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Beyond the Binary: Toward the Paraconsistencies of Russian Communication Codes

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Russian communication is often viewed as inherently mysterious or even mystical. The present article is aimed at the exposition of this view and shows how Russian communication modes can be conceptualized as a constant search for their own logical and practical grounding: This search goes beyond the binary model and focuses on the contingent nature of communication. To that end, we first present a short overview of the concepts of analog and digital. Then, the analog roots of Russian culture are discussed, followed by an examination of the role of the digital in today's Russia. It is argued that the dynamic of the analog and the digital leads to a third ground, which is conceptualized by using the ideas of paraconsistent logic developed by Nikolai Vasil'ev. Finally, this third ground is identified with the public sphere and is presented as interaction between the state and individuals; electronic communication exemplars are given.

Keywords: digital, analog, Russia, identity, paraconsistent logic, public sphere

Digital and Analog

There are a number of features traditionally associated with the concepts of analog and digital, such as "continuous," "iconic," and "relational" for the former, and "discontinuous," "symbolic," and "discrete" for the latter (for more, see Wilden, 1980, pp. 191–195). Today, the digital enjoys more and more popularity (cf. the expression "digital age"); however, certain biases can be identified in how the digital is conceptualized. First, the digital is often viewed as a distinct period of time (usually "now") and yet, when we try to read the time from the historical clock, as it were, to a certain degree of precision, the boundaries get fuzzy: Do we read it in years, epochs, eras? Time comes in scales—and keeps scaling off. Second, the digital is often equated with the modern computer; yet, although *digital* can be applied to a computer operating on data in the form of discrete elements, it must be remembered that the word *digital* can be traced back to a part of the human body: The Latin *digitalis* means "of or belonging to a finger." In

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fact, during the World War II–era the word *computer* was in use as a referent to people (typically women) whose job it was to compute mathematical sums (Kittler, 1999). After "[Alan] Turing's mathematical definition of computability in 1936 gave future computers their name" (Kittler, 1999, p. 243), the word was as ambiguous as *typewriter*, which meant "both typing machine and female typist" (Kittler, 1999, p. 183). Such devices as the abacus and the human hand are "analog computers," and had to be labeled thus after Turing accurately called his (digital) computing machine "Universal Discrete Machine" (Kittler, 1999, p. 18). And, third, the digital is often identified with electronic media; however, both *analog* and digital signals find application—and can interface—in modern *electronics where they* denote the features of information transmission and communication (Baher, 2001)*. Thus, although it is appropriate to focus on the digital, it should not be forgotten that it is conceptually related to the* analog. In this light, our discussion of Russian culture cannot avoid its deep analog roots.

Russian Culture: Analog

The mindset of Russian culture, for the most part, has been analog (cf. Proskudin & Sokolov, 2013). In Russia, most people have traditionally been dependent on some original, irreducible object held sacred and true. Its ideal representation—the logos—can and must be constantly attempted through the ritual of sacrament and ordinance. This relational act of speech possesses a metaphysical presence that provides the foundation for the phenomenological world. When the original meaningful object is imitated so closely that being itself seems to be experienced directly, mimesis appears to be transparent: In this case, "the question of mimesis would lead to the question of transcendence" (Grigorjeva, 2003, p. 229). One of the most influential and enduring "transcendental signifieds" in Russian culture has been (the concept of) God, who is ever present—at all times, in all places, and in all things—and in whose image and likeness all human persons are created (Genesis 1:26). Although it is said to bring about centralization and hierarchization, the transcendental signified is positioned in relation to all elements by being "paradoxically within the structure and outside it" (Derrida, 2004, p. 352). Thus, not only does God relate to all humans, but also all humans relate to all other humans. In this connection, the special role of icons in Russian culture must be mentioned: The *Greek εἰκών* (*eikōn*) means "likeness" or "image." Through icons and in temples, the faithful can relate to God who became visible in Christ: "Orthodox icons and the temple" are viewed as representing "the higher reality" (Grigorjeva, 2003, p. 223). It is important to emphasize, however, that the faithful do not worship the icon, as such: Through these "windows on heaven," they enter into a sacred place with God.

This relationship is established, first and foremost, through the use of the living voice because "the use of the voice will ultimately endow those words with the character of sacredness and ensure their ritual efficacy" (Dolar, 2006, p. 107). In this

> event of language, proper name and appellative name are indistinguishable; and . . . the proper name of the god and the predicate that describes a certain action . . . are not yet divided. Naming and denotation (or the assertorial and veridictional aspects of language) are originally inseparable. (Agamben, 2010, p. 47)

Here, it is clearly speech, not writing, that is central to language; of course, "the sounds of speech are analog, phonology and the alphabet are digital" (Wilden, 1980, p. 169). This tradition that goes back to worshiping the word explains the "centuries of logocentrism in Russian culture, of captivity to the word and the ideological principle" (Epstein, 1995, p. 328). One striking example of making the Russian people captive to the oral word was the mode of communication that became especially prevalent by the early 1930s when "school poetry memorization was rediscovered as one of the most effective weapons for infusing a sense of national and ideological coherence into the minds of Soviet children" (Gronas, 2011, p. 89). At the same time, poetry—albeit very different poetry—was recited in the Gulag camps, helping prisoners maintain their humanity and culture (Gronas, 2011). In general, Russian people are famous for their "soul talk" (*разговор по душам*), which is "most fitting to intimate occasions where 'good relations' [*sic*] are present" (Carbaugh, 2005, p. 123). In all of these cases, people strive (or are made) to be like the enduring "transcendental signified"—the original idea.

This mode of communication can be traced back to (at least) the ideas of *Plato:* "There is a special attitude to Plato in Russia, as the formation of philosophy there occurred substantially under Plato's influence" (Polyakova, 2011, p. 179; cf. Averintsev, 1996; Epstein, 2011). It is interesting to note that, according to the Tübingen School, Plato's teachings point to an "unwritten doctrine" articulated at the Academy: The most significant, most valuable, and most difficult topics are excluded from documentation and are reserved exclusively for orality (Nikulin, 2012). Plato's ideas have been kept alive through Russia's history, for instance, through the teachings of Augustine—"a 'logocentrist,' a devotee of the transcendental signified, an ontotheologian" (Peters, 1999, p. 73), who is known in Russia as Blessed Augustine (*Блаженный Августин*; for more, see *Jones, 2000).* This influence endured even after the October Revolution of 1917 (Nethercott, 2000), albeit developing in a dramatic fashion (Epstein, 2011). As result, Neoplatonic tendencies in Russian thought have always been strong (Dobieszewski, 2010). Notwithstanding his theory of "semiosphere" based on "biosphere" by Vernadsky, even "Lotman's thought was linked to the Neo-platonic one with multiple ties" (Grigorjeva, 2003, p. 233). Known for his structural-semiotic study of modeling systems, Lotman defined *model* as "an analogy of a perceived object which replaces this object in the process of the perception" (Lotman 1998, p. 387). However,

> this notion of model is more ambivalent (also in Juri Lotman's works) than in this formulation. The main question that arises immediately from this definition is—at what moment is the object replaced by a model and then by a piece of art? A series of problems follows: where does the borderline between these three different logical notions lie? Up to what extent can we speak of a "real" object and then of its model? (Grigorjeva, 2003, p. 219)

Indeed, the key concepts brought up by these questions—time, boundaries, and identity —all apply to the digital. A model does not "replace" the object; rather, it is the relationship of likeness to the object. The ambivalence of this definition reveals Lotman's wishful (digital) thinking.

Russian Culture: Time for Digital

As shown above, throughout Russia's history, its modes of communication were predominantly analog. As with all empires (Innis, 2007), Russia expanded (continued) over space (Burbank, von Hagen, & Remnev, 2007). A more careful look, however, makes it clear that any act of communication as an organization of elements into a relationship is, in fact, an event that takes place in time. For instance, as convincingly argued and documented by Kivelson (2006), the maps from European Russia can be seen as evidence of numerous communicative collisions—in the form of lawsuits, self-interested claims, and counterclaims—between Moscow officials and local landowners. Their validity was determined by the accuracy of the property recorded on the maps; therefore, location was a source not only of social bondage, but also of individual rights. This evolving sense of spatiality contributed "to shaping a far more interactive, inclusive polity than has generally been imagined in discussions of Muscovy under the Romanov autocrats" (Kivelson, 2006, p. 11). In a way, any empire can be viewed as "an empire of others," to use an apt title of a recent book (Cvetkovski & Hofmeister, 2014). Overall, just as the analog and the digital are conceptually related, so are space and time.

Thus, a cultural change takes place in the act of communication as an event, that is, when times cuts into space. *In other words, every event of communication, such as, for example, any* decision in the lawsuits over the property recorded on the Muscovy maps is a temporal event and a symbolic *act. In this sense,* "the digital emerges as an attempt to 'map' the 'territory' of the analog" (Wilden, 1980, p. 270)—always symbolically and sometimes also literally.

Digital Russia today draws more and more scholarly attention (cf. Gorham, Lunde, & Paulsen, 2014). Often, however, this attention is paid to digital media objects, such as platforms, operating systems, networks, and so on, from the perspective of information theory in which *digital* is equated with the efficiency of signal transmission. This is especially evident in the fields of business, strategic, and integrated marketing communication (cf. the 2013 and 2014 conferences *Digital communications in Russia* [*Digital-коммуникации России*]). Of course, "there is a good reason why 'digital' might as well be a synonym for 'efficiency'" (Jackson, 2014, para.5). At the same time, it must be remembered that the digital deals with abstract classes and repeatable essences (Anton, 2003). In other words, focusing on the digital is important not only because information is transmitted more efficiently, but also because "identity is digital" (Wilden, 1980, p. 24). And Russia continues to search for its cultural identity—what is usually referred to as the country's "national idea": "There are few countries in the world where the concept of a 'national idea' is quite as strong as it is in Russia" (Bacon, 2014, p. 178). By appreciating the digital, it is possible to understand this search more fully.

The digital is crucial for any genuine expression of an identity—individual or collective—online discussions in Russia as a form of political deliberation being one such example (Misnikov, 2012). A good analysis of the notion of authentic identity is Humphrey's (2009) study of Russian chat rooms. In their introduction to *Digital Anthropology*, Horst and Miller (2012) write about her study: "The avatar does not merely reproduce the offline person; it is on the Internet that these Russian players feel able, perhaps for the first time, *to more fully express their soul and passion* [emphasis added]. Online they can bring out the person they feel they really are, which was previously constrained in mere offline worlds. For these

players . . . it is only on the Internet that a person can finally become real" (p. 15). In other words, anyone who, through various forms of digital communication, acts independently is entitled to acceptance as factual. "This reconsideration of authenticity in the digital age" (Cobb, 2014, p. 4) calls for more research into Russian culture, including its most enigmatic concepts such as soul (*душа*). Pesmen's (2000) book *Russia and Soul: An Exploration* came out 16 years ago; it may be the time for another exploration, now using the framework of digital ethnography.

Navigating Unpredictable Roads

It is common to view the dynamic of Russian culture in terms of binary dynamism (cf. Dolgopolov, 2000) based on the well-known model proposed by Lotman and Uspenskii. What is less well known, however, is that Lotman and Uspenskii's work exists in two translations: "Binary Models in the Dynamics of Russian Culture" (1985) and "The Role of Dual Models in the Dynamics of Russian Culture (Up to the End of the Eighteenth Century)" (1984). The latter is a more accurate translation of the Russian title *Rol' dual'nykh modelej*. . . . This difference in meaning is very significant: Lotman and Uspenskii viewed the dynamic of Russian culture not in binary (i.e., two mutually exclusive) terms, but rather in dual terms (i.e., composed of two usually like or complementary parts): "the Old" and "the New." According to Lotman and Uspenskii (1984), in Russia, "the new emerged not from the structurally 'unexploited' reserve, but as a result of the transformation of the old, as it were, of its being turned inside out" (p. 7). In the two translations, this change is worded differently: "[C]hange occurs as a radical *negation* [emphasis added] of the preceding state" (1985, p. 32) and "change takes place as the *radical rejection* [emphasis added] of the preceding stage" (1984, p. 5). This difference is very significant because "one can REFUSE or REJECT in the analog, but one cannot DENY or NEGATE" (Wilden, 1980, p. 163). The latter translation more accurately reflects the original phrase (and, *mutatis mutandis*, the analog nature of Russian culture): "Radical rejection" (*радикальное отталкивание*) means "pushing off/away" and "repulsion," and is derived from the verb *отталкиваться* that has such meanings as "to push off/away," "to repel," and "to revolt." Change in Russian culture has mostly taken place through revolutions, that is, "revolts." In each such case, Russia has been turned inside out, as it were. What we see here, therefore, is "a simple inversion of the relationship between master and slave, or between executioner and victim" (Wilden, 1980, p. lv), the latter relationship bringing up many grim memories for many Russians. As a result, in spite of the *tumultuous and explosive character of* Russian history, nothing seems to be really changing.

As Lotman and Uspenskii (1984) put it, "the more things change, the more they regenerate archaic forms" (p. 5), or, as the popular saying goes, "In Russia, everything can change in 10 years, but in 100 years, nothing changes." It is in this light that we can especially appreciate the significance of Lotman's (2009) *Culture and Explosion*, which contains a chapter entitled "The Moment of Unpredictability." The very last words of the book are "History does not know repetition. It loves new and unpredictable roads" (p. 171). Obviously, such "moments of unpredictability" cannot be adequately understood within the binary model of relations constantly inverted. Many thinkers have emphasized that it is imperative to go beyond this model of Russian culture to more successfully navigate its "unpredictable roads." For instance, before Lotman, the Russian philosopher Nikolai Lossky (1957) wrote about "the insufficiency of the middle region of [Russian] culture," which was the title of a chapter in his book.

To address this middle ground, we turn to works of Nikolai Vasil'ev (1880–1940), a logician and a philosopher who worked as a professor at Kazan University. He was also a poet: One of his collections of poems is entitled *Longing for Eternity* (*Тоска по вечности*). Thus, it may not be so surprising that he developed the so-called "imaginary logic" grounded in his pioneering reflections on the triangle of contrariety. He is considered to be the originator of three-valued logic (Kline, 1965) and one of the main forerunners—along with Charles S. Peirce and Jan Łukasiewicz—of many-valued or paraconsistent logic (Bazhanov, 2010; Moretti, 2009). According to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, classical logic and most standard "nonclassical" logics are "explosive" because inconsistency cannot be coherently reasoned about. In its turn, paraconsistent logic challenges this orthodoxy: "a logical consequence relation, ⊨, is said to be paraconsistent if it is not explosive [*sic*]. . . . Thus, paraconsistent logic accommodates inconsistency in a sensible manner that treats inconsistent information as informative." It is noted, furthermore, that the prefix *para-* in English has two meanings: "quasi" (or "similar to, modeled on") or "beyond," and that many paraconsistent logicians have taken it to mean the second (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*).

Thus, "a triangle of contrariety can be seen as a good way to go beyond dichotomy. . . . Besides yes and no, we have maybe, besides true and false, undetermined" (Béziau, 2012, p. 11). In Béziau (2012, pp. 10–11), we find many triangles of contrariety, for example, the alethic (referring to various modalities of truth) triangle of contrariety (see Figure 1). Clear parallels can be drawn between the two top corners of the triangle in Figure 1, on the one hand, and the analog and the digital, respectively, on the other hand. Relationships can be established everywhere and always; also, it "is a type of analog or iconic communication in which the signal or sign has a necessary relation to what it 're-present'" (Wilden, 1980, p. 163). Digital beings, in their turn, are abstract entities that have no place or position (Eldred, 2009), that is, they exist nowhere and never, as it were; also, with their "either/or" character, grounded in negation, it is impossible for Self to be the Other. What is of special importance, however, is the third corner: the middle ground whose nature is contingent.

Figure 1. The alethic triangle of contrariety.

The Devil in Between

This third ground is usually identified with purgatory, which is missing—and badly needed—in Russian culture. This view follows Lotman and Uspenskii's (1984) work in which the dual model of Russian culture is represented by heaven and hell; however, besides holy and sinful behaviors, they note a zone of neutral behavior that allows salvation through purgatory. They argue that it is because of the lack of purgatory as a neutral ground that change in Russia took place as the radical rejection of the preceding

stage. It is traditional to accept that view:

> The afterworld in Russian medievalism is divided into hell and heaven, while Catholic conceptions allow a third to exist between these two—purgatory, a place for the souls of people who were not quite saints and not quite sinners, but who lived in an average, human sort of way and who, after enduring the trials of purification, *might* earn salvation. (Epstein, 2011, p. 26)

It appears as if in this zone the final decision is made whether one goes to hell or heaven, that is, whether one might earn salvation or might not. However, it is noted that

> Lotman and Uspenskii have mischaracterized purgatory as a space within which one earns one's salvation; rather, the correct theological understanding of purgatory is the experience of cleansing or purgation that can take place only after redemption has occurred. (Mandelker, 2006, p. 65)

Whether one gets to experience cleansing or purgation depends on "whether a soul is in or out of the state of grace at the time of death. Purgatory is not a means of working one's way out of hell into heaven" (Mandelker, 2006, p. 79).

We need, therefore, to search for other ways of conceptualizing this neutral ground that is so important, yet can be so dangerous because "the devils are generally working somewhere in between" (Pias, 2003, p. 182). One, of course, can deal with the contingencies of life by relying totally on chance and good luck, hoping that things will somehow sort themselves out. The significant role this attitude of *Avos'* (*Авось*) plays in Russian culture is reflected in numerous proverbs and folk sayings (Wierzbicka, 1992, p. 435). Or one can fight for the transcendental signified; this militant spirit is captured in these famous lyrics: "Hear, worker, the war began / Quit your job and march. / We shall bravely go to the battle for Soviet power / And we all to the last man shall die fighting for this" ("This" in "for this" can be anything—any transcendental signified). However, if we read these lyrics carefully, we cannot help wondering: If "all to the last man shall die," who will remain?

We would be better off if we could steer a path between *Avos'* on one side and revolutionary explosions on the other. Such an approach that avoids both these extremes would capture the contingent nature of the zone where nothing has yet been decided and thus something must be decided. It is crucial to realize that

> as long as the probability of a state between our permitted states is great and has to be taken into account, we have still a flavor of the continuous. When the probability of the Zwischen-state is zero or negligible, we think chiefly in other terms [i.e., digital]. That is . . . purely a matter of practicality. (Pias, 2003, p. 197)

In other words, in this neutral zone, we deal with the details ("the devils") that cannot not be probable; therefore, a decision is made between something considered necessary and something considered impossible.

Each such judgment is a matter of practicality because it requires practical wisdom and so is a form of phronesis. Such judgments are best made—through deliberative communication—in the public sphere, which, following Habermas (1964), is understood as a realm where matters oriented to the common good are freely discussed. In broad terms, this realm exists between government authorities and private individuals:

> The representative public sphere yielded to that new sphere of "public authority" which came into being with national and territorial states. Continuous state activity (permanent administration, standing army) now corresponded to the permanence of the relationships which with the stock exchange and the press had developed within the exchange of commodities and information. Public authority consolidated into a concrete opposition for those who were merely subject to it and who at first found only a negative definition of themselves within it. These were the "private individuals" who were excluded from public authority because they held no office. (Habermas, 1974, p. 51)

The "public authority" can be seen as analog by nature, a "continuous state activity," whereas "private individuals" can be viewed as "digital entities" (their "negative definition"). The public sphere, then, is the third, contingent, zone (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. The public sphere in the triangle of contrariety.

As mentioned earlier, the national authority can be based on the relation to (the authority of) any transcendental signified (and, *mutatis mutandis*, the relations to each other). Orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationality are considered to be the most enduring ideas for Russian culture (cf. Chubarov, 2001). Later, especially in post-Soviet Russia, autocracy was replaced by *Derzhavnost'* (*Державность*): the idea of great power or strong statehood, which is often employed in media campaigns for political purposes (Zasurskiĭ, 2004). It is important to see a complex dynamic between national authority, even in its autocratic form, and the public sphere. For instance, it is argued that the autocratic power in Russia allowed its ruling class to move along the path of modernity with the help of "a tightly controlled public sphere"; as a result, in the course of two centuries, Russia was transformed "into one of the most powerful enterprises on earth . . . at least until World War I" (Poe, 2003, p. 70).

In their turn, the private individuals were finding ways to define themselves. The realm of common concerns grew not only from family interactions within each household, but also those, for example, between Moscow officials and local landowners, as mentioned earlier, and the patronage relationships between Cossacks and high-ranking nobles that led to "the limited public sphere" (Witzenrath, 2007). According to Habermas (1964), the European institutions in the early public sphere were coffee houses, salons, and the *Tischgesellschaften* (table societies), and Russia had its own spaces where people of various social classes could mix, meet with travelers, and express their opinion: "for centuries in various Russian localities, rural drinking establishments . . . (e.g., *kabak, traktir, postoialyi dvor, kharchevnia,* and *korchma*) . . . functioned as centers of village public life" (Kimball, 2004, para. 1) Also, public markets, literary salons, and tea and coffee houses increasingly came to play a similar role.

It is important to remember that, in spite of its seeming spatial bias (for more, see Sinekopova, 2005), the public sphere is a discursive realm where claims are made—just like those in Moscovy or Cossack litigations or the soul talk in a kabak—that must be able to command the potential assent of all others in a discourse (Habermas, 2001). All such potential participants fall into two kinds, as stated earlier: national authority and private individuals; each uses digital communication in various ways. Let us look at some exemplars from electronic communication, which is the most recent form of digital communication (yet, not the only one, as explained earlier).

The state obviously has more resources at its disposal—from implementing e-government (Pardo, 2010; Trochev, 2008) to creating digital maps helping to unlock economic potential in Russia (http://www.thinkrussia.com/business-economy/digital-maps-help-unlock-market-potential-russia). Calls are made to distinguish between "honest" and "dishonest" administrative resources (Taylor, 2011), which is important in Russia, where the phrase *administrative resources* usually carries negative connotations. It can be suggested that when the use of administrative resources does not exclude, and even presupposes, the involvement of all potential participants in a discourse, it must be considered "honest"; it is called "dishonest" if it lacks transparency and accountability. With this overall criterion in mind, such forms of digital control as censorship tend to cause a more negative reaction. Russia has had extensive experience in the area of censorship and is now moving from analog to digital control (Johnson, 2014).

Control of the Internet, however, is more complex than it appears. In Russia, a poll released by the independent Levada Center in 2015 showed that 83% of respondents support censorship because of the "numerous dangerous sites and materials" online, and the Freedom House report found Russia to be "not free" (Freedom House, Freedom on the Net, 2015). The report documented the most commonly used types of Internet control in various countries assessed, including blocking and filtering (e.g., social media and communications applications), cyberattacks against regime critics, surveillance, throttling or shutting down service, and so on. Today, the possibilities for filtering Internet content deserve even more scrutiny in light of net neutrality discussions: All Internet traffic may be created equal, but some media sites may prove to be more equal and so load more quickly than others.

Propaganda is another area for which administrative resources are used. Although sometimes they speak about "gray" and even "white" propaganda (Watson & Hill, 2012), few would consider the use of administrative resources for propaganda purposes to be completely "honest"; after all, propaganda is

the deliberate attempt to shape opinions, and there is a difference between "deliberate" and "deliberative." Without a doubt, "the Internet and various forms of digital communication have significantly increased the dissemination of propaganda" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2015, p. 7). If the Soviet Union is sometimes equated with the "birth of the propaganda state" (Kenez, 1985), due to various new technologies and forms of digital communication, Russian propaganda campaigns are now much more effective: suffice it to mention the *Russia Today* network and the recently launched new multiplatform agency *Sputnik News*. Compared with propaganda, public diplomacy is a much more benign form of communication. The Russian Foreign Ministry uses the term *innovative diplomacy* for what is usually referred to as "digital diplomacy" (Simons, 2014). The future of Russian digital (or innovative) diplomacy looks promising, especially for the young generation that grew up using social media platforms (Permyakova, 2014).

Private individuals may not possess administrative resources on a par with those owned by the national authority, but, when it comes to using digital technologies, they can be quite resourceful and successful. The efforts of individuals also can be oriented more to the common good or to pursuing ulterior motives. An example of the latter includes media piracy: Russians are considered one of the worst intellectual-property offenders in emerging economies (Sezneva & Karaganis, 2011). Granted, the dynamic of power and resistance presents one with many digital dilemmas (cf. Franklin, 2013), and each symbolic act is a result of numerous factors, some more ambivalent than others. What to make of the so-called "Goblin," who is said to be an amateur Russian digital video editor named Dmitri Puchkov and who, not satisfied with the subtitle translations available on the market, redubed non-Russian films into colloquial Russian, adapting them to the contemporary Russian environment and thereby bringing new cultural signs and modes of thought (Walsh, 2003; cf. Vaidhyanathan, 2005)?

More and more often, however, the emotional energy of individuals finds more constructive outlets of expression; For example, Russians now tweet their protests (Nikiporets-Takigawa, 2013). When the Russian authorities blocked a Facebook page calling for a demonstration in support of opposition leader Aleksei Navalny, thousands of Russians took to Twitter and planned a live discussion of the verdict on January 15, 2015, at *Manezhnaya Square in Moscow. One can read more on* digitally mediated collective action and the networked public sphere in the report by the Berkman Center that describes its findings on a three-year project investigating the Internet's impact on Russian politics, media, and society (Alexanyan et al., 2012).

Thus, the neutral ground, so eagerly searched in and for Russia, is anything but calm; rather, it is "the theater of struggle," to use Hall's (1986) expression. Here, various actors are strenuously engaged with matters of common concern and nothing can ever be taken for granted or finally settled. That is why, for instance, "while the dynamics of digital communication are becoming clearer, its political effects remain illusive" (Esarey & Xiao, 2011, p. 312). The hopes for the Internet to completely democratize the public sphere always contained utopian notes. However, utopia is a "no-place," so this common ground must be cultivated time and time again. In other words, we must remember that "for every possible communication, the anticipation of the ideal speech situation has the significance of a constitutive illusion that is at the same time the prefiguration [*Vorschein*] of a form of life" (Habermas, 2001, p. 103).

This, of course, in no way must be taken to nullify the importance of digital communication for the creation of the public sphere. Although it may be true that "reimagining democracy under conditions of global technoculture is a project that is just beginning" (Dean, 2003, p. 111), many would disagree that "the Net is not the public sphere" (Dean, 2003, p. 104). The crucial role of the Internet, as the public sphere, for democracy cannot be denied, just as the overall role of the digital for the public sphere cannot be denied.

Yet, "the subject of digital knowledge can never fully represent the subject of analog knowledge" (Wilden, 1980, p. 22); also, "without the digital, we could not speak of the analog" (Wilden, 1980, p. 168). That is why we hear about "analog liberalism" and "embodied resistance" (Kelty, 2010) and read that "the revolution will *not* be Tweeted" (Gladwell, 2010). In other words, it is by using digital technologies that we can, and must, return to the analog world: This is understood very well by both political philosophers and pioneers of cybernetics: "Claims to sincerity can be redeemed only through actions" (Habermas, 2001, p. 93); "The language of action is spoken through the body" (Foucault, 1994, p. 104); "Every digital device is really an analogical device" (Norbert Wiener; see Pias, 2003, p. 158). Although the importance of the digital cannot be doubted, "survival is impossible without analog relations" (Wilden, 1980, p. 499). It is by emphasizing this crucial significance of survival of the entire humankind that Lotman (2009) ends his book: "To overlook this possibility would be a historical catastrophe" (p. 174).

Conclusion

Let us emphasize several key points discussed in the article.

Although the digital today enjoys popularity and draws scholarly attention, it can be discussed only in the background of the analog. This is especially true for Russian communication modes with their deep analog roots.

At the same time, the digital has always been latent in Russian culture; as mentioned, even Lotman's definition of a model reveals his wishful (digital) thinking. At present, of course, the digital takes the spotlight in Russian communication media and research. It must be remembered, however, that the digital should not only be identified with the efficiency of transmitting information: Only in the light of the digital can we understand Russia's cultural identity more fully.

Russia's search for its cultural identity is traditionally viewed in terms of binary dynamism as outlined in Lotman and Uspenskii's model. However, within this model in which binary relations are constantly inverted, there is no place for "moments of unpredictability" and truly new meanings. As shown in the article, the paraconsistent logic, developed by Nikolai Vasil'ev, can be fruitfully used to address the contingent nature of communication.

The zone "beyond the binary" can be best conceptualized as a discursive formation where matters of public practical concerns are discussed and phronetic judgments are made. This public sphere is an arena where the state and private individuals are engaged in communication in which nothing can

ever be taken for granted or finally settled. Various cases of electronic communication have been provided as exemplars of attempts at deliberative communication.

Finally, it must be remembered that the digital cannot fully represent the corporeality of analog knowledge; hence, any mode of communication must be viewed as a language of, and a call for, action.

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