Writing the Cityscape

Narratives of Moscow since 1991

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Declaration

I, Mark John Griffiths, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

To my family, old and new, with thanks.

Abstract

This thesis considers how continuity and transformation, the past and the future, are inscribed into the cityscape. Drawing on Roland Barthes' image of the city as 'a discourse' and Michel de Certeau's concept of the *Wandersmänner*, who write the city with their daily movements, this thesis takes urban space as both a repository of, and inspiration for, narratives.

In few cities is the significance of writing narratives more visible than in Moscow. In the 1930s, it was conceived as the archetypal Soviet city, embodying the Soviet Union's radiant future. Since the deconstruction of this grand narrative and the fall of the Soviet Union, competing ideas have flooded in to fill the void. With glass shopping arcades, a towering new business district, and reconstructed old churches, Moscow's facelift offers only part of the picture. A number of other visions have been imprinted onto the post-Soviet city: nostalgic impulses for the simplicity of old Moscow; the search for a new, stable, powerful centre; desires for luxury, privatized gated communities; and feelings of abandonment in the grey, decaying, sprawling suburbs.

Following an overview of recent changes to Moscow's topography, these four major themes are investigated through the prism of post-Soviet Russian literature. Retro-detective fiction offers insight into nostalgia for the past and the temporal layers that build up the palimpsestic cityscape. Descriptions of Moscow after the apocalypse shed light on the city's traditional concentric structure and the concomitant symbolism of hierarchy. Glamour literature challenges this paradigm by focusing on the gated community, a topographical form that splinters the city. Images of the supernatural and the Gothic lead to an alternative vision of the hybrid city, embracing multiplicity. In this way, fictional works defy the physical world's constraints of time and space, revealing a kaleidoscope of different perspectives on post-Soviet Muscovite experiences.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Chapter I

Introduction

Writing the Cityscape: Space, Time, and Genre

1.1. Making the Urban Environment

> It is in the urban environment – in a world that man himself has made – that mankind first achieved an intellectual life […]. For the city and the urban environment represent man's most consistent and, on the whole, his most successful attempt to remake the world he lives in more after his heart's desire. But if the city is the world which man created, it is the world in which he is henceforth condemned to live. Thus, indirectly, and without any clear sense of the nature of his task, in making the city man has remade himself.[1]

The city is more than just part of the landscape. It is a space that we as human beings physically manipulate according to our personal whims, construct in our imaginations as the projection of our own visions, and write into the narratives of our individual lives. As Robert Park argues, we associate the city with civilization – 'an intellectual life', differentiating urban structures, flows, and networks from the more natural environment of rural space. The wall traditionally acts as a clear boundary between the two, delimiting 'the world which man created' from the perceived chaos of unordered surroundings.[2] Within this malleable and manageable space, the construction of the urban environment represents a sustained human effort to shape the ways in which we interact with others, build our daily lives, and imbue society with a sense of order. In doing so, we form strong emotional attachments to our immediate surroundings; they embody our 'heart's desire'. Yet, this creation of ours also holds much potential darkness, a recurrent sense of having disrupted nature and moulded an uncontrollable world of spiralling iniquity in its stead. Having now created it, we are, after all, '*condemned* to live' in it.

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[1] Robert Ezra Park, *Human Communities: The City and Human Ecology*, Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1952, p. 73.
[2] Mumford shows that humanity's earliest cities were constructed to be a symbolic 'world', a 'walled urban container', at the centre of which would be the citadel. Lewis Mumford, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects*, London: Secker and Warburg, 1961, pp. 1 and 34.

We eulogize the city of dreams, a place where anything is possible, where our lives can be fulfilled, and our true potential met. We fear the city of nightmares, the depersonalized space of the unknown, where the protective neighbourhood community of the village has been shattered. On the one hand, Tommaso Campanella's City of the Sun embodies humanity's virtue in urban form. With its fortifying layers of stone, it is a self-contained, utopian space where the perfect society can live in harmony. On the other hand, Evgenii Zamiatin's One State and Bob Kane and Bill Finger's Gotham capture humanity's darkness. In One State, Campanella's 'heart's desire' for order, rationality, and structure is taken to its dystopian conclusion, creating a terrifying homogeneity that prevents free-thinking. In Gotham, humanity's selfish creation of vast inequalities is inscribed into the cityscape, the transcendental aspirations of the wealthiest writ large into the cloud-busting Gotham Tower, and the desperation of the poorest manifested in the seediest places of vice. From the most utopian hope to the most dystopian despair, and from the most awe-inspiring skyscraper to the most nauseating sewer, we write our own extremes into urbanity. If in the making of the city we remake something of our selves, then the result is as conflicted, diverse, multitudinous, and complex as our very beings.

During the course of the past one hundred years, Moscow has been repeatedly conceptualized as a site on which human beings can remake themselves. The city's symbolic properties were particularly emphasized during the years of Stalinism, when the Soviet capital was to be transformed into a prototype for the future socialist city. Lazarʹ Kaganovich led the charge in the 1930s, insisting that Moscow now be conceived as 'a laboratory to which people from all over the Union will flock to study its experience'.[3] The city was not labelled a building site – perhaps a more apt metaphor given the scale of the construction ahead – but a 'laboratory', an enwalled space reserved for experiments. This is the micro-world where the mad scientist aims to control nature in the creation of something seemingly impossible 'after his heart's desire'. The 1935 General Plan for the Reconstruction of Moscow acted as the blueprint for this experiment, an ambitious two-dimensional, paper image of how the three-dimensional city would ultimately appear. Writing in *Izvestiia* three days after the plan's official ratification, Nikolai Bukharin hailed the imminent construction of nothing less

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[3] L. M. Kaganovich, *Socialist Reconstruction of Moscow and Other Cities in the USSR*, trans. Martin Lawrence, London: Lawrence, 1931, p. 22.

than a Soviet 'City of the Sun', the making of an entirely 'new Moscow', even a 'new world'.[4] If a utopian, collective society was to be created in the Soviet Union, Moscow was not only to be its home, but the Muscovite cityscape would positively embody its values: a New Moscow for the New Soviet Man and Woman.

This thesis considers not the remaking of Soviet Moscow, but the remaking of post-Soviet Moscow following its predecessor's symbolic demise. It does not consider the plan's projection of hope in 1935, but its long-term impact. Whereas the General Plan offered a single, coherent (albeit unrealizable) goal, the situation in Moscow following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 has been one of eclecticism. Analysis of both the new physical additions to Moscow's cityscape and literary depictions of Moscow unveils a smorgasbord of competing ideas. Post-Soviet Moscow is a city of many narratives, some harking back to its past, others gazing into its future in the spirit of constant reinvention. Since the image of the utopian City of the Sun was written into the topography of the cityscape during the 1930s, ripples of its failure continue to be experienced seventy years later. The sense of loss can be conceptualized spatially in terms of a void. Some have searched for an alternative utopian drive to fill the gap, nostalgically looking for a more stable past on which to build narratives. Others have embraced capitalist economics and modern skyscrapers, conceiving a new, New Moscow of glass office blocks and global interaction. They hope that Moscow can become a bastion of the future once more, only this time founded on capitalist and not socialist rhetoric.

Post-Soviet Moscow has a special legal and administrative status, imbuing its municipal government with greater powers, and its mayor with more control, than any other Russian city. In the post-Soviet period, this enabled Iurii Luzhkov – Mayor of Moscow between 1992 and 2010 – to inscribe his own vision of Russia into Moscow's cityscape. Presiding over the capital as if it were his fiefdom, Luzhkov personally interfered with new architectural projects, attempted to shape the cityscape according to his gilded view of the past, and encouraged the development of towering new buildings in an effort to portray Moscow as a global city. Yet, whilst Kaganovich opined on the merits of transforming Soviet Moscow into a laboratory and Luzhkov mixed an array of different

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[4] N. Bukharin, 'Gorod solntsa', *Izvestiia*, 14 July 1935, p. 4. Unless otherwise stated, all translations in this thesis are my own.

architectural styles in the urban test-tube, ordinary Soviet and post-Soviet citizens have still been 'condemned' to live in it. Post-Soviet Moscow contains, at the same time, people who cling to memories they associate with their local surroundings, inhabitants who gaze longingly at the dramatic gentrification of certain central streets, millions who live in grey suburbs, and the super-wealthy few who build palatial gated communities for their families and friends.

Following an analysis of the physical changes to the cityscape, this thesis considers these diverse, ground-level experiences of Moscow through the prism of post-Soviet Russian literature. With the works grouped into four major themes – nostalgia, the post-apocalypse, glamour, and magic – I bring together a number of contemporary authors who have achieved notable recent success. In the context of past Moscow, I analyse Boris Akunin's retro-detective fiction and the post-Soviet impulses of nostalgia. In the context of future Moscow, I consider the post-apocalyptic imagery of Tat′iana Tolstaia, Dmitrii Bykov, and Dmitrii Glukhovskii. This is followed by a study of Moscow's most glamorous contemporary locales through the prism of Oksana Robski's literary output. Finally, I evoke the topography of Moscow's haunted suburbs through the lens of fantasy and the Gothic in recent works published by Viktor Pelevin, Vladimir Sorokin, and Sergei Luk′ianenko.

Works of fiction can be used to excavate below the city surface, peel back layers, and challenge the city authorities' claims to truth, providing alternative readings of, and new contexts for, the cityscape. They connect the grand schemes of the urban planner to the daily lives of the individual, highlighting the tensions in that relationship and revealing the problematic nature of attempts to view the city from a single perspective. As Blanche Gelfant describes, the city's appearance in literature enables the reader 'to explore the city, to show what it is, what values it lives by, and what effect it has upon the individual's character and destiny'.[5] In the works analysed in this thesis, the city is more than a backdrop. It is sometimes anthropomorphized as a character in its own right, sometimes weaved into the characters' lives, and sometimes unveiled as a reflection of the protagonists' values – a space capturing the remaking of the self. These works of fiction also enable the reader to break through the physical world's constraints

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[5] Blanche H. Gelfant, *The American City Novel*, Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1985, p. 8.

of time, moving backwards and forwards between the past, present, and future. As this introductory chapter highlights, time is of particular importance when considering the post-Soviet cityscape. The bursting of the utopian bubble has resulted in both scepticism towards metanarratives and nostalgia for an innocent time when such dreams could be believed. Literature reveals these repressed memories and renewed aspirations, offering a kaleidoscope of different perspectives on post-Soviet Muscovite experiences.

1.2. Writing Time into the Cityscape

> I am reminded that what gives a city its special character is not just its topography or its buildings, but rather the sum total of every chance encounter, of every memory, letter, colour and image jostling in its inhabitants' crowded memories.[6]

This introductory chapter maps the theories of time and space that underpin our understanding of urbanity and provide a basis for delving into the specificities of one city – Moscow. It outlines the increased focus on everything urban in academic research and elucidates how an interest in space has advanced scholarship on Russian history, culture, and society. It also considers how the changing attention of post-Soviet Russian literature meshes with new images of the Russian capital. The next chapter then maps the particular contours of Moscow's cityscape, tracing how its topography has been transformed between 1991 and the present day, and establishing the city's major post-Soviet themes.

During the course of the past few decades, space has played an ever-increasing role in academic enquiry, with some labelling the greater focus on space across a whole range of disciplines a 'spatial turn'.[7] Those working on diverse geographical regions and in different areas of research now consider more carefully how we construct, manipulate, and imagine our surroundings. The scholarship has ranged from the macrocosmic to the microcosmic level. Some researchers consider the impact of globalization on an

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[6] Orhan Pamuk, *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, trans. Maureen Freely, London: Faber and Faber, 2005, p. 99.
[7] Barney Warf and Santa Arias (eds), *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, New York: Routledge, 2009. In this volume, Pamela K. Gilbert's essay, 'Sex and the Modern City: English Studies and the Spatial Turn' (pp. 102-21), offers a good example of the 'spatial turn' being applied to literary studies.

international level, or note similarities between the world's major cities. Others focus on the smaller, localized sites that form part of our everyday lives: individual streets, city squares, parks, buildings, and even the communal flat.[8] The Marxist geographer David Harvey and the postmodern urbanist Edward Soja, both influenced by Henri Lefebvre, have been key figures in demonstrating how space shapes our cultural and social practices.[9] The topography around us is no longer conceived as just something tangible, a shell to inhabit, but as something both physical and imagined. Not only does it exist as a collection of buildings, but it is equally socially produced and socially constructed.

The intricacies of space are most visible in the city, where multiple lives collide within a compact area. Here, the passenger on the underground train is squeezed against strangers.[10] The pedestrian on the street encounters the urban crowd in a fleeting moment of shock, experiencing, as Walter Benjamin suggests in his critique of Charles Baudelaire's sonnet, 'A une passante', the delight of 'love – not at first sight, but at last sight'.[11] It is at this unexpected moment that an ordinary street corner becomes something more than a lump of stone or tarmac. It is built into the narrative of our lives as a locale anchoring a specific memory. The shock of the delight of love is felt by the individual and rooted in that very space long after the 'last sight'. The city is thus brought to life – in our aspirations and memories, in our literature and films. It inspires us and it depresses us. The city of the mind can have a greater impact on our existence, on the ways in which we write our paths through life, than any physical monument.

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[8] For a selection of cultural histories told through specific streets, see Zeynep Çelik et. al (eds), *Streets: Critical Perspectives on Public Space*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994. This volume includes Greg Castillo's study of Stalinist changes to Gorʹkii Street, 'Moscow: Gorki Street and the Design of the Stalin Revolution' (pp. 57-70). See also Boym's study of the communal flat in Svetlana Boym, *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994, esp. pp. 121-67.

[9] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991; David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1990; and Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, London: Verso, 1989. Soja argues that he is distinguished from a 'Marxist urbanist' because he focuses more on the present, departing from Harvey's urban Marxism 'in stressing the importance of the here and now, what is new and different in the contemporary world.' Edward Soja, 'Writing the City Spatially', *City*, 7, 2003, 3, pp. 269-81 (pp. 270-71).

[10] In his highly influential essay, Georg Simmel considers the daily shocks encountered by the urban inhabitant, 'the rapid crowding of changing images' that force the 'metropolitan man' to develop a 'blasé attitude'. Georg Simmel, 'The Metropolis and Mental Life' [1903], in Donald N. Levine (ed.), *Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971, pp. 409-24.

[11] For Benjamin, this causes the poet to undergo a moment 'of shock, indeed of catastrophe', which has a residual impact on 'the nature of the poet's emotions'. Walter Benjamin, 'On Some Motifs in Baudelaire' [1939], in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn, New York: Schocken, 1969, pp. 155-200 (p. 169).

First Roland Barthes and later Michel de Certeau have highlighted how the imagined city is constructed by those who walk the urban streets – the flâneur in Baudelaire's sonnet. For Barthes, the city is a 'discourse': 'We speak our city, the city where we are, simply by living in it, by wandering through it, by looking at it'.[12] As we become accustomed to a given city, we begin to learn its language, grow comfortable with its locales, and learn to make them speak to us. Subsequently borrowing and adapting Barthes' concept, de Certeau posits that it is the city's *Wandersmänner* – pedestrians – who take buildings and invest them with meaning. For de Certeau, there is an opposition between the perspective of the city's gods in the heavens and that of the *Wandersmänner* on the ground. Evoking the image of a city god standing on the 110th floor of New York's World Trade Center, de Certeau posits that from this distant vantage point the city's motion is arrested – the 'gigantic mass is immobilized before the eyes'.[13] As an urban planner or representative of the municipal authorities, the city god totalizes the city beneath him or her, treating it as a transparent, legible text. City gods conceive new buildings to write their own narratives into the cityscape on the map or plan at their fingertips. The *Wandersmänner*, on the other hand, are the 'ordinary practitioners of the city' living far below the threshold of the city god's visibility. They do not construct new buildings but write urban texts with their movements, their 'everyday practices'.[14] At this level, the once legible text of the map or urban plan is splintered into a multitude of texts, experiences, and practices. The single building placed by the urban planner in an effort to impact on the city's future is fragmented into contested sites, locales being continuously rewritten and reinterpreted by the actions of the *Wandersmänner*.

De Certeau's conceptualization of writing urban texts from both above and below can be extended by transposing Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's distinction of the arbor and the rhizome onto the topography of the city. For Deleuze and Guattari, the arbor is based on a central trunk/idea, whilst the rhizome lacks this pivot/core ideology. The arbor begins with just one concept and then splits from that point. The rhizome is based

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[12] Roland Barthes, 'Semiology and the Urban', in Neil Leach (ed.), *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, London: Routledge, 1997, pp. 166-72 (pp. 167-68).
[13] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984, p. 91.
[14] Ibid., p. 93.

on the principles of connection and heterogeneity.[15] From above, the city appears arboreal to the city god. A radial pattern of roads emanate from a central, historically grounded focal point. On the street level of the *Wandersmänner*, the city becomes rhizomatic. Myriad alleyways interconnect in a labyrinthine pattern. In my opinion, the city is both arboreal and rhizomatic. It is the lines drawn on the map and the human emotions attached to a specific site. It is the city god's utopian vision of moulding urban space and, in accordance with Orhan Pamuk's definition, 'the sum total of every chance encounter'.

These different perspectives are echoed in scholars' understandings of *space* and *place*. Whilst there is no single accepted definition of place, most scholars draw a distinction between boundless space and localized place. Yi-Fu Tuan was the first to argue in 1977 that 'we live in space', but that 'places are centres of felt value where biological needs, such as those for food, water, rest, and procreation, are satisfied'.[16] Our spaces are much broader and less intimate than our places. As a confined area that offers security, comfort, and familiarity, our places feature strongly in concepts of belonging and home. Aleida Assmann has more recently strengthened this distinction in her conceptualization of space as 'geographical and political domains' and place as something filled with personal meaning. 'Places are marked by names and qualified by histories'.[17] We might gaze upon the vast landscape of space, whilst telling long (hi)stories about our local places.

If we consider these urban theorists' concepts together, we can build a picture of the city's internal conflicts and diverse possibilities. On the one hand, urban space is the realm of the city god. It presents him or her with the opportunity to leave an imprint on the physical world. Space is flattened, waiting to be inscribed with teleologies and political narratives. On the other hand, the *Wandersmänner* on the ground create the city's places by adding a dimension, connecting individual identities to urban areas. Edward Said's descriptions of 'imaginative geography' in *Orientalism* (1978), and scholars' subsequent adoption of the ideas and adaption of the theory under the term

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[15] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, London: Athlone Press, 1988, p. 23.

[16] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977, pp. 3-4.

[17] Aleida Assmann, 'How History Takes Place', unpublished paper presented at the UCL conference 'Writing Spatial History', London, 14 November 2008.

'imagined geography', raise the important point that processes of both space- and place-making can be politically and ideologically charged. Said unveils the 'dramatic boundaries' drawn by 'imaginative geography'.[18] These boundaries are so 'dramatic' because they delimit 'us' and 'them', or in the Russian context what is considered *svoi* and *chuzhoi*. By constructing imagined borders, excluding others, and imbuing particular places with specific meaning for a single group, people engage in power relations. The imagined construction of the 'other' on the opposite side of the wall creates a feeling of superiority on this side of the wall. Whether the differences highlighted are based on race, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, or socio-economic position, local places and vast spaces can all be imagined as belonging to a specific group.

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Time plays an important role in the construction of space and place. Indeed, time is in evidence in a number of the spatial theories already discussed in this chapter. Time features in the totalizing view of the city god and in Benjamin's image 'love […] at last sight'. It is at the core of an arboreal ideology, and yet its passing is also key to the memories of Pamuk's 'chance encounter'. The city god seeks to construct a coherent, progressive narrative from the past to the future. The disruption of this temporal linearity can destroy the coherence of the narrative. As the waves of iconoclasm following the Bolshevik Revolution and again after the fall of the Soviet Union attest, the heroes of one epoch can quickly become the villains of the next. A statue that legitimizes one regime can have equal symbolic significance in its felling by the next. The places of the *Wandersmänner* are equally built on the accumulation of time, as the condensation of people's past experiences. These places can be invested with shared (hi)stories, rendering them symbolically important for certain groups of *Wandersmänner*. Yi-Fu Tuan's connection of place to home has at its roots an understanding of time. Home as a spatial construct is associated with the idea of being rooted in a familiar past; it is an anchor or site of ritual return in life's long journey.

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[18] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, London: Penguin, 1995, p. 73.

The importance of time being rendered visible at urban sites is developed by Benjamin in his concept of the 'porous city', and by Andreas Huyssen in his discussion of the 'urban palimpsest'. Benjamin constructs his theory whilst wandering the streets of Naples, a city where he finds it difficult to discern which buildings are still under construction, and which are already suffering from dilapidation. With temporal differences juxtaposed in the cityscape, it is impossible to reduce the Neapolitan architecture to a single ideology or age. The Neapolitan streets are rhizomatic: 'The stamp of the definitive is avoided'.[19] Cast as authors penning narratives of the city's places – writing the cityscape – the Neapolitan *Wandersmänner* not only shape the world they inhabit, but they also imbue it with multiplicity. As Benjamin observes the reinterpretation of Neapolitan buildings through popular performance, he captures the city's motion, the interpenetration of architecture and action – time sweeping across the streets. Concluding that 'porosity results […] from the passion for improvisation, which demands that space and opportunity be preserved at any price', Benjamin shows that the dynamic Neapolitans write old buildings into modern life.[20]

For Huyssen, this visible porosity occurs because time is spatially imprinted in layers into the cityscape.[21] The past endures in urban fissures, the demolished structures, the memories of the inhabitants, and the city's imagined geographies. Once we have imbued a specific place with meaning, it lives on, if not in the physical cityscape, then in our minds, our (hi)stories, and our records.[22] A building does not have to remain visible from the street to exert an impact on our lives, since memory-traces are scattered through the giant collective of *Wandersmänner*. As Lefebvre summarizes: 'No space ever vanishes utterly, leaving no trace. Even the sites of Troy, Susa or Leptis Magna still enshrine the superimposed spaces of the succession of cities that have occupied them'.[23]

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[19] Walter Benjamin, 'Naples' [1924], in *One-Way Street, and Other Writings*, trans. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter, London: Verso, 1997, pp. 167-76 (p. 169).
[20] Ibid., p. 170.
[21] Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003, esp. pp. 1-10 and 72-84.
[22] There are also similarities here with Rolf Lindner's argument: 'Cities are not empty pages, but narrative spaces in which particular (hi)stories, myths and parables are inscribed'. Rolf Lindner, 'The Cultural Texture of the City', paper presented at the ESF-LiU conference 'Cities and Media: Cultural Perspectives on Urban Identities in a Mediatized World', Vadstena, 25-29 October 2006, pp. 53-58 (p. 53), http://www.ep.liu.se/ecp/020/005/ecp072005.pdf [last accessed 11 March 2011].
[23] Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, p. 164.

Whereas Huyssen evokes the mediæval manuscript to elucidate the temporal layering of the city, Mikhail Bakhtin uses the novel to underline the deep-rooted interconnection of time and space. In his theory of the 'chronotope' (literally 'timespace') in fiction, Bakhtin shows how either time or space can be understood through the lens of the other. For example, time can adopt spatial characteristics in the novel, 'take on flesh' and become visible, whilst space is 'charged and responsive to the movements of time'.[24] Since fiction facilitates access to the realms of the imagination, it intensifies the entwining of the *chronos* and the *topos* in enabling the two to shift axes. The past can be embodied by a childhood home; the future can be represented by a vast desert of the unknown. Migration through space often results in a more acute awareness of time's passage and valorization of memories. As Salman Rushdie famously remarks, 'the past is a country from which we have all emigrated'.[25] Its loss can have a deracinating and alienating impact on the city inhabitant. Its traces can be yearned for nostalgically in the hope of one day returning to this 'country'. The *topos* can also be inscribed with aspirations for what is still to come; it reflects a society's vision of the future.

The use of the *chronotope* in fiction and the exploration of time and space through the medium of the novel are both elucidated further in Bakhtin's essay on the *Bildungsroman*, a fragment from one of his lost books. Categorizing different forms of the novel, Bakhtin illustrates how time and space shape the reader's journey through a fictional world. The 'travel novel' fails to 'recognize human emergence and development'.[26] It thereby lacks temporal development, considering instead diversity across space. In contrast, the 'novel of ordeal' contains 'adventure time', a period distinct from the ordinary life course.[27] Space is thereby relegated to the background as a setting for the hero's unusual adventure. Finally, in the 'biographical novel' and in particular the *Bildungsroman*, the protagonist's personal development brings about a shift into a new historical reality. Bakhtin is fascinated by the traces left by this process

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[24] Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel' [1937-38], in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981, pp. 84-258 (p. 84).
[25] Salman Rushdie, 'Imaginary Homelands' [1982], in *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*, London: Granta, 1991, pp. 9-21 (p. 12).
[26] Mikhail Bakhtin, 'The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism (Toward a Historical Typology of the Novel)' [1936-38], in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. Vern W. McGee, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986, pp. 10-59 (p.11).
[27] Ibid., pp. 11-15.

of emergence, the legible and visible spatial manifestation of time. This allows the reader to see 'visible vestiges of man's creativity, traces of his hands and his mind: cities, streets, buildings, artworks, technology, social organizations, and so on.'[28] Time's flowing is captured in space.

1.3. The Impact of the 'Spatial Turn' on the Study of Russia

Questions of geography have long preoccupied Russian thinkers, perhaps in part due to the oft-repeated theory of the need for autocratic rule to control such a large land mass. Bakhtin's discussion of the 'chronotope' (1937-38); Iurii Lotman's concept of the 'semiosphere' (first appearing in his works of 1983), including his distinction between the 'concentric city' of Moscow and the 'eccentric city' of St Petersburg; Vladimir Papernyi's theory of 'Culture Two' in reference to Stalinist architecture (1985); and Vladimir Toporov's elucidations on the 'Petersburg Text' (the most complete accumulation of his thoughts from the 1970s to the early 1990s was published in 1993) are all important theories that feature in the later chapters of this thesis.[29] In the Anglophone study of Russia, however, it is only during more recent years that there has been an explosion of interest in space. This is particularly true in historical studies. Writing in 2007, Nick Baron describes historians' recent focus on space in the Russian context as nothing less than 'new spatial history', which has enabled historians to cast off their traditional disciplinary shackles and consider landscapes 'simultaneously of the mind and in the world'.[30] Writing three years later in 2010, Malte Rolf reaches a similar conclusion in his investigation of Russian history's 'spatial turn'. For him, the Western 'import' of imagined geographies is 'now being fruitfully applied to Eurasia'.[31]

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[28] Ibid., p. 25.

[29] Papernyi conceived Culture Two as part of his doctoral thesis in the Soviet Union during the late 1970s, but was only able to publish it abroad in 1985 in the USA. Due to its controversial stance, his work was not accepted in the Soviet Union for his desired qualification. Vladimir Papernyi, *Kul'tura "Dva"*, Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1985; Yuri Lotman, *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture,* trans. Ann Shukman, London: Tauris, 1990, esp. pp. 191–202; and V. N. Toporov, 'Peterburg i "Peterburgskii tekst russkoi literatury" (Vvedenie v temu)', in *Peterburgskii tekst russkoi literatury: Izbrannye trudy*, St Petersburg: Iskusstvo-SPB, 2003, pp. 7-118.

[30] Nick Baron, 'New Spatial Histories of Twentieth Century Russia and the Soviet Union: Surveying the Landscape', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, n.s., 55, 2007, 3, pp. 374-400 (p. 376).

[31] Malte Rolf, 'Importing the "Spatial Turn" to Russia: Recent Studies on the Spatialization of Russian History', *Kritika*, 11, 2010, 2, pp. 359-80 (p. 359).

Mark Bassin was influential in encouraging historians to consider Russian territory in terms of its symbolic properties. In three articles on the 'invention' of Siberia published between 1988 and 1991, Bassin elucidates how the metropolitan gaze was first utilized ideologically in Russia to 'colonize' the country's eastern lands.[32] There was a large shift in the centre's image of Siberia between the pre-Petrine era and the early-nineteenth century, with the construction of the low-lying Ural Mountains as a definitive barrier in the metropolitan imagination. It was only in the nineteenth-century that Slavophiles began to consider Russia as a discrete, self-contained world, a malleable 'space' with its own internal colonies. A boundary was planted in the metropolitan psyche in order to create two imagined geographies – the Russian centre, with its capital in St Petersburg, and the Russian colony, Siberia. The 'civilized' centre occupied the space to the west of the Urals, whilst the 'barbaric' colony lay across the wind-swept plains of the east. From the nationalist perspective, this division validated the Russian Empire and confirmed its unique path through history. Through the exploitation of imagined geographies, Russia was strong, thanks to its imperialist colonization programme, and unique, thanks to the contiguous land mass it occupied.

As Harsha Ram elucidates, the process of Russian nineteenth-century empire-building featured strongly in the period's literature. Drawing heavily on Said's theories, Ram shows that the metropolitan's attempts to orientalize distant parts of what was a geographically contiguous empire were in fact efforts to 'deflect the "orientalization" to which they had themselves been subjected [by Western Europeans] onto their conquered neighbours'.[33] The imagined geographies of Western Europe rendered Russia a periphery, creating a sense of inferiority and 'othering' that impacted on Russia's own imagined geographies. Ram's study underlines the importance of literature, since its flexibility in conceiving space makes it a fruitful medium for conveying imagined geographies. Not only did it play a key role in defining the imagined boundaries but also in attaching exotic qualities to those on the other side. Indeed, Aleksandr Etkind concludes that nineteenth-century Russian literature is characterized by nothing less

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[32] Mark Bassin, 'Expansion and Colonialism on the Eastern Frontier: Views of Siberia and the Far East in Pre-Petrine Russia', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 14, 1988, 1, pp. 3-21; Mark Bassin, 'Inventing Siberia: Visions of the Russian East in the Early Nineteenth Century', *The American Historical Review*, 96, 1991, 3, pp. 763-94; and Mark Bassin, 'Russia between Europe and Asia: The Ideological Construction of Geographical Space', *Slavic Review*, 50, 1991, 1, pp. 1-17.
[33] Harsha Ram, *The Imperial Sublime: A Russian Poetics of Empire*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003, p. 24.

than 'the novel of internal colonization'.[34] For Etkind, the Russian metropolitan centre was so intent on constructing a European-style empire that it used all texts possible in order to transform swathes of its 'own people' (*narod*) into subalterns.[35]

Moving into the Soviet period, Katerina Clark posits in her study of revolutionary culture between 1913 and 1931 that the Bolsheviks continued this tradition by establishing the Soviet Union as a 'nation' through a process of self-colonization, 'form[ing] a colony out of Russia'.[36] Her work, *Petersburg, Crucible of Cultural Revolution* (1995), is also revealing in its focus on urban space as a means of exploring cultural histories. Unveiling how St Petersburg acted as the main locus of cultural avant-gardism during the 1910s and 1920s, Clark shows that Russian intellectuals interacted with the city through literature, plays, films, popular performances, opera, art, architecture, and linguistics. Urban space was not merely a physical backdrop, but it inspired intellectuals to work together in its cauldron of invention and play. Clark's monograph ends at the point when this vibrancy diminished and 'the Petersburg era came to an end'.[37] For Clark, the decision in 1931 to allocate the greatest resources to Moscow in the overall plans to redevelop Soviet cities marked the genesis of the Soviet 'myth of Moscow'.[38]

Clark picks up this theme again in her recent monograph, *Moscow: The Fourth Rome* (2011), which focuses on Moscow between 1931 and 1941. Whilst St Petersburg offered a rich topography for Clark's earlier explorations, her sequel takes Moscow as the prism through which to explore Soviet culture under Stalin. Once again, the city's texts, architecture, and images in literature, painting, and film enhance our understanding of the period's society. For Clark, the Stalinist scheme for Moscow's reconstruction rendered the city the 'Fourth Rome', a designation not used to describe

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[34] Aleksandr Etkind, 'Posle natsii. Russkaia literatura, XIX vek: Roman vnutrennei kolonizatsii', *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 59, 2003, 1, pp. 103-24.
[35] Ibid. See also Aleksandr Etkind, 'Fuko i tezis vnutrennei kolonizatsii: Postokolonial′nyi vzgliad na sovetskoe proshloe', *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 49, 2001, 3, pp. 50-73; and Alexander Etkind, *Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011.
[36] Katerina Clark, *Petersburg, Crucible of Cultural Revolution*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995, p. 297.
[37] Ibid., p. 293.
[38] Ibid., pp. 6 and 297.

Moscow at the time, but which evokes the concept of 'Moscow, the Third Rome'.[39] According to the sixteenth-century Pskovian monk Filofei, Rome had fallen to barbarians and Constantinople to heretics, but the messianic and eternal Third Rome of Moscow was to remain forever the bastion of Christianity. Clark envisages Stalinist Moscow as the embodiment of a socialist '*different*, post-Christian, belief system' (emphasis in the original).[40] Literature again captured the shift in thought, with the socialist-realist novels of the period weighting the Muscovite chronotope to valorize future space and future time.[41]

In accordance with the 1935 General Plan, a number of symbolically significant Muscovite locales were to be imprinted with the stamp of socialism and the hope of the Soviet Union's future glory. Drawing a line of progress from Moscow's 'dark' Tsarist past into its 'bright' Soviet future, the city gods aimed to construct a coherent narrative across time in Muscovite space. Moscow's ultimately unrealized Dvorets Sovetov, the strikingly realized Stalinist *vysotki*, VSKhV (Vsesoiuznaia Sel′sko-Khoziaistvennaia Vystavka, renamed VDNKh – Vystavka Dostizhenii Narodnogo Khoziaistva – in 1959 and VVTs – Vserossiiskii Vystavochnyi Tsentr – in 1992 following the fall of the Soviet Union), and the new Metro all formed part of this Soviet mythmaking process. The city texts at these symbolic sites and the propagandistic texts in literature, film, and newspapers created an imagined geography delimiting Moscow as sacred space.

The focal point of new Moscow and the centrepiece of the General Plan was to be the Dvorets Sovetov, which would be constructed on the site of the former Khram Khrista Spasitelia, demolished on 5 December 1931.[42] Given that the cathedral was a monument to both Orthodoxy and the Russian victory over Napoleon in 1812, the new palace was

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[39] Katerina Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931-1941*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011, pp. 1-41.

[40] Clark posits that this political hardening was accompanied by a counter-intuitive international outlook among Soviet intellectuals, who were actually engaged in greater exchange with the West than usually suggested. Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome*, p. 2.

[41] Although not analysed by Clark, Aleksandr Malyshkin's *Liudi iz zakholust'ia* (written between 1931 and 1938) offers an excellent example of the socialist-realist descriptions of bright centre and dark periphery in its opposition of civilized capital and primitive wilderness stretching beyond the Urals into Siberia. Aleksandr Malyshkin, *Liudi iz zakholust'ia*, Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1957, esp. pp. 26-27, 79-84, 90-91, 113, 140, and 236. The image of Moscow as a space of the future in this socialist-realist novel is contrasted with post-Soviet depictions of a futureless Moscow in my fourth chapter, pp. 159-61.

[42] For an image of the final design created by B. M. Iofan, V. A. Shchuko, and V. G. Gel′freikh, see Anon., *General'nyi plan rekonstruktsii goroda Moskvy: 1. Postanovleniia i materialy*, Moscow: Moskovskii rabochii, 1936, plate between pp. 92-93.

designed to magnify the site's historic symbolism and channel these semiotic powers through the lens of socialism. According to politicized alterations to Boris Iofan's original designs, it would ultimately be topped at its already towering zenith by a one-hundred-metres-high statue of Lenin. From his position in the clouds as a city god, Lenin could watch down on the *Wandersmänner* far below. Yet the overly ambitious nature of the repeatedly revised plans and the subsequent outbreak of war ensured that the palace was never completed.[43]

Going one step further than the Dvorets Sovetov, and actually achieving fruition in the north of the capital, the sprawling park-cum-monument VSKhV was conceived as the embodiment of the Soviet Union's achievements within one single space (figures 1 and 2, pp. 45 and 46). When the park was unveiled on 1 August 1938, it offered an array of giant pavilions showcasing the contributions of the Soviet republics to the socialist project. Regional traditions from around the Soviet Union were seized from the past, reinvented for the purposes of the display site, and reinserted into a new chronotope – Moscow in the bright Soviet future. Two additional points were added to the eight-pointed Uzbek star, for example, in order to make it resemble two rotated five-pointed Soviet stars.[44] With towering Soviet verticals and a giant statue of Lenin, everybody appeared to be working merrily towards the furthering of the Soviet economy. This interest in reaching ever upwards was then writ large across the Stalinist cityscape after World War II. Constructed following Stalin's personal request in January 1947, seven enormous skyscrapers, or *vysotki*, were scattered across Moscow during the late 1940s and early 1950s. Beyond their size and height, these buildings stood out in the cityscape due to their neo-classical 'wedding-cake' style, tall spires, and overt monumentality (figure 3, p. 47).

Projections of Moscow's grandeur, a love of verticality, and the narrative of the Soviet Union's history were all further imprinted onto Moscow's underground space during the 1930s. Connecting Sokol′niki in the north to Gor′kii Park in the south, the Soviet Union's first metro line opened on 14 May 1935 in Moscow. Saturated with symbolism

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[43] For more on the design process of the Dvorets Sovetov, see Sona Stephan Hoisington, '"Ever Higher": The Evolution of the Project for the Palace of Soviets', *Slavic Review*, 62, 2003, 1, pp. 41-68. The reconstruction of the Khram Khrista Spasitelia during the 1990s is discussed in full in my following chapter, pp. 62-65.

[44] Greg Castillo, 'Peoples at an Exhibition: Soviet Architecture and the National Question', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 94, 1995, 3, pp. 715-46 (p. 731).

and ideological fervour, the metro's cavernous stations were dubbed 'palaces of the people' and offered much more than just a functional transport system.[45] At Maiakovskaia (opened in 1938), thirty-five mosaic-bedecked cupolas depicted visions of Soviet aeroplanes, parachutists, and soaring towers, linking the deepest metro tunnels to the highest skies (figures 5 and 6, pp. 49 and 50). At Ploshchad′ Revoliutsii (likewise opened in 1938), eighty larger-than-life bronze statues lead passengers through the history of the Soviet Union, inscribing the story of the Bolshevik Revolution and its legacy into Moscow's underground maw. As Stalin's words crystallized in the cityscape, life became merrier for the statues, from those determinedly fighting the revolutionary struggle all the way to the last statues of two cheerful Young Pioneers (figure 7, p. 51).[46]

These city texts of Stalinist Moscow have received recent scholarly attention, with the edited volume *The Landscapes of Stalinism* (2003) collecting research on the significance of space to Stalinist ideology. Jan Plamper interrogates the spatial elements of the cult of personality, revealing how Stalin featured as the focal point of artwork.[47] Clark extends this centripetality to wider territory, showing how attention shifted during the 1930s away from the Soviet Union's peripheries and towards the metropolitan centre.[48] In a separate article in *Slavic Review*, Julia Beckman Chadaga focuses on the symbolism of the Byzantine eagles on the Kremlin towers, which were replaced during the 1930s by red Soviet stars. She thus illustrates how the city's visual images can be 'read' as 'cultural texts'.[49] Taken together, these essays demonstrate how a single ideology valorized small segments of the cityscape and elevated their worth. The sacralized Soviet spaces were isolated from the rest of the city by their towering verticality, special gateways (the distinctive metro entrances, for example), carefully

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[45] Mikhail Ryklin, 'Luchshii v mire: Diskurs moskovskogo metro 30-kh godov', *Wiener Slawistischer Almanach*, 38, 1996, pp. 153-69; Keith A. Livers, *Constructing the Stalinist Body: Fictional Representations of Corporeality in the Stalinist 1930s*, Lanham: Lexington, 2004, esp. pp. 189-236; and Mark Griffiths, 'The Third Rome and the Frozen Lake: The Reconstruction of Moscow during the 1930s and Spatiality under Stalin', unpublished master's thesis, University College London, 2009, esp. pp. 15-28.

[46] As Mike O'Mahony argues, the statues formed a coherent narrative, 'one huge and neatly defined evolutionary record in rock'. Mike O'Mahony, 'Archaeological Fantasies: Constructing History in the Moscow Metro', *The Modern Language Review*, 98, 2003, 1, pp. 138-50 (p. 149).

[47] Jan Plamper, 'The Spatial Poetics of the Personality Cult: Circles around Stalin', in Evgeny Dobrenko and Eric Naiman (eds), *The Landscape of Stalinism: The Art and Ideology of Soviet Space*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003, pp. 19-50.

[48] Katerina Clark, 'Socialist Realism and the Sacralizing of Space', in *ibid*., pp. 3-18.

[49] Julia Bekman Chadaga, 'Light in Captivity: Spectacular Glass and Soviet Power in the 1920s and 1930s', *Slavic Review*, 66, 2007, 1, pp. 82-105.

defined boundaries, and unyielding historical narratives. They were not designed as places of multiplicity, but as sites perpetuating a single precognition of a bright future that had yet to happen.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Stalinist scrawling on the Muscovite palimpsest has persisted beneath the waves of new construction, and memories of creating an ideal socialist city continue to haunt the post-Soviet Russian capital. The General Plan's vision never fully materialized, but the images of its initial hope and ultimate despair still endure. Some Muscovite locales have been recast in a fresh role for contemporary life. The VSKhV, now VVTs, was reimagined in the 1990s from socialist bastion to capitalist shopping-centre-cum-amusement-park (figure 4, p. 48). Electrical goods suddenly appeared in some pavilions, others were transformed into indoor flea markets, whilst funfair rides were later added to the semiotic mayhem. Other sites – the unrealized Dvorets Sovetov, the *vysotki*, and the metro – act as persistent reminders of the failed vision. It is these memory-laden locales that recur in this thesis.

For Etkind, the impact of the past on the contemporary Russian cityscape can be conceptualized through the distinction between 'hard' and 'soft' memories. Hard memory crystallizes in the form of statues; soft memory exists in literary texts and historical narratives. The two work in tandem, since 'monuments without inscriptions are mute, whereas texts without monuments are ephemeral'.[50] The premise of Etkind's main thesis is that post-Soviet Russia contains an abundance of soft memory – discussion of past events – but a lack of hard memory – the memorialization of these events in the physical landscape. The state authorities, or city gods, emphasize the moments of pride in Russia's past, but neglect the moments of shame. Etkind points out that the largest Soviet camps lack a museum or official recognition of past horrors. Where there are monuments to the dead, for example the Solovetskii stone on the Lubianka in Moscow, Etkind bemoans the fact that they are not placed on the exact sites where atrocities were committed, but merely nearby.[51] I would agree with Etkind's vision of memory conflicts, but argue that even in soft memory, in discourse, the

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[50] Alexander Etkind, 'Hard and Soft in Cultural Memory: Political Mourning in Russia and Germany', *Grey Room*, 16, 2004, pp. 36-59 (pp. 39-40). Julie Buckler expresses a similar concept in relation to urban legends that require 'a kernel around which to coalesce – most often a place'. Julie A. Buckler, *Mapping St. Petersburg: Imperial Text and Cityshape*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005, p. 124.
[51] Alexander Etkind, *Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013, p. 189.

situation is far from coherent. Soviet symbolism is valorized in nationalist narratives of World War II, whilst kitsch wares – T-shirts adorned with Lenin, matreshki of Soviet leaders, and match boxes adorned with images of Stalin – are sold at Muscovite markets. Some mourn Stalin's victims, yet Stalin's popularity has actually increased since 1991. Irrespective of his brutality and despite the fact that Stalin was actually Georgian, he achieved third place in the 2008 'Imia Rossii' poll of greatest 'Russians'.[52] Russia is a country whose history remains fiercely contested, and as a consequence Moscow is a city where monuments still matter. Given the competition for soft memory, it seems little wonder that the capital's cityscape is such a rich tapestry of conflicting symbols and different times.

1.4. The City in Literary Context: From Petersburg Text to Moscow Texts

Etkind's emphasis on soft memory brings us to the role of literature in this thesis. If we write narratives into our surroundings, both physical and imagined – as posited by Lefebvre, Harvey, Soja, Barthes, and de Certeau – and if changes over time alter, distort, and recast these narratives – as captured in the theories of Bakhtin, Benjamin, Huyssen, Yi-Fu Tuan, Assmann, and Etkind – then literature acts as a repository for studying these stories and monitoring their shifts. On the microcosmic level, authors plot an individual's experiences of travelling through these changing times and spaces. On the macrocosmic level, they shed light on changes in society. Richard Lehan argues that 'the ways of reading literary texts are analogous to the ways urban historians read the city'.[53] I would agree that cities can be read as a 'text', or multiple 'texts', containing their own tales. I would suggest, however, that urban historians can also 'read the city' by reading literary texts. Literature is, of course, just one means of accessing experiences of space and societal shifts. The writings of the urban inhabitant can also be elucidated through ethnographic studies in urban anthropology, more traditional historical sources, such as newspapers, detailed qualitative interviews in sociology, as well as film, visual advertisements, or song lyrics in cultural studies. Moscow in literature is particularly revealing, however, due to the political significance

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[52] Evgenii Lesin, 'Rus′-troika: Stalin, Stalin i Stalin', *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 29 December 2008, p. 2.
[53] Richard Lehan, *The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, p. 8.

of its imagined geographies during the twentieth century, and the historical significance of the city in nineteenth-century Russian literature.

In the form of the nineteenth-century Petersburg Text, Russian literature is unusual in having constructed its own urban metatext. As Robert Porter notes in his brief overview of the city's position in Russian literature, St Petersburg is a 'special case' due to the inherent tension within the city's urban fabric.[54] On the one hand, St Petersburg famously offered Peter the Great a 'window to the West'. It was to be the city of thought, technology, and progress, leaving Moscow as the 'big village', populated by faithful, God-fearing peasants. On the other hand, St Petersburg was forged by forced labour in a distant northern swamp at the expense of thousands of lives. Its comparative newness as a European city constructed at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the tyrannical and extraordinarily quick methods employed in its foundation, and its geographic position on the margin of Russian territory rendered St Petersburg ripe for hauntings in the literary imagination. Emily Johnson shows that St Petersburg even became the theoretical heartland for a form of academic enquiry – *kraevedenie*, the interdisciplinary study of a local area which focuses on the relationship between human society and the natural environment, as well as the semiotics which human beings invest into their surrounding space. The study of St Petersburg thus becomes a field in its own right, exploring wider questions of Russian identity and societal impact through the prism of a single city.[55]

Toporov has been at the vanguard of recent scholarly inquiry into these visions, elucidating the theory of the Petersburg Text, derived from what he describes as 'the monolithic quality (unity and wholeness) of the arrangement of meanings (the ideas)'.[56] For Toporov, the nineteenth-century Petersburg Text was based on a series of dichotomies, opposing the new Russian capital with its predecessor, Moscow. Either side of the dichotomy could be portrayed in a positive or negative light depending on one's perspective. Whilst St Petersburg could be cast as a civilized and rational city, the most famous examples of nineteenth-century literature portrayed the city according to

[54] Robert Porter, 'The City in Russian Literature: Images Past and Present', *The Modern Language Review*, 94, 1999, 2, pp. 476-85 (p. 476).
[55] Emily D. Johnson, *How St. Petersburg Learned to Study Itself: The Russian Idea of Kraevedenie*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006.
[56] Toporov, 'Peterburg i "Peterburgskii tekst russkoi literatury"', pp. 26-27.

Toporov's first scheme. From Aleksandr Pushkin's *Mednyi vsadnik* to Nikolai Gogol''s Petersburg tales and Fedor Dostoevskii's novels, St Petersburg was envisaged as an un-Russian space of alienation:

> По одной из них бездушный, казенный, казарменный, официальный, неестественно-регулярный, абстрактный, неуютный, выморочный, нерусский Петербург противопоставлялся душевной, семейственно-интимной, патриархальной, уютной, "почвенно-реальной", естественной, русской Москве. По другой схеме Петербург как цивилизованный, культурный, планомерно организованный, логично-правильный, гармоничный, европейский город противопоставлялся Москве как хаотичной, беспорядочной, противоречащей логике, полуазиатской деревне.[57]

The Petersburg Text offers an excellent example of the close relationship between literature and space, revealing both how urban topographies alter the course of a fictional work and how literature can be inscribed into the city. As the lines between the physical cityscape and imagined geographies blur, fictional characters, occurrences, and spaces redefine the city in the mind of the reader. The nineteenth-century Petersburg Text continued to cast its shadow over the twentieth century, perhaps most famously in Andrei Belyi's masterpiece *Peterburg* (serialized 1913-1914 and published in novel form in 1916), in which the hypertextual city and extant space are closely intertwined. Now, in the twenty-first-century city, visitors still follow 'Dostoevskii trails' to see the landmarks where fictional events (never) occurred over one hundred years ago and the buildings where an author's protagonists (never) dwelt. For Joseph Brodsky, literature is so entwined with reality that 'today when you think of St. Petersburg you can't distinguish the fictional from the real'.[58] Since reference to nineteenth-century Russian literature is almost automatically also a reference to St Petersburg, it is difficult – Brodsky suggests impossible – to disentangle the city and its metatext.

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[57] Ibid., p. 16.
[58] Joseph Brodsky, 'A Guide to a Renamed City', in *Less Than One: Selected Essays*, London: Viking 1986, pp. 69-94 (p. 80).

As a consequence, a large body of research concentrates on the importance of St Petersburg to Russian history and literature. With Toporov's comprehensive study frequently cited as direct inspiration, some researchers interrogate Toporov's theories, whilst others delve into specific works that make up the Petersburg Text. As the Petersburg Text has sparked wide-ranging debate not only in Russian but also in Western academic circles, a selection of the diverse perspectives include: an attempt to deconstruct the Petersburg Text to uncover 'the real St Petersburg'; an investigation of St Petersburg's recurrent eschatological myths; analysis of Petersburgian urban legends at specific locales; debate about alienation in Gogol''s demonic Petersburg; a comparative study of St Petersburg in Pushkin's *Mednyi vsadnik* and Dostoevskii's *Dvoinik*; the application of the Petersburg Text to Aleksei Balabanov's films of the 1990s; and questions surrounding the possible 'end of the Petersburg Text'.[59]

However, scholars have been far less convinced by, and far less vocal about, the role of Moscow in nineteenth-century literature. Indeed, literary depictions of Moscow in the post-Soviet period have been particularly under-researched. Toporov concludes that the depictions of Moscow 'do not form a separate "Moscow" text of Russian literature', although N. Mednis rightly points out that Moscow had already accumulated its own centuries-old associations, which were then used to shape the Petersburg Text.[60] Remarking in 2004 that the Petersburg Text has already received 'lavish attention', whilst the Moscow Text 'still awaits clarification', Ian Lilly constructs his own scheme of traditional associations for pre-revolutionary Moscow.[61] He posits that there are three main strands to the Moscow Text – Mother Moscow or 'matushka-Moskva', Moscow as a city of conviviality, and Moscow as the Third Rome. The first strand builds on Moscow's folkloric tradition, emphasizing the city's 'female essence', its history as a

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[59] Rolf Hellebust, 'The Real St. Petersburg', *Russian Review*, 62, 2003, 4, pp. 495-507; Valerii Tiupa, 'Mytho-Tectonics of the Petersburgian Hypertext of Russian Literature', *Russian Literature*, 62, 2007, 1, pp. 99-112; Buckler, *Mapping St. Petersburg*; Julian Graffy, 'The Devil is in the Detail: Demonic Features of Gogol's Petersburg', in Pamela Davidson (ed.), *Russian Literature and its Demons*, New York: Berghahn, 2000, pp. 241-77; Gary Rosenshield, '*The Bronze Horseman* and *The Double*: The Depoeticization of the Myth of Petersburg in the Young Dostoevskii', *Slavic Review*, 55, 1996, 2, pp. 399-428; Jennifer J. Day, 'Strange Spaces: Balabanov and the Petersburg Text', *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 49, 2005, 4, pp. 612-24; and Andrew Reynolds, 'Returning the Ticket: Joseph Brodsky's 'August' and the End of the Petersburg Text', *Slavic Review*, 64, 2005, 2, pp. 307-32.

[60] Toporov, 'Peterburg i "Peterburgskii tekst russkoi literatury"', p. 26; and N. E. Mednis, *Sverkhteksty v russkoi literature*, Novosibirsk: NGNU, 2003.

[61] Ian K. Lilly, 'Conviviality in the Prerevolutionary "Moscow Text" of Russian Culture', *Russian Review*, 63, 2004, 3, pp. 427-48 (pp. 429 and 447).

'city built of wood', and its connection to nature.[62] The second strand draws attention to Muscovites' sociability at the city's taverns, clubs, restaurants, and private banquets.[63] The third strand focuses on the city's politics and strictly hierarchical power structures.[64] With Lilly leading the charge to detail Moscow's semiotic characteristics, his parallel study – the edited volume *Moscow and Petersburg: The City in Russian Literature* – helps to elucidate these strands, although it is also worth noting the insight into nineteenth-century depictions of Moscow offered by Grigorii Knabe's collection of essays from 1998.[65]

Moving into the twentieth century, Marina Selemeneva provides an overview of Moscow's role in twentieth-century literature, but it is a number of recent Anglophone doctoral theses that shed most light on literary depictions of the city after the Bolshevik Revolution.[66] In his thesis of 2011, Sidney Dement explicitly 'refuse[s] to answer the question of whether or not the Moscow Text of literature exists' because, in his opinion, the more important question is how Toporov's theories of space apply to the Muscovite context.[67] Dement achieves his goal by focusing on three Muscovite locales in a single novel – Mikhail Bulgakov's *Master i Margarita* (written during the period 1928-1940) – and by illustrating how these places can be read as texts. Not only does space impact on our understanding of the novel, shaping the characters' paths through the narrative, but it reveals a fresh angle on political and social changes. Dement thus concludes that whilst Stalinist narratives were being inscribed into the cityscape, 'Bulgakov used the very same Moscow space to subvert Stalin's rewriting of Moscow'.[68]

Wider cultural depictions of Soviet Moscow's reconstruction have been analysed in Brinton Coxe and Clint Walker's doctoral theses (2007 and 2006 respectively). Expanding the focus to both literature and film, Coxe uses theories developed in the context of cinematography to contrast images of Moscow in the 1920s and 1930s with

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[62] Ibid., pp. 434-37.
[63] Ibid., pp. 437-46.
[64] Ibid., pp. 430-31.
[65] Ian K. Lilly (ed.), *Moscow and Petersburg: The City in Russian Literature*, Nottingham: Astra Press, 2002; and G. S. Knabe (ed.), *Moskva i 'moskovskii tekst' russkoi kul'tury: Sbornik statei*, Moscow: RGGU, 1998.
[66] M. V. Selemeneva, *Gorodskaia proza kak ideino-khudozhestvennyi fenomen russkoi literatury XX veka*, Moscow: MGU im. E. R. Dashkovoi, 2008, esp. pp. 79-137.
[67] Sidney Eric Dement, 'Textual Dimensions of Urban Space in M. A. Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita*', unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Kansas, 2011, p. 267.
[68] Ibid., p. 263.

those in the 1950s and 1960s. Whilst arguing that there is a 'Moscow text', Coxe does not explicitly consider the twentieth-century interplay with the Petersburg Text, but focuses on two 'Moscow myths'. The first, Moscow as the Third Rome, characterizes the earlier period, whilst the second, Moscow as the Big Village, summarizes the city's depiction in the latter period.[69] Walker, on the other hand, is adamant about the existence of a 'Soviet Moscow Text', founded in the 1920s and 1930s. Analysing Bulgakov, Boris Pil′niak, Andrei Platonov, and Andrei Belyi, he contends that the authors all draw on the nineteenth-century Petersburg Text as 'the primary lens for viewing and evaluating transformations in Soviet Moscow'.[70] He concludes that these depictions of Moscow's transformation highlight the Soviet elite's failure to realize Bolshevik revolutionary dreams.

In her doctoral thesis, Natalia Lechtchenko similarly develops the concept of viewing twentieth-century-literary Moscow through the prism of nineteenth-century-literary St Petersburg. With chapters on Marina Tsvetaeva, Vladimir Maiakovskii, Bulgakov, Bulat Okudzhava and Nikolai Klimontovich, Dmitrii Prigov and Sorokin, and Iurii Andrukhovych, Lechtchenko provides an overarching view of what she terms 'the Moscow myth'. She concludes that these writers not only offer the reader insight into Moscow, but that the city's elevation in twentieth-century culture renders Moscow a 'window on Russia'.[71] This conclusion captures the important shift of focus from St Petersburg to Moscow during the twentieth century. Indeed, the questions surrounding the existence of the Moscow Text in the nineteenth century are perhaps now retrospectively debated with such fervour due to the significance of Moscow's texts in the twentieth century.

The Soviet decision to move the seat of government to Moscow not only necessitated relocation across physical space, but it also created a concomitant shift in Soviet

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[69] Brinton Tench Coxe, 'Envisioning Moscow: The Role and Image of Moscow Myths in Soviet Film and Literature', unpublished doctoral thesis, Columbia University, 2007.

[70] Clint B. Walker, 'Transformation Metaphors in the "Soviet Moscow Text" of the 1920s and 1930s', unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Wisconsin, 2006, p. 7.

[71] Natalia Lechtchenko, 'A Window on Russia: The Moscow Myth in Twentieth-Century Russian Literature and Culture', unpublished doctoral thesis, Brown University, 2005, esp. pp. 1-29. In terms of more recent fiction, Lechtchenko focuses on Prigov's cycle of poems *Moskva i moskvichi* (written in 1982), Andrukhovych's *Moskoviada* (1993), and Sorokin's 'Moskva' (1995). *Moskoviada* is an excellent example of the apocalyptic visions of Moscow that proliferated around the time of the Soviet Union's collapse, and is discussed in my fourth chapter, pp. 169-70. Sorokin's 'Moskva' is discussed in greater detail in the context of gloomy images of post-Soviet Moscow in my sixth chapter, pp. 225-26.

citizens' imagined geographies, further strengthened by the 1935 General Plan. If the unique nature of St Petersburg's conception and construction resulted in the creation of the Petersburg Text, then the uniqueness of Moscow's twentieth-century reimagining has sparked its own mythologies. Works of fiction reconsider the visions of a new socialist city under Stalin and the imagery of a new capitalist-nationalist city under Luzhkov. That is not to say, however, that this thesis attempts to construct a coherent 'Post-Soviet Moscow Text'. In the face of the complexities of post-Soviet transformation, the conflicts over meaning, and the temporal tensions, I argue that the depictions of Moscow in recent Russian literature cannot be collated into a single vision.

Instead, I group authors according to important post-Soviet themes (nostalgia, the post-apocalypse, glamour, and magic), considering how they each deal with that theme in the context of the city, and how Moscow facilitates further exploration of that theme. There are echoes of past mythologies and historical continuities in these authors' texts, but these form only part of the bigger pastiche. Luzhkov's reimaging of the post-Soviet cityscape evokes the doctrine of the Third Rome, but new construction supplements religiosity with capitalist individualism. The image of 'matushka-Moskva' features in Akunin's retro-detective fiction, but Akunin's Moscow actually adopts a number of St Petersburg's traditional characteristics. Elsewhere, old centripetal hierarchies are reinforced only to be finally deconstructed, transformation is seen through the lens of capital accumulation, and notions of a Big Village in the suburbs are challenged by the formation of magical collectives. The schizophrenia of the post-Soviet cityscape is further distorted and reenvisaged in the multiple cities of the imagination. The post-Soviet authors discussed in this thesis reveal complexity; they form not a single Moscow Text, but a number of Moscow texts. They do not simply recycle or reconstitute the binary-laden model of the St Petersburg-Moscow dichotomy. Where such oppositions do appear, they are broken down over the course of the narratives, unable to withstand the test of time.

1.5 Post-Soviet Literature in Transition: From *Chernukha* to Genre Fiction

Just as the post-Soviet city cannot be characterized by binary oppositions or reduced to a simple schemata, Russian literature has witnessed a dramatic splintering, having thrown off the Soviet-era binary opposition between 'official' and 'dissident' works. During a period when Moscow was transformed on the ground and reimagined in the mind, Russian authors experienced their own time of transition. The changing landscape of post-Soviet literature is both mapped onto literary depictions of the Russian capital and expressed through authors' visions of Moscow. Given the opening of Russian literature to market forces, shifts in genres also reflect changes to post-Soviet readers' tastes. Certain depictions of Russia's largest city, whether of a nostalgic, glamorous or pessimistically dark hue, equally echo the new demands of the post-Soviet reading public.

During *perestroika*, the stumbling Soviet Union saw an outpouring of literary works, with previously unknown writers coming to the fore overnight and unmentioned areas of Soviet history discussed in literary journals. As the dominant Soviet metanarrative began to dissolve, the past became an unpredictable landscape, with many eager to have their own personal narratives recorded in memoirs. The new-found freedoms of the late 1980s and early 1990s then enabled authors to explore Soviet taboos and branch out into new genres. Russian short stories, novels, and films initially focused on increasingly negative imagery. They exuded cynicism in response to the changing political and social climate, as well as the thawing of censorship. With violent, overtly sexualized, and despairing visions flooding the cultural scene, critics began to use the term *chernukha* (from *chernyi* – black) to describe the appearance of 'black prose'.

Originally coined in the context of Ludmila Petrushevskaia's literary output, *chernukha* became all-pervasive during the late 1980s, first in Russian literature and then even more visibly in Russian film. Characters suffered from alcoholism, poverty, violence, rape, sadism, and urban alienation. As Seth Graham highlights in the context of film, urban space played an important role in moulding an appropriate atmosphere and compounding the bleakness, with the settings of *chernukha* including 'dirty and/or crowded apartments […], littered courtyards (populated by feral dogs or cats), urban

streets at night, beer bars or liquor stores, police stations or prisons, and hospitals'.[72] Focusing on 'physicality and "naturalism"', these black narratives were firmly grounded in the extant world, shaping a form of hyper-realism that captured widespread feelings of impoverishment.[73] The most depressing features of urbanity were fused with the most depraved elements of humanity. However, the cultural output of *chernukha* also contained a moral message, providing a brutally sincere insight into the poverty of Soviet life and thereby offering late-Soviet citizens an antidote to the saccharine world of Soviet kitsch. It unveiled the falsehood behind the utopian dreams and, in the words of Nancy Condee, presented 'socialist realism with a minus sign'.[74]

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the loss of a predetermined future, ensuing ideological vacuum, very real increase in crime, and fresh possibilities to describe life's most sordid aspects in a world without Soviet censorship all did little to lighten the cultural mood. Narratives of apocalyptic destruction, unrelenting baseness, immorality, humiliation, and hopelessness persisted during the 1990s. Authors and film producers almost appeared to compete with each other to conjure the most shocking imagery. There was, however, a shift in the early 1990s relating to these images' purpose. As Eliot Borenstein theorizes, 'classical' *chernukha* of the *perestroika* period ended at the beginning of the 1990s, with 'post-Soviet' *chernukha* offering only 'a superficial resemblance to its perestroika predecessor'.[75] The aim behind such images of explicitly attacking socialist realism and Soviet ideology was lost. Without the need to offer a counterpoint to Soviet propaganda, depictions of shocking violence and explicit sex became more stylized, metamorphized into a different form of crudeness.[76] Adopting symbolic properties, these images now raised wider questions about contemporary morality, growing societal inequalities, and Russia's past and future. The sex and violence of what Borenstein describes as 'neo-chernukha' thus found mass appeal, or as he describes, the genre's dark tentacles reached so far in the 1990s that '[neo-

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[72] Seth Graham, 'Chernukha and Russian Film', *Studies in Slavic Cultures*, 1, 2000, pp. 9-27 (p. 9).
[73] Ibid.
[74] Nancy Condee, *The Imperial Trace: Recent Russian Cinema*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 62.
[75] Eliot Borenstein, *Overkill: Sex and Violence in Contemporary Russian Popular Culture*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007, p. 17.
[76] I would like to thank Phil Cavendish for all his elucidation on *chernukha*, in particular this observation of how images of violence and sexuality were transformed during the course of the late 1980s and 1990s.

]chernukha-free entertainment was almost as hard to find in Russia as decaf [coffee]: it existed, but one had to know where to look'.[77]

It was not just the fictional protagonists who suffered hard times in the 1990s, but also Russian literature in general. With new forms of entertainment challenging literature's once dominant position in society, the post-Soviet period saw a sharp decline in readership. This trend particularly affected Russia's 'thick' literary journals, traditionally the place to publish intellectual works. In 1990, *Novyi mir* had a huge print run of 2,660,000, but within a single year this figure had been slashed to 958,000. By 1995, it stood at only 25,000, and by the turn of the new millennium, the journal's print run was just 13,300.[78] As the sales of *Novyi mir* and other 'thick' journals have continued to decline in the 2000s, Anthony Olcott summarizes that the post-1991 changes amount to no less than 'the utter transformation of the Russian reading public'.[79]

For some authors and literary critics, literature's loss of status is not only an indication of the younger generation's shifting interests; it also reflects the wider degradation of Russian society. In response to a 2005 poll revealing that 37% of the Russians surveyed never purchase books, Vladimir Grigor′ev, deputy head of the federal agency commissioning the poll, offered a lament common in literary circles of the 2000s. 'Books are ceasing to be a part of people's lives', he declared, 'This is horrible. The consequences for society are unpredictable.'[80] For Tolstaia the consequences are quite clear. The dislocation of a new generation from their cultural heritage results in regression and an inability to create works of brilliance in the future.[81] Others point to the quality of the literature still produced as a symptom of cultural atavism. High-brow intellectual works, vitriolic dissident pieces, and 'thick' journals may all have been diminished in the literary landscape, but so-called 'low' literary genres have flourished in their stead.

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[77] Borenstein, *Overkill*, pp. 18-19.
[78] Alla Latynina and Martin Dewhirst, 'Post-Soviet Russian Literature', in Neil Cornwall (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Russian Literature*, London: Routledge, 2001, pp. 234-50 (p. 235).
[79] Anthony Olcott, *Russian Pulp: The Detektiv and the Russian Way of Crime*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001, p. 1.
[80] Cited in Rosalind Marsh, *Literature, History and Identity in Post-Soviet Russia, 1991-2006*, Bern: Lang, 2007, p. 52.
[81] In her novel *Kys′*, Tolstaia transposes these views onto the topography of Moscow after the apocalypse. See my third chapter, pp. 146-53.

For literary critic Georgii Tseplakov, the proliferation of 'genre literature' has resulted in a market flooded by novels barely discernible from each other. Tseplakov maintains that post-Soviet literature has thus followed Hollywood cinema and Western pop music in the production of 'tedious' sequels. 'Pop groups are endlessly "delighting" audiences with new hits which are difficult to distinguish from each other, and in the bookshops we see a great multitude of the same type of genre books, written according to a template'.[82] Specifically naming Dar′ia Dontsova, Aleksandra Marinina, and Tat′iana Ustinova, Tseplakov accuses post-Soviet authors of having completely transformed 'the process of artistic production'.[83] Rather than slowly penning thought-provoking musings on society, they embrace 'operations management' from Western business models, rapidly firing novels from a conveyor-belt 'as though they were pies'.[84] The biographies of the three authors cited appear to support Tseplakov's concept of conveyor-belt literature. Since 1998, Dontsova has penned five cycles of detective novels, with the first and longest cycle alone comprising (as of August 2013) an incredible forty-five novels. Marinina (the pseudonym of Marina Alekseeva) is most famous for her series featuring the female detective Anastasiia Kamenskaia, which currently runs to a comparatively modest thirty novels. Ustinova is a crime writer whose œuvre comprises thirty-seven works, the majority published over a surprisingly short timespan at the beginning of the 2000s before she began to write television serials.

The rise of the internet has undeniably changed the face of literature. In reaction to journals' declining readership, more authors have turned to big publishing houses to print their works in novel form. During the 2000s in particular, these publishers have explored increasingly sophisticated means of selling books, deploying PR-techniques, running advertising campaigns, and attempting to imbue their authors with celebrity status. As Andrew Wachtel shows, authors have responded to a loss of social status by finding 'innovative solutions'.[85] In the West as well, publishing houses have sought Russian authors who could reach large audiences in translation. Literature has become one facet of a larger, more marketable transmedia product. From the authors to be

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[82] Georgii Tseplakov, 'Talant i lepta proektnoi literatury', *Znamia*, 2008, 5, pp. 195-206 (pp 199).
[83] Ibid., p. 200.
[84] Ibid., pp. 199-201.
[85] Andrew Wachtel, *Remaining Relevant after Communism: The Role of the Writer in Eastern Europe*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006, p. 6.

discussed in this thesis, Glukhovskii's novels have been successfully transformed into computer games, Luk′ianenko's works have gained a global reputation through their film versions, and Akunin has not only penned a 'computer game' in the form of a novel, but he has also courted worldwide fame with detective novels translated into thirty-four languages.

I would argue, however, that Grigor′ev, Tolstaia, and Tseplakov are unfairly negative in their judgement of recent fiction, and that the changes should not be viewed unreflectively in a negative light. Whilst the popularity of 'genre fiction' has soared in post-Soviet Russia, and the detective novel in particular has become ubiquitous in book stores, this does not mean that all such works are low in quality or deserve to be confined to airport lounges. In the shaping of his retro-detective fiction, Akunin undertakes historical research in order to produce a final 'product' that includes not only imaginative crimes, but also elements of 'high' and 'low' genres, social critique, the style of Dostoevskii in one paragraph, and mimicry of Gogol′ in the next. Nor do the changes mean that all recent fiction can be reduced to a standard generic 'template'. The works analysed in this thesis are grouped according to a specific theme or genre, yet they all challenge conventional thought in some way by exploring their particular niche, exhibiting a richness that offers something beyond out-dated stereotypes. They also offer a range of what critics might describe as 'literary qualities'. Whilst the author at the centre of Chapter Five – Robski – has received scathing criticism for her writing style, Akunin (Chapter Three), Tolstaia and Bykov (Chapter Four), and Pelevin (Chapter Six) carefully play with language and consciously draw on the Russian literary canon. These works have quite rightly sparked debate in academic and literary circles, whilst critiques of these works equally appear in scholarly journals.

1.6. The Post-Soviet 'Psychological-Ideological Landscape'

The theories of time, space, and the city discussed in this chapter have been formulated in different times and spaces, in both Russia and the West. Yet they nonetheless overlap in a conceptualization of the city as a space that is constructed in both the physical world and in our minds, that can be inscribed with narratives, and that contains past stories. Greater understanding of society's transformations can be gleaned by reading these narratives of the city. It is not sufficient, however, to consider only a semiotic

reading of the realm of the urban planner or city god. The places that *Wandersmänner* construct in their minds also shape the world around us. As Soja argues, the complexities of the city lie in its 'urban imaginary', 'the mental or cognitive mappings of urban reality'.[86] Our cultural texts are a useful resource in gaining access to these 'cognitive mappings' and, by extension, to our experiences of the places we inhabit.

Caroline Humphrey argues not only that there is a 'psychological-ideological landscape', but also that this landscape 'has specific post-Soviet contours'.[87] She finds something particular in the way the post-Soviet landscape is imbued with meaning. I would agree, but argue that there is not only something particular about the post-Soviet context, but also about the post-Soviet *Muscovite* context. The Russian capital has a special resonance as the synecdoche of the nation. On the one hand, it offers insight into Russian society. On the other hand, the city takes global trends affecting different societies – nostalgia, a period of rapid construction, the gated community, suburban existence – and filters them through local culture and history. It captures some of the most exciting contemporary Russian culture, whilst at the same time presenting an image of Russia to the world. Moscow remains haunted by the 1935 General Plan, and yet reimagined as the embodiment of Russia's future. It is a city rich with phantasmagorias from past ages, yet still ripe for fresh imagined geographies.

Chapter Two, 'Old Visions, New Buildings', explores the tension between past and future in the form of post-Soviet continuity and change to the physical cityscape. Elucidating both old and new narratives inscribed into the city's space, it considers Moscow's current state of semiotic confusion. Chapter Three, 'Reading the Palimpsest of Old Moscow', hones in further on the importance of time in our understanding of the contemporary city. Here, Benjamin's theory of the 'porous city' and Huyssen's concept of the 'urban palimpsest' are played out on the streets of Akunin's late-nineteenth-century Moscow. For one layer of the palimpsest, Akunin draws heavily on the nineteenth-century Petersburg Text to create a warm, nostalgia-inducing image of comforting 'matushka-Moskva'. However, digging further through the layers reveals

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[86] Edward Soja, *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2000, p. 324.
[87] Caroline Humphrey, 'Rethinking Infrastructure: Siberian Cities and the Great Freeze of January 2001', in Jane Schneider and Ida Susser (eds), *Wounded Cities: Destruction and Reconstruction in a Globalized World*, Oxford: Berg, 2003, pp. 91-107 (p. 104).

greater complexities, as the turbulent times of the present day come to resemble those of the past.

Chapter Four, 'Moscow after the Apocalypse', concentrates not on old Moscow but on its future incarnation in the form of Tolstaia, Bykov, and Glukhovskii's post-apocalyptic city. For them, the rate of transformation after the collapse of the Soviet Union is akin to life after a moment of apocalyptic destruction. De Certeau's tension between the city gods and the *Wandersmänner* is in strong evidence in this chapter, as the three authors trace the lives of peripheral figures moving towards Moscow's sacred centre. The hyperbolizing force of the literary apocalypse enables the authors to shed light on the symbolic importance of Moscow's traditional concentric structure. Chapter Five, 'Glamorous Moscow's Different Planes of Existence', considers how the rise of the gated community challenges Moscow's concentric paradigm and splinters the post-Soviet city. Robski's glamour literature focuses on the lives of wealthy Muscovites, who privatize segments of urban space and act as city gods over their own small world. In doing so, they draw on Western notions of glamour but create exclusive, parochial realms within the wider metropolis.

Chapter six, 'Death, Resurrection and In-Betweenness in Magical Moscow', concentrates on the sense of 'place' in Moscow's suburbs. Challenging the images of Moscow as a glamorous city, Pelevin, Sorokin, and Luk′ianenko underline the greyness of life in Soviet-era tower blocks. Between the crumbling builidngs and amidst the despairing suburbanites, mystical creatures imbued with supernatural powers group together to form small collectives. In doing so, they rewrite the narratives of the suburbs, bringing hope and fresh direction to the urban poor. In this way, the three authors capture the turn of Russian literature and film away from the imagery of bleak pessimism during the 1990s and towards warmer narratives of greater hope in the 2000s, theorized by Mark Lipovetsky in terms of 'Post-Sots' – a subtle return to optimism.[88] With the irony growing less biting, utopian projects of the past can be revisited from a fresh perspective.

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[88] Mark Lipovetsky, 'Post-Sots: Transformations of Socialist Realism in the Popular Culture of the Recent Period', *Slavonic and East European Journal*, 48, 2004, 3, pp. 356-77.

This thesis thereby not only explores the applicability of theories of time and space to post-Soviet Moscow, but through an in-depth study of the Muscovite context it also challenges these theories. Rather than the city simply being viewed from the dual perspective of the city god or the *Wandersmann*, the richness of literary portrayals of post-Soviet Moscow underlines the multiplicity of urban perspectives. The city can be recontextualized and rewritten in myriad ways by those experiencing it both above and below. If the earliest cities represent our will to impose some form of order, then post-Soviet Moscow elucidates the manner in which our efforts can actually create the opposite of the desired effect. From the attempts to reinscribe a sense of coherence after the apocalypse to the efforts to carve out a manageable gated community, the imposition of order on Moscow ultimately leads to greater splintering and even chaos.

1.7. Chapter Appendix

Figure 1. Entrance to the Vserossiiskii vystavochnyi tsentr (VVTs, formerly VSKhV and VDNKh).

Photograph © Mark Griffiths, 2009.

Figure 2. Statue of Lenin outside the main pavilion of the VVTs. Photograph © Mark Griffiths, 2009.

Figure 3. Main building of the MGU (Moskovskii gosudarstvennyi universitet im. Lomonosova).
Constructed between 1949 and 1953, the building forms one of the seven Stalinist *vysotki* and is an
excellent example of that era's 'wedding-cake' architectural style. Photograph, 'Moscow State
University' © Steve Jurvetson, 2009, https://www.flickr.com/photos/jurvetson/5562359204/ (licensed
under Creative Commons, CC BY Attribution 2.0,
https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/legalcode).

Figure 4. Post-Soviet ice-cream stalls outside the Soviet Kyrgyzstan pavilion in the VVTs. Photograph © Mark Griffiths, 2009.

Figure 5. Aeroplanes flying over the Spasskaia Tower in centre of an underground cupola at Maiakovskaia metro station (1938). The mosaics were designed by Aleksandr Deineka. Photograph © Mark Griffiths, 2009.

Figure 6. Aviation-themed mosaic at Maiakovskaia metro station designed by Deineka, connecting Moscow's dark underground to the bluest skies above. Photograph © Mark Griffiths, 2009.

Figure 7. Bronze statue at Ploshchad′ Revoliutsii metro station (1938) of a Soviet border guard and his trusty canine. The dog's muzzle is a lighter colour due to the wear caused as passers-by pat the dog for good luck. Photograph © Mark Griffiths, 2009.

Chapter II

Moscow's Cityscape

Old Visions, New Buildings: Continuity and Change in Post-Soviet Moscow

2.1. Appropriating the Past, Writing the Future

> As long as the public shares a regime's desire for permanence or its formal
> self-idealizations, it suspends disbelief in the monument's own
> impermanence […]. [T]he moment the public withdraws its faith and belief
> in the ideals embodied in a regime's icons, monuments are left exposed and
> vulnerable.[1]

From the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 to the current implementation of new city plans announced in 2011, Moscow has undergone a facelift. Sparkling glass façades have been juxtaposed with old, crumbling, unrenovated Soviet tower blocks. Orthodox churches destroyed years ago under Stalin have been entirely reconstructed, but with the addition of contemporary features for the twenty-first century. A new shopping arcade showcasing Western fashions at eye-watering prices has been implanted in the city centre, topped with a cupola and mythological figures. A giant park has been unveiled to glorify Soviet triumphs in war, including as its centrepiece the figure of St George slaying the dragon. The Stalinist *vysotki*, the seven elaborate skyscrapers scattered across the city's Soviet landscape (figure 3, p. 47), have welcomed twenty-first-century additions to their ranks. A collection of giant skyscrapers has also arisen from the banks of the river to form a new business district, which includes the tallest building in Europe.

During all this new construction, and despite economic liberalization, Moscow's municipal planning committee has maintained a strong grip on the reshaping of the city. With Luzhkov (born in 1936) exerting a huge influence as Mayor of Moscow from 1992 to 2010, one man's impetus has changed the contours of the city. Like de Certeau's city gods, Luzhkov has attempted to mould the space at his fingertips. He has shaped the city's global image, altered the course of Moscow's urban flows, and added his own architectural missives to Moscow's narratives through his favourite artist and architect, Zurab Tsereteli (born in 1934). Taking the city as a canvas, Luzhkov has

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[1] James E. Young, 'Memory/Monument', in Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff (eds), *Critical Terms for Art History*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003, pp. 234-47 (p. 244).

written into the cityscape narratives of the nation, its past and its future. Yet the result is incoherent and contradictory, creating a dizzying sense of cognitive dissonance. Grandiose post-Soviet projects have echoed Stalin's megalomaniacal schemes in their size and speed. Selective elements of history have been inscribed into the city according to a narrative based on patriotism and Orthodoxy, but a wide mixture of architectural styles has produced an eclectic pastiche. Moreover, the transition to a capitalist economy has resulted in growing inequality, manifested spatially in Moscow's opulent gated communities and decaying grey suburbs. Far from offering one single story, Moscow's post-Soviet cityscape has been carved up into much smaller, less equal segments.

During the 2000s, the city's historical concentric structure has been strengthened from above and married to an obsession with verticality, extending the city upwards. Not only has the historic centre remained Moscow's main employment hub, but the city's concentric rings have also come to offer a paradigm for Moscow's status on the wider geographical scale. Moscow has been fortified as Russia's most successful city economically and elevated to the status of global city on the international stage. Yet the situation has changed once more in the past two years. With Moscow's concentric structure seriously challenged for the first time in eighty years, the holy grail of Muscovite city planning has been replaced, at least temporarily, with an eccentric view of the peripheries. Following the proposals for the construction of New Moscow in the summer of 2011, the old city's boundaries were drastically extended on 1 July 2012, thereby increasing its territory by 2.39 times. Whilst it still remains to be seen exactly how this land will be put to use, the latest grand plan raises the possibility of more mass construction in the city's immediate future, only this time far away from Moscow's traditional core.

By focusing on Luzhkov's manipulation of the past in space, the strengthening of concentric Moscow, the aspirations to render Moscow a global player, and the latest plans to build New Moscow, this chapter establishes a framework for the following four chapters on Nostalgic Moscow, Post-Apocalyptic Moscow, Glamorous Moscow, and Magical Moscow. Nostalgic Moscow enters into dialogue with Luzhkov's rose-tinted vision of the old city. Post-Apocalyptic Moscow considers the continuation of the city's concentricity during a period of great upheaval and discombobulating transformation.

Glamorous Moscow captures the Muscovite elite's desire to appropriate the capitalist dreams of the West and compete with the world's richest people. Magical Moscow unveils the possibilities of the margins, of new plans for the city's distant suburban peripheries. By analysing not just the visible and rapid changes, but also the moments of continuity in urban planning during the post-Soviet period, this chapter also puts the spotlight on the importance of time in the consideration of urban space. It reflects the valorization of specific historic events, the recycling of both old aesthetics and old methods, and the appropriation of past visions of the city when looking to Moscow's future.

2.2. The Plinth without a Statue: Transformations after the End

In the aftermath of the failed coup in August 1991, the infamous bronze statue of Feliks Dzerzhinskii was removed from its plinth outside the Lub′ianka in central Moscow and relocated in the burgeoning statue graveyard, Park iskusstv, by the banks of the river near Gor′kii Park (TsPKiO imeni Gor′kogo). If, in accordance with Mikhail Yampolsky's theory, the gigantic Soviet statue on a pedestal was sacralized by its elevation above the city square – designed to be 'admired, contemplated, and worshipped' by the inhabitants roaming far below – then this iconoclastic moment marked its reinsertion into the normal temporal flow at the ground level.[2] In one of the most evocative analyses of the Soviet Union's collapse as manifested in space, Boym describes this iconoclastic fervour as a 'liberating political carnival', reminiscent of the spontaneous scenes following the fall of the Russian monarchy in February 1917.[3] As 'intellectuals and workers of all ethnic origins, postmodern artists, and new entrepreneurs came together on the barricades', Muscovites from all walks of life united in the performative deconstruction of the long-maintained Soviet structures.[4] Since the

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[2] Mikhail Yampolsky, 'In the Shadow of Monuments: Notes on Iconoclasm and Time', in Nancy Condee (ed.), *Soviet Hieroglyphics: Visual Culture in Late Twentieth-Century Russia*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press and BFI, 1995, pp. 93-112 (p. 93).
[3] Boym, *Common Places*, p. 233.
[4] Svetlana Boym, 'From the Russian Soul to Post-Communist Nostalgia', *Representations*, 49, 1995, pp. 133-66 (p. 149). As a counterpoint to Boym's thesis, Polly Jones posits that the situation in 1991 was much more complicated than suggested by such 'seductive narratives of populism and demonstrative iconoclasm'. For Jones, the debate over the fate of public monuments was not solely a question of destruction but also included 'preservationist impulses [which] were forcefully and consistently articulated in opposition to the ongoing tendencies to engage in popular and official iconoclasm'. Polly Jones, '"Idols in Stone" or Empty Pedestals? Debating Revolutionary Iconoclasm in the Post-Soviet

carnival, as Mikhail Bakhtin theorizes, 'does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators', the Soviet 'heroes' on their plinths were reduced to human size.[5]

At Park iskusstv, Dzerzhinskii was now daubed with paint (figure 8, p. 86), a granite statue of Stalin's had its nose cut off (figure 9, p. 87), and numerous other once untouchable Soviet figures were besmirched with graffiti. Through small acts of public defiance, the cityscape was recast amid fresh interpretations. The dominant Soviet discourse of past events was in the process of being challenged, leaving everything apparently possible and nothing certain. The unspeakable could now be spoken, the forgotten remembered, the sacred profaned, and the once solid narrative carved into a fifteen-tonne bronze monument rewritten. In the following two decades, further works were gradually added to the ranks in the sculpture park, from distorted postmodern forms to the colourful, wooden figure of Aleksei Tolstoi's 1936 creation Buratino (figure 10, p. 87).[6] Consigned to the past, Soviet leaders no longer appeared any more threatening than their fictional, cartoonish contemporaries from Soviet children's books.

When Dzerzhinskii was finally removed from his pedestal, the plinth was initially left in place. Whilst the statue was being spat upon and kicked, anthropomorphized in the public imagination, the pedestal resisted the same fate thanks to its pre-revolutionary origins as the base of a historically untainted monument to General Skobelev.[7] Through its continued presence in the cityscape, the plinth drew attention to the conspicuous void above it, the missing hero, and encouraged the use of alternative (hi)stories to plug the gap. Pre-revolutionary imperial Russia seemed to offer a less contested basis for narratives of historical continuation. The Soviet Union could be dismissed as a temporary abomination. Indeed, the square on which the towering figure of the Cheka's founder once stood had been renamed from Ploshchad′ Dzerzhinskogo to its pre-revolutionary designation Lubianskaia ploshchad′ almost a year earlier, whilst the

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Transition', in Stacy Boldrick and Richard Clay (eds), *Iconoclasm: Contested Objects, Contested Terms*, London: Ashgate, 2007, pp. 241-59 (p. 242).
[5] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984, p. 7.
[6] First appearing in Tolstoi's 'Zolotoi kliuchik, ili Prikliucheniia Buratino' (1936), the long-nosed, wooden Buratino is a reimagining of Carlo Collodi's Pinocchio. Featuring in several Soviet film and television adaptations, Buratino became hugely popular with Soviet children.
[7] Lauded as a Russian hero, General Skobelev was a nationalistic Slavophile whose unexpected death in 1882 sparked a range of conspiracy theories. He features as an important figure in two of Akunin's works to be discussed in my third chapter, esp. p. 125.

nearby metro station had also changed its name from Dzerzhinskaia to Lub′ianka. Similarly reverting to pre-revolutionary history, the Soviet hammer and sickle was lowered from Moscow's Kremlin following Mikhail Gorbachev's resignation and replaced with the tricolour, the old official national flag between the coronation of Tsar Nicholas II in 1896 and the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917.

Although some were content to pull down statues and return to narratives of Russia's greatness based on the old empire, others were keen not to efface but to inscribe into the cityscape the horrors that had taken place during seventy-four years of Soviet rule. Even before Dzerzhinskii's removal, the historical and human rights society Memorial had placed the Solovetskii stone across the square in remembrance of 'the victims of the totalitarian regime'. As the Memorial movement's biographer, Nanci Adler, suggested, 'a ghost carved in stone' had travelled from the far-flung Gulag of the Solovki archipelago to the capital to haunt the denizens of the old regime.[8] Streams of people visited Memorial's small Muscovite office to record their personal testimony of the Soviet camps, finally having their stories recorded for posterity.[9] The competition thus began over which elements of the past, both Soviet and pre-Soviet, should now be remembered and memorialized.

Into these disjointed circumstances stepped Luzhkov. Following Gavriil Popov's short-lived reign, Luzhkov was first appointed Mayor of Moscow on 6 June 1992, a position he clung to through numerous re-elections until his term finally came to an end on 28 September 2010, over eighteen years later. Repeatedly accused of corruption, yet enjoying wildly high popularity ratings amid talk in the late 1990s of his becoming president, Luzhkov proved to be an outspoken but successful figure with conservative, traditionalist views.[10] Emphasizing the significance of the capital above the rest of the country – 'the history of Moscow is the history of Russia' – Luzhkov set about shaping

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[8] Nanci Adler, *Victims of Soviet Terror: The Story of the Memorial Movement*, Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993, p. 54.

[9] Adler, *Victims of Soviet Terror*, p. 61. Semen Vilenskii's excellent anthologies offer snapshots of these memoirs, including the first volume which gives a voice solely to women in the Gulag. See Semen Vilenskii (ed.), *Dodnes' tiagoteet*, in two volumes, Moscow: Vozvrashchenie, 2004; Semen Vilenskii (ed.), *Poeziia uznikov GULAGa: Antologiia*, Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond Demokratiia, 2005.

[10] In January 2007, perhaps most shockingly, Luzhkov described gay pride parades as 'satanic events', which he would personally continue to outlaw in the Russian capital. Valentina Kudrikova, 'Luzhkov protiv Limonova', *Trud*, 2 November 2007, p. 2.

the cityscape according to his own whim.[11] His desires apparently coincided with those of Tsereteli, who was quickly dubbed the city's new 'court artist'.[12] Born in Tbilisi, Tsereteli had relocated to Moscow following his graduation from the Tbilisi State Academy of Arts and built a successful career during the Soviet Union's final two decades. It was, however, following his friendship with the new mayor in 1993 that he started to win big commission after big commission. From monuments to sculptures, shopping centres to parks, religious buildings to metro stations, Tsereteli scattered his art across Moscow's post-Soviet cityscape. His monumental style, love of excess, and apparent inability to merge new works seamlessly with the extant cityscape certainly won Tsereteli more than his fair share of detractors, yet he kept on producing.[13]

Luzhkov and Tsereteli's friendship and mutual desire to imprint themselves onto Moscow's cityscape is perfectly encapsulated by the fate of two eighteenth-century buildings in central Moscow. The first, 25 Ulitsa Petrovka, was originally constructed in 1793 as a luxurious mansion for the wealthy industrialist Mikhail Gubin. The second, 19 Ulitsa Prechistenka, was built as the urban residence for the Dolgorukov princes. In the post-Soviet period, both ended up in the hands of Tsereteli amidst shady circumstances.[14] The building on Ulitsa Petrovka was subsequently opened on 15 December 1999 as the Moskovskii muzei sovremennogo iskusstva under Tsereteli's directorship. Advertised with the acronym MMOMA from its English appellation (Moscow Museum Of Modern Art), the museum ambitiously alluded to its rather more famous counterpart in New York, MoMA. Commending Tsereteli's personal achievement as a 'miracle', Luzhkov described how this museum would transform the

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[11] Cited in Helena Goscilo, 'Zurab Tsereteli's Exegi Monumentum, Luzhkov's Largesse, and the Collateral Rewards of Animosity', in Helena Goscilo and Vlad Strukov (eds), *Celebrity and Glamour in Contemporary Russia: Shocking Chic*, London: Routledge, 2011, pp. 221-54 (p. 231).

[12] Lev Kolodnyi, *Serdtse na palitre: Khudozhnik Zurab Tsereteli: Khronika s vyskazyvaniiami geroia*, Moscow: Golos-Press, 2002, p. 307.

[13] When Tsereteli attempted to export his work abroad with a memorial to 9/11 – first rejected by New York City then placed in Jersey City – a group of New Jersey artists offered perhaps the most biting criticism of 'an insensitive, self-aggrandizing piece of pompousness by one of the world's blatant self-promoters'. William Finnegan, 'On the Waterfront: Monument', *The New Yorker*, 25 June 2007, http://www.newyorker.com/talk/2007/06/25/070625ta_talk_finnegan [last accessed 23 June 2013].

[14] Having been placed under the protection of the state during the 1960s, and given the highest architectural status in the early 1990s (pamiatnik kul′tury federal′nogo znacheniia), both buildings suffered a downgrade through an executive order of October 1998 that enabled Tsereteli to take them into private ownership. Tat′iana Andriasova, 'Osobniak dlia Zuraba', *Moskovskie novosti*, 6 July 1999, http://dlib.eastview.com/browse/doc/147985 [last accessed 21 June 2013].

Russian capital into 'the capital of world culture'.[15] Together the pair could take on the world.

Upon closer inspection, the museum did not showcase a panoply of works reflecting the latest in 'world culture', or even the ground-breaking triumphs of Russian artists, but the œuvre of Tsereteli, who had contributed the majority of pieces on display – 2,000 in total. As one critic summarized, the museum of 'modern art' more accurately resembled 'Tsereteli's private collection in his own private mansion'.[16] The second building on Ulitsa Prechistenka was at least that in both actualization and name, as it was transformed into the Galereia iskusstv Zuraba Tsereteli. Exhibiting more of Tsereteli's sculptures and paintings, the second museum dramatically increased Tsereteli's 'symbolic capital' and became what Goscilo describes as 'a temple glorifying its director'.[17] If Luzhkov facilitated Tsereteli's accumulation of symbolic capital, then the Georgian artist used both museums to return the favour. When I visited the Moskovskii muzei sovremennogo iskusstva in 2009, the experience was marked by the lasting image of a giant, bronze statue of mayor Luzhkov (figures 11 and 12, pp. 88 and 89) inside the entrance to the museum's courtyard.[18]

Tsereteli's work depicts Luzhkov as a street cleaner in the process of physically tidying up the capital and setting it on a new course for the future. Using the 'Putevoditel′ po Moskve', which peeks out of his large apron, Luzhkov is apparently able to guide the Muscovite across the main contours of his new city. With urban space at the mercy of his massively oversized hands, Tsereteli's Luzhkov is in control, the bronze incarnation of de Certeau's city god who writes the metropolis. Yet, closer inspection of the statue reveals a number of the inconsistencies prevalent in Moscow's reshaping under the partnership of Luzhkov and Tsereteli. In the rubbish at the bottom of Luzhkov's broom lies a discarded copy of *Pravda*, which Tsereteli juxtaposes with the copy of *Moskovskie vedomosti* nestled in Luzhkov's pocket. Embodied by its former mouthpiece, the Soviet Union is being swept away and replaced with symbols from a distant past – a revived newspaper hugely popular in Tsarist times. The hagiographic

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[15] Lev Kolodnyi, 'Moskva prirosla avangardom!', *Moskovskaia pravda*, 16 December 1999, http://dlib.eastview.com/browse/doc/215624 [last accessed 21 June 2013]. In its triumphalist tone, Kolodnyi's piece stands in stark contrast to Andriasova's much more critical gaze.
[16] Andriasova, 'Osobniak dlia Zuraba'.
[17] Goscilo, 'Tsereteli's Exegi Monumentum', p. 233.
[18] This is a personal observation from a research trip to Moscow.

immortalization of a current political figure is, however, uncannily reminiscent of the Soviet cult of personality, whilst Luzhkov's lantern-tipped broom handle reminds the visitor of Lenin's famous electrification schemes. The *lampa Il'icha*, designed to illuminate the rural villages and spread the centre's light to the peripheries, is transformed into the *lampa Luzhkova*. As Luzhkov's lantern only casts its light on a single city, Soviet practices are now recycled in Moscow's microcosm. The desire to efface memories of the Soviet Union is confusingly captured in typically Soviet form.

The Soviet overtones and aesthetic continuities are even clearer in another of Tsereteli's statues of Luzhkov, which enjoys a central position in a room at the second building, Galereia iskusstv Zuraba Tsereteli.[19] This time accompanied by a statue of his billionaire, property-mogul wife, Luzhkov is depicted as the ultimate sportsman in a bronze piece entitled 'Futbolist'.[20] Despite the work's title, the topless figure is not only poised to kick a football but is also caught mid-swing with a tennis racket in his right hand. With old-fashioned shorts, an old leather-style football, and what appears to be a wooden racquet, Luzhkov seems to have been flung forwards from a past age. As he strides to the future with bulging muscles, the statue reminds the Muscovite visitor of the Soviet bronze sculptures, discussed in the previous chapter, which adorn the city's underground at Ploshchad′ Revoliutsii metro station. Stalin-era imagery is reproduced for the post-Soviet city, as the valorization of greater youthfulness than age would suggest, personal strength, and physical exercise is repeated across the ages. The Soviet future has been replaced, however, with a post-Soviet future designated by a small elite, and the empty plinth vacated by Dzerzhinskii's statue has been symbolically repopulated with images of mayor Luzhkov.

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[19] For a photograph of this second statue, see Lev Kolodnyi, *Zurab Tsereteli*, Moscow: Belyi gorod, 2009, p. 23.

[20] Luzhkov's power over construction on such a scale proved particularly useful for his wife, Elena Baturina, who enjoyed the most lucrative contracts for her Moscow-based construction company Inteko. For a photograph of Tsereteli's bronze statue of Baturina with a horse, see Anon., 'Neodnoznachnye tvoreniia Zuraba Tsereteli' *RIA novosti*, 5 September 2012, http://ria.ru/photolents/20120905/743476203_743470243.html [last accessed 23 June 2013].

2.3. Moscow, Luzhkov Style: Rewriting the City from Above in the 1990s

During the early years of his reign as mayor, Luzhkov poured money into a series of four grandiose projects as he readied the capital for its day(s) in the sun over the weekend of 5-7 September 1997, Moscow's 850th anniversary. Firstly, the Soviet plan to construct a monument to victory in World War II was finally realized with some post-Soviet additions at Park Pobedy, opened on the 50th anniversary of victory in Europe, 9 May 1995. Secondly, the grandiose Khram Khrista Spasitelia was reconstructed from scratch, and the area around the cathedral was unveiled by Luzhkov and El′tsin in the days preceding the 850th anniversary celebrations. Thirdly, having played a key role in both projects, Tsereteli then unveiled a huge monument all of his own, *Pamiatnik v oznamenovanie 300-letiia rossiiskogo flota*, better known as the monument of Peter the Great. The controversial statue was likewise officially unveiled on the banks of the river Moskva during the anniversary events. Fourthly, the final piece in the jigsaw for the 850th celebrations was the giant shopping centre in the shadow of the Kremlin, under Manezhnaia ploshchad′. The centre's exterior was completed for the anniversary, although the public could only enter to purchase goods at the end of 1997.

Involving his court artist in all four major projects, Luzhkov offered a blend of nationalism, religion, and commercialism. For Bruce Grant, there is a certain 'Disneyization' in the eclecticism of this confused pastiche and a sense of postmodern 'play' at the heart of Tsereteli's monuments.[21] Yet, as a number of other critics assert, there is at least some coherence in Luzhkov's reimagining of the centuries-old concept of Moscow as the Third Rome.[22] Having been styled as the religious centre of the Christian world during the Middle Ages and then reconstructed as the secular centre of all workers everywhere during the Soviet period, the city was now to be redesigned as a source of pride once more, based on both its old Orthodoxy and new capitalism. The God-given messianic city and the economy-driven consumerist would unite. The power of this narrative was so great that it earned the mayor his own architectural style, the Luzhkov Style (Лужковский стиль), used to describe an eclectic borrowing from

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[21] Bruce Grant, 'New Moscow Monuments, or, States of Innocence', *American Ethnologist*, 28, 2001, 2, pp. 332-62 (p. 335).

[22] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, New York: Basic, 2001, pp. 83-119; Anatoly M. Khazanov, 'Post-Communist Moscow: Rebuilding the "Third Rome" in the Country of Missed Opportunities', *City and Society*, Annual Review, 1998, pp. 269-314; and Edith Clowes, *Russia on the Edge: Imagined Geographies and Post-Soviet Identity*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011, esp. 43-67.

different movements but with strong decision-making at the top. Given the scale of the vision and process of its implementation, it is difficult to disagree with Grigorii Revzin's conclusion that the Luzhkov Style created an 'architectural schizophrenia' by combining 'a variation of […] postmodernism' with 'a state-driven ideological mission'.[23] The resulting pastiche appeared postmodern but without the scepticism of power hierarchies or the ironizing deconstruction of grand narratives.[24] The experience of cognitive dissonance is accompanied by a desire for wholeness.

I would argue that Luzhkov not only stamped his mark on the cityscape, but that he also actively engaged in a process of 'collective instruction' from above, manipulating the extant cityscape in the hope of controlling which events from the past are remembered by the city's inhabitants.[25] The changes to Park Pobedy at Poklonnaia gora to the west of central Moscow set the tone for this 'ideological mission'. The site was initially earmarked in 1957 for a monument to Soviet victory at the end of World War II, but little progress was made, and work was halted altogether under Gorbachev. In 1993, Luzhkov then personally announced the re-envisaging of the project and the recommencing of construction. The Soviet symbolism was scaled down, and the white-walled, golden-domed Khram Georgiia pobedonostsa was added to the plans on Luzhkov's instruction. The park's centrepiece was now to be an obelisk, soaring to a height of 141.8 metres (symbolically capturing the 1,418 days of war). At its foot would stand Moscow's patron saint, St George, lance at the ready to kill the vanquished dragon (figure 13, p. 90).[26] This monument was conceived in Tsereteli's studio with Luzhkov's personal intervention: a sketch of the bayonet in Tsereteli's archives bears Luzhkov's name and the date 23 March 1993.[27] By working so closely with his favourite architect, and by taking such personal interest in the designs, Luzhkov recast

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[23] Cited in Egor Mostovshchikov and Vsevolod Romanenko, 'Moskva luzhkovskaia', *The New Times*, 4 October 2010, pp. 26-28; and Grigorii Revzin, 'Moskva: Desiat′ let posle SSSR', *Neprikosnovennyi zapas*, 25, 2002, 5, http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2002/5/revz.html [last accessed 27 June 2013].

[24] In the combination of reassuring metanarrative and postmodern aesthetics, there is an echo of the turn in literature during the 2000s towards a combination of both play and warmth. Captured under Lipovetsky's term 'post-Sots', this turn is discussed in detail in my sixth chapter, pp. 254-60.

[25] The term 'collective instruction' is used by Susan Sontag, who persuasively argues that 'collective memory' is not in fact the process of a group actively remembering the past. Instead, somebody stipulates what should be remembered by the collective. Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, London: Hamilton, 2003, p. 76.

[26] Lev Kolodnyi, 'Budet li Moskva Tret′im Rimom?', *Moskovskii komsomolets*, 31 August 2000, pp. 1-2.

[27] Lev Kolodnyi, 'Chto bylo i chego ne bylo', *Moskovskii komsomolets*, 6 November 2012, p. 7.

himself as city-creator, echoing the now mythical narratives surrounding alterations to Moscow during the 1930s at Stalin's personal behest.[28]

When the new cathedral to St George was consecrated on Victory Day in 1995 and the park officially unveiled in a grandiose ceremony, religion, remembrance, national pride, and Moscow were all symbolically fused under Luzhkov's careful watch. By incorporating the Orthodox cathedral and the imagery of the city's mythological patron, the site carefully led the visitor through a narrative of Moscow's great triumphs and concomitant divine protection over the centuries. Although Tsereteli initially included a gloomy monument to the victims of war, *Tragediia narodov*, it was soon moved under Luzhkov's direction from its prominent position at the park's entrance to an obscure location by the public toilets. The emaciated figures and harrowed faces of suffering in a concentration camp were not in keeping with the rest of the site's victorious pomp.[29] Tsereteli appeared to have learned his lesson, however, when he later created the murals for the metro station beneath the park. At the end of the station's north hall, he hung a gigantic enamelled panel depicting Field Marshal Kutuzov prior to his defeat of Napoleon in 1812 during the Otechestvennaia voina. At the end of the south hall, he included another panel in the same style depicting a triumphant Soviet hero on a pedestal at the end of the Velikaia Otechestvennaia voina. Important victories were thus connected to Moscow's status as a hero city, whilst all indications of bloodshed, suffering, and loss were effaced.

Religion and patriotism were once again entwined in Luzhkov's plans for the reconstruction of the Khram Khrista Spasitelia (figure 14, p. 91). As discussed in the previous chapter, Boris Iofan's Dvorets Sovetov was to be constructed on top of the demolished cathedral as a monument to the new Soviet ideology rising from the rubble of Tsardom. With little more than the foundations completed by the outbreak of World War II, however, the site was transformed between 1958 and 1960 into a rather more functional open-air swimming pool. In 1994, Luzhkov, Patriarch Aleksei II, and officials representing El′tsin's government took the decision to rebuild the original

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[28] Kaganovich leaving a coffee mug on a metro map is said to have resulted in the construction of the underground circle line, represented on the map by a brown circle. Another Soviet myth describes how Aleksei Shchusev's recently reconstructed hotel Moskva has an asymmetrical façade because Stalin approved the blueprints of two different façades for the same building.
[29] Tsereteli personally took the blame for the sculpture, which he later admitted was 'too terrifying'. Cited in Dar′ia Akimova, 'Pochemu Petr – i v Moskve?', *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 12 September 2001, p. 3.

cathedral, first completed in 1883, on top of the Soviet swimming pool. Although such a plan had been mooted previously, Luzhkov describes how he personally reached this moment:

> В центре Москвы удручала свалка, в какую превратилась яма осушенного бассейна «Москва». Под ней находился фундамент Дворца Советов. Встал вопрос: как с ним поступить? Я взял архивные материалы и увидел грандиозную платформу на 128 сваях, забитых до скального основания. Возникла мысль о возрождении Храма Христа на этом фундаменте.[30]

Casting himself in the role of post-Soviet Moscow's saviour, Luzhkov recounts how he dug into the archives to solve the problem of the 'dump' (*svalka*) in the city centre and facilitate the 'rebirth' (*vozrozhdenie*) of Moscow's past glory. If the original cathedral was part-requiem to the dead, part-eulogy to the Tsar, and the unrealized Soviet palace was envisaged as a monument to Lenin and his successor Stalin, Luzhkov's story leaves the reader wondering whether the building's latest incarnation was in some way intended as a monument to the mayor himself.

In terms of the wider historical narrative, the cathedral's reconstruction marked a line of continuity with pre-revolutionary Moscow and effaced Stalin's impact on the locale. The unpalatable was once again discarded in a display of nostalgic yearning for a lost era. Amidst increasing complaints about the costs to the public purse, the 'new' cathedral was at least completed in record time. Whilst the foundations had not been laid until January 1995, the external construction was finished for Moscow's 850th anniversary, and the main building was officially consecrated in August 2000. Backed by the will of the mayor, the scale and speed of the cathedral's completion led some commentators to highlight ironically the similarities between the Soviet Stakhanovites and the 'shockworkers of Orthodox labour'.[31] Nostalgia for pre-revolutionary Russia once again merged with Soviet practices.

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[30] Kolodnyi, 'Chto bylo i chego ne bylo', p. 7.
[31] Elena Lebedeva, 'Udarniki pravoslavnogo truda', *Moskovskie novosti*, 4-11 August 1996, p. 23; and Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, p. 105.

There were further echoes of Stalin's selective vision of history in the post-Soviet alterations to the pre-revolutionary architectural plans. Charged with overseeing pragmatic changes to old designs, Tsereteli caused controversy as he set about what he apparently viewed as a series of improvements. A business centre, restaurant, theatre with space for 1,500 people, subterranean parking area for 150 cars, and plethora of lifts were all built into the original designs. The wealthy Russian visitor now had space for his black Mercedes, could enjoy a business lunch before prayer, and would not be inconvenienced by a steep climb to God. In response, the journal *Arkhitektura i stroitel'stvo v Rossii* gathered leading figures in the field of architecture at a seminar whose title captured their dissatisfaction – 'Храм Христа Спасителя – от святости к шоу-бизнесу'. Complaining about 'yellowed' bas-reliefs moulded from plastic instead of marble and Tsereteli's 'vulgar imitation' of the original schemes, the group concluded that the cathedral amounted to no less than the 'falsification of historical heritage'.[32] Luzhkov's archival research clearly did not mean that the cathedral's reconstruction sprung from a love of historical accuracy.

The magnitude of the preservationists' complaints was nothing, however, compared to the response that greeted the historically indefensible appearance in 1997 of Tsereteli's statue of Peter the Great (figure 15, p. 92). Situated across the river from the reconstructed cathedral, the court artist's process of leaving his imprint on the cityscape – by now dubbed the 'Tseretelization' of Moscow – reached its towering pinnacle in the form of the forty-five-metres-high statue of Peter.[33] In the ensuing debate, it remained unclear why Peter the Great was now memorialized in a city he famously disliked, or why he had been added to the riverside vista of the historic Kremlin and reconstructed Khram Khrista Spasitelia.[34] The emphasis on seafaring in a city far from the coast evoked Stalin's ambitious promises to render Moscow the Port of Five Seas through the construction of the Moscow-Volga Canal between 1932 and 1937 (renamed the Moscow Canal in 1947). Yet, Tsereteli's execution appeared kitschy and toy-like. With questions raised regarding the cost to the public purse and the even greater expense of

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[32] Evgenii Strel′chik, 'Strasti po khramu', *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 24 November 1999, http://www.ng.ru/ng_religii/1999-11-24/2_cathedral.html [last accessed 5 July 2013].

[33] Michael R. Gordon, 'Russia's New Court Sculptor: Only the Colossal', *The New York Times*, 25 January 1997, http://www.nytimes.com/1997/01/25/world/russia-s-new-court-sculptor-only-the-colossal.html [last accessed 1 July 2013].

[34] For further analysis of the statue's reception, see Goscilo, 'Tsereteli's Exegi Monumentum', pp. 234-36; and Grant, 'New Moscow Monuments', pp. 334-36.

possible relocation, the radical-left group Revvoensovet found the most extreme solution: blow up the statue. Members of the group actually succeeded in planting explosives at the base of the monument before the plot was foiled. Unashamedly continuing his work, however, Tsereteli resisted the criticism, his most memorable response a comparison between the complaints about his statue and Guy de Maupassant's hatred of the Eiffel Tower.[35]

In the final major project surrounding Moscow's 850th anniversary, Luzhkov entrusted Tsereteli with the shopping centre under Manezhnaia ploshchad′, and the latter again turned to grandiosity. Whereas Soviet engineers had dug into the depths of the city to create the metro system as a symbol of Stalin's future-orientated capital city, post-Soviet workers excavated beneath the Manezh in the construction of a monument to capitalist excess. Each floor of the shopping centre was named after a different century, as though reflecting an archaeological discovery that entwined the city's past with its money-driven future. For the central atrium, Tsereteli again evoked traditional Orthodox architecture with a cupola that sprouted into the square above and doubled as a world clock with Moscow at its centre (figure 16, p. 93). Given that the shopping centre was the largest in Europe at that time, Moscow appeared to be offering a challenge to the world, this time through the lens of spending power. The irony, of course, lay in the financial difficulties experienced by the majority of Muscovites during the 1990s. Whilst the subterranean complex actually returned commerce to Okhotnyi riad – the old market stalls were removed in the 1920s – the expensive new shops were a capitalist mecca only for the minority who could afford to purchase items there.

With the architectural ensemble ready, and the stage set, Luzhkov led the vast spectacle of the anniversary celebrations, which he still describes in November 2012 as the highlight of his career.[36] More than seventy hectares of lawns had been laid, 3.5 million dead trees uprooted, 976 new glass kiosks erected, 3,700 new markets, shops and cafés opened, 160 building façades restored, 9,000 rooms renovated in municipal hotels, and 50,000 copies of the triumphalist tome *Moskva-850* circulated.[37] Over the weekend itself, clouds were seeded to prevent the weather spoiling the show, the music stars

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[35] Marina Raikina et al., 'Petra vsled za Iuriem', *Moskovskii komsomolets*, 5 October 2010, p. 1.

[36] Kolodnyi, 'Chto bylo i chego ne bylo', p. 7.

[37] Nikolai Ziat′kov and Elena Kibal′nik, 'Nam – 850! Kak prostroili etot prazdnik', *Argumenty i fakty*, 3 September 1997, p. 28.

congregated, and the crowds flocked across the city. As described in *Argumenty i fakty*, Moscow was no longer a 'decrepit and wretched old woman', but a 'young, radiant beauty'.[38] Anthropomorphized and feminized, the Russian capital once again inspired pride, just as it had done during its transformation in the 1930s.

Despite being lauded for its future direction, Moscow's 'new' face was, of course, an eclectic collection of locales that included many 'old' ideas. The projects embodied different eras uncannily juxtaposed with one another – from the defeat of Napoleon to the defeat of Hitler, from Moscow's past prowess to its loss of status under Peter the Great. Even the 850th anniversary itself was an 'invented tradition', manufactured in 1847 to buttress nationalism.[39] The Ipat′evskaia Chronicle mentions 1147 as the year when Iurii Dolgorukii feasted in the village of Moscow with two Grand Princes, Sviatoslav Ol′govich and Vladimir Sviatoslavich, but the event was transformed in Tsarist mythology as the moment Dolgorukii triumphantly laid the foundations for the marvellous city of Moscow.[40] Luzhkov and Tsereteli's emphasis on Orthodoxy and the heroic figure of St George reinforced this association of mythological founding and displayed further nostalgia for the rise of Muscovy. The grand statues evoked a yearning for strong, centralized autocratic control. And the new cafés and shopping centres marked the mayor's determination to take these concepts forward into the capitalist-driven twenty-first century.

2.4. Concentric and Vertical Moscow in the 2000s

In his influential discussion of Soviet architecture, *Kul'tura "Dva"*, Papernyi contrasts the architectural ideas of the 1920s with the buildings constructed under Stalin between 1932 and 1953. The first period, which Papernyi labels 'Culture One', is characterized by centrifugal forces, paper architecture, improvization, the softening of traditional thinking, horizontality, motion, the destruction of hierarchies, and a gaze towards the future. The second period, 'Culture Two', is formed of centripetal forces, grand projects, mythology, a return to classical features, hardening, verticality, immobility, the

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[38] Ibid.

[39] Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 1-14.

[40] M. N. Tikhomirov, *Ipat′evskaia letopis′*, Moscow: Izdatel′stvo vostochnoi literatury, 1962, p. 339; and Kathleen Klotchkov, *Der lange Weg zum Fest: Die Geschichte der Moskauer Stadtgründungsfeiern von 1847 bis 1947*, Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2006.

reconstruction of hierarchies, and an interest in past times.[41] Although scholars have subsequently deconstructed Papernyi's paradigm by illustrating how it fails to capture complexities, there are parallels between the centripetal power structures underpinning Papernyi's Culture Two and the top-down approach under Luzhkov.[42] Although Moscow's post-Soviet cityscape is characterized by eclecticism and even greater complexities, Papernyi's theory of a return to grand plans, mythology, hierarchy and centripetal concentricity rings true in the grandiose post-Soviet projects.

Coinciding with the beginning of Putin's presidency and his growing love of the 'power vertical', the first years of the new millennium bore witness to Muscovite buildings towering ever higher.[43] The Edelweiss (Edelʹveis) Tower on Davydovskaia ulitsa and the Triumph Palace (Triumf-Palats) on Chapaevskii pereulok stood out in particular, given their resemblance to Moscow's Stalinist 'wedding-cake-style' *vysotki*. Constructed between 2000 and 2003, the Edelweiss Tower rises to 43 storeys and is adorned with multiple turrets. Constructed between 2001 and 2006, the Triumph Palace is the tallest residential building in Europe at just over 264 metres high (figure 17, p. 94). Both are guarded to deter unwanted visitors and contain an array of luxury services, including a swimming pool, gym, restaurant, bowling alley, and sports area. As *Vecherniaia Moskva* commented on the Triumph Palace: 'If you so desire, you never even have to leave the block'.[44]

Not only do the Triumph Palace's 'wedding-cake' structure and soaring spire bear remarkable resemblance to Stalin's famous skyscrapers, but the Edelweiss Tower was the first building to be completed as part of another scheme with Stalinist overtones, the plan to construct the 'Novoe kolʹtso Moskvy'. The ring of skyscrapers was incorporated into the General Plan for 2020, first presented to the Moscow City Duma in 1999 and

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[41] Vladimir Papernyi, *Kul'tura "Dva"*, Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1985.

[42] Boris Groys most famously found not a distinct break – but continuity – between works of the Soviet avant-garde and the totalizing visions of Socialist Realism. Boris Groys, *The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond*, trans. Charles Rougle, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992.

[43] For more on the impact of Putin's 'power vertical' on Russian culture, see Helena Goscilo, 'Russia's Ultimate Celebrity: VVP as VIP *objet d'art*', in Helena Goscilo (ed.), *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*, London: Routledge, 2012, pp. 6-36; and Andrei Rogatchevski, 'Putin in Russian Fiction', in *ibid.*, pp. 133-59. The notion of the 'power vertical' has particular resonance for Bykov, as discussed in my fourth chapter, pp. 153-64.

[44] Ekaterina Vertinskaia, '"Triumf-Palas" udivliaet moskvichei', *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 6 March 2002, p. 4.

finalized in 2005, and the concept was supported by Luzhkov. More ambitious in scale than the 'first ring' of seven *vysotki*, the 'new ring' was intended to consist of sixty towering complexes by 2015. One of the skyscrapers pencilled in for Leninskii prospekt neatly captures the scale of the architectural ambition with its simple designation – 'Vertikal′'. However, with investors already reluctant by the mid-2000s to keep Vertikal′ rising amidst soaring costs, the plan ultimately foundered in the ensuing uncertain economic times.[45] The scheme was quietly scrapped in August 2011, by which point only six of the sixty skyscrapers had been completed or were nearing completion.

Despite reality never fulfilling ambition, Luzhkov proceeded with a number of other plans similarly aimed at strengthening the city's traditional concentric structure. With the MKAD renovated and extended to five lanes in each direction during the 1990s, the Third Ring Road, initially envisaged in 1935, was finally completed in December 2003 under the auspices of the General Plan for 2020. Almost as soon as the Third Ring Road was completed, the city's growing traffic problems seemed to necessitate the creation of the Fourth Ring Road. Construction duly began in 2008, and sections of the Fourth Ring Road had already been laid by 2011 when the road's future was thrust into uncertainty. Amid suggestions that parts of the route might be more expensive per kilometre than the Large Hadron Collider, and with costs rising above one trillion rubles, the city government slammed on the brakes.[46] However, other radical schemes from above were once again suggested in its place, including the enhancing of the ring structure vertically upwards. Ratified on 5 May 2010, the new General Plan for 2025 envisages raised roads above railway lines in the areas leading to several major Muscovite stations. Further suggestions involve double-decked sections of motorway, including around the MKAD.[47]

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[45] Elena Egorova, 'Novoe kol′tso Moskvy dalo treshchinu', *Moskovskii komsomolets*, 19 December 2006, p. 3.
[46] Ekaterina Polishchuk, 'Bol′shoi uskoritel′ deneg', *Novaia gazeta*, 18 September 2008, pp. 8-9; and Anon., 'Sobianin schitaet proekt stroitel′stva ChTK slishkom dorogim', *Interfax*, 17 February 2011, http://www.interfax.ru/news.asp?id=177894 [last accessed 1 June 2013].
[47] Nikita Mironov, 'Pervyi dubler MKAD postoriat riadom s "Krokus Siti"', *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 7 April 2011, http://www.kp.ru/daily/25665.4/827004/ [last accessed 9 April 2011].

During the course of the 2000s, Moscow's lack of road infrastructure posed an increasingly difficult problem for the city authorities.[48] Despite a dearth of usable tarmac, car numbers increased in the city from just 660,000 in 1991 to somewhere between 3.5 and 4 million by 2008.[49] In 2008, the average speed of the traffic in Moscow was just 21.8 km/h, comparing particularly poorly to cities such as New York (38 km/h), Seoul (38 km/h), and Madrid (35.1 km/h).[50] With the traffic jam a ubiquitous feature of Muscovite life, it gradually seeped into popular culture. From the authors to be discussed in this thesis, Robski and Luk′ianenko are notable for their repeated references to Moscow's traffic jams, which add to their characters' perceptions of Moscow and even play a role in the course of the fictional events. In the media, even foreign outlets noticed the scale of Moscow's jams, with one report describing a form of in-car mico-culture, including the possibilities for harmonica rehearsal, physical exercise, and music composition.[51] Others, however, have mustered less enthusiasm for the long commutes. Perhaps most memorably, the writer and artist Pavel Peppershtein summarizes the widespread annoyance at the hours wasted in vehicles, comparing the Muscovite traffic to 'a crawling mass of dung that clogs the city's arteries'.[52]

The General Plan for 2025, which captures the last vision of the city's future before Luzhkov's political demise, actually focuses less on building new roads, however, and more on constructing further metro lines. With the director of the research institute responsible for the General Plan (NI i PI Genplana Moskvy) apparently suggesting that no new cars would appear on Moscow's streets if no new roads were constructed ('Чем больше появляется дорог, тем больше на них машин'), a new metro project became the alternative solution.[53] Once again, it was conceived in concentric terms. Moscow would acquire two further circle lines, including a new express line with fewer stops

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[48] The percentage of land occupied by roads in other European cities lies on average between 20% and 25%, and in North American cities can reach as high as 35%. In Moscow, the percentage *aspired to* by the General Plan for 2025 is just 8.7%. Aleksei Muratov, 'Dorogoi titanov i geroev', *Proekt Rossiia*, 57, 2010, pp. 154-57 (p. 154).

[49] Robert Argenbright posits that drivers should be included in the policy-making process regarding traffic, as they already form 'emerging publics' keen to cooperate. Robert Argenbright, '*Avtomobilshchina*: Driven to the Brink in Moscow', *Urban Geography*, 29, 2008, 7, pp. 683-704 (p. 683).

[50] The statistics for New York and Madrid are from 2004, and for Seoul from 2005. All are cited in Mikhail Blinkin, 'Zapozdalye razmyshleniia o Genplane-2025', *Proekt Rossiia*, 57, 2010, pp. 158-63 (p. 158).

[51] Steven Rosenberg, 'What Muscovites get up to in traffic jams', *BBC News*, 30 January 2013, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-21230876 [last accessed 1 February 2013].

[52] Cited in Muratov, 'Dorogoi titanov i geroev', p. 154.

[53] Ibid., p. 155.

and longer carriages, which would be completed by 2020. By 2025, approximately 350 km of new track would be laid, more than doubling the size of the metro. Whilst the updated plans of April 2012 suggest that just 150 km of new track can be laid by 2020, the project remains highly ambitious given that only eighty kilometres were laid during the entire period of Luzhkov's reign.[54] Nonetheless, with boring machines currently at work under the city, colourful new circles could yet be added to Moscow's metro map.

Beyond their particular transport functions, the concentric circles offer a paradigm for considering Moscow's geographical tensions on a number of different levels during the post-Soviet period. On the municipal level, inequalities between the centre and periphery grew within the city's boundaries. On the national level, Moscow found itself as the focus of new development, racing ahead of its urban counterparts and offering something almost unrecognisable to those in Russia's remote regions. On the international level, Moscow became the symbol of Russia's twenty-first-century future and started to compete as a regional centre and global city. Rendering it more attractive to tourists and more expensive for residents, Moscow's historic core received huge investment in the restoration of streets and construction of new commercial opportunities. GUM on Red Square and TsUM opposite the Bol′shoi teatr were entirely renovated to become two of the trendiest department stores in the former Soviet Union. The nearby Tret′iakovskii proezd was transformed into a street of luxury boutiques; its first store, Giorgio Armani, opened in 2001, and other big labels soon followed suit.[55]

On the neighbouring central streets, the pre-revolutionary, fin-de-siècle hotels Metropole and National were both renovated to international five-star luxury standards, with the latter becoming a member of the exclusive Le Royal Méridien group. The Bol′shoi teatr reopened on 28 October 2011 following a longer-than-anticipated, six-year closure for a renovation process that cost at least 21 billion rubles. On the other side of Teatral′naia ploshchad′, the hotel Moskva was demolished and reconstructed in original form, echoing the resurrection of the Khram Khrista Spasitelia. On this occasion, however, the building had actually been constructed under Stalin (between

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[54] For full details of the latest metro development scheme, see Anon., 'Razvitie moskovskogo metropolitena v 2012 – 2020 godakh', 25 April 2012, http://old.stroi.mos.ru/kpr/d5211dr623929m666.html [last accessed 10 July 2013].
[55] This particular street became an important node in Moscow's glamour network, analysed in my fifth chapter, pp. 197 and 202-03.

1932 and 1935), was closed in 2002 and reopened in 2012 with the same façade but a modernized interior.

As property in central Moscow rocketed in price, purchasing a flat in a prime location near to these famous sites became the preserve of the wealthy. Once a street dominated by communal apartments in a dilapidated condition, Ostozhenka, south-west of the Kremlin walls, became the vanguard of post-Soviet gentrification.[56] Those with lower incomes were rehoused in their own, self-contained apartments further from the historic centre, and those with new-found wealth amalgamated the communal apartments to create large, exclusive properties. The poor were pushed out; the rich enjoyed the refashioned city centre's amenities. The combination of the rebuilding and its central location rendered Ostozhenka not only Moscow's most expensive street, but also in March 2011 one of the top-ten most expensive streets in the world.[57] In stark contrast to such gentrification, the collapse of the Soviet Union marked the public appearance of desperate urban poverty. Criminality, homelessness, and alcoholism all became more prevalent in the city. Social studies have drawn attention to the scale of the problem, as economic turmoil during the 1990s created a whole cadre of 'urban slums' by the turn of the millennium.[58] Muscovite stations have become a focal point for both shelter and police attention, with homeless children even developing their own station subcultures in the struggle for survival.[59]

Ostozhenka's fate offers a microcosm for wider trends, as the city centre has remained a place to find employment but not for the majority to live. In 2010, only 8% of Moscow's population inhabited the area within the Third Ring Road, a radius of 4.5 km from the Kremlin, yet 62% of the city's jobs were located in premises within this central

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[56] Anna Badyina and Oleg Golubchikov, 'Gentrification in Central Moscow – a Market Process or Deliberate Policy? Money, Power and People in Housing Regeneration in Ostozhenka', *Geografiska Annaler*, 87 B, 2005, 2, pp. 113-29.

[57] Although still falling behind London's Kensington Palace Gardens and Hong Kong's Severn Road, properties on Ostozhenka sold for $40,000 per square metre. Anon., 'Ostozhenka in world's "top ten" most expensive streets', *RIA novosti*, 9 March 2011, http://en.rian.ru/business/20110309/162926700.html [last accessed 24 June 2013].

[58] Alexey Krasheninnokov, 'Urban Slums Reports: The Case of Moscow, Russia', in Patrick Wakely et al. (eds), *Understanding Slums: Case Studies for the Global Report on Human Settlements 2003*, London: University College London, 2003, http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu-projects/Global_Report/pdfs/Moscow.pdf [last accessed 7 May 2013].

[59] Svetlana Stephenson, 'Street Children in Moscow: Using and Creating Social Capital', *The Sociological Review*, 49, 2001, 4, pp. 530-47; and O. V. Belyaeva and Y. I Berlieva, 'Moscow's Railway Station Children', *Working with Youth at Risk*, 10, 2006, pp. 6-31.

zone.[60] Away from the centre, the Soviet *mikroraionny* – micro-regions designed to furnish their inhabitants with all the necessities of urban existence and containing cheap, prefabricated buildings conceived under Nikita Khrushchev – began to show their age. Despite the post-Soviet building boom, 31% of Moscow's residential blocks in 2005 had been constructed between 1956 and 1965.[61] The area between the Third Ring Road and the MKAD consequently remained a space of low-quality, high-rise *spal'nye raiony* – sleeping districts or dormitory belts from which Muscovites commute to work. At the end of the 2000s, the city government intensified efforts to replace these multi-storey blocks and rehouse people living in entire districts, but the old *khrushchevki* have already become part of Muscovite folklore.[62]

Despite efforts to police migration and curtail the rights of migrants to the city, Moscow has continued to draw people to it and thus resisted the wider Russian trend of population decline. Whilst the overall population in Russia decreased by 1.6% or 2.26 million people between 2002 and 2010, Moscow's population rose during the same period, with a 7.2% jump.[63] As pressure intensified on the city's boundaries during the 2000s, increasing numbers of migrants without Muscovite resident permits settled in the surrounding Moskovskaia oblast′. At 10.2%, the population increase between 2002 and 2010 in Moskovskaia oblast′ was even higher than in Moscow city itself.[64] Millions of people now stream into the city from the surrounding region to work, greatly increasing Moscow's daytime population during the working week. On the one hand, a comparatively small number of super-wealthy Muscovites established increasingly opulent gated communities beyond the MKAD. On the other hand, much larger

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[60] Anna Bokova and Aleksandr Korobov, 'Moskva: Diagnostika i svoeobrazie', *Proekt Rossiia*, 57, 2010, pp. 76-80 (p. 78).

[61] Ibid., p. 77.

[62] The roles of the *mikroraion* and *spal'nyi raion* in the cultural imagination are discussed in my sixth chapter, pp. 234-42. The imagined geography of the concrete *khrushchevki* is discussed in my fourth chapter, pp. 144-46.

[63] Anon., 'Rossiian stalo men′she: Rosstat podvel nekotorye itogi perepisi naseleniia', *FK-Novosti*, 29 March 2011, http://dlib.eastview.com/browse/doc/24480547 [last accessed 19 July 2013]. For more on the efforts of 'the city government and the police […] to keep the city's migrants, both Russian and foreign, in a permanent state of insecurity', see Matthew Light, 'Policing Migration in Soviet and Post-Soviet Moscow', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 26, 2010, 4, pp. 275-313 (p. 276).

[64] Anon, 'Rossiian stalo men′she'. Ol′ga Vendina predicts that this trend of increasing migration will continue in the future, reshaping Muscovite identities. Ol′ga Vendina, 'Vse dlia moskvichei, vse vo imia moskvichei', *Proekt Rossia,* 57, 2010, pp. 124-27 (p. 125).

numbers of labour migrants – many from the Central Asian republics – came to populate far poorer and less inviting commuter districts outside the city limits.[65]

Even Russia's post-Soviet penal system appeared to privilege the capital above all else, continuing along the lines of the centuries-old paradigm of exiling prisoners from the centre to the periphery. High-profile cases of banishment from Moscow, such as those of Mikhail Khodorkovskii and members of Pussy Riot, simply underline the post-Soviet desire to maintain a strong 'pattern of donor and recipient regions'.[66] Whilst Moscow contains a number of famous prisons for those awaiting sentence, it lacks any correctional institutions whatsoever, compared to thirty-three such institutions in the Komi Republic.[67] One New-Russian-cum-novelist, Andrei Rubanov, captures the distinction in his semi-autobiographical, semi-fictionalized *Sazhaite i vyrastet* (2005), based on his own prison experiences on charges of fraud. Awaiting trial in Moscow's infamous Lefortovo jail, the first-person narrator flinches at the thought of potential banishment to Russia's 'dark, icy, distant expanses where the wolves howl at night'.[68] Mapping Moscow's concentricity onto the country's wider structures, he envisages how 'people, money, and information move from [Russia's] periphery [okraina] to its centre' and how prisoners and 'governmental commands' flow in the opposite direction.[69]

Even urban scholars have been tempted to use such models to depict the inequalities between Moscow and the rest of Russia. Using metaphors typical of early-Soviet descriptions of socialist 'civilization', John O'Loughlin and Vladimir Kolossov contrast the 'brightly illuminated' shop windows of post-Soviet Moscow with the 'many other Russian cities' that remain 'dark', mired in poverty and debt.[70] Ol′ga Vendina similarly concludes that being a 'Muscovite' means joining an 'elite club that stands in juxtaposition to the rest of the impoverished and uninhabitable country'.[71] Moscow has

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[65] Grigory Ioffe and Zhanna Zayonchkovskaya, 'Spatial Shifts in the Population of Moscow Region', *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 52, 2011, 4, pp. 543-66 (p. 555). The impact of the gated community on Moscow's topography is analysed in detail in my fifth chapter, pp. 178-220.

[66] Judith Pallot and Laura Piacentini, *Gender, Geography, and Punishment: The Experience of Women in Carceral Russia*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 57.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Andrei Rubanov, *Sazhaite i vyrastet*, Moscow: Astrel′, 2012, p. 108. The New Russians are discussed further in my fifth chapter, esp. p. 195.

[69] Ibid., pp. 375-76.

[70] John O'Loughlin and Vladimir Kolossov, 'Moscow: Post-Soviet Development and Challenges', *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 43, 2002, 3, pp. 161-69 (p. 161).

[71] Vendina, 'Vse dlia moskvichei', p. 126.

achieved primacy in almost all areas of life, from culture and religion to transportation and education, from sports to science. The strengthening of the poltical centre under Putin and centralization of decisions has further ensured that Moscow plays an almost sacred role at the very centre of Russia's urban network. Moscow's central position is backed up by quantitative data. Following the fall of the Soviet Union, income disparities increased between Muscovites and other Russians, foreign investment in Moscow grew, and new businesses located their headquarters in the Russian capital. By 2009, 42.2% of Russia's imports travelled into Moscow, whilst the city accounted for 17.3% of Russia's retail trade and over 20% of its small businesses.[72] Statistics from the same year reveal Moscow residents to be on average 2.7 times wealthier than those living elsewhere in Russia. This reflects a high degree of inequality when compared to New York, Paris, and London, where residents are only around 1.5 times richer than the average in the rest of the country.[73]

Isolde Brade and Robert Rudolph reached the conclusion in 2004 that Moscow was at that time 'striving to integrate itself into transnational and international economic structures'.[74] Further analysis in 2010 by a team of authors from the Globalization and World Cities (GaWC) research network illustrates how Moscow has since gone a long way to achieving this aim, dramatically increasing its global outlook during the 2000s.[75] Using statistical analysis to reach a measure of integration with other global cities, the authors show that between 2000 and 2008 'Moscow's connectivity to the global network grew more than any other city in Eastern Europe'.[76] This is despite the accession of many Eastern European countries to the EU during this period. Thanks to its comparatively well-developed economic and communication infrastructures, Moscow has become a focal point across the post-Soviet world for entrance into the global flows of both capital and knowledge. The Russian capital has been particularly boosted by its financial-service sector, having forged increasingly strong connections with London and New York in order to become the only major city in the former Soviet

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[72] Robert Argenbright, 'Moscow on the Rise: From Primate City to Megaregion', *The Geographical Review*, 103, 2013, 1, pp. 20-36 (p. 26).
[73] Bokova and Korobov, 'Moskva: Diagnostika i svoeobrazie', p. 78.
[74] Isolde Brade and Robert Rudolph, 'Moscow, the Global City? The Position of the Russian Capital within the European System of Metropolitan Areas', *Area*, 26, 2004, 1, pp. 69-80 (p. 69).
[75] David Bassens et al., 'World City Network Integration in the Eurasian Realm', *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 51, 2010, 3, pp. 385-401.
[76] Ibid., p. 391.

Union in this sphere.[77] Not only has Moscow continued to receive further investment from abroad, but wealthy Russian investors have increasingly acquired stakes in Western companies or even bought them outright.

As rich Russians have invested oil money abroad, for example purchasing some of the most expensive property in cities such as London, the Russian capital has tried to compete with the financial dreams of the West. Advertising culture has boomed in the city, growing to such an extent that by 2010 Moscow reached number nine in the list of cities across the globe with the most public advertisements.[78] This desire has been embodied in architecture in the form of the Moskva Siti (Moscow City) project. Situated on approximately one hundred hectares of prized land on the banks of the river just outside the Sadovoe kol′tso, Moskva Siti was deliberately designed to maintain the prestige of the city's centre. With the project initially conceived in 1992, Luzhkov repeatedly trumpeted its merits throughout his time as mayor, hoping that it would enable Moscow to compete on the global financial and business markets to the point that it could even rival the dominance in Europe of the City of London (apparently also borrowing its name). Construction began in 1996 on Moskva Siti's first skyscraper, Bashnia 2000, which was completed in 2001 at a height of 104 m. Most of the other skyscrapers are considerably higher, with Bashnia Federatsiia set to become the tallest building in Europe, if it can overcome its repeated financial difficulties. Currently scheduled to open in 2014 at the earliest, 'the tower' actually consists of two towers – the 64-storey 'West' tower and the 96-storey 'East' tower – in an apparent triumph of Eastern European urbanity.

With Luzhkov's love of verticality set to leave a lasting imprint on the city, the most recent and tallest Moskva Siti skyscraper to have been completed is the Mercury City Tower (Merkurii Siti Tauer). Whilst adding to the linguistic pastiche of Moskva Siti – some buildings are known by the Russian 'bashnia' and others use the English designation 'tower' (*tauer*), the Mercury City Tower (figure 18, p. 95) has recently overtaken London's The Shard as Europe's current tallest building.[79] Such events have

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[77] Ibid., p. 394.

[78] Anna Semenova et al., 'Moskva na rastiazhkakh', *Novye izvestiia*, 15 November 2010, p. 1.

[79] When it reached its pinnacle in November 2012, the Mercury City Tower soared to 339 m in height, compared to The Shard's 306 m. This meant that the latter building occupied the position of Europe's tallest building for a matter of months.

captured the imagination of some Muscovites, who populate an online society at ct.citytowers.ru, dedicated solely to discussions of the project. Moskva Siti's latest records are praised, the architectural designs discussed, and the construction progress monitored with regular photographic updates.[80] The Stalinist aim for Moscow to reach ever higher now has a twenty-first-century online fan club.[81]

The dual desire under Luzhkov to transform the city into a global business centre, yet still emphasize Moscow's pre-revolutionary history, is neatly captured in the decoration of several new metro stations completed during the mid-2000s. On the one hand, Vystavochnaia (2005) and Mezhdunarodnaia (2006) metro stations, both constructed under Moskva Siti, are future-orientated. Vystavochnaia possesses a glass walkway (figure 19, p. 96); Mezhdunarodnaia has a curved platform. With clean lines, metallic walls, modernized ticket barriers, and the first batch of new, twenty-first-century underground trains, both emphasize the city's international, capitalist, and technologized credentials. The message here is one of monetary success and entrance into the financial flows of the world's most successful cities. On the other hand, the murals at Trubnaia metro station in the city's historic centre (opened in 2007 and decorated under Tsereteli's auspices) capture an idealized vision of the past (figure 20, p. 97). The escalators are lined with traditional-style lamps, whilst the colourful murals and back-lit stained-glass mosaics depict Moscow through an array of bright Orthodox cupolas. As the city god attempts to inculcate patriotic fervour here, the metro user is afforded the opportunity to bask in Moscow's glory as a colourful Third Rome.

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[80] This website came to my attention in Mikhail S. Blinnikov and Megan L. Dixon, 'Mega-Engineering Projects in Russia: Examples from Moscow and St. Petersburg', in Stanley D. Brunn (ed.), *Engineering Earth: The Impacts of Megaengineering Projects*, in three volumes, Dordrecht: Springer, 2011, II, pp. 933-54 (p. 936).

[81] Pavel German and Iulii Khait's song 'Vse vyshe' (1928), or 'Ever Higher', became a rallying cry for young people in the 1930s and was adopted by the Soviet Air Force under Stalin. James Von Geldern and Richard Stites (eds), *Mass Culture in Soviet Russia: Tales, Poems, Songs, Movies, Plays, and Folklore, 1917-1953*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995, p. 257.

2.5. New Moscow in the 2010s? Exploring the Potential of the Peripheries

When President Medvedev responded immediately to a critical letter from Luzhkov by sacking the mayor in September 2010, Moscow entered a new era of city planning.[82] In smaller echoes of the iconoclastic waves that had swept across the city nineteen years earlier, the least-loved monuments of the Luzhkov Style became the target of renewed attacks. Gallery owner Marat Gel′man acted quickly on the day of Luzhkov's downfall, immediately calling for the new mayor to rid Moscow of Tsereteli's statue of Peter the Great. The monument's aesthetics were again raised in the Russian press, this time legitimized by a *Virtual Tourist* poll from 2008, which had placed Tsereteli's giant in the top ten ugliest buildings and monuments of the world. Arkhnadzor, an increasingly influential preservation movement founded in 2007, then took a step further by calling for the removal of all Tsereteli's sculptures from Manezhnaia ploshchad′ and other 'prominent sites in the city'.[83] The group's director, Konstantin Mikhailov, not only denounced Tsereteli's sculptures because they 'spoil Moscow's historic character', but also explicitly connected them to Soviet monuments, proposing that they meet the same fate and 'be placed in a park somewhere'.[84]

Acting mayor Vladimir Resin initially appeared receptive to altering the cityscape and removing some of his predecessor's spatial traces through a 'potential move' for Tsereteli's statue of Peter the Great.[85] However, in echoes of Tsereteli's previous attempts to encourage cities to accept his works, the practicalities of relocation proved difficult, with the city authorities in St Petersburg balking at the idea of welcoming the monument to their shores. As estimates grew over the cost of relocating the monument – one suggested that the city government might have to spend as much as 1 billion rubles – Peter ultimately remained in place under the new mayor Sergei Sobianin.[86] Tsereteli's detractors had to be satisfied with smaller changes. By February 2012, it had

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[82] For a copy of Luzhkov's letter, see Anon, 'Iurii Luzhkov – Presidentu Rossiiskoi Federatsii Dmitriiu Medvedevu', *Ekho Moskvy*, 28 September 2010, http://echo.msk.ru/blog/echomsk/714106-echo/ [last accessed 24 June 2013].

[83] Anon., 'Arkhnadzor predlagaet ubrat′ s "vidnykh mest" Moskvy raboty Tsereteli – metra "luzhkovskogo stilia"', *Novosti nedvizhimosti*, 29 September 2010, http://realty.newsru.ru/article/29sep2010/tsereteli [last accessed 24 June 2013].

[84] Cited in ibid.

[85] Ol′ga Nesterova, 'Kuda soshliut Petra Pervogo?', *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 6 October 2010, p. 7; and Irina Mak, 'Nesnosnyi pakt', *Izvestiia*, 11 October 2010, p. 10.

[86] Anon., 'Tsereteli ubrali iz merii', *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, 28 February 2012, p. 2.

become clear that Tsereteli could not maintain his power without his patron, and Sobianin removed him from his position in the city government.[87] In the meantime, Tsereteli's statue of Luzhkov entitled 'Dvornik' was quietly moved from its open courtyard location in the Moskovskii muzei sovremennogo iskusstva to a less prominent spot inside the Galereia iskusstv Zuraba Tsereteli.

Luzhkov's demise represented the opportunity for reflection on the mayor's legacy in city planning. In a poll run by *Itogi* in October 2010, the city's ever-growing traffic problems, perhaps unsurprisingly, featured heavily in the responses regarding the negative aspects of life in contemporary Moscow. Behind the boom in cars, however, the responses also referenced the eclectic nature of construction under Luzhkov. 'The lack of unified urban space', fuelled by corruption and inadequate planning regulations, resulted in 'a city incredibly disfigured by terrible new buildings'.[88] A number of those surveyed expressed particular concern over the scale of construction in the city centre, a view neatly summarized by the preservationist Natalʹia Samover, who concluded at the time that 'old Moscow' suffered 'the heaviest losses over the past 18 years' at the hands of 'greedy developers'.[89] As architects estimated that over 1,000 historic buildings were destroyed during the Luzhkov era, Samover sounded the battle cry to 'save historic Moscow'.[90]

After the initial wave of iconoclastic energy and forward-thinking, the hope has dissipated somewhat during recent years. In a poll taken one year after Sobianin's appointment, the majority of respondents (55%) believed that there had been no real change from Luzhkov's days in terms of the workings of the city government.[91] Only 8% saw an improvement, whilst LGBT activists were dismayed to find that Sobianin continued the precedent set by Luzhkov of banning gay pride rallies in the capital. On the streets, Sobianin enjoyed some success in his policies to remove the ubiquitous kiosks and to reduce the prevalence of oversized advertising hoardings. But his initial promise to prevent further construction in the city centre proved difficult to keep.

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[87] Luzhkov's wife, Baturina, suffered a similar change of fortunes. In September 2011, she was forced to sell her majority shares in her construction company.

[88] Leila Guchmazova et al., 'Grad Luzhkov', *Itogi*, 4 October 2010, pp. 22-26 (pp. 22-23).

[89] Natalʹia Samover, 'Novaia Moskva – eto staraia Moskva', *Moskovskii komsomolets*, 9 October 2010, p. 3.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Svetlana Averbukh, 'Moskovskii gambit', *Parlamentskaia gazeta*, 28 October 2011, p. 16.

Having supported the new mayor's revocation of permits to demolish historic buildings, members of Arkhnadzor were subsequently alarmed to discover the destruction of two nineteenth-century buildings in June 2011, the first on Bol′shaia Nikitskaia ulitsa and the second on Bol′shaia Ordynka. Drawing comparisons with the old methods employed by Luzhkov and the Soviet authorities before him, Arkhnadzor highlighted that both buildings were pulled down in haste on the same night, under the cover of darkness.[92]

If city planning has been marked by one distinct change since Luzhkov's dismissal, however, it is in the expansion of Moscow's territory. Taking planning experts and ordinary Muscovites by surprise, President Medvedev suddenly announced on 17 June 2011 to the St Petersburg International Economic Forum that Moscow's borders were to widen. Encompassing an additional 148,000 hectares of land, Moscow would now include not only the small district of Rublevo, where the wealthiest elite have their out-of-town homes, but also a huge chunk of agricultural and industrial land to the south-west of the city.[93] This area has a particularly low population density, minimizing the difficulties of authorizing new construction and reducing the need to give large numbers of people the coveted Muscovite residence permits. Its lack of existing infrastructure does, however, mean that construction would have to take place on an astonishing scale to transform this space into a thriving urban area. Handing this task to Sobianin, Medvedev asserted that the new city expansion would solve Moscow's traffic woes, reduce overcrowding, ameliorate the local infrastructure, and redistribute the capital's employment opportunities. In echoes of planning under Luzhkov, it would also support the large construction companies who lobby for mega-projects. Aimed at arresting the core city's inexorable population growth over the decades, the scheme was underpinned by the aspiration to relocate 2.5 million Muscovites and thereby drastically reduce the population within the MKAD.

These new plans were quickly dubbed 'Novaia Moskva' (New Moscow) in the press, evoking the descriptions in the Soviet press of the 1935 General Plan for the Reconstruction of Moscow as well as both Aleksandr Medvedkin's 1938 film and Iurii

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[92] Anon., 'Noch′ dlinnykh kovshei', *Arkhnadzor*, 21 June 2011, http://www.archnadzor.ru/2011/06/21/noch-dlinny-h-kovshej/#more-7756 [last accessed 24 June 2013].
[93] The exact land claimed by the city of Moscow is shown on the city government's website. See 'Karta rashireniia granitsa Moskvy', http://www.mos.ru/about/infographics/borders/ [last accessed 25 January 2014]

Pimenov's 1937 painting with the same name. In an article appearing in *Izvestiia* in 1935, C. E. Chernyshev described how the Soviet plans for Moscow would create both the first socialist capital in the world and a 'new city', 'Novaia Moskva'.[94] Medvedkin's *Novaia Moskva* then captured this city's actualization in film. Following the protagonist's 3,000-km journey from the rural provinces to the Soviet capital to participate in Moscow's reconstruction, the film concludes with a new city rising up out of the old Tsarist capital's mediæval backwardness.[95] Pimenov's painting embodied the experience on the ground of the new city. It depicts an emancipated young woman driving through redesigned central Moscow in an attractive, open-topped car, enjoying the wonders of the widened streets.

In focusing beyond Moscow's traditional borders, however, New Moscow of the 2010s actually harks back to the debate preceding Medvedkin and Pimenov's depictions of grand construction. Prior to the adoption of the 1935 General Plan, designs were welcomed from Western architects who sought radical solutions to Moscow's traditional concentric structure, the most notable of which was submitted by Le Corbusier. Transposing his concept of the utopian Radiant City, la Ville Radieuse, onto the Soviet capital, Le Corbusier proposed a 'new city' beyond Moscow's limits. This would leave the old city's historic centre as a monument to the past, or 'city-museum'.[96] Such comparisons were strengthened by the decision in December 2011 to welcome foreign plans for a competition to conceptualize the layout of New Moscow. After the nine shortlisted pieces were publicly showcased in Gor′kii Park during the summer of 2012, a team once again headed by a French urban planner, Antoine Grumbach, won the competition.[97]

The winning document represents a radical policy shift in the efforts to tackle the city's ever-growing problems of housing and traffic, as well as Moscow's social inequalities.

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[94] C. E. Chernyshev, 'Novaia Moskva', *Izvestiia*, 14 July 1935, p. 4.

[95] For more on the symbolic power of the plans to reconstruct Moscow during the 1930s, see Chapter One and Griffiths, 'The Third Rome and the Frozen Lake', pp. 5-28.

[96] Kenneth M. Straus, *Factory and Community in Stalin's Russia: The Making of an Industrial Working Class*, Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997, p. 43. For more information on the submitted plans, see Timothy Colton, *Moscow: Governing the Socialist Metropolis*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1995, esp. pp. 215-48.

[97] Grumbach already had experience of such projects, having been involved in the consultation process for Nicolas Sarkozy's scheme for Grand Paris. All the entrants' plans currently remain available on the website of Moscow government's Architecture and City Planning Committee. http://mka.mos.ru/mka/mka.nsf/va_WebPages/UrbanCompetitionRus [last accessed 24 June 2013].

The organs of both the national and city governments are supposed to relocate to the new Government Centre, built to the east of Kommunarka (a settlement with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants in the 2005 census). The plan otherwise intends to avoid Soviet-style forced relocation by redistributing jobs from the centre to the periphery. Premised on the thesis that people will move home in search of employment, special economic zones are incorporated to stimulate business. Beyond new buildings, the plan relies on two major infrastructural projects – a high-speed railway line leading directly to the city's three international airports and the Novaia moskovskaia liniia (NML). The NML is a 60-km radial with road, metro line, and tramway which connects central Moscow to Ryzhovo in the south-west.[98] Designed to transport one million passengers every day, the NML is supposed to intersect with the MKAD at the Vorota Novoi Moskvy. With new construction focused along this line extending to the south-west, the proposed radial marks a dramatic shift towards a linear paradigm of urban development. The project's horizontality would destroy Moscow's vertical hierarchies, facilitate the founding of multiple centres along the route, and symbolically embody an embrace of outward-gazing centrifugal forces in the place of inward-looking centripetal forces.

Explicitly contrasted to 'Old Moscow' in the plans, the 'new city' and its shining infrastructure are captured in colourful pictures of a bright new future rising from the ground.[99] The image of the Vorota Novoi Moskvy offers a snapshot of ultra-modern trams, towering neon skyscrapers, a giant restaurant, and an Orthodox church resembling the Khram Khrista Spasitelia.[100] Modern life, commercialism, and traditional religiosity are once again fused in a hazy, kitsch vision of Moscow's sparkling future. As the tram rushes towards the city's latest reincarnation, the people blur in a transient pastiche of multiple times and spaces. The image captures not only Moscow's dynamism, but also its persistent need for continual reinvention. It embodies a long-standing fetishization of the new and the deep-seated desire to compete on a global scale. Since the picture has been generated on a computer, physical space is lifted in virtual space. In its current form, New Moscow is no more than a computer simulation of the centuries-old Potemkin village, a glamorous two-dimensional image of young people enjoying an imagined green boulevard.

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[98] For a plan detailing the proposed route of the NML, see Aleksei Muratov, 'Sprashivali? Otvechaem!', *Proekt Rossiia*, 66, 2013, p. 80.
[99] Ibid., pp. 77-88.
[100] Ibid., p. 87.

Ever since its conception, New Moscow has received heavy criticism. Aleksandr Kudriavtsev, President of RAASN (Rossiiskaia akademiia arkhitektury i stroitelʹnykh nauk), describes the plans as 'a despairing gesture in an attempt to solve the most acute current problems'.[101] Others warn against suburbanizing rural land by replacing extant villages with undesirable, high-rise blocks.[102] Iurii Komarov dismisses the planning competition as a 'blatant attempt to legitimize […] a bizarre idea' through the use of Western urban specialists.[103] He further describes the notion that government agencies will voluntarily relocate as 'naïve', highlights that the new territories include the largest expanse of landfill waste in Europe, and concludes that the project's merits lie only in its glossy PR effect. [104] In some sections of the press, the legal wrangling to take land from present residents has even been compared to Stalin's collectivization policies.[105]

At this point in time, many unsolved dilemmas remain. Will New Moscow offer a genuine alternative to the long commute into the old city or will it become the twenty-first-century incarnation of Le Corbusier's plans in the 1930s, nothing more than paper architecture? How will the dramatic growth of out-of-town businesses affect the on-going development of the Moskva Siti project in the city's centre? Will the proposed flight of government departments result in the hollowing out of the Moscow's historic core? Huge infrastructural improvements are required to avoid simply transferring the current traffic jams to another area, whilst poorly regulated construction through corrupt mechanisms risks further environmental damage. The fact that Putin refused to mention the project during his presidential campaign in 2012, and has since raised questions regarding its economic costs, perhaps suggests that the tram will never actually shoot down the NML radial line and that young people will never enjoy the opportunity to bask in the sunshine at the Vorota Novoi Moskvy. With a new general plan for the capital incorporating the changes not due until the end of 2014, New Moscow's exact contours still remain to be seen…

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[101] Cited in Anon., *Stroitelʹnaia gazeta*, 18 November 2011, http://www.stroygaz.ru/gazeta/2011/10161/ [last accessed 24 June 2013].
[102] Ibid.
[103] Iurii Komarov, 'Novaia Moskva: Gradostroitelʹnyi plan ili piar?', *Nash sovremennik*, 2 February 2013, pp. 204-17 (p. 208).
[104] Ibid., pp. 212 and 217.
[105] Sergei Rusev, 'Novaia Moskva ili novaia kollektivizatsiia?', *Trud*, 15 February 2013, p. 2.

2.6. From 'Fact' to 'Fiction'

In his short story 'Tefal′, ty dumaesh′ o nas' (2000), Akunin satirizes the imposition of grand architectural projects onto the face of post-Soviet Moscow. Illustrated with a cartoonish depiction of Tsereteli laughing manically, the story's opening exchange introduces the reader to the Governor General and a supernatural sculptor, Iagkfi Eyukueudshch, whose name spells out 'Zurab Tsereteli' when the computer keyboard is switched from a Cyrillic to a QWERTY layout. Using his special powers, Iagkfi hypnotizes the Governor General into accepting an array of architectural pieces, which double as transmitting devices to facilitate an alien invasion. Amongst his 'disgusting' architectural 'monsters': 'a bronze bestiary outside the sacred Kremlin wall' (the figures above the shopping centre at Manezhnaia ploshchad′), 'a sliced-up dragon […] on Napoleon Hill (the statue of St George and the dragon at Park Pobedy) and 'the key component to all the designs – the nightmarish idol by […] the River Moskva' (the statue of Peter the Great).[106] The only saving grace for the court artist, who is accused on the street of hating Moscow, is that he will soon ensure the complete destruction of the monuments (and everything else). At this apocalyptic moment, some surviving humans will be transported to another planet with pink grass and white water.

Through a hyperbolized and fantastical version of reality, Akunin's tale highlights the risks of allowing one figure to accumulate excessive power and warns against the top-down reshaping of the cityscape. On the one hand, such an approach to city planning can expedite transformation. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Moscow has acquired many new buildings and parks, benefited from large regeneration projects, and welcomed much greater diversity in terms of land use. On the other hand, the flattening vision from above can obscure other perspectives, such as those of the conservationist, environmentalist, and ordinary citizen. Historical buildings have been lost, the environment damaged, and the traffic problems increased. The embrace of capitalist economics and the architectural changes required to render Moscow a global financial centre have been accompanied by the city god's attempt to return to solidities. In his conceptualization of Moscow as his personal fiefdom, Luzhkov has recycled Soviet-era

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[106] Boris Akunin, 'Tefal′, ty dumaesh′ o nas', in *Skazki dlia idiotov*, St Petersburg: Neva, 2000, pp. 80-96 (p. 88). In *Empire V*, Pelevin likewise satirizes Tsereteli's position in the Muscovite elite, when his vampire protagonist encounters a Tsereteliesque figure at an exclusive masked ball. For more on Pelevin's novel and its depiction of post-Soviet Moscow, see my sixth chapter, pp. 243-44 and 248-66.

verticality and concentricity in the post-Soviet period. With Luzhkov and Tsereteli having dominated the landscape of post-Soviet Moscow for almost twenty years, this process of top-down planning has continued since their removal. As Vendina concludes in 2013, Moscow's mayoral office today has the reputation of 'the most authoritarian administration of any in the Russian Federation', with 'little consideration given to inhabitants' opinions when taking urban planning […] decisions'. [107]

By focusing on the passage of literary characters across Moscow, the following four chapters provide the street-level counterpart to the mayoral visions of post-Soviet Moscow. The nostalgic reconstruction of lost buildings, the strengthening of concentric Moscow, the individual search for a private segment of the cityscape, and the final turn to Moscow's peripheries are all captured from a different perspective. In Akunin's historical detective novels, the nostalgia embodied in the reconstruction of the Khram Khrista Spasitelia and the bright murals at Trubnaia metro station is evoked in warm images of late-nineteenth-century Nostalgic Moscow. Yet the retrospective temporal angle reveals the impossibility of fully rebuilding a lost era. Multiple times likewise play an important role in the shaping of space in Post-Apocalyptic Moscow. Here, the city's centuries-old concentric structure is repeated in the reconstruction of the city after the apocalypse. Not only does this spatial layout reflect the continuation of hierarchy and power verticals, but it also has an impact on the little person dwelling in the urban peripheries and dreaming of self-aggrandizement.

In Glamorous Moscow, members of the wealthy elite are inspired not by stories of patriotism during World War II or narratives of Moscow's faded grandeur, but by Western paradigms of consumerism. Valorizing opulence, security, and foreign goods, they produce carefully controlled, privatized locales on the margins of city space. Finally, a more eccentric, centrifugal view of the city is captured in the analysis of Magical Moscow, a city of grey suburbs populated by supernatural beings. Whereas financial wealth binds the groups contained within the gated community, alternative collectives premised on magical powers now challenge the centre's hegemony. Here lies the promise of undermining convention, thinking beyond the current boundaries, and ultimately constructing a new, New Moscow.

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[107] Olʹga Vendina, 'Sotsialʹnyi atlas Moskvy', *Proekt Rossiia*, 66, 2013, pp. 230-33 (p. 230).

2.7 Chapter Appendix

Figure 8. Statue of Dzerzhinskii, sculpted by E. V. Vuchetich in 1958. Photograph taken in Park iskusstv
© Mark Griffiths, 2009.

Figure 9. Defaced statue of Stalin, sculpted by S. D. Merkurov in 1938. Photograph taken in Park iskusstv

© Mark Griffiths, 2009.

Figure 10. Wooden sculpture of Buratino, with its nose left perfectly intact, by D. G. Bazhenov, 2001.

Photograph taken in Park iskusstv © Mark Griffiths, 2009.

Figure 11. Bronze statue of mayor Luzhkov, entitled 'Dvornik' and sculpted by Zurab Tsereteli in 2000. Photograph taken in the courtyard of the Moskovskii muzei sovremennogo iskusstva © Mark Griffiths, 2009.

Figure 12. Close-up of Tsereteli's statue 'Dvornik'. Photograph taken in the courtyard of Moskovskii muzei sovremennogo iskusstva © Mark Griffiths, 2009.

Figure 13. Moscow's Park Pobedy. The base of the obelisk and the statue of St George killing the dragon with his lance. Photograph © Denis Giroux, 2006 (shared with the permission of the photographer).
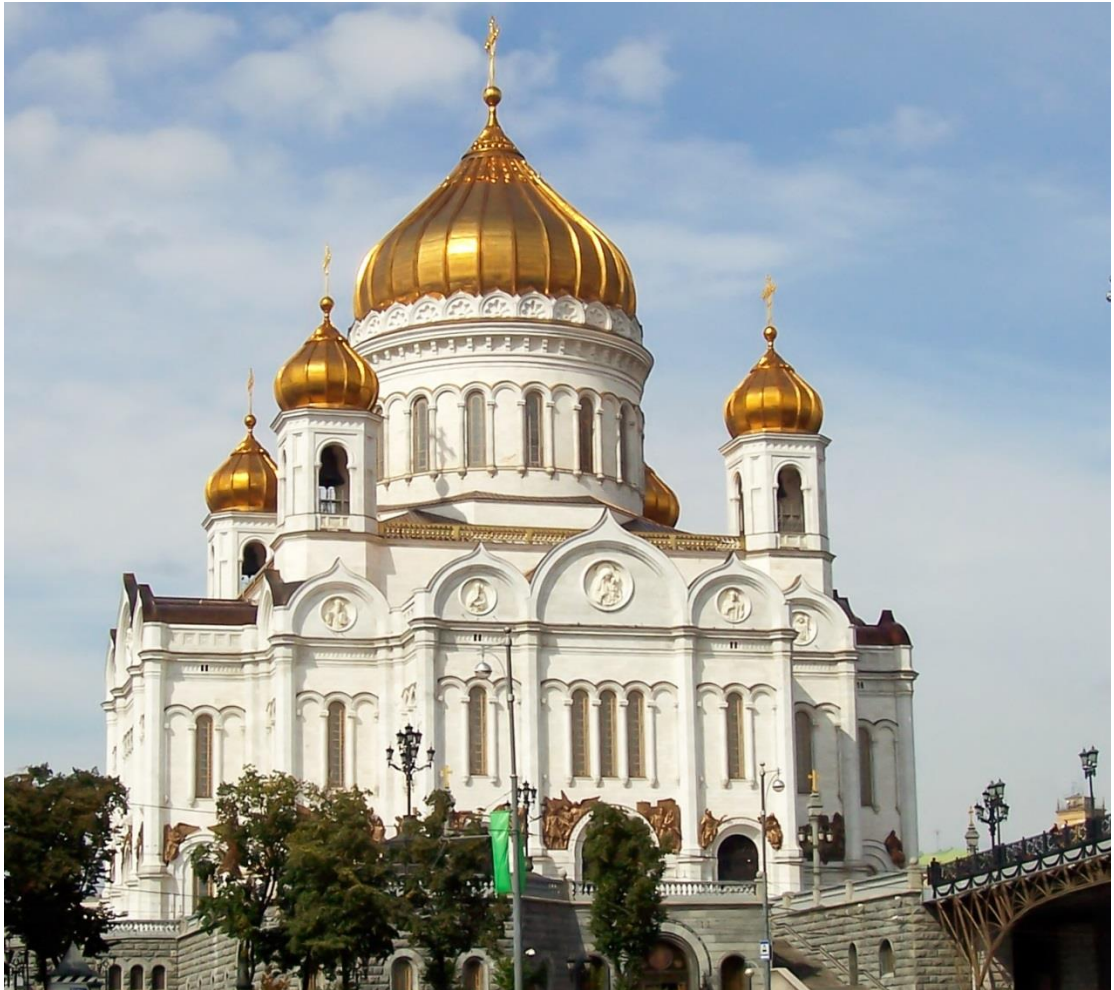
Figure 14. The reconstructed Khram Khrista Spasitelia in Moscow. Photograph © Denis Giroux, 2005
(shared with the permission of the photographer).

Figure 15. Tsereteli's statue of Peter the Great. Photograph taken from Park iskusstv © Mark Griffiths,
2009.

Figure 16. Shopping centre cupola at Manezhnaia ploshchad′. .In addition to the world time clock with Moscow at its centre, the cupola is topped with another statue of St George. Photograph © Mark Griffiths, 2009.

Figure 17. Triumph Palace, Moscow. Photograph © Jennifer Griffiths, 2013 (shared with the permission of the photographer).

Figure 18. The Mercury City Tower in Moskva Siti. Photograph © Jennifer Griffiths, 2013 (shared with the permission of the photographer).

Figure 19. Main hall of Vystavochnaia metro station. Photograph 'Vystavochnaya (Vystavochnaia)' © Mikhail (Vokabre) Shcherbakov, 2010, https://www.flickr.com/photos/vokabre/5102047716/ (licensed under Creative Commons, CC BY-SA Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0, https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/legalcode).

Figure 20. Underground exit of Trubnaia metro station, adorned with Tsereteli's giant, colourful mural of Moscow's Orthodox domes. Photograph © Mark Griffiths, 2009.

Chapter III

Nostalgic Moscow

Reading the Palimpsest of Old Moscow

3.1. Pseudonyms, Fake Portraits, and Other Forms of *Reflectsiomania*

We're nostalgic but we're not crazy.[1]

This chapter focuses on the depiction of past Moscow in the *novye detektivy* featuring Erast Petrovich Fandorin, the hugely successful creation of Grigorii Chkhartishvili, published under the *nom de plume* Boris Akunin. It thereby moves away from Akunin's purely satirical short story 'Tefal′, ty dumaesh′ o nas', discussed at the end of the preceding chapter, and focuses on the author's warmer and more nuanced reconstruction of late-nineteenth-century Moscow. The city conjured in Akunin's retro-detective fiction is centred on the past, its own history. Encompassing a pre-modern simplicity within its protective white walls, old Moscow as captured by Akunin in the first depictions of the series include strong elements of nostalgia. Endlessly referencing and mimicking the canon of nineteenth-century Russian literature, Akunin introduces the reader to his recurring hero, Fandorin, in a Moscow familiar to those who have read Toporov's elucidations of the Petersburg Text. In stark contrast to the deracinated St Petersburg of Pushkin, Gogol′, and Dostoevskii, Akunin's Moscow at the beginning of the Fandorin series in 1876 is pleasantly comforting and maternally possessive of the novels' abounding orphans. Whereas Gogol′s Akakii Akakievich in 'Shinel′' suffers at the hands of St Petersburg's cruel weather, Akunin's orphans find shelter in Moscow.

Akunin's choice of genre initially appears to support this picture of nostalgia. In accordance with the traditions of detective fiction, the criminals' attempts to disrupt Muscovite order are foiled by the heroic detective, who carefully traces the clues, solves the crime, and restores the rule of law. The appeal is clear to the post-Soviet reader, who seeks reassurance in times of rising crime rates. It can be argued, however, that Akunin exhibits a form of what Boym terms 'reflective nostalgia' rather than the 'restorative nostalgia' reflected in Luzhkov's monumental constructions of the 1990s. Restorative nostalgics display a love of the metanarrative and a yearning to recreate a specific image of the mythical past. Reflective nostalgics such as Akunin 'love details, not symbols',

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[1] Announced by Leonid Parfenov in 1995 and cited in Serguei Alex Oushakine, '"We're nostalgic but we're not crazy": Retrofitting the Past in Russia', *The Russian Review*, 66, 2007, pp. 451-82 (p. 451).

and 'present an ethical and creative challenge, not merely a pre-text for midnight melancholias'.[2] Akunin's nineteenth-century Moscow is not the totalizing reconstruction of an excessively valorized, mythical city, but the incarnation of the author's fascination with the past and interest in how time shapes urban space. His playful games, reflections, and distortions are rooted in the self-awareness and scepticism of postmodernism. They do not reproduce what postmodernists would describe as the grand, totalizing narratives of modernism.

The more the reader delves into the Fandorin series, the darker the images of Moscow and the more apparent the impact of time. As the author gradually unveils late-nineteenth-century Moscow's more sinister (hi)stories, the city proves to be far from the nostalgic bubble of pre-modern security initially presented at the beginning of the first novel. Over the course of the series, the reader learns of Moscow's vast social inequalities, discovers the shockingly blasé attitude of the ruling elite, and begins to understand the motives driving those who call for political and social change. As the works' inner chronology tips Moscow into the beginning of the twentieth century, Akunin shifts his spatial focus towards the city's seediest dives in the Khitrovka. This move destabilizes both the warmly nostalgic image of Moscow and the traditional detective novel, offering instead gloomier images of Moscow in 1900 reminiscent of hard-boiled detective fiction. It also brings the post-Soviet reader much closer to Akunin's Moscow, which appears increasingly 'haunted' by its rapidly approaching future. Aware of the upheaval that the city is predestined to undergo during the course of the coming years, the reader is presented with a precognitive experience of the old city. This journey throws the pitfalls of 'restorative nostalgia' into stark relief, highlighting the impossibility of fulfilling Luzhkov's vision of post-Soviet Moscow. As the two cities − pre-Soviet and post-Soviet − prove similarly chaotic, the hope of recovering a past based on Orthodox piety and Russian nationalism crumbles.

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The retro-detective series featuring Fandorin currently runs to thirteen separate publications over almost fifteen years. In the first novel, *Azazel'* (1998), the reader

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[2] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, p. xviii.

meets the twenty-year-old Fandorin on 13 May 1876 and follows his life roughly chronologically in the rest of the series. The latest novel, *Chernyi gorod*, was published in November 2012 and is set in the 'Black City', Baku, immediately prior to the outbreak of World War I. Most of the works are in novel form, although they also include one publication containing two separate novellas (*Osobye porucheniia*, 1999); a novel with two volumes, the latter providing background information from occurrences in Japan in 1878 to the events of the former, set in Moscow in 1905 (*Almaznaia kolesnita*, 2004); and a collection of seven short stories and three novellas covering a wide spread of geographical locations from Japan to France over a nineteen-year period (*Nefritovye chetki*, 2007). Chkhartishvili's versatility is mirrored in the adaption of his prose to other forms: three of the series have been transformed into Russian-language films (*Azazel'*, *Turetskii gambit*, and *Statskii sovetnik*), whilst *Azazel'* has also been adapted for the stage, rewritten as a graphic novel, and is due to undergo a big-budget American remake (its shooting has been repeatedly delayed since 2007).[3] With Chkhartishvili's fame burgeoning over the past decade, by April 2011 he had sold twenty-five million copies worldwide and earned his main pseudonym – Akunin – the title of 'number one most pirated author in Russia'.[4]

Having qualified as a Japanologist, explored his love of language as a translator, and worked as the deputy editor of the journal *Inostrannaia literatura*, Chkhartishvili initially wanted one of his literary colleagues to publish a popular but well-written work in a postmodern style. With nobody willing, however, he decided to create the project himself, thus blurring the boundaries between high and low culture. Drawing on his professional background, Chkhartishvili infused his works with linguistic variety, bestowed his protagonist with the skills of a Japanese samurai, and included philosophical musings not usually explored in detective fiction. Having published six Fandorin works in the first two years, Chkhartishvili rapidly exploited what he has described as the 'calculated' success of this winning formula.[5] He quickly maximized

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[3] In 2008, Chkhartishvili (as Akunin) also published *Kvest*, his computer-game novel (roman-komp′iuternaia igra). The reader answers questions that lead to different pages, explores a 'computer code' to each 'level' (chapter), and enjoys computer-generated images. Boris Akunin, *Kvest*, Moscow: Ast, 2008.

[4] Harriett Gilbert and Boris Akunin, 'World Book Club: Boris Akunin – *The Winter Queen*', interview at the British Broadcasting Centre, London, 11 April 2011. Further elucidation of Akunin's views on Moscow was gained through my own conversation with the author following the initial interview.

[5] Cited in Boris Kasanin, 'Pisatel′ Boris Akunin: "Moi uspekh byl proschitan"', *Novye izvestiia*, 9 June 2008, p. 1.

the commercial opportunities of authorial obscuration, cultivating a schizophrenic array of public personæ. Whilst his most famous works – those featuring Erast Fandorin, Nicholas Fandorin, Sister Pelagiia, and the 'cinematic' *Smert' na brudershaft* series – have been published under the *nom de plume* Boris Akunin, Chkhartishvili has additionally penned a non-fiction investigation into the prevalence of suicide amongst writers under his own name (*Pisatel' i samoubiistvo*, 1999) and even 'co-authored' *Kladbishchenskie istorii* (2004) with his own alter-ego. In the 'Explanation' prefacing this latter work, Chkhartishvili clarifies that each of the chapters is divided into two parts – non-fiction pieces written by the 'moralizer' and 'essayist' Chkhartishvili and fictional stories penned by the 'mass-entertainer' Akunin.[6]

On 11 January 2012, Chkhartishvili confessed that the three novels written by Anna Borisova were in fact his own, and that the fictional writer's 'portrait' was a computer-generated image merging his wife's face with his visage. In creating not only a new pseudonym, but also another persona, Chkhartishvili has claimed that he wanted to 'observe the world through the eyes of a woman'.[7] This revelation was followed two days later by a similar announcement regarding A. O. Brusnikin, an anagram of Boris Akunin. Chkhartishvili has described how he adopted this particular pseudonym in order to escape his own cosmopolitan, Westernized view of Russia ('shared' by Akunin) and to experience 'Slavophile' patriotism.[8] As a sign of the confusion in the press surrounding these multiple personalities, it was reported in both *Izvestiia* and *Komsomol'skaia pravda* that 'Boris Akunin' – and not Grigorii Chkhartishvili – had revealed himself to be the author behind the two *noms de plume*.[9]

This enthusiasm for layers and distortions seeps through the Fandorin universe to such an extent that the author's official website, www.akunin.ru, contains a 'portrait of the author' bearing no resemblance to Chkhartishvili, but evoking instead a nineteenth-century English dandy. Yet, in the recent Zakharov publications of the Fandorin series, seven of the twelve works contain a sketch of Chkhatishvili dressed in nineteenth-

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[6] B. Akunin and G. Chkhartishvili, *Kladbishchenskie istorii*, Moscow: KoLibri, 2007, p. 5.
[7] http://borisakunin.livejournal.com/50686.html [last accessed 27 February 2012].
[8] The author's playfulness is again underlined by his merging of images: Brusnikin's portrait results from the morphing of Chkhartishvili's face with the visage of a Parisian designer.
http://borisakunin.livejournal.com/50843.html [last accessed 27 February 2012].
[9] Asia Lavretskaia, 'Boris Akunin pospeshil raskryt′ sekret Anny Borisovoi', *Izvestiia*, 12 January 2012, p. 11; and Denis Korsakov, 'Boris Akunin priznalsia, chto pisateli Anna Borisova i Anatolii Brusnikin – eto on', *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 13 January 2012, p. 1.

century garb. Akunin/Chkhartishvili has even invented a psychological illness on this theme in one of the Fandorin novels, *Ves' mir teatr* (2010), which he labels '*reflectsiomania*' (*reflektsiomaniia*) – the torment of inhabiting a room without mirrors.[10] In one of the series' many self-reflective ironies, Akunin himself proves to be entirely incapable of inhabiting any fictional space without mirrors. Acknowledging his love of citation and intertextual references in the dedication of *Nefritovye chetki*, Akunin names a number of Western authors who have impacted on his prose, including Edgar Allan Poe; Agatha Christie; Arthur Conan Doyle; Maurice Leblanc; and Umberto Eco. As if to prove these influences, *Nefritovye chetki* then concludes with the novella 'Ulitsa bashni, ili kratkii, no prekrasnyi put′ trekh mudrykh', which melds different writers' ideas into a single story. Here, Akunin's Fandorin and Masa combine with Doyle's Sherlock Holmes and John Watson in order to foil Leblanc's mastermind Arsène Lupin in Brittany on the last night of the nineteenth century.[11]

Although Moscow is not the sole site of the Fandorin series, it is, like Doyle's London or Christie's enclosed spaces, the works' most prominent location.[12] The old city offers a nostalgia-inducing escape into a past prior to the traumas of the Soviet period, the chance to uncover allusions to great writers, and the opportunity to follow an attractive protagonist in his fight against ingenious criminals. The result is so appealing that two guidebooks have been published tracking the characters' fictional journeys across Moscow.[13] As this chapter illustrates, however, Akunin's penchant for distortion also impacts on his vision of the past city. An excavation of Akunin's main Muscovite locales reveals the multiple threads running through his city, the (hi)stories of marginalized orphans, and a finely balanced status quo constantly on the brink of apocalypse. Whilst Akunin's initial images of 'matushka-Moskva' are drawn from the nineteenth-century dichotomy between Russia's two largest cities, Akunin ultimately

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[10] Boris Akunin, *Ves' mir teatr*, Moscow: Zakharov, 2010, p. 144. As Chkhartishvili has published the Fandorin series under one pseudonym and regularly uses the same *nom de plume* for public events, interviews, and articles, I shall refer to the author as Akunin from now on, unless specifically referencing one of the rare occasions when Chkhartishvili appears under his own name.

[11] Boris Akunin, *Nefritovye chetki*, Moscow: Zakharov, 2010, pp. 593-700.

[12] Moscow features prominently in *Azazel'*, *Smert' Akhillesa*, 'Pikovyi valet', 'Dekorator', *Statskii sovetnik*, *Koronatsiia*, *Liubovnitsa smerti*, *Liubovnik smerti*, the first volume of *Almaznaia Kolesnitsa*, three short stories in *Nefritovye chetki* and *Ves' mir teatr*. Moscow does not play a role in *Turetskii gambit*, *Leviafan*, and *Chernyi gorod*. *Turetskii gambit* is set in Bulgaria, *Leviafan* traces a ship's voyage, and *Chernyi gorod* focuses on Baku.

[13] Andrei Staniukovich, *Fandorinskaia Moskva*, Moscow: Zakharov, 2008; and Mariia Besedina, *Moskva akuninskaia*, Moscow: Folio SP, 2008.

reverses this symbolism, playfully transposing catastrophic features traditionally associated with St Petersburg onto his Moscow. The Petersburgian image of the flood now constantly lurks around the Muscovite corner. This flood is not only physical, however, but also metaphorical – a flood of time, imprinting dramatic change onto the cityscape. With layers of time crystallizing in space, Akunin's Moscow proves to be nothing short of a *reflectsiomaniacal* palimpsest of different eras.

3.2. Akunin as Nostalgic? The Centred Order of Past Stability

Akunin is eager to rebuff claims that he is 'nostalgic for imperial Russia', asserting that this is 'entirely not true'.[14] His protestations seem somewhat disingenuous, however, when one considers the success he has gained from aesthetically beautiful recreations of past times, far more reassuring to the post-Soviet reader than rival works. Many critics have been quick to highlight the nostalgic element in Akunin's late-nineteenth-century world, with Anna Narinskaia describing the 'comfort' of Akunin's 'consistently appealing image', and Marina Koreneva summarizing the widespread sentiment that 'Akunin cultivates the "optimism of memory"'.[15] In the late 1990s, Akunin's past appeared much more positive than Russia's future. However, I posit that the rupture between the two opposing opinions can be closed by using Boym's distinction between different forms of nostalgia and considering Akunin's retro-detective fiction through the lens of 'reflective nostalgia'. As Akunin insists, his works do not reflect a yearning for Tsarist Russia's military might or imperial shows of power, but they do exhibit a fascination with Russia's nineteenth-century literary tradition.[16] The 'reflective nostalgia' of the Fandorin series is thus founded on self-awareness. Akunin loves the riddles he can weave from narratives of the past and delights in temporal games, but he does not promote the restitution of nineteenth-century-style autocratic control.

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[14] Stated by Akunin in his BBC interview, Gilbert and Akunin, 'World Book Club'.

[15] Anna Narinskaia, 'Erast Fandorin vnovʹ vyshel na stsenu', *Kommersant*, 11 January 2010, p. 14; and Marina Koreneva, 'Russian Detective Fiction', in Stephen Lovell and Birgit Menzel (eds), *Reading for Entertainment in Contemporary Russia: Post-Soviet Popular Literature in Historical Perspective*, Munich: Sagner, 2005, pp. 57-101 (p. 97).

[16] In a discussion with the political activist Aleksei Navalʹnyi, Akunin stresses that he feels no nostalgia for the 'military-bureaucratic empire' of imperial Russia or the Soviet Union, but does admit to being an 'imperialist' in the 'cultural-economic sense'. Boris Akunin and Aleksei Navalʹnyi, 'Razgovor s politikom', 3 January 2012, http://borisakunin.livejournal.com/49763.html [last accessed 24 January 2012].

With *Azazel′* published in 1998, the Russian reader was introduced to Fandorin in the midst of financial crisis, political upheaval, and future uncertainty. In the context of crime fiction, the most popular fictional Russian detective of the 1990s was Marinina's Kamenskaia, who first appeared in January 1993 in the novella 'Stechenie obstoiatel′stv', published in the journal *Militsiia*. Kamenskaia is a police officer whose main peculiarity for the early-post-Soviet audience lies not in her profession but her gender. Thriving in violent surroundings thanks to her intellect and not her brawn, Kamenskaia calmly and rationally tackles the new crime wave. Members of the mafia control important business deals, assassins are hired to kill rivals, snipers kill young men on the streets, journalists are murdered, fake beggars con honest Muscovites on the metro, a bride is shot dead on her wedding day, and even the publishing industry is shown to be corrupt. Shocking sex crimes are also on the rise in Marinina's Moscow, including rape, molestation, and necrophilia.[17] By turning to retro-detective fiction at the end of the 1990s and throughout the 2000s, Akunin stood at the vanguard of a wider shift in literature away from such sensationalist crime.[18] Exploring a past period removed from the crime of the 1990s, he carefully coaxed the reader through Pushkinian games of chance, secret societies, and long treks across Europe to intercept mail. The change in readers' tastes was then confirmed during the 2000s, not only by Akunin's success, but also by the replacing of Kamenskaia in the Russian affection with Dontsova's crime-fighting heroine Dasha Vasil′eva, who inhabits a far less coarse and more reassuring contemporary universe.[19]

With a narrator who adopts the style and language of nineteenth-century authors, the inclusion of historical events and personages, long passages describing locations, Dickensian-style headings that summarize the chapter's occurrences, and fictional newspaper accounts to disclose additional clues, Akunin's retro-detective fiction offers

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[17] In his review article, Anatoly Vishevsky describes in greater detail these differences between Marinina and Akunin. Anatoly Vishevsky, 'Answers to Eternal Questions in Soft Covers: Post-Soviet Detective Stories, *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 45, 2001, 4, pp. 733-39.

[18] Theorized under the term 'post-Sots' by Lipovetsky, the reader and viewer's growing desire for greater sincerity is discussed in my sixth chapter, pp. 254-60.

[19] Like Dontsova, Vasil′eva is a French teacher by profession, but she exhibits an inexplicable good fortune when solving crimes. The novels' positive tone is reflected in the virtual hyperspace of Dontsova's official website. The welcome page is tellingly saccharine, with two dogs and a dazzlingly pink layout dominated by hearts. See www.dontsova.ru [last accessed 22 December 2011]. Olga Mesropova outlines Dontsova's 'fairy-tale' imagery in greater detail in Olga Mesropova, 'Crime, *Byt*, and Fairy Tales: Daria Dontsova and Post-Soviet Ironical Detective Fiction', *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 52, 2008, 1, pp. 113-28.

escapism into a past era. As descriptions of the period's clothing, textures, food, streets, buildings, and figures all contribute to the vitality of his chronotope, Akunin undertakes hours of archival research before writing a new novel. Describing this work as 'the most pleasant part' of the entire writing process, Akunin displays a clear desire to share his passion for history and regularly posts little nineteenth-century anecdotes on his popular blog, 'Liubov′ k istorii'.[20] To maintain accuracy when envisaging space, he makes frequent use of Aleksei Suvorin's detailed maps of nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century Moscow.[21] To maintain linguistic credibility, Akunin approximates the language of the period, drawing on both 'high' culture and the street language heard in Moscow's seediest locales.

Reasserting the importance of the novel's tangibility through his argument that the paper book is in itself 'a work of art' and 'something that is pleasant to hold in your hands', Akunin ensures that even the form of his books is unique and nostalgically appealing.[22] At a time when publishers were increasingly turning towards bright, explosive covers for detective fiction, the Fandorin works have distinctive, black-and-white bindings and a nineteenth-century feel.[23] Letters and newspapers within the text are presented as historical documents with the appropriate layout and fonts (different characters use different handwriting), corrected diary entries are crossed out and rewritten, and the reader must move the book to read articles printed in landscape orientation.[24] The latest editions of the series, reprinted in 2010, feature black-and-white pencil drawings by the artist Igor Sakurov. By adding a visual dimension to the text, these drawings build on Akunin's claim that his work is 'a textbook on material history'.[25] In sum, Akunin presents the opportunity to bask in the warmth of nineteenth-

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[20] Akunin talked at length of his love for history in the interview Gilbert and Akunin, 'World Book Club'. For Akunin's recent blog entries, see borisakunin.livejournal.com [last accessed 30 March 2012].
[21] Akunin's reliance on these maps was brought to my attention by Staniukovich, the author of *Fandorinskaia Moskva*, on a forum for fans of Akunin's works.
http://www.fandorin.ru/forum/showthread.php?s=310167db13be79fa51de61761b7d56f9&threadid=4765&perpage=15&pagenumber=2 [last accessed 23 February 2012].
[22] Gilbert and Akunin, 'World Book Club'.
[23] Consider, for example, the menacing heel on the blue cover of Nina Vasina's *Udavka dlia bessmertnykh* (2000) or the scantily clad woman and threatening pistol on the eroticized cover of Vasina's *Chernye rosy dlia snaipera* (2001). The covers of Dontsova's works are equally populated by bright, vivid, highly stylized caricatures.
[24] See, for example, Boris Akunin, *Liubovnitsa smerti*, Moscow: Zakharov, 2010, pp. 180-208.
[25] Gilbert and Akunin, 'World Book Club'.

century simplicity, a time when, he insists, 'literature was great, belief in progress boundless, and crimes were committed and solved with elegance and taste'.[26]

In terms of genre, Akunin again gazes back in time to the Western origins of the detective novel as a puzzle, thereby diverging from the more recent Soviet and early-post-Soviet *detektivy*. Tracing the major trends of Soviet and early-post-Soviet *detektivy*, Olcott highlights how local social norms and the idiosyncrasies of the Soviet legal system impacted on the development of local detective fiction. He concludes that the standard Soviet *detektiv* is 'rarely a logical puzzle' with 'seldom any doubt about who the villain is'; it entirely avoids 'murder mysteries'.[27] Citing Boris Dubin's proclamation in October 1998 that 'strictly speaking, there is no *detektiv* in which the main hero is an amateur private investigator', Olcott illustrates that the early-post-Soviet protagonists, exemplified by Marinina's Kamenskaia, 'remain pretty much what their Soviet-era ancestors were – representatives of "The System"'.[28] These heroes adhere to the Russian legal process, avoid celebrations of individual initiative, and portray crime as an act against the state. Akunin, on the other hand, recreates the 'murder mystery' by constructing games for both his protagonist and reader to solve. With the entire series a *Bildungsroman* that traces Fandorin's career from the Criminal Investigation Department to private detective, Akunin also focuses his *novye detetktivy* on the protagonist. Where the Soviet detective lacks flair, Akunin's pre-revolutionary detective exudes individual brilliance.

In the early works of the Fandorin series, Akunin uses the logical puzzle in order to reproduce a sense of what Carl Malmgren describes in the context of 'whodunit' mystery novels as 'centredness'.[29] Drawing on the tricks employed by authors such as Christie and Doyle, Akunin leads the reader on a stroll with Fandorin through Moscow's nineteenth-century streets, collecting clues along the way. A crime is

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[26] Akunin's summary of the nineteenth century is printed on the covers of the Fandorin series.
[27] Olcott, *Russian Pulp*, pp. 19 and 23-24.
[28] Ibid., pp. 30-46. See also Boris Dubin, 'Predpochteniia', *Itogi*, 6 October 1998, http://dlib.eastview.com/browse/doc/3030034 [last accessed 11 December 2011].
[29] Carl D Malmgren, 'Anatomy of Murder: Mystery, Detective, and Crime Fiction', *Journal of Popular Culture*, 30, 1997, 4, pp. 115-35. Morris connects Malmgren's discussion of the enclosed detective space to Akunin's third Fandorin novel, *Leviafan*, but I would argue that this 'centredness' can be extended to Akunin's other early works and that even a fictional city can be constructed as a closed space. Marcia A. Morris, '"Canst thou draw out Leviathan with a hook?": Akunin Colludes and Collides with Collins and Christie', *Clues*, 28, 2010, 1, pp. 69-78 (pp. 70-71).

committed, usually a murder; the investigator travels from place to place on the trail of the criminal; the villain is brought to justice. Further lives are lost *en route* and other swindlers are brought into the action, but Akunin carefully lays out every piece of the jigsaw at the right moment. Seemingly irrelevant scraps of information later prove to be planted both in the narrative and on the fictional city's streets to be employed by the hero, who uses his extraordinary powers of deduction to reveal the signifier's correct signified. An apparently spontaneous street encounter of urban modernity ultimately proves to be premeditated, conjured by the author as a narrative trick. In a further echo of Malmgren's theories of the 'whodunit', space is 'orderly, stable, resistant to change, and relatively free of contingency […] isolated from the inroads of time'.[30] Space is subordinated to plot.

Space, time, and genre are thereby interconnected, since the images of 'centred' space add to the pleasingly nostalgic aesthetic. Duels are carried out with grace and equanimity, everything appears knowable, and any contravention of the norm apparently holds a rational explanation. As Akunin uses movement through space to give the reader a sense of the case's progression, Fandorin evolves into a flâneur-detective, emulating Holmes's ambulations when making deductions. Existing outside the urban crowds and going unnoticed in all parts of the city, Fandorin hones his observational powers to unlock Moscow's secrets. As the detective's desire to fight crime replaces the Baudelairean flâneur's cynicism and disengagement from society, Fandorin cleanses the Muscovite space under his control and protects Moscow's most marginalized. With Fandorin a barrier between the reader and the villainy described, and old Moscow 'relatively free of contingency', order trumps chaos. From crime emerges a resolution.

3.3. Old Mother Moscow and the Petersburg Text

In his repeated literary references, Akunin evokes the Petersburg Text, outlined in Chapter One, and intertwines it with his vision of Moscow and early images of static space. In doing so, he mainly focuses on what Toporov describes as the Petersburg Text's first scheme – the positive portrayal of traditional Moscow and the negative

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[30] Malmgren, 'Anatomy of Murder', p. 119.

depiction of alien St Petersburg. This creates nostalgia for the pre-modern, convivial, wood-based, inherently 'Russian' Moscow, whilst evoking a gamut of nineteenth-century literary references to 'soulless' and 'bureaucratic' St Petersburg.[31] The imagined geography of Akunin's positive depictions of Moscow is founded on the basis of enwalled security. In a city of 600,000 inhabitants, the only recent violent crimes are a murder resulting from a drunken brawl and the robbing of two cabmen.[32]

At the beginning of *Azazel'*, Ksaverii Feofilaktovich Grushin, head of the local Criminal Investigation Department, sits peacefully in his office, yawning with relief at the dearth of investigations. Wearing a pair of tortoiseshell-coloured pince-nez, Grushin inhabits a past realm. He embodies Moscow's relaxed atmosphere in his police work, undertaking investigations at a leisurely pace, loathing paper work as an unnecessary evil, and using the instincts he has honed in Moscow's markets and taverns to solve crime. Harking back to old Rus′ and repeating traditional Russian wisdom, Grushin believes in respect and patriarchal order. An avuncular figure fond of the samovar in his office, he is at one with soulful Moscow.

Given Grushin's relaxed attitude and the city's apparent widespread honesty, the shattering of the peace by an unprecedented suicide, just outside the Kremlin walls in Aleksandrovskii sad, is a shock to both the elderly police chief and the city's inhabitants. To explain such an interruption of the normal flows, the event is instantly portrayed as the imposition of the external 'other'. As laments the indignant columnist of a fictional newspaper article inserted into the narrative, Moscow in 1876 is unaccustomed to the pervasion of urban horror, previously only 'the scourge of Petropol′' but now 'spread[ing] to the walls of matushka-Moskva'.[33] Using Pushkin and Gavrila Derzhavin's Greek-based name for 'Peter's city', and denoting Moscow through a folk epithet, Akunin emphasizes St Petersburg's foreign linguistic basis and conjures a yearning for a past Moscow existing in a walled cocoon of pre-history.

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[31] Toporov, 'Peterburg i "Peterburgskii tekst russkoi literatury"', p. 16.

[32] Boris Akunin, *Azazel'*, Moscow: Zakharov, 2010, p. 8.

[33] Ibid., p. 14. This appellation is repeated in the subsequent two Fandorin works set in Moscow, *Smert' Akhillesa* and 'Pikovyi valet'. A very similar dichotomy is constructed between old Moscow and new Europe in *Almaznaia kolesnitsa* through a character who asserts that large-scale arms trade and duplicitous spying might occur 'far away, in Paris and London' but not in 'Moskva-matushka'. Boris Akunin, *Smert' Akhillesa*, Moscow: Zakharov, 2010, pp. 13 and 117; Boris Akunin, 'Pikovyi valet: Povest′', in *Osobye porucheniia*, Moscow: Zakharov, 2010, pp. 5-152 (p. 78); and Boris Akunin, *Almaznaia kolesnitsa*, Moscow: Zakharov, 2010, p. 105.

Through further references to the Kremlin's 'white walls' (the red brick was painted white until the Bolshevik Revolution) and the city's abundant cupolas, Akunin then repeatedly reminds the reader of pre-Petrine Muscovy's place as Russia's spiritual home.[34] Akunin's Muscovite characters frequently pray for salvation, evoke God's name when in need of individual fortune, and blame the devil at moments of crisis. In the golden city of 'forty times forty churches' (сорок сороков церквей), Muscovites express trust in their rulers and cling to the hope that God's servants will protect the old capital from excessive change. Akunin's Moscow thus appears to be the embodiment of Vissarion Belinskii's conclusion in 1844 that this 'city of patriarchal family life' is inhabited by those who 'strive for familial comfort'.[35]

It is into this trusting, familial world that Fandorin first steps, a rootless orphan who has never known his mother and whose father squandered his entire inheritance before a premature death. Standing at the bottom of the civil service hierarchy as a Collegiate Registrar of the fourteenth rank, Fandorin's unimportance is reinforced by Akunin's unreferenced citation from the opening two lines of Petr Veinberg's 1859 poem, popular amongst urban citizens as a reflection of the ranking system ('Он был титулярный советник,/Она — генеральская дочь').[36] With the narrator reporting Fandorin's lament that he is still far from even being a Titular Counsellor, the hero's future initially appears anything but heroic.[37] Fandorin is not, however, left to fester in St Petersburg's disorientatingly bureaucratic system but blossoms under the tutelage of his Muscovite mentor, Grushin. Although excessively didactic at times, Grushin teaches Fandorin to learn his trade by growing accustomed to the contours of the local streets.

When Fandorin has the opportunity to visit St Petersburg later in *Azazel'*, these first impressions of Russia's two major cities are reinforced by Akunin's juxtaposition of

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[34] In *Koronatsiia* and *Liubovnitsa smerti*, the term 'Belokamennaia' is used as a synecdoche for the entire city. In 'Pikovyi valet', it is Moscow's golden domes that exemplify the city's piety through the use of another traditional epithet, 'Zlatoglavaia'. Boris Akunin, *Koronatsiia, ili poslednii iz romanov*, Moscow: Zakharov, 2010, p. 15; Akunin, *Liubovnitsa smerti*, p. 9; and Akunin, 'Pikovyi valet', p. 78.

[35] V. G. Belinskii, 'Peterburg i Moskva', in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, ed. N. F. Bel′chikov et al., in thirteen volumes, Moscow: Izdatel′stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1953-1959, VIII (1955), pp. 385-413 (p. 389).

[36] P. I. Veinberg, 'On byl tituliarnyi sovetnik', in Andrei Burovskii, *Rossiia, kotoroi ne stalo*, Moscow: Olma-Press, 2005, p. 110.

[37] Akunin, *Azazel'*, p. 37. Fandorin is promoted to Titular Counsellor later in the novel.

East and West, Russia and Europe. If Akunin's Moscow is a synecdoche for Russia's Eastern past, St Petersburg is a synecdoche for its Western future. The 'electric streetlights and respectable buildings' of St Petersburg are compared to those of Berlin and Vienna, and the city is summarized in a single word: 'Europe'.[38] As Fandorin's voice permeates the narrative through free indirect discourse, he is shown to feel little warmth for this foreign place, remaining stubbornly Muscovite. Instead, it is the macho police chief, Ivan Frantsevich Brilling, who embodies St Petersburg's nineteenth-century characterization. In doing so, he threatens Grushin's position, representing the wider menace Moscow feels from St Petersburg. When an investigation in Moscow grows increasingly complex, Brilling is drafted in to solve it from St Petersburg, replacing the local police officers with those he trusts from the 'new' capital.

Whereas Grushin is sedate, respectful, and traditional, Brilling is quick-witted, cunning, and determined, taking controversial decisions to achieve his goals. Constantly seeking future progress, using processes of rational deduction, and sending Fandorin to Western Europe, Brilling revels in technological advances. He replaces Grushin's much-loved samovar with a telegraph in Moscow, and imports an early model of Alexander Graham Bell's telephone to his private flat in St Petersburg. Unlike Grushin, Brilling treats detective work as a 'science', using deductive reasoning and the careful accumulation of clues to catch the criminal. Believing that rigour and evidence can lead the detective to greater 'truths', Brilling represents the late-nineteenth-century scientific man. Grushin is thus 'a man of the past' (человек прошлого), whilst Brilling is 'a man of the future' (человек будущего).[39] Yet, as Akunin underlines, the problem with the future is its unpredictability. Brilling is ultimately revealed not to be a genius detective but double-agent with a Germanic name working for pan-European nihilists. Connecting the 'man of the future' with St Petersburg, Akunin shows the new capital to be exciting but dangerously unstable.

After a train journey from Irkutsk to Moscow's Riazanskii vokzal (now Kazanskii vokzal), Akunin's most prominent provincial character, Mariia Mironova, again

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[38] Ibid., p. 167. Here, Akunin draws on Gogol′'s personification of St Petersburg as 'a fastidious person, entirely German', always found 'preening before Europe'. N. V. Gogol′, 'Peterburgskie zapiski 1836 goda', in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, ed. N. L. Meshcheriakov et al., in fourteen volumes, Moscow: Izdatel′stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1937-1952, VIII (1952), pp. 177-91 (p. 178).
[39] Akunin, *Azazel′*, p. 67.

reproduces the first scheme of the Petersburg Text in *Liubovnitsa smerti* (2001). Whilst Mariia immediately suffers a sensation of physical shock at the station crowds, choking on the alienating fusion of the florists' natural scents and the industrial aroma of petrol, she quickly adapts to her new home. Viewing Moscow from the perspective of a peasant girl but through the prism of its opposition to St Petersburg, she feels comforted by the alluringly warm light that enticed her from the dark peripheries:

> Поезд доставил синеглазую путницу не в бравурный Петербург, а в печальную и таинственную Москву – Город Грез, похожий на заточенную в монастырь, век вековать, царицу, которую ветреный и капризный властелин променял на холодную, змеиноглазую разлучницу. Пусть новая царица правит бал в мраморных чертогах, отражающихся в зеркале балтийских вод. Старая же выплакала ясные, прозрачные очи, а когда слезы иссякли – смирилась, опростилась, проводит дни за пряжей, а ночи в молитвах. Мне – с ней, брошенной, нелюбимой, а не с той, что победно подставляет холеный лик тусклому северному солнцу.[40]

Here, Akunin evokes one of the core texts of the 'Petersburg Text', *Mednyi vsadnik* (written in 1833), appropriating Pushkin's images of Moscow as the purple-clad widow and St Petersburg as the new tsaritsa. He develops the concept of female Moscow, a faded beauty who cannot compete with her younger rival and is ultimately superseded by Peter's cold bride. The future generation – embodied by St Petersburg – once again replaces the old – connected to Moscow. Yet, whereas St Petersburg stands on the brink of apocalypse, the seductively grandiose balls threatened by the destructive Baltic waters, Moscow is Mariia's motherly guardian and safe haven. This need for maternal Moscow grows more acute after the dénouement of *Azazel'*, with the death of the protective (but megalomaniacal) anti-hero, Lady Astair,[41] and Fandorin's Bondian moment of post-nuptial loss.[42] Doomed to a deracinated life without family ties, Fandorin substitutes his individualistic dreams with a more widely embracing desire to

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[40] Akunin, *Liubovnitsa smerti,* pp. 15-16.
[41] Lady Astair is an anglicized version of a Russian historical character, an Orthodox nun who was put on trial in Moscow in 1876 for making a profit from charitable work. Akunin spoke in further detail about this figure following Gilbert and Akunin, 'World Book Club'.
[42] Fandorin's bride is killed in the final chapter of *Azazel'* in echoes of the murder of James Bond's new wife, Tracy, at the end of Ian Fleming's *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (1963).

protect Muscovites from harm. As a consequence, he develops into a paternal figure and mentor. With Fandorin, the widower, requiring assistance from the old, purple-clad widow of Moscow, the city might have been abandoned by Peter but adapts well to the role of the hero's motherly spouse.

Anisii Tiulʹpanov, from 'Pikovyi valet', is one of the works' abounding orphans in need of adoption by both paternal Fandorin and maternal Moscow. Struggling with a disabled sister, he works at the lowest level of the police force and earns such a meagre salary that he is unable to afford public transport. As Akunin again makes intertextual references to Gogolʹ's 'Shinelʹ' (1842), Pushkin's 'Pikovaia dama' (1834), and his own depiction of the now-successful Fandorin's impoverished beginnings, the *povestʹ* opens with a scene set in Moscow but reminiscent of literary St Petersburg.[43] Like Gogolʹ's Akakii Akakievich Bashmachkin, Anisii Tiulʹpanov is tormented by his very name, mortified by his permanent connection to tulips. He also quickly discovers that his 'thin overcoat' (худая шинелишка) does little to protect him from the elements. The wind, which tortures Akakii, and which Gogolʹ describes as 'typical of Petersburg', is transported to Akunin's Moscow, where it is anthropomorphized in its 'howling' pursuit of Anisii.[44] Where Akakii madly chases overcoats across the 'terrible desert' (страшная пустыня) of Gogolʹ's 'endless' Petersburg square, Anisii performs errands across the 'boundless, wind-swept city' of Moscow (по бескрайнему, продуваемому ветрами городу).[45]

Akunin's Moscow, however, offers far more compassion than Pushkin or Gogolʹ's St Petersburg, as Akunin builds on the dichotomies of the Petersburg Text to ensure that Anisii's lot diverges sharply from that of Akakii at this point. Racing past the Church of the Joy of All Who Sorrow (tserkovʹ Vsekh skorbiashchikh Radostʹ), Anisii is inspired by the icon to the Mother of God that hangs, not inside the church, but on its outside wall.[46] Transforming the public street into a religious space, Akunin fuses the

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[43] Małgorzata Stachurka offers a more detailed analysis of Pushkin's influence on 'Pikovyi valet', investigating Akunin's use of the Jack of Spades as a 'calling card' (wizytówka). Małgorzata Stachurka, 'O *Damie pikowej* Aleksandra Puszkina i jej spuściźnie w literaturze współczesnej (*Walet pikowy* Borysa Akunina)', *Slavia Orientalis*, 56, 2007, 1, pp. 7-16 (p. 15).

[44] N. V. Gogolʹ, 'Shinelʹ', in *Povesti*, New York: Izdatelʹstvo imeni Chekhova, 1952, pp. 161-96 (p. 182); and Akunin, 'Pikovyi valet', p. 10.

[45] Gogolʹ, 'Shinelʹ', p. 189; and Akunin, 'Pikovyi valet', p. 10.

[46] The church stands on Ulitsa Bolʹshaia Ordynka and was constructed between 1834 and 1836 by the architect O. I. Bove.

protectiveness of Mother Moscow with that of Mother Mary. Where St Petersburg is soulless, the old capital expresses solidarity with its citizens. As Akunin draws on Belinskii's description of Moscow as 'my matushka' and Gogol′'s personification of the city as the 'old stay-at-home [domosedka] who cooks bliny', Moscow is shown to care for her orphans.[47] Experiencing an epiphanic moment of changing fortunes, Anisii is galvanized by this omnipotent force to grasp the opportunity to work with Fandorin, who acts in tandem with 'matushka-Moskva' in the transformation of Anisii's life. As the close narration tracks the protagonist's progress, Anisii's success is mirrored by a shift in the descriptions of Moscow. The narrator no longer depicts the city as 'boundless', instead describing Moscow as a 'marvellous city' (чудесный город), capable of miraculously improving lives.[48] It now seems to be populated by people who are 'more simple-hearted and less hardened' than their northern counterparts.[49]

The image of Moscow as a location for positive transformation is repeated in *Liubovnik smerti* (2001), in which Fandorin is again cast as the mentor of a lost orphan. As Akunin mimics the genre of the social novel and evokes Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, Oliver is transported from London's squalid Saffron Hill to Moscow's Khitrovka.[50] Akunin's latest deracinated protagonist, Sen′ka, has slipped even further down the social ladder than his predecessor, Anisii, finding himself on the lower rung of a Khitrovkan gang's criminal hierarchy. Uneducated, and speaking a form of Russian littered with inaccuracies, he is initially devoid of hope. However, like Oliver, he has the fortune of stealing from the right man. As Akunin replaces the figure of Mr Brownlow, who takes pity on Oliver when the gang picks his pocket, with the more dynamic Fandorin, Sen′ka is afforded the opportunity to escape the squalor. Adopting Sen′ka as his protégé, Fandorin teaches him the correct use of language, trains him to dine in an 'elegant' manner, and takes him on cultural trips to the operetta and the dance hall.[51] With Moscow's historic centre the site of this educational transformation, Sen′ka is now able to explore an entirely new city of luxury hotels, bright lights, and, most importantly for Fandorin, 'civilized' values. When Moscow and Fandorin are wedded, the poor orphan

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[47] Belinskii, 'Peterburg i Moskva', p. 412; and Gogol′, 'Peterburgskie zapiski', pp. 177-78.

[48] Akunin, 'Pikovyi valet', p. 33.

[49] Ibid.

[50] As in *Oliver Twist*, Akunin adopts the Dickensian episodic style, with each chapter focusing on Sen′ka's latest action.

[51] Boris Akunin, *Liubovnik smerti*, Moscow: Zakharov, 2010, pp. 135-36.

is offered the chance to join a family and become an upstanding member of a better society.

3.4. Decentring the Petersburg Text in Moscow's Jungles

Exploring the development of American detective fiction during the twentieth century, Cawelti argues that the genre experienced a dramatic shift in line with social changes, the combination of modernity and urbanity. Whilst the 'classical detective story' depicts a puzzle in a setting isolated from the rest of society, the 'hard-boiled detective story' concentrates on the detective's quest for justice in an increasingly dangerous city.[52] With the initial crime of the hard-boiled novel proving to be only the starting point for further intrigue, the detective becomes 'emotionally involved in a complex process of changing implications' and is consequently utilized as the main narrative anchor amidst chaotic urban surroundings.[53] Explicitly drawing on Cawelti's theory, Malmgren broadly argues along the same lines, developing the concept of 'decentredness' that stands in opposition to the 'centredness' of the puzzle-orientated novel. The shift from puzzle to hard-boiled fiction means that 'basic societal signifiers […] become detached from their conventional signifieds'.[54] The detective's ratiocination is thus undermined. This loss of narrative resolution causes the reader to focus on the detective, not the puzzle, and 'how he comes to terms with the "decentred" world he finds himself in'.[55]

Over the course of the Fandorin series, the reader likewise encounters an increasing 'decentredness' linked to urban modernity. Perhaps in response to the critics' initial charges of nostalgia or perhaps as a planned feature of the works' internal chronology, Akunin's narratives gradually grow darker and the settings more chaotic. Whilst the reader's introduction to Fandorin is centred on the case in question – the narrator promises to describe the hero in detail due to his 'key role' but only briefly mentions his appearance – the later works are dedicated to plugging the gaps in Fandorin's biography.[56] Moscow changes for the worse, however, becoming a mother who has lost control of her children. The more fantastic Fandorin's skills grow, the more the city

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[52] John G. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976, pp. 80-161.
[53] Ibid., p. 146.
[54] Malmgren, 'Anatomy of Murder', p. 124.
[55] Ibid., p. 126.
[56] Akunin, *Azazel'*, p. 11.

tests him; the two edge towards divorce. With elements drawn from hard-boiled detective fiction usually associated with the grimy underbellies of American cities in the 1920s and 1930s, the more one reads, the more one discovers that Moscow's streets are swept by an increasing sense of uncertainty and the ever-lurking presence of future upheaval. Societal change brings cleavage and the detachment of signifiers from their signifieds. The pieces of the jigsaw no longer fit together.

Given Akunin's previous images of St Petersburg as the locale of change, the embodiment of Western urbanism, and a space of disorientating decentredness, Akunin takes the qualities he initially associates with St Petersburg and transposes them onto Moscow. This shift is foreshadowed in the first novel in the form of Grushin's power struggle with Brilling. When Brilling is sent from St Petersburg to assume control of the investigation, it is highly symbolic that Brilling replaces the samovar with the telegraph. As Lilly elucidates in his study of Moscow in nineteenth-century literature, the samovar was repeatedly valorized as the Muscovite's 'most prized possession', and thus became 'a standard piece of furniture in the "Moscow Text"'.[57] In *Azazel'*, however, the traditional image of Moscow's convivial tea-drinking is supplanted by the image of St Petersburg's rational functionality. As the images of 'matushka-Moskva' are, like Grushin, abandoned in favour of the future, urban space grows less secure and more discombobulating. In the latest novel in the series, *Chernyi gorod*, terrorist plots, stray bullets, and ethnic conflicts are all written into tumultuous times in the city of Baku in 1914. The parallels with post-Soviet confusion seep through the structure of this massively unequal city, where oil tycoons oppress impoverished workers.[58]

Over the course of the series, Akunin's Moscow likewise proves not to be a cocoon of pre-history, but a modernizing city undergoing a process of change. Modernity brings a quicker pace of life, sweeping away the old, patriarchal figures and replacing them with the egocentric 'new person', who relishes the competition of a 'dog eat dog' (зверь на звере) world.[59] With a growing number of terrorist organizations, criminal heists, gang-related crimes, suicide sects, bloody murders, serial killers, and interfering foreign spy-rings, Fandorin finds himself deracinated from the streets he used to know. Once the

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[57] Lilly, 'Conviviality in the Prerevolutionary "Moscow Text"', pp. 438-39.
[58] Boris Akunin, *Chernyi gorod*, Moscow: Zakharov, 2013. Moscow's contemporary inequalities and the spatial impact of the oligarchy's wealth are explored further in my fifth chapter, pp. 178-220.
[59] Akunin, *Smert' Akhillesa*, pp. 67-71.

flâneur-detective, he is now surprised to discover in the tenth work of the series, *Almaznaia kolesnitsa*, a Muscovite area he previously considered 'a hole' – the Petrovsko-Razumovskoe district – has been transformed by 'fashionable dachas'.[60] As the series progresses, Fandorin makes fewer trips to Moscow, avoids police officials entirely, and solves only those crimes that pique his interest. Jaded by the realization that the authorities increasingly lack honour, and unable to catch all the criminals alone, he concludes that the modern Moscow of 1905 is 'no longer the grand old capital [pervoprestol′naia], but some type of jungle'.[61]

With its slums and underground networks of passageways, it is the Khitrovka that becomes the focal point of Akunin's Moscow jungles, cast as the main locale of the eighth Fandorin novel, *Liubovnik smerti*. In his reconstruction of an area that has changed dramatically over the course of the twentieth century, Akunin draws heavily on Vladimir Giliarovskii's reminiscences and chronicles from *Moskva i moskvichi* (1926).[62] This separate universe is populated by thieves, alcoholics, and fugitives who have escaped the Siberian *katorga*; for Giliarovskii, it is the most marginalized locale in Europe.[63] Akunin's Khitrovka is controlled by the corrupt local police chief, Ivan Fedotych Budnikov, whom Akunin bases on Fedot Ivanovich Rudnikov – the real Khitrovkan police chief discussed by Giliarovskii. Adopting Giliarovskii's approach of describing the topography's minor details, digging beneath the surface in order to uncover the little people's (fictionalized) narratives, and appropriating the concept of the Khitrovka as marginalized, Akunin elucidates the lives of those who have fallen through the cracks of the maternal city's family support network.

Standing in stark opposition to the images of the improbably safe 'big village' found in the opening pages of *Azazel′*, *Liubovnik smerti* begins with chilling descriptions of the Khitrovka, 'the most terrible place in Moscow'.[64] Disease is rife and cholera wipes out

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[60] Akunin, *Almaznaia kolesnitsa*, p. 56.

[61] Ibid., p. 72.

[62] Elena Baraban highlights this connection to Giliarovskii's *Moskva i moskvichi*. She also points out that another of Giliarovskii's sketches, 'Pod kalanchoi', is evoked in 'Pikovyi valet', in which Akunin reworks the story of a famous Muscovite swindler deceiving the Governor General. Elena V. Baraban, 'A Country Resembling Russia: The Use of History in Boris Akunin's Detective Novels', *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 48, 2004, 3, pp. 396-420 (pp. 402 and 414).

[63] Vladimir Giliarovskii, *Moskva i moskvichi: Ocherki staromoskovskogo byta*, 2nd edition, Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel′, 1935, p. 20.

[64] Akunin, *Liubovnik smerti*, p. 15.

whole families, including that of the orphaned hero; girls of thirteen are forced into prostitution; cocaine is readily available, leading to a severe addiction for the eponymous heroine, Death; and children are preyed upon at a young age by Dickensian-style 'kidsmen', seeking to expand their criminal gangs. Muscovite existence has been warped in this 'underground kingdom' (*tsarstvo*), which is populated not by the living, but by 'ghosts', and is distinguished from the rest of the city by its 'crooked streets'.[65] As Akunin challenges himself to explore complex ideas with limited Russian, the spatial rupture is compounded by linguistic difference. Sen′ka and his compatriots drive the narrative through long passages of discourse in colloquial nineteenth-century speech. With Fandorin's dandyism under threat from Sen′ka's criminal slang, and the authorities menaced by the bandits' unintelligible mutilation of language, Fandorin repeatedly tries to correct Sen′ka's vocabulary.[66] Yet the standardized centre ultimately struggles to sanitize the marginalized 'other' in its midst.

The novel concludes with a fictional newspaper article praising constable Budnikov's heroism and commending Sen′ka as the paragon of the next generation, whom Moscow (its historical traditions emphasized through the ceremonial epithet *pervoprestol'naia*) can trust in the coming century.[67] The irony is not lost on the reader, who knows that Sen′ka would have wasted his ill-gotten wealth were it not for Fandorin's intervention, that constable Budnikov is in fact the story's master criminal, and that Fandorin must flee the city because his liberal *Weltanschauung* stands in conflict with Moscow's conservative hierarchy. In this now decentred world, the term *pervoprestol'naia* now seems absurd to the reader, given the rottenness spreading across all layers of society. Fandorin, Anisii, and Sen′ka prove to be the exception amongst Moscow's poor orphans, not the rule, and the narcissistic police force is so corrupt that even the Khitrovkan gangs' criminal code offers a more honourable form of justice. As Fandorin and Sen′ka head westwards towards Paris in a new automobile, the Khitrovka is left behind, not as a distant site of urban horror far from the 'marvellous city', but as a space at the very core of 'matushka-Moskva'.

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[65] Akunin, *Smert' Akhillesa*, p. 119.
[66] The narrator frequently adopts Sen′ka's mispronunciations when describing the setting – 'Potom *kolidor* byl, dlinnyi' and 'V nei poverkhu *kvartery*' (my emphasis). The narrator equally appropriates Khitrovkan colloquialisms, using a pack of cards, *koloda*, to represent the criminal gang's hierarchy – 'Vecherom, pozdno, seli vsei kolodoi v tri proletki'. Akunin, *Liubovnik smerti*, pp. 59, 61, and 75.
[67] Ibid., p. 287.

Using the whole of *Liubovnik smerti* to explore fin-de-siècle Muscovite experience through the eyes of those inhabiting the Khitrovka, Akunin evokes another of the Petersburg Text's core works, Fedor Dostoevskii's *Prestuplenie i nakazanie* (1866), and inserts its imagery of nineteenth-century St Petersburg into the topography of his Moscow. Whist Dostoevskii's Raskol′nikov is 'crushed by poverty' in St Petersburg, experiences the 'unbearable stench [von′] of the taverns', and feels 'loathing' for the 'drunkards', Akunin's Sen′ka encounters an unpleasant 'stink' (*vonishcha*) and 'drunken brawling' in the basements of the gloomy Khitrovka.[68] Finding himself inexplicably but repeatedly drawn to Sennaia ploshchad′, Raskol′nikov connects important moments in his life to the square and its 'dirty, fetid courtyards'.[69] Passing various 'rag dealers' (*lokhmotniki*), Raskol′nikov is pleased that his own rags do not stand out in this area.[70] As Akunin's Sen′ka likewise encounters a Khitrovkan 'rag-picker', who complains that a building has been closed-down due to an infestation.[71] If Fandorin wishes to move unnoticed in the area, he must also don old rags.

Akunin strengthens the associations between the Khitrovka and the Petersburg Text's negative images in his other Khitrovkan novel, *Liubovnitsa smerti*, which complements *Liubovnik smerti* in bridging the temporal threshold between the nineteenth and the twentieth century. Here, Akunin draws attention to the connection between the inexorable flow of time and his Muscovite chronotope by including a fictional newspaper article in the first section of every chapter. As the newspaper's date is always given according to both the Julian and Gregorian calendars, Akunin appropriates Gogol′'s use of the calendric difference to mould space. In doing so, he creates what Thomas Seifrid describes in the context of Gogolian Petersburg as an 'anomalous historical space'.[72] Transposing the liminality of Gogolian Petersburg onto his

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[68] F. M. Dostoevskii, *Prestuplenie i nakazanie*, Moscow: Izdatel′stvo Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1966, p. 32; and Akunin, *Liubovnik smerti*, p. 260.
[69] Dostoevskii, *Prestuplenie i nakazanie*, p. 82.
[70] Ibid. See also Dostoevskii's descriptions of the working classes in London. During an eight-day trip, Dostoevskii is horrified to discover a city resembling apocalyptic Babylon, with widespread poverty, prostitution, and misery. For him, the poor East End comprises a 'half-naked, savage, and hungry population'. F. M. Dostoevskii, 'Zimnie zametki o letnikh vpechatleniiakh', in *Sobranie sochinenii v piatnadtsati tomakh*, ed. G. M. Fridlender et al., Leningrad: Nauka, 1988-1996, IV (1989), pp. 388-451 (p. 416).
[71] Akunin, *Liubovnik smerti*, p. 91.
[72] Thomas Seifrid persuasively argues that the disappearance of Kovalev's nose in Gogol′'s 'Nos' on 25 March and its reappearance on 7 April reflects the limbo of being caught between the East and West. Thomas Seifrid, 'Suspicion toward Narrative: The Nose and the Problem of Autonomy in Gogol′s "Nos"', *Russian Review*, 52, 1993, 3, pp. 382-96 (pp. 382-83). Akunin also uses the calendric disparity as

Muscovite chronotope, Akunin destabilizes the nostalgic image of Moscow, casting a pre-fated shadow over the city. His Moscow is caught between its old incarnation as 'matushka-Moskva' and its new reimagining as a site of social strife. The simple past cannot be recuperated; an ominous future must soon be experienced.

The apocalyptic events of the forthcoming century looming, Akunin takes the image of the flood, popularized by Pushkin's lyrical depiction of St Petersburg's 1824 catastrophe in *Mednyi vsadnik*, and forces it onto the streets of Moscow. With a mass murderer on the loose, an imminent visit from the Tsar, and the portents of death hanging over the city, the Moskva River bursts its banks. The centrally-located Zamoskvorechie district just beyond the Kremlin walls is flooded. Like helpless Tsar Alexander I surveying the rising waters from his balcony in Pushkin's vision, Akunin's Governor General can do nothing but futilely observe the 'nightmare' unfolding at Piatnitskaia ulitsa.[73] The Governor General is a relic of a former age, unable to respond to the future demands of the growing population. Left behind by the changing times, he focuses on the last individual who can still save the day, and turns to his final hope – Fandorin.

With the shift in focus from puzzle to protagonist, Akunin increasingly draws the attention of not only his Governor General, but also the reader, to Fandorin. As Akunin takes the socialist-realist positive hero and reworks him for the post-Soviet audience, Fandorin is gradually moulded into what the author himself describes as a 'superhuman'.[74] Initially shaped by his paternalistic elder, he faces quests, overcomes obstacles, hones his physical abilities, and ultimately overcomes irrationality in his deductions.[75] In doing so, Akunin once again completes the temporal circle, linking the Soviet positive hero and the post-Soviet 'superhuman', which he aspires to bestow upon a jaded population, to the concept's literary roots in the nineteenth century. As Rufus Mathewson shows, the Soviet incarnation of the positive hero drew heavily on the

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a narrative trick in 'Dekorator'. The case can only be solved following the realization that Jack the Ripper travelled from London to Moscow earlier than first thought.

[73] Boris Akunin, 'Dekorator: Povest′', in *Osobye porucheniia*, Moscow: Zakharov, 2010, pp. 153-333 (pp. 165-66).

[74] Gilbert and Akunin, 'World Book Club'.

[75] Compare this description of Fandorin with Clark's elucidation of the socialist-realist positive hero. Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000, pp. 167-68.

historical form of the 1860s: 'the central ideas on the hero in literature had been transmitted very nearly intact […] from the middle decades of the nineteenth century to the Soviet present.'[76] Rarely deviating from the strictures of his heroic model, Fandorin is – as Akunin himself admits – 'more or less […] predictable'.[77] And yet, as Brian Baer and Nadezhda Korchagina show, Fandorin has truly become a post-Soviet celebrity, with fans celebrating his fictional birthday and journalists discussing him in articles as though he were a real person.[78] I would argue that such popularity cannot be explained solely by the character's heroic qualities but is also thanks to the ways in which he reflects Akunin's views on post-Soviet developments.

With the author becoming increasingly engaged in politics in the past few years, Fandorin's position as the arbiter of a fairer society holds particular relevance for post-Soviet Russia. Indeed, Fandorin embodies one side of a dichotomy Akunin constructs in an article published in 2010 in *The Guardian*, between the two groups he labels the *Aristokratiia* and the *Arestokratiia*.[79] Going back to the Greek root of the word – *aristos* – Akunin argues that members of the *Aristokratiia*, or aristocracy, possess a strong sense of freedom, a desire to fight society's inequalities, and a striving to reach their highest human potential. Those belonging to the *Arestokratiia*, or arrestocracy, aim to restrict freedoms and buttress Putin's 'vertical of power'.[80] Mentoring orphans to achieve their human potential and struggling against Moscow's poverty, Fandorin is the perfected aristocrat, remaining loyal to Russia but working within the paradigm of his own honour code. Working as a private investigator from the seventh novel, *Koronatsiia*, he combats state corruption, from constable Budnikov all the way to the Tsar's inner court.[81] Yet, in echoes of Akunin's description of Khodorkovskii trapped in

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[76] Rufus W. Mathewson, *The Positive Hero in Russian Literature*, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1999, p. 3.

[77] Boris Akunin, 'Menia zavorazhivaet zagadka vremeni', 20 September 2001, http://bodhy75.narod.ru/vhod/biblioteka/b_akunin/bolshaya_sborka_statei_i_intervyu/ [last accessed 12 December 2011].

[78] Brian James Baer and Nadezhda Korchagina, 'Akunin's Secret and Fandorin's Luck: Postmodern Celebrity in Post-Soviet Russia', in Goscilo and Strukov (eds), *Celebrity and Glamour in Contemporary Russia*, pp. 75-89 (pp. 81-83).

[79] Boris Akunin, 'Mikhail Khodorkovskii's Fate will Determine Russia's Future Direction', *The Guardian*, 14 December 2010, http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/dec/14/mikhail-khodorkovsky-russia [last accessed 24 January 2012].

[80] Ibid.

[81] In *Koronatsiia*, Akunin fuses the historic event of the 1896 Khodynka tragedy, which left 1389 dead, and the fictional kidnapping of Tsar Nicholas II's four-year-old cousin. Since the Tsar is more interested

prison, Fandorin sees his lofty aspirations destroyed by the arrestocrats. It is, therefore, Fandorin's surroundings – the changing city, unequal society, and controlling elite – that render the hero more interesting and more appealingly tormented. In his uncompromising battle with the arrestocrats, he becomes the archetypal hard-boiled hero, 'doomed to solitude […] because he is too good for the society he inhabits'.[82]

3.5. The Future and the Virtual: Making Time Visible

The links between Fandorin and Khodorkovskii, the hierarchies of imperial Russia and the vertical power structures of Putinism, as well as Akunin's valorization of honour and engagement with contemporary politics, all point towards a narrowing of the temporal chasm between Akunin's past Moscow and the contemporary world. This idea is reinforced by Chkhartishvili's preface to *Kladbishchenskie istorii*, in which he expresses a captivation with the past seeping through the extant cityscape. The piece is worth noting in and of itself because of the fact that Chkhartishvili makes the highly unusual move of not using a pseudonym. Amidst the games, mirrors, and *reflectsiomania*, this piece offers insight into the author's view of time and space, and why he so carefully layers his fictional worlds. Intrigued by the concept that the majority of the population in 'old cities' is already deceased,[83] Chkhartishvili imagines how the present-day *Wandersmänner* walk in their footsteps:

> Люди, которые жили раньше нас, никуда не делись. Они остались там же, где были, просто мы с ними существуем в разных временных измерениях. Мы ходим по одним и тем же улицам, невидимые друг для друга. Мы проходим сквозь них, а за стеклянными фасадами новомодных строений мне видны очертания некогда стоявших здесь

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in pomp than social change, and indifferent to the child's fate, the elite's true values are thrown in stark relief by Fandorin's personal valorization of human welfare above reputation.

[82] George Grella, 'The Hard-Boiled Detective Novel', in Robin W. Winks (ed.), *Detective Fiction: A Collection of Critical Essays*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1980, pp. 103-20 (p. 110).

[83] Compare Chkhartishvili's concept with Mumford's description of the city's origins, whereby primordial people initially made a claim to the land on which the graves of their forefathers were situated and built there. The first cities were thus constructed atop the bodies of the dead, so that 'the city of the dead antedates the city of the living'. Mumford, *The City in History*, p.7.

домов […] Все, что когда-то было, и все, кто когда-то жил, остаются навсегда.[84]

For Chkhartishvili, traces of the past remain in the city, which is not a *tabula rasa* but a compound of all that has come before. In this conceptualization of collecting inhabitants' individual (hi)stories, Chkhartishvili echoes Benjamin and Huyssen's theories, discussed in my first chapter. Chkhartishvili refuses to accept that the past merely ceases to exist in the renewal of the cityscape. This is precisely what Benjamin captures in his concept of the 'porous city'. Chkhartishvili further suggests that the past – its 'spiritual energy' – is felt by the present-day inhabitant, who continues to read the narratives of his or her predecessors.[85] This is exactly the sense of temporal layering and historical persistence which Huyssen elucidates in his discussion of the 'urban palimpsest'. Whereas the *Wandersmänner* walking the streets of de Certeau's city write their own, invisible urban texts, Chkhartishvili not only posits that such journeys are visibly inscribed into the cityscape, but also that the modern *Wandersmänner* are able to recover the footprints of those who have walked before. Chkhartishvili envisages a meeting of these different times in a single space, encountering posthumous personalities on Moscow's Kuznetskii Most – a silhouette of the past in the dense crowd of the present. In evoking these theories of entwined time and space, Chkhartishvili offers a lens through which to analyse the nineteenth-century Moscow constructed by his own pseudonym. I would argue that Akunin's Moscow is the literary embodiment of Benjamin's Naples and Huyssen's palimpsestic cityscape, the fictional manifestation of Chkhartishvili's desire to render city-dwellers immortal.[86]

Like Benjamin in Naples, the twenty-first-century reader discovers ambiguity when mentally tracing Fandorin's routes through old Moscow. Buildings experienced as ruins, empty spaces, or lost edifices by the contemporary Muscovite are reconstructed for Akunin's protagonists. Other architecture seen on a daily basis by the reader remains

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[84] Akunin and Chkhartishvili, *Kladbishchenskie istorii*, pp. 6-7.
[85] Ibid., p. 7.
[86] In Chkhartishvili's vision of the immortal urban inhabitant, there are allusions to the writings of Nikolai Fedorov (1829-1903). This is particularly true with regard to Fedorov's imagery of resurrection and cyclical temporality, founded on the ideal of reversing the flow of history. In this way, nostalgia becomes future-orientated, since loss in the present day will be overcome by its return in the future. For more on Fedorov's post-Soviet relevance, see George M. Young, *The Russian Cosmists: The Esoteric Futurism of Nikolai Fedorov and his Followers*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, esp. pp. 219-42. My thanks go to Sarah J. Young for drawing my attention to this connection.

nothing but a twinkle in the nineteenth-century planner's eye. Whereas Huyssen encourages the urban inhabitant to dig beneath the current layers and discover more about these temporal differences, Akunin goes even further, creating incongruity not only by unearthing repressed memories, but also by weaving the future into his (hi)stories of the past. Whilst imagining the tales that the late-nineteenth-century Muscovite might tell, Akunin simultaneously introduces elements of the post-Soviet world around him. The reader's precognitive journey through Moscow ensures that characters' musings on the future direction of their countries are verifiable as foresight or fallacy.

With the East a persistent feature, or as Georgii Tsiplakov posits an 'invisible background', of the Fandorin series, the debates about the Russian Empire's future regularly revolve around a geographical tension.[87] One discussion of Japan's relative strength in *Almaznaia kolesnitsa* concludes with the suggestion that in the future it will be the 'Chinese giant', not the West, who will rise up and devour Russia.[88] Akunin foreshadows future anxieties, evoking the competing, yet inseparably fused, forces pertinent to post-Soviet Russia – the on-going debates over Russia's place in global politics, the possibility of achieving a 'third way', and the rise of neo-Eurasianism. Embodying this geographical antagonism, Akunin's Moscow is neither a simple nostalgic construct nor a desert of post-apocalyptic hopelessness, but a city on the brink. The descriptions of rapid modernization and mass building projects, on the one hand, and the portrayal of patriarchal nepotism, a gulf between the rich and poor, and anti-Semitism, on the other, have much resonance for the contemporary reader. Akunin thereby brings the city of the past and present into a dialogue with each other, but instead of looking at the contemporary city, he counter-intuitively introduces this relationship through the prism of the past city looking forward.

Smert' Akhillesa offers the clearest embedding of future Moscow into its past, as Fandorin returns to his hometown following a six-year absence to discover new architecture and changes in Muscovites' behaviour. With the latest hotels furnished 'according to the true European customs' and people on the streets frustratingly aloof,

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[87] Georgii Tsiplakov, 'Zlo, voznikaiushchee v doroge, i dao Erasta Fandorina', *Novyi mir*, 11 January 2001, pp. 159-81(p. 165).
[88] Akunin, *Almaznaia kolesnitsa*, pp. 560-61.

Akunin evokes the post-Soviet fetish for apartments renovated to the perceived standards of the West (*evroremont*) and the loss of courtesies associated with the New Russians.[89] When Fandorin passes the Strastnoi monastery *en route* to his hotel, he mistakes Moscow's first monument to Pushkin, unveiled on Tverskoi bul′var on 6 June 1880, the eighty-first anniversary of Pushkin's birth, for a statue of Lord Byron. Hinting at the imperial cityscape's future destruction, Akunin draws on the reader's knowledge of Moscow's history (or, for the characters, future) to create a similar sense of disorientation to that suffered by Fandorin. Whilst Fandorin is embarrassingly reprimanded for his ignorance by his driver, the reader's mind is cast to Stalinist Moscow. The Strastnoi monastery was demolished in 1937 as part of the plan to widen Tverskaia ulitsa (then Ulitsa Gor′kogo) and the statue of Pushkin was relocated in 1950 to the site where the monastery had stood.

The future continues to cast its shadow over the city in *Smert′ Akhillesa* when Fandorin conveniently checks into his hotel, the Dusseaux (Diusso), just prior to the discovery of General Mikhail Dmitrievich Sobolev's dead body in one of the rooms.[90] Despite its historic significance and appearance in *Anna Karenina* on three occasions, the hotel itself is no longer known to contemporary Muscovites.[91] Akunin builds upon this obscurity in order to contrast the hero's hotel with that of the villain, who stays in the Metropole.[92] Whilst the Dusseaux lacks gas or electric lighting, the Metropole appears new and fashionable, evoking for the post-Soviet reader the later, more famous, art nouveau hotel with the same name. With this more modern hotel Metropole not actually opened until 1905, thirteen years after Akunin's narrative setting, Akunin uses the reader's vantage point to inscribe future connotations – the twentieth-century hotel's latest modern conveniences and array of foreign heads of state and celebrities as guests – into the past.[93] The hotel Metropole's actual condition in 1882, the year when the

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[89] Akunin, *Smert′ Akhillesa*, p. 8.

[90] Akunin changes the General's name to Mikhail Dmitrievich *Sobolev* but bases his narrative on Skobelev's actual death in the Dusseaux in 1882. Also appearing in Akunin's *Turetskii gambit* as a hero of the Russo-Turkish war, the 'White General', an avowed Slavophile, apparently suffered a heart attack. This sudden death spurned a series of conspiracy theories due to his young age (38), his nationalist political views, and the animosity felt towards him in Germany. Valentin Masal′skii, *Skobelev: Istoricheskii portret*, Moscow: Andreevskii flag, 1998, pp. 384-402.

[91] L. N. Tolstoi, *Anna Karenina*, Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel′, 1994, pp. 45 and 279-80.

[92] Staniukovich debates the exact location of the Dusseaux around Teatral′nyi proezd without reaching a firm conclusion. Staniukovich, *Fandorinskaia Moskva*, pp. 53-54.

[93] Whilst Staniukovich discovers historical reference to, but no photograph of, an earlier hotel Metropole, it is the 1905 incarnation that immediately springs to the mind of the contemporary reader. Ibid., p. 57.

villain would have checked in, is rendered irrelevant by the post-Soviet reader's precognition.

Akunin plays with further temporal layering when Fandorin subsequently reports to Prince Vladimir Andreevich Dolgorukoi, the city's 'omnipotent master' or, in echoes of de Certeau, city god.[94] Dolgorukoi is a patriarchal character loosely based on the historical figure Vladimir Andreevich Dolgorukov, Moscow's Governor General from 1865 to 1891. Yet in Akunin's vision of the character, there is a remarkable resemblance to three other figures from Muscovite history: Iurii Vladimirovich Dolgorukii, Moscow's 'founder'; Stalin, who is so closely associated with the 1935 General Plan for Reconstruction; and Luzhkov.[95] The portrait of Dolgorukoi accompanying the main text bears little resemblance to the historical figure of Vladimir Andreevich Dolgorukoi. Instead, the long facial hair evokes the statue of Iurii Vladimirovich Dolgorukov, unveiled on Tverskaia ulitsa in 1954, thereby connecting the fictional Governor General's shaping of urban space to the mythology surrounding Moscow's 'founding'.[96] This link is strengthened by the familiar 'gigantomaniacal' (both Stalin's and Luzhkov's) building projects over which Dolgorukoi now presides. In echoes of Stalin, Akunin's Dolgorukoi plans to construct a metro system beneath Moscow's surface. In echoes of Luzhkov, he intends to award the commission to paint the pre-revolutionary incarnation of the Khram Khrista Spasitelia to Gegechkori, the court's favourite Georgian architect, renowned for being a 'scoundrel' (*prokhvost*) in the mould of Tsereteli.[97]

Here, there is a point of overlap between Akunin's detective fiction and his fantastical vision of an alien sculptor in his short story 'Tefal′, ty dumaesh′ o nas'. Whatever the era, and whatever the level of imagination involved in constructing the scenario,

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[94] Akunin, *Smert' Akhillesa*, p. 13.

[95] Evoking the manner in which Muscovites playfully referred to the statue of Dolgorukii as 'Iurii Mikhailovich' (Luzhkov's name and patronymic) during Moscow's 850th anniversary celebrations, Ranchin posits that Akunin 'alludes to' Luzhkov. In her later article, Baraban highlights the lineage back to Dolgorukii and emphasizes Akunin's use of the Khram Khrista Spasitelia in creating 'irony about Luzhkov's megalomania'. Andrei Ranchin, 'Romany B. Akunina i klassicheskaia traditsiia: povestvovanie v chetyrekh glavakh s preduvedomleniem, liricheskim otstupleniem i epilogom', *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 67, 2004, 3, pp. 235-66 (p. 238); and Baraban, 'A Country Resembling Russia', pp. 404-05.

[96] See Akunin, *Smert' Akhillesa*, p. 60; and http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/bio_d/dolgorukov-va.php [last accessed 7 January 2012].

[97] Akunin, *Smert' Akhillesa*, p. 63.

Akunin's message is that the city gods perennially try to leave their personal mark on the face of Moscow. As Dolgorukoi's police chief describes, the Khram Khrista Spasitelia is designed to be a monument to a 'reborn Kheops'.[98] In the form of the eternal sarcophagus to his reign, Dolgorukoi, the city god, wishes to perpetuate his memory forever through the medium of urban space. Such cynicism resonates for the post-Soviet reader, surrounded in the late 1990s by a fresh array of mayoral vanity projects. Akunin's re-founding of a cathedral that the reader knows to have been destroyed in 1931 and reconstructed in the 1990s, and transportation of the man charged with re-envisaging its post-Soviet interior back in time to the point of its first conception, creates a temporal bewilderment reminiscent of Boym's experiences of Moscow during the 1990s. Boym talks specifically of the strange sensation she felt in 1998 when visiting a museum dedicated to the history of the Khram Khrista Spasitelia prior to the opening of its post-Soviet reincarnation.[99] Discovering a sepia-toned photograph, Boym initially assumes that it portrays the nineteenth-century cathedral but later discovers that it is actually a computer-generated image of how the new, reconstructed cathedral will appear in the future. For Boym, this is the manifestation of politicized, 'restorative nostalgia', an ideal 'at the core of [post-Soviet] national and religious revivals'.[100]

In *Smert' Akhillesa*, however, the sceptical interjections of Akunin's narrator and peripheral characters ensure that any 'restorative nostalgia' for a monument to imperial glory is tempered by a heavy dose of irony. Akunin uses the same temporal juxtaposition as Luzhkov achieves in the reconstruction of the Khram Khrista Spasitelia, yet Akunin's scepticism towards, rather than valorization of, strict hierarchies leads him to a very different form of nostalgia. Baraban argues that 'many of Akunin's heroes' across the Erast Fandorin, Sister Pelagia, and Nicholas Fandorin series are examples of Boym's 'reflective nostalgics' because they 'choose to absorb fragments of different cultures'.[101] I would personally extend this argument to the author himself and suggest that Akunin's playful games fit more broadly into Boym's concept of 'reflective nostalgia'. The distinction is important because not all nostalgic sentiments are the same: a fascination with the possibility of encountering a ghost on

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[98] Ibid., p. 71.
[99] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, pp. 107-08.
[100] Ibid., p. xviii.
[101] Baraban, 'A Country Resembling Russia', p. 408.

Kuznetskii Most cannot be equated to a desire to reproduce the past in the present day. As Boym posits, reflective nostalgics 'explore ways of inhabiting many places at once' in order to 'call [absolute truth] into doubt'.[102] Akunin himself 'absorb[s] fragments of different cultures', but the complex multitude of these fragments undermines the simplicity of totalizing visions and the very concept of 'absolute truth'.

Akunin's combination of historical fascination and rejection of 'restorative nostalgia' is further evidenced in the postmodern delight he takes elsewhere in more of these ironies of past times. In 'Pikovyi valet', for example, Fandorin asks Anisii to scour the newspapers for dubious news items. Before drawing Fandorin's attention to the phoney lottery vital to the case in question, Anisii is first suspicious of the Moscow City Duma's legitimate decision to rebuild the arcades on the north-eastern side of Red Square. With Akunin citing the establishment of the arcades' joint stock company and its decision in 1886 to welcome potential blueprints for the reconstruction, the reader is easily able to access the information concealed from the characters.[103] The competition does take place, the architect A. N. Pomerantsev and the engineer V. G. Shukhov ultimately submit the winning design in 1889, and the site is transformed into GUM (known as the Verkhie torgovye riady until 1921). Referencing the pseudo-historical, nationalist architecture of the foreshadowed building, Akunin hints at the post-Soviet fetishization of pre-revolutionary tradition, GUM's post-Soviet renovation, and the post-Soviet construction of the shopping arcade under Manezhnaia ploshchad′. Writing soon after the completion of Tsereteli's cupola on Manezhnaia ploshchad′, Akunin fuses the present and past through Anisii's derision of the proposed 'glass cupola' as 'utter nonsense' (*erunda*).[104] Given the well-publicized debates outlined in the previous chapter regarding the 'Tseretelization' of post-Soviet Moscow, it is clear that Akunin consciously references the contemporary city in his evocation of late-nineteenth-century Moscow. The simple orphan Anisii gives voice to the post-Soviet *Wandersmänner*, who reject the gaudy and kitsch architectural additions to the historic centre.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

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[102] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, p. xviii.

[103] Akunin, 'Pikovyi valet', p. 48. For an excellent series of photographs taken in 1886, the year in which 'Pikovyi valet' is set, and depicting the arcades prior to their reconstruction, see
http://loveki.ru/moscow/riady1886/ [last accessed 4 January 2012].

[104] Akunin, 'Pikovyi valet', p. 48.

Beyond the texts themselves, Akunin's blurring of fact and fiction is supplemented by a melding of reality and virtual reality, both through the author's websites (www.akunin.ru, borisakunin.livejournal.com) and through online communities celebrating the authors' works (www.erastomania.narod.ru, www.fandorin.ru, www.liveinternet.ru/community/1060161). As the author apparently shares his protagonist's fascination with technological developments, Akunin fuses textual and cartographical depictions of the city across time on his official site.[105] Under the heading 'A Combined History of Moscow', Akunin includes extracts from the pre-revolutionary newspapers *Russkoe slovo* and *Golos Moskvy*.[106] They describe how the surface of Moscow's Malaia Dmitrovka gave way on 8 June 1910, causing a horse and cart to fall down a hollow. These citations stand side by side with a narrative of similar tragedy reported by *Interfaks* on 14 May 1998, whereby part of the road collapsed on Bol′shaia Dmitrovka. Once again pre-revolutionary events appear to be repeating themselves in the post-Soviet period, only with a Toyota and a Jeep replacing the horse and cart.

For Akunin, human experiences across different times ultimately prove remarkably similar when one considers the minor details. This impression is strengthened by the accompanying map of Moscow, which evokes Boym's sepia photograph, combining a nineteenth-century map with an aerial view of the city from 2001.[107] The traffic-clogged streets of twenty-first-century Moscow collide with their historical counterparts along a north-south axis. Akunin's illustrator then reinforces time's porosity through space on his own website, www.sakurov.ru. Not only does Sakurov showcase the drawings used in the latest editions of the Fandorin series, but he also incorporates a series of seven paintings that depict Moscow's modern-day Khitrovka (2006-2008).[108] Taking Akunin's descriptions of nineteenth-century buildings as inspiration, and incorporating characters from the Fandorin series, Sakurov creates a temporal pastiche. Juxtaposing old churches and modern cars, he lifts characters envisaged by Akunin as the inhabitants

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[105] Elisa Coati offers further analysis of Akunin's official website in Elisa Coati, 'Time and Space Games on Akunin's Virtual Pages', *Digital Icons: Studies in Russian, Eurasian and Central European New Media*, 5, 2011, pp. 49-70 (pp. 54-56).

[106] http://www.akunin.ru/kombinatorika [last accessed 12 February 2012].

[107] http://www.akunin.ru/kombinatorika/karta/ [last accessed 12 February 2012].

[108] http://www.sakurov.ru/Gorodskoj_pejzazh-Moskva.htm [last accessed 2 February 2012].

of the city's underbelly and reinserts them into twenty-first-century Khitrovkan spaces that have long since gentrified.

The coexistence of past and present is transformed into lived experience by Akunin's internet fans. On 15 October 2000, a group of twelve joined the first Fandorin tour of Moscow organized through the website www.fandorin.ru, following the trail of the two students who dice with suicide in Fandorin's first case. Documenting their journey on the website and detailing their route on a contemporary map of the city, the self-styled *akunisty* merge buildings, bridges, and streets from 1876 with their contemporary surroundings. They intertwine fictionalized stories of crimes that were never committed and their own impressions of post-Soviet Moscow. Members of the group not only cast themselves in the role of detectives, revealing the locations of the characters' whereabouts, but even pretend to be Fandorin himself. At one point, they accost passers-by to enquire if they have seen Fandorin's first suspect, a 'slouching student with glasses'.[109] On the second tour on 11 November 2000, one of the group brings a copy of *Azazel'* to connect Akunin's words with the visual cityscape.[110] On the third tour, the *akunisty* hunt for Fandorin's home at 12 Malaia Nikitskaia ulitsa, a street with grandiose buildings now including the embassies of Laos and Nigeria. Upon discovering Japanese people outside one of the mansions, the fans immediately conclude that they have identified the descendants of Akunin's Masa.[111] In echoes of the Dostoevskii trails in St Petersburg and Sherlock Holmes tours in London, Akunin's imagined geography alters physical places in the fans' minds, inculcating a fascination with both the literary characters' movements and the city's heritage. The true *Wandersmänner* of modern Moscow now realize Chkhartishvili's vision for the lingering of past lives in historic cities, writing their own narratives of the city's streets through their movement.

The website's forum facilitates further interaction, allowing members to discuss their reading experiences and organize meetings. Highlighting Akunin's global appeal, events are arranged in Almaty, Jerusalem, and Tel Aviv. Fans in Istanbul begin a thread to collate pictures of their own city from 'Fandorin's time', even though it is only

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[109] http://www.fandorin.ru/akunistics/sightseeing/one/index.html [last accessed 16 February 2012].
[110] http://www.fandorin.ru/akunistics/sightseeing/two/index.html [last accessed 16 February 2012].
[111] http://www.fandorin.ru/akunistics/sightseeing/three/index.html [last accessed 16 February 2012].

fleetingly referenced in Akunin's works.[112] Moscow nonetheless receives by far the greatest attention on the forum, as the *akunisty* pinpoint streets using Google Maps and Google Earth, photograph locations visited by Akunin's characters, and debate the exact addresses of buildings mentioned in the works.[113] The differences between Akunin's Moscow and the post-Soviet city are unveiled, with particular emphasis placed on the twentieth-century gentrification of the Khitrovka, now described as 'a really lovely corner of old Moscow'.[114] As the *akunisty* compete to discover inaccuracies in the novels, each work has its own sub-forum, allowing members not only to highlight grammatical mistakes and historical flaws, but also to point out spatial errors.

Staniukovich's *Fandorinskaia Moskva* is itself the subject of a two-page online discussion.[115] Staniukovich joins the forum himself to invite reviews from its members, immediately referencing the famous literary critic Lev Danilkin's negative critique of both the book's content ('немилосердно длинные пассажи из романов фандоринского цикла') and what Danilkin perceives to be its purely commercial intent (the work is published in consultation with Akunin to mark the tenth anniversary of Fandorin's creation through his Moscow-based publisher, Zakharov).[116] With the *akunisty* supportive of the author, the response is favourable. One member highlights that Staniukovich is in good company, since Danilkin is also critical of Akunin's works. Another concludes that *Fandorinskaia Moskva* clearly stems from a shared 'love for the subject'.[117] Since each of Staniukovich's chapters is based on one of Akunin's novels, and offers fully mapped routes of the characters' movements, one fan describes how he reads *Fandorinskaia Moskva* 'in parallel' to *Azazel′*, as a means of 'embellish[ing]' the original.[118]

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[112]http://www.fandorin.ru/forum/showthread.php?s=ffe7ea15ffe1c1d11fcfde466757e3eb&threadid=3152; http://www.fandorin.ru/forum/showthread.php?s=ffe7ea15ffe1c1d11fcfde466757e3eb&threadid=2771 [last accessed 16 February 2012].

[113]http://www.fandorin.ru/forum/showthread.php?s=5f3ed93040e8a0c387a9414b04a7beb7&threadid=45 25 [last accessed 16 February 2012].

[114]http://www.fandorin.ru/forum/showthread.php?s=5f3ed93040e8a0c387a9414b04a7beb7&threadid=36 8 [last accessed 16 February 2012].

[115] Coati concludes that the fans' 'passion is shared by professional writers and is legitimised by its collection in a printed book.' Coati, 'Time and Space Games', p. 61.

[116] Lev Danilkin, 'Doppelganger', *Afisha*, 25 March 2008, http://www.afisha.ru/blogcomments/1360/ [last accessed 17 February 2012].

[117]http://www.fandorin.ru/forum/showthread.php?s=84db5f2d8f38b5aedf2e30d5a2a403c2&threadid=476 5 [last accessed 17 February 2012].

[118] Ibid.

Through this guidebook to semi-fictionalized places, the reader can absorb Akunin's descriptions of a porous city, reference other literary citations collated by Staniukovich, follow a nineteenth-century map through the twenty-first-century city, view photographs of old Moscow, explore sketches of little-known buildings, and ultimately discuss these experiences online. The literary hyperspace, physical streets, imagined geographies, and virtual meeting places are all conflated. The city is far more than new gentrification or past places; it is the sum of its inhabitants' experiences. Staniukovich's first trail aptly underlines the resultant pastiche. The reader begins on Miasnitskaia ulitsa, where Akunin describes Fandorin sitting in the Criminal Investigation Department of the Moscow Chief of Police (Сыскное управление при московском оберполицмейстере). However, whilst the reader-cum-*Wandersmann* can glance up from the guidebook to imagine Fandorin by the window of the late-nineteenth-century building that still stands tall on the contemporary street, the police department that Akunin imprints onto 1876 Moscow was not even officially formed until 1881.[119]

3.6. From Past to Future

Akunin has described how he subsisted on literature during his upbringing, reading so voraciously that he learned about his environment through 'books and not through life itself': for him, the fictional was inscribed into his 'cell structure'.[120] His imagined geographies were more important in the shaping of his *Weltanschauung* than the physical spaces around him. As a consequence, Akunin reinscribes this literature into the 'cell structure' of his novels. For the nineteenth-century elements of his hero, he appropriates features from Lev Tolstoi's Prince Bolkonskii (*Voina i mir*), Dostoevskii's Prince Myshkin (*Idiot*), and Mikhail Lermontov's Pechorin (*Geroi nashego vremeni*). For his imagined Moscow, he takes the Petersburg Text as his starting point. With warm descriptions of 'matushka-Moskva' and 'the old, white-walled capital', the reader's first encounter with Akunin's world evokes feelings of nostalgia. The reader's delight in shadowing the flâneur-detective in his crime-solving operations is mirrored by the pleasure of uncovering lost nineteenth-century mores and revealing those 'lovely

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[119] Staniukovich, *Fandorinskaia Moskva*, pp. 14-18. See also pp. 74-76 for a history of Miasnitskaia ulitsa.

[120] Cited in Elena Ragozhina, 'Boris Akunin: "Lekarstvo ot skuki"', *Novyi stil'*, 97, 2011, pp. 15-23 (p. 16).

corner[s] of old Moscow'. The reader can explore grandiose Muscovite buildings, follow the literary footprints to uncover which author is being referenced, and dream of becoming – or falling in love with – the dashingly handsome superhero.

In the reviews of literary critics, the first Fandorin novels were initially received as a means of escape from the socio-economic problems of the late 1990s. Even in the later works, the reader can continue to savour the nostalgic filter of a pre-revolutionary setting – the depictions of Moscow are never as bleak as the post-apocalyptic novels or Gothic visions to be discussed in the subsequent chapters of this thesis. However, with the author's external surroundings changing and the novels' internal chronology heading towards World War I, there is a growing sense of anxiety over the course of the series. The writer's increasing political engagement and involvement in anti-Putin campaigns are reflected in both the atmosphere of turmoil in Akunin's most recent Fandorin novel *Chernyi gorod*. As Konstantin Matrosov points out, the reader of *Chernyi gorod* is waiting for Fandorin's ultimate demise, which must lie round the corner given the predestined nature of the novels' chronology.[121] Elucidating the impact of time on our understanding of space, Akunin connects the approach of the twentieth century in his fiction to wider feelings of 'decentredness', the introduction of hard-boiled elements, and an increasing sense of forthcoming destruction.

Fascinated by the concept of spatially capturing time, Akunin describes how he frequently relishes the opportunity 'to solve, to untangle […] the enigma of time'.[122] Whatever their intent, however, Akunin's efforts result in the creation of new enigmas for the reader, who digs beneath the surface to discover entangled threads of different periods. Beyond the allusions to nineteenth-century culture, Akunin imbues his protagonist with features drawn from the archetypal socialist-realist hero and aspects of the post-Soviet celebrity. Beyond the descriptions of old Moscow, Akunin imprints the Soviet reconstruction and the post-Soviet transformation of the city onto his works' main locale. Fandorin combines English taciturnity and Eastern teachings, dandyism and incredible abilities in the martial arts. Moscow is carefully poised between traditional Russian mores and Western advances, provincial backwardness and the latest

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[121] Konstantin Matrosov, 'S bol′iu v Baku', *Gazeta*, 22 November 2012,
http://www.gazeta.ru/culture/2012/11/22/a_4863041.shtml [last accessed 15 August 2013].
[122] Cited in Ragozhina, 'Lekarstvo ot skuki', p. 16.

fashions. These competing forces are as applicable to post-Soviet Russia as they are to pre-revolutionary Russia. In one interview in 2005, for example, Akunin remarks upon Putin's connections to the FSB and Putinism's nepotism, emphasizing how those in 'the public service' in both eras can be 'deluded' by a false sense of the common good.[123]

As the Fandorin works come to focus less on the stability of the surroundings and more on the hero's life, Akunin's fans grow increasingly attached to the protagonist and yearn to follow his routes around Moscow. The internet facilitates a dialogical relationship between the author and his supporters, allowing them to share these yearnings publicly. As argued in the first chapter of this thesis, the city is not a single narrative, but a collection of stories, a smorgasbord of competing visions. Akunin's Moscow is the perfect exemplar. It is a layered space that blends past occurrences with fictional tales, the nineteenth with the twenty-first century, and reality with virtual reality. In Akunin's Moscow, there is, however, a constant sense that all these antagonisms and layers cannot continue to coexist peacefully. The potential for a clash of values, eras, and social groups constantly bubbles beneath the surface. An apocalypse is about to explode on the streets of old Mother Moscow due to the inexorable march of time, the footprints of those readers still searching for that 'slouching student with glasses'.

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[123] Cited in Igorʹ Shevelev, 'Boris Akunin: "Ubitʹ Fandorina?"', *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 2 November 2005, p. 16.

Chapter IV

Post-Apocalyptic Moscow

Moscow after the Apocalypse: Resurrecting the 'Phoenix-City'

4.1. The Rise of the Firebird from the Ashes

Cities and Thrones and Powers

Stand in Time's eye,

Almost as long as flowers

Which daily die:

But, as new buds put forth

To glad new men,

Out of the spent and unconsidered Earth

The Cities rise again.[1]

In the immediate aftermath of the Soviet Union's disintegration, one popular joke on the streets of Moscow suggested that, in a reworking of Stalin's thesis of achieving 'socialism in one country', the people were now witnessing an 'apocalypse in one country'.[2] The sense that people were losing both the foundation on which they had built their lives and the future towards which they were aiming was reflected in the turn of literature to dystopian and apocalyptic visions.[3] On occasion, these went further than an 'apocalypse in one country' to depict an apocalypse in one city: Moscow. With the capital once again taken as a synecdoche for Russia, the secession of Soviet republics was symbolized by sending fissures through Moscow's streets. In Aleksandr Kabakov's *kinopovest'*, *Nevozvrashchenets*, written from May to June 1988 and published the following year in the journal *Iskusstvo kino*, the reader is transported to Moscow in the near future – 1993. Soviet Moscow has been effaced, warring factions wreak havoc, and anarchists populate the ruins of the bombed Peking Hotel.[4] Published three years later, Vladimir Makanin's *Laz* similarly epitomizes the lost past and rapidly changing present by focusing on lawlessness in Moscow. With men hunting in packs, groups boarding

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[1] Rudyard Kipling, 'Cities and Thrones and Powers', in David Cecil and Allen Tate (eds), *Modern Verse in English*, London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1958, p. 111.
[2] Cited in Mikhail N. Epstein, *After the Future: The Paradoxes of Postmodernism and Contemporary Russian Culture*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995, p. 72.
[3] For an overview of Russian dystopian fiction in the late 1980s and early 1990s, see Sally Dalton-Brown, 'Signposting the Way to the City of Night: Recent Russian Dystopian Fiction', *The Modern Language Review*, 90, 1995, 1, pp. 103-19.
[4] Aleksandr Kabakov, 'Nevozvrashchenets', *Iskusstvo kino*, 1989, 6, pp. 150-75.

buses to steal old ladies' shoes, and gangs raping women, Makanin's protagonist, Kliucharev, lives in constant fear of the mob.[5] These two pessimistic works are indicative of the widespread darkness in the literature of that time – the turn towards *chernukha*. They evoke a dying city at the centre of a crumbling empire, reflect an uncertain future through the protagonists' helplessness, and link wider political upheaval to the collapsing of individuals' universes.

In the subsequent years, Moscow not only survived but rose again as the 'phoenix-city' from the ashes of its former existence.[6] As outlined in Chapter Two, the city government attempted to resacralize Moscow as the powerful embodiment of Russianness. Luzhkov viewed the city as the optimal building site for new skyscrapers, shops, and neon monuments to consumerism, and the spearhead for Russia's future direction. Yet, over a decade after the publication of Kabakov's *kinopovest'*, and long after the immediate upheaval of the early 1990s, the apocalypse still continued to be written into fictional Moscow. Dystopian and apocalyptic images, saturated with disillusionment and disaster, remain important tropes for the literature of the 2000s.[7] Indeed, as Boris Lanin posits, scholars are gradually coming to appreciate the continued significance of utopia and dystopia to twenty-first-century Russian literature and the enduring legacy of Soviet science fiction.[8] The importance of utopian visions did not end during the 1990s. This chapter will focus most closely on three of Post-Apocalyptic Moscow's bleaker narratives during the 2000s: Tolstaia's *Kys'* (2000), Bykov's *ZhD* (2006), and Glukhovskii's *Metro 2033* (2005).[9] Tolstaia's 'Moscow' is a stagnating village; Bykov's 'Moscow' is the centre of a new empire entirely isolated from the rest

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[5] Vladimir Makanin, *Laz: Povesti i rasskazy*, Moscow: Vagrius, 1998.

[6] Boym points out that there is a long-standing association of the firebird with Moscow, built into the city's mythology after its destruction in 1812. Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, p. 100.

[7] For an overview of recent Russian dystopian fiction, including apocalyptic visions, see Aleksandr Chantsev, 'Fabrika antiutopii: Distonicheskii diskurs v rossiiskoi literature serediny 2000-kh', *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 86, 2007, 4, pp. 269-301.

[8] B. A. Lanin, 'Russkaia utopiia, antiutopiia i fantastika v novom sotsial′no-kul′turnom kontekste', Problemy sovremennogo obrazovaniia, 1, 2014, pp. 161-69

[9] *Kys'* was first conceived in 1986 in the wake of the Chernobyl′ catastrophe, but Tolstaia returned to it in the late 1990s. *Metro 2033* was initially published online in 2002 but was reworked and extended for its publication in paper in 2005. As well as spawning a highly successful sequel, *Metro 2034,* the original novel has been transformed into an internationally acclaimed computer game and a film. This has inspired devotees to discuss Glukhovskii's fictional world and even write their own novels or short stories on www.metro2033.ru [last accessed 31 July 2013].

In echoes of Gogol′'s 'epic poem in prose', *Mertvye dushi*, Bykov entitles his work '*poema*' and suggests in the foreword that his preferred meaning for the abbreviation 'ZhD' is '*Zhivye dushi*'. The title, however, controversially evokes the slur 'zhidy', an idea reinforced by his characters' anti-Semitism. Dmitrii Bykov, *ZhD: Poema*, Moscow: Vagrius, 2006, p. 5.

of the world; and Glukhovskii's 'Moscow' exists in the bowels of the city due to radiation on the surface. These three works are connected by their portrayal of life after the apocalypse, the spatial isolation and temporal stasis that such a future entails, and their narrative focus on the 'little man' travelling from the geographic and social peripheries of Moscow to its centre. In their annihilated topographies, these post-apocalyptic cities are a far cry from Akunin's exploration of nineteenth-century buildings and old cobbled streets. The apocalypse yet to occur in Akunin's Fandorin series has now struck, transforming Moscow's citycape and dramatically reshaping its society. The destruction is so widespread that the authors raise the question of whether anything truly Muscovite can remain in Moscow after the apocalypse.

Close readings of these three works allow us to explore how the topography of the apocalypse is mapped onto the topography of Moscow, and how temporal disjuncture can be captured through depictions of space. As analysed in my second chapter, post-Soviet Moscow's cityscape was transformed into an eclectic pastiche of architectural confusion under the auspices of Luzhkov and Tsereteli, but the verticality and centralized hierarchies were strengthened. Walking past the collection of oversized monuments and reconstructed buildings as a *Wandersmann* might create confusion, yet looking down on a plan of the centre as a city god reveals a strengthening of Moscow's circular structure. Tolstaia, Bykov, and Glukhovskii capture this unusual mixture of continued disorientation, even after the period of immediate turbulence in the 1990s, and centralized ideology, an overarching metanarrative of history. Whereas Akunin reacts to the uncertainty of the post-Soviet period by locating narratives in a more stable, past time, these three authors hyperbolize the feelings of deracination through the lens of the future apocalypse. The upturning of the familiar and loss of former values create a landscape of varied signifiers, making it difficult for the post-apocalyptic inhabitant to reconcile the fragments. Yet the city's concentricity and its concomitant associations with the 'power vertical' still persist in the most mutated of future landscapes. The three authors use this enduring topographical feature to shed light on the importance of concentricity and verticality to both the city and the country, Russian society's past and future.

These post-apocalyptic novels are particularly illuminating in their conceptualization of transformation – where further change is still possible after the initial transition of the

'post-' period and where the structures of the city and society are reproduced. They go beyond the indiscriminate mass destruction of nuclear catastrophe to explore survival: they are 'post-apocalyptic' in the sense defined by Gary Wolfe, portraying 'the end of a way of life […] perhaps a system of beliefs – but not the actual destruction of the planet or its population'.[10] They consider the ideological volte-face, mutated remainders, and haunting vestiges produced by catastrophe as well as their impact on society. There is a clear overlap between such gloomy images of a denigrated, post-nuclear-blast Moscow and the dystopian images of an undesirable future repeatedly appearing in twentieth-century Russian literature. There is an inherent apocalyptic moment, 'the end of a way of life', in both utopian and dystopian literary fictions. Both Tolstaia and Bykov insert their Moscows into the dystopian canon of physically isolated spaces, tormented by restrictive rules that receive no revision from the outside world. Glukhovskii equally considers a lonely underground universe, drawing heavily on the Strugatskii brothers' science fiction. Like dystopian fiction, the authors then elucidate the potential degradation which initially embraced change can herald. Rather than concentrating on one paradigm taken to its paradisiacal or terrifying conclusion, however, all three focus on the conjunction of beginning and end. They incorporate utopian hope and its dystopian failure, but question where society can go next or even if it still has anywhere to 'go' at all. The novels link the loss of old aspirations created by the previous apocalyptic moment in Russia's history (1917) to the most recent post-Soviet transformations and then investigate the implications for the new millennium. Past catastrophes and their potential for future recurrence are inscribed into the present.

Working primarily with the apocalyptic moment of 1991 rather than 1917, Tolstaia, Bykov, and Glukhovskii reimagine the traditional Russian symbol of the apocalypse, which David Bethea identifies as the horse and rider in his influential work on the apocalyptic thread running through Russian fiction, from Dostoevskii to Belyi, from Platonov to Bulgakov and Boris Pasternak. Whilst the horse and rider was once the

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[10] Some have shied away from the term *post-apocalyptic,* as does the French scholar Samuel Minne, who prefers 'post-cataclysmique' due to the biblical associations with the 'apocalypse'. Since 'cataclysm' contains its own connotation of the deluge myth and writers continue to draw on the heritage of the biblical apocalypse, I use the terms that still pervade Anglophone scholarship. Samuel Minne, '*Yesterday Never Dies:* Perdre et retrouver l'Histoire dans quatre sociétés post-cataclysmiques', *Cynos*, 22, 2005, 1, para. 4, http://revel.unice.fr/cycnos/index.html?id=526 [last accessed 15 April 2013]. Gary K. Wolfe, 'The Remaking of Zero: Beginning at the End', in Eric S. Rabkin et al. (eds), *The End of the World*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983, pp. 1-19 (p. 1).

'"Ursymbol" for Russian history at an epic crossroads', it has been transformed for the post-apocalyptic atavistic world.[11] In *Kys'*, the horse has been replaced as the steed of choice by the mutated and enslaved human being. In *ZhD*, the horse and rider has become the 'iron horse', a train that circles the entire country in one giant loop.[12] In *Metro 2033*, the urban metro train replaces the 'iron horse', its breakdown symbolic of the Soviet project's failure. For Tolstaia, the harnessing of the irradiated human reflects the hopelessness of achieving further evolution. For Bykov, the transformation of the linear train of progress into the circular train forces Tolstaia's despair into ever-diminishing circles. For Glukhovskii, the metro train's breakdown is catastrophic but can herald new possibilities. In contrast to Tolstaia and Bykov's vision, Glukhovskii thus offers a glimmer of hope in the unlikeliest of places. Moscow's post-apocalyptic metro system suddenly has a new *raison d'être* beyond transporting passengers.

The reconceptualization of the harbinger of doom, this 'Ursymbol' of sudden transformation, leads us to the temporal angle so often simplified or marginalized in utopian and dystopian narratives by time's complete cessation. In *Kys'*, time, space, and apocalypse are all combined to show how the desired post-apocalyptic transition is impossible in a society suffering widespread amnesia. Although the chapter titles – letters drawn in order from the old Russian alphabet – evoke the desire for linearity, the novel's dénouement offers anything but progress. Tolstaia's Moscow after the apocalypse is caught in cyclical time, unreflectively repeating the same old rituals. *ZhD* likewise connects concentric space, cyclical time, and the memory-destroying apocalypse, presenting a bleak vision of temporal repetition. Writing from a more distant standpoint than Tolstaia, Bykov incorporates Putinism as yet another repressive slump in Russia's sprawling history. *Metro 2033*, on the other hand, has been chosen for analysis because it offers the reader both a vision of cyclicality and an alternative model. Allowing multiple regimes to prevail over one single order, Glukhovskii constructs a rhizomatic, node-based topography for Moscow beyond the strictures of its traditional concentricity. An embracing of this spatial multiplicity offers a path forwards. Hope is not found in reassuringly familiar stability or repetitive cycles but

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[11] David M. Bethea, *The Shape of Apocalypse in Modern Russian Fiction*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989, p. 193.
[12] As Bethea highlights, the train or iron horse also has a long-standing historical significance in Russian culture. For example, Bethea points out that in Dostoevskii's *Idiot*, the train was portrayed as a symbol of progress, 'capable of penetrating not only hitherto unreachable geographical but also social or class boundaries'. Ibid., p. 74.

springs from the unexplored fissures opened up by catastrophe. Glukhovskii's topography of chaos thereby comprises diverse contexts and potential opportunities.

4.2. Juxtaposing Centre and Periphery in Pre-Apocalyptic Moscow

In the words of Susan Buck-Morss, the 'modern city' contains an inherent tension between 'heaven and hell, phantasmagoria and catastrophe'.[13] The city as a closed, manageable, and malleable space offers the perfect geography for explorations of utopia. As far back as Plato's *Laws,* utopia was envisaged as an urban space that 'should be placed as nearly as possible in the centre of the country', with the walled Acropolis (containing temples to the gods) at its sacred focal point.[14] Yet the city also has a dark side: a hellish dystopia lurks in its shadows. The large metropolis stands haunted by the legacies of its previous inhabitants.[15] It is a site of perversion and the devil, said to be living in its subterranean maw.[16] It facilitates the full spectrum of human existence, yet creates a rupture between the haves and the have-nots. If, as David Harvey concludes, the 'polarization of positive and negative images has its geography', then it is specifically the concentric city that seems to provide its perfected form.[17] The concentric city focuses power at its core, valorizing the 'phantasmagoric' centre whilst concealing 'catastrophe' in its subterranean or peripheral cracks.

As highlighted in the analysis of Luzhkov's visions, Moscow stands as the epitome of concentric urbanity. It is, as Lotman posits in his conceptualization of the city as a semiotically charged space, a city associated with elevation. If Moscow has its own set of codes and signs as a 'semiosphere', then Lotman argues its main symbol is one of transcendental insularity, focusing inwards on its walled central citadel and

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[13] Susan Buck-Morss, 'The City as Dreamworld and Catastrophe', *October*, 73, 1995, pp. 3-26 (p. 9). I am grateful to Mark D. Steinberg for encouraging me to consider the relevance of this work to my analysis.

[14] Plato, *Laws*, trans. R. G. Bury, in two volumes, London: Heinemann, 1926, I, pp. 380-81.

[15] As discussed in the previous chapter, traces of the past can be read in urban space, imbuing the cityscape with palimpsestic qualities.

[16] David L. Pike, *Metropolis on the Styx: The Underworlds of Modern Urban Culture, 1800-2001*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007, esp. pp. 65-157. For more on the city's polis/perversion dichotomy, see Stephen Schneck, 'City and Village', in George F. McLean and John Kromkowski (eds), *Urbanization and Values*, Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1991, pp. 169-79.

[17] David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000, p. 158.

differentiating itself as the 'mediator between heaven and earth'.[18] Whereas 'eccentric' St Petersburg exists at the edge of cultural space and tends toward contact with outside cultures, concentric Moscow specifically lends itself to literary descriptions of hierarchy and isolation. From the images of Moscow as the Third Rome in the nineteenth-century Moscow Text elucidated by Lilly to Bulgakov's famous evocation of the three concentric cities cited by Lotman (Jerusalem, Rome, and Moscow) in *Master i Margarita*, the city's circles have been repeated in the cultural imagination.

The tension between the circle and the line has been problematized previously in Belyi's *Peterburg* (1913-14). Representing the city through a collection of geometric lines, dots, points, and circles, Belyi captures the intertwining of space, time, and *Weltanschauung* in the pre-Revolutionary Russian capital. St Petersburg expands and contracts throughout the narrative from its centre, where its founder stands immortalized in the form of the Bronze Horseman. The tension between East and West is writ large across its cityscape. Whereas Belyi uses the geographical features of St Peterburg to 'examine […] the persistent question of identity within the Russian psyche' and 'address Russia's impending political, social, and even psychological upheaval', the authors at the centre of this chapter explore these themes of apocalyptic change and widespread social turmoil through the prism of the post-Soviet Russian capital.[19] By focusing on Moscow, Tolstaia, Glukhovskii, and Bykov move away from the linearity of St Petersburg's geographical grid and focus solely on the connections between spatial contentricity and temporal cycles.

The symbolic significance of Moscow's concentric layout stems from the 1935 General Plan, aimed at rendering the city a beacon of hope for those toiling in the Soviet peripheries. In his eulogy to the Soviet 'City of the Sun' discussed in Chapter One, Bukharin envisaged the Soviet capital as a glorious focal point, 'a new Mecca, to which fighters for the true happiness of humanity come together from all ends of the earth'.[20] In the imagined geography of the Soviet centre, the capital was now sacralized above all other spaces. This opposition between centre and periphery was intertwined with the

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[18] Lotman, *Universe of the Mind*, esp. pp. 191-202. Brodsky expresses a similar idea in his description of Moscow's tendency to retreat 'to its womblike, claustrophobic, and xenophobic condition'. Brodsky, 'Guide to a Renamed City', p. 88.

[19] Sandra Joy Russell, 'The City as Dialectic: Andrei Bely's Creative Consciousness, its Nietzschean Influence, and the Urban Centre in *Petersburg*', *TranscUlturAl*, 1, 2011, 4, pp. 31-46 (p. 31).

[20] Bukharin, 'Gorod solntsa', p. 4.

series of binary antagonisms constructed in political discourse between the old, dark, primitive, chaotic tsarist regime and the new, illuminating, carefully planned Soviet order. The apocalyptic moment of 1917 was the pivot between the two worlds, with catastrophe portrayed as necessary destruction.

When, however, the concentric city's sacred core proves rotten and the utopian dreams associated with it fail to materialize, negative connotations are easily attached to the showcase city. First published abroad in 1986 and penned in his émigré home in Munich, Vladimir Voinovich's *Moskva 2042* is a good example of connecting a rotten vertical hierarchy to Moscow's concentricity. Voinovich selects Moscow as the centre of his dystopian universe and reduces the rest of the world to three concentric circles: the Soviet republics in the first, the fraternal socialist states in the second, and finally the capitalist nations.[21] Rather than valorizing these circles, Voinovich exploits the topography to make a satirical sideswipe at the Stalinist imagery of greatness radiating from the centre. When cast negatively, the isolation created by the centre/periphery binary forces Moscow into totalitarian stagnation. Communism's 'new' light of hope quickly fades, no technological progress can be made without outside inspiration, and the promised sacredness is profaned. Fifteen years previously, Venedikt Erofeev had similarly satirized the constricting rings of centralized power in *Moskva-Petushki.*[22] Whilst the narrator and protagonist Venichka seeks to flee oppressive Moscow to the Edenic freedom of Petushki on a suburban train, he ultimately finds himself back in the city centre. As Venichka's journey remains unrealized, his head is smashed against the Kremlin wall by a group of unnamed thugs.[23] Inserted into the dystopian context, spatial concentricity proves threatening, the centre violently constricting.

Prior to the conception of *Kys'*, Tolstaia had already thematized this centre/periphery spatial binary in her short story 'Fakir', first published in 1986 and set in the same year. 'Fakir' is an excellent example of how space can be used to raise questions of social hierarchy, marginalization, and elitist pretension. Investigating Tolstaia's early use of

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[21] Vladimir Voinovich, *Moskva 2042*, Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1987, pp. 124-25.

[22] *Moskva-Petushki* was first published in 1973 by the Israeli émigré journal *AMI*. Karen Ryan-Hayes concludes that, although some sources place the text in the late 1960s, *Moskva-Petushki* was written between 18 January and 7 March 1970, by 'Erofeev's own account'. Karen Ryan-Hayes, 'Introduction', in Karen Ryan-Hayes (ed.), *Venedikt Erofeev's Moscow-Petushki: Critical Perspectives*, New York, Lang, 1997, pp. 1-17 (p. 6).

[23] Venedikt Erofeev, *Moskva-Petushki: Poema,* Moscow: Zakharov, 2005, p. 138.

the centre/periphery opposition also helps to elucidate the significance of the apocalypse's specific topography during the subsequent analysis of *Kys′*, *ZhD*, and *Metro 2033*. In the opening scene, the reader tracks Galia's journey from periphery to centre, as Galia and her husband accept an acquaintance's (Filin's) dinner invitation to his centrally located apartment. Using free indirect speech, Tolstaia presents the reader with a dichotomized image of Moscow from the viewpoint of a resentful citizen of the distant sleeping districts. As Moscow's concentricity becomes the dominant trope, Tolstaia uses space to underline Galia's liminal position in late-Soviet society:

> Посреди столицы угнездился дворец Филина, розовая гора, украшенная семо и овамо разнообразнейше, – со всякими зодческими эдакостями, штукенциями и финтибрясами: на цоколях – башни, на башнях – зубцы, промеж зубцов ленты да венки, а из лавровых гирлянд лезет книга – источник знаний […] И вечернее небо над Филиным, над его кудрявым дворцом играет светом – кирпичным, сиреневым, – настоящее московское, театрально-концертное небо.[24]

> За окном тихо визжало под колесами Садовое кольцо, валил веселый народ, город сиял вязанками золотых фонарей, радужными морозными кольцами, разноцветным скрипучим снегом.[25]

Galia constructs a psychological wall around the Sadovoe kol′tso and elevates the centre above the surrounding city via a 'hierophany', the manifestation of the sacred in the chaos of the profane.[26] As Helena Goscilo asserts, the physical surroundings mould Galia's perceptions: the centre is awash with colour, the people flock 'cheerfully', and even the sky adopts a theatrical air in Filin's performance.[27] The 'stage' (the crenellated, protected Tower-of-Babel apartment in one of Stalin's *vysotki*) on which Filin 'acts' endows him with authority. Given Galia's ignorance, the reader is never even presented with the actual architectural features of his abode ('эдакостями, штукенциями и

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[24] Tat′iana Tolstaia, 'Fakir', in *Reka Okkervil′*, Moscow: Podkova, 1999, pp. 196-218 (p. 206).
[25] Ibid., p. 205.
[26] I use here Mircea Eliade's term, *hierophany*, because, in his view, people have always sought to found their universe on stable, sacred space. Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion,* trans. Willard R. Trask, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1959, p. 22.
[27] Helena Goscilo, *The Explosive World of Tatyana N. Tolstaya's Fiction*, Armonk, NY: Sharpe 1996, pp. 100–04.

финтибрясами'). Tolstaia carefully uses language (*tartaletki* rather than *pirozhki*), gastronomy (pâté), and music (Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Johannes Brahms) to highlight geographical and cultural divisions. The periphery, on the other hand, possesses an 'oily cold darkness', in which slum-like, five-storey concrete *khrushchevki* stand decaying:[28]

> Темно-белый холод, горбушка леса, где тьма еще плотней, где может быть, вынужден жить несчастный волк, – он […] с отвращением смотрит в слепые ветреные дали, […] зубы стиснуты в печали, и мерзлая слеза вонючей бусиной висит на шерстяной щеке, и всякий-то ему враг, и всякий-то убийца…[29]

When Galia leaves the towering *vysotka* feeling deficient, she passes through Moscow's concentric circles and travels to the profane, hostile, natural world. The periphery is the outermost boundary of civilization, the Muscovite incarnation of Evgenii Zamiatin's famous Green Wall standing between (the last) human order and untamed nature.[30] The architectural *zubtsy* (crenellations/teeth) that fortify Filin's cocooned home are transformed into the savage *zuby* (teeth) of the miserable wolf. Anthropomorphized yet voiceless, this marginalized creature represents Moscow's 'little people', crying soft tears that are never noticed or acknowledged by the centre.

Galia's illusion shatters, however, when she discovers that Filin ordinarily lives in the suburb of Domodedovo and that 'his' apartment is only a temporary sublet. This epiphany forces Galia not only to re-evaluate this 'clown in a Padishah's clothing' but also to reconsider her topographical image of Moscow.[31] The centre no longer seems so bright, the suburbs not so gloomy. As Voinovich and Erofeev illustrate, utopian isolation can easily be recast as totalitarian oppression, and as Tolstaia shows, the colourful centre can quickly become a grey disappointment when the mirage proves false. Moscow's topography contains inherent oppositions based on its particular topography that can easily be turned upside down in the cultural imagination.

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[28] Tolstaia, 'Fakir', p. 206.

[29] Ibid., p. 207.

[30] For Zamiatin's protagonist, D-503, prior to his epiphany, 'Man ceased to be savage [dikim chelovekom] only when we constructed the Green Wall'. Evgenii Zamiatin, *My*, New York: Inter-Language Literary Associates, 1973, p. 81.

[31] Tolstaia, 'Fakir', pp. 216-18.

Kabakov's anarchists, Makanin's mob, Erofeev's thugs, and Tolstaia's wolf are permanently poised to emerge from the dark spaces of Bukharin's bright 'new Mecca'.

4.3. Continued Concentricity in Tolstaia's Post-Apocalyptic Moscow

In *Kys′,* Tolstaia takes the late-Soviet, dichotomized Moscow constructed in 'Fakir', *Moskva 2042*, and *Moskva-Petushki*, burns it to the ground, and rebuilds it in grotesque, mutated form. With the Chernobyl′ catastrophe and the collapse of the Soviet Union standing between her two depictions, *Kys′* is set in an almost unrecognizable Moscow 200 years after the 'Blast' (*Vzryv*). The city survives but the remaining settlement has been ripped free of the majority of its historical roots and appears devoid of civilization. In honour of the ruling warlord, this isolated *sloboda* has even been renamed Fedor Kuz′michsk, mirroring the proposals to rename Moscow after Stalin during the 1930s.[32] The Stalinist *vysotki* and functional *khrushchevki* have disappeared, but the contrasts between centre and periphery remain, moulding the protagonist's (Benedikt's) perception of both his city and his life's trajectory.[33]

Firmly situated within the tradition of isolated utopian/dystopian space, going back to the description of disconnected and ephemeral Atlantis given by Plato's Critias and within the concept of the concentric city, Tolstaia's post-apocalyptic incarnation of Moscow is cut off from its surroundings and gazes in on itself.[34] As in Voinovich's vision of the Muscovite city-state, the city's rings are also explicitly evoked: the *Prezhnie*, the group of Muscovites who survived the 'Blast', and as a consequence no longer age, create a homemade Sadovoe kol′tso signpost. Although the apocalypse has mutated the street itself—the signpost now stands by a row of huts and not on an actual ring road—the Sadovoe kol′tso again marks the border between civilization and nature. Staring out over the city borders from the porch of his meagre dwelling, Benedikt finds nothing but darkness:

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[32] Colton, *Moscow: Governing the Socialist Metropolis*, p. 249.

[33] In her choice of protagonist's name, Tolstaia references Erofeev's Venedikt in *Moskva-Petushki*. As discussed subsequently on p. 151, one particular scene in *Kys′*, which depicts Benedikt's drunken exploits, strengthens this initial association.

[34] Plato, 'Timaeus', in *Timaeus, Critias, Cleitophon, Menexenus, Epistles*, trans. R. G. Bury, London: Heinemann, 1929, pp. 1-253 (pp. 40–43).

Какая тьма. На север, на юг, на закат, на восход – тьма, тьма без края, без границ, и во тьме, кусками мрака, – чужие избы как колоды, как камни, как черные дыры в черной черноте, как провалы в никуда, в морозное безмолвие, в ночь, в забвение.[35]

Again employing the narrative technique of free indirect speech, Tolstaia blinkers the reader's view to capture Benedikt's ignorance and underline the depressive mind-set created by confined, concentric existence. The 'dark-white cold' and 'windy horizon' of 'Fakir' are now associated with an even gloomier finality, with silent 'oblivion' and 'death'. This is compounded by Tolstaia's remoulding of Galia's wolf into the part-feline, part-folkloric *kys'*. As the city's inhabitants invent wild myths, rumours abound of the *kys'* – a beast that screeches mournfully, lingers amongst the trees, and waits for fresh prey. Tolstaia anthropomorphizes nature, enabling the snowy wastelands to emit a 'howl', and fuses Moscow's peripheral space with the dark 'other', the reimagined wolf/*kys'*.[36]

With only darkness beyond the peripheries of his world, Benedikt turns away from the wailing wastelands and focuses on the sacred centre where the powerful elite dwell. As Benedikt emerges from the nineteenth-century mould of the literary 'little man' who dreams of social aggrandizement, the story becomes a *Bildungsroman*. Ashamed of his tail (a consequence of radiation poisoning) and pathetic existence, Benedikt progresses from being a copyist in the Work *Izba* to the son-in-law of the city's powerful secret police chief, Kudeiar Kudeiarych – *Glavnyi Sanitar*. His climb up the career ladder is mirrored spatially by his literal and metaphorical advance through the 'seven gates' standing between his dark hut and the mansion of his new bride's family.[37] There, Benedikt retreats to his personal Tower of Babel – his father-in-law's library. After he has read every book, he stares out across the pitiful city below:

Бенедикт выбегал на галерею, смотрел с верхотуры на слободу […] поспешают-семенят там внизу людишки, бегут-торопятся в печное

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[35] Tat′iana Tolstaia, *Kys'*, Moscow: Eksmo, 2003, p. 92.

[36] Ibid., p. 204.

[37] The seven gates are a clear reference to Campanella's City of the Sun, which possesses a sacred heart surrounded by seven walled rings, named after the seven planets known to people at that time. Tommaso Campanella, *La Città del Sole: Dialogo Poetico/The City of the Sun: A Poetical Dialogue,* trans. Daniel J. Donno, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981, esp. pp. 26-27

тепло, на лавку, да за суп за свой, жидкую мышиную похлебочку…

Как и едят-то дрянь такую, как и не противно-то? […] А была б моя

воля, – весь город перетряхнул бы: сдавай книги, тудыть![38]

The centre of reconstructed Moscow appears to be a portal to a better life. It is associated with order, where Benedikt neatly categorizes his books; the light of Benedikt's mouse-tallow candle (and the golden street lamps in 'Fakir'); human civilization; technology – the wheel has been 'reinvented' even if the cars no longer speed down the streets; culture – the cult of the book; height – Benedikt gazes out from atop a tower (and Filin lives in a Stalinist *vysotka*); and the sacred – Benedikt worships the library's books as material idols (just as Galia is spellbound by the exoticism of Filin's *tartaletki*, pâté, and music). The space beyond Moscow's borders is characterized by chaos, with no streets or regulated movement, the natural world, a primitive existence, the profane, and the illegible (Galia and Benedikt irrationally fear the externalized, unknown 'other'). These spatial oppositions are further buttressed by the wall, both physical and psychological. Kudeiar Kudeiarych's library is physically protected within the mansion's seven walls, whilst the knowledge contained within psychologically elevates this space and imbues its guardians with authority over the common citizen. The centre/periphery binary is mapped onto the topography of the post-apocalyptic city with all its accompanying associations and implications.

Locked away from society's woes, Benedikt has the privilege of dreaming of a distant, utopian Atlantis, formed from fragments of information gleaned through his vorocious reading and 'postmemories' passed down from his mother.[39] Here, Tolstaia evokes Petia's dreams from another of her short stories, 'Svidanie s ptitsei' (published in *Oktiabr'* in 1983), and reminds the reader of Erofeev's descriptions of Petushki.[40] Whereas Benedikt envisages distant green islands bedecked with lilac and the 'Princess Bird' (Kniazh′ia Ptitsa) yearning to kiss him, Erofeev's Venichka longs for Petushki,

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[38] Tolstaia, *Kys′*, pp. 284-85.
[39] Tolstaia, *Kys′*, p. 201. 'Postmemory' is used here in the sense in which Marianne Hirsch employs the term, as memories transmitted to the next generation. Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames*: *Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997, esp. pp. 22-23.
[40] As in Bendikt's vision, Petia envisages a bright, white civilization, including 'white palaces with emerald, scaly roofs, stepped temples with tall doorways, […] enormous golden statues, and marble staircases'. Tat′iana Tolstaia, 'Svidanie s ptitsei', in *Liubish′ – ne liubish′*, Moscow: Olma-Press, 1997, pp. 66-79 (pp. 66-67).

'where the birds never fall silent, not by day or night, where the jasmine never stops blossoming'.[41] Like Venichka's Petushki, however, Benedikt's paradisiacal islands prove to be a drunken illusion, fuelled by three barrels of locally brewed alcohol. After a restorative nap, Benedikt's Atlantis sinks without a trace.[42]

His dreams do, however, elucidate the significant divergence of *Kys'* from its predecessors and the specific temporal and spatial impact of the apocalypse. Tolstaia's Galia is confined by her social status and the location of her apartment on the urban periphery. Voinovich's Kartsev is enclosed in a society he understands to be absurd but cannot escape due to the leader's all-pervasive cult of personality. Erofeev's Venichka is an intellectual repeatedly haunted by the Kremlin and the power it represents. Tolstaia's Petia is a daydreaming child, but the story's dénouement represents an epiphany that renders the fantastical universe forever lost. Benedikt, on the other hand, is eternally trapped in an infantilized world by his own lack of education or cultural roots. He can never escape from the cycle of destruction and degradation, not because the wider regime will never fall or the leader will never die (as in a dystopian hell) but because he personally lacks the necessary nous. He does not possess the free-thinking of the typical dystopian protagonist. Despite effectively travelling through time by accessing Moscow's past knowledge, Benedikt is unable to make sense of this information. He can never become an intellectual because the books he craves so desperately that he is willing to kill for are no more than meaningless objects. He mistakes the material for the spiritual and fails 'to learn the alphabet of life'.[43]

Moscow's concentric form and the accompanying lust for centralized power persist after the apocalypse, but all nuance and dialogue have been destroyed. Extrapolating from Benedikt to the future generation he embodies, Tolstaia warns against isolating the concentric city and, by extension, post-Soviet society, from Russia's past, 'high'

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[41] Tolstaia, *Kys'*, pp. 201-02; and Erofeev, *Moskva-Petushki*, p. 34.

[42] Tolstaia's evocation of the lost island of Atlantis is reminiscent of the moment when Zamiatin's D-503 finally breaks through the Green Wall and out of One State. Surrounded by the beauty of the natural world, D-503 conjures the analogy of stumbling upon 'a sixth, a seventh continent in the ocean, some sort of Atlantis'. Zamiatin, *My*, p. 137.

[43] Tolstaia, *Kys'*, p. 336. Again referencing the dystopian canon, Tolstaia evokes Zamiatin's Mamai, the forty-year-old 'boy' who attempts to protect his money from the raids in St Petersburg during the upheaval of 1917. Although initially appearing innocent, Mamai, like Benedikt, is overwhelmed by his lust for books as material objects. Mamai is so consumed by his love of books that he violently impales the mouse who has robbed him of his literary fantasies. E. Zamiatin, 'Mamai', in *Povesti i rasskazy*, Letchworth: Bradda, 1969, pp. 148-56.

culture. Tolstaia's post-apocalyptic generation live in a state of what Marshall Sahlins describes as 'historylessness', experiencing culture 'in practice', as '*habitus*'.[44] Their lives are so basic that the passing of time becomes an irrelevance. With no future, the past is crystallized into a single version of events, dominated by the invented triumphs of the ruler. Discovering that no progress is made over hundreds of years, the *Prezhnie* attempt to educate the current generation of Muscovites. Their (hi)stories fall on deaf ears. When the city is once again gripped by revolution, renamed, and resubjugated by a new elite, no improvements are made.[45] Moscow's concentric structure is simply strengthened: its hierophanic citadel is protected by twice as many sentinels, the new regime's idol is guarded around the clock, and, in a nod to Moscow's ring roads and the Soviet internal passport system, three fences are erected requiring authorization to pass.

The loss of knowledge caused by the apocalypse ensures that the city's structure cannot be reinterpreted, reimagined, or reworked. Galia's epiphany is now impossible due to Benedikt's ignorance. As the centre continues to expand and contract in a cycle beyond Benedikt's control, he finally realizes that the ostracized 'other' is not external but internal. The *kys'* does not exist beyond the city walls but within his very being. The apocalypse has permanently imprinted the constricting centre/periphery division onto Moscow's topography because its inhabitants no longer possess the tools to alter the paradigm. Spatial concentricity and temporal cyclicality are crystalized by the apocalypse to such an extent that they trap individuals at the most basic level, within their own heads.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

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[44] Marshall Sahlins, 'Other Times, Other Customs: The Anthropology of History', *American Anthropologist*, n.s., 85, 1983, 3, pp. 517-44 (p. 525). Eliade posits that the elevating and ordering of profane space into transcendental space also results in the transformation of 'concrete time into mythical time'. Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return or, Cosmos and History*, trans. Willard R. Trausk, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991, p. 21.

[45] *Moskva 2042* concludes with a similar moment of revolution and regression. Effigies of the former ruler are burned, his supporters are mercilessly crucified, the Solzhenitsyn figure returns on a white steed, and a new set of mediæval rules are put in place. Voinovich, *Moskva 2042*, pp. 314-16, and 325-26.

In an interview with *Afisha*, Tolstaia reveals that she has taken the word *kys′* from the Komi language.[46] The obscure linguistic basis and unexplained meaning of the novel's eponymous villain emphasize not only the inhabitants' need for primordial myths but also the mutation of language following a break with the past. Believing 'it is possible to extract [*vytianut′*] an entire world from one word', Tolstaia makes careful use of language, exaggerating the divisions in post-Soviet Russia by giving each societal level different forms of address (represented spatially by Moscow's concentric model).[47] Adopting mediæval torture practices, whilst aping Soviet slogans, members of Tolstaia's elite use a mixture of colloquialisms and bureaucratic terms to dictate to ordinary citizens. In Fedor Kuz′mich Kablukov's three decrees, Tolstaia parodies Tsarist degrees and Soviet propaganda, as the leader heaps praise upon himself and informs the people how they should behave.[48] Representing the intelligentsia, the *Prezhnie* frequently appear to be speaking a different language from Benedikit, who mispronounces words that are unknown to him ('*mogozin*', '*onervestetskoe abrazavanie*', '*osfal′tom*', '*entelegentsyi*', '*troditsiiu*', '*rinisansa*', '*met*', '*felosofiia*').[49] Items such as asphalt and honey, and facilities such as shops or museums, no longer exist and such words are no longer required. Tolstaia, however, puts greater emphasis on the loss of cultural concepts in the future generations' shrinking vocabulary (a university education, the intelligentsia, tradition, a renaissance, and philosophy).

In the face of linguistic play and temporal pastiche, critics have struggled to describe the novel's message or clearly define its genre. The wealth of peasant expressions, folk idioms, and mutated words imbues *Kys′* with a specifically Russian feel but poses the question of what lies behind Tolstaia's games. For Andrei Nemzer, *Kys′* is no more than empty playfulness with constant references to the literary canon, an 'imitation' of Aleksei Remizov's tales and Zamiatin's dystopia, and the recontextualization of the Strugatskii brothers' mutants.[50] Others focus on the fact that *Kys′* was originally

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[46] Tat′iana Tolstaia, 'Nepal′tsy i miumziki: interv′iu zhurnaly *Afisha*', in Natal′ia Tolstaia and Tat′iana Tolstaia, *Dvoe: Raznoe*, Moscow: Podkova, 2001, pp. 419-25 (p. 419). In the novel's English translation, Jamey Gambrell emphasizes the association with *rys′* (lynx), entitling the work *The Slynx*.

[47] Ibid., p. 422.

[48] Tolstaia, *Kys′*, pp. 10, 95-96, 139-40, and 376.

[49] Ibid., pp. 16, 19, 26, 35, 47, and 69. Compare this mutation of language with linguistic changes following the advent of Russian SMS language, the use of phonetic spelling on more recent internet blogs, and the additional complication of influences from English, often valorized for their exoticism.

[50] Andrei Nemzer, 'Azbuka kak azbuka: Tat′iana Tolstaia nadeetsia obuchit′ gramote vsekh buratin', http://www.ruthenia.ru/nemzer/kys.html [last accessed 25 May 2011].

conceived in 1986 in the wake of the Chernobyl′ crisis: Tolstaia only returned to the novel in the late 1990s to incorporate Russia's upheaval during the first decade after perestroika. Nikita Eliseev, for example, concludes that the failure to realize the work upon its initial inception was 'fatal', rendering it 'irrelevant' by 2000.[51] Tolstaia herself, however, refuses to define the work as a comment on a single historical moment, emphasizing the individual aspect of the trope of the apocalypse: 'everybody has their own blasts [vzryvy], cataclysms, wars, and the destruction [gibel′] of familiar worlds'.[52] Natal′ia Ivanova agrees that if *Kys′* is read as a straight dystopia, it appears superficial and the product of an age when that genre remained popular, but argues that if the novel is treated as a parody of dystopia, it accommodates both the Gorbachev and El′tsin eras and incorporates postmodern playfulness.[53] Lipovetsky further posits that *Kys′* captures the crisis of post-Soviet language and should not be read as a prognosis for a 'future' that had already occurred by the time of its publication.[54]

Over a decade later, it is clear to me that the novel's significance lies in its commentary on the impact of repeated loss rather than the failings of the current teleology. Tolstaia recreates the helplessness of spatial isolation frequently problematized in dystopian literature but ultimately destroys the hope that exists beyond the dystopia's walls or within the usual protagonist's liberated personality. The apocalypse is not used to explore new ground but as a hyperbolizing force for the trope of seclusion Tolstaia scrutinizes in her short stories of the 1980s and for the theory of cultural degradation she expounds in her newspaper articles from the 1990s.[55] As Boris Paramonov notes,

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[51] Nikita Eliseev, review of *Kys′* by Tat′iana Tolstaia, *Novaia russkaia kniga*, 2000, 6, http://www.guelman.ru/slava/nrk/nrk6/11.html [last accessed 25 May 2011]. Boris Kuz′minskii similarly highlights the time between the novel's inception and publication, labelling *Kys′* a 'retro-dystopia' (retroantiutopia), Boris Kuz′minskii, review of *Kys′* by Tat′iana Tolstaia, *Shvedskaia lavka*, 5, 18 October 2000, http://old.russ.ru/krug/vybor/20001018.html#kn1 [last accessed 25 May 2011].

[52] Tat′iana Tolstaia, 'Miumziki i Nostradamus: interv′iu gazete *Moskovskie novosti*', in Tolstaia and Tolstaia, *Dvoe*, pp. 426-34 (p. 426). Tolstaia confesses that the work lay dormant for long stretches of time, once going untouched for four years, but she stresses how her ideas evolved whilst working as a university lecturer and commentator for American magazines. Tolstaia, 'Nepal′tsy i miumziki', p. 419.

[53] Natal′ia Ivanova, 'I ptitsu *paulin* izrubit′ na *kaklety*', *Znamia*, 2001, 3, pp. 219-21. During the first decade of the new millennium, since the publication of Ivanova's article, the genre of dystopia has seen a strong resurgence.

[54] Mark Lipovetskii, 'Sled *Kysi*', *Iskusstvo kino*, 2001, 2, pp. 77-80.

[55] Aleksandr Ageev highlights the overlap of the novel's ideas with Tolstaia's 1992 article in *The Guardian* on Russian nationalism and her review of Elena Molokhovets's nineteenth-century cookbook, *Podarok molodym khoziaikam* (1861), which he believes inspired the multiple culinary references found in *Kys′*. Aleksandr Ageev, 'Golod 45', *Russkii zhurnal*, 2 August 2001,

Kys′ is connected to *brys′*, to *rys′* and, by extension, to Rus′. The lynx-like (*rys′*) cat, which is 'shooed' away (*brys′*) in people's minds, represents not only the marginalization of those on the periphery but, more widely, of Russia's past.[56] With Moscow thrust back to Kievan Rus′, the archive of the city's entire history has been obliterated.

This intertwining of space, time, and language is perhaps best evidenced in *Kys′* by Nikita Ivanich's attempts to restore culture and revive memory through a new statue to Pushkin. As the majority of the community lack the necessary code for the statue to hold meaning, and nobody can recall Pushkin's visage, the poorly sculptured block is rapidly profaned. It is reduced to a 'pushkin', a lump of wood on which to hang laundry. The statue is no more than a simulacrum, as elucidated by Jean Baudrillard in the sense that it substitutes a model of a cultural reality for reality itself because such a cultural reality simply no longer exists.[57] For Tolstaia, the dramatic break with the past has rendered the cultural sophistication and educational opportunities for which Galia yearns in 'Fakir' not only unachievable, but even more distant by the year 2000 than they were in the mid-1980s. The apocalypse has strengthened the centre/periphery divide and exasperated the situation for the ordinary Muscovite who can no longer even distinguish between sophistication and degradation. Catastrophe's impact on such an individual level kills hope and destroys potential avenues of escape. Creating ground-level confusion, upheaval allows a single leader to take control of history with dangerous consequences.

4.4. The Train, History, and Moscow in Bykov's *ZhD*

In *ZhD*, Bykov takes Tolstaia's exploration of inescapable cultural degradation after the apocalypse and writes it onto a broader chronotope. Whilst both Tolstaia and Bykov make grand statements about Russia's history, Paramonov's description of *Kys′* as 'an

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http://old.russ.ru/krug/20010802.html [last accessed 15 April 2013]; Tatyana Tolstaya, 'A Short Tour of the Russian Asylum', *The Guardian,* 19 March 1992, p. 25; and Tat′iana Tolstaia, 'Zolotoi vek', *Den′: Lichnoe*, Moscow: Podkova, 2001, pp. 450–68.

[56] Boris Paramonov, 'Russkaia istoriia nakonets opravdala sebia v literature', *Vremia MN*, 14 October 2000, p. 7.

[57] Jean Baudrillard, 'Simulacra and Simulations' [1981], in *Selected Writings*, 2nd edition, ed. Mark Poster, trans. Paul Foss et al., Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001, pp. 169-87.

encyclopædia of Russian life' is even more applicable to *ZhD*.[58] Incorporating more of Russia's history and vast space in his sprawling epic, Bykov considers the political stagnation of the mid-2000s in the context of wider trends and maps Moscow's concentricity onto the whole of Russia's geography. Unlike *Kys'*, *ZhD* is not premised on a nuclear blast but on economic apocalypse. The discovery of the mysterious substance phlogiston in the rest of the world has both isolated Russia externally and sparked a civil war internally.[59] Although once again set in a distant future, Bykov depicts post-Soviet tropes familiar to his reader in 2006: an isolated Russia, strong Moscow, vertical power structures, racist characters, violent war, unpleasant torture, depraved sex, and an all-too-frequent anti-Semitism.[60] Turning his satirical tools towards Putin's nationalistic discourse and political *zastoi* following the political and cultural thaw of the 1990s, Bykov considers a Russian state bent on self-sufficiency. In Bykov's vision of the future, the strong-armed *siloviki* not only seize control of the country's political system but also propagate militaristic images to the point that they permeate all social and cultural layers.

In echoes of Kablukov's all-pervasive cult of personality in *Kys'* and Luzhkov's attempts to write his own narrative into the post-Soviet cityscape, Bykov's Moscow is dominated by the ruling Varangians. A synechdoche for the wider Varangian state, the capital is cleansed of all opposition to conform to the leading ideology that juxtaposes Varangian identity with that of the Khazars. Proclaiming themselves descendants of the Scandinavians who traded along the rivers from the Baltic to the Black Sea in the ninth and tenth centuries, the Varangians are cold, powerful, and rigid. The Khazars, on the other hand, are Jewish liberals claiming descent from the semi-nomadic people who established an empire north of the Caspian Sea and converted to Judaism at the

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[58] Paramonov, 'Russkaia istoriia nakonets opravdala sebia v literature', p. 7.

[59] Bykov draws upon the obsolete, late-eighteenth-century Phlogiston Theory, which posited that this odourless, colourless material was responsible for combustion. Bykov thereby satirizes the global search for an oil replacement, post-Soviet Russia's economic reliance on oil and gas, and Russia's history of being placed outside Western developments. For more on Phlogiston, see J. H. White, *The History of the Phlogiston Theory*, London: Arnold, 1932.

[60] For Lipovetsky, Bykov at times 'falls into' nothing less than 'anti-Semitic pamphleteering'. For Igor' Shevelev, however, the 'Russophobia' and anti-Semitism are the result of Bykov writing 'from the soul' and 'without confines'. Mark Lipovetskii and Aleksandr Etkind, 'Vozvrashchenie tritona: Sovetskaia katastrofa i postsovetskii roman', *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 94, 2008, 6, pp. 174-206 (p. 200); and Igor' Shevelev, 'Bykov bez beregov', *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 30 August 2006, p. 13.

beginning of the ninth century.[61] With Moscow's fixed space opposed to the nomadic arrangement of the Khazar Kaganate, the groups' topographies reflect their *Weltanschauungen*:

> Москва есть столица Русской земли, стольно-престольный град, исторический центр ее объединения вокруг себя, мать русских городов и национально очищенный от всякого мусора краснобелокаменный город-герой, неоднократно отстоявший свою честь от иноплеменных захватчиков![62]

In an evocation of the centre/periphery paradigm, Varangian Moscow is elevated via a hierophany through the tributes to the 'purified' 'Hero City'. The narratives of Moscow's glory propagated through the monuments, metro station, and victory parades at Park Pobedy are now channelled through the lens of the apocalypse and written across an entire future society.[63] As Bykov extends Moscow's concentric circles across his future Russia, Moscow becomes both the giver of life, 'the mother of Russian towns', and the citadel of state power. It thus combines both the Muscovite and the Petersburgian images of the nineteenth-century 'Petersburg Text'. Appropriating St Petersburg's mantle as the city of the north, Varangian Moscow is not just the protective 'matushka-Moskva' of Akunin's early works but also the more heroic, militaristic 'Rodina mat''. When the Varangian soldier fighting on the southern front constructs an imagined geography of his 'northern' homeland, he evokes the Greek myth of Hyperborea, describing both the harshness of the landscape ('суровые пейзажи') and Moscow's vertical power-structure ('торжество вертикали').[64] The centre of the concentric rings of power, Moscow is the heavenly city offering transcendence from post-apocalyptic torment.[65]

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[61] Frederick I. Kaplan, 'The Decline of the Khazars and the Rise of the Varangians', *American Slavic and East European Review*, 13, 1954, 1, pp. 1-10.

[62] Bykov, *ZhD*, p. 50.

[63] See my second chapter, pp. 61-62.

[64] There are clear links here between the Varangian power structure and Putin's emphasis on the *vertikal'*. Bykov, *ZhD*, p. 43.

[65] Bykov's imagery of Varangian Moscow as an aspirational destination strongly evokes the depiction of the Soviet capital in numerous films and texts of the Stalin era. As Emma Widdis posits through her neat distinction of 'exploration' and 'conquest', Stalinist culture focused on the assimilation of far-flung Soviet lands. Whereas 'exploration' allows a non-hierarchical embrace of difference, 'conquest' is undertaken as a radial, centrally controlled process. Like Varangian Moscow, Stalin's Moscow was repeatedly portrayed as the powerful centre which tamed the wilderness of the East. This process

As in Galia and Benedikt's vision of the tower, centripetal forces initially draw ordinary Varangians to this symbolic focal point. Army Captain Gromov is eager to return to Moscow to rendezvous with his lover, accompanying Private Voronov on a long overland journey. A Varangian Governor in Siberia likewise yearns for Moscow, constructing a series of oppositions between the capital and the far-flung reaches of the country. In a characterization reminiscent of Tolstaia's description of the wolf/*kys'*, the Governor orientalizes the locals, associating them with nature, darkness, ignorance, muteness, the profane, and primitive chaos. For the Governor, this distant Siberian village is populated – with the exception of his pale lover – by 'swarthy [smuglykh], stocky Chinese-looking peasants and proletariats', who are 'lazy', possess an unrefined 'cunning', and speak in an incomprehensible language lacking vital vocabulary.[66] As a consequence, severance from the centre is a source of despair, as 'everything happen[s] in Moscow'.[67]

Tracking four couples' journeys across Russia, however, the reader discovers that although Moscow is the nucleus of autocratic power, none of the main characters can find joy or establish roots there. Varangian Moscow is, in fact, the embodiment of the nation's lost momentum: rather than everything happening there, nothing changes. Devoid of former vibrancy due to a climate of cultural and political freeze, Varangian Moscow comes to resemble Bykov's politicized description of Putin's Russia: 'a dead man', whom one should fear because 'a dead man cannot change'.[68] Following in the footsteps of Tolstaia six years after the publication of *Kys'*, Bykov connects spatial concentricity to temporal stasis and cultural degradation. Varangians communicate in an increasingly simplistic Russian, preferring single-syllable worlds in their latest television serials whilst barely sustaining a literary scene devoid of inspiration.[69] As Bykov pre-empts the policy in 2011 to construct New Moscow on 148,000 hectares of

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necessitated the drawing of fresh boundaries, paradoxically bringing the periphery closer to the centre whilst simultaneously emphasizing the centre's sacredness. Emma Widdis, *Visions of a New Land: Soviet Film from the Revolution to the Second World War*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003, pp. 7-12; and Griffiths, 'The Third Rome and the Frozen Lake', pp. 28-32.

[66] Ibid., p. 221.

[67] Ibid., p. 223.

[68] Dmitrii Bykov, '20 years after USSR: Russian Society and Russian Literature', guest lecture at the University of Cambridge, 13 October 2011.

[69] Bykov describes a pair of writers who must 'carve out' (*vaiat'*) the sixteenth novel in a series on special agent Sedoi. Bykov, *ZhD*, p. 83.

freshly claimed land, his future Moscow has been extended beyond sustainable limits and is populated by vast swaths of half-constructed houses and rubbish tips. Whereas Tolstaia imagines only the reconstruction of former buildings, Bykov describes the 'ruins' of buildings never completed in the first place. Satirizing the desire in the 2000s to grab more land, Bykov leaves the visions of further accommodation and business districts as empty dreams, their failure inscribed into the cityscape. The city government's plans appear overly ambitious, premised on their symbolic value of rendering Moscow a global city rather than the practical need for new office space.

With Varangian Moscow crumbling under the weight of its own homogeneity, Bykov uses temporal layering to highlight alternative narratives of the city, contrasting memories of past Moscow with the present, ailing capital. Just as Tolstaia's *Prezhnie* still vaguely recall a city of culture, Bykov's Gromov recollects a multicultural capital. Yet, it is not the Sadovoe kolʹtso that Gromov idealizes, but distant memories of the unregulated suburbs of Medvedkovo:

> Она жила в Медведкове, у черта на рогах, в доме барачного типа […]. Необычайно трогательна была взаимная любовь всех этих людей. […] Маша жила тут шестой год, но что делается за этим забором – понятия не имела. Как-то он предложил ей влезть в пролом, сам протиснулся следом – и тайна раскрылась […] Там был интернат для детей с врожденными уродствами; не успели они войти во двор красного здания, как невесть откуда выбежали на них эти страшные дети […] окружили их кольцом, задирали головы, мычали и домогались любви.[70]

In the godforsaken, far-flung reaches of Moscow ('у черта на рогах'), Bykov unveils a community-driven micro-city thriving on diversity. Behind the Varangian façade of military power, through the small gap in the concrete wall, there is an entire world of the unvoiced and the marginalized. Like the unfortunate children in the hidden hostel, outsiders seek mutual understanding in a close-knit suburban collective.[71] It is only in

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[70] Ibid., pp. 98-100.
[71] There are echoes here of recent fantasy fiction focusing on magical groups in Moscow's suburbs, discussed in my sixth chapter, esp. pp. 251-60.

this distant place – untouched by the confining 'power verticals' of the centre – that true aspiration can still flourish.[72]

In an even more distant recollection of Gromov's childhood, memories of the far-flung suburbs are again captured as a source of hope. As Gromov recalls having gazed at passing trains from a cabbage field on the border between the urban and the rural, Bykov ties the image of the locomotive to a journey through both time and space:

> Если сесть на этот поезд, можно было попасть в удивительные места. […] По железной дороге мохно уехать куда угодно, причем вопрос о конечной цели решает она сама. [...] Можно ехать на юг, а приехать на север – дорога сама переводит стрелки […] Человек, севший на поезд, который тяжело, с железным скрипом полз мимо громовского дома, выпадал из обычного пространства и попадал в особое. Его время начинало подчиняться железнодорожному расписанию. […] Железная дорога, ж/д, раз и навсегда кем-то запущенная, решала тут все.[73]

When the ten-year-old Gromov is willing to take a leap of faith, the train promises to transport him from the 'ordinary space' (обычного пространства) of suburban Moscow into a bright new future, where a wealth of 'wonderful destinations' awaits. The train brings Russia's vast space to Gromov's doorstep, as the idyllic fields of Moscow's periphery are fused with the locomotive speeding towards a new life. Echoing the political programme he promotes in Putin's Russia, Bykov uses the spatial paradigm of concentricity to underline his suspicion of central authority. He proposes instead a fresh focus on the periphery.[74] The past, the periphery, and the train of progress offer hope.

In the present time of militaristic, decaying Varangian Moscow, however, Gromov disembarks from a now dilapidated train upon his return to Moscow as an adult. Here, he discovers a city without a future, a place synonymous with ending and death, 'where

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[72] Bykov asserts that 'there are no good verticals in Russia, verticals do not work at all'. Bykov, '20 years after USSR'.

[73] Bykov, *ZhD*, pp. 541-42.

[74] For Bykov, Putin's political elites are mired in a never-ending cycle, thus necessitating a 'move away from the centre and [a new] focus on the occurrences on the periphery, […] in the provinces'. Bykov, '20 years after USSR'.

there has been no life for a long time'.[75] Since the dead city, like Bykov's dead man, 'cannot change', the hope of past journeys is lost in the present day.[76] The images of community-spirited Medvedkovo and future-orientated train travel are nothing more than 'restorative nostalgia'. The suburb has been bulldozed, the children removed, and the train no longer rushes into the distance. This revelation is shared by the Varangian Governor when he makes his own return to his former home, discovering that Moscow's fabric has been corroded by hegemonic power. With the first part of *ZhD*, 'Departure' (*Otpravlenie*), concluding with an 'interlude' that contains new lyrics to the tune of 'Podmoskovnye vechera', Moscow is explicitly fused with Babylon. This foreshadows the capital's future disintegration in the second part, 'Arrival' (*Pribytie*), when the past's irrevocability is fully realized. Aspiration for something better immediately following the apocalypse is replaced in the longer term by the realization that nothing positive will ever arrive.

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In the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the train became a symbol of modernity, of the journey towards a more technologized future, connecting the larger cities to each other and to the raw materials required for their sustenance and expansion. In Russia, the rapid development of the railway proved particularly conducive to Moscow's growth and, following the unveiling of Brianskii vokzal on 18 February 1918 (renamed Kievskii vokzal in 1934), Moscow stood at the centre of the rail network with nine major stations. The train altered the perception of distance on the map and impacted on the city's spatial layout.[77] Moving into the Soviet period, the hierarchy of sacredness reflected in Soviet culture and described by Clark was supported by the railway.[78] On 16 June 1930, Moscow Time was designated as the mean time for the entire Soviet Union and the train rushed out to the periphery, spreading Muscovite order.[79] In Aleksandr Malyshkin's socialist-realist work, *Liudi iz zakholust'ia*, space is used to

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[75] Bykov, *ZhD*, p. 115.
[76] Ibid., pp. 554-55.
[77] Moscow's eastern districts of Lefortovskaia, Basmannaia, and Rogozhskaia experienced particularly rapid industrial growth at the beginning of the twentieth century as the areas most convenient for the new rail connections. Colton, *Moscow: Governing the Socialist Metropolis*, p. 47.
[78] See my first chapter, pp. 25-28.
[79] Mervyn Matthews, *The Passport Society: Controlling Movement in Russia and the USSR*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993, p. 27.

represent time, and the train is instrumentalized as the facilitator of the journey to catch up with, and overtake, the West. The train flies 'from the forests somewhere, from the village, from autumn', towards Moscow's 'sun-drenched festivities', heralding a new spring.[80]

In *ZhD*, Bykov repeatedly connects Moscow to the train but reverses this traditional and socialist-realist connotation of forward movement, deconstructing the train as the symbol of progress.[81] Bykov takes Moscow's Kol′tsevaia liniia as the paradigm for post-apocalyptic existence, forcing the premise of a circle line – to link urban hubs together – onto the wider rail network – designed to connect Moscow radially to other destinations. As one of Bykov's partisans summarizes: 'they want to encircle Russia with a giant rail ring', 'a local variation of the Great Wall of China'.[82] The iron horse roaring towards the future and the train of Gromov's childhood now trundle round a giant circle line encompassing the entire Russian territory.

Bykov underlines the difficulty of escaping Moscow's circles in the tale of Sasha, a homeless man who embarks upon a drunken journey to Moscow's suburbs reminiscent of that undertaken by Erofeev's Venichka. Like Venichka and Benedikt, Sasha discovers that paradise beyond the capital proves illusory, an *outopia* in the Greek sense of 'no-place'. With Sasha struggling to escape Moscow's urbanity, deracinated and unable to reach places he vaguely remembers, he finds himself trapped on a disorientatingly new metro line, the Preobrazhenskaia liniia.[83] With the line's name reminding the reader of Professor Preobrazhenskii from Bulgakov's *Sobach'e serdtse* (written in 1925), Bykov evokes Bulgakov's idea that a historical moment of

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[80] *Liudi iz zakholust'ia* was based on the author's visits to Magnitogorsk during 1931 and 1932. Malyshkin, *Liudi iz zakholust'ia*, pp. 7 and 34.

[81] For a Soviet-era vision of the train's movement being halted, see Andrei Platonov's excellent short story 'Sredi zhivotnykh i rastenii'. Written in 1936, Platonov's story subverts the socialist-realist narrative of the Soviet train speeding towards progress, playing with the official rhetoric to reveal the emptiness behind its shining façade. Andrei Platonov, 'Sredi zhivotnykh i rastenii', *Techenie vremeni*, Moscow: Moskovskii rabochii, 1971, pp. 369-88. See also Griffiths, 'The Third Rome and the Frozen Lake', pp. 32-36.

[82] Bykov, *ZhD*, pp. 371-74. The importance of the fetishization of an encircling wall evokes Franz Kafka's short story 'The Great Wall of China'. For Kafka, the narrative of confinement is of greater significance than its actualization. The porosity of the segmented Great Wall of China is irrelevant as long as the citizen continues to view it as a complete circle. Franz Kafka, 'The Great Wall of China', in *Description of a Struggle and The Great Wall of China*, trans. Willa Muir et al., London: Secker and Warburg, 1960, pp. 76-82.

[83] Bykov, *ZhD*, p. 467.

apocalyptic upheaval may affect dramatic change, but does not result in positive transformation if all ties to the past are immediately severed.

Bykov strengthens this connection between the spatial image of the train leading nowhere and the temporal torpor of a lost past at the end of *ZhD*. Here, he uses Gogolian imagery to evoke the famous scene at the end of Part One of Gogol′′s *Mertvye dushi* but overturns its symbolism.[84] With the destruction of their former home in Medvedkovo to make way for new housing, Gromov accepts that a life with Masha in Moscow is unrealizable and returns on the train to fight the Varangians' phoney war. His loss of future aspiration is echoed in the train's lack of direction and the hopelessness of ending the war. Gogol′′s forward-rushing 'ptitsa-troika', shooting like 'a bolt of lightning' ('не молния ли это, сброшенная с неба?'), thus becomes a dilapidated train ('дрянной, обшарпанный, сообразно бюджету постановки'); the horses of Gogol′′s troika mutate into the iron horse; and the linearity of Gogol′′s 'elongated lines' [vytianutye linii] is replaced with a circle.[85] As Rosalind Marsh notes, citing Georgii Vladimov's novel *General i ego armiia* (1994) and Viacheslav P′etsukh's essay 'Russkaia tema' (1993), other writers have previously evoked Gogol′′s speeding troika in the post-Soviet period as a metaphor for Russia and its future.[86] However, whereas the question for those writing in the early 1990s was the future destination of the troika/Russia, Bykov upturns its movement to leave it permanently short of any concrete terminus. Bykov prefaces *ZhD* with a short citation from Ecclesiastes, proclaiming: 'All go to one place'. In the dénouement, that one place proves to be the 'village' of Zhadrunovo, an empty space where all are suspended in a void. Bykov's Russia is thus obviated altogether, a signifier without a signified, a simulacrum whose citizens meander in circles and fight a war that does not even exist. In sum, 'Только и была [кольцевая] железная дорога'.[87]

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[84] Whilst Gogol′′s Chichikov travels around estates collecting dead souls – legal ownership of deceased serfs – Bykov's living souls remain nominally alive, yet are similarly tied to the land.

[85] Bykov, *ZhD*, pp. 675-76; and N. V. Gogol′, *Mertvye dushi*, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel′stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1948, pp. 243-44. For more on Gogol′′s image of 'Russia itself as a troika', see Robert A. Maguire, *Exploring Gogol*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994, pp. 249-54.

[86] Rosalind Marsh, *Literature, History and Identity in Post-Soviet Russia, 1991-2006*, Bern: Lang, 2007, p. 410. Pelevin also transforms Russia into a train in his novella 'Zheltaia strela' (1993).

[87] Bykov, *ZhD*, p. 676.

Travel inside a railway carriage can be, at the same time, both a liberating and a confining experience. On the one hand, the passenger (Gromov as a child) is afforded the opportunity to expand horizons. On the other hand, de Certeau convincingly argues that the carriage also acts as a form of incarceration, keeping the passenger immobile despite the forward mobility of the locomotive itself (Gromov as an adult and Bykov's Russia throughout history). The railway carriage forms a 'closed system', in which the traveller is 'pigeonholed, numbered, and regulated' to produce order, a 'rational utopia'.[88] The traveller can see the outside world through the windowpane, imbuing immobile objects with an apparent ability to move, but the glass acts as a barrier, preventing all tactility with the places passed. It is only when the traveller disembarks at the terminal station that the illusion created by the passenger's encapsulation ends and 'history begins again'.[89] With the jostling masses at the train station, 'the incarceration-vacation is over.'[90]

Bykov uses the image of the train to capture this incarceration in *ZhD* but instead of a single passenger, the whole of post-Soviet Russia is confined within the small compartment.[91] The cell of glass and iron isolates, but rather than producing an ordered, 'rational utopia', it creates dystopic, dehumanizing order. Sitting inside Bykov's train means being trapped in perpetual immobility. The passenger's encapsulation never ends; the status quo can never be disrupted; history can never recommence. The reader is informed, through the titles of the two parts into which the work is divided, that the train is departing and subsequently arriving, yet Bykov's gigantic circular railway moves from departure to arrival and arrival to departure. With the fusion of temporal cycles and spatial circles, Bykov's protagonist Volokhov envisages Russia's history spatially and extends the cyclical theory of pre-nineteenth-century Russian culture posited by Lotman and Boris Uspenskii.[92] Drawing on the resurrection of demolished

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[88] De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 111.

[89] Ibid., p. 114.

[90] Ibid.

[91] As Bykov notes in his foreword, 'ZhD' could be interpreted not only as an abbreviation of 'Zhivye dushi' but also of the railway ('zheleznaia doroga'). Bykov, *ZhD*, p. 5.

[92] Lotman and Uspenskii argue that pre-nineteenth-century Russian culture can be explained in terms of a binary model of 'the old and the new', with the future opposed to the past at regular breaking points. This began with the removal of the idol of Perun from the hills of Kiev, where it was replaced with a Christian church following Vladimir's conversion. Yuri M. Lotman and Boris A. Uspensky, 'Binary Models in the Dynamics of Russian Culture (to the End of the Eighteenth Century)', in Alexander D. Nakhimovsky and

buildings during the 1990s, in particular the reconstruction of Moscow's Khram Khrista Spasitelia atop the unrealized dreams of the Dvorets Sovetov, Bykov follows the thread round to complete the circle. It is now the Kievan statue of Perun which is re-erected, as the Varangians' new (but old) deity:

> Захватчики же шествовали […] по Дантовой модели ада – сужающимся концентрическим кольцам, последним из которых было девятое: полный мрак и вечная мерзлота. От момента создания империи Россия прошла уже пять кругов. […] Начинался шестой, очень простой, с постепенным и неукоснительным сокращением всех, кто знал длинные слова и иностранные языки.[93]

In his explicit evocation of Dante, Bykov captures Benedikt's katabatic journey through Moscow and applies it to the course of Russian history. Bykov uses the character of Volokhov to espouse the political views he personally expresses elsewhere: 'Russian history is a play, played for seven centuries in the same cycle'.[94] Russia moves from revolution to a period of political freeze, which is followed by thaw and further stagnation, thus requiring another revolution. Whilst simplifying events and forcing complex changes into a restrictive paradigm, this model does reflect the continued significance of Russia's past, the feelings of renewed uncertainty in the mid-2000s, and the loss of hope in a new 'third way'. In a thinly veiled critique of Putinism, Bykov attaches negative connotations to each break with the past. For him, the liberating impulse of *glasnost′* was ultimately replaced by the 'strict repression of all who knew long words'. [95] History thus leads downwards into greater chaos:

> Можно было уничтожить все коренное население, […] но посмертная месть несчастных жителей заключалась в том, что захватчики уже не могли остановиться: они начинали колонизировать сами себя,

Alice Stone Nakhimovsky (eds), *The Semiotics of Russian Cultural History*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985, pp. 30-66 (pp. 33-34). For a more recent discussion of the non-linear flow of time, see Tamara Kondrat′eva, 'Sovremennoe gosudarstvo kak vlast′ po "Domostroiu"? (K sporam o sotsiokul′turnykh istokakh stalinizma)', *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 81, 2006, 5, pp. 50-66.
[93] Bykov, *ZhD*, p. 185.
[94] Bykov, '20 years after USSR'.
[95] For Bykov, the stagnation under Putin is 'worse' than that under Brezhnev, due to Russia's loss of influence and lack of overarching metanarrative against which to construct counter-narratives. Ibid.

безжалостно угнетая всех, кто умел работать, и возвышая исключительно тех, кто умел убивать.[96]

Posing the wider question of this cycle's cause, Volokhov turns to Russia's 'internal colonization' and consequent isolation, extending Etkind's assertion that Russia is a country that colonizes and orientalizes itself.[97] Unable to look beyond the boundaries of their own world, Bykov's colonizers repeatedly look inwards in search of a dark 'other' to subjugate, thereby bringing Russia closer to the frozen lake at the heart of Dante's *Inferno*. The only escape from internal colonization appears to be on the geographical periphery, in the suburb of Medvedkovo or by Gromov's cabbage patch. But the Varangians' control is so strong and their reach so wide, that the spiral of decline simply continues.[98]

4.5. Glukhovskii's *Metro 2033*: Deconstructing the Palaces of the People

Where Tolstaia uses the apocalypse to transform Moscow into a static village and Bykov further explores the disastrous effects of isolation on the city, Glukhovskii takes the trope of nuclear annihilation as the starting point for the deconstruction of Stalin's 'palaces of the people' beneath Moscow. The year is 2033 and nuclear war has trapped the surviving human beings in Moscow's metro. Like Tolstaia and Bykov, Glukhovskii uses the apocalypse as a means of exploring post-Soviet transformations, similarly fuses travel from the periphery of Muscovite space to its centre with his protagonist's (Artem's) epiphanic journey, and also allows Moscow's concentric-ring structure to play a role in plot development. Unlike Tolstaia and Bykov, however, Glukhovskii presents the reader with a more immediately recognizable vision of Moscow's subterranean cityscape. More concerned by the correlation between the extant city and the contours of his fictional universe, Glukhovskii uses online-forum feedback to rework his narratives and carefully considers the practical ramifications of nuclear war (including the likely impact on specific metro stations and the possible remaining

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[96] Bykov, *ZhD*, p. 182.

[97] Etkind, 'Fuko i tezis vnutrennei kolonizatsii', p. 71. See also Etkind, 'Posle natsii. Russkaia literatura, XIX vek', pp. 103-24. In his discussion of *ZhD* with Lipovetsky, Etkind explicitly plays down his influence, stating that he 'deeply disagrees' with some of Bykov's 'other opinions'. Lipovetskii and Etkind, 'Vozvrashchenie tritona', p. 201.

[98] For Bykov, Russia 'must become an India softly separated' from its internal yoke without the bloodshed of partition. Bykov, '20 years after USSR'.

weaponry).[99] The specificities of the metro system enable Glukhovskii to incorporate divergent paths beyond Tolstaia and Bykov's cyclical temporality, a plurality that extends to Glukhovskii's online project, *Metro 2033 Universe*. As Glukhovskii encourages other authors to pen post-apocalyptic novels set in their own cities, Moscow becomes one node in a global network of urban basements.[100]

As discussed in Chapter One, the metro was one of the major centrepieces for Moscow's reconstruction during the 1930s, transporting Stalinism's aim to reach ever higher, ever lower beneath the Soviet capital. In his study of metropolitan 'underworlds', David Pike illustrates how London's Tube was perceived negatively prior to World War II as a threatening, otherworldly space, drawing attention to the crises of the society above.[101] This perception of London's underground has persisted in popular culture, as exemplified by the BBC television series *Neverwhere* (1996), created by Neil Gaiman, who subsequently transformed his vision into a novel with the same title. Gaiman's image of subterranean 'London Below' evokes Pike's 'underworld', an uncanny, distorted counterpart of surface-level 'London Above'. 'London Below' is a 'labyrinth', a 'place of madness', where mysticism is rife, the 'other' roams free, and light is cast upon the cracks of 'London Above'.[102] In this underground realm of distorted reality, Knightsbridge actually becomes a bridge and The Angel, Islington, is transformed into a living angel. The Moscow metro was aimed at achieving the opposite effect, racing ahead of the aboveground as the new ideology's spatial crystallization. Kaganovich neatly captured the desired contrast, characterizing the Western underground systems as 'dark, monotonous, cheerless', whilst describing the new metro as the embodiment of 'the sensation of the sun and the joy of

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[99] For his online site and forum see http://www.metro2033.ru/forum/ [last accessed 21 June 2011]. Rejected by ten different publishers, Glukhovskii's novel garnered such popularity on his website that its publication in paper became possible in 2005. The 2005 version of *Metro 2033* reflects the influences of the online community. In the face of popular demand, Glukhovskii altered the trajectory of a stray bullet that killed his protagonist and extended the work by eight additional chapters. 'Angus Kennedy interview with Dmitrii Glukhovskii', interview at the London Book Fair, 12 April 2011.
Although Glukhovskii does not feature in Coati's article, his literary career offers an excellent example of what Coati describes as the fresh opportunities that Russian authors find on the internet for 'literary exchange and interpersonal communication'. Coati, 'Time and Space Games', p. 50.

[100] Grant McMaster is the first international writer to join the project with *Metro 2033: Britannia* (2011). His work tracks the adventures of Ewan, who survives the nuclear apocalypse in Glasgow's subway.

[101] Pike, *Metropolis on the Styx*, pp. 1-16. I am grateful to Mark D. Steinberg for suggesting that I consider the similarities between Glukhovskii's vision of the metro and the imagery analyzed by Pike.

[102] Neil Gaiman, *Neverwhere*, London: Headline, 2000, p. 318. I would like to thank Sarah J. Young for drawing my attention to this comparison.

Moscow'.[103] The metro was officially portrayed as an ideological challenge to the West; it offered a glimpse not of the problems of the aboveground (as in London) but of a bright new future for the surface-dwellers, conceptualized as a completed whole and soon to be realized everywhere.[104]

As the site of heroic achievement, the underground – from the far-flung mines to the Moscow metro – was deeply embedded in Soviet cultural discourse. Playing linguistically with both the nocturnal owl, *sova,* and the Soviet person, *sovok,* Mikhail Epshtein goes so far as to suggest that the Soviet people grew so enamoured by the construction of subterranean temples that they permanently came to live in underground darkness. For Epshtein, even when the Great Owl, the nocturnal higher power, proves to be imaginary and the underground temples' grandeur fades (when the dreams of a utopian future remain unrealized and the Soviet Union collapses), the people still continue to cling to their ideology. Having been thrust underground by promises of a glorious future, the people can no longer escape from the framework of their long-adopted rhetoric in the post-Owl/post-Soviet period.[105]

In *Metro 2033*, Glukhovskii takes the people who once dwelled aboveground, but had come to believe the promulgations of the Great Owl, and forces them to live permanently underground. Turning the symbolism of the metro project on its head, descent beneath Moscow no longer leads to paradise, but to hell. E. Gard's article in *Vecherniaia Moskva* on the day of the metro's unveiling in 1935 established a set of binary oppositions with the metro as the pivot between 'old Moscow', 'the city of pedestrians', and 'new Moscow', a glorious model city in which 'all are passengers'.[106] In *Metro 2033*, Glukhovskii again evokes these oppositions but, seventy years later, transposes the time periods onto one another. Distant memories of old (pre-apocalyptic) Moscow create an imagined metro in survivors' minds, where passengers can speed

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[103] L. M. Kaganovich, 'Pobeda metropolitena – pobeda sotsializma', in A. Kosarev (ed.), *Kak my stroili metro*, Moscow: Izdatel′stvo Istoriiafabrik i zavodov, 1935, pp. 27-35 (p. 34); and Anon., 'L. M. Kaganovich sredi passazhirov metro', *Pravda,* 16 May 1935, p. 3.

[104] Anon., 'Moskovskii metro – novaia stupen′ v stroitel′stve sotsializma', *Pravda*, 16 May 1935, p. 3.

[105] Mikhail Epshtein, *Velikaia Sov′: Filosofsko-mifologicheskii ocherk*, New York: Slovo, 1994. In her study of Gor′kii Street, Monica Rüthers considers the impact of darkness on aboveground space, positing that 'the rules of space and time were invalidated by nightlife'. Monica Rüthers, 'The Moscow Gorky Street in Late Stalinism: Space, History and *Lebenswelten*', in Juliane Fürst (ed.), *Late Stalinist Russia: Society between Reconstruction and Reinvention*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2006, pp. 247-68 (p. 257).

[106] E. Gard, 'Istoriia moskovskogo peshekhoda', *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 14 May 1935, p. 4.

around the city. In the new (post-apocalyptic) Moscow, however, not one of the inhabitants is a passenger and very few are even pedestrians. Travel between even the closest neighbouring metro stations is fraught with danger. Old (imagined but lost) Moscow is the site of opportunity, new (real but futureless) Moscow is the space of despair. Where Kaganovich envisaged a joyful underground, Glukhovskii harks back to the Victorian and early-twentieth-century images described by Pike of the inherently catastrophic 'underworld'.

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The palatial metro system was originally conceived as a subterranean topography where ordinary Muscovites could encounter the Soviet metanarrative of history on a daily basis: 'multiple phantasmagorias intervened habitually into their [Moscow residents'] daily life'.[107] However, with this 'dreamworld' transformed by Glukhovskii's apocalypse, the reader of *Metro 2033* traces one ordinary resident's repeated moments of shock as he confronts the phantasmagorias-cum-nightmares. A baby at the time of the nuclear war, Artem has grown up confined to a single station, VDNKh, existing in liminal space at the world's edge. Gripped by the opportunity for adventure, he is charged with travelling to the central Polis – the metro stations Biblioteka im. Lenina, Arbatskaia, Aleksandrovskii sad, and Borovitskaia – to bring the news that mutants are amassing in the peripheries. Searching for meaning in a world of alienation and loss of former values, Artem constructs future stability in spatial terms. As his long quest begins, Artem dreams of these central stations' lights and valorizes the knowledge contained in the library above Biblioteka im. Lenina. He thus echoes the same conceptualization of space as Tolstaia's Benedikt and Bykov's Varangians, constructing an imagined geography based on Moscow's concentric topography. He sacralizes the hierophanic centre, which is once again physically and psychologically walled off from its surroundings.[108]

The naive, young metro inhabitant further embellishes the centre/periphery model by adding the underground/aboveground dichotomy, imagining travel amid the ruins of the

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[107] Buck-Morss, 'City as Dreamworld and Catastrophe', p. 22.
[108] Owing to a series of tunnel collapses, an internal passport system, and hostile stations, the Polis is physically difficult to reach.

Kremlin. With the Soviet dreams of exploring the sky as a pilot or blasting off into space as a cosmonaut no longer applicable, the hope of one day becoming a 'stalker', somebody authorized to roam aboveground, is the new generation's ultimate aspiration for exploration.[109] Citing the Strugatskii brothers as his 'Soviet idols' and a major influence on the science-fiction elements in his own works, Glukhovskii consciously lifts the image of the 'stalker' from Arkadii and Boris Strugatskii's *Piknik na obochine* (1972) and the subsequent Andrei Tarkovskii film *Stalker* (1979).[110] But, whereas the Strugatskii brothers' 'stalker' would guide others through the rural and liminal space of the *Zona,* Glukhovskii transposes this barren but compelling land onto the centre. It is the post-Soviet capital that has become the dangerously alluring area beyond the borders of surviving civilization. In the imagination of the metro's children, the underground has been de-sacralized and the aboveground re-sacralized.

When Glukhovskii's 'little person' does break through the physical barriers between Moscow's centre and periphery and even reaches the surface above the Polis, he, like Benedikt and Gromov, finds only darkness behind the wall. In the Polis, Artem unveils a restrictive society heavily influenced by those who, again like Benedikt, worship books as material objects. The wall is porous, the centre is not transcendental, and there is no omnipotent or benevolent leader. The sense of cognitive dissonance is compounded by the disappointment of Moscow's surface. The Kremlin has been preserved as an 'architectural monument' (памятник архитектуры), but instead of offering a beacon of hope, its irradiated ruby-red stars shine so brightly that they immediately paralyse any human who gazes at them.[111] The meaning behind the old symbols has been destroyed. The underground station names offer a visual connection to the pre-apocalyptic city yet prove to be no more than reminders of society's loss. As empty signifiers, the parks, theatres, squares, bridges, stations, boulevards, and

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[109] Compare this vision of the 'stalker' with the aviation imagery and verticality inscribed into the Stalinist cityscape discussed in Chapter One.

[110] Beyond the Strugatskii brothers, Glukhovskii consciously draws on the post-apocalyptic and dystopian canons, stressing the importance of 'global literature'. Emphasizing his particular admiration for Gabriel García Márquez, Glukhovskii evokes in his own work the catastrophic 'blast' (the cholera epidemic) at the heart of Márquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera* (1985). Dmitrii Glukhovskii et al., 'Bestselling Genre Fiction in Russia', seminar at the London Book Fair, 12 April 2011. See also David Buehrer, '"A Second Chance on Earth": The Postmodern and the Post-Apocalyptic in García Márquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera*', *Critique*, 32, 1990, 1, pp. 15-26.

[111] Dmitrii Glukhovskii, *Metro 2033*, Moscow: Ast, 2011, p. 312. Glukhovskii thus deconstructs not only the subterranean Soviet imagery but also the symbols aimed at projecting the ideology into the sky, analysed by Chadaga. See my first chapter, p. 28.

prospekty they describe no longer exist. The once 'merry' (*veselo*) walls on which they used to hang are now 'coated with a layer of soot and grease'.[112]

With his childish dreams shattered, Artem concludes his quest by travelling from Moscow's deepest underground to its highest remaining point, the top of the Ostankino Television Tower. Here, he finally has the opportunity to stare into the eyes of the mutant 'other', previously held at bay by the survivors' walls. It is at this point that he realizes, like Benedikt, that the true threat is not external but internal. Whilst the surviving human beings struggle on in disunity, Artem understands that the *Homo novus* of Moscow's aboveground is actually far better adapted to post-apocalyptic conditions. As the children of a new era, they pose no menace but extend the (mutated) hand of friendship.[113] Artem seeks to reciprocate the gesture, but his fellow survivors refuse to learn the lessons of the past. Like Tolstaia's elite and Bykov's Varangians, they resort to trying to eliminate the 'other' that they irrationally fear. Under a new barrage of nuclear weapons, the city burns once more and the phoenix-city's cycle of destruction and resurrection continues.

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During a question and answer session at the London Book Fair, Glukhovskii maintained that *Metro 2033* is not a warning about nuclear weaponry. He asserted instead that he is in favour of technological progress and that nuclear annihilation offers a convenient metaphor for Soviet collapse: 'the great advantage of the [post-apocalyptic] genre' is that 'it reflects current experience'.[114] As captured by Russian authors in the early 1990s, the gloomy underground can offer an apt location for life after a regime's disappearance. In Viktor Pelevin's *Omon Ra* (1992), both the Soviet space programme and the construction of the 'places of the people' are shown to be empty simulacra: space travel proves to be a crudely crafted sham taking place in abandoned metro tunnels under Moscow.[115] In *Moskoviada* (1993), the Ukrainian author Iurii Andrukhovych goes even further in its portrayal of Moscow's metro as inherently

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[112] Here, Glukhovskii evokes Stalin's language ('Жить стало лучше, жить стало веселе') to emphasize the continued resonance of broken Soviet dreams. Glukhovskii, *Metro 2033*, p. 94.
[113] Ibid., pp. 502-06.
[114] Glukhovskii explicitly expresses the belief that one 'apocalypse' has already occurred in Russia with the loss of the Soviet ideology and its system of values. 'Kennedy interview with Glukhovskii'.
[115] Viktor Pelevin, *Omon Ra: Povest'*, Moscow: Tekst, 1992.

apocalyptic, with Moscow consuming other cities in its underground maw.[116] These early-post-Soviet works focus on a crumbling empire that was deceptive at best and devouring at worst. In the 2000s, Glukhovskii goes beyond the immediate annihilation to raise questions about the potential for stability, the risks of another catastrophe, and the future of the next generation. The discovery of the Soviet symbols' meaninglessness – the immediate apocalypse – is only the starting point from which to construct a more intricate post-Moscow.

Writing on the Soviet Union's collapse from a more distant perspective than Pelevin and Andrukhovych, and exploring a different route from Tolstaia and Bykov, Glukhovskii incorporates both the uncertainty surrounding the destination for Putinism's new path at the beginning of the 2000s and the symbolic opportunity destruction creates. Asserting Russia's existence 'on the threshold of epochs' and that 'we all fear [another] apocalypse', Glukhovskii diverges from the stagnation, atavism, and 'historylessness' of *Kys'* and the hopeless cycles of *ZhD*.[117] Tolstaia fuses post-1917 with post-1991 and highlights the dominance of an autocratic ruler's hegemonic narrative. Bykov takes the repression of Putinism as another period of stagnation and connects this to a model of Russian history over seven centuries. Glukhovskii, in contrast, treats a return to a single metanarrative as only one potential outcome. Not only does he show the centre to be empty and centripetal forces to be dangerous, but he also unveils a panoply of disparate regimes on different metro lines:

> Станции стали независимыми и самостоятельными, своеобразными карликовыми государствами, со своими идеологиями и режимами, лидерами и армиями […] сегодня становясь метрополиями воздвигаемых империй, чтобы завтра быть поверженными и колонизированными вчерашними друзьями или рабами.[118]

The trope of chaotic division is frequently repeated in post-apocalyptic literature, with Paul Auster's *In the Country of Last Things* (1987) offering an excellent example outside Russian literature of urban space atomizing according to the reactions of

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[116] Iurii Andrukhovych, *Moskoviada,* trans. A. Brazhkina, Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2001. For more on Andrukhovych's image of Moscow, see Lechtchenko, 'A Window on Russia', pp. 248-58.
[117] 'Kennedy interview with Glukhovskii'.
[118] Glukhovskii, *Metro 2033*, p. 14.

different post-apocalyptic groups. Auster's unnamed city is riven along the lines of lifestyle choice or profession, from the Runners racing through the streets to the Fecalists collecting human waste.[119] What Glukhovskii achieves, however, is a novel of decay rooted in the contours of a specific city. With the shattering of Artem's initial eulogy to the centre, disorientation and deracination are mapped onto the topography of Moscow's underground. Nazis have a Fourth Reich; Communists control the Sokolʹnicheskaia liniia and emphasize the symbolic significance of its colour (red) on the map; Trotskyites have a base at Avtozavodskaia; merchants have established a loose confederation; and a subterranean collective farm has been set up to the northeast.

Whereas Kaganovich's vision of the metro is homogenizing in its utopian aspiration, Tolstaia's descriptions of dark periphery and empty centre are unrelenting in their bleakness, and Bykov's image is one of Moscow growing more stagnant and less diverse, Glukhovksii portrays the metro as a site of difference. As Pike demonstrates, the underground has long been bemoaned for its inability to remain homogenous, and the nineteenth-century obsession with this catastrophic space continues to seep into modern-day thought.[120] Situated within this long-standing tradition of a heterogeneous underground, Glukhovskii's labyrinth of 'troglodytic kingdoms' has much greater postmodern fragmentation than Tolstaia and Bykov's centre/periphery model.[121] Rather, it resembles the distinction made by Deleuze and Guattari between the modernist arbor and the postmodernist rhizome. Like the rhizome, myriad connecting roots/routes sprout out of nodes/interchange stations in all directions and, when severed, appear afresh elsewhere/beyond collapsed tunnels.[122] It is not the dichotomized opposite of the aboveground, but its heterotopic counterpart.[123] It distorts, refracts, and twists aboveground existence, revealing conflict and generating fresh meanings.

Amidst this flux, surviving maps depict stations since detached from the remaining structure and tunnels not yet completed in the post-Soviet extension of the metro. With

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[119] Paul Auster, *In the Country of Last Things*, London: Faber and Faber, 1988, esp. pp. 11-35.

[120] Pike, *Metropolis on the Styx*, esp. pp. 312-15.

[121] I use here Walter Benjamin's description of the Parisian Métro, whose 'labyrinthine halls' give rise to 'troglodytic kingdoms'. Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, Cambridge MA: Belknap Press, 1999, p. 519.

[122] Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 3–28. See also my first chapter, pp. 18-19.

[123] I use here Michel Foucault's concept of the 'heterotopia'. As a useful lens through which to consider urban fragmentation, this concept will be explored further in Chapter Five. Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics*, 16, 1986, 1, pp. 22-27.

the permanence of post-Soviet development brought into question and suspicion cast on plans to build more stations, the metro map becomes a form of hyperreality, defined by Baudrillard as 'a map that precedes the territory'.[124] Thanks to the 'generation by models of a real without origin or reality […] it is the map that engenders the territory'. It is not the map that subsequently disintegrates but 'the real […] whose vestiges subsist here and there'.[125] Following the moment of apocalypse in *Metro 2033*, people's sense of the 'real' has been destroyed and it is post-apocalyptic reality that now obviates the map. The concept of looking down on the entire system and depicting a connected whole on a single sheet of paper has become mere fantasy. The standpoint of de Certeau's city god, who can mould the city as a city planner or politician, has been rendered obsolete.

The shattering of the 'real' forces Glukhovskii's survivors to gaze back beyond the temporal break. As the survivors seek hope in (hi)stories of the past, rumours abound that Moscow's former glories remain accessible through the fabled *Metro-2*, the secret, Stalinist, second underground system said to contain golden rails and subterranean gods.[126] Artem himself vaguely recalls the 'flying, tooting [metro] trains with bright squares for windows', which shoot along the tracks from the other life of his childhood.[127] Mythologized as a 'comfortable and safe capsule', the metro train represents a protective cocoon whose destination was reassuringly predetermined.[128] When Artem attempts to remember the specificities of the train, however, he discovers that 'nothing remains before his eyes'. His half-forgotten memories quickly dissipate; they are a fleeting glimpse of a past Atlantis slipping through his grasp 'like water'.[129] The train has stalled and the past it symbolizes is irretrievable, forcing Artem, like Benedikt and Gromov, to relinquish all hopes of 'restorative nostalgia'.

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[124] Baudrillard, 'Simulacra and Simulations', p. 169. In modern-day Moscow, the Filevskaia liniia has recently been extended, with new stations at Delovoi tsentr and Mezhdunarodnaia. Glukhovskii, however, envisages the opposite fate for this line, which is irradiated by its close proximity to the surface. He thus harks back to fears during World War II, when a Nazi bomb damaged Arbatskaia, and during the Cold War, when the line's effectiveness as a bomb shelter was queried. Glukhovskii, *Metro 2033*, p. 11.

[125] Baudrillard, 'Simulacra and Simulations', p. 169.

[126] Glukhovskii, *Metro 2033*, pp. 271-74 and 431.

[127] Ibid., 186.

[128] Ibid., 14.

[129] Ibid., 186.

Like Tolstaia's Benedikt and Bykov's Varangians, Artem initially seeks solace in the centre and, like Tolstaia's *Prezhnie* and Bykov's Gromov, he subsequently turns to the past. Amidst the ruins, the lack of plausible answers, and the faded memories, he diverges from his post-apocalyptic counterparts, however, by uncovering a fresh solution. Rejecting the narratives created by old power structures and unshackling himself from the trauma of abandonment, Artem internalizes change and finds the strength within to welcome difference. With the demonized 'other' offering a new perspective outside humanity's destructiveness, Glukhovskii stresses the need to discard constrictive ideology and investigate unorthodox opportunities. He does not rail against a loss of knowledge (like Tolstaia and Bykov), but rather highlights the vulnerability of the civilizations such knowledge has been used to construct.

The conclusion that the man-made centre does not lead to heaven reflects a different vision of Moscow's post-Soviet space and offers hope for a path out of Tolstaia and Bykov's cycle. The apocalypse that separates Tolstaia's 'Fakir' and *Kys'* brings only further extremes to the centre/periphery paradigm. With each period of refreeze, Bykov's Moscow is plunged into an ever-darker spiral of decline. For Glukhovskii, however, there are fresh possibilities on the margins of concentric space and new futures away from the centre's stasis. The truly blessed in *Metro 2033* are not those holed up in the central Polis, but the 'stalkers'. Although temporally poor – constantly racing against the clock to avert further catastrophe – the 'stalkers' derive power from being spatially liberated. The nomad moving between the rhizomatic nodes (the 'stalker' moving between stations) is privileged over those too poor to travel beyond a particular area/station or those chained too tightly to the arbor of a strict ideology.

4.6. From Circles to Splinters

> She rode the tubes, to and fro and round and round in the city's fuming
>
> entrails. She rode the Circle Line until, on this new scale of time and
>
> distance, the Circle made her head reel. And it never got her anywhere.[130]

> It is not the present that turns out to be behind us, but the future itself.[131]

Given the long-standing associations between the city and the apocalypse – from Babylon to Gotham – and the Soviet imagery of the showcase capital, it is perhaps unsurprising that the city of Moscow has been singled out in narratives of post-apocalyptic metamorphosis. Moscow's dramatic reimaginings, from the centralized plan of 1935 to the construction under Luzhkov, make the city an excellent locale for studying the interconnections between urban space and large-scale transformation. A city can be moulded to project imagery of a 'dreamworld', but its cracks and nuances hold the key to deconstructing such a totalizing vision. Russia's spatial inequalities, Moscow's own internal social divisions, and the continued conflict surrounding Moscow's symbolic sites render the Russian capital an apt setting with which to explore potential future paths following this deconstruction process.

In *Kys'*, *ZhD*, and *Metro 2033*, catastrophe, time, and space are interlinked. The symbols of progress written into the showcase capital no longer resonate for the post-apocalyptic inhabitant, who is confronted by temporal uncertainty and spatial confinement. As the reader follows the protagonists around these post-apocalyptic spaces, the reshaping of a familiar cityscape creates repeated shocks. Elements of mediæval Muscovy, Tsarist Russia, and the Soviet Union disorientatingly form a pastiche that also contains post-Soviet transformations and Western influences. At certain sites, the past crystallizes, taking the shape of: a monument to Pushkin and a Sadovoe kol′tso signpost (*Kys'*); a suburban apartment block and a hostel hidden behind a concrete wall (*ZhD*); and surface ruins and names hanging on station walls (*Metro 2033*). The apocalypse has, however, forever altered these places and erased society's shared memories. Pushkin's works are recalled by a tiny minority and no lamps illuminate the dark Sadovoe kol′tso

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[130] Martin Amis, *Other People*, London: Cape, 1981, p. 169.
[131] Epstein, *After the Future*, p. xi.

(*Kys'*); entire suburbs have been razed and their inhabitants banished from the city (*ZhD*); and the damaged Soviet star is blinding, the ruined Khram Khrista Spasitelia a mutants' lair (*Metro 2033*). A sense of loss seeps through the novels' pages, a nostalgia not just for what was – as captured by Akunin's nineteenth-century Moscow – but for what might have been.

One feature that nonetheless spans across these turbulent changes is Moscow's concentricity. As literature captures the strengthening of Moscow's rings in the physical cityscape, spatial layout is connected to narrative direction. Given the widespread destruction, it is Moscow's single remaining recognizable feature in Tolstaia's *Kys'*, which ties the post-apocalyptic locale to wider comments on Russia's history. As Soviet practices are repeated and the Stalinist reconstruction of Moscow continues to inform thinking, Tolstaia's post-apocalyptic city of Moscow becomes a 'fossil of time future'.[132] It is trapped in temporal and spatial stasis, unable to move beyond its current time/borders due to the inhabitants' loss of know-how. With greater hindsight, Bykov is able to go beyond Tolstaia by also commenting on Putinism. Capturing the return of nationalist rhetoric, vertical power, and the messianic figure of Putin, Bykov inserts Putinism into the wider historical cycle. Moscow now appears caught in repetitive periods of thaw and freeze over the *longue durée*, spiralling in ever-diminishing circles of cultural degradation. With the concentric city an appropriate synecdoche for a nationalistic Russia focused on greater autarky, Tolstaia and Bykov warn of the dangers created by a self-serving centre stifling dialogue.

Bykov offers a glimmer of an alternative life where community spirit flourishes on the city's margins, but destroys hope for the future by locating this chronotope in a lost past. The memories of a suburban micro-city cannot be restored. Glukhovskii, on the other hand, shows that the apocalypse does not solely reinforce past structures, but can break them down or offer alternatives for the future. Whereas Tolstaia and Bykov focus on the apocalypse as a hyperbolizing force that highlights familiar processes, Glukhovskii transposes the topography of the shattering apocalypse onto the topography of Moscow. He splinters the concentric paradigm and shows the ideology of the centre

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[132] I use here J. G. Ballard's description of a post-apocalyptic Pacific island. J.G. Ballard, 'Terminal Beach', in Walter M. Miller Jr and Martin H. Greenberg (eds), *Beyond Armageddon: Survivors of the Megawar*, London: Robinson, 1987, pp. 125-45 (p. 129).

to be no more or less applicable than those at the rhizomatic system's other nodes. The catastrophe of time is manifested in a catastrophe of space, producing factions spatially rooted in different metro lines with competing *Weltanschauungen*. Highlighting the demand for overall stability during the early years of Putin's presidency, Glukhovskii illustrates that those best placed to capitalize on such uncertainty are the spatially liberated elite. In this way, *Metro 2033* foreshadows the exploration of Glamorous Moscow in the next chapter. Moscow's wealthy seek to create their own protected places within the splintered post-Soviet city, moving between privatized places – the gated community, the luxury boutique, and the expensive restaurant. Like Glukhovskii's stalkers, they have the freedom of the city.

Excessive fragmentation, however, ensures that only a minority of the city-dwellers acquire the codes to unlock the meanings stored within the cityscape. Only a tiny, enwalled elite prosper, whilst the remaining inhabitants suffer from atavism and a dearth of reconstruction. Walling off segments of the city in the utopian vein of excluding the unwanted 'other' simply recreates the trap so thoroughly elucidated by Tolstaia and Bykov. Isolation breeds stagnation, openness facilitates innovation. Such gaping inequalities are undesirable because they create inward-gazing narrow-mindedness. Focusing power or wealth in fortified pockets hinders an overview of the entire system and an appreciation of difference. At worst, the elite turns to these remaining inhabitants in search of the dark 'other' against which to construct an identity, thereby undertaking a process of internal colonization. Magnified further through the prism of the apocalypse, the specificities of Moscow's extremes thus underline the more general need for spatial solutions somewhere between an undesirably strong centre and chaotic splintering.

For a city to be successful, time and space must be considered together, with future direction shaped through inclusion. Glukhovskii, therefore, suggests that space is constructed in such a way that it brings in the demonized 'other' – Tolstaia's wolf/*kys'*, Bykov's children, and Glukhovskii's mutants – from behind the wall. The anachronistic and spatially marginalized periphery can be welcomed from beyond the pale to produce a more cooperative future. Here, catastrophe not only proves destructive but also creates fresh hope, resulting in mutations and divergences that signal a new temporal route through a world of loss and disappointment. All three authors highlight the risks of

failing to capitalize on this hope, of (re)erecting walls, valorizing isolation, and avoiding dialogue with the 'other'. A consuming torpor still lurks around the corner, whether it bubbles up from the underground or lies temporarily dormant within the peripheral 'little man'. If there is an 'apocalypse', a revelation, in these works, it is the unveiling of the persistence of this temporal and spatial void.

Chapter V

Glamorous Moscow

Wealth, Gates, and Glamour: Different Planes of Existence

5.1. Money and the City

> We live in "fortress cities" brutally divided between "fortified cells" of
> affluent society and "places of terror" where the police battle the
> criminalized poor.[1]

This chapter investigates Moscow through the prism of money, focusing on those who
have acquired it both rapidly and in abundance during the post-Soviet period. For some,
the transition to a capitalist economy has facilitated great wealth accumulation; for
others, it has resulted in a sharp plunge into deep poverty. This disparity is particularly
true for the Russian capital, which in 2008 became the global city with the most
billionaires and held onto its title of 'billionaire capital of the world' again in 2013 with
six more dollar billionaires than New York.[2] The increased polarization of Moscow
between the super-wealthy and the desperately poor has both social and spatial
consequences. In the city centre, the homeless have amassed in greater numbers, around
train stations, in the parks, and under the city's surface in the gloomy underpasses that
offer some shelter from the freezing winters. On the borders between the urban and the
rural, Moscow's gated communities have grown ever more grandiose over the past
fifteen years. Opulent palaces are now fortified by the latest advancements in security
technology to keep at bay the unwanted 'other', the marginalized victims of rapid
transformation captured by Tolstaia, Bykov, and Glukhovskii.

On the one hand, the appearance of the gated community can be read as the
transposition of a Western model of urbanization onto the Russian capital.[3] Since the
gated community took hold as a common feature in the USA during the 1980s, it has
become a truly global phenomenon, privatizing the outskirts of cities from Buenos Aires

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[1] Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*, London: Verso, 2006, p. 224.
[2] Dmitrii Butrin, 'Moskva – gorod milliarderov', *Kommersant*, 7 March 2008, p. 13; and Artur Galeev, 'V
Moskve milliarderov bol′she, chem v drugikh stolitsakh mira', *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 2 March 2013, p.
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[3] As the earliest examples of the gated community, Setha Low suggests Llewellyn Park in Eagle Ridge,
New Jersey (1850s), Tuxedo Park in New York (1886), and Sea Gate in Brooklyn (which even
established a private police force in 1899). Setha Low, *Behind the Gates: Life, Security, and the Pursuit
of Happiness in Fortress America*, New York: Routledge, 2003, pp. 14-15.

to Beijing, from Cairo to Jakarta.[4] Since 1991, large cities in Eastern Europe in general, and Moscow in particular, have likewise experienced a trend of privatizing even the smallest of spaces. Formerly public pavements outside expensive Muscovite restaurants have been cordoned off overnight in a money-making scheme based on charging clients to park outside the door of the establishment.[5] The turn to capitalism is manifested spatially on the street. Not only does privatization, which forms one of capitalism's main tenets, have its spatial consequences, but the greater the inequality, the more dramatic the brand of privatization. On the other hand, the new villas can be read as a post-Soviet reimagining of Moscow's historical dacha phenomenon, or even the capitalist incarnation of the privileged housing previously represented in a different urban form by Iofan's Dom na naberezhnoi. Moscow has a long tradition, including during the Soviet period, of reserving exclusive places for its political and economic elites.

This chapter explores the tension between Moscow's rich and poor, and between Russian and Western urban models, through a close analysis of Robski's *Casual*. Published and set in 2005, Robski's first novel quickly became a commercial phenomenon, its circulation reaching 270,000 copies in a matter of months.[6] Not only did the novel launch Robski's career, but its success prompted publishers to seek out clones, who would write works of a similar ilk, rendering *Casual* the epitome of Moscow's glamour culture under Putin. Whilst the novel's English title indicates the importance of foreign fashions to Moscow's wealthy leisure class, the action is firmly grounded in the Rublevka, the colloquial name for the gated communities along Rublevo-Uspenskoe shosse to the west of Moscow. Like the young Vadim Glebov, the unfortunate protagonist of Iurii Trifonov's *Dom na naberezhnoi* (1976) jealously gazing

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[4] Guy Thuillier, 'Gated Communities in the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires, Argentina: A Challenge for Town Planning', in Rowland Atkinson and Sarah Blandy (eds), *Gated Communities*, London: Routledge, 2006, pp. 67-83; Fulong Wu and Klaire Webber, 'The Rise of "Foreign Gated Communities" in Beijing: Between Economic Globalization and Local Institutions', *Cities*, 21, 2004, 3, pp. 203-13; Eric Denis, 'Cairo as Neoliberal Capital? From Walled City to Gated Communities', in Diane Singerman and Paul Amar (eds), *Cairo Cosmopolitan: Politics, Culture, and Urban Space in the New Globalized Middle East*, Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2006, pp. 47-71; and Trevor Hogan and Christopher Houston, 'Corporate Cities – Urban Gateways or Gated Communities Against the City? The Case of Lippo, Jakarta', in Tim Bunnell et al. (eds), *Critical Reflections on Cities in Southeast Asia*, Singapore: Times Academic Press, 2002, pp. 243-64.
[5] This is a personal observation from my time living in Moscow.
[6] Irina Ivanova, 'Vse muzhiki svo…?', *Nasha versiia*, 9 January 2006, p. 19.

up at his friend's life of privilege in the Stalinist house on the embankment in purge-era Moscow, the reader yearns to discover more of this exclusive world of luxury.

Far away from Akunin's warnings of Putinism's nepotism and Tolstaia and Bykov's critique of Putin-era cultural and political stagnation, Robski beckons the reader inside Putinism's most opulent palaces. Deeply rooted in her personal experiences, Robski's locales are not the cobbled alleyways of the past city or post-apocalyptic visions of the future city, but restaurants, bars, hotels, casinos, and gated communities that can be located on a contemporary map of the city. The protagonist's favourite Rublevka restaurant, Veranda u dachi, is at the same time one of the hotspots for local Rublevka gossip and one of the author's regular haunts.[7] Embedded within the world she depicts, Robski quickly became the symbol of *glamur*. Soon after the publication of her first novel in 2005, Robski was given her own television show, *Dlia tebia*, on NTV. Robski thereby continued the trend of post-Soviet authors creating transmedia products, exemplified previously through Akunin's films and comic books as well as Glukhovskii's films, computer game, and online project. On *Dlia tebia*, Robski interviewed famous guests, offered fashion advice, and cooked a range of sample recipes. She brought her brand of glamorous, Muscovite excess into the living rooms of average Russians.

Despite the apparently alien nature of Robski's culture, there are some similar processes at work in the construction of these glamorous places and those analysed previously. As a spatial form, the gated community is rooted in an imagined geography, first constructed within the mind. It is founded on a binary opposition of 'us' and 'them', drawing on both nostalgia and utopia. It embodies nostalgic impulses for the close-knit neighbourhood of the village and for a simpler existence in the countryside dacha. It reflects the utopian desire to wall off a group of people, who share similar principles (in this case, an appreciation of wealth), and who want to escape from the chaos outside captured so vividly in post-apocalyptic images of Moscow. The gated community again reveals the continuation of the Soviet mentality of 'othering' those beyond its own borders. The major point of divergence from the works studied previously, however,

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[7] Amidst a proliferation of new services in the area during the early 2000s, the restaurant opened in May 2001. Anon., 'Oksana Robski budet babushkoi?', *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 2 February 2007, p. 13; and Anna and Andrei Veligzhaniny, 'Pravda o muzh′iakh Oksany Robski', *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 23 March 2006, p. 14.

lies in the fact that Robski's gated community is a distinctly feminine space. Evoking images of the traditional femininized home, populated by maids, masseuses, rich wives, and children, Robski rarely allows men to penetrate either the Rublevka or the narrative, which traces the lives of a female protagonist and her close female friends.

Robski's Moscow does not engage with the politics of the time or pass judgement on the morality of the elite, but exists as a neighbourly realm of wealthy women obsessed with surface allure. Akunin's nineteenth-century Moscow is positioned on the brink of dramatic transformation in a losing battle against the inexorable winds of change. Post-Apocalyptic Moscow is a space that reflects a sudden break with the past, great trauma, and bewildering uncertainty regarding the future. Even the most brilliant detective or the most ingenious survivor of the apocalypse is rendered helpless by the sheer weight of time and space. In stark contrast, Robski's Moscow is centred on interior space, a manageable realm, and a desire to negate time's impact. Most of the action unfolds within the gated community or behind the line of exclusive establishments' doormen with their strict policy of 'face control'. As our focus is shifted from wider historical processes to personal experiences of local places, it is the glamorous individual and her obsession with remaining glamorous that form the focal point of Robski's narrative.

Beyond Russian literature, an analysis of Robski's portrait of the gated community is timely, since there is a paucity of scholarly work on the depiction of such compounds in literary fiction. One notable exception is Sarah Blandy's analysis of J.G. Ballard's works *Running Wild* (1988), *Cocaine Nights* (1996), and *Super Cannes* (2000), which focuses on Ballard's explorations of the border and isolated existence.[8] The appeal in Robski's works lies elsewhere, however, not in the characters' lack of geographical freedom – described by Ballard and highly reminiscent of the post-apocalyptic narratives of the previous chapter – but in its abundance.[9] Robski depicts a group of people who are not simply rich in money but also rich in space. They are finanically

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[8] Sarah Blandy, 'Enemies Within? Gated Communities Unhinged', paper presented at the Housing Studies Association Autumn Conference, Cardiff, 4-5 September 2001. Sonia Hirt also remarks on the understudied connection between culture and post-socialist space, although her own research does not have a specifically literary hue. Sonia A. Hirt, *Iron Curtains: Gates, Suburbs and Privatization of Space in The Post-Socialist City*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012, p. 29.

[9] Ballard's dystopic vision in *Super Cannes* of an overly ordered elite yearning for disorder to burst through the community's walls follows the same lines as his post-apocalyptic 'fossil[s] of time future', highlighted in my previous chapter, p. 175.

liberated to travel wherever they choose. In Ballard's *Super Cannes*, the characters permanently exist in their closed business-park, Eden-Olympia, without interaction with the external world. In *Casual*, the characters form a similarly closed society but locate it geographically in the form of a network, stretching from the slopes of St Moritz to the bars of central Moscow. The reader's view of Moscow is limited to a small number of opulent locations, yet the city is at the same time connected to an array of far-flung destinations.

5.2. The *Claustra* of the Gated Community

> Secluded individualistic homes […] turn inwards to preserve their own logic
> and values, closing their doors to the immediate surrounding environment.[10]

Over the past twenty-five years, the rise of private housing developments has sparked much media debate and become a popular topic of scholarly attention. These spatial phenomena may have segregated and fragmented cities but they have cut across disciplinary boundaries in academia. Historians search for the gated community's predecessors, anthropologists quiz residents on their reasons for 'retreat', sociologists warn of the potentially catastrophic consequences such withdrawal might have on wider society, legal experts debate the ramifications of local government losing control of public services, and urban specialists highlight the multitude of methods used to hide the buildings from public view. The emphasis is on isolation, seclusion, and exodus, as underscored by the definition of the gated community in Setha Low's seminal anthropological investigation of life behind the gates:

> A gated community is a residential development surrounded by walls,
> fences, or earth banks covered with bushes and shrubs, with a secured
> entrance. […] The houses, streets, sidewalks, and other amenities are
> physically enclosed by these barriers, and entrance gates are operated by a
> guard or opened with a key or electronic identity card.[11]

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[10] Manuel Castells, 'High Technology, Economic Restructuring, and the Urban-Regional Process in the United States', in Manuel Castells (ed.), *High Technology, Space, and Society*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1985, pp. 11-40 (p. 19).
[11] Low, *Behind the Gates*, p. 12.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the wall and the city are intrinsically connected: the first urban spaces were enclosed as symbolic worlds, and the wall was the tool used to separate the urban and the rural. Low's description of 'surrounded' residencies, 'barriers', and 'secured entrance[s]' emphasizes that it is this image of the wall (or its fence and landscaping counterpart) as an instrument of division that forms the key structure of the gated community. Blandy further underlines this point by noting that mediæval walled cities are frequently cited as early prototypes of the gated community.[12] In the British context, the enclosure of the commons marked a process of privatizing land, reserving the use of enclosed fields for the fortunate few. In the modern day, this traditional fortress mentality is accompanied by legal questions, with residents in the USA usually obliged to sign contracts that include a common agreement on behaviour and collective responsibility for community management.[13] Such gated communities are not only physically isolated from the rest of the city, but now no longer come under the jurisdiction of the once shared municipal government.

The combination of both physical and legal elements has resulted in scholars frequently viewing this phenomenon as the break-up of the traditional city, 'the privatization of public space', the 'wallification' of 'our' metropolises, and the creation of new self-contained universes.[14] Mike Davis goes even further in his rhetoric by decrying nothing less than 'the destruction of public space'.[15] Amidst a general feeling that members of the elite are harming society by refusing to adhere to wider obligations and blithely rejecting the existence of a city's blemishes, scholars too portray the process of gating in a negative light.[16] In the context of London, Anna Minton describes with some hope

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[12] Sarah Blandy, 'Gated Communities in England: Historical Perspectives and Current Developments', *GeoJournal*, 66, 2006, pp. 15-26 (p. 16).

[13] Rowland Atkinson and Sarah Blandy, 'Introduction: International Perspectives on the New Enclavism and the Rise of Gated Communities', *Housing Studies*, 20, 2005, 2, pp. 177-86 (pp. 177-78).

[14] Dirk De Meyer et al, *The Urban Condition: Space, Community, and Self in the Contemporary Metropolis*, Rotterdam: 010, 1999, pp. 94-97. See also Edward J. Blakely and Mary Gail Snyder, *Fortress America: Gated Communities in the United States*, Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1997, esp. pp. 2-3.

[15] Davis, *City of Quartz*, p. 225.

[16] Low begins one interview by arguing that the general public too frequently views the process of gating in simple terms as 'somehow bad'. She continues, however, by questioning whether those retreating are 'aware of the consequences', which, for her, include the propagation of an unfounded 'discourse of fear' and the erection of 'concrete barriers' that 'inscribe […] discrimination, segregation into the landscape'. Setha Low, 'Interview with John Brown, editor of Slow Home', Calgary, 10 December 2007, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMKpCBKDCY4 [last accessed 20 July 2012]. This negative view amongst scholars is equally reflected in research on Eastern Europe. Mariusz Czepczyński is particularly

the possibility of new paradigms of civil engagement to avoid what once appeared to be the unstoppable spread of 'privatization, control and segregation of every aspect of city life […] following the American model'.[17] Given the centuries-old efforts to break down the walls of the citadel and the continuing struggles to democratize cities across the world, many are now reluctant to see the re-erection of walls on its periphery. The rich are accused of creating 'private cities' within the wider metropolitan conurbation, 'edge cities' around the borders of traditional urban space,[18] or even a 'privatopia' that enables them to escape the city's disappointments by creating 'an exclusive group living according to its own rules'.[19]

Paul Virilio perhaps best summarizes the widely expressed sentiments about this 'world that *is closing in on itself*': 'the *cosmopolis*, the open city of the past, gives way to this *claustropolis* where foreclosure is intensified by exclusion of the stray, the outsider' (emphasis in the original).[20] In the twenty-first-century capitalist *claustropolis*, the individual concentrates on his or her immediate surrounding area and creates a personalized level of service unavailable to most other city-dwellers. The composition of the wider city's established order is disrupted by the *claustrum* of the gated community's door, which opens only for those in possession of an electronic smart key. For Minton, such seclusion through sophisticated technology and advanced planning creates nothing short of 'the architecture of extreme capitalism'.[21] The enclosure of the commons has been taken to its ultimate conclusion within the twenty-first-century metropolis, using the modern-day wall, the highly developed *claustrum*, to construct 'a divided landscape of privately owned, disconnected, high security, gated enclaves side

scathing in his critique of the Polish gated community as 'a selection of socially isolated individuals'. Mariusz Czepczyński, *Cultural Landscapes of Post-Socialist Cities: Representation of Powers and Needs*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008, p. 170.

[17] Anna Minton, *Ground Control: Fear and Happiness in the Twenty-First-Century City*, reissued with new material (first ed. Published in 2009), London: Penguin, 2012, p. 199.

[18] Georg Glasze et al., 'Introduction: Global and Local Perspectives on the Rise of Private Neighbourhoods', in Georg Glasze et al. (eds), *Private Cities: Global and Local Perspectives*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2006, pp. 1-8. For more on the concept of the 'edge city', which its critics describe as 'lacking established community […and] administered by "shadow governments"', see Michael Dear and Steven Flusty, 'The Iron Lotus: Los Angeles and Postmodern Urbanism', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 551, 1997, pp. 151-63 (pp. 154-55).

[19] Evan McKenzie, *Privatopia: Homeowner Associations and the Rise of Residential Private Government*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994, pp. 23-24.

[20] For Virilio, the gated community is a symptom of a wider process leading to the end of geography – the realization of humanity's geophysical limits and the scramble for perceived security in an over-populated world. Paul Virilio, *City of Panic*, trans. Julie Rose, Oxford: Berg, 2005, esp. pp. 63-78 (citation pp. 68-69).

[21] Minton, *Ground Control*, p. xii.

by side with enclaves of poverty which remain untouched by the wealth around them'.[22] Opulence is embedded within poverty, yet the two rarely meet. Where the survivors of the apocalypse analysed in the previous chapter sought to re-found their worlds in central Moscow, the inhabitants of the gated community thereby seek to shape a new, separate universe on its fringes. The harmony of the larger cosmos is sacrificed for the coherence of the community within the smaller gated space.

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At the moment of the socialist regimes' collapse, Davis contrasted the pictures of liberation, beamed across the world as the Berlin Wall was being torn down, with the increasing penchant amongst wealthy, white, urban Americans for walling off their gated communities. 'Even as the walls have come down in Eastern Europe', he declares in *City of Quartz* (1990), 'they are being erected all over Los Angeles.'[23] If 'freedom' was spreading to the East, it was apparently being squeezed in the West by successful urbanites resolute in their attempts to construct 'fortress L.A.' on the city's outskirts.[24] This urban 'doughnut' effect furnished the fortunate with a saccharine existence, but left hollowness in city centre, which was becoming, for Davis, a no-man's land of deprivation. With the benefit of hindsight, however, it is clear that Davis's comparison of liberated Eastern Europe and barricaded Los Angeles also proved to be hollow. Although the Berlin Wall fell, much smaller walls were gradually erected on a local level outside the major cities. Through their sheer size, number, and wealth, Moscow's gated communities became the most recognized example of this trend occurring across post-socialist Eastern Europe. They developed in diverse locations amidst shared uncertainty about the future, insecurity over increasing crime rates, and aspiration to achieve the perceived standards of the West.[25]

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Davis, *City of Quartz*, p. 228.

[24] Scholars have since appropriated Davis's term in fresh contexts. See, for example, Rowland Atkinson and John Flint, 'Fortress UK? Gated Communities, the Spatial Revolt of the Elites and Time-Space Trajectories of Segregation', *Housing Studies*, 19, 2004, 6, pp. 875-92.

[25] Nikolai Genov, *Global Trends in Eastern Europe*, Farnham: Burlington, 2010, pp. 122-24; and Hirt, *Iron Curtains*, p. 3. Within Russia itself, Moscow's settlements are taken as the paradigm for regional developers who look to the capital for inspiration. Moscow is once again at the vanguard of Russian development. Maria Zotova, 'Emergence of Gated Communities in Russia: Causes and Consequences', *L'Espace Politique*, 15 June 2012, para. 27, http://espacepolitique.revues.org/index2385.html [last accessed 1 August 2012].

If the American gated communities grew in popularity on the back of fear, whipped up by the depictions of violent crime in the media, post-Soviet, Muscovite gated communities emerged in the middle of a very real crime wave.[26] Between 1990 and 1995, the number of reported cases of theft (*krazha*) in Russia escalated from 913,100 to 1,367,900 – a percentage increase of 49.8% – before falling to 1,108,400 by 2010, whilst the cases of murder or attempted murder rose from 15,600 in 1990 to 31,700 in 1995 – a percentage increase of 103.2% – before falling back to 15,600 by 2010.[27] As the capital and largest city, Moscow was particularly affected, with an estimated fifty cars on average being stolen every day at the apex of the post-Soviet crime wave in 1995.[28]

First appearing in Moscow in 1996, the earliest gated communities were, therefore, immediately connected to the protection of foreign businessmen, moulded as spaces for Westerners to live in isolation from the city. Indeed, one of the first such communities at the Pokrovskie kholmy complex in the north-west of Moscow was initially only available to foreigners.[29] Better known by its English appellation – Pokrovsky Hills – the community contained Anglophone services, the Anglo-American School of Moscow on site, and a direct shuttle-bus from its gates to Tushinskaia metro station. The Soviet practice of isolating Westerners from ordinary citizens for political, state-driven reasons was now replaced with the practice of Westerners choosing isolation due to a perceived fear of crime. Given Sebastien Lentz's revelations through interviews with those construction companies involved – that these complexes were designed without actually knowing whether Russian customers would appreciate such housing – it seemed as though an entirely new American urban model was being transplanted onto a city increasingly looking westwards.[30]

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[26] Low, *Behind the Gates*, esp. pp. 11-25.
[27] My calculations are based on the official figures taken from the 2011 edition of the *Rossiiskii statisticheskii ezhegodnik* of the Federalʹnaia sluzhba gosudarstvennoi statistiki, available online at http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b11_13/IssWWW.exe/Stg/d3/10-01.htm [last accessed 10 August 2012].
[28] Glenn E. Curtis (ed.), *Russia: A Country Study*, Washington DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1998, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+ru0210) [last accessed 10 August 2012].
[29] Sebastian Lentz, 'More Gates, Less Community? Guarded housing in Russia', in Glasze et al (eds)., *Private Cities*, pp. 206-21 (p. 209). For more information on this particular community, see http://pokrovskyhills.ru [last accessed 10 August 2012].
[30] Lentz, 'More Gates, Less Community?', p. 215.

Local Muscovites did, however, buy into these new building schemes, and the popularity of the gated community grew in the following years. As the number of segregated spaces increased both through closed, inner-urban apartment blocks with guards and further-flung gated communities, around 15% of all new buildings in Moscow were secure complexes by 2011.[31] The growing ubiquity of the car enabled residents to move away from local transport hubs, constructing new communities along the major radial routes out of the city and around the MKAD. IRN (Indicators of Realty Markets) data analysed by Mikhail Blinnikov et al. for 2004, the year before Robski published *Casual*, illustrate that new construction was concentrated to the west and north-west of Moscow.[32] Indeed, 44.5% of the new communities were split almost equally between just two main roads – Novorizhskoe (to the north-west of the MKAD) and Rublevo-Uspenskoe (to the west). The majority of this development consisted of highly desirable and extremely expensive gated communities, with most homes along Rublevo-Uspenskoe shosse commanding over $1 million.[33]

At their most extreme, these mansions offered wealthy Muscovites a countryside playground for eclectic architectural experimentation. Developers gave their customers greater opportunity for customization, whilst an army of interior designers burst onto the scene to offer advice on the most enviable new styles. Residents would compete over new homes with swimming pools and fitness centres. Turrets and moats emphasized the citadel mentality, foreign façades revealed an appropriation of Western ideas, and giant phallic towers reflected a macho masculinity based on business deals conducted at gunpoint. Local river banks and lake shores were altered, American landscaping techniques were employed, pesticides were spread, and imported grass seeds were sown. Whilst the Russian word *dacha* has been appropriated into the English language, the reverse occurred from the mid-1990s with the English word 'cottage' – *kottedzh*. To differentiate the out-of-town palatial communities from the traditional-style country dwelling, and to underline their Western origins, the new developments became known as *kottedzhnye poselki*.

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[31] Zotova, 'Emergence of Gated Communities in Russia', para. 20.
[32] Mikhail Blinnikov et al., 'Gated Communities of the Moscow Green Belt: Newly Segregated Landscapes and the Suburban Russian Environment', *GeoJournal*, 66, 2006, 1/2, pp. 65-81 (p. 75).
[33] Ibid., p. 76.

The monumental Muscovite *kottedzh* is not simply a house designed to protect its occupants; it also provides a very visible symbol of having transcended certain social and economic boundaries. Its physical borders are accompanied by the 'dramatic boundaries' described by Said, constructed through imagined geographies – people's perception of difference.[34] The *kottedzh* is consciously designed to stand apart from the extant cityscape and fragment the city through a process of exurbanization. Such development draws urban residents and services away from the city centre to the rural areas outside the city, thereby converting spaces of nature into islands of urbanity whilst still maintaining a connection to the surrounding countryside.[35] In stark contrast to suburbanization, exurbanization represents more than the sprawl of urbanity, fusing city amenities and rural environs, commercial opportunities and countryside tranquility. At the beginning of the 2000s, this resulted in the rapid appearance of many large retail stores and out-of-town shopping centres around the MKAD, making Moscow's outer orbital 'the most important investment zone outside the compact city'.[36] Businesses followed the money, and the majority of these opportunities clustered to the west and north-west of the city.[37] As tensions boiled between the Moscow city government, the authorities in Moskovskaia oblast′, and the multinational investors, an important difference emerged between the Muscovite gated community and its American counterpart.[38] Unlike in the USA, residents in and around Moscow lack the legal means to manage their local resources; they can never be truly independent from the surrounding area.

Despite Thanos Pagonis and Andy Thornley's supposition that Muscovite construction in the 1990s aimed at the imposition of 'the Western urban development model' (with only some success), and Ekaterina Makarov's description of Moscow's villas as nothing short of 'an entirely novel form of residence in Moscow', for me, the rise of the

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[34] See my first chapter, pp. 19-20.

[35] Adrian X. Esparza, 'The Exurbanization Process and Rural Housing Markets', in David Marcouiller et al. (eds), *Rural Housing Exurbanization, and Amenity-Driven Development: Contrasting the 'Haves' and the 'Have Nots'*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2011, pp. 27-50 (p. 44).

[36] Robert Rudolph and Isolde Brade, 'Moscow: Processes of Restructuring in the Post-Soviet Metropolitan Periphery', *Cities*, 22, 2005, 2, pp. 135-50 (p. 145).

[37] Ibid., p. 147.

[38] The opening of a new IKEA on 22 March 2000 offers a good example of the potential for conflict. The Moscow city authorities attempted to maintain control over the new development in Moskovskaia oblast′ by refusing to authorize the construction of a bridge support on Leningradskoe shosse. Anon., 'Bitva pod Moskvoi prodolzhaetsia', *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 24 March 2000, http://dlib.eastview.com/browse/doc/2349003 [last accessed 10 March 2013].

kottedzh does not mark the full-scale transposition of an American spatial paradigm or the absolute rejection of Russian models.[39] As illustrated in the previous chapter through the persistence of the centripetal paradigm in post-apocalyptic thinking, local models cannot be destroyed so easily. Indeed, Caroline Humphrey points out that even the word *kottedzh* already had a historical precedent in Russia, as it was used in the appellation of the Dvorets Kottedzh. Constructed between 1826 and 1829 in Peterhof, this palace allowed Tsar Nicholas I to retreat from St Petersburg and reside in the surrounding countryside.[40] The modern-day *kottedzh* thus evokes the pre-revolutionary country estate, or *usad'ba*, which provided the nobility both a means of escape from the cities and access to nature. Recent scholarly interest in these estates – mainly constructed between the mid-eighteenth and md-nineteenth centuries – has underlined the importance of their physical and imagined geographies in rural Russia. As Laura Victoir concludes, 'the estates were the glue that socially and culturally cemented pre-revolutionary Russia'.[41] The estate consequently became an important chronotope in nineteenth-century Russian literature, with its own social intrigues and cultural signifiers.[42] Indeed, the concept of privatizing land goes back centuries in Russia and was particularly pertinent during the reign of Ivan Groznyi through the distinction between the *zemshchina* and the *oprichnina*. The ruling elite have a long history preserving exclusive enclaves of land and exploiting private ownership as a means of control.

Since the middle of the nineteenth-century, Moscow has developed another form of rural retreat – the dacha, which in stark contrast to the *usad'ba* actually thrived during both the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. Once a minority privilege for the elite, the dacha witnessed such a rise in popularity between 1945 and 1991 that Rudolph and Brade characterize this fresh construction as nothing short of 'socialist suburbanization'

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[39] Thanos Pagonis and Andy Thornley, 'The Western Urban Development Model Meets Moscow Politics', in Martin De Jong et al. (eds), *The Theory and Practice of Institutional Transplantation: Experiences with the Transfer of Policy Institutions*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2002, pp. 169-84; and Ekaterina Makarova, 'The New Urbanism in Moscow: The Redefinition of Public and Private Space', unpublished paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Montreal, 10 August 2006.

[40] Caroline Humphrey, *The Unmaking of Soviet Life: Everyday Economies after Socialism*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002, p. 195.

[41] Laura A. Victoir, *The Russian Country Estate Today: A Case Study of Cultural Politics in Post-Soviet Russia*', Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2006, p. 19.

[42] P. R. Roosevelt, *Life on the Russian Country Estate: A Social and Cultural History*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995, esp. 102-28.

– a distinctly socialist conceptualization of the city's peripheries.[43] Celebrated as the gateway between the urban and the rural, the dacha did not replace the centrally located apartment or obviate the need for life in the centre, but supplemented it as a peaceful refuge. In the post-Soviet period too, the dacha has remained a mass phenomenon, with waves of Muscovites now flocking to the city's stations at weekends and during the summer months. Beyond its leisure opportunities, Melissa Caldwell stresses the importance of the dacha's nutritional significance in the Soviet period, concluding that during Soviet food shortages 'dacha gardens were seen by both state and citizen as a vital part of the national food supply system'.[44] In the period of economic transition and widening inequality of the 1990s, the dacha became less a means of supplementing food and more a means of sustenance. In one household survey undertaken in 1998, 17% of urban Russian respondents with a dacha cited leisure as the dacha's main purpose; 44% cited the benefit of 'additional produce for the table'; and 36% described the dacha as their 'main source of subsistence'.[45]

I do not suggest that the post-Soviet elite's giant *kottedzh* is the direct descendent of either the *usad'ba* or the dacha, but nor is it the manifestation of a Western spatial paradigm unaffected by local tradition. The *kottedzh* is not a rural estate; it exists instead in close contact with the city and its urban services. One of the new features of this spatial model is the shift of urban commodities to the city's rural surroundings in order to supply the wealthy inhabitants with the latest urban pursuits in a countryside setting. Yet the concept of the post-Soviet *kottedzh* does in some ways resemble the concept of the pre-revolutionary *usad'ba*, notably in the retreat of the wealthiest few from the city centre and the imposition of their desires on the local population. As the post-Soviet villagers lack the political, economic, and social capital of the *kottedzh* elite, they often find themselves at the mercy of the rich Muscovite's every whim.

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[43] Rudolph and Brade 'Processes of restructuring', p. 138. See also Stephen Lovell, *Summerfolk: A History of the Dacha, 1710-2000*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003, esp. pp. 163-208. Melissa Caldwell points out that although the term *dacha* is frequently used colloquially in Russian, it is actually 'an official administrative designation reserved primarily for the larger country residences of the elite'. Some of Caldwell's respondents initially make this distinction, describing their more humble country dwellings as a *sarai* (literally 'shed'), although they confusingly then refer to it as a 'dacha' after making the initial point. Melissa L. Caldwell, *Dacha Idylls: Living Organically in Russia's Countryside*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011, p. 8.
[44] Caldwell, *Dacha Idylls*, p. 10.
[45] Cited in Simon Clarke, *Making Ends Meet in Contemporary Russia: Secondary Employment, Subsidiary Agriculture and Social Networks*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2002, p. 148.

Unlike the dacha, the contemporary *kottedzh* is neither a place to grow food nor a site for enjoying unbridled nature. The rich Muscovite seems to prefer the new gourmet restaurant to growing produce on a plot of land. The construction of the *kottedzh* frequently aims to overcome the natural environment, with artificial pools preferred to lakes, and tended lawns prioritized over unkempt fields. Yet the areas valued the most historically for the Soviet elite's dachi remain the same for the post-Soviet elite's *kottedzhi*. With all land technically under public ownership during the Soviet era, the Soviet state favoured its ruling classes by ensuring access to the most privileged locations. The best dachi were reserved for those with the greatest political power. In the post-Soviet period, the land has been transferred to private ownership, yet those with the highest social capital continue to horde the most exclusive sites. Those best placed to exploit the upheaval of the 1990s now possess the most luxurious dachi to the west of Moscow. Both Barvikha and Zhukovka along Rublevo-Uspenskoe shosse traditionally contained dachi and sanatoria reserved for the Soviet nomenklatura. Indeed, Stalin's daughter, Svetlana Allilueva, lived in a settlement in Zhukovka, which included special shops and a pass system reminiscent of the modern-day exclusive fashion stores and guarded entrances.[46] It is precisely these villages which have become the most exclusive during the post-Soviet period and which form the focus of this chapter. As an analysis of Robski's *Casual* will show, the theories of complete exclusion developed in the American context can only be partially transposed onto Moscow, which remains reliant on its historical formations.

5.3. Unveiling the Glamour of Fortress Moscow

A close reading of Robski's *Casual* unlocks the *claustra* of Moscow's gated communities and offers a glimpse of the concerns, visions, and lifestyles shared by some of those living on the other side of the wall. Illustrating how the Rublevka has been constructed in the cultural imagination during the economically prosperous early years of the Putin era, *Casual* maps semi-autobiographical, semi-fictionalized stories of a materialistic elite onto the topography of Moscow in 2005. On the one hand, Robksi offers the reader an extensive list of Moscow's most exclusive locations in the mid-2000s. On the other hand, her narrative technique of providing snapshots of

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[46] Lovell notes that the only location where the residents would mix with other strata of Soviet society was at the local cinema. Lovell, *A History of the Dacha*, p. 171.

rollercoaster lives, collated in twenty-two short chapters (the last contains just two sentences), condenses and intensifies the repeated moments of violence, lust, and unreflective spending. The Rublevka, the gated community, and the high life are all intertwined in *Casual*, connecting grandiose architecture to wealth and a closed spatial phenomenon to economic freedom. Indeed, the novel's main location is so integral to the characters' lives that *Casual* became more widely known in Russia under the popular title 'Rublevka'.

Echoing this fusion of physical area, imagined geography, and authorial creative license, Robski selects an unnamed heroine and first-person narrator with a similar biography to her own. Born on 10 June 1968, Robski has herself enjoyed a life trajectory of upward financial and social mobility through marriage, leading her all the way to a house on the Rublevka thanks to her third husband and businessman, Mikhail Robski. Both Robski's father and that of her heroine died when they were children; Robski's first husband was killed in a drunken brawl, whilst her heroine's husband is shot by a business rival; and Robski, like her protagonist, grew up in insalubrious surroundings – a flat on Ulitsa Verkhniaia Krasnoselʹskaia.[47] Despite the autobiographical moments in the novel, Robski is keen, however, to distance herself from her heroine. She stresses that she would personally be happy to live with the 'people' (*narod*) rather than in isolation from them, and that the friends described in *Casual* are not hers but 'friends of my heroine'.[48] Her protestations and initial unwillingness to reveal details of her own biography in the press hint at Robski's unease about the public reaction she and her friends would receive. The erection of spatial barriers is accompanied by the raising of social barriers. By treading the line between fact and fiction, and between the enclosed Rublevka and the media spotlight, Robski attempts to bring Putinism's 'bourgeois class' into the open and propagate her conclusion that 'rich people are people nonetheless'.[49]

In the spirit of conveying the ordinariness of extraordinary lives, the narrator-cum-heroine of *Casual* adopts a highly conversational tone and consistently focuses on her own microcosmic personal issues in direct addresses to the reader. Close narrative

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[47] Veligzhaniny, 'Pravda o muzhʹiakh Oksany Robski', p. 14.
[48] Oksana Robski, 'Vstrecha s Oksanoi Robski', *Argumenty i fakty*, 20 May 2005, http://gazeta.aif.ru/conf/conf/78 [last accessed 15 August 2012].
[49] Ibid.

proximity to the protagonist's daily movements limits the reader's view of wider Moscow, rhetorically gating the reader in an inescapable tunnel of socialites' small talk, fashion, and gastronomic delights. What the novel is most successful in repeatedly highlighting is the importance of surface for Moscow's super-rich. The superficial representations of fame and fortune are then intertwined with Muscovite space. If the gated community can be viewed – at least in part – as the Americanization of Moscow's periphery, Robski's relentless descriptions of celebrity reflect the Russian embrace of female-driven American narratives. The author herself has since hosted Western-style television shows, importing alien paradigms to the Muscovite context and embracing foreign fashions and cuisine. As suggested by the choice of English title and idealization of the glamour phenomenon, which has its roots in American consumption culture, Robski's protagonist also often seems to be influenced more by the USA than by her immediate surroundings.[50] During a particularly lonely period for one of the characters, Robski actually makes a nod to the HBO show *Sex and the City*, which grew to be a hit in Russia under the title *Seks v bol'shom gorode*.[51] Creating a pun on the Russian title, Robski's character describes life in the Muscovite gated community as 'No Sex and the City' (Отсутствие секса в большом городе).[52]

Given Robski's focus on sex, gender, and human relations, *Casual* has been connected by scholars to the imported genre of 'chick lit', which has witnessed phenomenal success in Anglophone culture since the middle of the 1990s.[53] For some literary critics, this unironic internalization of American advertising culture renders Robski's literary output derisory – the prose version of repetitive, vacuous glamour magazines. Apparently offering little more than simple titillation, Robski's efforts are captured

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[50] Larisa Rudova, 'Glamur i postsovetskii chelovek', *Neprikosnovennyi zapas*, 6, 2006, pp. 168-79 (pp. 168-69).

[51] *Sex and the City* was also brought to Russian screens in the form of a Russian adaptation, *Bal'zakovskii vozrast, ili Vse muzhiki svo…*. This series was not a great success and received negative reviews from critics concerned by the imposition of an alien culture on Moscow. The original series set in New York, however, combined alien concepts with an exotic location and was greeted much more positively. My thanks go to Stephen Hutchings for his insight into these series.

[52] Here, Robski also reminds the reader of the famous phrase from the television show linking women in Leningrad and Boston, MA, in 1986: 'seksa u nas [v SSSR] net'. With the speaker actually referring to the appearance of sex in television advertising, the phrase came to symbolize the hypocrisy of public taboos relating to sex. For a clip from the show, see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rnw5FrUABhk&feature=related [last accessed 9 August 2012].

[53] Rudova, 'Glamur i postsovetskii chelovek', p. 172. For more on 'chick lit' and its impact on gender concepts, see Suzanne Ferriss and Mallory Young (eds), *Chick Lit: The New Women's Fiction*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2006.

quite simply by Evgenii Grishkovets: '"Робски" – это не "литература"'.[54] At the same time, Robski has received criticism from some of the women living on the Rublevka, who argue that she is a 'proletarian writer' because she actually underrepresents their wealth and the cost of their houses.[55] What is clear with the benefit of hindsight is that *Casual* captured the dominant cultural trend in Moscow, glamour (*glamur*), when it was rapidly becoming the height of fashion. With scholars having already proclaimed an end to the era of the New Russians by this point,[56] Robski's sudden and highly successful burst onto the literary scene marked a new epoch for Moscow's wealthiest inhabitants and earned her the status of glamour literature's 'pioneer'.[57] To understand the topography of Robski's Moscow, one must first, therefore, consider the topography of her brand of glamour culture.

During the early 2000s, the cultural phenomenon of *glamur* reflected the fusion of economic and social capital in a more stable environment under Putin. In Moscow, the leisure industry boomed, and cultural exchange between the Russian capital and major global cities increased. In his cultural characterization, the New Russian of the 1990s had been brash, uncivilized, and invariably male, the post-Soviet incarnation of the 1920s NEP men, awash with money but poor in taste or morals.[58] By the Putin era, the ubiquity of glossy magazines ensured that Muscovites paid greater attention to global fashion trends.[59] As Larissa Rudova summarizes, *glamur* marked an embrace of 'western-style glossy journals, celebrity media, high fashion, the beauty industry, consumption of luxury goods'.[60] Being a 'socialite' was suddenly transformed into a profession. Through the escalation of Kseniia Sobchak to what Strukov and Goscilo describe as 'Russia's arch-celebrity' (she is renowned as 'the Russian Paris Hilton'), glamour shifted the focus away from reckless and gaudy businessmen to wealthy and

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[54] Cited in Pavel Basinskii, 'Literatura po zhenskoi chasti', *Russkii kur'er*, 10 April 2006, p. 21.

[55] Anon. '"Proletarskaia pisatel'nitsa" glamurnykh bul'onnykh kubukov', *Stringer*, 18 August 2005, http://stringer-news.com/publication.mhtml?Part=38&PubID=4556 [last accessed 15 August 2012].

[56] Pavel Lungin and Aleksandr Timofeevskii, 'Konets dinozavrov', *Iskusstvo kino*, 2002, 4, pp. 5-17; and Harley Balzer, 'Routinization of the New Russians?', *Russian Review*, 62, 2003, 1, pp. 11-36.

[57] Viktoriia Shokhina, 'Glamur bez beregov', *NG. Ex libris*, 28 December 2006, p. 8.

[58] Seth Graham neatly describes the New Russians as a 'filthy rich, amorphous, quasi-mythical social-class-*cum*-criminal-subculture'. Seth Graham, 'The Wages of Syncretism: Folkloric New Russians and Post-Soviet Popular Culture', *Russian Review*, 62, 2003, 1, pp. 37-53 (p. 37).

[59] Djurdja Bartlett, 'In Russia, At Last and Forever: The First Seven Years of Russian *Vogue*', *Fashion Theory*, 10, 2006, 1/2, pp. 175-204 (p. 180).

[60] Larissa Rudova, 'Russian Glamour Culture and the Extraordinary World of Oksana Robski', *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 44, 2011, 5, pp. 1102-19 (p. 1102).

sartorially savvy women.[61] Glamour's archetypal heroine is young, beautiful, and female. For the main female characters of *Casual*, the latest fashions are of the utmost importance. When a so-called 'friend' is spotted in the latest copy of *Vogue*, she is immediately ridiculed for being photographed in a Vivienne Westwood dress from an outdated collection.

Glamour's emphasis on women and fashion has a spatial impact. In stark contrast to the imagined Moscows analysed previously, Robski's commercialized city has been entirely rebranded. American Express is the payment of choice, the fashion labels are Western, the names of the establishments frequently appear in Latin script, and the children attend English classes. The city, like the narrative, is awash with Anglicisms and foreign signifiers, reshaping the reader's understanding of Russian urban space.[62] The nucleus of this high-life existence is the protagonist's Rublevka mansion, which she nonchalantly reveals to be worth 'three and a half million' (the narrator automatically calculates large sums in US dollars rather than rubles).[63] For the characters of *Casual*, the gated community is not merely a safe haven away from local crime but another status symbol of economic and social capital. It is a bounded, imagined geography, whose connotations reinforce the inhabitants' sense of belonging, of being *svoi*. The heroine's upbringing in the Moscow neighbourhood of Khamovniki could hardly be more different from her present life in what she describes as 'our village', an insular universe where 'nobody would ever even entertain the idea that the diamonds might not be genuine'.[64] 'Gigantic and beautiful', her opulent mansion is the place where she can receive a massage from the Ukrainian live-in masseuse, allow her daughter to play safely in the swimming pool, and sip mojitos whilst sharing neighbourhood chat with the other female residents.[65]

This localized community remains an idyllic and much-desired corner of Moscow throughout the novel. Whilst the heroine also owns a centrally located apartment, where

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[61] Helena Goscilo and Vlad Strukov, 'Introduction', in Goscilo and Strukov (eds), *Celebrity and Glamour in Contemporary Russia*, pp. 1-26 (p. 7).
[62] Tatiana Mikhailova notes that the more accessible items are written in Cyrillic, whilst those objects with 'transcendental status' are given in Latin script. Tatiana Mikhailova, 'Glamour à la Oksana Robski', in Goscilo and Strukov (eds), *Celebrity and Glamour in Contemporary Russia*, pp. 90-104 (p. 94).
[63] Oksana Robski, *Casual*, Moscow: Rosmen, 2005, p. 249.
[64] Ibid., p. 59.
[65] Ibid., pp. 47 and 86.

she lives when necessary, it is the out-of-town locale which she 'loves' as her home and to which she looks forward to returning.[66] This image of the periphery as a place of manageable, homely retreat is succinctly captured in a single scene through the protagonist's location-rich description of a late-night return from the central nightclub 'First' (its name given in Latin script).[67] Since one friend is drink-driving and the group has been smoking cannabis, the characters face the task of evading the police checkpoints along the MKAD before reaching the refuge of Moskovskaia oblast′. As the protagonist's driver ultimately solves the dilemma by providing a decoy to divert police attention, the group is depicted breaking through the gateway of the city's authority and back into their secured world of Barvikha.[68] With their husbands frequently away on business, the rich women happily rule over this opulent realm.

With the unveiling of its Luxury Village complex in the same year Robski released *Casual*, Barvikha is the embodiment of exurbanization – an attempt to create a well-equipped segment of space in the more rural region outside the city's borders. The Luxury Village is conceived as the rural counterpart to the city's most exclusive central locations and belongs to Mercury. This luxury fashion group is the epitome of glamorous retail; it was founded in 1993 and owns all the stores in Moscow's most exclusive boutique street, Tret′iakovskii proezd, as well as the department store TsUM. As the official website of the Luxury Village describes, the 'traditional urban infrastructure' is 'inscribed' (*vpisat′*) into the 'countryside' of Moskovskaia oblast′.[69] Not only are the biggest fashion labels represented, but the complex also includes a hotel and spa, a concert hall, where a number of Western singers have already performed, and an expensive, flashy branch of TsUM. Explicitly targeting only the 'most prosperous, dynamic, and sophisticated audience', Mercury reimagines and rebrands a small rural area through a process of localized 'place-making'.[70] Shoppers must possess the necessary tools to unlock the intended semiotic meanings stored within such places. In this case, Muscovites must obtain sufficient wealth and read enough fashion magazines to understand the cultural significance of these brands.

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[66] Ibid., p. 47.
[67] At that time, the nightclub was situated on Sofiiskaia naberezhnaia – the street on the southern bank of the river directly opposite the Kremlin – but it closed down in 2006.
[68] Robski, *Casual*, pp. 241-44.
[69] http://www.barvikhahotel.ru/#/barvikha/ [last accessed 12 August 2012].
[70] http://www.blv.ru/about/ [last accessed 12 August 2012]. See Chapter One for more on the theories of constructing meaning-laden 'places' – as opposed to 'space' – within the city.

Based on the mimicry of foreign paradigms and foreign labels, the Luxury Village attempts to construct Dear and Flusty's 'edge city', an American-style, self-contained, wealthy micro-community. With the consumer opportunities available on this extra-urban site, the rich housewife's shopping desires can be fulfilled without the need for recourse to central Moscow. The exclusivity of Barvikha and the Rublevka, the reproduction of the centre's glamour on the city's periphery, and the emphasis on gating – on the *claustra* – all underline the difference between post-Soviet Moscow's gated exurbanization and its sprawling suburbanization. As the focus of Chapter Six, the city's suburbs expanded massively during the Khrushchev period. New apartment blocks were constructed around *mikroraiony* such as Cheremushki, made famous by Dmitrii Shostakovich's operetta.[71] These suburban areas were conceived at the time of their construction as self-contained sites for all, a spatial form that would encourage neighbourhood community and social mixing. The exurban gated community, on the other hand, is conceived at the moment of its construction as a rural locale for the few, a spatial form that discourages social mixing and focuses on constructing camaraderie between those with similar socio-economic backgrounds. Whereas the following chapter discovers an embrace of heterogeneity in the suburbs, the gated community is founded on the principle of homogeneity.

5.4. 'A Utopian Social Experiment but without the Poor People'

Looking beyond Russia's borders for inspiration, one of glamour's fundamental tenets is newness. Ageing is defeated by plastic surgery and Botox; poverty is concealed by the community's gates or the tint of the car's windows; and depression is cured by expensive meals and holidays abroad. On the one occasion that Robski's protagonist actively reflects on her life trajectory, she envisages the boundary between her old and new life in spatial terms, imagining her parents' entire two-room apartment for a family of four fitting into her bedroom of thirty square metres.[72] Like Tolstaia's Benedikt and Glukhovskii's Artem, she briefly conjures a fleeting image of a radically different life. Unlike Benedikt and Artem, however, her own existence has changed for the better. She

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[71] See my sixth chapter, p. 236.
[72] Robski, *Casual*, p. 247.

is actually keen to detach her current life from her childhood, trying to dismiss the image as a consequence of smoking cannabis. Memories of the past are an inconvenience when attempting to isolate oneself in the constant partying of the present. Lotman and Uspenskii's model of cyclical breaks in Russian history, discussed in the previous chapter in the context of Bykov's circles, once again reflects post-Soviet processes. After each major historic break, the new attempts to replace the old. As Lotman and Uspenskii suggest in reference to the site of the idol Perun in Kievan Rus′, greater semiotic significance can be created by constructing the new on the site of the old.[73] The village of Barvikha once offered a countryside retreat through its sanatorium reserved for those supposedly building Communism; it now provides an escape for those building themselves a glamorous new future.

In culture too, glamour literature fills the gap, conjuring a soothingly rose-tinted vision of post-Soviet existence to reassure the Putin-era reader ready to leave behind the shocking bleakness of explicit violence and sex. Where post-apocalyptic literature offers a dispiritingly empty void, Robski fashions colourful imagery in front of the reader's eyes. Indeed, one scene in an advertising agency during which the heroine works on the rebranding of whey, could easily have been lifted from Pelevin's *Generation "П"* or *Empire V*, only without Pelevin's biting irony.[74] Different marketing ideas are bandied about, evoking positive notions of free time and exoticized foreignness. A husband purchases whey for his wife because of its foreign cachet ('Дорогая, за границей все женщины пользуются этим'); a woman uses the product to make her face 'smooth' and her hair 'silky'; and another woman is afforded time to party because the whey is used to cook bliny more quickly.[75] The initial post-Soviet concerns of economic crisis, future uncertainty, and Russian isolation on the global front all seem a world away. Instead, this is a new time where the individual can relax and focus on herself.

As Goscilo and Strukov posit, 'glamour in Russia is a new utopia having replaced both the late-Soviet project of building a radiant future and the early-1990s vision of a

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[73] Lotman and Uspensky, 'Binary Models in the Dynamics of Russian Culture', p. 33-34.
[74] For analysis of Pelevin's attack on Moscow's glamour culture, see my sixth chapter, pp. 248-51.
[75] Robski, *Casual*, pp. 71-72.

democratic state'.[76] Or, in the words of the multi-millionaire property developer Aras Agalarov with regard to his 340-hectare 'city for millionaires' just off Novorizhskoe shosse: 'the project is a utopian social experiment but without the poor people'.[77] Reminders of past poverty and memories of the Soviet Union must be removed from view. In his ground-breaking 1994 study of early-Soviet ethnicity policies, Iurii Slezkine suggests that the Soviet Union was conceived as a communal apartment, with 'every family that inhabited it […] entitled to a room of its own'.[78] If, as Slezkine argues, the Soviet Union actively promoted national co-habitation and ethnic particularism, then the post-Soviet gated community rejects the notion of the 'other' living side by side, instead focusing solely on the like-minded. The communal apartment is replaced by a walled-off row of mansions.

In the use of the isolated gated community as a means of overcoming post-Soviet alienation, however, familiar processes are actually at work. As Lotman and Uspenskii theorize, the new can never entirely replace the old, as the past gradually seeps through the present.[79] For Robski's protagonist, memories of the past still persist in the present. She is unable to exclude completely the visions of her childhood home or the postmemories of the Soviet Union inherited from her mother. For glamour culture more widely, the impulse to construct a local utopia – and the wholeness such an enclosed space offers – is itself reminiscent of Soviet dreams. Soviet narratives continue to exert an impact in the new millennium. The embrace of the 'other' has been lost, but there remains a vestige of Soviet mentality in the desire for structure, order, and protection from the outside, anarchic world. When one of the group in *Casual* decides to design a new house nearer to the fitness centre and beautician on Il'inskoe shosse, Robski leads the reader to the construction site. Once there, the heroine immediately marvels at the roofers' professionalism; they take meticulous care with their work and place the tiles 'carefully, one after another, with an even level of adhesive'.[80] At this point the famous wall-building scene in Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *Odin den' Ivana Denisovicha* (1962) is evoked, only without any criticism of the goal and without the perspective of the roofer.

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[76] Goscilo and Strukov, 'Introduction', p. 4.

[77] Cited in Natal′ia Granina, 'Stroitel′stvu raia dlia millionerov meshaiut istrinskie aboringy', *Izvestiia*, 19 February 2008, p. 1.

[78] Yury Slezkine, 'The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism', *Slavic Review*, 53, 1994, 2, pp. 414-52 (p. 434).

[79] Lotman and Uspensky, 'Binary Models in the Dynamics of Russian Culture', pp. 30-66.

[80] Robski, *Casual*, p. 194.

Shukhov in a Soviet camp or roofers on a millionaire's mansion may still be able to take simple pleasure in the task of construction on another's behalf, they are unable to reap the utopian project's rewards.

In this way the new utopia starts to resemble the old, as Robski's glamour becomes an ultra-commercialized version of the familiar phenomenon of Soviet kitsch. This 'new' culture revolves around the socialist-realist tropes of transcendence to a condition of absolute merriness and the disavowal of despair. Tolstaia was one of the first to hint at this link in her definition of glamour's 'carelessness' and 'lightness of being' (легкость бытия).[81] In this 'rarefied, radiant, ethereal' state of existence, there are 'neither blemishes, nor ingrown nails', 'no tear-stained eyes […] depression […], and, finally, no death'.[82] For those in some way touched by the brushstroke of glamour, the simulacrum still reigns supreme. As Tolstaia commandeers the language of Milan Kundera's condemnation of Communist kitsch in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984), the reader could be forgiven for thinking Tolstaia is discussing Soviet culture. For Kundera, Communist ideology aims at what would rapidly become an 'unbearable lightness of being', a state of 'unbelievable innocence'.[83] As the ideology intends to construct a 'world of grinning idiots', its kitsch cultural output actually means the 'the absolute denial of shit [absolutní popření hovna]'.[84] Like Kundera's Communist kitsch, the capitalist kitsch of glamour culture refuses to acknowledge the existence of the shit that might disturb the Botox-secured grin of the model on the cover of the latest fashion magazine.

If everything and everybody in Moscow can be bought and no poverty exists because the gated community's gates act as a Potemkin village for its inhabitants, questions are raised about motivation and meaning in this 'rarefied, radiant, ethereal' state of sublime existence. Throughout the novel Robski's heroine exudes an air of casualness, a repeated sense that nothing really matters and that few emotions lie beneath the surface. Having been called by the police regarding her husband's murder, the heroine immediately heads to the wardrobe to impress the officers when they interview her

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[81] Tat′iana Tolstaia, 'Ia planov nashikh liubliu glamur′e', *Den'*, pp. 254-68 (p.256).
[82] Ibid., pp. 261-62.
[83] Milan Kundera, *Nesneitelná lehkost bytí*, Brno: Atlantis, 2006, p. 270.
[84] Ibid., pp. 265-70.

('Жена Сержа должна выглядеть сногсшибательно').[85] When she visits her husband's driver in hospital, she stands before a paralysed man and muses why he had failed to shield her husband with his own body. In his works, Pelevin repeatedly shows the reader the tragedy of the void behind the façade of 'new' Moscow and deconstructs its vacuous advertising culture. He finds little difference between the meaninglessness of the Soviet space project and the emptiness of capitalist advertising, but he clearly portrays both negatively. Akunin, likewise, shows the irony behind the nostalgic impulses he evokes. Robski's heroine, on the other hand, internalizes the discourse of glamour, without revealing personal shock at the city's inequalities or deceits. If the reader is moved by the emotionless depictions of exorbitant expenditure and excess, Robski's heroine drives the narrative forward without acknowledging that anything unusual is being described. The flip-side of glamour's reassurance is an unnerving but familiar lack of reflectivity.

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If glamour's newness rails against the past without acknowledging the ways in which it appropriates old discourses, then the gated community as a spatial phenomenon in Moscow is unconsciously working within the historical paradigm of connecting the centre and the dacha. The Barvikha Luxury Village may bring the centre to the rich housewife's doorstep, but it does not stop her from visiting Tret′iakovskii proezd in the city centre. Robski's heroine might try to avoid contact with the outside 'other' as much as possible, but she certainly does not remain within the confines of 'her' village. On the contrary, she builds the full extent of Moscow's high-end service industry into her daily life, travelling around Moscow to a range of exclusive locations accessible via her chauffeur-driven car.

The protagonist heads to 'Galereia' on Ulitsa Petrovka to find 'people whose houses aren't mortgaged', visits the male strip club Krasnaia shapochka on Tverskaia ulitsa, and discusses her friend's wedding plans for the Metropole.[86] She even attends Moscow's most exclusive *prezentatsii*, an English word appropriated by the Muscovite elite to describe the most exclusive, glamorous event at which a new product, exhibition

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[85] Robski, *Casual*, p. 8.
[86] Ibid., pp. 239, 148, and 257.

or cultural event is promoted amid a media storm. With the heroine seeing Kseniia Sobchak at a Chopard *prezentatsiia* on Tret′iakovskii proezd, Robski underlines the continued prestige attached to one of Moscow's centrally located streets…or, as it has been humorously labelled colloquially 'Tret′iakovskaia galereia' – a place with wares to be admired through the window but, as in the museum, not to be touched by the average visitor.[87] Glamour's 'absolute denial of shit' does indeed have spatial implications, but rather than just creating one utopian exurb, it injects the face of the entire city with small implants that offer a localized 'lightness of being' in both Moscow's centre and on the periphery.

Given the precision with which Robski traces her heroine's movements, the glamorous Muscovite locales described can be pinpointed on a contemporary map of the city. To capture visually the spread of locations mentioned in *Casual*, I have created a number of maps using Google Map Maker.[88] These maps form part of a process undertaken for this chapter of reading Robski's *Casual* 'for place', focusing on the repeated references to Muscovite locations which are immediately recognisable to the city's wealthy elite. These maps recreate Robski's narrative in cartographical form, visually rooting the abundant descriptions of Moscow in specific areas of the city. Rather than highlighting the plot progression through the narrative, they focus on the significance of place in the construction of the Rublevka elite's tales. They show how glamour culture is embedded within the local spatial context and draw attention to the points of contact between glamour and other cultures within the city. They can all be accessed online: clicking on each symbol brings up the relevant citation and page reference from the novel.

The first map, available online at http://goo.gl/maps/gUA5r, pinpoints the establishments visited by Robski's heroine during the course of the novel for entertainment or relaxation. This demonstrates in cartographical form how Robski constructs Glamorous Moscow as a network of elite locales, thereby supporting recent

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[87] Robski and Sobchak are well acquainted and even co-authored the work *Zamuzh za millionera, ili Brak vysshego sorta* (2007). Offering 'practical' advice on how to ensure the expensive gifts keep flowing from a wealthy husband, the novel quickly became a bestseller.

[88] Three maps have been created to show the locations' purpose when mentioned in the novel. The first http://goo.gl/maps/gUA5r, depicts the sites visited for entertainment. The second, http://goo.gl/maps/3Wzmg, shows locations not specifically aimed at entertainment but nonetheless reserved for wealthy visitors. The third and final map, http://goo.gl/maps/UXby3, marks the heroine's location when thrust into an encounter with the 'other'.

geographical and anthropological research that has highlighted Moscow's post-Soviet spatial divisions. The west of the city is viewed as an ecologically pleasant place to live for those with money, whilst the east is associated with industry and social deprivation.[89] Some exurbanization has undoubtedly resulted in a greater concentration of power and wealth in the secluded villages outside the MKAD, but Robski's characters clearly do still require the city beyond their immediate surroundings. Like the traditional dacha, the gated community exists in interaction with the centre, parts of which have themselves experienced a gentrification process.[90] A fitness centre and two restaurants in Zhukovka are noted within the immediate vicinity of the protagonist's home but, with the single exception of a store on Rublevskoe shosse just inside the MKAD, the remaining sites visited for recreation, shopping, and entertainment are within Moscow's Third Ring Road.[91] Moreover, all the locations the heroine selects for drinking alcoholic beverages or partying are situated within the Sadovoe kol′tso. These central buildings in particular are exoticized in the mind of the reader through Robski's tales of debauchery, making them stand out from the surrounding cityscape.

To save time and increase revenue, the central establishments sometimes combine leisure functions. For example, the protagonist finds a $1200 pair of pyjamas at Brioni within the Radisson Slavanskaia hotel complex, before relocating to the Japanese restaurant, Sumosan, in the same hotel. As the protagonist proceeds to visit two more of Moscow's most expensive hotels, the Soviet era is again evoked, with the continuation of the trend of reserving international hotels as spaces for the elite. Now owned by large multinational companies, these hotels carve out small pockets of Moscow where the same standard of service and products are on offer as in any other major global metropolis. The number of these locations is relatively small, but the services they offer wide, creating a tension between the topography of the city and the modest size of the group of friends who all frequent the same spots. The heroine travels long distances only to bump into familiar faces, causing her to remark that 'Moscow is a huge city but

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[89] Dmitrii Pisarenko, 'Bogatye sobiraiutsia v getto', *Argumenty i fakty*, 6 April 2005, p. 20.
[90] For Gdaniec, the post-Soviet 'process of gentrification' has created an 'increasing exclusiveness of the city centre'. Cordula Gdaniec, 'Reconstruction in Moscow's Historic Centre: Conservation, Planning and Fiancé Strategies – The Example of the Ostozhenka District, *GeoJournal*, 42, 1997, 4, pp. 377-84 (p. 377). See also my second chapter, pp. 71-74.
[91] It is not always clear to which location Robski is referring, particularly if more than one branch of a chain store exists in Moscow. Where possible, I have used the most likely store, given the protagonist's location at that point in the novel.

all of us move in one and the same vicious circle'.[92] My second map, http://goo.gl/maps/3Wzmg, plots the remaining points in this 'vicious circle', showing the local places mentioned by the heroine not used for entertainment but in some way reserved for those with wealth.[93]

This map completes the picture of Robski's localized 'place-making'. It includes the characters' village; the exclusive bania in Gorki-10 the heroine visits on the trail of her husband's killer; the tranquil beach at Nikolina Gora where she practices shooting; her friend's new house; the cemetery containing her husband's grave; and the private hospital where she is treated for a kidney infection.[94] Joining these dots creates less a rounded 'vicious circle' than a series of islands. The process of cartographically representing Robski's 'place-making' reveals a form of 'splintering urbanism', a theory defined by Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin in relation to other major global metropolises but which seems particularly applicable to post-Soviet Moscow. According to this paradigm, the traditional city is not simply replaced by the 'edge city', created through the exurbanization of the more rural *oblast′*, but is instead overlaid by an 'interlinked complex of private, air-conditioned and secure spaces'.[95] Whereas the topography of the apocalypse analysed in the previous chapter demanded a strengthening of Moscow's concentricity and emphasized political control, the topography of Glamorous Moscow is fractured.

In stark contrast to the static centripetal model, the process of splintering urbanism relies on speed and mobility. The elite must be able to access rapidly different splinters in the network, using their cars, mobile phones, and fast-track airport services to connect with other major metropolises. In Moscow, top officials and rich businessmen place flashing blue lights, or *migalki*, on the roofs of their cars, allowing them to flout speed limits, jump red lights, drive down streets against the flow of traffic, and access designated fast lanes. Successful Muscovites' readiness to exploit political or economic

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[92] Robski, *Casual*, p. 239.
[93] Where the exact location can be pinpointed from the narrative, the blue marker contains a black circle. Otherwise, the marker is placed over the nearest metro station or suburban station or, failing that, in the centre of the village.
[94] Boris El′tsin regularly visited the same hospital in Krylatskoe as Robski's protagonist, Tsentral′naia klinicheskaia bol′nitsa, before he died there of heart failure on 23 April 2007.
[95] Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin, *Splintering Urbanism: Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities and the Urban Condition*, London: Routledge, 2001, p. 277.

capital to obtain a *migalka* – either through official channels or through bribery – underlines their valorization of mobility across space.[96] Even the city gods must sometimes negotiate the places of the *Wandersmänner* in order to move around the city. Graham and Marvin conclude, however, that the city gods ultimately turn back to verticality in a renewed effort to avoid such inconvenience. Through a structure of 'vertical segregation', Graham and Marvin suggest that the elite of the future will pay to access raised motorways, reproducing the 'experience of flying over the top of the city, escaping from its congested roads and […] crowded streets at ground level'.[97] As discussed in Chapter Two, one of the plans proposed in 2011 to overcome Moscow's notorious congestion was the double-decking of the city's major arteries.

As the realms of science-fiction and extant cityscape begin to coincide, new technology plays a crucial role in the development and maintenance of this splintered system. Not only does greater surveillance keep the 'other' at bay, but new means of communication allow peripheral spaces to be connected to a network. The gates of the community may have slammed shut, but new portals have opened elsewhere in hyperspace, connecting people through the world wide web. Whereas the train was once the harbinger of condensed space, shrinking distances and forcing the reimagining of Russia's vast geography, virtual messages carried through the city's airwaves and cables bring another rethinking of space. Indeed, Maria Kaika's description of technology in the 'city of flows' increasingly resembles the movements of the spatially liberated city gods. Where Kaika depicts opaque, unfathomable technological networks 'disappearing underground, locked into pipes, cables, conduits, tubes, passages, and electronic waves', those who optimize the splintered city make the most of their interconnectivity beyond the gaze of other city-dwellers.[98] Mapping all the communications between these people – from the trips across the city described by Robski to messages through social media – would create a similar image of criss-crossing lines.

Given the importance of keeping these connections open – these pipes unclogged – the narrator of *Casual* describes with great frustration the endless traffic jams created by

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[96] Amidst growing anger at the proliferation of *migalki*, Muscovites began a 'blue bucket' campaign in the spring of 2010. Taping upturned blue buckets to their cars, they playfully challenged the flouting of traffic rules and the state's unwillingness to regulate the use of *migalki*. Dmitrii Sokolov-Mitrich, 'Chelovek bez migalki', *Izvestiia*, 27 April 2010, p. 6.
[97] Graham and Marvin, *Splintering Urbanism*, p. 276.
[98] Maria Kaika, *City of Flows: Modernity, Nature, and the City*, New York: Routledge, 2005, p. 28.

Putin's need to move at speed from the centre to his *kottedzh* in Novo-Ogarevo.[99] Here, the dacha's *raison d'être* has been expanded to include office functions, with Putin welcoming foreign heads of state, religious leaders, and other important dignitaries (including American Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama) to his countryside mansion. When the Russian President's Press Secretary, Dmitrii Peskov, announced on 17 October 2012 that Putin would work from his countryside residence when possible, Peskov drew attention to the traffic problems created by Putin's trips to and from central Moscow.[100] Putin's cavalcade is simply an enhanced version of Robski's chauffeur-driven car or the BMW topped with a *migalka*, expediting travel through areas of the city that do not interest the passenger in order to ensure that he or she arrives safely at the fortified destination. On the same day as Peskov's announcement, the Prime Minister's Press Secretary took one step further in a declaration that Medvedev would now travel by helicopter whenever possible.[101] Air travel – and what Graham and Marvin view as its low-level recreation through the opportunity to 'fly' along double-decker motorways – is the optimized version of the city gods' movements. By helicopter, the passenger travels from one location to another without experiencing anything of the space in between. Indeed, by replacing the car with air transport, the entire city of Moscow can be diminished to just another splinter in a global network. When Robski's protagonist grows increasingly afraid of police questioning, she instantly buys a first-class flight ticket to India, from where 'everything connected to Moscow became distant and unimportant'.[102]

As Timothy Ingold posits in his opposition of the wayfarer and the traveller, the construction of space is transformed by the form of movement undertaken.[103] For the wayfarer, movement is the purpose of the journey itself. For the traveller the destination is the journey's sole purpose. Considered in terms of de Certeau's distinction between verticality and horizontality in the city, the wayfarer is the *Wandersmann* and the

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[99] Putin's home is a nineteenth-century mansion, subsequently used as a Soviet state dacha for the elite. During his time in Novo-Ogarevo since 2000, Putin has overseen the renovation and extension of this estate, including the installation of a helipad, swimming pool, and gym.
[100] Aleksandr Gamov, 'Dmitrii Peskov: "Putin rabotaet v Novo-Ogareve, chtoby ne perekryvali dorogi v Moskve"', *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 19 October 2012, p. 2.
[101] Anon., 'Medvedev budet predvigat′sia v Moskve po vozdukhu', *Ekonomicheskie novosti*, 17 October 2012, http://dlib.eastview.com/browse/doc/27870718 [last accessed 13 March 2013].
[102] Robski, *Casual*, p. 315.
[103] Timothy Ingold, 'Road-building', unpublished paper presented at the conference 'Species of Spaces', Tallinn University, 29 July 2008.

traveller is the city god. The elite described by Robski are travellers-cum-city-gods, rather than wayfarers-cum-*Wandersmänner*.[104] On the one hand, wayfarers collect memories of the journey, just as the *Wandersmänner* collate narratives of urban space on the city's streets. On the other hand, travellers attempt to banish the journey from memory as uneventful and unimportant, just as city gods erase the unpalatable sections of urban space that do not fit their overarching metanarratives. For Moscow's elite travellers-cum-city-gods, the majority of the city's space is obviated by the significance of the splinters. A small number of locales represent all the city god or traveller would wish to know about the city. In echoes of Robski's narrative technique of condensing events into short, sharp chapters of shock, Moscow as a glamorous city is spatially condensed into short, sharp splinters of shocking opulence.

Through its system of networked places, Robski's *Casual* adds nuance to the theories of the utopia 'without the poor people' and the 'privatopia'. Glamorous Moscow is not a singular utopia but a series of what Foucault defines as 'heterotopias'. These nodes are, in some ways, the ideal of the capitalist city – sacralized islands of affluence and the ultimate representations of money-making. Yet they do not exist solely in the imagination – as utopias – but are integrated into the cityscape – as heterotopias. Unlike the utopia, they are tangible spaces. Whereas the apocalypse has been used by authors as a trope to mark a moment of temporal change – post-apocalyptic degradation its consequence – the heterotopic gated community is another site created by the 'absolute break with […] traditional time'.[105] The crystallization of capitalist dreams, often on the same locations once reserved for Communist dreams, has the effect of a distorting mirror, reflecting an extreme, hyperbolized view of one of Moscow's recent transformations. Gazing in on this opulent world from the outside 'exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy'.[106] The gated community and its exclusive counterparts are thus, in Foucauldian terms, *heterotopias of compensation*. Through their own extremes and excesses, they actually bring greater attention to the continued poverty of the surrounding city and its increased fragmentation. Their apparent perfection from the outside underlines the imperfections of the remaining city.

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[104] Robski's focus on the elite stands in stark contrast to Akunin's fascination with the minute details of little people's (hi)stories and the narratives left by those who used to roam the streets.

[105] Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', p. 26. There are connections here between Robski's capitalist-based urban splinters and Glukhovskii's rhizomatic vision of Moscow's post-apocalyptic metro discussed in the previous chapter.

[106] Ibid., p. 24.

5.5. Robski's Parochial Realm

Robski's narrative allows the reader to move from outside these heterotopic nodes and into their interior, confirming that the network of places is much more complex than the static world of the utopia. As a spatial form, utopia arrests the flow of linear time and stabilizes social processes. It is a static no-place. If a utopia is allowed to form in physical space, however, the transplantation of the imagined utopia onto the extant city creates a realized heterotopia based on compromise. In Robski's *Casual*, the static chronotope of the utopia is thus replaced by a dynamic chronotope of the gated community, a fused spatiotemporality that possesses its own internal dialogue and tensions. The community's walls are designed to perpetuate homogeneity, yet the reader actually discovers signs of heterogeneity behind them. Whereas Maria Zotova posits that Russian gated communities 'create a feeling of comfort and safety for their residents', Robski draws attention to the exact opposite – the residents' feelings of discomfort and insecurity.[107] The luxurious excesses of Rublevka life bring their own problems, conflicts, and confusions. Emancipation through wealth has its limits, and the apparent freedoms offered by those who appear to own everything prove illusory. The projections of glamour and success are simply a mask.

Rather than externalizing all violence and chaos beyond the walls, Robski's characters are more likely to be thrust into harm's way by the circles in which they move than Muscovites living in other areas of the city. The very foundations of their existence are often built on shadowy deals, exploitation, deceit, and violence. The narrative begins with the protagonist's discovery that her husband has been shot and killed on the doorstep of their apartment. One oligarch is consequently depicted taking precautions to evade such a fate, dancing in a club surrounded by bodyguards. As the protagonist attempts to defy gender prejudices and break into the male-dominated business world, the risks escalate. Five masked men armed with sub-machine guns burst into her new office, claiming to be from the department charged with fighting economic crime (UBEP) and demanding $20,000. The negative ramifications of a money-orientated universe are highlighted by the repeated instances of corruption. The police are bribed, a

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[107] Zotova, 'Emergence of Gated Communities in Russia', para. 31.

passport official is bribed, a nurse is bribed, and even the worker in the morgue has to be bribed to allow a wife to see her husband's body. The grime, out of which glamorous opulence flourishes in Robski's Moscow, can never be permanently banished.

Given this dubious melange of business and violence, accompanied by an untrustworthy system of law enforcement and fluctuating relationships between friends, Robski reveals the 'privatopia' to be less private than parochial. Drawing on Albert Hunter's theory of different 'social orders', Lyn Lofland explodes the binary opposition between public and private space by theorizing the 'parochial realm'.[108] For Lofland, such locations are 'characterized by a sense of commonality among acquaintances and neighbors who are involved in interpersonal networks that are located within "communities"'.[109] Her prime example is the neighbourhood bar, where the local drinkers know each other and frequently interact. They thereby create a local place that is much more intimate than the public realm. Rather than dividing the city along clear fissures between public and private, Lofland's interpretation allows for a 'continuum' and fluidity.[110] It is a sense of this fluidity that one counter-intuitively finds across the splintered urbanity and behind the gates of Glamorous Moscow. Whether in her own home, the village she considers 'ours' or the nightclubs frequented by the same familiar faces, Robski's protagonist rarely finds herself in private.

Not only do the group of friends move around each other's houses in the gated community without a second thought, but these wealthy women are confronted by the people they view as the 'other' on a daily basis. These encounters frequently take place not in public, but within the parochial realm. Inside her mansion, Robski's heroine is repeatedly perturbed by the presence of her masseuse, Galia, who permanently lives there. 'Othering' Galia through financial capital and language, remarking on her Ukrainian pronunciation of 'g' as 'kh', the protagonist is explicitly aware of their different planes of existence. At one point, she remarks that a masseuse's monthly

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[108] Albert Hunter, 'Private, Parochial and Public Social Orders: The Problem of Crime and Incivility in Urban Communities', in G. D. Suttles and M. N. Zald (eds), *The Challenge of Social Control: Citizenship and Institution Building in Modern Society*, Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1985, pp. 230-42.

[109] Lyn H. Lofland, 'Social Life in the Public Realm: A Review', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 17, 1989, 4, pp. 453-82 (p. 455).

[110] Parochial realms are, of course, highly contextual. If, for example, a newcomer walks into the neighbourhood bar that Lofland describes, the setting would be a public, 'other' realm for him or her.

salary in Donetsk equates to a manicure or a couple of rolls of sushi in Glamorous Moscow. On this basis, she decides that Galia has 'a furtive look' about her.[111]

In what is usually conceived by scholars as the 'private' space of the car, the protagonist is accompanied by her driver, a woman with whom she naturally spends much time, but against whom she constructs her own identity. Concluding that women find success through their appeal to men, the protagonist makes derogatory remarks about her driver's appearance, compares her to a man, and casts aspersions over her sexuality. As Robski expresses similar views in an interview regarding female bodyguards and what she believes to be their desire to behave like men, the author and her protagonist merge in their views on gender.[112] Losing one's glamour means losing one's position on the Rublevka because men seek younger, more attractive replacements. These potential losses are brought into stark relief by the old women who stand on the street in Zhukovka near to the characters' mansions, selling pirozhki and attempting to convince single men to marry their granddaughters. As a permanent reminder of the terrible consequences wrinkles could bring, the old women reinforce the protagonist's determination to remain at the top of this parochial hierarchy.

Highly polarized visions of masculinity and femininity, youth and old age, beauty and ugliness, the fashionable and the tasteless, and rich and poor are all brought together in Robski's parochial realm. Men are expected to be chauvinistic, women are demanded to remain young, fashionable, and beautiful. The genderless, even dehumanized staff are required to perform given tasks without impeding on the lives of the glamorous. As this universe functions on the basis of familiarity, the tensions are managed according to unspoken rules. The police are shown to hate everybody on the Rublevka, yet cannot risk their jobs by fining somebody important. The hitman likewise rails against destroying organized crime in the city on the basis that at least these criminals are 'ours' (*svoi*).[113] In echoes of Akunin's nineteenth-century criminal Khitrovka, the mores that hold this realm together prevent its extremes from penetrating wider Moscow. Of course, the major difference between the two is that the Khitrovka is entirely fixed in

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[111] Robski, *Casual*, p. 45.
[112] Susanna Al′perina, 'Zhenshchina s Rublevki', *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 18 February 2005, p. 24.
[113] Robski, *Casual*, p. 134.

one particular locale, whereas Robski's twenty-first-century universe is spread across the city.

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On occasion, the spatially mobile elite are forced into contact with the city beyond the regulated parochial realm. Despite her efforts to ensure journeys are trouble free, the protagonist must occasionally enter the public realm. Moving past Zotova's somewhat tautological conclusion that the 'expansion of gated complexes in large cities [in Russia] led to […] the formation of enclaves',[114] Robski's *Casual* thereby reveals the sporadic interaction between those living in the enclaves and the rest of the city. The heroine's three major points of contact with the wider city are marked on my third and final map, http://goo.gl/maps/UXby3.[115]

This map shows locations in the north, south-east, and suburban belt between Moscow's historic centre and expensive *kottedzhi*, drawing attention to three areas of the city not usually frequented by the Rublevka clique. It marks the areas of the city where Robski's protagonist leaves the protective bubbles of splintered urbanism. The marker to the south-east represents a business opportunity for the protagonist, who discovers a dairy in the industrial town of Liubertsy, Moskovskaia oblast′. Unglamorous Moscow is thus exploited by Glamorous Moscow, with the rebranding of the same product according to the advertising codes recognized by the elite. The other two markers, however, represent the protagonist's collision with the wider city, when she finds herself outside her comfort zone.

On the first occasion, the protagonist is forced to take a detour to Mnevniki when driving alone on her way home from the centre, in an effort to avoid one of Moscow's ubiquitous traffic jams. Against her better judgement, she stops *en route* at an old, Soviet-style store in order to pick up the household goods she needs at prices three times lower than she is usually accustomed. Having marvelled at the saleswoman's helpfulness and been amused by an old lady's unexpected affability, the heroine encounters two Tajik men in the parking lot:

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[114] Zotova, 'Emergence of Gated Communities in Russia', para. 29.
[115] As the exact locations are not given in the narrative, the markers show the city quarter mentioned.

> Мою машину перегородила «шестерка» с двумя таджиками. Так, что я не могла выехать. […] Я поставила сумки на багажник и отошла от машины на безопасное расстояние. Одну мою приятельницу при таких же обстоятельствах выкинули из машины, а другую убили. Топором по голове. […] Стоит ли всей этой суеты «Хозяйственный» в Мневниках? Десять раз нет![116]

On the second occasion, the protagonist is thrust into wider Moscow as the result of her husband's former lover, who lives near to Babushkinskaia metro station in the north-east. Never having heard of the area and searching for the apartment without her driver, the protagonist loses her way in the maze of unknown streets:

> Какая-то сумасшедшая старушка на переходе ткнула мне в фару деревянной клюкой. И, обернувшись, погрозила кулаком. Я не была уверена, что фара уцелела, но выйти проверить не рискнула. […] Однажды я купила у бабушки, стоявшей рядом с супермаркетом, три высохшие связки каких-то трав. […] Я представила себе, как она собирала их где-то здесь […] Положила их на заднее сиденье, чтобы не бросать в урну на ее глазах.[117]

Created by circumstance, these two incidents recast the heroine on her journey across Moscow from an urban traveller, moving from heterotopic site to heterotopic site, to a wayfarer, lost in the sea of the wider city. The city god is brought crashing to the ground, forced into uncomfortable encounters with Moscow's *Wandersmänner*. Now collecting narratives of the journey itself rather than of the opulent destinations, the heroine is abruptly immersed in the lives of those on a different plane of existence. She is suddenly forced to cope with the existence of the 'other', the *chuzhoi* living in Moscow's suburban chaos. The Tajik men are usually excluded from her daily life, at the very least on socio-economic grounds, whilst the old women are generally ignored due to the botox-driven valorization of youth. In both cases, the heroine looks down on the 'other' who penetrates the protective, mobile bubble she has created for herself in

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[116] Robski, *Casual*, pp. 41-42.
[117] Ibid., p. 102.

her car. The first incident illustrates the imagined threat of the 'other', with the two Tajik men actually doing nothing more than changing a tyre, whilst the second is a moment of unexpected violence. Both cases produce feelings of fear and non-belonging. The babushka in Babushkinskii raion – the embodiment of the roaming *Wandersmänner* – seems so menacing that the protagonist dare not leave the fortified space of her car to check the state of the headlight. When feeling calmer, the protagonist does purchase 'some kind of herbs' from an old woman whom she pities. In an unexpected moment of compassion, she even conjures an image of this distant existence, envisaging the old lady collecting the herbs nearby, checking their quality and weighing up their value. However, the gap between their lives is ultimately too wide to bridge and, although the heroine tries to spare the woman's feelings, she ultimately has no need for her labour.

In these moments of shock, Robski captures the tensions in Moscow over the emergence of the luxury gated compounds, particularly for those who find themselves living in the shadow of the *kottedzh*. Such visible displays of financial wealth have resulted in a backlash from the have-nots. With these conflicts played out in the press, even Putin has been unable to wall himself off in Novo-Ogarevo without strife with the neighbours. Following a negative article in the British press, *The Independent* on 4 August 2002, it was reported in the Russian press that water-shortages for residents living in the nearby village of Ogarevo had become the 'object of English mirth'.[118] The locals complained that the water to their village had been shut off to supply Putin's residence with the large volumes required to fill his 'enormous' swimming pool and maintain his 'extensive' lawns.[119] Another commented that the winter brought a 'stream of excrement' to the village, suggesting that a solution to the leaking pipes would be found quicker if this sewage were redirected towards Putin's gates.[120]

It is, however, Agalarov's previously cited attempt to realize his utopian dreams without the 'poor people' that offers the best example of the 'other' finding a voice. Balking at Agalarov's plans and rejecting voluntary relocation, the local residents of Voronino in Moskovskaia oblast′ purchased weapons and fostered a siege mentality on the other side

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[118] Fred Veir [Weir], 'Ob″ekt dlia angliiskikh nasmeshek. V Ogarevo na chai ne zovut', *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, 10 August 2002, p. 3.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Valeria Korchagina, 'Putin's Neighbors Left Without Water', *The Moscow Times*, 18 July 2002, p. 1. See also Vadim Kirilenko, 'Vody sosediam Putina!', *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 5 December 2002, p. 2.

of the fences around Agalarov's gated community. One local pensioner, Raisa Novkak, then published a short poem in *Izvestiia*, describing the dramatic changes to contemporary life in Voronino since the bulldozers rolled in:

> Нельзя пройти к реке,
>
> И к лесу не добраться
>
> Была когда-то речка,
>
> А негде покупаться.
>
> Кругом заборы метров пять,
>
> Как будто барщина опять.[121]

In Tolstaia's post-apocalyptic rendering of Moscow, the insular Muscovite associates the world beyond the city's borders with a dark, menacing nature, embodied by the primitive wolf/*kys'* howling in the night. The protagonist of *Casual* likewise finds little purpose for organic herbs collected locally. The gated community aims to tame the nature beyond the city, replacing the river with a swimming pool, the forest clearing with a helipad. In Novak's poem, however, the village-dweller reclaims nature and legitimizes her plight through the prism of its wonder. Families who have lived in the area for generations continue to bathe in the local river and collect fruit from the forests, but suddenly find their access to this natural existence severed by the fences of the gated community. Drawing on the centuries-long enserfment of the impoverished peasant at the hands of the wealthy landowner, Novak evokes the concept of unpaid labour, *barshchina*, to situate her plight within the historical model of the vanquished tied to what is naturally 'their' land.

In an equally vitriolic article published by *Pravda*, the residents' struggle against Agalarov is again inserted into a historical context, hyperbolically elevated to that of those Muscovites who offered a last line of defence against the Nazis in 1941. In echoes of the widespread distrust of New Russians perceived to be 'immoral' during the 1990s, Agalarov and his co-conspirators are described as 'occupiers', trying to seize land on the edges of the city. The article suggests that the ordinary 'workers and pensioners' have been dismissed as 'cattle' (*bydlo*) by the oligarchs, who use money to act beyond

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[121] Granina, 'Stroitel'stvu raia dlia millionerov', p. 1.

legal recourse and subjugate the 'natives' (*aboringeny*).[122] With the local residents again connected to the land and nature, Agalarov's company ZAO Krokus Interneshnl (Crocus International) is accused of damaging the environment and destroying local fish stocks. The frustration arising from perceived injustice, embodied by Robski's old woman helplessly shaking her fist in a localized act of defiance, can be channelled on a wider scale. Indeed, the article concludes by suggesting that the villagers of Voronino could become a 'springboard for a national offensive against the new occupiers'.[123]

Despite the withdrawal of Robski's characters from politics and the author's assertion that they have similar problems to other Muscovites, the gated community has nonetheless become a politicized issue. Il′ia Ponomarev, from the political party Spravedlivaia Rossiia, uses similar rhetoric to describe members of the Rublevka elite who, he argues, 'behave like invaders on occupied territory'.[124] For Ponomarev, those who have assets abroad and educate their children overseas 'pillage Russia and take the spoils to the West'.[125] What he views as an unwillingness to share in the common struggle is embodied in the gated community: 'The higher the fence protecting their dacha, the more they have to hide.'[126] As the heterotopic gated community must exist within wider urban space and cannot be fully segregated as an imagined utopia, its visible excesses bring it into a collision course with those trapped outside. The wider public threatens to enter through the gate and disturb the flows of the carefully maintained parochial realm.

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[122] Vladimir Vishniakov, 'Voroninskii platsdarm', *Pravda*, 7 March 2008, p. 2.

[123] Ibid., p. 2. There are echoes here of Bykov's theory, discussed in the previous chapter, that Russians have for centuries colonized their own people.

[124] Ilya Ponomaryov, 'Arrest People with High Fences on Rublyovka', *The Moscow Times*, 1 March 2013, p. 75.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Ibid.

5.6. From Secluded 'Privatopia' to Barbaric Wilderness

Because night has fallen and the barbarians haven't come.

And some of our men just in from the border say

There are no barbarians any longer.

Now what's going to happen to us without barbarians?

They were, those people, a kind of solution.[127]

Scholars of American exurbanization have developed theories of the 'edge city', the 'privatopia', and 'wallification' to elucidate the processes of hollowing out downtown areas and constructing 'fortified cells' in rural belts around the city. The gated community is portrayed as a means of abandoning urban centres, polarizing the city's population, and threatening social cohesion. In Moscow, the growing social and economic inequalities of the 1990s have equally manifested themselves in spatial polarization, with a rise in American-style gated communities by the end of the decade. During the first years of Putin's presidency in the early 2000s, this construction has been accompanied by a process of shifting consumer services to out-of-town locations. The most exclusive residences along the Rublevka have been furnished by the most exclusive shops. To place Minton's description of London in the Muscovite context, the wild economic transformation of the post-Soviet period has produced the 'architecture of extreme capitalism'.

This process of exurbanization has not resulted, however, in the abandonment of the city centre or a loss of the prestige attached to being a Muscovite. Instead, continuities have been maintained between the historical spatial paradigm of the Russian dacha and the new *kottedzhi*, or as Humphrey concludes, 'even in the most inventive scenario the villas are involved with existing cultural categories'.[128] The rise of the *kottedzh* has shifted some power to the west of the city, and Putin's mansion has become the centre of important political meetings, but access to Moscow historic centre has remained crucial. The failure to implement full-scale exurbanization in Moscow has been

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[127] C. P. Cavafy, 'Waiting for the Barbarians', in *Collected Poems*, ed. George Savidis, trans. Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrad, London: Hogarth Press, 1984, p. 15.
[128] Humphrey, *The Unmaking of Soviet Life*, p. 184.

highlighted recently by a scheme unveiled in 2012 and supported by the Moscow city government. It aims to establish a new express rail service from Usovo just off Rublevo-Uspenskoe shosse to Belorusskii vokzal in the centre.[129] At the same time, the plans for New Moscow outlined in Chapter Two have actually resulted in the Rublevka being subsumed by the city, following the shift of Moscow's borders in 2012. Moscow's wealthiest area of luxurious gated communities is more reliant on the city than ever before. Moscow has not been hollowed out in the same fashion as some North American cities.

In a further distinction from their American counterparts, the gated communities in Moscow have become closely tied to a specific brand of popular culture, the *glamur* of Putinism. As the poster-girl for Russian glamour literature, Robski encapsulates one of the dominant cultures of the mid-2000s and, by selecting the Rublevka as her setting, she describes the most exclusive vanguard of this trend. Writing the topography of glamour onto the topography of Moscow, she paints a portrait of the interactions of the super-rich women inhabiting the *kottedzhi*, both with each other and with the wider city. The space she constructs in *Casual* is not so much a single 'privatopia', but a series of heterotopias spread across Moscow. Like Foucault's heterotopia, her gated community counter-intuitively contains many liminal features, caught between the urban and the rural, the public and the private, Moscow and its environs, life's worries and shiny gloss, wealthy frivolity and the potential for bankruptcy, glamour and the onset of wrinkles. Whilst attempting to deny its roots in history and refusing to accept the temporal flow, Robski's Rublevka draws on both Western and Russian paradigms and maintains clear historical ties to its spatial predecessors. The result is an eclectic pastiche of multiple times and spaces.

As Chapter Six posits, the eccentric, open suburbs allow such dichotomies and such liminality to coexist, embracing the differences. For those in the gated exurb, however, one side of these oppositions must always be denied. In stark contrast to the chronotope of the grey suburb, the chronotope of the gated dwelling is based on perfection and exclusion. It focuses on all of the good and none of the bad. The gated community must contain the commodities associated with urbanism on its doorstep in the countryside. It

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[129] Aleksandr Panchenko, '"Aeroekspress" zavernet na Rublevku', *Kommersant*, 23 January 2012, p. 1.

must remain Muscovite in terms of prestige, yet exclude the city's chaos and poverty. The gloss conceals the concerns. Wild parties banish all thoughts of bankruptcy. Robski's heterotopia thereby refuses to acknowledge the existence of the surrounding imperfections, focusing on the positive side of the either/or dichotomies it helps to construct.

Far from a utopian community isolated in beautiful countryside, the Rublevka's inhabitants are themselves just one node in an international network of wider flows. The protagonist's temporary escape from the Rublevka to India towards the end of *Casual* is indicative of a recent trend of the Muscovite elite spending increasing periods of time abroad. Published at the end of 2011, an investigation by Irina Mokrousova finds evidence of Rublevka businessmen now relocating with their families to London; a 20% drop in numbers at the once over-subscribed Rublevka school; and a dramatic loss of business for an agency that furnishes the local gated communities with domestic staff.[130] Once the paragon of successful exurbanization, the Barvikha Luxury Village is now depicted as an empty space, with no expensive cars outside and no customers inside. Explanations for these recent changes are varied. Economic reasons during the recession have encouraged some to seek a cheaper life on Novorizhskoe shosse, where the brand of glamour is considered less ostentatious and not so financially draining. Flight abroad offers another motive, including the brain drain created by children who remain in the West after their foreign education, an increase in the number of businessmen spending time in Western Europe, and the mass exodus of officials once loyal to Luzhkov following his political demise in 2010. Finally, logistical problems are cited, with suggestions that the traffic jams have grown so unmanageable from 2009 onwards that the former residents now spend weekdays in a central apartment and only occasionally commute to the Rublevka at the weekend.[131] Whereas the *kottedzh* initially appeared to offer a drastic alternative to the dacha, fifteen years after its first emergence it has simply proven to be a larger, better equipped seasonal dwelling. It has been relegated from the aspiration of creating a self-contained world to just one splinter in a wider network.

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[130] Irina Mokrousova, 'Proshai, Rublevka', *Vedomosti*, 28 November 2011, p. 1.
[131] Ibid.

If the biggest myth of the gated community in the USA is the American Dream that with hard work alone anybody has the opportunity to pass through this exclusive portal, then the biggest myth of the Muscovite gated community is the promise of glamour. What seemed possible in the early years of Putinism now seems unsustainable during the years of global financial crisis. Whilst developers once hoped to implant meticulously landscaped communities into the Moscow countryside, they ultimately discovered that they were unable to obviate the need for travel to the centre or sufficiently improve the underdeveloped local infrastructure. Even Robski's refusal to engage with the politics of the time now seems dated, given Kseniia Sobchak's attempts to restyle herself from sex symbol to protest symbol during the anti-Putin protests of 2012.[132] As a close analysis of *Casual* reveals, glamour and its parochial realm are mutable, only tentatively held up by a series of oppositions. The gated community cannot form a 'privatopia' in Moscow because the spatial paradigm on which the community is premised is constructed by opposing a way of life that is both excluded yet relied upon. The money used to construct this universe often stems from Moscow's shadows. The gated community on the edge of urban and rural space embraces the possibilities created by owning a large plot of land, yet its roots still lie in urban 'business' deals. It perpetually maintains one foot in the dark world of Muscovite urbanity. The 'other' must persist because it is, in the words of Cavafy, a 'kind of solution'. Whether it is buttressed with the kitsch output of Communism or of glamour, the 'world of grinning idiots' can only be maintained if there is a parallel world of poor people who are not grinning because their village is being destroyed.

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[132] Given her late father's role as Putin's mentor, the family's connections to the President, and glamour's traditional lack of political engagement, Sobchak's opening phrase at the protest captures her surprising *volte face*: 'Я Ксения Собчак и мне есть что терять'. Kseniia Sobchak et al., 'Seichas v strane unikal′naia situatsiia, kogda vse ochercheno – vot tut bl*di, a tut ne bl*di', *The New Times*, 23 January 2012, pp. 10-15 (p. 10).

Chapter VI

Magical Moscow

Death, Resurrection, and In-Betweenness in Moscow's Suburbs

6.1. Unglamorous Moscow: Embracing 'Other' Local(e)s

Кремль – не Москва.[1]

Moscow is a sleeping giantess lying on her back in the middle of vast Russia. Thus asserts the unnamed narrator of Vladimir Sorokin's 'Eros Moskvy' (2001). Having spent a year and a half in Tokyo without ever becoming acquainted with the city and developing a special bond with his anthropomorphized Moscow over twelve years, he urges the reader to take the time to grow fully accustomed to his or her urban surroundings. Only then is it possible to move beyond the clichéd historical associations or empty platitudes of describing Moscow as 'the capital of our Motherland', 'an historic monument', 'the Third Rome', and 'the centre of Russia, to which all roads lead'.[2] Whereas Robski's female narrator of *Casual* portrays the glamorous face of Moscow, emphasizes the importance of youthful beauty, but refrains from explicitly detailing sexual activities, Sorokin's male narrator seeks to take his relationship with the female city to another level. In doing so, he 'gropes' and 'lightly touches' the city, discovering seven erogenous zones.[3] His subsequent list does not include the tourist attractions of the Kremlin and Red Square but more intimate locations. Five are distanced from the historic centre geographically – Cheremushkinskii rynok, Kapotnia, Vagan′kovskoe kladbishche, MGU, and VDNKh. The other two are removed from the usual associations through performative reinterpretations – walking round the Bul′varnoe kol′tso in an anticlockwise direction with three bottles of port, and standing naked in Krasnye vorota metro station.

In this way, 'Eros Moskvy' unveils the 'other', unglamorous side of Muscovite life. Whereas Robski's locales are characterized by affluence, Western products, expensive fashion, and exceptional cuisine, the places to be explored in this chapter are impoverished, devoid of descriptions of extravagant clothing or gastronomic delights,

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[1] Sergei Luk′ianenko, *Novyi Dozor*, Moscow: Astrel′, 2012, p. 278.
[2] Vladimir Sorokin, 'Eros Moskvy', in *Moskva*, Moscow: Ad Marginem, 2001, pp. 9-16 (pp. 9-10). There are echoes here of Barthes' notion of the city speaking to its inhabitants over time, discussed in my first chapter, p. 18.
[3] Ibid., p. 10.

and lacking in opportunity. Whilst wealthy Muscovites fight each other to pass the face control of the most glamorous locations, swathes of Soviet-era apartment blocks remain inhabited by the unwilling, confined by a lack of capital. Glamorous Moscow is overflowing with abundance; grey, suburban Moscow is marred by a distinct absence. Yet for Sorokin's narrator, Moscow can nonetheless be experienced on a different plane of existence in these 'other' spaces. Instead of dining in luxury, he chooses to spend a whole day begging with a cap in his lap at Cheremushkinskii rynok. Appeal is not just contained within the shiniest urban spaces, but as Baudelaire found within grimier urbanity; there exists 'le beau dans l'horrible', glamour in the grit.[4] In their own ways, these 'secret', 'other' locations offer the promise of a different type of transcendence, transporting Sorokin's narrator all the way from 'earthly Moscow' (Москва земная) to 'Heavenly Moscow' (Москва Небесная).[5]

Following Sorokin's lead, this chapter will study these sites of the long-term Muscovite, recognizable to the reader accustomed to life in the city.[6] Scratching beneath the glamorous surface and digging into the suburbs, one unexpectedly discovers not just the tedium of everyday life, *byt*, but also a host of otherworldly events and occultist mysticism. People hit each other with magical ice hammers, old women cast curses, and fanged-creatures bite necks in the night. These local places are, at the same time, the grittiest sites of 'earthly Moscow' existing in a cloud of Gothic gloom, and the locales that, through magic, promise to facilitate transcendence to another realm, to 'Heavenly Moscow'. Where the previous chapters focused on historical Moscow in the detective novel, future Moscow in post-apocalyptic fiction, and contemporary Moscow in glamour literature, this chapter considers novels that include elements of the Gothic, fantastic, and magical. From Sergei Luk′ianenko's Moscow of 1998 in *Nochnoi Dozor* to Viktor Pelevin's Moscow of 2008 in 'Zal poiushchikh kariatid', a decade of literary portrayals of the city's suburbs has been marked by the influx of wizards and witches, prostitute-werefoxes and messianic super-werewolves, vampiric overlords, and ice-hammer-wielding cult-members intent on a cathartic apocalypse.

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[4] Charles Baudelaire, *Œuvres Complètes III: L'Art Romantique*, Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1869, p. 110.

[5] Sorokin, 'Eros Moskvy', pp. 10 and 16.

[6] To accompany the original publication of 'Eros Moskvy', *Afisha* ran an online forum inviting readers to describe their own experiences of Moscow's secret places. Reminiscent of the online forums interacting with the works of Akunin and Glukhovskii, the website has sadly since disappeared but is discussed in Ellen Rutten, *Unattainable Bride Russia: Gendering Nation, State, and Intelligentsia in Russian Intellectual Culture*, Evanston, IL.: Northwestern University Press, 2010, p. 221.

On first inspection, this 'other' and its magical excess may appear incompatible with the reader's experiences of modern Moscow. At the flash of a wand, the wizard can surely transcend the confining boundaries of both mundane problems and grey urbanity. Yet for the three authors at the centre of this chapter – Luk′ianenko, Sorokin, and Pelevin – post-Soviet magic is not completely unconfined by conventional rules, nor does it inhabit an entirely separate world. The mythological creatures abounding in post-Soviet Russian literature of the late 1990s and 2000s live alongside human beings. Indeed, many of them have developed their powers or become undead following stints as ordinary people. They are not superhumans in the understanding of American comics, with sensational powers that allow them to swoop in to save the day. Nor do they haunt mediæval cities, distant ruins, or fictionalized urbanities, but the contemporary streets of Moscow.

The limited magic and realistic contemporary setting are mirrored in the genre of the works: Luk′ianenko, Sorokin, and Pelevin bring Gothic darkness to the suburbs of post-Soviet Moscow. The vampire, half-human, half-monster; the polarities of urban inequalities; complex moral issues; the suburbs caught between centre and periphery; a clash between good and evil; the juxtaposition of light and dark; a tension between the mundane and fantastic; and a Gothic focus on challenging boundaries all create an overriding sense of liminality. Whereas Robski's human protagonist offers insight into a Muscovite lifestyle inaccessible to the majority of readers, part-human, part-immortal protagonists actually facilitate exploration of the ordinary city. As the undead crawl out of Moscow's suburban spaces, the three authors use fantastic creatures to consider the flip side of Glamorous Moscow's opulence, question the continued impact of the Soviet past on the present day, and give a voice to the unrealized desires existing on the city's margins.

6.2. Questions of Genre: From Moscow's Void to Gothic Moscow

As highlighted in my previous chapter, both crime and inequality grew in Moscow in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse. As Birgit Beumers and Mark Lipovetsky elucidate, this was accompanied by a cultural shift from the Soviet state's vision of 'punitive or "prophylactic" violence' towards 'communal/communicative violence'.[7] The 'decentralization of Soviet violence', replacing totalitarian violence with depictions of 'authority and submission on a "horizontal level"', resulted in an abundance of graphic images of localized horrors.[8] As discussed in Chapter One, vivid descriptions of sex and violence became ubiquitous in Russian cultural output during the *chernukha*-era of the late 1980s and again during the uncertainties of the 1990s. In literature, Sorokin's works capture this trend, with descriptions of shocking bloodshed and brutal rapes, frequent scatological references, and drug-fuelled hallucinations across an array of novels, short stories, plays, and film scripts. As the author himself admits, during the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s he became engaged in writing 'cruel literature […] which provokes shock and an emetic reaction'.[9]

Sorokin's destructive brutality was perhaps most memorably brought to the highly stylized streets of Moscow in the cinematic script he co-authored with Aleksandr Zel′dovich entitled 'Moskva' (1995), and later transformed in 2000 into a film under Zel′dovich's direction.[10] This vivid, explicit, metaphor-saturated work has also received some of the most scholarly attention of any post-Soviet cultural depiction of the city. Clark summarizes the general consensus of opinion that Sorokin and Zel′dovich aim to capture the sense of loss experienced during the 1990s through images of 'catastrophic' Moscow, to the point that the post-Soviet city metaphorically merges with Hiroshima

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[7] Birgit Beumers and Mark Lipovetsky, *Performing Violence: Literary and Theatrical Experiments of New Russian Drama*, Bristol: Intellect, 2009, pp. 50-59.

[8] Ibid., pp. 59-63.

[9] Vladimir Sorokin, '…U nas kosmicheskie tseli, a ne ideia komforta i vosproizvodstva. My ne miasnye mashiny. I v etom voprose ia romantik', in Anna Iunggren and Kristina Rotkirkh (eds), *Odinnadtsat′ besed o sovremennoi russkoi proze*, Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2009, pp. 89-99 (p. 92).

[10] Vladimir Sorokin, 'Moskva (kinostsenarii)', in *Moskva*, pp. 365-431. The pair collaborated again more recently for the 2011 film *Mishen′*, which offers a sprawling vision of a consumerist future. With the central characters seeking eternal youth and inner spiritual contentment, a particularly memorable and cleverly shot aerial scene of the Altai Mountains captures their desire to move beyond superficial Moscow and embrace new horizons.

and becomes nothing more than a 'black space'.[11] Clark's description of this apocalyptic fusion evokes another of Sorokin's works, his short story 'Khirosima' (2002). The story features a number of Muscovite locations, from the luxurious restaurant Iar to a condemned five-storey building in the suburbs on Ulitsa Novatorov. In a short vignette of each place, people choke each other – businessmen in anger, two homeless men in a drunken haze, children playing games, two old women hanging themselves, and two men experimenting sexually. Some of those being choked consequently share a hallucinatory vision of a 'scorched city', although not named presumably Hiroshima, amidst whose 'ashen landscape' a dying dog gives birth to a litter of puppies.[12] Taken together, Sorokin's 'Moskva' and 'Khirosima' propagate an image of urbanity replete with abusive sex, drug abuse, alcoholism, criminality, mindless cruelty, perversion, and linguistic obscenities. As the puppies' birth into such depraved surroundings seems nothing short of cruel, Hiroshima-cum-Moscow's destructive void offers only dark hopelessness.

Whereas Sorokin captures the 'black space' of Moscow during the 1990s through explicit gore, Pelevin's acclaimed novels *Chapaev i Pustota* (1996) and *Generation "П"* (1999) depict the same void through narrative playfulness, heavy use of irony, and postmodern confusion. In *Chapaev i Pustota*, the setting oscillates between Moscow's streets in 1919, the interior of a Moscow mental hospital during the early 1990s, and three imagined locations in Central Asia. Severe poverty and violence are missing in the portrayal of the post-Soviet city, but a feeling of abounding meaninglessness emerges from the temporal and spatial confusion. Upon his release from the mental institute at the end of the novel, the protagonist concludes that the empty space where a Muscovite

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[11] The comparison of post-Soviet Moscow with post-nuclear-blast Hiroshima echoes the portrayal of 1991 as a nuclear explosion previously cited in Chapter Four. Katerina Clark, 'Place, Trauma and Memory: Vladimir Sorokin and Aleksandr Zelʹdovich's *Moskva*', unpublished paper presented at the conference 'Between History and the Past: Soviet Legacy as the Traumatic Object of Contemporary Russian Culture', University of Sheffield, 31 October 2010. For more on Sorokin and Zelʹdovich's depictions of Moscow as 'emptiness' (Lipovetskii, p. 56), 'the hole or anus' (Goscilo, p. 322), and a 'metaphysical void sucking up the life of its inhabitants' (Livers, p. 426), see Mark Lipovetskii, 'S/Z i pustota', *Iskusstvo kino*, 2001, 2, pp. 56-61; Helena Goscilo, 'Re-Conceptualizing Moscow (W)hole/Sale', *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 51, 2007, 2, pp. 312-30; and Keith A. Livers, '"Empty Is My Native Land": The Problem of the Absent Center in Aleksandr Zelʹdovich's *Moscow*', *The Russian Review*, 64, 2005, pp. 422-39.

[12] Vladimir Sorokin, 'Khirosima: Rasskaz', in *4: Rasskazy*, Moscow: Zakharov, 2005, pp. 42-49 (p. 48).

statue once stood is 'the best of all possible monuments'.[13] The loss of a coherent narrative of the past is best represented by a blank space where something meaningful once existed.

Three years later in 1999, the city according to Pelevin was still suffering from this loss. In *Generation "П"*, 'a banana republic of evil' (post-Soviet Russia) succeeds 'an empire of evil' (the Soviet Union), Western advertising practices replace Soviet slogans, and literary scholars now make their fortune as advertising copywriters.[14] With the hollowing out of meaning behind the new neon signs, however, Moscow once again features as a giant simulacrum without direction, a city fuelled by individual self-interest and abounding purposelessness.

If Pelevin's *Chapaev i Pustota* elucidates 'the vacuum of ideology' during a period of 'transition' (Krystyna Steiger), *Generation "П"* compares Moscow to an unintelligible 'foreign commercial slogan' (Boris Noordenbos), and Sorokin captures a Hiroshimaesque void through pointless violence, it is the Gothic that has been subsequently spirited in to plug the gap for these authors during the 2000s.[15] In wider culture too, Thomas Jesús Garza shows how the vampire was resurrected in Russian Gothic music during the first years of the new millennium.[16] Having been a dormant figure during the Soviet period, the vampire rose to prominence in the musical scene when Russia's new president came to power. Garza thus posits that Putin's image as a fearsome political figure who clamps down on public freedoms has resulted in his being cast as a vampire. I argue, however, that the appearance of the undead during the 2000s represents more than a satirical jibe aimed in Putin's direction. Given that the human characters of Russian literature and film had become either too depraved or too disenchanted with the discombobulating panoply of imported symbols during the 1990s, post-human creatures offered a means of escaping human alienation. Partly embodying

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[13] Viktor Pelevin, 'Chapaev i Pustota', in *Vse Postig?*, Moscow: Vagrius, 1999, pp. 7-360 (p. 348). Compare Pelevin's image with the semiotic void left by the removal of the statue of Dzerzhinskii in 1991, discussed in my second chapter, pp. 55-57.
[14] Viktor Pelevin, *Generation "П"*, Moscow: Vagrius, 1999, p. 18.
[15] Krystyna A. Steiger, 'Satire, Parody, and Nostalgia on the Threshold: Viktor Pelevin's *Chapaev i Pustota* in the Context of its Times', unpublished doctoral thesis, McGill University, 2004, pp. xiii-xiv; and Boris Noordenbos, 'Breaking into a New Era? A Cultural-Semiotic Reading of Viktor Pelevin', *Russian Literature*, 64, 2008, 1, pp. 85-107 (p. 104).
[16] Thomas Jesús Garza, 'From Russia with Blood: Imagining the Vampire in Contemporary Russian Popular Culture', in Barbara Brodman and James E. Doan (eds), *The Universal Vampire: Origins and Evolution of a Legend*, Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2013, pp. 195-208 (p. 201).

the past (undead vampires and ghosts), partly representing a search for stability in the present (joining a magical collective), these beings capture the conflation of unresolved antagonisms.

In literature, the arrival of Sergei Lukʹianenko's *Nochnoi Dozor*, published and set in 1998, heralded a wave of strange creatures pouring out onto Moscow's streets in the cultural imaginary. Lukʹianenko's first book was followed by four more in the series – *Dnevnoi Dozor* (2000), *Sumerechnyi Dozor* (2004), *Poslednii Dozor* (2005), and a final sequel to the 'Last' Watch, *Novyi Dozor* (2012). Two films directed by Timur Bekmambetov – *Nochnoi Dozor* and *Dnevnoi Dozor* – were then released in 2004 and 2006 respectively to critical acclaim and box-office success both in Russia and abroad.[17] The series became such a widely recognized part of popular culture that when a power cut in May 2005 affected large swathes of Moscow, a joke began to circulate on the internet that members of the Night Watch were the true perpetrators.[18] The success of the *Dozor* novels and films was followed by a distinct shift towards the Gothic in the literary œuvres of both Pelevin and Sorokin during the 2000s. Pelevin had introduced werewolves in his short story 'Problema vervolka v srednei polosse' in 1991, but they became the protagonists in a Muscovite setting in his 2004 novel *Sviashchenniaia kniga oborotnia*. Two years later, Pelevin took a step further into the realm of Gothic imagery with *Empire V*. The novel follows the assimilation of its young protagonist into the ranks of Moscow's vampires, who control the city's human beings. For Sorokin, *Led* (2002) introduced an occultist group intent on apocalypse using magic. The work soon became a trilogy with the addition of *Putʹ Bro* in 2004 and '23000', published in 2005 as the last part of Sorokin's collected work *Trilogiia*.

During the period when the vampire and werewolf have been rising in Russian literature, Anglophone culture has also witnessed an explosion of the Gothic onto both

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[17] This also paved the way for a computer game adaptation of the series. By the time *Dnevnoi Dozor* was released as a film, Lukʹianenko's novels had been translated into seven different languages, were well-known across Europe, and achieved print runs numbering in the millions. Raisa Vivcharenko, 'Sergei Lukʹianenko: "Ia ne khochu ostatʹsia avtorom "Dozorov"', *Russkaia gazeta*, 9 February 2006, http://russkayagazeta.com/rg/gazeta/fullstory/sergej-lukyanenko/ [last accessed 8 May 2013].

[18] Stephen M. Norris, 'In the Gloom: The Political Lives of Undead Bodies in Timur Bekmambetov's *Night Watch*', *Kinokultura*, 16 April 2007, http://www.kinokultura.com/2007/16-norris.shtml [last accessed 31 May 2013]. In her article on film heroes during the Putin era, Birgit Beumers shows the significance of protective figures in the *Night Watch* to popular culture. Birgit Beumers, 'Killers and Gangsters: The Heroes of Russian Blockbusters of the Putin Era', in Stephen White (ed.), *Media, Culture and Society in Putin's Russia*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, pp. 204-25 (pp. 220-24).

the screen and the page. Written and directed by Joss Whedon, the American television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* introduced the viewer to a number of maturing teenagers, who battled a range of vampires and other creatures over 144 episodes between 1997 and 2003. The critically acclaimed cult series spawned its own spin-off show, *Angel*, as well as numerous novels, comics, and video games. A number of literary sagas were then successfully translated into wildly popular transmedia products. In the mid-to-late 2000s, the focus of teenage affection has shifted to Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* works, a tetralogy published between 2005 and 2008 and translated onto the big screen with great financial reward. The American HBO television drama, *True Blood*, has recently concluded its sixth season, tracing the life of Sookie Stackhouse, a telepathic half-human, half-fairy who has frequent adventures with vampires. The series is again based on literature, *The Sookie Stackhouse Novels* by Charlaine Harris – the complete saga runs to thirteen works published between 2001 and 2013, with each novel featuring 'dead' in the title.

Recent Gothic images in Anglophone culture in general, and these four series in particular, have received significant scholarly attention. Narratives of vampires are a useful lens through which to investigate societal shifts and cultural developments, or as Douglas Kellner posits, they offer 'access to social problems and issues and hopes and anxieties' through their 'richness of allegorical structure'.[19] They facilitate discussion of the construction of gender, sexuality, race, romance, history, and adolescence. On the one hand, the liberated, decisive, and unnaturally strong vampire slayer Buffy has been lauded as a symbol of third-wave feminism.[20] On the other hand, the aggression of the leading male characters and the helplessness of the heroine in *Twilight* have led scholars to accuse Meyer of reinforcing patriarchal models of masculine authority.[21] Set in Louisiana, scenarios in the *The Sookie Stackhouse Novels* and *True Blood* repeatedly evoke the American civil rights movement, racial tensions in the southern States, and

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[19] Douglas Kellner, 'Teens and Vampires: From *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* to *Twilight*'s Vampire Lovers', in Shirley R. Steinberg (ed.), *Kinderculture: The Corporate Construction of Childhood*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2011, pp. 90-118 (p. 90).
[20] Irene Karras, 'The Third Wave's Final Gift: *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*', *Thirdspace*, 1, 2002, 2, http://www.thirdspace.ca/journal/article/view/karras/50 [last accessed 28 July 2013].
[21] Melissa Miller, 'Maybe Edward Is The Most Dangerous Thing Out There: The Role of Patriarchy', in Maggie Parke and Natalie Wilson (eds), *Theorizing Twilight: Critical Essays on What's at Stake in a Post-Vampire World*, Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011, pp. 165-77; and Ashley Donnelly, 'Denial and Salvation: The *Twilight* Series and Heteronormative Patriarchy', in *ibid.*, pp. 178-93.

strong undercurrents of ultra-conservative Christianity.[22] The traditional centre/subaltern power structures are then disrupted by the superhuman abilities of the vampire 'other'.

The single major trope in all three of these Anglophone series, however, is adolescence, closely connected to the twenty-first-century revival of Gothic imagery. As Catherine Spooner shows, 'the body at the centre of many [recent Anglophone] Gothic narratives is definitely an adolescent one', since the 'Gothic has always had a strong link with adolescence'.[23] Whedon's Buffy and Meyer's Bella Swan are both introduced to the reader/viewer when starting a new high school; they then gradually negotiate the transition to adulthood. Harris's Sookie is a naïve virgin who discovers more of the world through her first encounters (sexual and otherwise) with a vampire. The emphasis on the confusing process of *Bildung* during the life of a teenager – the protagonists' psychological and sexual maturing – meshes with the liminality of the Gothic. 'Pushing toward extremes and excess […] the Gothic deals in transgressions and negativity […] [, and] explores chaos'.[24] Growing from child to adult, the teenager pushes the boundaries of society's rules and learns about excess. The vampire presents the potential for transition, moving from human civilization to cannibalism, from life to death, and from mortality to an eternal wandering of the earth. The werewolf is likewise positioned between humans and animals – human during the light of day, he grows savage in the dark of night.[25]

Given the interest in Buffy, Bella, and Sookie, there has been a surprising paucity of critical analysis on the Gothic turn in Russian literature. When critics have engaged with these tropes, there has been much disagreement about how to define narratives that present to the reader a cauldron of magical, fantastic, and Gothic images rooted in the modern metropolis. Focusing on Pelevin, Alexandra Berlina describes how Russian magic has been 'largely ignored in scholarship', but is resolute in her assertion that

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[22] With religious fervour directed against vampires ('God hates fangs') and those who discriminate against the undead beings labelled 'racist', the narrative traces vampires' efforts to integrate through a process known as 'mainstreaming'. Those lobbying for recognition from wider society and equal rights no longer kill humans, instead finding sustenance in synthetically manufactured artificial blood.

[23] Catherine Spooner, *Contemporary Gothic*, London: Reaktion, 2006, esp. pp. 87-124 (pp. 87-88).

[24] Allan Lloyd Smith, *American Gothic Fiction: An Introduction*, New York: Continuum, 2004, p. 5.

[25] Nighttime marks the werewolf's transformation into the voiceless wolf and menacing *kys'*, which Tolstaia locates beyond the borders of civilization in her Moscow.

'Russian magical realism exists'.[26] In her doctoral thesis on Pelevin, Petrushevskaia, and Ludmila Ulitskaia, Tatiana Keeling likewise asserts that magical realism has flourished in post-Soviet Russia as a result of the 'cultural fragmentation and disintegration caused by the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union'.[27] Bemoaning a lack of discussion of post-Soviet magic, Etkind equally attempts to rectify the situation by considering recent novels, films, and monuments, including Bykov's *Opravdanie* (2001); Pelevin's *Zhizn' nasekomykh* (1993) and *Empire V*; Sorokin's *Tridtsataia liubov' Mariny* (1999) and *Goluboe salo* (1999); and Vladimir Sharov's *Do i vo vremia* (1993), *Voskreshenie Lazaria* (2002), and *Bud'te kak deti* (2008). He acknowledges elements of magical realism, but ultimately groups the works under a new genre – 'magical historicism', labelling Bykov, Pelevin, Sorokin, and Sharov 'magical historicists'.[28] Focusing on the importance of history as a narrative trope ('the post-Soviet novel […] emulates and struggles with […] history'), Etkind concludes that the four magical historicists use 'plenty of magic' in their works but 'do not have much of what could plausibly be characterized as mundane'.[29] In her discussion of Pelevin, Dina Khapaeva, on the other hand, considers the significance of recycling Gothic aesthetics. Tracing Pelevin's increasing engagement with the Gothic over the course of his literary career, Khapaeva suggests that Pelevin captures no less than the construction of post-Soviet 'Gothic society'.[30] Basing her theory, like Etkind, on the repression of Soviet horrors, Khapaeva posits that the ambiguities raised in recent fiction reflect the 'situational' nature of contemporary Russia's 'Gothic morality'.[31]

The lack of scholarly consensus and Etkind's rejection of magical realism can be explained by the multiplicities of the Russian context as well as the ambiguities within

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[26] Berlina explicitly calls for Pelevin's *Sviashchenniaia kniga oborotnia* 'to be discussed [by future critics] in terms of magical realism'. Alexandra Berlina, 'Russian Magical Realism and Pelevin as its Exponent', *Comparative Literature and Culture*, 11, 2009, 4, pp. 1-9 (p. 8).

[27] Tatiana V. Keeling, 'Surviving in Post-Soviet Russia: Magical Realism in the Works of Viktor Pelevin, Ludmila Petrushevskaya, and Ludmila Ulitskaya', unpublished doctoral thesis, Arizona State University, 2008, p. 232.

[28] Etkind, *Warped Mourning*, p. 224; and Alexander Etkind, 'Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied: Magical Historicism in Contemporary Russian Fiction', *Slavic Review*, 68, 2009, 3, pp. 631-58 (p. 657).

[29] Etkind, *Warped Mourning*, p. 233.

[30] Dina Khapaeva, *Koshmar: Literatura i zhizn'*, Moscow: Tekst, 2010, pp. 290-95; and Dina Khapaeva, *Goticheskoe obshchestvo: Morfologiia koshmara*, Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2007, esp. pp. 125-35.

[31] Dina Khapaeva, 'Neliudi i kritiki (reaktsiia na dialog M. Lipovetskogo i A. Etkinda "Vozvrashchenie tritona: Sovetskaia katastrofa i postsovetskii roman")', *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 98, 2009, 4, pp. 181-90 (p. 184).

the definitions of what magical realist novels typically contain.[32] On the one hand, the post-Soviet fascination with magic can be read as the historical continuation of Soviet superstition and mysticism. On the other hand, the post-Soviet context provides a fresh reality for fantastic discourse to undermine. There are similarities between the temporal confusion of post-Soviet Russia and the turbulence after the horrors of World War I, when Franz Roh coined the phrase 'magic realism' in his 1925 discussion of post-Expressionist painting. The chaos and confusion of post-Soviet Moscow echo the discombobulation of Roh's time. Yet Roh did not understand 'magic' in the fantastic sense, and Etkind is persuasive in his rejection of the term for post-Soviet literature.[33] Most frequently discussed in the context of Latin American literature, magical realism usually includes light touches of magic embedded in the real world. 'Magic grows almost imperceptibly out of the real'.[34] As Etkind suggests, Pelevin's later works on vampires and werewolves contain greater elements of the fantastic than found in most magical realist works. This argument is even clearer in the case of Luk′ianenko's magicians, who miraculously heal or terminally curse human beings. They do not grow 'almost imperceptibly out of the real', but rather unveil an entire magical universe with its own laws and history existing alongside the extant city. If one stretches the definition of magical realism to include all fantasy located in recognizable places, the term's usefulness is diminished.[35]

I instead argue that it is more fruitful in the Muscovite context to consider the significance of the abounding Gothic symbolism. The works of Luk′ianenko, Pelevin, and Sorokin include Gothic motifs of vampires and werewolves, an occultist sect with magical powers, heroes who challenge the rule of tyrants, and, in the form of Luk′ianenko's Svetlana, an (apparently) innocent maiden in need of the hero's protection. I certainly do not reject the importance of the past or suggest that the same impulses are at work as in Anglophone culture during this period. Luk′ianenko, Pelevin,

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[32] The confusion even extends to the genre's exact designation. In one of the most in-depth volumes on the subject, seven of the articles include the term 'magic realism' in their titles, eight authors refer to 'magical realism' as an interchangeable concept with 'magic realism', and one contributor, Alejo Carpentier, devises his own term for 'a uniquely American form of magical realism' – 'lo real maravilloso' or 'the marvelous real'. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris (eds), *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995.

[33] Franz Roh, 'Magic Realism: Post-Expressionism', trans. Wendy B. Faris, in *ibid.*, pp. 15-31.

[34] Wendy B. Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative*, Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004, p. 14.

[35] Keeling actually pre-empts such criticism, admitting that her thesis is premised on 'a rather broad definition of magical realism'. Keeling, 'Surviving in Post-Soviet Russia', p. 238.

and Sorokin do not pose the same questions of gender and sexuality as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* or *Twilight*, nor do they consider the racial tensions and (non-)human rights of *True Blood*. Whilst their characters' personal development is undoubtedly important, their focus is not on adolescence – none of their major characters goes to school. Luk′ianenko, Pelevin, and Sorokin's novels are all set against the backdrop of the Soviet past, and I would agree with Etkind on the importance of time – that repressed trauma finds an outlet in post-Soviet literature. Etkind's 'magical historicism' and the Gothic tradition actually intersect here, since the Gothic trope facilitates 'the *return* of the past, of the repressed and denied, the buried secret that subverts and corrodes the present' (emphasis in the original).[36] But this chapter is also concerned with the contours of the present, with the impact of this past on Putin's Moscow. In post-Soviet Russia, vampires are searching for a reassuring collective and a path towards something new.

With all the novels analysed here set in Moscow between 1998 and 2012, the Gothic is transposed onto the contours of the contemporary city. Given the wealth of diverse Muscovite experiences and perspectives explored in the previous chapters, I would stop short of Khapaeva's vision of contemporary society as exclusively Gothic, but I would agree that post-Soviet Moscow offers an excellent topography for such imagery. Vampires and secret sects integrate well with Moscow's dark, subterranean hide-outs and towering, neo-classical architecture – both the Stalinist *vysotki* and their post-Soviet reimagining.[37] In its grimiest quarters, post-Soviet Moscow also offers many borders to transgress and much chaos to explore. Extremes of light and dark, good and evil, are easily transposed onto the topography of a city that has rapidly become less equal and more polarized. The swathes of decaying suburban blocks between the historic centre and the rural *oblast′* create a mood of gloomy Gothic barrenness. Neither eulogized for their historic splendour, nor enjoyed for their rural beauty, they are deeply liminal spaces. On the one hand, the suburban inhabitants lead an ordinary existence in these grey blocks. On the other hand, magicians, vampires, and werewolves turn these areas into a magical playground. Inspired by Gothic liminality, I move beyond Khapaeva's concept of a totally immoral 'Gothic society', and focus instead on how new meanings and fresh hope are created in the collisions and oppositions of the suburbs. I argue that

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[36] Smith, *American Gothic Fiction*, p. 1.
[37] Consider, for example, the Triumph Palace discussed in my second chapter, pp. 68-69.

the fusion of Mundane Moscow and Magical Moscow produces a third image of a city seeking a different identity. The depictions of Mundane Moscow alter the reader's image of the magical elements, and vice versa the inclusion of magic adds to the portrait of everyday life, *byt*, in the city. The combination of the two shows how the city accumulates and subsumes all manner of seemingly incompatible ideas in the creation of something unique.

6.3. Mundane Moscow: The Eccentric City of Suburbs

> Nowhere does Moscow look like the city itself; at the most, it resembles its outskirts. The wet ground, the wooden booths, long convoys carrying raw materials, cattle being driven to the slaughterhouse, and indigent taverns are found in the busiest parts.[38]

In Luk′ianenko, Pelevin, and Sorokin's gloomy depictions of contemporary Moscow, the city is not a place of marvels but an expanse of deprived urban districts, a global metropolis that 'resembles its outskirts'. In echoes of Benjamin's descriptions of Moscow following his two-month visit to the city from 6 December 1926 to 1 February 1927, 'nowhere does [it] look like the city itself'. Nowhere does it appear as the city found in tourist guides or those eulogies of the 'Third Rome' propagated by mayor Luzhkov but dismissed by the narrator of Sorokin's 'Eros Moskvy'. Unlike Tolstaia's Benedikt, Glukhovskii's Artem, and Bykov's Gromov, the characters inhabiting the Moscow of this chapter do not seek to reach the city's sacred, hierophanic centre, but instead build lives of little exchange with central politics or traditional locations of power. In their rejection of the centre, Luk′ianenko, Pelevin, and Sorokin's protagonists follow in the footsteps of Erofeev's Venichka in *Moskva-Petushki*. Turning away from the menacing Kremlin, Venichka finds himself in a perennial state of geographical displacement, searching for the eternally elusive suburb of Petushki. Petushki represents an alternative to the Soviet metanarrative, a place of escape, yet it proves to be forever unreachable. As a consequence, Venichka is trapped in liminal space, writing his

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[38] Walter Benjamin 'Moscow' [1927], trans. Edmund Jephcott, in *Selected Writings: Volume 2, 1927-1934*, ed. Michael Jennings et al., .trans. Rodney Livingstone et al., Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999, pp. 22-46 (p. 42).

adventures into the landscape between the station stops on the suburban railway line –
each chapter title locates him between stations.

The main characters discussed in this chapter are likewise caught between different
universes whilst searching for a better place – in the spatial greyness of the suburbs, the
physical greyness between the human and non-human, the psychological greyness of
different social groups' conflicting demands, and the metaphysical greyness of multiple
'truths'.[39] By honing in on marginality, the three authors construct Moscow not
according to the concentric paradigm discussed in the earlier chapters, but as an
eccentric city. 'Denying historically formed structures', in this case its historical
concentricity, the eccentric city lacks a central focal point or clear *raison d'être*.[40] In
contrast to the inward-gazing post-apocalyptic city, Luk′ianenko, Pelevin, and Sorokin's
images of suburban Moscow's gloomy existence capture a city that is amorphous. It
looks outwards from its suburbs, appropriating symbols from a wide range of times and
spaces.

In my previous chapter, the inhabitant of Glamorous Moscow was shown to deliberately
avoid contact with the outside 'other' except in a controlled environment, to wall off her
existence from the rest of the city where possible. On the other side of these walls, in
the intermediate and outer urban belts of the city between the historic centre and the
MKAD, Moscow's suburbia is a region of porous *spal'nye raiony*, sleeping districts far
removed from the luxury of the Rublevka. Former Soviet *mikroraiony* have become
nothing more than dilapidated zones for sleeping between long commutes to work in
more central locations. Pressures on the housing infrastructure have been exacerbated in
post-Soviet Moscow by a large but unknown number of migrants living illegally in
Moscow's shadows, creating what O'Loughlin and Kolossov describe as 'neglected and
forgotten housing ghettos'.[41] The same problems have been repeated in the building of
newer apartment blocks around the MKAD. The 'low-cost' materials used in their

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[39] Luk′ianenko's protagonist Anton discovers over the course of the series that there are 'levels of truth',
making it impossible to solve the old witch's metaphysical riddle: 'Who decides what is real in this
world'. Sergei Luk′ianenko, *Dnevnoi Dozor*, Moscow: Ast, 2006, p. 291; and Sergei Luk′ianenko,
Sumerechnyi Dozor, Moscow: Ast, 2006, p. 191.
[40] Lotman, *Universe of the Mind*, p. 194.
[41] O'Loughlin and Kolossov, 'Moscow: Post-Soviet Developments', p. 162. See also Olga Vendina,
'Social Polarization and Ethnic Segregation in Moscow', *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 43, 2002,
3, pp. 216-43.

construction mean that these new blocks now 'look like distant "sleeping districts" of Moscow'.[42]

In the popular imagination, life in these districts has come to be characterized by a sense of impoverished greyness, architecturally embodied by the five-storey prefabricated *khrushchevki*, which are denigrated in colloquial speech as 'slums' – *khrushchoby*, from *trushchoba*. The scars of social deprivation are spatially imprinted onto the concrete buildings through signs of petty crime, alcoholism, drug addiction, and violence. Their inhabitants often lack the means to either move or renovate the existing housing stock. In the spirit of gritty tourism embracing divergence from the beaten track, one Moscow-based tourist operator now even offers a guided tour entitled 'Moscow sleeping district', which claims to give visitors a glimpse of the flats where 'real Muscovites' live.[43] The history-laden Kremlin, chocolate-box multi-coloured domes, and grandiose nineteenth-century architecture of the centre are thus rejected as gloss concealing the lives of the suburban majority. This tour is the closest rival for readers of Luk'ianenko, Pelevin, and Sorokin to those organized by Akunin aficionados discussed in Chapter Three: it is precisely these suburban flats that form the setting for their novels.[44] Their narrative focus on these areas sheds light on the dilapidation of Khrushchev's thaw-era myth of the *mikroraion*, captured by Shostakovich's operetta *Moskva, Cheremushki* (1959) and its film adaptation by Gerbert Rappaport *Cheremushki* (1962). Where these pre-fabricated, concrete areas were once celebrated as the liberating solution to the housing crisis – a small self-contained space for all – they are now reimagined as places of confinement. They no longer embody a bright new society, but its decline.

With the struggle between magical forces raging, Luk'ianenko's numerous first-person narrators still find time to cast a careful eye over their immediate surroundings and give critical comments on Moscow's present condition. Both Tul'skaia metro station and its surrounding streets to the south of the city are derided for their 'idiotic' (*duratskii*) architecture. The narrator concludes that the area, characterized by a 'pompous [pompeznyi] skyscraper […] and gigantic apartment block', is almost predestined for

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[42] Alexander Antonov and Anna Shagova, 'City on the Edge of Moscow Agglomeration: A Chance for Sustainable Development', paper presented at Real Corp 2012 – 17th International Conference on Urban Planning, Regional Development and Information Society, Schwechat, 14-16 May 2012.
[43] http://bridgetomoscow.com/theme-tours [last accessed 9 May 2013].
[44] For more on the Akunin city trails, see my third chapter, pp. 130-32.

hauntings due to its excess of dark corners where creatures of the night can dwell.[45] Elsewhere, fantastic beings change the course of human history, but live in the grimiest of suburban Muscovite flats. A witch charges $5000 to perform a spell that will force a man to love her client, yet she finds neither the money nor the magic to improve the appearance of her apartment. The threshold to her 'magical' space is an ordinary door, made from 'squalid, Soviet-era faux leather' and bedecked with 'cheap aluminium numbers, barely held up by the ill-fitting screws'.[46] Another character's apartment building suffers from similar dilapidation, drawing in the negative magical energy that hovers above it in the form of a dark vortex (invisible to the human eye but causing depression amongst the inhabitants). Located in the suburb of Perovo, the building recurs in the narrative as a 'doleful' block, a prime example of Moscow's 'tedious, panelled nine-storey buildings'.[47]

Charged with battling against the city's evils and dispelling suburban Moscow's Gothic atmosphere, the Night Watch team of Light Others (*Inye* – magical part-humans) initially appear to face a hopeless task. Everywhere the characters look, street lights are broken, entry systems smashed, and lifts soaked in urine. The forces of good are acutely aware of the city's ills but lack the necessary power to change the current equilibrium between the rich minority and the poor majority. Indeed, Moscow's vast suburban expanses at times seem totally unmanageable and unnavigable ('лучшим видом транспорта по-прежнему оставался джип'), as suburban vapidity repeats itself across the whole city:[48]

> Воняло гнилью из мусоропровода. За окном шумел проспект, медленно погружающийся в сумерки. Уже начинали мерцать фонари.
> Я сидел, крутил в руках сотовый телефон и размышлял, звонить сейчас шефу […]
> – Где находишься, Антон? […]

[45] Sergei Lukʹianenko, *Nochnoi Dozor*, Moscow: Ast, 2005, p. 42.
[46] Lukʹianenko, *Dnevnoi Dozor*, p. 9.
[47] Lukʹianenko, *Nochnoi Dozor*, p. 95; and Lukʹianenko, *Sumerechnyi Dozor*, p. 96.
[48] Lukʹianenko, *Nochnoi Dozor*, p. 124. Compare this image with Akunin's description of the Muscovite 'jungle', discussed in my third chapter, pp. 115-22.

–На лестничной площадке уродского многоэтажного дома. Рядом с мусоропроводом.[49]

With the smell of rubbish offending the olfactory senses (*voniat'*) and the building itself an eye-sore (*urodskii*), it is not just the *prospekt* outside this particular suburban window that is 'slowly sinking into the twilight [v sumerki]', but much of Moscow in general. The significance of what initially appears to be the onset of evening in this scene only becomes apparent when one considers the other planes on which Luk′ianenko's multi-layered magical universe operates – the *sumrak* (twilight or gloom).[50] The first and most recurrent zone of the *sumrak* exists as a gloomy version of the ordinary world, with faded sound and arrested time (enabling Others to travel across space quicker than humans). It is sunless and cold, 'a greyish [serovatyi], smudged haze': 'Глубокое серое небо, в котором нет и не было звезд, небо вязкое как кисель, светящееся тусклым, мертвенным светом […] Все сквозь серый светофильтр'.[51] Whilst the extant city and this grey realm are maintained throughout the *Dozor* series as separate realities, it is hardly surprising given the descriptions of 'real' Moscow that the narrator frequently has to direct the reader as to when the characters are in 'ordinary reality' and when they are entering the *sumrak*. With its 'grey city snow', ordinary Moscow repeatedly seems to be a 'grey light filter', its 'deathly light' haunted by deathly figures.[52]

The depictions of Moscow in Pelevin's works of the 2000s offer a similarly bleak outlook for the majority of its suburban inhabitants. In Pelevin's city, the entrances to metro stations are not portals to majestic caverns or gateways to an efficient transport system, but places of shelter for homeless people and stray dogs.[53] A group of young women congregates at the entrance to one such metro station, Profsoiuznaia, to travel to the Rublevka. Forced to prostitute themselves to rich businessmen because of a lack of other job opportunities, they read about the latest aesthetics of Russian glamour culture on their journey to work without holding any hope of ever being able to buy into this

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[49] Ibid., p. 88.
[50] In the English subtitles of the two film adaptations, *sumrak* is translated as 'gloom' although this attaches rather more negative connotations to the concept than present in the original Russian.
[51] Luk′ianenko, *Dnevnoi Dozor*, pp. 22-23; and Luk′ianenko, *Nochnoi Dozor*, p. 126.
[52] Luk′ianenko, *Nochnoi Dozor*, p. 51.
[53] Compare this image with Glukhovskii's post-apocalyptic vision of the metro as a subterranean hell. Viktor Pelevin, *Sviashchennaia kniga oborotnia*, Moscow: Eksmo, 2004, p. 280.

lifestyle.[54] The divided global metropolis is only inviting for those on the wealthy side of the divide. As one of the werefoxes in *Sviashchenniaia kniga oborotnia* concludes, Moscow is the city of 'neon catacombs'.[55] On the one hand, the bright lights of recently discovered capitalism offer fresh opportunities: 'skyscrapers are being built, tonnes of sushi consumed'.[56] A few people are living out the dreams of Luzhkov's new Moskva-Siti business district. On the other hand, this economic system ensures that only a small minority grow ever richer, whilst ordinary inhabitants discover that, with a dearth of capital, they can do very little to ameliorate their lives. As Pelevin borrows from Dante, the sign leading to hell hangs above Moscow's sleeping districts: 'Abandon all hope, ye who enter here'.[57]

Whereas Luk′ianenko and Pelevin resist graphic descriptions of the exact horrors this grey hell holds, Sorokin goes a step further in the *Led* trilogy by violently splattering red blood across the drab cityscape. In the opening scene of *Led*, the first of the trilogy to be published, but the second in terms of the works' inner chronology, Sorokin welcomes the reader to his world of magical-heart-speaking beings in base surroundings with a pile of unexplained excrement. Carefully constructing the locale in the opening paragraph, Sorokin's unnamed narrator describes a warehouse on Silikatnaia ulitsa, Mytishchi, an industrial suburb to the north-east of Moscow. The concrete floor is littered with 'three milk cartons, a scrap heap, cigarette-ends, a dead rat, and two piles of dried-up faeces'.[58] With the scene set for violence to erupt, three men soon pull up in an off-road vehicle, drag out two bound captives, tie them to steel columns, and begin to smash the victims' chests with wooden-handled, ice-tipped hammers. For one of the pair, this process releases his hidden magic and allows him to join the 'Brotherhood of the Light' (Братство Света). Being hit by the cult's special hammer facilitates his transformation into a magical being. The other has no such inner power, however, and is consequently bludgeoned to death by a cursing maniac.

Part One of *Led* continues in this vein, following the secret sect's attempts to recruit more Muscovite members. The narrative shifts from the 12-kilometre mark on Kievskoe

[54] Viktor Pelevin, 'Zal poiushchikh kariatid', *P5: Proshchal'nye pesni politicheskikh pigmeev Pindostana*, Moscow: Eksmo, 2008, pp. 5-118 (pp. 26-38).
[55] Pelevin, *Sviashchennaia kniga oborotnia*, p. 99.
[56] Ibid., p. 100.
[57] Ibid., p. 107.
[58] Vladimir Sorokin, *Led*, Moscow: Ad Marginem, 2002, p. 9.

shosse in the south-west of Moscow to a flat in Strogino in the north-west, from Novoriazanskoe shosse in the south-east to a warehouse on Novoiasenevskii prospekt in the south-west and to an apartment on Olenii val in the north-east.[59] All the attacks take place in the city's shadows around the MKAD, far from unwanted police attention. Whilst the novel travels from centre to periphery and the Brotherhood seizes victims from all strata of society, including a rich businessman who lives on Tverskaia ulitsa, the majority of the victims hail from the sleeping suburbs. As the narrative includes the exact addresses of the victims' apartments and sect's warehouses, the emotionless documentation of violence is accompanied by detailed descriptions of the mundane cityscape. One victim buys a bottle of Baltika beer on Tverskoi bul′var before heading south to his home, a seven-storey apartment block in Moscow's Chertanovo district. There, he has an ordinary meal of chicken, boiled potatoes, sauerkraut, and gherkins prepared by his plump mother, before exchanging obscenities with other frustrated young people in an internet chat room. Another victim (Alia Nikolaeva) faces further suffering when she returns to a different Muscovite suburb, Strogino. Having been stripped naked in the woods, Alia has to offer sex to a passing driver in return for a lift home, where she is subsequently tortured by her angry, doubting pimp in a shocking scene strongly reminiscent of Sorokin's earlier images of depravity.[60]

Elsewhere, a homeless man spends the night with his alcoholic girlfriend in the stairwell of a sixteen-storey panel-block building. Having begged two members of the Brotherhood for beer money, he soon finds his poverty brought to an abrupt end as his face is literally plunged into Moscow's grime by a pair of knuckledusters. His girlfriend suffers a similar fate, her head smashed against the stairwell's 'graffiti-bedecked wall'.[61] The homeless pair's suffering at the hands of such thuggery again evokes the fate of another alcoholic, Erofeev's Venichka. Whereas Venichka suffers his demise against the Kremlin wall, however, Sorokin shifts his victims' violent end to a prefabricated panel block near to Kon′kovo metro station. Erofeev's symbolic image of state-led oppression during the Soviet period is reimagined by Sorokin in terms of Beumers and Lipovetsky's 'communal violence'. The main threat now stems from a much more shadowy and ill-defined enemy.

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[59] Ibid., pp. 49, 60, 117, and 121.
[60] Ibid., pp. 60-71.
[61] Vladimir Sorokin, '23000', *Trilogiia*, Moscow: Zakharov, 2006, pp. 471-685 (p. 478).

The three authors all converge in their portrait of Moscow as a city unsuited for habitation due to its extreme weather conditions.[62] Even the immortals find Moscow too hot or too cold. When a group of Sorokin's Brothers and Sisters returns to the city from a search for new members in the provinces, Moscow is described as 'greeting [them] with ice, […] sooty-grey snow' causing a mass of cold, dehumanized people to huddle together 'in a herd'.[63] Later in the trilogy, when the members of the Brotherhood collect their final recruits, another group of Brothers seeks to flee the city from Vnukovo airport amidst soaring temperatures. Now, the courtyard outside the prefabricated buildings is 'hot', the Zhiguli cars stood outside are 'dusty', and the meat in the nearby humans begins 'to curl' (*klubit'sia*).[64]

The temperature similarly plunges and soars over the course of Luk′ianenko's *Dozor* series without ever offering Muscovites a comfortable environment. When the reader first meets the recurring hero, Anton Gorodetskii, at the beginning of *Nochnoi Dozor*, a freezing, wintry wind is sweeping across the dark, night-time streets. His apartment is bitterly cold, barely protected by the remnants of a failing municipal heating system, and the meat left out in the kitchen has only partly defrosted. Anton's surname may imply an affiliation with urbanity, but his first inner-monologue is filled with a desire to abandon Moscow and bathe in the almost unimaginable 'warm alien ocean' of Ialta or Sochi.[65] With a vodka-based breakfast proving his only solace, Anton descends into the city's darkness to fight vampires who seem inherently better adapted to 'terrible, cold, inhospitable Moscow'.[66] The opening scene of Luk′ianenko's second novel provides the exact opposite climate but an identical conclusion for a new first-person narrator, Alisa Donnikova – an evil witch ideologically opposed to Anton. Summer has replaced winter, but the new season now menaces the city's inhabitants with an 'unprecedented heat'.[67] As Anton and Alisa's voices unexpectedly merge despite their differences, the

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[62] Khapaeva likewise makes this observation about the 'inhuman' extremes of the Muscovite weather. Dina Khapaeva, 'Soviet and Post-Soviet Moscow: Literary Reality or Nightmare?', trans. Catriona Kelly, in Mark Bassin and Catriona Kelly (eds), *Soviet and Post-Soviet Identities*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 171-90 (p. 181).
[63] Vladimir Sorokin, *Put' Bro*, Moscow: Zakharov, 2004, p. 208.
[64] Sorokin, '23000', pp. 479 and 493.
[65] Luk′ianenko, *Nochnoi Dozor*, p. 11.
[66] Ibid., pp. 11-13. See also Luk′ianenko, *Dnevnoi Dozor*, p. 258.
[67] Luk′ianenko, *Dnevnoi Dozor*, p. 17.

best course of action is once again to 'escape from stifling [dushnoi] Moscow' and head to the (now cooler) Crimea.[68]

As even the witches fail to bring relief to Moscow's scorched earth with futile rain spells, Pelevin's vampire protégé Roman Shtorkin appears to agree with Sorokin's Brothers of the Light in their flight from Vnukovo and Lukʹianenko's wizards and witches in their search for convalescence in the Crimea.[69] For Roman, 'summer Moscow' is appealing, not because of its heat but because of a certain 'hint', wafting 'on the breeze, […] in the poplar fluff', 'of the places one could go away from the city'.[70] As the grey city cannot be enjoyed for its own merits, but instead offers a low basis from which to escape, Mundane Moscow once again resembles not Lotman's description of the archetypal concentric city but its eccentric counterpart. Gazing outwards for external inspiration, Moscow may have defeated nature with its brutal concrete urbanism, yet it remains in conflict with the natural elements.[71] It is a space inculcating the inhabitant with a desire to search for something better.

6.4. The Past Rises from the Muscovite Earth

> When the dead are not properly buried and mourned, they turn into the undead.[72]

For Etkind, the sustained appearance of magical beings in Russian literature during the 2000s turns the reader to the past and renders the texts 'vehicles of memory'.[73] He posits that the lack of monuments to Soviet victims ('hard' memory) is counterbalanced by the overabundance of monsters in post-Soviet Russian culture ('soft' memory). An embrace of this form of literary expression represents a symptom of trauma and fills the gaps in the extant cityscape. The undead creatures embody those who died in the Stalinist purges and Soviet Gulags but are not acknowledged in official discourse, 'the

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[68] Ibid., p. 61.
[69] Lukʹianenko, *Nochnoi Dozor*, pp. 286-87.
[70] Viktor Pelevin, *Empire V/Ampir V: Povestʹ o nastoiashchiem sverkhcheloveke*, Moscow: Eksmo, 2006, p. 24.
[71] Lotman, *Universe of the Mind*, p. 192.
[72] Alexander Etkind, 'Post-Soviet Hauntology: Cultural Memory of the Soviet Terror', *Constellations*, 16, 2009, 1, pp. 182-200 (p. 186).
[73] Lipovetskii and Etkind, 'Vozvrashchenie tritona', p. 177.

many millions […] unlawfully murdered'.[74] As Ross Poole shows, there are precedents within literary criticism for reading these creatures through the prism of the past, particularly in the (shimmering) form of the ghost. The ghost is not conjured from nowhere and nothing, but returns to remind characters 'that if the dead remain dead, the responsibilities they left remain'.[75] As Poole illustrates, ghosts admonish; they 'remind us of what we know and of what we have to do', vividly bringing back to life a past we want to forget. [76] They are, in the Freudian sense, uncanny, *unheimlich*, which as Freud informs us is not the binary opposite of the familiar. It stems, rather, from the familiar; it is 'in some way a form of the familiar' ('Unheimlich ist irgendwie eine Art von heimlich').[77] In the liminal space between colliding worlds, uncanny beings are at the same time both out of place in the modern city, yet also strangely recognizable.

In his theory of 'magical historicism', Etkind asks the reader to take a leap between the literary ghost and Russian literature's range of 'ghosts, spirits, vampires, dolls'.[78] Moscow's mundane streets are familiar to the reader, yet uncannily haunted by memories. In Pelevin's *Empire V*, the Soviet past seeps through the city's architecture, particularly in Moscow's grey suburbs. Driving past 'eighteen-storey panel-block buildings of the sleeping districts' in 2006, Roman views the apartments as the final gift from an empire to its people before its demise.[79] The economy was subsequently transformed, but the Muscovites who lived in these suburbs remained rooted to the spot, imprisoned in 'the concrete cells of their Soviet buildings'.[80] As Roman remarks using spatial terms: 'the houses, trees, and trams remained in place, but the earth on which they stood disappeared'.[81] Forced back into the shadows of his childhood, Roman is moved to tears at the memories of the 'Sunshine City' (Солнечный Город) and the loss of the 'absurd country' in which he was born.[82] The bright vision never came to fruition, yet it continues to haunt members of the next generation. They discover that although

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[74] Etkind, 'Post-Soviet Hauntology', pp. 182 and 193-98. See my first chapter for more on Etkind's distinction between 'hard' and 'soft' memories, esp. pp. 29-30, and my sixth chapter, pp. 242-43.
[75] Ross Poole, 'Two Ghosts and an Angel: Memory and Forgetting in *Hamlet*, *Beloved*, and *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*', *Constellations*, 16, 2009, 1, pp. 125-49 (p. 126).
[76] Ibid., p. 127.
[77] Sigmund Freud, 'Das Unheimliche', *Psychologische Schriften: Band IV*, Frankfurt am Mein: Fischer, 1989, p. 250.
[78] Etkind, 'Post-Soviet Hauntology', p. 195.
[79] Pelevin, *Empire V*, pp. 207-08.
[80] Ibid., p. 208.
[81] Ibid., p. 17.
[82] Ibid., p. 18.

the infrastructure has remained, the universe has been turned upside down. Given the gravity of this transformation from Soviet child to post-Soviet man, Roman's mutation from human being to vampire no longer seems so dramatic. The experience of the Soviet Union has forever changed him, and the extant cityscape acts as a permanent reminder of this past.[83]

Another grey apartment block, this time in Butovo in the south of Moscow, is similarly haunted by past events in Luk′ianenko's *Dnevnoi Dozor*. The novel begins with a ferocious battle between the Night Watch and the Day Watch in the stairwell of the block, leaving casualties on both sides. Although initially appearing to be an unfortunate meeting, both the location and the event haunt the rest of the novel, as it gradually becomes apparent that the protagonists were orchestrated to meet at this time and place as part of a much wider conspiracy. For the doomed first-person narrator, Alisa, the very fabric of this suburban 'hole' (*dyra*) foreshadows the bleak end of non-existence that awaits her later in the novel:

> Ох, ну и дыра…Лучше жить где-нибудь в Мытищах или Лыткарино, чем формально числиться москвичом, и обитать на этих жутких задворках. Вроде все на месте, и дома, и чахлые деревца, пытающиеся пробиться из спрессованной глины, и машины у подъездов стоят не самые убогие, но…[84]

Moscow is once again shown to resemble its suburbs, and being a registered Muscovite in Butovo is associated with a darker existence than life in Moskovskaia oblast′. The resident is caught in liminal space, technically a Muscovite but without the benefits. Alisa's fleeting glance suggests that everything is where it should be, with normal houses and cars parked by the entrances, yet there is something 'eerie' (*zhutkii*) or uncanny about an area that saps the life out of the 'sickly' (*chakhlye*) trees. Civilization is in decline here. When Alisa's line of thought is interrupted ('*no…*'), the description should perhaps be supplemented by details of Butovo's historical significance and a potential explanation for its undead qualities. As well as having some of the cheapest

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[83] There are echoes here of the post-apocalyptic inhabitants' experiences, described in my fourth chapter, pp. 135-77.

[84] Luk′ianenko, *Dnevnoi Dozor*, p. 41.

property within the Moscow city region, the area is renowned for Butovskii poligon, a site of mass executions and burials during the purges of the late 1930s.[85] According to official data, 20,671 people were killed at this location, which remained heavily guarded until 1995. With information only slowly seeping into the public realm, Butovskii poligon was declared a 'historic monument' in 2001, the Orthodox Church consecrated the Khram Novomuchenikov i Ispovednikov Rossiiskikh in honour of the victims in May 2007, and Putin laid flowers at the site at a ceremony in October 2007.[86]

Etkind does not include *Dnevnoi Dozor* in his analysis, but this particular passage supports his theory of magical historicism. If one were to apply Etkind's terms to the scene in Butovo, Luk'ianenko could be said to provide the 'soft' memory reminder of the cityscape's history. The vampires and witches in an apartment block in a novel set at the end of 1999 represent the 20,671 victims of Stalin's purges not yet laid to rest. Since mourning had not taken place by this time, the unburied memory seeped through the pages of popular literature. Following the novel's publication in 2000, the families of Stalin's victims at Butovo have been given some closure, with the opening of the site to the public and the erection of the memorial. With 'soft' memory only later accompanied by 'hard' memory, the writing of 'soft' literary texts thereby ran ahead of the writing of 'hard' city texts in the working through of trauma.

The Soviet Union's violence likewise features heavily in Sorokin's *Led* series, although he diverges from the other two authors by actually setting some of the action in the past – *Put' Bro* takes place between 1908 and 1950 and Part Two of *Led* oscillates between the Nazi concentration camp and the Soviet Gulag. The insertion of the mysterious sect, the Brotherhood, allows Sorokin to play with history, maintaining the major events but recontextualizing their purpose. Actions are 'emplotted' to weave a new narrative based on the Brotherhood's teleology.[87] The founding of the NKVD is an opportunity for the Brotherhood to uncover new recruits without the dead bodies arousing suspicion. World

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[85] Ekaterina Pakhomova, 'Nedvizhimost' ot MKADa do ada', *Moskovskii komsomolets*, 22 June 2005, p. 8.
[86] Natal'ia Melikova, 'Umopomrachenie…za chto?', *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 31 October 2007, p. 4; and Anon., 'Butovskii poligon ob''iavili istoricheskim pamiatnikom', *Moskovskii komsomolets*, 8 August 2001, p. 8.
[87] I borrow here Hayden White's theory, according to which history is in fact 'a literary, fiction-making operation' based on the 'emplotment' of narratives. Hayden White, 'The Historical Text as Literary Artifact', in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, pp. 81-100 (p. 85).

War II is a pointless battle between power-hungry humans. The process of rapid urbanization is a means for the Brothers and Sisters to unveil more of their kind in a shorter time. Not only does Moscow retain past structures – 'its fences have simply grown higher and richer' – but a powerful elite also looms over society at all times. A single thread of totalitarian thought runs through the narrative across time and space, from Stalinism and Nazism to the modern-day rituals of the secret Brotherhood. The existence of other perspectives on events is denied by a strict metanarrative of history. It is in this reflection on continuity from past to present that Sorokin fulfils Etkind's assertion that post-Soviet authors 'struggle with history'. As Sorokin himself remarks, the *Led* series is 'a sort of monument to the twentieth century'.[88] Sorokin thereby goes beyond localized unburied traumas to make a more sweeping observation on autocratic mentalities. All 'soft' memories only crystallize when the ruling city god allows multiple narratives to coexist in the cityscape.

<div align="center">***</div>

By extending the challenge of the Gothic beyond the realm of the Soviet Union, however, it becomes clear that vampires and werewolves not only to draw attention to unburied horrors but also re-evaluate current processes. It is not only the past that is emplotted through tales of the magical elite but also life in the contemporary city. Where Moscow's wealthier areas – Robski's splinters of glamour culture – are depicted in the three authors' works, the undead are used to construct fresh images of these locales. Whilst Robski captures tight-knit communities with care-free appeal, Gothic imagery transforms the sites' *raison d'être* by inserting them into much wider narratives of conspiracy and control. Luk′ianenko deconstructs the image of a glamorous, parochial realm by focusing on a gated community without the community. The lack of inhabitants creates a sense of Gothic barrenness. Pelevin goes further by challenging the Botox-secured grin of glamour culture. Behind the seductive smiles lie manipulation and a lust for power.

Set in 2003, Luk′ianenko's third novel, *Sumerechnyi Dozor*, briefly moves away from the images of grey Soviet blocks to focus on one of the new, inner-city gated complexes

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[88] Sorokin, 'U nas kosmicheskie tseli', p. 96.

constructed on the banks of the Moskva River. Given that the imposing, Stalinist Dom na naberezhnoi once defined elite living during the 1930s, Luk′ianenko's prologue informs the reader that the nearby post-Soviet 'towers on the bank of the Moskva […] have become the new symbol of the capital, replacing the jaded Kremlin'.[89] The elite continues to live in gated segregation behind a fresh façade, and the businessman at the centre of the novel moves between glamorous splinters, also retreating to his *kottedzh* in Gorki-9 (the village where Medvedev has his mansion). With underground parking, shops, cafés, a sauna, swimming pool, and casino, the complex appears to offer everything within its own walls. The first impression strongly echoes Robski's *Casual* in its evocation of plentiful serenity:

> Во дворе […] стояли две ярко-оранжевые уборочные машины […]. Было в машинках что-то игрушечное, будто приехали они прямиком из Солнечного Города, где веселые малыши и малышки радостно чистят свои миниатюрные проспекты.[90]

Whereas Pelevin connects the 'Sunshine City' to memories of Soviet Moscow in *Empire V*, here Luk′ianenko attaches the epithet to the post-Soviet city of glamour. The expensive complex is a miniature city contained within a safe, gated environment. The security enables the rich to play with the giant, bright orange road sweepers like toy trucks. Botoxfication is fused with the immortality of the undead, glamour culture with the gothic. The flow of time is denied, producing an infantilized world of endless pleasure and no responsibility. By inhabiting space outside that accessible to the ordinary Muscovite, members of the elite enjoy a privileged life of power and excess. As Anton discovers, however, reality cannot match the vision. The toy world is not all that it initially appears and botoxification has dangerous side effects. The mummified grin becomes a grimace. There is insufficient demand for the property, and only nine people can actually afford to live in a building for hundreds. Behind the façade of glamour, the cafés are closed, the saunas cold, and the parking spaces empty. With so few Muscovites able to partake in the rich delights, Luk′ianenko suggests that such complexes stand unpopulated, haunted by creatures who now represent not past memories but unrealized futures. The towering, 'new symbol of the capital' proves to be

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[89] Luk′ianenko, *Sumerechnyi Dozor*, p. 10.
[90] Ibid., p. 63.

a site with the external structures in place but without the internal character. The *Wandersmänner* who transform the city are absent. Like the towering, but abandoned, Gothic castle, it consequently stands decaying.

For Pelevin, the deceit of glamour is not merely an empty game but something more sinister. Going beyond Luk′ianenko's snapshot, Pelevin fully explores the satirical potential of the Gothic in the context of Putin's Moscow and reveals glamour to be a vehicle for exploitation by the elite. He begins in *Sviashchenniaia kniga oborotnia* by deconstructing the image of the luxury hotel, entirely recontextualizing what Chapter Five highlighted as a major bastion of Moscow's glamour network. Taking the hotel National as both the starting point of the novel and a major symbol of Russia's reborn national pride during the early 2000s, Pelevin initially depicts the locale as 'representative of the national taste' and home to the most affluent members of the glamorous elite who can afford the $600-per-night price tag.[91] In its hidden depths, however, lies a money-making scheme centred on a mystical werefox who creates the illusion of prostituting herself to clients without ever actually touching them. The werefox's tail whirls, the client is magically drawn into a dream-like fantasy. During the course of the novel, the vices of this simulated den of iniquity, in which the client is really only paying for the surface image of prostitution, spread to other locations in central Moscow. To the protagonist gazing out on Moscow's central towers from an expensive penthouse, the city seems to amount to little more than its phallic architecture.[92] Luzhkov's skyscrapers and Tsereteli's soaring monuments create an impressive illusion through glamorous makeovers and macho bluster, but they actually conceal humanity's most primal instincts. Where the ordinary Muscovite is trapped in the sleeping suburbs, a small minority of rich people thrive on money and sex.

Pelevin develops the theme further two years later in *Empire V*, using a slightly different prism through which to satirize the corruption of Moscow's elite, now no longer represented by foxy prostitutes but a stratum of vampires. The most famous vampire in Western culture, the eponymous hero of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), lives in a distant ruined castle atop a mountain, becoming a lonely recluse or, according

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[91] Pelevin, *Sviashchennaia kniga oborotnia*, p. 21.
[92] Ibid., pp. 139-40.

to Dragan Kujundzic, 'a figure of crumbling sovereignty'.[93] Pelevin's vampire represents quite the opposite – a figure of global conspiracy. Here, vampires still live discretely in the shadows, but occupy Gothic settings in the twenty-first century metropolis. Rather than retreating with the decline of the nation-state, they work across borders, controlling societies in urban centres. As Pelevin repeatedly plays with language, including the name of his protagonist (Roman, literally 'novel'), the reader discovers more about the vampires' rule at the same time as Roman, a new vampire.[94] During his training, Roman learns that humans have been created by vampires using a combination of genetic modification and artificial selection. They exist to feed vampires, milked like cattle on an industrial scale for their energy-giving 'red liquid' (a politically correct version of the blood-sucking mediæval vampire). As Roman undertakes a series of degustation sessions to discover different people's tastes, he bites people, reads minds, unveils their past memories, and sheds light on the range of animalistic instincts driving humanity.

Roman is taught the two major cultural concepts used to subjugate human beings: 'discourse' (*diskurs*) and 'glamour' (*glamur*). The first is language, either spoken or written – the columns in the glossy magazines Roman is given as study material. The second is image or appearance – the pictures. As the ruling vampires appropriate religious symbolism for their new teleology, discourse and glamour connect human beings' 'body' and 'soul' to create a special, thirst-quenching, and power-bearing liquid for vampires called *bablos* or 'the symbolic blood of the world'.[95] In this way, Pelevin extends Karl Marx's famous comparison of capital and vampires – 'Capital is dead labour, that vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks'.[96] For Pelevin, members of capitalist Moscow's corrupt, wealthy, vampiric elite not only suck up money from others' labour, but they also maintain the whole system of economic flows through the false representation of value. Playing with a slang term for money (*bablo*), Pelevin constructs *bablos* as the absurd inflation of an

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[93] Dragan Kujundzic, 'vEmpire, Glocalization, and the Melancholia of the Sovereign', *The Comparatist*, 29, 2005, pp. 82-100 (p. 93).

[94] Having become a vampire, Roman is subsequently known to his compatriots by the diminutive Rama, the seventh avatar of the Hindu god Vishnu.

[95] Pelevin, *Empire V*, pp. 60 and 251.

[96] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, ed. Frederick Engels, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, in three volumes, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1970, I, p. 233. My attention was drawn to this passage by Kujundzic, 'vEmpire, Glocalization, and the Melancholia of the Sovereign', p. 92.

object's worth. The more glamorous an object appears, the more *bablos* is produced in the human being for the vampire to harvest. Urban centres in general, and Glamorous Moscow in particular, exist on the sole premise of making money, of generating *bablos* through cultural manipulation. Roman is given the example of two black Mercedes standing outside a casino on Moscow's Novyi Arbat. They are, on first appearance, both black and long, and, therefore, identical. Yet glamour inflates the value of the first car, which the onlooker knows to be 'an expensive model from last year'; the second car is much cheaper because it is understood through the prism of glamour to be an outmoded version associated with unfashionable New Russians from the 1990s.[97] Through advertising, public relations, and glamour literature, people are taught to valorize surface appearance and to believe that one lump of metal can be significantly more valuable than another.

Magic facilitates movement between the mundane city and the headier realms of Glamorous Moscow, but closer inspection unveils Pelevin's glitzy spaces as a life-sucking force. An underpass off Tverskaia ulitsa has been transformed, replacing rows of small kiosks with a giant, glass-walled shopping centre. The change is not explained in terms of improved commercial opportunities, however, but as a means of adding glamorous value and strengthening the vampires' grip on the city.[98] When the vampires walk in the footsteps of Robski's characters, eating sushi in a restaurant on Sadovoe kol′tso, the glamorous image is again destabilized by descriptions of consuming blood-red tomato juice. Even Robski's Rublevka is recontextualized as the centre of vampiric control. Inhabited by the leaders of the undead elite, the most palatial gated dwelling now appears menacing with its high fence, checkpoint and 'mighty building'. As Roman remarks, it resembles not the dainty space of Robski's feminized community but the 'black entrance to Babylon'.[99] As the Rublekva becomes the lair of the anti-Christ, the demand for isolation from the rest of the city no longer seems so innocent, recast instead as the evil city god's yearnings to manœuvre the *Wandersmänner* as pawns.

The attack on the elite's wallification is renewed when Pelevin returns to the theme of glamour and the space of the Rublevka two years later in the short story 'Zal

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[97] Pelevin, *Empire V*, p. 171-72.
[98] Ibid., p. 185.
[99] Ibid., p. 208.

poiushchikh kariatid'. Once again consciously digging away at the foundations of Glamorous Moscow, here Pelevin opens up a cavern beneath the Rublevka under the auspices of a new business venture that will furnish the rich client's every need. The reader learns that the ruling elite must be segregated not because of their secret plots, but for the sake of Moscow's global image. Dangerously infantilized by excess wealth, Russia's oligarchs have grown 'incapable of aiming for anything other than the gratification of their constantly changing desires'.[100] They are, as a consequence, a national embarrassment. Attractive young women are bussed from the sleeping suburbs to the secret location beneath the lavish *kottedzhi* to act as prostitutes for the oligarchs. Whilst the rich cannot be prevented from sucking wealth from the city – or in the terms of *Empire V*, sucking *bablos* from its inhabitants – they can at least be distracted from causing more mayhem. In this way, Pelevin transforms the Rublevka from a place of appealing splendour to a gilded prison for those seeking only self-gratification. He highlights not only past crimes but also what he perceives to be crimes in the present.

6.5. The Search for the 'Real' and Alternative Communities

> А обычный человек всю жизнь работает, высунув язык от усталости, а
> потом умирает от стресса, успев только кое-как расплатиться за норку
> в бетонном муравейнике.[101]

Pelevin's use of vampires to criticize the ruling elite raises the question of whether post-Soviet Moscow's monsters are simply haunting ghosts or whether they also embody a wider range of political, societal, and cultural impulses. Is Roman/the novel solely a vehicle of memory or also a vehicle of other desires? As Rosemary Jackson posits, the introduction of fantastic elements in literary fiction can have two effects, revolving around the dual meaning of 'expression' – expulsion and manifestation. On the one hand, fantastic features can be utilized to '*expel* desire' considered threatening to 'order and continuity', whilst on the other hand they also '*tell of*, manifest or show desire'

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[100] Pelevin, 'Zal poiushchikh kariatid', p. 12. Pelevin expresses a similar view in his 2008 interview, describing how Moscow's 'oligarchs […] have become detached from life'. Cited in Natalʹia Kochetkova, 'Oligarkhi rabotaiut geroiami moikh knig', *Izvestiia*, 17 October 2008, p. 17.
[101] These are Pelevin's observations on post-Soviet life, cited in Natalʹia Kochetkova, 'Vampir v Rossii bolʹshe chem vampir', *Izvestiia*, 3 November 2006, http://izvestia.ru/news/318686 [last accessed 25 May 2013].

(emphasis in the original).[102] With his theory of 'magical historicism', Etkind captures the way in which literature expels traumas not discussed elsewhere because they threaten state-sponsored narratives of historical continuity. I would, however, argue that Moscow is not solely a reflection of an amnesic void but also a means of manifesting other desires existing in the city of the 2000s. It is not only orientated towards its past, but also towards its present and future. As Pelevin captures in his interview with *Izvestiia*, rather than spending an entire lifetime trying to carve out a small corner of the 'concrete anthill', the 'ordinary', twenty-first-century Muscovite seems less concerned by the search for past murders than by the present-day search for easier gratification and an alternative basis for life.

Luk′ianenko, Sorokin, and Pelevin's protagonists all share a desire to be part of a greater whole, to find meaning in their lives through a wider teleology. Whether wizards or witches, vampires or werewolves, they do not derive their power solely from magical abilities, but also from joining a collective. Luk′ianenko's Anton is lifted from the dreary suburbs to fight for the city's Night Watch. Sorokin's sect members are equally empowered by joining the Brotherhood: standing in unity in circles allows them to channel magic abilities. In all three of Pelevin's works, the protagonist commits to a wider group of magical beings. A Hu-Li (A Khuli), the first-person narrator of *Sviashchenniaia kniga oborotnia*, spends two-thousand years waiting for the appearance of the messianic super-werewolf (*sverkhoboroten′*). When she finally finds him, she becomes embroiled in his FSB plot to extract oil from Russia's far north and keep Moscow's oligarchs awash with money. Roman equally relies on money to sustain the collective he joins in *Empire V*, exploiting the machinery of a vast vampire empire to keep the elite in power. Lena, the protagonist of Pelevin's 'Zal poiushchikh kariatid', supports the elite in her own way, aiming to be the 'ideal' woman for her oligarch clients by resembling a silent, immobile architectural caryatid ready to spring to life at the required moment. To stand still for long periods of time, she is injected with a serum named 'Mantis-B' (using the foreign word) extracted from the praying mantis (*bogomol*). As Lena grows increasingly enthralled with the figure of the praying mantis, however, the story concludes with her shedding her human skin, ripping off her client's

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[102] Rosemary Jackson, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*, London: Routledge, 2002, pp. 3-4.

head, and joining a new collective of mantises.[103] Inserting the self into a greater metanarrative of life, however radical, seems preferable to rotting away in the sleeping suburbs.

On the one hand, the fascination with the collective and growing focus on empire can be read as an ironic commentary on Russia's flourishing nationalism under Putin during the 2000s. Critics have been quick to highlight the play at work in Pelevin's *Empire V*, for example, stressing the author's satirical take on the imperialism of Aleksandr Dugin and Aleksandr Prokhanov. Roman learns that vampire rule is a world-wide regime of anonymous dictatorship known as the Fifth Empire (hence the title's Roman numeral V), following the rule of Rome, Byzantium, the Nazi Third Reich, and the postcolonial Fourth Rome of globalism.[104] For Edith Clowes, Pelevin thus parodies Dugin's neo-Eurasianism, borrowing concepts such as 'the Heartland' (Khartland – the vampire's power-centre) from Halford John Mackinder via Dugin.[105] For Livers and Sander Brouwer, the vampire empire ironizes Prokhanov's concept of the post-Soviet Fifth Empire, headed by the 'Imperator of the Polar Star', Vladimir Putin.[106] Using magical characters allows the author to hyperbolize political suppression under Putinism and highlight the insular attitudes of an elite focused on self-preservation.

All three authors underline the dangers of 'othering' large sections of society (in this case, human beings). The focus on the demands of the fortunate few brings a concomitant neglect of the many. Having been granted the ability to read people's minds, Roman thinks nothing of using his powers for his own gratification. He delights in playing with the memories of his first human victim, artificially inserting himself into her past and using the information to persuade the woman to return home with him. Vampire morality ensures that his conscience is clear, since human beings are merely a

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[103] The story's dénouement reminds the reader of one of Pelevin's much earlier works *Zhizn' nasekomykh*. Featuring transmutations, the novel follows the lives of mosquitoes, ants, dung beetles, and a range of other insects at a seaside resort in the Crimea. Whilst monotony characterizes the lives of his insects in 1993, Pelevin offers a more promising spiritual purity for the praying mantises in 2008.

[104] Pelevin, *Empire V*, p. 272.

[105] Clowes, *Russia on the Edge*, p. 167.

[106] Keith Livers, 'The Tower or the Labyrinth: Conspiracy, Occult, and Empire-Nostalgia in the Work of Viktor Pelevin and Aleksandr Prokhanov', *The Russian Review*, 69, 2010, pp. 477-503; and Sander Brouwer, 'What Is It Like to Be a Bat-Author? Viktor Pelevin's *Empire V*', in Sander Brouwer (ed.), *Dutch Contributions to the Fourteenth International Congress of Slavists, Ohrid, September 10-16, 2008*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008, pp. 243-56.

commodity to be desired, as if yearning for a cigarette or alcohol.[107] The magical beings in Sorokin's *Led* trilogy likewise dismiss their human counterparts with contempt. When the eponymous protagonist and founder of the Brotherhood experiences his epiphany at the end of *Put' Bro*, Bro realizes through his magical heart that Moscow is simply 'a city of meat machines'.[108] Since people lack the special qualities of the Brothers and Sisters, their world can be obliterated without moral qualm. The death of a thousand 'meat machines' is excused if it furthers the Brotherhood's plight.

Even in Luk'ianenko's *Dozor* series, the so-called powers of the Light are more concerned about the preservation of their own collective than the protection of the humans they profess to serve. When the group's leader, Geser, wishes to convey unpalatable information to Anton, he takes him to one of Moscow's specialist bars. Whether it be a skiers' restaurant, plumbers' snack-bar or parachutists' pub, Geser chooses the spatial embodiment of teamwork which, through its 'micro-environment', underlines that all members of a collective must either 'accept the rules and enter the little society or reject them'.[109] In the Muscovite cauldron of juxtaposed times and competing imageries, it is important to align oneself with similar beings. Over the course of the series, it becomes clear that the needs of this single group do not necessarily coincide with those of wider society. In fact, Geser gradually comes to resemble closely his evil nemesis, who is at least honest about the self-interest that motivates him.

On the other hand, despite the satire and the questionable effects of subjugating wider society to the needs of one small segment, the three authors capture a cultural and societal shift during the 2000s away from the void of meaning and towards a rehabilitation of grand narratives. There exists in Putin's Russia a desire to move beyond the unburied traumas of the past and uncover something coherent, something 'real', on which to base the future.[110] This has been reflected in cultural output. Lipovetsky describes a turn away from the Sots-Art postmodern deconstruction of Socialist Realism towards what he defines as 'Post-Sots'. This new movement treats

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[107] Pelevin, *Empire V*, pp. 111-17.
[108] Sorokin, *Put' Bro*, p. 232.
[109] Luk'ianenko, *Nochnoi Dozor*, pp. 347-52; and Luk'ianenko, *Dnevnoi Dozor*, p. 267.
[110] This sentiment is equally reflected in the nostalgic appeal of Akunin's Moscow, the reassurance of a strong centre in Post-Apocalyptic Moscow, and the comfort of glamorous well-being in Robski's Glamorous Moscow.

Soviet symbols and totalitarian discourse in a more nuanced way. Past mythology is recontextualized for a new generation growing up without positive heroes as role models. Irony remains in Post-Sots, but it is never too biting. Pessimism is replaced by a softer re-evaluation of utopian projects ('distracting […] from everyday troubles') and an emphasis on 'optimism and affirmative values'.[111]

Alexei Yurchak notes a similar trend in visual art, with particular reference to the St Petersburg artist Dasha Fursei. Rather than viewing the Soviet past as something hostile to be deconstructed, the next generation of artists continues to be self-aware and warmly ironic but focuses on 'authenticity and idealism'.[112] For Yurchak, this shift marks nothing short of a move to 'post-post-Communist' and 'post-postmodern' culture, which he labels a fresh brand of 'new sincerity'. Defining itself against postmodernism and rejecting cynicism, the new sincerity of the 2000s 'allows its authors to remain committed to the ideals that they discuss, while also being somewhat ironic about this commitment'.[113] The ideals of the Soviet Union can be discussed in broader terms without destructive criticism. Aspiration for a future 'City of the Sun' can thereby be reclaimed, albeit in a self-aware and somewhat ironic manner.[114]

Whilst Luk′ianenko's grey Moscow is not a utopian 'City of the Sun', and both Pelevin and Sorokin use much heavier irony than Fursei, their works of the 2000s represent a softer approach towards the desire for more positive literature, a form of new sincere mysticism. For the junior recruits of Luk′ianenko's Night Watch, their leader Geser resembles the child-like imagery of avuncular Stalin watching over the city from his illuminated Kremlin room. Geser's knowledge and experience frequently appears to grant him a more distanced view of events, enabling him to out-manœuvre others with a final goal in mind. Standing above the city as an incarnation of de Certeau's city god, Geser usually gets the better of his evil adversaries when the large battles are held atop Moscow's highest buildings − on the Dom na nozhkakh na VDNKh, a twenty-five-

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[111] Lipovetsky, 'Post-Sots: Transformations of Socialist Realism'. pp. 356-77. As discussed in my third chapter, p. 120, Akunin makes a similar claim with regard to his own superhero, Fandorin, who is moulded as a figure for the post-Soviet generation to admire.

[112] Alexei Yurchak, 'Post-Post-Communist Sincerity: Pioneers, Cosmonauts, and Other Soviet Heroes Born Today', in Thomas Lahusen and Peter H. Solomon Jr. (eds), *What Is Soviet Now? Identities, Legacies, Memories*, Berlin: Lit, 2008, pp. 257-76.

[113] Ibid., pp. 258-59.

[114] Ibid., p. 267.

storey skyscraper constructed in 1968, or in a small pentagonal room at the apex of the MGU main building (see figure 3, p. 47). With Stalin's empire style of architecture connected to the post-Soviet elite, the city and the country are both described as 'gigantic', yet 'almost everyone' who controls the fate of the vastness is in a 'cramped' space looking down on Moscow.[115] Despite his reservations, Anton is seduced by this group's power and consequently finds himself narrating his own existence in accordance with the Night Watch's metanarrative of history.

Behind Pelevin's critical commentary on the vacuity of recent glamour culture lies a similar yearning in his vampire protagonist for a sense of belonging. Whereas *Generation "П"* offers no hope of uncovering solidities, *Empire V* is more ambiguous seven years later. If Roman is, as the novel's subtitle suggests, 'a real superman' – the post-Soviet incarnation of Boris Polevoi's positive hero or 'real man' in 'Povestʹ o nastoiashchem cheloveke' (1946) – then he maintains a strong admiration for empire. Not only does he long nostalgically for the Soviet Union, but he also concludes the novel with a lust for totalizing control (repeating six times 'everything is ours') and a declaration of love for the cultural tenets of the vampire empire ('Я люблю наш ампир. Люблю его выстраданный в нищете гламур и выкованный в боях дискурс').[116] The surprising tone of the novel's dénouement even causes one critic, Vadim Nesterov, to decry the novel in dismay as something 'the former cynic, Pelevin' would never have penned.[117] Yet in many ways, Roman's final proclamations are quite understandable, given his journey from grey mediocrity to a realm where his existence finally seems to have genuine meaning. His transformation into a vampire allows him to see more of the city's wonders, extends his life, and gives him a sense of purpose beyond the confines of the 'concrete anthill'.

By taking a naïve, ordinary nineteen-year-old man and enabling him to ascend to the top of the vampire hierarchy, Pelevin captures a youthful desire in the post-Soviet generation for more comforting visions of the future. In 'Zal poiushchikh kariatid', he

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[115] Lukʹianenko, *Dnevnoi Dozor*, p. 243.

[116] Pelevin, *Empire V*, pp. 406-07.

[117] Vadim Nesterov, 'Diskursa s sisechkami', *Gazeta*, 13 November 2006, http://www.gazeta.ru/culture/2006/11/13/a_1041279.shtml [last accessed 20 May 2013]. This particular review is discussed further in Livers 'The Tower or the Labyrinth', p. 499. Lipovetsky similarly points out that the novel can be read somewhat ambiguously as a satire on liberalism. Lipovetskii and Etkind, 'Vozvrashchenie tritona', p. 180.

returns to this topic, offering through Lena a young, female counterpart to Roman. Here, the final image of Lena becoming a praying mantis both upturns the image of glamorous femininity created by Robski and allows Lena to move across the threshold from lonely human to fulfilled post-human. Where Robski's Rublevka housewives desperately battle to retain their youthful appearance and thus their husbands' favour, Lena is empowered as a mantis to devour the subjugating male oligarch. This liberating act facilitates her spiritual and spatial 'crossing' (*pereezd*) from beneath the Rublevka to a bright, 'happy glade'.[118] Whilst her past is shown to be 'a black abyss of nonexistence' – the void at the centre of *Chapaev i Pustota* – her mutation brings inner purity. In a reversal of Gregor Samsa's famous transformation in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* (1915), becoming an insect in (post-)postmodernism brings not alienation and deracination, but a sense of belonging and rootedness. Attesting to the potential for future happiness amongst the congregation of praying mantises, Lena becomes a 'mantis' not only in the physical sense but also in the Greek sense of 'prophet'. As entrance to the post-human, post-post-Communist world brings personal benefits, Lena blazes a trail for a disaffected youth seeking a new path.

This desire for fulfilment through the collective is in even greater evidence in the dénouement of Sorokin's *Led* trilogy. In the first novel *Led*, Sorokin undermines utopian aspiration by highlighting the horrors undertaken in the name of a higher goal. People are tortured, forced labour is used in the creation of the sect's ice-hammers, and all forms of totalitarianism appear equally abhorrent. By the end of '23000', however, the brutal violence of *Led* subsides in favour of admiration for the purity of the occultist sect's final goal. Rather than ironizing the Brotherhood's search for the final members needed to reach the magical 23,000 figure, Sorokin adopts a style which is, as Lipovetsky posits, closer to that of 'the Socialist Realism and the emotional mythologism' used by Aleksandr Dovzhenko, Oles′ Gonchar, and even Aleksandr Prokhanov.[119] Sorokin's human world is pointless and highly atomized. It is embodied by the city of Moscow, which is ruled by fear, resentment, and envy over the size of a neighbour's dacha or glamour of a friend's car. In stark contrast, members of the magical Brotherhood seek natural harmony, supporting each other and abstaining from

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[118] Pelevin, 'Zal poiushchikh kariatid', p. 117.

[119] Mark Lipovetskii, *Paralogii: Transformatsii (post)modernistskogo diskursa v russkoi kul'ture 1920-2000-kh godov*, Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2008, p. 637.

eating meat or killing animals. Given these surroundings, there is a certain appeal in the Brotherhood's spiritual faith. When the apocalypse is ultimately averted in the final chapter, two humans – Bjorn and Olʹga – are left behind in the sunlight. The symbolic rebirth of Adam and Eve heralds not meaningless death but a new chance for humanity to unite. Where the wretched puppies are born into hopelessness at the end of Sorokin's earlier 'Khirosima', Bjorn and Olʹga have a bright, sunlit future ahead.

In interviews, Sorokin himself appears to have been transformed by his creation: 'I previously used to create worlds and destroy them […]. But here, I simply create a world and admire it. This is something new for me.'[120] Basking in the splendour of this magical place, Sorokin remarks that the world around him has 'changed dramatically' during the course of his life and, in a nod towards 'new sincerity', he expresses the hope that perhaps the world can now head towards 'a new harmony'.[121] The dramatic change of tone and difficulty of reconciling the violent imagery with the spiritual warmth have provoked confusion amongst literary critics. On the one hand, Marina Aptekman reads Sorokin through the prism of his earlier attempts at deconstruction, insisting that *Led* is a 'postmodern interpretation' mobilized as a literary weapon that 'constantly deconstructs the nationalist myth […] of national-patriotic writers'.[122] Psoi Korolenko, on the other hand, reads the series from the opposite perspective. Sorokin is no longer a 'scandalous' agitator but a writer in the neo-traditionalist mode who describes 'realistic' characters in great detail within 'the tradition of realist novels'.[123] For Korolenko, the *Led* series even marks a watershed moment in post-Soviet Russian literature, signifying the replacement of 'the epoch of postmodernism' with 'a yearning [toska] for the Absolute, […] the deep, transcendental foundation of being'.[124] Myths, wholeness, and grand narratives have replaced deconstruction, emptiness, and narrative fragmentation.

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[120] Sorokin's new literary direction was accompanied by a change of publisher as he moved from Ad Marginem to Igorʹ Zakharov – the publisher of Akunin's latest Fandorin novels – between the publication of *Led* and *Putʹ Bro*. Igorʹ Shevelev and Vladimir Sorokin, 'Ledianoi apokalipsis', *Moskovskie novosti*, 17 September 2004, p. 27.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Marina Aptekman, 'Kabbalah, Judeo-Masonic Myth, and Post-Soviet Literary Discourse: From Political Tool to Virtual Parody', *Russian Review*, 65, 2006, 4, pp. 657-81 (p. 677).
[123] Psoi Korolenko, 'Skolʹzkii putʹ k Absoliutu', *Vedomosti*, 20 September 2004, http://www.vedomosti.ru/newspaper/article/2004/09/20/81027 [last accessed 30 May 2013].
[124] Ibid.

Such diverse readings of these works, to the point where some critics no longer recognize Pelevin and Sorokin as the writers they once knew during the 1990s, highlight the unreconciled tensions inherent in the novels themselves. The unusual blend of seemingly incompatible irony and sincerity contained within the novels evokes the confusion, ambiguity, and humour of late-Soviet *steb*. As Yurchak explains, this form of irony practiced by groups such as the Mit′ki and necrorealists 'differed from sarcasm, cynicism, [and] derision'.[125] Rather than clearly supporting or deconstructing the dominant discourse, *steb* 'required such a degree of *overidentification* with the object […] that it was often impossible to tell whether it was a form of sincere support, subtle ridicule, or a peculiar mixture of the two' (emphasis in the original).[126] Just as Yurchak finds in the context of Soviet *steb*, post-Soviet critics have found it difficult to ascertain where the boundaries lie between support and mockery in the worlds of Pelevin and Sorokin. Ideological clarity and biting subversion have been replaced by ambivalence and recontextualization.

In his discussion of recent nationalist fantasies under the theory of 'ironic imperialism', Boris Noordenbos shows how the confused critical reception of Pelevin's *Empire V* and Sorokin's *Led* trilogy captures a wider trend in Russian literature of the 2000s.[127] For Noordenbos, nationalist writers have increasingly fused 'ideological radicalism with postmodern irony, pastiche and humour' in a 'game of ambiguous radicalism' that positions itself 'on the very borderline between irony and ideological militancy'.[128] In this way, nationalist writers have brought the trickeries and ambiguities of Soviet *steb* into the twenty-first century, achieving widespread popularity despite the strength of their radical views. That is not to say that all these writings follow identical paths or that the authors at the centre of this chapter are radically nationalist. I envisage the 'borderline' between the two positions as being more akin to a 'borderland' or zone, with greater space for difference. The irony is in much greater evidence in some works than others. In Luk′ianenko's *Dozor* series, grand Soviet architecture is connected to the post-Soviet magical elite with little irony regarding the historical continuities. In the

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[125] Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006, pp. 249-50. I would like to thank Stephen Hutchings for bringing my attention to this comparison.
[126] Ibid., p. 250.
[127] Boris Noordenbos, 'Ironic Imperialism: How Russian Patriots are Reclaiming Postmodernism', *Studies in East European Thought*, 63, 2011, pp. 147-58.
[128] Ibid., p. 149 and 157.

cases of Sorokin and Pelevin, irony and deconstruction play a much more expansive role, in particular when compared to the more radical nationalist figures Noordenbos analyses (Pavel Krusanov, Prokhanov, and Dugin). Yet Pelevin's *Empire V* and Sorokin's *Led* series do mark a clear shift in the authors' wider œuvres away from the unequivocally negative deconstruction of the 1990s. As the lines blur, the reader is once again thrust into a grey zone, only now in terms of ideology.

6.6. MundaneMagical Moscow as ThirdSpace

A recurrent theme throughout this thesis, both genre and ideology have an impact on the depiction of urban space. From violent depravity (Sorokin's 'Moskva'), the void of the psychiatric hospital (Pelevin's *Chapaev i Pustota*), and the simulacra of the consumerist models represented by Moscow's neon advertising billboards (Pelevin's *Generation "П"*), there arise witches living on the graves of Stalin's victims (Lukʹianenko's *Dnevnoi Dozor*), ice people with a secret medical institute on Novoluzhnetskii prospekt (Sorokin's *Led*), and vampires congregating in a powerful lair beneath the Rublevka (Pelevin's *Empire V*). Utopian aspiration for a better life mingles with despair at the city's purposelessness, and the prospect of magical transcendence coexists with mundane urbanity. Gothic imagery, magic, and a range of urban spaces all have a destabilizing impact on Magical Moscow, rendering it a 'mutopia' in the sense defined by Istvan Csicsery-Ronay. Mutopian Moscow is born from the emptiness of the 1990s – from the Zen 'mu' of nothingness or, for Csicsery-Ronay 'Hiroshima's rad-hot [sic] desert'.[129] Offering an eccentric rather than concentric reaction to the empty uncertainties of the apocalypse, the city is consequently pulled in all directions. It is a hybrid space, not based on a single ideology but on networking, communicating across realms. Fusing human experience and technological innovation, the mutopian city is, at the same time, both a space of multiple ideas and interactions, yet 'it is also utopian'.[130]

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[129] There are echoes here of the fusion of Moscow and Hiroshima in Clark's analysis of *Moskva*. The image is also reminiscent of the nodal model of Moscow constructed by Glukhovskii in the city's underground, discussed in my fourth chapter, esp. pp. 170-73. Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, 'Notes on Mutopia', *Postmodern Culture*, 8, 1997, 1, para. 48,
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/postmodern_culture/v008/8.1csicsery-ronay.html [last accessed 19 May 2013].

[130] Ibid., para. 39. This concept of the hybrid city is further explored in Matthew Gandy's theory of 'cyborg urbanization'. Matthew Gandy, 'Cyborg Urbanization: Complexity and Monstrosity in the Contemporary City', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 29, 2005, 1, pp. 26-49. Both Csicsery-Ronay and Gandy draw heavily on Donna Haraway, 'A Cyborg Manifesto: Science,

In an application of Soja's theories of space to the Russian context, Moscow is a form of what Soja describes as 'ThirdSpace'. It is a 'space of radical openness […] at the margins' constructed through thinking in terms of 'both/and also'.[131] MundaneMagical Moscow (the fusion of the grey and fantastic city) embodies many opposed concepts, the past and the future, good and evil, hope and despair, crippling poverty and excess wealth, surface-level advertising and the search for spiritual fulfilment, human and non-human, individualism and collectivism. These tensions are not worked through but left open to diverse critical interpretation. The Soviet past haunts the city, yet it is never given a definitive burial. Hope is found for the future through the collective, yet the path is obscured by the multitude of appropriated mythologies, immoral acts, and lack of clear answers. The possibility of absolute fulfilment is accompanied by violence, needless murder, and selfishness. The main characters discover magical abilities, undertaking a series of initiations or a path of discovery with a mentor, yet they do not transcend to an entirely separate universe. Their powers ameliorate contemporary Muscovite life – characters use magic to avoid traffic jams or improve their living arrangements – but the protagonists still inhabit marginal spaces within the city. They have expanded life-spans but can still be 'killed'. They are granted an overview of history but still worry about individual, private matters.

Pelevin's A Hu-Li, for example, has lived for thousands of years as a werefox, yet her body is the simulacrum of a teenage girl. She participates in carnal delights in some of Moscow's most glamorous locations, yet she equally hunts chickens in the woods. She does neither positive nor negative deeds but is uncontrollably in love with a super-werewolf. Continuing to experience human emotions even after their transformation, the characters discover that love further compounds the sense of in-betweenness and brings the individual into conflict with the collective. Luk′ianenko's Anton makes decisions throughout the *Dozor* series that could be potentially detrimental to the collective in favour of protecting his wife. In a decidedly gendered move, his wife goes even further by giving up her position as a sorceress to look after their child and ensure that her personal power does not leave her husband feeling inadequate. Pelevin's Roman is

Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century', *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, New York: Routledge, 1991, pp. 149-81.
[131] Edward W. Soja, *ThirdSpace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996, pp. 6-17.

similarly driven by an infatuation with another member of his vampire elite. Not only does jealousy cause him to enter into a duel, which results in the death of his mentor, but Roman ultimately discovers that personal happiness eludes him and that his love is unattainable.

These struggles on the individual level are mirrored in the depictions of a city awash with foreign symbols. Moscow's glamour culture satirized by Pelevin appropriates Western models, and the bunker beneath the Rublekva in 'Zal poiushchikh kariatid' is constructed on the explicit premise that it will provide all the luxuries oligarchs crave in the West on (or under) Russian soil.[132] With a noticeable increase in Anglophone cultural references, from the American medical drama *House* to the British author Terry Pratchett, Luk′ianenko's Moscow likewise feels increasingly infiltrated by Western ideas by the time of the latest 2012 novel *Novyi Dozor*. Yet, with the growth in discourse about Eurasianism, MundaneMagical Moscow is clearly also influenced by Eastern philosophies. It is significant that the heroine of *Sviashchenniaia kniga oborotnia* is actually Chinese. Not only does she draw attention to the growth of Chinese immigrants living in Moscow, but she also ruminates in some detail on both Buddhist and Taoist philosophical thinking.

Sorokin further evidences this increasing interest in China in his first novel penned after the *Led* series, *Den' oprichnika* (2006), and in the collection of short stories that acts as a sequel, *Sakharnyi Kreml'* (2008). Satirizing Putinism's clamp-down on freedom of expression, Sorokin's two works provide an East-gazing counterpart to Pelevin's analysis of glamour and discourse in *Empire V*. A techno-dystopia set in the near future of 2028, Moscow has been separated from the West by the autocratic ruler's giant wall and instead looks to China for both economic and cultural interchange. In a reversal of Solzhenitsyn's *Odin den' Ivana Denisovicha*, the reader gains insight into Sorokin's dystopian society in *Den' oprichnika* through the prism of a single day in the life not of a prisoner but of an *oprichnik*, a high-ranking member of an elite group formed in the image of Ivan the Terrible's secret services. The *oprichniki* violently dispose of the latest enemies of the state, rape the victims' wives, take new, powerful, mind-altering drugs, use Chinese-made genital implants, and at the end of the working day participate

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[132] In an intertextual reference to *Empire V*, Pelevin quips that D & G stands not for Dolce & Gabbana, but for 'Discourse and Glamour'. Pelevin, 'Zal poiushchikh kariatid', p. 88.

in a homosexual orgy. Autocracy, technology, a valorization of the collective, Chinese influence, and, in accordance with Sorokin's typical style, violent sex are all fused. In the domestic sphere of this new world, facilities are all now computerized, houses are filled with Chinese furnishings and decorations, Chinese electronic 'news bubbles' (пузыри новостные) adorn the walls, and a '4-D' Chinese game is the most popular form of children's entertainment.[133]

By emphasizing the importance of new technologies in Moscow, *Den' oprichnika* offers the culmination of a trend appearing throughout the works of Luk′ianenko, Pelevin, and Sorokin, and provides the final element of Moscow as a mutopian ThirdSpace. From Anton's now outdated MiniDisc player in 1998 (*Nochnoi Dozor*) to the opportunities available on the 'piratical [piratskii] expanses of the internet' in 2012 (*Novyi Dozor*), technology has played an increasing role.[134] Facilitating escape from the grey suburbs and acting as a surveillance tool, the internet is fully exploited by twenty-first-century creatures. Old myths are reinterpreted through modern invention, a vampire's tongue is compared to a 'portable flash drive', a sonnet-writing competition takes place via email, and vampires stalk each other on LiveJournal.[135] With the internet's possibilities almost magical, technology can sometimes do the job even better than special powers.[136] In this way, the hybrid city of Gothic, magical, and mundane realms also transgresses the boundary between the real and the virtual.

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The fantastic has permeated post-Soviet Russian literature across the spectrum, from Luk′ianenko's popular works to Sorokin's provocative images and Pelevin's incisively analytical reading of contemporary culture. The writing styles are very different but the

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[133] Twenty-eight million Chinese citizens live in Sorokin's future Russia, the countries are connected by a giant motorway, and the narrative is littered with Chinese expressions to reflect the necessity for the future Muscovite to learn the language. Vladimir Sorokin, *Den' Oprichnika*, Moscow: Zakharov, 2006, pp. 25-26 and 160.

[134] Luk′ianenko, *Novyi Dozor*, p. 212. With Anton's music igniting the reader's imagination, one fan has created a blog with imbedded YouTube videos showcasing the tracks mentioned in the novels at http://rufanbook.livejournal.com/14148.html [last accessed 17 May 2013].

[135] Pelevin, *Empire V*, pp. 167, 186, and 381.

[136] At the end of *Led*, Sorokin satirizes the latest health craze for fitness machines. Concluding that they can reach the population more effectively by commercializing their operations, the Brothers and Sisters market an 'ICE wellbeing system' which mechanically strikes users' chest with ice. Sorokin, *Led*, pp. 290-310.

magic similar. This wide variety of part-human beings is certainly not unique to Moscow or to Russian culture. From *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* to *Twilight* and *True Blood*, a range of immortal creatures has been brought to life during the same period in the Anglophone popular imaginary. Russian authors consciously draw on traditional Gothic aesthetics, the Western literary canon, and these recent developments in Anglophone literature, film, and television. In both Russian and Anglophone cultures, contemporary works rarely now focus on vampires alone but usually also include other part-humans – magicians, werewolves, shapeshifters, and fairies. Yet these creatures are vehicles for different messages in different cultural contexts. In Russia, they represent a means of dealing with the trauma of the Soviet Union, embodying the deceased enemies of the people, and reminding contemporary society of past crimes. The ghost of the Gulag continues to haunt the modern-day street. But they also embody something more, a step beyond the initial post-Soviet images of depravity and the bleak hopelessness of life after the apocalypse. In the turn to new sincere mysticism during the 2000s, literature captures fresh societal desires for hope. As Lukʹianenko asserts, the fantastic is a means of allowing authors to 'talk about this life that we live'.[137]

What is specific to the works analysed in this chapter is the setting in which these beings appear. They roam alleyways, wander past kiosks, and inhabit buildings familiar to the contemporary Muscovite reader. The local circumstances imbue the characters with specific meaning and have an impact on their trajectories. Genre – elements of the Gothic, magical, and fantastic; space – the grey, sprawling Moscow suburbs; and time – the traumas of the past and the search for a stable future – are all inextricably intertwined. In stark contrast to the concentric, inward-gazing city of the post-apocalyptic imagination, this Moscow is eccentric and displaced. The crises, resurrections, and life-changing decisions take place on the margins, the stairwell of the multi-storey apartment block or the abandoned warehouse of an industrial suburb. Haunted, neglected, and forgotten, the sleeping suburbs reflect the life of many Muscovites, far removed from central power or glamorous frivolity. Embodied by the apartment block in Perovo that recurs in Lukʹianenko's *Dozor* series, ordinary Muscovite existence seems stagnant and in desperate need of renovation. Yet, there is still hope in the greyness. As literature moves ahead of reality, the process to demolish

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[137] Cited in Igorʹ Svinarenko, 'Sergei Lukʹianenko: Ia ne uveren, chto krovʹ – eto vkusno', *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 2 April 2008, p. 9.

the nineteen *khrushchevki* in Perovo dating from the 1960s and erect new multi-storey blocks in their place actually began a decade after the publication of *Nochnoi Dozor*.[138]

This new hope is expressed in the works through special powers, transforming Mundane Moscow into a threshold to other realms.[139] Average city-dwellers are offered a fresh start in life by being imbued with new abilities, struck with an ice-hammer, schooled in the lives of vampires, and transformed into a praying mantis. In doing so, they join collectives privileged above other Muscovites by the powers they possess. These groups act as self-serving communities, appropriating models from wherever necessary to achieve the desired goal, combining foreign concepts with local ideas. Whilst the authors' ideological balancing acts evoke late-Soviet *steb*, their magical collectives resemble Yurchak's description of the Mit′ki and necrorealists in Leningrad during the late 1970s and 1980s. These artists and film-makers created small, underground groups to offer an alternative collective to the one featured in official propaganda and produce new meaning by recontextualizing familiar symbols. 'The characters of both these groups [the Mit′ki and the necrorealists] lived in the zone between the inside and the outside of the boundaries drawn by Soviet authoritative discourse'.[140] In the case of post-Soviet immortals, the characters inhabit a zone between the 'communal violence' of the 1990s and the state's hardening during the 2000s. They neither gratuitously kill nor shy away from violence in the name of the cause; they neither support nor entirely deconstruct the totalizing sentiments behind Putinism; they are neither activists nor dissidents. Instead, they are both aware of the ironies of, yet strangely attracted to, narratives of a collective's greatness. As in the case of *steb*, it is difficult to distinguish the boundaries between irony and sincerity, ideological fevour and dissidence. The both/and also thinking results in a compromise that is subjective and dependent on circumstance. Actions considered perfectly acceptable to members of a mystical group in the furthering of their future schemes appear abhorrent to the contemporary reader. Transcendence to the magical collective leads to moral relativity and a tension between the group's needs, the individual's desires, and the survival of wider society.

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[138] Anon., 'Perovo izbavitsia ot khrushchevok', *Moskovskii komsomolets*, 11 August 2008, p. 7.

[139] For more on the chronotope of the threshold, see Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel', p. 248.

[140] Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever,* esp. pp. 238-81 (p. 249).

MundaneMagical Moscow not only underlines the confusion of the changing post-Soviet cityscape but also the fusion of seemingly incompatible ideas. Glamorous Moscow is segregated along the financial lines represented spatially by the wall. Buying into the brand of glamour, whatever its latest fashion label, means joining a collective of people who attach similar value to the waiters' Armani attire. Those who share this valorization are on the inside, whilst the others are on the outside. The part-human beings of Moscow are, however, acutely aware of their reliance on the rest of the city and work within its mundane spaces as well as its magical areas. Rather than reject liminality, they embrace its possibilities. Members of Luk′ianenko's Night and Day Watches understand that their powers stem from humanity; Sorokin's Brothers and Sisters must seek new recruits amongst the human population; and Pelevin's vampires depend on milking human beings for sustenance. Desires to exploit special powers are tempered both by this realization and by the persistence of very human emotions of love and compassion within the protagonists. The clear boundaries maintained by the gated community or the rigours of face control are undermined and broken down. MundaneMagical Moscow is liminal; its inhabitants operate in a realm of in-betweenness. It is a city with many shades of grey.

Chapter VII

Conclusion

Moscow: Russian Capital of the Future?

7.1. Global Expanses and Local Walls

> The representation of the modern city can no longer depend on the ceremonial opening of gates […]. The city from here on is deprived of gateway entries […] the urban wall has long been breached by an infinitude of openings and ruptured enclosures.[1]

Paul Virilio first suggested as early as 1984 that our traditional understandings of the city no longer reflect its contemporary form. Modern innovations, improved networks of human communication, the advent of mass air travel, and the processes of globalization have recast the city. These trends have intensified in the twenty-first century. The virtual hyperspaces of the internet permit instantaneous communication across the world, deconstructing the outer city wall, the tenet of primordial urbanity. Perpetual motion is created by budget airlines that allow citizens on average Western wages to spend the weekend in distant locales. Many businesses' employees are in some way involved in, or reliant on, transactions carried out across borders. We can live in one nation and regularly work in another. From the perspective of the wealthy Western urbanite or Muscovite, these developments render the city a transit point in life's journey beyond national boundaries. Global cities appear to have more in common with each other than with their immediate hinterlands. Virilio takes such changes as evidence for the death of the city, arguing that we should instead focus on the impact of time on our daily lives. 'If the metropolis is still a place, a geographic site, it no longer has anything to do with the classical oppositions of city/country nor centre/periphery', he posits, since 'distinctions of *here* and *there* no longer mean anything' (emphasis in the original).[2] This leads Virilio to his dramatic conclusion in *Negative Horizon* (1984) that 'the city is reduced to nothing more than a shop window to be destroyed'.[3] Powerful global forces leave only city-ruins as reminders of a bygone era.

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[1] Paul Virilio, 'The Overexposed City' [1984], in *Lost Dimension*, trans. Daniel Moshenberg, Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2012, pp. 25-48 (pp. 30 and 33).
[2] Ibid., pp. 29-30.
[3] Paul Virilio, *Negative Horizon: An Essay in Dromoscopy*, trans. Michael Degener, London: Continuum, 2005, p. 96.

Yet, this heightened global connectivity has not obviated the need for humans to congregate in cities and interact with each other on the local level. Nor has it rendered all cities the same, carbon-copy reproduction of the idealized global conurbation. With the benefit of hindsight, we can see today that Virilio captured the forthcoming destruction of national boundaries and explosion of the binary between the urban and rural, but incorrectly forecast the sacking of the global metropolis. The processes associated with his predictions of deterritorialization have not produced all the anticipated results. If the rhizome of globalization has created nodes across the world in the form of interconnected global cities, between which citizens move, then the arbors of ideologies have continued to find root on the local level. In recent years, scholars have consequently turned to the theory of 'glocalization' in order to explain the commingling of the global and the local. Robert Robertson is frequently cited for popularizing this concept, arguing that there exists 'the simultaneity and the interpenetration of […] the global and the local, or – in more abstract vein – the universal and the particular'.[4] Rather than antagonistic forces, the two sides are 'complementary and interpenetrative'.[5] For me, 'glocalization' is all the more relevant today, since the local still refuses to disappear and urban space still impacts on human experience. Whilst recognizing the impact of innovations over time, this theory captures the continuing significance of space. It embraces local peculiarities and rejects the teleology that we are all progressing towards a final destination of globalized homogeneity.

This thesis brings together these hotly debated antagonisms of time and space, the global and the local, homogeneity and heterogeneity, exploring how they are played out on the streets of post-Soviet Moscow. By focusing on local experiences of the Russian capital, my work contributes to the current debate regarding global cities. As outlined in Chapter Two, researchers from the Globalization and World Cities (GaWC) group have recently quantified the interactions of metropolises with each other, highlighted the growing role of Moscow's financial services in global flows of capital, and concluded that Moscow, Shanghai, and Beijing 'have become much more integrated in the WCN

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[4] Roland Robertson, 'Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity', in Mike Featherstone et al. (eds), *Global Modernities*, London: Sage, 1995, pp. 25-44 (p. 30).
[5] Ibid., p. 40.

[world city network] in the last decade [2000-2010]'.[6] Yet, as Sarah Hudspith rightly points out, the purely economics-orientated approach of much recent scholarship on global connectivity obscures the local context, whilst the scholarly use of 'quasi-imperialist language' such as 'integration' has an 'othering' effect.[7] An analysis of literature adds the much-needed cultural dimension and facilitates an in-depth exploration of Moscow's many other narratives beyond the city's increasing global appeal.

From the economist's perspective, Moscow has grown increasingly 'integrated' into global capital flows. It forms one node of a wider, multinational, cross-boundary network of large metropolises. These global processes have exacerbated problems and experiences familiar in other major cities. Many global cities particularly struggle with inequality, divided between the spatially emancipated elite and those tied to the poorest urban areas. From rose-tinted, nostalgic television series about the East End of London during the 1950s, such as the BBC's popular series *Call the Midwife* (first aired in 2012), to the ever-higher towers being erected in Dubai; from the most exclusive residential compounds of Los Angeles to the desperately impoverished suburban townships of Johannesburg, certain features of the modern metropolis are shared across the globe in more or less extreme forms. Yet this thesis shows that the city's narratives are far more complex and locally grounded than suggested by theories of global homogenization or the universalization of urban experience. The contours of nostalgia for the Soviet Union differ from those in the East End of London. The specificities of Moscow's traditional concentric structure are connected in the Russian imagination to the wider political situation. The particular laws in Russia distance experiences of the Muscovite gated community from those of the same urban form in the USA. An exploration of temporal and spatial in-betweenness through Gothic tropes in Russian literature imbues the vampire with fresh significance when compared to the recent Anglophone narratives of teenage maturation. The local context speaks back to the global in the formation of new meanings, whilst local problems frequently have context-specific solutions.

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[6] Chapter Two, pp. 74-75; and Bassens et al, 'World City Network Integration in the Eurasian Realm', p. 397.

[7] Sarah Hudspith, 'Moscow: A Global City?', *Slavic Review*, 72, 2013, 3, pp. 453-57 (p. 454-55).

Physical structures are considerably easier to replicate than imagined geographies, which have their own idiosyncrasies and local flavours. During his time as mayor, Luzhkov possessed the necessary power to inscribe some of his imagined geographies into the physical cityscape, working closely with his chosen architect, Tsereteli, to change the face of Moscow. Other Muscovite figures discussed in this thesis are only able to impact on their surroundings in a much smaller way, often through personal tales. The masterful flâneur-detective battles to maintain Moscow's sense of pre-modern serenity. The peripheral little man dreams of breaking through Moscow's concentric circles in order to reach the sacred centre. The wealthy inhabitant of the Rublevka isolates herself from the city with the aim of constructing a glamorous bubble around herself and her friends. The impoverished inhabitant of the grey, suburban apartment building yearns to transcend his or her current surroundings and find meaning in life. All these visions enhance our understanding of, and add nuance to, global impulses. It is impossible to grasp fully the significance of local spatial forms without also considering the elements of historical continuity – the nineteenth-century images of Moscow reproduced for the contemporary reader, the reimagining of Stalinist plans after the apocalypse, the historical importance of the dacha, and the symbolism attached at the moment of construction to the *khrushchevki* and *mikroraiony*. Literature proves to be both a repository of stories which elucidate human experiences of space and also a means of creating new understandings of the city. The local narrative sheds fresh light on a city's specificities, leading the reader to experience that particular space in new ways.

If the local combines with the global to create new pluralities all over the world, then the city gods' grand dreams of urban space are fused with tales of particular streets, blocks, and communities to produce fresh multiplicities all over the city. The city's complex flows are captured through the inclusion of these diverse perspectives from both above and below – what Robertson describes as 'the simultaneity and the interpenetration of […] the universal and the particular'. By embracing the narratives of the city gods and the *Wandersmänner*, this thesis undermines Virilio's supposition that 'distinctions of *here* and *there* no longer mean anything'. With the rise of both the super-rich oligarchy and the new poor in post-Soviet Moscow, it means something if you are here, amongst the effluence of the poor suburb, or there, amidst the affluence of the opulent *kottedzhnye poselki*. It matters whether you work here in the historic centre

but have to commute from there in the far-flung suburbs. Life on the newly gentrified Ostozhenka in Moscow's historic centre is very different from everyday existence in the suburbs of Butovo, Kon′kovo, Medvedkovo, or Babushkinskaia. The opposition between the urban and rural might have grown less important than it once was, but fresh oppositions have sprung up within the city.

The walls have fallen on the global front, yet on the urban stage smaller walls – some physical, some imagined – have been (re)erected. Reinforcing the significance of the here and there, power relations are tipped in one direction through the 'othering' of those on the opposite side of the wall. Imagined geographies propagated through texts and discourses reinforce this process. Given its Soviet status as showcase capital, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the growth of inequality during the post-Soviet period, Moscow offers an excellent case study for analysis of the contemporary city's fissures. Thanks to its imperial architecture, neo-classical Stalinist *vysotki*, and modern-day smorgasbord of soaring towers and vertical monuments, Moscow's cityscape oozes power. With subjugation on multiple fronts, the effort to gain control over other citizens is a major feature of the visions of Moscow explored in this thesis. In Akunin's Moscow, the Tsar and his entourage show disdain for ordinary Russians and remain content to keep the Khitrovka as a bounded 'other' within the city, its poverty contained through iron-fist rule. The arrestocrats at the pinnacle of the rigid hierarchy restrict others' freedoms. In post-apocalyptic visions of Moscow, the powerful elite wall off the city centre as a fortified citadel, permitting access to the chosen few and leaving an animalistic existence for those on the periphery. Inhabitants of the periphery buy into this imagined geography, repeating myths about the sacred centre's opulence and power.

The city's traditional concentric structure is reimagined by Robski in the relocation of central walls to localized areas – the gated community and the strictly controlled zone of the expensive restaurant. The 'other' is kept at bay through a carefully moulded combination of physical alterations to the cityscape and intangible barriers created according to glamour culture's strict criteria of belonging. An interested magazine reader on the bus reaffirms glamour culture's imagined geography by exploring the latest fashions of the rich, but cannot access this realm. Those on the other side of this socio-economic divide lead very different lives in the suburbs of Gothic Moscow. The

dreams of glamour are deconstructed here, revealed to be a vacuous power game designed to milk the many and serve the few. Yet, rather than embrace the emptiness, those enlightened inhabitants seek other forms of collective, turning to magic in order to transcend to another delimited universe. Fresh, hybridized imagined geographies are constructed here, founded on belonging to powerful, magical groups with their own histories and associations with specific Muscovite places.

Each chapter of this thesis, however, ultimately elucidates how these attempts to rebuild walls and reconstruct solidities founder on Moscow's complex streets. The city proves to be multipolar, with oppositions operating on many different levels. Luzhkov's aspirations of reinventing the Third Rome give way to an eclectic pastiche of times, places, and ideas. The hope of reconstructing old Moscow likewise proves impossible. Nostalgic Moscow is a city of change, poised on the brink of dramatic transformation. The strict concentric structure of Post-Apocalyptic Moscow breaks down at the moment of the protagonist's epiphany. There lies only emptiness in the city's core and a destructive intolerance within the inhabitants' very beings. Even life in the more easily manageable parochial realm of the gated community holds far greater tensions than first appearances suggest. Glamorous Moscow struggles to maintain the binary oppositions it relies upon, forced to negotiate a path between utopian aspiration and the realities of the extant city. Positioned in the suburbs, Magical Moscow is inherently liminal. Members of its mystical factions battle to reconcile the group's demands and individual desires, old mythologies and modern technologies, the collective's teleology and issues of morality. The solution here lies in the embrace of difference.

7.2. Moscow's Past, Present, and Future

The multiplicity of narratives and mutability of urban sites underline the significance of time when thinking about space. Whereas Virilio argues that we should mainly focus on just time, I posit that it is important to consider the fusion of time and space. The arresting gaze of the city god, conceptualization of Moscow as the messianic Third Rome, nostalgia for nineteenth-century 'matushka-Moskva', totalitarian metanarrative of history, glamorous parties buzzing to the tune of eternal youth, and magical collectives' teleologically driven (hi)stories all interweave time and space. Across the works studied in this thesis, members of the elite repeatedly seek to conceal, prevent, or

mitigate the impact of time's passing. In their conceptualization of space and time, there are clear parallels between Akunin's Grushin and the leaders of post-apocalyptic Moscow. Change threatens the comfortable status quo. There are similarly connections between the botoxifcation of Robski's Rublevka housewives and the eternal lives of the vampiric overlords in the visions of Pelevin and Luk′ianenko. The chosen few are able to exist both within and outside the city's structures. They eternally appear as ordinary urbanites, youthful and care-free, yet they also inhabit an alternative realm beyond the reach of the average Muscovite. By controlling temporality, they are able to access multiple universes, empowered through an apparently permanent advantage over others. Yet, attempts to control space across time repeatedly fail. The passing of time foils regimes' claims to permanence, allowing the heroes on pedestals to be scrawled with graffiti in moments of iconoclastic fervour. The local element of 'glocalization' relies on time, with traditions, rituals, mythologies, and shared memories continuing to exert an impact, sometimes for centuries. Past traumas still felt by one society can alter what is acceptable in the present day. A business can, therefore, run a successful marketing campaign in one context, which would prove hugely offensive in another.[8]

Time's passing has been felt all the more acutely in post-Soviet Moscow over the course of the past two decades. The rapid pace of economic change has been reflected in the speed with which old buildings have been destroyed and new ones erected. Following Luzhkov's fall from power in 2010, preservationists have questioned whether the price of re-orientating the Russian capital towards the future so quickly was worth paying. Lament over lost buildings, social issues sparked by growing inequality, traffic problems, and eclectic architectural mismatches in the historic centre have been created or exacerbated by planning decisions from above. Perhaps the lessons learned in post-Soviet Moscow can be applied to other metropolises experiencing rapid change in order to prevent others from making similar mistakes. As planners and politicians in Moscow now consider the construction of a new urban centre to the city's south-west and better preservation of the old, historic centre, their counterparts in Beijing could perhaps study

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[8] A recently reported example involves the advertising campaign run by the Thai franchise of Dunkin' Donuts. Whilst the chief executive of the Thai franchise saw no problem in using images of a woman with black face make-up in the context of other Thai advertisements drawing on racial stereotypes, the American parent company disagreed. The advertising campaign was consequently pulled for its 'racist' overtones. Adam Gabbat, 'Dunkin' Donuts apologises for "bizarre and racist" Thai advert', *The Guardian*, 30 August 2013, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/30/dunkin-donuts-racist-thai-advert-blackface [last accessed 30 August 2013].

the Russian example before they continue to destroy historic *hutongs* in an effort to pave the way for new buildings and wider roads.

The rapid pace of change not only presents infrastructural and architectural problems but also creates a sense of cognitive dissonance for the city's inhabitants. As a consequence, this thesis is populated by Muscovites who suffer from temporal and spatial confusion, haunted by the lost past and in search of meaning amidst confusing contemporary surroundings. Moscow's modern-day palimpsest is rather neatly captured in one final, short novella, Arslan Khasavov's *Smysl* (2010), which brings together some of the themes of this thesis. Born in Ashgabat, now Turkmenistan, in 1988, Khasavov is a young writer with Kumyk roots, whose novella offers a snapshot of life in Moscow in 2007 for a lonely, disenchanted, and confused youth. Born in Grozny but now in Moscow with his family, Khasavov's twenty-year-old protagonist Artur Kara is marginalized on a number of levels – religious, ethnic, financial, social, and physical. Given his alienation, Artur rejects the narratives of the centre and searches instead for a revolutionary solution. In doing so, he rails against the proliferation of glamour culture in Putin's Russia during the first decade of the 2000s. Gazing out of the window of his parents' ninth-floor apartment block, Artur watches the construction process unfold in Moskva Siti, connecting the modern skyscrapers to the city gods' power structures. The lucky few gaze down from the 'transparent height' of their glass towers onto the lives of the less fortunate.[9] Money rules contemporary Moscow, with those at the top supported by glamour culture's meaningless valorization of everything 'new' – fresh versions of similar products.

In search of alternative frameworks, he first turns to the past and meets members of Eduard Limonov's National Bolshevik Party (Natsional-bol′shevistskaia partiia or NBP, which was banned in 2007). Exploring a past he cannot remember, Artur attends an NBP rally and learns about the group's ideology. As old ghosts seep through the contemporary cityscape, Artur enters into an imagined dialogue with a statue of Lenin standing in a park near Avtozavodskaia metro station. Antropomorphizing the statue, he questions how Lenin continues to inspire people, despite the fact that everything Lenin

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[9] Arslan Khasavov, *Smysl*, Moscow: Sever, 2010, p. 88.

'conceived' and 'created' has since 'come crashing down'.[10] Disappointed by Lenin's lack of response, Artur seeks out alternative narratives through Geidar Dzhemal''s shadowy group, the Islamic Committee (Islamskii komitet). His adventure takes him to a particularly gloomy Muscovite apartment, where two members of the Islamic Committee describe their incarceration in Guantanamo Bay. Underwhelmed by the group's surroundings and their notion of non-Muslims as 'infidels', however, Artur ultimately decides to appropriate elements of different ideologies in the creation of his own revolutionary manifesto. He draws on jihadist language, but redefines 'infidel'; adopts the Bolshevik idea of replacing the family with the commune; and even borrows from glamour culture in the formation of policies to prevent people from becoming overweight. In this way, Artur brings different times, places, and ideologies into a collision course, using the resultant carnage to generate fresh meaning.

Artur's short journey captures a desire that recurs throughout this thesis – one that has become increasingly prevalent during the first decade of the 2000s – for positive change to overcome the city's splintering. The immediate responses to the collapse of the Soviet Union – the wretchedness of the early 1990s, the playful upturning of Soviet hierarchies, and the ambivalent confusion of postmodernism – have all been well-documented and analysed by scholars elsewhere. Moving beyond the initial sense of loss and cynicism, this thesis captures the search for something concrete during the following decade. For some (Tolstaia in particular), this search appears futile due to the impossibility of breaking Russia's historical cycles. For others, hope exists on the margins and in the hybridization of different ideas. There undoubtedly remains in Russian literature of the 2000s what Jean-François Lyotard famously describes in his definition of postmodernism as 'incredulity toward metanarratives'.[11] Grand narratives of Moscow as the Third Rome, restorative nostalgia, the strictures of concentricity, utopian isolationism, and magical transcendence have all been deconstructed in recent literature. Yet, there also exists a new-found yearning for alternatives. Nostalgic Moscow glows with the warmth of Akunin's genuine love for history's nuggets. In Post-Apocalyptic Moscow, Bykov considers the possibility of constructing a new society away from the hegemonic, homogenizing centre, and Glukhovskii proposes an

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[10] Ibid., p. 62.
[11] Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984, p. xxiv.

embrace of the ostracized 'other'. Glamorous Moscow reverberates with the nostalgic desire to recreate a lost sense of community. Magical Moscow likewise resounds with voices seeking a collective and its concomitant sense of purpose. The 'incredulity toward metanarratives' is now accompanied by credulity toward sincere emotions.

This sincerity is repeatedly found in the little narratives of Moscow's *Wandersmänner*, who recast the city's 'other' places. From the Khitrovkan dens of iniquity to the dampest underground tunnels, from the furthest-flung periphery to the greyest concrete tower blocks, hope-filled futures inhabit unexpected locales. The creation of new imagined geographies away from Moscow's centre has been echoed recently in the New Moscow project for the city's south-western periphery. If the necessary political will and financial backing can be found, Moscow may discover a new satellite city on its doorstep with all the administrative functions of the capital. As Vadim Rossman analyses in his recent article in *Slavic Review*, the relocation of the state's machinery to just beyond Moscow's borders is actually one of the less radical recent proposals to tackle the city's problems and create new futures on the periphery.[12] Dugin suggests shifting the capital to Kazan′, Limonov proposes Omsk, and Vladimir Iurovitskii envisages a brand new city in the Russian Far East. For these neo-Eurasianists, an eastwards move would represent a symbolic rejection of the West and bring Russia politically and economically closer to the East. Designed to 'marginalize' Europe, Iurovitskii's new metropolis might at least possess a name that appeals to Putin – Vladimirograd.[13] Rejecting the symbolic trappings of empire and focusing on economic growth, others suggest what Rossman defines as 'a forward-thrust capital' in order to stimulate the economies of underdeveloped Russian regions.[14] Some draw on historical narratives in their backing of a federalist capital, highlighting mediæval Muscovy's history of brutally subjugating other regions. They suggest that a shift to the historic cities of Novogorod, Tver′, or Pskov would destroy Moscow's centuries-old hegemony and tackle corruption.[15]

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[12] Vadim Rossman, 'In Search of the Fourth Rome: Visions of a New Russian Capital City', *Slavic Review*, 72, 2013, 3, pp. 505-27.
[13] Ibid., pp. 510-12.
[14] Ibid., p. 513.
[15] Ibid., p. 515.

The increased interest in relocation and concrete plans for New Moscow capture a number of problems relating to the Russian capital, highlighted in the literature analysed in this thesis. Moscow suffers from an ever-burgeoning population, under-developed infrastructure, endless traffic jams, perennial lack of space, and excessively high property prices. Russia suffers more widely from an over-reliance on Moscow, a lack of investment in its regions, over-centralized political machinery, and other citizens' resentment towards those living in Moscow. Describing advocates of a federalist capital as 'the most perceptive and keen participants in the debate', Rossman is clear about his personal support for the construction of a new Russian capital to solve these issues.[16] He concludes that 'the size, the imperial legacy, and the ingrained ideological symbolism of Moscow make it unfit for the role of a new federalist capital'.[17] I certainly agree that the past – 'the imperial legacy' – and successive regime's attempts at self-legitimization – 'ideological symbolism' – are imprinted onto the cityscape. I would question, however, whether this wealth of ideas necessitates the rejection of Moscow and the construction of a fresh city as a *tabula rasa*. It is the diversity of Moscow's narratives and plurality of its (hi)stories that offer the city the potential for greater democracy. The rewriting of old stories, the reimagining of extant places, and the contested debates around what to memorialize challenge existing power structures. At the basis of Rossman's conclusion lies the concept that one cannot overcome a city's past, since the space is so indelibly inscribed with a given legacy that it remains forever tainted. Whilst a specific past might be particularly difficult to escape in the case of sites with a single, horrific purpose – the Gulag or the concentration camp – Moscow remains sufficiently ambiguous and multifarious to overcome this problem.

Drawing on Brodsky, Toporov, and Lotman, Buckler concludes that 'Petersburg urban legends […] compensate for the dearth of history in this relatively young city'.[18] I believe that Buckler thereby uncovers the reason why the nineteenth-century narratives of St Petersburg were so sufficiently consistent that Toporov could compile them in the form of the Petersburg Text. The city's founding myth became St Petersburg's most important trope. In the case of post-Soviet Moscow, my thesis shows that the opposite is true. Multiple urban legends arise in Moscow not from a dearth of history, but from

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[16] Ibid., p. 524.
[17] Ibid., p. 527.
[18] Buckler, *Mapping St Petersburg*, p. 126.

history's excess. The sheer mass of narratives weighs heavily on Moscow, but these (hi)stories combine with contemporary experiences to create many different Moscow texts. Ghosts of the past mingle with Muscovites, who are intent on experiencing the future life, monuments to old heroes stand in the shadow of new skyscrapers, and dreams of walling off a twenty-first-century utopia entwine with realizations of dystopian despair. Post-Soviet Moscow rejects a singular definition and resists attempts to diminish its primacy. It is a site of rapid transformation and alienation, yet also a city with perennial hope for the future.

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