

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: CASUALTIES OF COLD WAR:
TOWARD A FEMINIST ANALYSIS
OF AMERICAN NATIONALISM
IN U.S.-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

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Using a feminist transdisciplinary research approach, this dissertation interrogates the discursive configurations that constituted the framework of meaning within which the United States conducted its relationship with the Russian Federation between 1991 and the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. It calls attention to the production and operation of what I refer to as “gendered Russian imaginaries” (i.e., the range of masculinities and femininities that have been assigned to narrative and visual depictions of Russia and Russians in American political and popular culture) that have been invoked as part of American cold war triumphalism to craft and support U.S. foreign policy.

The dissertation has two parts. While much has been written about the *consequences* of U.S. Russia policy, I explore its ideological *causes* in Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4. Chapter 1 enumerates the foundational precepts upon which my project relies, while Chapter 2 offers some necessary background information concerning the evolution and deployment of gendered nationalisms in the Russian Federation and in the United States. Chapters 3 and 4 examine the metaphors and analogies deployed throughout the congressional hearings that led to two pieces of U.S. legislation, the Freedom Support Act of 1992 and the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000.

Through visual, narrative, and discursive analyses of several popular culture texts, including 1997's animated feature film *Anastasia* (Chapter 5), NBC's hit television series *The West Wing* (Chapter 6), and Washington, D.C.'s popular International Spy Museum (Chapter 7), part two explores the ways in which Russia and Russians were visually and narratively depicted in U.S. popular culture at the turn of the twenty-first century.

Given the Russian Federation's status as the world's second-largest oil producer after Saudi Arabia, the importance of Russia to contemporary U.S.-Middle East politics can no longer be in any doubt. Consequently, the mistakes, assumptions, and triumphalist arrogance of the United States since 1991 must be reckoned with and accounted for. This dissertation contributes a feminist analysis to that endeavor by drawing attention to the links between cultural and national identities, the gendered politics of knowledge production, and the circulation of power in transnational contexts.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Imagining Russia

"If we cannot escape these discursive patterns, then we must at least acknowledge the staggering force of tradition in shaping national narratives and expose the fictions that pass as history lest we become lost in the myths."¹

During the fall of 2005, the Italy-based fashion design company Diesel featured an advertisement that ran in the United States in *GQ Magazine* in which a shirtless young cowboy, culturally intelligible as white, rippled muscles bronzed by the sun, lay prostrate, sprawled in apparent contented exhaustion across a plush red and black sofa (figure 1). His brown leather boots are adorned with spurs, his heavy metal belt buckle is unfastened, his well-worn stonewashed jeans are unbuttoned, revealing his lower torso, and his crimson hat is pulled low over his eyes. Behind him, displayed prominently on the shelf, are *matryoshka* dolls, arguably the most globally recognized symbol of Russian national identity.² That the dolls seem to be fashioned, not from the customary wood hand-painted by Russian artisans, but from malleable plastic, signals the advertisement's use of a complex intertext that

¹ Helena Goscilo and Andrea Lanoux, introduction to *Gender and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Russian Culture*, ed. Helena Goscilo and Andrea Lanoux (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006), 24.

² Dating back only to the late nineteenth century, traditional *matryoshka* (or "nesting" dolls) are individually carved and then hand painted. Designs are usually drawn from Russian folk art, fairy tales, and religious imagery. The term *matryoshka* comes from Matryona, a popular female name among peasants in pre-revolutionary Russia, which, in turn, is related to the Latin root "mater" meaning "mother." As a result, the dolls are closely associated with motherhood and, because of their numerous "offspring," fertility. For a more extensive history of *matryoshka* dolls, see L. N. Soloviova, *Russian Souvenir: Matryoshka* (Moscow: Interbook Business, 1997).



Figure 1: An advertisement for Diesel jeans.

simultaneously relies on and reinforces its viewers' conflation of heterosexual sex with a feminized Russia: The dolls' plastic red mouths are open, hollow, and rife with (hetero)sexualized possibility. Having ostensibly just received the fatigued cowboy's penis and ejaculate, they wait while he sleeps and will, the ad promises, be available to pleasure him again when he awakens. This advertisement for jeans, that most quintessentially American of products, seems to imply that, unlike the brazen and demanding American women the cowboy may have known, these inanimate, plastic *matryoshka* dolls signal the alleged virtues of "traditional" Russian womanhood:³

³ For complex historical reasons that I discuss more fully in the next chapter, idealized notions of conventional Russian femininity, or *zhenstvennost*, require that Russian women be passively subservient in both private and public life in order to maintain the integrity of the Russian family and,

Always already silent, they enjoy lying subserviently immobile while the cowboy, associated in the popular American mythos with notions of “Manifest Destiny” and nineteenth-century Westward expansion, achieves his orgasm, and, most conveniently, they can be deflated and packed away when not in use.

As an encounter between the United States and Russia, whose contentious relationship, known colloquially as the cold war, held geopolitics hostage in the latter half of the twentieth century,⁴ the Deisel advertisement traffics rather problematically in a particular U.S.-based imaginary that conceptualizes Russia, represented here by the silent, inanimate, plastic *matryoshka* doll, as not just inferior, but also female and

hence, the Russian nation. For more information, please refer to Goscilo and Lanoux, introduction to *Gender and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Russian Culture*; Vera Tolz, *Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); and Catherine Schuler, *Women in Russian Theatre: The Actress in the Silver Age* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

Expectations of *zhenstvennost* are heartily deployed by Anastasia International, an Internet marriage agency specializing in arranging Russian/Ukrainian-U.S. marriages. The results of a 2005 survey, for example, reveal that their willingness to “preserve traditional family values and consider their husbands to be the heads of the household,” “put their families ahead of career advancement,” “value a well-kept household,” and “dress stylishly and elegantly and look after themselves” make Russian women particularly attractive to U.S.-based men who, according to Anastasia International, are “disenchanted (or perhaps, ‘dis[en]franchised’) by the extremely career-oriented bent that women in [Western] countries predominantly demonstrate.” Survey results are available on-line at Anastasia International, “New Survey Reveals What is So Attractive in Russian Ladies,” <http://www.anastasia-international.com/media-publication36.html> (accessed May 8, 2008).

⁴ I use the term “geopolitics” to refer to the means by which “dominant and powerful sovereign nation-states have tried to make sense of and represent their global spatial environment [...] with a view to facilitating their foreign policy making.” Francois Debrix, *Tabloid Terror: War, Culture, and Geopolitics* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 9. Additionally, following political scientist David Campbell, I have chosen throughout this dissertation to substitute the lower case “cold war” for the more typical “Cold War” when referring to the dominant geopolitical paradigm of the last half of the twentieth century in an attempt to draw attention to that conflict as a discursive configuration integral to the creation of a post-war American national identity. Via a reading of recently declassified cold war-era U.S. national security documents, Campbell demonstrates that “the danger posed by the Soviet Union was not considered to be primarily—or even significantly—military” by the U.S. foreign policy elite. Rather, the perceived danger was cultural and ideological (i.e., concern for the infiltration of communism). Consequently, Campbell contends, the cold war was a discursive phenomenon, a product of a particular crisis in American national identity, “that was not dependent on (though clearly influenced by) the Soviet Union.” It should be noted, however, that Campbell’s argument here “neither maintains that the foreign policy of the Soviet Union (and other communist states) was benign nor that the United States willfully fabricated a danger where none could be perceived.” David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 25, 138, and 137.

subservient to the United States, signified by Diesel's obvious homage to that quintessential American icon, the virile, masculine Marlboro Man.⁵ Instead of conquering the rugged American frontier, though, Diesel's cowboy encourages the (hetero)sexual violation of a feminized Russia—the vanquished foe of what historian Ellen Schrecker calls “cold war triumphalism.” This is the hegemonic national/ist narrative that not only claims the United States “won” the cold war simply because it deserved to win (based on its allegedly superior economic, military, and political systems), but is also the basis for U.S. unilateralism in world affairs after 1991.⁶ Additionally, the use of the *matryoshka* doll as a commodity to sell jeans, a classic American product, is, within the triumphalist narrative, both the ultimate proof and justification for the United States' cold war “victory.” Not only has capitalism trumped communism (as U.S. pundits and officials had promised all along), but the symbols and traditions of imperial Russia, itself, which in 1917 had been subsumed by the specter of communism, can now be freely integrated into the global capitalist marketplace.

This advertisement, then, in its efficient assemblage of the governing themes of American nationalism and U.S. foreign policy, is much more than an attempt to entice presumably elite white, young, heterosexual, male consumers to buy an

⁵ Like cultural theorist Arjun Appadurai, I use the term “imaginary” as a noun to signal the necessary interconnectedness between “the old idea of images, especially mechanically produced images (in the Frankfurt School sense); the idea of the imagined community (in Anderson's sense); and the French idea of the imaginary (*imaginaire*), as a constructed landscape of collective aspirations.” Arjun Appadurai, “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Economy,” in *Colonial Discourse/Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 327.

⁶ Ellen Schrecker, introduction to *Cold War Triumphalism: The Misuse of History After the Fall of Communism*, ed. Ellen Schrecker, 1-24 (New York: The New Press, 2004).

expensive pair of jeans.⁷ It depicts a troubling conflation of American nationalism with the commodification of racialized, heteronormative gender configurations, thereby hailing its target audience,⁸ interpellating them simultaneously as both consumers and conquerors within the national governing mythology of cold war triumphalism, or what I refer to as the *triumphalist mythscape*, that has dominated U.S. political and popular culture for more than fifteen years.⁹

In response to a call for a feminist research methodology that advocates linkage rather than comparison as a means of “destabiliz[ing] the forms of hegemony that underwrite the production of knowledge in the modern period,”¹⁰ I employ in this dissertation a feminist transdisciplinary approach that attends to the connections between the hegemony of American heteropatriarchal nationalism in U.S. political and popular culture and its effects on U.S.-Russian relations. I interrogate the

⁷ Diesel’s men’s jeans range in price from roughly \$150 to \$300 USD, making them accessible to a very small niche market. Billing itself as an “innovative international design company” and “a leader in pioneering new styles,” Diesel has, according to its own website, become “part of the youth culture worldwide.” The company envisions its optimal clients as “independent people who follow their own unique path in life” and as “style-makers who express their individuality by the way they dress.” Diesel, “For Successful Living,” <http://www.diesel.com/info/history.php> (accessed March 21, 2008).

⁸ Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards and Investigation),” in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, 127-86 (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971).

⁹ I rely for this term on the existence of cold war triumphalism as discussed by Schrecker as well as what sociologist Duncan S. Bell calls a “national mythscape,” which he defines as “the discursive realm, constituted by and through temporal and spatial dimensions, in which the myths of the nation are forged, transmitted, reconstructed and renegotiated constantly.” Duncan S. Bell, “Mythscales: Memory, Mythology, and National Identity,” *British Journal of Sociology* 54, no. 1 (2003): 75. The notion of consumers and conquerors is from Tuszynska’s discussion of *The Birthday Girl* (2000), a feature film starring Nicole Kidman as a Russian mail-order bride, to which I will return shortly. Agnieszka Tuszynska, “Eastern Girls, Western Boys: The Image of Eastern European Women in the Birthday Girl,” in *Vampirettes, Wretches and Amazons: Western Representations of East European Women*, ed. Valentina Glajar and Domnica Radulescu, 203-14 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

¹⁰ Caren Kaplan and Inderpal Grewal, “Transnational Practices and Interdisciplinary Feminist Scholarship: Refiguring Women’s and Gender Studies,” in *Women’s Studies on Its Own*, ed. Robyn Wiegman (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 76.

gendered, heteronormative, and racialized dynamics of U.S. Russia policy between the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. Using what feminist political scientist Cynthia Enloe terms a “feminist curiosity,”¹¹ that is, a mode of feminist inquiry whose objective is figuring out how things got to be the way they are so that they might be different, I examine the production and operation of particular assumptions about Russia and Russians that have been invoked to craft, support, and implement U.S. policies.

I draw explicitly on the methodologies and perspectives of cultural studies, political science (especially feminist international relations theory), women’s/gender studies, feminist development studies, performance theories, and history. Each of these locations of knowledge production has its own intellectual genealogy/ies, and, because my work here requires the flexibility of multiple and simultaneous perspectives, this project draws from and is in constant dialogue with each of them. Consequently, the questions and issues with which I am concerned have demanded that I be, concomitantly, an historian, a political scientist, a literary scholar, an economist, a performance theorist, a scholar of nuclear proliferation, and a cultural critic—just to name a few of the hats I have worn while researching and writing this dissertation. Consequently, my work operates simultaneously as both a research model and a theoretical paradigm within which to interrogate the ways in which gendered, racialized, heteronormative discursive configurations are integral to the formulation of nationalist narratives and foreign policy objectives.

¹¹ Cynthia Enloe, *Globalization and Militarism: Feminists Make the Link* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 1 and 9-12.

Chapter Outline

By the early 1990s, American-style capitalist democracy appeared to have triumphed over communist totalitarianism, and, in Russia, the state assets of a former superpower became the objects of neocolonial conquest for largely U.S. and Western corporate and political elites.¹² This is the point at which my work in this dissertation begins. Having emerged from a broader critique of the ways in which U.S.-based popular and political cultural texts utilize neocolonial strategies that rely upon the discursive construction of foreign nationals as Others to justify and legitimate the growth of U.S. military and economic geopolitical hegemony in this current era of globalization, my research interrogates the production and operation in U.S. popular and political culture between 1991 and 2003 of what I refer to as “gendered Russian imaginaries” (i.e., the range of masculinities and femininities assigned to narrative and visual depictions of Russia and Russians in American political and popular culture) in an attempt to understand not only *what* they mean, but also *how*, *why*, *when*, *by whom* and *for what purpose(s)* their meanings have been constructed. Interestingly, each of these gendered imaginaries is ethnically Slavic, which makes them white Europeans; however, as Russians, they are subject to a complex cold war-era version of Orientalism.¹³ My analysis is framed on one end by the demise of the

¹² I use the term “neocolonial” throughout as an inherent critique of the ways in which powerful nation-states behave as if they were colonial powers, particularly the ways in which private corporations, based largely in the global North and West, continue their exploitation of the resources of less powerful nation-states.

¹³ The term “Slavic” is generally used to refer to the Indo-European peoples of Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and the Balkans who speak linguistically related languages. Pan-Slavism, a nationalist movement intended to unite all Slavic peoples under one government and against Western oppression, reached its height in the late nineteenth century. For example, one of the major reasons that the Russian Empire became embroiled in World War I was its promise, in the context of pan-Slavism, to defend the Slavic peoples of Serbia against an Austro-Hungarian military offensive.

Soviet Union and subsequent attempts to construct a post-Soviet Russia in the early 1990s and on the other by the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, which, as I will discuss in chapter 8, signaled a shift in the ways in which post-Soviet Russia sought to present itself on the global stage, and, consequently, the ways in which Russia and Russians were depicted in the U.S. Conceptualizing gender as a shifting signifier, I identify and examine five post-Soviet sites where gendered, racialized, heteronormative images of and assumptions about Russia and Russians have been invoked in U.S. popular and political culture texts to craft a cold war triumphalist American nationalism that serves not only as justification for a neocolonial U.S. Russia policy, but also for U.S. geopolitical unilateralism since the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991. I am particularly interested in the discursive interplay between textual sites and visual sights that, together, create knowledge about Russia and Russians in the United States.

This dissertation has two parts. While much has been written about the *consequences* of U.S. Russia policy, I explore its ideological *causes* in Part One. My exploration of the ideological *causes* of U.S. foreign policy is a composite task emerging, first, from Enloe's call to "to use a feminist curiosity to develop explanations—that is, to discover *causes*" of particular events and situations, and, second, from U.S. foreign relations historian Michael H. Hunt's search "for a relatively coherent, emotionally charged, and conceptually interlocking set of ideas" that form the core of U.S. foreign policy, "reflect the self-image of those who espoused them," and "define a relationship with the world consonant with that self-image." He concludes that the existence and maintenance of a racial hierarchy in

which white, European descent remains superior to others is one of three core ideologies at the foundation of U.S. foreign policy. The others are the promotion of liberty and an expressly anti-revolutionary political positionality.¹⁴

In this chapter, I provide several operational definitions, enumerate the foundational precepts that undergird my work, and discuss this project's potential implications and theoretical interventions. In chapter 2, I provide some necessary background concerning the evolution and deployment of gendered nationalisms in the Russian Federation and the United States, arguing that Russia's historically feminized presentation of itself has heavily influenced depictions of Russia and Russians in the U.S. media, particularly in film and television, over the course of the last century—and most definitely after 1991.

Chapter 3 tackles the gendered, racialized, and heteronormative dynamics of the Freedom Support Act of 1992, the legislation that authorized U.S. bi- and multilateral assistance to the independent states of the former Soviet Union. Through an analysis of the legislation itself as well as the congressional hearings convened to discuss U.S. aid to Russia, I consider why and how U.S. bilateral aid to Russia took the form of technical assistance to the exclusion of all other options. I argue that the assumptions which helped to shape U.S. Russia policy immediately after the demise of the Soviet Union relied simultaneously—and rather incongruously—on the notion of a weakened, feminized Russia in urgent need of assistance, and on the continuation of a cold war-era conceptualization of the Russian Federation as duplicitous, irrational, and maleficent. I demonstrate that the metaphors and analogies used

¹⁴ Enloe, *Globalization and Militarism*, 12; and Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 12.

throughout the hearings to justify and legitimate policy decisions reveal an explicit imperialist hubris embedded in U.S. Russia policy and rooted in racialized, gendered discursive configurations reminiscent of the colonial strategies of past empires.¹⁵

Chapter 4 asks, “Why did U.S. legislators’ sudden desire in the late 1990s to halt human trafficking coincide with clashes on Capitol Hill over who should most appropriately take the blame for what seemed to be the wholesale failure of U.S. Russia policy?” I conduct a close reading of the U.S. congressional hearings that led to the passage of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) to argue that in U.S. political culture in the late 1990s, human trafficking became synonymous with sex trafficking (i.e., the illegal transnational trade in the bodies of (usually) women and girls for [predominantly] heterosexual sex), which, in turn, was inextricably linked with victimized Russian women, who were assumed to be white Europeans. According to anti-trafficking rhetoric, these women not only need to be saved not only from “evil” traffickers, but also from emasculated Russian men, who, unable to cope with the transition to capitalism and democracy, were incapable of supporting or protecting “their” women and children in the way that “real” men should. I then contextualize the anti-trafficking hearings within an overarching discursive analysis that takes into account their relative synchrony with the oversight hearings being held on Capitol Hill to assess what went wrong with U.S. assistance in Russia. I argue that these two conversations, one about a proposed U.S. anti-trafficking law, the other about U.S. Russia policy, reveal much not only about the

¹⁵ By the term “imperialist” I mean not the material manifestations of colonial conquest (i.e., occupation of territory and the exploitation of resources), but an attitude of superiority over and the right to dominate foreign peoples.

gendered dynamics of U.S.-Russian relations at the end of the twentieth century, but also about the epistemological limitations imposed on both policy debates by the inadequacies of language. Although well-intentioned, the members of Congress who championed the passage of the TVPA inadvertently deployed the rhetoric of Russian trafficking “victims” as a convenient political trope that operated equally well in both sets of hearings. Russian men, particularly political elites and law enforcement officials, were explicitly identified as the chief opposition not only to attempts to end sex trafficking, but also to the success of U.S. policies in the region.

In Part Two, I move from an exploration of the sites of U.S. foreign policymaking to one of sights, of the ways in which Russia and Russians were visually and narratively depicted in U.S. popular culture at the turn of the twenty-first century. Chapter 5 chronicles the political uses made of Grand Duchess Anastasia Nicholaevna, one of the Russian Empire’s most iconic and frequently mythologized figures, since her rumored escape from a Bolshevik firing squad in 1918. I first provide some historical background with regard to the execution of Russia’s last royal family during the Russian Revolution, after which I conduct a textual and semiotic analysis of Twentieth Century Fox’s 1997 animated feature film *Anastasia*. I reveal the film’s complicity with the rhetoric of U.S. Russia policy throughout the 1990s in its depiction of Russia as, quite literally, an orphaned teenage girl whom the United States must rescue in the name of democracy, freedom, and human rights. I conclude with a discussion of the two contentious debates in Russia, one social and political, the other cultural and historical, that characterized the context within which *Anastasia* had its Russian premier in March 1998.

While a concern for Russia's internal domestic affairs, including much-publicized alleged human rights abuses and civil liberties violations, constituted the Clinton administration's policy toward Russia, the George W. Bush administration left that country largely to its own devices and has demonstrated interest in Russia only as a potential geopolitical friend or (more recently) foe in the "war on terror." Chapter 6 takes into account this shift in U.S. Russia policy by mapping the fictionalized depiction of U.S.-Russian relations on NBC's television series *The West Wing*, whose seven-year run (1999-2006) was bifurcated by September 11, 2001. I argue that, before that date, the popular weekly drama offered a critical perspective on the major post-Soviet political, diplomatic, and military events and issues by subtly giving voice to alternative policy directions and possibilities, even as it utilized the gendered Russian imaginary so prevalent in U.S. popular and political culture. But after 9/11 and the advent of the "war on terror," storylines concerning Russia, already gendered, were explicitly linked with Islamic fundamentalism.

Within the context of the "war on terror," the link in U.S. popular and political culture between the gendered Russian imaginary and Islamic fundamentalism has been further complicated and partially constituted by Russia's continued military engagement with Chechnya and its longstanding bilateral diplomatic and economic relations with Islamic fundamentalist regimes in the Middle East (most notably Iran), which pre-date the creation of the Russian Federation as a political entity. Chapter 7 grapples with this shift in the gendered Russian imaginary through a reading of the public relations materials and cold war exhibits of Washington, DC's International Spy Museum, which opened to the public in July 2002. I illustrate the textual, visual,

aural, and architectural methods by which female heterosexuality is explicitly conflated in the museum with the dangers of state-based violence and the threat of Soviet/Russian espionage. I argue that this tactic makes a duplicitous *femme fatale* of the Soviet Union (and, by extension, its successor state) in order to facilitate the museum's use of the cold war as a cautionary tale to justify the "war on terror."

In the last chapter, I detail the "casualties of cold war" to which I refer in the title of this dissertation. I discuss the tangible and intangible damages inflicted by the cold war, focusing particularly on the epistemological limitations that were imposed on the foreign policies of both countries and the potential implications of those limitations for the future of U.S.-Russian relations.

Foundational Precepts

Located at the vortex of several distinct although always already interrelated and interconnected intellectual genealogies, my project relies on three crucial foundational precepts:

1. That stories told about the past have tangible effects in the present, particularly within the context of nationalist projects, which are always in flux and are, consequently, malleable;
2. That nations, nationalisms, and relations between nation-states are constituted by and through gendered, racialized, and heteronormative discursive configurations; and
3. That these always already gendered, racialized, and heteronormative (his)stories a nation tells about itself are widely promulgated via a wide

range of cultural texts which are intrinsically imbued with political significance, operating as sites of public pedagogy that make meaning and, therefore, affect material conditions and experiences.

Precept 1: Histories at work

Uniting the great variety of theoretical approaches to the origins of nationalism and the formation of nations is, first, an acknowledgment of the past from which those processes emerge and, second, a concern for the ways in which, and by whom, stories about that past are mobilized in the present to create what British sociologist Duncan S. Bell terms “governing myths” that “impose a definite meaning on the past, on the nation and its history” in an attempt to cohere a single, collective national identity.¹⁶ Sociologist Anthony D. Smith, for example, positions nationalists as social and political archaeologists whose task it is to “reconstruct a past era or civilization and relate it to later periods, including the present” in an attempt to provide for the nation “a suitable and dignified past.”¹⁷ Similarly, in case studies on Russia, Quebec, and West Germany, historian M. Lane Bruner specifically identifies three types of history (monumental, antiquarian, and critical) that are commonly used as what he terms “strategies of remembrance” in the creation of nationalism’s

¹⁶ Bell, “Mythscapes,” 74.

¹⁷ Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 176. The past must be understood as different from history: “[h]istory is a discursive practice, a discourse about the past. History is not to be confused with the past, for history is a collection of stories and argument about some set of events from before.” Bruce E. Gronbeck, “The Rhetorics of the Past: History, Argument, and Collective Memory,” in *Doing Rhetorical History: Concepts and Cases*, ed. Kathleen J. Turner (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1998), 48.

governing myths.¹⁸ And, as political scientist Anatol Lieven and historian Ellen Schrecker demonstrate, the deployment of histories, particularly those concerning the “founding fathers” and the United States’ alleged “victory” over communist totalitarianism in the cold war, is fairly easy to detect in the governing myths of American nationalism, particularly since the events of September 11, 2001.¹⁹

Given this concern for the pedagogical uses of history in nationalist projects, recent theorists of nations and nationalism also tend to agree that the nation, an “imagined political community,”²⁰ and its attendant ideology, nationalism, are cultural artifacts that are, like (and, arguably, because of) the stories they tell about themselves, historically contingent and always in flux. Consequently, the nation, itself, is a social construct always coming into being as what postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha calls “a system of cultural signification” created via the dynamic and contentious process of its own narration of its constructed history.²¹ And, like all cultural artifacts, the nation, in the words of theorist John Hutchinson, is a “zone of conflict” that is by no means culturally homogenous, thus leaving it vulnerable to competing nationalisms that may pursue radically different methods for constituting

¹⁸ M. Lane Bruner, *Strategies of Remembrance: The Rhetorical Dimensions of National Identity Construction* (Columbia: University of South California Press, 2002), 8. According to Bruner, monumental history is used to construct a great mythical past worthy of imitation and, thus, employs stories about the past as a call to act on behalf of the nation. The deployment of antiquarian history rests on a love of the past and a desire to preserve rather than exploit it. Critical history problematizes both monumental and antiquarian history by calling attention to the exclusions and perceived injustices of the past.

¹⁹ Anatol Lieven, *America Right Or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

²⁰ For more on this notion, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. (New York: Verso, 1991), 6-7.

²¹ Homi K. Bhabha, introduction to *Nation and Narration* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 1-2.

the nation of their ideological and political imaginings. The differences between competing nationalisms, Hutchinson contends, often manifest themselves in the competition between cultural nationalists, who “[emphasize] the role of inner traditions [...] and promote decentralization or regional liberties,” and political nationalists, “who are inspired by external (Western) models which seek to modernize society from a central site.”²² But, as feminist theorist Anne McClintock points out, not one of these “sanctioned male theories” incorporates what feminist international relations (IR) theorist V. Spike Peterson refers to as a “gender-sensitive lens” to make sense of the origins of nations and the evolution of nationalisms. Using as a case study the Afrikaaner nationalist movement in South Africa, McClintock demonstrates nationalism’s reliance on claiming the legitimacy of either a “traditional” past or “modern” future “is typically resolved by figuring the contradiction in the representation of *time* as a natural division of *gender*.” Put more simply, women tend to be associated in national governing myths with ethnic/national/cultural authenticity and tradition, and men with progress and modernity.²³

Precept 2: Gendered nationalisms and geopolitics

From a feminist perspective, then, the most obvious question to be asked of normative theories of nationalism would seem to be, “Where are the women?” and “What does gender have to do with it?” The first question assumes that *sex* is a

²² John Hutchinson, “Nations and Culture,” in *Understanding Nationalisms*, ed. Montserrat Guibernau and John Hutchinson (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 85.

²³ V. Spike Peterson, “The Politics of Identity and Gendered Nationalism,” in *Foreign Policy Analysis: Continuity and Change in its Second Generation*, ed. Laura Neack, Jeanne A. K. Hey, and Patrick Haney (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995), 357 and 359; and Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

biological category and attends to the experiences of women in and as part of nationalist projects. For scholars exploring this question, the identities of their subjects are determined by the presence (or, arguably, lack) of particular anatomical characteristics. The second question assumes that *gender* (i.e., the range of masculinities and femininities) is a fluid social construct, “an identity tenuously constituted in time” and “instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*,”²⁴ and is concerned with interrogating how and why socio-cultural fears of and assumptions about masculinities and femininities are wielded in the creation and maintenance of nationalist narratives. Although these two questions can yield quite different research projects, they are inherently interrelated. By incorporating them into their analyses, feminist scholars have worked to fill the theoretical gap left by the (mostly) male theorists of nationalism in an attempt to find new ways of conceptualizing and telling the nation’s constructed history²⁵—a history that, as they have collectively shown, is reliant not only upon the material manipulation of women’s bodies, but also on the systemic deployment of gendered, racialized, and heteronormative discursive configurations.

Among the first to study women’s experiences in nationalist projects was feminist political theorist Kumari Jayawardena, whose *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (Zed Books, 1986) revisions the histories of nationalist/revolutionary struggles in several countries, including India, China, Indonesia, Egypt, and Korea, to

²⁴ Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory,” in *The Performance Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Bial (New York: Routledge, 2004), 154; italics in original.

²⁵ Uma Narayan, *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions, and Third World Feminism* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

incorporate the experiences of women into histories of those movements. At the same time, historian Linda K. Kerber chronicled the political transformation of acceptable women's roles during the American Revolution in *Women of the Republic: Intellect & Ideology in Revolutionary America* (W.W. Norton & Co., 1986). These studies, both published in 1986, laid the foundation for subsequent histories documenting the experiences of women in nationalist projects and the convergence of nationalist and gendered discourses in moments of political and social upheaval in various national contexts. For example, Joan Landes researches women's participation in the public sphere before and during the French Revolution, while Miranda Pollard's work explores the effects of military defeat and Nazi occupation on French articulations of gender roles and relations in wartime France. Arguing that Vichy's nation-building focused on returning France to an illustrious and largely mythical past, Pollard reveals the tactics by which the government promoted the family as the most important unit of a new France and elevated married mothers to a high social status even as women's reproductive rights and educational and employment opportunities were severely curtailed. Similarly, Elizabeth Wood and Wendy Goldman each chronicle the Soviet Union's retreat from its own revolutionary rhetoric by exploring the dynamic relationship between state policy and society. Wood explores the U.S.S.R.'s campaign to draw women into the public sphere and involve them in the world of politics by reconstructing how notions of gender sameness and difference both facilitated and complicated Bolshevik efforts at state building in the 1920s, while Goldman focuses on how women, the poor, and orphaned street children were exploited by the state to meet its own needs during the 1930s. And Victoria De Grazia

interrogates the experiences of women under Mussolini's dictatorship by examining the creation and impact of fascist sexual politics within the context of the changes in Italian society as a result of World War I and considering the response(s) by the fascist government to women's increased participation in the mass politics of the interwar period.²⁶

These historical studies concerning the exploitation of women and other marginalized populations rather dichotomously position nationalism and its proponents as the enemies of women; however, German historian Claudia Koonz demonstrates through an examination of the interrelated discourses of/on nationalism, anti-communism, motherhood, and family, the ways in which German women, no less than men, participated in and/or were complicit with Nazi policies. British historian Antoinette Burton is critical of women's participation in state-based nationalist movements, which, as she and others have shown, are quite often part and parcel of an imperialist foreign policy. In *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), Burton focuses on the collaboration of organized British feminism in the Victorian and Edwardian periods with the ideological work of empire, imperialism, and colonialism in their treatment of and assumptions about

²⁶ Kumari Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (London: Zed Books, 1986); Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1986); Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988); Victoria De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Wendy Z. Goldman, *Women, the State and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917-1936* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Miranda Pollard, *Reign of Virtue: Mobilizing Gender in Vichy France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); and Elizabeth A. Wood, *The Baba and the Comrade: Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997). See also Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann, and Catherine Hall, ed., *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century* (New York: Berg, 2000).

Indian women. Terming this “imperial feminism,” she shows how British women sought to link women’s political emancipation (i.e. suffrage) with the continued health and success of the British Empire in a time of increasing global insecurity.²⁷ And feminist international relations (IR) scholar V. Spike Peterson advocates recognizing women not only as symbols and victims of nationalism, but also as agential participants in nationalisms and violent conflicts.²⁸

Similarly, in their rejection of the notion of “women” as a homogenous category, a way of thinking that emerged from Western feminists’ assumptions about shared experiences based on biological *sex* regardless of cultural, religious, or other differences, postcolonial and transnational feminist theorists have drawn attention to the differential relationships of women to and within the nationalist and/or imperialist state as it, itself a cultural construction, is embedded within specific historical moments and transnational practices such as colonialism and globalization. Arguing that even anti-colonial nationalism wielded as a liberatory tool from European domination has historically utilized “female bodies as the symbol of the nation to generate discourses of rape, motherhood, sexual purity and heteronormativity,” feminist theorists Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan point out that “nationalisms are not just patriarchal;” rather, women are often ready participants. Burton’s framing of

²⁷ Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family and Nazi Politics* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987); and Antoinette M. Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

²⁸ V. Spike Peterson, “Sexing Political Identities/nationalism As Heterosexism,” in *Women, States, and Nationalism: At Home in the Nation?*, ed. Sita Ranchod-Nilsson and Mary Ann Tétreault, 54-80 (New York: Routledge, 2000). For more on the convergence of gendered ideologies, feminist politics, and nationalist aims, see, for example, Valentine M., introduction to *Democratic Reform and the Position of Women in Transitional Economies*, ed. Valentine M. Moghadam, 1-25 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); and Nanette Funk and Magda Mueller, eds., *Gender Politics and Post-Communism: Reflections for Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

late-nineteenth and early twentieth century British feminism within an imperialist discourse is an example, as is the common understanding in the U.S., particularly since September 11, 2001, that it is the duty of the United States to “save” Muslim women from their oppression by the patriarchal cultures of Islamic countries—even while alarmingly high rates of sexual assault, domestic violence, and other gender-based inequities continue unabated in the United States. It is nationalism, Grewal and Kaplan contend, that “creates these misrecognitions”²⁹ and thus leads, as I have shown, to the absence in normative theories of nationalism of a consideration of either the experiences of women or the use of gendered discourses.

The impressive body of feminist scholarship on nationalisms is perhaps most efficiently encapsulated by sociologist Nira Yuval-Davis, who clearly demonstrates the dynamic relationship between women and the state, on the one hand, and gender and the nation on the other by offering a succinct four-point formula for thinking about gender relations and “the ways they affect and are affected by national projects.”³⁰ They are:

²⁹ Caren Kaplan and Inderpal Grewal, “Postcolonial Studies and Transnational Feminist Practices,” *Jouvert: A Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 5, no. 1 (2000), par. 6; available on-line at <http://social.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v5i1/grewal.htm> (accessed February 8, 2008). See also Narayan as well as Mrinalini Sinha, “Refashioning Mother India: Feminism and Nationalism in Late-Colonial India,” *Feminist Studies* 26, no. 3 (2000): 623-44; Norma Alarcon, Caren Kaplan, and Minoo Moallem, introduction to *Between Woman and Nation: Nationalisms, Transnational Feminisms, and the State*, ed. Norma Alarcon, Caren Kaplan, and Minoo Moallem, 1-18 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999); Inderpal Grewal, “On the New Global Feminism and the Family of Nations,” in *Talking Visions: Multicultural Feminism in a Transnational Age*, ed. Ella Shohat, 501-30 (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1998); and Caren Kaplan and Inderpal Grewal, ed., *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

³⁰ Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 3. Yuval-Davis offers a clear differentiation between the nation and the state, arguing that the latter refers to institutional apparatuses and governing structures, while the former refers to the “related nationalist ideologies and movements” that “are constructed by shifting nationalist discourses promoted by different grouping competing for hegemony” (4). Consequently, I understand “the nation” (the Andersonian imagined community) as distinct from but in dialectical relationship with “the state” (the set of institutions that govern civil society).

1. Women as the biological reproducers of the nation, which involves the pressures of having or not having children according to state needs as differentiated based on dimensions of identity and difference.
2. Through cultural reproduction and gender relations, which refers to the notion of “woman” as symbolic border guard of traditional and/or modern culture, constructions of “manhood” and “womanhood,” and “woman” used to prove modernity and/or as an homage to cultural traditions.
3. The ways in which women are included (or not) as citizens while also always subjected to the gender-based regulations, rules, and policies of the state.
4. The discourse of war for “womenandchildren” and the effects of militarization, particularly the increasing participation of women in the military. This mode of analysis also deals with the gendered affects of war on soldiers and victims (especially with regard to rape as war crime) and includes a discussion of the possible relationship between women, feminism and peace.

Because of its attention to representational politics, it is Yuval-Davis’ second point, concerning the cultural reproduction of gender relations, constructions of “manhood” and “womanhood,” and the use of women as the cultural signifiers of national identity, that is of particular concern to me in this project. Several feminist studies of nationalisms, including a few of those discussed above, support Yuval-Davis’ analysis by incorporating into their projects an examination of the ways in which cultural texts ranging from legislation and newspapers to artwork and novels are part and parcel of the ideological discursivity of the gendered nationalist project. Through an examination of the popular Stalin-era women’s magazines *Rabotnitsa*

(*The Woman Worker*) and *Krest'yanka (The Peasant Woman)*, for example, historian Lynn Atwood explores the multiple incarnations of the “new Soviet woman.”³¹

But if Yuval-Davis and the other feminist theorists of nationalism are right, as I believe they are, about the deployment of gender-as-discourse in national identity formation, what happens when the gendered signifier of the nation travels across borders and, even more intriguingly, is deployed in an entirely different geographical, cultural, or historical context from that out of which it emerged? What, I wonder, do women and gender have to do with relations *between* nation-states? What about skin color/ethnicity and sexual orientation? When nation-states are gendered feminine, as feminist theorists of nationalism have demonstrated, what are the consequences for the formulation of foreign policies and the conduct of geopolitics? More specifically, how are gendered, racialized discourses wielded in U.S.-Russian relations? What are the effects on U.S. Russia policy when Russia is conceptualized in U.S. popular and political culture as a gendered subject? By what means, by whom, and for what purposes is the gendered nation politicized in/for its new context?

Addressing these questions necessitates turning to feminist international relations (IR) theorists, who focus their attention not on the relationship of women to the state and/or the use of gendered discursive configurations to create and maintain nationalisms, but on the significance of women and gender for relations *between* nation-states. Alternatively (and often simultaneously) utilizing the same two

³¹ Lynn Atwood, *Creating the New Soviet Woman: Women's Magazines as Engineers of Female Identity, 1922-1953* (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1999). For examples from French history, see Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992); and Joan B. Landes, *Visualizing the Nation: Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

questions undergirding feminist studies of nationalism (i.e., “Where are the women?” and “What does gender have to do with it?”), feminist IR scholars seek to understand how the activities and experiences of the majority of the world’s people have come to be excluded from the major theoretical frameworks commonly used to explain relations between nation-states, “while other people’s idealized traits, if not their daily activities, seem to inspire the models, concepts and processes” by which geopolitics is conducted.³² Collectively, through interrogations of war and peace, security, international political economy, human rights, the environment, and other related issues, they reveal the myriad ways in which gender-as-discourse and women’s bodies are co-constitutive of geopolitics and the political economies of this and other historical moments of globalization. Put another way, feminist IR theorists believe that “gender makes the world go ‘round.’”³³

Building on feminist anthropologist Gayle Rubin’s notion of the sex/gender system³⁴ as constitutive of social relations, feminist political scientist Cynthia Enloe argues that the real and imagined transnational traffic in gendered bodies is *one*, if not

³² Christine Sylvester, “Feminist Theory and Gender Studies in International Relations,” <http://www.isanet.org/sections/ftgs/femir.html>, par. 2.

³³ Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). This phrase is the title of Enloe’s first chapter.

³⁴ The “sex/gender system” as articulated by Gayle Rubin is “the set of arrangements by which society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity, and in which these transformed sexual needs are satisfied.” Rubin prefers the term “sex/gender system” to others like “patriarchy” and “mode of reproduction” to describe social relations because it “is a neutral term which refers to the domain and indicated that oppression is not inevitable in that domain, but is the product of the specific social relations which organize it.” She argues that this concept, which has its theoretical foundation in Friedrich Engels’ attempts to develop notions of a kinship system as an explanation of women’s oppression, most accurately describes the social organization of sexuality and the reproduction of the commodities of sex and gender. Gayle Rubin, “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the ‘Political Economy’ of Sex,” in *Feminism & History*, ed. Joan Wallach Scott (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996; reprint, 2000), 106 and 113.

the, bedrock of global politics. For example, she calls on scholars to revisit the alleged simplicity of an international politics and foreign policy dependent on heterosexual marriage and, more specifically, on wives, particularly those of diplomats and military personnel, doing what they are supposed to do. She also considers the feminized nature of migrant work, chiefly domestic service, as well as the work of women in the garment industry, which relies on “[f]eminized patterns of racial and regional inequality—interwoven with ideas about motherhood and feminine respectability.”³⁵

Consequently, Enloe argues, material relationships between nation-states within and among (past and present) globalization processes cannot be understood without attention to the fact that gender-as-discourse, rather than simply a part of these processes, is constitutive of them. In her most recent work exploring the links between militarization and globalization, for example, Enloe focuses what fellow feminist IR theorist V. Spike Peterson terms a “gender-sensitive lens”³⁶ on the ways in which “national security” becomes militarized. Enloe explains how the notion that international politics requires “rationality,” in combination with the gendered assumptions that men are “rational” and women are “emotional,” means that “a certain kind of masculinity” has become “the entry ticket into national security discussions.” As a result, “how one thinks about national security not only affects global relations but determines who is even allowed to sit at the table to take part in the security conversation.” According to the conventional understanding of the term

³⁵ Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*, 156.

³⁶ Peterson, “The Politics of Identity and Gendered Nationalism,” 170.

“national security,” anything can be a threat, from women’s fertility (i.e., the argument that there are too many people using the world’s scarce resources) to foreign militaries and non-state actors. Instead, Enloe suggests a reprioritization of that which should be “secured” under the conceptual and operational rubric of “national security,” positing that “human security” may be more useful than “national security” in thinking about issues of security and safety.³⁷ She also offers a discussion of the gendered dynamics of U.S. interrogation techniques at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay. Arguing that the torture and harassment of detainees by U.S. military personnel was part and parcel of American nationalist ideas about feminization in opposition to the privileging of particular militarized forms of masculinity, she points out that, because no one has yet to ask about the causes and consequences of wielding ideas about masculinity and femininity, the ways in which militarization can lead to torture remain unknown.³⁸

Enloe’s call to examine the affects of the deployment of gender-as-discourse on international politics requires the acknowledgement and interrogation of what Peterson terms “gendered hierarchies,” which are marked by a systemic discursive “denigration of the feminine” accompanied by a glorification of particular forms of masculinity.³⁹ She demonstrates the myriad ways in which this process requires not only feminization, as Enloe points out, but also heterosexism, “the institutionalization and *normalization* of heterosexuality and the corollary exclusion of non-heterosexual

³⁷ Enloe, *Globalization and Militarism*, 40-43.

³⁸ Enloe defines feminization as “a process imposing allegedly feminine characteristics on a person—man or woman—or a group or a kind of activity” in an attempt to “lower her (or its) status.” Enloe, *Globalization and Militarization*, 99.

³⁹ Peterson, “Sexing Political Identities/Nationalism as Heterosexism,” 58.

identities and practices.” The institutionalization of heterosexism within nationalist projects and as part of international relations also “normalizes the subordination of women and naturalizes rape as an expression of male power against women and ‘insufficiently masculine’ men,”⁴⁰ thus requiring a performance of virile—and often violently militarized—heterosexual masculinity that is able to define itself in opposition to both. For example, Enloe argues that the United States’ continued lack of support for global human rights and demilitarization treaties originates in the Pentagon’s deft ability to convince civilian officials that U.S. “national security” would suffer, and these civilian officials, afraid of not appearing “manly,” are either unable or unwilling to stand up against military personnel. Enloe concludes that American political culture “equates military experience and/or military expertise with political leadership,” and that the “political competition to appear ‘tough’ has produced U.S. foreign policies that severely limit the American capacity to play a useful role in creating a more genuinely secure international community.”⁴¹ This analysis is borne out in historian Robert Dean’s critique of the construction and deployment of heteronormative masculinity among U.S. foreign policy elites during the Viet Nam conflict.⁴²

⁴⁰ Ibid., 59-60; italics in original.

⁴¹ Enloe, “Masculinity as a Foreign Policy Issue,” *Foreign Policy in Focus* 5, no. 36 (2000), <http://www.fpif.org/pdf/vol5/36ifmasculinity.pdf> (accessed May 10, 2008), par. 7-9.

⁴² Robert D. Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001).

Precept 3: Cultural texts as sites of public pedagogy

As my discussion thus far has shown, theorists of nations and nationalisms argue that nations depend on and are constituted by governing myths assembled out of the stories the nation tells itself about its own past. Yet, as feminist theorists have demonstrated, these stories are inherently gendered, racialized, and heteronormative, often resulting in a mythical, idealized notion of “woman” as the symbolic representative of national identity accompanied, paradoxically, by a denigration of the feminine in national culture, the texts of which “help construct the gendered nation.”⁴³ Added to this gender hierarchy is a racial hierarchy, both of which are then elevated to the level of international politics, causing a nation-state to define itself in opposition and/or abjection to its feminized, racialized Other.

Because the work of these scholars rests on the feminist theoretical tenet that gender is socially constructed, their research archives are comprised largely of a variety of cultural texts that, as sites of nationalist mythmaking, have significant material implications for the formation of (gendered, racialized, heteronormative) national identities and the conduct of international relations. Dean, for example, relies for part of his analysis on discursive and textual analyses of the memoirs of several high-ranking and prominent policymakers, while Cynthia Enloe examines a range of cultural texts, including women’s Victorian travel literature, advertisements, Hollywood films, and the utilization of U.S. corporate logos to critique the deployment of gender-as-discourse in nationalisms and international politics. For

⁴³ Cynthia Enloe, *The Morning After: Sexual Politics at the End of the Cold War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 245.

instance, she points to the romanticized depictions of the imperialist project via films like *Out of Africa* (1985), a fictionalized account of the life of writer Isak Dinesen starring Meryl Streep and Robert Redford, that provided the basis for the fashion trend in “safari wear” pedaled in the mid-1980s by stores such as Banana Republic. As African nationalist movements recede into history, Enloe is concerned that these movies, with their white female stars and fashionable clothes, “are gaining an ideological potency, making white women and their white male lovers the ‘real’ people of Africa for thousands of European and North American film viewers,” thus affecting a drastic revisioning and reimagining of the violent and exploitative European colonization of Africa and Asia during the nineteenth century.⁴⁴

It is Enloe’s call to “take culture—including commercialized culture—far more seriously” when considering the ways in which fears of and assumptions about gender are wielded geopolitically that forms the impetus for my research.⁴⁵ As political scientist François Debrix contends, it is only after interrogating geopolitics as a culturally-produced and historically contingent discourse deployed through cultural texts in order to produce a desired (and profoundly simplistic) political understanding of the world that one can “start to appreciate, and perhaps even challenge and unsettle, the cultural work that is required to turn a given visualization of the world into a dominant or hegemonic political strategy.”⁴⁶ But interrogating the power of cultural texts as performative sites of public pedagogy—and of nationalist

⁴⁴ Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*, 51-52.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 196-197.

⁴⁶ Debrix, *Tabloid Terror*, 11.

mythmaking—requires a discussion of the means by which these (gendered, racialized, and heteronormative) nationalist governing myths are locally and globally dispersed.⁴⁷ If, as Debrix demonstrates, geopolitics is a discourse, then *all* the “modes of writing and representation used to convey public messages (political or not) are of necessity the media through which the geopolitical discourse circulates.”⁴⁸ Much as Benedict Anderson theorized that modern forms of nationalism emerged from “the convergence of capitalism and print technology,” particularly in the form of newspapers,⁴⁹ I argue that contemporary nationalisms are analogously constituted by a variety of cultural texts that include not only print cultures, but also, as critical pedagogical theorist Giroux contends, “all those audio, visual, and electronically mediated forms of knowledge that have prompted a radical shift in the production of knowledge and the ways in which it is received and consumed” in this contemporary moment of globalization.⁵⁰ Thus, as I will demonstrate in the following chapters, television programs, films, museums, congressional proceedings, and Internet sites are all important as producers of “narratives, metaphors, and images that exercise a powerful pedagogical force over how people think of themselves and their relationship to [O]thers.”⁵¹ As systems of representation,⁵² these cultural texts are

⁴⁷ Cultural texts are performative in the sense that they, acting as discourse, (re)produce that which they simultaneously describe.

⁴⁸ Debrix, *Tabloid Terror*, 11.

⁴⁹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 46.

⁵⁰ Henry Giroux, “Cultural Studies, Public Pedagogy, and the Responsibility of Intellectuals,” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 1, no. 1 (2004): 67.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁵² According to cultural theorist Stuart Hall, a “system of representation” “consists not of individual concepts, but of different ways of organizing, clustering, arranging and classifying concepts, and of

integral technologies through which nationalisms can be mobilized and nations, both one's own and an(O)ther, constituted. Because the texts of U.S. popular and political culture, as performative sites of public pedagogy integral to national identity construction, operate collectively to interpellate national subjects into the collective "we" of the nation, they are a powerful venue for what performance studies scholar Richard Schechner calls "make belief," the means by which a performance (in this case of the nation as discursively assembled via cultural texts) "create[s] the very social realities [it enacts]."⁵³

Interventions and Implications

My work in this project draws attention to the links between cultural and national identities, the politics of knowledge production, and the circulation of power in transnational contexts by incorporating the approaches and perspectives of transnational feminist cultural studies, theories of performance, and feminist theories of international relations into an analysis of American nationalism and U.S. foreign policy. I utilize a transdisciplinary methodological approach that conceptualizes popular and political culture texts as sites of public pedagogy that work discursively (although not always successfully) as systems of cultural representation to construct knowledge about Russia in particular times, places, and spaces for specific political purposes. I use *transdisciplinary* rather than *interdisciplinary* to describe my research

establishing complex relations between them." Stuart Hall, "The Work of Representation," in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall (London: Sage Publications, 2003) 17.

⁵³ Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 35.

approach in order to draw attention to the ways in which it necessitates a tolerance for—and, indeed, the embracing of—research approaches that are uncomfortable, ambiguous, and messy. It encourages active and purposeful shifting between and among multiple academic locations in order to make knowledge that could not have been made otherwise. Consequently, my work here operates simultaneously as both a research model and a theoretical paradigm within which to interrogate the ways in which gendered, racialized, heteronormative discursive configurations are integral to the formulation of national/ist narratives and foreign policy objectives.

In keeping with this goal, this dissertation makes two interrelated critiques. The first, in which I take up the challenge posed by feminist sociologist Kathryn Farr, who urges an examination of the cultural environments in destination countries (usually industrialized locations in the global West) where various systemic and institutionalized gender-based inequities are (often insidiously) rampant, is of the role the United States plays in sustaining the traffic in women from Russia to the United States.⁵⁴ According to a report from the United Nations Center of International Crime Prevention released in May 2003, Russia now tops the list of countries providing women-as-commodities in the global economy. Although most Russian women end up in Germany, the United States ranks second as a prime destination for women trafficked out of Russia.⁵⁵ The United States government has, of course, admonished Russia on (what it perceives as) that country's continued neglect of human rights,

⁵⁴ Kathryn Farr, *Sex Trafficking: The Global Market in Women and Children* (New York: Worth Publishers, 2005).

⁵⁵ According to the same report, 96 percent of humans trafficked internationally are female and nearly half are children. Mizus, et al., "Germany, U.S. receive most sex-trafficked women," *Off Our Backs* (July/August 2003): 4.

including with regard to the traffic in women; however, it refuses to acknowledge its own complicity in the forced migration of women and children from Russia to the United States.

This complicity is the impetus behind the second critique offered here, which is the disclosure of the institutionalized and systemic exploitation of gendered, racialized, and heteronormative neocolonial rhetoric at work in both the material conduct of U.S. policy *toward* as well as in popular representations *of* Russia in the United States. Despite U.S. overtures of friendship toward (or at least begrudging attempts at cooperation with) Russia since 1991, the relationship between the two countries continues to deteriorate—partly as a result of U.S. policies that take their shape within the context of anti-imperialist imperialist nationalism.⁵⁶ Additionally, as historian Ellen Schrecker points out, there has been no systematic examination of the means by which triumphalism and cold war histories reassert themselves in government policies and popular imaginations. After all, as historian Robert Dean so astutely reminds his readers, U.S. foreign policy is not made in a vacuum. It is, instead, created and implemented by (usually elite, white) men “who act from a repertoire of possibilities that are a product of their experience.”⁵⁷ A fourth foundational precept buttressing my research, then, is that the (predominantly) elite

⁵⁶ U.S. foreign relations historian Robert L. Ivie uses the term “anti-imperialist imperialism” to describe a major tenet of contemporary U.S. foreign policy. As he rightly points out, the U.S. promotes democracy abroad as a means of creating a world order conducive to its interests, a foreign policy approach that not only perpetuates cold war themes, but also reveals “strong overtones of national insecurity and vulnerability that drive the desire to dominate others.” Ivie, “A New Democratic World Order?,” in *Critical Reflections of the Cold War: Linking Rhetoric and History*, ed. Martin J. Medhurst and H.W. Brands (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), 252. See also Dimitri Simes, “Losing Russia,” *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 6 (2007): 36-52.

⁵⁷ Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood*, 4 and 3.

white men who make and implement U.S. foreign policy are not immune to the “frameworks of knowledge”⁵⁸ formed by long exposure to American nationalist governing myths bolstered by the political and popular cultural texts that constitute the triumphalist mythscape of U.S. popular and political culture, of which the gendered Russian imaginary is an integral part. On the contrary, with the recent developments in global communications technologies allowing for real-time “telediplomacy,” in combination with the rapidity with which the political configurations in Eastern Europe shifted after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, foreign policy elites—including security officials and intelligence officers—often obtain their information in the same way the rest of us do: via the Internet and television news programs.⁵⁹ As a result, the members of the contemporary U.S. foreign policy establishment, so many of whom served as “cold warriors” in federal governmental positions throughout the 1970s and 1980s before being asked to drastically alter their cold war worldviews after 1991, have, as I have intimated and will demonstrate in subsequent chapters, been plagued by an “ideology of masculinity.” This mindset demands from its adherents a self-conception necessitating the “cultivation of imperial masculinity” (i.e., the drive for U.S.

⁵⁸ Gerbner, “The Image of Russians in American Media and the ‘New Epoch,’” in *Beyond the Cold War: Soviet and American Media Images*, ed. Everette E. Dennis, George Gerbner, and Yassen N. Zassoursky (London: Sage Publications, 1991), 31.

⁵⁹ Royce J. Ammon defines “foreign policy elites” in the U.S. as “top members of the State Department and other officials in the foreign-policy establishment; influential members of Congress; opinion leaders in the society at large, such as the major media outlets and their chief personalities; and members of think tanks and top academics.” Royce J. Ammon, *Global Television and the Shaping of World Politics: CNN, Telediplomacy, and Foreign Policy* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2001), 143. For information concerning the reliance of foreign policy elites on publicly available information via the Internet and television, see Patrick O’ Heffernan, *Mass Media and American Foreign Policy: Insider Perspectives on Global Journalism and the Foreign Policy Process* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corp., 1991); and David D. Newsom, *The Public Dimension of Foreign Policy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996).

hegemony in the world) and “the willingness to use American military power to kill unseen foreigners.”⁶⁰ Just as cold war triumphalism, with its intrinsic justification of geopolitical unilateralism, has become an integral part of American nationalism in the post-Soviet period, so has the masculinism, racism, and heteronormativity of the “imperial brotherhood” as interrogated by Dean become constitutive of the formulation and conduct of U.S. foreign policy.

American Nationalism and the Triumphalist Mythscape

The dustcover of Schrecker’s *Cold War Triumphalism* features a color picture of U.S. President Ronald Reagan astride a white steed (figure 2). Bedecked in the requisite attire of a rugged cowboy (white hat, plaid shirt, blue jeans and boots), the photograph, originally taken in June 1980 by Tony Korody, was digitally altered for the 2004 dustcover. In this new image, Reagan appears to have ridden through a storm whose forceful winds continue to whip past him. The revised photograph is also slightly out of focus, the visual effect of which is that of waking up from a dream (as that experience is normally depicted on television and in film). The white horse and Reagan’s white cowboy hat and light-colored shirt fairly glow in a picture that has clearly been chosen with a certain degree of irony to signal the mythical proportions of cold war triumphalism and its white, masculine, heterosexual hero, Ronald Reagan—a hero whose iconography draws explicitly on the American “Marlboro Man,” thus linking it to the more contemporary Diesel jeans cowboy. Interestingly, if conceptualized as two still photographs taken from the same film, this

⁶⁰ Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood*, 12 and 241.

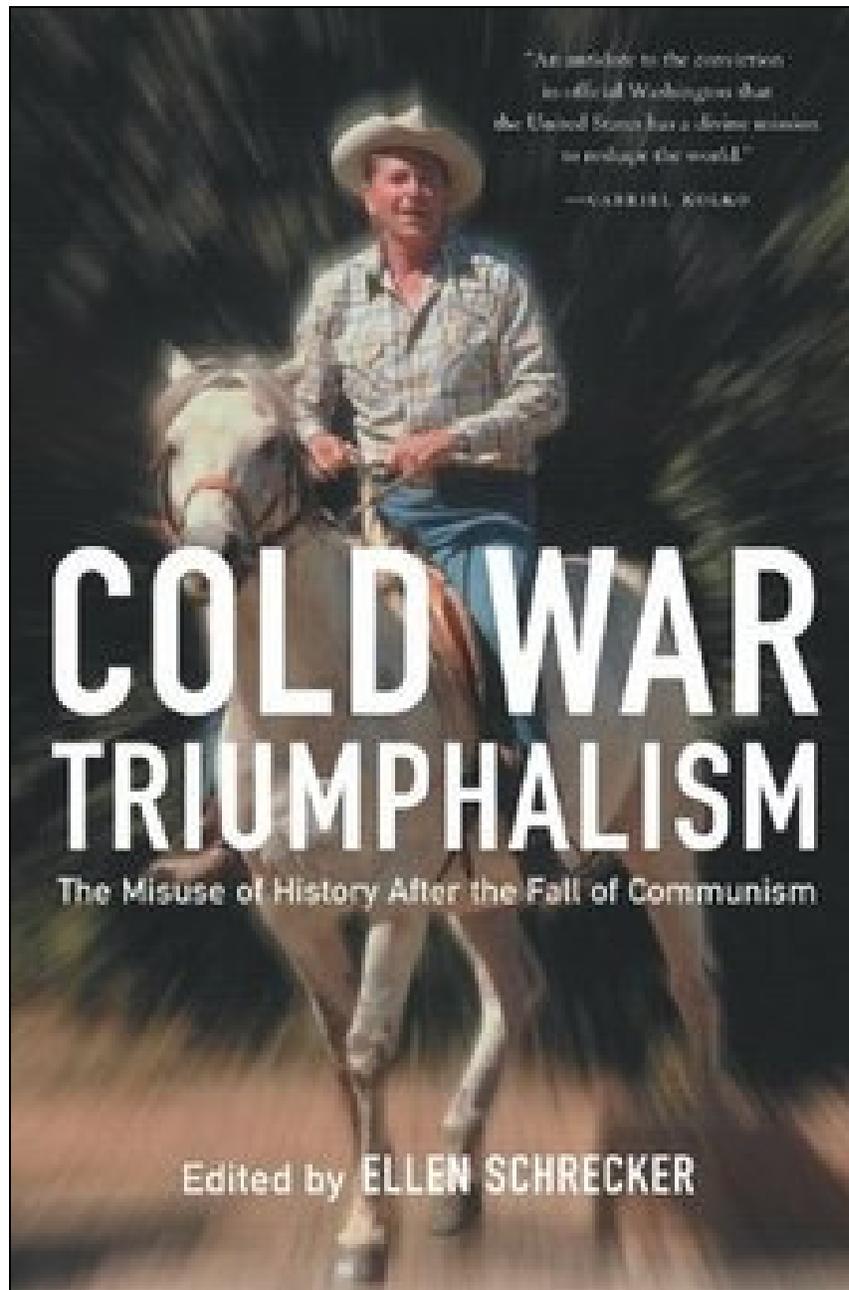


Figure 2: Ronald Reagan, “winner” of the cold war.

picture and the Diesel jeans advertisement discussed previously could operate as a metaphor for U.S. post-Soviet geopolitical engagement.

The photograph of Reagan is the first scene, the public performance presented by the United States to the world: the heroic (white, male) victor of the cold war, a champion of “freedom” and “democracy,”⁶¹ bravely riding through gale force winds (or terrorist attacks) to face whatever challenges lie ahead. What follows in the Diesel ad is that which lies behind that performance: the exploitation of marginalized populations in order to achieve U.S. economic and national security. That the “violated” subject in the Diesel ad is both feminine and symbolic of Russian imperial culture is, within the context of the triumphalist mythscape, no coincidence.

The commonality linking these two images is the rugged, heroic (white) cowboy whose public triumph is easily depicted and described using the same images as that which are used to depict and describe his sexual violation of the plastic *matryoshka* dolls. Thus, what is missing is a third photograph portraying the events that occur between the image of a mythical Reagan and the sexually sated cowboy. The narrative constructed from these pictures has a beginning and it has an end, but, if you will forgive the pun, the climax is missing. Why? Might it be that the exploitative brutality of neocolonial U.S. Russia policy, represented here by the missing scene that would, if it existed, depict the national hero raping a series of

⁶¹ I have chosen to use quotation marks around the words “freedom” and “democracy” in this context to signal what feminist philosopher Namita Gotswami contends are the imperialist ambitions of the United States that, instead of the physical appropriation of land (the current occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan notwithstanding), takes shape in economic and cultural arenas. Thus, the United States demands that its meanings and applications of fluid concepts such as “democracy” and “freedom” (as applied, for example, via economic pressures to encourage states to adopt U.S.-style democratic governments) are the *only* meanings and applications of these concepts. Namita Gotswami, “Feminism against Empire,” paper presented as part of the lecture series, *The Possibilities of Women’s Studies: Emerging Scholars Herald the Future*, University of Maryland, April 14, 2005.

plastic blow-up dolls, does not fit easily into the cold war triumphalist mythscape?

This conspicuous absence serves as the primary catalyst for my work in this dissertation as I seek to expose the gendered, racialized, and heteronormative discursive configurations that were deployed by the U.S. in its conduct of U.S.-Russian relations between the dissolution of the Soviet Union 1991 and the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003.

CHAPTER 2

Gendered Nationalisms and Popular Geopolitics

"As enemies are constructed, so are nations."¹

In the last chapter, I explained the four basic foundational tenets that undergird my work in this dissertation:

1. That stories told about the past have tangible effects in the present, particularly within the context of nationalist projects, which are always in flux and are, consequently, malleable;
2. That nations, nationalisms, and relations between nation-states are constituted by and through gendered, racialized, and heteronormative discursive configurations;
3. That these always already gendered, racialized, and heteronormative (his)stories a nation tells about itself are widely promulgated via a wide range of cultural texts which are intrinsically imbued with political significance, operating as sites of public pedagogy that make meaning and, therefore, affect material conditions and experiences; and
4. The (predominantly) elite white men who make and implement U.S. foreign policy are not immune to the "frameworks of knowledge"² formed

¹ Zillah Eisenstein, "Writing Bodies on the Nation for the Globe," in *Women, States, and Nationalism*, 37.

by long exposure to American nationalist governing myths bolstered by the political and popular cultural texts that constitute the triumphalist mythscape of U.S. popular and political culture.

In this chapter, I demonstrate in more specific detail the ways in which I have applied these precepts to my own work throughout the remainder of the dissertation. I first provide some information concerning the historical development and deployment of gendered, racialized, and heteronormative discursive configurations in Russian and American nationalisms. I then explore the effects and consequences of those deployments, focusing on the depiction of Russia and Russians in U.S. media, particularly film and television, over the course of the last century.

Gendered Russian Nationalism

Russian nationalism—even the concept of a Russian nation—has been and, as argued by any number of scholars, continues to be problematic.³ Peter the Great declared Russia an empire in 1721, but it was a land-based imperial power in which the “colonies” were accessible by land travel, and colonial administrative policies were

² Gerbner, “The Image of Russians in American Media and the ‘New Epoch,’” in *Beyond the Cold War: Soviet and American Media Images*, ed. Everette E. Dennis, George Gerbner, and Yassen N. Zassoursky (London: Sage Publications, 1991), 31. Materialist feminist criticism also insists that people are “ideologically inscribed” within the *mise en scène* of their particular socio-historical contexts. See Judith Newton Deborah Rosenfelt, introduction to *Feminist Criticism and Social Change: Sex, Class and Race in Literature and Culture*, ed. Judith Newton and Deborah Rosenfelt, xv-xxiv (New York: Methuen, 1985).

³ In addition to Tolz’s *Russia*, some of the major contemporary theorists of Russian nationalism include: Nicholas Riasonovsky, *A History of Russia*, 6th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Orlando Figes, *A People’s Tragedy: A History of the Russian Revolution* (New York: Viking, 1996); Orlando Figes, *Natasha’s Dance: A Cultural History of Russia* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 1991); W. Bruce Lincoln, *Between Heaven and Hell: A Thousand Years of Artistic Life in Russia* (New York: Viking, 1998); and David Remnick, *Resurrection: The Struggle for a New Russia* (New York: Vintage, 1998).

often simultaneously adopted in the metropole. Thus, for Russia, one of the largest empires in the history of the world at the turn of the nineteenth century,⁴ there has never been a concept of “over there-ness” as was arguably the case with regard to Britons’ conceptualization of the British Empire at its zenith, and is certainly true with regard to the normative conceptualization in the United States of contemporary American military and economic expansion. As a result, a long history of fluid territorial boundaries that may (or may not) encompass Russia’s “colonies” as well as constant debates about the inextricability (or not) of Russian national myth from Ukrainian history have made virtually impossible the construction of a Russian nation—even after 1991.⁵

For three hundred years, the Russian Empire operated within a clear familial paradigm in which the *Batiushka-Tsar*’ (Father Tsar), the Christian god’s divine representative on earth, dealt with matters of state and politics, while *Matushka-Rus*’ (Mother Russia) symbolized the intangible, mystical (and mythic) Russian nation.⁶ Not only have Russian women historically been “regarded as ‘the breeders’” and “perceived as the passive symbols of the nation,” there is a long tradition among the intelligentsia to “transform Russia into a feminized subject conceptualized by (mostly male) intellectuals/politicians/nationalists as irresistibly attractive, but at the same

⁴ In the twentieth century, the Soviet Union was eventually able to extend its own borders, whether geographical and/or ideological, to match those of the Russian Empire at its zenith.

⁵ Russia’s August 1991 declaration of independence from the U.S.S.R. effectively “shrank [the borders of Russia’s imagined community] almost to those of Muscovy at the end of the sixteenth century, which meant that over 25 million Russians found themselves living outside the borders of the new Russian state.” Tolz, *Russia*, 12. Evidence of the impossibility of a stable Russian national identity remains clearest in the case of the breakaway republic of Chechnya, whose Muslim leaders have repeatedly requested sovereignty since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.

⁶ Goscilo and Lanoux, introduction to *Gender and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Russian Culture*, 6.

time unknown and therefore frightening, thus provoking a simultaneous feeling of love and hatred.”⁷ Literary scholar Eric Naiman, for example, contends that throughout the 1920s, the Gothic literary tradition, which “is rooted in a woman’s (culturally induced) disgust with her own body,” was used widely in the literature, both fiction and non-, of the New Economic Policy (NEP).⁸ Naiman claims that anti-NEP writers of the 1920s created a biologically deviant female body that became rhetorically representative of all that was anomalous in the NEP. He analyzes Bolshevik political theorist Aleksandra Kollontai’s use of language, images, and metaphors in her longest novella, *Vasilisa Malygina* (1923), and in her work with the Workers’ Opposition, accusing her of writing “misogynistic fiction” and of employing images of the female body to personify the politically and ideologically deviant forces she felt were at work within the Communist Party. Naiman also reads the poetry of Bolshevik supporter Vladimir Mayakovsky to link the NEP’s centrality of heterosexual sex—particularly violent sex—that measured the male subject’s social significance through his violation of the female Other, with its Silver Age forerunners.⁹

A thorough understanding of Naiman’s argument here requires a brief discussion of the period in question, referred to as Russia’s “Silver Age.” Usually

⁷ Tolz, *Russia*, 12.

⁸ Eric Naiman, “When a Communist Writes Gothic: Aleksandra Kollontai and the Politics of Disgust,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 22, no. 1 (1996), 11. The NEP was a stop-gap measure begun by Lenin in 1921 to ease the new Soviet Union’s economic crisis by eliminating consumer product shortages through a partial (and allegedly temporary) integration of privately owned businesses into the socialist system.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 2. Naiman, *Sex in Public: The Incarnation of Early Soviet Ideology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

associated with the urban centers of St. Petersburg and Moscow with their large communities of avant-garde artists and intellectuals, the short period between the 1905 February Revolution and the start of the First World War

[...] saw the arts explode in kaleidoscopic splendor, as the most brilliant talents in Russian art, literature, poetry, music, and the ballet combined and recombined their genius to produce a dazzling and ever-changing array of new creations that overwhelmed the senses. There seemed to be no end to the brilliance and variety that Russia's Silver Age could achieve, and no limits to the heights to which its creations could ascend.¹⁰

But, despite this praise, cultural historians of this period, most notably theatre scholar Spencer Golub,¹¹ have demonstrated quite successfully the negative use(s) these artists made of notions of biologically essentialized heteronormative femininity. According to Golub, creative (mostly male) intellectuals of the late imperial period co-opted female iconicity (both physiological and psychological) to express frustration with their own artistic and emotional isolation engendered by the dismal failure of the February Revolution and the humiliating defeat of the Russian navy by the Japanese in the Russo-Japanese War, both in 1905. Playwrights, for example, created two personae, the *femme fragile* and the *femme fatale*, both of which anticipated the Bolsheviks' exploitation of women as simultaneously positive and negative symbols of Russian morality in the 1920s. Golub argues that these theatre

¹⁰ W. Bruce Lincoln, *In War's Dark Shadow: The Russians Before the Great War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 372.

¹¹ Spencer Golub, *The Recurrence of Fate: Theatre and Memory in Twentieth Century Russia* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1994).

artists, “unable to leap out of [themselves] to realize [their] social causes as social change, [...] repeatedly leapt into [their] existential other”: Russia-as-woman.¹² Their plays’ characters “expressed the creative intelligentsia’s ‘will to death’ disguised as beauty, engendered by the conflicting influences of the *fin de siècle* and the delayed *mal du siècle* of 1905.” In short, intellectuals and theatre artists of the Silver Age transformed their own social impotence into feminized versions of their former selves, replete with “a hopeful/hopeless metaphysics of passive expectancy.”¹³ In considering this, it is helpful to envision, as feminist theatre historian Catherine Schuler suggests, *The Seagull’s* Nina Zarechnaia and the actress who played her, the Silver Age’s most famous *femme fragile*, Vera Kommissarzhevskaja.

Kommissarzhevskaja’s enormous popularity rested on her ability to transform the psychological fragmentation of the Chekhovian heroine into a new “modern” version of Russian femininity that, encouraged by the messianic and self-sacrificial themes of Silver Age intellectuals, “required the bearer to project the image of a fragile, ethereal, and rather helpless child.”¹⁴

In this context, the irony of Golub’s title, *The Recurrence of Fate*, is not lost, for, as he contends, the Bolsheviks “had little tolerance for gender ambiguity and female metaphors,”¹⁵ and the fluidity of gender identity promulgated by Silver Age

¹² Ibid., 67.

¹³ Ibid., 40.

¹⁴ Schuler, *Women in Russian Theatre*, 156 and 165. It is hardly surprising in the notoriously anti-Semitic Russian Empire that Kommissarzhevskaja’s opposite, the feared *femme fatale* who “seemed purposely to confuse sex with love and embodied the paradox of love and death,” was dark-haired Jewish actress Ida Rubenstein, who played such characters as Salomé and Cleopatra. Golub, *Recurrence of Fate*, 41-42, 45-50.

¹⁵ Ibid., 48.

theatre artists portended a similar fate for them as for the women whose oppressions and stereotyped characteristics they assumed as their own. The transitional period between the end of the Russian Empire and the creation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics “trapped Russians in limbo, between remnants of a discredited past, with its values and hierarchies, and a ‘radiant future’ in the making, inspired by untested theories and faith in perfectibility.”¹⁶ The Bolsheviks sought this perfection, their promised socialist utopia, by utilizing a universal heterosexualized male normative in the creation of the new Soviet citizenry that confirmed the ideological death of “woman” while, simultaneously, rendering real women, with their physically marked feminine bodies, politically, socially and culturally deviant.¹⁷ During the process of (re)building the nation after the civil war, women were forgotten as direct participants in the revolutionary project, but were deemed necessary to its completion as physical conduits through which to “[define] the life and image of the new Soviet culture.”¹⁸ This project proceeded in two directions simultaneously. The first was informed by the gradual institutionalization and naturalization of Bolshevik educational theorist Nadezhda Krupskaja’s notion of “worker-mother,” which emphasized the value of the work women were already doing and sought to improve their educational opportunities and social conditions. This went hand in hand with the Bolsheviks’ desire to universalize its citizenry based on a heteronormative masculinized model.

¹⁶ Goscilo and Lanoux, introduction to *Gender and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Russian Culture*, 6.

¹⁷ Golub, *Recurrence of Fate*, 98.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 70.

The second, pervasive among the oppositional intelligentsia, was the equation of women and the female body, specifically female genitalia, with what they, Bolshevik political theorist Aleksandra Kollontai and Bolshevik poet/playwright Vladimir Mayakovsky among them, viewed as the ideologically deviant and conciliatory NEP. Naiman posits that the sex act may have been synonymous with all forms of contamination and that women's bodies, in general, and female genitalia, specifically, came to symbolize the lurking specter of politically "deviant" saboteurs against whom leading anti-NEP Bolshevik theorists issued constant warnings. He argues, for example, that Kollontai's pamphlet, *The Workers' Opposition*, written just before the Tenth Party Congress in 1921 to demand a party purge of "bourgeois elements" that had allegedly become insensitive to the needs of the working class, charts the gradual moral and physical corruption of the party (*partii*—a feminine noun in Russian) and turns "her" into a "defiled, leaking internal space no longer secure against penetration."¹⁹

Naiman's argument corresponds well to that of historian Choi Chatterjee, who examines the gendering of Soviet narratives about the two 1917 revolutions, the first in February that ended with the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, the second in October in which the Bolsheviks came to power. She asserts that the February Revolution (a failure from the Bolshevik perspective), which is generally believed to have started in St. Petersburg when women began rioting to demand bread to feed their families, was feminized in Soviet popular and political culture as an example of how *not* to have a socialist revolution: "[T]he unruly participation of women" who intentionally strayed

¹⁹ Naiman, "When a Communist Writes Gothic," 14.

from Lenin's plan for systematic and organized rebellion had, according to the Soviet nationalist governing myth, cost the Bolsheviks a much-desired win. In contrast, the successful October Revolution was gendered masculine and upheld in Soviet popular and political culture as an exemplary revolution.²⁰

This powerful conflation of gendered and nationalist discourses in the many eras of Russian nation-building has a long history and manifests itself in three specific ways: 1) Russia in comparison and competition with the global West, identified by its allegedly different religious, cultural, economic, and political institutions, 2) "Russians as creators and preservers of a unique multi-ethnic community [...] profoundly different from European and Western empires," and 3) "Russians as members of a community of Eastern Slavs, the origins of which lay in Kievan Rus."²¹ Each of these possible approaches to Russian nationalism is explicitly gendered in that it depends on discourses of "progressive" masculinity and "traditional" femininity to construct a single "modern" Russian nation.²² For example,

²⁰ Choi Chatterjee, "The Two Stories of the February Revolution," chap. in her *Celebrating Women: Gender, Festival Culture, and Bolshevik Ideology, 1910-1939* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002), 38-59. Additionally, linguist Valentina Zaitseva has written on the ways in which a gendered Russian national and cultural identity is embedded in the linguistic and grammatical structure of the Russian language. See Valentina Zaitseva, "National, Cultural, and Gender Identity in the Russian Language," in *Gender and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Russian Culture*, 30-54.

²¹ Tolz, *Russia*, 1. Additional scholars who have ventured to interrogate the uses made of traditional (i.e., Orthodox and imperial) gender ideologies in the construction of gendered nationalism/s within processes of Russian and/or Soviet state-building are, in order of publication: Laura Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); Goldman, *Women, the State, and Revolution*; Golub, *Recurrence of Fate*; Schuler, *Women in Russian Theatre*; Naiman, *Sex in Public*; Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd, ed., *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution: 1881-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Chatterjee, *Celebrating Women*; and Amy Caiazza, *Mothers and Soldiers: Gender, Citizenship, and Civil Society in Contemporary Russia* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

²² Several scholars touch on this issue in their work, among them are: Schuler, *Women in Russian Theatre*; Lynne Atwood and Catriona Kelly, "Programmes for Identity: The 'New Man' and the 'New Woman,'" in *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution, 1880-1940*, ed. Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 256-90; and Tolz, who points to the

by charting “the evolution of the problematic morphology of the new Soviet Woman” and interrogating “the strategies of narration and emplotment used in Soviet propaganda for women,” Chatterjee exposes the dichotomous, paradoxical and often contradictory messages provided by the Soviet government during International Women’s Day celebrations throughout the 1920s and 1930s regarding the status and expectations of Soviet women. According to her, Soviet women were discursively transformed from a symbol of the traditional backwardness of Russia into “a cultural marker that broadcast the progressiveness and modernity of the Soviet Union to the world.” This is not to say, though, that the specter of women’s “backwardness” disappeared altogether from Soviet propaganda, but its use as a subtext of International Women’s Day literature should not, Chatterjee argues, be dismissed “as a mere reflection of Bolshevik misogyny. Rather, it served as a counterpoint to illustrate the achievements of Soviet women.” For instance, while women’s presence and participation in work and civil society increased, so did their enrollment in educational institutions of all levels and types. By the mid-1930s, International Women’s Day propaganda was underscored by “the growing pervasiveness of the idea of woman as both a qualified wage earner and consumer,” which served to create the mythological Stalinist heroine, who was both ultramodern in her financial and emotional independence and decidedly *not* in her implicit reliance on father-Stalin to reinforce “premodern notions of personal subjection and political subordination.”²³

frequent long-time use of “Mother Russia represented as a peaceful and long-suffering peasant woman,” who has a long history of standing in for a pre-Petrine and, after the revolution, pre-Soviet Russia that was untouched by the “modernity” of the global West. *Russia*, 4.

²³ Chatterjee, *Celebrating Women*, 5 and 133-135.

For the Bolsheviks, the idea was never to dismantle patriarchy, but to replace the authority of local males (husbands, brothers, fathers) with “that of the absent, omnipotent male of socialist patriarchy.” As a means of achieving this goal, the Bolsheviks told the history of women “in the tragic vein familiar to those steeped in the literary traditions” of Russia’s most famous (male) writers, a rhetorical strategy that served as justification for the Soviet government’s self-appointed mission to rescue and rehabilitate Soviet women from their “backwardness.” Thus, the status of women in the U.S.S.R. functioned “as a marker or an index of progressiveness” and, by the advent of the mythological Stalinist heroine of the 1930s, served as proof of the country’s modernity and its “vanguard position among European nations.”²⁴

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, communism was in constant conversation with liberalism and fascism when it claimed to have solved the “woman question,” and, Stalin’s “rhetoric of feminist liberation,” asserts Chatterjee, did create a discursive environment in which to publicly express any sexist views (as they were rather narrowly conceptualized in that time, space, and place) was simply unacceptable. To do so would threaten the legitimacy of Stalin, the Soviet Union, and its policies as it worked to define itself partially in contrast to the freewheeling capitalist West and fascist Germany and Italy. According to Stalinist historiography, then, “Soviet women owed everything to the Stalinist Five-Year Plan” because it

²⁴ Ibid., 1, 14, and 16. Goldman also discusses this social(ist) phenomena (albeit briefly) in *Women, the State, and Revolution*.

managed to convert the backward *baba* into the modern New Soviet Woman and convince men to treat her with respect—at least outwardly.²⁵

Unfortunately, though, as the Soviet system collapsed, so did the façade of gender “equality,” not only materially (in terms of women’s decreased employment opportunities, lack of political participation, and inability to access disappearing social services, et cetera), but also discursively. There has been a marked change in attitudes toward gender, women’s representation in the media, and “the acceptability of blatantly discriminating practices and statements.”²⁶ According to Russian feminist Anastasia Posadskaya, the events of 1991 and the resultant quest for democracy and capitalism in the Russian Federation resulted in the widespread use of women’s bodies as commodities, particularly in pornography and prostitution, and the revitalization of Russian Orthodoxy meant a concomitant “resurgence of traditional attitudes toward gender relations.”²⁷ Binary notions of sexual difference have been adopted, and the post-Soviet belief that domestic and family roles are women’s natural focus has been promoted in opposition to the tenets of Marxist-Leninism. This has included a discussion in the popular media of a national demographic crisis and fertility issues accompanied by pro-natalist pressures through government legislation, as well as the utilization of a historicized gender binary in which the state is equated

²⁵ Chatterjee, *Celebrating Women*, 138. For more on this transformation from “backward” *baba* (short for *babushka*, meaning “grandmother” or “old woman” in Russian) to loyal, devoted, and “modern” comrade, see historian Wood, ed., *The Baba and the Comrade*.

²⁶ Rebecca Kay, *Russian Women and Their Organizations: Gender, Discrimination, and Grassroots Women’s Organizations, 1991-1996* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 26.

²⁷ Anastasia Posadskaya, “Changes in Gender Discourses and Policies in the Former Soviet Union,” in *Democratic Reform and the Position of Women in Transitional Economies*, ed. Valentine M. Moghadam (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 164.

with masculinity, the nation with femininity. According to feminist scholars Gascilo and Lanoux,

For the greater part of three centuries, Russian and Soviet heads of state have fostered a cult of masculinity, epitomized by imperial Russia's all-male cadre of bureaucrats, military schools, and exclusive institutions for nobles, and subsequently by the Soviet Union's ideological founding fathers, New Men, and Stakhanovite workers. By contrast, Russian nationhood historically has assumed female form, whether in the image of Mother Russia (*Matushka-Rus'*, *rodina-mat'*), the Russian literary heroine, or the foreign currency prostitute—all endowed with the traits of irrationality, passion, enigma, submissiveness, and suffering invariably imputed to women.²⁸

These same gender binaries resurfaced in Russian popular and political culture after 1991 as “post-Soviet self-commentary [...] adopted an apocalyptic rhetoric of doom and self-flagellation” not unlike that which was promulgated during the Silver Age,²⁹ and Russian politicians of all ideological perspectives utilized gendered imagery and metaphors, reminiscent of and often directly referencing and/or quoting writers from the late nineteenth-century Slavophile and Silver Age intelligentsia, to advance their particular political agendas.³⁰ Prominent since 1991, for example, has been the routine narrative deployment of the Russian prostitute “in the symbolic

²⁸ Gascilo and Lanoux, introduction to *Gender and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Russian Culture*, 9.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

³⁰ Sheila Kunkle, “(Re)thinking Russian Nationalism: Gender Politics and Discourses of Identity,” Ph.D. dissertation (University of Pittsburgh, 1995).

battle for Russia's soul." According to Russian and Slavic studies scholar Eliot Borenstein,

[...] the collapse of the Russian state, the decline of patriotism, and the absence of a workable national idea share center stage in the Russian media and culture industry with tales and images of sexually uninhibited young women offering their bodies and their services to paying clients.³¹

This material prostitution, which has long been used to signify national humiliation (as a male, rather than female, experience) in Russian/Soviet national narratives, is often configured as metaphorical: Russian popular and political culture has created a national/ist narrative in which Russia itself has been transformed into a "nexus of buying and selling, where everything of value is offered cynically to the highest bidder."³²

Gendered American Nationalism

The demise of the Soviet Union coincided with the culmination in U.S. popular and political culture of a long discursive process that feminist literary scholar Susan Jeffords terms the "remasculinization of America," "a revival of the images, abilities, and evaluations of men and masculinity in dominant U.S. culture" in the years since the United States' unexpected and humiliating defeat in Viet Nam.³³ But that Jeffords points to the *remasculinization* of America after the mid-1970s suggests that gender-

³¹ Eliot Borenstein, "Selling Russia: Prostitution, Masculinity, and Metaphors of Nationalism after Perestroika," in *Gender and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Russian Culture*, 174-175.

³² *Ibid.*, 175.

³³ Susan Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), xii.

as-discourse, particularly attempts to masculinize the state while feminizing the nation, has long been constitutive of American nationalism. Feminist literary scholar Annette Kolodny's close reading of dozens of American pastoral narratives written by men between the eighteenth and late twentieth centuries illustrates the ways in which the United States' westward expansion and, later, industrialization, relied heavily on gendered imaginaries in which the land, unknown and potentially dangerous, was alternatively conceptualized as either a nurturing mother (the hope and promise of sustenance) or as a passive virgin awaiting domination by the masculinized U.S. state and its (male) explorers. These gendered imaginaries, Kolodny contends, provided a conceptual framework within which to view the vast expanses of the unknown land in the American west as feminine and, consequently, less alien and threatening.³⁴

The gendered imaginaries enabled by American men's pastoral writing, having emerged as they did from European colonial and pastoral narratives, are the bedrock of a messianic and chauvinistic American nationalism that, fueled by the United States' alleged "victory" over the Soviet Union in the cold war, has been the source of the United States' belief not only that "the default mode of humanity is to become Americans," but that, consequently, the United States has a divinely-inspired duty to spread its vision of "democracy" and "freedom" to the rest of the world.³⁵ According to journalist Anatol Lieven, the essential elements of this "exceptional nationalism" are "faith in liberty, constitutionalism, the law, democracy,

³⁴ Annette Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975).

³⁵ Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*, 66.

individualism and cultural and political egalitarianism,” all of which have remained constant throughout American history and have been recently expanded to incorporate a “belief in the absolute superiority of free market capitalism, unlimited economic opportunity and consumerism” and, more controversially, “racial tolerance and equity” and “the rights of women.”³⁶ The convergence of these values with American “exceptionalism” explains the United States’ historical tendency toward a type of geopolitical isolationism that, rather than a desire to withdraw completely from world affairs, enables the U.S., as unique among nation-states, to position itself as a reluctant and involuntary participant in the dealings of “inferior foreigners”—as long such dealings do not undermine U.S. national sovereignty. This (often explicitly racist) chauvinism legitimates U.S. military unilateralism: Because Other nation-states are always already hostile and inferior, the U.S. “is free to dictate to them or even conquer them for their own good,”³⁷ a logic that was used most recently to justify the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March 2003.

Paradoxically, while the United States looks for and embraces opportunities to spread its core values internationally, its neocolonial (and usually military) offensive has long been billed as its best defense against perceived threats of all kinds, whether local or global. A fervent messianic nationalism, made more salient by the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991 and conflated with masculinity through militarization, has historically gone hand in hand with paranoia and a perception of national

³⁶ Ibid., 5 and 49.

³⁷ Ibid., 3 and 15-17. The irony here, of course, is that the United States is notorious for using decidedly *undemocratic* tactics in its effort to spread democracy abroad. U.S. historian John Fousek and journalist Naomi Klein also make this point. See John Fousek, *To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); and Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007).

vulnerability (i.e. threats to “national security”) that rely on “an obsession with domestic subversion [and a] belief in an outside world dominated by enemies and potential traitors.”³⁸ The maintenance of the cold war in the U.S., for example, relied in equal parts on repeated affirmations of America’s greatness *as well as* on the notion that communism, whether foreign or homegrown, posed an immediate threat to the singularly American values enumerated above. And, as Lieven rightly points out, an obsession with internal subversion during the cold war largely overshadowed any potential threat by the Soviet Union, resulting in an “anticommunist hysteria [that has] become part of American political culture.”³⁹

What Lieven’s otherwise sound exploration of American nationalism’s causes and consequences ignores, however, is the role of gender—not to mention skin color, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, and other dimensions of identity—in creating and maintaining its governing myths. For instance, Lieven does point out that American nationalism is dependent for its continued maintenance upon the (his)stories the United States tells itself about its past. Consequently, not unlike many of the nationalisms explored by feminist and other critical scholars, American nationalism “continuously looks backward, to a vanished and idealized national past.”⁴⁰ But what he neglects is that this past is not without its identitarian valences; the American past is the *gendered, racialized* past of colonial conquest and slave labor as described by Kolodny.

³⁸ Ibid., 154.

³⁹ Ibid., 158. For more on anti-communism as constitutive of contemporary American nationalism, see Peter H. Buckingham, *America Sees Red: Anti-Communism in America, 1870s to 1980s* (Claremont, CA: Regina Books, 1988); and Fousek, *To Lead the Free World*.

⁴⁰ Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*, 7.

The employment of a gender-sensitive lens enriches Lieven's work by pointing to American nationalism's reliance on unmarked masculinity to sustain itself. What Lieven misses in his discussion of anti-communism and the legacy of the cold war as constitutive of contemporary (i.e. post-1991) American nationalism, for example, is what Dean terms the "ideology of masculinity" within which he contends that U.S. cold war-era foreign and domestic policymakers were inextricably embedded, thus affecting in direct and material ways not only the decisions they made, but also the conceptual frameworks within which such decisions were formulated.⁴¹ Like Lieven, Dean argues of the immediate post-war years of the last century that as U.S. foreign policymakers "began forming a new global imperial alliance under U.S. leadership, in opposition to the Soviet Union," they contributed to the creation of "a 'national security state' dedicated to the containment of communism and the expansion of a corporate capitalist world economic order." They accomplished this task by deploying "alarmist rhetoric to persuade the American public that the Soviets posed an immediate and direct threat to U.S. interests and to world peace." Unlike Lieven, however, Dean goes further. By incorporating a concern for the manipulation of gender-as-discourse into his analysis, he is able to argue convincingly that "[g]ender, sexuality, and the production and control of sexual secrets played a central role in many political struggles of the Red Scare era." In their zeal to make a clear enemy of the Soviet Union, U.S. cold war-era policy elites "depicted the foreign service as a bureaucracy staffed by effete 'cookie-pushing' Ivy

⁴¹ Dean uses the term "ideology of masculinity" to refer to "the cultural system of prescription and proscription that organizes the 'performance' of and individual's role in society, that draws boundaries around the social category of manhood, and that can be used to legitimate power and privilege." Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood*, 5.

league internationalist homosexuals and ‘pinks,‑” thus “conflat[ing] fears of domestic political subversion and foreign aggression with anxieties about the maintenance of domestic social and sexual order.” Consequently, according to Dean, “[c]ountersubversive rhetoric linked behavior that subverted the ‘natural’ relations between the sexes with behavior that subverted the proper political relations of American society,” and

Communism, depicted as an implacable, expansionist, militarily threatening enemy in its external imperial incarnation, was portrayed domestically as an “infection”; a conspiratorial, protean invasion of the boundaries of state and society, undermining national strength from within.

As such, communism, conflated with sexual “deviance,” could be—and was—easily linked to progressive politics through, for example, pejorative rhetoric about the “party girls” allegedly sent to enlist young men in the U.S. Communist Party. A conceptual progression from communism to sexual deviance to progressive politics also facilitated the post-war feminization of diplomacy and the foreign service while serving as a catalyst for McCarthyism, embedded within which was what Dean calls a “sexual inquisition” inside the State Department that was meant to publicly expose closeted homosexuals and other “less masculine” men who, the FBI argued, were easy targets for blackmail by Soviet intelligence. Dean concludes about America’s cold war-era governing myths that “[g]ender and the politics of sexuality and ‘deviance’ were not peripheral issues; they were central to the operations of power within the state.”⁴²

⁴² Ibid., 63-70.

This gender-sensitive analysis of McCarthyism reveals the gendered paradox at the heart of American nationalism: Its sustainability requires the paranoid rhetoric of a national (feminized) vulnerability to (feminized) threats of all kinds as a means of legitimating the state's (masculinized and, usually, militaristic) expansionism, which has been justified by historicized references to the uniqueness of American "values." Put another way, America, the feminized nation, must be conceptualized as vulnerable to threats, which are also feminized, making them, by their very nature, both dangerous and easy to defeat. Thus feminized, the nation to be protected and its threats to be eradicated together facilitate the state's easy justification of its oppositional and (often) violent, masculinist bellicosity.

Dean concludes, for example, that the ideological origins of the Viet Nam conflict were rooted in attempts by U.S. foreign policymakers to live up to an idealized notion of American masculinity, and waging a war in Viet Nam was their chance to demonstrate their manhood in opposition to effeminate diplomats and "pink" communists. And feminist literary scholar Susan Jeffords argues that American cultural representations of Viet Nam—most of which were created by white men in the late 1970s and 1980s—signaled the remasculinization of American culture in the wake of the United States' humiliating (and emasculating) military defeat. Jeffords's analyses of several cultural texts, including novels, personal narratives, films, and television series, shows that the discourse of the war (re)equated masculinity and militarization with American national identity by positioning patriarchal figures, usually portrayed as veterans of Viet Nam, as representative of national security, stability, and guidance. In contrast, the U.S. state and its political

and active-duty military representatives were feminized as incompetent and ineffectual. This analysis is borne out exceptionally well in *The A-Team* (1983-1987), NBC's action-adventure series about a group of fictionalized Viet Nam veterans living underground as "soldiers of fortune," who, having been accused of robbing the bank of Hanoi in the final days of the Viet Nam conflict, elude a succession of bumbling and confused U.S. military personnel while concomitantly working to end injustice and strife wherever and whenever they can. According to Jeffords, *The A-Team* is just one example of a slew of 1980s cultural texts that depicted ex-soldiers, particularly Viet Nam veterans, as "'victims' of society, government, and the war itself," thus "provid[ing] 'evidence' of a group of men who were themselves victims, on a par with women, blacks, and other disenfranchised groups." This "evidence" made possible the argument that "(white) men were not oppressors but instead, along with women and men of color, themselves victims of a third oppressor, in this case the government," which was explicitly feminized by virtue of its ineffectuality in and eventual defeat by Viet Nam.⁴³

In American political culture, President Ronald Reagan capitalized on this popular anti-governmentality by casting himself as the masculine hero of his own morality tale in which he, as a self-positioned government outsider-made-American President, promised to single-handedly make government bureaucracy accountable for the failures of Viet Nam, first, by promoting the ingenuity and spirit of American individualism (which is in direct and explicit opposition to Soviet communism) and, second, by

⁴³ Jeffords, *Remasculinization of America*, xiv.

[...] decreas[ing] the size of government itself and cut[ting] unwieldy bureaucracies that had come, according to Reaganites, more to serve the interests of lawmakers and bureaucrats who depend on their budgets than to address the real needs of citizens.⁴⁴

Thus, Jeffords demonstrates the ways in which masculinized, heroic anti-governmentality, represented in American popular and political culture by the “hard [white, male] bodies” of actors Clint Eastwood, Sylvester Stallone, Bruce Willis, and Ronald Reagan, was narratively and visually deployed in the 1980s to avenge the emasculating failures of Viet Nam.

The ideological reach of this governing myth, already considerable by the end of the 1980s, benefited enormously from contemporaneous developments in Eastern Europe. Having led the United States to its inevitable “victory” over the Soviet Union seemingly overnight, Ronald Reagan, the quintessential icon of a rugged and virile American masculinity, and outpacing his apparently inconsequential sidekick, Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev, became the hero of the cold war. As Schrecker rather sarcastically describes the logic of the triumphalist narrative, “[f]reedom, democracy, justice, courage, and the sheer grit and resolve of the American people triumphed over despotism and darkness.” She argues that this grave misuse of history to justify a post-Soviet national/ist present is “oversimplified and distorted,” leaving “no room for victims (as opposed to losers).”⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Ibid., 19.

⁴⁵ Schrecker, introduction to *Cold War Triumphalism*, 3-4, 7.

The (Geo)Political Traffic in Gendered Imaginaries

I asked in the last chapter, “What happens when the gendered signifier of the nation travels across borders and is deployed in an entirely different geographical, cultural, or historical context from that which it emerged?” I argue that it is in the sites and sights of the American triumphalist mythscape, of which the gendered Russian imaginary is an integral part, that answers to this question may be found—particularly because Russia’s configuration of itself as the world’s prostitute, recycled and reconfigured from the Silver Age, has been heavily influential in American imaginaries of post-Soviet Russia. Communication theorist George Gerbner contends that U.S. media outlets, because they are largely sympathetic to U.S. government policies, depict foreign countries in the way that the government wants them to, using information gleaned predominantly from government sources.⁴⁶ For instance, linking a November 1985 *New York Times* survey in which 28 percent of those polled believed that the U.S.S.R. was an enemy of the U.S. during World War II to what media mogul Ted Turner, in the May 17-23, 1989 issue of *Variety*, called “hate films,”⁴⁷ Gerbner argues that, because the media is a major producer and provider of images of foreign nationals for American audiences, the knowledge that most Americans have about Russia comes from the media. Consequently, like the rest of us, U.S. foreign policy elites are by no means immune to the (geo)political knowledge, the “belief” in an often polarized geopolitical imaginary in which the

⁴⁶ Everette E. Dennis, George Gerbner, and Yassen N. Zassoursky, ed., *Beyond the Cold War: Soviet and American Media Images* (London: Sage Publications, 1991), vii. This anthology has its roots in a June-July 1989 media studies conference at Moscow State University that focused on cold war depictions of the United States in the Soviet Union and vice versa.

⁴⁷ Included in Turner’s list were *Rambo*, *Invasion USA.*, *Red Dawn*, *The Hunt for Red October*, and the miniseries *Amerika*.

global West and East are diametrically opposed, produced by and through these cultural texts.⁴⁸

As the single ideologically binding and delimiting geopolitical imaginary of U.S. foreign policy for most of the last century, the cold war served as the primary catalyst for an overwhelming number of cultural texts, many of the most (in)famous of which are filmic, that, as historian Harlow Robinson deftly illustrates, narratively and visually depicted the Soviet Union, Russians, and/or communists according to the ebb and flow of U.S.-Soviet relations.⁴⁹ According to Robinson, before World War II, Hollywood representations of Soviets/Russians in films such as *Tovarich* (1937), *Ninotchka* (1939), and *Comrade X* (1940) were largely negative, but after the December 1941 Japanese attack on the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor brought the U.S. into an (albeit temporary) alliance with the U.S.S.R. against the Third Reich, representatives from the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration called on Hollywood producers to revision their representations of the Soviet Union and its citizens in order to provide the American movie-going audience with a less negatively valenced understanding of their new ally. Producers were happy to comply, and a number of pro-Soviet films, most notably *North Star* (1943) and *Days of Glory* (1944), quickly

⁴⁸ For more on the media's role in shaping U.S. foreign policy, see Patrick O'Heffernan, *Mass Media and American Foreign Policy: Insider Perspectives on Global Journalism and the Foreign Policy Process* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corp., 1991). I use the term "foreign policy elites" throughout to refer to the "top members of the [U.S.] State Department and other officials in the foreign-policy establishment; influential members of Congress; opinion leaders in the society at large, such as the major media outlets and their chief personalities; and members of think tanks and top academics." Royce J. Ammon, *Global Television and the Shaping of World Politics: CNN, Telediplomacy, and Foreign Policy* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2001), 143.

⁴⁹ Harlow Robinson, *Russians in Hollywood, Hollywood's Russians: Biography of an Image* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2007). For an engaging look at American anti-communist propaganda, see Michael Barson and Steven Heller, *Red Scared! The Commie Menace in Propaganda and Popular Culture* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2001).

made their way through the long production process and into U.S. cinemas. Ironically though, as Robinson notes,

Just how quickly and apparently easily many Hollywood figures adapted to the changed situation is evident in the fact that the same writer, Melchior Lengyel, supplied the original story both for *Ninotchka* (before) and for *Days of Glory* (after). What a difference a war can make.⁵⁰

However, neither the war nor the difference it made lasted much beyond the Yalta Conference in February 1945,⁵¹ and Hollywood was soon embarrassed by its wartime pro-Soviet sentiment, particularly because, according to Robinson, those films were a primary catalyst that sparked the controversial post-war investigation by the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) into alleged communist influence in American culture and education.⁵² While making note of the precipitous decline in the production of films featuring Russian/Soviet characters and plots between the mid-1940s and 1960, Robinson rightly points out that those fifteen years at mid-century marked the height of the cold war, and the sparse but negative filmic depictions of the Soviet Union during that time were integral to the geopolitical development of that country as the United States' "primary military, economic, and ideological adversary."⁵³ This apparent fact of U.S. foreign policy persisted in

⁵⁰ Robinson, *Russians in Hollywood*, 116.

⁵¹ Located in Ukraine on the Black Sea, the resort city of Yalta served as the site of the second of three wartime meetings between the heads of the Allied Powers, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Soviet Union.

⁵² For example, the pro-Soviet film *North Star* was re-cut and reissued as the profoundly anti-Soviet film *Armored Attack* in the post-war period. Robinson, *Russians in Hollywood*, 116-117.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 149.

popular and political culture with precious little relief until the late 1980s, when Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev began the dual processes of *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring) that, within a few short years, not only enabled the collapse of the entire Soviet system, but also rendered nonexistent Hollywood's chief antagonist—almost.

Although Robinson does briefly mention that “[t]he seduction/ideological conversion of a Soviet woman through American/capitalist fashion and luxury [...] became a standard feature of Hollywood screenplays about the U.S.S.R.,”⁵⁴ what is surprisingly absent from his account of roughly a century's worth of Hollywood filmic depictions of Russia and Russians—including those made after the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991—is any sustained analysis of the implicit sexism, heteronormativity, and Orientalism embedded in many of the films he discusses. In contrast, feminist literary critics Valentina Glajar and Domnica Radulescu contend that since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, “women from [Eastern Europe] in particular, have become a favorite and convenient site for the accumulation of stereotypical images feeding Western lust for the exotic and fear of the ‘barbaric.’” Because they are white and European, Slavic women

[...] are not drastically Other and thus are endowed with an aura of familiarity, or of Europeanness, and yet they are not fully familiar, or European either, as they come from the more remote regions of Europe, perceived as *almost* Oriental, as *almost* exotic, yet not fully so.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Ibid., 62.

Feminist scholar Roumiana Deltcheva goes further, asserting that since the fall of the Soviet Union, “the Slavic slut, ready to sell her body and soul for greenbacks, has become as much of a fixture in Western cinema as the Russian villainess used to be in James Bond movies during the Cold War.” Although “exotic” and Other, Slavic women are white people from (albeit peripheral) European spaces and are, therefore, easy scapegoats for Western media pundits who interpret “their social downfall [...] as a consciously chosen path, rather than as the result of social/political circumstances imposed upon them.” Pointing to the “perspective of geographical differentiation” of Eastern Europe as articulated “within artistic representations by Western artists,”⁵⁶ Deltcheva contends that post-1991 filmic depictions of Eastern European women fall into three basic categories (or some combination thereof): “the scrupulous slut, the conniving trickster, and the helpless victim.” Each of these three stereotypes “carr[ies] distinct negative connotations that, in their totality, reinforce the idea of Otherness as negation: negation of voice, negation of space, negation of experience.”⁵⁷

For example, with a nod to Edward Said, feminist literary scholar Agnieszka Tuszynska offers a critical reading of a film entitled *The Birthday Girl* (2001), starring Nicole Kidman as Nad’ya, a Russian mail-order bride, to argue against the

⁵⁵ Valentina Glajar and Domnica Radulescu, introduction to *Vampirettes, Wretches and Amazons: Western Representations of East European Women*, ed. by Valentina Glajar and Domnica Radulescu (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 2 and 4; italics in original.

⁵⁶ At the foundation of this “geographical differentiation” is the Orientalist conceptualization of Eastern Europe “as a world ‘over there,’ an alien world of differences that is light years away not only from the economic prosperity but also from the social conventions and values of the West.” Roumiana Deltcheva, “Eastern Women in Western Chronotypes: The Representation of East European Women in Western Films after 1989,” in *Vampirettes, Wretches and Amazons*, 162.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 162, 164, and 181.

dichotomous notions of Self and Other that occupy Western epistemologies. She points out that “[i]n order to make the process of othering more efficient and unambiguous in its exclusionary implications, the West has employed a rigid system of binary oppositions, which draw clear lines between ‘us’ and ‘them.’” This, of course, is also a statement about who has geopolitical power and the ability to wield it, when and why, a struggle that manifests itself, Tuszynska contends, in *The Birthday Girl* as both the depiction of and the site at which global East and West “confront each other in a much-telling setting which renders the Eastern European woman a commodity and the ultimate ‘other.’”⁵⁸ In the film, Nad’ya’s refusal to speak and her ready willingness to fulfill in complete silence her British husband’s sexual fantasies of bondage and sado-masochism operate as a “microcosm of the modern world’s power structure, in which domination is not always exercised through violence, but more and more often through multidimensional—economic, social, and ideological—oppression.”⁵⁹ As Nad’ya is both a woman and Russian, her gender, national origin, and ethnicity intersect, making her white, British (Western) husband feel both like a “man” and a “conqueror,” while her (hetero)sexuality becomes “the aim of modern-day colonialism; her body is invaded and transformed for the purpose of the Englishman’s entertainment.” But then, abruptly, the film’s narrative shifts as Nad’ya, like all typical Hollywood *femmes fatales* (a common filmic archetype that I will discuss more fully in chapter 6), turns out to be not what she seems, and is, instead, “transformed into the cinematographic ‘type’ of the cunning Russian woman-

⁵⁸ Agnieszka Tuszynska, “Eastern Girls, Western Boys,” 204.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 207.

spy, who maims Western men with her deceptive sexuality and uses them for her own ends.”⁶⁰ Not coincidentally, this narrative shift occurs just as Nad’ya begins to express her thoughts and desires verbally—using excellent English-speaking skills that her husband (and the viewing audience) has been led to believe she does not possess. The moment she begins to speak, she becomes an enemy.

Tuszynska contends that *The Birthday Girl* places the relationship between Nad’ya and her British husband within the context of the much-heralded and allegedly inherent differences between the global East and global West in which the East is depicted in Western post-Soviet news media and popular culture as economically devastated and underdeveloped, while the West is discursively constructed as a parental figure to Eastern Europe, suggesting that region’s alleged “infantile nature, and thus its inferiority and inability to govern itself in a responsible and mature manner.” She rightly points out that this “same rhetoric [...] is characteristic of the language used in patriarchal, sexist societies to refer to women,” thereby comparing men’s treatment of women in heteropatriarchial societies to the post-Soviet treatment of Eastern Europe by the industrialized “democracies” of the global West, a topic to which I will return in the next chapter.⁶¹

Given these feminist analyses of the gendered, racialized Hollywood depictions of Russia and Eastern Europe produced since 1991,⁶² it is easy to see now why the Diesel Jeans advertisement with which I began the last chapter is so

⁶⁰ Ibid., 208-209.

⁶¹ Ibid., 204-205.

⁶² The feminist cultural analyses presented in the collection of essays edited by Glajar and Radulescu do not attend to Western depictions of Russian masculinity; this is a deficiency that I will attempt to rectify in this project

problematic. First, the ad unambiguously suggests that a passive, feminized Russia is, geopolitically speaking, available and willing to do whatever the masculinist United States commands—a notion that potentially reinforces not only what U.S. foreign policymakers think they already know about post-Soviet Russia, but also U.S. neocolonial attitudes about the (un)limits of U.S. geopolitical power. Second, the Diesel Jeans advertisement is an example of a disturbing discursive trend in U.S. popular and political culture between the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the U.S. declaration of war on Iraq in 2003 in which post-Soviet Russia was explicitly sexualized and gendered in U.S. popular and political culture. Conceptualized as politically and ideologically “backward,” the Russian Federation was frequently depicted as a feminized and/or emasculated entity that was potentially duplicitous, antagonistic, sexually voracious, a threat to U.S. national security, and/or an innocent victim of circumstances beyond its control and, consequently, in need of salvation and resurrection. These gendered Russian imaginaries, as discursive systems of cultural representation and nationalist mythmaking, bolstered a triumphalist American nationalism whose narrative worked to “make belief” about a strong, masculinist U.S. national identity in opposition to that which was Russian/Soviet. Alarming, though, given the “rise in mass abuses and violence against [Slavic women], either as a result of new ethnic wars or of the new social phenomenon of the trafficking of women and girls for sex from East European to Western countries,” Glajar and Radulescu argue that

[W]hat happens to women in society is directly related to the ways in which they are seen and represented in the imagination and in the philosophical and

artistic constructions of that culture. This relationship is not seen in terms of one-sided views of mimetic representations of reality but in terms of dialogue and interconnectedness between a culture's ideological constructs, artistic representations, and its social realities.⁶³

The production and operation of the gendered Russian imaginary within the triumphalist mythscape re/inscribes the Russian Federation as a gendered, racialized Other to the United States, thus creating a cultural atmosphere in which the exploitation of feminine and/or emasculated bodies as representative of Russia makes plausible the material traffic in “real” women and girls from Russia into the United States for work in the sex industry. Radulescu contends that the reductive representations of Eastern European women in American culture as embodying some essence of an “exotic” culture fuels the seemingly-boundless desire in the West for “whatever is perceived as ‘exotic’ femininity,” especially that which is not visibly Other. This, she argues, “can easily be translated into the practice of objectifying and treating flesh and blood women as inferior beings” and may well be both cause and consequence of the increasing numbers of Russian and Eastern European women and girls who are trafficked to the West for work in the sex industry.⁶⁴ This link between cultural representations and material reality enables me to consider the ways in which, once the deployment of gender, heterosexuality, and ethnicity in national governing myths works to create gendered, racialized nationalisms, those national performances travel and are then translated and transformed in different spacetimes

⁶³ Glajar and Radulescu, *Vampirettes, Wretches and Amazons*, 5 and 7-8.

⁶⁴ Domnica Radulescu, “Amazons, Wretches and Vampirettes: Essentialism and Beyond in the Representation of East European Women,” in *Vampirettes, Wretches and Amazons*, 45-46.

within and among the circuits of power that constitute this and previous historical moments of globalization. For instance, the Soviet Union's fashioning of its gendered national identity in the 1910s and 1920s, itself built on a long tradition of gender-as-discourse as it developed in the imperial period, has been instrumental in forming not only post-Soviet Russian conceptualizations of itself as the world's prostitute, but also U.S.-based knowledges about the Russian Federation since 1991. Consequently, I posit an expanded conceptualization of "trafficking" to connote the exploitative cultural representation of Other gendered, racialized, heteronormative bodies in media and popular culture to justify particular political agendas. If the process of trafficking is "a practice which treats human beings as commodities,"⁶⁵ and the noun "traffic" refers to the movement of an entity through an area or along a route across all kinds of borders, then certainly the depiction of Russia and Russians in U.S.-based English-language media and popular culture can be considered a form of "imagined" trafficking that has direct material effects on both U.S. foreign policy toward Russia and on the continued "real" trafficking of Russian women into the United States for work in the sex industry.

⁶⁵ Liz Kelly and Linda Regan, "International Irony," *LOLApres* (November 2001), par. 7.

CHAPTER 3

Freedom for Whom? Support for What? Making Feminist Sense of U.S. Russia Policy

"The 'freedom' guaranteed to some individuals in society has always been premised upon the radical unfreedom of others."¹

In the little more than two years between the fall of the Berlin Wall in the summer of 1989 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991, U.S. policymakers who had lived their lives within the context of the cold war came to realize that the geopolitical changes in Eastern Europe necessitated a conceptual reorientation of their understanding of the hostile relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union and between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the countries of the defunct Warsaw Pact. Despite their understandable penchant for suspicion, developed during a time when the Soviet Union was considered an "evil empire," legislators recognized that they would have to support, with cautious optimism and as friends in need, a unified Germany, new democratic governments in Poland and Hungary, and, in early 1992, the Newly Independent States (NIS) of the former Soviet Union. They appreciated and embraced with enthusiasm the historical importance of their task, which they interpreted as nothing less than the creation of an entirely new geopolitical paradigm. Representative

¹ Andrea Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2005), 184.

Howard L. Berman (D-California), presiding as chairperson over a March 1992 hearing before the House Subcommittee on International Operations, most concisely expressed the consensus inside the Beltway: “We have won the Cold War. Now it is profoundly in our interests to build a lasting and stable peace.”²

The provisions by which the United States would accomplish this momentous task—the building of a “lasting and stable peace”—were codified as U.S. Public Law 102-511, the Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets Support Act of 1992. Colloquially dubbed the Freedom Support Act (FSA), the legislation authorized U.S. bi- and multilateral assistance to the independent states of the former Soviet Union.³ It amended or repealed several cold war-era prohibitions on economic, humanitarian, and other forms of assistance to the region and extended the Support for East European Democracy (SEED) Act of 1989, which authorized U.S. aid only to Hungary and Poland, to incorporate assistance to the successor states of the Soviet Union. Described as “the most important piece of legislation coming down the pike with regard to foreign policy in years”⁴ and as “every bit as much a policy statement as a legislative package,”⁵ the Freedom Support Act was and

² House Subcommittee on International Operations, *Democracy Building in the Former Soviet Union*, 102nd Cong., 2nd sess., March 18, 1992 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), 1.

³ Multilateral aid is given by donor countries to international financial institutions, usually the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the World Bank, for the dispersal of loans to recipient countries; bilateral aid refers to direct state-to-state assistance from donor countries to recipient countries. I am concerned in this chapter primarily with the latter from the United States to the Russian Federation.

⁴ Representative Lee Hamilton, presiding as chairperson. House Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, *Developments in Europe, April 1992*, 102nd Cong., 2nd sess., April 9, 1992 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office), 19.

⁵ Secretary of State James A. Baker, speaking on behalf of the George H.W. Bush administration. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Legislation Authorizing Assistance to the Former Soviet Union*, 102nd Cong., 2nd sess., April 9, 1992 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office), 7.

remains the first and only proposal that not only identified specific U.S. concerns about the status of Russia's political and economic systems and enumerated ways to alleviate them, but also addressed strategies for reorienting the *entirety* of U.S. foreign policy in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. It thus operates as both a blueprint for U.S. Russia policy since 1991 and, more broadly, for the ways in which a triumphant United States, concerned with how the world's only remaining "superpower" should conduct itself in the absence of a clear geopolitical adversary, reified its masculinist credentials on the global stage by self-consciously positioning itself in opposition to an (often gendered, racialized) Other.

My task in this chapter is not to chronicle the material *consequences* of the Freedom Support Act, but to decipher its ideological *causes*. I utilize a cognitive approach to foreign policy analysis in order to expose "the complex processes by which certain frames used in policy debates employ themes that resonate with popular ideology and are woven in and through the everyday practices of policy construction."⁶ I interrogate the ideological assumptions undergirding the Congressional hearings that constitute the bulk of the Freedom Support Act's legislative history, focusing particularly on the ways in which those assumptions were repeatedly manifest in the metaphors and analogies utilized by policymakers and

⁶ Nancy Naples, *Feminism and Method: Ethnography, Discourse Analysis, and Activist Research* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 109. Cognitive foreign policy analysis assumes that human actors engaged in activities in specific places at particular historical moments ultimately determine the direction of foreign policy. The recent incorporation of cultural studies approaches and perspectives into the study of U.S. foreign relations has resulted in an epistemological shift within that intellectual genealogy over the course of the past three decades that has caused scholars to ask "how culture affects policymaking in the U.S., specifically on how ideas about race, gender, sexuality, religion, and family relationships, not to mention democracy, shape the worldview of American policymakers and the decisions they make." Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson, ed., *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 2nd edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 8. See also Jerel A. Rosati, "A Cognitive Approach to the Study of Foreign Policy," in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, ed. Laura Neack, Jeanne A. K. Hey, and Patrick J. Haney (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995), 49-70.

witnesses throughout the hearings. I identify and critique the salience of discourses touting “modernity,” capitalist democracy, “freedom,” American exceptionalism, and conventional notions of “development” that converged during the hearings, held between June 1991 and May 1992, to formulate the ideological foundation upon which post-Soviet U.S. Russia policy rests.

I also bring together the work of feminist development and international relations theorists to offer a feminist assessment of the objectives and provisions of the FSA. What, I ask, was the legislation optimally designed to do? What were the gendered implications and consequences of its objectives and provisions when put to work on the ground in Russia? Which issues are most prevalent, and which were (often unintentionally) omitted? Whose perspectives and concerns were taken into account in the formation and implementation of the FSA, and whose were excluded? In short, for whom and/or what did the Freedom Support Act of 1992 work to facilitate “freedom” and why? And who and/or what did the FSA “support?”

Because the demise of the Soviet Union corresponded with the ascendancy of neoliberal economics,⁷ it is hardly surprising that the apparent *a priori* domination in the FSA of the material interests of U.S.-based corporations and the ideological interests of American nationalism reveals the corporatized neocolonialism that fueled the inception and implementation of U.S. Russia policy.⁸ The FSA’s pro-business

⁷ Broadly conceived, proponents of neoliberalism seek to shift the control of the economy from the public to the private sector.

⁸ U.S. foreign relations historian Michael H. Hunt argues that, historically, the economic interests of U.S. corporations have gone hand-in-hand with the advancement of U.S. capitalism. According to him, U.S. policymakers’ “favorite method was the promotion of free trade and indirect control of crucial markets rather than the creation of costly colonial regimes.” Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 9.

priorities also reveal the striking absence among U.S. policymakers—despite what was, at that time, roughly twenty years’ worth of feminist critiques of capitalist democracy and conventional cold war-era development paradigms—of any concern for or consideration of how U.S. Russia policy would affect ordinary Russian people, particularly women, children, and other historically marginalized groups who were most negatively affected by U.S.-led “reform” efforts in the 1990s. Finally, I contend that in their formulation and implementation of the FSA, U.S. policymakers relied simultaneously on three interconnected gendered Russian imaginaries, the damsel in distress, the evil mother-figure, and the wily temptress, thus revealing the gendered, racialized, and heteronormative tropes operating within the discursive frames that shaped U.S. Russia policy in particular, and U.S. foreign policy more generally, throughout the 1990s.

The Freedom Support Act

Enacted on October 24, 1992, in the last months of the George H.W. Bush presidency, the Freedom Support Act was, as its title indicates, intended to “support freedom and open markets in the independent states of the former Soviet Union.”⁹ It authorized U.S. monetary support of and participation in multilateral Russian aid programs as well as bilateral aid in the form of technical advice and assistance on projects leading to the democratization of the new country’s political system, defense conversion, and the systemic privatization of Soviet-era state-run industries. At its most basic level, the Freedom Support Act was an extension to the former Soviet

⁹ *Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets Support Act of 1992*, U.S. Public Law 102-511, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 106 (1992): 3320-3362.

Union of the provisions of Public Law 101-179, the Support for Eastern European Democracy (SEED) Act of 1989, whose goal was

To promote political democracy and economic pluralism in Poland and Hungary by assisting those nations during a critical period of transition and abetting the development in those nations of private business sectors, labor market reforms, and democratic institutions.¹⁰

In its authorization of U.S. federal bi- and multilateral aid to the NIS,¹¹ the Freedom Support Act retained the basic spirit of the SEED Act while also adding to the latter's focus on economic and political reforms a concern for the conversion for civilian purposes of the Soviet-era military and defense infrastructure. Title II of the FSA enumerates the following economic assistance activities to the NIS:

1. To fulfill urgent humanitarian needs.
2. To foster "a democratic and free society."
3. To establish free market systems "based on the principle of private ownership of property."
4. For the purpose of "creating conditions that promote trade and investment, and encouraging participation of the United States private sector in the development of the private sector" throughout the NIS.
5. To assist with food distribution and production.

¹⁰ *Support for East European Democracy Act of 1989*, U.S. Public Law 101-179, enacted by the 101st cong., 1st sess., November 28, 1989.

¹¹ Although there had been fifteen Soviet republics, there were just twelve newly independent states to which the Freedom Support Act applied. Because the United States had never formally recognized the Soviet Union's annexation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania after World War II, these three states did not fall within the purview of the Freedom Support Act.

6. To promote programs that improve health and human services, particularly “voluntary family planning services, housing, and other services and policies that are components of a social safety net, particularly for infants, children, and people with disabilities.”¹²
7. For education and educational television, especially the development of textbooks and imparting to television professionals throughout the NIS the knowledge needed to produce educational television programming that promotes the “basic skills and the human values associated with a democratic society and a free market economy.”¹³
8. To promote energy efficiency and production through market-based pricing policies and concern for the environmental consequences of production.
9. To ensure civilian nuclear reactor safety.
10. For environmental conservation and resource management.
11. For the improvement of the transportation and telecommunications infrastructure and management.

¹² Justifiably negative critiques of U.S. Russia policy throughout the 1990s point repeatedly to the failure of U.S. and IMF/World Bank assistance efforts to preserve the social safety nets that had existed in the Soviet Union. See especially Ethan B. Kapstein and Michael Mandelbaum, ed., *Sustaining the Transition: The Social Safety Net in Postcommunist Europe* (Washington, DC: Council on Foreign Relations, Inc., 1997); and Judyth L. Twigg, “What Has Happened to Russian Society?” in *Russia after the Fall*, ed. Andrew C. Kuchins (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2002), 147-162.

¹³ This provision is clearly the result of the testimony of several witnesses, including two from the U.S.-based Children’s Television Workshop, which produces *Sesame Street*, who testified before the Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs on May 6, 1992 in advocacy of U.S. funds earmarked specifically for the development of children’s educational television in Russia. The inclusion of such a provision in the Freedom Support Act is an explicit acknowledgement by Congress that television can be a powerful pedagogical tool. Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, *The Role of Children’s Educational Television in the Transformation of the Former Soviet Union*, 102nd Cong., 2nd sess., May 6, 1992 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992).

12. To address the problem of illegal drugs, including “[p]romoting drug education, interdiction, and eradication programs.”
13. To attend to issues of migration, particularly “[p]rotecting and caring for refugees, displaced persons, and other migrants; addressing the root causes of migration; and promoting the development of appropriate immigration and emigration laws and procedures.”

Regardless of the sheer magnitude and breadth of the planned U.S. portfolio, the provisions and objectives of which were ostensibly meant to effect a total political and economic transformation in the independent states of the former Soviet Union, these thirteen seemingly disparate thematic areas to which U.S. aid could be applied cohered to facilitate the continued military prowess and increasing economic dominance of the United States on a transformed geopolitical stage. It is items two, three, and nine, which explicitly promote democratization, privatization, and defense conversion, that form the core of the U.S. assistance program as outlined in the Freedom Support Act; the other items are subsets of these three paradigmatic issues and provide for the economic interests of a variety of U.S.-based business sectors, from educational services and health care, to telecommunications and transportation.

The primacy of democratization, privatization, and defense conversion in the FSA is embedded in the legislation’s concern for the interrelated processes by which they would be concomitantly achieved. In addition to its attention to the development of business opportunities for the U.S.-based aerospace and agricultural sectors,¹⁴ the FSA called for the establishment of American Business Centers throughout the NIS

¹⁴ *Freedom Support Act*, sec. 601 and sec. 701.

that would operate as sites of information on and for the administration of potential cooperative agreements and commercial partnerships between U.S.-based businesses and local NIS ventures.¹⁵ It also called for the establishment of the Democracy Corps, a non-governmental, non-profit organization to be incorporated in the District of Columbia, whose express purpose was to set up and operate sites throughout the NIS. Through technical advice and assistance and small grants (under \$5000 USD) to people and organizations identified by Corps consultants as able to do the work of democratization, the Democracy Corps was to assist in the development of “institutions of democratic governance (including judicial, electoral, legislative, and administrative processes),” the non-governmental organizations that constitute civil society (“including charitable, educational, trade union, business, professional, voluntary, community, and other civic organizations”), and the development of a market economy.¹⁶ The Freedom Support Act also incorporated into its support of freedom and open markets nonproliferation and disarmament programs and activities that explicitly addressed U.S. lawmakers’ concerns about the potential threats to the national security and territorial integrity of the United States in the absence of central control of the Soviet Union’s massive stockpile of nuclear, biological, chemical, and conventional weapons.¹⁷ The FSA also included provisions for the commencement of U.S. Information Agency and State Department activities throughout the former Soviet Union, particularly diplomatic missions and educational programming.¹⁸ A

¹⁵ Ibid., sec. 301.

¹⁶ Ibid., sec. 401.

¹⁷ Ibid., sec. 501.

¹⁸ Ibid., sec. 801.

reading of the Freedom Support Act reveals that U.S. assistance in three crucial areas—economic reform, democratization, and defense conversion—was deemed by policymakers to be the best and most efficient way of “support[ing] freedom and open markets” in the former Soviet Union and ensuring that its successor states, particularly Russia, would be effectively integrated “into the community of democratic nations,” thus becoming part of “a peaceful and stable international order” in the wake of the Soviet Union’s demise.¹⁹

Implementation

Thirteen billion dollars in U.S. federal monies were allocated in fiscal year 1993 as part of the Freedom Support Act. This figure constituted the bulk of a twenty-four billion dollar G7 aid package announced by President George H.W. Bush on April 1, 1992 and included an authorized increase in the allowable annual U.S. contribution to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).²⁰ Although subsequent years saw variations on the amount of U.S. dollars Congress was willing to allocate for NIS assistance, available U.S. financial resources earmarked for the former Soviet republics throughout the 1990s and into the twenty-first century were divided between the

¹⁹ Ibid., sec. 101. From a U.S. perspective, the import of being able to accept Russia into a “community of democratic nations” rested on the notion of a “democratic peace,” the assumption, commonly held among conventional International Relations scholars and U.S. foreign policymakers, that democracies do not wage war against each other. For critique of the “democratic peace” theory, see Ivie, “A New Democratic World Order?,” 256-258.

²⁰ *Freedom Support Act*, sec. 1001. The G7 (Group of 7), currently known as the G8 as a result of the addition of Russia in 1997, was an international forum for the governments of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Interestingly, U.S. President George H.W. Bush did not discuss the proposed multilateral aid package with either Russian Finance Minister Yegor Gaidor or the other G7 heads of state. For more on this, see James M. Goldgeier and Michael McFaul, *Power and Purpose: U.S. Policy Toward Russia after the Cold War* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), 73-82.

IMF's multilateral structural adjustment programs on the one hand, and U.S.-administered bilateral efforts on the other. According to the provisions of the FSA, all U.S. bilateral efforts were coordinated and governed by a single presidential appointee within the State Department.²¹ In the Clinton administration, this position was held by Ambassador Richard L. Morningstar, Special Advisor to the President and Secretary of State on Assistance to the NIS, who, according to anthropologist Janine R. Wedel, designated the bulk of his oversight responsibility to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). In turn, USAID, fearful that it had no expertise in Eastern Europe, relinquished much of its portfolio to a private entity, Harvard University's Institute for International Development (HIID).²²

The specific provisions of U.S. aid to Russia in the first post-Soviet decade were consistent with trends in Western aid to Eastern Europe more generally, which took the form of technical assistance (rather than direct government-to-government monetary aid) and was intended to foster the privatization of state-owned enterprises and the development of markets for Western-produced goods and services.²³ As is apparent from a series of relevant Congressional hearings held between June 1991 and May 1992 (to which I will return in the next section), the Marshall Plan, the U.S. plan for European recovery after World War II, was the point of reference for U.S. aid to Eastern Europe, but as Wedel points out, there were some significant differences: While the Marshall Plan had been ninety percent grant aid in the form of

²¹ *Freedom Support Act*, sec. 102.

²² Janine R. Wedel, *Collision and Collusion: The Strange Case of Western Aid to Eastern Europe, 1989-1998* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

²³ See *ibid.* as well as Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*.

capital assistance (i.e. monies allotted directly to European governments that did not have to be paid back), aid to Eastern Europe in the 1990s was comprised largely of export credits, loans, and debt relief.²⁴ Western assistance to Eastern Europe and the NIS after 1991 thus equaled advice, not cash, and Wedel joins the many critics of U.S. Russia policy, arguing that this “help” did not in any way attend to the needs of the people of Eastern Europe. Goldgeier and McFaul concur, pointing out that the U.S. financial commitment in Russia throughout the 1990s, despite being in the tens of billions of dollars, was wholly inadequate to successfully implement even the policy *priorities* of the Freedom Support Act, let alone those issues (such as social welfare, health care, and education reform, all of which are the sectors through which women, children and other marginalized populations are most likely to interact as citizens) that, although mentioned in the Freedom Support Act as within the framework U.S. Russia policy, took a back seat to the Harvard Institute for International Development’s (HIID) economic “reform” efforts.

Under the direction of Harvard economics professor (and neoliberal economic theorist) Jeffrey Sachs, who had in the late 1980s successfully guided Poland and Hungary through their own economic transformations from communism to capitalism, HIID helped to define the “reform” agenda for the NIS by facilitating a rapid transition from communism to capitalism. Known colloquially as “shock therapy,” the Harvard Project’s approach to economic reform in Russia assumed that

²⁴ It should be noted, however, that at no point since 1991 have the international banking institutions, particularly the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, offered to forgive the Soviet Union’s debt, the bulk of which (more than 70 percent) was absorbed by the Russian Federation. Ibid, 71.

a free market economy is the “natural” or “normal” state of the economy. In theory, “shock therapy” requires several concurrent measures, including price liberalization, macroeconomic stabilization, privatization of state resources, and free international trade and investment, all of which must be done as rapidly as possible in order, first, to create a new capitalist system in place of the old state-based command economy, and, second, to prevent the supporters and beneficiaries of communism from mounting an effective counter-action.²⁵ With the authority to administer U.S. federal funds in the billions of dollars, all earmarked for Russian assistance programs, Sachs and his team at Harvard identified a group of pro-Yeltsin Russian “reformers,” led by economists Anatoly Chubais and Yegor Gaidor, and designated them as the exclusive administrators of U.S. aid monies in Russia.²⁶

Desperate for foreign aid in the months immediately after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Russian Duma approved Yeltsin’s request for a year’s worth of executive powers to issue laws by decree in 1992-1993. In this climate, Yeltsin turned to his friends and advisors, Chubais and Gaidor, who hired economists from the Harvard Project to work as consultants to the Russian government. Together, and with Yeltsin’s support, this team of Russian and U.S.-based economists took optimal advantage of their ability to make sweeping changes to Russia’s economic infrastructure, without parliamentary oversight, by liberalizing prices and selling off the assets and resources of the former Soviet Union. This money trail (i.e. from the

²⁵ David M. Kotz and Fred Weir, *Russia’s Path from Gorbachev to Putin: The Demise of the Soviet System and the New Russia* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 155-159.

²⁶ For Western donor agencies, an Eastern European “reformer” must self-identify as such and be pro-Western and English-speaking; in addition, s/he must possess already-established Western contacts and must have traveled to and/or studied in the West. Wedel, *Collision and Collusion*, 137.

U.S. government to USAID to HIID to the Chubais Clan and back to HIID's economists as paid consultants) left precious little room for transparency or accountability and created a situation in which a single private entity (Harvard University's HIID) was not only responsible for implementing and overseeing U.S. bilateral assistance to Russia, but was also its chief recipient.²⁷ Ironically, the implementation of U.S. aid in Russia circumnavigated the very democratic processes it was supposed to facilitate.

Consequences

U.S. bilateral reform efforts, driven by the principals of “shock therapy,” resulted in increased hardships for the majority of Russians. The removal of price controls resulted in high inflation, putting the prices of most consumer goods beyond reach, and the rapid privatization of state-run industries wiped out the Soviet Union's “extensive and universal social safety net” that, although “meager,” reliably provided education, health care, pensions, job security, housing, transportation, child care, vacations, and so forth.²⁸ Although the pension system did remain a political priority, other elements of the social network evaporated as the transition to capitalism meant that the state could/would no longer maintain those programs. The result was widespread and extreme poverty caused predominantly by unemployment or low-

²⁷ According to Wedel, Harvard-based members of the Chubais Clan, to which the Harvard Project assigned the entirety of its Russia portfolio, included Sachs, Harvard economics professor and chief World Bank economist (and eventually Undersecretary of the Treasury for International Affairs under Clinton) Lawrence Summers, and Harvard economics professor Andrei Schleifer.

²⁸ Judyth L. Twigg, “What Has Happened to Russian Society?,” in *Russia after the Fall*, ed. Andrew C. Kuchins (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2002), 147.

paying jobs.²⁹ This led to other social ills: Heavy drinking was ubiquitous and illegal drug use increased, as did rates of violent crime and reported cases of HIV/AIDS. Life expectancy plummeted while the number of premature deaths from suicide, alcohol-related causes, or infectious/parasitic diseases skyrocketed, the latter because medicines were often unavailable to the poor. Journalist Naomi Klein provocatively suggests that Russians, who were quite literally disappearing after the implementation of “shock therapy,” have been the victims of “economic genocide.”³⁰

Russian society at the end of the first post-Soviet decade was starkly divided into a precious few haves and a large majority of have-nots, and it is widely acknowledged that women and children were most negatively affected by Western “reform” policies and programs throughout the NIS.³¹ As feminist scholar Valentine Moghadam rightly points out, Eastern Europe had “one of the most educated workforces in the world,” and women occupied high-skill jobs in large numbers. But with the demise of the Soviet system, educated women were among the first to lose

²⁹ Roughly 60 percent of the Russian population lived in poverty at the end of the first decade of “reform.” While this figure may seem high and does contradict other studies claiming a significantly lower rate of poverty, because of the new poverty standard implemented in 1990, “the poverty situation in the 1990s has been worse than the official statistics suggest: if the poverty standard which prevailed in the pre-reform era had operated in 1999, then 60 percent of the Russian population would be counted as poor. It should be noted, however, that the quasi-official poverty line for the 1980s [...] was generous by international standards,” making it possible that even their alarmingly high figure of sixty percent may still be low. Shorrocks and Kolenikov, “Poverty Trends in Russia during the Transition.”

³⁰ According to Twigg, “vodka remains cheaper than milk, supported by a state that relies on almost \$500 million in annual revenues from alcohol duties,” and the high rates of crime “have bestowed Russia with the world’s largest prison population.” Twigg, “What Has Happened to Russian Society?,” 153. For more information concerning the stark consequences of economic “reform” efforts in Russia, see Walter Lafeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-2002*, 9th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2004), 389-395; and Klein, *Shock Doctrine*, 239.

³¹ Andrew C. Kuchins, introduction to *Russia after the Fall*, 1-18.

their jobs, “constitute[ing] an estimated 70 percent of Russia’s unemployed.”³² Many companies fired or refused to hire women in an effort to avoid granting maternity leave or paying child care benefits, which were still required by Russian law, and women who did work “tended to be confined to traditional, low-paying, ‘female’ occupations.”³³ As early as 1993, feminist sociologist Anastasia Posadskaya argued that “reform” had already become a masculine project to the detriment of women, whose perspectives had been entirely excluded. She points out that with the removal of Soviet-era quota systems, women’s representation and participation in politics decreased exponentially, which resulted in women’s collective inability to participate in the planning and distribution of societal resources as “legislative bodies began to play a real role in policymaking.”³⁴ Additionally, women’s bodies were utilized ubiquitously as commodities in pornography and prostitution, and the concomitant disappearance of social services such as child care and the resurgence of Russian Orthodoxy operated in conjunction with public rhetoric about Russia’s demographic crisis and natalist pressures through government legislation to encourage traditional conceptualizations of gender roles, particularly the glorification of motherhood.³⁵

³² Valentine M. Moghadam, introduction to *Democratic Reform and the Position of Women in Transitional Economies*, ed. Valentine M. Moghadam (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 1-25.

³³ J. Ann Tickner, *Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 107.

³⁴ Anastasia Posadskaya, “Changes in Gender Discourses and Policies in the Former Soviet Union,” in *Democratic Reform and the Position of Women in Transitional Economies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 162-179.

³⁵ For more information, see Posadskaya, “Changes in Gender Discourses and Policies in the Former Soviet Union”; Tickner, *Gendering World Politics*; Kunkle, “(Re)thinking Russian Nationalism”; Rebecca Kay, *Russian Women and Their Organizations: Gender, Discrimination, and Grassroots Women’s Organizations, 1991-1996* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000); and Amy Caiazza, *Mothers*

Lastly, in Russia, as throughout the world, poverty is “largely a female phenomenon,” and one of its most accessible palliatives has become sex work, to which increasing numbers of women throughout the NIS have turned as an employment option.³⁶

Even this cursory review of the objectives and ultimate results of U.S.-led “reform” efforts in Russia demonstrates quite clearly that the Freedom Support Act certainly did not support “freedom” for most people living in the former Soviet republics, particularly women, children, and other marginalized groups. Rather, the legislation deviates not at all from the “twentieth century tradition of linking American national security to the hegemony” of capitalist democracy in its strenuous preservation of the “freedom” of the United States to protect its own national security interests through defense conversion and nonproliferation programs (thus mitigating the once-significant threat posed by the Soviet Union’s formidable military arsenal to the territorial borders of the U.S. and its European allies) and providing financial

and Soldiers: Gender, Citizenship, and Civil Society in Contemporary Russia (New York: Routledge, 2002).

³⁶ Twigg, “What Has Happened to Russian Society?,” 150. See also Posadskaya, “Changes in Gender Discourses and Policies in the Former Soviet Union”; and Farr, *Sex Trafficking*. But, as Barbara Einhorn points out, although women were disadvantaged in the paid labor force and in institutional politics, their involvement with grassroots organizations provided new kinds of opportunities for political engagement. Barbara Einhorn, *Cinderella Goes to Market: Citizenship, Gender and Women's Movements in East Central Europe* (New York: Verso, 1993). Please refer to Kay, *Russian Women and Their Organizations*; and Caiazza, *Mothers and Soldiers* for detailed discussions of the ideologies and activities of Russian non-governmental women’s organizations.

Feminist political scientist Jacqui True warns Western-based feminists researching and writing on Eastern European women against a singular focus on the ways in which they have been victimized by the political, economic, and social turmoil in the region over the course of the past decade. She argues that depicting these women solely as victims (rather than also considering their “agency and the aspect of local negotiations in globalization”) could potentially create a victimized identity for the women of Eastern Europe that is analogous to the category “Third World women”—a category to which postcolonial feminists strongly object. *Gender, Globalization and Postsocialism: The Czech Republic after Communism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 24.

support for U.S. businesses to develop and make use of new commercial opportunities throughout the NIS.³⁷

The Ideological Causes of U.S. Russia Policy

In hindsight, it is easy to forget that the Freedom Support Act was not always what it is; it may well have been quite different were it not for a specific set of circumstances and assumptions that converged in the early 1990s to drive the post-Soviet U.S. foreign policy agenda. Before they were codified as U.S. Public Law 102-511, the provisions of U.S. assistance to Russia were discussed and debated on Capitol Hill in a series of Congressional hearings between June 1991 and May 1992 wherein legislators had an opportunity to gather information about the changes taking place to and within the Soviet Union and to hear advice and suggestions from expert witnesses concerning possible U.S. responses to those changes. As the only official record reflecting the salient concerns driving the formulation of the first post-Soviet U.S. foreign policy agenda, a reading of the published transcriptions of these hearings reveals much about the mindset of legislators as they set about completely revisioning the entirety of U.S. foreign policy in the wake of the Soviet Union's demise.

Although held most obviously in response to events in Eastern Europe, the hearings were from the outset shaped, first, by legislators' anxiety about the economic recession gripping the United States and, beginning in the early months of 1992, their partisan concerns about the increasingly acrimonious presidential election campaign between Democrat William J. Clinton of Arkansas and the incumbent, Republican

³⁷ Ivie, "A New Democratic World Order?," 249.

George H.W. Bush of Texas. The congressmen involved in these hearings—and “men” is the appropriate term here—were, regardless of their political affiliations, largely concerned with how their constituents would react in an election year to the perception that the U.S. was expending its already scarce resources to support the (re)construction and development of a series of countries that had, for the last half-century, been its mortal enemy. Consequently, House and Senate committee members from both parties were forced to reconcile public demands for fiscal conservatism with the material reality that the successor states of the Soviet Union were in political and economic meltdown. The result was perceived threats to U.S. national security accompanied by legislators’ collective nationalistic desire to respond to these converging crises by trumpeting American altruism and the alleged superiority of the economic and political systems that had, from their perspective, triumphed in what U.S. Secretary of State James A. Baker called the “titanic struggle between freedom and totalitarianism.”³⁸

The belief that United States had won this “titanic struggle” caused U.S. policymakers to miss the opportunity after the demise of the Soviet Union “to create a ‘concert of powers’ in support of regulated capitalist growth, world stability and the relief of poverty, preventable diseases and other social ills.”³⁹ The pursuance of these objectives would, indeed, have been an extraordinary evolution in U.S. foreign policy priorities, which have since the end of World War II been focused on the continued survival and independence of the United States, its concomitant territorial integrity and expansion, its military and economic security, and the extension and

³⁸ Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, April 9, 1992, 4.

³⁹ Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*, 14.

sustainability of the country's democratic values and ideals.⁴⁰ But the demise of the United States' only state-based geopolitical adversary became not an occasion for reevaluation, circumspection, and/or self-reflexivity on the part of the U.S. foreign policy elite; rather, it became one within which to arrogantly celebrate the "victory" of capitalism over communism and of "freedom" over totalitarianism. Indeed, the events of 1989-1991 vindicated the nationalist narrative of American exceptionalism and prompted "[a]n instantly reconfigured history" in which the United States was the rightful and predetermined victor of the cold war as a result of its adherence to democratic values.⁴¹

Constitutive of American nationalism in the post-Soviet period, this triumphalist mindset was a dominant discursive frame within which foreign policymakers were operating in 1991 and 1992. As Lieven points out, the narrative of progress dominates the teaching of and conversation about history in the United States, which means that the notion that "the default mode of humanity is to become American" is not only widespread, but was further substantiated by the demise of the Soviet Union and its attendant socio-political system, communism.⁴² This thinking is embedded within U.S. foreign policy, which assumes that U.S. interests are universal

⁴⁰ Bruce W. Jentleson and Thomas G. Paterson, *Encyclopedia of U.S. Foreign Relations*, ed. Council of Foreign Relations, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁴¹ Bruce Cumings, "Time of Illusion: Post-Cold War Visions of the World," in *Cold War Triumphalism*, 77; see also Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*. In *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Hunt contends that because there have been no wars, revolutions, or social unrest to disrupt it, the U.S. has not been forced to be self-reflexive about its approach to foreign policy, which means that the ideology/ies at the foundation of that policy remain unexamined and are thus unwittingly permitted to continue.

⁴² Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*, 66.

interests.⁴³ Bolstering this belief was neoconservative political scientist (and sometimes consultant for the Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations) Francis Fukuyama, whose belief that the triumph of capitalist democracy over communism signaled the “end of history” is the stuff of legend among scholars critical of neoliberal economic and modernization theories and neorealist approaches to international relations. Among the most (in)famous and easily the most influential of the cold war triumphalists, Fukuyama originally posited his thesis in the 1989 issue of the *National Interest*, and, despite several different perspectives published around the same time, the notion that the world had reached the “end of history” immediately became “so deeply internalized as to be usually beyond self-awareness and therefore beyond discussion,” which led to an assumption among foreign policymakers that everyone everywhere was on the same historical timeline in 1991 and that everyone everywhere wanted, or should want, an American-style capitalist democracy.⁴⁴ Cumings believes that the “end of history” thesis posits a “deeply conservative argument in favor of the status quo” by “[creating] a discourse of power that says in essence, you’ve never had it so good, so what are you complaining about?” Thus, any protest against or critique of the status quo is always already illegitimate, the effect of which has been that people who live in the global West, particularly the United States, have been convinced not to think about the possibilities provided by other

⁴³ Robert J. McMahon, “‘By Helping Others, We Help Ourselves:’ The Cold War Rhetoric of American Foreign Policy,” in *Critical Reflections of the Cold War*, 233-246.

⁴⁴ Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*, 69. See also Jane L. Parpart and Marianne Marchand, “Exploding the Canon: An Introduction/Conclusion,” in *Feminism/Postmodernism/Development*, ed. Marianne H. Marchand and Jane L. Parpart (New York: Routledge, 1995), 1-22; Tickner, *Gendering World Politics*; and Andrei Tsygankov, *Whose World Order? Russia’s Perception of American Ideas after the Cold War* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004).

socio-political systems, because they already live in the best imaginable one, to which the forces of history have inevitably brought them.⁴⁵ Consequently, legislators' collective belief in the superiority of the U.S. political system and American cultural values form the bedrock of U.S. Russia policy.

Why help Russia?

The granting of U.S. assistance to what was still the Soviet Union was by no means a foregone conclusion when Senator Joseph Biden (D-Delaware) convened the first hearing on the matter before the Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs on June 6, 1991. Although Biden believed that the goal of the U.S. should be to play “a constructive role in helping transform [the U.S.S.R.] into a free market democracy,”⁴⁶ he, like many of his colleagues, was not at all sure of what that role should be. It was not until a hearing on the future of the Soviet economy thirteen days later, on June 19, 1991, that he stressed that, although there remained some rather contentious debates on the issue of “whether and how we might promote constructive political and economic change within [the Soviet Union], which has long been our global adversary,” consensus had been reached on Capitol Hill that what happens in the U.S.S.R. affects the United States. The U.S. should thus provide technical assistance and advice to encourage the development of a free-market democracy, but legislators

⁴⁵ Cumings, “Time of Illusion,” 86.

⁴⁶ Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, *The Soviet Crisis and the U.S. Interest: Future of the Soviet Military*, 102nd Cong., 2nd sess., June 6, 1991 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), 2.

agreed that assistance should be contingent upon significant changes to the Soviet Union's command economy.⁴⁷

Although in early agreement that the U.S. should provide some sort of assistance to the Soviet Union, legislators demanded that they be able to explain to their constituents why, during an economic recession, U.S. tax dollars should be sent abroad, to a country that had been the United States' geopolitical adversary for the last half century. The answer was two-fold. First, despite what legislators earnestly believed to be the end of the cold war, early witnesses made the convincing argument that the Soviet Union/Russia was no less a threat to U.S. national security in 1991 and 1992 than the U.S.S.R. had been at the height of the cold war. The difference, witnesses claimed, was in the nature of the threat, which lay in the possibility that the crumbling Soviet Union could erupt into violent chaos and that the military, already under-resourced, would lose control of that country's stockpile of thousands of nuclear weapons. Although the security and defense experts called upon to testify assuaged fears among legislators that the Soviet military would instigate and/or join a coup and expressed confidence that "[t]he Soviet procedures to try to counter an accidental or unauthorized launch of nuclear weapons are very substantial and very significant," their collective inability to predict whether or not Soviet nuclear weapons, well-guarded by special KGB and military forces and requiring both human and mechanical arrangements to arm and launch, could "fall into the hands of some rebel groups or terrorists, particularly if order breaks down even further" and leads to

⁴⁷ Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, *The Soviet Crisis and the U.S. Interest: Future of the Soviet Economy*, 102nd Cong., 2nd sess., June 19, 1991 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), 64.

“full fledged civil war” did not, in the end, inspire confidence among subcommittee members. In fact the final verdict on the potential for threats to U.S. national security from the Soviet Union was that, regardless of the political and economic situation, “[t]he Soviet[s] will field a very modern, survivable, lethal strategic arsenal that will threaten to blow away the United States or anyone else if they would gravely threaten or directly attack the Soviet Union.”⁴⁸ The continuance of the Soviet/Russian nuclear threat to U.S. national security—and, consequently, Russia’s status as a *femme fatale*—was utilized in subsequent hearings to undergird the urgent need for U.S. assistance. Such assistance was, legislators pointed out to each other, to their constituents, and to the Bush administration,⁴⁹ in the best interest of the national sovereignty and territorial security of the United States.

Second, having won the cold war in what was being billed in U.S. political and popular culture as a stunning triumph of capitalism and democratic values, policymakers believed that the United States was uniquely positioned to help its former adversary to *mature* into a “normal,” “modern,” “civilized” society that would, in time, not only become part of an envisioned global free-market economy and a stable “democratic peace,” but also (most conveniently for those legislators eager to mollify their apprehensive constituents during an economic recession) create

⁴⁸ Subcommittee on European Affairs, June 6, 1991, 21 and 52.

⁴⁹ Senator Biden chided Bush and his administration repeatedly throughout the hearings for their slow reaction to the events in Eastern Europe. See especially Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, September 24 and 26, 1991; Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, *U.S. Assistance to the New Independent States: Recommendation from U.S. Non-Profit Organizations*, 102nd Cong., 2nd sess., March 19, 1992 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991); and Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, May 14, 1992. According to Goldgeier and McFaul in *Power and Purpose*, a respect for the national sovereignty of the Soviet Union and, hence, its leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, was a chief reason for the Bush administration’s reluctance to respond to events in Eastern Europe.

new markets (or, more tellingly, “new frontiers”⁵⁰) for U.S. exports. It was widely assumed, for example, that the threat to U.S. national security presented by the possibility that unsavory political leaders would surface in the context of the Soviet Union/Russia’s political chaos could be mitigated by effecting a permanent sea change in the economic and political structure of Eastern Europe. On April 9, 1992, Senator Claiborne Pell (D-Rhode Island) encouraged those present at a hearing before the full Senate Committee on Foreign Relations to learn from previous mistakes made by the U.S. in response to revolutionary events in Russia. Recalling the U.S.’s failure to assist Alexander Kerensky’s flailing provisional government during the spring and summer of 1917, Pell reminds his audience that while Kerensky “may not have been what we would call a democrat, [...] he was a lot more palatable than the alternative that followed” in the wake of the October Revolution. He goes on to point out that the Bolsheviks were able to exploit the frustrations and desperation of a war-weary people, and Lenin was welcomed “as a savior, a man on a white horse.” According to Pell, the U.S. faced in 1991 and 1992 a “similar opportunity to encourage democratic reform, not only in Russia, but in the other countries of the former Soviet Union,” and it should do so lest a “new man on a white horse” advocating political positions distasteful to U.S. interests come to power. Paraphrasing U.S. Secretary of State James A. Baker, Pell asserts (rather controversially in light of recent critiques not only of the cold war, but also of the Korean and Viet Nam conflicts) that the United States “won two hot wars and one cold war in this century” and strongly admonishes

⁵⁰ Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, April 9, 1992, 6.

his colleagues in Congress not to let the opportunity to effect political and economic transformation in Eastern Europe pass by.⁵¹

The three priority items of the Freedom Support Act—democratization, privatization, and defense conversion—were, at their foundation, supported and legitimized by a conceptualization among U.S. policymakers of the Soviet Union and, later, its successor state, as simultaneously weak and in need of assistance *as well as* chaotic, duplicitous, and irrational, both of which operate as the feminized Others needed in order to “systematically [...] create a conception of international politics as a realm characterized by ever present ‘threats’ and ‘dangers’” and to “[present] the world as disorderly and hostile.”⁵² For U.S. policymakers, the political, economic, and military instability of the Soviet Union (and, later, Russia) significantly increased the possibility of chaos, violent skirmishes between political factions, and, at worst, civil war, all of which weakened Soviet state-based institutions and, according to U.S. defense and security experts, made that country a potential threat to U.S. national security. Consequently, the Soviet Union/Russia was as much a threat in its (feminine) weakness as it had been when it waged cold war as a strong (masculine) state, making it the ultimate *femme fatale*; a wily temptress disguised, alternatively, as a backward *baba* in need of education and training and a seemingly innocent damsel in distress in need of protection, salvation, and resurrection, Russia’s unpredictability and potential for violent chaos made its very weakness a threat. Thus, the question of whether to provide assistance at all was, in and of itself, a gendered one.

⁵¹ Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, April 9, 1992, 1-2.

⁵² Jill Steans, *Gender and International Relations: Issues, Debates, and Future Directions* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2006), 35.

Modernity as development

Having “won” the cold war, the United States was justified in its assumption that those who are “modern” are well-equipped to help those who are not, which was translated in the Freedom Support Act into policies that emphasize the unidirectional transfer of knowledge and expertise from West to East.⁵³ Consequently, according to Wedel, cold war-era development paradigms emphasizing the deregulation and reduction of government institutions were essentially cut and pasted onto Eastern Europe without regard for the substantial differences between the NIS and the countries of the global South to which those same paradigms had been originally applied—with dubious success, as feminist development theorists have pointed out. The NIS became the “the new South,” an “impoverished, backward ‘other’ in need of salvation from the developed North/First World,” which reinforced the authority of the United States to map the course of Russian political and economic reforms.⁵⁴

Although never explicitly stated but always assumed, it is clear from the earliest congressional hearings that the notion of transforming Russia into a “normal, civilized society” meant making it into a U.S.-style capitalist democracy.⁵⁵ It was Konstantin Kagalovsky, a senior economic advisor to the Russian government, who came closest to offering an explicit definition of “normal” when he informed the House Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East that Russia’s goal was to become a “normal country with a normal political democracy and a normal market

⁵³ Jane L. Parpart, “Deconstructing the Development ‘Expert:’ Gender, Development and the ‘Vulnerable Groups,’ in *Feminism/Postmodernism/Development*, 221-243.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 222.

⁵⁵ Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, June 19, 1991, 72.

economy” as quickly as possible.⁵⁶ What this objective inferred—and not very subtly—was that, while the United States had reached the pinnacle of “normalcy” and “civilization,” Russia was both *abnormal* and *uncivilized*, a notion that had been given currency the previous June when Graham Allison of Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government asserted that the then-Soviet Union was “rather like the story of the prodigal son” in which a child, stubbornly believing that their way is best, “wandered away from civilization for quite a long period of time and is now trying to come back.”⁵⁷ In other words, despite having been a worthy adversary of the U.S. throughout the second half of the twentieth century, the Soviet Union and, later, the Russian Federation, remained “primitive” and “backward” by Western standards of modernity, which are grounded in capitalism and premised upon the notion that the natural historical progression of societies is from “traditional” agrarian systems to “modern” industrialized economies and market production.⁵⁸ The noted exception to this, as discussed above, was in its nuclear capability.

Allison’s literal and figurative assignation of a child-like state to the Soviet Union was, although the first use of that particular metaphor, not the last. In fact, after the dissolution of the U.S.S.R. in December 1991, the metaphor expanded into a full-fledged familial colonial trope in which the child, Russia, called out to its parent, the

⁵⁶ House Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, *United States Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States*, 102nd Cong., 2nd sess., April 1, 1992 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), 2.

⁵⁷ Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, June 19, 1991, 71.

⁵⁸ Nalini Visvanathan, introduction to part one in *The Women, Gender and Development Reader*, ed. Nalini Visvanathan, et al. (London: Zed Books, 1997), 17-32. See also Jane L. Parpart, M. Patricia Connelly, and V. Eudine Barriteau, ed., *Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Development* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2000).

United States, for help as it struggled to find its way in the confusing and cut-throat capitalist world from which it had intentionally disengaged in 1917. This process was conceptualized by witnesses and committee members alike in terms of life stages between infancy and adolescence. During the earliest hearings in June 1991, for example, the political and economic upheaval in the Soviet Union was expressed in terms of death and rebirth: “As the old Soviet economy dies, a new one is being born.”⁵⁹ Several months later, the successor states of the Soviet Union were collectively described as “the political parallel to a teenager who has just gotten a driver’s license and now wants to drive a car as fast as he can in whatever direction he can go,”⁶⁰ and the citizens of those new countries had become “the orphans of communism”⁶¹ to whom the United States, “as a world power,” must send emergency humanitarian assistance in the form of medical supplies and foodstuffs.⁶²

As “children of their own time,” Russians were in desperate need of leadership, and it was the “responsibility” of the United States,⁶³ whose experience, entrepreneurial spirit, and values (i.e., democracy and capitalism⁶⁴) had triumphed over the communist system, to provide it. The most appropriate and effective help

⁵⁹ Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, June 19, 1991, 99.

⁶⁰ House Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, *United States Policy toward the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)*, 102nd Cong., 2nd sess., January 21, 1992 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), 30.

⁶¹ Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, April 8, 1992, 92.

⁶² Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, *U.S. Assistance to the New Independent States: Recommendations from U.S. Business and Agriculture*, 102nd Cong., 2nd sess., April 9, 1992 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), 194-195.

⁶³ House Subcommittee of International Operations, March 18, 1992, 19.

⁶⁴ Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, June 19, 1991, 71.

that the United States could offer, argued political scientist William E. Simon Roberts of the U.S.-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (who was opposed to direct U.S. monetary assistance to the Soviet Union), would “[focus] on leading the Soviets to *our* ideas of liberty. The best aid package would be the ideas that account for *our* own success.”⁶⁵

The widespread assumption among U.S. policymakers of the United States’ uniqueness to aid the struggling Russia in its metaphorical infancy was heavily bolstered by ideas about and standards of Western modernity, which was discursively constituted throughout the hearings by democratic political institutions and a capitalist economy unencumbered by trade regulations. In his testimony before the Subcommittee on European Affairs, U.S. State Department representative Robert Zoellick argued that the people of the United States had “held fast” for half a century to their ideological commitment to capitalist democracy so that “freedom and liberty could finally light the lives of hundreds of millions of people frozen in a backward and frightening age.” He claimed that the people of Eastern Europe “will need the leadership, spirit, and example that only America can supply.”⁶⁶ The “backward and frightening age” of communism, according to several expert witnesses, meant that, politically speaking, Eastern Europe in 1991 looked startlingly as it had in 1914, before Archduke Franz Ferdinand of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was assassinated in Sarajevo, igniting ethnic and nationalist tensions throughout the Balkans and,

⁶⁵ Ibid., 100; italics mine.

⁶⁶ Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, *Consolidating Free-Market Democracy in the Former Soviet Union*, 102nd Cong., 1st sess., October 30, 1991 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 136.

ultimately, World War I. According to Donald R. Kellerman, director of the London *Times-Mirror International's* Center for People and the Press,

[A]fter fifty years of world war, cold war and communism, Europe has resumed the twentieth century. If Rip van Winkle had fallen asleep in 1914 and awakened in 1991, he would find many of the same problems that were there when he had dozed off.

Consequently, Kellerman argued, the United States must provide assistance to Russia in order to support the establishment and maintenance of democratic institutions as a means of proactively fending off any potential for ethnic or nationalist conflicts.⁶⁷

If the political situation in Eastern Europe in 1991 so closely resembled the nationalist chaos of 1914, then the economic and agricultural situation was no better. In June 1991, Senator Biden argued that the Soviet Union would need assistance “bringing the Soviet economy into the twentieth century, let alone the twenty-first century.”⁶⁸ Similarly, Soviet/Russian agricultural technologies and methods were equated with those of the United States in the nineteenth century. One witness spoke of Soviet farmers’ “primitive” attitudes and their “traditional” allegiance to collective farms,⁶⁹ while James C. McCullagh, U.S.-based publisher of the Russian-language agricultural journal *Novii Fermer*, argued on behalf of technical assistance in agricultural modernization due to the fact that Russian farmers were, like their

⁶⁷ Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, September 24, 1991, 4-5.

⁶⁸ Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, June 19, 1991, 142.

⁶⁹ Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, September 24, 1991, 14.

nineteenth-century American counterparts, “tied to the land and to bread and very, very fundamental things.”⁷⁰

Why technical advice as opposed to direct financial support?

Given the emphasis in the hearings on the United States’ unique position to assist Russia and, with it, the many interrelated reasons behind the decision to provide assistance to Russia in the first place, the issue of what *type(s)* of assistance gained currency in the hearings once it had been decided that, yes, the U.S. should render some sort of aid—if for no other reason than to protect its own national interests. U.S. bilateral assistance to Russia was provided in the form of U.S. government contracts to U.S.-based corporations, NGOs, and non-profit think-tanks, which were, via the Harvard Project through the Chubais Clan in St. Petersburg, charged with the task of providing technical advice and assistance on the ground in Russia. And since the goal of U.S. aid was, first and foremost, to protect U.S. national interests by creating an ally in the envisioned global “democratic peace” as well as markets for U.S. exports, it was up to these civilian government contractors to teach Russians how to be “normal” and “civilized” by U.S. standards. This tutelage included lessons on how to create a political, economic, and military security infrastructure that would enable, promote, and sustain democracy and a free-market economy and halt the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This deviation from “old-style foreign aid,” U.S. Secretary of State James A. Baker asserted, was in direct correlation with what the NIS had specifically requested, i.e., not direct monetary support, but the knowledge

⁷⁰ Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, April 9, 1992, 195.

of how to create democratic institutions and operate within a free-market economy.⁷¹ Russian “reformers,” themselves, had asked not for money, but for knowledge and advice.

Additionally, there was broad consensus on Capitol Hill during the summer of 1991 that the U.S.S.R.’s centralized state apparatus was losing its grip over its constituent republics and that Gorbachev was in “way over his head.” Senator Biden believed that the Soviet premier, having “unleashed some forces” with “no idea of the consequences of his actions,” was “running to catch up to a plan he never had.”⁷² Several witnesses concurred, pointing to a “crisis of leadership” at the top echelons of the Communist Party, and the inability of U.S. policymakers to rely on Gorbachev’s continuing credibility or legitimacy, particularly given the rising popularity of the recently-elected President of Russia, an as-yet-unknown Boris Yeltsin. There was concern that any direct U.S. assistance would serve to bolster the flailing Soviet government rather than be used as a catalyst for change.⁷³ This political chaos, argued economist Marshall I. Goldman of Harvard University’s Russian Research Center, meant that the Soviet Union, whose economy he likened to a “Third World country,” was simply unable to either absorb or administer such large amounts of capital.⁷⁴ The argument against direct monetary assistance to the Soviet Union and, later, Russia, was summed up quite nicely several months later by U.S. Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade, J. Michael Farren, who argued that the U.S.

⁷¹ Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, April 9, 1992, 8.

⁷² Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, June 6, 1991, 20-21.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 104-106.

should provide *only* technical advice and assistance and *not* direct monetary aid for two reasons. First, “there [are] simply no mechanisms available [in the Soviet Union] to make the decisions or allocate” the use of billions of U.S. dollars. Second, “the appeal that we got from everyone that we spoke to was come and tell us what we have to do. Give us the technical assistance.”⁷⁵

Conveniently, the claims of politicians and witnesses alike that “everyone” in the U.S.S.R./Russia was asking for technical advice and assistance as opposed to monetary aid foreclosed whatever other forms U.S. assistance might have taken and handily enabled the United States to perform its unique global role as father-teacher-protector of the sick, bleeding child who had for so long been its geopolitical adversary. According to U.S. foreign relations historian Robert J. McMahon, although U.S. foreign policy is dictated by the interests of the U.S., that self-interest is most often downplayed by policymakers who highlight the altruism of the United States and the alleged “universality of U.S. objectives.” This strategy, he contends, enables those same policymakers to present U.S. interests (i.e., “needs that might conceivably conflict with those of others”) as “utopian objectives completely in harmony with the needs of all other members of the international community.” That U.S. interests happen to coincide with what U.S. leaders believe is best for the world is merely a happy coincidence that serves as further proof of American exceptionalism.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, October 30, 1991, 162.

⁷⁶ McMahon, “By Helping Others, We Help Ourselves,” 234.

For example, legislators concerned about rousing the ire of their constituents during an election year by sending U.S. funds to Russia during an economic recession made sure to incorporate into the Freedom Support Act a version of the American “bootstrap” myth, appropriately modified to address what U.S. policymakers and pundits identified as their most immediate goals for Russia: democratization, privatization, and defense conversion. The legislative debate concerning U.S. Russia policy in the early 1990s coincided with the ascendance of neoliberal economic theory and the demise of the welfare state, both of which were legitimated by the demise of the Soviet system in Eastern Europe and resulted in a conceptual shift from a focus on collective rights to individual liberties that “proclaim[ed] the death of society in the name of the individual and his [*sic*] family dedicated to ‘traditional family values.’” This meant that citizenship, already gendered masculine, was “conceived of as being primarily concerned about the individual’s responsibility for his [*sic*] own fate and that of his [*sic*] family.”⁷⁷ One obvious result of this problematic and ubiquitous discourse of “democracy” is that it vilifies the role of the state in providing rights and support; people, the neoliberal model argues, should do for themselves with little to no government oversight or regulation. Echoing this neoliberal consensus between Democrats and Republicans on Capitol Hill, one witness, Russian scholar Dmitri Simes of the Carnegie Institute for International Peace, argued that the U.S. cannot save people in the N.I.S. “in spite of themselves”; rather, the U.S. should commit to helping only those who help themselves. That,

⁷⁷ Einhorn, “Gender and Democratic Citizenship in the Context of Democratisation and Economic Transformation in East Central Europe,” in *International Perspectives on Gender and Democratisation*, ed. Shirin M. Rai (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 105.

according to him, is the extent of the “American responsibility.”⁷⁸ Similarly, Republican Senator Jesse Helms made abundantly clear that the Freedom Support Act would not be another Marshall Plan. There would be no financial “bailouts”; instead, Russian leaders would have to commit to political and economic reform and be willing to work to achieve it for themselves with limited direct financial assistance from the U.S.⁷⁹

Pathologizing Russia

Unlike the cold war-era conceptualization of development, which had focused on turning “underdeveloped” countries in the so-called Third World into “developed” ones, the countries of Eastern Europe (the “Second World”) had been, according to U.S. pundits and policymakers, *misedeveloped* rather than *underdeveloped*. Consequently (and not unpredictably), assistance to Russia had at its foundation an ideological commitment to eradicating the principles, systems, and bureaucratic structures of communism once and for all. U.S. technical advice and assistance was therefore justified as the best and only way to “stem the hemorrhage” caused by the communist system and its advocates.⁸⁰

Although not utilized until the very last congressional hearing on May 14, 1992 to describe the social, political, and economic situation throughout the former Soviet republics, the conceptual imagery of a personified Russia bleeding profusely and uncontrollably was built upon the foundations laid by witnesses in previous

⁷⁸ House Subcommittee on International Operations, March 18, 1992, 19.

⁷⁹ Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, April 9, 1992, 3.

⁸⁰ Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, *U.S. Assistance to the New Independent States*, 102nd Cong., 2nd sess., May 14, 1992 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), 330.

hearings who relied heavily on metaphors in which Russia was made the equivalent of an ailing patient in urgent need of help recovering from a disease. In his testimony before the Subcommittee on European Affairs, for example, Harvard University's Graham Allison encouraged U.S. lawmakers to assist the Soviet/Russian people in their recuperation from what he termed "a deep and long illness" caused by "having lived in that asylum for seventy years."⁸¹ Similarly, Representative Dave McCurdy (D-Oklahoma) assigned Russians the status of trauma victims, arguing that U.S. institutions and values "must serve as the foundation for the transformation of societies traumatized by decades of totalitarianism."⁸²

Throughout the hearings, Russia's figurative "hemorrhaging" took on three interrelated forms, all of which caused great consternation among U.S. policymakers. The first was the rapid disintegration of the Soviet state, economic, and military infrastructure, which, as I discussed briefly above, evoked concern for U.S. national security on a number of levels. Even though witnesses assured committee members of their relative confidence in the stability of Soviet command and control of its nuclear arsenal, those same experts were by no means confident that Soviet nuclear technology could not somehow find its way to "some rebel groups or terrorists."⁸³ The potential for this so-called "brain drain" from highly skilled Soviet/Russian nuclear scientists to what were, from a U.S. perspective, undesirable groups (such as Islamic fundamentalist regimes in the Middle East or terrorist organizations

⁸¹ Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, June 19, 1991, 72; and Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, September 26, 1991, 62.

⁸² House Subcommittee on International Operations, March 18, 1992, 7.

⁸³ Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, June 6, 1991, 21-22.

throughout Central Asia) was a high priority throughout the hearings. While U.S. policymakers called for the conversion of the Soviet-era military-industrial complex into civilian production, witnesses acknowledged that “the decay of the Soviet imperial system” would mean significant reductions in Soviet defense spending and, consequently, inadequate resources for the support of active duty and retired military personnel and their families, which could lead Soviet military scientists to trade nuclear and other WMD technologies on the black market for much-needed cash, thus the perceived “hemorrhaging” of cold war-era Soviet knowledge and technology.⁸⁴

Second, Russia’s “hemorrhaging” took the form of the potential for ethnic/nationalist conflicts, which one witness, a senior executive in charge of NIS operations for a corporation headquartered in Des Moines, Iowa, referred to as a “cancerous reservoir of hate” that is “quite alien to all of us in the United States.”⁸⁵ Predicated on the rather arrogant assumption (particularly given that it was made by a (presumably) white man from a Midwestern American city not exactly known for its racial or ethnic diversity) that the United States is largely devoid of racial and ethnic conflict, this statement is indicative of the general belief among hearing participants, legislators and witnesses alike, that one of the most important lessons the United States could—and, therefore, should—impart to the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union was cultural pluralism founded on a respect for human rights and civil liberties—in short, democratic values. Ironically, while the assumption that the U.S. does democracy correctly and is therefore uniquely positioned to teach others

⁸⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁸⁵ Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, April 9, 1992, 172.

is ubiquitous throughout the hearings, the sole hearing that specifically addressed the role the United States should play in ensuring and protecting “minority rights” throughout the former Soviet Union was held on May 5, 1992, just a week after the commencement of the riots in Los Angeles.⁸⁶ The temporal coincidence was not lost on hearing participants, but only one witness, Father Bryan Hehir of the U.S. Catholic Conference, pointed explicitly to the irony, positing that “this may not be the best week for the United States to talk about cultural pluralism.” But as a means of justifying his own presence and the *raison d’etre* of the hearing, he offered a caveat, insisting that the U.S. has “a lot of experience with it and we have done better than most societies.”⁸⁷

The third form of Russian “hemorrhaging” discussed during the hearings was the global public health risk posed by the widespread environmental degradation caused by decades of alleged misdevelopment under communism and the Soviet-era nuclear reactors that Senator Biden termed “little more than ticking time bombs.”⁸⁸ According to one environmental expert, the United States has “a straightforward interest in seeing the orphans of communism grow up healthy, because otherwise the rest of us are going to be unhealthy.” That same witness urged Congress to incorporate into any U.S. assistance plan a strategy by which the U.S. would work to help the people of the former Soviet Union “stop poisoning themselves and their kids and their land and their air and their water.” Of particular concern was the pollution

⁸⁶ The riots in Los Angeles began on April 29, 1992, when a predominately white jury acquitted four police officers accused in the videotaped beating of black motorist Rodney King when he resisted arrest following a high-speed car chase. The King situation was seen by many as a metaphor for the historical injustices perpetrated against blacks in the United States.

⁸⁷ Senate Subcommittee of European Affairs, May 14, 1992, 231.

⁸⁸ Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, April 8, 1992, 49-50.

of Russia's water supply as a result of underground nuclear waste storage facilities, because Russia's water does not just stay in Russia; it flows into the Arctic Sea, which flows into the Bering Strait, and, from there, into the Pacific Ocean.⁸⁹ The goal of "containing" the Soviet Union, which had been the *modus operandi* of U.S. foreign policy for the last half century, had unexpectedly unraveled. Russia was now not only far from contained, but it was "hemorrhaging," and U.S. policymakers scrambled to reorient cold war-era strategies in response to the uncontrolled expulsion of Russia's bodily fluids.

From a feminist perspective, though, Armitage's ascription of human qualities to a series of nation-states and his discursive conflation of hemorrhaging with the economic and political instability of an entire region of the world has significant discursive consequences for U.S. Russia policy. Reliant upon normative assumptions about the common medical causes of uncontrolled bleeding (i.e. either menstruation or hemophilia), Armitage's metaphor operates simultaneously not only to gender this sick, bleeding child undeniably feminine, but also to blame its mother (Mother Russia), the "backward," politically regressive communist *baba*, for causing its potentially fatal illness.⁹⁰ It also forces an identification of post-Soviet Russia with one of the most famous European aristocrats to be afflicted with the illness, Alexei Nikolaevich Romanov, the thirteen year-old son of Tsar Nicholas II and the heir apparent to the Russian Empire when he was assassinated by a Bolshevik firing squad

⁸⁹ Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, April 8, 1992, 92-94.

⁹⁰ Hemophilia refers collectively to several hereditary diseases that impair the body's ability to control coagulation. It largely affects males and is passed predominantly through the maternal bloodline.

in 1918. The implicit invocation of this boy's suffering reflects the repeated strategy used by hearing participants that conflated the euphoria of transition with the last days of the Russian Empire: Support U.S. aid to Russia, or suffer the potential consequences.

Russia is thus an ailing child whom the United States must help or else risk losing its self-identity and perceived global reputation as the world's defender of peace and freedom. On the other hand, though, this sickly child retains in its impressive stockpile of nuclear weapons the ability to pose a significant security threat to the territorial boundaries of the U.S. (whether directly through military engagement or indirectly through the "brain drain" of technological knowledge and skills). And although on the road to recovery, the child may also at any moment be thwarted in its resurgence by an evil mother figure, the retrograde (i.e., "uncivilized," "abnormal," and "traditional") *baba*, whose nationalist xenophobia, political conservatism, and apparent historical penchant for totalitarianism lurk in the shadows of the child's fledgling political and economic reforms. These complex gendered imaginaries in which Russia operated dramaturgically as both threat and victim fits perfectly within the altruistic nationalist narrative policymakers felt obligated to maintain even while worrying about how to defend to their constituents in an election year U.S. aid to Russia. The offering of technical advice and assistance not only enabled the U.S. to fulfill its self-appointed altruistic role as global defender of peace and freedom, but also to strengthen its own waning economy, particularly the private business sector, through government grants for consultants to travel to Russia and teach the traumatized "orphans of communism" about democracy and capitalism.

Capitalism as “freedom”

Despite the rhetorical commitment by the United States via the FSA to democratization as one of the three dominant pillars of its Russia policy throughout the 1990s, subsequent analyses of U.S. Russia policy have identified the virtual absence of both money and programming for democracy-building in the NIS. Goldgeier and McFaul provide evidence that monies earmarked for democratic reform “were only shadows of the amounts spent on economic technical assistance,”⁹¹ and in her study of Western support for grassroots organizations in Russia, Sarah Henderson demonstrates that, as in economic aid to the NIS, the short-term needs of (mostly) U.S.-based donors—rather than long-term, sustainable development strategies—were at the core of the aims and objectives of civic aid.⁹² Although intended to “[establish] commercial partnerships between the people of the United States and the peoples of the independent states,”⁹³ the overarching purpose of the American Business Centers authorized by Title III of the Freedom Support Act was to further U.S. economic interests by assisting U.S.-based small- and medium-sized businesses “facilitate their entry into the commercial markets of the independent states.”⁹⁴

Additionally, U.S. lawmakers specifically promoted the establishment of American Business Centers in areas in which agribusiness could be successfully conducted (thereby “facilitat[ing] the demonstration and use of United States

⁹¹ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 118.

⁹² Sarah L. Henderson, *Building Democracy in Contemporary Russia: Western Support for Grassroots Organizations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003).

⁹³ *Freedom Support Act*, sec. 301(a).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, sec. 301(c)(1).

agricultural equipment and technology”) and/or to which U.S. environmental goods and services could be exported.⁹⁵ Thus, the potential throughout the former Soviet Union for widespread food shortages and environmental disaster, along with an expressed desire on the part of U.S. legislators to avert these humanitarian crises, became an economic advantage to U.S.-based businesses in the agricultural and energy sectors. Sec. 706 of Title VII, entitled ‘Agricultural Trade,’ authorizes the promotion of U.S. agricultural exports to the former Soviet Union, and U.S.-based energy sector companies were promised U.S. financial assistance in their attempts to ‘penetrate’ the emerging market in the region by working with NIS officials to clean up Soviet-era nuclear sites and commercial nuclear waste.⁹⁶ This conflation of U.S. economic interests with the concern legislators expressed in Title II for “environmental conservation and resource management,” “urgent humanitarian needs,” and “food distribution and production” conveniently enabled the U.S. to don the garb of a white knight to perform the role of magnanimous friend to a neighbor in need while, simultaneously, protecting its own overarching objective to “design and implement programs to provide adequate commercial and technical assistance to United States business seeking markets in the independent states of the former Soviet Union.”⁹⁷

The U.S. was more direct in announcing its self-interest in Title V, which argued that the state of the Soviet-era military infrastructure was, in 1992, an explicit

⁹⁵ Ibid., sec. 301(b)(2)(C).

⁹⁶ Ibid., sec. 304(2).

⁹⁷ Ibid., sec. 303(b).

and direct threat to the national security of the United States and that commitment to and progress toward nuclear and conventional nonproliferation and disarmament were crucial criteria for U.S. aid in this and other areas.⁹⁸ According to the FSA, the nonproliferation programs and activities for which U.S. assistance could be used were: (1) dismantling weapons of mass destruction, (2) putting a stop to the proliferation of these weapons, whether physical via storage and/or transport or through the dispersal of technical knowledge and expertise, and (3) the conversion of defense/military industries for civilian purposes, including training scientists for new civilian careers (FSA 1992, sec. 501). But because NIS commitment to and progress toward these U.S.-identified issues were designated by the Freedom Support Act as criteria for receipt of the U.S. aid authorized therein, lawmakers effectively ensured that the U.S.-based defense/military industry would reap extraordinary economic benefits through lucrative consulting contracts via a proposed research and development foundation that would not only assist the independent states of the former Soviet Union to make good on these criteria and, consequently, maintain their aid in other areas, but also to facilitate the coming together of U.S. and former Soviet scientists for research projects intended for “peaceful purposes.” This foundation, to which the impoverished former Soviet states were expected to make a financial contribution in order to participate, was intended to establish useful links between research/academia, the business sector, and scientific technologies and, in the process, create new markets for U.S. technologies and researchers-as-consultants.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Ibid., sec. 501 and 502.

⁹⁹ Ibid., sec. 511(b).

Despite what is so clearly the United States' willingness to provide assistance to the NIS with the explicit goal of strengthening U.S.-based corporations, the prioritization of U.S. economic and national security interests is certainly understandable within the conventional context and traditions of U.S. foreign policy.¹⁰⁰ But since the Freedom Support Act was ostensibly intended to support *not only* open markets, *but also* freedom for Russia and emerging Eurasian democracies, a glance at the FSA's moniker, mission statement, and general provisions would seem to indicate that it authorizes plenty of U.S. assistance for both, even while creating a false dichotomy between political and economic processes, between democratization and the transition to capitalism. But the dichotomization is one-sided: According to the Freedom Support Act (and the conventional wisdom of neo-liberal economic theory), while a capitalist infrastructure can be achieved without attention to the processes of democracy, democracy is predicated upon the establishment of free markets. Within the constraints of the FSA, then, democratic processes are allegedly inherent in the practice of capitalism (and, consequently, do not need to be fostered; rather, they will develop automatically), but capitalism is not necessarily inherent in the practice of democracy.

The relative (and ironic) unimportance of democracy to "freedom" as the term is utilized in the Freedom Support Act is manifest in the ubiquitous placement of capitalism's building blocks, most notably the privatization of state-run industries and the creation of open markets, throughout the FSA's ten sections. In contrast, Title IV, entitled "The Democracy Corps," is the sole section dedicated to the methods by

¹⁰⁰ In "By Helping Others, We Help Ourselves," McMahon argues that this strategy is not unusual in the conduct of U.S. foreign policy.

which democratization would/should take place in the NIS. Embedded even within this section is the directive that democratization efforts should bolster “the development of democratic institutions, *a market-oriented economy*, and a civil society.”¹⁰¹ The inclusion of this component within the mission of the Democracy Corps,¹⁰² U.S. Russia policy’s sole form and method of U.S. assistance earmarked specifically for democratization, signals that, in the Freedom Support Act, “freedom” is not only equivalent to the specific combination of open markets with democracy, it is also *dependent upon* them. This explains why the FSA’s constitutive definition of “democracy” and its prescribed approach to building democratic institutions incorporate “economic pluralism” and the development of a “market-oriented economy.”¹⁰³ It also explains why prescribed economic “reform” projects did not reciprocate these efforts by including democratization activities. Consequently, the conflation of democracy with capitalism with freedom in the Freedom Support Act indicates that the United States was interested in building only *capitalist* democracies

¹⁰¹ *Freedom Support Act*, sec. 401(f)(1); italics mine.

¹⁰² The express purpose of the Democracy Corps was ostensibly to establish and operate sites throughout the NIS and, through technical advice and assistance and small grants to local entrepreneurs, to assist in the development of “institutions of democratic governance,” the non-governmental organizations that constitute civil society (“including charitable, educational, trade union, business, professional, voluntary, community, and other civic organizations”), and the development of a market economy. *Ibid.*, sec. 401.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, sec. 201 and 401(d)(4). According to the Freedom Support Act, the constitutive elements of *democracy* are:

1. Political, social, and economic pluralism;
2. Respect for internationally recognized human rights and the rule of law;
3. The development of institutions of democratic governance, including electoral and legislative processes;
4. The institution and improvement of public administration at the national, intergovernmental, regional, and local level;
5. The development of a free and independent media;
6. The development of effective control by elected civilian officials over, and the development of a nonpolitical officer corps inn, the military and security forces; and
7. Strengthened administration of justice (FSA 1992, sec. 201).

throughout the former Soviet Union to the exclusion of other types of political systems.¹⁰⁴ The growth and stability of the market thus became the yardstick by which the success of U.S. Russia policy was measured, and, as often happens, democracy was subordinated to “the purposes of [economic] liberalism and thus to the state in promoting and protecting private enterprise,” causing *democracy* to be discursively conflated with *free market capitalism*.¹⁰⁵ For U.S. policymakers in 1992, “freedom,” although conflated with the notion of “democracy,” meant *economic freedom*, the freedom defined by neoliberals as the degree to which economic actors are able to operate without restraint or interference from state-based entities and/or institutions. The FSA thus codifies the freedom of U.S. corporations to develop and utilize new markets for their goods and services and promotes that of Russians to engage fully in the global market economy. It supports *freedom* in the Russian Federation only insofar as that “freedom” augments the “security” and economic prosperity of the United States.

Imperial Masculinity: The U.S. as Global Abuser

To reiterate, the objective of U.S. Russia policy as enumerated in the Freedom Support Act was threefold: democratization, privatization, and defense conversion. Democratization, as policymakers understood it, required the complete eradication of

¹⁰⁴ Interestingly, a public opinion poll conducted in early 1991 confirmed that people in the Soviet republics of Russia, Lithuania, and Ukraine did not want a U.S. model for political leadership or economic institutions; there was, instead, overwhelming support for socialist democracy. But U.S. and British pollsters testifying before the Subcommittee on European Affairs were nonplussed. They argued that this opinion could be altered by providing evidence of the tangible rewards that can come to ‘ordinary people’ through capitalism. Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, September 24, 1991, 11.

¹⁰⁵ Ivie, “A New Democratic World Order?,” 248.

the vestiges of communism, which would then be replaced with ideological and institutional apparatuses to support the development and maintenance of democratic political and free-market economic systems. The second (but, as I have attempted to demonstrate, far from secondary) goal, privatization, meant not only the implementation of a free-market economy in Russia, but also the creation of new markets and resources for U.S. businesses. The best possible way of achieving these goals, policymakers decided, was through technical advice and assistance in the form of U.S.-based consultants who, funded by U.S. government contracts, would travel to and throughout Russia teaching Russians how to create, maintain, and function within a capitalist democracy. A not insignificant source of the many problems caused by the neoliberal assumptions embedded in the modes and methods of the Freedom Support Act, Wedel argues, was that, in policymakers' efforts to eradicate traces of communism, Western donors like HIID actually perpetuated some of the most problematic components of that system while laying waste to other, more favorable aspects. For example, their top privatization priority was large company towns with their "socialist amenities such as health and day care, as well as employee retreat centers," but they gave little thought to the fact that their strategy to single out "reformers" whose perspectives and approaches agreed with their own, but that were not popular among Russians would require reform by government decree, thus making capitalist democracy look and feel an awful lot like the central planning they were working to dismantle. Western-style economic "reforms" in Russia were often instituted forcibly, usually via presidential decree, thus by-passing the very democratic processes the U.S. reportedly favored. As might be expected, this resulted

in increased negative public opinion among Russians about the West, in general, and the U.S., in particular.¹⁰⁶

When President Clinton made democratization “the linchpin of his foreign policy, he perpetuate[d] a twentieth century tradition of linking American national security to the hegemony of one form of government,” thus revisioning U.S. foreign policy as “anti-imperialist imperialism” that insists upon democracy as the only means by which to create a world order conducive to its own interests. As a result, post-Soviet U.S. foreign policy rhetoric was rife with the quest for a new democratic world order, which perpetuates the notion of American exceptionalism while, simultaneously, revealing “strong overtones of national insecurity and vulnerability that drive the desire to dominate others.”¹⁰⁷ The aspiration of policymakers in the Freedom Support Act to ensure the development of “a peaceful and stable international order”¹⁰⁸ was rooted in their confidence in the notion of a democratic peace, “the premise that peace and security depend on spreading democracy globally.” But this idea not only hides the fact that “democracy,” as I have intimated above, is a contested term, but also enables the United States “to legitimize its economic agenda of world capitalism under the sign of a quest for [liberal, capitalist] democracy.”¹⁰⁹

The lack of material support by the U.S. for democratization in the Freedom Support Act meant that, in effect, the United States ignored the concerns of women

¹⁰⁶ Wedel, *Collision and Collusion*, 5. See also Tsygankov, *Whose World Order?*

¹⁰⁷ Ivie, “A New Democratic World Order?,” 249 and 252.

¹⁰⁸ *Freedom Support Act*, sec. 101(1).

¹⁰⁹ Ivie, “A New Democratic World Order?,” 256.

and other marginalized populations, as they were the groups most negatively affected by the dismantling of Soviet-era social welfare networks during privatization. The consensus among feminist theorists of liberal democracy is that, even while potentially providing the best opportunity for the advancement of women—assuming gender is taken into account in its formulation,¹¹⁰ democratization is a gendered concept whose working definitions within liberal theories are “constrained and limited.”¹¹¹ In an article published just two years after the demise of the Soviet Union, feminist political theorist Zillah Eisenstein contends that the theories of democracy being promulgated in Eastern Europe during the foundational years of the transition were “old” in the sense that they assumed that the citizenry to which democracy was being applied was male, and politics were thus reduced to the economy and the market.¹¹² The only successful trajectory for Eastern Europe and Russia became synonymous with a specific ideology—capitalist democracy—as the only possibility, but twenty years’ worth of feminist critiques of this system had demonstrated quite clearly that this form of democracy requires revisioning using gender as an integral category of analysis.¹¹³ Similarly, feminist development theorists had also argued against the *a priori* ascendance of capitalist democracy as the ultimate achievement of modernity, pointing out the myriad ways in which conventional cold war-era

¹¹⁰ Phillippe C. Schmitter, “Contemporary Democratization: The Prospects for Women,” in *Women and Democracy: Latin American and Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. Jane S. Jaquette and Sharon L. Wolchik (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 222-37.

¹¹¹ Tickner, *Gendering World Politics*, 104; Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988).

¹¹² Zillah Eisenstein, “Eastern European Male Democracies: A Problem of Unequal Equality,” in *Gender Politics and Post-Communism*, 303-17.

¹¹³ Marilyn Porter and Ellen Judd, ed., *Feminist Doing Development: A Practical Critique* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999).

development strategies meant to create capitalist democracies in the image of the United States have had negative consequences for women and other marginalized groups throughout the so-called Third World.¹¹⁴ Paradoxically, the U.S. insistence throughout the 1990s on democratization in support of its own interests, which manifested itself in U.S. development and foreign policy approaches, has meant that the new democratic world order for which lawmakers had advocated in the wake of the Soviet Union's demise "is more democratic in name than in practice."¹¹⁵

Although varied in the material specificity of its logistical applications, the intention (societal transformation), mode (unilateral and pedagogical, what Russian scholar Stephen Cohen derisively calls the "tutelage approach"¹¹⁶), and implementation (via U.S.-based consultants and the investment in Russia by U.S. businesses) of U.S. assistance to Russia required nothing short of "active penetration,"¹¹⁷ both ideological and material, of regions throughout Russia deemed strategically important by U.S. government contractors as a means of achieving U.S. goals. As is clear from the Freedom Support Act, post-Soviet U.S. foreign policymakers—the overwhelming majority of whom were, not surprisingly, elite

¹¹⁴ See, for example, Jane L. Parpart and Marianne Marchand, "Exploding the Canon"; Parpart, "Deconstructing the Development 'Expert'"; Nalini Visvanathan, et al., ed., *The Women, Gender and Development Reader*; Marilyn Porter and Ellen Judd, ed., *Feminists Doing Development: A Practical Critique* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Jane L. Parpart, M. Patricia Connelly, and V. Eudine Barriteau, ed., *Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Development*; and Jane S. Jaquette and Kathleen Staudt, "Women, Gender, and Development," in *Women and Gender Equity in Development Theory and Practice: Institutions, Resources, and Mobilization*, edited by Jane S. Jaquette and Gale Summerfield (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 17-52.

¹¹⁵ Ivie, "A New Democratic World Order?," 262.

¹¹⁶ Stephen F. Cohen, *Failed Crusade: America and the Tragedy of Post-Communist Russia*, revised ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001).

¹¹⁷ House Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, January 21, 1992, 11.

white men—“used America’s core political ideals to support an imperial policy of ideological expansion” (Sullivan 2002, 63) in which American-style institutions and values were exported to Russia in order to incorporate that country into the economic and political systems of the global west. This required significant changes to Russia’s economic, political, social and military structures and processes, but the U.S. approach, which, rather incongruously, makes “reform” a prerequisite for the receipt of aid (rather than providing aid to facilitate “reform”), has insisted that those changes be made on U.S. terms.¹¹⁸

Nor is it a coincidence, for example, that the acronym for the Support for East European Democracy Act of 1989 is SEED. Used as a verb, “to seed,” the SEED Act ascribes an active, agential role to the United States as the masculine planter of democratic values and institutions deep into the passively fertile cultural landscape of a feminized Eastern Europe. Although it authorized bi- and multilateral U.S. assistance to Hungary and Poland two years before deliberations began on Capitol Hill concerning what became the Freedom Support Act of 1992, the latter is, at its foundation, merely an extension of the provisions of the former to the successor states of the Soviet Union. As such, it was referenced fairly frequently throughout the hearings by legislators and witnesses alike.

Similarly, despite the rhetorical and linguistic emphasis on democracy-building in the SEED Act, the primary discursive (and, later, practical) emphasis in the Freedom Support Act was, as I have shown, not on democratization, but on the

¹¹⁸ Janine R. Wedel, “U.S. Assistance for Market Reforms: Foreign Aid Failures in Russia and the Former Soviet Bloc,” *Policy Analysis* 338 (1999): 1-20; and Paige Bryan Sullivan, *U.S.-Russian Relations: From Idealism to Realism* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2002).

privatization of Russia's economy and, consequently, on that country as an unexplored—if potentially risky—"frontier" for "some very substantial commercial opportunities [...] for American companies."¹¹⁹ Legislators and witnesses alike conceptualized the former U.S.S.R. as rife for investment by U.S. companies and potential new markets for the sale of U.S. goods and services. For example, witness Paul Konney, Senior Vice President and General Counsel of Tambrands, Inc., a White Plains, NY-based tampon manufacturer with production facilities in Russia, Uzbekistan and Ukraine, emphasized the prospect generated by the reforms taking place in Eastern Europe for "marrying up" the interests of U.S. corporations with the untapped "production capacity of a region so rich in human and natural resources."¹²⁰ To accomplish this goal, he argued, the provisions of the SEED Act could be applied to the Soviet Union. Konney's support of the SEED Act coincided with that of SEED Act author and European Affairs Subcommittee Chairperson Biden, who argued that, rather than going through the trouble of creating an entirely new law, the provisions and goals of the SEED Act should simply be extended to include the successor states of the Soviet Union. In the end, the Freedom Support Act did basically that, and Biden, a Democrat who authored the SEED Act, chided the Republican Bush administration mercilessly for its torpor and lethargy, calling the Freedom Support Act "hardly visionary" and referring to it as "SEED 2." Biden's intention in applying the SEED Act to Russia, though, was made clearest when he called upon

¹¹⁹ Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, April 9, 1992, 6; and House Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, *Developments in Europe*, 102nd Cong., 2nd sess., February 26, 1992 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), 18.

¹²⁰ Senate Subcommittee of European Affairs, September 26, 1991, 111 and 76.

representatives of the U.S. business community to offer their suggestions for how to ensure that “the seeds of a market economy [are] planted deep in Russian soil.”¹²¹

As my analysis of the Freedom Support Act and the relevant legislative hearing have shown, the gendered trope “link[ing] the colonized to eroticized geographies of ‘virgin land’” and to “symbolic fantasies of rape and rescue” that is so common in imperialist discourse appears with alarming regularity in the legislative hearings of the Freedom Support Act and is thus connected not only to policymakers’ conceptualization of Russia as gendered inherently feminine, but also to their notion of the United States as the masculine cold war “victor” destined to save Russia both *from* itself and *for* global capitalism.¹²² This bolsters feminist theorist Kathryn Temple’s contention that the desire of the United States to dominate others economically and militarily is analogous to an individual abuser whose goal is to “retain power and control over his individual victim,” thus making the U.S. (with its constituent political and economic elite) a “global abuser” exemplary of “a patriarchal power model that equates power with one’s capacity to control others.”¹²³ As signaled by the use of the term “active penetration” to describe the goal of U.S. businesses in Russia, the language used throughout the hearings to describe the mode of and strategies for U.S. assistance to Russia was overtly gendered and, given the discursive configuration of Russia as feminine, often suggestive of forced (hetero)sexual

¹²¹ Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, April 9, 1992, 151.

¹²² Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 141; see also Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather*.

¹²³ Kathryn Temple, “Exporting Violence: The School of the Americas, U.S. Intervention in Latin America, and Resistance,” in *The Fire This Time: Young Activists and the New Feminism*, ed. Vivien Lobaton and Dawn Lundy Martin (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 119.

intercourse, which was justified by the potent combination of cold war triumphalism and American exceptionalism. According to the narrative of U.S. aid created throughout the hearings, a masculinist U.S., gloriously triumphant in its cold war “victory” and assured of the right(eous)ness of its political and economic systems, welcomed the historic opportunity to play its predestined role as “a beacon and a model” to “these new Russians” by providing unidirectional technical advice and assistance.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ House Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, January 21, 1992, 5.

CHAPTER 4

Crime, Corruption, and Chaos: Sex Trafficking and the Failure of U.S. Russia Policy

"This is the Russia that many in the West now say we have lost. Lost not in the sense of having mislaid, by accident, but through our own actions and mistakes. Lost as a selfish, thoughtless man loses a woman who loves him—through indifference or by pushing her away."¹

Feminist development theorist Joe Doezema argues that recent attempts by Western anti-trafficking advocates to halt the transnational trade in (usually female) bodies for sex work are analogous to the “white slavery” panic of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in which white Western women were thought to be at risk of abduction for prostitution in Other(ed) geographical areas, most notably South America. Although the direction of the traffic in women has switched (i.e., from North to South at the turn of the twentieth century to Eastern/Southern women trafficked to the West/North at the turn of the twenty-first), Doezema points to the strikingly similar rhetoric used to create both narratives: young, naïve, innocent women are lured by evil traffickers into a horrendous life of sex, crime, and drugs. She argues that both narratives operate/d as cultural myths related to concerns about women’s sexuality and racialized Others as a means of curtailing women’s voluntary migration as nation-states experience/d what she terms a “boundary crisis” involving

¹ John Lloyd, “The Russian Devolution,” *New York Times*, August 15, 1999, <http://lexisnexis.com/> (accessed September 25, 2007).

“fears of loss of community identity” in the wake of “displacement, mass migration and globalisation.”²

Although Doezema does not discount reports that trafficking in human beings for sex work occurs, she wonders, given the widely acknowledged (even among anti-trafficking activists) difficulty of collecting reliable data on this illegal activity, whether the anti-trafficking campaign, much like the mythologization of “white slavery,” might “revolve around a relatively few number of cases that conform to the stereotype of the innocent girl lured or abducted into the sex industry.”³ The contemporary (i.e. since the late 1990s) anti-trafficking narrative, Doezema argues, reveals one form of the “implicit racism” embedded in Western anti-trafficking rhetoric, which assumes that non-Western women are unable to act as agents in their own lives. As trafficking “victims,” these women are at the mercy of, rather than active participants in, local and global socio-economic systems, making it impossible for women to make a *choice* to enter the sex industry; rather, they only do so when “duped” by traffickers. In this discourse they are thus presented as helpless and childlike, which, as Doezema points out, is inherent in what feminist theorist Chandra Mohanty critiques as Western feminists’ “colonial gaze.”⁴ In opposition to this narrative, and given the scarcity and/or unreliability of the available data, there is evidence to suggest, in fact, that not only are “[t]he majority of ‘trafficking victims’

² Jo Doezema, “Loose Women or Lost Women? The Re-Emergence of the Myth of ‘White Slavery’ in Contemporary Discourses of ‘Trafficking in Women,’” *Gender Issues* 18, no.1 (2000): 46.

³ *Ibid.*, 31-32.

⁴ Chandra Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,” in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, ed. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres, 51-80 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

[...] aware that the jobs offered them are in the sex industry,”⁵ but that, despite the attention given it by U.S.-based politicians, activists, and the media, *sex* trafficking accounts for a relatively small number of *human* trafficking cases, most of which involve men *as well as* women and children for forced labor in industries ranging from domestic service to garment industry sweatshops to agriculture.⁶

I explore in this chapter how the contemporary anti-trafficking narrative of “victims” and “villains” as described by Doezema (along with the attendant Western “hero”) ceased to be abstract in legislative hearings on the issue and was, instead, superimposed over an ongoing diplomatic confrontation between Russia and the United States. Before the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, the last years of the twentieth century were widely considered to have been the nadir of post-Soviet U.S.-Russian relations. In the wake of Russia’s August 1998 financial collapse, followed closely by charges of corruption and money laundering at the highest echelons of the Russian government (including accusations leveled at President Boris Yeltsin himself), the Republican-led U.S. Congress convened a series of hearings between September 1998 and October 1999 whose collective purpose was to assess the effectiveness (or not) of U.S. Russia policy as administered by the Democratic Clinton administration.

Almost simultaneously, several legislators, most notably the late Senator Paul Wellstone (D-Minnesota) and Representative Christopher Smith (R-New Jersey),

⁵ Doezema, “Loose Women or Lost Women?,” 24; see also Anthony M. DeStephano, *The War on Human Trafficking: U.S. Policy Assessed* (Rutgers, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007).

⁶ See *ibid.* as well as Debbie Nathan, “Oversexed: Anti-Trafficking Efforts Too Often Neglect Other Forms of Forced Labor,” *The Nation*, August 8, 2005, 27-30.

began to advocate the passage of a U.S. anti-trafficking law through a series of hearings that began in the summer of 1999. Together, along with a mark-up session concerning a House version of the proposed bill held on August 4, 1999 before the House Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, these hearings constitute the bulk of the legislative history of Public Law 106-386, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA).⁷ Signed into law on October 28, 2000—two months before the enactment of the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Women and Children—the U.S. law became a global model for anti-trafficking legislation and continued that country’s self-perceived role as a global leader in human rights advocacy. The TVPA focused on what Clinton administration officials called the three Ps: prosecution of traffickers, protection of “victims,” and prevention activities aimed at vulnerable populations in identified source countries.

Debate continues among scholars, immigration and law enforcement officials, legislators, and even sex workers themselves about the suitability of the TVPA and its effectiveness for combating human trafficking,⁸ but in this chapter I will focus on the timing of the legislation the late 1990s to halt human trafficking, which coincided with clashes over who should most appropriately take the blame for what appeared at the time to be the wholesale failure of U.S. Russia policy. I first conduct a close textual analysis of the U.S. Congressional hearings that led to the passage of the TVPA to argue that in U.S. political culture in the late 1990s, human trafficking

⁷ *The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000*, U.S. Public Law 106-386, enacted October 28, 2000, LexisNexis Congressional.

⁸ For more information, see DeStephano, *War on Human Trafficking*; and Joyce Outshoorn, “The Political Debates on Prostitution and Trafficking of Women,” *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society* 12.1 (2005): 141-55.

became discursively synonymous with *sex* trafficking (i.e., the illegal transnational trade in the bodies of (usually) women and girls for (predominantly) heterosexual sex), which, in turn, was inextricably linked with “victimized” Russian women, who were assumed to be white Europeans. According to the anti-trafficking rhetoric in the Congressional hearings, Russian women ostensibly needed to be saved not only from “evil” traffickers, but also from emasculated Russian men, who, unable to cope with the transition to capitalism and democracy, were incapable of supporting or protecting “their” women and children in the way that “real” men should.

I then contextualize the anti-trafficking hearings within an overarching discursive analysis that takes into account their relative temporal synchrony with the oversight hearings being held on Capitol Hill to assess what went wrong with U.S. assistance in Russia. I argue that these two co-constitutive conversations, one about a proposed U.S. anti-trafficking law, the other about U.S. Russia policy, reveal much not only about the gendered dynamics of U.S.-Russian relations at the end of the twentieth century, but also about the epistemological limitations imposed on both policy debates by the inadequacies of language. Although well-intentioned, the members of Congress who championed the passage of the TVPA inadvertently deployed the rhetoric of Russian trafficking “victims” as a convenient political trope that operated equally well in both sets of hearings: Russian men, particularly political elites and law enforcement officials, were explicitly identified as the chief opposition not only to attempts to end sex trafficking, but also to the success of U.S. Russia policy.

On Capitol Hill

According to journalist Anthony M. DeStephano, it was through Sheila Wellstone, the wife of Senator Paul Wellstone, that the issue of “human trafficking” was first brought to the attention of the U.S. Congress in the late 1990s. In 1997, law enforcement officials raided a brothel in an upscale, predominantly white neighborhood just outside the District of Columbia, arresting not only the brothel owners, but also the sex workers, whom police learned had been illegally brought into the U.S. from Ukraine and Russia and forced to work as prostitutes. According to DeStephano, although the brothel owners were prosecuted, the sex workers, themselves, faced no criminal charges. But as they were living in the United States illegally, they were deported after the trial (during which law enforcement officials charged them for their housing), “sent back to homelands in no better shape and certainly with no better job prospects that they’d had when they’d left.”⁹ The treatment of the sex workers by local law enforcement officials angered Wellstone, and she encouraged her husband to bring the issue of human trafficking to the attention of his Congressional colleagues and then work with them to create legislation that would improve the ways in which U.S. law enforcement officials and state and federal institutions responded to trafficking situations. Shortly thereafter, the first public mention of human trafficking on Capitol Hill was made by Senator Wellstone on the floor of the U.S. Senate where, on March 10, 1998, International Women’s Day, he introduced a resolution denouncing the transnational traffic in women for sex work and domestic labor by using as visual aids maps of routes used

⁹ DeStephano, *War on Human Trafficking*, 14.

by emigrants from the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union. The proposed resolution, he argued, would put the U.S. Congress on record as opposing the transnational traffic in women and girls.

Although Wellstone did acknowledge the fact that women are trafficked for reasons other than sex work, his presentation featured stories of young, naïve, and/or economically desperate women from Russia and elsewhere in the former Soviet Union having been duped into prostitution by manipulative traffickers. As a result, Wellstone's floor speech served not only as the impetus for what became, over the course of the next two years, bipartisan support in both houses of Congress for the creation of U.S. anti-trafficking legislation, but also, unfortunately, to crystallize before it began the discursive limits of the Congressional conversation on human trafficking. That Wellstone chose in this first public discussion of human trafficking among legislators to focus chiefly on *sex* trafficking meant that his colleagues, heretofore largely unaware of these human rights abuses, were introduced to the issue as one that affects predominantly women and girls forced to work as prostitutes serving heterosexual male clients. This heteronormative perspective ignored the likelihood that boys and men are also trafficked for sex work. Additionally, Wellstone's focus on *sex* trafficking to the exclusion of other forms of human trafficking meant that his colleagues on Capitol Hill were introduced to the issue of trafficking-as-forced prostitution rather than as constitutive of global labor migration, more broadly conceived. The focus on trafficking-as-forced prostitution led in subsequent Congressional hearings to the discursive conflation of *human* trafficking with *sex* trafficking, thus effectively eliminating not only the possibility that women

and (girl) children could be trafficked for reasons other than for forced prostitution, but also that men (or boys) could be trafficked at all.

Doezema's critique of Western anti-trafficking rhetoric rings true when applied to Wellstone's floor speech: his "victims" were young, naïve women preyed upon by evil traffickers. But, for Wellstone, just as in the subsequent Congressional hearings that constitute the legislative history of the TVPA, "victims" were frequently identified as Russian, Ukrainian, or, more generally, Eastern European (i.e. culturally/ethnically Slavic and racially white) women who, as a result of the combination of extreme economic hardship and delusional desperation, were deceptively led by their fellow Russians (or Ukrainians) into a life of prostitution, drugs, and crime. Thus, in the discourse created by and deployed in the U.S. Congress during the late 1990s, villainous Russian/Eastern European organized crime networks worked in concert with complicit, corrupt, and/or ineffectual Russian/Eastern European government and law enforcement officials to prey upon young, innocent Russian/Eastern European women, who became the trafficking "victims" passively awaiting rescue by the heroic (and, lest we forget the perceived results of the cold war, triumphant) United States in its self-appointed role as a global human rights leader.

On June 28, 1999, more than a year after Wellstone's floor speech, the first hearing concerning the issue of trafficking was held on Capitol Hill before the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).¹⁰ The Commission's

¹⁰ The CSCE is an independent agency of the U.S. government charged with monitoring and encouraging compliance with the Helsinki Accords. Signed in 1975, the Helsinki Accords set out the principles that guide relations between the participating countries. For more information, please see the

chairperson, Representative Christopher Smith (R-New Jersey), had already introduced a bill in the House, H.R. 1356, the Freedom from Sexual Trafficking Act of 1999. Smith believed that this bill would aptly address Sheila Wellstone's concerns about the treatment of sex trafficking survivors by U.S. law enforcement officials and government agencies, first, by incorporating protection and prevention efforts for victims and, second, by treating traffickers "exactly as we do those who commit rape."¹¹

The bill's title, along with the hearing it precipitated, *The Sex Trade: Trafficking in Women and Children in Europe and the United States*, illustrates quite clearly that in the year since legislators had first been informed of the existence of trafficking through Senator Wellstone's floor speech, the broad issue of human trafficking for forced labor in a wide variety of industries had been prematurely delimited to incorporate only sex trafficking. Including this first hearing before the bipartisan and bicameral CSCE, there were a total of three Congressional hearings and one public legislative markup session held between June 1999 and April 2000 to hear expert testimony on what lawmakers of both houses interchangeably referred to as "trafficking" or "sex trafficking." For example, while Smith is clear in his opening remarks that the hearing before the CSCE has been convened to hear expert testimony specifically concerning *sex* trafficking, he almost immediately and then for the remainder of this and subsequent hearings in the House substitutes the abbreviated

official websites for the CSCE (<http://www.csce.gov>) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (<http://www.osce.org>).

¹¹ Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, *The Sex Trade: Trafficking in Women and Children in Europe and the United States*, 106th Cong., 1st sess., June 28, 1999 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999), 3.

term “trafficking.”¹² Similarly, in the two-part hearing held before the Senate Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, chairperson Sam Brownback’s (R-Kansas) opening remarks make clear that the hearing is intended to address *all forms* of trafficking in women and children.¹³ Despite this claim, however, the overwhelming majority of the invited witnesses testify on the causes and consequences of *sex* trafficking, and Brownback refers specifically in his opening remarks to the commercial sexual exploitation of women and children, pointing out that “[e]very year, approximately 1 million women and children are forced into the sex trade against their will internationally.”¹⁴ In the second part of that same hearing, Brownback uses his opening statement to again refer specifically to the global sex trade, calling the transnational traffic in the bodies of women and children for forced prostitution “a new phenomenon and does not really look like anything we have seen before.”¹⁵

Most telling, though, is that with the exception of twelve witnesses with expertise in human rights, transnational crime and corruption, global affairs, and immigration, most of whom were called upon from the State Department to address questions regarding the Clinton administration’s policy toward human trafficking, the bulk of the “expert” testimony on the scope of “trafficking” came from thirteen non-

¹² *Ibid.*, 4.

¹³ The heteronormativity of these hearings is pervasive: The focus by Wellstone, Brownback, and their colleagues on women and girls as “victims” of sex trafficking left no room in the discussion for even the possibility that men and boys may also be trafficked for labor of all kinds—including work in the sex industry.

¹⁴ Senate Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, *International Trafficking in Women and Children*, 106th Cong., 2nd sess., February 22, 2000 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000), 1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, April 4, 2000, 71.

governmental researchers and activists (including five sex trafficking survivors—one from Nepal, two from Mexico, one from Ukraine and one from Russia) who were involved exclusively with projects and/or organizations dedicated explicitly to putting a stop to *sex* trafficking. Indeed, of the twenty-five witnesses called to testify over the course of three hearings between June 1999 and April 2000, the majority of them were part of the anti-*sex* trafficking campaign, which indicates the clear emphasis in Congress on ending *that* form of labor trafficking to the exclusion of others.

Additionally, one of the witnesses, Laura J. Lederer of the anti-sex trafficking Protection Project, testified at each of the three hearings.¹⁶ Providing roughly the same statement each time, Lederer’s description of how young, innocent, poverty-stricken women are easily lured into the global sex trade mirrors precisely the narrative that Doezema so powerfully critiques.

This narrow focus on sex trafficking is hardly surprising; the very title of H.R. 1356, the Freedom from Sexual Trafficking Act, exposes Christopher Smith’s belief that sex trafficking, although not the only form of labor trafficking, is by far “the most brutal” and that to include all forms of forced labor practices under the rubric of one law assumes that they are all the same and should thus be treated as such by law enforcement officials.¹⁷ But by the time the Senate began its hearing in February 2000, the strenuous admonishments by several human rights and immigration experts

¹⁶ Founded by Laura Lederer in 1994 to address the issue of trafficking in persons as a human rights violation, the Protection Project was at the time of these Congressional hearings housed at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. It is now based at the Foreign Policy Institute at The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, DC. For further information, see <http://www.protectionproject.org/>.

¹⁷ House Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, *Trafficking in Women and Children in the International Sex Trade*, 106th Cong., 1st sess., September 14, 1999 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999), 3 and 43.

that U.S. anti-trafficking legislation should not be limited to commercial sexual exploitation had resulted in proposed legislation entitled, more broadly, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act to reflect its allegedly expanded scope. Regardless, Brownback's insistence that both parts of the Senate hearing would be about *all* forms of trafficking in women and children was belied by its exclusive focus on sex trafficking. Of the thirteen witnesses who appeared before the Senate Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs¹⁸—and despite the knowledge that there are other organizations whose work has focused on other kinds of labor trafficking—an overwhelming majority (nine, including four former self-identified involuntary sex workers) specifically addressed the causes of *sex* trafficking and/or the experiences of and consequences for women who are trafficked into the sex industry.¹⁹ In contrast, earlier hearings held before the CSCE and in the House, which were explicitly and unapologetically focused only on *sex* trafficking, were actually *more* balanced in terms of perspectives and experiences of the witnesses. In fact, it was in these early hearings that legislators heard increasingly vigorous objections to Smith's singular focus in H.R. 1356 on sex trafficking as separate from and to the exclusion of other forms of trafficking and forced labor.²⁰

Although these objections seemed to have influenced the scope of the proposed U.S.

¹⁸ The subcommittee given jurisdiction of these hearings in the Senate reveals legislators' preconceived notions about whence they thought the majority of trafficking "victims" were coming. The assignation of the sex trafficking hearings to the Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian affairs prematurely Orientalizes the discourse and ignores the potential for other geographical areas to serve as source countries.

¹⁹ Senate Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, February 22, 2000 and April 4, 2000.

²⁰ Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, June 28, 1999, 4, 16, 24 and 35-36; House Committee on International Operations and Human Rights, August 4, 1999, 5; and House Committee on International Operations and Human Rights, 14 September 1999, 11, 14 and 31.

anti-trafficking legislation to incorporate sex trafficking as just *one* form of forced labor trafficking, the conceptualization by legislators of “trafficking” as “sex trafficking” persisted. This is apparent in the renewed insistence by Department of Justice civil rights attorney William R. Yeomans toward the end of the final hearing on the TVPA that any U.S. legislation should “criminalize a broader range of trafficking,” including not only sex work, but also domestic service, migrant labor, and sweatshop labor.²¹ In the end, despite the ongoing debate about the scope of the proposed anti-trafficking legislation, the stated purpose of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, whose title would suggest a wider reach than Smith had originally proposed in his Freedom from Sexual Trafficking Act, is “[t]o combat trafficking in persons, a contemporary manifestation of slavery whose victims are predominantly women and children, to ensure just and effective punishment of traffickers, and to protect their victims.”²²

“Modern Day Slavery”

Predicting that the numbers of women trafficked for work in the global sex industry could soon reach those of the African slave trade in the eighteenth century,²³ the Protection Project’s Laura Lederer initiated what became the frequent deployment in the anti-trafficking hearings of an analogy between sex trafficking and slavery, specifically the African slave trade and the subsequent enslavement of kidnapped

²¹ Senate Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, April 4, 2000, 77.

²² Trafficking Victims Protection Act, sec. 102(a).

²³ Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, June 28, 1999, 22.

Africans and their descendents in the United States. Witnesses began utilizing this analogy not only as a means of explaining to legislators the magnitude of the problem, but also to convince them of the integrity at the heart of their legislative attempts to solve it. Wendy Young of the Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children, for example, referred to sex trafficking as “an increasingly prevalent phenomenon” equivalent to “modern day slavery,”²⁴ and Theresa Loar of the President’s Interagency Council on Women, who contextualized sex trafficking within the broader problem of violence against women, called sex trafficking “one of the most egregious violations of our time” and a “modern form of slavery.”²⁵ Finally, Department of Justice civil rights attorney William R. Yeomans described trafficking as “slavery in its modern manifestations.”²⁶

Later, legislators themselves got on the “slavery” bandwagon as the Senate hearing shifted from a small group of legislators trying to convince their colleagues of the importance of anti-trafficking legislation to a massive bipartisan effort to convince the Clinton administration, particularly Clinton’s State Department, that additional legislation focused on women and children and authorizing increased federal personnel and reporting was necessary to combat the transnational traffic in human beings for forced labor. In his statements before the Senate Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, subcommittee chairperson Brownback openly employed the rhetoric of slavery, referring to sex trafficking as “the new slavery” and

²⁴ Ibid., 24.

²⁵ House Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, September 14, 1999, 14.

²⁶ Senate Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, April 4, 2000, 76.

admonished his colleagues to listen carefully to the expert witnesses so that they may learn together how to craft a “comprehensive scheme to penalize the full range of offenses involved in elaborate trafficking networks.”²⁷

The analogy between slavery and sex trafficking, as well as the histories and painful legacy of U.S. race relations to which it implicitly refers, made the bodies of enslaved Africans and their descendents discursively equivalent to the young, female “victims” of sex trafficking as constructed by the anti-trafficking discourse. And, as Lederer pointed out to legislators, it also presented an opportunity for the United States to do at the turn of the twenty-first century what the British Empire had done at the turn of the nineteenth, that is, take the lead in eradicating the slave trade, albeit in a contemporary form.²⁸ Thus, accomplishing the obliteration of sex trafficking would demonstrate to the world the right(eous)ness of the United States’ cold war “victory” and, perhaps, provide an opportunity for the United States to exorcise its guilt by righting an egregious wrong from its own past. The rhetorical strategy that analogized the institution of African slavery with the transnational trade in women and girls for sex work clearly appealed to legislators’ desire within the American nationalist narrative to accept and fulfill the United States’ self-perceived responsibility to “eradicate this terrible scourge” and ensure “that every man, woman, and child be afforded the opportunity to live in a world of freedom.”²⁹ Lederer used this strategy advantageously on two additional occasions. The first was at the hearing before the

²⁷ Ibid., 71 and Senate Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, February 22, 2000, 1-2.

²⁸ Senate Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, April 4, 2000, 87.

²⁹ Ibid., 75.

CSCE in which she, in an attempt to encourage continued Congressional progress on the proposed anti-trafficking legislation, locates the eradication of sex trafficking within the historical trajectory of the U.S. women's movement, predicting that "[o]ne of the hallmarks of the 21st century will be the emancipation of women worldwide." She then congratulates legislators for being on "the right side of history" with regard to protecting the rights of women, particularly by addressing sex trafficking as a human rights issue.³⁰ The second occasion was during a prepared statement two months later when she argued that the "commercial sexual exploitation of women and children is one of the last, unfortunately the last, even in the women's movement, the last, of the issues, but definitely not the least to be examined by our society," suggesting to legislators that they had the opportunity, by "shin[ing] a light on what is taking place,"³¹ to trump even feminist activists by leading the way on anti-trafficking legislation that would protect the predominantly white and male policymakers' "daughters" from horrendous treatment by would-be slave-traders in the new century.³²

Voluntary Sex Work v. Forced Prostitution

At the crux of the conversation about sex trafficking on Capitol Hill was the combination of the perceived social immorality of sex work in the United States and the ideological differences between and among contemporary U.S.-based feminists

³⁰ Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, June 28, 1999, 23-24.

³¹ Senate Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, February 22, 2000, 3.

³² House Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, September 14, 1999, 40.

concerning the root causes of sex trafficking and the difference between voluntary sex work and forced prostitution. Some feminists argue that sex work is a legitimate survival strategy chosen by women and should be respected as such. They argue that “[p]rostitution itself is [...] not the problem, but the context within which women engage in prostitution—such as forced prostitution and trafficking, as well as the often bad conditions under which the work is done—is problematic.”³³ Consequently, they contend that voluntary sex work must be clearly delineated from sex trafficking and forced prostitution. In contrast, neo-abolitionists, whose moniker is an explicit reference to those who, during the nineteenth century, sought to eradicate the enslavement of Africans, conceptualize all sex work as a form of slave labor. According to them, sex work is inherently oppressive, sexually exploitative, and part of the cycle of violence against women, making the notion of “voluntary” sex work irrelevant. Given that “[t]he United States has perhaps the strongest anti-prostitution laws of any industrialized country and will not endorse any form of prostitution whether ‘forced’ or ‘voluntary,’” the neo-abolitionist position was featured throughout the TVPA hearings.³⁴ For example, Lederer rather arrogantly presumed to “speak safely for many women’s organizations” when she lauded Smith’s efforts to pass anti-sex trafficking legislation, arguing that “sex and labor aren’t the same and can’t be equated.”³⁵

³³ Outshoorn, 145.

³⁴ Senate Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, February 22, 2000, 21.

³⁵ House Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, September 14, 1999, 43.

An attempt to grapple with the ideological divergence between “forced” prostitution and “voluntary” sex work was made only once in the course of the TVPA hearings when Wellstone tried to glean from Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs Frank E. Loy how, for the purposes of “victim” protection, U.S. federal and local law enforcement and state institutions would define and identify “victims” of sex trafficking. In an earlier hearing in the House, Smith had touted the provision incorporated into his proposed anti-trafficking legislation that “include[ed] relief for deportation of victims, provided it is established that they were really innocent victims.”³⁶ Whether Wellstone had read the transcript of this hearing and wanted clarification is unknown, but it is clear that his concern several months later was whether or not a woman who voluntarily agreed to be trafficked for sex work and was subsequently abused or exploited in the performance of that work would then be able to avail herself of the “victim” protection provisions of the proposed U.S. anti-trafficking legislation. Unfortunately, Loy’s answer neglected to address Wellstone’s concern about a potential legislative loophole; instead, he insisted that the issue of forced versus voluntary prostitution would have no bearing on the application of the proposed legislation, because

[...] the key is whether the trafficker[s] themselves are engaged in an act of transporting someone across international borders by illegal techniques for illegal profit, and then whether the act for which they are doing so falls within what we would hope would be a very broad definition of sexual exploitation.³⁷

³⁶ Ibid., 2.

³⁷ Senate Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, February 22, 2000, 22.

Loy and Wellstone had reached a communicative stalemate made more complicated by the strictly-enforced five-minute timeframe granted each legislator to ask questions of the witnesses. While Wellstone wanted assurances from the State Department that the widest possible definition of “victim” would be utilized in the *protection* of those who had been trafficked, Loy remained singularly focused on the *prosecution* of traffickers, both within existing U.S. law that made all forms of prostitution illegal and within the proposed provisions of the TVPA. Thus, bolstered by already-existing U.S. federal laws against all forms of prostitution, neo-abolitionists successfully made Wellstone’s question discursively impossible within the context of U.S. policies toward prostitution and the proposed anti-trafficking legislation: according to the neo-abolitionist U.S. policy, all forms of sex work are exploitative, which means that all women engaged in prostitution are “victims.” Ostensibly, there can be no legislative loophole.

Although it was Wellstone’s 1998 floor speech that largely contributed to the discursive limitations of the trafficking debate in Congress to “sex trafficking” and its “victims” in the first place, it is ironic that it is he who attempted to open it back up again by acknowledging the possibility that some women, those who may have at one point or another *chosen* sex work as a viable and legitimate form of labor, could well be excluded from the protections of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act if they did not adequately meet the definition of “victim” as outlined in the TVPA and applied by local law enforcement officials. Although discursively impossible within the neo-abolitionist rhetoric in which all prostitutes are “victims,” Wellstone’s question, which allowed for the possibility that women could *choose* sex work as means by

which to earn their living, was the closest the Congressional hearings came to countering the implicit racism that Doezema argues is embedded in contemporary anti-trafficking discourse. Wellstone's question also attempted to counter the hearings' implicit sexism, which was based on the perceived social immorality of sex work in a U.S. context and relied on the construction and rhetorical deployment of an "innocent" "victim" who has been unwittingly tricked into selling her body for sex. This is the sympathetic prostitute around whom a case can be made, as it was in the Congressional hearings, for protection rather than prosecution despite her illegal activities, because it was not her *choice* to step beyond the bounds of an appropriately feminine performance; she ostensibly did so out of dire financial necessity. Additionally, the discursive focus on poverty and violent coercion makes it inconceivable that she could have *chosen* sex work; she would rather be doing something—anything—else. Trafficking "victims" (i.e., as in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act) must be "sexually blameless" in order to appeal to the public and to the concerns of policymakers.³⁸ In contrast, Wellstone's question, along with the testimony of several Clinton administration officials that sex trafficking should be considered in tandem with other forms of labor trafficking, acknowledges the possibility that women from countries identified as sources of labor for the sex industry may well have the mental capacity to choose for themselves how and where to earn their livelihoods. Were she able to exist discursively, this, of course, would be the unscrupulous sex worker who, having voluntarily *chosen* prostitution, is not,

³⁸ Doezema, "Loose Women or Lost Women?," 36.

therefore, an appropriate “victim” and deserves what she gets, whether a beating at the hands of traffickers or deportation at the hands of U.S. immigration officials.

Much as in the Congressional hearings that constituted the partial legislative history of 1992’s Freedom Support Act (which I discussed at length in the last chapter), heteropatriarchal familial metaphors explicitly identifying the United States as the masculine patriarch best suited to rescue and protect young, female “victims” were used freely throughout these congressional hearings to evoke and mobilize bipartisan support for U.S. anti-trafficking legislation. State Department representative Harold Hongju Koh, for example, attempted early on to empathize with legislators from their shared perspective as fathers, pointing out that “trafficking often hits us so hard because it often involves children like our own.”³⁹ Koh’s approach worked on Representative Eni F. H. Faleomavaega (D-American Samoa), who added later in that same hearing, “I have a 13 year-old daughter, and I wish that every parent, every father, every brother could have a real sense of appreciation [for] what women and children go through.”⁴⁰ Similarly, Smith appealed not only to his colleagues, but also to legislators and law enforcement officials abroad, asking, “What are you doing? These are your daughters. [...] These are people you should be putting sandbags around to protect them.”⁴¹

Even a cursory examination of these familial metaphors exposes the heteropatriarchal assumptions that undergird them: A parental concern for the

³⁹ House Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, September 14, 1999, 10.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁴¹ House Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, September 14, 1999, 19.

protection of “children” rapidly (and, given the largely male composition of the Congressional committees before which these hearings took place, not unexpectedly) became a fatherly concern for the protection of “daughters.” Similarly, while the United States is assigned the role of patriarchal protector in this anti-trafficking narrative, the governments of source countries are also assigned an inferior masculine role as fathers and brothers who are unable or, worse, have no desire to protect “their” daughters. Smith, for example, appeals to those governments to “stop exporting and exploiting *your* women,”⁴² and, later, Lederer assures U.S. legislators that several of the most prominent source countries “are expressing a real interest in stopping trafficking in *their* women and children.”⁴³ Although these two statements imply ownership of women and children by nation-states that are discursively configured as masculine, their own masculinity is implicitly inferior to that of the United States because, unlike the U.S., they have not taken the appropriate steps to protect “their” women from the horrors of what was frequently referred to by hearing participants as “modern day slavery.”

Russian “Victims” and “Villains”

I have thus far discussed the anti-trafficking narrative constructed through the Congressional hearings that constitute that partial legislative history of the TVPA only in the abstract, that is in terms of Doezema’s analysis that draws on the classic nineteenth-century melodramatic stock characters of “victim,” “villain,” and an

⁴² Ibid., 53; italics mine.

⁴³ Senate Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, February 22, 2000, 56; italics mine.

implied “hero.” Not surprisingly given the highly politicized forum on Capitol Hill, the United States was rhetorically cast in the role of the heteropatriarchal hero with the messianic responsibility of rescuing innocent, young, non-Western female “victims” from the clutches of foreign (i.e. racially/ethnically Other and largely masculine) transnational crime networks and complicit and/or ineffectual law enforcement officials. While Doezema does, indeed, critique this implicitly racist depiction of both “victims” and “villains,” arguing that “victims” and traffickers alike are conceptualized in anti-trafficking discourse as always already Other/ed, I am interested in this section in how and why, throughout the TVPA hearings, U.S. legislators unambiguously associated a specific national/ethnic identity—Russian—with these roles and what implications such an association had on U.S. Russia policy, particularly within the context of the debate that raged on Capitol Hill concerning the apparent wholesale failure of U.S. Russia policy in the wake of that country’s August 1998 economic collapse and subsequent revelations a year later concerning the alleged illegal capital flight from Russia of IMF loans.

Throughout the 1990s, it was predominantly the House Committee on International Relations that took the responsibility in Congress for monitoring the progress and results of the Freedom Support Act (see Appendix III). Beginning in June 1996, a U.S. presidential election year, hearings were held before the Republican-chaired committee fairly regularly as a means of assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of the Clinton administration’s Russia/NIS policy. In addition, the debate over “Who lost Russia?” had surfaced in the news media at various intervals throughout the decade, beginning as early as February 1992 (i.e.,

while the Freedom Support Act was still being debated in Congress) when a *New York Times* op-ed asked “Who is Losing Russia?”⁴⁴ But with the total collapse of the Russian economy in August 1998 and subsequent allegations that IMF and perhaps even U.S. funds were being squandered by corrupt Russian politicians, the blame game on Capitol Hill hit its zenith, precipitating hearing after hearing in which indignant legislators of both political parties demanded an explanation from a parade of Clinton administration officials of just what, exactly, had gone wrong in Russia—despite billions of dollars in U.S. aid (see Appendix IV).

Although hardly encouraging *before* August 1998 with regard to either the slow trajectory of Russia’s political and economic transition or its continued sales of conventional weapons and technology to several of its more (from a U.S. perspective) unsavory neighbors, particularly Iran, Congressional hearings held *after* that date were particularly somber, as terms such as “state of crisis,” “catastrophe,” “financial disaster,” and “total failure” were used alternatively to describe both Russia and U.S. Russia policy. For example, a hearing before the House Committee on International Relations regarding U.S.-Russian relations that began on July 16, 1998, just weeks before Russia’s economic collapse, featured testimony from witnesses on precisely these issues; however, in the second part of the hearing on September 17, 1998 these concerns were unceremoniously preempted by legislators’ accusations that high-level Russian government officials had been lying to the United States with regard to the progress of their “reform” efforts, and that the Clinton administration had

⁴⁴ Charles Krauthammer, “Who is Losing Russia?” *New York Times*, February 14, 1992, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed June 5, 2007).

intentionally ignored signals that those efforts were not working.⁴⁵ Accusations that the White House had been somehow negligent in effecting a transformation in Russia's political and economic structure was the dominant theme of hearings about U.S. Russia policy in the year following August 1998. But a year later, in late August and early September 1999, reports began to surface in the U.S. news media that high-level Russian government officials had illegally diverted billions of dollars in Russian foreign aid, including from the IMF and the World Bank, through the Bank of New York for personal use,⁴⁶ after which Congressional hearings focused explicitly on crime and corruption in Russia and how the United States should move forward in the wake of its apparently failed Russia policy, for which the Clinton administration, particularly Vice President Al Gore (who was, at the time, running for President against Republican George W. Bush of Texas), was held largely responsible.

It was within the context of this last evolution in thinking about who was to blame for a failed U.S. Russia policy in an environment of apparently ubiquitous Russian crime and corruption that the hearings concerning sex trafficking began in an

⁴⁵ House Committee on International Relations, *U.S. and Russia: Assessing the Relationship*, 105th Cong., 2nd sess., July 16, 1998 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998) and House Committee on International Relations, *U.S. and Russia, Part II: Russia in Crisis*, 105th Cong., 2nd sess., September 17, 1998 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998).

⁴⁶ Richard Cohen, "Who Lost Russia? Well, No One," *New York Times*, September 15, 1999, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed June 5, 2007); Fritz Ermarth, "A Scandal, Then a Charade," *New York Times*, September 12, 1999, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed June 5, 2007); Michael McFaul, "Russia's Revolution is Not Over," *New York Times*, September 20, 1999, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed June 5, 2007); Boris Nemstov and Ian Bremmer, "Don't Jettison Russia Just Yet," *New York Times*, September 3, 1999, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed June 5, 2007); "The Russian Money Trail," *New York Times*, September 12, 1999, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed June 5, 2007); Robert E. Rubin, "Don't Give Up on Russia," *New York Times*, September 21, 1999, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed June 5, 2007); Serge Schememann, "What Makes Nations Turn Corrupt?" *New York Times*, August 28, 1999, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed June 5, 2007); Richard W. Stevenson, "U.S. Seeks details on Russia's Use of Aid," *New York Times*, September 2, 1999, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed June 5, 2007); and Fareed Zakaria, "Lousy Advice Has its Price," *New York Times*, September 27, 1999, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed June 5, 2007).

attempt to create and enact U.S. anti-trafficking legislation that would be effective “the world over” in stopping the transnational trade in human bodies for forced labor, particularly women and children for sex work.⁴⁷ The House Committee on International Relations acted throughout the 1990s as the primary Congressional monitor of U.S. Russia policy. Its jurisdiction continued after August 1998 with two hearings, one to assess what it termed the “crisis” in Russia on September 17, 1998, the other in June 1999 to consider U.S. achievements, if any, in Russia after seven years of aid. The CSCE also held a hearing after Russia’s August 1998 economic collapse to assess the status of human rights in Russia, and the House Committee on Banking and Financial Services convened a hearing to examine the Russian economy and U.S. policy toward Russian economic reform. Among and between these committees, there was considerable overlap in committee membership. Smith served as chairperson of both the CSCE and the House Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights and led the charge on anti-trafficking in the House. He also served on the CSCE with Brownback, a member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the chairperson of the Senate Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, which heard testimony on trafficking in the Senate. Additionally, several members of the House Committee on International Relations, which convened the bulk of the hearings concerning U.S. Russia policy, were also members of Smith’s Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights.

⁴⁷ The rather arrogant notion that a U.S. domestic law should and could be effective “the world over” in stopping sex trafficking was voiced by Rep. Earl Hilliard (D-Alabama) before the House Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, *Trafficking in Women and Children in the International Sex Trade*, September 14, 1999, 50. The ability of the U.S. to encourage foreign nation-states to enforce U.S. domestic laws within their sovereign territory theoretically lies in the threat of U.S. economic sanctions: The thought was that if particular countries did not work to end trafficking as prescribed in the U.S. law, then the U.S. would respond by imposing sanctions.

Less than a month after this subcommittee's hearing on sex trafficking, its members joined the full Committee on International Relations to begin a series of hearings exploring the pros and cons, successes and failures of U.S. Russia policy. And in the Senate, as the "Who lost Russia?" debate raged before the Committee on Foreign Relations, several of its members were engaged with the issue of sex trafficking via their participation in hearings before the Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs.

Given the chronological trajectory of the relevant Congressional hearings in combination with the extensive personnel overlap, it is no wonder that legislators' attempts to stop sex trafficking became discursively conflated on Capitol Hill with what expert witnesses identified as rampant crime and corruption in Russia. Louise Shelley of the Center for the Study of Transnational Crime and Corruption, for example, cites the NIS specifically, arguing not only that law enforcement officials and policymakers there view trafficked women as "deserving of their fate or motivated by financial necessity and therefore do not investigate or prosecute crimes involving sexual trafficking and prostitution," but that they are also largely corrupt and, in some cases, actually working with traffickers.⁴⁸ In effect, the causes of sex trafficking were largely associated with the political and economic chaos throughout the NIS, particularly in Russia, that had, according to the anti-trafficking narrative, enabled a few corrupt (male) politicians and government officials to amass enormous wealth at the expense of their fellow Russians, predominantly women and children. These women and children, reduced to poverty and ill health and unable to be

⁴⁸ Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, June 28, 1999, 18-19.

protected by those same corrupt and/or ineffectual political leaders, were being lured by transnational criminal networks into the global sex trade at alarming rates. Theresa Loar of the President’s Interagency Council on Women most explicitly made this association at a hearing on *Trafficking in Women and Children in the International Sex Trade* when she asserted that what was happening in Russia—the crime, corruption and economic and political instability that allegedly left women vulnerable to traffickers—was “something that [...] I don’t think anyone could have anticipated. All of us had extremely high hopes for Russia, which have not been realized and probably will not be realized in the foreseeable future.”⁴⁹

Thus, the “villains” of the anti-sex trafficking narrative created in Congress were precisely who Doezema says they were: always already racially/ethnically Other and complicit, corrupt, and/or ineffectual government and law enforcement officials or organized criminal networks. But, as Russia was the source country that received the lion’s share of legislators’ attention, the “villains” were also assumed throughout the hearings to be principally Russian men in varying positions of local and federal leadership. Legislators’ preoccupation with Russia was revealed early on in the CSCE hearing when witness Anita Botti of the President’s Interagency Council on Women offered a list of geographical areas from which women and children are trafficked that included Central America, Southeast Asia, Russia, Ukraine, Poland and the Czech Republic, after which chairperson Smith singled out Russia. He noted that that country was “conspicuously absent” from international efforts to halt sex trafficking and asked Botti to specifically address “where Russia stands [on the issue], since it is

⁴⁹ House Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, September 14, 1999, 17.

the country of origin of so many of the women who are exploited.”⁵⁰ There was no subsequent discussion, in this or in any other Congressional hearing, of similar concerns with regard to the other geographical areas of origin as identified by Botti and subsequent expert witnesses, and this early fixation on Russia as *the* source for trafficked women and children, like that on sex trafficking to exclusion of other forms of human trafficking, resulted in a limited conversation steeped, this time, in cold war-era tropes reliant upon a villainous (emasculated) Russia, its “suffering” (feminized) people (specifically identified as women in post-Soviet Russia), and a sympathetic (masculine) United States. Although other regions, most notably Southeast Asia and Central America, were mentioned as source countries, the former Soviet Union in general, and Russia in particular, were the geographical areas that elicited the long-term interest of legislators.

Smith continued his fixation with Russia during a legislative mark-up session for his H.R. 1356, the Freedom from Sexual Trafficking Act of 1999, before the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights (of which, as I have mentioned, he was also chair). His opening statement is a veritable anti-Russian diatribe in which he points out that “[o]ne of the ironies of the fall of the Soviet Union [...] has been that the explosion of poverty that has occurred has resulted in a very fertile ground for organized crime—the syndicates, the Russian mafia, the Ukrainian mafia—to prey upon these women.” Additionally, Smith reports that when Russian policymakers and law enforcement officials are asked about sex trafficking

⁵⁰ Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, June 28, 1999, 7. Despite Smith’s claim that Russia had not to that point been involved in international anti-trafficking efforts, the Russian Federation actually co-sponsored with the United States the UN Protocol.

and what they are doing to stop it, reactions range from complete denial to bewildered requests for more information to explicit complicity. Not surprisingly, it is this last reaction Smith finds particularly repugnant, and he claims that Russian law enforcement officials believe that if sex trafficking is occurring right under their noses, it is because “[Russian] women are just more beautiful” than women of other national ethnicities.⁵¹ Subcommittee member Matt Salmon (R-Arizona), who served with Smith on the full House Committee for International Affairs as well as on the CSCE, also jumped in that same mark-up session onto the anti-Russia bandwagon, pointing specifically to the rampant government corruption and complicity in that country that enables sex trafficking to “go on with a wink and nod.” In an implicit reference to the ongoing hearings before the House Committee on International Relations concerning Russia’s August 1998 economic collapse and the alleged squandering of assistance funds by Russian government officials, he points out that the U.S. “put[s] out millions and millions of dollars in aid to Russia” and demands that the bill in question, H.R. 1356, include the possibility for economic sanctions as a means of enforcing government accountability for “some of the money that we are sending over there.” His reasoning is that “[w]hen their government turns a deaf ear to this kind of human suffering and misery, I think we have a responsibility to be a little more scrutinizing in how we dole out the money.”⁵²

The inclusion in any U.S. anti-trafficking law of the potential for economic sanctions against those countries that fall short of U.S. anti-trafficking standards met

⁵¹ House Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, August 4, 1999, 3-4.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 6.

with opposition from the Clinton administration, which argued that sanctions would only serve to worsen the very economic conditions that, according to experts, were the chief cause of women and children being made vulnerable to sex traffickers in the first place. But several of Salmon’s Republican colleagues could not foresee a situation in which countries, particularly Russia, that had been identified as major source countries of women trafficked into the sex industry would be induced to expend their already scarce resources on halting that practice unless the proposed U.S. anti-trafficking legislation included an incentive to do so—namely, economic sanctions. Seconding Salmon’s support of sanctions, subcommittee member Thomas Tancredo (R-Colorado) claimed that the threat and possible implementation of sanctions were the only way of stopping sex trafficking in “a country where almost every level of the government is actually participating in it, either directly, frankly, or indirectly, by suggesting that it is really not much of an issue, it is sort of a cultural thing and no big deal.”⁵³

By the time sex trafficking was taken up in the Senate, U.S. legislators were confident in their identification of Russia as the chief offender in the anti-sex trafficking narrative. Not only did this facilitate an understanding of the issue as the purview of the Brownback-chaired Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, but it also enabled the specific identification of trafficking “victims” as Russian (i.e. racially white and ethnically Slavic) women whose economic and social disadvantages in the “new” Russia left them vulnerable to being “lured” by traffickers and whose fear of authority figures, rooted in a legacy of Soviet oppression, made

⁵³ Ibid., 24.

them unlikely to seek help from law enforcement officials in destination countries.⁵⁴ Three of the five sex trafficking survivors who were invited to provide testimony as part of Congress's consideration of anti-trafficking legislation served as witnesses during the second part of the Senate hearing before Brownback's subcommittee on April 4, 2000. And although just one of the women was Russian (the others were from Mexico and Ukraine, respectively), this final hearing on what would become the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, although intended to be a hearing on human trafficking, broadly defined, quickly became a hearing focused only on *sex* trafficking—with Russia as the primary antagonist. The frequent discursive conflation made in U.S. political and popular culture between Russia and Ukraine is clear in this hearing: While two of the three sex trafficking survivors were from those countries, only Natalia Khodyreva of the *Russian*-based anti-sex trafficking organization the Angel Coalition was on hand to speak on behalf of the experiences of *Russian* women. No Ukraine-based anti-trafficking expert was invited to testify in this or any other hearing, nor were anti-trafficking experts from either Mexico or Nepal, the identified source countries of the three additional sex trafficking survivors asked to testify before the Senate subcommittee.

Not unpredictably, given what legislators had learned from U.S. State Department officials, activists, and scholars throughout the hearings, Khodyreva argued during her testimony that the traffic in Russian women for work in the global sex industry

⁵⁴ Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, June 28, 1999, 15.

[...] is a consequence of a socioeconomic situation in Russia and job discrimination against women. So many educated women cannot find the appropriate job that will provide a good living condition, they have no choice but to take a job with low qualifications abroad. But most of them find themselves in forced prostitution or slavery-like conditions.⁵⁵

Given the textbook symmetry of Khodyreva's testimony to the overall narrative about sex trafficking as constructed by and during the Congressional hearings on the issue, it seems that to have merited an invitation to this last hearing, witnesses (including a few State Department officials and several representatives of human rights/anti-trafficking organizations who had all testified on the issue at at least one previous hearing) were expected to reify the very narrative with which Sen. Paul Wellstone initiated the debate in his floor speech back on International Women's Day in March 1998. Even subcommittee member Wellstone himself, using a shrewd rhetorical strategy intended to reinforce and underscore for his Senate colleagues the importance of Khodyreva's testimony, offers a summary of her statement for the record, reiterating that in terms of the former Soviet Union

[...] the bitter irony is that the economic disintegration means that these women have not always been poor or many of them were actually highly educated, who at one time may have been gainfully employed and now they have no employment. So they are looking for a way to go to another country to find a job, but not of course being forced into prostitution.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Senate Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, April 4, 2000, 102.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 106.

American Heroes

That Wellstone ends this final hearing on sex trafficking precisely where he began the conversation roughly two years before, with clearly identifiable Russian “victims” and implicit Russian “villains,” illustrates the essential stagnancy in Congress of the anti-trafficking narrative’s discursive frames, which, as I show, correspond almost exactly to those critiqued by Doezema, with the addition of a specific national/ethnic identity assigned to both “victims” and “villains.” Particularly intriguing, however, is that while concerns about the crime, corruption, and chaos that supposedly characterized Russian politics and society at the end of the twentieth century were omnipresent in the Congressional hearings regarding the proposed U.S. anti-trafficking legislation, the issue of sex trafficking, which had its first hearing on Capitol Hill before the CSCE in June 1999, was almost entirely absent from contemporaneous Congressional hearings on the successes and failures of U.S. Russia policy—despite the fact that Smith and Wellstone each served on the respective committees that convened those hearings. The sole reference during the hearings on the successes and failures of U.S. Russia policy to a concern about the “threats of trafficking of arms, drugs, [and] women and children” as a result of Russian “reforms” during the 1990s was made by invited witness James O. Finckenauer, Professor of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University and an expert on transnational organized crime.⁵⁷ Even Wellstone remained surprisingly silent on the issue in

⁵⁷ Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Corruption in Russia and Future U.S. Policy*, 106th Cong., 1st sess., September 30, 1999 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999), 80.

hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.⁵⁸ And in a three-part hearing before the House Committee on International Relations held during October 1999, legislators explored charges of corruption at the highest levels of the Russian government, the alleged mismanagement and laundering of Western aid monies, Russia's chaotic domestic situation (which, according to expert witnesses, included rampant anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism, extreme poverty, widespread health epidemics, the potential for totalitarianism/fascism, and a war in the Islamic republic of Chechnya), and the tenuous state of U.S.-Russian relations as a result of Russia's continued sale of conventional weapons technology to Iran. The printed transcript of the three-part hearing indicates that Smith, a member of this committee, did not directly participate on either October 6 or October 19; on October 7, however, he did submit for the record an opening statement *in absentia* detailing his primary concerns about U.S. Russia policy, particularly his outrage at the Clinton administration for supporting the wrong "reformers" in Russia and its inability to account for the billions of dollars in U.S. aid spent there.⁵⁹ He also criticized what he termed Russia's "war of vengeance" in Chechnya as well as (then) newly-appointed Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's apparent path "toward militarism and authoritarianism."⁶⁰ It is unknown whether Smith's lack of participation at the first and last installments of this

⁵⁸ Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Corruption in Russia and Recent U.S. Policy*, 106th Cong., 1st sess., September 23, 1999 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999), 21-23.

⁵⁹ Smith's accusation here, and, in fact, the entire partisan battle on Capitol Hill in the late 1990s concerning the failures of U.S. Russia policy, neglects the fact that the Freedom Support Act, which emerged out of the Republican George H.W. Bush administration and served as the foundation for Democrat Bill Clinton's Russia policy, had overwhelming *bipartisan* support when it was being formulated in 1991-1992.

⁶⁰ House Committee on International Relations, *U.S. Policy Toward Russia, Part II: Corruption in the Russian Government*, 106th Cong., 1st sess., October 7, 1999 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999), 94-97.

hearing, in combination with his absence from the second, indicate that he was never actually *in* the hearing room with his colleagues and their invited witnesses at any point during this three-part hearing. What *is* clear from the record, however, is his surprising silence on the issue of sex trafficking as a consequence of the apparent failures of U.S. Russia policy and the resultant crime and corruption in Russia. Congressional hearings provide clear and specific opportunities for legislators and then witnesses to present their remarks to hearing participants. Each legislator is then given five minutes to ask whatever questions they would like of the witnesses based on the witnesses' prepared testimonies. That Smith failed to avail himself of these opportunities to advance his own agenda and make clear for his colleagues the importance of his proposed anti-sex trafficking legislation within the broader context of U.S. Russia policy—particularly because he had not been reticent to do so in earlier subcommittee hearings on sex trafficking—seems a clear indication that human trafficking, which (as I have illustrated) became discursively conflated with “sex trafficking,” was ghettoized by/in Congress as a “women’s issue” and not incorporated into the “big ticket” items of international relations such as the causes and consequences of crime and corruption in Russia and the apparent failure of U.S.-led reform efforts as a result of that crime and corruption.

The hearings held after the August 1998 collapse of Russia’s economy in which legislators demanded to know what went wrong in Russia concluded that, in the final assessment, it was Russians, or, more specifically, crooked Russian politicians masquerading as “reformers,” who were largely to blame for the continued economic and political chaos that enveloped their country and that, by the late 1990s,

signaled the failure of (or at least a necessary reorientation of) U.S. Russia policy. Not surprisingly, this same group of Russians, along with inept and/or corrupt law enforcement officials and the reportedly increasing power and influence of transnational Russian criminal networks, were simultaneously to blame for the traffic in women from Russia, Ukraine, and elsewhere in Eastern Europe for work in the global sex industry. A few legislators did acknowledge, however, that U.S. policies early on in the transition process, particularly “shock therapy” with its rapid privatization of state-owned industries and high rates of inflation, *may* have contributed to some of the problems facing Russia in the late 1990s, most notably the alarmingly high numbers of Russians, particularly women and children, living in poverty. But regardless of the extent to which U.S. policies were implicated in what one hearing participant called Russia’s “state of crisis,”⁶¹ the discursive assignation of blame for Russia’s economic, political and social problems to particular Russian men, whether corrupt “reformers” or inept and/or complicit law enforcement officials, enabled the United States to remove itself from the equation: Russia was in disarray as a result of *Russian* corruption, *not* U.S. policies, and trafficking was happening as a result of the alarming disarray of Russian institutions and legal apparatuses—even after several years and several billions of dollars in Western aid monies.

Conveniently, such a conclusion meant that the United States was not responsible for the desperate poverty that, according to anti-trafficking experts (including St. Petersburg-based hearing witness Khodyreva), had left Russian women vulnerable to organized transnational crime networks. And even if U.S. Russia policy

⁶¹ House Committee on Banking and Financial Services, *Russian Economic Turmoil*, 106th Cong., 1st sess., June 10, 1999 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999), 3.

had, to whatever minuscule extent, contributed to Russia's problems, the increasing numbers of (white) women and children being trafficked out of Russia for work in the global sex industry gave the United States an opportunity to redeem itself by leading the charge against sex trafficking.

The opportunity to lead the charge against sex trafficking is, I contend, why U.S. legislators' commitment to halt human trafficking coincided in the late 1990s with partisan clashes over who/what should most appropriately take the blame for Russia's continuing political and economic problems and the apparent failure of U.S. Russia policy. The focus in those hearings on crime and corruption at the highest echelons of Russian government was synchronous with hearings on sex trafficking in which the "villains" were Russian crime syndicates and inept and/or complicit law enforcement officials, and "victims" were Russian women. Operating within the cold war triumphalist narrative, this presented legislators with the perfect opportunity to "rescue" Russian women from "evil" or incompetent Russian men, who, as Smith and Tancredo reported in the hearings, had little to no interest in taking action to halt sex trafficking themselves and were, therefore, unable to protect their "daughters" in the way that "real" men rightly should. This enabled the anti-trafficking narrative in the United States, like that regarding Russia's continuing political and economic problems, to proceed without the inclusion of the United States as an actor *embedded in* the process. There was no acknowledgement in the anti-trafficking narrative that the U.S. may have contributed in some way to either the *cause* of women's migration from Russia (i.e. poverty and lack of employment or educational opportunities in source countries) or the *demand* for Russian sex workers by potential customers

within the territorial borders of the U.S..⁶² This latter omission is particularly intriguing given the professed shared objective among legislators to attend to the causes of sex trafficking as a means of preventing it, because, as one witness put it, “[t]here are all those customers on that other end there that are creating the need for the supply.”⁶³ At only one point in any of the three hearings on sex trafficking was there a consideration of or attempt made to characterize those “customers” in the U.S. who would solicit women for illegal sex. On April 4, 2000, William R. Yeomans of the U.S. Department of Justice reported that Mexican women working as prostitutes in brothels in Florida and the Carolinas were frequented by “migrant laborers.” These “johns” were discursively constructed not as white American men, but as racially Other/ed men who were, themselves, most likely illegal immigrant workers.⁶⁴ Clearly, the identification of a “john” as a dark-skinned, Spanish-speaking illegal immigrant not only erased the likely complicity of U.S.-born men in the commercial sexual exploitation of women and children globally, but also enabled some legislators to target illegal immigration as a primary cause of sex trafficking into the U.S..⁶⁵ This resulted in United States’ rhetorical placement within the anti-trafficking narrative as an outside observer, as an involuntary destination country for illegal immigrants (e.g.

⁶² According to a report from the United Nations Center of International Crime Prevention released in May 2003, Russia tops the list of countries providing women-as-commodities in the global economy, and, while most Russian women end up in Germany, the United States ranks second as a prime destination for women trafficked out of Russia for work in the sex industry. Mizus, et al., “Germany, US Receive Most Sex-Trafficked Wome,” 4; see also Farr, *Sex Trafficking*.

⁶³ House Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, September 14, 1999, 39.

⁶⁴ Senate Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, April 4, 2000, 77.

⁶⁵ See, for example, comments by Representative James C. Greenwood (R-Pennsylvania) at the hearing before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, June 28, 1999, 11.

“johns” and “victims”) and transnational criminals (the “traffickers”), and the obvious choice to lead international efforts to end sex trafficking.

It can be no coincidence, though, that U.S. legislators learned of and began their efforts to end sex trafficking at the end of the 1990s, only after large (enough) numbers of white women from Eastern Europe and the NIS began appearing as commodities in the global sex industry.⁶⁶ International laws outlawing human trafficking date back to the “white slavery” panic in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when white European women were reportedly at risk for abduction into forced prostitution in Other geographical areas, most notable South America. Although historians have demonstrated that “white slavery” was a largely non-existent phenomenon utilized as a metaphor for a number of societal anxieties, including the voluntary emigration of women from Europe for work,⁶⁷ it operated as a powerful cultural myth that mobilized the international community and resulted in the passage of an international anti-trafficking law in 1904 as well as the 1949 United Nations International Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons.⁶⁸ The outbreak of two world wars and subsequent anti-colonial conflicts during the mid-

⁶⁶ Given the clandestine nature of the global sex industry, the number of women and girls trafficked from Russia into the United States for sex work is impossible to quantify, however Russia serves as a “primary source country” for the estimated 45,000 to 50,000 women that are trafficked into the United States annually, and journalist Victor Malarek reports that women from Russia and the NIS represent more than 25 percent of the annual global trade in women for the sex industry. Amy O’Neill Richard, “International Trafficking in Women to the United States: A Contemporary Manifestation of Slavery and Organized Crime” (Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Intelligence, 2000), 3; Victor Malarek, *The Natashas: Inside the New Global Sex Trade* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2003), 6.

Richard and Malarek also discuss the involvement of Russian organized crime in the U.S. sex industry, as does feminist scholar Donna Hughes, who details the sex industry-related activities of the Russian mafia in the U.S. Hughes, “Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation: The Case of the Russian Federation” (Geneva, Switzerland: International Organization for Migration, 2002), 50.

⁶⁷ Doezeema, “Loose Women or Lost Women?”

⁶⁸ See Outshoorn, “The Political Debates on Prostitution and Trafficking of Women.”

twentieth century effectively halted human transnational migration, and concerns about “white slavery” and human trafficking disappeared for the better part of fifty years—until the increase in global trade, tourism, and migration corresponded in the 1970s with the liberalization in the global West of sexual mores and values. As a result, East Asian women began to be trafficked to Western Europe during the early 1980s, followed shortly thereafter by women from Central America, West Africa, and the Caribbean in the late 1980s. Then, in 1989/1991 with the demise of the Soviet system in Eastern Europe, the supply of women for illicit sex started to come increasingly from that geographical region, particularly from Russia and Ukraine,⁶⁹ thus pointing to the possibility that U.S. legislators suddenly became interested in the issue in the late 1990s precisely because Russian and Ukrainian women are white Europeans. This suspicion is, of course, bolstered not only by the catalyst behind Wellstone’s Senate floor speech (i.e., a 1997 police raid of a massage parlor outside the District of Columbia that revealed Russian and Ukrainian sex trafficking “victims”), but also the targeting of Russian government and law enforcement officials as the primary “villains” of the anti-sex trafficking narrative. Additionally, U.S. State Department officials repeatedly testified that they became aware of the extent and seriousness of sex trafficking only in the mid-1990s, contextualizing the phenomenon within the increasing power of transnational criminal networks and the growing supply of vulnerable women that began concomitantly with the collapse of

⁶⁹ See *ibid.* and Doezema, “Loose Women or Lost Women?”

the Soviet system, to which Representative Barbara Lee (D-California) replied disbelievingly, “It sounds like we have just had our head in the sand on this.”⁷⁰

From “Mother Russia” to “Miss Russia”

I have thus far presented a critical assessment of recent attempts by U.S. legislators to halt the transnational trade in women and children as part of the global sex industry. But, as perceptions and subsequent discursive depictions of Other countries (whether rhetorical, textual, televisual, and so forth) are drawn in part from those countries’ representation of themselves, from their national performance on an international stage,⁷¹ it is hardly surprising that by the late 1990s U.S. legislators had come to associate Russia not only with crime, corruption, and chaos, but also with prostitution. In Chapter 2, I discussed briefly the operationalization by Russian politicians of gendered themes, imagery, and metaphors taken directly from and/or reminiscent of late-nineteenth century Russian imperial and Orthodox assumptions about masculinity and femininity that reappeared continually in representations of the Russian nation throughout the 1990s.⁷² I pointed out that since the demise of the Soviet Union, there has been a marked change in attitudes toward gender, the representation of women in the media, and “the acceptability of blatantly discriminating practices and statements.”⁷³ This has included the widespread use not

⁷⁰ House Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, September 14, 1999, 27; Senate Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, February 22, 2000, 17-19.

⁷¹ For more on this, see Radulescu, “Amazons, Wretches and Vampirettes.”

⁷² See Kunkle, “(Re)thinking Russian Nationalism.”

⁷³ Kay, *Russian Women and Their Organizations*, 26.

only of women's bodies as commodities, particularly in pornography and prostitution, but also of prostitution as a metaphor for Russia's relationship with Other countries, particularly those in the global West, to whom Russia (in the self-assessment of its media) seems to have become nothing more than a "nexus of buying and selling, where everything of value is offered cynically to the highest bidder."⁷⁴

Historically, (female) prostitutes and prostitution have performed a significant dramaturgical function in Russian cultural mythology as "a sign of Russian national humiliation—of the desperation of a[n emasculated] country forced to sell off its natural and spiritual resources to unscrupulous clients from other lands."⁷⁵ In Russian literature, this has meant the fictional depiction of women not only as "a source of great virtue" (i.e. Mother Russia, the Motherland, etc.), but also, simultaneously, as "a kind of pathological entity" in opposition to which Russian men have defined their masculinity.⁷⁶ In the post-Soviet era, this virgin/whore dichotomy has meant that Russian women are conceptualized as

[...] the site of antagonisms between what is considered truly Russian and what is corrupted by the West (as in Russian beauty contests), between what is demeaned by capitalist influence (prostitution and crass consumerism) versus what is esteemed in mythologies of motherhood in Russian folklore; between

⁷⁴ Borenstein, "Selling Russia," 175; see also Posadskaya, "Changes in Gender Discourses and Policies in the Former Soviet Union."

⁷⁵ Borenstein, "Selling Russia," 175.

⁷⁶ Barbara Heldt, *Terrible Perfection: Women and Russian Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); Kunkle, "(Re)thinking Russian Nationalism," 152-153.

what is pornographic (naked female dancers in night clubs and new fashion trends) and what is pleasurable.⁷⁷

Women in post-Soviet Russia are thus always already positioned within Russian nationalist discourse as (hetero)sexed and gendered subjects, which creates a clear and distinct link between domestic beauty pageants, for example, and the transnational traffic in Russian women, because the contests “provide an increasing use of the feminine body as a public icon” that is subsequently “taken up as part of a [Russian] national iconography.” As a result, and in the context of an emerging capitalist market, “[t]he prostitute [...] is the new ‘protagonist’ who threatens bodily and/or moral purity, and so it is Russian cultural purity which is at stake in her activity.”⁷⁸ The ubiquity of sex and (hetero)sexuality in Russian culture throughout the 1990s, which was a defiant oppositional response to the perceived puritanism of Marxist-Leninism, linked the commodification of women’s bodies with Western consumer culture and transformed the cultural mythology of the virtuous “Mother Russia” into “Miss Russia,” the sexually promiscuous beauty pageant contestant-turned-sex worker.⁷⁹

This is, in large part, the Russia that Russians themselves presented to the international community: The rapid drive to join the global capitalist economic system in the 1990s meant that everything—including Russian women—was for sale. It is no wonder, then, that U.S. legislators, all of whom were raised, first, within the

⁷⁷ Ibid., 181.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 199-200.

⁷⁹ See *ibid.* and Borenstein, “Selling Russia.”

limited epistemologies of the cold war that made Russia/the U.S.S.R. and its constituent political and economic systems an anathema to the United States and, second, in a rather puritanical environment (ironically, not unlike that created by Marxist-Leninism in the Soviet Union) where sex work is considered immoral, zeroed in on the discursive and material exploitation of Russian women by Russian nationalists across the political spectrum.⁸⁰ These epistemological foundations, in conjunction with the essentialization of Russia-as-prostitute and the sexual exploitation of Russian women through pornography and sex work,⁸¹ has meant that U.S. legislators and policymakers have learned what they think they know about post-Soviet Russia from an already limited Russian nationalist narrative constructed predominantly by male artists, journalists, intellectuals, and so forth. Representative Tancredo, for example, pointed out to his colleagues on the Subcommittee on International Relations and Human Rights that sex trafficking “is [Russia’s] second biggest product.”⁸² Interestingly, the ubiquitous operationalization of women’s bodies in Russian popular culture was well enough known in the U.S. at the turn of the twenty-first century to have made it into the dialogue of a third-season episode of NBC’s hit dramatic series, *The West Wing*. One of the show’s recurring characters, Communications Director Toby Zeigler, is asked to credential a Russian reporter who has been refused credentials by the newly-elected Russian president. Assuming that this incident is just further proof that the Russians have little to no understanding of

⁸⁰ See Kunkle, “(Re)thinking Russian Nationalism.”

⁸¹ See Radulescu, “Amazons, Wretches and Vampirettes.”

⁸² House Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, August 4, 1999, 7.

democratic principles, particularly freedom of speech or the press, Toby agrees to meet with the reporter, who proudly announces that her newspaper is “the highest daily in Russia,” to which Toby replies, “It’s hard to tell if that’s because of your reporting, your editorials or the naked women on page three.” Later, having learned that the reporter has been refused Russian credentials solely because her journalistic integrity is shoddy, at best, Toby encourages her to stop writing, give up her column inches, and “put another naked woman in there.”⁸³

The essentialist depiction of Russian women not only in Russia, but also in the United States, left much to be desired in the decade or so after the demise of the Soviet Union. In Russia, they were both titillating sex objects and symbols of national (masculine) humiliation; in the U.S., they were simultaneously constructed and conceptualized as sex objects and “victims” of “one of the most shocking and rampant human rights abuses world wide.”⁸⁴ Radulescu posits that these cultural representations are linked to the rise in Russian and Eastern European women and girls who are trafficked to the global West as part of the sex trade. She argues that the cultural products that objectify women from Eastern Europe and rhetorically construct them as authentic, as embodying some sense of an “exotic” culture, “can easily be translated into the practice of objectifying and treating flesh and blood women as inferior beings,” especially if, as in the case of the U.S. anti-trafficking narrative, they are “not visibly Other.”⁸⁵ If, as I believe, U.S. legislators’ concern

⁸³ “Enemies Foreign and Domestic,” *The West Wing*, DVD, directed by Alex Graves (May 1, 2002; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2004).

⁸⁴ Senate Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, February 22, 2000, 2.

⁸⁵ Radulescu, “Amazons, Wretches and Vampirettes,” 45-46.

about sex trafficking in the late 1990s was a contemporary version of the “white slavery” panic, it crystallized within the context of the cold war triumphalist mythscape in which the U.S. had “won” its fifty-year ideological and nuclear stand-off with the Soviet Union, making the United States, with its “triumphant” political and economic systems, the sole advocate of peace and freedom in a post-Soviet and pre-9/11 world recovering from roughly a century’s worth of global conflict. Consequently, with the convergence of two conversations on Capitol Hill, one about how to stop the transnational trade in (white, Russian) women for work in the global sex industry, the other about what went wrong in Russia, two specific characteristics of American nationalism surfaced to drive the agendas of both sets of Congressional hearings. First, just as they had been less than a decade before, when creating the Freedom Support Act, U.S. legislators were caught up in adherence to an American nationalist messianism that not only ignores U.S. complicity in global affairs, but also assumes that the United States is the world’s sole guardian of freedom. Second, the unresolved histories and epistemologies of the cold war, during which anti-communism became an indelible and unquestioned part of U.S. political and popular culture, led U.S. policymakers to continue to rely on state-based paradigms of what/who counts as an “enemy,” thus resulting in the continued identification of that same old cold war-era adversary: Corrupt and/or inept Russian (i.e. former Soviet) men wielding institutional power over the oppressed masses of Russian society, who, in the case of the new “white slavery”/anti-sex trafficking narrative, were conveniently universalized as Russian women whom the benevolent United States could “rescue” from both their (Russian) traffickers as well as their chaotic and

ineffectual (Russian) state institutions. This resulted, rather ironically, in the operationalization of the “white slavery” myth to conjure a gendered Russian imaginary that led to the discursive (re)victimization within U.S. anti-trafficking discourse of the very bodies U.S. policymakers aimed to rescue and protect.

CHAPTER 5

Death and the Maiden: The Representational Violence of Imperial Nostalgia

"I am a little wary of these spectral Romanovs."¹

I discovered the existence of Anastasia International, Inc., which advertises itself as "the industry leader" in East-West matchmaking,² while doing preliminary research in the fall of 1996 as part of my senior-year independent study course on radical women activists in late imperial Russia. I was in the college library surrounded by dozens of identical neon yellow signs warning all potential users of the library's brand new Internet-enabled computers that the Web was to be used for "legitimate research purposes" only; e-mail, surfing, pornography (the librarians knew it when they saw it), and other recreational activities were expressly prohibited. The librarians were notorious hawkers, but as I was conducting "legitimate research," I knew I had nothing to worry about, so I went ahead and typed "Russian women" into whatever search engine the college library was using at the time and came up with more than a thousand hits, all of which were in English. Rather impressed with myself and feeling fairly optimistic that I would be able to find a few good sites to examine for the project on which I was working, I started scrolling down the list just

¹ Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna in playwright Marcelle Maurette's *Anastasia*, English adaptation by Guy Bolton (New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1956), 54.

² Anastasia International, <http://www.anastasiaweb.com/Default.aspx?page=Difference>, par. 6 (accessed February 28, 2008).

to have a better idea of my options. A site entitled AnastasiaWeb.com caught my eye, and I clicked on it.

At first, I did not understand what I was seeing, but I know I did not see what I expected. There were none of the familiar pictures, no stern faces or imperial portraits, no Orthodox regalia or photos from that infamous basement at Ipatiev House, where Russia's last royal family was assassinated by a Bolshevik firing squad in 1918. Just photographs of gorgeous women, all thin, culturally intelligible as white, and predominantly blonde, and all in what were clearly meant to be sexually provocative poses. I scrolled down a bit more and started reading: This was a site dedicated to matching Western (i.e., American) men with Russian or Ukrainian wives. It advertised "romance tours" to more than a dozen cities, including Moscow, St. Petersburg, Odessa, and Kiev, where, depending on the tour purchased, a (presumably heterosexual) male client could meet up to twenty women over the course of five days with the option of choosing one of them as his wife. According to the website, the agency, Anastasia International, Inc., a U.S.-based "family run business" with offices in Bangor, Maine and Moscow, Russia, would take care of all travel visas, immigration paperwork, and other such legalities.³

While trying to comprehend what I was looking at, a stealthy research librarian approached my terminal and, pointing vigorously to those ubiquitous neon yellow signs, demanded to know if I had neglected to read the rules regulating Internet research. Fortunately, some quick thinking (and the fortuitous coincidence that she recognized me from the recent campus theatre production in which I had

³ Anastasia International, <http://www.anastasiaweb.com> (accessed March 24, 2008).

starred with the Dean's son) kept me out of hot water. But as soon as she returned to her desk, I navigated back to the page displaying the original results of my search for "Russian women," and, scrolling less perfunctorily this time, I soon came to the frustrating conclusion that none of these sites, all of which advertised the (hetero)sexual availability to English-speaking men of Russian and/or Ukrainian women for marriage and/or more temporary companionship, would be remotely useful to me in my research. I was also angry that, although not trafficked according to U.S. and UN definitions of the term, these women certainly were being explicitly used as commodities within the sex/gender system, which is reliant upon the exchange of female bodies to sustain heteropatriarchal capitalism.⁴ I remember thinking to myself as I gathered my coat and backpack and headed for the library's print holdings in Russian history, "So much for this new-fangled Internet thing."

As exasperating as that experience was, it did get me thinking for the first time about constructed knowledges and their potential implications. What might be the consequences, I began to wonder, if English speakers geographically located in the global West knew post-Soviet Russia largely as a pick-up joint, and Russian women in terms of their ability to use the promise of sex to snag a Western husband? And given the implicit understanding shared collectively by these sites' users that the women listed are not only ready and willing to abandon Russia and relocate to their future husband's home in the West, but also that they are unable to find suitable *Russian* men with whom to share their lives *in Russia*, what might Westerners conclude from these sites about *both* Russia *and* Russian men? An enormous

⁴ Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women."

conceptual leap is hardly required to posit that if these sites were all Westerners knew of Russia, it would be quite easy to believe (1) that all Russian women exist as titillating sexual objects in the service of Western men, (2) that post-Soviet Russia, poverty-stricken since its emasculating “defeat” by the United States in the cold war, is a terrible place from which these (hetero)sexually available women are trying to escape, (3) that Russian men—including the ineffectual, emasculated state and its officials—are ill-equipped, both financially and sexually, to “keep” Russian women for themselves, and (4) that Western men are preferred by Russian women because they are better endowed. The pun is intentional, for it signals the production and deployment on these international matchmaking sites of fears of and assumptions not only about masculinity and femininity, but also about ethnicity and socio-economic status, that echo the rhetoric and language used on Capitol Hill in the formulation of U.S. Russia policy throughout the 1990s. It also calls attention to the importance of virile masculinity to triumphalist American nationalism: the demise of the Soviet Union meant not only that the assets of the state were up for grabs to the Western corporate elite, as I discussed in chapter 3, but so were Russian women, who were depicted in the Western media and by the international matchmaking industry as “‘the best-kept secret of the Cold War,’ a ‘beautiful princess’ who is unlucky to have been born into a poor country and to be mistreated by an alcoholic and violent local male.”⁵

⁵ Tatiana Osipovich, “Russian Mail-Order Brides in U.S. Public Discourse: Sex, Crime, and Cultural Stereotypes,” in *Sexuality and Gender in Postcommunist Europe and Russia*, ed. Aleksander Stulhofer and Theo Sandfort (New York: The Haworth Press, 2005), 234.

As Russian literary scholar Tatiana Osipovich rightly points out, “the fairy-tale quality of such representations not only reconfirms Anglo-American patriarchal values but, most important, also symbolically reinforces the dominance of capitalist North America over its former communist enemy,”⁶ thus lending the status of metaphor to the narrative created and deployed by the “mail-order bride” industry. But what complicates the representational politics of this geopolitical fairy tale is the explicit titular reference by Anastasia International, Inc. to Grand Duchess Anastasia Nicholaevna Romanova, the youngest daughter of Russia’s last tsar, who was executed along with her family in 1918. Anastasia International lends the name of one of Russian history’s most renowned individuals to each of the site’s potential brides, thus conflating into a single essentialist identity these Russian Everywomen searching for their very own Western Prince Charming. The company’s historically referential moniker thus conjures assumptions about and nostalgia for the opulent, aristocratic milieu of imperial Russia within which Anastasia lived with her family before the 1917 October Revolution that brought down the three hundred-year-old Romanov dynasty and transformed the Russian Empire into the Soviet Union. This powerful discursive combination provides Western men, chiefly those in the U.S. who, unlike their European counterparts, are entirely devoid of even the potential for hereditary aristocratic lineage, the opportunity to play the part of the chivalric knight in shining armor to a downtrodden but beautiful Russian princess. Interestingly, this quintessentially historicized European “utopian fantasy” has a more contemporary—and decidedly less class-specific—American analogue: the cowboy of the Wild West

⁶ Ibid., 234.

as epitomized in the Diesel jeans ad and the photograph of Ronald Reagan, both of which I discussed in the introduction.⁷

An American nostalgia in the 1990s for the Russian Empire, particularly the class and gender politics at the heart of such nostalgia, is the catalyst for my work in this chapter. I am interested in the discursive interplay between the gendered rhetoric of the East-West matchmaking industry, principally that of Anastasia International, and the neocolonial pedagogical message of Twentieth Century Fox's 1997 animated feature film entitled *Anastasia*. Such an interplay reflects and influences not only what U.S. viewers think they may know about post-Soviet Russia, but also, potentially, the future trajectory of U.S. Russia policy. Given the apparent ease with which Grand Duchess Anastasia, as an object of knowledge that "circulate[d] and work[ed] in different and linked ways in different times and places,"⁸ became an inextricable part of U.S.-based conceptualizations of the Soviet Union and Russia in the last century, an attention to the logics and paradoxes of haunting, the constant "*politics* of memory, of inheritance, and of generations" within which people must learn to exist,⁹ necessarily drives my approach here. Because the notion of haunting

⁷ Film theorists Ella Shohat and Robert Stam argue that "to explain the public's attraction to a text or medium one must look not only for the 'ideological effect' that manipulates people into complicity with existing social relations, but also for the kernel of utopian fantasy reaching beyond these relations, whereby the medium constitutes itself as a projected fulfillment of what is desired and absent within the status quo." Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, "From the Imperial Family to the Transnational Imaginary: Media Spectatorship in the Age of Globalization," in *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary*, ed. Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 162.

⁸ Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, "Postcolonial Studies and Transnational Feminist Practices," *Jouvert: A Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 5, no. 1 (2000), par. 5, <http://social.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v5i1/grewal.htm> (accessed March 24, 2008).

⁹ Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), xix, italics in original.

“hinges on the relationship between visibility and invisibility, on appearance and disappearance,”¹⁰ I build in this chapter on Derrida’s notion of hauntology as a method of inquiry by embracing feminist sociologist Avery Gordon’s call to follow the ghost in order to account for exclusions and invisibilities—and the inevitable instrumentality of their present absence.¹¹

These absences are the “representational violence” to which I refer in this chapter’s subtitle. I use this term to refer to the ways in which an object of knowledge (in this case Anastasia) is mistranslated in the act of transposition between sites, whether geographical, temporal, literary, filmic, et cetera.¹² This mistranslation becomes the ghost—the present absence—whose story must be told not only as a means of “repair[ing] representational mistakes,” but also to understand “the forces that make things what they are” in an attempt to expose the constructedness and political utility of knowledge so that it might be remade.¹³ As I will demonstrate in this chapter, Twentieth Century Fox’s 1997 *Anastasia*, a transparently ahistorical animated remake of the company’s 1956 live-action film starring Yul Brynner and

¹⁰ Diana Taylor, “Dancing With Diana: A Study in Hauntology,” *The Drama Review* 43, no. 1 (1999), 64.

¹¹ Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

¹² The notion of transposition as I am using it here belongs to Russian literary scholar Caryl Emerson, who defines it as the “retelling of a narrative in different genres.” I am concerned here with genres, but also with the transposition and translatability of objects of knowledge over space and through time. Caryl Emerson, *Boris Godunov: Transpositions of a Russian Theme* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 7.

¹³ While in this chapter I focus solely on the representational violence done to Anastasia in a U.S. cultural context, the same process occurred to no less degree in post-Soviet Russia by Russians themselves. This, of course, is beyond the scope of my work here, but it provides a potentially interesting avenue into the modes and methods of Russian nation building during the first post-Soviet decade.

Ingrid Bergman, utilizes much the same neocolonial rhetoric. As part of this rhetoric, the entirety of post-Soviet Russia was conceptualized by U.S. policymakers during most of the 1990s as a damsel in distress, to conceptualize the relationship between the United States and Russia as do the legislative hearings that resulted in 1992's Freedom Support Act (which I discussed in chapter 3). Building upon this neocolonial rhetoric and playing upon notions of chivalric American masculinity, Anastasia International, Inc. reorients this feminized conceptualization so that it corresponds to normative categories of biological sex. Put another way, the rhetoric of 1997's *Anastasia* reflects that of the Freedom Support Act in its assumption that *all* Russia, albeit explicitly narratively and visually represented by a young, female protagonist, is in trouble and needs help. Anastasia International, on the other hand, clearly differentiates the post-Soviet experiences of Russian *women* from that of Russian *men* by implicitly arguing that the former, impoverished by the (masculine) state and (often) physically abused, must be rescued from the latter. The assignation of blame for the bleak conditions faced by women in post-Soviet Russia to Russian men, who are variously depicted as ineffectual, inebriated, and violent, is consistent with the concerns expressed by Congress during the so-called "Who lost Russia?" hearings and in those resulting in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (which I discussed in the previous chapter).

Not surprisingly, both these post-Soviet cultural texts make savvy political use of an American imperial nostalgia in the interest of economic gain. But their potential as sites of pedagogy ensures their (perhaps unintentional) contribution to popular geopolitics. Thus, the *transposition* and *mistranslation* of *Anastasia* as an object of

knowledge are *transnational*. They not only ensure that Anastasia's ghost is part and parcel of "the *horizontal* and *relational* nature of the contemporary economic, social, and cultural processes that stream across spaces," but also that ghost's politicized embeddedness in local and global "regimes of power."¹⁴ My overarching concern in this chapter, then, is to sort out the ways in which, given the complex convergence in these texts of gender and class politics with American nationalism and post-Soviet U.S.-Russian relations, Anastasia's ghost was deployed in the 1990s, and what that deployment might reveal about the social, cultural, and political context in which post-Soviet U.S. Russia policy was formulated.

Conjuring the Ghost

Having been successfully repressed by the Bolsheviks for more than seventy years in a disinformation campaign that was "so thorough that even the most expert foreign intelligence officers and diplomats could not unmask it,"¹⁵ the historiography of the Romanovs' imprisonment and execution has since 1991 been meticulously researched and documented. Relying on declassified Soviet-era materials, eye-witness testimonies, and material evidence, in conjunction with several books written and published in Europe during the 1920s and 1930s by monarchist Russian émigrés (including White Army investigator Nicholas Sokolov's 1924 account of his official inquiry into the royal family's disappearance) and depositions taken in Europe immediately after the October 1917 revolution of several people who had been close

¹⁴ Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 4, italics in original.

¹⁵ David Remnick, "Letter from St. Petersburg: The Next Tsar," *The New Yorker* 74, no. 18 (July 6, 1998), 47.

to the Romanovs, a number of historians, including Edvard Radzinsky, Robert K. Massie, and Greg King,¹⁶ have worked to reconstruct the circumstances of the Romanovs' imprisonment and the events leading up to and surrounding their execution.

Their research concludes that the following is a likely scenario: Around midnight on the night of July 17, 1918, the members of imperial Russia's last royal family, all of whom had been placed under house arrest eighteen months earlier, were escorted by their Red Army captors into a small, unfurnished room in the basement of the house in which they were being held.¹⁷ Yakov Yurovsky, the Red Army officer in command, explained to the prisoners that their picture needed to be taken as proof that they were still alive and in custody. But, after a few moments, he ordered not a photographer, but eleven additional soldiers, all armed with revolvers, into the room. Standing before the tsar, he announced the decision of the Soviet Ural Executive

¹⁶ Edvard Radzinsky, *The Last Tsar: The Life and Death of Nicholas II*, trans. Marian Schwartz (New York: Anchor Books/Doubleday, 2003); Robert K. Massie, *The Romanovs: The Final Chapter* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995); Robert K. Massie, "Yekaterinburg," in his *Nicholas and Alexandra: The Story of the Love that Ended an Empire*, 506-517 (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1967; reprint, New York: Ballantine Publishing Group, 2000); and Greg King, "The End of the Romanovs," in his *The Last Empress: The Life and Times of Alexandra Feodorovna, Tsarina of Russia*, 363-370 (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1996).

¹⁷ Although the Bolsheviks had taken over the government in Petrograd (the wartime—and anti-German—name for St. Petersburg, later changed to Leningrad) and surrendered to Germany, civil war ensued for the next three years in which Bolshevik forces (the Red Army) battled the White Army, an international coalition of imperial army officers and their supporters, including French, British, and U.S. troops. That the U.S. participated in attempts to oust the fledgling Bolshevik government remained a thorn in the side of U.S.-Soviet relations for most of the twentieth century. For further information, see Nicholas V. Riasonovsky, *A History of Russia*, 6th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 481-483.

Since the 1991 declassification of relevant Soviet archives, evidence has revealed that, concerned about the White Army's rapid advancement toward Ekaterinburg and the potential negative consequences for the Bolshevik revolution should the royal family be rescued, officials in Moscow, possibly including Lenin himself, ordered the execution not only of Tsar Nicholas II, but also of the entire royal family. For more detailed information concerning the raging debate in Moscow in the days leading up to July 17, please refer to Massie, "Approved by Moscow," in *The Romanovs*, 12-24.

Committee to execute him and fired a single shot at point-blank range. Nicholas II died immediately.

Following Yurovsky's lead, the other executioners opened fire. Tsarina Alexandra Feodorovna and the eldest grand duchess, Olga, both died quickly, as did the family doctor, Nicholas's valet, and the cook. Alexei, the young heir to the throne and a hemophiliac, tried to shield himself with the body of his father as one of the soldiers kicked him in the head and Yurovsky fired two shots into his ear. But Alexandra's lady-in-waiting and the three youngest grand duchesses, Tatiana, Marie, and Anastasia, remained alive as bullets fired into their chests ricocheted inexplicably around the room. The young women frantically attempted to shield themselves from the panicked executioners, who, having been given explicit orders to aim for the prisoners' hearts in order to avoid excess bloodshed, went after them feverishly with rifle butts and bayonets when bullets failed. But even the repeated thrusts of bayonets into the upper bodies of the three grand duchesses met with surprising resistance as the young women and Alexandra's lady-in-waiting screamed, bled, and fought their executioners for approximately twenty minutes.

According to the reports of eye-witnesses in their interviews with Sokolov during the 1920s, less than an hour later, as the eleven corpses were being wrapped in sheets and loaded onto a truck in the courtyard, one of the grand duchesses to have sat up and began screaming, followed by two of her sisters. The soldiers, already panicked by the unexpectedly lengthy ordeal inside the house, were at their wits' end. Afraid that gunfire in the open courtyard in the middle of the night would attract attention, they could not shoot the young women. Instead, they again resorted to

bayonets and stabbed the grand duchesses over and over again until their screaming stopped.

The bodies were taken to an abandoned mine shaft approximately thirteen miles from Ekaterinburg where they were laid out on the ground and disrobed. As the soldiers were removing the clothes of one of the daughters, they found rows of diamonds, tightly sewn together, gleaming from the gash in her corset. It was at this point that Yurovsky and his men learned what they could not have known beforehand: At some point during the family's imprisonment at their summer residence in Tsarkoe Selo, but before they were moved to the town of Ekaterinburg in the foothills of the Ural Mountains, the tsarina had instructed her daughters and lady-in-waiting to sew some of the dynastic jewels into their underclothes. Historians have surmised that the tsarina, hoping their relatives in Europe (who included Nicholas's cousins, King George V of England and Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany) would somehow secure their release and provide them refuge from the political turmoil that had toppled the Romanov dynasty, intended to use the jewels as a means of support when they were able to escape to Europe. In all, more than eighteen pounds of diamonds were collected from their corsets and these, along with a belt of pearl necklaces from the body of the tsarina and other assorted valuables, were put into sacks. Their clothes were burned and their bodies dumped into the mine shaft, which Yurovsky then collapsed by throwing hand grenades into the pit. Several days later, as the White Army threatened to overtake the town, Yurovsky and his men returned to the mine shaft, exhumed the bodies and moved them a few miles deeper into the woods. A shallow grave was dug and, after being doused with acid and burned in an

attempt to make them unrecognizable, the bodies were reburied and remained in that spot in the woods outside Ekaterinburg for more than seventy years.¹⁸

The execution of the Russian Empire's last royal family remained a Soviet state secret until the demise of that country in 1991, but rumors of the escape of at least one of Nicholas II's five children began almost immediately after the Bolshevik government announced to the world in a July 1918 press release that the tsar had been executed, and the tsarina and the twelve year-old heir to the throne, Alexei, had been "sent to a place of security."¹⁹ Announcements of the tsar's death were also published in the major Soviet newspapers, *Pravda* and *Isvestia*. No mention was ever made of the status or location of the four grand duchesses, and as the days, months, and years passed without any sort of resolution, it became increasingly easier to imagine that one or all of the children had somehow escaped.

This unlikely scenario, fueled simultaneously by Moscow's sustained disinformation campaign and the hopes of monarchist émigrés who had successfully fled the Revolution, led to a fascination in the United States with the Romanovs and, more specifically, with the youngest grand duchess, eighteen-year-old Anastasia Nicholaevna, whose rumored narrow escape in the summer of 1918 from the firing squad that had killed her father fueled a seventy-year scholarly and popular obsession in the United States with discovering the "truth" about what happened to the last royal family of imperial Russia. Had the tsar's wife, Alexandra Feodorovna and their five

¹⁸ The White Army was rapidly advancing on Ekaterinburg and did, in fact, take control of that city on July 25, 1918. The royal family missed being rescued by little more than a week. Massie, *The Romanovs*, 15. According to Massie, two Soviet forensic archaeologists first located the gravesite in the mid-1970s, but deemed the information too dangerous to make it known publicly.

¹⁹ "Ex-Czar of Russia Killed by Order of Ural Soviet," *New York Times*, July 21, 1918, Proquest Historical Newspapers (accessed September 28, 2005).

children been killed along with the tsar on July 17, 1918? Might the young heir to the throne, twelve year-old Alexei, or maybe one of the couple's four daughters, have escaped somehow? Certainly the preponderance of claimants to Romanov lineage appearing in Europe and the United States in the decades after 1918 fueled these questions, none more so than Anna Anderson, whose declaration in the early 1920s while a patient in a German sanatorium that she was Anastasia sparked a flurry of controversy and debate. However, thanks to the declassification of relevant Soviet government materials and the painstaking reconstructive work of historians, scientists, and forensic archaeologists since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the mystery was, for all intents and purposes, finally resolved in the mid-1990s. In *The Romanovs: The Final Chapter*, Massie chronicles the archival research and the findings of dozens of scientific experts to make a compelling case for the authenticity of the human remains unearthed from a shallow grave in the woods just outside Ekaterinburg, Russia in 1992. And in 1994, while forensic archaeologists were still sorting out who was who among the exhumed Romanovs, DNA tests posthumously disproved Anderson's claim to be Grand Duchess Anastasia. For a number of reasons, though, the official burial in St. Petersburg's Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul on July 17, 1998 of the skeletal remains of what many believe to be the Russian empire's last royal family was and remains highly contentious.²⁰

²⁰ When the royal family's remains were first exhumed in the early 1990s, scientists were disappointed to find that two bodies were missing from the gravesite and set about searching the forest near Ekaterinburg for another grave. They found it in late 2007 and exhumed the remains of the young heir to the Romanov dynasty, Alexei, and his sister, Marie. DNA tests conducted in early 2008 confirmed their identities. Clifford J. Levy, "Experts May Have Found Remains of Tsar's Children," *New York Times*, August 25, 2007, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed May 6, 2008); Clifford J. Levy, "Amateurs Unravel Russia's Last Royal Mystery," *New York Times*, November 25, 2007, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed May 6, 2008); and "DNA Tests Confirm the Deaths Of the Last

Held on the eightieth anniversary of the royal family's execution, the burial, held in St. Petersburg's Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul, the historical burial place of the Romanov tsars since Peter the Great, was intended by then-Russian President Boris Yeltsin to signal a positive step taken by a new country attempting to rebuild itself out of the ruins of the Soviet Union. As the Romanov burial approached, Yeltsin's approval ratings were at an all-time low, and he needed the burial to be an event of momentous historical importance in order to help smooth ruffled feathers and retain control of the government.²¹ He also wanted desperately to close the door on what he called, in his brief speech at the burial, "one of the most shameful episodes in [Russian] history."²² But Patriarch Alexei II, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, refused to officiate at the ceremony because he doubted the authenticity of the human remains. Both imperial and Orthodox traditions require the participation of the Patriarch to certify a tsar's funeral, and Alexei II's marked absence was a patent affront to Yeltsin's plans for a "grand reconciliation" between the state-enforced atheism of Russia's Soviet past and its present attempts at religious inclusion. As a result, the legitimacy of the burial was tenuous, at best.²³

Missing Romanovs," *New York Times*, May 1, 2008, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed May 6, 2008).

²¹ For more information, see Klein, *Shock Doctrine*; and Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*.

²² "Address by Yeltsin: 'We Are All Guilty,'" *New York Times*, July 18, 1998, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed December 17, 2004).

²³ Patriarch Alexei's reluctance in this matter has its roots in the religious iconicity of the last royal family, whose members were, after much internal debate within the Church, finally canonized in 2000. From the Patriarch's perspective, if the human remains interred in the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul on July 17, 1998 are those of Nicholas II, his wife, and their children, then, according to Orthodox canon law, they are holy relics, imbued with miraculous powers and, as such, deserving of special treatment in accordance with Orthodox traditions and rituals. For more on the canonization debate, see "Sainthood Issue May Split Church," *St. Petersburg Times*, <http://www.sptimesRussia.com/special/tsar/sainthood.htm/> (accessed December 29, 2004). For more on the controversy surrounding

Additionally, in the months before the burial, a heated dispute raged between those predominantly monarchists and/or Orthodox believers who decried the burial of the remains of individuals whom they believed to be anonymous commoners in the historic crypt of the Romanov tsars, and leftists, largely communists and socialists, who were disgruntled that the Russian and St. Petersburg governments would, by providing the former tsar and his family a state-sponsored burial, implicitly condone the violence inflicted upon the Russian people by Nicholas II and his ancestors. Nicholas II was a notoriously inept ruler whose inattention to the anachronistic structures and institutions of his empire, combined with escalating hostilities in Europe and internal nationalist and revolutionary dissent within Russia, resulted in several poor decisions, not least of which was his choice to order the imperial guard to open fire on a group of peaceful protestors in St. Petersburg's Palace Square in February 1905. Widely known as Bloody Sunday, this event signaled not only the commencement of Russia's first revolution, but also the beginning of the end for the Romanov dynasty. A Communist Party spokesperson told the *St. Petersburg Times* that Bloody Sunday was the primary reason for the Party's objection to the Romanov burial.²⁴

the burial service, see especially Alan Philips, "Last Czar is Denied an Emperor's Reburial," *Vancouver Sun* (British Columbia), June 16, 1998, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed December 17, 2004).

²⁴ John Varoli, "Petersburg Funeral Set for July 17," *St. Petersburg Times*, March 9-15, 1998, <http://www.sptimes.ru/archive/times/344-345/petersburg-funeral.html> (accessed July 18, 2005).

Anastasia on Stage and Screen

In the midst of these national political disputes, Twentieth Century Fox's 1997 animated feature film *Anastasia*, based on that production company's own 1956 live action film of the same name,²⁵ opened in St. Petersburg at the end of March 1998—barely four months before the scheduled burial of what the Russian Orthodox Church still refers to as “the Ekaterinburg remains,” and less than seven months before Russia's disastrous August 1998 economic collapse in which “the two purported economic achievements of the Boris Yeltsin era—control of inflation and a stable, convertible currency—were wiped out.”²⁶ Russian media coverage of the strange political and ideological alliances forged between Orthodox priests and members of the Communist party to prevent the burial of the Ekaterinburg remains in St. Petersburg appeared almost simultaneously with harsh reviews of *Anastasia*. For three weeks in a row in the *St. Petersburg Times*, a weekly English-language newspaper, the lead story was either about the growing controversy surrounding the impending Romanov burial or the Russian audience's response to *Anastasia*.²⁷

²⁵ Each version is available on DVD: *Anastasia*, directed by Don Bluth and Gary Goldman (1997; Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, Inc., 2001) and *Anastasia*, directed by Anatole Litvak (1956; Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, Inc., 2003).

²⁶ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 231-232.

²⁷ Varoli, “Petersburg Funeral Set for July 17”; Varoli, “Yeltsin, Government Agree to Bury Tsar Here; Skeptics Say Bones Aren't the Tsars,” March 9-15, 1998, <http://www.sptimes.ru/archive/times/344-345/yeltsin-agree.html/> (accessed July 18, 2005); Yevgenia Borisova, “Protests to Greet Funeral for Tsar,” *St. Petersburg Times*, March 16-22, 1998, <http://www.sptimes.ru/archive/times/346-347/protests.html> (accessed July 18, 2005); and Anna Badkhen, “*Anastasia* Premiere Frightens, Perplexes,” *St. Petersburg Times*, March 23-29, 1998, <http://www.sptimes.ru/archive/times/348-349/anastasia.html> (accessed July 18, 2005).

The movie's protagonist is a teenager name Anya²⁸ who, having come of age in a provincial Soviet orphanage after losing track of her family and identity during the violence of the Russian Revolution (the precise details of which remain ambiguous throughout the film), goes in search of both in a "journey to the past" that takes her first to dreary, industrialized Leningrad and then west to Paris. Anya's "journey to the past" is the title of one of the film's musical numbers, and its "past" is the era of the Russian Empire, before the October 1917 revolution. Although the film, with the exception of its prologue, takes place in 1926, the creators chose to use the imperial (and post-1991) moniker, "St. Petersburg," rather than the Soviet "Leningrad" to refer to the former capital of imperial Russia. This practice is compatible with the rest of the film: the Soviet Union is neither mentioned not labeled as such; instead, the term "Russia" is used to refer to the U.S.S.R..

What is perhaps most striking about the 1997 film is that it blatantly ignores the revelatory details of the early 1990s that exposed the facts behind the execution and burial of Russia's last royal family. For instance, Massie's book chronicling the exhumation of and DNA tests conducted on the Romanov remains was published in the United States in 1995—two years before the U.S. release of the animated *Anastasia* on Thanksgiving weekend in 1997. There was also high profile news media coverage of the location, exhumation, and identification of the Ekaterinburg remains in the years before Massie's book was published.²⁹ Consequently, when it opened in

²⁸ Amusingly, Anya is not the Russian diminutive of Anastasia; rather, it is Nast'ya. But who would want the princess-protagonist in an animated fairy tale to be called "nasty?"

²⁹ "Soviet Paper Reports Discovery of Slain Tsar," *New York Times*, April 16, 1989, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed July 3, 2006); "Remains in Siberia Identified as Bones of Czar and Czarina," *New York Times*, June 23, 1992, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed July 3, 2006);

St. Petersburg in March 1998, *Anastasia* sparked a bitter debate concerning the appropriateness of the hugely ahistorical film for Russian children as well as non-Russian adults—particularly as final plans for the official burial of the Ekaterinburg remains were being heatedly discussed. This, of course, draws attention to the power of filmic narratives as sites of public pedagogy that construct knowledge about the events, places, and people they depict. A St. Petersburg historian, for example, worried that “[t]his monstrous marvel of American culture [...] poses a bigger threat to American audiences, who will misinterpret the history of Russia.”³⁰ One Russian language reviewer, after lambasting the film, suggested that, in retaliation, Russia should make a film about the Kennedy assassination in which the president had not actually been killed but, instead, hid out on Aristotle Onassis’ yacht.³¹ Other Russian reviewers reacted to the film’s ahistoricism with similar derision.³²

Despite its genre (animation), likely target audience (children, probably girls), and blatant ahistoricism, *Anastasia* was, and remains, enormously popular among American audiences. In its opening weekend in the United States, the film, which was

and “Royal Blood, Royal Bones: The Romanovs’ Remains are Finally Confirmed,” *New York Times*, July 11, 1993, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed July 3, 2006).

³⁰ Badkhen, “*Anastasia* Premiere Frightens, Perplexes.”

³¹ Natalya Ivanovna Gladilshikova, “Anastasia,” *Itogi* (Moscow), April 6, 1998, EastView Information Services (accessed July 12, 2005).

³² Ivan Fedorov, “Sleduya za kameroi,” *Sodruzhestvo* (Moscow), March 25, 1998, EastView Information Services (accessed July 12, 2005); and Tat’yana Tolstaya, “Anastas’ya, ili zhizn posle smerti,” *Russkii Telegraf* (Moscow), March 21, 1998, EastView Information Services (accessed July 12, 2005).

Interestingly, an English-language report out of Moscow claims just the opposite: Apparently, *Anastasia* had “Russian audiences raving” in praise of the “film’s color animation, the wizardry of American movie making and the wistful storyline about the czar’s daughter Anastasia, who miraculously escapes death during the revolution.” Inga Saffron, “Russian’s Love *Anastasia* Despite its Flaws,” *Buffalo News* (New York), March 19, 1998, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed June 23, 2004).

by all U.S. film industry accounts Twentieth Century Fox's overwhelmingly successful attempt to beat cartoon monolith Disney at its own animation game, earned \$14.2 million, making it the largest-grossing opening ever for a non-Disney animated film and, even more impressively, the second most popular film that weekend behind box office frontrunners *Mortal Kombat: Annihilation* and John Grisham's *The Rainmaker*.³³ The film's box office success was accompanied by the marketing of Barbie-style action figures and an interactive website featuring historical information on the Romanovs, information about the production of the film, links enabling users to listen to music and view pictures from the film, play games, and order DVD versions of the film and its sequels from the Fox Online Store.³⁴ As evidenced by its financial success, the continuing popularity of *Anastasia* in the U.S. ensures that the film operates as a site of public pedagogy that, as I will demonstrate, employs the gendered, (hetero)sexualized rhetoric and cultural codes of cold war triumphalism to reify the notion of Russia as a weakened, defeated foe.

Based on Anna Anderson's claim that she was Anastasia, which not even those who had been closest to the Romanovs could disprove at the time, Anderson's story of torture and survival became the basis for the hit Broadway play, *Anastasia*, which opened at New York's Lyceum Theatre at the height of the cold war in

³³ Information on U.S. box office receipts can be found at "News for Anastasia," <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0118617/news> (accessed February 28, 2005). Most English-language reviews of *Anastasia* mentioned the fact that the film marked Twentieth Century Fox's first attempt at animation and, consequently, signaled the company's readiness to challenge animation giant Disney. One U.S. reviewer remarked that "[t]his season's great Disney cartoon isn't a Disney film after all." Daniel M. Kimmel, "Captivating *Anastasia* a Must-See," *Telegram & Gazette* (Worcester, MA), November 21, 1997, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed July 23, 2004).

³⁴ The website can be found at http://www.foxhome.com/anastasia/index_frames.html (accessed May 6, 2008).

December 1954.³⁵ Adapted by Guy Bolton from Marcel Maurette's original French, the play is set among Berlin's Russian émigré community during the early months of 1926. Intent on reaping the lucrative financial rewards that will inevitably come to him should he locate the missing Anastasia, former White Army General Bounine, late of His Majesty Nicholas II's imperial guard, has located a woman whose physical appearance (including the visible scars on her palms) closely resembles what he imagines the "real" Anastasia would look like had she survived. The play chronicles Bounine's attempts to (re)make Anna, who not only suffers from amnesia and inexplicable episodes of hysteria, but may well be (hetero)sexually promiscuous, into a grand duchess while continually challenging its audience to question the perceived differences between material reality and representation. In thinking about this play within its socio-historical and geopolitical context, then, it is easy to extrapolate to a broader metaphor: Which is "real," the play asks, the Soviet Union or the Russian Empire? If Anna, like her puppet master Bounine, is a cheat and a fraud, then the Russian Empire is, at last, a thing of the past, and the Soviet Union, whose existence the United States did not officially acknowledge until 1933, is legitimized. But if Anna is the "real" Anastasia, then the survival of this youngest member of the imperial family signals the endurance of empire—even in the face of horrific tragedy. Tellingly, the play's third and final act takes place during Orthodox Easter, thus confirming the "real" identity and attendant resurrection of its protagonist and,

³⁵ To bolster wide popular interest in the show, the cover of the February 14, 1955 edition of *Life* magazine asked the omnipresent question on which *Anastasia*'s financial success depended: "Is the Princess Alive?" The accompanying article answers the question in the affirmative with an exclusive interview with Anna Anderson at her home in Germany. "Mystery of Czar's Daughter: A Hit Play, A Real Life Discovery," *Life* 38, no. 7 (February 14, 1955), 31-35.

concomitantly, the illegitimacy of the Soviet Union—a country led by those who not only executed the tsar (the political arm of Empire), but also his noncombatant wife and children.

Twentieth Century Fox's 1956 movie version of *Anastasia* was by no means either low-budget or low profile. Encouraged by the play's New York success, studio president Darryl F. Zanuck purchased the rights to *Anastasia* in 1955 and spared no expense in catapulting the movie into immediate production, hiring famed director (and anti-Soviet Ukrainian émigré) Anatole Litvak and casting matinee idol Yul Brynner. He also achieved a major cultural coup by propelling Ingrid Bergman back onto her iconic pedestal as Hollywood's preeminent leading lady seven years after she had been systematically dethroned for having an extramarital affair with Italian director Roberto Rossellini.³⁶ Zanuck's efforts reaped extraordinary critical, popular and financial success and garnered a Best Actress Oscar for Bergman.³⁷

The vigorous media ramp-up to the premier at New York City's Roxy Theatre on December 13, 1956 included *Life* magazine's November 26, 1956 cover story on Bergman's triumphant return to the United States and featured what has arguably become one of the most famous pictures from her long career: an *Anastasia* publicity photograph in which she is costumed in the traditional gown of the Russian imperial court (figure 3). But even though Bergman's photo dominates the magazine's cover,

³⁶ For more on Bergman's exile from Hollywood, see Jane Sherron De Hart, "Containment at Home: Gender, Sexuality and National Identity in Cold War America," in *Rethinking Cold War Culture*, ed. Peter J. Kuznick and James Gilbert, 124-55 (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991); and Adrienne L. McLean, "The Cinderella Princess and the Instrument of Evil: Revisiting Two Postwar Hollywood Star Scandals," in *Headline Hollywood: A Century of Film Scandal*, ed. Adrienne L. McLean and David A. Cook, 163-189 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001).

³⁷ Aubrey Solomon, *Twentieth Century Fox: A Corporate and Financial History* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1988).

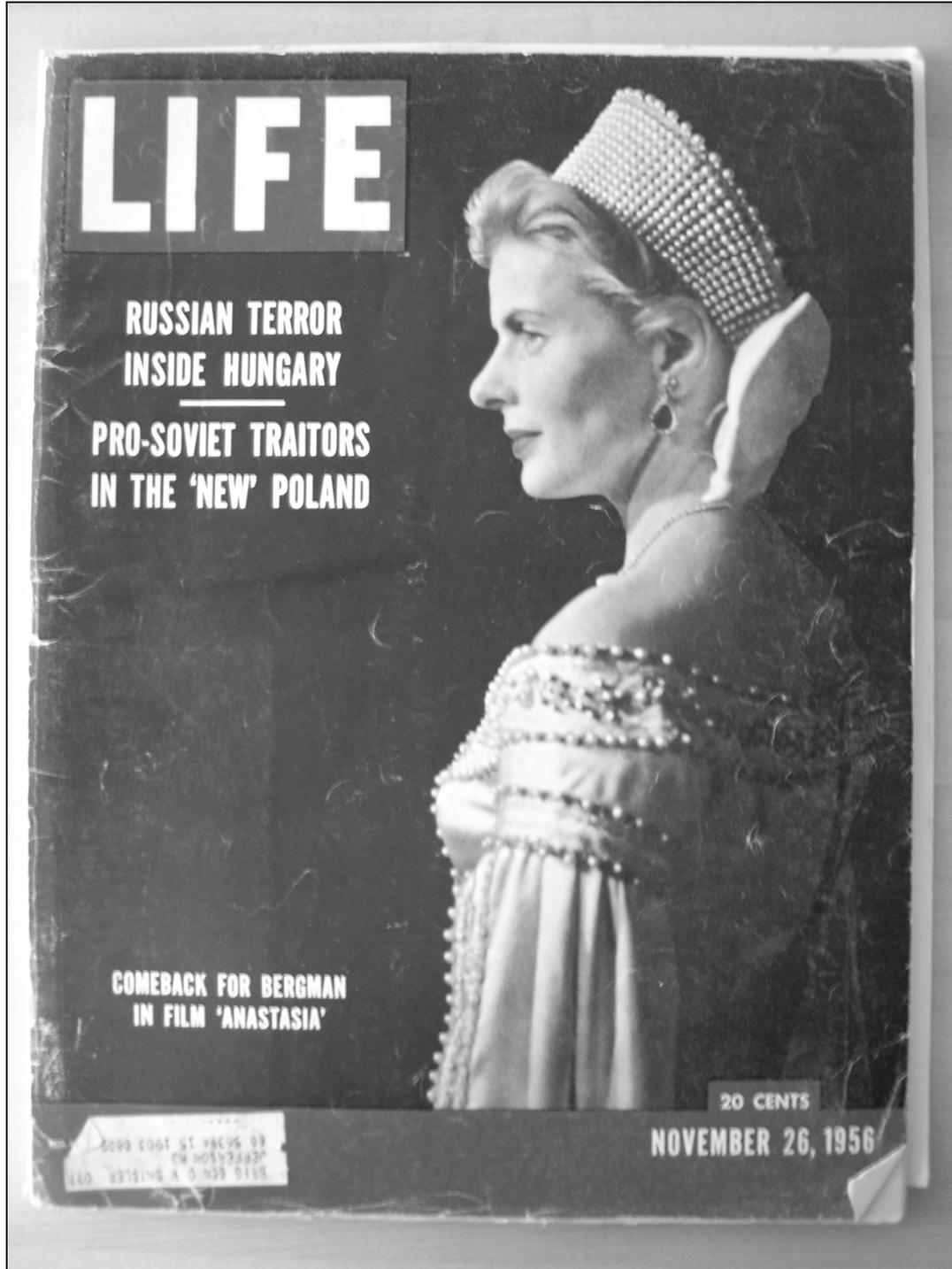


Figure 3: Bergman in *Anastasia* (1956).

the issue's central headlines signal that her return to American cinema, while perhaps interesting to *Life's* readers, is by no means the most politically important event covered in that week's issue. Rather, it is the focus on the Soviet repression of populist Hungarian and Polish attempts to overthrow the Communist leadership in those countries to which Bergman's picture seems, upon first glance, to refer.³⁸ This famous color image is a medium close-up of Bergman's left profile set against a black background, and the placement of text on the cover seems as if she (as Anastasia) is looking, perhaps scornfully, perhaps resignedly, at the only two headlines that grace the coveted space directly underneath the title of the magazine: "Russian Terror Inside Hungary" and "Pro-Soviet Traitors in the New Poland." It is only by reading down to the cover's lower left-hand corner that the reader learns, via a headline in a font approximately half the size as that which announced the recent events in Hungary and Poland, that Bergman is in a new film.

With this issue, *Life* magazine was continuing its on-going coverage of political and military developments in Eastern Europe. On November 5, readers were invited to consider whether or not the "crisis" in the Soviet Union's satellite states signaled "new cracks in the Red Empire" while learning about the "desperate fight for freedom" against the U.S.S.R. taking place in Poland and Hungary. In the next issue

³⁸ At the Twentieth (Communist) Party Congress in February 1956, Soviet General Secretary Nikita Khrushchev gave his famous "secret speech" detailing Josef Stalin's crimes against the party and against the national interests of the Soviet Union, effectively acknowledging that there were many potential paths to communism and that the U.S.S.R. was but one of them. This slight loosening of the ideological tether by which the Soviet Union held its satellite states in Eastern Europe opened the door for rebellion against communist rule in Poland. Relative success there incited popular rebellion in Hungary, which the Soviet military forcefully and decisively crushed on November 4 and 5—two days before the U.S. presidential election in which incumbent Republican Dwight D. Eisenhower ran against (and defeated) Democrat Adlai Stevenson. For more information, particularly concerning the connection between events in Eastern Europe and the simultaneous Arab-Israeli crisis and the meaning of these international events for U.S. domestic politics and U.S.-Soviet relations, see Lafeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War*, 189-201.

(November 12), readers had learned more about the popular rebellions by “patriots” against “tyranny” in Eastern Europe, and on November 19, an editorial entitled “To the Heroes of Hungary” had paid tribute to the lives and actions of those who fought against the Soviet Union during the height of conflict on November 4 and 5. The next week, November 26, *Life*’s photographs documenting the destruction wrought in Hungary by Soviet forces accompanied by an exclusive first-person account of the conflict seem misplaced in an issue devoted not only to Bergman’s role in *Anastasia*, but also to the impending Christmas shopping season.

As evidenced by this issue of *Life* magazine, 1956’s *Anastasia* was inextricably bound up in the political culture of the cold war. After all, it had been just three years since the execution of accused Soviet spies Julius and Ethel Rosenberg,³⁹ and the infamous House Committee on Un-American Activities would not be abolished until 1975. The coverage of Soviet brutality in Hungary alongside the return of Bergman in a film about a missing Russian princess tortured by the Bolsheviks appears, at first glance, to be at odds with the issue’s rhetorical positioning of the annual Christmas shopping season as a normative rite of passage for all Americans. However, the issue draws successfully on a host of cold war cultural codes to implicitly create a meta-narrative (while simultaneously confirming that which already existed) not only about the Soviet Union’s continued use of violence and force—even against noncombatants—in the name of communist expansion, but also about the ascendancy and superiority of the U.S. (capitalist)

³⁹ Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, U.S. citizens and members of the U.S. Communist Party, were executed in 1953 after having been found guilty of conspiracy to commit espionage. It was believed that it was they who enabled the Soviet Union’s acquisition of atomic technology. I discuss this in greater detail in chapter 6.

system, which allegedly permits the unencumbered practice of religion (the material reality of American-style Christmas and the fictionalized depiction of Russian Orthodox Easter converge in *Anastasia*), the copious availability of a wide variety of consumer goods, and the freedom to and means by which to purchase them. *Life's* coverage of *Anastasia's* premier serves to remind the magazine's readers that, according to the U.S.-based narrative upon which U.S. foreign policy toward the U.S.S.R. was based in 1956, violence and tyranny are endemic to the Soviet Union while, conversely, the United States is committed to protecting, celebrating, and, where possible, recovering the rights and freedoms lost by those, represented by Bergman's *Anastasia*, who have suffered at the hands of that system.

Ignoring the new information about the death of the imperial family learned in the early 1990s, Twentieth Century Fox's animated *Anastasia* deviates very little from the plot of its 1956 predecessor. After a brief prologue in which the Russian Revolution is depicted as the result of a curse leveled upon the royal family by the film's villain Rasputin,⁴⁰ the audience is introduced to an amnesiac Anya as she leaves the bleak Soviet orphanage in which she has been raised and embarks on a journey, both personal and geographical, to learn the details of her forgotten past. This quest is at the core of the film's narrative and is sustained via two overarching themes, both of which are apparent in the film's opening moments. The first of these is the importance of the heteropatriarchal nuclear family. The tsar was the "Little

⁴⁰ Because of his apparent ability to "heal" the Tsarevich Alexei's bouts of hemophilic bleeding, Grigori Efimovich Rasputin became a counselor and close confidante of Tsarina Alexandra Feodorovna.

Father” (*Batiushka-Tsar*) of the Russian empire,⁴¹ and the destruction of the royal family creates easy, although never explicitly defined, villains for Twentieth Century Fox’s fairy tale of the missing Russian princess. The first few minutes of the movie, for example, feature a little girl dancing with her father at a ball in honor of the Romanov dynasty’s tercentenary, and the audience is informed through the elderly voice of an as-yet-unseen female narrator (actor Angela Lansbury) that “[t]here was a time not very long ago when we lived in an enchanting world of elegant palaces and grand parties. The year was nineteen hundred and sixteen and my son, Nicholas, was the tsar of imperial Russia.” Forgetting for the moment that 1916 was neither the year of the Romanov tercentenary nor of the October Revolution, the narrator’s affirmation of imperial Russia’s splendor and of the close familial relationship with her son and the little girl, her granddaughter, Anastasia, provides for the audience a context within which to situate politically and historically the depicted events as well as to identify the film’s heroes and villains.

This narrative of the unnamed, unseen Bolsheviks as destroyers of blissful domesticity is one of the movie’s key presuppositions, bolstered early on by a long, lingering shot of an animated adaptation of what is arguably one of the most famous portraits of the royal family and a slow zooming in of the camera on a little girl accompanied by the voice of the Dowager Empress proclaiming: “So many lives were destroyed that night. What had always been was now gone forever. And my Anastasia, my beloved grandchild... I never saw her again.” Anya’s central objective

⁴¹ For more on this, see Goscilo and Lanoux, introduction to *Gender and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Russian Culture*.

throughout the film is to learn who she is and to find her family, goals that are made quite clear in the song, “Journey to the Past”:

Somewhere down this road
I know someone’s waiting.
Years of dreams just can’t be wrong!
Arms will open wide,
I’ll be safe and wanted
Finally home where I belong.
Well, starting now, I’m learning fast
On this journey – to the past.⁴²

Not only does Anya find both her identity and her grandmother in Paris, she also finds heterosexual love with one of her Russian traveling companions, a former servant of the Romanovs, and, like Bergman’s Anastasia in 1956, relinquishes her title and the Romanov fortune for it.

Anastasia’s second overarching theme, the rhetorical construction of Russia—conflated in this movie with the Soviet Union and all things communist (although the word “communist” is not used at all)—as a site of absence, loss, and suffering in contrast to the abundance and gaiety of 1920s Paris, reveals that dominant structures of feeling in the United States concerning Russia in the post-Soviet period are not all that different than they were at the height of the cold war. The title sequence features the glittering golden domes of St. Petersburg’s famous Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ⁴³ rising above luminous white clouds as the

⁴² “Journey to the Past,” lyrics by Lynn Ahrens (TCF Music Publishing, Inc., 1997).

⁴³ Known colloquially as the Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood (Храм Спаса на Крови), this church, modeled after the much older St. Basil’s Cathedral in Moscow, marks the spot on which Tsar Alexander II was assassinated in March 1881 by members of the populist revolutionary group The People’s Will. Ironically, Alexander II was a moderate reformist, having liberated the serfs in 1861, but his assassination resulted in a conservative backlash during the reigns of his son, Alexander III (1881-1894), and grandson, Nicholas II (1894-1917), that brought down the Romanov dynasty.

orchestral music swells and the film's title, "Anastasia," appears majestically in the font commonly used in the global West to replicate Old Church Slavonic, explicitly linking Anastasia and the royal family to the ancient traditions and mysticism of the Russian Orthodox Church as it is imagined in the global West. The camera then slowly pans down below the dazzling white cloud cover to reveal an industrialized, polluted Leningrad in the dead of winter, 1926. Ten years have passed since the opening of the film and the lyrics to the first song, "A Rumor in St. Petersburg," unambiguously reveal the film's politics and, hence, its place within the cold war triumphalist narrative:

St. Petersburg is gloomy!
St. Petersburg is bleak!
My underwear got frozen standing here all week!

Oh, since the revolution,
Our lives have been so gray!
Thank goodness for the gossip that gets us through the day!⁴⁴

The frozen "bleakness" of industrial Leningrad is in stark contrast to the warm spring and festive atmosphere that greets Anya and her traveling companions when they reach Paris. As they travel from East to West, the color palette of the film changes from drab browns and grays to lush primary colors, which match the color palette of the movie's opening scenes depicting the opulence of imperial Russia. Thus, by focusing on the *style* of aristocracy rather than on the political and historical contexts of the Russian Revolution (e.g., the fact that the institutions and structures on which the empire was built were disintegrating, as evidenced by the 1905 revolution, Russia's catastrophic defeat by Japan in the Russo-Japanese War that same year, and

⁴⁴ "A Rumor in St. Petersburg," lyrics by Lynn Ahrens (TCF Music Publishing, Inc., 1997).

its inability to mount an effective defense against Germany during World War I), the film invites a nostalgia for imperial Russia as an authentic “home,” which, when the film was released in the U.S., was helped along by the marketing of Nicholas and Anastasia Barbie-style dolls, thus reifying the structures of kinship at work in the film. The off-screen violence of the revolution destroyed Anya’s family, so she must literally travel West in order to find “home, love, family.” Also proof that a capitalist economy trumps communism is Anya’s new wardrobe, because, “Where better to shop,” the film asks with its frenzied montage during which Anya visits Chanel and Gucci, “than in Paris?”

In this movie, it is clearly the West, represented by Paris, and *not* her native St. Petersburg, that “holds the key to [Anya’s] heart.” In its reliance on the imperialist rhetoric that is constitutive of cold war triumphalism, 1997’s animated *Anastasia* and the historical Anastasia both serve as focal points from which to examine how geopolitical struggles for self-determination and political legitimacy are played out on cultural stages and, in this case, also on the body of a dead teenage girl whose material remains were, during the movie’s respective releases in the U.S. and Russia in November 1997 and March 1998, lying in fragments in an Ekaterinburg morgue awaiting reburial more than eighty years after her execution.

A Reflection of U.S. Russia Policy

During the 1990s, one of the major debates among legislators and foreign policymakers on Capitol Hill was a concern for how to (re)define “ourselves” as a national body politic in a world without the Soviet Union, which had for so long

(according to American national governing myths) been the clear economic, military, and political opposite/antagonist of the United States. The strategies by which the U.S. worked to reconstitute itself in the wake of this conundrum of national identity lies is reflected in 1997's *Anastasia*, which operates as a socio-political allegory for U.S.-Russian relations during the 1990s: In 1991, the Russian state was (as in 1917) unable to prevent the disintegration of its empire and, as a result, lost its masculinist credentials as a geopolitical power broker. Thus, discursively relegated in the U.S.-made *Anastasia* to the status of a bewildered female orphan trying to find her way "home" to American-style capitalist democracy, Russia needs to be "rescued" from the havoc caused by seventy-four years of communist rule. As a means of reconstituting the United States' own masculinist global performance in a decade in which it had no clearly definable enemies, the Russian Federation became in U.S. political and popular culture doubly ontologized as Other—both feminine and foreign—and distinctly not the "we" of the American nation. And, ostensible, it was through cultural globalization and economic "reforms" that the U.S. would be able to "rescue" Russia.

The film, then, is a lens through which to read U.S. Russia policy during the 1990s, which was the consequence of an American nationalist hubris justified by the United States' alleged "victory" in the cold war. Derisively labeled the "tutelage approach" by journalist and political scientist Stephen Cohen,⁴⁵ the Clinton administration's plan empowered U.S.-based pundits, politicians, and policymakers to paternalistically teach Russians how to create for themselves an American-style

⁴⁵ Cohen, *Failed Crusade*, 11.

capitalist democracy. Broadly, it aimed for nothing less than the immediate and total transformation of the new country's state-based economy and one-party political system in order to bring it into a global community of democratic nation-states. The theoretical rationale was that democracies would not, by virtue of their shared interests, go to war against each other; therefore, growing the number of democracies around the world would lessen the chances for large-scale military conflict. Thus, using as their foundation legislation passed in the last months of the George H. W. Bush administration (the provisions of which I discussed at length in chapter 3), President Bill Clinton and his advisors marshaled a post-Soviet U.S. foreign policy, colloquially referred to as the Clinton Doctrine, whose aim was to ensure democratic alliances through the eastward expansion of NATO and increase foreign markets for U.S. goods and services.⁴⁶

But U.S.-led efforts to assist in Russia's economic and political transition to a capitalist democracy did not in any way meet Russian President Boris Yeltsin's expectations. Not only did the United States refuse to forgive Soviet debt (the bulk of which was assumed by Russia after 1991), but it refused to make its considerable financial resources available directly to Russian governmental institutions, preferring instead to provide assistance in the form of goods and services as coordinated by the United States Agency for International Development (U.S. AID) and contingent upon Russia's "progress" toward economic "reform" *as defined by U.S. officials*.⁴⁷ Yeltsin

⁴⁶ President William Jefferson Clinton, "Remarks to the National Townhall Meeting on Trade," 1998, http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/olc/dl/35282/14_2_clinton.html (accessed November 7, 2006); and President William Jefferson Clinton, "Remarks on United States Foreign Policy in San Francisco," 1999, http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/olc/dl/35282/14_3_clinton_foreign.html (accessed January 8, 2007).

anticipated considerable financial support akin to the Marshall Plan; what he got instead was:

1. Aggressive U.S.-led attempts to expand NATO into Eastern Europe, realized beginning in 1999 with the accession of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland (and, as of 2004, the former Soviet republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) against the express wishes of the Russian Federation.
2. A concern that the U.S. would withdraw from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (a threat on which President George W. Bush finally made good in 2001).
3. The growth of U.S. military presence on Russia's territorial borders as U.S. troops moved onto bases in the former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, which meant increased U.S. military expenditures (from \$260 billion to over \$300 billion in an allegedly post-cold war era) and profitable contracts for U.S. arms producers Boeing, Lockheed Martin, and Raytheon.⁴⁸
4. Increased U.S. political, economic and cultural hegemony throughout the former Soviet Union, particularly with regard to the export of American-style institutions and values via U.S. AID assistance programs and an influx of U.S. corporate giants such as McDonald's, Chevron, Proctor & Gamble, and Ben & Jerry's ice cream.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ For more information, see Chapter 2 in this dissertation as well as Paige Bryan Sullivan, *U.S.-Russian Relations: From Idealism to Realism* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2002); and Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*.

⁴⁸ For more information, see Lafeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War*.

Despite U.S.-led multilateral attempts to assist Russia's economic recovery and transition to capitalist democracy, conditions throughout the country continued to deteriorate until by March 1998, when *Anastasia* opened in St. Petersburg and Moscow, Russia's unemployment rate was at an all-time high, demographic and public health crises loomed large, and almost half the population was living in poverty.⁵⁰ As Goldgeier and McFaul make clear, however, although U.S. attempts at reform were largely rhetorical, and its restricted financial support was sorely inadequate for such a large country, these circumstances also mean that Russia's financial woes, including its August 1998 economic collapse, were by no means entirely, or even predominantly, the fault of U.S. policies in the region. But these details meant little to those in Russia who were struggling to make ends meet in the spring of 1998. By then, it had become increasingly clear to Russian officials that U.S. aid was contingent upon Russia's progress toward "democracy," "human rights," and "free-market economy" as defined by U.S. policymakers. Because post-Soviet Russia had continuously fallen short of U.S. expectations in these areas, U.S. material support for reforms was significantly less than what was promised in the wake of the Soviet Union's demise, and almost a decade's worth of U.S.-led multilateral attempts at economic, technical, and political assistance, combined with Russia's own efforts to reconstitute itself, had resulted in the degeneration of Russian civil society.

⁴⁹ House Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, *United States Policy toward the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)*, 102nd Cong., 2nd sess., January 21, 1992 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992); House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *U.S. Post Cold War Foreign Policy*, 102nd Cong., 2nd sess., May 6, 13, 14, 20, and 21, 1992 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992); House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The Future of U.S. Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era*, 102nd Cong., 2nd sess., February 6, 19, 20, 25, March 5, 24 and April 30, 1992 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992); and the Freedom Support Act. For more information, see Sullivan, *U.S.-Russian Relations*; and Wedel, *Collision and Collusion*.

⁵⁰ Shorrocks and Kolenikov, "Poverty Trends in Russia during the Transition."

Widely considered the nadir of post-Soviet U.S.-Russian relations before the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in early 2003, the spring of 1998 was characterized by pervasive and increasing anti-Americanism caused by the confluence of three interconnected circumstances: (1) threats of NATO expansion eastward, (2) promised U.S. aid that had failed to materialize, (3) and the persistent influx of U.S. cultural products—including the premier of Twentieth Century Fox’s animated *Anastasia*, which purported to tell the story of the most famous member of Russia’s last royal family, in a country where, eighty years earlier, the “real” Anastasia’s execution had taken place.⁵¹ During its 1997-1998 theatrical release in the U.S. and Russia, *Anastasia* could not help, given the prominence of the impending Romanov burial in Russian national politics, but implicitly recall the violence and brutality of the Bolsheviks at a time when communism had been discredited as a colossal failure and the Soviet Union as aberrant, a deviation from what would have been, were it not for the Bolsheviks, the unimpeded historical development of the Russian Empire. The film thus presented a direct challenge to Russia’s ownership of Anastasia’s ghost.

1997’s *Anastasia* relies on the discursive notions of kinship and heterosexualized gender constructs constitutive of the Clinton Doctrine, which emphasized the patriarchal United States’ ability to assist a nascent Russia. Featured at the beginning of the film wearing the imperial military garb that the historical Nicholas II wore in his most famous official portraits, the film’s animated tsar joyously lifts his daughter into his arms, dancing effortlessly with her across the parquetted palace floor. This act of fatherhood, in combination with Nicholas’s

⁵¹ Andrei Tsygankov, *Whose World Order?*

uniform and medals (an unambiguous visual representation of his alleged military prowess), implicitly conflates the political and military security of empire with the familial protection allegedly provided by fathers within the dominant heteropatriarchal nuclear family paradigm. Empire is thus made equivalent to family. But since that family, along with the Russian Empire, is destroyed, the film makes clear to its viewers that Nicholas II, the *Batiushka-Tsar*, was unable to protect either his daughter or his empire from the violence of the Bolshevik Revolution. Similarly, since post-Soviet Russia, in its failed performance of masculinity, was/is so clearly unable to protect its own people from hardship, *Anastasia* posits that it is the global West, particularly the United States, that should step up to the plate in this regard. Fundamentally a children's movie, *Anastasia* does not delve explicitly into policy debates about what sort of assistance, how much, and when, but its narrative and visual pedagogy does make a solid case for the superiority of the global West over "bleak," "gloomy" Russia.

Reckoning with the Ghost

Released in the U.S. in November 1997 and in Russia the following March, Twentieth Century Fox's ahistorical animated *Anastasia* unintentionally embraces, reflects, and promotes the neocolonial rhetoric utilized in the Congressional hearings that resulted in 1992's Freedom Support Act, thus revealing how pervasive (and persuasive) this rhetoric had become. The film conflates post-Soviet and imperial Russia, arguing via its chief female protagonist that Russia should be "rescued" from an unidentifiable but violent rabble (the Bolsheviks) that, broadly, destroyed a

splendid and luxurious way of life and, more specifically, shattered the domestic bliss enjoyed by Anya and her family. Anya's quest for "home, love, [and] family" constitutes the movie's primary plot, and the narrative's fused embodiment of each respectively as a specific geographical location (Paris), family (the Romanovs), and time (a romanticized imperial Russia) establishes Anastasia's rightful "home" in the global West with her grandmother and the other aristocrats of the Russian Orthodox émigré community who continue, according to the film, to live lives steeped in the fantastic style and opulence of the Russian imperial court. Consequently, this animated *Anastasia*, based on a romanticized nostalgia for a loving, close-knit nuclear family—signified in the film by Anya's relationship with her father, Tsar Nicholas II, and her paternal grandmother, Dowager Empress Marie Feodorovna—traffics in an imperial nostalgia that not only glorifies the Russian Empire, but concomitantly denigrates that which replaced it.

As simultaneously a reflection *and* performative component of the triumphalist mythscape, the movie casts Russia, the site of Anya's horrific past (and conflated with the Soviet Union and all things communist), as an antagonist to the heroic West, which is the location of Anya's future as constituted by her grandmother, the Russian émigré community and her young (heterosexual) love interest. That eighteen year-old Anastasia Nicholaevna was executed along with her family in 1918 is evidence within the film's narrative contribution to the triumphalist mythscape of the callous depravity of communism, communists, and the Soviet Union (all conflated with post-Soviet Russia) that results in the material existence of the mutilated corpses of women and children. Simultaneously, the myth of

Anastasia's escape to the West justifies the story the United States tells itself about its alleged "victory" in the cold war. It allows the United States to gain and retain prominence as the justifiable winner of that conflict because it, unlike Russia, is able to protect those same "womenandchildren" from the civil liberties and human rights violations of which the Soviet Union and, now, the Russian Federation have been deemed guilty.⁵²

Similarly, the strategies used by Anastasia International to market their commodity—Russian and Ukrainian women—to Western men echo the anti-Russian sentiments of not only the congressional hearings that led to 2000's Trafficking Victims Protection Act, but also the contentious debate on Capitol Hill over U.S.-Russia policy—both of which took place largely after the catastrophic collapse of Russia's economy in 1998. But, unlike *Anastasia*, the anti-Russian rhetoric deployed on the company's websites differentiates the post-Soviet experiences of Russian women from those of post-Soviet Russian men and explicitly blames the latter for the destitution that has caused the former to search for husbands in the West. This differentiation operates concomitantly (1) to allay potential clients' suspicions that the agency and the women it is peddling are frauds, and (2) to evoke potential clients' empathy for the women's collective plight as the simultaneous victims of poverty at the hands of the failed, emasculated post-Soviet Russian government and (often) violence at the hands of inebriated Russian men who have proven unable to negotiate the transition from communism to capitalist democracy. According to Anastasia International, for example, Russian women have suffered so much since the demise of

⁵² Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, 24.

the Soviet Union that there is no fee charged them for using the company's matchmaking services. The company's own research has revealed that the women listed on their site make, on average, "about 1600 rubles per month, an equivalent of about \$59." Consequently, Anastasia International "would much rather let the lady spend her money on a new dress, than pay a fee for using [its] services."⁵³ What is understood here is that the money spent on the new dress would ostensibly be in preparation for meeting the Western man who is reading these informational materials provided by Anastasia International to assure its potential clients of the matchmaking company's veracity—as well as that of the women for which it hopes to facilitate East-West marriages.

The company assures its potential clients that Russian women believe in "traditional values and desire to devote themselves to the man of their dreams. [...] They expect their man to be the head of the family."⁵⁴ "Furthermore," Anastasia International contends, "Russian women look for what's positive in a man. They don't care about your looks, or possessions; they care about your personal qualities. They look for sensitivity, trust and understanding." The apparent lack of these qualities in Russian men, in combination with "the sharp increase in regional wars [particularly Russia's continued military engagement in the breakaway Islamic republic of Chechnya], alcoholism, smoking, stress and suicide," has, according to Anastasia International, left post-Soviet Russia devoid of marriageable men. And, the website continues, because the life expectancy of Russian men is some twenty years

⁵³ Anastasia International, <http://russianbrides.com/faq1.htm>, par. 13; accessed March 4, 2008.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, par. 7.

less than that of Russian women, “[t]here are currently over 20 million more females than males living in the territory of the former U.S.S.R..” Accordingly, not only are there few men in Russia, but there are few *men* in Russia; that is, Russia has, both literally and figuratively, been entirely depopulated of masculine men with the ability and/or willingness to support families.⁵⁵ Thus emasculated, the Russian Federation and its male citizenry can no longer “protect” and “provide for” the women living within its territory, and Western men who *can*, by virtue of their economic prosperity and geographical location in the global West, are justified in picking up the slack left by their failed Russian counterparts. This interpretation is validated by Anastasia International, which points out that because “Western men offer [them] more security and stability,” “Russian women believe that men living in North America make better husbands than [sic] Russian men.”⁵⁶ The implicit message embedded in this rhetoric is that neither the agency nor the women listed could possibly be fraudulent given the colossal failures of Russian masculinity, at both federal and local levels, that have apparently forced thousands of women, encumbered by poverty and (often) violence, to make the decision to leave Russia by searching for Western husbands with whom they can make their homes in the West.

This narrative bolstering the legitimacy of East-West matchmaking, however, also makes explicit use of Anastasia’s ghost to evoke among its potential clients a

⁵⁵ Just short of a year after Russia’s August 1998 economic collapse, *New York Times* journalist Paul Lewis assessed the high social and human costs of Russia’s transition to capitalism. For him, “the most striking feature” has been the stark decrease in the ratio of men to women throughout Eastern Europe. According to a UN report, young and middle-aged men are “missing” as a result of the decline in men’s life expectancy due to increased suicide rates, poor health care, and rising drug addiction and crime. Paul Lewis, “Road to Capitalism Taking Toll on Men in the Former Soviet Bloc,” *New York Times*, August 1, 1999, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed June 5, 2007).

⁵⁶ Anastasia International, <http://russianbrides.com/faq1.htm>, par. 9; accessed March 3, 2008.

nostalgia for the opulence, grandeur, and traditional gender roles of imperial Russia by offering a clear transposition of the myth of Anastasia that, like 1997's animated *Anastasia*, is updated for a post-Soviet world. First, as Tanya Osipovich points out, marriage to a Russian woman is a plus for an American man because her culturally intelligible whiteness "would not produce outsiders' immediate suspicion regarding the character of their matrimonial arrangement." Secondly, marrying a Russian woman enables a Western man to live out his own fairy tale in which he, the noble prince, rescues his Russian "princess" from the poverty caused by incompetent and ineffectual (male) Russian government officials and violent, inebriated Russian men.⁵⁷ In the United States, however, marriage to a princess may well be desirable for some, but remains virtually impossible given American society's historical lack of hereditary aristocracy. Thus, an opportunity to live out the utopian fantasy of a fairy tale as depicted in *Anastasia* and via the marketing strategies of *Anastasia International* is, for most American men, their only chance at conceptualizing themselves as both a dashing, heroic prince and as an integral part of U.S. Russia policy. Within the context of American nationalism, the fairy tale of an East-West marriage takes on a potentially triumphalist connotation in which "rescuing" a down-and-out Russian "princess" through heterosexual marriage is part and parcel of a post-Soviet U.S. foreign policy that emphasizes American beneficence, which, in turn, serves as proof of capitalist democracy's superiority.⁵⁸ And by selecting a Russian woman as his bride, an American man is able to serve his country through

⁵⁷ Osipovich, "Russian Mail-Order Brides in U.S. Public Discourse," 233.

⁵⁸ Within an American nationalist context, the fairy tale also promotes heterosexual marriage as a constitutive element of U.S. foreign policy.

heterosexual marriage to a beautiful, compliant, traditionally feminine Russian woman. Heterosexual marriage to a Russian woman thus represents not only the perfect attainment of (male) utopian fantasy, but also serves, metaphorically, as the best hope for harmonious post-Soviet U.S.-Russian relations.

Thirdly, a concerted effort by Anastasia International to differentiate the experiences of Russian women not only from Russian men, but also from American women, limits the wide range of available gender performances within American culture by reifying normative gender roles. Virile, nationalistic notions of American masculinity are glorified, while contemporary performances of American femininity, made possible by the suffragist and feminist movements of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, are explicitly denigrated. According to Anastasia International, “Russian women are affectionate, family oriented, and unlike American women, comfortable with their femininity.” They are eager to please, have no interest in competition or careers, and, the international matchmaking industry promises, are content to stay at home and raise children without making unreasonable demands for non-essential material goods.⁵⁹ Similarly, as I have shown, the animated *Anastasia* relies on gendered symbols and kinship structures, particularly the importance of the heteropatriarchal nuclear family, to reify traditional gender politics.

Consequently, these contemporary Russian “princesses,” informed by Anastasia’s ghost, become what feminist theorist Susan Bordo terms a “text of femininity” that is constitutive of historical constructions of gender which are “always homogenizing and normalizing, erasing racial, class, and other differences

⁵⁹ Anastasia International, <http://russianbrides.com/faq1.htm>, Par. 7.

and insisting that all women aspire to a coercive, standardized ideal.” As she is narratively and visually depicted in 1997’s *Anastasia* and on Anastasia International, Grand Duchess Anastasia Nicholaevna Romanova becomes “a graphic text for the interpreter—a text that insists, actually demands, that it be read as a cultural statement” about normative gender roles within the context of U.S.-Russian relations in the 1990s.⁶⁰ In both these post-Soviet cultural texts, Anastasia becomes the victimized *femme fragile* whom the United States must rescue from her tragic death in the name of democracy, freedom, and human rights. This narrative indicates that one of the ways in which the United States sought to revision itself in the absence of its cold war antagonist (the Soviet Union) was through a cultural deployment of Anastasia’s ghost, first, to create a feminized representation of Russia in the United States and, second, to ground post-Soviet U.S.-Russian relations within the framework provided by heteropatriarchal marriage and kinship structures. This celebrates a form of American triumphalism rooted in a nostalgia for empire and implemented via the Clinton administration’s vigorous attempts to remake post-Soviet Russia’s political and economic systems in the image of the United States.

Paradoxically, despite the importance of Anastasia’s ghost to Russian and American nationalist narratives and as an allegory for U.S. Russia policy during the 1990s, the transnational hypervisibility of the mythic Anastasia as a site of ideological contestation has relegated the historical Anastasia to *invisibility*. The iconic publicity still photograph of Ingrid Bergman as Anastasia that served as the cover of *Life* magazine’s November 26, 1956 issue has an explicit antecedent: an

⁶⁰ Susan Bordo, “The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity,” in *Unbearable Weight* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 168-169.

official photograph of the “real” grand duchess dressed in the traditional costume of the Russian imperial court, likely taken in honor of the Romanov tercentenary in 1913 when Anastasia was thirteen years old (figure 4). This photograph was also very clearly the basis for Anya’s court regalia in 1997’s animated *Anastasia*, as evidenced by the design of the dress worn by the doll marketed as part of the movie’s wide U.S. release in the fall of 1997 (figure 5). These images can help tell the gendered, heteropatriarchal story of U.S. Russia policy in the 1990s, which operated within the same cold war triumphalist cultural framework out of which 1997’s *Anastasia* emerged. Twentieth Century Fox’s 1997 animated version of the story would not



Figure 4: Thirteen year-old Grand Duchess Anastasia, 1913



Figure 5: Anya's ball gown

have been possible were it not for the critical and popular success of its predecessor. Thus, there is a direct and credible link between the 1913 photograph of the teenage grand duchess, 1956's image of Bergman as Anastasia, and the animated 1997 version with its corresponding three dimensional Barbie-style doll. In this chronological succession of imagery, the "real" Anastasia is gone and, with her, the "real" causes of the Russian Revolution. They are replaced in the American triumphalist narrative by U.S.-based fictionalized accounts of the myth—proven false since the early 1990s—of Anastasia's escape from a Bolshevik firing squad, and a nostalgia for empire that ignores the gender-, race-, and class-based injustices of imperialism.

Similarly, with the demise of the Soviet Union and the concomitant ascendancy of the internet as a site of transnational communication and exchange, it is hardly surprising that Anastasia International, Inc., whose only quantifiable articles of trade are Russian women, should choose a name with such specific connotations to Russia's imperial past. To peddle the site's wares to wary Western men, the historical Anastasia necessarily disappears and, with her, the political and economic turmoil of the Russian Empire. Instead, what remains is an idealized American triumphalist nostalgia for the *style* and grandeur of an empire (allegedly) prematurely eradicated as a result of excessively violent revolutionary upheaval and civil war that included the brutal death of the *Bat'iushka-Tsar* and his family and the ascent of a totalitarian regime that was, for more than half of the last century, rhetorically constructed as a serious security threat to the national sovereignty of the United States and its allies abroad.

Throughout the cold war, the rhetorical bellicosity of the United States was matched by that of the Soviet Union, and both countries relied on the material existence of their enormous nuclear stockpiles as a means of mutual assured destruction (MAD). After the Soviet Union's 1991 collapse, though, the United States' dichotomous rhetorical strategy, reliant upon nationalist notions of "us" versus "them," could no longer be used to mobilize a unified nationalist political culture, and American pundits and policymakers were forced to envision U.S. national identity not in terms of the *existence* of the Soviet system, but in terms of its absence and failure. The recurrent "rescue" of Anastasia by the U.S. as depicted in 1997's *Anastasia* and in the marketing strategies of Anastasia International signals popular discursive

attempts in the 1990s to revision the Russian Federation as both the victim and the perpetrator of its own crimes. Both texts reflect the operationalization in the Freedom Support Act of narratives of kinship and domesticity that constitute nationalist struggles for power, sovereignty, and political legitimacy, but Anastasia International goes further than *Anastasia* by arguing explicitly that Russia's male leaders are responsible for both the demise of the Soviet Union and the country's continued failure to live up to U.S. expectations of progress toward capitalist democracy and human rights (as defined in U.S. terms), while Russia's women were left with emasculated, ineffectual men unable to cope with the economic hardships that accompanied the transition to a free-market economy.

As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, this is the American triumphalist trope as it developed in the late 1990s. Thus, in their exploitation of the symbols of Russia's imperial past for capitalist gain, the two cultural texts that I have interrogated in this chapter, Twentieth Century Fox's 1997 *Anastasia* and the websites of Anastasia International, deploy Anastasia's ghost as a metaphor for post-Soviet U.S. Russia policy by implicitly casting the emasculated Russian Federation as an antagonist to the heroic West. This deployment also reveals a nostalgia for the grandeur of imperialism by making a revered sepulcher for Russia's imperial past out of the brutal death of a teenage girl. And the material existence of the historical Anastasia's publicly accessible tomb in St. Petersburg's Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul continues to guarantee the operation of her ghost embedded in the highly politicized histories to which it always already refers. Perhaps even more importantly, though, the recurring prevalence of Anastasia's ghost, which operates transnationally

as a sort of morality tale about the gendered consequences of violence and death, calls into question the fitness of Russian men to “save” Russian women, thus reifying the configuration in contemporary U.S. popular and political culture of a heroic American masculinity whose cold war “victory” has resulted in an obligation to save a feminized Russia from its emasculated doppelganger.

CHAPTER 6

“It’s a Cold War Mentality:” U.S.-Russian Relations on *The West Wing*

“Your paranoia was a lot sexier back when you guys were communist, Nad’ya.”¹

Regardless of the many different approaches to theorizing the origins and mechanisms of nationalism, which I discuss in chapters 1 and 2, each argues that the maintenance of nationalism relies upon “the centrality of nationalist *story-telling*, on the evocative narrative of the links between the past, present and future,”² making popular media crucial to contemporary nationalist projects. And because visual technologies have become so ubiquitous, particularly through the globalization of film and television, images have displaced words as the central makers of meanings and identities.³ Visual imagery is thus performative in that, like other texts of other genres, it “generates meaning through a set of signifying practices which constitute the object of knowledge.”⁴ In other words, film and television texts are performances that make belief about the things, people, places and events they depict.⁵ The

¹ President Josiah Bartlet to the Russian Ambassador in “Galileo,” *The West Wing*, DVD, directed by Alex Graves, November 29, 2000 (Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2004).

² Bell, “Mythsapes,” 66, italics in original.

³ Chris Barker, *Television, Globalization and Cultural Identities* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1999).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 60; and Shohat and Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism*.

historical inextricability of filmic technologies from the European and U.S. imperialist projects of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries means that television, as film's descendent, is inherently embedded in nationalist storytelling as a prominent circulator of a national mythology "based on generalization and deliberate simplification and packaged into easily comprehended and reproducible narratives."⁶ Contemporary popular media thus operate within and as part of nationalism to create [...] an artificial though nonetheless real symbolic order that operates to provide not information but confirmation, not to alter attitudes or change minds but to represent an underlying order of things, not to perform functions but to manifest an ongoing social process.⁷

Consequently, contemporary national mythscapes are largely constituted by televisual imagery, and television (as both technology and performance) has become an integral pedagogical tool through which nation-states recount and circulate their own stories about themselves and their Others.⁸

One technique by which this nationalist process of identity-making occurs, and with it the identification of "us" and "them," is in the illustration and fictional depiction of international relations in film and television. As foreign relations historian Robert W. Gregg demonstrates, films (and, as I will argue in this chapter,

⁵ Performance Studies theorist Richard Schechner defines "make belief" as the process by which a performance "create[s] the very social realities [it enacts]." Schechner, *Performance Studies*, 35.

⁶ Shohat and Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism*; and Bell, "Mythscapes," 77.

⁷ J. Carey, *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society* (Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 19; quoted in Liesbet van Zoonen, *Feminist Media Studies* (London: Sage Publications, 1994), 37.

⁸ See Bell, "Mythscapes"; Baker, "Repairing Relations with Russia"; and Shohat and Stam, "From the Imperial Family to the Transnational Imaginary."

television series such as NBC's long-running primetime ratings powerhouse *The West Wing*) have the potential to "enhance our knowledge of international relations." Not only do "they dramatize the abstract ideas and the mundane events" so that major geopolitical events like war and espionage "can be brought more vividly to life on the screen than on the printed page or in the lecture hall," but audiences also have the potential to become "armchair participants" in the action of international politics, because "directors are able to stage the action and bring us ever so much closer to it." Most importantly for my purposes here, however, is that in an attempt to make the story have meaning for general audiences, filmic—and televisual—narratives tend to condense the complex, abstract concepts of international relations, such as sovereignty, violent conflict, human rights, nationalism, and the balance of power, so that entire countries, groups, ideas, and political movements are personified by particular characters within the narrative structure of the text.⁹

The work of George Gerbner makes clear that good and efficient use was made of this strategy in the depiction of U.S.-Soviet relations on U.S. television during the latter part of the cold war. According to his analysis of images from the Cultural Indicators data bank of annual network samples housed at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School, along with their archive of television scripts, U.S. prime-time television was the chief offender in promulgating frequent and largely negative stereotypical images of the Soviet Union and its citizens for U.S.-based audiences. In his analysis of 44 programs with 103 Soviet characters between 1976 and 1991, Gerbner reports that there were more Soviet men than women (a ratio of

⁹ Robert W. Gregg, *International Relations on Film* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 3-4.

three to one), no children or elderly people, and five general categories of characters: KGB/security personnel/spies, diplomats, ballet dancers, sports figures, and scientists. Two-thirds of Soviet men and nearly as many Soviet women depicted on primetime television “play[ed] out the roles of hunter and hunted, but, as Gerbner rather sarcastically reports, “[t]his being American television, most of the hunters fail, and their prey escape to ‘freedom’” in the global West.¹⁰

Gerbner thus concludes that “[t]he image of Russians throughout the 1970s and 1980s is largely frozen into a frigid Cold War [sic] formula.”¹¹ Linking a November 1985 *New York Times* survey in which 28 percent (i.e., more than a quarter) of those polled believed that the U.S.S.R. was an enemy of the U.S. during the Second World War to what media mogul Ted Turner, in the May 17-23, 1989 issue of *Variety*, called “hate films,”¹² Gerbner points out that, because the U.S. televisual media is a major producer and provider of images of foreign nationals for American audiences, the knowledge that most Americans (including policymakers) have about Russia comes from the media. And because U.S. media outlets are largely sympathetic to U.S. government policies, they depict foreign countries in the way that the government wants them to, using information gleaned predominantly from

¹⁰ Gerbner, “The Image of Russians in American Media and the ‘New Epoch,’” 33.

¹¹ Ibid. In a study appearing in the same anthology, which grew out of a conference on American and Soviet media images held in Moscow during the summer of 1989, communications scholar Everette Dennis identifies nine broad thematic areas on which U.S. media portrayals of Russia seemed to focus during the cold war: superpower competition, Soviet leaders, Soviet history, foreign policy conflicts, Soviet science and culture, civil liberties, sports, Soviet women, and the peaks and valleys in U.S.-Soviet relations. Interestingly, these are the themes that continue to dominate U.S. news coverage and popular media depictions of the Russian Federation.

¹² Included in Turner’s list were *Rambo* (1982), *Invasion USA* (1952 and 1985), *Red Dawn* (1984), *The Hunt for Red October* (1990), and the miniseries *Amerika* (1987).

government sources,¹³ thus putting to political use for nationalist projects the fictional narratives and visual imagery of film and television. Given television's embeddedness in those nationalist projects, the dramaturgical strategy of creating one character to stand in for an entire country (the Soviet Union), group (the KGB), or socio-political system (communism) serves to reinforce a historically constructed international social order in which the gendered and racialized discourses of colonialism are wielded explicitly to privilege some groups of people while denigrating the nation-state's Others.¹⁴

Although ostensibly a "post-cold war" text, NBC's hit dramatic show *The West Wing* (1999-2006) utilized this cold war-era dramaturgical strategy in its own depiction of post-Soviet U.S.-Russian relations throughout the series. Like most filmic and televisual narratives that incorporate international politics, *The West Wing* (whose title refers to the administrative wing of the White House in Washington, DC, where most of the series' action takes place), reinforces the dominant conventional/realist perspectives of U.S. foreign policy in which nation-states are the central actors, and conflict between them is conceptualized as inevitable. The series also relies mightily on the right(eous)ness of an idealized United States and its

¹³ See Dennis, et al., *Beyond the Cold War*. U.S. media's support of U.S. government policies is hardly new, nor is the nationalist performativity of the narrative created by that support. According to feminist literary scholar Virginia Carmichael, the information presented by government officials during Department of Justice press conferences concerning the Rosenberg case was taken and printed unquestionably as "truth" by U.S. media outlets, resulting in what she terms a "tyranny of meaning" in which alternative narratives about the Rosenbergs were not (and are not) possible. Virginia Carmichael, *Framing History: The Rosenberg Story and the Cold War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 6.

¹⁴ Shohat and Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism*.

fictional policymakers, all of whom are senior west wing staffers, thus “reflect[ing] America’s best image of itself.”¹⁵

Interestingly, though, while *The West Wing* is undoubtedly nationalist at its core, scholars contend that the show often exceeds the narrow parameters of American political discourse. Patrick Finn, for example, argues that “[p]art of the show’s motive seems to involve an attempt to define a new political mythology.” Similarly, political scientist Samuel Chambers asks if it might not be “possible to locate within the conception of political dialogue presented by [*West Wing* creator and principle writer from 1999-2003 Aaron] Sorkin a certain alternative vision of democracy, a vision that exceeds the current scope of American politics.” Even communication scholars Shawn and Trevor Parry-Giles, whose work on *The West Wing* focuses on the construction and ideological meaning of the U.S. presidency, argue that despite the series’ overt reinforcement of an American nationalism that is profoundly gendered, racialized, and militaristic, *The West Wing* frequently challenges these “existing conceptions of U.S. nationalism” and tends “to offer a multi-faceted sense of U.S. national identity.”¹⁶

As an ardent fan of *The West Wing* since its premier in September 1999, I, like these scholars, have been alternatively frustrated and exhilarated by the show’s

¹⁵ John E. O’Connor, and Peter C. Rollins, introduction to *The West Wing: The American Presidency as Television Drama*, ed. Peter C. Rollins and John E. O’Connor (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 13.

¹⁶ Patrick Finn, “*The West Wing*’s Textual President: American Constitutional Stability and the New Public Intellectual in the Age of Information,” *ibid.*, 120; Samuel Chambers, “Dialogue, Deliberation, and Discourse: The Far-Reaching Politics of *The West Wing*,” in *ibid.*, 86; and Trevor Parry-Giles and Shawn Parry-Giles, *The Prime-Time Presidency: The West Wing and U.S. Nationalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 14 and 16. See also Trevor Parry-Giles and Shawn Parry-Giles, “*The West Wing*’s Prime-Time Presidentiality: Mimesis and Catharsis in a Postmodern Romance,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88, no. 2 (2002): 209-27.

political indecision, particularly with regard to its fictionalized depiction of U.S.-Russian relations. Interestingly, the unique intersection of the self-professed progressive political ideologies of the show's creative team with contemporaneous U.S. political culture simultaneously produced an overarching meta-narrative reminiscent of cold war-era rhetoric in which a feminized Russia remains elusive, enigmatic, and potentially threatening to U.S. national security (thereby reifying Russia as feminized Other to—and, therefore, the principle geopolitical antagonist of—the United States), while individual episodes seem to advocate specific changes to “real-life” U.S. Russia policy that, if made, would force a measure of self-reflexivity in the formation and implementation of that policy.

As a sociopolitical allegory, *The West Wing* tells a particular story about Russia within a specific socio-historical context and with the histories and legacies of the cold war still fresh in the minds of its U.S. audience.¹⁷ But the valence of this story necessarily shifted during the run of the series to suit the changing needs of the story the United States tells about itself between *The West Wing*'s U.S. premiere in September 1999 and its final episode in May 2006. My task in this chapter, then, is to map the fictionalized depiction of U.S.-Russian relations on *The West Wing*, whose seven-year run was bifurcated by September 11, 2001. Through a feminist discursive analysis of several relevant episodes, I demonstrate that before that date the popular weekly drama offered a critical perspective on the major post-Soviet political,

¹⁷ Feminist theorists Bonnie Thornton Dill, Maxine Baca Zinn, and Sandra Patton refer to “the political narratives embedded in public policy agendas” and their popular culture media representations as “sociopolitical allegories” that give political meaning to representation and argue that such cultural products must be deconstructed in order to learn their pedagogical/dramaturgical/performative strategy(ies). Bonnie Thornton Dill, Maxine Baca Zinn, and Sandra Patton, “Race, Family Values, and Welfare Reform,” in *A New Introduction to Poverty: The Role of Race, Power, and Politics*, ed. Luis Kushnick and James Jennings (New York: New York University, 1999), 264.

diplomatic, and military events and issues by subtly giving voice to alternative policy directions and possibilities, even as it utilized the gendered Russian imaginary so prevalent in U.S. popular and political culture. But after 9/11 and the advent of the “war on terror,” storylines concerning Russia, already gendered, were explicitly linked with Islamic fundamentalism.

The West Wing and U.S. Political Culture

Created by self-proclaimed political leftist Aaron Sorkin, who wrote or co-wrote most of the episodes in the first four seasons, *The West Wing*, which presents a fictionalized depiction of the conduct of U.S. politics from inside the White House, a dominant and high-profile site of U.S. domestic and international policy-making, utilizes dramatic plots that often reference, parallel, and/or were analogous to recent “real-life” events and situations. The first two seasons, in particular, are rife with storylines obviously inspired by consultant and former Clinton administration press secretary Dee Dee Meyers’ contributions concerning events within the Clinton White House—despite Sorkin’s continued insistence that he does not model his characters and scenarios from “real life” events.¹⁸ Sorkin is also considered a “master of miracles out of chaos” for his ability to dramatize contemporary events with speed and efficiency, often resulting in *The West Wing*’s rapid response to geopolitical developments.¹⁹

¹⁸ For more on this, please see Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles, *The Prime-Time Presidency*; and O’Connor and Rollins, introduction to *The West Wing*.

¹⁹ John A. Levesque, “Aaron Sorkin is a Man of Many Words,” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, March 7, 2000, <http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/tv/sork07/shtml> (accessed March 28, 2005). For example, in the third season opener, “Isaac and Ishmael,” which aired for the first time on October 3, 2001—just three

At the height of its popularity, and especially after Republican George W. Bush became president in January 2001, *The West Wing* served as a semi-contemporaneous alternative to the conservatism of U.S. politics, and Sorkin was widely lauded as “the country’s loyal opposition” to a president for whom 52 percent of eligible U.S. voters did not vote.²⁰ A good part of the series’ unprecedented popularity rested, then, upon the fortuitous convergence of events and personalities that resulted in what was widely considered a constitutional crisis in U.S. presidential politics. After winning the first of its four consecutive Emmy Awards for Best Drama in September 2000, the critically successful show began to attract a wide popular following. At the same time, its ensemble cast, led by the ardently anti-Bush Hollywood movie star Martin Sheen as fictional U.S. president Josiah Bartlet, a liberal New Hampshire Democrat with a Ph.D. in economics, stumped for Democrat presidential hopeful Al Gore during his highly contentious and controversial election campaign against Bush in the fall of 2000.²¹

weeks after September 11, 2001—west wing senior staffers, trapped in a lock-down triggered by a security breach, discuss the histories and consequences of terrorism with a group of high school students.

²⁰ Tad Friend, “West Wing Watch: Snookered by Bush,” *The New Yorker*, March 3, 2002, http://www.newyorker.com/printable/?talk/020304ta_talk_frien (accessed March 17, 2005).

²¹ For more information on Sheen’s political activities and affiliations, see Finn, “The West Wing’s Textual President”; and O’Connor and Rollins, introduction to *The West Wing*.

According to journalist John Levesque, television critics polled by the trade publication *Electronic Media* in spring 2000 ranked *The West Wing* first ahead of then-audience favorites, *The Simpsons*, *ER*, and *Friends*. But by fall 2000, the show had found its niche with television viewers and had reached the Neilson Top 10. “Aaron Sorkin’s Smart Women Always Seem to Get Dumber,” *Seattle Union Record*, November 22, 2000, <http://b4a.healthyinterest.net/news/000032.html> (accessed March 17, 2005). Given the series’ narrative lean to the political left, it is interesting to note that according to *Hollywood Reporter*, viewership of *The West Wing* was, at least in its early years, evenly split between Republicans and Democrats. This, Patrick Finn contends, means that *West Wing* viewers have in common not their political ideologies and affiliations, but their socio-economic status: In the fall of 2000, *The West Wing* was the number one most watched television program in households making over \$100,000 per year. Finn, “The West Wing’s Textual President,” 118-119.

Additionally, by the end of the 1990s, when *The West Wing* was being developed for television, two issues converged in U.S. popular and political culture that made the series' foreign policy focus on U.S.-Russian relations almost inevitable. First, the cold war, "the dominant meta-issue of international relations" for more than forty years, was "rapidly fading into history, the magnitude of its impact on the lives of hundreds of millions of people increasingly hard for a new generation to imagine."²² Second, as I discussed in chapter 4, U.S. policymakers and pundits were embroiled in a hotly-contested debate over what went wrong in Russia, a country into which the U.S. and its global partners had injected billions of dollars since 1991 in the form of assistance packages designed to foster democratic institutions and a free-market economy. On Capitol Hill, Democrats blamed Republicans, Republicans blamed Democrats, and everyone blamed the Clinton administration, particularly Vice President Al Gore, whose mid-decade bilateral meetings with Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin appeared to have amounted to very little in the face of the August 1998 collapse of Russia's economy, its continued sale of conventional weaponry to Iran, and unremitting incursions by the Russian military into Chechnya, an Islamic republic approximately the size of Connecticut on Russia's southeast border. Thus, given Sorkin's concern for and ability to incorporate into *West Wing* episodes contemporary political events and issues, along with his access to information provided by consultants Meyers, Peggy Noonan (former senior advisor to Ronald Reagan), and Marlin Fitzwater (press secretary in the Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations), it comes as no surprise that U.S.-Russian relations

²² Gregg, *International Relations on Film*, 5.

constituted a significant portion of the series' narrative, particularly in seasons two and three, during which *The West Wing's* major foreign policy concerns paralleled the historical shift from a concern for democracy-building and economic transition in Eastern Europe, which had dominated U.S. foreign policy throughout the late 1980s and 1990s, to terrorism and Islamic fundamentalisms after 9/11.

Gendered Discursive Configurations

Despite its status as a “post-cold war” text, *The West Wing* in no way deviated in its depiction of U.S.-Russian relations from the cold war-era narrative strategy that assigned particular characters to stand in for entire countries, groups, political movements, or ideologies. A grand total of ten Eastern European (i.e., former Soviet) characters show up in *West Wing* episodes, all of whom function dramaturgically as representatives of various Eastern European political factions.²³ Three are educated and socially influential Belorussian men seeking the advice of U.S. legal scholars in drafting their country's first post-Soviet constitution;²⁴ one is a pro-capitalist Ukrainian legislator who arrives intoxicated for his previously-scheduled low-level meeting at the White House and demands to speak with the president. Arriving with him is a Ukrainian woman, whom one of show's protagonists surmises is “either a security attaché or a hooker.”²⁵ The remaining five Eastern European characters are

²³ Given the oft-made discursive conflation in the Western media of “Soviet” with “Russian” with “Eastern European,” I have enlarged my analytical scope in this chapter from a particular focus on Russia to a broader consideration of the portrayal of Eastern European characters more generally.

²⁴ “The Wake-Up Call,” *The West Wing*, DVD, directed by Laura Innes (February 9, 2005; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2006).

²⁵ “The Lame Duck Congress,” *The West Wing*, DVD, directed by Jeremy Kagen (November 8, 2000).

Russian: First to appear is the Russian ambassador to the United States, played by British actor Charlotte Cornwell,²⁶ followed by two men negotiating the details of an upcoming U.S.-Russia summit on behalf of (fictional) newly-elected Russian President Peter Chigorin (who, although a recurring character, never appears onscreen), and anti-Chigorin journalist Ludmilla Koss.²⁷

As inextricably embedded in the televisual legacies of the cold war as *The West Wing* was, the show was also certainly not immune to the importance of gender as a category of identity in contemporary U.S. culture. Despite its puzzling reputation for its “depiction of strong women in powerful roles,” *The West Wing* “articulates a specific vision of [American] nationalism ordered by gender roles and historically rooted gender norms.”²⁸ This was a common critique leveled against the series in general and principle writer Sorkin specifically,²⁹ and it is borne out in the gendered narratives *The West Wing* uses to tell its fictionalized story of U.S.-Russian relations. Just as in Gerbner’s examination of cold war-era prime-time televisual texts, the ratio of male to female Eastern European characters in *The West Wing* is slightly more than three to one: seven of the ten are men, and just three are women. Yet, it is the women, rather than the men, who represent ideologies and groups that are, from the point of view of the “real-life” United States government, the fictional Bartlet administration, and U.S.-based *West Wing* viewers, essentially negative and in opposition to U.S. foreign policy goals.

²⁶ “Galileo.”

²⁷ “Enemies Foreign and Domestic,” *The West Wing*, DVD, directed by Alex Graves (May 1, 2002).

²⁸ Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles, *The Prime-Time Presidency*, 16.

²⁹ See, for example, Levesque, “Aaron Sorkin’s Smart Women Always Seem to Get Dumber.”

In its frequent attention to U.S.-Russian relations, *The West Wing* presented fictionalized narratives often inspired by “real-life” events and issues confronting the two countries to both respond to and posit its own theories about the direction of Russia’s post-Soviet political evolution and the success (or not) of U.S. policies in the region. Consequently, just as U.S. legislators were concerned throughout the 1990s with the possibility that latent but powerful conservative forces in Russia and throughout Eastern Europe could potentially topple political and economic reform efforts there, *The West Wing* joined that debate by manipulating U.S. cultural fears of and assumptions about femininity and masculinity to offer a brilliantly subtle cautionary tale about U.S. Russia policy. “Will Russia,” the tale asks, “finally become a capitalist democracy that engages diplomatically and economically with the global West? Or will the reform processes of the 1990s ultimately be defeated by latent conservatism?”

Given *The West Wing*’s nationalist idealism, the latter is never really a possibility—at least not within the fictional universe of the Bartlet administration, but cunning and argumentative female characters who represent feared retrograde political perspectives are offered up in its fictionalized depiction of U.S.-Russian relations as examples of the sorts of Russians with whom U.S. leaders would have to contend should U.S.-led reform efforts in Eastern Europe fail. These cantankerous and blatantly anti-American female characters exist in opposition to their befuddled male counterparts who, although overwhelmed by the sudden social and political changes they have endured since 1989, are supportive of U.S. (and the Bartlet administration’s) goals and objectives for Eastern Europe, including democratization,

nuclear non-proliferation, and the development of a global free-market economy. “Which would you rather have,” *The West Wing* seems to be asking its audience through its gendered assignation of particular qualities to its Eastern European characters, “a bewildered Russia in need of U.S. guidance and support as it works toward political and economic reform, or a Russia that is, like its antecedent the Soviet Union, quarrelsome, antagonistic, and deceitful?” The answer, of course, is obvious: Confused white men working for change—even if they do not exactly inspire confidence—are better than bad-tempered white women who, in their duplicity and aggressiveness, represent and put into practice the worst qualities (from a U.S.-based perspective) of the Soviet system.

Vassily Konanov as Boris Yeltsin: “Our Kind of Crazy”

This foregone conclusion is apparent in an early second-season episode featuring a thinly-disguised fictionalized depiction of former Russian President Boris Yeltsin, whose heavy drinking and resultant capriciousness were the cause of much consternation among U.S. President Bill Clinton’s staff throughout the 1990s.³⁰ Entitled “The Lame Duck Congress” for its central focus on President Bartlet’s continuing disagreement with congressional Republicans over ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty,³¹ the episode aired for the first time on

³⁰ Strobe Talbott, *The Russia Hand: A Memoir of Presidential Diplomacy* (New York: Random House, 2002).

³¹ The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, which bans all nuclear explosions, was opened for signature by the United Nations General Assembly in September 1996. Although the United States has signed the treaty, as of May 2008 the U.S. Congress had not yet ratified it. The Russian Federation has signed and ratified the treaty. UN rules require U.S. ratification of the treaty before the treaty can take affect. For more information, please see <http://www.ctbto.org>.

November 8, 2000—the day after election day in the United States—and was the first of six *West Wing* episodes to feature a plotline concerning Russia and/or Eastern Europe.³² Although I am well aware of the potential pitfalls that come with explicitly assigning authorial intentionality, given writer/creator Sorkin’s and the cast’s (and, consequently, the series’) ideological lean to the political left, along with the “real-life” U.S. political context within which *The West Wing*’s second season was readied for and launched on primetime television in the fall of 2000, one possible interpretation of “The Lame Duck Congress” is as a measured response to the critiques of Clinton’s Russia policy leveled by Governor George W. Bush of Texas against Democratic nominee Vice President Al Gore throughout the notoriously contentious 2000 presidential campaign. The episode argues that, although Eastern European reformers are admittedly “crazy,” they are “our kind of crazy”; therefore, the United States should stay the course in Eastern Europe. This means not only the maintenance of multi- and bilateral aid as outlined in the Freedom Support Act of 1992 and subsequent related legislation (which I discussed in detail in Chapter 3), but also the continued support of political leaders who demonstrate support for U.S. goals and objectives—including, by November 2000, former Russian President Boris Yeltsin and his hand-picked successor, the then-enigmatic Vladimir Putin.

U.S. ratification of the treaty was one of the top foreign policy goals of the Clinton administration, but Republicans refused to move forward on it until changes were made to the 1972 U.S.-Soviet Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty enabling the United States to build a national missile shield that would guard against long-range attacks. Russia’s opposition to a U.S. missile shield made those changes unlikely. Eric Schmitt, “Democrats Ready for Fight to Save Test Ban Treaty,” *New York Times*, August 30, 1999, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed September 2, 2007).

³² In order of original airdate, the six episodes are: “The Lame Duck Congress” (November 2000), “Galileo” (November 2000), “Somebody’s Going to Emergency, Somebody’s Going to Jail” (February 2001), “Enemies Foreign and Domestic” (May 2002), “Evidence of Things Not Seen” (April 2003), and “The Wake-Up Call” (February 2005).

Sorkin's skillful use of narrative in combination with the widespread media coverage of particular "real-life" events enabled "The Lame Duck Congress" to operate in November 2000 as a site of public pedagogy in which the Clinton administration's attempts at political and economic reform in Eastern Europe are overtly validated. The episode's secondary plotline utilizes Ukraine as a dennotative stand-in for Russia, and the White House visit of intoxicated, irrational Ukrainian parliamentarian Vassily Konanov is loosely based on Yeltsin's first visit to the United States in 1989, just after he had won a seat in the Congress of People's Deputies of the U.S.S.R.. The official issue on that occasion, as reported by George H.W. Bush administration press secretary Marlin Fitzwater (who, by 2000, was enjoying his private sector career as a consultant on *The West Wing*), was one of protocol: Should U.S. President George H.W. Bush agree to meet with Yeltsin, then a relatively low-ranking and often vociferously oppositional member of the Soviet Union's legislative body, the White House would risk giving the impression that it was either retreating from its official support of Soviet Premier Gorbachev's reform policies or "trying to provide a platform for dissent."³³

This is precisely the issue at stake in "The Lame Duck Congress," and writer Sorkin makes clear via several successive scenes early in the episode that Konanov, who has been invited to the White House to meet with the president's advisors on the Balkans, is, under no circumstances, to do anything *but* that. In the episode's first scene, for example, White House Press Secretary C.J. Cregg makes this point crystal clear to the press corps, and a bit later, after the daily meeting of the senior staff in the

³³ Paul Hendrickson, "Yeltsin's Smashing Day; Boris' Boozy Bear Hug for the Capitalists," *The Washington Post*, September 13, 1989, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed September 2, 2007).

Oval Office, President Bartlet confirms with Chief of Staff Leo McGarry that Konanov will not be taking any high-level meetings. Responding in the affirmative, Leo reminds the senior staff that “[i]f anybody happens to see Vassily Konanov in the hallways, walk in the other direction.” The episode’s early moments thus set up very clearly the fact that this as-yet-unseen Eastern European politician, although welcome at the White House, is not strategically important enough to the United States to merit a meeting with even a member of the senior staff, all of whom constitute the show’s protagonists and are thus the characters with whom *West Wing* audiences most readily identify.

A passing familiarity with Sorkin’s tendency toward the comically ironic, however, is enough for viewers to realize that the exact opposite of what is supposed to happen is likely to occur. Konanov’s imminent arrival at the White House is inauspiciously announced by Bartlet’s personal aide, Charlie Young, who reports to Deputy Chief of Staff Josh Lyman that, rather than attending his meeting with the president’s Balkan advisors as scheduled, Konanov is not only “sitting in the car in the driveway [and] refusing to get out unless he can speak to the president,” but he is also reportedly drunk. Viewers also learn that accompanying Konanov is a woman whose identity is so ambiguous that she could be either “a security attaché or a hooker.” Within a matter of seconds, and in direct violation of Leo’s directive that the senior staff “walk in the other direction,” Konanov becomes Josh’s problem, and the stage is set in this humorous episode for the inevitability that the drunk and bellicose Konanov, who spends his day at the White House yelling in a combination of Russian

and very bad English at whomever is within earshot, will somehow get precisely what he has asked for: A meeting with the president.

Just as his reputation for drunken irrationality and profligate behavior paves the way for Konanov's arrival at the White House in "The Lame Duck Congress," Boris Yeltsin's first visit to the United States in 1989 was "preceded by his reputation as a hothead with a conspicuous bad habit."³⁴ Yeltsin's manic schedule, rambling loquacity, and all-night drinking earned him a feature spot in the "Style" section of the *Washington Post*, in which he was described as not only a "radical legislator" and "political maverick," but also an "imbiber nonpareil."³⁵ This well-earned reputation stuck with him throughout his post-Soviet political career, and his prominent position as Clinton's chief partner in negotiating U.S.-Russian relations throughout the 1990s meant that his erratic behavior was often used in U.S. popular and news media to paint Russia—and Russian reformers—with a broad brush.³⁶

Three issues in particular dominated news headlines about Russia between July 1999 and the premiere of "The Lame Duck Congress" in November 2000. The first, which I discussed briefly in chapter 4, involved a scandal in which high-ranking Russian government officials were suspected of laundering billions of dollars in International Monetary Fund loans through the Bank of New York. This revelation, which implicated Yeltsin and several prominent U.S.-backed Russian politicians, prompted a U.S. congressional investigation into the successes and failures of the

³⁴ Talbott, *The Russia Hand*, 21.

³⁵ Hendrickson, "Yeltsin's Smashing Day."

³⁶ For more on the relationship between Clinton and Yeltsin and that relationship's affect on U.S.-Russian relations during the 1990s, see Talbott, *The Russia Hand*; and Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*.

Clinton administration's Russia policy.³⁷ However, although majority leader Representative Dick Armey (R-Texas) called Clinton's Russia policy "the biggest foreign policy failure since Vietnam,"³⁸ the anticipated campaign-season battle between congressional Republicans and the Clinton White House never materialized, and U.S. Russia policy remained essentially intact—with assurances from Treasury Secretary Lawrence H. Summers that specific safeguards, including audits of IMF loans, would be implemented in the future to prevent money laundering.³⁹

The second issue dominating news headlines about Russia was the generally strained state of U.S.-Russian relations. Not only was Russia still reeling from the U.S.-led military intervention in Kosovo and, with it, the material evidence of NATO expansion,⁴⁰ but Russia's unresolved military conflict with Chechnya as well as its unremitting consistency in refusing to agree to U.S.-proposed amendments to the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty were the source of much consternation in Washington.⁴¹ Clinton and Yeltsin reached a tenuous impasse in Beijing at the end of

³⁷ Celestine Bohlen, "Secrecy by Kremlin Financial Czars Raises Eyebrows," *New York Times*, July 30, 1999, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed September 2, 2007); "The Russian Money Trail," *New York Times*, August 31, 1999, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed September 2, 2007); and Eric Schmitt and Raymond Bonner, "Hearings on Russian Money Moves are Likely to be Partisan," *New York Times*, September 21, 1999, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed September 2, 2007).

³⁸ Eric Schmitt, "Treasury Chief Defends U.S. Aid to Russia, but Calls for Safeguards," *New York Times*, September 22, 1999, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed September 2, 2007).

³⁹ *Ibid.*; Schmitt, "Democrats Ready for Fight to Save Test Ban Treaty"; and David E. Sanger, "Russia Hotly Protests Audits Demanded by IMF for Loans," *New York Times*, September 27, 1999, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed September 2, 2007).

⁴⁰ John M. Broder, "Russian Premier Warns U.S. against Role as Policeman," *New York Times*, July 28, 1999, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed September 2, 2007) and James A. Baker, "Repairing Relations with Russia," *New York Times*, February 5, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed September 2, 2007). For information about why Russia opposed U.S. military intervention in Kosovo, see Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*; and Talbott, *The Russia Hand*.

1999 over Clinton's continued efforts to get Yeltsin to first acknowledge and then address the Russian military's alleged human rights violations in Chechnya. Having at last heard enough of what he interpreted as U.S. attempts to meddle in the sovereign affairs of Russia, Yeltsin is reported to have warned Clinton that Russia remains a great power with "a full arsenal of nuclear weapons."⁴² As a subsequent *New York Times* editorial put it,

President Boris Yeltsin of Russia is known for his occasional bombast, some of it playful, some angry, some merely erratic. But when the man who commands the largest nuclear stockpile in the world rattles that arsenal after he gives his vintage bear hug to President Jian Zemin of China, the scene is, at best, unsettling.⁴³

The third major news issue was the ascendance to the heights of Russia's political establishment of former KGB officer Vladimir Putin and, with it, the frequency and seeming impulsiveness with which Yeltsin appointed and then disposed of prime ministers.⁴⁴ The general tenor of this coverage focused on the

⁴¹ "Angry Yeltsin Reacts to Clinton Criticism," *New York Times*, December 10, 1999, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed September 2, 2007); Michael Wines, "Yeltsin Waves Saber at West; His Premier Speaks Softly," *New York Times*, December 11, 1999, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed September 2, 2007); Marc Lacey, "Clinton Wishes Putin Well and Brings Up Chechnya," *New York Times*, March 28, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed September 2, 2007); Jane Perlez, "U.S., Welcoming Russian Approval of Nuclear Arms Treaty, Says it Hopes for Further Cuts," *New York Times*, April 15, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed September 2, 2007); Patrick E. Tyler, "Clinton and Putin Meet at Kremlin with Wide Agenda," *New York Times*, June 4, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed September 2, 2007); and Marc Lacey, "Putin Bends Clinton's Ear Hoping to Halt Missile Shield," *New York Times*, July 22, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed September 2, 2007).

⁴² "Angry Yeltsin Reacts to Clinton Criticism."

⁴³ "Boris Yeltsin's Outburst," *New York Times*, December 10, 1999, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed September 2, 2007).

⁴⁴ Celestine Bohlen, "Yeltsin Dismisses another Premier; KGB Veteran is in," *New York Times*, August 10, 1999, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed September 2, 2007); Eric Schmitt, "Yeltsin

normalcy of unpredictability when dealing with Yeltsin's Russia and reiterated a U.S. State Department spokesperson's assurances that U.S. Russia policy, because it has been focused not on personalities, but on Russia's political and economic reform, would be unaffected by the latest government shake-up in Moscow.⁴⁵ This normalcy of unpredictability, however, did not stop the same reporter from posing the question, "Is Russian President Boris Yeltsin crazy?" After explicitly referencing Yeltsin's recent "zombie-like public appearances [that] reinforce fears about his state of mind," the article goes on to argue that, clinically speaking, Yeltsin is quite sane; however, lurking behind this façade is a desire to maintain his hold on power for as long as he possibly can.⁴⁶ Similarly, his surprise resignation (and concurrent appointment of Putin as acting president) on December 31, 1999, was described as "political theater," a "classic Yeltsin move—unpredictable but shrewd."⁴⁷

Given Yeltsin's prominence in negotiating U.S.-Russian relations throughout the first post-Soviet decade, it is significant that the Russian president's reputation in the global West was forged predominantly through a "prism of news clips" featuring "embarrassing shots of him toppling over at official ceremonies, frugging at a rock

Resigns: In Washington; Power Shift is Not Viewed as a Threat to U.S. Ties," *New York Times*, January 1, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed September 2, 2007); and Alessandra Stanley, "The World: Saying Goodbye; A Man Who Rode a Tank Became the Man on Horseback," *New York Times*, January 2, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed September 2, 2007).

⁴⁵ Bohlen, "Yeltsin Dismisses another Premier." Goldgeier and McFaul contend just the opposite, that congenial U.S.-Russian relations during the 1990s were heavily dependant upon personalities, specifically those of Clinton and Yeltsin. Strobe Talbott also, although quite implicitly, makes a case for the reliance of U.S. Russia policy on the personal involvement of Clinton to temper Yeltsin's penchant for theatrics. Additionally, Talbott points to the successful working relationship between U.S. Vice President Al Gore and Russian Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin during the Clinton-Yeltsin years.

⁴⁶ Celestine Bohlen, "The World: A Russian Who's Still Dancing as Fast as He Can," *New York Times*, August 15, 2000, http://www.lexisnexis.com (accessed September 2, 2007).

⁴⁷ Stanley, "The World: Saying Goodbye."

concert or recovering from heart surgery in a government dacha.” As the examples provided above make clear, these and other similar incidents were reported in U.S. print media, where U.S. readers learned that “Russians have also seen [Yeltsin] act out rituals that date back to the czars, shaking his finger at quaking local bureaucrats, ordering them to raise wages that Moscow had already cut back.”⁴⁸ According to news reports, it was not just when traveling abroad that Yeltsin’s behavior and decisions were erratic; he behaved irrationally at home in Russia, as well.

Consequently, it is hardly surprising that the overarching commonality between the three dominant Russia-related issues covered by the news media between July 1999 and November 2000 is a concern for Yeltsin’s penchant for capriciousness that is both sardonic and sincere. While Yeltsin’s erratic behavior and heavy drinking made for a good story and enabled an easy and unfortunate discursive conflation of Yeltsin, the Russian people’s international representative, with actual Russians in Russia, there was genuine concern in the media and among Washington insiders that the Russian president’s eccentricities would be the cause of some sort of worst case diplomatic or military debacle involving Russia’s hefty nuclear stockpile. With the specter of the August 1998 collapse of Russia’s economy lurking in the minds of U.S. policymakers, these new issues, along with the disclosure in October 2000 that Russia continued to sell conventional weaponry to Iran in violation of a 1995 deal between Gore and Chernomyrdin, cohered as clear evidence that, according to the most informed pundits, Russia remained at the end of the 1990s very much a threat to U.S. national security—despite billions of dollars in U.S. bi- and multilateral aid. This

⁴⁸ Ibid.

assessment opened the door first for Republican legislators on Capitol Hill to question Clinton's Russia policy⁴⁹ and, later, provided Republican presidential nominee George W. Bush solid ammunition during the contentious 2000 U.S. presidential election campaign with which to attack Gore, whose mid-decade work with Chernomyrdin was a key part of that policy.⁵⁰

It is possible, then, to read "The Lame Duck Congress" as *West Wing* writer/creator Aaron Sorkin's firm rejection of Republican-led critiques of Clinton's embattled Russia policy, particularly given the strategic incorporation into this election-season episode's plot of a "drop in" meeting between pro-Western Ukrainian politician Vassily Konanov and U.S. President Josiah Bartlet.⁵¹ Konanov, as Yeltsin did in 1989, does finally get his meeting with the president. After shuffling Konanov from office to office and still concerned about diplomatic protocol, Deputy Chief of Staff Josh Lyman appeals to his boss for help. Understanding that all reformist Konanov wants is to gain political capital within the context of Ukrainian domestic politics by being able to return home and say that he met with the U.S. president,

⁴⁹ Schmitt, "Democrats Ready for Fight"; Schmitt, "Treasury Chief Defends US Aid to Russia"; and Schmitt and Bonner, "Hearings on Russian Money Moves."

⁵⁰ R. W. Apple, Jr., "Bush Questions Aid to Moscow in Policy Talk," *New York Times*, November 20, 1999, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed September 2, 2007); John M. Broder, "Bush Leads G.O.P. Criticism of Gore over Russian Arms," *New York Times*, October 14, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed March 17, 2005); Bob Davis, "Gore is Criticized for Russian Arms Deal that Endorsed Sale of Submarine to Iran," *Wall Street Journal*, October 16, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed March 17, 2005); and David E. Sanger, "The 2000 Campaign: World Views, A Special Report; Rivals Differ on U.S. Role in the World," October 30, 2000, *New York Times*, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed May 1, 2005).

⁵¹ Unlike *The West Wing*'s fictional scenario, when Boris Yeltsin arrived in the United States in 1989 for his "will-he-ever-sleep, take-America-by-storm tour," he had not yet been invited to the White House. When the invitation did finally come, it was for a high-level meeting with National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft to which President George H.W. Bush would "drop by" for "no more than a minute or two." Afterwards, Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater reported that Bush ended up spending about fifteen minutes speaking with Yeltsin. Hendrickson, "Yeltsin's Smashing Day."

Chief of Staff Leo McGarry instructs Josh to orchestrate a “drop-in” in which Konanov will meet with a low-level White House staffer while President Bartlet, who just happens to be walking by, will “drop in” and talk briefly to Konanov.

Although there is no formal record of what transpired in George H.W. Bush’s “real-life” “drop in” meeting with Boris Yeltsin in 1989, the fictionalized televisual encounter on *The West Wing* between a U.S. president and a pro-Western (i.e. pro-democratic and pro-capitalist) Eastern European politician offers one possible scenario in which Konanov-as-Yeltsin asks, quite calmly and without theatrics, to discuss commercial landing rights, the World Trade Organization, and nuclear compatibility, all of which signal his pro-Western reform agenda. That Konanov, who spends his entire day at the White House shouting unintelligibly at everyone sent to placate him, saves his most rational moments for Bartlet gives *West Wing* viewers the opportunity to consider the likely possibility that what they have learned from the news media over the course of the past decade (i.e., between 1989 and November 2000, when “The Lame Duck Congress” originally aired) about Yeltsin’s drunken irrationality, his garrulousness, and his frequent political capriciousness may not, in fact, be the whole story, that perhaps what one journalist termed Yeltsin’s “Mad Czar” façade is a carefully crafted public performance quite often intended to appease his critics in Russia.⁵²

⁵² Bohlen, “The World: A Russian Who’s Still Dancing as Fast as He Can.” In his memoir, *The Russia Hand*, Clinton’s chief Russia expert, Strobe Talbott, frustration with Yeltsin’s public performance that was so in contrast to his private persona is a frequent topic, and, like several U.S.-based journalists who reported on U.S.-Russian relations throughout the 1990s, Talbott concludes that Yeltsin’s constant political battles in Moscow forced him to walk a narrow line between the concerns of (usually conservative) Russian nationalists and his supporters in the West.

Precisely because it utilizes televisual technology to present a fictionalized depiction of what might have transpired between Bush and Yeltsin in 1989, *The West Wing* is able to offer its audience a chance to learn about the “real” Boris Yeltsin, albeit through a double simulacra in which fictional Yeltsin stand-in Vassily Konanov is played by famous Russian actor Eugene (Yevgeni) Lazarev.⁵³ There is widespread agreement in “The Lame Duck Congress” that Konanov is “crazy,” and neither Chief of Staff Leo McGarry nor President Bartlet disagrees with that assessment. But Leo does defend the Democratic Bartlet administration’s Eastern European reform agenda (which mirrors that of the Clinton administration), arguing that, although Konanov (like Yeltsin) is undoubtedly certifiable, “he’s our kind of crazy.” So, just as Clinton stuck with reformist Yeltsin, Bartlet sticks with Konanov, because a “crazy” reformer prone to drunken flamboyance is, from the perspective of U.S. policymakers, significantly better than a communist/totalitarian dictator.

This election-season episode of *The West Wing*, the first of six in the series that specifically address U.S. interests in Eastern Europe, offers the most explicit endorsement by Sorkin of Clinton’s Russia policy in support of Democratic presidential hopeful Al Gore, and of the reformist agenda of Yeltsin and his hand-picked successor, Vladimir Putin. But it does so while reifying a conceptualization of post-Soviet Eastern Europe and its white male reformers as fools in the Shakespearean tradition who, through a combination of cunning and humor, “tickle,

⁵³ Renowned in the Russian Federation as the first actor to play Stanley Kowalski in a Russian-language production of American playwright Tennessee Williams’ *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Yevgeni Lazarev has an extensive resume as both actor and teacher in Russia and, most recently, in the United States, where, in addition to his work on *The West Wing*, he has been featured on primetime network television in *ER*, *24*, and *Alias*. His many honors include the coveted title, National Artist of Russia. “Yevgeni Lazarev,” <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0493738/> (accessed September 6, 2007).

coax and cajole their supposed betters into truth, or something akin to it.”⁵⁴ Sorkin and co-writer Paul Redford recycle this dramaturgical strategy in a third-season episode entitled “Enemies Foreign and Domestic,” which originally aired on May 1, 2002, in which White House Deputy Communications Director Sam Seaborn is charged with negotiating the logistics of an upcoming U.S.-Russia summit with two (white, male) officials from the Russian Embassy in Washington, DC. Although I will return later to a more fulsome analysis of this episode, it is enough to know for the moment that these two characters operate within the episode’s narrative structure as classic fools in the Shakespearean tradition: Their concern for seemingly irrelevant details (such as the presidents’ wardrobes and the U.S. first lady’s preference for shrimp over herring), in combination with their flagrant inability to use or understand colloquial English, operate concomitantly not only as the primary source of humor in this largely somber *West Wing* installment, but also as the pivot on which the episode’s narrative turns. In “The Lame Duck Congress” and “Enemies Foreign and Domestic,” *The West Wing* makes clear that the weighty responsibilities of political and economic reform in Eastern Europe are in the hands of well-meaning, but largely befuddled, elite white men, the result of which being that Yeltsin’s Russia, although gendered masculine, is represented on *The West Wing* as a particular performance of Eastern European masculinity that is pro-Western, yes, but potentially incompetent and ineffectual—an understanding already ubiquitous in U.S. popular and political culture through media coverage of Yeltsin himself.

⁵⁴ Mark Edmundson, “Bookend: Playing the Fool,” *New York Times*, April 2, 2000, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C04EEDE143DF931A35757C0A9669C8B63&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=all> (accessed May 13, 2008), par. 4.

Cold War Hold-Outs

In keeping with and reflective of the contemporaneous concern among “real-life” U.S. policymakers that powerful and increasingly popular conservative forces within Russia and throughout Eastern Europe could at least undermine, if not entirely derail, reform projects in the region, the version of Russian masculinity presented on *The West Wing*, along with the fragile Eastern European reform process it both represents and is responsible for, is continuously threatened by what one character refers to as the “cold war hold-outs, the ex-Soviets walking around,”⁵⁵ most of whom never actually appear as characters on *The West Wing*. But through a televisual depiction of just three of these anti-Western ideologues as culturally intelligible female-bodied characters whose physical appearance and overall demeanor identify them as *femmes fatales* in the classic Hollywood tradition, *The West Wing* warns its viewers that protecting U.S. interests in Russia means continued U.S. support for the reformers, regardless of their unpredictability and including newly-elected Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose pro-Western credentials were very much in question. The representation of Eastern European women in *The West Wing* as *femmes fatales* deviates little from what Glajar and Radulescu contend have been the largely negative representations of Eastern European women as “alluring, slightly Oriental or exotic temptresses with an edge of vampirism.”⁵⁶

⁵⁵ “Enemies Foreign and Domestic.”

⁵⁶ Glajar and Radulescu, introduction to *Vampirettes, Wretches and Amazons*, 6.

A familiar dramatic archetype “whose evil characteristics cause her to either unconsciously bring destruction or consciously seek vengeance,” the *femme fatale*’s origins “are intimately related to the biblical Eve and the narrative of the Fall in the book of Genesis.” Her “most striking characteristic” is that “she never really is what she seems to be.”⁵⁷ This destabilizing ambiguity operates as a foundation from which (usually male) painters, playwrights, novelists, filmmakers, and other creators of popular culture have historically drawn their inspiration for depicting the attendant characteristics that have become variously synonymous with the *femme fatale*: destructive curiosity, greed, temptation, sin, and rampant sexuality. This archetype functions dramaturgically as “an articulation of fears surrounding the loss of stability and centrality of the self, the ‘I,’ the ego.” As a result, “she harbors a threat which is not entirely legible, predictable, or manageable” and transforms “the threat of the woman into a secret, something which must be aggressively revealed, unmasked, discovered.” It is this characteristic that makes the *femme fatale* “fully compatible with the epistemological drive of narrative, the hermeneutic structuration of the classical text.”⁵⁸ In other words, because of the disruption to self-identity caused by her inherent ambiguity and potential for erratic changeability, the *femme fatale* shares the qualities of a literary or filmic narrative in that the entity whose self-identity has been disrupted is only able to reconstitute it by getting to the end of the story, by revealing the “truth” that lies beyond the surface ambiguity.

⁵⁷ Elizabeth K. Menon, *Evil by Design: The Creation and Marketing of the Femme Fatale* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 4; and Mary Ann Doane, *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 1.

⁵⁸ Mary Ann Doane, *Femmes Fatales*, 1-2.

On *The West Wing*, the ability of the show's protagonists and, through them, its viewers, to get to the "truth" of U.S.-Russian relations is hindered by the puzzling (and potentially duplicitous) ambiguity of three Eastern European woman characters (one is Ukrainian, two are Russian) who, in their varying degrees of bellicosity and indignation as demonstrated via their interactions with series protagonists, represent the sorts of personalities with whom the United States would be forced to deal should the men in charge of pro-Western political and economic reform efforts be ousted from power. As I mentioned above, the first of these *femmes fatales*, whom one of the senior staffers posits is either "a security attaché or a hooker," accompanies Ukrainian legislator Vassily Konanov to the White House in "The Lame Duck Congress." Deputy Chief of Staff Josh Lyman makes this assessment of who and what this woman is well before *West Wing* viewers have met her, and the discursive pairing of these two seemingly incongruous professions conjures for his fictional colleagues and the "real-life" viewing audience a gendered Russian imaginary reliant upon cold war-era assumptions about and Orientalist stereotypes of female KGB officers engaging in *sexpionage* as a means of accomplishing Soviet intelligence goals.⁵⁹ Thus, before meeting her, viewers already assume that this unnamed Eastern European woman must be white, relatively young, probably beautiful, and dressed provocatively, the result of which is that even if she does turn out to be *just* a security attaché, she constitutes a titillating combination of exoticism and the potential for (hetero)sexualized violence. When viewers do finally get a glimpse of her, she fulfills all their heteronormative fantasies—that is, until she scorns Josh's job title (i.e.,

⁵⁹ *Sexpionage* is the title of historian David Lewis' 1976 book on Soviet intelligence.

Deputy Chief of Staff) and rebukes him for using a “tone” with which to address Konanov, causing Josh to respond rather more in earnest than not, “Oh, how I miss the cold war.”

What is most interesting about the operationalization of the *femme fatale* archetype in “The Lame Duck Congress,” though, is that while this woman’s “true” identity is never explicitly revealed to either viewers or White House staffers (she is never referred to by name and is listed in the episode’s credits as “Russian Woman”), Chief of Staff Leo McGarry reveals in a brief conversation with the President’s personal aide Charlie Young that he believes that she is most likely a security attaché, which, of course, does not preclude the possibility that she may also use sex as a tool of her trade:

Charlie: The girl’s not bad looking.
Leo: Go to work.
Charlie: You think she knows how to kill me?
Leo: Yes.

The *ability* of this woman to kill Charlie reflects Soviet-era Soviet intelligence technologies, but because Konanov is a post-Soviet reformer, the *possibility* that she will do so is virtually non-existent—despite the fact that her negative treatment of Josh is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the hostility and violence of which she is capable if provoked. But Konanov remains in charge throughout, thus making clear to *West Wing* viewers the ability of post-Soviet Eastern European reformers to quell the potentially violent hostility of the more irrationally conservative tendencies of the Soviet era, represented in this episode by the (hetero)sexualized female security attaché.

Another of the “cold war hold-outs” depicted on *The West Wing* on November 29, 2000, just three weeks later, is the Russian ambassador to the United States, who appears in another election-season episode entitled “Galileo” in which fictional U.S. president Josiah Bartlet and Chief of Staff Leo McGarry attempt to track down the cause of a fire in a Russian oil refinery. Unlike the unnamed sex worker/security attaché in “The Lame Duck Congress,” however, the Russian ambassador is the only Eastern European character in “Galileo.” Whereas “The Lame Duck Congress” offers a point-counterpoint morality tale in which the potential for conservative politics accompanied by disruptive, (hetero)sexualized violence is contained as long as the white, male, pro-Western reformers, as confused as they may be, remain in charge, “Galileo” offers no such comfort to its viewers. In its depiction of the Russian ambassador as (by U.S. cultural standards) a conventionally beautiful, white, heterosexual woman who is hostile and argumentative, this episode trafficks problematically in a gendered imaginary that renders the Russian Federation ideologically “backward,” militarily ineffectual, and quite literally feminized via the televisual portrayal of its ambassador by a female-bodied actor, Charlotte Cornwell.

Simultaneously, however, “Galileo” is also a perfect example of the constant political tension manifest on *The West Wing* between ardent American nationalism and a critique of normative political culture and policymaking inside the D.C. Beltway. Although it does utilize the *femme fatale* archetype to symbolize and warn its U.S. viewers of the failures of select Russian reform efforts, particularly in the areas of nuclear non-proliferation and military restructuring, “Galileo” envisions a new direction for U.S. Russia policy in the post-Soviet period in which the United

States admits its own complicity in the cold war and acknowledges the need to come to terms with those mistakes in order to successfully work with its former adversary in the achievement of mutual geopolitical objectives in the twenty-first century.

With these two seemingly oppositional pedagogical projects at work within one episode, I am intrigued by the discursive links between the fictional world created in “Galileo” and the “real-life” politics of the historical moment in which the episode first aired. I wonder what difference it makes to the conceptualization of post-Soviet Russia in U.S. popular and political culture that, on *The West Wing*, the Russian ambassador is a woman. What and how does such a representation mean within the context of U.S.-Russian relations, particularly given that, in “real life,” a woman has never served as Soviet/Russian ambassador to the United States, or vice versa? What are the discourses in and around this episode that necessitated the part be written for a woman? And how is that woman, whom viewers are encouraged by the narrative to accept unquestioningly as the Russian ambassador, rhetorically situated within *The West Wing*’s depiction of high-stakes international diplomacy between two former(?) political and ideological adversaries?

Ubiquitous media coverage in the weeks immediately preceding the episode’s November 29, 2000 premier of the controversial U.S. presidential election between Gore and Bush notwithstanding, one likely reading of “Galileo” is as a critique by episode co-writers Kevin Falls and Aaron Sorkin of the U.S. response to the tragic deaths of 118 Russian naval personnel on Saturday, August 12, 2000, when the Kursk, a five-year-old Russian nuclear submarine, sank in the Barents Sea just north of Murmansk. U.S. news coverage of the disaster began three days later, when media

outlets first learned of it through Russian sources, and continued unabated until well into October. Early coverage amounted to little more than daily progress reports, first of delayed, then failed, Russian-led rescue missions, stormy Arctic waters, multiple refusals, and then—finally, four days later—reluctant acceptance by Moscow of NATO offers of assistance.⁶⁰ But once Western journalists were able to better piece together the slivers of available information, more reflective coverage focused on the Kursk as a powerful and effective metaphor. When it went into service in 1995, Russia’s latest and greatest nuclear submarine was, according to the *Boston Globe*, “proof, and a potent symbol, that Russia still had the military might to defend its interests around the world.” But when it plummeted to the bottom of the Barents Sea on August 12, it became

[...] a symbol of something entirely different: of Russia’s inability to keep its nuclear Navy maintained and its crews trained, and of the dangers this implies for the rest of the rusting fleet of ‘floating Chernobyls’ that make up the bulk of the country’s submarine force.⁶¹

Thus, the Kursk, simply the most recent in a long history of Soviet and Russian naval disasters, became a symbol of the weakened Russian military-industrial complex as well as the environmental and public health risks posed by deteriorating and/or

⁶⁰ Andrea Stone, “Subs in Peril in Russia’s Ragged Fleet,” *USA Today*, August 15, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed March 17, 2005); Daniel Williams, “Russian Sub Stranded on Sea Bottom; Navy Chief Voices Little Hope for More Than 100 Aboard Nuclear-Powered Craft,” *Washington Post*, August 15, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed March 17, 2005); Sabrina Tavernise with Christopher Drew, “Sunken Submarine Sends SOS as Russia Pushes Rescue Effort,” *New York Times*, August 16, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed March 17, 2005); and Patrick E. Tyler, “Putin Meets with Grieving Families of Sub’s Crew, Promises Payments for Ten Years,” *New York Times*, August 23, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed March 17, 2005).

⁶¹ David Filipov, “In This Navy, A Policy of Neglect; Aging Fleet Seen as Promising Disaster,” *Boston Globe*, August 21, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed March 17, 2005).

mishandled Soviet-era nuclear weaponry. According to one interview with former Soviet naval officer Aleksandr Nikitin, the “accident [sketched] a pretty accurate picture of the state of the navy.”⁶² And *San Francisco Times* science writer Carl T. Hall warned that “a much wider-ranging disaster may be unfolding with the slow decay of the Soviet-era war machine.” Citing low troop morale and a Russian military budget crisis, he chronicles the myriad health and environmental problems that will result should the radioactive materials from Soviet-era subs and the “hundreds of other old chunks of war apparatus that nobody is talking about” leak into the ocean. Hall’s article calls attention to a potentially catastrophic environmental and public health hazard that, when the Kursk went down in August 2000, had been on the back burner in various international policy arenas for more than a decade.⁶³ Meanwhile, new Russian President Vladimir Putin, who had been elected just six months before in what he in his inaugural address termed Russia’s first legal and peaceful transfer of power,⁶⁴ was being skewered in both Russian and English for remaining on vacation in the Crimean resort town of Soch’i during the first days of

⁶² Tavernise, “Sunken Submarine Sends SOS.” See also Christopher Drew, “A Sad Record of Submarine Disasters,” *New York Times*, August 16, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed March 17, 2005); Andrew Kuchins, “Russia’s Insecurity Complex,” *Washington Post*, August 21, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed March 17, 2005); and Dave Montgomery, “Submarine Tragedy Shows Diminished State of Russian Military,” *Houston Chronicle*, August 31, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed March 17, 2005).

⁶³ Carl T. Hall, “The Danger: Permanent Nuclear Nightmare; Contamination Remains Soviets’ Deadly Legacy,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 18, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed March 17, 2005); see also Margaret Coker, “Russian Navy’s Decay Not Just Threat to Readiness; Conditions Put Other Countries, Citizens at Risk,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, August 27, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed March 17, 2005); and James Clay Moltz, “The Kursk Was in Dangerous Company,” *New York Times*, August 29, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed March 17, 2005).

⁶⁴ “Putin’s Inaugural Address,” *New York Times*, May 8, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed September 2, 2007).

the crisis rather than making himself visible as the leader of a grieving nation.⁶⁵ In a rather surreal paradox U.S. media coverage of the goings-on in the Arctic Circle trumped even that of the Democratic National Convention, which was held that year in Los Angeles from August 14 through August 17. According to the *New York Times*, by late afternoon on the third day of the Democratic National Convention, most of the major networks and all of the internet news sites had drifted from the non-events in Los Angeles to the drama unfolding in the Barents Sea. Only ABC and the cable news channels continued to cover the convention as their lead story.⁶⁶ And given the focus of the U.S. news media from August well into the last weeks of October on the Kursk tragedy as an all-too-real example of the tenuous grasp Russia had on its own armed forces and nuclear arsenals, both presidential candidates, ironically, continued their dogged fixation on domestic issues in the last weeks of the campaign, virtually ignoring anything related to global events or to the impact those events would (or should) have on U.S. foreign policy.⁶⁷

Not even the Kursk tragedy, with its weighty symbolism, could persuade either candidate to break free of neo-realist assumptions about the U.S. “victory” in the cold war. This triumphalist mindset was conspicuously manifest in both candidates’ deft ability to talk superficially about how they would manage “nuclear

⁶⁵ Masha Gessen, “Comrade Putin, Taken at His Word,” *New York Times*, August 22, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed September 2, 2007); “The Kursk and the Kremlin,” *New York Times*, August 23, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed March 17, 2005); and Patrick E. Tyler, “Putin Proposes a System for International Help in Submarine Disasters,” *New York Times*, September 9, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed March 17, 2005).

⁶⁶ Rick Lyman, “The Democrats: On the Web – Political Surfing; Low Drama Convention Stirs Hunger for Punditry,” *New York Times*, August 17, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed March 17, 2005).

⁶⁷ Sanger, “The 2000 Campaign: World Views, A Special Report.”

rivals” China and Russia, while touting the seemingly incongruous virtues of unilateral military intervention and international cooperation as equally-valid ways of spreading U.S.-style “democracy” and “freedom.”⁶⁸ Remarkably, apocalyptic reports of the environmental threat posed by the Kursk and other discarded and/or damaged radioactive materials were not enough to rouse even environmentalist Gore from his post-Soviet stupor, and Bush’s plan for U.S.-Russian relations was recycled from the Reagan-Bush, Sr. years, replete with graduates of those administrations’ foreign policy and national security teams, including Republican Vice-Presidential nominee, Dick Cheney, and Soviet expert Condoleeza Rice. In retrospect, the hope of John Gray, a professor at the London School of Economics, that “the loss of the Kursk might stir some new thinking on western policy toward Russia” and force the United States and its NATO allies to self-reflexively examine their own role in creating the circumstances that have made post-Soviet Russia what it is was too much to ask.⁶⁹

Where local/national politics failed to engage the global/transnational, though, *The West Wing* picked up the slack. Already made aware of the weakness of Russia’s economy,⁷⁰ its crumbling military-industrial complex, and the incompetence of its military personnel, initial reports in “Galileo” of a fire in a Russian oil refinery come as no surprise to *West Wing* viewers, nor does the eventual revelation, arrived at by the fictional United States’ superior surveillance and intelligence capabilities, that Moscow has kept the truth of this incident from even its own domestic media. So,

⁶⁸ For a fairly thorough analysis of each candidate’s foreign policy approaches, see *ibid.*

⁶⁹ John Gray, “Comment & Analysis: Russia’s Fall,” *The Guardian (London)*, August 22, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed September 2, 2007).

⁷⁰ “And It’s Surely to Their Credit,” *The West Wing*, DVD, directed by Christopher Misiano (November 1, 2000; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2004).

armed with satellite photographs of a fire not in an oil refinery, as the Russian media originally reported and the Russian ambassador continues to claim, but in a disintegrating nuclear missile silo, Leo summons her to the White House. The structure of this short scene is fascinating in that it is the ambassador rather than Leo who initiates the (hetero)sexualized banter right from the start—and in complete opposition to the professional, respectful demeanor with which Leo approaches her.⁷¹

- Leo: *(Walking into his office, smiling, right arm extended in preparation for a handshake.)* Madame Ambassador.
- Nad'ya: Leo. *(Standing, she smiles as they shake hands. Clearly, they know each other.)*
- Leo: Thank you for coming. *(He moves to the back of his desk and lays down the file folders with which he entered the office.)*
- Nad'ya: You look handsome, Leo. /
- Leo: *(Not looking at her, shuffling through the piles on his desk in an attempt to locate something.)* Thank you. You look very nice yourself. / *(Cut to medium shot of Nad'ya.)*
- Nad'ya: You get more handsome every year. / *(Cut to medium shot of Leo behind his desk, mildly amused and most certainly bewildered. / Cut back to Nad'ya.)* And you're having your suits hand made now. /
- Leo: *(Finally, she's got his attention as, almost in disbelief, he asks:)* Nad'ya, are you hitting on me? /
- Nad'ya: *(She answers with the skill and aplomb worthy of a seasoned diplomat—which she is.)* I was sorry to hear about your divorce. /

⁷¹ Taken from the official DVD recordings, all transcriptions and stage directions are mine. Interestingly, while “Galileo’s” ambassador was provided a surname, Kozlowski, in the episode’s shooting script, onscreen she is only ever referred to in the third person or by her first name. This is significant in that conventional Russian social relations necessitate the use of a patronymic, which, in its identification of the person’s father, serves to indicate respect in formal encounters. The patronymic of Grand Duchess Anastasia Romanova, for example, is Nicholaevna because she is the daughter of Nicholas. Nad'ya has no patronymic, which indicates that script writers Falls and Sorkin were either unaware of the importance of this integral component to Russian names, and/or their intention was to construct a dramaturgical scenario in which the Russian ambassador is rhetorically demoted by the familiarity with which President Bartlet and his Chief of Staff address her. She is, by the way, the only ambassador depicted on *The West Wing* to be so informally addressed. Production information concerning “Galileo” can be found at http://www.westwingepguide.com/S2/Episodes/31_GALILEO.html (accessed March 18, 2005).

In an attempt to translate into text that which appears visually onscreen, a backslash (/) signals a cut to a different frame or camera angle.

Leo then puts an abrupt stop to the frivolity, insisting that they turn to the issue at hand:

- Leo: *(Holding the blue file folder for which he was looking, he emerges from behind his desk and walks toward her, stating with matter-of-fact certainty:)* You have a fire in a missile silo. /
- Nad'ya: *(Responding with equal resolve.)* It is an oil refinery. /

And they revert to the diplomatic version (albeit fictionalized) of the cold war-era game of cat-and-mouse, which dominates the remainder of this scene.⁷²

- Leo: *(Losing his patience and holding up the blue file folder in his right hand, Leo approaches Nad'ya.)* These are keyhole satellite photographs. / *(Cut to close-up of Nad'ya.)* Would you point, please, / *(Cut to close-up of Leo.)* to the oil refinery in these pictures? / *(Cut back to Nad'ya.)*
- Nad'ya: I'm not in a position to comment on matters of national security. / *(Cut back to Leo, who tosses the folder on the coffee table.)*
- Leo: Okay. Can you please tell me how an oil refinery explosion would affect national security? / *(Cut back to Nad'ya.)*
- Nad'ya: This is really a matter to be taken up with the foreign minister.
- Leo: I'm taking it up with the Russian Ambassador to the United States. / *(Cut to close-up of Leo.)* Is your country ready to deny that there was an explosion at Siko Silo 14D? /

With no response from the ambassador, Leo finally puts his cards on the table as the camera slowly closes in on Nad'ya and then cuts to a parallel close-up of Leo:

- Leo: We know how to deal with these kinds of emergencies. / We have guys who train for it all the time. Ask us for help.

End of scene.

⁷² News coverage of the Kursk often referred to this game, frequently practiced in the Arctic Circle between Soviet and American naval vessels during the cold war, intended to test the enemy's military strategies and capabilities. According to U.S. intelligence sources, the Kursk was engaged in similar activities when its hull exploded on August 12, 2000. Jason Burke, Ian Traynor and Amelia Gentleman, "Focus: Russia's Naval Catastrophe," *Observer* (London), August 20, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed March 17, 2005).

The idea that national identity is often (and perhaps even primarily) defined in relation to that which it (presumably) is not has a long intellectual genealogy, although, as I discussed at length in chapter 1, scholars have just recently begun considering this notion in terms of gender and/or other dimensions of difference. In the above scene, Leo, bearing the unassuming good will of the U.S. (while stern and, arguably, a bit paternalistic, he is professional and respectful), is made vulnerable by the unsolicited and obviously unexpected sexual advances of a woman whose features, although beautiful by U.S. cultural standards, are strikingly similar to the wicked queen Malificent in Walt Disney's animated feature *Sleeping Beauty* (1959). This likeness is particularly intriguing given the feminist scholarship on Disney that points to the continued portrayal of its female villains as either grotesquely overweight or, like *The West Wing*'s Nad'ya, tall, thin and angular, always possessed of a potentially dangerous sexuality, and almost always post-menopausal.⁷³

The destabilizing effect that Nad'ya's arrival has on the narrative is signaled by the opening shot of this scene, which takes place before Leo arrives. The camera frames the doorway to Leo's office and slowly moves in to focus on a rather terse encounter already in progress between Margaret, Leo's assistant, and the ambassador. To fully understand how and why this scene makes meaning, it is crucial to keep in mind that *West Wing* audiences already know and like Margaret. Although a supporting character, the easy relationship she enjoys with Leo is a frequent source of humor, and audiences trust her because Leo trusts her. Margaret, standing, is in full

⁷³ Jill Birnie Henke, Dianne Zimmerman Umble, and Nancy J. Smith, "Construction of the Female Self: Feminist Readings of the Disney Heroine," *Women's Studies in Communication* 19, no. 2 (1996): 229-41.

view, while the ambassador is sitting, her back to the camera. The viewer is able to see only the back of her head and hear her brusque, one-word responses to Margaret, who wants simply to offer her refreshment or assistance while she awaits Leo's imminent arrival. While this is going on, though, and the camera continues to approach from behind the ambassador's right shoulder, Nad'ya holds up her left hand and uses the digits of her right hand to examine the neatly trimmed fingernails on her left. When considered in combination with what and how the camera frame the viewer's witnessing of the ambassador's disinterest in Margaret's kindness, this feline-esque action signals the potential danger of this mysterious newcomer, made unambiguous by the implicit connection in this scene between the ambassador's sexualized Otherness and what the viewer already knows is a radioactive fire burning out of control in Russia's Oblast' region. It is clear that Nad'ya is attempting to use her sexuality to delay as long as possible the inevitable conversation for which she knows she has been called to the office of the White House Chief of Staff. In *The West Wing's* masculinist, heterosexist world of geopolitics, Nad'ya will use any strategy necessary to keep Leo off balance, thereby leaving the United States and its NATO allies vulnerable to whatever consequences could result from a failing Soviet-era military infrastructure. In this scenario, then, a woman's sexuality, characterized by secrecy and duplicity and made explicitly equivalent to Russian national identity, is a blatant threat to U.S. national security.

In retaliation, President Bartlet, wielding the full patriarchal, heterosexualized power of the United States and its military might, turns the tide. The camera pans from the left to focus on Leo and Nad'ya in the midst of a rather heated discussion.

Nad'ya's back is to the door, rendering her vulnerable in that she is unable to see anyone who may enter the room behind her. Despite this, she is in complete control of the conversation:

Nad'ya: Any inspection team will *have* to include neutral representatives.
Leo: Who do you want?
Nad'ya: The Finns. /
Leo: I'll take it to the State Department, but they're not gonna want to accept limits on the inspection team. /
Nad'ya: No one enters our country without approval. /
Leo: They'll agree to notification, but not approval. /
Nad'ya: And I'm going to insist on notification *and* approval.' In addition, results from the inspection will remain in the country— /
Leo: Nad'ya!
Nad'ya: Leo.' Soil samples, / (*Unbeknownst to her, Bartlet appears in the doorway behind her right shoulder.*) carbon residue, photographs and photographic negatives' — /
Leo: Listen— (*He notices Bartlet.*)
Nad'ya: All that must / remain under Russian control. (*Bartlet slams the door.*)

They stand: Leo first, / then Nad'ya, who is slightly rattled, although quite adept at hiding it. /

Bartlet: Your paranoia was a lot sexier back when you guys were Communist, Nad'ya. /
Nad'ya: Mr. President. (*Wholly without conviction.*) How good to see you. /
Bartlet: From where do you get the nerve to try and dictate terms on this?' Are you insane? / (*Close-up on Nad'ya, Leo behind her.*) / (*Cut back to close-up of Bartlet.*) Your missile regiment is in a horrifying state of disrepair. Your best-trained operators have left or died. / (*Close-up on Nad'ya, who swallows almost imperceptibly.*) / The ones you've got aren't paid very much— when they're paid at all.' They don't have enough to train with.' Your ICBMs are well beyond their warranty life.' (*Bartlet begins moving toward her.*) Not seven weeks ago,' you mistook a Norwegian weather rocket for a submarine-launched trident missile' (*He stops, standing face to face with her.*) / 'cause the cross-tack information never made it to the Russian CNC system.' / (*Cut to close-up of Leo.*) Leo, at the time the SS-19 exploded,' / it was being drained of its liquid hydrogen' in an attempt by deserting soldiers to' (*Interrupting himself, he turns to address Leo.*) — wait for it. /
Leo: Steal the warhead? /

Bartlet: Steal the warhead. / (*Close-up on Nad'ya.*) / When were you gonna tell us about *that*? Do you realize how dangerous that— /

Nad'ya: Mr. President, you shouldn't be concerned with the welfare of the Russian people. /

Bartlet: Well, I am concerned with the welfare of the Russian people, but that's not what they pay me for.' / You guys fall asleep at the switch in Minsk, / (*Cut to Leo.*) and I've got a whole hemisphere hiding under the bed.' / How do you not tell us this is going on?' How do you not ask us for help? /

Nad'ya: We'll not need help finding the leaders of the black market network— /

Bartlet: Yeah, thanks.' We're sending in NATO inspectors. /

Nad'ya: Leo and I were just discussing the terms.

Leo: The terms are / we're sending in NATO inspectors, or he's taking a walk to the press room. /

Bartlet: Get your foreign minister on the phone.' / (*Bartlet walks to the door.*) I really don't know from where you guys get the nerve. /

Nad'ya: (*She turns sharply to look at Bartlet.*) From a long, hard winter. Mr. President.

End of scene.

Viewers are implicitly drawn into the above conversation as allies of Leo, President Bartlet, and the United States by the camera's subtle inclusion of the open door behind Nad'ya at the beginning of the scene. This is the door through which viewers first enter Leo's office in this episode and through which they first encounter a stranger whom they assume is the Russian ambassador, whose arrival at the White House has been much-anticipated throughout the episode. In that opening shot, which reveals Margaret's rebuffed attempts to make the ambassador comfortable, the viewer is positioned as an invisible eavesdropper as the camera slowly—and cautiously—approaches from behind the stranger's right shoulder, almost as if stalking the as-yet-unidentified woman sitting in the chair. But in the scene described above, rather than actually *being* that which is not seen, the camera flips the viewers' subjectivity, allowing them to see (with their ally Leo) what Nad'ya cannot. By making so

prominent the potential for someone to approach unseen behind her, Nad'ya's position in the scene is weakened, because the camera enables viewers' realization of the potential for someone to sneak in behind her—as they have already done. Consequently, the arrival of President Bartlet through that very door and unbeknownst to Nad'ya as she argues with Leo is not surprising. Nor is it surprising that, wielding the masculinist and heterosexist military might of the United States, he is able to save the day and force a diplomatic resolution to the issue by revealing to Leo that, in addition to lying about the location of the fire, the Russian government also neglected to reveal that it was caused by the draining of liquid hydrogen from an active nuclear warhead.

While Bartlet's obdurate tactics here are, arguably, not unusual in the fictionalized universe of diplomatic and international relations on *The West Wing*, they take on a disturbing, (hetero)sexualized, and threatening timbre considering the highly gendered role each participant assumes in the scene. Most obvious is the specific dramaturgical function of each character within the episode's narrative structure. In offering U.S.-led NATO assistance to quell the radioactive blaze in the missile silo, Leo epitomizes the benevolence of the U.S. and its western allies, but viewers know he is being deceived, even potentially seduced, by Russia, a titillating and treacherous *femme fatale* whose retrograde cold war-era duplicity and antagonism threatens the health and security of the entire global community. Nad'ya's potent and transgressive sexuality serves as a metaphor for the fact that Russia, via the sinking of the Kursk and "Galileo's" fictional explosion of a nuclear warhead, is leaking radioactive waste that cannot be contained. President Bartlet, who intervenes in

negotiations between Leo and Nad'ya only after he learns the real cause of the fire, signifies the stellar investigative and intelligence capabilities of the "real-life" United States, which enable the episode's protagonists and, with them, *West Wing* viewers, to get to the "truth" of what is going on in Russia, despite the obstacles erected by the wily Russian ambassador.

Additionally, Nad'ya is physically trapped between Leo and Bartlet, who is, very literally, blocking all of her potential escape routes. Thus, in "Galileo," Russia is physically caught between the proverbial rock and a hard place, and the Leo-Nad'ya-Bartlet triangle explicitly signifies the principal themes that constituted U.S. news media coverage of the Kursk tragedy earlier that year:

1. The threat of nuclear proliferation, particularly the illegal traffic in nuclear technology, and the potential consequences of environmental contamination as a result of Russia's disintegrating military-industrial complex, including poorly trained and underpaid personnel, old technology, and a lack of financial resources.
2. An attitude perceived as arrogance because Putin took so long to ask for NATO assistance.⁷⁴
3. The continued deception by the Russian government of well-meaning Western officials as well as foreign and Russian media (and, by extension, innocent civilians in Russia and around the world), which signaled a return to, or perhaps a continuance of, cold war-era tactics, which *The West Wing*'s Chief of Staff terms in "Galileo" a "cold war mentality."

⁷⁴ See especially Thomas L. Friedman, "Foreign Affairs: A Russian Dinosaur," *New York Times*, September 5, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed September 2, 2005).

This last issue, the “real-life” unwillingness of the Russian government to tell the truth about the Kursk, is what necessitates the inclusion of a *femme fatale* within the narrative structure of “Galileo.” Nad’ya’s actions in *The West Wing*’s fictional universe mirror exactly those of the Russian government in dealing with the “real-life” sinking of the Kursk. Ostensibly unwilling to admit to the incompetence of its naval personnel and the poor condition of its submarine fleet, the Russian navy initially reported and continued to posit during the investigation of the Kursk wreckage that the explosion that downed Russia’s newest nuclear submarine was the result of a collision with another vessel, possibly an abandoned World War II-era underwater mine. But, just as in “Galileo,” U.S. intelligence accounts differed from the Russian assessment, and investigators learned that not only was the explosion caused by the submarine’s own torpedoes, thus signaling a problem with either the weaponry or the crew or both, but that the Kursk may actually have been testing a new type of torpedo.⁷⁵ Similarly, in “Galileo,” the fire is initially reported to be in an oil refinery, and Nad’ya, the fictional Russian government’s official representative, insists that this is so—regardless of U.S. evidence to the contrary. Additionally, she neglects to mention to Leo the fact that the fire was caused by the draining of liquid hydrogen in an attempt by deserting Russian soldiers to steal a nuclear warhead. This information, which Nad’ya (as Russia) ostensibly keeps from Leo (as the United States), reifies precisely what *West Wing* viewers have learned about what one

⁷⁵ Patrick E. Tyler, “Russia Calls for Help from West as Hope for Sub Survivors Fades,” *New York Times*, August 17, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed March 17, 2005); Patrick E. Tyler, with Steven Lee Meyers, “Russian Admiral Acknowledges Explosion Inside Sub,” *New York Times*, August 19, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed March 17, 2005); Patrick E. Tyler, “Russians Blame Cuts in Budget for Sub Fiasco,” *New York Times*, August 22, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed March 17, 2005); and Patrick E. Tyler, “Russians Point to a Collision in Sub Sinking,” *New York Times*, August 18, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed March 17, 2005).

character terms the “troubling state of the Russian military.” Nad’ya’s obstinacy and hostility toward Leo’s offers of assistance in quelling the fire mirror that of the Russian government in the early days of the Kursk crisis, when Russian president Vladimir Putin repeatedly refused NATO offers of assistance. The narrative structure of “Galileo,” then, follows precisely that of the U.S. news media’s coverage of the Kursk tragedy, replete with duplicitous and inflexible (i.e., ex-Soviet) government officials, all of whom are collapsed in “Galileo” into one *femme fatale* whose existence signals to viewers that the protagonists will be engaged during the episode in a project of discovery that requires learning the “truth” about what is going on in Russia. Nad’ya thus becomes a dramaturgical necessity indicating that what *is* is not in any way what it seems to be.

As I mentioned briefly above, though, “Galileo” seems to engage in two simultaneous and apparently contradictory pedagogical projects. The first is to warn U.S. viewers of the potential dangers Russia continues to pose to U.S. national security as a result of its aging weaponry, unskilled and underpaid personnel, and the threat of nuclear proliferation via accidents (such as the Kursk and Chernobyl) and/or the intentional pilfering of nuclear technology by deserting soldiers. As I have demonstrated, this lesson is proffered using a gendered imaginary in which Russia is a *femme fatale* in the classic Hollywood tradition. Thus, it would be fairly easy to make the case that “Galileo” is not only anti-Russian but also profoundly Orientalist and sexist in its assignation of qualities belonging to a highly stylized and heterosexualized feminine performance to the entirety of the Russian Federation as it is conceptualized in U.S. popular and political culture.

But despite writer/creator Aaron Sorkin's penchant for beating the drum of American nationalism, *The West Wing* as a text tends toward the center-left of the U.S. political spectrum. Consequently, fictional U.S. President Bartlet imagines a very different transnational encounter between him and Nad'ya, one in which she would permit NATO cooperation with the Russian military:

In the Oval Office. Wide shot of the room as Bartlet moves toward the front of his desk. Leo follows.

Bartlet: Did they think we weren't gonna see it, Leo?

Leo: *(Resigned.)* It's a cold war mentality.

Bartlet: If they ask, we could help.

Leo: I wouldn't wait for the phone to ring.

Bartlet: Yeah. / *(Reverse angle as Bartlet turns to lean his right side against the front of the desk. The back of Leo's shoulder and head are in the right corner of the shot.)* Yeah. Galileo Galilei.' He sat in a cathedral in Pisa.' He watched a lamp suspended from the ceiling as it oscillated back and forth.' / *(The camera's focus is Leo; Bartlet's right shoulder is in the left corner of the shot.)* He used his pulse to keep time and discovered that the period of oscillation was independent' of the size of the arc. / *(Close-up of Bartlet.)* And a few years later, he contradicted the theory that a heavier body' falls faster than a lighter one.' Which took some guts back in 1609 when you consider' that the theory he was contradicting was Aristotle's./

By making Bartlet's benevolent desire to assist Russia despite its "cold war mentality" (of which Leo accuses only Russia while absolving the U.S. of the same haunting) discursively analogous with Galileo's seventeenth-century revolutionary astronomical theories, this episode problematically reinforces the notion that the alleged end of the cold war has ushered in an era in which Russia and the United States, along with their allies, can work together to build a global democratic peace. But it is no accident that it is Nad'ya-as-Russia who abruptly forecloses the

cooperation Bartlet envisions by conjuring the history of “a long, cold winter” left unresolved.⁷⁶ Thus, their conversation ends where it should rightly begin, with a ghost.

“Galileo” was very much a part of the (admittedly limited) post-Kursk critique of U.S./Western complicity in Russia’s economic, military, and political morass at the end of the 1990s, of which the Kursk and its 118 crewmen were the most recent casualties. Although pundits generally agreed that Russian leaders should certainly be held accountable for the loss of the Kursk and its crew, they insisted that U.S. foreign policy objectives throughout the 1990s, including NATO expansion into Eastern Europe and the (at that time) on-going conversation in the U.S. about creating a national missile defense system in violation of the 1972 U.S.-Soviet Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, caused Russia’s increasing distrust of the U.S. and its allies. Consequently, with its national security at stake, the Russian Federation pumped money it did not have into its military establishment until, according to two analysts from the Brookings Institute, the United States had “more to fear from Russia’s weakness than from its strength.”⁷⁷ British political philosopher John Gray, expanding his analysis beyond Russia’s military and economic woes to incorporate a

⁷⁶ Nad’ya’s retort about “a long, cold winter” could easily be interpreted as a general reference to the cold war; however, it is possible that Nad’ya may also be reminding Bartlet of the sacrifices made by the Soviet Union on the Eastern Front during World War II (which is known in Russia as the Great Patriotic or Great Fatherland War), particularly during the sieges of Leningrad and Stalingrad by the German army during which more than one million civilians in Leningrad alone died of starvation, stress, and/or exposure. Because the Soviet Union’s Western allies delayed opening the Western front, the lesson for the Soviet Union was that it could not count on anyone’s support or assistance. For detailed information, see David M. Glantz, *The Battle for Leningrad, 1941-1944* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2002); and John Barber and Andrei Dzenishevich, ed., *Life and Death in Besieged Leningrad, 1941-44* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

⁷⁷ Clifford Gaddy and Michael O’Hanlon, “The Russian Submarine Disaster,” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, August 27, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed March 17, 2005).

concern for the country's humanitarian and demographic crises, called on Western governments to self-reflexively accept partial responsibility for "Russia's desperate plight" and to rethink their approach toward Russia.⁷⁸ "Galileo" may well have been Sorkin's contribution to this way of thinking about U.S. Russia policy.

Interestingly, Nad'ya is the diminutive form of Nadezhda, a woman's name meaning *hope* in Russian. Given its ubiquity in English-language discourse about the Soviet Union and Russia (made especially prominent by the famous Nadezhdas, Krupskaya and Mandelstam⁷⁹), it is possible that Sorkin's use of it in "Galileo" is merely an accident. On the other hand, keeping in mind his political leanings to the left and the episode's advocacy of the potential for collaboration between the U.S. and Russia, it is feasible to think about the name of the fictional Russian ambassador as Sorkin's own one-word foreign policy directive. It may also be feasible to conceptualize this episode, the highly problematic woman-as-nation trope notwithstanding, as a theoretical treatise on the objectives of post-Soviet U.S. Russia policy. Because it is Nad'ya who forecloses the possibility of further negotiation in the face of what she interprets as the hubris of American triumphalism, she is the agent of change within the episode's narrative structure; it is she who shifts from villain to potential hero by being the only one of the Leo-Nad'ya-Bartlet trio to get past the empty rhetoric of cold war-era cat-and-mouse diplomacy—even as she never

⁷⁸ Gray, "Comment & Analysis: Russia's Fall."

⁷⁹ Educational theorist Nadezhda Krupskaya was Lenin's wife, and Soviet dissident Nadezhda Mandelstam, a gifted and successful writer in her own right, is best remembered for her commitment to preserving and publishing the works of her husband, Osip Mandelstam, which were banned in the Soviet Union. For more information, see Robert H. McNeal, *Bride of the Revolution: Krupskaya and Lenin* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972); and Nadezhda Mandelstam, *Hope against Hope: A Memoir* (New York: Atheneum, 1970).

once yields any ground by confirming the accuracy of U.S. intelligence data. Instead, she tosses the unresolved problem of the “long, cold winter” back at President Bartlet, which forces him and Leo to rethink how the United States approaches Russia.

Peter Chigorin as Vladimir Putin: Bartlet's Last Best Hope

Co-writers Paul Redford and Aaron Sorkin incorporate a similar plot twist into a third season (and post-9/11) episode entitled “Enemies Foreign and Domestic” in which only the willingness and ability of recently-elected Russian president Peter Chigorin to creatively expand the parameters of U.S.-Russian relations manages to save a planned U.S.-Russia summit endangered by the actions of cold war-era Russian military and diplomatic leaders. Viewers first learn about Chigorin in the episode’s opening scene when one White House senior staffer refutes another’s claim that the Russians have “finally elect[ed] a reformer” by retorting rather sarcastically, “twenty years in the KGB and an election that would make Tammany Hall look like the League of Women Voters?”

The obvious surface similarities between the biographies of the fictional Chigorin and the “real-life” Putin immediately enabled *West Wing* viewers to locate this episode within the context of contemporaneous “real-life” U.S. concerns about Russia’s allegiances in the Bush administration’s new “war on terror.” Russia’s geographical expanse and complicated cultural heritage have long been the cause of great angst and uncertainty as Russian intellectuals and world leaders alike have for centuries debated whether Russia’s natural alliances lie with the global East or West, and, in the wake of Putin’s unprecedented rhetorical support for the United States

after 9/11,⁸⁰ this debate became significantly more nuanced as Western fears about a nationalist conservative backlash in Russia grew. U.S. news coverage of Russia's response to the events of September 11 cited Russian economic interests and the challenge to political cohesion within the country as the main reasons that the United States should remain wary of any sort of U.S.-Russian alliance in the "war on terror." Most obviously, should Putin ally Russia's fortunes with the United States- and NATO, crucial Russian defense contracts as well as its long-term diplomatic relationships with "axis of evil" members Iran, North Korea, and Iraq⁸¹ would be in serious jeopardy, thus signaling the magnitude of Russia's foreign policy decisions after 9/11.⁸² According to one journalist, the events of that day "effectively pushed Mr. Putin into choosing between a Russia allied with no one, and a Russia bound to the West," and it was widely believed among Western pundits at the time that he chose the latter. But Putin's alliance with the West in general and the Bush administration in particular won him few friends at home in Russia, where he was not only "perilously far ahead of public opinion in his campaign to bind Russia to the

⁸⁰ Suzanne Daley, "After the Attacks: The Alliance; Russia Condemns Attack on U.S. and Vows to Aid NATO Nations," *New York Times*, September 14, 2001, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed September 2, 2005).

⁸¹ U.S. President George W. Bush's first use of the term "axis of evil" to describe these three countries occurred during his State of the Union address in January 2002. Despite its close diplomatic and economic relationship with these three declared enemies of the United States, Russia's response to Bush's rhetoric was, according to one *Moscow Times* reporter, "muted." Robin Munro, "Russia All But Mum on Bush's 'Axis of Evil,'" *Moscow Times*, February 1, 2002, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed September 2, 2005).

⁸² Michael Wines, "After the Attacks: In Moscow; Russia Takes Stand against Terrorism, but the Stance Wavers Quickly," *New York Times*, September 16, 2001, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed September 2, 2005); Michael Wines, "A Nation Challenged: Moscow; To Free the Way for the U.S., or Not? Either Way, a Fateful Choice for Russia," *New York Times*, September 21, 2001, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed September 2, 2005); and James Brooke, "North Korea's Other Axis: With Moscow," *New York Times*, March 24, 2002, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed September 2, 2005).

Atlantic alliance of democracies,”⁸³ but also out of step with the opinions of “the military and political elites on whom his power partly rest[ed].”⁸⁴ What was interpreted by some in Russia as Putin’s post-9/11 capitulation to the United States on NATO expansion, the presence of U.S. troops in the former Soviet republics of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and the unilateral U.S. withdrawal from the 1972 U.S.-Soviet Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty roused the ire of powerful political factions, and Western pundits wondered if Putin, whose pro-Western credentials had been very much in doubt since Yeltsin catapulted him to power in late 1999,⁸⁵ would be able to sustain the support he offered to the United States.

When it aired on May 1, 2002, “Enemies Foreign and Domestic” joined this cacophony. Asking, “Whose side is Russia—and Putin—really on?,” the episode complicated this question before answering it by demonstrating the tug-of-war between multiple political factions in post-Soviet Russia, all of whom could potentially be the “foreign enemies” of the episode’s title, rather than presenting that country as a unified political entity. On the one hand, the depiction of newly-elected Russian President Chigorin’s surreptitious and indirect attempt to thwart his own military’s ability to sustain its Soviet-era defense contracts with Iran suggests to *West*

⁸³ Michael Wines, “Treaty’s End Would Ruffle Russia’s Politics,” *New York Times*, December 13, 2001, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed September 2, 2005).

⁸⁴ Wines, “A Nation Challenged.”

⁸⁵ Although virtually unknown when Yeltsin named him Acting President at the end of 1999, Putin had a largely negative image in the West “as a former KGB officer who had brutalized Chechnya and stifled Moscow’s independent news media.” Patrick E. Tyler, “The Morning After Dawns on Moscow,” *New York Times*, December 16, 2001, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed May 14, 2008). See also Celestine Bohlen, “As Vote Nears, Russians Leaning Toward Return of a Strong Hand,” *New York Times*, December 12, 1999, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed September 2, 2007) and William Safire, “Rhymes with Rasputin,” *New York Times*, January 6, 2000, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed September 2, 2007).

Wing viewers that “real-life” Russian leaders, particularly Putin, should, as the United States worked to build a global coalition to fight the “war on terror,” be given the benefit of the doubt. On the other hand, though, even as this post-9/11 episode seems, in the end, to efficiently dispense with the notion that Russia remains a menace to U.S. national security, its discursive equation of Russia’s military, diplomatic, and atomic energy officials, whose alliance with Iran jeopardizes not only the pro-Western reforms in Russia, but also U.S. hopes for a global democratic peace, with a Russian *femme fatale* warn U.S. viewers that there still exist in Russian politics what one *West Wing* character terms “cold war hold-outs, the ex-Soviets running around” who are well-positioned to undermine pro-Western political and economic reforms and the politicians (such as the fictional Chigorin and the “real-life” Putin) who may support them. To underscore this latter point, the U.S.-Russian summit for which the Bartlet administration is preparing throughout “Enemies Foreign and Domestic” is nearly derailed by those “cold war hold-outs” who have begun selling Russian nuclear technology to Iran in fulfillment of Soviet-era defense contracts. It is only the off-screen ingenuity of Chigorin, who manages to circumnavigate “the old [Soviet] diplomatic corps” to get a message through to Bartlet that he would like to add nuclear non-proliferation to the summit agenda, that convinces the U.S. president to throw caution to the wind and keep his appointment with Chigorin in Helsinki.

Interestingly, the narrative structure of this episode’s opening scene provides crucial clues for use in answering the question posed by the episode about Russia’s allegiances in the “war on terror.” Through the heated discussion of U.S. Russia policy and the recent (fictional) Russian presidential election, viewers are led to

believe that “Enemies Foreign and Domestic” will focus on preparations for Bartlet’s upcoming summit in Helsinki with Chigorin. But this conversation is, quite literally, interrupted by the actions of Islamic fundamentalists in Saudi Arabia. According to a news report out of Riyadh, the religious police have prevented several girls from escaping the fire that enveloped their school because they were not appropriately dressed. This news sends Bartlet press secretary C.J. Cregg, whom *West Wing* viewers already know from previous episodes to be a champion of Muslim women,⁸⁶ into a quiet rage and reorients the episode’s narrative away from the upcoming U.S.-Russia summit and toward Islamic radicalism in the Middle East. Frequent *West Wing* viewers, though, are too savvy to be fooled by this apparent narrative shift from one set of foreign policy concerns to another. It is simply too easy. Aaron Sorkin’s *West Wing* scripts are, generally speaking, celebrations of complexity and nuance, often involving upwards of three or more simultaneous plots per episode. These multiple plots often intersect in surprising ways, meaning that the introduction in the early moments of any Sorkin-authored *West Wing* episode of one possible narrative that is then interrupted by another signals the likely possibility that the two will be in some way interconnected. In the case of “Enemies Foreign and Domestic,” the structure of the episode’s opening scene signals to viewers that, by episode’s end, the new Russian president will be linked somehow to U.S. concerns about Islamic fundamentalism.

Thus, through the convergence of several interrelated plots focusing simultaneously on U.S. policies in Russia and the Middle East, it is “Enemies Foreign

⁸⁶ See especially “The Women of Kumar,” *The West Wing*, DVD, directed by Alex Graves (November 28, 2001; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2004).

and Domestic” that most plainly marks *The West Wing*’s post-9/11 dramaturgical shift from a focus on the pros and cons of U.S. Russia policy and the post-Soviet political and economic transition throughout Eastern Europe to an almost singular concern for the growth of Islamic fundamentalism through a fictionalized depiction of the “real-life” Bush administration’s “war on terror.”⁸⁷ But while this episode does signal a major shift in the Bartlet administration’s foreign policy—a shift that mirrored that of the “real-life” United States in the wake of the events of September 11, 2001—it also justifies continued U.S. suspicion of Russia by making conservative political forces discursively equivalent to a Russian *femme fatale*, Russian journalist Ludmilla Koss.

Before she appears on-screen, viewers learn that Koss, who is the D.C. correspondent for the Moscow-based Russian-language newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*, has been banned from the upcoming U.S.-Russia summit by Chigorin’s people because, according to C.J., she “supported the other guy.”⁸⁸ Consequently, Koss has requested White House press credentials to cover the summit, and C.J. asks communications director Toby Ziegler to meet with her to facilitate her request. This expository information about the as-yet-unseen Koss relies on contemporaneous U.S. media coverage of “real-life” Russian President Putin’s crackdown on Moscow’s independent media and, consequently, his apparent disregard for democratic values,

⁸⁷ In episodes at the end of season three and the beginning of season four, the “real-life” “war on terror” takes the form of a military conflict between the United States and the fictional Middle Eastern country of Qumar.

⁸⁸ Published in Moscow, *Novaya Gazeta* (*Новая Газета*) is a twice-weekly tabloid covering social and political topics of interest to its roughly 550,000 readers. It is owned in part by former Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev and is known for its scathing critiques of Russian government policies. Its official website is <http://novyagazeta.ru/>. An abridged English-language version can be found at <http://en.novayagazeta.ru/>.

particularly free speech and the freedom of expression. Disgusted by what appears to be Chigorin's anti-democratic behavior, Toby agrees immediately to meet with Koss, adding indignantly, "It's time to teach these Stoli drinking Tchiakovskys a thing or two about free press American style: You don't ban those who supported your opponent. You make them wallow in their loserdom by covering your victory."

Thus the stage is set for Toby's meeting with Koss, and with everything viewers know about Chigorin so far—twenty years in the KGB, a questionable election process, penalizing reporters who disagree with him, and the selling of nuclear technology to Iran—they are predisposed to like Koss, particularly given the cultural capital and heroic reputation that "real-life" *Novaya Gazeta* reporter Anna Politkovskaya enjoyed in the United States.⁸⁹ But Koss's meeting with Toby begins to complicate these predispositions, and viewers learn immediately that Koss is hardly the victimized journalist she had seemed when C.J. was describing her plight. Firstly, Koss is all business. Unlike the Russian ambassador's sexualized repartee with Leo in "Galileo," Koss refuses to engage in any sort of friendly banter with Toby, despite his best efforts. She is also mildly combative when he does not immediately grant her request to cover the summit. He wants to discuss it with the U.S. State Department to ensure that credentialing her in explicit opposition to Chigorin's wishes is "not a grotesquely insulting thing to do to a new president from whom the United States is hoping for quite a bit." She asks sardonically, "Oh, so your

⁸⁹ Known in the U.S. for her critical coverage of the Chechen conflict and her vociferous opposition to Putin, Politkovskaya was assassinated in the elevator of her Moscow apartment building in October 2006.

first amendment only extends as far as is polite?” to which Toby responds, “No. It extends further than that, but it only protects us.”

Koss’s undisguised hostility toward Toby works in tandem with the expository information provided in this scene about *Novaya Gazeta* to further dissuade *West Wing* viewers from making quick and potentially erroneous assumptions about Chigorin (or Putin). Viewers learn in this scene that, according to Koss, of all the newspapers published daily in Russia, *Novaya Gazeta* has the highest circulation. Toby then counters her with a touch of sarcasm accompanied by a wry smile: “It’s hard to tell if that’s because of your reporting, your editorials, or the naked women on page three.” This thinly-disguised condemnation of *Novaya Gazeta* is later confirmed by a State Department representative who argues that allowing Koss to cover the summit would be like “if [the Russians] credentialed *The Inquirer*.” The negative assessment of the publication serves also to sully Koss’s reputation as a journalist, so it comes as no surprise that, in his attempts to learn why Chigorin has banned her from the summit, Toby has acquired several articles that have enabled him to come to the conclusion that she is, quite simply, a bad journalist who wants the privileges of being a member of a free press without any of the responsibility:

Toby: By the way, I found out why Chigorin and his people have such a problem with you.

Koss: It’s because I don’t flatter them.

Toby: No. It’s because you stink.

Koss: I beg your pardon?

Toby: You can beg all you want, you’re not gonna get it. Last month, you alleged the Chigorin government bombed several apartment buildings based on an unattributed source. It was refuted, you never retracted it.

Koss: The government’s case was all over the television.

Toby: Last week, you wrote a cover story about President Chigorin’s mother-in-law moving closer to the Kremlin. (*Koss rolls her eyes and stands, readying to leave.*) You printed her home address, she had to relocate.

Koss: Well, that's her decision.

Toby: You reported the failing grades of the Defense Minister's twelve year-old son. Does that even count as journalism? (*Koss stares at Toby, refusing to respond.*) Does that do anything but bring ridicule on a defenseless kid? We've got people like you here. On cable and on the Internet. And there's no one anywhere on the ideological spectrum who doesn't roll their eyes when their names are spoken out loud. (*Koss smiles disdainfully as Toby walks back to his desk.*) We've always had free press here. We take it for granted. But how can you... (*Long shot of Koss standing from behind Toby's right shoulder, his right arm extended in the air as he crumples his printout of her article on the Defense Minister's son.*) ...treat it like this? (*He tosses the crumpled article away in disgust. She watches it go without a word.*) You should give up your space and put another naked woman in there. Anyway, here are your credentials.

Koss walks to the desk, clearly expecting him to hand them to her; instead, he shoves them toward her roughly and turns away. Forced to pick them up herself from his desk, Koss does so and promptly exits Toby's office.

The most crucial information that viewers learn from Toby's interaction with Koss in this episode is that Chigorin's dislike of and actions toward her are not arbitrary or necessarily related to any sort of anti-democratic tendencies on his part. Consequently, it is Koss, the obstructionist and duplicitous *femme fatale*, who holds the key not only to the successful decipherment of Chigorin's true political and ideological stripes, but also to the episode's larger question about Russia's allegiances in the "war on terror." Interestingly, Koss does not at any point reveal the specific ideological or political differences between herself and Chigorin that have caused her to be so critical of him, and as Toby (and with him, the viewers) unravels the truth behind Chigorin's antipathy for Koss, this lack becomes a glaringly present absence that further suggests that, despite evidence to the contrary, Chigorin may not be the anti-democratic cold war hold-out he initially seemed to be. Koss's dislike of him is without foundation and her critical reporting merely vengeance without cause.

The combination in this Russian *femme fatale* of a dislike for the pro-Western Chigorin and, according to Toby, a patent lack of respect for free speech in particular and democratic values in general means that she operates dramaturgically in this episode as the gendered televisual representation of those otherwise unseen “cold war hold-outs, the ex-Soviets walking around” whose ways of thinking, being, and doing are not only anti-Western and anti-American, but also of another time. They espouse what Leo in “Galileo” calls a “cold war mentality.” But, as is demonstrated quite effectively by the barely-averted diplomatic disaster between Russia and the United States in “Enemies Foreign and Domestic,” these feminized “cold war hold-outs” remain a potent threat not only to pro-Western reform efforts in Russia and those leaders who support them (like Chigorin and the “real-life” Putin), but also to U.S. national security through the threat of nuclear proliferation to declared U.S. enemies in the Middle East.

As this episode reminds its viewers, the power of a free and independent media is potentially enormous, which, in Russia’s case, is both good and bad. According to Koss, *Novaya Gazeta* has the highest circulation of all the daily newspapers published in Russia. It is also, as viewers learn, vociferously critical of the Chigorin government, which by the end of “Enemies Foreign and Domestic,” is the equivalent to being anti-Western and anti-American. The conservative and oppositional *Novaya Gazeta*, whose representative in the U.S. is the tabloid journalist Koss, thus has the potential to exert enormous influence over a wide range of issues and to promote anti-Western ideas and agendas throughout Russia. Consequently, although this episode does conclude with Bartlet’s realization that Chigorin has

chosen to ally himself and his country with U.S. interests, its unnuanced depiction of a Russian *femme fatale* advocates caution with regard to a U.S.-Russian alliance in the “war on terror.” Clearly, the continued existence of these latent but powerful anti-Western, cold war-era ideologues, symbolized by Ludmilla Koss, could potentially stymie or topple Chigorin-as-Putin, one result of which would be an Iranian nuclear program.

Whose “Cold War Mentality?”

In this chapter, I have mapped the fictionalized depiction of U.S.-Russian relations on *The West Wing* and demonstrated through a feminist discursive analysis of three relevant episodes, “The Lame Duck Congress” (November 8, 2000), “Galileo” (November 29, 2000), and “Enemies Foreign and Domestic” (May 1, 2002), the ways in which Orientalist assumptions about and fears of gender as a category of identity are offered up within the series’ narrative structure to argue that white Eastern European men working for pro-Western political and economic reform, although confused and potentially vulnerable, are a better option for protecting U.S. interests than the powerful retrograde conservatism whose advocates are explicitly gendered feminine via their collective embodiment in the classic *femme fatale* archetype. I have also argued that through this dramaturgical strategy, which was the result of the unique intersection of the progressive political ideologies of the show’s creative team with contemporaneous U.S. political culture during the show’s seven-year run, the series offered a meta-narrative reminiscent of the cold war. In this meta-narrative, a feminized Russia remains elusive, enigmatic, and potentially threatening to U.S.

national interests through its diplomatic and economic ties to U.S. enemies in the Middle East. Simultaneously, select episodes seem to advocate specific changes to “real-life” U.S. Russia policy that, if made, would force a measure of self-reflexivity in the formation and implementation of that policy.

What is most interesting about this dual pedagogical mission, however, is that it is, in the end, the *Russian* characters, rather than the show’s American protagonists, whose actions and persuasive diplomatic strategies offer an idealized alternative path for U.S.-Russian relations. In “Galileo,” for example, it is the Russian ambassador who, in the final showdown with Bartlet, lays bare the cold war triumphalist arrogance of the United States. Although she operates dramaturgically as the episode’s *femme fatale*, she is the only one willing to cut through the morass of cold war-era U.S.-Soviet diplomacy to remind Bartlet that the United States is partially to blame for the history of distrust between their two countries. Similarly, in “Enemies Foreign and Domestic,” Russian President Chigorin, who does not ever appear on screen, takes the risk of surreptitiously defying his own military elites and diplomatic corps not only by making the decision to add nuclear non-proliferation to the summit agenda, but also in getting his message through to a wary Bartlet. I mentioned briefly above that the two seemingly-befuddled Russian Embassy officials sent to negotiate the logistics of the summit operate unexpectedly as the pivot on which this episode’s narrative turns. It is through them that Chigorin passes his message to Bartlet, who is only convinced of its authenticity by Deputy Communications Director Sam Seaborn, who recognizes it as having been written by the Russian president rather than one of his aides as a result of the use of colloquial English, replete with idioms. The

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Percy Fitzwallace, flummoxed by Chigorin's unorthodoxy, exclaims only half-jokingly, "You're telling me that foreign policy of this magnitude is conducted through Sam, and I'm still alive?"

It is rather ironic that in the fictionalized depiction of post-Soviet U.S.-Russian relations on *The West Wing* so much emphasis is placed on latent (and feminized) conservative forces in Russia that threaten to undermine pro-Western reform efforts and, consequently, U.S. national security, yet the existence of "cold war hold-outs" among U.S. political, military, and diplomatic elites is rarely explicitly critiqued. Throughout "Enemies Foreign and Domestic," Deputy Chief of Staff Josh Lyman posits a hunch (which eventually turns out to be accurate) that, given Russia's inability to satisfactorily fulfill its Soviet-era defense contracts with Iran for conventional weaponry, perhaps Iran is pressing Russia's Ministry for Atomic Energy (MINATOM) to provide them with nuclear technologies. Although Admiral Fitzwallace, Leo, and the president immediately reject this theory, Josh remains unconvinced by their intransigence and broaches the subject again in a private conversation with Leo in which they are supposed to be coming up with a plausible excuse that will gracefully excuse Bartlet from the upcoming U.S.-Russia summit in Helsinki:

- Josh: How can you guys, all of you, be so sure it's not MINATOM and the other cold war hold-outs, the ex-Soviets walking around? There are issues on the table: there's NATO expansion, the Caspian pipeline—
- Leo: (*Interrupting, his voice raised.*) You don't get to put a bomb in Iran! There are no other issues on the table right now. We're gonna have to fly over there and blow this thing up, and given what they're manufacturing there, I don't know if that's possible. We were all so smart: Russia's hobbled, the next conflict's gonna be in the Middle East. Turns out it *is* in the Middle East. With the Russians.
- Josh: You didn't answer my question.

Leo: What question?
Josh: Chigorin just took office four months ago. How can you be sure it's not a rogue thing?
Leo: I don't want a leak, Josh. Everyone's proceeding like we're going?
Josh: Yes. How can you be sure?
Leo: I can't.

This admission by the same character who, in "Galileo," accused Russia's political leadership of harboring a "cold war mentality" in its dealings with the United States, reveals that U.S. leaders are similarly encumbered. But his refusal to suggest to the president the possibility that Josh may be right indicates that, unlike some of the Russians depicted on *The West Wing*, U.S. leaders are not willing (or, perhaps, not able) to alter their thinking.

Series writer/creator Aaron Sorkin, though, gives Bartlet and Leo another chance to live up to the fictional Russians' diplomatic challenge in a fourth season episode entitled "Evidence of Things Not Seen."⁹⁰ In this episode, which marked *The West Wing*'s final depiction of U.S.-Russian relations, Bartlet must, without revealing its mission, ask Chigorin's permission for U.S. military personnel to enter Kaliningrad to retrieve a downed U.S. spy plane that was taking pictures of "illegal nuclear transfers in the region."⁹¹ Working with a team of experts, Leo suggests to Bartlet that he tell Chigorin that the plane was photographing evidence of coastal erosion in the Baltic Sea on behalf of Finland. Although skeptical (Bartlet asks Leo, "This phone call that you're going to set up with Chigorin? It's, like, for a White

⁹⁰ "Evidence of Things Not Seen," *The West Wing*, DVD, directed by Christopher Misiano (April 23, 2003; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2005).

⁹¹ Kaliningrad is a Russian exclave located on the Baltic Sea between NATO and European Union members Poland and Lithuania. It is Russia's only Baltic Sea port that is ice-free all year, and is thus strategically important to Russia's military and economic survival.

House bloopers reel or something?”), he authorizes the call, during which Chigorin, rather predictably, reacts to Bartlet’s obfuscation with justified hostility.

Frustrated with cold war-era tactics that clearly “[aren’t] working anymore,” Bartlet finally comes clean, making the case to Chigorin that the illegal traffic in nuclear weaponry and technologies is “as big a problem for you as it is for us,” but pointing out, too, that Russia’s continued unwillingness or inability to put an end to it has forced the U.S. into the position of having to protect its own national interests. Bartlet then puts a deal on the table: He offers to share with Chigorin the intelligence collected by the spy plane if Chigorin will permit the U.S. to enter Kaliningrad and get the plane. If not, Bartlet will order the plane detonated, and no one will see the pictures. Arguing that the two leaders need to trust each other, Bartlet conjures the cold war ghost he mistakenly ignored when dealing with the Russian ambassador in “Galileo” by reminding Chigorin that “[o]ur two countries have stopped the world from annihilating itself for sixty years because of conversations like this one.”

The shift in Bartlet’s tactics from lying to truth-telling in dealing with the Russian president in this episode is admirable, and it eventually pays off when Chigorin agrees to the deal. But given contemporaneous “real life” news coverage of Russia’s staunch opposition to the Iraq war being waged almost unilaterally by the Bush administration and in direct opposition to several permanent members of the UN Security Council, Russia among them (I discuss this further in chapter 8), I cannot help but wonder whether the stand-off between Russia and the United States depicted in “Evidence of Things Not Seen,” particularly its resolution in favor of the U.S., is simply a fictional manifestation of what was at the time a growing chasm in

U.S.-Russian relations. According to one *New York Times* journalist, contrary to statements from both countries that emphasized the continued partnership between presidents Putin and Bush, “on most major strategic issues resolved since Sept. 11, 2001, Russia has resisted, then grudgingly accepted, American dictates that it has been powerless to change.”⁹²

The West Wing's Nad'ya and Chigorin are Russian political elites who, to varying degrees, advocate a new direction for U.S.-Russian relations, and Chigorin, in “Enemies Foreign and Domestic,” even goes so far as to covertly undermine the actions of his own military and diplomatic officials to risk enacting the trust between the two leaders that Bartlet does not get around to advocating until a year later in “Evidence of Things Not Seen”—and then only when backed into a proverbial diplomatic corner. Yet, despite the fact that it is Nad'ya and Chigorin who represent the idealized cooperative future that Sorkin imagines for the U.S. and Russia, they must still bow to U.S. dictates, Nad'ya to NATO inspections and Chigorin to U.S. intelligence gathering over Kaliningrad. Both actions, if taken in “real-life,” would breach the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation, immediately gendering U.S.-Russian relations as the unwilling violation of a feminized Russia by a masculinist United States. The fictionalized depiction of U.S.-Russian relations on *The West Wing* thus offers a confusing and often incongruous pedagogical legacy that, in the end, not only justifies continued U.S. suspicion of a feminized Russia, but also legitimates the “cold war mentality” with which U.S. policymakers, both fictional and non-, continue to formulate and enact U.S. Russia policy in the post-Soviet era.

⁹² Michael Wines, “Russia Sees a Chance to Get Some Respect,” *New York Times*, March 30, 2003, <http://www.lexisnexis.com> (accessed May 14, 2008).

CHAPTER 7

The Cultural Politics of Cold War: The International Spy Museum and the U.S. Security State

"The shit's really hit the fan, huh, Roy"?¹

According to its public relations materials, Washington, DC's International Spy Museum, which opened to the public in July 2002—just ten months after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center—houses “the largest collection of international espionage artifacts ever placed on public display.”² The museum's permanent collection is divided into five thematic exhibits through which visitors move in sequence. The first, “School for Spies,” orients museum-goers to the world of international espionage by exploring the reasons individuals may choose such a career, how they are recruited and trained, and the tools and technologies by which they go about doing their jobs. Visitors then move into the next exhibit, “The Secret History of History,” which chronicles the history of global espionage up to the early twentieth century. The third exhibit, “Spies Among Us,” explores spycraft during World War II with a focus on the efforts of celebrities such as chef Julia Child, singer Josephine Baker, and actor Marlene Dietrich. “War of the Spies,” by far the largest of the five exhibits,” focuses on the cold war, while “The

¹ Ethel Rosenberg to Roy Cohn in Tony Kushner's *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes, Part One: Millennium Approaches* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1993), 111.

² International Spy Museum, “Fact Sheet” (2002).

21st Century,” which consists of a single film entitled *Ground Truth*, addresses the challenges current intelligence professionals face in the wake of 9/11.

Wildly popular with tourists because of its family-friendly atmosphere and high-tech interactive multimedia exhibits that enable visitors to explore “the craft, practice, history and contemporary role of espionage,”³ the museum has become an integral component of the District of Columbia Revitalization Act. Passed by the U.S. Congress in 1997, the Act’s intent is to facilitate a massive city-wide effort to grow the DC business community, provide more jobs for DC residents, and create more housing, retail, and entertainment options for tourists and locals alike.⁴ Additionally, the museum’s geographical location at 800 F Street, NW, just blocks from the White House, down the street from FBI headquarters, and within short walking distance of dozens of major national tourist sites, in conjunction with its extended emphasis on what I will demonstrate is the right(eous)ness and success of U.S. intelligence efforts, implicitly signals its affiliation with the ostensibly unlimited and superior power of the U.S. nation-state and its various security apparatuses.

In this chapter, I conceptualize the International Spy Museum *as* performance in the sense described by performance studies scholar Richard Schechner, who argues that to interrogate a cultural text *as* performance “means to investigate what the object does, how it interacts with other objects or beings.”⁵ Museum scholars agree

³ International Spy Museum, “First Museum Dedicated to International Espionage Opens in Washington, DC, July 2002,” press release (2002).

⁴ Although privately owned and operated, more than half of the museum’s start-up capital—\$21.9 million, to be precise—came from the government of the District of Columbia in the form of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and Enterprise Zones (EZ) bonds, both of which are components of the DC Revitalization Act.

that regardless of the inevitable contestability of their exhibits, “museums remain powerful and subtle authors and authorities whose cultural accounts are not easily dislodged.”⁶ As “critically important educational institutions,” museums “possess a power to shape collective values and social understandings” via “symbolic politics” that “invoke ideals, recast realities and manufacture meanings.”⁷ Consequently, museums operate as performative pedagogical sites and are therefore inextricable from the histories, legacies, and processes of nationalisms, colonialisms, and globalization. But, as “spaces where cultures of knowledge, education, entertainment and national politics intersect,” museums are subject to the interpretation of their visitors, who already possess varying degrees of knowledge about the exhibits before they even step inside.⁸ Given their membership in a kaleidoscope of knowledge-making media, “[m]useum exhibitions are bolted together out of the rhetorical fragments taken from more specific discourses and practices that have not always been fabricated with objective detachment, passive gazing, and dispassionate consideration.”⁹ Museums and their exhibits are thus performative in that they “help to forge reality, and then they organize the collective rites of this unstable reality’s

⁵ Schechner, *Performance Studies*, 24.

⁶ Sharon Macdonald, introduction to *Theorizing Museums: Representing Identity and Diversity in a Changing World*, ed. Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers/The Sociological Review, 1996), 4. For more on this way of conceptualizing and interrogating museums, see Steven C. Dubin, *Displays of Power: Memory and Amnesia in the American Museum* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); and Martin Proslar, “Museums and Globalization,” in *Theorizing Museums*, 21-44.

⁷ Timothy W. Luke, *Museum Politics: Power Plays at the Exhibition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), xiii-xiv.

⁸ Magdalena Hillstrom, “Museums and Gendered Articulations of Modernity,” in *Gendered Practices: Feminist Studies of Technology and Society*, ed. Boel Berner (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1997), 77.

⁹ Luke, 219.

reception that will write authoritative accounts of the past, present, and future in their displays.” They “serve as ontologies, telling us what reality really is.”¹⁰

At the International Spy Museum, “reality” is forged through high tech multimedia exhibits and special programming meant to entertain visitors while simultaneously teaching them the history of spycraft. These concomitant goals, to entertain and to educate, are constitutive of the museum’s mission. What, though, is the “reality” being discursively created by the museum and its exhibits? And through what means are the “facts” of that “reality” being conveyed to the museum’s visitors? To answer these questions, I first provide some crucial historical and contextual information necessary for making sense of the centrality of nuclear proliferation and the cold war to the museum’s story of international espionage. I then delineate the ways in which the International Spy Museum operates as a performance of a particular “reality” of its own construction, focusing on the specific textual, visual, aural, and architectural methods by which it seeks to accomplish its mission to “educate the public about espionage in an engaging manner and to provide a dynamic context that fosters understanding of its important role in, and impact on, current and historic events.”¹¹ Because the International Spy Museum makes no map of its exhibits available to its visitors—a clever component of its performance ostensibly meant to heighten for museum-goers the sense of “secrecy” and the pleasure of discovery—I have chosen to present relevant portions of my journey through the museum in narrative form in an attempt to guide readers through those parts of the

¹⁰ Ibid., 219-220.

¹¹ International Spy Museum, <http://www.spymuseum.org/about/faq.php>, par. 3 (accessed April 10, 2008).

museum that are most salient to my work in this chapter. I demonstrate that the “reality” depicted in the museum’s story of international espionage (1) presents as fact the guilt of convicted Soviet spies Julius and Ethel Rosenberg for passing the “secret” of nuclear technology on to the U.S.S.R., (2) positions the Soviet Union/Russia as always already a feminized enemy of the just and virtuous United States based on the former’s apparently historical predilection for irrational state-sponsored violence and terror, and (3) assumes the unquestioned legitimacy and integrity of U.S. covert intelligence networks operating in apparent self-defense against those entities (most notably the Soviet Union and communists, but also including non-state-based actors such as the Palestinian Liberation Organization and Al’Queda) whom the U.S. claims threaten the national security of the U.S. and its allies. In short, I am concerned in this chapter with *what* is being taught, *how*, and *for what purposes(s)*. I argue that at the International Spy Museum, the cold war, constituted by the feminized duplicity of the Soviet Union (which, in turn, was enabled by the traitorous activities of the Rosenbergs), is used to legitimate and justify the current “war on terror.”

A Cold War Museum

Indeed, the cold war and, more specifically, the U.S. “victory” over the Soviet Union are at the center of the museum’s story of international espionage. This is hardly surprising given that, as I will discuss in greater detail later, the majority of the museum’s decision-makers are current and former U.S. intelligence professionals who were involved to varying degrees in cold war-era espionage. An overwhelming

majority of the espionage technologies and artifacts displayed as part of the museum's permanent collection were developed during and utilized as part of the cold war, and stories of cold war-era spycraft constitute the bulk of the museum's narrative.

Although we are told by a docent that the elevator for which we are waiting will take us up to the start of the museum's exhibits on international espionage, my experience has already started, for not four feet above my head, hanging from a rope, is a replica of the toppled statue of Stalin's first security chief, Feliks Dzerzhinsky, which, until August 22, 1991, stood outside KGB headquarters in Moscow. The accompanying placard reports Dzerzhinsky's pioneering and violent efforts to purge the Soviet Union of its internal dissenters. And again, after a short elevator ride up to the start of the exhibits, I am confronted with another, more contemporary warning about the dangers of communism and the legacies of the cold war: a larger-than-life black and white portrait of a North Korean soldier guarding the border between democratic South Korea and communist North Korea at Panmujon. We are then ushered into a small, dimly lit movie theatre that seats approximately forty or fifty people. An orientation film ostensibly intended to contextualize what we are about to see in the museum describes the half-century-long ideological conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union as "a new type of conflict, fought not by soldiers, but mostly by spies" and explicitly identifies the cold war as "the intelligence community's finest hour." My trek through the museum has yet to begin, and already I've learned the lesson that, according to the International Spy Museum, communism,

maintained by militarized, state-based terror, remains a salient threat, and that the cold war was the catalyst for the development of contemporary spycraft.

As is clear from these first moments inside the museum, its narrative succeeds in marking identities, particularly highly politicized notions of “us” and “them,” for its visitors, all of whom are rhetorically interpellated into an imagined community of U.S.-based intelligence insiders. According to the museum’s story of international espionage, “us” is the United States and its NATO allies, while “them” is any entity that threatens the national security of the United States and its allies. Most frequently, these security threats are explicitly identified throughout the museum’s exhibits, programming, and public relations materials as the Soviet Union and communists (further proof of the museum’s focus on the cold war), but several non-state-based actors that have emerged since the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991, such as the Palestinian Liberation Organization, the Irish Republican Army, and Al’Queda, are identified, as well.

In a brochure advertising the museum’s collection of espionage artifacts, for example, the museum hails its reader (the prospective museum-goer), promising that visitors will “[s]ee the storm clouds gathering as World War II drew near and clandestine German and Russian spy rings operated right under *our* noses.”¹² The use of the inclusive pronoun “our” makes clear that the museum’s success as a story of international espionage relies heavily on visitors’ collective belief, made possible by canonical national/ist narratives that facilitate and encourage cultural amnesia as well

¹² International Spy Museum, informational brochure, italics mine.

as an intolerance for ambiguity and nuance,¹³ that the Federal Bureau of Intelligence (FBI) and, by extension, the U.S. government are always the “good guys.” Not surprisingly, this narrative ignores the fact that, in the United States, some of the most egregious violations of personal freedoms and civil liberties have been committed by the FBI against U.S. citizens affiliated to various degrees with the political left.¹⁴ Exhibits throughout the museum demonstrate the many ways in which the Soviet Union’s Committee for State Security (*Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti*, or KGB) sought classified information in and from the United States (for example, the Soviet Union’s failed attempt to incorporate microscopic surveillance devices into the infrastructure of the new U.S. embassy in Moscow during its construction in the 1980s), implicitly lauding the success of U.S. intelligence for foiling their effort. However, reciprocal espionage attempts by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) are deemed just, while KGB counter-intelligence efforts are negatively valanced throughout the museum’s narrative.

¹³ Luke argues that museums create worlds in which the artifacts on display are removed from their contexts and, thus, placed seemingly outside politics, adding to the feeling of objectivity and generalized truth. By removing items from their social and political context, museums make those items devoid of historical specificity and, instead, situate them in some generalized, mythic past that no one still living remembers.

¹⁴ The International Spy Museum did curate and host a special, limited engagement exhibit in 2006 entitled *The Enemy Within*. Now on tour throughout the United States, this exhibit “reveals dramatic episodes in American history, from 1776 to the present, when the U.S. was attacked at home” and describes the ways in which how “the country acted—and sometimes over-reacted—resulted in the evolution of U.S. counterintelligence and security measures.” International Spy Museum, http://www.spymuseum.org/about/exhibits_enemy.php# (accessed April 22, 2008). It addresses some of the more questionable tactics the U.S. government has used to quell internal dissent, including a section on the FBI’s Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO), which targeted organizations and people suspected of being subversive, including the NAACP, Martin Luther King, Jr., the CPUSA, and the entire New Left political movement. Formal COINTELPRO operations took place between 1956 and 1971. For more information, please refer to Nelson Blackstock, *COINTELPRO: The FBI’s Secret War on Political Freedom* (Atlanta: Pathfinder Press, 1990); and Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, ed., *The COINTELPRO Papers: Documents from the FBI’s Secret Wars against Dissent in the United States* (Boston: South End Press, 2001).

The museum's marketing materials also reveal the presumed U.S.-based perspective of its prospective visitors by promising that they will "learn how the biggest secret of the 20th Century—the atom bomb—was stolen by Soviet spies." This statement remains contestable in its assumption that scientific technology can ever be "secret," or even proprietary, but also participates in and reifies the cold war-era hypothesis that the Soviet Union could not possibly have developed nuclear technology on its own, thus pointing to the necessity of hunting down the traitorous spies operating "right under our noses" during World War II. Such language also assumes that visitors to this ostensibly "apolitical" and "nonbiased" museum are not, themselves, communists and/or former loyal Soviet citizens who would consider the attainment of the atomic bomb by their country only fitting—especially considering the fact that when the Manhattan Project to develop an atomic weapon was begun in the United States during World War II, the U.S. government invited its allies France and Great Britain to join in the research while excluding the U.S.S.R., which was, at that time, also an ally of the United States.

Given the volume of cold war-era artifacts on display (some of which I will discuss specifically), and the rhetorical centrality of the cold war to its attempt to tell the history of international espionage, the International Spy Museum cannot help but be a cold war museum. Unlike Washington, DC's other national museums, most of which cannot be "extricated from the global war between two cultural systems during the Cold War" because of their implicit mission to glorify the universal value of the arts and promote American artists, events and artifacts as symbols of democracy,¹⁵

¹⁵ Luke, *Museum Politics*, xxiv.

the International Spy Museum is temporally removed by more than a decade from the period normally associated with the cold war (i.e., roughly 1945 through 1989/1991). Although not explicitly *in* the cold war (and, thus, seemingly outside the conflict), the museum is very much a history *of* the cold war—which, given the contestability of the “cold war” as a cultural referent (which I discuss in chapter 1), actually puts the museum right back *in* it. The International Spy Museum’s cold war story reflects the political and ideological perspectives of the United States rather than those of the now-defunct Soviet Union. Consequently, the fact that there is only one extant participating nation-state—the United States—left to tell the story raises critical questions about how that story is told, under what circumstances, to whom, how, and for what purpose(s).

Atomic Secrets

In August 1945, the United States effectively ended the Second World War in East Asia by using two of its new atomic bombs to obliterate the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan.¹⁶ Four years later, on September 24, 1949, the *New York Times* published U.S. President Harry Truman’s announcement that “within recent weeks an atomic explosion occurred in the U.S.S.R.” In this statement, issued to the print media via White House advisor Charles G. Ross, Truman reminded the American public that, due to the nature of scientific research, “no single nation could, in fact, have a monopoly of atomic weapons.” According to Truman and his Secretary of State Dean

¹⁶ These two incidents, one on August 6, 1945, the other on August 9, stand out as the only time atomic weapons have been used in warfare. For more on Truman’s decision to use the atomic bombs within the context of negotiations with the Soviet Union, see Lafeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War*, 23-31.

Acheson, who held a news conference at the United Nations General Assembly following the public release of Truman's historic statement, there would be no alterations to U.S. foreign policy as a result of this event. Acheson reassured the press of the accuracy of Truman's earlier statement that plans had been made for what had all along been the expectation of "the eventual development of this new force by other nations." For U.S. policymakers, then, the apparent acquisition and successful use of nuclear technology by the Soviet Union was not unexpected and was therefore met with apparent nonchalance. When confronted by a barrage of reporters on his way out of a Cabinet meeting, for example, Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson calmly asked them not to "overplay it." Similarly, General Omar N. Bradley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, issued a statement urging the American people to remain calm: "We have anticipated it for four years and it calls for no change in our basic defense plan."¹⁷

Despite the prevailing appearance of equanimity among policymakers in the wake of the revelation that the Soviet Union possessed the "secret" of nuclear technology, *New York Times* columnist Anne O'Hare McCormick called 1949 the "epochal post-war year."¹⁸ Echoing her colleague, *New York Times* reporter William L. Laurence, who claimed that the Soviet atomic explosion marked "the end of the first period of the atomic age and the beginning of the second,"¹⁹ McCormick mused that the first phase, begun with the U.S. war-time atomic attacks on Hiroshima and

¹⁷ Anthony Leviero, "U.S. Reaction Firm," *New York Times*, September 24, 1949.

¹⁸ Anne O'Hare McCormick, "The Epochal Post-War Year is 1949," *New York Times*, September 26, 1949.

¹⁹ William L. Laurence, "Soviet Achievement Ahead of Predictions by 3 Years," *New York Times*, September 24, 1949.

Nagasaki, lasted only as long as the United States alone had the knowledge and ability to use nuclear technology and was thus able to prevent the escalation of violence. This period of U.S. atomic dominance was shattered in the wake of Truman's statement, which made clear the fact that the U.S.S.R. remained a threat to declared U.S. objectives for a lasting post-war peace.²⁰ According to McCormick, the Soviet Union's atomic explosion would require a reevaluation of the "temporary sense of safety" that accompanied the widely-held assumption "that [the United States] would never use [its atomic bomb] to start a war and that nobody else would dare to start a war without it."

Within twenty-four hours of Truman's statement, the Soviet Union responded, acknowledging via a radio broadcast that Moscow did, indeed, have in its military arsenal the ability to create and employ atomic weapons. The broadcast also emphasized that this was hardly a revelation given that Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs V. M. Molotov had informed the United States of this fact in November 1947. According to Molotov, the so-called atomic "secret" had been non-existent since at least that time. As for the alleged "atomic explosion" recently monitored by U.S. intelligence sources, Moscow's official news agency reported that "[t]he Soviet Union is working on many projects which require large-scale blasting," which "might draw attention beyond the confines of the Soviet Union."²¹ At no point did the

²⁰ This U.S. objective was explicitly iterated by Acheson in his comments at the United Nations following Truman's announcement. According to Acheson, "The entire foreign policy of this Government is directed toward the organization and preservation of peace. It is only through the success of those efforts that we will avoid the increased hardships and perils of war." "Acheson Comment on Atom News," *New York Times*, September 24, 1949.

²¹ "Soviet Union Has 'Atomic Weapon,' Moscow Says as to U.S. Statement," *New York Times*, September 25, 1949.

U.S.S.R. confirm that it had detonated a nuclear *weapon*, and Truman was careful in his announcement to refer to the event ambiguously as an “atomic explosion” without specifically identifying its cause or method.

In a front-page article published alongside Truman’s statement in the *New York Times* and journalist Anthony Leviero’s piece on official U.S. reaction to the alleged Soviet atomic test, reporter William L. Laurence implicitly takes on both Truman and Leviero over Truman’s use of the term “atomic explosion.” In what is largely a scientific article concerning the ways in which nuclear explosions are monitored, measured, and recorded, Laurence argues that if the United States had gathered enough intelligence to determine the existence of an explosion at all, what Truman ambiguously termed an “atomic explosion” could have been nothing but the explosion of an atomic *bomb*. What is most intriguing about this article, though, is that its content is actually in disagreement with its headline. Entitled “Soviet Achievement Ahead of Predictions by 3 Years,” Laurence contends in this piece that rather than being ahead, the Soviet Union was actually just getting caught up. Scientists had predicted that the U.S.S.R. would not attain nuclear capability until at least 1952, but Laurence points out that such predictions were made based on the erroneous assumption that Soviet scientists did not begin working to develop the technology until *after* the U.S. revealed the existence of its own atomic weapons at the close of World War II. Predictions and timelines of nuclear proliferation were thus made without taking into consideration the likelihood that, like the United States, the Soviet Union used the discovery of nuclear fission in 1934 as a catalyst for creating atomic weapons. According to Laurence, “It would be more reasonable to

assume that [the U.S.S.R.] had been working on it in secrecy since January 1939 and that it thus took them ten, rather than four years, to reach the stage of testing their first atom bomb,” thus putting the Soviet Union four years *behind* the United States in this regard.

Two days after Truman’s statement, a *New York Times* article entitled “Soviet Atom Gains Laid to U.S. Laxity” reported on the efforts of Republican Representative Harold H. Velde of Illinois and Democratic Senator Herbert R. O’Connor of Maryland to restrict U.S. immigration laws to prevent the “infiltration” of the United States by communist agents and sympathizers. According to Velde and O’Connor, the U.S. government had been careless in permitting known “subversive activities” to go on unimpeded, including the continued operation within the United States of more than 150 American communists and Soviet agents “engaged in a Russian attempt to obtain atomic secrets.”²² As signaled by this article, two simultaneous conversations, one about the alleged precipitous attainment of nuclear technology by the Soviet Union, the other concerning illegal immigration were quickly conflated, and concerns about domestic “infiltration” and the stealing of U.S. national security “secrets” by foreign and American communists led to questions about *how* it was that the U.S.S.R. was able to develop and test an atomic weapon a full three years ahead of schedule. Little attention was given to Molotov’s claim that he had informed the United States of Soviet nuclear capability in 1947, because policymakers believed then, as they did in 1949, that the Soviets had neither the scientific expertise nor the industrial infrastructure to develop, build, and test such a

²² “Soviet Gains Laid to U.S. Laxity,” *New York Times*, September 26, 1949.

weapon. Thus, according to the narrative constructed in the wake of the Soviet Union's 1949 "atomic explosion," there could be only one possibility: U.S.-based communist spies working inside and/or closely affiliated with the Manhattan Project must have passed "secret" information to the Soviet Union.²³ The United States, unwilling to acknowledge Soviet scientific expertise, initiated a hunt for the guilty parties, the most legendary of whom are Julius and Ethel Rosenberg.

The Rosenbergs as Discursive Phenomena

Given the notoriously anti-communist politics of the American 1950s, it is perhaps no coincidence that on June 19, 1953, almost three years before the heralded premier of Twentieth Century Fox's first feature-length film version of *Anastasia* (which I discussed in chapter 5), U.S. Communist Party members Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, having been convicted in federal court of conspiracy to commit espionage, were executed at New York's Sing Sing federal prison for allegedly participating in a successful plan to supply the Soviet Union with the "secret" of the atomic bomb. The circumstances surrounding their arrest, indictment, trial, and subsequent appeals were convoluted, and the fact of their execution remains politically charged. Since the declassification in 1995 of crucial U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) documents, there has been a resurgent interest in closing the book on the Rosenberg case once and for all. Known collectively as "Venona," these files of Soviet transmissions, decrypted by U.S. government operatives in the late 1940s, are considered by many

²³ The Manhattan Project was a joint effort by wartime allies Canada, Great Britain, and the United States to develop a nuclear weapon. The U.S.S.R. was, at the time, also an ally of the United States, but was neither informed of nor invited to participate in the top secret endeavor.

the final word in the Rosenberg case: they allegedly prove that at least Julius and maybe Ethel were indeed involved in direct espionage against the United States on behalf of the Soviet Union during World War II.²⁴ Despite what appears to be resoundingly damning evidence, though (especially concerning Julius's involvement), Rosenberg supporters remain vigilant in pointing to repeated instances of judicial misconduct before, during, and after the trial, the political aspirations and affiliations of the presiding judge and some members of the prosecution, the alleged inadequacies and/or inexperience of the Rosenbergs' attorney, and the cultural environment of virulent anti-communism and anti-Semitism that they contend dramatically affected the outcome of the trial and all but guaranteed that the Rosenbergs' appeals would be unsuccessful.²⁵

In her discussion of the cultural milieu in which the Rosenberg trial took place, feminist literary scholar Virginia Carmichael focuses on the linkages and connotations that bolstered conservative anti-communism between 1950 (the year of the Rosenbergs' arrest) and 1953 (the year of their execution), particularly those between communism, treason, and dissent. As a result of this conflation, anyone who strayed from the conservative (Christian) agenda, including liberals; radicals; Jews; immigrants; leftist artists and intellectuals; and labor, civil, and women's rights activists and organizations, became suspect and were effectively rendered "communist" in U.S. popular and political culture. This led not only to ruined careers

²⁴ Ronald Radosh and Joyce Milton, *The Rosenberg File*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997); Nigel West, *Venona: The Greatest Secret of the Cold War* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1999); and Herbert Romerstein and Eric Breindel, *The Venona Secrets: Exposing Soviet Espionage and America's Traitors* (Washington, DC: Regency Publishing, Inc., 2000).

²⁵ Carmichael, *Framing History*; and *Heir to an Execution*, DVD, directed by Ivy Meeropol (Burbank, CA: HBO Home Video, 2004).

and public ostracism, but also to the eventual implosion of the political left as a result of internal disagreements and self-imposed censorship. But regardless of the “truth” of their guilt or innocence, the Rosenbergs were swept up in the summer of 1950 into a discursive maelstrom in which every identity by which they could possibly have defined themselves was in direct opposition to the accepted norm of that historical moment. Both Ethel and Julius were active members of the Communist Party in the era of McCarthy, HUAC, and the Korean War, the latter of which framed their arrest, trial, and execution.²⁶ They made their lives and raised their children in Manhattan’s Lower East Side, a well-known center of Jewish life and culture in the United States. They were working class during the (arguably rhetorical) ascendance of middle-class prosperity. They were the Jewish children of Russian immigrants living in a country with an overwhelmingly white, Christian body politic at a time of increased paranoia concerning the domestic “infiltration” of foreigners and the concomitant conflation of Jews with communist ideology.²⁷ The predominant national/ist narrative of post-war America required significant adjustment to accommodate the anathema that the Rosenbergs represented. And Ethel Rosenberg, by virtue of her femaleness in combination with her alleged participation in the network of pro-Soviet atomic spies, was a direct threat to the heteropatriarchal norms of American capitalism in which women are apolitical homemakers and caretakers of children while their husbands go off to (white collar) jobs.

²⁶ Communist North Korea invaded democratic South Korea on June 25, 1950; Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were arrested in New York City that summer. The armistice was signed between North and South Korea on July 27, 1953; the Rosenbergs were executed on June 19 of that same year.

²⁷ While both Julius’ parents were from Russia, Ethel’s mother had emigrated from Austria. Her father, though, was Russian.

The tacit rules and regulations of domestic “containment” affected not only the media’s portrayal of Rosenberg and her public persona, but also the discursive milieu from which emerged the prosecution’s rhetoric and, ultimately, the rationale that allowed presiding Judge Irving Kaufman to sentence her to death. As early as August 12, 1950, for example, prosecuting attorney Myles J. Lane linked Rosenberg’s actions with contemporaneous military conflict, arguing, “if the crime with which she is charged had not occurred perhaps we would not have the present situation in Korea.”²⁸ Returning less than a year later to that same theme in his sentencing statement, Kaufman called the Rosenbergs’ crime “worse than murder,” asserting that their actions were the direct catalyst for “the Communist aggression in Korea” as well the potential for “millions more” casualties incurred there and elsewhere as a result of their egregious breach of U.S. national security.²⁹

Thinking through the use of Ethel Rosenberg as a *femme fatale* of the cold war triumphalist mythscape requires an historicized conceptualization of American national identity. Acceptable roles for women in the United States after World War II were very few and highly prescribed, and the heteropatriarchal nuclear family was vigorously deployed by policymakers and pundits as the first line of defense against treason and subversive activity.³⁰ The trouble with the Rosenbergs, though, was that not only had they apparently functioned quite successfully as Soviet operatives *within*

²⁸ “Plot to Have G.I. Give Bomb Data to Soviets Is Laid to His Sister Here,” *New York Times*, August 12, 1950.

²⁹ “Judge Kaufman’s Statement upon Sentencing the Rosenbergs,” http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/rosenb/ROS_SENT.HTM, par. 2 (accessed April 18, 2008).

³⁰ For more on the importance of the heteropatriarchal nuclear family to American national identity in the 1950s, see Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).

the very structure that was supposed to protect against such activity, but it was Ethel Rosenberg, the wife and homemaker, who was made, rhetorically if not in practice, responsible for it. According to the *New York Times*, which printed its stories on the Rosenberg case verbatim from FBI press releases,³¹ it was she who “recruit[ed] her brother, David Greenglass, 28, to obtain classified, that is, secret information concerning the atomic bomb for the Soviet Union.”³²

This explicit attribution to Ethel Rosenberg of setting in motion the events that led to the Soviet Union’s nuclear capability was the first of many. It found its way into the prosecution’s rhetoric and, arguably, into the minds of the jury, which was not sequestered at any point during the trial and thus had access to the print media’s ubiquitous coverage. It also served as an implicit explanation for other examples of Rosenberg’s purportedly aberrant behavior. According to subsequent news reports, she had the audacity, when investigators appeared at her door after her husband’s arrest, to insist on her Constitutional right to see a search warrant and call an attorney. She was also consistently derided during the trial for her “refusal to demonstrate feeling, a refusal interpreted as a sign of arrogance, disdain, contempt, or absence of remorse and increasingly read as evidence of guilt in a cold and unnatural woman.”³³ With regard to the fate of their young children, she bore the brunt of the interpretive coverage, which accused her of being an “unnatural” mother who chose loyalty to her political commitments over the responsibilities of motherhood. The bottom line for

³¹ Carmichael, *Framing History*, 99.

³² “Plot to Have G.I. Give Bomb Data to Soviets Is Laid to His Sister Here.”

³³ Carmichael, *Framing History*, 97-98.

Judge Kaufman was that Rosenberg, a “mature woman—almost three years older than her husband and almost seven years older than her younger brother,” failed in her responsibility to dissuade them from their activities. Instead, she “encouraged and assisted the cause” and, as such, was “a full-fledged partner in this crime.”³⁴

Within the narrow confines of what was considered acceptable behavior for women in the decade or so following 1945, the mounting rhetoric identifying Rosenberg as the communist ring-leader of a costly espionage operation was easy to interpret: she manipulated her husband and brother, breached national security, refused to cooperate with those charged with protecting the American body politic, abandoned her sons, and not once demonstrated an ounce of remorse for any of it. The alleged crimes of Ethel Rosenberg require that she, both literally and figuratively, be disappeared as punishment for not only violating the laws of the United States, but also the gendered norms of cold war-era domestic containment. In the twisted logic of this particular narrative, Rosenberg is guilty of *something*, and whether that something is conspiracy to commit espionage or betraying the men in her life (and, with them, the heteropatriarchal nuclear family-as-America), she deserved to die.

The Rosenbergs at the International Spy Museum

The International Spy Museum explicitly marks September 23, 1949—that day on which President Harry Truman announced the Soviet Union’s first atomic explosion—as the commencement of the cold war, and, despite the continuing controversy concerning the degree to which Julius and/or Ethel Rosenberg were

³⁴ “Judge Kaufman’s Statement,” par. 6.

involved (or not) in enabling Soviet scientists, the Rosenbergs are positioned in the museum's narrative as central figures in the espionage network that made the events of that day possible. The Rosenbergs and the cold war are thus co-constitutive in the museum's narrative. According to the museum, were it not for the Rosenberg's actions, the cold war would not have existed, and were it not for the cold war, neither would the Rosenbergs as discursive phenomena.

I am first introduced to Julius and Ethel Rosenberg in an exhibit entitled "Atomic Spies." To stand in this small, square room whose grey walls are a grid is like standing on a Star Trek holodeck. Or maybe inside a Rubics Cube. Beginning with a replica of a letter by Albert Einstein to Franklin Delano Roosevelt requesting/warning the U.S. President that the United States should research and build an atomic weapon to pre-empt Nazi Germany, this room uses the U.S. government's timeline of events as constructed for the Rosenberg trial to visually demonstrate the flow of information concerning the "secret" of the atomic bomb from communist agents in the United States to scientists in the Soviet Union. According to the (white, male) voiceover that accompanies the real-time mapping of the alleged "spy network" on a wall of the exhibit, "Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, codenames 'Liberal' and 'Ethel,' provided Soviets with stolen defense and military documents." He was an "active spy," she his "supportive wife."³⁵

³⁵ Ironically, it was actually Ethel Rosenberg who was manipulated at the hands of the state. Materials released by the Department of Justice in 1974 under the Freedom of Information Act reveal that although the only evidence the prosecution could garner linking her to the "spy ring" was the pre-trial testimony of her sister-in-law, Ruth Greenglass, the government charged her with conspiracy to commit espionage and took her into custody in an attempt to force a confession from her husband and to prevent her from being able to testify on his behalf. For more information, see Carmichael, *Framing History*, 103.

Upon leaving “Atomic Spies,” I encounter an enormous wall mural of “nuclear weapons on parade in Moscow” and a placard reading:

NUCLEAR AGE BEGINS

In conventional wars, armies battle in plain site. In the Cold War, spies and governments wrestled in the shadows. It was a new type of conflict, fought not by soldiers but mostly by spies.

World War II left the U.S.S.R. controlling Eastern Europe, dividing a continent and, increasingly, the globe. Nations chose sides between two superpowers, fueling in time undercover struggles that sparked regional flare-ups...but without igniting World War III.

Past the mural, at the end of a short, grey hallway is the universal sign for a nuclear fall-out shelter. Following the only path available to me, I turn the corner and head down the drab concrete stairs, ostensibly into a fall-out shelter. The walls of the staircase are decorated by posters advertising several U.S. cold war-era films, and a (white, male) voice over in the guise of a contemporaneous radio newscaster and quoting from the text of the press release issued by the White House on September 22, 1949, reports that Truman has announced that an atomic explosion has occurred in the Soviet Union. Then, quoting from a 1953 statement issued by President Dwight D.

This lack of evidentiary support for Rosenberg’s involvement continued with the release of the Venona documents in 1995. Unlike her husband, her brother, and her sister-in-law, Rosenberg was never given a code name by Soviet agents working in the United States. In all the decoded Venona materials, she is mentioned only once as “LIBERAL’s wife. Surname that of her husband, first name ETHEL, 29 years old. Married five years. Finished secondary school. A FELLOWCOUNTRYMAN [member of the Communist Party] since 1938. Sufficiently well developed politically. Knows about her husband’s work and the role of METR and NIL. In view of delicate health does not work. Is characterized positively and as a devoted person” (“New York 1657 to Moscow, November 27, 1944,” *NOVA Online*, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/venona/inte_19441114.html#cabl (accessed May 26, 2008)).

Eisenhower to explain why he refused the Rosenbergs clemency in the hours before their execution, the voiceover reports:

By immeasurably increasing the chances of atomic war, the Rosenbergs may have condemned to death tens of millions of innocent people all over the world. The execution of two humans is a grave matter. But even graver is the thought of millions of dead whose deaths may be directly attributable to what these spies have done.

As visitors come to the bottom of this long, concrete staircase repeatedly labeled with the infamously foreboding symbol for a nuclear fall-out shelter, they file through a short, dark hallway and out into a sporadically lit area cordoned off by chain link fencing that form the transparent “walls” of the area’s various exhibits. Located immediately to the left is the International Spy Museum’s presentation of information concerning the political and ideological tensions of the 1950s. The display, entitled “Red Scare” and designed to suggest a nuclear fall-out shelter, features a black and white composite film, which includes portions of Walt Disney’s manifestly anti-communist testimony before HUAC, as well as various clips of Senator Joseph McCarthy’s vigorous defense of his attempts to expose communists and communist sympathizers in the United States. The film is just over two minutes long and automatically repeats itself as museum-goers venture behind the guardrail of a wheelchair ramp to view the artifacts on display in two glass cases built into the “wall” of the simulated fall-out shelter and to read the information provided on the

accompanying placards. Together, these constitute the museum's take on the socio-historical context in which the Rosenbergs' trial and execution took place.

After the immediacy of the video, a familiar technology to which visitors are instantly drawn, the display's white lighting plays on their propensity to read from left to right, subtly focusing the brightest lights on the left-hand side of the exhibit and thus urging them toward the largest glass display case. Prominently mounted above this case, painted in black on what appears to be an aged, white shingle, is a quotation attributed to former Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev explicitly acknowledging the Rosenbergs' "significant help in accelerating the production of our atomic bomb." The glass case itself contains replicas of pamphlets and public relations materials intended during the Rosenbergs' incarceration between 1950 and 1953 to raise either awareness of their plight and/or money for their costly and lengthy appeals process. A significantly smaller glass display case, located down and to the immediate right of the larger one, houses a replica of the infamous Jell-O box that Julius Rosenberg is said to have used as a signal linking two of his operatives, Harry Gold and David Greenglass, at the Los Alamos atomic research facility in June 1945. The original, the museum reports, was used by the prosecution during the trial and is currently located with the Rosenberg trial documents in the U.S. National Archives in Washington, DC. What the museum does not mention, however, is that its replica Jell-O box is actually a replica of a replica: the "original," assuming it ever existed, has never been located, and prosecutors Myles Lane and Roy Cohn readily admitted to the jury and Kaufman at the time of the trial that their Jell-O box was

fabricated solely for demonstrative use in the courtroom.³⁶ Nor does the museum mention that the quotation attributed to Khrushchev, on which the museum relies (in conjunction with its subsequent display concerning the top-secret Venona program, to which I will return shortly) as definitive proof of the Rosenbergs' guilt, is taken from an edited, English-language edition of his published memoirs that was posthumously transcribed from cassette tapes said to have been created by Khrushchev, but not verifiable by voice-print. Additionally, since the Rosenbergs had already been executed as traitors who had provided the "secret" of the atomic bomb to the Soviet Union, it would not have been in the Soviet Union's best interests for Khrushchev to have done anything but confirm the findings of the FBI. Why, after all, would he reveal the existence of undiscovered intelligence operatives? Using Khrushchev's memoirs, then, for the final word on the Rosenberg case is most definitely problematic.³⁷

The conspicuous absence from this display of any discussion of judicial and prosecutorial misconduct during, as well as the potentially illegal activities of the FBI in making, the Rosenberg case forces a glaring critique of the ideological positionalities of the museum's creators and decision-makers. Although a wall placard, entitled "Julius and Ethel Rosenberg: Guilty or Innocent?" seems at first to ask museum-goers to come to their own conclusions about the case, its question is merely rhetorical, as the museum has already made the decision on behalf of its visitors. Leaving no room for debate or conversation, the placard affirms that "[f]rom

³⁶ Marjorie Garber, "Jell-O," in *Secret Agents: The Rosenberg Case, McCarthyism and Fifties America*, ed. Marjorie Garber and Rebecca L. Walkowitz, 11-29 (New York: Routledge, 1995).

³⁷ Carmichael, *Framing History*, 223, footnote no. 2.

1943 to 1946 Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, an ideological New York couple with two young sons, were at the center of a spy network feeding industrial, military, and atomic secrets to the Soviets.”

Given the painstaking recuperative work of Rosenberg supporters and other progressive activists and intellectuals in the decades since the 1950s, it is surprising that the International Spy Museum presents as part of its “reality” the unambiguous guilt of the Rosenbergs, particularly given the wrongs perpetrated against leftists of all ideological persuasions by, most notably, the FBI and the Department of Justice’s COINTELPRO. The placard mentions that “[w]hen Julius was caught and refused to talk, the FBI arrested Ethel, too, in hopes of breaking her husband.” But this (illegal and ultimately unsuccessful) government-sanctioned effort to leverage Rosenberg against her husband in an attempt to secure his confession passes without comment in the museum’s narrative, as does the FBI’s lack of evidentiary support linking her to the crime of which she was accused. Although the display does acknowledge the “widespread sympathy and doubt” that accompanied the Rosenbergs’ conviction and execution, accompanied by a picture of a pro-Rosenberg rally in France, the United States and its institutions exist outside that doubt. No mention is made of the U.S.-based activism that occurred during and since the Rosenberg case to draw attention to the inadequacies of the trial and attempt to situate it within the context of McCarthyism. This is particularly ironic given that the museum itself would not be able to report the “facts” as it does were it not for the success of a 1970s lawsuit brought against the federal government by the Rosenbergs’ sons under the Freedom of Information Act, which released previously-classified trial materials revealing the

FBI's questionable tactics in making the government's case against the Rosenbergs. According to the museum, the Rosenbergs "were found guilty and sentenced to die in the electric chair," but *who* it was that found them guilty and sentenced them to die remains intentionally ambiguous in order to avoid implicating the U.S. government.

The need for this ambiguity is further substantiated and legitimized via the dramaturgical *unimportance* to the museum's narrative of another placard containing the museum's only acknowledgment of the persecutions suffered in the United States by the political left in the era of McCarthy. The museum concedes that while "[s]ome spies were uncovered in the process, [...] history has shown that most of the accused were innocent, their lives and reputations destroyed by the Communist witch-hunt." Not only is this placard positioned well below eye-level in the display's darkest area and obscured by the shadow cast by the television (on which the short composite film, "Red Scare," runs continuously), but it is also the last informational piece in an unusually (for this museum) text-heavy display, which itself comes more than half-way through the museum—long after visitors have stopped attempting to read everything. Located unobtrusively behind the guardrail of a ramp that makes this portion of the museum accessible to patrons in wheelchairs, the display is also difficult to get to. Given these potential obstacles, which museum-goers could use as an excuse to pass entirely by or gloss over the substantive information presented in the display, it is the anti-communist sentiment expressed in the video by Walt Disney, along with the prominence of the quotation from Khrushchev's memoirs, that work concomitantly to bolster museum-goers' existing beliefs in both the legitimacy of anti-communism and the Rosenbergs' guilt. After all, if Disney, the allegedly benign

creator of family entertainment and amusement parks,³⁸ thinks communism is “un-American,” then it undoubtedly must be. And who else but Nikita Khrushchev, a former leader of the Soviet Union, would know the “truth” about the Rosenbergs’ involvement in his country’s attainment of nuclear technology?

The placard’s written text calling McCarthyism a “witch-hunt”—assuming visitors read it—thus contradicts the predominant message promulgated by the display’s audio-visual materials, which, in their conclusive condemnation of the Rosenbergs, operate in conjunction with the evidentiary support provided by the museum in the form of subsequent informational materials concerning the NSA’s top-secret Venona project. A series of placards reports the 1995 declassification of hundreds of decrypted World War Two-era Soviet transmissions to and about agents (including one called “Liberal,” whom decoders have identified as Julius Rosenberg) operating within the territorial boundaries of the United States. It features FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover’s contention that “Communism, in reality, is not a political party, it is a way of life, an evil and malignant way of life.” Hoover’s sentiment, like the quotation attributed to Khrushchev, is painted in black ink on an aged, white shingle and prominently displayed at the start of the Venona exhibit, thus squelching any potential for an oppositional, or even nuanced, interpretation of the museum’s story of Venona and its import to the Rosenberg case.

³⁸ Critical pedagogical theorist and communications scholar Henry A. Giroux argues that the Disney Corporation, rather than promoting childhood innocence and harmless utopian fantasy, has become a momentous political and cultural force in shaping a conservative status quo that perpetuates racism and sexism, encourages social homogenization, and turns children into consumers for the capitalist marketplace. See, for example, *The Mouse That Roared: Disney and the End of Innocence* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001); and *Mickey Mouse Monopoly*, VHS, directed by Miguel Picker (Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation, 2001).

Another potential obstacle to museum-goers' ability to become aware of and/or process the almost-critique of McCarthyism offered by the small placard is actually the sequence in which information concerning the Rosenberg case is presented as part of the museum's story of international espionage. As described in my touring narrative above, before visitors reach the simulated nuclear fall-out shelter in which the "Red Scare" display is located, they are presented with two specific references to the Rosenbergs' central involvement in the Soviet Union's attainment of nuclear technology. The first is the small grey room entitled "Atomic Spies," which describes the development of nuclear weaponry and the alleged means by which that technology ended up in the hands of Soviet scientists. The second occurs via a white, male voiceover in the grey, concrete stairwell leading down to the simulated fall-out shelter. With these two specific references to the Rosenbergs immediately preceding the "Red Scare" exhibit, museum-goers already know what they did (from "Atomic Spies") and what happened to them (by listening to the voiceover in the stairwell), which leaves visitors with no practical reason to put in the extra effort of navigating behind the wheelchair ramp's guardrail to read the informational placards. Add to this the prominent anti-communist rhetoric in the exhibit, itself, which is readily discernible with a cursory glance while walking down the ramp and ahead to the Venona exhibit, and it becomes clear that the sequence of information presented on the Rosenbergs serves to confirm rather than challenge what visitors probably already knew before coming to the museum: the Rosenbergs were guilty, and communism is bad. Thus, the museum's take on the Rosenberg case, like its interpretation of the cold war itself, is all about power—the power of the International Spy Museum, as a

U.S.-based cultural text, to make meaning within the cold war triumphalist mythscape as well as the power of the white men who speak on behalf of or (in the case of Khrushchev) in support of the U.S. state in the museum's exhibits. From Hoover and Disney to the white, male voiceover reporting Eisenhower's reasons for denying the Rosenbergs' appeal for clemency, it is the institutions of the U.S. nation-state—its media, its politicians, its decision-makers—that are used to prove the Rosenbergs' guilt and, by association, the inherent malignancy of communism and the Soviet Union.

The Origins of State-Based Terror

Although there is only one path through the International Spy Museum, exhibits and displays are arranged so that visitors can pick and choose to interact with those that are most intriguing to them. There are, however, three areas of the museum through which museum-goers *must* pass in order to get to the remainder of the exhibits, each of which features a concentrated narrative of a specific historical moment of import to the international history of espionage. One of these is “Atomic Spies” in which the Rosenbergs are explicitly identified as part of a network of communist agents. Another is the concrete stairwell in which the Soviet atomic explosion and the Rosenbergs' execution are announced.³⁹ The first, though, through which museum-goers are obligated to pass is an exhibit entitled “Red Terror” that is designed to replicate the office of feared Soviet intelligence officer Feliks Dzerzhinsky, the

³⁹ The exception to this is those visitors who cannot or do not use the stairs and, instead, opt for the elevator.

toppled statue of whom hangs ominously overhead as museum-goers are boarding the elevator that takes them up to the start of the exhibits.

At the end of a long, red hallway, prominently visible from about twenty-five yards away, is a large, highly sexualized black and white portrait of one of history's most well-known (if least successful) spies, Margaretha Zelle, who, as exotic dancer Mata Hari, spied for Germany during World War I and, in 1917, was executed by France for her efforts. Although Mata Hari's portrait seems, at first glance, to mark the end of the corridor, upon reaching it, I immediately discover that, although hidden behind a scarlet velvet curtain, a doorway disguised as an immense wooden bookshelf, emblazoned with the words "Doorway to Hell," has been left ajar, revealing a secret room. I can hear men singing vigorously in Russian. Displayed on the bookshelf/door are Russian-language versions of novels by James Bond creator Ian Fleming, a book entitled U studentova kommunisti (For Communist Students) by Uri German and a series of books collectively entitled Zhizn zamechatel'nykh lyudei (The Lives of Famous People), with editions on Russian revolutionaries Vladimir Lenin and Sofia Perovskaya. The room behind the great wooden bookshelf/door is square, dark, and overwhelmingly red. A deep scarlet rug protects the very Russian parquetted floor, dark shades are drawn over the windows, and a series of still black and white images moves across them from left to right accompanied by a medley of Soviet-era choral music. The room is meant to be the office of Soviet security chief Feliks Dzerzhinsky. His portrait hangs on the wall to the left, next to those of Lenin and Stalin. A quote attributed to Dzerzhinsky reads, "We stand for organized terror."

In front of me are his desk and his phone and his chair. And to my left is the secret entrance to Moscow's feared Butyrka Prison, to which Soviet citizens were sent, never to be heard from again. Had they been executed? Were they sent to the gulag? Some of the faces that comprise the scrolling images are blacked out, evidence of having been "disappeared" during the Stalinist purges, and the accompanying text reports that "8 million Soviet citizens were arrested for crimes against the state. 700,000 were executed."

Although its moniker and artifacts refer specifically to the Stalinist purges of 1937/38, when millions of Soviet citizens were "disappeared" in an effort to remove dissident members of the Communist Party, this multi-media exhibit purports to tell the history of Russia's "long tradition of secret police" that "defin[ed] the art of ruling by fear." A wall placard attributed to museum board member and intelligence historian H. Keith Melton (who is also on the faculty of the Centre for Counterintelligence and Security Studies⁴⁰) tracks the alleged continuity in tactics throughout Russian and Soviet history to suppress the activities of subversive groups:

Russia has a long tradition of secret police. The OKHRANA [*sic*] served the Czar, keeping watch over subversive groups. When the Bolsheviks seized power, they created the Cheka, the group responsible for the Red Terror. As the Cheka grew and evolved, it was renamed the GPU, then the OGPU. Stalin

⁴⁰ International Spy Museum, "Advisory Board of Directors and Advisory Council," press release (July 2002).

recognized it as the NKVD. *In 1954, it became the infamous KGB; then in 1992, after the fall of the Soviet Union, the FSB.*⁴¹

By unequivocally linking the strategies and tactics of tsarist Russia with those of the Russian Federation via those of the Soviet Union, the exhibit points to an apparent meta-historical predilection in that geographical area of the world for state-based violence (regardless of its leaders or political structures) and names the October Revolution that brought the Bolsheviks to power as the origin of the use of “terror and torture as political tools.” According to a wall placard, “[t]he Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 reshaped world politics. It also transformed spying, initiating a new era in which governments institutionalized espionage to control their own citizens.”

In thinking about how the museum constructs its narrative about the history of international espionage, it is interesting to consider the ways in which “Atomic Spies” and “Red Terror” are discursively symmetrical and metonymically interconnected within that narrative. Each of these exhibits attempts to elicit visitors’ intellectual and emotional engagement with its particular story through an immersive experience in the specific time, space and place of that story. In the case of “Red Terror,” museum-goers find themselves in NKVD chief Feliks Dzerzhinsky’s Moscow office during the earliest days of the Stalinist purges and are encouraged to imagine that they are awaiting interrogation and probable imprisonment and/or execution. In “Atomic Spies,” museum-goers experience the Soviet Union’s first atomic explosion in 1949 through several interconnected stimuli, including a voiceover launch countdown that

⁴¹ Italics mine.

begins in English and ends in Russian, a film clip of a burgeoning mushroom cloud, lights that blink rapidly on and off, a roaring audio track and a floor that shakes violently, causing unsuspecting visitors to momentarily lose their balance. With the exception of the concrete staircase that leads down to the simulated fall-out shelter, no other portion of the museum relies so exclusively on these immersive theatrical techniques. This makes both “Red Terror” and “Atomic Spies” spaces in which museum-goers become involuntary performers on a stage created by the sights and sounds of the exhibit.

Several strategies operate in tandem to construct these exhibits as performance spaces. First, each is housed in a square room whose physical openness is in stark contrast to the dimly lit alcoves and angled walls that define the museum’s other exhibits, all of which (with the exception of “Red Terror” and “Atomic Spies”) are intentionally designed to force museum-goers to peer into nooks and crannies and search behind angled walls. The physical location within those exhibits of placards and artifacts, most of which are displayed at a height that facilitates equal accessibility to them by children as well as adults, forces adults to look down and children to look up, thus manipulating the bodies of museum-goers into an involuntary physical performance throughout the museum. To look down, adults must collapse their shoulders and deliberately adjust their center of gravity; to look up, children must stand on their toes. Both age groups are thus off balance, and neither is able to get a clear view of the information presented without expending some physical effort. This forced physical performance enhances the pedagogical mission of the museum by relaying its message concerning the dangers and potential duplicity

of espionage through the physical embodiment of the experience. Variances in lighting color and strength, along with an almost chaotic array of audio-visual stimuli, reinforces a feeling of surveillance and secrecy. Thus, visitors' perception of their new-found ability to see clearly the information presented in both "Red Terror" and "Atomic Spies" encourages them to fully engage with those materials.

Secondly, the presentation of information in these two exhibits is done primarily through visual imagery and sound rather than a preponderance of written text. This strategy mirrors that of the museum, in general, but "Red Terror" and "Atomic Spies" differ in their 360-degree arrangement of those technologies; thus, each room's design as an open diorama whose walls are sparsely populated with pictures, artifacts, and text-based informational placards, in conjunction with the aural and visual stimulation provided by each exhibit, promotes a singular attention to the exhibit's narrative as well as a performance enacted as part of that narrative.

Lastly, as I have mentioned, visitors are obligated to pass through each exhibit on their way to subsequent areas of the museum. Given these factors, the narrative importance of "Red Terror" and "Atomic Spies" to the museum-as-text is manifest in their structural prominence; they are the architectural variant of literary theory's parallel structure and, as such, discursively promote the notion (with which most adult viewers likely already come to the museum) that the Soviet Union's (and, by geographical and historical association, the Russian Federation's) irrational predilection for terrorizing its own people inherently means that it cannot be trusted to safely wield nuclear technology. In sequential order, the story told in "Red Terror" sets the dramaturgical stage for "Atomic Spies," which operates in conjunction with

“Red Scare” to explain the origins of the cold war: Russia’s inherent and meta-historical reliance on terror to control its own citizens became, with the Soviet attainment of atomic weaponry, a direct threat to U.S. national security, thus offering sound justification for the cold war.

(Hetero)Sexpionage

The museum’s use of the cold war to justify the “war on terror” is heavily reliant upon efficient operation of gendered discursive configurations, which the museum wields quite adeptly. But unlike many museums, which have been forced in the wake of feminist critique to reorient their narratives to include the stories and experiences of women, the International Spy Museum features them quite prominently in a number of exhibits. Not only are there two women on the museum’s advisory committees,⁴² but the stories of female spies and the testimonies of women CIA operatives appear throughout the museum, whether to provide further information concerning a particular historical event or as experts lending their opinions concerning the future of U.S.-based intelligence operations in the wake of 9/11. Thus, it is not the absence of women’s voices and experiences that forces a feminist critique of the museum; rather, it is the explicit conflation of female sexuality with the threat of enemy espionage and the dangers of state-based violence that operates in tandem

⁴² Retired Lieutenant General Claudia J. Kennedy was not only the highest ranking woman in the U.S. Army, but also “[t]he first and only woman to serve as Deputy Chief of Staff for [U.S. Army] Intelligence.” As “former Chief of Disguise in the CIA’s Office of Technical Service,” Jonna Hiestand Mendez’s “twenty-seven year career included operational disguise responsibilities in the most hostile theaters of the Cold War, from Havana to Moscow to Beijing and ultimately into the Oval Office.” International Spy Museum, “Advisory Board of Directors and Advisory Council” (press release, July 2002). Mendez currently serves on the faculty of the Centre for Counterintelligence and Security Studies. Center for Counterintelligence and Security Studies, http://cicentre.com/intelligencespeakers/ISB_L-Z/SP_MENDEZ_Jonna.htm (accessed April 22, 2008).

with the museum's covert use of heteronormative notions of masculinity and femininity to emasculate the Soviet Union (and, by extension, the Russian Federation) in order to bolster the museum's history of the cold war and its performative justification of the continuance of cold war-era strategies in U.S. foreign policy after 9/11.

Feminist film critic Laura Mulvey has discussed the systemic and normative masculinist perspective, what she terms the "male gaze," through which audiences of all genders have grown accustomed to viewing realistic film narratives. She argues that female characters (and the actors who portray them) traditionally fulfill an "exhibitionist role" in which they are "simultaneously looked at and displayed;"⁴³ they are included within the filmic narrative only as erotic spectacle, serving both the (male) characters within the on-screen universe of the film as well as the film's spectators. Rarely does the visual presence of women become necessary to the progress of the filmic narrative, thus creating "[a]n active/passive heterosexual division of labour" in which women exist to be looked at and men to drive the narrative. According to Mulvey,

This is made possible through the processes set in motion by structuring the film around a main controlling figure with whom the spectator can identify. As the spectator identifies with the main male protagonist, he projects his look onto that of his like, his screen surrogate, so that the power of the male

⁴³ Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," excerpted in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent B. Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2001), 2186.

protagonist as he controls events coincides with the active power of the erotic look, both giving a satisfying sense of omnipotence.⁴⁴

I have already discussed at length the strategies by which the International Spy Museum, in its marketing materials and exhibits, interpellates visitors into a community of U.S.-based intelligence insiders whose enemies are communists, the U.S.S.R./Russia and any individuals or groups that threaten the national security of the United States and its allies. Whatever their means and methods, U.S. and NATO espionage victories over these enemies are touted as warranted and legitimate, while defeats are used to justify increased spycraft. With this chicken-and-egg logic, visitors to the International Spy Museum are implicitly asked to identify with the museum's (masculine) protagonist, the United States, and to share its desire to eliminate its historical enemy, the Soviet Union, which, like the female characters of traditional filmic narrative, exists as a passive object meant to serve as dramaturgical proof of the hero's virility.

For example, the introductory display to an exhibit entitled "The Secret History of History," which aims to demonstrate the historical longevity of intelligence work as a viable strategy of global politics, reminds museum-goers that espionage is "the world's second oldest profession," thus making an explicit connotative and discursive link between prostitution and the secrecy, excitement, and potential duplicity of covert intelligence work. This link succeeds because it depends upon the public perception of sex work in a specifically U.S.-based context. Although selling one's own or purchasing another's body for money is illegal in the United States

⁴⁴ Ibid., 2187.

(with the notable exception of the state of Nevada), and both actions are conceptualized and discussed in largely negative terms, there is, of course, no dearth of known “red light districts” across the country. This incongruous relationship between law and practice results in a disconcerting public schizophrenia in that the national body politic understands the logic behind the simple formula presented by its lawmakers: sex work is bad, therefore sex work is illegal. However, the illegality of prostitution, in combination with its existence within a capitalist, heteropatriarchal, and homophobic social structure, even while given broad lip service as distasteful, is also simultaneously sexually titillating because the premise on which it rests (prostitution is bad) is actually not accurate for those individual (usually male) customers who choose to hire a (usually female) sex worker. The International Spy Museum expertly exploits this schizophrenia, the tension between law, practice, and male (hetero)sexual desire, to promote and tell its story of international espionage.

This tension is unavoidably manifest in the museum’s store, through which all visitors must pass to exit the museum. Several different products, including mugs, magnets, t-shirts, and postcards, feature a World War II-era propaganda poster warning U.S. naval officers and enlisted men to “beware of female spies” for fear that women were “being employed by the enemy to secure information from Navy men, on the theory that they [were] less liable to be suspected than male spies.” Also available for purchase is a print of another World War II-era propaganda poster that warns male soldiers to “Keep mum [because] she’s not so dumb!” In this image, three white, male military officers are in competition with each other for the favors of one white woman, whose bright red lipstick, opaque flesh-colored gown, lavish jewelry,

and defiant gaze at the (presumably male) viewer continue, even more than fifty years after the poster's original publication, to work in conjunction with the (in)famously beguiling and destructive *femmes fatales* of Hollywood's "reel life" to signal the woman's identity as a "real life" *femme fatale*.⁴⁵

On display in the museum is a KGB-issue 4.5 mm single-shot pistol disguised as a tube of bright red lipstick. This weapon could, of course, be convincingly carried and wielded only by female operatives, thus pointing to the use of what journalist David Lewis calls "sexpionage" in his exposé on the alleged institutionalized and systemic exploitation of sexual acts by Soviet intelligence.⁴⁶ Interestingly, not only is a replica of this artifact sold (presumably to female visitors) in the museum store as a pen disguised as a plastic tube of red lipstick, but it was also featured prominently in the museum's marketing and public relations efforts in preparation for the museum's July 2002 opening. Included as the fifth of fifteen full color images in the museum's initial press preview of its collection, the gun is introduced as "The Kiss of Death" and described as "easily hidden in a purse," thus gendering feminine the anonymous KGB operative to whom the weapon was issued.⁴⁷ National Public Radio's coverage of the museum's opening also featured "The Kiss of Death" in its abridged on-line photo gallery of the museum's collection,⁴⁸ and museum creator Milton Maltz

⁴⁵ Luke points out that museum-goers already know tremendous amounts from other sources before they even step inside an exhibit. Museums, he argues, "provide relics and specimens from 'real life' to affirm and anchor images and stories taken from 'reel life' during screen time with TV, movies, and the worldwide Web." *Museum Politics*, 219.

⁴⁶ David Lewis, *Sexpionage: The Exploitation of Sex by Soviet Intelligence* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976).

⁴⁷ International Spy Museum, "Collections Images," press release (July 2002).

referred specifically to it in an interview conducted by NPR's Tavis Smiley, explaining that the pistol was "given to every female KGB agent either to protect herself or to commit an assassination."⁴⁹

The lipstick gun's location within the museum reveals the reason it was relied on so prominently in the museum's initial public relations efforts. Included as part of the "School for Spies" exhibit, which aims to illustrate the technical aspects of spycraft via artifacts and interactive demonstrations, the lipstick pistol is prominently displayed in a glass case directly across from the exhibit's chief attraction, the James Bond Austin Healey, thus providing a discursive link between the materiality of "real life" Soviet intelligence tactics and the knowledge of the filmic "reel life" cold war-era world of James Bond—particularly the "Bond girls," several of whom were not only classic *femmes fatales*, but Soviet spies as well—with which (at least) adult visitors likely come to the museum. The museum's wall placard points out that the lipstick pistol "delivered the ultimate 'kiss of death,'" thus identifying female sexuality as a potentially fatal tool of espionage and associating Russian/Soviet women with the traits and characteristics of the Hollywood *femme fatale*.

On a repeat visit to the museum, as I turn away from the portrait of Mata Hari, I already know that behind the red curtain to my left is the secret door to Felix Dzerzhinsky's office and the exhibit entitled "Red Terror." I can hear the Soviet anthems being sung, luring me into the dark. I peek in to see the blacked-out faces of

⁴⁸ Available at <http://www.npr.org/programs/morning/features/2002/jul/spy/>; accessed April 22, 2008.

⁴⁹ Milton Maltz, interview by Tavis Smiley, *The Tavis Smiley Show*, National Public Radio, July 19, 2002, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1146943> (accessed April 22, 2008).

the disappeared moving slowly across the drawn window shades. But I ignore all that and, instead, choose to wander to my right, into what appears to be a ladies' dressing room of the Victorian era.

Should visitors choose to explore this room to the right, they learn about the deeds and experiences of nineteenth-century woman-spies, most of whom included in this display spied for the Confederacy during the U.S. Civil War and were thus enemies of the United States. Mulvey points the scopophilic voyeurism of cinema, which “arises from pleasure in using another person as an object of sexual stimulation through sight.”⁵⁰ In extrapolating her analysis for thinking about the International Spy Museum, the fact that museum-goers learn about these *women* spies (who were enemies of the United States) while located in what is presumably their dressing room, a private space into which visitors to their homes in the nineteenth century would most certainly not have been invited, is evidence of the tacit permission given by the museum to, in the language of espionage, penetrate their perimeter and learn their secrets. Unlike filmic narratives, which, by virtue of their sheer public-ness, Mulvey acknowledges as seemingly “remote from the undercover world of the surreptitious observation of an unknowing and unwilling victim,”⁵¹ the International Spy Museum exists solely to reveal this “undercover world” for its visitors. This objective is most explicitly introduced via what could arguably be considered a metaphor for rape (i.e. visitors invade what is traditionally the private space of

⁵⁰ Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” 2184-85.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 2184.

women), thus pointing to the museum's successful manipulation of gendered discursive configurations to tell its story of international espionage.

Moreover, coming immediately after the revealing portrait of Mata Hari in the hallway, this display continues the museum's implicit conversation, begun with the "Kiss of Death" lipstick pistol and the linkage between sex work and spycraft, of the ways in which female spies used duplicitous sexuality to deceive their (ostensibly male) victims into sharing secrets and breaching national security. This conversation forms the foundation of what museum-goers know about the history of espionage up to this point in the museum's narrative and, as such, proves crucial as they are introduced for the first time in "Red Terror" to the Soviet Union as not only the enemy of the United States, but also as the originator of state-based terror. Even while reading placards, examining artifacts, and watching the short informational film in the Victorian dressing room, visitors are able to *hear* "Red Terror" before they see it: the sound of male voices singing what sounds like a robust nationalistic and/or militaristic anthem subtly permeates the museum's coverage of Civil War-era woman-spies. This incongruous conflation of sounds and information, in combination with the physical and psychological feeling that one is moving deeper and deeper into a space that has heretofore been not only entirely unknown, but also forbidden, discursively connects "Red Terror" and the Soviet Union with the sexualized tactics of woman-spies, from Mata Hari to the anonymous "real-life" KGB agent whose cover was breached and from whom the "Kiss of Death" was undoubtedly confiscated.

The “real-life” failure of this female KGB agent operates as a subtle metaphor in the museum’s story of cold war-era espionage: her failure, and, with it, the demise of the Soviet Union, enables not only the very existence of the International Spy Museum, whose holdings are largely Soviet in origin, but also the geopolitical ascendance of the United States as the world’s sole “superpower.” According to its own press materials, the museum owes its existence in large part to the failures of various intelligence operations, for these failures have facilitated knowledge of certain tactics and technologies that were, by no means and under no circumstances, intended for the eyes and ears of any group other than that which used them.⁵² The United States, as the “winner” of the cold war, need not reveal its intelligence tactics and is thus able to remain largely unnamed as a participant in the more unsavory and morally questionable aspects of espionage required to wage cold war—not to mention a global “war on terror.” But because the Soviet Union “lost” the cold war, ceasing to exist in the process, its intelligence techniques ultimately failed and were subsequently discovered by historians and U.S. intelligence operatives (the burial site of the Romanovs is a case in point, as is the lipstick pistol and the strength of the U.S.S.R.’s nuclear ballistic missile submarines). This “loss” caused by the failure of Soviet intelligence activities, in combination with that country’s apparent irrationality stemming from its allegedly historical predilection for state-based terror, results in the rhetorical emasculation of the historical Soviet Union and its contemporary successor state, the Russian Federation, within the cold war triumphalist narrative as presented in the International Spy Museum. The majority of exhibits and artifacts on public

⁵² International Spy Museum, “Souvenir Book” (Springfield, VA: Goetz Printing, Inc., 2002).

display at the International Spy Museum, because they are Soviet in origin, provide cumulative and conclusive evidence of the United States' alleged superiority over the U.S.S.R., an abjection deployed rhetorically as part of the museum's story of international espionage only to reinforce what museum-goers already know: the U.S. won the cold war, thus exposing the weaknesses underlying the Soviet system—including in its espionage techniques.

The Cold War as Cautionary Tale

I want to make clear that I am in no way a Soviet apologist, nor is it my intention to entirely discredit the information presented throughout the museum concerning the U.S.S.R.'s startlingly efficient use of state-based violence and the global threat of nuclear annihilation imposed by the precarious relations between the United States and the Soviet Union in the second half of the twentieth century. Rather, my objective in this chapter has been to interrogate not only the "reality" of the history of espionage as it is discursively created by the International Spy Museum and its exhibits, but also the means by which the "facts" of that "reality" are being promulgated within the context of its post-9/11 historical moment—especially when taking into consideration the museum's power and influence as a site of public pedagogy in the nation's capitol city. An explicitly educational institution whose mission is to "educate the public about espionage in an engaging manner and to provide a dynamic context that fosters understanding of its important role in, and impact on, current and historic events,"⁵³ the International Spy Museum prides itself

on its commitment to “the *apolitical* presentation of the history of espionage in order to provide visitors with *nonbiased, accurate* information” about “an all-but-invisible profession that has shaped history and continues to have a significant impact on world events.”⁵⁴ It seeks to fulfill this mission through permanent and special exhibits in conjunction with innovative programming that includes DC city tours highlighting “some of the most notorious spy cases ever to unfold in the nation’s capital,”⁵⁵ annual lecture series and workshops, a speaker series, and a variety of children’s events, from themed birthday parties to scavenger hunts. But the museum’s choice of language to describe itself relies heavily on the positivist assumption that “accuracy” can be achieved, that stories about the past can be told without bias, and that it is possible for the museum and its exhibits to exist outside politics. The power of the museum to tell its story within and from the perspective of cold war triumphalism (and in a time, space, and place very much affected by the events of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent “war on terror”) not only remains unacknowledged, but is explicitly denied.

For example, the museum’s explanation of its exigency via an explicit linkage to the geopolitics of its post-9/11 moment is echoed in a July 2002 letter from George W. Bush on the occasion of the museum’s grand opening. In this letter, displayed prominently in the museum’s lobby, Bush congratulates the museum’s founder, Malrite Company Chairman and former U.S. intelligence analyst Milton Maltz, for

⁵³ International Spy Museum, <http://www.spymuseum.org/about/faq.php> (accessed April 10, 2008), par. 3.

⁵⁴ International Spy Museum, “First Museum Dedicated to International Espionage Opens in Washington, DC, July 2002,” italics mine.

⁵⁵ International Spy Museum, http://www.spymuseum.org/special/spycity_tour.php (accessed April 7, 2008), par. 1.

his “tireless efforts to create the Nation’s [*sic*] first public museum dedicated to presenting the story of intelligence gathering throughout world history.”⁵⁶ The letter, an official document issued by the White House and mounted on a plaque paid for by the Republican National Committee, also emphasizes the museum’s significance for its time, space, and place: Its “efforts in educating all Americans on the important role intelligence has played in shaping world events is,” according to Bush, “particularly timely as we fight the war against terrorism.” By explicitly situating the museum’s *raison d’etre* within contemporary geopolitics as constituted by the post-9/11 “war on terror,” the prominent display of Bush’s letter in the museum’s lobby effectively nullifies the museum’s own claim that it exists as “a private and independent entity with no links to any government agency, foreign or domestic.”⁵⁷

Bush’s letter also works in conjunction with the museum’s symbolic and geographical location at the center of an ambitious urban revitalization and historic preservation project in the District of Columbia’s Penn Quarter to lend credibility and legitimacy to the museum’s narrative. According to a DC government press release issued in anticipation of the museum’s July 2002 opening, the International Spy Museum, which is located within walking distance of the National Mall, just blocks from the White House, and down the street from FBI headquarters (figure 6), “is

⁵⁶ The Malrite Company, the successor to Malrite Communications Group, which owned television and radio stations across the country, is currently “using its years of expertise to develop innovative museum and education projects around the country.” The company is “breaking new ground in the development of bold new concepts to enhance arts and entertainment districts starting with the International Spy Museum which opened 19 July 2002 in Washington, DC. The Malrite Company was also the driving force behind the newly opened Maltz Jupiter Theatre in Jupiter, FL. The newest Malrite project, The Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage, is now open in Cleveland, OH. International Spy Museum, http://www.spymuseum.org/press/about_leadership.php (accessed April 22, 2008).

⁵⁷ International Spy Museum, <http://www.spymuseum.org/about/faq.php> (accessed April 7, 2008), par. 6.

projected to boost local economic development through 150 new jobs, \$2 million in new annual tax revenue and increased tourism for the region.”⁵⁸ Indeed, it has succeeded exponentially, drawing more than 700,000 visitors in its first year of operation (July 2002-July 2003) and surpassing expectations concerning revenue

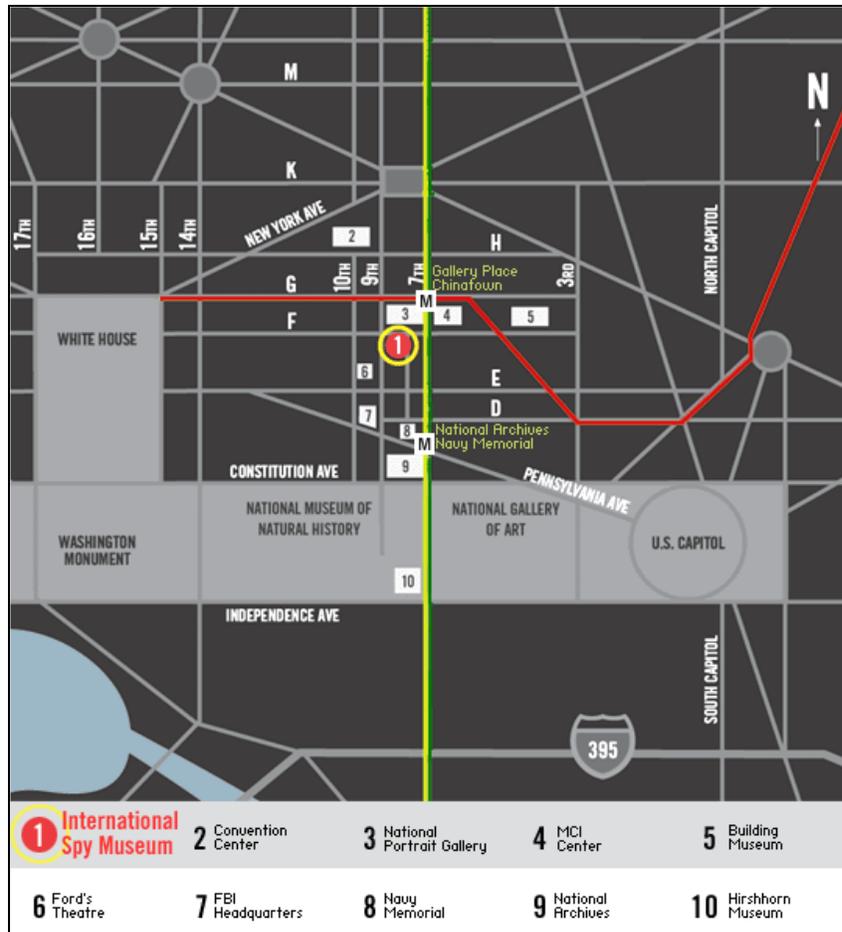


Figure 6: Locating the International Spy Museum in D.C.

⁵⁸ Government of the District of Columbia, “International Spy Museum First to Receive TIF from the District,” press release (May 16, 2001).

from the museum gift shop, private dining, and special events.⁵⁹ Calling its merger of the public and private sectors a “new business model that is thriving during a time when tourism dollars are hard to come by,” the museum’s “positive influence on the local tourism and business community has been recognized” with several regional and national awards citing the museum’s ability to draw people to DC’s downtown area, its leadership in the effort to revitalize the F Street corridor and its commitment to providing employment opportunities for DC residents.⁶⁰

The meticulous neighborhood revitalization efforts of the museum’s designers, who worked closely with the DC Historic Preservation Division, to renovate while “carefully preserv[ing]” the architectural integrity of the five historic buildings which house the museum’s exhibits and administrative offices at 800 F Street NW have also been lauded as superior examples of urban renewal.⁶¹ The International Spy Museum, with its renovated buildings, permanent exhibits, up-scale dining space, gift shop, café, and active calendar of special events, is, quite literally, transforming the neighborhood between the National Mall and Washington, DC’s Convention Center. And although the museum, which is privately owned and operated by the Cleveland-based Malrite Company and relies for a good chunk of its

⁵⁹ What the museum does not take into account in its press materials is the fact that its record first year of operation (July 2002 through July 2003) coincided with the early months of the “war on terror,” specifically U.S. military engagement in Afghanistan and the attendant media coverage of the successes and failures of intelligence gathering in predicting the events of September 11, 2001, and locating Al’Queda leader Osama bin Laden.

⁶⁰ International Spy Museum, “International Spy Museum Exceeds First Year Expectations,” press release (July 19, 2003).

⁶¹ Ironically, one of these buildings, the Warder-Atlas Building, built in 1892 at 527 9th Street, NW, was the headquarters of the fourth district of the U.S. Communist Party from 1941 to 1948. According to the International Spy Museum, “[t]he original door leading to these offices was carefully identified during construction, has been preserved and is on display” in the museum. International Spy Museum, “Historic Building Backgrounder.”

multi-million dollar annual operating budget on admission fees, food concessions, and gift shop sales, “competes for visitors with over 100 museums in the greater DC metropolitan area, most offering free admission,”⁶² it is its “engaging interactive exhibits, the rich atmosphere provided by state-of-the-art immersive environments and the compelling personal stories of real spies” that have made the International Spy Museum “a must-see destination”—despite its high admission fees.⁶³

The museum’s claim to be devoid of politics, that it focuses “on human intelligence, not political ideology,”⁶⁴ is particularly intriguing in light of the fact that the museum’s founding Board of Directors and Advisors was comprised of career intelligence officers and/or military personnel from the United Kingdom, the former Soviet Union, and the United States.⁶⁵ Day-to-day operations at the museum are overseen by founding Executive Director Peter J. Earnest, a thirty-six-year veteran of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) who served in the Clandestine Service in Eastern Europe during the 1970s and was later the intelligence organization’s chief spokesperson. Other members of the founding Board of Directors and Advisors included a former Director of Central Intelligence, Admiral Stansfield Turner (1977-

⁶² It is, for example, within easy walking distance of the national Smithsonian museums, all of which are federally funded and open to the public free of charge.

⁶³ International Spy Museum, “International Spy Museum Exceeds First Year Expectations,” press release (July 19, 2003). As of May 2008, adult visitors (i.e., anyone between the ages of twelve and sixty-four) can expect to pay \$18 USD each for admission to the permanent exhibit. Participation in or attendance at other programming, such as special exhibits, scavenger hunts, and the Spy City Tours, requires additional fees. For further information, see International Spy Museum, <http://www.spymuseum.org/plan/ticketing.php> (accessed April 7, 2008).

⁶⁴ International Spy Museum, <http://www.spymuseum.org/about/faq.php> (accessed April 7, 2008), par. 5.

⁶⁵ Of the twelve Board members and five members of the Advisory Council, just two are not from the U.S.; historian Christopher Andrew is the sole U.K. representative, while former KGB chief of counterintelligence, General Oleg Kalugin, is the sole representative from the U.S.S.R./Russia.

1981), a former Deputy Chief of Staff for U.S. Army Intelligence, retired Lieutenant General Claudia J. Kennedy, former FBI director of Counterintelligence, Intelligence, and Security Programs, and historian H. Keith Melton, who, like many of his colleagues on the Board, is on the faculty of the Centre for Counterintelligence and Security Studies in Alexandria, Virginia.⁶⁶ And, as I have mentioned, Maltz was, himself, a U.S. naval intelligence analyst. The affiliations of the museum's Board of Directors and Advisors with the military and intelligence communities, along with the prominent display of President Bush's congratulatory letter and in its lobby and its centrality, both physical and symbolic, to DC's revitalization efforts, reveal a political perspective (if not an ideology) heavily supportive of militarism and securitization situated within the museum's complex historical moment of production and operation—a moment defined by an ongoing war against “terror” arguably being fueled in large part by cold war triumphalism.

Had the United States not “won” the cold war, its policymakers and pundits would not, since 9/11, have been able to utilize the widespread belief in the superiority of its political, economic, and military structures, along with the right(eous)ness of its heteropatriarchal capitalist democracy and professed commitment to human rights, to wage the “war on terror,” which has been billed as

⁶⁶ According to its website, the U.S. military veteran-owned and operated Centre for Counterintelligence and Security Studies in Alexandria (CI Centre) “provides dynamic, in-depth and relevant education, training and products on counterintelligence, counterterrorism and security” for corporations and other organizations interested in “protect[ing their] information, facilities and personnel from foreign intelligence collectors, global terrorists and competitor threats.” Courses are taught by “seasoned veterans” who “were successful in the counterintelligence, counterterrorism, security and intelligence professions.” Core competencies include: counterintelligence strategy and tactics, tactical counterterrorism prevention strategies, economic espionage protection, international travel safety, and security awareness. “About the CI Centre,” Centre for Counterintelligence and Security Studies, http://cicentre.com/About_Us.htm (accessed May 29, 2008), par. 1, 2 and 6.

the U.S.-led liberation of oppressed peoples from Islamic fundamentalisms. But, since it did “win” the cold war, the United States and its affiliated pedagogical institutions (such as the International Spy Museum) are free to promulgate narratives that present as normative and inevitable the geopolitical realities of the current historical moment without regard for either the contestability of those narratives or the myriad ways in which the geopolitical realities to which they refer may well have been quite different.

Additionally, by deploying a rhetoric of universality, anonymity, and lack of accountability in its press materials and exhibits, the museum effectively writes the United States out of the cold war—even while simultaneously positioning that country as that conflict’s rightful victor and the Soviet Union as its antagonist. For example, as part of the “School for Spies” area, which orients museum visitors to the tools, techniques, and technologies of espionage, an interactive console simulating a submarine sonar station demonstrates the methods by which ballistic missile submarines tracked each other during the cold war. According to the cursory historical information provided on the console’s computer screens, these nuclear submarines were developed by unidentified nation-states in order to protect their nuclear weapons from being destroyed in first-strike attacks launched by their adversaries, who also counted nuclear weapons as part of their enormous military arsenals. This narrative, displayed on the console’s computer screens, is accompanied by a visual depiction of these unspecified countries separated by a vast ocean. Although the visual depiction seems to go out of its way to avoid assigning particular identities to these state-based entities that were so concerned with protecting their

atomic stockpiles, the amorphous shape on the left-hand (i.e., west) side of the computer screen, meant to represent the landmass of one of two great fictional adversaries, is drawn in the general shape of the United States' Atlantic coastline. The other, separated from its enemy by a large ocean, is drawn as a solid mass lurking ominously on the right-hand (i.e., east) side of the screen. Such a visual geographic depiction of the strategic use of ballistic submarines throughout the cold war is clearly reliant upon museum-goers' familiarity with the hemispheric orientation of a Mercator world map, which hangs in hundreds of thousands of classrooms across the United States and around the world.

The exhibit's façade of anonymity is further compromised by history. During the 1950s, when ballistic submarines were first developed and utilized to defend against potential first-strike military engagements, only the Soviet Union, the United States, and U.S. ally the United Kingdom possessed nuclear capabilities.⁶⁷ The story told by this exhibit, therefore, can only be about the half-century conflict between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, which is confirmed by an accompanying wall placard that comments explicitly upon the overwhelming nuclear power afforded the Soviet Union by just one of its typhoon class submarines, pointing out that such a submarine possessed several times more destruction power than the "bomb dropped on Hiroshima."

⁶⁷ 1970's Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty officially recognizes just five "nuclear weapons states," the United States (1945), Russia (formerly the Soviet Union, 1949), the United Kingdom (1952), France (1960), and China (1964), each of which is a permanent member of the UN Security Council. For more information, please refer to the Public Broadcasting Service's interactive map of nuclear proliferation available at http://www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth_coverage/military/proliferation/map_flash.html (accessed April 8, 2008). See also "Global Nuclear Stockpiles, 1945-2006," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* (July/August 2006), <http://thebulletin.metapress.com/content/c4120650912x74k7/fulltext.pdf> (accessed April 8, 2008).

Interestingly, nowhere in this exhibit—or in the entirety of the museum’s story of the history of international espionage that relies so heavily on the “secret” and use of nuclear technology—is there any mention of exactly *who* or *what* was responsible for this last act. That an atomic bomb was simply “dropped on Hiroshima,” rather than having *been* dropped by something or someone, is exemplary of the passive language used throughout the museum to circumnavigate not only the complicity of the United States in the commencement and continuance of the cold war, but also the striking similarities between the tactics and technologies employed by the U.S. and those used by the U.S.S.R., which the museum repeatedly points to as examples of horrific human rights violations and as sizeable global threats. Nowhere in the museum is it mentioned, for example, that the United States remains the only nation-state to have ever actually detonated an atomic bomb as part of its war-time military strategy, yet the destructive power of the Soviet Union’s nuclear ballistic missile submarines—which were never used in warfare—is candidly cited. While the museum’s narrative explicitly names the Soviet Union as the perpetrator of various crimes, it simultaneously renders the United States a passive observer of the cold war.

At the end of my journey through the museum, just as I’m leaving the history of cold war espionage behind me, I come face-to-face with a fierce, multi-headed dragon backlit in bright white. A quotation attributed to former CIA Director James Woolsey on the occasion of the Soviet Union’s demise warns, “We have slain a large dragon, but we now live in a jungle filled with a bewildering variety of poisonous snakes. And in many ways, the dragon was easier to keep track of.” I proceed into a

small screening room in which a short documentary is being shown that describes the demands placed on the intelligence community since 9/11. The film, made exclusively for the International Spy Museum, reports that the intelligence demands of the twenty-first century are different from those during the cold war. Now spycraft must concern itself not only with state-based threats, but also those posed by ethnic nationalisms, religious fundamentalisms, paramilitary groups, and terrorists. A series of still photographs accompanied by a white, male voiceover reminds viewers what can happen when intelligence fails. These photographs, all taken in the aftermath of incredible violence, are labeled “Tokyo,” “Beirut,” “World Trade Center, 1993,” “Oklahoma City,” “Kenya,” “Yemen,” “Madrid,” “London,” and, lastly, “World Trade Center, 2001.” According to the film, cold-war era intelligence technologies that locate and count only heavy weapons and machinery (i.e., nuclear missiles, tanks, and troop movements) are insufficient to avoid similar attacks in the future. Consequently, the film argues, what is needed is increased intelligence and defense spending in order to repel new kinds of enemies.

My task in this chapter has been to explore the “reality” created by the International Spy Museum and its exhibits and to interrogate the methods by which the “truth” of that “reality” is conveyed to museum visitors. Through an analysis that conceptualizes the museum as performance by taking into account the rhetoric of its promotional materials, the content, design, and architectural lay-out of its exhibits, as well as its economic importance to and physical location in the District of Columbia, I have demonstrated that the “reality” created by the museum depends on three

interconnected narratives: (1) the role of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg in enabling the Soviet Union to develop nuclear technology and thus igniting the cold war, (2) the U.S.S.R. and its successor state, Russia, as always already feminized enemies of the United States, and (3) the indisputable integrity of U.S. intelligence networks. The museum's geographical location, in conjunction with its emphasis on the successful work of U.S. intelligence agencies, implicitly signals the museum's affiliation with the ostensibly unlimited and superior power of the U.S. nation-state and its various security apparatuses. This affiliation is bolstered by President Bush's letter on display in the museum's lobby. Second, through the explicit conflation of female heterosexuality with the dangers of state-based violence and the threat of Soviet/Russian espionage, the cold war is deployed as a discursive construct used to justify the "war on terror." Lastly, the loosely chronological story of international espionage told by the museum's permanent exhibits draws explicitly on contemporary geopolitics, particularly the so-called "war on terror," thereby taking full advantage of the museum's post-9/11 salience by exploiting the anxiety of museum-goers to advocate for their continued support, both rhetorical and financial, of contemporary intelligence efforts as an integral part of U.S. national security. For example, the museum's unsophisticated narrative of the Rosenbergs' assumed guilt offers an implicit post-9/11 moral lesson. The extraordinary and unprecedented breach of national security for which they were allegedly responsible is held up as an example of what happens when the territorial borders of the United States are indiscriminately flung open, when ideas are allowed to flow freely and "subversive" groups are permitted to enter/operate. Thus, the strategies by which the United States

“contained” the U.S.S.R. and its attempted ideological and intelligence “infiltration” of the United States during the period commonly known as the “cold war” can now be legitimately deployed in the contemporary “war on terror” by the U.S. security establishment against any and all “dissenters,” including Islamic fundamentalists and illegal immigrants. The International Spy Museum operates effectively as a site of national(ist) remembrance that constructs a heroic history of one nation-state (the United States) in the wake of its “victory” over an(O)ther (the Soviet Union).

My concern with the museum, then, is not that it presents one (overwhelmingly negative) story about the Soviet Union (and the Russian Federation), but that it does not explicitly acknowledge, first, that its story is not the *only* story and, second, that it lacks self-reflexivity. That the museum’s history of cold war espionage does not include an architectural and narrative discursive equivalent to “Red Terror” pointing to the wrongs perpetrated by the U.S. against its own citizens in the name of “national security” reveals the museum’s confinement to realist definitions of “terror” and “security” as well as the triumphalist biases of its creators and decision-makers. As a result, this museum, which is simultaneously *in* and *of* the cold war, has put itself in position to identify for one million visitors each year not only the legacy/ies of that conflict, but also the contemporary political realities of another. Thus historically and politically located, the museum explicitly and circuitously calls on the cold war to justify and legitimate the “war on terror.”

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion: Casualties of Cold War

"We were all so smart.
[We thought:] Russia's hobbled, the next conflict's gonna be in the Middle East.
Turns out it *is* in the Middle East. With the Russians."¹

Throughout this dissertation I have explored the narrative and visual depictions of Russia and Russians in several American popular and political culture texts in an attempt to expose the gendered, racialized, and heteronormative discursive configurations that constitute the framework of meaning within which the United States conducted its relations with the Russian Federation in the decade between the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. I have made clear the myriad ways in which gendered Russian imaginaries were explicitly deployed as part of the American triumphalist mythscape to bolster support for, justify, and legitimate U.S. geopolitical unilateralism.

This is not to say, however, that the Russian Federation remains blameless. It has been extraordinarily difficult to attempt a feminist analysis of U.S.-Russian relations between 1991 and 2003 which explicitly incorporates a critique of American nationalism's triumphalist mythscape without appearing to let Russia entirely off the hook for what happened there after the demise of the Soviet Union. I am well aware

¹ *The West Wing*'s Chief of Staff Leo McGarry to Deputy Chief of Staff Josh Lyman in "Enemies Foreign and Domestic."

that the disastrous implementation of U.S. policies in the region was, in many ways, facilitated by Russian politicians and policymakers.² But, as historian and Russia expert Stephen Cohen has argued steadily over the course of the last decade and a half, the mistakes, assumptions, and triumphalist arrogance of the United States since 1991 must be reckoned with and accounted for if the U.S. wishes to avoid what he terms a “new American cold war” with the recently-emboldened Russian Federation.³

My work here has been an effort to contribute to that endeavor by focusing on the ideological *causes* of U.S. Russia policy rather than the material *consequences* of its implementation. I have attempted to demonstrate how the Russian Federation’s recycling in the early 1990s of gendered tropes from the Russian Empire’s Silver Age became heavily influential in American conceptualizations of post-Soviet Russia, thus offering a partial answer to the question I pose in chapter 1. “What,” I ask, “might be the consequences when the gendered signifier of the nation travels across borders and is deployed in an entirely different geographical, cultural, and/or historical context from that out of which it emerged?”

The answer is in the “casualties of cold war” to which I refer in this dissertation’s title. Put simply, these are the tangible and intangible damages inflicted

² See, for example, Lilia Shevtsova, *Yeltsin’s Russia: Myths and Reality* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999); Michael McFaul, *Russia’s Unfinished Revolution: Political Change from Gorbachev to Putin* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); Renfrey Clarke and Boris Kagarlitsky, *Russia under Yeltsin and Putin* (London: Pluto Press, 2002); Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*; Padma Desai, *Conversations on Russia: Reform from Yeltsin to Putin* (London: Oxford University Press, 2006); Herbert J. Ellison, *Boris Yeltsin and Russia’s Democratic Transformation* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007); and Lilia Shevtsova, *Russia: Lost in Transition: The Yeltsin and Putin Legacies* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007).

³ Stephen F. Cohen, “The New American Cold War,” *The Nation*, July 10, 2006, 10-17. Cohen’s disapproval of U.S. Russia policy is hardly a secret, nor are his prescriptions for change. See, for example his *Failed Crusade*.

during and as a result of the decades-long confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. The notion of “tangible damages” refers, first and most obviously, to the loss of life in cold war-era conflicts such as Korea, Viet Nam, and Afghanistan as both the Soviet Union and the United States attempted to incorporate peripheral nation-states into their respective spheres of influence by backing, respectively, anti-capitalist or anti-communist regimes. According to Ellen Schrecker, these actions served to “[bolster] otherwise weak and repressive regimes, while encouraging the militarization that seriously deformed those nations’ societies” and continue, even almost twenty years after the alleged end of the cold war, to have clear geopolitical repercussions.⁴ A second “tangible damage” inflicted by the cold war remains “the national security state that produced and was produced by the militarization of American foreign policy.” This led to the extraordinary growth in the unilateral powers of the U.S. president, while

[...] the American people came to be seen as an obstacle to the conduct of the Cold War. Uninformed and unaware of the dangers the United States supposedly faced, they had to be induced to acquiesce in whatever measures the nation’s leaders believed were necessary to protect national security.⁵

The militarization of national security thus enabled a lack of accountability on the part of the U.S. government; it need not justify its actions to anyone, and, just as after the events of September 11, 2001 and during the contemporary “war on terror,”

⁴ Schrecker, introduction to *Cold War Triumphalism*, 21.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

violations of human rights and civil liberties accompanied the concealment of government ineptitude.⁶

A third “tangible damage” is the increased traffic in Russian women and girls for work in the global sex industry—including to the United States. The discursive traffic in gendered Russian imaginaries in the conduct of U.S.-Russian relations, particularly those that depict post-Soviet Russia as a helpless, feminized victim, help to sustain the material traffic in women from Russia for work in the U.S. sex industry. As I demonstrate in chapter 3, the assumptions which helped to shape the Freedom Support Act were simultaneously dependent upon the notion of a weakened, feminized Russia in urgent need of assistance, and on the continuation of a cold war-era conceptualization of the Russian Federation as duplicitous, irrational, and maleficent. The neocolonial metaphors and analogies used throughout the congressional hearings to formulate a post-Soviet U.S. Russia policy reveal an explicit imperialist hubris rooted in racialized, gendered discursive configurations reminiscent of the colonial strategies of past empires. Additionally, the implementation throughout the early 1990s of the provisions of the Freedom Support Act contributed mightily to the material impoverishment of an overwhelming number of Russians, the large majority of them women. Some of these women were then integrated, whether forcibly or otherwise, into the global sex industry and made their way to the United States, usually as part of Russian organized criminal networks that continue to operate with very little restraint from U.S. law enforcement in the New York-New Jersey metropolitan area, the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, and

⁶ Ibid., 19-20.

Florida tourist hubs such as Orlando, Miami, and Ft. Lauderdale.⁷ The United States is thus both materially and discursively complicit in the continuing traffic in Russian women for work in the U.S. sex industry.

Because my work here has been focused on the *causes* of U.S. Russia policy rather than their consequences, I have been most interested in the *intangible* damages inflicted by the cold war, particularly what Schrecker refers to as “the polarizing habit of mind”⁸ and Cohen terms “resurgent cold war orthodoxies,”⁹ that have rendered impossible U.S. foreign policy epistemologies that exist outside a concern for militarized national security. But in identifying unfortunate but significant legacy of the cold war, both Schrecker and Cohen ignore the effects of gendered, racialized, heteronormative discourse on U.S. foreign policy and, with it, the invisibility of a violent, militarized masculinity determined to protect and defend a vulnerable nation. Since the demise of the Soviet Union and, more recently, the events of September 11, 2001, Americans have been reminded of the United States’ alleged exceptionalism, an idea whose maintenance requires, paradoxically, *both* the vigilant protection of a nation always already susceptible to internal and external threats (including, for instance, from communists, feminists, illegal immigrants, homosexuals, and “terrorists”) *as well as* a commitment to expansionism, which has historically been accomplished through military occupation and economic globalization. And the discursive configurations used to construct and maintain these two facets of American

⁷ Hughes, “Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation.”

⁸ Schrecker, introduction to *Cold War Triumphalism*, 21.

⁹ Cohen, “The New American Cold War,” 15.

nationalism have relied heavily on the gendered, racialized language of colonial (masculinized) conquest justified by perceived (feminized) threats. There is, as Naomi Klein illustrates through her investigation of the implementation of U.S.-led economic “reform” efforts in Russia during the 1990s, an obvious and disturbing discursive link between the American pastoral narratives of Annette Kolodny’s analyses of gendered American nationalism (which I discuss at length in chapter 2) and the expansionist policies of neoliberalism, which has become the standard-bearer of global economic “development” programs over the course of the last three decades. Calling Russia’s “transition” from communism to capitalism “one of the greatest crimes committed against a democracy in modern history,” Klein explicitly likens the neoliberal economic policies implemented there to colonialism. She argues that in place of the land, the state became “a colonial frontier” in which “corporate conquistadors,” operating in the legal and political void created by the hurried and intentional dismantling of communism, gobbled up state assets seemingly overnight, resulting in enormous wealth for a precious few—including key U.S. government contractors—and a startling increase in poverty, alcohol consumption, HIV/AIDS, violent crime, and suicide for the many. According to Klein, “Russia’s ‘economic reforms’ can claim credit for the impoverishment of *72 million people in only eight years.*”¹⁰

As Klein rightly points out, though, the “extreme acts of terror” committed by U.S.-based economic consultants and Western financial institutions as part of Russia’s economic “reform” could only succeed if there were legitimate reasons for

¹⁰ Klein, *Shock Doctrine*, 220, 242, and 238 (italics in original).

them to continue.¹¹ The co-constitutive elements of American nationalism (paranoia and expansionism, which were quite obviously manifest as legislators debated the Freedom Support Act) require the identification of feminized and/or emasculated “enemies” that will first threaten the nation and then become the focus of U.S. actions that are billed as defensive, rather than offensive. So, despite the fact that Russian military and economic structures were nearing total collapse in the early 1990s, Russia was depicted in American popular and political culture as a vengeful nation bent upon reclaiming its superpower status.¹² As I demonstrate in chapters 3 and 4, a perceived need to protect itself against this potential threat legitimized the United States’ desire to be involved in the early stages of post-Soviet Russian nation-building. And, later, in the mid- to late-nineties, as reports spread about the apparent failures of U.S. Russia policy, Russia was condemned by U.S. media and political pundits as a country whose “transition” to capitalist democracy was being held hostage by corrupt “communist hardliners” with a “Soviet mentality.”¹³ Both these rhetorical strategies, when combined, justified staying the course mapped out early on by neoliberal economic theorists, enabled increased attempts by Russian leaders, particularly Boris Yeltsin’s hand-picked successor, former KGB officer Vladimir Putin, to circumnavigate democratic processes by cracking down on political dissent that threatened to undermine economic “reform.” These strategies also overtly manipulated U.S. cold war-era paranoia about Soviet expansionism and the

¹¹ Ibid., 240.

¹² Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*, 158.

¹³ Klein, *Shock Doctrine*, 225-226.

infiltration of communism to fuel an American cultural imaginary of Russia as—still—an always already feminized and/or emasculated enemy against which the militarized, masculine United States must continue to protect itself.

And it is no wonder: Cohen’s frank assessment of U.S. policy toward Russia in the first post-Soviet decade is that it was profoundly hypocritical. While U.S. leaders Clinton and Bush posed for photographs with their Russian counterparts Yeltsin and Putin, proclaiming a strategic U.S.-Russia partnership, they simultaneously exploited post-Soviet Russia’s weaknesses by encircling that country with U.S. and/or NATO military installations, blatantly intervening in Russia’s domestic affairs, and continuing “familiar cold war double standards condemning Moscow for doing what Washington does—such as seeking allies and military bases in former Soviet republics, using its assets (oil and gas in Russia’s case) as aid to friendly governments and regulating foreign money in its political life.”¹⁴ As I discussed briefly in chapter 5, these anti-Russian U.S. policies fostered distrust in Russia and clearly demonstrate, first, that, the recent “chill” in U.S.-Russian relations is not, despite the rhetoric of U.S. pundits, entirely the fault of former Russian President (and current Prime Minister) Vladimir Putin, and, second, that in Washington at least, the cold war is far from over. Cohen asserts that “Putin’s Kremlin,” while getting an oft- (but not always) deserved bad wrap from U.S. politicians and American media outlets, has “[reacted] largely to a decade of broken U.S. promises and Yeltsin’s boozy compliance” with U.S. policies.¹⁵

¹⁴ Cohen, “The New American Cold War,” 10.

¹⁵ Ibid., 13-14.

Russia's Geopolitical Resurgence

Through a reading of Russian press coverage of Russia's response to NATO expansion in the 1990s, political scientist K.M. Fierke demonstrates the ways in which Russia's relationship with the West, particularly with the United States, during the first post-Soviet decade is best categorized as a "Machiavella strategy," a "gender game" reliant upon the discursive deployment of gender hierarchies in relations between nation-states.¹⁶ While the (masculine) approach prescribed by Niccolo Machiavelli in *The Prince* requires, if not both fear and love, then at least fear, as well as the power to "[manipulate] images and [construct] public realities," its feminine counterpart depends on "an alternative strategy" in which weak actors "'best' the enemy" by transforming it into an "unwitting ally." According to Fierke,

[...] besting places the Prince in a position where his actions must be consistent with his image of goodness and justice or risk exposing the ruthlessness underlying his strategy to the full light of day, thereby dissolving the appearance. In the process, new spaces are created for a more equal dialogue between the strong and the weak."¹⁷

This, Fierke contends, is how Russia conducted its foreign policy with the West during the latter part of the 1990s. She identifies three stages in post-Soviet Russia's redefinition of its relationship with the West. Between 1991 and 1993, an economically, politically, and militarily weakened Russia lacked its own voice and

¹⁶ K.M. Fierke, "Besting the West: Russia's Machiavella Strategy," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 1, no. 3 (1999): 403-34.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 411.

was “servile to and dependent on the West.” In 1994, Russia “became ‘tough,’ overcompensating for her [*sic*] weakness,” which resulted in “increased isolation.” But in the last half of the 1990s, Russia implemented its Machiavella strategy. The country “began to reassert an identity that assumed greatness, that stood firm while weak,” and that enabled it “to act rather than react in an attempt to change the game so that her [*sic*] own interests would be taken into account against the background of NATO’s expansion eastward.”¹⁸ For example, by publicly offering to *join* NATO rather than opposing its expansion, Russia forced the U.S. into “a position of having to respond in kind or risk being exposed as the agent in creating a new division of Europe.” As Fierke points out, “[f]or NATO to press ahead, oblivious to Russian concerns, would present NATO as an expansionary power in the traditional sense, rather than as a peaceful and restrained anchor of stability.”¹⁹ Having stopped “reacting to the moves of the dominant player,” itself a feminized role within the heteronormative geopolitical framework of neorealism, Russia won a victory by changing the rules of the gender game: it “made the unthinkable [i.e., Russia joining NATO] not only thinkable but possible” and transformed feminized weakness into a performance of feminized strength.²⁰

Although a signatory of the Partnership for Peace, Russia, of course, is not, as of June 2008, a member of NATO, nor is it likely to be in the foreseeable future.²¹

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 414.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 422.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 414.

²¹ Launched in 1994, the Partnership for Peace is a NATO program aimed at creating and sustaining trust between NATO and non-member nation-states throughout Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Although Putin was among the first to speak with Bush and offer his condolences and support after 9/11, and although Russia has been a staunch supporter of the subsequent U.S.-led “war on terror” in the form of crucial Middle East intelligence (the result of its long engagement with the region) and access to former Soviet air bases in Central Asia, U.S.-Russian relations has suffered exponentially since the Bush administration unilaterally withdrew in 2002 from the 1972 U.S.-Soviet Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, claimed the borrowed Central Asian bases as its own, incorporated several former Soviet and Soviet-influenced states into NATO,²² and continued its indictment of Russia’s domestic and foreign conduct.²³ But Russia’s success at the turn of the century in forcing the United States to take notice of Russian opposition to a variety of U.S. foreign policy goals laid the foundation for its explicit and vocal opposition to a U.S.-led military invasion of Iraq in 2003, an opposition that marked an explicit shift in the Russian gender game: forced during the 1990s as a result of its economic, political, and military weakness to enact a Machiavella strategy, Russia was by 2003, in a position to act from a position of geopolitical strength and, arguably, in response to its treatment, both material and discursive, by the U.S. since 1991.

For more information, see “The Partnership for Peace,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, <http://www.nato.int/issues/pfp/> (accessed May 23, 2008).

²² In 2004, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia became members of NATO. These accessions, along with the 1999 incorporation of Poland, have brought the eastern boundary of NATO quite literally to the western border of Russia.

²³ Cohen, “The New American Cold War,” 16. For example, U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney’s harsh criticism of Russia’s human rights record at a 2006 conference of Baltic states held in Vilnius, Lithuania to champion the advancement of democracy in the region irked Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, who warned that Cheney’s speech “looks like a provocation and interference in Russia’s internal affairs,” and the Russian media proclaimed the start of “a new cold war.” Vladimir Isachenkov, “Russian Media Warn of New Cold War,” *Associated Press*, April 5, 2006. The text of Cheney’s profoundly anti-Russian speech is available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/05/20060504-1.html> (accessed May 27, 2008).

The “truth” of U.S. “victory” and Soviet “defeat” in the cold war has become so pervasive in the American national(ist) narrative that prominent cold warriors from both U.S. political parties (including residents Clinton and Bush and their Secretaries of State, Madeleine Albright and Condoleezza Rice) have been spectacularly ignorant of the Russian Federation’s economic and geopolitical resurgence that has made it “a critical linchpin of the 21st century.”²⁴ Not only is Russia in possession of an enormous stockpile of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons of mass destruction—as well as the materials and technical expertise to develop more—it is, geographically-speaking, the largest country on earth, home to more than 140 million people, including twenty to twenty-five million Muslims. It shares a 2,600-mile border with China, and nearly a quarter of the world’s people, many of whom belong to conflicting ethnic and religious groups, live on its borders. Russia’s economy, which, as I discuss in chapters 3 and 5, collapsed entirely in 1998, has grown about 7 percent a year since 2002, and the country has paid off a \$200 billion foreign debt. It continues to exert its resurgent economic and military influence throughout the NIS, Europe, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East—often (and understandably) in explicit opposition to U.S. objectives in those same regions. And, most importantly for my purposes, Russia is the world’s second-largest producer of oil after Saudi Arabia, which, in combination with its long-standing economic and diplomatic relationships with Islamic countries throughout Central Asia and the Middle East, positions it at the vortex of contemporary U.S.-Middle East politics.²⁵

²⁴ Richard Stengel, “Choosing Order before Freedom,” *Time* 170, no. 27 (2007), 44.

After 2008: Competing Masculinities

The significance of Russia to U.S. success (or failure) in the Middle East was made most visible in March 2003, when, following reports that Iraq was in violation of a 1991 United Nations resolution banning its production and use of weapons of mass destruction, a coalition of primarily U.S. and U.K. forces invaded that country against the express wishes of several UN Security Council members—including the Russian Federation, which, as a permanent member, retains the power to unilaterally veto any and all resolutions. Russia, along with Germany and France, made abundantly clear in the weeks leading up to the U.S.-led invasion its objection to the use of military force in Iraq,²⁶ and Russia's insistent and vocal disapproval made that country the focus of a geopolitical diplomatic meltdown and forced the United States to conduct a potentially illegal war without the support of the international community.²⁷

Since then—and since 9/11 more broadly as a result of Bush's insistence throughout the fall of 2001 that the U.S. be able to create a national missile defense system in violation of the ABM Treaty—U.S.-Russian relations have been superficially civil, often conducted through informal “manly” activities such as

²⁵ For more information, on Russia's geopolitical significance, see *ibid.*, as well as Cohen, “The New American Cold War.”

²⁶ In the clearest expression of their disapproval of U.S. plans for military action in Iraq, the foreign ministers of Germany, France, and Russia issued a joint statement from Paris on March 5, 2003 stating that, like the United States, their “common objective remains the full and effective disarmament of Iraq.” However, they argued that this objective could be achieved by the continuation of weapons inspections. They called for the increased cooperation of Iraqi authorities in the inspections process and encouraged the establishment of specific timelines for completing both the inspections as well as Iraqi disarmament. “Words of Refusal: Three Nations Say No,” *New York Times*, March 6, 2003.

²⁷ Russia, France, and Germany vetoed the U.S.-proposed war resolution. Consequently, the U.S.-led coalition may well have violated international law by invading Iraq without the approval of the UN security council.

clearing brush on Bush's Texas ranch or salt water fishing at the Bush family resort in Maine.²⁸ These informal summits between Presidents Bush and Putin provided the American press with fantastic opportunities to showcase in print and in pictures the American president's (and, consequently, the United States') virule, rugged masculinity. In his coverage of the November 2001 Bush-Putin summit in Crawford, Texas, for example, journalist David B. Sanger made a point of contrasting Bush's mesquite barbecuing and "Reagan-like" brush clearing with Putin's "business casual" attire and woeful lack of cowboy boots that, on the ranch, "is the surest giveaway [...] of a cityslicker."²⁹ Bush's superior masculinity is implicitly operationalized in this narrative as not only in opposition to, but also in gendered hierarchical relationship with, Putin's urban (and urbane) effeteness. Like the Diesel advertisement with which I began this dissertation, this narrative draws explicitly on the mythical American cowboy, the solitary, independent Marlboro Man associated in the popular American mythos with notions of "Manifest Destiny" and nineteenth-century westward expansion—an imperialist endeavor that, as Annette Kolodny demonstrates, was rife with violently heteronormative rhetoric depicting masculine heroes demonstrating their mastery over "virgin" land.

The depiction of rugged American masculinity writ on the body of the U.S. president shifted slightly in May 2003 when, just weeks after the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, Bush landed on the deck of the U.S. aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln in full flight regalia (figure 7) to deliver a speech proclaiming a victorious end to combat

²⁸ Bush hosted Putin in Texas in November 2001, and in July 2007, Putin and Bush met at Bush's parents' home in Kennebunkport, Maine.

²⁹ Sanger, "Out at the Ranch, Guests from Russia," *New York Times*, November 15, 2001.

operations in Iraq. Not to be outdone in the gender game, Putin posed for his own set of photographs during his August 2007 fishing vacation to southern Siberia (figure 8). Upon their public release, the pictures became the catalyst for a “squall of gossip and speculation” among Russians and in the international community about what, if any, political message Putin was trying to send, to whom, and why.³⁰

While these respective images of American and Russian national identity are, of course, meant for a constituency of their domestic audiences, they are also powerful technologies in the conduct of contemporary U.S.-Russian relations,

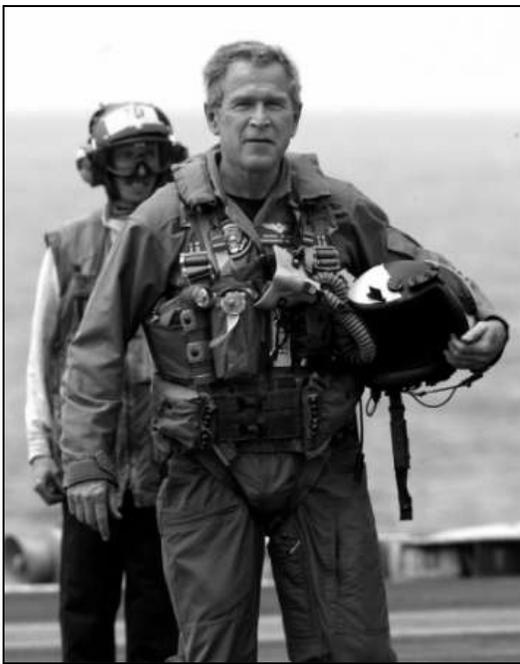


Figure 7: Bush as fighter pilot



Figure 8: Putin as rugged outdoorsman

³⁰ Michael Eckel, “Media Going Gaga over Vacation Shots of Putin,” *Seattle Times*, August 23, 2007. Pundits had long speculated that Putin, limited by the Russian constitution to two terms in office, would try somehow to circumnavigate that provision and make another bid for the presidency during the 2008 election cycle. He did not, although he all but hand-picked his successor, Dmitri Medvedev, who took office in May 2008.

particularly within the context of Russia's recent geopolitical resurgence that has enabled it to flip the gender game again and rejoin the ranks of powerful (masculine) nation-states. These presidential images of competing masculinities are visual manifestations of the gendered, racialized, and heteronormative discursive foreign policy tactics of both countries in the wake of the "war on terror" and the diplomatic crisis that pitted Russia against the United States over the invasion of Iraq. As a signifier of American national identity, the iconic photograph of Bush on the aircraft carrier declaring victory in Iraq in 2003, much like that of Ronald Reagan taken atop his white steed in 1980, is the dream of every political operative in its use of the constitutive elements of heteropatriarchal American nationalism to depict the (white, male) U.S. Commander-in-Chief and representative-in-chief as a strong patriarch ready to lead his country. But what is strikingly different here from not only the Diesel ad and the picture of Reagan, but also pictures of Bush, himself, clearing brush bedecked in jeans and a white cowboy hat (figure 9), is the explicit militarization of the U.S. president and, with him, the American national(ist) narrative in the wake of 9/11.

In contrast, the image of rugged outdoorsman Putin draws explicitly on the American Marlboro Man mythos promulgated in U.S. presidential iconography,³¹ although the prominent display on Putin's bare chest of a Russian Orthodox cross makes obvious the translation of this image for a Russian cultural context that has

³¹ Indeed, one news article actually labels Putin "Siberia's Marlboro Man." "Siberia's Marlboro Man: Bare-Chested Putin Answers Call of the Wild," *Spiegel Online*, August 14, 2007, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/0,1518,499835,00.html> (accessed May 21, 2008).

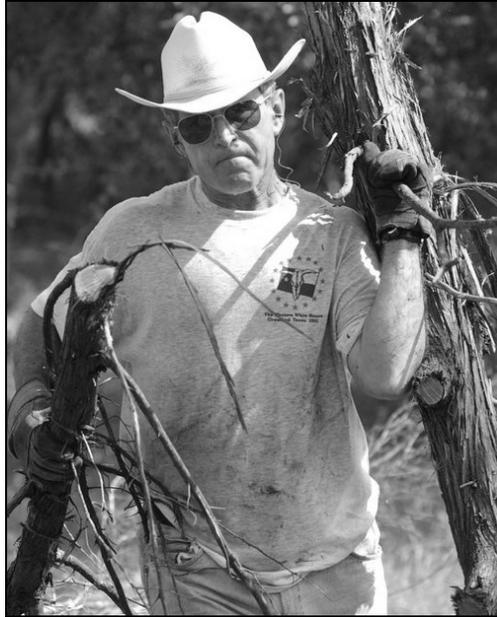


Figure 9: Bush as rancher

come to rely heavily on the (very conservative) Russian Orthodox Church for the formation of a post-Soviet Russian national identity. But given the downward trajectory of Bush's popularity among American voters, and the steady decrease in American support for the U.S. occupation of Iraq since Bush declared victory on the U.S.S. Lincoln in May 2003, it may well be the case that "[h]anging out eating hamburgers at a family barbecue in Kennebunkport may be all very well for lily-livered presidents, but world leaders who are real men prefer to go fishing in Siberia."³² After all, it is Putin, not Bush, who was named *Time* magazine's 2007 Person of the Year, and it is he, as Prime Minister, who remains at the top echelons of Russian government and world politics. At the moment, Putin—and Russia—are winning the gender game that is U.S.-Russian relations.

³² Ibid.

Appendix I

Timeline of Important Dates in U.S.-Russian Relations, 1905-2003

DATE	EVENT
1905	Russo-Japanese War; Russia is soundly defeated.
1905	February: First Russian Revolution forces Tsar Nicholas II to create a parliamentary system.
1913	Romanov tercentenary.
1914	Start of the Great War (World War I).
1917	February: Second Russian Revolution brings down the monarchy and installs a liberal democratic government under the leadership of Alexander Kerensky.
1917	Third Russian Revolution, also known as the October Revolution or the Bolshevik Revolution, brings the Bolshevik Party to power under the leadership of V. I. Lenin.
1918	March: Lenin signs the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, surrendering to Germany and withdrawing Russia from the war. July: Nicholas II, his wife, and five children are summarily executed by Bolshevik soldiers in Ekaterinberg, Russia.
1918-1921	Russian Civil War between the Red and White Armies; monarchists, liberal democrats, and an international coalition of anti-communist forces (including the United States) make an unsuccessful attempt to oust the Bolsheviks from power.
1922	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics created.
1923	Death of Lenin; ascension of Stalin to Communist Party leadership.
1930	U.S. officially recognizes the U.S.S.R.
1937-1938	Height of the purges in the U.S.S.R.
1938-1945	The Great Patriotic War (World War II); U.S.S.R. is a wartime ally of France, Great Britain, and the U.S. against Nazi Germany and the Axis Powers.
1945	U.S. reveals its nuclear prowess when it deploys its new atomic bombs to quell the Japanese, forcing them to surrender and, consequently, ending the war in the Pacific.
1949	U.S.S.R. successfully conducts its first atomic explosion.
1950-1953	Korean War; also the arrest, trial, and execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg.
1953	Death of Stalin.
1956	Khrushchev's "secret speech" denouncing Stalin. November: Hungarian revolution.
1980s	Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev initiates major reforms of the Soviet system, colloquially termed <i>perestroika</i> (restructuring) and <i>glasnost</i> (openness).
1989	November: Fall of Berlin Wall.
1990	October: Reunification of Germany.
1991	August: Under the leadership of its president, Boris Yeltsin, Russia declares independence from the Soviet Union. December: Dissolution of U.S.S.R.
1992	October: U.S. President Bush signs the Freedom Support Act authorizing U.S. aid to the Newly Independent States (N.I.S.) of the former Soviet Union.
Early 1990s	Several corpses are found in a makeshift grave near Ekaterinburg, Russia; DNA tests later reveal that they are, indeed, the remains of the Romanovs.
1998	July: The remains of the Romanovs are interred in St. Petersburg's Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul. August: Russia's economy collapses.
1999	December: Yeltsin appoints former KGB head Vladimir Putin as Acting President of Russia.
2000	March: Putin is elected President.
2001	September: Al'Qaeda terrorists destroy targets in New York City and Washington, DC, igniting a U.S.-led global "war on terror".
2003	March: Despite the express opposition of Russia and several other member of the UN Security Council, a U.S.-led coalition invades Iraq.

Appendix II

Hearings Comprising the Partial Legislative History of U.S. Public Law 102-511, the Freedom Support Act of 1992

DATE	HEARING TITLE	COMMITTEE	SUMMARY
June 6, 1991	<i>The Soviet Crisis and the US Interest: Future of the Soviet Military</i>	Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, Committee on Foreign Relations	Explored the relationship between the Soviet military and the Soviet economy as well as the military's role in shifting political situation.
June 19, 1991	<i>The Soviet Crisis and the US Interest: Future of the Soviet Economy</i>	Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, Committee on Foreign Relations	Legislators tried ascertain the best way(s) by which the U.S. may be able to assist the U.S.S.R. transition to a market economy.
September 24, September 26, and October 30, 1991	<i>Consolidating Free-Market Democracy in the Former Soviet Union</i>	Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, Committee on Foreign Relations	Began the assistance debate regarding whether to provide assistance and, if so, what types and how. Legislators were concerned with what a new U.S.S.R. would/ should look like, and how best to get there.
January 21, 1992	<i>United States Policy toward the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)</i>	House Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, Committee on Foreign Affairs	An assessment of U.S. policy in the days after the demise of the Soviet Union. Legislators wanted to know what, if anything, should be done that the U.S. was not already doing.
February 25, 1992	<i>State Department Resource Needs for US Representation in the CIS</i>	House Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East and Subcommittee on International Operations, Committee on Foreign Affairs	Congress wanted to know if the George H.W. Bush plan to open embassies in all the former Soviet republics without additional funds was feasible.
February 26, 1992	<i>Developments in Europe; and Consideration of H. Con. Res. 156, Concerning the Emancipation of the Baha'i Community of Iran</i>	House Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, Committee on Foreign Affairs	Testimony by State Dept. official regarding the status of aid to former Soviet Union.
March 18, 1992	<i>Democracy Building in the Former Soviet Union</i>	House Subcommittee on International Operations, Committee on Foreign Affairs	Explored the activities and organizations that were involved in democracy-building throughout the former Soviet Union.

March 19, 1992	<i>US Assistance to the New Independent States: Recommendation from US Non-Profit Organizations</i>	Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, Committee on Foreign Relations	A continuation of the on-going conversation in Congress about how the US might best help the transition to free-market democracies in NIS, this time with advice from select representatives from US-based non-profit organizations.
April 1, 1992	<i>United States Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States</i>	House Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, Committee on Foreign Affairs	Focused on economic reform questions facing Russia and key issues facing the US, especially the status of economic reforms, the status of Russia's negotiations with the IMF, Russia's assistance needs, the IMF's assistance program, and recommendations for US policy and assistance.
April 8, 1992	<i>Environmental and Energy Challenges in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union</i>	Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, Committee on Foreign Relations	Hearing was convened to hear testimony concerning the potential threat posed to US national and global environmental security by aging nuclear reactors operating in the former Soviet Union.
April 9, 1992	<i>US Assistance to the New Independent States: Recommendations from US Business and Agriculture</i>	Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, Committee on Foreign Relations	As a continuation of the conversation about the possible forms of US aid to the NIS, this hearing explored how the US might assist the NIS while also positively impacting US businesses and US workers.
April 9, 1992	<i>Developments in Europe</i>	House Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, Committee on Foreign Affairs	Hearing held to learn about general developments in Europe from a State Department representative, but the committee was particularly interested in the political and economic situation in the former Soviet Union as well as the status of proposed and enacted US assistance programs.

April 9, 1992	<i>Legislation Authorizing Assistance to the Former Soviet Union, S. 2532</i>	Senate Committee on Foreign Relations	Concerned with US role in the continuing transition of the NIS into capitalist democracies.
May 5, 1992	<i>Protecting Minority Rights in the New Independent States and Eastern Europe: The Role of the United States</i>	Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, Committee on Foreign Relations	Explored the role the United States might play in responding to reports of human rights abuses throughout Russia and the NIS, particularly anti-Semitism.
May 6, 1992	<i>The Role of Children's Educational Television in the Transformation of the Former Soviet Union</i>	Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, Committee on Foreign Relations	Within the context of the areas in which the United States is best suited to offer assistance and expertise, this hearing advocated the implementation of children's educational television throughout the former Soviet Union.
May 14, 1992	<i>US Assistance to the New Independent States</i>	Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs, Committee on Foreign Relations	Anticipating a political battle in Congress over what had by that time become the Freedom Support Act, this hearing gave Bush administration officials and supporters the opportunity to tell Congress about the provisions of the proposed legislation.

Appendix III

Congressional Hearings Concerning U.S.-Russian Relations before August 1998

DATE	HEARING TITLE	COMMITTEE	SUMMARY
February 8, 1994	<i>Impact of IMF/World Bank Policies Toward Russia and the Russian Economy</i>	Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs	Hearing convened to ascertain what is happening with the Russian economy. What do Russians need to do to ensure successful economic reform?
June 13, 1996	<i>Effectiveness of US Assistance Programs in Russia, Ukraine, Armenia, and the Other Newly Independent States</i>	House Committee on International Relations	Question in this hearing is, "Are programs in Russia being implemented effectively?" Witnesses are from various US government agencies involved in reform efforts. The concern is that US aid is not doing any good, and Congress wants to know if the US should change its methods.
March 11, 1997	<i>US Assistance to the Newly Independent States of the Former Soviet Union</i>	House Committee on International Relations	Hearing held within context of Clinton's request to increase aid to the NIS; Congress would rather decrease it, so Clinton administration witnesses defend the request, called the "Partnership for Freedom" initiative.
March 12, 1997	<i>US Relations with Russia and the Newly Independent States</i>	House Committee on International Relations	James Collins, Ambassador-at-Large for the NIS, has been asked to tell the committee about the state of US-Russian relations, especially regarding NATO expansion and Russia's sale of weapons to and possible nuclear cooperation with Iran. There is also a concern for capital flight from Russia and corruption within the Russian government. There is also a discussion of the current Russian political situation: a high number of communists in the Duma and a general increase in conservative nationalism.
March 26, 1998	<i>Review of US Assistance Programs to Russia, Ukraine and the New Independent States</i>	House Committee on International Relations	Clinton administration invited to address the concern among committee members about the ongoing sale of Russian weapons technology to Iran, China, and Cuba. Legislators also ask about the seeming lack of stability in Russian political leadership as well as the lack of cooperation from Russia on US policies.

July 16, 1998	<i>The United States and Russia: Assessing the Relationship</i>	House Committee on International Relations	Held to review political and economic developments in and US policy toward Russia. Critiques of Russian foreign policy from a US perspective, particularly Russian arms sales to various countries and policies toward several former Soviet republics.
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Appendix IV

Congressional Hearings Concerning U.S.-Russian Relations after August 1998

DATE	HEARING TITLE	COMMITTEE	SUMMARY
September 17, 1998	<i>The United States and Russia, Part II: Russia in Crisis</i>	House Committee on International Relations	Legislators want to know whether (1) Russia has been lying to the US with regard to aid disbursement and progress toward reforms and (2) the Clinton administration has been ignoring signals that reform efforts are not working. Continuing concern that Russia is selling weapons technology to Iran.
January 15, 1999	<i>Whither Human Rights in Russia?</i>	Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe	Human rights here are a concern, especially reports of the torture and beating of soldiers, anti-Semitism, lack of religious freedom, and civil liberties violations, particularly freedom of the press.
June 9, 1999	<i>Assisting Russia: What Have We Achieved after Seven Years?</i>	House Committee on International Relations	Russia received \$6 billion in direct US assistance since 1993 and close to \$20 billion in IMF loans, most of which cannot be accounted for or paid back, so the committee wants to know where it all went. Gender concerns are mentioned here for the first time in any congressional hearings about Russia by US administration/government officials: According to the witness, US AID is developing new strategies and "integrating gender concerns" (11). Belligerence abounds at this hearing as everyone tries to figure out who to blame for the problems in Russia.
June 10, 1999	<i>Russian Economic Turmoil</i>	House Committee on Banking and Financial Services	Purpose: To examine the status of the Russian economy and US policy toward economic reform in that country. It is widely acknowledged that Russia is in

			crisis and that IMF structural adjustment programs failed. Legislators want to create an environment in Russia that fosters foreign investment, but they remains concerned about anti-Americanism, lack of accountability for American tax-payer monies, corruption, crime, and inflation. One witness mentions Russia's health crisis, environmental problems, and declining educational system.
June 28, 1999	<i>The Sex Trade: Trafficking of Women and Children in Europe and the United States</i>	Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe	A few members of Congress have recently learned that sex trafficking occurs and are bent on stopping it. This hearing brings together expert anti-trafficking witnesses to report to the committee what they know about the situation.
August 4, 1999	<i>H.R. 1356, The Freedom from Sexual Trafficking Act of 1999</i>	House Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, Committee on International Relations	Provides some background on sex trafficking.
September 14, 1999	<i>Trafficking in Women and Children in the International Sex Trade</i>	House Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, Committee on International Relations	Part of attempts by select members of the House of Representatives to get the US to pass a comprehensive anti-sex trafficking law that punishes traffickers rather than the "victims" and provides protection for the latter.
September 23, 1999	<i>Corruption in Russia and Recent US Policy</i>	Senate Committee on Foreign Relations	Purpose: To examine allegations of corruption in Russia and to see whether the Clinton administration was aware of and/or contributed to the problem. Chairperson Joseph Biden (D-Delaware) stresses that they are not there to debate about whether the US should be engaged in Russia; that is a done deal. Concern is expressed regarding the Russian mafia: Senator John Kerry (D-Massachusetts) asks about corruption and transnational

			crime, but does not mention sex trafficking; nor does Senator Paul Wellstone (D-Minnesota). Biden points out that the very people on this committee who are now critiquing US Russia policy (especially shock therapy) are the ones who advocated it in the first place.
September 30, 1999	<i>Corruption in Russia and Future US Policy</i>	Senate Committee on Foreign Relations	Purpose: To examine corruption in Russia and figure out where to go from here. One witness lays out specific provisions for US Russia policy going forward, while another encourages the US to refocus its assistance programs toward establishing the rule of law. Another, an expert on organized crime, discusses prostitution, gambling, and drugs as part of these networks' activities. He specifically mentions trafficking of women and children as happening in the US to underscore the transnational nature of the problem. According to the witnesses, it has not been US money that has been wasted, but IMF loans.
October 6, 1999	<i>US Policy Toward Russia, Part I: Warnings and Dissent</i>	House Committee on International Relations	This hearing exploring charges of corruption and mismanagement of aid monies in Russia continues theme of Senate hearing in which the Clinton administration is being blamed. The situation in Russia is grim, and corruption is rampant; perhaps Russian President Boris Yeltsin is not the reformer he claimed to be? One witness argues, "We shouldn't restrict out policy connectivity to Russia to a few cozy relationships among people who speak English and IMF-ise" (14).
October 7, 1999	<i>US Policy Toward Russia, Part II: Corruption in the</i>	House Committee on International Relations	How widespread is the corruption in Russia? Does it extend to Yeltsin, himself,

	<i>Russian Government</i>		given the links between his family and a Swiss company? Are US-based investors, advisors, and pundits benefiting from the continued capital flight of IMF monies from Russia?
October 19, 1999	<i>US Policy Toward Russia, Part III: Administration Views</i>	House Committee on International Relations	Clinton administration official Strobe Talbott is invited to address US Russia policy within the context of Congress's reexamination of that policy in order that he may defend the Clinton administration's lack of action. According to Talbott, Secretary of State Madeline Albright divides US Russia policy into two categories, arms control and support for internal transformation, but Congress is currently unwilling to authorize more funds for these objectives. There is also concern among legislators about transnational networks of Islamic fundamentalists supporting Chechnya, especially countries from "the Arabian peninsula to South Asia" (12). Talbott suggests that Russia needs to see its problem in the Caucasus as a global threat and work together as part of an international community. Concern that the transfer of technology and weapons to Iran is happening with the knowledge and maybe even the encouragement of the government.
February 22, 2000 and April 4, 2000	<i>International Trafficking in Women and Children</i>	Senate Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Committee on Foreign Relations	First hearing on trafficking in the Senate; convened to learn more about the transnational traffic of women and children for all sorts of forced labor, particularly sex work.
March 7, 2002	<i>Monitoring and Combating Trafficking in Persons: How Are We Doing?</i>	Senate Committee on Foreign Relations	Hearing convened to examine how well the TVPA is working and if any changes should be made.

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