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In 1979, Jean-François Lyotard wrote the treatise *The Postmodern Condition*. This text was destined to become an important landmark in modern society’s understanding of itself. It is worth remembering that the subtitle of the treatise first appeared as “A Report on Knowledge,” and its first edition was called *Problems of Knowledge in the Most Developed Industrial Societies* (the book was commissioned by the Université du Québec, affiliated with the Quebec government).

Thirty-three years later (in a society that can by no means be classified as “the most developed industrial”), the contemporary discussion on university and education, in our opinion, lacks the claim to give “a report on knowledge,” the aspiration to comprehend what is and what is no more knowledge today. Without a reflection on this issue, the debate on school and university remains a torrent of justified but indolent curses towards ministries, officials, and anonymous circumstances. We find it insufficient to do nothing but join the general jeremiad or to wait passively for a new Godot-Lyotard. The journal *Logos* proposes to start a discussion on the philosophical foundations of contemporary knowledge and its institutions.
As Long as They Call It University

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Abstract: The author considers the pointlessness of choosing between historical models of university. Instead, he proposes to find what is happening to knowledge today and whether this is relevant for higher education. Obviously, the internet and modern communication technologies affect the character of knowledge and attitudes towards it. The decline of the nation-state means a change of the principal partner and client of science. Now it is the individual customer who determines user-friendly content and form of knowledge. University bureaucracy does its best to satisfy his desires. It is this bureaucracy, not scholars-professors, who embody university now. Current trends in knowledge and university are similar in Russia and in the West (the Bologna reform as a realization of the managerial turn), despite the high degree of corruption and plagiarism in the former.
But maybe the river simply never existed? Maybe. Then how was it called? River it was called.
Sasha Sokolov. *A School For Fools*

UNIVERSITY has always transcended the social average. Certainly this is not an exclusive privilege of the university. School does the same in its own way, although in a lesser extent: no wonder that in the Russian language school education is called *average* (*srednee*). So does politics, and art, and literature, and war, and love, and tourism... University—as all of the above—cherishes a certain dream. This dream is doomed to remain unfulfilled within the concrete walls of any university—even if it is the most vamped, advanced, quotable, “liked” by its alumni or effective university. All, without exception, university projects were determined by the various visions of this ideal—from the Bologna of the 11th century to the Bologna of the 21st century. To insert university into the logic of material and social circumstances, even the most “inevitable,” will never be a satisfactory solution. For it would put into question the very objective to transcend the social reality.

However, university is also immanent to a whole process. Economical, political and—less perceptible—epistemic and even moral changes affect its evolution. University is a child of society and nothing social, alas, is alien to it. Society dreams (or, more often, remembers that it dreamt) university, but the dream always bears the imprint of the dreamer. There is a lot of pertinence in the current critical debates on university, triggered by the project of higher education reform. But the criticism often does not go beyond an assurance in the speaker’s best intentions, whereas suggestions generally have the disadvantage of leaving unanswered the questions of political and economical will capable to realize them.

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The current condition of the Russian university can be understood only by distinguishing and then reconciling the two relatively independent series of events: 1) the collapse of the Soviet system, including education; 2) the neoliberal twist with the Bologna reform as its epiphenomenon.
The decline of the Soviet epoch demanded changes of all its institutions and attributes. This demand was, first of all, ideological, whilst the change could also be of a ritually-incantatory nature, as, for instance, the tardy renaming of the militia into the police. The renaming of thousands of colleges and technical schools into universities and academies in the 90s had serious consequences. These renamings were encouraged by the absence of control and the regionalization of state political will. Catastrophic inflation happened, seemingly, as a collateral harm. Headmasters became nomothets: this will be called so, because “I was the first to think it up.” However, this nomothetic practice implicitly testified to the high prestige of science: it seems that while old educational institutions pass by the name of university, the prestige of the brass plate should not be doubted. But the very recent titles innovative or scientific and research university is characteristic of the fact that simply university does not inspire former respect.

The late Soviet system of education was the product of the Cold War and the rivalry of systems. To a certain extent, nothing if not mathematics and natural sciences benefited from this situation. All the rest suffered heavy losses caused by repressions, isolation, censorship, ideological yoke, selection politics under party control etc. Many scholars and teachers tried to oppose to all that their ethos of devotion, abjuration and asceticism. But, if one does not take into account some disciplines, educational institutions and a few people in each of them, all the rest deserve not even a whit of the nostalgia expressed today towards the Soviet system of education.

In the sphere of higher education, the neoliberal wave in the West, encouraged by the demise of communism, was crowned with the so-called Bologna reform, conceived in the same 90s and introduced at the turn of the century. It became an example of typical “Brussels” decision making: vertically from top downward, without discussion with persons interested or competent in education, at the ministerial level, chaotically, short-sightedly, and irresponsibly. Today, it can be considered substantially completed, and not only in Europe but to a certain degree in Russia. I still [Maiatsky 2009a; Maiatsky 2009b: 100–108] regard it as contradictory and pernicious and consider it illusory that the European university did not suffer from it. The damage caused by the Bologna reform is deep and not perceptible on the surface. The assessment of results has reduced all the complex process of conveyance, absorption, understanding and criticism of knowledge to the pure accumulation of points. It had fatal consequences for students’ and teachers’ spirit. The positing of academic mobility as an end in itself, without any reflection on why exactly the mobility is good for study, misled all the goal-setting of educational pro-
cess.\textsuperscript{1} Finally, the reformatting of the whole of educational and scientific process under the aegis of “excellence” has dangerously narrowed the gap between the worlds of university and business, heralding the victory of the managerial spirit over the spirit of research and study.

It can be argued where the damage from Bologna turned out to be worse, in Russia or in Europe. The Western university is undermined not so much by the very reform but by the tendency that the latter embodies; but fortunately the inertia of centuries of tradition is great. Such a solid tradition does not exist in Russia. Most Russian educational institutions emerge from the exploitation of the Soviet (and the echoes of pre-Soviet) heritage, the scientific and technological decline and the imitation of what is easy to imitate (which is exactly the case of the Bologna reform). But, strange as it may seem—and the Ministry of Education and Science can be proud of it—Russia and the West share, with all colossal differences in degree, a lot of problems. In that sense the tendency is conjectured correctly. Both in Russia and Europe there is an evident split into officials and academics in the body of university, along with the increasingly disadvantages for the latter. Here as well as there we see the same triumph of managerial logic presented as the culmination of progress, the same dictate of numbers (ratings, points, or grades—credits and ‘publish-or-perish’ indexes) over sense, quality control over the very quality, image over reality.

Education is not only included in the totality of the \textit{oikos} and bears its features, but also is affected by the direct influence of external factors. In the West the prolongation of the educational cycle is conditioned by unemployment, in Russia—by the army service and the will to escape it. Of course, in many countries one speaks about university (and even more so about school) with despair. It is no wonder that in Russia this sphere (alongside the system of justice and public health service) inclines to an apocalyptic tone. The discussion about education in Russia is also burdened by the fact that the trust in power has reached such astounding abysses that any legislative initiative is perceived as a next stratagem in the war against its own people who is used to expect more and more tricky and whimsical discrimination from above.

In this respect, Russia makes its own odd contribution to the reality of education. It is ridiculous to catch academics and students in the act of plagiarism when it emerges that the sovereign and the guarantor (long before he became the sovereign and the guarantor) shared with the peo-

\textsuperscript{1} It seems to me an aberrance that at their recent conference the provosts of German universities discussed as a serious problem the fact that the hopes for greater mobility were not justified.
ple of science the hardships of research and the joy of discoveries—in the dissertations of colleagues. It is ridiculous to catch an assistant NN in bribery or the sale of term papers if the whole system is built on corruption, not only the system of higher education but the system as a whole in the foundation of which, as serious social scientists argue, lay, lies and will (=must?) lie the kickback economy. If the post-Bologna Western student has on their mind and tongue only grades and points, then the post-Soviet thinks and speaks money. It is no less ridiculous when the Western cases of plagiarism and corruption make the Russian news feeds and bring the long-hoped-for relief: over there is “just the same.” It is known, but preferred not to be taken into account, that “there” such facts cause scandal and, usually, cost its actors their political and other careers, whereas here they are perceived as inevitable, and—in comparison with other vices and plagues—innocent evil. And why necessarily evil? Does not the fact of acquisition of academic degrees by many representatives of the “elite” testify, although in a somewhat extravagant form, to the high reputation of science?

The ardour with which the reform is discussed signifies that the expectations from the investments in education are not only irreconcilable with the budgetary ones, but that education is endowed with compensatory functions: what does not work in other spheres can be counterbalanced with this one. Here, civic awareness, insulted and reviled daily, meets with the utopian reckoning to “start with education,” formerly so popular in alternative Soviet pedagogy: let us create “pure” zones of the future in order to change the world of tomorrow by the formation of new people today. However, the sphere of education has lost at present the last illusions of relative protection from a hostile environment and itself teaches its wards the lessons of injustice and corruption.

The catching-up development has accustomed, it seems, civil society to look out for the models to emulate in the past and the far. The history of higher education, as well as education in general, is extremely interesting and undoubtedly an instructive fabric for examination, but nothing emanates from it directly, as from historical knowledge in general, and here historical examples cannot prove anything. University models used to vary significantly and were constantly subject to changes, perceived negatively by some agents,—there, however, the lesson ends. From it follows neither what kind of model one should adhere to, nor where the political, economical and other will, that is necessary for the construction and reconstruction of the educational system, can be found. Moreover, such construction implies decades of enduring and consistent politics, which is considered an unattainable luxury not only in the permanently-catastrophic “here” (in Russia, where nobody ventures to forecast for
a year or two), but also in the hectic “there” (in the West, where new reform should be initiated before the next elections).

There is no “primordial origin” of university to which any modern university must return. There is not even any proto-university. Sorbonne? Bologna? Why not the Moroccan Fes? or Constantinople? And there is no single “idea of university” by which any university in the past was supposedly inspired, and to which any modern university must amount to. What if Humboldt, Dewey, Newman, Kant or Comte created such and such national educational institution—what does it have to do with us? Here, on our Rhodes, this knowledge won’t help us to jump higher than we can.

In this, I will allow myself to disagree with the position of Allan Bloom that was shared, it appears, by Bill Readings, the author of the sharply critical book *The University in Ruins*: “University has ceased to be Humboldtean, which means that is ceased to be, as a matter of fact, university” [Readings 2010: 93]. To define the essence of university as Humboldtean seems to me well-meant but arbitrary. If I am indignant to some events of university life and consider them contradictory to the core (concept, spirit…) of university, then it testifies only to the fact that I was brought up on different notions of university. Among the people who are concerned with its mission, there are enough of both those who believe that it is necessary to return to one or another model, and those who, on the contrary, believe that “time compels” to certain radical changes. Besides, the watershed between them, both in Russia and the West, does not coincide at all with the division into the right and the left. Often, the right act not as conservatives but the bearers of “progress,” whereas the left urge the return to the former condition and/or retain its positive sides. Whether university must or can remain as it was—the question cannot be posed in such a way. University is that social institution by means of which society dreams of an alternative. Regrets about a former university are only dreams—about the lost ideal of knowledge and its future revival. It occurs, rather, that there are several borders of dissociation: advocates of a strong state against liberals, idealists against pragmatists, nostalgists against futurists, egalitarists against meritocrats.2

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As for the present, the debates on education are characterized by too much of an instantaneous reaction (to the Bologna reform, to the legislation of higher education reform etc) and little understanding of the metamorphoses that happened with knowledge in its regard to man,

2. In France this last axis is defined as jacobins against pédagogistes.
production, consumption and society in general. The classical forms of knowledge, that distinguished themselves in Modern science, originated from the postulates of the infinite divine and natural (Deus sive Natura) contractor, the mastering-appropriation-conquest of which was the source of justification of man's godlike nature, whereas for the sovereign it proved the divine afflation of its power. Science turned nature to man, but only with its most favourable sides, the ones that allowed to heat and to illuminate one's dwelling etc, but for science it was the mere implementation of fundamental knowledge, practically a side effect of the disclosure of natural objective laws and “the discovery of mysteries.” The conquest of nature was realized by methods similar to the conquest of the territories of geopolitical rivals and colonies.

The dependence of this model of knowledge on forms of production contemporary to it is evident. The same dependency exists today, only now the tendency of the very production in relation to the world has changed. It is expressed in the growing predominance of tertiary industries (the tertiary economy sector). Whereas the fraction of high technology is declining in the added value of the so-called “high-value-added goods” (articles à haute valeur ajoutée), the fraction of promotion, design, delivery (and so forth even to the extent of a smile) is growing.

The particularity of tertiary activity is that—apart from the juridical, medical and informative—no services are knowledge-intensive: neither financial, nor household, nor municipal, nor transport, nor tourist… They require nondescribable (and ineducable, that is, it is difficult to create a pedagogical strategy that would produce admittedly better results than a spontaneous existential process) competences: communication skills and worldly sagacity (skills of judgement). Of course, for as long as there are people who believe that some specific faculties are capable of nurturing these skills, it is hence “handy” for us to work with such clientele. But one cannot, in all sincerity, insist that university gives them knowledge, as in the past. Rather, it deceives them, indulges their ignorance, plays on their fears and trust in easy money. But this “deception” turns against university when those very people become the main consumers of university knowledge.

Now more than ever, university science needs to find the methods of and arguments for financing of fundamental researches. On the hori-

3. Some also distinguish a quaternary, knowledge-based one, others consider this distinction superfluous.
4. In this respect, traditional university joins the ranks of the sellers of air, speculating on the former symbolic capital of science under the most incredible plates.
zon of geopolitics this mechanism of financing was relatively well-adjusted, but it is not yet clear how to justify it under the conditions of a globalized economy. The machine of traditional war required much more cognitive investments than even the machine of antiterrorism protection. The state is privatized and there is no one to appeal to. On the one hand, the moral authority and social prestige of knowledge, whilst on the other hand, the state as the main patron in need of legitimization have both collapsed. The state more and more assumes a grotesquely-sham character. With the withdrawal of industry from under the national banners (the reasons and mechanism of this process in Russia and in the West are different, but the result is similar), the need for high qualification has also departed: it is considered normal that scientific and technological education follow the places of implementation.

Today, the partner (discourser, customer) of university is no longer a national state, ambitious and aggressive. Today, it is an individuum that is already feebly connected with the fatherland, yet is feebly connected with the cosmopolitan ethos a là Kant. He is a consumer and an egoist. For him, “common activity” is a trick, a con-art, similar to former ideologies. But he also cannot “love his own business:” what does it mean, as a matter of fact, his own? His professional and human trajectory has become unpredictable.

Today, university experiences the pressure of the consumer, unprecedented in history, it becomes itself consumer-friendly. The consumer not only wants to consume a product but to suggest to the manufacturer how the product should look, choose the colour of wallpaper, the exact specifications and lining of a car, the structure of faculties and curriculum.

About a century ago, Husserl analysed the fact of sciences’ implementation into the living world according to Galileo’s standard. Today this fact is trivial to us, but the very science shows us its gadget side to a much greater degree, user-friendliness or simply usability. A whole number of new university disciplines emerged on the direct order of the consumer. Of course, historical university was also heterogeneous: the faculties of theology, law and medicine appealed to absolutely diverse legitimations: to God, Law and Nature accordingly. But to what, if not the imperative of our era, appeals “public relations” (and other “marketings”), in the field of which it is possible to become a bachelor, a master,

5. As it is said on the website of one respectable educational institution: “The department of public relations was created in the July of [such and such] year. Its birth was predestined by life itself.” Then the cognitive image of a hero of our time is outlined: a PR-specialist “not only must know the theory […] well, but also write releases, create websites, draw mock-up models, project stage decisions, work with all types of office equipment, show understanding of cars, cos-
a candidate and a doctor of philosophy, remains unclear. It is only apparent that the only preoccupation of someone who chooses that faculty is not to change one’s way of thinking and understanding of life. But is she/he guilty if university—or what is for the moment known under its name—sanctifies such a possibility by its own authority? There is no problem in the addition of new faculties per se (and the history of university is comprised of nothing else but these additions), but in the present context of orientation towards the market, the addition risks turning out a substitution (where there is something to substitute): “there is no demand for Sanskrit, whereas there is for marketing”—becomes the only argument. It is not surprising then that the equalization of the most difficult fields of knowledge with more than dubious and vague disciplines under the same roof results in prospective students choosing in favour of the most precocious specialities, the mastering of which formerly took (their ancestors) a few months in a merchant college.

The decline of the state coincided with the redistribution of educational tasks. It is evident that today not university, as the historical companion of the national state, but the media functions as the main educator and the “great Consoler.” In the world built by contemporary media, the role of knowledge is fairly modest, and is not included in the formula of success. A hero of our time may have gone to university, but he did not necessarily finish it. On the other hand, he likes to take risks and has faith in his star. One would think that the TV programmes, built on the principle of panel games and quizzes, would appeal to the cognitive consciousness of viewers. However, the debate on truth is practically reduced here to guessing, whereas the heuristics is reduced to hazard. The Internet, of course, is not so univocal. Whilst for some it is a colossal support (which includes scientists in the most varied fields of knowledge), for others it has become equivalent to knowledge, with all the expected distorting effects.

Before our eyes, the very homo academicus is changing. The loss of prestige had to have an impact on his self-esteem. Before our eyes, such remnants of the old-regime as vocation, devotion and mission are evaporating from the scientific existential orientation. His features will soon be erased like… well, indeed like a face traced on the riparian sand. We have already achieved the point where the homo academicus has only one leg in university, while the other is in business, media or politics. Work at university (as well as any work in one place in general) has ceased to be perceived as a life choice and has become a period in life, or

metrics, fashion, cookery, fishing gear, clocks, odours and many others. While in addition [sic!] he must possess encyclopedic knowledge.”
an option, contemporaneous with others. The modern *homo academicus* dwells in university but does not construct it anymore. We can, perhaps, rejoice in the end of university bonzes, but the basis of university is no longer comprised of (replaceable and fluid) scientific and pedagogic staff, but of permanent managers at different levels for whom, in essence, it makes no difference whether to direct a university or a travel agency. “In medicine, it is not necessary to know how to cure, what is important is to make the right administrative decisions,”—this eloquent opinion of executives, recently quoted by a chief superintendent of a department at one of the hospitals has, alas, a universal use.

It is not surprising that it also disorientates lecturers-scientists, for the criteria and imperatives of science and administration do not at all necessarily coincide. The bureaucratic machine not only requires constant, fastidious and often nonsensical accountancy procedure, evaluation and self-evaluation, but self-improves: changes criteria, diversifies forms etc. It is impossible for any lecturer-researcher, this constant object of administrative mistrust, to keep up with the constant process of new form creation. For this reason, the predominant mode of filling in of various reports and projects becomes the employment of already submitted and successfully accepted documents (the more homotypic they are, the easier it is for an official). Is it any wonder then that some “researchers” confuse the situations where copy-paste is not only tolerated but welcomed, with those situations where this method is considered plagiarism?

University reached heights in that era when cognition (of God, freedom, oneself) was considered the main sense-giving mechanism of life and history. Some memory of this epoch still lingers on but it becomes more and more obscure, overgrown with legends and transforms into myth. That was an epoch of knowledge deficit about the world and culture, and to the fulfilment of which the best energies and years were dedicated. The current younger and future generations cannot comprehend these worries. Mankind’s need for knowledge can be considered satisfied.

6. This tendency was smartly and ironically called test drive by an American researcher [Ronell 2005].

7. A similar opinion, but in relation to dissertations, was recently expressed on Alexander Filippov’s Facebook (status from 7.02.2013): “While fighting for the quality of dissertations, the Higher Attestation Commission produced a great many hard, burdensome rules and over-rode advice completely. Being afraid that it will come to no good, the advice went, one would think, the most reliable way. Dissertators were being implicitly compelled to use, as a sample for filling out serious documentation, works that were already defended and passed all expert investigations,” which puts dissertators in a potentially vulnerable situation, precisely from the point of view of plagiarism.
In practice, much knowledge revealed lots of sorrow. The main problem has become the oversupply of information and the main concern—protection from it. The Bologna student calculation, aimed at not working one’s fingers to the bone and not over-attending lectures and seminars, embodies this tendency perfectly, so to say, at the lower level.

* * *

In society’s actual attitude towards knowledge at least three processes can be pointed out: 1) the construction of ignorance, 2) the production of doubt, 3) the strife for credence. Each of them, of course, deserves a separate discussion; let us restrict ourselves here to brief characteristics.

1. The liquidation of illiteracy has attained its aims. In spite of the prolongation of school education’s duration, the percentage of students who did not gain even basic skills by senior classes is high. Notably, it also applies to a number of European universities. The labour market has ceased to stimulate learning and education. Early (and fast) professionalization, the inflation of diplomas, high unemployment among professionals, the outspread of the phenomena of “over-qualification,” the banalization of entertainment, the escalation of the struggle for the “rights of the child” against compulsion to the “acquisition of knowledge,” the labour market’s preference for flexibility to the detriment of knowledge/experience—all these phenomena, one way or another, illustrate what sociologists and psychologists call the social construction of ignorance.

2. Certain kinds of knowledge are fraught with danger for certain sectors of the national economy. In such a way, knowledge about the risks of atomic energetics menaces its development (and investments into it). Knowledge about the role of the human factor in the alterations of climate and environment threatens the industry by additional expenditures on ecology. The consumer’s knowledge about the harm of tobacco and alcohol can do direct economical damage to these economic sectors of economy. It is difficult to control (not to speak of suppressing) the generation and assimilation of such data under the conditions of mass literacy and the network-based distribution of information. Instead, one can remind the consumer that they have a right to critical as-

8. Logos is going to address these themes in the near future.—Editor’s note.
9. Statistical data and sociological studies show that almost every school graduate can enter some university, see [Shishkin 2004: 380].
sertion, to freedom from the acceptance of any convincing arguments. The consumer proves themselves to be a heritor of classical and modern-age skeptics in the resistance to arguments and information. Such a strategy, speculating on the Cartesian doubt, tickles the ear of the consumer, endowing him with critical faculty towards science. If it is impossible to forbid knowledge, then, in the very least, it is possible to compel to doubt it.

3. The parallel loss of ground by the state and science compel (Western) politicians to talk about how important it is to “regain the trust” (of citizens, voters, consumers et cetera). The recent scandals in the pharmaceutical and food industries put into question the credibility of corporate and state control. All the attempts to withstand the tendency by means of multiplying expert investigation and experts lead to a rather antipathic repercussion: trust in the institution of experts (which is itself subject to expert investigation and so on indefinitely) recedes. The legitimization of expert knowledge is undermined by the media and network-based production of opinion, by that very doxa which was loftily denied by philosophy and science and which now itself becomes the judge of knowledge, increasingly disavowing itself.

And—frankly and entre nous—is the specific proportion of boon-follies, coming from under the pen and mouths of university scientists (here, I deflect attention away from so-called hard sciences) much lower than that fraction of blog-follies that is inevitably—but without footnotes, links to itself and its pretensions, ambitions and other demonstrations of will to power—generated by the “web republic?”

One way or another, a growing portion of knowledge is acquired outside university. It was known long ago about the role of networking in science. Not only historians, but also physicists derived a huge portion of knowledge and operational data from smokerooms and the couloirs. Today the web has become such a mega-smokeroom. The consequences of these shifts for cognitive behaviour are colossal and are already repeatedly described (chronophagia, distracted attention…). One trait is rarely spoken about: erudition itself has become suspicious, and soon will also become disgraced. Wikipedia (and other similar projects) have become the genuine prosthesis of the “living memory,” and to show off one’s prosthesis is not an innocent gesture.

The connection of knowledge with employment has changed. Not so long ago—in Russia as well as in Europe—the matriculation certificate guaranteed job placement. Today higher education not only does not guarantee it, but does not even try to promise it. The Bologna re-
form proposed a truly absurd solution of this problem: the reduction of study term and early professionalization (inasmuch as an erenow bachelor gets a diploma, providing the formal grounds for entering the market labour). However, it is obvious that a bachelor does not have a bigger chance for recruitment after 3–4 years of education than had a former alumnus after five. Moreover, the necessity in constant retraining must have enhanced the need in fundamental skills, which cannot be acquired in fast coaching. But market (at least in the service sector) becomes quite indifferent to this component: here, the tendency towards the creation of artificial fluidity is evident. The young are uninformed of their rights, one should not pay them for the length of service, they suffer less from diseases and do not yet have children, it is easier to drive them out so far as they themselves desire to try out new fields. Their ignorance and inexperience add to their labour a touching tinge of amiable inaptitude that can appeal to a client, especially a young one (and presumably just as “fluid” at his own work place). An increasingly greater number of young people start working, not waiting for a diploma that consequently has ceased to be a necessary condition for employment in the eyes of many employers. That is to say, the diploma does not guarantee job placement, whereas its absence does not hinder it.

Is the influence of this new attitude to knowledge palpable inside university? Undoubtedly. The contractual system (in the West), of course, largely favours the dynamization of research and teaching, and is on the whole capable of raising the level of both. But the clipping of careers changes the attitude, not only to “one’s own” department, but to one’s profession in general. The chronopolitics of university has changed radically. In recent years the majority of modern universities (here and there) go through such a turbulent reconstruction, that only a rare student manages to start and finish their higher education within an unchanged institutional frame. The same acceleration is observable also in science. Today there is no department that will be tolerant (as it used to happen) to some scientist stewing over one book or one problem for 25 years (hail to multi-tasking!), as it won’t be tolerant to the fact that a researcher can arrive at the refutation of the primordial hypothesis or to another negative result. It is difficult not to see the impact of the media in this shift, the blogosphere dictates—for the better of worse—the rhythm, tempo, style, modes of argumentation and the legitimation of utterance.

University has never been the only place for the production of knowledge. Has it remained a privileged place? The fall in the prestige of knowledge comes only into seeming contradiction with the growing demand for higher education. It is predetermined by parental inertia: parents grew up in the preceding epoch and still perceive knowledge as a
key to success. But they also consider it their duty to catch up with modernity: it is they who first torture their child with “manual dexterity,” that must permit the development of the little genius, so that one and a half decades later they can send him to study some fashionable pseudo-speciality. By no means is the demand for higher education warmed up by research romanticism, curiosity or the desire “to be of service to society,” but fears for children and the desire to save oneself from the uncertainties of the modern world by way of investing in human (in essence: children’s) capital asset.

Well, university is ready to render this service. For its part, it leaves no stone unturned in order to seem exactly what consumers want it to be: successful, prestigious, rating-based. It is ready to produce its own rating. It is ready to forget its yesterday self. But insofar as it has not yet invented a new self, it simply denies the old self and remains a firm, rendering services, claiming to be an expensive firm, rendering services. In this regard, university not only undergoes changes (which always took place), but, in a determinate and very essential sense, ends. It is and remains university only for as long as it is called such, but even its very name risks losing any attention-value and any meaning.

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Benjamin vs. Schmitt: Giorgio Agamben’s Mistake

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Abstract: “Dangerous liaisons” of the left and right-conservative discourse have been discussed widely by different thinkers of the 20th century. Most sharply this issue rung in the context of long standing debates between the left esoteric Walter Benjamin and the conservative utopist Carl Schmitt. Based on the texts of Benjamin and Schmitt of the 20s and 30s focused on a range of issues such as sovereignty, state of emergency or violence and language, the author exposes the irreducibility of the positions of these two thinkers and their fundamental political, metaphysical and ethical alternativeness. The article critically analyses the approaches of famous modern day researchers to the theme referred to (Agamben), conditioned by their preconceived political, theological and metaphysical convictions.
In the second book of the trilogy *Homo Sacer*, Giorgio Agamben dedicated a special chapter to the relationship between Schmitt and Benjamin. Although at first glance Agamben presents Benjamin’s position adequately and concisely in relation to the topic of exception, the controversy between jurisprudence and life, law and justice, and in many ways stands alongside him against Schmitt and the conservatives, he nevertheless arrives at fairly ambiguous conclusions regarding the nature of violence, making some significant mistakes in his narration.

Agamben’s enchantment with his opponent’s political theology can only be explained by his own theological thinking. Like other liberals who acknowledge “the relevance and topicality of the study of Schmitt” [Mouffe 2004: 140], he ranks among his “special achievements” the inclusion of the anomic, extreme sides of social life within the field of jurisprudence or some rational order, although he admits such an inclusion to be paradoxical and aporical (regardless of numerous citations of Benjamin, Agamben’s political innocence is seduced by the figure of the sovereign with his decisions because of the shimmering Supreme Being registering his presence and participation in mundane affairs) [Agamben 2011: 55]. No matter how much Agamben refers to Benjamin in this context, the figure of the sovereign and his decisions overpowers his political innocence, behind which looms the Supreme Being, participating and making itself noticeable in affairs.

At first glance, the mistake that Agamben makes while reading Benjamin’s second dissertation is purely textual. He believes that the publishers of Benjamin’s *Collected Writings* of 1972–1989, “with an extraordinary disregard for any philological carefulness” corrected “Es gibt eine barocke Eschatologie” (“There is a Baroque eschatology”) to “Es gibt keine...” (“There is no...”), “although the next passage is logically and syntactically linked to the original reading” [Agamben
In other words, Agamben argues that, Benjamin discerns in the Baroque epoch of the 17th century a doctrine a post-historical afterlife. For this reason, Benjamin writes further that it is exactly the presence of such an eschatology that “gathers together and exalts all earthly things before consigning them to their end (dem Ende)” [Benjamin 1998: 66].

It is not easy to sort out themes relating to the end of history, especially when they are considered in terms of their impact on the historical life of specific epochs. However if one does not mix them with one’s own religious prejudices, but simply turns a few more pages of Ursprung, then one can read the following: “Burdach’s new definition of Renaissance and Reformation, which is directed against the prejudices derived from Burckhardt, first reveals, per contrarium, these decisive features of the Counter-Reformation in their true light. Nothing was more foreign to it than the expectation of the end of the world, or even a revolution, such as has been shown by Burdach to inform the Renaissance movement…” [Benjamin 1998: 79–80]. And, even more clearly, “the developing formal language of the Trauerspiel can very well be seen as the emergence of the contemplative necessities which are implicit in the contemporary theological situation. One of these, and it is consequent upon the total disappearance of eschatology (der Ausfall aller Eschatologie), is the attempt to find, in a reversion to a bare state of creation, consolation for the renunciation of a state of grace” [Benjamin 1998: 80–81].

It can be noted in favor of Agamben, a true devotee to Benjamin, that although he did not manage to read Ursprung in full, he knew that Benjamin’s understanding of the end of history was not all that simple. For this reason, he further notes that even though Benjamin talks about eschaton, in his writing the latter is empty, “it does not know either redemption or the freed other world, it remains immanent to time”: “It is precisely such a “white eschatology”—not leading the Earth into a freed other world, but surrendering it to the absolutely empty sky—that forms the Baroque exception as a catastrophe” [Agamben 2011: 90–91].

Here, Agamben mixes Benjamin’s perceptions of the end of the world with the very Baroque authors whose position was rather shared by Schmitt.¹ For Benjamin, catastrophe is not inevitable death for all at

¹. Heil justly notes, referring to a range of important secondary sources [Figal 1992; Deuber 1983; Bolz 1989] that if Schmitt fixates on catastrophe as the end of history then Benjamin “lives with the theological assurance that the transient could have been saved from its past” (“das Vergängliche könne aus seiner Vergangenheit gerettet werden”), from that very past that is transient [Heil 1996: 129].
the end of history, but rather violence over the living. For this reason, what he understands as salvation is the release of people from suffering, even if it is past suffering. His conception of salvation is fully directed at the everyday violence of people over people, and not at all at their common mortal fate. This is a radically irreligious and anti-mythological mode of thought which nonetheless does not repudiate the analysis of language, imbued with ontotheological rudiments and mythical atavisms, even at the level of its formal structure. Thus, Benjamin's texts do not dispense with theological lexicon and metaphors. Yet how can one see any theological messiahship in Benjamin if he writes: “...in happiness, all the earthly long for death, only in happiness one is destined to acquire this death. <...> For nature can be messianic only in its eternal and total impermanence. To aspire to it <...>,—is the objective of world politics, the method of which should be called nihilism”? [Benjamin 2012: 236]

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This seemingly insignificant mistake also did not pass without consequences for Agamben's general interpretation of Benjamin, which depended overwhelmingly on his religious philosophy of history and his largely Schmittian understanding of the problem of violence in its relationships with jurisprudence. The violent nature of jurisprudence that connects Benjamin and Schmitt’s position in critical terms was not fully understood by Agamben: “Benjamin’s thesis consists in that while mythical-juridical violence is always a means towards one end or another, pure violence, in relation to an end (just or unjust), is never merely a means towards its achievement—lawful or unlawful. The criticism of violence does not assess violence in its relation to ends which violence aspires to achieve as a means, but looks for “the criterion, the distinction in the very sphere of means, irrespective of the ends it pursues” [Agamben 2011: 97].

Agamben distinguishes between juridical violence, founded on mythical precepts, and “pure” violence, founded on a certain perception of the ultimate divine justice, according to the criterion of its relation to the ends. The aim of juridical violence is the establishment and legitimation of power, whereas divine violence allegedly does not have a goal. This is not exact. The grounds for Benjamin's criticism of juridical violence became the discovery of the fact that it does not pursue legal aims in much the same way as affective commonplace violence and mythical violence of the classical Greek gods. Such violence does not achieve any justice but only manifests a violator whose being endows him with the natural right to exist in this guise [Benjamin 2012:
85–86]. The sovereign, according to this logic, is just an ordinary violator, and no jurisprudence—neither suspended nor excluded—as well as no “force” of the inactive justifies his actions. Only the divine status prescribed to him can act as its legitimation, or rather the consensus in society with regard to its consecratedness. To begin to believe in politics as a god (the politics of a god)—is that boundary of religion’s secularisation (accomplished by Schmitt) that perhaps reveals the nature of modernity.

One significant point that Agamben missed in the reconstruction of Benjamin’s position is the theme of nonviolent (or “pure”) means which he discussed in the prospect of the achievement of just ends. These means are pure in the sense that they are not dirtied by violence, but not in the sense that they are free from any ends. What Benjamin means here is not any ends, but just ends of divine goal-setting. Although indirectly, such ends can be achieved by pure means, among which, under certain conditions, we can also include the proletarian general strike.

Benjamin’s “divine violence” also remained a mystery to Agamben: “Introducing the theme of violence, Benjamin further claims that, in the case of anger, violence is never a means, but merely a manifestation (Manifestation). Whilst violence, acting as a means of establishing jurisprudence, never destroys its own relationship with jurisprudence and, in such a way, endows jurisprudence with the status of power (Macht) connected with violence in the tightest and most essential way”, pure violence reveals and breaks the bond between jurisprudence and violence and ultimately can turn out to be not the violence that administers and executes (schaltende) but the violence that merely acts and manifests (waltende)” [Agamben 2011: 98]. The translation of waltende here as “to act” is not precise, and even less so the neutral “to manifest.” Benjamin is referring to a stronger meaning, that of “ruling.” Pure divine violence is evidently opposed here to the administrative violence of the pagan gods which, according to his opinion, the Christian gods turned to by the 17th century. The divine violence described in Benjamin’s writing can in no way be considered a relational term dependent upon externalities or upon jurisprudence (although it is correct that it is not substantive in the sense of some social constant or anthropological cipher). He determines the purity of violence through a rather Kantian perception of purity as an idea, not mixed with anything either conceptually or empirically. Agamben

2. “Justice is the principle of all divine endmaking, power the principle of all mythic lawmaking” [Benjamin 2012: 88].

Igor Chubarov
correctly writes that it is akin to the purity of “divine language” in the even earlier work “On Language as such and the Language of Man” (1916) [Benjamin 2012: 7], in which language was understood as the directness of spiritual contents communicated in it, that is, as its very communicability (immediacy) without reference to external content. Where, then, does jurisprudence come in? [Agamben 2011: 95]

Divine violence does not establish anything; rather, it simply rules in the indefinite prospect of decay and the end of life, not demanding anything in return and not promising any individual avoidance of death. That is, Benjamin does not draw any hopes, demands, morals or jurisprudence from the idea of the end of history. Divine violence, according to his words, annihilates jurisprudence [Benjamin 2012: 90] rather than merely breaking off relations with it temporarily for the sake of establishing a new jurisprudence. For this reason, pure violence cannot be the prerequisite of jurisprudence, even a “pure” one [Agamben 2011: 99]. It redeems the mythical guilt of the innocent man, upon which legal stipulations are founded, assuming upon itself all the historical victims and setting a messianic limit to human sacrifice. Pure violence is not bloody; it is a sign of the ultimate desolation of all the things in existence, not a means of the holy punishment [Benjamin 2012: 95].

Benjamin did not deny the fact that jurisprudence belonged to the sphere of anomie, in the sense that laws as such emerge from pre-legal violence. However, he did not regard this natural genealogy of jurisprudence to be a sufficient warranty for the legitimation of the actual violent actions of the state; in contrast to Schmitt and Agamben, he did not delineate it through the figure of God and his Law. He draws the metaphor of God along the upper boundary of world developments, so to say [Benjamin 2012: 250–251]. Benjamin juxtaposed divine law to the prehistoric, pre-mythological law of social life, which equally annoyed both Gershom Scholem, a fan of Jewish mysticism, and Carl Schmitt, admirer of Catholic dogmatic theology [Benjamin 2012: 154–155].

Benjamin draws a distinction between violence and jurisprudence not along the body of human Law but along the brim the “divine violence” revelation. In other words, violence is not the perpetual cypher of human activity, but rather, it is an inevitable reaction to the impossibility to go on living under state system and jurisprudence conditions. Violence severs the relationships with jurisprudence and law in the Jetztzeit of messianic redemption and turns to the past, not the future. For this reason the questions of Apostle Paul and attorney Vyshinsky about the future of Law after its messianic or proletarian
execution would not have interested Benjamin in the least [Agamben 2011: 99]. Law is abrogated here in order to become the interpretation, not the instrument, of someone’s sovereign hegemony.

In our closing remarks on Agamben, it should be said that he justly points to the work on Kafka and to its discussion in a correspondence with Scholem, as this is a key source for Benjamin’s understanding of jurisprudence and violence: “What corresponds to the exposure of mythical-juridical violence on the part of pure violence as an excess in the essay on Kafka is the mysterious image of jurisprudence that is no longer executed but is merely studied” [Agamben 2011: 99]. The new lawyer, Doctor Bucephalus, indeed only examines juridical folios, but does not apply their provisions in practice. The image of play, which Agamben leans towards, can, however, be read as a version similar to the Schmittian understanding of the political opposition friend-enemy, although in a lighter form. Despite the fairly unclear and “mysterious” understanding of such a play as a study of no longer used jurisprudence, Agamben nevertheless looks toward he future and promises a new kind of jurisprudence. But for Kafka-Benjamin, Bucephalus is, at the same time, a tamed animal, joyfully and obliviously walking in circles under the dome of the circus of history.

**Reason as the Function of Violence**

“Franz Kafka” (1934), as well as the theses *On the Concept of History* (1939) reveal in themselves not quite a teaching (*Lehre*) that can be brought into life, but rather an example of its interpretation which life itself could have turned to. The status of Benjamin’s theoretical work rises exceedingly on account of the problem of the correlation between reason and violence, historically not resolved. Its practical insolubility, however, does not become for him grounds for conservative conclusions. This, if anything, most clearly sets Benjamin’s approach apart from that of Schmitt’s.

When Schmitt claims that “the metaphysical image that a definite epoch forges of the world has the same structure as what the world immediately understands to be appropriate as a form of its political organization” [Schmitt 2000: 70], he essentially equates reason with violence, rendering them functions or instruments of being, understood as the permanent *bellum omnium contra omnes* of friends-enemies. Such an approach results in the devaluation of philosophical knowledge, which becomes the agent of violence in the field of consciousness and language. In such a way, the Nazi lawyer did not confine himself to the solution of political-legal problems—
to recourse to dictatorship under extreme conditions is not just reasonable, but reason itself acts here as the main dictator. However, the understanding of spirit as an ability to put dictatorship into action reveals the fundamental ambiguity of the notion of sovereignty. Benjamin discerned in the image of the sovereign Baroque dialectics consisting of “severe self-discipline and merciless external action,” the realization of which led in the beginning of the 17th century to “a sobering up with regard to the course of events in the world” and a cooling down that can be matched in its intensity only with “the fever of lust for power” [Benjamin 2002: 87–92].

The figure of the dictator came to be firmly established in the narrow gap between the immanentism of daily life and the transcendence of belief in the mode of secularized history. It is no coincidence that the tyrants of Baroque plays appear to be fairly melancholic against the backdrop of the historical frustration that befell teachings on monarchical sovereignty. On the stage of Trauerspiel this dialectic is presented as the theatre of a monarch’s affects, and not his real political actions and historical decisions. As much as the playwrights would have liked to extol these affects at the expense of the dictator’s martyrdom, the actual plays demonstrate that following the logic of monarchical affects in the political game can only lead to societal collapse. From here stems the melancholy and inconsolability of the German Baroque epoch, perceived through its allegorical images.

Schmitt’s discourse is melancholic in its own right, although he writes repeatedly about nothing but decisions. Nostalgically connecting to lost historical knowledge, Schmitt draws upon the actual similarities between the social and cultural atmosphere of the epochs after the Thirty Years’ War and the Weimar Republic [Palmier 2009: 406]. The lost war, political and economic crises, the impotent revanchist impulses of politicians required both apologetic art and a plebiscitary political theory.3

Schmitt’s thought process takes place in an atmosphere of a hostile world, in an environment of lost battles and social humiliation; this is why he also defines the political through conditions of war, enemy confrontations and mutual murders. This is straightforward enough. But the idea of decision sounds fake in this context, for it is obvious that, relying on the relevant concepts of sovereignty and politics, the aims of the German state and jurisprudence could not have been achieved at

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3. Benjamin depicted concisely the social-psychological portrait of the theorists of German fascism drawing on the material of yet one more Nazi writer and Schmitt’s friend, Ernst Jünger [Benjamin 2012: 359–375].
all. They only provoked ungracious fervours and nourished pathological affects. The opposition “friend-enemy” in this sense emerges not “from life” in its existential dimensions at all, as Schmitt believed, but is rather conditioned by the theological (meaning “ideological”) state of the epoch and its standpoints. This Schmittian opposition can be interpreted as a historical category stemming from secularized theology in the epoch of fascism [Benjamin 2002: 128].

The ending of Benjamin’s famous “Epistemo-Critical Prologue” to Ursprung can be considered in this context a desperate warning to Karl Schmitt—a warning which Schmitt, in the end, ignored:

Even then the danger of allowing oneself to plunge from the heights of knowledge into the profoundest depths of the baroque state of mind, is not a negligible one. That characteristic feeling of dizziness which is induced by the spectacle of the spiritual contradictions of this epoch is a recurrent feature in the improvised attempts to capture its meaning [Benjamin 1998: 56].

References


The Disruption of Continuity

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Keywords: revolutionary politics; post-communist transformation; replacement of elites; property; default; inflationary politics.

Abstract: The paper describes in a comparative perspective the dynamics and main phases of revolution from the point of view of economics. It analyses the dynamics of the revolutionary processes as well as the economic policy, which revolutionary governments are to proceed: inflationary financing, redistribution of property, monetary issue etc. The author argues that revolutions cause the expansion of transaction costs and the economic slowdown as a result. He demonstrates that the Russian transformation of the late 1980s—early 1990s generally actuates the same economic policy mechanisms as during the great revolutions of the past. However there is a specificity in it—this was the first full-scale revolution to take place under the circumstances of the crisis of industrialism and the transfer to post-industrial society.

1. Edited by Carol S. Leonard.
Introduction

THE TRANSFORMATION of an economic and political system may assume a variety of forms. This transformation is often described as a “revolution.” Indeed, revolutions are generally defined by their result: they alter the system’s fundamentals and often society itself. Using this result-oriented definition, however, can make it difficult to define actual events as “revolutionary.” In other words, there remains a considerable lack of clarity about what revolutions are. This paper develops a taxonomy for revolutions, drawing on historical, recent experience in western and eastern Europe and, especially, in twentieth-century Russia.

This paper emphasizes, in particular, as a formidable factor linking all revolutions, that they were carried out under the circumstances of a dramatic weakening of state power. To political scientists, the manifestations of weakness are: crisis, sharp conflict among elites (and interests in general) and the absence of a consensus concerning basic values and key aspects of the country’s trajectory. For economists weakness is evident in the financial crisis of the state, in its incapacity to collect taxes and balance its expenditures with its income. The paper argues that it is precisely the weakness of state power that determines the spontaneous character of economic and social processes, which in turn makes great revolutions surprisingly similar in terms of both the phases of development and their basic characteristics. Suddenly, social development appears to be the result not of purposeful effort (sometimes more, sometimes less effective) but of the diversity of interests leading the country in different directions in a seemingly spontaneous process.

Elusive Components of Revolution

Traditionally, revolutions are identified both by their outcomes and by events: generally, they are seen as forcible regime changes, bring-
ing about the emergence of a new elite and the dominance of a new ideology, along with transformation of property rights. Post-communist transitions call for some reassessment of these, among other, classical components of revolutionary transformation. In the post-communist “revolutions,” there was little violence, yet the events led to system-wide transformations. Furthermore, it turns out that neither a change in elites nor violent seizure of power were essential for regime change in Central and Eastern Europe.

Spontaneity and not violence is the constituting characteristic of revolution. Violence can take place. A sharp conflict and lack of common ground with regard to fundamentals make likely the exertion of force to impose values, according to which it becomes impossible to come to an agreement by non-violent means. However, the level of violence is not an adequate dynamic for quantitative analysis. One would hardly agree that the bloodier a revolution, the more significant it is. The level of violence would also introduce problems of selection bias, for example, where rural and urban revolutions are compared with each other; the general level of social and economic development (along with educational, cultural and material well-being) of a country surely decreases the likelihood of violence and destruction for those who have so much of material worth at stake.

The changing of an elite? Is this also fundamental? In the course of revolution, it undoubtedly happens. However, elite shifts should not be confused with the immediate physical elimination of representatives of the old regime’s elite (sent to the scaffold, forced to immigrate or resign). These can lead to misperceptions, first of all, that there has actually taken place a significant and lasting change in the elites [Goldstone 1991: 296]. Contemporary accounts are filled with complaints by radicals about the preservation of many representatives of the old elite in power. Such comments are characteristic of writers about even such seemingly radical upheavals as the French Revolution. Only the passage of time and not the presence of absence of any particular statesman can allow one to tell if real change has taken place.

That is, elite “interests” should not be confused with the representations of individuals. What is a new elite? It is one that is ready to act under new circumstances, and to play by new rules within a new logic. The descendants of the old elite and new actors sometimes act together, showing adaptive capacity of old and new elites. It is inappropriate, for example, to exclude Talleyrand from being a member of a new elite, just because as Bishop of Autun, he was a representative of the old elite. Similarly, the presence of Viktor Chernomyrdin (a Minister and member of the CC CPSU, that is, from the highest layers of the Soviet no-
menclature) should not be used to underestimate his importance in the formation of new Russian capitalism. In short, the roles played by individuals are more important than their social origins.

Analogous speculations can also be applied to the importance of redistribution to new owners of property. A change in landowners is undoubtedly important, but it can be overemphasised. Much more important than the physical change of owners is the change in the form of ownership. An important illustration is provided by the English Revolution in the middle of the 17th century. Many scholars find the results of the English revolution ambivalent because, despite expectations of radical property redistribution, the aristocracy for the most part retained their position as landowners. Even more problematic is that the leaders of that revolution resold the Royalists’ country estates back to the old owners after their confiscation. What was important, however, was that after being resold, the property now in possession of that old elite was private, that is, freed from long standing feudal obligations. This, the rights attached to the property, formed the basis of the future capitalist society and ensured the necessary social foundation for future economic growth. By analogy, in Russia, after the initial stage of privatization, a substantial part of the property fell under the control of the existing directors of enterprises, and thereafter only gradually changed hands [Treisman 2010: 26].

What about the replacement of one ideology by another? The linkage between revolution and ideological transformation is more complex than is generally believed. Revolution does not impose a new ideology on society. Conversely, it only happens when society (and first of all the elite) become enthralled by the new ideology, or by new ideas of the “correct” social order. The Enlightenment, the ideology of “natural order” and “the spirit of the law” laid the foundation of the French Revolution and the common base for the activity of virtually all revolutionary and post-revolutionary governments of that era. Then there was the crisis of the system of market democracy and the consolidation of a global industrial ideology, with monopolies and new elites, which became a powerful feature of society and economy at the turn of the 20th century. Now, contemporary post-communist transformations fit a new system of economic and political views and values grounded in liberalism and individualism, which had triumphed in the civilised world by the early 1980s. Francis Fukuyama’s well known thesis about “the end of history” [Fukuyama 2010] has become its symbol. In short, the dominant ideology of the immediately prior epoch generally defines the main framework of revolution and its economic dimension afterward.

Thus, in our understanding, much is ambiguous about characterizations of revolution; but one feature holds in common in all histor-
ical epochs: the weak state against which revolution is shaped. There follows the social rebuilding, the systemic social crisis and the subsequent adaptation to the new challenges of the epoch. Many mechanisms of adaptation to a new order by stronger states are possible: gradual reforms conducted by the old regime, conquest by a foreign state and, last of all, “revolutions from above.” However, the common trait of all these mechanisms, differentiating them from revolution, is the guidance through phases by the strong state power (national or occupational), maintaining control over the character and progress of reforms. Under such circumstances, there is no place for a chaotic battle between different sides with relatively equal forces, a battle with an indeterminate political outcome, making all social life uncertain, both in the short run and in a strategic sense. What we are saying, is that it is this uncertainty, conditioned by political struggle, that largely predetermines the course of a revolution, including the economic mechanisms of revolutionary transformation.

The Russian Case: the Imperial Period

The main objective of Russian politics at the outset and at the end of the 20th century was modernisation, or rather, the narrowing of the gap with more developed countries in terms of social and economic development, traditionally measured by GDP per capita. This objective has been central to the Russian state over the last three centuries. At least since the reign of Peter the Great, the country has tried to modernize and reduce the gap, as measured in years, to close the gap, which has been estimated by various observers as approximately 50 years from the level of, say, France and Germany.

At the turn of the 20th century, modernization was accelerated. The defeat in the Crimean war left no doubt that Russia’s retention of its position as an independent player in world politics depended on industrialization. Alexander II began the implementation of a series of political reforms that were later followed (largely by his successors) by economic reforms: budget, tax and export regulations. The result of these efforts accelerated the pace of industrial growth to approximately 10% per annum in the 1890s.

The means of late nineteenth-Russian industrialization are are well known. Two key factors can be emphasized. First, the peasantry footed the bill. Russia was the largest exporter of grain (45% of the world market). Farm produce was the chief export, hence, the main source of foreign currency inflow to the country. High taxes enabled the drainage of capital from the village, which was redistributed in favor of in-
dustry. “We will starve, but we will export”—this was the essence of the program of the Finance Minister Ivan Vyshnegradsky, although none dared to state it explicitly. It should be added that at that time, Russian grain elevators belonged to the State Bank, which also governed fiscal policy. It is probably also the case that fiscal policy accounts in part for the longstanding preservation of the peasant commune (obchshina) in the Russian village. Sergei Witte tried to solve purely fiscal problems by using the commune to draw taxes out of the village, a historically traditional institution that was adapted to play a role in modernisation. One way or another, the country paid for modernization via the preservation of institutions, which, at times, was too great a price. As in the example of the peasant community, it can be assumed that an earlier liquidation of the institution could have meant a more rapid development of capitalism in Russian villages, and perhaps could have prevented the revolution (or at least its turnings, in a catastrophic direction). The government’s desire to use a simple traditional institution for tax purposes thus contributed to a crisis of the system and collapse of the country.

Secondly, accelerated industrialisation, as viewed at the time, required the active role of the state to stimulate economic growth. Unlike the pioneer countries of industrialisation (England, the Netherlands and France), Germany and Russia, catching up later on, had to rely on the state’s resources to compensate for institutional gaps common in less developed countries—the lack of reliable banks and financial records for commercial companies, and the insularity of the domestic market. The state became the source of financial resources and demand for industrial production. State banks and the state budget turned into key institutions fostering economic growth.

Policy also contributed to the acceleration of modernisation. Russia’s first three prime ministers—Sergei Witte, Pyotr Stolypin and Vladimir Kokovtsov—foresaw positive economic prospects for Russia provided external peace and domestic stability was maintained over roughly twenty years. Steady economic growth in peacetime would have helped accomplish basic goals of industrialisation and emergence from “a turbulent zone,” or one fraught with revolution.

Historical statistics demonstrate that revolutions take place in countries with comparable GDP per capita. Curiously, nominal? Real? GDP per capita for England in the mid 17th century, France in the late 18th century, Germany in the mid 19th century, Mexico and Russia in the early 20th century, was within a small range, meaning that the structure of GDP and employment, the level of literacy and other social and economic characteristics of the given society were also similar. The table illustrates the comparability of this data as well as the speed
with which Russia in the early 20th century was emerging out of “the turbulent zone.”

Perhaps for these other countries, to which the Russia of the early 20th century corresponded, the stimulus provided by policies oriented toward investment had an equally stimulating effect. Sergei Witte emphasized that “in point of fact there are numerous investments now in our country but not all, for different reasons, boost industry” [Witte 1932: 135]. He aimed to stimulate the transformation of savings into investment, in short, to encourage entrepreneurial activity and mobilize foreign capital. Indeed, he argued, “the history of all modern wealthy countries shows that initially they were, to a large extent, indebted for industrial development to the influx of foreign savings and foreign enterprises” [Witte 1932: 137]. The Minister of Finance proposed to lift restrictions applied to the establishment of joint-stock companies with Russian and foreign participation, while also encouraging regional and local authorities to stop interfering with the activity of business: “No matter how the legislative power alters the procedure for setting up and running manufacturing establishments, the latter will always largely depend on numerous local authorities, starting with a village constable up to a governor-general; these local influences can be useful and beneficial only when all government authorities are imbued with the conviction that industrial development is good from both a state and national point of view and that every possible assistance that can be given to it becomes part of their official and moral duties” [Witte 1932: 138].

In 1917, the revolution erupted. Years of crisis and instability followed, and after reconstruction of state and economy, the post-revolutionary government again had to face the task of accelerating in-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>The Beginning Year of the Revolution</th>
<th>GDP per Capita</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>1640</td>
<td>around 1200</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1774</td>
<td>1287 (data from 1820)</td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1789</td>
<td>1218 (data from 1820)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1848</td>
<td>1476 (data from 1850)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1905</td>
<td>1218 (data from 1900)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>1467 (data from 1913)</td>
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<td>Russia</td>
<td>1917</td>
<td>1488 (data from 1913)</td>
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</table>
Industrialisation. The Bolsheviks perceived this challenge as requiring harsher measures. On the one hand, they saw themselves as surrounded by hostile states and needing to prepare for war, which gave urgency to industrialisation (“Either we’ll do it or they’ll crush us” [Stalin 1951: 29]). On the other hand, the Bolsheviks’ terror amounted to a social degeneration of power. They were convinced, for a number of reasons, that organic economic growth would result in the strengthening of the private sector; this being more competitive than the public sector, and ultimately, capitalism would destroy the new regime. This is why they aimed to restrict growth in agriculture while ensuring a maximum expansion of urban industry and by expanding the number of urban workers whose lives, unlike those of the peasantry, would depend entirely on the state.

These two factors encouraged resolute steps towards the accomplishment of industrialisation, which in its result, showed the use of the same means as in the late 19th century: the exhaustion of the villages’ capital, the reconstruction of the peasant community and the dominant role of the state. But under the Soviets, industrialisation took an unprecedentedly cruel form, the price of which amounted to millions of human lives. Revolution came to an end and the country returned to the solution of problems left in 1913, with a society that turned out to be exceptionally rigid, incapable of responding positively to new challenges. For that reason, when the country faced challenges in the post-industrial epoch, it did not have political or economic instruments for an adequate response. The second revolution in the country followed, all in one century.

The Russian Case: the Post-Soviet Period

To a great extent, Russia’s post-communist transformation was shaped by the coincidence of different interrelated crises, and consequently, of several transformational processes simultaneously. The first crisis was structural: with trade opening up, the essentially industrial society was faced post-industrial challenges. Second, price shocks furthered an already building macroeconomic (financial) crisis. Third, the country faced the urgency of post-communist political and economic transformation: it was the revolutionary character of this last crisis that gave most shape to the transformation. In addition, there was a revolutionary factor, which distinguished Russia from most other post-communist countries, although not from other revolutionary situations in the past. Comparing modern Russia’s revolution to historical revolutions, to which the three simultaneous crisis situations can be added, helps
our understanding of Russia’s post-communist developmental peculiarities, as well as development following the others [Mau, Starodubrovskaya 2004].

From even a superficial glance at the events of the last fifteen years in Russia, a comparison with the great revolutions makes sense. We argue that similarities can be found even in the dynamics of crisis of the communist system, its movement from one phase to another, bearing comparison, for example, to phases depicted in the eminent work by Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution* [Brinton 1965], written in the 1930s. It compares the English, American, French and Russian (Bolshevik) revolutions. Brinton’s book could have served both as guide and political prognosis in the 1980s in the Soviet Union. The similarity of phases,\(^1\) of features of the political struggle and economic processes among past and current revolutionary periods are striking, and their similarity can assist an understanding of the character and direction of on-going changes. Analogies, of course, do not prove anything. However, they help identify problems faced and the means chosen to resolve them; in that sense, the similarities are surely the basis of such analogies.

The impact of revolution on the further development of a country’s economic and political system is one of the most contested and ideologically divisive issues in historical writing of the past century and a half. Three main points of view can be seen in the debates. First, revolution is seen as a catalyst of economic progress, delivering the country’s economy from the fetters of the former regime. The understanding of revolution as the locomotive of history is by no means a Marxist innovation for such an interpretation was expressed by French liberal historians as far back as the beginning of the 19th century. Second, revolution is seen, by contrast, as lacking much influence since the main directions of development have already been determined in the old regime. This thesis dates back to to Tocqueville [Tocqueville 1997]. Last, there is a conservative view, postulating a negative impact on the country’s development [Hirschman 1991].

\(^1\) The following are his major phases of the revolutionary process: “the pink period” (or “honeymoon”), when all forces are consolidated around the task of overthrowing the old regime, when power is in the hands of an extremely popular “moderate government”; polarisation, the dissociation of social and political groups leading to the collapse of the “moderate government”; the radical period, when the final demolition of the old system takes place and a revision becomes impossible; Thermidor (if one uses the famous term of the French revolution), creating a foundation for the strengthening of the state and the stabilisation of the system; post-Thermidorian stabilisation and emergence from revolution.
Of course history gives us examples of all three results. Also, one cannot use history in an experimental way such that doses of revolution can be analyzed scientifically. The counter-factual, “What if not?” is difficult to construct. Our objective is to compare countries within parallel historic epochs so that we can also compare contexts. One fact is certain: the character of post-revolutionary society and its social and political outlook significantly depend on the very progress of revolutionary transformation. It is precisely here that new groups of interests and elite factions are being constituted. It is precisely here that a new system of property relations is being constructed. However, it would be a mistake to conclude that following such new formations, social conflict is reduced. The presence of irreconcilable issues among leading groups and interests is the main source of instability, compounded by the governing power’s incapacity to exercise consistent political and economic policy. That conflict of interest groups is substantially reduced afterwards, a position common among historians and political scientists, especially those who have Marxist views, is not reflected in the evidence.

A comparison of the English and the French revolutions is useful in this regard. The former is believed to be unfinished and ambivalent, since the landed aristocracy, tied to the old regime, was preserved. The French revolution, in turn, led to a much deeper transformation of property relations, primarily in terms of land, and opened up a wide field for a quick political strengthening of the entrepreneurial classes, first of all the industrialists and the bankers. The course of events, however, requires closer scrutiny. In England, with the post-revolutionary dominance of the landed elites and sharp conflict between the leading groups of interests, in fact, fertile ground was laid for the beginning of economic growth, leading to the industrial revolution. The struggle between free traders (the industrialists) and protectionists (the landowners) turned out to foster an economic and political opposition, monitoring and pushing forward the elite for over two centuries. Economic competition engendered political divisiveness which resulted in no social faction gaining dominance over the state or being in a position to use political power for mercenary purposes.

In post-revolutionary France, by contrast, results led to deceleration of economic growth: all main groups were interested in protectionism—the peasants, the industrialists and the bankers. Such a coalition stood the test of restoration and a new revolution because not one government dared to challenge it. The result is evident; up to the

2. Perhaps, Bastiat’s satirical sketches and, first of all, his pamphlet *The Candlemaker’s Petition* express the depth most eloquently [Say, Bastiat 2000: 89–93].
1850s, economically, France continued to lag behind England [Crouzet 1990, 1996]. Thus, the change in the character of property ownership is more important than the change of owners. Analogous examples can be drawn elsewhere in history. The key examples lead to an important hypothesis: if the formation of consensus with regard to relatively basic social values is the main condition for a country stably emerging from revolution, then the absence of conflict with regard to the questions of economic policy appears to be a source of stagnation and the preservation of economic backwardness.

**Revolution and the Economic Order**

At the heart of the economic problems leading from revolution are, first of all, ongoing political crisis and rising transaction costs, which reducing stimuli for entrepreneurship and create uncertainties for decision-makers. Uncertain prospects facing the new economic order add to uncertainties, for example, one consequence of the redistribution of property, that new appropriators cannot value their new acquisitions. It is important in this regard—problems facing the new regime—that institutional structures of society have broken down; that is, “the rules of the game” are now different. With a weak state, unable to ensure law enforcement, and therefore legal contracts, entrepreneurs’ transactions costs mount.

These problems are aggravated by civil war that often follow great revolutions. With these uncertainties, enterprises are “prone to choose a short term strategy,” that is, “the most profitable businesses become trade, redistribution and black market operations” [North 1997: 92]. These activities, mediatory and commercial, although more immediately profitable than production, are nevertheless significantly damaged by instability as new “rules of the game” emerge. We therefore argue that such transaction costs are a main factor in the deterioration of the economic situation in all revolutions, even in England, where initially, property rights were assured to a greater degree than initially in other revolutions.

At present, Russia faces severe economic problems as a consequence of these conditions, inducing the rise of transactions costs. The low competitiveness of Russian enterprises can be associated with the inability of state power to ensure stable management conditions or, even more fundamentally, law enforcement. Corruption in the state machinery and in the courts are the main obstacles to more rapid economic development. Enterprises have to take into account peculiar “expenditures for the execution of the law” (that is, for the implementation of justice, for the obtainment of a fair decision from state agencies), which not only increases costs but also enhances uncertainties.
Second, also fundamental to the way revolutions affect the economic order is the way state finances are managed, in particular, through the budget process. Financial crises can be associated with state’s inability to pay for its expenditures in a traditional lawful manner. How state finance works is critical for successive regimes, the pre-revolutionary order, subsequent revolutionary governments, and the lasting stable state authority to emerge. State finance is critical throughout revolution. By this, we mean not only contributions, requisitions and new taxes but also measures aimed at the redistribution of property, such as nationalisation, privatisation, and various confiscations. All these emerge from a search for resources by the revolutionary authorities. It is important to add, that expansionary funding of the state budget also included paper money emission, an instrument of the two great revolutions of the 18th century (the American and French revolutions).

The crisis of state finance leading to and during revolution takes the following forms. First, there is a decline in tax collection and, consequently, the government’s access to coercive means to collect taxes. Eventually the authorities either shut their eyes to this problem, resorting to unconventional means of funding the treasury and even abolish taxes as happened in France in 1789–1791, or they reduce taxes in the midst of a budget crisis, as occurred in the USSR in 1990–1991. Naturally, the motivation to reduce taxes lies in a search by a weak government for political support. It is not surprising that in post-communist Russia, the peak periods of non-payment of taxes coincided with the moments of the most dramatic weakening of state power (August–September 1993 and the winter of 1995–1996), when the question of state survival was apparently raised.

Second, in regard to state finance, the role of loans increases drastically. These can be not the usual voluntary loans but “voluntary-compulsory,” or more often, compulsory. The latter often pass into contributions imposed on the supporters of the old regime. The authorities are inclined to enter into individual treaties with taxpayers or big financiers while coming to an agreement about their contribution to the state budget. Although loans are not always available to the revolutionary government (as happened in revolutionary France and Bolshevik Russia), as a general rule, revolutionaries (even at a radical stage) are capable of conducting internal and external borrowings, although on a narrowing scale as the revolution progresses. The USSR at the time of Perestroika and post-communist Russia had broad access to borrowings (initially external), and external indebtedness during that period increased dramatically (approximately five-fold from 1985 to 1997) with a parallel growth in the internal debt.
Third, in respect to state finance, some form of default on government obligations, as a means of breaking with the heritage of previous regimes, is typical for revolutions. Common examples include the refusal of the Thermidorian government in eighteenth-century France to redeem two thirds of its debt (“the bankruptcy of two thirds”) and in early twentieth-century Russia, the refusal of the Bolshevik government to meet the debt of previous regimes. Then in 1998, Russia executed an internal debt default, although it continued scrupulously to pay off its external debt. In essence, default in this situation becomes the means of overcoming budget imbalances, a sign that the authorities are ready to settle down on the course to financial recovery.

Fourth, the state’s non-payments to the recipients of treasury funds gain widespread acceptance. This is especially characteristic of the final phase of revolutions when the government is already strong enough to conduct a retaliatory financial course, but does not yet have the sufficient political capital formally to balance the budget (that is, for an increase in income to cover liabilities or decrease in liabilities to the level of real income). Non-payment, as shown above, was a serious problem of post-communist Russia, reaching almost 40% of GDP. Non-payment affected not just the budget but all spheres of the country’s economic life, tax non-payments (to the budget), delays in salary payments (both in state as well as private enterprises), and businesses indebtedness to each other. Then, as revolution draws to a close and the political regime is consolidated, measures for financial and economic stabilisation bear fruit. The beneficiaries, however, are not the reformers or radicals, but the post-revolutionary governments. Tax innovations of the Long parliament and the Protectorate, for example, translated into gains by the Restoration government, and the stabilisation measures undertaken by the Directory were manifest fully only under Napoleon Bonaparte.

To summarize, the weakening of the state and its inability to collect taxes and borrow financial resources on the market force the authorities to resort to “nontraditional” sources of income (at least during peacetime), that is, they resort to the redistribution of property and paper money emission, two economic mechanisms by no means alternatives, but, indeed, closely interrelated. As the experience of the

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3. Probably Burke was the first to indicate this connection. He sharply criticised the issue of French assignats as “an outrageous affront to property and liberty,” pointing out, first of all, the redistributive function of assignats: “The alliance of bankruptcy and tyranny, at any time or in any nation, seldom manifested itself as such a violent outrage upon credit, property and liberty, as this compulsory paper currency has become.” Burke saw in paper money the source of
French assignat shows, the redistributed property can serve a mechanism for paper money supply.

Such inflationary mechanisms of funding revolutions are well explored in the economic literature [Falkner 1919; Dalin 1983; Aftalion 1990]. The government’s logic is relatively simple. Revolution finds itself in a financial trap; the revenue base is destroyed whereas expenditures of revolutionary power dramatically increase. The government resorts to the printing press and the gap between the amount of money and the gold standard (or the commodity and resource base) increases more and more. Money loses value which impels the government to apply a standard set of coercive actions, including the demand that monetary notes be accepted at face value, the prohibition of coined money, among other things as a measure of value (for the indexation of prices), and outright bans on trading basic consumer goods at market prices.

Among reactions to these measures, refusal to accept such “rules of the game” even under the threat of the death penalty (as in Jacobian France), is common. High inflation leads to the gradual exhaustion of the emissive source of budget supply. Emission, triggered by the restriction or absence of other means of funding, first of all taxes, undermines the fiscal base even more; consequently, the proportion of non-inflationary sources of funding the budget steadily declines as inflationary processes develop. As a result, the amount of paper money in circulation increases at an accumulating pace, whereas its value declines even more rapidly.

Inflationary funding of the budget was an important element of Russian economic policy in the 1990s. Although after 1994, inflation was held in check, and hyperinflation played a relatively minor role in redistribution by comparison with privatisation.

Property redistribution is one of the most important mechanisms of the revolutionary authority’s resolution of social, economic and political problems. Too easily accepting politicians’ own declarations, and economists observations, scholars are inclined to interpret the redistribution of property as a means of enhancing the economic system’s efficiency. That is, they see redistribution as part of the implementation of new, more effective economic management. Whether it be privatisation or nationalisation (as in the revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries and at the end of the 20th century), revolutionary authorities claim such efficiencies. However, efficiency cannot be monitored until after political stabilisation and the end of revolution. Until then, two other functions of property redistribution are primary: the strengthening of the political base

future crises and the impossibility of success for the French revolution as opposed to the English one [Burke 1993: 205, 216, 239–245].
(handing property over to political and social groups supporting the ruling power), and the acquisition of additional resources for the treasury.

Past and present revolutionary governments used a complex set of mechanisms for redistribution. They guarantee the emission of securities through the redistributed property by which authorities pay off their debts. The results of these transactions are clear. Under the circumstances of political uncertainty, the receivers of such security papers prefer liquidity and sell papers with a large discount. Property is thus concentrated in the hands of a small group of owners, who acquire it at a discount. It is not surprising that among the new purchasers, representatives of the new political elite emerge.

**Conclusion**

From a discussion of revolutionary events in Russia in the late 20th century, we see a contrast with most Central and Eastern European countries, where no revolution, in the strict sense of the word, took place; society and the elite were not divided over basic values. No matter how deep were the internal conflicts, in Central and Eastern Europe, states strived to find a place in a united Europe. Consequently, authorities did not lose control over social and economic processes. The revolution in Russia shows that revolution as one of several mechanisms of transformation is unpredictable: scholars failed to predict the imminent collapse of Soviet communism, as historically, revolutions were not predicted. What was unpredictable was the mechanism of transformation, revolution, however. Attitudinal change preceded all great revolutions of the past, from the English to the Bolshevik examples. It is not that change itself was unexpected—their advent was in the air—the mechanism of these changes, their spontaneous character, uncontrolled by the authorities, was unexpected.

There is one feature in particular that distinguishes the Russian transformation of 1980–1990 from other great revolutions of the past. In essence, we are dealing with the first full-scale revolution taking place under the conditions of an industrial crisis and the transition to a post-industrial society in a country with an overwhelming majority of population being urban with a high level of education and culture. Regardless of material problems before events in Russia, the level of well-being was significantly higher than in analogous periods of the past. This has a significant imprint on the ongoing transformation of modern Russia, but it cannot change the basic characteristics of the revolutionary mechanism.

4. In the second edition of *Modern Revolutions* John Dunn postulates the impossibility of revolutionary transformation in communist countries [Dunn 1989].
References


Representation and Self-Empowerment: 
Russian Street Protests, 2011–2012

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Keywords: street rallies; political protest; political representation; self-empowerment; revolutionary break; subjectivity; social classes; parties and parliament; political hegemony; direct democracy; common interest; utopia; sociological interview; social movements research.

Abstract: The article introduces into forms of political and social representation specific to the recent Russian civil protests. The analysis is based on numerous interviews with protesters and observation of evolution of the movement. The data challenges the frequently referenced “crisis” of representation and bring to light a variety of coordination centers set in competition for a political mandate of the protest movement, as far as a vague will of a considerable part of protesters to be represented. Media coverage of the street rallies, including their global attribution to a “middle class,” is critically examined along with the protesters’ own statements and rallies agenda, in order to check the presence of an actual social or revolutionary representation. The article reveals a break with apparatus and hegemonic models of collective action in current mobilization which provides it with new (in the Russian context) forms of political subjectivity based on self-empowerment and self-trial.
While explaining the mass street protests of 2011–2012 in Russia’s major cities, Russian commentators have tried out a multitude of metaphors: from revolution to carnival. However, all of them were only weakly connected to the facts inasmuch as they did not rely on research. International commentators, in turn, made comparisons with the Arab Spring, the Indignados and other world movements without taking into account the denial of the Russian protest to articulate demands for social justice and to publicly criticise representative democracy.¹ The formal incentive for the mass protests for “fair elections” were violations of the electoral procedure reported by hundreds of observers and revealed through social networks and mass media. However, a series of sociological interviews conducted at the street protests by the Independent Research Initiative (NII Mitingov)² showed that the protests correlated only implicitly with electoral motives. The violation of electoral procedures, indeed, served as a trigger for the mobilisation but the dilemmas of institutional representation and citizen control, as well as social equality, did not become the directive for protest actions. The demands to “repair” public institutions stood side by side with the distrust of permanent representation that could have solidified the outcomes of the movement institutionally.

¹. Demands for direct democracy were, first and foremost, voiced by radical activists familiar with international practices.

². The Independent Research Initiative (NII Mitingov) collected over 500 interviews at both protest and pro-government actions in 2011–2013. Alan Amerkhanyanov, Alexander Bikbov, Alexandrina Vanke, Ksenia Vin’kova, Anna Grigoryeva, Svetlana Erpyleva, Anastasiya Kalk, Carine Clément, Georgii Konovalov, Elvira Kuchitskaia, Pavel Mitenko, Olga Nikolaeva, Mariia Petrukhina, Egor Sokolov, Irina Surkichanova, Arsenii Sysoev, Denis Tualakov, Ekaterina Tarnovskaia, Aleksandr Tropin, Alexander Fudin, and Dar‘ia Shafrina have been involved in the collection and analysis of the data at various times.
In my earlier article, I defined the semantic structure of mobilisation as constellated by the anger directed against the elitist privileges of state officials, maximalist legalism, apolitical irony and the assertion of the protesters’ own cultural sophistication as opposed to the “cultural ignorance of the authorities” [Bikbov 2012a: 2]. In this present article, I shall characterise the structure of the social action that generated this semantic field by means of connecting with each other the contradictory demands for both a system of political delegation “working fairly” and the inclination of the protest participants to self-representation.

The Non-Electoral Protest “For Fair Elections”

What the critical public campaign preceding the parliamentary elections on December 4, 2011 and the presidential elections on March 5, 2011 promoted was not singular candidates but rather the importance of negative choice: “For any party but United Russia,”3 “For any candidate but Putin.” A few years earlier, in 2007–2008, some losing candidates had already tried to prove fraud but did not find mass support because of the general distrust of institutional players. The criticism of 2011, addressed to the entire (in)operating electoral system, and the appeal to sideline important monopolists proved to be efficient precisely because it ceased to demand loyalty to any one party or candidate. As a consequence, the willingness to participate in the elections did not tie a voter with project expectations to any potential winner: “Putin’s not great, Zyuganov is rather old, but I take well to communism. Out of the new faces, Prokhorov is pleasant, but I doubt him”4 (Moscow, 4.02.12,5 f., approx’ 25 years old, h/e, private entrepreneur).6 “I don’t support any of the existing forces. But anyway, I’ll support some of them against the existing party of power” (m., approx’ 30 years old, h/e, IT specialist).

Electoral activity was not completely negative but, nevertheless, critical distance to candidates and their programs was inscribed into posi-

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3. United Russia is the ruling party.
4. In the conventional network of political coordinates, Gennady Zyuganov (the Communist party) and Mikhail Prokhorov (a right-wing liberal party) are complete opposites.
5. Here and further on, the first indication in parenthesis is the place and date of the rally at which the interview was taken. If in the subsequent quotations a different place and date are not stated it means that the interview was taken at the same rally.
6. Here and further on, abbreviations in the characteristics of respondents mean: m.—male, f.—female, h/e—higher education, s/e—secondary education, approx’—approximately.
tive motivation: “I voted for the party Yabloko,\textsuperscript{7} I sympathise with them but not in everything. But if there is a movement or party that corresponds better with my requirements and interests <…> then maybe I’ll myself show more attention” (m., approx’ 25 years old, h/e, PR manager). The same incredulity marked the possible professionalisation of the protest’s moral representatives as institutional: “I don’t have a liking for a lot of the organisers <…> Akunin, Parfyonov\textsuperscript{8}—yes, of course, they are all the intelligentsia, but I can’t imagine them becoming politicians” (Moscow 24.12.11, f., approx’ 45 years old, h/e, biologist in a pharmaceutical company).

The semantic border dividing the sensitivity of a situational civil protest from the world of “dirty” institutional politics preserved its constitutive character throughout these two years of mobilisation. Attempts by existing parties to take over the stage of the protest provoked rejection: “I didn’t like that party representatives are trying to use this rally for their own advantage. As if they tried to draw more voters to themselves <…> In reality we are trying to get rid of Putin but what is happening on the stage looks as if somebody is trying to decide for us who will perform” (m., approx’ 25 years old, transport worker). This was assonant to the reactions of the protests’ situational coordinators’ to professional politicians: “We’ve gathered here not for your sake!” What was the sense of this movement, if not electoral? Many among the protesters understood the call for fair elections as a metaphor for a much deeper reformation of all society: “Fair elections is like a sign of changes in the country <…> If the elections are fair then it will mean respectively that law has taken hold much more broadly in the country” (f., two h/e, employed). “So that everybody bears responsibility. So that the laws simply work, so that the courts are fair, so that the army is strong… that is, I mean, so that everything works and functions normally” (m., approx’ 30 years old, h/e, engineer). The essential factor here was not a demand for a radical change of the regime but the expectation of its peaceful optimisation. The street movement, to a large extent, unfurled as a protest in the name of fair stability.

Those who declared their readiness to be represented did not see themselves as participants in political work. Criticising institutional politicians, they expected not to take dangerous power into their own hands but rather to compel others, who are already in power or might come into it, to act less greedily and selfishly: “I don’t want to partic-

\textsuperscript{7} Yabloko is a party with a social-democratic version of the liberal program.
\textsuperscript{8} Boris Akunin is a famous detective writer, Leonid Parfyonov is a popular TV presenter from the 2000s.
ipate in politics because I understand that it is a very dirty business. The only way I can have an impact on pushing the course of this dirty water in the direction I need is to have choice, but choice is what I don’t have” (m., approx’ 30 years old, h/e, IT specialist). “We need a certain committee with certain powers, whereas only certain people should negotiate at the level of the authorities” (Moscow, 24.12.11, f., over 60 years old, school mentor). Institutional representatives acted here not as trusted delegates but professionals, capable of conducting hard technical work.

Not being electoral, the protest also did not have a class dimension. Russian and international media regularly appealed to the spirit of “the middle class.” As I have demonstrated earlier [Bikbov 2012c], those few participants who agreed with this label expressed their reservation about its realism: “I hope to reckon myself among the middle class but, frankly speaking, I have quite a vague perception of what that is” (m., approx’ 25 years old, h/e, PR manager). While “the middle class” was mentioned in the mass media about twice as frequently in the first three months of mobilisation than in the previous three months, reference of this in blogs did not undergo any noticeable change throughout the same six months of mobilisation. The attribution of the protests to “the middle class” right after the first mass actions on the December 5–6, 2011 turned out to be an exceptionally swift and effective media campaign in which both liberal and pro-government mass media were in agreement. The social demands of the vulnerable strata, such as affordable education and a decrease in the cost of housing services and utilities, along with the problematization of high taxes and bureaucratic expenses for business by the successful strata, were subject to (self)censorship in the public agenda of the protests. As a consequence, street actions did not reproduce the participants into a mobilised class. The collective identity of the movement was defined by the mottos of a universal consolidation and appeals to defeat first “the common enemy,” and only then to think about political differences.

**The Protest Between the Hegemonical Representation and the Non-Hegemonical Moderation**

Non-politically affiliated participants demonstrated their anti-institutional preferences in the form of protest. It was not only perverse utterances in the street space and in the social networks, ironically mocking the figures of “high” politics. The actual fact of participating in the protests did not imply the mandate of trust. It sufficed for many protesters just to know the time and place of a legalized rally in order to present
themselves with their banners, not approved by anybody but family or friends and not agreed with any coordinating body. The inclination of the protesters to show up correlated with a high, on average, level of education and a professional or educational specialisation in intellectual and service sectors. In fact, in the street mobilisation that followed the elections “with no real choice,” the utopia of other, better representatives of the future peacefully coexisted with the participants’ readiness to or capability of cultural self-representation.10

More politically experienced participants suggested two competing models of coordinating protest actions. Radical political activists, who joined the civil movement, tried to realise a hegemony,11 “having taken the lead” of the protests through traditional representative structures. Inexperienced civil activists, professionalising in the course of the protests, more often offered situational projects built on non-hegemonical and non-leadership principles.

One of the key agencies of coordination, the Organising Committee, turned out to be a hybrid body. Being constituted of political figures from the opposition, civil activists and media figures, it initially emerged as a technical group negotiating the time and place of the protest with the mayor’s office and Police of Moscow. As a result of the unannounced redefinition of technical tasks into representative ones, it soon turned into a monopolized control centre that announced the next stage of mobilisation, formed the public agenda and spoke with journalists on behalf of protesters. What is remarkable is the collision that made this centre the result of a compromise between official authorities and the opposition, “open to dialogue.” Even before the parliamentary elections on December 4, 2011, radical groups of liberal and left-wing activists agreed with Moscow City Government that a rally should be held on the December, 10 in one of the squares in the city center. When it became obvious after the spontaneous mobilisation of the December, 4–6 that the number of participants in the legal protest would significantly exceed the stated three hundred people, the Government demanded a change

9. On average, two thirds of the protests were formed by people with higher education. It is one of a few points of agreement between the results gathered by the Independent Research Initiative (NII Mitingov) and the data of large poll agencies.
10. I discuss the function of the first protests as the city stage of self-representation in more detail in my article [Bikbov 2012b].
11. By hegemonical practice I, first of all, imply the direction of collective actions by the politically most experienced and ideologically prepared representative (elected or appointed). This model is characteristic of both traditional parties and a range of non-party activist groups and non-governmental organisations.
of location. But it did not enter into dialogue with the official organisers, instead appointing to this role a famous politician of Yeltsin’s period, Boris Nemtsov, in such a way providing him with a critical resource for recruiting the future Organising Committee.\textsuperscript{12}

As a counter to this behind-the-scenes Organising Committee, radical political and civil activists created an alternative centre of representation, the Civil Movement.\textsuperscript{13} Originally its structure resembled a talk shop, but the first compromise votings reproduced it as a political organ. With all their differences, self-proclaimed delegates leaned towards a hegemonical perception of political action, that is, they intended to give direction and a program to a spontaneous street protest. Their political suggestions were majorly ignored by the Organising Committee, except for the publication of a list of political prisoners.

In January 2012, the Civil Movement, amounting to 300–500 participants, carried out elections for an internal representative body, allocating quotas to civil organisations and the three major political factions in its make-up: liberal, ultra-left and ultra-nationalistic.\textsuperscript{14}

Both the Organising Committee and the Civil Movement aimed at the permanent representation of the protest, operating between mass street actions and laying claim to their technical and program preparation. On the opposite pole, situational coordination centres were formed. The declaratively apolitical Workshop of Protest Actions, the politically charged Occupy-assemblies, the initiative group White Ribbon and mobile groups of civil observers could be reckoned among them. In the majority of cases, they declared their non-leadership character or adhered to it in practice. Moderators acted here not as permanent delegates of the protest but mediators in the discussion, facilitating the participants public statements and action. Such structures were not devoid of the asymmetries of political and symbolic power: the team of moderators was relatively stable and received much media acknowledgement.\textsuperscript{15} However, titular and political hierarchies were sus-

\textsuperscript{12} The role of Nemtsov as a delegate-negotiator for the movement, agitating for re-election, was all the more ambiguous for only a few days earlier he encouraged a boycott of the elections altogether.

\textsuperscript{13} This body changed several names, I use one of them for convenience purposes. It is worth mentioning that while the absolute majority of the participants of the Civil Movement were not admitted to the meetings of the Organising Committee, a reverse inclusion was regular.

\textsuperscript{14} The voting was conducted by means of text messaging. Votes given to certain candidates amounted predominantly to dozens and hundreds, which serves as yet one more indication of the specifically activist character of this body.

\textsuperscript{15} Among whom can also be reckoned the moderators of Moscow Occupy-assemblies, the key role in public recognition and acknowledgement of which be-
As the results of the voting showed, expectations were inflated. According to
50
pended in favour of practical and communicative competence, where-
as decisions were limited to the tactical tasks of a specific action or a
series of such.

The principle of coordination in these cases was the authorisation of
all the participants to personally contribute to the debate, which coun-
terposed them to the hegemonical practice of doctrinal discussion. Par-
ticipants in situational communication were granted procedural equal-
ity, doctrinal disputes were censored. Both the Occupy-assemblies, or-
ganised by non-authoritarian left-wing activists, and the Workshop of
Protest Actions, under the patronage of journalist Masha Gessen, cre-
ated work groups, authorised by the respective centre, that did not de-
egate their powers to anybody and had to “do everything themselves.”
Such mechanics of inclusion disposed its participants to a self-trial—the
transferral of their skills and intuitions into the protest space. The distin-
guishing trait accompanying such pedagogics of (self)empowerment was
the rejection of revolutionary preparatory ascesis and of the hegemoni-
al stigmatisation of “laymen” and “commonness,” characteristic of ac-
tivism exercising a shepherd’s control over the ideologically “immature”
neophytes. In the agencies of situational coordination, extreme toler-
ance was shown to the absence of an ideological commitment, whilst
privileged attention was given (in the case of the Workshop) to the de-
politicized skills and resources of the participants. This pedagogics did
not dictate a separation from one’s professional, family and other “non-
activist” time in one’s life, admitting in advance the limitation of free
resources and highlighting the value of the fact that participants were
ready to “drop everything and come,” “fly off to a meeting,” etc.

In October 2012, representatives, who nominated themselves in the
wake of the street movement, tried to legitimise themselves through
the project of the Coordinating Council of Opposition. Potentially, this
body was a united “catch-all” [Kirchheimer 1966] opposition proto-
party, uniting “nonsystemic” forces ranging from the social democrats
and liberals to the ultra-nationalists; in reality—a variant of an alterna-
tive parliament. Agitation and the procedure of voting for candidates
were built upon the presumption of mass involvement and replicated
the model of general parliamentary elections. The organisation in-
herited from the Civil Movement the principle of quota representation
for social activists, liberals, the left and nationalists. According to pub-

l. As the results of the voting showed, expectations were inflated. According to
the organisers’ data, only slightly over eighty thousand people took part in it.
lic announcements from the project’s authors, they intended to secure for themselves the permanent representation of the protest by means of political mandate: “We should do everything so that the elected leaders of the protest movement have legitimacy, so that they speak on behalf of citizens who have chosen them and not as if they were self-nominated” (Dmitry Gudkov) [Faibisovich 2012].

In general, throughout all the series of attempts to speak with the authorities on behalf of the protest movement, journalists and even its participants, there was the constantly reproduced act of converting organisational mediation into political representation. Both “old” political groups and newly emerged alliances became prospective authorised agents as soon as they took upon themselves the functions of technical mediators and received recognition from the mass media. None of these permanent bodies received the decisive reciprocated authorisation from mass participants of the protest movement who preferred self-representation and situational coordination. The Coordinating Council of Opposition once again merely superseded the tension, begotten by the collective desire to postpone delegation in the protest, and masked it by the procedural form of parliamentary elections in miniature.

Self-Empowerment, Self-Trial and Normalisation

Not only the authorising pedagogics of certain protest initiatives, but also the actual appeal to go out onto the streets were successful among an educated public thanks largely to the following model: *I will do it, if you want you can join me.*[^17] It provided the pleasure of being together, inseparable from the protest action, formerly stigmatized, whether it be public criticism of the political establishment or a united shouting of slogans. Those who were already sufficiently empowered in terms of their position in society, possessors of the skills of professional autonomy and social initiative, tended to reproduce a similar unordinary experience in their personal experiment. Among those interviewed, people with higher education having some sort of experience of governing their own lives were represented in an unquestionably higher proportion: they had the knowledge of searching for their place in the market of employment and freelance occupation, of working in research institutes, of partaking in charitable and local initiatives such as volunteering for orphanages or combating forest fires in the summer of 2010, etc.

[^17]: I discuss this regime of mobilisation in greater detail in my articles published in Russian.
Along with the opportunity of acquiring activist experience in the course of a conjoined public action (and not by means of doctrinal training beforehand), the remarkable trait of the movement was its educational character. The desire to “simply get to know” something about the unfurling events often sounded as the motive for participation: “To hear the presenters, to see how many people would come, just to be here” (Moscow, 24.12.2012, f., approx’ 25 years old, s/e, IT specialist); “Just to come out and see how many people support the same point of view” (f., approx’ 25 years old, h/e, scientist). The broad convergence of political and intellectual significations of such an experiment suspended all the preliminary conditions characteristic of conventional politics. Political opponents, having gained access to a new and attentive audience, agreed to appear together, whereas the mass participants tried to hear out everyone. Apolitical protesters ceased taking into account the formally “dangerous” or simply discredited reputation of certain speakers, perceiving them as “democratic” on the basis of their united presence on the main stage of mobilisation.18 The veto on anyone’s exclusion from the common movement gave the highest legitimacy not to independent representatives but to the very idea of unity. This served as the direct antithesis to the hostile tactics of the authorities: “It seems that the whole spectrum is represented here and all people stand calmly side by side. This is how a normal society should be organised” (f., approx’ 50 years old, h/e, chief accountant). In such a way, the protest experiment was not only critically addressed to the government, it became a transient realization of the utopia of a reunion of a politically divided society, a return to communal belonging that phantasmatically preceded any differences.

This explains the durability of the movement that was regularly resumed, not with an electoral or class agenda, but as a result of the gap between an abnormal (corrupt), splitting governance and the normative ideal of public institutions that would allow people to gather together freely, parties to act on behalf of the citizens’ interests, officials not to steal and the state to work for the greater public good. An even more sturdy reference mark of the presumption of norm was the personal experience of “normal life” by the participants. Explaining a possible contribution to the alteration of society, the protesters offered such solutions as, among others:19 “To obey the laws, to treat people around me well;” “I simply support civil responsibility every day. I give a seat

18. It should not go unnoticed that such attention, among other things, legitimised as democratic delegates those who organically stand against democracy, a range of the ultra-nationalists and ultra-liberals in particular.

19. The full formulation of the question: “What can you personally do to alter the situation [in the country]?”
to the elderly, I help them by carrying their bags;” “Not to litter, not to spit cigarette butts on the ground;” “We can bring up our cool son so he becomes a good person;” “To do all the right things;” “To help simply by my being present here;” “To go to the elections and vote;” “The only thing we can do is just to keep doing what we are doing right here and now. <…> We need to participate online. Facebook;” “To participate in volunteer initiatives,” etc.20

In other words, the participants saw the extraordinary measure of changing the unacceptable order in its coercion to a privately accepted norm. No matter how discouraging the conviction “I can do only what I am doing now” might sound in the view of public changes, it had sense and value in the latent logic of self-empowerment and individual self-representation. The practices of “normal” life bore no relation whatsoever to the official order that realised itself in fraud, the non-motivated violence of the police, the corruption of the courts and control institutions. The “normality” of the protesters authorised them to initiate a street experiment in which the abnormal institutional order was subjected to a critical trial [Boltanski, Thévenot 2006]. The result was not only the participation in legal protests but also other forms of self-trial, when habitual city practices were used as protest ones. This was expressed in collective “walks,” held without slogans or banners, that functioned as a protest message; in the conjugation of participants in the habitual recreation zones of the city; in the gathering on the Red Square in white clothes without political markings, which induced the police to arrest mere flaneurs and tourists because it was impossible to distinguish a symbol of protest from an image of seasonal fashion. This abnormal order also turned elections from a usual routine practice into a civil achievement, inviting violence from the police and members of the election committees [Bikbov 2014].

The readiness to self-trial became the mechanism of the protest complementing the distrust toward institutional representatives. The movement did not aspire to solidify their conquests institutionally because the protest experiment was focused on the self-revelation of the abnormality of the order, manifested in the reactions of the police, city and state authorities and the pro-governmental mass media. Not having led to a swift political emancipation, the street protest became, for its participants, the ground for an educational experiment.

20. The quotations are taken from interviews with participants of the protests, recorded in December 2011—February 2012 in Moscow, Saint Petersburg and Paris (the latter considers a Russian-speaking mobilisation in solidarity with the protest movement in Russia).
References


New Urban Romanticism: 
Political and Sociocultural Aspects of the Newest Russian Protest

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Keywords: new urban protests in Russia; legitimacy; legality; spectacle; theatricality; visual culture; new media; creative class; new romanticism.

Abstract: The article examines the major political, social and cultural aspects of Russian protest movements in the late 2011—early 2012. Well-established concepts used within these movements as well as their social self-characterization are analyzed. The article considers the impact of the new media environment on the shape and political limitations of this phenomenon. It argues that the novelty of the protest phenomenon is the appearance of “new urban romance.”
OVER the past months, the main topic of Russian intellectual discussions has been the succession or events in Moscow and several other large Russian cities which took place in the wake of the most recent Duma and Presidential elections. Spirited excitement reached a climax on many occasions and the events have left an important mark on the lives of participants; texts written on this topic will be important for many generations of intellectual historians. I was most interested in this last circumstance; owing to my professional and special interests, the section on “intellectuals” (far less so “politics”) has significantly grown in my Internet bookmarks during this time. However, I had no inclination to write anything on the subject. The situation mirrors the reasons that historians differ in their estimation of the epoch of Peter the Great: some enthusiastically refer to it as a critical moment in Russian history, whilst others discern in it the banal continuation of the tendencies of Aleksey Mikhailovich’s reign. All in all, here I am on the side of the intellectually bored. Although, of course, I am personally happy for the emotional uplift of young students and my forever young friends and companions. Yet, a person of the writing profession has need to record current developments, if not in the form of massive treatises, then at least in the form of little notes for posterity.

Constitution Day

An indication of the crisis of (or loss of) legitimacy by the current regime due to objections to the last Duma and Presidential elections is one of the most actively played out conceptual games of recent times, but at the same time one of the least adequate. And here is why. The notion of legitimacy refers to the structure of power and governance as the aggregate of institutions and to the basic principles of the accept-
It is characteristic that the ideologists of the protest, mobilised for political re-

The question of the fully fledged civil legitimacy of the existing system brings us back to the “depths of time”—first to the system that emerged under Boris Yeltsin and then, if one is especially meticulous, further back to the history of the emergence of the Soviet state. The question, however, is too complex for only superficial examination. I will therefore limit myself to the following formulation that is indeed far from new: the contemporary Russian political and legal system of institutions exists and operates as a result of the permanent suspension of democratic procedures. The source of legitimacy of this system lies in the future, not in the present, and the future that was advocated by the protesters is in no way different from the content of the prevailing system’s mandate of legitimacy. The question of exactly whose company of friends benefits from the cur-

1. It is characteristic that the ideologists of the protest, mobilised for political re-
The Generation of Screens

One of the common clichés of the current events was the division between TV and Internet audiences. The latter understood itself as strictly thinking and independent—in contrast with the passive former, dummed down by propaganda. Notwithstanding the unbearable easiness and pleasantness of such an act of self-cognition, media critics nevertheless suggest they should pay more attention to certain formal sides of the issue first and not to impressive substantive metaphors.

In the context of our problem, it is appropriate to pose the simple question of the essence of the TV medium as a message and its significance for the political fate of modern societies. Politics in the age of television, with few exceptions, ceases to be a complexly mediated structure with party programs, discursive political press, social-political groups such as trade unions, parties, etc. The process of losing this organisational-rational structure by politics is, of course, not homogenous: the historical track of established practice slows down this process in countries with a respective paradigmatic tradition, but Russia cannot be considered to stand among them, for it lacks such a history. In its full development, this process leads to the transformation of politics into a TV show, founded on the direct emotional relationship to the personality of a politician explicitly present on your home screen (“audience democracy” [Anashvili 2009: 33–56; Kurennoy 2005]). But the Russian internet audience is not so different in this sense from the TV one: a purely emotional personification of the protest, expressed as a direct address to Churov or Putin, clearly dominated over a possible discursive-rational complexity. In such a way, it can be concluded that the internet does not limit the efficiency of television-screen mechanisms of deforming the paradigmatic modes of modern politics, hence one can simply acknowledge the absolute similarity between TV and internet audiences. The substitution of vivacious TV news for a reflection, quickly brought forth after all this most mundane formula of the company of friends as an explanatory model. See the exemplary: “We used to have an institution of friends. … But now an institution of enemies emerged of its own accord” [Revzin 2012]. The formula of thinking contrariwise here, of course, is the criterion of itself and its opposite.
venomous demotivators did not make any noticeable adjustments to this similarity.

The direct emotionality on which TV-audience democracy is based also revealed another aspect within the web community. Web interaction begets its own emotionality and logic of self-assurance, the very same principle of screen reduction of complexity at its core. The intense web protest interaction that reached its culmination by the March elections placed the participants in an atmosphere of expectancy of the inevitable collapse of the regime. Enthusiasm in this regard is concisely expressed by the words of the responsive parodist Sergey Shnurov:

> When all people get to know about our Khimki Forest
> Welfare and happiness will reach up to the heavens.

The growing frustration surrounding results and expectation gave rise to a wave of varied reactions, including social judgment of all the major centers of Russian electoral polls forced to provide public explanations [Sotsiologiia 2012], as well as an abundance of personal emotional disappointments.²

**Theatricalisation, Emotionality and New Media**

It is easy to agree with Olga Sedakova’s academic thesis that protest actions are not a carnival in the Bakhtinian sense [Sedakova 2012]. However, it is also difficult to deny that recent urban actions, to a large extent, resembled a theatrical staging (including such forms as puppet protests or “Lego-rallies” in some cities where there were no mass actions). The individualised theatricalisation of the rally participants was one of the most remarkable peculiarities of the protest events because, in departure from practices of self-organisation, traditional demonstration attributes (marching columns, banners, orators), revealed an unusual sociocultural novelty. Theoretically speaking, this peculiarity

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². For example: “I shall be frank. I wanted to see how this “monstrosity” works at a microlevel level,” that is at the level of precinct election committees. I wanted to see “stuffings,” “carousel voting,” “swindlers-chairmen,” etc. with my own eyes. I wanted to see all the things that many observers described after the Duma elections. Instead, I saw the procedure of elections in its chemically pure form from the inside. Neither I nor, by all accounts, other observers saw any violations, any “lawlessness” <…> the Fourth of March became the day of giving up illusions for the thousands of observers-neophytes who took upon themselves this mission amid the enthusiasm from the mass protests. We are not Russia, we are merely its part, and moreover, not the most numerous” [Uzlaner 2012].
can be considered to be the realisation of several types of possible factors (that could be combined or redistributed in different ways among various groups of participants), the factual correlation of which cannot, however, be determined without a special investigation. For that reason, let us limit ourselves to the philosophical procedure of relating the structure of possibilities.

First, the individualised theatricalisation can be considered a compensation for the scarcity of Russian urban public spaces that could have become the regular scene for such forms of self-expression. Even in the biggest cities, dandyism is for the most part packaged into the confined spaces of clubs or shopping centers. Rallies, however, turned out to be a spontaneous form of street gathering of a referential audience that could hardly be expected to appear in other urban localities.

Secondly, contemporary culture with its tendency toward individualism and fragmentation does not dispense with the need for collective emotional experience (moreover, it even intensifies it), the expression of which does not find any intelligible forms in Russian contemporary urban space (indeed, some bureaucratised “city day” cannot be regarded as such). It is not Le Bon’s “crowd” in the old-fashioned sense and not Kracauer’s ornament “mass.” A multitude acts here as the resonator and the accelerator of individual emotionality realised, among other things, in the form of theatrical staging. As if Yevgeni Grishkovetz multiplied into a myriad of mini-copies that with his same sincerity put on their mini-performances before a mobile audience of several thousand well-wishing spectators. On the whole, however, the emotional request to partake in protest actions is epistemologically worth considering precisely in the light of the specificity of an experience-driven society (“Erlebnisgesellschaft”), dominated by an autonomous logic that can hardly be captured by political terminology. A long list of emotional notions by which the participants identified their need to participate in these collective events and the results of their participation can be quoted here (sincerity, enthusiasm, overcoming fear, bravery, various forms of “we”-experience, extreme emotions such as clashes, arrests for a few days, and so on). However, all these emotions could have been realised in a variety of other non-political practices. Only one thing distinguishes them from political logic, namely the participants’ centrality on themselves, on their own emotional experiences and not on a purposeful-rational struggle for structural redistribution of power relations or on resolutions of a common political program. Speaking in economic terms, the need for an emotional shock, the satisfaction of which, by and by, has a costly character, was realised here in a mass and budgetary way.
Thirdly, the individuality of self-expression unfurled not only on the street but also in the new media environment, which also poses serious limitations for the possibility of employing the language of classical political theory for the analysis of these events as such. One should not, of course, overestimate the significance of the social networks for the organisation of the new protests. However, it is precisely them that could act as the catalyst for the modeling of individual forms of the observed public self-expression. The efficiency of this catalyst is based on the personified structure of the representation of the modern internet user (first of all, on social networks). The role of the new media environment can be schematically presented in the following manner: by virtue of the immediate finding of support for their oscillatory opinion, the web, among other things, creates for an atomised individual an opportunity to effectively withstand the traditional forms of ideology transmitted by authorities through “big media.” The web, in its turn, forms its own highly emotional “public opinion,” as it has already been noted above. However, the very form of its media packaging (the personification of profile) stimulates an individual form of expression that in the end materially comes into conflict with a traditional symbolic apparatus of the consolidation and representation of the political position of the social majority (common slogans and banners, orators’ speeches, political claims, etc.). The widespread use of the means of visual fixation (photo cameras, etc.), directly commuted to the web space of presentation that diffused attention all throughout the rallies, ignoring the tribune, their traditional representative and center of events (in contrast to traditional journalistic optics), should also be taken into account. This aspect of the modern media environment also, although differently,

3. In this statement, I rely on a series of interviews we conducted on 24.12.2011 on Academician Sakharov Avenue with the students of Cultural Studies at NRU-HSE under the auspices of the journal The Russian Reporter (taking advantage of this opportunity, I would like to express my gratitude to the editorial board here). In particular, the polling of significant groups of participants (from 5 people onward, not formed according to party affiliations) showed that the method of their organisation has a hybrid character. The factors of family or friendly ties, common work and education played in this case the main role, whereas the social networks played an instrumental role. That is, the internet networks fulfilled a coordinating, not organisational function.

4. In relation to this, in my point of view, one also should not nourish excessive enthusiasm regarding internet networks and underestimate the role of the mass media. Because it is exactly corporate media players that acted as the points of crystallization of web public opinion and directed it.

5. That is, defining the logic of what Herman Lübbe calls “praecptio” understanding by it “the dependency of the future reception of the past, which will some-
provoked and intensified the personified theatricality of the rallies’ participants.

In such a way, it is precisely emotional individualisation, which acquired its material-symbolic fixation in the form of theatricalised attributes (slogans, costumes, etc.) and relied on a specific media structure in terms of both the event’s input and output, that furthered the key political peculiarities of the protests—their political disparity.⁶

**Homines Novi**

Neither the new media environment, nor all the more so the political situation in Russia (that has hardly changed structurally since the 1990s), nor the actions and motives of some local political groups provide sufficient or necessary explanation for the outburst of the newest social activity. Of course, the generational factor always plays its role—after all, the generation that has now embarked on the course of formal political action has not only no memory of the Soviet period but not even of the most part of the history of post-Soviet Russia. But precisely because it always plays a role the generational factor is also always insufficient.

The sociocultural explanation I offer has a partially institutional character. The problem of institutions is one of the main problems of contemporary Russian society that was voiced in very different contexts lately. It is said that there is a lack of them, that they are weak, etc. I understand the institution as a typified form of social cooperation, a steady and reproducible habitus of social interactions. In the post-Soviet period, we have to deal with the large-scale creation of new formal institutions (or establishments) [Kurennoy 2006: 5–26], first and foremost in the field of law. However, not all of them are functional and there is a suspicion that the majority of them do not work at all, whereas those that do work are not new. This peculiarity of our society was repeatedly described in modern literature (in Simon Kordonsky’s day become our present, on the kind of means by which the present is imparted to the future” [Lübbe 1994: 94–113].

6. The explanation used here is rather oriented toward the central situation of “thing” in the manner of constructions a la Bruno Latour and not toward the apparatus of the conceptualisation of political events accepted by the classical sociopolitical theory. All in all, I nevertheless risk defining the notion of “emotional individuation” here as the supporting structure of material and media attributes (limiting, in such a way, radical constructivism). Although, of course, this individuation could not have taken place in an articulated way without the presence of the latter.
works in particular). For this reason I am not going to dwell on it. Never-
etheless, there is a range of new institutions that have by now reached
the level of mass (though not universal) functionality. The two insti-
tutions that can be named among them are the institution of the for-
mal contract (the efficiency of which is based in particular on the suc-
cess of the contract of personal liability insurance for car drivers) and
the institution of consumer choice (that can also be considered new
against the background of the unprofitable Soviet economy). In oth-
er words, the majority of our citizens are used to the situation of possi-
ble consumer choice at a time when a considerable group of them, al-
though less numerous, have adopted the habit of formal contract com-
pliance. As for the institution of formal contract compliance, it is not,
of course, limited to only car drivers: the use of the consumer contract
that deals with the acts of purchase and sales of goods and services is
also commonplace. One can assume, however, that in relation to the
latter the situation is much more variegated (in virtue of the heteroge-
neity of consumer possibilities and practices), colourful and not easily
succumbing to generalisation, in contrast to the institution of the ve-
hicle insurance contract that can be considered the exemplary case of
a new post-Soviet institution.

The stabilisation of these two mass institutions means that we are
dealing with a real correction in the behaviour of large groups of people,
that is very difficult to achieve even by the most radical political meas-
ures, all the more so by means of political declarations and the contin-
uous creation of formal institutions.

If we look now from this perspective at the common denomina-
tor of the newest public protests, it is easy to notice that, content-wise,
their demands amounted to the observance of the indicated institu-
tional norms (the possibility of choice and the formal observance of
contracts) not only on the consumer and civil markets but also on the
political one. The proof is the demand for “fair elections” and the in-
dignation shown toward the lack of options with regard to the presi-
dential candidate.

This, however, does not mean that only groups of “informed con-
sumers” and “car drivers” took part in the protests, as such an expla-
nation would be naive and not confirmed by the opinion polls of the
protestors. But the very protests should also not be understood in sim-
plified terms—as the selectively organised gathering of this exact mul-
titude of people in this exact place at this exact time. These events have
a latent institutional background defining the contingency of these vis-
ible forms of activity that have a certain isomorphism in relation to the
surrounding social environment.
It does not follow from this thesis that this context is the context of all Russian society. Rather, different institutional layers of this context are integrated to different degrees into the visible form of protest activity—some of them more deeply than others. We live in a country that is far from being developed, hence we share the problems of “developing” societies that were explicitly described by Hernando de Soto [de Soto 2004]. Only a small part of the Russian population is within the legal domain of formal contract compliance. In Braudel and de Soto’s terminology, it is under the “glass dome.” Whilst the other part of our society will not empathise with “fairness” to the same degree, as they themselves function in accordance with the norms of formal institutions and live according to the rules of shadow zones. The same reservations should be made (although it is a question of different social proportions) in relation to the developed habits of consumption. In order to elaborate—in the manner of a historical reference—I shall mention that the formal “fairness” is a new occurrence in Russia and remind you of lines sung by Soviet poet Vladimir Vysotsky, revered across the nation:

The troop fulfilled the order golly good
But there was one who did not shoot.

It is clear from these lines that such societies are also possible where fairness is manifested precisely through non-compliance with the formally declared contract. And, as of yet, we are far from overcoming the inertia of one such society, although the newest developments indicate that the “glass dome” of the legal institutional environment has already acquired its contour and hardened. All the newest torrent of journalism where the theme of “two Russias,” “two peoples,” etc. is played upon can be translated into precisely this language of distinction between two types of institutional environments, accompanied by a few ad hoc specifications.

As a side remark on the institutional aspect of this problem, I shall add that the construction of the boundaries of this dome dividing formal and informal institutional environments is actively stimulated by some policies of control and rationalisation practiced by Russian bureaucracy. The difference in access to the information environment by citizens plays the key part in the realisation of these policies, which is, so to say, approved in practice by Norbert Balz’s thesis that the split, becoming all the more definite, is now drawn in the modern world along the line of “online”/“offline” players [Bolz 2011].

The following provides an illustration: the portal of state and municipal services Gosuslugi.ru has been in operation in Russia since 2010.
The connection to its services is based on citizens’ access to the Internet. The “online” citizens who use these services are endowed with special privileges compared to “offline” citizens. For example, the collapse of the infrastructure for certification of the technical condition of vehicles, that happened in May 2011 and gave impetus to make the decision at the presidential level to change this whole system, could not have been possibly noticed by the “online” Russian citizens. The “online” citizens obtained the privilege of making preliminary appointments upon filling in the online form and of the subsequent guarantee of strict abidance of the rules of certification according to this appointment—as contrasted to the “offline” citizens who continued living according to the informal rules of a “first-come-first-serve” basis (the practice of making an appointment by phone that existed beforehand was at the same time cancelled). Similar types of discrimination are at work upon application for an international passport and other basic civil documents. It is such control policies of Russian bureaucracy that shed light on the genesis of the self-comprehension of the “hamsters” who participated in the rallies one and one and a half years after the mentioned mechanism of splitting the online and offline worlds of Russian citizens took effect.

A Creative Class?

A remarkable occurrence that accompanied the rise of political activity was the explosive vivacity of discursive work aimed at the production of notions that could identify and self-identify the social substratum of the new activity. “Angry citizens,” “educated citizens,” “the Facebook generation,” “the intelligentsia,” “the new intelligentsia” and so on—in short, many different words were tried out. The astonishing peculiarity of this discursive work by metropolitan publicists turned out to be a convulsive mobilisation of conceptual resources formulated in the Soviet and pre-Soviet periods for the thematisation of the problem of the “intelligentsia” that one would think irrevocably fell into oblivion.

7. To be more exact, on the competence of access—taking into account special terminals that should, as envisioned by the developers, present an alternative for those who don't have access to the internet through their own personal computers.

8. The stated remark does not imply a retrograde criticism of this progressive service. But as any other virtuous and rational undertaking, it has unforeseen social and cultural consequences, that should at least be thematised. By the middle of April 2012 the number of registered users of the website exceeded 2 million people.

I shall stop here at only one popular social marker borrowed from Richard Florida, the “creative class.” In reality, this concept, as well as some others, was not really new in the Russian public space, it was brought into play as part of the competition between expert groups long before the protests, as an accompaniment to the program of modernisation. The issue in question was about the creation of a possible social backbone to this very modernisation—the Institute of Social Projecting, for example, brought forward the “middle class” and in 2010 the “intellectual class” [Mezhuev, Cherniaev, Kurkin, Pavlov 2010] emerged (by the way, in spite of that very “creative” class). It is not appropriate here to enter into the polemics around Florida’s concept (in some ways very dubious), but despite its theoretical weakness there is a hard core to this work that is presented in the chapter “From Social Capital To Creative Capital” [Florida 2005: 294]. In this chapter, Florida tries to provide a substantial analysis of the social peculiarities of the group he implied by using the concept “creative class,” polemically referring to Robert Putnam’s concept of “social capital” while at the same time significantly relying on Mark Granovetter’s theory of “weak ties. By addressing this central point in Florida’s work it is possible to understand whether it makes sense to call the Russian protesters a “creative class.”

On the basis that Florida’s “creative class” is distinguished by sustained individualism and aspiration to walk away from “strong ties” and be drawn to “weak” ones, the answer to this question is no. Besides, Florida’s creative class is the most mobile constituent of modern societies. It chooses its place and not merely inhabits it (which contributed to the concern of city authorities all around the world after Florida’s way, the chapter “The Nameless” bears a direct relationship to the discursive pursuits at the end of 2011 to the beginning of 2012, which this text also discusses: “the new form of intellectualism up until now has not found either the conceptual ways for its articulation or steady socio-communicative structures that have a public character.” The recent revival of public activity and the emergence of communicative density merely brought this problem of a social marker to the light of publicist discourse.

10. Only those people who are tied to a specific political space care about the long-run political rules of the game (“fair elections”). Whilst it is easier for a representative of the creative class to choose for themselves a well-developed environment, not burdening themselves by an additional identity expressed in political obligations. A small but characteristic remark: among the circle of active participants of the newest events accessible to me, it was but the parents of the newborn who in their majority acted as observers at the presidential elections. That is, a category of people who can hardly be expected to have much free time but, at the same time—thanks to the burden of long-run strategies for the future—who are interested in the compliance with the rules of the game in the present
da explained to them what is what—hence there are all these “creative cities,” branding and the “Perm experiment”). If you prefer an example from art, then the exemplary representative of the “creative class” is the protagonist in the movie *Up In The Air* 11 who is practically homeless, spending his life in airplanes and hotels and starting only short-term relationships (“weak ties”). The spirit of the new rallies, however, as far as I can comprehend it from interviews, conversations and the cloud of written texts, is of a completely different kind. It became more and more apparent as the actual emotional heat began to recede and the crystallization of some stable social practices started—to the accompaniment of speculations on the topic of “what to do next?” There was nothing unexpected in these practices, a true club of amateur singing unfolded at *OccupyAbay* (singing with the guitar, mats, sleeping bags, though there were no tents for purely technical reasons), whereas the “assemblies” organised at them praised the age-old utopia “back to antiquity!” The ideologists of the movement started speaking about various beneficial local works—to reach out to the people, to support small initiatives and projects. In other words, what followed after the act “What a great thing that we have all gathered together here!” were various publicists’ vain pursuits of a “common minor deed” that would unify us, that would not allow for the loss of feeling of sincerity, of the friend’s elbow, and of creative favour. It goes without saying that this minor common deed should go against the “big” ones—bureaucratic-rational state ones, in short, absolutely soulless, untruthful and corrupt 12—and be, on the contrary, sincere, ascetic, altruistic and small. 13

context more than anybody else. The ideal representative of the “creative class,” in turn, when discomfort reaches their limits, simply buys an airplane ticket.

11. *Up in the Air* (directed by Jason Reitman, 2009) is an adaptation of the novel of the same title by Walter Kirn (2001). The film presents a conservative criticism of the social type represented by the protagonist.

12. Here is a random selection: “Artists and writers should give preference to small publishing houses, independent projects, non-budgetary exhibitions and musical initiatives crowd-sourced on the internet. We shall use the state only as the source for our personal means for survival but our mind and heart will be someplace else. If it means exhibitions organised in private apartments and concerts in open spaces—let it be so” [Degot’ 2012] “Inasmuch as the state is not able to handle this bottomless pit of rusty iron, it is necessary to mobilise private business and common citizens: when you wake up go and fix your own fence”; “Any form of horizontal self-organisation—trade unions, house management companies, the organisations of fishing enthusiasts and societies of lifeguards—all of these are good” [Saprykin 2012]; “one should consume less and do things for other people’s sake” [Murav’ev 2012].

13. For background information: such a contemporary bureaucratic monster as the Ministry of Emergency Situations has grown in actual fact from a small civil
What has the “creative class” got to do with this? Absolutely nothing. For these events have as their backbone an entirely different motive. It is the attraction to the sincerity of “strong ties” resulting from working together on minor deeds, in the process of singing songs with the guitar under a starry sky and other understandable sociocultural practices. Of course, the question arises of how much truth there is in the words of the very ideologists suddenly awakened by the street, feeling this motive and trying to cast it now into manifestoes. What prevented them from doing these minor deeds before? Is it so that somebody put obstacles in their way of enlightening children or hindered their ascetic devotion to science, education and culture? Or stopped them from supporting non-budgetary exhibitions and concerts in open spaces? Come on!—Nothing stood in their way. They pretended and will go on pretending as usual, shrugging off their manifestoes, false in their starry-eyed idealism with appeals and instructions. “The time has come, something enormous is impending us all. A massive, strong tempest is getting ready. It is coming and it is already very near and soon it will blow off our society’s sloth, bias to labour and rotten boredom. I will work and in some twenty five to thirty years everybody will work. Everyone!”—for pity’s sake, for how long is this going to continue…

Yet, that being said—notwithstanding whatever delusions in self-identification—there is something of a novelty in this movement, something massive has taken place here. But what is it after all?

**New Urban Romanticism**

The new phenomenon of activity is at odds with itself at two levels. The first one is superficial and political. Many various, sometimes contradictory, forces aspired to privatise it politically, to take on the leadership and to direct it. These forces emerged before this phenomenon and will continue their existence regardless of it. What they have managed to instrumentalise and how profoundly is a question that is not relevant to our immediate topic. How adequate or inadequate was the perception of this phenomenon on the other hand—this question is also of no major importance.

The second level of incongruity is more substantial: “in itself” is not the same as “for itself.” The phenomenon perceives itself as being very liberal, very advanced—hence, among other things, the desire to call initiative—on the basis of a group of volunteer rescuers who worked after the earthquake in Spitak in 1988.
themselves a “creative class.” But in my opinion, the essence of this phenomenon lies in something totally different; it is a romantic reaction to the burden of modernisation, to the world in which heavyweight rationalised corporations and state apparatuses function, to the world regulated by external ties, among which a human being is not the end but the means submerged into manipulation and insincerity. It is precisely in this that the whole problem of estrangement lies, the utopia of overcoming which fed Marx’s energy; the problem that today has reached sizes and limits totally unthinkable to Marx.

The Russian phenomenon of the newest social activity is not isolated. But it belongs not to the range of Orange and Arab revolutions but rather it stands closer to the movement that simultaneously unfurled in core countries of western culture (Occupy Wall Street). It is a protest against the system of the modern world as such. Of course, this system is better in some aspects, in others lame, but these are all details. People do not want to live in a soulless world of external ties where sociality is integrated by the external structures of government (manipulation and propaganda, controlled rallies), where big corporations operate, access to the control over which is limited and scarce by definition (hence their corruption). They crave a leader similar to them, whom they understand and who is agreeable to them, they crave sincere and strong relationships, bonded by kind minor deeds. They want their handicrafts to be noticed and appreciated (even if it is one’s own political banner)—are they, indeed, in any way worse than the choir of Buranovskiy Babushki on Eurovision? They look for freedom, altruism and songs with the guitar under a starry sky, when something slightly cold and hostile surrounds them, which, however, only strengthens the emotion of a common but yet individualised shared experience. The new urban romantics want assemblies and direct Athenian democracy, not

14. The attraction to formal contract compliance described above seems at first sight to contradict this, for it can be regarded as a preference for external ties. However, if one considers this problem seriously then this peculiarity of the protest environment can nevertheless be interpreted as a variety of romantic reaction. To be more precise, as a comfortable way of dealing with the indeterminacy of the complex world, as a refined form of aspiration to one and the same “stability” (the key concept of Putin’s success in “another Russia”), that is constituted within the limits of a more complex environment of the “glass dome.”

15. It is interesting that the Babushki were not aesthetically accepted within the environment we are discussing. Here the hero is, rather, Peter Nalich, whose appearance on the preceding Eurovision was perceived precisely as the victory of this very new urban romanticism over the bureaucracy of competitive selection.
oblique political representations and the sclerotic apparatuses of governance, thanks to their enormousness. Such is the romantic reaction that is as old as the civilisation of modernity and is its necessary part and inevitable shadow.

Having mentioned the two types of incongruity, I am nonetheless not inclined to underestimate the significance of those, albeit inadequate, political forms and types of self-identification in which this romantic reaction can be encapsulated. Under certain circumstances, this protest against soulless civilisation could have been cast into a nationalist or even fascist form, under others— into a socialist revolution. The paradox of all modern revolutions, however, lies precisely in the fact that man simply wanted to give up the gun and move to the village to be with his beloved and engage in minor deeds, but as a result he spent twenty five years washing ore in a camp in the country of victorious revolution.

So, notwithstanding the analysis presented here, everything is yet possible and nothing is excluded.

References


Corruption and Revolution as Structural Foundations for the Fiction of State Interest (raison d’État)

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Abstract: The main thesis of the article is that revolution and corruption are structurally and genetically related to the process of state building (étatization). Basing itself on Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu’s ideas on the state, the article demonstrates that revolution and anti-corruption agitation are derived from a “normative pressure,” resulting from the generalization of the fiction of raison d’État. In the conclusion of the article this thesis is considered in the context of recent protest movements in the US and Russia which impose a demand on the “new norm.” The fact that the normative initiative shifted from from the governments to protest movements suggests that current models of political representation are undergoing a deep crisis.
IN THE SERIES of lectures *On the State*, Pierre Bourdieu recalls the fashionable jargon reigning in sociology when he was beginning his academic career. Love for the word “mutation” was universal. It was talked about everywhere and by everyone: “technological mutation,” “media mutation,” etc. Along with this, Bourdieu says, even the most superficial analysis led to raising the fundamental question of how powerful the mechanisms of reproduction are: what are the reasons for the obstinacy with which societies reproduce themselves in spite of mutinies, rebellions, revolts and revolutions? What made one wonder was not the mechanism of mutation, but the exact opposite—“that order is evidenced so often” [Bourdieu 2012: 258]. In other words, the scientific community was addressing a secondary problem.

This story is enlightening, for it gives a warning: one can take the wrong path already at the stage of defining the problem. Thus it touches on the subject of this article in the most immediate way, which will focus on two topics popular today in the social sciences: corruption and revolution.¹ Both themes have mobilised entire research specialisations that have turned corruption and revolution into self-sufficient subject areas.

And again, “the most superficial analysis” shows that both notions have, so to say, an atmospheric nature. The conviction that these no-

1. The qualification of mass protest and anti-governmental movements as revolutions depends not only on scientific definitions of the notion “revolution” but also on the evolving political conjuncture. That is to say, at the current stage, the activists of the protest movement “For Fair Elections” emphasize the principally non-revolutionary character of the movement, interpreting revolution as a threat to society, an undesirable but possible result of the confrontation between the roused civil society and the rigid, authoritarian political regime of power. Their refusal to self-identify as revolutionary, nevertheless, does not answer the question of the definition of the movement’s character.
tions have solid and tangible thematic foundations is explained by three risky but unavoidable tendencies at work in science.

We will call the first tendency profanation: the intensive circulation of notions of corruption and revolution in science happens under the obvious pressure of mass media, and to a large extent they derive from public discussions.

We will term the second tendency state fiction. The social sciences continually reproduce a logic which threatens their very existence—a political-administrative logic, within which a problem is formulated and perceived just as the state interest (directed toward crafting a solution) requires. Working within the logic of state order, in the name of achieving political operationality, scientific research risks seeing and thinking of corruption and revolution in the same way that the state sees and thinks of these themes. Science obtains an applied character, whereas its analytical apparatus is artificially simplified.

Finally, we will define the third tendency as the development of an autonomous complex. The singling out of corruption and revolution as autonomous objects of analysis to some extent continuously engenders the danger of their transformation into political universals governed by virtually autonomous dynamics and objective laws. What helps to overcome such a realistic understanding of the research object are Cartesian doubt and radical nominalism—such a method of description that attentively respects the rules according to which heterogeneous symptoms are grouped, framed as a unitary “malady,” as one essence. However, good old Cartesianism, always suspecting the research object to be illusionary, proves itself a fairly difficult task. But the only alternative to such Cartesianism appears to be the belief in the existence of an object only insofar as it is researched and discussed.

The three aforementioned tendencies—profanation, administrative fiction and the development of an autonomous complex—manifest themselves most distinctively in current Russian discussions on corruption. Mass media is inclined to associate with corruption an ever increasing list of social and political problems: all the various defects of the state machinery, problems of low economic growth and effectiveness, criminality and the criminalisation of all law enforcement bodies, the problems of domestic urbanism and urban development, the au-

2. The state, of course, cannot “see” or “think.” The famous quotation by James Scott, “seeing like a state,” successfully highlights the constitutive and fictive nature of the “state’s glance,” translating a complex and fanciful social hieroglyph into “a demonstrative and administratively more convenient format” [Scott 2007: 19].
thoritarian and non-democratic character of political institutions, systemic problems of education and public health services, terrorism in the North Caucasus, the rudimentarily developed moral consciousness of officials, etc. All these and other problems, in some way or another, have become linked to corruption. Ultimately, the connection of corruption with this infinite list of problems acquires the character of “unnecessary connection,” an “autonomous complex” requiring a specific policy. An illusion emerges that it is possible to cope with all these issues of different natures and histories through the implementation of a well-planned and consistent anti-corruption policy. Just a few trifles are lacking—political will and a correctly formulated strategy of fighting evil.

Discourse on corruption has turned into an active component of social and political crisis; it exerts more and more impact on its evolution. The exceptionally successful slogan of the protest movement, “Away with the party of swindlers and thieves!,” firmly tied the “big” discourse on corruption with the “great” discourse on revolution.

The expectation of change is high. We are witnessing the decline of the party system constructed under Putin, the charisma of the country’s political leaders is fading away, new political leaders have emerged, the protest movement has developed suddenly and almost out of nowhere. However, there is another, more monolithic and nearly immovable dimension of which Bourdieu has spoken—“the force of the social world which lies in the orchestration of unconscious, mental structures. For there is nothing more difficult than changes in these mental structures by means of revolution. For this very reason, revolutionary projects, concerned with the creation of the new man, fail so often” [Bourdieu 2012: 145].

Perhaps the terms “unconscious” and “mental structures” used by Bourdieu look outdated in today’s context. We do not insist on using them. However, we will focus on those inert political and social schemes of a collective action that reproduce the social order in spite of revolutions and upheavals.

This article argues that corruption and revolution are fixed aspects of the state’s development, state-building, or what is sometimes called the process of etatization. In other (more drastic) words, revolution and corruption are structurally inherent in the state, and for this rea-

3. We preferred the word “etatization” because in the Russian language its literal translation—“statism”—is tightly associated with the alteration of forms of ownership—from private to state ones.

4. It is customary to speak of structural corruption as either a characteristic of
son the deepening of the process of etatization is inevitably accompanied by the strengthening of corruption and the intensification of protest and revolutionary movements. Works by Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu will help us substantiate this thesis.

**On the State**

Revolution and corruption are connected with each other not only in terms of discourse but also genetically. It is exactly after the French revolution that the political idea of governmental power enacted by the people and executed only in the interests of the people significantly gained ground and acceptance. And it is precisely this new and democratic belief that historically served as the basis for the criminalisation of corruption [Stessens 2001: 891]. The Napoleonic Code first defined the corruption of civil servants as a crime in 1810, prescribing criminal penalty for abuse of power. The French revolution clearly distinguished between private interest and public duty. In addition to that, it also made the claim that the former should not influence the latter [Stessens 2001: 905].

Napoleon's administrative innovation, introducing the distinction between the private interests and public duty of officials, was perceived as a discriminatory step. Its rationality was not as obvious as it might seem today, for civil servants continued to live relying on “private” sources of income and not at all on wages. Salary, as the system of remuneration for officials, emerged only in the middle of the 19th century, after it was first introduced in England. Thus, the division between the private pocket and the public treasury is a fairly recent phenomenon.

Napoleon’s reform could not have been successful if it did not rest upon a relatively new idea that captivated the imagination of the masses—the notion of state interest (raison d’État). Modernity rests upon the obviousness of the distinction between private and public interests, assuming that to a greater or lesser degree this distinction has always been made. We will omit a most interesting story of the emergence of the concept of “state interest” [Foucault 2011: 313–404; Foucault 2004: 245–318]. It should be noted, however, that Foucault and Bourdieu tried to define the reality of what we call the state on the basis of the genesis of this concept.

Both Foucault and Bourdieu consider it possible to talk about the state only on condition of overcoming the narrowness of the institu-
tional approach. The state cannot be reduced to the establishments in which it manifests itself, to legal norms and codices, to apparatuses of violence, etc. In short, it cannot be reduced to what applied political science and economic science can point to and say “this is the state.”

Without going into details and significantly simplifying the issue, it can be observed that for them the state is not so much a reality delineated by institutions as a principle of political action, differentiation and knowledge. For Foucault, the state presents the embodiment of a strategic scheme. He calls it “the regulatory idea of politics,” “the very essence of the state,” “the principal of reading reality” and also “the objective (objectif) of the political mind,” which gives the state a projective and even utopian dimension [Foucault 2004: 263, 294–295].

Bourdieu expresses himself even more radically, calling the state the embodiment of an illusion:

The state is such a well grounded illusion that it exists by virtue of the fact that we believe in its existence. This illusionary reality, although collectively acknowledged through consensus, is a place which a whole number of phenomena refers to—academic and professional titles or the calendar. It is precisely this mythical reality, existing in consequence of its manifestations and collective belief in its existence, that is the principal of its manifestations [Bourdieu 2012: 25].

Both Foucault and Bourdieu define this fictitious and illusionary something by analysing the concept of “state interest” (raison d’État), characterising it as the “principle” of the intelligibility of public or political space. They discern the state not in the “physics” of establishments and institutions, not in “obvious” material forms, but in the “implicit” ideal plan behind them—in symbolic, cultural and “mental” structures. From this viewpoint, the symbolic dimension turns out to be more inert and fundamental in relation to the institutional dimension and spontaneous changes in the balance of power in political life.

<…> the state interest (raison d’État) in its essence is, I would say, something <…> conservative, preservative (conservatoire) [Foucault 2004: 263].

The state can be defined as the principle of orthodoxy, that is, as a hidden principle that can be discerned only in manifestations of public order, simultaneously understood as physical order, opposite to disorder, anarchy and, for example, civil war. The hidden principle picked out in manifestations of public order is understood as physical and symbolic simultaneously [Bourdieu 2012: 15].
Articulating the solidity and inertia of the symbolic, Bourdieu corrects Max Weber’s definition of the state. The state, he says, is a monopoly on violence. But this violence is symbolic insofar as “a monopoly on symbolic violence is the condition upon which a monopoly on physical violence as such is enacted” [Bourdieu 2012: 14].

The concept of the state, understood as a principle of a fictitious, imaginative, illusionary and symbolic nature, appears to be utterly inconvenient for applied political and economic sciences. It is inconvenient because this plan of the symbolic is resistant to control. It is exceptionally difficult to find in this scheme of “the implicit” and “the unconscious” a place for the subject-reformer.

What advantages are there in an approach aspiring to overcome the institutional perspective? Transcending institutions, one can see them as elements of a more general order and also focus on the technologies of power that define the logic of institutional multiplicity. We can describe here the following example from Foucault: a mental hospital has its own institutional density, constitution and premises allocated rationally and according to necessity; however, it is the consequence of a more general and external project—“societal hygiene” directed to the whole of society [Foucault 2004: 174].

Bourdieu also repudiates the institutional approach calling the notion of “apparatus” a Trojan Horse of functionalism:

The educational system, the state, the church, political parties and labour organisations are not apparatuses but fields. A fight between agents and institutions happens inside a field, following norms and rules defining this playing space <…>. Those who reign in this game on the given field acquire the position allowing them to make it work for their benefit, but they always have to reckon with the resistance, contestation, demands and claims of “politicians” or their subjects [Bourdieu, Wacquant 1992: 78–79].

Transcending functions, one can compare the initial project of some institution with what has been achieved as a result of its establishment. This been said, the general economy of power remains in focus—the utilisation of these institutions by agents, which as a rule differ from the intended function and programme.

Having freed the problematics of the state from the narrowness of the institutional perspective, Foucault and Bourdieu discover unexpected structural and historical connections. Both of them, each in their own way, pay attention to the structural and genetic connection of corruption and revolution with the state interest (raison d’État). Every step on the road to the advancement of the state interest (raison d’État),
including complex policy given the name of “modernisation” in our
time, irrevocably collides with reactions and resistance, the origins of
which at first glance seem to be different: with protests, mutinies, up-
heavals on the one hand, and the growth of corruption on the other.

**The State and Corruption**

The Marquis de Sade considered the state the most important source of
corruption: “Learn Juliette what politics is, conducted by all those who
support corruption among citizens at the highest level. While the sub-
ject is being consumed by gangrene, while he is weakened by pleasures
and debaucheries, he does not feel the weight of his shackles, it is pos-
sible to fetter him when he does not suspect it. The real politics of the
state consists in increasing the corruption of its subjects tenfold by all
possible means” [Sade 1967: 529]. A similar perception of corruption
prevails today among Islamic ideologists who believe that it is a conse-
guence of modernisation, of the state’s interference with the business
of the Ummah. We encounter it in spaces where the fiction of the state
interest has not yet acquired the symbolic might that it requires.

On the other hand, modernisers are convinced that corruption is
linked to the hermiticity and impenetrability of the social world for the
state interest. Europeans visiting Africa, Bourdieu says, exclaim from
time to time: “Oh, these new states are just terrible. They cannot tran-
scend the logic of their household, there is no single trace of state in-
terest.” Such predominance of private interest over state interest is usu-
ally called corruption by the modernisers.

The first perspective—expressed by de Sade and the Islamists—is
usually connected with moral corruption. The second perspective—the
European viewpoint with regard to new African states—belongs to the
field of legal norms and directly touches upon the legitimacy of the state.
Modern research on corruption most commonly expresses the second
perspective, which is not a mere coincidence—these studies, as a rule,
incorporate within themselves the outlook of the state [Nuijten, Gerhard
2007: 1]. However, in both cases, corruption emerges where the logic of
the state withstands certain social logics of reproduction. The distinction
of the perspectives, however, does not solve, but rather dramatises the
following question: which order can corruption be referred to—does it
belong to the social world as such, habitus, or is it rather the inevitable
consequence of etatization, the expansion of state norms, the sovereign’s
every attempt to delegate power to the growing apparatus of officials?

Akhil Gupta, who researched corruption discourse in the local me-
dia of Southern India, discovered that it is commonly believed that the
behaviour of the selfish bureaucracy pursuing its personal advantage is a deviation from norms and laws established by a “moral center” existing somewhere out there [Gupta 1995: 375–402]. No matter how patriarchal one’s way of life, it does not stop the local population from perceiving the idea of the state as transcendental and not reducible to its corrupt manifestations. From Bourdieu’s point of view, corruption plays the role of the dissociation principle between the real state and the theoretical one, between the state materialised in the functionaries and the state materialised in the central power [Bourdieu 2012: 330]. In Foucault’s opinion, corruption accentuates the utopian and projective plan of the state—the state interest.

The temptation of regression from the state interest (raison d’État) to the private interest, “the interest of one’s own household” (raison maison), always exists. Bourdieu explains this constant danger by the difficulty of establishing a special state logic requiring “extraordinary” efforts and rules, that is, those rules that destabilise the habitual social order. The habitual world demands that the individual cares about their parents, supports their children, helps their friends, etc. However, the state interest demands from the individual just the opposite: if they give “presents” to the father or the children, they break the public order:

…theoretically, brother, mother, father do not exist anymore in the public world <…>. In the public world (or in the Gospels), we voluntarily renounce ethnic and domestic connections through which all forms of dependency and corruption [manifest themselves]. Thus the formation of the public subject takes place, the definition of which is to serve a reality that is transcendental to local, particular and domestic interests—a reality that is in fact the State [Bourdieu 2012: 407].

The never-ending game in which the state logic involves the social world leads to a radical transformation of social relationships. They become etatized, whereas any opposition to the state at the discursive level is registered as a violation of public order or corruption.

The logic of state interest both relies on the social world and finds obstacles in it. It acquires its support in the commonness of the logics of “raison maison” and “raison d’État”: the logic of the “household mentality,” fidelity to one’s home, is mastered to the degree to which the household is perceived as a variation of the corporate body (corpus corporatum); yet, simultaneously, the same logic of the household moves to a transcendental essence for the agents. The decisive factor in this is the subsequent process when thought is objectified from the point of view of the household, when it is canonised and codified by juridical discourse [Bourdieu 2012: 408].
Paradoxically as it is, the growth of the state’s power, its institutions and establishments, appears to be an obstacle on the way to establishing the fiction of raison d’État. The need for the continuous expansion of the state puts the nominal sovereign\(^5\) in a position of compromise. He considers the cost of retaining his authority and its delegation. However, the growth and sophistication of society inevitably leads to the amplification of control structures. The expansion and building of the state is performed at the expense of the differentiation of governmental bodies. The sovereign power is compelled to delegate part of its functions to the ever-increasing number of authorised officials; the enlargement of the amount of managerial branches expands opportunities for abuse. And now “every authorised official can do for himself as much as the king does for himself.” For this reason, Bourdieu assumes, the best thing is to imagine “the process of the state’s development <…> in terms of reproduction through fission” [Bourdieu 2012: 433]. And it is precisely this process of delegation that inscribes corruption into the very structure of the state, into the logic of its formation. In other words, the potential for corruption is multiplied as the sovereign power reproduces itself upon both branching and delegating functions.\(^6\)

The growth of the state by means of delegation holds a risk linked to the depersonalisation of the sovereign and the dissolution of the power’s charisma in the midst of the growing mass of authorised officials. This risk is compensated by what Bourdieu calls “institutional hypocrisy” or “permanent schizophrenia.” What he means by it is the central and universal trait characteristic of both the sovereign and the whole army of its bureaucratic clones—“impersonation,” or the mode of speaking on one’s own behalf as well as on behalf of the state body. This mode is expressed in the trope of prosopopeia, the example of which is Louis XIV’s famous aphorism “I am the state,” or Medvedev’s relatively recent statement, “I do not speak in retorts but announce sentences <…>. Everything I say is moulded in granite,” made on 25 September 2009 during a conference on innovation.

In Bourdieu’s model, impersonation has a fairly natural duality: the appropriation of the universal furthers its very universalism. In other words, abuse of power supports the state interest (raison d’État). And the state interest, in turn, becomes a stake in the conflict of a variety

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5. The sovereign itself is an authorised agent. For example, an absolute monarch is authorised by his “rule” to conduct dynastic policy [Bourdieu 2001: 146].

6. One should take into account that Bourdieu presents only the scheme of statehood’s formation in modernity. In real history, delegation could have been performed not in the form of authorisation but through the creation of alliances, for example with financial groups, by the sovereign.
of private and public perspectives. In the shadow of the universal state interest, a whole number of exchange operations take place between the bureaucrats and the notables acquiring capital—these are the biggest transactions on which the state service rests. And it is not necessary that the exchange is expressed in monetary equivalent; respectability can also be exchanged. The contestation of the universal and the involvement of a variety of authorized officials and different social groups in its contestation turn the state into a space for political rivalry. For this reason, the very conflict gives its meaning to the process of growth and strengthening of the state as the principle, as the logic of state interest. And then an opportunity arises that even a war song “directed against the falsehood of the law and kings, a song that ultimately engendered the first form of revolutionary discourse, turns into the administrative prose of the state” [Foucault 2005: 98].

**The State and Revolution**

“Before the French revolution, corruption was a phenomenon almost approved by the constitution” [Tiihonen 2003: 4–5]—this thesis, although not very original, indicates that we must take a closer look at the connection between corruption and revolution. Bearing in mind the very recent past, as Tiihonen notes, following many studies on corruption, there was a boom of academic publications touching upon this topic in the 1990s. The focus of the boom fell mostly on former socialist states in which revolutionary changes had just taken place and new state formations were emerging.

Twenty years before the French revolution, the literal meaning of the term “revolution” was rather metaphorical. In its first meaning, it referred to the rotation of the celestial bodies, but, according to the *Dictionary of the French Academy*, “revolution” meant “changes happening in public relationships and social affairs in a figurative sense only” [*Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française* 1765: 443].

From the point of view of historical and genetic analysis, another expression, coup d’État, was much closer to the contemporary meaning of “revolution,” as Michel Foucault demonstrates. The same *Dictionary of The French Academy*, published thirteen years later after the one mentioned above, gives the following definition of coup d’État: “Coup d’État is an energetic and at times violent decision that the Ruler or the Republic obliges to make against those who upset the State” [*Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française* 1778: 472]. There is something unexpected for us in this definition: it turns out that “coup d’État” was accomplished by the very sovereign power; whereas we would rather be in-
clined to identify “those who upset the State,” those who are alienated from power, with the force executing the takeover.

Foucault directly points out this historical perversion in his detailed analysis of “coup d’État” [Foucault 2011: 342–349]. Although he does not give a direct explanation, his analysis implicitly suggests that the “perversion” of the concept’s meaning occurs due to the French revolution. As the most important stage in the harsh struggle over the establishment of the state interest (raison d’État), this revolution became the historical triumph of state order. The revolution was merely a military instrument of the Third Estate undertaking the mission of universalisation and etatization. It saw in republican forms a regime of governance that was realising the state interest (raison d’État) more adequately than dynastic forms or principles. After the royal government was acknowledged as the force “upsetting the state,” a new semantic standard of the concept “coup d’État,” as well as of revolution, was set. It is from then on that general knowledge associates coup d’État with a forcible transition of political power from one “group” to another, whereas revolution is coupled with the revolt of the masses against usurpers.

For that reason, the following conceptual adjustment should be made to the contemporary secular perception: coup d’État, as well as revolution, should be understood not as an inversion of the top and the bottom, when the subordinate group or “the masses” suddenly seize power and become the new leaders, but as the revolt of those strata of the population who are convinced that they are the bearers of the state interest, “raison d’État.” “We fight a king in order to protect the King”—such was the battle cry of the English Puritans, expressing simultaneously their enthusiasm for a specific normative order and their conviction in the corruption of the royal rule in power. This distinction between the normative and the reality somewhat echoed attempts by lawyers in the late Middle Ages to clearly distinguish between “the will of the Crown and the wishes of a king” [Kantorowicz 1997: 18].

In this sense, a higher degree of the social world’s integration into the state, the modes of reproduction of new social groups, can be considered the results of revolution, defined as a revolt against the monopolists and the usurpers of the state interest. Thus it is better not to talk about revolution in terms of an inversion of the “top” and the “bottom,” but rather to stress the fact of the energetic involvement of the urban bourgeoisie and proletariat, who internalised the state interest, in the creation of the state order. Revolution, in such a way, is the result of the democratisation of the fiction of the state interest (raison d’État), a social impulse to order rather than chaos. Revolution is the deepening of the process of etatization.
The military might of the Russian Empire afforded the exertion of control over the vast territories of Eurasia. However, it hardly integrated all its inhabitants into the political life or the economical games of exchange that transcend the boundaries of local traditional worlds. It was the October Revolution that managed to significantly raise the degree of integration into the state of both the most remote corners of the empire and the most marginal social strata. The empire did not ask for much loyalty to be shown toward the imperial centre. It was undemanding of the dwellers of Russian villages, remote kishlaks and mountain auls. In return, the Soviet Union greatly raised mobilisation efficiency.

The French and October revolutions were the greatest manifestations of the state and the state interest. The terror before “totalitarianism” engendered by them, is nothing more than an intuitive fear of the state as a practice establishing new relationships between the social world and the government [Foucault 2011: 361]. Both revolutions revealed a potent impulse for transformation of all social relationships—ethnic, family, class, etc.—into state ones; revolution, in such a manner, is structurally inscribed into the state. A successful revolution leads not so much to chaos as to the strengthening of the state order.

The Semantic Collapse and Protest Movements

No matter how “mature” a state might seem, revolution is always a structural possibility. The state, realised in actually existing institutions, will always look incomplete, transient, corrupt and imperfect in comparison with the state interest as an objective and a projective fiction. It follows from the described theology of raison d’État that the very cycle of modernity’s revolutionary substitutions of one sovereign by another (the Crown by the sovereign people, dictators or authoritarian rulers by parliaments, one president by another), cannot, by definition, be brought to an end. Revolution will be the fundamental characteristic of politics until societies are dependent upon the logic of raison d’État. The Arab Spring, the indignados movements in Spain, Occupy Wall Street in the USA and also the Russian protest movement “For Fair Elections”—the very concurrence of these mass protests in different parts of the world can serve as a good illustration.

Saturday, March 5, 2012… The progression of two motorcades across Moscow (one with resigning President Medvedev and the other with newly elected President Putin), cleared from people by the police, engendered an extraordinary strong image—“the President of emptiness” that quickly spread in social networks and mass media. Only a short while before, Vladimir Putin was called “an advocate of statism.” He
was the undisputable and practically only reincarnation of the state interest for the whole population of the Russian Federation. However, on the day of his inauguration, an empty Moscow became the evidence of the just happened semantic collapse—the disassociation of the idea of the state and Putin. Official TV channels greatly enhanced this effect, broadcasting the progression of the two solemn motorcades, isolated from the masses of people.

Emptiness emerged where only recently there had been the body of the sovereign. And this emptiness is endured as an exigent need in the substitution of incumbent President Putin by another body, personifying the supremacy of state power. In the perspective of popular political science, what happened can be portrayed as the result of a series of political mistakes made by the nation’s leadership and Vladimir Putin. However, from the viewpoint of the political theology of raison d’État, the collapse is yet another piece of evidence of the fact that any body, any technique of representation is inadequate to the state as an objective.

For the protest movement, the inadequacy of representation is expressed in the “obvious” corruption of Vladimir Putin, the ruling party, the oligarchical regime, the whole existing state machine. This obviousness turns for the protest into the foundation of contestation and acquisition of the right to the representation of the state interest.

The semantic collapse that occurred at the turn of 2011–2012 in Russia can be called a purely Russian story, a history characteristic of a country with rudimentarily developed democratic institutions. However, in today’s world we also have the opportunity to observe similar processes in developed democratic countries, including the country that is known as the paragon of democracy—the United States of America.

Let us briefly list similarities of the processes taking place.

The particularity of protest movements and the appeal to the universalism of the state interest

In both countries, protest movements revealed their particularity, that is, they were predominantly urban and localised. This was especially evident in the Russian Federation, inasmuch as only a specific group of metropolitan inhabitants took part in the movement. At the same time, protest movements expressed universal demands for a change of the regime in power. Both in Russia and the USA, protesters are dissatisfied with how they are being governed. They characterise the existing regimes of governance as oligarchical. The Occupy Wall Street movement saw the source of power’s corruption in the total domination of private corporations and in the privatisation of the state and all insti-
tutions of representative democracy by them. In Russia, the source of corruption is found in the privatisation of the state by a clique or an oligarchical group that reveals in itself an alliance of state officials with the business elite. The utopian perspective of both movements is a new universal order of freedom and justice “for everybody.”

The crisis of political representation

The main appeal of protests is addressed to the operation of representative democracy. The criticism of the American “occupants,” as well as the Spanish indignados, is directed against the principle of political representation as such. From the very beginning, the movement’s activists furthered the idea of “direct democracy,” apprehending that with the help of the technologies of representation (party representation, for example), the “System” would try to corrupt and dissolve the movement in traditional political institutions. The movement declared one of its main organisation principles to be the renouncement of political leadership, centralisation and hierarchy. Indeed, the “System” has at its disposal a wide spectrum of opportunities to influence the movement’s leaders: denigration and blackmail, involvement in negotiations for the purpose of co-opting the leaders into the political nomenclature, direct and indirect bribery, etc. The taboo on leadership and centralisation is emphasized especially often; references are made to the direct democracy of the Quakers, ancient Athenians and also the experience of their fellows in arms, the Spanish indignados. Some quotations and paraphrases of Deleuze and Foucault can be read in the “occupants” blogs, for example: “A group must not be an organic unity of hierarchised individuals but a generator of continuous de-individualisation.”

At first glance, it seems that the Russian protest movement stands for the development of institutions of political representation, hoping for the substitution of the corrupt parliament, president and government for non-corrupt ones. An impression is created that the Russian people, dreaming of fair elections, remain “the last nation” in Europe to believe that representative democracy makes sense. Although the “For Fair Elections” movement did not articulate a distrust for representative democ-

7. I am grateful to Michael Urban, a professor of political science at the University of California, Santa Cruz, who drew attention to the fact that today in the USA not only left-wing protest movements are enthralled by the universalism of state interest. Right-wing radical movements just as equally contest with the political establishment over state competences, creating, in particular, subdivisions of the civil police patrolling the Mexican border in order to prevent its violation by illegal immigrants.
racy as such, as a protest mass it constantly resists the usurping of political leadership by professional opposition politicians. The leaders of the protest, accepted by all its participants, turned out not to be opposition politicians but “safe” writers and artists, devoid of imperious ambitions.

The protest ecumenism and “political apathy”

One of the most widespread characteristics given to the Russian protest movement is its “political apathy.” Political apathy is highlighted when it is called “civil,” thus being opposed to the so-called non-systemic political opposition. But the protests in Spain, Greece and the USA are classified in a similar way.

Protesters in different countries have one common message: there are no ethnic, racial or social disputes between us; we are united in thinking that there is an egoistic minority (1%), the authority of which makes our life unbearable; our unanimous rejection of this minority is stronger than our differences in beliefs; we are the 99%.

Social movements do not prevent parties from participation in rallies, yet they consciously avoid any party identification and encourage diversity within the movement. In the USA, there were attempts to engage with the movement representatives of right-wing populism—the Tea Party. Slavoj Zizek, who visited the camp of the “occupants,” advised them not to “fall in love” with themselves and to integrate within their ranks conservative admirers of Sarah Palin.

In Russia, the protests integrated non-systemic left-wing internationalists and right-wing nationalists. And in Egypt, despite fairly successful attempts by the current transitional military power to split the Christians and the Muslims, a considerable part of the Copts nevertheless voted for candidates from the Muslim Brotherhood during the last nationwide election.

The absence of programme requirements

Almost in all countries the protests are criticised for their inability to formulate a list of requirements for government. The absence of concrete requirements for government is portrayed as an expression of the movement’s irrationality.

However, the American “occupants” consciously imposed a ban on the articulation of demands and concrete programmes. Their refusal to make political demands is indicative of the semantic collapse that has taken place—of their refusal to see state institutions as the legitimate bearers of the fiction of raison d’État. The protest by the occu-
pants contests and disputes this function: what is the point of making demands before usurpers?

The main objective is formulated by the occupants rather metaphorically or performatively—as the restitution of public spaces to society, the seizure of squares and the building of institutions of direct democracy: “Occupy Everything. No demands. Occupy, occupy, occupy!..”

An important trait of all movements is their clearly expressed patriotism. International values are expressed by the participants of the movements as often as patriotic ones. In Russia, this tendency was revealed in the polemic on who in fact cooperates with the United States Department of State—the opposition that “sold itself” to the West or the “corrupt” ruling elite that concentrates its capital in offshore territories.

The denial of the legitimacy of state institutions, among them legislative ones, the belief in the impossibility of negotiating with them, reservations about the practicality and meaningfulness of making demands before ruling coalitions—all these emphasise that the protest project is by nature nothing but a request for a new public order, for new foundations of the constitution of society. For that reason it can be argued that in spite of accentuated respect for the Law and appeal to justice, the utopian projection of modern protests ultimately implies not only a fundamental change in the regime of power but also the alteration of the constitutional system. Although protest actions are generally non-violent in character, their objectives reveal the logic of “coup d’État,” or a takeover, transcending the current law: “emergency actions in spite of the general law” [Foucault 2011: 342]. They are directed against the prevailing public order, but driven toward the universalisation of the state interest, that is, they take a stand against its usurpation by a narrow ruling clique.

Political rivalry furthers one and the same logic of the state interest and strengthens the positions of the universal inasmuch as the very state turns into an arena for political struggle. In such a way, revolution, as well as anti-corruption agitation, can be considered the derivative of the normative pressure accompanying the process of etatization. The request for a new state order and a new norm today comes not from governments but protest movements. The loss of the rulemaking initiative by governments is indicative of the exhaustion of modern models of political representation and of the advance of the epoch of a “new norm.”
References


Socrates in Spartan Camouflage

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Abstract: The article judges biographical evidence of Socrates, describing some particularities of his visage and behavioral manner. On the basis of evidence by Aristophanes, Xenophon, Plato and others the author comes to the conclusion that Socrates’ behavior and image are stylized to the Spartans character. “Le Mirage Spartiate” and Socrates’ biographical testimony are compared. The parallels drawn allow to discuss nonverbal determination of the philosophic temper as a subject of the History of Philosophy.
FOR ALL the variety of assessments of Socrates’s philosophical oeuvre in contemporary science, the following three attributes prevail among them: “dialectics,” “irony,” and “morality” [Vlastos 1991; Surikov 2011]. They outweigh all other traits of the antique thinker: both among apologists of the Athenian “barefoot sage” and his opponents. They also dominate in the overwhelming majority of reconstructions of Socrates’ image. This article, however, will attempt to take a look at Socrates not through the prism of his dialectics, but from the point of view of the practical, behavioural side of the lifestyle chosen by him.

The thesis that Socrates’s philosophy came down to us mainly as a set of his very fragmented biographies can hardly be disputed. Consequently, Socrates’s followers’ renditions of their teacher’s life show us the vector of the development of his ideas that they chose. Any biographical record in this case acquires a hermeneutic character (and meaning) as not only a message, but largely an interpretation. Ethical and political, as well as epistemological ideas of his biographers manifest themselves through the image of Socrates. It is enough to remember Socrates’s famous moral excursion from Theaetetus that forms not only the “vertical” constituent of Platonic ethics (“flight to the true motherland”), but also the demarcation of the types of knowledge: philosophical and conventional.

The most detailed versions of Socrates’s “persona” are presented in accounts by Plato and Xenophon. For all the differences in their descriptions of their teacher’s lifestyle, a number of common, clearly expressed dominant behavioural characteristics can be found in them. This article will focus specifically on one behavioural characteristic: the stylisation of behaviour (and, to a certain degree, appearance) modelled after the Lacedaemonian, known to us from antique historiography. This stylisation, expressed in Laconian mannerisms in a way that was obvious to his contemporaries, became one of the motives
for the trial of 399 BC\textsuperscript{1} and appears to be broader than Socrates’s political agenda.

2. It is precisely in the texts by Socrates’s disciples and their successors that the most important records about the Laconian ethos emerge (besides Plato’s dialogues, such as \textit{Hippias Major}, \textit{Protagoras}, \textit{Laws}, Xenophon’s treatises, Plutarch of Chaeronea is especially significant). This fact once inspired a number of researchers to formulate the hypothesis of “the Laconian mirage”—the assumption that the peculiarities of the Lacedaemonian social order and legislation, well known to us, reflect not the reality of Sparta, but rather utopian ideas of Greek historians and political theorists (first of all, Plato’s followers) [Oliver 1933–1943; Oliva 1971]. In our opinion, adherents of this hypothesis are too sceptical of the authenticity of antique information about the political and behavioural realities of Lacedaemon. However, some traces of Plato are nevertheless evident in the image of Lacedaemon and one of their sources is Socrates, or rather, a collection of records about his appearance, behaviour and motives for some of his deeds.

Sometimes, irony with regard to Spartans is found in Plato’s texts. An example of this can be drawn from the dialogue \textit{Hippias Major}, where Socrates laughs at the egotistic sophist Hippias who equates his sophistication in wisdom to the amount of money earned. While at the same time it becomes apparent that in Sparta, which Hippias visited more often than any other place, he did not earn a single Mina. Spartans were not at all interested in mathematics, astronomy or natural philosophy—subjects in which Hippias was very informed (Hippias is probably the first real historian of philosophy who gave account of the opinions of the ancient sages in his \textit{Collection} [Patzer 1986]). Instead they interrogated him about the past: about the foundation of cities, about glorious deeds of ancestors and about all the things that were the subject of interest to poets and logographers of Antiquity, Callinus and Mimnermus, Xenophanes and Hecataeus [Plato \textit{Hip. Maj.} 285cd].

One question arises: is the Laconian disregard for the scholastic attainments of mathematics and natural philosophy, that is of the heritage of early Greek thought, linked to their “military simplicity” induced by Lycurgus’ famous requirement not to do anything but military business, or to the fact that they possessed wisdom anyway? Socrates says in \textit{Protagoras}, “philosophy is of more ancient and abundant growth in

\textsuperscript{1} The dissatisfaction with Socrates’ Laconian mannerisms is hidden behind the well known charges put against him, but the reason here is obvious: in 399 BC Athenians did not dare yet to conduct anti-Spartan lawsuits.
Crete and Lacedaemon than in any other part of Greece” [Prot. 342ab], Aleksei Losev called the next speculation in this dialogue “a myth about Spartans’ deeply hidden intellect” (here he addresses the belief that Laconians converse with their sages secretly from the outsiders). However, there are some grounds for such a myth: teachers of wisdom (Hippias for example) came to Sparta and were asked to address the youth in their speeches; the ancient king, Agasicles (at the turn of the 7–6 century BC), loved to welcome sages into his company, as we can gather from [Plutarch Mor. 208b]. Some ancient sages-cosmogonists (for example, Alcman and Epimenides) bore a relation to the Crete and Lacedaemon. It is in Sparta that the Milesian philosopher Anaximander erected his gnomon. Polyaenus, in his Stratagems, recounts how king Leonidas saw gathering storm clouds before battle and announced to his officers that the storm was caused by natural objective laws, namely, the movement of the stars [Polyaenus Strat. i 32.2].

It follows from this that there is only superficial “irony” in Plato’s Socrates. As early as in Protagoras we see the form in which Spartan wisdom was expressed, namely, in the laconic oration.

If you choose to consort with the meanest of Spartans, at first you will find him making a poor show in the conversation; but soon, at some point or other in the discussion, he gets home with a notable remark, short and compressed—a deadly shot that makes his interlocutor seem like a helpless child [Plato Prot. 342e].

Laconism was also supposedly learnt from Spartans by the famous “seven sages.” This is precisely the “ancient mode of philosophising—the Laconian brevity.”

These assertions lay the foundation for the future “trend”: the transformation of collections of Spartan expressions into “florilegiums” of practical wisdom. The prime example of this process would become Plutarch, who left behind the most complete corpus of moral maxims ascribed to Spartans. The “ethical rationalism” of Spartans as presented in Plutarch’s collections directly resonates with the ethical programme of Plato’s Socrates: Spartan kings encouraged others to learn to rule and obey, much like the just person in The Republic, practicing in subordination to the mind and having control over his passions.

Nevertheless, the identification of Socrates’s style of philosophising with Spartans’ laconic manner seems to be impossible: the Atheni-

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2. When the Spartan king Agesilaus was asked why Spartans are happier than other nations, he replied: “They, more than anybody else, exercise in the skill to rule and obey” (Plutarch).
an philosopher is the very embodiment of the nature of oration. He is, too, a master of brief, trenchant phrases ("death is the liberation of the soul from the body," “it is better to be subject to injustice than to commit it,” etc.), but his partiality for conversation, this passionate philosophical garrulity, by no means resembles the reticence of the citizens of Lacedaemon.

And yet, Socrates’s speech is, at times, paradoxically similar to the laconism of Spartans. And not only in that it claims verity (in those cases when it claims it), but also in that Socrates, like Spartans, under certain conditions, acts as a parrhesiast.

In the lecture courses of 1982–1983, Michel Foucault repeatedly addresses the topic of parrhesia (παρρησία), a specific notion from antique oratory, meaning speech in which any conscious conventions and rhetorical figures are absent and which expresses the truth freely—fearlessly and disconcertingly [Foucault 2008: 159–262]. Foucault strongly differentiates parrhesia from Socrates’s dialectic irony, observing in the latter the art of maieutics [Foucault 2011: 68], but it is impossible to deny that The Apology of Socrates (both in the variants of Plato and Xenophon) is also the talking of truth, the talking that happens in the situation of mortal danger.

Foucault agrees with the fact that Socrates acts as a true parrhesiast in The Apology. From his point of view, Socrates’s defence at the trial is a philosophical free speech, not putting the narrator above his audience, but trying both the defendant and Athenians [Foucault 2011: 334–335]. It is precisely in this that he sees the nature of “ruling over himself and others”—this truly regal ability, that, according to the opinion of Socrates’s apologists, this thinker possessed in full. Socrates’s free speech is the dignity that philosophy nurtured in him and it is exactly that what makes him, at the moment of his trial, not a respondent playing according to the rules of the Athenian judicial rhetoric, but rather a truly independent man capable of trying his judges.

Spartan speeches, removed from their context of didactive, preaching collections and understood in light of their historical conditions (it is not of any relevance whether they are fictional or not), also cease to be a rhetorical convention. It is enough to provide the story told by Herodotus about a conversation between the Spartan dissenter Demaratus and the Persian king Xerxes before the battle of Thermopylae. Astonished by the behaviour of Spartans standing at outposts, their heads adorned with wreaths of flowers, Xerxes does not believe that they will engage in battle with his army. Demaratus reminds him that he already cautioned the king about these people before the beginning of the march on Hellas. At that time Xerxes ridiculed him, but now he
has to admit that Demaratus’ words about the strange demeanour of his compatriots were correct. Despite Xerxes’ mistrust and bewilderment, the dissenter replies that he considers it his great duty to speak the truth in his presence, no matter what the truth may be [Herodotus *Hist.* vii 209]. Entirely dependent on the volition of the Persian king, Demaratus praises his compatriots as the most glorious Hellenic tribe. Despite his “court” position, he dares to tell the truth when facing the barbarian ruler.

It is fairly simple to semantically link Demaratus and Socrates. Even one of the main antique denouncers of Socrates, Aristoxenus, does not deny his frankness. According to Plutarch, he portrays Socrates as a rude and ignorant man but nevertheless an honest man [Plutarch *Mal. Her.* 856cd]. Straightforwardness, simplicity and plainness constitute quite sufficient behaviourological grounds for parrhesia. Indeed, a philosopher can appear before the court only as an artless simpleton, destroying the eristic judicial discourse. It is not without reason that Socrates calls defence, at the beginning of *The Apology*, a “difficult task,” while considering the virtue of an orator the speaking of truth [Plato *Apol.* 18a, 19a]. In spite of the audience set against him by prosecutors, he is prepared to speak the truth. Moreover, he does so not through rhetoric, but rather with the most ordinary language which was so characteristic of his conversations with Athenians. Differences in style and delivery between Socrates’s and Spartan speeches in situations of danger dwindle: what we begin to see are speeches of parrhesiasts, who are perfectly aware of what they are doing.

3. The similarities between Socrates’s image and the image of of Spartans become especially apparent when one reads about the last hours of the Athenian philosopher’s life. Socrates, preparing for death, appears in *Phaedo* as focused, vivacious and even cheerful. He expresses to his saddened and amazed friends a thesis that will ultimately become famous: philosophy is a preparation for death.

Other people are likely not to be aware that those who pursue philosophy aright study nothing but dying and being dead” [*Phaedo* 64a]. Socrates proclaims that he expects from death “the greatest boons.” In particular he hopes to meet the best people and is sure that he will be judged by wise and virtuous gods [68b].

The description of Socrates’s “philosophical” death has a dazzling impact on the readers of *Phaedo*. Meanwhile, Plato’s predecessors encouraged a courageous acceptance of one’s death, The Spartan poet
Tyrtaeus is especially notable in this context. According to a widespread legend, he arrived in Lacedaemon from Athens [Laws i 629a] and had been a representative of a wonderful pleiad of musicians and poets (Terpander, Thaletas, Tyrtaeus and Alcman), which, by celebrated tradition, fashioned the main civil festivities of Lacedaemon, inspired courage in warriors and helped to formulate of the famous Spartan military ethos. In one of Tyrtaeus’ elegies there is a motif which stands out in pronounced harmony with Phaedo. The poet calls [Tyrtaeus Eleg. 6–8]:

Fear ye not a multitude of men, nor flinch,
But let every man hold his shield straight towards the van,
Making life his enemy and the black spirits of Death—
Dear as the rays of the sun! <…>
Yes, ’tis a fair thing for a valiant man to fall and die
Fighting in the van for his native land.

It should be noted here that the anticipation of a glorious death as a dignified ending of a glorious life is the theme that is constantly discussed by antique historians when they describe the courage of Spartans, especially in the classical period of Lacedaemon’s history.

Socrates’s death echoes the most famous Spartan death, namely the fall of the Three Hundred in the battle of Thermopylae. Herodotus reports that before the beginning of the war, a Delphian Pythia foretold that the destruction of Sparta could be avoided only if one of the kings was sacrificed. In the morning of the decisive day of the battle for Thermopylae the prediction of the fall was confirmed by the diviner Megistis who read the fortune on purtenance [Herodotus Hist. vii 219–220].

But here we see a reflection of the story about Socrates’s death. According to Xenophon’s The Apology, Socrates believed that the gods led him to death before the beginning of the trial.3 While in Crito Plato describes Socrates’s dream in which a beautiful majestic woman prophesises his death on the third day [Plato Crito 44ab]. In the poem from Iliad quoted by her (“The third day hence to fertile Phthia shalt thou go” [Homer Iliad ix 363]), the threat of Achilles, having been insulted by Agamemnon, to leave the camp of Achaeans and return to the motherland, is contained. The assonance of the Greek words “Phthia” (Φθία) and “to die” (φθίνω) forces Socrates, sensitive to such things, to

3. See [Xenophon Apol. 5]. Socrates’s disciples explain the sage’s knowledge of his future by citing the influence of his demon. Diogenes Laertius, however, refers to Aristotle’s words about some magician who predicted Socrates’s fate [Diogenes Laertius Lives II, 5.45].
see in these words a prediction of his impending death, which will become for the philosopher the return to his true heavenly motherland.

Before his disciples came to visit him in prison on the day of the execution, Socrates tried to write poetry following Apollo’s instruction, who urged him to “serve the muses” in recurrent dreams. If before what he meant by this was philosophy, then on the last day of his life, he turned to poetry [Plato Phaedo 60c]. According to [Plutarch Mor. 16], Spartans also made a sacrifice to the muses before battle in order to obtain fame that later would be praised by descendants. This fame, is one of the basic notions of moral wisdom, contained in “Spartan aphorisms.” It is this fame that was celebrated by Spartans during feasts. And again, it is Plutarch who informs us of Spartans’ love for singing. Devotion to the muses, both on the military field and on the field of philosophical battles, proved itself to be accordant—in both cases it was linked to death.

On a large number of occasions, Plato and Xenophon portray Socrates as a warrior who was not afraid of, but craved, a glorious death. In The Apology, Socrates refuses to take death into account, preferring first and foremost to care not about himself but about the justness of the deed. In Crito, Laws address him with admonition: “You must not give way or draw back or leave your post” [Plato Crito 51b]. Socrates’s composure in the battle of Delium (424 BC), when the Athenian formation was destroyed (“everybody has already straggled off”), and enemy cavalry dominated the battlefield, was eloquently described in Symposium by Alcibiades. These and other accounts remind us, sometimes literally, of the value of the military regime and loyalty to comrades in arms celebrated by the aforementioned Tyrtaeus.

4. The comparison between Spartan traits and Socrates’s philosophical position becomes especially clear when we recall Spartan’s famous loyalty to the law, which was pointed out by classical Greek historians and the followers of Socrates, Plato and Xenophon. But this position stands in perfect harmony with the one held by Socrates in Crito, where he explains why he has no desire to flee from prison in the following manner:

…and ought either to convince her by persuasion or to do whatever she commands, and to suffer, if it commands you to suffer, in silence, and if it orders you to be scourged or imprisoned or if it leads you to war to be wounded or slain, it will is to be done, and this is right [51b].

4. See [Symp. 221ab]. Also there is more information about Socrates as the warrior in [Anderson 2005: 273–289].
Compliance with the stipulations of the law implies the execution of even those stipulations which appear strange to us. Let us examine one more testimony of Laws in [52b]:

\[\ldots\]you would never have stayed in it more than all other Athenians if you had not been better pleased with it than they; you never went out from the city to a festival, or anywhere else, except on military service, and you never made any other journey, as other people do, and you had no wish to know any other city or other laws, but you were contented with us and our city. So strongly did you prefer us and agree to live in accordance with us; and besides, you begat children in the city, showing that it pleased you.

Escaping from the law would have resulted in Socrates “having to curry favour with everybody and being subservient” [53e], that is, to be disgraced and lose honour. Tyrtaeus speaks of the same idea: a runaway from the battlefield will “taste a bitter fate.” Socrates claims: finding himself, for example, in Thebes, where laws are good, he who fled his native city will become their enemy. Tyrtaeus affirms in the elegy already quoted here that far and near a fugitive will be an enemy to those who receive him.

The fragment drawn from Crito is especially important for the theme of comparing the image of Socrates with that of Spartans in the traditions of antiquity because Plutarch claims: Lycurgus forbade Spartans from leaving the confines of their country with the exception of periods of military operations or participation in diplomatic and religious missions [Plutarch Par. Lives 27]. In his opinion, trips abroad could induce a weakening of the solid foundations of Spartan demeanour.\(^5\) Perhaps it is due to this very reason that Socrates did not go to foreign rulers who invited him, particularly Archelaus I of Macedon and Scopas from Crannon, whom he “despised” [Diogenes Laertius Lives ii 5.27]. As we know, Socrates left Athens only at times of military operations and once went to Isthmus at a time of a religious celebration. Even if he had been the owner of land, then he hardly ever visited this property: it is not without reason that in Phaedrus we read that Socrates almost never went beyond the city walls [Plato Phaedrus 230c].

5. Activities to which Socrates and Spartans devoted themselves on their home grounds, it seems, differed greatly. Spartans, if one is to be-

\(^5\) See the story about king Leotychidas, bribed by the Thessalians, or the sad fate of general Pausanias who defeated the Persians in the battle of Plataea and was then corrupted by the lifestyle of the conquered barbarians.
lieve the tradition of antiquity as represented in works by Thucydides, Plutarch and other authors, were constantly preparing themselves for military actions. It is precisely with regard to this that the special attention given to the education of children, which is described in detail in Xenophon’s Constitution of the Lacedaemonians, was connected [Xenophon Const. Lak. 2–7]. What should be noted is, on the one hand, the austerity of their upbringing, and, on the other hand, the fact that, according to Xenophon’s words, Lycurgus “mixed all ages in Sparta” in spite of the custom where peers spent their time in the company of their equals in age. The legendary legislator believed that this would enable young people to learn from the elders’ experience and to prepare more aptly for the tribulations of adult life.

But Plato’s Socrates also aspires to spend time with people of different ages. In the dialogue Parmenides he is portrayed as an inquisitive adolescent conversing with wise elatic thinkers. In the dialogue Theaetetus, the elderly philosopher acts as an educator of youths. The Thirty Tyrants aimed to prohibit Socrates from associating with young people [Mem. i 2.33], and in 399 BC he was tried for “the corruption of youth.”

It is also worth noting here that upon taking to philosophy, Socrates gave up all other activities [Plato Apol. 31b]. One place from Diogenes Laertius suggests that he undertook certain commercial activities from which he derived income [Diogenes Laertius Lives ii 5.20]. However, in Plato’s dialogues, Socrates does not engage in any business. Although he owns enough property to serve in the ranks of the hoplites, this property was long abandoned by the philosopher [Plato Apol. 31b]. Socrates fully immerses himself in philosophy and avoids distraction by anything but unavoidable public and military duties. Plutarch’s words are in line with this image of a man who withdraws from economic concerns:

For one of the noble and blessed privileges which Lycurgus provided for his fellow-citizens, was abundance of leisure, since he forbade their engaging in any mechanical art whatsoever, and as for money-making, with its laborious efforts to amass wealth, there was no need of it at all, since wealth awakened no envy and brought no honour [Plutarch Par. Lives 24].

In the historical and philosophical tradition, Socrates is portrayed as a truly free man. In the dialogue Theaetetus, Plato ascribes words to Socrates about the necessity of the true sage’s withdrawal from philistine

6. See the famous place from Pericles: [Thucydides Hist. ii 39].
7. Socrates also “did physical exercises and had solid health” [Diogenes Laertius Lives ii 5.22].
hustle linked to money-making, the fear of social deprivation and the reign of judiciary erotic. But the mode of life of Spartan men, to the degree that it is described by the authors of the “Spartan mirage,” is completely devoid of the traits of the ordinary people from *Theaetetus*. In Plutarch’s opinion, the main virtue of Lacedaemonians was freedom:

Therefore it was that one of Lacedaemonians who was sojourning at Athens when the courts were in session, and learned that a certain Athenian had been fined for idleness and was going home in great distress of mind and attended on his way by sympathetic and sorrowing friends, begged the bystanders to show him the man who had been fined for living like a freeman [24].

6. One more place where Socrates’s image can be linked to the “Spartan mirage” is Delphi. The pythian sanctuary that declared Socrates as the wisest man among Athenians traditionally was in amicable relations with Sparta. According to the legend, the approval of Lycurgus’ legislation by Delphi became one of the first manifestations of this friendship. When Lycurgus came to the sanctuary, the oracle addressed him with the words: “I cannot understand how to call you, a god or a man?” Socrates “humbly” admits that the oracle did not equate him to a god, but “merely” declared that he excelled far beyond Athenians [Xenophon *Apol.* 15]. Quite possibly the main motive here is not so much in highlighting the sage’s special status, but in comparing Socrates with the famous legislator. If we cannot ascribe Plato’s political projects (for example, *The Republic*) to the historical figure of Socrates, then Socrates certainly could claim his closeness to Lycurgus with regard to caring for youth’s education [24].

7. For authors of antiquity, Socrates’s eroticism had not only philosophical implications. The passionate nature of Socrates is expressed in his appearance. Both Plato and Xenophon talk about it. Alcibiades, in Plato’s *Symposium*, compares the appearance of his teacher with portrayals of Silenus, one of the hypostases of the agricultural demon of fertility [Plato *Symp.* 215b]. The meaning of the comparison is clear: Alcibiades juxtaposes the image of Socrates, referring us to its “rusticity” which was ridiculed in “satyr plays” (and which could, at times of growing animosity between poleis, be associated with “rural” Sparta), with the inner beauty of his soul. However, it should not be forgotten that sileni and satyrs are associated with a sexuality characteristic of agricultural cults. Plato is echoed by Xenophon. In his *Symposium*, Socrates ironically dis-
cusses his “crayfish” eyes, pug nose and pouty lips (see [Xenophon Symp. v 5] and onwards), which, in antiquity, were indicators of sensuousness.

From the point of view of the Athenian sage’s inheritors, philosophical musings entirely transformed his passionate nature. Porphyry mentions this theme in *The History of Philosophy*.

Cicero’s story, in *Tusculan Disputations*, about the mistake of the physiognomist, Zopyrus, who tried to “read” the philosopher’s character in the traits of his face, is also indicative. The victory of the “heavenly” Eros over passionate nature is especially evident in Plato’s *Phaedrus*. Here, Socrates urges not to surrender to bodily appetite, thus taming the “black stead” responsible for voluptuous desires [Plato *Phaedrus* 256ab].

Here again we see Spartan parallels. Xenophon talks about the very same erotic restraint in *Constitution of the Lacedaimonians*—only now in relation to Lycurgus’ legislation [Xenophon *Const. Lak.* ii 13]:

The customs instituted by Lycurgus were opposed to all <…>. If someone, being himself an honest man, admired a boy’s soul and tried to make of him an ideal friend without reproach and to associate with him, he approved, and believed in the excellence of this kind of training. But if it was clear that the attraction lay in the boy’s outward beauty, he banned the connexion as an abomination; and thus he caused lovers to abstain from boys no less than parents abstain from sexual intercourse with their children and brothers and sisters with each other.

8. Many other more or less direct indications of similarities between the Spartan mode of life and Socrates’s behaviour can be pointed out: his spouse Xanthippe, who resembles Spartan rather than Athenian women; the comparison of the Sophists with the Peltasts in *Theaetetus*—that branch of fighters which brought about the destruction of the norms of classical Spartan hoplite combat.

8. “Porphyry claims that Socrates, Sophroniscus’ son, was intemperate early in his life, but, upon overcoming himself and pursuing the sciences in earnest, he managed to get rid of the worst and to reveal the traits of philosophy” [Theodore GAC iv 2]. Also [Cyril *Con. Jul.* vii 76, 784d-785a]: “Furthermore, Porphyry writes about Socrates: “He was modest in his daily life and did not require much for the satisfaction of day-to-day needs; as for love affairs, he was eager for them, although they did not compel him to become an ill person” Cited by [Porphyry Hist. Phil. 12a].

9. “Zopyrus, who professed to know a man’s character from his appearance, when in a public assembly he had given a long catalogue of the faults of Socrates, and was derided by others who did not recognize those faults in him, was relieved from blame by Socrates himself, who said that these faults were implanted in him by nature, but that he had exterminated them by reason” [Cicero *Tusc. Disp.* iv 37].
However, the most important and obvious trait of Socrates in the view of his contemporaries was his appearance. Was there anything Spartan in it? If one adheres to the principle of stylisation in the “strict” sense of the word, then some Spartan traits should be revealed also in the outward demeanour of the Athenian sage. Our expectations are met again in this case. In complete sympathy with traditions established by Lycurgus, Spartans did not look after their bodies in the same way other Hellenes did. They washed themselves, dressed up and adorned their heads with wreaths only when they went to war. Paradoxically, something similar can also be said of Socrates’s behaviour. Aristophanes recorded at least two confirmations of this. Chronologically, the first one can be found The Clouds, where Aristophanes compares Socrates’s disciples, gloomy, looking under their feet and negligently clad, with the Laconians who were taken as captives in the battle of Pylos [Aristophanes Clouds 225]. Later in The Birds, Aristophanes describes the “fashion” of Spartan lifestyle, widespread among Athenians, with reference to the example of Socrates [Birds 1281–1284]:

Before your city was built, all men had a mania for Sparta;
long hair and fasting were held in honor,
men went dirty like Socrates and carried staves.

There is a strong possibility that this fashion was widespread at the time of the Peace of Nicias.

Socrates evidently did not take “bathing” and “perfume” care of himself. “Hygienic ascesis,” obviously aimed at the habituation of the body to hardships, is similar to the case of Lacedaemonians. We encounter Socrates, “washed and in sandals,” in Symposium (which amazes all the participants of this dialogue [Plato Symp. 171a]). However, it should be noted that this text is dedicated to the theme of Eros and appears as a debating contest in the restoration of the “ancient demon.” This contest becomes for Socrates a kind of ordeal, as war is for Spartans. And as we see, he engages tirelessly—even when everyone else falls asleep, our philosopher is busy conversing on whether the authors of comedies can write tragic works and visa versa [223c]. Moreover, up to the appearance of Alcibiades, companions in this dialogue keep the pledge not to drink wine, exhibiting the same firmness as participants of legendary Spartan syssitias [Xenophon Const. Lak. v 3–7; Plutarch Par. Lives 12].

9. Summing up the Spartan traits of Socrates’s image in the texts by his disciples, we can assume that a new, not yet developed side of historical and philosophical studies opens before us: a non-verbal dimension
of antique (and not only antique) philosophy, expressed not in an esoteric silence but in the symbolic reflection of some real and fictional patterns in philosophers’ lives. This theme is particularly important in relation to Socrates, due to his “not knowing,” which was welcomed by the Delphian oracle. Whether we understand the Athenian philosopher’s “not knowing” as a methodical principle “breaking new ground” for the “searching of one’s self” for his disciples and their future philosophical doctrines, or interpret it as a criticism of sophistic wisdom, the verbal “not knowing” does not, in any case, imply the loss of behavioural orientation. The sage, refusing to define courage, beauty and correct opinion, in his practical activity is courageous, just and morally beautiful; he is absolutely one and the same with himself and his behavioural symbolism in his stamina at the trial and before death. From this point of view, he appears before his disciples as fully “knowing,” only this knowledge is so difficult to express through language, through dialogue or in a biography…

References

Plato and ἀδύνατον: The Alibi of One Utopia

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Abstract: The paper discusses the realistic application of Plato’s Kallipolis, providing results of recent studies on Greek colonization and cultural poetics. The Republic is just one among other colonization projects proposed by Athenian intellectuals in 4th century BC. Participants of the dialogue are quite familiar with real colonization practices. Socrates gives concise and clear indications on the typical recolonisation scenario to implement. The notoriously enigmatic saying that the ideal polis is to be found “nowhere on earth,” should be examined in the context of legendary tales about the foundations of colonies.
E ENCOUNTER a strange inversion. Aristotle calls Plato φίλος, a friend, and spends twenty years in communication with him. Popper calls Plato an enemy and lives two thousand years later in a non-overlapping aeon. “Fellow” Aristotle repudiates Plato’s political thought in view of reality: the hypothesis of the ideal polis is impossible, ἀδύνατον. “Remote” Popper, on the contrary, discerns such an undeniable connection with reality that it is equated to a crime without expiration. Why? In trying to answer this question, one can remember, along the lines of Deleuze, that philosophy is a matter of friendship, while in hard times even a good friend cannot be trusted. Or one can conclude, along the lines of Schmitt, that politics rest upon the distinction between a friend and an enemy, and hence it should not be excluded that enemies comprehend our politics even better than friends [Schmitt 1932]. However, we will choose a different scenario: what role does ἀδύνατον play in politics? What if the “impossible” symbolises not the end of history, but rather its beginning?

Below we will return to the famous finale of The Republic’s Book IX, the source of constant inspiration for at least two mutually exclusive groups: leisurely dreamers devising utopian projects and austere realists who never get tired of expressing their indignation over inappropriate fantasies. But first let us turn to Socrates, not at the triumphant moment which serves as a prologue to the majestic vision of Er, but in a more formal part of the dialogue where practical particularities regarding the foundation of Callipolis are discussed. At the end of Book VII, imbued with bold ideas and images (the symbol of the cave, the hierar-

1. “One should propose arbitrary hypotheses, as long as they are not impossible.”
2. See Gilles Deleuze’s letter to Dionys Mascolo from the August 6, 1988 [Lambert 2008: 37–38].
3. The congeniality of friends is discussed in the finale of the speech “Über das Zeitalter der Neutralisierungen und Entpolitisierungen,” included in this edition.
Socrates utters a phrase in which he expresses the hope that what was said by his companions with regard to the state and its organisation is “not merely vain dreams but something, although difficult, yet possible”: μὴ παντάπασιν ἡμᾶς εὐχὰς εἰρηκέναι, ἀλλὰ χαλεπὰ μὲν, δυνατὰ δὲ πη [Plato Rep. 540d2–3]. This phrase is read as a foretelling of Aristotle’s critical response, stated in the epigraph, but now we will focus our attention on its continuation: “Someday true philosophers will become the rulers of the state,—Socrates says,—and then in the future they will establish their own state (διασκευωρήσωνται τὴν ἑαυτῶν πόλιν).” “How exactly?”—his interlocutor reacts laconically, and the readers find themselves, at first glance, in a strange situation. Were the previous five books of The Republic (exclusive of Book I standing on its own) not dedicated to the very theme of how to organise a new polis in the future? It becomes necessary here to take caution and to remember the logic of the preceding speculation.

It starts with the analogy between the soul of a human being and the state (in Book II). Socrates suggests that it is necessary to examine the origin of justice and inequality, imagining in the mind’s eye (θεασαίμεθα λόγῳ) the emerging polis [369a5]. In such a way, what we behold is a mental experiment. The theoretical status of this contemplation is confirmed in the subsequent books. The analogy between the soul and the state formally ends only in Book IV, after which the essential part of Book V is allocated to the consideration of the thorny subject of the commonness of wives and children. Finally, in the middle of the same book, the direct question of the implementation of the ideal mode of life is raised [472b], and, further on, the claim to prove the possibility of the foundation of the described polis is put forward [472e4]. With some reservations, Socrates agrees to provide the required evidence, claiming that, for the transformation of a bad state structure into an ideal state structure, only one change is necessary, yet a radical change—philosophers must come to power. Socrates’ words trigger a lively reaction from his companions, and for this reason the end of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth books are concerned with the definition of a true philosopher. This fascinating digression from the general line of argument for the feasibility of Callipolis should not, however, cloud the fact that the philosophers’ coming to power does not mean an automatic transformation of the polis into an ideal one. The radical

4. The quotation, stated in the epigraph, formally belongs to Laws and not The Republic.

5. For example, Book IV: νῦν μὲν ὦν … πλάττομεν [420c1], “now we are molding in our imagination.”
change offers only an opportunity (ἂν...ἐλθοι εἰς τούτον τὸν τρόπον τῆς 
πολιτείας πόλις [473b6], αὕτη ἡ πολιτεία...φυῇ τε εἰς τὸ δυνατὸν καὶ φῶς ἕλιον ἵδη [473e1]). At this stage, there is nothing yet said about the practical means of transforming the given polis into the ideal one. A clarification emerges in the middle of Book VI. The rise to power of philosophers is a matter of happy chance, one possibility in a sea of infinite historical possibilities, which someday will most certainly result in the acquisition of monarchical power by people of philosophical nature. It might happen anywhere, although not everywhere, “in some barbaric locale, far away, beyond our horizon” [499c9]. This rectification, put somewhat in brackets, is very important, and for this reason this perplexity should be pinpointed in order to make way for our subsequent attempt at its clarification: why do Greeks, the founders of a new city, find themselves outside of Greece? Finally, the key passage:

They will begin by sending out into the country all the inhabitants of the city who are more than ten years old, and will take possession of their children, who will be unaffected by the habits of their parents; these they will train in their own habits and laws, I mean in the laws which we have given them: and in this way the State and constitution

This mysterious text obscures rather than clarifies the question of the establishment of the ideal polis. The first stage is a catharsis, a religious rite, the cleansing of the city and the morals of the people. Previously, there was no reference to this, whereas the mentioned “draft of the state’s structure” is implemented only at the next stage. However, Socrates’ interlocutor does not pay any special attention to the “innovation,” taking it for granted. The polis, along with its entire population, is in need of cleansing—an extraordinary event, but from the point of view of the interlocutor, it is apparently expected. Further particularities appear only at the end of Book VII, where, in effect, speculation on the matter of the actual establishment of the ideal state actually ends. And again, the companions, evidently understanding each other without words, are content with Socrates’s sparing elucidations about how the philosophers will enact the foundation of the city:

They will begin by taking the State and the manners of men, from which, as from a tablet (πίνακα), they will rub out (καθαρὰν ποιῆσειαν ἄν) the picture, and leave a clean surface. This is no easy task. But whether easy or not, herein will lie the difference between them and every other legislator—they will have nothing to do (ἐθελῆσαι ἂν ἄψασθαι) either with individual or State, and will inscribe no laws, until they have either found, or themselves made, a clean surface. [501a2–7].
of which we were speaking will soonest and most easily attain happiness, and the nation which has such a constitution will gain most [540e5–541a7].

The modern reader sees in this description an awkward synthesis of cynical biopolitics and political opportunism. The proposed plan of the seizure of power is a military operation in its scope. Even if one puts aside the moral side of the matter, can it be argued that the practical realisation of the political project of The Republic merely relies on Socrates’ singular phrase? Such carelessness makes one suspect that the companions intentionally do not attach value to practicalities inasmuch as they do not believe in success and do not want to realise their plans. Indeed, does not the proof of possibility turn into the demonstration of helplessness? Does it appear that the genuine meaning of Plato’s ἀδύνατον is impotence, incapability of practical deed?

There is an element that is left without attention. In Book III, after the narration of the myth of earth-born people educated as if in a dream, Socrates also briefly speaks about the transition of power in the city to the control of ideal wardens:

Now, let our earth born men equipped with armoury go forth under the command of their rulers. And when they reach the destination, let them look around and pitch their camp in a high place which will be safe against enemies from without, if the enemy pounces like a wolf at the flock, and likewise against insurrections from within, if one dares not to obey the law. There, let them sacrifice and set up their tents [415d7–e4].

This description resembles the annexation of a city by a foreign army: if the warriors were locals they would not need to look around. This plan differs from the one outlined above with regard to several details: here, the appearance of the philosopher does not play a role; the sacrifices performed after the seizure of power apparently do not constitute a part of the rite of the cleansing of the city; inhabitants are allowed to live in the city and not in the village. The differences in the plans of the seizure of power can likely be explained by the gradual change in the conception of The Republic, which had been created over the course of several decades. It is reasonable to regard the books, from the second to the fifth, as a product of the initial version of the dialogue where attention is primarily drawn to the accomplishment of wardens and not philosophers. The assumption about the existence of such a version is legitimate [Thesleff 1982] inasmuch as the recitation of The Republic in the beginning of the dialogue Timaeus corresponds to it and not to the text that came down
to us [Tim. 17a-19b]. One way or another, aside from detailed theoretical speculation about the organisation of Callipolis, Socrates proposes two concrete plans of military seizure of power in some already existing city for its subsequent transformation into an ideal city. The laconism of plans is, theoretically, not an objection to their realisation: who completely discloses the aim of “revolution”? Only those who do not wish for its success. On the contrary, true conspirators limit themselves to a hint. The hint links the theme under discussion to generally accessible knowledge. If illustrative examples of the realisation of analogous plans are contained within the limits of common knowledge in the classical epoch, then the hint given in The Republic by Socrates fulfills its function and is sufficient, notwithstanding its desultoriness. In this case, the “subtlety” of the hint testifies not to the helplessness of thought in the face of reality but to carefulness with regard to the treatment of reality, the realisation of which is conceived as desirable and possible.

* * *

In the Seventh Letter, Plato describes his situation during the years of political standstill that followed the Civil War (404/3 BC) and the execution of Socrates (399 BC):

...it was not possible to be active in politics without friends and trustworthy supporters (ἄνευ φίλων ἀνδρῶν καὶ ἑταίρων πιστῶν); and to find these ready at my hand was not an easy matter...though at first I had been full of a strong impulse towards political life, as I looked at the course of affairs and saw them being swept in all directions by contending currents, my head finally began to swim; and, though I did not stop looking to see if there was any likelihood of improvement in these symptoms and in the general course of public life, I postponed action till a suitable opportunity should arise [7th Let. 325d1–326a2].

The Seventh Letter is the apology of Plato—the politician. It was written (by Plato himself or one of his disciples) in the wake of the tragic Sicilian events that led to the death of Dion (354 BC). Notwithstanding the possibility of a biased approach to the description of the relationship between Plato and the tyrant Dionysius II of Syracuse, the letter is precious for it contains “Plato’s point of view” on earlier political events dating back to the time of The Republic’s conception or its earlier versions. It follows from this letter that Plato always aspired to take

6. For the events in Sicily in relation to the participation of Plato and members of the Academy see: [Cambridge Ancient History 2008: 695–706].
part in public activity, yet he gave up on direct participation in political life upon the discovery of the incurable malady of the existing political system. Nevertheless, Plato continues to ponder a better polity and, as we know, those thoughts constituted the basis of several dialogues. Is Plato’s political interest limited to theory? This does not follow from the “autobiographical” quotation stated above. On the contrary, there Plato talks about the search for friends necessary for the realisation of plans. It is doubtful that what he means is co-authors of dialogues, ideal friends-philosophers (who were only possible in the imaginations of the classical epoch). “Hetaireiai,” communities of friends (ἐταίροι), were secret political clubs in Athens [Cambridge Ancient History 2008: 577–578]. Technically, there were neither parties nor other legal mechanisms, providing instruments of consolidation for the opposition in the city. Thucydides writes about hetaireiai in the epoch of the Peloponnesian war: “…members of hetaireiai <…> plunged headfirst into any dangerous affair. Indeed, such organisations were by no means aimed at the good of society within the framework established by the law” [Thucydides Hist. Pel. War iii 82.6]. At the time of the notorious trial, with regard to the case of the “mutilators of the Hermai” in 415 BC, participants of one such hetaireia were charged, and it became clear that among them there were several young aristocrats associated with Socrates and Plato’s relatives [Nails 2000: 18]. For this reason, Plato’s words can be understood as the affirmation of the fact that after the reconstruction of democratic rule, the oppositional forces were destroyed and it was impossible for Plato—the politician to find trustworthy allies who were capable of conspiring together. What remained was to wait for good luck, however it was not equivalent to a retraction from practical activity.

In the 390s BC, Plato was not the only one who found himself in a situation of uncertainty following turbulent times. The works of Xenophon, another faithful follower of Socrates, who, like Plato, belonged to

7. One cannot agree with the statement that the classical epoch did not know and, moreover, could not even imagine a friend as a companion in political struggle, that Greeks never put friendship to a close relationship with war as it is claimed (referring to Deleuze) in the above mentioned article by Lambert [Lambert 2008: 44].

8. An interesting parallel to the theme of solitude from the Seventh Letter comprises the introduction to Will To Power, also written by a person from the closest circle, Nietzsche’s sister, who remembers her brother in such a way: “Back then, he was overcome by the painful assurance that he will never find for himself a co-partner for his most difficult works, that he will have to do everything, everything by himself and undertake his difficult journey in complete solitude” [Nietzsche 2004: 16].
the aristocratic “party” defeated in the Civil War, contained important particularities about the epoch. Xenophon was older, and at the moment of the catastrophe in 404 BC, he did not merely dream of politics, but played an important role, serving in the aristocratic cavalry, occupying a privileged position under the rule of the Thirty. The victors-democrats sent the cavaliers into exile to Asia to join Cyrus’s army with one transparent goal: to neutralise these people forevermore and to never see them again in Athens.9 The wandering of the Hellenic troops, described in Anabasis, stands parallel to Plato’s political pursuits. At the very time when Plato regrets the absence of faithful companions, Xenophon finds himself at the head of a mighty and disciplined military machine wandering about without definite aim, in blind nostalgic longing after the defeat of Cyrus’ expedition. Once, Xenophon nearly achieves what Plato dreams of in vain. The Greek mercenaries strive to reach Hellas, although they know that there they are castaways without a home. The most they could count on was to found a new settlement, either in a barbarian country or among Greeks. It is not surprising then that

Xenophon, who had before him numerous Hellenic hoplites, peltasts, archers, slingers and cavaliers, who owing to training were highly skillful in their profession…came to think that it would not be a vain idea to found a city, having multiplied in such a way the possession and power of Hellas [v 6.15].

Only one thing interferes with Xenophon’s plans—the warriors’ desire to return to the motherland by all means. The regular occupation of cities falling their way is an everyday necessity for the Hellenic regiment: stopping for rest or to buy provisions, they virtually invade a populated locality each time. Ambassadors of Sinope complain: “Rumours have reached us that allegedly you entered the city by force and some of you took up in people’s abodes and as though you, by force and without permission, collect from the territory whatever you need” [v 5.11]. The seizure of a city in the third book of The Republic is described in much the same way: a wandering regiment enters a city and stays there forever. The nomadic machine of war acquires at last its territory.

Isocrates, another elder contemporary of Plato and his adversary in the understanding of philosophy, dreams of a new form of politics—all-Greek, Panhellenic—and also sees its realisation in the establishment

9. See: [Xenophon Gr. Hist. iii 1]: “Athenians sent [to Asia] those who served in the cavalry under the rule of the Thirty, assuming it would benefit democracy if they were far away from the motherland and died.” Cp.: [Németh 2006: 88–89].
of new cities on Barbarian lands. He praises the history of the colonisation of Asia Minor in *Panegyricus* (380s BC) and discerns in it an exemplary strategy for future conjoined warfare with Barbarians [iv 34–37, 99, 122]. In one of his last speeches (346 BC), Isocrates addresses Philip II of Macedon with a plan of the invasion of Asia from Cilicia to Sinope and the foundation of cities with the purpose of settling them with “wandering” Greeks who were left without a roof over their heads and hence are dangerous (κτίσαι πόλεις ἐπὶ τούτῳ τῶν τόπων καὶ κατοικίσαι τῶν νῦν πλανωμένους δι’ ἔνδειαν τῶν καθ’ ἡμέραν καὶ λυμαινομένους οἷς ἂν ἐντύχωσιν) [v 120].

But not only political losers and schemers think about the foundation of colonies. As a result of the defeat in the Peloponnesian war, the Athenian thalassic empire broke down, and subsequently, in the middle of the 4th century BC (when *The Republic* was nearing completion, whereas the work on *Laws* was only beginning), the restoration of authority and the might of cities by means of a new wave of colonisation became the priority of revanchist policy of the official power. In the 360s and 350s BC, the most energetic efforts were undertaken for the return of lost domains [Figueira 2008: 466]. Athens learns the lesson from the past. Earlier in the 6–5th centuries BC, polis gathering momentum turned allied cities into dependent colonies, having achieved that not only “in deed” but also “in name,” thus creating a legend about itself as responsible for all Ionian colonisation [Lurie 1957: 206]. In a retrogressive movement from an ideological construct to military practice, mythological narratives became the direct motive and justification for the expansion. The major part of the imperial colonising activity in the 5th century BC can be considered “repeated colonisation,” inasmuch as its subjects were those Greek cities that Athenians’ perceived in their imagination as heirs of Athenian colonisation [Figueira 2008: 456]. In concurrence with this, it is only in exceptional cases that colonisation takes place in a barren place. Even with regard to archaic colonisations, researchers have suspicions that legends about autochthony were invented by the victors for the purpose of legitimizing their conquests, whereas in reality the “tabula rasa” method was used [Crielaard 2009: 57]. Thus the Athenian colonisation during the classical period was an entirely conscious recolonisation. A new city was founded in place of an old one, while the inhabitants of the old city were expelled in the majority of cases. The Peloponnesian war and accusations of collaboration with Sparta became a convenient excuse for clearing the local population. Colonisation became an instrument for the punishment of the disobedient, it was frequently accompanied by ἀνδραποδισμός, or the extermination of adult men and the taking of women and chil-
dren as slaves. In addition, military service was the main duty of the new colonists in the city; they became its guardians [Figueira 2008: 443, 450, 452, 507]. Plato’s *The Republic* undoubtedly contains many novelties previously unheard of in the classical epoch, however, all of them relate to the description of a “better polity,” that is, to the organisation of the state’s mode of life emerging after the territorialisation of the war machine as such, after the seizure of land for the ideal city. But those two passages from the dialogue where the plans of a city’s capture are scarcely mentioned, are, in the context of Athenian colonising practices, absolutely transparent to those who are familiar with its realities. The suggested methods are traditional forms of biopolitics characteristic of the epoch. One can even discern in Plato’s propositions an aspiration to the execution of a soft version of colonisation. The former population of the city do not undergo total extermination, exile or transformation into slaves: they either remain to live under the protection of guardians-invaders, or are partially transferred to the country.¹⁰

In the 4th century BC, weakened Athens acts more carefully than at the time of the blossoming of its empire, but this does not bring about the desired results. The historical moment is irretrievably gone. Therefore, all the more intensively, the best minds of the city continue looking for the redeeming secret of successful colonisation. Isocrates substitutes the conception of imperial colonisation, ἀποικία, discredited in the eyes of the allies, for the terminologically more neutral κληρουχία, while remembering to clarify that it serves the purpose of protecting the local population and not of looting [Isocrates Pan. iv 107]. Plato, for his part, proposes concepts of the best state structure. Therefore, in the context of the epoch, his projects, laid down in *Laws* and *The Republic* (on the basis of colonisation in both cases), are just a few of the many projects presented on the political “market of ideas” and at times they have to “compete” with fairly exotic alternatives. In such a manner, Philip II of Macedon, the addressee of Isocrates’ advice, founds cities for the single purpose of exerting control over occupied territories. One such colony today is Plovdiv in Bulgaria. In 342 BC, its population of two thousand was constituted of criminals brought from Macedonia. The place was nicknamed Poneropolis, “the city of scoundrels” [Figueira 2008: 488].

¹⁰. The hypothesis that it is easier to get along with children than with adults has a political-philosophical prehistory, see the fragment from Heraclitus [121 DK = 105 Marcovich]: “The Ephesians deserve to be executed all without exception, whereas the city should be entrusted to beardless youths, for they expelled Hermodorus, the best [man] among them, with the words: ‘Let nobody be the best among ourselves, and if one such is found, let him be in a strange land, with others!’”
Even if the antipode of Callipolis became a reality, to what degree was the “beautiful city” of Plato divorced from the realities of its epoch? The Athenian colonists of the 5th century were Ariston, the father of Plato and two of Socrates’ companions in this dialogue—Glaucon and Adeimantus, and also themetics, Lysias and Polemarchus, sons of Cephalus, in whose house the conversation described in The Republic takes place. These people would not bother to delve into much detail about such an ordinary event as the foundation of a city by means of recolonisation. What, then, remains ἀδύνατον, from the point of view of the interlocutors? The “impossible” of this kind is their everyday reality.

* * *

In 355 BC, Dion of Syracuse, Plato’s close friend, came to power in Sicily. Members of the Academy helped to overthrow the unpopular Dionysius the Younger. The new ruler, who technically did not become a tyrant, wielded almost unlimited power and had the unique historical opportunity to implement Plato’s political project, although not as radical as it appears in The Republic. Plato’s Eighth Letter, the authenticity of which also raises serious doubts, contains the project of mixed constitution, ascribed to Dion, restricting both royal power and popular freedoms. The fact that political instructions were included in Plato’s letter addressed to Dion’s friends, even a forged one, is telling. Dion’s policy was perceived as the implementation of the Academy’s ideas. Soon, however, Dion fell victim to a conspiracy, never having proceeded with the reforms. To move from the seizure of power to its exploitation in practice proved itself to be a difficult task. The impossibility only opened up in the abundance of opportunities: the “tabula rasa,” ready to embrace the draft of the ideal state, turned out to be an overloaded system of coercive relationships that compelled Dion to undertake fatal steps. The peripeteia missed its catharsis.

A few years before these events, Plato received an invitation to visit Sicily, hinting at the possibility of realising his political ideal. The philosopher did not make his decision instantly. In the Seventh Letter, he lists the doubts tormenting him, the validity of which was confirmed afterwards, leading the mission to fail. The letter gives a retrospective view on the events, but the story told in it testifies that Plato realises the impossibility of the whole undertaking from the very beginning; however, irrespective of this, he sets out in order to found a state. In its

11. A relatively fresh attempt to draw an up to-date line under the arguments over the authenticity of the Seventh Letter and Plato’s participation in real politics is made in the work [Schofield 2007].
content, the story is fictitious, but in its form it is the ordinary “truth” of Greek historians. It is precisely under these circumstances, when the beginning of the journey is linked to its impossibility, that legendary foundations took place. For instance, here is what Herodotus tells us about the foundation of Cyrene by someone named Battos, a random and unwitting man who also suffered from a speech impediment:

When Battos had grown to be a man, he came to Delphi to inquire about his [stammering] voice; and when he asked, the prophetess thus answered him: “For a voice thou camest, O Battos, but thee lord Phœbus Apollo sendeth as settler forth to the Libyan land sheep-abounding.” He thus made answer: “Lord, I came to thee to inquire concerning my voice, but thou answerest me other things which are not possible (ἀδύνατον), bidding me go as a settler to Libya; but with what power, or with what force of men should I go? [Herodotus Hist. iv 155, italics added]

What is impossible structurally and in terms of genre makes the history of foundation. The stories of Greek historians about the celebrated colonisations of the archaic period naturally reveal the breach in the vision of reality. The legitimising source of colonial trajectories, diverging on the periphery of the ecumene, is the Delphian Oracle, the word of God famous for its ambiguity. The future founder of a city must solve a riddle given to him by god, with no right to reject this honorary and dangerous mission. The premise of the Oracle’s riddle usually rests on the confusion of traditional views on the nature of things, while the answer to the riddle often consists in the resolution of logical contradictions among names, for example, relating simultaneously to flora and fauna. Colonists must be quick-witted, both geographically and logically: what helps them in their search for the right landmark is the ability to differentiate homonyms and to determine the accuracy and appropriateness of names [Dougherty 1993: 49–52]. In Herodotus’s and Thucydides’s accounts, the practical realities of colonisation transform into events occurring in the sphere of logic:

There is a story that Alcmaeon, son of Amphiaras, during his wanderings after the murder of his mother was bidden by Apollo to inhabit this spot, through an oracle which intimated that he would have no release from his terrors until he should find a country to dwell in, which had not been seen by the sun, or existed as land (μήπω ὑπὸ ἡλίου ἑωρᾶτο μηδὲ γῆ ἦν) at the time he slew his mother; all else being to him polluted ground. Perplexed at this, the story goes on to say, Alcmaeon realised with great difficulty that what he was talking about were these washes [between the islands in the bed of the river] [Thucydides Hist. Pel. War ii 102.5–6].
The extreme case of a logical problem is contradiction, impossibility. Such impossibility is the situation of an ordinary man (Battos) confronted with the necessity to accomplish a divine mission, but it marks only the beginning of the journey. From the point of view of an omniscient god, there is no contradiction and impossibility, truth reigns here. For this reason, the typical “colonial landscape” described by the oracle has the logical status of “impossible but true.” As C. Dougherty notes: “We find the majority of enigmatic colonial oracles precisely in the context of the ‘impossible but true’ landscape. In this regard, an oracle describing the spot allocated for the foundation of a colony as ‘land that is not land’, or the place where ‘man is beaten by a wooden dog’, greatly resembles the poetic device named ἀδύνατον” [Dougherty 1993: 50].

Greeks regarded polis life as a higher and more intensive stage of existence in comparison with a natural one. Colonisation was an act of culture, man’s victory over the forces of nature, its anthesis was the mythological redivision of lands linked to the act of divine violation. The conditions of the colonial riddle usually reflected some natural impossibility that was eventually resolved due to the use of mental resources available to an ordinary person. The solution of the riddle is the task of man, the manifestation of his humanity, the attribute of civilisation and culture. The colonist logically neutralises the natural contradiction contained within the riddle, resulting in the intensification of human life, its exaltation over the natural level. Natural impossibility succumbs to man if translated into the field of logic. Logos masters physis. The riddle does not remain without consequences, it always imposes responsibility. The example of radical responsibility is the life of one who deciphers the riddle. The most famous example of a “deadly riddle” in Greek literature is the story of Oedipus and Sphinx. Colonists find themselves in an analogous situation: their life depends on the solution of the riddle. Battos cannot return home upon the failure of his mission: “…the Theraians sent Battos with two fifty-oared galleys; and these sailed to Libya, and then came away back to Thera, for they did not know what else to do: and the Theraians pelted them with missiles when they endeavoured to land, and would not allow them to put to shore, but bade them sail back again” [Herodotus Hist. iv 156]. The life of the colonist entirely depends on whether he can solve the task given to him by god. In the form of a deadly riddle, the extensive and intensive forms of life coincide. The salvation of the colonists’ “bare life” depends on their ability to become a cultural hero. The paradigm example of a “deadly riddle” in the history of philosophy is the mission of Socrates. Apollo entrusts him with an unexpected duty through the Pythia—he must check the truth for incogitability: “What can the God
mean, what is the interpretation of his words (αἰνίττεται) when He says that I am the wisest of men? And yet he is a God and cannot lie” [Plato Apol. 21b]. The successful solution of this riddle as well as of Sphinx’s riddle in Sophocles’ tragedy Oedipus the King, turns out to be fatal. It legitimises the status of the discerning man as the wisest among people, but in the end his superhuman wisdom leads him to his death. So- crates knows what is ahead of him, but he does not abandon his search for truth, assuming that an unexamined life is not worth living [38a]. He inverts the equability of extensive and intensive life: the latter engulfs the former completely, “bare life” is equated to death—the fatal step that has had important consequences for the history of political thought.12

The dramaturgy of the solution to the “deadly riddle” of the colonial type implies temporal cohesiveness and newsworthiness.13 The riddle must be unraveled in due time, this organises the dramaturgy of events. In Poetics Aristotle holds up the composition of Oedipus the King as an example where the moment of recognition happens at the moment of a reversal of circumstances (peripeteia) [Aristotle Poet. 1452a35]. The Apology is an early work of Plato attempting to write tragedies in his youth. The moment when Socrates solves the Oracle’s riddle at the trial becomes a turning point: Athenians realise that reality is far more dreadful than assumptions, for Socrates is much more dangerous in his own speeches than in the accounts of his prosecutors. He is the wisest, he is an outcast, he is a pharmakos (some wonderful texts are dedicated to this subject)14 [Derrida 2007]. Plato himself uses yet another word—“paradigm” (Sophocles also uses it in his tragedy when the Chorus speaks of Oedipus as a paradigm). Socrates is a paragon of riddle and its solution. God uses him as a paradigm (ἐμὲ παράδειγμα ποιούμενος [Plato Apol. 23b1]) in order to propose a riddle to people and furnish a divine answer. As in Sophocles’ tragedy, in Plato the administrator of justice discovers a terrible truth and blinds himself. Having initiated a show trial, a demonstration of the abuse of power by

12. The indistinguishability of extensive (“banal,” “bare”) life and death is in particular characteristic of all the tradition of political and ethical thought “after Nietzsche,” from Heidegger to Deleuze.
13. “The majority of ambiguous oracles in Greek literature only obtain the correct understanding retrospectively; with this background, it is important to point out that, as a rule, it is said about colonial oracles that they were successfully interpreted at the right moment—as if signalling Apollo’s support for the expedition” [Dougherty 1993: 50, italics added].
14. It is interesting to read this manifesto of deconstruction in tandem with Vernant’s classical structuralist research on the king Oedipus [Vernant 1990].
the victors in the Civil War, the Athenian demos fears Socrates no less than the defeated aristocrats. It is not merely a “teacher of tyrants” that comes before the court but the personification of the superhuman dimension of politics which Athenians are no longer able to restrain but can only hide from their sight. Xenophon, in his *Apology of Socrates*, notes Socrates’s inexplicable loftiness, whereas the peripeteia of the procedural drama happens, in his opinion, when Socrates began to “exalt” himself [Xenophon *Apol. 32*], i.e. the cause of the judges’ fatal exasperation was the story with the oracle. Assumptions were made that the oracle was Plato’s artistic innovation (in a similar way tragedians invented their own versions of myths), for Xenophon is a dependent source: he personally did not attend the trial and writes his text in the wake of Plato’s testimony. In any case, Plato skillfully placed the story with the oracle in the composition of *The Apology*, imparting the judicial process with the dramatic form of “deadly riddle.”

* * *

In the finale of Book IX of *The Republic*, there is a wonderful exchange of retorts summing up lengthy speculation about the ideal polis (and according to the opinion of some, Plato’s whole political project):

[Glaucon:]…I understand; you speak of the city of which we are the founders, and which exists in idea (ἐν λόγοις) only; for I do not believe that there is such as one anywhere on earth (γῆς γε οὐδαμοῦ)?

[Socrates:] *In heaven there is laid up a pattern of it (ἐν οὐρανῷ ἴσως παράδειγμα)*, methinks, which he who desires may behold… [Plato *Rep*. 592a10–b3, italics added]

It is fair to ask whether it is astrology under the guise of politics that is presented to the public by the philosopher, who forbade attending the Academy to all incompetent in geometry, that is in the science dealing with figures drawn on earth? The criticism of Deleuze and Guattari, apparently directed at the given quotation by Plato, sounds like an accusation in professional inadequacy: “Concepts do not await us already finished, after the fashion of celestial bodies. Concepts do not have heavens” [Deleuze, Guattari 2009: 15]. Asmus states in his comment: “This is a model of an ‘ideal’ state, that is of such that, according to Plato’s opinion, should have existed, but up to now has not yet emerged and is found nowhere in reality. Consequently, the dialogue *The Republic* is characterised as literary, and is included in the genre of so-called Utopia” [Plato 1994: 540] It might be possible to agree with Asmus’ remark but under a significant reservation: in Plato’s time, the genre of Uto-
pia consists of the colonial parables, usually beginning with a prophecy telling about some “impossible landscape.” These parables are partially witty and partially absurd; however, they had been preserved in history insofar as they narrated about foundations of real poleis.

The cited dictums from Book IX describe two views on the feasibility of Callipolis’ state structure. The first perspective, a human one, is expressed by Glaucon: the described “landscape” is impossible. The second perspective, a divine one, is presented by Socrates: the “landscape” might be impossible but true. Thucydides’ Alcmaeon must have found “the land that is not land.” The future founder of Callipolis also must find a land that is not land but something having its image in heaven. This is a typical situation established in terms of the genre in which the future founder of the city finds himself upon receiving an oracle, with a mission linked to it. Many will hear an oracle, it will be available to “[him] that desires,” but by no means does it relate to anybody. Battos was a secondary figure in the Greek kings’ retinue that visited Delphi but it is precisely to him that the mission of the foundation of Cyrene was assigned. He ignored the will of god for as long as possible, trying to carry on with his former life, however, he was eventually condemned and expelled by enraged citizens in order to found a new city, and save the only thing that he still fully owned as an exile—his life. The foundation of a city is the drama of “deadly riddle,” a reversal of circumstances between the highest and the lowest points of human existence, between a pharmakos and a founder of a colony, between “bare life” and a “cultural hero.” For this reason, no matter how detailed instructions are, the success of the whole enterprise depends on the future “coloniast” who will certainly learn about his mission because its completion decides the matter of his own existence in the world:

…and beholding [the pattern in heaven], [man] may set his own house in order. But whether such an one exists, or ever will exist in fact, is no matter; for he will live after the manner of that city, having nothing to do with any other [592b3–5].

Among the interlocutors in The Republic, there are future victims of civil turmoil: Polemarch, Lysias, Nicias. This is typical of Platonic dialogues: in The Laches, courage is discussed with military leaders who will soon afterwards suffer a fateful defeat. In The Charmides, the question of moderation is discussed with the future tyrants, Critias and Charmides, who will also suffer a defeat and die. Each of these dialogues proposes its own version of “deadly riddle.” The logic of reasoning in them is connected with history and the nature of events, creating a problem and verifying its solution.
Aristotle’s objections are mainly founded on the demonstration of disparities between Plato’s suggestions and widespread opinions or the realities of the epoch. Both, according to the opinion of Aristotle, are the inevitable obstacles on the way to the realisation of the political project containing some inexecutable requirements known in advance. Evaluating the political projects described in *The Republic* and *Laws*, Aristotle even claims that *any* of the known or existing alternatives have prominent advantages in comparison with them:

Other constitutions [non-Platonic] have been proposed <…> which all come nearer to established or existing state structures than either of Plato’s [*The Republic* and *Laws*] <…> other legislators begin with what is necessary [Aristotle *Pol.* ii 1266a.34].

Strauss, as if developing this thought of Aristotle draws the following conclusions about *The Republic*: “The just city is impossible. It is impossible because it is directed against nature” [Strauss 1964: 127]. A retrospective journey into the dramaturgy of stories about the foundation of Greek cities shows that colonisation as an act of culture is always directed against nature. The foundation of a city, being a Delphian riddle, begins precisely with the impossible.15 Aristotle draws the conclusion about the impossibility of Platonic projects on the assumption that there is no connection with reality. Fiction, which has no place in reality, is called by the Greek word “utopia.” The absence of the suspect on the scene of the crime is called in legal practice by the Latin word “alibi.” What are the relationships between alibi and utopia? Does utopia have an undoubted alibi?

In 1938, Karl Popper began to work on the book *The Open Society And Its Enemies* [Popper 1992]. This took place under conditions hardly disposed to “the contemplation of patterns in heaven,” against a backdrop of calamities: “I made the decision to write this book on the day when I learnt of Hitler’s invasion of my native Austria.” Popper finishes his work in 1943, as an émigré. There is no reason to believe that over the course of the five difficult years deciding the fates of the author and of the war, Popper had an abundance of time which he could dedicate

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15. It is interesting that contemporary historical studies on the antique polis find themselves in the analogous situation of the “impossible beginning” (in particular, intellectual efforts consolidated around the Copenhagen Polis Centre): “No matter what was called polis in archaic and classical sources, the fundamental [methodological] principle consists in the following: this polis can deviate from some [theoretical] ideal of Antiquity and the early modern period, but it is impossible to have a polis if it is not a genuine one” [Morgan 2003: 5].
to the pursuit of “political astrology.” On the contrary, the thinker addresses the “deadly riddle” of his epoch, the genesis of totalitarian regimes. Popper’s gesture is anachronistic and unjust, yet it cannot be denied philosophical significance. Popper strips Plato of his political alibi, so surely guaranteed by the utopia of his thought. He deports the Greek philosopher from antiquity, inaccessible to modernity, ignores the obvious impossibility of his projects and brings him to the trial of history, charging him with the cruelest crime of our times.

It is not a matter of friends or enemies, far or near; the issue is ἀδύνατον, symbolising not the end of history, but the certainty of its beginning. For Aristotle, “the reader” (his nickname in the Academy) reading Plato, there is nothing at stake. For him, it is one text among many: “To take the best out of the possible” is the principle of selection. It is a given that the scope of his reading is extensive. Popper has much at stake and attempts to accomplish the inconceivable. For him, the reading of The Republic and Laws is dictated by the necessity to solve a “deadly riddle.” Against his wishes, he finds himself in a situation of a colonist looking to grasp at straws when there is nothing to rely on. At this moment, even the landscapes of Callipolis or Magnesia do not seem out of place to him: “Plato develops a strikingly realistic theory of society” [Popper 1992: 68]. Utopia invades reality, the alibi is annulled, the impossible demonstrates its kinship with truth. Arendt writes in The Origins of Totalitarianism that our epoch is characterized by a constant clash with “elements of unprecedented unpredictability,” moreover, it is precisely the exploitation of the impossible as a political resource that leads to success in the struggle for power. Arendt says that under the Nazi regime, history acts in the mode of an oracle and notices something which would have been very familiar to the ancient Greeks regarding the organisation of historical existence: “Prophecy’ becomes a retrospective alibi: only that happens which has already been prophesied” [Arendt 1962: 348–349] Nietzsche concludes on Plato’s political career, his “reversed reflection”: “His designs were possible…But success failed him: so he attained the fame of a fantasist and a utopist” [Nietzsche 2004: 496].

* * *

Plato’s follower, Alain Badiou, makes Xenophon’s Anabasis the emblem of political pursuits of the entire past century [Badiou 2010]. The dramatic crisis of Badiou’s essay is reached upon the comparison between Saint-John Perse and Paul Celan’s poems, named after the work of the famous Greek. The epic imperial expansion into the unknown, the remote areas of which are safely secured by the inflow of colonial goods, is set against the anti-rhetorical movement “into the distance, into the
untravelled, beyond the bounds.” For Perse, the problem lies in the ethical choice between a heroic voyage and repose, whereas for Celan this very journey is dubious, it embodies the “impassable-true.” Forty years elapse between the writing of the two poetical *Anabasis*es in the 20th century, the same two generations divide Plato and Aristotle’s dates of birth. During this period, the poetics of work, activity and intensive movement within the extensive horizon of traditional politics manages to give way to bewilderment with regard to the necessity of a journey into the absolutely impassable. The short (according to the expression of Buckler and Beck) [Buckler, Beck 2008: 4] 4th century BC is the inverse of the short (if one follows Badiou) 20th century AD. The Athenian century ends with centrifugal expansion and the neutralisation of the impossible. The 20th century unfurls under the sign of the intensification of “the political” and the totalisation of conflicts. In the epoch of Plato and Xenophon, as well as in the epoch of Celan and Popper, the inconceivable has not yet been moved to the horizon and reduced to the object of leisurely opportunists’ attention—it rages under everybody’s feet: land that is not land, the “impossible/impassable/true.” Badiou gives the past epoch another name—“the century of anti-Platonism.” The case of Popper, the acknowledgement of Plato’s relevancy through imputing him with responsibility, can also bear the name of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Arendt, Derrida and Deleuze (as well as Aristotle himself, inasmuch as we interpret the impossible in his work not as a condemnation but as a problem, that is the beginning of an exploratory journey).

Plato’s utopia does not have an alibi, its impossibility has shown its fulfilment, its price is taken into account in the political economy of modernity. Does it enhance the value of Platonism for thought?

16. As it is possible to conclude from the unauthorized summary of Badiou’s seminar *Pour aujourd’hui: Platon!* (24 Octobre, 2007), openly available for access.

17. Giorgio Agamben believes that the traditional interpretation of the definition of the "possible," offered in the ninth book (θ) of *Metaphysics* [1047a24–28], trivialises Aristotle’s text, reducing it to tautology. He proposes a new interpretation and concludes: “Potentiality (in its double appearance as potentiality to and as potentiality not to) is that through which Being founds itself sovereignly, which is to say, without anything preceding or determining it (*superiorem non recognoscens*) other than its own ability not to be. And an act is sovereign when it realizes itself by simply taking away its own potentiality not to be, letting itself be, giving itself to itself” [Agamben 1998: 32].

18. See the following statement of a Canadian researcher about the influence of American neoconservatism in general (and Leo Strauss’ disciples in particular), having a direct relationship to Plato’s concept of “kings-philosophers”: “When I wrote this book in the 1980s, I could not even conceive that the tyr-
Our main argument was technically a structuralist one: the founder of Callipolis is included into the binary opposition, parallel in its structure to the opposition of tyrant-pharmakos from Vernant’s classical work on Oedipus. The ambiguity of the oracle defines the logical matrix of archaic epistemology. But why did the Greeks use the oracle? Did it happen for the sake of reducing the boundless multitude of variants to two, or for the sake of dramatising life, since the ambiguity of interpretation led to extremes? The curtailment of variants makes sense when there is a principle difference between them. But even if the impossible is possible, what is left to do with the truth that is indubitable? In other words, while Plato’s colonist had a fair chance to be a vain dreamer, the experience of the 20th century apparently testifies to his almost unavoidable implication in the crime. The “Sicilian voyage,” the risk of travel in a gale, is the new curse of thought after the epoch of activism, when the main disdain is addressed to “cabinet dreamers,” sunk into the earth. Heidegger’s rectorial speech, Foucault’s Iranian epopee (Averincev, Bibikhin, Mamardashvili). By engaging in politics, the thinker is destined to compromise himself. One who is not capable of thought is exposed to another danger—without realising this, he becomes an Eichmann. An alternative no longer offering a choice. “A fox there was, naive to the degree that he not only fell into the trap all the time, but he could not even explain the difference between a trap and not-a-trap” [Arendt 2000: 543]. Foucault calls problematization a philosophical stake in historical analysis, the turning point in the development of discursive practices [Foucault 2001: 171]. The problem of the present, understood as an epoch in which utopia is devoid of an alibi, lies in the fact that the impossible is bound to happen. A fancy turns into fantasy, becoming a branch of production and not a resource for critical thinking. Love for wisdom appears not as modesty, but hypocrisy in a world burdened by knowledge and responsibility. The furnishing of an alibi for a utopia becomes a moral problem. Another problem is representation, the exposure and limitation of the impossible, for which it is necessary to indicate once more a place not existing on this earth.

References


anny of “sages” would come so close to realisation in the political life of such a great country as the United States” [Drury 2005: 12].

