Spaces of Becoming and Being: The Nature of Shared Experience in Czech Society from 1918 to 1989

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In approaching an analysis of revolution there are a variety of theories from which to draw on including rational action, cultural functionalism, and material structuralism. While each theory offers its own legitimate perspective, it is through a combination of such theories that one arrives at a more holistic understanding of the ways in which collective identities and solidarities are restructured over time. The origins of a revolution can be found within the dominant forms of shared experience that characterize the historical memory of a particular society as well as the cultural objects and social networks through which they move. The dramatic changes brought about during the course and in the aftermath of the Velvet Revolution of 1989 in Czechoslovakia provide an apt case-study for the exploration of the relationship between forms of shared experiences and the expression of revolution. The Velvet Revolution as a collective expression of social and political dissent by a national community cannot be separated from the nature of print capitalism and cultural production between the years 1918 and 1989, particularly in the forms of samizdat literature and the television serial. These mass forms of shared experience reflected and created certain ways of being in the world within Czechoslovak society that exemplified the dialectic between the normalization project of the totalitarian political system and the parallel polis of dissent moving in the underground of society that would eventually shape the organizational structures of the revolution in its effort to realize new ways of being in the world.

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PREFACE:

Such vast events-each a link in the human race's life-chain; each event producing the next one , and that one the next one, and so on: the destruction of the republic; the founding of the empire; the breaking up of the empire; the rise of Christianity upon its ruins; the spread of the religion to other lands-and so on: link by link took its appointed place at its appointed time, the discovery of America being one of them; our Revolution another; the inflow of English and other immigrants another; their drift westward (my ancestors among them) another; the settlement of certain of them in Missouri, which resulted in *me*. For I was one of the unavoidable results of the crossing of the Rubicon.

-Mark Twain, The Turning-Point of My Life

To speak of the Czechoslovak state is to speak of an entity that no longer exists but in the pages of earlier texts and in the minds of those generations who experienced it. As a national project, at once both physical and imagined, it is an entity no longer recognized as legitimate within the larger world system of sovereign nations or as an existential category of consciousness within the majority of the Czech and Slovak populations as they exist today. Yet the former Czechoslovak state still retains its place in the narratives of the past that exert their influence on the understandings of the present in the modern day Czech Republic and Central Europe as a general region. Any attempt to explain the various large-scale collective mobilizations throughout the history of the Czech peoples, particularly the Velvet Revolution of 1989, must be approached through the lens of a broader historical trajectory in both political and intellectual developments. Approaching the Velvet Revolution as a case study enveloped within a larger historical experience, one finds its origins reveal a landscape of changing notions of solidarity and ideas of the "soul of the Czech people" as well as the revolutions relationship to the broader constructed narrative of "Europe" as an idea of a certain way of being in the world that has changed throughout the centuries.

In the grand narratives of history, events have their cause and time has its order. The mass movements of peoples and goods find a place within a larger trajectory of linear development that seem to explain the shape and character of the world in the present. These narratives are varied, multi-dimensional, and almost always contested as the stories of the few often become the presented reality of the whole. It is through these narratives that the chaos of lived experience is bound in memory and the past given a voice in the ever-unfolding present. Rather than a self adrift in the infinite expanse of unmediated circumstances, the individual finds a place in the timeline and a means of understanding what he or she is and concomitantly, isn't. As one event is connected to another we develop a conception of a broader narrative that locates who we are within a defined historical order; a sequence in which our sense of self becomes intertwined with the stories of the past. Whether it is in the form of a national narrative or local tale, the very association with particular events and the people who experienced them draws one into a certain community, at once both material and imagined, with vast implications for identity and action in the present. These implications, however, are not concrete or deterministic, but fluid associations exposed to the circumstances of one's time and the negotiation of self in the face of those material and moral conditions. The broader narratives to which we associate become entwined with our personal narratives as we incorporate the present into the structures of our subjectivity: a space where past and present become integrated in the discreet flow of the everyday. Our stories, in effect, make us who we are collectively.

While potentially containing a hint of deliberate facetiousness, the epigraph by Mark Twain demonstrates the difference between a notion of history as an objective category, compared to an understanding of past events, represented as an historical past, but separate from what actually occurred. In defining the difference between the two approaches, Anthony Kemp

states, "history is a literary structure whose literariness must always be denied; its grip on the imagination and on the whole perceived structure of the world is so great that its human origin, its createdness, cannot be acknowledged."[1] Thus, even as we construct a notion of the historical with others and communicate ideas of the past through stories, both oral and printed, we hold this past to be an objective truth rather than a communicated form of our own subjectivity. Yet even as we hold steadfast to our own particular understandings of the past, what Ivan Klima calls attention to, the past is open to a plethora of subjective interpretations. "Each historic event was-and remains-hard to understand. It does not resemble a rock to which we are able to give a precise definition and description of its degree of hardness, its composition as well as its height above sea level. Each historic event is subject to countless interpretations, and it can be said that it is at all times merely a variety."[2]

As this project developed, the descriptions put forth by Kemp and Klima became seemingly self-evident, reflected in theories regarding subjectivity and consciousness across disciplines. Delving further into first-hand recollections and various analyses of the unfolding of the Velvet Revolution and its aftermath, it became clear that my analytical focus should revolve around an exploration into the historical formation of consciousness and the identification of certain general characteristics of a "collective" consciousness that made such a large-scale mobilization of people across generations and classes possible in 1989. Rather than a static category, however, it became clear over time that notions of selfhood and collective associations

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[1] Anthony Kemp, *The Estrangement of the Past: A Study in the Origins of Modern Historical Consciousness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). 106.
[2] Ivan Klima, "Living in Fiction and History," in *Fictions and Histories*, ed. Christina M. Gilis (University of California at Berkeley: Occasional Papers of the Doreen B. Townsend Center for the Humanities, 1998), 3.

were dynamic, fluid categories situated in the mundane aspects of everyday life, subject to constant processes of reifying and reimagining.

Subject to these very processes, history, as a social construction, reaches to the very core of conceptions of self and other as a result of its proliferation and consumption in the narrative form, incorporating aspects as diverse as social memory, language, and ethnic origin. The interplay of these various aspects of consciousness not only allows us to understand our place in the world, it often provides the foundations upon which we build notions of solidarity. Our associations with particular narratives of the past locate us within a larger community that connects us to those who are viewed as participants, both direct and indirect, in our personal narratives as a result of shared circumstances. It is with this community that we associate ideas of solidarity, and it is in conjunction with it that we participate in acts of mass social expression. As a malleable entity, the imagined community cannot be divorced from our own consciousness, as our memories and the understanding of our experiences change with the tide of our own socio-historical circumstances. Yet just as our narratives find construction in the realm of the subjective so may we also be able to encounter narratives in a transitory manner, outside the confines of our own circumstances. Shared experiences may shape our conceptions of self as a definite, particular form of being, but it also exposes this self to contradictions in its variance from the practical to the abstract and its [association] with multiple forms of shared spaces.

As I approached the intersection of the historical narrative with the origin of notions of the self and community within Czech society, it became apparent that these social constructions were grounded in certain bodies of knowledge that served as the medium through which a sense of meaning is negotiated and also functioning as one of the constitutive elements of a shared social existence. Expanding upon the paradigm articulated by Fredrik Barth that we significantly

advance our anthropological agenda by developing "a comparative ethnographic analysis on how bodies of knowledge are produced in persons and populations in the context of the social relations that they sustain,"[3]; I hope to further illustrate the connection between the bodies of knowledge that exist within a society and the ways in which that knowledge informs action in the world through an exploration into the roots of revolution as a process of political and social reimagining with its expressive foundations in the present understanding of history. It is through such paradigms, among others, that I initially approached my research as an attempt to understand the foundations of large-scale social mobilizations and the efficacy of shared spaces and experiences in making such movements possible. Over the course of this project I have not arrived at succinct, definitive answers, but rather find myself absorbed with more questions stemming from the complex picture painted by any attempt to understand the nature of social reality and the processes whereby we participate with others to create it anew each and every day. Answers, however, may not be the end goal to which one should ultimately strive, for in the course of any research one should be open to the possibility that the "end" of the road may only be the beginning of future explorations.

While I have not ended in a place of certainty, my research has led me to a more nuanced perspective combining a multitude of paradigms within the social sciences that together foster a more holistic sense of reality as a subjective space of negotiation, creation, and destruction in which memory is ever present as we present ourselves to the world and make conscious decisions about how to organize ourselves in relation to others as well as with others. If any generalized conclusion could arise out of the body of research from which I sought clarity, it

[3] F. Barth, "An Anthropology of Knowledge," *Current Anthropology* 43, no. 1 (2002): 1.

would be that we are often not conscious of the connection between the type of shared spaces and experiences we participate in (whether economic, political, or cultural) and the impact they can have on our ideas of how we should be in the world and who we share that world with. As we consume various forms of print and visual media, and engage with the representational forms of words and images, we construct notions of solidarity that impact the nature of the collective actions we choose or are drawn to participate in.

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

1.1 THE SOCIAL ORIGINS OF SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS:

As the foundational principle of the Cartesian tradition, first articulated in the Discourse on the Method in 1637, "Je pense donc je suis," more commonly known as "Cogito ergo sum", ushered in a perspective on the nature of the self as an inherent, individuated entity imbued with the innate capacity to reason. An apt articulation of this perspective can be found early in Descartes Second Meditation, "I am, therefore, precisely only a thing that thinks; that is, a mind or soul, or intellect, or reason-words the meaning of which I was ignorant before."[4] "I think, therefore I am" became the dominant paradigm on self-consciousness as the Western intellectual tradition progressed through the centuries to the modern era. With this development came an ever increasing emphasis on the authority of the first-person perspective and the idea of the self as possessing a basic capacity for objective reasoning within a connected to a world possessing measurable and quantifiable qualities that function in the capacity of objective knowledge. Within the Cartesian perspective, pursuit of knowledge of the self is an inwardly located process of self-reflection divorced from interactions with others under certain objectified material conditions. Conceptions of the self or consciousness of the self then stems from this process of self-reflection in which the ambiguity of experience is mediated by the reasoning capacities of a

[4] Rene Descartes, *Descartes: Selected Philosophical Writings*, trans. John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). 22.

logical mind in order to arrive at what can be described as "universal" truths relating to the nature of the material world and one's place in it. "I think, therefore I am" is one such foundational truth, the very truth upon which Descartes felt he could construct a reliable body of knowledge, in the pursuit of concrete realities outside the illusory perceptions of the senses.

The problematic inherent to such an approach is a self divorced from a common world shared with others, for the Cartesian self constructs its identity from within rather than in conjunction with others. The possibilities of such categories as "inter-subjectivity" and "co-consciousness" would be antithetical to a preconceptualized, ahistorical self originating from within. "I think, therefore I am" as a particular conception of the origins of self-consciousness is invalidated by the idea of a self articulated through engagements with others and a perspective on self-knowledge as socially co-constructed in nature. As opposed to "I think, therefore I am," "I am, therefore I think," as a theoretical inversion of the individuated self, places the origins of self-consciousness (knowledge of the self) within a common life-world shared with others. Inherent to the latter perspective is a self that is defined by the negotiation and mediation that occurs through interactions with the surrounding world and the others who constitute it. The shared experiences that comprise the mundane movement of everyday life, from the most basic to the most complex, are the dominant repository for ideas of the self and create the very possibility for commonalities across subjectivities. It is in the nature of these shared experiences that the foundations of identity and collective actions can be found as these experiences are the ambiguous space from which meaning and self-knowledge are discerned and objectified.

As opposed to the Cartesian perspective on the self and inherent dualism[5] belonging to the phenomenological approach in its separation of subject and object, there is a significant body of work originating from the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, and psychology (as well as other disciplines within the social sciences) focused on moving away from the perspective on the self as defined by the Cartesian tradition. In their work on the nature of subjectivity, Arthur Kleinman and Erin Fitz-Henry call attention to what they see as a general problem in the study of subjectivity. "A problem in the study of subjectivity that troubles all anthropologists is the ongoing emphasis in philosophy, psychology, and other social science disciplines on a kind of universal human nature that is held to be neurobiologically hardwired and historically unchanging."[6] Psychologist Phillipe Rochat explicitly poses a counter approach to the study of self-consciousness (the representation we hold of ourselves through the eyes of others), containing within it a direct critique of the perspective on the self as developed in the Cartesian tradition.[7] For Rochat, the origins of self-consciousness are innately social in contrast to the idea of a "core" or an "individual self".[8] Fundamental to his theory is the connection between a sense of self and its co-construction in relation to others. More than just self-consciousness, though, this proposition places the locus of self-experience and its connection to ideas of the self within a common world, with self-experience originating in encounters with others who make up this

[5] In his work on the social origins of self-consciousness, Phillipe Rochat encapsulates his critique of the phenomenological approach to subjectivity as a weariness to accept the assumption of subjective experience located inside the individual rather than outside. "Once again the phenomenological account rests on the fine description of what is experienced by the individual from "within". It assumes as its given the interiority of experience (i.e., first person perspective or subjective experience)." [Philippe Rochat, *Others in Mind: Social Origins of Self-Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). 8.]

[6] Arthur Kleinman and Erin Fitz-Henry, "The Experiential Basis of Subjectivity," in *Subjectivity* (California: University of California, 2007), 52.

[7] Rochat, *Others in Mind: Social Origins of Self-Consciousness*: 3.

[8] Ibid.

common world.[9] Taking Rochat's proposition a step further, Paul Ricoeur makes the claim in Oneself as Another that the very category of selfhood implies otherness to such a degree that the self cannot be thought of without the other.[10] Emerging from these two theories is a perspective on the nature of the self and self-consciousness as co-constructed conceptions originating in the integration of first- and third-person perspectives,[11] a negotiation fundamental to the very ways in which individuals represent an objectified sense of self to themselves and to others. In locating the self within a common world of others and material objects, the shared experiences of everyday life, from the nature of work to the dispersed consumption of printed material, become the constitutive sources for conceptions of the self and ideas of the larger community in which that self is located.

In an approach defined by a definition of consciousness as conscious knowledge with others, or shared knowledge, shared experiences can be viewed as the basis of consciousness in which a "distinct state of mind," or individual consciousness, is defined by the self's engagement with an outside world populated by others, both familiar and distant.[12] Rather than the self as an insular category originating from within, the self takes shapes through its interactions with the others of its life-world. We are constantly negotiating the structures of our own subjectivity as we shape and are shaped by the conditions of everyday life. Subjectivity is thus bound up with the material and historical circumstances shared with those in one's immediate locale as well as those individuals who only exist within the imagination, the "distant" other. Yet before one can

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[9] Ibid., 9.
[10] Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). 3.
[11] In the exposition of his approach, Rochat defines first-person perspective as the experience of the embodied self while the third-person perspective represents what is publicly shared of the self. [Rochat, *Others in Mind: Social Origins of Self-Consciousness*: 26.]
[12] Ibid., 52.

establish a connection between the types of shared experiences constitutive of everyday life and their impact on ways of being in the world, it is necessary to both define what it means to have a common world and the implications of that idea for the dominant, Cartesian conception of consciousness; a conception that continues to color the perspective of many within the Western academic tradition.

While it is seemingly self-evident to think of the world as a common or shared space, the notion implies more than just the physicality of movement through the world with a consciousness of the others in one's immediate vicinity. The idea of a "common" world draws on conceptions regarding the nature of subjectivity and its impact on the ways in which we experience the world as more than just the moment of "here and now." The use of the word common reflects the notion that at any given moment we participate in a negotiation of meaning out of the ambiguity of our experiences that incorporates notions of the past as they exist in memory. The common world is a space shaped by the past and preserved in a future that takes shape through the decisions of the present. In her articulation of this kind of temporal integration, Hannah Arendt notes in her seminal work The Human Condition that it is more than just what we have in common with those who live with us, but also about what we share with those who were here before and those who will come after us.[13] Experience in this common world is at once social and subjective as well as collective and individual for it is a space in which the very nature of our perspectives on subjectivity are socially produced historical constructs.[14] More than just a matter of individual negotiation though, the way in which we construct our subjective realities occurs in tandem with the negotiations of others in our social

[13] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958).
[14] Fitz-Henry, "The Experiential Basis of Subjectivity," 53.

worlds, an inherently inter-subjective process in which we create shared meanings and representations. It is through these shared meanings that a common sense understanding of reality is achieved across subjectivities.

While the common world takes shape through the interactions and negotiations of autonomous selves, it is constituted by the types of shared experiences and spaces that provide the context in which these social constructions are formulated. Although these experiences are shared, they are often not immediately recognized as such, even when experienced in the presence of others, for we are often caught up in the feelings that such experiences elicit and the need to then understand and compartmentalize what is unfolding before us as individuals. Yet whether explicitly recognized as collective or not, the knowledge that takes shape out of a shared experience is often embodied in the larger group that experiences it such as the family, the society, and even the broader culture in which an individual's subjectivity takes shape.[15] Even the very integration of these experiences into understood aspects of conscious knowledge is a process impacted by the presence of others. It is out of these experiences that shared conceptions of morality and knowledge take root within a particular subjectivity, yet in the expression of these shared representations in everyday life it is possible to speak of these categories as existing in terms of a state of co-consciousness.[16] For Rochat, co-conscious experience is "what constitutes our ideas and conceptions of the world and particularly the representations we hold about ourselves in relation to others."[17] In addition to this, the shared experiences that form the basis of the qualities of our co-consciousness are the very source of ideas relating to communal

[15] Rochat, *Others in Mind: Social Origins of Self-Consciousness*: 54.
[16] Rochat defines the category of co-consciousness as "a state in which we not only know of knowing, but, more importantly, know of sharing knowledge with others." [ibid.]
[17] Ibid., 55.

identification and inform the corresponding possibilities of collective mobilization, particularly in moments of dramatic social reimagining that take their most extreme form in the moments of revolution.

As a category innate to social existence, though, shared experiences cannot be fully understood until placed within a specific context as the particulars of a historical case demonstrate the relationship between a shared experience and the manner in which it comes to shape certain ways of being in the world. Varied and dynamic, the shared experiences of everyday life can often exist as practical forms such as industrial commodities and collectively consumed forms of creative expression. Yet at their most fundamental level, shared experiences exist in the various forms and structures of our material and socio-historical circumstances, related to the dominant forms of consciousness that represent the existing paradigms of our historical moment. The dominant political, economic, and social systems that constitute the nature of everyday life are representative of the most widespread forms of shared experience belonging to the human condition. One could even say that the very necessities to which every human as a functioning biological entity is subject, constitute the most basic form of shared experience. This is not to say that these experiences create static, uniform ways of being in the world, for the individual is an autonomous actor in the creation of his or her own reality, but rather that these shared experiences foster common ways of understanding one's existence and place within a larger social landscape. More than the experiences themselves, though, it is the way in which those experiences, particularly the awareness of those experiences, are preserved in general consciousness through subsequent generations in the physical structures of everyday life as well as in the bodies of knowledge to which a society turns to understand the present. The ways in which we imagine the larger communities to which we belong and the types of

solidarities we hold are impacted by the nature of the shared experiences that we participate in. It is in the translation of the large-scale shared experiences of our historical moment into personal meanings that we are able to move from the ambiguity of lived experience to the knowledge of who we are and with whom we "belong". Through the cemturies, the nature of shared experience has changed in relation to the dominant technological developments characterizing the major historical epochs from the rise of print capitalism and the newspaper as an industrial commodity to the more recent emergence of the internet as a formative space in regards to the self. In the basic movements through the mundane aspects of our everyday lives we participate in a variety of shared experiences. As we consume and create, we participate in a negotiation of the self that is objectified in the social transactions that take shape within the common experiences we share with others.[18]

It is in the context of a historical example that the intricacies and nature of experiences as shared becomes more apparent in terms of the ways of being in the world and the type of minds created through the negotiation of the experiences by selves and communities. The very roots of the Czech Republic and prior to that the Czechoslovak nation-state are found beginning in the middle of the 19th century as part of a larger pursuit to construct a particularly Czech national conscious.[19] While not necessarily functioning as a shared experience, the ability to imagine the Czech nation as a community experiencing the throws of history as a "people" with roots in primordial ethnic groups was only possible through the consolidation of various existing dialects. The very ability to frame the experiences of Czechoslovakia as shared would not be possible without this historical development in language. In effect, the existence of a shared language

[18] Ibid., 11.
[19] Jaroslav Pánek and Oldrich Et Al II Tuma, *A History of the Czech Lands* (Prague: Charles University : Karolinum Press, 2009).

connected to an ethnically defined idea of the "Czech" peoples created the conditions by which selves belonging to that category could envision their existence in a constructed historical trajectory of shared experiences. In describing the types of large-scale experiences belonging to the invented tradition of the Czechoslovak state, Czech author Ivan Klima makes notes of events that impacted the very nature of everyday life from the first Czechoslovak Republic of 1918 to the Velvet Revolution, the last major formative experience that could be said to belong to the fading Czechoslovak state community in 1989.

> "We spent our childhood in the democratic republic of Masaryk. Then came Munich, two mobilizations, capitulation, the Nazi occupation and war. The enraptured experience of the defeat of Nazism and the restoration of peace. Less than three years of relative freedom, and then the communist coup. On the one hand, the enthusiasm of the builders of socialism; on the other hand, hundreds of thousands of those whom the new regime deprived of their employment, property and freedom. Trials. Concentration Camps. The first wave of emigration. The immediate sealing of the border. Censored libraries, a press forced into conformity. Massive brainwashing. Then the thaw of the 1960s, the Prague Spring and again an occupation, this time a Soviet one. Again, hundreds of thousands stripped of their jobs, again political trials. A new wave of emigration and again sealed borders. Then came the velvet revolution-My generation has lived through so many historical transformations, people had to adapt so many times, that it could not fail to influence their character."[20]

In this condensed historical narrative of Czechoslovakia, expressed in terms of its impact on the people and their character, Klima highlights the types of experiences that were shared by a "we" because the events themselves operated on a wide enough scale to change the nature of everyday life yet also impact the very way in which individuals were in the world including the manner in which people interacted with others. These shared experiences ranged from the level of the world-historical in the form of the First World War and Nazi occupation of Central Europe to experiences more specific to the Czechoslovak experience particularly the Soviet invasion of 1968 and its impact on the nature of media and cultural production. Concluding with the Velvet Revolution, Klima indirectly calls attention to the revolutions connection to the past. Rather than

[20] Klima, "Living in Fiction and History," 6.

a single moment in the history of Czechoslovakia, the revolution is intimately connected to the shared experiences of the past, even as a form of shared experience in and of itself. Shared experiences, while often discussed as singular moments in linear time, function in tandem with one another throughout a collective's existence as part of larger webs of social connection and imagined forms of solidarities. They are continually present in the minds of individuals in both memory and material reality as the constantly unfolding present is given its proper place in the continuum of the past.

In the analysis of revolution as an upheaval of the existing social, political, and economic order, the focus is often placed on the ideological aims and class backgrounds of participants as well as the resulting political system that emerges in the aftermath and its implications for the larger international political order. In the body of work addressing the Velvet Revolution of 1989 in Czechoslovakia, efforts are often focused on explaining the subsequent "Velvet Divorce" or break up of the modern Czechoslovak state into the Czech Republic and the sovereign nation of Slovakia. By locating a revolution within a broader historical trajectory of socio-economic developments, though, one can shift the primary focus from the rationale of political reorganization to that of the dominant forms of consciousness and associated forms of solidarity that underpin the emergence of what can only be called a revolution after the fact. More so, the nature of a revolution can be found within the dominant forms of shared experience that characterize the historical memory of a particular society as well as the cultural objects and social networks through which they move (aspects innate to shared experience as a category). The dramatic changes brought about during the course and in the aftermath of the Velvet Revolution are intimately connected to the types of shared experiences belonging to the Czechoslovak nation-state as both a physically defined territory and imagined community. The

Velvet Revolution as a collective expression of social and political dissent by a national community cannot be separated from the nature of print capitalism and cultural production between the years 1968 and 1989, particularly in the forms of samizdat literature and the television serial. These mass forms of shared experience reflected and created certain ways of being in the world within Czechoslovak society that exemplified the dialectic between the normalization project of the totalitarian political system and the parallel polis of dissent moving in the underground of society that would eventually shape the organizational structures of the revolution in its effort to realize new ways of being in the world.

2.0 THE INVENTION OF THE NATION:

With but a simple declaration on November 13th, 1918, the self-proclaimed Revolutionary National Assembly of the soon to be Czechoslovak Republic brought to a close centuries of imperial dominance by the Bohemian Throne, also marking the end of the most significant project of social reimagining in the history of the Czech Lands, casting this very notion of solidarity into the pages of antiquity. This declaration was the culmination of a process originating in the 18th century in what at the time was collectively thought of as the Czech Lands; a process with its roots in the ideas of the17th and 18th century European Enlightenment around individual rights and state hood.[21] Significant developments in the economy coupled with technological advancements in industrial production fostered the conditions necessary for individuals to imagine the nation, not only as a new form of political organization, but in collective consciousness emanating from the standardization of the Czech language in mass-produced printed literature and a deliberate construction of a historical narrative of the Czech ethnic group as a distinct historical community. The developments in language and print capitalism beginning in the mid-18th century in the Czech Lands fostered new possibilities for both self-consciousness and communal identification, creating over time a new type of collective

[21] Martina Ondo Grecenkova, "Enlightened Absolutism and the Birth of a Modern State (1740-1792)," in *A History of the Czech Lands*, ed. Jaroslav Panek (Prague: Charles University: Karolinum Press, 2009), 276-77.

consciousness defined in terms of national belonging.[22] Nationalism, though, did not emerge out of a historical vacuum; rather it appeared in relationship to the larger cultural systems that preceded it.[23] The very possibility to "think the nation" lay in the developments of these systems and the manner in which they achieved an imagined notion of community outside the physicality of face to face interaction.

In comparing the nature of solidarity and self-identification in the world before the codification of the nation-state paradigm to the historical reality that emerged in its wake, it becomes clear that the nature of communal associations was intimately tied to not only the spread and consumption of printed material, but also to the content of the material itself. The most apparent manifestation of this shift in conceptions of solidarity was the movement away from a consciousness of the Czech Lands and associated identities as the primary sense of the collective to an expression of the rights of the Czech ethnic group as a linguistically and historically separate community within the region. These shifts in ideas of self and community also had a dramatic impact on the nature of solidarity within the region, redefining ideas of shared experience and providing the foundation for collective mobilizations and expressions of dissent in the coming centuries of struggle under the yoke of totalitarian dominance from outside the boundaries of the Czechoslovak nation. As a form of collective consciousness, national identity functioned as an overarching form of solidarity allowing mobilizations across

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[22]As part of his general theoretical perspective, Phillipe Rochat defines self-consciousness as the representation of who we are in our mind, while connecting this conception to an implicit awareness of others. "Self-consciousness is inseparable from the basic drive to affiliate and maintain proximity with others." [Rochat, *Others in Mind: Social Origins of Self-Consciousness*: 2.]

[23] In the opening pages of his seminal work on the nation as an imagined community, Anderson identifies Christendom, the Islamic Ummah, and the Middle Kingdom as the primary examples of large cultural systems that preceded the emergence of nationalism. [Benedict R. O'G Anderson, *Imagined communities : Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. and extended ed. (London ; New York: Verso, 1991).]

generations and classes, evident in the expressions of dissent throughout the history of the modern Czechoslovak state from its origins at the close of the 19th century to its restructuring in 1989 during the Velvet Revolution.

In describing the relationship between nationalism and forms of self-consciousness, Benedict Anderson notes that rather than the nation "awakening" to self-consciousness, nationalism invents the types of solidarities characteristic of the nation where they did not exist before.[24] As nationalism took hold of local communities and empires across Europe, populations experienced a fundamental reorganization of political life that was achieved primarily through re-imaginings regarding the nature of historical narratives and their corresponding claims to certain cultural traditions and legacies. Yet it is important to note that while these national communities were imagined, they were a reflection of practical elements in everyday life. For any imagined tradition to take hold of the population it had to reflect practical elements already in existence.[25] Often defining the past along ethnic and linguistic lines, these communities distinguished themselves through the manner in which they imagined the nation.[26] While these processes resulted in a variety of new identities with unique pasts and presents, they were united on a theoretical level in that the style of their imagining was made possible through the spread of ideas in the primary forms of the novel and the newspaper, as well as disseminated literature originating from the sciences and the liberal arts. For Anderson, these forms (the novel and the newspaper) "provided the technical means for 're-presenting' the kind of imagined community

[24] Ibid., 6.
[25] Robert M. Hayden, "Moral Vision and Impaired Insight: The Imagining of Other People's Communities in Bosnia," *Current Anthropology* 48, no. 1 (2007): 105-07.
[26] Anderson, *Imagined communities : Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*., 7.

that is the nation."[27] It was through such works that the idea of the past as shared between certain distinct people took root and over time fostered a general consciousness that allowed for subsequent conceptions of the unfolding present as shared by a particular community. Through nationalism, notions of the "we" and the "us" changed significantly and created new realities through which to understand the unfolding present. As compared to its historical predecessors, though, identities constructed around the notion of the nation-state were connected to specific territorial boundaries as compared to the global communities of the past that were grounded in notions of a religious universalism.

Yet moving between both of these distinct historical realities, the book, as the first modern-style mass-produced industrial commodity, underwent significant changes as it developed into an industrial commodity within a larger system of print capitalism.[28] In the vast imagined religious communities that preceded the advent of nationalism particularly that of Christendom, a type of general consciousness across territories was made possible through the spread of religious texts. In only the hundred years between the 16th and 17th centuries, the Gutenberg Bible had been reproduced between 150,000,000 and 200,000,000 times.[29] Giving rise to markets around the book as commodity as early as 1480, printing presses existed in towns across present day Italy, Germany, France, England, and Czech Lands.[30] As a continuation of this development, the novel and the newspaper, as a type of book, contributed to the formation of a national imagination that changed conceptions of being in the world, even changing the very conception of whom one shared the world with. "What, in a positive sense, made the new

[27] Ibid., 24-25.
[28] Ibid., 34.
[29] Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book : The Impact of Printing 1450-1800*, [New ed., Foundations of history library (London: N.L.B., 1976). 182-86.
[30] Ibid., 182.

communities imaginable was a half fortuitous, but explosive, interaction between a system of production and productive relations (capitalism), a technology of communication (print), and the fatality of human linguistic diversity."[31] The nature of print media from its form to its content was intimately tied to more general changes in technology and cultural expressions, specifically the standardization of languages and their subsequent preservation as self-contained cultural artifacts with durability beyond the present moment.[32] By participating in the consumption of these printed materials, individuals also actively engaged themselves in a generalized form of shared experience that over time would foster certain ways of being in the world defined along lines of a national ethno-linguistic heritage.

As part of his general philosophy of Czech history, prominent Czech philosopher Jan Patocka believed that historically, the Czechs had always been spiritually united with the rest of Europe. "For a century and a half Bohemia was the center of Europeanization of Eastern Europe. In the mid-fourteenth century, Charles IV's Prague was the capital of an eastward facing Holy Roman Empire."[33] The relationship highlighted by Patocka's particular narrative of Czech history reveals the intimate connection between the intellectual traditions of Western Europe and the historical development of Bohemia into the modern Czechoslovak state. As the specifically Czech Enlightenment began in the aftermath of the European Enlightenment, Czech scientists purchased foreign European Enlightenment literature, utilizing ideas that would become the foundation for ideas regarding the Czech nation-state.[34] The very origins of this state originated out of a Czech Enlightenment tradition that was specifically shaped through

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[31] Anderson, *Imagined communities : Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*: 42.
[32] Ibid., 34.
[33] Aviezer Tucker, "Shipwrecked: Patocka's Philosophy of Czech History," *History and Theory* 35, no. 2 (1996): 9.
[34] Grecenkova, "Enlightened Absolutism and the Birth of a Modern State (1740-1792)," 276.

interactions with the body of knowledge constructed during the European Enlightenment. Beginning in the mid-18th century, the Czech Enlightenment began as a project in the reappraisal of Bohemian history.[35] The Enlightenment scientists undertook this project with a specifically nationalist approach as they attempted to construct a narrative of the past that emphasized the unique national character of the Czech peoples. In the year 1775, this effort manifested itself in the practical form of a scientific institution dedicated to the development of mathematics, patriotic history, and natural sciences.[36] The aptly named Private Society in the Czech Lands for the Development of Mathematics, Patriotic History, and Natural Sciences would eventually become the current Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, exemplifying the historical legacy of modern state with its roots in the borrowed ideas of the European Enlightenment.

While a national consciousness defined in terms of a shared ethno-linguistic tradition would eventually become the most prominent form of self-identification by the end of the 19th century, the Czech Enlightenment could not achieve such a generalized form of collective consciousness since its publications were primarily in the German language and as a result were not available to most of the Czech speaking population.[37] Although Enlightenment publications were developed specifically to educate the sub-strata of the population, these printed materials reinforced a particularly rural consciousness rather than fostering a collective identity around which all members of society could identify and collectively organize. The lack of a standardized linguistic registrar through which a monoglot mass reading public[38] could be

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[35] Ibid., 277.
[36] Ibid., 277.
[37] Ibid., 288.
[38] For Anderson, the development of such a mass reading public had to be preceded by a standardization of language as the first step in cultivating the subjective idea of the nation. [Anderson, *Imagined communities : Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*: 43-44.]

developed prevented a shift in self-consciousness from a primary identification as a citizen of the Czech lands to an awareness of the self as a distinct Czech ethnicity with a unique language, past, and cultural tradition.[39] However, by the middle of the nineteenth century the rise of the newspaper, along with publishing houses and bookstores, and the development of a Czech language programme created the necessary conditions for the eventual emergence of the third wave of the Czech emancipation movement. As defined by Jan Hajek and Milan Hlavacka, this was a stage "when a broad spectrum of the population identified with the idea of belonging to a nation which represented specific values, and when the national movement reached its mass and irreversible character; this occurred in the period after 1830 and mainly after the 1848 revolution."[40]

Yet before such an emancipatory phase could materialize, collective consciousness within the Czech lands and greater Bohemia had to undergo dramatic changes regarding notions of what defined the imagined community and who belonged to it. The primary social mechanisms through which this occurred had their origins in the shift from the dominance of the German language in print culture to the ascendency of Czech as the standardized language of publication; originating with the efforts of the editor and publisher of the Czech newspaper-Kramerius' Imperial Royal Prague Postal Newspaper (Krameriusovy cis. Kral. Praske postovske noviny), Vaclav Kramerius.[41] By the end of the 18th century Kramerius' publishing house and

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[39] Jan Hajek and Milan Hlavacka, "Birth of the Modern Czech Nation (1792-1848)," in *A History of the Czech Lands*, ed. Jaroslav Panek (Prague: Charles University: Karolinum Press, 2009), 296.
[40] Ibid., 297.
[41] This is not to say that Vaclav Kramerius' efforts existed in isolation, for the push to make Czech the dominant language of political and cultural discourse permeated a variety of cultural arenas including the theatre. "From the 1780s, a Czech theatre called the Shack (Bouda) presented Czech translations of German plays alongside original Czech plays, whose main themes were Czech history and mythology. Czech theatre thus contributed to the development of the Czech language, as well as Czech patriotism, which differed from enlightened Land patriotism

bookstore were producing works primarily in the Czech language as part of a larger movement to assert the rights of the Czech language and nation, a movement later known as the Czech National Revival.[42] More than the systematic publishing of common Czech literary works,[43] Kramerius also undertook a widespread effort to disseminate educational and fictional books written in Czech to the general population, rural and town inhabitants alike. The efficacy of such activities in relation to the possibility to imagine the national community should not be underestimated for they were central to the development and eventual emancipation of the Czech national community as these publications helped to foster a collective Czech national consciousness. This consciousness would form the eventual foundation of collective efforts of resistance during the revolution of 1848 as they would during the Velvet Revolution of 1989. Preserved throughout subsequent generations, Czech national consciousness would be the expressive medium through which to articulate expressions of agency and rights outside the dominance of foreign rule whether dynastic, imperial, or ideological. As Anderson succinctly states, "the newspaper reader, observing exact replicas of his own paper being consumed by his subway, barbershop, or residential neighbors, is continually reassured that the imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life."[44] Thus, while the consumption of printed materials is primarily an activity carried out within the confines of the mind of the individual, cultural artifacts such as the newspaper and novel exist as shared spaces inextricably bound to the mundane aspects of everyday life through which individuals negotiate a sense of self and shape ideas regarding the

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in its emphasis on the specific national features of the Czech state, especially its linguistic and cultural Czech identity." [Grecenkova, "Enlightened Absolutism and the Birth of a Modern State (1740-1792)," 278-79.]

[42] Ibid., 278.

[43] Vaclav Kramerius focused on the publication of Czech literary works from the Veleslavin times (16th century). These works were significant for they eventually served as the model for revivalist Czech. [ibid., 279.]

[44] Anderson, *Imagined communities : Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*: 35-36.

nature of the larger collective to which that self belongs. It is in these shared spaces that new forms of solidarity arise as they are spaces that can shape memory and define collectively held bodies of knowledge. These types of shared spaces are also often sites of potential transformations in which identities can be both reified and challenged. In the case of what would become the Czech National Revival movement, the shared spaces (i.e. newspapers, brochures, novels, and historical volumes) produced by the developing system of print capitalism fostered conditions that led citizens of the Czech Lands to develop new forms of solidarities based on ethnicity rather than on regions, estates, creed, state, or dynasty.[45] In effect print capitalism "made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways."[46]

As an invented concept of political organization, the nation-state paradigm is characterized by a perspective on identity as mutually exclusive. It is defined by a dialectic of self and other, favoring the creation of a homogenized citizen bounded by a measurable territory that delimits both a physical and imagined boundary, a formulation frequently defined in terms of ethnic and linguistic belonging. The process by which the nation comes to take shape in the minds of individuals implicitly involves the community being defined in coordination with a conscious conception of who falls outside the imagined boundary as a result of such aspects as language, historical experience, intellectual tradition, or cultural legacy. In the case of the Czech Lands prior to the solidification of the Czech national identity as the dominant form of political and social solidarity, nationalism provided a common set of symbols and values through which to challenge the political and cultural hegemony of the German population within the region. At

[45] Hlavacka, "Birth of the Modern Czech Nation (1792-1848)," 296.
[46] Anderson, *Imagined communities : Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*: 36.

the turn of the18th and 19th centuries the Czech ethnic group held the position of a non-ruling nation or ethnic group, and did not encapsulate the entirety of the state community which included additional populations from Germans to Slovaks.[47] Nationalism as a form of general solidarity in Czech society became the primary medium through which the Czech ethnic group, as a subordinated community within a larger empire contested the dominance of German language and culture between the 18th and 20th centuries. In the case of the Czech ethnic group, "the national community became the best form of mutual defense and also a means of expansion outside this group."[48] The forms of consciousness taking shape during the Czech National Revival thus informed the articulation of the "Czechs" right to self-determination as an ethnic group attempting to realize its place in the world through the consolidation of a territorially sacred space within a larger world system of competing nation-states.

[47] Hlavacka, "Birth of the Modern Czech Nation (1792-1848)," 295.
[48] Ibid., 297.

3.0 SAMIZDAT TEXTUAL OBJECTS AND THE SOCIALIST TELEVISION SERIALS IN THE 1970S AND 1980S:

> **But one thing is certain: whatever the future may bring, it will be those home-made books which will provide a testimony of the time in which we live, for the language which sounds like falling gravel will not interest anyone.**
>
> **-Milan Šimeča, Samizdat Author[49]**

As a complex category intrinsic to everyday life and instrumental to notions of the self and community, knowledge has been historically defined in a variety of ways ranging from an implicit state of mind that is innately private to a social construction developed through direct experience and resulting perceptions.[50] In approaching an analysis of knowledge in terms of its application in the world, one moves away from the idea of knowledge as an implicit state of mind and moves towards addressing the problem of how a category that takes shape through individual experience also develops into conventional bodies of knowledge defined in terms of the local contexts from which they arise.[51] In applying the definition of knowledge put forth by

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[49] H. Gordon Skilling, *Samizdat and an Independent Society in Central and Eastern Europe* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989).

[50] As described by John Dewey in his explanation of an experimental theory of knowledge, "the organ or instrument" of knowledge is often categorized as a "ready-made state of mind or consciousness, something purely subjective, a peculiar kind of existence which lives, moves, and has its being in a realm different from things to be known; and that the ultimate goal and content of knowledge is a fixed, ready-made thing which has no organic connections with the origin, purpose, and growth of the attempt to know it, some kind of Ding-an-sich or absolute, extra-empirical "Reality"." [John Dewey and John J. McDermott, *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, Phoenix ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981). 187.]

[51] In his effort to define an approach to an anthropology of knowledge, Fredrik Barth states that while knowledge is experience-based, "most knowledge does not become private in any individual sense." He goes on to claim that

Barth that "knowledge is what a person employs to interpret and act on the world" to the study of consciousness and revolution, it becomes clear that the bodies of knowledge we engage with on a daily basis impact the very way in which we are in the world.[52] Moreover, these bodies of knowledge and the mediums through which they are disseminated are innately shared and as a result, should be viewed in connection to the larger social circles through which they move and which they reinforce. Thus, the manner in which dissemination occurs cannot be separated from the content of the knowledge itself. In the moments when we collectively mobilize, whether as a local community or a nation, we draw on the shared sources and forms of knowledge that constitute the larger social orders to which we belong in order to express ourselves, as both individuals and members of larger collectivities. As Czechoslovak society experienced the dramatic set of political, economic, and social changes brought about by the 1968 invasion of Warsaw pact troops and the subsequent infiltration of normalization policies into all aspects of everyday life during the 1970s and 1980s two competing systems of knowledge emerged and, over time, came to represent two different ways of being within Czechoslovak society. These respective bodies of knowledge were represented by the state controlled television networks and corresponding fictional socialist television serials, on the one hand, and the printed samizdat materials of a parallel independent society attempting to function outside the constraints of the totalitarian government on the other. The choice to participate in the consumption of one source over the other reflected larger associations within everyday life i.e. "dissident" or

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"this makes a great deal of every person's knowledge conventional, constructed within the traditions of knowledge of which each of us partakes." [Barth, "An Anthropology of Knowledge," 2.]

[52] Ibid., 1.

"normalized."[53] The development of a Czech dissident underground occurred in conjunction with the growth of printed samizdat materials into a full-fledged, unstandardized parallel to the official publishers operating under the yoke of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. While the ideology of the normalization government infiltrated the space of the home through the medium of the television set, promoting a particular "normalized" citizen and corresponding way of being in the world, the parallel society of dissidence attempted to preserve the historical and cultural legacy of the "Czech soul"[54] and combat the process of intentional forgetting pursued by the artifices of totalitarian ideology.

More than just the nature of its content, it is the embodiment of knowledge in cultural objects and the subsequent channels through which they move that defines a particular corpus of knowledge. Identifying three specific faces of knowledge, Barth lays out a framework for understanding how traditions of knowledge are reproduced and changed over time. This framework is also useful in connecting the development of a specific body of knowledge over time to conceptions of self and notions of solidarity. As a dynamic space of shared experience integrating the past with the present, a corpus of knowledge constitutes a source for ideas of how one should be in the world and how to act in that world based on past notions of identity that range from communal to ethnic. It is the performance of knowledge within the world, though,

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[53] While these categories can be discussed as separate and distinct it is important to note that they were not mutually exclusive as social life is fluid with interactions occurring across boundaries both natural and artificial. The term "gray zone" captures this fluidity as it is a metaphor for "a considerably large part of Czech and Slovak people, who, though remaining "silent," i.e. not joining the "dissidents" in their protests, disagreed with the Communist Party guidelines and thus represented a hidden threat to the totalitarian regime." [Martin Machovec, "The Types and Functions of Samizdat Publications in Czechoslovakia, 1948-1989," *Poetics Today* 30, no. 1 (2009): 8.]

[54] The Czech soul in this context refers to the spiritual character of the Czech self as an existential category grounded in historical experience. Drawing on this notion, Jan Vladislav, editor of one of the several independent publishing houses described the "parallel culture" as providing the most eloquent evidence of the nation's desire for freedom of expression and offered one way of preventing the Czech nation from being robbed of its identity and having an alien identity substituted instead." [Skilling, *Samizdat and an Independent Society in Central and Eastern Europe*: 26.]

that shapes the path of the tradition, performances that reflect a realization of a certain kind of self in the world.[55]

Building on the idea of knowledge as performed within the world, Barth defines the three main faces of knowledge as substantive corpus, communicative medium, and social organization.[56] These categories do not exist in isolation, but rather are interconnected and appear together in the application of knowledge in everyday life.[57] The substantive corpus is an aspect of any tradition of knowledge and is made of "assertions" and "ideas" about aspects of the world.[58] These assertions and ideas do not become significant, however, unless they can be embodied and communicated through various types of media, both print and visual, as representations in the form of "words, concrete symbols, pointing gestures, actions."[59] These forms of media constitute a significant space for shared experiences as they can be transmitted to large portions of the population and over time can become an unnoticed aspect of everyday life. Included in this framework is the space for agency in terms of the reproduction and application of knowledge that is part of any effort to understand and act in the world.[60] In connection to this, the third face of knowledge defined by Barth is the manner in which knowledge is "distributed, communicated, employed, and transmitted within a series of instituted social relations."[61] Inherent to this particular face is the control or influence over such movement for the manipulation and deliberate effort to instantiate certain values within a tradition is the motivation

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[55] Barth, "An Anthropology of Knowledge," 5.
[56] Ibid., 3.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] "This perspective secures the space for agency in our analysis: it makes us give the necessary close attention to the knowers and to the acts of the knowers-the people who hold, learn, produce, and apply knowledge in their various activities and lives." [ibid., 3.]
[61] Ibid.

of any ideological force attempting to foster a certain way of being in the world. This was as true of the normalization project in post-1968 Czechoslovakia as it is today with the sway of the commodity image-system and promotion of consumer values through commercial television.[62]

The aforementioned faces of knowledge described by Barth offer a particular lens through which to view the relationship of a tradition of knowledge to notions of solidarity and expressions of dissent contained in the moments when that solidarity is expressed as practical social mobilizations in everyday life. The following sections will attempt to demonstrate how the socialist television serial and textual objects of samizdat represented two separate bodies of knowledge, with the latter eventually paving the way for the attempted realization of a new type of existence defined by "pluralism, free elections, freedom of expression, proper representation of diverse interests and public participation."[63] Thus, samizdat literature as a contextual manifestation of a broader Czech tradition of knowledge, with its development in the unofficial parallel structures of underground society, eventually became the legitimate source of values and morality in Czech society, and led to the type of consciousness that would oppose and undermine the totalitarian system and ultimately define the character of the Velvet Revolution in 1989.[64]

Originally coined in Moscow during the 1950s by a Russian poet, samizdat as a term has become synonymous with any unofficial literature existing outside the dominant channels of social life, particularly in publishing and distribution.[65] In the 1970s and 1980s, the term was attributed to the newly spreading unofficial information systems or "alternative public spheres" flourishing across the region of Eastern Europe particularly in Hungary, Poland, and

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[62] Sut Jhally, "Image-Based Culture: Advertising and Popular Culture," in *Gender, Race, and Class in Media*, ed. Jean M. Humez Gail Dines (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2011), 201.
[63] Skilling, *Samizdat and an Independent Society in Central and Eastern Europe*: 126.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Gordon Johnston, "What is the History of Samizdat?," *Social History* 24, no. 2 (1999): 122.

Czechoslovakia.[66] These systems were unique according to context but systematically similar as materials were often passed from hand to hand and over time, the social circles that also represented the distribution networks of samizdat materials became the primary source of opposition to the totalitarian governments within each country. Although different depending on context as a result of preexisting social networks, it is possible to provide a succinct definition of samizdat as the "unofficial production and distribution of text-based material in typed, mimeographed, Xeroxed or printed form."[67] In Czechoslovakia, samizdat texts were often produced by typewriter.[68] In connection to its original ontological origin, samesbyaizdat, the word samizdat represents a type of publishing and distribution outside the structures of print capitalism and represented more than just a "parallel culture" as "the legitimate continuance of the tradition of Czech belles-lettre."[69] In this continuance and ultimate preservation of a historical identity, samizdat became a space through which to articulate counter notions of reality, directly challenging the economic and political structures of the totalitarian system and defining itself as the "reverse image of the evils in the present system."[70]

While referring specifically to the materiality of printed texts and the nature of their production and dissemination, samizdat is a term that cannot be separated from the unofficial social systems that arose out of and were reinforced by the circulation of samizdat material. The relationship between samizdat literature and corresponding developments in the social spheres through which it moved have been described as a "parallel information system,"[71] "a second

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[66] Ibid., 128.
[67] Ibid., 123.
[68] Machovec, "The Types and Functions of Samizdat Publications in Czechoslovakia, 1948-1989," 5.
[69] Skilling, *Samizdat and an Independent Society in Central and Eastern Europe*: 77.
[70] Ibid., 126.
[71] Phrase coined by Czech Historian Vilem Precan [ibid., 20.]

culture,"[72] "a parallel political life,"[73] "alternative society,"[74] and even a "parallel polis."[75] All of these characterizations capture an aspect of samizdat, reflecting its integration into the social, political, economic, and moral life of the society in which it is found. What the aforementioned phrases reflect is what Libuse Silhanova describes as "the more spontaneous, centrifugal tendencies in the economy, society, and culture, or in nonconformist private life" captured by samizdat as both a collection of textual objects and the shared cultural space of solidarity and articulated opposition.[76] Despite its existence as a system outside modern print culture, samizdat nonetheless was a continuation of a tradition in Czechoslovakia and Western Europe in which the printed word and subsequent forms of its distribution resulted in the development of particular types of consciousness; identifications that were relied upon to organize in public spaces during moments of mass protest.

The eventual impact of samizdat on the Velvet Revolution of 1989 is located in the different characteristics of samizdat and their role as representations of the three faces of knowledge defined by Fredrik Barth. As it developed in Czechoslovak society in the 1970s and 1980s, samizdat came to function as a corpus of knowledge in its own right, as well as the continuation of a past legacy of thought, reflected in a consciousness of living outside the system and opposing the structures of totalitarian control through the very constitution of one's everyday life. In terms of its substantive corpus then, samizdat reflected particular ideas about the past, present, and future regarding the characteristics of the Czech self and the place of the

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[72] Ibid., 31.
[73] Phrase coined by Vaclav Havel [ibid., 123.]
[74] Term used by Hungarian Scholar Hankiss to describe a system of parallel structures challenging the official power structure. [ibid., 220.]
[75] Ibid., 221.
[76] Ibid.

corresponding community within the larger world system. A significant set of ideas was developed by members of Charter 77 and these political samizdat addressed a number of issues within Czechoslovak society, issues directly related to the policies of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. These documents contained specific analyses of social problems such as discrimination in employment, the suppression of literature, violations of economic, social, and human rights environmental degradation, inadequate health care, and interference with the right to history and information.[77] Placing a great deal of value on self-determination and freedom of information, the writers of samizdat produced documents that opened up spaces of dialogue and helped to enable the formation of independent democratic associations of citizens attempting to live in freedom.[78]

These ideas placed the corpus in direct opposition to the normalization initiative to develop a citizenry defined by solidarities limited to the familial structure as a metaphor for loyalty to the Communist Party and its associated ideology. Yet in many ways this tradition was empty in terms of ideological legitimacy for its primary goal was the pacification of the general population through the depoliticization of the public sphere, thus establishing itself as a foreign set of values. It was the preservation of collective or social memories in the typed pages of samizdat materials that contributed to its efficacy in Czechoslovak society, in effect allowing such printed materials to exist as texts of morality. As Olga Zaslavskaya notes in her work on the archival preservation of samizdat texts, "knowledge of the recent past is transmitted to cultural memory through the oral traditions, written histories, documents, and the artifacts of

[77] Ibid., 26.
[78] Ibid., 126.

cultural heritage (both tangible and intangible)."[79] Samizdat, though, also functioned as a space for the construction of new collective memories in the face of a totalitarian system attempting to destroy the past notions of the self that had allowed for the general protest that characterized the Prague Spring in 1968, a process interrupted for more than two decades only to be resumed in the reclamation of public spaces that occurred over the course of the Velvet Revolution.

For knowledge to be spoken of as a tradition or shared body of information, it must be embodied in representations that can be communicated across time and space. Functioning in the role of a communicative medium, the textual objects of samizdat production were responsible for the dissemination of the body of knowledge belonging to those commonly thought of as dissidents. This particular medium was unique in that it relied on an unofficial system of production and distribution outside the structures of modern print culture. While some have referred to this quality as a reversion to conditions that existed prior to the invention of the Gutenberg printing press, this is a misguided notion; samizdat still represented a system of production, albeit one defined by a lack of efficiency and scale. Rather than reflecting the standardization and fixity characteristic of the post-Gutenberg period, though, samizdat texts were more similar to the unstandardized, spontaneously disseminated, unfixed quality of oral culture.[80] Often unbound, the textual objects of samizdat contained pages with no margins or standard format in general. The unbounded nature of some collections of novels, essays, and poems fostered a situation in which people would read together, passing pages around the room. This type of consumption was markedly different from the individual experience inherent to the consumption of printed materials from the official publishers. Samizdat as a communicative

[79] Olga Zaslavskaya, "From Dispersed to Distributed Archives: The Past and the Present of Samizdat Material," *Poetics Today* 29, no. 4 (2009): 670.
[80] Ann Komaromi, "Samizdat as Extra-Gutenberg Phenomenon," *Poetics Today* 29, no. 4 (2008): 634.

medium, then, was particularly effective in cultivating a sense of solidarity among participants in the unofficial culture for the very responsibility of dissemination fell upon the same individuals consuming such works. This sense of solidarity was heightened by the inherent risk that participation in such a system involved, and increased the significance and value of each printed text. As one anonymous consumer of samizdat texts once noted, "samizdat is a medium of communication which looks poor and miserable beside the fantastic rotary press and color television, but which in fact is an unusually powerful and indestructible force…It is written only by someone who has something to say…When I take it in my hand, I know that it cost someone a good deal to write it-without an honorarium and at no little risk."[81] The communicative medium belonging to the system that arose around samizdat was more than just a set of channels through which material moved, but a deliberate act of defiance directed at the conditions of life under totalitarianism. To produce a work outside the dominant structures of production, then, was a small act of protest that, when combined with others, undermined the nature of the totalitarian system as an effort to restrict all forms of expression that did not conform to the officially determined criteria of ideas.

The type of social organization surrounding the movement of samizdat textual objects is one of the most significant aspects of this particular body of knowledge as it was the relationships and social structures developed and reinforced by samizdat texts that provided the ideological and organizational basis of the Velvet Revolution in 1989. More than just textual objects, samizdat material in the context of Czechoslovak social organization functioned as

[81] Skilling, *Samizdat and an Independent Society in Central and Eastern Europe*: 13.

objects of exchange within newly emerging social networks of opposition.[82] Just as samizdat once forged alternative publics in the USSR, Czechoslovak samizdat served to bind a community of dissidents as well as generally being the basis of identity and community.[83] The shared experience of samizdat and the corresponding parallel polis that emerged around it concretized an oppositional consciousness that would be fully articulated during the Velvet Revolution.

Passed from hand to hand, these pages represented the life-blood of a resistance culture attempting to preserve a legacy of free social and political thought. These texts and the relationships that developed through them were a contestation with the structures of totalitarianism over the character and trajectory of the future social order. This contestation played out in the pages of samizdat and the images flashing across television screens during the 1970s and 1980s, as both sources of creative expression attempted to substantiate certain values within the framework of everyday life. While both sources were forms primarily engaged within the private space of the mind, they both nonetheless created spaces for the development of new types of consciousness and notions of solidarity. With the end of the Prague Spring television moved from a space of open dialogue and discussion around the future of the political and economic life of Czechoslovakia to the primary medium of social control available to the totalitarian regime in its attempt to remake the Czechoslovak citizen. Samizdat, however, represented the movement of the ideas articulated during the Prague Spring into the unofficial culture of the underground, allowing it to serve as a space for "free" conversations outside the "codes and euphemisms of everyday life."[84] Yet despite the types of solidarity fostered through the production and circulation of samizdat materials, the unofficial culture could only occupy a

[82] Komaromi, "Samizdat as Extra-Gutenberg Phenomenon," 656-57.
[83] Ibid., 657.
[84] Johnston, "What is the History of Samizdat?," 133.

space apart, lacking a "public space common to all and indivisible," without a separation into "we" and "they", and with some feeling of belonging together."[85] As a result, samizdat and the parallel culture of which it was a part continued to shape solidarities outside the structures of totalitarianism, preserving the spiritual continuity of the Czech cultural life within a set of unofficial parallel social structures. While existing in a space of relative social isolation during normalization, the ideas promoted through samizdat would be reclaimed over the course of the Velvet Revolution in 1989 as the unofficial culture began to assert itself once again in the public sphere, attempting to again realize the possibility of a free, autonomous self in the social order of Czechoslovakia.

3.1 THE CRAFTING OF NORMALIZATION'S CITIZENRY:

After the seemingly spontaneous beginning of the Prague Spring in the autumn of 1967 with the Strahov dormitory demonstrations, Czech society experienced a relaxing of the constraints on expression and open political dialogue as the primary channels of expression such as newspapers, television, and literature began to shake off the chains of official state-sponsored propaganda. Rather than a dramatic restructuring of social life, this process gathered slow momentum through both individual and collective acts of defiance that centered on expressions of "truth" as opposed to the institutionalized policy of historical fabrication so essential to the efforts of the Soviet backed Czechoslovak communist party. This gradual opening up of Czech society occurred through the same cultural channels coopted by the communist party in their

[85] Skilling, *Samizdat and an Independent Society in Central and Eastern Europe*: 39.

efforts to engineer a particular kind of Czech citizenry. Yet the burgeoning consolidation of the television as both a source of news and space for artistic expression came to dominate the acquisition of knowledge within society as it fostered and developed alongside the events of the Prague Spring until the changes forced upon it in August of 1968.

The growing influence of the television in Czechoslovak society and its critical role in the events of the Prague Spring should not be viewed in a vacuum, but rather as a larger social trend occurring in parts of the industrial world with the broadcast image as the new currency of social exchange and a legitimate source for ideas of the self. The impact of the television as the dominant medium in the West is well documented in its ability to alter social opinion and mobilize collective action in violation of commonly held conceptions of morality. "In the United States, the gruesome televised images from the Vietnam War changed public opinion, and live scenes from the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago turned a demonstration into a historical event."[86] The representation of events as mass communicable televised images thus came to dominate ideas of the world at large as well as impact the nature and scope of notions of solidarity within individual countries. The power of the televised image began to assert itself throughout the 1960s in the United States as well as in Czechoslovakia. The potential of the televised image to foster new types of consciousness was realized early on by the commercial sector in the United States and the post-1968 normalization government in Czechoslovakia. While commercial television was employed to develop a notion of the self as consumer[87] in the

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[86]Paulina Bren, *The Greengrocer and His TV: The Culture of Communism after the 1968 Prague Spring* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), Nonfiction. 21.

[87] Mediating the relationship between family and the economy, television in the 1960s was charged with the task of making new economic and social relations "credible and legitimate" to American audiences. "Television advertised individual products, but it also provided a relentless flow of information and persuasion that placed acts of consumption at the core of everyday life." [George Lipsitz, "The Meaning of Memory: Family, Class, and Ethnicity

United States, in Czechoslovakia, the television and specifically, the socialist television serial, under the control of the ideological apparatuses of the communist party, was used to develop a new post-1968 communist citizen with a lifeworld defined by the solidarities of family, work, and close friends.[88] This particular project of normalization was carried out as a deliberate means of combatting the changes begun by the Prague Spring and their impact on the public sphere. As such, it was logical that the television served as the main ideological vehicle for the transmission of normalization values relating to conceptions of the individual, the family, and the citizen in the post-1968 totalitarian reality.

The cultural ascendency of television within Czechoslovak society began in relation to the larger trend of loosened government censorship that was characteristic of the Prague Spring period. The transition of the television from simply another outlet for untrusted state propaganda to a source of dissidence and social critique transformed the level of its use and, subsequently, the nature of everyday conversations. Prompting this process was the appointment of Jiri Pelikan as the head of Czechoslovak state television in 1963.[89] A reform minded communist, Pelikan "steered programming so that it increasingly echoed the demand among the intelligentsia that society open up to allow for constructive criticism and individual decision making."[90] Television's transformation resulted in the extension of the public space to include the political discourse of the time, in effect creating spaces within everyday life for the questioning of the nature of the political system and its impact upon the social structures of Czechoslovak society. "It was the media that had moved the political dialogue out of the exclusive literary domain,

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in Early Network Television Programs," in *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Critical Reader*, ed. Jean M. Humez Gail Dines (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2011), 28.]

[88] Bren, *The Greengrocer and His TV: The Culture of Communism after the 1968 Prague Spring*: 149.

[89] Ibid., 21.

[90] Ibid.

from behind the closed doors of reform-minded party apparatchiks, and fully into the public sphere."[91] Broadcasts centered on the recapitulating of the past as a means of counteracting the processes of "intentional forgetting" employed by the communist regime as well as live debates on the nature of state socialism. In this period of revelation and reflective discourse an intimate bond was formed between the content flashing across television screens and the rhythms of everyday life; the conversations, stories, and thoughts of regular citizens from a vast array of Czech social groupings experienced a transformation that, if not for the invasion of 1968, would have altered the very physical fabric of everyday life. This bond, though, could not have been possible without the combination of an understood language with a recognizable array of images that merged the immateriality of televised content with the practical reality of everyday life for a vast array of Czechoslovak citizenry consciously connected by the shared experience of a totalitarian communist regime. In the faces and words of the ordinary citizens projected across televisions throughout the country, the larger society found a voice of dissidence and a medium through which to understand their present reality and its rapidly changing circumstances.

As noted above, the movement of political dialogue out of the literary circles of reform minded party members and into the public discourse was revelatory for general society as it jumpstarted a process of political and social renegotiation. Yet this dialogical shift was still dependent on its original source as the political discourse was not only occurring in literary circles, but through the forms of literature, particularly that of the narrative. The transition of the story as confined in the novel and poetic form to the newly developing cultural space of the television was rather fluid, not unlike the presentation of narrative on the stage of the theatre,

[91] Ibid., 24.

also a significant contributor to the events of 1968. However, the literary narrative as television serial would not realize its full potential until the post-invasion period of normalization as the newly staffed communist apparatchik would harness the full potential of the television as a source of knowledge in an attempt to create the privatized citizen of normalization and institutionalize its faltering ideology in the most basic structures of everyday life. The normalization regime used the space of the television to relocate dialogue on social and economic problems from the public sphere to the privatized space of the home, all mediated by the multi-episode television serial which offered acceptable solutions to pressing social and economic issues without the need for a genuine public dialogue.[92]

The television as mass medium became a dominant source of knowledge in coordination with the events of the Prague Spring. However, the content of television dramatically changed with the onslaught of normalization and the re-crafting of political engagement and the shape of everyday life in Czechoslovakia. As Paulina Bren notes

> "The Prague Spring had begun and ended not as a political revolution, but as a revolutionary experience of words and images. Radio dominated, but television had offered proof of its potential supremacy by juxtaposing visual impression with words, transmitting pictorials of reportage and confession, and turning revelation and defiance into immediate and lasting pictures that millions of viewers shared. Television's performance as a unique communicator between state and citizens guaranteed its place at the top of normalization's surveillance list."[93]

Television's ability to capture the lived experience of multiple types of self existent in Czechoslovak society imbued it with a symbolic power that transcended social divisions while still grounded in the practical reality of everyday life, a reality that it in turn gave form and tribute to. In its ability to capture the multi-faceted and formless nature of lived reality, the influence of the television only grew with time as more and more individuals participated in a

[92] Ibid., 149.
[93] Ibid., 45.

shared experience that came to shape both their interior and external sense of reality. The connected fates of the Prague Spring and Czechoslovak television are essential to understanding the relationship between the consumption of television as a general shared experience and ideas of the self and the collective within Czechoslovakia.

3.2 THE PRIVATIZATION OF CITIZENSHIP:

As defined by Lauren Berlant in her exploration of sexuality and citizenship in the United States, the privatization of citizenship is the process whereby civic responsibility is "turned inward and played out within the family sphere," an idea that is then further reinforced by the media as its acceptable place.[94] While originally applied to describe the efforts of the Reagan administration in the United States, the term aptly fits normalized Czechoslovakia as well. In its efforts to promote the life of a privatized citizen through the form of the socialist television serial, the Czechoslovak Communist Party attempted to reformulate the national community as "simultaneously lived private worlds."[95] Through the space of television and its mass availability, the state apparatuses promoted a particular type of existence in the world that conformed to the ideology of normalization and, ultimately, allowed for the preservation of power through the pacification of the general public and the relegation of political discourse to the private space of the home as the locus for the development of social values. With the television serial as its primary medium, the ideology of normalization crafted a general public

[94] Lauren Gail Berlant, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City : Essays on Sex and Citizenship*, Series Q (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997). 177.
[95] Bren, *The Greengrocer and His TV: The Culture of Communism after the 1968 Prague Spring*: 149.

willing to accept the fabricated reality of the Communist Party in favor of a promised social and economic security. Yet this population also retained its consciousness as an ethnically Czech population, a nationalistic form of solidarity that remained throughout normalization and reasserted itself as a primary identity during the Velvet Revolution in 1989.

In order to achieve such a widespread project as the inculcation of normalization values in the dominant consciousness of the Czechoslovak population, the recently purged and restructured apparatuses of the communist government of Czechoslovakia looked to the genius of the screen-writer and storyteller Jaroslav Dietl. After the invasion in 1968, Dietl became a willing participant in the new ideological project of normalization in order to maintain his position in society and to continue the practice of his craft. The popularity of Dietl's works largely stemmed from his ability to craft a story with protagonists whom the majority of the public could easily identify with. These stories functioned as the medium through which the communist government could communicate with the general population and discreetly promote certain perspectives on the structures and roles of everyday life from the hospital system and economy to the role of women in the home. Through strong emotional identifications with the characters of the television serials, the general population implicitly identified with normalization, as these characters were often constructs of the normalization citizen. Summed up aptly by an anonymous contributor to a samizdat journal on the legacy of Jaroslav Dietl, his impact was much broader than the mere creation of television serials for he "created a substitute world, the kind that the party needed…He created a false world, a false Czech nation, false stories and history."[96] The efficacy of Dietl's television serials rested in his ability to promote

[96] Ibid., 155.

certain perceptions of social roles and routine personal activities through the framework of an easily relatable story.[97] Transmitted to television sets around the country, these serials presented both a substantive corpus and communicative medium through which the normalization government could change the nature of social organization in the country and in the process redefine notions of the Czech self.

3.3 THE MOVE TO THE PUBLIC:

Despite the popularity and widespread impact of the socialist television serial and its successful depoliticization of the public sphere in Czechoslovakia between the years 1968 and 1989, the corpus of knowledge associated with samizdat and the parallel culture of dissidence ultimately won out as the Velvet Revolution gained momentum and the streets of Prague became saturated with the voices of dissent reclaiming a public sphere of uniform solidarity. The competing systems of knowledge, represented by the socialist television serial on one hand and printed samizdat materials on the other, did not exist in isolation but became part of larger efforts to realize a certain way of being in the world that could be reflected in the nature of everyday life. Containing their own respective notions of solidarity, these spaces served as the dominant locus of shared experience within Czechoslovak society during the normalization period, dramatically impacting the form and content of the Velvet Revolution of 1989. The revolution itself would ultimately define itself as an effort to reclaim a sense of the public sphere as a space for the communal negotiation of the political and social life of the country. Moreover, the revolution

[97] James Lull, "Hegemony," in *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Critical Reader*, ed. Jean M. Humez Gail Dines (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2011), 34.

became an attempt to realize certain ideas of the Czech self, preserved and articulated in the pages of samizdat literature, in the practical structures of everyday life.

4.0 THE LANGUAGE OF PROTEST IN THE THEATER OF REVOLUTION:

> **This revolution has many dimensions, many aspects, many facets, and it also has its theatrical dimension. I've discovered that many key points of this revolution, and even my presidency, by some mysterious coincidence, are taking place in a theatre, or, are somehow linked to theatre.**
>
> **-Vaclav Havel[98]**

The moments in time that collectively become known as a revolution are significant for their ultimate impact on the political and social structures that constitute everyday life. The protests that provide the life-blood for a revolution are not just political acts, though; they are attempts to remake the nature and character of the social world, attempts to reimagine social spaces and the relationships that occur within them. A revolution, however, is not the realization of a new reality, but rather an effort to pave the way for the realization of a new world through the destruction of the old system. Just as totalitarian regimes do not limit their activities to the realm of the political, a revolution articulates a collective's attempt to transform the moral constitution of everyday life. The events that characterize a revolution are dynamic and incorporate the concrete actions of individuals with the imaginative capacity of the collective as a larger revolutionary consciousness takes shape. Streets, squares, and buildings are imbued with historical symbolism as the urban fabric itself becomes a stage for the actors and actresses of dissent. In these spaces of make-shift theatre the expressive forms of the revolution, from songs

[98] Michael Andrew Kukral, *Prague 1989: Theatre of Revolution, A Study in Humanistic Political Geography* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1997), Nonfiction.

and chants to posters and pictures, cannot be divorced from the locales in which they are articulated. In the fervor of revolution the spaces of everyday life experience a transformation as the fabric of reality is fractured by the challenge of voices representing a counter source of values and morality. The actions of individuals that participate in the upheaval of the existing social order are fundamentally about the translation of ideals from the realm of the imagination to that of material reality. These actions are taken with the knowledge that the nature of political life is closely intertwined with the character of social reality, particularly in populations that have experienced life under a totalitarian regime in which the political apparatuses control content of knowledge and its mode of transition, from their stranglehold over media to their imprisonment of society's creative voices. There is thus an inevitable relationship between a revolution and the status quo it deliberately seeks to change. Marx himself made note of this seemingly paradoxical relationship in his statement that "the character, scale, and concrete content of every revolution are determined by the socioeconomic formation that the revolution must eliminate and also by the specific characteristics of the socio-economic system for which it is clearing the ground."[99] It is important then to understand the processes through which a revolution comes to fruition as a reflection of the larger socio-historical circumstances in which they are situated.

In the common discourse on revolution, analytical emphasis often focuses on the political consequences of a revolution in terms of both the state and the regional political configuration to which it belongs. While political revolution can certainly be considered the most dramatic expression of socio-political human activity, it is also a form of linguistic performance that integrates individual consciousness, national memory, and moral idealism into

[99] Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (New York,: International Publishers, 1970).

a narrative of resistance.[100] In the revolutionary project, history is given a new direction, yet this direction is not only determined by the political system to which the revolution eventually gives life, but also by the new possibilities of being which the revolution strives to capture and make real; possibilities whose very roots are found in the linguistic expressions of the revolution.[101] As one of the most basic aspects of everyday life, language is instrumental to understanding not only the character of a revolution, but the new reality towards which the revolution strives. It is the language itself that announces a new reality that has yet to take shape and only exists as ideals in the shouts and proclamations of such historical platitudes as democracy and freedom. Yet these utopian conceptions are as fleeting as the unity and strength fostered in demonstrations for ultimately the utopian forms inherent to any revolution must be achieved in reality.[102] In the collective pronouncements of any revolution, words seem to have a shared meaning in the imaginations of the language community that employs them, but in the movement from revolution to the solidification of a new status quo, these ideals become contested as socio-political structures are created and preserved. The ideological basis of any revolution must eventually move beyond utopian conceptions into material reality and it is in this movement that the former social order as well as ordinary language persists in all their difficulties and frustrations.[103]

In the view of revolution as an act of collective social creation it becomes important then to locate that action in the language, participants, and location of protests as these characteristics reveal the ways in which individuals mobilize themselves as a collective and draw upon the past

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[100] Kukral, *Prague 1989: Theatre of Revolution, A Study in Humanistic Political Geography*.
[101] Jacques Ehrmann, ed. *Literature and Revolution* (Yale University: Yale French Studies, 1967).
[102] Ibid., 30.
[103] Ibid., 31.

in reimagining the future. The words of protest that characterize a revolution integrate the past with the present in order to connect new aims with social and political goals of the past. Language, though, functions as more than just the basic unit of social expression; it is an act within the world that impacts its very materiality. As a process of becoming and being, language constitutes the social and material of everyday life.[104] Revolutions and the speech events that give them life are not just political acts, but attempts to remake the nature and character of the social world; attempts to reimagine social spaces and the relationships that occur within them.

While revolutions can be discussed as a category independent of context with discernible general characteristics, when placed in context, they become a stage upon which the memories, values, and overall consciousness of an imagined community are acted out and negotiated. It is in the streets and squares that the individual finds his voice and the collective articulates its common consciousness. The ways in which people express themselves and align themselves with others over the course of a revolution reveal the shared experiences that are unique to a particular set of material and historical circumstances. The rapid demise of the Eastern Bloc at the end of the 1980s represents one of the most unique historical periods of revolutionary activity in terms of their breadth and unique character. As the countries of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Eastern Europe attempted to overthrow their respective communist totalitarian governments, the world system at large experienced the beginnings of dramatic shift that would result in the eventual demise of the Cold War system, in effect creating a "historical cleavage" between the world before and after 1989.[105] The Velvet Revolution of 1989 in Czechoslovakia epitomizes

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[104] Igal Halfin, ed. *Language and Revolution: Making Modern Political Identities*, The Cummings Center Series (London: Frank Cass, 2002).
[105] Vladimir Tismaneanu, "The Revolutionsof 1989: Causes, Meanings, Consequences," *Contemporary European History* 18, no. 3 (2009).

this historical cleavage as a country that for decades was caught between the shores of European democracy and Soviet communism, submerged in a river of totalitarian rule beginning with the 1938 invasion by German forces and continuing into the late 80s' with the dominance of the normalization system of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (ČSC). Yet as the decade came to a close, Czechoslovak society would soon find itself in the streets and squares of Prague attempting to articulate a revolutionary consciousness defined by the principles of democratic participation and civic activism.[106]

From the very beginning, the revolution in Czechoslovakia was placed within a larger historical trajectory, resulting in the construction of a particular narrative of the past that would rely on the symbolic value of historical figures and places in the development of a specifically "Czechoslovak" revolutionary consciousness. This consciousness would find its foundations in the shared experiences unique to the Czechoslovak nation from the Soviet led Warsaw pact invasion of 1968 to the ideological project of normalization instituted by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in the wake of the invasion. Participation in the revolution itself would come to serve as a form of shared experience as the protests and meetings gained momentum and the KSC continued to present itself as a force from outside the imagined character of Czechoslovak society.

Over the course of the revolutions development, the expressive forms it would take, from the chants during protests to the locations of demonstrations, would reflect the revolutions placement within a larger linear temporal sequence, a narrative of history that would influence

[106] Ibid., 271.

the very conceptions of selfhood taking shape outside the paradigm of normalization. As Couze Venn states in his work on narrative identity:

> "Time, then, determines the horizon for any understanding of being; as soon as one thinks of oneself as a conscious being, one thinks time, and one cannot think time without bringing up the question of consciousness, specifically, the consciousness that one exists in time, as being in time, dispersed between a remembered past, an evanescent present and the anticipation of a future."[107]

Thus, the formation of a historical narrative in which to situate their sense of self would come to inform the linguistic expressions of the participants in the Velvet Revolution. This sense of self would be characterized by the association of the Czechoslovak nation with the historical legacy of Europe, an imagined conception that would inform the invocation of words such as freedom, the idea of democracy, and a sense of self as an autonomous entity with certain inalienable rights.[108] These conceptions find their roots in the project of the French Revolution in which political liberties, both individual and universal, were preserved in a European constitution that allowed for self-realization in politics in the 'democratic' struggle against aristocracy and tyranny.[109] Not limited to conceptions of the self, the manner in which individuals and the larger collective would come to imagine the very structures of society after the displacement of the KSC as ruling party would be shaped by a narrative defined in connection to the intellectual legacy of the European Enlightenment as well as a harkening to a specifically Czech democratic tradition. This tradition would repeatedly find its expression in the national symbols of the tri color Czechoslovak flag and the national anthem over the course of the revolution. In his first-person recollections of the Velvet Revolution Michael Kukral calls attention to the constant

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[107] Couze Venn, "The Repititon of Violence: Dialogue, the Exchange of Memory, and the Question of Convivial Socialities," *Social Identities* 11, no. 3 (2005).
[108] Halfin, *Language and Revolution: Making Modern Political Identities*.
[109] Ibid., 27.

proliferation of these symbols and their use as source for the articulation of a common Czechoslovak consciousness.

> "During this lengthy half-hour [during a protest in October 1989] the people around me sang, more than once, the Czech national anthem, "kde domuv muj?" (Where is my home?), followed by the Slovak national anthem, and also "Ach synku, synku" (a pastoral song from the days of the First Republic (1918-1938). Clapping and chanting arose calling for "Freedom" again."[110]

As this passage demonstrates the linguistic expressions of the revolution were grounded in a particular idea of the community's history, with foundations for most lying outside the direct experiences of their lives, yet were still considered an aspect of their being in the world. The incorporation of a song from the days of the First Republic incorporates the immediacy of the revolution with an idea of the past, relating the pursuit of democracy in the present with the democratic traditions of the past as embodied in the figure of Masaryk, the first president of Czechoslovakia.

The solidarity inherent to the protests and demonstrations of the Velvet Revolution was grounded in the idea of the Czechoslovak national community, a type of consciousness around which the multiple segments of Czechoslovak society (industrial worker, student, intellectual, actor/actress, etc.) could mobilize in order to articulate a sense of a larger collective, defined by a constructed historical narrative. The very possibility of saying and thinking in terms of a "we" as a pronoun of "common-being", was based on an "our" existing in the same space of time, "so that history belongs to community and community belongs to history."[111] The history of the "Czechoslovak" people in this sense can only be historical if it is claimed by the community.[112] Integrating the past with the present in an effort to reimagine the possibilities of existence in the

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[110] Kukral, *Prague 1989: Theatre of Revolution, A Study in Humanistic Political Geography*: 43.
[111] Venn, "The Repititon of Violence: Dialogue, the Exchange of Memory, and the Question of Convivial Socialities," 288.
[112] Ibid., 288.

future, participants from across the societal landscape of Czechoslovak identity drew on this narrative in its articulation of their experiences over the prior century during the months of the Velvet Revolution. The very existence of this narrative reveals the connection between the construction of a historical narrative, the language community, and the manner in which a society collectively mobilizes itself in the moments of revolution. The type of mobilizations across identity configurations necessary for the success of a revolution is possible through a common imagination, drawn upon by the linguistic expressions that characterize any revolution.

One of the earliest actions of what would become the Velvet Revolution began in January of 1989 during the twentieth anniversary commemoration of the self-immolation and death of university student Jan Palach on Wenceslas Square, a site that would become the focal point of the revolution in the coming months.[113] The violent break up of this commemoration by police forces would become a poignant memory within the minds of participants and served as evidence of the "political power, control, and unwillingness to change" on the part of the KSC.[114] Events such as this one would come to instill disillusionment in and fear of the government in the minds of many; this would ultimately lead to the establishment of political and social structures outside the government which had greater legitimacy and moral authority then the ruling party itself.[115] During the course of the revolution these sectors of society, from the Civic Forum (a collection of marginalized artists, intellectuals and writers) to the actors and actresses of the theatre community (particularly those of the Magic Lantern Theatre) would serve as the main arbiters of revolutionary organization in reimagining a society no longer controlled politically and socially by the KSC.

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[113] Kukral, *Prague 1989: Theatre of Revolution, A Study in Humanistic Political Geography*: 36.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid., 37.

Often pointed to as the official beginning of the revolution, November 17, 1989 started as a day of commemoration and was officially known as the International Day of Students.[116] By many, particularly students, it was also known as Jan Opletal Day (Jan Opletal was a Prague university student killed exactly fifty years prior by the occupying Nazi forces).[117] Forming the background for the demonstrations that day, the symbolism of Opletal's name as a murder victim by an outside totalitarian force fit with past commemorations by focusing on the self-immolation of Jan Palach as he faced the reality of a new Soviet occupation in 1968. As the various university students of Prague provided the initial source of momentum leading up to the outbreak of the Velvet Revolution, the demonstrations in the months and years prior to November 17th were imbued with the legacies of Opletal and Palach, their names functioning as abstract representations of life under totalitarianism in which the only true sense of freedom is to be achieved through the destruction of the physical body as a means of sparing the repression of the soul.

Occupying an entire quarter mile long block in the heart of Prague, the students and university faculty demonstrating that day would combine an oral invocation of the name Opletal with banners expressing revolutionary ideals, all accentuated by a proliferation of 3x5 inch Czechoslovak flags.[118] The space of the block was transformed into a stage fit with actors and a background setting as the voices and images of Czechoslovak consciousness gave expressive shape to frustrations amassed from lifetimes lived in the false reality forced upon Czechoslovak society by the normalization practices of the KSC. Shouts of "SVOBODU" (Freedom) and "KDO SE BOJI AT ZUSTANE DOMA, ALE MELI BYCHOM JIT!" (Let whoever is afraid

[116] Ibid., 47.
[117] Ibid., 48.
[118] Ibid., 49.

stay at home, but we should go! J. Opletal) were accentuated by homemade banners silently demanding "Svobodne volby!" (Free elections!) and "Chceme novou vladu!" (We want a new government!).[119] Banners in this context functioned as visual icons and as linguistic markers of a shared past whose very words represented a reality separate from that fostered by the KSC. Not only did these shouts and banners draw on the symbolism of Opletal and the Western conception of free elections, but they also used the pronoun "we" signifying an idea of the imagined community and a call for general society to act. These speech acts, as performed in the space of the street, also represented a fracture in the "normal" progression of everyday life by calling for a dramatic change in the nature of the political structures.

In the coming weeks and months demonstrations similar to the one on November 17th would continue with increasing frequency, size, and variety of participation as the revolution gained momentum. Shifting focus from the streets as the focal point to Wenceslas Square as the center of revolutionary activity, the demonstrations became more than acts of political dissent. They became direct challenges to the legitimacy of the KSC through the physical occupation of public spaces with bodies and voices. The reclamation of public spaces such as Wenceslas Square and the surrounding streets was also an existential challenge to the government's years of dominance over public and private life achieved through the policies of the normalization government whose explicit goal was to strengthen the leading role of the Communist Party in the ideological and public sphere as well as the whole life of the country.[120] The occupation of these public spaces was also fundamentally about the psyche of individuals within Czechoslovak society who in their pronouncements were announcing an end to their fear and complacency.

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[119] Ibid.
[120] Michael Long, *Making History: Czech Voices of Dissent and the Revolution of 1989* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), Nonfiction.

The reclamation of public spaces was not a strategy limited to the Czechoslovak experience, but functioned as a larger regional strategy attacking the very ideological heart of communism in the Soviet system.[121] As Tismaneanu describes it:

> "The whole philosophy of dissent-Michnik's 'new evolutionism'-was predicated on the strategy of long 'penetration' of the existing system, the gradual recovery and restoration of the public sphere (the independent life of society) as an alternative to the all-embracing presence of the ideological party-state, and the practicing of anti-politics as a non-Machiavellian experience of authenticity, transparency, civility and good-faith."[122]

This strategy would only increase in its magnitude and extent in Czechoslovakia as not only individual voices and bodies conquered public spaces, but words themselves in the form of thousands of signs came to dominate the material structures of everyday life, blanketing shop windows, walls, poles, and trams.[123] These words in many ways represented the conquering of the public space by democratic speech.[124] The most common posters revolved around the connection of the year 1968 with 1989 (the year of the Prague Spring and the Beginning of the Velvet Revolution respectively) with a specific poster by Ales Najbrt displaying "68/89" in large stylized numerals as well as posters simply stating "Back to Europe".[125] The first poster, indexical in nature, implies not only a connection between the two years, but also centers on the idea that the path to democracy was halted in the year 1968 and resumed in the year 1989, solidifying the legacy of the Prague Spring in the Velvet Revolution and tying both together in the collective consciousness. The second poster plays on the idea of Europe and all its represents in relation to the ideals of democracy, freedom, and the rights of the autonomous self as a means of reconnecting Czechoslovakia with that tradition.

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[121]Tismaneanu, "The Revolutionsof 1989: Causes, Meanings, Consequences," 273.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Filip Blazek, *Plakaty Sametove Revoluce (Posters of the Velvet Revolution): The Story of the Posters of November and December 1989*, trans. Douglas Arellanes (Prague2009).
[124] Ibid., 1.
[125] Ibid., 2.

In addition to their more abstract role in relation to the collective consciousness of Czechoslovak society, the posters also served as a form of communication between their creators and the general population of Prague. This role was in many ways a necessity as the typical sources for knowledge in society at the time (televisions and newspapers) were controlled by the government and as a result provided only falsified accounts of the revolution.[126] The reliance on informal networks of social communication such as this one reflected a general development within Czechoslovak society originating in the aftermath of the Soviet led invasion of 1968 in which large segments of society (mainly artists, intellectuals, and politicians) were both physically removed from both their prominent roles in society as well as symbolically erased from the Czechoslovak cultural memory. This process of "intentional forgetting" would become a hallmark of the normalization period in Czechoslovakia.[127]

Yet as a direct result of this policy, the cultural life of the nation moved into the informal networks of the underground and continued to thrive in the form of samizdat literature and makeshift universities which emerged at the end of the 1970s (commonly referred to as "flying university" and "Patocka university").[128] Overtime this would result in a shift in the legitimacy and locus of moral authority from the KSC to the voices of "dissent" in society: writers, actors, musicians, and erased political figures of the past. These very same people would come to populate the organizational structures of the Velvet Revolution with Vaclav Havel representing the epitome of this shift in his ascendance from political prisoner to president in the aftermath of the KSC's demise. The expressive forms and organizational character of the Velvet Revolution were thus developed in direct relationship to the material and moral conditions fostered by the

[126] Ibid., 3.
[127] Bren, *The Greengrocer and His TV: The Culture of Communism after the 1968 Prague Spring*.
[128] Long, *Making History: Czech Voices of Dissent and the Revolution of 1989*: 16.

KSC and their ideology of normalization. This development of ancillary cultural forms and social networks would become crucial to the Velvet Revolution as they became practical sources of social organization and the basis of the revolutionary imagination during the overthrow of the KSC and, ultimately, the realignment of the Czechoslovak nation with Western Europe.

5.0 CONCLUSION:

Even in the aftermath of revolution, societies continue the renegotiation of the structures of the everyday in the months and years that follow the demise of the former social order. Every day we make an effort to realize certain notions of self and community in the world through the practical decisions that confront us. The creation and reification of the systems and corresponding structures of everyday life are processes intimately connected to individual notions of the self and the placement of that self within a larger historical continuum of shared experiences. As the most extreme form of collective social reimagining, revolution presents the significant challenge of translating ideals into the practical structures of daily life. It is in this attempt to translate generalized ideals such as freedom, democracy, and justice into functional political and economic systems that the participants in a revolution are confronted with the reality that what seemed shared before, is actually subject to very individual conceptions. It is inevitable in any such translation for there to be widespread discontent with the nature of new structures for it is impossible for the rhetoric of revolution to be uniformly captured in the new political and economic systems which arise in the aftermath.

Rather than just a reimagining of the political and economic life of the nation, though, revolutions are grounded in the conceptions of self and community that inform the manner in which people organize and express themselves during any revolution. Moving outside the realm of ideals, revolutions involve the direct attempts of individuals to change their current reality in

the hopes of creating something better. Integrating preexisting notions of solidarity with public performances of dissent, revolutions necessitate the disruption of everyday life as they attempt to create the conditions necessary for the realization of new forms of being. The Velvet Revolution of 1989 is a fitting example in its attempt to realize the ideal of self-determination and individual autonomy in the dominant systems shaping the nature of everyday life. For many in Czech society, though, the revolution may have wiped out the structures of the communist system, but the type of consciousness cultivated under successive years of totalitarian control remained; a consciousness wed to strong leaders and dominant ideologies. The overarching shared experience of life under a totalitarian system that created the very possibility of a samizdat body of literature and corresponding "parallel culture" was also responsible for the persistence of a consciousness that was supposed to disappear with the demise of the old order. Yet as the persistence of a consciousness fostered through normalization demonstrates, it will be through the construction of new types of shared experiences within the current paradigm that new types of self and collective consciousness will emerge.

As individuals whose consciousness is situated in the world, we are consistently involved in the remaking of our own reality and the social world in which that reality is located. If we approach an analysis of revolution as an attempt to realize certain ways of being in the world, an in depth look reveals the ways in which decisions regarding the types of media we consume and the bodies of knowledge to which we then subscribe, impact the manner in which we organize collectively and try to create society anew. In a world defined by the dominance of the television and the broadcast image, it has become increasingly important to think reflexively about the nature of our knowledge and the sources from which we derive ideas of the self. As we move through the world and participate in the variety of shared experiences implicit to social existence,

we reinforce our preexisting understandings of the world, but also create new understandings to serve as the basis for future notions of solidarities outside the constraints of our current identity formations.

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