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Internet Newspaper as a Product of Russian Postmodernism

by

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Abstract

Emergence of digital technologies has caused debates among scholars about what role and impacts the Internet will have in our society. The diversity of positions regards the Internet ranges from the hypothesis that the new medium is just another reinforcement of previous media to a belief that it is a new powerful tool for mass manipulation. This thesis is an attempt to explore some features of the Internet as a postmodernist phenomenon. Using Russian media as a case study, this work seeks to explore the correlations between electronic media and the post-Soviet society. The relevant mass media theories and critical works are reviewed and taken as the foundation of this research. An examination of Russian media is performed on the examples of two periodicals: *Trud* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. Essential criteria of the analysis are functions of the periodicals, their content and methods of representation during the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. The study argues that the Post-Soviet press and particularly Internet newspapers have become a product of Russian postmodernism, which is a combination of Socialist Realism traces and innovative avant-garde trends.

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Introduction

Media has always played a crucial role in running society; the authorities employ the capabilities of mass media to control and manipulate the masses they govern. The interest of media's impact on the masses has been reinforced with the emergence of digital technologies. New technological innovations have allowed for some new effects and have lead to new cultural patterns that are not always acceptable for the government.

As we shall see further, early theories on media performed a direct analysis of media from the viewpoint of content or technological arrangements. Later examinations of scholarly works show that theoreticians have overcome a tendency for perfunctory approaches to the media and have begun associating media with questions of power distribution and ideological issues. Control over people through media is dependent on the medium through which it is performed. Media has long been recognized as an instrument of ruling classes and political leaders to influence the masses. Marxist adherents support this point of view deriving an ideological presence in media functioning (Chandler, URL). Ideological perspective was a core approach of Marxists in the issue of media. Leading theorists of media studies, Noam Chomsky, relates the ideological existence of mass media functions. He believes that mass media is capable of creating a false consciousness to penetrate people's minds and manufacture their consent (Herman and Chomsky, 2).

This study uses the Russian media as a case study. The period of totalitarianism during the Soviet period and its constant control over the state makes Russia a valuable example. The transition from a Communist country to a democratic state occurred during a short period of time, another example of its uniqueness. Being exposed to both the Soviet and post-Soviet eras, I am able to compare both

political situations and their effects on media. In order to place Russian Post-Soviet media within contemporary culture, theories on media communication and postmodernism are discussed in the first chapter. This thesis employs some trends of Marxist thought, specifically emphasis on the prevailing role of media in ideological dissemination. Russia as a case study focuses on the historical development of the media and their importance in governing the state. The inevitable instability and uncertainty of power described by Antonio Gramsci has turned media into “a field of ideological struggle” (Chandler, Hall, URL). Being in the middle of a political arena is a bone of contention and puts post-Soviet media in a difficult situation. Media in Russia, as in any other country, are constantly swinging their strategies towards prevailing ideas. The privileged elite deploy all the capabilities of mass media in order to mislead the masses and consolidate their power. This study will demonstrate how the creations of certain ideas and views favourable to the authorities have spread through media. The abilities of this persuasive medium are powerful enough to make the general population accept the false reality created by government, despite their own natural beliefs.

The second part of the first chapter is devoted to a post-modern theory review. This section will focus on the peculiarities of Russian postmodernism and examine the theory of Jean Baudrillard who introduced the notion of ‘hyperreality’ in connection with the functioning of postmodernist media. Theories of Russian postmodernism will be discussed as well. As we shall see further, Mikhail Epstein, Nadia Mankovskaya and Alexander Genis attempt to demonstrate features of Russian postmodernism. Based on the formula of Alexander Genis: *Russian postmodernism = avant-garde + Socialist Realism* (Genis, 1999), the major characteristics of avant-garde and Socialist Realism will be outlined in order to be

traced in the Post-Soviet media. Positions of Jeffrey Brooks and Katerina Clark will be examined in order to derive features of Socialist Realism in media. The findings of Dominic Strinati will be used to trace evidence of postmodernism on mass communication. These features will be used throughout this thesis to place Russian mass communication and particularly the Internet within Post-modern culture.

Analysis of Russian media as exemplified by *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* will be performed in Chapter 3. The purpose of this analysis is to discover whether the Post-Soviet media, particularly the Internet, manages to evolve into an independent form from its Socialist past and become a product of Russian postmodernism. This chapter will analyze the peculiarities of the Russian media in terms of historical growth and its visual and lexical arrangements. The strategies of information delivery of the Soviet *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* will be analyzed in the section *Mass Media of the Soviet Period*. Features of Socialist Realism, one of the major trends of Russian postmodernism, will be derived from the theories of Jeffrey Brooks and Katerina Clark. The section *Media of the Post Soviet Period* will trace features of postmodernism named by Dominic Strinati. The analysis of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* will be based on such criteria as establishment, original purposes of the periodicals, target audience and visual or lexical representations. The section will describe the similarities and differences of print and online versions of newspapers and their resemblance to the Soviet press. The influences of Socialist Realism will be revealed. The content analysis will provide ample evidence that Internet newspapers are as highly influenced as their print counterparts by innovative avant-garde trends within the historical path of Socialist Realism.

Chapter 1.

Literature Review

In my thesis I will explore the evolution of Russian media as exemplified by *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud*. The emphasis will be on the Soviet ideology-oriented approaches to information delivery and the emergence of the Internet, a medium of postmodernist Russia. My findings are concerned with the appearance and features of postmodernism and possible ways they have affected and predefined the Internet as a medium today. The thesis uses Western research and tests its applicability to Russian media.

I have divided the Literature review into two parts: Mass Media Theory Review and Postmodernist Theory Review. The first section contains a brief review of works on mass media studies. I have examined various angles and points of views on the issues of media and their interaction with society in terms of political, economical and social aspects. Western scholars have made important contributions to media studies so the essential emphasis in this section is on the theories of Marxists such as Althusser, Jacques Lacan and Gramsci; they have examined the relationships between media and its application as an ideological tool. These ideological perspectives are relevant to the Russian media as a state formerly with a totalitarian mode of governing. The views of Harold Innis on the role of media in power distribution are also covered. The emergence of the digital era has also caused some debates among scholars. Besides the Western scholars I will also consider Zasurski's position of understanding the function of technology in Russian society.

The rise of influential mass culture, caused by economic crisis after the collapse of the Soviet regime, entails various postmodernist trends in Russian society. The next section of the review examines the correlation between mass media

and the postmodernist phenomenon in Russia. This part will deal with some theories on postmodernism by Zvereva, Espstein and Baudrillard. I will review various positions from these scholars and find overlaps in their discourses.

Media Theory Review

Modern life incorporates technology into society and disguises it, making its usage as natural as possible. The appearance of the communication medium, as a way to transfer and spread information, does not seem to be an extraordinary event in everyday life. The mass media has a complex function to “amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with values, beliefs, and codes of behaviour” (Herman and Chomsky, 1). This function is often underestimated due to the commonness of mass communication in our lives and the invisibility of the impact it has.

Many scholars devote their time and efforts to study the mass media as a phenomenon from different aspects and points of view. Major approaches, taken by media theorists, concentrate on issues of ideology, technology and the reflection of reality as related and often overlapping notions in communication studies.

Early studies on media tend to perform a direct analysis from the viewpoint of content or technological arrangements. Relation to reality is one of the mandatory stages of any theory, including media studies. Early theorists chose not to dwell on connections with society and its effects, but rather perform a superficial examination of obvious derivations. The appearance of a new medium is often examined in term of its accuracy to reflect reality. The camera was first seen as essentially a recording instrument rather than “an expressive medium in its own right” (Giannetti, 435).

Later scholarly works show that theoreticians have overcome an urge for perfunctory views of the media and have started associating media with questions of power distribution and ideological issues. Daniel Chandler gives credit to Marxists for the first “attempt to theorize media”; however, he notes that they did not push forward the study of media (Chandler, URL). Nevertheless, I find their theories of relating power and mass media fundamental for examining media’s role in society, which is especially relevant to Russia as a case study.

The totalitarian mode of governing in the Soviet Union had to be a well-adjusted mechanism in order to achieve the obedience and simultaneous respect of a large and diverse nation. Mere use of force, which was traditional for feudal or slave-owning systems, is no longer an effective and long-lasting method of ruling. The Soviet system resorted to the power of mass media in order to achieve subordination.

Media has long been recognized as an instrument of the ruling classes to spread their influence. Marxists scholars support derivations of this point of view. According to their classical position, the mass media is used to spread the ideas and views favorable to the ruling classes, or are produced by them, and deny or neutralize alternative possibilities. These proponents extend the power of media from the mere dissemination of ideas to their mental production. Mental production implies that “the class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it” (Chandler, URL).

Marxist theory does not confine the correlation between the elite and media to a pure dependency of the ruling class on the mass media. Soviet government and media had interdependence through their interaction. Clearly, dominating groups of

society rely on media as a tool to impose ideas; at the same time, media chooses to be “locked into the power structure, and consequently as acting largely in tandem with the dominant institutions in society” (Chandler, URL). In accordance with this theory, Soviet media, being caught up by the privileged apparatus, tried to enslave authorities through their medium of power. Daniel Chandler described it as a “tendency to avoid the unpopular and unconventional and to draw on values and assumptions which are most valuable and most widely legitimated” (Chandler, Murdock and Golding, URL).

Theories of Marxists play an important role in examining the Soviet media, as the ideological perspective was a core approach of Marxists in the issue of mass communication. According to their stance, “ideological positions are a function of class positions” and dominant classes determine the prevailing ideology in society (Chandler, URL). However, in terms of ideology, Marxists can be divided into two groups. The first group of traditional Marxists believes that it is possible to overcome ideology “in an effort to reach some essential truth” (Dino, URL). The solution can be seen in economic development for example. The other group tends to think that society cannot escape ideology. One of those adherents is Louis Althusser, a French philosopher, who represents an important break in Marxist theory, particularly when it comes to the notion of ideology. He and his followers think of ideology “in a way more akin to Jacques Lacan, as something that is so much a part of our culture and mental make-up that it actively determines what we commonly refer to as ‘reality’” (Dino, URL).

Doohyun Park in his paper “An Althusserian Reading On Thomas Nashe’s ‘The Unfortunate Traveller’” supports the idea of the indivisibility of society and ideology. Analyzing Althusserian theories he states, “we are constituted as subjects

through ideology". Althusser, as he asserts in his work, does not think of ideology as a creation of the ruling elite. It is "omnipresent; it inheres in every representation of reality and every social practice, and all of these qualities inevitably confirm or naturalize a particular construction of reality" (Park, URL). Steven Green notes that Soviet Marxists used media as an instrument to create a false reality to "disguise a reality of oppression and exploitation" (Green, URL). Writing about Marxist theory, Daniel Chandler refers to ideology as a "false consciousness". In his opinion it is a result of "the emulation of the dominant ideology by those whose interests it does not reflect" (Chandler, URL). Therefore the mass media is in hands of the dominant elite, which uses it to spread the values of the ruling classes. It is interesting to note that Althusser did not accept the position of false consciousness. For him, ideology is seen as "the medium through which we experience the world". He believed in "a determining force" of ideology in its own right (Chandler, Curran, URL). Independently from the role media plays in our lives, many scholars agree with the opinion that exploitation is a concurrent part in the co-existence of classes and is unavoidable.

One of the opponents of the idea of ideology's imminence is Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist thinker. Gramsci's approach to the issue of ideology is akin to Althusserian thinking; he points out that ideology does not depend on an economic situation. Gramsci believes that hegemony, the prevalence of one social group over others is a product of common sense. Barry Burke describes Gramsci's hegemony as "the permeation *throughout* society of an entire system of values, attitudes, beliefs and morality that has the effect of supporting the status quo in power relations" (Burke, URL). He refers to hegemony as an 'organizing principle' that is spread into every area of our every day routine. This predominant

consciousness is absorbed by the population to the extent that it becomes a part of what people generally take as 'common sense'. Burke notes that the process of conscious naturalization flows so smoothly “that the philosophy, culture and morality of the ruling elite come to appear as the natural order of things” (Burke, URL).

In his book *Manufacturing Consent* Chomsky also points out the ability of false consciousness to penetrate people minds'. For Chomsky the elite's domination of mass communication occurs so naturally that media news employees convince themselves that their choice and interpretation of news is objective and based on professional news values. (Herman and Chomsky, 2)

Gramsci's statements echo most of Althusser's beliefs. However, unlike the latter, Gramsci insisted on the uncertainty and instability of power among certain social groups. He believed that power and control should be constantly re-negotiated. His emphasis on struggle can be inferred from the statement that “common sense is not something rigid and immobile, but is continually transforming itself” (Chandler, Gramsci, URL). Fiske, one of the supporters of power renewal, states:

“Consent must be constantly won and rewon, for people's material so experience constantly reminds them of the disadvantages of subordination and thus poses a threat to the dominant class... Hegemony... posits a constant contradiction between ideology and the social experience of the subordinate that makes this interface into an inevitable site of ideological struggle” (Chandler. Fiske, URL)

Similar statements can be found in Stuart Hall's essay “Policing the Crisis”. He refers to media as a servant to the interests of ruling classes and “a field of ideological struggle” (Chandler, Hall, URL). Daniel Chandler believes that the reference [“site of struggle”] is made about mass media. Mass media has become an outlet of opportunity for the ruled classes to alter hegemony. Harold Innis supports the idea of mass media involvement in power distribution. However, his views are

more materialistic. He admits that power is not “an immediate relation among individuals or even groups” and acknowledges the existence of a struggle between classes to dominate. Innis says that

...struggle is socially and technologically mediated by communication media, but the primary function of communication, transportation, production and so on is to transmit information to move and make goods. These technologies and their functions are deployed by competing groups in their struggle for social supremacy. Technologies thus mediate power... (Di Norcia, Innis, 337).

Innis notes that despite the fact that technology plays an important role in social formation, technologies are not the only mediators of social actions. He lists several factors where social supremacy exists: “communication media, other technologies, space and time biases, knowledge and political, religious or economic organization” (Di Norcia, Innis, 1990).

Hegemony has been referred to as the projection of the values of the prevailing classes on numerous occasions. The notion of hegemony conveys the power of representing and imposing ideas in a way that appears natural and obvious to the ruled masses. Therefore, rigid thoughts cannot be taken as ideological. Nevertheless, enforcement of any dogma always carries with it complex strategies for the ruling classes.

The complexity of ruling, while simultaneously avoiding social upheaval, has been addressed by media scholars as a challenging function of the elite involved in mass communication. One of the most outstanding figures on media studies, Noam Chomsky, who is considered to be one of “the most important intellectuals today” (Bonnar, URL) relates the issue of ideology to the current notion of democracy and methods of achieving it. Chomsky believes in the crucial role of media in the organization of a state. He regards media as a powerful tool through which

authorities are able to reach the masses and to impose ideological values without the masses noticing. Chomsky, who examined the theories of Walter Lippmann, pointed out Lippmann's classification of people. The first group consists of privileged people who carry out the executive function; they do the thinking and planning and understand the common interests. The other group, the ruled masses, are referred to as "the bewildered herd" (Chomsky, 2002, 16). Unlike the first group, the governed do not have to carry out special duties; however, they have "the right to consent, but nothing more than that". According to Chomsky, the population does not play the role of "participants", but that of "spectators". He says, "the general population must be excluded entirely from the economic arena, where what happens in society is largely determined. Here the public is to have no role, according to the prevailing democratic theory (Chomsky, 1999, URL)." Despite the fact, that "the bewildered herd" is not assigned executive duties, supporting Lippmann, Chomsky sees a function for the masses in a democracy. Masses are allowed to elect their leaders, but once this is done they are "supposed to sink back and become spectators of action" again. This structure is a properly functioning democracy as indicated by Chomsky (Chomsky, 2002, 16).

The Soviet Union is an example of a state where authorities attempt to mask absolute control over the masses through mass communication functioning. As follows from Chomsky's theories, a real democratic state should be based on the principle of the controlled masses' consent. Chomsky tries to distinguish a democratic regime from a non-democratic one by naming the strategy of persuasion as a major approach in manipulating masses and "manufacturing consent" (Herman and Chomsky, 1). Indeed, contemporary methods used by Russian authorities to govern people are radically different from Russia's previous historical experiences.

The masses are not being dictated to or forcibly coerced anymore. Thus Russian media has become one of the main propaganda tools of the state and is being widely used by the government to achieve their goals and manipulate the masses.

Propaganda has a crucial role in the history of the Soviet Union. The importance of propaganda is one of the main focuses of media studies. For Chomsky “propaganda is to a democracy what the bludgeon is to a totalitarian state” (Chomsky, 2002, 20). Various media scholars admit that dissemination of propaganda is not an easy task. Chomsky states that Edward Bernays sees “the conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses” as an “important element in a democratic society.” The intelligent minorities, or ruling elite, have to carry out this essential task by making use of propaganda constantly and regularly. Continuous and systematic propaganda application is necessary, because they [the ruling elite] alone “understand the mental processes and social patterns of the masses” and can “pull the wires which control the public mind.” According to Chomsky, this is why the masses have consented to having “free competition to be organized by leadership and propaganda”. Chomsky says that “propaganda provides the leadership with a mechanism” and citing Bernays states that propaganda helps “to mould the mind of the masses” and “they will throw their newly gained strength in the desired direction”. This process is referred to by Bernays as “engineering consent” and considered to be the “essence of the democratic process” (Chomsky, Bernays, 1999, URL).

Non-democratic states did not allow the masses to participate in political issues. For example, pre-revolutionary Russia never gave peasants an opportunity to choose government or change authorities. The Tsarist regime tried to consolidate its

power through the open use of force and direct praises of the ruling classes¹. Illiteracy in the target audience and immature technology dictated propaganda's forms in feudal Russia. Uneducated and extremely religious peasants were easily subjected to the propaganda activities of the church, which was supported by the monarchy². However, the establishment of the Soviet regime did not mark the beginning of an absolute freedom of choice for the masses. The Communist Party created a dictatorship but in a less obvious way, possible with the introduction of new technologies.

With industrialization and the development of media, a new concept for a possible democracy occurred; the increased accessibility of media for the masses forced authorities to review their ruling strategies. Media scholars continue to attempt to find new perspective for power analysis. Michel Foucault has developed theories on "how power might be exercised in and through the mass media". He offers a new approach to the issue of power. Foucault does not recognize "the simple hierarchical approach". In his understanding, "power comes from below" and he rejects "binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled". For Foucault the power is "dispersed through the network of relationships which make up society and are based on discourse".

Michel Foucault was the first to apply semiotics to the study of how socialism shapes our world and how discourse organizes and regulates knowledge. He believes that there is nothing neutral about language. "Discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance

¹ Peter The Great opened his famous "window to the West" to Russian peasants. His reign is characterized by violence. The boyars were forced to accept a new life style (including smoking tobacco, drinking coffee, shaving beards and others) as proper since it had been imposed by the Tsar (Tolstoy, URL).

² Canonization of monarchs easily reinforced the power of the ruling elite (History of Russia, URL).

and a starting point for an opposing strategy” (Green, Foucault. URL). Foucault sees history as a fiction; therefore the present is fictional too. He asserts, “if we claim to know the present, it can only be power that is causing us to apply the absolute of knowledge to a fictional present”.

For Foucault, knowledge is a product of power. He relates the issue of the individual discourse to the power-knowledge connection. According to his stance this relationship creates a perceived “truth” (Green, Foucault. URL). The humility of the masses and an acceptance of this “truth” are the key factors of the ideal democratic society. Now media has a role of “interpreting and making sense of the world to the mass public”. Curran compares this new role of media to the role of the Church. Mass communication amplifies systems of representation to legitimize the social system (Curran, 1982).

As we can see scholars pay more attention to media per se, whereas there are some debates over the medium itself. Political and technological isolation (Gerovitch, 12) from the West in the past made Post-Soviet Russia cautious when it encountered such technological innovations as the Internet. Involvement of technology in the information delivery process embodies instability in control over the masses, which is of crucial significance to media of a former totalitarian state. Harold Innis emphasized the role of the medium. He believed in the importance of the medium and according to him it has “an important role on the dissemination of knowledge over space and over time” (Innis, 33). Innis compares the appearance of a new medium to the original cause of a new civilization (Innis, 34). He conducted a historical analysis of relationships between mediums and social situations and stated that a medium can be responsible for the appearance of states and civilizations. In accordance with Vincent Di Norcia, who analyzed the theories of Innis, he believes

that technological progress is one of the reasons for social upheaval. Innis's suggestion is that "innovations in communications media and increases in the quantity and speed of information flow were destabilizing". At the same time, Innis does not imply social progress by "mechanization of communication". He rather refers to media as a social force, not necessarily progressive (Di Norcia, Innis, 1990).

Marshall McLuhan, one of the supporters of Innis's theories, has become well known for his controversial work *Understanding Media*. McLuhan develops ideas on the importance of a medium to the extent that "the medium is the message" itself. For McLuhan the content is less important; it is "the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action" (McLuhan, 9). If we apply this to current technology, the emergence of the Internet in this case, we can assume that information received from printed books and information in a form of hypertext will have different effects on the audience as it has been delivered in different ways. As we shall see further, the analysis of online *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* reveals that the Internet versions of both periodicals repeats the content of their print counterparts. However, online advantages such as interactivity and the constant update of news help to involve the audience in a process of reading. Forums, chat rooms, and guest books have become a venue for users to express their own opinions and discuss articles and relevant information. The medium [the Internet] has created an atmosphere of free speech and the independence of ideas.

Liberation of information delivery allowed an unlimited flow of data into cyberspace, which consequently caused some negativity among readers. Henry Jenkins describes the uncertainty of teachers while evaluating data from the Internet (Jenkins, 1999). The staff, used to conventional textbooks and familiar with the reputation of the Internet as a "world without gatekeepers" is intimidated when

trusting knowledge gained from the Internet. As we can see, the perception of the computer as a game device has played a crucial role in recognizing the information it supplies. Deriving from this, we can assert that media does depend on the medium. Jenkins believed that “technology always emerges within a social and cultural context that constrains or facilitates its designer’s goals” (Jenkins, 1999).

Lewis H.Lapham says that McLuhan’s theories were not always welcome. Many scholars disagree with the famous statement of McLuhan: “Medium is the message” (McLuhan, 1964). Similarly, Carla Hesse, believes that “recognizing that the book is a medium does not necessarily imply that its material form fully determines its function or status”. Print culture is “not inevitable historical consequences of the invention of printing... but rather, the cumulative result of particular social and political choices made by given societies at given moment”. As a derivation, Hesse sees “interactive technologies” not as products of technologies “but of our social and cultural interactions with them” (Jenkins, Hesse, 1999). The emergence of the Internet in Russia is a product of a social struggle between ideology and financial crisis, which the Soviet Union was doomed to encounter. Decades of political change and Russian media evolution resulted in the inclusion of the World Wide Web within Post-Soviet communication. The findings of this research reveal Russian periodicals online as phenomena that have been shaped not only by technological advances of the state but by social, political and economic aspects of the past.

McLuhan also discusses the impact of technology on media from another perspective. He suggests the definition of media as “the extensions of man” and the “extensions of the nervous system” (McLuhan, 3). His theories are based on the integration of technology into our lives. McLuhan states that “slow movement

insured that the reactions were delayed for considerable periods of time. Today the action and the reaction occur almost at the same time” (McLuhan, 4). The essential basis of his theory is the possibility of rapid communication through technology, i.e. electric media. Benjamin Symes points out this technological rapidity “echoes the speed of senses” (Symes, URL). Sherry Turkle also argues in favour of a perception theory. She says that a computer is a “second self” and akin to McLuhan she believes that it is “an extension of our perception of our own identity, a vehicle for rethinking our relations with the world, and a metaphor for thinking about human intelligence” (Jenkins, Turkle, 1999).

The works of McLuhan have informed *Generation P*, a book on Russian media by Viktor Pelevin. It is the fictional story about the power of media in Post-Soviet society and a reflection of the pervasive influence of mass communication on perceptions of reality. Having survived the economic crisis and experienced traumatic transition from a totalitarian state to the post-Soviet regime, Russian society followed an anti-Communist institution. Financially independent media set a goal to conquer the audience by creating a false reality based on advertisements and myths about the government. The representation of materials with the help of technology has become realistic to the point where people stop distinguishing the false from the real. Despite its fictional character *Generation P* is a work precisely reflecting the reaction of Russian people to the political and economic situation of the country. It shows how easily media can affect an audience’s perception especially if it [perception] has been weakened by political upheavals. Pelevin believes that technology is capable of distorting reality and even its diluting it (Pelevin, URL).

Technological advances such as telephone, television and the Internet have brought us ways to “contact and converse with those who inhabit the same physical

space” (Symes, URL). The speed of electronic media has created what McLuhan refers to as a “global village” (McLuhan, 4). In other words, the “global village” manages to bring people together via technology. It seems appropriate in today’s situation, when the appearance of the World Wide Web makes communication possible over any space. Henry Jenkins says, “the Internet allows us to maintain contact with those we’ve left behind or to build new friendships and join new communities, despite the unmooring of our ties to geographically local communities” (Jenkins, 1999).

The second half of 1980s and beginning of 1990s are marked by an increased interests by scholars from various social and humanitarian studies in the role of mass communication in our society. Media has become not only a condition, but also an environment and cultural idol constantly affecting society and the whole system of the senses and imagination of each individual. Questions of electronic media and their interaction with reality have been raised by interdisciplinary studies. Having reviewed previous theoretical approaches to mass media and emphasis on their importance in the ideology dissemination process, it becomes clear why one of the essential issues remains the issue of the authorities’ relaxation of control in regards to the appearance of the Internet.

In 1991 a group of scientists created the World Wide Web³. Being a relatively new phenomenon, the Internet has rapidly earned a reputation as a medium

³ Global computer network appeared as a result of technological emulation between USSR and USA. The beginning of this conflict started in 1957 when Soviet scientists managed to send Sputnik to space. USA considered this campaign as a serious challenge to their science. After decades of hard work and discoveries, nearly a thousand of computers were connected into a small network. However, the introduction of WWW protocol in 1991 is considered to be the official emergence of the Internet (Internet in the World, URL)

promising freedom of speech and carrying the notion of real democracy. Amy Bruckman defines cyberspace as a chaotic and non-polished place. She writes:

Cyberspace is not Disneyland. It's not a polished, perfect place built by professional designers for public to obediently wait on line to passively experience it. It's more like a finger-painting party. Everyone is making things, there's paint everywhere, and most work only a parent would love (Jenkins, Bruckman, 1999).

People do not look at computers as information storage devices and calculation machines; they finally have become "a medium of communication, education, and entertainment" (Jenkins, 1999).

So-called technophobia creates the opposite opinions in academic circles. Technology is seen as an evil and anti-human mechanism "destroying more organic pre-technological cultures" (Jenkins, 1999). The adherents of these theories deny the Internet as a method of freedom of expression. They view such technology as a better disguised method of controlling the masses and as "the instrumentation of surveillance, power, and social control, rather than as a toolkit for social and political transformation" (Jenkins, 1999). Gibson writes about the danger of digital media, which is capable of "divorcing human intelligence from the body, of isolating the self from real-life experience, and of transforming human culture into data" (Jenkins, Gibson, 1999). At the same time George Grant believes that it is in human hands to form our present. He writes that we are born in an historical situation with "certain objective technological facts". According to him "it is up to human beings in their freedom to meet that situation and shape it with their 'values' and their 'ideas'" (Grant, 1976).

Russia as a state with a strict totalitarian past is still concerned about the issue of media control. In his interview with Martin Jacques, Stuart Hall states that the Internet, as a new technological invention, is more an information source than a

source of ideas. According to him this source cannot be controlled and regulated in traditional ways (Jacques, URL). The current legislation of the Russian Federation has been applicable to traditional mass media only. The Russian Information Policy Committee states that any medium must be regulated based on its specific characteristics⁴. The Internet does not have the characteristics upon which these regulations are based. In contrast, its unique features such as openness, independence from scarce spectrum and relative freedom from a publisher, makes regulation of the Internet a challenging task for government⁵. Kurt Wimmer in his memorandum on Russian Internet regulation admits that “an attempt to apply media regulations to the Internet would require hundreds of thousands of creators of Web sites to register with the government and comply with complex regulations”. Obviously such a policy would discourage creation of web pages in Russian for Russian citizens. In addition to that, Wimmer believes that the regulation “would prove to be futile and counterproductive”, since the accessibility of the Internet allows the usage of Web pages created in Europe or the United States (Wimmer, URL).

However, Stuart Hall believes this is the temporary stage of “maximum freedom” when an ideal supervision mechanism has yet to be figured out. Hall states that our understanding of cyber democracy is based on relative values of what we believe freedom is. He says,

At the moment it's a kind of illusion that the Internet is going to allow us to escape from the determinance of politics and power and economic life and the gendering of social relations and race and ethnicity. These things already shape who does and who doesn't have access to what, and they're going to give rise to forms of structuring and regulation which will, to some extent, constrain what can and can't be said on the Internet (Jacques, URL).

⁴ TV and radio broadcasting are to be licensed due to the limited spectrum and possible signal interference problems (Wimmer, URL).

⁵ Some traditional media laws are applicable to the Internet in Russia. Such as: copyright and intellectual property right, defamation and child pornography (Wimmer, URL).

At the same time he points out the negativity of the current situation and does not see only positive effects from the “utopia of absolutely free and open expression”, where I think he implies possible chaos and confusion on the Internet.

The question of the World Wide Web providing democracy is viewed differently from the perspective of state order. Lev Manovich believes that interactivity serves for the good of democratic ideas and issues of equality. Whereas, he sees totalitarian states, Russia in this case, using technology as “another form of manipulation... to impose... totalitarian will on the people...” (Jenkins, Manovich, 1999). He says:

A Western artist sees the Internet as a perfect tool to break down all hierarchies and bring art to the people. In contrast, as a post-communist subject, I cannot but see the Internet as a communal apartment of the Stalin era: no privacy, everybody spies on everybody else, always present are lines of common areas such as the toilet or the kitchen” (Manovich, 2001).

Manovich argues that technology is deployed in radically opposed ways in the West from the East. However, my findings, which I will describe in the next chapters, show that Post-Soviet Russia has managed to catch up with the Western level of freedom of speech on the Internet. Manovich’s assertion about the cyberspace usage as an ideological tool in Russia can be explained by the Soviet policy against innovations that could potentially free public opinion. Despite the danger seen in the technological progress, the Soviet apparatus could not prevent scientific discoveries. Henry Jenkins writes about the inevitability and irreversibility of technological expansion (Jenkins, 1999).

More contemporary scholars are realizing the important role of the electronic medium. David Lyon suggests that knowledge of computer technology and its position in our lives may be “essential to participate fully in the society of the future, radically altering the ways in which economic and social exchanges are created, the

means by which we access information and obtain knowledge, and the character of work and leisure". Despite Lyon's acknowledgment of the importance of new communications, he suggests a pessimistic overview of technology. He argues that technology is not a product of innovation and creativity, but rather a simple reinforcement of "old structures, existing power relations and established ideologies in new ways"⁶ (Lyon, 1988).

The emerging technologies of information and communication shape social and cultural experience along familiar lines and reinforce the power of some individuals over others, not only terms of processes of production, but also in the spheres of leisure and consumption (Lyon, 1988).

Lyon highlights that success is impossible in a field without information technology. According to him, this is "the start of a new age" (Lyon, 1988).

The new epoch of digital information has had its effect on Russia by bringing not only access to an enormous amount of information, but also many possibilities to express its own opinion. A shift from an audience of spectators to that of participants has occurred. The question of press freedom and cyberspace has become more and more urgent these days. The impossibility of total information control is a challenge to the Post-Soviet State.

Leonard R. Sussman has raised the question whether the Internet will be censored. In his essay *Censor Dot Gov* Sussman states that the increased flow of information and news force government to take some precautions and restrict content on the World Wide Web, which is a mandatory stage for any medium innovation. Sussman calls control of the Internet one of the biggest challenges to the censor, as it is omnipresent and at the same time "headquartered nowhere" (Sussman, URL).

⁶ Lyon's assertions are akin to McLuhan's statements that medium takes its content from previous technologies. (McLuhan, 1964)

Despite the apparent difficulty in creating a gate to control the Internet, some theoreticians see solutions in the medium itself. Sussman agrees with Lyon's statements, that selective access to the World Wide Web, caused by the high cost of connection fees and wide use of English, significantly decreases the audience of the Internet. Sussman believes that this self-filtering audience feature of the Internet can allow a future relaxation of censorship in cyberspace (Sussman, URL).

Anton Nosik talks about the increased information flow, which changes the goal of Internet authors. The goal has been shifted from "to be published" to "to be read". As we shall see further, the technological possibilities of the Internet allow all the readers of *Trud* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* to become publishers by posting their messages in forums and guest-books. The Soviet system was also in favour of workers expressing their ideas; however, all the correspondence was censored and letters of improper character were never published. Nosik believes that with the collapse of the totalitarian regime, the current audience is "drowning in the sea of information". This avalanche of news, according to Nosik, has induced a depreciation of free speech. He believes that any independent opinion can be lost among millions of others. This is classified as one more self-censoring feature of the Internet (Nosik, URL).

Ivan Zasurskiy compares the Internet to a library with its "dump of informational garbage". He also believes that control over the Internet is almost impossible due to the diversity of its data flows. For users-pioneers of cyberspace the Internet was a new communication space without any possibility to create a hierarchy. Priority was given to the interaction between individuals, Zasursky notes. First users of the Internet never intended to make money or create businesses, they were aiming at the creation of new communities (Zasursky, 1999).

These increasingly hostile and colonial measures place us in the same position as those previous lovers of freedom and self-determination who had to reject the authorities of distant, uninformed powers. We must declare our virtual selves immune to your sovereignty, even as we continue to consent to your rule over our bodies. We will spread ourselves across the Planet so that no one can arrest our thoughts.

We will create a civilization of the Mind in Cyberspace. May it be more humane and fair than the world your governments have made before (Perry Barlow, URL).

Zasursky makes an observation that by 1999, the Internet had overcome the stage when cyberspace was lead by enthusiasts and absolute believers in communities without profit. The Internet has since come to a compromise, which results in a more tolerant co-existence of commercial and non-commercial information in one communication space (Zasurski, 1999).

Many scholars are trying to find an explanation to the rapidly increasing popularity of the Internet. The Web is one of the essential sources of news and information today, making it competitive with other media. Zasursky believes that the Internet's audience is different than the audience of other mass communications. According to him, the Web user constitutes "the active core" of the masses. These users are "curious, ready to check trustworthiness of any statement, compare translation of Russian documents with their originals, surf archives and process tons of information in order to find answers" (Zasurski, 1999).

It is obvious that a large portion of the population favors the Internet over other mass media. McLuhan believed that all new mediums take their content from previous technologies (Levinsin, 42). According to Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin the Internet itself, as a communication system and as a cultural sign, "remediates telegraph". They argue that the tremendous success of the Web is justified by the emergence of more graphic browsers, which permit the appearance of static images along with text. According to them the Web engages larger audiences including

academics, researchers, business communities and regular users with the help of graphics. Another advantage that the Web gained with graphic browsers is the ability of computers to remediate not only numerical data, reports and texts, but also magazines, newspapers, and graphic advertising. The popularity of online magazines and newspapers has grown. They have become “important genres” (Bolter and Grusin, 1999).

The tradition to which web designers now looked for inspiration was graphic design for print, and the principles of web page design became similar to those for laying out magazine articles, advertisements, and title pages.... These remediations combined respect and rivalry (Bolter and Grusin, 1999).

The audience previously accustomed to old conventional paper editions was attracted to speedy information delivery and “point-and-click interactivity”. The Internet “became an increasingly important remediator of all sorts of printed information” (Bolter and Grusin, 1999).

Internet applications are more focused on the perceptual side of mass communication. The Web manages to give the audience control over the flow of information. Cybermedia has been aggressively renewing all previous mediums; this diverse blend of media makes the Internet a powerful tool to manipulate the masses’ minds and at the same time is the first medium that pledges to give freedom of speech to its audience.

In this introductory overview of media and communication studies, I have focused my interests on some early theories along with contemporary views on technology. My discussion has demonstrated that scholars relate the issues of ideology and media in our society. This indicates a close connection and interdependency of these two phenomena. Exploitation is natural and inevitable as media has been used by the privileged elite to consolidate their power. At the same

time media works in the interests of the government in order to secure its [media's] position.

The emergence of new technologies is followed by the appearance of so-called technophobia. Some theoreticians see the end of the human era with the technological innovation of the Internet; others believe it will bring freedom of speech and consequent anarchy. At the same time, the Russian audience has discovered the advantages of the Internet. The masses believe in the possibility of finally create a fully democratic community, while at the same time technological advantages are being deployed by mass media to manipulate and “manufacture consent” (Herman and Chomsky). Having allowed the Internet to enter Russian society, the Russian government attempts to evaluate cyberspace in terms of its possible threat to national security. Meanwhile theoreticians believe that “the cultural expectations that the Web remediate all earlier media means that the web interface can never be completely transparent” (Bolter and Grusin, 1999). Therefore there is no absolute answer to the question of whether or not the Internet serves as a good or bad entity.

Postmodernist Theories Review

In the previous section I have reviewed studies that address the interaction of media and the representation of reality. Marxists scholars believe that ideology creates what we believe is reality through the means of mass communication (Dino, URL). They maintain the point of view that reality is not only reflected via mass communication, but that it is constructed by media and exists only in representation (Zvereva, URL). Contemporary culture is influenced by various means of communication. Vera Zvereva states that today people have to co-exist with

computer technology, television, radio, email along with other forms of communication. Media helps people to communicate and to gain knowledge about the world. At the same time, they [media] become a common part of our every day life; they dissolve and transform into something natural helping humans to establish new forms of perception and different understandings of freedom. This process creates an unlimited amount of intermediaries between individuals and reality. Television and newspapers help to spread information but deliver it through someone's belief in what should be considered important, based on ethical values. The actual information delivery is performed through physical devices. The combination of technological and ethical aspects creates intermediaries. According to Zvereva, these intermediaries change people's idea of the world, and abilities to sense real life. Therefore the issue of reality status, its representation and imitation has become problematic in the modern informational society (Zvereva, URL).

This section will focus on theories of postmodernism and especially on the peculiarities of Russian postmodernism. The emphasis will be on the effects of postmodernism in the development of media theories. As we saw earlier mass media theoreticians have been questioning the issue of reality representation and the perception of reproduced reality by an audience. These issues overlap with the interests of postmodernists who have addressed the construction of reality as well. The overview of postmodernism theories will examine the theories of Jean Baudrillard who introduced the notion of 'hyperreality' in connection with the functioning of postmodernist media. Theories of Russian postmodernists will be discussed as well. As we shall see further Mikhail Epstein, Nadia Mankovskaya and Alexander Genis attempt to demonstrate features of Russian postmodernism. Basing on the formula of Alexander Genis: *Russian postmodernism = avant-garde +*

Socialist Realism (Genis, 1999) the major characteristics of avant-garde and Socialist Realism will be outlined in order to be traced in Post-Soviet media. These features will be used throughout this thesis to place Russian mass communication and particularly the Internet within postmodern culture.

Post-modern media theoreticians have questioned the construction of reality and its representation to the masses. Jean Baudrillard, a French social theorist and one of the leading figures working on issues of postmodern media, argues that “postmodern’ media culture is a world of signs that have made a fundamental break from referring to ‘reality’”. Mass media creates what we believe is real through “conceptual or mythological models” but in fact it has “no connection or origin in reality”. Baudrillard believes that this simulation model is “the determinant of our perception of reality”. Media dictates commodity ideals to the public. Baudrillard refers to this process as the appearance of hyperreality when “the distinctions between real and unreal are blurred” (Hawk, URL).

Baudrillard defines hyperreality as “the simulation of something which never really existed” (Wikipedia, URL). As we saw earlier, mass media has been a tool for power reinforcement and the dissemination of ideological values. Noah Raizman states that “the challenge of simulation is never admitted by power”. He says that “the only weapon of power, its only strategy against this defection, is to reinject the real and the referential everywhere, to persuade us of the reality of the social, of the gravity of the economy and the finalities of production” (Raizman, URL). Raizman views Baudrillard’s theories as a reverse sign system of Saussure⁷, whose theory

⁷ Ferdinand de Saussure was the first theoretician to develop a model of semiotics. According to his history, the sign is the whole result of the associations of the signifier with the signified. The signifier is the form that the sign takes, i.e. physical form (shape of letters, sound etc.). The signified – the concept it represents; referred to something rather than itself. Referent is an actual thing (Chandler, URL).

suggests the concept that “signified is preceding the signifier”. The postmodernism of Baudrillard takes a new look at the semiotics of the society:

the signifier, the image, the symbol, icon, and index, precedes the signified, the real basis of the sign, posits a world where capitalism has run rampant, and where any concept of the real, or of meaning, or of history, has been eroded. Baudrillard's postmodern world is that of mass communication, mass media, and the proliferation, across all boundaries, of signs (Raizman, URL).

Baudrillard believes that simulation is a creation of capitalism. The society that honours commodities, eventually values information about products more than the products themselves. These simulations lose their connection with reality; the way currency exchange is “no longer based on [the] real weight of gold”. Currently, mass media is bombarding us with an endless flow of images which are “supplanting real life”, as Baudrillard states. Furthermore, he argues that real life has not been supplanted but completely replaced by simulation. As we can see, Baudrillard’s views are more radical than McLuhan’s approach to the issue of reality and simulation, who argues in favour of the confusion of reality and false reality, rather than a complete replacement of the real (Raizman, URL).

Baudrillard extends his discourse to the question of power. He understands power itself as something unreal. He believed that it is the media, which produces the image of power. This image is reinforced through “the idea of real”. Baudrillard says “through the language of crisis, and the portrayal of the unfortunate and those subjected to tortures of the body and heart, the status quo of those not involved in the crisis is reinforced.” Therefore, the content of media can be predefined by the urges of power. One more aspect shaping the media, according to Baudrillard, is the desire, which is seen as “an instrument of power”. Desires possessing humans are being perceived as reality, because they become extensions of people’s minds (Raizman, URL).

The stance of Baudrillard is close to the theories of economic determinists⁸. They believed that “the contents of the media and the meanings carried by their messages are ... primarily determined by the economic base of the organizations in which they are produced” (Curran, cited in Chandler, URL). At the same time the audience’s desires (as consumers) also constitute one of the major factors through which the interests of the dominating elite are shaping the content of media. Daniel Chandler suggests that

commercial media organizations must cater to the needs of advertisers and produce audience-maximizing products (hence the heavy doses of sex-and-violence content) while those media institutions whose revenues are controlled by the dominant political institutions or by the state gravitate toward a middle ground, or toward the heartland of the prevailing consensus.” (Chandler, URL)

Therefore, hyperreality, defined as “the authentic fake” by Umberto Eco (Wikipedia, URL), penetrates the content of media.

Many scholars have tried to characterize postmodernism and to place it within contemporary culture. Most scholars agree that postmodernism is a purely Western phenomenon as it is derived from capitalism, and therefore cannot exist in Communist countries. Fredric Jameson for example equated postmodernism with late capitalism (Jameson, URL). According to these stances, the concept of postmodernism is supposed to be alien to some cultures where capitalism did not develop. However, some Russian theoreticians disagree with this statement and believe in the existence of posmodernism in Russia.

In his book *After the Future: The Paradoxes of Postmodernism and Contemporary Russian Culture* Mikhail Epstein attempts to trace the origins of

⁸ “Economism is a key feature of “classical Marxism”. In economism, the economic base of society is seen as determining everything else in the superstructure, including social, political and intellectual consciousness.” (Also known as materialist theories) (Chandler, URL)

Russian postmodernism noting its cultural peculiarities and traditions. One of the main features of Russian postmodernism he argues, is in its uniqueness. Russian postmodernism is not just an echo of its Western duplicate; it has its own evolution, which was encouraged by the influence of Socialist Realism (Epstein, 1995, URL).

Epstein bases his discourse on Baudrillard's theory of reality simulation. Earlier movements preceding the emergence of post-modernism in Russia, Socialist Realism in this case, tried to "unmask the illusions, or ideological perversions, of consciousness, in order to disclose the genuine reality of material production". The question of reality representation can be disputable in Socialist Realism too. John Fiske in *Reading Television* says that there is no such phenomena as reality in realism since it has "an artificial construct". He argues that

'naturalness' arises not from nature itself but from the fact that realism is the mode in which our particular culture prefers its ritual condensations to be cast. There is nothing natural about realism, but it does correspond to the way we currently perceive the world (Fiske, 160).

Epstein believes that the construction of reality is not common to Western cultures alone; Russian history consists of examples of simulations, attempts "to substitute for reality those images which appear more real than does reality itself" (Epstein, 1995, URL). However, fake reality production might be better disguised and not pushed so aggressively in the West since Western countries have not employed totalitarian modes of governing. Indeed, Russia has long practiced the insistent promotion of reality myths that never actually occurred. The most prominent example of produced reality is the Soviet Utopian society. The October Revolution in Russia has reinforced the urge to impose "the simulative nature of reality". Epstein describes:

All social and private life was subordinated to ideology, which became the only real force of historical development. Signs of new reality, of which Soviet citizens were so proud in the thirties and fifties... were actually pure

ideological simulations of reality. This artificial reality was intended to demonstrate the superiority of ideas over simple facts (Epstein, 1995).

The disappearance of reality can be traced through the whole period of Soviet rule. The government had forcefully promoted ideologically pure visions of a Utopian life. Those views “were imposed with such force and determination that these ideological constructions became hyperrealities” (Epstein, 1995).

Mikhail Epstein claims that Socialist Realism can be considered “an essential postmodern trend”. Socialist Realism has some postmodern features. One of those features is “the creation of a hyperreality which is neither truthful nor false but consists of ideas which become reality for millions of people”. At the same time, Epstein notes that we cannot fully identify Russian postmodernism through Socialist Realism. The latter is only one of the stages of postmodernism emergence”. In the conclusion to his book *After the Future: The Paradoxes of Postmodernism and Contemporary Russian*, Epstein emphasizes that Russian postmodernism is a result of Socialist Realism and a “reaction of utopianism” (Epstein, 1995).

The connection between Russian postmodernism and Socialist Realism has found its place in theories by Alexander Genis. In his essay “Triangle: Avant-garde, Socialist Realism, Postmodernism” he identifies Russian postmodernism as a separate and unique movement from its Western counterpart. He proposes to use the following formula *postmodernism = avant-garde + mass culture*. Referring to Leslie Fiedler’s work “Cross the Border, Close the Gapwork”, Genis equates the function of Western mass culture and the function of Russian Socialist Realism. According to him, both of these phenomena serve as an infantile religious “official storage of State myths”. Genis’s discourse results in a derivation of a new formula: *Russian postmodernism = avant-garde + Socialist Realism* (Genis, 1999).

Genis's formula suggests that postmodernism in Russia has developed from the avant-garde and Socialist Realism. The applicability of this formula to Russian media can be tested by outlining and tracing features of Socialist Realism and the avant-garde in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud*.

The presence of Socialist Realism on the pages of Soviet media is indisputable. It was a "a teleologically-oriented style" and its purpose was "the furtherance of the goals of Communism" (Wikipedia, URL). The government was interested in the filtering of newspaper materials and in a certain way of constructing representational materials. Jeffrey Brooks in his essay "Socialist Realism in Pravda: Read All About It!" describes the inseparability of the notion of Socialist Realism and Russian newspapers. Socialist Realism was a catch phrase of the press. Brooks says that from phrases such as "the active Soviet public" (*sovetskaya obshchestvennost'*), "heroism" and "the new people" readers could "recover something of the original meaning of Socialist Realism" (Brooks, URL). The Party gave directives to editors and authors of the newspapers, however all the periodicals were produced as results of "the staff's spontaneous, if politically constrained, reactions to Soviet life" in the combination with "leaders' wishes". Brooks believes that Socialist Realism turned newspapers of the Soviet period into "the work of people who verbalized their own experiences, lexicons and observations in an effort to make the world around them intelligible within the official given limits" (Brooks, URL). The press was working on the production of an image of Soviet society and Socialist Realism set the standard for this production.

The Soviet apparatus tried to use newspapers to shape a more favorable opinion of Communism to the masses. Jeffrey Brooks notes that one of the primary requirements of Socialist Realism in media was the representation of materials with a

notion of truthfulness, especially when it concerned “an historically concrete portrayal of reality in its revolutionary development”. The government was imposing the idea of the possibility of building a Utopia through hard work and team efforts. Therefore, Brooks states that Socialist Realism combines truthfulness with “the task of the ideological remaking and education of labouring people in the spirit of Socialism” (Brooks, URL). As we shall see further both peculiarities have found their places on the pages of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* of the Soviet period.

The promotion of Communists goals on the pages of periodicals required a specific angle for the representation of materials. Socialist Realism created promising images of the future for the Soviet people by “a creative reflection on the best of Soviet life”. Jeffrey Brooks names the image of heroism with “potrayals of feats”, devotion and praise of industrialization as major features of Socialist Realism (Brooks, URL). These three characteristics blend into a patriotic style which defined the content of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud*, as will be further examined.

According to Brooks another important feature of Socialist Realism is the representation of a new audience. All the texts and materials were gathered and constructed in order to meet the requirements of a certain audience. The Soviet apparatus misunderstood the role of the press, assuming media could serve as “a vehicle for education” and “an instrument of class war” only. None of the periodicals took into account “the nature of popular taste”; they aimed to construct the audience by publishing a small range of materials suited to this constructed audience (Brooks, URL). The collapse of the Soviet Union and demolition of the influence of Socialist Realism later lead to an opposite strategy of media, as will be exemplified in our examination of *Trud* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. The audience and its interests have become a determining factor in the work of media.

In her book *Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* Katerina Clark tries to determine the role of Socialist Realism in Russian culture. She believes that literary and non-literary worlds⁹ have become one phenomena and is highly affected by ideology and politics. Clark's findings are in accordance with the stance of Brooks; she points out a constant search for a positive hero in literature and press. According to her, this feature has characterized all printed works since Socialist Realism demanded a strict following of canons and patterns, which will be reflected in the further analysis of the newspapers (Clark, 2000).

The collapse of the Soviet regime and the consequent retreat of the influence of Socialist Realism have caused new tendencies in mass media. In order to survive in the Post-Communist environment, the press has taken innovative directions non-existent in the Soviet period. At this point a new stage of avant-garde development is noted. The avant-garde is "often used to refer to people or actions that are novel or experimental, particularly with respect to the arts and culture (Wikipedia, URL)"; it has taken over the present media, trying to erase signs of a Socialist past. Decades of totalitarian reign did not allow Socialist Realism to leave without a trace. The unique combination of Socialist Realism residual conventions and avant-garde innovations has been referred to as Russian postmodernism by Genis.

Dominic Strinati has outlined some distinguishing peculiarities of the postmodern age which can help to identify the involvement of the Russian Internet in a new postmodern society and also to distinguish it from previous media as a part of postmodern culture (Strinati, 422).

The collapse of the Soviet Union was accompanied by the rise of Russian postmodernism, determined in many aspects by its economic situation. Newspapers

⁹ Clark implies journalism and media (Clark, 8)

and their online branches were forced to shift methods of survival, and work toward maximizing their audience. An entertaining style and tabloid methods of representation have become major strategic moves of Internet designers over the past years in order to expand the number of reader-consumers. Strinati names “an emphasis on style at the expense of substance and content” (Strinati, 422) as one of the features of postmodernism. Strinati believes that another distinguishing characteristic of postmodernism is a blurred difference between art and pop-culture and refers to it as “the breakdown of the distinction between high-culture and popular culture”. He cites consumption as a cause of this process. According to him, art “becomes increasingly integrated into economy” as it is supposed to play the role of advertising and becomes “a commercial good in its own right”. Beside economic effects, the new Post-Soviet era has brought technological innovations. These implementations have contributed to the growth of a sense of immediacy in contemporary media. Strinati believes that the speed at which people presently can communicate creates confusion in the masses in terms of their perception of time and space values (Strinati, 422). The Internet is an example of “confusions over time and space”. The presence of forums, chatrooms, instant news updates and guest books in online versions of newspapers can serve as devices confusing the perception of time and space in cyberspace.

Nadia Mankovskaya in the book *Esthétique postmoderne* notes that Russian postmodernism with all its current innovations is still highly politicized, the result of the influence of Socialist Realism. Unlike Genis, she names the main trend of Russian mass-culture as Socialist Realism (Mankovskaya, URL). The article “Evil and Good of Mass Culture” states that Russian mass-culture comes from Socialist Realism, however it is commercialized and its goal is to be sold (Literaturnaya

Gazeta, 2003). According to some statements in the article, Socialist Realism and mass culture can be equated based on audience strategies. Socialist Realism tried to address as large an audience as possible, including common workers, in order to disseminate Communist dogma effectively. Mass culture has everyone as a target audience as well; however, it is guided by financial interests. In the 1990's Russian postmodernism started exhibiting obvious commercial tendencies, characterized by an entertaining tone. However, Mankovskaya does not see this process as the end of postmodern evolution. Mankovskaya believes that the emergence of the Internet is the next step for postmodernism in the 21st century. She sees new evolutionary trends in the interactivity of cyberspace (Mankovskaya, URL).

This brief review of Post-modern theory assists the analysis of the Russian media's evolution. Based on various aspects such as history, visual design and lexical representation we will discover whether the Russian Internet, particularly online periodicals, are products of Russian postmodernism. One of my main arguments is that Russian online periodicals have been influenced by their past print counterparts but are estranged today from these ideological influences; the result of postmodernism trends. The review of mass media and postmodernist theories helped to outline essential criteria of my analysis and direction of my research.

Chapter 2

Analysis of Trud and Komsomolskaya Pravda

The purpose of this study is to discover whether the Post-Soviet media, in particular the Internet, has managed to evolve into an independent form from its Socialist past and become a product of Russian postmodernism. This chapter will analyze the peculiarities of the Russian media in terms of its historical growth, and its visual and lexical arrangements. The analysis of the newspapers will reveal that contemporary *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* are estranged from the influence of the preceding totalitarian regime; however, both periodicals have been highly affected by their Socialist past. The combination of new tendencies, along with the avant-garde and traces of ideologically oriented styles form Russian postmodernism (Genis, 1999). The argument of this thesis is that Russian periodicals online are products of Russian postmodernism.

In order to test the argument, I will analyze the strategies of information delivery of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* when both periodicals were used for ideology-oriented goals during the Soviet period. The previous chapter outlined Socialist Realism as one of the major trends of Russian postmodernism. Features of Socialist Realism have been derived from the theories of Jeffrey Brooks and Katerina Clark.

This section will reveal features of Soviet periodicals in terms of the influence of Socialist Realism. I consider this stage of the historical development of periodicals substantial, as it is a preparatory step for the Russian postmodernist conception (Epstein 1995). The tough, overwhelming control of the Communist party over Russia has left an imprint on newspapers; in terms of the filtering of materials, data representation, target audience choices and the visual design of each

issue. Jeffrey Brooks believes the press under the influence of Social Realism was used to fulfill the educational function in society. Editors and authors tried to deliver information with the goal to reflect “on the best of the Soviet life” and with maximum “truthfulness”. The texts and articles did not try to meet readers’ interests, They were intended to construct that audience (Brooks, URL). Katerina Clark believes that a strict following of canons and patterns and a search for a positive hero are the features demonstrating Socialist Realism effects on media (Clark, 2000).

The next section of my analysis will cover the collapse of the Soviet system and the transition to a new post-Soviet era. I believe this is an important historical age for Russian mass media; a prompt turn of events in Russia provided us with an opportunity to observe how quickly the media reacted to the political and economic situation of the state. Being in the Soviet Union at that time, marking the rapidity at which changes took place, allowed me to witness a unique shift of mass media survival techniques. This new situation altered the content and materials represented in newspapers. A clumsy copying of Western styles has been mastered within a few short years after 1991 alongside Soviet features peculiar only to Russian media. This period can be called the emergence of Russian postmodernism in mass media.

Alexander Genis characterizes Russian postmodernism not only through features of Socialist Realism but the avant-garde as well. The role of the avant-garde brings various innovations brought on by the novelty of the economic, political and social situations of the Post-Soviet era. Jean Baudrillard associates postmodern media with the creation of a “false reality”, termed hyper-reality (Hawk, URL), though it characterized the Soviet media as well. Strinati outlined the following features as defining postmodern Post-Soviet media: one, predominance of style over content; two, the disappearance of the border between high and popular culture and

three, confusion over time and space. Further analysis is aimed at revealing those features based on the comparison of Internet versions of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* to their print predecessors.

This chapter focuses on the historical development of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud*. The analysis is targeted at the evolution of methods of information delivery that both periodicals had to adopt in order to survive during the Soviet and Post-Soviet periods. The Soviet period is characterized by the obvious ideological interests of the authorities for mass media. The government created a false reality promising the Soviet people happiness and satisfaction through the construction of a Communist future. Socialist Realism is the dominant movement pre-defining the style and overall function of the newspapers. The reflection of hard labour, heroic deeds at work and collectivism are represented as a natural reality. However, the excessive enthusiasm and exaggerated stories about workers and youths striving for a communist establishment on the pages of print media created a mythical impression promoted by the Soviet apparatus for its own ideological interests.

An analysis of the post-Soviet period will show that the creation of reality by the ruling elite has shifted its goals. Socialist realistic trends seem to fade away; consumer-oriented strategies have appeared, aimed at attracting larger audiences. These two stages of Russian history attract the attention of many scholars who examine the peculiarities of the communist state transition.

For media scholars in particular, Russia is an important case because it allows us to witness what happens when an attempt is made to build a politically and economically independent media system from the ruins of a state-controlled, propaganda-oriented one, and to replace a Marxist-Leninist approach to media organization, virtually overnight,

– Brian McNair notes (McNair, 85). Further he points out that we rarely “have the opportunities to be spectators of such a radical upheaval”. I have not attempted a full

comparative treatment with other types of media or media of the West, but only drawn parallels or noted contrasts where they seem to me helpful in understanding various aspects and peculiarities of the Russian media establishment as a postmodernist product. My research will be concentrated on the comparison of print and online versions of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* with references to the Soviet period.

Mass media of the Soviet period

The role of mass media is vital everywhere, but in Soviet society it has been especially important. In her book *Soviet Media in Transition* Elena Androunas describes media as “an integral element of the totalitarian system, the most powerful weapon of an all-pervasive brain-washing complex” (Androunas, 10). Throughout my research I encountered adherents of the idea that media has a more complex function than information delivery. One of these supporters is Noam Chomsky who believes that propaganda is “a very important aspect of their [media] service” (Herman and Chomsky, 13). From the moment a state is constructed there has been a necessity for a regime to be capable of keeping the masses in order. The Soviet media as a means of communication was an ideal apparatus for the totalitarian government to maintain control.

The Soviet press has always had a reputation of a “people’s media”. The newspapers were “amplifiers of workers’ and peasants’ grievances and aspirations” (Hopkins, 19). Media was allied with the Soviet people and at the same time played the role of spokesman for the Communist Party. Joseph Stalin referred to newspapers as “the means to maintain contacts with the working masses of our country and rally them around the party and the Soviet state” (Hopkins, Stalin, 20). As we shall see all

the periodicals had a certain function in Soviet society and were effectively used by the Communist Party.

Establishment and original purposes of *Trud*

As it follows from the history of the Soviet Union, the newspapers during the totalitarian reign were intended as tools for the constant control of the masses and the continuous delivery of Communist appeals. *Trud* was one of those newspapers of the Soviet period, serving as an instrument for filtered information delivery.

Trud (Labour, work – rus.) was established as a daily periodical for the working class on February 19, 1921. The first issue of *Trud* was published with a circulation of one hundred and fifty thousand issues. It was an official organ of Всероссийский Центральный Совет профессиональных союзов (All-Russian Centre of Trade Unions) and had specific intentions and functions in Soviet society.

As it is conveyed from the history of *Trud* (Chernega, 2003), the newspaper played the role of a ‘motivational machine’ for the working class. The needs of Communist dogma shaped *Trud* based on its ideological priorities. All the articles of the newspaper were published after a thorough processing of the mechanism of censorship. The editors worked carefully, filtering materials and constructing issues in a favourable light for the Party.

Construction of the periodical during the Soviet period turned out to be a complex mission. Stories were properly selected based on the government’s point of view; materials were supposed to be delivered in ideologically oriented language. The importance of word choice and statement assemblies was one of the priorities in the information delivery process. Frank Ellis, when describing language significance in the Soviet media states: “Language as pure ideology reached the greatest

perfection in the Soviet Union, in some ways becoming the ultimate form of censorship” (Ellis, 41). Obviously, the government used the power of language as an ideological tool. Further Ellis points out “two distinct, but mutually linked functions: it would serve as a conduit for the ideology of the new state; and would help to censor ideas and information which may be harmful or destabilizing”. Clearly, the Soviet media had ulterior motives, reflected in their language usage, specifically words choice while constructing materials.

Ellis demonstrates that *Trud* being an organ of the Communist party, strategically creating and intentionally hiding propagandistic messages. The methodically spread and disguised propaganda of *Trud* took its start from the title of the newspaper. *Trud* (Labour – rus) was a non-random name for the periodical that was immediately associated in people’s minds with hard work, industry, and common people and was opposed to such notions as leisure, ineffectiveness and idleness.

Idealization and worship of labour in the Soviet Union were conditioned by the pursuits of the authorities to strengthen the state. Stalin’s main ideas are described by Vadim Rogozhin in his book *Was There An Alternative?* Their goals were to “catch up and beat leading capitalist countries in technical and economic spheres” (Rogovin, URL). The competitive spirit and hard work were directed toward scientific development as well. In February of 1946 Stalin personally formulated the chief priority for Soviet science: “not only to overtake but to surpass in the near future the achievement of science beyond the border of our country” (Gerovitch, 15). Soviet scientists and engineers were instructed to catch up with the West in the shortest time possible . Patriotism and a determination to work hard for the future of the country were urgent subject matters and major ideas to be agitated.

Agitation of co-operation and hard work for the communist future is reflected not only in the title of *Trud* but also in numerous slogans, which appeared on the pages of the newspaper. All of them promoted industry and diligence by any means. One of them was a slogan of the day, which was published in one of the issues of *Trud*:

"Стахановской работой возместим урон, нанесенный врагами народа!"
(*Trud*) (We will rebuild the country, which was destroyed by enemies, by Stahanovite work!)

A mention of Stakhanov's work makes this slogan consummate and idiomatic. The name of Alexei Stakhanov, a Donbas miner who had exceeded the norm of coal production more than five times within a six-hour shift, was well known among the Soviet workers. His record initiated the Stakhanovite movement¹⁰ – a campaign urging the working class to emulate such feats of super-productivity (*Bolshaya Sovetskaya Encyclopedia*, URL). The slogan is both patriotic and labour promoting.

The simplicity of slogans on the pages of *Trud* is persuasive and influential. The Party was conversing with the audience by means of the media. Control of the masses was skilfully achieved by ideologically orientated language usage. Political leaders commonly used this technique in their speeches and appeals. The famous quotation of Lenin "Study, study and study" is based on the principle of simplicity and repetition. The records of this technique used by Lenin can be found in the book of Frank Ellis *From Glasnost to the Internet*:

"In common with many demagogues Lenin exploits the carefully structured use of repetition, the creation of slogans and set-piece responses to complex situations. The aim is not reasoned discourse, that convinces by force of

¹⁰ The Stakhanovite movement was a mass movement of innovators of social productivity in the USSR – leading workers, collective farmers, engineers and technicians, towards an increase of labour productivity with the help of new technologies. It appeared at the end of the second decade of 1930s as a new stage of socialist emulation. The socialist construction, success of the country's industrialization, cultural and technical growth and wealth of the working class nourished the Stakhanovite movement. (*Bolshaya Sov.Enc.* Online, URL)

argument and logical persuasion, but to produce an effect that appeals to the irrational and to the ease with which many people can be won over by verbal formulas” (Ellis, 42).

This is what we see in *Trud*: the editorial staff’s eventual goal is to eliminate or reduce the critical thinking faculty of the audience. In order to achieve this goal the newspaper focused on organizing and wording materials in the manner of appeals.

The newspaper published materials about socialist emulation and the execution of the national economy plans, so-called *pyatiletka*¹¹. From the beginning of its existence, *Trud* had been a tool to inspire the Soviet people to improve social production and to promote trade unions to increase labour, and encourage politically approved activities among the population. As mentioned, the original purposes of *Trud* were very similar to the goals of other periodicals in the Soviet period. Encouragement and guidance for the working class were one of the main subject matters of *Trud*. Statistical articles covering results of completed projects were meant to provide a great spiritual support for the Soviet future builders.

"22 519 часов труда": "За полгода только на субботниках в Оренбурге участвовало 59 382 человека. Из них — железнодорожников — 40 747. По партийности коммунистов — 22 380, беспартийных — 37 002. Проработано (безвозмездно!) 22 тысячи 519 часов". (**"202 519 hours of labour"**: "Within six months 59 382 workers took part in 'Subbotnik' in Orenburg. Among them: 40 747 railway workers, 22 380 Party members, 37 002 non-party workers. Completed (gratis!) 202 519 hours of labour.") (Chernega, 2003)

Articles in *Trud* from the Soviet period are saturated with enthusiasm and passion from among the working class. Headline styles indicate the character of published stories.

¹¹ Soviet economic practice of planning to augment agricultural and industrial output by designated quotas for a limited period of usually five years, otherwise known as *Pyatiletka* (RUSNET: Encyclopedia, URL)

"Что ни день, то месячная норма" – "Every Day Monthly Output".

This headline is introducing an article about a worker who managed to finish three months worth of work within three days. Credit is given to the tremendous patriotism and extreme selflessness; *Trud* underlines the significant contribution of common workers and their every day achievements.

Establishment and original purposes of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*

The correlation between issues of ideology and media's role in culture has carried out a complex function in society (Herman and Chomsky, 3). Certainly the role of media is always significant in the government of people; this is especially applicable to any country with a totalitarian regime. Marxists claim that any control over people is to be performed through the media. Therefore, media serves as a tool for dissemination of dominating opinions (Chandler, URL). The analysis of *Trud* shows that the periodical had been used in the interests of ideology. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* just as *Trud* had a certain role during the Soviet period and was established to fulfill a certain role in Soviet society. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (Komsomol Truth – rus.) was approved as an All-Union Komsomol newspaper on March 13, 1925. On May 24, 1925 the first issue of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* was published with a circulation of thirty one thousand issues. It became an official organ of VLKSM (All-Union Lenin's Communistic Alliance of Youth).

The Soviet government immediately started using the advantages of the media to create what Marxists would refer as a "false consciousness" (Chandler, URL). As is conveyed in the official web site of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (*Komsomolskaya Pravda in Penza*, URL), from the very first day of its existence *Komsomolskaya Pravda* aimed to inspire the younger generation with enthusiastic

spirit, energy and the desire to work toward progress. Akin to *Trud*, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* had been constructed in order to fulfill its function as a propaganda-disseminating tool. The title of the newspaper, its content, slogans and activities were meant to guide young men and women to a better life within the Communist regime. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* devoted itself to agitation among the younger generations. The editorial staff organized mobile branches, so-called “Редакция на колесах” (“Wheel Editorials”). The mission of these representatives was to publish slogans and posters promoting local construction projects, among them are the Gorkov motorcar factory, Kharkov tractor factory, Donbass and many others. The main slogan of the newspaper in that time was “Сила примера - буксир отстающим” – “Power of a good example is a tow for others left behind.”

Like *Trud*, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* was saturated with artificial enthusiasm and energy. Headlines remind us of appeals or slogans that do not necessarily hint to what the articles are going to be about.

Рабы не мы. – Slaves Are Not Us (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* 10 Jan. 1988: 1)

This headline introduces an article about a long queue to a lawyer. The author feels devastated about the disorganized system of appointments. The content of the material is not clearly reflected in the title; however, it suggests the situation to be an unacceptable one. A typical Communist motto is implied: the Soviet people are the happiest and most perfect.

Materials in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* were marked by explicitness; open confidence and determination were signs of propagandistic intentions and the headlines were mostly appeals.

Крепить перестройку! – To Strengthen Perestroika! (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* 4 Feb. 1988: 1)

As can be seen from the examples, the Communist party effectively used the newspaper to send ideological messages to the masses through its publications. The consistency of ideological influence on the content suggests single-mindedness in the media strategies during the Soviet period. The newspapers served in the interests of ruling classes and were designed to disseminate the ideas of the authorities. The aim of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* was to be a powerful tool to consolidate the integrity of the totalitarian regime and unite young generations for future Communism construction.

Both the titles of *Trud* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* were meant to disseminate the propagandistic values of the Party. As we saw earlier *Komsomolskaya Pravda* had a strong educational function. At the same time *Trud* was intended for guiding the more mature working class.

Compare the above-mentioned slogans of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud*:

“Сила примера – буксир отстающим” – “Power of a good example is a tow for others left behind”. (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*)

and

“Стахановской работой возместим урон, нанесенный врагами народа!”
– “We will rebuild the country by Stahanovite Work (*Trud*)

These two examples distinctly demonstrate that *Trud*'s primary goal was not to carry out an education function and teach young generations. The audience of *Trud* was the working class. This slight difference of original purposes resulted in a less edifying tone and the use of instructive inflections for *Trud*. Although *Trud* was publishing its materials in a less educational mode than some newspapers¹², I believe that it was a characteristic of all Soviet media (print media, television, radio) to deliberately construct their publishing or broadcasting with the purpose of instructing

¹² In this case *Komsomolskaya Pravda*

the public. Elena Mickiewicz, describing Soviet media, notes that “all the shows, whether explicitly instructional or not, are educational – that is, they have a distinct didactic flavour and are used to socialize the viewers” (Mickiewicz, 1981). As any other Soviet newspaper, *Trud* was under the influence of Socialist Realism, which pursued “the task of the ideological remaking and education of labouring people in the spirit of socialism” (Brooks, URL). However, due to the different target audience, this peculiarity was less apparent on the pages of *Trud* than in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* as the goal to educate the audience was mostly achieved not by direct instructions, but by oblique hidden messages. The analysis of issues revealed that *Trud* was less aggressive in publishing appeals; it was fulfilling its educational function through portrayals of feats and patriotic deeds.

The Marxists’ position states that “the mass media simply disseminate the ideas and world views of the ruling class, and deny or defuse alternative ideas” (Chandler, URL). The findings of my research on the content of *Trud* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* are very much in accord with this point of view. The analysis shows that the Communist Party effectively used the newspapers by constantly sending messages through their publications promoting technological progress and cultural and educational programs. The general aim of *Trud* and “*Komsomolskaya Pravda*” was to consolidate the integrity of a totalitarian regime.

Influential trends of Socialist Realism in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* during the Soviet Period

Having analyzed issues of *Trud* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, I found that the overall content of the newspapers and their modes of representation were products of their history and social environment. The Soviet totalitarian apparatus established

Komsomolskaya Pravda and *Trud* as a set of tools to reach people and used them in a manner convenient for the Communist party. I agree with Tony Bennett who believes that “a text or a genre has no “in-itselfness”. Genres and texts must therefore be analyzed in different ways; the analysis should take into account conditions in which they have been culturally activated as a result of the “inscription in different social, institutional and ideological contexts” (Glynn, 2000).

The “ideological context” for *Trud* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* was an oppressive regime within the Party’s control. Brooks notes that the authorities demanded positive portrayals of Soviet life; however, there was a difference between representations of materials “truthfully” and “correctly” (Brooks, URL). Despite their depiction of hard lives, publications were implying positivity for the Communist party, acceptable for the press. This aspect affected *Trud* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and consequently resulted in the focus of the newspapers on the ugly realities of workers’ lives, sympathy for working-class people, particularly the poor, and evident encouragement of patriotism among young people.

As the analysis of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* shows, Socialist Realism was the only influential trend of the Soviet media. Being affected by it, neither of the periodicals set a goal to amuse the observer as a primary objective. The amount of humorous content was very low in both periodicals. Socialist Realism pursued the goal of the furtherance of Communist dogma, which affected the content of newspapers. The educational function was fulfilled through the delivery of truthful materials intended to touch the patriotic spirits in the masses. Having compared issues of *Trud* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* during the Soviet period, I noted similar tendencies of both periodicals to please the government and consolidate the hyperreality of Communist happiness.

Analysis of examples – influence of Socialist Realism

Mikhail Epstein identifies Socialist Realism as the predecessor of Russian postmodernism. He also believes in truthful information representation. According to him Socialist Realism reflects the reality without any distortions in order to disclose ideological perversions (Epstein, 1995, URL). However, John Fiske disagrees, stating that the reflection of Soviet reality is as false as any other representation of reality by ruling classes (Fiske, 1978). Fiske believes that there is nothing natural about represented reality since it has been artificially constructed in the interests of the government. As shown in the analysis of *Trud* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* Soviet authorities had been practicing the promotion of a Communist myth and a promising future with the end goal of strengthening of the Soviet state.

I have chosen examples from *Trud* to demonstrate the influence of the Socialist Realism trend. As we shall see Socialist Realism had its impact on media materials, characterized by tendencies to depict the heroic deeds of common people and to portray the real lives of workers. The following two examples of the materials highlight the focus of the newspapers on improvements to the living conditions of workers, struggles for labour legislation and protection of labour.

Example #1.

Молоко для рабочих: ...Отделы охраны труда постановили, что работающие во вредных производствах... должны получать ежедневно бутылку молока. Но до сих пор часто случается, что ордера на молоко получали, но молока за неимением не отпускали. В виду этого Особая Комиссия по снабжению рабочих вредных производств постановила: в случае отсутствия молока такое должно быть заменено маслом...
(**Milk for Workers:** ... Labour protection departments decided that employees working in hazardous conditions... must received a bottle of milk daily. So far, workers received milk vouchers, but milk has not been supplied. Special Committee of supplies for workers working in hazardous conditions decided to supply butter in case of absence of milk.)

The article from which this quote was taken consists of three parts. The first part of the article informs the audience that employees working in hazardous conditions are taken care of and will be supplied with milk daily. This piece of information is followed by a passage on how employees had not been supplied with any milk. The closing portion of the article contains a positive statement – workers will be provided with butter instead of milk. Putting these three sections together, we can see an attempt by the editors to “sandwich” negativity with positive information. The “positivity + negativity + positivity” formula is characteristic of many articles. This essential formula is commonly featured in the publications in *Trud*. This description of a problem is a result of the Socialist Realism epoch; it is a response to the need for reality depiction. This is followed by a part describing a found solution; this technique adopted by an ideologically controlled media allowed the Soviet authorities to appear in a favourable representation.

Example #2.

Борьба с клопами: ... Взять наш барак. Еще недавно в нем было столько клопов, что невозможно было спать. Летом... все спали во дворе, а зимой, когда на снег и мороз не уйдешь, порой глаз нельзя было сомкнуть. Мы гордимся, что клопов у нас в бараке теперь нет — после тщательной дезинфекции они все погибли¹³. (**Struggle With a Bed Bug Epidemic:** ... For example, our barrack. Not too long time ago there were so many bed bugs; it was impossible to sleep. During the summer... we all had to sleep outside, but in wintertime when it is too cold to sleep outside, we could not even fall asleep. We are proud that now our barrack is absolutely bed bugs free – after a thorough disinfection all bed bugs are gone.)

This article covers the successful struggle of workers with a bed bug epidemic and does not contain any direct appeal to the audience. This example follows the same structure as the first example. It represents the problem (an epidemic of bugs), and

¹³

describes the solution (disinfection), which had brought outstanding results (all bugs are gone).

The dominating doctrine of Socialist Realism had a strong effect on the articles of the periodical. Graphic descriptions of the hard lives of workers and the every day problems they encounter are the major subject matter of *Trud*. We saw earlier the attempts of the editorial staff to depict problems in both examples. The materials convey a protest against a perfect and ideal world. They promote an image of a common worker; the worker is from the common masses and is a part of the Soviet people. However, it was unacceptable for the totalitarian system to allow media to depreciate the Soviet apparatus, which could result from constant publications about the difficulties of workers. Both examples demonstrate that the editors chose to end the articles with positive statements and give hope to the audience. This gave readers a simulated impression of happy endings and consequently created falseness in media reflecting reality. We can see that during the reign of Socialist Realism, the construction of a hyperreality was already present on the pages of Soviet periodicals.

Target audience of media during the Soviet period

Previous sections have demonstrated how media was used as a mind-shaping machine under the influence of Socialist Realism. It is important to realize the role of the audience in terms of media as a propaganda tool. The Frankfurt School devoted numerous research works to the issue of media use for propaganda purposes (Branston, 149). Branston noted the emphasis on “the power of corporate capitalism, owning and controlling new media, to restrict and control cultural life in unprecedented ways” and leaving “no space for innovation or originality”.

Adherents of the Frankfurt school see a close connection between the audience and media as global phenomena of relationships between the masses and social systems.

They believed that

“The means of... communication..., the irresistible output of the entertainment and information industry carry with them prescribed attitudes and habits, certain intellectual and emotional reactions which bind the consumers... to the producers and, through the latter to the whole [social system].” (Chandler. URL)

My findings support the correlation between the target audience and surrounding community. The analysis of the periodicals of the Soviet period demonstrated that the image of the addressee is constantly changing depending on the current social, political and economic environment. Further analysis will reveal that Socialist Realism was forcing newspapers to publish materials despite the interests of its readers. The government was trying to construct the target audience by dictating to the press what to publish. Media studies often refer to the audience as “ groups of individuals addressed and partly ‘constructed’ by media industries” (Branston, 148).

The totalitarian system of the Soviet Union placed certain standards on the media during its time. Valentin Turchin writes: “Blocking the exchange of information is still, of course, one of their most important tasks, and a foundation stone of totalirianism... (Cited in Ellis, 3). However, it is important to note that the total closing down of information exchange is impossible. As an alternative, the Soviet apparatus attempted to set filters and to regulate both knowledge and the audience. Each periodical had a separate function to influence a certain group of readers, which made the styles and contents of each issue unique for each newspaper.

Target audience of *Trud* during the Soviet period

The Soviet system controlled the mass media. *Trud* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* were under the constant patronage of the Communist party. As with any other newspaper, both periodicals were supposed to connect the masses and authorities by delivering agitating messages to the Soviet people. Unlike *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, *Trud* was predominantly aimed at the mature working class. The newspaper being an organ of the Communist party, consisted of strategically created and intentionally hidden propagandistic messages. As it was mentioned earlier, *Trud* was a non-random name of the periodical. The word “trud” as a title demonstrates the importance of the notion of labour in the Soviet Union. The usage of “trud” is supposed to help “one recover something of the original meaning of Socialist Realism” (Brooks, URL). As we shall see further, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (Komsomol Truth) was intended for members of Komsomol – Коммунистический Совет Молодежи (Communist Youth Union – rus). It was a political organization created to enrol young generations into the political struggle for the socialist future of the Soviet Union. The difference in target audience of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* is reflected first of all in the titles. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (Komsomol Truth – rus) contains decision-making intonations: young generations are given a choice between truth and lie. At the same time, *Trud* has a laconic, self-explaining title, which reflects the character of mature and serious readers – workers.

A brief history of *Trud* retrieved from the archives (Chernega, 2003), does not contain any information on activities of the *Trud* editorial staff. Nevertheless, I have analyzed the materials of *Trud* during the Soviet period and distinguished

workers as a major group of target readers. My analysis is based on the subject matter covered in the articles and potential addressees.

One of the criteria of this study is word usage. The examined materials mostly cover information about the Party and its activities as they related to the working class. Wide usage of such words as “workers”, “labour”, “proletariat” and others can be traced on the pages of *Trud* of the Soviet epoch.

О работе женщин в день 8 Марта: "В связи с поступающими предложениями женщин-работниц и женщин-служащих о том, чтобы 8 марта женщины *работали* полный *рабочий* день, ВЦСПС решил поддержать инициативу *работниц* и *служащих* и постановить, что 8 марта *работа* женщин должна производиться полный *рабочий* день". (Women's *working hours* on Women's Day: Based on the proposals of female *workers* and female office employees, Central Committee has decided to support the initiative of women and decreed that the 8th of March¹⁴ will be full time day for all women.) (Chernega, 2003)

Materials of this type are common on the pages of the Soviet *Trud*. The word “*работа*” (Rus. – work) in the Russian version of the newspaper occurs seven times. Jeffrey Brooks believes that the technique of using heroism-related words creates a certain “linguistic environment” for unconscious associations with Socialist Realism (Brooks, URL). The aim of the newspaper is to tell its audience that the Party supports and encourages any expression of enthusiasm and patriotism among workers.

The goals of *Trud* and its target audience radically affected approaches to material representation. The editors tried to impose the idea of solidarity and power to the common people. The usage of words “we”, “our” and “people” helped to reflect a spirit of collectivism, solidarity and enthusiasm in the Soviet state.

Архангельск. Мы, рабочие коллектива паровозагоноремонтного завода, в ответ на подлые преступления врагов народа обязуемся

¹⁴ International Women's Day

работать еще лучше, поднять производительность труда до 200 процентов и не допускать брака и простоя. Умножим бдительность и не дадим врагу мешать нашей ударной работе! (Archangelsk. We, workers of steam locomotive repair factory, as a response to crimes of traitors, undertake to work harder to increase productivity up to 200% and not to allow product defects and stoppages. To increase vigilance and not to let our enemies to disturb our shock work!) (Chernega, 2003)

Usage of the pronoun “we”, as a method of personalization was popular on the pages of *Trud*. It allowed for the creation of a dialogue atmosphere between an editor and the addressees, which brought the newspaper closer to the masses.

The addressed audience of *Trud* had the same role in Soviet society as the target audience of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*: readers were builders of socialism. However, the less frequent occurrence of the word “komsomol” on the pages of *Trud* indicates its age classification; *Trud* was aimed at a more mature group of people than *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. The Komsomol was one of the first stages of the Soviet apparatus working on preparing the masses to become members of the Party. *Trud* was targeted at the masses that had become members of the Party already and were more likely working with trade unions. This explains the less educational style of the materials on the pages of *Trud*.

Socialist Realism was based on the principle to “glorify political and social ideals of communism” (Bown, URL). The press had propagandistic intentions in most of the articles. Mass media was fulfilling its information delivery function, however always following this propagandistic style. Narrative style was a major trend on the pages of the press to make the material more appealing to the audience, rather than publishing direct appeals and instructions. The following extract from *Trud* is in a form of narration but it conveys that a reader should follow someone’s example:

"Экономим на тряпках". Какое, казалось бы, значение имеет для экономики обыкновенная тряпка? По норме мне полагается 200 граммов тряпок. Утром мой напарник получил 200 граммов, и мы пользовались ими четыре смены. Иначе говоря, вместо 1600 граммов тряпок мы израсходовали только 200!" ("Save on Rags". Who would have thought of any value of a common rag for the economics? In accordance with standards, I was supposed to be issued 200 grams of rags. My workmate have received 200 grams in the morning. We were using them for four shifts. In other words, instead of 1600 grams of rags, we used only 200!) (Chernega, 2003)

The editors tried to demonstrate a heroic deed and emphasize the importance of co-operation and contribution during the Soviet State consolidation.

Target audience of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*

Komsomolskaya Pravda, one of the tools of the Soviet government intended for the future builders of the Soviet Communist future – young members of Komsomol. The Komsomol was the largest Youth Communist Movement in the Soviet Union for citizens aged fourteen and older.

The described chronology (*Komsomolskaya Pravda in Penza*, URL) of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* explains how the nature of the target audience of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* predetermined its activity and editorial staff. Numerous cases of patronage of new construction objects are archived on the pages of the newspaper. Some of them were reflected in slogans and appeals. For example during the 1930s *Komsomolskaya Pravda* advanced the slogan "Весь комсомол строит Урало-Кузбасс" "All Komsomol is building Uralo-Kuzbass" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda in Penza*, URL). Any activity performed by *Komsomolskaya Pravda* was promoted in the interests of the ideological state.

Овладевать Ленинским искусством политического руководства! – To Master Lenin's Art of Political Managing (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* 23 Apr. 1988: 2)

This and similar appeals were imbued with a spirit of absolutism and irrefutability targeted to shape young socialistic minds. This style of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*

aimed to attract the attention of readers and direct their energy onto new construction projects and patriotic deeds. I believe that this approach was efficient taking into consideration the nature of the target audience. Young generations, who needed more guidance, accepted the instructions of the Communist Party that were sent through the press.

Having analyzed materials of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* of the Soviet period I have distinguished Komsomol members as a distinct group of readers based on the subject matter and potential addressees. The word “Komsomol” is mentioned in each issue. Articles covering Komsomol organizations and the different spheres of people’s lives are united in columns like *Комсомол и экономика (Komsomol and Economics)* (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* 12 Jan. 1988) and *Комсомольский Телетайп (Komsomol Teletype)* (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* 1988).

As a general addressee of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, a young professional can be identified. The promotion of an image of the young professional is observed in headlines and images. An issue dated March 24, 1988 contains an article with the title “На все руки мастера” – “Jacks-of-all-trades”. An image above it portrays a young fellow working on a milling machine, the next image shows the same person doing sporting activities. The overall coverage of sport was unusually high. The combination of continuous coverage of the technical skills of young generations and their sporting achievements, promoted a technical education and a healthy life style, highly recommended for a younger audience.

The editors used a young, promising, socialist contemporary, as the basic reader’s image of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. In general, the audience of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* was addressed in connection with urgent youth issues:

- Participation in state gatherings –

И взойдут надежды. Говорят молодые делегаты съезда (And Hopes Will Sprout. Young Delegates of Collective Farmers' Congress Speak Out) (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* 25 Mar. 1988)

- Education –

Первая сессия (First Examinations) (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* 16 Jan. 1988)

- Life of youth in other Socialist countries –

Лица друзей. Юность Вьетнама (Faces of Friends. Youth of Vietnam) (March, 16 1988)

Issues addressed in the materials were intended to establish a dialogue between the ideological motives of the government and the future builders of socialism. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* under the influence of Socialist Realism performed an educational function by enlightening youth concerns. The educational function for young readers of the newspaper was combined with a propaganda disseminating mechanism of the Party officials.

Встреча в ЦК КПСС (Meeting in Central Committee of the Communist Party of Soviet Union). (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* 9 Jan. 1988)

The minutes from the meetings of the Central Committee were published almost every third issue. Jeffrey Brooks notes that literature and arts were not given a priority in the Soviet press. Socialist Realism forced out these two topics from the Soviet media discourse (Brooks, URL). Pages of publishing space were regularly allotted to coverage of political sessions and congresses.

Потенциал кооперации – делу перестройки. Выступление М.С.Горбачева на 4-м всесоюзном съезде колхозников. (Potential of Cooperation – To Perestroika. M.S.Gorbachev's speech on the 4th All-Union Meeting of Collective Farmers) (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* 24 Mar. 1988)

This article took 3 full pages and did not contain any images. Despite a poor layout, it was informative and delivered information to the required audience.

Komsomolskaya Pravda's readers – young generations and Party officials, were constructed by the ideological mechanism of the Soviet Union. Socialist Realism shifted the priorities of the press from what people would like to read to what they needed to read. Readers were reached by means of an ideologically controlled selection of materials. Propagandistic approaches to publishing frequently caused excessive enthusiasm yet poor planning of the layout of content. The issue dated October 15 contains almost no images but allotted the first three pages to the chronology of the Party Congress, the lists of candidates and their rights and duties (*Komsomolskaya Pravda, 1952*). At the same time materials can be characterized as highly informative and educational. Articles contain important historical and statistical data.

Socialist Realism required the press to construct their articles according to the demand for a positive response from the target audience. The newspapers created promising images of the future for the Soviet people by “a creative reflection on the best of Soviet life”. Jeffrey Brooks names the image of heroism with “portrayals of feats”, along with devotion and praise of industrialization as major features of the influence of Socialist Realism (Brooks, URL).

Socialist Realism demanded from the press the promotion of industrialization, as it symbolized a better future for the Soviet people. The nature of the target audience incited the newspaper to support the professionalism of the young Komsomol member. The historical archives of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (*Komsomolskaya Pravda in Penza*, URL) record that the newspaper initiated numerous youth activities, such as the organization of technical meetings and youth conferences for various professional spheres. It is apparent in files (*Komsomolskaya Pravda in Penza*, URL) that technical education propaganda was followed up by the

publication of a technical supplement to *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. In 1931 the newspaper published 19 technical supplements.

Reflections of devotion and enthusiasm were intended to create a positive attitude in young generations towards the construction of the Communist state. The historical records (*Komsomolskaya Pravda in Penza*, URL) describe how in 1930 *Komsomolskaya Pravda* suggested a minimum standard of physical fitness for the people and upon the newspaper's recommendation the government set up a badge with the «Готов к труду и обороне» (“Ready to Work and Protect”) slogan for millions of members of Komsomol. For example, the reporters and artists of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* participated in Arctic expeditions. Materials on those expeditions were covered in a column “Хочу в Арктику” (“I Want to Go to the Arctic”). These expeditions increased awareness of national heroes. To all appearances the newspaper was acting as an educational organ for younger generations.

The educational function of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* was often combined with the goal of encouragement, especially during the War period. This shift is conveyed in the archives (*Komsomolskaya Pravda in Penza*, URL) by describing that throughout the war the newspaper focused on publishing the work of young writers and war correspondents that related stories of young heroes and their patriotic deeds. Most of the characters had their prototypes in the young members of Komsomol. Starting in 1941 *Komsomolskaya Pravda* published essays written on the front line by Arkadiy Gaidar, a famous Soviet writer, on his truth-based story “Мы не забудем тебя, Таня!” (“We Will Not Forget You, Tanya!”) about Zoya Kosmodem'yanskaya, a national teenage heroine. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* also published articles about Liza Chaikina and the diaries of Natasha Kovshova, who were famous for their

patriotic deeds during the war (History of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, URL). Stories of this nature promoted acts of courage and patriotism to readers of the newspaper. As indicated in the *Komsomolskaya Pravda* documentation (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* in Penza, URL), during the post war period the newspaper resumed its patronage activities lasting throughout the Soviet period. The newspaper staff were involved in such campaigns as the reconstruction of Stalingrad and participation in the construction of Bratsk and Krasnoyarsk hydroelectric power station. Obviously the content and activities of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* were closely associated with the character of the edition, with its original missions and interests.

The analysis of the content of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* has shown that the press of the Soviet period was highly influenced by the interests of the authorities and was used as an instrument of power. The features of Socialist Realism outlined by Jeffrey Brooks are present in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud*. Obvious tendencies to represent materials with truthfulness and at the same time with the added embellishment of Soviet life are demonstrated by examples from the newspapers. Effects of Social Realism are reflected in the attempts of editors to promote industrialization for the future Communist establishment. The analysis of these two newspapers has demonstrated the search for a positive hero, named by Katerina Clark as another feature of Social Realism. Socialist Realism affected not only the content and style of both newspapers, but graphical representation as well; resulting in a small number of images in the periodicals. Despite their different target audiences and consequent diversity in materials represented, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* demonstrated similarities in their ideology-oriented styles with the purpose of consolidating the Soviet apparatus. Socialist Realism required the press to follow one pattern of functioning, which was in accordance with the furtherance of

Communist policy. These similarities started fading away in 1987 and continued to disappear in the next 4 years. This was a period of instability for the Soviet regime, its final collapse coming in 1991.

Media of the post-Soviet period

It has been acknowledged by theoreticians that the mass media is a tool of the authorities used to extend their power. As is described in the previous sections, the Soviet period is characterized by forceful strategic moves in media usage. Marxists believe that exploitation is inevitable and natural in any society. Gramsci, supporting the idea of a natural presence of exploitation, argues that a struggle is necessary in order to re-new power (Chandler, Gramsci, URL). The imminence of an upheaval in the USSR was obvious for some scholars. Frank Ellis blames socialism and the principles of public ownership; according to him this prevented any economic progress for the country. The Soviet people could not afford poor economic planning and “brutal and wasteful methods to achieve results” in order to catch up with the West (Ellis, 63). While capitalist countries were targeting “intellectual-intensive modes”, Marxists ideology was promoting “labour-intensive” politics in the Soviet Union that did not prove to be a competent style of wealth accumulation (Ellis, 4).

The power shift drew the attention of the struggling classes towards media. Stuart Hall refers to media as a servant to the interests of the ruling classes and “a field of ideological struggle”. According to Daniel Chandler mass media is the “site of struggle” for its well-known abilities to manipulate masses and, as was discussed earlier, for the power to alter hegemony (Chandler, Hall, URL). Elena Androunas believes that the freedom movement of the press in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Union was an unconscious choice of society. She believes it was the result of “a constantly changing balance of the political forces that are in power and have all the

might of the state at their disposal, on the one hand, and opposition groups, on the other” (Androunas, 3). McNair wrote, “Soviet ideology was rejected. Marxism-Leninism was redundant and discredited as an organizing principle of government; ... there were nothing in Soviet theory or practice worth hanging onto” (McNair, 85; 82).

The collapse of the Soviet Union obviously brought some economic difficulties to almost all institutions that were earlier financially supported by the state. The mass media was among them. Since a functioning media was vital to the system, under the control of the Communist Party their existence was fully secured and guaranteed by the government; supply and distribution were taken care of. Brian McNair writes:

If Russian media workers are free from the impositions of an authoritarian political system, they now grapple with the sometimes equally inhibiting pressures and constraints of the market capitalism, which replaced it... (McNair, 84)

Disintegration of the totalitarian system gave mass media its financial independence from the state. The instability in funding sources greatly affected the media system. The solution to the problem was found in advertising revenues and through increasing circulation by attracting larger audiences.

The period of the breakdown of Communism is characterized by a process of Socialist Realism trends weakening in mass communication. Russian media did not have to promote ideologically-centered values any more. Alexander Genis believes that Socialist Realism was a predecessor of Russian postmodernism. The connection between Russian postmodernism and Socialist Realism has found its place in his essay “Triangle: Avant-garde, Socialist Realism, Postmodernism”. Genis identifies Russian

postmodernism as a separate and unique movement from its Western counterpart. (Genis, 1999).

The post-Soviet period is distinguished by a fade away of Socialist Realist influence and the emergence of postmodernist trends in Russian mass media. In order to enlarge the audience, mass media shifted its ideology-oriented style to observer-amusing techniques.

The collapse of the Soviet Union caused the rise of Russian postmodernism, determined in many aspects by its economic situation. The financial independence of newspapers and their online branches forced them to shift methods of survival toward an audience maximizing approach. An entertaining style along with tabloid methods of representation have become the major strategic moves of Internet designers over the past years to expand the number of reader-consumers. Strinati names “an emphasis on style at the expense of substance and content” (Strinati, 422) as one of the features of postmodernism. Strinati believes that another distinguishing characteristic of postmodernism is a blurred difference between art and pop-culture and refers to it as “the breakdown of the distinction between high-culture and popular culture”. He cites consumption as a cause of this process. According to him, art “becomes increasingly integrated into economy” as it is supposed to play the role of advertising and becomes “a commercial good in its own right”. Besides economic affects, the new Post-Soviet era has brought with it technological innovations. These implementations have allowed for the growth of immediacy in media today. Strinati believes that the speed people can communicate today creates confusion in the masses in terms of the perception of time and space values (Strinati, 422). The Internet is an example of “confusions over time and space”. Presence of forums, chats, instant news updates, and guest books in the online versions of newspapers can

serve as confusing devices in terms of the perception of time and space in cyberspace.

In accordance with Mankovskaya, Russian postmodernism exhibits obvious commercial, mass-cultural tendencies characterized by entertaining overtones (Mankovskaya, URL). McNair believes the so-called tabloidization of “newly liberated media” was inevitable; they were “subject to the brute force of the market” (McNair, 85).

The country was almost brought to poverty by the poor judgement of Soviet authorities; after the collapse of the totalitarian regime the country managed to recover in a short period of time. The Russians quickly realized the need to adopt new survival strategies. Frank Ellis believes that the advanced information technology of post-Soviet Russia and various studies in information theory are the “keys to this revolution of wealth creation”. He argues that “research, design, marketing and the service sector, indeed the whole mode of activity associated with what has been termed the post-industrial society, would be impossible without the concept, hardware and software of IT” (Ellis, 5).

The next sections will explore peculiarities of Russian postmodernism in *Trud* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* as the new state media. Russian postmodernism has caused changes in the purposes of both newspapers and has resulted in changes both to the content and to the way materials are represented. A new target audience and relevant innovations in visual, syntactical and lexical constructions will be covered. The overall analysis seeks for the correlation between the Post-Soviet media and the establishment of Russian postmodernism.

Change of purposes of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud*

The decline of Soviet power changed the newspapers dramatically. The archive of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* in Penza, URL) names December 1, 1990 as the day when the newspaper stopped being a part of VLKSM (All-Union Lenin's Communistic Alliance of Youth). *Komsomolskaya Pravda* officially became the All-Union daily newspaper. The further dismantling of the Soviet system in 1991 affected all the media in the country, including *Trud* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. No longer under the patronage of the Communist party both periodicals lost their financial support and started struggling with funding difficulties. The Post-Soviet period was financially difficult for all media organizations. Privatization became a crucial moment in the development of techniques for continuing the existence of the press.

Realizing that survival for a financially independent newspaper indisputably lay in acquiring large circulations, the newspapers changed their strategies. *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, as is described in official returns (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* in Penza, URL), started looking for reliable partners in various regions. The partners had established regional editorials, publishing informational supplements intended for local audiences. The newspaper's goal shifted from ideological inspiration and encouragement of young generations to increasing circulation by any means in order to meet financial requirements and make profit.

Brian McNair names financial crisis as the major cause of the dependence media has on advertising and sponsorship in his essay "Power, Profit, Corruption, and Lies" (McNair, 85). In order to increase profit, the partners established their advertising supplement to *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and started working in many regions. *Trud* chose not to send numerous editorials all over the country. *Trud's*

decision was to achieve success by a complete change of the content of each issue. Both newspapers followed the same tendencies as all print media and allowed the emergence of advertising on their pages. The introduction of advertisements in Post-Soviet media is a significant sign of the sharp deviation from the conventional existence of the mass media dictated by the former Soviet apparatus and the strengthening of the influence of postmodernism in media.

The new era has brought new goals to the print media in Russia. The first step taken by all editorials was to give up excessive politicization of the content. The next step was the appearance of advertising content. *Trud* approached this goal in a moderate manner. The content has been changed but the amount of advertising is comparatively small to that of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. *Trud* proves that Chomsky's propaganda model, which includes advertisements as one of the main components, is not always applicable to the Post-Soviet media (Herman and Chomsky, 14). Both periodicals stopped publishing propagandistic materials and ideological messages. The need for money eliminated the politically oriented approaches to materials censorship. Advertisements appeared, unprecedented for the Soviet media; merchandising sections are often allotted full pages as in the issue of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* dated the 25th of December 2003. Another example is a single Panasonic advertisement, which occupies a full page of valuable publishing space (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 25 Dec. 2003: 11). This change demonstrates the current dominance of financial interests over content importance.

New media approaches do not lower the popularity of the newspapers. According to its statistics, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* is currently published in 42 large cities in the former Soviet Union and Germany. The average audience for one issue of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* is over two million readers (*Audience of Komsomolskaya*

Pravda, URL). The newspaper has been recognized in the Guinness Book of Records as the daily newspaper with the largest circulation. *Trud* had a record circulation of over 21 million issues in 1990 (Intergum Techno, URL). The financial needs of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* dictated new standards in media functioning that implied eliminating Socialist Realism trends. The new advance has led to the survival and successful growth of the periodicals.

New content for new target audience

As covered in the previous units, the post-Soviet media had to undergo radical changes due to the political restructuring of the country. Ideological purposes became irrelevant. State ownership and its absolute financial support were replaced by privatization. The result of this was that the press became self-sufficient. Competitive newspapers have been forced to reconsider a target audience approach and give attractive content to readers. .

Postmodernist influence on mass media has affected methods of representing materials as well. Larissa Ryazanova-Clarke and Terence Wade in their book *Russian Language Today* note that post-totalitarian Russia had to undergo very important linguistic changes due to the political upheavals in the country. The rigidity of canons of the Soviet usage turned out to be repulsive for a Post-modern audience. “The universal language of Communism” had to be replaced;

...radical changes in social and political life gave a public voice to representatives of new social strata who lacked an adequate command of Russian and were at the same time relatively free of strict censorship and editorial constraint. This resulted in the infiltration of official registers by colloquialisms and jargon and of colloquial registers by clichés and other elements of officialese (Ryazanova-Clarke and Wade, 307).

The language of media was freed from former ideological standards. The style switched to a more colloquial one. Media workers tried to increase their audience by simplifying the language. Journalists of newspapers aimed at young generations, “cultivated a coarse kind of language designed to ‘win hearts and minds by its realism’” (Ryazanova-Clarke and Wade, 308). The next sections of the thesis will trace the media peculiarities of the new strategies in content construction imposed by postmodernism. Features of lexical representation will be discussed and compared with some Socialist Realism trends.

New content for new target audience of post-Soviet *Komsomolskaya Pravda*

The establishment of Russian postmodernism has affected the press. According to Alexander Genis the dilution of the Socialist Realist influence was followed by the emergence of new avant-garde trends. One of the major changes was deviation from ideology-centred content. The main task of the editorial staff of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* has become the gathering of as large an audience as possible in order to increase circulation. A wide range of materials was a potential solution to this problem. General news remained the main subject of the issue. In its mission statement, the editorial staff of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* refers to news as a “unique product, which is interesting for anybody despite their age, gender, social status, education and income” (*Audience of Komsomolskaya Pravda*, URL). In the same source, editors state that they believe news published *Komsomolskaya Pravda* is successful.

News coverage, however, was the essential goal of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* during the Soviet period as well. Nevertheless, it was decided that the old Soviet strategies were not suitable for a profit-oriented structure. Excessive ideological

influence and propagandistic motives filtered information and constantly represented it in a distorted way. A distortion of reality and news has been related to in media studies. There is a current opinion by media theoreticians that news “is not transparent, not unbiased” (Gill and Stafford, 134), in other words it is always someone’s version of events. However, media of the Soviet period in general failed to balance out various points of view on the same issue. This shortcoming of Soviet newspapers was reflected in a negative attitude toward the West and its influence.

Там хорошо, где мы есть. – It is good where we are. (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* 30 Mar. 1988: 4)

This is a typical assertion during the Soviet period. It carries a spirit of belief in the Communist utopia and a denouncement of the West. Based on its experience in the post-Soviet era, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* succeeded in overcoming the flatness and rigidity of its old version thereby managing to reach a wider audience by covering various materials, opinions and contrary points of view. Having consulted with the full content of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, I have chosen columns based on the essential criteria of a target audience analysis. Each column appears to be grouped by pieces of information that are targeted towards a certain social group of readers who can be determined and classified.

The Soviet press under the influence of Socialist Realism was constructing its materials in order to reach a specific target audience. The research I have conducted revealed an obvious shift from the specialized audience of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* of the Soviet period to current readers with mixed interests, different backgrounds and careers. Besides prevalent columns covering current events, the economy, business and sports, there are columns targeted at a new reader. The *Уроки Духовности* (*Spirituality Classes*) section covers spiritual issues and is intended for

a religious audience. The appearance of such articles in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, considered unacceptable for a Communist newspaper, is a significant indication of a transition from ideological Communist propaganda to freedom of speech. The fade away of Socialist Realism is also reflected in such columns as *Прямая линия* (*Direct Line*), *Читатель и газета* (*Reader and Newspaper*). These sections contain answers from politicians and celebrities to the audience's questions, letters from readers and supportive or objective reviews by the masses. The goal of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* in allowing people to speak out is to attract more readers who are willing to express their own opinion and become a part of the debates. This type of participating reader is often represented by a senior part of the population. The younger audience is suggested by information about celebrities, their lives, scandals and sensations in *Кумиры* (*Idols*), *Сенсация* (*Sensation*), *Скандал* (*Scandal*), and *Шок!* (*Shock!*). In order to assure the maximum attraction of the potential audience, the newspaper started covering sex, health issues, television, family concerns, crimes and consultations in the following sections: *Дрянная девченка* (*Bad Girl*), *Здоровье* (*Health*), *Премьера* (*Premier*), *Сериалы* (*Soap Operas*), *Дела семейные* (*Family Issues*), *Криминал* (*Crime*), and *Консультации* (*Consultations*). A wide range of genres signifies the different images of the target audience. Each reader has the freedom to think or speak now an illustration of a shift in ideology. The multiple structure of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* demonstrates that the periodical does not follow canons and patterns anymore that were the demand of Socialist Realism.

Diversity in materials proves that editors are not interested in a specialized audience. Their goal is to attract as many readers as possible. The new regime as it has been described caused the newspaper's loss of its former target audience –

members of Komsomol parties and young leaders. The analysis of columns shows that celebrities-centred articles have replaced coverage of materials about Heroes of Socialist Labour. The atheistic view of Communism has faded out and during for Soviet time, materials about religion have appeared. Various materials covered have ensured larger audiences. The high circulations (*Audience of Komsomolskaya Pravda*, URL) of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* during the post Soviet period is evidence of the growing popularity of the newspaper. The newspaper managed to survive through a traumatic transition from a fully state supported organ to a financially independent institution.

New content for new target audience of post-Soviet *Trud*

Postmodernism trends have affected *Trud* and changed its approaches as well. The increase of circulation through new content is also the goal for this newspaper as well. Having given up the practice of narrow-minded ideological content, *Trud* has taken a new direction toward a wide variety of materials. Obviously, the main focus of the newspaper remained the same as *Komsomolskaya Pravda's* – news coverage. Since the goal of *Trud* has become addressing a larger audience than just the working class, the editorial has shifted the content from absolute labour-oriented information to coverage of social and political life of society in any sphere. However, as we shall see further, *Trud* remains more conservative than *Komsomolskaya Pravda* in terms of content and representation. Similarly to the analysis of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, I have examined the columns of *Trud* as an attempt to classify the content and target audience of the newspaper.

My findings show that some of the columns surely assist in the enlargement of the audience. The section *Как живешь, глубинка?* (*How Are You, Village?*)

addresses issues and problems of country life, thus, increasing the popularity of *Trud* in the back lands. The column *Ваш адвокат – “Труд”* (*Your Attorney – Trud*) provides a regular dialogue devoted to the urgent legal problems of readers; professional specialists give legal advice to the readers of *Trud*. *Энергия России* (*Energy of Russia*) is a weekly section of related news items devoted to the problems of the fuel and energy complex in Russia. *Деньги* (*Money*) is a section which can be interesting for any reader of *Trud*. It raises questions concerning average citizens and seeks for answers related to the issues of living standards, the stability of Russian currency, future of foreign investments in Russia and ways to save money. *Спрос и предложение* (*Demand and Supply*) is published three times a month. The goal of this section is to protect the interests and rights of consumers and to help readers to understand the market. The attractiveness of this section is justified by the unbiased information about the quality of products and services, reliability of various companies and others. *Trud* devotes its content not only to economic and political issues. In the section *Музы не молчат* (*Muses are not Silent*), it covers the arts and all relevant information, such as coming concerts, plays and ideas by famous writers, producers, actors and actresses. Sections *Криминал* (*Crime*) and *Зона* (*Zone*) talk about accidents that occurred during the week and some tips on how to avoid being a victim. *Trud* publishes some information on legislation, letters from convicts and their families. The appearance of the latter is a sign that *Trud* attempts to reach freedom of speech and expression of ideas. The same can be seen in the section *Бывшее остается с нами* (*The Past Remains with Us*). The section contains some unknown facts about Russia, stories of common people, documents from confidential archives and hidden memoirs about some events that had never been revealed to the public. The collapse of the totalitarian regime was accompanied by the freedom of

the press, allowing these publications. The periodical controlled for so many years by the Soviet authorities, now under the influence of postmodernism started the column *Лампада (Icon Lamp)*. This section covers materials of religious character. *Trud* editors refer to this section as a response to “the long decades of vulgar atheism control” (Itegrum Techno, URL). It is targeted at readers who are seeking for faith and spiritual support. As we can see, the range of content of *Trud* has been enlarged, insuring higher popularity and the success of the newspaper.

Trud has chosen similar strategies as *Komsomolskaya Pravda* in structuring its content. However, the process of tabloidization has not affected *Trud* to the same degree as *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. The editors of *Trud* preferred not to follow Western canons, and preferred a conventional style in some degree. We do not see any materials devoted to the life of Hollywood celebrities, sex or scandals in their issues. Entertainment is pursued in the publication of Guinness Book records, humorous real life stories, jokes and others. To achieve more universality and meet the interests of a larger audience *Trud* publishes gardening articles in the *Усадьба (Farmland)* section and materials written by students in the section *Смугородок (Campus)*. As we can see Western standards are not always pursued by the Post-Soviet media.

The collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in the fade away of Socialist Realism’s influence on the press. The emergence of Russian postmodernism affected the media by destroying the rigid canons of the totalitarian regime. The newspapers switched from ideology-centred materials to a wide range of topics in order to increase the audience. The diversity of content in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* shows that editorials in both newspapers do not set a goal to target a certain group of readers anymore as was accustomed in Socialist Realism. Moreover, their goal is not

to eliminate any potential reader from the audience. The mix of styles in each newspaper demonstrates that postmodernism breaks down the distinction between pop-culture and high-culture. As Strinati believes the border between the two phenomena disappears (Strinati, 422). The slight difference in the content of *Trud* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, however, does not reflect on the popularity of the newspapers. Both periodicals have managed to survive and prosper in the media market.

Introduction of the Internet versions of newspapers

Nadia Mankovskaya in the book *Esthétique postmoderne* notes that Russian postmodernism with all its current innovations is still highly politicized, the result of the influence of Socialist Realism. In the 1990s Russian postmodernism started exhibiting obvious commercial, mass-cultural tendencies characterized by entertaining overtones. However, Mankovskaya does not see the commercialization of media as the end of postmodern evolution. Mankovskaya believes that the emergence of the Internet is the next step for postmodernism in the XXI century. She sees new evolutionary trends in the interactivity of Cyberspace (Mankovskaya, URL).

The emergence of the Internet into our lives has brought new perspectives for media development. David Lyon argues that computer technology plays an important role in our society and can radically affect all spheres of our lives (Lyons, 384). Frank Ellis believed that information technology has made possible all the activities that we refer to as making up the post-industrial era. According to him it includes research, design, marketing and others (Ellis, 5). *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* have achieved success in surpassing the financial difficulties that occurred after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Encouraged by their achievements both periodicals

introduced online versions of their newspaper, creating an opportunity for the further evolution of Russian postmodernism.

Russian media effectively deploys the technological possibilities of the Internet today. The World Wide Web allows maximum involvement and participation of the audience online. Accessibility of the Internet often causes “confusion over time and space” defined by Strinati as one of the features of Postmodernism. Interactivity allows for the graphic and colourful representation of materials and consequent “emphasis on style at the expense of substance and content”, one more post-modern peculiarity.

Komsomolskaya Pravda and Trud online

Encouraged by their success the editorial staff sought for further development. The newspaper introduced its website in 1998 (In The Press, URL). The site of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* serves as a supplementary addition to the print version of the newspaper. All the resources are reviewed daily and news columns are updated online almost every hour. The site began to cover materials related to politics, economics, culture, sport and others. At the outset there were six staff employees working on the online issues. As “Manifest” Internet Advertising Agency (Manifest, URL) states on the site of the Russian Press Centre (InThePress, URL), every month five hundred and forty thousand readers visit the site. Irina Chefranova – the director of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*’s site was quoted by the same sources as saying:

“Our site is in the top ten of Rambler Top-100¹⁵. The dynamics of site hits and audience quality of www.kp.ru allows us to qualify the site as an attractive advertising arena”.

¹⁵ The biggest rating system in Russia (Rambler, URL)

The online *Komsomolskaya Pravda* turned out to be a successful addition to its print version.

The technical capabilities of the Internet allowed implementation of new and distinctive possibilities from the technological era for postmodernism evolution. As mentioned above, the audience immediately appreciated online accessibility. According to the statistical data, 2.73 million pages are downloaded monthly (InThePress, URL). The accessibility of the *Komsomolskaya Pravda* materials online allows access to the current sections, *Гостевая книга* (*Guest Book*) and *Форум* (*Forum*). The modern political regime offers freedom of speech to the masses in various representations. *Гостевая книга* allows readers to publish their comments, questions and concerns. *Форум* is a more organized form of discussion, reviews are grouped by subject, styled after Western Internet Chat rooms. Neither would be possible to recreate on paper due to the amount of space they occupy. Technological features are an advantage of the Internet, giving more possibilities for postmodernism development. Many other technical aspects apply to the columns *Знакомства* (*Dating*), *Слайд-шоу* (*Slide show*), and *Астропрогноз* (*Horoscope*). An interactive mode, anonymity and comparatively quick online updating are indispensable features for the post-Soviet audience with its increased demands.

Trud introduced its Internet version in 1999 (*Trud*, URL). Like *Komsomolskaya Pravda* online, the site serves as a supplementary addition to the print version of *Trud*. All the information is updated on a regular basis. A news line is updated almost every 30 minutes. The site does not contain any statistical information on its usage, however the high activity of users in forums and guest books demonstrate the popularity of the site.

As well as *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, *Trud* has taken advantage of the technological advancements of the Internet. Online consultations with professional psychiatrists, forums and guest books allow accessibility, immediacy and anonymity to the readers. A frequently updated weather forecast, currency exchange rates and also the opportunity to subscribe for regular news updates are signs of this new technological influence on media.

The Post-Soviet generation does not have to have strong beliefs in any one organization as it was during the Soviet reign. After the collapse of the Soviet Union Communism ideals lost their value. Enthusiastic slogans and political calls did not appeal to the public. Besides the change in target audience and new content, media needed a different approach in information delivery in order to meet the new era's requirements. The Internet has met those requirements and managed to start a new stage of media history under the influence of postmodernism.

New Strategies of Post Soviet Media

Previous units described some Postmodernist tendencies in Russian media and the transition of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* from being tools of the Communist Party to successful enterprises armed with new content, with the addition of one of the latest technological achievements – the Internet. The powerful combination of two novelties, however, would not be as successful if the editorial staff did not employ the capabilities of other formal devices: visual, lexical and syntactical representations are combined with traces of the Socialist Realist, along with strong narrative. The aim of this unit is to examine the combination of these techniques and understand their success.

Title Representation of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud*

A complete turn around of contents would assume new newspapers and therefore different titles for *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud*. However, both of the periodicals chose to keep their titles.

The title of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* is a significant factor in the shaping of readers' expectations. It is informative in showing us what the newspaper used to be about. The word "pravda" (truth – Rus.) had an expanded meaning during the Soviet Period. It implied relationships to Socialist Realism and relevant issues. Despite its new approaches to content and representation, modern *Komsomolskaya Pravda* has kept its original title. The same font of the title is a shorthand way of conjuring up particular associations in the readers' mind. The graphology remains constant in print and Internet versions, which allows an easy identification of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* by the audience.

The title style of the weekly supplement *Tolstushka* (*Fatty* – rus.) is more colloquial. The newspaper has added some humour in order to attract young readers. The title was modified visually in order to achieve an effect of novelty. Traditional fonts remained the same for most of the letters from the old issues of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. The title images of state awards such as: the Orders of Lenin, the October Revolution, the Great Patriotic War and the Orders of Glory are still illustrated. Devoted readers could feel that the newspaper has not abandoned its historical past and there is still a connection to Socialist Realism trends. The last syllable of the word *PravDA* (truth – rus) was written in different font, size and colour (See Figure 1). This technique created a play on words emphasizing the word

“DA” (Yes – Rus.). An exclamation mark is used to promote an enthusiastic spirit, echoing the Socialist past. A new subheading “A Newspaper Which Can Be Read All Week” replaced the old Communists’ slogans. It became clear from the subtitle that *Komsomolskaya Pravda* - “*Tolstushka*” was now targeting at much wider audience but still wanted to appeal to its readers from the Soviet period.



Как
«матерятся»
ПОЛИТИКИ

Жирову
сделали
НОВОГОДНИЙ
ПОДАРОК

САМЫЙ БОЛЬШОЙ
27
МЛН ДОЛЛ.
США
в месяц
в России и СНГ
ISSN 8753-433X

Русская теща
Джеймса Бонда
ПОИТ ЕГО
ВОДКОЙ



Стр. 24 - 25

КОМСОМОЛЬСКАЯ
ПРАВДА!



19 - 26 декабря 2003 г.

ПЕТРОСЯН ВОРУЕТ ШУТКИ У КВН

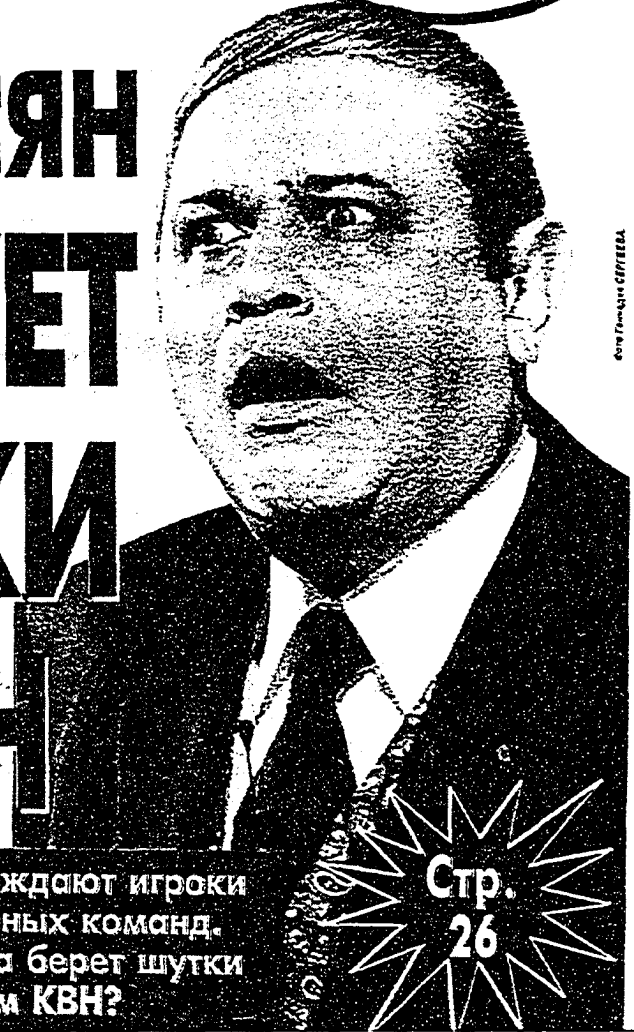


ФОТО ГЕОРГИЙ СЕРГЕЕВ

Так утверждают игроки
популярных команд.
Но откуда берет шутки
сам КВН?

Стр.
26



(Figure 1)

Trud did not abandon its Socialist past and change its title. The title of the newspaper was meaningful during the Soviet period and was associated with respect

and carried a high value. It implied the pride of the Soviet people and the determination to build the Communist future. The graphology of the title remained the same in the online version, helping readers to associate it with the *Trud* of the Soviet era. The editors of *Trud* have had a moderate approach to the establishment of online *Trud*. Limited changes to the title representation are reflected only by the disappearance of the images of state awards the newspaper had previously earned.

The remarkable reputations of the Soviet *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* played a significant role in the formation of newspapers' standing as independent media. Both periodicals echo with their Socialist Realism past; the old titles made the online versions of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* associate with the popularity of their Soviet predecessors. The visually modified version of the title in *Komsomolskaya Pravda's* weekly supplement offers a novelty spirit to the audience, suggesting postmodernism trends.

Front Page: Layout and Graphology of *Trud* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda*.

The previously described new content of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* required new modes of representation in order to appeal to public. The front page of the newspaper is its exterior side, which should be as visually appealing and enticing as possible. The selling capability of any newspaper depends on the visual and textual arrangements of its front page, which is supposed to attract the consumers' attention. Linda McLoughlin, the author of *The Language of Magazines*, calls a front page "the most important advertisement (McLoughlin, 5)". The Internet home pages of both newspapers play similar roles with their front pages. As selling capability depends mostly on the effect of the front page on a potential reader, the same way the first Internet page we open plays an important role in attracting an audience. The

importance of this function requires thorough planning and the close attention from the editorial staff.

The Soviet press did not pursue the goal of expanding its circle of readers in order to increase profit. Newspapers disseminated the ideas of the Communist Party, reflected in the structuring of front pages. Neither *Trud* nor *Komsomolskaya Pravda* attempted to achieve attractiveness for their cover pages by publishing images or materials that were not related to politics. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* of the 29th of February allotted most of the front-page space to State Decrees (1939). *Trud* published the chronology of the Party Congress and statistical data from the budget of the Soviet Union (*Trud*, 26 May 1939). Most of the articles on the Soviet front pages are published in full instead of giving only an insight into what materials are published inside the issue. As we can see Socialist Realism created a canon for front pages. The canon implied a priority to issues related to the internal political activity of the country and were absent of entertaining materials on cover pages.

The rise of postmodernism and its influence on media changed approaches to the arrangements of front pages. A modern text producer tries to put a lot of information into limited space in order to tell as many readers as possible what is interesting for them in the newspaper. This is the reason why only the most urgent and interesting materials are published on the cover. Materials are not fully published on coverpages, but rather in a preview mode. Due to the small amount of space and necessity to make a front cover as efficient as possible the editors also make good use of underlining, emboldening and a variety of font sizes and styles.

ПОЖАР В САМОЛЕТЕ ТУШИЛИ МИНЕРАЛКОЙ. (FIRE ON THE
PLANE WAS PUT OUT WITH BOTTLED MINERAL WATER)
(*Komsomolskaya Pravda* 23 Dec.2003)

The cover line is written in big red letters and the same font; however, the “bottled mineral water” is highlighted in white on a grey background of the image. The incompetence of flight crewmembers and insufficient availability of fire extinguishers are intended to draw reader’s attention (See figure 2). *Trud* seems to have more consistency in the styles and fonts applications. Using black and white only, it does not resemble a magazine (See figure 3).



(Figure 2)

Простые правила президента

Вчера Владимир Путин почти три часа общался с россиянами в прямом эфире

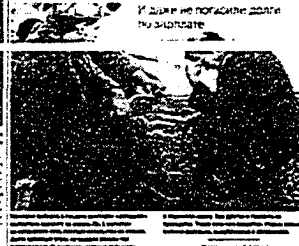


Вчера Владимир Путин почти три часа общался с россиянами в прямом эфире. Президент ответил на вопросы граждан, касающиеся экономики, социальной политики, внешней политики и других вопросов. Путин подчеркнул, что его главная задача — обеспечить стабильность и развитие России.

Жак Ширак махнул платком



Шахтеров спасли, чтобы дожить



Экспресс-новости

Минус 700 функций
В течение года планируется сократить количество функций органов государственной власти на 700 единиц.

Ромик будет молод всегда



Ромик будет молод всегда. Мальчик, страдающий редким заболеванием, продолжает жить благодаря современным медицинским технологиям.

Последние Патриарха

Последние Патриарха. Церковные и общественные деятели вспоминают о жизни и деятельности последнего Патриарха.

Озеро снова болотом

Озеро снова болотом. В результате загрязнения окружающей среды озеро превратилось в болото.

Заблуждены в бильярдной

Заблуждены в бильярдной. Расследование показывает, что в бильярдном клубе происходили странные события.

Террористок нельзя опровергать

Террористок нельзя опровергать. В ходе расследования террористической деятельности женщины.

Завод проглотит из пенсион

Завод проглотит из пенсион. Финансовый кризис угрожает существованию предприятия.

ЧИТАЙТЕ В СЛЕДУЮЩЕМ НОМЕРЕ:

ЧИТАЙТЕ В СЛЕДУЮЩЕМ НОМЕРЕ: В следующем номере журнала будут опубликованы материалы о развитии экономики России, о социальных проблемах и о внешней политике.

(Figure 3)

The monotony and repetition of style on Soviet front pages dictated by Socialist Realism have been replaced by new trends of postmodernism. Emboldening, or highlighting the intriguing parts of sentences is one widely used technique of the current press. Linda McLoughlin, working on front pages of magazines (McLoughlin, 25), attaches importance to the location of text. According to her study the top left hand corner is the prime position as in our culture we learn to

read from left to right, and from the top to the bottom of the page. Having analyzed numerous issues of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud*, I conclude that most of the headlines of high importance are given this prime position.

Герои России не хотят воевать в Чечне. – Russian Heroes Do Not Want to Fight in Chechen War. (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*_13 Mar. 2002)

The focus is on a worldwide problem – terrorism, therefore the text producer has chosen to print this cover-line in the prime position (See Figure 4). The same can be seen in *Trud*. Significant news materials are placed in the left top part of the page (See Figure 5).

Unlike its print version, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* online avoids partial brightening of headlines. All headings in the material are fully emboldened and subheadings italicized (See Figure 6). Such consistency in headings is a distinctive feature of the Internet version and reflects the consistency of Soviet newspapers. Website designers believe that overdone text can lead to a quick eye tiredness and concentration difficulties for users. The online version of *Trud* contains more colourful content from its print counterpart. The simplicity and austerity that characterize the print version would not be appropriate for the Internet and would significantly lower the popularity of the website. Despite the differences in style, print and Internet versions *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* allot a significant part of publishing space to images and visual graphs.

Layouts of the Internet pages of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* do not resemble their print originals. The print newspapers tend to have chaotic structures placing materials according to their priorities and space they occupy, as each page should be filled out and at the same time well arranged. Whereas the Internet versions copy the Soviet newspapers structure and allow more organized layouts, as

each heading is linked to a separate page containing the material itself. Both online newspapers contain the images of the Socialist state awards they earned during the Soviet period (See Figure 6 and 7).

ГЕРОИ РОССИИ НЕ ХОТЯТ ВОЕВАТЬ В ЧЕЧНЕ Стр. 4

ПИРУЕТ ОПИКЕРА МИРОНОВА Стр. 3

КУСТАНАЙСКУЮ ОБЛАСТЬ ЗАТОПИЛО Стр. 5

КОМСОМОЛЬСКАЯ ПРАВДА
СРЕДА 13 МАРТА
26 МИЛЛИОНОВ
БОЛЬШОЙ ТИРАЖ В РОССИИ И ЗА РУБЕЖОМ

Номер телефона террориста № 1 - 00873-682-505-331

ПОЗВОНИТЕ БЕН ЛАДЕНУ!

ПОЧТИ ДЕШЕВЛЕ

Вчера выяснилось: спецслужбы США давно знают номер личного мобильного главного врага Америки. Почему же они до сих пор не поймали Усаму?

МАГАЗИН ЗДОРОВЬЯ
САХАРНЫЙ ДИАБЕТ БОЛЕЕТ НЕСЛАДКО
ТЕЛ.: (795) 165-77-65

Услуга (в контроле) проплатил за телефон на год и вперед.	Курс валют:	Доллар США - 152,10 тенге	Евро - 122,73 тенге
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СТР. 2

(Figure 4)

СРЕДА, 17 ДЕКАБРЯ 2003 ГОДА

ТРУД

2 стр. 5 стр. 7 стр.

№ 233 04450 ЦЕНА В РОССИИ 7 КОПЕЕК

НАШ АДРЕС В ИНТЕРНЕТЕ: HTTP://WWW.TRUD.RU

Дороги без дураков

транспортная стратегия требует 20 млрд. долларов в год
Российская казна потянет только пятую часть этих денег



Российские дороги — крупнейшее слабое звено Российской экономики», — на этой неделе, тратит до 70 млрд. долларов ежегодно в год. Большая ее часть приходится на содержание дорог. Планируется начать в этом году масштабную программу замены изношенного транспорта в России до 2023 года, восстановлению изношенного транспорта России, обновление парка авиационной техники.

Как известно, дорожные программы в России в последние годы выделяются в отдельную статью бюджета. В 2003 году — до 200 млрд рублей, в 2004 году — до 250 млрд рублей, в 2005 году — до 300 млрд рублей.

Темпы, с какими восстанавливаются российские дороги, зависят от финансирования. В 2003 году в России было выделено на дорожные работы 200 млрд рублей, в 2004 году — 250 млрд рублей, в 2005 году — 300 млрд рублей.

Согласно транспортной стратегии Российской Федерации, к 2010 году необходимо обеспечить транспортную доступность всех населенных пунктов России. Для этого требуется вложить в дорожное строительство около 20 млрд. долларов в год. Российская казна потянет только пятую часть этих денег.

МАК ПРИРОДНАЯ РЕНТА СТАНОВИТСЯ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОЙ

Он считает, что «максимум» Россия может получить от нефти — 100 миллиардов долларов в год.

Владимир Путин

ЖИТЬ В МОСКВЕ И ОСТАТЬСЯ ЗДОРОВЫМ — ЭТО НЕПРОСТО

Многие считают, что Москва — это город для здоровых.

Александр Горюнов

КОГДА Я СЫГРАЛ МОЛЛЕРА, МНЕ ПРЕДЛОЖИЛИ ВСТУПИТЬ В ПАРТИЮ, КОММУНИСТЫ НЕ ОТКАЗАЛИ МНЕ

Владимир Путин

Что делать с Саггемом?

Этим вопросом задается не только в Вашингтоне



Ваша задача — обеспечить безопасность США. Это означает, что вы должны быть готовы к любому развитию событий. Вы должны быть готовы к тому, что Саггем может сделать что-то, что будет угрожать безопасности США.

Сейчас в мире нет ничего невозможного. Саггем может сделать что-то, что будет угрожать безопасности США. Мы должны быть готовы к этому.

Пограничников выманули и расстреляли

В Дагестане произошли массовые убийства пограничников



В Дагестане произошли массовые убийства пограничников. Пограничники были выманены и расстреляны. Это произошло в районе села...

В Дагестане произошли массовые убийства пограничников. Пограничники были выманены и расстреляны. Это произошло в районе села...

Экспресс-новости

«Персей-1» затонул у Сахалина

Вместе с 12 пассажирами самолета в Охотском море затонул самолет «Персей-1». Самолет упал в Охотском море у берегов Сахалина.

В городе закончился газ

В городе закончился газ. Жители города остались без газа. Это произошло из-за аварии на газопроводной линии.

Высоким слогом русского романа

Высоким слогом русского романа. Роман написан в высоком слогом русского языка. Это произведение является шедевром русской литературы.

Снегурочка, нажми на тормоза!

Снегурочка, нажми на тормоза! Снегурочка должна быть осторожна. Она должна быть готова к любому развитию событий.

Голенищев считает себя мэром

Голенищев считает себя мэром. Голенищев считает себя мэром города. Это произошло из-за его действий на посту мэра.

ЧИТАЙТЕ В СПЕЦИАЛЬНОМ НОМЕРЕ:

ЧИТАЙТЕ В СПЕЦИАЛЬНОМ НОМЕРЕ. В этом номере вы найдете много интересной информации. Это издание посвящено...

(Figure 5)

ВЫБЕРИ СВОЙ ФОНД!

2 октября 2004


МЫ НЕ БУДЕМ МОРОЧИТЬ ВАМ ГОЛОВУ!

Покрываем все зубы французским противокариозным фторлаком – 400 руб.

ст. м. "Университет", пр-т Вернадского, д. 2/10, тел. 151-02-34, ежедневно. Срок предложения ограничен до 15 ноября

Мисс "КП" Знакомства Форум Гостевая книга

НЕГРОМКАЯ ДАТА



Джентльмен удачи Савелий Крамаров

В среду популярному актеру исполнилось бы семьдесят лет. Сегодня вечером на Первом канале - фильм о нелегкой судьбе веселого человека

63,54	1,0079	
Cu	H	Ag
63,546	1,00794	107,8682
12,01115	ZANESSI	15,999
C	БИТОВАЯ ТЕХНИКА	O
12,0107		15,99903
40,08	55,847	
Ca	Fe	Pt
40,078	55,845	195,084

Бытовая техника

(Figure 6)



(Figure 7)

The new design of print media is a sign of the Postmodernist influence on newspapers. Visual imperatives become important to increase the target audience, often by choosing style and representation over the content. However, some features of the Soviet canons are still reflected in the structuring of the Internet *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud*. Comparison of the Internet and print versions of the periodicals have demonstrated the Postmodernist trends in Russian media, resulting in a mix of Socialist Realism and avant-garde innovations. Despite similarities and the same content, online newspapers had to go back to the Soviet canons in constructing their pages in order to achieve maximum attractiveness and success among readers.

Syntactical Representation

Keeping up with the demands of the post-Soviet audience and the new market economy has not been an easy objective. Financially independent newspapers encountered severe competition that did not exist during the Soviet period. The goal of each periodical has become to survive and make profit as a business enterprise through the increase of its audience. Front pages, which serve as an advertising device for each issue underwent significant changes. The editors had to review approaches to constructing headlines as the main indicator of a newspaper's content. Simple statements are no longer efficient for providing an insight into the meaning made in texts. The variety of newspapers and periodicals available has placed the reader in the position of consumer. A creative approach to syntactical structure proved to be an efficient tool that deviated from the conventional *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud*. This approach imparts an emotionally expressive touch, reflecting the entertaining style of present media.

Having analyzed *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud*, I classified the headings into four types that occur in both versions of the newspaper – print and online:

1. Imperative.

Imperative headlines are in the form of appeals or request. This type of headline has a close connection with the Socialist Realism period. The Soviet press was disseminating propagandistic materials, often characterized by orders and commands. The Socialist Realism influence has left its traces in imperative headlines in the modern press. However, as we shall see further, most of the imperative headlines contain parody, irony and humour.

The imperative style of headlines of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* makes a connection between the readers and stories covered by the newspaper.

Personalization creates a ‘talking to the audience effect’. Absolute personalization as a technique is often accompanied with various intertextual connections. The following example has a momentous effect on readers by ironic reference to cell phone rates advertisement.

ПОЗВОНИТЕ БЕH ЛАДЕНУ! Ночью – дешевле (CALL BIN LADEN!
Low night rates) (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* 13 Mar. 2002)

This headline introduces information that the American government knows the cell phone number of Osama Bin Laden. Despite the seriousness of the material, the article has a humorous touch, grabbing the attention of the audience by associating a frequently heard phrase from cell phone campaigns.

2. Interrogative.

Interrogative headlines are in the form of questions and inquiries. The analysis of the Soviet press has revealed that this type of headlines was not typical for the newspapers of that period. The government-controlled media was encouraged to suggest only strong narrations in their materials. Interrogative style implied uncertainty and unnecessary entertaining emotionality.

The emotionality of the new *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* has become a new distinctive feature of the representation of materials during the post-Soviet era. The intention of interrogative headlines is to intrigue readers and send them an invitation to learn the results of a research project or even conduct their own investigation. The following example is trying to intrigue the audience.

ГОТОВИЛОСЬ ЛИ ПОКУШЕНИЕ НА ПУТИНА? (Was There An Assassination
Attempt On Putin?)(*Komsomolskaya Pravda* 28 Nov.2002)

This very promising headline alludes to a top-secret materials reference. It is obvious that such material would not appear in the *Komsomolskaya Pravda* of the Soviet

period. Today however, the interests of the audience are given a priority, freedom of speech helps to assure success of the issues.

Что делать с Саддамом? (What To Do With Saddam?) (*Trud* 17 Dec, 2003)

As we can see, the colloquial intonations created by interrogative sentences apply to articles of any character, making their titles sound more promising and entertaining.

Loosened censorship allow for celebrity gossip, which has been used more by *Komsomolskaya Pravda* than *Trud*. This technique is an enticement for a reader, who is highly influenced by a new flow of pop-culture and enjoys voyeuristic glimpses into other people's lives. The interrogative form creates an aura of mystery.

ТАРЗАНА МОЖНО КУПИТЬ НА НОЧЬ? – CAN YOU BUY TARZAN FOR A NIGHT? (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* 2-9 May. 2003)

This headline found in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* describes the daring attempt of a journalist to buy a sexual service from Tarzan¹⁶. A little investigation conducted by the journalist reveals that it either impossible or extremely difficult to receive paid sex from Tarzan. However, the headline does not directly state: It is impossible to buy Tarzan for a night. Text composers rather prefer formulating a heading in an interrogative style in order to intrigue the audience and not to disclose the answer.

3. Exclamatory.

Exclamatory headlines contain or imply exclamation. Exclamatory headlines, as imperative style, have close connections with the Socialist Realism period. The Soviet narrative was intended to appeal to the patriotic and enthusiastic spirit of the public. The usage of exclamatory sentences as headlines demonstrates the historic

¹⁶ Tarzan is the most popular strip dancer in Moscow. A scandalous character of the material is reinforced by the fact that he is a husband of Natasha Koroleva, a famous Russian pop singer (All Celebrities, URL).

traces of the Soviet press. Unlike their ideology-oriented predecessors, most of the modern exclamatory headlines have entertaining tendencies.

The analysis of previous examples clearly shows that the articles in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, *Trud* and their online versions have shifted towards entertainment-oriented methods. Headlines of the newspaper as well as online articles have a complex function to give readers a sense of amusement and easily absorbed content. All headings are used to express surprise, alarm, shock, scandalous articles or a strong opinion and can be accompanied by an exclamation mark. My analysis of online and print versions of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* has revealed a low usage of exclamatory sentences. This phenomenon can be explained by an attempt of editors to avoid overemphasis due to the exclamatory nature of any article title.

4. Declarative.

Declarative headlines are headlines in a form of plain statements. The majority of the sentences used as headlines in online and print versions of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* are declarative. However, the text composers do not focus on the structure of statements but rather on strong lexical selection. Headlines of this type are intended to strike the audience with the hidden meanings behind the words. These cases are examples when lexicographic representation is chosen over structural strategy as dominant in declarative headlines. Detailed analysis of word choice and language tricks is discussed in the next section: Lexical Representation: Tricks of Languages.

Lexical Representation: Tricks of Languages.

We have witnessed a tremendous transformation of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* from being Communist ideological tools to post-Soviet pop-culture apparatuses. As covered in previous sections, the new era has brought new requirements for the newspaper as a financially independent organ. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* have directed their forces from educational targets toward the entertainment sphere.

Postmodernism influence on mass media has affected methods of representing material. Larissa Ryazanova-Clarke and Terence Wade in their book *Russian Language Today* note that post-totalitarian Russia had to undergo very important linguistic changes due to the political upheavals in the country. The rigidity of canons of the Soviet usage turned out to be repulsive for the Post-modern audience. The language of media was freed from the ideological standards. The style switched to a more colloquial one. Media workers tried to increase their audience by simplifying the language. Journalists of newspapers aimed at young generations, “cultivated a coarse kind of language designed to ‘win hearts and minds by its realism’” (Ryazanova-Clarke and Wade, 308).

Ryazanova-Clarke and Wade believe that social upheavals cause “non-standard, spontaneous and uncontrolled linguistic elements”. They name colloquialism and the simplification of language as major trends in Russian language evolution after the Soviet canons collapsed. Media had to undergo lexical evolution in order to meet the requirements of the new market economy. With a shift in goals the editorial staff had to review the language that materials are represented in. Given the immense competition mentioned, the text producers of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* use various linguistic techniques in order to attract the audience’s attention. This section of my analysis will focus on the strategies adopted by text producers in

order to attract our interest. The major strategy observed on the pages of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* is an infusion of humorous spirit, easily perceived by the audience and creating a more appealing atmosphere.

“Democratization” of media language resulted in the simplifying of language and “an abundance of non-standard forms and expressions” for the press (Ryazanova-Clarke and Wade, 310). Witty effects are achieved by means of figures of speech. Metaphorical expressions are used more frequently in print and online versions of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. The text composers create an implicit link between essentially different things; that still have some common relationship. Materials of a serious character like the article about the never performed maintenance of a dam are introduced by the heading:

Безопасность на честном слове (Safety Maintained by Words of Honour)
(*Komsomolskaya Pravda* 21 Oct. 2003: 11)

The Russian version refers to a childish expression Честное слово! – Upon my word, used by children in the absence of any argument. The following example gives insight to the article talking about exchange rates of American and Russian currency:

Где навар будет жирнее? (Where the nourishing soup will be fatter?)
(*Komsomolskaya Pravda* 6 Mar. 2002: 6)

As we can see the title does not resemble the content of the material and in fact sounds humorous. Metaphorical strategies are inherent in online version of the newspaper as well.

Бюджет-2004: кому вершки, а кому корешки (Budget-2004: who gets tops, who gets roots) (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* 12 Aug. 2003, URL)

The heading entitles the article covering the government’s decisions on planning the budget for 2004. The humorous reference in the title is made to a

famous Russian folk fairy tale story “Вершки и корешки” – “Tops and Roots¹⁷”. Covering the material on the election of governors in Russia, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* online published:

Кому из губернаторов мотать второй срок? (Which Governor will be Sentenced Twice?) (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* 16 Mar. 2004, URL)

We can observe a very unusual comparison of the position of a governor with a jail sentence. An unexpected semantic combination of the word “governor” and implied “jail” spices up this material representation.

A humorous effect is often achieved by mocking references to famous works, expressions, sayings and usage of their language and lexicon. Text composers use such parodies to imitate their style with a satirical and comic effect.

Эх, «Яблоко» куды котишься? (Ah, “Apple”, Where Are You Rolling to?) (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* 23 Dec. 2003: 6)

The reference in this example is made to a Russian folk song “Эх, яблоко” – “Ah, Apple”. The name of the Yabloko party, which means “apple”, has become a part of the play on words. It is interesting to point out that the language style strongly resembles Russian folk dialect, bringing a special tinge of humour. A playful tone is a major device for reaching the audience and has been shaped with colloquialisms.

The analysis of *Trud* has revealed that the newspaper has a more conservative approach to linguistic innovations. The newspaper still has a moderate style and avoids excessive entertaining tendencies. The language strategy of the modern *Komsomolskaya Pravda* differs from that of *Trud*'s. The direction *Trud* has taken is aimed toward a complete dilution of ideology-oriented messages without an obvious

¹⁷ A witty Russian fairy tale story about a bear and a fox, where the fox was distributing the harvest. The fox decided that it takes tops and the bear takes roots when they gathered wheat in harvest. To make it fair, they alternated it the next year, the bear took tops and the fox took roots. However, to trick the bear the fox planted turnips the second year.

tabloidization. Obviously, neither periodicals follow patterns or canons in establishing themselves as post-Soviet media.

Despite different linguistic approaches, the style of modern *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* does not resemble language constrained by Socialist Realism. “Democratization” of the language required simplicity of the delivered messages. The Socialist Realist demolition as a style resulted in the disappearance of such words as “communism”, “socialism”, “nomenclature” and others. The analysis of the lexical representation of print and online version of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* shows that the media are performing their major function – delivery of desired information to the masses in a way preferable to the audience.

Conclusion

In my thesis I explored the evolution of Russian media as exemplified by *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud*. The emphasis was on the Soviet ideology-oriented approaches to information delivery and the emergence of the Internet, a medium of postmodernist Russia. My findings concerned the appearance and features of postmodernism and possible ways it has affected and predefined the Internet as a medium today. The thesis uses Western research and tests its applicability to Russian media. The main argument of this study is that the Internet newspaper online is a Russian postmodernist phenomenon. The study focused on the theories of postmodernism and especially on the peculiarities of Russian postmodernism. The emphasis here is on the effects of postmodernism and the development of media theories.

In order to test the main argument, the main features and peculiarities of Russian postmodernism have been outlined. In his book *After the Future: The Paradoxes of Postmodernism and Contemporary Russian Culture* Mikhail Epstein traced the origins of Russian postmodernism, noting its cultural peculiarities and traditions. As we saw earlier, Russia indeed practiced an insistent promotion of reality myths that never actually existed. The most prominent example of produced reality is the Soviet Utopian society. The October Revolution in Russia has reinforced the urge to impose “the simulative nature of reality”. Mikhail Epstein claims that Socialist Realism can be considered “an essential postmodern trend” (Epstein, 1995, URL).

In his essay “Triangle: Avant-garde, Socialist Realism, Postmodernism” Alexander Genis identifies Russian postmodernism in relation with Socialist Realism. He proposes the following formula *Russian postmodernism = avant-garde*

+ *Socialist Realism* (Genis, 1999). Genis's formula suggests that postmodernism in Russia has developed from the avant-garde and Socialist Realism. The applicability of this formula to Russian media was achieved by outlining and tracing features of Socialist Realism and the avant-garde in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* including both print and online versions.

The analysis of *Trud* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* of the Soviet period demonstrated the high influence of Socialist Realism on mass media of that period. Features of Socialist Realism's influence on media, outlined by Jeffrey Brooks, were found in the *Trud* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* of the Soviet period. Driven by the Communist Party's ideology, both periodicals followed certain standards in the representation of materials. Articles of the Soviet period are characterized by tendencies to present information truthfully and at the same time reflect on the best of the Soviet life. The newspapers published propagandistic materials, promoting devotion and industrialization as keys factors for the establishment of Communism. The press carried out an educational function. The overall content of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* targeted a specialized circle of readers, rather than a diverse group or audience. *Trud* targeted the working classes and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* young Komsomol members.

Katerina Clark notes that the press under the influence of Socialist Realism tried to search for a positive hero. The control of authorities demanded standardization of the press. As we saw earlier, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and followed the pattern of furthering Communist dogma (Clark, 2000).

The demolition of the Soviet regime and consequent retreat of the influence of Socialist Realism caused new tendencies in mass media. In order to survive in the Post-Communist environment, the press took innovative directions non-existent

during the Soviet period. As we saw financial difficulties and the self-sufficient functioning of the press forced the newspapers to try to increase their audience in order to meet demands of a new market economy. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* started publishing advertisements, never acceptable for the Socialist press before them. However, *Trud* does not pursue the goal to make profit on advertisements. The amount of space allotted to ads is very small comparatively to *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. This proves that the propaganda model proposed by Herman and Chomsky is not fully applicable to the Russian media of the Post-Soviet period (Herman and Chomsky, 1988).

The increase of audience was achieved by expanding the content and meeting interests of a larger group of readers. This resulted in “a breakdown of a distinction between high and low culture”, defined by Strinati as one of the features of postmodernism (Strinati, 423). New content required innovative ways of representation. *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, highly affected by the process of tabloidization chose a variety of styles and visual imperatives. *Trud* receded from its Socialist standards, however, followed a moderate path of materials representation. Preference of style over content as another sign of the postmodernist influence on mass media is also observed. This is the point where the rise of new avant-garde trends is noted. Avant-garde is “often used to refer to people or actions that are novel or experimental, particularly with respect to the arts and culture (Wikipedia, URL)”.

Mankovskaya saw the introduction of the Internet and its technological possibilities as the next step of Postmodernist evolution. Encouraged by their achieved success, editors of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* introduced online versions of their newspapers. The Internet periodicals contain the same materials as their print counterparts; however, technological advantages are taken. Interactivity

reinforced the surpassing of style over content. Forums, chat rooms and guest books cause confusion over time and space, considered to be a Postmodernist phenomena (Strinati, 423).

Online and print versions of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* had to adopt lexical changes to comply with a new era. Larissa Ryazanova-Clarke and Terence Wade in their book *Russian Language Today* note that post-totalitarian Russia had to undergo very important linguistic changes due to the political upheavals in the country. The rigidity of canons of Soviet usage turned out to be repulsive for the Post-modern audience. As we saw, the language of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* were freed from these ideological standards. The style switched to a more colloquial one. Media workers tried to increase their audience by simplifying the language (Ryazanova-Clarke and Wade, 308).

Based on the formula of Alexander Genis, Post-Soviet innovations in media can be considered avant-garde trends. These trends took over media, attempting to erase signs of a Socialist past. However, decades of totalitarian reign did not allow Socialist Realism to leave without a trace. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* have their old titles. Online newspapers publish images of Soviet awards and follow consistency in styles of texts representation that characterized the press during the Soviet time. This unique combination of Socialist Realist residual conventions and avant-garde innovations has been referred as Russian postmodernism by Genis. Modern Russian media and particularly online newspapers are products of this combination.

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