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Conclusion: Changing Imaginings of Collective Futures

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Individual and Collective Imagination

Imagination is one of the basic mental capacities that define humans as species. In agreement with authors of this volume, I conceive imagination as a feature of the dialogical mind. Dialogical imagination characterizes the mind that is in reflexive interactions with minds of other individuals, groups and communities. More broadly, dialogical imagination involves reflexive interdependencies between minds, institutions and cultures; and between past, present and future events (Marková, 2016). As such, dialogical imagination is intertwined with various forms of thinking and language, such as remembering, making sense of signs and creating signs, with symbolic communication and with judging and evaluating phenomena in social reality. Therefore, imagination can be com-

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C. de Saint-Laurent et al. (eds.), *Imagining Collective Futures*, Palgrave Studies in Creativity and Culture, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-76051-3_14

prehended only in a holistic manner, together with those mental capacities and activities which humans display in their sociocultural and historical contexts.

If, for analytic reasons, this volume singles out collective imagining as a distinct phenomenon to be explored, we should see it as an attempt to *highlight* its collective features within the context of other kinds of social thinking, shared activities and communication. These features might involve, on the one hand, aspirations for desirable common goals and outcomes, and on the other hand, the ways of avoiding problems or conflicts that could threaten the existence of communities. However, collective visions of the future may also refer to collective acceptance of ideological, religious or political doctrines, which groups and communities adopt either thoughtlessly, or due to fear, or indeed due to admiration of such doctrines and of charismatic leaders propagating them.

Throughout the whole of European history, *imagination of the individual* has been both denigrated and celebrated. Disparaged by Plato (1991), it was accepted by Aristotle (1998), and highly acclaimed by Giambattista Vico (1744/1948). Imagination was largely rejected by positivism as a form of irrational thinking (LeGouis, 1997), and Albert Einstein (1931/2009) praised it higher than knowledge.

In contrast, the history of theoretical treatments of *collective imaginations* is relatively short. True, collective imaginary is as old as the history of humankind and we can trace it in all religions, myths and fables. However, explicit theories of collective imagination are linked to the emergence of human and social sciences in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This coincides with dramatic societal changes accompanied by the beginnings of social movements in relation to political and anti-religious protests at the time, and fights against economic exploitations during industrialization.

Alongside these societal changes, the rise of the modern concept of the Self fundamentally contributed to theorization of collective imagination. Let us recall that until the seventeenth century, the concept of the Self was strictly individualistic. Its history goes back to the philosophy of Saint Augustine (AD 354–430), who conceived the Self as the centre of inner incorporeal activity of self-knowing, reflexivity and self-consciousness.

These capacities of the Self, as St. Augustine (397–398/2006) articulated them in *Confessions*, enabled the human soul to reach God. The concept of the Self as a thinker and knower permeated subsequent philosophy for more than a thousand years and culminated in Descartes's "Cogito ergo sum". Such philosophically construed concept of the Self was far removed from the Self as experienced in daily life.

The premodern Self in daily life of the mediaeval society was closely tied to institutions and the existing social structures (Berger, 1973; Marková, 2003). The Self had a stabilized identity that was interwoven into requirements and constraints of the strictly hierarchical mediaeval society. Each social group had a mandatory code of behaviour and of lifestyle to which the Self was submitted.

The breakdown and disappearance of the mediaeval society necessarily led to the development of the modern Self based on new demands. Above all, the post-mediaeval society transformed the relations between the Self and social structures and various forms of Others. These new relations became involved in the Self's search for social recognition, which included the struggle for human rights, dignity and equality. These searches and struggles were also reflected in new philosophical trends, such as those of Fichte and Hegel, and the emphasis on the interdependence between the Self and Others.

The emergence of these socially orientated philosophies and the rise of human and social sciences in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were parts of the broadly based societal, cultural and political movements that swept across Europe. They brought about new ideas of nationalism, they encouraged interest in other cultures, and they promoted languages as marks of national identity. These movements, which inspired desires for radical changes in society, called for the democratization of life. They led to diverse formulations of collective imaginations of the future. These imaginations aimed to become the guiding forces of modernity, enabling the development of shared social practices and expectations for the future within a new and legitimate moral order (Taylor, 2002). Most importantly, such practices could be accomplished only in and through understanding the multiple interdependencies between the Self and Other(s).

In building upon ideas about collective imaginations of the future as the guiding forces of modernity, the authors of this volume present a rich spectrum of thoughts ranging from historical to psychological, sociocultural and political approaches. In this concluding chapter, I shall attempt to identify some common themes that permeate this volume and discern some concepts that, to my mind, guide the authors' thinking.

Imagination and Images

Imagination is such a basic capacity of humanity that it cannot be annihilated without destroying the human being *as the* human being. The capacity to imagine can be altered by physiological/biological means (e.g. drugs, stress on the brain, brain injury) or by a mental illness. For example, the loss of memory or of language as a result of brain accident has a destructive effect on imagination and other forms of thought. In contrast, some substances, such as hallucinogenic drugs or narcotics, may temporarily enhance imagination.

While imagination can be altered or destructed only by physiological or biological impact on the brain, images, that is, the processes and products of imagination, are amenable to destruction and manipulation by social means. It is not an exaggeration to claim that, today, we live in the world of images. Rapid advances in communication and technology enable the swift spread of information through media images, artistic products and artefacts. They constantly bombard humans' capacities of coping with the magnitude and diversity of images.

In this section I shall be concerned with two issues. First, I shall discuss how the question 'What is imagination?' is answered by authors of this volume. The answer to this question depends on the problem addressed by the researcher. Second, let us remind ourselves that despite the conceptual difference between imagination as the capacity to imagine, and images, as the processes and products of imagination, these two concepts are often treated as if referring to identical capacities and processes. Yet their conceptual differentiation has an important theoretical and social significance.

Imagination as Decoupling

One way of answering the question 'What is imagination?' is to consider imagination as a mental activity that is separated from the immediate experience, and is concerned with 'what does not yet exist'. This perspective is widespread in social sciences (see Jovchelovitch and Hawlina, Chap. 7, this volume). So conceived, imagination is viewed as wondering about futures that enable creative acting. This perspective is adopted by several authors of this volume who develop theoretical ideas about imagination as a process that is temporarily decoupled from the instant flow of experience.

Zittoun and Gillespie (Chap. 2, this volume) develop a sociocultural model of collective imagination based on their original theorization of imagination of individuals (Zittoun & Gillespie, 2016). They resourcefully extend the three core dimensions of their original model (i.e. time orientation, the semiotic distance of imagining and the plausibility of realization of imagined events) to develop the model of collective imagination. The authors conceptualize in detail these novel extensions. These comprise the degree of centralization of imagining and its emotional valence; these are distributed in collective imaginations of multidimensional spaces in historical and sociocultural fields. Utilizing and developing Zittoun and Gillespie's perspective, Power (Chap. 11, this volume), too, draws on imagination as decoupling of immediate experience.

Other models that seem to adopt the decoupling perspective of imagination are proposed by de Saint-Laurent (Chap. 4, this volume) and Glăveanu (Chap. 5, this volume). De Saint-Laurent proposes a model of collective imagination of the future based on several features of collective memory (see below). Glăveanu explores the construction of collective futures as creative activities of multiple actors and cultural environments. Glăveanu places the relations between the Self and Others in the centre of theorizing creativity, imagination and collective futures. Collective futures are formed both through imagination as an activity of thinking and through creativity as an action-based process.

Decoupling is also involved in utopias. Jovchelovitch and Hawlina (Chap. 7, this volume) critically analyse utopias as strivings for a better future in which there are no conflicts and tensions, and in which the

perfect society timelessly flows. The authors argue that utopias tend to be static designs and monologized fictions presenting futures as a kind of blessing for everybody and allowing no alternative. The authors contrast such unrealistic utopias with the forms of collective imaginations that are multifaceted, dialogical and dynamic interactions between Selves and Others.

Brescó (Chap. 6, this volume), too, is concerned with utopias. Specifically, he discusses the Marxist utopia of a classless society that would be achieved through class struggle, and the utopias of nationalist movements in the nineteenth century aiming to create nation states. Brescó uses the notion of 'prolepsis' (see below) to explain the logic of these utopias based on reconstructing the past in order to achieve the required political goals.

In conclusion, while these authors conceive imagination as intrinsic to human thinking and to its related mental activities, they aim to construct specific theoretical models or to refer to particular kinds of collective imagination. Decoupling collective imagination from the immediate experience enables them to bring out the exact features of their theoretical models and of issues they address.

Imagination as Embedded in the Flow of Thinking

Another perspective conceives imagination as part of any form of thinking that takes place in the flow of daily experience, rather than being distanced from it (even if only temporarily). This perspective can be viewed as an extension of Heidegger's (1968) position expressed in his questioning 'What is called thinking?' According to Heidegger's answer to this question, to think means to interrogate oneself, other humans and institutions, as well as to question phenomena in social reality. For Heidegger, to think means to search for a path in an unknown territory. Under such circumstances, the knower does not know where precisely the path might lead, and he/she only has a hunch about the final destination. This may be likened 'to making a first path on skis through new-fallen snow or clearing a way for oneself through dense forest growth' (Gray, 1968, p. xxiv). As Heidegger often repeated, in order to think, 'we

must get underway' (e.g. Heidegger, 1968, p. 8). Heidegger considered that thinking and questioning were more or less synonymous capacities.

Imagination, likewise, may be considered as a search for possible routes leading to desirable destinations or at least to outcomes avoiding adverse effects (see Power, Chap. 11, this volume). While one may imagine the outcome, the path to it has yet to be uncovered. According to this perspective, imagination is present in and through most forms of thinking, in particular when humans do not have sufficient information about the relevant issues that might lead to the thought-after destinations. Perhaps only algorithmic thinking and formalistic procedures with rigid techniques and fixed goals can take place without imagination. Otherwise, imagination is involved in learning, questioning oneself and others, searching for a solution, or simply in any attempts to find a path through the unknown terrain. Humans learn in and through making sense of new phenomena, comparing them with past experiences and knowledge, and with what they share with others. In these cases, imagination is part of all kinds of daily thinking and communication, and some authors in this volume adopt this perspective.

Social thinking and dialogical communication involve, above all, the imagining of perspectives of others. It was in this context that Ragnar Rommetveit (1974) introduced the notion of 'prolepsis'—that is, of a conversational move indicating the speaker's anticipation of socially shared commonalities for communication. By imagining the other participant's presuppositions, the speaker proleptically induces a communicatively appropriate response from the other. We can assume that prolepsis plays two roles. On the one hand, and as Rommetveit (1974) suggested, it is closely related to intersubjectivity—that is, to the search for a common ground in order to achieve mutual understanding of the participants. It is this role of prolepsis that was later on developed by Cole (1996) and other researchers in child socialization. On the other hand, by making a conversational move, the speaker has the privilege of controlling the range of appropriate answers from the other, and to that extent, he/she restricts the range of responses from the other participant. Glăveanu (Chap. 5, this volume) touches on this role of prolepsis in discussing 'imagining for others'.

Brescó (Chap. 6, this volume) uses the concept of prolepsis in order to examine collective imagination of the future. He takes as a point of departure the process of a child's socialization, during which parents attempt to lead the child towards their expected goals for their young. Brescó proceeds to build a model of prolepsis in the politics of imagination. He argues that just as parents' cultural past is reflected and extended in the education of their child, so collectively imagined futures are based on multiple ways of reconstructing the past and the present in order to attain the desired political goals for the future. Prolepsis is a part of daily interactions and communication and it explains the spiral logic of social structures that move from and to the past, present and future. Collective imagination, therefore, cannot be isolated or decoupled from daily interactions and communication.

In focusing on collective imagination in relation to literature, Carriere (Chap. 3, this volume) does not use the term 'prolepsis', although the concept of prolepsis permeates his arguments as he claims: 'we imagine the mind of the other and we adjust our interactions based on how we imagine they respond'. Carriere views imagination as being totally enmeshed in the daily social world. It governs intersubjective rules of interaction and beliefs that others share these thoughts and beliefs (Rommetveit, 1974). Like Heidegger, Carriere conceives the ways of approaching the uncertain future through constructing meanings that move across past, present and future. He shows the ways through which literature can propel collective imaginations for intersubjective, as well as for political or creative purposes.

In discussing his model of collective imagination, based on the distinction between imagination and creativity, Glăveanu (Chap. 5, this volume) adopts the position of decoupling imagination from the flow of experience. However, when he is concerned with the question of perspectival collective futures, he views imagination as a feature of the flow of experience and interaction. He outlines three forms of perspectival positions in communication such as the Self for Others, the Self with Others and the Self towards Others. These positions are differentiated with respect to mutuality of perspectives.

Glăveanu's position illustrates that these two conceptions of imagination—that is, imagination as a mental activity distanced from immedi-

ate experience and imagination as embedded in daily thought—are complementary. The prioritizing of one or the other conception of collective imagination is given by authors' questions, for example: do they intend to construct a theoretical model of imagination? Alternatively, do they explore imagination in daily flow of thinking, activities and communication?

Images as Products of Imagination

Whichever of these two conceptions of collective imagination one adopts, in the process of imagining, humans produce images. These could be concrete mental pictures or sensorial (e.g. visual, hearing) creations. Although images are produced by the minds of individuals, we assume that they are dialogically constructed in the socially shared social world. Powerful collective images, which are generated in politics and ideologies, shape public decisions. Media images promote the public understanding of science, as well as artistic inventions of humans and computers. Not surprisingly, various forms of collective images are debated across disciplines, such as arts (e.g. Goldbard, 2006), politics (e.g. Bottici, 2011; Czobor-Lupp, 2014) and cultural studies (e.g. Calhoun, 2002; Gaonkar, 2002; Göle, 2002; Lee & LiPuma, 2002). In view of this, it is notable that studies of collective imagination in social psychology have been rare (but see e.g. Arruda, 2014; de Alba, 2004, 2007).

We see in this volume (e.g. Nicholson and Howarth, Chap. 9, this volume) that explorations in social representations, which are based on a sociocultural approach, are closely linked to the studies of collective imagination. Imagination is one of the fundamental concepts of Moscovici's original theory (Moscovici, 1961, 1976/2008) (which however, does not apply to some other social representational approaches). Among joint links between the sociocultural approach to social representations and collective imaginations are, for example, the following: holistic and dynamic perspectives on social phenomena, the emphasis on relations between the past, future and contemporary ideological and political conflicts and their embeddedness in history and culture. Indeed, one may even pose the question as to whether there are any substantial

conceptual differences between collective imaginations of the future and sociocultural approaches in social representations, or whether viewing these two fields as separate from one another is a terminological matter.

While imagination is a basic capacity of humanity that cannot be annihilated without destroying the human being *as the* human being, concrete images are subjects of terrific social and psychological influences (Marková, 2017). Dictatorships, totalitarian regimes, modern bureaucracies, markets and political uncertainties have a gigantic power to manipulate and distort images. This happens by channelling thinking, language and symbolic processes through certified routes so that they can serve specific purposes of socialization, whether political, cultural or educational. For example, manipulated photographs by the mass media show genetically modified tomatoes as growing bigger *as if* they were injected by 'genes'. Such photographs, transported from medicine and genetics, stimulate public's ideas and manipulate their images (Wagner, Kronberger & Seifert, 2002). During the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the 1980s, images (by the media) of people infected by the virus formed and transformed collective images or social representations of HIV/AIDS and proved to be much more influential than knowledge of the disease (e.g. Marková & Farr, 1995). Systematic repetitions and re-presentations of images convert them finally into social reality and establish them as truth.

Interdependencies and Oppositions Between the Self and Others

Anthropological evidence shows that already in human prehistory, the categories 'we' and 'they' were fundamental to social life. The preference for one's own group over other groups is one of the basic common-sense assumptions. It is so deeply and unconsciously entrenched in the human mind that it is hard to eradicate, or even to reflect upon it (Benedict, 1942). The Self identifies with the selected Other (a group, nation, or language), and is ready to take part in wars, and to sacrifice oneself for these valued Others. Equally, the Self keeps a distance from unwanted Others, who could be associated with danger, threat and risk. Rather than admitting to oneself one's moral, intellectual and other kinds of

shortcomings, the Self attributes them to unwanted Others, rationalizes one's thoughts and conduct, and invents fictitious reasons to justify one's behaviour (Ichheiser, 1951).

This fundamental theme permeates all chapters of this volume, each author focusing on different features of interdependencies and oppositions between the Self and Others in and through rich thematic spectra. The authors portray these interdependencies and oppositions as they take place in heterogeneous political, historical, cultural and psychological events. One possibility is to consider these phenomena in terms of hopes and fears, as images of collective futures rooted in the past, and as semiotic means of collective imaginations.

Collective Imaginations as Hopes and Fears

Some authors present the Self and Other(s) as outright enemies, or as partners trying to establish peace after long battles; as associates making effort to cooperate; or as parties uncertain about one another. The opposing partners differ with respect to a variety of features, such as power relations, trust and distrust and the capacity to negotiate. Collective imaginations of the future involve endless ranges of these dynamic processes.

Tileagă (Chap. 8, this volume) presents the Other in the past communist regime in Romania as having a total power over the Self. After the collapse of communism, citizens, that is, Selves, absolutely isolated themselves from the Other, that is, from communism, which they collectively imagined as an outright enemy disrespecting human rights and national values. Such representation of communism was made explicit in Romania in the 'Tismăneanu Report', a document that reassessed the nature and extent of crimes committed by illegitimate institutions that repressed, and physically and morally abused citizens during the years from 1945 to 1989. Tileagă is well aware of the difficulty in rehabilitating demoralized citizens, many of whom collaborated with the regime. Coping with the past communist Other in the public consciousness is still, after many years, a big challenge for the future. The main problem of constructing the new collective future is to develop ethics based not only on remem-

bering the past injustice but on constructing ethics of trust and responsibility.

Zittoun and Gillespie (Chap. 2, this volume) display representations of communism by the Americans and the Soviets during the Cold War. In contrast to Tileagă's presentation of the Other as an enemy with a total power over citizens, the Soviets and the Americans were outright enemies with relatively equal powers. They both exposed monological collective imaginations of communism, each representing these in totally opposite ways. While the Soviets started from the presupposition of communism as being the bright future of humankind, the Americans created images of communism as an oppression, control and demagogy. However, strategies of coping with local enemies in their own countries in the two regimes were similar. Both the Americans and the Soviets blacklisted individuals who disagreed with the regime and they forbade publications expressing unwanted ideas; censorships and suspicion of espionage dominated their internal and external relations. As Zittoun and Gillespie show, visual images of posters and painting as the forms of control used in both political camps were based on similar, though opposing, contents, of manipulating public images of the past and future of communism.

Future imaginations in protracted conflict and tenuous post-conflict situations are often based on long histories of fights. In such situations, the Self and Other hold to their occasions of fragile peace with a considerable effort. They try to cope with unresolved problems and with the danger that the conflict could restart at any time. Nicholson and Howarth (Chap. 9, this volume) present Israeli–Palestinian protracted conflict in which the two communities are segregated by geographical borders and military powers. Periods of a relative truce and conflict rapidly change as the two parties find it hard to compromise on their geographical, political and economic perspectives. The authors show that the complex intergroup relations and past experiences of both groups remain central to their constructions of collective identities based on unfulfilled images of the future.

Portraying a post-conflict situation after the uprising in Egypt in 2011, Maarek and Awad (Chap. 10, this volume) explore initiatives of cooperatives that mobilized themselves in order to try out new practices that would counter the oppressive past regime and that would put in its place

visions of a free and socially just society. Their three case studies show the multifaceted features of collective initiatives, their motives, constraints and the envisaged possibilities for social and political changes. As the authors observe, one cannot provide a recipe 'that could be applied fully to actualize and sustain the imagined future that was inspired by the revolution'. Instead, cooperatives use strategies of trial and error to cope with the unknown terrains. Relations between the Self and the Other in activities of cooperatives can be viewed in two ways. First, in opposing themselves against the Other, that is, the old regime, cooperatives create new visions of the collective future. Second, in order to succeed, cooperatives must coordinate actions between local Selves and Others within the cooperative, place emphasis on self-help and personal responsibility, and so create solidarity and collective imagining of the future.

Obradović (Chap. 12, this volume) poses the question about Serbia's identity as a nation. She observes that Serbia is a country 'in-between' with historical influences from both the West and the East, and so involves considerable cultural contrasts. These issues enter the public awareness with respect to the question as to whether Serbia should become a member of the European Union (EU). As Obradović notes, the Self and Other present themselves as Serbia versus the EU. While there are good reasons for Serbia to become a member of the EU, such as that it will benefit from the economic and political security, the membership in the EU also presents fears of such an alliance; above all, the EU poses a threat to the national identity of the Serbs. Will the Serbs be forced to adopt foreign rules that are discordant with the historical heritage of Serbia? What is Serbia going to gain in terms of national identity by becoming a member of the EU? At present, it appears that citizens are in a pre-conflict situation before starting any negotiations with the EU, which makes it difficult to create a collective imagination of the future. Obradović highlights the importance of Serbia's national compatibility with the EU. This raises the question of the cultural continuity of Serbia's identity. Hopes and fears are likely to dominate future interactions and negotiations with the EU.

In conclusion, incompatible presuppositions between the Self and Others are associated with heterogeneous collective imaginations and identities. The Self and Others as outright enemies clearly define their

collective images; The Self and Others in pre-conflict and post-conflict situations have different aims and they face uncertainties in relation to trust and distrust, and hopes and fears for the future. Their collectively imagined futures are constructed in and through their experienced past which is reinterpreted alongside their contemporary conditions.

Collective Futures Are Rooted in the Past

Future imaginations are inevitably embedded in histories, narratives and traditions. The past can be viewed with nostalgia or as a reminder of terror; as a golden age of happiness or as a time of sadness; as a judgement of ethical or unethical conduct of Selves and Others; and so on. Memories are not stable facts to which one can repeatedly refer, but they are imaginative reconstructions and reinterpretations of the past and present, and of future expectations. All chapters thematize, in one way or other, these well-documented phenomena (see also de Saint-Laurent, Brescó, Awad & Wagoner, 2017)

On the basis of her own empirical research, Constance de Saint-Laurent (Chap. 4, this volume) develops a theoretical model involving three roles of collective memory fundamental for the imagination of collective futures. First, she displays two major political narratives, one in the politics of the Right and the other in that of the Left, both having their origins in the French Revolution. These grand narratives, which historically express the opposing frames of reference, still resonate in parliamentary debates and political imaginations in France. Second, the author shows that past experiences serve as examples of analogical events and thus, they guide the logic of historical reasoning. Finally, such examples and their logic augment the possibility of developing general understandings of how the world works and what the future might hold. The author considers these three roles of collective memory, that is, framing, exemplifying and generalizing as mutually interdependent: 'they all participate to the creation and maintenance of general representations of the world'.

These relations between collective memory and the imagination of the future take place in and through language and communication. Constance de Saint-Laurent makes important observations in extending Mikhail's

Bakhtin's (1981) concept of *discursive heteroglossia.* Dialogical participants not only speak in diverse languages at the same time, but they simultaneously refer to several historical situations. This means that *discursive heteroglossia* must be expanded into *temporal heteroglossia.* In other words, dialogue refers not only to the here and now, but it echoes the past, expresses the present and anticipates the future.

In a different context, Jacques Souriau (2013) maintains that a single conversation is part of a 'hyper-dialogue', that is, 'a part of conversations that take place throughout the whole life', recalling memories of the past, co-constructing present experiences and imagining the future. The term 'hyper-dialogue' refers to the very dialogicality and historicity of the human life (Marková, 2016, p. 183).

Seamus Power (Chap. 11, this volume) views imagining and remembering as dynamic processes interrelated with psychological and moral impacts. Specifically, he studies the local Irish context, in which people used analogical thinking in invoking disagreeable memories of the past privatizations of water services in Bolivia. These thoughts contributed to their construction of images for the Irish water services, which were based on a similar incident that took place in another part of the world. The participants in Power's study orientated themselves towards unwanted collective imaginations of past privatizations of basic resources and acted in order to avoid them becoming real. They viewed privatization as an unfair austerity that increases the gap between the rich and poor. Although, as Power maintains, imagination is not necessarily a moral enterprise, people imagine and conceptualize the future using moral judgements. The protestors in Power's study became moral actors for whom the privatization of water was an immoral act, and thus, it motivated and justified their protest actions. More generally, Power concludes, 'protesters in social movements are moral actors'.

Collective Imagination as a Semiotic Process

Sensory images—for instance, visual and hearing images—can take on powerful symbolic roles. In her analysis of Soviet posters during Stalinism, Bonnell (1997) drew attention to visual and verbal symbols expressed in

political images and their special semantics combining meanings of words and visual impressions. Political posters skilfully mixed folk culture and symbols of Orthodox religion to create highly effective impressions on the masses. Bonnell commented that visual images were particularly overpowering because most peasants, at whom these posters aimed, were illiterate but they easily understood visual images. Having comprehended this situation, Soviet artists produced truly religious art under the label of politics. In the 1920s and 1930s, the history of the Soviet Union was rewritten using new socialist and communist images (Zittoun and Gillespie, Chap. 2, this volume) which had a tremendous effect on masses. The regime presented 'new images' clothed in old ones. Although masses were not explicitly aware of the substitution of religious images by the political ones, their implicit familiarity reminding religious icons of saints, was effective. For example, on those posters, Lenin had 'qualities of a saint, an apostle, a prophet, a martyr, a man with Christ-like qualities' (Bonnell, 1997, p. 146). Both Lenin and Stalin were presented as super humans whose images were carried on sticks in oval frames just like images of Christ. Another commentator on the relations between Orthodox religion and the Soviet communism, Boris Souvarine (1939, p. 357), remarked that 'Leninism' had become 'a complicated theology with its dogma, its mysticism and its scholasticism' (Marková, 2017).

Zittoun and Gillespie (Chap. 2, this volume), using two examples, also show the importance of visual and hearing images in the competition between the Soviets and Americans during the Cold War. The first example concerns the design of the Soviet satellite *Sputnik 1* that not only orbited the Earth within 90 minutes, but emitted radio signals and thus provided both visual and hearing evidence of its existence. This not only showed the Soviet achievement but brought questions as to whether the satellite was spying or whether it could be carrying a nuclear weapon. The USA and USSR skilfully generated specific images with respect to space competition in designing posters, television programmes, and all possible means of communication and propaganda to influence the public.

Mixing political and religious terminology was another effective means of creating images which the masses easily understood (Marková, 2017). For example, Stalin (1921–1823/1953, 5, p. 73) named the communist party the 'Order of Knights of the Sword' within the Soviet State. Lenin

was the 'apostle of world communism' and 'the leader by the Grace of God' (Tumarkin, 1983). Symbols and the semantic significance of images kept changing throughout the history of the regime and this corresponded to its changing ideologies (see Antonova & Merkvert, 1995).

Literature, too, plays a fundamental symbolic role in collective constructions of the future (Carriere, Chap. 3, this volume). Literature allows readers to cross from reality to a magical world and to reflect on these transformations, and thus, what people read, what is promoted or censored by institutions, has a tremendous effect of collective imagination. Forbidden books have always been a particular attraction, secretly circulating among the interested public and shaping the collective imagination. Carriere suggests that there are two main roles of literature. First, it has a psychological function in the sense that it drives action and transforms our social representations of phenomena. It motivates humans either 'to do great deeds or horrible acts of suicide bombings'. Second, it is through literature that humans display themselves as imaginative beings. If we recall again the Heideggerian perspective, 'literature allows us to explore the unknown' and 'to test new boundaries and taboos' (Carriere, Chap. 3, this volume). Literary insights enable humans to imaginatively reflect on their personal and collective self-concepts and to promote changes for the future.

The Future of Collective Imaginations

By bringing together productive and plentiful ideas on imagining collective futures, the contributors to this volume make a major theoretical and empirical advancement in this domain. They explore the main concepts which drive collective imaginings and their dynamic transformations. Yet despite incessant transformations of collective imaginings, the authors appreciate their historical durability and strategic searches for paths in the unknown. For example, de Saint-Laurent shows that the Left and Right in French politics have been forceful in collective imagination since the Enlightenment; collective imaginations of the past communist regimes and Cold War (Zittoun and Gillespie, Tileagă) still resonate in contemporary political and ethical problems; and territorial, religious

and political imaginations (Nicholson and Howarth, Maarek and Awad, Glăveanu, Brescó, Obradović, Power, Carretero) do not shake off their historical roots. Collective imaginations express themselves as heterogeneous and multifaceted (de Saint-Laurent); yet on other occasions, they could be articulated as monological utopias (Jovchelovitch and Hawlina, Brescó). The authors have shown the ways in which semiotic processes, mixing visual and hearing symbols, as well as religious and political terminology, abundantly influence the formation and manipulation of images (Zittoun and Gillespie, Carriere, Carretero).

But what about imagining of collective futures? It appears that contemporary dramatic political and economic upheavals all over the world have destroyed the relatively simple dichotomies of rival political parties and of oppositional ideologies that have governed the imaginings of collective futures. Instead, we witness the breakdown of traditional institutions and of established political parties, as well as the increasing distrust and uncertainties over the future of individuals, groups and nations. What role will history and the past grand narratives play in the world dominated by the increasing power of markets, business and self-appointed political leaders? As history and morals become continuously distorted, Carretero's (Chap. 13, this volume) thought of 'the (im)possibility of imagining the future' opens new questions for the future.

Rapid societal transformations do not annihilate imagination. It is images that become more and more volatile, fragmented and unpredictable as they are associated with the breakup of established groups and with re-institutions of new ones. What is dreamt today may be no longer a dream for tomorrow. Yet despite fragmentation and uncertainties of our time, numerous examples show that the dialogical nature of humanity continues to induce solidarity during periods of crises and triumphs, for example, in the public's help to victims of earthquakes, terrorism or disease. Rapid societal changes pose new questions for the creation, maintenance and change of collective images of the future. It is with this in mind that we shall have to search for new ways of rethinking imaginings of collective futures and of understanding the ways images are formed and transformed.

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