

THE POWER OF DRESS IN CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN SOCIETY: ON GLAMOUR DISCOURSE AND THE EVERYDAY PRACTICE OF GETTING DRESSED IN RUSSIAN CITIES¹

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Large-scale social inequalities are established, not at the level of direct institutional discrimination, but through the subtle inculcation of power relations upon the bodies and dispositions of individuals. This process of corporeal inculcation is an instance of what Bourdieu calls *symbolic violence* or a form of domination which is “exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity.”
McNay 2000:36

Pierre Bourdieu’s work has shown that the process of corporeal inculcation constituting identities is not a uni-directional one to which individuals passively submit. Rather, individuals take an active part in the “praxis or living through of [social] norms” (McNay 2000:32).

Exploring the discourse and practices of dress in Moscow and two other Russian cities in 2004–5 and again in 2007–8, I was struck by the rigor with which dressed appearance was judged and relentlessly dismissed in case of non-compliance with specific criteria of adequacy. The phenomenon was especially pronounced with young urban professional Muscovites but not restricted to them. The people I encountered revealed a highly reflexive—and explicit—pragmatism in their use of clothing and

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accessories to assert their social status, economic performance, professional competence and—in the case of female respondents—femininity, or in other words, sexual attractiveness to men, while relentlessly consigning inappropriately dressed individuals into the realm of invisibility.

The focus of the present paper is on the functioning of dress in the production, reproduction, and transformation of power relations and the complex nature of the cultural resources which individuals and groups draw upon in this matter. I will study current basic dress discourse, which will be represented here by passages from interviews with three generations of middle-class women. I understand basic dress discourse and practice as micro-mechanisms of power (Foucault 1980[1976]), constantly subjecting individuals whilst empowering them in the sense that finding oneself to be the subject of a discourse endows one with a certain kind of knowledge and opens up a field of action. I will show how these techniques rely on the affective dimension of dress. I will discuss my findings against the background of Russian glamour culture and glamour ideology, and wider portrayals of current Russian society by Russian and non-Russian social scientists. In doing so I will show how the desires of individuals are made use of in the maintenance of power relations by two versions of capitalism: the post-industrial, post-modern version of Western capitalism on the one hand, and the specifically Russian one on the other. Thus I will offer an explanation for the difference in dress use and self-fashioning between Russia and the West that has been pointed out by Russians and Westerners alike. My explanation centers on the principal differences in the social role of the “spectacle”² as a societal game or performance in public space in Russian society and in Western ones.

This article is based on three years of research on self-fashioning by means of dress in present-day Russian society, in the course of which I conducted 60 guided interviews with people of various ages, educational, professional backgrounds, social aspirations, and self-definitions.³ I selected a wide range of participants using a snowball method and interviewed them on the role dress plays in their lives. The interviews were conducted in Moscow, Yekaterinburg, and a minor city near Moscow between 2004 and 2008.⁴

² I refer to the term “social spectacle” as coined and critically discussed by Guy Debord in *The Society of the Spectacle* (1995 [1967]), which according to the author marks the last stage of the commodification of social life (ibid.:32). “The spectacle cannot be understood either as deliberate distortion of the visual world or as a product of the technology of the mass dissemination of images. It is far better viewed as a *weltanschauung* that has been actualized, translated into the material realm—a world view transformed into a material realm” (ibid.:12–13). Pfaller (2008) offers a noteworthy critique of this analysis, which will be discussed in the last section of this paper and might shed light on the different approaches toward the “social spectacle” in Russia and the West.

³ Among them were a cleaning woman, a male miner, a female cloakroom attendant, a retired female nurse, a female school teacher, a male and a female artist of different generations, a female university professor, a female philosopher, a male sociologist, a retired female construction engineer, managers of both sexes from the film, tourism, advertising, and banking industries, a young male politician, two young female diplomats (one in Moscow, one in Yekaterinburg), a freelance personal image consultant, a female post-office clerk, a young female music teacher working in various odd jobs such as weaving wreaths for an undertaker, and many others.

⁴ Field research on the topic of “Getting Dressed as a Social Practice: the Function of Fashion

In the present paper, the focus is on those respondents who can roughly be categorized as urban middle class by income, occupation/education, and self-identification, although such a classification is not entirely satisfactory (see Remington 2010:1).⁵ It would be more informative to say that all the respondents quoted below—except for the retired chemical engineer—have a university degree and jobs in the service and creative industries. Their ages and incomes differ widely.

Methodologically, I am drawing on Foucauldian discourse analysis as operationalized for use in cultural analysis by Diaz-Bone (2006). I have explored the “knowledge system” that generates certain concepts (e.g. “taste”) and certain objects (e.g. “dress”) and the pertaining dress codes that shape people’s practices of self-fashioning and as a consequence their appearance. This “knowledge system” connects objects with concepts and themes (e.g. “dress” with “taste” and such discursive themes as “fashion,” “cosmetics,” “ecology,” “health,” “fashion,” “the workplace,” “the market,” and “competition.”)

SOME THEORETICAL PREREQUISITES

DISCOURSE, SELF-GOVERNMENT, POWER

I did not grow up in the Soviet Union, yet Russia is the object of my study. In order to avoid the “ethnographer’s gaze at the natives’ neck rings”—as a Russian friend defined my work on Russian dressing practices in a heated debate, I am primarily concerned in this paper with examining discourse as produced or reproduced by my respondents themselves. I will be searching for the integrating semantics of basic Russian dress discourse, or—in Foucauldian terms—its *episteme* (Foucault 1994:22). Therefore my focus is on recurrent narratives, topics, concepts, and arguments in my respondents’ statements concerning their use of dress in their day-to-day practices of shaping their appearance.

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⁵ Remington compares in his study various definitions of the “middle class” used by Russian sociologists, including Tat’iana Maleva, director of the Independent Institute for Social Policy in Moscow, who “has defined and measured the middle class as the group lying at the intersection of three sets of categories (represented as a Venn diagram): level of income and material well-being; occupational and educational status, and self-identification” (Remington 2010:1). According to Maleva’s definition (2008), “45% of the population could be classified as middle class on the grounds of income, 52% by possession of durable goods, and 30% by self-identification. On the other hand, only 19% were middle class by occupation and education, and only 5% could be classified as middle class if middle class status is restricted to those exhibiting all three properties. Another 15% share at least two sets of middle class traits” (Remington 2010:1). According to another model presented in Remington’s paper, “20–22% of the economically active population of cities—i.e., excluding pensioners—can be called middle class” (see Gorshkov and Tikhonova 2008:15, quoted in Remington 2010:3). Gorshkov and Tikhonova argue that an additional “third of the urban population form a ‘periphery’ of the middle class” (Gorshkov and Tikhonova 2008:16). These—according to the authors—“are people who lack one qualification to be considered middle class, usually income (ibid.: 20, quoted in Remington 2010:3).

Analyzing dress discourse, I hope to reveal how some of “the distinctive apparatuses and programs of governing which, working through particular regimes or games of truth, *aim to involve us actively in the government, management, and development of ourselves*” (Bennett 2003:54, my emphasis.) For this purpose I understand “government” as

any more or less calculated and rational activity, undertaken by a multiplicity of authorities and agencies, employing a variety of techniques and forms of knowledge, that seeks to shape conduct by *working through our desires, aspirations, interests and beliefs*, for definite but shifting ends and with a diverse set of relatively unpredictable consequences, effects and outcomes (Bennett 2003:47, quoting Dean 1999, my emphasis).

One of the apparatuses involving us actively in the government of our selves is the fashion industry⁶: it selects in the first place what will become available options for us to create an appearance, it loads garments with social meaning disseminated via the media, for the most part through the representation of garments in advertising (see Barthes 1990 [1967]). In this latter point the fashion industry partly intersects with the media as transmitters of pertinent knowledge.⁷ Other such “techniques and forms of knowledge” are found in the explicit and implicit dress-codes effective in the market—as a dimension of corporate cultures as well as a vital factor of individual self-marketing; in educational institutions and in the family; and last but not least it is also the ongoing anonymous processes of looking and being looked at in the street that involve us into ongoing processes of “self-government” (cf. Rose 2004:147).

Thus, power relations in Foucault’s conception are restricted neither to state power and politics in a narrow sense, nor to the relations between different social classes, nor to inter-individual relations. Accordingly, dress will not be discussed here on the level of only cultural politics, or class struggle, or interaction between individuals alone. Rather, I will try to integrate these levels. For Foucault, “power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation” among individuals who “are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power”; “it is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as

⁶ By fashion industry I mean—following Entwistle (2006:705–706)—the whole apparatus (or field in Bourdieu’s terms) of production (including designing, haute couture, prêt-à-porter and mass production) and distribution of clothes (fashion retailing and distribution) as well as the “critical relationships between production and consumption” (ibid.:705), where—according to Entwistle—the “buyers” come in with their selection practices through which they “qualif[y] and mediat[e] fashionable clothing” (ibid.:706). I also include in the field of fashion industry fashion shows and certain media as intermediaries between the production and consumption of clothes.

⁷ I am thinking, for example, of the great number of TV shows of the “before/after” kind, such as “Modnyi prigovor” with the grey eminence of Soviet fashion Viacheslav Zaitsev as supreme judge of taste on the Russian TV-channel ORT, or the “personal image consultants” that public figures inevitably have to consult.

individuals" (Foucault 1980[1976]:98). In this sense, everybody's dressed appearance is already a power effect. Following Foucault's suggestion to start analysis from the "micro-mechanisms" of power, the present study is an attempt to perform an

ascending analysis [...], starting from its [...] infinitesimal mechanisms, which each have their own history, their own trajectory, their own techniques and tactics, and then see how these mechanisms of power [in this case, on the level of everyday use of dress] have been—and continue to be—invested, colonised, utilised, involuted, transformed, displaced, extended etc. by ever more general mechanisms and by forms of global domination (Foucault 1980[1976]:99).

Bearing in mind all this, the case of dress seems to be an excellent example of Foucault's claim that *power* is not to be confused with *violence* or *coercion*; in contrast with these, it is being exercised where one person or group of persons "structures the field of action" of others, leaving the other room for manoeuvring; exerting power is "conducting the conduct" of the other (Bennett 2003:61), or indeed of oneself. In view of the illusion of freedom and self-determination individuals tend to claim with respect to their dressing habits, the public spectacle is an excellent example of a site and means of power exertion in the Foucauldian sense. The question I am addressing is: what kinds of power relations are at work and what cultural resources are being drawn upon by various groups and individuals in establishing/maintaining these relations in present Russian society? Who or what mechanisms are striving to colonize or utilize the infinitesimal mechanisms at work in the public spectacle performed by, among other things, everyday dressing practices?

POLITICAL CONTROL OVER APPEARANCE AND THE SOVIET STATE

People's use of dress is of obvious interest to political, economic, and cultural power elites. The ruling classes at all times and within all types of societies have striven for control over the subordinate classes' appearances by restricting certain uses of dress to certain groups. In Western Europe,

increasingly during the late Middle Ages and through the Renaissance, those at the top end of the class structure sought to police and regulate fashion, while those lower down periodically challenged or simply flouted such regulation. Among the motivations behind sumptuary laws was a concern to preserve class distinctions, enabling identification of persons at a glance (Entwistle 2000:88).

Modern totalitarian regimes strove to shape people's appearances by "educating" them in accordance with a predefined ideal: see e.g. Guenther 2004 on the Nazi attempt to construct an appropriate female image. Political attempts at controlling people's appearances were also part of the Soviet state's aim of creating a new, Soviet, lifestyle that would be distinct from the pre-revolutionary bourgeois as well as the traditional rural way of life (Gurova 2008:54–55).

Our "fashion" ought to be plain, comfortable, easy to accomplish, inexpensive, affordable to the woman worker and, above all, meet the requirements of clothing

in general, i.e. protect people from cold, dust and mud etc., while remaining elegant (ibid.:51, quoting an article from the widely read women's magazine *Rabotnitsa* no. 3/1924:30–31, "On dress and fashions"; my translation from Russian here and in all other quotes).

Gurova in her book on Soviet underwear (2008) presents a concise chronology of Soviet cultural politics, according to which highly experimental cultural policies of the 1920s, such as the attempt to design a new appearance for New Man by creating avant-garde dress designs, were never widely implemented, and by the mid-1930s were superseded by a cultural reorientation toward conservative ideals and a high degree of tolerance for a "bourgeois lifestyle" with its "chic, luxury, comforts, and pleasures" (Gurova 2008:57). Toward the end of the 1930s, a shift had taken place in cultural policy that led to the "Great Deal" between Stalin and the "middle class" whose support he needed. "According to this 'Great Deal,' the middle class provided tacit support to the regime, while the latter guaranteed material prosperity to the former" (Gurova 2008, 67).⁸ *Kul'turnost* (cultural refinement) had superseded "hygiene" as the cultural keyword. And "while in the 1930s it was the pre-revolutionary educated class that served as a lifestyle model, in the postwar period, role models were derived from the Western lifestyle and modes of consumption" (Gurova 2008:66–67). From the 1950s on, the "education of taste" via popular magazines such as *Rabotnitsa* (The Woman Worker), but also literary and other journals was part of a response to the heightened influence of Western fashions. The discursive strategies employed were meant to shape "a material culture as far as possible meeting the needs of the masses and expressing the nature of our great era," Nikolai Zhukov (1954:159) wrote in an article titled "The Education of Taste. An Artist's Remarks." Publications of this kind invoked "elegance," "convenience," "simplicity," "practicality," and "modesty" as the pivotal concepts of Soviet "taste" (see also Rusanova 1961:75; Zaitsev 1982; Kazarinova 1985:107). Arguments were often polemically directed against "degenerate Western fashions," yet Soviet fashion designers made active use of foreign fashion design while advocating "modesty" and "practicality" and warning young women not to stick out of the crowd and not to judge a person by her/his dressed appearance. Here are some more examples of this discourse:

How young women ought to dress. [...] your wardrobe should reflect individuality⁹, taking fashion into account without imitating it blindly. [...] It is not recommendable for a young woman to dress too "fashionably," flamboyantly,

⁸ Gurova is referring here to Vera S. Dunham's *In Stalin's Time. Middle Class Values in Soviet Fiction* (1979). Richard Sheldon in his introduction to the enlarged and updated edition of Dunham's book of 1990 sums up the notion that the social entity Dunham is referring to as "middle class" is rooted in prerevolutionary *meshchanstvo*. "The men of power were kin to it, the new bureaucrat and the stakhanovite, the new army officer and the new professional. They were all meshchane, pulled up from the bottom of society. Building upon this vestigial stratum, Stalin began during the thirties to create a new privileged class, a new bureaucracy, which owed its allegiance only to him" (Sheldon in Dunham 1990:XIX).

⁹ But by no means "individualism"! The two terms had clearly different discursive meanings.

garishly, attracting everybody's attention in the street. And it is always nice to see a young woman dressed elegantly, comfortably, simply and harmonically (*Rabotnitsa* 3/1958).

As mentioned above, a typical feature of this discourse were its polemics against capitalist fashion, accused of incapacitating people and depriving them of their sense of taste:

Capitalism has turned fashion into a speculation in aesthetic taste, its prostitution, the denigration of aesthetics, of arts. [...] No, standardized fashion is not only cheap, it is one of the most seductive seductions for women who have no taste. If a piece of clothing has become the norm, this means that everybody is wearing it. That is to say, it is "generally accepted," and if you decide to wear it, you can make no mistake—nobody will rebuke you for a color combination or shape. And if somebody does not like it, you can easily justify yourself: "That's what everybody is wearing!" (Rusanova 1961:66).

Vainshtein argues that Soviet dress codes "definitely contained a disciplinary component: obeying the dress code was interpreted as a manifestation of being a loyal citizen. Everything beyond the 'official' Soviet mass style was subject to regulation, which in fashion worked the same way as censorship did in literature" (Vainshtein 2007:105). "What is special about Soviet Russia in this respect," Gurova argues, polemically,

is that, alongside fashion, the media, and other institutions that would transmit the culture of the body in civilized societies, in Soviet Russia, for a long period, there were relatively rigid official frameworks regulating a large part of social life. This also applies to the spheres of appearance and the body, where the state revealed great activity in regulating everyday practices (Gurova 2008:76).

Gurova also points out that "Soviet discourse was striving to veil any desire to seduce behind the ideas of hygiene and modesty" (*ibid.*:75). What turned out to be modest was the effect of this discursive strategy. One more specific feature of Soviet/Russian society needs to be mentioned here in connection with the regulating strategies of the state: they were complemented by the peculiar mechanism of "social control [that was and still is] accomplished 'horizontally,' i.e. by the mechanism of everyone monitoring everyone else" (Gurova 2004:10).

Within the framework of such modern projects as the Soviet state, the endeavour of shaping new kinds of subjects was relatively centralized. In post-modern—and post-Soviet—conditions, the shaping of subjects is far more decentralized. It seems to be within the discretion of individualized "entrepreneurial selves" (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005). However, as I will argue in the following sections on glamour ideology and the role of the spectacle in Russian society, post-Soviet strategies of subjectification are still drawing upon the psychological effect of this peculiar Soviet dialectic of the rigid ethical requirement of "modesty" in conflict with the yearning for eroticized "flamboyance" and all kinds of visual status markers.

GLAMOUR IDEOLOGY

"Glamour" is a key concept of current Russian media discourse. In a thematic issue of the online bulletin *kultura* on "Glamorous Russia," Birgit Menzel (2008) characterizes "a mixture of the new elite's ostentatious self-representation and a universal cult of luxury, fashion and an exotic and erotic lifestyle promoted by the mass-media" (ibid.: 4) and very appropriately speaks of glamour as an "ideology": "Glamour has also become the official ideology, and not just a tactic, of 'bread and circuses' which plays a decisive role in job competition and is promoted by the political elite, especially the Putin administration" (ibid.: 4). One could even speak of attempts to establish glamour ideology as hegemonic in a Gramscian sense. Larissa Rudova argues as much when she claims that "glamour culture"—which she and other authors explicitly present as a phenomenon of the Putin era—is an "ideology of money, success, entertainment and conspicuous consumption" even promoted by the Putin elite by having its representatives, including Vladimir Putin himself, appear on TV and in glossy journals in expensive brand-name outfits (cf. Rudova 2008:2). As Rudova concludes, in doing so "Putin's regime" has "discouraged interference in politics" (ibid.: 2). I would add here that the Putin elite as a whole is striving to actively shape the way the majority is supposed to imagine reality—or more precisely, "their real conditions of existence" (Felluga 2003, quoting Althusser), which they are supposed to imagine as a huge spectacle they are all allowed to participate in, and if they have miserly roles in this spectacle this is not due to the undemocratic politics and excluding social mechanisms, but to their own poor performance.

These efforts seem to be successful, for, as Xenia Gusarova claims in the same issue of *kultura*, "Russia is exceptional in that the middle classes are also striving to keep abreast of 'glamorous' fashion" and that "many individuals spend the lion's share of their income—and not merely what is left over after buying necessities—on their external appearance" (Gusarova 2008:15). And finally, Olga Mesropova foregrounds the role of the media in the active promotion of glamour culture and its articulation with politics, noting with respect to the performance of Putin and Medvedev on the night of Medvedev's election on March 2, 2008, that

These patriotic appeals by Russia's two top politicians within the setting of a rock concert are highly representative of a recent Russian tendency to link politics with elements of popular spectacle and stardom. In their country's popular imagination, major politicians and celebrities alike have become dazzling personifications of style, wealth, social status, power, youthfulness and conspicuous consumption (Mesropova 2008:12).

In the same vein, Tat'iana Mikhailova, analyzing the functioning of Oksana Robski's popular novels, argues that Robski

reveals the meaning of glamour as a simulacrum of social mobility and a mirror of post-Soviet democracy. Perestroika and the decades that followed offered real (though highly risky) opportunities for social advancement to men and

women alike, independently of their original status, birth, or wealth. In the 2000s the rapid dwindling of social mobility and the ossification of the social structure go hand in hand with the rise of glamour as a substitute for dreams of social and economic mobility, dreams that once again, as in the 1970s–80s, appear unrealizable without the help of supernatural forces, in other words, *magic*, which, I remind you, is etymologically what the word “glamour” means.

Mikhailova also comments on “the function of glamour as an image of supreme symbolic power, a peculiar kind of political pantheon of the gods and demigods of post-Soviet Russia: everybody can touch upon their lives (this touch is called democracy), but it is only by miracle that one can enter the circle” (Mikhailova 2008:10).

Mikhailova’s observation is absolutely accurate: she clearly points out the ideological dimension of glamour culture by connecting the imaginary realm it creates with the contrasting social reality of limited social mobility. Participation in glamour culture—if only through wearing fake brand-name sun glasses—is illusionary communion with the “pantheon”.

Be glamorous! Be strong! Be rich! These are the principles that fill the moral and aesthetic vacuum of the early 1990s. Writing about dress and its symbolism, Linor Goralik (2007) characterized that period as “a Babylonian confusion of tongues,” referring to the collapse of the dress system as a language people had been able to read but which was destroyed by the near-complete breakdown of the commodity supply. It was what Irina Zhrebkina termed a “collapse of the symbolic order itself” that had come about with the disintegration of the Soviet Union. As a consequence—in Zhrebkina’s crushing judgment—subject formation had come to take place in a situation of immediate (“obscene”) violence that would come to constitute subject structure (Zhrebkina 2003:22).

If the Soviet subject was principally a “double” subject, with aspects visible on the level of *consciousness* and others invisible and located on the level of *desire*, for post-Soviet subjects it has become possible at last to render their invisible aspects visible (i.e. their formerly forbidden desires, needs, and instincts) (ibidem 2003:24).

Taking Zhrebkina’s thesis at face value, “glamour culture” could achieve its hegemonic status due to the fact that it allows desires morally disqualified in Soviet times not only to shed their ambivalent status but even to turn into a cultural imperative.

In fact, “glamour” is a notion hard to grasp theoretically. Stephen Gundle (2008) has offered a useful and differentiated analysis of the concept. Following Gundle, I see glamour as, crucially, “a performance or parade that has no meaning unless it is widely viewed” and “coming into existence only through the perception and reception of visual effects.” Thus glamour is

an image that attracts attention and arouses envy by mobilizing desirable qualities including beauty, wealth, movement, leisure, fame, and sex [...] it is the image of a category of big spenders and high consumers organized around these

values that is the social bearer of glamour. Directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, the attributes of this elite are made to appear imitable (Gundle 2008:389–390).

In this definition, the central feature of “glamour” is an image, and furthermore one that is characterized by “ambiguity,” “mystery,” and a hint of “transgression” (Gundle 2008:327). Gundle in his history of glamour convincingly demonstrates that there has always been a “gulf between the types of lifestyles associated with glamour and the modest and contained lives of the public,” a gulf that was imaginarily crossed by “cosmetics, fashion goods, accessories, and other goods that could be worn or carried,” and which has “fuelled the imagination,” for they “promised the immediate realization of a transformation of the self into something different and better” (Gundle 2008:389). We must bear these considerations in mind when turning to the interpretation of interview extracts below.

SOCIALIZED IN THE STALIN ERA

Although “Soviet dress etiquette in many respects was based on the imperative of programmatic poverty” (Vainshtein 2007:103), the notion of glamour, the “magic,” the “aura” emanating from luxury, from precious materials, elegant, erotic designs and splendid performances—and the awareness of their social effect—is present in several accounts. Those of my respondents who were socialized in the Stalin era and are now retired talked with surprising frankness about their past physical attractiveness and the ways and means by which they managed to dress splendidly—against all the odds of the Soviet clothing industry and against the dress discourse outlined above. Here is an example, as recollected by one of my interviewees. Tatiana Nikolaevna¹⁰ (born 1932), a former chemical engineer, started her working life in the early 1950s. At the time of the interview I conducted with her in Moscow in 2005, she was already retired, working as a cloak-room attendant to make ends meet.

Well, you know, at the institute I used to dress, how should I say? The men there used to say: Tania, *you dress flamboyantly*. [...]. *Bust size three*. Why not show that? A *fine figure*, flat belly, no fat, there was something to show. Well, that was unusual at that time. Either people did not have the means, or, I don’t know. Anyway, I dressed the way I liked. This was my kind of fashion.

Here is a memory of a later period by the same respondent:

That was the time when there were foreign currency shops. She [her sister-in-law, who worked abroad] did not give us foreign currency but some slips of paper, I forgot the name, equaling a certain amount of money, and I went to the foreign currency shop and bought [...] myself a beige dress, *woolen material, made in France*. Two pockets, one here and one there, silk lining, a belt of metal rings. When I appeared at the institute in this, they just gasped, ah, oh! It was obvious that the dress was *imported, expensive, and this was exactly what it ought to be*.

¹⁰ All respondents’ names have been changed to ensure anonymity.

Reading these lines, one is reminded of what was said above about the Stalinist “bourgeoisie” of the 1930s, when Tatiana Nikolaevna was a child. It was the chic and luxury of the *nomenklatura*, though accessible only to a small number of people, that shaped people’s imagination of elegance and luxury. Neither the didactic efforts of the media nor the humble clothing industry could do anything about this. However, not everybody was lucky enough to have access to the foreign currency shops. In everyday life, for a considerable number of intelligentsia members, the seamstress was a resource in their striving for an elegant, individual appearance, as Vainshtein (2007) states. For some of these women, who worked at home or at the home of their clients and who were recommended by word-of-mouth, this activity was also a way to conceal their aristocratic origins behind the image of the hard-working craftswoman and at the same time entertain their private business largely unnoticed by the authorities. The seamstresses took so little for their work that having a dress sewn this way was cheaper than buying a badly fitting and—as people perceived it—disgraceful piece of clothing in a shop. Along with the clothing they made to order, these dressmakers also passed on their aristocratic notions of taste to their clients (Vainshtein 2007:113). This was the way in which the idea of glamour survived Soviet asceticism and fuelled citizens’ imaginations.

Rather than interpreting Tatiana Nikolaevna’s perception of Brezhnev-era official discourse as oppositional, I would read it as an interesting take on a Soviet maxim that she might well have generally accepted: a modest appearance is fine for the majority, but in her own everyday life she “operates with exceptions to the rule arising from the contradictions and disjunctures between hegemonic-dominant encodings and negotiated-corporate decodings” (Hall 1980:137). The use of official discourse by Soviet citizens was much more complex than Westerners sometimes assume.¹¹

This we have to bear in mind when trying to understand the dressing practices of the decades that followed. Official Soviet discourse had shaped the aesthetics and

¹¹ It was not that people as a principle disqualified what they read, heard, and saw in the media. This becomes clear, for example, when one reads the art historian Tatiana Kruglova’s (2005) “Lyrical Preface” to her book on socialist realism:

Throughout the time that I was writing this book, I could not shrug off the feeling that there was not that great a divide at all between the heroes and heroines of the most classical works of *sotsrealism* and those real people that liberally oriented critics used to talk and write about so much. The characters of the most didactical Soviet works of art were constantly evoking memories of my relatives—typical Soviet people who had been workers and farmers for generations, of whom one grandfather fell victim to Stalin’s repressions and the other was a public prosecutor who signed death sentences, while their children were sitting in the same classroom at school and later got married. There were informers among them and reputable pioneers; members of the communist party and independents, they were fighting, building, healing, and there was not one single person among them who was a conscious opponent to the Soviet regime, the communist party, or who wished to live in another country. The world around them—to them—was not only simply normal, it was the only possible world. And although they did not adore Stalin, this did not make a fundamental difference. [...] Soviet arts shaped their horizon, values, and aesthetic tastes. They did not know Mikhail Bulgakov or read Boris Pasternak. This we have to bear in mind, for, in order to understand a person of another era, one must look for the place where arts and life overlap to form a common field (Kruglova 2005:7).

ethics of everyday life, even for those who trespassed against it. The mechanism at work here was very aptly described by Vail' and Genis (2003) with respect to the late 1960s, when Khrushchev's prophecy of "communism within 20 years" had turned into "the shortest joke." Thus, although people had long ceased to believe in that formula, it was when the Communist Party itself officially abandoned communism as an ideal in its party program of 1969, "that the role this ideal had played in Soviet society for almost a decade became obvious. [...] It turned out that it was possible not to believe in communism, but it was not possible to live without this 'disbelief'" (Vail' and Genis 2001:285).¹² Thus official discourse on the one hand, and people's desires and everyday practices on the other, created a peculiar dialectic and—as I would claim—the breeding ground for the exploitation of people's desire for "glamour" in recent years.

In the late 1950s, with the Iron Curtain becoming porous and "bourgeois chic" tending to be negatively associated with Stalinism and classified as *petit-bourgeois* (*meshchanstvo*) by the romantic enthusiasts of the Thaw period, fantasies of "bourgeois chic" gave way to such Western fashions as were transmitted by Italian and French cinema as well as Polish and Estonian fashion journals (Lebina and Chistikov 2003:216; Vail' and Genis 2001; Boym 2002:89 and 97; Vainshtein 2007:122–3)¹³. Fashionable attire à la Sophia Loren and Gina Lollobrigida was often sewn by

¹² Accordingly, it was no contradiction to be crazy about "Western rags" and rock music or luxury import clothing while—more or less consciously—being confident that somewhere out there, there were binding criteria of what was right and wrong, beautiful and ugly. This was the space within which social norms were lived and turned into everyday practices. The radical shift of the parameters of this field that took place in the late 1980s had serious consequences for the psychological equilibrium of individuals as well as society as a whole. As Aleksandr Arkhangel'skii put it:

The collapse of the USSR, compared to the war and the repressions, was a trifle, but try to explain this to the generation born in 1970–1976. Yes, we knew the late Brezhnev, and we, perhaps, were the most devoted Soviet children: we loved this country in our own way but sincerely for our not very luxurious, but peaceful childhood. Still, in 1991, those who had taught us to guard this country jealously, informed us that the country had ceased to exist for objective reasons (Arkhangel'skii 2007).

Irina Zherebkina (2003:22) referred to this historical fact as "the collapse" not only of certain (Soviet) identities, but of "symbolic order itself," which according to her diagnosis was much more traumatic to Soviet subjects than the political and economic collapse.

¹³ Lebina and Chistikov (2003) argue that in the special context of the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party, when Khrushchev declared the "peaceful coexistence of systems" and the "building of communism within 20 years" (ibid.:199), the development of fashion played "an important and ambiguous part." Up to the early 1950s, Leningrad residents were still wearing clothing sewn in the style of the years between 1938 and 1946 copied from dress they had seen [as soldiers] in Europe, which they had liberated from fascism. Yet at the same time, Soviet designers working at the Fashion Houses ("doma modelei") founded back in the mid-1930s, began to adopt Dior's "New Look". With the appearance of People's Republics and the formation of the Warsaw Pact in 1955, the phenomenon of the so-called "fashion of the socialist camp" emerged and regular "International Fashion Competitions" were organized, which were usually won by the Soviet Union (Lebina and Chistikov 2003:204–5).

mothers and skilful neighbors and—according to my respondents’ accounts—positively enchanted male admirers.

Vainshtein may have had this phenomenon in mind when she wrote in 1995 that

[i]t was no accident that the sore issue of flamboyant attire was discussed permanently in Soviet magazines. For ladies of flamboyant appearance were ubiquitous personages of Russian fashion history, heroines of satire and—at the same time—absolute true-life characters. In the past few years, their portrait would comprise evening make-up, jewelry, flamboyant and expensive-looking dress, preferably fur coats, leather, items produced by famous Western companies with eye-catching labels—in a word, all attributes of conspicuous consumption.

Vainshtein relates these observations to “the lack of nonchalance, the lack of a casual, relaxed behaviour,” resulting in the “impression of effort and strain.” This flamboyant style [*navorochennyi stil’*] prevents any idea of understatement in appearance, precluding negation, let alone versions of alternative fashion or non-conformism. In addition, as Vainshtein argues, “the social and psychological genesis of the flamboyant style is more complex—in fact such attire in most cases demonstrates not actual wealth, but a ‘condensed image’ of wealth (analogous to Mandelshtam’s concept of the ‘condensed image of the West’)” (Vainshtein 1995:49).

TASTE, STATUS, FEMININITY, AND GLAMOUR: DAUGHTERS OF THE KHRUSHCHEV ERA

“TASTE”

In an analysis of the concept of ‘*taste*’ in current Russian discourse (Klingseis 2010) I argued that bearing in mind the discursive situation of the Soviet era and its psychological effect on the collective imaginary, it is hardly surprising that the “episteme” or “integrating semantics” (Diaz-Bone 2006) organizing people’s talk in the interviews revealed ‘*taste*’ as an aesthetic and ethical category. The present analysis is exploring the articulations of ‘*taste*’, ‘*status*’ and ‘*femininity*’, showing that a high awareness of social ‘*status*’ relates dress directly to social hierarchy and economic wealth, and a certain notion of ‘*femininity*’ traverses both ‘*taste*’ and ‘*status*’ and marks the emphatically gendered quality of appearance in present-day Russia. Analysis revealed that all three concepts—as developed in the respondents’ statements—bear distinct traits of the Soviet historical heritage. And finally, for a number of my female respondents—though a minority—‘*glamour*’ was a relevant concept, although with varying discursive implications; ‘*glamour*’, too, entertains interesting relations with the before-mentioned concepts. As Zakharova states, in Soviet discourse, ‘*taste*’ implied “the application of certain norms in everyday practice (the proper compilation of one’s wardrobe and the adequacy of dress to the respective social situations—workplace, home, holiday resort, excursion, theatre, dancing etc.)” (Zakharova 2007:57), maxims that strikingly resembled notions of “*taste*” in Western

discourse of the 1950s and the early 1960s. But whereas these maxims were gradually banned from basic discourse in the wake of the 1968 revolution and had come to mark the discourse of very conservative people in the West, the Soviet maxims up to the present manifest themselves very distinctly in the statements of even young middle-class interviewees in my corpus (Klingseis 2010:147). What was most surprising to me was the almost identical wording of statements made by young women—students and young professionals—and media texts from the Soviet era (Rusanova 1961, Zaitsev 1982). This suggests that the Soviet endeavor of an “education of taste” has had durable effects and there seems to be no fundamental break in the genealogy of the concept. There is one more point in which the discursive meaning of “taste” in basic dress discourse as represented in my interview corpus echoes with Soviet media texts on the subject: in both, “good taste” and “bad taste” were repeatedly associated with a person’s character and her or his moral, professional, intellectual, economic and social capacities (Klingseis 2010:153).

Here is one of several examples:

[...] if a man is neat in all things, in dress, he will care about himself. And he will care about others. That is, he will, first of all, be attentive, he will be punctual, he will be accurate. If, however, a man is dressed without taste, this means that he is not interested in anything, he lives in a world of his own, it will be hard to connect with such a person (bank manager, female, born in 1964, Ekaterinburg 2007).

“Taste” as a normative notion does not allow for idiosyncracies; it is unable to accept otherness without evaluating it negatively. Such an approach also forecloses a person’s ability of “looking at oneself through the eyes of another” (Bakhtin 2000:241) and thus the awareness that “each and everybody is another” (ibid.:242) to everybody else, what we might refer to as post-modern ironic self-distance. This attitude is very common across generations in my data, and is most pointedly expressed in the following statement by Larisa, born in 1964, editor of a Russian fashion magazine, remembering a visit to London (Moscow, 2008):

It’s very funny in London, for example. There people also dress strangely, I don’t know, sneakers combined with some glamorous dress, or just some shapeless piece of clothing, and very ... ah ... uninteresting in color, no matter where you are, in the little lanes in the center or in St. James’s Park, everywhere the same. Not trendy at all.

In the course of the past decade, the notion of taste has also been effectively integrated into new middle-class professional life, where it lives on as an implicit corporate dress-code under capitalist conditions. Tamara, born in 1972, an economist who heads a department in an advertising company, uses a trope of Soviet discourse best summed up as “individuality through inventiveness,” an individuality that is eagerly striving for adherence to the norms (Moscow, 2004):

I don’t like it when people dress *too modestly*, when they do *not catch your eye*—some ordinary pair of trousers, some *plain* top—when they don’t draw any

attention to themselves. I love it when there is *some bright element* in people's dress.¹⁴ [...] I think there are *certain social rules, norms*. Let's put it this way: I don't wear *sports clothes*. Partly, I think that in my ... so to speak ... position, sporty style is *not very suitable*. So to say, when I am *on holiday*, I may allow myself a more *relaxed style*, as it were, but at work people look, they pay attention to the way I dress, and therefore some things I just cannot, cannot put on.

"STATUS"

The degree to which people are affected—or interpellated (in Althusser's terminology)—by glamour ideology foregrounding glamour as a status marker varies among my middle-class respondents. In many statements, the notion of glamour emerges between the lines as a status marker: it is in one way or another represented by the notion of good 'taste' while the key concepts of, for example, "status" and "glamour" are not overtly mentioned at all, but rather represented by elements of their conceptual content. A good example of this is to be found in the following extract from an interview with Vera, born in 1963, director of a small regional museum that also serves as a location for art exhibits, wife of a well-to-do businessman, and mother of two. Her statement is particularly interesting, since it brings together in one interview the most salient topics of the present-day basic dress discourse of her generation (minor city near Moscow, 2008):

Well, in my life *clothes play, well, if not the main part, but for me it is very important to dress well, and look good, well, for one thing, my job obliges me to do this*. For instance, I cannot allow myself to go to work in, well, *slovenly dress*; though *not necessarily expensively*, not necessarily. [...]

Dress helps me in this matter. Well, *in showing that I am the boss*, you see. And I encourage the whole team to do so [i.e. to dress properly]. [...]

What makes me angry is a *lack of taste*, in dress—well, what kind? For example, if someone wears black shoes and white socks together with dark trousers, and those white socks are peeping out, I just *could kill her* [short silence], *the woman who allowed* this man to dress like that [!]. In spite of all that talk and writing about the necessity of socks matching the color of the shoes. This I cannot stand at all. And another thing that upsets me is a person *dressed in a slovenly way*. If the shirt is *not fresh*, or the person *smells* not quite fresh and clean; you

¹⁴ This statement evokes associations with arguments advanced by Soviet media:

For, whether we want it or not, each of us in one way or other shapes her image, which expresses itself in the way she dresses and communicates with her environment. And it is fine if this image is interesting, if it contains some individual trait.

Fashion is a kind of game that helps us change our appearance, reveal new traits in it. Putting on a beautiful, properly selected piece of dress we change. And this is what is enchanting (*Rabotnitsa*, January 1988 supplement, p. 2–3).

Here is a much earlier reference to the importance of detail:

It happens frequently that the producers, striving to free themselves from needless trouble, introduce a "slight" simplification in a new model: saving on the trimming, deciding to do without some detail—a pleat, an artificial flower on a lady's dress. This might seem a trifle, but in fact disregard for such a "trifle" meant as a decoration by the designer will change the appearance of the model to unrecognizability, deprive it of its elegance, spoil it (Zhukov 1954:168).

see, there is no necessity whatsoever that a person be *dressed expensively*, I repeat. Or wear *branded clothing*. No. Even in my own life I don't pay much attention to this. What is most important is that dress be *adequate*, that the person be able to *select their clothes appropriately* in terms of *color, shape*, you see, *texture* of the material, well, that the person be *dressed neatly*.

Yes, I do *love expensive things*, expensive jewelry, if it's within one's means. Expensive jewelry is what I get from my husband, you see. Until recently, I did not own any diamonds or sapphires, it's just that now I am in the proper age for this, *if it's within your means*; my husband gives me jewelry, and I wear it with great pleasure. [Laughs.]

This quote shows very clearly the irresistible but ambivalent relationship this generation entertains with luxury—as an aspect of the image of glamour, which is outweighed by an emphatic concern with questions of 'taste,' resulting in the claim that luxury is dispensable, while taste is not. Vera's explicit claim is that it is her tasteful clothes by which she marks her status as a boss; but we understand from her statement as a whole that it is also their visible costliness.

Accordingly, the "dull" appearances of Western women are absolutely incomprehensible to Russians, as expressed in another quote from the interview with Vera, which stands for many similar statements from my corpus:

When I watch women abroad—well, where have we been lately? in Germany, Austria, in France—I am somewhat surprised: why do they dress so plainly? So absolutely plainly that, well, can it really be interesting to dress like that? [...] Well, that's to say, over there feeling comfortable [*komfortno*] is everything. Feeling at ease at any cost.¹⁵

¹⁵ Incidentally, the Berlin author Wladimir Kaminer, born in Moscow in 1967, offered his own, humorous and hyperbolic, explanation for this state of affairs in the Austrian fashion journal *fair* (May 2009). Kaminer claims that

in comparison to their European sisters, Russian women dress incredibly buff, they are not afraid to wear uncomfortable clothes, they can spend hours in front of the mirror and make no concessions to the weather in their choice of dress. [...] Once I witnessed an incident when three balls of ice-cream melted away within seconds in the hand of a Western tourist at the sight of a bunch of Russian scorchers. [...] Western fashion-conscious women dress discreetly but inconspicuously, they strive to manifest their inner values in the first place (Kaminer 2009:145).

One of his not quite serious explanations refer to the Russian landscape: "In the steppe of Central Russia, in order to be perceived at all, say: as a human creature at a distance of two kilometres, other qualities are necessary. This cannot be accomplished by inner values alone" (ibid.:146). The other one refers to the demographic imbalance of the sexes: 65% of the population being female, men in Russian society are "a rare and vanishing prop" (ibid.:146). Most remarkably, he claims in the same hyperbolic manner that "Russia is the motherland of all kinds of artificiality and fake, the country of fake hair, fake nails, fake breasts; even natural furs are colored green and red here in order to look fake" (ibid.:146). Of course, Kaminer's text must not be read as a sociological explanation here, but as an interesting piece of discourse.

“FEMININITY”

Yet another “Soviet” notion fits in smoothly with present-day capitalist conditions with their tendency of engendering a double-standard society: “femininity” (“*zhenstvennost*”). The concept oscillates between romantic femininity and the ambiguous image of a *femme fatale*. Its implications are condensed in the following quote by Lilia (born in 1965, Moscow, 2005), a doctor working at a private clinic in the center of Moscow. Her statements to some extent echo the erotic connotations of glamour conjured up in Tatiana Nikolaevna’s statement above, with the only difference that Lilia’s job allows her to walk into *GUM* (the elegant traditional department store on Red Square) and buy the things she likes:

[...] any piece of clothing that I put on ought to be *stylish, beautiful*. And it ought to *suit just me*. That is, it need not be, let’s say, *fashionable*, it should perhaps even be *classical* [...] but all the same it ought to be *comfortable*, and *beautiful*. [...] I am a *romantic* kind of woman, a *romantic-style* woman, therefore I love light and tender materials, *fine* and *splendid* skirts, *magnificent* blouses, or, on the contrary, a tight polo neck and a very pleasant and beautiful lower part, with *pleats, fbounces, frills*—*romantic* and pleasant. And I never wear shoes without *high heels*. Never. I always wear *stilettos*, no matter whether they are fashionable or not. Even when six or seven years ago a more democratic style came into fashion, shoe toes turned blunt, heels clumsier, I nevertheless [laughing] managed to find *stilettos, stilettos, only stilettos*. [...] Even in winter I try to wear fur-lined shoes with thin soles and narrow toes. This very *elegantly* and beautifully *accentuates the female leg*, it endows it with a certain *charm*, and if this is the case, *it is the leg that all style arises from*.

“STATUS” AND “SELF-MARKETING”

In the next interview extract, discursive evidence of a new social phenomenon occurs: the commercialization of human appearance. Larisa, born in 1964, editor of a fashion magazine, wearing a jacket by Gucci, name brand jeans and a handbag by Furla (Moscow 2008), says:

To me, it is important to *look pleasant*, that is, I want dress to *emphasize my taste, wealth, social position*, and to me this is very important, and, in fact, the way you sell your magazine, *you also sell yourself, and, well, your activities*. [...] Well, in my dress, *brands play an important role*, as in my work I communicate with people who are quite *wealthy*, who are quite *branded* themselves, so I, too, *need to be aware that I’m wearing a Gucci jacket*, and jeans by ..., like it or not.

True, articulations of glamour not only with social status, but also with a person’s market value were rare in my interview corpus and restricted to the statements of women who were exceptionally successful in terms of professional achievements and economic status (the latter being at least partly owed to their husbands). Oksana (born in 1963), a consultant in intercultural business communication (Moscow 2008):

This is some innate notion, the notion of *status*. I can tell you very definitely: I was having an appointment with a potential client in one Russian company and

I caught the gaze of the office manager upon me. She looked at my *ring*, she looked at my *wrist watch*. I have a wrist watch my husband gave me, *Longines*, with *diamonds*, which I wear on exactly these occasions. [Adding as a kind of explanation:] status is everything.

The “innate notion of status” is in fact ideological code for relentless competition. In an attempt to illustrate to me the difference between Saint Petersburg and Moscow, Oksana adds the following story:

A close friend of ours recently came to Moscow. He is younger than us. Back in Saint Petersburg, he already loved brands. His basic style was smart casual, but it inevitably had to be brand name clothing. Even top brands. And I asked my husband: “How is N. doing? And he replied: “It’s done,” he said. “N. [laughing] has joined the Moscow arms race.”

In her statements, Oksana brings to mind Zherebkina’s thesis of violence as being constitutive of the post-Soviet subject structure and the now visible performance of formerly forbidden desires, needs, and instincts. Being a social scientist herself, Oksana explicates a state of affairs that remains the implicit subtext of many other interviews with middle-class respondents of various ages. Aesthetic and ethical categories regulating appearance and inherited from the Soviet past turn out to have adapted smoothly to the conditions of an unmitigated social Darwinist capitalism.

MEN AND DRESS

So far I have only quoted from interviews with women. I must admit that most of the men who were prepared to be interviewed at all were—with very few exceptions—working either at a university or in some intellectual or creative—usually freelancing—profession (an editor, a marketing consultant, an opposition politician, a lawyer, a social scientist), or were still struggling with the new economic and labour market conditions or working on the side of those who struggle against the negative effects these might have on young people (a former nuclear physicist trying to gain a foothold in business, a former bookseller unemployed at the moment of the interview, a former miner working as a doorman to make ends meet, a church-associated youth worker, to name a few)—none of them seriously contaminated with glamorous imaginations although most of them were concerned with matters of taste. Exceptions were found among young men (20–27): an economist working in an advertising agency, a psychologist and freelancer organizing castings for various TV shows such as “*Fabrika zvezd*,” a student of management and marketing and the above-mentioned editor, who will be quoted below, and a manager of a dental practice. Senior male managers are not represented in my corpus: I simply failed to gain access to them, for which there might be several reasons, among them the subject matter that might be perceived as “female” and thus “not serious.” At any rate, while female senior managers found time to give me an interview, their male colleagues did not.¹⁶

¹⁶ I selected interview partners by a snowball principle: each interview partner established contacts to people from their environment: workplace, family, friends.

Still, I will venture a few thoughts on men and glamour based on statements made by women and by the men I did interview, as well as on fiction and media. Both women's and men's statements leave no doubt: it has always been the women's competence and responsibility to care for the appropriate appearance of the whole family, husbands included (Vera: "I just could kill [...] the woman who allowed this man to dress like that"). This responsibility extends from doing the laundry and ironing to matching men's everyday shirts with ties, socks, and shoes. Based on fiction and TV series, I would suggest that this—except for the washing and ironing—also applies to the very rich: thus, in Oksana Robski's novel *Pro LiubOff/On* (Moscow, 2005), the wife's choice of an appropriate tie to go with the appropriate shirt she chose for her husband suggests the intimacy, even the essence, of the relationship between the glamorous and vicious wife and her equally glamorous and vicious husband, an intimacy that cannot be damaged by the latter's trivial extra-marital affair. Incidentally, the advice of Soviet women's magazines and etiquette guides, phrased in categorical, authoritative manner, was addressed almost exclusively to women (examples include Zhukov 1954; Rusanova 1961; Zaitsev 1982; and the magazine *Rabotnitsa*), an observation also made by Gurova (2008:75).

Whereas for most women represented in my interview corpus it is of central importance to emphasize their femininity (i.e. sexual attractiveness to men), these very women—even those belonging to the 20-plus generation—repeated over and over again that for men it is most important to look "clean," "neat," "ironed," and to wear "clean shoes" (obviously a pivotal aspect of a man's agreeable appearance to this day). Some of them mention a fresh smell, too. On second thought, some of the female respondents added that they preferred to go out with a man in an elegant suit. The majority of men beyond thirty who were available for an interview, in contrast, claimed that they did not really care about clothes.

Furthermore, as can be concluded from the interviews I conducted with both men and women, gender and (economic) status, by and large, are connected in a very traditional way: i.e. women who do not possess economic capital will often strive to "conquer" a man with such capital using their skills in fashioning their appearance. I have no evidence of any case where the reverse would be true: a man without economic capital considering such a course of action with respect to well-to-do women. But once more fiction—again by Oksana Robski—has in store an example of a well-to-do woman who dressed her gigolo, a coach from the sports club she is frequenting, in white Brioni shorts to present him to her woman friends (Robski 2005:95).

Finally, it should be mentioned that neither official Soviet texts nor present-day basic dress discourse allow for any gender ambiguities; with very few exceptions, traditional gender roles are largely adopted and reproduced without questioning by the interviewees—female and male, young and old alike. Other people's gender ambiguity is perceived with hostility by the majority of my respondents, as an association experiment with a photograph revealed. Only a handful of interviewees—all of them men and women born in the 1980s—allowed themselves a playful and self-consciously ironic relationship with their appearance. For the overwhelming majority, their dressed appearance was a very serious matter.

Valentina, born in 1982, a manager in the film business (Moscow 2008), puts the problem this way:

Here [in Russia] we still have a lot of stereotypes with respect to the relationship between women and men, and a woman must strive to entice a man. I think that in Austria hardly any woman [is like that]; on the contrary, women strive to be more independent in this sense.

YOUNG URBAN PROFESSIONALS OF THE PUTIN ERA

Interviewees belonging to the 20-plus generation place a different emphasis, even if they did not fundamentally question the traditional notions of taste, status, and femininity. Still, adequate dress is no longer seen so much as a moral obligation to one's fellow persons (which it unequivocally used to be in Soviet times and also for the majority of the 40-plus generation). Rather, it is viewed as a tool for achieving professional and private goals, a means of keeping one's psychic equilibrium in a heavy-going work-life (where shopping for clothes compensates for an exorbitant workload), of fashioning an individualized competitive self—or simply as a source of pleasure. However, the traditional stress on distinct gender differences (emphatic femininity), high awareness of binding norms (taste) and the socially and economically distinctive function of dress (status) are still in force.

Here is how Margarita (born in 1980), diplomat, unmarried, no children, responds to my request to name the most important criteria for her dressed appearance (Ekaterinburg, 2007):

To look good. To feel comfortable. Well, [clothes] ought to be *beautiful*. That's most important after all. As it seems to me. [...] And it ought to be *romantic and feminine*. [...] That's what it ought to be. I adore *high heels*, I adore *dresses, skirts*, and there are also some favorite accessories, as a rule, things that, as a matter of fact, are borrowed from men's dress. *Vests*, [...] *braces*, and also, I am planning to buy *men's shoes*. [...] I have not done that yet, but I surely will. These items are, of course, *borrowed from men's dress* and adapted. That's to say, all the same, to *look special, feminine, beautiful* (laughs). *Stylish*. [And, answering my question about her shopping habits:] well, I don't know, the increasing extent of stress, perhaps, also plays a part here. That is to say, more and more shopping is becoming an *antidepressant*, it's a *strong remedy*.

Individual respondents in their statements—as well as their behavior toward me, the interviewer—beside the instrumental use of dress in business, made explicit the perceptibly aggressive dimension of dress (as a discourse and practice). Here is Valentina again:

In Russia, in Moscow, there is a very strict code, that is to say, people may just not communicate with a person if she or he is not dressed properly. Well, they just may refuse them access to a club or restaurant, quite simply not let them in. There are well-trained people at the entrance who at a single glance can tell what clothes you are wearing.

And she goes on to explain what she herself usually does with dress:

That is to say, I have a number of things I put on if, for example, there are negotiations on the agenda that day and I have to *demonstrate that I am a well-to-do person, that I am in a position to do business* with these people. The same applies when I am going to meet another woman [...]. If we don't know each other and it is necessary to *create a trustful relationship*, there is *something to talk about*. It's just an element of business.

At my explicit request, Valentina comments on my admittedly nonchalant, casual mode of dress:

Well, in Moscow, women would try to dress more, well, let's say, elegantly; the way you probably will dress for the evening, they would try to look like during the day as well. In your kind of clothes in Moscow, well, a woman would go to her dacha, but not do her job; to her dacha to work in the garden. [...] You are not offended, are you? [laughs] I'm joking.

RESERVATIONS AGAINST GLAMOUR

My respondents did include staunch glamour addicts who appear to support Gusarova's claim that the middle class is "wholeheartedly addicted to 'glamour' fashion." However, I should stress that the overwhelming majority of the people I interviewed—speaking in Kizilova's terms—belonged rather to the "middle class periphery" than to the "middle class proper." They were concerned with questions of "taste" and looking "decent" rather than with "glamour."¹⁷ The above quotes suggest a complex relationship between glamour and taste in people's minds, where glamour (appearing mostly in statements about expensive brands) tends to be seen as ethically ambivalent, or even associated with a lack of taste:

Sergei (born in 1984), student of Russian philology (Moscow 2004):

Men, for example, in Russia don't dress as a principle. That is to say, men usually are dressed by their wives, well, aaaand, there is no taste, you know, in clothing. Especially with men. And women, if they are beyond thirty, as a rule, they dress... follow a kind of Eastern model, that is, their clothes must look expensive. That's the main criterion. And accordingly, that is why they go to all kinds of expensive shops and often buy absolutely tasteless things, well ... and this is why in Russia brands such as Hugo Boss, Gianfranco Ferre, Armani could catch on. [...] I.e. expensive but often rather boring clothes, [...] but it looks expensive. That's to say, that is important, it's the Eastern approach.

¹⁷ If we proceed on the assumption of "glamour ideology" aspiring to hegemony, this means that "consent must be constantly won and rewon, for people's material social 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" (Fiske 1992:291, quoted in Chandler 2000).

Some people simply voiced ethical reservations against overpriced brands. Tamara, the economist, states:

There are things for which one simply must not pay a certain amount, because the piece in question simply does not justify it. Not because you don't like it, but as a principle. Well, I think..., I will give you an extreme example: I recently saw a skirt in a shop that cost twelve thousand rubles. That is four hundred dollars. I think that spending four hundred dollars on a skirt is ... indecent [laughs].

There are also indications of a change of tide in public discourse. The famous fashion historian Alexandre Vassiliev says in an interview, not without subtle humor:

Glamour is out: tinsel, strass, high heels, peroxide blondes, sandwiches on fingernails. A new trend is emerging—"new modesty," with fashion becoming intellectual, when you need to think about a woman's image when she is not undressed, but dressed. [...] For many women [the previous style] was the springboard into a new life: an office job or simply a new lover; even contracts are often signed by sleeping with someone (Goshko 2009).

A glance back into recent history will shed more light on the complex relationship between taste and glamour in basic dress discourse. The following statement refers to the economically difficult early 1990s:

One method of keeping up communication in the broken language of dress was a keen dependence upon a small number of intact shared "words" that were placed center stage, their significance intensified, and their meaning extended. One of these important "words" was the concept of "taste" [...]. The parameter of "taste" could be preserved in dress even under extreme poverty and horrible scarcity. "Taste in clothes" was read as a general "message"; it was relatively universal, and it had the capacity to protect those unable to follow the latest trends from the aggression of "newspeak" [meaning: in the language of dress]. Taste was also a means of self-restriction for those able to make use of the latest means of expression but did not know how to apply them in practice. [...] "... I am very grateful to my father for his good taste. There was never ever anything vulgar in my wardrobe ..." (the female respondent [of Goralik's], a teenager at that time, was "dressed" by her father, who was able to travel abroad) (Goralik 2007).

Accordingly, Valentina's answer to my question about what groups of people she would identify with respect to dress in the streets of Moscow was as follows:

There are people who dress expensively and with taste, and there are people who dress expensively and without taste, there are people who dress inexpensively and with taste, and there are people who dress inexpensively and without taste.

SUBVERSIVE STRATEGIES?

As was said above, constituting identities is not a unidirectional process to which individuals passively submit. Rather, individuals take an active part in the

“praxis or living through of [social] norms” (McNay 2000:32), sometimes even appropriating and making use of them in a way not intended by the creators of those norms. True, even the tactics of outsmarting the logic of hegemonic ideology are a testimony to that ideology’s perfect functioning. The following excerpt is an example of an appropriation and exploitation of hegemonic discourse and practice. Artem (born in 1979), a psychologist who—at the time of the interview—was studying cultural theory, organizing castings and raising funds for various TV productions and engaged in other freelancing occupations (Moscow 2005):

I often buy clothes in second-hand shops, because I know that one can get dressed for a royal reception there. If you go and look carefully, you can buy clothes of absolutely any style for a small amount of money, absolutely any style. With shoes it’s more difficult, and with accessories too. You can see whether they are expensive or cheap, but as to clothes, you can buy anything there.

Elsewhere in the interview, Artem demonstrates possible effects of playing with the hegemonic code:

[...], if I am dressed very provocatively but feel confident, that is, for example, once I went to a meeting with a general manager of a TV studio, and everybody was like that, only me, I was wearing [...] socks with the Union Jack on them [...], I was sitting there, legs crossed, and everybody was looking at these socks, and he [the general manager] was looking at them too, but nobody said a word, and I was enjoying this, I felt this flux of energy, I could stand up and speak out, precisely what nobody else would dare to do. [...]. I am able to say that I am not interested in this or that, I will not do it, because I’m not here for money, I want to do something extraordinary.

The following is another example of a man’s very independent use of dress, revealing a strong attachment to a particular lifestyle as well as the purely aesthetic, non-utilitarian, pleasure of dress, attitudes that place him far beyond the Russian male mainstream. Vladimir (born in 1965) is an editor and manager of a publishing house (interviewed in Ekaterinburg, 2007). I should add that even Vladimir mentioned that he asked female friends to accompany him on his rare shopping outings, when he can no longer afford not to replace his old trousers or jacket.

If I have the choice between Italian and British [clothes], I will clearly choose British.¹⁸ Well. That is, no fancy shoes on thin soles with long tips, but a sturdy, good pair of shoes on solid soles with a welt. *Solid shoes*, which allow you to confidently stride across the *British Isles*, not some street in Milan. *Jackets*, also *sand-colored*, not Italian. [The Italians] love all that black-and-white stuff, well, stark contrasts. You see. Suits, never unicolored, there should always be a little thread, like in yours [tweed], well, or stripes, and with jackets, for example, I love

¹⁸ It must be mentioned that during the 2000s, Italian-branded clothing was extremely popular in Russia, including among men. Former president Vladimir Putin himself is said to have introduced Brioni suits to Russia.

leather patches [at the elbows]. Because I'm an editor, and I have to accentuate my profession. And the jacket does this very well. Everybody notices at first sight—an editor!

I want to look like ... a *European* with a university degree. Well. And if I pass a shop-window and see a ... nice checkered shirt that would be appropriate, I don't know, for some, well, [...] for some young professor, for some reason I am tempted to buy it. Well, that is, there is some kind of ... image, as it seems, some *ideal* image of my colleague working at Vienna University, or Oxford University or the like, well, distractedly scattering his cigarette ashes on his lapel, but still dresses decently. That is the class I want to belong to. This is *our class, our fate*, and we should all *match each other*, more or less. That's how it is. I.e. *class solidarity*.

And asked about his shopping practices, Vladimir replies:

It's pleasure, [...] yes. That is so. Anyway, I love it very much. [...] And I can do it for a long time without getting tired of it. [...] And *I love clothes-shopping with women*. I have a [teenage] daughter, for whom, of course, I buy clothes, and there are all kinds of [the daughter's] girlfriends, and I like that. [...] I can watch a long time while they are choosing and trying on, testing my reaction, waiting for my comment, [...] *playing their games*, which I don't even understand, but I try to join in all the same. [...] That is, I love it. That's just *fashion*, and I just don't do justice to it, unfortunately. But I understand how it can be *delightful* and *interesting*.

TOWARD AN EXPLANATION

I started off with the theoretical assumption that in present-day societies, power—to a large extent—is exerted no longer by a central authority issuing prescriptions and proscriptions and imposing (violent) sanctions, but rather by decentralized efforts—whose sources are not easy to determine—to direct people's conduct. It is impossible to spot a single authority as the source of this kind of power. Rather, as Foucault discovered, its "tactics were invented and organized from the starting points of local conditions and particular needs. They took shape in piecemeal fashion, prior to any class strategy designed to weld them into vast, coherent ensembles" (Foucault 1980[1977]:159). The regulation of dress and appearance, I would claim, has long been one of these tactics. A special ideological feature of dress and appearance in present-day Russia—and increasingly also in Western societies—is glamour.

I have tried to sketch out above the process by which glamour ideology takes shape and the part it plays in the exertion of power in Russia. I have demonstrated its functioning within the current power constellation as well as its effects—including the resistance it provokes—by quoting from interviews I conducted with Russian respondents between 2004 and 2008. They reveal the effects of glamour ideology on people's self-fashioning, self-governing, and effect on others through appearance and dress. What is beyond doubt is the eminent role the media and the

culture industry play in the transmission of “glamour ideology” as described by Menzel, Rudova, and Mesropova.

It is obvious from my empirical work on the effects of glamour ideology that, depending on their age and living conditions, individuals react differently to its interpellations, and that none of the respondents are totally absorbed by glamour. In fact, there is no individual whose identity is absolutely congruent with one single category. Rather, in each of the identifications observable in the above quotations, varying ideological categories overlap in varying ways. I pointed out the eminent role of the concept of taste as an aesthetic, and in some cases also an ethical, category overlapping with elements of “glamour” in some statements. In others, however, the concept of femininity dominates over the concept of luxury as an indispensable element of the notion of glamour. For others still, status and the marketability of the self are clearly more important than the concept of taste, although it remains relevant to them. And last but not least, as we could see in some respondents’ reasoning, each ideological claim can be appropriated and utilized for purposes not compatible with its original logic, as in the case of the respondent who outsmarts potential employers using sophisticated glamorous outfits he combines from items bought in second-hand shops. Thus, while glamour ideology is indeed powerful in current Russia, its power is not totalizing. Concepts originating in historically separate discourses—such as taste, femininity, and their various connotations—do play a role in the identification and self-governing processes of current Russian urban subjects. What has, as I hope, become clear by now is the way power acts through (ideologies of) dress and appearance by way of individuals’ self-shaping and self-regulation or identification as well as their resulting actions upon others.

Accordingly, people interpellated by glamour or any other ideology—including those who, lacking the means to buy expensive brand-name items, wear fake brands or second-hand clothing—are empowered to act and achieve their goals by actively shaping and transforming themselves and their actions according to the demands of these ideologies. These demands are often enough conflicting, causing people to contradict and justify themselves in my interviews (for example, Vera the museum director). They subject themselves to such ideologies readily and willingly, pointing to either the pleasure and comfort, or the feeling of dominance or even uprightness this provides them. There is no external constraint for them to do so. It is rather that ideologies satisfy very basic human desires—either for love and acknowledgement, or for control and safety. This also applies to glamour ideology: wealth, status, power, youth, and prestigious consumption are the things people imagine will fulfill these desires; it is these imaginations that, for example, make them join the glamorous arms race. There are, of course, other ways one could imagine fulfilling one’s desires, but ideologies do have the ability to fuel the imagination. Therefore, dressed performances are not simply strategies, cold calculations, although in some of the quoted statements they might be. In others, they are not so conscious at all; rather they are the materializations of the way these respondents imagine themselves and their conditions of existence. In still other cases, people obviously enjoy their glamorous performances. They derive pleasure from playing glamorous roles and feeling the reaction of their

audience, these performances as a rule having a distinctly erotic touch; most prominently this is so in Tatiana Nikolaevna's account, but also in those of Lilia (the doctor) and Margarita (the diplomat).

In the final paragraphs of this article, I would like to propose some considerations concerning the different histories of glamour in Russia on the one hand, and Western societies on the other. As I will argue, these differences at least partly explain the different roles glamour plays in each of them, a difference pointed out by some of my respondents. I will claim that these different histories have resulted in different hegemonic styles and discourses structuring people's public performances.

With respect to Western societies, the *episteme* of late modern or post-modern discourse seems to crystallize in the notion of "authenticity". Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) dedicated a whole chapter of their *The New Spirit of Capitalism* to this concept. According to the authors, the debate on authenticity, which emerged in the late 19th century as a reaction to the estrangement of the individual from modern life and was taken up again in the first half of the 20th century, experienced an unexpected revival around 1968, first as a critique of the depersonalization and anonymity that resulted from capitalist mass production and consumption and then as a critique of consumer society.¹⁹ At the very same time—in the 1960s—the concept of authenticity was submitted to deconstruction: it was unmasked as bourgeois, reactionary, even proto-fascist and elitist on the one hand, and as a naïve belief in an original state of affairs on the other. Boltanski and Chiapello argue that capitalism has since then absorbed the inauthenticity critique (e.g. through eco-marketing) as well as its deconstruction by integrating both in the demands it places on the workforce. In short, the authenticity debate is an important ideological issue in Western capitalism.

The Austrian philosopher Robert Pfaller adds an important consideration to this analysis. Pfaller claims that the inauthenticity critique of the 1968 generation has resulted in a socio-psychologically peculiar state of emphatic "narcissism" and "political surrender" (Pfaller 2008:115, my translation from Russian here and in all other quotations) in post-modern Western societies. According to Pfaller, this claim echoes in post-modern individuals' "striving to be free, to be *totally themselves*, autonomous and authentic, avoiding at any cost to play a role or be subject to any kind of heteronomy [and avoiding also] to be *more than themselves*²⁰ or even to be happy." For Pfaller, post-modernity's narcissistic striving for autonomy and authenticity is the cause of the decline of the public sphere as an arena of political debate:

in Western culture [...] the public sphere, where people once used to behave more solemnly and formally than in their homes, has been extinguished in favor

¹⁹ See also Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle* (1995), the French original being published in 1967, where the "spectacle" was understood as the last stage of the commodification of life.

²⁰ The consent to "being more than oneself," according to Pfaller, is a necessary prerequisite for playing/performing in the sense of taking part in the public performances of (glamorous) social rituals, which requires—at least temporarily—being another, abandoning—at least temporarily—the anxious insistence on "authenticity". And this is exactly what Western postmodern subjects—according to his reasoning—distance themselves from so decidedly.

of an allegedly “authentic” private sphere. [...] Under neoliberal conditions, the fatal effects of this development have become obvious. [...] The anti-authoritarian rebellion against the supposedly heteronomous standards of the public sphere and the blunt enforcement of “authentic” private identities [...] have led to the destruction of the public sphere as a sphere of political debate (Pfaller 2008:134–5).

As a visible consequence in everyday life, elegant, erotic, glamorous dress and behavior have ceased to be part of public space the way they used to be in Western societies up to the 1950s.

Today, Pfaller’s argument suggests, dress in public no longer serves the solemn, pleasure-affording masquerade, the game/performance²¹ everybody was seeing through and still playing along with “solemnly and formally,” though only in specific, well-defined places and at specific times. Instead, dress has come to serve individuals’ ascetic and determined demonstration of “authenticity.” “Glamour,” alongside other practices with an ambivalent moral status such as smoking and drinking, instead of being performed on special occasions, which, Pfaller argues, turned such practices from ambivalent to sublime, have been expelled from Western public space altogether and are reserved to a small elite. And what is more, this glamorous elite is presented to a wider public as having nothing to do with real life, a sphere we ordinary people had better not have contact with, something morally dubious. Pfaller interprets this situation as a distribution of the “prey” of socially available pleasures “to the disadvantage of the great majority” (ibid.:136).

In post-Soviet Russia, in contrast, the fate of the spectacular seems to be a very different one. For decades it was the case that, on the one hand, glamorous performances in public were suppressed from official discourse and banished from the public space to people’s private imaginaries. Simultaneously, on the other hand, establishments reserved for the nomenklatura saw such performances not only released from suppression, but even transformed into the new cultural imperative and actively encouraged by the new cultural elites of the Putin era. The effect was tremendous.

Therefore, it might be argued that, while the ideology of authenticity became hegemonic in the Western version of capitalism, that is to say an allegedly post-

²¹ The German word “Spiel” means “game” as well as “performance/spectacle,” and Pfaller uses “Spiel” in the sense of “game” (e.g. children riding on a line of chairs they imagine as a train) as well as in the sense of “performance/spectacle,” referring in this to Huizinga’s *Homo ludens* (1956 [1938]) and understanding both game and performance/spectacle as aspects of a “delusion without deluded” (“Täuschungen ohne Getäuschte”) that everybody is seeing through, which is the condition for the game/performance/spectacle to work, i.e. to afford the specific pleasure it affords (Pfaller 2008:62–63). Playing/performing (e.g. dressing up for a carnival parade) presupposes “humor,” which implies “the ability to look at the ego from a certain distance, not to take it as seriously as it likes to take itself and/or wants to be taken by others,” do something “silly” and thus “expose the ego to a massive alterity” (Pfaller 2008:40 with reference to Freud). Still, it is not the naïve or “silly” that draw the greatest pleasure from the game/play/performance, but the “shrewd”: those “able to draw a clear division between the two spheres [of game/play/performance and reality]” on which the effect of the game/play/performance relies (ibid.:42).

industrial one relying heavily on employees' autonomy, emotional engagement, and identification with the goals of companies (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005), glamour ideology has become hegemonic in Russian capitalism, which has its own specific history and conditions of existence. This appears even more plausible if we include in our considerations the macro-structures within which glamour ideology functions. According to Boris Kagarlitskii's diagnosis (2003), Russia in the course of the 1990s "took on the role of a supplier of raw materials for the West" and shows "all the characteristics of a 'peripheral country' within the global economy" and a highly corrupt bureaucracy (Kagarlitskii 2003:491). In the Putin era, with active support from the presidential administration, Russian capitalism turned "from oligarchic to bureaucratic," and Russian society experienced a "tightening of the screws" and a "strengthening of authoritarianism" (Kagarlitskii 2003:516). This socio-economic and political context is anything but beneficial to a narcissistic, self-indulging subject striving for authenticity. The situation described by Kagarlitskii is conducive to determined self-assertion—and that is exactly what a certain group of young, well-educated urban professionals are demonstrating in their day-to-day self-fashioning, and many others are striving for. Given the high degree of capital and personal intertwining of politics, the economy, and the media (cf. Mangott 2009:45–9), the dominance of the glamorous lifestyle of the elites on TV seems almost natural. In addition, given the history of Soviet cultural politics (the maxims of "modesty" and "taste") and its effects on subjectivity as outlined above, it also seems plausible that Western authenticity discourse and its effects on Western people's appearance are incomprehensible not only to the young and successful, but even to the majority of Russians not able to take an active part in glamour culture. The logic of Russian capitalism relies on the logic of an arms race, and this involves all lifestyles, dress and appearance included.

This does not mean, however, that people in Western capitalism live an authentic life of ease. On the contrary, power struggles simply acquire a different style. If Russian women perceive Western women as plain and uninteresting, this does not mean that Western upper middle class women wear what Russians would term "democratic" clothes. Even an appearance that looks "plain" and "democratic" at first glance might reveal its exclusive quality in terms of materials and workmanship to the observer at second glance. Western people do have their ways of expressing differences in social and professional status. Thus, for example, feminist researchers such as Linda McDowell (1995) in the mid-1990s diagnosed ambitious women's attempts to "minimize their difference from the masculine norm through forms of disguise of their femininity and sexual attractiveness" by assimilating their dress-code to men's by wearing jackets and trousers. McDowell pointed out that this had to do with "making status distinctions plain rather than gender differences indistinct", for—to quote one of her respondents in a London City merchant bank—"women should wear jackets unless they want to be associated with a secretary" (McDowell 1995:89). Angela McRobbie (2010 [2008]), commenting on a more recent state of affairs, in a critical chapter on so-called make-over TV shows broadcast on BBC, reveals still another current line of status distinction

when she claims that glamour (a more glamorous appearance being the promise of the “What not to wear” show) has always carried the signs of ambition and hard work, whereas nonchalant elegance and simple chic has at all times been the distinctive feature of the bourgeoisie, (membership in which is obviously out of reach for the show’s poor candidates). Accordingly, the conclusion the author draws from her analysis of the format, instead of uniting women under images of equality, these shows produce new gendered meanings of class and status (McRobbie 2010:174).

In conclusion, I argue that the Western striving for authenticity and Russian love of glamorous spectacles are two specific strategies of government by self-government in different post-modern versions of capitalism. Seen from this perspective, the French philosopher Gilles Lipovetsky (1994[1987]) was too optimistic to claim, over twenty years ago, that “the theater of appearances has a new configuration,” that “by virtue of the overwhelming diversification of ‘legitimate’ styles, fashions in dress have ceased to be compelling or unanimous” (ibid.:245) and that, by the same token, “[t]he cult of looks is no longer aimed at a display of rank” but “experienced as a way to stay young, to feel good, to maximize self-confidence” (ibid.:244). In his enthusiasm, he overlooked the socio-historical contingency of dressing practices when formulating as universal what might have been true for a few late-capitalist Western societies on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the exploitable potential that “ever-young, well-feeling” subjects permanently striving to “maximize self-confidence” are presenting to this type of capitalism.

In conclusion, we can identify at least two aspects that divide the current Russian glamour spectacle from Pfaller’s pleasure-affording “games/performances”: “humour,” implying “the ability to look at the *ego* from a certain distance, not to take this *ego* as seriously as it likes to take itself and/or wants to be taken by others” (Pfaller 2008:40) on the one hand, and the ability “to draw a clear division between the two spheres [of game/performance and reality],” a prerequisite for its pleasure-affording capacity (ibid.:42), on the other.

This interpretation is at least indirectly supported by an observation by Mark Lipovetsky (2008) based on the latter’s analysis of literature, theater, and film of the 20th century. He notes with respect to a play by Oleg and Vladimir Presniakov: “Performing [in Russia] has long turned into a careless routine, somewhat humiliating, somewhat habitual” (Lipovetskii 2008:779).

Here is the voice of a character from the play *Evropa-Aziia*:

... We are presenting a show here—and they [the Westerners] pay for it! They are yearning for shows, you know, for, times have turned sorry over there, shows are prohibited, and they have not yet got used to this... Here you have Hollywood just around each corner, and in each head, too! Now they are coming here [to Russia] in bunches, poor things—we are now the center of world tourism! Why is that so? Because they can’t live without shows—bread, but no circuses. It’s hard for them, so—let them pay, pay a lot... And we will play for them, because here, everyone is an actor [...] (quoted in Lipovetskii 2008:779).

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