The Foundational Myth of Russia

Explicating the puzzle behind the foundational myth of
Russia and the construction of its contemporary geopolitics

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the construction of the contemporary Russian geopolitics through the usage of the foundational myth, better known as the Third Rome myth and the center of true Christianity. This is achieved through the analysis of four famous speeches by President Vladimir Putin. These speeches cover the two regions of Ukraine and Georgia, the former being to an internal audience and the latter to a foreign audience. Accompanied with examining the foundational myth, this dissertation also deliberates on how it is being utilized by Putin. In his reconstruction of a new Russia, one that synthesizes the old ideas of greatness alongside the new set of geopolitics. The aims to fulfill are: Firstly, to broaden our understanding of the present and future Russian geopolitics. Secondly, through usage of the myth to develop our understanding of the new environment surrounding hybrid warfare. And especially politics, in form of soft power, that play a significant role where insight can help prevent future conflicts. The method of analysis is of qualitative nature. Speech act by Austin and Searle is employed in order to gain an overview and enable the construction of semiotic squares, that in turn facilitate the actantial models by Greimas.

Key words: Myth, Third Rome, Hybrid war, Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Speech acts, Actantial model, Semiotic square

Table of contents

"The birth and expansion of the Russian Empire had been greatly influenced by an eminently messianic belief in the special mission of tsarist Russia as heir to the global vision of a Third Rome. Totalitarian trends in ideology and political attitudes are still besetting Russia even as it seeks to assert political pluralism."

Andrei Kozyrev while Russian foreign minister (Kozyrev 1992)

1. Introduction*

1.1 Aim and research question

On the remote Russian archipelago in the northern Lake Lagoda, there is a monastery called Valaam. Well known for regressing to a state of deprivation, through the ensuing vandalism if not outright plundering during the Soviet era of rampant militant atheism. Perfectly timed for the upcoming Russian presidential election in the year 2018, a documentary aired on the top national channel Rossiya 1 portraying a new image. A rather mystical image, one of Vladimir Putin restoring Valaam to its former splendor. And through it as a catalyst, mirroring the rebirth of Russia itself under his leadership from the chaos and humiliation suffered during the 1990s to getting back on the right track again. He is depicted as the national savior of Russia and the healer of the rift between those who yearn for the pre-revolutionary Imperial and Orthodox traditions and others clamoring for the return of the great power status held by the USSR (Robinson 2018). This is very much in line with the myth of the Third Rome, that is equally shrouded in mysticism and even dreams of messianic proportions (Kalb 2010:10). This dissertation will demonstrate how Putin is constructing his self-portrait as an heir of Constantine the Great. And through that, the de facto temporal head of the Orthodox Church entitling him as The Tsar, or Emperor in English, of the Third Roman Empire. Undoubtedly, he is reviving the Third Roman Empire of the past that fell, losing its Tsar and state religion.

This assertion will be achieved through analyzing his speeches, thereupon discovering the underlying deeper meaning of the speeches in relation to the foundational myth. Coupled with finding out which actors actually represent positions that preserve the myth and even advance it. This culminates towards examining church officials, contemporary Russian philosophers and finally provide a hybrid warfare overview. In order to answer the questions concerning

the position of myth in society and geopolitics. This generates the puzzle of the dissertation and the subsequent research question is:

What role does the foundational myth play in the formation of the contemporary Russian geopolitics?

It should be noted that despite all speeches covering Putin and the clear emphasis on him, this is not a Putin study. As the main aim of this dissertation is to provide insight into what role the myth plays through its relationships, particularly in the formation of the contemporary Russian geopolitics, as portrayed in the analyzed speeches. Likewise, it should be noted the emphasis is on the role of myth and not describing any causality. It is also important to highlight the question: it is truly possible for these speeches to be considered representations of the contemporary Russian geopolitics? In answering that, it is vital to recognize that the speeches are exactly just that: re-presentations. The "real" or actual geopolitics of Russia is in constant state of flux, as it adapts to the state of the current world and more importantly determined behind closed doors. It is with this limitation in mind, that the research can instead use the speeches as the next best thing. Probing for the deeper meaning and consistency through time, as represented by the speeches. Putin being the speaker is therefore a strength, as it allows for interpreting the myth through him. He as the longstanding leader and the obvious power concentration around him frames it as ideal to conduct this research through him. It is difficult to find speeches of the same magnitude by someone else, much less translated. On that tangent, as I am a non-Russian speaker, translations have to be relied upon and are subsequently used for all the speeches.

Furthermore, the effects of the myth are magnified by its philosophers and supporters. They all influence Putin and are therefore of equal value to study, as they provide further insight into the myth and its inner workings. As the speeches take the form of transcripts, this dissertation will conduct a textual analysis, where the myth and its position are placed at the forefront through speech acts, semiotic squares and finally actantial analysis. Due to the nature of annexations and conflicts, this dissertation opts to use the concept of regions to avoid confusion. The two regions covered are of vital importance to Russia, as illustrated by the substantial developments in the last decade. Effectively placing them in the spotlight for all the major speeches. Aside from that, they are both also deeply imbedded into the foundational myth, generating additional reasoning for their inclusion. In other words, Georgia and Ukraine are both chosen regions to study due to their deep historic significance and sharing the Orthodox religion. Subsequently making them essential areas of study

towards elucidating how the foundational myth and Russian geopolitics interplay. With that in mind, the field this research wishes to contribute towards is therefore international relations.

Among the important concepts to define, myth is expanded on below further. As a general term, it is a metaphor, in this case one informs the Russian historical contemporary politics as Kalb puts it (Kalb 2008:1-2). Another reoccurring concept is that of Eurasia or Eurasianism. Referring to Russian civilization not belonging towards the European nor Asian sphere, instead forming its own. In other words, constituting Russia as unique in the world, a notion that this dissertation adheres. This has at times cultivated the Russian state into embracing the entire multiethnic part of their state. And expanding the notion of *родина* (motherland) to be everywhere and nowhere in particular, often expressed in the nationalist discourse (Torbakov 2015:438). Another important concept is geopolitics, traditionally defined as politics influenced by geographical factors. Kjéllen, the Swedish father of geopolitics, takes it further by defining it as "doctrine of the state as a geographic organism". Stressing the importance of the interplay existing between states and not just in terms of geographical considerations, also in material resources and power relations (Marklund 2010:251). Then there is the concept of hegemony from Gramsci. Consisting of establishing dominance, especially in a region or group, in terms of one over others (Lukes 2005:7-8). With it there is also the accompanying concept known as the sphere of influence, referring to the geopolitical zone in where a state attempts towards gaining exclusive influence (ibid:84). It is further worth noting that the actantial structure, when separated from its theoretical concept could be presented more simply as an actantial model. For the most part, this is due to the fact that the model is presented in the method section whereas the theoretical framework covers the structure. These parts of the dissertation will be providing the innerworkings of that concept.

1.2 Outline

The four speeches are divided based on two aspects, region and audience. The first two are Georgian speeches that were held to a foreign audience and can be characterized as external. While the remaining two concerning Ukraine and Crimea were held to an internal audience. They will furthermore be analyzed in chronological order, that remains is consistent with these groupings. Initially this may result in a somewhat shallow start, due to the Georgian case consisting of shorter speeches with less direct connection to the myth. On the other hand, this allows for insight into how Putin is constructing the foundational myth overtime. The

hints that can be found in the early speeches, effectively illustrate what is to come in Crimea. Correspondingly they are all connected and start with Georgia, where it builds up towards Crimea and the very last speech, essentially providing a thread that connects the speeches. Below is an outline of the speeches, where the a) represents the various semiotic square juxtapositions:

The Speeches

1. The Munich Speech (External)

    a. Safety vs Danger

    b. Statements about multipolar world

    c. February 10, 2007

2. The Bucharest Speech (External)

    a. Safety vs Danger

    b. Statements about negotiation

    c. Held April 2, 2008

3. The Crimean Speech (Internal)

    a. Myth vs Reality

    b. Statements about myth (historic)

    c. March 18, 2014

4. The State of the Union Speech (Internal)

    a. Good vs Evil

    b. Statements about myth (religious)

    c. December 4, 2014

2. Previous research

While there are many influences, the historic literature analysis focusing on the myth by Kalb and Østbø works respectively constitute the basis for the previous research. This dissertation wishes to build upon it, by introducing contemporary politics to the equation of myth. This will be achieved primarily through the prominent speeches by Putin. In this section, the aim is towards elucidating the research on the Russian foundational myth thus far. In order to provide a solid foundation to stand on, before beginning with the main body of the research.

2.1 Russia's Rome by Kalb

In her book titled "Russia's Rome: Imperial Visions, Messianic Dreams, 1890–1940", Kalb goes to the bottom of the versatile connection between Rome and Russia. Including the inheritance of ambitions, both imperialist and religious that facilitate the spiritual bedrock accompanying the Third Rome phenomenon. Kalb's field is comparative literature and the emphasis is on what she describes as "texts that have been understudied despite the prominence of their authors" and myth-making tools (Kalb 2008:28). These texts and works that she examines are of a diverse nature, where some writers call for a rebuke while others engage in extolment of the Roman influences. The decisive factor in this decision making is the time of writing, with the Soviet era in particular being complex in that regard. For instance, depicting the complexity at hand for the Bolsheviks of associating it with the old Tsarist regime, while still inheriting it and subsequently ending up using it themselves (ibid:26). This perplexity extends towards the authors, as seen with an example of the prominent figure Merezhkovskii. He is a writer who renders the cultural discourse through his trilogy written during the Imperial era, it consists of an enthusiastic desire at first towards seeing the completion of the Third Rome project. The approach is unequivocally towards the purpose of unifying, achieved through combining Western secularism and Eastern spiritualism. This lasts until the third and final addition, where he becomes disillusioned and goes as far as dismiss the entire notion of the Third Rome project entirely (ibid:28). While another author with a post-Symbolist nature named Kuzmin exalts the idea once again in a play after Iosif Stalin ascend to power. In the play titled The Death of Nero, implications are made of the prerevolutionary intelligentsia playing a part in the creation of the oppressive rule. And then further rejecting that rule, including the very same utopian dreams that

motivated it. This all achieved through the parallels drawn between the ancient Roman Emperor Nero and Bolshevik leaders (ibid:31).

As for the myth itself, it is foremost described as heavenly kingdom of sorts. As seen with the continuous promise of glory and other magnificence that the predecessors enjoyed, a splendor that stretches from Babylon to Constantinople. It is reminiscent of a fairytale, where there is an evil power in the form of sins and Russia assumes on the role as the savior and beacon of light against that very darkness (ibid:59). Kalb makes this case by using the Merezhkovskii novels as a blueprint, towards the purpose of merging the foundational myth with Russian modernism (ibid:34) At first glance, this can appear as bizarre, yet both of these aspects still plays a significant role in Russian society. The hold on society modernism has does not end there, as it has as still continues to shape the Russian national identity. It is therefore far more significant than a mere myth and its survival, despite the radical changes instituted by the Bolsheviks, to this day attests its significance, if not even because of it (ibid:75). The myth is furthermore deeply rooted in Christianity, to the extent of dominating its significant spiritual component (ibid:40). It originates as an extension of the great schism, known as the East-West Schism, that formalized the separation between the West from the East in 1054 and finally resulted in the of the Catholic the Orthodox Church as separate entities with their own spheres. A separation that eventually extended towards rationalism and even religious durability itself. Kalb explores this through utilizing a Nietzschean dichotomy, focusing on the philosopher Vladimir Solov'ev. He is one of the central writers and the emphasis is placed on his poems (ibid:72). What Kalb discusses, that needs to be taken into consideration is the Russian Modernism. In broad terms, it marks a shift towards the perception of how we are in charge of history at the end of the tsarist era, a viewpoint that constitutes a golden age for writers. Consequently, creating the idea of politics steering development (ibid:195). To summarize, Kalb provides a rich historic setting for the myth that is beset with complications by the spiritualism, as Russia approaches the contemporary age in an ambiguous position that is worth exploring through a political lens (ibid:74).

2.2 The New Third Rome by Østbø

In his book focusing on the Russian nationalist debate. Østbø, as a political scientist, depicts the different ideas of what Third Rome is in the Russian nationalist discourse, specially by his approach of combining politics and history. He primarily sets out to discuss the impact of the myth on Russia's history. Contrary to Kalb however, he shifts his effort towards scrutinizing conservative thinkers, who have attempted to re-establish the notion of Third Rome, with little contemplation on its original exhortation. These nationalist thinkers are generally perceived to be nitpicking whatever suits their purposes, something that unsurprisingly often results in misinterpretations regarding history. This can be seen already be seen with the very first author of the myth Philotheus of Pskov, more known as Filofei the monk. The theme is how original Christian eschatological intention becomes overshadowed by glory-seeking (Østbø 2016:1-2). In the myriad of interpretations, what remains at all times at its very core is the idea towards assigning an exceptional role to Russia in the world. Østbø examines four writers, serving as the means for gaining insight into the ongoing nationalist debate in Russia. Beginning with the dubbed "geo-apocalyptics of the postmodern" advocated by Aleksandr Neklessa and Vadim Tsymburaskii to name a few (ibid:4). The Orthodox Church remains at its seat of vital importance within this context as well, still taking a stand against evil. This is even represented through an antichrist and Russia serving as the last kingdom, spearheading the last stand against that very evil (ibid:96). Effectively going beyond even history in terms of giving Russia meaning, rendering it as instrumental in the salvation of mankind (ibid:74).

Central to this creed is the famous Russian philosopher Aleksandr Dugin. He at one point went as far as label the USA as the heirs to the most famous rival of Ancient Rome called Carthage. This spurred on by comparisons of merchant ideals and Atlantic dominance. He effectively reviews the Cold War though as if it were a continuation of the ancient Punic Wars. He likewise goes as far as alluding to the famous Latin quote *Carthago delenda est'* being repurposed by American strategists, during the time of the Cold War, on how the Russian adaption of Third Rome must be destroyed (ibid:108-109). This serves as a reminder of how deeply rooted and still relevant the East-West divide is on the mindsets of both parties. As more examples emerge of this, it becomes more concrete and less prone to simply clutching at straws. Nevertheless, as Christianity plays less of a role within his own writing, he instead relies more upon geopolitics. Such as making use of the "Heartland" theory by Halford Mackinder, derived towards combating the Western Atlantic hegemony, while

managing to attain almost the same conclusions as the more traditional approaches. These are the ones centered around Christianity, in regards to the myth (ibid:144). Østbø manages to trace variant of the myth as designed by Dugin, emphasizing that to be Russian one has to be a Muscovite for example (ibid:113). A Russia with that foundation becomes a holy object almost in itself. Depicting a true Russia, one that manages to blend geopolitics with a pseudo-theology. Since the very fate of the nation is inseparable from a "true orthodoxy" as the Muscovite state is not only the true heir of Rome. It is more importantly the only remaining geopolitical large space, where such a version of orthodoxy can be preserved (ibid:150). Dugin essentially constructs a dichotomy where Russia exists in different versions or possibilities. Where he identifies the most noteworthy one as the one that is advocating towards a return to the "Eurasian" strategy, combining the European and Asian ambitions. Here we see how Dugin attempts to bridge the gap between the Muscovite and Soviet periods, by making use of arguments constructed through the quasi-theological and metaphysical nature (ibid:127). He is essentially attempting to extend the expansions of Third Rome towards including the additional focus on Asia. While reflecting upon the significant implications this holds on the current mindset in Russia, in relation to placing it in charge of liberating and more importantly leading other people. An imperialist notion that is shared by the other writers as well, according to Østbø. In its extreme, it applies a Manichean ideology towards the construction of a grand narrative that unsurprisingly also holds a geopolitical dimension (ibid:134-135). Such supremacy notions undoubtedly play a role in the nationalist debates today and hold implications for the multipolar world idea, an idea advocated by Putin.

Tussling with the different sources, Østbø confirms the notion of the myth to be dynamic. Explaining why it resurfaces time and time again, through the subsequent transformations that occur. He then proceeds to link the work of the four different writers to it, in order to categorizes them. Tsymburkii is identified as less Orthodox and instead more core-oriented in relation to the imperial era for example (ibid:26). The distinctiveness of the Russian nationalism itself falls short, while being elucidated by the more typical archetypes of a dichotomy. Most notably regarding imperialism versus nationalism. It is instead when the opposed characteristics of these come together that an explanation is formed, consisting of elements from both. Only then can the Russian uniqueness can be explained. Østbø therefore chiefly assumes the position of presenting the myth through the traditional conservative perception, as so often centered in the nationalist debates and oriented towards looking back.

3. Background

3.1 The foundational myth

The concept of myth can fundamentally be described as a narrative, enacting a story often associated with distant pasts containing deeply symbolic tales. Often with the purposes relating to promoting designated social actions or values (Magoulick 2004). There are several foundational myths and even more myths of other types, however this dissertation exclusively focuses on the foundational myth of Third Rome and the subsequent heritage and claims it produces. It all begins with the insurmountable Roman Empire that dominated the known world throughout antiquity. During the reign of Emperor Constantine the Great, the city of Constantinople was founded. Through his embracing of Christianity, the empire itself was also subsequently forever entwined with Christianity. During the reign of the later rulers, the capital of the empire was gradually shifted to the Eastern part. One of the main factors behind this was greater prosperity and trade. This resulted in Constantinople becoming the new seat of the Empire. Among the Slavic people it was dubbed with the name Tsargrad, meaning city of the Caesar/Emperor. As the Empire eventually separated, between the Western part in Rome and the Eastern part in Constatinople, so too did Christianity with the great schism, leading to the Orthodox and Catholic branches. Once Constantinople finally collapsed in A.D. 1453, the Orthodox religion found itself without a defender and more importantly lacking a leader. Through a combination of factors, such as a theology calling for the unity of Eastern Orthodox Church, reinforced by cultural and state-oriented factors. Towards the objective of granting absolute power to the ruler. Resulting in the seat of Constantinople being moved to Moscow. This prerogative as the heirs of Rome quickly became rooted deeply in the identity and symbolism of the Grand Duchy of Moscow, eventually formed the Russian Empire and through that embracing the mantle of a Third Rome that, according to them, will not fall (Østbø 2016:17-19). This is perhaps best exemplified by the epistle addressed to Vasilii III (reigned during 1505-1533):

"The Church of old Rome fell for its heresy; the gates of the second Rome, Constantinople, were hewn down by the axes of the infidel Turks; but the Church of Moscow, the new Rome, shines brighter than the sun over the whole universe. Thou art the ecumenical sovereign, thou shouldst hold the reins of government in awe of God; fear Him who has committed them to

thee. Two Romes have fallen, but the third stands fast; a fourth there cannot be. Thy Christian Kingdom shall not be given to any other ruler." (Dukes 1998:59).

This foundational myth is not just a distant legacy from Rome akin to the Latin one as seen in Western Europe. After all, the Holy Roman Empire was formed, then famously condemned by Voltaire as being none of the three things in its name. Instead the Roman legacy in Russia encompasses the entire national identity and symbolism, constantly present in the culture and as a central theme in the church. Fulfilling the role of an inheritance, or as it rather wishes to see itself, as a continuation (Kalb 2009:8-9). The arduous work of Kalb and Østbø illustrate the scope of the myth, covering a nationalistic side and the "messianic" aspect. Encompassing a rather deeply Christian aspect of the myth. The reason for the selecting these two specific authors is to indicate the versatility of the foundational myth. Generally, one would assume the conservative approach presented by Østbø of looking back to be the only function of the myth. In contrast to that, the progressive approach as demonstrated by Kalb proves how it can be also used to construct the future and look ahead. Exemplified by the literature she examines. She furthermore highlights how the myth is important for Russians in a deeply profound way, that is not at all shared by the Western counterpart (ibid:9-10). It is as result from this that the regions of Georgia and Ukraine are so crucial. Both in relation to the myth itself as well as the more obvious historical and religious significance. It is primary through their relation to the foundational myth that Russia has claims, and has used towards fulfilling the foundational myth.

3.2 Hybrid warfare

The conceptualization of Hybrid Warfare is an ever-expanding area of study with a growing list of literature. It can fundamentally be explained as an increasingly reliance on technological means towards executing various operations, such as cyber capabilities. Russia is widely considered one of the most prolific users, to the point of this being the main tool used in augmenting the military campaign, in both Georgia and Ukraine (Bachmann & Gunneriusson 2015:198). This is manifested in everything from various forms of infrastructure disruptions to even full bank systems, by way of cyber-attacks to (dis)information campaigns through various media outlets. One the of typical example of this is the Russian attempt made on crippling the internet infrastructure of Estonia in 2007 (Bachmann & Gunneriusson 2014:82). In general, the role of the armies is directed away from

its traditional role, instead the new primarily purpose is varying forms of intimidation (Bachmann & Gunneriusson 2015:199). It is titled hybrid warfare, due to essentially constructing a mix consisting of both military and non-military approaches (Renz & Smith 2016:11). All towards crafting an art that excels in targeting the weaknesses of an adversary and this is naturally done in order to exploit it (Bachmann & Gunneriusson 2007). And the Russian implementation of this, in both regions, has been met with success following an effective synergy between the two modules working in tandem (Renz & Smith 2016:55). The most well-known instance being the so called "Little green men" in Crimea, referring to the unmarked soldiers sparking the conflict with seemingly spontaneous blockades (Bachmann & Gunneriusson 2015:205). This also symbolizes the new way of warfare, with less fighting and therefore reduced losses. War in general is not even declared, it simply starts with the military forces already deployed military forces. As opposed to the prolonged mobilizations of the past, the new approach begins unnoticed long before (Snegovaya 2015:11).

And while Georgia has left the limelight, due to the volatile situation at Crimea, it is still highly relevant and bursting with additional developments. Nilsson describes it as being held firmly, where a sustained Russian military presence is keeping any and all military threats credible. Through military forces being never too far away from being able to quickly reach its capital. Effectively dominating the foreign policy of the new pragmatic government that has replaced the previous pro-NATO one (Nilsson 2018:26). This as the media landscapes shifts accordingly, towards encouraging a distancing from Western Europe and favoring a closer integration with the so called "Eurasian" market (ibid:41). Turning the previously harsh rhetoric employed against Russia into an impossibility to utilize in the current scenario (Cornell & Nilsson 2009:258). The territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia occupied by Russia allows them to firmly keep Georgia within its sphere of influence and prevent any NATO membership prospects (ibid:259). In more recent times, this border has been slowly moving deeper into Georgia, as reported by multiple news agencies and dubbed creeping borders (Robinson 2017). For more details on the events surrounding both these countries, timelines are provided for Georgia (Stewart 2008). And subsequently through another source for Crimea (BBC Timeline 2014). These developments have been combined with a constant and consistent increase in military spending and modernization, to the point of Russia becoming by 2016 the third largest spender globally (Sputnik 2017). Perhaps best visualized by the recently presented new super weapon, a new generation of nuclear-powered missiles hailed as "invincible" (BBC 2018). And these relentless increases have been met with

concerns of unfeasibility, both internally and externally. As they are reminiscent of the overspending that finally broke the USSR; effectively also ending the cold war. Especially problematic in the face of rock bottom oil prices, Western sanctions and the ongoing economic recession (Holodny 2015).

4. Theoretical framework

This section presents the theoretical framework of this dissertation. It consists of the actantial analyses built, using on the four Putin speeches as material. The process begins by using the semiotic theory of A.J. Greimas through Hébert, regarding the actantial structure of discourses. This forms the groundwork towards allowing the dissertation to construct the actual actantial models. that form the bulk of this research. With the focus being on the theory of Greimas, it is important to confront questions relating to application and basic concepts. Meaning there is a need for operationalization. Such as this model containing six different actants, that can be used towards creating an analysis on the various types of discourses. In the original theory by Greimas however, the structure plays a much larger role within the theoretical construct. Resulting in more complications than initially perceived, that are discovered once one looks on the theory as a whole. Consequentially leading to one attaining a better grasp on everything involved in the actantial structure. The theorization itself is grounded in constructivism, from the field of international relations. At the core, constructivism is a social theory preoccupied with understanding the various relationships between agents and structures (Barnett 2014:156-157). It is similarly to this that Putin is often designated as perceiving the world as a "zero-sum game", meaning within international relations terms that Putin is a realist (Myre 2014). This is an important consideration for the myth. As the myth is itself a theory, that is studied through the use of Greimas, as he presents one way to study it. As such, the place of constructivism within this dissertation is one with the simple goal to compliment Greimas. With this in mind, the next part of this section is devoted towards attempting to offer a general overview of A.J. Greimas and his theory, especially the context of where the theory was developed in. While the second part is dedicated towards the analysis, primarily aspects relating to the actantial structure.

4.1 Political myth

The popular idea of a myth as a false story or idea is misleading. However, it still comes off as an anomaly when studied under any traditional scientifically approach. Due the fact that a myth is foremost a system of meanings. One that is further ahistorical in nature and always relevant in explaining its constant existence. With such an abstract linguistic nature taking the form of semiotics, it cannot be refuted by science oriented within rationalism. Its usage is to give meaning and through tropes, establish relationships that connect things which are normally not connected. In order words, it does not matter whether or not it is by necessity connected. The scholarly literature on myth in general is abundant, on the other hand when it comes to the political myth, such a selection is more limited and subsequently less known (Østbø 2016:63). Christopher Flood defines it as:

"[…] an ideologically marked narrative which purports to give a true account of a set of pasts, presents or predicted political events and which is accepted as valid in its essentials by a social group" (Flood 2002:44).

While he remains neutral in his definition by not giving any special status to ideology. He still wishes to show how it can be manipulated, whether by intent or not, towards serving the needs of one social group (Flood 2002:13-16). Østbø summarizes the definition of political myth through the suitable idea of political myth as a story about a political society. A kind of ideological narrative, defining the concept of politics as well. The society is typically in the form of something that used to exist in the past and now must be restored, typically concerning the political society. A society that is destined to be created in the future and therefore the myth is told for prompting such encouragement, towards accelerating its inevitable arrival. The meaning lies in connecting the past with the future through crafting a relationship between them. It could, for instance, take the form of a narrative explaining how one group came into existence and then cite their ultimate objective(s). In accomplishing this, means such as hegemony, expansion or sovereignty are often encouraged. While not all political myths are conservative, the foundational ones tend to be. Often trough the way they contribute towards legitimizing the current state of affairs (Østbø 2016:63). The final addition is the abstract notion, as myths are not required to necessarily be grounded in reality nor contain actual history. They take up a form of thinking that precedes rational and scientific thought, resulting in the mythical consciousness being unable to distinguish between reality and appearance (ibid:64). The concept of Third Rome is clearly a narrative that fulfills all of

this, as it environs a special role for the Russian Church and in more secular terms, a new beginning for Muscovite Russia (ibid:70).

Since historians persuade through relying on evidence, often taking the form of documents and archaeological finds. The myth on the other hand takes on another approach, where it expresses a practical worldview or justifies an existing state of affairs. It all boils down to trying make sense of human experience and through that, it finds followers and supporters. As both tend to be politicized narratives, mixing these approaches is common. Yet the ultimate objective of the myth-maker is in the end not provide evidence, but to move people to action (ibid:71). As a result, it is difficult to discern myth from non-myth, especially when handling the Third Rome idea (ibid:76). Østbø describes his approach to Third Rome as taking into account the dynamic character of the myth. In order to escape the purist and more static approach, that is ultimately misleading within the political myth context. The aim is to approach the true meaning of the political myth, by studying how the narratives are used and in what context the myth is embedded. For instance, how Putin makes use of it and how the myth in turn structures Putin. Correspondingly, this does not tell us much about the core of Russia, it does on the other hand tell us much about the Russia and that the teller of the myth is engaged in inventing (ibid:103). With the perception of Putin and his thinkers as the tellers, this dissertation shall follow suit by also assuming this perception.

4.2 Semiotics of Greimas

Algirdas Julien Greimas was a Lithuanian linguist, active in semiotics mainly throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Despite the structuralism wave, his field was losing ground due to the rise of post-structuralism in the late 1960s. He still endured with his studies however. Though his works were primarily in French, there are translations in English (Hébert 2007:11). In his studies, the notion that no single element is meaningful in itself was central, the idea is rather that it can only be grasped in relation to other elements. It is these types of relationships that comprise of a structure, that have to be studied. This is assuming that the goal is to understand the phenomena of meaning in such a broader setting. The structuralist notion assumes, that there are universal structures that characterize the way we comprehend and in addition, operate in and with the world (Hawkes 2003:6-7). With semiotics as his main field of research, Greimas begun looking outwards of structuralism. His primary goal was the creation a sort of unitary theory and method. One capable of explaining, through scientific nature,

meaning and signification alike (Greimas 1987:27-28). Leading to the premise that meanings have to become articulated first or narrativised, forming a cornerstone in what he calls a type of semio-narrative grammar under the broader narrative grammar (ibid:63). He identifies two, one that works on the surface and the other in an underlying level, as in below the discursive level (ibid:xi). As the articulation, regarding the meaning, moves between these levels it does so from the abstract to the fundamental level. Essentially leading to the eventual manifestation at the discursive level and that process is called generative trajectory (ibid:xxviii). This is represented in the following table 1 as seen below:

Table 1: Generative Trajectory of Greimas

GENERATIVE TRAJECTORY			
		syntactic component	Semantic Component
Semiotic and Narrative structures	deep level	FUNDAMENTAL SYNTAX	FUNDAMENTAL SEMANTICS
	surface levels	SURFACE NARRATIVE SYNTAX	NARRATIVE SEMANTICS
Discursive Structures		DISCOURSIVE SYNTAX Discoursivization ||| || actorialization | temporalization spatialization	DISCOURSIVE SEMANTICS Thematization Figurativization

(Source: Greimas 1987:xxix).

Where the top of the model is filling the semantic function with the semiotic square. And the syntactic function is words or elements in a sentence. Similarly, upon moving along the table on the fundamental level, we find the theory of the foundational myth. Where Kalb and Østbø form the level of surface narrative, through their retelling of the myth, that the dissertation utilizes as opposed to diving straight into the source material of the myth itself. And it is also here that the speech act aspect fits, beginning the transformations because of the actants. On the last level we find the discursive syntax, it is here that the text itself comes in; in the form of the speeches by Putin. In summary, the connection to the above figure and its levels is achieved through the various semiotic squares, all in order to interpret meaning and probe for deeper knowledge.

4.3 The actantial structure

The next part to cover is the narrative schema of Greimas. According to it; all discourses, including speeches, share common structures. Including the actanital structure, that also fits in there. When simplified, its actants can be viewed as: sender and receiver, object and subject and finally helper and opponent. These various positions are often represented by multiple characters and through varying type of actors in the actual discourse (Hébert 2007:72). A crux however appears, regarding the narrative programs within the context of the previously discussed levels of semiotic and narrative structures. When the utterances with function relating to actants form narrative trajectories, given a discourse, they are also considered changes in junctions between the subject and object (ibid:80). Forming one of the many possible axes and this evidently extends to the actants subject and object, and more importantly the trajectory of the subject. It however fails at granting any insight as for the reasons behind the existence of the other actants, relating to sender and receiver. This is explained through the domain of the sender being transcendent in relation to the narrative trajectory of the subject, within the function of framing the trajectory of the subject (Greimas & Courtés 1982: 207-208).

Finally, there is the last development towards the theory by Greimas: namely the addition of modalities. It is customarily defined as what modifies the predicate of an utterance. This brings about the concept of modal utterance, that is capable of over determining a descriptive utterance. While there are different types of modalities that can be perceived, they are centered towards modalizing the state of being and doing. Examples of this can be wanting-to, being-able-to and naturally also having-to (ibid:193-195). The reason for this inclusion is due to the importance of relating the inner workings of the actantial structure towards understanding its discoursive manifestations. The narrative programs to name one, establishes the discourse through these various trajectories – without which there would be no discourse. This does however at no point have to be expressly highlighted, as the most outstanding parts of the narrative programs remain conveyed in the manifested discourse implicitly (ibid:246). As such, it is possible to describe a discourse without expressing, whether explicit or implicit, any doing or modality taking place.

5. Method

5.1 Speech act

The American philosopher Charles W. Morris developed behavioral signs through several types of relations, later he established himself into pragmatics and semantics. He defines pragmatics as the study of signs with relation to interpreters. Prompting the need for a distinction between the usual meanings of a sentence and the meaning it has within specific circumstances. In other words, there is a need to differentiate between meanings and uses (Petrilli 2006:308). There are two fields that together constitute the core of linguistic pragmatics, through analysis of utterance and analysis of conversation. Due to the nature of the material at hand, this dissertation will place emphasis and focus on utterances.

In the typical speech situations, there is an utterance provided by a speaker and directed towards a listener. We all know how to play this game, yet have always done so without any explicit formulation of the rules. This is typically conveyed, unsurprisingly, through noises made by the tongue and jaw. That together constitute acts that may inform, irritate or plainly bore the listeners. These performed acts can be extended towards asking questions, giving reports and warnings or even issuing commands. What they have in common is what Austin defines as illocutionary acts (Searle 1970:1). In the book titled "How to do things with words" that reached fame first after his time, due to being posthumously published in 1962. John L. Austin points out that a large number of utterances are part of an action, this means they are performative (Austin 1962:6). For example, the utterance of "I hereby name you John" is clearly an action, in this case a baptism. Whereas "Don't do that!" could be an order or perhaps a request. The distinctiveness of these two examples is that they are not used to state things, they are not just constative in nature, instead rather vigorous prompts. More importantly, such utterances cannot be assessed as true or false. Instead rather as appropriate or inappropriate (ibid:9). Upon pondering how this is assessed, we find the speech act theory. Besides the previously gained insight, on how utterances are utilized to perform actions, speech act theory also assumes that the speaker is involved within three different speech acts simultaneously upon uttering a sentence (ibid:54). These are the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts that are broken down and explained within the speech act context (ibid:101). When analyzing and breaking down speeches, these three concepts will be important.

To give an example of an analysis, beginning by breaking down the previous given example of the utterance "Don't do that!" through all three of the acts above. Locutionary act is the first to be covered, it is the act of uttering a sentence with its meaning comprising of syntactic and phonetic aspects that in turn correspond to a meaningful utterance. What does "Don't do that!" mean then? It addresses an unknown person, comprising a "you" as the covered subject or addressee of the speaker. Whereas the "Don't" takes the opposite form of allowance, so someone is not allowed to perform something. Bringing in the next question of what it is that is not allowed? Meaning an unknown object or an object given within the context. The locutionary act shown here, is related to the basic linguistic analysis of an utterance (ibid:103). This attention given towards meaning may seem trivial at first, yet it is vital. Perhaps best illustrated with one of the all too famous six-word novel "For sale: baby shoes, never worn" linked to Hemingway that never explicitly states a tragedy, yet is understood as one. The context at hand give it a deep meaning and naturally this can also be applied to speeches.

Vital to the speech act theory is the illocutionary act, it describes what the speaker does by saying a sentence. In other words, the execution of the locutionary act. Examples of this can be commanding, threatening, promising, warning and so on. The intended outcome of an utterance used to perform a certain illocutionary act is known as illocutionary force (ibid:105). Most illocutionary acts are implicit in nature, meaning they lack a precise performative verb that is used to signal the act. The previous example of "Don't do that!" is an implicit order. Whereas making it an explicit act would require the addition of a performative verb to the utterance. That is simply a verb that denotes the act. The optional adverb of "hereby" could be introduced in order to highlight the performative nature. Turning the example sentence into "I hereby order you not to do that!" instead (ibid:106).

Then finally, there is the perlocutionary act that denotes the outcome on the listener by means of executing the illocutionary act. The outcomes are unique to the situation at hand yet more importantly may or may not be what the speaker intended. Prompting the question of what is the intention behind the "Don't do that!" example. It could be that the speaker by using it, succeeds at preventing the listener from coming into contact with a dangerous object (ibid:109). Every single speech act is subject to the appropriacy conditions, these are conditions that need to be satisfied by the acts in order to be acknowledged as intended. As such there are cases where the performance of a speech act is deemed as inappropriate. If the speaker does not fulfill the conditions, such as being a specific person in a specific context.

For example, the utterance "I declare the meeting to be over" requires the speaker to be in charge of it. As otherwise one is not entitled to that action. And in doing so despite this, has violated one of the appropriacy condition (ibid:115). This is in no way exclusive to declarations; it also applies to other types of illocutionary acts such as promising or threatening. Prompting them to follow certain conditions as well. The approach of Austin categorizes several such conditions, that range from preparatory to propositional conditions. The former is the perquisite conditions for a speech act, and can take the form of the right person performing the act. Whereas the latter is where an act needs to convey certain aspects about the world, that is in line with the speech act in question (ibid:116). Meaning it is more than a mere analysis of language, it is the examination of language and the effects of what one can achieve with it. Below is a summary of everything discussed so far:

"Speech act is an act that a speaker performs when making an utterance, including the following:

- A general act (illocutionary act) that a speaker performs, analyzable as including:
    - the uttering of words (utterance acts)
    - making reference and predicating (propositional acts), and
    - a particular intention in making the utterance (illocutionary force)
- An act involved in the illocutionary act, including utterance acts and propositional acts
- The production of a particular effect in the addressee (perlocutionary act)"

(Glossary of Linguistic Terms, 2018).

In regards to speeches, Austin proposes some effects that can be achieved through the perlocutionary act as seen under table 2 below:

Table 2: Types of Illocutions proposed by Austin

No.	Illocution	Example
1.	To convince the hearer	Make hearers see his case as true
2.	To bore the hearer	Perform with dullness and repetition
3.	To frighten the hearer	Cause anxiousness and fear
4.	To prompt the hearer	Expect hearer to act or some consequence
5.	To insult the hearer	Offend the hearers
6.	To alarm the hearer	Tell hearers about dangerous situation(s)
7.	To enlighten the hearer	Enrich hearers knowledge/intellect
8.	To inspire the hearer	Make hearers motivated and encouraged
9.	To get the hearer to do something	Specific statement for specific action
10.	To get the hearer to realize something	Deeper meaning about statement

(Source: Austin 1962:120-121)

John R. Searle, who was a student under Austin, takes the notion of speech act further and refines it; towards analytical purposes, that suit this dissertation. And through his developed extensions, he arguably forms another variant of it. One that emphasizes more psychological factors, such as intensions and beliefs (Searle 1970:65). This gives substance to the achievement of Austin and is of extraordinary valuable for political scientists when analyzing speeches and other documents. As interpreting words at face value is the equivalent of taking a knife to a gunfight. This is exceptionally well illustrated through a quote from Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, who was the top diplomat for Napoleon Bonaparte while in his favor. He is reputed to have said "A diplomat who says "yes" means "maybe", a diplomat who says "maybe" means "no", and a diplomat who says "no" is no diplomat". Speech acts can be tricky to classify and towards that purpose, Searle primarily divides speech acts into three distinct groups. That of performing utterances, performing propositional acts such as predicting or referring and finally performing illocutionary acts (ibid:24). He asserts that there are five, and only five, basic so called "primitive" forms of illocutionary act. These are listed and briefly explained with examples in the table 3 below:

Table 3: Types of illocutions proposed by Searle

No.	Type of Illocution	Example
1.	Assertive	Statements, explanations, assertions
2.	Directives	Orders, requests, commands
3.	Commissives	Promising, vows, threats, pledges
4.	Expressives	Apologies, thanks, congratulations
5.	Declarations	War, adjourning a meeting, marriage

(Source: Searle 2002:5)

Searle describes his own approach towards a general theory of speech acts as a synthesis of sorts. Based on the ideas of Austin and Paul Grice, whose theory emphasize taking the speakers intention into account. The difference being in that the speech act by Austin were very preliminary and tentative at the time of his demise. On the other hand, the theory of meaning by Grice proved more conclusive and therefor piqued the interest of Searle. In this case, the idea that in the creation of a valid utterance, the speaker conveys meaning if, and only if, he intends to produce a certain effect or outcome on the listener. By getting the listener to recognize the intention towards generating that effect (ibid:43-44). In other words, the synthesis consists of Austinian illocutionary acts and Gricean intentionalist accounts of

meaning. Further combining this with the theorization of Searle, the theory of constitutive rules and institutional facts to name a few, leads to the creation of the extension by Searle. In a sense, he argues that all linguistic communications essentially involve acts and this extends to texts as well. Due to texts containing communication and messages. that are not classified as a natural occurring phenomenon, it is a human creation with intentions. It is in contrast to logical positivism and is more oriented towards constructivism, with the emphasis on social construction. This is an important distinction to make in order to remain attentive towards intensions and audiences, as with positivism the communication could very well exist without either of these. It is a vital tool towards unraveling the deliberately crafted puzzle by the speaker and an ideal tool for this dissertation to use. Additionally, speech act is already used in the field of political science. Especially by the Copenhagen School relating to theories on securitization (McDonald 2008:2-3). Resulting in its inclusion being a useful addition to this dissertation as a complement.

5.2 Data

The speeches, as mentioned before, are selected due to sharing the characteristic of fame and importance. Their grand status means represent paradigm shifts, most notably the Bucharest speech displaying a willingness to compromise, a belief that dissipated shortly after the speech. Whereas the Crimean speech is similar to a victory speech, as seen with the many announcements of success within it. Resembling a triumph and is arguably the most famous of them all. It has to be noted, that there is no nitpicking of speeches occurring in any way towards fulfilling goals of the researcher, as none of these are considered minor speeches. The speeches can be classified into two groups, the former being internal due to being held for the Federal Assembly and in extension the Russian people. While the latter foreign, due to taking place at summits with foreign dignitaries as the audience. All of these speeches are furthermore in Russian, while the transcripts themselves are official English translations. The speeches prompt questions of what is to come in the future, as they are vital pieces of information when probing for future geopolitical constructions. There are some notes to be made on the speech act tables as seen in the appendix. For one thing, the decimal of the percentage is rounded to two decimals for sake of convenience. Some sentences that do not qualify on their own and are merged with others. These tables are above all meant to provide a summary regarding the nature of the speeches. As they break down the speeches in accordance to the speech act methods as described earlier. The table itself is achieved through

a quantitative approach, yet this remains a qualitative oriented dissertation and does not employ any mixed methods approach.

5.3 Fairy tale and actantial model

In order to proceed with the analysis, while also keeping the myth at the center of it, the speech act approach needs to be supplemented with the tool known as the actantial model. Aside from opening up an investigation between the thematic roles and actantial roles, it also enables a narrativization of values (Greimas 1987:90). Developed by A.J Greimas and based on the theories by Vladimir Propp, regarding his famous work with fairy tales (Propp 1968:3-4). Nestled deep in folktales with the goal of grasping the Russian culture (Propp 2012:10). However, due to the text being illusive at times and the technical nature clouding comprehension with Greimas writing, Hébert is utilized towards the construction of the models. As he has a firm grasp of the writings and more importantly conveys it in a more practical manner. The actantial model can be summarized as consisting of six facets, or actants, and three axes that in turn identify the elements of a story (Hébert 2007:70-71). The six actants are described by Hébert using the fairy tale template as:
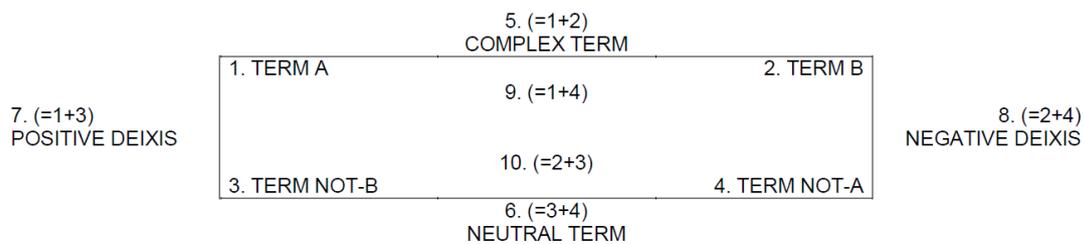
"(1) The subject (for example, the Prince) is what wants or does not want to be conjoined with (2) an object (the rescued Princess, for example). (3) The sender (for example, the King) is what instigates the action, while (4) the receiver (for example, the King, the Princess, the Prince) is what benefits from it. Lastly, (5) a helper (for example, the magic sword, the horse, the Prince's courage) helps to accomplish the action, while (6) an opponent (the witch, the dragon, the Prince's fatigue, a hint of terror) hinders it." (Hébert 2007:71)

While the three axes form a duality, or junction rather. The axis of desire is between (1) subject and (2) object with a relationship between them being called a junction. This is as in whether the object and subject are conjoined or disjoined depending on events taking place. The other axis is that of power and between (3) helper and (4) opponent that assist and respectively hinder any conjoin from taking place. And the final axis is that of transmission, or knowledge according to Greimas, between the (5) sender and (6) receiver. Then the sender element is more often than not the one seeking establishment of the junction between the subject and object in question. And furthermore, benefits from the junction being fulfilled, that explain why it could strive for it. It is also worth noting that the sender elements are often receiver elements as well (Hébert 2007:71).

5.4 Semiotic square of Greimas

In order to refine the actantial analysis, employing the semiotic square is necessary. It is another tool developed by Greimas and used towards oppositional analyses. Dedicated towards mapping disjunctions and conjunctions. The refinement stems from how it allows an increase in the analytical classes through assigning them additional oppositions. It supplements the actantial analysis by offering a more technical and detailed insight for the speeches. To illustrate, Hébert discusses how the classical life/death opposites could be increased to four by including the living dead as both and neither, in turn constituting angels (ibid:41). Below is an empty semiotic square provided by Hébert with nothing mapped out aside from the mapping itself:

Table 4: Structure of the semiotic square

```
                          5. (=1+2)
                        COMPLEX TERM
              ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
              │ 1. TERM A                  2. TERM B │
  7. (=1+3)   │              9. (=1+4)               │   8. (=2+4)
POSITIVE DEIXIS│                                     │ NEGATIVE DEIXIS
              │              10. (=2+3)              │
              │ 3. TERM NOT-B          4. TERM NOT-A │
              └─────────────────────────────────────┘
                          6. (=3+4)
                        NEUTRAL TERM
```

(Source: Hébert 2007:41)

The square is composed of numbers concerning the oppositions and four terms, each corresponding to a position and they are:

Position 1: (term A), Position 2: (term B), Position 3: (term not-B), Position 4: (term not-A). Generally speaking, easier to understand once the squares are actually filled with content from the speeches.

Wherein the first two are the basic opposition, while the other two obtained by negating each term (ibid:41-42). Hébert also identifies the relations the terms establish on square as contrariety and contradiction. The former being the relation between term A and B, and between not-A and not-B. Whereas the latter being the relation between term A and not-A, and between B and not-B. And a third relation referring to implication or rather being referred to as complementarity. Stating the relation between not-B and A, and between not-A and B. It is important to remember that the term opposition encompasses both the contrariety and contradiction in this context (ibid:42). Hébert offers this clarification:

"Contrariety, contradiction and complementarity are bidirectional relations (that is, A is the opposite of B and vice versa), whereas implication is unidirectional, from not-B to A and from not-A to B. Because of the relation between them, terms A and B are called the "contraries" and terms not-A and not-B are the "subcontraries" (because they are contrary terms located "below" the contraries); terms A and not-A are the "contradictories", and terms B and not-B are "contradictories" as well." (Hébert 2007:42)

The remaining part is to explain is movements along the square. They take place in negation: A → not-A; B → not-B. And assertion: not-B → A; not-A → B. The arrow indicates direction of movement. Then there are the three levels of analysis that need to be distinguished before application can take place. (1) Do the entities, assuming any position within the square, truly exist in the real world? (2) Can an entity within the square be lexicalized? As in, named with a concept qualifying as standard usage. The example given is neither euphoria nor dysphoria lexicalized to indifference. And lastly (3) is each entity or position, given within the square, realized in the corresponding semiotic act? (ibid:43). This version of the semiotic square is applied to the speeches using the semantic approach as outlined by Hébert (ibid:47). In essence, it allows us to read between the lines of the assigned opposites and see the deeper meaning between what qualifies as both of them or neither of them. Overall, it is the most valuable tool for this dissertation in interpreting the structure of the myth as the various speeches include several aspects of it, as they cover a wide spectrum of issues and not just the myth. In any case, it also provides the foundation that is used towards the creation of the actantial analyses.

6. Analysis

With a groundwork laid through the usage of fairy tales, the next step is to apply the actantial act towards the foundational myth. Hébert notes how traditionally the sender is considered the one who initiates the action. Meaning in turn, the rest "comes along the way" so to speak, and act within the capacity of assisting. They are therefore assigned the helper class instead (Hébert 2007:71-72). An actant does not necessarily always have to correspond to a character in the traditional sense as presented thus far. In fact, with an ontological viewpoint it could correspond to a sort of anthropomorphic being. Taking the shape of a talking sword, something less concrete like the wind or as in this case; a myth (ibid:73). The general action of the myth is to make Russia great power, one worthy of the rich tapestry presented through

the Roman legacy. This needs to be converted to an actantial model, in order to be applicable to the material, that consists of speeches. The four speeches are delved into, towards identifying the elements needed to construct two actantial models. These are based on the internal and foreign audiences (ibid:72). The next step is to select a subject and an object. In this case, the foundational myth is the clear subject with the objective of making Russia great. The junction is a conjunction in nature and the senders of the model are:

- **Religion**, through Christianity proclaiming Russia as the savior of mankind and leader of the Orthodox branch of the religion. Embedding the sacred duty to strive for greatness, in order to achieve all of these ambitions (Kalb 2008:9).
- **Roman legacy**, the Russian nation is a continuation of Byzantium, that is in turn the same as Ancient Rome. Such a legacy must be lived up to and this third iteration of Rome must not fall, as there will be no fourth according to the myth (ibid:15).
- **Russians**, who we can assume have a "personal" desire of seeing their country as prosperous and strong. Whether in general for self-benefit or as a believer who is longing for a return to one of several possible "glorious" pasts (Østbø 2016:38).

The above is clearly a relation of "desire" between the subject and the object. As for receivers, the obvious choice is Russians; as in the Russian citizens themselves. Asides from being the targeted audience of the speeches that are analyzed, they themselves are also a sender due to the personal desire component. Another point arguing for this choice, is that the myth itself has been centered towards them throughout time, as it has survived the multiple forms of Russia. From a prominent role throughout Imperial tsarist era to the inconspicuous one it held during Soviet era and then the chaotic aftermath, to just name a few. In all of these cases it has existed in some form of capacity, especially as a resonance. This is pointed out by Kalb, in how it has maintained a constant role in everyday life, through novels and theater plays for instance (Kalb 2008:190). The actantial models are constructed below, after the speeches have been processed through a semiotic square. When analyzing speeches, it is important to note the difference between connotations and denotation. To provide one practical example, the statement "hands stained with blood" is not explicit and instead has a secondary meaning of implying, thus making it a connotation.

The material as mentioned before consists of speeches, in the form of transcripts. These transcripts are first taken through the speech act method, yielding a summary based on the types of utterances. With that overview in mind, semiotic squares can be constructed towards mapping out the different axis and juxtapositions. Allowing us to see between the rows and

more importantly, identify only what is the most important messages within the speech. And then finally, based on this extraction construct actantial models, giving the speeches the narrative that we seek to unravel. In other words, it is giving it meaning. The structure of the speeches is based on chronological order, as mentioned earlier. Yet before diving into that, it is important to note that the role of the religion and the thinkers need to be taken into account and discussed first.

6.1 Role of religion and thinkers

As previously mentioned, the very heart of the myth is wrapped in the Christian faith, specifically the Orthodox branch. It is important to make a distinction here; faith is a conviction while church is an institution. It then comes as no surprise that the monastery restoration by Putin is not the only connection he has with the religion. Putin is known to have close ties to Kirill, the Patriarch of Moscow. Meaning the head of the Russian branch of the Orthodox Church, and to top it off with a former KGB past, like Putin himself. This bond has with time shown a remarkable transformation, in changing the role of the Church plays within society throughout the last decades. And influenced Putin doubtlessly, to the point of it venturing into legal territory even. And through this, Putin has consistently built the image of himself as the Defender of the Faith, all towards fulfilling the requirements of the foundational myth. This can be seen with the laws, such as making it a crime to "insult the feelings" of religious believers. While also inviting the Church to important state events and then attending Church ceremonies himself during holidays (Bennets 2016). This despite there not being a defined state religion, and religious freedom prescribes the President representing all people: to be neutral through the official separation of church and state (Bennets 2017). It should furthermore be noted, that in the structure of the Orthodox faith, there is a patriarch fulfilling the role as the leader on a per country basis. Subsequently, this means it is traditionally tied to the state and not necessarily exclusive to Russia. Because Russia shares this history, the Russian Orthodox Church has, and continues to, play a role in the politics of Russia (Torbakov 2014:146). Torbakov describes Kirill attending the same TV channel as mentioned before, Rossiya 1, where he expresses criticism and caution of the West, in line with the government (ibid:147). Likewise, he constructs the image of Russia as entirely distinct from the West and therefore unique. In continuation of that approach, he lauds Putin for the stability and order Russia enjoys today as nothing short of a true miracle (ibid:148). With that in mind, Torbakov investigates the relationship between the two and concludes that

despite the church declining and issues relating to the multiethnic state, there still is ongoing cooperation between the two (ibid:169-170).

Among the thinkers influencing Putin, the central theme is a return towards glory, where perhaps none are more prevalent than Aleksandr Dugin. Frequently referred to as "Putin's Favorite Philosopher" or as "Putin's Brain" due to consistently working to his advantage (Barbashin & Thoburn 2014). By 2012, a frequent guest on the largest television channel in Russia. Dugin outright described the annexation within Ukraine as a necessary condition for the "Euroasian imperial project" according to Snyder (Snyder 2018:87). While he himself was not an original student of Eurasianism, he has certainly positioned himself as the very spearhead of it (ibid:80). He formed a think-tank called the Izborsk Club together with other known Putin thinkers, where the primary fixation is the Eurasian idea. Among them are names such as Tikhon Shevkunov, known as to be the favorite monk of Putin. Snyder goes as far as describe the founder Alexander Prokhanov as a fascist novelist, he yet another companion of Putin of course (ibid:82-83). With all of this culminating through influencing Putin towards what Snyder summarizes as:

"Concepts from the three interflowing currents of Russian fascism—Ilyin's Christian totalitarianism, Gumilev's Eurasianism, and Dugin's "Eurasian" Nazism—appeared in Putin's discourse as he sought an exit from the dilemma he created for his country in 2012. Fascist ideas burst into the Russian public sphere during the Obama administration's attempt to "reset" relations with the Russian Federation." (Snyder 2018:83).

These ideas clearly stem from the foundational myth, as established by Østbø, to the point of Dugin even utilizing the personification of "Satan" or "Lucifer" when ascribing evil. Like upon inventing "cruci-fiction" whose purpose is prompting Russian intervention towards protecting the Russian world (ibid:149). In other words, applying the same profoundly deep Christian nature of the foundational myth. As Putin surrounds himself with people engrossed with the myth and clergy yearning for it, he is clearly himself shaped by it. In assessing towards what extent, is where this dissertation comes in, where constructions of semiotic squares and actantial models will finally provide answers.

6.2 The Munich Speech

With the methodology established, the next step is identifying helpers and opponents, in the first step towards constructing the actantial model. To do, it requires the inclusion of the speeches themselves and an introduction to the material. The first of these is the famous so-called Munich Speech regarding Georgia. Much like Crimea, Georgia also used to be part of the Russian Empire and history. Annexed in 1801, after a time as a protectorate and effectively constituting a core within the empire (Stewart 2008). Yet the official Kremlin website is silent and nearly void of content dedicated to Georgia. It unsurprisingly contains no speeches in the style that was made available with Ukraine and Crimea conflict. In other words, a different approach has to be taken towards its inclusion for this dissertation. One that yields insight, albeit through different material and for the last speech a different source. The focus is on the two speeches taking place before the Georgian five-day war, dubbed the Russo-Georgian war, between 7-12 August, 2008. This is done in order to see the build up to it and rhetoric utilized (Barabanov 2008). Both of these speeches are given to a wide foreign audience, namely at a security conference and NATO summit. The speeches are vital, as Putin is addressing an audience that is not of internal nature.

The speech takes place on the February 10, 2007 at the annual Munich Security Conference. Among the attendees is everything from heads of states to media and business representatives. The speech was held in Russian; however, the official Kremlin website does provide an English translation of the transcript. The table under Appendix 1 provides a summary of the speech, where unlike other speeches there, is a higher number of declarations. These account for declaring the state of the world, as dangerous and uncertain for the future. And also declaring the stance of Russia on certain issues and viewpoints. While the high number of directives is not traditional orders, instead they take the form of requests to the other in attendance and hearers in general (Munich Speech 2007).

Due to the different audience, the speech as one would expect does not discuss the foundational myth in any capacity. Instead it shifts the focus to other matters, such as discuss the reduction of nuclear missiles in relation to the USA. Unlike the an rebuke regarding the ABM treaty, here is a more cordial approach towards a promise of reduction towards 2012. The amiable tone shapes the speech overall as it can be summarized towards improving relations, that are later strained due to various factors where the advent of the Georgian conflict plays a significant role. Georgia is mentioned in the speech with de-escalation being

the key phrase as Russia is pulling out, even to an accelerated schedule. It is explicitly stated that the removal of military bases and forces in Georgia is to appease NATO on towards ratifying The Adapted Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (ibid). In hindsight, this did not transpire. Due to the year ending with Russia pulling out of that exact treaty, referring to the same year as this speech was held (Sputnik 2015). Resulting in the so called "little war" that shook Georgia and the world, which seemingly sparked the start on the path towards fulfilling the foundational myth. Particularly increasing tensions, to the point where Putin had to explicitly deny that Russia had any Imperial ambitious (Steele 2008).

Consequently, in regards to the speech itself. Putin goes on in length regarding his multipolar world agenda, questioning the nature of the contemporary unipolar world and putting it at odds with the very foundation of democracy. Shaping this to be one of the central points with his speech and what he wishes to convey to the audience. Resulting in what he describes as:

"We are seeing a greater and greater disdain for the basic principles of international law. And independent legal norms are, as a matter of fact, coming increasingly closer to one state's legal system. One state and, of course, first and foremost the United States, has overstepped its national borders in every way. This is visible in the economic, political, cultural and educational policies it imposes on other nations. Well, who likes this? Who is happy about this?" (Munich Speech 2007).

With that theme in mind, the constructed semiotic square below outlines the view of Putin or more accurately, his constructed universe on this agenda:

Table 5: Semiotic Square for the Munich Speech

Safety + Danger
"Nuclear missiles"

Safety "Multipolar world"		Danger "Unipolar world"
	Safety + Not-safety ?	
	Danger + Not-danger ?	
Not-danger "UN mandated force"		Not-safety "Unilateral force"

Safety + Not-danger "UN sole arbiter of force" (left)

Danger + Not-safety "Continuation of USA's overstepping" (right)

Not-danger + Not-safety
"Democracy"

In this situation, nuclear missiles clearly both deter the usage of conventional military force. While just as much instituting a whole new game, with far more danger. Although within this

context democracy is just a neutral tool, used by both sides towards arguing for their own respective cause. Above all, it captures the essentials of Russian politics as is discussed in more length with the other speeches. It is certainly interesting to note how this semiotic square allows these placements into such positions. In the grander scheme of things, it is pushed into a lesser role. Coupled with the foundational myth not perceiving it as necessity, if not at times even discourages against it. Within this context it is just a system of governance and unable to provide safety or danger on its own. Contrary to the nuclear missiles that fulfill both of these functions and are as a result the subject of treaties. In any event, it is interesting to note how the speech is structured towards the inclusion of various elements that help propagate the multipolar world idea. Especially through using the values of the USA, effectively turning it against them. In addition, the acceptance of the multipolar world would allow for the advancement of the foundational myth. And constitute one step closer to the world it prophesizes, as the other speeches will illustrate more on below.

6.3 The Bucharest Speech

This speech is not derived from the Kremlin official website and to exacerbate matters. therefore non-official. Mere months before the military action in Georgia, in April 2008 there was a NATO summit in Bucharest where Putin held a speech. One supposedly characterized by lambast, more so than the previous at least. And curiously not made available on the official Russian government website, it was however made available through its relating press. A pro-Ukrainian news service in Kiev called Unian.net (Unian.info for English version) has released the speech, translated to English and Ukrainian as well. Searching for the transcript elsewhere proved futile, one example of this is illustrated through the pro-Russian news service Russia Today (shortened as RT). Their article on the event promises a link with the "full version" of the speech, the link refers back to the same article that still lacks the speech (RT 2008). The transcript itself is short, in comparison to the others, and is classified as a "behind closed door" type by Fitzpatrick. These factors have in fact sparked speculation by her and others that the speech is being suppressed by the Russian government (Fitzpatrick 2016).

While this dissertation does not engage in any such speculation, the various circumstances and properties surrounding this rather controversial speech are the very reasons for its inclusion. Despite its shortcoming of being just that; short, it yields a different perspective.

Fulfilling the role of an excellent complement, when contrasted to the other more openly oriented type of speeches. And it is of course, like the other speeches, considered famous. The table under Appendix 2 provides the short summary for the final speech, due to the size it is difficult to derive much. In general, the tone is rather serene than initially perceived to be as it instills a different atmosphere, characterized as franker and keener while scaling down the formalities. Due to that and the different audience, no explicit references towards the foundational myth are present. Both Georgia and Ukraine, with Crimea included, is discussed throughout the speech. An openness towards concessions is displayed on behalf of Russia towards Georgia, in connection with solving its ethnic conflict through cooperation. Georgians notably being dubbed as friends seeking to restore territorial integrity. Yet, NATO membership is still as expected met with deep skepticism, reasoning it would only exacerbate the already existing problems in the region. More notably, however, that notion does explicitly not extent towards Ukraine in any capacity. As the tone shifts towards, in the other speeches, questioning the legitimacy of the hold Ukraine has on Crimea. Presenting the Russian claim this early, with the focal point of many Russians living there; it only makes sense to have a Russian garrison and not a NATO one. This signals the most vital difference between these two regions, that this and the other speeches demonstrate (Bucharest Speech 2008). Georgia lacks the same deep historical connection and Russian population as that of Crimea to warrant an outright annexation. Resulting in its prominent position, arguable at the very forefront, within the rich literature of Hybrid Warfare. His central argument is that both of these regions are riddled with problems and a NATO presence would only exacerbate the problem. Despite the short nature of the speech, it is still prominent and therefore it is given a semiotic square:

Table 6: Semiotic Square for the Bucharest Speech

	Safety + Danger "Georgian ethnic conflict"	
Safety "Russian base"		Danger "NATO base"
Safety + Not-danger "Reaching an agreement"	Safety + Not-safety ?	Danger + Not-safety "Ending negotiations"
	Danger + Not-danger ?	
Not-danger "Russian sway"		Not-safety "NATO member"
	Not-danger + Not-safety "Georgian independence"	

Independence does not matter within this context, as the nation leans towards one side or the other. That is certainly to the interest for the involved parties, resulting in the negotiations and consequent conflict. In light of this, the ethnic conflict places significant pressure on both of these countries involved to act upon. Granting an additional dimension to the already ongoing interplay, as the actantial model below illustrates.

6.4 Actantial model for The Munich and Bucharest Speeches

Because these two speeches are for foreign audiences, they are grouped up as such and given a common actantial model. The template is provided by Hébert (2007:77), while the table below is the dissertations own construction:

Table 7: Actantial model of Multipolar World

No.	Actant	Actantial class	Actantial sub-class
1.	Putin	Sender	
2.	Russians	Sender	
3.	Democracy	Senders	
4.	Dignitaries	Receivers	
5.	Democracy	Helper	
6.	UN	Helper	
7.	Nuclear treaties	Helper	
8.	The USA	Opponent	

All of these actants are present in the speeches, they commonly convey them in these capacities. Together they form the following actantial model, including object and subject, as in the table below:

Table 8: Actantial model of the foreign speeches by Putin

Sender Putin			Receiver Dignitaries The USA (From Putin's perspective)
	Subject Dignitaries	**Object** General object (goal): Multipolar world Specific objects (means): 1. Democratic to share power (Democracy) 2. Nuclear weapons already multipolar (Nuclear treaties) Specific substitute objects: 1. Foundational Myth 2. Stopping NATO expansion 3. Negotiation	
Helper (for the specific objects) Democracy, the UN & Nuclear treaties			**Opponent** (for the specific objects) The USA

Within this model, Putin is seen as the sender, due to the notion of the multipolar world within this context being of his own making. In championing its cause, he invokes democracy, the UN and treaties towards arguing that sole supremacy of the USA goes against everything globalization is supposed to be about. And in any world with multiple great powers, Russia is assured a spot. This open up a path through the backdoor towards justifying the current strength of Russia as well as future increases, assuring its own sphere of influences and recognition. This is tied to the foundational myth, as a way towards securing a future where it can exist and begin to shape the world according to it. In other words, these measures and objectives are stepping stones and in no way grand goals of themselves. It is therefore not enough to have Georgia or Crimea void of NATO troops or influence. Ideally that void should be filled with Russian troops or influence that may not appeal as much to the original helpers. In general, it does not appeal to the helpers Democracy & the UN yet on the other hand it

does appeal to the foundational myth. Subsequently this is the key here and is valid for the first two speeches as well. The purpose is thus in laying the groundwork for the foundational myth and for what is to come with Crimea, as seen in the speeches below.

6.5 The Crimean Speech

The next speech is The Crimean Speech by President Vladimir Putin and was held on March 18, 2014 to both chambers of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation. It is the first of the two speeches falling into the internal nature category. A translated version in English of the speech is made available through the official governmental website at en.kremlin.ru. As previously discussed, Crimea is vital and selected due to constituting a large part of the Russian interests. As for the reason for including this particular speech, it is due to recalling the deeply imbedded historical connections of Crimea, especially so in relation to the foundational myth. The speech also marks an important turning point in the Crimean Crisis, as the annexation phase of the conflict is over by that date. The speech takes on the purpose as a reasoning for all actions up until now, a way towards wrapping it up and of course justifying those very actions. The table under Appendix 3 provides a summary of the speech through employing the tools provided by Austin and Searle. The table exhibits a speech, where the predominating portion is dedicated towards assertive statements on knowledge. In other words, Putin does not, to a large extent, attempt to persuade or make a case directly and instead rather presents a reality with the facts surrounding it. As he lets his case be made more naturally through carefully crafted utterances, where there is little room for other interpretation. As for the two zeroes in the table, while one could argue that he feels insulted by the West and specifically the USA, as seen with his Kosovo and Crimea comparison. He never goes as far as insult any hearer himself (Crimean Speech 2014). These last two aspects are the same among the speeches and not the focus of this dissertation.

In this speech, Putin assumes the position of helper in the actantial model. He speaks of Crimea as the location of the ancient Khersones, where Prince Vladimir was baptized. The legendary figure who Christianized the Kievan Rus in A.D. 867 and brought Orthodoxy as a basis to the culture, thusly forever entwining it with Byzantium and Rome. Furthermore, the people of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine all lay claim to the Kievan Rus as their cultural ancestors (Voyce 1995). With this in mind, it is all the more noteworthy to see the particular emphasis Putin places in his speech on how this legacy has been vital towards crafting the

unity within Russia internally. And in extension, the connections formed with other Orthodox countries, such as Ukraine and Belarus that he also names. He also points out more locations in Crimea and Ukraine that have throughout time served the purpose of symbolizing Russian glory and greatness (Crimean Speech 2014).

It is further worth noting that Crimea itself has a history of being a region under the Byzantine Empire, mostly as a trading port with sea access to the capital (Meduza 2015). With a final tangent on how this history is their common history and does not just belong to Russia alone. He further discusses in length the more modern history shared between the two nations, such as political strife suffered by both. Denoting it further by saying towards the end "I repeat, just as it has been for centuries, it will be a home to all the peoples living there". With an intention of lifting the more positive aspects that unites them while wishing them no ill will. A combination of factors for intervening is created with the basis being derived from the foundational myth of the deep connection and historical claim on the land. As well as the ties with between the two people, both ancient and more modern tiers. For this reason, it was unimaginable at the time of ceding Crimea during the USSR that Ukraine would become a separate state. This is combined with the more modern reasoning of not abandoning the people there and furthermore protecting their right to fully express their free will and in extension, safeguarding their freedoms and democracy. As clearly signaled by the referendum that was held according to him "in full compliance with democratic procedures and rules of international law". Yet at the center of this is still what he describes as "[…] the aspiration of the Russians, of historical Russia, to restore unity". Putin himself confirms this upon his summary of the actions in Crimea needing "to be taken into account with the full historical and political context" (Crimean Speech 2014). Then he also discusses internal strength of the nation, in terms of people to ethnic minorities. In this case it is important to understand the difference between vital concepts of "русские" (russkiye) and "россияне" (rossiyane). The former refers to ethnic Russians, while the latter means citizens of Russia. As a result of this, one can be ethnic Russian regardless of country and whether or not they hold Russian citizenship. Due to the breakup of the USSR, Russians found themselves in new countries overnight and were no longer Russian citizens. Accordingly, it falls under the rebuilding the nation effort to bring them back into the fold, hence comes the annexation of Crimea. The distinction between these two concepts are of vital importance in understanding Russian democracy and even more so Russian politics itself. This also applies to the speeches by

Putin, as he makes statements with the presumption that the speakers are well aware of this with bleeding hearts.

While there are internal opponents, the ones that are solely identified are the external Western Powers and chiefly among them the United States of America that is given all scorn. For the most part, this is a reoccurring theme. The two most important utterances within the speech for this context are (1) how world order is unachievable with only one dominant superpower reigning. And (2) how left otherwise the USA will continue to act as they please and ignore international laws and the UN overall (ibid). As they seek to prevent the multipolar world that Putin strives for, they build coalitions towards opposing a strong Russia from emerging (Wight 2016). He responds by presenting a stronger Russia with a backbone:

"Russia found itself in a position it could not retreat from. If you compress the spring all the way to its limit, it will snap back hard. You must always remember this." (Crimean Speech 2014).

Resonating further on how a Ukrainian NATO membership would not just entitle a threat to the whole of Southern Russia and cut off access to the Black Sea. It would also constitute a symbolic blow, by having NATO forces housing such immensely important historic territories representing vast Russian past military glory (ibid). Even more so considering it spanning not just mere centuries but almost a millennium (Voyce 1995). Likewise, when Putin is discussing national unity and interests, a significant difference can be pinpointed. Due to him phrasing "give in" as negotiation whereas the other option is to "retreat to who knows where". This is certainly significant as retreating is what armies do, usually upon losing land. Once again, this shows that the pursuit of the world according to the foundational myth is the only option to pursue. Due to the any other option resulting losing in negotiations and consequently land, something unthinkable (Crimean Speech 2014). Below is the semiotic square constructed for this speech, depicting the world according to Putin:

Table 9: Semiotic Square for the Crimean Speech

<div align="center">

Myth + Reality
"Russian superpower"

</div>

Myth "Strong Russia"		Reality "Strong USA"
	Myth + Not-myth ?	
	Reality + Not-reality ?	
Not-reality "Third Rome"		Not-myth "Deficient"

Left label: Myth + Not-reality "Heavenly Kingdom" (Russian Unipolarity)

Right label: Reality + Not-myth "USA sole hegemony" (Unipolarity)

<div align="center">

Not-reality + Not-myth
"Multipolar world"

</div>

By deficient, this model means as in an incomplete Russia, unable to fulfill its foundational myth without Crimea as the speech make evident. The myth is calling for a strong Russia in the harsh reality that consists of the hostile USA and its coalitions. It must once again attain a position of strength by opposing this, combine the two into becoming a Russian superpower through the means of the multipolar world. In general, this means making Third Rome a reality and not just something shrouded in myth. Correspondingly the first step is to take is achieving a great power once again, attaining the multipolar world through allowing for its existence. Moreover, exhibiting how the yearning for a return to greatness goes back even further than the Soviet period. Thereupon leading to the next speech that is a continuation, building even further upon the same notion. The myth furthermore dictates a Russian hegemony, where the multipolar world itself is merely a stepping stone. Namely through the notion of the "Heavenly Kingdom" that the messianic aspects refer to and is impossible to achieve without a strong Russia. Labeling it as synonymous with it.

6.6 The State of the Union Speech

The foundational myth connection is not at all unique to the famous Crimean speech. With an idea of the Crimea conflict given above, we can now examine the aftermath through the next and last major speech. The speech is the State of the Union, given the same year on December, approximately nine months later. Unquestionably containing the same structure as dictated by the myth. Once again, the source is the official kremlin website that provides a full transcript of the speech in English. A summary of the speech is provided using the illocutions, as seen with the table under Appendix 4. The speech is similar to the previous one, as they are both addressed to the federal assembly with a few differences. As the State of the Union

speech is more general, meaning not all the concerns are related to Ukraine and in extension Crimea. This is represented with the increased number of directives and prompts for various government agencies in terms of economic policy. As this particular part exhibits on a few statements with emphasis on citing numbers. However, due to the nature of the speech, this is to be expected. Despite that, the speech has a surprisingly large portion dedicated towards Ukraine and even some, to a somewhat less extent, in regards to the USA. Beginning with the foundational myth, one of the most notable paragraphs is the following:

"[The annexation of the Crimea] has special significance for our country and our people. Because our people live in the Crimea, and the territory itself is strategically important; because it is here that is found the spiritual source of the formation of a multifaceted but monolithic Russian nation and a centralized Russian state. It was here, in the Crimea, in ancient Chersonesus or Korsun, as ancient Russian chroniclers called it, that Grand Prince Vladimir was baptized and then baptized all of Rus." (State of the Union 2014).

Putin once again reaffirms the strategic reasoning, but above all reiterates the deep historic ties in where it is unfathomable for something so sacred to the foundational myth to be beyond the borders of Russia. In the Crimean speech, Prince Vladimir was merely mentioned and within this speech he is specifically credited with the baptism of the Rus. As such, this particular area is assigned the status of the birthplace for the foundational myth, hereafter the other aspects come into play such as the Roman legacy. Yet at the heart of it all is the Orthodox faith and subsequently the baptism into Orthodoxy, that lay the very core of what constitutes the Rus people and later the Russian state. This utterance is what Putin chose to reiterate on both of these two major occasions in addressing the Federal Assembly and subsequently also on the people listening. In the very next paragraph he goes even further in detail on the subject:

"In addition to ethnic similarity, a [common] language, common elements of material culture, a common territory unmarked by stable borders, and nascent common economic activity and princely rule, Christianity proved to be a powerful spiritual unifying force that helped include very different blood tribes and tribal unions of the extensive eastern Slavic world in the formation of a single Russian nation and the creation of common statehood. And it was on this spiritual soil that our forefathers for the first time and forever became conscious of themselves as a single people. And this gives us the grounds to say that Crimea, ancient Korsun, Chersonesus, and Sevastopol have enormous civilizational and sacral importance for

Russia. Like the Temple Mount in Jerusalem is for those who believe in Islam or Judaism. And this is how we will always consider it." (State of the Union 2014).

Aside from just delving deeper into it, the application of this paragraph is towards justification. It is the foundational myth, through Christianity as the locus, which allows them to claim Crimea. Chiefly to the point of designating the subsequent sites the status as holy sites even. Effectively forming a powerful utterance, whether it is perceived as a connotation or denotation. Likewise, the siege of Sevastopol in 1854-1855 during the Crimean War is a vital part, the connection evidently goes even further than that. There is a distinct combination at play here consisting of the historic legacy and religion. It goes deeper than it simply being the spiritual soil of ancestors. There is an unmistakable need towards keeping it within Russia; in order to fulfill the notion of Russia. That is the Russia according to the myth, a Russia that is the champion of the Orthodox faith in touch with its Roman legacy. Accordingly, anything else is considered a plundering of it, and backing down from this destiny would be shying away from the fulfillment of that project. Resulting in a return to the chaotic time following the fall of the USSR, where such plundering was made possible. Remarking further on how the USA posing a threat, to Russia and the world stability, since pulling out of the ABM Treaty in 2002 and how this will be tackled through "no one will ever attain military superiority over Russia" (State of the Union 2014). It would be considered "evil" to deny them something so sacred, as shown with comparison to Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The semiotic square below constitutes the important aspects of the speech and builds on, with that notion in mind:

Table 10: Semiotic Square for the State of the Union Speech

	Good + Evil "Crimean annexation"		
Good + Not-evil "Russia according to myth"	Good "Christianity"		Evil "Contrary to will of God"
		Good + Not-good ?	
		Evil + Not-evil ?	
	Not-evil "Orthodox Religion"		Not-good "Backing down"
		Not-evil + Not-good "Rus"	

(Right side label: Evil + Not-good "The USA by opposing")

Focusing on the deeply embedded Christian nature of the myth, establishing the sacredness. It inhabits the prophesized fight of good versus evil, which Russia alone is destined to be able to win, in accordance to the myth. Subsequently, the Crimean annexation establishes a hostile action against fellow brethren, the alternative of letting it fall into the hands of evil however is far worse and has to be avoided. As justified by religion, history and the Third Rome project. This is important, as it indicates the dilemma Putin is facing, shown by the signs of Crimean annexation and Rus. Whenever signs are used, they have certain autonomy that simply cannot be controlled. For this reason, it is contrary to the myth for Putin to attack his own origin through the annexation of fellow Rus. Consequently, the onus is on him to face this contradictory dilemma and figure out how to reconcile it with the myth. Because the land acquisition is still vital towards the pursuit of changing the world to the one according to the myth. Nevertheless, failure to resolve it would mean losing control where in turn the narrative could spin out of control. Resulting in the annexation being a necessary, albeit evil action, in the narrative of establishing the foundational myth in reality. This exhibits the inherent danger of wielding a pre-existing idea, where failure to adapt the signs could potentially backfire. This explains why there simply cannot be room for losses on either side of the conflict, as then the image would crumble and Putin would be unable to utilize the myth due to acting against it. Hence, the need for hybrid warfare in making it possible to annex a country, without the loss of any life. As a result, demonstrating how Putin is walking on a fine line.

6.7 Actantial model for The Crimean and State of the Union Speeches

The two speeches are both held for the federal assembly, constituting an internal nature and subsequent Russian audience. Traditionally within actantial models, the sender is the one that initiates the action, then something comes along and stirs up the desire for it. This is exactly the case here, with the myth already being in play, such as during the Soviet era where it was almost entirely in the background; yet still in play. Now with Putin assuming the actant of helper, the myth is at the very forefront again. In other words, the myth as discussed by Kalb, has always been there as a resonance. And with the Putin actant, it is extended towards the people of Russia as a whole are act as the receivers. This puts the Western powers, primary through the USA, as the opponents towards the completion of myth. While it is potentially possible to use that grouping instead, due to the repeated specification within the speeches; the USA is used in the models. It argues for a further weakening of Russia and downscaling their sphere of influence, as seen through the speeches on both Georgia and Ukraine. There is

no doubt that Putin is a direct adherer towards it, three actions from the speeches are identified towards forming the actantial model. This is done in order to obtain the hopes and intentions that the foundational myth holds for Russia and are: (1) Russia must be strong internally. (2) Russia must obtain its ancestral land. And (3) Russia must be recognized as a major power. The actions do not however presuppose each other, meaning Russia can seize land first before being able to perceive itself as strong internally. No order is given, it is timeless like the myth and land acquisition thus becomes the starting point. Thereupon the new order becomes USSR -> Russia -> Crimea -> russkiye -> rossiyane -> nation.

In this situation, it is through requiring land that Russia becomes both strong internally and recognized as a major power in turn. In addition, this brings back the ethnic Russians back towards once again also becoming Russian citizens. All towards fulfilling the foundational myth and leads to the actantial model below:

Table 11: Actantial model of the foundational myth

No.	Actant	Actantial class	Actantial sub-class
1.	Religion	Sender	
2.	Roman legacy	Sender	
3.	Russians	Senders	Intentional (believers) and unintentional (non-believers) looking out for personal desire
4.	Russians	Receivers	Intentional (believers) and unintentional (non-believers) looking out for personal desire
5.	Religion	Helper	
6.	Roman Legacy	Helper	
7.	Putin	Helper	
8.	The USA	Opponent	

(Note: Putin not a sender, as the myth exists without him)

All of these actants are present in the speeches, they commonly convey them in these capacities. Together they form the following actantial model, including object and subject, as in the table below:

Table 12: Actantial model of the internal speeches by Putin

Sender Russians			Receiver Russians The USA (From Putin's perspective)
	Subject Russians	Object General object (goal): Greatness Specific objects (means): 1. claims to land (Roman legacy) 2. Leadership (Religion) Specific substitute objects: 1. Crimea 2. Multipolar World 3. Synthesis (Third Rome)	
Helper (for the specific objects) Religion, Roman Legacy & Putin			Opponent (for the specific objects) The USA

The model, through the speeches, show how Putin wishes to impart the past Russian glory upon the contemporary Russia. While also warning the USA how this greatness is coming, and is not to be trifled with. Hence, he utilizes this external threat and the Church as a foundation towards making Russia strong internally. While reclaiming Constantinople is obviously a stretch, Crimea sends the same signals and serves the strong purpose as ancestral land, if not more due to it being Russian ancestral land. And he finally argues towards the multipolar world in terms of world powers, allowing Russia entry into the status as a great power. In this model more roles could be filled, such as the "little green men" qualifying the assignment as helper. All the more in light of how actants can multiple roles, like Putin being placed in both the role of helper and sender. Although on the other hand, these models need to present the most important parts in order to form a conceive representation. While this dissertation does not seek to prove this is exclusively used by some or as a dominant idea, merely to point out and illustrate it is being used, even at the top. For instance, taking the form of Putin being influenced by its thinkers, whom are strong adherents to the myth.

7. Conclusion

To provide a summary, the myth is seen playing a major role in the construction of the Russian geopolitics. In the form of the myth informing Russian geopolitics. This finding is achieved through Greimas, the structure of the myth can be analyzed by applying the actantial models and interpreting them as well as their movements. Coupled with noting that there is no set sequence in the myth, it is in fact timeless due to its abstract nature. Additionally, the chronological ordering of the speeches allows for insight into how Putin himself is utilizing it in his construction. While also providing a clear timeline, as the speeches not only relate to one another, but build upon the previous as well.

7.1 Empirical findings

These are all major and famous speeches that particularly relate to Crimea and Georgia. Making them of essence in any context when trying to understand these two areas and the conflicts surrounding them. That is to say, at the same time the larger comprehensive nature of the speeches also logically covers Russia as well. Overall, fulfilling all the aims this dissertation set out to accomplish. Going through the constructed models allows for specific empirical conclusions to be drawn from the analysis. While traces of similarity regarding the myth can be found among all four speeches. The different audiences consisting of foreign dignitaries' place difficulty in explicitly outlining the foundational myth, yet it exists between the lines. On the whole, the myth is much clearer when addressing the internal audience. This is exhibited through an axis of meaning that is at play here and can be identified, through the meaning of the juxtaposition between the two actantial models. Indicating how Putin is striving towards a goal and utilizing helpers on the way to achieving it in both models. The multipolar world on the other hand is finally framed as way towards opening the door for the "stronger Russia" as dictated by the foundational myth. Then Putin himself, upon breaking off negotiations, fulfills it through utilizing his own form of unilateral force in both Georgia and Ukraine. Yet they are both, to different degrees, part of the imperial project. Displaying how ultimately the multipolar world is not a part of the foundational myth and under most condition even at odds with it. As there will be no fourth Roman empire and other pretenders are incapable of fulfilling it lest they serve as hindrance instead.

The most notable similarity is the role of the USA. Consistently portrayed with hostility across all the speeches and reflected in both models. This framing is almost exclusively employed when discussing what is wrong or evil in any attempt to get any argument across, to the point of even dominating the semiotic squares. Clearly indicating that this is not just a rhetoric trick, but constituting most major policies. And transcending the Russian interior upon being employed in the same fashion for the foreign audience, with only little shifts in the tone. Since the hostility is constant, so too has the military budget increases been alongside the evolution of hybrid warfare. Towards the purpose of accompanying military action in a global world with coalitions and repercussions. Admittedly, the Crimean speech is famous for being one of the most significant. On the other hand, the State of The Union speech provides a far more interesting and valuable semiotic square. Since it goes further into depth of the aspects the Crimean speech in contrast merely mentions.

Georgia is unmistakably a prelude for what is to come with Crimea, a fact the literature on hybrid warfare attests to both in terms of conducting it and alluding to it. As such Georgia, is reflected less within the speeches and is found lacking in terms of historic connection and significance when compared to Crimea. Yet from the religious standpoint, it is vital and seen in the structures of the speech exhibiting that NATO (non-Orthodox) should not be in Georgia but rather Russian (Orthodox). In other words, Georgia plays a vital role in the construction of the self-image of and by Putin. Where he is seen as the protector Georgia and arbiter of its ethnic conflict, a typical role for one who is the leader of the Orthodox religion. While the same could be extended towards Ukraine and the Crimean Peninsula it is obviously a much deeper and more significant part. This point is solidified with Putin displaying willingness to compromise on Georgia but under no circumstances on Crimea. The long history and near-holy value, as prescribed by Putin himself, establish it as a core of the state as opposed to a colony or territory. It is powerful claims for these kinds of cores that are so significant enough to be used as casus belli, as evident in this case. The connection, as advocated by the myth, goes beyond in intricacy than simply being a on the fly justification. Meaning it is a part of a larger and grander design, as the people surrounding Putin have, and continue, to attest to.

This dissertation has studied the foundational myth through Greimas where the speech as the subject, gives direction to the object being the myth, to change the world into what the myth prescribes. In other words, Putin phrases his ideas towards what is described by the myth to be familiar. That is to say, Putin sees the world through the myth and we see Putin through the myth. Resulting in the foundational myth becoming crucial in any attempts made towards grasping the formation of the Russian geopolitics under Putin. Consequently asking: How do you change the world to achieve the myth? So then, the myth is used towards informing the Russian geopolitics and the next question is how Putin places himself in the myth. Is he controlling the myth or is it in fact controlling him?

7.2 Creating a synthesis

The myth could be perceived as simply a way to quell potential unrest. Essentially inspire perseverance, in light of increasing sanctions against Russia and scorn from the Western world. That dominate the news at the time of this writing. Or is it the construction of a new Russia, one synthesizing the Imperial tsarist grandeur and Soviet militarism with the common denominator of the foundational myth of Third Rome. The speeches and thinkers discern towards the latter, as all the pieces of the puzzle are there and the effort directed at its inception is staggering. While the new hybrid war doctrine avoids direct violence, it is important to note that there are more factors at play. The speeches demonstrate how Ukraine is seen as brethren, sharing the same faith and culture. Extending towards the branch to Georgia as well through religion. An Orthodox champion does not attack other Orthodox brethren. However, this gives even more motives for the carefully waged warfare waged on both regions. As they could easily go wrong and undo the carefully constructed image of Putin, that he has cultivated for so long. Meaning that the purely strategical reasoning one would expect to dominate the geopolitics is incorrect. Granting another reasoning as for why the shaping of geopolitics is being influenced by the foundational myth. Torbakov identifies Putin as a typical *gosudarstvennik* (champion of a strong state) in light of his statist focus (Torbakov 2015:444). With the Tsar Alexander III being his role model, in the formation of his quasi-monarchial leadership style (Torbakov 2016). While others have gone as far as identify him as an outright self-proclaimed Tsar (Mamonova 2018). In where democracy is seen as a weakness and the foundational myth craves the strong and mythical figure, a hero if

you will, to lead the never-ending fight against evil. And make Russia whole again through this messianic belief, as the third and last iteration of the Roman Empire.

This is reminiscent of past incidents, with fading democracy in favor of a strong absolute ruler. One other such, albeit perhaps extreme, example is the Empire of Japan during the interwar period where military officers unhappy with imposed navy limitations by the West sought the Shōwa Restoration. Meaning restoring the mostly ceremonial Emperor to absolute power and in their attempts murdered three prime ministers, to the point of historians coining the term Government by assassination. In this situation, the blame for anything bad passed to the ministers whereas their foundational myth dictated everything would be well again through the full restoration of the Emperor. To summarize an otherwise long story, they failed to fully fulfill this foundational myth; yet democracy was still severely weakened and plunged Japan into World War II in the process (Duus 1976:210-211). Though this was an extreme situation, the same totalitarian trends can be seen in Russia (Kozyrev 1992). Torbakov notes some similarities with Turkey, in terms of what could be called democratic backsliding and furthermore having an absolute monarch as role model for the leader of the nation (Torbakov 2016). This shows how the foundational myth has usages of being studied outside of Russia as well if not even possibly compared, accounting for the Russian and other unique positions of course. For this purpose, the dissertation has demonstrated how the foundational myth is shaped by many influences. More importantly, how it undeniably has an impact on Putin as exhibited in his speeches. In a sense, Putin makes use of the myth whereas this dissertation makes use of it to understand Putin, and the myth itself makes use of Putin as a vessel. Approaching the speeches by Putin through the foundational myth gives coherence and discerns a repeating theme, one that provides a framework for understanding Russian contemporary foreign policy. Additionally, Putin utilizes the foundational myth towards constructing his own synthesis. One consisting of the tsarist assertive monarchy with a deep commitment to the Orthodox religion combined with the Soviet militarism as seen with the increasing, at times unfeasible, modernizations of the military. While through this, also appealing to the different people yearning for the tsarist and soviet times alike. With increasing amount of literature recognizing signs of this, it is all the more important to study the myth and its function in the future as Russia continues its commitment towards this project. Due to the foundational myth being the common denominator between what otherwise should be divided groups. It is hence a powerful unifying tool, one capable of justifying claims on land and legacies alike.

In conclusion, despite the limitations of this dissertation in that it examines only major speeches by Putin. The dissertation manages to yield considerable insight and is consequently the best possible choice given the scope of this research and the employed method. Accordingly, the divergence from traditional science in favor of the myth has provided valuable and unique discernment. For this reason, the four speeches have been studied more in depth and have been able to identify the major turning points they represent, in order to highlight them. The rhetoric and references employed in them, aim towards a wide audience and can reasonably be assumed to cover a broader area than other minor speeches given to specific audiences. Furthermore, the myth takes connotations and denotations into account, as it probes for the deep abstract and ahistorical meanings that are otherwise unattainable. The various thinkers have also been pointed out by this dissertation and other writers in relation to how they affect Russian policy. Looking at the speeches, this can be confirmed to indeed be the case and exhibits a need for future research. This research could have benefited from the inclusion of a historical reconstruction, to more broadly compliment the myth and speeches. While this has not been possible to the desired extent, given the time and scope of this dissertation. Future research is encouraged to dig deeper digging into the rich and vast history, and not just regarding Russia. Especially the other two regions as their ties run deep with the various iterations of Russia throughout time. Such as, the common claim to the Rus as ancestors to name just one. The historical connection is integral and studies dealing with this subject should always have it in mind. In closing words, the narrative is not just of a simple nationalist sense, it evidently goes back even further as demonstrated by the messianic belief. And while the pursuit of the foundational myth varies among countries, it is essential in understanding Russia as well as the unique position relating to Eurasia it tends to be described with and is in the process of intensifying.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Illocutions of the Munich Speech at February 10, 2007

Searle	Type of illocution	Number of sentences	Percentage
1.	Assertive	175	79.18
2.	Directives	14	6.33
3.	Commissives	4	1.80
4.	Expressives	6	2.71
5.	Declarations	22	9.95
		Total: 221	Total: 100%
Austin	**Illocution**	**Number of sentences**	**Percentage**
1.	To convince	56	25.33
2.	To bore	0	0
3.	To frighten	16	7.23
4.	To prompt	9	4.07
5.	To insult	0	0
6.	To alarm	10	4.52
7.	To enlighten	87	39.36
8.	To inspire	18	8.14
9.	Specific action	11	4.97
10.	Deeper meaning	14	6.33
		Total: 221	Total: 100%

Appendix 2: Illocutions of the Bucharest Speech at April 2, 2008

Searle	Type of illocution	Number of sentences	Percentage
1.	Assertive	35	77.77
2.	Directives	3	6.66
3.	Commissives	1	2.22
4.	Expressives	0	0
5.	Declarations	6	13.33
		Total: 45	Total: 100%
Austin	**Illocution**	**Number of sentences**	**Percentage**
1.	To convince	7	15.55
2.	To bore	0	0
3.	To frighten	0	0
4.	To prompt	3	6.66
5.	To insult	0	0
6.	To alarm	1	2.22
7.	To enlighten	31	68.88
8.	To inspire	0	0
9.	Specific action	0	0
10.	Deeper meaning	3	6.66
		Total: 45	Total: 100%

Appendix 3: Illocutions of the Crimea Speech at March 18, 2014

Searle	Type of illocution	Number of sentences	Percentage
1.	Assertive	170	79.43
2.	Directives	8	3.73
3.	Commissives	30	14.01
4.	Expressives	10	4.67
5.	Declarations	6	2.80
		Total: 224	Total: 100%
Austin	**Illocution**	**Number of sentences**	**Percentage**
1.	To convince	20	9.34
2.	To bore	0	0
3.	To frighten	10	4.67
4.	To prompt	6	2.80
5.	To insult	0	0
6.	To alarm	4	1.86
7.	To enlighten	143	66.82
8.	To inspire	9	4.20
9.	Specific action	3	1.40
10.	Deeper meaning	29	13.55
		Total: 224	Total: 100%

Appendix 4: Illocutions of the State of Union at December 4, 2014

Searle	Type of illocution	Number of sentences	Percentage
1.	Assertive	338	77.88
2.	Directives	60	13.82
3.	Commissives	19	4.37
4.	Expressives	8	1.84
5.	Declarations	9	2.07
		Total: 434	Total: 100%
Austin	**Illocution**	**Number of sentences**	**Percentage**
1.	To convince	64	14.74
2.	To bore	2	0.46
3.	To frighten	9	2.07
4.	To prompt	12	2.76
5.	To insult	0	0
6.	To alarm	5	1.15
7.	To enlighten	246	56.68
8.	To inspire	33	7.60
9.	Specific action	38	8.75
10.	Deeper meaning	25	5.76
		Total: 434	Total: 100%