sve privlačnijom, njezino sustavno ispitivanje još uvijek nije ni izbliza dovršeno. To se odnosi na niz pitanja, odnosno zadataka, uključujući:

- 1) dokazivanje da do podjele nije došlo postupnim nakupljanjem pojedinačnih pisarskih intervencija i pogrešaka tijekom prepisivanja u različitim sredinama bez cjelovite redakcije
- 2) ispitivanje samoga procesa redakcije – njezinih okvira i smjernica
- 3) ispitivanje povijesnih okolnosti koje su dovele do nje i u kojima je ona izvršena; i
- 4) tumačenje one sastavnice varijacije u tekstu koja nije ponikla tijekom te redakcije ili predstavlja razne vrste kontaminacije ili prijelaznosti između nove i stare recenzije.

Iako zasad nema konačnih odgovora na ta pitanja, literatura o toj problematici pokazuje posve određen pravac razvoja, osobito u pogledu okvira podjele. Početkom dvadesetoga stoljeća Josip Vajs (1903:65–67) već je nazreo jednu važnu sastavnicu ukazujući na različite „verzije“ (latinski *versiones*, što u kontekstu njegova teksta u biti znači „na različite prijevode“) biblijskih lekcija koje su bile izvorno prevedene s grčkoga.

Vatroslav Jagić, pišući svoj pregled hrvatske glagoljične književnosti deset godina kasnije u skladu sa svojim stavovima o ograničenim okvirima glagoljaške kulture, kao

³ Vidi <https://www.britannica.com/topic/textual-criticism/Critical-methods#ref523801>

da je odbacio Vajsovu ideju (osim u slučaju psaltira, za koji je pretpostavljao da je bio podvrgnut reviziji u 13. stoljeću) jer se ograničio na tvrdnje da varijacija u hrvatskoglagojskim liturgijskim tekstovima pokazuje: 1) postupnu infiltraciju narodnih elemenata u crkvenoslavenske tekstove; i 2) postupno prilagođavanje tih tekstova *Vulgati* (Jagić 1913:15–16).

U dvama radovima izdanim tijekom pedesetih godina Josip Hamm oživio je i dalje razvio Vajsovu koncepciju o dvjema različitim verzijama, odnosno prijevodima pojedinih biblijskih čitanja (Hamm 1953; 1958), s tim što njegova novija verzija „prevedena iz Vulgate“ (Hamm 1953:17) nije bila novi prijevod *ab ovo*, nego temeljito preoblikovanje prvobitnoga prijevoda s grčkoga (Hamm 1953:31). Ta se teza od onda postupno pojačava i produbljuje. Hammov doprinos sastoji se i u njegovu dokazivanju da se dvije verzije biblijskih čitanja mogu naći ne samo među tekstovima koji su izvorno prevedeni s grčkoga nego i u *Knjizi o Juditi* (Hamm 1958), čija je starija verzija već izvorni prijevod s latinskoga. Još jedan njegov doprinos sastoji se u označavanju novijih verzija ispravljenih prema *Vulgati* neutralnom oznakom *B*, a ranijih verzija oznakom *A* bez obzira na to potječu li od izvornih prijevoda s grčkoga ili s latinskoga. To sugerira da je Hamm pretpostavljao da obje te vrste varijacije predstavljaju različite aspekte jednoga zajedničkoga procesa ispravljanja biblijskih tekstova bez obzira na podrijetlo njihovih izvornih prijevoda. Ipak, on nije izričito iznio takvu tvrdnju na koju je njegova terminologija tako jasno upućivala niti se upuštao u objašnjavanje te značajne okolnosti, vjerojatno zato što bi to vodilo u stranputicu od glavnoga cilja njegovih istraživanja.

Od toga vremena počeo je postupni proces proširivanja broja i vrsta tekstova koji se uklapaju u tu podjelu na dvije verzije. Dok su se Vajs i Hamm ograničili na pojedina biblijska čitanja u brevijarima, Marija Pantelić ukazala je na sličnu podjelu kod misala (Pantelić 1967:69) i to s obzirom na njihove biblijske tekstove općenito (tj., ne ograničavajući se na pojedine tekstove kao što su Hamm i Vajs). Ona pokazuje ovu podjelu prije svega na temelju 18 mjesta iz *III. i IV. Knjige o Kraljevima* (Pantelić 1967:69–71), ali dodaje jedan primjer iz *Knjige o Esteri* koji ukazuje na veću složenost ove podjele. Ovaj posljednji primjer, naime, pokazuje ne toliko razliku između grčke i latinske matice, već kako su „neki mlađi zahvati korektorija lat. sredovječne Vulgate dospjeli u jednu skupinu hrvatskoglagojskih misala i podijelili ih u 2 skupine: *južnu* i *sjevernu*“ (Pantelić 1967:68). Što se tiče samih biblijskih tekstova u tim kodeksima, Pantelić (1967:71) je tvrdila da iznesene potvrde dijele ih na dvije „matice“: sjevernu („u čijem se tekstu nazrijevaju ostatci grčke Septuaginte“) i južnu („koja se oslanja na Vulgatu...“), ali nije bliže odredila što ona podrazumijeva pod pojmom „matice“. Dakle, Pantelić je uvela i geografsku koordinatu podjele, povezujući jednu verziju (koja bi odgovarala Vajsovoj i Hammovoj starijoj, odnosno *A* verziji kod brevijara) s kodeksima iz sjevernijih (pretežno krčko-istarskih) predjela, dok je drugu (koja odgovara Vajsovoj i Hammovoj mlađoj ili *B* verziji kod brevijara) povezivala s kodeksima južnije provenijencije (što bi uključivalo Zadar, Liku i Krbavu). Na kraju, dala je kratku

karakterizaciju jezičnih i drugih razlika između tekstova jedne i druge skupine. Nažalost, ni ona se nije dublje upuštala u tumačenje nastanka te podjele vjerojatno (kao što je bio slučaj s Hammom) zato što je to bilo nepotrebno za rješavanje njezinih konkretnih zadataka u tom radu.

Sedamdesete i osamdesete godine donijele su znatne pomake u proučavanju ove problematike. Josip Tandarić u nizu radova upotpunio je sliku u više pogleda.⁴ Prvo, on je pošao dalje od ranijih istraživača ukazujući na određene molitvene i druge liturgijske (tj., ne samo biblijske) tekstove koji pokazuju istu vrstu podjele na dvije verzije koja je dotada bila utvrđena za biblijska čitanja (Tandarić 1993:32). Drugo, pokazao je da se podjela tiče ne samo verzija tekstova nego katkad i samoga izbora tekstova u pojedinim kodeksima (Tandarić 1984:127–128). Treće, Tandarić je pokazao da podjela seže dalje od misala *sensu stricto* te uključuje i ritualne tekstove (Tandarić 1993:33). Četvrto, primijetio je (Tandarić 1993:31–21) da je zapravo riječ o istoj podjeli na dvije verzije tekstova, odnosno na dvije skupine kodeksa, koja obuhvaća i misale i brevijare (tj., da su podjele kod jedne i druge knjige dva aspekta jedne šire pojave), ali ne bez izvjesnih ograda. Među ostalim, podjela je jasnije izražena kod misala nego kod brevijara,⁵ a isto je tako izraženija kod starije (sjeverne) verzije nego kod novije (južne) jer tekstovi južne verzije pokazuju više unutarnje varijacije nego što nalazimo u tekstovima sjeverne verzije. Peto, Tandarić je među prvima otkrio da kod onih malobrojnih identičnih tekstova koji se sreću i u misalu i u brevijaru (konkretno, kod himne *Pange, lingua, gloriosi lauream certaminis*), mogu biti čak i četiri verzije, dvije u misalu i dvije u brevijaru (Tandarić 1993:32). Studija Zdenke Ribarove o *Knjizi o proroku Joni* (Ribarova 1987:135) upućivala je na takvu mogućnost i za taj tekst.⁶ Na kraju, Tandarić je možda prvi upotrijebio termin „redakcija“ da označi dvije verzije pojedinih tekstova (Tandarić 1993:33). Nažalost, ni on se nije upustio u objašnjavanje što je podrazumijevao pod pojmom redakcije i nije pokušao protumačiti prirodu i nastanak mlađe redakcije.

Od toga vremena niz je autora upotpunio tu sliku u više pogleda. To uključuje određivanje broja pojedinačnih tekstova koji su obuhvaćeni tom podjelom, vrste tih tekstova (uključujući, na primjer, legende ili živote svetaca: Badurina-Stipčević, Mihaljević & Šimić 2012:266–267; Badurina-Stipčević 2010:47–49; Šimić & Vela 2021:125), pripadnost pojedinih kodeksa jednoj ili drugoj skupini i razne vrste prijelaznosti odnosno kolebanja pojedinih kodeksa između jedne i druge skupine (Badurina-Stipčević, Mihaljević & Šimić 2012:262). Utvrđeno je također da je geografska koordinata sjever – jug za razlikovanje dviju skupina samo djelomično točna (Corin 1991:23; Badurina-Stipčević, Mihaljević & Šimić 2012:262).

⁴ Tandarićevi najvažniji radovi o toj tematici skupljeni su u zbornik Tandarić 1993.

⁵ Ovo je ranije primjećivala i Pantelić (Pantelić 1964: 79), barem što se tiče održavanja jezične norme crkvenoslavenskoga jezika.

⁶ Ribarova je zapazila da je tekst *Jone* u Hrv „samostalno oblikovanje“ različito od dviju verzija zasvjedočenih kod brevijara. Sad je jasno da zapravo postoje dvije različite verzije *Jone* u misalima (Corin 2002a, 2002b).

Još je jedan smjer u proučavanjima posljednjih desetljeća njihovo razgranavanje na dvije struje, što odražava dvije perspektive iz kojih možemo proučavati redakcijsku hipotezu. Prva perspektiva, tekstološka, proučava varijaciju u okvirima pojedinih tekstova, kao što je, na primjer, *Prva knjiga o Samuelu* u raznim kodeksima. Druga perspektiva (kodikološka) stavlja fokus na pripadnost pojedinačnih kodeksa određenoj skupini, s obzirom na verzije tekstova koje sadrže. U okvirima kodikoloških studija proučavamo dosljednost, prijelaznost ili specifičnost pojedinih kodeksa u njihovu donošenju *A* ili *B* verzije tekstova. Primjer kodikološkoga pristupa donosi rad o *Dabarskome brevijaru*, u kojemu autori svrstavaju hrvatskoglagoljske brevijare u tri grupe – predstavnike sjeverne (*A*) skupine, predstavnike južne (*B*) skupine („a tekstovi južne skupine doživjeli su .. sveobuhvatnu redakciju prema latinskome tekstu misala i brevijara u 14. vijeku“), i prijelaznu podskupinu kodeksa unutar južne skupine čiji tekstovi „mjestimice se priklanjaju starijoj redakciji“ (Badurina-Stipčević, Mihaljević & Šimić 2012:261–262). Ta trojna podjela ukazuje na jedan razlog zašto je važno precizirati što podrazumijevamo pod pojmom redakcije i tražiti dokaze za primjenjivost izabranoga tumačenja jer izdvajanje prijelazne *B* skupine kodeksa s *djelomičnim zadržavanjem* značajka *A* skupine ostavlja otvorenu mogućnost takvoga tumačenja prema kojemu je moglo do *A* : *B* podjele doći ne trenutačnim redakcijskim činom (zapravo, kratkotrajnim procesom pod centraliziranim nadzorom), nego postupno tijekom duljega vremena.

Možemo svesti prvi dio rada na sljedeća tri zapažanja. Prvo, tvrdnja da se hrvatskoglagoljski liturgijski tekstovi, kao i kodeksi koji ih sadrže, dijele na dvije prepoznatljive verzije, odnosno skupine, izgleda dobro utemeljenom. Drugo, tvrdnja da je ta podjela nastala kao rezultat svjesne, promišljene redakcije također izgleda dobro utemeljenom. Treće, a što je za nas ključno, nije završeno, a u nekim pogledima jedva je započeto, usredotočeno i svestrano ispitivanje te „redakcijske hipoteze“ i njezinih ramifikacija. A to nas vraća na četiri ključna pitanja iznijeta na početku rada o redakcijskoj hipotezi. Ta su pitanja nezaobilazna ako želimo:

- precizirati što točno podrazumijevamo pod pojmom redakcije kada govorimo o dvojnoj podjeli hrvatskoglagoljskih liturgijskih tekstova i kodeksa
- razumjeti sve ramifikacije povezane s tim pojmom
- uvjeriti se da pojam *redakcija* točno odgovara povijesnoj stvarnosti s kojom smo suočeni.

U ostatku rada pokušat ću oblikovati drugo i treće pitanje s početka rada, a onda ću se na kraju zadržati na prvome, najvažnijemu pitanju u pokušaju da odredim načelni odgovor na njega. To je pitanje: Je li redakcija hrvatskoglagoljskih liturgijskih tekstova u četrnaestome stoljeću povijesna stvarnost?

2. Okviri, smjernice, i proces redakcije

Kad postavljamo pitanje o povijesnoj stvarnosti redakcije, vrijedi početi od preciziranja objekta redakcije. Naime, je li riječ o redakciji cijeloga brevijara i misala ili samo pojedinih dijelova tih knjiga? Dosadašnja istraživanja govore pretežno u prilog redakciji cijeloga brevijara i cijeloga misala, samim time što istraživači otkrivaju podjele na dvije verzije kod biblijskih, ritualnih, svetačkih i homiletskih tekstova. Ipak, još ima praznina koje treba popuniti, osobito kod rubrika, odnosno informativnih tekstova koji su vezivno tkivo liturgijskih knjiga, a u kojima uočavamo dosta individualnih značajka.

Dalje, treba precizirati je li pretpostavljena redakcija brevijara i misala bila izvedena kao jedan cjeloviti proces, odnosno čin, tako da se odigrala istodobno, pod jednim pokroviteljstvom i vodstvom, za obje knjige. Alternativno, jesu li se redakcije brevijara i misala dogodile u dvama nepovezanim procesima ili nešto između tih krajnjih mogućnosti? Zdrav razum kao da govori u prilog zajedničkome procesu, međutim, postojanje usporednih parova pojedinih tekstova kod brevijara i kod misala upozorava nas na to da odgovor neće biti jednostavan.

Nadovezujući se na prethodno pitanje, zanima nas do koje mjere možemo rekonstruirati sam proces redakcije. To jest, do koje mjere možemo utvrditi:

- 1) izvorne crkvenoslavenske verzije na kojima je izvedena redakcija
- 2) latinske verzije koje su služile kao autoritativne pri izvedbi redakcije
- 3) stilske, jezične i druge smjernice za reviziju, kao i jesu li te smjernice jednake, i to do koje mjere, za misal i za brevijar, kao i za različite tekstove u njima
- 4) podjelu rada nad revizijom tekstova i knjiga, među ostalim, je li sudjelovalo više skupina ljudi u radu nad svakom knjigom, samo jedna skupina za obje knjige ili neka treća mogućnost; koji je bio sustav i organizacija rada tih skupina; i jesu li sve skupine radile pod istim ili različitim vodstvom i smjernicama
- 5) jesu li redaktori zbog obima posla pripremili samo jednu verziju, odnosno jedan primjerak svake knjige, po svoj prilici s najdužim tekstovima i najpotpunijim izborom tekstova, iz kojih su potonji prepisivači pravili različite duže ili kraće prijepise prema svojim potrebama; ili su redaktori sami pripremili primjerke i s kraćim i dužim tekstovima, odnosno primjerke brevijara i misala za različite predviđene uporabe.

Važno je postaviti ta pitanja bez obzira na realnu mogućnost pronalaska zadovoljavajućih odgovora na njih.

3. Povijesne okolnosti redakcije

U uskoj je vezi s određivanjem procesa redakcije pitanje o povijesnim okolnostima koje su do nje dovele i pod kojima se ona odvijala. Prvo, možemo li bliže precizirati njezin

datum? Činjenica da najraniji primjerci novije ili *B* verzije misala (Nov⁷) i brevijara (Vat⁵) već pokazuju odstupanja od pretpostavljenih recenzijskih matica ukazuje na postojanje izvjesnoga vremenskoga razmaka između provedbe redakcije i nastanka tih kodeksa.⁸ Drugo, gdje je redakcija izvedena? Kao što je iznijeto na početku rada, nekoliko autora nalazi indikacije koje upućuju na Zadar, ali možemo li odrediti mjesto, odnosno sjedište te reforme bliže nego to na temelju arhivskih dokumenata, sadržaja samih tekstova, ili povijesnih okolnosti poznatih iz drugih izvora? Treće, zašto je došlo do redakcije? Za biblijske tekstove koji su bili izvorno prevedeni s grčkoga odgovor se čini jasnim – da bi se ti tekstovi potpunije uskladili s autoritativnim latinskim tekstom (tj. s *Vulgatom*). Međutim, isti razlog nije mogao postojati u istoj mjeri za tekstove čija je starija, ili *A* verzija već bila prijevod s latinskoga, a pogotovo za tekstove koji nisu biblijski. Zašto se baš tada – početkom ili sredinom 14. stoljeća – osjetila neodložna potreba za sveobuhvatnom revizijom cjelovitih liturgijskih knjiga, ili zašto se ta potreba baš tad osjetila jače nego ranije? Također, tko je naredio, odnosno propisao provođenje te redakcije? To jest, koje je autoritativno lice odnosno tijelo odlučilo o potrebi za redakcijom, odredilo njezine smjernice i osiguralo znatne resurse koji su bili potrebni za njezinu izvedbu? Peto, tko ju je izveo? Postojanje usporednih parova verzija pojedinih tekstova, po jedan par u misalu i u brevijaru, sugerira u najmanju ruku da su različite skupine ljudi mogle raditi na istome tekstu u okvirima jedne i druge knjige. Tko je rukovodio poslom – angažirao redaktore i pisare, odlučio o podjeli posla i nadzirao kvalitetu redigiranih tekstova? Jesu li ti rukovoditelji angažirali profesionalne pisare, jednu poznatu samostansku radionicu ili nešto treće?

Na kraju, a ovo je iznimno važno, kako se osigurala recepcija nove recenzije – njezino prihvaćanje i širenje nauštrb stare verzije? Jesu li, na primjer, redaktori pripremili veći broj primjeraka *B* recenzije misala i brevijara i poslali ih u ključna odredišta s popratnim pismima koja su objašnjavala da je nova verzija propisana za opću uporabu i proglašavala stariju verziju zastarjelom? Jesu li autoritativni primjerci nove recenzije bili pohranjeni u središnjemu repozitoriju da služe kao kontrolni primjerci? Drugim riječima, kako se osiguralo da nova recenzija ne postane uskoro samo još jedna verzija u jednome primjerku među tolikim drugim primjercima misala i brevijara, u kojemu bi se slučaju njezina posebnost uskoro izgubila među njima?

Dosadašnja literatura ne pruža odgovore na većinu tih pitanja. Ali zato treba imati u vidu da se tim pitanjima bave uglavnom filolozi. U određivanju povijesne situiranosti pretpostavljene redakcije potrebno je također sudjelovanje povjesničara koji su specijalizirani za određena područja i za arhivsku građu povezanu s njima u određenome razdoblju. Među ostalim, ako povod za redakciju ne možemo svesti na jednostavnu

⁷ Spisak izvora nalazi se na kraju rada.

⁸ Za tri slučaja odstupanja od pretpostavljene recenzijske matice u tekstu *Prve knjige o Samuelu* (2:29, 2:30, i 3:12) u Vat⁵ vidi Tablicu 1b. Takva odstupanja u Nov zapažena su tijekom rada nad komparativnim korpusom svih biblijskih čitanja za posljednja dva tjedna u korizmi u hrvatskoglagoljskim misalima. Taj korpus je služio kao izvor za Corin 1991. Ta odstupanja nisu do danas iznesena u jednome sustavnome radu o tome pitanju.

potrebu da se tekstovi izvorno prevedeni s grčkoga prilagode *Vulgati*, onda nas mora zanimati je li pretpostavljena redakcija proizišla barem dijelom iz promjena političkih, jurisdikcijskih ili drugih prilika u pojedinim hrvatskim predjelima ili čak šire u katoličkome svijetu toga vremena (Šimić & Vela 2021: bilješka 80).

4. Svjedočanstvo *Prve knjige o Samuelu* o povijesnoj stvarnosti redakcije

Naposljetku, vratimo se prvome, ključnome, pitanju koje je iznijeto na početku rada. S obzirom na nedostatak dokumentarnih i bilo kojih drugih dokaza o pretpostavljenoj sveobuhvatnoj redakciji hrvatskoglagoljskih liturgijskih knjiga u prvoj polovici 14. stoljeća, osim onih koji proizlaze iz analize varijacije u tekstu, moramo razmotriti i suprotnu mogućnost. To jest, je li moguće da je do podjele na dvije verzije ipak došlo bez osmišljene reforme, jednostavno kao rezultat postupnoga nakupljanja različitih promjena u raznim sredinama, doduše sa povremenim redaktorskim intervencijama manjega obima (kojih je svakako bilo; Šimić & Vela 2021)?

Odgovor na to pitanje možemo tražiti kvalitativnim i kvantitativnim pristupima. Ovdje ću se ograničiti na pojmovno najjednostavniji kvantitativni pristup. Naime, postoji li jezgra *varijantnih parova* koji dosljedno razlikuju *iste dvije skupine* spomenika i predstavlja li broj tih parova dovoljno veliki postotak cjelokupne varijacije da čini nevjerojatnim da je takva situacija mogla nastati u odsustvu pretpostavljene cjelovite redakcije? Bilo bi korisno kad bismo mogli izračunati statističku razinu pouzdanosti da do danoga rezultata nije došlo kao rezultat postupnoga nakupljanja različitih promjena u raznim sredinama bez cjelovite redakcije. Međutim, svaki takav statistički izračun temeljio bi se na brojnim pretpostavkama istraživača i njihovim osobnim rješenjima kako, gdje i na koliko pojedinačnih slučajeva podijeliti potvrđenu varijaciju (vidi primjere navedene u nastavku), što bi umanjilo vrijednost takvog postupka.

Prva knjiga o Samuelu u hrvatskoglagoljskim brevijarima čita se (uz manje varijacije) tijekom Jutrenja od prve nedjelje nakon osmine Pedesetnice. Najduža čitanja uključuju cijela prva tri poglavlja s izuzetkom drugoga do desetoga stiha drugoga poglavlja, koji su redovito izostavljeni. Ti su stihovi uključeni zasebno u psaltir nekih brevijara kao starozavjetni kantik – *Anina pjesma*.

S obzirom na dosadašnja zapažanja o varijaciji između *A* i *B* verzija različitih vrsta tekstova u brevijarima i misalima, gotovo svaki tekst bi mogao, barem u načelu, pružiti osnovu za testiranje redakcijske hipoteze. *Prva knjiga o Samuelu* ipak je posebno pogodna iz nekoliko razloga. Prvo, dvije se verzije jasno raspoznaju, što ne vrijedi u istoj mjeri za sve brevijarske i misalske tekstove. Ovo je značajno jer nije u pitanju *postojanje* varijacije između *A* i *B* verzija, nego narav i podrijetlo te varijacije ondje gdje jest zastupljena: upućuje li analiza te varijacije na zaključak da je ona nastala kao rezultat cjelovite revizije, to jest redakcije, dotičnoga teksta? Ovo je bitno utvrditi za

pojedini tekst prije nego što razmotrimo je li ta redakcija obuhvatila brevijar (ili misal) u cjelini. Brevijarski (ili misalski) tekst u kojemu dvije verzije nisu dovoljno raspoznatljive pružio bi manje materijala za ovakvo testiranje redakcijske hipoteze.

Drugo, tekst *Prve knjige o Samuelu* koji je zastupljen u hrvatskim crkvenoslavenskim brevijarima nije suviše kratak da bi pružio dovoljno materijala, ali ni toliko dug da bi analiza bila teško izvediva za cijeli tekst, što bi zahtijevalo proizvoljno ograničavanje dijela obuhvaćenoga analizom. Iako je cijeli tekst *Prve knjige o Samuelu* doista dug, dio koji je zastupljen u brevijarima sastoji se od svega triju poglavlja.

Treće, poželjno je da tekst — po mogućnosti s duljim čitanjima — bude prisutan u što većemu broju brevijarskih kodeksa. *Prva knjiga o Samuelu* zadovoljava i taj uvjet. Bakmaz (2004:144) daje pregled duljine čitanja iz *Prve knjige o Samuelu* u svim glagoljskim brevijarima.

Četvrto, budući da je ekscerpiranje povezanoga teksta iz svih kodeksa bilo preduvjet za analizu predstavljenu ovdje, bilo je korisno odabrati tekst čije kritičko izdanje nije bilo prethodno objavljeno.⁹ U osobitim okolnostima lipnja i srpnja 1991. godine, kada sam prvi put razmatrao ovaj problem i birao prikladan tekst za ekscerpiranje, peta je okolnost igrala presudnu ulogu. Naime, tekst je morao biti dostupan za ekscerpiranje, a bio sam prisiljen donositi odluke u neuobičajeno kratkome roku i na temelju faksimila koji su tada bili dostupni u zbirci Staroslavenskoga zavoda (kako se Staroslavenski institut tada zvao) u Zagrebu. U tim manje negoli poželjnim uvjetima odabrao sam jedan starozavjetni (tj. iz *Hebrejske Biblije*) i jedan novozavjetni tekst (*Djela apostolska*) koji su zadovoljavali gore navedene kriterije. Kasnije, u mirnijim uvjetima, uspio sam nadopuniti taj korpus tekstem iz nekoliko dodatnih kodeksa.

Ekscerpirao sam sve varijante u tekstu *Prve knjige o Samuelu* iz 20 rukopisnih i dva tiskana brevijara (izuzimajući *Aninu pjesmu*, koja se nalazi većinom u drugim kodeksima i očito ima drukčiji razvojni put¹⁰). Iako glagoljični tekst uglavnom slijedi *Vulgatu* i na temelju površnoga pregleda čini se da je preveden s latinske matice (ali vidi Nahtigal 1902:31; Corin u pripremi), jasno se naziru dvije verzije koje su raspoređene po kodeksima na sličan način kao drugi biblijski tekstovi koji su ranije proučavani, uz određene iznimke. *A* verziju nalazimo u Vb₁, Vb₂, Vb₃, VO, Pad, Pm, Met, N₁, i N₂. *B* verziju sadrže Vat₅, Oxf, Dr, Mos, Ber, Brib, Vat₁₀, Rom, Dab, Kos, i Bar. Svaki od ekscerpiranih kodeksa pokazuje određen broj odstupanja od opće slike za verziju koju sadrži. Slično kao u dosadašnjim istraživanjima drugih tekstova, takvih odstupanja ima znatno više u kodeksima koji sadrže *B* verziju, ali nikako na način koji bi doveo u pitanje individualnost te verzije. Neka odstupanja vjerojatno predstavljaju kontaminaciju između *A* i *B* verzije (vidi primjere u tablicama 1a i 1b, u kojima kodeks sa *A* verzijom

⁹ Kritičko izdanje *A* i *B* verzija *Prve knjige o Samuelu*, koji će se temeljiti na tomu ekscerpiranome tekstu, predviđeno je kao nastavak ovoga istraživanja, jer je ovaj rad usmjeren na uži zadatak razmatranja i testiranja redakcijske hipoteze, a ne na sveobuhvatnu analizu teksta koji je uzet kao osnova za testiranje.

¹⁰ Tekst *Anine pjesme*, koju obrađujem na drugome mjestu (vidi Corin u postupku objavljivanja), također se pojavljuje u dvjema verzijama, s time što je *A* verzija *Pjesme* očito prevedena s grčkoga.

ima *B* varijantu i obrnuto), dok druga imaju izvanredakcijsko obilježje i nalaze se u jednome kodeksu ili u malome broju kodeksa (vidi primjere u tablicama 1a i 1b sa *C* varijantom¹¹). Samo dva brevijara – Mav i Vat₁₉ – pokazala su toliko izmiješanu sliku da je njihov tekst *Prve knjige o Samuelu* teško svrstati u predstavnike jedne ili druge verzije.

Iz ekscerpiranih primjera isključio sam gotovo sve slučajeve sitne fonološke i pravopisne varijacije. U pojedinim slučajevima odrazi fonoloških promjena (npr. odrazi *dj/*zdj) mogu imati redakcijsku važnost. U takvim slučajevima raspodjela varijanata po kodeksima poslužila je kao mjerilo. Imajući na umu uvjetnost svakoga računanja broja ovakvih ili onakvih slučajeva varijacije, u prvim trima poglavljima *Prve knjige o Samuelu* ostalo je, prema mojemu prebrojavanju, 172 slučaja relevantne varijacije u ekscerpiranim kodeksima.

Iz toga smanjenoga korpusa varijanata pokušao sam odrediti postotak dosljedne varijacije između *A* i *B* verzije. U tu svrhu isključio sam iz analize Mav i Vat₁₉ jer su njihovi tekstovi jedino mogli zamutiti sliku. Na temelju ostalih 20 kodeksa izdvojio sam kao relevantne za dokazivanje je li *B* verzija nastala namjernom promišljenom revizijom sve slučajeve varijacije kod kojih ima najviše jedno odstupanje od dosljedne *A* : *B* varijacije unutar svake skupine. Taj je kriterij uklonio sve slučajeve varijacije *hapax* (tj., varijante koje se pojavljuju samo u jednome spomeniku) te sve druge slučajeve varijacije koji očito, ili barem vjerojatno, nisu redakcijskoga podrijetla. Isti je kriterij doveo do otpadanja većine slučajeva u kojima je zabilježen veći broj (tri, četiri ili pet) varijanata na jednome mjestu u tekstu. Većinom su to mjesta koja su očito stavljala pred prepisivače neku osobitu teškoću ili nedoumicu. Još je jedan neizbježni uzgredni rezultat toga kriterija eliminiranje nekih slučajeva varijacije koji lako mogu biti redakcijskoga podrijetla, ali je u korpusu ipak zabilježena više nego jedna iznimka od dosljedne *A* : *B* varijacije unutar jedne ili druge skupine. S druge strane, isti je kriterij doveo do zadržavanja maloga broja slučajeva koji mu formalno odgovaraju, ali su se ipak činili nesigurnima, osobito u trećemu poglavlju. Iako se ti slučajevi uklapaju u opći obrazac koji je već snažno zastupljen u cjelokupnoj bazi podataka, njihovo zadržavanje među varijantama izdvojenim za dokazivanje redakcijske hipoteze temelji se na situaciji u manjemu broju kodeksa (vidi tablice 1a i 1b).

Iz cjelokupnoga korpusa od 172 slučaja relevantne varijacije u tekstu, primjenom navedenoga kriterija izdvajaju se 86 slučajeva dosljedne ili skoro dosljedne *A* : *B* varijacije, što čini 50 %. Ovi primjeri prikazani su u tablicama 1a i 1b.¹² Ne možemo sa sigurnošću odrediti koji bi postotak davao koju točnu razinu pouzdanosti da do takve situacije nije došlo postupnim nakupljanjem različitih promjena u raznim sredinama bez cjelovite redakcije. Možemo donositi takav sud jedino na temelju subjektivnih

¹¹ Iznimku čine slučajevi u kojima Vb₁ ili Vat₅ sami odstupaju od recenzije *A* i *B* (vidi tablice 1a i 1b: 1:21; 2:29, 2:30, 3:12). U tim slučajevima, varijante u drugim kodeksima iste verzije označene su sa *C*.

¹² Podatci iz Rom, Oxf, Kos, Brib, Pad i Vb₃ nisu prikazani u tablicama 1a i 1b zbog ograničenoga prostora.

predodžba. Moja je procjena ipak da 50 % cjelokupnoga broja slučajeva varijacije odlično odgovora situaciji koju bismo očekivali da je *B* verzija nastala kao rezultat svjesne, promišljene redakcije cjelokupnoga teksta *Prve knjige o Samuelu*. Drukčije rečeno, čini mi se nevjerojatnim da bi takva situacija mogla nastati u odsustvu cjelovite redakcije.

Treba imati na umu da je izračunani postotak dosljedne *A* : *B* varijacije manje važan nego nalaz o postojanju većega broja takvih primjera jer će taj postotak ovisiti dijelom o vremenu proteklome između provedbe redakcije i stvaranja kodeksa iz kojih se podaci ekscerpiraju, o broju i izboru ekscerpiranih kodeksa, kao i o pojedinačnim odlukama tijekom ekscerpiranja. Na primjer, da nisam u korpus podataka unio podatke iz Dab, još tri primjera (u stihovima 1:13, 1:28 i 3:6; vidi označene retke u tablicama 1a i 1b) ukazivala bi na gotovo dosljednu *A* : *B* varijaciju. Da nisam u korpus podataka unio podatke iz Vb₃, još dva primjera (u stihovima 2:1 i 2:16; vidi označene retke u Tablici 1a) ukazivala bi na gotovo dosljednu *A* : *B* varijaciju, i slično. Da sam primjere iz Mav i Vat₁₉ svrstao u skupinu *A* ili *B*, postotak dosljedne varijacije još bi se znatno smanjio. Kao opće pravilo, dodavanje primjera iz novih kodeksa smanjuje postotak dosljedne varijacije. Dalje, u stihovima 1:2–5 na četiri mjesta stoji žensko ime *pēnna/penna* (sa *p*) u *A* skupini a *fēnna/fenna* (sa *f*) u *B* skupini. Je li to jedan slučaj varijacije ili četiri? U stihu 1:21, skupina *A* ima *elkan' mužь ee*, dok skupina *B* ima *mužь ee el'kanь*. Je li kraći izraz *elkan'* u Vb1 rezultat skraćivanja prve ili druge varijante, ili je treća varijanta? Vjerojatno se radi o skraćenju varijante koja se nalazi u drugim kodeksima skupine *A*, ali to je ipak subjektivna ocjena. U stihu 2:1, je li ispravnije smatrati „... *na vragi moe· i vzveselih se...*“ u skupini *A* naspram „... *vrhu nepriēt(e)lь moiһь· êko vzveselih se...*“ u *B* skupini kao jedan slučaj varijacije, ili su različiti veznici *i* i *êko* poseban slučaj varijacije? Na slične dileme nailazimo i na drugim mjestima.

	Vb ₁ - A	Vat ₅ - B	Version C	Vb ₂	VO	Met	N ₁	N ₂	Pm	Vat ₁₀	Bar	Dab	Ber	Dr	Mos
1:1	eter'	ediny edans Vat ₁₀		A	A	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B
1:1	aramataim' aramata Pm ; aramaim' N ₂	ot aramatie		A	A	A	b	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B
1:1	ot gori epraima	ot gori eprēma		A	A	A	A	A	b	B	B	B	A	B	B
1:1	erovoama	eroboama eroobama Vat ₅		A	A	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B
1:1	epratēi sa p	efratie/efratii/efratei sa f		A	A	A	A	A	A	B	A	B	B	B	B
1:2	pēn'na/pen'na 4x: 1:2, 1:4, 1:5	fēn'na/fen'na 4x: 1:2, 1:4, 1:5		A	A	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B
1:3	tu	on'dē		A	A	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B
1:4	ipožrē elkan'	požrēti el'kanu		A	A	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B
1:4	sinom' svoim'	sinom' ee		A	A	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B
1:7	Vistinu an'na	An'na že	Vistinu že an'na	A	A	C	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B
1:8	ipoč'to (2. pojavljivanje)	i začē		A	A	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B
1:11	rekuči glagolūči N ₂	plačūči iobēb' obeča rekuči om. iobēb' obeča rekuči Dab add. bogu Vat ₁₀		A	A	A	C	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B
1:12	s'blūdaše glagoli ust' ee glagoli vse glagoli Met	smotraše usta ee sablūdaše usta ee Dr	s'motraše ^{el'agoli} ust' ee	A	A	A	A	A	A	B	B	C	B	B	B
1:13	iglas' ee	iglas' ee		A	A	A	A	A	A	B	B	A	B	B	B
1:13	p'ēnu suču	p'ēnu		A	A	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B
1:18	obrēt'	obrētohb		A	A	A	A	A	A	—	B	B	B	B	B
1:20	i nareče ime emu	i v'za ime emu ime v'za emu Dr		A	A	A	A	A	A	—	B	B	B	B	B
1:21	elkan'	muž' ee el'kan' el'kan' elikan' Dab	elkan' muž' ee	C	C	C	C	C	C	—	B	B	B	B	B
1:22	dondeže doideže Vb ₂ , N ₁ , N ₂ , Vb ₃	dokolē		A	A	A	A	A	A	—	B	B	B	B	B
1:22	otdoen' budeť (passive)	nenadoit' se (reflexive) nadoit' se Dab, Dr, Mos; otdoiť se Ber		A	A	A	A	A	A	—	A	B	B	B	B
1:23	elkan'	elkan' muž' ee		A	A	A	A	A	A	—	B	B	B	B	B
1:23	i prēbudi i prēbudi tu Met	i zaūtra		A	A	A	A	A	A	—	B	B	B	B	B
1:23	dondeže doideže N ₁ , N ₂	dokolē		A	A	A	A	A	A	—	B	B	B	B	B
1:23	otdoiši ego	nadoiši ego		A	A	A	A	A	A	—	B	B	B	B	B
1:23	iotdoi	inadoi		A	A	A	A	A	A	—	B	B	B	B	B
1:23	dondeže doideže N ₁ , N ₂	dokolē		A	A	A	A	A	A	—	B	B	B	B	B
1:23	ostavit'	otdēlits		A	A	A	A	A	A	—	—	B	B	B	B
1:24	i potom' egda otdoi ego poēť ego s' sobou	i dovede ego s' sobou, potom' egda otdoi ego om. egda Vat ₅		A	A	A	A	A	A	—	—	B	B	B	B
1:27	otročiča radi	skozi otročiča		A	A	A	A	A	A	—	—	B	B	B	B
1:28	i togo radi	i zato		A	A	A	A	A	A	—	—	B	B	B	B
1:28	vse dni života ego	ø	vse dni imiže budet' zaēb'	A	A	A	A	A	A	—	—	B	C	C	C
1:28	i molīše gospoda o nem'	imolīše gospoda ondē	imolīše gospoda otrudē	A	A	A	A	A	A	—	—	B	C	B	B
2:1	Moli že anna rekuči	i moli an'na ireče		A	A	—	A	A	A	—	—	B	B	B	B
2:1	o gospodevē	v gospodevi		A	A	—	A	A	A	—	—	B	A	B	B
2:1	i v'znese se	i v'z'dvižen' est' i v'zdvīzese nine Vat ₅	i v'zradova se	C	A	—	A	A	A	—	—	B	B	B	B
2:1	o bozē	v bozē		A	A	—	A	A	A	—	—	B	B	B	B
2:1	na vragi moe	vru nepriētel' moihb		A	A	—	A	A	A	—	—	B	B	B	B
2:1	i v'zveselih se	ēko v'zveselih se		A	A	—	A	A	A	—	—	B	B	B	B
2:12	ni vēduča	ne videča ne videči Dab, Lj	ni viduča	A	A	—	A	A	A	—	B	—	B	B	B
2:15	k sim'	K' semu vsmu. Brib		A	A	—	A	A	A	—	B	—	B	B	B
2:15	varena	mesa varena		A	A	—	A	A	A	—	—	B	B	B	B
2:16	koliko	eliko		B	A	—	A	A	A	—	—	B	B	A	B
2:17	veli zēlo	velik' velmi pred' gospodom' om. velik' Dr; om. pred' gospodom' Mos		A	A	—	A	A	A	—	—	B	B	B	B
2:20	bog' ee	gospod' ee	ø	A	A	—	C	A	A	—	—	B	B	B	B

Tablica 1a. Dosljedna ili gotovo dosljedna varijacija između A i B skupina kodeksa u tekstu Prve knjige o Samuelu u hrvatskoglagoljskim brevijarima. Stihovi 1:1 – 2:20.

	Vb ₁ - A	Vat ₅ - B	Version C	Vb ₂	VO	Met	N ₁	N ₂	Pm	Vat ₁₀	Bar	Dab	Ber	Dr	Mos
2:20	vzdala esta v'dala e(sta) N ₁	esi v'zdala esi vzdaly Vat ₅ esi daly Brib		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
2:22	sini	sina		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
2:22	stréžahu	ustréžahu ustréžahu Dab		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
2:23	zane	počto	začb	A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	C	B
2:24	nemozéta	nehotéite	ø	A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	C
2:24	iže	egože	ø	A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	C
2:27	v' domu	domu		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
2:28	dom'	domu		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
2:29	otvrgoste se	otvrgoste		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
2:29	žrtv' moihs	Varijanta A	žrtvi moihs	A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	C	C	C	C
2:29	prsvini vséh'	prvini		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	A	B
2:30	na kiždo	ø	na iže koliždo	A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	C	C	C	C
2:30	ače mene nebrégut'	a iže mene ne pomenut' pomenut' pomenet' Dr, Mos		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
2:32	vcr(ě)kvi	vtemp'ri meü vtem'ple meü Ber ; vtemp'limiü (!) Vat ₅	ø	A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	C
2:33	izmrut', egda k muž'skim vrmenem' pridut'	iz'mrěb, eg'da k muž'skomu vremeni pridet' muž'skomu mužsku Vat ₅		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
2:34	imut'	imatb		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
2:34	i se dva sini	i est' dvěü sinu		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
2:35	blizu srdcu moemu om. srdcu VO	blizu srdca moego		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
2:35	i saziždet mi dom' i saziüt' mi dome N ₁	i sazižu emu dom' om. emu Mos		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
2:36	préd' mnoü	pride		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
2:36	kruha	i hlěb' kruha	srebra kruha	A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
2:36	molü te	molü		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	A	B	B	B
2:36	ukruhi hlěb'	lande hlěb'		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
3:1	neznaüčim'	neznaüčumu	neznaüče	A	A	—	C	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
3:2	na mēště	v mēšti		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
3:2	i ne možaše	i ne mogaše		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	A	B	B	B
3:6	paki	opetb		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
3:6	k' eliü	ks eli erěü	k' eli	A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	A	B	C	B
3:6	i reče emu	i reče k nemu		A	A	—	B	A	—	—	—	A	B	B	B
3:6	počto	zane		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
3:6	čedo moe	sinu moi	ø	A	A	—	C	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
3:9	počto	zane		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
3:10	zva i	i vzva i	ø	A	A	—	A	C	—	—	—	B	B	a	B
3:12	Vs d(š)n' on' vsnže	V d(š)n' onb	V d(š)n'	A	A	—	B	A	—	—	—	B	B	C	B
3:12	načšn'/načan'	nauču	načnu	A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	C	C	C	C
3:13	znaše	zna		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
3:13	sini svoē	sinu svoeü		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
3:14	dov(ě)ka	vs v(ě)ki		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
3:16	eli erēi	eli riječ eli dodana na margini u Dr		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
3:16	sine moi	sinu moi		—	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
3:17	reki	ø		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
3:17	čto esi slišalb	čto estb slovo		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
3:17	stvorí	tvoritb stvoritb Dab Dr Mos		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	B	B	B
3:18	godé goti Vb ₂	dobro		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	—	B	B
3:18	očima ego tvorí	vsociü ego tvoritb		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	—	B	B
3:19	bē	bisi (i.e., bī) bibtb Dr		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	—	B	B
3:20	daže	ø		A	A	—	A	A	—	—	—	B	—	A	B

Tablica 1b. Dosljedna ili gotovo dosljedna varijacija između A i B skupina kodeksa u tekstu Prve knjige o Samuelu u hrvatskologoljskim brevijarima. Stihovi 2:20 – 3:21.

Naravno, takav subjektivni sud na temelju postotka dosljedne $A : B$ varijacije ne možemo smatrati konačnom ili definitivnom potvrdom redakcijske hipoteze. Njegova je važnost prije svega u poticaju koji daje daleko složenijemu kvalitativnome pristupu proučavanju varijacije između A i B verzija. Ne možemo se ovdje upustiti dublje u tu temu, nego samo napomenuti da se oblasti tih kvalitativnih proučavanja poklapaju s temama pokrivenim drugim i trećim pitanjem s početka rada. To su, dakle:

2. indikacije o procesu i smjernicama pretpostavljene redakcije. To se odnosi, među ostalim, na pojedine stilske, leksičke, gramatičke osobine i druga prevoditeljska rešenja koja prožimaju B verziju većega broja tekstova a otimaju se objašnjavanju samo na temelju kronoloških, regionalnih ili individualnih čimbenika povezanih s pojedinim kodeksima. Kandidati su za tu kategoriju na temelju dosadašnjih opažanja (u formatu $A : B$): *iže : ki*; *svédételbstvovati : svédokovati*; *vbčne/ut'* + infinitiv : perfektivni prezent. Te tri osobine u biti predstavljaju prilagođavanje narodnim govorima, ali njihova raspodjela sugerira da bi njihova uporaba u B verzijama mogla odražavati sustavnu primjenu a ne pojedinačne intervencije ili omaški. Tek na temelju naknadnih proučavanja moći će se donijeti konačan sud o redakcijskome podrijetlu tih i drugih varijantnih osobina.

3. povijesni čimbenici odnosno povijesni izvori koji bi sugerirali da se u određenome trenutku u određenoj regiji odnosno mjestu osjetila potreba za revizijom ili barem prikladna prilika.

U ovome kratkome tekstološkome (tekstocentričnom) radu, također ne možemo detaljnije analizirati odnos između te i kodikološke perspektive proučavanja *Prve knjige o Samuelu* u hrvatskoglagoljskim brevijarima. Možemo ukratko napomenuti da N_1 i N_2 , koji se obično svrstavaju u skupinu prijelaznih *B* kodeksa (Badurina-Stipčević, Mihaljević & Šimić 2012:262), imaju prilično dosljednu *A* verziju *Prve knjige o Samuelu*. Pm, koji bi se mogao svrstati u istu skupinu, također sadrži *A* verziju ovoga teksta.

5. Zaključak

Na kraju možemo podvući dva glavna zaključka. Prvo, podatci iz teksta *Prve knjige o Samuelu* izneseni ovdje potvrđuju, na temelju ograničenoga korpusa podataka, tvrdnju o redakciji hrvatskoglagoljskih liturgijskih knjiga u prvoj polovici 14. stoljeća. Drugo, rad je iznio niz pitanja povezanih s redakcijskom hipotezom. Na neka od njih već naziremo rješenja, uglavnom u skladu s vladajućim znanstvenim koncepcijama iznesenim u dosadašnjoj literaturi, dok na druga pitanja vjerojatno nikada nećemo dobiti definitivni odgovor zbog gubitka, tijekom stoljeća, arhivskih materijala i drugih dokaza koji su možda nekada sadržali odgovore.

Pitanja iznesena u ovome radu ukazuju na neke puteve prema daljnjem razjašnjavanju nastanka i obilježja pretpostavljene redakcije. Važno je formulirati i oblikovati čak i „beznadna“ pitanja (tj. ona na koja vjerojatno nikada nećemo pronaći konačan odgovor), no to posebice vrijedi za pitanja koja možemo istraživati na temelju podataka koji nam jesu na raspolaganju.

Primjerice, kako tumačiti „prijelaznu“ podskupinu unutar južne skupine kodeksa koju su izdvojili Badurina-Stipčević, Mihaljević i Šimić (2012: 261–262)? Je li ta podskupina nastala djelomičnim zadržavanjem obilježja starije redakcije ili pak kontaminacijom, odnosno ukrštavanjem dviju redakcija (točnije: recenzija)? Druga bi mogućnost podrazumijevala ponovno uvođenje a ne zadržavanje obilježja starije redakcije — bilo mjestimično, bilo u cijelim pojedinačnim čitanjima.

Redakcijska se hipoteza neće moći smatrati definitivno dokazanom sve dok se ne prouče svi aspekti njezina teorijskoga konstrukta — barem u onoj mjeri koju dopuštaju sačuvani dokazni materijali.

Izvori

- Bar = *Baromićev brevijar*, 1493, Zagreb, NSK, sign. *R I-16^o-1a*.
Ber = *Drugi beramski brevijar*, 15. stoljeće, Ljubljana, NUK, sign. *MS 163*.
Brib = *Bribirski brevijar*, 1470, Zagreb, Arhiv HAZU, sign. *III b 6*.
Dab = *Dabarski brevijar*, 1486, Zagreb, Arhiv HAZU, sign. *III c 21*.
Dr = *Dragučki brevijar*, 1407, Zagreb, Arhiv HAZU, sign. *III b 25*.
Mav = *Mavrov brevijar*, 1460, Zagreb, NSK, sign. *R 7822*.
Met = *Brevijar Metropolitanske knjižnice*, 1442, Zagreb, Metropolitanska knjižnica, sign. *MR₁₆₁*.
Mos = *Moskovski brevijar*, 1442–1443, Moskva, Rossijskaja gosudarstvennaja biblioteka, sign. *F. 270, 51/1481*.
N₁ = *Prvi novljanski brevijar*, 1459, Novi Vinodolski, Župni ured.
N₂ = *Drugi novljanski brevijar*, 1495, Novi Vinodolski, Župni ured.
Oxf = *Oxfordski brevijar-misal*, 14. st., Oxford, Bodleian Library, sign. *Ms. Canon lit. 172*.
Pm = *Pašmanski brevijar*, dr. pol. 14. i 15. stoljeća, Zagreb, HAZU, sign. *III b 10*.
Pad = *Padovanski brevijar*, sredina 14. stoljeća, Padova, Biblioteca Universitaria, sign. *MS 2282*.
Kos = *Kosinjski brevijar* (prvotksak hrvatskoglagoljskog brevijara), 1491, Venecija, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, *Inc. 1235* (ranija sign. Ven. 104 / inv. br. 76865).
Rom = *Rimski brevijar*, 15. stoljeće, Rim, Archivio del Capitolo di San Pietro, sign. *D-215*.
Vat₅ = *Vatikanski brevijar Illirico 5*, sredina 14. stoljeća, Rim, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, sign. *Borg. Illir. 5*.
Vat₆ = *Vatikanski brevijar Illirico 6*, sredina 14. stoljeća, Rim, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, sign. *Borg. Illir. 6*.
Vat₁₀ = *Vatikanski brevijar Illirico 10*, 1485., Rim, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, sign. *Borg. Illir. 10*.
Vat₁₉ = *Vatikanski brevijar Vaticano Slavo 19*, 1465., Rim, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, sign. *Vat. Slav. 19*.
Vb₁ = *Prvi vrbnički brevijar*, 13./14. stoljeće, Vrbnik, Župni ured.
Vb₂ = *Drugi vrbnički brevijar*, 14. stoljeće, Vrbnik, Župni ured.
Vb₃ = *Treći vrbnički brevijar*, 15. stoljeće, Vrbnik, Župni ured.
VO = *Brevijar Vida Omišljanina*, 1396., Beč, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, sign. *Cod. slav. 3*.
Nov = *Misal kneza Novaka*, 1368., Beč, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, sign. *Cod. slav. 8*.

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Croatia as a Part of Western Europe – Myth or Reality?

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Abstract

Among the Croats, there is a belief that Croatia was (and is) part of the Western European world, especially until 1945 (a belief shared with the Slovenian, the Hungarian, Poles, Czechs and Slovaks). On the other hand, western scholars and writers often situate Croatia in the Balkans (and also in Central Europe; furthermore, Croatia is a Mediterranean country, a fact often overlooked in decision-making). The territory of present-day Croatia historically lay at the borders of empires (Eastern Roman Empire, Western Roman Empire, Byzantine Empire, Carolingian Empire, Austro-Hungarian Empire, Ottoman Empire). Croatia's historical flow was tumultuous (as any other small country) and diverse, as was its cultural flow, though to a lesser extent since culture requires cohesion and connects with other, similar, cultures. The Croatian culture features influences of the Latin culture, Greek culture, Western European culture and Ottoman culture. In this paper, I consider these factors and others, such as Eastern Europe after the Great Schism, Eastern Europe after 1945, and eastern Europe after 1990, and aim to answer a difficult and controversial question: whether Croatia ever belonged or currently belongs to Western Europe, and what are the circumstances and features that mark it. Furthermore, I also question the concept of westernness, and its criteria.

Key words: West, East, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Balkans, Central Europe, Mediterranean, Byzantine culture, Latin culture, Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Austro-Hungarian Empire, Ottoman Empire, westernness

Introduction

Among the Croats, there is the longstanding belief that Croatia was (and is) part of the Western European world, especially until 1945. On the other hand, western scholars and writers often situate Croatia in the Balkans. Croatia (and the Croats) do not have a univocal history. Unlike large countries (and nations), which perhaps do have such a history since they are the ones writing history (or making the divisions), small countries or nations are dependent on the large ones. Furthermore, Croatia is marked by an important specificity: its position at the borders of empires, or being divided by empires. At the beginning of its existence, Croatia was a frontier of the Carolingian Empire on the one side and the Byzantine Empire on the other (although more of its territory lied in the former). After the period of princes and kings who ruled independently, Croats entered into a personal union with the Hungarians. Later, they recognised the Austrian king as their own (1527), becoming part of the multinational Austro-Hungarian Empire,

while at its borders, parts of Croatia were being torn off by the Ottomans. Another important fact is that after numerous wars during the Middle Ages, the majority of the Croatian coast was occupied by the Venetians in the period of early modernity.¹³

These are the basic historical features or Croatia's historical framework. Affiliation with a particular civilisation depends not only on history, but also deeply on a combination of culture, social system or organisations, religion or ideological factors.¹⁴

Croatia's situation is complex. Regarding culture, three main layers are observable: Western European,¹⁵ Byzantine, and Ottoman. Given that Croatia officially belonged to Western European states,¹⁶ Western European elements have been evident in its culture and society throughout history.¹⁷ In fact, Croatia had contours of Western European societies during most of its history, although some of its territories were under Turkish rule (though for a shorter period of time than other Balkan countries). If this is correct, what about the unofficial culture?¹⁸ Was Croatia or the Croatian culture completely Western European, at least until 1945? My opinion is that it was not (perhaps in some period, such as in the 17th century, when some of its parts were under Turkish rule). At high levels, Croatia remained Western European, but at lower ones and in other types of culture, the affiliation was/is Balkan. An additional balkanization was exerted during the period of Yugoslavia, a pronounced Balkan country (though attempts to correct this have been made in recent decades). Taking into consideration the Croats in other countries where they are autochthonous and present in greater numbers, we can state that Croats belongs to at least two circles.

Starting from these points and questioning whether Croatia ever belonged to Western Europe, I will also question the criteria of westernness throughout history. The reason that motivated me to write this essay¹⁹ was the following. I was in a western European country and having a discussion on West vs. East in the global sense, and I received the impression that several people (from different western European countries) found it strange that I, as a Croat, would speak affirmatively of the West (if not identifying indirectly or latently with it). I reflected on that and added other thoughts that have occupied me in recent years, wondering why our ancestors believed us to be part of the Western European world (as an idea present directly or indirectly in older texts). Also, reading papers, newspapers and books, I found that a similar problem exists (as a preoccupation) among the Czech and Poles (and the Hungarian and Slovenes), nations also considered to belong to the European West. I revealed several analogies to

¹³ See, for examples, Pavličević 1996.

¹⁴ In division, I will not consider the economy or other superficial factors, but only deeper ones that create true division between countries (except in the contemporary sense, though these factors are not completely justified).

¹⁵ I use the term *Western Europe* or *Western European* (with a capital letter) to refer to cultural, ideological or a civilisation unit, and the term *western Europe* or *western European* (with a lower case letter) to a geographical unit.

¹⁶ Croatia, as legal subject with its own rights in retaining its parliament, sovereignty, and statehood, was part of Western European countries and states (Austro-Hungarian Empire) or those which considered themselves as such (Croatian-Hungarian Kingdom; whose grounds have yet to be proven here), or its parts were occupied for a longer period by a Western European country (Republic of Venice). This fact, among others, facilitated Croatia in acquiring Western European culture and Western European social particularities.

¹⁷ Ignoring their intensity and sometimes quality, these are the same elements.

¹⁸ In some cases, it is possible to call it a counterculture, at least in the sense that it is found to be unaccepted by the mainstream culture or high culture, though it is tolerated.

¹⁹ This presentation was given at the conference: Heritage and New Horizons: Croatia and Croats in a Global Context Conference, held at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, in February 2024.

make this paper more coherent, and to bring it before a wider context (including certain stereotypes or common opinions in more than the European sense).

Firstly, there are two concepts of West: one in the global sense and the second in the European sense. Regarding the global West (both culturally and geographically), it encompasses all of Europe and the Americas,²⁰ and thus, the remainder belongs to the East (there are three Easts, based on their geographical and cultural proximity: Near East, Middle East and Far East, naturally, classified according to their distance from Europe, as an example of eurocentrism; their proximity to Western Europe, of course).

The second concept of West/East is the European one. There are at least three types, and these have changed over the course of the history, and justifiably so, with the exception of the last one, which is not based on cultural and/or ideological factors, but on economic power (and thus, not on the right grounds). The roots for this division lie in the Enlightenment. Those who thought it strange I would speak affirmatively of the West is because they identify the West/East division with the European one, which is another example of eurocentrism, in particular of western-eurocentrism.²¹

1. Concepts of the European West Throughout History²²

The concept of West has a long history and tradition (as well as the division into East-West), but I will not address these topics here (see, for example, Todorova, 2009: 11; Mac Sweeney 2023; though the latter examines only facets). Furthermore, there is a tendency in the academic area to erase any dichotomy or division in the postcolonial world and the world of integrations (European and others) and equality. After Wolff's announcement (1994) that Eastern Europe was invented in the Enlightenment by the philosophers and writers, something similar has now been stated for the West (and implicitly for Western Europe) by Mac Sweeney. However, there are more solid grounds for division.

1.1 Zero division or proto-division

This division is called zero division or proto-division because it did not affect us, or affected us only indirectly (peoples who live in Europe in, more or less, the same zones from the Middle Ages), with certain exceptions. *Id est*, it survived only partially, although this division was both political and cultural. It concerns the division into the Eastern and Western Roman Empire in antiquity. Today's Europe has grounds in that Europe, in the dusk of Europe, which we are familiar with since we had no knowledge

²⁰ For example, this is also Sweeney's vision of the West (although a bit from America's point of view, outlining features specific to the US perspective).

²¹ Here, I will not address the topic of Occidentalism (a negative or distorted vision of Westerners by Easterners, including Europeans, as a reaction to Orientalism by E. Said, applied also to Eastern Europeans, see, for example, Buruma; Margalit 2004 or Barnard; Spencer 1998), but I will address some examples of eurocentrism or, in particular, western-eurocentrism given that the latter is very important in shaping our perceptions of small countries and the Balkans (though the perception is not important here, but its result).

²² Cultural theorists and historians of culture or sociologists of culture (for example, Todorova, Wolff) question all the divisions of Europe into East-West, i.e., their bases (except religious or political ones). I will not consider the labels these divisions have or might have had, only to the extent such projections (originated by other, non-crucial, factors) provoke, or are provoked by real divisions, but I will take in consideration cultural, religious and ideological basis for division.

of the earlier one, i.e., we had no direct relations with it. The Western Roman Empire was dissolved in 476 AC, and the Eastern Roman Empire was dissolved after the Turkish invasion conquering Constantinople in 1453. Despite this fact, we are taught that the dissolution of the Roman Empire was in 476 AC, as another example of western-eurocentrism. Although this division itself was irrelevant for the Croatian culture,²³ and especially for later Croatia, the territory of present-day Croatia mostly belonged to the Western Roman Empire.²⁴ Nonetheless, there are repercussions on the later Croatian culture, in the strong Latinisation of this territory, especially in its most accessible region: Dalmatia. This would be inherited chiefly by the Croatian settlers, although this would not be a crucial factor.²⁵ On the other hand, the later Byzantine role (after 476) will be important as well.

After the dissolution of the Western Roman Empire, the Croats arrived to their new homeland under the Eastern Roman Empire or Byzantium Empire. Although the territory of Croatia today was heavily Latinised, and the Croats accepted the Latin culture (the oldest monuments mentioning the name of Croatia and its rulers were written in Latin in the Latin script, although this could be a Carolingian influence), the early medieval Croatian culture was not completely based on the Latin culture and Latin script. In the cultural sense, it was not completely part of the West or Western European culture²⁶ (in fact, Croatian settlers adopted a mixed culture, Latin-Greek, from the old antiquity period, or extended old antiquity period). Due to the later powerful Byzantium Empire and its influence over a wider space, the territory of today's Croatia was in the zone of Byzantium influence, and some parts of Croatia were under Byzantine rule (for a shorter or longer term). The most visible Byzantine influence, and subsequent Eastern European features (since in that period there was no division into East-West) were perhaps the Glagolitic and Cyrillic scripts (although the latter was not in use in Croatia before the Great Schism, according to conserved texts). It is known that all other Slavic Catholic peoples abandoned the use of Glagolitic script very early on, nearly at the beginning. The Glagolitic script was invented by a Greek: Konstantin Cyril,²⁷ and the Cyrillic script stemmed from the Greek uncial script (believed to have been invented by pupils of Konstantin Cyril) and linked to Orthodoxy. There are, of course, more Byzantine influences in the Croatian medieval culture (in law, written heritage, church offices, toponomastics). The strength of the Byzantine influence in Croatian culture was testified by the following: the Croats received Christianity from that direction, at least in part.

However, later Latin (and western European) culture prevailed, although it was dominant early on and certainly after the Great Schism.²⁸ Nonetheless, these elements were characteristic of the eastern European culture, but not in the sense of East-West

²³ In the East/West sense. Mrduljaš (2007) has a similar opinion.

²⁴ Until 437, and to the Eastern Roman Empire from 437 to 476, with the independence of Dalmatia from 454. That Dalmatia occupied a greater area than the present-day region, nearly half of present-day Croatia.

²⁵ The perception of the common people differs than that of the academic world. In this sense, I heard from a student (from a western European country where Latin is the parent language) that Western Europe (or Western European culture) is the whole space which once belonged to the Western Roman Empire. I mention this as a curiosity.

²⁶ From today's perspective.

²⁷ This is considered the most plausible opinion.

²⁸ For the previous see "Bizant" in: *Hrvatska enciklopedija*; Bratulić 2007; Bratulić; Damjanović 2005

division, with the exception of Cyrillic script, which was later linked to Orthodoxy at the official level.

This zero or proto-division is related causative-consequentially to the first European concept of East-West.

1.2 First division

The first European division into East-West was made after the Great Schism in 1054, when Europe was divided religiously, politically and culturally into the West (Catholic) and East (Orthodox). This was a medieval division that would be maintained until 1945,²⁹ and serve as a basis since other factors would appear later.

These other factors are the appearance of the middle class (more significantly) or bourgeoisie, that would drive change (predominantly technological and scientific) in western Europe, and as a rising class would dethrone the aristocracy as the dominant class, resulting in capitalism. The latter is a notable feature of western European countries. The middle class or bourgeoisie, and free professions were non-existent or almost non-existent in Turkish Europe and Orthodox Europe (appearing late in Russia, in the 19th century). The appearance of the middle class is linked tightly to the Renaissance, emerging in that period in accordance with the historical, social and cultural changes that occurred. J. Burckhardt (1860), who was first to define the notion of the Renaissance, together with J. Michelet, acknowledged for the theoretical conception of the notion. He considered the Renaissance to be a key factor in shaping western culture based on topics of this world and laicism.³⁰ With all these changes, a novelty would be introduced into society: the ability to more easily progress from a lower class to a higher class.

Another factor that marked western Europe in that period was popular language, which began to be introduced into use, after the medieval use of Latin, in the public and higher spheres (as the language of culture, significantly or completely). This was not limited only to Romance language countries, but also occurred in England.³¹ On the other side in Eastern Europe, a number of Old Church Slavonic was in use earlier, or Old Greek in Greece. There, popular language did not begin to substitute for these languages.³²

Another factor that marked western Europe (more precisely western and northern Europe) was Protestantism, emerging in Germany, Switzerland, France,³³ but also in England (with different motives) and Czechia³⁴ (considered to be an Eastern European country), before spreading around Europe.

²⁹ See, for example, Kundera's essay "The Tragedy of Central Europe" claiming the same for the Czech, as claimed by Croats.

³⁰ See "Renesansa" in: *Hrvatska enciklopedija*; Burckhardt 1997

³¹ Latin and French were more prestigious than English in the Middle Ages. French "became a major language of administration, education, literature and law in England", Grange: <https://www.humanities.ox.ac.uk/article/medieval-britain-if-you-wanted-get-ahead-you-had-speak-french>; see also Suggett 1946.

³² For example, in Serbia Old Church Slavonic was in general use until the 19th c. (Ivić 1994)

³³ According to the origin of the reformers: Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli and Jean Calvin, see Boisset 1985 or Dunstan 1962.

³⁴ Jan Hus and his church; it is possible to call it a proto-protestant as well.

However, the nature of these characteristics (middle class, Renaissance, Protestantism, popular language, industrial revolution) is social and cultural instead of religious or ideological. The exception was the division into Catholicism-Orthodoxy; even Protestantism is more of a social and/or cultural feature than religious, in accordance with the tendencies or ideas expressed in the Renaissance. Despite the wars among Catholics and Protestants, there was no formal division, with both groups functioning within the same society. Religion and ideology tend to be the basis for deeper formal divisions, as expressed in the Introduction, as seen multiple times throughout history. On the other hand, it was precisely some of these characteristics (industrial revolution, the middle class as a driver of economic progress and development) that served the Enlightenment's philosophers to create Eastern Europe on that basis. All these elements, among others, will serve to situate Croatia either within the Western European or Eastern European, or Balkan spheres or cultures.

1.3 Second division

The model of the division into European West and East based on Catholicism and Orthodoxy, and the culture related to it in a broader sense, or spread in this way, was maintained until the mid-20th century, due to the ongoing significance of religion in the cultural, ideological and identification sense. A shift towards atheism took place later, and did not imply a cultural factor that would erase that type of culture. But already in the 18th century, a new division began to form, and slowly expanded through the 19th and 20th centuries, as the invention of Eastern Europe by the Enlightenment's philosophers and writers, as Wolff indicated.³⁵

The second concept of European East-West arose after 1945. After World War II, Europe was ideologically (and politically) divided, between Capitalism in the West and Communism in the East, as two opposite worlds. In addition to the ideological division, these worlds also faced other types of divisions (both political and social: multiparty system – one-party system, more democracy – less democracy, etc.). Taking these differences of a deeper nature into consideration, the division was justified.

1.4 A third division?

Is it possible to talk of a third division? If it is not possible to talk about it, it exists in practice. The third division into European East-West came into existence in 1990, with the dissolution of the Communist block and totalitarian regimes in the European East, and continues to this day. On the one hand, this continues the division into the Capitalist block and Communist block (although no longer formally). In the early 1990s, there were some social differences (less democracy, undeveloped multiparty system, less plurality of expression, etc.), which were later more or less evened out. On the other hand, the main reason was economic power, and a division on this basis is a prolonged division made by the Enlightenment's thinkers and writers, as detected by Wolff (1994).

³⁵ Novak (2009) moves the beginnings of this division to the Renaissance, though economic prosperity was not yet achieved. An echo of that 18th c. idea of the backwardness of eastern Europe, is visible in the 19th c. in a poem by the Croatian writer August Šenoa: *Kakvu Hrvati jedu djecu* (The kinds of children Croats eat), as an answer to such perceptions.

The first problem is that a division based on economic power cannot be relevant, since this kind of division is not based on the ideological, religious, or cultural factors that provoked the deep and true divisions of the past. Such a division is unfounded, and not based on any concept. Given this, the east-west division of this kind should not be written with capital letters. The justification cannot be that we live in a free world, an economic world and a consumer society where the differences have been levelled out, leaving perhaps the most prominent justification: economic power. A second problem is that an ex-communist country in the 1990s would be poorer, though this that has changed substantially, e.g., Czech Republic and Slovenia are now more developed than Portugal, though Slovenia and Czech Republic are only insignificantly less developed than Spain, according to the GDP per capita in 2023.³⁶ If this criterion was strictly implemented, then Portugal, Spain (or even Ireland 30 years ago) would be excluded from the European West (with a capital letter). The extenuating circumstances are that these countries are geographically west, and that they belonged to Western Europe in the previous division, based on Capitalism.

2. The Balkan concept

The Balkan concept started to be forged after the Turkish invasion and their occupation of Southeastern Europe. Turks are the crucial factor in shaping this concept. Although Todorova mentions two factors: the Byzantine and Turkish,³⁷ the former is only a feature and has no importance in the emergence and shaping of the concept. It is secondary, although more important than other phenomena, such as the *gusle*³⁸ (with debate on whether this instrument is of proto-Balkan or old Slavic origin)³⁹ or the roasting of a pig or lamb on a spit. That the Byzantine factor is a secondary feature is visible in this: some territories are considered Balkan despite the low level of Byzantine influence (even by Todorova). Without the Turks, there would be no Balkans (in the cultural sense).⁴⁰ Not only did they give rise to the name (though this is not relevant for the issue): in Turkish, the word *Balkan* means ‘steep mountain range cover with forest’,⁴¹ but they left elements of common culture at various levels. These elements on the Balkan particular grounds (including people) resulted, at the end, in their particular features. It is known that cultural regions share both cultural elements and geographical features (at least some), and the Balkans are no exception. Other cultural regions share them as well, such as the Central Europe plain (from the Ukraine to Romania, across Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia and Austria, among others). On the other hand, it is known that empires not only favour the dissemination of elements of a particular culture or cultural region, but they spread them consciously and intentionally. In fact, we can state that empires are crucial for shaping cultural regions: (the Austro-Hungarian Empire for Central Europe, the Ottoman Empire for the Balkans, the (Great) British Empire for

³⁶ <https://data.worldbank.org/country>

³⁷ *Imagining the Balkans*, 2009: 10.

³⁸ ‘(one-string) rebec’, ‘two-stringed fiddle’

³⁹ The most pronounced theories of origin, at least in Croatia (<https://hr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gusle>; Čaleta 2012). According to Kuhač 1877, the *gusle* is of Slavic origin, although with no exclusive proof. The Illyrian (proto-Balkan) theory seems a myth. However, it is possibly of oriental origin (Čaleta 2012).

⁴⁰ That the Balkans are a result of the long Turkish rule, as shown by Todorova (2009: 12), although less explicitly.

⁴¹ Skok 1971; see Todorova 2009 for more detailed meanings.

Great Britain and Ireland,⁴² the Russian Empire for eastern Europe and Asia).⁴³ This is even more clear in the case of the Balkans, i.e., the Ottoman Empire, in comparison with the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Central European culture. This is because the Balkans were occupied (by force) by the Turks. It is about the dissemination of elements of their own culture within the territory under their rule, with the aim to ingrain these elements. This is why the Balkans as a cultural region were shaped later (see below). In conclusion, cultural regions are shaped on the basis of geographical and cultural features.

Although the Balkans existed as a geographical space before the arrival of the Turks, they did not exist culturally in this sense (or geographically as a notion). The concept of the Balkans began under Turkish rule. The Balkans start developing and coming into existence in the 19th century after the liberation of certain territories from Turkish domination. The creation of the Balkan concept (in the cultural and political sense) was completed in the 20th century by the Balkan wars and after the Turks left the Balkans. Until then, the Balkan and Oriental coexisted as a form of the latter, and in a form of the other (as outer form and manifestation), in the way E. Said sees Orientalism, not only because the space belonged to Turkey, but because life, or the way of life, was more or less identical. If we read I. Andrić, we will see an oriental world in a Balkan territory, in general (or even B. Stanković where he writes about the Turkish period). If we think this is fiction, and that these writers were born after the withdrawal of the Turks, we can take Matija Mažuranić and his travel guide *Pogled u Bosnu* (1842),⁴⁴ and we will be able to observe that this is more the Orient than the Balkans.⁴⁵ According to this, the Balkans would be the youngest shaped European cultural region.⁴⁶ However, this does not mean it did not developed later, nor that the shaping of the Balkan identity ended then.

The name itself (Balkans) initially (until the 19th century) signified only the mountain between Bulgaria and Serbia, and Romania, called *Stara planina* in Bulgarian (still in use, as the Balkans as well), and the ancient *Haemus* (*Aemus*), which was more frequent until the 1820s.⁴⁷ Todorova claims that the name was erroneously assigned to the Dinaric Alps, because of the incorrect claims that Haemus began at the Bay of Venice and ended in the Black Sea, i.e., linking the Adriatic and Black Seas, “with a dominant position in the peninsula”. This was repeated during history, for two thousand years, in one way or another.⁴⁸

⁴² I would like to note here that there is no official name for this cultural region or geographical region.

⁴³ Although other factors or characteristics are also important, e.g., Central Europe includes the space where Germans historically lived or moved through. I doubt this is a coincidence. Tomas and Kardum (2025: 17-18) claim that there are several concepts, ideas of Central Europe, depending on the origin, among others: a German one and a Slavic and Hungarian one, and the Germans geopolitical concepts consider “Central Europe as the space of expansion of German political and cultural domination”. The same opinion was given by Gauss (1994), an Austrian writer. However, what was said is a fact.

⁴⁴ *A View into Bosnia*

⁴⁵ Todorova (2009: 12-13) implicitly says that the Balkans were forming from the end of the Turkish rule (18th - 19th c.) to the end of the WW I, and that the Ottoman legacy later was “invented and reinvented” regarding its self-identity. Wolff (1994) calls the Ottoman Empire in Europe explicitly Orient, of course, in accordance with the Enlightenment terminology, where Eastern Europe should be a transitional space between the West and the Orient.

⁴⁶ However, it remains a doubt regarding today's Great Britain and Ireland. Was this region, with no name, already shaped prior to Ireland's independence? There, I think, the same factors do not apply.

⁴⁷ See Todorova 2009: 22, and further; *Hrvatska enciklopedija s.v. Balkan*

⁴⁸ 2009: 25, and farther

In the sense of the peninsula, the name Balkans was first coined by German geographer August Zeune in 1808. He simply standardised what had earlier existed in the wrong perception, attaching himself to that opinion. “It was the erroneous belief of the Balkan Mountains as the northern frontier of the peninsula that inspired Zeune to name it Balkan”.⁴⁹ It was in the mid-19th century that this name started being applied by more authors than the other denominations for the same. Until “the Congress of Berlin in 1878, the most often used designations were [...] ‘European Turkey’, ‘Turkey-in-Europe’, ‘European Ottoman Empire’, ‘European Levant’, ‘Oriental Peninsula’”. And for the Ottomans the common geographical designation was *Rum-eli* ‘the land of the Romans (Greeks)’.⁵⁰

The Balkans are not only a geographical and cultural notion, in the sense of a cultural region (made by the mixing of geographical and cultural factors), but they were also concretised in a pure geographical notion – the *Balkan Peninsula*. Geographical zones should have clear borders in comparison with cultural regions, which are social appearances and, as such, appear in continuum (though less than natural appearances), with no clear borders. The problem is the Balkan peninsula borders do not coincide with the borders of the Balkans as a cultural region, or are exaggerated.

Thus, the Balkans exist as a geographical notion,⁵¹ geopolitical notion and cultural region (although always on the same basis). On the other hand, there are different divisions as to what the Balkans include. For example, some divisions include Croatia and Slovenia (*Hrvatska enciklopedija*, s.v. *Balkan*; Todorova 2009: 30, 31),⁵² some authors even include Hungary, or Turkey (at least its European part), or exclude Romania (Todorova 2009: 29). In the case of Hungary, which in part was also part of European Turkey, other factors intervene, such as the geographical one, since there are no mountains (to the south). The same regards Slavonia (a region in Croatia), which does not belong to the Balkans but instead to Central Europe.⁵³ What draws attention is Todorova’s criterion or classification, which excludes Slovenia but includes Croatia. Her argument is that Croatia’s territory was “under Ottoman rule for considerable lengths of time”. This is not incorrect, though the word “considerable” is vague, and could cause confusion. The truth is that some Croatian territories were occupied by Turks for a shorter or longer period, but this period was on average 150 years and did not exceed 200 years,⁵⁴ although some areas were occupied for 100 years or less (such

⁴⁹ Todorova 2009: 25-26

⁵⁰ Todorova 2009: 27. In 1893, in order to correct Zeune’s error, the German geographer Theobald Fischer proposed the name *Südoesteuropa*. (Todorova 2009: 28). This is a frequent geopolitical term in use today.

⁵¹ In two forms, as a mountain range and the Balkan Peninsula.

⁵² That is the common, geographical, approach for Todorova. On the other hand, Todorova does not deny the Slovenians’ and Croats’ western self-consideration, and the same is claimed by the Hungarians (Todorova 2009: 30)

⁵³ On the other hand, there are different divisions that include Central Europe, with Croatia and without it, etc. See, for example, these maps: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Regions_of_Europe_Map.png; <https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/countries-regions/transnational-regions/central-europe>; https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/casestudy/media/nic01_ceuromap.html; <https://geohistory.today/europe-divisions-and-unifications/>.

⁵⁴ In fact, less. The first Croatian areas were occupied by Turks at the end of the 15th c. (Makarska and its surroundings), but the conquering did not begin until the 16th c., after 1522 (except Sinj which was occupied in 1514). All occupied territories ever were again part of Croatia in 1699 by the Treaty of Karlowitz, some even earlier (as Makarska which liberated from Turks in 1684, and free of them between 1646 and 1671 as well). Mažuran 1998; *Hrvatska enciklopedija* s.v. “Makarska”

as Moslavina).⁵⁵ This period of 100-200 years is not so considerable, given that other parts of the Balkans were under Ottoman rule for 500 or 600 years. However, what is particularly noteworthy is Todorova's inclusion of the Dubrovnik Republic in the Balkans. Her argument is that its territory was vassal, and "only nominally Ottoman", and "exerted such an important influence on the Balkan Peninsula that its history cannot be severed from the Balkans". The latter is quite doubtful. Although it is true that Dubrovnik was a vassal republic to a certain extent (paying for liberty, but not acting for Turks), its influence in the Balkans could not be the crucial argument, for two reasons. Firstly, there was no Turkish presence in the Dubrovnik Republic, or any Turkish cultural elements. Its culture is highly similar to the cultures of other Croatian towns in Dalmatia that were not occupied by Turks, but with local particularities. Secondly, the Republic of Venice also exerted its significant influence (even more significant) in the Balkans. Therefore, her claim is not plausible.

3. Croatia's western elements and Balkan elements

3.1 Western elements

In the first chapter (1.2), I outlined the characteristics or elements of the West and/or western European culture, especially those emerging with Modernity (changing or developing of form). This is the essence of today's western societies, spreading and being spread from the European east to the Far East. I will consider them now, as well as Balkan characteristics, trying to decipher their role in creating the Croatian profile.

The first feature is Catholicism, in the period when Europe was truly divided into East and West. As stated in the first chapter, the division into European East-West based on the religion was maintained until 1945. This is not solely my opinion, as Kundera shows in his famous essay "The Tragedy of Central Europe" (1984).⁵⁶ Therefore, Croatia belonged to the European West (at least once).

Other elements of the West or western European culture (middle class, Renaissance, popular language, Protestantism, industrial revolution) arise more or less in the Renaissance, at the beginning of Modernity. The Renaissance is very important in the cultural sense (not to say as a civilisation, a word misused by the western European philosophers, writers and cartographers, starting from the 18th century,⁵⁷ and it is also a word that serves to exaggerate the "importance" of the Renaissance in our world). It is a turning point, in which new life models were grounded, new social relations were created, with the development of science and technology and the development of individualism, and it forms the foundation of the society we live in. It is about Modernity, which started in the Renaissance and continues still (the same attitude toward humans and their world). The Renaissance arose in Italy before spreading to

⁵⁵ This Croatian microregion was occupied for 40-50 years, see *Hrvatska enciklopedija* s.v. "Moslavina", Pavličević 2001.

⁵⁶ "Geographic Europe' (extending from the Atlantic to the Ural Mountains) was always divided into two halves which evolved separately: one tied to ancient Rome and the Catholic Church, the other anchored in Byzantium and the Orthodox Church. After 1945, the border between the two Europes shifted several hundred kilometers to the west, and several nations that had always considered themselves to be Western woke up to discover that they were now in the East." (1984: 33)

⁵⁷ See Wolff, 1994; indicated also by Mac Sweeney in 2023.

other countries. Although in the Renaissance the division into backward and progressive countries was aligned by South-North⁵⁸ (in fact, it was Italy who made this division), the Renaissance also flourished in other European countries. However, it failed to spread throughout the European east (and did not appear in all western European countries).⁵⁹ The Renaissance in Croatia was quite substantial (various circles; literature, writers corresponding among themselves; painting; architecture; press).⁶⁰

The middle class arose already in the Middle Ages, but more systematically and typically in the Renaissance (which would later be converted to the bourgeoisie). In Eastern Europe, an Orthodox Renaissance appeared very late, for example in Russia in the 19th century.⁶¹ It was absent in the Balkans, being under Turkish rule and ruled by a (centralised) feudal system (timar system) until 1831.⁶² The best example of the Croatian Renaissance middle class could be the Dubrovnik merchants, with the middle class also appearing in other Croatian towns. All “free professions” belonged to the middle class. Marko Marulić was a judge and procurator, as was Barne Karnarutić (both Croatian Renaissance writers),⁶³ while Juraj Dalmatinac was a Croatian Renaissance sculptor and builder, and Mikša Pelegrinović was a notary, judge and Croatian Renaissance poet, etc.

Bubrin (2013) draws attention to the fact that the Croatian and Bohemian, Polish and Hungarian Renaissances are disregarded in the scholarship on the Renaissance “in the West”. In general, Western scholars do not cross the (“traditional”) border of “the West”, which is Venice, to the South, and the Nuremberg-Leipzig-Wittenberg axis to the east. This shows, on the one hand, that the Renaissance as a criterion of westernness is appropriate, while on the other that this disregard has to do with the concept of the West on the western side of that border. The Renaissance is quite important for contemporary society, i.e., western European society, not only in the cultural sense, but as a basis of capitalism (as reflected in today's East-West division based on economic power), technology, development of science, progress (or what led to progress, a notion that remains important). As previously indicated, this will form a “civilisation”, a word which will be applied (according to Wolff 1994) in the 18th century by Enlightenment philosophers, writers and cartographers to differentiate Western from Eastern Europe in inventing Eastern Europe.⁶⁴ However, the Renaissance in the latter sense (more in the economic and social sense than a cultural paradigm) is quite doubtful (as progress). It contains negative features and consequences, not only in the Renaissance period, but still nowadays, which has been very well depicted by Sabato (an Argentinian writer and scientist) in his brilliant essay *Hombres y engranajes*.⁶⁵ Furthermore, the border indicated by Bubrin coincides, more or less, with the border of Wolff (in the Enlightenment period), and the latter with the Cold War border: Stettin to the East, and

⁵⁸ Wolff 1994: 357

⁵⁹ In eastern Europe, it appeared significantly in Poland, Hungary, Czechia and Croatia. Bubrin 2013; Novak 2009

⁶⁰ As well as in Hungary, Czechia and Poland.

⁶¹ See, for example, Smith 2017

⁶² The feudal system was retained until the end of the Ottoman Empire. See, for example, Matuz 1982. However, that does not imply there was no middle class to a lesser extent, and of Turkish type, earlier.

⁶³ Marko Marulić was a humanistic and Renaissance writer, known and read across Western Europe, a Renaissance correspondent, and his environment, education, and topics, were completely Western European. For that reason, his inclusion in the module *Conformación de la identidad balcánica* at the University of Buenos Aires is unusual.

⁶⁴ Novak (2009) states that in the Middle Ages, Byzantines considered the West to be barbarians.

⁶⁵ *Men and Gears*; see, also, “Renesansa” in: *Hrvatska enciklopedija*

Trieste to the South. Thus, what is (was) Western Europe is dependent on the point of view, which can be biased.

Popular language is another characteristic of the western European world. Whilst in eastern Europe Old Church Slavonic or Old Greek was in use in the higher spheres, as the language of culture, in the West popular language was in use, more obviously from the Renaissance period. Popular language in Croatia becomes the language of literature, of law, etc., and the language of culture early on in the Middle Ages (from the 12th century), earlier than in some western European countries. This is already evident in part in the *Bašćanska ploča* (Baška tablet), around 1100, an important document of Croatian history. This text shows mixed features of Old Church Slavonic and (old) Croatian.⁶⁶ Later these elements (of popular language) increases. As is known, in the 14th century, the first Croatian literary language⁶⁷ (Chakavian) penetrates all fields, with an internal stylistic stratification: the style of legal documents, town statutes, monastic codices or lawbooks, poetic and prosaic styles).⁶⁸

Protestantism could be another factor. It emerged in the 16th century and is linked to the Renaissance in the broader sense,⁶⁹ as a reflection of the same libertine ideas. Reformed churches arose in western Europe (Germany, Switzerland, France) in the strict sense. But they spread also to other western European countries (or which were considered as such during a phase of their history), which had their national protestant movement as the followers of the previous: Netherland, France, Belgium, Austria, Scotland, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Czechia, Hungary, Iceland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland,⁷⁰ Croatia and Slovenia, Romania,⁷¹ and Spain, a bit in Italy.⁷² Beside the three (western European) nuclei of Protestantism, it emerged earlier in Czechia in the 15th century as a form of proto-Protestantism (Protestantism in the broader sense): the Hussites, after their leader Jan Hus. In Croatia, there was a small, national protestant movement in the west (and north) that never took root, but featured one of the most important persons in the history of Lutheranism: Matija Vlačić Ilirik (Matthias Flacius Illyricus in Latin). This movement had an education policy,⁷³ an idea/conception of Croatian standard language, and more.⁷⁴

Taking into consideration these elements, factors (though perhaps less with respect to Protestantism; nonetheless, some western European countries are not better, Spain, Italy, etc.), Croatia would belong to western Europe.⁷⁵ One could claim that the quantity of several of these elements (e.g., middle class, industrial revolution) is not to the level as elsewhere in western Europe or it might be scarce. However, this concerns only one or two elements. Second, in the periphery, the quantity of a feature, or its prominence, is usually not pronounced. We could consider Croatia in this sense as the periphery of

⁶⁶ See Damjanović 1990

⁶⁷ There were three literary languages in use in Croatia till the 19th c., when one of them was standardised.

⁶⁸ Lončarić; Kekez 2007: 69

⁶⁹ See, for example, Boisset 1985

⁷⁰ These five countries belong to north Europe or the Nordic countries, but in the broader sense, economic power or wealth, they are often considered western European countries. See farther on that.

⁷¹ As part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

⁷² "Protestantizam" in: *Hrvatska enciklopedija*; "Reformacija" in: <https://hr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reformacija>

⁷³ For both children and adults.

⁷⁴ Bratulić 2007; Bratulić 2011; Oczkova 2010

⁷⁵ Or Western Europe. I use the lower case given that it is not about deeper factors for division. On the other hand, Croatia seems closer to the European west than to the European east. See Pavličević 1996

the western European world, although these (periphery, quantity) were the items that motivated the Enlightenment philosophers and writers to create Eastern Europe.⁷⁶ The fact is though these differences existed, they were insufficient to split what was once one zone into two, on the basis of economic power and quantity or development of those cultural and social factors.⁷⁷ Third, the less development of culture and the less developed social factors, in comparison to western Europe, have an explanation. Croatia was long menaced by Turks and their invasion, and was forced to allocate most of its revenues to defence, while its population had no space or time to dedicate themselves to culture under the constant Turkish threats, fear, incursions, robbery and fire in the bordering zones (with many people emigrating to Italy, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary). However, this cannot be justification for everything. Taking into account only economic power and the factors that drive it, then some western European countries would not be considered part of this kind of Western Europe during certain periods of their history, particularly Portugal, Spain, and Ireland.

3.2 Balkan elements

On the other hand, if we take a look at Balkan elements in the Croatian culture (literature, visual arts, architecture), they are almost non-existent or very rare until the 20th century. For example, in literature, the first (and the only) prominent element did not appear until the 18th century, with *Razgovor ugodni naroda slovinskoga* (A Pleasant Conversation of the Slavic People) by the Franciscan friar Andrija Kačić Miošić. A question could arise why this book would be of Balkan elements. The anti-Turkish theme is not necessarily Balkan, as can be evidenced by this kind of theme appearing in the 15th century, including various genres, with some works even written in Latin (Nikola Modruški, Marulić, Črnko, Karnarutić, etc.). The type of verse (epic decasyllable), should not be considered Balkan by default, although it does not exist in the Kajkavian dialect,⁷⁸ though it is shared with the Serbian. The singing style that appeared in the territories occupied by Turks and bordering zones could be considered Balkan, unlike the *bugarščice* (old Croatian songs of long verse), a different (archaic) style of singing about battling the Turks, not only because of the lyric ballad tone. Also, an image of an old man, a *rhapsode*, who sings playing the one-string rebec evokes the Balkan world (although the instrument itself is only secondarily Balkan).⁷⁹ So, while the topic is not Balkan necessarily, neither is the whole work Balkan (thematizing other historical events as well). Kačić's work was intentionally oriented toward the South Slavic and other neighbouring countries, expressing solidarity with other peoples under Turkish oppression. The tale was told from the perspective of those suffering Turkish occupation, from the point of view of a person who is very close to them if not one of them. Some of the above is also reflected in the motives (persons, events, etc.; persons are, for example, Croatians, Serbs, Albanians), and the (shared) lexis. In the 18th century, some parts of Ivan Lovrić's work can also be considered as Balkan (*Osservazioni di*

⁷⁶ See Wolff, 1994

⁷⁷ Neither Wolff denies there were differences in the eastern part of Europe regarding the western part, but they were used, or misused, to create an artificial construct, with purpose (see Wolff 1994, "Conclusion").

⁷⁸ One of the Croatian neighbouring groups of dialects, not shared with the Serbs. See Kekez 1986

⁷⁹ *gusle*: mentioned previously.

Giovanni Lovrich sopra diversi pezzi del Viaggio in Dalmazia del signor abate Alberto Fortis coll'aggiunta della vita di Sočivica), though is not fiction, as the life of the anti-Turkish brigand Stanislav Sočivica. On the other hand, Ivan Mažuranić's *Smrt Smail-age Čengića* (*The Death of Smail-aga Čengić*) did not derive directly from the author's environment and surroundings, or by the events or by the topic (in the strict sense), or by the language or expressions of his environment. Thus, it is about a work of art, art (and artificial) construction, with a specifically chosen topic, and the whole work was elevated to a level of symbolism. Its models are *Osman*⁸⁰ by Baroque writer Ivan Gundulić and the classical literature. Nonetheless, its model is partially Kačić as well, influenced by his imitation of popular and folk literature, of what Mažuranić read and listened to in childhood.⁸¹ This work could be considered Balkan only in a broader sense; if there would be more works, books of this kind, but, unfortunately, that is not the case. After Kačić, Balkan elements in the (written) literature are rare and sporadic. These elements in the 19th century usually appear as the influences of Kačić's book or folk epic poetry (for example, in Botić, imitating both; the poetry and work of Despot, who positioned himself in the Balkans, are not Balkan despite featuring Balkan elements, while in other authors Balkan elements are generally marginal).⁸² It should be considered that Balkan elements are not the same or equal everywhere, and especially not of the same intensity. In this way, Balkan customs are rarer and of less intensity in the western periphery, precisely because it was much less under Ottoman influence.⁸³

Thus, Croatia's culture is predominantly Western European, but only regarding high culture or art production and styles. As indicated earlier: the Turks were the crucial factor in shaping the Balkan culture. So, it is quite clear that Balkan elements would be present, since parts of present day Croatia were occupied temporarily by the Turks. If considering other aspects of culture, especially, the folk culture (customs, music, etc.),⁸⁴ or the culinary, even everyday life, there are many more Balkan elements, although Croatia (still) remains peripheral. On the other hand, Croatian culture is of western European type only if we consider high culture and the present day territory. But if we look at Bosnia and Herzegovina, the facts are different. And they are even more different if we take into consideration Croatian Muslims, whose literature was written in Croatian though sometimes in the Arabic script, or in the Croatian Cyrillic script (in use in Bosnia by Croat Catholics and Muslims), and also in the Latin script. This was also part of the Croatian culture (according to Bosnian Muslims themselves).⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Thematising the end of a Turkish tyrant as well.

⁸¹ Frangeš 1987.

⁸² These two authors are not central literary figures in the 19th century, on the contrary, but in the central personalities there are no Balkan elements, or they are quite peripheral.

⁸³ Todorova (2009: 31) does not deny that "some regions are more Balkan than others".

⁸⁴ Todorova (2009: 12-13) indirectly makes a distinction between two types of Turkish influences: in politics, (high) culture, economy, of social type, and in "the demographic sphere and the sphere of popular culture". The second is more persistent and continuous. But what Todorova does not mention is that the first is found, generally, in the pure Balkans, and not, for example, in Croatia, only perhaps at microlevels. Therefore, the distinction should be made between the Balkans in the narrow sense, and in the broader sense. In the former, the Turkish influence is not only greater but also wider (affecting more areas).

⁸⁵ For example, "Chirvat türkisi" (Croatian poem) written in Arabic script in the 16th c. by Mehmed Erdeljac; Kreševljaković 1912; Hadžijahić 1938; or Kurt 1902.

Croatia expressly started to be part of the Balkans in the state and political sense, and, consequently, in the socio-political sense, during its membership of Yugoslavia for some 70 years. Given that the majority of Yugoslavia was in the Balkans, both geographically and culturally, the country as a whole was positioned in this way. Furthermore, during the second or communist Yugoslavia, the state was positioned ideologically in the Balkans as well, in an anti-colonial or, at least, anti-imperialist sense. The Balkans were opposed to imperialist Europe (Germans, Italians, etc.).⁸⁶ During this 70-year period, the areas that did not belong to the Balkans geographically nor culturally suffered an acculturation, because the country was expressly defined as Balkan. This was more prominent in the second Yugoslavia, not only because of its longer duration, but also because transport means were more developed and accessible, and affordable, and the significant growth of literacy and the media precipitated acculturation, not only officially, but also by diffusing music and cultural patterns, even words or lexis, of Balkan (usually Turkish) origin. On the other hand, an acculturation from below also occurred. Croatia (parts) and Slovenia were the only two republics that did not culturally belong to the Balkans. Among them, in my opinion, Croatia, i.e., Zagreb as the most urbanised and industrialised city, suffered greater acculturation, by settlers from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Macedonia. The key factor was the language (even for Macedonians, as Croato-Serbian was obligatory for all).

4. Examples of the Division East-West from the Czech and Polish Perspective

It appears that the Czech and Polish cases are similar to that of Croatia. From 1945, Czechia (Czechoslovakia) and Poland belong to Eastern Europe due to their Communist reality. After 1990, they continue to be in the same group since the division remains, based now on economic power as engendered in the Enlightenment period. Milan Kundera in his essay “The Tragedy of Central Europe” finds the same factors (criteria) of belonging to Western Europe for Czechia, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia,⁸⁷ as those of our ancestors: the Catholic world and Rome opposed to the Orthodox world and Byzantium. After 1945, “the border between the two Europes shifted several hundreds kilometres to the west, and several nations that had always considered themselves to be western woke up to discover that they were now in the East.”⁸⁸ Kundera refers to this territory, these countries, as the *kidnapped West*.⁸⁹

Further, Kundera addressed an additional problem arising from this situation: the notion of Central Europe (between Eastern and Western Europe) reduced to these

⁸⁶ In fact, the communist orientation toward the Balkans took place early on, even before the establishment of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. South Slavic communism reflected on a Balkan federation to include all South Slavic countries (including Bulgaria), Greece, Rumania and Albania. (Gužvica 2021) This idea was maintained until the end of WWII (Dedijer 1949: 94; Matković 1998: 291), although Dedijer refers to confederation.

⁸⁷ “the word ‘Europe’ does not represent a phenomenon of geography but a spiritual notions synonymous with the word ‘West,’” 1984: 33.

⁸⁸ Kundera 1984: 33. According to Tomas and Kardum, the same sentiment of belonging was/is felt by the Hungarians, Poles and Slovaks (2025: 7).

⁸⁹ In another context, Kundera quotes T. Masaryk (1895): “The Czechs are not next to the East (they are surrounded by Germans and Poles, that is, the West) ...”, i.e., that Czechs are not mediators between the East and the West (1984: 34), the idea allocated to Central Europe, see Kundera.

mentioned countries, which lies culturally in the West and politically in the East, but excluding Austria.⁹⁰

A further issue in Kundera's essay has similarities with Croatia. It describes a nostalgia for the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and in this sense his essay is reminiscent of the book of the same name (*The Tragedy of Central Europe*) published in 1923 by an English author, Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett. In the latter, nostalgia is expressed because of unpredictable political circumstances and unstable surroundings in which this space lies, i.e., negative consequences of the breakup of that space. His nostalgia is not only cultural and economical, but also geopolitical and strategic. Kundera's nostalgia is due to a better organised country, culturally important as a nucleus of the Central European culture, which has strength in comparison to other spaces, towards both East and West and, of course, for being Kundera's area within this country part of the West undoubtedly. Thus, in Kundera's essay, an Austro-Hungarian nostalgia is observable. In Croatia, this kind of nostalgia also exists, although little is known about it. Some people and the media refer to Yugonostalgia, but there is also an Austro-Hungarian nostalgia, as a counterpart to the former, though it is usually less expressed. This kind of nostalgia is far less present in the media. However, I have heard it several times, from common people of different geographical origins, and once on television (from a right-wing political and/or cultural worker). Arguments in its favour are that the Austro-Hungarian Empire was a good country, organised, etc. (similar to Kundera's vision).⁹¹ Nostalgia was alluded to by the Austrian writer Karl-Markus Gauss in his collection *Die Vernichtung Mitteleuropas* (1991), claiming that contemporary Croatian (and Hungarian and Polish) writers see the Austro-Hungarian Empire as far better than it was (a *false* and *uncritical* vision according to him).⁹² In this sense, the Croatian identity is conflicted and divided: those who cherish the Austro-Hungarian nostalgia see themselves as part of Western Europe and opt for it, while those who cherish Yugonostalgia opt for the Balkans in general.

The Polish example is similar. In Croatia, the national ideology is based on Catholicism and Christianity, not only as an identity, but especially related to the Turkish invasion, as it is referred to as the *Bulwark of Christendom* (implying sometimes to be part of Western Europe, or, at least, its shield), while in Polish contemporary prose, Poland is referred to as the "historical bulwark of the West".⁹³

According to the above, Croatia shares sentiments, attitudes, visions with other eastern European countries due to its belonging to the same country and a similar position, among others.

⁹⁰ 1984: 33, 36. In fact, this is the form of Central Europe presented to students in Trinity College Dublin, in general, though there are other approaches.

⁹¹ Though this, in fact, is a lie. It is well known that the Austro-Hungarian Empire at its end was rotten, corrupt, in decay (not only known from Hašek's and Krtleža's literary works, but in general; the Gauss' vision is close to that, far from ideal). On the other hand, this point is also valid (with different factors) for Yugoslavia or Yugonostalgia.

⁹² *Uništenje Srednje Europe* (1994: 21)

⁹³ One of the perceptions, Kaniewska 2018, although there is a perception of being between the East and the West, or Central European.

5. Conclusion

It could be observed that Croatia is both a Central European country and a Balkan country, and has been recognised as such (although not generally by the same people). The Balkans imply Eastern Europe, though the term Balkans has a range of connotations that are far more affective, and more negatively charged (than a pure geographical notion or the cultural region notion). On the other hand, Central Europe does not necessarily imply the West (anymore), as shown. The Balkan notion is subordinated to Eastern Europe to some extent, but it also exceeds its limits as a different category. The Balkans are another cultural and mental complex, considered more backward and inferior, with less “civilisation”, dirty, savage, and the (European) other, negative one, of course.⁹⁴ Croatia’s problem is not simply the Balkans versus Eastern Europe. It is not about Eastern Europe, given that the Balkans are a symbol (more than a notion and more than the meaning of Eastern Europe). Furthermore, the notion of Eastern Europe is also less important for Croats for the following reason: the notion of Eastern Europe is newer in use (since 1945), despite being coined in the 18th century (according to Wolff). Therefore, it reaches only newer generations in identifying themselves with it or in accepting this designation. That is, in Croatian identities, but also in the eyes of other peoples (from the West, European and the world), there remains the dichotomy of the West vs. the Balkans. In correlation with the above about the Balkans, the West has opposite values. No one compares the Balkans, Central Europe and the Mediterranean (which are all cultural regions), but the dichotomy of the West-Balkans is established, proving the Balkans are more than a cultural region. While other countries of the former Central Europe, according to Mikanowski (2023), run away from the negative connotations of the notion of Eastern Europe, forming new associations (Baltic States, new Central Europe), Croatia was more negatively marked as the Balkans. As opposed to the (earlier) West until 1918, the conviction among part of Croats, due to the state and social structure and official culture of the time was they were part of the West until that date, and they would now be again. Nowadays, living between three designations: the Balkans, Central Europe (that should be, or was, Western Europe) and Eastern Europe, Croats are more burdened and confused than their eastern European colleagues; lying between grandiose “Civilisation” (of western Europe) and the Balkan backwardness, the Eastern Europe notion sounds middle and even mild. However, a polarisation took place between two worlds: West-Balkans, which also passes through other categories: Austro-Hungarian nostalgia-Yugonostalgia, Right-Left. In other words, it contains not only cultural divisions, but ideological and political ones as well. The division in the Croatia society is massive, making it one of Europe’s most politically divided countries.

It can also be observed that Croatia’s situation is not monolithic, but is quite complex.⁹⁵ Croatia’s territory belongs to three cultural regions: Central Europe, the

⁹⁴ See, or cf., Todorova 2009, among others.

⁹⁵ The complexity of the Croatian situation, and the Croatian identity, is seen in a 2023 survey by the CEPER group from Austria, a firm specialised in market research. Ten countries positioned between Germany, Turkey and Russia were included in the survey on regional identity. Croats showed the most complexity: 36% considered themselves part of the Balkans, 26% part of Central Europe, 22% part of Western Europe, 9% part of Eastern Europe (and 7% answered “I don’t know”). Since these results are no longer available at <https://cepergroup.com/article/ceper-not-all-central-europeans-consider-themselves-central-europeans>, I refer to Tomas and Kardum (2025: 7-8). However, it is interesting that the Balkan identity showed the highest percentage.

Mediterranean and the Balkans.⁹⁶ Were Croatia a large country, this would be an advantage, but as a small country it becomes more of an obstacle. The problem is the world of science and/or persons who make classifications want to be able to position a whole country into a group, to be “complete” or precise. This is the way we used to look at the world. That’s why there are at least two classifications (Central Europe and Balkan). Another problem is mentioned above: the Balkans are more than a cultural region. Further, Croatia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1918. The question is whether this country belonged to the West or to the East. As observed in Czech, Polish, and Hungarian cases, it was part of the West. On the other hand, Austria is undoubtful in this sense even nowadays. Can the question be posed as: what kind of power was the Austro-Hungarian Empire: an Eastern one or a Western one? Exposing things in this way, the answer will be clear. So, if Croatia was (at least in this way, but as shown it was also in other ways) part of the Western Europe until 1918, how did it become Balkan in the meanwhile? Despite its Balkan features, it suffered a period of acculturation and underwent a repositioning (even self-repositioning) during the two Yugoslavias, especially the second one. This period is quite important for the establishment of divisions (both by science and the general public), for two reasons: the development of contemporary science (to avoid unfounded points), and the notable increase of literacy and development of the mass media. In other words, many scientific truths and visions were established during the 20th century (and it is not easy to change customs, visions, truths; neither for the establishers, nor the receivers). On the other hand, the common people were sufficiently educated and had access to the media to receive and retain such information. However, Croatia’s place can be suitably described as being both a periphery of Western Europe and as a periphery of the Balkans. That is, also, its misfortune.

As shown, Croatia was not unambiguously Western in the cultural and social sense during its history. Some of its important features of identity (even current) were received from the East, though after the Great Schism, the influence of Western culture prevailed. It received later a certain Turkish influence, although not from above since the entire country was never occupied as part of the Turkish Empire, but instead received it from below, i.e., from the common people, and as the frontier area. This is the reason why the Croatian Balkans is (s)lighter (in addition to the fact that parts of the occupied territory were occupied for less 200 years). Accordingly, there was no Ottoman influence in politics and economy (Croatia made its decisions on interior matters in its parliament and had suffrage in the Austro-Hungarian Empire). This is also one of the reasons why we encounter Balkan characteristics in the low (or lower) culture, and why Croatia already traced its path regarding the high culture before the arrival of Turks,⁹⁷ which later continued in unoccupied territory (with some crisis, in quantity, at the end of the 17th and in 18th centuries). However, as noted by Burke, *et alia* culture is not only the high culture (as earlier considered in the sciences and by the public), but it consists of all types of culture, including daily life and even the culture of behaviour. Regarding acculturation (though in the reverse direction), it is interesting how the behaviour of Croatian drivers towards pedestrians changed after its separation from Yugoslavia,

⁹⁶ Unfortunately, the Mediterranean as cultural region is rarely used, if at all, for divisions. This shows that other factors, supracultural ones, are supposed to be crucial in formation of cultural regions: empires.

⁹⁷ This is another reason why we do not see an Ottoman legacy, or only very scarcely, in high culture.

becoming more polite, slower, allowing them to cross the street (though Croatian drivers have still not caught up with some western European regions). The period of seventy years in Yugoslavia, however, shows that belonging to a cultural region can be changed from above (although in this sense this is an insignificant number of years).

With respect to the cultural and social spheres, Croatia is mostly of western European type, although the development of certain social features was somewhat scarce. I already mentioned the reason for that: the invasion of Turks resulted in less available resources for cultural activities, investments, and development, due to political and military instability). However, we should not blame the Turks for everything (as the Bulgarian do),⁹⁸ but we should be aware that it could have done more.

Apart from the fact that Croatia belonged/belongs to the Western European cultural circle, in a broader sense, it resembles Argentina. Nowadays, Argentina is not a developed country, nor is it perceived as such. But between the two world wars, Argentina had a GDP at the level of France or Germany,⁹⁹ and it was eligible for living, for migrants, and its image as a developed country among the common people was not lost quickly.¹⁰⁰ Croatia as a part of Western Europe in the full meaning is an echo in a similar way, from the old times, as *Antemurale Christianitatis*.

In my opinion, Croatia should build and shape its identity, as everything else, on the features of all three cultural regions. If that was not easy earlier on because the divisions were stricter, it should be easier today in the society we live in, and perhaps even an advantage. The Balkan component should not be ignored, because doing so would ignore a part of our own reality. And when we ignore something, it becomes a problem. However, a problem persists in making divisions among scientists (especially those less conversant, from a faraway world), who like to draw sharp borders (Croatia is a small country) between worlds, and positioning a whole country into a single space. Here, heritage matters of the former state Yugoslavia, which was clearly positioned in the Balkans (by itself, and even ideologically)¹⁰¹ and by the world (or the West), and Croatia is one of its successors.

The inclusion of Croatia into the Balkans is constrained, biased on generalisations or stereotypes because of ignoring the field and even out of bad intentions, driven by the same motives as those of the Enlightenment philosophers, giving labels, creating opinions and world visions (somewhat consciously, somewhat unconsciously) on behalf of western European and American sciences. It is well known that the most powerful, wealthy and developed, and, thus, the most influential sciences (with data, labels, opinions, which are repeated, taken for granted, and accepted without checking) are the American, British, French and German (the German is currently, perhaps, a bit better in that regard, likely due to the geographical proximity).¹⁰² I can give an example from Trinity College Dublin. In the module *Introduction to Central, East European and Russian Studies*, Croatia was situated in the Balkans because the coordinator needed or

⁹⁸ A part of them, see Todorova 2009

⁹⁹ Maddison (MPD) 2023. According to Ashmead-Bartlett (1923: 17) Argentina, together with the USA and England, participated in the nourishment of Austria after 1919.

¹⁰⁰ According to analysis on an Argentinian television, this change happened in 1945. For example, see https://youtu.be/t96wJNE_YsY?si=Kg0yeJCENo14sXR8.

¹⁰¹ On the other hand, only ideologically it could be explained why some Slovenes consider themselves Balkan nowadays, as opposed to the germanisation (or austrianisation) they suffered to a great extent during history.

¹⁰² Todorova claims that the Western sciences and media created a “demon” from the word *Balkan* and its derivations. See especially 2009: 33-37.

wanted to present it within the Balkan countries. But it was not given a fair chance to be presented in its Balkan context in correlation with its Central Europe or Mediterranean contexts. Paradoxically, in another lecture of the same module, Croatia was presented on a map as being part of Central Europe. Or why even today, it is possible to find Yugoslavia as an existent country, in various forms, designated even by Europeans. These kinds of opinions which took root and are incorrect, unchecked or out of date are more visible regarding Slovenia, still considered Balkan by some authors,¹⁰³ and even in travel guides, e.g., *Western Balkans* by Lonely Planet (2024), including literary travel guides as well. Slovenia never was part of the Balkans culturally, although some geographers included it, as indicated by Todorova (2009: 30). This is a legacy of the former country Yugoslavia, and it will be difficult to get rid of it, because this vision was shaped during the whole 20th century, when contemporary science was being established, and people grew up with it.

Although the Balkans are marked negatively, as an otherness, not only by the (European) West, but also by Croats,¹⁰⁴ sometimes it's better to be Balkan than an unaccepted (and dumped) son of Western Europe,¹⁰⁵ not only because one knows what it is, but because of Western European hypocrisy, arrogance and haughtiness,¹⁰⁶ and even humiliation. On the other hand, there is Croatian hypocrisy: the Croats consider themselves Western European officially but act as Balkan in unofficially hiding it. Finally, I think Croatia and the Croats should build their identity in their own way, and rely less on this or that concept. However, it is not possible to ignore the shared history we have with others.

In summary, let us answer the title question: Croatia's belonging to the West (primarily culturally) is not a myth, but it is also not the full reality. Present day Croatia was predominantly part of the Western European cultural circle, or Western Europe (at least as a periphery, because of the Turkish invasion, if not by other social factors) from the High Middle Ages until 1918. At the same time (from the late 15th to late 17th century), its territories were occupied by Turks and a military zone (*Vojna krajina*) was established, so it also was part of the Balkans. In 1918, it joined the State of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and Yugoslavia, where an acculturation and further balkanisation took place, on behalf of others and the Croats themselves. Therefore, the Croatian culture as a whole (including Bosnia and Herzegovina) belongs to both the Western European and Balkan circles (at varying levels for each and by some elements at the same level for both). The Croatian identity is ambiguous, bplex (if not triplex), with two major divisions crossing such a small territory, that is as it is diverse as its landscapes and dialects.

It could be observed that when considering defining the space that a country historically belongs to, it is better to refer to its culture or circle (rather than to belonging), since notions of cultural regions and geographical notions may overlap but

¹⁰³ "It is thought, especially in Anglo-American works, that Slovenia and Croatia are part of the Balkans as well." *Hrvatska enciklopedija*, s.v. *Balkan* It is, similarly, thought by Todorova 2009: 30, 31.

¹⁰⁴ And not only Croats, but the Bulgarian as well (at least sometimes), for example, see Todorova 2009.

¹⁰⁵ Regarding the unacceptance on behalf of the Western Europeans, and even distortion of facts when concerning about eastern Europe, see Polish writer Miłosz 1999: 5-6.

¹⁰⁶ A good comparison was made by Todorova; if the Balkans are marked as savage and cruel (in killing among themselves), what then are the Germans?

not necessarily coincide. Cultural regions are continuums, because there could be differences in social factors, and since perceptions and “concepts” can change, as shown above. However, given that we live in a world where money is so important, and development and economic power form the core of today’s society, while deeper differences have mostly disappeared, it is not unrealistic to expect in the future that the main divisions will be based on monetary and economic power (although such criteria should be applied worldwide, and not only in Europe). Although J. Mikanowski said goodbye to such a division (*Goodbye Eastern Europe*, 2023), I do not think this is the case, and economic differences still remain (though less). However, in such a division, other countries would also be left outside Western Europe: Portugal, Spain, Ireland (historically). Until the end of the 20th century, Ireland was poorly developed, and regarding its culture is (almost) completely English in the older periods with respect to the Western European component. Spain, beside the economic issue, has other problems regarding the features of today’s Western Europe, such as major corruption, abuses of human rights, problems with rule of law, and the state of law. Spain is not a democracy, unfortunately. And these countries are considered parts of Western Europe because they are undoubtedly in the west, and it is impossible to avoid them in the geographical sense. In my opinion, this kind of division (without these countries) forms *Western Europe* based on economic power, and this coincides with “Western Europe” as traced by Herder in the Enlightenment (Wolff, 1994: 307-308). It is interesting how the image of country changes with economic progress. The Irish accent, words and manner of speech (i.e., Irish people, or characters) are perceived and presented positively (“cool”) in movies and television recently (unlike earlier).¹⁰⁷ This is why it is good to base divisions on culture (or circle), as an important, stable factor (that is omnipresent), and not on development, which can change, as can the perceptions and concepts, as shown by the cases of Argentina and Ireland.

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¹⁰⁷ Freyne 2024

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Sarajevo Corpus of SMS Messages in Bosnian

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Today, we live in a world of constant correspondence using our mobile phones: we regularly send messages through numerous applications for which it is enough to have access to the Internet and then nothing limits us in typing messages. However, do we remember a time when it wasn't like that? Not so long ago, thirty years ago, on December 3, 1992, the first SMS message was sent. From the first message to the appearance of applications such as WhatsApp, Viber, Facebook, Instagram – civilization communicated via SMS and through this communication developed a language that had its own specifics.

The language of SMS messages is defined primarily by text limitations: one message could have a maximum of 160 characters with spaces. Therefore, users were forced to make their language as economical as possible, that is, to convey as much meaning as possible with as few language symbols as possible, regardless of the possible formality imperatives. The conventions of using this language are not isolated: they have left a strong impact on our entire correspondence, so even our current communication through a large number of applications is strongly influenced by former SMS messages. At the same time, the language of SMS messages itself developed together with the technology that enabled later certain corrections and suggestions of words.

This is why this language is interesting both to linguists and to researchers of other non-linguistic disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, cultural studies, etc. However, despite the great potential that SMS messages offer, SMS message corpora are rare in the world, primarily due to the difficult process of collecting samples that will be diverse enough to cover different aspects of interest to researchers. Most of these corps are privately owned and are not available to the public today. Among the active corpora available to the scientific community, the following can be distinguished: The Swiss SMS Corpus, 88MilSMS: French text-message corpus and sms4science.

Recognizing the potential that such a corpus would offer, a group of authors gathered in Sarajevo and decided to use perhaps the last chance to "catch" SMS messages in the

Bosnian language and create a corpus before they, together with "non-smart" phones, are forever gone.

The author's team consists of six linguists: Halid Bulić (project leader), Elma Durmisević, Azra Hodzic-Cavkic, Enisa Bajraktarević, Azra Ahmetpahić-Peljto and Belmin Sabic. The idea was formally developed as a project of the Center for Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian Languages of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Sarajevo, under the name *Sarajevo Corpus of SMS Messages in Bosnian*, not because the informants or authors are exclusively residents of Sarajevo, but simply because the idea of the project was born and developed in the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Work on collecting SMS messages for the corpus began in January 2021, when the authors set themselves the imperative to collect 10,000 SMS messages. In addition to the fact that corpora of SMS messages are very rare and, from today's point of view, particularly precious, it is important to point out that the Bosnian language does not have many electronic corpora in general. Furthermore, they were all either developed outside the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina, or are of the open or specialized type. Therefore, the *Sarajevo corpus of SMS messages in Bosnian* represents a very significant contribution to the development of corpus linguistics within the framework of Bosnian studies.

In February 2023, they succeeded in this and published the collected material in PDF format on the website of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Sarajevo¹⁰⁸. Although the PDF format was not an ideal option, it still seemed a pity to keep the material from the public. In this regard, project leader, Prof. Dr. Halid Bulić, wrote in the *Preface* about this electronic edition:

The Sarajevo Corpus of SMS Messages in Bosnian was originally published by the University of Sarajevo – Faculty of Philosophy as an electronic book. The second phase of the work involved compiling the SMS messages into a corpus and linguistic annotation, which was done using the CLASSLA package (<https://github.com/clarinsi/classla>), version 2.1, with language = Serbian and type = nonstandard for tokenization, lemmatization and morpho-syntactic tagging (both MULTEXT-East and Universal Dependencies). As opposed to the previous version, this version corrects a number of mistakes in the metadata.

After the publication of the material in PDF format, work on the idea continued with the aim of getting the corpus into an adequate electronic form that will allow users different types of analysis, both linguistic and non-linguistic. Therefore, in July 2024, in cooperation with Dr. Philipp Wasserscheidt, an expert in corpus linguistics from the Humboldt University in Berlin, found the corpus on the repository *CLARIN.SI*¹⁰⁹. This corpus consists of 10,000 SMS messages, and can be counted among smaller corpora,

¹⁰⁸ The PDF can be found at the link: <https://www.ff.unsa.ba/index.php/bs/projekti-centra-za-b-h-s-jezik/18335-sarajevski-korpus-sms-poruka-na> - in the Bosnian language.

¹⁰⁹ The corpus can be found at the link: <https://www.clarin.si/repository/xmlui/handle/11356/1913#:~:text=The%20Sarajevo%20Corpus%20of%20SMS%20Messages%20in.>

but the variety of its samples certainly offers a large number of possibilities for research. Here it is stated that the corpus contains: *10000 texts, 15330 sentences, 105902 words, 128492 tokens* and the description further says:

This corpus is specialized, static (i.e., no future growth is planned), diachronic and covers the period from 2002 to 2022. The SMS messages included in this corpus were obtained from voluntary donors (informants). Both senders and recipients of the messages included in the corpus are Bosnian speakers, exhibiting diversity in terms of age, education and occupation, place of origin and countries of long-term residence. The Sarajevo Corpus of SMS Messages in Bosnian was originally published by the University of Sarajevo – Faculty of Philosophy as an electronic book. The second phase of the work involved compiling the SMS messages into a corpus and linguistic annotation, which was done using the CLASSLA package (<https://github.com/clarinsi/classla>), version 2.1, with language = Serbian and type = nonstandard for tokenization, lemmatization and morpho-syntactic tagging (both MULTEXT-East and Universal Dependencies). As opposed to the previous version, this version corrects a number of mistakes in the metadata.

Each SMS in the corpus offers information about the age and occupation of both the recipient and sender of the message, place of residence, level of education, gender, number of words in the message and number of characters. In addition, the informants were able to state notes that they considered important, for example that a particular message is a continuation or response to a previous message or that the recipient and the sender are related. Therefore, within the framework of this correspondence, users can analyze linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of entire love correspondences, discussions, conflicts or, on the other hand, explanations of why the informant is late for the arranged coffee, etc. The anonymity of the informant is guaranteed because all names, surnames and nicknames in the text of the message are anonymized. Within the 10,000 SMS, the informants are very diverse: they come from different age groups (from students to pensioners), different educational profiles, and even different countries. Although the informants are mostly from Bosnia and Herzegovina, a certain number also come from Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, Austria, Germany and the United States of America. The condition for specifying another country was that the informant spent more than five years there, so this corpus can also be used for the analysis of bilingualism or language in a diaspora. The messages contained in the corpus were sent in the period from 2002 to 2022, so this corpus also has a diachronic nature because it can be used to analyze how SMS correspondence has changed over time.

The material for the corpus was collected by having informants fill in a table for each SMS they shared. In the text of the message, the name is anonymized, but there were no other interventions. The emoji has been left. Metadata includes: native language (which is the same for all informants - Bosnian), gender, age, country of long-term residence, level of education, occupation, and month and year of sending the message. Taking into account the above data, the search on the Clarin.si repository offers numerous possibilities. We can examine, for example, phenomena related to gender or age, for example the relationship between the number of words and the level of education, the choice of the most common initial wording among female and male informants, etc.

SMS, which served as the basic form of correspondence for about thirty years, is certainly a valuable phenomenon that science should record, which is why this corpus represents a very significant contribution both to Bosnian studies and beyond. Bearing in mind that the non-standard language is still fighting for its place in the study of the languages of the Central South Slavic diasystem and that this is a corpus of a non-standard language – it is important to highlight its regional and general Slavic contribution. And finally, given the variety of metadata, it can be confirmed with certainty that the *Sarajevo corpus of SMS in Bosnian* can be used by linguists in their studies of sociolinguistics, stylistics, pragmatics, dialectology or gender studies, but certainly also by other scientists within sociology, psychology, pedagogy and other sciences for which this data is relevant.

*Late Soviet and Post-
Soviet Necro-
Aesthetics*

Motherland Death: Late Soviet and Post-Soviet Necro-Aesthetics (A Short Introduction)

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The content cluster below has been put together as a contribution to death and immortality studies (see e.g. Khapaeva 2017), with an East European twist (see e.g. Bernstein 2019; Sofronov 2022; Jianu and Lazar 2023; and Epshtein 2023). The articles in the cluster encompass the period from the 1980s to the present day, i.e., from one global shift, signified by the fall of the USSR, to the next, signalled by COVID, Russia's full-scale invasion in Ukraine, the world's division into increasingly isolated and antagonistic segments, and the return of the threat of a nuclear apocalypse.

In the context of East European studies, the topic of death has been primarily explored by anthropologists (see e.g. Mokhov 2021 and the academic journal *Arkheologiya russkoi smerti*, nos 1-6, 2015-18). Researching necroaesthetics (i.e. a beautification of death in East European culture) is an underdeveloped field. In the 1980s-1990s, necroaesthetics reflected the gradual disintegration of Soviet society and individuals through necrorealism (see Lars Kristensen's article in this cluster), the so-called schizo-revolution of St Petersburg art scene (see Khlobystin 2017), the National Bolshevik Party and its Moscow newspaper *Limonka* (see Fenghi 2020, Chapter 2), the *chernukha* film genre (see Isakava 2017), songs by the Siberian punk band *Grazhdanskaia Oborona* (see Chernyi 2014), heroin chic in fashion (which arrived in Russia in the late 1990s, see Kushnir 2021), and so on.

During the relatively prosperous 2000s, the chill of afterlife diminished its attraction for authors and artists, yet it made a comeback with the advent of *ruskii mir* ("Russian World"), an intellectual and institutional "attempt at conceptualising the identity of Russia and her place in the post-Soviet space, with strong reference to the spread of Russian language and culture" (Wawrzonek 2021: 19), by force of arms if necessary.

According to the cluster's authors, the current revival of necroaesthetics has been prompted by the Kremlin's adoption, in the early 2010s, of conservative values, characterised, in particular, by the development of the cult of Victory (over Nazism, see Walker 2022) and the return of patriotic hero as a principal role model in popular culture

(a long process with post-Soviet roots in the late 1990s, see e.g. Norris 2012). Today, nostalgic necrophilia dominates official Russian culture and politics, with its constant recycling of the Soviet era, evident, for example, in the processions carrying ancestors' portraits (known as *bessmertnyi polk*, or the Immortal Regiment, see polkrf.ru) at the annual Victory parades, and in the digital resurrection of once popular (now deceased) actors and singers (see Nemchinova 2022), e.g. for the New Year's Eve TV show *Goluboi ogonek* ("Blue Light"). A symbolic revitalisation of the dead has also been practised by the Kremlin's countercultural opposition, which, in competition with the officialdom, seeks to reappropriate death (cf. the Party of the Dead phenomenon, see Agitatsia 2021).

The articles in this cluster deal with necroaesthetics from various angles. Lars Kristensen analyses its manifestations in contemporary Russian cinema through Mikhail Brashinsky's film *Waves* (2023), situating it between Western necropolitical theories and the Russian tradition of necrorealism, exemplified by Evgenii Yufit. Kristensen argues that *Waves* moves beyond necrorealism by developing an allegorical critique of post-Soviet authoritarianism that encourages political awareness and viewer responsibility.

Andrei Rogatchevski examines how death is conceptualised in the artistic, political and military activities of Eduard Limonov's National Bolshevik Party through psychoanalytical and metaphysical frameworks, using Limonov and Zakhar Prilepin as case studies against the backdrop of post-Communist wars in Europe and Mbembe's theory of necropolitics. The article also explores the interaction between the party's grass-root necropolitics and the Kremlin's state-level necropower.

Thomas Drew's paper analyses how the Russian state has memorialised war casualties since the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, drawing on (post-)Soviet visual traditions to use the war dead for propaganda and social engineering. Drew argues that these necroimages underpin state mythmaking, and interprets the Putinist regime's self-image as a death mask.

Finally, Emma Rimpiläinen traces the post-Soviet zombie as a cultural figure from the demise of the USSR up to the 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine, showing how it articulates social anxieties about influence, communication and power, rather than about physical contagion. In the context of the current Russo-Ukrainian war, zombification becomes a rhetorical and ethical tool for distrusting communication, managing responsibility for the beliefs of one's loved ones, and diagnosing the workings of power, with the implication that anyone can become zombified.

This cluster is the first publication within the international research network "Necroaesthetics and Necropolitics in Contemporary Eastern Europe", initiated and coordinated by Maria Engström and Andrei Rogatchevski.

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Towards Necroaesthetics in Contemporary Russian Cinema

Original research article

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Abstract:

This article examines the emergence of necroaesthetics in contemporary Russian cinema through an analysis of Mikhail Brashinsky's 2023 film *Volny* (*Waves*). Drawing on the theoretical framework of necropolitics as outlined by Achille Mbembe, the study distinguishes between Western conceptions of necroaesthetics and the uniquely Russian tradition of necrorealism, particularly in the works of Evgenii Yufit. The analysis identifies how *Volny* draws lines to the aesthetics of necrorealism, incorporating intertextual references. However, in *Volny*, Brashinsky must construct his own framework of post-Soviet authoritarianism that can be aligned with a neoliberal critique. Through the film's three-part structure – the main protagonist's retreat into nature, his immersion in a death cult, and the confessional aftermath – the paper argues that *Waves* offers a critical reflection on grand narratives, belief systems and sovereign power. Ultimately, the film presents a form of necroaesthetics that goes beyond necrorealism by adding allegorical critiques to the political system. It is argued that this creates a space for political awareness and viewer responsibility in an era marked by ethical uncertainty and authoritarian resurgence.

Introduction

At our local art museum in Skövde, Sweden, an exhibition opened in the fall of 2022 titled *The Chance of Survival at the Time of Necropolitics* by Chto Delat? and *The Party of the Dead*. It was only six months after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. The museum staff told me they had envisioned an onslaught from the public about the relevance of displaying Russian artists at their local museum – artists who could be considered complicit in the war against their landlocked neighbour. However, the public backlash did not happen – as it usually does not in our small town. Thinking about this later, it seemed even more significant that the exhibition’s announcement referencing necro-politics did not cause offence. Recalling Ella Shohat’s perceptive article, ‘Note on the “Post-colonial”’ (Shohat 1992), in which she registers a shift in attitudes toward the term *postcolonial* grounded in the geopolitical changes brought about by the disintegration of the Soviet Union, one might ask whether a similar shift can be detected in the passing of *necropolitics* in the exhibition title going largely unnoticed. Perhaps necropolitics is now understood as a natural extension of the postcolonial perspective, which has shaped the politics of art exhibitions ever since postcolonialism emerged as an academic discipline (Cohen, Torshizi & Zamindar 2023).

A second observation that guides this paper comes from *The Guardian* (2024), which featured an article about the science of death. According to the scientists cited, “death is not a point but a process.” One of them, Belgian neuroscientist Charlotte Martial, argues that we need to reconsider the relationship between consciousness and responsiveness, and “maybe [even] question every state that we consider unconscious” (Blasdel 2024). The way these researchers describe their topic and push the boundaries of death into a state of unconsciousness resonated with the artworks of *The Party of the Dead*, now exiled in cities like Berlin, Vienna, or Tel Aviv. They too seek to push death into the consciousness of their audiences.

One of the artworks in the exhibition was Chto Delat?’s *Canary Archives*. This piece draws allegories from the function of canaries in the mining industry, where the death of a caged bird signalled the presence of toxic gases. Similarly, in this artwork, the cage functions as a warning system for detecting a toxic environment. However, whereas birds were once the warning, in Russia today it is the artists who are the first to be strangled by the totalitarian atmosphere. Using this metaphor of a warning system for the slow progression into totalitarianism, this paper aims to analyse one film to assess whether cinematic indicators of totalitarianism can be detected.

The selection of material for analysis is deliberately limited. I will use one filmmaker and, in particular, one film to illustrate my argument. This is, of course, methodologically problematic if the goal is to make claims about Russian cinema as a whole. My aim is to use Mikhail Brashinsky as a case study to pinpoint trends or currents in contemporary Russian cinema. Brashinsky becomes my cinematic canary – used to

detect the toxic gas of necropolitics. Before turning to Brashinsky's film, we need to define necroaesthetics as it manifests in art.

There is a direct lineage to necroaesthetics from Achille Mbembe's definitions of necropolitics, tied to the postcolonial production of "death-worlds," where the extraction of resources and human lives leads to a condition of living death (Mbembe 2003: 40). Necroaesthetics is formed out of the desire to make the condition of living death visible – to give "death-worlds" a voice. The argument here is that the necroaesthetics found in Brashinsky's work is closely tied to necropolitics – a consequence of growing totalitarianism – rather than arising from a purely aesthetic condition. The necroaesthetics of *Waves* is driven by a desire to critique sovereign control over individual freedom. The film divided critics: some condemned it (Kichin 2023), while others saw in it a glimmer of hope (Chernova 2023; Il'ina 2023). Its production was torturous and laborious, with several setbacks – COVID-19 among them (Stepanov 2022). Nevertheless, I argue that Brashinsky and his film *Waves* provide an excellent case through which we can assess the evolution of necroaesthetics in Russian cinema.

In the early 2000s, Sergei Medvedev (2025: 43–44) argues, Russian politics underwent a 'corporeal turn', characterized by an intensified focus on bodies, health, and life as objects of political control. This turn can be understood as closely linked to the emergence of necroaesthetics, in which body politics occupy a central position. As concepts of hygiene, classification, and population management increasingly entered political discourse (Medvedev 2025: 43–44), the distinction between necrorealism and necroaesthetics became more pronounced, with the latter foregrounding forms of otherness produced through such discursive regimes. Moreover, in the transition from biopolitics to necropolitics, death itself becomes a governing principle that drives political action, as exemplified by the deployment of soldiers to the front lines (Terry 2024: 313). Within this neo-colonial context, the Russo-Ukrainian war "can be seen as a typical example of Achille Mbembe's concept of necropolitics" (Makarychev & Medvedev 2024: 123). While the war represents a culmination of the corporeal turn, I will argue that Brashinsky's filmmaking can be read as an early manifestation of the same shift.

Brashinsky's film will be set against the necrorealism of Evgenii Yufit, who best personifies the necrorealist perspective (Berry & Miller-Pogacar 1996). According to Fenghi, necrorealism of the 1990s is characterized by "intellectual freedom, creativity, and radicalism" (Fenghi 2023: 256), which is markedly different from the current cultural climate in Russia where culture is seen as an 'engine' for social transformation (Murawski 2022). My claim is that Brashinsky makes explicit references to Yufit and the necrorealists through his film *Waves* and thus points in the direction of necroaesthetics.

Capturing the Necroaesthetics

Russian and Soviet colonialism were different from Western transatlantic trade industry that characterises the predominant perspective on colonialism. Etkind has controversially (Hansen 2023) argued that Russians were both colonisers and the colonised at the same time through internal colonisation (Etkind 2011), which is used to illustrate that “life is preserved and cultivated as an organic natural resource” (Makarychev & Medvedev 2024: 139). It is the argument of Makarychev and Medvedev (2024: 144) that Russia has moved from biopolitics into necropolitics through treating its own population as it an expendable commodity (whether in pandemics or wars), which is reminiscent of a colonial situation where overseas colonies were part of a widespread slave trade. In short, Russian necropolitics is included in the same process and procedures are comparable with a colonial situation. Internal colonialism produces that same systems of exploitation and power hierarchies where the death of some is necessitated by others. While Mbembe’s necropolitics is formulated out of a Western context, death-worlds are continuously produced through political action and can be detected within other forms of imperial construction, including the post-Soviet Russian case.

In the Western context, necroaesthetics has been considered a consequence of biopolitics, colonialism, and racism. The term follows in the wake of Mbembe’s work on necropolitics, in which he outlines how political regimes – often colonial authorities – have decided who may live and who must die. Slavery is just one condition in which life and death are intricately linked to body politics (Mbembe 2003). If necropolitics is “the expression of sovereignty that resides in the power to decide life and death,” then it is also “an emergent practice” within the realm of aesthetics (Lushetich 2018: 2). As mentioned, colonialism plays a major role, but so do contemporary political crises such as climate change, migration, and the plight of refugees.

For example, Verónica Tello examines the construction of the Silent University – an art project led and executed by migrants – as a collaborative effort within contemporary art’s critique of institutional frameworks. Crucially, this critique, which emerged in the 1970s, should not be seen as anti-institutional but rather as an attempt to preserve the art institution in a more egalitarian and transparent form (Tello 2018: 60). However, it is precisely this drive for institutional critique that attracts “artists to come and propel ‘recovery’ or elicit ‘empowerment,’” which reads as capital extraction from “death-worlds” (Tello 2018: 68). Another example is the aesthetics of environmental crisis, which, according to Hauser, serves to “hypercompensate for a systemic necropolitics that has variously taken the form of the increasing technical manipulation of living systems, ecologies, the biosphere and of very ‘un-green’ mechanisation which [...] has ‘taken command’ of life and death” (Hauser 2018: 97).

What becomes evident in the application of Mbembe’s necropolitics to aesthetics is that it aims to give voice to the voiceless. Necroaesthetics seeks to tell the stories of

silenced communities that inhabit the death-worlds Mbembe identifies – immigrants, sweatshop workers, and victims of climate change – those sacrificed by a global neoliberal economy that does not discriminate by country or ethnicity. All societies are affected. However, this aesthetic is not neutral; it emerges from capitalism’s continuous effort to extract wealth from others’ labour or resources.

Marina Gržinić (2018) argues that necrocapitalism hollows out images of poverty, suffering, and conflict to such an extent that it links aesthetic landscapes to death. Ultimately, necropolitical regimes produce the “beauty” of death (Gržinić 2018: 31). Interestingly, in post-communist contexts, this emphasis on image production is accompanied by a lack of articulation around colonial experience. Gržinić writes that the 1970s saw the imposition of what she terms “biopolitical amnesia” – not as a racializing process of forgetting but as a deficit of memory. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in the 1990s, the suppression of counter-history continued in the form of aphasia: a lack of language with which to address the colonial past (Gržinić 2018: 31). This inability to develop a language for colonial legacies is precisely why necroaesthetics emerges – it helps us see the unseeable, to sense what cannot yet be articulated in words.

While necroaesthetics may appear more direct and detectable in certain artists' work, it also signals the rise of anti-globalist nationalism, as seen in Russia over the past two decades. Berardi (2018: 93) writes: “[t]he necro-aesthetic is the attunement of sensibility and of perceptual expectations to the current drift to extermination that is the key feature of the Trump age”. The “Trump age” could easily be replaced by the “Putin age.” Berardi argues that the necropolitics of the ‘strong man’ appeals to those who feel abandoned by the neoliberal marketplace – those who have lost status and security in the face of an unrestricted global economy. These individuals, seeking revenge, are often drawn to reactionary politics – Brexit, protectionist tariffs, or anti-woke rhetoric. In his view, “[t]he cult of superiority returns in the neoliberal age in the guise of social Darwinist competition, which despises those who cannot survive the ‘Natural Selection of the Market.’ Fascism, on the other hand, may be seen as an aggressive resentment of the historical game’s losers” (Berardi 2018: 88–89).

It is my argument here that the silent majority of Russians who support Putin’s warfare are among these historical game’s losers. The loss of empire, according to Anton Shekhovtsov (2025), is central to Putin’s quest for symbolic immortality. The Cold War’s outcome plunged Putin into revisionist thinking that has ultimately placed him within a necropolitical framework – one that seeks to distinguish between good deaths and bad deaths. Good deaths are those that further the return of the Soviet empire; bad deaths are those that attempt to prevent it – NATO, the EU, liberalism, or “woke” politics.

Neoliberalism itself does not oppose this logic of “good” versus “bad” deaths. However, it is important to distinguish between **thanatopolitics** and **necropolitics**. The former concerns the governance of death and the production of meaningful deaths – of

“good deaths” (Grue 2022) – while the latter links back to biopolitics and is connected to Nazi-era ideologies of racial extermination. In my view, this ties Russia’s war in Ukraine to the necropolitics of imperial nation-building.

This is essential because, as this paper argues, the necroaesthetics of Brashinsky’s film *Waves* represents a response not directly to the Russian army’s meat grinder in Eastern Ukraine, but to the failed promise of neoliberalism. It expresses the experience of losing the neoliberal game. What links the necroaesthetics in *Waves* to the necropolitics of Putin’s regime is Berardi’s “cult of superiority” in a neoliberal era where the strongest survive – while death-worlds are left behind.

Brashinsky: The Canary Bird of Russian Cinema

Mikhail Brashinsky emerged on the Russian cinema radar in the early 2000s with the drama *Gololed* (*Black Ice* 2002), although by then he had already established himself as a film critic. Together with Andrew Horton, Brashinsky co-edited two volumes on Glasnost cinema – *The Zero Hour: Glasnost and Soviet Cinema in Transition* (1992) and *Russian Critics on the Cinema of Glasnost* (1994). Having been educated partly in Russia and the United States, Brashinsky was well positioned to contribute to the growing interest in post-Soviet Russian cinema following the collapse of the Soviet Union. This dual cultural background carries over into his filmmaking practice, resulting in films that do not resemble much else produced in Russia at the time. In addition to his work as a scriptwriter, translator, and producer, his directorial films stand out as unique and somewhat anomalous in the post-Soviet Russian cinematic landscape.

This singularity makes Brashinsky easily comparable to international filmmakers. Quentin Tarantino is often referenced in connection with Brashinsky – not only because both make extensive use of allusions to film history and genre conventions, but also because of the deliberate pacing with which they develop and release their work. Neither filmmaker rushes projects; instead, they spend considerable time shaping their scripts before bringing them to the screen.

This international sensibility was already evident in Birgit Beumers’ review of *Black Ice*, where she references influences such as *Dogma 95* and ‘post-human’ cinema (Beumers 2003). *Black Ice* is a fragmented, fast-paced portrait of emotional alienation in Moscow around the turn of the millennium. The narrative centres on two figures: a lawyer who has left her husband and becomes entangled in a dangerous legal scheme, and a gay translator who becomes obsessed with her after a chance encounter in a hospital. Neither character can truly connect with others, trapped in self-absorption and unable to recognize love even when it is offered. Their paths intersect only fleetingly as they spiral deeper into isolation and dissatisfaction. Avoiding traditional narrative structures, the film presents a sequence of missed opportunities and failed encounters, underscoring the characters’ inability to see beyond their immediate desires. Visually,

this fragmentation is mirrored through rapid editing, hand-held camera work, and a surplus of close-ups that deny the audience a clear sense of spatial orientation. *Black Ice* portrays a world in which the speed of urban life has frozen emotional connection, leaving characters trapped in a dehumanizing cycle of desire and disappointment.

If *Black Ice* is a fast-paced, entangled narrative, then *Shopping Tour* (2012) is a slower, more coherent genre film. A satirical horror-comedy, *Shopping Tour* transforms a mundane day trip into a grotesque nightmare. The story unfolds through the lens of a teenage boy's mobile phone camera as he documents a bus trip to Finland with his mother. Initially framed as a shopping excursion, the trip takes a dark turn when the Russian tourists arrive at a Finnish shopping centre, only to be locked in and hunted by their hosts, who morph into zombies. The drama escalates into genre pastiche as every Finn seems determined to consume the "tasty" Russian shoppers. The mother and son struggle to survive, uncovering personal secrets along the way – her hidden smoking habit, his sexual orientation, and their unresolved family tensions. In my reading (Kristensen 2014), their flight through the shopping mall's back corridors exposes the "backside" of capitalist excess, where human life is commodified and consumed like merchandise. Through a mix of irony and horror, the film critiques Russian consumerism and the complicity of Russians in a system that feeds on materialism.

Although necropolitics are not overtly addressed in these two earlier films, both engage with contemporary political themes. Retrospectively, necropolitical tendencies can be detected. In *Black Ice*, the individual characters' various paths ultimately lead to death or dead-ends, with egotistic desires serving as their downfall. More directly, *Shopping Tour* visualizes Mbembe's "death-worlds" by exposing capitalism's underbelly. Still, it is in *Waves* that Brashinsky confronts necropolitics explicitly, making it the central focus of this paper.

Waves follows Oleg, who escapes city life after his girlfriend's suicide and stumbles upon a forest commune that promises immortality through synchronization with the universe's "waves." The cult-like community resembles a summer camp, but those over 65 voluntarily submit to "the next level" – a so-called meaningful death. As Oleg becomes drawn to a single mother, Vera, and seduced by the commune's ideology, he is gradually pulled into its rituals. The commune eventually collapses in flames, leaving behind shame and confusion. The film ends ambiguously, with Oleg and Vera ascending an escalator toward an uncertain light – perhaps redemption, delusion, or merely another chapter in their journey.

I argue that Brashinsky incorporates film history into his filmmaking not just as an auteur or a genre pasticheur, but as a means of political commentary on contemporary Russian authoritarianism. In this view, Brashinsky draws upon elements of necrorealism from late Soviet cinema to articulate his critique of Russia's political trajectory over the past two decades – a period in which necropolitics has taken firm root not only in Russia but across the geopolitical landscape.

Together, these three films – *Black Ice*, *Shopping Tour*, and *Waves* – explore themes of love, alienation, consumerism, and the search for meaning through innovative genres and unsettling narratives that challenge the viewer. They reflect a growing tendency toward necroaesthetics in contemporary Russian cinema. The aim of this paper is to argue that necrorealism serves as a reference point for the development of necroaesthetics, as seen through the lens of Mikhail Brashinsky's filmmaking.

Soviet Necrorealism

As I aim to distinguish between *necrorealism*, which is particular to late Soviet and early post-Soviet Russia, and *necroaesthetics* as formulated by Western critics, it is essential to examine necrorealism more closely – especially the filmmaking of Evgenii Yufit. Why realism? Realism became the dominant mode in the Soviet Union through Socialist Realism, officially established in 1934 at the First Congress of Soviet Writers. In cinema, Socialist Realism marked a departure from the formalism of early Soviet film, such as montage cinema, which constructed reality by cutting and rearranging moving images. This approach emerged both from avant-garde aesthetics – where form and content were subject to experimentation – and from the technical constraints of the time, which only allowed for short segments of footage. These factors contributed to the celebrated tradition of Soviet montage cinema, though some critics saw this as problematic in terms of realism. French film theorist André Bazin, for instance, argued that Soviet formalism imposed a controlling mode of cinema that limited the audience's ability to interpret meaning from the images (Bazin 2005).

One could argue that the dominance of realism was institutionalized through Socialist Realism. Boris Groys contends that the formalist and avant-garde aesthetics of the early Soviet Union did not entirely vanish with the imposition of Socialist Realism (Groys 1992). While opponents suggest a clear rupture between these movements (see e.g., Kirn 2015), Groys maintains that, in terms of depicting reality, the aesthetic regime of realism remained intact. Whether there was a break or not is secondary to the current discussion; what matters is that realism was the dominant framework through which aesthetics was interpreted. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that necrorealism emerged as an attempt to construct a new form of realism in opposition to Socialist Realism, which necrorealists saw as empty as the political rhetoric it accompanied. Viktor Mazin argues that the necrorealists sought to double reality in pursuit of the impossible, a “double mimesis” (Mazin 2001: 30), which retains the framework of realism. For the necrorealists, the ‘necro-’ was the principle around which the movement revolved, and ‘realism’ was the defining aesthetic frame of representation (Mazin 2001: 32). The realism that the necrorealists pursued was not a more-than-real, as in surrealism, but rather a “para-realism” adapted to the decaying aesthetic principles of Socialist Realism — and to a decomposing socialism at large (Mazin 2001: 35–39). This, of course, means

that the necrorealists were, as a critic wrote in 1992, “one flesh with *homo sovieticus*...” (quoted in Mazin 2001: 47). True to the modernist art tradition, the necrorealists added an aesthetic frame of “indifferent deadness” to the real, which audiences found shocking and revolting, even “anti-aesthetic” (Alaniz & Graham 2001: 21-24).

There are several approaches to examining necrorealism as a cinematic form. One is to consider its roots in amateur cinema and its precarious position within the state-controlled filmmaking system (Vinogradova 2011). Vinogradova argues that although amateur film workshops were fully funded by the state, they were not necessarily required to project state ideology. In this context, the work of Evgenii Yufit and the necrorealists provides a valuable example of a cinema that sought “to subvert the values grounded in the doctrine of social realism” (Vinogradova 2011: 223). In *Sanitary-oborotni* (*Werewolf Sanitarians*, 1984), for example, the narrative begins with a sailor alighting from a train and walking into the woods, where he is beaten to death by a group of sanitarians who follow him. The three-minute film ends with footage of a ship and a roaring sea. In short, there are no hallmarks of realism present, since, according to the necrorealists, the very concept of “the Real” was equated with death (Vinogradova 2011: 223).

Similarly, the opening of *Lesorub* (*Woodcutter*, 1985) is set in Yufit’s studio, where the walls are adorned with paintings of heads of corpses. Yufit himself enters the room with a bullet hole in his forehead and picks up a microphone – but his voice cannot be heard. When he finally plugs in the microphone, the film abruptly cuts to a snowy forest path where a man walks unsteadily, either drunk or struggling on the slippery ground. A mob suddenly rushes across the path at high speed, knocking the man down. Shortly afterward, they return in the opposite direction, trampling him again. They attach a rope to his leg and drag him away. A dummy is then thrown from a tall building and beaten upon hitting the ground. An intertitle states that “despite falling from great heights, his functions remain intact.”

These sequences align more closely with the aesthetic regime of formalism and the cinema of attractions. Silent imagery, intertitles, and rapid editing are reminiscent of Georges Méliès as well as Lev Kuleshov, suggesting that necrorealists were far from indifferent to film theory. At times, events are intercut with shots of people watching, implying the presence of spectators within the film. The viewer’s position is thus projected as a substitute for an internal audience, yet in necrorealist cinema any possibility of meaningful interpretation is ultimately denied. The images make no sense, either for the onlookers within the film or for the audience watching the spectacle.

Indeed, Elina Sattarova uses the term “necrospectacles,” asserting that the films arising from necrorealist happenings were indeed intended for an audience (Sattarova 2023: 91). Sattarova connects necrorealists’ fascination with trains to the birth of cinema itself, such as the Lumière brothers’ *Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat* (see also Alaniz & Graham 2001: 26). While trains were a recurring motif in necrorealist films – and this

will be shown to carry over into Brashinsky's work – other forms of transport also featured prominently in early cinema. For instance, bicycles are central in the Lumière film *Workers Leaving the Factory*, suggesting that the bicycle is as foundational as the train in linking mechanical movement to cinematic motion (Bennett 2019). Notably, for the Situationists – whose “happenings” in the 1960s and 70s bear similarities to those of the necrorealists – the bicycle was the preferred mode of transport, due to its speed and the elevated vantage point it offers the rider. The Situationists engaged with the modernist avant-garde movement, which challenged traditional boundaries and sought to redefine “the role of the viewer” (Oldrell 2025: 7). The necrorealists similarly adopted a modernist position but did so by playing with the rules of Socialist Realism.

The term *necroaesthetics* is used by Yurchak (2006: 238) in his book on late Soviet aesthetics. Yufit himself employs the term, elaborating on the political aspects of necrorealist happenings. He compares his interest in cadavers to their transformation in color and form – a metamorphosis he describes as “a kind of necroaesthetics” (Mazin 2001: 48). The key point here is that the word “aesthetics” only emerged retrospectively, after the movement's peak. While one can now identify necrorealist aesthetics as a rejection of binary biopolitics and a striving towards the creation of “a new species” (Yurchak 2006: 249), I would argue that viewing their work primarily through an aesthetic lens risks re-politicizing what was originally intended as an escape from ideological frameworks. In his MA thesis, Thomas Drew (2017: 2) also refers to *necroaesthetics*, but in a similar fashion as Yurchak, through reverted commas. However, as Drew writes, the aim of necrorealism was not imposing a “cultural idea from an elevated, philosophical position, but [...] drawing attention to an existing feeling within the bulk of Soviet society” (Drew 2017: 16).

Recurring themes in Yufit's early necrorealist films include elaborate depictions of suicide, men frolicking in forests, and absurd, meaningless actions performed in a style comparable with montage-era cinema but presented as performance art. It is a world “*sans* women” (Alaniz & Graham 2001: 15), where homoeroticism reigns as an anti-evolutionary form of propagation. Women can exist as witnesses, as onlookers or as suicide enablers in the necrorealist works of the post-Soviet period. The early works were short films, as described above, ranging from 3 to 30 minutes, shot on portable cameras, and often intercut with reused documentary footage or actualities from Soviet cinema. As Yufit's films grew in length, due to his formal training at the workshop of Alexander Sokurov, they adopted a more explicit critique of evolution and human exceptionalism, becoming increasingly bleak and pessimistic. The reuse of documentary film clips diminishes in the later works, losing its relevance as a critique of the Soviet condition (Alaniz & Graham 2001: 23–24).

From a necropolitical standpoint, the condition depicted in these films is totalizing: there is no external position for the viewer that can offer critical distance of the images. It is an “undivided, whole aesthetic space” (Turkina & Mazin 2001: 54). By mimetically

doubling Soviet reality, life is portrayed as inherently meaningless, and death becomes the only means of achieving purpose. Death is not merely an endpoint but a process of transformation – and it is this process of decay that is framed as the truest expression of life.

Analysis of *Waves*

In the following analysis, I focus on three clearly distinct sections of the film. The first depicts Oleg's return to nature, in which he flees the city after the suicide of his wife or girlfriend. The middle section follows Oleg in the sect, where he falls in love with Vera and tries to understand the group's ideology. The final section takes place after the collapse of the sect and consists of online confessions from key characters. This structure mimics that of the necrorealists: first, the group travels into the forest (nature); then, they perform elaborate deaths (suicide); followed by Soviet newsreels or actualities, serving as commentary in the manner of relational aesthetics. In other words, meaning is derived from the social context of the art performance (Bourriaud 2002).

It is in the beginning of the film that we see a close resemblance to Yufit's filmmaking. If necrorealists sought to reduce life to its biological foundation – down to the molecular level – and thereby open a path to rebirth through death, then this is also what we witness in the opening of Brashinsky's film. Oleg's return to nature begins on a train as he flees his entrapped life in the city. While taking the first available train, he notices a couple arguing. When they step outside the compartment, Oleg steals one of their rucksacks and heads into the woods – reminiscent of the sailor figure in *Werewolf Sanitarians*. However, once in the forest, Oleg's struggle to adapt begins. Though he finds a small hut, he sleeps poorly, and the hut contains no food. The rucksack, containing only women's clothing, offers no help. In this situation, Oleg is the modern human alienated from nature.

Gradually, he begins to readapt. First, he lights a fire using a glass shard and tampons from the rucksack. Then he constructs a sling from condoms to shoot squirrels for food. Finally, he collects water from a stream. These actions mark his immersion into nature. He reaches a point outside the framework of society – beyond law and civilization – a bare-life condition akin to that sought by the necrorealists. He is reduced to a grain in the natural cycle, on a par with animals, insects, and trees. He even receives an endearing glance from a deer as they drink together from the same stream. Oleg's movement towards becoming an Agambenian *homo sacer*, an outcast in Ancient Rome that was considered outside legal order, is seen elsewhere in contemporary Russia in terms of body politics or war mobilisation (Medvedev 2025: 61; Makarychev & Medvedev 2024: 134-5). Here it is seen as a process of extreme othering, closely linked to e.g. prison camps, as in the case of the opposition leader Alexei Navalny (Medvedev 2025).

If this *homo sacer* stage is what necrorealists attempted to reach through elaborate self-mutilation or suicide, then in Brashinsky's film, this world is soon violated by the law – in the form of policemen chasing Anton. In Agamben's thinking, bare life is made possible by the *polis* (the city-state), which defines subjects through rules and regulation (Agamben 1998). Thus, the existence of the *polis* is what enables the possibility of bare life. This is also where Brashinsky cuts to the next section: Oleg's introduction to the sect. Anton reluctantly brings him into the community, where Anton's mother Vera has joined following the loss of her husband and older son. While the necrorealists may have stayed in the forest, decaying with nature through frolic and death, Brashinsky breaks with their tradition by introducing a death cult. It is not a totalizing condition, as in necrorealism, because Oleg remains a sceptic – an outsider who maintains the *polis* as a framework.

The sect is led by a charismatic leader who claims he can gather all the world's waves and unite them to stop time. "Because you have to believe in something, right?", he tells Oleg. The sect is building a machine to equalize wave energy, and all members contribute to this goal through breathing exercises, abstaining from meat and smoking, and rearing pigs for sale. Additionally, the women are expected to have sex with the leader, complicating Oleg's feelings for Vera. Here, Brashinsky presents a clear allegory of contemporary Russia, with its turn toward authoritarianism and the paradoxical logic of restoring Soviet greatness.

Brashinsky continues the necroaesthetic theme by depicting the sect as a death cult in which people over 65 years of age voluntarily sacrifice themselves for the "greater good" – i.e. the unification of the waves. It is through Zoya, Oleg's minder and caretaker of the pigs, that he learns this. Zoya cherishes the pigs and tells Oleg they are "closest to humans – after monkeys, of course." She notes their transplantable organs, shared diseases, and identical medication regimens. This interspecies logic bears resemblance to post-human perspectives, although it does not appear in necrorealism. Importantly, the pigs are raised for profit to ensure the sect's survival. They serve a utility function, not as co-inhabitants.

In contrast to necrorealism, where heterosexual love oriented toward reproduction is largely irrelevant, Zoya insists that pigs "love just as much [as we do]." Reproductive heterosexual love is, in fact, what distinguishes Brashinsky's necropolitics from necrorealism, where love is predominantly homosexual and therefore detached from reproduction. In Brashinsky's version, Oleg's sexual desire and lust for Vera keep him within the sect and introduce a critical perspective on wave theory. Love is very much present in Yufit's films, especially in his later feature works, where characters seek sensual and intimate encounters; however, these are rarely heterosexual and are more closely tied to intimate relationships with nature or attempts to dissolve into it. Indeed, when confronted with the inconspicuous homosexuality in his film, Yufit is adamant to level it as an infantile play with nature's contradictions (Artyukh 2004). In necrorealism,

alternative forms of reproduction constitute a central concern, as exemplified in *Serebryanye golovy* (*Silver Heads* 1999), where the main protagonist seeks to dissolve into nature through being penetrated by sticky wooden poles.

In contrast, in *Waves*, love brings into focus politics, which the necrorealists vehemently avoided. This political perspective is further revealed in the sect's euthanasia discourse, once again conveyed by Zoya. She explains: "This is how it works with us: when you turn 65, you leave. Old age gets in the way of immortality. The only thing the elderly can do to help is to give themselves. Their last wave, so to speak." Oleg responds with a remark that this is nonsense, but Zoya remain defiant: "It's not nonsense, Oleg. Think about it – it makes sense."

Without Oleg's objection, there would be no rupture in this logic. Oleg's resistance exposes the totalitarian reasoning that the necrorealists embraced to avoid falling into political ideology. In this sense, *Waves* is emblematic of contemporary Russian cinema – it uses allegory and Aesopian language, but ideology is unavoidable. Unlike late Soviet official rhetoric, which was hollow, today's discourse is ideologically charged.

This also marks a shift in necropolitics, as it becomes embedded in a neoliberal socio-economic system that resembles Social Darwinism more than liberal democracy (Makarychev & Medvedev 2024: 131). Within a Social Darwinist framework, death is understood as a natural process produced through nature's selective elimination of the weak, whereby individual death is framed as benefiting the greater good. The rationale for culling those over 65 is framed by Zoya in utilitarian terms: their productivity is low, and thus they should "give their wave" to the greater good. Here, neoliberalism enters the picture. Neoliberalism is characterized by the financialization of everything (Harvey 2005), where all value is measured by utility. Whether in finance, education or art, that which is unproductive is discarded. Zoya's reasoning aligns with this logic: the elderly have little use-value and must therefore be sacrificed. Similar arguments appear in euthanasia debates, where demographic shifts link entitlements to workforce participation, thereby stigmatizing non-workers (Grue 2022). As Jan Grue (2022) notes,

euthanasia provides what neoliberalism craves most: a framework for the ostensible ideology-free management of life. And in doing so it creates a perfectly rational discourse in which death can appear – always in the abstract – as a cost-saving factor, as *telos*.

It is worth noting that the necrorealists used an allegorical *telos* that pointed towards "a certain hidden, teleologically displaced striving to inscribe death in life" (Mazin 2001: 34), while in Brashinsky's film, the necropolitical *telos* of neoliberalism is in full view. Brashinsky channels this discourse through Zoya, though it becomes fully visible only in the film's final section, following the sect's collapse in a massive fire.

After escaping with Vera, Oleg is seen in a hospital – the same that admitted his girlfriend after her suicide. Then, abruptly, the film cuts to various characters speaking directly into webcams. This aesthetic – familiar to audiences from the COVID-19 era –

invokes online confessionals. The interviewer is never shown but presumed to be Oleg, which gives these monologues an intimate, direct-to-audience feel. Zoya appears first and offers a defensive, even accusatory, justification of her choices: “I don’t understand what you’re asking of me. What coercion? What violence? What more do you want from me? You’ve done the whole thing yourself. You took in everything. Everything. What more do you want? What life did you save? Whose? Mine? So I’ll turn sixty-six, then sixty-seven, sixty-eight – so what?”

These confessions explore why each character joined the sect, what kept them there, and whether they still believe in it. These questions mirror those that might be asked about Russian society’s drift toward authoritarianism post-2014 and 2022.

Oleg’s roommate at the camp, Petr, also comes online for an interview. Petr’s reply intensifies this allegorical critique. He responds: “You still don’t understand anything. What does a cult have to do with this? This isn’t about us. It’s about all of you. Look at yourself. Everything’s neat and tidy, right? You think you’re better than us? [...] I won’t say anything more.”

Here, the accusation shifts to the audience. We are asked to reflect on our complicity. Just as no one was coerced into the sect, belief systems like Putin’s regime are entered into voluntarily – because they offer meaning, purpose, and belonging. This critique is aimed squarely at the Russian audience, inviting self-reflection on individual responsibility in the political system’s evolution.

The film draws parallels with global political phenomena such as Trump’s MAGA movement, Orbán’s Fidesz, and Putin’s revisionist nationalism – each rooted in belief systems demanding faith in the face of contradiction. These systems promise greatness, purpose, and identity – however bleak or delusional the logic. *Waves*’ sect thrives on similar terms. Brashinsky thus addresses necropolitics by showing how belief in death – when framed as meaningful – can seduce people into self-destruction. His film transforms necropolitics into necroaesthetics not as a total condition, as in necrorealism, but as something escapable. There is an aftermath – an awakening. The confessions are in the past tense. The final scene shows Oleg and Vera ascending a metro escalator into the light, while we, the viewers, descend. Critics have debated the symbolism: is there a hope of (heterosexual) love? An escape into another world? A step toward redemption? (See Chernova 2023; Il’ina 2023).

Such ambiguity is a staple of arthouse cinema – leaving audiences to carry the film’s questions home with them. I do not wish to offer a definitive interpretation of *Waves*’ ending. Rather, I emphasize that the very existence of an “outside” affirms the aesthetic position of the audience. This critical stance – denied in necrorealism – is central to necroaesthetics as Brashinsky develops it. Through allegory, critique, and ambiguity, *Waves* invites reflection on belief, responsibility, and complicity in authoritarianism, offering both a diagnosis and a space for awakening.

Conclusion

Returning to the “canary in the coal mine” method, of using Brashinsky as a case study to test the invisible toxicity of contemporary Russian necropolitics, we can identify a clear evidence of playful engagement with late Soviet necrorealism. This is most apparent in the narrative structure Brashinsky employs in *Waves*: the journey from the urban environment to the forest by *elektrichka*, the return to a condition of bare life, the presence of a death cult, and the inclusion of documentary-style imagery, all closely mirroring the structures found in the early necrorealist films of Evgenii Yufit. It is within the aesthetic and conceptual spectrum of necrorealism that Brashinsky’s engagement with contemporary Russian necropolitics becomes visible.

Although the politics of death was sharply intensified in February 2022 with Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, it is important to note that *Waves* had been in production long before this moment. This complicates any straightforward alignment of the film with Putin’s later authoritarian consolidation of power. Instead, *Waves*, as the culmination of a decade-long creative process, suggests that necropolitical sensibilities had already taken root in the filmmaker’s imagination prior to their full realization in society at large. This trajectory can also be traced back to Brashinsky’s earlier films, *Black Ice* and *Shopping Tour*. That said, the necroaesthetics at work here is shaped by a Western critical tradition, in which the aesthetic project seeks to foreground voices rendered disposable by neoliberal and neocolonial necropolitics. Necroaesthetics thus functions as a critique of global neoliberalism, where the death of the many serves the interests of the few. We find this perspective present in the fact that Brashinsky allows space for critical distance, marking a departure from necrorealism’s more closed and nihilistic worldview.

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Russia's Grassroot Necropolitics: The Case of the National Bolshevik Party (with special reference to Eduard Limonov and Zakhar Prilepin)

Original research article

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Abstract

The notion of death in the artistic, political and military activities of Eduard Limonov's National Bolshevik Party (aka Other Russia) is examined from a psychoanalytical and a metaphysical viewpoint represented by Freud, Jung and Spielrein, on the one hand, and Aleksandr Dugin and Limonov himself, on the other. Limonov and Zakhar Prilepin serve as representative case studies against the background of the Balkan, Chechen and Ukrainian wars of the 1990s-2020s. Mbembe's concept of necropolitics provides the overall theoretical framework for discussion.

Question 151

The World Values Survey held in 2017-22 in sixty-six countries contained question 151, designed to find out if the respondents would fight for their country in the event of war. In Russia, where the survey took place in 2017 (when the country was already in a state of hybrid war with Ukraine), nearly 68% of those asked answered "yes" (see Haerpfer et al 2022). Yet in the autumn of 2022, some seven months into Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, an estimated 700,000 people left Russia abruptly to avoid mobilization by the armed forces (see Tofaniuk & Saprionova 2022). The high mortality rate at the frontline has instead been largely counterbalanced by eye-watering financial rewards for signing up that sometimes equaled millions of rubles per person (see e.g. Gerasimenko 2024 and Khorosho idut 2025). Also, heavy debtors and the long-term unemployed (see e.g. Dolinina 2023), foreign nationals (see e.g. Bartosiewicz & Żochowski 2024) and (chiefly) domestic convicts have been recruited (the latter, on the understanding that they would be set free if they manage to stay alive long enough; see e.g. Belovodyev 2024 and Denisova 2025). Last but not least, many ordinary draftees (banned by law from fighting abroad) have been tricked or forced into signing up for a

combat zone transfer (see e.g. Vakulina & Sheludkova 2024). At the same time, approximately 10% of the Russian troops engaged in the war (whose total number is estimated to be around 500,000) have gone AWOL in 2024 alone (see Kargin 2025).

Whether a result of a social desirability bias, or an alternative viewpoint (23.5% and 8% respectively answered question 151 as “no” and “don’t know”), or a heart change when push came to shove, or the wrong kind of war, or for any other reason – one thing is clear: a sizeable proportion of the 68% who had declared their readiness to fight for their country in 2017 would not convert into boots on the ground by late 2022. About half the size of the Russian army (currently numbering ca 1.5 million people) did not wish to be in it at wartime and the Russian authorities had to find an alternative solution to keep offsetting heavy war casualties (amounting in February 2022 – January 2025 to “a minimum” of 172,000 killed and “at least” 376,000 severely wounded, Clavilier & Gjerstad 2025). In other words, the Kremlin got involved in necropolitics, defined as “the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die” (Mbembe 2003: 11).

State-level necropower in Russia

This would not be the first time. The Red Terror of 1918-22, the Great Purge of 1936-38, the invasions of Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968) and Afghanistan (1979-89) – to name but a few in the previous century alone – are the highlights of Soviet policies adopted to establish and maintain a kind of Marxism-based order, domestically and internationally. As the Nobel Prize winner Svetlana Alexievich (1994: 223-24, 227) put it, Soviet history is that of a

“Kingdom of Death. [...] We [the Soviets] are a people of war. We are either fighting a war or getting ready to do so. We have never lived differently. [...] Thanatology (a study of death) has governed us for too long. We have been taught how to die. We have learnt it well. [...] And we’ve unlearnt how to distinguish between war and peace, [...] life and death.”¹¹⁰

Such an outlook and behavioral pattern can be traced to the Marxist ideology. According to Mbembe (2003: 20),

“the subject of Marxian modernity is fundamentally a subject who is intent on proving his or her sovereignty through the staging of a fight to the death. [...] Terror and killing become the means of realizing the already known telos of history.”

Yet with the dissolution of the USSR and the Marxist doctrine falling out of the official favour, the Russian state still kept resorting to violent solutions of various difficult issues, mostly to do with conflicts over the Soviet ethnoterritorial legacy and the newly independent countries’ preferred allegiances. Suffice it to mention two Chechen wars of the 1990s – 2000s, the Russo-Georgian war of 2008 and the Russo-Ukrainian war (2014-

¹¹⁰ All translations are mine, unless indicated otherwise.

present), which can be classified as wars of recolonization (see e.g. de Nevers & Taylor 2023). To quote Mbembe again (2003: 23),

“The colony represents the site where sovereignty consists fundamentally in the exercise of a power outside the law [...] and where ‘peace’ is more likely to take on the face of a ‘war without end’.”

This explains both the brutality and the longevity of the current Russo-Ukrainian war, where prospects for a truce (let alone a lasting peace agreement) appear slim. For the time being, the demand for manpower has been met by the Kremlin in accordance with Mbembe’s understanding of necropolitics, namely “the capacity to define who matters and who does not, who is *disposable* and who is not” (2003: 27). It is therefore hardly surprising that, mindful of the lack of enthusiasm for enlisting and of the need to safeguard the titular nation (affected by negative demographics), the Russian authorities apply a combination of incentives and coercion to send to the battlefield (in addition to the population categories mentioned in the previous section) the ethnic minorities (for Buryats, see Agumava 2024; on the Chuvash, Tatar and Bashkir battalions in Ukraine see e.g. “Sura” 2025) – and the local population of Donbas (see e.g. Kibalnyk 2022).

In addition, addressing the reluctance of many Russian citizens to die for their country, the authorities have been practicing a nationwide thanatization, i.e. “boosting society’s death drive” (Epshtein 2023: 24) by trying to promote “a cult of death as a genuinely mass ritual and the highest manifestation of patriotism” (ibid., 26).¹¹¹ In this endeavour, the Kremlin has been partly preceded and partly assisted by the National Bolshevik Party (NBP).

“Yes to Death!”: Eduard Limonov’s NBP

From its foundation in 1993, by the author Eduard Limonov and the philosopher Aleksandr Dugin,¹¹² the NBP advocated an incorporation, by the Russian Federation, of post-Soviet territories populated by native speakers of Russian. The party promoted its agenda through direct actions, such as a temporary takeover of the tower at the Sailors’ Club in Sebastopol on 24 August 1999 (Ukraine’s Independence Day) with the slogan “Sebastopol is a Russian city”. The action caused an international scandal (the NBP members involved got arrested and charged with an attempt to damage the Ukrainian territorial unity, punishable by up to ten years’ imprisonment). The event could not have passed unnoticed by Vladimir Putin, whose first term as Russia’s PM had begun on 9 August 1999. Yet it took fifteen years or so until the annexation of Crimea became the Kremlin’s official policy, too, and got carried out.

¹¹¹ For more on this process, see Thomas Drew’s article in the same journal issue.

¹¹² For more on the NBP, see e.g. Fenghi 2020. For more on Limonov, see e.g. Rogachevskii 2003. For more on Dugin, see e.g. Barbashin&Thoburn 2014.

The NBP's direct actions were usually followed by police beatings, detention and jail sentences, not to mention the occasional lethal outcome for the party faithful. Since the NBP came into existence, hundreds of its members served time in prison, sometimes more than once; and dozens died in the line of party duty (see e.g. *Kratkii kurs* 2019). As role models for the living (and an indication of a death cult), a few of those killed were posthumously added to the editorial board of the main party newspaper *Limonka* (a double pun on Limonov's *nom de guerre* and a nickname for a hand grenade). The NBP's attitude to death is well illustrated by the party salute "Da, smert'!" (Yes to death!), signifying readiness to die for the party cause and inspired by the motto "Viva la muerte" of Franco's Falangists. The literary critic Viktor Toporov observed in 2006 that NBP members (or Natsbols)

"fight against life itself [...] – in fact, for the right to die a violent death. [...] A powerful creative impulse – a collective longing for death – [...] comes from a fiery Natsbol nucleus."

According to Vladimir Linderman (an NBP leader whom I interviewed in Uppsala in December 2010), to prepare NBP members for any eventuality, a samurai code of conduct has been adopted by the party (focusing primarily on the maxim "the way of the samurai is death"). The maxim has been taken from the 1979 book *Yukio Mishima on Hagakure*, which contains an English translation of comments by the Japanese writer and political activist Mishima (1925-70) on an early XVIII-c. collection of texts by Yamamoto Tsunetomo about the desirability of preserving certain samurai traditions in peacetime. By his own admission in a 1995 interview, Limonov came across a copy of the book while in emigration (i.e. well before launching the NBP), took it everywhere with him and kept rereading it over and over again. Quotes from *Yukio Mishima on Hagakure* can for instance be found in Limonov 1993, in a chapter entitled "A Heroic Attitude to Life".¹¹³

In Limonov's world, *Hagakure*'s take on the samurai legacy is intimately linked with a concept of heroism. For Limonov, a hero is someone "absolutely free because he has overcome the fear of death" (Pavlenko 1995: 90). Serving in the military does not automatically imply fearlessness, though. When criticizing the Russian army for its lack of will to stage a rebellion against the contemptible political establishment, personified by President Yeltsin, Limonov quotes this passage from *Hagakure*: "One cannot accomplish feats of greatness in a normal frame of mind. One must turn fanatic and develop a mania for dying" (Mishima 1979: 119). Limonov continues: "This is what every battalion or detachment commander in Russia should remember. Heroism is a special condition which has to be reached by getting into a state of frenzy. [...] Those

¹¹³ Cf. "In order to be a perfect samurai, it is necessary to prepare oneself for death morning and evening day in and day out. When a samurai is constantly prepared for death, he has mastered the Way of the Samurai" (Mishima 1979: 100), in Limonov's own Russian translation. A different Russian translation of *Hagakure* and Mishima's thoughts on it, in book form, under one cover, appeared three years later in St Petersburg (see Tsunetomo 1996). For more on Limonov and Mishima, see Chantsev 2009.

who have achieved the heights of heroism and rebelled are venerated by the people regardless of whether the rebellion is a success” (Limonov 1994).

Limonov first experienced war directly in late 1991, when visiting the siege of the Croatian town of Vukovar by the Yugoslav People’s Army, and it proved to be formative, despite his age (he was nearly fifty). Limonov was invited to the siege while at a book launch in Belgrade, by some officials from the self-proclaimed autonomy of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sylvania (which had been part of Croatia until its secession from Yugoslavia, with Vukovar as the autonomy’s capital). In 1992-93, Limonov also went to Bosnia and to the so-called autonomous republic of [Kninska] Krajina (where he joined Serbian separatists as a volunteer).¹¹⁴ He reported from the war theatre to French periodicals (see Limonov 2012a), and years later published a book about his adventures in former Yugoslavia. The book’s title was *Smrt*, a BCSM word for “death”.

In *Smrt*, Limonov (2008a: 71) calls the late XX-c. Balkan wars his testing ground, just like “the XIX-c. Caucasus used to be an exotic arena for the heroic deeds by the likes of Lermontov”. For Limonov, the Balkans looked like a “heroic land, in which heroic people [...] fought each other to death for their mountains, gardens and dark oak groves” (ibid.: 90). It was here that he realised: “things are important only if they lead to death” (ibid.: 91). It was here, upon meeting the future convicted war criminal Vojislav Šešelj (leader of the Serbian Radical Party, founded in 1991) that Limonov decided to establish a political party of his own:

“Šešelj’s party has armed units on the battlefield and a faction in the parliament. And I’ve been dreaming of becoming a putschist and a revolutionary [...] since childhood! [...] Now the tectonic changes have been taking place and the volcanic passions of peoples from the former USSR and Yugoslavia have awoken. It’s a good time for individuals like me” (ibid.: 100).

Unsurprisingly in such a context, the ultimate ambitions of Limonov’s own party, as described in his book-length party programme called *Drugaia Rossiia* (or Other Russia; this collocation has functioned as the NBP’s new name after the party got banned for extremism in 2007), have been formulated as follows: “Maybe Death will become our God” (Limonov 2004: 10).

Grassroot Necropower and Limonov’s Disciple Zakhar Prilepin

The author and politician Zakhar Prilepin can be considered a high priest of the NBP’s death worship.¹¹⁵ He initially encountered death in combat as a young police officer on a tour of duty at the first Chechen war in 1996, and joined the NBP the same year. These experiences defined Prilepin’s life for decades to come, and were respectively described

¹¹⁴ These short-lived ethnic enclaves may have served as a model for the self-proclaimed Luhansk and Donetsk people’s republics (LDNR) in Ukraine.

¹¹⁵ For more on him, see e.g. Orlova 2023 and Pertsev 2023.

in two loosely autobiographical novels, *Patologii* (Pathologies, 2005) and *San'kia* (2006). Prilepin's preference for controversial autofiction (describing in both books the deliberate and unapologetic killings of unarmed civilians), with elements of *roman à clef* (when the reader is unable to tell if the actions ascribed to identifiable prototypes happened for real), has roots in Limonov's own writing.

With few exceptions, from his scandalous debut novel *Eto ia – Edichka* (It's Me, Eddie; 1979) to the posthumously published travelogue *Starik puteshestvuet* (Old Man's Travels; 2020) and poetry collection *Zelenoe udostoverenie episkopa, slozhennoe vdvoe* (A Bishop's Green ID, Folded in Half; 2023), Limonov kept exploiting the only topic he could seemingly never get tired of: himself, presented in a heroic light. Prilepin's autobiographical persona is also "clearly positioned as a 'hero of our time', in Lermontov's words" (Rogatchevski 2012). Other typically Limonovian features in Prilepin's (and other Limonov-inspired) prose include (but are not limited to) social disaffection as a key impetus for creative activity; graphic sex scenes and copious profanity; desire to be different at all cost, frequently leading to self-contradictory statements and erratic behaviour; and obsession with making a lasting impact (e.g. political ambitions; revolution as a means of satisfying these ambitions by unsitting the ruling establishment; and the concomitant theme of death/immortality).

More specifically, Limonov's and Prilepin's war prose (including Prilepin 2017, 2019 and 2020 about the hybrid stage of the Russo-Ukrainian war) have the following tropes in common, listed here in no particular order of priority, as none has apparently been assigned to them by the two authors: policy shifts at the top bringing unwelcome changes to the battlefield; women; property expropriations; a stabilized frontline resulting in adventurous provocations; random death and luck in avoiding it (a near-death experience); what's for dinner; a distinct focus on soldiers/minders closest to the narrator/protagonist; and a special interest in private armies and volunteers.¹¹⁶

The NBP death-seeking ethos must have a great deal to do with the fact that over a hundred Natsbols joined the Donbas separatists voluntarily, soon after the Ukrainian war had begun (Chalenko 2017). The NBP also helped to send other volunteer fighters to the LDNR (some 2000 individuals in total between April and December 2014,¹¹⁷ see Prilepin 2015 and Azar 2017).

Contrary to the way the state-run army recruitment went after the full-scale invasion of 2022, money did not seem to play much of a role in the process organised for and by the Natsbols. Prilepin became one of such NBP volunteers. In the war's first four years he progressed from a humanitarian aid supplier to a deputy battalion commander. He claimed (2017: 19) that, until 2015, volunteers had been paid hardly anything at all and

¹¹⁶ Limonov and Prilepin did not always see everything eye to eye, though. In Prilepin 2019, Limonov is condescendingly described as a former visionary doer, who with time became a mere news commentator, so the authorities stopped paying attention to what he was up to. Conversely, in 2018 Prilepin was expelled from the NBP for aligning himself too close to the Kremlin.

¹¹⁷ Of the overall 35,000 or so, up to 90% of whom apparently came from Ukraine.

in any case their salaries amounted to approximately fourteen thousand roubles (or 230 US dollars) a month, i.e. were barely enough to live on.

The volunteers' motivations to head to the war zone varied from marriage breakdown to revenge for the civilian casualties reportedly inflicted on the Ukrainian pro-Russia sympathisers by their opponents (see Prilepin 2015; Prilepin 2020: 281). Yet the NBP members apparently went to Donbas to fight for a cause, protecting the interests of the Russian-speaking Ukrainian minority.¹¹⁸ Judging by the information available, it was the Natsbols' own initiative, of a potentially sacrificial nature, thus qualifiable as what can be termed "grassroot necropower", when individuals take upon themselves the decision concerning their own possible martyrdom, effectively establishing and exercising sovereignty over their own mortality. Mbembe (2003: 38) paraphrases such a mindset thus: "one is free to live one's own life only because one is free to die one's own death".¹¹⁹

The NBP's Death Drive: A Psychoanalytical Explanation

Applying a psychoanalytical framework to Limonov and his party members is justified because Limonov valued Sigmund Freud high enough to copy most of his *Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (in Russian translation) by hand at the age of twenty-one. Even though much later Limonov (2003: 202) admitted that "psychoanalysis was not an exact science", he praised Freud for discovering the libido and the subconscious, which brought about "a breakthrough and a revolution in our understanding of human beings" (ibid.: 203). Limonov calls Freud an "extremist" (ibid.: 201) – which, coming from a certified extremist politician should be taken as a compliment – and claims that Freud is "not a humanist. There is no doubt whose side of the barricade he's on" (ibid.: 202) – presumably implying the National Bolshevik side.

In their actions, NBP members appear to be driven by an exceptionally strong death instinct, which Freud in his 1933 essay "Why War?" defined as

"being at work in every living creature and [...] striving to bring it to ruin. [...] The death instinct turns into the destructive instinct when [...] it is directed outwards. [...] The organism preserves its own life [...] by destroying an extraneous one" (1964: 211).¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ They also wanted to get involved in Donbas's political life, hoping to restore Soviet-style social justice there (Azar 2017), but were denied the opportunity by the separatist leadership and its Moscow minders, who tended to treat NBP volunteers with suspicion. In the words of an NBP activist Aleksandr Averin, only "the chance to wage war under the competent guidance of specially trained people" was granted to the party members (ibid.). The Natsbols were not allowed to form substantial military units of their own, even though one NBP member, Sergei Fomchenkov (portrayed in Prilepin 2019 as Tomich), has reached the rank of a battalion commander. Moreover, several NBP volunteers were expelled from Donetsk (see Rogacheva 2015), while others got arrested and served jail time (see Smirnov and Shvets 2018) and Prilepin's battalion became dismantled after the assassination of Aleksandr Zakharchenko, head of the DNR (see Durnev 2018).

¹¹⁹ Cf.: For Limonov, death is "a means of enforcing his independent status (*samost'*) in the face of a comprehensively repressive [political] system" (Chantsev 2009: 126).

¹²⁰ This is a variation on an earlier excerpt from Freud's *Civilisation and Its Discontents* (1930: 97): "part of the [death] instinct became directed towards the outer world and then showed itself as an instinct of aggression and

Accumulated in society in critical quantities, the destruction instinct may lead to an all-out war. The philosopher Oksana Timofeeva elaborates:

”At war the subconscious desire to kill yourself [...] is transferred onto the Other. War is a kind of collective ruse: instead of committing a mass suicide [...], a country in a deep existential crisis attacks a neighbouring country under the pretext of defending some lofty ideals [...]. The irony is that the transference isn’t always working: by attacking the neighbour we’re doing damage to ourselves, too.”
(Arkhangel’skii 2024)

As Freud notes (1964: 211), when the death instinct is “turned to destruction in the external world, the organism will be relieved and the effect must be beneficial”. However, a residue of the death instinct always “remains operative within the organism, and we have sought to trace quite a number of normal and pathological phenomena to this internalization of the destructive instinct” (ibid.).

Prilepin’s *Patologii* lends itself comfortably to psychoanalysis. To begin with, the book’s title is a Freudian self-diagnosis.¹²¹ A dream describing how a Russian soldier peels off a Chechen’s head as if it was a potato (Prilepin 2006: 81) encapsulates the narrative vacillating between a constant awareness of the looming death and a no less constant (and demonstrably heightened) urge to eat and drink. According to Sabina Spielrein’s 1912 article “Destruction as the Cause of Becoming”, “eating equals copulating” from a physiological viewpoint (Cooper-White and Brock Kelcourse 2019: 224). Unsurprisingly, sexual desires are also present in *Patologii*, chiefly through memories and imagination: Prilepin’s alter ego, a detachment commander with the Russian special forces, goes to Chechnia as a result of a broken relationship with his girlfriend Dasha. Sexual failure as an impetus for warmongering has a psychoanalytical origin, described in Jung’s *Transformation and Symbols of the Libido* (1911): “Death fantasies [...] readily accompany the renunciation of the erotic wish” (quoted in Cooper-White and Brock Kelcourse 2019: 210).

In Prilepin’s account of the Donbas war (2019), belonging to the category of the living dead is a recurrent motif, e.g. (in the narrator’s own words) “I am not alive” (2019: 374), “a recently formed battalion of corpses that have gone cold” (even though none of the soldiers is even wounded yet; 2019: 11) and – in the words of the narrator’s wife characterizing him and his comrades-in-arms – “I perceive you as the living dead” (2019: 350). Limonov (2008a: 160) refers to himself in a war context as a “vigorous dead man”, too.

destruction”. Limonov was familiar with this work by Freud. He quotes a long passage from it (ibid.: 85) in a Russian translation in Limonov 1993: 30.

¹²¹ Needless to say, neither Limonov nor Prilepin were little when they experienced war. However, it is precisely the psychoanalytical claim emphasising the importance of childhood for human psyche that Limonov rejects (2012b: 257): “In my view, Freud’s statement that early childhood defines people’s future life is groundless. My experience as a child did not do anything for me”.

Such a paradoxical amalgamation of life- and death-related features also finds a psychoanalytical explanation, which posits that

“human instincts are of only two kinds: those which seek to preserve and unite – which we call ‘erotic’, [...] and those which seek to destroy and kill and which we group together as the aggressive or destructive instinct. [...] An instinct of the one sort can scarcely ever operate in isolation; it is always accompanied [...] [by] a certain quota from the other side” (Freud 1964: 209).

One of the first psychoanalysts to identify the death drive, Sabina Spielrein, states that “in order to bring forth life, death is necessary” and “the procreative act itself is self-annihilation”, because “without the destruction of the old state, change cannot and will not happen” (Cooper-White and Brock Kelcourse 2019: 223, 228, 234). Striving to build a different Russia, Natsbols believe that their plans are unlikely to come to fruition without a resort to violence. It can be claimed that the NBP’s revolutionary spirit is Spielreinian in nature (cf. her statement that “creation is also destruction”, Cooper-White and Brock Kelcourse 2019: 210). It is hardly coincidental that the imagery of *Patologii*’s opening scene (a minibus falling in a river, with one passenger managing to swim ashore and save another passenger, a little boy, in the process) is strongly redolent of Spielrein’s analysis of water symbolism in its relation to the dualistic concept of death-cum-rebirth (for details, see Cooper-White and Brock Kelcourse 2019: 213, 229-30, 238-39, 245).

The passenger – *Patologii*’s protagonist and Prilepin’s fictionalised double – saves the child at an additional risk to his own life. This is probably necessary to present the central character and narrator from the start in a positive light, as a caring, selfless and resourceful individual, before the reader learns that he is also a killer cop above the law. Given that the protagonist is autobiographical, it is hard not to interpret the book’s opening as an attempt at self-exoneration. As Freud put it (1964: 210), “the satisfaction of [...] destructive impulses is [...] facilitated by their admixture with others of an [...] idealistic kind”.

Needless to say, the fact that there is death drive at work does not automatically mean that human life loses its value. Actually, once the death drive has been transformed into the destruction instinct, the value of the destroyer’s life becomes directly proportionate to the number of lives that the destroyer has destroyed. Using death-driven people as a mere cannon fodder can therefore be seen as an unpardonable waste. This is probably why Limonov publicly expressed his indignation when in the autumn 2014 a group of some fifty NBP members were ordered to guard a frontline section next to Sokilnyky in the Luhansk region against a thousand or so Ukrainian troops: in the event of Ukrainian advance, the Natsbols would have undoubtedly been annihilated, making it a rather senseless “sacrifice” (Azar 2017). Thus, a sizeable proportion of “erotic” components in the destructive instinct contributes to an individual/group preference for the heroic mode of behaviour “as classically understood: to execute others while holding one’s own death at a distance” (Mbembe 2003: 37).

Death According to Dugin and Limonov: A Metaphysical Explanation

Psychoanalysis is not the only possible explanation of Natsbols' special relationship with death. The NBP leadership has helpfully provided two original conceptualisations of death, one by Dugin, who left the party in 1998 but remained an influential thinker among the party circles (and well beyond), and another by Limonov. Dugin's and Limonov's approaches, different though they are, both belong to a metaphysical, or mystical, tradition (Limonov uses the two terms as synonyms), which assumes that "along with the visible world, there exists a parallel invisible world. [...] [This] mystical dimension [sometimes] dominates over the physical one [...] or blends with it in copious amounts" (Limonov 2005: 6).

Dugin's views on the subject have been expressed most eloquently in his 2006 lecture "Smert' i ee aspekty" (Aspects of Death; see Dugin 2006 and Dugin 2009b: 223-63), given at the so-called Novyi Universitet (New University), an informal itinerant discussion group established in 1998, chiefly to promote Dugin's teachings (which, incidentally, link the notion of death with the Abrahamic religions while positing that God created universe out of nothing, i.e., in Dugin's interpretation, out of "an absolute death"; Dugin 2002: 294). Dugin differentiates between death as it was perceived (he claims) in pre-modern (prior to 1500 AD), modern (XVI-XX century) and post-modern times (from the late XX century onwards). Dugin argues that the key features of society in the pre-modern, modern and post-modern time periods are respectively connection (*sreda predaniia*, from *peredavat'* "to transmit"), interruption (*sreda razryvaniia*) and disconnection (*sreda razorvannosti*).

Initially, in the pre-modern "paradigm of thought" (as Dugin calls these three principal stages in humanity's understanding of what the world is like, see Dugin 2009a), "death as such does not exist [...] yet there is no life either as something separate from death. Life and death are somehow synonymous" (Dugin 2009b: 238). In the modern paradigm, death becomes "everything" and the "last heroic deed" still available to humans is "the right to die" (Dugin 2009b: 252). In the post-modern paradigm, even this right has been withdrawn. A concept of *bios necros* (dead life) is invoked to characterise what happens at the post-modern stage: death "has integrated life to such a degree that life is no longer aware of its own existence" (Dugin 2009b: 257). The postmodern human "is not mortal any more, [...] yet this makes him [...] not immortal but lifeless" (Dugin 2009b: 258).

The three paradigms function as a rule of thumb for almost everybody – with one exception, which Dugin refers to as "the Radical Subject", or someone who does not fully "match any of the paradigms" (Dugin 2009a: 612) and tends to retain the features that usually disappear in transition from one paradigm of thought to another. At the pre-modern stage, the radical subject is identical with life and can never accept death as its

part, however small. At the modern stage, the Radical Subject “acts as a murderer”, thus demonstrating to people “the value of life” (Dugin 2009b: 260-61), which they have allegedly forgotten. At the post-modern stage, the Radical Subject is simultaneously “life and death onto himself” (“sam sebe Zhizn’ is sam sebe Smert’”; Dugin 2006).

Who are these Radical Subjects, capable of killing others and themselves in the name of life as they imagine it? By mentioning Radical Subjects in the same breath with the political “movement” emblematised by a “bundle of rods”, or fasces, carried in public processions by the Roman civil servants known as “lictors”, Dugin (2009b: 261-62) hints: such individuals have a great deal in common with Fascism or Nazism. Given that the NBP is part-Nazi in its provenance (see e.g. Rogatchevski 2018), it is logical to come to the conclusion that Natsbols (including Limonov and Prilepin) are, by and large, little else than a self-selected association of Radical Subjects, who impose their own rules on life and death.

Never the one to follow in the wake of someone else’s train of thought if he could help it,¹²² Limonov has come up with an alternative explanation for the phenomenon of death, bordering somewhere between sci-fi horror and sheer lunacy. In his book *Eresi* (Heresies; 2008b), Limonov says:

People are creatures invented by a most complex civilization that controls planet Earth. [...] Human destiny is to die, so that people’s spiritual energy would recharge the accumulators of their Creators [who came from this superior civilisation]. [...] The day is near when we’d locate our Creators and attack them. A great battle will take place. We’ll immobilise them, capture them and uncover their secrets. We may even eat them and become immortal (Limonov 2008b: 55, 57, 60).

For some, this quote would testify to Limonov’s superiority complex.¹²³ For others, it would serve as evidence that he merely followed *Hagakure*’s advice: “Defy the gods if they block your path” (Mishima 1979: 133). On balance, any excuse for a self-destructive behaviour would do, theomachy and radicalism of all kinds included, when you need volunteers for a suicide squad.

The NBP as a unique role model?

Having gathered several possible (not necessarily exhaustive) explanations for the NBP’s self-sacrificial conduct, coming from both an outside and an inside perspective, two additional issues remain to be probed. When it comes to concerted and active death seeking on the battlefield, 1) to which degree if any is the NBP a specifically Russian phenomenon; and 2) has the party inspired anyone outside its ranks to join the separatists’ side in the hybrid war?

¹²² Cf. “Limonov does not go deep into thanatology – the philosophy of death and dying – in any of its aspects, either medical and biological, or ethical, or theological [...]. We will not find in his work what ancient philosophers called *commentatio mortis* or *meditatio mortis*. It is hard to locate in [his] text[s] a deepened expression of *fascinosum* and *tremendum*. Limonov does not avoid the topic of death but makes it his own” (Suchanek 2001: 141, 145).

¹²³ Limonov, portrayed as “starik Ed” (Old Man Ed) in Prilepin 2019: 332, is said to have been trying to play (demi)God in his later years.

The first question should be answered in the negative. To begin with, NBP party members include not only ethnic Russians but also e.g. Tatars, Roma, Blacks and Jews. Furthermore, according to Prilepin (2017: 316, 440-41, 452), the separatist cause attracted combatants from Ossetia, Chechnia, Serbia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Yakutia, France, Germany and Georgia, as well as Latvia, Poland, Canada, Finland, Norway and the US.¹²⁴ Finally, both the psychoanalytical and the metaphysical interpretations of death (drive) clearly account for a mankind-wide tendency. The NBP acts as a kind of magnet for people with a hypertrophied death instinct – but so arguably do skydiving, BASE jumping and motorcycling. The key difference is that the NBP activities at the Russo-Ukrainian war theatre are bound to inflict potential damage on many others and not oneself, first and foremost.

How influential has the NBP been as an early proponent of and participant in Russia's war with Ukraine since Spring 2014? This question is hard to answer in the absence of verifiable information about the exact numbers concerning Natsbols' presence at and input in the military operations in Ukraine (I have asked Averin, an NBP's current co-leader, to supply me with those but he has not responded). The NBP helped organize the arrival of thousands of volunteers from Russia in Donbas during the hybrid war. Yet most volunteers, if we are to believe Prilepin (2015), came from Ukraine, while many arrivals decided to go back to where they came from when their survival odds turned out to be low (Prilepin 2017: 120-21). What's more, by Prilepin's own admission (2015), it was (social) media reports about, and reaction to, the Russo-Ukrainian war, not Natsbols' example, that compelled people to volunteer. The NBP was not even the only pre-organised group of foreign combatants in the LDPR. Those included, among others, the Night Wolves MC and the adherents of the Russian National Unity movement.

What did seem to be affected by the NBP ideology and practices is Russia's Presidential Administration. The Kremlin has a long and checkered history with the NBP, persecuting some of its members while adopting some of its policies, such as expressing concern about Russian native speakers that inhabit the former Soviet territories. The NBP's disproportionate media presence (owing to their widely reported direct anti-government actions, as well as memorable NBP-related literary and visual art), coupled with advisory briefings (Dugin eventually became a Kremlin consultant and Prilepin confronted Putin personally a few times to impress the NBP and separatist agenda on him¹²⁵), is to blame.

With the Presidential Administration's (mostly involuntary) assistance that aggrandized the NBP more and more while attempting to marginalize it further and

¹²⁴ The full-scale invasion apparently widened the scope of those signing up on the Russian side to Africa, South-East Asia and the Middle-East, see Savina and Feoktistov 2025. These recruits have been likely motivated in their choice by pecuniary, rather than idealistic, considerations. According to *The Economist*, "as countries get richer, their citizens tend to become less eager to sacrifice themselves" (Raining 2024: 50).

¹²⁵ See e.g. Babitskii 2007 and "Prilepin posle 'priamoi linii'" 2018.

further, the party has achieved the level of publicity and recognition it would never have managed otherwise. As a result, the NBP “has saturated the air with [Limonov’s] contagious and explosive ideas and they have become a reality” (Prilepin 2019: 346). This reality, in some shape or form (such as the Russo-Ukrainian war, fuelled by necropolitics at the grassroot and state level), now concerns us all, wherever we are, whether we like it or not – and death may come sooner than we think. Forewarned is forearmed. A Hagakure-like training might come in handy. To quote from a Limonov obituary, “Limonov has died and now we live in his world, which values composure, fortitude and fearlessness” (Rubanov 2020).

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Necro-Icons: Russian State Commemorative Practice and National Mythmaking During the Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine

Original research article

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Abstract

This paper investigates the practices and politics of memorialisation of Russian war casualties since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Drawing on Russian and Soviet legacies of the memorial image, it looks at the ways in which the Russian state has used its war dead for propagandistic and social engineering purposes over the last two years; alongside this investigation, it examines the significance of the necroimage (a term used here to describe Barthes' concept of 'a living image of a dead thing') in relation to the Russian state's practices of mythmaking and self-justification. Ultimately, viewing these mythmaking practices in relation to the works of Roland Barthes and Francois Hartog, I propose a new way of viewing the Putinist regime's self-image: as a death-mask, constructed around a metamodern articulation of Russian temporality; a mechanism of national self-commemoration.

Nationalist rhetoric must always include a degree of artifice. In the creation, modification and perpetuation of a national mythos, narrative is paramount and invaluable for bridging awkward discrepancies between political rhetoric and historical fact (Anderson 1991). Throughout Putin's regime, and particularly since the early 2010s, political discourse in the Russian Federation has seen increasing use of ambiguity and artifice, often attributed by analysts in part to the influence of Vladislav Surkov¹²⁶. The foci of this article are threefold: the way in which the Kremlin has been transforming its image since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the various self-justifications which have been given for the war in official and state-aligned media, and the way that Russian war dead have been utilised in support of nationalist propaganda and social engineering programmes. These factors, viewed in conjunction with one another, present an image of Putin's Russia, formed in part through its martyrism of military casualties and iconification of their portraits, and its ambiguous blending of temporalities, relying on centuries of disparate histories and narratives, forms what I consider to be a death mask; a 'living image' (Barthes [1981] 1993:79), a projection of life from a regime which understands, on some level, that it is not quite alive.

Picturing the Dead

Up to the 19th-century, the memorial image was generally limited to high-status individuals; to those who could afford the commission of their own portraits, busts and similar from professional artisans, or who were considered important enough to have such things commissioned post-mortem by their families or communities. The advent of photography did much to change this, and it was further democratised by advancements in printing which allowed for the reproduction of photographic images in more durable forms. Chief among these new methods, in the context of the memorial image, was photoceramics, pioneered by Lafon de Camarsac in mid-1850s France. Photoceramics enabled the installation of a photorealistic image of the deceased on their headstone itself; not a facsimile of the person engraved into the stone, but a captured instant of the individual's life and true likeness. By the start of the 20th-century, the new technology and associated memorial practices passed, via Italy, to the Balkans where it became particularly popular in Slavic communities. If grave portraiture existed in Russia or the RSFSR before the 1950s at all, it was not at all prominent, but post-war relations between the USSR and Yugoslavia led to a noticeable increase in use in the 1960s to 1980s, presented by Svetlana Adonyeva and Elizabeth Warner (2021:146) as a '[s]ecular alternative to...the small icons which often used to adorn graveyard crosses in pre-Soviet times'. The development of laser etching in the 1990s and 2000s allowed those who could

¹²⁶ This article does not dwell on Surkov; that would be a separate article in itself. However, his background as an aspiring theatre director and PR-manager is highly pertinent to discussion of performativity in 21st-century Russian politics, and his formulation of 'Putinism' and pet concept of 'sovereign democracy' are directly relevant to how the Russian state has cultivated its image domestically and internationally since Putin's first term.

afford it to make their ‘living image’ larger than life, notably the *bandity* whose headstones dominate their surroundings in Novodevič’e cemetery in Moscow and Širokorečenskoe in Ekaterinburg.¹²⁷ As Adonyeva and Warner (ibid.) note, ‘[t]oday, a portrait of the deceased is a virtually obligatory part of the grave marker’.

I use Barthes’ *Camera Lucida* here to frame this grave portraiture, even when not strictly photographic, as analogous to photographs in a memorial context. Per Barthes ([1981] 1993:78-79), a photograph captures

that instant, however brief, in which a real thing happened to be motionless in front of the eye [...] the photograph’s immobility is somehow the result of a perverse confusion between two concepts: the Real and the Live: by attesting that the image has been real, the photograph surreptitiously induces belief that it is alive, because of that delusion which makes us attribute to Reality an absolutely superior, somehow eternal value.

The grave portrait functions as a form of death mask, of a compressed temporality, showing a snapshot in an attempt to represent a totality; the ‘living image’ as substitute for corporeal form, depicting one moment but, for the right viewer, embodying many. As with a more traditional death mask, the aim is to provide a semblance of immortality. Outside of a specifically religious understanding of immortality as a concept, there was another definition of the term propagated in the USSR. 1948 saw the publication begin of the seventeen-volume Dictionary of the Contemporary Russian Literary Language (*Slovar’ sovremennogo russkogo literaturnogo jazyka*). Its primary definition of ‘immortality’ (*bessmertie*) was ‘Eternal existence in people’s memory; being unforgettable’ (*večnoe suščestvovanie v pamiati ljudej; nezabvennost’*). It presented spiritual and individualised definitions as archaisms. To quote Adonyeva and Warner again:

The new notion of immortality transformed it into an act independent of the individual’s personal fate or choice. Instead, it became the result of external evaluation of the individual by society (Adonyeva & Warner 2021:224).

Under the Soviet regime, this external evaluation by society was frequently distorted by or actively subordinated to the state, on the premise that the CPSU at least in theory spoke on behalf of Soviet society; following a period of partial relaxation of this control from the late-1980s to the early-2010s, the politics of commemoration in Russia are increasingly the domain of the state.

Legions of the (Un)Dead

Perhaps the clearest example of this new immortality in conjunction with the memorial image is the Immortal Legion (*Bessmertnij polk*) procession. *Bessmertnij polk* as we know it in the 21st-century was inaugurated in 2012 in Tomsk, but the first recorded instance of analogous event was in Novosibirsk in 1965, in which students from School № 121 paraded the streets with photographs of living veterans of the Second World War, and planted an avenue of trees in their honour, also a form of ‘immortal’ monument; the

¹²⁷ Cf. Rochlic & Grečko 2015

same year, Victory Day became a national day of remembrance in the USSR. Around a dozen similar events took place from 1981 to 2010, but the Tomsk event in 2012 formed the (semi)coherent movement which exists today. The *Bessmertnij polk* and similar parades use images taken of people in life, presented as those who survived them wish to remember them, in much the same way as grave portraiture; however, in both cases, the presence of the image, and the context in which it is presented, necessitate that the subject is dead. Even if the aim is to preserve the memory of the subject and thus keep them ‘alive’ in a certain understanding, the portrait acting as a ‘living image’ which invokes Barthes’ delusion of life, these contexts demand that the viewer acknowledge that the subject is no longer alive in the conventional biological sense.

The original Tomsk initiative served as intergenerational mediation, a means of processing, or perhaps prolonging, generational trauma, what could be characterised as ‘postmemory’, following Marianne Hirsch (2012). The Kremlin saw the potential of the marches and from 2014, utilising the Legion’s Moscow coordinator Nikolai Zemtsov, among others, reoriented march conceptually around nationalist and jingoist remembrance – a fusion of the familial and the national memory. The main attractions of co-opting the marches by the Kremlin were its possibilities for politically undesirable ramifications, should the participants take on or express anti-state positions in response to their losses and, if configured instead around a national ideal, to become a powerful tool for sustaining national hero myths. The *Bessmertnij Polk* was incorporated into official Victory Day events throughout Russian and, to varying degrees, has had a presence in the larger Russian diaspora communities worldwide. Held online in 2020-21 because of Covid-19, marches resumed in 2022, this time including in the main rank photographs of soldiers lost in Afghanistan, Chechnya, and Ukraine; this was decried by the original organisers as a distortion of the spirit of the march, which was specifically to honour those who fell against fascism in the 1940s.

In-person marches were cancelled in 2023 on security grounds, with suggestions that the inclusion of images of soldiers who fell in the invasion of Ukraine might provoke conflict or anti-war sentiments (Sibir’.Realii 2023). This suggests that Russian authorities were concerned that permitting mass marches which included losses since 2022 may have allowed the Russian public to get a more accurate sense of the scale of those losses than was being reported by the Ministry of Defence. Marches were cancelled again in 2024, as only 28 Russian cities were permitted to hold processions or in-person events for *Den’ Pobedy*, and six regions declined to hold them due to frequency of Ukrainian artillery and drone attacks. Small, local, institutionalised events were encouraged instead; by fragmenting memorial practices, the risk of disclosing the human cost of the war is significantly reduced. Last year, 2025, the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, saw events take place in-person and online throughout the Russian Federation, with the occupied territories and those on Russia’s western border opting not to hold in-person events for safety reasons. The official *Bessmertnij polk* website explicitly stated that ‘[the k]ey element, symbolising personal memory, is a portrait of a veteran of the Great Patriotic War...[which should be carried by] a direct descendant or relative,’ indicating that on an organisational level the emphasis was still to be on remembrance of the 1940s. It is still too early to get a good sense of how closely this was followed in the various processions, but it is notable that official directions avoided a repeat of the broader scope of the 2022 events. The problem with the Great

Patriotic War as a unifying myth is, bluntly, that surviving veterans are a limited and dwindling resource, so the sustaining trauma is mostly second- or third-hand; the full-scale invasion of Ukraine represents an opportunity to try and forge the national hero myth anew, using parts of the old myth, yet in that regard it faces a core crisis of legitimacy.

New Myths and the ‘Sanctified’ Military Operation

The constant claims of ‘denazification’ and invocation of the 1940s are one clear indication of this new myth recycling the old; depicting Ukraine as a junta led by ‘Banderites’ and neo-Nazis. Mixed in with these have been allegations of ‘weapons of mass destruction’ in Ukraine, ranging from nuclear and chemical arsenals, with echoes of the justifications given for the invasion of Iraq, to claims of bioweapons and weaponised mosquitoes, calling back to Nazi experiments on the military use of malaria-carrying mosquitoes at the Entomological Institute of the SS at Dachau (Kremlin.ru 2022; Skljarev’ska 2022). Direct links to the Great Patriotic War serve to borrow, or perhaps steal, legitimacy for the full-scale invasion. Whereas the Soviet declaration of war in 1942 had the clear justification of an existentially necessary response to direct and unambiguous military invasion by German forces, further bolstered by the discovery of Nazi concentration camps as the Soviets advanced, the ‘Special Military Operation’ has no such foundations and is denied even the official status of a war from the Russian perspective. Yet, as the ‘operation’ has drawn out year by year, now exceeding the Great Patriotic War in length, the need to justify prolonged conflict along with associated economic and human costs has been mounting.

The objectives outlined for the war in official and officially-endorsed discourse remain variable and ambiguous. In response to a question from military correspondent Evgenij Poddubnij on 13th June 2023, Putin asserted that:

[The goals of the war] change in accordance with the current situation, but on the whole, of course, we will not change anything, and they hold for us a fundamental character (Meduza 2023).

Further, they have been escalating in meta-significance as the war has progressed: from ‘demilitarisation’ of Ukraine, to effective acknowledgement of a proxy war with NATO, to an outright ‘holy war’ for the future of Christendom (RIA Novosti 2024).

In line with the latter, since 2023 there has been an increase in the stress on the ‘moral’ or ‘holy’ qualities of the war, and fighting for ‘traditional values.’ The framing of this is broadly the same as the ‘anti-woke’ culture war rhetoric in the USA and Europe, but drawing on Orthodox tradition, and enforced to a greater degree.¹²⁸ Eastern Orthodoxy is pitted directly against Western Catholicism, which is equated to Satanism and ‘false’ Christianity. A combat manual produced, in pamphlet and video format by the A.N. Nazarevsky School of Common Sense, in March 2023 for soldiers fighting in Ukraine stated the following under the heading ‘Who started this war and when?’:

This war began 1,000 years ago, when Satanism prevailed in the Western Christian, primarily Catholic Church. Did Christ call for burning people alive, accusing them of heresy? Did Christ call for the slaughter of entire nations for different views of the world? Did Christ call for trading in indulgences, absolving the rich of the most terrible sins? Did Christ call for the slave trade, referring to the fact that

¹²⁸ It would be remiss of me not to mention that the enforcement of social, political and identitarian norms is becoming increasingly stringent in the USA and Europe, and that, in certain areas such as trans identity and freedom of protest, the gap is narrowing to a worrying degree.

people of a non-white race allegedly have no soul? All this and much more is the work of the devil, nurtured by the Western church, which is called Christian by misunderstanding. (Ščerbakov, 2023)

In the video format, the text is read by Boris Kostenko, former CEO of the Russian Orthodox TV channel *Spas*.

Similarly, the Mandate of the XXV Worldwide Russian National Council, “The Present and Future of the Russian World,” later that year held that:

From a spiritual and moral point of view, the “Special Military Operation” is a Holy War in which Russia and its people, defending the unified spiritual space of Holy Rus, fulfil the mission of “Katechon”, protecting the world from the onslaught of globalism and the victory of the West, which has fallen into Satanism (VRNS, 2023)

This alliance of the first and second estates is not new, even during the secularism of the USSR Stalin partially rehabilitated the Church in order to support war efforts. From at least the 1940s, Soviet discourse was conflating words like *svjatoj* with Socialist ideals and working towards Soviet Communism, in a co-option of theological rhetoric to highlight ‘macro’ perspectives and teleological, utilitarian purpose. It seems that the extent to which the alliance is now being emphasised represents a concerted effort to unify the two in the minds of the Russian public.

As the contemporary Russian Orthodox church is so close to the state, and closely aligned with its conservative leanings, the holy aspect of the war has become more prominent. The ‘sacred’ struggle is no longer ostensibly socialist and progressive, as in the 1940s, but based in tradition, conservative values, and national glory. The church is, of course, deeply involved in the socially-conservative, ‘anti-woke’ rhetoric, and the state’s efforts to combat ‘childfree ideology;’ Russia knows particularly well the demographic consequences of large, sustained wars, and has faced long-term struggles in addressing lower male life-expectancy even in times of relative peace. In return, the church is protected by updated legislation, for example ‘On insulting the feelings of believers’, which has been used to prosecute artists protesting the church’s links to blocking reform of domestic abuse laws (Věrstka 2024a).

The fusion of the holy war myth with Soviet myths, particularly those related to the Soviet hero myth which arises after the Second World War is charged with meaning, and the ‘cultural imperative’ of ‘service for the benefit of society, based on a sense of duty to the dead [...] whose cause is now your cause’ (Adonyeva & Warner 2021:242). Putin himself, during his Christmas address in January 2026, said the following:

And we often call the Lord ‘Saviour’ because he came to Earth to save all [its] peoples. So too soldiers, soldiers of Russia, as if on behalf of the Lord, fulfil this very mission – defence of the Fatherland, deliverance of the Motherland and its people. And at all times in Russia, we have treated our soldiers as those who, as if on behalf of the Lord, fulfil this holy mission (Kremlin, 2026).

If the war is a holy war for the soul of Christendom, and Russian soldiers are acting ‘on behalf of the Lord,’ then the fallen Russian soldiers are surely martyrs¹²⁹? But how many martyrs has this holy war produced, and how does Russia remember them?

Cargo 200

¹²⁹ Distinguished here by the author from the term ‘hero’ due to the overtly religious framing which has been embraced to some degree at state level. I am not currently aware of any official characterisation by the Russian state itself of fallen Russian soldiers as ‘*mucheniki*’.

Official statements on Russian losses dry up within a few months of the invasion. Most, if not all, discussion of the military cost of the war in Ukraine centres around precise details of Ukrainian losses, with mentions of Russian casualties only mentioned as being ‘several times fewer’, or significantly less numerous. In a Kaliningrad court in early June 2022, it was ruled that publishing a list of the names of recently repatriated bodies would constitute ‘revealing military secrets’ (Šramenko 2022).

As Anya Bernstein observed in 2016, ‘[w]hile the [Russian] state withdraws in certain domains, it seeks to retain its function of managing death and immortality, which remains an important source of sovereignty’ (Bernstein 2016:20). The co-option of the *Bessmertnij polk* by the state has allowed Russian authorities to decide ‘who is worthy of becoming “immortal,” [and to “abolish] death” for certain privileged groups;’ (Hanukai 2020:817) the highly selective acknowledgement of Russian military losses in Ukraine functions somewhat similarly in its glorification of individual deaths in parallel with active suppression of gross losses. The chosen few are elevated to immortality, whilst the demoralisation of mass death is held at bay through judicially-enforced secrecy.

Despite the tight-lipped approach of the Russian state, we have had some indications from within the apparatus. Evgenij Prigozhin stated Wagner PMC alone had lost nearly 20,000 soldiers in the battle for Bakhmut, later tallied at 19,547 by Mediazona (Lejba 2023; Treshchanin 2024). Reporting by BBC Russian Service and Mediazona in October 2024 claimed a confirmed 72,004 names of Russian military personnel killed between February 2022 and May 2024, gathered from analysis of Russian cemeteries, military memorials, and obituaries. From this they extrapolate a possible 110,775 – 160,008, based on advice from ‘their military specialists’ that their survey would likely account for 45-65% of the total (Ivshina 2024). By December 2025, this minimum number of losses had risen to 156,161 named personnel (Mediazona 2025) so, applying the same margin of error, this gives a projected range of 260,268 – 367,024 total fatalities amongst Russian troops. In addition to inspection of material memorials and records, this data has also been drawn from social media posts, announcements in regional news media, and posts on Russian government websites; social media posts are considered to be reliable if they come from the families of the deceased or if they come from city or regional social media pages and are accompanied by photographs and/or indication of the dates of death and burial.

On the basis of analysis of public records by Mediazona and Meduza into compensation sums paid out for injury in 2022, the report suggests a minimum ratio of 1.7:1 to 2:1 for wounded to killed personnel. They propose an actual ratio of 4:1, backed up by ‘independent experts and numerous testimonies from the front’, giving 442,455 to 1.46 million seriously-injured Russian military personnel.¹³⁰ In early December 2023, supporting documentation for the Ministry of Labour’s proposed amendment to the law ‘On the Social Protection of the Disabled’ indicated the Ministry expected a demand for ‘no fewer than 60-70 thousand’ prosthetic limbs and extremities – more than twice the pre-war annual average (The Moscow Times 2023).

¹³⁰ This uses the lowest estimated figure of total losses multiplied by the lowest bound of the minimum ratio (260,268 x 1.7), and the maximum estimated figure of total losses multiplied by the proposed ‘actual’ ratio (367,064 x 4). As such, the real number will be somewhere between the two but is likely to be very significantly lower than 1.46 million.

As the Russian state does not discuss its mass war dead, sites of new military cemeteries are often discoveries rather than public announcements. In June 2023, during an episode of the ghost-hunting show *Bitva Ekstrasensov*, broadcast footage from a cemetery in Vladimir oblast' showed at least 5 recent military graves in the background. Analysis of satellite imagery in late 2022 led to the discovery of a new military cemetery in Krasnodar Kraj, allocated for Wagner PMC, which was subsequently visited in person to verify the site (Lebedev et al. 2023). The images show three rows of graves by the end of November 2022 and the cemetery virtually full by January 2023. In a remote plot in Gusinobrodskij cemetery, Novosibirsk, 200 military graves were found in Spring 2023. Clandestine burials are a vital part of obfuscating the human cost of the war to Russia, and thus helping to perpetuate state narratives of military superiority.

At least some of these bodies are not properly identified. There are multiple reports from Russian morgues, for example those in Rostov and Rzhhev (Holod Media 2023a; *Važnie istorii* 2023) of misidentified bodies, and of medical and military authorities attempting to pressure family members into burying bodies which have not been conclusively identified. Such incidents have been attributed to the sheer volume of fatalities and the inability of state institutions to manage under the workload; they are also indicative of a lack of real respect both for the dead and their families, and of inadequate resource allocation for the war. In many cases from "rank and file" burials, the grave markers are simple: wooden Orthodox crosses, bearing the words '*večnaja pamjat*', and a small plaque giving name, rank, and dates of birth and death. No image, and not necessarily the right name; a treatment of the dead which undermines their rhetorical martyr status. What distinguishes this from commemoration of the dead during the Great Patriotic War, primarily, is the scale: these relatively spartan burials and failures of infrastructure date from relatively early into the war, when fatalities numbered in the tens of thousands. Whilst this is by no means an insignificant number in the context of modern warfare, the Red Army fought in battles which saw as many dead in the space of days; it was logistically impossible to retrieve and individually bury the remains of the fallen. Even facing an influx of cadavers for which local institutions were not adequately prepared, the task before Putin's administration was significantly more manageable.

New Hero Myth: Saints of Sinners?

When soldiers are openly remembered, it is not always in the manner or the places one might expect. Besides plaques and memorials in commemorative public parks, squares and avenues, there has been an increasing trend of installing memorials in schools and youth centres, augmenting the rise in classes and workshops on "patriotism," military preparedness and "traditional values."

In June 2023, a school in Kuratovo, Komi, unveiled two new memorial plaques dedicated to Semën and Aleksandr Tutrinov, a father and son who had both studied at the school. The father, born 1981, died in Chechnya in 2002 – just five years after leaving the school; his son, born 2001 and thus never having known his father save for 'living images', and memories shared with him by others, followed in his footsteps to die in Ukraine in 2022 – just six years after leaving school. (The Insider 2023).

Gymnasium No.44 in Irkutsk unveiled four ‘heroes’ desks’ (*party geroev*) in March 2023, dedicated to young local men who had fallen in Ukraine. The desks bear images of the dead, along with brief biographical information and a short description of their ‘heroic’ actions. A report by Vesti Irkutsk (2023) said that sitting behind the desks will be an honour for students, and that they will hold class votes on who gets to sit at them, taking into account academic achievement and ‘active participation in the life of the gymnasium, setting an example to others.’ However, a report by local news agency Ljudi Bajkala says that two students, apparently overcome by the grieving relatives in attendance, fainted during a minute’s silence (*toržestvennaja linejka*). One student was quoted as saying: ‘It’s just like going to a grave or a wake’ (*Eto vsě ravno, čto prijti na mogilku ili pominki*). Lyudi Bajkala went on to say that no-one wanted to sit at the desks (Ljudy Bajkala 2023). Another such desk was unveiled at School No. 66 in Irkutsk in May 2025, making at least 25 in Irkutsk schools alone as of June 2025, so any disquiet on the part of students has evidently not been taken into account (IRK.ru 2025; Komsomol’skaja Pravda 2025).

When considering memorial practice to named individuals, it is worth bearing in mind the composition of Putin’s forces in Ukraine. Wagner and the VSRF both openly recruited convicted felons. The martyrification of soldiers and lionisation of SVO veterans is at odds with fact that late-December 2023 saw reports that 83 criminals who were pardoned by Putin on return from service in Ukraine had, between them, killed 51 people before they were sent to the front (Sirena 2023). Beyond which, the same were involved in 11 cases of rape upon their return, of which 6 involved minors. In October 2023, Aleksandr Glazov, sentenced to six years imprisonment in 2019 for encouraging teenagers to kill themselves, allegedly as part of the semi-mythical ‘game’ *Sinij Kit* (Blue Whale), gave a class on patriotism and ‘his service in the SVO zone’ in School №1 in Kotelniki, Podmoskov’e, having been pardoned following service in Ukraine with Wagner PMC (Ščerbakova 2024).

Analysis by Věrstka (2024b) using, in part, data from Mediazona and the BBC Russian Service, revealed that at least 408 memorials had been unveiled in Russia to former criminals who had died in Ukraine. 128 of these ‘heroes’ were convicted of causing grievous bodily harm resulting in death, 110 for narcotics-related crimes, 158 across theft, robbery, and burglary, and 2 for rape. Of these, 56 were installed in schools and other related youth institutions. Věrstka state that ‘the decision to memorialise a criminal is often taken by the schools,’ but it is almost certainly influenced by state rhetoric and a desire to perform conformity. To some extent this will be due to genuine support but, in light of the escalating crackdowns on nonconformist expression, there are certainly undertones of fear of the consequences for not being sufficiently patriotic. On an official level, the criminals have been pardoned for whatever they did before service, though this does amnesty does not extend to crimes committed upon return, but their communities and their victims are unlikely to be as forgiving.

Institutional Absurd

Alongside the cognitive dissonance of memorialising violent criminals in schools, elements of the institutional absurd have been evident in various attempts by regional administrations and organisations to promote the state’s image and grand rhetoric. I will

go into some examples of these relatively minor events at length since they highlight an interesting phenomenon which approaches meta-irony, wherein state- or state-adjacent actors have produced combinations of symbolism which are intensely, though unintentionally, self-parodic. An unveiling ceremony on 9th May 2023 in Kyakhta, Buryatia for a bust of local soldier Dmitry Farshinev, designated a ‘Hero of the SVO,’ used the composition ‘Horn of Plenty’ from the 2012 film ‘The Hunger Games’ (Arnol’dova 2023). The world of *The Hunger Games* is characterised by a strictly hierarchical society in which the poorer inhabitants fight to the death for the entertainment of the rich elites; Buryatia was rated 68th of Russia’s 85 regions (excluding occupied territories) in terms of average income in a 2024 study by *RIA Novosti* and, according to *Mediazona*’s data, rated 10th amongst all regions for military fatalities (*RIA Rating 2024*; *Mediazona 2025*). Reporting on the event asserts that the choice of music was a mistake, and that the administration employee in charge of the decision was unaware of the original context and simply searched online for ‘ceremonial/solemn music for an opening [ceremony]’ (*toržestvennaja muzyka dlja otkrytija*).

An article from *Holod Media* in September 2024 reported on a ceremony in the Main Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces, in which Orthodox priests blessed ‘purity seals’ to be distributed to troops in operational combat areas (*Holod Media 2024*). A purity seal is a strip of parchment or cloth bearing religious text which is attached to armour or military technology with a wax seal, a symbol from the universe of the dystopian tabletop wargame *Warhammer 40,000*. The faction which uses the seals is a far-future projection of humanity, the Imperium of Man, which is characterised by racial supremacist views, extreme authoritarian violence and religious fanatical devotion to the ‘God-Emperor of Mankind.’ The original depiction of this universe, created in the UK in the 1980s, was very heavily tongue-in-cheek, satirising the concepts in a similar vein to Paul Verhoeven’s films from the same era; much like with Verhoeven’s films, however, not all fans see past the façade to the underlying messages. The producer of these seals, Krasnodar-based infantry equipment supplier, *Ratnik Tactical Russian (RTR)*, posted an image of the seals being blessed by a priest on their *VKontakte* page on 1st October 2024, affirming with no apparent trace of irony that, since ‘Russian soldiers are by right the greatest warriors of humanity’ they should bear fitting icons, and that ‘thousands of seals have been sent to the front’ (*RTR 2024*).¹³¹ The design is very clearly modelled directly after the *Warhammer 40,000* accessories, a point not lost on the post’s commenters who all make some reference to the franchise. Instead of devotional texts to the God-Emperor and the double-headed eagle of the Imperium¹³², the seals bear the Chi Rho Christogram and the text of the 90th Psalm.

Alongside the visual parallel, *RTR* present the products with two small, indirect references to *Warhammer*, the name ‘purity seals’ (*pečaty čistoty*) and the description of Russian soldiers as ‘humanity’s greatest warriors,’ an obvious nod to the in-universe descriptions of the ‘Space Marines’ of the Imperium; aside from these, there is no direct reference to *Warhammer* but, instead, the historical analogue of Constantine the Great,

¹³¹ Whilst *RTR* is not an official government organisation, the state has regularly failed to properly equip its soldiers, particularly since the rise in conscription. As such, it is common practice for soldiers or their families to source their own combat gear privately. *RTR* is not the biggest private supplier, but it is certainly prominent.

¹³² Which, in a Russian context, would have its own further connotations of empire. Interestingly, a Muscovite was arrested in October 2022 for cosplaying as a *Warhammer 40,000* Imperium soldier after police interpreted this same double-headed eagle insignia as Nazi iconography (*Baza 2022*).

first Christian emperor of Rome, and his introduction of the *labarum* (Chi Rho iconography on traditional *vexilla*) amongst his forces. Despite this, the connection was immediately picked up on by members of the VK group; the top comments, with laughing and smiling emojis, include slogans from the Warhammer 40,000 universe such as ‘the Emperor protects,’ and ‘in the name of the God-Emperor,’ as well as joking expectations for the company to later announce the release of ceramite¹³³ Space Marine armour. The initial post is played straight, the comments are made in a semi-self-aware irony, but there is no criticism of the symbolism and the fact that RTR made several posts on the topic in September and October 2024 with purchase links to their VK store page and a range of photos showing the seals on RTR tactical equipment suggests that they were indeed produced and may have been sent to serving soldiers. There is an inherent ambiguity within satire of this sort, as with Verhoeven’s *Starship Troopers* (1997), where the author cannot guarantee that every viewer will read the work as satire and may instead take everything at face value. Verhoeven’s reworking of the original 1959 book by Robert Heinlein is a parody of the novel’s markedly fascist undertones, wherein the “good guys” are presented to the audience such that the “right” viewer will see them as the “bad guys;” in the universe of Warhammer 40,000, it is integral to the original concept that there are no “good guys” and that all major factions are some degree of evil from the perspective of the late-20th-century British authors. I cannot comment on the intentions of RTR, the extent to which their followers on VK understand the nuance of the reference, or of the degree of awareness of the source material on the part of any members of the Russian Orthodox church who were involved with the purity seals, but the symbolism is striking. There is no clear indication of whether this is a misreading of the source, a conscious contestation of the source (i.e. that the soldiers of the Imperium actually *are* the “good guys”), a self-aware and ironic appropriation of the symbolism, or merely the adoption of a “cool” aesthetic; all of these interpretations seem equally possible and thus co-exist as a cognitively dissonant mass in the mind of an informed viewer.

A more overt mixture of symbolism can be seen in dolls produced for frontline soldiers in 2023 under the auspices of Kremlin-led nationalist youth-organisation ‘Movement of the First’ (*Dviženie pervych*). Creation of these ‘talismans,’ modelled after Soviet cartoon character Cheburashka, was part of a nation-wide initiative in schools and youth organisations, and the design and quality varied considerably. In at least one case from Tomsk oblast’, the dolls wear *papachi* or “Cossack” hats, and have the letter Z embroidered on their chests. These dolls simultaneously evoke Imperial Russia, Soviet Russia and contemporary Putinist Russia, fusing the three politically and ideologically distinct epochs into one, and echoing the flattening of historical time frequently found in Putin’s addresses to the nation¹³⁴. The program is also representative of a wider programme of indoctrinating Russian children into pro-war nationalist sentiment, in a more interactive and less solemn manner than the school memorial boards.

¹³³ A fictional in-universe polymer.

¹³⁴ Tomsk is particularly associated with Siberian Cossacks, so the *papachi* serve primarily to provide a local flavour, but the Cossack hat as a symbol, indeed the Cossack himself, does not exist in a vacuum and will always have historical connotations beyond this.

In August 2023, filming for the TV series *Berlinskaja Žara* (Berlin Heat, produced by *Filin Entertainment* in partnership with *Gazprom-Media*) dressed areas of Saint Petersburg as 1940s Berlin, replete with posters and insignia. One keen-eyed resident spotted a roadside advertising board disguised with a mock-up poster which bore the image of a smiling German soldier and the words ‘Wir werden siegen, weil uns Adolf Hitler fuhr’ (We will prevail because Adolf Hitler leads us); behind the façade, on the other side of the signboard, was a poster exhorting that ‘contractual [military] service [in the VSRF] is a real man’s job!’ (Holod Media 2023b). The juxtaposition of these two signs is certainly accidental but would be considered heavy-handed if placed as deliberate parody.

As part of an all-Russian initiative named ‘Flowers for Mothers of Heroes’ (*Cvety mamam Geroev*), the regional headquarters of ruling party *Edinaja Rossija* in Poljarnye Zori, Murmansk, visited the mothers of local soldiers who had fallen in the war with flowers and kitchen appliances (Edinaja Rossija g. Poljarnye Zori 2025). In at least two cases, proudly displayed on the local administration’s VKontakte page, the domestic appliance was a meatgrinder. The word meatgrinder carries the exact connotations in Russian (*mjasorubka*) as it does in English.

The above examples, all appearing in contexts sanctioned either by state-aligned institutions or members of the Orthodox Church, highlight the dissonances between the state’s projection of itself and the realities of contemporary Russia.

Flattened (War)Time

Contemporary Russian national mythmaking seems to lean on the manipulation of temporalities and mingling of heritages. Although some element of temporal fusion is necessary to any mythmaking process, the polyphony (or cacophony?) of narratives in pro-war media feels like an escalation ad absurdum of the ‘rehabilitation of several pasts’ seen under Brezhnev (Deschepper 2024:58); as the heritagisation drive of the 1960s and 1970s saw, to paraphrase Deschepper, seemingly everything become a potential heritage object, so the scramble for justification of the full-scale invasion has seen seemingly every part of any history which could be tied to Russia or the Rus’ become fodder for the national myth. The consistent attempts to use memories of the Great Patriotic War to legitimise the invasion, along with rhetoric about medieval-style crusades and holy wars, and reference to Imperial histories claiming Ukraine as Russia, act to flatten and superimpose radically different ideologies and understandings of time, progress, and victory. Putin has garnered something of a reputation for reaching into the past during his addresses, exemplified in his 2020 comparison of COVID-19 to the ‘Pechenegs...and Polovtsians’ who ‘terrorised’ ‘our country;’ this became a near-instant meme in online Russian communities, since a reference to raids on Kievan Rus’ in the 10th and 11th centuries seemed so absurdly far-removed from current events (BBC Russian Service 2020). Indeed, as various scholars, and in particular Marlene Laruelle (cf. 2019; 2025), have been noting in recent years, the breadth of ‘facts’, ideas and interpretations present in state narratives and discourse is a conscious tactic, both broadening the potential appeal of social and political messages, and maximising the ‘ideological toolkit’ which the authorities can deploy to achieve their objectives.

In relation to the “Special Military Operation”, everything is now, now is war, and the end of the war (the end of 'now') is indeterminate, predicated on a 'victory' which has long been far from assured; whose stakes have been raised to such a lofty degree in internal discourse that, even if the 'victory' is achieved, it could not possibly have the transformative impact which is promised of it. The objective has moved from the propagandists' cry of 'Kyiv in three days,' to an unrelenting stalemate lasting over three years; the temporality of the rhetoric has been forced to shift along with what was, in relatively short order, revealed to be military hubris.¹³⁵ The self-image of the Russian state, thus mired in drawn-out conflict, cannot be a photographic snapshot of time, but must instead be a superimposition of contrasting times one upon another.

The war in Ukraine is simultaneously a “special military operation” in official terms, that is, of a lesser category than a full war, yet also the continuation of a millennium-long war for the future of Christendom against the “Satanists” of the Catholic Church. Wars throughout Russian history, waged for myriad reasons, can be woven into a narrative which presents them as if they were the *same* war, whether Medieval, Imperial, Soviet or post-Soviet, and to serve in or support the war in Ukraine is to honour and continue the legacy of all the others. The polyphony of narratives blend into a metamodern cacophony, where history and victory are certain (or, at least, whatever the results are will be claimed as victory), but the present is not, and nor will the future be. The objective is victory, not what comes after the victory. Of course, another parallel exists here between the full-scale invasion and the Great Patriotic War, in the all-consuming need for a victory at any cost; but it runs into the recurring problem that the latter was fundamentally a war of retaliation and vengeance against a foe which had not only drawn the first blood, but which had drawn copious amounts of it. The ‘Special Military Operation’ was not launched in self-defence; it has no Siege of Leningrad, no Battle for Kursk or for Stalingrad. For the same reason, it cannot compare directly with the war of 1812. And yet, the state must invoke these conflicts in an attempt to justify the mounting costs of a war which does not yet appear to have achieved any of its stated objectives; this is perhaps why it cannot be a distinct war in its own right, but is depicted instead as the continuation of an age-old struggle.

The result of the war has not been Ukraine's demilitarisation, but the transformation of the Ukrainian Armed Forces into one of the most modernised and experienced military forces in the world. Since the objective of denazification has been complicated by repeated assertions that effectively the entire government and most of the population are “Nazis,” this would require full military defeat of Ukraine; something which seems increasingly unlikely whilst we are in still the realm of conventional warfare. The odds of victory in the sphere of theological warfare seem rather remote, despite the growing influence of fundamentalist strains of Christianity in the USA and Europe. What, then, is the end goal for the Putinist regime? Assuming that the situation is understood on some level by the Russian government, the state's self-image begins to look more like a pre-emptive death mask. Failure, or anything seen to be capitulation, will result in the death of the regime. If not by external forces, then by internal ones who start to question

¹³⁵ It is worth noting that Putin opted for a more conservative timeframe of two weeks for the capture of Kyiv, though this only makes him very slightly less hubristic than his warhawks.

what it has all been for, or a groundswell of support for those who have already been questioning¹³⁶.

The war in Ukraine has engendered or heightened anti-Russian public sentiment throughout and beyond Europe. Inadvertently encouraged by the slightly bizarre adoption of the Latin letter Z for war propaganda, “zombie” is a term frequently encountered in anti-war discourse to describe pro-war Russians. As Sergei Mironov, leader of the political party *Spravedlivaja Rossija* discovered in April 2023, not even the Russian-made AI image-generation software, Kandinsky *Sbera*, escaped the influence of this symbolism,¹³⁷ responding to the prompt ‘I am a Z patriot’ (*ja – Z patriot*) with an image of a man in a trenchcoat with vacant, glowing eyes, his lower face fused with a gas-mask respirator, and his skin covered in what appeared to be biomechanical infection (Zabirko 2025; Holod Media 2023c). Alexei Yurchak (2008:211), summarising Vladimir Kustov, a member of the late-Soviet Necrorealist art collective in Leningrad, wrote the following about Kustov’s ‘Necromethod:’

Life starts at birth and ends when “absolute dying” begins; during life the subject is a “person.” Death starts when “absolute dying” ends and goes until the subject loses any “recoverable form”; during this period the subject is a “corpse.” In the intervening zone that Kustov calls “absolute dying,” the subject is neither a person nor a corpse but is in a transitory stage in between.

Clearly, the Russian state is not yet dead but, now locked into a conflict which it presents as existentially important and bedecked in images of those citizens whose lives have been spent on it, neither does the state seem ‘alive’ in any meaningful sense.

Presentism, one of three conceptualisations of historical time outlined by Francois Hartog at the start of the 21st-century, is described by him as ‘the sense that only the present exists, a present characterized at once by the tyranny of the instant and by the treadmill of an unending now’ (Hartog 2015:xv) and paraphrased by Aleida Assman (2019:208) as ‘a present that has absorbed the future and the past’. The contemporary Russian state’s image of itself and the nation is atemporal, fusing past, present, and future, both fact and fiction. It suggests a glorious future, informed by a glorified past, but nobody seems to quite know the details; there is the idea of telos, but it does not at all seem close at hand. War footing, particularly with the faltering nature of the Russian invasion and the state’s subsequent need to maintain rhetorical momentum in its place through proliferation of myths and the creation of a pantheon of heroes, creates a pervasive ‘now’ which must be endured, but which needs the idea of clear victory as its telos; is the Russian state attempting to evade this by blurring the boundaries between past/present/future? I view this as a sort of multiple exposure of images of Russia, the accepted, the embellished, and the false; all superimposed one over the other, all fighting for dominance whilst being presented as unified and singular. There are images of Russias now dead and Russias which were never alive, with conspicuously little attention paid to what Russia(s) the state plans for or after the “victory” it so existentially

¹³⁶ Though the majority of these voices have now been in some form of exile for several years.

¹³⁷ Until its algorithm was very significantly tweaked following the incident.

needs - just a hazy future in which the war is won and ‘now’ has ceased. The image the Russian state constructs of itself is simultaneously an attempt at projecting strength and vitality, and a self-memorialisation using every society it claims as ancestor. It is of a state not yet dead, but which cannot be truly alive whilst frozen in the ‘now’ of a war to whose outcome it has tied its very existence. Perhaps the state is in Kustov’s ‘Zone of Absolute Dying.’

Post-Mortem

If the state’s fears are existential, then what are the fears of the public?

A telephone survey by Russian Field (2023), of 1611 respondents with 4.35 refusals and connection interruptions per completed questionnaire, asked Russians ‘which of the negative consequences of the military operation cause you the most concern?’, with multiple answers accepted. The highest three answers showed 62% were concerned by human casualties and losses; 38% by the psychological condition of those returning from the front; and 33% the rise in poverty, and economic crisis. Aside from a clear majority of respondents primarily concerned with the human cost, unsurprising given the extent of recruitment and conscription, over one third listed the psychological impact on veterans. Add to that the psychological effects of growing up surrounded by memorials, some of which may be to people who had actively hurt the local community, and indoctrinated into grandiose and often conflicting nationalist and identitarian narratives from the earliest years of school. Beyond the mental toll of war on the generations who fought it, what of the toll on the generations who didn’t? Compounding this is the fact that returning veterans of the war are already coming back with expectations; having been lionised in political discourse as the saviours of Russia, and seeing the memorials to those who did not make it back, there is inevitably the sense that their country now owes them a debt. There is not just the psychological impact of war, particularly among those who were already convicted criminals before their service, but the potential for serious disaffection as soldiers return to a country whose short- to mid-term economic prospects seem stagnant at best (Dabrowski, 2025).

There is also the already long-standing gender imbalance in Russia to consider, and even young men who survive the war will bear some form of stigma, whether external or internal. Any form of post-war Russia will feel the demographic consequences of the war, even if it ends tomorrow. The state’s conservative turn, best exemplified in its campaigns against LGBT+ identities and “childfree ideology”, is a clear attempt to pre-empt these consequences.

Quoting Putin from plenary session of Petersburg International Economic Forum-2023:

We have not turned on to the path of self-isolation. In contrast, we have widened our contacts with promising, responsible partners in countries and regions which today act as locomotives and drivers of the global economy

In this can be seen the same basic rhetoric as with Brexit; that no economic harm is being suffered by the country as a result of government actions, and that the state is, in fact, very cleverly taking advantage of an opportunity to diversify its economic links. A bluff on the level of state discourse which does not marry with the lived experience of

its citizens, and thus scapegoats must be found and blamed for the material decline in living standards. In Russia, this can be lumped together neatly with the prosecution of anti-war voices, the so-called *inoagency* or “foreign agents,” and the framing of Russia’s actions and domestic issues as results of hostile action from NATO and its allies; these tactics, playing on well-established tropes of establishing external and internal enemies as scapegoats for failures of the state, can do much to bolster the official narrative, but it will become much harder to maintain that narrative as living standards continue to fall.

Putin’s regime to some extent recognises the approaching danger, the threat to its vitality of significant losses, long-term injuries, and economic instability, but it is vigorously insisting on and reaffirming its eternal life.

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“It’s very hard to convey any arguments or facts to them”: Post-Soviet zombies and infectious information

Original research article

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Abstract

Tracking the career of the post-Soviet zombie from its emergence at the cusp of the Soviet collapse until Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022, this essay analyses the zombie as a mythical figure mobilised for working through shifting social relationships and cultural anxieties. Post-Soviet discourse reveals a concern with the process of zombification, which is understood to take place through communication rather than physical contact. In the context of the Donbas war since 2014, the image of the living dead has been used as a rhetorical device to cast doubt on all communication, both mediated and personal, and to ethically relinquish loved ones from responsibility for their misguided understandings. Fear of malicious influence through information has also led to practices of media hygiene, which, in turn, imply a recognition that zombification could happen to anyone, even the speaking subject. As such, accusations of zombification form part of an emic vocabulary of diagnosing the operation of power in Ukraine.

1. Introduction

On a warm but windy day in August 2018, I visited the family home of a couple I call Katja and Vladyslav (both pseudonyms) in a suburb of Kyiv, Ukraine's capital. Hailing from Luhansk, they had agreed to give an interview for my doctoral thesis in social anthropology about the mass displacement caused by the war in the Donbas region that had been ongoing since spring 2014. Sitting in their spacious kitchen, drinking herbal tea and eating home-made sweets, we first charted the family's experiences of living through war and leaving their home behind. The couple's young children busied themselves with playing while we talked.

Eventually, the discussion turned to reasons behind the war itself. Katja offered to explain the background of the whole situation to me. According to her, throughout the country's independence, Ukraine was divided into two opposing halves in terms of political opinions and views of the past, and there was no unified public opinion. In all previous presidential elections, votes were distributed almost 50/50, the east of the country voting for one candidate and the west for another. Katja argued that the differing political orientations and views about the past were not *really* a problem, but that politicians used them cynically to manipulate people's consciousness to further their own interests. Vladyslav agreed with his wife's account and scoffed: "People are too emotional, and to put it crudely, it is easy to motivate people to some kind of acts through television. Russia zombified people, like 'let us be pro-Russian and everything will be fine.' And people voted for it."

"Zombifying" is not just a clever metaphor for brainwashing invented by Vladyslav on the spot, but a staple term in Russian-speaking media and public sphere since the 1990s (Berdy 2014; Borenstein 2019). His view that especially the television is used to zombify audiences is widely shared in Ukraine and Russia. For example, an unnamed author cited by the Moscow Times columnist Michele Berdy claimed that:

"The television is called the zombie-box [*zombojaščik*] for very good reason. (...) The reason is this: the stupefying effect of television programs used by the authorities to brainwash the population in order to create the specific public opinion that they need." (Berdy 2014)

Because of the potentially harmful influence of television, many of my interlocutors, whose lives had been fundamentally disrupted by the Donbas war, resorted to practices of media hygiene: avoiding consumption of news from certain outlets or channels, or disavowing media consumption altogether. Katja, too, told me that she chose not to follow the news anymore.

While mobilising accusations of zombification is thus not a particularly new phenomenon, or one restricted to the context of the Donbas war, this event gave it novel relevance as a rhetorical practice. Claims of zombification, such as the one Vladyslav articulated above, were often utilised by people I met during my fieldwork to make sense of other people's understandings about the Donbas war. Due to the chaotic course of events, Russia's hybrid warfare, and conscious efforts to cause confusion, the reasons behind the Donbas war were obscure to even native residents of the region. It was not clear who exactly was fighting and why. Highly diverse understandings about the reasons behind the war caused rifts between erstwhile friends and family members. The metaphor of zombification was mobilised to analyse these disagreements: people who found themselves supporting clashing interpretations habitually diagnosed each other as being zombified by malicious information influence. It is noteworthy that all sides to

the war in Donbas blamed each other for being zombified, so that one person accused of having fallen victim to malicious propaganda could fling the accusation right back and claim that it was the other side who had been brainwashed (see also Borenstein 2019; Uehling 2023). Even as time passed from the first military clashes in spring 2014, understandings about the Donbas war did not get any more congruent. As a result, some of my interlocutors cut ties with their family members or friends who disagreed about the true causes behind the war. Meanwhile, others who were still in touch with their families avoided talking about politics altogether to avoid interpersonal conflicts.

In this essay, I analyse how the figure of the zombie, originating in the Haitian plantation society, helped with working through such tensions. The empirical materials discussed here derive from ethnographic fieldwork I conducted in Ukraine and Russia between 2018–2019 among people displaced by the Donbas war.¹³⁸ During my time in the field, stories of families torn apart by disagreements about the war and of brothers fighting on opposing sides of the frontline were common in the media. For example, director Korniy Hrytsiuk interviews a young journalist working for a Ukrainian TV channel for his documentary film “Train: Kyiv-War” (2020). Sitting on a train on her way to Kostjantynivka, a town close to the frontline, the journalist describes how her boyfriend turned against her after his views shifted towards a more pro-Russian position in the aftermath of Euromaidan and flaring up of the war. Until the war, he had never been prone to radicalism. However, after seeing her deliver a television reportage about military operations near Donetsk, he accused her of distorting reality and working for the Kyiv “junta”. He began working as a military correspondent in Donetsk, then enlisted to fight on the side of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic and was eventually killed. An elderly woman from the embattled city of Debaltseve summarises the point aptly in the same documentary: “We are all the same, but for some reason we were divided and became enemies.”

These problems only intensified with Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Several media reports have described how even close family members living in Russia would simply not believe their relatives in Ukraine about bombings the latter were witnessing with their own eyes (Korenuyk and Goodman 2022; Tondo and Rice-Oxley 2022). It seems that people living in Russia exist in a completely different reality to the one experienced by people in Ukraine. More globally, stark antagonisms about the proper interpretation of reality have become increasingly familiar in the past decade. In the United States, differing views about politics, the re-election of Donald Trump to the presidency, and accusations of conspiratorial thinking incite family feuds and severing of ties. The tagline for a recent National Public Radio (NPR) podcast series reads “Reporter Zach Mack thinks his dad has gone all in on conspiracy theories, while his father thinks that Zach is the one being brainwashed. (...) Can one family live in two realities?” (Mack 2025).

In hindsight, then, the war in the Donbas heralded not only a period of global instability, but also of anxieties about information that turns people into the living dead. I argue that unpacking concept of zombification can help analysing the uncanny functioning of power and knowledge in the current geopolitical moment. In this essay, I do not examine to the content of the claims, beliefs, or understandings that my

¹³⁸ Names of informants cited here are all pseudonyms. Interviews were conducted in Russian or Ukrainian; all translations to English are by me.

interlocutors in the field analysed with the metaphor of zombification, nor will I attempt to debunk them. Conspiratorial beliefs are notoriously resistant to debunking efforts (Drażkiewicz Grodzicka and Harambam 2021; Drażkiewicz and Harambam 2024; Zembylas 2023). Rather, I will track the career of zombification as a concept and analyse what the fear of zombies might reveal about anxieties about knowledge and power (Barth 2002; Foucault 1978; Glaeser 2011).

Conspiracy theories, misinformation, and malicious influence have long been part of the research agenda about post-Soviet societies (Borenstein 2019; Roudakova 2017; Yablokov 2018), but a recent movement in analysing conspiracy theories argues for incorporating concerns with conspiratorial thinking into the field of inquiry (Drażkiewicz and Harambam 2024). This essay takes inspiration from that idea and considers what the concept and fear of zombification reveals about vernacular understanding of political subjectivity. The essay develops this line of thought in the following way. The next section traces the emergence of the concept of zombification in the 1990s and shows how it was linked to an explicit critique of Soviet subjectivity. After that, the figure of the zombie is examined together with other fantastical monsters that appeared in post-Soviet popular culture, followed by a discussion of the features of Soviet media and the role of television in particular. As already noted, zombification claims re-emerged in 2014 as a rhetorical device used to discredit other people's beliefs about the Donbas war. However, an alternative analysis of zombification claims views them as ethical diagnoses relieving loved ones from responsibility for their erroneous views (Uehling 2023). Finally, the essay analyses what the fear of informational zombification implies for understandings of the self and its vulnerability to malicious influence before discussing accusations of zombification as part of an emic way of diagnosing the operation of power in Ukraine.

2. Background: the living dead and post-Soviet critique

To fully appreciate the popular and literary career of the zombie, it is important to note that this mythical character originates in the plantation economy of colonial Haiti (McAlister 2012). The *zonbi*, as it is known there, arose to respond “to the nexus of capitalism, race, and religion” converging in slave labour used on the plantations of what was then French-controlled Saint Domingue (McAlister 2012:461). Elizabeth McAlister argues that “the zombie represents, responds to, and mystifies fear of slavery, collusion with it, and rebellion against it” (ibid.). The Haitian *zonbi* could equally be the spirit (*zonbi astral*, “astral zombie”) or the body (*zonbi kò kadav*, “walking corpse”) of a dead person, but in both cases, the enslaved dead were made to work on behalf of someone else. Contrary to popular belief, Haitian zombies do not eat human flesh; rather, they represent the draining of a person's life force in a more indirect and insidious way. *Zonbis* are created by sorcerers in a process often involving secrecy, selling, capturing, and whipping, actions obviously reminiscent of the conditions of historical slavery (McAlister 2012).

When it comes to popular usage in the context of my field sites, what arguably matters more than the figure of the zombie itself is the process of its creation, that is, *zombification* (Borenstein 2019; Zibirko 2025). The term zombification as it is used in the post-Soviet context appears to originate in Russian novelist Viktor Pelevin's satirical

essay titled “Zombification of the Soviet Man: Experiences of Comparative Anthropology“ (“Zombifikatsija sovjetskogo čeloveka. Opyt sravnitel’noj antropologii”), published in 1990 (Borenstein 2019; Pelevin 1990; Zabirko 2025). In his mock-scientific treatise, Pelevin explores the cultural practice of voodoo in Haiti and makes explicit connections between zombies and slavery, loss of agency, manipulation, belief in magic, and war. He then claims that zombification was achieved in Soviet society by inculcating citizens to highly ideological and ritualistic forms of behaviour from an early age, essentially stripping Soviet citizens of their individuality, agency, and free will (Pelevin 1990; Zabirko 2025). He argues that a Soviet person was as much a slave to the party-state as a Haitian zombie is to their voodoo master. In Pelevin’s essay, the metaphor of the zombie is thus used in an overt way to critique Soviet subjectivity – defined by all-encompassing official ideology and ritualistic behaviour.¹³⁹

In addition to Pelevin’s zombies, literary scholars have observed that a host of fantastical creatures, such as vampires, werewolves, and witches appeared in literature and popular culture after the fall of the Soviet Union (Khapaeva 2009; Lipovetsky and Etkind 2010). After zombies, Pelevin himself wrote about powerful, elegant vampires feeding on humans in his 2006 novel *Empire V: Tale of a Real Uberman* (*Ampir V. Povest o nastojaščem sverchčeloveke*). Historian Dina Khapaeva argues that in post-Soviet literary culture, such mythical monsters represent suppressed collective memories about Stalinist repressions but also index the restructuring of social relationships after the collapse of state socialism (2009). According to her,

“the most unexpected result of the fall of the Soviet regime was a feeling of moral disorientation. The collapse of communism, whether praised or damned, left a sense of a moral vacuum, an absence of a coherent system of values to guide moral judgement.” (ibid.:374-75)

The aforementioned literary monsters stepped in to morally evaluate the rapidly changing relationships during deep societal crisis (Khapaeva 2009; Lipovetsky and Etkind 2010; see also McAlister 2012). Pelevin’s vampires act as a critique of the predatory capitalism of the 1990s, in a manner similar to how the figure of the vampire has been mobilised as a critique of landed gentry and class society in the “West.” Beyond the habits and desires of his vampires, Pelevin also describes the process of “vampirization,” which for the novel’s protagonist happens exactly at the time of the Soviet society’s unravelling, further underlining the role of this mythical monster in embodying social change (Lipovetsky and Etkind 2010).

What kind of undead are post-Soviet zombies and what changing relationships do they represent? It seems obvious to point out that whereas for example vampires are imagined as powerful and sometimes even desirable figures, zombies are characterized by exclusively negative traits, particularly their lack of agency and free will. Crucially, McAlister notes that zombies are the only recurrent horror character originating from a non-European context (2012). While vampires, ghosts, and werewolves are of European cultural stock, the zombie's exotic origins have exposed it to multiple, iterative layers of mythologising as the character travelled from Haiti to the United States and onwards. The zombie began its path into the Hollywood roster of mythical monsters during the

¹³⁹ Pelevin rose to fame in the 1990s with his discerning literary critique of Soviet authoritarianism and, later, of the predatory capitalism of the first post-Soviet decade. In recent years, however, his reputation as an incisive critic of social ills has suffered due to his apparent failure to condemn Russia’s invasion of Ukraine or to generally take any kind of principled political stance apart from espousing general cynicism (Pinkham 2025).

US military occupation of Haiti between 1915–1934, when it became entangled with myths of cannibalism and native superstition that the occupying forces employed to dehumanise inhabitants of the island and thus justify their occupation (Dendle 2007; McAlister 2012).

Taking inspiration from sensationalised travel writers' accounts, the first zombies appeared in American films already in the 1930s, most famously in the 1932 film *White Zombie* (McAlister 2012). Throughout the years, the characteristics and behaviours of Hollywood zombies have shifted together with the cultural anxieties they embody: from labour exploitation in the 1930s to fears of communist infiltration in the 1950s, and from a critique of consumerism in the 1960s to an uneasiness with commodification of the human body implied by advances in biomedical science since the 1980s (Dendle 2007). Some of the systematic differences between Haitian *zonbi* and American zombies are that while in Haiti, *zonbis* are brought into being through sorcery to serve powerful men in secret societies, in American films, zombies tend to have more diffuse origins like pathogens or radiation, sometimes even alien invasion. Also, as remarked earlier, cannibalism is an entirely American zombie tradition.

Although the features of both Hollywood zombies and post-Soviet zombies are borrowed from the same cultural source, they have their own histories and characteristics. If Hollywood zombies have been used variably to critique slavery, labour exploitation, and fears of invasion (Dendle 2007), Post-Soviet zombies reveal particular anxieties about infection and loss of agency through malicious influence. According to Oleksandr Zabirko,

“a zombified person as such is not necessarily a braindead, flesh-eating monster from a blockbuster but rather *any person whose state of mind is corrupt*.” (2025:165, emphasis added).

Because of this, post-Soviet zombies appear particularly uncanny: they tend to live amongst healthy people and may keep acting and looking like normal despite being infected. One of my interlocutors Daria, a young English teacher living in Lviv, felt this way about the first months of the Donbas war. She explained that she suddenly became aware that her family members and friends disagreed with her about the events unfolding in the Donbas in a fundamental way, and that she had been “living amongst these people all the time” without realising it. She posited that her nearest and dearest had been zombified for a long time, but she had not noticed because they looked the same as always. Suddenly realising that others around her were zombified gave rise to a feeling of uncanniness. In a similar vein, Dendle notes that zombies in American films from the 1950s are “frightening for the very reason that they do not look like enemies at all, from the outside: they look disturbingly like our co-workers, neighbours, friends, and families.” (2007:49–50).

However, while Hollywood zombies tend to suffer from some type of physical infection, post-Soviet zombies are more about mental pollution. According to Zabirko, “a post-Soviet zombie is less an imaginary creature than it is a state of mind” (2025:161). Furthermore, as already mentioned, both Eliot Borenstein and Zabirko note that post-Soviet zombies are defined first and foremost by the process through which they are created. According to Borenstein,

“as in the West, [post-Soviet] zombies are the product of contagion, but along a completely different disease vector. The post-Soviet discourse is less concerned with zombie as thing than it is with zombie as process: not zombies, but zombification.” (2019:184)

Rather than physical contact, the process of zombification in post-Soviet societies relies to a large extent on the media, especially television. Michele Berdy quotes another author in her aforementioned column: “Television as a brainwashing machine is also called зомбификатор (zombifier) or зомбивизор (zombivision). (...) Ninety five percent of the population is subject to collective zombification.” (Berdy 2014). The understanding about the power of the TV to zombify or brainwash audiences implies that the transmission of information has deep effects on the audiences’ psyche, and that the audiences always receive the messages exactly as intended by the propagandist.

To unpack this vernacular understanding, it is helpful to review how discourses about the harmful influence of television developed historically. Alexey Golubev traces how understandings about the television’s ability to deeply influence viewers emerged in the late Soviet period (2020). Golubev examines the Soviet TV set and its power to transform the domestic space and Soviet selves, focussing particularly on psychic séances broadcast on state TV channels in the late 1980s. Televised séances of competing psychics Anatoly Kashpirovsky and Alan Chumak, broadcast in 1989, showcased the affective potential of the TV set to arrange viewers’ bodies spatially and temporally (ibid.). Kashpirovsky and Chumak claimed to have healing powers that they could transmit via the television and help viewers remotely with their health problems. Chumak also claimed his powers could be stored in liquids and creams placed in front of the TV set during the séances. According to Golubev, because of these shows, the TV became an object of social conflicts between educated (male) urbanites who disparaged them as indicators of obscurantism on the one hand, and their mainly female audiences who believed in their healing power on the other (ibid.). Still, both groups took seriously the transformative power of television over Soviet people. Golubev notes how critics claimed that

“the television’s power is dangerous for the national body. If left unchecked, it would damage the physical and mental health of the nation, represented by a conventional reference to women and children as powerless subjects needing protection.” (ibid.:157)

Golubev points out that many explanations for the popularity of Kashpirovsky's and Chumak’s séances “refer pejoratively to obscurantism and the stupidity of Soviet television audiences” (ibid.:9).

The TV set remains a highly antagonistic object in contemporary Russian society due to the consolidation of media companies in the hands of the government under Putin’s rule and the instrumental use of the television to discredit the opposition. Golubev notes that “[a]s a result, in the critical public discourse of the 2000s and 2010s, regular viewing of television strongly associates with a lack of critical thinking” (ibid:160). I will return to the point about the potentially harmful effects of communication later, but first I will discuss whether everyday subjectivity and media consumption in the Soviet period (or after it) warrant the zombification diagnosis.

2.1 Media and Soviet society

A common view about media in the Soviet Union is that Soviet society was saturated with propaganda and ideological manipulation eliminating all free thinking. This view also seems to fit together with Pelevin's essay on the zombification of the Soviet subject (1990). In academic discourse, this understanding largely derives from the totalitarian school in historiography, which emphasised all-encompassing party control, censorship,

stark contrast between public and private life, and overall lack of freedom (Friedrich and Brzezinski 1956). However, revisionist and post-revisionist historians have challenged this view by paying attention to the subjectivities created by Soviet ideology and discipline, and by interrogating to what extent the system relied on grassroots participation and internalisation of Soviet values (Fitzpatrick 1994, 2007; Kotkin 1997).

Meanwhile, anthropologists of the late Soviet society in Russia have examined practices that were enabled despite and because of the structuring of everyday life in the Soviet Union (Golubev 2020; Yurchak 2005). These studies have shown that everyday life in the late Soviet period should be analysed beyond a simple dichotomy between state power versus grassroots resistance, and with concepts derived from the lived experience of the Soviet localities themselves rather than the Western analytical toolkit. There were certainly committed members within the Communist Party and Komsomol who believed in the official ideological pronouncements, as well as political dissidents who denounced them equally ardently (Yurchak 2005). However, as Alexei Yurchak argues, most people were not particularly interested in politics, as the highly performative character of official discourse in late socialism was recognised by pretty much everyone (*ibid.*). Most ordinary folks disparaged both party activists and dissidents as overly zealous busybodies who took Soviet discourse entirely too seriously (Roudakova 2017:15; Yurchak 2005).

If not by official Party ideology, is it accurate to say that Soviet audiences were zombified by the media? According to Natalia Roudakova, while there was no “free marketplace of ideas,” the role of journalists in the Soviet period was not just parroting official pronouncements but also “speaking truth to power” (2017). Roudakova argues that “contrary to conventional narratives, Soviet-era journalists did share a truth- and justice-seeking ethic for which they were recognised by their audiences” (*ibid.*:7). Professional journalism existed alongside propaganda, and journalists were expected to participate in governance by relaying citizens’ grievances up the administrative chain (*ibid.*:29-30). This required actively cultivating trust between journalists and their audiences. Furthermore, Borenstein claims that Soviet citizens were highly discerning media consumers rather than brainwashed automatons (2019:229). Instead of universally and unquestioningly receptive attitudes to party propaganda, the late Soviet period was characterised by the population’s general distrust of official news and statements (*ibid.*). Everyone recognised that the connection between real events and their representation in official news was tenuous. Moreover, many citizens directly participated in creating these fantasy representations in their everyday roles as union and party representatives in workplaces and universities (Yurchak 2005). Roudakova argues that it was post-Soviet privatisation, not Soviet legacies, that led to the erosion of professional journalistic norms and citizens’ trust in the media. After 1992, journalism has widely become seen as “political prostitution” (Roudakova 2017).

Furthermore, the loss of “authoritative voice” of late socialism (Yurchak 2005), combined with the erosion of journalistic practices in the 1990s, bred mistrust in the media and general cynicism in Russia and other post-Soviet countries (Roudakova 2017). While seeking truth and speaking it to power were part and parcel of Soviet journalists’ work, Roudakova argues that the practices of hidden advertisements and owners’ demands for political and electoral promotion have brought about “a society-wide erosion of the value of seeking truth and of speaking it to power.” (Roudakova

2017:8). In light of these authors' work, then, Soviet citizens were not particularly zombified subjects: people participated in pro forma activities not due to ideological fervour but to promote their careers, both party activists and dissidents were seen as irritating busybodies, and official newspapers were not read as the only and ultimate truth. If anything, it appears that the conditions for zombification accusations arose after the Soviet collapse with increased mistrust in journalism and politics more generally. When it comes to the Ukrainian context, there are clear similarities with the Russian media landscape, but also idiosyncratic features. The media system in independent Ukraine is a product of both Soviet legacies and post-Soviet developments, especially the oligarchisation of the economy (Orlova 2016). Most mainstream media outlets up until Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine were under oligarchic control, representing over three quarters of the national audience share (Fedirko 2022:77). Media holdings thus became extensions of oligarchic power and conduits for their influence in national politics. Concretely, this has meant that oligarchic owners often place limits on what journalists could report and how. The effects of these arrangements have been an overall mood of cynicism and mistrust in the media in Ukraine. After the Euromaidan revolution, there have been attempts to create independent outlets like Hromadske, but even their journalists have struggled to extract themselves from the atmosphere of mistrust with its concomitant accusations of bias and political involvement (Fedirko 2021, 2022).

3. The resurrection of zombies in 2014

It is poignant that the metaphor of Soviet power as zombification arose exactly at the time of state-socialism's demise and not any earlier. As already argued, the zombie metaphor can be understood as a tool for working through the societal upheaval and moral confusion of the early 1990s. However, rather than waning away in importance as the Soviet collapse receded further away in the rear-view mirror, the image of the zombie gained novel salience after the Euromaidan revolution and the beginning of the Donbas war in spring 2014. It is not possible in the scope of this essay to track how the idea of zombification travelled to – or independently appeared – in Ukraine. However, it has been used in the same sense as in Russia: as a critique of Soviet subjectivity or as a way to discount other people's beliefs, often both at the same time.

During my fieldwork, several of my informants in Ukraine claimed that people in the Donbas were particularly vulnerable to zombification because of their lastingly "Soviet mentality." For example, Andrii, a Luhansk-born real estate lawyer in his thirties living in Lviv, used the idea of Soviet brainwashing to explain why he found it impossible to agree about political questions with many of his compatriots:

"It's very hard to convey any arguments or facts to them. That is, they are very easy to manipulate. Because they were also brainwashed in the Soviet Union and now they again rush from one extreme to the other – someone over there in Donbas believes Russia, someone here believes politicians like Julia Tymošenko and so on."

In a later conversation about corruption in Ukraine, Andrii complained that Ukrainians generally lacked critical thinking and "sound perception" (in Russian: *ne chvataet adekvatnogo vosprijatija*). He was willing to put his hopes on the next generation of young people, who would be able to think freely without the damaging

influence of the Soviet Union. Such discourses blaming Soviet influence for a perceived lack of critical thinking are not unique to Ukraine, but are rather commonplace in the postsocialist sphere (Dzenovska 2018; Larson 2013; Reeves 2005). It is noteworthy that both Vladyslav and Andrii referred to the concept of zombification and lack of critical thinking, because their views about the Donbas war were mutually incompatible with each other. This again demonstrates how the concept was employed from many different subject positions to articulate mistrust in other people's beliefs, and not only from the liberal-nationalist position, which tends to be highly critical of the Soviet system. Indeed, several interlocutors whom I met in Russia also used the concept to criticise the credulity of Ukrainian publics.

"Soviet zombification" thus appears to have surprisingly long-lasting effects, if Soviet-era education and ideological inculcation impacted former subjects almost thirty years after the collapse of state socialism, despite the thorough delegitimation of the Soviet system in the decades after (Chelcea and Druță 2016). In Ukrainian political discourse, there has been a tendency to discount the views of people from the country's South-Eastern regions as misinformed or mystified by referring to the concept of zombification (Portnov 2017). This understanding came up during my fieldwork in Ukraine as well. While brainstorming ideas for improving the conditions of internally displaced people from the Donbas, one Ukrainian-speaking participant wrote "kill the slave within you" on a whiteboard, implying that it was a faulty consciousness that was the main problem, not displacement and war. In this, the idea of zombification eerily resembles the Marxist concept of false consciousness – an explanation for how workers (or voters) misrecognise the particular interests of the ruling classes as their own and identify with them politically. As a result, this critique of the Soviet subjectivity is, ironically, quite Soviet in form. I will return to arguments about vernacular or "everyday Marxism" (Kruglova 2017) and the paradox of thinking about Soviet subjectivity with understandings about personhood deriving from the Soviet period, but first, I will discuss an alternative reading about claims of zombification in the Ukrainian context. Analysts tend to observe that accusations of zombification are a way to articulate mistrust in other people's ideas without the need to engage with them critically (Borenstein 2019). Zombification always concerns others, never the speaker, because only by recognising the effects of zombification in others, the speaker can be sure that she has not been zombified. Seen in this light, the metaphor of zombification is simply a rhetorical tool used to discredit other people's beliefs and does not contain any deeper metaphors about changing social relationships. It could be claimed that since the outbreak of the Donbas war, the rhetorical power of zombification accusations has experienced inflation, as all sides to the Donbas war habitually blame each other for being zombified. Among my interlocutors, the only commonly shared understanding was that something was badly wrong with everyone else's reasoning capabilities, that is, that everyone else is zombified.

However, rather than a dismissal or an accusation, zombification claims can also be analysed as ethical diagnoses relinquishing loved ones from responsibility for their erroneous views (Uehling 2023). As discussed above, the Donbas war caused sudden rifts between family members and friends, when people found themselves disagreeing deeply about the reasons behind the war. According to Greta Uehling, personal relationships turned into sites for working out the tensions of the Donbas war:

“the geopolitical conflict erupted and overflowed into the interpersonal realm so that the conflict between the two countries was often expressed in the intersubjective connections between people” (ibid.:74).

According to Uehling, in the aftermath of the Donbas war, Ukrainians engaged in three strategies for maintaining “everyday peace” despite strong interpersonal disagreements: “avoiding the topic of politics, avoiding the people with whom one disagreed, and ascribing discord to the zombifying powers of the media.” (ibid.:73). In Uehling’s view, ascribing flawed beliefs to informational contagion implies that there is a possibility for recovery, that is, that people can be somehow de-zombified. Seen in this way, zombification is first and foremost an ethical diagnosis: the afflicted person is not to blame for their condition, and the task for unzombified people is tolerating them until they can be released from the voodoo master’s spell. In a similar vein, Zabirko argues that:

“An informationally ‘zombified’ person ceases to be a valid interlocutor and cannot engage in a meaningful discussion. Yet (...) they cannot be simply annihilated – thus, one needs to look for strategies for coming to terms with such ‘zombified’ compatriots.” (2025:163)

In this reading, the concept of zombification is utilised to work through the tensions of the Donbas war. The similarity between the post-2014 zombie and the Soviet zombie diagnosed by Pelevin is that both lack critical thinking and are easily manipulated by the media. Also, both appear as metaphorical means for working through social crisis. However, the threat posed by zombified people to the speaking subject appears to have shifted. In the context of the Donbas war, the view that zombified people are not solely to blame for their condition was accompanied by media consumption practices that questioned the idea that the speaking subject is immune to the effects of zombification.

Borenstein argues that the “brainwashing/zombification narrative works [as a rhetorical strategy] because it posits the vulnerability of others while reinforcing a sense of one’s own strong, inviolate self: I am not zombified, because I can see how zombification has worked on others” (2019:187). However, I argue that the concern with zombification may not signify a sense of a “strong, inviolate self” but rather of one’s vulnerability to informational corruption. As described above, I discerned in some of my informant’s responses a desire for what I call “news hygiene:” many had stopped, or at least claimed to have stopped, consuming news sometime after they left the Donbas. Many of my interviewees also refused to recommend me news sources, TV channels, or journalists to follow so that I could gain a better understanding of what was happening, citing their distaste for the media. There was widespread recognition that all sides were spinning facts about the Donbas war: there were regular mismatches between events and news stories about them, which increased my informants’ sense that no news outlet is to be fully trusted to tell the truth. For example, Daria lamented that it is hard to get objective information about events in the Donbas, which is why she completely ceased watching TV. Such media hygiene practices have been observed even in literature. Zabirko observes that in science fiction author Sergei Lukianenko’s novel *Kvazi* (2016),

“human society (...) seeks to preserve its identity by rejecting modern technologies such as radios and computers and reverting to an archaic lifestyle to protect itself from possible ‘zombification’” (2025:163).

Several of my interlocutors, such as Katja introduced at the beginning of this essay, told me that they had stopped watching or reading news or otherwise limited their exposure to media sometime between 2014 and 2016.

Cutting ties with erstwhile family members or friends espousing disagreeable views was another strategy employed to avoid negative influence through communication, as explored above. If, as Borenstein claims, zombification claims assert the speaker's "strong, inviolate self", there should be no need for such practices. However, because so many people ascribed to them in the aftermath of the Donbas war, encountering zombified friends or contradictory media accounts clearly provoked more than just irritation. Also, discourses around the idea that television is capable of zombifying people often contain an assertion that audiences must be protected from its malicious influence, as Golubev notes (2020). These observations seem to imply that no one is safe from the potentially harmful influence of communication, whether mediated or not. And, if zombification is an ethical diagnosis relinquishing the victims from responsibility for their erroneous views, as Uehling (2023) suggests, negative moral evaluations concern the zombifying information – or the secretive agent behind it – rather than the zombified person. Together, these observations point to the possibility of infection through communication: that by exchanging information, a person's bodily integrity may be unwittingly breached and they can lose their agency as a result.

Poignantly, similar anxieties about becoming zombified have been observed in Haiti, the zombie's birthplace. Davis Wade notes that

"the concept of slavery implies that the victim of zombification suffers a fate worse than death—the loss of individual freedom implied by enslavement, and the sacrifice of individual identity and autonomy (...) It must be emphasized that the fear in Haiti is not *of* zombies, but rather of *becoming* a zombie." (1988:ch.1).

A key difference is that while in the Haitian context, zombification happens through sorcery, in Ukraine and Russia it apparently takes place via communicative means. Being exposed to the wrong kind of information can fundamentally rob a person of their autonomy and free will. How can this happen? I argue that Anna Kruglova's analysis of the perceived vulnerability of the self to outside forces (2017) is helpful in attempting to pick apart the idea of infectious information. In what Kruglova calls "vernacular Marxism," the material impacts of communication and affect are explicitly acknowledged (ibid.:769). Vernacular Marxism is not the official ideology of Marxism-Leninism, but a type of common sense in Gramsci's terms (1999), one that metabolised the official ideology of state-socialism into a vernacular language over decades of Soviet rule and after. In post-Soviet Russia, vernacular Marxism features understandings about the material basis of personhood and exchange of information. According to Kruglova, in these everyday understandings,

"Affects are like particles in physics in that they become charged as either *pozitiv* or *negativ*. The essences of *pozitiv* and *negativ*—upbeat and optimistic, or depressed and gloomy—are applied often and to everything: people, places, emotions, thoughts, and words. *Negativ* is naturally a bigger concern." (2017:770)

That is, other people's moods, intentions, and thoughts can have an either negative or positive impact on the subject. Because of this, all communication is charged

"with a threat of affect dispossession—insidious agendas, unpleasant surprises, threats of 'brainwashing,' or 'loading'—*gruzit'*, unnecessarily straining one's affective structure with irrelevancies or abstractions" (ibid.:770).

To shield oneself from such affective dispossession, a person should communicate with caution and avoid revealing too much about themselves to outsiders. That is, a kind of energetic sorcery can be achieved through communication, which makes it important to treat all exchanges of information with suspicion.

Finally, an important feature uniting the Haitian and Post-Soviet zombie is that their existence always implies another character, at least implicitly: the zombie master. Zombified victims are always “subservient and beholden to the nefarious authority of some unknown master” (Wade 1988:ch.2). That is, zombies are not simply emptied of the capacity to act in a meaningful way, but their actions do not represent themselves – they represent the will of the zombie master. Indeed, Taras Fedirko argues that an idiom of invisible masters who are behind everything is mainstream in Ukraine.¹⁴⁰ This “paranoid vernacular,” as he calls it, is used to interrogate the true origins of power in a system where it is unclear what anyone stands for in politics. It seems that everyone speaks on behalf of someone else. That is, the owner of power is displaced behind chains of representative labour: politicians, journalists, and others (see also Fedirko 2022).

In Fedirko’s analysis, the paranoid vernacular is an emic representation of the patronal form of rule that emerged in post-Soviet Ukraine. In this system, learning to see behind the surface of appearances is a crucial virtue, one that clearly echoes Marxist and psychoanalytical diagnoses of power. I argue that the concern with zombification should be seen as a part of this “paranoid vernacular:” the character of the zombie attempts to diagnose the displacement of agency. However, much like in Haitian secret societies, the ultimate slave master who is responsible for zombifying their victims remains unknown and unknowable. Usually, the only reference to the true owner of the zombified people’s agency is via the rhetorical question “who benefits?” (Fedirko 2022:73). The success of the zombie as a character for working through societal anxieties in post-Soviet Ukraine thus appears to derive from its ability to diagnose and represent a social system based on secrecy and the suppression of some people’s will to that of another.

4. Conclusion

Throughout its career in literature and popular discourse, the post-Soviet zombie has evolved. Arising in the early 1990s from Viktor Pelevin’s essay as an explicit critique of the collapsing Soviet order, the post-Soviet zombie came to embody the capacity of media, especially the television, to brainwash audiences. In this usage, perceived Soviet legacies leading to an erosion in critical thinking skills are evoked to explain the vulnerability of audiences to the effects of the “zombie box” (*zombojaščik*). In the context of the Donbas war since 2014, the image of the living dead was used again in a slightly different guise: as a rhetorical device to cast doubt on *all* communication, both mediated and personal, and to ethically relinquish loved ones from responsibility for their misguided understandings (Borenstein 2019; Uehling 2023; Zabirko 2025). Fear of malicious influence through information led to widely accepted practices of “news hygiene,” that is, avoiding all media consumption. These practices, in turn, imply a

¹⁴⁰ Seminar talk titled “Anxieties of influence: manipulated speech and oligarchic publicity in pre-invasion Ukraine,” given by Fedirko on the 5th of November 2025 at the Department of Cultural Anthropology, Uppsala University.

recognition that zombification could happen to anyone, even the speaking subject, highlighting an understanding of the material effects of communication on personhood (Kruglova 2017).

The most recent shift in the meaning of the zombie came with Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. While in the Donbas war, the zombie metaphor was often used as an ethical diagnosis (Uehling 2023), after 2022 the meaning of the zombie has drifted towards dehumanisation of enemy soldiers by both sides of the war (Zabirko 2025). This reflects the trashing of hopes that zombified people could be cured of their ailment, as the intensification of the war only entrenched irreconcilable viewpoints. Another mythical figure, the orc, has joined the zombie in Ukrainian war-time discourse, painting the enemy as fundamentally different and incompatible with those fighting on the side of good (ibid.). Nevertheless, even in the aftermath of the 2022 invasion, the concept of zombification is still widely used in popular discourse as a commentary on the corrupting effects of television in both Ukraine and Russia (see figure 1).

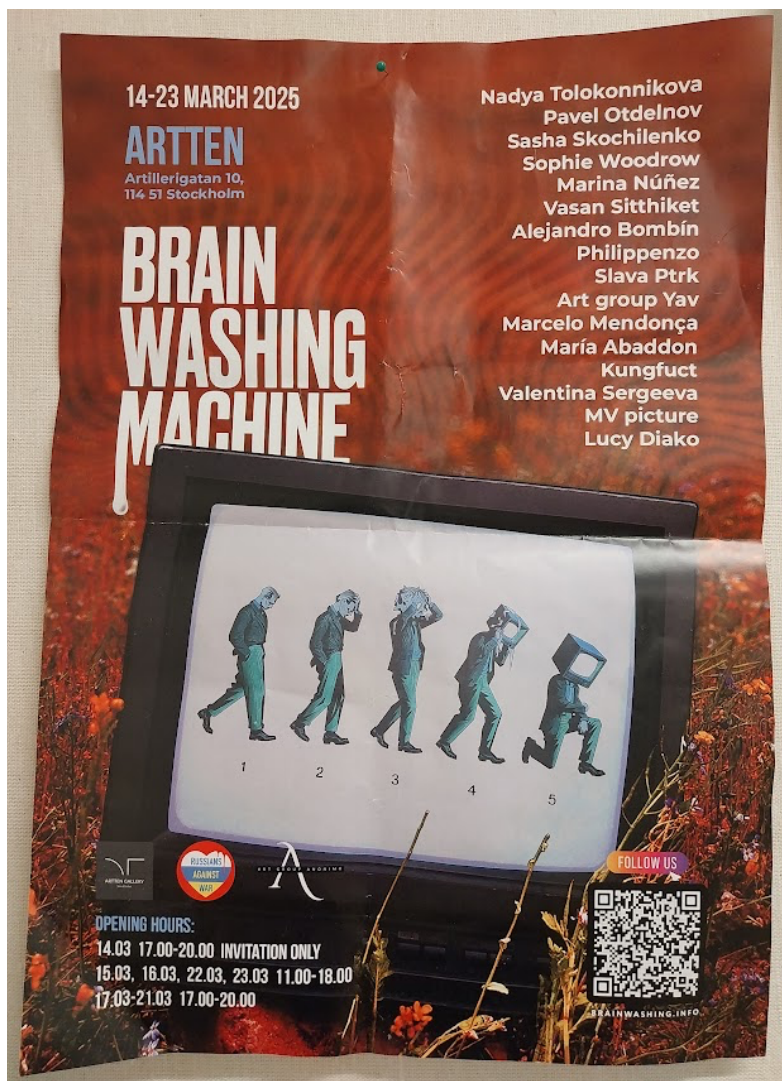


Figure 1. A poster for an anti-war exhibition in Stockholm, spring 2025. Photograph by the author.

Zombification as a problematic is intimately connected to the globally rising concerns with hybrid warfare, mis- and disinformation, conspiracy theories, and “fake news” in the past decade. In this essay, I have argued that anxieties about zombification in post-

Soviet Ukraine and Russia rely on a specific understanding of personhood, one derived from “vernacular Marxism” in Anna Kruglova’s terms (2017). In the Ukrainian context, it is also part and parcel of what Taras Fedirko calls the “paranoid vernacular,” an emic way of analysing patronal form of power. As such, the concept of zombification acts as a diagnosis of the uncanny operation of power in a society where agency appears constantly deferred: everyone acts on behalf of someone else, with the ultimate owner of power, or slave master, remaining secret. However, a tragic paradox is that accusing someone of having been zombified essentially robs them of the capacity to be the author of their own actions and opinions, a rhetorical move that can only cause further alienation and discord. Whether and how accusations of zombification contribute to an atmosphere of bitterness and mistrust and how the character of the zombie has evolved further since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine could be questions for further research.

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Festschrift

To Andrei Rogatchevski

Introduction

**“Talent is always conscious of its own abundance,
and does not object to sharing.”**

Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn (1973). “The First Circle”

The present volume honors the outstanding contributions of Andrei Rogatchevski to the fields of Slavic studies and literary and cultural studies more broadly, while also celebrating Andrei as a colleague, collaborator, mentor, and person. In this short introduction, our primary aim is to outline Andrei’s significance within the field and to offer an overall portrait of the person he is—something that, at least in part, helps explain the remarkable breadth, depth, and originality of the scholarly achievements represented in his work.

A comprehensive and seemingly never-ending list of Andrei’s projects, books, articles, reviews, organized panels and conferences is readily available online (see e.g. <https://en.uit.no/ansatte/andrei.rogatchevski>). Among the publications he has (co-) authored or (co-)edited are:

- *Bribery and Blat in Russia: Negotiating Reciprocity from the Middle Ages to the 1990s* (2000);
- *A Biographical and Critical Study of the Russian Writer Eduard Limonov* (2003);
- *Filming the Unfilmable: Casper Wrede’s “One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich”* (2010; 2nd ed. 2014);
- *Punishment as a Crime? Perspectives on Prison Experience in Russian Culture* (2014);
- the special issues of *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* (nos. 2–4, 1999) entitled *East and Central European Émigré Literatures: Past, Present—and Future?*;
- the special issue of *Science Fiction Film and Television* (no. 2, 2015) entitled *Filming the Strugatskiis*;
- the special issue of *Nordlit* (no. 39, 2017) entitled *Russian Space: Concepts, Practices, Representations*;
- *Madness and Literature* (thematic section), *Wiener Slawistischer Almanach*, vol. 80, 2017, pp. 7–116 (with Maija Könönen);
- *A War of Songs: Popular Music and Recent Russia–Ukraine Relations* (with Arve Hansen, Yngvar Steinholt, and David-Emil Wickström; foreword by Artemy Troitsky), Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2019, 247 pp.;
- *The Russian Revolutions of 1917: The Northern Impact and Beyond* (with Kari Aga Myklebost and Jens Petter Nielsen), Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2020, 211 pp.;

- *Svalbard Studies: On the Occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the Svalbard Treaty* (special issue of *Nordlit*, no. 45, 2020, pp. 1–191; with Leonid S. Chekin).

What is less easy to find, however, is a carefully curated narrative of the various stages of Andrei's academic career. This absence is itself telling and points to a defining feature of his personality: constructing an exhaustive online résumé might have been less important to him than advancing ideas, moving projects forward, and building meaningful scholarly collaborations. Below, we therefore outline just a few key highlights of his career in order to convey the academic breadth and geographical scope of his expertise.

Andrei is a graduate of Moscow State University (1988, MA equivalent in Russian Language and Literature) and the University of Glasgow (1998, PhD in Slavonic Languages and Literatures). He also studied at Charles University in Prague (the Poděbrady campus) and at the University of West Bohemia in Plzeň. Over the course of his career, he has taught at the University of Glasgow, the University of Strathclyde, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, the University of Helsinki, Masaryk University in Brno, the University of Ostrava, the Technical University of Liberec, the University of Mainz/Germersheim, the University of Ghent, and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He has held a research position at Uppsala University and is currently Professor of Russian Literature and Culture at UiT – The Arctic University of Norway.

Andrei joined UiT in January 2014, arriving from Glasgow with his trademark enthusiasm, an exceptionally wide range of research interests, and an extensive international academic network. To his new colleagues, it quickly became clear that UiT had gained a resourceful, generous, and deeply committed team player. He soon left a visible mark on both the curriculum and the research profile of the unit. Perhaps the most prominent example of this was the establishment of the research group RSCPR (Russian Space: Concepts, Practices, Representations) in the autumn of 2014. Following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the group was reorganized and renamed PSiF (Pax Slavica in Flux). Through this work, Andrei has not only contributed decisively to expanding the unit's research focus to include Belarus and Ukraine, but has also reinforced its Arctic dimension by launching Svalbard Studies as a distinct research field within the PSiF framework. His long-standing passion for film has also found institutional expression in the two MA-level courses he established shortly after his arrival at UiT.

There are perhaps three major things that immediately stand out about Andrei, and this perception was shared by both colleagues and students when we asked around.

First, Andrei is marked by an exceptionally broad cultural curiosity. While literature remains central to his work, he is equally deeply engaged with film and with Arctic-related questions. Professionally, whatever topic one raises, Andrei invariably seems to know exactly whom to contact: specialists spread across the globe, from New Zealand and South Korea to North America and Europe. A telling anecdote dates back to his interview trip to Tromsø, when, having just a few hours in the city, he decided to take the cable car to Fjellheisen and unexpectedly encountered Turid Austin Wæhler, a former student of his from Glasgow. Turid later became his PhD candidate and defended her dissertation in 2024, entitled "*What characterizes successful collaboration in health*

care, and how can culture be a facilitator or barrier to collaboration?”, a project that also reflects Andrei’s sustained engagement with “Svalbard studies”, a field he himself established at UiT.

When UiT adopted institutional guidelines emphasizing a strategic focus on the Arctic, Andrei immediately grasped the potential and approached it from an original and unexpected angle. Rather than reiterating familiar narratives, he turned to largely unexplored material, such as Polish presence on Svalbard and Polish cinematic representations of the archipelago, virtually unknown in Norway and beyond. His work on the Polish Polar Station Hornsund, a year-round research facility established in 1957 and operated by the Institute of Geophysics of the Polish Academy of Sciences, exemplifies his ability to identify neglected topics and bring them to scholarly visibility. Where others see an absence of research, Andrei uncovers sources, patiently works through archives, and only then proceeds to analysis. He possesses an extraordinary capacity to sustain and follow through on such long-term projects. At the same time, he is consistently available, always interested in collaboration and eager to involve others in new initiatives—qualities that make him an exceptionally valued colleague.

Second, Andrei is widely known for his remarkable memory. It comes as little surprise to those who work with him that he can be described as a “walking encyclopedia” (Rus. “человек-энциклопедия”). He recalls precisely what was published where and when, and in discussions with PhD students he can effortlessly generate an entire reference list on the spot. Where others may need time to search and verify, Andrei immediately retrieves what is needed. This ability is complemented by his extraordinary linguistic aptitude. Within just a few years, he learned Norwegian well enough to handle official documentation, participate fully in formal meetings conducted in Norwegian, and eventually even serve as a program coordinator. At various points in his career, he has also acquired Czech, Swedish, Polish, Ukrainian, and Belarusian.

Third, Andrei is distinguished by a highly original personal scholarly style. His writing is information-rich yet vivid, engaging, and often humorous. He is unafraid of controversial topics and unhesitant about challenging established disciplinary traditions—an especially important quality within Slavic studies. Where many scholars continue along familiar paths, Andrei actively seeks new angles and responds directly to contemporary developments. This is evident, for example, in his work on contemporary East-Slavonic popular music, a field to which he made groundbreaking contributions. His colleagues at UiT and elsewhere, regularly benefit from Andrei’s overview and generous advice. Andrei has a keen sense for timely themes. His presently ongoing project on the Russian cult of death was inspired, amongst other things, by the inclusion of Leonid Andreev’s *The Red Laugh* (*Красный смех*) on the RUS-2110 course curriculum back in 2014. Today, in the light of recent and unfolding events, this Russian willingness to sacrifice oneself for meaningless causes appears strikingly prescient and painfully relevant.

Yet, Andrei is far more than a “walking encyclopedia” or an indefatigable scholar. Not everyone may know that he is also a devoted father and grandfather. Despite the sheer number of projects he is involved in, he remains deeply engaged in the lives of his sons and grandchildren and takes great interest in their pursuits.

Andrei is a dear colleague and friend to many. This volume brings together contributions from those who wished to congratulate him, to share personal stories, and

to express their appreciation for his work and his presence. Here, we offer a selection of these greetings, reflections, and memories, along with a list of contributors, as a collective tribute to Andrei Rogatchevski and to the enduring impact he has had on our field and on all of us who have had the privilege of working with him.

Yngvar Steinholt
Svetlana Sokolova
Tore Nasset

Greetings

Yngvar Steinholt:

Andrei and I first met briefly at a conference in the UK, where he stood out by knowing what I was talking about, and for providing encouragement and substantial advice for my project. We since got to know each other better and from 2014 became close colleagues. His academic curiosity, approachability and enthusiasm is a true gift for his work colleagues and students alike. He takes chances and embraces opportunities not everybody would be aware of.

In 2016 we learned about an interesting conference in Nimes. Should we go? Why not! A sporty decision, and perhaps a risky one. We did turn out to be the only delegates presenting in English, which meant our panel got a rather exclusive audience of five. Nonetheless, we gained a lot from attending a French academic event, and our papers became the first steps towards a full-grown book project *A War of Songs*, published in 2019 with two other colleagues.

Two years after Nimes, in a blisteringly hot downtown Tokyo, we strolled past a narrow alley sporting a curious little door in an enormous, windowless concrete wall. A small sign by the door suggested somewhat unconvincingly that this was a form of drinking venue. After dark, we passed by again and the door was open. Negative thinking is rarely an option with Andrei, so in we went. We descended down narrow stairs into a tiny, sparsely lit venue, where jazz classics streamed from hidden speakers. The room consisted of a bar with five rickety stools, and –as it turned out– a private collection of whisky bottles, collected from all over the world. The bottles' owner and friendly host, who swiftly put out his cigarette and followed us in, chose the drinks, music and conversation topics for his guests exclusively himself. He turned out to be extremely knowledgeable on every aspect of Japanese culture, from ancient local history to kabuki theatre. Our conversations with him enriched our short stay in the Japanese capital immensely. Andrei is perpetually looking for opportunities to learn something. It is always well worth joining him in such quests. Congratulations on your anniversary, Andrei. And many happy returns!

Josie von Zitzewitz:

Dear Andrei,

поздравляю с прошедшем юбилеем! I want to take this opportunity to thank you publically for being not only a friend, but a stalwart supporter and role model throughout my academic career. One occasion in particular stayed with me: we were hanging out having a beer, but by the end of the evening you had somehow pushed me into

formulating an entirely new line of inquiry into contemporary online poetry. I still have the notes I took. A few years later, the project that grew from this conversation brought me to Tromsø, where I was able to realise several exciting collaborations in spite of the pandemic. And there are other examples - I remember asking you, many years ago now, why you spend so much time researching writers whose work expresses nationalist or otherwise unsavoury views and you replying simply "somebody needs to do it so the world knows what's going on". How right you were... Or when my old friend Vadim Stroykin died following relentless persecution by the Russian authorities: although he'd not been widely known as a writer, you encouraged me to commemorate him with an entry in the Literary Encyclopaedia. I can't possibly list all the moments of inspiration, and I remember indignantly calling you a workaholic more than once, but I want you to know that your curiosity, integrity and humanity make Russophone academia a better place. All the very best for the next years!

Pierre Kornev:

Dear Andrei Borisovich,

Please accept my warmest congratulations. Studying under your guidance was truly a joy and a privilege. You are an exceptional professor—deeply knowledgeable, thoughtful, and endlessly generous with your time and attention. Your genuine love for teaching and for your students is felt in everything you do.

You care deeply about your work, and every former student of yours I have ever spoken with remembers you with admiration and gratitude. Your lectures were never just lectures—they felt like real conversations, where everyone was invited to think, question, and discover together. It was in those moments that real understanding was born.

I look back on your lectures with great fondness and nostalgia.

Thank you for everything, Andrei Borisovich.

Best regards,

Pierre Kornev (Former MA student in Russian Studies at UiT)

Leonid S. Chekin:

С Андреем Рогачевским мы подружились на Южном острове Новой Зеландии. Это было так давно, в июне 1998-го года, что мы даже успели обменяться по почте рукописными «документами на бумажных носителях», подобными тем, о которых речь идёт в моей статье в этом сборнике. С тех пор не перестаю восхищаться его эрудицией, безупречным вкусом и острым, свободным умом!

Ken Wilson:

Dear Andrei, you've been a valued friend, colleague, mentor, exemplar and inspiration for 30 years now. Congratulations on the festschrift (much deserved) and here's to the next 30 years!

Eva Binder:

Dear Andrej, without your initiative, we would not have an Erasmus agreement between our universities (Tromsø and Innsbruck), and without your warm invitation to Tromsø

at just the right moment, I would not have travelled to the far north for a week of Erasmus exchange in January 2026. What's more, I don't know anyone else in the wide world of academia who responds to emails so quickly, at any time of the day or night. I hope you remain just as communicative, energetic and dynamic in the decades still ahead – even if we all become slower and more sluggish with age. All the best!

Atle Grønn:

Takk til 60-åringen for inspirerende utveksling om 100-åringen "Шахматная горячка" (1925)!

Brita Lotsberg Bryn:

Tusen takk for fine leseopplevelser og alt godt samarbeid!

Andrei Krasniashchikh:

Дорогой Андрей, спасибо за возможность побывать в Тромсё! Желаю Вам удачи в любом деле, интересных научных находок, сил и ярких впечатлений! Буду рад продолжить наше сотрудничество и общение.
С уважением, Андрей Краснящих.

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Josephine von Zitzewitz
Institute for Russian and Eurasian Studies (IRES)
The editors of Slovo

Ukrainian Indefinite Pronouns and Language Typology

Original research article

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Abstract

The present article offers an empirical analysis of Ukrainian indefinite pronouns and adverbs based on data from the GRAC corpus. The proposed analysis has ramifications for Ukrainian linguistics, Slavic linguistics, and language typology. With regard to Ukrainian linguistics, we identify substantial frequency differences and suggest distinguishing between a “core” system including the indefiniteness markers *de-*, *-s'* and *bud'*-, and three “peripheral” markers, viz. *-nebud'*, *aby-*, and *kazna*. From the perspective of Slavic linguistics, the proposed analysis facilitates comparison with other Slavic languages, such as Polish and Russian. Our analysis pinpoints a number of similarities across Ukrainian, Polish and Russian, but also demonstrates that Ukrainian has a distinct system that merits investigation in its own right. For language typology, the analysis we propose shows how frequency information can be integrated in semantic maps, which arguably makes semantic maps a more powerful tool for cross-linguistic comparison.

Introduction

Indefinite pronouns have attracted considerable attention in Slavic linguistics, and in his seminal typological study, Haspelmath (1997) includes thorough analyses of *inter alia* Polish and Russian. Haspelmath (1997) does not analyze Ukrainian, which has received less attention in scholarly literature than other Slavic languages (but see Fisun 2019, 2022). In this article, we present an analysis of Ukrainian indefinite pronouns and adverbs based on data from the GRAC corpus (Shvedova et al. 2017–22).

In Slavic languages, indefinite pronouns and adverbs are typically formed by adding what we may call an indefiniteness marker to a question word (a pronoun like Ukrainian *xto* ‘who’ or an adverb like Ukrainian *de* ‘where’). For the purposes of the present article, we will consider pronouns and adverbs based on the following indefiniteness markers: *de-*, *-s’*, *bud’-*, *-nebud’*, *aby-*, and *kazna*. As demonstrated by Fisun (2019, 2022), more markers are attested, but these fall outside the scope of the present article, which focuses on the most conventionalized and prototypical indefinite pronouns and adverbs in Ukrainian.

Our contribution can be summarized as follows. First, with regard to Ukrainian linguistics, we offer a semantic map for the relevant pronouns and adverbs and analyze the frequency distributions of the words under scrutiny. On the basis of frequency data, we propose a distinction between a “core” system and what we refer to as “peripheral” markers. Second, from the perspective of Slavic linguistics, we offer a comparison of Ukrainian with Russian and Polish, showing that the Ukrainian system is different from both neighboring languages. Third, when it comes to language typology, we argue that semantic maps can yield more insightful analyses if frequency information is included in the maps.

After a brief discussion of semantic maps in section 2, we present the frequency data for Ukrainian and carry out a correspondence analysis of these data in section 3. Section 4 is an analysis of the Ukrainian “core” system, which is compared to Polish and Russian in section 5. In section 6, we explore “peripheral” markers, before we show how frequency data can be incorporated in semantic maps in section 7. Section 8 sums up our findings.

1. Semantic maps for indefinite pronouns and adverbs

Haspelmath (1997) takes nine broad categories as the point of departure for his typological survey of indefinite pronouns, which are illustrated with Russian examples (from Haspelmath 1997:273–275):

- (1) Specific known:
Nam nado pogovorit’ s toboj koe o čem.
‘You and I have to talk about something.’

- (2) Specific unknown:
Kto-to postučal v dver'.
'Someone knocked on the door.'
- (3) Irrealis non-specific:
My vstretimsja gde-nibud'
'We'll meet somewhere.'
- (4) Question:
Zvonil mne kto-nibud'?'
'Did anyone call me?'
- (5) Conditional:
Esli čto-nibud' slučitsja, ja skažu mame.'
'If anything happens, I'll tell mom.'
- (6) Comparative:
Zdes' prijatnee žit' čem gde-libo v mire.
'It is more pleasant to live here than anywhere in the world.'
- (7) Indirect negation:
bez kakoj-libo pomošči
'without any help'
- (8) Free choice:
Ty možeš' kupit' ljubuju knigu.
'You may buy any book.'
- (9) Direct negation:
Nikogda ja ne zabudu tebjja.
'I will never forget you.'

While, as shown in the copious literature on Russian indefinite pronouns (e.g., Dahl 1970, Padučeva 1985: 209–220, Padučeva 2011, Padučeva 2018, Tatevosov 2002), more fine-grained distinctions can be pinpointed, these broad categories represent a good starting point for comparison of languages and will be adopted in this article. We note, though, that Haspelmath's categories represent a heterogeneous set. Some of the categories describe the referential properties of the relevant lexical items. For instance, the distinction between (1) and (2) has to do with whether the referent is known to the speaker or not. In a similar vein, (1) and (2) represent the difference between specific and non-specific reference. Other categories describe contextual features that license certain indefinite pronouns. Examples of this type are questions in (4) and conditional clauses in (5).

In the following, we focus on categories (1)–(8). Category (9), direct negation, behaves the same way in Ukrainian, Polish and Russian, and is therefore not of primary interest when comparing these languages.

A semantic map may be defined as “a way to visually represent the interrelationships between meanings expressed in languages” (Georgakopoulos and Polis 2018:1). Haspelmath (1997) distributes the nine categories so that closely related categories are close to each other on the map. Lines indicate the categories covered by certain forms. The semantic map in Figure 1, adapted from Haspelmath (1997:271), describes the distribution of the three Polish markers *-s'*, *-kolwiek*, and *ni-*. Haspelmath (1997:273)

also includes a semantic map for Russian. As shown in Figure 2, this map involves seven markers: *koe-*, *-to*, *-nibud'*, *-libo*, *ni-*, *ljuboj*, and *ugodno*.

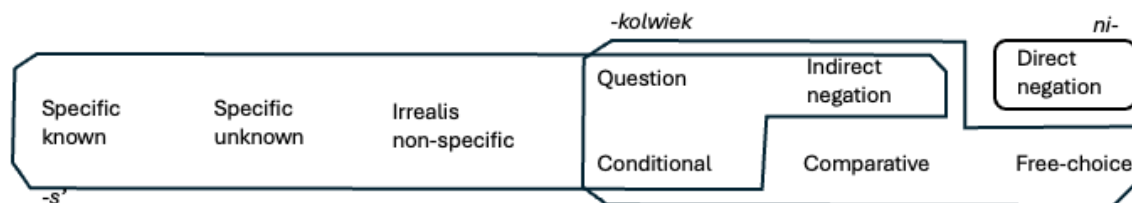


Figure 2: Semantic map for Polish (adapted from Haspelmath 1997:271)

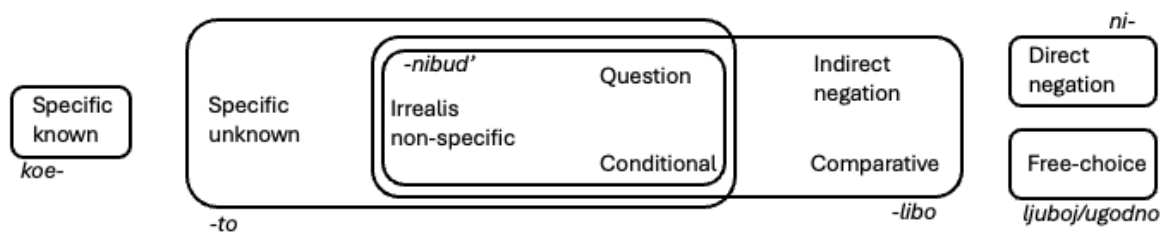


Figure 3: Semantic map for Russian (adapted from Haspelmath 1997:273)

Haspelmath does not provide a semantic map for Ukrainian. It is therefore necessary to present the relevant indefiniteness markers and their frequency distribution in section 3, before we turn to more detailed analyses in the following sections.

2. Frequency data and correspondence analysis

We consider six indefiniteness markers (*de-*, *-s'*, *bud'-*, *-nebud'*, *aby-*, and *kazna*) in combination with seven widely used question words: *xto* ‘who’, *de* ‘where’, *jakyj* ‘which’, *koly* ‘when’, *jak* ‘how’, *ščo* ‘what’ and *kudy* ‘whereto’. Table 1 displays the frequencies of all combinations of indefiniteness markers and question words in the GRAC corpus (Shvedova et al. 2017–2022).¹⁴¹

The frequency differences are substantial. As shown in Figure 3, the three markers *-s'* (66.7%), *de-* (19.0%) and *bud'-* (12.2%) together cover 97.9% of the corpus examples in Table 1. It therefore makes sense to consider these three markers the “core” system of Ukrainian. We refer to the remaining markers as “peripheral”, since they constitute only 2% of the examples in Table 1.

	<i>de-</i>	<i>-s'</i>	<i>bud'-</i>	<i>-nebud'</i>	<i>aby</i>	<i>kazna</i>	Total
<i>xto</i>	73 424	387 081	19 927	10 609	367	55	491 463

¹⁴¹ Corpus searches were carried out in May, 2025. We used data from version 18 of GRAC. The datasets analyzed in the present article are available at <https://doi.org/10.18710/VESH4N>.

<i>de</i>	0	218 927	3067	3440	105	58	225 597
<i>jakyj</i>	532 048	818 183	429 328	22 641	1141	111	1 803 452
<i>koly</i>	8469	197 534	7730	12 211	19	21	225 984
<i>jak</i>	0	181 626	355	1510	2286	47	185 824
<i>ščo</i>	122 438	736 190	12 063	20 458	777	1983	893 909
<i>kudy</i>	523	42 993	584	1612	138	65	45 915
Total	736 902	2 582 534	473 054	72 481	4833	2340	

Table 1. Frequency distributions for Ukrainian indefinite pronouns and adverbs

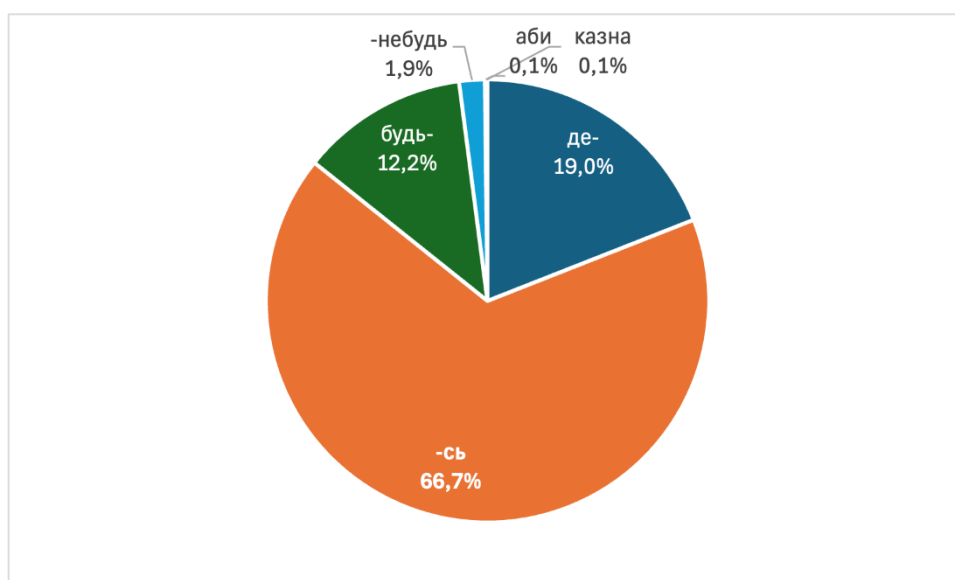


Figure 4: Relative frequencies of indefinite markers in Ukrainian (based on Table 1)

In order to get a better understanding of the relationships between indefiniteness markers and question words, we carried out a correspondence analysis of the “core” system on the basis of Table 1.¹⁴² This model groups indefiniteness markers and question words in an n-dimensional space and maps out the two most important dimensions in the graph shown in Figure 4. In the figure, the indefiniteness markers are given in red, while black is used for question words. Notice that *de* is both an indefiniteness marker and a question word, and therefore occurs twice in the figure.

The horizontal dimension, which covers 97.2% of the variation, maps out the indefiniteness markers with *-s'* to the left and *de-* to the right (*bud'*- ended up outside the graph). Less important, but still relevant, is the vertical dimension, which covers

¹⁴² We are grateful to Laura A. Janda for assistance with the correspondence analysis.

2.8% of the variation. This dimension shows that the question words behave differently. From top to bottom we get a scale ranging from substantival pronouns (*xto* ‘who’ and *ščo* ‘what’) via the adjectival pronoun *jakyj* ‘which’ to adverbs (*de* ‘where’, *koly* ‘when’, *jak* ‘how’, and *kudy* ‘whereto’). The graph shows that *de-* is closest to pronouns, while *-s* is located between pronouns and adverbs. Clearly, indefiniteness markers show different preferences for question words – and vice versa.

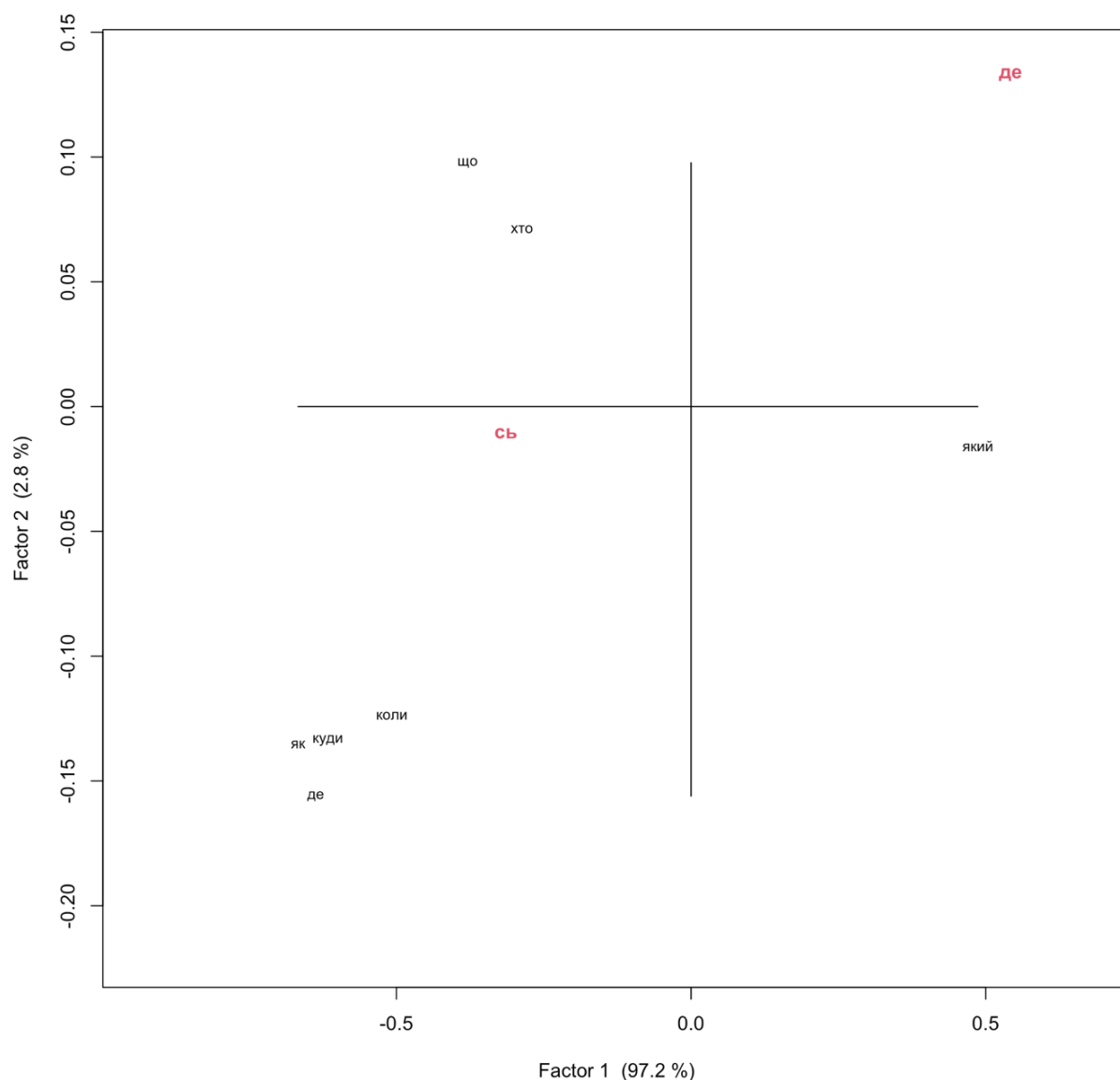


Figure 5. Correspondence analysis of the Ukrainian “core” system based on numbers from Table 1

The corpus data presented in this section clearly show that frequency matters. We return to this point in section 7, but first we must consider the distribution of the markers with regard to Hapelmath’s categories. This is the topic of the next section.

3. The Ukrainian “core” system

3.1 The most frequent categories

We extracted a random sample of 600 examples from the GRAC corpus and annotated the data manually for the semantic categories in Table 2. As shown in Table 2, we excerpted 200 examples for each “core” marker. The data offers a good picture of the situation for the categories “specific known”, “specific unknown”, “irrealis non-specific” and “free choice”.

	де	сь	будь	Total
specific_known	147	3	0	150
specific_unknown	53	148	0	199
irrealis_non_specific	0	40	0	40
free_choice	0	0	200	200
Other	0	9	0	9
Total	200	200	200	600

Table 2: The Ukrainian “core” system. Data sample from GRAC corpus

The relative frequencies are given in Figure 5. As shown, *de-* dominates for specific known, while *-s* is the most widespread option for specific unknown and the only option for irrealis. For free choice, *bud’-* is used.

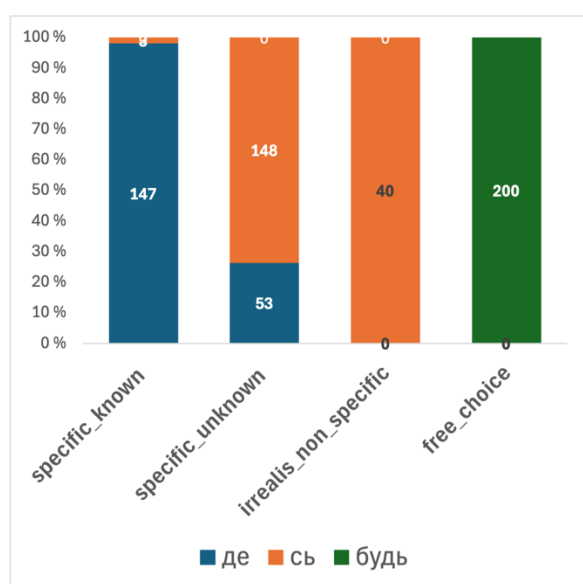


Figure 6: The Ukrainian “core” system. Data sample from GRAC corpus

Here are some illustrative examples

- (10) Specific known:
Ty obicjav, rozumnyku, deščo rozpovisty.
'You promised, smart man, to tell me something.'
- (11) Specific unknown:
Inkoly bat'ky ne vkazujut' v anketax pro jakis' osoblyvosti dytyny.
'Sometimes parents do not include any characteristics of the child in the questionnaires.'
- (12) Irrealis non-specific:
My ne možemo skazaty, pro jakis' perspektyvy, ale robota tryvaje.
'We can't say anything about any future options, but our work continues.'
- (13) Free choice:
A čynovnyk, bud'-jakogo rangy, nese šče j polityčnu vidpovidal'nist'.
'And an official, of any rank, also bears political responsibility.'

3.2 Questions

In order to investigate the distribution of indefiniteness markers in questions, we searched in the GRAC corpus for *deščo* or *ščos'* followed by "?" with up to five intervening words. The results are summarized in Table 3 and Figure 6, which demonstrate that *s'* is the dominant marker that covers about 99% of the examples. Here is a relevant example *ščos'*:

- (14) Jak možna z takuju ljudinoju pro ščos' govoryty?
'How could it be possible to talk to such a person about anything?'

	# examples
<i>deščo</i>	518
<i>ščos'</i>	37 631
Total	38 149

Table 3: de- vs. -s' in questions. Data from GRAC corpus

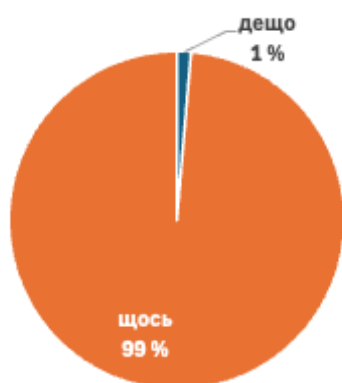


Figure 7: de- vs. -s' in questions. Data from GRAC corpus

3.3 Conditional clauses

We searched in GRAC for *jakščo/jakby* ‘if’ followed by *ščo/jakyj* with *de-*, *-s’*, *-nebud’* or *bud’* with up to five intervening words. The results are summarized in Table 4 and Figure 7. As shown, *-s’* dominates strongly with 84% of the examples. Here is an example with *-s’* (*jakas’* ‘any kind’ (nominative feminine singular)):

- (15) Jakščo potribna jakas’ dopomoga po xatnim spravam, ja prošu mamu abo babusju.
 ‘If I need any kind of help in my house, I ask my mother or grandmother,’

	# examples
<i>de-</i>	3062
<i>-s’</i>	43 514
<i>-nebud’</i>	1476
<i>bud’-</i>	3696
Total	51 748

Table 4: Conditional clauses in GRAC corpus

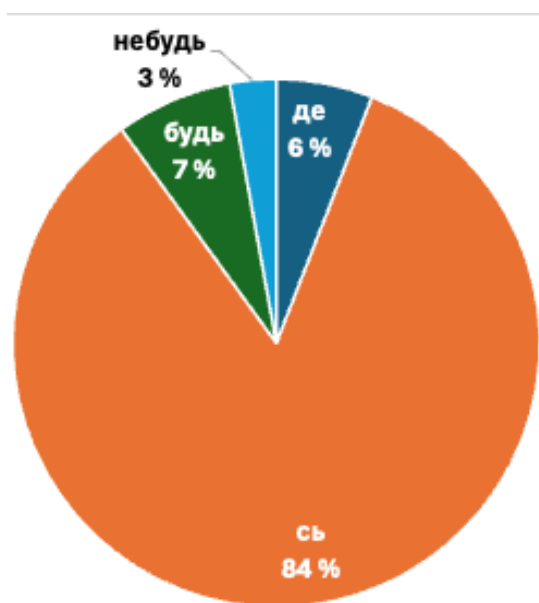


Figure 8: Conditional clauses in GRAC corpus

3.4 Indirect negation

Indirect negation concerns contexts where the preposition *bez* ‘without’ precedes an indefinite pronoun, as in the following example:

- (16) Vin, bez bud'-jakogo sumnivu, zvažyvsja b na ostannje jakby buv sam.
'Without any doubt, he would have gone for the second option if he were alone.'

The results, summarized in Table 5 and Figure 8, show that *bud'*- is the dominant marker for indirect negation, since it covers 89% of the examples.

	# examples
<i>de</i> -	280
<i>-s'</i>	1392
<i>-nebud'</i>	333
<i>bud'</i> -	16 354
Total	18 359

Table 5: Indirect negation in GRAC corpus

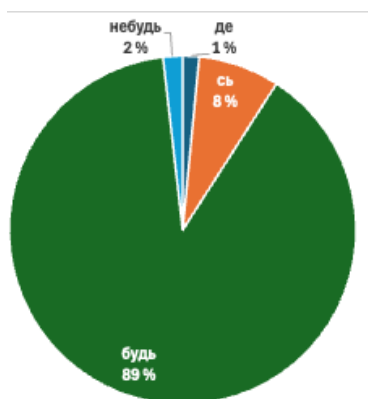


Figure 9: Indirect negation in GRAC corpus

3.5 Comparative

The comparative category involves *niž* 'than' followed by an indefinite pronoun or adverb:

- (17) Hadaju, sportsmena ce spodobajet'sja bil'se, niž bud'-ščo z togo, ščo my možemo im zaproponuvaty.
'I think the athletes will like it more than anything we can offer them.'

We searched for *niž* 'than' followed by an indefinite pronoun or adverb and received the results summarized in Table 6 and Figure 9. As shown, *bud'* dominates with 83%, while *-s'* is attested in 11% of our examples.

	# examples
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-s'	576
<i>bud'</i> -	2734
Total	3310

Table 6: Comparative in GRAC corpus

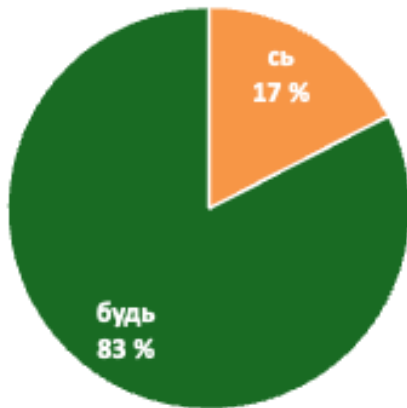
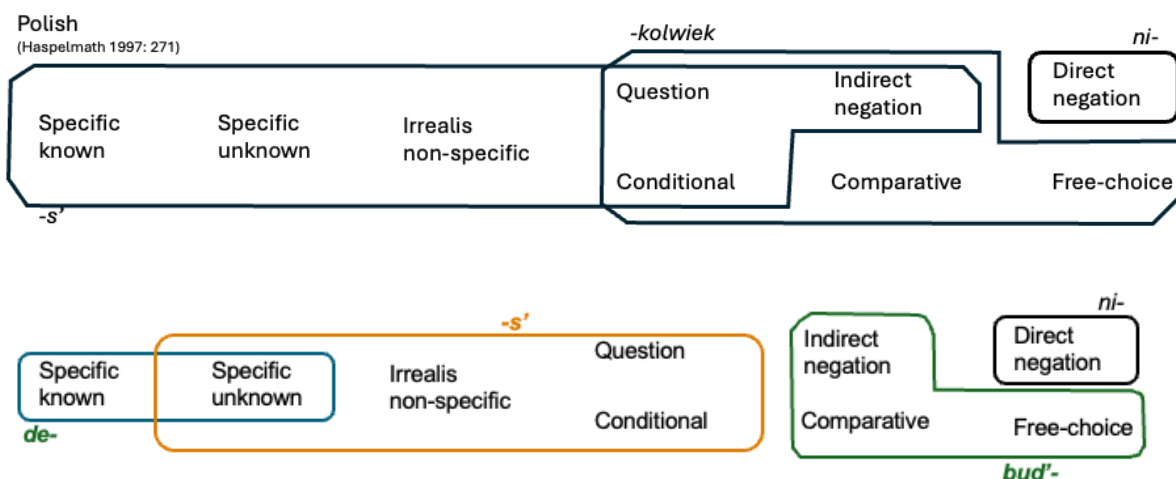


Figure 10: Comparative in GRAC corpus

4. Ukrainian “core” system vs. Polish and Russian

Based on the findings reported in section 4, we are in a position to draw a semantic map for Ukrainian and compare it with Haspelmath’s maps for Polish and Russian (shown in section 2 above). For the convenience of the reader, we have juxtaposed the three maps in Figure 10, where Ukrainian is placed under Polish and above Russian.



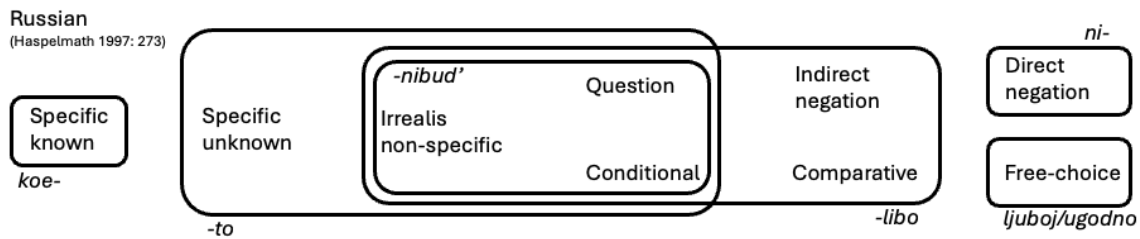


Figure 11: Comparison of semantic maps for Polish (top), Ukrainian (mid), and Russian (bottom)

As shown, in Ukrainian *de-* covers the two leftmost categories (specific known and specific unknown). Specific unknown also has *-s'*, which furthermore covers irrealis non-specific, question and conditional. In the rightmost portion of the Ukrainian map, *bud'* is the dominant marker, covering indirect negation, comparative and free-choice. Arguably, we could have extended the area of *-s'* to include comparative, but we decided to limit ourselves to the dominating marker *bud'* for this category. This simplification does not affect our line of argumentation in the following.

All three semantic maps have certain markers that gravitate towards the leftmost portion of the map, while others are found in the middle or in the rightmost portion of the map. Thus, Ukrainian *de-* has a distribution similar to Russian *koe-* in the leftmost part of the map. In the middle portion of the map, Ukrainian *-s'* is similar to Russian *-to*, while Polish *-s'* has a somewhat wider distribution than its Ukrainian counterpart. Ukrainian *bud'* covers a smaller area than *kolwiek* in Polish, but a larger area than Russian *ljuboj/ugodno*, which are restricted to the free-choice category on Haspelmath's (1997:273) map.

Despite the similarities, it is clear that the Ukrainian “core” system is substantially different from both the Polish and the Russian systems. The Ukrainian system therefore merits study in its own right. In the following section, we expand our analysis of Ukrainian by adding “peripheral” markers to the map.

5. “Peripheral” markers in Ukrainian

In order to gather information about the “peripheral” markers (*-nebud'*, *aby-* and *kazna*), we extracted a random sample of 100 examples of each marker with *jakyj* and *ščo*. Since *kazna* turned out not to combine with *jakyj* in our dataset, for *kazna* we only have data for *ščo* with this marker.

For *-nebud'* all examples involved the category irrealis non-specific:

- (18) –Zroby ščo-nebud', ščob ne vtopyvsja (Onlajn-ZMI, 2022)
'Do something, so he won't drown.'

The marker *aby-* was attested exclusively in the free-choice category:

- (19) Pal'to deputatka obrala ne aby-jake, a vid italijs'kogo brendu Dolce&Gabbana.
(Tablo ID, 2021)

‘The member of parliament didn’t choose just any jacket, but one of the Italian brand D&G.’

Kazna was also only attested in the free-choice category in our data sample:

(20) I ce vže ne tehnologija, a kazna-ščo, tak pšeniciu vyroščuvaty ne možna vzagali (Den’, 2000)

‘And this is not a good method, but goodness knows what, wheat cannot be grown like this.’

In Figure 11, we have added the “peripheral” markers to the semantic map for Ukrainian, proposed in section 5 above. The additions reinforce the conclusion reached in section 5. Although the Ukrainian system is similar to the systems of Polish and Russian, Ukrainian clearly has a distinct system that is different from those of the two neighboring languages under scrutiny in the present article.

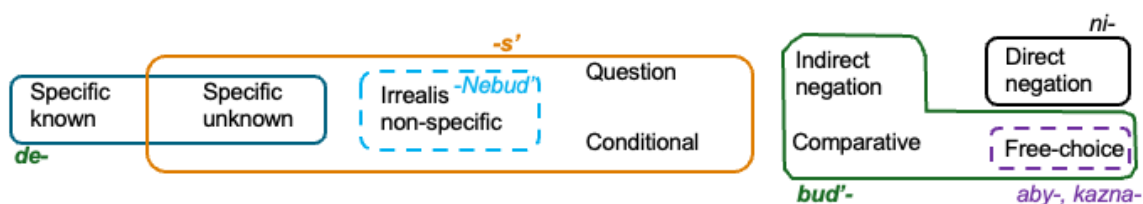


Figure 12: Semantic map for Ukrainian including “peripheral” markers

6. Semantic maps and frequency

In section 2, we demonstrated that frequency matters for indefinite pronouns and adverbs in Ukrainian. There are substantial frequency differences, and our correspondence analysis showed that different question words have different preferences for indefiniteness markers, and *vice versa*. It seems very likely that these different preferences are part of the mental grammars of native speakers, since there is ample evidence that native speakers are sensitive to frequency differences (e.g., Bybee 2007, Ellis et al. 2014)

Although semantic maps of the type used by Haspelmath (1997) represent a good starting point for cross-linguistic comparison and typological studies, the maps do not include frequency information. In other words, Haspelmath’s semantic maps distinguish between what is possible and what is impossible in a language but do not capture what is frequent or typical as opposed to what is infrequent or atypical.

We propose adding information about relative frequencies along two dimensions. With regard to the categories, which represent the meaning dimension, we suggest representing differences in relative frequency by means of different font sizes. For Ukrainian, we propose distinguishing between four levels:

- (21) Categories (meaning): different font size
- a. specific unknown: >60%
 - b. specific known, irrealis: 10–20%

- c. question, free choice: 2%
- d. other < 1%

When it comes to the markers, which represent the dimension of form, we propose using lines of different thickness to represent differences in relative frequency. For Ukrainian, it seems reasonable to adopt a tripartite distinction:

- (22) Indefiniteness markers (form): different thickness of lines
- a. *-s'*: > 60% (thick line)
 - b. *de-*, *bud'-*: 10–20% (thin line)
 - c. other: < 2% (dashed line)

In Figure 12, we provide a semantic map for Ukrainian with information about relative frequencies, as suggested above. Clearly, the proposed semantic map is somewhat impressionistic, although it is based on a quantitative analysis of frequency data. However, the map we propose does include more information than the maps of Haspelmath (1997), and we argue that the additional information is presented in a user-friendly way that makes it possible to get a good overview of the situation in the language.

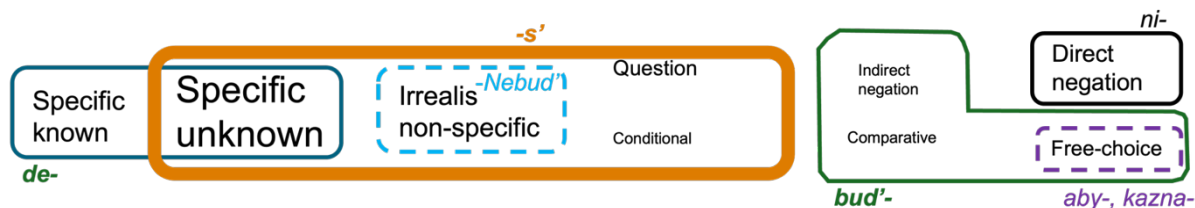


Figure 13: Semantic map for Ukrainian with integrated frequency information

We would like to emphasize that the map in Figure 12 includes information about *relative* frequencies. In other words, the differences reflected in the Figure concern the proportions of examples for each category or indefiniteness marker (cf. Table 1 in section 3 above).

We conclude that it is possible to include frequency information in semantic maps in a straightforward way. When we add frequency information about categories (meaning) and indefiniteness markers (form), the result is a diagram that is both informative and reader-friendly. We submit that this approach can be insightfully applied beyond indefiniteness pronouns and adverbs in Slavic.

7. Concluding remarks

In this article, we offer a corpus-based analysis of Ukrainian indefinite pronouns and adverbs which has implications for Ukrainian linguistics, Slavic linguistics, and language typology.

With regard to Ukrainian linguistics, our analysis shows that there are substantial frequency differences among the attested combinations of question words and

indefiniteness markers. A correspondence analysis clearly testifies to the different preferences of question words for indefiniteness markers – and *vice versa*. Based on frequency data, we propose distinguishing between a “core” system of frequent indefiniteness markers, and an additional system consisting of “peripheral” markers of lower frequency.

When it comes to Slavic linguistics, the proposed analysis of the Ukrainian data facilitates comparison with other Slavic languages, such as Polish and Russian, considered in the present article. Our comparison shows that although there are several similarities across the three languages under scrutiny, Ukrainian clearly posits a distinct system that merits analysis.

From a typological perspective, our analysis shows how information about relative frequencies can be incorporated into semantic maps in a straightforward way. We propose adding frequency information concerning both meaning (Haspelmath’s nine categories) and form (indefiniteness markers).

The Ukrainian inventory of indefinite pronouns and adverbs is considerably larger than the pronouns and adverbs we have analyzed, as demonstrated by Fisun (2019, 2022). More research is needed in order to find out whether and how these pronouns and adverbs can be accommodated in the kind of analysis we propose. However, such an analysis is beyond the scope of this short article.

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Autographs of Rasmus Rask newly found in Saint Petersburg archives

Original research article

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Abstract

The article discusses recently discovered autographs by the Danish linguist Rasmus Rask in Saint Petersburg archives. It provides new insights into Rask's connections with two young scholars, Ivan Nikolaevič Lobjko and Peter (Petr Ivanovič) Köppen, who were part of Count Nikolaj Petrovič Rumjancev's circle in Saint Petersburg. It also sheds light on Rask's relationship with the Copenhagen salon of the poet Juliane Marie Jessen. One of the documents contains Rask's pioneering ideas about the Lithuanian language. His letters to friends in Saint Petersburg reveal his mental state and scholarly ambitions following his return from a long journey through South Asia. In one letter, Rask encouraged Lobjko to write a Russian grammar according to the new plan developed by the Danish scholar. In another letter, he explained his decision to work on Spanish grammar when the scholarly public expected a study of Sanskrit and modern languages of South Asia.

Keywords: history of linguistics; archival sources; nineteenth-century letter-writing; Russian grammar; Spanish grammar; Lithuanian-Sanskrit comparison

Introduction

In October 2024, I received a message from Karina Vadimovna Proničeva (Pronitcheva), a research associate at the Saint Petersburg Institute of History of the Russian Academy of Sciences. She was tasked with describing the previously unprocessed papers of Ivan Nikolaevič Lobjko¹⁴³ (1786–1861) in the Institute’s archives and asked me to look into papers written in Danish and German, some of which bore the signature of Rasmus Rask (1787–1832). Upon studying the scans, I identified five documents as Rask’s autograph manuscripts. These were published by the renowned Danish linguist Karl Verner in his first scholarly article, which was released in 1874. The other papers included letters from Rask’s teacher and patron, Rasmus Nyerup; a friend of Rask’s, the architect Andreas Wilhelm Egeroed (Egerod); and prominent members of Count Nikolaj Petrovič Rumjancev’s scholarly circle: Friedrich Adelung, Anders Johan Hipping, and Anders Johan Sjögren.

The five documents written by Rask were his autobiography and a scholarly note on Baltic languages in German, and three letters to Lobjko dated April 27, 1824, September 6, 1824, and January 28, 1826, in Danish. According to Verner, he saw the documents in Saint Petersburg after the librarian of the First Department of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Ernst (Arist Aristovič) Kunik, told him about their existence among Lobjko’s papers. Verner’s publication was accompanied by an article by Vilhelm Thomsen, who provided additional information on Rask’s friendship with Lobjko. This information was excerpted from several previously published letters from Rask to his mentors Peter Erasmus Müller and Rasmus Nyerup. In this article, I highlight the intentional and unintentional omissions in Verner’s transcription of the documents and discuss the significance of the newly discovered Rask materials for his biography and the history of linguistic ideas. In the appendix, I include an edition of a letter from Rask to another Saint Petersburg friend, Peter Köppen, which has never been published before and which I found in the archives of the Academy of Sciences.

Rask befriended Lobjko while the Danish scholar stayed in Saint Petersburg from March 27, 1818, to June 13, 1819. During this time, Rask was preparing for a long journey that would take him through the Russian Empire and South Asia. The two exchanged language lessons (Danish and Russian). Lobjko wrote in his memoir that he “wept tears of utter bliss” after listening to Rask explain new philological ideas (Lobjko 2013:53; Rask 2018:145). Rask encouraged his Russian friend to undertake various scholarly and translation projects, only a few of which came to fruition. However, the title of “a disciple of the peerless Rask” (Rask 2018:13, 159) may have helped Lobjko

¹⁴³ I render his Russian name Лобойко as Lobjko in accordance with this journal’s stylesheet. Judging by the limited evidence I have (dating from 1822 and 1827), his preferred spelling was Lobjko; he may have adopted it after moving to Vilna. In Rask’s diary and letters he appeared as Laboikow, Labojko, Labojkof, Laboyko, Loboiko, Loboikow, Lobjko, and Lobjkov; Adelung addressed him Loboiko, Egeroed Laboika, and in Sjögren’s diary he was both Loboiko and Lobjko.

attain a professorship of Russian literature at the Imperial University of Vilna in January 1822.

A search for Rask's manuscripts, initiated by Louis Hjelmslev in connection with the publication of Rask's selected works (1932–1937)¹⁴⁴ and letters (Rask 1941), and subsequently pursued by Marie Bjerrum (Rask 1968), produced no information regarding the documents' location. In his collection of Rask's letters, Hjelmslev reprinted Verner's transcription of the three letters to Lobjko. Meanwhile, the documents were housed in the Department of Manuscripts at the Library of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. In 1950, the papers were transferred to the Institute of History, where they remained unbeknownst to researchers until they were assigned to Pronitcheva for processing. I contributed brief descriptions of some of the materials which are now available to researchers who visit the Institute's archives. The finding aid (*opis'*) has been approved by the management of the Saint Petersburg Institute of History (Pronitcheva 2025).

Rask's autograph manuscripts from 1818–1819: Autobiography and Note on the Baltic Languages (№ 3)

After being processed by Pronitcheva, Lobjko's archive (*fond* 330) now include 30 numbered items or files. In the finding aid, the autobiography and the scholarly note are designated as number 3. The autobiography is signed at the end with the name Rask, but not in his handwriting (although the document starts with the word *Untergezeichneter*, "undersigned"). Verner's edition includes minor typos and corrections: he transcribed *Unterzeichneter* instead of *Untergezeichneter*, *geboren* instead of *gebohren*, *Studiren* instead of *Studieren*, *Kopenhagen* instead of *Koppenhagen* (twice), *und mit* instead of *und es mit*, *Kopenh.* instead of *Koppenh.* (four times), *Lexicons* instead of *Lexicon*, *Schottland* instead of *Schotland*, *wider* instead of *wieder*, *eingegeborne* instead of *eingegebahrne*, *geborner* instead of *gebohrner*, *Otheri* instead of *Ohteri*, *Wulfstani* instead of *Vulfstani*, *sogenannt* instead of *sogenanten*, *verwechseln* instead of *verwechselnden*, *eines Freundes* instead of *seines Freundes*, *Hon. Magister* instead of *Hrn. Mag.*; *des Kön. Geheimeraths* instead of *des Hrn. Gemeimeraths*, *die [Jahresschrift]* instead of *das*, *Skálda* instead of *Scalda*, *nach alten Codd.* instead of *nach alten Cod.*, *zum ersten Male* instead of *zum erstenmale*, *beyden* instead of *beiden*, *widrigenfalls* instead of *wiedrigenfalls*, *Gebiete* instead of *Gebiethe*, and *studiren* instead of *studieren*. Lobjko translated this document into Russian and included it in the first version of his memoirs (Lobjko 2013:55–58; Rask 2018:147–150). At the end

¹⁴⁴ In two editions, with Danish (1932–1935) and German (1932–1937) commentaries.

of his translation, Lobjko added Rask's name, place, and date (*Ėrazm Christian*¹⁴⁵ *Rask. SPburg, June 1818*).

The autobiography concluded with Rask's plans for continuing his journey. The wording closely resembles that used in his letter to P.E. Müller on June 11, 1818 (Rask 1941-I:317; Rask 2018:44), confirming the date "June 1818" added by Lobjko in his translation. This document is likely related to the election of *Ėrazm Christianovič*¹⁴⁶ *Rask* as a corresponding member of the Free Society of Lovers of Russian Literature on July 9, 1818 (Bazanov 1964:445).

The scholarly note relates to a German translation of *O początkach narodu i języka litewskiego* ("On the Origins of the Lithuanian Nation and Language", 1808), a work by Franciszek Ksawery Michał Bohusz. The note begins with the following statement: "My dear friend, the translator of this book, asked me to provide a brief opinion on the origins and earliest conditions of the Baltic peoples¹⁴⁷". In a footnote to Verner's edition, Vilhelm Thomsen suggested that the unnamed translator was Lobjko. It is likely that it was one of Lobjko's many unfinished projects and that he intended to advance his scholarly career by translating this work into German, a language in which he was fluent. In the scholarly note, Rask stated that he had no prior knowledge of Bohusz's book or Vater's excerpt from it when he concluded that Baltic languages were similar to Ancient Greek in terms of vocabulary and morphology. Rask based his conclusions on the inner structure of the Lithuanian language. In contrast, Vater found correspondences between Lithuanian and Greek in only 24 words and explained them as direct or indirect borrowings from Greek into Lithuanian (see Vater 1816:72–73). Studies of Sanskrit (on which Rask focused in Saint Petersburg) led him to further suggest that the Baltic languages are the closest to Sanskrit in words and morphemes among all European languages, and he illustrated his point with a table of correspondences between Sanskrit, Greek/Latin, Lithuanian, and "other languages", that is, Danish, Icelandic, German, and Russian (*fig. 1*). The note bears Rask's signature, *R. Rask*. I see only seven minor discrepancies between the original and Verner's edition. Verner made substitutions, using *keinesweges* [*durch Vermischung*] instead of *keineswegen*, *einigermassen* instead of *einigermassen*, *erleuchten* instead of *erleuchtern*, *кашлять* instead of *кашлеть*, *wünschen* instead of *pflügen*, *beruhet* instead of *beruht*, and *ereignet hat* instead of *ereignet*.

Surprisingly, this work by Rask was not included in the register of his published works (Rask 1932–1937-III:361–409; Rask 1968:512–513). Furthermore, Hjelmslev

¹⁴⁵ Rask still often used his middle name in 1818. In Danish, he had changed its spelling to Kristian, signing his publications and many of his letters *R.K. Rask*. In Latin and Swedish, he was *Erasmus Christian[us] Rask*. He finally dropped his middle name during his subsequent journey, as he had planned to do since at least 1812.

¹⁴⁶ In Russian, Rask's middle name was altered into a patronymic. Technically, his Russian patronymic should have been Nikolaevič, as the first name of his father was Niels. At baptism, Rask's official name was Rasmus Christian Nielsen Rasch.

¹⁴⁷ *Lettischen völker*. Rask used the term for the entire group that we now call Baltic, which includes the Prussians, Livonians, and *de egentlige Letter*, or the proper Latvians. See Rask [1818]:161–162.

failed to mention it when discussing Rask's contributions to Baltic linguistics and acknowledging that Rask was the first to consider the Baltic languages a distinct branch of the Indo-European family (ibid.:125). The note merits the attention of historians of Baltic linguistics and Lithuanian national ideology because here he compared the Lithuanian language to Sanskrit for the first time. The similarity of Lithuanian forms to Sanskrit (as well as to Latin and Greek) has played a role in the linguistic awareness of Lithuanians since August Schleicher's grammar (1856–1857) (Otrębski 1958:57), although Antoine Meillet is the most often cited authority on the ancient features of the Lithuanian language.¹⁴⁸

Rask made the same observation in passing in his *Remarks on the Zend Language and the Zend-Avesta*. The work was originally written in English in 1821. It was first published in Danish in 1826, followed by a German translation in the same year. Then, it was published posthumously in English in 1834: "The Greek, the Latin, and perhaps even more than any European tongue, the Lithuanian, approach very nearly to Sanskrit".¹⁴⁹ However, Rask did not provide any examples this time, and there is no indication that his work impacted Lithuanian linguistics. Had Lobjko not buried Rask's note among his own unfinished projects, the idea of the Lithuanian language's great pedigree could have gained currency much earlier.

Rask's autograph manuscripts from 1824–1826: Letters to Lobjko (№ 20)

After returning from South Asia, Rask wrote the three letters comprising file number 20. He reestablished the level of intimacy that had characterized his relationship with Lobjko in Saint Petersburg. At the same time, he reclaimed his position as Lobjko's mentor. His letters are an excellent example of what Margaretta Jolly calls a "tantalising form of writing's engagement with life, where public and private, professional and personal are so happily confused" (Jolly & Stanley 2005: 91).

The first letter is two pages long and dated April 27, 1824. One week prior to that date, Rask had sent a marriage proposal to his "first and no doubt last love", whom he had met aboard the ship on his way back from India.¹⁵⁰ He had not yet received a response and was in high spirits: Rask obviously wanted to see his friend happy, too. In

¹⁴⁸ The alleged quotation from Meillet "anyone wishing to hear how Indo-Europeans spoke should come and listen to a Lithuanian peasant" has become "so deeply rooted and often used when describing the Lithuanian language ... that references to the original source are impossible to be traced and are never given" (Maumevičienė 2012:120). Compare Meillet 1908:46: *Le lituanien est remarquable par son aspect d'antiquité indo-européenne; ils est frappant d'y trouver ... des forms qui recourent exactement des forms védiques ou homériques...*

¹⁴⁹ In the Danish version (and in the German translation by Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen) the phrase "perhaps even more than any European tongue" loses its element of a doubt: *ja mer end noget andet Sprog i Evropa / ja mehr noch als irgend eine andere Europäische Sprache*. See a critical edition of English and Danish versions in Rask 1932–1933:145,146. Von der Hagen's translation in Rask 1826:14.

¹⁵⁰ On his unsuccessful marriage proposal, probably to Pauline Boalth (1800–1856), see Diderichsen 1960:214, fn. 20. The quote is from Petersen 1834:77.

the letter, transcribed and published by Verner with minor discrepancies¹⁵¹, Rask congratulated Lobjko on his new position at the University of Vilna and invited him to visit Copenhagen during the summer vacation. He asked if Lobjko was still single and if he remembered the girl Rask had told him about. Then, he switched to scholarly news, mentioning his newly published Spanish grammar in passing and providing a criticism of Josef Dobrovský's Slavonic grammar: the main deficiency of the latter work was its mixing of word formation with form formation (i.e., derivation with inflection).

Lobjko received the letter on May 6 and replied on May 9 (Old Style),¹⁵² reminiscing about their friendship:

In Saint Petersburg, you met me as a benevolent heavenly being who increased and ennobled my enjoyment of the sciences. Your guiding spirit still hovers before my eyes during every contemplation. Nothing is dearer to me than my memory of you, and I will always be devoted to you. (Lobjkov 1837:223)

He told Rask about his various interests in Slavic and Baltic studies, expressing his favorable opinion of Dobrovský's grammar and asking Rask whether he could suggest a better system. However, he did not offer his opinion on Rask's news about the publication of the Spanish grammar, only noted that he had read about this book in Russian newspapers (*russiske blade*).¹⁵³ Clearly, Lobjko did not consider the news relevant to his interests or position.

Of his personal situation Lobjko told Rask that he was still not married and was living in a big, nice apartment with his mother.

The city has beauties in abundance; but they are not fit for a professor; they are careless, wasteful and flamboyant, they do not understand or love domestic life, they are always seeking amusements and diversions, and to beautify the world by their appearance, without having a taste for domestic happiness. (ibid.:223–224)

This may have been a period of romantic disappointment for Lobjko, though it wouldn't last long. His tendency to fall in love and his courtship style were widely discussed in Vilna before he finally got married in 1829 (Rejtblat 2013:18). However, Lobjko declined the invitation to go to Copenhagen with the excuse that he didn't tolerate the sea well. He proposed that Rask come to see him in Vilna instead.

The letter was written in German, and it reached us in the Danish translation first published by Rask's brother, H.K. Rask, in 1837 and reprinted twice, by Verner (1874:291–295) and Hjelmslev (Rask 1941-II:99–105).¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Verner transcribed *ville disse Linier* instead of *vil disse Linier*, *bømske* instead of *bömske*, *Formdannelsen* instead of *Formdannelse*, *bedst* instead of *best*, *mig for vanskelig* instead of *mig temmelig vanskelig*, etc. etc. instead of etc., and *formeget* instead of *for meget*.

¹⁵² Verner (1874:291) miscalculated when trying to convert the dates. The correct dates are May 18 and 21 New Style.

¹⁵³ I was unable to identify the Russian newspapers which published such timely reports of the book.

¹⁵⁴ Alderik Blom's assertion that Lobjko's "letters he wrote to Rask in Danish" (Blom 2017/2018:29) are evidence of Lobjko's "gratitude to Rask" is incorrect. This is the only letter from Lobjko to Rask that Blom may have ever seen; it was translated from a lost German original.

On September 6, 1824, Rask responded with a six-page letter, the second in file number 20 in Lobjko's archive. This is the longest of the three letters, and it was copied by Verner (1874:295–300) with more discrepancies: *d. 6te September* should be *d. 6. September*; *Fædrelands* should be *Fædrenelands*; *andre vakre Piger* should be *andre vakre og huslige Piger*; *för om tre År* should be *förend om tre År*; *det er mig ikke muligt* should be *det er mig ikke mulig*; *Frankrig* should be *Frankerig*; *Rusland og Vender* should be *Rusland og Venden*; *blot subskriberede* should be *blot subskriberte*; *en Del Spørgsmål* should be *en Del Spørgsmåle*; *Efterretninger* should be *Efterretning*; *jeg har ikke haft* should be *jeg har dog ikke haft*; *Dobrovsky's* should be *Dobrowsky's*; *aldrig vænte* should be *aldrig med Rette vænte*; *de finske Stammer Jem, Kvener, Kareler o.s.v.* should be *de finske Stammer, og de indvandrede Jem, Kvener, Kareler o.s.v.*; *Vilkina-Saga* should be *Vilkina Saga*; *sögubrot (d.e. Sagafragment)* should be *sögu-brot (d.e. Saga-fragment)*; *Ragnar-Lodbroks Saga står i første Bind* should be *Ragnar Lodbroks Saga står i første Bind*; *at skikke mere* should be *at skrive mere*. These discrepancies were, of course, copied into Hjemlev's edition, with an additional typo.

Rask recommended the same girl to Lobjko again, providing more details about her and even giving her last name. Verner decided to hide it behind the initial "W". Rask described her as a Swedish girl who knew how to keep a household, came from a respectable family, and was "as well behaved as anyone", though she probably did not have significant wealth. She lived in the household of the poet Juliane Marie Jessen. Little is known about Rask's friendship with the elderly poet, who was not very talented but jovial and well-connected. Their friendship dates back to before Rask's journey, and he valued her society, as well as that of the young, unmarried women in her household—her "adopted daughters", whom she sheltered and patronized.¹⁵⁵ As there is nothing compromising about the girl in Rask's letter and more than a century and a half has passed since her death, I can reveal her name. She is Maria Elisabeth Wetterberg (1798–1874), who later married gardener Johannes Schebel. Evidently, Rask concluded from Lobjko's letter that his friend could still be interested in getting a foreign bride who did not have much of a dowry. Rask was sad about describing his own official and material position: He had custody of his brother, a schoolboy, and could not marry for lack of funds.

He talked about a new enterprise of publishing ancient Scandinavian sources on Russian and Slavic history, with translations into Latin and Danish. A promising young man, Lieutenant Carl Christian Rafn, who had begun diligently and reliably to translate and publish Icelandic "romantic sagas", was at the head of the enterprise. Rask inquired whether it would be possible to find in Lithuania those willing to subscribe or otherwise sponsor the publication of the texts and the Latin translation.

¹⁵⁵ Fredrik Bajer (1868:24, fn.), commenting on Sille Bayer's recollections of Juliane Marie Jessen's household, goes so far as to call Rask one of the poet's "adopted sons".

In response to Lobjko, Rask refuted the incorrect hypothesis about the kinship of “the Finnish tribes and the immigrant Yem, Kvens, Karelians”, with the Scandinavians, expressed by an unnamed Russian author (here, Verner's transcription distorted the text the most by omitting the words “and the immigrant”). In general, on the topic of Scandinavian and Russian relations in the Middle Ages, Rask advised to rely on sources rather than on Swedish historians, although Jonas Hallenberg had recently made a serious contribution to Old Swedish history. Rask mentioned once again his own Spanish grammar, which he would be sending separately and which he suggested as a possible model for Lobjko's work on Slavonic and Russian grammar.

The letter had enclosures that are no longer available in the same archival collection, including engraved images of the bracteates and a list of questions for Russian experts. Most probably, this refers to the request signed by Christian Jürgensen Thomsen, which is preserved in the Russian State Library.¹⁵⁶

The third, short letter from Rask was dated January 28, 1826 (*fig. 2*). Verner's edition is true to the original except for the format of the date. The letter accompanied Rask's Frisian grammar and informed that Rask had received a response neither to the previous letter (of September 6, 1824) nor to the Spanish grammar that Rask had sent separately. This was the end of the correspondence between the two friends.

This break in once intimate friendship puzzled Verner (1874:285–286) and Thomsen (1874:313). Was it the domestic situation which distracted Lobjko as he married, or the political situation in Vilna? In fact, Lobjko thought about responding to his friend. Among Lobjko's materials in the Russian State Library, there are drafts of friendly letters that were apparently never sent. One is dated August 16, 1827, and the other was written around 1830.¹⁵⁷ They indicate that Lobjko intended to reply to Rask but delayed doing so for a very long time. He indeed got married, but only in 1829, and in the second draft, he extolled the virtues of his young wife and her noble Baltic German family, von Klopman.¹⁵⁸ His domestic bliss was indeed darkened by the political situation in Vilna after the brutal suppression of secret student societies in the academic year of 1823–1824 by the Imperial Government. We can read about his state of mind in his letter to his former colleague Joachim Lelewel from October 27, 1829: “My situation at the university is still difficult. I have to hide and be cautious. I am constantly in anxiety” (Lobjko 2008:200).¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Moscow, Российская государственная библиотека. Отдел рукописей. Фонд 205 (Общество истории и древностей российских), № 122, ч. 3, л. 223–225об., see about it Rask 2018:28, 166, notes 118–120.

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.*, № 122, ч. 4, л. 249–250об.; 247–248об. I am grateful to Abram Il'ich Rejtlat for pointing out the Scandinavian materials in this collection and to the late Aleksandr Vasil'evič Nazarenko (1948–2022) for helping me understand Lobjko's German handwriting.

¹⁵⁸ In literature about Lobjko, the maiden name of his wife is often misspelled as von Klonman.

¹⁵⁹ Lobjko taught at the University of Vilna until its closure in 1832. He then taught at two academies based on university departments: the Vilna Medical-Surgical Academy and the Vilna Roman Catholic Theological Academy, until 1840.

However, the main reason he failed to respond to Rask's letters may have been that he had no scholarly achievements to brag about. After he moved from Saint Petersburg to Vilna, the work of Lobjko as the promoter of Scandinavian studies in Russia did not bear much fruit (although, in 1825, he was admitted to the Royal Nordic Society of Antiquaries).¹⁶⁰ In his second letter, Rask told Lobjko that it was up to his friend to apply Rask's principles to a Slavonic or Russian grammar. In his autobiographical note, Rask stressed that his famous 1818 "Investigation of the Origin of the Old Norse or Icelandic Language" included a section on the genetic relationship between Old Norse and Russian languages. However, he did not do much publishable work on Russian after that,¹⁶¹ and Rask hoped that Lobjko could accomplish the task of writing a Russian grammar according to the "new plan" he used in his various grammars to make them comparable. Instead, Lobjko published an unsuccessful "Grammar" aimed at Polish students. It was written in Russian with a parallel text in Polish by Leon Rogalski (Lobjko & Rogalski 1827).¹⁶²

As late as 1835, Lobjko was planning to write a comparative grammar of Slavic languages, among other things (Rejtlat 2013:16). By that time, Rask had already died. Lobjko never forgot him and carefully preserved everything written by Rask's hand, but he never finished the work he hoped to present to his brilliant Danish teacher of new philological ideas.

Appendix. A letter from Rask to Köppen in the Archives of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Peter (Petr Ivanovič) Köppen (1793–1864) was another young scholar whom Rask befriended in Saint Petersburg. His personality was the direct opposite of Lobjko. Köppen was very hard working and productive; he recognized the significance of Rask although was not enchanted by him. Almost simultaneously with Rask's journey in South Asia, Köppen undertook a tour of Central Europe (1821–1824) and wrote to Rask from Leipzig on March 3, 1824 on the way back to Saint Petersburg. After receiving Rask's response, Köppen wrote again from Saint Petersburg, on May 20, 1824. Both letters are preserved in the Royal Library in Copenhagen and have been published (Rask 1941-II:85–86, 97–99). Rask's response to which Köppen referred to in his second letter has been considered lost (Rask 1968:211). I found this letter in the Archives of the Russian Academy of Sciences, dated April 18, 1824 (that is, nine days before his first

¹⁶⁰ On Lobjko's contribution to Scandinavian studies, see Chekin 2011. Lobjko's archive, described by Proničeva, includes a letter from Carl Christian Rafn dated August 31, 1828 (№ 21), informing him about this honor. Lobjko did not receive the diploma that was mailed to him in 1825.

¹⁶¹ Rask wrote a treatise on a new Russian orthography based on Greek letters, but he never published it at the suggestion of Johann Philipp (Filipp Ivanovič) Krug (see Petersen 1834:78, Rask 2018:209). The manuscript, titled *Wie man Russisch mit griechischen Buchstaben schreiben kann, nebst einem Versuche über die Pasigraphie*, is preserved in Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, NKS 149 c kvart. Æske 13, b. 42.

¹⁶² The book does not have the names of the authors. For their identification, see Rejtlat 2013:14, who also quotes a negative review in *Moskovskij Telegraf*.

letter to Lobjko) and received, according to Köppen's note on the letter, on April 27, 1824 (probably Old Style, that is, on May 9 New Style).¹⁶³

Before presenting the text and translation of the letter, I would first like to highlight what I consider to be its most interesting part: where Rask mentions his new Spanish grammar.¹⁶⁴ To do so will require a brief discussion of the expectations of Rask's friends and colleagues, which are exemplified by another unpublished letter from the Lobjko archive (No. 13), dated September 16, 1822. This letter was addressed to Lobjko and was written by Anders Johan Hipping, who was Count Rumjancev's librarian from 1820 to 1823 and Rask's authorized representative in Saint Petersburg.

Von unsern Freunde Prof. Rask habe ich in lange Zeit nichts erfahren. Wahrscheinlich ist er jetzt auf die Rückreise und wird uns wohl unverhofft mit einem Briefe aus Kopenhagen überraschen. Wie ich gehört habe so soll er viel unter den Indianischen Völkerstämme umgewandert seyn und sich besonders mit der Sanscritschen abgegeben haben, worin er schon bey seiner Abreise von hier schöne Kenntnisse besass. Ein Deutscher Journal meldete für eine Zeit zurück dass er hätte eine Sanskritsche Grammatik in Petersburg herausgegeben, dass dieses aber nicht wahr ist, wissen sie am besten. Ohne Zweifel wird die litterarische Welt sehr viel gewinnen wenn er einmahl zurückkömt, und Zeit gewinnt seine Entdeckungen aus Licht zu bringen (Saint Petersburg. Санкт–Петербургский институт истории РАН. Архив. Русская секция. Фонд № 330, оп. 1, № 13, л. 1об.).

I have not heard anything from our friend Prof. Rask for a long time. He is probably on his way back now and will likely surprise us with a letter from Copenhagen. I have heard that he traveled extensively among the Indian tribes and devoted himself particularly to Sanskrit, in which he already had a solid knowledge when he left here. A German journal reported some time ago that he had published a Sanskrit grammar in Petersburg, but you know best that this is not true. Without doubt, the literary world will gain a great deal when he returns and has time to bring his discoveries to light.

The scholarly public eagerly awaited a study of Sanskrit and other languages of South Asia, but instead Rask published a grammar of Spanish language. P.E. Müller (1833:22) reminisced that there was a wealthy merchant's son who wanted Rask to teach him Spanish, and Otto Jespersen suggested that it could have been the reason for the book: if he had to deal with that language to make extra money, why not to write a whole grammar (1918:49). In fact, he had already worked on his French, Italian, and Spanish verb systems on board the ship, having finished a draft on Spanish conjugation by February 15, 1823.¹⁶⁵ It is also worth noting that the published book was dedicated to the poet Juliane Marie Jessen, who, according to the dedication, had introduced Rask to "one of the most beautiful languages of the South" (Rask 1824:3). We know from correspondence with Lobjko, that Rask had a close relationship with Jessen at that time. Perhaps stronger than any material or social considerations was his "aversion to all things Asiatic" which he could confess only to a close friend and patron Johan von

¹⁶³ Saint Petersburg. Санкт–Петербургский филиал Архива РАН. Фонд 30, оп. 3, д. 228. I am grateful to Viktor Ivanovič Gochnadel' (Hochnadel) and Natal'ia Sergeevna Prochorenko, who made it possible for me to study this document while the facility was closed to the public in April 2019.

¹⁶⁴ On the significance of this work see Sletsjøe 1957, Kuhlmann Madsen 1994, and Dorta 2001.

¹⁶⁵ According to an entry to his unpublished diary, *Jeg sluttede mit Udkast til den spanske Gjærningsordlære, som jeg havde bragt i temmelig god Orden, og udfyldte dette* (Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, NKS 389 ek oktav. Dagbøger 1 [1816–5. maj 1823], [217]).

Bülow (see Rask 1941-II:75). It was one symptom of the “decisive change in his spiritual habitus” Rask experienced during his journey (Diderichsen 1960:145).¹⁶⁶

In his letter to Köppen, Rask tried to justify his choice of topic, but he did not succeed. Köppen’s spontaneous and naïve response touched a sore spot with Rask: “I would have been almost mad at you, when after coming back from Asia you were writing a Spanish grammar. By contrast, Prof. Bopp in Berlin has just informed me about the first sheet of his Sanskrit Grammar”.¹⁶⁷

The unfavorable comparison of Rask to Franz Bopp was not the only blunder in this response by the younger scholar, who unwisely chose to be on back-slapping terms with Rask. He also took the liberty of offering unsolicited advice regarding Rask’s linguistic patriotism: “I would hope that in your edition of the Zend-Avesta, you will not accompany the text in the original language with only a Danish translation. Please ensure that foreigners do not have to rack their brains over it” (Rask 1941-II:98). No further correspondence has survived. Probably this exchange of letters resulted in termination of their friendship.¹⁶⁸

Sr. Hochwohlgebor[en]em Hrn. Hofrath *P. v. Köppen*, Ritter und Mitglied mehrerer gelehrten Gesellschaften.
Hrn. Mag. *Wiborg*, Buchhändler in *Stockholm* schönstens empfohlen.
In *St. Petersburg* abzugeben bey der Ober Postdirection.¹⁶⁹

Kopenhagen d. 18 April 1824.

Sehr Hochgeschätzter Hr. von Köppen, theurer Freund!

Welch ein grosses Vergnügen haben Sie mir nicht mit Ihren freundschaftlichen Schreiben aus Leipzig gemacht und mit der sehr willkommenen Geschenken, die damit folgten. Ich bin zwar keinesweges in den griechischen Alterthümern eingeweiht, aber doch interessirt mich ausserordentlich alles was griechisch ist, und besonders das olbische Psefisma hat vielen von meinen Freunden schon grosses Vergnügen gemacht. Ich möchte Ihnen recht gern ein gleiches thun, aber leider habe ich jetzt gerade keine Gelegenheit; auch habe ich nichts herausgegeben als — eine spanische Grammatik, die Sie schwerlich würde interessiren können. Meine Absicht ist damit gewesen das Sprachgebäude der südlichen Sprachen in eine mehr philosophische Form zu giessen, und dazu habe ich die spanische gewählt, weil sie mir am wenigsten bearbeitet und am meisten philosophisch schien. Vor kurzer Zeit habe ich dem Grafen Roumänzow ein Exemplar geschickt, konnte aber damahls nicht mit diesem fertig werden.

Keinen Brief habe ich von Ihnen noch sonst jemand in Russland nach Indien bekommen wiewohl ich mehrere besonders an Hrn. Labojko, Hipping &c. geschrieben habe, auch kann ich nicht recht wissen wer der Capt. oder Seeräuber, wovon Sie sprechen seyn kann: in Bassra bin ich nicht gewesen, und in Bushehr wo ich war ist kein

¹⁶⁶ I am discussing this change in more detail in an article in a forthcoming volume in the *Studia Fennica Folkloristica* Series, Leila Virtanen, Jyrki Pöysä & Tiina Seppä (eds.) *Confessions and Confidences: Revisiting Academic and Cultural History Through Letters and Other Documents of Life*. Helsinki: SKS.

¹⁶⁷ *Bald hätte ich mich über Sie geärgert, dass Sie nach einer Rückkehr aus Asien eine spanische Grammatik Schreiben. Dagegen hat mir Prof. Bopp in Berlin den ersten Bogen seiner Sanscrit-Grammatik mitgetheilt.* (Rask 1941-II:97–98; this edition misreads *mir* as *nun*, see: Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Additamenta 198 folio. Fasc. 9, brev 147).

¹⁶⁸ There is a reference to *Freund Rask* in Köppen 1822:287 (“Friend Rask, who after having lived in Iceland for almost three years, is now traveling in India”) while a later Russian translation of the same work refers to *Господинъ Раскъ* (“Mister Rask”, Köppen 1828:49).

¹⁶⁹ The letter was folded into an envelope. The instructions for delivering the letter and the addresses to Köppen and Anders Wiborg (1776–1836) who ran a bookshop and publishing company in Stockholm and helped Rask to forward this letter are written in Rask’s hand. There are also other handwritten notes in Russian by the postal authorities, as well as a stamp bearing the name of the port of Grislehamn, which was located on the postal route from Stockholm to Åbo and on to Saint Petersburg.

engl. Consul, doch ist daselbst wirklich eine Faktorey, wo ich auch logirte. Auch erinnere ich daselbst wirklich einen Griechen aus den ionischen Inseln gesehen zu haben, vielleicht mag er es gewesen seyn; aber mit solchen Leuten kann man nie etwas schicken; ich habe mit Armeniern da mehrmals Briefe geschickt, aber niemals, soviel ich nur habe erfahren können ist das geringste davon abgeliefert worden.

Ich bin in dieser Zeit, wie gewöhnlich, fast ganz in Sprachen vergraben. Es ist möglich dass ich eine Ausgabe der Zend-avesta im Originaltexte in Stand bringen werde; auch denke ich an ein Dänisches Etymologicum &c. &c. Doch wozu Ihnen von Plänen zu schwätzen, die noch ganz ungewiss sind ob sie in Stand kommen werden oder nicht, geschweige *wie* sie ausgeführt werden mögen.

Aber recht herzlichen Dank für Ihre freundschaftliche Erinnerung eines fremden Reisenden nach so langer Zeit und ein ehrerbietiger Gruss an alle gemeinschaftliche Freunde und Gönner in St. Petersburg. Wir sind hier fast ganz von literarischer Communication mit St. Petersburg abgeschnitten — z.B. was kann es seyn was Krug über die Nordalbingi geschrieben hat? Ich habe nie etwas davon erfahren können; wahrscheinlich hören Sie auch nicht viel von unserm wissenschaftlichen Leben dort. Es ist hier kürzlich ein Theil (der 12te) der grossen Dänischen Geschichte von Suhm aus seinen Mscr. herausgegeben. Im Jahr 1821. ist eine schöne Ausgabe eines der ältesten Provincialgesetzen Dänemarks im alten Originaltexte mit Uebersetz. &c. erschienen. Ich weiss aber nicht ob solches Sie interessiren kann? Verzeihen Sie daher meine Weitläufigkeit und meine Sprachfehler, deren hier gewiss viele sind, und erlauben Sie mir die Ehre beständig zu verharren, Hochgeschützter Herr!

Ihr ganz ergebenster Diener und Freund

R. Rask

To Most Honorable Mr. Court Councillor *P. v. Köppen*, knight and member of several learned societies.

To Mr. Master *Wiborg*, bookseller in *Stockholm*, with warmest regards.

To be delivered in *Saint Petersburg* to the Post Office Headquarters.

Copenhagen, April 18, 1824.

Dearly esteemed Mr. von Köppen, dear friend!

What great pleasure you have given me with your friendly letter from Leipzig and the very welcome gifts that accompanied them. Although I am by no means an expert in Greek antiquities, I am extremely interested in everything Greek, and the Olbian Psephisma¹⁷⁰ in particular has already given many of my friends great pleasure. I would very much like to do the same for you, but unfortunately I do not have the opportunity at present; nor have I published anything other than — a Spanish grammar, which is unlikely to be of interest to you. My intention was to cast the linguistic structure of the southern languages into a more philosophical form, and I chose Spanish because it seemed to me to be the least worked on and the most philosophical. I recently sent a copy to Count Rumjancev,¹⁷¹ but was unable to finish this¹⁷² at the time.

I have not received any letters from you or anyone else in Russia to India, although I have written several, especially to Mr. Labojko, Hipping, etc., nor can I really know who the captain or pirate you mention might be: I have not been to Basra,¹⁷³ and there is no English consul in Bushehr, where I was, but there is indeed a trading post there, where I also stayed.¹⁷⁴ I also remember seeing a Greek from the Ionian Islands there, perhaps it may have been him;¹⁷⁵ but you can never send anything with such people; I have sent letters with Armenians there several times, but as far as I have been able to ascertain, not even the smallest of them has ever been delivered.

¹⁷⁰ Reference to Köppen 1823.

¹⁷¹ Rumjancev thanked Rask for his letter of April 10 and for his Spanish grammar and other gifts in a response dated April 19 (Rask 1941-II:91).

¹⁷² The missing word is probably “letter”.

¹⁷³ Rask planned to go there (see Rask 2018:82–83,87).

¹⁷⁴ Köppen wrote that he had sent a letter to Rask to Calcutta with a *Schiffscapitän (oder Seeräuber?) welcher Sie in Bassora bey dem englischen Consul kennen lernte* (Rask 1941-II:86). According to his unpublished diary, Rask arrived in Bushehr in July 1820 and was there until August 27 when he sailed to Bombay (Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, NKS 389 ek oktav. Dagbøger 1 [1816–5. maj 1823], [126]).

¹⁷⁵ In his diary Rask mentioned *den Græske Kaptain en artig og dannet Mand*, “The Greek captain, a polite and cultured man” (ibid.).

At this time, as usual, I am almost completely immersed in languages. It is possible that I will publish an edition of the Zend-avesta in the original text; I am also thinking of a Danish Etymologicum, etc., etc., etc.¹⁷⁶ But why should I prattle about plans that are still completely uncertain as to whether they will come to fruition or not, let alone *how* they might be carried out?

But thank you very much for your friendly remembrance of a foreign traveler after such a long time, and respectful greetings to all our mutual friends and patrons in Saint Petersburg. We are almost completely cut off from literary communication with Saint Petersburg here — for example, what could Krug have written about the Nordalbingi?¹⁷⁷ I have never been able to find out anything about it; you probably don't hear much about our scientific life there either. Part (the 12th) of Suhm's great Danish history has recently been published here from his manuscripts.¹⁷⁸ In 1821, a beautiful edition of one of Denmark's oldest provincial laws appeared in old original texts with translations, etc.¹⁷⁹ However, I do not know whether this might be of interest to you. Please forgive my verbosity and my linguistic errors, of which there are certainly many here, and allow me to remain, Your Most Honored Sir!

Your most devoted servant and friend

R. Rask

¹⁷⁶ Neither project has been completed.

¹⁷⁷ Köppen replied that Krug had not published anything about Nordalbingi as yet (Rask 1941-II:98). On June 12, 1824, Anders Johan Sjögren wrote to Rask that Krug worked on Nordalbingi and was asking for Rask's opinion about that name's etymology (ibid.:340). Marie Bjerrum identified this work as *Wer sind die Marcomanni und Nordalbingi in Schriften des IX und X Jahrhunderts* (Krug 1848-I:1–81; Rask 1968:211–212,369).

¹⁷⁸ Suhm 1824. This posthumously published volume was edited by Rasmus Nyerup. Rask contributed by correcting the proofs of the historical sources in Old Norwegian included in the publication (ibid.:ii,397).

¹⁷⁹ Kolderup-Rosenvinge, J.L.A. 1821.

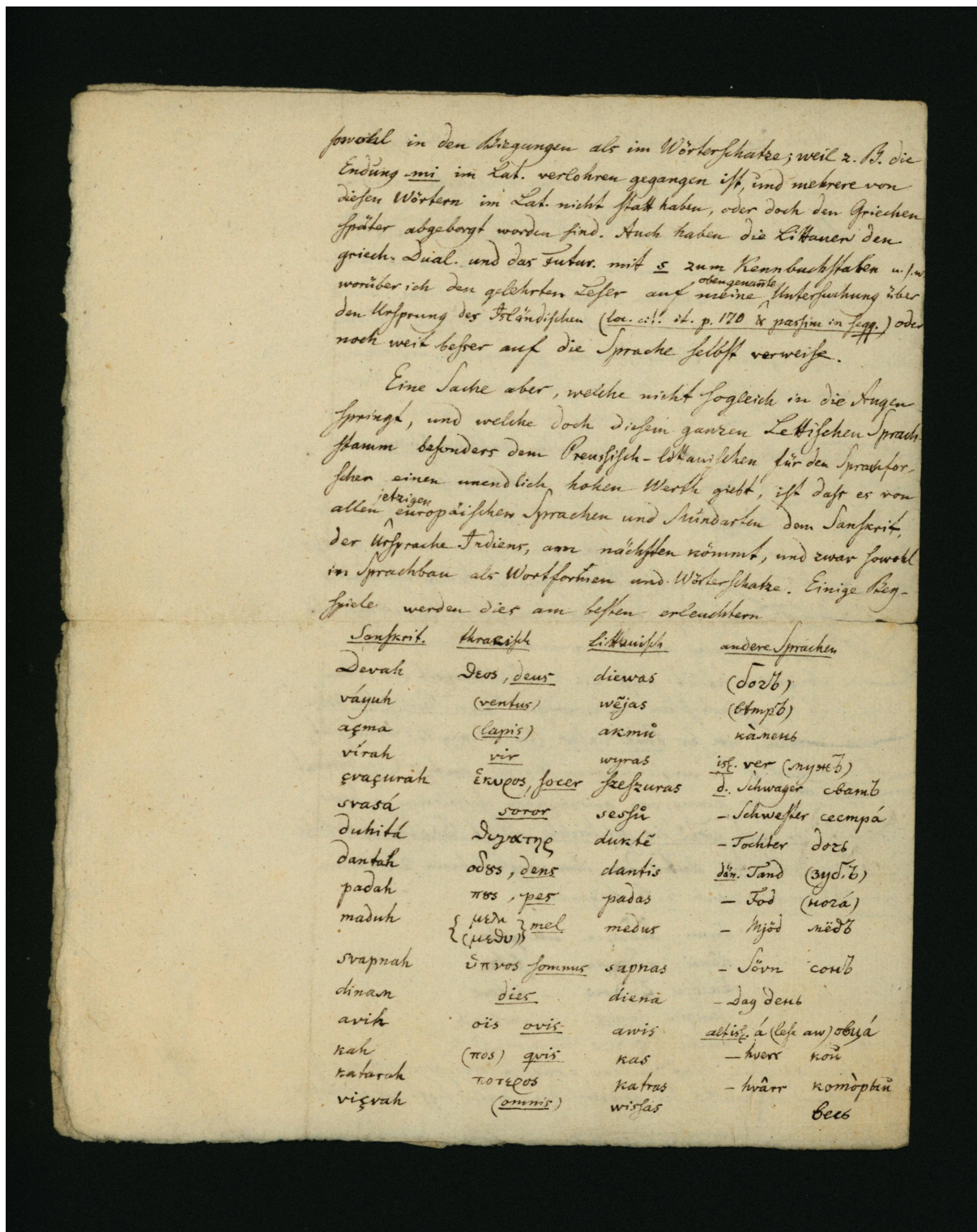


Fig. 1. A page from Note on the Baltic Languages with the beginning of the table of correspondences between Sanskrit, Greek/Latin, Lithuanian, and "other languages". Saint Petersburg. Санкт-Петербургский институт истории РАН. Архив. Русская секция. Фонд № 330, оп. 1, № 3, л. 30б.

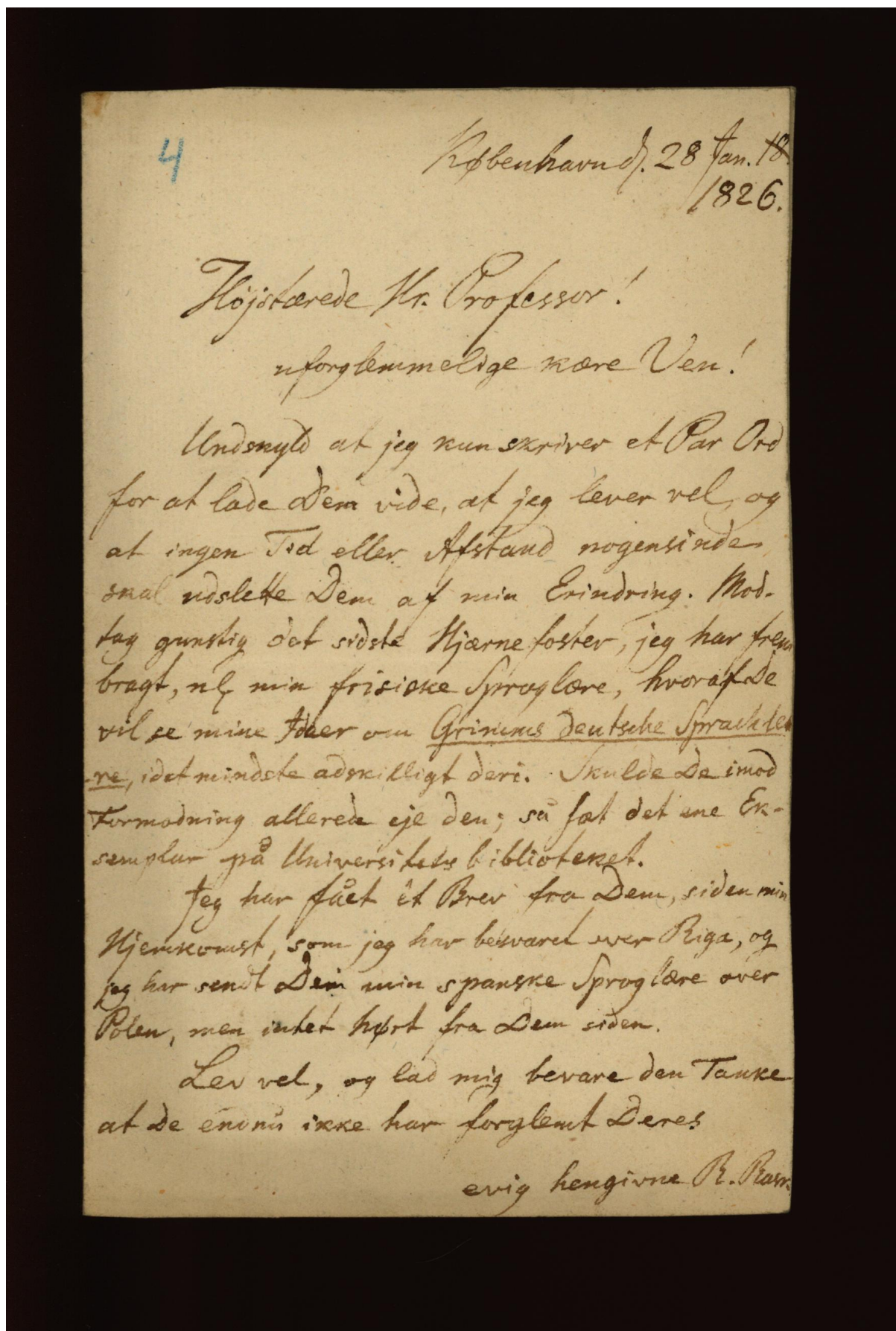


Fig. 2. The last letter from Rask to Lobjko. Saint Petersburg. Санкт-Петербургский институт истории РАН. Архив. Русская секция. Фонд № 330, оп. № 20, л. 6.

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Советские мультфильмы глазами русскоязычной молодежи в Норвегии

Original research article

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Аннотация

Настоящее исследование является одним из первых качественных исследований, посвященных восприятию советских мультфильмов русскоязычной молодежью, проживающей в Норвегии, и может служить отправной точкой для изучения роли детской культуры в контексте миграции и самоидентификации. Особое внимание уделяется вопросу о том, как советская анимация воспринимается поколением, не знакомым с советской культурной средой напрямую, но имеющим с ней опосредованный контакт через семью. Исследование носит новаторский характер и основано на анализе восприятия респондентами трех ключевых компонентов советской мультипликации: визуальной составляющей, звукового сопровождения и содержательного наполнения. Дополнительно рассматривается возможная зависимость оценок от пола, возраста участников и их языковой среды (в частности, влияния русскоязычных родителей). Результаты исследования показывают, что визуальная сторона мультфильмов чаще воспринимается как устаревшая, тогда как содержательное наполнение сохраняет свою актуальность. Звуковое сопровождение оценивается преимущественно положительно, особенно в отношении музыкального оформления и актерской игры. Существенного влияния пола, возраста и наличия русскоязычных родителей на восприятие мультфильмов не выявлено, хотя респонденты мужского пола в среднем оценили произведения несколько более позитивно, чем респондентки. Как «советское» респонденты чаще всего идентифицируют материальную культуру (одежду, быт и другие атрибуты). Моральные установки, напротив, воспринимаются ими скорее как универсальные или «русские», и четкая граница между советским и российским при этом, как правило, не проводится.

1. Введение

В данном исследовании советские мультфильмы рассматриваются как часть культурного наследия, передающегося от поколения, выросшего на этих мультфильмах, к поколению, не заставшему Советский Союз и проживающему в стране с иной культурной средой – в Норвегии. По словам И. П. Иванова-Вано, одного из основоположников советской мультипликации, мультипликация представляет собой искусство, которое всегда находится «в гуще самых жизненных интересов народа», выражая идеи, которыми живет человек (Иванов-Вано 1980:3, 8), и поэтому является важной составляющей современной культуры. При этом именно эта часть культуры оказывается наиболее доступной детям второго поколения эмиграции, находящимся вне культурного пространства, в котором выросли их родители. В то время как чтение книг на унаследованном языке требует дополнительных усилий со стороны родителей, мультфильмы могут просматриваться как совместно с членами семьи, так и самостоятельно. Кроме того, они включают в себя множество различных элементов, таких как музыка, песни, а иногда и литературную или историческую основу. Все респонденты, принявшие участие в данном исследовании, были знакомы с советскими мультфильмами и смогли проанализировать их со своей точки зрения. Более того, по мнению исследователя Д. Макфадьена (MacFadyen 2005), советские мультфильмы представляют собой произведения искусства и не утрачивают своей актуальности вне исторического контекста своего создания. Таким образом, в данном исследовании мы стремимся не только выяснить, как в целом советские мультфильмы воспринимаются вторым поколением эмигрантов, но и определить, какие смыслы это поколение находит в произведениях, отражающих ушедший культурный социум.

Норвежская русскоязычная диаспора представляет особый интерес для исследования, поскольку число русскоязычных семей в Норвегии, особенно на севере страны, где проводилось исследование, достаточно велико. По данным Норвежского управления по делам иммиграции UDI (Utlendingsdirektoratet) со ссылкой на статистику Центрального статистического бюро Норвегии SSB (Statistisk sentralbyrå), в Норвегии проживает 22.254 человека российского происхождения (Paust 2025). В современной России советская культура в значительной степени интегрирована в актуальный культурный контекст, что позволяет современной российской молодежи сохранять непосредственный контакт с ее элементами (Parkman Smirnova 2020). В отличие от этого, русскоязычная молодежь, проживающая в Норвегии, в значительной мере находится вне подобной культурной среды. Вопрос о том, каким образом советская анимация воспринимается поколением, не знакомым с советской культурной средой напрямую, но имеющим с ней опосредованный контакт через членов семьи, до настоящего времени практически не изучался. В открытом доступе не обнаружено упоминаний о подобных исследованиях.

Исследование носит новаторский характер и основано на анализе восприятия респондентами трех ключевых компонентов советской мультипликации – визуализации, звукового сопровождения и содержательного наполнения. Чтобы исследовать восприятие советских мультфильмов русскоговорящей молодежью, проживающей в Норвегии, необходимо решить следующие задачи:

1. Выяснить, какие факторы могут влиять на восприятие советских мультфильмов. Например, художественные особенности самих мультфильмов или характеристики респондентов, такие как их пол, возраст, происхождение и культурная и языковая среда.
2. Проанализировать, какие характеристики советских мультфильмов устарели, а какие остаются важными или приобретают новое значение.

Следует отметить, что данное исследование касается только мультфильмов, которые участники уже смотрели в детстве. Иными словами, мы не демонстрируем незнакомые респондентам мультфильмы и не оцениваем спонтанную реакцию на них в настоящем времени.

Учитывая задачи данной работы, были сформулированы следующие гипотезы:

Гипотеза (1): На восприятие советских мультфильмов русскоговорящими респондентами влияют все три основополагающие характеристики советских мультфильмов, а именно: визуализация, звуковое сопровождение и содержательное наполнение¹⁸⁰.

Гипотеза (2): На восприятие советских мультфильмов русскоговорящими респондентами влияют определенные характеристики самих респондентов, такие как пол, возраст и языковая среда (в частности, русскоговорящие родители).

Мы покажем, что визуализация в большей степени воспринимается как устаревшая, тогда как содержательное наполнение, не теряет своей актуальности. Звуковое сопровождение преимущественно оценивается положительно, особенно в отношении музыкального оформления и актерской игры. Влияние пола, возраста и наличия русскоговорящих родителей на восприятие советских мультфильмов в целом не прослеживается, хотя респонденты мужского пола в среднем оценили мультфильмы несколько более положительно, чем респондентки.

Статья организована следующим образом. В Разделе 2 представлен обзор ключевых характеристик советской мультипликации – визуализации, звукового сопровождения и содержательного наполнения. Раздел 3 описывает метод, примененный для сбора данных, а также основные характеристики респондентов. Два последующих раздела посвящены анализу данных. В Разделе 4 рассматривается форма советских мультфильмов (визуализация и звуковое сопровождение): сначала представлены общие тенденции, выявленные в исследовании (4.1), затем проводится их качественный анализ (4.2). В Разделе 5 приводится общий обзор восприятия содержания респондентами (5.1), после чего представлен качественный анализ содержания и его воздействия на респондентов (5.2). Основные выводы исследования, а также возможные направления дальнейшей работы, изложены в Разделе 6.

¹⁸⁰ Перед опросом респондентов мы взяли «нулевую гипотезу» за отправную точку, поскольку у нас не было предположений о том, какая именно из характеристик мультфильмов будет играть решающую роль.

2. Основные характеристики советских мультфильмов

В данном разделе рассматриваются ключевые особенности советской мультипликации – визуализация, звуковое сопровождение и содержательное наполнение. Основное внимание уделяется характеристикам мультфильмов, созданных после 1950-х годов, так как мультфильмы более ранних периодов не упоминаются респондентами этого исследования. Подробный обзор истории советской мультипликации и особенностей каждого периода представлен в (Nilsen 2025:4-15).

2.1. Визуализация

Ключевым моментом визуализации в советских мультфильмах является стилистическое разнообразие. В основном привлекались рисованные техники, некоторые мультфильмы делались с помощью плоской бумажной перекладки и перекладки плоских марионеток, и в меньшей степени привлекали кукольную и пластилиновую анимации. С помощью этих техник мультипликаторы придавали мультфильмам плавность движений, реалистичность и живость.

Советские мультфильмы более поздних периодов прежде всего основывались на сказках и фольклоре. Тематически мультфильмы, как правило, предлагали зарисовки о животных и вымышленных существах (Balina, Beumers 2015:132). Важной особенностью является то, что реальность в мультфильмах чаще всего передавалась через визуальные формы, эмоциональное восприятие (ощущения и общую атмосферу) и звуковые эффекты, а не через членораздельную речь и текст. Исследователь Д. Макфадьен отмечает, что недосказанность придает тексту дополнительную семантическую нагрузку: недосказанное (неслышимое, лишённое смысла и невидимое)¹⁸¹ делает текст более выразительным (MacFadyen 2005:47). Это объясняется тем, что зритель сам додумывает, что режиссер хотел передать той или иной деталью.

По словам канадского аниматора Н. Макларена (McLaren), «мультфильмы – это не искусство движущихся рисунков, а, скорее, искусство нарисованных движений. То, что происходит между кадрами важнее того, что происходит на каждом (отдельно взятом) кадре» (MacFadyen 2005:47)¹⁸². Благодаря этим особенностям мультипликация обладала большей свободой по сравнению, например, с кино, где реалистичность играла более значительную роль. Особенно это заметно в мультфильмах, созданных в брежневский период. Несмотря на общее усиление цензуры в Советском Союзе, в области мультипликации она была относительно мягкой, так как основное внимание цензоров сосредотачивалось на сценарии, а не на визуальной подаче¹⁸³. Таким образом, больший акцент делался

¹⁸¹ Оригинальная цитата: «That which is unstated – the unheard, senseless, and unsees – boosts the semantic load of what is stated».

¹⁸² Оригинальная цитата: «[...] cartoons are “not the art of drawings that move, but rather the art of movements that are drawn. What happens between each frame is more important than what happens on each frame”».

¹⁸³ Оригинальная цитата: “[...] which became known as the Stagnation Era, the screws of censorship were tightened again. [...] this censorship was concerned with the text more than with the aesthetics. This allowed artists, animation artists included, considerably more freedom than they had had for the last two decades.” (Bendazzi, 2015, с. 77, цитируется по Pikkov, 2016, с. 28–29). Перевод: «В период застоя цензурные рамки вновь были

на тексте и соответствии сценария советским установкам, чем на скрытых смыслах, заложенных в мультфильмах. В результате мультипликаторы могли много экспериментировать с формой, а также прибегать к новым западным направлениям, таким как поп-арт (Pikkov 2016:28–30).

2.2. Звуковое сопровождение

В рисованном фильме музыка и изображение органично переплетаются, создавая единство этих элементов (Познер 2021:346). Внедрение звукового сопровождения в советские мультфильмы пришло вместе с влиянием У. Диснея на развитие советской мультипликации в 1930-е годы. Толчком стал мультфильм Диснея «Три поросенка», в котором ярко демонстрировалось взаимодействие музыки и текста. Считалось, что звуковое сопровождение, включая песни, ритмические диалоги и фоновые звуки, способствовало развитию сюжета (MacFadyen 2005:52).

В советских детских фильмах большую роль играет музыка, которая была написана знаменитыми музыкантами и композиторами, такими как В. Я. Шаинский и Е. П. Крылатов. В. Я. Шаинскому принадлежат известные песни из мультфильмов, например, «Песенка мамонтенка» и «Песенка крокодила Гены» (см. Приложение 4). Творчество Е. П. Крылатова включает не менее известные песни, к примеру, «Кабы не было зимы»¹⁸⁴, «Колыбельная медведицы»¹⁸⁵ и «Песенка Умки»¹⁸⁶ (Пухов 2012, Славская 2014). Песни из мультфильма «Бременские музыканты», часто упоминаемые нашими респондентами, были написаны композитором Г. И. Гладковым. Эти песни были созданы в жанре рока. Среди других композиторов, внесших свой вклад в развитие мультипликации, можно назвать М. И. Дунаевского, написавшего музыку к мультфильму «Летучий корабль», и М. С. Вайнберга, автора песни Винни-Пуха (Пухов 2012). Кроме того, в мультфильмах использовались популярные песни на момент их создания (Pikkov 2016:29). Например, песни известных артистов А. Пугачевой и В. Высоцкого звучали в некоторых сериях многосерийного мультфильма «Ну, погоди!».

Голоса героев озвучивались лучшими советскими артистами. Прежде всего стоит отметить артистку К. М. Румянову, которая озвучила более 200 анимационных и кукольных картин. Ее голосом говорят герои в любимых мультфильмах наших респондентов, к примеру, Малыш из «Малыш и Карлсон», Мамонтенок из «Мама для мамонтенка» и Заяц из «Ну, погоди!» (ТАСС 1999–). Помимо Румяновой, значим вклад и других известных артистов, таких как Е. П. Леонова, Ю. В. Никулина, А. Б. Джигарханяна, Ф. Г. Раневской и других (Залеская 2023).

Музыка, шутки, афоризмы «крылатые устойчивые фразы» (Pikkov 2016:32), а также привычки героев мультфильмов, становились источниками цитирования.

ужесточены [...] однако эта цензура в большей степени касалась текста, чем эстетики. Это предоставило художникам, в том числе мультипликаторам, значительно больше свободы, чем у них было за последние два десятилетия».

¹⁸⁴ Мультфильм «Зима в Простоквашино» (1984 г.).

¹⁸⁵ Мультфильм «Умка» (1969 г.).

¹⁸⁶ Мультфильм «Умка ищет друга» (1970 г.).

Это прежде всего касается мультфильмов брежневского периода. В качестве примера многим респондентам запомнился кот из мультфильма «Трое из Простоквашино», основанного на детской сказочной повести Э. Н. Успенского «Дядя Федор, пес и кот», который говорил, что бутерброд надо есть колбасой вниз – «колбасой на язык класть»¹⁸⁷.

2.3. Содержательное наполнение

Главное в содержательном наполнении – это непосредственно герои, их эмоции, действия и характер (личность). Герои отражают мир/социум, на который рассчитаны мультфильмы. Д. Макфаден отмечает, что без своей характерности герои не будут восприниматься зрителями. Для того, чтобы зритель воспринял героя, зритель должен узнать и почувствовать себя через героя. Герой без характера не правдоподобен. Для усиления эмоций героев окружение героя и природа показывается через призму его эмоционального состояния (MacFadyen 2005:45, 53, 54). Иными словами, в мультфильмы приносился психологизм, т.е. отражение внутреннего мира персонажей, в том числе через их мысли, чувства, ощущения и поведение (Мещеряков, Зинченко 2007).

В своем исследовании М. Д. Баландина отмечает, что мультфильмы являются одним из уникальнейших инструментов воздействия на ребенка благодаря смещению фантастического и реального. Это связано с тем, что дети воспринимают мультфильмы как часть реальности, так как они не всегда могут отличить реальное от воображаемого, и начинают доверять мультфильмам, полагаясь на ценности и установки, заложенные в их сюжетах (Баландина 2017:18, 19, 25). Из этого можно сделать вывод, что привнесение психологизма в мультфильмы усиливало воздействие на зрителя, способствуя воспитанию нового, «коммунистического», человека с помощью мультипликации. Зритель, видя того или иного персонажа, будет либо стремиться быть похожим на него, либо, наоборот, решит не быть таким как этот персонаж, в зависимости от его качеств и поведения. Восприятие зрителем персонажа будет зависеть от того, как образ персонажа представлен на экране.

Советские мультфильмы, как правило, были поучительными. В них всегда присутствовала некая философская или этическая мысль, которой нужно уделить внимание во время просмотра, а не только развлекательные моменты. В силу того, что мультипликация использовалась как средство формирования личности и передачи определенных ценностей советскому обществу, в мультфильмы закладывались черты характера, которые считались желательными для советского человека (Волдаева 2011:3, 5). Мультфильмы затрагивали «темы дружбы, товарищества, чистой любви, высокой порядочности, честности, помощи слабому, осуждение коварства и зла, торжество справедливости, воспевание доброго и прекрасного» (Иванов-Вано 1980:169).

Такая черта как поучительность является, возможно, одним из главных отличий между советскими мультфильмами и мультфильмами У. Диснея, что многократно

¹⁸⁷ «Неправильно ты, дядя Федор, бутерброд ешь. Ты его колбасой кверху держишь, а надо колбасой на язык класть. Так вкуснее получится», – говорит кот Матроскин в мультфильме «Трое из Простоквашино», объясняя, что так вкус колбасы лучше чувствуется.

упоминалось респондентами. В отличие от советских мультфильмов, основная цель диснеевских мультфильмов была развлекать зрителей (MacFadyen 2005:38). Тем не менее, в своих мультфильмах У. Дисней также показывал противоречия реального мира с помощью комического гротеска (чрезвычайного преувеличения) при изображении как героев, так и окружающей их среды. По словам С. И. Юткевича, У. Дисней «закрепляет за персонажами определенные человеческие черты, превратив их в постоянные маски». В этом случае «маска олицетворяет ту или иную особенность человеческого темперамента или поведения, и тогда художник ограничивает себя по преимуществу бытовым юмором» (Юткевич 1971:167, 169). Таким образом, можно сказать, что советские мультфильмы, скорее, были более поучительными, а американские, наоборот, играли более развлекательную роль¹⁸⁸.

Поиск собственных идей и стилей в период отхода советских мультипликаторов от влияния Диснея привел к формированию трех жанровых направлений советской детской мультипликации: волшебные сказки разных народов, сказки о животных, реальность, представленная в виде волшебной сказки (Юткевич 1971:183). В сказках про животных животные очеловечиваются, и ребенок в мире животных узнает «свой» мир. Таким образом, персонажи-животные – это своеобразная метафора, при использовании которой мультфильм больше воздействует на сознание зрителей. Через животных мультфильм передает заложенные в него воспитательные (моральные) ценности (Юткевич 1971:183).

Кроме того, многие советские мультфильмы отражают эпоху, в которую они были созданы, а также историко-политические и социокультурные аспекты (Pikkov 2016:30–31). Это можно объяснить тем, что анимация подвергалась цензуре, которая должна была гарантировать, что в мультфильме отражалось правильное, по мнению правительства, содержательное наполнение. У. Пикков ссылается на А. Гарееву и утверждает, что мультсериал «Ну, погоди!» отражает и комментирует повседневные аспекты жизни советского общества (инфраструктуру, одежду, музыку), предлагая уникальный взгляд на советское общество в период, когда создавался данный мультсериал (Gareeva 2013:1, цитируется по Pikkov 2016:32). На этом основании можно сказать, что мультфильмы отражают культуру своего времени.

¹⁸⁸ Как справедливо отметил анонимный рецензент этой статьи, тот факт, что советские детские мультфильмы являются частью более дидактической традиции, тогда как, например, продукция Disney в первую очередь ориентирована на развлечение, требует более основательного комментария. Существует обширный корпус исследований, посвященных влиянию У. Диснея на формирование детских представлений о гендерных ролях, а также роли компании Disney в контексте американской «мягкой силы» (см., например, Giroux, Pollock 2010). Между культурным материалом и его реципиентом существуют не только временные и пространственные различия, но и социально-идеологические сдвиги. Получение «внешнего» взгляда на детские фильмы, по-видимому, оказывается более сложной задачей в тех случаях, когда речь идет о произведениях, которые по-прежнему являются нормой в окружающей реципиента культурной среде. Иными словами, детям может быть труднее критически или дистанционно оценивать мультфильмы, представляющие их актуальное культурное пространство. Более подробное сопоставление восприятия диснеевских (и шире — американских) и советских мультфильмов в данной аудитории будет представлено в отдельной статье, посвященной анализу взаимосвязи между самоидентификацией респондентов и оценкой ими советской мультипликации.

При этом важно подчеркнуть, что хотя рассматриваемые мультфильмы являются советскими по происхождению, их сюжеты иногда заимствованы из зарубежной детской литературы, и многим из них предшествует соответствующая книга. Так, ряд мультфильмов, упомянутых респондентами, основан на произведениях таких авторов, как А. Линдгрэн (Швеция), Р. Киплинг и А. А. Милн (Великобритания) (см. список советских мультфильмов, названных респондентами, в **Приложении 4**). Такие мультфильмы представляют собой интересный гибрид, в котором западный сюжет адаптируется для советской детской аудитории.

Опираясь на вышесказанное, можно утверждать, что каждый из трех рассматриваемых факторов играл важную роль в создании советских мультфильмов. Мультипликаторы развивали визуальный ряд, применяя различные техники и стараясь выработать собственный «советский» стиль, что способствовало повышению качества картин. Советские мультфильмы выполняли важную воспитательную функцию: они были поучительными и отражали качества, которыми должен был обладать советский гражданин. Немалую роль в развитии советской мультипликации играло музыкальное сопровождение в исполнении известных советских артистов. Актуальность этих факторов для русскоязычной молодежи, проживающей в Норвегии, представлена в Разделах 4 и 5.

3. Данные и метод

3.1. Метод

Сбор данных для исследования может быть проведен при помощи количественного или качественного метода. Количественные исследования направлены на проверку гипотез или предполагаемых связей между феноменами, а качественные исследования, напротив, направлены на создание этих гипотез (Ryen 2012:28–29). Иными словами, количественный метод позволяет собирать и статистически анализировать большое количество данных по конкретным вопросам (Dalen 2011:73, Jacobsen 2022:146), в то время как качественный метод уделяет особое внимание сбору дополнительных, заранее не известных, факторов по вопросу исследования (Bjørgve 2013:61–62, Jacobsen 2022:144–145). Выбор между использованием количественного или качественного метода, или их комбинации, зависит от характера и целей конкретного исследования.

В данном исследовании использован метод качественного интервью, поскольку наибольший интерес представляют личные переживания респондентов, связанные с советской мультипликацией, а не статистика. По степени формализации выделяются три типа качественного интервью: структурированное, полуструктурированное и неструктурированное (Leseth, Tellmann 2018:70). В структурированном интервью заранее определены формулировки вопросов и последовательность, в которой они задаются (*ibid.*:71). При проведении неструктурированного (или открытого) интервью исследователь

задает вопросы по ситуации, отталкиваясь от общего плана, привязанного к задачам исследования (*ibid.*:70). В использовании полуструктурированного интервью используются заранее определенные формулировки вопросов, без четкого указания на последовательность, в которой они задаются (Ryen 2012:99; Leseth, Tellmann 2018:71).

При сборе данных использовался формат полуструктурированного индивидуального интервью, которое устанавливает более доверительные отношения между интервьюером и респондентом, и тем самым позволяет респондентам чувствовать себя более свободно. При использовании такого интервью респондент может не оставаться в строго установленных рамках и поднимать темы, которые лично ему интересны (Thagaard 2009:87). Это дает возможность выявить дополнительные факторы, играющие роль при восприятии мультфильмов исследуемой аудиторией.

В проведении полуструктурированного интервью ключевую роль играет интервью-гайд. Интервью-гайд – это документ, содержащий предварительные темы и блоки потенциальных вопросов, направленных на получение данных для исследования (Kvale, Brinkmann 2015:46, 162; Dalen 2011:26). Интервью должно способствовать получению информации и развитию хорошего взаимодействия между интервьюером и респондентом во время интервью (Kvale, Brinkmann, 2015:163). Для достижения этого эффекта первый блок обычно представлен вопросами о персональных данных респондентов, а последующие блоки предлагают варианты вопросов непосредственно по теме исследования (Leseth, Tellmann 2018:72).

Не менее важным преимуществом проведения интервью является невербальный язык, например мимика, интонация, визуальный контакт и так далее. Личное общение с респондентом позволяет интервьюеру включить в свой анализ интервью невербальный язык, что повышает практическую ценность полученных данных (Vjergve 2013:52). Кроме того, личное общение дает интервьюеру возможность убедиться, правильно ли интервьюер понял респондента (*ibid.*:52).

3.2. Респонденты

Объектом данного исследования являются русскоговорящие молодые люди, проживающие в Норвегии и выросшие в семьях, где либо один из родителей, либо оба родителя русскоговорящие. Молодые люди, принявшие участие в данном исследовании, владеют русским языком в разной степени. Возрастная категория респондентов – 16–23 года. Данный возрастной диапазон был выбран по нескольким причинам. Во-первых, подростки старше шестнадцати лет могут принимать участие в исследовании без согласия родителей¹⁸⁹, что упростило процесс получения разрешения на проведение интервью (см. ниже). Во-вторых, в Норвегии с шестнадцати лет подростки переходят в школу второй ступени. Эти

¹⁸⁹ Оригинальная цитата SIKT: «Barn og ungdommer kan som hovedregel selv samtykke til deltakelse i forskning når de er fylt 15 år.» (Sikt, без даты).

Перевод: «Дети и подростки, как правило, могут, самостоятельно давать согласие на участие в исследовании, когда им исполняется 15 лет».

два фактора способствуют большей самостоятельности респондентов в сравнении с более младшими участниками, что важно для проведения интервью. Это проявляется прежде всего в том, что респонденты самостоятельно приняли решение участвовать в интервью. Кроме того, период обучения в старшей школе совпадает с этапом активного формирования личности (Isurin 2017:53), что позволяет предположить наличие у респондентов собственных мнений и взглядов на различные темы.

В связи с конфиденциальностью в анализе данных не используется точный возраст и настоящее имя респондентов¹⁹⁰. Также в связи с конфиденциальностью было принято решение не включать в исследование респондентов из семей, где только отец русскоговорящий, так как таких семей мало¹⁹¹, что повышает вероятность распознавания респондента. Поэтому в исследование включены респонденты из семей, где либо только мать русскоговорящая, либо оба родителя русскоговорящие. Вместо использования точного возраста респондентов, респонденты были разделены на две возрастные группы: школьники старшей школы – 16–19 лет, и те, кто уже закончил старшую школу – 20–23 года, включая как студентов, так и тех, кто не учится, а, например, работает. В Норвегии ученики в основном оканчивают старшую школу в год исполнения своего девятнадцатилетия, поэтому было принято решение разделить возраст респондентов именно на эти две группы. В анализе участники исследования обозначены условными номерами, например, И1 (информант 1), И2 (информант 2) и т. д.

Наибольшее число респондентов на момент интервью проживало в Северной Норвегии, в городе Тромсе. Это связано с тем, что исследование проводилось в рамках магистерского проекта Каролины Белокуровой Нильсен в Норвежском арктическом университете, расположенном в этом городе. Однако нельзя утверждать, что исследование охватывает исключительно Северную Норвегию, поскольку респонденты включали: 1) людей, выросших и проживающих в этом регионе, 2) прибывших в Тромсе из других регионов Норвегии, 3) выросших в Северной Норвегии, но на момент интервью проживающих в других частях страны, и 4) людей, не имеющих прямого отношения к Северной Норвегии. Такое географическое разнообразие респондентов объясняется тем, что именно эти люди согласились принять участие в исследовании.

В целом в исследовании приняли участие двенадцать респондентов. Чтобы проверить, зависит ли типичное и индивидуальное в ответах респондентов не только от возраста, но и от пола, было решено при опросе использовать одинаковое количество девушек и юношей, то есть шесть девушек и шесть

¹⁹⁰ Сведения о годе рождения респондентов и их родителей, а также указание времени переезда родителей в Норвегию, безусловно, позволили бы сделать более точные выводы при ответе на вопрос о том, каким образом осуществляется передача культуры между разными поколениями. Однако в рамках данного исследования мы сознательно не приводим эти данные в целях защиты конфиденциальности респондентов, поскольку в противном случае наши участники могли бы быть идентифицированы. Русскоязычные родители всех респондентов родились и выросли в русскоязычном культурном пространстве, поэтому в данном случае речь идет о передаче культуры от первого поколения эмигрантов ко второму поколению.

¹⁹¹ Мы обратились к представителю Норвежско-русского общества в г. Тромсе (Norsk-russisk forening i Tromsø: <https://www.noruss.no/?lang=ru>), который сообщил, что семей, где только отец является русскоговорящим, значительно меньше, чем семей с русскоговорящей матерью.

юношей. Кроме того, для более показательного результата для исследования было целенаправленно выбрано одинаковое количество респондентов, с одним русскоговорящим родителем (матерью) и двумя русскоговорящими родителями. Окончательное распределение респондентов проиллюстрировано в **Таблице 1**.

Пол	Возраст	Русскоговорящие родители	Количество респондентов
Ж (женский)	Школьник/-ца (16–19 лет)	Мать/оба	
М (мужской)	Студент/работа (20–23 года)		
Ж	16–19 лет	Оба	2
Ж	16–19 лет	Мать	1
Ж	20–23 года	Мать	2
Ж	20–23 года	Оба	1
М	16–19 лет	Оба	2
М	16–19 лет	Мать	1
М	20–23 года	Оба	1
М	20–23 года	Мать	2
Всего			12

Таблица 1. Количество и характеристики независимых факторов (пол, возраст и наличие русскоговорящих родителей) респондентов, принявших участие в данном исследовании.

3.3. Этическая составляющая исследования

Любое интервью сопряжено с этическими вопросами, например, по проведению интервью, сбору и хранению данных, разглашению личной информации респондентов и т. д. (Jacobsen 2022:47–49). В рамках данного исследования у всех участников было получено письменное или устное соглашение на участие в интервью и сборе данных; исследование было зарегистрировано в соответствии с требованиями норвежской организации Sikt (см. ниже); личные данные респондентов были анонимизированы. Кроме того, при отборе респондентов был принят ряд шагов, которые описаны выше в разделе 3.2.

В Норвегии исследовательские проекты, обрабатывающие персональные данные, должны быть зарегистрированы в организации Sikt: Kunnskapssektorens tjenesteleverandør [Поставщик услуг для сектора образования и науки] (ранее NSD) (Jacobsen 2022:160). Организация Sikt предоставляет конфиденциальные услуги, в том числе те, которые направлены на помощь исследовательским учреждениям в соблюдении нормативов по конфиденциальности при сборе и обработке персональных данных респондентов. В соответствии с требованиями организации Sikt нами было получено официальное разрешение на проведение интервью в рамках настоящего исследования (подтверждение доступно в Приложении 1 в Nilsen 2025).

Перед началом интервью каждому респонденту выдавалось информационное письмо, в котором была предоставлена информация об исследовании, конфиденциальности и правах респондента во время и после интервью. К информационному письму было приложено заявление о согласии, в том числе на участие в данном исследовании, на запись интервью на диктофоны и временное хранение аудиозаписей, а также на использование полученных во время интервью данных в настоящем исследовании. Кроме того, респонденты были уведомлены, что исследователь (Каролина Белокурова Нильсен) и руководители данного проекта (Светлана Соколова и Елена Бьергве) будут иметь доступ к аудиозаписям. Данное заявление о согласии было подписано каждым респондентом, принявшим участие в исследовании очно, перед началом интервью. Респонденты, с которыми интервью проводилось по видеосвязи, дали согласие устно. Поскольку информационное письмо и заявление о согласии являются важными документами, а респонденты владеют русским языком в разной степени, было принято решение подготовить данные документы исключительно на норвежском языке. Все респонденты свободно владеют норвежским языком, что позволило исследователю быть уверенным в том, что каждый респондент полностью осознавал содержание и значение подписываемых документов.

3.4. Проведение интервью

Успешность проведения интервью в значительной степени зависит от того, насколько исследователю удастся установить доверительные отношения с респондентом (Jacobsen 2022:141, 163, 164, 171). Учитывая отсутствие предварительного знакомства между исследователем и респондентами, было важно с самого начала установить некоторое взаимопонимание. Перед началом интервью исследователь представлялся, знакомил респондента с темой исследования и разъяснял его права, несмотря на то что часть этой информации уже была изложена в информационном письме. Каждый респондент был также проинформирован о том, что может отказаться отвечать на тот или иной вопрос.

Чтобы не упустить важные вопросы по теме, был разработан список вопросов (интервью-гайд), которые необходимо было задать респондентам в течение интервью. Интервью-гайд данной работы состоит из двух блоков: блок с персональной информацией о респонденте и блок вопросов о советской мультипликации¹⁹². Все вопросы в интервью-гайде направлены на исследование восприятия респондентами советских мультфильмов.

Чтобы проверить, насколько хорошо и понятно составлен интервью-гайд, перед интервью с респондентами было проведено пилотное интервью. После пилотного интервью респондент прокомментировал как вопросы для интервью, так и сам процесс проведения интервью. Пилотное интервью и обратная связь респондента позволили улучшить качество вопросов для проведения предстоящих интервью.

¹⁹² В **Приложении 1** приводится только вторая часть анкеты (блок вопросов о советской мультипликации), поскольку связь между самоидентификацией респондентов и их восприятием советской мультипликации, а также актуальная в этой связи первая часть анкеты, будут рассмотрены нами в отдельной статье.

Поскольку уровень владения русским языком у респондентов различается, интервью-гайд был подготовлен в двух вариантах – на русском и норвежском языках, при этом содержание вопросов оставалось идентичным. Русский вариант интервью-гайда для данного исследования представлен в **Приложении 1**.

Для случаев, если респондентам будет сложно вспомнить советские мультфильмы, было подготовлено **Приложение 2** с фрагментами различных советских мультфильмов. Для сравнения рисованных, кукольных и пластилиновых мультфильмов было разработано **Приложение 3** с фрагментами советских мультфильмов, выполненных в этих техниках.

Интервью проводились на русском и норвежском языках в период с 28.03.23 (первое интервью) по 10.03.24 (последнее интервью). Ввиду того, что респонденты владеют русским языком в разной степени, а также для более комфортного проведения интервью, респондентам была дана возможность самим выбрать язык интервью – русский, норвежский или оба языка, то есть респонденты могли по своему усмотрению переходить с одного языка на другой во время интервью. Возможность самому выбрать язык интервью обеспечивала респонденту не только чувство комфорта, но и позволяла наиболее точно выразить свои мысли, что представляет особую ценность для любого исследования (Isurin 2017:82–83).

Респондентам, проживающим в Тромсе, была предоставлена возможность самим выбрать комфортное для них место проведения интервью. Чаще всего встречи по желанию респондентов проходили либо в университете Тромсе, либо в центральной библиотеке Тромсе, либо дома у респондента. Интервью с респондентами, не проживающими в Тромсе (респонденты И7, И9 и И12), проходило по видеосвязи, чтобы максимально сделать их похожими на встречи вживую, а именно чтобы респондент мог видеть исследователя, а исследователь реакции респондента. Длительность интервью была от полутора до двух часов. Ответы респондентов для подстраховки фиксировались на два диктофона, исследователь также делал письменные заметки во время интервью.

Не менее важным фактором, от которого зависит успешность интервью, является тип задаваемых вопросов – закрытые или открытые вопросы. Закрытые вопросы подразумевают вопросы с ответами *да/нет*, то есть интервьюер получает от респондента ограниченные ответы на конкретные и короткие вопросы, без обсуждения и размышлений со стороны респондента (Eide, Eide 2017:196). Открытые вопросы, наоборот, дают возможность респонденту поразмышлять над заданным вопросом, что-то рассказать, добавить, объяснить, выразить свои мысли, поделиться своим опытом (*ibid.*:202). Открытые вопросы часто начинаются вопросительными словами, такими как *как, почему, что* (*ibid.*:202).

В интервью для этого исследования использовалась комбинация закрытых и открытых вопросов. Сначала респонденту задавались закрытые вопросы, затем, исходя из ответа респондента, задавались открытые вопросы. Открытые вопросы, как было отмечено ранее, имеют следующие преимущества: они дают респонденту возможность ответить на вопрос настолько подробно и глубоко, насколько респондент считает необходимым. Респондент может отметить то, что считает нужным для исследования, привести примеры из личного опыта, которые невозможно предусмотреть заранее, что позволяет разделить собранные данные

на типичные и индивидуальные ответы (Thagaard 2009:87; Jacobsen 2022:163; Ryen 2002:90).

В следующих разделах будет представлен подробный разбор проведенных интервью, учитывающий как основные факторы, перечисленные в **Разделе 2**, так и дополнительные особенности мультфильмов, названные респондентами непосредственно во время интервью.

4. Форма: визуализация и звуковое сопровождение

4.1. Общая характеристика восприятия формы советских мультфильмов

Факторы «визуализация» и «звуковое сопровождение» при анализе интервью были объединены в раздел «форма». Основные выводы по восприятию формы советских мультфильмов респондентами на основе интервью сформулированы в **Таблице 2**, обобщающей восприятие визуализации и звукового сопровождения в виде следующих упрощенных оценок: «нравится», «не нравится», и «нейтрально». За этими упрощениями стоит ряд нюансов:

- **Визуализация:** Отношение респондента к визуализации обобщалось на основе его восприятия рисованных и кукольных мультфильмов, и в меньшей степени пластилиновых мультфильмов, так как респонденты во время интервью больше внимания уделяли именно рисованным и кукольным мультфильмам.
 - Оценка «**нравится**» подразумевает, что респонденту либо нравятся советские мультфильмы всех типов визуализации, либо он отмечал, что ему нравится/нравились мультфильмы определенного типа, например, рисованные мультфильмы (при этом не было комментария относительно мультфильмов других типов).
 - Оценка «**не нравится**» подразумевает, что респонденту в целом не нравились и не нравятся советские мультфильмы.
 - Оценка «**нейтрально**» предполагает, что респондент или нейтрально относится к тому, как был сделан мультфильм (четкое мнение отсутствует), или по-разному относится к мультфильмам разных типов (например, ему нравятся рисованные мультфильмы и не нравятся кукольные). Кроме того, респонденту могут нравиться отдельные рисованные мультфильмы и не нравиться другие, или он может, например, нейтрально относиться к рисованным и не любить кукольные. Также эту оценку получало мнение респондента, когда он отмечал, что мультфильмы специфического типа ему нравятся, однако

у них есть недостатки (например, им не хватает динамики, или «экшена»¹⁹³).

• **Звуковое сопровождение:**

- Оценка «**нравится**» подразумевает, что респондент сам отметил, что ему нравятся/нравились музыка или голоса персонажей и он их хорошо помнит.
- Оценка «**не нравится**» подразумевает, что респондент сам отметил, что музыка или голоса персонажей ему не нравятся. В других случаях респондент вспоминал лишь мелодии небольшого числа песен или какую-то одну композицию, при этом либо не имел четкого мнения о звуковом сопровождении советских мультфильмов, либо считал его менее удачным по сравнению с западными мультфильмами.
- Оценка «**нейтрально**» означает, что респондент помнит лишь некоторые песни и голоса героев из советских мультфильмов или совсем их не помнит, но отмечает, что ему нравились/запомнились голоса героев.

- «**Итог: форма**»: итоговая оценка восприятия формы советских мультфильмов каждым респондентом была выведена на основании оценок визуализации и звукового сопровождения. В случае комбинации оценок «нравится» и «нейтрально», конечный результат подытоживался оценкой «**нравится– (с минусом)**», так как оценка не является сугубо положительной, тем не менее «нравится» перевешивает «нейтрально». Аналогичным образом «**не нравится+ (с плюсом)**» отмечает те случаи, когда оценка «нейтрально» перевешивает оценку «не нравится». В случае совпадения оценок рассматриваемых факторов был сформулирован четкий итог «**не нравится**», «**нравится**» или «**нейтрально**». Оценка «**нейтрально**» была также выставлена в одном случае, когда визуализация получила оценку «нейтрально», а звуковое сопровождение – оценку «не нравится».

Отметим, что результаты **Таблицы 2** заметно упрощают данные опроса, тем не менее, они позволяют сделать некоторые общие наблюдения относительно восприятия советских мультфильмов интересующей нас аудиторией.

Информант, возраст, родители	Визуализация	Звуковое сопровождение	Итог: форма
И1 (Ж, Ш, оба)	Не нравится	Не нравится	Не нравится
И2 (Ж, С, оба)	Нейтрально	Нравится	Нравится –
И3 (Ж, Ш, оба)	Нейтрально	Нейтрально	Нейтрально

¹⁹³ Динамичное развитие сюжета и быструю смену кадров, так же, как и активное поведение героев, респонденты называли «экшеном».

И4 (Ж, Ш, мама)	Нравится	Нравится	Нравится
И5 (М, С, мама)	Нравится	Нейтрально	Нравится –
И6 (Ж, С, мама)	Нейтрально	Не нравится	Не нравится +
И7 (М, С, оба)	Нейтрально	Нравится	Нравится –
И8 (М, Ш, оба)	Нейтрально	Не нравится	Нейтрально
И9 (М, С, мама)	Нейтрально	Нравится	Нравится –
И10 (М, Ш, оба)	Нравится	Нейтрально	Нравится –
И11 (Ж, С, мама)	Нейтрально	Нейтрально	Нейтрально
И12 (М, Ш, мама)	Нейтрально	Нейтрально	Нейтрально

Таблица 2: Восприятие респондентов визуализации и звукового сопровождения (формы) в советских мультфильмах. Используемые сокращения: И – информант, Ж – женский пол, М – мужской пол, Ш – школьник/-ца, С – студент ¹⁹⁴, оба – оба родителя русскоговорящие, мама – только мать русскоговорящая.

Сопоставив итоговую оценку восприятия респондентами формы советских мультфильмов, сформулированную в **Таблице 2** с характеристиками самих респондентов, указанных в Гипотезе 2 – полом, возрастом, и тем, являются ли оба родителя или только один русскоговорящими, можно выявить следующее:

- «Не нравится»: **Двум девушкам** разного возраста, у одной из которых оба родителя русскоговорящие, а у другой только мама, форма **не нравится**. Однако одна из этих опрошенных относится к визуализации нейтрально, поэтому ее восприятие было оценено как чуть более положительное (не нравится+).
- «Нравится»: **Одной девушке-школьнице**, у которой только мама русскоговорящая, форма **нравится**.
- «Нравится–»: **Четверо юношей** – один школьник и три студента, а также **одна девушка-студентка**, относятся к форме чуть более положительно, чем просто «нейтрально». Можно сказать форма им **относительно нравится**, но есть что-то, что не находит у них отклика и не вызывает положительных эмоций. У троих из них оба родителя русскоговорящие, у двоих только мама.
- «Нейтрально»: **Четверо** респондентов относятся к форме **нейтрально**. Все критерии (пол, возраст и наличие родителей, владеющих русским) имеют разные показатели.

Исходя из представленных выше наблюдений, можно отметить следующие тенденции в отношении формы:

¹⁹⁴ Напомним, что характеристика «студент» отсылает как непосредственно к студентам, так и к молодым людям, окончившим школу, но на данный момент не посещающим занятия в университете, а, например, работающим.

1. В основном, респондентам или относительно нравятся советские мультфильмы, или они относятся к ним нейтрально.
2. Респонденты, которые более положительно относятся к советским мультфильмам, скорее, мужского пола.
3. Респонденты, которые менее положительно относятся к советским мультфильмам, скорее, женского пола.
4. Влияние наличия родителей, владеющих русским языком, и влияние возраста респондентов не просматривается. Пол респондента может играть определенную роль, однако выборка слишком мала, чтобы говорить о четких тенденциях.

4.2. Качитативный анализ восприятия формы с примерами

В этом разделе будет представлен более развернутый анализ того, что стоит за общими выводами восприятия визуализации и звукового сопровождения. Мы сосредоточимся на трех категориях, предложенных в предыдущем разделе: «нравится», «не нравится» и «нейтрально», показывая, что именно отмечали респонденты. Список советских мультфильмов, песен из мультфильмов и крылатых фраз, названных респондентами, представлен в алфавитном порядке в **Приложении 4**.

4.2.1. «Не нравится»

Как отмечалось ранее, форма не нравится двум девушкам (И1 и И6), однако одна из них относится к визуализации нейтрально. Стоит отметить, что, по словам И1, она не увлекается мультфильмами. В свою очередь, дома у И6 члены семьи в целом мало смотрели фильмы и больше читали книги, поэтому у И6 больше воспоминаний, связанных с книгами, и практически отсутствуют воспоминания о фильмах.

Визуализация:

Общим элементом в ответах респонденток И1 и И6 были темные цвета в советских мультфильмах. По словам обеих участниц, темные цвета отталкивают, их не хочется смотреть, в то время как яркие цвета, наоборот, вызывают интерес. И1 особо отметила, что, к примеру, кукольные и пластилиновые мультфильмы ей не нравятся из-за темных красок, в то время как рисованные мультфильмы очень яркие. По поводу цветовой палитры респондентки сказали следующее:

И1: «Краски, конечно, были ярче в современных. Из тех советских мультиков, которые я смотрела там, яркости было довольно мало, и там, да, все было какое-то [пауза] в таких темных цветах. [...] И наверно, поэтому детский глаз шел все время на все самое яркое¹⁹⁵.»

¹⁹⁵ «Все самое яркое» подразумевает диснеевские мультфильмы, поскольку речь шла о сравнении диснеевских и советских мультфильмов. Респондентке больше нравились диснеевские мультфильмы.

И6: «Æ føler jo at de her¹⁹⁶ er litt sånn... de får man ikke så lyst til å se på, fordi det er ikke så mye farger og sånt på de. [...] Da får æ jo litt inntrykk av at de er litt sånn gamle filmer, siden det er svart-hvitt. [...] Æ liker jo de her¹⁹⁷ som har med dyr og mye farger og sånt ja.»¹⁹⁸

Анимация – второй ключевой момент. По словам И1, анимация (прорисовка/манера рисования) в советских мультфильмах вызывала негативную ассоциацию, которая создавала впечатление, что мультфильм будет скучным:

И1: «Периодически было скучно смотреть русские/советские фильмы просто из-за рисовки. Просто, когда ты уже познакомился с такой анимацией, более современной, то все время, конечно, есть интерес в этой анимации, и все время тогда ассоциация была с советскими мультиками более такая не негативная, но такая: «эх, скучно-то сейчас будет». Вот такое ощущение было всегда, когда кто-то говорил, что мы сейчас будем какой-то советский фильм смотреть или мультик. Такое: «ой, сейчас будет неинтересно». [...] И это, конечно, очень грустно, это неправильно, но вот у меня вот такое создалось впечатление, что оно как бы старое.»

Также И1 отметила, что технология, используемая в советских мультфильмах, отличалась от, например, технологии, используемой в диснеевских мультфильмах, что создавало впечатление, что советские мультфильмы более старые и скучные:

И1: «Все диснеевские были более структурные, а советские они были, из-за того, что они были нарисованы, они не были такие структурированные, они могли быть какие-то кривые периодически и, наверно, не могу сказать, что это из-за этого я смотрела диснеевские, но это могла быть маленькая такая причина.»

Более того, И1 кукольные и пластилиновые мультфильмы не нравились. В них ее отталкивала именно анимация.

И1 про пластилиновые: «[...] не нравилась анимация. Они какие-то, очень по пластилиновому двигались как бы, они какие-то очень без костей были.»

И1 про кукольные: «не нравится мне выражение лица. Не нравится, как они презентуют персонажей, потому что в рисованном виде они совсем по-другому выглядели, по крайней мере, крокодил Гена. [...] Просто из-за визуализации, мне просто не нравится, как это показано.»

И6 сделала интересное замечание относительно визуализации в мультфильме «Снежная королева» (1957)¹⁹⁹ Л. Атаманова. По ее мнению, этот мультфильм выглядит как диснеевский, поскольку способ того, как он нарисован, отличается от других советских мультфильмов. В визуализации Л. Атаманова она увидела яркость, подобную привычным ей более поздним диснеевским мультфильмам.

Звуковое сопровождение:

¹⁹⁶ Показывает на кадры черно-белых мультфильмов в **Приложении 3**.

¹⁹⁷ Показывает на кадры из мультфильмов «Винни-Пух» и «Волк и теленок» в **Приложении 3**.

¹⁹⁸ Перевод: «Я ведь чувствую, что вот эти, какие-то такие... их не очень хочется смотреть, потому что в них нет так много красок и прочего. [...] У меня складывается впечатление, что они немного такие старые фильмы, раз они черно-белые. [...] Мне нравятся вот эти, в которых есть животные и много красок и все такое, да.»

¹⁹⁹ При просмотре **Приложения 3**.

Обе респондентки не помнили тексты песен из советских мультфильмов, но помнили мелодии некоторых песен. У И6 были воспоминания о крокодиле, который поет песню со словами «пусть бегут»²⁰⁰. И1 помнит мелодию песни из «Летучего корабля», когда тот взлетал, и мелодии песен из «Бременских музыкантов». Эти мелодии она ассоциирует с данными мультфильмами. Кроме того, И1 отметила, что в целом мультфильм легче запоминается и воспринимается, когда в нем есть музыка, которая нравится. Это также помогает, по ее мнению, донести основное послание фильма:

И1: «[...] когда есть какая-то музыка, которая нравится, конечно, во-первых, ты лучше помнишь фильм, да и восприятие лучше становится, и, конечно, музыка всегда влияет на восприятие фильма, это вот всегда, музыка же тоже помогает fremheve [донести] тематику, которая должна быть.»

4.2.2. «Нравится»

Респондентка И4 – единственная, кому нравилось и продолжает нравиться все в советских мультфильмах, особенно песни. Она до сих пор иногда напевает их, как сама, так и вместе с мамой, хорошо помнит, из какого мультфильма какая песня, а иногда даже слушает их для собственного удовольствия. Прослушивание этих песен приносит ей много радости. Помимо песен, в мультфильмах ей нравилось то, как персонажи были нарисованы и как они говорили: всегда красиво были одеты и говорили громкими голосами, четко и правильно. Она отметила, что мультфильмы были нарисованы просто, но вместе с тем элегантно, спокойно, красиво и мягко, и в них не было резких персонажей. Респондентке в равной степени нравятся рисованные, кукольные и пластилиновые мультфильмы.

И4 о персонажах: «Det var stor del av det jeg likte, måten dem [karakterene] var tegnet på og snakket på. Dem snakket alltid veldig sånn, på en ordentlig måte, med sånn store stemmer og dem var alltid kledd veldig pent. Jeg likte det veldig godt.»²⁰¹.

Дополнительно был задан вопрос, уточняющий, что респондентка подразумевает, когда говорит, что ей нравится, как нарисованы мультфильмы. Имеет ли она в виду только персонажей или весь мультфильм. На что И4 ответила следующее:

И4: «Det er kanskje hele filmen. [...] Det er et bilde æ har veldig klart i hodet mitt: en stor rød sol med et stort smil og veldig vakkert tegnet på en måte. Det er sånne type ting. Det var veldig sånn enkelt tegnet, men samtidig veldig sånn elegant på en måte. [...] Det var ingen sånne edgy karakterer eller tegninger, alt var veldig sånn rolig, fint og mykt.»²⁰²

Звуковое сопровождение:

²⁰⁰ «Песенка крокодила Геня», звучащая в мультфильме «Чебурашка» (1971 г.).

²⁰¹ Перевод: «Это было большей частью того, что мне нравилось, то, как они [персонажи] были нарисованы и как разговаривали. Они всегда говорили очень правильно, громкими голосами, и всегда были очень красиво одеты. Мне это очень нравилось».

²⁰² Перевод: «Возможно весь фильм. [...] Это образ, который ясно стоит у меня перед глазами: большое красное солнце с большой улыбкой и очень красиво нарисованное. Что-то в таком духе. Это было очень просто нарисовано, но в то же время как-то очень изящно. [...] Не было каких-то «резких» персонажей или рисунков, все было очень таким спокойным, красивым и мягким.»

Участница И4 обратила внимание на то, что музыка в советских мультфильмах не использовалась случайным образом, «лишь бы была», не имея никакого отношения к сюжету, как, по ее мнению, это делается в других мультфильмах. Музыка, наоборот, создавала атмосферу, усиливала общее настроение, способствовала повествованию и показывала состояние героев. По ее мнению, музыка в других мультфильмах звучит «пусто», и не так «тепло/с любовью», как в советских мультфильмах. Участница И4 отметила, что музыка способствует развитию визуального ряда, и вместе эти два элемента создают единство. Из размышлений И4:

И4: «[...] Sanger var alltid rolige... ble brukt på en helt annen måte. For eksempel eg husker i «Бременские музыканты», så er det en del hvor han hovedpersonen synger på natta og spiller gitar [...] det var ikke noe veldig trist med sangen, men hele stemningen som bygde opp til det. [...] Ofte så i andre filmer [ikke sovjetiske] da kan det være en sangsekvens bare for å ha en der, også gjør det på en måte ikke så mye kanskje med historien eller filmen i seg selv. Mens i de andre [sovjetiske] så var det en mening bak, dem gjorde noe med hele filmen, og kanskje dem fortalte historien videre eller sa noe om hvordan hovedpersonen har akkurat der og da. [...] i alle andre barnefilmer eg så på, så kunne det virke sånn «tomt» på en måte, eg fikk ikke samme følelsen til dem. Det var ikke like kjærlig for meg å høre på dem, som det å høre på de sovjetiske.»²⁰³

4.2.3. «Нейтрально»

Четверо респондентов (ИЗ, И8, И11 и И12) относятся нейтрально к форме советских мультфильмов. Анализ проводится на основе итоговой оценки восприятия формы: респонденты данной группы либо нейтрально относятся и к визуализации, и к звуковому сопровождению, либо им нравится визуализация, но не нравится звуковое сопровождение. Респонденты ИЗ, И11 и И12 «нейтрально» относятся и к визуализации, и к звуковому сопровождению. Исключением является респондент И8, которому не нравится музыка в советских мультфильмах. Респондентам ИЗ, И8 и И11 нравились рисованные мультфильмы. Респондентке ИЗ кукольные и пластилиновые мультфильмы не нравятся, И11 кукольные нравятся больше, чем пластилиновые, но меньше, чем рисованные, а И8 не помнит ни кукольных, ни пластилиновых. Исключение относительно кукольных мультфильмов составляет респондент И12, которому они нравятся больше рисованных, поскольку ему в целом нравится анимация «стоп-моушен»²⁰⁴. К пластилиновым и рисованным мультфильмам он относится нейтрально. Респонденты ИЗ и И11 помнят некоторые песни из советских мультфильмов, а И12, наоборот, не помнит песен, но ему запомнились голоса героев.

²⁰³ Перевод: «[...] Песни были всегда спокойными... их использовали совершенно иначе. Например, я помню, в «Бременских музыкантах» есть часть, где главный герой поет ночью и играет на гитаре [...] ничего особо грустного в песне не было, но создавалась вся атмосфера вокруг этой сцены. [...] Часто в других фильмах [не советских] бывают просто песенные номера ради песни, и в общем, они не очень влияют на сюжет или фильм в целом. Но в этих других [советских] песня имела смысл, она влияла на весь фильм, возможно, продвигала историю или раскрывала, что чувствует главный герой в тот момент. [...] Во всех остальных детских фильмах, которые я смотрела, в песне могла ощущаться какая-то «пустота», у меня не было таких же чувств к ним. Мне было не так приятно слушать их, как советские песни».

²⁰⁴ Английский: покадровая анимация. Под анимацией «стоп-моушен» респонденты подразумевали стиль визуализации кукольных и пластилиновых мультфильмов.

Визуализация:

Среди достоинств рисованных советских мультфильмов респонденты отмечали высокое качество их визуализации; И3 и И8 даже высказывали мнение, что ранние советские мультфильмы «опережали свое время». Респонденты также обратили внимание на краски, используемые в советских мультфильмах. По мнению И8, яркие краски играли большую роль: мультфильмы со светлыми тонами были веселыми, а с серыми, наоборот, казались скучными:

И8: «Анимация была очень хорошей к старым временам [для того времени], мне кажется. 1954 год и Мойдодыра прям хорошо показывали, не знаю, как у них так получилось. [...] Мне больше как ребенку нравились краски очень яркие. Так что фильмы, которые с серым кадром, не так сильно нравились, потому что мне казалось, что они были скучными, и я сильно уставал.»

И3, наоборот, отметила, что все мультфильмы, которые она смотрела, были в ярких тонах, без темных сцен. Интересно, что данное мнение является противоположенным мнению И2, которая считает, что в советских мультфильмах доминируют мрачные тона (см. выше). По словам И3, краски придают мультфильмам шарм:

И3: «Те, что, конечно, я смотрела, они всегда мультики были очень яркими. То есть не было таких темных сцен каких-то там пугающих, или там неприятных. То есть всегда, даже если, может быть, сюжет там... да... то есть Волк как бы гонится за Зайцем²⁰⁵, пытается его съесть. Но, как бы Заяц такой хитрый и что всегда может ускользнуть от этой проблемы, так сказать, и что он тоже добрый, помогает Волку иногда. И что вот краски, как бы помогают этому, то есть вот даже, если посмотреть на эту картинку²⁰⁶, то есть там шарики разного цвета, не то, что там все красные или все синие, и то, что у Волка бабочка с узорами прикольная. То есть – придает свой шарм, так сказать.»

Респондентка И11 не исключение: в рисованных мультфильмах ей тоже нравились цвета. По ее мнению, они способствовали выражению эмоций героев.

И11: «Мне нравилось, когда [мультфильмы] были с красками, с разными цветами. А так, если черно-белый, то он скучноватый. А если там уже с разными красками, то уже более-менее интересно.»

И12, как и остальные респонденты этой группы, считает, что рисованные мультфильмы имеют неплохие визуальные характеристики. Несмотря на то, что рисованные мультфильмы нравились И8, он отметил, что в них нет «экшена», чем они уступают диснеевским мультфильмам:

И8: «Мне кажется, что в американских было больше экшена. Мне в это время очень сильно экшен нравился. [...] Я бы не сказал, то, что в русских, ну, в советских фильмах это было. Мне казалось, что больше было концентрации [...] на детей, и не так много экшена просто было. Они, больше цензурно были, чем в американских фильмах.»

Относительно кукольных мультфильмов респондентка И3 отмечает, что они больше взаимодействовали с задним планом, чем пластилиновые. Пластилиновые мультфильмы ей не нравились из-за отсутствия плавного перехода от одной картинки к другой, а также из-за того, что озвучка героев не совпадала с их движениями:

²⁰⁵ В мультсериале «Ну, погоди!» (1969–2006 гг.)

²⁰⁶ Комментирует Приложение 3.

И3: «Мне, наверно, больше рисованные нравились. [...] Пластилиновые мультики меня как-то никогда не привлекали. То есть как-то не вызывают никаких абсолютно чувств или мыслей что ли. [...] они все время шли так: одна картинка, другая картинка, и они уже в другой позе. То есть не было вот этого гладкого перехода, по мне. И то, что, когда они говорили, немножко рты странно двигались. То есть они как бы открывались, но слова не сопоставлялись с моментами открытия рта.»

Она также обратила внимание на то, что кукольные мультфильмы более понятны, если в них узнаешь героев, например, в кукле узнаешь волка. Она не понимала, что за животное Чебурашка, и ей также был непонятен сюжет мультфильма с его участием²⁰⁷:

И3: «Кукольные как бы лучше, чем пластилиновые [...] как бы больше они вместе с задним планом, вместе работали, а в пластилиновых, то есть как бы тебе пластилин поставили и как бы он просто стоит. [...] «Волк и теленок» – это прикольно было. То есть, может быть, то, что я узнавала этих животных. Волка я знаю, теленка я знаю, то есть то, что он в быка потом превратился. А вот в Чебурашке, может быть, то, что это был сам Чебурашка, не совсем для меня понятным было, и никогда не понимала сюжета мультфильма.»

Участница И11, в свою очередь, уделила внимание тому, что в кукольных и пластилиновых мультфильмах отсутствует четкое отображение эмоций героев. Однако в кукольных все же присутствуют какие-то эмоции, в отличие от пластилиновых. Кроме того, она убеждена, что пластилиновые мультфильмы можно «слепить» самостоятельно дома:

И11: «Мне пластилиновые не нравились [...] и сейчас не нравятся. [...] мне просто не нравится то, что клеили там что-то, ну, это для меня ненастоящее. Можно и самому сделать из пластилина попробовать [...] А так если уже нарисованные или, например, кукольные – это да, уже намного лучше, по сравнению с пластилиновыми. А потому что мне кажется, что [...] если пластилиновые, то тогда, ну, эмоций не видно у персонажей, да? А если нарисованные или кукольные, то тогда, ну, больше эмоций можно увидеть, чем у этих пластилиновых ребят. Ну, кукольные тоже так себе. Кукольные мне нравятся, там тоже можно увидеть эмоции, но больше всего мне нравятся нарисованные мультфильмы.»

И12 любит кукольные мультфильмы, просто из-за того, что они сделаны в стиле «стоп-моушен», который ему нравится больше, чем рисованные мультфильмы:

И12: «[...] Jeg likte også stop-motion bedre enn animasjon, så jeg tror det er derfor jeg likte også «Домовенок Кузя» ganske mye. [...] Stop-motion er når de bruker dukker og andre ting til å lage film. [...] De så mer interessant og mer spesielle ut enn de som var animert.»²⁰⁸

Звуковое сопровождение:

²⁰⁷ Респондентка не уточнила какой или какие мультфильмы с участием героя Чебурашки она имеет в виду. Всего есть четыре мультфильма, режиссер – Р. А. Качанов: Крокодил Гена (1969 г.), Чебурашка (1971 г.), Шапокляк (1974 г.), и «Чебурашка идет в школу» (1983 г.) (Капков, 2006, с. 315–316). Однако в **Приложении 2**, который просматривала участница, проиллюстрирован фрагмент из мультфильма «Шапокляк» (1974 г.).

²⁰⁸ Перевод: «Мне также больше нравилась кукольная анимация (стоп-моушен), чем рисованная, поэтому, думаю, мне так сильно понравился «Домовенок Кузя». [...] Стоп-моушен – это когда используют кукол и другие предметы для создания фильма. [...] Они выглядели более интересно и необычно, чем рисованные мультфильмы.»

Респондентка И11 изначально отметила, что помнит только песню из мультфильма «Красная шапочка»²⁰⁹ а также то, что песни в советских мультфильмах всегда были интересными и качественными. Тем не менее, после просмотра иллюстраций мультфильмов в **Приложениях 2 и 3**, она вспомнила, что в ее семье хорошо знают песню из «Чебурашки» «Пусть бегут»²¹⁰, а также смогла назвать еще несколько песен, которые ей нравились: про снегурочку из «Ну, погоди!»²¹¹, колыбельную из мультфильма «Мама для мамонтенка»²¹² и песню принцессы из «По следам бременских музыкантов»²¹³. Относительно крылатых фраз И3 подчеркнула, что она иногда слышит, как ее семья использует какие-то фразы из советских мультфильмов, и все знают, откуда данная фраза, или заканчивают ее:

И3: «Иногда дома, или там с бабушками, с дедушками, я слышу, что они скажут какую-то фразу, и все такие: «ooo, да, да, да, вот оттуда» или там, что кто-то скажет одну фразу, и кто-то другой закончит ее, ну, как бы второй частью фразы. Прикольно очень так.»

И12, в свою очередь, помнил только фразу кота Матроскина из «Трое из Простоквашино», в которой кот объясняет, как надо правильно есть бутерброд²¹⁴. Однако рассказывая о своих любимых советских мультфильмах («Домовенок Кузя» и «Трое из Простоквашино»), помимо интересного сюжета и стиля визуализации, И12 отметил манеру разговаривать у героев, в частности, подходящие голоса. По его мнению, благодаря голосам создавалось впечатление, что герои сами разговаривают, не было ощущения, что их озвучивают:

И12: «De hadde en interessant fortelling. De hadde en animasjonsstil som jeg likte å se på. Også i tillegg til voice actors²¹⁵. Passende stemmer, i tillegg til at hvordan de brukte stemmer, så hørt det ikke ut som at det var en voice actor bak dem, men at ... det er litt vanskelig å si. Du vet... man merker lett når det er dårlig, ikke sant. Når det er dårlig voice acting, så høres det ikke passende ut.»²¹⁶

Исключением из данной группы является респондент И8, которому не нравилась музыка из советских песен. По его словам, песни были тихими, в них было мало энергии, он часто уставал от них, и более того, ему казалось, что во всех советских мультфильмах играла одна и та же песня:

И8: «Музыка, во-первых, была очень такой... тихая, не так много энергии вызывалось. Я очень часто уставал просто от музыки. Не так сильно нравилась музыка. Можно так различить, ну, типа в американских фильмах типа барабаны все были, а в русских типа, ну, тихая музыка – классика. Не знаю, как-то так. [...] Мне советская музыка в фильмах казалась той же самой. Не было никакого

²⁰⁹ Советский мультфильм «Красная шапочка» (1937 г.) – черно-белый. И11 отмечала, что считает черно-белые мультфильмы скучными, поэтому можно предположить, что тут она на самом деле говорила о фильме «Про красную Шапочку» (1977 г.).

²¹⁰ «Песенка крокодила Гены» из мультфильма «Чебурашка» (1971 г.).

²¹¹ Песня «Расскажи, Снегурочка».

²¹² Песня «Песенка мамонтенка».

²¹³ Песня «Короля и Принцессы».

²¹⁴ См. сноску 8.

²¹⁵ Английский: Артисты, озвучивающие героев.

²¹⁶ Перевод: «У них был интересный сюжет. У них был такой стиль анимации, который мне нравилось смотреть. В добавок к актерам озвучки. Подходящие голоса, а также то, как они использовались, звучали так, что не казалось, будто за персонажем стоит актер озвучки, а... немного трудно объяснить. Вы знаете... легко понять, когда озвучка плохая, правда ведь? Когда озвучка плохая, она звучит неестественно.»

различия, мне кажется. Как с русским попом, мне кажется. Просто то же самое. Во всех одинаковая. В старых песнях особенно. Помню, родители включали, и мне казалось, что та же самая песня играет.»

Тем не менее, голос Винни-Пуха И8 считает необычным:

И8: «Мне нравится, как он говорил. Я помню, у него был такой необыкновенный голос.»

5. Содержание и воздействие советских мультфильмов

5.1. Общая характеристика восприятия содержания

Мысли респондентов про содержание в советских мультфильмах обобщены в **Таблице 3**. В данной таблице понятие содержания представлено в виде трех компонентов – «сюжет и персонажи», «эмоции» и «культура и поучительность», которые влияют на восприятие содержания респондентами. Три вышеназванных компонента в **Таблице 3** предполагают следующее:

- **Сюжет и персонажи:** нравятся ли они респонденту или нет;
- **Эмоции:** какие эмоции мультфильмы вызывали у респондентов (позитивные/негативные), что также подразумевает наличие или отсутствие у респондентов эмоциональной привязанности к советским мультфильмам;
- **Культура и поучительность:** отражают ли мультфильмы советскую культуру, и были ли они поучительными, в частности, научили ли они чему-нибудь респондента.

Мысли респондентов в **Таблице 3** представлены в виде значений «нравится/не нравится», «позитивные/негативные», «отражается/не отражается» и «присутствует/не присутствует», в соответствии с порядком пунктов, представленных выше. В случае, когда респонденту что-то нравилось и одновременно не нравилось, или у него не было четкого мнения относительно сюжета или персонажей мультфильма, его восприятие оценивалось как «нейтральное». В случае, если респонденту в целом нравились сюжет и персонажи, но при этом были некоторые элементы, которые респондент отмечал, как неудачные или не близкие ему, оценка выставлялась как «нравится – (с минусом)». Оценка «нравится» подразумевает, что респондент либо эксплицитно сказал, что сюжет и персонажи ему нравятся, либо отметил позитивные стороны сюжета и персонажей и не упомянул негативных черт.

Оценка «50/50» была использована при анализе поучительности советских мультфильмов в двух случаях, когда, по мнению респондентов, мультфильмы едва ли чему-либо их научили, но при этом было бы неверно утверждать, что респонденты вовсе ничему не научились. В некоторых случаях в ответах респондентов наблюдались противоречивые мнения относительно того,

отражают ли мультфильмы культуру и присутствует ли в них поучительность. Это отмечено в **Таблице 3** и будет более подробно рассмотрено в разделе 5.2.

Важно отметить, что при анализе такого показателя, как «эмоции», также повлиял и невербальный язык. К примеру, если респондент напрямую не указывал, какие эмоции у него вызывают советские мультфильмы, но во время интервью с улыбкой говорил о них, это расценивалось как признак того, что мультфильмы, скорее всего, вызывают у него положительные эмоции.

Итоговая оценка восприятия содержания респондентами была выявлена на основе суммирования оценок по всем вышеперечисленным пунктам. Итоговые оценки представлены следующими значениями:

- **«Нравится»**: в случае только положительных оценок по всем пунктам;
- **«Нравится– (с минусом)»**: в случаях, когда среди исключительно положительных оценок есть одна оценка или несколько оценок «нравится с минусом»;
- **«Нейтрально»**: при равном количестве положительных и отрицательных оценок или в случае, когда положительных оценок чуть больше, чем отрицательных.
- **«Не нравится+ (с плюсом)»**: в случаях, когда отрицательных оценок больше, чем положительных.

Пол, возраст, родители	Сюжет + персонажи	Эмоции	Культура + поучительность	Итог содержание
И1 (Ж,Ш,оба)	Сюжет: Не нравится Персонажи: Не нравятся	Негативные	Культура: Отражается Почительность: Присутствует	Не нравится +
И2 (Ж,С,оба)	Сюжет: Нравится – Персонажи: Нравятся	Позитивные	Культура: Отражается Почительность: Присутствует	Нравится
И3 (Ж,Ш,оба)	Сюжет: Нравится – Персонажи: Нравятся	Позитивные	Культура: Отражается Почительность: Присутствует	Нравится
И4 (Ж,Ш,мама)	Сюжет: Нравится Персонажи: Нравятся	Позитивные	Культура: Не отражается Почительность: Присутствует	Нравится –
И5 (М,С,мама)	Сюжет: Нравится Персонажи: Нравятся	Позитивные	Культура: Отражается Почительность: Присутствует	Нравится

И6 (Ж,С,мама)	Сюжет: Нейтрально Персонажи: Нейтрально	Никаких не вызывают	Культура: Мнение отсутствует Поучительность: 50/50	Не нравится +
И7 (М,С,оба)	Сюжет: Нейтрально Персонажи: Нравятся	Позитивные	Культура: Отражается Поучительность: 50/50	Нейтрально
И8 (М,Ш, оба)	Сюжет: Нейтрально Персонажи: Нравятся	Позитивные	Культура: Не отражается Поучительность: Присутствует	Нейтрально
И9 (М,С, мама)	Сюжет: Нравится – Персонажи: Нравятся	Позитивные	Культура: Отражается Поучительность: Присутствует	Нравится –
И10 (М,Ш, оба)	Сюжет: Нравится – Персонажи: Нравятся –	Позитивные	Культура: Отражается Поучительность: Присутствует	Нравится –
И11 (Ж,С, мама)	Сюжет: Нравится Персонажи: Нейтрально	Позитивные	Культура: Отражается Поучительность: Присутствует	Нравится –
И12 (М,Ш,мама)	Сюжет: Нравится – Персонажи: Нравятся	Позитивные	Культура: Отражается Поучительность: Не присутствует	Нравится –

Таблица 3: Восприятие респондентами содержания в советских мультфильмах. Используемые сокращения: Ж – женский пол, М – мужской пол, Ш – школьник/-ца, С – студент, оба – оба родителя русскоговорящие, мама – только мать русскоговорящая.

Опираясь на оценки, сформулированные в **Таблице 3**, а также учитывая базовые характеристики респондентов (пол, возраст и наличие русскоговорящих родителей), можно сделать следующие выводы относительно восприятия содержания респондентами:

- Содержание мультфильмов **нравится восьмерым респондентам**. Формальных сходств между респондентами не наблюдается, все основные характеристики представлены сбалансированно: четыре девушки и четверо юношей (пол); четыре школьника и четыре студента (возраст); у троих респондентов оба родителя русскоговорящие, а у пятерых только мать (языковой фон в семье). Итоговые оценки «нравится» и «нравится с минусом» рассматриваются как относительно равнозначные. «Минус» в данном случае относился лишь к единичным параметрам (к одному или

максимум двум пунктам в **Таблице 3**), поэтому итоговое восприятие в этих случаях в данном анализе рассматривается как положительное, то есть респонденту содержание «нравится».

- **Нейтральное** отношение наблюдается у **двоих респондентов, юношей** разного возраста, у которых оба родителя русскоговорящие. Здесь просматривается сходство по полу и наличию русскоговорящих родителей.
- **Не нравится** содержание советских мультфильмов **двум девушкам** разного возраста и с разным статусом русского языка в семье. Сходство в данном случае наблюдается лишь по полу. Тем не менее, важно отметить, что это те же самые респондентки (И1 и И6), которым не нравится и форма советских мультфильмов.

Исходя из итоговых оценок отношения респондентов к содержанию (см. **Таблицу 3**), можно выявить следующие тенденции:

1. В целом, респонденты положительно относятся к содержанию в советских мультфильмах.
2. Содержательное наполнение советских мультфильмов, скорее, не нравится информантам женского пола. При этом важно отметить, что те же участницы (И1 и И6) подчеркнули, что им не по душе и визуальная форма советских мультфильмов. В данном случае трудно утверждать, что именно пол респондентов определяет негативное отношение к мультфильмам; вероятнее всего, полученный результат связан с индивидуальными особенностями этих респонденток.

5.2. Качитативный анализ восприятия содержательного наполнения с примерами

В данном разделе представлен более детальный анализ факторов, лежащих в основе общих выводов о восприятии содержания советских мультфильмов респондентами. Структура этого анализа отличается от структуры анализа восприятия формы, представленного в Разделе 4. С одной стороны, мнения респондентов относительно содержания расходятся в меньшей степени (восприятие в целом более позитивное); с другой стороны, итоговая оценка содержания включает большее количество факторов, поэтому анализ удобнее организовать именно по этим параметрам. В данном разделе рассматриваются как типичные элементы в ответах респондентов, так и уникальные мнения – те, что отличаются от позиции большинства – по основным показателям, представленным в Таблице 3. Особое внимание уделяется ключевым компонентам, определяющим содержание советских мультфильмов и их воздействие на зрителей: сюжету, персонажам, эмоциональному фону произведений, их воспитательному потенциалу и степени их ассоциации с советской культурой.

5.2.1. Сюжет

Восьмерым респондентам нравится сюжет в советских мультфильмах. Такая оценка предполагает, что респонденты либо отзывались о сюжете сугубо положительно, либо отмечали, что им нравятся сюжеты советских мультфильмов с небольшими оговорками. Мнение остальных четверых респондентов отличается от мнения большинства. Трое из них нейтрально относятся к содержанию в советских мультфильмах. Это подразумевает, что у них либо отсутствует мнение относительно содержания (И6), либо им одновременно что-то нравилось и не нравилось в сюжете (И7 и И8). Респондентка И1, как уже говорилось, в целом не очень положительно относится к советским мультфильмам: она выросла на западных мультфильмах, поэтому и сюжет советских анимационных фильмов ей представляется непривлекательным. В частности, И1 характеризует советские мультфильмы как скучные.

Типическое в ответах:

Восемь респондентов, которые отметили, что им нравился сюжет в советских мультфильмах, охарактеризовали его как «смешной», «веселый»/«комедийный», «добрый», «интересный» и «поучительный». Согласно большинству респондентов, в советских мультфильмах было больше смысла, чем в американских, и даже норвежских, мультфильмах. Согласно респондентам И5 и И11, советские мультфильмы были часто основаны на сказках. Участник И5 отметил, что есть много мультфильмов про Новый год, про традиции и культуру разных народов. Участница И11, в свою очередь, поделилась тем, что русские мультфильмы интереснее норвежских, к примеру, тем, что в них есть разговаривающие животные и вещи. По ее мнению, в норвежских мультфильмах нет смысла, а в русских наоборот, «смысл был, есть и будет». Из размышлений И5 и И11:

И5: «Во-первых, многие были как бы постановленные с русских сказок [поставленные по русским сказкам], вот. Помню очень много было фильмов именно про Новый Год, про традиции. Там про 12 месяцев, потом было, как я и сказал, много очень про Деда Мороза, всяких разных. [...] в этих мультиках было очень много показано про других народов, которые были все вместе. [...] больше всего советские – это были украинцы, казахи, русские. [...] у них был свой стиль рисовки, более простенькие. Как я говорил уже, было много под музыку сделано, музыкального сопровождения.»

И11: «В Норвегии скучные на самом деле были эти детские мультфильмы. Даже мультфильмов не было – сериалы, можно так сказать. А русские более интересные. Интересно было смотреть. [...] например, то, что там животные разговаривали, то, что там ... вещи разговаривали. Ну, по типу сказки, можно так сказать. Мне это очень нравилось. В норвежских, во всяком случае, мультфильмах в детстве, там больше они были где-то, выходили в этот... на кораблях, на море, про вот этих викингов показывали. И то, что они были где-то в лесу. Ну, как-то не очень мне эти норвежские мультфильмы нравились. Они были по типу кукольных. [...] мне больше нравятся русские, и сериалы, и все. [...] в русских показывают смысл, всегда есть смысл, и думаю, что всегда будет какой-либо смысл.»

Участница И4 любит советские мультфильмы, в них ей нравится все. По ее словам, она смотрела мультфильмы каждый день, в том числе вместе с мамой, и мама объясняла суть мультфильма, если И4 что-то было непонятно:

И4: «Мне очень нравились эти мультфильмы. Я всегда хотела эти смотреть. Это могли были быть те же самые мультфильмы каждый день почти. [...] Она [мама] могла forklare [объяснить], что случилось, если я не поняла.»

По поводу сюжета респондентка И4 отметила, что советские мультфильмы немного отличались от норвежских детских мультфильмов моралью и тем, как они ее представляли. Она считает, что советские мультфильмы были добрыми, как и персонажи в них. Если же отрицательный персонаж получал наказание, в том числе связанное с физическим дискомфортом, оно, как правило не было жестоким, и воспринималось как заслуженное:

И4: «Æ syns dem var litt annerledes fra norske barnefilmer. [...] det var noe med budskapene og måten de ble fremvist på. [...] Æ følte alt var godhjertet på en måte, på en veldig søt måte. [...] Hvis det er de onde karakterene som får vondt da på en eller annen måte, eller får hevn, så er det alltid veldig sånn fortjent, eller og det er ikke noe veldig dramatisk heller. [...] Man sitter igjen med en tanke «ja, nå var det rettferdig» på en måte.²¹⁷»

Участник И9 признался, что ему нравится, когда слабый герой побеждает большого и сильного героя. Пример он привел из мультфильма «Рикки-Тикки-Тави», который он с удовольствием смотрел в детстве:

И9: ««Рикки-Тикки-Тави», про какого-то грызуна, который, вроде, кобру победил. Нравился этот мультик, я помню. [...] мне эти змеи как-то не нравились никогда, они страшные, и ползут везде, вот и кусают, и потом умираешь от них. [...] белка какая-то вот под названием Рикки-Тикки-Тави, вроде бы, его так звали. Он победил как раз эту змею – кобру. [...] еще понравилось, что, как бы, кобра считается типа мощным [...], опасным животным, и приходит какая-то белка и типа побеждает вот это опасное животное. [...] Мне нравятся истории, [...], где слабый герой побеждает сильного.»

Индивидуальное в ответах:

Оригинальный анализ сюжетов в советских мультфильмах сделала участница И2, по словам которой, советская мультипликация плохо доносила суть мультфильма до детей. По ее мнению, основная идея отдельных советских мультфильмов больше понятна взрослому, чем ребенку. Дети воспринимают легкие, смешные моменты, находящие отражение в смешных персонажах, которые делают глупые вещи. Кроме того, дети больше обращают внимание на цвета, песни, рифмы – на то, что создает позитивные эмоции. Несмотря на данную критику, И2 считает, что все известные ей советские мультфильмы были хорошими и веселыми:

И2: «Плохо доносилась мысль именно по-детски в каких-то мультиках. Вот, то есть даже в «Умывальнике [Мойдодыре]» он был таким строгим, что дети должны, то есть понятно, что он хочет, чтобы дети умывались, но это было таким приказным тоном. То есть это было даже немного пугающе, мне кажется, для ребенка. [...] Допустим «Бременские музыканты». Как по мне их идея, вот то, что, несмотря ни на что, они вместе. Вот колесят по дороге. Но, как это ребенок поймет, то, что там какая-то принцесса чего-то не хочет, потом тут разбойники, и тут собаки, кошки, петухи?

²¹⁷ Перевод: «Я считаю, что они немного отличались от норвежских детских фильмов [...] было что-то в их послании зрителю, и в том, как они были представлены [...] Я чувствовала, что в них все было по-доброму, в очень трогательной форме. [...] Если отрицательные персонажи как-то страдали или получали возмездие, то это всегда было как будто заслужено, и при этом не очень жестоко [...] В конце оставалось ощущение: «да, в общем-то, это было справедливо.»»

Ну как? Ну сложно. Это для ребенка сложно. Там вот ладно Винни-Пух, он максимально по-детски. То есть он там «Ла, ла, ла, ла» там идет себе. Сова там умная. Но там все объясняется. Он для детей. А вот какие-то, возможно, мультики они не совсем детские. [...] А дети мне кажется, им просто весело из-за того, что там какие-то смешные персонажи, которые делают какую-нибудь глупую вещь. [...] Ребенку, 6–5 лет, ему нравятся цвета, песни, рифмы, что-то смешное.»

Участница И1, в целом равнодушная к советским мультфильмам, тем не менее, вспомнила Винни-Пуха, который для нее сейчас не является таким смешным, как раньше, поскольку она, по ее мнению, переросла его шутки. Однако сейчас Винни-Пух ассоциируется с хорошими воспоминаниями:

И1: ««Винни-Пуха» я, конечно, вспомнила. Как он на шарике летал. С Винни-Пухом хорошие отношения. [...] вот для меня он такой радостный, но чуть-чуть дурацкий мультик. [...] Я помню его голос. [...] не знаю, наверно, с одной стороны, он сейчас для меня не такой смешной, но, наверно, с какой-то стороны, тогда был чуть-чуть смешной, и поэтому я его помню с какой-то стороны. [...] Сейчас он не такой смешной, он просто хорошие воспоминания передает. [...] Я думаю, я просто переросла этот выбор фильмов. Имеется в виду – этих шуток.»

Респондент И7, в свою очередь, положительно относится к сюжету мультфильма «Ежик в тумане», к которому все остальные респонденты относятся отрицательно, считают его пугающим и полагают, что он может привести к детским травмам. И7 отметил, что в детстве этот мультфильм ему было некомфортно смотреть, а сейчас, напротив, он является одним из его любимых. Ему импонирует в том числе то, как создавался этот мультфильм и какие приемы применялись для достижения желаемых эффектов:

И7: ««Ежика в тумане» я помню, когда смотрел, не знаю, может, лет 5–7 было, и у меня было очень такое некомфортное чувство, тревожное появилось, когда я его в первый раз смотрел. И я его после этого несколько раз пересматривал, и с каждым разом теперь этот, ну, не проект, фильм, мне нравится больше и больше. Мне он кажется интересней и интересней. [...] то, как человек, который создавал сам мультфильм – мультипликатор, у него была специальная для того времени техника, как сделать так, чтобы был вот этот вот туман. То есть он брал маленькие тонкие кусочки бумаги или салфеток, и подносил их вручную поближе и подальше от камеры, чтобы они размывались и создавали эффект тумана. [...] сам вот конкретно этот мультфильм для меня интересен просто как [...] произведение искусства. Но, мне кажется, не слишком я сильно загибаю, когда так говорю, учитывая то, что у него как раз есть какие-то награды.»

В сюжетах советских мультфильмов для И8 не хватало динамики («экшена»). Он также отмечает, что советские мультфильмы больше подвергались цензуре, чем американские. Кроме того, И8 признался, что он побоялся бы показать своим норвежским друзьям мультфильм «Малыш и Карлсон». По его мнению, в мультфильме другой юмор, который не подходит для детей старше 7 лет. Разные мультфильмы подходят для людей разного возраста из-за разных юмористических приемов:

И8: «Наверно, Карлсон, потому что, не знаю, юмор чуть-чуть другой там. [...] Больше такой детский юмор, я не думаю, что он подходит к ребятам постарше 7 лет, например. Не знаю, разные мультфильмы, подходят другим возрастам. [...] Разный юмор.»

Несмотря на отсутствие четкого мнения относительно сюжетов советских мультфильмов, участница И6 сделала интересное замечание о восприятии советских мультфильмов в наше время, особенно в норвежской среде. По ее

словам, норвежцы в школах учат, что Советский Союз – это государство, заслуживающее критики. Это в свою очередь способствует тому, что норвежцы считают советские фильмы страшными, предполагают, что содержание в советских фильмах проходит жесткую цензуру, или же что эти фильмы вообще лучше не смотреть. Иб хотела бы, чтобы ее семья, которая в целом мало интересуется кино, больше времени уделяла советским мультфильмам, не только в целях изучения русского языка, но и для разнообразия ассортимента фильмов:

Иб: «For min del altså, så skulle jeg, når jeg tenker tilbake på det, ønsket at vi brukte mer tid på det, både for å lære russisk språk, men også for ja, mer variasjon i hva slags filmer vi har. Men æ tror kanskje at mange vil la være å gjøre det, fordi det høres litt skummelt med ja sovjetiske filmer. Folk er jo, æ vet ikke folk er kanskje mer kritiske til de. [...] Æ tror spesielt mange nordmenn har det litt sånn, man lærer om Sovjetunionen, så lærer man jo at det kanskje er kritikkverdige stat og alt det der. Og at man derfor tenker at det kan være mye innhold også i sovjetiske filmer som æ vet ikke enten burde sensureres eller at man ikke burde se på, men det er jo, alt det her er jo barnefilmer, så æ vet ikke om det hadde vært noe problem å se på det i dag egentlig.»²¹⁸

Отдельное внимание респонденты, в основном юноши (И5, И7, И9, и И10), а также участница И1, уделили мультфильму «Тайна третьей планеты». Респонденты отмечают такие позитивные черты, как присутствие динамики («экшена»), интересную космическую тематику и увлекательный сюжет, а также научную составляющую и хорошо нарисованные персонажи. Судя по всему, мультфильм привлек внимание, поскольку был рассчитан на более взрослую аудиторию – детей школьного возраста, и такого контента было меньше в арсенале советских мультфильмов, доступном нашим респондентам:

И5: ««Тайна третьей планеты» – у меня даже какие-то игрушки по этому фильму были. [...] Самое интересное было то, что он был про космос и про другие планеты. Такой более научный. Что они там путешествовали. Ну, как-то этот – фильм будущего – как про будущее. Персонажи, хорошо были нарисованы. [...] Сюжет был интересный. Жаль, что фильм про него не сняли.»

5.2.2. Персонажи

Типическое в ответах:

В целом, респонденты положительно относятся к персонажам в советских мультфильмах. Большинство респондентов отмечали исключительно позитивные черты персонажей, не упоминая никаких негативных черт. Респондентки Иб и И11, «нейтрально» оценившие содержание мультфильмов, не имели четкого мнения о персонажах, однако И11 отметила, что у персонажей была хорошая речь.

²¹⁸ Перевод: «Что касается меня, то, оглядываясь назад, я бы хотела, чтобы мы этому уделяли больше времени, и для того, чтобы выучить русский язык, и просто ради большего разнообразия фильмов, которые мы смотрим. Но я думаю, что многие этого не будут делать, потому что само выражение «советские мультфильмы» звучит немного пугающе. Люди, не знаю ... возможно, относятся к ним более критически. [...] Думаю, особенно у многих норвежцев сложилось такое мнение; когда изучаешь историю, узнаешь о Советском Союзе как о государстве, заслуживающем критики, и все такое. И поэтому думаешь, что и в содержании советских мультфильмов есть то, что, не знаю, должно подвергаться цензуре или чего не стоит смотреть. Но ведь все это – детские фильмы, поэтому я не знаю, было ли бы проблематично их смотреть в наше время.»

Респонденты подчеркивают, что в основном героями советских мультфильмов являются животные, в то время как героев-людей существенно меньше. К примеру, И5 отметил, что в мультфильмах было много волшебных зверей, а также других необычных персонажей, таких как «Мойдодыр». Он также добавил, что его пугала манера изображения некоторых отрицательных персонажей. Участница И4, в свою очередь, призналась, что ее настораживал образ Снежной королевы из мультфильма Л. Атаманова. Респондентка И11, не имеющая особого мнения относительно персонажей, все же отметила, что ее норвежские друзья не поняли бы советские мультфильмы, в которых есть несуществующие персонажи и говорящие вещи.

Респонденты также отметили, что герои были смешными: например, у персонажей была наигранная злость, что было смешно. Более того, практически все персонажи, даже отрицательные, обладают смешными чертами. Персонажи, по мнению респондентов, были красиво нарисованы и одеты. Некоторые респонденты также отмечали, что им нравилось, как герои говорили: всегда с интонацией, имели правильную и четкую речь без наличия жаргона, некоторые, например, Винни-Пух, обладали необычным голосом.

Ниже мы проиллюстрируем наиболее распространенные мнения респондентов о персонажах – весьма положительные – через самые интересные цитаты. Стоит отметить, что про персонажей, особенно про своих любимых, респонденты рассказывали, широко улыбаясь:

И2: «Чиполлино мне нравится. Там был Сеньор-Помидор. [...] Я помню очень героев, в принципе, если я смотрела. То есть я даже по именам помню, возможно, каких-то. [...] Возможно, они были какие-то смешные. Мне просто нравился вот этот Сеньор-Помидор, он помню так ходил: «Я Сеньор-Помидор». То есть настолько такая наигранная злость. Наверно, она была больше смешная, чем что вот он был злой. То есть более позитивно это воспринимаешь, как-то смешно.»

И5: «Большинство [персонажей] нравилось. Бывало, там, конечно, некоторые были страшенькие. В детстве пугали меня своей рисовкой – Баба Яга, например, Кощей. Это персонажи, которые злодеи. [...] Были странные персонажи. Они больше всего мне нравились своим видом, вариативностью, например, «Мойдодыр» и «Я, Водяной»²¹⁹. [...] Многие странные персонажи – вымышленные. Они как бы не пугали меня.»

Респондентам нравились или до сих пор нравятся те или иные персонажи прежде всего за их яркий характер. Респондент И5 даже завел кота, похожего на своего любимого героя – кота Матроскина из мультфильма «Трое из Простоквашино»:

И5: «[...] Из персонажей [...] я бы назвал кота Матроскина из Простоквашино. [...] У меня у самого дома есть кот. Может, он мне приглянулся из-за того, что после этого мультика я хотел иметь кота дома. Кстати, если присмотреться, он же был в мультике белый и серенький в полосочку. У меня, можно сказать, такой же.»

Для участницы И2 важен образ персонажей – протагонистов и антагонистов. Ей нравится, что персонажи, которые по задумке должны быть отрицательными, на самом деле совмещают в себе позитивные черты, например, Леший, Водяной и «Бабки-Ежки»:

²¹⁹ Имеется в виду Водяной – персонаж из мультфильма «Летучий корабль» (1979 г.).

И2: «Всегда нравился Водяной. Как он нарисован – несообразный [несуразный] какой-то. Непонятный какой-то, и по сути Водяной – это как бы такой негативный персонаж. Тем не менее, он помог главному герою. Он добрый. Хотя Водяной, Леший, Бабы-Ежки и вот это все у нас негативное. Но вот даже в этом мультике их сделали позитивными персонажами несмотря на то, что они должны быть негативными по логике вещей, когда мы слышим: «Баба Яга», «Водяной». [...] Карлсон по сути – негативный герой. Он учил мальчика гадостям, что можно бардачить [устраивать бардак, разводить беспорядок], пачкать, кушать конфеты, воровать плюшки. То есть он учил гадостям, но ты так воспринимал это в детстве позитивно: «А что, надо похулиганить!». Что-то вот, сама идея, как это подавалось, возможно, была интересной. Тебе же хотелось смотреть не отрываясь.»

Индивидуальное в ответах:

Интересно, что, в то время как всем респондентам нравился «Винни-Пух» как персонаж, участница И4 призналась, что в детстве и даже сейчас считает его очень некрасиво нарисованным, а в детстве он ее и вовсе раздражал:

И4, со смехом рассказывая о Винни-Пухе: «Æ husker at æ liksom kunne se på han når æ var liten, og æ tenkte at han var så stygg. Æ ble liksom så irritert av å se på han. Det er faktisk bare noen måneder siden så æ viste mine venninner sånn et bilde av han og var sånn «Se, se hvor fælt dem har tegnet ham» og at æ brukte å irritere meg over det når æ va liten. Den var veldig rar.»²²⁰

5.2.3. Эмоции

Типическое в ответах:

У всех респондентов, кроме И1 и И6, советские мультфильмы вызывают либо исключительно позитивные эмоции, либо некоторую эмоциональную привязанность (см. цитаты, приведенные ниже в данном разделе). Респонденты связывают советские мультфильмы с детством и хорошими воспоминаниями. Многие респонденты отметили, что после интервью у них появилось желание заново посмотреть советские мультфильмы. Так, участник И10 на вопрос, хотел ли бы он сейчас посмотреть какие-нибудь советские мультфильмы, ответил, что ему хотелось бы многие посмотреть и даже пересмотреть. И10 отметил, что во взрослом возрасте его мнение о мультфильмах, возможно, будет отличаться от его понимания в детстве. Кроме того, сейчас он может обратить внимание на другие аспекты и извлечь из фильмов для себя что-то новое:

И10: «После разговоров, да, множественных, захотелось, если честно, даже что-то пересмотреть. Потому, что были ситуации, когда я недавно пересматривал что-то, что я смотрел в детстве, например, даже если фильмы какие-то взять. И, ну, абсолютно по-другому понимал, что там происходит, и как бы у меня мнение там менялось о фильме, ну, или просто, что-то новое для себя взял.»

Участница И4, к примеру, призналась, что при просмотре советских мультфильмов и прослушивании песен из них, она чувствует себя ребенком, чувствует себя «дома» и ближе к русской культуре и русской составляющей своей идентичности (у И4 только мать русскоговорящая). Более того, эти мультфильмы вызывают ностальгию по тому времени, когда она вместе с мамой смотрела

²²⁰ Перевод: «Я помню, как я смотрела на него, когда была маленькой, и думала, что он очень уродливый. Я очень раздражалась, когда на него смотрела. На самом деле, всего пару месяцев назад я показала своим подругам изображение с ним, сказала: «Смотрите, как ужасно они его нарисовали!» и рассказала, что в детстве он меня очень раздражал. Он был очень странным.»

советские мультфильмы. Она добавила, что без советских мультфильмов ее детство было бы неполным:

И4: «Ofte når jeg hører dem, ok ikke bare sanger, men filmene også, fordi æ bruker ganske ofte å se på dem på nytt nå. Og da føler æ mæ som om æ var 5 år igjen og så på dem, føler meg liksom som et barn igjen, for jeg har enda tilknytting til dem [...] Det er så klart en nostalgi til da æ og mamma brukte å se på dem i lag, når æ var liten, men det er også, ja det med at æ føler meg mer hjemme på en måte. [...] Når æ ser de filmene så føler æ meg mye nærmere den russiske delen av meg på en måte. [...] Æ kommer nærmere den delen, og kulturen og sånt.²²¹»

И4 на вопрос рада ли она, что смотрела советские мультфильмы: «Det er eg veldig glad for. Æ føler at æ på en måte hadde manglet noe, hvis ho [mamma] ikke hadde vist meg dem.²²²»

Респондентка И2 на протяжении всего интервью о советских мультфильмах отвечала с улыбкой. Она отметила, что советские мультфильмы и песни к ним, которые она иногда напевает, вызывают исключительно позитивные эмоции, хорошее настроение, а некоторые мультфильмы даже хотелось смотреть не отрываясь:

И2: «Они мне нравятся до сих пор. Я даже посчитала нужным их показать своему молодому человеку. У меня есть просто мультики, которые мне нравятся, я напеваю песенки. Мне весело. [...] у меня есть крестник [...] ему два годика, я прихожу, и я там могу песенки петь, он смеется, ему весело от того, ну, насколько это позитивные эмоции доставляет ребенку.»

Как видно по приведенным цитатам, советские мультфильмы вызывали у некоторых респондентов чувство уюта, «дома» и безопасности, ассоциировались с детством и ностальгией. Эти высказывания отсылают к важному аспекту культурной преемственности между поколениями: молодое поколение, выросшее в ином историческом и культурном контексте, тем не менее в ряде случаев воспринимает мультфильмы, на которых выросли их родители, как «свои».

Индивидуальное в ответах:

Только у одного респондента (И1) советские мультфильмы связаны с негативными ассоциациями. У респондентки И6 советские мультфильмы не вызывают никаких эмоций²²³. Участница И11 в свою очередь призналась, что у нее нет эмоциональных привязок к советским мультфильмам. Однако, она отметила одного персонажа (Дядюшку Ау), восприятие которого поменялось с возрастом: в детстве он казался ей страшным, а сейчас, наоборот, кажется веселым:

²²¹ Перевод: «Часто, когда я их слышу – хорошо, не только песни, но и фильмы тоже, ведь я их сейчас довольно часто пересматриваю. И тогда я чувствую себя будто мне снова пять лет, и я смотрю их, и чувствую себя снова ребенком, потому что у меня все еще есть к ним привязанность. Это, конечно, ностальгия по тому времени, когда мы с мамой смотрели их вместе, когда я была маленькой, но также и то, что я чувствую себя более «дома». [...] Когда я смотрю эти мультфильмы, я в некотором роде чувствую себя ближе к своей русской стороне [...] Я становлюсь ближе к этой части себя, культуре и всему, что с ней связано.»

²²² Перевод: «Я этому очень рада. Я чувствую, что мне в некотором роде, чего-то не хватало бы, если бы она [мама] мне их не показывала.»

²²³ Как уже упоминалось ранее, участницы И1 и И6 в целом не увлекаются мультфильмами.

И11: «Когда мы смотрели «Дядюшку Ау», нам всегда казалось, что он какой-то страшный. [...] И когда мы сейчас вспоминаем, [...] он такой, ну, маленький гномик, можно и так сказать. [...] сейчас, во всяком случае, я считаю, что он не страшный, а наоборот, смешной. А так, да, нет эмоциональных этих... не очень.»

5.2.4. Поучительность

Типическое в ответах:

Девять респондентов (все, кроме И6, И7 и И12) отметили, что в советских мультфильмах присутствует поучительность. По мнению респондентов, мультфильмы учат следующему:

- Взаимодействию с людьми: лучше понимать поступки людей, дружбе и уважению, взаимопомощи, как себя вести, прощать, эмпатии, т.е. переживать за персонажей.
- Развивать память: например, помогают лучше запоминать песни, стихотворения.
- Новому взгляду на мир: открывают новое мышление.
- Положительным качествам человека: быть добрым, не быть ленивым и жадным, быть чистоплотным, быть доброжелательным.
- Ценить все, что дают родители, и все, что имеешь.

И11 о поучительности в советских мультфильмах: «В некоторых мультфильмах, ну, можно сказать, во всех мультфильмах, было то, что, во всяком случае, я выучила, то, что надо быть всегда добрым [...] «Мойдодыр» – то, что чистоплотным надо быть, [...] помогать друг другу, доброжелательным быть. То, что надо быть... ценить то, что, к примеру, тебе дают, да? Ну, то, что, например, тебе родители делают. Надо все ценить.»

И5: «[...] Еще они в мультфильмах показывали правильные поступки. [...] Многие персонажи помогали другим персонажам в советских мультфильмах. Плюс они были вежливыми, благодарили за помощь.»

Мнение И9 несколько отличается от приведенных выше. По его словам, мультфильмы воздействуют на подсознательном уровне. В качестве примера он отметил, что они помогают усвоить нормы общения со старшими, а также понять ценность доброты и уважения. И9 также подчеркнул, что советские мультфильмы передают те же ценности, которые он приобрел благодаря русской культуре, детскому саду и школе:

И9: «Я думаю, что как бы может подсознательно да, научили, вот. [...] Например, как, не знаю, уважать человека или как, не знаю, подходить к незнакомцам или как подходить к взрослым там, к старшим. [...] То, что меня научили мультики, – то же самое, что меня научила русская культура и, не знаю, там русский детский садик, школа русская. [...] Мультфильмы учили, не знаю, вот этой доброте, уважению, но, если просто сказать, что научили меня именно этому или этому, я не смогу сказать, это очень трудно.»

Индивидуальное в ответах:

В данном разделе в стороне от общего мнения находятся респонденты И6, И7 и И12, мнение которых относительно присутствия поучительности в мультфильмах

было оценено как «50/50» и «не присутствует». И12 не считает, что есть какие-то ситуации в мультфильмах, которые его чему-то научили. И7 считает, что едва ли в советских мультфильмах присутствует поучительность, но и говорить, что она не присутствует, по его словам, тоже неверно. По его мнению, мультфильмы формируют людей на подсознательном уровне, как и «детские травмы». В том, что мультфильмы учат на подсознательном уровне, мнение И7 совпадает с мнением И9 и И6. Отличие заключается в том, что И6 не использует напрямую слово *подсознание*, как это делают И7 и И9. Ниже приведены ответы И6 и И7 на вопрос, научили ли их чему-то советские мультфильмы:

И6: «Æ har kanskje lært mer enn æ forstår av det. Fordi man ser jo bare på det, eller i hvert fall for min del så har jeg bare sett på det som underholdning, men så har man jo sikkert lært mange ting [...], som æ ikke innser selv egentlig fra det.»²²⁴

И7: «Мне кажется, вряд ли. Но в то же время говорить «нет» тоже неверно, потому что я не могу знать на 100 процентов. Потому, что когда ты мелкий, когда ты ребенок, у тебя любая частичка информации на тебя влияет очень сильно, потому что у тебя очень быстро развивается мозг и впитывает абсолютно все, что в него положить. И это закладывает как бы характер практически на всю жизнь. Из-за этого такие вещи, как детские травмы, потом переносятся на людей, которые... им может быть 30–40 лет, а что произошло с ними в детстве, до сих пор сильно ломает им психику. Вот, следовательно, и это все происходит обычно на подсознательном уровне. [...] Следовательно, из-за этого я не могу сказать на 100 процентов, что на меня не влияли советские мультфильмы, на мою философию по жизни, или то, что они меня ничему не учили [...] То есть, скорее, они мне что-то дали, они у меня в голове что-то поменяли, но что именно, сказать у меня просто нету шансов, даже пытаться догадаться.»

5.2.5. Советская культура

В конце этого раздела мы подведем итог, как содержание советских мультфильмов воспринимается респондентами, в частности, каким образом они представляют для участников утраченный или даже неизвестный мир. Хотя большинство участников распознали в мультфильмах элементы «советской культуры» (наряду с моральным посланием), в интервью они либо не останавливались на этой теме подробно, либо не обладали достаточными историческими знаниями, чтобы ясно вербализовать то, что именно они понимают под «советской культурой».

Типичское в ответах:

Большинство респондентов (9 из 12) выразили четкую уверенность, что мультфильмы отражают культуру. Из них некоторые респонденты отметили, что мультфильмы отражают культуру времени, в котором они были сделаны, не утверждая, что они отражают именно советскую культуру. В понятие «отражение времени» респонденты включали следующие реалии: как выглядели автомобили, одежда, жилье и его атрибуты в то время (например, печка, дача, деревянный дом) и как было устроено общество: например, как люди относились друг к другу, что ели, как вели себя в гостях, что было принято приносить с собой в качестве

²²⁴ Перевод: «Возможно, я выучила больше, чем осознаю. Помочу что человек ведь смотрит на это, или, по крайней мере, я смотрела на них лишь как на развлечение, но, наверняка, я научилась многим вещам [...], которых даже не осознаю.»

подарка, когда идешь в гости, какие раньше были праздники. Отдельные мультфильмы, по словам респондентов, даже отражали политическую ситуацию в стране. Такие комментарии относились к пост-советским мультфильмам, таким как «Незнайка на луне» (1997–1999):

И7: «Потому, что это [советские мультфильмы] тоже часть истории и часть культуры, хоть и не такая как, допустим, преподают в школах. Это другое звено культуры, я бы сказал. [...] Мультфильм «Незнайка на луне» – это, конечно, не советский мультфильм, он вышел, кажется, в конце 90-х или где-то в 90-х, но сам весь мультфильм, если на него посмотреть и посмотреть просто на политическую ситуацию в стране, то можно увидеть много таких разных подколов, много отсылок к самой ситуации [...] к тому, что происходило на то время.»

Респонденты И7 и И9 полагают, что иностранцы не поймут советские мультфильмы из-за культурного аспекта, заложенного в них:

И7: «[...] насколько сложно бывает иногда объяснить сюжет некоторых мультфильмов, если просто их надо объяснить. Например, «Чебурашка», то есть по факту какое-то то ли плюшевое, то ли какая-то обезьяна, какое-то маленькое существо, про которое ничего не известно, кроме того, что его нашли в коробке с апельсинами. А нашел его крокодил, который работает в зоопарке, даже не живет в зоопарке [...] почему-то. [...] или даже «Домовенок Кузя», чтобы объяснять мультфильм «Домовенок Кузя» надо сначала объяснить иностранцам славянское понятие такого феномена как *домовой*. Это уже надо углубляться в славянскую мифологию.»

И9: «Думаю, что им бы не понравились бы. [...] Много шуток, они не поняли бы просто. То есть именно не шуток, но вот именно, да, и шуток, и, может быть, этих культурных устоев, вот которые мы понимаем, которые мы можем типа *relatere til* [с которыми мы себя ассоциируем], которые они просто не поймут. Будут просто думать: «ой, странно, [...] зачем так делать [...]», а мы говорим: «а, это у нас в России так нормально, так делают». Они вот, мне кажется, именно не поймут.»

Индивидуальное в ответах:

Участница И4 не могла с уверенностью сказать, отражают ли мультфильмы советскую культуру, но для нее они представляют собой тот набор фильмов, на которых выросли ее мать и тетя:

И4: «Det er kanskje litt feil å si. Kanskje, altså, sånn i mine øyner så sier jo det veldig mye til meg om så klart hva barna vokste opp på. [...] jeg tror det handler noe om liksom tiden de ble lagt i, og sånt. [...] Jeg e litt usikker på den. Kanskje på noen måter, men tror det er feil å si at det gjenspeiler hele kulturen totalt, men æ tror at de filmene var et resultat av hvordan det var da, og jeg tror at man kan se det, at dem ikke lager akkurat sånne type filmer lenger.²²⁵»

Респондент И8 сперва отметил, что мультфильмы не отражают советскую культуру, однако, по его словам, они отражают, например, русскую кухню, что делает советские мультфильмы легко узнаваемыми:

И8: «Нет, я бы не сказал так. Ну, раз я вырос с некоторыми русскими мультфильмами, я могу легко их распознать, если я увижу какие-то кадры: «Да, это похоже на советские фильмы». Но я бы не сказал, что они отражают культуру прямо. Не знаю, больше всего персонажей в мультфильмах – они просто животные. Может быть, в некоторых кадрах типа, не знаю, показывается какая-то еда,

²²⁵ Перевод: «Так, возможно, неправильно говорить. Может быть... то есть, на мой взгляд, это, конечно, много говорит о том, на чем выросли дети. [...] Я думаю, речь идет о том, в каком времени они [мультфильмы] были созданы и так далее. [...] Я не уверена насчет этого. Возможно, в каком-то смысле, но я думаю, что неправильно говорить, что они отражают всю культуру в целом, я думаю, что эти [мульт]фильмы – результат той эпохи, и это видно: таких [мульт]фильмов больше не создают.»

кузина [кухня], например, русская, например, борщ. Вот, могу сказать. И тогда легко распознать, что «да, русский фильм»»

Как видно по ответам респондентов И4 и И8, не все респонденты видят в анализируемых мультфильмах проявление духовной культуры, или советское культурное наследие. Более того, респонденты часто не проводят границы между советским и российским. Удаленное во времени и пространстве воспринимается в таком случае как просто удаленное, принадлежащее другой социальной среде.

6. Основные выводы

Целью данного исследования было изучить восприятие советских мультфильмов русскоговорящей молодежью в Норвегии и проследить, как на это восприятие влияют художественные особенности мультфильмов (визуализация, звуковое сопровождение и содержательное наполнение), а также характеристики самих респондентов, такие как их пол, возраст и языковая среда.

1. Характеристики мультфильмов

Результаты интервью показали, что на восприятие советских мультфильмов русскоговорящими респондентами действительно влияют визуализация, звуковое сопровождение и содержательное наполнение, однако влияние отдельных характеристик проявляется в разной степени. Основная выявленная тенденция заключается в том, что визуальная составляющая советских мультфильмов воспринимается как более устаревшая по сравнению с их содержанием.

Форма. В качестве главных недостатков визуализации были названы темные тона и краски, что особенно характерно для кукольных и пластилиновых мультфильмов, и отсутствие динамики («экшена») в сюжете и движениях. Среди положительных замечаний респондентам импонируют рисованные мультфильмы, в частности использование цветовой палитры для выделения важных моментов. Отдельные индивиды, которые увлекаются искусством и интересуются мультфильмами, показали способность воспринимать и устаревшую эстетику: они с интересом оценивали визуализацию в советских мультфильмах. Кукольные и пластилиновые мультфильмы положительно оценивались лишь несколькими респондентами, которым нравится именно эта форма визуализации. Несмотря на высокий уровень развития кукольной мультипликации в плане передачи движений, респонденты не оценивали эту технику положительно. Они воспринимали кукольные мультфильмы как страшные, отдельные респонденты отметили, что в этих мультфильмах у персонажей отсутствует плавность движений, а артикуляция не совпадает с озвучкой.

Следует, однако, отметить, что советские мультфильмы были технически «устаревшими» уже в тот период, когда респонденты смотрели их в детстве. Вероятно, аналогичное отношение возникло бы и к визуальному оформлению «старых» западных детских мультфильмов, поскольку респондентам, по всей видимости, ближе компьютерная графика, на которой они выросли. При этом важно учитывать, что, сравнивая советские мультфильмы с западными

(диснеевскими, а в отдельных случаях – восточными аниме и норвежскими мультфильмами), респонденты в основном сопоставляли произведения, созданные с разницей примерно в сорок – пятьдесят лет, не всегда осознавая этот факт. Нельзя упускать из виду, что такая временная дистанция неизбежно влечет за собой существенные различия в технических возможностях, а также в эстетических и педагогических предпочтениях разных эпох.

Большинство респондентов оценили музыку и актерские голоса, использованные в советских мультфильмах, как сильную сторону их выразительности. Музыкальные вставки воспринимались как смыслообразующие и эмоционально насыщенные, помогавшие лучше понять сюжет. Голоса персонажей характеризовались как четкие, выразительные и соответствующие характерам героев. Многие мелодии и песни запомнились своей теплотой, мелодичностью и эмоциональным воздействием, нередко вызывая у зрителей ностальгические чувства. Тем не менее, встречались и критические замечания. Некоторые зрители находили музыку повторяющейся и утомительной, а отдельные голоса – раздражающими (например, голос Зайца из «Ну, погоди!»). Особое место занимает использование цитат и крылатых выражений из советских мультфильмов, ставших частью повседневной речи. Так, строка из «Винни-Пуха» – «Кто ходит в гости по утрам, тот поступает мудро» – регулярно воспроизводится респондентами, а рассуждение кота Матроскина о том, как следует есть бутерброд, нередко приводится как пример практичного, житейского совета.

Содержание и воздействие. В содержательном наполнении респонденты оценили в первую очередь героев и их характер, а также поучительность, заложенную в каждый советский мультфильм. Респонденты отмечали, что сюжеты советских мультфильмов часто отличаются добротой, юмором, поучительностью и смысловой насыщенностью. Они отражают советские и русские традиции, включают разнообразных персонажей-животных, а также элементы волшебства и справедливости, где слабый герой побеждает сильного. Кроме того, присутствие мифических персонажей, таких как Баба-Яга и Кощей, показывает, что основой советских мультфильмов нередко были сказки и фольклор. Вместе с тем некоторые респонденты указывали на трудности восприятия сюжета: отдельные произведения казались ориентированными, скорее, на взрослую аудиторию, не всегда были динамичными и могли показаться непонятными иностранному зрителю.

Герои советских мультфильмов характеризуются как добрые, запоминающиеся и часто необычные – животные, магические существа и говорящие предметы. Положительно оценивались логичность их действий, выразительность речи и наличие интонаций, а также общий позитивный настрой даже у отрицательных персонажей. В то же время некоторые персонажи воспринимались как пугающие или неприятные, что подчеркивает индивидуальные различия в восприятии.

Советские мультфильмы вызывали у многих респондентов чувство уюта, «дома» и безопасности, а также ассоциировались с детством и ностальгией. В этом контексте представляются актуальными исследования ностальгии и функции культуры как основы формирования сообщества (см., например, *Boym 2001; Bell 2003; Oushakine 2007*). Мы планируем посвятить этим вопросам

отдельную статью, в которой проблематика самоидентификации будет рассмотрена более подробно.

С возрастом восприятие мультфильмов менялось: респонденты начинали обращать внимание на те детали, которые ранее оставались незамеченными. Как правило, респонденты отмечали воспитательный характер советских мультфильмов. По их мнению, такие произведения не только развлекают, но и формируют личность зрителя, передавая модели поведения и ценности как на осознанном, так и на подсознательном уровне.

Интерес к советским мультфильмам у многих респондентов пропал в юности, тем не менее многие из них проявили интерес к мультфильму «Тайна третьей планеты», отмечая оригинальность сюжета. Судя по всему, советская мультипликация была прежде всего ориентирована на детскую аудиторию, а не на подростков, поэтому мультфильмы вроде «Тайна третьей планеты» заметно выделяются на общем фоне.

Все вышесказанное подтверждает вывод Д. Макфадьена о том, что советские мультфильмы являются произведениями искусства и сохраняют свою актуальность за пределами советской реальности. Интересно, что респонденты не всегда осознают, что речь идет об особой «советской культуре». Отметку «советское» чаще всего получает материальная культура, представленная в мультфильмах, например различные советские атрибуты: особая одежда, устройство быта и т.п. Моральные установки участники воспринимают, скорее, как универсальные (или «русские»), чем как строго «советские», и здесь респонденты часто не проводят четкой границы между советским и российским.

2. Характеристики респондентов

Влияние пола, возраста и наличия русскоговорящих родителей на восприятие советских мультфильмов в целом не просматривается. Однако в отношении возраста, можно сказать, что респонденты постарше демонстрировали более аналитический подход к ответам на задаваемые вопросы, обдумывали не только характеристики мультфильмов, но и их влияние на зрителей. Возможное влияние пола наблюдалось в отношении формы советских мультфильмов: респонденты мужского пола в целом более позитивно оценивали визуальную форму, чем респонденты женского пола. Выборка респондентов недостаточно велика, чтобы однозначно утверждать наличие такой закономерности, однако в дальнейшем представляется целесообразным проверить, существует ли тенденция, согласно которой советская визуализация больше нравится мальчикам, чем девочкам.

Можно предположить, что более решающими факторами, чем пол респондентов и количество русскоговорящих родителей, являются другие обстоятельства, например, длительность проживания семьи в Норвегии, возраст, в котором респонденты впервые смотрели мультфильмы, а также индивидуальные особенности, не рассматриваемые в исследовании.

Выявленные в ходе настоящего исследования тенденции могут стать основой для дальнейшего количественного анализа, направленного на более точное определение особенностей восприятия зрителями отдельных характеристик

советских мультфильмов. Настоящее исследование предоставляет интересную отправную точку для изучения роли детской культуры в контексте миграции и самоидентификации. В перспективе мы планируем более детально изучить взаимосвязь между самоидентификацией русскоязычной молодежи и подростков (в частности, тем, какой язык они считают доминирующим и с какой культурной общностью – русской или норвежской – они себя отождествляют) и их восприятием советских мультфильмов. Кроме того, представляется важным рассмотреть, каким образом миграционные процессы и воспитательные стратегии родителей влияют на сохранение или утрату элементов родной культуры в новой стране проживания.

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8. Приложения

Приложение 1: Интервью-гайд на русском языке

Вторая часть – вопросы про советскую мультипликацию:

№	Вопросы	Варианты ответов и вопросов
1.	Смотрели ли Вы в детстве советские/русские мультфильмы?	
2.	Кто Вам показывал эти мультфильмы?	Не помните, как это обычно происходило: Вам просто включали мультфильмы и уходили, или человек, который их включал, сидел рядом и смотрел их вместе с Вами? Может быть, он что-то комментировал или рассказывал во время просмотра?
3.	Когда чаще всего Вы смотрели мультфильмы? Это было связано с какими-то праздниками?	Например, перед Новым годом, когда вся семья собиралась вместе; каждый день; или как особый ритуал во время пребывания в России или другой русскоязычной стране: например, как времяпрепровождение с мамой или бабушкой.
4.	Есть ли какие-нибудь мультфильмы, которые Вам особенно запомнились или нравились в детстве? Можете назвать хотя бы три из них?	
5.	Просили ли Вы своих родителей/бабушек/дедушек включить Вам эти мультфильмы еще раз? У Вас было желание их пересмотреть?	
6.	Почему Вам нравились именно эти мультфильмы? Отличались ли они чем-то от других? Что Вам в них особенно нравилось?	Например, музыкой, сюжетом, манерой речи персонажей или самими героями. Если Вам нравилось их визуальное оформление, то что именно? Например, забавные или выразительные образы, красивые картинки, особенности анимации, интересные голоса персонажей или сюжет.
7.	Есть ли мультипликационные герои, которые Вам особенно нравились?	Например, Винни-Пух или Карлсон.
8.	Вспоминаете ли Вы какие-нибудь песни или музыку из мультфильмов, и поете ли их сами? Бывает ли так, что Вы слышите песню из советского мультфильма, и у Вас поднимается настроение? Есть ли у Вас какие-либо эмоциональные ассоциации с мультфильмами?	Например, песенка из «Мамонтенка»: «Пусть мама услышит, пусть мама придет, пусть мама меня непременно найдет, ведь так не бывает на свете, чтоб были потеряны дети».

9.	Помогал ли просмотр советских или русских мультфильмов в изучении русского языка? А чему еще они могли Вас научить? Есть ли какая-либо сцена или ситуация из мультфильма, которую Вы запомнили и которая чему-то Вас научила?	Например, как вести себя в той или иной ситуации.
10.	А сейчас Вы смотрите советские мультфильмы?	«Нет»: есть ли у Вас желание сейчас посмотреть советский мультфильм? Какой мультфильм Вы бы сейчас посмотрели? «Да»: что Вас сейчас привлекает в советских мультфильмах? Из-за чего Вы выбираете советские мультфильмы для просмотра?
11.	Сейчас у многих мультфильмов есть английские субтитры. Есть ли какой-нибудь мультфильм, который Вы хотели бы показать своим норвежским друзьям? Почему именно этот или эти мультфильмы?	«Да»: Если да, есть ли мультфильм, который Вы хотели бы показать друзьям, но опасаетесь, что они его не поймут?
12.	Как Вы считаете, интересно ли сейчас смотреть советские мультфильмы? Когда у Вас будут дети, Вы будете им показывать советские мультфильмы? Почему?	
13.	Если сравнить советские и западные мультфильмы, они чем-нибудь отличаются?	Например, «Том и Джерри» и «Ну, погоди!».
14.	Вы рады, что смотрели эти мультфильмы, или это для Вас не имеет особого значения?	
15.	Как Вы сейчас смотрите на советские мультфильмы, которые назвали ранее? Остались ли они Вашими любимыми? Привлекают ли Вас те же факторы, что и раньше, или с возрастом Ваше восприятие изменилось?	
16.	Есть ли что-то еще, чем Вы хотели бы поделиться?	

Приложение 2: Кадры из советских мультфильмов

Мойдодыр
(рисованный, 1954 г.)



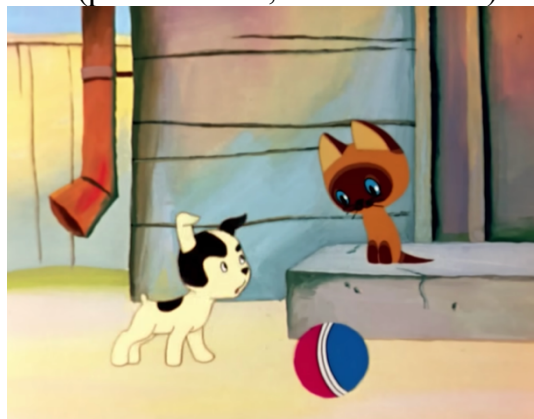
Мешок яблок
(рисованный, 1974 г.)



Бременские музыканты
(рисованный, 1969 г.)



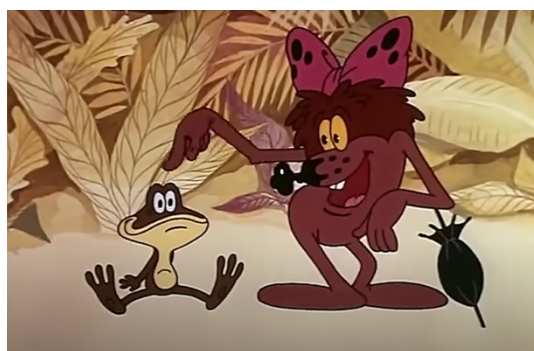
Котенок по имени Гав
(рисованный, 1976–1982 гг.)



Летучий корабль
(рисованный, 1979 г.)



Подарок для слона
(рисованный, 1984 г.)



Ну, погоди!
(рисованный, 1969–2006 гг.)



Трое из Простоквашино
(рисованный, 1978 г.)



Шапокляк
(кукольный, 1974 г.)



Мама для мамонтенка
(рисованный, 1981 г.)



Ежик в тумане
(использованы разные техники, 1975 г.)

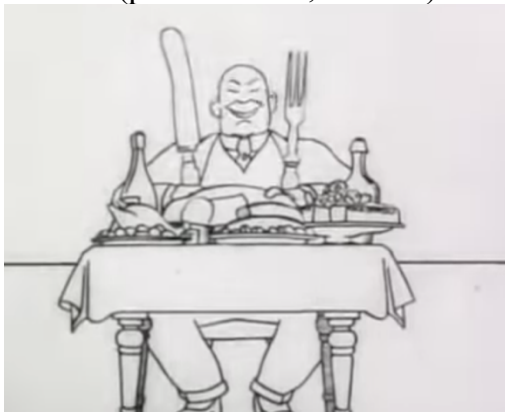


Чиполлино
(рисованный, 1961 г.)

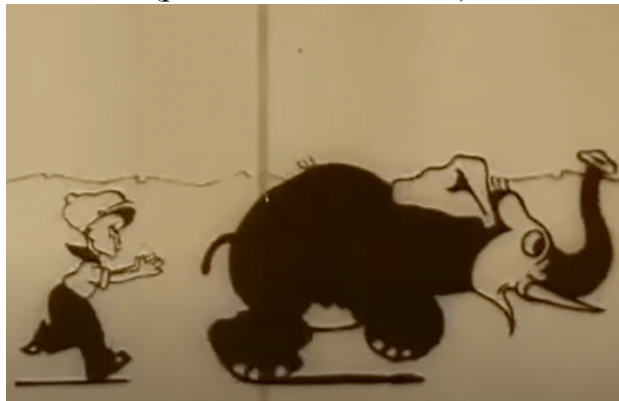


Приложение 3: Кадры советских мультфильмов сделанных с помощью разных техник

Советские игрушки
(рисованный, 1924 г.)



Сенька Африканец
(рисованный, 1927 г.)



Сладкий пирог
(рисованный, 1937 г.)



Муха-Цокотуха
(рисованный, 1941 г.)



Сказка о царе Салтане
(рисованный, 1943 г.)



Снеговик-почтовик
(рисованный, 1955 г.)



Снежная королева
(рисованный, 1957 г.)



Падал прошлогодний снег
(пластилиновый, 1983 г.)



Винни-Пух
(рисованный, 1969–1972 гг.)



Волк и теленок
(кукольный, 1984 г.)



Пластилиновая ворона
(пластилиновый, 1981 г.)



Тайна третьей планеты
(рисованный, 1981 г.)



Пушкин и Лермонтов – вечные спутники

Эрик Эгеберг

«Как современная обоим поэтам критика (прежде всего – в лице Белинского), так и позднейшая историко-литературная наука тесно связали их имена. И для этого были все основания: недаром в Лермонтове видели продолжателя дела Пушкина, его приемника и наследника,» пишет Андрей Федоров²²⁶). С этим общим мнением насчет «всех оснований» нетрудно согласиться, но в то же время не легко определить те места, в которых продолжатель дела отличается от его зачинателя. Далее, нужно установить, о каком именно «деле» здесь идет речь – общественно-политическом или литературно-эстетическом? По обеим линиям проведены исследования, выявившие целый ряд как схожестей, так и различий этих поэтов. (О Пушкине и Лермонтове как прозаиках не будет идти речь.)

Таким образом, уже установлено довольно устойчивое мнение о соотношении Пушкина и Лермонтова, но остается проблема педагогического порядка. Дело в том, что опыт показывает, что видеть различия их поэзии и формулировать свой взгляд на них представляет из себя трудности не только для начинающих студентов, но и для их преподавателя. Причин к этому несколько, но главная проблема та, что обилие схожестей затеняет отличия, которых тоже много, хотя менее ярких и вследствие этого грозящих тонуть в общем поэтическом словаре и равномерно повторяющемся потоке четырехстопных ямбов. Конечно, можно составлять подбор стихов обоих поэтов, показывающий отличия на разных уровнях, т. е. что-то наподобие популярного жанра «Достоевский и Толстой». В самом деле, сопоставление творчества поэтов имеет свои преимущества перед тем же приемом в области художественной прозы, потому что одно стихотворение в сжатом виде может показать больше, чем сотни страниц прозы, хотя не следует забывать, что поэзия и проза выявляют разные стороны данного автора.

Но какую пару стихотворений брать для сравнения наших двух поэтов? Самый близкий ответ гласит: «Пророк», тему которого можно проследить от Пушкина (или даже от Кюхельбекера) не только до Лермонтова, но и через всю русскую лирику до Евтушенко (и, может быть, еще дальше). Другой, менее очевидной, парой подходящих произведений являются «Арион» Пушкина и «Парус» Лермонтова, сюжеты которых разны, но многие мотивы общи: плавание, буря, мятеж. Оба стихотворения в свое время входили в список произведений, разбор которых требовался от студентов.

Особенностью «Ариона» Пушкина является его двуликость: одно лицо обращено к далекой давности, к античной мифе об Арионе, другое к более близкому прошлому – к безуспешному восстанию декабристов (в языке того времени: мятеж). Наличие двух планов может усложнять анализ «Ариона», но маскировка так прозрачна, что во всех поворотах проглядывается лицо Пушкина.

²²⁶ А. В. Федоров. Лермонтов и литература его времени. Л. 1967. Стр. 92.

А что касается «Паруса» Лермонтова, то он был написан почти одновременно со стихотворением «Челнок» (август 1832 г.), которое, будь оно таким же хрестоматийным как «Парус», могло бы занять его место в предлагаемом здесь сопоставлении с «Арионом».

АРИОН

Нас было много на челне; // Иные парус напрягали, // Другие дружно упирали // В глубь мощны
веслы. В тишине // На руль склонясь, наш кормщик умный // В молчанье правил грузный челн;
// А я — беспечной веры полн, — // Пловцам я пел... Вдруг лоно волн // Измял с налету вихорь
шумный... // Погиб и кормщик и пловец! — // Лишь я, таинственный певец, // На берег выброшен
грозою, // Я гимны прежние пою // И ризу влажную мою // Сушу на солнце под скалою

ПАРУС

Белеет парус одинокой // В тумане моря голубом! // Что ищет он в стране далекой? // Что кинул
он в краю родном? // ...Играют волны — ветер свищет, // И мачта гнется и скрипит... // Увы! Он
счастья не ищет // И не от счастья бежит! // Под ним струя светлей лазури, // Над ним луч солнца
золотой...А он, мятежный, просит бури, // Как будто в бурях есть покой.

Вместо того, чтобы обсуждать, какие выводы можно делать на основе сравнения этих стихотворений, посмотрим, что скажет знаменитый датский критик Георг Брандес о творчестве и личности их авторов. Брандес не владел русским языком, свои петербургские доклады (1867 г.) он читал по-французски. Но читать русские произведения он мог: прозу в датском переводе, поэзию в немецком переложении Боденштедта.

Вот мнение Брандеса о Пушкине: «Как дух Пушкин сильно отстаёт от Байрона, у которого никакая усталость от жизни не изнуряла пылающего восторга свободы, который, став его жизнью, вел его к смерти, тогда как вера в свободу юного Пушкина при переходе к возмужалости переменилась на грубое восхваление отечества.»²²⁷) О Лермонтове же: «И в то же время он пишет ту массу лирических стихов, в которых гордая душа без обиняков проявляет свою непокорность. Пушкин мог поддаваться, позволять себе соблазняться, торговаться своим убеждением, делаться грубым патриотом – а он никогда!»²²⁸.

Суждения датского критика бесспорно односторонни, по мнению многих даже несправедливы, особенно в отношении Пушкина. Но можно ли безоговорочно отрицать, что в словах Брандеса содержится доля, даже немалая, правды? Обстоятельный ответ на такой вопрос требует чтения сотен страниц, но толчком ко чтению и к раздумьям может служить хорошо обдуманый подбор стихотворений для сопоставления. В творчестве Пушкина и Лермонтова имеется много таких произведений, являющихся сокровищем для педагога. В литературоведческой статье следовало бы – как в книге Андрея Федорова – проследить тему до конца, а в работе с педагогической целью лучше поручать дискуссию студентам.

²²⁷ Georg Brandes. Samlede Skrifter. T. 10. Kjøbenhavn 1902. Стр. 465.

²²⁸ Там же, стр. 468.

Rock, Roots, Relativity, and ‘Russianness’: Dissecting an Onion

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–“But,” maintains the research interviewer, “What, beyond the lyrics, are the *Russian* qualities of *russkiy rok*?”
–“Dunno,” replies the Russian rock legend, “Bad drumming?”

Twenty years ago, the research question concerning ‘Russian’ musical features in my study of Leningrad rock of the mid 1980s (2005) was left unanswered. In hindsight, perhaps that was the best possible outcome. In any case, nothing had shown up in the qualitative interviews or musical analyses conducted. Perhaps the selected research material was from too early a stage of musical development to show up any potential national musical traits? Granted, to non-Russian respondents, the songs sounded different from their respective Western subgenres, but was this mere codal interference, or did they in any small way reflect an identifiable Russian rock sound?

The Russian respondents interviewed²²⁹ –musicians, band managers, sound producers, and music journalists of the era– stuck stubbornly to a simple binary: words and topics were Russian, the music Western (or global). How could there be any musical ‘Russianness’, argued former Akvarium bass player Mikhail Feinshtein-Vasiliev (1953-2013), when Russia never had any folk music to deliver it? Soviet pseudo-folklore destroyed the last possibilities for any authentic Russian folk music. Russian pop or ‘restaurant music’, he stated, were instead derivatives of Jewish and Roma music and made for drinking and dancing. Rock producer Andrei Tropillo (1951-2024), a profound influence on the sound and aesthetics of early Leningrad rock, wholeheartedly agreed. Of course, he admitted, the topics of Russian rock songs might be different. Akvarium’s Boris Grebeshchikov sang about hanging on to his roots in order to remain standing, but his music suggested those roots connected to Celtic or Buddhist traditions more than any Russian one. Certain technicalities, Tropillo agreed, such as lead vocals mixed up-front and given priority over rhythm instruments, are audible, but beyond that – nothing. Other respondents tied ‘Russianness’ to provincial restaurant music in a similar manner. In contrast, rock was seen as an urban, intellectually-aspiring genre, fuelled musically by a global aesthetics.

Only when the conversation moved on from *russkiy rok* of the 1980s to punk in the 1990s and 2000s, did respondents actively apply notions of ‘Russianness’, albeit on the level of performer and audience attitudes, not music as such. Composer and musician Sergei Kurëkhin (1954-96) famously declared only two things distinguish any European form of culture from its corresponding Russian form: foulness and madness. Tropillo maintained in our interview that Russian rock indulged in the spirit of punk to 99%.

²²⁹ In 2001-2002, in addition to Vasilev and Tropillo, qualitative research interviews were conducted with: Andrei Burlaka (b. 1955), Mikhail Borzykin (b. 1962), Marianna Tsui (1959-2005), Nikolai Vasin (1945-2018), Aleksandr Startsev (1958-2006), Andrei Kagadeev (b. 1961) and Nikolai Kopeikin (b. 1966), Andrei ‘Villi’ Usov (b. 1950).

Notably, as demonstrated in our study of punk in Russia (Pilkington et al, 2013): it is not first and foremost the generic conventions of punk rock music, but its tendencies towards celebratory self-debasement that appear to resonate with Russian musicians and audiences. In that study, we were again left with very few objectively ‘Russian’ musical traits, but plenty of subjective cases identifying foulness, madness, jesting, uselessness, moronicness, drinking, and dancing as markers of ‘Russianness’.

Could we, if only for the sake of stubbornness, press on and make a case for musical ‘Russianness’ by hand-picking artists commonly celebrated as the most profoundly ‘Russian’? Again, we are immediately faced with the (written) word as the main signifier of national cultural identity. In the case of Aleksandr Bashlachev (1960-88), his musical influences from bard song –the vigorous rhythmic use of a seven-string guitar– are perhaps better described as delinquent ‘Sovietness’. In the case of Dmitriy Reviakin (b. 1964), his poetic pseudo-archaisms are influenced by faux-shamanism and secondary indigenous derivatives to such an extent, that even his lyrics –despite their author’s extreme nationalist sympathies– challenge the dominant concepts of ‘Russianness’ themselves. From all this, the most solid finding that emerges is that cultural ‘Russianness’ is very much an onion: It consists of layer upon layer of alluring assumptions, but has no core.

Looking for national traits in a musical form may at first glance seem innocent enough, but clearly, the concept of ‘Russianness’ represents a deviation far from the innocent. It proposes that subjects of the largest land empire on the planet, formed by seven centuries of almost continuous military expansion, and counting more than a hundred colonised peoples, can somehow be united by a single set of narrow characteristics flavoured by Greater Muscovy. How could serious humanistic research rely on a concept so obviously false? And yet, fuelled by the elder Dostoevsky and other Russian proponents of mystical Slavophile pseudo-philosophy, Slavonic studies have been rehearsing and repeating this exercise for so many decades, we have long since stopped asking ourselves what the emperor is wearing. Virtually everyone active in the field of Western Slavonic studies since before the turn of the millennium have at some point or other –more or less actively or openly– applied or adhered to clichéd concepts from ‘the Russian soul,’ via ‘the Russian idea,’ to ‘the great and mighty Russian language’. One need not proceed as far as to ‘Russia’s historic mission’ to be engulfed and absorbed by the propagandist agenda of *The Russian World*. Even since Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, such Slavonic study parroting of Kremlin propaganda has been surprisingly prominent, its echoing at international conferences and seminars only slowly beginning to fade at the time of writing.²³⁰ Critical voices were never absent, but customarily ignored (if not drowned-out by their opponents). Outside Ukraine, a most timely and encouraging example of sense is the

²³⁰ Two examples: At Oslo University, 1-2 June 2023 (Trauma, Memory, and Counter-Culture: Borders and Border Transgressions in [Post-]Communist Europe), Ukrainian presenters were reprimanded by the opening key-note speaker for being un-cooperative and unconstructive when it came to protecting Russian language and culture on Ukrainian soil. Ukrainian presenters (who had yet to speak) were also marginalised in the programme, where Russian nationals enjoyed considerably more space and more prominent times for their contributions. At Manchester University 30 June - 1 July 2025 (Culture, Media, and Resistance in a Polarising World), a delegate confronted a main panelist for not mentioning a ‘Georgian scenario’ (i.e. the re-instating of a Moscow-friendly government in Kyiv) as a ‘possible peaceful resolution’ of the Ukrainian conflict.

small publication by Allik et al (2011), which –as a beginning– falsifies the existence of a ‘Russian soul’ as successfully as scientifically.

Honestly, do we really need to ask what constitutes the ‘Russian’ in Russian culture? Perhaps our current times of polarisation, isolationism and extremist Kremlin narratives of an essentialist ‘Russianness’ can, despite themselves, help us finally deconstruct and abolish some die-hard thought patterns. For this purpose, a concept of culture as a singular element with local variations will be more fruitful than a ‘whateverness’ notion of co-existing and competing ‘cultures’ in the plural. Temperature, depth, local marine fauna and flora vary greatly with your location, but the ocean remains the ocean. Although human in origin, culture with its many complex currents, ebbs and flows are, much like the sea, not subject to human control, and attempts at its manipulation are likely to produce unforeseen, sometimes dramatic, consequences.

Let us stick with our blatantly unoriginal ocean metaphor for another moment. If anything, it illustrates why those in power at any time, in any nation, can only temporarily construct and impose rudimentary definitions of one nationally specific culture. This goes for small nations as well as empires, yet the former are perhaps more likely to accept having been shaped by (rather than shaping) larger cultural currents. Granted, cultural surplus sometimes fuelled the expansion of empires, but the Russian Federation offers no such case. Modern Russia’s humble origins, Muscovy, on the North-Eastern outskirts of Kyivan Rus, received mere trickles from global cultural currents. Contrary to Kremlin narratives of Russian greatness, Russia’s expansion into the largest area nation state on the planet was not driven by cultural strength or ‘Russian ideas.’ Instead, as the empire’s spatial expansion followed the logic of Dugin’s square –arrows pointing outwards in all directions– cultural development arguably followed an under-communicated side of the same logic: expansion in all direction creates at its center a deficit, a vacuum into which flows anything that may help restore normal pressure. As natural a development as the elementary physics, this only becomes a problem when the center of power begins proudly proclaiming that cultural superiority facilitated (and rectified) its geographical expansion. Cultural currents that have been flowing into the empire for centuries from the outside and periphery, from neighbours and from colonised peoples, must now either be converted into aspects of an all-encompassing ‘Russianness’ that flows from Moscow at its the center, be dismissed altogether, or –as most recently demonstrated– be bombed to extinction like countless Ukrainian museums and cultural institutions. In the Russian Federation’s *Russian World* any ‘cultural minority’ (be it Buryat, Chuvash, Dagestani, Jewish, Mari, or any of a hundred others) is Russian only to the extent that it is owned by Moscow and subordinated its rigid cultural canon. Resisting this regime and insisting on cultural equality is ‘Nazism’ in current Kremlin parlance.

If this demonstrates more than the exhaustion of our ocean metaphor, it suggests an answer to Gogol’s question –much quoted for all the wrong reasons– to the mad Russian troika in his novel *Dead Souls*, to questions of the ‘Russian idea’, and to what constitutes Russia’s ‘mythical path’. In mathematical terms, it suggests the answer is 0 or, perhaps more fittingly: \emptyset . In cultural terms, this implies that notions of ‘Russianness’ should be treated much like notions of authenticity, or like notions of God: there is no denying that the idea exists, but that proves nothing beyond the idea itself. Authenticity forms an

integral part of how humans make sense of the world, value things and actions, yet it is chronically unable to prove the existence of anything objectively authentic. So, perhaps in the end this is how the question of cultural 'Russianness' is best approached as well: As a concept that proves nothing beyond its indeterminable conceptuality.

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