

Semiotic management of communicative situations: New people(s) and old methods

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Abstract. How to explain the existence of totalitarian communities in the light of hegemonic ideologies that have been oftentimes, and also quite recently, condemned (Nazism, communism, Stalinism, religious radicalism)? How, in the globalizing world, do information islands emerge where people live in isolated semiotic realities? How is it possible to manipulate the masses, *proceeding from* denounced reasoning and policies? Why can people be subject to regimes typologically similar to those that destroyed their physical and semiotic past? These are issues the article approaches, trying to see logic in the management of semiotic realities through communicative situations, specifically as to how different types of objects in the latter are constructed. Metaneeds used in the construction of semiotic realities indicate the value-based structure of macrosignifieds as elementary units in culture cores. The use of macrosignifieds and skilful manipulation with metaneeds make it possible to *create novel semiotic species* in closed sociocultural systems that are based on unilateral semiotization *of the surroundings and function by autocommunicative feedback loops*. The examples given are derived from one of the most elaborate experiments in the creation of New Man and closed semiotic realities – from the territory of the former Soviet Union and the contemporary Putinized Russia.

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The article will look into processes that are connected with things and people in communication, and with the creation of semiotic reality. Discrepancies that concern social, cultural and even physical reality of communities have not disappeared in the course of globalization, but have, on the contrary, become ever deeper and more extensive in every sense. It probably suffices to mention examples such as the Arab Spring, the 'death of multiculturalism' in Europe, the revolutions in Ukraine, different opinions concerning the boundary between terrorism and religious truths. We shall try to explain collisions of different semiotic realities by some events that occurred in Estonia at the beginning of the 21st century.

Keeping in mind society and culture, and semiotic processes happening in, and done to, these, we apparently live in an interesting time. For several reasons our era deserves special attention as regards some processes and phenomena to be followed below, since several of the phenomena to be examined have occurred also earlier in history, maybe even co-appeared previously as well. Yet never before (it is especially the 21st century that we keep in mind here) have many of those appearances been so extensive, so obvious and, in the light of our so-called highly developed level of civilization, so surprising. Globalization might probably be a term to characterize the diverse curiosities surrounding us nowadays – both in cultures, metacultures (as concerns both scholarship and also envisaging cultural developments) and the conditional 'global culture'. It is clear that we can talk about globalization ever since the invention of the printing press, maybe even earlier (e.g. mass conventions). But we would probably agree that the unification of cultural units we can witness today has, on the one hand, reached an unprecedented scale, just as the information channels and media available create more and more uneven informational regions and lonely, even informationally and semiotically isolated islands, on the other hand. Globalization has brought along the spread of cultural units beginning from, for example, music and food, and ending with discussions about larger culture themes and topics like the economic, social and political organization of communities. It is important that globalization does not concern only singular cultural traits or items, but also broader cultural themes, for such simultaneous double flow of artifactual as well as purely semiotic cultural units has started to unify and unite people's worldviews, while it has simultaneously started to insulate worldviews, as already mentioned.

In the framework of the present paper, we will try to approach the issue from a viewpoint casting light on the formation of communicative contexts. Methodologically, we shall depart from ideas articulated by Vilfredo Pareto about components of the communicative situation that bind together the individual and the societal levels: the individual psychic state, behavioural acts, communal knowledge and theories of correct behaviour, and actual social ways of behaving (Pareto 1935:

90). Alongside with these ideas, and hand in hand with systems theory, Talcott Parsons' (1952) treatment of the communicative situation and its component objects was developed. It is logical that communication and semiosis are, in such light, inevitably connected with both individual and communal metaneeds and evaluation standards. Thus, we will try to view the construction of communicative contexts with the background knowledge of a very simple awareness of human life as swirling around the satisfaction of a pyramid of needs. The latter has been analysed thoroughly by several specialists, but let us mainly follow the logic expressed by Bronislaw Malinowski (1922) and Abraham Maslow (1970). For our present context, a most important aspect of the logic of striving towards the satisfaction of need lies in Maslow's conception of metaneeds or being-values as decisive for the self-actualization of people. Our contemporary discourse on phenomena and cultural themes around us is loaded with value-based arguments, and is thus very tightly connected with the overall metaneeds. Metaneeds are of high informational value of the structure of the semiotic reality of a given community, as they actively direct people's instrumental and consummatory behaviour (as discussed in Burgoon et al. 1994: 17) in their daily lives. Instrumental communication as concerned with intentional operating with the surroundings is, via metavalues, connected with identity discourse and consummatory semiotization of the world.

Value-based discourses offer us keys for understanding the world around us, and metaneeds are served, both implicitly and overtly, to us to make us see what really should matter in our conceptualization of things and phenomena around us. Metaneeds are offered to us, for example, to make sense of what is 'evil', what is 'terror', how to take 'global warming', how to behave in 'the Christian way', how to comprehend actual military activity and to explain manipulation with economic means interfering with the daily lives of actual people. In the light of metaneeds and continuous re-explanation of them, another very curious phenomenon today is the confrontation between diverse ideological paradigms, beginning from consumerism and ending with religious collisions, wide-scale and varied re-appearance of fascism, chauvinism and Nazism. When such ideologies clash, the circumstances that are connected with their semiotic build-up and functioning become even more exciting; the latter allow to observe the semiotic imbroglio of worldviews (that are, in one way or another, totalitarian) that may seem distant from one another at first glance.

What should deserve our attention is the continuous re-appearance of those cultural themes and ideologies that have emerged in the past and that have been officially condemned (amongst them specific totalitarian regimes, radical movements and behaviour). Our so-to-speak global metaneeds have been shaped in both informal and formal discourses that both belong to the legitimized cultural sphere. Nevertheless we can observe the easiness with which wide-scale movements are

being initiated on the basis of certain denounced ideologies. One of the aims of the present article is to try to explain some aspects of the semiotic mechanisms, processes and actual manners through which seemingly impossible sociocultural objects and phenomena are created. We shall depart from the obvious knowledge that the 21st century finds humanity in the repeating condition of collisions between groups of diverse nature, and that these collisions are mostly to do with identity discourse. The latter are often based on extremely simplistic metaneeds having to do with, for example, religious views, or concepts of good and evil quite directly derived from lower needs in Maslow's pyramid. And here, these 'simplistic metaneeds' may carry the weight of a long history during which "the link between an initial referring term and the 'real world' has already been established in a prior text" (Schiffrin 2006: 113). For us, it will be important that "links between a subsequent referring term and the initial referring term are delimited by the characters, activities and scenes already evoked in the textual world" (Schiffrin 2006: 113). Likewise, in our context metaneeds find active links with the linguistic and semiotic community in a specific physical and semiotic reality, and are thus continually at least tacitly in use by the mere exercise of natural language or other sign systems. For us, it will be important that we will be dealing with a "linguistic community outlined in time and space [...] that possesses a common 'referential space' which does not emerge anew at every moment, but which is of a constant nature, that makes it possible to bind certain general terms with certain constant reference" (Pärli 2008: 58), laying stress on the last aspect, and accentuating connections between general terms, constant reference, referential reality, metaneeds and also the physical reality.

Of course, very frequently religious and the so-to-speak practical matters have been combined or at least bound together, and thus we do not find ourselves surprised when topics like religious enlightenment, saving the world and, for example, the issue of living space (as referring to *Lebensraum*) coexist side by side in the explanation of military activity (the latter applies also to the issue of terrorism) and other quite actual undertakings. So, rushing ahead we can maintain that while on the one hand metaneeds are, to a certain extent, derived from the primary needs or at least connected with them, then on the other hand metaneeds themselves influence not only the conceptualization of the surroundings, but also the perception of the environment on a very physiological level. Such union of metaneeds, secondary and primary needs is illustrated even by the already mentioned and actually practised *Lebensraum*-rhetoric, although Maslow (1993: 309) himself limited his example to a less ideological discourse on the level of the individual: "[...] metaneeds, though having certain special characteristics which differentiate them from basic needs, are yet in the same realm of discourse and of research as, for instance, the need for vitamin C or for calcium" (Maslow 1993: 309).

In these curious times, objects around us deserve particular consideration: both objects surrounding us in our culture, in our daily life and ordinary behaviour, as well as objects as constructed and operated with – both in cultures and metacultures. Objects are important: any culture consists of objects, both physical and purely semiotic ones. All cultural objects participate in the formation of sociocultural systems, while the latter are made cohesive through communication. In his conception of the communicative situation Parsons has summarized the idea of the socialness of things and the formation of culture through objects. Let us briefly recollect the basics of the Parsonian understanding of communicative situations, for in its simplicity and high operational value for actual analysis it is of utmost importance for the explanation of manipulation with items in world-view in our daily lives.

Things and names in communicative situations

An essential factor that makes social systems and the descriptive frame of particular cases relative is the orientation of an actor to the communicative situation. Parsons (1952: 4) defined the *situation* as “[...] consisting of objects of orientation, so that the orientation of a given actor is differentiated relative to the different objects and classes of them of which his situation is composed”, while the *object world* is composed of *social*, *physical* and *cultural objects*. Whereas a *social object* can be seen both as composed of other actors (*alter*) and as one who has switched him- or herself into the referential reality (*ego*), *physical objects* are non-interactive empirical units that do not respond to the *ego*, and *cultural objects* are the symbolic elements of cultural tradition or value patterns (Parsons 1952: 4). Besides the psychological aspects concerning the dynamic (self-) determination of *social objects* (cf. G. H. Mead’s distinction between the ‘I’ and the ‘Me’), a relational moment is implied by the *cultural objects* that can, via internalization, be included into the structural components of the self (Parsons 1952: 4). Until the inclusion of cultural objects into the structural elements of the self they, along with physical objects, form the context or setting of conditions for social action.

The construction of a communicative situation from the standpoint of an agent depends largely on the motivation of the self: only in the case of motivated attitude towards a situation can we talk about social action proper (Parsons 1952: 4, 543ff). Motivation has to do with psychological, just as well as with cultural drives (let us recall that Parsons was a student of Malinowski), whereas the arrangement of action elements is a function of the agent’s relation to his/her situation and to the history of that relation (Parsons 1952: 5). In this sense, communicative action is dependent on the system of expectations (Parsons 1952: 5, 32ff), and similar to the logic

of Charles Sanders Peirce's notion of habit as a determinant of semiosis (CP 5.491). This implicit semiotic counterpart of analysing social systems makes the position of Parsons a little ambivalent: systems of expectations have evidently to do with abductive logic and thus they distance social systems from the (mechanical) cybernetic information systems. While Parsons could have been associated with an approach to culture and society that lays stress on the social factors, and can be seen as paradoxical in terms of actually setting social systems under the influence of the structural units of objects framing the social situation, we can finally see the dynamic relation between the functional and the structural categories. Parsons himself presupposed this dynamism as well: situational elements can obtain specific meanings and turn into such symbols for the self that gain importance for his/her system of expectations (Parsons 1952: 5). In the case of social interaction these signs acquire shared meanings and start to mediate communication between different agents; then we can talk about the origin of culture (Parsons 1952: 15ff). The psychological, social and cultural considerations are connected also in what Parsons called the cathectic, cognitive and evaluative orientation modalities (Parsons 1952: 7) of interaction, for in order to be communicatively successful, one has to set his/her motivations in accordance with certain sociocultural contexts and requirements as they are connected with established values. Thus communicative behaviour, at least in order to be successful, must be fundamentally reflective, and follow certain logical patterns. These logical patterns (evaluation standards, etc.) are embedded, transmitted, learned and shared by culture.

In semiotics, it is an accepted truism that man lives in a certain environmental reality in which and of which he has created a certain semiotic reality. The constituents of the semiotic reality are arbitrary in their relation to the physical realm and environment, and are conditional, negotiable and actually negotiated. We live as individuals who have gone through the process of socialization in institutions of diverse nature in social groups, and act in diverse sociocultural roles according to certain norms in society. *Homo sapiens* has diverse understanding of his physical environment, and this is reflected in his language as the house of being as was so clearly maintained already by Martin Heidegger. The sociolinguistic aspect of Heidegger's thought has been transformed and transferred to us, and also to the sphere of semiotics, by the so-called Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. All these paradigmatic indicators are to do with an understanding which sees the individual, society, culture, and also the environment (as perceived and conceived) as culture-genetic in the end (or in the beginning, if you will). Societies are formed of individuals who have been formed by social groups who are formed through information flows that are at least guarded, if not formed or shaped, by certain sociocultural managers who are sometimes called the gatekeepers or re-layers.

Such social – and also sociocultural – control is directly linked to the topic of creating objects around us, naming them and segmenting them into categories. Or more exactly, this control is linked to the topic of concrete and abstract reference (or concrete and abstract concepts, see Danesi and Perron 1999: 79) in terms of how naming is decisive for distinguishing between the semiotic reality and the physical environment that oftentimes is considered as objective realm, although, in the end, it is a negotiated and thus a conditional sphere as well. This means that under the topic of naming we are dealing with a number of phenomena that cover the area from general names to proper names, from descriptions to definitions of the so-to-speak objective contents of human environment(s). We are to distinguish between talking about naming in the framework of the philosophy of language and in the context of semiotics. In philosophy, naming is mostly connected with the topic of the logic of reference, truth and reality. In semiotics, naming has been dealt with alongside such notions as (mythological) consciousness, denotation and connotation, distinctive features of objects, etc. The most important moments for the current argument lay in the abstractness and concreteness of referents. Additionally, what is maybe even more important is that the relation between abstractness and concreteness is not absolute, universal or somehow provably solid or logical. This conditionality of items in our physical and semiotic environment is expressed in Pareto's notion and treatment of *non-logical conduct* (Pareto 1935: 74) which reveals its essence in communicative situations, words and names used to arrange objects in those situations.

Saul Kripke's well-known summary of logicians' understanding of names as proper names was formulated as follows – they are “phrases of the form ‘the x such that ϕx ’, such as ‘the man who corrupted Hadleyburg’” (Kripke 1981: 24). That ‘man’ serves as an example of the referent of the given description. Therefore, Kripke considers the possibility of uniting names and descriptions under a common term ‘designators’. Designators, however, lead us to the topic of intentionality and to the negotiated nature of meanings and names of objects. It is important that this negotiated nature concerns, in the end, also the reality-degree of objects. The reality-degree, in turn, is describable at least on the axes of concrete and abstract reference, and the possibility and impossibility of objects. The possibility and impossibility of objects in terms of the probability of creating, accepting and using them has, just as in the literary sphere, to do with the suspension of disbelief.

An analogous trend of understanding proper names can actually be met in semiotics as well. For example, as maintained by Juri Lotman and Boris Uspenskij, the general meaning of the proper name is principally tautological: a name or another is not characterized by differential features, but merely signifies an object to which it has been attached. Consequently, a set of objects with the same name does not necessarily imply any other special features except the characteristic of bearing the

given name. In this line, Lotman and Uspenskij (1973) can be linked with Roman Jakobson's (1971: 131) treatment of 'puppyhood', 'Fido' and 'fidoeness'. However, the boundary between names and descriptions is often, maybe even in most cases, vague. A relatively simple type of descriptions is produced in order to refer to somebody or something, to single out specific objects in the world. Kripke uses the relatively widespread example of a cocktail party and a reference to 'the man over there with the champagne in his glass is happy' (Kripke 1981: 25). This example takes us to the area of genuine semiotics, when keeping in mind suggestions of tying it up with the possibility of lying: the reference to 'that man over there' would most probably work whether or not his glass contains any champagne (which can be replaced, for example, with water). It is noteworthy, that in the case of naming, or such kind of descriptive reference, lying may occur unintentionally; apparently such unintentionality is an especially acute issue in the process of naming as an everyday practise. Lying as such a favoured subject in semiotics, in turn, connects us back to philosophical discourse and specific logical issues that can be gathered under the topic of the so-called impossible objects.

Such links between philosophy and semiotics that arise from the subject matter of naming, in fact bind together also humanities and social sciences in a wider perspective. Truth, reference, reality, semiotic reality are factually socioculturally negotiated phenomena that depend on the Parsonian communicative situation. Therefore we should be very conscious of the connection of things, objects in communicative situations, and how those things are called – named, if you will.

In what follows, we will try to show how communicative situations can be bluntly manipulated, and how things surrounding us can be turned around in a roundabout way. The way in which three main constituent fields of communicative situations – the physical, cultural, and social objects – can be defined, solved and created turns out to be a key issue through which to observe analytically the topic of naming as ranging from proper names to descriptions, and even to descriptions in proper names. And even more importantly – this is a key issue for defining and understanding objects around us: the scale of objects, the classes of objects, the segmentation of our diverse environments into objects of various kinds. The creation of objects and respective management of communicative situations through legitimated metaneeds is certainly requiring a state of mind characterized by suspension of disbelief, which is most likely to be achieved and effectively executed in different kinds of totalitarian regimes.

New social species: An example of the Soviet Man

Let us consider an example from Estonia 2007 – an example probably very well known internationally. This example concerns the notorious case of the Bronze Soldier (for chronology, see Alatalu 2008), a monument to the Soviets who, according to one version (the version, of course, belonging to the Soviet discourse), liberated Estonia (and Europe), and according to another first freed and then occupied the whole of Eastern Europe (for example, the Estonian, or, probably, even the contemporary European discourse). So, let us be concerned only with this very brief example how the whole event was treated on the very territory of Estonia. A summary, merely in a few words: the removal of the Bronze Soldier has widely been treated as an elimination of a Soviet statue by the Estonian government, and at the same time popular rumours spread also in the mass media say that the whole issue was orchestrated from Moscow with Putin's administration involved, and was used as a possibility for a coup to overthrow the Estonian state regime. There were mass protests against the removal of the monument in Russia, as well as demonstrations organized from Russia in the Estonian capital. One of the main organizers of those protests was the so-called *Putinjugend* under the name of Nashi that also protested at and blockaded the Estonian Embassy in Moscow, there were alarming cyber-attacks against Estonian governmental and nongovernmental organisations (including banks). The whole affair was serious and in Tallinn Estonia faced the vastest looting and street violence by gangs ever seen in history, including WWII. However, inasmuch as the actual events in Tallinn mostly occurred in the streets, it is very difficult to point at specific documented events or written materials expressing ideological standpoints involved (however, see Liiv 2007; Alatalu 2008; Pöld 2008; Ehala 2009).

Estonia reportedly has a democratic rule and free press, and that free press has a non-governmental part, which has capitalist owners; this applies to virtually all printed press in the Estonian language. On the other hand, there is at least partially state-supported press printed in the Russian language. When we consider the case of the Bronze Soldier, we could notice a situation that is probably best summarized in the comparison of Estonian- and Russian-language presses, especially versions of a newspaper that is published parallelly both in Estonian and in Russian (see Figure 1). The case is about two radically different messages about the same event, which probably refer to two separate information spaces.



Figure 1. Excerpts from Linnaleht (City Paper) May 1, 2007.

Linnaleht (City Paper) is a weekly paper and the example in question comes from its Tallinn issue of May 1, 2007. This picture depicts the situation on the day the Bronze Soldier had already been relocated to a military cemetery in Tallinn. This is perhaps a clear example of how propaganda is made, and how the semiotic reality of a social (although probably not sociocultural) group is managed by goalkeepers. The Estonian-language version on the left-hand side reports that the Bronze soldier has been re-erected, supporting this information with a relevant photograph. On the right-hand side we can view an image in the Russian-language edition of what is in principle the same paper, accompanied by information about the police having restricted the access to the military cemetery for the time of construction work. In the picture we can see an empty lot without the statue, while from the news story beside it (categorized as ‘scandal’) it is practically impossible to understand, where the monument was actually located at that particular time: the headline refers to ‘The Bronze soldier in the cemetery’, which can just as well as be associated with indefinite plans for the future. There is no need to repeat the value of visual information and the power pictorial images have over verbal information. In our case the effect of ‘visual verification’ is supported by the saying “One picture speaks more than a thousand words” which practitioners firmly keep in mind.

The particular social group targeted by the Russian-language edition is very difficult to define because it is formed of the remnants of Soviet people imported into Estonia during the Soviet occupation. These people have not become integrated in Estonian society; they have stuck to the principle of not learning the Estonian language; they consider Estonian territory as legitimately belonging to Russian

geopolitical and cultural space. These people cannot be considered as Russians, but rather as Soviets – a new species the regime actually managed to develop all over the Soviet Union whose residue in the form of the proposed New Soviet Man are causing counter-cultural problems all over the former forcefully unified territory. Those problems basically concern the identity of people who are, in fact, a sociocultural invention of a totalitarian regime, and who, in terms of identity and integration in a novel sociocultural environment and communicative situations, remain societal and cultural outsiders. Or, as Jurgen Ruesch (1972: 204) has described them, they are rootless individuals “living on fringes of culture, seeking in new culture the old symbols”, or have even become dependent on living as a minority group for they cannot connect with the core culture.

Artificial races are not a new invention, and can be met already in the medieval worldview. Yet, diverse medieval antipodes rather served as semiotic constructs, or were derived from the people whom Europeans actually met during their colonial travels and whose ideals of beauty were expressed in bodily mutations. This is a specific and vast issue on which we have no time to dwell in length. Our present context is concerned with the vigorous will of creators of new massive ideologies to generate a novel man to inhabit a new world order – communism, Nazism and other similar openly totalitarian, designed and planned regimes. When we remind ourselves of the logic of the above-described communicative situations, this is quite natural: the new world is based on a new ideology that governs all communicative situations through which the sociocultural reality is constructed, and all communicative situations must include new and better social objects instead of the aged, degraded and incomplete existing humans.

The creation of new races usually has to solve two main problems: the physical and the mental one. A simplest way of bettering the physical base for a new race is to bring *Homo sapiens* to a higher level of physical capacity. Some of the latest relevant wide-scale examples can be given from the preparation of the Arian race in the Nazi Germany, or the Communist Man in the Soviet Union. The physical improvement of the human body was not limited to an active lifestyle and exercise, but reached eugenics. Eugenics had its so-to-speak mild form in the form of, for example, officially organised brothel service system for the Aryan man, and its range ended in the hands of “doctors” in prison camps. Yet the Nazi plan for populating the new Reich with a new man was about improving the existing people, while the Soviet Union was working on a completely new biological being who would both physically and intellectually surpass *Homo sapiens*. That new biological being was to be the Communist, and surpassing the man of the previous evolutionary level was important both for the very development of communism, and also for the spreading of the World Revolution. Ilya Ivanovich Ivanov’s work in the area of human-ape hybridization experiments (see e.g.

Rossiianov 2002, Shishkin 2003) is the most well-known and serves as a telling example to illustrate the whole topic and case in point.

It is hard to see major differences between the ideologies of the Nazis and the Soviets in their plans for better social orders and their strive to create a new human who would live in those orders. The similarities concern both scientific efforts as well as practical steps taken in organizing the life span of the already existing people. We know about the categorization of men in the Nazi Germany's military forces – we can easily recall the *Hitlerjugend* and other preparatory institutions for the so-to-speak ultimate human. The Soviet man had to follow a similar trajectory of socialization: Child of October → Young Pioneer → Communist Youth (Komsomol) → Communist.

Against such a background, the Soviets all over the vast territory of the Soviet Union had been provided with a fully organized semiotic reality, they were defined socially and culturally, as well as in terms of geographical and environmental identity. Even today, it is interesting that in spite of the collapse of the Soviet Union the Soviet regime did manage – at least to a certain extent – to create its own nation that was, in its artificial essence, dissimilar from all the existing ones. This success is actually ongoing as verified even in *Putinjugend's* contemporary identification discourse that follows the former Soviet ideology in combination with modern Putinism (for example, in their introduction on their Internet page they use the web address not of Russia, but that of the Soviet Union: 'www.nashi.su'). After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, also the identity realm of the Soviet Man was shattered, and in many countries they were started to be treated as the so-called Fifth Column. Just as Putin, a former KGB officer, they consider the collapse of the Soviet Union as the greatest catastrophe of the 20th century, that links up with the general pseudocommunist totalitarian discourse of contemporary Russia.

At the same time, the Soviet residue in the area of the former Union neither want to move back to Russia or to other countries of origin because of differences in the living standards (at least in the case of Estonia), nor do they feel actually compelled to, since according to themselves the land where they live “belongs to them” (“*vsyo nashe!*”) – this was claimed in the streets also during the Tallinn riots in Spring 2007. Rather, their efforts concern(ed) the restoration of the Soviet regime. In Estonia, their situation is difficult, because more-or-less formally they bear the name of Russians, they often have Estonian citizenship, they are simultaneously Europeans and Asians (in several aspects), they are pushed into several linguistic realms at the same time, and so on. Therefore, it is additionally very difficult to organize their identity discourse in terms of supporting it in the physical reality. In other terms, in a situation that is quite novel in principle, the Soviets became unable to relate their semiotic reality with the environment, and became linguistically, communicatively, and semiotically incompetent (in the Chomskian sense); they became

unable to construct communicative situations (in the Parsonian sense) in a wholly renewed physical, social and cultural environment after the constituents of the old communicative situations had collapsed. In the days of the Soviet Union (if seen from the administrative central zone), people's sociocultural reality was clearly defined in all three aspects of communication – the social objects (*true communists* with diverse communist roles in communist institutions); the cultural objects (for example, *socialist* art, socialist living standards, and daily style); and the physical objects (although it must be said that in a totalitarian regime it is hard to find physical objects that would not be loaded with ideology; here the Soviet infrastructure, the so-called Soviet Land itself, and other both physical and semiotic could be located). All these objects and aspects in communicative situations were governed and guided by specific Communist-Soviet metavalues.

The identity discourse all over the former Soviet Union, as concerns the Soviet Man who managed to survive the collapse of the Soviet Union and other cataclysmic events, is a vivid example of *displacement*: their identity is now displaced both in terms of time (referring back to the former Soviet Union times) and in terms of space (connected not even, perhaps, with Russia, but specifically with the Kremlin as the *centration zone*). They, particularly a few of the leader-like persons of the remaining Soviets (in Estonia, for example, individuals once connected to the Interfront movement), become what some Soviet leaders (Lenin, Stalin) sometimes reportedly called 'useful idiots' — originally a phrase to refer to those Western reporters and travellers who would endorse the Soviet Union and its policies in the West in case of need and after 'activation'. Principally and functionally, the same happened to the Soviets in the former Soviet republics. They became manipulable by the ideological propaganda machine of the Kremlin and Kremlin-related organizations (for example, on monetary or purely ideological basis). Those propaganda organizations have by now been dealing for a long period with unilateral semiotization of all of the three constituents of the communicative situation. Creating public informational space through unilateral semiotization is just a continuation of a Soviet system establishing quite fixed – or legitimized, if you will – referential relations with the components of the communicative situation. Again, what is highlighted is the relations between identity and communicative situation, and to the semiotization and solving communicative situations so as, in a minutely different phrasing, described by Ernst Gellner:

In stable and self-contained communities culture is often quite invisible, but when mobility and context-free communication come to be of the essence of social life, the culture in which one has been *taught* to communication becomes the core of one's identity. (Gellner 1983: 61)

Thus, in our case in Estonia, there appeared a rigid confrontation between the Soviets and Estonians which was and is fuelled by Russian-language media both in the Russian Federation and in the Republic of Estonia. This confrontation concerns quite dissimilar informational spaces the two communities live in. There is one extremely important note to be made in connection with the referential relations in communicative situations and identity discourse. Putting it roughly: while a democratic information space implies the necessary connection of its societal members and environmental contexts (including social, economic, political, cultural and other contexts), a totalitarian (including the Soviet and the contemporary Putinized) informational space is characterized by the mediation of most of the environmental stimuli. In the case of such mediated information, *invention* (see below) becomes a norm in creating information space, and through invention events, objects and phenomena become naturalized. A member of a totalitarian informational space must be detached from direct contact with the environment, for otherwise a closed holistic and univocal sociocultural system would be shattered (let us only recall the “*opening* of the Iron Curtain” or the schooling of illiterate suicide bombers by Taliban authorities).

Metaneeds and pseudorealities

The issue of metaneeds and pseudorealities touches upon the above-mentioned unilateral semiotization of diverse types of objects around us. Solomon Marcus made a distinction between primary and non-primary communication which matches our division of two types of information spaces – the democratic and the totalitarian, or the open and the closed. While primary communication must meet the category of ‘aboutness’ (Marcus 1992: 135–137), non-primary communication is related to communication on communication and to mediated communication. Thus it causes a situation that for different reasons, for example economic factors, lack of knowledge, ideology and so forth, favours the ‘invention approach’ (on the latter, see Marcus 1992: 137–138) and the creation of new pseudo-realities with the help of constructed indexical elements. These invented indexical elements may be abstract references constructed both on the basis of concrete or purely abstract nature.

The creation of pseudorealities through invention seems to be possible through the aforementioned metaneeds and cultural values. Through the examination of the latter, it should be possible to understand how stereotypes – in our case, the national (and also chauvinist) ones – can quite easily be created, facilitated, enforced and settled. The background of the above-mentioned conflict in Estonia between two semiotic and sociocultural realities was (and is) also largely formed of metaneeds. In the Tallinn riots of 2007, the behaviour of the Soviet Man was an expression and

outburst of the value system that had lost its official institutional base in the Soviet Union. Needless to stress that the loss of such a formal basis for institutional facts (for the latter, see Searle 1995) makes the boundary between the ‘objective’ and the ‘subjective’ extremely fluid, as contents of metaneeds also can be manipulated not merely arbitrarily, but even randomly. During the days of the riot, as also before and after it, exclamations were witnessed in the media and in the streets reflecting Soviet metaneeds that can be summarized in the following comparison of stereotypes of the Soviet Man and Estonians as expressed by the rioters (see Figure 2; see also Liiv 2007). Although it is a completely illustrative table, it contains actual recorded expressions and phrases as well, and relates to further discourse as well (for example, accusation of Estonians of Nazism in 2013)¹, as also to at least partially analysed value discourse and self-positioning in the events of the Bronze Night (see Kask 2013) that can be used to describe the cultural distance between the two communities.

Soviets	Estonians
think, behave and speak self-righteously, use sincere traditional language (including <i>religious</i> issues)	speak, live in “the Western” way, use “German alphabet”, think and act slyly
rescuers of Europe from Nazism	betrayers, joined the Nazi army
liberators of the world from capitalism and imperialists (work in process)	under-cover capitalists before and after the socialism in the Soviet Union
deliverers of spiritual and other freedom, bringers of Communism	worshippers of material things, followers of capitalists
deliverers of the possibility to join the Soviet Union	betrayers, “joined the Soviet Union at free will”, now accusing the SU of occupation
self-sacrificing missionaries	people of <i>Usura</i> in the widest sense
à corollary: saviours	a corollary: fascists, Nazis

Figure 2. A possible comparison of metaneeds expressed during the Tallinn riots of 2007.

The significance of the so-to-speak truth value of any metaneed or even a semiotic conception/unit can be increased by objectification or embodiment. Therefore, we should recall the importance of concrete reference before we take a glimpse at the techniques applied in order to enforce even the above-suggested contrasts between the metaneeds of the ‘own and the alien’ socii. When we keep in mind the emergence of the Soviet identity and the related Communist-Soviet consciousness in the events of Tallinn’s Bronze Night, we are witnessing a much more interesting and complex

¹ Baltija 2013 = <http://baltija.eu/news/read/34392>.

objectification of identity elements than just, for example, fetishism which played a decisive role there as well. Also it is exactly about the conditionality of the boundary between the concrete and abstract reference so as that the boundary implies the dynamics between the three main types of objects in the communicative situation.

Indeed, it is important that the community kept in mind here is associated with the project of creating the Soviet Man that was initiated at the beginning of the 20th century, while the Russian nation simply happened to populate it as its first raw material. As we know, the Soviet Man was necessary for inhabiting the new state order, the Soviet Union. This was about a completely novel organizational and semiotic reality, and its semiotic management was quite cleverly united with offering people a new physical reality – for example, by the means of massive translocation of diverse kinds. In this sense, it is logical that for example foreign workers who immigrated to Estonia did not enter the Estonian cultural space or a Finno-Ugric community, but the Baltics or *Pribaltika* as such. In that conditionally and also experientially *new space* it was easier and simpler to operate semiotically proceeding from a state of *tabula rasa* filled and arranged by the Soviet order. Essentially, that meant organizing of communicative situations, relevant environments and their elements according to centrally delivered Party instructions. For the following generations of the Soviet Man the Soviet metaneeds, significant environments and evaluation standards became even more natural, since borders between primary and secondary groups lost their meaning and significance (this is well exemplified by Pavel Morozov's case and the relevant ideological and moralising discourse). Likewise it is logical that in the course of the naturalization process of the Soviet semiotic reality also the Soviet physical space, including '*Pribaltika*', became natural and *own* for the Soviet Man. Therefore it is natural that the collapse of the Soviet Union was, for the Soviet Man, truly a 'geopolitical catastrophe' as Putin has put it. Re-gaining of independence of small states occupied by the Soviet Union was a semiotic and cultural collapse for the Soviets, and it brought along a need for extensive re-identification in a situation that took them from the socioculturally dominant position to belonging to a minority group in a small state. Geopolitical re-positioning, break in identity discourse, and collapse of the semiotic reality were factors in the light of which it is easier to understand unilateral semiotization, and even the construction, of types of objects in communicative situations; these were factors via which the social and the cultural environments became defined and used both physically and semiotically in radical manners.

In the case of our example, the 'positive values' of the Soviets were inflated into the Bronze Soldier, and there is an interesting parallel for such canalization of cultural metaneeds (in Maslow's terms). It is an almost perfect example of condensing descriptions into a proper name entity, and illustrates the creation of impossible

objects on the other hand, while leading us back to principles of practise ascribed to certain Native American tribes. According to Eva Lips (a surprisingly forgotten cultural analyst), amongst some of the First Nations there has been the phenomenon of ‘temporary holiness’:

The religious primordial matter does not reside in all things or beings, but only in some, and does not do this at all times either. For that, I have put into use the notion of ‘temporarily sacred’. This can be revealed so that a starving Indian wondering around stands foot at a rock and complains his misery, asking for help, from that rock as his god; or he may even turn in pray to his hunting companion, his dog – but as soon as the misery is past, both the rock and the dog turn again into ordinary objects and lose their magical powers. These objects are not magical by their nature, but it is the prayer of a human that makes them sacred temporarily. Neill writes that “whenever a Dakota finds himself in spiritual misfortune, wants to escape either from real or imagined trouble, he would find for himself a round rock graspable for him by weight, puts it into a place free of grass and bushes, paints it red, offers it feathers and prays to it for help. After the ceremony has ended, the rock would not be treated with such respect any more. If any guest would want to have the rock for himself, he would get it.” (Lips 1963: 118; my translation – AR).

The same also happened in the Tallinn of the 21st century (it probably is worthwhile to repeat: in the twenty-first century), where the Bronze Soldier was turned into ‘a red rock’ similar to that of the Dakotas (needless to say that the ‘red rock’ thankfully serves here multiple connotations). The physical constituents were first turned into cultural objects in the communicative situation, and then made into social objects. A physical rock and bronze ensemble was so loaded with cultural values that it did not any more take an effort to guide its status from the originally physical, through the cultural, into a social object (as often suggested in Estonian daily media in 2007, it was exactly an operation, and it was conducted by and through Putin’s administration). Simultaneously, at the same time the Soviet discourse rearranged communicative situations between the Estonian and the Soviet communities by an exactly opposite procedure with Estonians as former communicative partners. Gradually and swiftly Estonians as social objects in the communicative situations were identified as bearers of specific meanings, values and metaneeds (particularly those associated with the Nazis) – they became cultural objects or mere passive dummies in communication, and after that physical objects. From the Soviet viewpoint it was (and is) logical and natural: the Estonian community was so far from the core of the Soviet realm that there was no overlap of the semiotic realities that could have made it possible to share sign systems necessary for even initializing communication, to say nothing of exchange of information or understanding. Estonians appeared as objects

in the scene on action – this is an example of a most typical semiotic operation that can be noticed in virtually all totalitarian information spaces. Such unilateral semiotization explains how social objects as original partners in communication can quite easily be turned into mere physical objects that must, in the end, be erased from communicative situations, because they are only obstacles in the effort of *organizing* the physical and the semiotic environment. This logic is vividly represented in totalitarian regimes and the shaping of communities by both organizing the ‘reparable’ part of population, and eliminating the hopeless division as in Stalinist and Nazi repressions and mass executions.

So once again the identity of the Soviets in Estonia became defined through distinctive Communist features. The Bronze Soldier became the dominant of the identity discourse of the Estonian Soviets, and so also communicative situations were solved using the monument. At the same time, the Soviet (and unfortunately also Russian) propaganda was and is turning the Estonian state and Estonians into physical constituents (although loaded with certain negative value systems) of the communicative situation. In this case it refers to the status of an enemy with whom it is not possible to communicate or with whom one just will not communicate, but whom one semiotizes unilaterally. Examples can be drawn from the official discourse (for example, Russia’s unilateral withdrawal of signatures from the Estonian-Russian border treaty already as early as 2005) to daily routine (for example, fire-arms target practise using pictures of high-profile officials of the Estonian state in the Nashi Seliger camps). And yet we can see that in some years the whole issue around the Bronze Soldier seems to have faded and the status of the monument seems to have receded to its prior state - it seems to have abandoned its status as a social object and has been transformed into a cultural one. According to the opposite logic of turning a physical object into a social one, it seems that the Bronze Soldier may, in time, even give up its status as a cultural object in favour of that of a simple artifact or physical object in the Tallinn military cemetery – similarly to the way of the transition of a Dakota’s red rock described by Lips. Of course, this superficial conclusion does not mean that the final reference of the monument as a token in a cemetery would be the concrete one in the sense of falling into the category of mere physical objects. At the same time this option might be at least imagined, if one thought of future generations brought up in Estonia (again, we have to repeat that the same mechanism might apply for several states previously under the influence of the Soviet rule – e.g., the Communist memorials in the Memento Park at the city of Budapest).

The descriptive and explanatory discourse offered to the Estonian Soviets by the Russian language media was efficiently turned into nominative discourse (for example, a virtual equationmark drawn between ‘Estonians’ and ‘fascists’ by virtue

of which Estonians became a condensed signifier of specific descriptions and characteristics), which always helps to explain the world in fairly primitive and simple ways. Following the message of the Putinized media, Kripke's "man over there with champagne" reappeared: it did not matter for a Soviet whether or not Estonians (Poles, Latvians, etc.) in fact supported the Nazi mentality, for if they had moved a Soviet symbol (e.g., the Bronze Soldier), they consequently had to be holding a glass full of Fascism. During this process, names became condensed containers of descriptions, or designators in Kripke's terms. After these designators have been used enough and long enough, they become legitimized and obtain the status of proper names – this is an extremely widespread practise of totalitarian regimes in their manipulations with their population (see, for example, words or descriptive names such as 'kulak', 'Jew', 'Nazi', 'capitalist', 'imperialist'). Totalitarianism refers to not only political regimes, but also culturally and religiously rigid systems. Also, political totalitarianism can mingle with other areas of sociocultural systems, for example, identity discourse. When discussing our example of discursive practise (Figure 2) with Gellner's above-mentioned logical possibilities for identification as categorizing the alien or the hostile, we can see how originally so-to-speak neutral definitions are turned into designators. Or, in other words, the semantic field of names and namings that are ideologically loaded with descriptions changes, and once again it is proved that denotation is nothing but the most accepted connotation: for example, 'Estonian' in the context of the above-described contemporary Soviet-Putinist discourse is a collective name used to refer to a people with specific negative characteristics, representing certain negative metaneeds.

Continuity of metaneeds and semiotic management of communicative situations

All the above-mentioned oppositions of metaneeds were and are also carefully taught to those called 'useful idiots'. This process of education has deep historical roots and is by no means casual or episodic. Conceptions of good and evil, virtue and sin, humanity and inhumanity, the spiritual and the material and all the relevant paradigms of metaneeds are shaped in the course of many decades. Even if seemingly new paradigms are formed, it usually means the transformation of the existing ones and mostly cosmetic changes. Even though most ideas about the creation of a New Man have associated the new level of being with discarding the past, they have actually always been based on a deep-rooted historical mentality of peoples and people. The manufacturing of the Soviet Man is no exception, and has been associated with the Russian Orthodox mentality: as claimed by several authors (for example,

Berdyayev 1937, Levin 1988), the essence and ultimate mission of the Soviets were derived from the key aspects of Russian Orthodox faith. The latter were defined and discussed by, for example, Pavel Novgorodtsev (1923) as follows: contemplation (*созерцание*), humility (*смирение*), spiritual simplicity, delight in God, the need for external expression of religious feeling, and expectancy of the Heavenly Kingdom.

A similar treatment of the Russian Orthodox faith that allows seeing the transfer of the so-called macrosignifieds (on this term, see Danesi and Perron 1999) from religious thought into Communist ideology, views the mystical aspect and power of the Russian Orthodox Church as the closest to the *source* which reveals the mission of the so-called Russian spirit or soul (see, e.g., Zenkovski 1923). Apparently, the essence of the saviour mission was transferred and used in Communist ideology, just as the so-to-speak minor nuances and culture traits of orthodoxy found exploitation there – for example, the transformation of the icon corner into the ‘Red Corner’, religious processions into parades, Orthodox pennants into revolutionary pennants and slogans, and so forth.

Alongside with material assets and cultural traits that were brought from Orthodoxy and Czarism into Communism, another feature is common to both the Russian Orthodox and the Soviet mentalities – this concerns the immateriality of the ultimate essence and true being of humans: higher existence and the meaning of life, so to speak, do not lie in the ordinary environment, in consumer culture and (mundane) things. Rather, the aim and end of human existence is to serve a higher institution and the future, while the individual need not ever see that future or institution oneself: the question is one of faith. The individual is subject to fulfilling a role in the community, and it is the latter that finally reaches the promised future. The Orthodox man serves God with the goal of arriving in Paradise where all things mundane lose their meaning and all that remains are the immaterial eternal values. Obviously, the same logic of explaining daily routine and the futility of everyday life hardships was carried into Communist ideology. Similarly, it was relatively easy to bring a large *socium* to serve a communist Leader; it was even less complicated due to the long Czarist history of the Russian nation. A life-long commitment to the Leader and the Party went hand-in-hand with understanding self-sacrificing efforts in terms of work and living in extremely undemanding primitive conditions – all exertion was explained through the prism of the community and being convinced in the bright Communist future of the Soviet Man and eventually the whole world. The Soviet culture of poverty (this should be understood as a term) and stealing is can be explained quite straightforwardly, if we keep in mind that the mundane material welfare was so insignificant and the meaning of life was elucidated through sacred categories and spiritual metaneeds. The transfer from the Russian Orthodox mentality in combination with the Czarist paradigm to Soviet ideology and the formation

of a Soviet sociocultural space followed routine symbol management (for the relevant semiotic mechanism, see Ruesch 1972: 277–298). After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the creation of the presidential Russia was just as easy due to a flashback to the pre-Soviet era, and the formation of the Putinized Russia pursued the binding of all three previous major paradigms (the Orthodox, the Czarist, and the Soviet) of making sense of the world.

It is important to pay attention to the duration of the process of creating the New Man that has been long-lasting, and is still going on – in Russia, for example, in the forging of the so-called Putin-generation. Likewise, it is imperative to understand that the semiotic techniques used to design the brains of yet another New Man provide clues for understanding such guidelines for making sense of the world that are based on a paradoxically quite uncontroversial combination of the rational and the mystical (or the mythical). Following Pareto, it makes sense to say that a member of the ‘Putin generation’ rationalizes the world mystically, and that the seemingly irrational explanation of the world is, in fact rational for such a community, keeping in mind also the pragmatic dimension of intelligence. This is possible by (a) effective manipulation of the three types of objects mentioned above in communicative situations, together with (b) skilful operating with historical metaneeds and macro-signifieds, and (c) actual daily symbol management (producing, using, marketing, degrading symbols). These three major facets of shaping and maintaining contemporary worldview in Russia have led to the creation of a specific (yet not unique) sociocultural reality which might, at a superficial glance, seem to be composed of so-called impossible objects and constructs.

Yet what else are we to call a sociocultural system guided by a national leader who is idealized and idolized by extremely diverse social target groups such as, for example, heterosexual teenagers, homosexuals (it must be stressed that sexuality is not insignificant in this case), retired people, animal rights defenders, and so on. One might just recall reports – and it is significant that these reports are always illustrated – on Putin’s activities such as shooting a tiger with tranquillizer, riding a tricycle at a communion of bikers, riding a horse half-naked with a shotgun, applying a tracking device to a polar bear, hugging a puppy and a baby, freeing a leopard to the wilderness, waving from a military jet plane, and so on and so on (on and on also in time). According to a common sociological truth, in a situation labelled as a culture change brought along by rapid transformation of the societal structure and economy, the cult of a leader is facilitated. This is supported by an identity discourse largely based on the sharpening of an opposition between the own and the alien, explained through good and evil, the own and the hostile and other similar meta-needs and evaluative standards. Kripke’s ‘man over there with the champagne in his glass’ comes into play again – the leader is a leader, be s/he holding a gun, a puppy, or a tricycle, and there is no logical inconsistency from the viewpoint of possibly

inconsistent subcultural groups until they belong to the same suprasystem. After a common ground has been found (or founded), it is not too difficult to manufacture a new identity discourse on which to build a New Man who will eventually discard his original sociocultural paradigm. The cultivation of identity through envisaging 'others' and 'enemies' is a plain and widespread technique, it is even possible to maintain that "[...] identification is often most consequential as the categorisation of others, rather than as self-identification" (Jenkins 2008: 15).

Categorization helps to raise a community's cohesion most effectively through opposition, and the logical end-point of that opposition is the division of people, communities, states or other social units into 'own' and 'enemies'. One of the most curious results in the perception of the surrounding as a hostile environment is the Putinized Russians' awareness of Estonia as one of Russia's most dangerous enemies – in 2007 even the leading one, when, according to the Levada Center, Estonia topped the list of Russia's enemies at 60%². Of course, on the other hand, the Putin administration's Russian identity discourse has had to focus on internal consolidation, and this has led to results very similar to what is known from the era of the Nazi and Soviet attempts to create a new and better generation for a new regime. Those results range from adoration of Putin in poetry and songs (probably the most famous of them being "The One Like Putin" by the group Singing Together) to the organization of a mass marriage of members of the Nashi establishment, and arranging their mass wedding and mass copulation in tents on river boats in 2007.

Such tendencies are interesting, even for the mere reason of representing specific metaneeds that have been openly and formally condemned ever since the Nuremberg Trials. Yet the nationalist and chauvinist ideologies that prevailed in the world in the early 20th century are looming everywhere at the beginning of the twenty first century as well. Besides Russia, some of the most colourful examples of such metaneeds and identity construction are North Korea, Belarus, Turkmenistan. The latter is one of the most noticeable regimes even nowadays, not to talk about the period of Turkmenbashi's ("Head of all Turkmens") rule when Saparmurat Atayevich Niyazov assumed the position of the leader of Turkmens and replaced the existing cultural core units of the identity discourse with those chosen at his own free will, for example, his pseudoreligious *Ruhnama*. Besides such quite extreme cases, a similar direction seems to have been chosen by several European countries whose leaders have claimed the failure of multiculturalism (in 2012, for example, Germany, UK).

It is obvious that these – although negatively – exciting examples and trends touch upon a tremendously wide range of issues and affect all modes of human and

² Golov, A. 2007. *Дружественные и недружественные страны для россиян*. <http://www.levada.ru/press/2007053003.html>. Retrieved 23.02.2014.

societal life. Likewise, they have been – and are – subject to extensive metalevel discussions; while the present article is by no means trying to summarize these cultural and metacultural reflections as a holistic presentation. To a certain extent, the discussion in the present article is limited by actual evidence and illustrative material of the Bronze Night as extremely limited and mostly audiovisual. The relevant self-identification, exclamations of identity, reasoning of conduct in openly expressed form are virtually not to be found in any of the written sources. At the same time the case was about events that are not possible to reinstate or reconstruct as evidence based on what actually took place in the streets (see Liiv 2007), as the acts of looting were backed up with meaning only retrospectively. For this reason, the evidence matter of the article was restricted, while one of its main goals was to disclose a certain logic of semiosis and communication that is relatively simple and easy to generate, relying on connections between primary needs and metaneeds, primary groups and secondary groups, abstract referents and concrete referents, sensing the physical and the semiotic reality so as all these connections meet and merge in the types of objects in communicative situations.

Our interest here was a little less pretentious: how is it primarily technically possible, and how is it so easily possible, to create phenomena that we can call impossible sociocultural objects (let us remind of the so-called Penrose triangle)? One way to explain this is exactly through manipulation with different types of objects in communicative situations, as this manipulation is eventually based on the legitimization of specific metaneeds.

The case in point is pretty much opposite to Lotman's and Uspenskij's treatment of objects and names. They dealt with proper names as signifiers that have no immanent connection with the objects they stand for, also, names are not characterized by differential features. On the other hand, if we think about the conception of macrosignifieds, we can see that there is *something* that unites similar ideologies, names and objects in dissimilar times and places (for example, *Hitlerjugend* --- Young Pioneers --- *Nashi/Putinjugend*; Arian Man --- Communist --- Nashist; Third Reich --- Heavenly Kingdom --- bright Communist future --- a proud and mighty Russia of the future). Now the fact of bearing a given name becomes a *characteristic*, and a characteristic is already a distinctive feature of the given object. Therefore, names indeed *can* be used in the actual comparison of objects and phenomena. Naturally, at this point we keep in mind not only the linguistic etymology of names and proper names, but also the sociocultural etymology of them. And naturally, the issue is not only about the few vivid examples – that simultaneously are also typical – that were given, but rather concerns considerably broader developments (for example, the so-called Arab Spring, the events in North Africa in and since the 2010s).

The sociocultural etymology of names for phenomena and things is in direct connection with the categorization of objects into different types in communicative situations. Communicative situations that occur in totalitarian information spaces form telling examples of unilateral semiotization of the world. Unilateral semiotization, in turn, makes it quite easy to manipulate the status of objects around us, since information involved in such communicative situations is principally indisputable. In the above examples we saw how a physical object (the Bronze Soldier) that may or may not — it depends on one's knowledge of history and personal connection with the events of WWII — take the role of the cultural object, was so overloaded with metaneeds that it did not even assume the function of forming a space for action (for example, mass demonstrations and speeches held at the monument). Rather, it was turned into a social object and an actor in communication; not only did the monument symbolize cultural values and historical events (at this point it is irrelevant whether or how the latter actually occurred), but it was also turned into an active agent (which is why its physical relocation obtains particularly interesting connotations). In Parsonian terms, the situational elements obtained specific meanings, turned into cultural symbols for social selves and started to mediate communication between intracultural (in this case, Soviet) agents and intercultural agents (in this case, between Estonians and Soviets, the European Union and the Putinized Russia). For Parsons, as suitably also for us, this is the point we should principally be able to talk about the origin of culture (a post-Soviet Communist culture, a novel Putin-cult(ure)).

On the other hand, we saw that the case of the Bronze Soldier was not connected with the birth of a new culture, but the whole event the result of a centuries-long tradition of principles of making sense of the world and an established network of macrosignifieds that made possible the Russian Revolution, the creation of the Soviet Union, the concept of the World Revolution, the transition of Russia into a sovereign democratic state, and the re-introduction of a totalitarian regime at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In a semiotic community with a common paradigm of macrosignifieds, it is relatively easy to regulate the semiotic (and other) behaviour, to administer the system of symbols, and to alternate the statuses of objects. In totalitarian regimes (as already stressed, our examples of the Soviet Union and the Putinized Russia are but brief illustrations for developments all over the world), symbol and reality management is easier, since the semiotic reality of people is extremely unified and equalized. This holds also for objects forming communicative situations – just as it is relatively simple to transfer a physical object into a social one, it does not take much to make a social object into a cultural object (for example, Stalin, Hitler, Turkmenbashi or Putin seem as not so much social beings, but rather as carriers of values, goals, meanings). Although the cultural objects of

the communicative situation seem less active or even passive in comparison with the social objects, they possess a clearly higher potential of embodying and transmitting meanings (and also macrosignifieds) in both time and space; cultural objects can be activated, certain meanings and even cultural themes can be switched on by the use of cultural objects. Cultural objects, in turn, may be embodied and turned into physical objects; being either a cultural or a physical object depends on knowledge and intentions of social objects (for example, whether Lenin's mausoleum and his body are semiotically loaded units or just any objects). It is noteworthy that the above-described examples can be met in contemporary discourse as well, concerning alternative social and cultural circumstances. We can recall the events in Ukraine and accusation of 'Ukrainian nationalists' by Putin, Sergei Lavrov and other officials in these events³.

Summary

Totalitarian information spaces are extremely integrated, which is why it is not difficult to alternate the statuses of objects, as well as to integrate potentially very diverse social groups into a holistic society through a leader or a sociocultural hero. A vicious circle is quickly formed, for due to being a culturally loaded social object, the leader gets access to easy manipulation of semiotic reality and the social groups forming the given socium. Such socii, although being internally very easily manageable, have a very strong identity pattern and a univocal information space, and are interculturally and internationally extremely rigid. Totalitarian information spaces offer their members simple and strong identification discourses, they offer easy and unequivocal semiotization of the surrounding world, as well as set patterns for the creation, understanding and using communicative situations. Thus, totalitarian regimes are easy to live in as regards the daily routine of making sense of the world and other semiotic behaviour, and they can be attractive for this easiness as well – also in terms of the semiotic life of its members. Therefore, there is no paradox between the popularity of totalitariness and condemning it; nevertheless, as was said in the beginning, we are living in an interesting time to witness the rise of popularity of ideas and ideologies leading inevitably to conflicts between rather artificially (and easily) created sociocultural systems and communities. At the same time, the semiotic and non-semiotic simplicity of the creation of such systems and the efficiency

³ RIA Novosti 2014. Putin Blames Ukrainian Nationalists for Crimea Secession. <http://en.ria.ru/world/20140318/188547762/Putin-Blames-Ukrainian-Nationalists-for-Crimea-Secession.html>. Retrieved 24.03.2014; also BBC News 2014. Ukraine Crisis: Russia Vows Troops Will Stay. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26414600>.

of managing those systems is a guarantee that this interesting time probably will not end at all.

Above all, it was mentioned that in the context of globalization, the administration of communicative situations, or rather manipulation with people through that administrative activity is a curious phenomenon, and maybe it can only be explained by informational insularization that occurs in parallel with globalization. It seems that such explanatory logic is valid, finding especially vivid proof in the shape of totalitarian – thereby dissimilarly totalitarian – societal organizations.

At the same time, we can notice how contradiction, or at least paradox, between globalization and semiotic insularization in the technical, and possibly also other aspects vanishes. This nuance concerns the communicative situation and its components. In case of extremely dense information exchange unprecedented in previous history, such meaningful units get together to an such extent that the mapping of their semantic fields (this means, the formation of meaningful paradigms in the Saussurean sense) shifts from the arbitrary (in the Saussurean sense) into already almost random, accidental. Saussure's arbitrariness points at the conditional nature of relations between sign systems and the semiotic reality, and the so-to-speak objective reality: relationships between the conceptual world, semiotic devices as sign systems, and 'reality' are principally agreed upon. Yet that negotiability requires from members of the *socium* an understanding that is unified at least to a degree, at least a certain overlap of their perceptual and cognitive universes, for otherwise no communicational possibilities would emerge on either the level of sign systems or on the plane of contents. This stability of signs, sign systems and, thus, also of the semiotic reality is guaranteed by the crystallization of the bond between concepts and sound-images (Saussure 1959: 65–74). In other words, while the relation of the semiotic reality and the surrounding 'objective reality' is arbitrary, it cannot be described as random – this relation has been and is being continually negotiated in the community and is, at least to a certain extent, unified in the socialness of sign systems. Relationships between the semiotic and the 'objective' reality are arbitrary in principle, but they cannot be completely accidental – rather, they are inert, since in the opposite case sociocultural systems would lose their continuity and communicative possibilities between people as/and semiotic subjects would disappear in the end.

In the environment of globalization, the situation is different: meaningful entities (or cultural units or semiotic units) may enter essentially casual cultural spaces (or semiotic spaces or semiospheres) in which they can be (re-)contextualized according to freely chosen manners and principles. Before semiotic globalization takes place as integrative unification of diverse cultural spaces, single and particular, often also discrete meaningful units spread into different cultural spaces. In this sense, separate semiotic communities do not exchange information about one another's

cultural spaces, but borrow and lend liberally chosen semiotic units that are fitted together with one's own existing sociocultural knowledge on the basis of will, needs and abilities. Or, in other words, such exchange and traffic of semiotic units does, by no means, already refer to the logico-meaningful integration (to use P. Sorokin's concept) of the so-to-speak parent-communities of those units. Instead, such – for example, internet-based – communities have formed of members who have, through essentially unilateral communication, created, firstly for themselves and then for their fellow members, sufficiently filtrated semiotic environments – filtrated enough to consider the latter as fragmented and highly selective as in case of any other principally totalitarian community.

The topic of the communicative situation re-emerges here in connection with the creation of both individual and collective identities: it is fairly easy to construct communicative situations when it is easy (including also maximally arbitrary and even accidental) to operate with the three types of objects forming those situations. In the so-called global(ized) world there have been created extensive possibilities for constructing identity on freely chosen grounds, and the manufacturing of those grounds is even simpler, since at will the status of physical, social, and cultural objects is quite easily changeable (even, for example, game-based virtual communities or very diverse fanatic religious communes and the transfer of their essential conditionality into the physical environment and action). At the same time, in their closedness (in a systems theory sense) such communities are semiotically similar to insular totalitarian regimes in which the meaning of the world and its contents is mostly determined by the system's internal feedback loops. And, simultaneously, there is apparently no controversy in the existence in certain totalitarian regimes of societal groups seemingly distant from one another – it is possible to conjoin them into a united socioculturally closed system by using opportunities to re-play the statuses of diverse objects in the semiotic and physical environment according to the situation at hand. Indeed, it seems that a general condition is the principal preservation of the macrosignifieds and their complexes that form the culture core – in diverse situations and group environments it is simply possible to give them dissimilar forms of expression. In this manner there appear – or rather, are made to appear – such sociocultural objects that in their arbitrariness are, as semiotic constructs, so-called impossible objects that still function in the sense of non-logical conduct as discussed by Pareto. Of these semiotic systems are formed that, in their closedness, are related to neither *other* semiotic realities, nor, often, the physical environment (the case of world-view prevailing over knowledge).

At any rate, in case of such socii (semiotically insularised as totalitarian, subcultural, fragmentary or the similar) it is decisive that it is the concentration and condensation of descriptions into names that can be explanatory for the coordinated

creation of clear-cut (and often also simplistic) frames of metavalues that, in turn, offers community members instructions for semiotizing the world and solving arising communicative situations and situations of semiotization in general.

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Семиотическое управление коммуникативных ситуаций: новые люди и старые методы

Как объяснить существование тоталитарных обществ в свете гегемонистских идеологий, которые были совсем недавно осуждены (нацизм, коммунизм, сталинизм, религиозный радикализм)? Как возникают информационные островки в глобализирующемся мире, где люди живут среди изолированных семиотических реалий? Как это возможно, чтобы массами манипулировали, исходя из рассуждений и политики, осужденных мировым сообществом? Почему люди должны страдать от режимов, типологически подобных тем, которые уничтожили их физическое и семиотическое прошлое? Эти вопросы рассматриваются в статье с целью увидеть логику в управлении семиотических реалий посредством коммуникативных ситуаций, сосредоточиваясь прежде всего на том, как в последних конструируются объекты различного типа. Метапотребности, используемые в конструировании семиотических реалий, указывают на макроозначаемые как элементарные единицы культурного ядра ценностно-ориентированной

структуры. Использование макроозначаемых и умелое манипулирование метапотребностями делают возможным создание новых семиотических видов в закрытых социокультурных системах, которые основаны на односторонней семиотизации окружающего мира и действуют посредством автокоммуникативной обратной связи. Приведенные примеры заимствованы из одного из наиболее сложных экспериментов по созданию Нового Человека и закрытой семиотической реальности – с территории бывшего Советского Союза и сегодняшней путинизированной России.

Kommunikatiivsete situatsioonide semiootiline haldamine: uued inimesed ja vanad meetodid

Kuidas selgitada totalitaarsete kogukondade olemasolu alles üsna hiljuti hukka mõistetud hegemoonsete ideoloogiate (natsismi, kommunismi, stalinismi, radikaalse religioossuse) valguses? Kuidas on võimalik massidega manipuleerida, *lähtudes* taunitavatest mõttekäikudest ja poliitikast? Miks saab inimesi allutada režiimidele, mis tüpoloogiliselt sarnanevad neile, mis hävitasid nende füüsilise ja semiootilise mineviku? Käesolev artikkel tegeleb nende teemadega, püüdes tuvastada loogikat semiootilise reaalsuse haldamises kommunikatiivsete situatsioonide kaudu, keskendudes eelkõige sellele, kuidas viimastes konstrueeritakse erinevat tüüpi objekte. Semiootiliste reaalsuste konstrueerimisel kasutatavad metavajadused osutavad makrotähistatavate kui kultuurituumade elementaarüksuste väärtustepõhisele struktuurile. Makrotähistatavate kasutamine ning oskuslik manipuleerimine metavajadustega muudavad võimalikuks uute *semiootiliste liikide* loomise suletud sotsiokultuurilistes süsteemides, mis põhinevad ümbruse ühepoolsel semiotiseerimisel ning toimivad *autokommunikatiivsete tagasisidesilmuste* kaudu. Toodud *näited tulenevad ühest kõige keerukamast katsest* luua Uut Inimest ning suletud semiootilist reaalsust – varasema Nõukogude Liidu ning tänapäevase putiniseeritud Venemaa territooriumilt.