Chapter 1

Late Socialism:
An Eternal State

Mimicry is a very bad concept, since it relies on binary logic
to describe phenomena of an entirely different nature. The
crocodile does not reproduce a tree trunk, any more than the
chameleon reproduces the colors of its surroundings. The Pink
Panther imitates nothing, it reproduces nothing, it paints the
world its color, pink on pink.
—Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus:
Capitalism and Schizophrenia*[1]

An Eternal State

"It had never even occurred to me that in the Soviet Union anything
could ever change. Let alone that it could disappear. No one expected it.
Neither children, nor adults. There was a complete impression that every-
thing was forever." So spoke Andrei Makarevich, the famous songwriter
and musician,[2] in a televised interview (1994). In his published memoirs,
Makarevich later remembered that he, like millions of Soviet citizens,
had always felt that he lived in an eternal state (*vechnoe gosudarstvo*)
(2002, 14). It was not until around 1986 and 1987, when reforms of
perestroika (reconstruction) were already afoot, that the possibility of
the socialist system not lasting forever even entered his mind. Many
others have described a similar experience of the profound feeling of the
Soviet system's permanence and immutability, and the complete unex-
pectedness of its collapse. And yet, Makarevich and many Soviet people
also quickly discovered another peculiar fact: despite the seeming abrupt-
ness of the collapse, they found themselves prepared for it. A peculiar
paradox became apparent in those years: although the system's collapse
had been unimaginable before it began, it appeared unsurprising when it
happened.

[1] Deleuze and Guattari (2002, 11).
[2] The lead singer of *Mashina Vremeni* (Time Machine), a Russian rock band.

When the policies of perestroika and *glasnost'* (openness, public discussion) were introduced in 1985, most people did not anticipate that any radical changes would follow. These campaigns were thought to be no different from the endless state-orchestrated campaigns before them: campaigns that came and went, while life went on as usual. However, within a year or two the realization that something unimaginable was taking place began to dawn on the Soviet people. Many speak of having experienced a sudden "break of consciousness" (*perelom soznania*) and "stunning shock" (*sil'neishii shok*) quickly followed by excitement and readiness to participate in the transformation. Although different people experienced that moment differently, the type of experience they describe is similar, and many remember it vividly.

Tonya, a school teacher born in Leningrad in 1966, describes the moment she first realized, around 1987, that "something impossible" (*chto-to nevozmozhnoe*) was taking place: "I was reading on the metro and suddenly experienced an utter shock. I remember that moment very well. . . . I was reading Lev Razgon's story 'Uninvented' (*Nepridumannoe*),[3] just published in *Iunost'* [the literary journal *Youth*]. I could never have imagined that anything even remotely comparable would be published. After that the stream of publications became overwhelming." Inna (born in Leningrad in 1958)[4] remembers her own "first moment of surprise" (*pervyi moment udivleniia*), which also occurred around 1987 and 1988: "For me perestroika began with the first publication in *Ogonek*[5] of a few poems by [Nikolai] Gumilev," a poet of the *Akmeist* circle whose poetry had not been published in the Soviet Union since the 1920s.[6] Inna had already read the poetry in handwritten copies but had never expected it to appear in state publications. It was not the poems that surprised her but their appearance in the press.

The stream of new publications began to rise exponentially, and the practice of reading everything, exchanging texts with friends, and discussing what one had read soon became a national obsession. Between 1987 and 1988, the circulation of most newspapers and literary journals jumped astronomically, as much as tenfold and more in the course of

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[3] In his memoirs, Razgon recounts the seventeen years he spent in Stalinist camps, from 1938 to 1955. In 1987 and 1988, several stories from it were published in the *Ogonek* weekly and the *Iunost'* literary journal. Soon after the book was published in its entirety.

[4] See more about Inna in chapter 4.

[5] The weekly magazine *Ogonek* was the most popular voice of perestroika.

[6] The poet Nikolai Gumilev, Anna Akhmatova's first husband, had not been published since his arrest in 1921 for his alleged participation in an anti-Bolshevik conspiracy that, it would be revealed sixty years later during perestroika, was a fabrication of the ChK (the precursor of the KGB) (Volkov 1995, 537). See chapter 4 on the symbolic importance of Gumilev in the 1970s and 1980s.

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one year.[7] Often it was impossible to find many of the more popular publications at newsstands because of the speed at which they sold out. In letters to the weekly magazine *Ogonek*, readers complained of having to stand in line at a local kiosk at 5 A.M., two hours before it opened, to have any chance of buying the magazine. Like everyone else, Tonya tried to read as much as possible: "My friend Katia and I started subscribing to monthly literary journals (*tosltye zhurnaly*): *Oktiabr', Nash Sovremennik, Novyi Mir, Znamia, Iunost'*. Everyone tried to subscribe to different journals so they could exchange them with friends and have access to more materials. Everyone around us was doing this. I spent the whole year incessantly reading these publications."

Reading journals, watching live television broadcasts, and talking to friends who were doing the same quickly produced new language, topics, comparisons, metaphors, and ideas, ultimately leading to a profound change of discourse and consciousness. As a result of this process, in the late 1980s, there was a widespread realization that the state socialism which had seemed so eternal might in fact be coming to an end. Italian literary scholar Vittorio Strada, who spent much time in the Soviet Union before the transformation began, summarized the experience of the fast-forwarded history that he encountered among the Soviet people in the late 1980s: "[N]o one, or almost no one, could imagine that the collapse . . . would happen so soon and so fast. . . . The timing of the end and the way in which it occurred were simply startling" (Strada 1998, 13).

The abrupt change was also quite exciting. Tonya, who had always felt proud of being a Soviet person and never identified with the dissidents, unexpectedly found herself quickly engrossed in the new critical discourse and, in her words, "felt elated" that most people were doing it—"this was all so sudden and unexpected and it completely overtook me." Tonya remembers reading

Evgeniia Ginzburg's *Steep Route* (*Krutoi marshrut*),[8] then Solzhenitsyn, then Vasilii Grossman.[9] Grossman was the first to imply that

[7] Daily newspapers were the first to rise in circulation, during the Nineteenth Party Conference in 1986. The circulation of *Argumenty i fakty*, for example, rose from a few hundred thousand to several million around 1986 and 1987. By the end of 1987 the same had also happened to many weeklies (e.g., *Ogonek* and *Moskovskie novosti*) and monthly "thick" journals (*Novyi mir*, *Druzhba narodov*, and others).

[8] *Krutoi marshrut*, by Evgeniia Semenovna Ginzburg, had the subtitle *Khronika vremen kul'ta lichnosti* (A chronicle from the times of the cult of personality). The book is a memoir of the eighteen years the author spent in Stalin's camps. It was written in the late 1960s (first part) and 1970s (second part), and for many years existed in samizdat. The book's first official Soviet publication, to which Tonya refers, occurred in 1988, eleven years after Ginzburg's death. Evgeniia Ginzburg was the mother of the famous writer Vassily Aksyonov.

[9] Vasilii Semenovich Grossman's novel *Life and Fate* (*Zhizn' i sud'ba*), about his experiences of World War II and Stalin's camps, was written in the late 1950s and early 1960s,

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Communism could be a form of fascism. This had never occurred to me before. He did not say this openly but simply compared the tortures in the two systems. I remember reading it lying on the sofa in my room and experiencing an intense feeling of a revolution happening all around me. It was stunning. I had a break of consciousness (*perelom soznania*). Then came the books of Vladimir Voinovich. I shared everything with my uncle Slava.

As these and endless other stories about the late 1980s suggest, the system's collapse had been profoundly unexpected and unimaginable to many Soviet people until it happened, and yet, it quickly appeared perfectly logical and exciting when it began. Many discovered that, unbeknownst to themselves, they had always been ready for it, that they had always known that life in socialism was shaped through a curious paradox, that the system was always felt to be both stagnating and immutable, fragile and vigorous, bleak and full of promise. These experiences suggest an important set of questions about Soviet socialism: What was the nature of the late Soviet system and way of life that had this paradox at its core? On what kind of internal systemic shifts at the level of discourse, ideology, social relations, and time was this paradox predicated? Furthermore, what was the nature of the production and communication of knowledge in this system, and of the forms in which it was coded, circulated, received, and interpreted? These questions are not about the causes for the collapse but about the conditions that made the collapse possible without making it anticipated. With these questions in mind, this book sets out to explore late socialism—the period that spanned approximately thirty years, between the mid-1950s and the mid-1980s, before the changes of perestroika began, when the system was still being experienced as eternal. This book will investigate this period through the eyes of its last generation, focusing on these people's relations with ideology, discourse, and ritual, and on the multiple unanticipated meanings, communities, relations, identities, interests, and pursuits that these relations allowed to emerge.

Binary Socialism

One of the motivations for writing this book is to question certain problematic assumptions about Soviet socialism, which are implicitly and

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and was confiscated by the KGB because it represented a picture of the war that was strikingly different from the official representation. A copy of the manuscript was secretly brought to the West, where it was published in 1980. The first Soviet publication of the novel was by the literary journal *Oktiabr'* in 1989, twenty-five years after the writer's death.

explicitly reproduced in much academic and journalistic writing today.
These common assumptions include the following: socialism was "bad"
and "immoral" or had been experienced as such by Soviet people before
the changes of perestroika, and, further, the collapse of Soviet socialism
was predicated on this badness and immorality. These assumptions are
manifest today in the terminology used to describe that system—for ex-
ample, in the widespread use of phrases such as "the Soviet regime,"
with the myriad assumptions often packed into it—and in the use of bi-
nary categories to describe Soviet reality such as oppression and resis-
tance, repression and freedom, the state and the people, official economy
and second economy, official culture and counterculture, totalitarian
language and counterlanguage, public self and private self, truth and lie,
reality and dissimulation, morality and corruption, and so on.[10] These
terminologies have occupied a dominant position in the accounts of So-
viet socialism produced in the West and, since the end of socialism, in
the former Soviet Union as well.

In the most extreme examples of this discourse, Soviet citizens are por-
trayed as having no agency: in this portrayal, they allegedly subscribed to
"communist values" either because they were coerced to do so or because
they had no means of reflecting upon them critically. In the late 1980s,
Françoise Thom argued that, in the context of ubiquitous ideological lan-
guage, linguistic "symbols cease[d] to work properly," making the Soviet
Union "a world without meaning, without events and without human-
ity" (Thom 1989, 156). In the late 1990s, Frank Ellis went further:

> "When reason, common sense, and decency are assaulted often enough,
> then personality is crippled, and human intelligence disintegrates or is
> warped. The barrier between truth and lies is effectively destroyed. . . .
> Schooled in such a climate, fearful and deprived of any intellectual ini-
> tiative, Homo Sovieticus could never be more than a mouthpiece for
> the party's ideas and slogans, not so much a human being then, as a
> receptacle to be emptied and filled as party policy dictated." (Ellis
> 1998, 208)

Even when granted some agency in accounts of this type, the voices of
these subjects are often still unheard due to oppression and fear. For
example, John Young describes Soviet citizens as "non-conforming" dis-
sidents, who "counter the deceptions of government by setting forth 'the
facts' in contrast to official falsehood" in "conversations with frustrated
friends behind closed doors, in sign language devised by family members

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[10] See dichotomies reproduced in Kupina (1999); Shlapentokh (1989); Wierzbicka
(1990); Zaslavsky and Fabris (1983); Zemskaia (1996); Zemstov (1984). For a discussion
of the assumptions behind modern binaries in general, see Mitchell (1990).

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who suspect the secret police have bugged their apartment, in a manuscript or on a tape recording passed around from person to person" (Young 1991, 226). These are extreme examples; however, they represent a definite trend in conceptualizing Soviet life.[11]

Binary metaphors are also widespread in retrospective analyses of socialism written inside the former Soviet Union since the "collapse." In such accounts, Soviet culture is divided into the "official" and the "unofficial"—a division that, according to sociologists Uvarova and Rogov, can be traced back to a particular dissident ideology of the 1970s which held that "nothing good could appear in an [official] Soviet journal in principle; and a real text could only be published in an unofficial publication (*samizdat*) or a foreign publication (*tamizdat*)" (1998). Critiquing this division, Uvarova and Rogov propose instead to divide Soviet culture into censored (*podtsenzurnaia*) and uncensored (*nepodtsenzurnaia*). This change of terms helps to highlight the ambivalence of cultural production in the Soviet Union; however, it still reduces Soviet reality to a binary division between the state (censored) and the society beyond it (uncensored), failing to account for the fact that many of the common cultural phenomena in socialism that were allowed, tolerated, or even promoted within the realm of the officially censored were nevertheless quite distinct from the ideological texts of the Party.

One reason for the persistence of these binary models is the particular "situatedness" (Haraway 1991) of much critical knowledge about Soviet socialism: it has been produced either outside of, or in retrospect to, socialism, in contexts dominated by antisocialist, nonsocialist, or post-socialist political, moral, and cultural agendas and truths. As Rogov demonstrates in his research, diaries from Brezhnev's period, produced during the 1970s, and memoirs produced retrospectively in the 1990s are not only written in two distinct voices and languages; they also evaluate the everyday realities of Soviet socialism, both implicitly and explicitly, in two different ways. The memoirs not only tend to be much more critical of the socialist system than the diaries, but also to conceive of it and of the author's place within it in terms that emerged only in retrospect (Rogov 1998).[12] Patrick Seriot has also shown that by the end of perestroika in the late 1980s, it had become politically important, especially for members of the intelligentsia, to emphasize that during socialism there was no "mixing [of] the language of power with their own language" and that their own language was "a free space to be

[11] One significant element of this genre is a reliance on what Mitchell diagnoses as a dominant "master metaphor" in the social sciences that conceives of power and resistance through the "distinction between persuading and coercing" (Mitchell 1990, 545).

[12] For a discussion of the memoirs about the Soviet past published in the 1980s and 90s see Paperno (2002).

extended through struggle" (Seriot 1992, 205–6). But this story of divided languages was, to a large extent, a retrospective late- and post-perestroika construction.

Furthermore, the term stagnation (*zastoi*), which figures prominently as a tag for the period of Brezhnev's rule, also emerged only in retrospect, during the time of Gorbachev's reforms, after Brezhnev's period had ended and the socialist system was undergoing its rapid transformation.[13] In fact, the very conceptualization of the late 1960s and 1970s, when Brezhnev was the party's general secretary, as a certain "period" with concrete historical features, also emerged retrospectively during perestroika. According to Rogov, "The [Soviet] person in the 1970s had a rather vague understanding about the historical coordinates of his epoch, considerably vaguer than became apparent to the same person from the perspective of the late 1980s and 1990s" (1998, 7). The perestroika critical discourse which exposed many unknown facts about the Soviet past and critically articulated many realities that had been implicitly known but unarticulated until then, also contributed to the creation of certain myths about it that were colored by the newly emergent revolutionary ideas and political agendas of the late 1980s. Many binary categories in the accounts of the vanishing system gained their prominence within that revolutionary context.

At the same time, some of the roots of these binary categories go much deeper, originating in the broad "regimes of knowledge" formed under the conditions of the Cold War, when the entity of "the Soviet bloc" had been articulated in opposition to "the West" and as distinct from "the third world." The act of critiquing isolated binaries does not necessarily deconstruct these deeper underlying assumptions behind them. For example, Susan Gal and Gail Kligman provided a crucial critique of many binary divisions that dominate the studies of state socialism, arguing that in these societies "[r]ather than any clear-cut 'us' versus 'them' or 'private' versus 'public,' there was a ubiquitous self-embedding or interweaving of these categories."[14] And yet, they connected this critique with another claim that "[e]veryone was to some extent complicit in the system of patronage, lying, theft, hedging, and duplicity through which the system operated," and that often even "intimates, family members and friends informed on each other" (Gal and Kligman 2000, 51). The emphasis on such categories as duplicity, lying, and informing on others—which suggest moral quandaries at the core of the people's relations with the system

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[13] The term was used at that time in relation to two other terms, thaw and perestroika, which had entered public discourse earlier, the former in the 1950s, the latter in 1985 (Rogov 1998, 7).

[14] For a critique of binaries in the descriptions of socialism see also Lampland (1995, 273–75, 304).

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and with each other—implicitly reproduces an underlying assumption that socialism was based on a complex web of immoralities.

Everyday Realities

The Soviet system produced tremendous suffering, repression, fear, and lack of freedom, all of which are well documented. But focusing only on that side of the system will not take us very far if we want to answer the question posed by this book about the internal paradoxes of life under socialism. What tends to get lost in the binary accounts is the crucial and seemingly paradoxical fact that, for great numbers of Soviet citizens, many of the fundamental values, ideals, and realities of socialist life (such as equality, community, selflessness, altruism, friendship, ethical relations, safety, education, work, creativity, and concern for the future) were of genuine importance, despite the fact that many of their everyday practices routinely transgressed, reinterpreted, or refused certain norms and rules represented in the official ideology of the socialist state. For many, "socialism" as a system of human values and as an everyday reality of "normal life" (*normal'naia zhizn'*)[15] was not necessarily equivalent to "the state" or "ideology"; indeed, living socialism to them often meant something quite different from the official interpretations provided by state rhetoric.

An undeniable constitutive part of today's phenomenon of "post-Soviet nostalgia," which is a complex post-Soviet construct,[16] is the longing for the very real humane values, ethics, friendships, and creative possibilities that the reality of socialism afforded—often in spite of the state's proclaimed goals—and that were as irreducibly part of the everyday life of socialism as were the feelings of dullness and alienation. A Russian philosopher wrote in 1995 that, from the vantage point of the first post-Soviet years, he had come to recognize that the grayness and fear of Soviet reality had been indivisibly linked with a very real optimism and warmth, with accompanying forms of "human happiness," "comforts and well-being," and "cordiality, successes and order" in a "well-furnished common space of living" (Savchuk 1995). A Russian photographer, echoing the same realization, made a "banal confession" that for him personally the "crash of Communism" was also, in retrospect, the crash of something very personal, innocent, and full of hope,

[15] See chapters 3 and 4 for more on "normal life."

[16] For a comprehensive discussion of the phenomenon of "nostalgia" in the postsocialist world and for a critique of this concept's sociological usefulness, see Nadkarni and Shevchenko (2004). On postsocialist nostalgia see Boym (2001), Berdahl (1999), and Bach (2002).

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of the "passionate sincerity and genuineness" that marked childhood and youth (Vilenskii 1995). A critical examination of such retrospections is essential to an understanding of Soviet socialism. Without understanding the ethical and aesthetic paradoxes that "really existing socialism" acquired in the lives of many of its citizens, and without understanding the creative and positive meanings with which they endowed their socialist lives—sometimes in line with the announced goals of the state, sometimes in spite of them, and sometimes relating to them in ways that did not fit either-or dichotomies—we would fail to understand what kind of social system socialism was and why its sudden transformation was so unimaginable and yet unsurprising to the people living within it.

For the analysis of this seemingly paradoxical mix of the negative and positive values, of alienations and attachments, we need a language that does not reduce the description of socialist reality to dichotomies of the official and the unofficial, the state and the people, and to moral judgments shaped within cold war ideologies. Recent critical discussion of language from postcolonial studies provides some insight relevant to the socialist context.[17] Dipesh Chakrabarty criticizes some postcolonial historiography for the use of a kind of language that implicitly produces "Europe" as "the sovereign, theoretical subject of all histories, including the ones we call 'Indian,' 'Chinese,' 'Kenyan,' and so on," reducing these other histories to "variations on a master narrative that could be called 'the history of Europe'" (2000, 27). Chakrabarty's call for a language that would decenter and "provincialize" the "master narrative" of Europe in postcolonial historiography is relevant to the writings on socialism; however, in the case of socialism, especially in Russia, the object of "provincializing" would not just be "Europe" but, more specifically, "Western Europe"[18]—a post-Soviet "master narrative" in the history of socialism that implicitly and explicitly reproduces binary categories of the Cold War and of the opposition between "first world" and "second world."

This book is also an attempt to look for such a language and thereby to reconstruct some ethical and aesthetic complexities of socialist life, as well as the creative, imaginative, and often paradoxical cultural forms that it took. The challenge of such a task is to avoid a priori negative accounts of

[17] At the same time drawing any parallels between socialism and colonialism, which is a growing trend, must be done with extreme caution to avoid equating one with the other at the expense of the profound political, ethical, and aesthetic differences between these projects. As Timothy Brennan points out, the differences between colonialism and socialism concern not simply methods of dividing "imperial" spoils or organizing "administration, hierarchy, and sovereignty over land," but, more importantly, "aesthetic taste and social value" and "intellectual excitement and moral intention" (Brennan 2001, 39). See also Beissinger and Young (2002).

[18] See Yurchak (2003b) and Moore (2002), and Lampland's discussion of socialist history (1995, 336).

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socialism without falling into the opposite extreme of romanticizing it. By showing the realities of actually existing socialism—where control, coercion, alienation, fear, and moral quandaries were irreducibly mixed with ideals, communal ethics, dignity, creativity, and care for the future—this book attempts to contemplate and rehumanize Soviet socialist life.[19]

Lefort's Paradox

Like Western democracy, Soviet socialism was part of modernity. Foucault stressed that even such "pathological forms" of power as Stalinism and fascism, "in spite of their historical uniqueness . . . are not quite original. They used and extended mechanisms already present in most other societies . . . [and] used to a large extent the ideas and the devices of our political rationality" (Foucault 1983, 209). As a modern project, Soviet socialism shared the key contradictions of modernity.

One of the central contradictions of socialism is a version of what Claude Lefort called a general paradox within the ideology of modernity: the split between *ideological enunciation* (which reflects the theoretical ideals of the Enlightenment) and *ideological rule* (manifest in the practical concerns of the modern state's political authority). The paradox, that we will call "Lefort's paradox," lies in the fact that ideological rule must be "abstracted from any question concerning its origins," thus remaining outside of ideological enunciation and, as a result, rendering that enunciation deficient. In other words, to fulfill its political function of reproducing power, the ideological discourse must claim to represent an "objective truth" that exists outside of it; however, the external nature of this "objective truth" renders the ideological discourse inherently lacking in the means to describe it in total, which can ultimately undermine this discourse's legitimacy and the power that it supports. This inherent contradiction of any version of modern ideology, argues Lefort, can be concealed only by the figure of the "master," who, by being presented as standing *outside* ideological discourse and possessing *external* knowledge of the objective truth, temporarily conceals the contradiction by allowing it "to appear through himself" (1986, 211–12).[20] In other words, modern ideological discourse, based on the utopian ideals of the Enlightenment, gains its legitimacy from an imaginary position that is external

[19] Going beyond preexisting binaries in our understanding of socialism will also contribute to developing a critical perspective on the contemporary rise of a global neoliberal hegemony—itself a distinctly postcommunist phenomenon—and to question what Wendy Brown (2003) calls "*homo œconomicus* as the norm of the human" and the "formations of economy, society, state and (non)morality" that accompany this norm.

[20] See also Bhabha (1990, 298); and Žižek (1991a, 145–47).

to it and will experience a crisis of legitimacy if that imaginary external position is questioned or destroyed.

In the society built on communist ideals, this paradox appeared through the announced objective of achieving the full liberation of the society and individual (building of communism, creation of the New Man) by means of subsuming that society and individual under full party control. The Soviet citizen was called upon to submit completely to party leadership, to cultivate a collectivist ethic, and repress individualism, while at the same time becoming an enlightened and independent-minded individual who pursues knowledge and is inquisitive and creative.[21] This Soviet version of Lefort's paradox was not a chance development; it grew out of the very revolutionary project itself. In 1825, Saint-Simon, an early theorist of the political, intellectual, and artistic avant-garde, whose ideas influenced Marx, Lenin, and Russian revolutionaries, wrote that the project of liberating the society required establishing a political and aesthetic avant-garde that would exercise "over society a positive power, a true priestly function . . . marching forcefully in the van of all the intellectual faculties." This avant-garde, wrote Saint-Simon, should address itself "to the imagination and to the sentiments of mankind [and] should therefore always exercise the liveliest and most decisive action." For this purpose the arts and politics should unite under "a common drive and a general idea" (quoted in Egbert 1967, 343).

The conception of a political and artistic avant-garde as a creative force united by one idea for the purposes of leading and perfecting society put this tandem before an enduring paradox: the process of leading and perfecting had to be subsumed under the control of a political program and, at the same time, to be free from control in order to focus on the creative, experimental, and innovating process for the production of a better future (Egbert 1967, 343–46).

In the Russian revolutionary context, this paradox of modern ideology became institutionalized by the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The new process of cultural production was supposed to advance radical social ideas and revolutionize consciousness by achieving two relatively incommensurable goals: to practice an experimental, innovative aesthetics that was constantly ready to defy old canons and, at the same time, to subsume these creative experimentations and innovations under the strict

[21] This version of Lefort's paradox can be compared with how it plays itself out in late capitalism. For example, Susan Bordo argues that enunciations and practices of capitalist ideology put the Western subject in a "double bind" between, on the one hand, a workaholic ethic and repression of consumer desire and, on the other, the capitulation to desire and achievement of immediate satisfaction. Bordo attributes the unprecedented epidemia of anorexia and bulimia in the West, in the 1980s and 90s partly to the intensification of this double bind (1990).

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control of the vanguard party. Immediately after the revolution, Lenin wrote in a letter to Klara Tzetkin that Communists could not sit in idleness allowing the "cultural process" to develop chaotically: they "must strive with clear consciousness to control that entire process in order to form and define its results" (Arnol'dov et al. 1984, 176). Lenin accused members of the Second International of separatism because some of them argued that, having come to power, the proletariat should stop interfering with creative cultural production and experimentation. On the contrary, argued Lenin, the only means of achieving the goal of the ultimate liberation of culture and consciousness in communism was to intensify the party's management of all spheres of cultural life. A person could not become truly liberated spontaneously; that person had to be educated and cultivated. On Lenin's insistence, the Bolshevik Party adopted a resolution stressing that all organizations of the *Proletkul't* (People's Commissariat of Proletarian Culture) had "an unconditional obligation to regard themselves as strictly subsidiary organs" to the organizations of the *Narkompros* (People's Commissariat of Enlightenment) (Arnol'dov et al. 1984, 171). In other words, cultural organizations (all forms of intellectual, scientific, and artistic practice) were subsidiary to educational and political organizations, and all forms of cultural production were to be fully supervised by the party. It was that subsidiary position, went the argument, that would allow these organizations to exercise their full creative potential for the building of the new society.

The Soviet state's constant anxiety about publicly justifying state control of cultural production while simultaneously attempting to promote its independence and experimentation reflected this paradox. As late as 1984, a book entitled *Marxist-Leninist Theory of Culture* (*Marksistsko-leninskaia teoriia kul'tury*), authored by a collective of theoreticians of culture from Moscow's Institute of Marxism-Leninism (Arnol'dov et al.), was still defending this point. Some may say—their book begins—that to be truly creative, the work of cultural production in intellectual, scientific and artistic fields cannot be controlled and directed. The book goes on to argue that although this view is not altogether erroneous, it tells only one side of the story, ignoring the irreducible duality of all cultural production. In fact, the book argues, creative work is always both "a strictly private affair" of a creative individual and a "labor of social utility" that creates "spiritual values" and "socio-moral norms" in society. In the socialist society, both aspects of cultural production are recognized as equally important, since in this society "the formation of the new person goes not spontaneously, but consciously, as a result of a purposeful educational work." Therefore, in the socialist context, the independence of creativity and the control of creative work by the party are not mutually contradictory but must be pursued simultaneously (Arnol'dov et al.

1984, 162, 163). What is remarkable about the discourse in this book is not the argument itself but that this imaginary dispute needed to be revisited throughout Soviet history, suggesting the enduring tension at socialism's core.

This tension was not limited to scientific and artistic spheres but concerned all discourses and forms of knowledge that were produced and circulated in Soviet society. In the earlier periods of Soviet history, as the following chapters will show, the loud voices of the political, scientific, and artistic avant-garde concealed this paradox. They located themselves "outside" the field of ideological discourse and from that external position made public comments about and adjustments to that discourse. An explosion of creativity and experimentation marked the early postrevolutionary years but ultimately gave way to the suppression of the intellectual avant-garde and all experimental culture and science and to the introduction of a strict and unified party control.[22] This shift was enabled and made to appear logical by the paradox inherent in the very ideology of the revolutionary project.

It was Stalin who now played the role of Lefort's "master" who stood outside of ideological discourse, making editorial comments about it from that external position and in this way concealing the paradox through himself. This external position enabled the production and wide circulation of a public metadiscourse about all forms of political, artistic, and scientific expression that evaluated them for precision and accuracy against an external canon—the Marxist-Leninist dogma. Stalin's "external" editorial position vis-à-vis all forms of discourse and knowledge, which provided him with unique access to the external canon against which to evaluate them, was crucial in the emergence of those phenomena that became the trademarks of his regime: his immense political power; the cult of his personality; his personal involvement in editing political speeches, scientific papers, films, and musical compositions; the campaign of purges in party organizations; and the ultimate Great Terror in which millions perished. In the last years of Stalin's rule, and especially after his death in 1953 and the subsequent denunciation of his cult of personality, that external position vis-à-vis discourse and knowledge vanished. The main result of this development was not the denunciation of a concrete leader, but a major reorganization of the entire discursive regime of state socialism: a position external to ideological (political, scientific, artistic) discourse, from which a metadiscourse about it could be launched, ceased to exist, and therefore the metadiscourse on ideology

[22] Groys marks the beginning of the "Stalinist phase" of Soviet history at April 23, 1932, when the Central Committee of the party adopted a decree that "disbanded all artistic groups and declared that all Soviet 'creative workers' would be organized according to profession in unitary 'creative unions' of artists, architects, and so on" (Groys 1992, 33).

disappeared from public circulation (see discussion of this process in chapter 2).

Since there was no longer an external voice that could conceal the Lefort's paradox of Soviet ideology, the incongruence of goals and means that constituted that paradox became unleashed. This change ultimately led to a profound transformation of the structure of all types of Soviet ideological discourse (from the language of ideology to the nature of ideological rituals, practices, and organizations) during late socialism. As a result of that transformation, it became less important to read ideological representations for "literal" (referential) meanings than to reproduce their precise structural forms. This transformation of the discursive regime eventually led to a profound shift within Soviet culture during the late period, opening up spaces of indeterminacy, creativity, and unanticipated meanings in the context of strictly formulaic ideological forms, rituals, and organizations. In this way Lefort's paradox returned to haunt the Soviet system. It enabled a profound internal reinterpretation and displacement of the socialist system, creating a set of contradictory conditions that made the system's implosion seem so unexpected when it began, and at the same time so unsurprising and fast once it had occurred.

Acts and Rituals

During the late Soviet period, the form of ideological representations—documents, speeches, ritualized practices, slogans, posters, monuments, and urban visual propaganda—became increasingly normalized, ubiquitous, and predictable. This standardization of the form of discourse developed gradually, as a result of the disappearance, in the 1950s, of the external editorial voice that commented on that discourse. With that shift, the form of the ideological representations became fixed and replicated—unchanged from one context to the next. These representations no longer had to be read literally, at least in most contexts, to work perfectly well as elements of the hegemonic representation. This fixed and normalized discursive system was akin to the kind of discourse that Bakhtin terms "authoritative discourse" (*avtoritetnoe slovo*). For Bakhtin, authoritative discourse coheres around a strict external idea or dogma (whether religious, political, or otherwise) and occupies a particular position within the discursive regime of a period. It has two main features. First, because of a special "script" in which it is coded, authoritative discourse is sharply demarcated from all other types of discourse that coexist with it, which means that it does not depend on them, it precedes them, and it cannot be changed by them. Second, all these other types of discourse are organized around it. Their existence depends on being positioned in relation to it,

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having to refer to it, quote it, praise it, interpret it, apply it, and so forth, but they cannot, for example, interfere with its code and change it. Regardless of whether this demarcated and fixed authoritative discourse is successful in persuading its authors and audiences, they experience it as immutable and therefore unquestionable (Bakhtin 1994, 342–43).[23] To stress that during late socialism the newly normalized Soviet ideological discourse no longer functioned at the level of meaning as a kind of ideology in the usual sense of the word, I will refer to it henceforth as "authoritative discourse."

The change in the functioning of Soviet ideology during late socialism was reflected in how Soviet citizens participated in ideological rituals and events, as described in many ethnographic accounts. For example, it is well known that during the period from the 1960s to the 1980s, the overwhelming majority of Soviet people participated in May Day and Revolution Day parades in Soviet cities. The apotheosis of such parades in the cities was the walk across the central square in front of the city's party leaders, who stood on a high platform and waved to the marching masses. People cheered as official slogans blared from the loudspeakers, and the thundering roar of these hundreds of thousands of voices sounded impressive and unanimous. According to Soviet newspapers at the time, these massive events "convincingly demonstrate[d] the unbreakable union of the party and the people. . . ." (*Pravda* May 2, 1981). In practice, however, most people in the parades paid little attention to the slogans, and many were not aware who exactly was depicted on the Politburo portraits they carried.

Most Soviet citizens also regularly participated in various state elections for city or district government positions. These elections usually had a single official candidate and invariably produced a massive vote of support, though in practice the voters were relatively uninterested and/or ignorant as to who they were voting for. Sergei (born in 1962) remembers: "Usually I was not quite sure what type of elections these were, or who the candidate was. I would just go to the local election center, take the ballot with the candidate's name, and put it in the voting box. This was the whole procedure for me. I would forget the name of the candidate a few minutes later. I don't remember ever worrying that I was not more interested or that the elections were 'fake.'" Most young people also regularly attended Komsomol (Communist Union of Youth) meetings at schools, colleges, factories, and other locations. At such meetings, it was not uncommon for people to participate in certain procedures without

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[23] Michael Holquist explains that authoritative discourse is "privileged language that approaches us from without; it is distanced, taboo, and permits no play with its framing context (sacred writ, for example). We receive it. It has great power over us, but only while in power; if ever dethroned it immediately becomes a dead thing, a relic" (Bakhtin 1994, 424).

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paying close attention to their literal meanings, such as voting in favor of resolutions without knowing what they said. This was not always the case, but it was certainly a dominant paradigm. Among small groups, the required Komsomol meetings were often reported without actually being held. Anna (born in 1961) remembers regular Komsomol meetings in her student group (twenty to twenty-five people) in college in the early 1980s, where "the *komsorg* (the meeting's convener) would often suggest: 'Maybe we should just write down that we had a discussion and voted in favor of the resolution, without actually having the discussion? I understand that everyone has things to attend to at home.' "

What should we make of these acts of mass participation and support in which people regularly paid little attention to the literal meanings of the ritualized acts and pronouncements in which they participated? Can these acts be described as pure masquerade and dissimulation, practiced in public for the gaze of the state and collective surveillance? This book argues that these acts cannot be reduced in this way, and instead offers a different interpretation. An examination of how these ritualized events and texts operated and what they meant to those enacting them is crucial to an understanding of the inherent paradoxes of late socialism. In most contexts these unanimous acts, gestures, and utterances of support did not refer to the literal meaning of ideological statements, resolutions, and figures, but rather performed a different role. For this analysis, we need first to understand the discursive conditions under which authoritative discourse was produced, circulated, and received in late socialism.

Actors in Masks

One common attempt to explain how ideological texts and rituals function in contexts dominated by unchallengeable authoritative discourse whose meanings are not necessarily read literally is to assert that citizens act "as if " they support these slogans and rituals in public, while privately believing something different. Underlying this model are theories of mimicry and dissimulation. A recently influential approach to these theories can be found in the work of Peter Sloterdijk. In *Critique of Cynical Reason* Sloterdijk argues that in the contemporary West the success of ideology is based not on Marx's classic formula of "false consciousness" ("they do not know it, but they are doing it"), but on what he calls "enlightened false consciousness" ("they know very well what they are doing, but still, they are doing it"). According to Sloterdijk, many Western subjects are postmodern cynics who insist on wearing a mask of misrecognition because they know that the ideology of the consumer society

is unavoidable, even though they also know perfectly well that this ideology misrepresents social reality (Sloterdijk 1993; Žižek 1991a, 29). This model of acting "as if" echoes James Scott's (1990) discussion of the discourse of subaltern subjects that proceeds in two distinct transcripts, "official" and "hidden"—one representing a mask, the other the truth behind it. Lisa Wedeen, in a recent analysis of the "authoritarian" rule of President Asad in Syria, draws on Sloterdijk and Scott to argue that the art of publicly acting "as if" they subscribed to ideological claims, without really believing them, allowed common citizens "to keep their actual thought private," sustaining a "gap . . . between performance and belief" (Wedeen 1999, 82). Slavoj Žižek (1991a) draws on a similar model of acting "as if" to theorize the basis of power in Eastern European state socialism.

In 1978, in the famous essay "The Power of the Powerless," Václav Havel (1986) constructs a similar model of state socialism in the Eastern Europe of the 1970s. According to Havel, the citizens of socialist Czechoslovakia lived "in lies": they acted in public as if they supported ideological slogans and messages even though privately they believed them to be false. This mode of conformism, argues Havel, allowed them to be left alone by the regime and to avoid personal problems—a reasoning Havel found morally reprehensible (1986, 49–51). In the Soviet Russian context, a related model has been developed by Oleg Kharkhordin. Kharkhordin argues that the subject of late Soviet society was a dissimulator who acted differently in two different spheres, the "official public" and the "hidden intimate." According to that model the dissimulating subject was split: its hidden intimate self was only "available to the gaze of the closest friends or family members but sometimes kept secret even from them" (1999, 357), making it possible to spot these dissimulators only when they "suddenly let their strict self-control go and [broke] their utmost secrecy" (275).

All these models share a crucial problem: although they provide an alternative to the binary division between the recognition and misrecognition of ideology, they do so by producing another problematic binary between "truth" and "falsity," "reality" and "mask," "revealing" and "dissimulating." According to this binary model, such public political acts as voting in favor of an official resolution or displaying a pro-government slogan at a rally should be interpreted "literally"—as declarations of one's support for the state that are either true ("real" support) or false ("dissimulation" of support).[24] Several problematic assumptions about language, knowledge, meaning, and personhood lie at the basis of this understanding. In this view, the only function of language is to refer to

[24] See the discussions of such acts in Kharkhordin (1999) and Wedeen (1999).

the world and to state facts about it. That is why models based on such an understanding divide language into "codes," such as official, or public, transcript and hidden, or intimate, transcript.[25] Knowledge in this view exists before discourse. Discourse reflects knowledge and does not produce it. Meaning, accordingly, is a psychological state that is fully formed in the mind of the speaker before the act of speaking.[26] The speaking person, in these models, is a unified, bounded, sovereign individual who possesses a "unique self-constituted" consciousness (Mitchell 1990, 545) and a "unitary speaking ego" (Hanks 2000, 182), and whose authentic voice can be hidden or revealed.[27]

The Performative

In hopes of articulating a more nuanced understanding of late socialism and its paradoxes, we need to go beyond these problematic assumptions to examine how people living within that system engaged with, interpreted, and created their reality. The analysis in this book will consider discourse and forms of knowledge that circulated in everyday Soviet life not as divided into spheres or codes that are fixed and bounded, but as processes that are never completely known in advance and that are actively produced and reinterpreted (Haraway 1991, 190–91; Fabian 2001, 24).

Many theories of language focus on its active and processual aspects. For example, Voloshinov stressed that the use of language involves a situated process in which meaning is produced, not simply reflected or communicated (Voloshinov 1986, 86).[28] In his critique of the models of language that posit isolated bounded consciousness Bakhtin also pointed out that they ignore the ongoing and agentive processes constitutive of the event. Such models, he argued, can only transcribe an event as an accomplished static fact "at the cost of losing those actual creative forces which generated the event at the moment it was still being accomplished

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[25] See Susan Gal's thorough critique of Scott's model of language (1995). For other critiques, see also Mitchell (1990), Humphrey (1994), and Oushakine (2001).

[26] See similar critiques in Rosaldo (1982, 212); Hill and Mannheim (1992); Duranti (1993, 25); Yurchak (2003b).

[27] Ironically, even accounts of the "split" person in these models are in fact based on a unitary model of personhood: the "split" is a constitutive element of the dissimulating act, which is employed or acted out by a preexisting (pre-split) "intimate hidden self" to conceal oneself from public view or to reveal oneself to intimate friends. Thus, Kharkhordin's model of the subject contains a peculiar tension between the subject who possesses an authentic "intimate self" that can be hidden and revealed, and the subject who exists as the result of hiding and revealing. See critique of split subject models in Strauss (1997).

[28] See also Hanks (2000, 143); Hanks (1993, 153n2); Duranti (1997; 1993); Gal (1994).

(when it was still open), i.e., at the cost of losing the living and in principle nonmerging participants in the event" (1990, 87). Instead, the productive and dialogic view of language developed by Bakhtin and his colleagues understands the speaking self as "voice" that is never bounded or static but always "dialogized," because speaking implies inhabiting multiple voices that are not "self-enclosed or deaf to one another" but that "hear each other constantly, call back and forth to each other, and are reflected in one another" (1984, 75).[29]

The productive nature of language is also central to John Austin's analysis of "performatives" and the traditions in the study of language that are related to this approach (1999). Introducing speech act theory, Austin argues that in addition to "constative" utterances that state something (present facts or describe reality, such as "it is cold," "my name is Joe"), language includes a whole class of utterances that *do* something. Such utterances as "Guilty!" (uttered by a judge in a courtroom), "I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth" (at an official launching ceremony), or "I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow" perform an action that changes things in social reality instead of describing that reality. Austin calls this class of utterances "performative utterances" or "performatives." Constative utterances convey meaning and can be true or false; performative utterances deliver force and cannot be true or false—instead they can be felicitous or infelicitous.

Austin points out that what makes an utterance a performative is not the intention of the speaker, but rather the accepted conventions surrounding the utterance, which involve the appropriate person uttering the appropriate words in the appropriate circumstances in order to obtain conventional results. If the conventions are not in place, the performative will not succeed regardless of the intention of the speaker (1999, 12–18). Conversely, if the conventions are in place, the performative will succeed regardless of intention. The issue of intention is central here, in light of our critical assessment of the abovementioned models that posit meaning in discourse as a psychological state that preexists the act of speaking. For example, speech acts such as oaths do not have to be intended, as a psychological state, to be performed. If a person makes an oath in court to tell the truth, though internally planning to conceal the truth, this does not make the execution of the oath any less real or efficacious, nor does it exonerate the person from legal repercussions if the lie is discovered. In other words, the very binding of this speech act within the system of laws, rules, or conventions (making it a recognized

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[29] See also Bakhtin (1994, 304–5; 1990, 137); Todorov (1998); Clark and Holquist (1984); Holquist (1990, 175); Gardiner (1992, 73); Hirschkop (1997, 59–60); Kristeva (1986).

oath with consequences) does not depend on whether the speaker intended the words uttered during the oath "for real" or "as if."[30]

In a critical reading of speech act theory Derrida pushed further Austin's point that it is the conventions of a speech act, and not the intention of the speaker, that make a performative successful. The conventionality of a speech act implies that it must be formulated according to a recognized "coded" or "iterable" model—that is, it must function as a citation that is repeatable in an endless number of contexts (Derrida 1977, 191–92). However, the exhaustive knowledge of context cannot be achieved because any context is open to broader description and because contexts in which new citations of the same speech act can appear are potentially infinite (Derrida 1977, 185–86). Because of the citationality of a speech act and the indeterminacy of context, the meaning of any given speech act is never completely determined in advance. Each speech act can break with context in unpredictable ways and achieve effects and mean things that were not intended in advance. This ability of the speech act to break with context, argues Derrida, is a constitutive element of its performative force.[31] By stressing the structural ability of a conventional formula to be used in unanticipated ways, Derrida's argument recognizes the possibility for change and unpredictability even within strictly controlled and reproduced norms and conventions. At the same time, by limiting the discussion to the semiotic level of discourse, Derrida downplays the role that external social conventions, institutions, and power relations also play in constituting the performative force of a conventional utterance.

In a different critical reading of performative acts, Pierre Bourdieu (1991) focused precisely on that external dimension, adding a sociological analysis of Austin's "conventions" that are necessary for a successful performance of speech acts. Bourdieu argues that the source of power of conventional speech acts "resides in the institutional conditions of their production and reception" (111) and that their power is "nothing other than the *delegated power* of the spokesperson" (107). Although Bourdieu's focus provides a necessary external perspective on the social and institutional nature of power and the process of its delegation, it still privileges just one side of the performative: it downplays the role of the semiotic nature of discourse in constituting the performative force and consequently downplays the possibility for change in discourse that institutions cannot determine or anticipate in advance.

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[30] Austin does not bracket out intention altogether, but he stresses that it is not necessarily a constitutive part of the performative force. For example, if an oath is made in the appropriate circumstances but without the intention to follow it, performative force is "abused" but successfully carried out (Austin 1999, 16).

[31] See an elaboration of this point in Culler (1981, 24–25) and a critical assessment of Derrida's critique of Austin in Cavell (1995) and in Searle (1977; 1983).

A synthesis of Derrida's and Bourdieu's critical readings of Austin's theory would allow one to consider both constitutive elements of the performative force of a speech act—the delegated power of external social contexts and institutions and the semiotic power of discourse to produce unpredictable meanings and effects in new contexts. It is precisely because the two elements of the performative force—sociological and semiotic—operate simultaneously that speech acts even in strictly controlled institutionalized contexts can take on meanings and produce effects for which they were not intended. This possibility of an unanticipated outcome constitutes, Judith Butler argues, "the political promise of the performative, one that positions the performative at the center of a political hegemony" (Butler 1997b, 161). This point is crucial for the following discussion of ideological rituals and utterances and the effects they produce.

Speech Acts and Ritualized Acts

Austin's and later work on performatives in speech has been influential in a number of fields. It has affected the analysis of various forms of ritualized practice that are not necessarily linguistic and the analysis of how aspects of subjectivity may be produced in such practice. For example, Judith Butler focuses on the ritualized repetition of embodied norms as performative acts—acts that do not simply refer to an a priori existing "pure body" but shape that body as sexed, raced, classed, and so forth (1990, 1993).[32] Drawing on Derrida's and Bourdieu's critical readings of performativity, Butler argues against theories of the subject and meaning according to which the subject is fully given in advance, only to perform the discourse later on. Rather, she asserts, the subject is enabled through discourse, without being completely determined by it:

> [A] regularized and constrained repetition of norms is not performed *by* a subject; this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal conditions for the subject. This iterability implies that "performance" is not a singular "act" or event, but a ritualized production, and ritual reiteration under and through constraint, under and through force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat of ostracism and even death controlling and compelling the shape of the production, but not, I will insist, determining it fully in advance. (Butler, quoted in Hollywood 2002, 98)

Drawing on Butler's work and theories of the ritual in anthropology and religious studies, Amy Hollywood proposes to broaden the discus-

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[32] See also Morris (1995).

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sion of the performative to various "ritualized acts" that are repeated in different contexts and whose meanings are neither completely known in advance nor determined by the participants' intentions (Hollywood 2002, 113).[33] Catherine Bell further points out that through the repetition of ritualized actions in different contexts, persons are produced and produce themselves as "ritualized agents . . . who have an intrinsic knowledge of these schemes embedded in their bodies, in their sense of reality, and in their understanding of how to act in ways that both maintain and qualify the complex microrelations of power" (Bell 1992, 221).

This view of ritualized acts and speech acts as constitutive of the person is different from the view of these acts as divided between mask (acting "as if ") and reality, truth and lie. In the mask/truth models the person is first posited and then is involved in the act of wearing masks or revealing truths. By contrast, most performative theories do not posit the person completely in advance, before the acts—the person is enabled performatively in the repetition of the act.[34] As philosopher Aldo Tassi points out, there is no performative person that preexists the person wearing a mask: "There is no role that stands 'behind' all our other roles and defines what we 'really' are, no more than there is an act of knowing (a knowing that) that stands 'behind' the acts of knowing and defines the possession of knowledge (knowing how)" (Tassi 1993, 207).

Constative and Performative Dimensions

At the end of his book Austin pointed out that any strict division into constative and performative acts is an abstraction, and "every genuine speech act is both" (1999, 147). Speech acts should not be seen as either just constative or just performative; rather, concludes Austin, depending on the circumstances, they are more or less constative and more or less performative. Developing this insight I will speak of performative and constative "dimensions" of speech and discourse in general. The relative importance of these dimensions in discourse may change historically.[35] The same is true of ritualized acts in a broader sense.

The kind of act that is constituted by the uttering of a conventional formula in a given context cannot be understood by attending merely to the

[33] Schechner (1985; 1993; 2003) also provides a view of aesthetic performance as emerging and productive, in which the actor undergoes temporary or permanent changes; see in particular his concepts of "transformation" and "transportation" (1985). On the intentionality in ritual, see Humphrey and Laidlaw (1994).

[34] This view of the person can be traced back to Aristotle.

[35] Austin writes: "[P]erhaps we have here not really two poles, but rather an historical development" (1999, 145–6).

structure of the utterance or to generic elements of the context known in advance. One must attend to the context-in-emergence, the context in which the utterance is being repeated. One must attend to the "actual creative forces that generated the event at the moment it was still being accomplished (when it was still open)" (Bakhtin 1990, 87). In this book, when analyzing speech acts such as slogans, party speeches, and addresses, and ritualized acts such as votes and meetings, we will speak of their coexisting constative and performative dimensions. From the perspective of this coexistence, the act of voting in the conventional context of a meeting does two things at once: it states one's opinion (the constative dimension) and binds the vote within the system of rules and norms where it is recognized as a legitimate vote (the performative dimension). The unity of the constative and performative dimensions makes the vote what it is: a statement of opinion that is recognized as having consequences in legal, administrative, institutional, and cultural terms.

These two dimensions of discourse do not constitute a new binary. They are not in a binary either-or relationship; rather they are indivisible and mutually productive (as the discussion below shows). For example, the opinion one states when voting may be affected by whether the vote is legally binding with actual consequences: a recorded vote at a faculty meeting is different from an informal vote among friends (and this difference may affect how one votes). Since the relative importance of the constative and performative dimensions of a ritualized act and speech act in any given new instance can never be completely known in advance, the constative and performative dimensions may "drift" historically. For example, the importance of the constative dimension may diminish, while the performative may grow in importance. Suppose that during elections in certain institutional circumstances, it is no longer crucial for people to state their opinions about the candidate, but it is still very important to participate in the act of voting. A person may be aware that in the elections there will always be only one candidate (or one resolution), although still conscious that a successful execution of the ritual of voting will enable other important practices and events to happen, such as the reproduction of the institution itself and of one's position as its member (as its student, employee, citizen) with all the possibilities that follow from that position. In such a context, it may be less important for whom one votes than that one votes. In other words, the person may not have to pay much attention to the constative dimension of the vote (the literal meaning of a resolution or a candidate), but will still have to attend closely to the vote's performative dimension. This would include paying attention to the pragmatic markers of the ritual, such as the question, "Who is in favor?", and the appropriate response of raising one's hand in an affirmative gesture. The performative dimension continues to be central in this ritualized act,

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but the constative dimension has moved from its original meaning. The successful achievement of the result (such as reproducing the institution and one's position in it) does not necessarily depend on what one's opinion about the candidate is or even whether one has an opinion at all.

Performative Shift

A general shift at the level of concrete ritualized forms of discourse, in which the performative dimension's importance grows, while the constative dimension opens up to new meanings, can and does occur in different historical and cultural contexts. Consider an example from the contemporary United States. Today a number of private universities, colleges, and schools in several states require teachers and professors to take a "loyalty oath" to ensure that they do not "hold or foster undesirable political beliefs. . . . While the statutes vary, [these institutions] generally deny the right to teach to those who cannot or will not take the loyalty oath" (Chin and Rao 2003, 431–32). Recently, a sociologist of law took such a loyalty oath at a midwestern university when her appointment as a professor began. From a political standpoint she disagreed with the practice of taking loyalty oaths, and later, in her role as professor of the sociology of law, she voiced political positions counter to those mentioned in the oath and challenged the oath-taking practice itself. However, before she could do this, she first had to take the oath, understanding that without this act she would not be employed or recognized by the institution as a legitimate member with a voice authorized to participate in teaching, research, and the institution's politics (committees, meetings, elections, and so forth), including even the possibility to question publicly the practice of taking oaths. Here, the constative dimension of the ritualized act experiences a shift, while the performative dimension remains fixed and important: taking the oath opens a world of possibilities where new constative meanings become possible, including a professorial position with a recognized political voice within the institution. In the sociologist's words, "The oath did not mean much if you took it, but it meant a lot if you didn't."[36]

This example illustrates the general principle of how some discursive acts or whole types of discourse can drift historically in the direction of an increasingly expanding performative dimension and increasingly open or even irrelevant constative dimension. During Soviet late socialism, the performative dimension of authoritative speech acts and rituals became particularly important in most contexts and during most events. One person who participated in large Komsomol meetings in the 1970s

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[36] Interview with author.

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and 1980s described how he often spent the meetings reading a book. However, "when a vote had to be taken, everyone roused—a certain sensor clicked in the head: 'Who is in favor?'—and you raised your hand automatically" (see a discussion of such ritualized practices within the Komsomol in chapter 3). Here the emphasis on the performative dimension of authoritative discourse was unique both in scale and substance. Most ritualized acts of authoritative discourse during this time underwent such a transformation. Participating in these acts reproduced oneself as a "normal" Soviet person within the system of relations, collectivities, and subject positions, with all the constraints and possibilities that position entailed, even including the possibility, after the meetings, to engage in interests, pursuits, and meanings that ran against those that were stated in the resolutions one had voted for. It would obviously be wrong to see these acts of voting simply as constative statements about supporting the resolution that are either true (real support) or false (dissimulation of support). These acts are not about stating facts and describing opinions but about doing things and opening new possibilities.

The uniqueness of the late-socialist context lay in the fact that those who ran the Komsomol and party meetings and procedures themselves understood perfectly well that the constative dimension of most ritualized acts and texts had become reinterpreted from its original meaning. They therefore emphasized the centrality of the performative dimension of this discourse in the reproduction of social norms, positions, relations, and institutions. This emphasis on the performative dimension took place in most contexts where authoritative discourse was reproduced or circulated: in votes, speeches, reports, slogans, meetings, parades, elections, various institutional practices, and so on. It became increasingly more important to participate in the reproduction of the *form* of these ritualized acts of authoritative discourse than to engage with their constative meanings. It is crucial to point out, however, that this does not mean either that these ritualized acts become meaningless and empty or that other meanings in public life were diminishing or becoming totally constrained. On the contrary, the performative reproduction of the form of rituals and speech acts actually *enabled* the emergence of diverse, multiple, and unpredictable meanings in everyday life, including those that did not correspond to the constative meanings of authoritative discourse.

The reopening of Lefort's paradox of Soviet ideology in the 1950s brought about the shift that resulted in the rise of the performative dimension of authoritative discourse during late socialism. This also made the constative dimension of discourse increasingly unanchored, indeterminate, and often irrelevant. The next chapter discusses how this shift happened and how it affected the structure of authoritative discourse and ritualized practice; the chapters that follow discuss what new meanings

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became possible as a result of this shift. For now, it is important to note that this transformation toward the performative was not planned; it was a byproduct of the changes—beginning in the 1950s—in the conditions under which Soviet authoritative discourse was produced, circulated, and received. A model of authoritative discourse in which the literal precision of statements and representations was evaluated against an external canon (described in the opinion of an external editor) was gradually displaced by a model in which the external canon was no longer available. As a result of this shift of conditions, the authoritative discourse underwent a major internal normalization at the structural level. The normalized and fixed structures of this discourse became increasingly frozen and were replicated from one context to the next practically intact. This process of replication took place at the level of texts,[37] the visual discourse of ideology (posters, films, monuments, architecture), ritualistic discourse (meetings, reports, institutional practice, celebrations), and in many centralized "formal structures" of everyday practice (De Certeau 1988, xv) (such as school curriculum, prices of goods, and the general organization of urban time and space). Eventually, the replication of the fixed and normalized forms of discourse became an end in itself, and the constative meanings of these discursive forms became increasingly unimportant. This book will refer to this process—in which the performative dimension of ritualized and speech acts rises in importance (it is important to participate in the reproduction of these acts at the level of form), while the constative dimension of these acts become open-ended, indeterminate, or simply irrelevant—as *performative shift*.[38] Performative shift was a central principle through which authoritative discourse in late socialism operated and through which practice was represented and organized.[39]

[37] See Urban on "transduction" (the replication of textual forms) (1996, 30).

[38] Elsewhere I theorized this shift of discourse as *heteronymous shift* (Yurchak 2001a; 2003b), from "heteronym"—meaning a word of the same written form as another word but different in meaning (e.g., *bass*, a string instrument and the fish; *tear*, to rip and a teardrop). The term *heteronymous shift* emphasized that the meanings for which reproduced forms of authoritative discourse stood could slide in unpredictable directions. The term *performative shift* employed in this book is related to that idea. However, it also emphasizes another point: that shift of meaning is possible because of a mutually constitutive relationship between the performative and the constative dimensions of discourse. The rise of the performative dimension of discourse to dominance (the fact that a ritualized form is fixed and performing it is unavoidable) enables a shift at the level of the constative dimension.

[39] Many practices in the socialist "economy of shortage" were organized according to the performative shift. Consider a central symbol of industrial production in late socialism—the fulfillment of the "plan." To industrial managers involved in Soviet industry it was crucial that the plan was successfully fulfilled at the level of form (in numbers, figures, statistics, reports, etc.). These managers needed, among other things, to design various methods (resource bargaining, padding, barter, etc.) in order to avoid the obstacles imposed by the

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Creative Productions

A complex system of institutional and power relations made possible the ubiquitous replication of ritualized acts and utterances of authoritative discourse. For example, if party and Komsomol activists did not reproduce these forms of authoritative language, or if they publicly engaged in a critical rewriting of that language, they would risk receiving an official reprimand, losing their job, or more serious repercussions. The common perception that authoritative discourse was simply unavoidable and unchangeable further shaped the reproduction of ritualized forms of this discourse. This perception was predicated on the particular conditions of production and circulation of authoritative discourse, with the state having hegemonic power to impose a widely circulating representation of reality formulated in that discourse, thus guaranteeing that any alternative representation or counter-representation would not acquire the same widely circulating status as a shared "public" discourse.[40]

However, the ritualized acts and speech acts of authoritative discourse were not replicated simply because of these institutional power relations, control, or the threat of punishment. They were replicated because of the importance of the performative dimension. Reproducing the forms of authoritative discourse acquired a strong performative role: it enabled people to engage in new, unanticipated meanings, aspects of everyday life, interests, and activities, which sprang up everywhere in late socialism and were not necessarily determined by the ideological constative meanings of authoritative discourse.

The new, unanticipated meanings did not coincide with those explicitly described by or envisioned in authoritative discourse. However, this process should not necessarily be seen as "resistance" to the norms and meanings articulated in that discourse. As Derrida argued, the ability of a sign to break with context in itself is politically and ethically neutral, until invested with new meaning (Hollywood 2002, 107). In a critical reading of

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functioning of the socialist economy itself. As a result, the plan was often fulfilled with the help of the practices that violated the literal meanings for which the plan was supposedly designed (e.g., the satisfaction of a social need for which it was designed). See Nove (1977); Kornai (1980); Verdery (1996); Ledeneva (1998). The "plan" as a symbol of the socialist economy experienced performative shift. It was meticulously reproduced in representation (in reports, statistics, figures), but the meaning associated with it became open and somewhat unpredictable, allowing for the introduction of new meanings. See also Lampland's brilliant discussion of the "fetish of plan" (1995).

[40] For example, when in August 1968, seven people at Moscow's Red Square unveiled slogans protesting the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, the group was arrested within a couple of minutes and the event was ignored by the Soviet press, remaining unknown to most of the Soviet population until twenty years later, when it was publicly discussed during perestroika.

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Butler's discussion of performativity, Saba Mahmood draws on Butler's Foucauldian point that "the possibility of resistance to norms [is located] within the structure of power itself rather than in the consciousness of an autonomous individual," but argues against the tendency to equate agency with resistance: "[I]f the ability to effect change in the world and in oneself is historically and culturally specific (both in terms of what constitutes 'change' and the capacity by which it is effected), then its meaning and sense cannot be fixed a priori. . . . [Indeed] agentival capacity is entailed not only in those acts that result in (progressive) change but also those that aim toward continuity, stasis, and stability" (Mahmood 2001, 212).[41]

We should add to this critical reading that agentival capacity can also be entailed in acts that are neither about change nor about continuity, but about introducing minute internal displacements and mutations into the discursive regime in which they are articulated. Such acts may appear inconsequential to most participants and remain invisible to most observers. They do not have to contradict the political and ethical parameters of the system and, importantly, may even allow one to preserve the possibilities, promises, positive ideals, and ethical values of the system while avoiding the negative and oppressive constraints within which these are articulated. This view of how new meanings are produced through the repetition of authoritative speech acts and rituals refuses a binary division between form and meaning or between real meaning and pretense of meaning.[42] In the late Soviet case, the performative repetition of the rituals and texts of authoritative discourse, and the engagement in different new meanings that were not described by the constative dimension of these rituals and texts, still did not preclude a person from feeling an affinity for many of the meanings, possibilities, values, and promises of socialism. It even allowed one to recapture these meanings, values, and promises from the inflexible interpretations provided by the party rhetoric.[43]

The following chapters argue that the performative shift of authoritative discourse that occurred in the 1950s and 1960s allowed Soviet people to develop a complexly differentiating relationship to ideological meanings, norms, and values. Depending on the context, they might reject a certain meaning, norm, or value, be apathetic about another, continue

[41] See also Hollywood (2002, 107n57); Morris (1995, 15); Fraser (1995).

[42] See, for example, Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "deterritorialization" (2002)—a strategy of decentering binary oppositions (which Guattari calls "territorialized couplings" [1995]) without constructing alternative dichotomies. See also my chapter 4 for a discussion of this concept.

[43] Barnett points out that in the context of state socialism in China the unchangeable and unavoidable ideological discourse of the state nevertheless "offers room for maneuver within the terms of its own rhetoric," allowing its citizens to assume "that they were entitled to illustrate and act out imaginatively the promise within socialist discourse" (Barnett 2002, 284).

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actively subscribing to a third, creatively reinterpret a fourth, and so on. These dispositions were emergent, not static. The unanimous participation of Soviet citizens in the performative reproduction of speech acts and rituals of authoritative discourse contributed to the general perception of that system's monolithic immutability, while at the same time enabling diverse and unpredictable meanings and styles of living to spring up everywhere within it. In a seemingly paradoxical twist, the immutable and predictable aspects of state socialism, and its creative and unpredictable possibilities, became mutually constitutive.

Materials and Methods

Because of the immense social change that came with perestroika, when socialism began imploding, and the shift in the voice and tone of the retrospective post-Soviet discourse that emerged in the 1990s, it is important in the investigation of the period before perestroika to draw on two types of materials: *contemporaneous* and *retrospective*. The contemporaneous materials used here consist of accounts of late socialism produced during that period. These include personal accounts (diaries, letters, written notes, drawings, pictures, jokes, slang, other examples of oral genres, music recordings, and amateur films) and official Soviet publications (texts of speeches and documents, newspaper articles, fiction, films, photos, and cartoons). The retrospective materials consist of the accounts of that period that were produced later, during perestroika and the first post-Soviet decade. These include interviews and conversations conducted by the author (around fifty semistructured interviews with former party and Komsomol leaders, speechwriters, propaganda artists, rank-and-file Komsomol members, students, workers, engineers, members of "amateur" cultural communities, among others), as well as dozens of published interviews, memoirs, essays, films, and fiction. These materials appear in the author's translation unless stated otherwise; where it is necessary to the analysis, the original Russian is given in Latin transliteration.

I collected the bulk of these materials during fifteen-month fieldwork research in St. Petersburg in 1994 and 1995. To broaden the scope of this research, in the summers of 1996, 1997, and 1998, I collected more interviews, diaries, and personal correspondences from a larger field: St. Petersburg and several other Russian cities including Moscow, Kaliningrad, Smolensk, Sovetsk, Novosibirsk, Yakutsk, and Penza.[44] The

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[44] In most cases, I provide only the first names of informants to protect their identity. In a few sensitive cases, the first names are also changed, as well as revealing details of their situation, such as names of schools and institutions. A few well-known people among the informants are referred to by their real names with their consent.

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original research began with the following notice that ran for two months in the summer of 1994 in several St. Petersburg weeklies:

> How well do we remember our lives before 1985, before the changes of perestroika? Our feelings and experiences of the Soviet years are documented in personal writings, diaries, and correspondences that date to that time. These are important historical documents that should not be allowed to vanish. I am conducting a sociological[45] study of the period between the 1960s and the beginning of perestroika and am looking for personal written accounts of daily life at that time.

The advertisement provided a contact number. The response was quite enthusiastic. Dozens of people of all ages and occupations wanted to share their written materials from that period or simply to talk about the problem, which seemed to interest them all: what was it about their life before 1985 that made its change so unexpected and yet so profound and fast? Although many materials came from people of older generations, the majority came from people in their thirties and forties—those who came of age during the last two decades before perestroika. Members of these younger cohorts may have been more likely to read newspaper advertisements and respond to them, to keep diaries, or save correspondences. However, from conversations with different people something else also became apparent. Although the sudden transformation of socialism was equally unexpected by and equally unsurprising to different generations and social groups, it was the younger people, those who had graduated from secondary schools in the 1970s and early 1980s, who seemed particularly struck by the suddenness of the event and yet surprisingly to themselves turned out to be particularly prepared for it. These people most wanted to make sense of this event and their experience of it.

Generations are not natural, they are produced through common experience and through discourse about it. Under appropriate conditions, age may provide what Karl Mannheim called a common "location in the historical dimension of the social process," creating a shared perspective on that process (Mannheim 1952, 290). And the shared experience of coming of age during a particular period may also contribute to sharing understandings and meanings, and the processes through which they are reproduced (Rofel 1999, 22). DeMartini (1985) stresses two different understandings of a generation: as a *cohort* and as a *lineage*. The cohort emphasizes the difference in age, assuming that age peers have certain things in common with each other as well as characteristics that distinguish

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[45] In the Russian context, as in many continental European contexts, the term "sociologist" represents this type of research more accurately than the term "anthropologist."

them from other cohorts. The lineage emphasizes the relations between generations, assuming that there is a strong bond between parents and children, and a continuity of social and political consciousness. These two understandings of a generation do not have to be contradictory. They may coexist, and this is how the generation is understood in this book. In Russia, the discourse about the importance of the generational experience is widespread and powerful. Many people who appear in this book think and talk about the importance of their growing up during the late Soviet period. It is common in Russia to compare the experiences of different generations, to use specific names to identify them, to mention events and cultural phenomena that are seen as important for the formation of a common generational experience, to describe the continuities between generations, and so on. These discourses not only reflect generations but also contribute to their production.

This book maintains that because of the performative shift of authoritative discourse and the subsequent normalization of that discourse, the post-Stalinist period between the mid-1950s and mid-1980s became thought of as a particular period with shared characteristics, which is here called late socialism. In some of the literature addressing this period, the thirty years are divided into two shorter periods that have been mentioned above: the thaw (*ottepel'*), the period of Khrushchev's reforms, and the stagnation (*zastoi*), Brezhnev's period. The Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1968 is often considered the symbolic divide between the two (Strada 1998, 11). These two periods roughly correspond to two generations—the older generation that is sometimes called the "sixtiers" (*shestidesiatniki*, identified by the name of their formative decade) and the younger group, here called the "last Soviet generation."

This study focuses on this younger generation—people who were born between the 1950s and early 1970s and came of age between the 1970s and the mid-1980s (see also Boym 1994; Lur'e 1997 and 1998). In the mid-1980s approximately 90 million people, almost one-third of the Soviet population, were between the ages of 15 and 34—therefore belonging to what I am calling the last Soviet generation.[46] Although differences in social class, gender, education, ethnicity, profession, geographic area, and language provided for differences in the experiences of socialism by these people, they nevertheless shared particular understandings, meanings, and processes of that period, having come of age during the 1970s and mid-1980s. As Russian philologist Marina Kniazeva has pointed out, that

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[46] The total population at that time was approximately 281 million people (Itogi Vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1989 goda [Results of the All-Union 1989 Census]. 1992. Moscow: Goskomstat SSSR).

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generation of people, whom she calls "the children of stagnation" (*deti zastoia*), unlike previous and subsequent generations, had no "inaugural event" around which to coalesce as a cohort (1990). The identity of the older generations was formed around events such as the revolution, the war, the denunciation of Stalin; the identity of the younger generations has been formed around the collapse of the Soviet Union. Unlike these older and younger groups, the common identity of the last Soviet generation was formed by a shared experience of the normalized, ubiquitous, and immutable authoritative discourse of the Brezhnev's years.

Most people of that generation were also members of the Komsomol during the 1970s and 1980s. This membership made them one of the largest groups to collectively participate in the reproduction and reception of authoritative texts and rituals in the local contexts of schools, institutes, factories, and so forth, where Komsomol organizations operated. Having grown up entirely during Brezhnev's period, they had not experienced any major transformations of the Soviet system and way of life until perestroika and became particularly skilled, from early years in school, in the performative reproduction of the forms of authoritative discourse. At the same time, they also became actively engaged in creating various new pursuits, identities, and forms of living that were enabled by authoritative discourse, but not necessarily defined by it. This complex relationship, as argued earlier, allowed them to maintain an affinity for the many aesthetic possibilities and ethical values of socialism, while at the same time interpreting them in new terms that were not necessarily anticipated by the state—thus avoiding many of the system's limitations and forms of controls.

This discussion of the last Soviet generation is linked to broader considerations of method employed in the book. This book is not about a representative norm of Soviet life or an average Soviet experience. Rather, it investigates internal shifts that were emerging within the Soviet system during late socialism at the level of discourse, ideology, and knowledge but that became apparent for what they were only much later, when the system collapsed. This is why this analysis does not consider many important historical events, political developments, economic conditions, social classes, ethnic groups, or gender differences. It focuses instead on members of younger generations of educated urbanites from different Russian cities and towns who were involved in ideological institutions, rituals, and discourses of the Soviet state and who practiced various cultural pursuits, from science to literature and music. Although the discourses, activities, relations, and values of this cohort are not necessarily representative of an average social experience of the period, they serve as a powerful lens through which emerging internal shifts in that system become visible.

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A closely related methodological issue is how the author of this text figures in it. I rarely refer to myself in the text as the "I" of the events, observations, and analysis. This is a conscious decision that I have considered seriously. Being self-reflective about the position of the observer and writer is a crucial ingredient of any analysis, and anthropology has a long-standing tradition of doing this. But this self-reflective position should not be confused with constructing an authorial self that is linguistically present in the text as sovereign and unitary. The authorial voice is always deeply decentered and multivoiced, the point that Bakhtin, one of the inspirations of this book, argued forcefully. This book could only become possible because of the multiple temporal, spatial, and cultural decenterings of my authorial self. The book is written partly through the voice of someone who had a personal experience of living in the Soviet Union during the late socialist period and witnessed the Soviet Union's disintegration, but equally so through the voice of someone who has lived for the last fifteen years in the United States, who studied in an American graduate school, who become a professional anthropologist in the United States, and who learned to occupy a retrospective position and different cultural and linguistic locations to reconsider and analyze the meanings and origins of past events. Furthermore, this book is provoked by experiencing not only Soviet life, but also post-Soviet transformations and Western and postsocialist social science writings about both. The realization that the following text became possible only because of these multiple decentered positions and temporalities of my authorial voice makes me reluctant to write from the first person perspective and uncomfortable with the label "native anthropologist."

Survey of Chapters

Chapter 2 proceeds with a two-level analysis of Soviet authoritative discourse. First is a historical analysis that reconstructs the genealogy of a major discursive shift that, in the 1950s and 1960s, brought about the progressive normalization and hardening of the form of authoritative discourse. Second is an analysis of the principles and rules according to which the new strictly formalized authoritative discourse and especially its language part became organized. The chapter draws on materials such as the published texts of party leaders, futurist poets, and linguists; newspaper editorials; ideological speeches; and the author's interviews with speechwriters and consultants at the party's Central Committee, and with artists and designers of visual propaganda. Chapter 2 makes another methodological point demonstrating how a combination of discourse analysis, linguistic analysis, and genealogical analysis may create

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a tool for investigating shifts in discursive formations. This method is also employed in the following chapters.

Chapter 3 analyzes how members of the last Soviet generation were involved in the reproduction of the norm of authoritative discourse in the context of the Komsomol organization to which most of them belonged in the 1970s and early 1980s. This chapter also begins the analysis, which is pursued in full in the following chapters, of how the performative reproduction of the authoritative forms in texts and rituals allowed these young people to invent multiple new meanings, pursuits, relations, socialities, and lifestyles that were neither necessarily determined by constative meanings of authoritative discourse nor opposed to them. This chapter focuses in particular on the practices and contexts of "ideological production" (the writing of speeches, texts, and reports; the conducting of rituals) and on the people who ran these practices and contexts: the local "ideological producers" (Komsomol organizers, secretaries, and rank-and-file members).

Chapter 4 shifts the analysis from the practices and contexts of ideological production to the contexts of cultural milieus[47] based on networks of friends, common intellectual pursuits, and practices of *obshchenie* (endless conversations, interactions, and forms of "being with others"). This chapter focuses on urban cultural milieus of the 1960s and 1970s, whose members thought of themselves as living in a reality "different" from the "ordinary" Soviet world. These communities of archeologists, theoretical physicists, literature lovers, mountain climbers, rock musicians, and so on, created a kind of "deterritorialized" reality that did not fit the binary categories of either support of or opposition to the state. The chapter argues that these cultural milieus should be analyzed not as exceptions to the "norm" of late Soviet life, but as paradigmatic examples of how that norm became everywhere decentered and reinterpreted. Although the existence of these cultural milieus was not necessarily thought of by their participants as a form of resistance to the socialist state, the cultural work that went on within them contributed to a dramatic reinterpretation of the socialist system, ultimately and "invisibly" undermining many of the announced Soviet principles and goals.

Chapter 5 analyzes the "imaginary" worlds that emerged within late-socialist life, especially in the life of the younger generations. It focuses in particular on the cultural and discursive phenomenon that it calls the "Imaginary West:" a local cultural construct and imaginary that was based

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[47] The term "milieu" is used here in the cultural studies sense. For example, Grossberg (2000) argues that the metaphor of "social space" encompasses two elements: a "territory" (a dynamic site for carrying out actions) and a "milieu" (the social relations and possibilities for actions and events within that site). For a genealogy of the term "milieu," see Rabinow (1989, 31–34).

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on the forms of knowledge and aesthetics associated with the "West," but not necessarily referring to any "real" West, and that also contributed to "deterritorializing" the world of everyday socialism from within. The production of this cultural construct within Soviet life was enabled by the performative shift of Soviet authoritative discourse described earlier, and the paradoxes of the cultural politics of the Soviet state that became exacerbated by this shift. This chapter conducts a genealogy of the Imaginary West, starting with the 1950s and 1960s, and analyzes the principles and dynamics of that imaginary world when it came to dominance in the lives of young people in the 1970s and 1980s.

Chapter 6 draws on diaries, memoirs, newspaper articles, and, in particular, on a personal correspondence between two young men in the late 1970s. In this chapter I argue that for some young people during that period, the meanings and ideals of communism and the influences, imaginations, and desires of the Imaginary West did not necessarily contradict each other; on the contrary, they could become rearticulated together in one discourse about a future society.

Chapter 7 focuses on the aesthetics of irony, the humor of the absurd, *anekdoty*, and absurdist pranks that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as ubiquitous elements of everyday life. This chapter argues against the traditional analyses of these forms of humor as examples of resistance to the system or subversion of its announced goals. Rather, I argue that this aesthetic was one of the cultural principles through which the deterritorialized late Soviet culture was produced and reinterpreted.

The conclusion revisits the book's central set of questions: What paradoxes at the core of the late Soviet system made the collapse of that system appear to its citizens as both completely sudden and unexpected and yet completely unsurprising? On what kind of internal displacements at the level of discourse, knowledge, ideology, meaning, space and time were these paradoxes predicated? And how was knowledge produced, coded, circulated, received, and interpreted under these conditions?