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Amidst the Wonders of the City: Countenances of Moscow in Barbara Włodarczyk's *Wide Tracks**

ABSTRACT: The article analyses the various countenances of Moscow which have been presented by Barbara Włodarczyk in the cycle of television reportages *Wide Tracks*. The text focuses on illustrating the specific features of a film report that allow its author to present the wondrous picture of the Russian capital emerging from the particular fragments of the discussed reportages. Moreover, as a result of juxtaposition of the reports from that part of the city, which overwhelms one with its richness and splendour, with the accounts from these corners of Moscow in which the continuous struggle for survival takes place, the article examines the internal contradictions which may be observed within the depicted urban space. The analysed cycle also exposes the series of political conflicts which undermine the immaculate image of Moscow as a wondrous city, presented by some of the characters of the discussed film pictures, and simultaneously, it allows one to discover some new, less known countenances of the metropolis.

KEYWORDS: reportage, Moscow, wonder, city, countenance

* Barbara Włodarczyk, *Szerokie Tory* [*Wide Tracks*], Telewizja Polska [Polish State Television], <http://www.tvp.pl/filmoteka/film-dokumentalny/historia/szerokie-tory/>, Copyright 2015—translation of the title taken from Polish State Television, <http://sales.tvp.pl/21766327/wide-tracks#> used also in other texts referring to the cycle; the wonders of urban landscape are related to many times in M. Christine Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 146–47, 209, 369. Adopting various countenances and adjusting them to the inhabitants and tourists' expectations—a capacity that, among others, Michael Moran discerns as a quality possessed by the Polish

To see the look of the wandering peasant when he approaches Moscow!—when, yet afar off, the sound of her thousand bells is wafted upon his ear!—when the proud and beautiful spectacle of her towers, and domes, and spires, unfolds itself to his eye! He pauses—he, this untamed savage, this creature of the scenes of the perishing body—in a tumult of awe, affection, and delight! He pulls off his hat, makes the sign of the cross upon his brow, shoulders, and bosom, clasps his hands upon his chest, and bows his body to the earth. He advances another step towards the Holy City; and then sinks upon his knees, and falls down upon his face, thouching the ground with his forehead.

Leitch Richie, *A Journey to St. Petersburg and Moscow through Courland and Livonia* (1836)

The “holy” image of Moscow intimidating a traveller is the motif emerging not only from the introductory quotation, but also from other early travel and diaristic accounts of journeys to the city.¹ Although in Leitch Ritchie’s depiction the traveller is a simple countryman, in many travel reports the amazed wanderer is represented by the writer himself/herself who, astounded by the size and the plethora of antique edifices—the main elements apparently evoking the notably religious sensations and

country (Moran, *A Country in the Moon. Travels in Search of the Heart of Poland* (London: Granta Books, 2008), 29—is also broadly discussed with reference to Poland in my article: Monika Kowalczyk-Piaseczna, “On the Reverse Side of Europe: Images of Poland in Michael Moran, Edward Enfield and Tom Fort’s Reportages from the East,” *Studia Litteraria Universitatis Iagellonicae Cracoviensis*, no. 9 (2014): 127–40.

1 Among others see: Sir James Abbott, *Narrative of a Journey from Herat to Khiva, Moscow and St. Petersburg, during the Late Russian Invasion of Khiva* (London: James Madden, 1856); or Fanny M. Thomson, *Memoranda of a Journey to Moscow in the Year 1856* (Liverpool: G. Smith, Watts & Co., New York Public Library, 1859). This symbolic meaning of Moscow and its holiness is presented among others by Thomson in *Memoranda of a Journey to Moscow*. It is also described in Ryszard Kapuściński’s *The Empire [Imperium]*, (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 2008), which has been examined in detail in my article „Podróż do wnętrza ‘Imperium’: ‘Wschód najbliższy’ oczami Ryszarda Kapuścińskiego” [“Travel to the Imperial Interior: ‘The Nearest East’ through the Eyes of Ryszard Kapuściński”], in *Interyory/Eksteriory*, ed. Zbigniew Białas and Paweł Jędrzejko, special issue, *Er(r)go. Teoria — Literatura — Kultura*, no. 24/25 (2012): 81–89.

awe in the visitors—seems to be stunned by this overwhelming display of magnitude.²

Yet, marvelling at a cityscape certainly has not been limited to that of Moscow and the interest in a city as a peculiar framework of objects and places, has been raised in its visitors and inhabitants alike ever since the great world metropolises came into existence.³ As it was not until the development of epistolary accounts, journal writing and, ultimately, the genre of travel reportage, that this interest could be transformed into a written form and shared with those deprived of the possibility to experience it directly, the emergence of these literary forms, capable of framing the experience of astoundment elicited by a cityscape, quite expectedly evoked a great dose of enthusiasm in their respective readers.⁴

That Moscow is still considered to be a city that may provide one with a number of wondrous experiences is constantly confirmed by many contemporary travel reports which, due to the symbolic—revered—representation of the city, in the form of written accounts from the Russian capital or television documentary coverages from the area, allow their authors to convince the audience that seeing the city as a miraculous place, often evoking religious sensations and beliefs, is still common among the visitors to the place.⁵ The elements that contribute to this

2 See, for example, Thomson, *Memoranda of a Journey to Moscow*; Walter Benjamin, *Moscow Diary*, ed. Gary Smith (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).

3 The city constantly attracting new settlers and visitors in the past and in the contemporary times is aptly depicted in Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory*, 204.

4 In “The Journey and Its Narratives,” Tzvetan Todorov (70) presents the development of travel writing, ascribing the particular popularity of the genre to “the sense of [...] superiority” that the accounts of the other worlds have usually evoked in their readers. Todorov, *The Morals of History*, trans. Alyson Waters (Minneapolis, MN: The University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 60–70.

5 See, for example, Robert Perkowitz, *Lisbon to Moscow: A Photo Journal Experience of a 2003 Bicycle Tour Across Europe* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2006); Kate Young, *Trans-Siberian Odyssey: 5,000 Miles by Train from Beijing to Moscow* (Leicester, UK: Upfront Publishing, 2012); Russell Fraser, *The Three Romes: Moscow, Constantinople, and Rome* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2009); Kapuściński, *Imperium*, or the analysis of his reportage in my article „Podróż do wnętrza Imperium.”

wonderful picture of the Russian capital, allowing to rank it among sacred destination points, are numerous, as both the Church buildings and the splendour of the secular areas of the city may evoke equal sense of admiration in the visitors of Moscow.⁶ That this sanctified representation of the city has prevailed throughout centuries is aptly depicted by William Greener in *The Story of Moscow*, where the author presents the aims for creating and sustaining the “holy” image of the capital:

Holy Moscow comprises all that has served to nurse and sustain the faith amidst infidel aggression; the white-walled and golden-crowned city is symbolic of the lasting reward of heroic endeavour in the upwards struggle of the race towards supremacy. Not indestructible itself, but its spirit undying; razed time after time only to appear again greater and more glorious than before, Moscow seems to the Russians not so much a part of the national entity personified in empire, as the very soul of his race; possessed, even as each individual, with strength to endure adversity and unflinching vigour to accomplish a predestined purpose.⁷

As Greener observes, it is the sense of power and dominance offered by the sacred image of Moscow that has provoked Russian citizens to treat their capital as an embodiment of sanctity. The early and the contemporary travel accounts, in turn, suggest that sustaining the picture of the mighty influential city has incited the travellers from around

6 Thomson, *Memoranda of a Journey to Moscow*, 210–11; There are, of course, other aspects of a city that may evoke wonder. A great example of admiration of the less glamorous and more everyday side of life in the city is provided, among others, in John Gay’s poem “Trivia: or, The Art of Walking the Streets of London” (London for Bernard Lintot, Oxford University Collection, 1730) where he is enthralled by the grimy, shabby urban surroundings. This approach can be related to Moscow or to any other city, however, undoubtedly, Włodarczyk’s reportages show that the splendour and glamour that Moscow is apparently brimful with, seem to first catch the attention of most travellers. That notwithstanding, in the further part of this article, I also analyse Włodarczyk’s fascination with the less attractive parts of the city.

7 William O. Greener, *The Story of Moscow* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1910), 172.

the world to visit the glamorous capital and experience the plenitude of its wonders.⁸ Thus, the aim of the present study is to examine these elements of the visual accounts of the city, which allow their viewers to perceive certain aspects of Moscow as wondrous. To that end, a study of a television report, as a medium capable of conveying and elucidating the impressions and feelings the cityscape and people living there evoke in a reporter,⁹ will be based on the analysis of a series of television reportages made by Barbara Włodarczyk in the capital of Russia. Following the main idea proposed in the discussed reportages that regard Moscow as one of the examples of marvellous cityscapes, the study will focus on the particular events, lifestyles, views, and countenances the city and its inhabitants represent, with the aim of distinguishing the particular qualities that allow one to see the place as the “city of marvels.”¹⁰

Several reportages selected from *Wide Tracks*—a series of television broadcasts made by Włodarczyk for the Polish State Television—illustrate the diversity of images and guises that a visitor to the city may be regaled with.¹¹ The reporter imparts the specific nature of wonder

8 See, for example, Ritchie, *A Journey to St. Petersburg and Moscow*; Thomson, *Memoranda of a Journey to Moscow*; Benjamin, *Moscow Diary*; Włodarczyk, *Wide Tracks*.

9 Warren Buckland, *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 10, 100–101; With regard to the “theories of enunciation” (Buckland, 78) developed, among others, by Francisco Casetti or Christian Metz and all the specific features that a film picture possesses including, among other things, the capacity to convey images, reflect reality, evoke impressions, establish relation with the viewers and numerous other aspects connected with the film image, it is worth referring to the entire work by Buckland in which he relates to the studies of many famous semioticians, linguists, and film theorists; see also Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory*, 125.

10 A term used by Eduardo Mendoza as a title of his book about Barcelona. Mendoza, *The City of Marvels*, trans. Bernard Molloy (New York: Pocket Books, 1990); I use the term after Mendoza in reference to Moscow in the entire article.

11 Włodarczyk emphasises the diversity of images that Moscow presents in the *Wide Tracks* television series as well as in many other of her reportages about Russia. She also depicts this phenomenon in the book entitled *Nie ma jednej Rosji* [“There Is No One Russia”] (a publication that includes a number of reports broadcast in the television reportage cycle) (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2013)—translation of the title taken from Łukasz Wojtusik, “A Very Large Country Called Russia.

that Moscow evokes in her to the viewers, and “in an accessible and interesting way [she] help[s] [them to] [...] overcome stereotypes, comprehend the way of thinking [...] better, and learn about the conditions of living, social mechanisms and changes that have occurred during the last five years in the East.”¹² Włodarczyk admits that “Russia is not homogeneous,”¹³ and, as one may learn from her reports, neither is its capital. Therefore providing representation of the everyday Russian reality—each of her documentary reportages constitutes a one-day coverage depicting the life of a particular inhabitant of Moscow—she creates an image of the Russian capital consisting of independent elements, which together construct an array of people, objects, and events.¹⁴ Combining

On Barbara Włodarczyk's *Nie ma jednej Rosji [There Is No One Russia]* in *New Eastern Europe*, no. 4 (XIII) (2014): 190–93, <http://issuu.com/neweasteurope/docs/nee42014preview>; see also “On the Reverse Side of Europe.”

12 Polish State Television „Szerokie Tory” [“Wide Tracks—About the Series”—o cyklu], <http://www.tvp.pl/filmoteka/film-dokumentalny/historia/szerokie-tory/o-cyklu>, Copyright 2015; I have translated the comment on the series cited from the State Television website, as well as all the following quotations from Włodarczyk's book and the particular episodes of the *Wide Tracks* cycle. The specific capacity to share individual experience that a documentary filmmaker appears to possess is well explained in Buckland's *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film*. In Włodarczyk's way of travelling and reportage making, in turn, I discern the features of “empathic civilization” which Jeremy Rifkin diagnoses as the new condition of contemporary societies based on an “embodied experience—that is, participation with the other—and [...] the ability to read and respond to another person ‘as if’ he or she were oneself, [which] is the key to how human beings engage in the world, create individual identity, develop language, learn to reason, become social, establish cultural narratives, and define reality and existence.” Rifkin, *The Empathic Civilization: The Race to Global Consciousness in a World in Crisis* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 142–43.

13 Włodarczyk—a quotation from a meeting organised by the Students' Research circle Russian Roulette at the University of Silesia, as part of the series *Closer to Russia* (May 28, 2012).

14 I refer here to Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter's observations with regard to urban architecture, which the authors find reflected in the general structure of a city. Rowe, Koetter, *Collage City* (Cambridge, MA; London: MIT Press, 1983), 3–4, 63–66. For further information on the subject see also Thomas P. Brockelman, *The Frame and the Mirror: On Collage and the Postmodern* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2001), 52–53, 156–164. For the description of realistic reflection of reality in the film image, as depicted by George Lakoff see Buckland, *The Cognitive*

the particular single accounts from Moscow, the reporter forms a general picture of the city that, as it turns out in her reportages, gradually exposes its wondrous aspects.

The City in the Object-Glass

In order to study the contemporary film reports, which for the purpose of the current analysis *Wide Tracks* series represents, the origins of the genre need to be examined. Before the emergence of a documentary form of reporting, the urge to capture the experience of the cityscape wonder and, more importantly, the need to share it with the receiver, were realised in such visual methods of representation as sketches, icons or graphic images.¹⁵ However, since these forms of depiction were apparently not yet capable of capturing the atmosphere and exceptionality of the city in its entirety, the attainment of the expected impact on the receiver was still largely dependent on his or her imaginative aptitude.¹⁶ Nonetheless, as M. Christine Boyer argues in her book addressing the characteristics of the cityscape image creation, it appeared to be the only means of representation which allowed their authors to convey the most of the urban charm to the viewers.

We grasp the immediacy of city life through its imagery. Sometimes thrilled by the imposed vision and power of the sovereign

Semiotics of Film, 47–48. This phenomenon is also analysed in Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory*, 125.

15 Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory*, 204. For the origins of travel writing genre see, for example, G. Harry Jamieson, *Visual Communication: More Than Meets the Eye* (Bristol, Chicago: Intellect Books, 2007); Joanne Morra, Marquard Smith, eds., *Visual Culture: What is Visual Culture Studies?*, in *Visual Culture: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies*, vol. I (Abingdon, New York: Taylor & Francis imprint in Routledge, 2006).

16 Steve Hoelscher, “Imaginative Geographies” and Joan Schwartz, “Photography, Geography And” in *Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, ed. Barney Warf (Thousand Oaks, CA; London; New Delhi: SAGE Publications 2006), 244–45, 354–56. The impact on the viewer, which has its source mainly in the cinematic capacity for “transforming the manner in which spectators perceived the space” (Boyer, 107) is studied, among others, in Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory*.

spectacle, we are as well mesmerized by the visual facticity of everyday sights. If scenographic forms of the city most often present exceptional and phantasmagorical views that lie outside of the ordinary, then there is another look, a more disciplined observing eye, that catalogs the minutiae and facts of everyday life. [...] In the historical roots of topographic views of the city, we find the same primacy of the visual and pictorial, combining the spectacle with documentation; placing the spectator inside the panoptic machine, intensifying in a blackened room, through a peep box, a camera obscura, or urban observatory, the experience of an isolated viewer gazing upon the many fascinating things presented on the urban stage, but a gaze that classified, categorized, and judged the verisimilitude of the projected imagery.¹⁷

Boyer emphasises the common desire to grasp and retain the city images and experiences, apparently held by both the creators and the observers of these depictions. For according to the author, gaining access to the “observatory” appears to be enticing, as this peculiar “urban documentation” provides an opportunity to experience the same source of awe that the documenter was offered. She also observes that though the capabilities of a topographer or a photographer remain of considerable importance to the process of creating a visual report, the images represented by means of sketches and pictures undoubtedly provide a veracious reflection of the original city view which had evoked the reporter’s astoundment.

With the emergence of the documentary genre, the plausibility of the city representation was to be facilitated even further, due to the capacity of a film picture to feature a series of movable, animate objects and characters, and the events that may be followed by the viewers with

17 Presenting this argument, the author refers to the observations of Leon Battista Alberti—“Italian humanist, architect, and principal initiator of Renaissance art theory,” Joan Kelly-Gadol, “Leon Battista Alberti” in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Leon-Battista-Alberti>, Copyright 2014—and his “topographical analysis of the sites and monuments of Rome.” Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory*, 204.

only a minute involvement of their imagination.¹⁸ A film theorist, Warren Buckland, determines “a blurred image, jolting camera movements, hesitant pan shots, abrupt editing, long sequence shots, insufficient light, film grain, direct sound (as opposed to studio sound), and real background ambience”¹⁹ to be the characteristics of a documentary report which make the represented world more accessible and authentic to the viewer, as this “number of specific textual figures prompt the reader to take the cameraperson as the embodiment of the real enunciator.”²⁰ Thus, according to Buckland, it is the object-glass and the documentary reporter’s mediation that allow the viewers to obtain a permit to the most inaccessible parts of the city. What should be borne in mind, however, is the specificity of this means of engaging the external observer into the represented world, which may never occur without being preceded by the process of interpretation that both the reporter and the viewer naturally perform.²¹

Yet, as Włodarczyk’s reportages illustrate, this process impedes neither the veracity of the general depiction of the city image, nor of the seemingly minute elements that the city consists of. The feeling of wonder that accompanies her during the individual encounters with the inhabitants of the Russian capital, she aptly conveys to her viewers by

18 Casetti, quoted in Buckland, *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film*, 61–62; Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright also observe that the visual message exerts a much more powerful impact on the receiver than the travel writing pieces. Sturken and Cartwright, Introduction to *Practices of Looking*, in *Visual Culture: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies*, 27–33. The change of the role of imagination that occurred with the emergence of a film report is shown in Erik Barnouw, *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) and Buckland, *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film*.

19 Buckland, *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film*, 101.

20 Ibid., 100. In developing the theory of enunciation and reality reflection Buckland grounds his observations, among others, in the study of Christian Metz (Buckland, 52–54) and George Lakoff (Buckland, 47–48). See also Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory*, 125.

21 Francisco J. Gonzalez, *Plato and Heidegger: A Question of Dialogue* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 116. To learn more about the interpretative process see also Buckland, *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film*, 51 and Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory*, 27, 218, 375.

means of certain transposition which the visual representation allows her to perform.²² And though the process of editing, including a selection of takes and individual situations being featured or excised from the records of these encounters, is still beyond the viewers reach, the impressions that the camera images are able to provide them with in a documentary report, seem to be sufficient to reflect the various countenances that Moscow has to offer, and to allow them for the admittance to the “urban observatory.”²³

The “City of Lights”²⁴

Each of the characters of Włodarczyk’s reportages seems to confirm Buckland’s observations regarding enunciation theories, serving as a mediator between the Moscow reality and the viewers’ conception of it. The reporter does not restrict herself to the representation of any particular economic or social group living in Moscow, thus creating a rich and diversified image of the capital’s area. Yet, as her reportages illustrate, it is usually the affluent and dazzling side of the city that first absorbs the

22 Buckland, *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film*, 100–102; Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory*, 107.

23 Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory*, 204. The selection, which an author of a travel account is necessarily engaged in, as choosing the elements that will be presented in the edited form, he or she completes the first stage of interpretative process (Gonzalez, *Plato and Heidegger*, 116), I describe in detail in another of my articles: “Peregrinating Objects. Consumptive Capacities of the Traveller’s Personal Items in Robert Byron’s *Road to Oxiana* and Jason Elliot’s *Unexpected Light*” published in *Identity and Intercultural Exchange in Travel and Tourism*, Tourism and Cultural Change series (Bristol/Buffalo/Toronto: Multilingual Matters/Channel View, 2015), 133–145; see also Buckland referring to Roger Odin’s (in Buckland, 89) and Rudolf Arnheim’s (in Buckland, 6) observations in that field in Buckland, *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film*.

24 The phrase used most often with regard to Paris, for example in such literary works as: Robert H. Sherard, *Oscar Wilde. The Story of an Unhappy Friendship* (New York: Haskell House Publishers Ltd., 1970), 94; or a more contemporary one: David Downie, *Paris, Paris: Journey into the City of Light*. Photographs by Alison Harris, with a foreword by Diane Johnson (New York: Broadway Books, 2011).

visitors' attention. In Włodarczyk's accounts, Moscow lures one with the glamour of luxurious boutiques and overwhelms one with the excess of commodities it has to offer; it is a city of opulence and variety, which allures one with its charm and profusion; it is finally "a city that never sleeps."²⁵ And though it still displays its "proud and beautiful spectacle of her towers, and domes, and spires, [which] unfolds itself to [one's] eye,"²⁶ the particular episodes of *Wide Tracks* indicate that presently it is a place of prosperity and development, combining the archaic beauty of sacral and secular edifices with splendour which provides nourishment for the consumerist desires.²⁷

In one of the reportages from the cycle, Włodarczyk and the prospective viewers of her account are guided around this enticing cityscape by Kirill, a nineteen-year-old student who earns his living taking photographs in the Moscow upscale dancing clubs.²⁸ Thus, not only is the viewer presented with the city image rendered to him or her by the reporter, but the picture of Moscow seems to be additionally filtered through the eyes of its native inhabitant, thus being subjected to the process of double interpretation.²⁹ Uncovering the night countenance of the

25 Reference to the New York City as the "city that never sleeps" appears for example in: John Kander and Fred Ebb, *New York, New York* (Copyright: Emi Unart Catalog Inc./EMI Music Publishing, 1977), <http://www.emimusicpub.com/> (see *Encyclopaedia Britannica* <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Kander-and-Ebb>, Copyright 2015) or Murray Pomerance, ed., *City That Never Sleeps: New York and the Filmic Imagination* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007). In Włodarczyk's reportages such references, combined with the reporter's fascination with the city's display of lights, occur with regard to Moscow (Włodarczyk, *There Is No One Russia*, 228–29). I use these references after the reporter throughout the present article.

26 Ritchie, *A Journey to St. Petersburg and Moscow*, 186.

27 For the harmonious combination of the sacral and the secular in Moscow see also Timothy J. Colton, *Moscow: Governing the Socialist Metropolis* (Cambridge, MA; London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), 39–41; Maurice Paleologue, quoted in Caroline Brooke, *Moscow: A Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 2; Włodarczyk, *There Is No One Russia*, 37, 45, 229.

28 Włodarczyk, *Wide Tracks*, ep. 23. In Polish State Television *Wide Tracks* [*Szerokie tory*] <http://www.tvp.pl/filmoteka/film-dokumentalny/historia/szerokie-tory>.

29 The characteristics of this double mediation in the interpretation of a cityscape, with regard to the relation between the reporter and his or her

capital, Kirill provides his tour participant with an opportunity to experience wonder and awe—the sensations which, as the introductory passage has demonstrated, the city tends to evoke in its visitors. Włodarczyk, in turn, occupying a position of the direct witness to the presented events, becomes capable of exploiting her own enunciatory potential, as the camera—providing her with the mediatory tool—enables her to endow the viewers with the capacities of seeing, interpreting and, at least partially, verifying the description of the city presented to them in the form of a film image.³⁰ One of such vivid representations of the Russian capital that the viewer is offered with in Włodarczyk's report is presented below.

Manicure at midnight or an appointment with a solicitor at dawn—in Moscow these things do not surprise anyone, because the Russian capital is full of life for 24 hours. It is one of the most conspicuous signs of its change. Here, one can do shopping, whiten one's teeth, swim in a pool, give a coat to a drycleaner, have a haircut done in a hairdresser's or even have a car serviced at any time. It is all because the inhabitants of Moscow counting several million citizens, work longer and

guide and the prospective viewer is again well explained through the theories on enunciation presented in Buckland's study (Buckland, *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film*), yet the importance of the guide figure needs some further elucidation. The choice of a guide is of course dependant on the traveller's expectations, and thus it may be, as in St. Frances de Sales, *Of the Necessity of a Guide in Order to Enter on the Path of Devotion and Make Progress Therein* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2010), a spiritual guide who will uncover the religious paths before the traveller, or someone who seems most knowledgeable and apt for the job, as in Henry Peacham's "The Art of Living in London" in *The Complete Gentleman: The Truth of Our Times, and The Art of Living in London*, ed. Virgil B. Heltzel (Cornell University Press, 1962). In case of a contemporary traveller who, as Włodarczyk, intends to be exposed to the same experience of the city to which its local dweller is exposed to and then relate this experience to the viewers of her report, the choice of a native inhabitant who lives in the city and presumably knows its least known parts seems to be most appropriate (a tendency observed not only in Barbara Włodarczyk's *Wide Tracks* but also, for example, in Benjamin's *Moscow Diary*).

30 Buckland, *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film*, 77–78; Gonzalez, *Plato and Heidegger*, 116.

longer, and spend more and more time on commuting. That is why only night is left for their private lives and entertainment. The Russian capital is a city for the strong and healthy.³¹

From this passage one may easily infer that the night countenance of the city is even more alluring than its daytime counterpart. The glitter of lights and the burgeoning nightlife may undoubtedly be seductive, and draw the young and affluent individuals to the Russian capital. For it “is one of the most expensive cities in the world [...]”,³² “vibrant with life for 24 hours a day.”³³ As the reporter is driven around the city, she gains an opportunity to become a participant in this rich and ostentatious display of lights, for at night “the centre of the Russian capital is almost as bright as during the day. The streets are illuminated by street lamps, colourful glaring neon lights flicker on bridges and house facades, huge electronic billboards, phosphorescent clocks and ruby-coloured stars on Kremlin glow.”³⁴

Though together with Kirill, Włodarczyk has a chance to visit some refined and expensive dancing clubs in Moscow frequented only by the most influential individuals, in her reportage, she evidently assures the viewers that the city nightlife consists of much more than just the club entertainment. As she observes, in Moscow people visit bookstores and hairdressing salons late at night, and though the places “offer their services for a price approximately twenty per cent higher than during the day,”³⁵ they still enjoy a great number of customers coming to their premises at the most peculiar hours. For there are many wealthy people in Moscow, the reporter claims, who lead the lives of luxury, whereas the city appears ready to satisfy their most sophisticated needs at any time.³⁶

31 Włodarczyk, *Wide Tracks*, ep. 23.

32 Włodarczyk, *There Is No One Russia*, 230.

33 *Ibid.*, 228.

34 *Ibid.*, 229

35 Włodarczyk, *There Is No One Russia*, 237; Włodarczyk, *Wide Tracks*, ep. 23.

36 “The Russian capital is a great market for luxurious goods [...] as the local Croesuses always choose the most expensive items from the price offers. If they buy a watch, it costs tens of thousands of dollars, if they buy jewellery, it costs millions.” Włodarczyk, *There Is No One Russia*, 37.

Moreover, “for a certain number of Russian millionaires, poverty is so exotic that it fascinates them. The young millionaires in Moscow [...] go out to the streets of the city in [a homeless person’s] disguise and beg for money. Whoever arouses more pity, wins.”³⁷ Such unusual amusements aiming at the admittance to the world of the poor which on the one hand, may seem deterring, yet, on the other hand, appears fascinating, are not a novelty and may be regarded as an expression of the young citizens’ surfeit with their own riches and a pursue of a more ordinary life.³⁸ Most evidently, however, these peculiar forms of entertainment seem to suggest that the capital has many interesting facilities to proffer, that it constantly lures new enthusiasts of the glamorous life, and fascinates them with the spectrum of unusual opportunities provided at their disposal, allowing them to “experience something that differs entirely from their everyday lives.”³⁹

In another of her reportages, Włodarczyk spends a day with Julia Dalakian “one of the leading fashion designers in Moscow,”⁴⁰ during

37 Włodarczyk, *There Is No One Russia*, 41; Włodarczyk, *Wide Tracks*, eps. 21, 23.

38 Such tendency of entering the world of the poor and becoming a part of their society was many times described in literature, as it seems to have fascinated such authors as, for example Jack London. Cf. Richard W. Etulain, ed., *Jack London on the Road: the Tramp Diary and Other Hobo Writings* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1979) or, more contemporarily, Neil Gaiman who objecting against the loss of values and the growing fascination with money in *American Gods* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003) “tells the story of a conflict between traditional gods, with their focus on morality and community, and a new breed of deities devoted to modern concerns: money, celebrity, decadence and technology” (Fraser McAlpine, “Neil Gaiman’s American Gods is Coming to Starz,” June 2015, <http://www.bbcamerica.com/anglophenia/2015/06/neil-gaimans-american-gods-is-coming-to-starz/>), whereas in “*Neverwhere* TV series that the BBC made [...] [he depicts the] backstage [...] London” (Gaiman, 2010) which “falls through the cracks.” (Gaiman, “Neil Gaiman Introduces *Neverwhere*” <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/expat/expatlife/6915542/Neil-Gaiman-introduces-Neverwhere.html>, *The Telegraph*, January 3, 2010); Christine Photinos, among other authors, writes about that trend in American literature in “The Tramp in American Literature, 1873–1939” *AmeriQuests* 5, no. 1 (2008), <http://ejournals.library.vanderbilt.edu/index.php/ameriquests/article/viewFile/62/60>.

39 Włodarczyk, *There Is No One Russia*, 41.

40 Włodarczyk, *Wide Tracks*, ep. 21; Włodarczyk, *There Is No One Russia*, 28.

which Julia presents the extremely wealthy world of fashion to the reporter, at the same time emphasising the sacrifices one often has to make to become its part. As Julia claims, “young Russian girls think that [...] [this] world is a pass to a better life.”⁴¹ Yet, when the designer invites the reporter to a casting to one of her fashion shows, the requirements which the girls have to meet in order to obtain this “pass,” turn out to be almost unattainable. The viewer may see, however, that it does not deter the girls from trying, as the world they strive to receive an admittance to, seems too alluring to them to daunt them with a single rebuff. That this desired world is one of inconceivable opulence is blatantly confirmed in the report by the descriptions of the clientele visiting fashion shows and designer boutiques, such as the one that Julia owns:

[Julia] dresses businesswomen, celebrities, and wives of the wealthy Russians. Moscow is a paradise for the fashion market. After a few decades of deficit, when the elegant outfits could be found only in the Western fashion magazines, the wealthy Russian women want to have everything that is best. They spare no expense on that. In Moscow there is one rule ‘live with the moment, because you never know what may happen tomorrow.’⁴²

The final statement quoted above clearly suggests that an approach to life with the overt unconcern about one’s future may be frequently observed among the wealthy citizens of the capital, and that here, rarely may one find affluent individuals saving their money for the years to come. That “the money may be lost within one day,”⁴³ Włodarczyk illustrates recalling the case of “Mikhail Khodorkovsky—the oil magnate and the richest man in Russia, [who] today, serves a several year’s sentence in the Russian prison camp, [...] [having committed] economic offences [...]”⁴⁴ The reporter claims that, bearing this and many similar instances in mind, the Russian millionaires cherish every day of their

41 Włodarczyk, *There Is No One Russia*, 35; Włodarczyk, *Wide Tracks*, ep 21.

42 Włodarczyk, *There Is No One Russia*, 28; *ibid.*

43 Włodarczyk, *There Is No One Russia*, 44.

44 *Ibid.*

wealthy existence, flaunting their fortune and “living as if every day was to be their last.”⁴⁵

As the further examples of reportages will illustrate, however, the less affluent and thus seemingly less attractive part of Moscow is as extensive as this opulent one, though it remains hidden, eclipsed by the glamorous countenance of the Russian capital, and its “recesses”⁴⁶ inhabited by a number of homeless and unemployed, constitute a frequently disregarded side of this wealthy and prosperous city.⁴⁷ Yet, in her accounts, Włodarczyk immerses in these parts of Moscow which are concealed from the visitor’s perfunctory glance, to subsequently portray them to the viewers in her documentary reports.

The Urban Recesses

In *Wide Tracks*, Moscow consists of parallel realities which create the most diverse and vivid image of its expanse. Depicting the variety of cultures, traditions, beliefs and economic statuses that the characters of Włodarczyk’s reportages represent, the reporter simultaneously indicates the interdependence and the harmony in which the worlds of poverty and affluence apparently exist.⁴⁸

45 Ibid.

46 I have adopted the term after James Walvin who uses it with reference to the poverty-stricken parts of the English urbanscape from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Walvin, *English Urban Life: 1776–1851* (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1984), 91. I use the concept with regard to Moscow from this point of the article onwards.

47 Włodarczyk, *There Is No One Russia*, 237–38. For the mixture of wealth and poverty and the mutual interdependence of these two parallel spheres of life, impossible to function as separate autonomous entities, see also Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory*, 9, and Brooke, *Moscow: A Cultural History*, 183–214. I repeatedly refer to that phenomenon described in these studies in further parts of the present article.

48 These two realities, of course, are not the only countenances that Moscow possesses and that are presented in *Wide Tracks* reportage series, thus, by no means may they be regarded as elements composing a complete image of the city. Creating juxtapositions of wealth and poverty, the sacral and the secular or presenting the

Russia has 62 billionaires and one hundred thousand millionaires. They set the trend of the metropolis. But even the night is not able to efface the contrasts which are a sign of the times in Moscow. [...] There are 2 million estimated emigrants from the former Russian Republics. Because luxurious cars, elegant restaurants and wealthy shops attract like a magnet.⁴⁹

In another of her accounts the reporter claims that “a huge amount of homeless people living on charity, paradoxically proves that Moscow is a rich and prosperous city to which people come hoping for a better future.”⁵⁰ This claim seems to be confirmed in the reportage by the homeless residents of Moscow who admit that they came to this city, because here ‘tearing off’ at least a little piece of its plenty for oneself seemed attainable. Since “the official rate of unemployment in Russia is only half per cent, [...] a number of immigrants come [to Moscow] from Ukraine, Tajikistan, and Moldavia.”⁵¹ And even though “every tenth of them ends up on the street,”⁵² the glamorous countenance of the city apparently remaining beyond their reach, the reporter shows that they can still find their own way to endure the hardships that living in the “recesses” of the capital entails, and that the vast territory of the city nevertheless appears to be more favourable to them than the places they originally came from.

Hence, Włodarczyk’s observations may lead to deductions that the plenteous and the indigent realities in Moscow do not exist separately

arrangement of political favours among two most conspicuous political parties is a tendency of such authors as, for example, Colton, *Moscow: Governing the Socialist Metropolis*; Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory*; Brooke, *Moscow: A Cultural History*, or Włodarczyk, *Wide Tracks*, since it allows one to depict the various contradictions which, as Włodarczyk proves in her reports, Moscow is brimming with. Following that tendency, in the further parts of this article, I depict the various contradictory images of the city, selected from the reporter’s accounts.

49 Włodarczyk, *Wide Tracks*, ep. 23; Włodarczyk, *There Is No One Russia*, 238.

50 Włodarczyk, *Wide Tracks*, ep. 16.

51 Ibid.

52 Włodarczyk, *Wide Tracks*, eps. 16, 23; Włodarczyk, *There Is No One Russia*, 238.

or autonomously, but that these dimensions appear to complete one another. Moreover, the reporter's account seems to prove that owing to the poor, the more wealthy inhabitants of the city tend to appreciate the social position they have managed to achieve, because belonging to the world of affluence confirms their privileged status in the urban hierarchy. The homeless mendicants with scarce maintenance, in turn, evidently prefer to bear the burden of their poverty in Moscow rather than in any less luxurious city, as the wealthy inhabitants of the Russian capital seem eager to justify their own well-being with the frequent acts of sharing their wealth with the more necessitous individuals.⁵³

Apparently aware of the essential coexistence of these seemingly opposite worlds, and thus inclined to search for the representatives of the less advantaged of them in the most opulent part of the capital, the reporter meets Lena, a fifty-four-year-old homeless woman from Ukraine, who earns her living begging in the streets of Moscow.⁵⁴ In the reportage, Włodarczyk accompanies Lena in her daily routines, thus being offered an opportunity to share the toil that the homeless person's everyday existence in Moscow proves to entail. Being allowed to observe Lena at her usual activities and feeling the same pain that being exposed to the unyielding cold brings, the journalist is shown to experience the uninviting reality of the Russian capital. Not only does it allow her to empathise with the main character of her report, but it significantly increases her credibility in the eyes of her viewers, making her enunciation genuine.⁵⁵

Thus, drawing upon the reporter's vivid account, the viewers may learn that sustaining the difficult conditions in Moscow is attenuated with the city offering one a place to spend the night, and allowing one to cadge enough money to be able to provide oneself with the essential means for living. Moreover, as the main character of the episode herself admits, the status of a homeless person entitles her to obtain aid from the Orthodox Church where she is fed and provided with

53 Włodarczyk, *Wide Tracks*, ep. 16; see also C. Brooke, *Moscow: A Cultural History*, 183–214 and Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory*, 9.

54 Włodarczyk, *Wide Tracks*, ep. 16.

55 Buckland, *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film*, 77–78, 100–102.

something to wear, and in front of which Lena spends countless hours hoping for the benevolence of the faithful. Yet, though the generosity that the city apparently bestows Włodarczyk's character with may be expected to evoke a positive attitude towards the capital of Russia, it may soon become overt to the reportage viewers that for Lena it seems difficult to muster enough optimism to look into the future with hope. She does not seem to regard the Russian "holy city"⁵⁶ as this place of inexhaustible favour, and she is well aware of the fact that Moscow is changeable: once it shows a face full of mercy, another time a more reckless one, capable of destroying anyone but the strongest and the most invulnerable individuals.⁵⁷ Hence, when the reporter asks Lena about her future, she answers:

— Who will need me when I'm old?

— What will you do when you no longer have health and strength to go out in the street and beg?

— When I'm old I will die of hunger. Nobody is going to need me or feel sorry for me.⁵⁸

From Lena's words one may easily infer that Moscow may expose its less favourable face quite unexpectedly. Yet, at the same time, Włodarczyk's reportages illustrate that this volatility of the city results from the fact that it seems ready to satisfy all the different expectations that are held towards it by the visitors and citizens.⁵⁹ For as long as people strive for the city to be regarded as one of the most luxurious capitals of Europe, Moscow will satisfy their most extraordinary materialistic needs, whereas if they hope to find in it the archaic beauty of the architectural artworks, designed to bring one the peace of soul and spirit,

56 Ritchie, *A Journey to St. Petersburg and Moscow*, 186.

57 Włodarczyk, *Wide Tracks*, ep. 16; Moran, *A Country in the Moon*, 29.

58 Włodarczyk, *Wide Tracks*, ep. 16.

59 On the expectations that a particular area may be able or even willing to fulfil see Moran, *A Country in the Moon*, 29 and "On the Reverse Side of Europe"; for people's expectations towards contemporary Russia see Louis Menashe, *Moscow Believes in Tears: Russians and Their Movies* (Washington, DC: New Academia Publishing, LLC, 2010).

they may search for it among the numerous sacral buildings, scattered around the city.⁶⁰ Finally, as Włodarczyk's reportage proves, only until the wealthy people feel willing to help those in need, the needful will be an abided element of the city image.

Conflicting Desires

That the division into the wealthy and the poor inhabitants of the city is not yet the most conspicuous contradiction that Moscow tends to conceal behind its glamorous facade, is illustrated by a series of the reporter's politically-oriented accounts. Many of the discrepancies visible in the city have their source in the deep internal political conflicts that the capital has been involved in, and which now, with the growing political and social awareness of its citizens, are being demonstrated more and more ostentatiously.⁶¹ One of the most distinctive pictures of the perturbations that the community of Moscow is compelled to face, is presented in a reportage featuring Olga Bychkova, the reporter of *Echo of Moscow* Radio, with whom Włodarczyk visits one of the squares in the centre of the Russian capital during the oppositional manifestation taking place after the re-election of Vladimir Putin.⁶² Once the considerable number of police and military forces starts crowding upon the streets together with the participants of the gathering, while the adherents of the winning party are organising their own assembly in a square nearby, in the reportage it becomes clear that the centre of the

60 Brooke, *Moscow: A Cultural History*, 5–25; 184–193; Colton, *Moscow: Governing the Socialist Metropolis*, 453–750.

61 Brooke, *Moscow: A Cultural History*, 91, 98, 107, 111; Włodarczyk, *Wide Tracks*, eps. 30, 31.

62 Włodarczyk, *Wide Tracks*, ep. 31; see also Paula Obara "Wide Tracks: About Presidential Election in Russia" [„Szerokie tory: o wyborach prezydenckich w Rosji”] <http://rosyjskaruletk.edu.pl/2012/04/12/szerokie-tory-o-wyborach-prezydenckich-w-rosji/>, and Paweł Łaniewski, „Nie ma jednej Rosji. Barbara Włodarczyk. Recenzja” [“There Is No One Russia. Barbara Włodarczyk. Review”], <http://rosyjskaruletk.edu.pl/2013/05/18/nie-ma-jednej-rosji-barbara-wlodarczyk-recenzja/>, in *Rosyjska Ruletka* [Russian Roulette], Students' Russian Studies Circle, Copywright 2010–2014, <http://rosyjskaruletk.edu.pl>.

capital becomes an arena for the confrontation of the contrasting faces of Russia.⁶³

This lack of unity in Moscow, undoubtedly related to the visible chasm between the wealthy and the impoverished parts of its society, in the case of the arrangement of political favours, seems even more conspicuous, as it exposes the substantially different ways of thinking about Russia.⁶⁴ One of the parties in the report appears to follow the image of a perfect country represented by the constantly developing capital, glowing with lights and amazing the visitors and the newcomers with its wealth; another one, represents a contrary—oppositional—attitude, characterised by the citizens' disappointment with the impeccable appearance that, in the reporter's view, Moscow attempts to beguile them with. The main character of Włodarczyk's reportage, however, quite expressly pronounces for the latter approach, propagating a less idealised, yet more comprehensive way of thinking about the city, and the country in general.

To pursue that aim, Olga uses her radio auditions, whereas Yevgeniya Chirikova—a heroine of another of the reporter's politically-oriented accounts—a social activist and a dedicated follower of the oppositional approach, declares her anti-governmental attitude by personally inviting the inhabitants of Moscow to undertake conscious measures to show their dissatisfaction with the current governmental rule.⁶⁵ As the report-

63 Włodarczyk, *Wide Tracks*, ep. 31; for the variety of faces a country may present see i.a. Moran, *A Country in the Moon*, 29 or Łaniewski, "There is No One Russia. Barbara Włodarczyk. Review," whereas for the origins of the political changes in Russia see Colton, *Moscow: Governing the Socialist Metropolis*, 453–750.

64 These different approaches to the country with regard to its political situation are well presented in Loren R. Graham, *Moscow Stories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 285–86, whereas its divisions with regard to economic situation, in Brooke, *Moscow: A Cultural History*, 183–214. One of the more idealistic ways of thinking, which I refer to in the article, is represented in the reportage by a participant of the pro-government manifestation who declares: "We live in a wonderful country and I'm really content with what my life looks like. I can study, my parents are healthy, they earn good money. [...] The police presence is desired here, because they protect us [...] from the raging opposition members who beat girls and small children." Włodarczyk, *Wide Tracks*, ep. 31; see also <http://rosyjskaruletka.edu.pl/2012/04/12/szerokie-tory-o-wyborach-prezydenckich-w-rosji/>.

65 Włodarczyk, *Wide Tracks*, eps. 30, 31.

age illustrates, Yevgeniya is a controversial individual, often suspected of trying to impair the ostensibly powerful image of the Russian nation, and thus facing discontent of the Russian police forces, as well as of people who, in her belief, prefer to sustain this deceptive image created by the political authorities, rather than be disenthralled by the actual state of affairs.

Yet, neither Yevgeniya nor the other supporters of the opposition depicted in the report tend to cease to persist in their efforts, for as one of the participants of an anti-government meeting from Włodarczyk's previously described report claims, the current political condition and the economic status of an average inhabitant of Russia need to be improved.⁶⁶ Hence to give the exasperated political activists and the ordinary Moscow citizens means to divulge their growing anxieties, which only partially suppressed after the years of regime, eventually start to be proclaimed to the public, Włodarczyk offers them an opportunity to present a credible picture of the unfavourable atmosphere that pervades their country.⁶⁷ For being in the centre of the conflict allows her to personally ensure the reportage characters that none of her films will be broadcast in Russia, and thus, become their reliable confidant; whereas for the Muscovites, speaking publicly about their country's difficult position does not seem that disturbing, owing to the protective barrier that the distance between their own and the reporter's country constitutes.⁶⁸ The ease with which the reporter engages the inhabitants

66 Ibid., ep. 31.

67 For the specificity of the time of political regime in Russia and anxieties deriving from the difficult experiences of that period see Colton, *Moscow: Governing the Socialist Metropolis*, 130, 271. The necessity to demonstrate social uneasiness that the Russian citizens tend to evince is discussed in Brooke, *Moscow: A Cultural History*. For the film report as a medium for expression of individual experience I refer to Buckland, *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film*.

68 Buckland analyses the specific features of the distance that a camera seems to guarantee in Buckland, *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film*, 93. For the difficult position of the contemporary Russia see Brooke, *Moscow: A Cultural History*, 215–36. The special quality of reality description from the position of a participant of the described events, is one of the characteristics of Bronisław Malinowski's method of "direct observation" (Malinowski, *The Sexual Lives of Savages In North-Western Melanesia* (London, New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2002, 238)), to which Buckland also relates with regard to "Roger Odin's semio-pragmatic film theory" (in Buckland, 77) that

of the Russian capital in a conversation, in turn, apparently allows her to establish a particular connection with them and thus uncover the hidden countenances of the “city of marvels.”⁶⁹

Hence, owing to her accounts, the Polish reporter becomes a direct medium for conveying information about the city and its residents, providing the external observers with their share in the experience of the reportage characters.⁷⁰ That this experience is extremely diverse is confirmed by the discussed reports which show Moscow as a city of conflicting desires, since each of its inhabitants, newcomers, and visitors has different expectations towards the opportunities that it may provide.⁷¹ And though Włodarczyk’s documentary cycle illustrates that these expectations usually originate in a promise of a wondrous adventure, in

assumes viewers’ intermediate interaction with the film events. In one of the *Wide Tracks* episodes, a man accosted by the reporter in the street agrees to entrust her and talk to the camera, only after he becomes assured that the conversation will not be aired in the Russian television. Włodarczyk, *Wide Tracks*, ep. 16.

69 Włodarczyk, *Wide Tracks*, ep. 16; The easiness in establishing a connection with one’s interlocutor is explained in Malinowski, *The Sexual Lives Savages*. For film-maker’s ability to mediate between the depicted and the actual reality, the latter being seemingly inaccessible to the viewer, see Buckland, *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film*, 50–51, 77–78, 93.

70 Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory*, 204. In his book, Buckland mentions the “absorptive” capacities of a moving picture, where he refers, among others, to Michel Colin’s study (Buckland, *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film*, 50–51, 77–78), the aspect which I also raise in terms of a reader’s mediated participation with reference to written travel reportage accounts in “Travel to the Imperial Interior” and “Peregrinating Objects” (as, among many others, do Wolfgang Iser in “Interaction between Text and Reader,” Andrew Bennett, ed., *Readers and Reading* (Abingdon, London, New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group 2013, 20–31) or Jennine G. Molz “Playing Online and between the Lines: Round-the-World Websites as Virtual Places to Play,” in *Tourism Mobilities: Places to Play, Places in Play*, ed. Mimi Sheller, John Urry (London, New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2004)), 178.

71 Louis Menashe describes people’s various expectations, united by the common hope for a better life in the post-Soviet and contemporary Russia, in the context of the film industry development in Louis Menashe, *Moscow Believes in Tears: Russians and Their Movies* (Washington, DC: New Academia Publishing, LLC, 2010), 205–63. People’s ideas of an opportunity for adventure in the constantly changing capital is also well illustrated in Brooke, *Moscow: A Cultural History*, introduction, XVII–XXII and Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory*, 19, 64, 474, 481.

case of each of the reportage characters this wonder appears to have different, often contrasting embodiments. For in the discussed accounts Moscow is a city for those who want to cherish the glitter of its lights, admire its ecclesiastical and secular monuments, and for those who arrive in it expecting their unfortunate existence to change; yet, regrettably, it is also a city of appearances by which one often turns out to be deceived.

The *Wide Tracks* series presents many of the diverse images of Moscow, as reaching even these spheres of the city life which may not be seen at first glance, Włodarczyk introduces a viewer into the world of urban wonders, even though they often diverge considerably from the common understanding of that concept.⁷² As if complying with the above-cited theories studied by Buckland, she becomes an interpreter of the presented events, using her reportages as a tool and herself as a medium through which the most astounding images of the city may be conveyed. In her accounts, the variety of cityscapes and the wondrous capacity of the moving picture, create a specific mixture that displays potential to enchant ever new visitors and examiners of the capital.⁷³ For seeing the “awe, affection, and delight”⁷⁴ that Moscow apparently evokes in the author of the reportage seems sufficient to entice one to “advance another step towards the Holy City”⁷⁵ and to gradually discover its wonder-abounding repository.

72 Boyer refers to the wonders of the city and the impact they exert on the observers in Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory*, 147, 369. The meaning of wonder used in the present article relates, among other things, to the exceptional mixture of wealth and indigence, which Boyer refers to in another part of her book, Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory*, 9, and which is also described in detail in Brooke, *Moscow: A Cultural History*, 183–214. For the above-mentioned aspect of mediation and the ability of a documentary author to reach reality beyond the viewers’ access again see Buckland, *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film*, 10, 67–68, 77–78.

73 Here and in the concluding statement, I relate to the specific ‘wondrous’ quality which, according to Buckland, a film image possesses—a capacity to convey the impression evoked by the actual view through “enunciation,” as well as to entice the viewer owing to the film image’s potential for “absorption.” Buckland, *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film*, 100–2, 50–51 respectively; see also Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory*, 204; “Travel to the Imperial Interior” and “Peregrinating Objects.”

74 Ritchie, *A Journey to St. Petersburg and Moscow*, 186.

75 Ibid.; see Buckland, *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film*, 77–78, 100.

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Monika Kowalczyk-Piaseczna

**Pośród cudów miasta:
różne oblicza Moskwy w *Szerokich torach* Barbary Włodarczyk**

STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł stanowi analizę różnorodnych wizerunków Moskwy, jakie zaprezentowane zostały w cyklu reportaży telewizyjnych *Szerokie tory* autorstwa Barbary Włodarczyk. Tekst koncentruje się na przedstawieniu specyficznych cech relacji filmowej, umożliwiających ukazanie obrazu niezwykłości rosyjskiej stolicy, jaki wyłania się z poszczególnych fragmentów omawianych reportaży. Ponadto, w wyniku zestawienia reportaży z tej części miasta, która zachwyca przepychem i blaskiem z relacjami z tych zakątków Moskwy, w których toczy się nieustanna walka o przetrwanie, w artykule przedstawione zostały wewnętrzne sprzeczności, jakie zaobserwować można w prezentowanej miejskiej przestrzeni. Analizowany cykl reportaży obnaża również serię politycznych konfliktów, które naruszają nieskazitelną wizerunek Moskwy jako cudownego miasta, prezentowany przez niektórych z bohaterów omawianych obrazów filmowych i tym samym pozwalają odkryć inne, mniej znane oblicza metropolii.

Monika Kowalczyk-Piaseczna

**Inmitten der Stadtwunder:
Verschiedene Gesichter von Moskau in *Breiten Wegen*
von Barbara Włodarczyk**

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der vorliegende Artikel ist eine Analyse von verschiedenen Bildern von Moskau, die in dem Zyklus von Fernsehreportagen *Szerokie Tory* (dt.: *Breite Wege*) von Barbara Włodarczyk dargestellt wurden. Seine Verfasserin konzentriert sich auf spezifische Merkmale des Filmberichtes, die ihr möglich machen, die ganze Einzigartigkeit der russischen Hauptstadt darzustellen, die in den einzelnen Fragmenten der zu analysierten Reportagen erscheint. Der Artikel zeigt auch innere Widersprüche zwischen den reichen, prächtigen Stadtteilen Moskaus und den Ecken der Stadt, in denen ein ununterbrochener Überlebenskampf geführt wird. Der hier präsentierte Zyklus von Reportagen offenbart auch die ganze Kette von politischen Konflikten, die das makellose Bild von Moskau als einer wunderschönen Stadt, wie es manche Helden der Reportagen wollen, verletzen und erlaubt damit ein anderes, weniger bekanntes Gesicht der Metropole zu entdecken.