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Tropes of the Line, Metaphors of the Queue

Sorokin's nuanced approach to critical literature wittily creates a surrealist perspective of the cultural queue. The surreal metaphor of society as an endless line and the perpetual feeling of what the queuer searches for are met with enigmatic perception of time and place. The culture of how a line of people is structured is a series of people who simultaneously wish to be a part of the benefactors closer to the end, whereas the metaphor of the queue is about systematic turmoil and the transition of society. Some of the queue operations, descriptions of the environment, actions and reactions of queuers, all allude to the endogenic cultural perspective of the Russian common man living in the Stalinist Soviet Union. The line of queuers is a metaphoric placement in society where proximal interlocutors share perspectives of the society and collectively interact with citizens; queuers provide perspectives to historical events and contrastive cultures that create ideological shift.

Early in the work, the mention of Georgians is an ethno-cultural criticism on the behavior and mobilization of Georgian people in the ruling powers of the Soviet Union. In the year *the Queue* is written, Stalin is the primary head of leadership, and some other ethnic Georgians effectively mobilized into the high ranks of the Soviet Union. Characters, voices in the queue contest that the Georgians just "let themselves right in,"

advantaging each other over the common queuer (10-11). The bunching up at the front of the queue supports that the reference to Georgians is specifically about the Stalin regime; metaphorically, the bunching of people is representative of a power vacuum following Lenin's death and the Georgians who took multiple levels of power. Additionally, the voices, citizens in the queue with ambiguous origin, are paranoid that uncivil behavior or dissenting discourse will have them taken out of the queue is evidence of the same paranoia that one will be taken off to labor camps by *druzhniki*. However, the perception of a person 'leaving' is presented into the eyes of an erratic alcoholic where he is not sent labor camp, but into a distal portion of "the queue," another lower social realm ostracized from others (134).

Georgians make their presence again in cooperation with local authorities, depicted as all-capitalized text, after the entire queue corpus gathers in a single location and impedes movement on the whole street (71-73). Georgians in cooperation with authorities oppress the queue of Russians-- that is the social parameters of class— by organizing them in single-file. Voices of the queuers found the reorganization of what was already agreed upon among each other as an unnecessary interference that permitted Georgians to unjustifiably ascend the social queue. Queuers reveal the Georgian hypocrisy that setting up checkpoints was to prevent outsiders from breaking into the queue, when the Georgians were the perpetrators (72). Whenever there is a question of the queue's structure, the oppression of roll-call and filing is reinforced to secure the power over the queue (111).

The Queue voices represent the discourse that occurs in the everyday life of the common man in the Soviet Union. Blending sequence, the queuer's voices depict the culture of the common man, overall shifting locality yet socially stagnant. Resentment is present toward other groups in society, such as the Swedes, Turks, and Bulgarians, who are discussed for their products and mobility in and out of the Soviet society—the queuers are simply spectators without choice. Finns make a brief appearance as affluent possessors of technology in the queue, yet show no resentment with any of the queuers. Hungarians are also mentioned for their comparative tastes in food. Mentions of these other nationalities is a differentiation of exo-cultural contact that does not interfere with “the queue” in contrast to the way Georgians have.

In several instances, the intermingling of sexes supported the morals shared by the intelligentsia. No other mentioning of a queue appears in Soviet documents prior to Stalin's death¹. Although, in a *Memoir of a Communist Schoolboy*, the child refuses to sit next to a girl that reports others for misconduct in his classroom; he states that it resembles an action that intellectuals do, and he curses at people like that in “the queue” presenting friction between ideologic classes (Oct 6, 1924). However, the intermingling of the sexes in the queue is not resented. In fact, there is no differentiation of a person's action based on their sex. That is, no one is limited or uncooperative based of their gender role. The sentiment the schoolboy makes a redirection to the sex whereas the problem lies within girl's commitment to the oppressive state rather than her fellow comrades. Although the schoolboy's memoir regards intellectuals as unfavorable, there is a shifted

¹ That I could find using a controlled search through the *Seventeen Moments of Soviet History: Queue*

opinion from the boy to the querers who praise the words of Lenin, that one should learn, and keep on learning, referent to Lenin's famous phrase: "*uchitsa, uchitsa, uchitsa.*"

The difference between these two samples of queue is the perception of intelligentsia (Vadim in *the Queue*) associated with the Bougeois by the Bolševik Party rather than something admired by Lenin and transcended into Soviet culture like we see with Aksyonov's Nina from *Generations of Winter*. These characters are similar in their perception of intrinsic values and the oppression of the state; most importantly, they both represent the intelligentsia into the Stalinist years—to the extent that they are both romanticized for their involvement of intellect, as if sapiosexuality were culturally integrated with the rise of intelligentsia. However, there is comparative evidence of sexual disparity where Nina is objectified and violated for her success and Vadim is consensually desired from multiple partners. Considering the presence of salacious transcribed speech, unless acts of exhibitionism were legal in the Soviet Union, I conclude that the presence of these acts is not within a physical queue, and supportive that "the queue" is a metaphor for the society of the Soviet common man and the cultural relationships between class members.