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Asymmetrical Oppositions and Hierarchical Structures in Soviet Musical Criticism

The Case of the Essay Collection *Za rubezhom* (Abroad) (1953)

Kirill Kozlovski

The immediate impulse for writing this chapter was a small work for bass voice and piano written by the famous Russian composer Dmitri Shostakovich. The composition, whose text (aside from a quotation from Alexander Pushkin) was written by Shostakovich himself, bore a strange title: *Preface to the Complete Edition of My Works and a Brief Reflection Apropos of this Preface*¹ Here is the part of the work relevant for our topic:



We can see in this piece a clear juxtaposition of two concepts – ‘*sovetskii*’ (Soviet) and ‘*zarubezhnyi*’ (foreign) – manifesting itself not only on the verbal but first and foremost on the musical level. Whereas the adjective ‘Soviet’ lacks any specific characterization, its musical face being bleak and inexpressive, its counterpart, the adjective ‘foreign’, is set to music with a characteristic interval of a diminished fifth, which has often been perceived as the ‘devil’s interval’ in European music since the Renaissance.² Thus, the word ‘foreign’ is given some strong negative

connotations (whether they are ironic or not is up to the audience to decide). In its turn, the unmarked adjective 'Soviet' is perceived as a part of a binary opposition only *a posteriori*, in comparison with the marked adjective 'foreign'.

This small but telling example can serve as an introduction to the study of asymmetrical counter-concepts in Soviet musicological discourse. For this case study, I have chosen a collection of essays called *Abroad (Za rubezhom, hereafter ZR)*, published in 1953, which contains eleven articles authored by Soviet musicologists and composers in 1945–51 for the journal *Sovetskaiâ muzyka (Soviet Music)*. All the articles, composed by the prominent figures in Soviet musical life, are essentially reports about the authors' journeys outside of the Soviet Union. Indeed, all of the nine authors (the composer Dmitri Kabalevsky and the collections editor Ivan Martynov contributed two articles each) were prominent figures in Soviet musical life. The countries covered in *ZR* were also nine in number: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia (two articles), China, Austria, Italy, Belgium, the United Kingdom, the United States and Poland. The scope of the contributions varied widely: while Tikhon Khrennikov's article offered a comparative perspective on musical life in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Austria, the majority of volume participants confined themselves to discussing musical life in a single country, and a few focused on specific events (such as the international violin competition in Brussels in 1951, discussed by Mikhail Chulaki).

Before embarking on a close reading of the volume, one cannot neglect the vexing problem of authorship and authenticity in the Soviet Union: many prominent public figures unable or unwilling to frame their loyalty in the precise terms prescribed by the ideological authorities used ghost writers to write 'obligatory' articles and speeches. Among the collection's authors, at least one – namely, Dmitri Shostakovich – resorted to this practice,³ but he may not be the only one to have done so. Even if all the other texts in the book were actually written by those who signed them, the outcomes of the creative process were almost certainly affected by the ubiquitous self-censorship, editorial corrections to the manuscripts before they were first published in the journal *Sovetskaiâ Muzyka (Soviet Music)* and, last but not least, the semi-official censorship of the General Directorate for the Protection of State Secrets in the Press ('*Glaolit'*') exercised over all texts issued by Soviet publishing houses. In his (unsigned) preface, the volume editor Ivan Martynov claimed to have minimally intruded upon the texts of his colleagues. The comparison of the texts published in the collection with their original versions in *Sovetskaiâ Muzyka* confirms that the editorial corrections were indeed minimal, being limited to changes in spelling and the conjugation of

foreign names and toponyms, changes of layout and occasional synonymic substitutions (for instance, 'our country' was replaced with 'USSR', etc.). In the face of such virtually insurmountable difficulties in cleansing authentic authorial voices (if any) of multiple editorial interferences, I decided to treat this collection as a unified – albeit not very homogeneous – entity, ignoring stylistic and other differences between the articles.

Let us have a closer look at the opposition '*Soviet*' vs '*foreign*'. In this 190-page-long book, the adjective '*Soviet*' appears 302 times – often as a part of such standard word combinations as '*Soviet deputy*', '*Soviet art*' and, of course, '*Soviet Union*'. In contrast to Shostakovich's song mentioned earlier, the volume often offers definitions of '*Soviet*'. Here is a good example:

Having condemned the formalist, anti-popular orientation in modern reactionary bourgeois music of Western Europe and America leading to the complete degeneration of music as a great art form; and having condemned the manifestations of the formalist tendencies in Soviet music, we the Soviet composers consider problems that were discussed at the Congress of Soviet Composers to be directly connected to the destiny of music of all countries and nations of the world. (ZR, 39)

Examples of this kind in the collection are manifold: the semantic field of the concept '*Soviet*' is usually clearly demarcated and extensively commented upon. Coupled with the extremely high frequency of its use, this anchoring turns the word '*Soviet*' into the key notion of the book. As the positive, self-referring pole of the counter-conceptual pair '*Soviet*' vs '*foreign*', the word seems somewhat functionally similar to the notions of '*Hellene*' and '*Christian*' in the two first sets of asymmetrical counter-concepts investigated by Reinhart Koselleck.⁴ However, the analogy is far from complete. In the case of *Abroad*, the 'mutual recognition' of the positive term by senders and recipients appears questionable, or at least limited:⁵ not many people outside of the USSR would share the messianic overtones of the quoted passage. This places the word '*Soviet*' in the vicinity of another positive but non-consensual member of the asymmetrical set of concepts mentioned by Koselleck – namely, '*Super-Human*'.⁶

Another issue with the pair is the extreme rarity of the adjective '*foreign*', which is supposed to function as the counterpart of '*Soviet*': it is employed in the collection only four times – and all these appearances are in the anonymous preface. The word '*abroad*', consisting in the Russian language of the preposition *za* and the noun in the instrumental case

rubezhom, is used almost as sparingly (seven times in the whole book). An even more peculiar situation can be observed in relation to the adjective 'inostrannyi' (literally meaning 'from another land'), which is a popular synonym of the word 'zarubezhnyi' (foreign). None of its six appearances in the book places the word in opposition to the notion of 'Soviet': rather, it is used from the point of view of the country that is being described. Here is a characteristic example:

One of the unpleasant sides of modern Italian street life is the open hunt on foreign tourists, aimed at making them give away money at any cost. As soon as a foreigner appears in a district with museums and ancient monuments, he is immediately attacked by street merchants selling all kinds of relics and souvenirs, with unemployed guides – and even simple beggars – offering their services. (ZR, 125)

The same can be said about the other synonyms of 'zarubezhnyi' found in the book. Whereas the adjective 'zagranichnyi' (which literal means 'beyond the border') does not appear at all, its paronym 'graniŭsa' (border) is used twice – but never in connection with the actual border of the USSR. Other related words, such as 'bezgranichnyi' (limitless), stray even further from the main dichotomy, being used metaphorically in decidedly non-political contexts.

This state of affairs appears to be at stark variance with the expectations implicitly established in Koselleck's seminal work. Contrary to Koselleck's persistent mentions of counter-concepts as binary phenomena,⁷ the words 'Soviet' and 'foreign' fail to appear in pairs, or at least they fail to do so with comparable frequency. Moreover, virtually all possibilities of conceptual pairing of the positive and the negative concepts (including the latter's derivatives and substitutes) are demonstrably ignored, even at the cost of creating an unruly, polycentric narrative in which synonyms are not synonymic at all. Indeed, in the volume, the notion of 'Soviet' is constantly reiterated and buttressed, shifting attention away from the notion of 'foreign' as such. If, in Shostakovich's song, the adjective 'Soviet' was a bleak, undefined and unmarked term compared to 'foreign', the essay collection reverses the semantic value of the same terms (without calling into question the conceptual asymmetry itself): the whole existence of 'abroad' is questioned and its seemingly obvious qualities are left undefined or even unmentioned. What could be the reason for such a strategy?

In my opinion, asymmetrical oppositions between these concepts do exist and play a significant role in *Za rubezhom*, but their architecture is more complex than the binary scheme suggested by the book title: the ensuing

hierarchy neither confirms nor negates the opposition manifested in the book title but rather fills the conceptual void created by the under-determination of the term 'foreign'. The point of departure for testing this hypothesis can be the only notion that one can consider defined, that is, 'Soviet'. Indeed, the word is used very frequently in the book – but only in specific contexts: it does not allow negative connotations to linger, it eschews ambivalence and, most importantly, it precludes the possibility of using comparative or superlative degrees such as 'more Soviet' or 'the most Soviet'. 'Soviet' refers to an ideal – a goal to strive for. Here is a characteristic example:

We, Soviet composers, unanimously answered this question at our First All-Soviet Union Congress:

Music must serve the interests of the people; it must carry to the millions of listeners (precisely millions – and not just a handful of selected guild-secluded musicians) the high ideals of humanism as they are understood by us, Soviet people and all truly progressive agents of humanity who defend the real interests of democracy. (ZR, 37)

This quote gives us an insight into the main – and fairly obvious – reason for avoiding the word 'foreign': the border is drawn not between the Soviet Union and everything else, but between the 'capitalist countries' and the so-called 'countries of people's democracy'. In this specific context, the words 'Soviet' and 'democratic' might seem synonymous. But a closer look at the texts shows that this is not the case. The words 'democracy', 'democratic' and their derivatives appear in the volume sixty-two times. But their semantic field is more ambivalent than that of 'Soviet', as the following quotations demonstrate:

But even these composers that consciously aim for democratization of their art, are not nearly free from the burden of the formalist influences. (ZR, 36)

The musical culture of Czechoslovakia has grown up and became more democratic – that's what we would like to tell our readers about. (ZR, 158)

We have seen and heard representatives of the really progressive intelligentsia of America fighting for peace, for the true democracy, and having great sympathy towards Soviet Union. (ZR, 52)

The quotations allow for some common trends to be discerned: unlike 'Soviet', the notion of democracy can be graded ('more democratic') and qualified ('true/real democracy', which implies the existence of its untrue or false variations). Most importantly, democracy is deemed compatible not only with positive notions that are ideologically adjacent to it, but also with markedly negative qualifications, such as 'formalistic tendencies'. In

the latter case, the progressive dynamics of striving towards democratization is particularly stressed, producing an opposition to the static perfection of 'Soviet'.

Close to this notion is that of 'realism', which, together with its paronyms, appears in the book's fifty-seven times. Similar to 'democracy', 'realism' is also a dynamic concept, frequently used in word combinations implying movement, such as 'stepping on a pathway of big realistic art' (ZR, 89), or 'striving to find the new, realistic ways of development' (ZR, 97). And, as the following quotation demonstrates, it is also (somewhat) gradable:

the large education work carried out by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, and finally, the huge influence of Soviet realistic music helped many composers and musicologists of Czechoslovakia to overcome harmful cosmopolitan tendencies of the formalist bourgeois art and step firmly on the path of realism and people's spirit (*narodnost*). (ZR, 85)

From this excerpt, it is possible to see that the meaning of 'realism' varies in accordance with the semantic properties of related key concepts. Connected to the notion of 'Soviet' (as in 'Soviet realistic music'), it is a static and unambiguous concept. However, whenever realism is connected with '*narodnost*', it turns into a dynamic notion associated with overcoming harmful tendencies – on the way towards the ideal, but not quite there yet.

By the way, the notions of '*narodnost*' and '*narodnyi*' (people's), which apparently belong to the same semantic field as 'democracy' and 'realism', happen to be very popular with the book's authors, appearing no less than one hundred and forty times. Like the notion of 'Soviet', they possess, however, no discernible territorial connotations, which, according to Koselleck, link conceptual asymmetries with the basic deictic self- (inside) and other- (outside) identifications.⁸ However, the opposition between the terms and their opposites, underpinned by the clear negative prefix 'anti-' ('*narodnyi*' vs '*antinarodnyi*'), appears to be even more asymmetrical than the main opposition 'Soviet' vs 'foreign'. This conceptual asymmetry is skewed in a similar fashion to '*sovetskii*' vs '*zarubezhnyi*': the word '*antinarodnyi*' appears in the collection only seven times – and always as a part of a synonymic row with '*formalisticheskii*' (formalism) (six times) or '*kosmopoliticheskii*' (once). In its turn, the negative pole of this privative conceptual opposition is closely connected to the notion of cosmopolitanism, so that the words 'anti-people' ('*antinarodnyi*') and 'cosmopolitan' ('*kosmopoliticheskii*') can be used almost interchangeably, affixing pejorative connotations to the otherwise neutral term.⁹ Additionally, these connotations are underscored by the contrastive juxtapositions of the term

‘cosmopolitanism’ with its positive correlate ‘internationalism’, as in the following passage:

In general, those were serious questions touching upon the situation in modern music art and concerning formalism and realism, internationalism and cosmopolitanism . . . (ZR, 77)

The opposition between the good (internationalism) and the bad (cosmopolitanism) alternatives to ‘*narodnost*’ is underscored here by the parallelism with the adjacent counter-conceptual pair in which the conjunction ‘*i*’ (and) likewise differentiates between the positive and the negative counter-concepts, albeit in reverse order.

The last example provides a good opportunity to shift our attention to the negative poles of conceptual asymmetries, which refer to the ideological adversaries of Soviet Union and its allies. Some of the conceptual asymmetries somewhat misleadingly take the form of aesthetic controversies indifferent to ideologies and national boundaries: this is true of the aforementioned terms ‘formalism’ (*‘formalism’*) and ‘formalist’ (*‘formalisticheskii’*), used in the book thirty-three times as antipodes of, respectively, ‘realism’ (*‘realizm’*) and ‘realist’ (*‘realisticheskii’*).

In the last quoted passage, the contradistinction is given a meditative shape, but it can easily be amplified and dramatized, as Dmitri Kabalevsky’s account of musical life in Great Britain demonstrates. The Soviet composer scolds his British colleague Edward Clarke for the unwillingness to take sides in an ‘escalating struggle between the two tendencies in contemporary music – the formalistic and the realistic ones’ (ZR, 81).¹⁰ In its turn, the negative correlate of ‘democracy’ and its paronyms is the adjective ‘bourgeois’ (*‘burzhuaiznyi’*), which is used in the book twenty-four times (again, far less than its positive correlates) – most typically as a part of the expressions ‘bourgeois music’ or ‘bourgeois art’. But, unlike the notion ‘formalist’/‘formalism’, ‘bourgeois’ is localized geographically. This is done, at least in part, by means of anaphoric repetition: the ‘bourgeois music’ occurs in the text alongside ‘bourgeois West’ and, even more specifically, ‘bourgeois Austria’. A case in point can be seen in the following, previously quoted passage:

We, Soviet composers – having condemned the formalist, anti-popular orientation in modern reactionary bourgeois music of Western Europe and America leading to the complete degeneration of music as a great art form . . . (ZR, 39)

The adjective ‘capitalist’, usually employed in the book as a part of the word combination ‘capitalist country’, is even easier to localize,

although it appears in the text just ten times (twice in relation to the United States) – way less often than its positive correlate ‘democracy’. One excerpt in particular deserves our attention:

Concurrently with the competition in the Belgian capital one of these infamous ‘trials’ aimed at discrediting the Soviet Union, was organized. Such ‘trials’ are organized in capitalist countries from time to time following direct orders from the other side of the ocean. (ZR, 153)

Using conceptual asymmetry to sketch out intricate relations between the USSR and two capitalist countries, this passage attempts to establish a more complex correlation between asymmetrical counter-concepts and geography than the simple distinctions between ‘Soviet’ and ‘foreign’ or even ‘democratic’ and ‘bourgeois’ would imply. The model for dealing with such undertakings, which presents hierarchical relations between countries in discourse as based on their spatial (physical) and ideological (metaphorical) proximity, has been suggested by Paul Chilton¹¹ and I will be relying on his findings in my analysis. ‘Soviet Union’ presents itself as the obvious positive pole of the book’s narrative, with the positivity not simply derived from the authors’ common self-identification but also empirically verified by the contextual analysis of the term ‘Soviet’ above.

The last quoted passage attests to the fact that ‘abroad’ was by no means a homogeneous Other of the Soviet Self, having been subject to further partitions and subordinations. Still, the most basic division of foreign countries suggested in the book was a standard opposition between ‘capitalist states’ and ‘the countries of people’s democracy’. The line drawn between the two ideological camps was supported on both sides by supplementary asymmetrical concepts, such as *progressive* vs *regressive*, *realistic* vs *formalistic*, *democratic* vs *bourgeois*, traditionally employed in Soviet public discourse for ideological demarcation.

A typical example can be found in Tikhon Khrennikov’s article ‘Novoe i staroe v muzykal’noi zhizni Evropy’ (New and Old in the Musical Life of Europe), in which ‘bourgeois Austria’ is juxtaposed with ‘democratic Poland and Czechoslovakia’:

Even the briefest impressions of these encounters, musical works and presentations that we listened to at the composers’ meetings create a picture of an interesting and substantial revival process concerning ideas and creativity in the musical life of the countries of people’s democracy – as well as the picture of deep spiritual crisis, muddle and perplexity of ideas among composers of bourgeois Austria. This picture unfolds against a backdrop of a stunning contrast between the shining dawn and rise in the social, economic and cultural life in democratic Poland and Czechoslovakia and a full degradation of the

national economy in bourgeois Austria. The grand pathos of building the new socialist life, the powerful rise of the amateur activities of broad masses of working people, optimism and faith in the bright future on the one side – and decline, desolation, poverty and a lack of perspectives on the other. (ZR, 83)

Helpful in telling friends from foes, this series of one-dimensional binaries fails, however, to reveal the chain of command within the ‘bourgeois’ area and to grade the badness of its elements accordingly. Already, the references to the ‘direct orders from the other side of the ocean’ quoted above put the United States in the position of the supreme ideological evil; the brief mention of local progressive forces does little to alter the very negative tone of the article devoted to the United States. The noun ‘America’ is often followed by the adjectives ‘capitalist’ and ‘free’ (the latter, always in quotation marks, is evidently used ironically). The degree of negativity ascribed to the transoceanic superpower is discernible in the following quotation:

The struggle against this danger (the attempts to stall the fruitful development of national countries), the struggle against the harmful and shallow American cosmopolitanism is one of the most important tasks for all progressive musicians in the world. (ZR, 32)

Close to this apex of evil are the ‘countries of the Anglo-American bloc’. The adjective ‘Anglo-American’ appears in the collection six times and one of these instances seems to be particularly revealing:

An important place in discussions was occupied by the problem of composers’ and critics’ freedom of creativity in the conditions of capitalist America and the countries of the Anglo-American bloc. (ZR, 31)

Here, an author keen to highlight the supreme position of the United States among capitalist countries chooses to forgo logic, opposing the whole (‘Anglo-American bloc’) to a part (‘capitalist America’) and literally putting ‘America’ first. However, the inconsistency of the notion ‘Anglo-American’ is not limited to this irregularity: largely associated with English-speaking countries, its semantics is flexible enough to accommodate nearly every imaginable combination of the ‘evil’ countries. As Dmitri Astashkin has stated, ‘The notion of “Anglo-American bloc” implied that the local audience would read it as a broad conglomerate of any political or military forces hostile to the USSR.’¹² Moreover, in ZR, the necessity to set the United States apart from lesser evils leads to some rather positive descriptions of other countries belonging to the ‘bloc’. For instance, Dmitri Shostakovich favourably contrasts the habits of Irish journalists to those of their American colleagues:

Their polite manners and tactfulness seemed to create such an impressive contrast to our recent American 'conversation partners' that both I and Fadeev, despite utter exhaustion and the late hour, were gladly answering their questions. (ZR, 48)

Other authors readily employed this model of internal partition within negatively marked identities: although the negative status of the 'bourgeois' (or 'capitalist') countries was never called into question, occasional positive evaluations of aspects of these countries were not uncommon (with the expected exception of the United States). Thus, Dmitri Kabalevsky mentioned the 'signs of growing movement of progressive forces' in the United Kingdom (ZR, 82) and in Tikhon Khrennikov's description of Austria, 'a group of composers was sincerely trying to step on a path of the righteous realistic creativity' (ZR, 50). Even more ambivalent is the article by Aram Hachaturyan about Italy: although clear about the subordination of the country to the United States by means of the Marshall Plan, the author hails the amity between the supposed ideological enemies, praising the Italy-USSR Friendship Society and rejoicing at the sight of crowds singing 'The Internationale' while meeting Soviet delegates:

The warm meeting of the Soviet delegation at the railway station was a clear demonstration of the friendly feelings that Italian people experience towards Soviet Union. (ZR, 124)

The material collected appears sufficient for making preliminary conclusions about the negative poles of asymmetrical concepts tied to the general notion of 'foreign' in the volume. Among the capitalist countries portrayed, only the United States is presented as unambiguously negative, which also corresponds to its ascribed role as the focal point and the main driving force of the capitalist evil. Other Western countries are described in a more nuanced and flexible way, revealing the gradable scale of ideological goodness and badness between the unquestionably positive (the USSR) and the unquestionably negative (the United States) poles; indeed, a country could receive comparatively better treatment in the book when mentioned alongside the United States and still score low next to the one of 'the people's democracies'. The vague expression 'countries of the Anglo-American bloc', aside from indirectly affirming the dominance of the 'pole of evil' (the United States) in the capitalist camp, is also subject to significant semantic alterations depending more on specific contexts than its verbatim meaning.

The conceptual framing of hierarchical relations between 'friendly' countries is organized rather similarly to their 'hostile' opposite: like the United States, the main anchor – Soviet Union – occupies an

unchallengeable position, which is not negotiable, gradable or prone to significant changes. This static monumentality is often underscored by the use of the past tense and a gerund, for example, 'We, Soviet composers, having condemned the manifestations of formal tendencies in the Soviet music', etc. (ZR, 39). Other 'countries of the people's democracy' are measured against this yardstick, with the amount and strength of analogies between them and the USSR being the main evaluative criteria.

It is probably not a coincidence that the collection opens with Georgi Khubov's article 'Bulgarian Sketches', which is saturated with references to the expressions of 'love of Bulgarians towards their brother and liberator – the Russian people' (ZR, 23). Curiously, out of thirty uses of the adjective 'Russian' in the volume, half occur in Khubov's text. For instance, while describing Bulgarian folk music, the author uses every opportunity to stress its similarities with Russian and Ukrainian folk traditions, blending political and economic associations with the ethnic and geographical ones. Another generalized expression of closeness between the Soviet Union and Bulgaria is the *linguo-ethnographic* term 'Slavonic' applied to Soviet Union and Bulgaria (in such word combinations as 'Slavonic brotherhood' or 'Slavonic nature') and never used for the pairings of the Soviet Union with the other Slavonic countries, namely Poland and Czechoslovakia. This misleading *pars pro toto* grants Bulgaria the special status of the 'close friend' of the Soviet Union, somewhat similar to the standing of the United Kingdom in relation to the United States. As for Poland and Czechoslovakia, they are associated with the USSR by means of the familiar (and non-geographical) aesthetic concept of 'realism' (as opposed to the 'formalism' of the bourgeois countries). But their subordinate positions are clearly marked by the use of processual terms. For instance:

the forces of progressive musicians are huge; joining them will undoubtedly bring forth substantial and fruitful results for the benefit of the healthy and successful development of musical art. (ZR, 43)

By these means, the two socialist countries are shown to be striving for and emulating unshakable aesthetic and political credentials that the Soviet Union has always defined for everybody else.

Interestingly, China – the country which was both culturally and geographically (as far as the European part of the USSR was concerned) quite distant from the Soviet Union – was also depicted in the volume as a close friend, probably due to the rosy relations between the two dictatorships in 1950s. Dmitri Kabalevsky's article 'Muzyka svobodnogo Kitaïa' (The Music of the Free China) reveals a rather hopeless scramble for similarities between Russian and Chinese music that could match the countries' political rapport. In the absence of stronger arguments, the

task is fulfilled by randomly mentioning Chinese cultural figures that have either studied or performed in the USSR, and citing the popularity of Russian music – particularly Russian songs – in China.

Having paid a lot of attention to the cultural evolution of specific verbal pairs exemplifying the phenomenon of asymmetrical counter-concepts in Western cultural history, Reinhart Koselleck largely refrained from discussing their actual correlation in texts on micro- and macro-levels: it seemed to be of little interest to him whether (and how) conceptual asymmetries actually achieve coordination in sentences and larger discourse units. This chapter's close reading of the edited volume *ZR* offers some tentative answers. Apparently, conceptual asymmetries can sustain great discrepancies between the frequencies of the positive and negative poles in texts without losing their divisive potential. From time to time, asymmetrical counter-concepts appear next to each other in texts, but the syntactic representation of such asymmetries is rather weak, so the readers are expected to know the differences in advance. Last but not least, conceptual asymmetries can be coordinated hierarchically. The underlying divisions 'Soviet' vs 'foreign' and 'capitalism' vs 'people's democracy' rely on supplementary sets of non-gradable conceptual asymmetries (such as the oppositions 'realism'–'formalism', 'progressive'–'regressive') fully represented by the two emblematic identities, the positive Self (the Soviet Union) and the negative Other (the United States), the values of which are also absolute. The badness of capitalist countries other than the United States is measured by the presence or absence of properties associated with the positive poles of supplementary asymmetries ('progressive tendencies'). The goodness of socialist countries, in contrast, is determined based on the degree of their 'Russianness', high and low levels of which mark the proximity of the respective satellites to the positive centre of the system: the USSR.

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Notes

1. Shostakovich, Dmitri, *Preface to the Complete Edition of My Works and a Brief Reflection Apropos of this Preface*, op. 123; bars 70–79.

2. See, for instance, Andreas Werckmeister, *Harmonologia musica oder kurze Anleitung zur musicalischen Composition* (Quedlinburg: Calvisius 1702), 6.
3. Elisabeth Wilson, *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 377.
4. Reinhart Koselleck, 'Zur historisch politischen Semantik asymmetrischer Gegenbegriffe', in *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979).
5. *Ibid.*, 211.
6. *Ibid.*, 244.
7. See Kirill Postoutenko, Introduction to this volume.
8. Koselleck, 'Zur historisch politischen Semantik asymmetrischer Gegenbegriffe', 218.
9. Andrea Albert, *Kosmopolitismus: Weltbürgerdiskurse in Literatur, Philosophie und Publizistik um 1800* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005), 21–66.
10. Meanwhile, it was (again) Dmitry Shostakovich who devoted a large section of his cantata *Anti-Formalist Gallery* (*Antiformalisticheskii raek*, 1948–68) to parodying this particular binary opposition.
11. Paul Chilton, *Analysing Political Discourse: Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2004).
12. Dmitrii Iu. Astashkin, 'Obraz anglo-amerikanskogo bloka v poslevoennoi Novgorodskoi presse v nachal'nyi period "kholodnoi voiny" (1947–53 rr.)' [The Image of the Anglo-American Bloc in the Postwar Novgorod Press in the Early Period of the 'Cold War'], *Vestnik Novgorodskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* 63 (2011), 23.

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