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# **Eurasian Frontier: Interrelation of Eurasian Cultures in a Global Age**

Edited by  
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The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

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## Foreword

IRINA BOLDONOVA

This collection of articles presents the general idea of the Eurasian form of existence and the so-called Eurasian life model. This acquires new features from its engagement of modern culture, ideology, philosophy and education. The authors analyze the philosophical, cultural, linguistic and artistic characters of this world picture. The 21st century world is more open, integrated, and interdependent, but at the same time it has become much more complicated. Globalization has had the most noticeable impact on Eurasia. Even in isolated villages people are no longer ignorant of developments in the wider world. The physical and virtual connectivity *via* the internet has created an unprecedented awareness of rights and opportunities thereby empowering the global and virtual human being, this creates widespread expectations for the global age on the one hand, and the will to preserve ethnicity and national culture on the other.

After the breakup of the Soviet Union, new sovereign countries have emerged in Eurasia to form a new unity. Earlier, Eurasia was relatively isolated, even though located at the centre of the world's largest territory. Now Eurasia – including Russia as a part of it – is engaged in the process of integration, defined by a common perspective on humankind at this time of globalization. This process addresses a number of important questions: how ideas move between the East and the West?; how intercultural dialogue can be implemented?; and why some peoples, especially those in Europe, eagerly incorporated Asian knowledge, while Asians were more selective in their willingness to accept new ideas? In Siberia, with Buryatia as the Eurasian frontier is the true example of collaboration offering evidence of Eurasian intellectual interchange and a critical analysis of the impact of intercultural dialogue on people, states and cultures on both sides of the border.

Buryat State University has ongoing collaboration with Mongolian and Chinese universities. It conducts extensive exchanges with Asian educational and research institutions. Thus Ulan-Ude is perhaps the most appropriate place in Russia for holding the present conference on the theme *Eurasian Frontier: Interrelation of Eurasian Cultures in a Global Age* because it provides the geographical and cultural link between

Russia (Europe) and Mongolia, China and India (Asia). This international conference has brought together scholars from a variety of fields, such as philosophy, linguistics, history, politics, anthropology, sociology and literature, to revisit the histories, analyze the contemporary situation and encourage the creation of new knowledge regarding this era with its considerable humanistic, social, scientific, and strategic significance. This cross-cultural and cross-frontier approach is reflected not only in the international representation of the participants, but also in its consideration of analytic, continental, Asian and indigenous responses to issues and developments in the field of human and social sciences in philosophical reflection.

Indeed, this territory itself has both an Asian and a Eurasian character, reflected in the ethnicity, language, culture and customs of the people. Likewise, through the centuries Buryatia has had equally intensive trading and cultural contacts with Mongolia, China and Central Asia. The most dramatic improvement in Eurasian relations has been with China. The settlement of the borders between China and Russia paved the way for the restoration of traditional trading and the historical people-to-people links in the divided regions. Being at the true crossroads, Buryatia plays an integral role in the developing field of borderland studies and economic cooperation, besides restoring traditional links, such as Silk Road, Tea Road, Eastern Ring and others.

The essays presented in this volume continue the discussion of these issues in the context of Eurasian frontier – its knowledge and will, ethics and metaphysics, philosophy and religion, language and literature, education and science – thereby facilitating widespread discussion and deeper reflection. In general the papers tell about national identity formation and explore how cultures have been affected by global forces. They respond to the question: “How can Eurasian cultures manage globalization and develop while maintaining a viable national identity?” Some philosophical research is devoted to the dialectical and holistic approaches to the dialogue of civilizations and their joint efforts in the development of internal and external freedom. This, in turn, can provide the spiritual energy necessary for creating a hermeneutically oriented civil society, constitutional state, active and responsible communities, and persons in harmony with nature and the self. The hermeneutic approach is one

of the most important ways to study issues of communications and conflict prediction, as well as to elaborate transversal values.

At the same time Ulan-Ude is the centre for exploring the interplay of transnational identities in the Eurasian context. It is a place, where representatives of many nationalities live in peace and understanding. Among other cultural criteria language is used to differentiate ethnic groups and reinforce their collective consciousness. Most citizens in Buryatia consider Russian as their native language; yet the Buryat ethnic population is guaranteed education in their native language. This has made Ulan-Ude a creative transnational city with specific focus on the emergence there of the Eurasian frontier's language reality.

Hence, literature in Russia has played a key role in defining national identity. Some authors emphasize that the unification of national cultures leads to loss of the beginnings of the cultural roots, in the process washing out its value system. In these conditions it is necessary to pay attention to those spheres of culture and art which reveal universal values. The key for this is the recognition of the transitional stages, which can be analyzed from the example of the Eurasian frontier. The national Buryat literature follows the tendency to unite traditions of European and Asian cultures. Some poets write in Russian, while still having a national mentality and willingness to participate in intercultural dialogue. They represent the national culture, created on the basis of a new consciousness, in the context of the contemporary global age. The vast territory of the Eurasian frontier includes Siberia, North, Far East, Central Asia and North-Eastern Asia. Thus, Buryatia occupies the position of a mediator between the Russian and the Asian part of Eurasia. People living in this territory have common roots in their national traditions, nomadic economy, attitude to nature, folklore, shamanism and Buddhism.

The interrelation of Eurasian cultures is an important social and cultural resource, which shapes the mentality and self-consciousness of the contemporary person through language, literature, philosophy, science and education. Eurasian life models the idea that each country or nation is able to nourish its language, literature, folklore and art, preserving its sense of ethnic and national identity in a global age.





# Introduction

VENSUS A. GEORGE

This volume entitled, *Eurasian Frontier: Interrelation of Eurasian Cultures in a Global Age*, includes essays that represent Eurasian existence and the life model in the context of globalization and its consequences on the divergent cultures of the Eurasian Frontier. The authors of the essays unfold themes, such as philosophy, linguistics, history, politics, anthropology, sociology and literature pertaining to the Eurasian nations and cultures, so as to revisit their histories, analyze their contemporary situation and encourage the creation of new information, by focusing on humanistic, social, scientific and strategic issues and matters. Hence, the essays initiate wider and deeper reflection on knowledge and will, ethics and metaphysics, philosophy and religion, language and literature, education and science. This cross-cultural, dialogical and holistic approaches attempts to bring together the European, Asian and indigenous religious values in synthesis, in order to achieve the goal of bringing about genuine collaboration among the nations and cultures of the world, particularly those of the Eurasian Frontier. This, in turn, provides the spiritual energy necessary for creating a genuine civil society, constitutional state, active and responsible communities, and persons in harmony with nature and the self. We unfold the topic of this volume in thirteen chapters. Below, we shall briefly consider the theme and content of each of these chapters.

In the first chapter "Searching for Ways of Peace", Thomas Menampampil looks for means to establish harmonious living among diverse peoples so as to bring about a peaceful society in a world that is prone to violence and bloodshed. In the introduction, he begins by stating that more than 130 million people were killed during the last century in wars and revolutions in different parts of the world. Then he moves on to speak of the physical, emotional, verbal, theological, cognitive, sexual, visual, institutional, structural, economic, political, social and ecological forms of violence that are rampant in our world. He deplors that civilization has not civilized human beings and the horrifying barbarity with which the humans deal with their fellow humans exceeds the cruelty that is found in the animal kingdom because the humans can be artfully and artistically

cruel. Besides, human beings provide philosophies of violence and facilitate their implementation by working on human emotions, using aggressive language and perpetuating memory of historic injuries in the minds of the victimized people.

Then the author proceeds to consider ways that can lead to peace and harmony and reduce the furtherance of violence. According to him – working on prejudice-reduction; the realization that the oppressors and the oppressed are ordinary people; effective healing of collective memories; cultivating higher motives in people that can persuade them to give up violence; transforming inner-group-loyalty into concern for humanity; tapping the resources of Asian cultures, such as compassion, religiosity, community cohesion, family loyalty, concern for every sentient being and absolute respect for life; choosing the middle path; renunciation for a higher goal; and the strength that comes from true religious practice – are some means that would reduce violence and bring peace among peoples and nations. In the conclusion, the author states that the more we, as peoples and nations, discover the inner resource of healing hidden within us, the more we shall be empowered to shed the sunshine of joy, love, gentleness and humaneness, which, in turn, contribute to the cause of peace, reconciliation and healing in our troubled world.

In the second chapter, "Eurasian Union's Project: A Sustainable Future Being Born Today", Vyacheslav Mantatov speaks of the loss of common values and purposes in the post-Soviet Russia. The neoliberal reformers who came to power in Russia imposed symbols and attitudes that belong to a capitalist consumer society, which led to the emergence of abnormal social differentiation and inequality of wealth. Besides, it led to the destruction of the foundations of the Christian-Communist-World, such as work, honesty, justice and common good, in the process losing the socialist-civilizations of the post-Soviet era. Instead of following the western model of neoliberal capitalism, with its totalitarian market commercialization, the people of the former Soviet Union, the great Eurasian Empire, must take steps to bring about the transition to the state system of the conscious realization of the noosphere. The former Soviet space with its institutional and sociopolitical attributes in the future should become a Greater Eurasian Union with the integration of Russia and China, making it a powerful, civilized, harmonious and socialist Union based on the principles of sustainable development. As the

cyclical historical movement that favors the East, Russia must focus more on China for its long-term and sustainable development instead of being a buffer state between the capitalist West and the communist China, and move towards building an Eurasian Union guided by the philosophy of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

The third chapter entitled "Transversal Values in Hermeneutic Dialogue" by Irina Boldonova and Veera Bashkeeva, seeks ways to elaborate a creative hermeneutic model for the optimization of multicultural dialogue in "post modern" global society. In elaborating on this issue, the first section of this paper deals with a general consideration of cultural values, spelling out the significant values of western and eastern civilizations, and the influence of various religions in the formation of these values. The second section highlights the need for interaction between western and eastern cultures, so as to bring about the greater influence of eastern values on western culture. The third section attempts to unfold the Buryatian-Mongolian culture and its inherent values, such as dialogue and consensus-building in solving an issue, and the value, of environment, benevolence and compassion. The fourth section clarifies the notion of transversality, its relevance, and how hermeneutic dialogue can bring it to light. The fifth section presents a vision of applying hermeneutic ideas in the intercultural communication with specific reference to European and Asian value systems. The conclusion briefly states the significance of transversalism, as a study of moral values of the West and the East, and how it can contribute to build bridges between eastern and western cultures and civilizations.

In the first part of the fourth chapter entitled "The Frontier Thesis and Social Interactions in Eurasia", Oyuna Randalova attempts to elaborate the origin of the Frontier Thesis in the writings of American author Frederick Jackson Turner, and its transfer to and development on Russian soil. The Russian authors did not make a direct transfer of the Frontier Thesis as proposed by Turner, but conceptually transformed it and used in the Eurasian context. The second part of the fourth chapter takes up for discussion inter-social interactions in the Eurasian situation, particularly on the basis of the socioeconomic sphere of the Buryat society. The analysis considers social-interactions in the Eurasian society at various levels of historical development, starting from the primitive communal

system, during the Russian Empire, after the October Revolution of 1917 and in the twentieth century. The conclusion points to the destruction of the nomadic civilization and culture of the Buryats, the development of the Eurasian mentality and the formation of the Eurasian synthetic culture based on Eurasian national identity.

In the fifth chapter "Social Liberalism and Holism: Solidarity of Purpose", Lydia Gomboeva attempts to unfold the complementary nature of liberalism and holism, as both of these ideologies have solidarity of purpose as they serve liberal political democracy. Elaborating on this theme, the first part of the chapter clarifies the meaning and types of liberalism, the notion of a "strong state", and the consequences of a "strong state" in a liberal society. The second part expounding holism speaks of the nature and principles of holism, the metaphysical and psychological foundations of holism, and holism as an ideal ontology for liberal political democracy. The conclusion highlights the manner in which liberalism and holism complement each other in bringing about the establishment of liberal political democracy.

Liubov Ivankina, in the sixth chapter entitled "*Imago Alterus* as an Orientation of the Cross-Cultural Dialogue and communication", points to the role of the significant other in any type of cross-cultural interaction. After briefly considering the meaning of *Imago Alterius* and its influence in an interpersonal context, the author attempts to show the connection between knowledge about oneself and the other. Elaborating on the *ego-alter* theory, this section clearly points out that the image of a person's *ego* depends greatly on the image of the significant *alter*, who has had an influence on the former. This implies the presence of the *Imago Alterius* at every human, cultural and cross-cultural interaction. The second section expounds on this point by considering the *Imago Alterius* as a conceptual program of human life influencing the interpersonal interaction between representatives of different cultures. The third section speaks of the types of relations and orientations in actions directed towards the other and their consequences in the understanding of one's personality, the cross-cultural paradigm, and interaction among cultures. The conclusion, applying this concept to the Eurasian Frontier, speaks of the necessity of the proper formation of *Imago Alterius*. With its help, a person determines the cultural space with which he identifies in the context of which he differs from others.

This, in turn, helps him to understand and accept the other and his/her culture in their uniqueness.

In the seventh chapter "The Ecological and Cultural Aspects of the Eurasian Frontier: The Baikal Region", Larisa Mantatova points to the significance of the Baikal region for the concept of the Eurasian Frontier. Elaborating on this theme, the introduction speaks of how the Baikal region historically served as the meeting place of the oriental and the western civilizations, the seat of many empires and political powers, the geographical cradle of many migrations, the meeting points of religious values and cultural trends – thus providing the paradigm for dialogue among various cultures for the sustainable development of the world. The first section of the chapter, considering the ecological aspects of the Baikal region presents it as a sufficient reserve of ecological sustainability. Very significant in this regard is Lake Baikal, which maintains the ecosystem of the region. The second section highlights the cultural aspects of the Baikal region. Socially and culturally the Baikal region was a natural and non-violent settlement, in which the indigenous population and the newcomers developed an "overlapping zone", based on confessional and ethnic tolerance. This, in turn, transformed the Baikal region into a sociocultural entity characterized by a shared regional identity and mentality. The focus of this mentality was not what differentiated the people, but what united them. This conclusion points out that the family feeling prevalent among the people of Baikal region is significant not only for the unity of the Eurasian Frontier, but also to foster the spiritual unity of the entire humankind living on this planet.

In the eighth chapter entitled "Ethnic Contradictions and Political Conflicts in the Globalized World: Reasons and Solutions", Aleksandr Boldonov and Yuri Romanov explore the reasons and solutions of ethnic contradictions which are manifest as political conflicts in the globalized world. The introduction briefly considers the significance of globalization. While globalization has the ability to solve many present-day problems, it can also exacerbate older issues and create new ones. In this context, the first section of the chapter considers the nexus of ethnic contradictions to international terrorism in the globalized world. The second section establishes that global political conflicts are in fact the manifestations of diverse ethnic differences and contradictions. The third section deals with

separatism as the consequence of such ethnic contradictions and political conflicts. Further clarifying the notion of separatism, this section elaborates on its nature, causes and types in the context of Europe inasmuch as Russia is considered a European nation. The fourth section attempts to give some solutions to dismantle separatist tendencies and outlooks, which, in turn, can lead to the end of political conflicts and ethnic contradictions. The conclusion highlights the need to improve the socio-economic conditions, enhance regional cooperation among sovereign states, form international legal frameworks, and create anti-crisis centers, thereby bringing about the end of the political conflicts and separatist outlook of many ethnic groups.

The ninth chapter "National Characters and Themes in the Russian Language: Buryat Literature" by Svetlana Imikhelova unfolds the characters and themes in the Russian language as expressed in the poems and writings of Buryat authors, poets and writers. The introduction speaks of the historical and geographical significance of Buryatia and the ability of the Buryat literature to express creatively both the national face and the soul of the Buryat people. Having established the significance of Buryatia at the crossroads of cultures and the ability of the Buryat literature to give expression to the ethnic and national cultures, the chapter moves on to consider various themes, both ethnic and national that are found in the writings of Buryat authors, poets and writers of the Russian language. Some of the themes considered are: the idea of socialism; the idea of freedom; the idea of the city; the idea of education, mysticism and nature; the idea of national Russian culture and ethnic Buryat culture; the idea of a national Russian-language; and the idea of national image. The conclusion points to the desire of the Buryat authors of the Russian language to escape the boundaries of ethnic and national possibilities and interests. While they do not want to lose the past and what is native, they wish to be open to new horizons. Inspired by the dialogue of cultures, the Buryat literature will represent the ethnic and national on the basis of the new personality of the artist, creatively moving into the context of the broadened consciousness of the new civilizational space that is universally and generally valid.

Irina Bulgutova, in the tenth chapter, "Literature and Spirituality in the Informational Society", unfolds the role of literature in

cultivating spirituality in the context of the information society. The introduction briefly presents the information society as the new stage for the development of *homo sapiens* at various levels of human existence, including his spiritual development in the context of the emerging noosphere or global consciousness. The first section outlines that the synthesis of science, religion and art and their respect literature play a significant role in the formation of spirituality, as a feature and value of the human race. The second section highlights the relationship between the information society and the individual's spiritual level, by presenting information networks and twitter as opportunities for the individual to develop his/her own spirituality and its perspective on life. Thus, new technologies of communication by opening new horizons of freedom of choice for the individual unlock genuine possibilities for spiritual development. The third section elaborates the relationship of the individual spirituality to the emergence of the noosphere or global consciousness, as the latter expands the mental sphere and subconsciousness of a person, thereby leading to spiritual transformation. The fifth section points to the influence of the information age on the formation of spiritual attitudes and fundamental values. The conclusion speaks of the need for developing an harmonious world outlook that can help to create an organic unity of the material and the spiritual aspects, and work for the sustainable development of the world. This calls for recognizing the inevitability of the globalization process and the need to preserve spirituality, thereby focusing on the fundamental values that bring together people and cultures for prospective dialogue.

In the eleventh chapter entitled "Genre Peculiarities of Minor Forms in the Buryat Legendry: The Case of Oral Compositions of the Alar' Buryats", Maria Danchinova elaborates on the nature of minor forms in Buryat legendry particularly taking into consideration the oral compositions of Alar' Buryats. The first section of the chapter takes up the problem of genre delimitation, which is a complex task. Its complexity is caused by the variability, fluctuation and obscurity of genre boundaries, besides its subject matter taking forms of a legend, tale, short story or fairytale. Hence, all researchers agree that it is impossible to find strict parameters of genre delimitation in the minor form. The second section clarifies legends and tales. Expounding on this point, the similarities and differences between

legends, tales and fairytales are considered. Besides, the subject matter dealt with in these minor genre are also briefly reviewed. Finally, the qualities of interrelatedness, interpenetration, fluidity and openness of the genre boundaries that mark these oral compositions are analyzed. The third section specifically looks at the problem of delimitation of Buryat legends and tales. A brief consideration of their origin from mythological material and the three states of their development are discussed. The specific feature of the Buryat oral story as communicating a real event in its historical context is analyzed. The fourth section highlights the peculiarities of the minor genres of Buryat legendry by studying the oral compositions of Alar' Buryats, as a contemporary tale with another folklore piece of Alar' Buryats for comparison. The conclusion speaks of the possibility of finding various genre enlargements of myths, legends and tales in the Buryat folklore. Though it is not easy to determine their boundaries, the author's reflection on the minor forms of Buryat legendry opens the space for further research.

Tsytsygma D. Bidagayeva, in the twelfth chapter entitled "Spheres and Aspects of Culture", identifies and clarifies some key issues involved in the clash of cultures, particularly where religion is a controversial issue. The introduction briefly states that the presupposition of a universal culture that includes European and other cultures is no longer accepted as true because of the numerous conflicts and clashes among cultures. The first section sets the Eurasian Frontier as the context of such a clash of cultures, as a melting pot of diverse cultures and ethnicities; as divergent social groups of entrepreneurs, bankers and new generations of politicians; a mixture of peoples, such as Buryats, Russians, Tatars, Ukrainians, Jews and Evenks; and representing such various religions as Buddhism, Shamanism, Orthodox Christianity and the like. To cope with such cultural conflicts and clashes, it is important to form an efficient system of communication based on the awareness of similarities and differences among the cultures. Besides, identifying intercultural interferences and coping with them by means of genuine interactions between cultures and languages, based on commonly accepted religious values and principles, enables them to understand each other's cultures, cooperate, interact and be united with the other. Buryatia sets an example of such peaceful coexistence



in the Eurasian Frontier. The second section attempts to define the notions of "culture" and "cultural sphere" in terms of institutions, technology, ideology and behavior. Such perceptions of these notions are vital for effecting genuine understanding among divergent cultures of the Eurasian Frontier. The third section briefly considers the language as an important expression of both culture and cultural spheres. Proper grasp of other cultures can happen only through language. Linguistic understanding supplemented by the right perception of non-verbal behaviors, such as gestures, mimes, body language and actions will lead to greater understanding among peoples and nations. The conclusion speaks of the importance of one's knowledge of the trends of speech and behavior in a given culture as vital means of intercultural communication. Hence, linguo-cultural awareness of people and the ability to use it in the situations of conversation and dialogue is a way cultures can move from conflict and clash to understanding and unity.

The thirteenth chapter, "The Role of Synonymy as a Method of Systematization of Medical Terminology in Intercultural Interaction", by *Victoria Khantakova* and *Svetlana Shvetsova*, highlights the significance of synonymous relations in the organization and systematization of medical terminology, which, in turn, promote intercultural and inter-civilizational relations, over and beyond the medical field. The introduction considers in general the importance of synonymy and synonymous relations in recognizing the problems of modeling, understanding and generating diverse scientific discourses, and scientific medical discourses in particular. The first section analyzes the nature and characteristics of scientific medical discourse. For medical discourse to be scientific, there is need a terminological system that is adequate and accurate to express the discoveries in the medical science. Hence, it needs a high degree of the use of terminological units, such as synonymous eponym-terms and toponymic terminology, to make medical reflection more scientific and dynamic. This leads to the clarification of the terminological apparatus in medical science in the second section. This facilitates determining the exact etiology of a disease by giving a terminological and semantic structure, and thereby helps to express accurately different stages of research and discoveries about an illness. The third section speaks of the scope and formation of scientific medical terminology. As new illnesses and their remedies

are invented, there is the need to find proper terminology to express them. Usually medical science invents terms from the Latin and Greek languages and later finds their equivalents in local languages. Besides, the use of Latin and Greek prefixes and suffixes to invent new terms, thereby form a new terminological system that best expresses the new developments in medical sciences. The fourth section considers the synonymy and synonymous relations of medical terms as a method of systematization of medical terminology. Using synonymy to systematize medical terminology helps to organize medical knowledge obtained from medical research. The conclusion points to the fact that standardization of medical terminology by using synonymy would facilitate dialogue among medical scientists of many countries and enhance the work of medical specialists. Besides, the creation of a unified medical language not only would bring about greater development in the medical and health sciences, but also would lead to developing intercultural and inter-civilizational relations.

In the conclusion, entitled "Geopolitical Feasibility and Sustainability of the Eurasian Union in the Twenty-First Century", Vensus A. George briefly retells the themes of the thirteen essays that constitutes this volume, which express the deeper desire of the people of the Eurasian Frontier to reintegrate economically and politically the post-Soviet space and establish a Greater Eurasian Union. Then, he attempts to consider the feasibility of the concept of the Greater Eurasian Union and its sustainability in the present geopolitical context of the Eurasian Frontier nations and the world at large. In elaborating this theme, he first clarifies the notion of Eurasian Union in terms of Eurasian Economic Union and the Greater Eurasian Union with geopolitical ambitions. In the next section, he looks into the sustainability of the Eurasian Economic Union in its present mode of operation and the feasibility of Greater Eurasian Union as a geopolitical power bloc. It would seem that the Eurasian Economic Union is not sustainable in its present mode of operation and the Greater Eurasian Union is not feasible in the twenty-first century, in the geopolitical context of the nations of the Eurasian Frontier and the world at large. The volume ends with a bibliography of the books used by the authors in writing the essays that constitute this volume and with an index.

1.

## Searching for Ways of Peace

THOMAS MENAMPARAMPIL<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Whenever I speak, I must cry out violence and outrage is my message!<sup>2</sup>

During the last century an estimated 130 million people were killed.<sup>3</sup> One estimate says that, in the 70 years after 1917, the Soviet regime killed 61,911,000 people, 20 million of whom were in the Stalinist period alone.<sup>4</sup> Between 1958 and 1962 the Great Leap Forward in China killed 20-30 million people.<sup>5</sup> The Cultural Revolution launched by Mao Zedong in 1966 killed 15-70 million people. 3 million died in the Korean War; and 2 million were killed in the Vietnam War. In the Iran-Iraq War between 1980 and 1988 a million people were killed. Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge killed 2 out of the 8 million of Cambodia.<sup>6</sup> Between 1900 and 1989 wars all over the world carried away 86 million people.<sup>7</sup> In the Hutu-Tutsi clash in the 1990's at least one million were killed.<sup>8</sup> Since World War II, 25 million people have been killed by their own governments. No less than 10 million people have died since World War II in civic violence.<sup>9</sup> Hitler's and Stalin's brutality is well known.

Historian Eric Hobsbawm notes that even the liberal states waged the two world wars in the same spirit. According to him, they "recognized no limit on the suffering they were prepared to impose on the population of 'the enemy', and, in the First World War, even on their own armed forces. Indeed, even the victimization of entire

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<sup>1</sup> Guwahati, India

<sup>2</sup> Jer. 20: 8

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Gerald A. Arbuckle: *Violence, Society, and the Church* (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2004), p. xi.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Jonathan Glover: *Humanity* (London: Pimlico, 2001), p. 237.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 284.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 309.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Gerald A. Arbuckle: *Violence, Society, and the Church*, p. 182.

blocs of people, defined on *a priori* grounds, became part of warfare... This was part of that relapse of nineteenth-century civil progress into a Renaissance of barbarism."<sup>10</sup> The above list does not include dozens of other international and inter-community conflicts during the last century, more especially in recent years, such as the Sino-Indian war of 1962; the Indo-Pakistani wars of 1965 and 1971; Israeli wars on the Palestinians in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, 1982; the Turkish invasion of Cyprus; revolution in Egypt 1952; the revolutions in Iraq and Syria in the 1950's and 1960's; the revolutions in South Arabia in the 1960's and 1970's; and the revolution in Iran in 1979.

We are getting used to news of violence. According to Milan Kundera: "The bloody massacre in Bangladesh quickly covered the memory of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia; the assassination of Allend drowned the groans of Bangladesh; the war in the Sinai desert made people forget Allend, the Cambodian massacre made people forget Sinai; and so on until ultimately everyone lets everything be forgotten."<sup>11</sup> Scientists point out that animals fight, but they do not wage wars. Humans are the only primates who pursue enthusiastically mass killings of their own kind in a planned way. It might even seem that war is the most important of human inventions.

Is it possible then that the ability to make peace is a later achievement? The oldest traditions of humanity, its myths and epic poetry, speak primarily of killings. In our own times, hatred has mounted, and people go to the furthest limits of harshness using suicide bombs and killing even non-combatants, including women and children. War is not the only form of violence. It takes various forms: ideological conflicts, terrorism, pathological forms of nationalism, racial violence, ethnic cleansing, famine, domestic violence, workplace abuse, football hooliganism, cyberspace violence, inter-cultural violence and finally, accepting violence as normal. Violence is both action and lack of action that is insensitive to human suffering and oppressive of human persons. Violence in every form keeps growing. Indeed, as St. Paul says, presently "...all of creation

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<sup>10</sup> Eric Hobsbawm: *The Age of Extremes* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), p. 392.

<sup>11</sup> Milan Kundera: *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (London: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1982).

groans with pain.”<sup>12</sup> Konrad Lorenz has written at length about the innate aggressiveness of man, concluding from animal behavior that human beings are programmed to be violent in war, crime, personal quarrels and destructive and sadistic behavior, as though there is an innate instinct to aggressiveness.<sup>13</sup>

However, we do not accept this point of view. For, once we accept that violence is normal for human beings, that an ethnic clash or nuclear war is due to biological factors beyond our control, we do nothing to prevent war or violence. If we hold that our aggressive behavior is created by social, political and economic circumstances of our own making, we can prevent it. That is why it is good to study our inner weaknesses more carefully. For example, since ‘tribalism’ – fierce loyalty to one’s own community including exaggerated forms of nationalism and other collective self-identities – runs so deep in our nature, it seems impossible to eliminate these inner dispositions. However, when we know more about the monsters within us, we learn to cage them and tame them.<sup>14</sup> The greater our individual and collective self-consciousness about our inner makeup, the easier it becomes for us to handle ourselves. History can teach us many lessons.

### Forms of Violence

Non violence is not for power but for truth. It is not pragmatic but prophetic.<sup>15</sup>

Violence is not about war only, but about abusing people, reducing their self-esteem, self-confidence and self-worth. It leads them to an experience of powerlessness, subjugation and poverty.<sup>16</sup> Violence can be physical, emotional, verbal, theological, cognitive, sexual, visual, institutional, structural, economic, political, social, and ecological. Violence also includes condoning violence, inaction during violence, passive acceptance of violence and considering violence as useful. We all contribute to violence when we take refuge

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<sup>12</sup> Rom. 8: 22.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Eric Fromm: *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 22.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Jonathan Glover: *Humanity*, p. 7.

<sup>15</sup> A quote from Thomas Merton.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Gerald A. Arbuckle: *Violence, Society, and the Church*, p. xii.

in any of these forms of escapism. For example, when governments defend their military and law-enforcing personnel and prevent international scrutiny of reported physical tortures, like in Iraq or Chechnya, they condone violence. When the police force stands with each other in mutual defense despite their inhuman treatment of prisoners, they condone violence. The same is true of members of a gang that defend each other though they know that their companions have gone to excesses. Similarly, political leaders, who overlook the violence of supporters, ideologues who consider violence as self-defense and professionals who tolerate colleagues in their dishonest and exploitative ways condone violence.

Modern man, who claims to have set himself free from every form of oppression from political and religious authorities or social conventions, is today even more exploited than ever before in a hidden manner: he has become a slave to the business interests of mighty impersonal corporations. As a consumer, he/she is compelled to be satisfied with second rate mass produced goods, and third rate entertainment; he/she is deceived by advertisements, illusory hopes, unsatisfiable and unrealizable goals, personality-degrading and mind-fragmenting concepts. As a worker too he/she is abused and exploited, and often becomes addicted to work and a victim of work-aholism. The public – both the workers and consumers as a whole – have come to unconsciously serve the interests of profit-making companies. Companies, in turn, are in merciless competition among themselves trying to eliminate each other. Henry Ford admitted that assembly-line-production was dehumanizing and “a great business is really too big to be human”. In fact, Fordism was the industrial counterpart of Nazi ideology and Nazi oppression of both worker and consumer.<sup>17</sup>

Gerald Arbuckle puts the following activities on the list of violence: maligning others, calumniating, spreading negative rumors, and character-assassination. For example, Martin Luther King was accused of being a communist and Archbishop Romero of leftist leanings. Arbuckle has a further list of violent deeds: deceptive strategies used by corporate magnates, such as using euphemisms like ‘downsizing’ to mean plain sacking; political manipulations, such as offering bribes, making unrealistic promises, using deceptive

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 112.

flattery, having recourse to untrue advertisements, glamorous display, boasting, being arrogant or jealous, intimidating, gossiping, hurting people with cynical humor, taunting, sneering, scorning, patriarchal or ethnic or racial jokes, ignoring conventional courtesies, being rude and ill-mannered, entering into inhuman competition, vandalism, scapegoating, projecting on to others one's own faults, football hooliganism – greatly aggravated by commercial sports, political witch-hunting and oppression of minorities. He considers also political patronage, cronyism, family-rule over society – such as Marcos and Suharto, new forms of colonialism, imbalance in trade and economic relationships, placing unbearable burdens of international debts on weaker nations as forms of violence.

There is, further, the violence done to future generations when the present generations leave debts behind, exhaust natural resources, damage nature, such as massive deforestation in India, which leaves to others unbearable burdens. By doing so, the present generation violates an unwritten contract of justice it has made with coming generations. There is violence planted also into those unhelpful philosophies that educate the rising generation to collective anger, cynicism, exaggerated pragmatism, narcissism and nihilism. There are the local variations of violence: caste unfairness in India, communal clashes in South Asia, gender inequality in many parts of the continent, unequal class structures in West Asia and elsewhere, insidious consumer and media cultures in developed countries, violence sanctioned or sponsored by government, drug deals, street gang violence in urban centers, insurgency and secessionism, ethnic hatred, militant politics; mafia in Sicily and the US. If these are all forms of violence, the longer list of oppressors would include parents, husbands, fellow-citizens, politicians, business tycoons, trade unionists, ethnic leaders, slum lords, drug barons, arms traffickers, intellectuals, and anyone else who can hurt and anyone who condones violence or remains inactive and ourselves! Those who suffer from violence include: the public in general, who are harassed both by insurgents and the police in turn; the poor and the weak who are victims of local thugs, the homeless, innocent prisoners – one estimate claimed that 40% of those in prison were innocent, the brutalized, the stigmatized, the sick, the illiterate,

and the bonded laborer.<sup>18</sup> Arbuckle sees a tinge of human aggressiveness even in the recent legal and the media harshness against pedophile clergy. When we notice that the Olympic Games, which were meant to bring nations together, have often been marred by aggressive competitiveness and nationalistic pride, we realize how deeply violence has planted itself into our public life.

### **Civilization Has Not Civilized Us**

Nuclear weapons have changed everything, except our modes of thought.<sup>19</sup>

Eric Fromm says that, contrary to what people usually think, primitive man was the least warlike, and that it was with the growth of civilization that warrior attitudes grew.<sup>20</sup> “The history of civilization from the destruction of Carthage and Jerusalem to the destruction of Dresden, Hiroshima, and the people, soil, and trees in Vietnam, is a tragic record of sadism and destructiveness.”<sup>21</sup> Fromm sees the degree of destructiveness increasing with the increased development of civilization. He argues that the picture of innate destructiveness fits history much better than prehistory. Man is the only primate that kills and tortures members of his own species without any reason, either biological or economic, and feels satisfaction in doing so.<sup>22</sup> Fromm calls man’s fascination with killing ‘necrophilia’. Assyria’s aggressiveness in destroying villages and cities and poisoning soils, was an early witness to necrophilia as civilization took a step forward. Chariots, invented around 1800 B.C., revolutionized warfare in the Near East, Mediterranean and China. In 1674 B.C., the horse-riding Hyksos were able to conquer the horseless Egypt and become Pharaohs. In India, pre-Aryans had an advanced culture; but the Aryans had horses and chariots; and that decided the issue.<sup>23</sup> The introduction of saddles and stirrups allowed the Huns and other communities from the steppes to terrorize the

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 174.

<sup>19</sup> A quote from Einstein.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Eric Fromm: *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, p. 206.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Dom Moraes and Sarayu Srivatsa: *Out of God’s Oven* (New Delhi: Viking, 2002), p. 68.



Romans, which led to a culmination in the Mongol conquests of much of Asia and Europe in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>24</sup>

The Spanish adventurer, Pizarro, had an army of 168 soldiers while the Inca ruler, Atahualpa had 89,000 soldiers and millions of Inca people in Peru; but Pizarro won.<sup>25</sup> Modern technology gives the aggressor an advantage, and accentuates the impersonality of killing. One does not realize the damage one is causing. In fact, it looks as though the killer is not killing, but operating a machine. A human person comes to be doing the very opposite of what he/she is made for. Hitler, who was a student of architecture, turned out to be the destroyer of cities. He wanted to destroy Paris and Leningrad. He was a Jew-hater besides being a German-hater – a hater of the mankind and life itself. Fromm is right in saying that man is the only species that is a mass murderer.<sup>26</sup> The Nazi killing of the Jews was organized as a production process. Those who could not do useful work were led into the gas chambers and gased. Useful objects like clothes, hair, gold teeth were sorted out and recycled. The response of the Allies to the German-Japanese military harshness was equally terrible. The code name of the attack on Hamburg was ‘Operation Gomorrah’, which wiped out a city of 2 million in three nights.<sup>27</sup> On August 6, 1945, the atomic bomb ‘little boy’ was dropped on Hiroshima and the calculation of death over 5 years was 200,000. Three days later on August 9, the bomb ‘fat man’ was dropped on Nagasaki and in 5 years 140,000 had died.<sup>28</sup> All sensitivity had disappeared on both sides. When such atrocities are committed by one’s own party or country, the same insensitivity is noticeable in our own days. Even democracies become illiberal and intolerant of minorities. They silence weaker voices, connive at and even provoke ethnic conflict, and oppress the public through state-violence.

India has some of the fastest growing cities of the world. The impersonality of urban agglomerations, with their poverty, squalor and disorder, produces an atmosphere conducive to violence. Common values and personal relationships begin to disappear; consequently. Modern man is isolated and lonely; he/she becomes

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. Jared Diamond: *Guns, Germs and Steel* (London: Vintage, 1997), p. 94.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Eric Fromm: *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, p. 533.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Jonathan Glover: *Humanity*, p. 81.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 897-899.

part of a crowd and not of a community. Margaret Thatcher asked cynically, "Is there such a thing as a civil society?" People become a part of the 'disorganized dust of individuals'. They have no convictions to share, but only slogans and ideologies that they derive from the media, though, in reality, they hunger for truth and for companionship all the while. Psychologists tell us that the human organism needs both stimulation and rest. In industrial societies, the human person is continuously under stimuli: greed, sex, violence, narcissism through movies, TV, radio, magazines, and the market.<sup>29</sup> If one is unproductive, all the more, one becomes inwardly passive and bored; the outlet he seeks may take the form of violence. Eric Fromm considers an exaggerated love of machines, gadgets, and other lifeless objects as a form of 'necrophilia' – a love for death. Worship of speed and the machine, glorification of war, destruction of culture, drug, crime and cultural decay are signs of 'necrophilia'.<sup>30</sup> Thus, we see that man's aggressiveness is due to those aggression-producing conditions that he himself creates: physical conditions, mental attitudes, intellectual convictions and acquired beliefs. It is up to him/her, then, to create conditions that will contribute to peace and harmony.

#### **No Limit to Excesses**

Thucydides records that when Athens and Sparta fought, Melos wanted to remain neutral. The Athenian spokesman said, "It is a general and necessary law of nature to rule wherever one can". The Athenians took Melos and killed all men of military age and sold women and children to slavery. The summary of the Athenian argument was, 'might is right'.<sup>31</sup>

Adolf Hitler told Alice Miller: "My pedagogy is hard. What is weak must be hammered away. In my fortress of the Teutonic Order a young generation will grow up before which the world will tremble. I want the young to be violent, domineering, undismayed and cruel. The young must be able to will these things. They must be able to bear pain. There must be nothing weak or gentle about them. The free, splendid beast of prey must once again flash from their

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. Eric Fromm: *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, p. 323.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 458.

<sup>31</sup> Jonathan Glover: *Humanity*, p. 18.

eyes."<sup>32</sup> Shooting the Jews was treated as a sport; they were made a shooting-target. Bottles would be put on their heads to teach young recruits to hit straight.<sup>33</sup> The bureaucracy and technology of modern state has made the scale of horrifying barbarity. We notice that even wolves are not aggressive to their own kind. However, our recent history tells us that no animal could ever be as cruel as man; so artfully and artistically cruel. For instance, cutting babies out of women's wombs or throwing them before their mothers to catch them on a bayonet. Torturers are told to suppress their 'squeamishness'. The victims do not belong. They are of another ideology, nation, tribe, or religion.<sup>34</sup> Hitler called the enemy 'sub-humans'. The British referred to the Germans as Huns. The enemy becomes non-persons. They are less than dirt. A Soviet soldier confessed: "The Afghans weren't people to us. They were less than human, just animals."<sup>35</sup> They are an inferior race; killing them was like killing cockroaches.<sup>36</sup> During the World War II, the Americans considered Japanese yellow monkeys, vermin, subhuman rats or rattlesnakes.<sup>37</sup> For the Japanese, Americans were demons, fiends, monsters and twisted nosed savages.<sup>38</sup> Hindutwavadis refer to the tribals as "*vanvoasis*" as though they were mere jungle products.

Unfortunately sensitivity towards destructive cruelty is rapidly diminishing, and 'necrophilia' – the attraction towards what is dead, decaying, lifeless and purely mechanical – is increasing. The Falangist motto was 'long live death.'<sup>39</sup> For the Khmer Rouge, the victims were 'microbes'. Young men were trained to be cruel to animals, human beings and pregnant Vietnamese women.<sup>40</sup> The Soviet motto in Afghanistan was: "The army must keep healthy and we must banish pity from our minds."<sup>41</sup> A Soviet soldier remembering his days in Afghanistan says: "It's frightening and unpleasant to have to kill, you think, but soon you realize ... killing

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 337

<sup>33</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 341.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Eric Fromm: *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Jonathan Glover: *Humanity*, p. 307.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

*en masse*, in a group, is exciting, even – and I’ve seen this myself – fun.”<sup>42</sup> Another said: “I actually want to go on killing.”<sup>43</sup> Ex-Vietnam sergeants would boast of the atrocities they had committed.<sup>44</sup> A Vietnam returnee admits that he misses the war “because I loved it, loved it in strange and troubling ways.”<sup>45</sup> Another said: “The hardest part – the part that’s hard is to kill, but once you kill, that becomes easier, to kill the next person and the next one and the next one, because I had no feelings or emotions or nothing. No direction. I just killed. It can happen to anyone.”<sup>46</sup>

### **Providing a Philosophy for Violence**

Alexander Solzhenitsyn says in the *Gulag Archipelago*: “The imagination and the spiritual strength of Shakespeare’s evildoers stopped short at a dozen corpses, because they had no ideology.”<sup>47</sup> On the contrary, people armed with an ideology of aggressiveness kill millions.

Many modern ideologies have justified violence: Marx believed in violent struggle; and Darwin taught that the fittest would eliminate the rest. Young people for a few generations have been fed on the thoughts of thinkers like Marx, Lenin, Mao, Camus, Marcuse, Sartre, Che Guevara, Fanon, Arendt and Gramsci. For them, struggle is the sole path towards progress. They look at every human being as a wolf to every other human being. However, a more careful study of human history will reveal that every struggle was in the larger context of collaboration; and those who reconcile and motivate others for collaboration make the greatest contribution to human growth. Not ‘either us or them’, but ‘both us and them’ making a big WE. Indeed, collaboration is the law of human history and not conflict taken in its isolation.

According to Nietzsche, every higher culture began with the conquest by barbarians who had an ‘unbroken strength and lust for power’. The nobles came from the barbarians. Their superiority lay

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252.

in psychic strength, which also meant that they are 'more complete beasts'. Nietzsche saw in Christian compassion the triumph of Judeo-Christian slave morality. He laments that the Jewish morality developed in Egypt where the Jews were slaves, and was further developed by Christians when they were also slaves. He was alarmed at the spread of this kind of morality in the world.<sup>48</sup> In his thinking, the concept of struggle is predominant.<sup>49</sup> Thus, for Nietzsche, half the world is weak, sick and inconstant; and hence they glory in being weak, compassionate and humble. It is the conspiracy of women and priests against men – against the strong. Therefore, Nietzsche despised altruism. Loving your neighbor is a disguise for mediocrity.<sup>50</sup> Egoism is essential to the noble soul and the belief that others are subordinate by nature to us.<sup>51</sup> In advocating hardness, he rejects pity as unmanly. "To see others suffer does one good, to make others suffer even more ... without cruelty there is no festival."<sup>52</sup>

It is this type of conviction that makes leaders brainwash their people about the need to fight. In Plato's *The Republic* Thrasymachus argues that it is the interests of the strong that is generally considered just and right.<sup>53</sup> What surprises us is the ease with which people accept philosophies of violence and fall under the spell of irrational political and religious doctrines. The reason, however, is simple: human beings need a cohesive frame or orientation. The more an ideology pretends to give answers to all questions, the more attractive it is.<sup>54</sup> Ultimately it becomes, as Albert Camus said of Communism, a metaphysical justification for organized murder.

The Nazi ideology of wanting to preserve the unmixed Aryan identity of the German people led to the excesses of World War II. Since war was proposed as the only solution, war had to come. For example, Helmuth von Moltke considered a war between the Tetons and the Slavs necessary. He exhorted the Germans to hold high their

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<sup>48</sup> Cf. Jonathan Glover: *Humanity*, p. 12.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Eric Fromm: *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, p. 311.

spiritual culture.<sup>55</sup> He said: “War is the only remedy to cure existing illnesses. War is beautiful. Its noble grandeur raises man high above earthly, daily things.”<sup>56</sup> Schmidt-Gibichenfels said: “We Tetons must no longer look upon war as our destroyer ... [but] at last we must see it once more as the savior, the physician.”<sup>57</sup> Many Germans thought Nazism gave their lives meaning and purpose.<sup>58</sup> People became ‘mono-cerebral’, whose feelings had withered. For them, the only form of sin was failing to take advantage of others when opportunities offered themselves. In the same way, for Stalin, violence was a necessary part of his revolutionary goal. He said in 1932: “Russians may be hungry and short of clothes and comfort, but you can’t make an omelet without breaking eggs.”<sup>59</sup> He believed that individual victims were unimportant, that in the longer historical perspective they would be forgotten.<sup>60</sup> Someone who worked under Stalin said: “With the rest of my generation I firmly believed that the ends justified the means. Our great goal was the universal triumph of Communism, and for the sake of that goal everything was permissible – to lie, to steal, to destroy hundreds of thousands and even millions of people, all those who were hindering our work or who could hinder it, everyone who stood on the way.”<sup>61</sup> Mao thought he could afford to lose 300 million people in a nuclear war, since the other 300 million Chinese would emerge strong.

Even today, theories of violence are propagated continuously on television and through cartoon strips: the belief that violence solves problems; that the more power the better; and that threats do help. Such beliefs stir up emotions. The media entertain people with violence. It is calculated that children in the United States see 8000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence before they leave elementary school. As there are conflict-promoting ideologies, there are responsibility-shifting ideologies. Zygmunt Bauman has argued that modernity is “prominent for the tendency to shift moral responsibilities away from the moral self either toward constructed and

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<sup>55</sup> Cf. Jonathan Glover: *Humanity*, p. 186.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 196.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 362.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 255.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 256.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 259.

managed supra-individual agencies, or through floating responsibility inside a bureaucratic 'rule of nobody'."<sup>62</sup> In a manner of speaking, post-modernity today has created a climate in which evasion of moral responsibilities is a way of life. By rendering relationships 'fragmentary' and 'discontinuous', it fosters 'disengagement and commitment-avoidance'. Postmodern thinkers believe that every account of justice that purports to be universal is inherently oppressive. Many ideologies are continuously proving to be incomplete explanations, and even to be deceptive. Turning back to Marxist ideology, we are today able to see that class analysis alone does not explain all the diverse dimensions of corporate reality and conflict. Time has come for us to develop complementary systems of thought and a philosophy for peace.

#### **Working on Emotions**

If Cain is avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold.<sup>63</sup>

When myths replace history, societies are in danger. Slobodan Milosevic's creation of a Serbian national mythology proved disastrous to the populations of the Balkans. Croats and Muslims had to pay heavily for it. Myths are kept alive by commemorative events and public display. Irish republican myth and Soviet Marxist myths were reaffirmed by marching, parading, flag waving and performing gymnastics. Hitler manipulated rituals; so did Mussolini. Soviet ideology came alive during May Day parades. Hutu-Tutsi hatred was fomented by political rhetoric.<sup>64</sup> In America, the national flag was visible even on baby carriages and sports stadiums after September 11, 2001. It expressed people's solidarity with the American struggle against 'Islamic terrorism'. The Hindu nationalists (R.S.S.) regularly hold their rabble rousing parades. Symbols stir human hearts. It is said that men possess thoughts, but symbols possess men.<sup>65</sup> Anger rises. Others react, and both groups

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<sup>62</sup> Zygmunt Bauman: *Life in Fragments: Essays in Postmodern Morality* (London: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 99.

<sup>63</sup> Gen. 4: 24

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Jonathan Glover: *Humanity*, p. 121.

<sup>65</sup> Gerald A. Arbuckle: *Vionence, Society, and the Church*, p. 18.

get trapped by the violent responses to each other.<sup>66</sup> The Hindu nationalist leader Sadhvi Rithambara told Hindu men that they were eunuchs if they did not save Ram's birthplace. She told women to give birth to sons who would kill Muslims, and that killing Muslims was a good thing.<sup>67</sup> Advani's *ratha yathra* mobilized the historic anger of millions.

Little angers accumulate, get linked with bigger angers, and explode. Penetration of local issues by regional and national issues, and the combination of personal quarrels with communal anger or political grievance, aggravate tensions. Latent hostilities are drawn towards new avenues that open up. Occasionally local demonstration against one grievance gets compounded with ethnic or inter-religious quarrels. Then, all forms of hostilities become conjoined. Emotions can be worked up out of proportion to the grievance. At times it happens that more serious emotions are being roused over lesser issues, while people who are suffering under far greater hardships remain silent. While some fight for fulfillment, others have to fight for existence. Some struggle for greater amenities; others for basic necessities. Some press for privileges; others for most elementary and greatly reduced rights. Some fight for exaggerated forms of self-expressions; others for essential freedoms. Some deafen the world with their greatly magnified claims, while others whisper their basic needs below their breath. Anger of intellectuals and armchair philosophers is often blown out of proportion. There is a big difference between the expectations of people in the developed world and those in the less developed parts of the world. We have the elite in every nation, and the poorest and humblest; the dominant ethnic groups in every society, and the minorities and the marginalized: The former are assiduously pursuing satiety, while the latter are frantically searching for essential security.

### Using Aggressive Language

The motto of the Red Guards, "Mercy to the enemy is cruelty to the people."<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Cf. Jonathan Glover: *Humanity*, p. 123.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Dom Moraes and Sarayu Srivasta: *Out of God's Oven*, p. 87.

<sup>68</sup> Jonathan Glover: *Humanity*, p. 291.



Aggressive language has gone into many ideologies and theologies that have developed during the last few decades. Justice issues have been often universalized, sometimes trivialized, rarely personalized. The fact is that justice-fighters need to look at their issues more holistically. From a distance, the world may appear neatly divided into guilty perpetrators and innocent victims. The closer we get, however, the more the line between the guilty and the innocent blurs and we see an intractable maze of small and large hatreds, dishonesties, manipulations, and brutalities, each reinforcing the other. The victim from one point of view is an oppressor from another point of view, and in another context. Marijorie Suchocki says: "To break the world cleanly into victims and violators ignores the depths of each person's participation in cultural sin. There simply are no innocents."<sup>69</sup> Working for peace is not a popular mission in our times. The fighter is the hero today. He is fighting for justice, fighting for human rights, fighting for environment, fighting for the rights of women, and fighting for his people. However, what happens when justice as perceived by one fights against justice as perceived by another? What happens when perceptions collide, and two people who are fighting for perfectly good causes come into conflict? What happens when principles collide: the rights of the individual and the rights of indigenous people?; one person's right to property and another person's right to existence?; and one person's right to success and another person's right to survival?

One person's justice is another person's injustice. Therefore, one seeks 'just' revenge, and the other 'just' counter-revenge.<sup>70</sup> No wonder, then, that "the worst injustices, the most bloody and unjustifiable transgressions of justice are committed daily in the name of justice, under the protection of the name of justice".<sup>71</sup> The grander and more sweeping justice is the more injustice it can wreak. That is why while we struggle for justice, we should approach the entire endeavor in a peaceful way. We must make it clear at every stage, like Mahatma Gandhi, that our intentions are peaceful; that we can be self-critical; and that we are capable of repenting for our own injustice. If the plot is written around the schema of the oppressed – the victims and the oppressors – the perpetrators, each party will

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<sup>69</sup> Miroslav Volf: *Exclusion and Embrace* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), p. 80.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202.

find good reasons for claiming the higher moral ground of a victim. Each will perceive itself as the oppressed by the other and all will see themselves as engaged in the struggle for liberation. Would it not be perverse to argue that the word "oppressor" is only the incriminating label that a self-styled victim likes to place on his enemy, or that the appellation "victim" is just the name a person who is as oppressive as anybody else likes to use in order to gain social advantage? Here, the words of Prophet Isaiah – "people will oppress one another, every man his fellow and every man his neighbor"<sup>72</sup> – come true. As of now, there is enough encouragement for violence, in any case. As Roman Caesars offered violent spectacles to the city rabble, today newspapers and television channels delight in reporting war, crime and atrocities more to satisfy the growing curiosity of viewers and readers than to inform and educate.<sup>73</sup>

#### **Cultivating Memory of Historic Injuries**

"Memory is not what happened, but what people felt what happened."<sup>74</sup> In the Balkans, the Serbs, Croatsians, Muslims – all had their own negative memories. Mothers taught the children words like Jihad, war, crusade, revenge with deep emotion.

The Turks had defeated the Serbs in 1389 in Kosovo on the Field of Blackbirds. The Croatsians had taken advantage of Serbs during World War II. It was not easy for the Serbs to forget these hurts and humiliations. Slobodan Milosevic's 'this is your land' speech aroused their wounded memories. The Serb media whipped up anger among the Serbs. So did the Croatian media among their own people. The media war ultimately led to actual conflict. The Serbian forces invaded Croatia. Shocking things happened: Muslims and Croatsians were beaten, tortured, mutilated and killed; Catholic Churches and monasteries were attacked and even destroyed. At Sarajevo, the Serb army targeted the Oriental Institute, destroying thousands of its Islamic and Jewish manuscripts. They shelled the National Museum and the National Library, destroying over a million books and many thousands of manuscripts and records; elsewhere in Bosnia the Serbs

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<sup>72</sup> Is. 3: 5.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Eric Fromm: *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, p. 396.

<sup>74</sup> A quote from Eric John Ernest Hobsbawm.

destroyed Ottoman architecture, and 800 mosques.<sup>75</sup> It looked like the attack of the barbarians on the Roman Empire, or of the Huns on Western Europe.

History is often written in such a manner as to keep alive negative memories and promote prejudices. The winners boast, and the losers remember. It is reported that Pakistani textbooks describe Jews as tight-fisted money-lenders, Christians as vengeful conquerors, Hindus as devious and cowardly people. The B.J.P. Government wanted to re-write Indian history highlighting Islamic excesses and showing the minorities in a bad light. China and Japan have serious differences of opinion about their recording of World War II events. Protestants in Northern Ireland go further: they keep alive their anger by the solemn celebration of the Orange parade in which the defeat of the Catholics by William of Orange in 1691 is celebrated; and Catholics respond in similar fashion. All ethnic states have minorities within their borders, and if they divide according to community further, they will find again other minorities within the new area, *ad infinitum*. History records repeated clashes between neighboring communities. Thus, ancient hatreds remain. A narrative of victory stirs resentment in those who were defeated. A narrative of defeat calls for redressing a grievance, no matter how many years have passed.<sup>76</sup>

Anger against one's own traditional culture is even more tragic. During the Cultural Revolution in China, the Red Guards attacked traditional Chinese culture. They wanted to eliminate the influence of Confucius on Chinese society. They destroyed most of the temples in China. In people's houses, books and works of art were destroyed. Libraries were wrecked and books burnt.<sup>77</sup> There is a general human weakness that when we revive our memories, we tend to be selective, prejudiced and often lost in self-pity. Only a healing of memories can take away all hurt feelings and bring a less destructive world into existence. In recent years, prayer-services and commemoration of the dead are being conducted on sites associated with wars, with unhealed or unacknowledged collective wounds: Verdun,

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<sup>75</sup> Cf. Jonathan Glover: *Humanity*, p. 147.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 146.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 288.

Gettysburg, Auschwitz, and Hiroshima.<sup>78</sup> Can we do something similar at Somnath, Ayodhya, Panipat and Plessey? We cannot change our past, but we can change our response to the past. Since memories shape present identities, neither 'I' nor 'the other' can be redeemed without the redemption of the remembered past. When we entertain profound hurt feelings over the memories of our colonial past, we are doing more hurt to ourselves than others. We attain true freedom only when we have redeemed our past and get rid of all rancor and ill feeling. We must dig up the anger that is buried in our hearts and transmute it by the power of genuine forgiveness into re-invigorating spiritual energies.

### **Working on Prejudice-Reduction**

For he who does reverence to his own sect while disparaging the sects of others wholly from attachment to his own sect, in reality, inflicts, by such conduct, the severest injury on his own sect.<sup>79</sup>

History records any number of instances of mutual prejudice. All communities had a negative word to refer to the outsider: for the Greeks "*barbaroi*", for the Romans "*barbari*", for the Jews "gentiles", for the Indians "*mlecchas*", and for believers "infidels". People had negative images of each other, they stereotyped each other. Their memories of events differed. Communities deliberately cultivated prejudices. Where there is actual prejudice, nothing else matters: your education, job, knowledge, ideas, and the great things you have accomplished – all these are nothing – you are just a stereotype of your community.<sup>80</sup> For the Nazis, Einstein was just a 'hated Jew'. As we said, history provides ample evidence to mutual dislikes and exclusion. Jews were confined to ghettos in medieval Europe. There were zones for colored people in western towns. There were reservations for indigenous communities in America and Australia. Gypsies were marginalized. South Africa believed in keeping the black people apart. Upper caste Indians kept the lower caste people outside the towns. Hindus and Muslims loathed each other. We are

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<sup>78</sup> Cf. Russ Parker: *Healing Wounded History* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2001), p. 57.

<sup>79</sup> A quote from the Edict XII of Asoka (c. 261 B.C.)

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Jonathan Glover: *Humanity*, p. 152.

sensitive to Christian-hate. Of late, Muslim-hate has become widespread, and it has a history. Prejudiced people in Christian Europe referred to them as the children of Ishmael, the anti-Christ, and the children of Cain.<sup>81</sup> Words like "street Arab" and "mad *mullah*" that have gone into daily vocabulary witness to the collective prejudice of many communities against Muslims. The destruction of the mosque at Ayodhya need not be retold. Nor was the anger only in one direction. The rage of the Taliban against 'Buddhist idolatry' led them to vandalize the Bamiyan Valley Buddhas in Afghanistan. The destruction of the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001 is fresh in our memories.

Different communities may have different understanding of the same events. For the Americans, Pearl Harbor was an unprovoked aggression. For the Japanese, it was a response to the encirclement policy of the Americans, Chinese, British and Dutch.<sup>82</sup> In 1914, what was the containment of Germany for Moscow, Paris and London, was 'encirclement' for the Germans.<sup>83</sup> Many people consider the Korean and Vietnam wars as failures; but for the American Government they were symbols of proud resistance to Communism, and the official policy of America would not allow any public grief over the loss of personnel in those two wars.<sup>84</sup> Ideological prejudices can lead to grave injustices. In the Russian Revolution, millions of people who were slightly better-off than others, were declared "oppressors" and killed. When the Soviet soldiers killed the *Kulaks* – mere peasants described as *bourgeoisie* – the criteria for identifying them was vague.<sup>85</sup> The same thing happened in China, Vietnam and Cambodia. In Cambodia, Pol Pot men considered even people with spectacles or who knew a foreign language as foreign collaborators. In these catastrophes, more harmless people died than guilty. "The distinction between justice and injustice in specific cases usually are not as clear-cut as the partisans think they are."<sup>86</sup> According to Young, it is not easy to distinguish between justice and "socially

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<sup>81</sup> Andrew Wheatcroft: *Infidels* (New York: Random House, 2004), p. 5.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Jonathan Glover: *Humanity*, p. 166.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 229.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Gerald A. Arbuckle: *Violence, Society, and the Church*, p. 116.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Jonathan Glover: *Humanity*, p. 238.

<sup>86</sup> Theodore Runyon, ed.: *Theology, Politics and Peace* (New York: Orbit Books, 1989), p. 67.

specific prejudices and self-interested claims to power.”<sup>87</sup> However, the education of the public is not easy. People always want to tag responsibility onto someone. Kate Adie, the BBC reporter, said in 1993 about Yugoslavia that if you take the stand that nobody is totally good or totally bad, the viewers are not pleased. Yet that is the truth. Things need to be explained. John Dawson says: “Paradoxically, the greatest wounds in history ... have not happened through the acts of some individual perpetrator; rather through institutions, systems, philosophies, cultures, religions and governments.” That is why no one wants to appear responsible and everyone is happy to disclaim responsibility. However, all are responsible in varying ways.

Since all disown responsibility, the situation turns out to be like a blind man leading the blind. When we propagate ideologies that condone violence, when we support a conflict for the achievement of some immediate goal forgetful of vaster consequences, when we over-insist on one set of rights deliberately remaining blind to a comprehensive network of rights and relationships in true Asian style, we do not know what we are supporting. We cease to be promoters of life. A cold legal view of all reality, not a human vision of life, begins to reign. Eric Fromm said that emphasis on law and order only without worrying about life and structure, stricter punishment for criminals, love of destructive violence – do not contribute to the growth of man, do not promote love for life.<sup>88</sup> One person’s justice is another person’s barbarity. Even the concept of human rights has different connotations in different parts of the world, and in different cultural contexts. According to Carter, for the Americans, human rights are about freedom of religion, press, and rule of law. Soviets’ concern is about a decent home, right to have a job, family, and medical care.<sup>89</sup> In the Asian context, they may be further different; but when people try to impose ‘mono-civilizational’ answers on humanity as a whole, tensions are bound to arise. If, after World War I, the winners had held some of their pretended rights in suspense and thought of forgiveness and reconstruction, they would not have alienated Germany altogether. It is sad to think that the injustice of the Peace Treaty of Versailles, demanding that

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<sup>87</sup> Miroslav Volf: *Exclusion and Embrace*, p. 199.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Eric Fromm: *The Anatomy of Human Destruction*, p. 33.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Theodore Runyon: *Theology, Politics and Peace*, p. 6.

Germany alone take the full responsibility for World War I, led to World War II. Justice as understood by the Allied Powers differed from justice as perceived by the Germans.

We can learn from history. A new beginning can be attempted even after a long period of mutual alienation. Prophetic gestures can reduce tensions. Forgiveness can lead to better times. When Tony Blair took over as the British Prime Minister, he issued an apology on behalf of the British for their contribution to the infamous Irish Potato famine. This gesture met with the universal approval of the Irish political leaders. The fact, of course, is that there is a myth around the Irish famine of 1847 as though it was caused only by the neglect of British Protestants. However, Irish Catholic middle men also would have to be held responsible.<sup>90</sup> There is a myth around the Bengal famine in India which happened during World War II, as though it was caused solely by the indifference of the British Government; but the insensitivity of the Hindu business community and Muslim administrators, who at that time shared responsibility with the British for ruling Bengal, was equally a cause for the disaster. In the 1980's Mikhail Gorbachev withdrew his forces from Eastern Europe, and told the West that he had deprived them of an enemy.<sup>91</sup> The Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee's bus trip to Lahore thrilled millions of Indians and Pakistanis. Suffering can lead to vindictiveness or to redemption. "Suffering can also lead to the belief that, having suffered, one has acquired a right to impose suffering upon others. It is the special task of the survivors of violence to show us how such suffering may be transformed into redemption."<sup>92</sup> Redeeming the past is forgiveness. Extremely hard as it may sound, forgiveness is the only reliable strategy for ending the self-repeating phenomenon of unfairness in human history. Forgiveness alone can break the cycle of violence. It holds the ultimate key to that treasury which can pay all historic debts.

### **Oppressors and Oppressed Are Just Ordinary People**

Both those who fight and those who die are just ordinary human beings.

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<sup>90</sup> Cf. Gerald A. Arbuckle: *Violence, Society and the Church*, p. 10.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Jonathan Glover *Humanity*, p. 232.

<sup>92</sup> Veena Das: *Mirrors of Violence* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 33.

Dean Rusk, speaking about the Cuban crisis, said: "I've met and worked with a good many people whose names are in the history books or in the headlines. I have never met a demigod or a superman. I have only seen relatively ordinary men and women groping to deal with the problems with which they are faced."<sup>93</sup> It is ordinary men that contribute to war or to peace. One can grow into a monster; and another into an amazing peace-maker. Heinrich Himmler, along with Hitler, was responsible for the slaughter of between 10-15 million unarmed Russians, Poles, and Jews. He was not a hater or monster, but merely a dehumanized bureaucrat. He was courteous and spartanly simple. He never read immoral books. He was not a rebel, but he sought to be under a strong man. He turned out to be a veritable monster. In Erich Maria Remarque's *All is Quiet on the Western Front*, a German soldier asks: "Now just why a French blacksmith or a French shoemaker would want to attack us? No, it is merely the rulers." Going beyond the rulers, ultimately, it is the ideology-creators – the idea-givers – who are behind mighty forms of violence. They could have built up an ideology for peace too. The ones fighting are just ordinary human beings. What counts for most people are petty local and personal matters, more than human rights.<sup>94</sup> On a Christmas day in 1914, a German soldier cried to his enemies, "We don't want to kill you, and you don't want to kill us, so why shoot?"<sup>95</sup> No one wants to kill another. Speaking of the Nazi experience, Christopher Browning says in his work *Ordinary Men*: "Once the killing began, however, the men became increasingly brutalized. As in combat, the horrors of the initial encounter eventually became routine, and the killing became progressively easier. In this sense brutalization was not the cause but the effect of these people's behavior."<sup>96</sup> Ordinary men became brutes.

Primo Levi speaks of such human-brutes: "Instead, they were made of the same cloth, they were average human beings, averagely intelligent, averagely wicked: save for exceptions, they were not monsters, they had our faces, but they had been reared badly."<sup>97</sup> Both the authors of violence and victims are just ordinary people.

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<sup>93</sup> Jonathan Glover: *Humanity*, p. 218.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 349.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 402.



Dividing the good and the evil is not as simple as some would like to make out. Alexander Solzhenitsyn says in *Gulag Archipelago*: "If only it were all so simple!! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being ... it is after all only because of the way things worked out that they were the executioners and we weren't."<sup>98</sup> Nietzsche has said that whatever harms the world-calumniators may do, the harm that the good do is the most harmful harm. That is a statement that can make us think. The slide into complicity with what is evil in our culture would not be nearly as easy if the cultures did not so profoundly shape us. In times of crisis, we find it difficult to distance ourselves from our culture and raise our voices in protest. In fact, we find ourselves almost helpless if the prevalent culture itself has already surrendered to an ideology of violence. We join in the violence ourselves, or seek escape in merely 'denouncing the other'. We act as though a self-righteous denunciation of 'the other' sets all things right. When we limit ourselves to moralistic denunciations of injustice, we do not fulfill our mission. We must proceed on to historically and socially informed path-breaking efforts. Experience abundantly shows that the categories "oppression and liberation" seem ill-suited to bring about reconciliation and sustain peace between people and groups of people. This is the firm conviction of persons who have lived a full life in the midst of ideology-driven conflict. Ultimately what is required is reconciliation between the oppressors and the oppressed, or else it will merely lead to injustice-with-role-reversal.

### **The Healing of Collective Memories**

All men have hearts. And each heart has its own leanings.  
Their right is our wrongs, and our right is their wrong.<sup>99</sup>

Edward Said, in his book *Culture and Imperialism*, points out that during the colonial period, intellectuals who should have been the guardians of the conscience of their own nation and culture were no

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<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 401.

<sup>99</sup> A quote from Prince Shotoku of Japan.

more than echoes of their community's prejudices, their noble ideals notwithstanding. Slave trade, world conquest, and unfair commerce were all part of the 'civilizing, modernizing, and Christianizing course – a form of 'civilization' that led to holocaust, apartheid and ethnic cleansing. It is the task of today's intellectuals to heal such memories in their own communities that suffered this colonial injury, restore them to health and help them to look positively to the future. That is the only way they may transform their wounded cultures and the disturbed social situation in which they live, bringing health and wholeness. They have a vocation to be healers and not to be a depository of grievances. Paul Ricoeur's suggestions to the European Union contained meaningful words like 'exchange of memories' and 'forgiveness'. These concepts are extremely useful for situations, where people still retain hurt historic memories. We need a 'healing of collective memories'. When you happily meet the other and forgive, the demon in the other disappears. In fact, you begin discovering yourself in the other and are filled with compassion even for his failure. You discover that they are also human, just like you.

In a dealing with East-West historic injuries and negative memories, two kinds of conclusions are not helpful: a) conclusions that arise from an exaggerated sense of guilt of the West for its colonial past, or those that presently reflect its attitude of dominance; b) equally, those conclusions that arise from the unhealed memories of people in ex-colonies, who suffer excessively from post-colonial complexes and live on grievances. Their conclusions are not likely to correspond to precise reality or to lead to anything very useful. There is bound to be a blind spot somewhere. They can only be partially objective. Their conclusions need to be sifted and re-interpreted before they can be useful for actual life. Objectivity can spring only from serene reflection, with an enormous amount of confidence in one's own heritage with no grudge towards anyone, with no guilt feelings on the one hand, nor grievance or anger on the other. Prince Shotoku of Japan introduced a liberal constitution in 604 A. D. On this occasion he asked his people not be resentful when others differ from them. According to the Prince, all men have hearts, and each heart has its own leanings; one's right is other's

wrong and other's right is one's wrong.<sup>100</sup> In the light of this marvelous insight coming from a great Prince who lived on our ancient continent, could we decide to bring a non-confrontational approach to our problems? Can we be true Asians, living in the tradition of Buddha, Asoka, Prince Shotoku, and the Dalai Lama? The mission of peace calls for a new thinking. It lays on us the compulsion of awakening a new consciousness in ourselves. It demands that we bring new themes for discussion, create a new public opinion, and build up new philosophical and theological bases for peace.

To begin with, we ought to search for the roots of aggressiveness in ourselves. We must channelize and tap that hidden energy for new purposes. Only when we have unmasked injustice and evil in our own inner world and have subjected ourselves to a spiritual surgery, shall we be able to discover the forces of evil in the society that surrounds us and commit ourselves to working on them. Or else, even as we work for peace, we may find in ourselves a striving for unfair superiority, eagerness to manipulate others; we may discover traces of individual and collective selfishness, unwillingness to share power and material means. The Koreans use the word '*han*' to refer to the experience of pain, bitterness, helplessness and eagerness for revenge imposed by injustice and oppression accumulated over centuries. The result is a self-image of victimhood. We need to be liberated from it. Young people in particular have to be helped out of self-imprisonment in bitterness, lest they retreat into themselves in a permanent manner. Listening, affirming, appreciating, questioning, searching together, and leading people to creative dialogue even with opponents are some of the steps that the healer of memories takes in the fulfillment of his/her ministry.

### **It Is a Higher Motive That Can Persuade**

*What should I do with that, by which I do not become immortal?*<sup>101</sup>

Human beings come fully alive only when they share with others those values and ideas which they consider precious and true. These satisfy them more than anything else. Martin Luther King said: "If

<sup>100</sup> Cf. W.G. Ashton, trans.: *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697* (Tokyo: Tuttle, 1872), pp. 122-133.

<sup>101</sup> A quote from the *Upanishads*.

you haven't found something that you're willing to die for, you're probably not fit to live any way." Self-interest is a reality of life, but creative and sensitive people will learn to combine it with concern for others. Sensitive leaders will combine it with national interests and with those of humanity. Persons like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela were inspired by a higher motive, when they adopted an approach of refusal to retaliate injuries. They entertained a vision of love as an agent of change, and communicated this message with demonstrative action. This did not exclude the protest dimension. They deliberately broke the law by civil disobedience for conscience sake; and they acted out of conviction. Amartya Sen, the Nobel Prize winner, said that he was deeply impressed by a question raised in the *Upanishads*, one of India's ancient classics. He was referring to the question the learned wife of Yajnavalkya asked: "What should I do with that, by which I do not become immortal?" This profound question in the *Upanishads* inspired him in his efforts to propose an economic theory which gave central importance to the human side of economic development, and which won him the Nobel Prize. Dean Rusk says that at the crucial moment of Cuba crisis, what played the decisive role in concluding the issue was the basic question asked in Westminster Catechism: "What is the end of man?" Rusk was a convinced Presbyterian.<sup>102</sup> Pope Benedict XVI was right when he expressed his conviction that wherever and whenever men and women were enlightened by the splendor of truth, they naturally set out on the path of peace.<sup>103</sup>

Human beings need an object of total devotion as a focal point of all their strivings and a basis for all their effective values.<sup>104</sup> Material possessions alone do not satisfy the human heart. Selfishness can offer only partial answers to human longings. When relationships and adequate self-expressions will be considered more important than consumption and retaliation, human society will be reborn. War and peace are not things that depend on fate or instinct, but on human choices and community-set goals.<sup>105</sup> If it is the path of peace that people choose, coming generations shall be blessed. E. F. M.

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<sup>102</sup> Cf. Jonathan Glover: *Humanity*, p. 220.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Pope Benedict the XVI, World Day of Peace, "In Truth, Peace", 1.1.06.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Eric Fromm: *The Anatomy of Human Destruction*, p. 311.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

Durbin and J. Bowlby have argued with great skill that peaceful cooperation, not merciless competition, is the most natural and fundamental tendency in human beings.<sup>106</sup> Only if we decide to follow this tendency, so gently planted in us by our Creator, can we move from confusion to community, war to peace, propaganda to respectful conversation, and enmity to amity. Asian cultures are generally considered 'cultures of life' because they promote life. In cultural chaos, people are left without familiar symbols, myths, rituals and convictions.<sup>107</sup> Humanity, in consequence, is weakened in human society. The danger is that the culture goes dead and society withers. St. Iranaeus said that the glory of God was the human person fully alive. Eric Fromm calls such a person a 'biophilous' person. He/she loves life and everything alive; he/she furthers growth; he/she wonders, he/she loves the adventure of living. He/she sees the whole, not merely the parts: he/she has a holistic view of the human person, the human society and history. He/she influences others through love, reason, example, and inspiration, and not through authoritarian ways. He/she promotes the culture of life, and culture comes alive through him/her and the society prospers. For Marx, moral laws were a disguise for class interests. Yet, we cannot deny that there is an inner voice that speaks to us. Sigismund Freud, in his book *The Future of an Illusion*, says: "The voice of the intellect is a soft one, but it does not rest until it has gained a hearing. Ultimately, after endlessly repeated rebuffs, it succeeds. This is one of the few points in which one may be optimistic about the future of mankind."<sup>108</sup>

### **Building on the Asian Concept of Compassion**

Ancient epics like the Illiad, Odessey, Mahabharata and Ramayana were about the heroic deeds of the strong against the weak. Modern epics have been about the courageous struggles of the weak and oppressed against the strong, like the struggle for political independence and economic fairness. A time is coming, and it is here, when we shall enact and write together the grand epics of 'Reconciliation and Peace', bringing the weak and the strong together until all are strong.

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<sup>106</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 283.

<sup>107</sup> Gerald A. Arbuckle: *Violence, Soceity, and the Church*, p. 23.

<sup>108</sup> Jonathan Glover: *Humanity*, p. 224.

If the concept of justice is not tempered by that of compassion, a central value in Asian tradition, we shall be locked in inextricable struggles with each other, with no visible progress in any direction. The Confucian emphasis on justice, for example, is softened by many humanistic ideals and the cultivation of self-discipline. It is completed by moral education that strengthens affective ties in society and promotes the common good. Virtues like solidarity, dedication to the community, family values, social harmony and the exercise of benevolence are fully in the Confucian tradition, softening a crude understanding of social justice. In the Dalai Lama, we find a worthy representative of the Buddhist tradition. He stands for what some people consider an 'idealistic response to the individual and collective needs of our times.'<sup>109</sup> He suggests that we look at the enemy as a human being. To quote him: "Although personally that enemy is harming you, forget that so-called enemy. Look at him as a human being just like you or me who also wants happiness. With that reason you can develop genuine sympathy or compassion."<sup>110</sup> His absolute refusal to hate the enemy remains most admirable.

If we do not make place for love in our hearts and in the heart of our struggles, our life will not fructify and all our efforts will lead to endless self-defeating and self-perpetuating struggles. St. Paul says: "Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous. Love is never boastful or conceited ... It is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes."<sup>111</sup> Can we capture something of this spiritual message that comes from West Asia in our personal life, in our social relationships, and in our struggle for a better world? We need to learn to forgive, to start anew, and to build on the broken pieces of hope and shattered bits of good will. We need peace makers today: who esteem others, even their enemies; who win sympathies and support by the uprightness of their conduct and the truthfulness of their argument; those who transform hearts by human touch with which they handle even the most vitiated situations; and who have the ability to identify and separate real

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<sup>109</sup> Cf. Rajiv Mehrotra, ed.: *Understanding the Dalai Lama* (New Delhi: Viking, 2004), p. x.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

<sup>111</sup> I Cor., 13: 4-7.

issues from their own ego-requirements, the rigid ideologies they have appropriated, the irrelevant theologies and predetermined positions they have accepted. The work for peace often begins with one person who is convinced and committed. Such a glorious idea constantly keeps winning fresh support. It is a work that calls for courage, even greater courage than waging a war. It seeks no glamour. It is an effort that needs to sustain itself even when every pointer to success seems to vanish. It is a work that seeks to tap every form of good will be buried in the deepest recesses of the opponent's heart.

#### **Building One's Concern for Humanity on the Foundation of 'Inner Group Loyalty'**

Christ too claimed an identity: he identified himself with the victims of violence. It is when a Christian does this, does he/she become most Christ-like.

As we have already seen, inter-community conflicts are daily on the increase. The world today is being torn apart by the politics of differences. As a consequence, some have come to consider the inner loyalty within an ethnic group as a negative force, describing it as 'tribal loyalty'. In fact, it is an eminently positive force. Anthropologists look at identity affirmation of communities as something healthy, even necessary. It is the energy that any community needs for its own self-preservation and self-enhancement. It serves a psycho-social purpose ensuring solidarity within the community in times of danger. There is an inbuilt instinct in human persons, possibly to preserve and defend the genes that strengthens group identity and makes one sacrifice for the family and ethnic group. There is also a similar psychological conditioning by which one feels intensely for one's religious, ethnic, linguistic, territorial identity.<sup>112</sup> It is on this solid foundation that we can build our commitment to the whole of humanity as well. The inner loyalty we speak of has gradually to be broadened to include an ever widening circle of friends until it embraces the whole human family.

In India the joint family used to give a sense of security and well being to its members, especially in moments of crisis. Japanese hold

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<sup>112</sup> Cf. Jonathan Glover: *Humanity*, p. 142.

by peer group loyalty at school or employment. This group acts like an extended family. To think of one's group as very special is normal. For oneself, one's group is indeed unique. This understanding of one's group as unique, however, must combine with the recognition of every other community too as unique, each in its own way, and include respect for other groups and their rights. Loyalty to one's own community is a resource. When it opens out to the rest of humanity in benevolence, it becomes fruitful. Most world religions have proposed transcending the confining boundaries of one's own community. Christian concern reaches out to the ends of the earth. Solidarity in evil can only be countered by solidarity in good. Soon after World War II, Carl Jung wrote: "It is a fact that cannot be denied: the wickedness of others becomes our own wickedness because it kindles something evil in our own hearts."<sup>113</sup> The same would be true of the goodness of people. It kindles goodness in others.

#### **Tapping the Resource of Asian Cultures**

The Dalai Lama has made a decisive choice "between the power of the gun and the power of wisdom and compassion."<sup>114</sup>

Though the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences had invited the Asian Churches decades ago to plan their mission in dialogue with the cultures of Asia, we have done too little reflection in this line. While we have given considerable attention to the socio-economic problems of Asia, we have done too little to tap the resources of the sturdy cultures and civilizations of our ancient continent. Our pride in the rich heritage of our great civilizations and stimulating cultures would have little substance, unless we searched for greater rootedness in our own inherited values and traditions. Asian values, such as religiosity; community cohesion; family loyalty; love, compassion and concern for every sentient being; absolute respect for life; choice of the middle path, moderation and right sense of balance; renunciation for a higher goal and many similar values of the Asian traditions elude the scrutiny of techno-

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<sup>113</sup> Carl Gustav Jung: "After the Catastrophe"; *Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, eds., H. Read, et. al., vol. 20 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964a), p. 168.

<sup>114</sup> Rajiv Mehrotra: *Understanding the Dalai Lama*, p. xxiv.



logical and scientific research. They are not considered relevant to current economic theories. However, our society lives by them, except small sections that have become alienated from their original identity. These values can be understood only through profound reflection in the context of a living community in which they are rooted. If we have become uprooted individuals, we shall miss the depth and the sustaining power that comes from our community. Cohesion within the community and concern for the larger good of humanity, the measure of self-renouncing generosity and radical commitment that such a challenge elicits do not figure in the market place. Yet, these determine the destinies of societies, nations and civilizations. So many of us unfortunately look at ourselves and our cultural heritage like uprooted people 'with borrowed glasses'. So it happens that our self-understanding itself is not sufficiently Asian.

If Asian values do not find a place in defining the future of Asian societies, we can only see a 'black hole' ahead. We are heading towards a cultural and civilizational suicide. Structural changes and legal reforms alone cannot ensure good conduct. Laws are interpreted and observed in a particular cultural context and with its own traditional values. If, for example, respect for life is not an absolute value, and what is important is the smartness to evade the law-enforcing machinery, then violence will thrive. It is doing so already in many situations. We often take values for granted. We think that they are 'the given' in any society. We can no longer think so. Communities that are alienated from the core of their inner selves have become rootless, and their traditional values miss the sustaining strength derived from their cultures. Modern society has been striving hard to propagate a sort of 'secular humanism' to replace centuries old cultures and civilizations, and even religions. It has met with limited success. Mahatma Gandhi and the Dalai Lama have shown that a peaceful approach, rooted in our ancient civilizations and religions, can be brought to the mightiest problems of the day. Does not the teaching of Jesus "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God"<sup>115</sup> contain a truly Asian message? It is this assurance that has to be developed into a theology that can guarantee a future for us.

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<sup>115</sup> Mt. 5:9.

### The Strength of Religion

He has chosen me and sent me to bring good news to the poor,  
to heal the broken-hearted.<sup>116</sup>

Speaking of the need for peace, Kurt Biedenkopf, a member of the West German Parliament, said some years ago: “We will have to rely on the strength of religion ... to make the kind of sacrifices and exercise the self-discipline that will be demanded.”<sup>117</sup> It is true that the human person is often ruled by self-interest; but he/she is subject also to the law of mutual self-interest, balanced self-interest, self-forgetting interest in the other and in the common good. It is religion that can impose this law from within. While secular inspiration emphasizes the change of the mind, religion focuses on the change of the heart. A secular ethics is impersonal; religious moral demands are personal and they touch the inner dimension of the human person. A secular ethic seeks to reconcile differences; religion seeks to reconcile differing people. Issues may be irreconcilable; but if people, who can love, trust and forgive, can be reconciled, every issue speedily becomes reconcilable. The Church may not have always succeeded in her effort to bring peace to human society, but she has kept trying in spite of her own limitations. People would like the Church to be part of the solution, not part of the problem. Nevertheless, the problems remain. The Church has to become an agent of healing for individuals, families, institutions, nations, communities and cultures struggling with the memory of a wounded history. In this, Pope John Paul II has set us a marvelous example.

Binding the broken hearted is an unbelievably great mission. “He has chosen me and sent me to bring good news to the poor, to heal the broken hearted.”<sup>118</sup> Every Christian believer, as a citizen, ought to take on this responsibility. No one needs to be afraid that he/she will fail. Failures are bound to come; but we can still hold on to hope. Theologies of hope say that the Word of God keeps calling, coaxing and compelling; opening up new alternatives and possibilities; evoking new responses; and defeating old stalemates. The Lamech approach is replaced by the Jesus approach – forgive seventy times

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<sup>116</sup> Is. 61:1.

<sup>117</sup> Theodore Runyon: *Understanding the Dalai Lama*, p. x.

<sup>118</sup> Is. 61:1.

seven times.<sup>119</sup> Then, we learn to identify with the victims of violence, as Christ did on the cross. F. W. de Klerk of South Africa was asked whether it was international sanctions that brought apartheid to an end. His reply was quick: "It was not sanctions, but a deep analysis on our knees before God." Mandela knew how to forget injuries. He was like Joseph of old who knew how to forgive, forget, and begin all over again.<sup>120</sup> God keeps forgetting evil.<sup>121</sup> When we think of it, forgiveness is double suffering: accepting the original injury; and forgoing the claims of justice. However, it ushers in a new spring. It lays the foundation of a new future. A new heaven and a new earth come within our reach.

### Conclusion

When we grow conscious of the shadow side of our being and make up our mind to work on it, we begin to discover the inner resources for healing hidden within us. Then only shall we be empowered to shed the sunshine of joy, love, gentleness and happy relationships around us. Then only shall we develop the spiritual strength to be effective in the healing ministry and tap the restorative power of peace and non-violence. Only the strength of an inner peacefulness which we have painstakingly acquired through prayer and closeness to God can give a peace-giving quality to our words and deeds. May we make a worthwhile contribution to the great cause of peace, reconciliation and healing in these troubled times.

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<sup>119</sup> Mt. 18:21.

<sup>120</sup> Gen. 45:14-15; 46:1ff.

<sup>121</sup> Is. 43:18-19; 25; 65:17; Jer. 31:34; Rev. 31:4.



2.

## **The Eurasian Union's Project: A Sustainable Future Being Born Today**

VYACHESLAV MANTATOV<sup>1</sup>

Russian society is experiencing a deep spiritual and moral crisis. There is a loss of common values and purposes; and V. Solovyov's "belief in the positive reality of the higher world" does not work anymore. In Soviet Russia, after the October Revolution the belief in the mission of our country in building a new communist world was the transcendental faith. People used to say: "We know what we are living for: we are building communism. The entire world is watching us!" In post-Soviet Russia, there is no longer that faith in the future. In the 1990s neo-liberal reformers – who came to power in Russia amid a total deficit of goods – imposed the symbols and attributes of a capitalist consumer society. They built a commodity market and a consumer society. However, it has turned out to be not just a dead end, but the path to self-destruction. Today the country is in a terribly unstable situation caused by the abnormal social differentiation and the inequality in wealth. According to the State Duma of the Russian Federation, more than 40% of total personal income belongs to 0.8% of the population. The difference coefficient between 20% of the poorest and 20% of the richest people is three times larger than the normal level as at the end of the Soviet period. This is the effect of the bipolar economy – the economy of the rich and the economy of the poor – built on the parasitic consumption of the minority and deprivation of the majority.

A tragic consequence of neo-liberal consumer attitudes was the destruction of the spiritual and moral foundations of the Christian-Communist world – work, honesty, justice and the common good. In full accord with the law of capitalist accumulation the principle of freebies in the Russian society triumphed as "a possible maximum consumption with little effort to obtain it." Triumphant freebies are

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accompanied by unlimited corruption. Today, we witness the fight against corruption, but it will not be successful until the social and economic roots of corruption are eradicated. The root of evil is the neoliberal capitalism as has been understood in China. It is high time for us to understand it. According to many Russian philosophers the tragedy of post-Soviet society is the consequence of the destructive path of giving up social and national identity in favor of global capitalism and material civilization. The famous Russian philosopher K. M. Dolgov says:

Throughout the whole history of Russia it has been shown that the culture of the spiritual and the religious, philosophical, artistic, aesthetic was the priority, and not the accumulation of richness, material interest and material civilization. Even after the revolution, in the period of socialist construction, material goods were implied within the national, general social sense.<sup>2</sup>

Modern Russia has to prove its ability to continue to build the socialist and spiritual civilization. Historical tradition is not a reliable guide to the future *per se*. Yet, we should not give up our civilizational identity. In our opinion, the sustainable future of Russia lies in a socialist civilization. Like good and evil, Russia and capitalism cannot coexist. However, we must understand that the totalitarian state socialism is the same way to the apocalypse as the neoliberal capitalism with its totalitarian market commercialization. Modern socialism is a sustainably developing social democratic and moral society.

For the present, it is clear that we should not blindly follow the western model of capitalism. We should find our own way of sustainable progress and restore the faith in the mission of Russia as a great Eurasian empire. In this regard, the experience of socialist transformation in the U. S. S. R. might be of unique interest. An undeniable fact is that the Soviet Union was a great Eurasian empire. In some sense, it is an example of the global noosphere civilization. The founder of the U. S. S. R., V. I. Lenin, regarded the Soviet Union as an open union of free republics, which should involve other

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<sup>2</sup> K. M. Dolgov: "Culture, Civilization, Globalization"; *Dialogue between Cultures in Globalization. Bakinsky Forum* (Moscow: 2012), p. 483.

nations by voluntary agreement to create a common state. The founder of the noosphere theory V. Vernadsky assessed the Soviet socialist society as the beginning of the transition to the state system of the conscious realization of the noosphere.

In the epoch of globalization, the creation of a new effective integrated society in the former Soviet space with its institutional attributes – based on the experience of the U.S. S. R. – acquires vital importance. Since January 1, 2012 Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus formed a single economic space. Creation of the Eurasian Union was planned for the year 2015. However, there are other things more cosmopolitan than a single economy. We speak about common values and ideals that unite people within a single union. In our opinion, this integrating function could be carried out within a socialist project of sustainable development. The project for a sustainable future will revive the cosmogenic-historical optimism of the Marxist-Leninist theory of communism and V. Vernadsky's concept of "Ascension to the Noosphere." In the future, this project could become the pharos for the Greater Eurasian Union – the integration of Russia and China. An important reason for this assumption is the fact that the ideal of the ruling party of China is communism, and the goal is building of a socialist ecological civilization. The 18<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of China has set the target of turning China into a powerful, civilized, harmonious and modernized socialist country on the principles of sustainable development by the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Peoples Republic of China.

The cyclical conception of historical movement reveals that now we witness the end of the Western European cycle of global development and the beginning of an Eastern/Asian cycle. The change of cycles usually coincides with the change of world civilizations and leaders of global development. In five years, China will become the communist world power, coming to the first place in the world both in economic and human potential. Given the global trend at the moment, Russia needs to focus more on the East, namely on China with its sustainable long-term development. We cannot allow turning Russia into a buffer between the capitalist West and communist China. Inflaming the crisis of world capitalism makes the socialist experience of China invaluable, as the world has no other alternative. Perhaps the fate of the whole of human civilization

depends on the successful building of “socialism with Chinese characteristics.”



3.

## **Transversal Values in a Hermeneutic Dialogue**

IRINA BOLDONOVA & VERA BASHKEEVA<sup>1</sup>

### **Introduction**

Culture preserves and transmits values, codes and traditions from one generation to another. Values have a sociocultural significance. Each culture has its own historical way of developing and cultivating specific ways of world perception, mentality, verbal and nonverbal communication, and information exchange. Culture determines how we interact with other people and behave within our reality. Individuals have the same attitude to the world within one culture and tend to behave in similar ways. The values of a culture are formed by the interplay of both ideas and aesthetic forms and provide norms of conduct, standards of behavior, and sources of faith and vision. Cultural variety often causes different beliefs and standards. The most important element of culture is that people behave according to their level of moral development and education. Cultures and civilizations elaborate an optimal synthesis of ideas and values that enable people to deal with the tasks of survival and further development. The elaborated norms of such synthesis are perceived by those who tend to believe in a heuristic sense of history, and interaction and interchange of ideas and values. Culture can be regarded as a number of human values of which the most significant are three: truth, beauty and goodness. The harmony of these three values appears to be what we usually understand by 'culture' and it is achieved by conscious effort of self-cultivation by individuals. Values develop and influence the vitality and life quality of people. The understanding of a particular culture requires a correct comprehension of the basic ideas and evaluation of aesthetic perfection. Culture is the realization of both individual and social values through various kinds of activities. The formation of the value image is a fundamental principle of reality.

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This chapter seeks ways to elaborate a creative hermeneutic model for the optimization of multicultural dialogue in “post modern” global society. In elaborating on this issue, the first section of this paper deals with a general consideration of cultural values, spelling out the significant values of western and eastern civilizations, and the influence of various religions in the formation of these values. The second section highlights the need for interaction between western and eastern cultures, so as to bring about the greater influence of eastern values on western culture. The third section attempts to unfold the Buryatian-Mongolian culture and its inherent values, such as dialogue, consensus-building in solving an issue, value of environment, benevolence and compassion. The fourth section clarifies the notion of transversality, its relevance, and how hermeneutic dialogue can bring it into light. The fifth section presents a vision of applying hermeneutic ideas in the intercultural communication with specific reference to European and Asian value systems. The conclusion briefly states the significance of transversals, as a study of moral values of the West and the East, can contribute to build bridges between eastern and western cultures and civilization. Now, we move to a general consideration of cultural values.

### **Cultural Values: A General Consideration**

Traditionally we have and follow basic values which are of universal status and quality. We all know that values, such as love, truth, beauty and kindness to others are basic values for the whole humankind. The religious values of the three world religions – Christianity, Buddhism and Islam – have become part of our lives. The values of these religions influence their ways of being, reflection, economic activities and social practice. Besides these three world religions, the belief-systems of Confucianism and Daoism in China are great sources of heuristic ideas for contemporary reality. Western civilization has been superior for centuries – more advanced in science, economy, technologies, politics, and social policy. Western countries transform their own way of life because they adapt nature and can prevail over natural order of life. A practically oriented mind-set in the West certainly exhibits values, such as rationality, liberty, legality, equality and human rights. However, values, such as responsibility, sympathy, friendship, compassion and social

solidarity are second-level values in importance for this type of mentality.

The Enlightenment mentality is the most powerful ideology in human history. It is generally recognized that great cultural achievements also are based on this mentality. The dignity of the individual, modern organizational concepts including universities, non-governmental organizations, multinational corporations, hierarchical authority structures, the ideas of sexual purity, welfare, the mass media and liberty are Enlightenment values. As they are practically related to Christian, especially Protestant values, they are considered to be universal, true and valid for Christians. We cannot support the idea of S. Huntington about the *Clash of Civilizations*. The claim of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the reality of a globalizing world for the dialogue among civilizations is becoming more and more necessary for human survival and flourishing. The main task of philosophical reflection today is to elaborate a “universal ethics” focusing on the core values with descriptions of paths of learning to be human in the global community, as is planned for the 2018 World Congress of Philosophy in Beijing. Transversal values help working towards a dialogical civilization.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Need For Interaction between Eastern and Western Cultures**

In the age of globalization, when the Enlightenment movement began, the cultures of Russia, the East/China and the West demonstrate two types of cultures that share many fundamental moral and philosophical principles. International relations of both the groups show a dialogue among cultures. They focus must be on how the quality of human creativity, good will and cooperation can bring about effective results. Cultural diversity of Russia and China gives the source for genuine intercultural and intercivilizational dialogue. Exchange between peoples, cultures and civilizations, international cooperation and mutual understanding are not only possible, but also practically proves that these two countries can do much for the exchanges and common aspirations of humanity. Human sciences in general and particularly philosophy, on the basis of theories put forward in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, manifest the desire for

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. “Rethinking Philosophy Today: Results of the XXII World Philosophical Congress”; *Vestnik BGU, Philosophy, Sociology, Political Science, Cultural Studies*, vol. 6, no. A (2009).

collaboration. At this point a dialogue between the two has already begun. On the other hand, East Asia has been supremely confident of its cultural superiority. It was a universalistic cultural order based, to a great extent, on Buddhism, Confucianism and other systems of values. These theories contain a distinct view of humanity and the moral significance of every aspect of the human existence, the natural world and social life. There is no doubt that this philosophical reflection on this type of civilizational order has given East Asia many centuries of political stability and cultural achievements. The core of the East Asian ethical and cultural tradition is relevant and suitable to the realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and to the values of traditional Russian culture.

The cultural collaboration of European, Russian, Eurasian, and East Asian values are called transversal values and are based on the idea of cultural interaction and a 'partnership conversation.' Yersu Kim notes: "Today, even as it has become clear that the western synthesis is no longer able to offer a sure guide to human survival and prosperity, East Asia is nowhere near forging a clear conception of where it wishes to go from here. Efforts have not been lacking in proffering 'East Asian' solutions to the problems facing humanity." One such effort was the 'Asian values' debate of the 1990's, which focused on values that emphasized education, consensus building, harmony, responsibility and leadership. This symposium has the objective of identifying those 'transversal values' shared between Europe and East Asia. It will make an important contribution to the task of bringing to life those spiritual and cultural values that could be resources with which to forge a new cultural synthesis, perhaps just an expansion and revision of a partly flawed cultural synthesis. The starting point of such an effort at cultural synthesis is to see these values in clear relation to the tasks and problems that afflict humanity and to try to come to grips with them. In a sense, this proposes that we reverse the conceptual process, namely that we look first at the fundamental problems that afflict Europe and East Asia, and indeed humanity as a whole, and then try to see what values are needed to deal with these problems.

The required values may turn out to be European, East Asian or of some other provenance. We understand these values because they are connected closely, in an existential way, to the problems we know first-hand. People from different cultures can communicate in

an intelligible way about these values because the problems from which they spring are common to these different cultures.<sup>3</sup> One of the most important strategic objectives of cultural development in modern China is the construction of a harmonious culture as an indicator of the state's soft power. This type of culture provides the idea of multifactor, universal, coordinated and continuous development of political, economic, social and cultural components of a harmonious society as an integrated system. So the ancient Chinese idea of 'great unity' is no longer a utopian vision, but a realizable and practical challenge. The theory of sustainable development and the concept of a new paradigm as type of civilization are supposed to change moral values. Sustainable development presupposes a more holistic perspective, which teaches how to balance and coordinate human satisfaction among many different dimensions of human existence. This new vision would place inner satisfaction of the mind on the same or even on a higher level than material satisfaction. Literature, music, painting and meditation would enrich practical activity. It would be a way of being, in which mind and emotion, quality and quantity, future and past will have their own appropriate and respected places.

A philosophical rethinking of the spiritual foundations of a new society deals with East Asian cultural traditions as a globalizing process. These East Asian moral values can bring a fresh view. Confucius' teaching still has a significant impact on political, economic and cultural life of contemporary China. The Confucian conception of morality – especially "benevolence", "adherence to tradition" and "respect for the aged" – has an important effect in one's up-bringing, emphasizing the importance of the educational function of culture in China. The Confucian conception as a national, spiritual, intellectual heritage is deeply heuristic in globalization, which is inevitably a process of unification. This conception has great strength not only for modern East Asia, but also for Russia and Europe. For example, the principle "learning to be human as a ceaseless process of self-realization" has been very attractive in Europe and still produces a great effect for those who would like to become successful professionals. Confucian values seem quite

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Yersu Kim: "East Asia and the Evolution of Common Values"; *Cultural Diversity and Transversal Values: East-West Dialogue on Spiritual and Secular Dynamics* (New York: UNESCO, 2006), p.135.

modern to western intellectuals and demonstrate great grass roots potential for the study of what is true and useful. Obviously traditional East Asian thinking offers helpful intellectual and spiritual resources for the solution of contemporary global problems. In this context, it is essential to define the role and place of Russia as a multinational country which occupies the vast territory and stretches on two continents connecting Europe, Russia proper and Asian cultures. Among the Asian nations inhabiting the Russian Federation Buryatia is a region in the eastern part of Siberia between Lake Baikal and Mongolia. In the next, section, we briefly consider characteristic elements of Buryat-Mongolian culture.

### **Buryatian-Mongolean Culture**

The Buryats – more exactly, the Buryat-Mongols – live in the northern part of the Mongolian nation. Throughout the centuries they lived in most states of Central Asia, as for instance in the great Xiongnu Empire. All the time, the Buryats lived around Lake Baikal, though the territory stretched further than the Krasnoyarskiy region in the west, and in the east as far as the Amur River. The only way to understand the phenomenon of this nation is to study its history, which enables us to understand the way in which archetypes and codes of civilization are reflected in modern political conditions. The Buryat-Mongols participated in Central Asian and later the great world events of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. They followed the ancient cultural and political traditions, with rich experience of nomadic statecraft and possessed a unique value system, spiritual culture, ethics and law, which regulated international communication in Central and Eastern Asia.<sup>4</sup> Specific characteristics of Central Asian civilization were natural coexistence with the environment and a desire to combine nomadic and stable ways of living, cattle-breeding with agriculture and handicraft production. It is well-known that since the time of Xiongnu till the Mongol epoch several writing systems appeared in Central Asia, the xylographic printing tradition was founded, and an education system and school of interpretation originated. In the field of freedom of conscience the nomads were more advanced than all contemporary communities prior to the 13<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. I. Urbanaeva: *Man by Lake Baikal and the World of Central Asia* (Ulan-Ude: Buryat Science Center, 1995).

century. There was also a high culture of spiritual perfection and techniques of interactions on different levels.

The memory of the steppe civilization keeps the facts that among the nomads, due to the influence of Buddhism, complicated issues were solved by negotiations. The example of the unique diplomatic mission – the voyage of the Buryat delegation to the Russian Tsar Peter, the Great, in 1702-1703 – to sort out their differences proves this. The purpose of the visit was to defend the Buryats from violence from the top executives of their local administration and then to seek aid against the Mongolian and Manchurian invaders. The nomads of Eurasia have been noteworthy carriers of technical and cultural diffusion all along the communication and trade routes from one end of the continent to the other. Reflection upon historical fortune of great and small nationalities and nations, their destiny, role and place in the history of mankind led to thinking historical and political logic in terms of progress. The Mongol people, including the Buryats, were part of the Central Asian cultural traditions and in particular its religious tradition. Shamanism, which had been a leading pagan religion of the Buryats for a long time, had very much in common with shamanism of other Central Asian peoples. The same can be said of Buddhism. Originated in India, Buddhism developed outside India. It fulfilled the mission of a world religion and became an open system by adapting the original world-view, concepts and cults. The Mongols began studying Buddhism at the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century during the conquests of Genghis Khan and his successors against the Khitan, the Chinese, the Tangut and other peoples. Though Buddhism was not consolidated at that time, it began spreading among the Mongols by the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

What is the importance of this phenomenon? Buddhism as one of the leading world religions, is the most humanistic and peace-loving of religions. This made it possible to move beyond the success of Genghis Khan in forming the great Mongolian empire during its heroic age. Buddhism had a strong influence on the Mongolian and Buryat mentality. Aggressiveness and intolerance decreased and a tendency developed to solve contradictions and resolve conflicts through negotiations and dialogue, with the desire to reach consensus. Similarly, the analysis of the Yangtze River civilization in China demonstrated the existence of a completely different mode of

human civilization – the rice-cultivating and fishing civilization. The people of this civilization recognized their environment, benevolence and compassion as significant values. We must first study and then educate the young generations about these civilizations. Not only technological and aesthetic transfers, but also philosophical and religious ones broaden views and extend mutual understanding in sharing these values among cultures.

### **Principle of Transversality and Hermeneutic Dialogue**

Elaborating on the principle of transversality Kim Yersu writes as follows:

We would do well to keep in mind the origin of the notion of transversality, which comes from geometry. The values of different cultures and civilizations intersect at points where there is a perception of the commonality of the problems that they face. To be sure, the idea of transversality is not an easy notion, and it may in the end prove not to be possible to free it from the metaphysical and epistemological baggage that burden the notion of universality. It seems, however, to be more ‘user-friendly’ than universality, since the latter is bound up with the difficulties of communicability and translatability, as well as with the charge of hegemonism. What is clear is that both Europe and East Asia have a common task at hand of forging a cultural synthesis that can serve humanity as it faces the realities of the twenty-first century and beyond.<sup>5</sup>

As we can see, the dialogue of cultures is the “other side” of the process of globalization. The question about possible strategies of intercultural interaction, its opportunities and limits, and potential grounds for mutual understanding is ultimately vital today for contemporary philosophy. This idea determines the perspective of consolidation of scholars and other professionals in realizing dialogue itself. Here, the well-known and recognized dialogical methodology is hermeneutics. Under the influence of Hans-Georg Gadamer, hermeneutics developed in broader philosophical terms.

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<sup>5</sup> Yersu Kim: “East Asia and the Evolution of Common Values”; *Cultural Diversity and Transversal Values: East-West Dialogue on Spiritual and Secular Dynamics*, p. 135.



Gadamer associates understanding with inner historical, dialectical and intrinsically linguistic experience. The object of philosophical hermeneutics is no longer a text, as it has traditionally been in the history of its development. The sphere of research is now extended to structures of society and social relationships.<sup>6</sup>

Contemporary scholars develop hermeneutics in communication studies mostly in the U. S. A. Among them are R. Palmer, S. Deetz, K. White, J. Stuart, J. Anderson and others.<sup>7</sup> One of the most popular tendencies is the application of hermeneutics to intercultural communication. In the context of this chapter, hermeneutics is considered as a very important philosophical paradigm in the study of dialogues of civilizations. Contemporary German philosophers J. Habermas and K.-O. Apel analyzing hermeneutics, underline the ethical aspect of the communicational discourse.<sup>8</sup> F. Dallmayr studying modalities of intercultural dialogue emphasizes heuristic features of hermeneutic dialogue as follows:

Adapting, but also modifying the Habermasian scheme, I shall distinguish between three, or perhaps three-and-a-half, main types of intercultural dialogue. I list first the different modalities and then comment briefly on each of them. The three basic modalities are these: (1) pragmatic-strategic-communication; (2) oral-universal-discourse; and (3) ethical-hermeneutical-dialogue. To these one can add a fourth type, but I prefer to treat it as a sub-category under (3) agonal dialogue or contestation.<sup>9</sup>

F. Dallmayr notes that in ethical-hermeneutical-dialogue, partners seek to understand and appreciate each other's life stories and

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. H.G. Gadamer: *Truth and Method*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Revised Edition (New York: Continuum, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. S. Deetz: "Conceptualizing Human Understanding: Gadamer's Hermeneutics and American Studies"; *Communication Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 2, Spring (1978). Cf. also J. Stewart: "Foundations of Dialogic Communication"; *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, vol. 61 (1978), pp. 185-201.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. J. Habermas: "Moralbewusstsein und Kommunikatives Handeln"; *Моральное сознание и коммуникативное действие*, trans. & ed. D. V. Sklyadnev (СПб: Наука, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> F. Dallmayr: *Beyond Orientalism: Essays on Cross-Cultural Encounter* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 79.

cultural backgrounds, including cultural and religious/spiritual traditions, storehouses of literary and artistic expressions, and existential agonies and aspirations. It is in this mode that cross-cultural learning most importantly takes place. We can agree with F. Dallmayr that the most full-bodied intercultural modality is ethical-hermeneutical- dialogue. Here particular cultural experiences can enter in a genuine way, while still preserving the openness to the 'other' required for dialogue.

### **Our Vision in Applying Hermeneutic Ideas in Intercultural Communications**

Our vision of applying hermeneutic ideas to the study of intercultural communication is the following. For the analysis of intercultural hermeneutics this approach will use the elements of a theory of hermeneutic experience:

1. The hermeneutic circle and the problem of prejudices give the direction when a single phenomenon can be interpreted and understood in the context of the whole cultural tradition of the past. The understanding of otherness helps to overcome the personal context of our own prejudices. Prejudices constitute the historical reality of being.<sup>10</sup> The intuitive anticipation of the whole meaning is corrected by interpretation of rituals, customs and family relations. The unique position of Russia as an Eurasian country reveals its connections with western and eastern cultures. The existence of Confucian, Buddhist and Daoist values in China can be an example of positive prejudices. The brilliant example of how negative prejudices are overcome in the context of global policy and the whole mankind is the United Nations with its derivative organization UNESCO. Through conferences and other sociocultural, educational projects, UNESCO contributes to better intercultural understanding and practical results.

2. The hermeneutic significance of temporal distance defines historical thinking and historical mediation between the past and the present, which helps us to realize the historical value of different

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. I. Boldonova: "On H. G. Gadamer's Truth and Method. The Hermeneutics of Interpersonal Communication"; *The Dialogue of Cultural Traditions: A Global Perspective. Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change*, gen. ed. George F. McLean, Series I, Culture and Values, vol. 39, Chap. XXXIX. URL <http://www.crvp.org/book/Series01/I-39/chapter-39.htm> (12.12.2009).

notions. Historical consciousness reconstructs the horizon and puts us in the position of other culture representatives. Thus, Buryatia presents the area where people, both European and Oriental live. For better understanding, we must analyze the interrelations of these two cultures in the past. Here, temporal distance as a filtering process allows false prejudices to be overcome while true ones remain.

3. The principle of the history of effect can be applied to intercultural communication and it must take place in a hermeneutic situation. One's knowledge can never be complete and so each side of communication must be open towards new meanings which help to understand ourselves much better. Transmission to the horizon of the other culture promotes understanding, ways of interpreting of speech situations, speech acts, the rules of speaking, personal relations, the functions of speech in the community, and ethnic political problems. Cultures communicate in different ways, but forms of messages require a shared code and communicators, who know and use this code. The Silk Roads have been major arteries for the exchange of culture and civilization for at least fifteen hundred years, and have helped shape recent human civilization at least in East Asia.

The fact – that Buryat culture is based on Buddhist religious traditions and their codes and the Russian culture is based on the Russian Orthodox Church and its codes – can give us a reason for hermeneutic analysis. For example, the possibility of emotional co-experience in the intercultural communication between the Buryat and the Russian in dealing with values can be studied hermeneutically.

4. According to advanced contemporary research in the field of intercultural communication, the idea concerning traditional cultural dichotomy is that western and eastern cultural traditions will be transmitted to transversality. This is the basic principle of co-evolution, co-existence and the unification of the planet's inhabitants. Synthesis of contemporary culture and dialogue of different cultures is the reality of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The hermeneutic approach with the aim of humane thinking suggests methods of universal understanding. Here the idea is not to suppress the culture of the minorities, but to give them a chance to survive and develop as a way to dialogue and cooperation. We can find a model for future

dialogue between the two cultures in the example of dialogue, peaceful interaction and intercultural communication of East Asian and Russian cultures.

### **Conclusion**

The hermeneutic methodology contains effective methods of interpretation of any cultural phenomenon, the most global and complicated one is the dialogue of civilizations. In this time of transition from universalism to transversalism, the study of moral values and the role of traditional values of the East and the West is now an important scientific and practical problem. The world today is full of misunderstanding and violence. Future prospects will depend on philosophical reflection and on the way mankind finds possible direction for building bridges of dialogue among nations and peoples.

## **The Frontier Thesis and Social Interactions in Eurasia**

OYUNA RANDALOVA<sup>1</sup>

### **Introduction**

This chapter analyses the the Frontier Thesis and social interactions in Eurasia. The first part of this chapter attempts to elaborate the origin of the Frontier Thesis in the writings of American author Frederick Jackson Turner, and its transfer and development in Russian soil. The Russian authors did not make a direct transfer of the Frontier Thesis as proposed by Turner, but conceptually transformed it and used in the Eurasian context. The second part of this chapter takes up for discussion inter-social interactions in the Eurasian situation, particularly on the basis of the socioeconomic sphere of the Buryat society. The analysis considers social-interactions in the Eurasian society at various levels of historical development, starting from the primitive communal system, during the Russian Empire, after the October Revolution of 1917 and in the twentieth century. The conclusion points to the fact of the destruction of the nomadic civilization and culture of the Buryats, and development of the Eurasian mentality and Eurasian synthetic culture based on the solid pivot of Eurasian national identity.

### **Origin of Frontier Thesis and Its Development in the Eurasian Context**

The Frontier Thesis originated in American historiography at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the works of Frederick Jackson Turner. It was, and still is, supported by many historians in the United States. The essence of this theory lies in the recognition of a line or an open field of unoccupied and sparsely populated land forming the outer edge of the wave of resettlement. According to Turner, new Americans coming from the East to the West over the centuries moved this line of juncture between savagery and civilization from

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the Atlantic to the Pacific coast thereby exploring a new continent by peaceful means.<sup>2</sup> The emphasis was placed on the development of the idea of "nearly unoccupied" lands, and mainly its peaceful nature. In Turner's thesis the notion of colonization of the American continent is replaced by the notion of the frontier as a mobile line of peaceful progress on newly colonized territories. The idea of the frontier became an explanatory factor in the evolution of the American history. "American democracy, complex nationality, individualism, physical and social mobility, in his opinion, are directly linked with the frontier."<sup>3</sup> Followers of F. J. Turner in their subsequent studies developed an idea of a "safety valve" or an unoccupied land contributing to dissemination of social contradictions.

It should be noted that, despite frequent criticism, the Frontier Thesis was firmly established as a kind of historical research paradigm of American history. It remained so until the 1980's, when its plausibility was seriously questioned, if not totally refuted by American historians themselves. If, in the country of its origin, the Frontier Thesis was almost abandoned, or at least no longer universally accepted as a plausible historical methodology, in Russian historiography this theory was readily adopted as a valid methodological approach to study the complex processes of incorporating non-Russian peoples into the Russian state. For example, authors of the academic publication *Asiatic Russia in the Geopolitical and Civilizational Dynamics of the 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries* carried out a comparative analysis of American history and the history of Russia searching for historical parallels between the colonization of the American West and Asiatic Russia. The frontier idea attracted them because "in accordance with the conceptual method, the key factor of the colonization process was the emergence of a new society, formed as a result of synthesis of social practices of the colonists, their development of the environment and the indigenous population."<sup>4</sup>

Authors of monographs rightly point out the impossibility of a direct transfer of this theory to Russia. However, their interpretation

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. V.V. Alekseev et al.: *Aziatskaya Rossiya v geopoliticheskoi i tsivilizatsionnoi dinamike XVI-XX veka* (Moscow: Nauka, 2004), p. 213.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 214.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208.

of the Frontier Thesis is conceptually transformed. As applied to American history, they are unable to speak about any synthesis. Turner's Frontier Thesis is a theory which completely eliminates the second side of the colonial interaction. It should be noted that comparison as a basis of the methodological use of the frontier theory is a limiting factor. It prevents considering results of such an interaction as a holistic phenomenon. The Frontier Thesis is only a special case of a broader systematic theory of imperialism and colonialism. Its "advantage" lies only in identification and justification of the colonial mentality of the American nation. This thesis is typologically focused on the future development of unoccupied lands and natural wealth in the Middle East, Asia and even Siberia. Its "disadvantage" is that facts selected in accordance with this method cannot provide an explanation of the historical process because it suggests several unilateral interpretations. Applied to the problem of the Russian state-empire the Frontier Thesis leaves out the role of the second part of the interaction, that is, the historical results, the impact of the meeting and synthesis of the native population. Mostly because of this it was criticized by the "new historians of the West" in the United States. However, academics managed to negotiate the shortcomings of the original concept. The work is valuable because it draws attention to the complex and ambiguous process of the formation of the "Asiatic Russia".

Another idea connected with the Frontier Thesis is that the synthesis of Russia's European core with its harsh Asian periphery lifted Russia to an equal position with the United States as the twentieth century's superpower. From the historical viewpoint this statement appears to be false. For many centuries Russia developed its might owing to Siberia's resources. In the second half of the twentieth century it became a global superpower on par with the United States of America because of the major social upheaval, the construction of a new social order and the victory in the Second World War. In our opinion, the concept of synthesis can be helpful in studying the history of the incorporation and colonization of Siberia. It was proposed by the Russian researchers of the colonial East, N. A. Simoniya and L. I. Reisner. At the heart of this concept of social synthesis lies the analysis of the situation of overlying heterogeneous structures at several stages in a process of mutual influence of the

West and the East.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the synthesis of this understanding is dynamic, like going to the next level of development. Under the socio-historical synthesis we understand the process of interaction between dissimilar socio-economic or politico-ideological bases taking place during the interlocking merger or formation of some self-contradictory integrity. Synthesis refers to a process and concrete results. Public synthesis can occur in the natural self-development society – endogenous synthesis, and as a result of an external impact on society. In one form or another, the social synthesis is and was presented by some process of historical development.<sup>6</sup> This formational synthesis within formational theory, developed the idea of social synthesis.

The methodology of public synthesis seamlessly integrates into all three main areas of contemporary social science: the formational approach – the inter-formational synthesis; the civilizational approach – the inter-civilizational synthesis; and the theoretical framework of world-system analysis – the "core-periphery" dichotomy in relation to exogenous synthesis. Interaction of societies at different levels of stadial development can be seen in various aspects, such as the economic, political, cultural, and civilizational. Inter-social interaction in Eurasia is a cross-cultural and inter-ethnic cooperation, and the important factor is the split-level of historical development. The study of the historical process of interaction of social organisms in Siberia using the idea of social and historical synthesis, should complement the methodology of public synthesis and constitute a new entry in the philosophical and historical analysis of regional development.

### **Inter-Social Interaction in Eurasia**

The inter-societal relationships include such processes as the perception and mastering of European and Russian cultural elements by the peoples of Asiatic Russia. The peoples of Central and North Asia were not only recipients of the achievements of the Russian European civilization, but simultaneously maintained and enriched their autochthonous civilizational heritage. In the course of

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. E. N. Galich et al.: *Evolyutsiya vostochnykh obshchestv: sintez traditsionnogo i sovremennogo*, eds. N. A. Simoniya and L. I. Reisner, (Moscow: Nauka, 1984).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. O. E. Nepomnin and V. B. Menshikov: *Sintez v perekhodnom obshchestve: Kitai na grani epoch* (Moscow: Vostochnaya Literature, 1999).



the entire twentieth century, especially during the Soviet epoch, there unfolded a multi-level historical process of interactions and mutual influence of the Russian-European and Turkic-Mongolian worlds represented by the Buryats, Yakuts, Tuvinians, Altai and other peoples. However, by the beginning of the Soviet period, the Buryat social medium already reflected a socio-historical synthesis of various social relationships. Here, we consider the synthesis phenomenon on the basis of the socioeconomic sphere of the Buryat society, which typified the Siberian ethnic social media.

At the moment of their incorporation into the Russian Empire the Buryats represented the nomadic culture of East Siberia. Studies in the history of the Siberian autochthones show that during the merger into Russia they were at various levels of historical development ranging from late stages of the primitive communal system to the dawning of a feudal society. Opinions differ as to whether these were the beginnings of feudalism. However, the formation of an early class society, social differentiation and insulation of the elites were the undoubted attributes of that historical period. They already had developed a tributary system named *yasak* where tribute was paid in furs. This resulted in "more permissive, flexible, adaptive and affirmative forms of interrelations between the Russians and the aboriginals."<sup>7</sup>

The stadial – formational and civilizational – rupture between the interacting social media was not so catastrophic to germinate a complete incompatibility of socioeconomic orders of the newcomers and autochthones, as it happened, for example, in the northeast of Eurasia where the Russian-Chukchi interaction was much more dramatic. With the expansion of state colonization and the growth of the Russian population the mutual influence of the Russian peasants and local nomadic cattle herders intensified. So did the spread of the Russian culture, which, in the historical perspective, transmitted European culture. A socioeconomic synthesis was gradually formed with the patriarchal, clannish and semi-feudal structure under the paramount property of the state. That is why, in this context, it is hard to speak about feudal relations. Synthesis in the material production system continued in the social order of life. The Buryat

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<sup>7</sup> V.V. Alekseev et al.: *Aziatskaya Rossiya v geopoliticheskoi i tsivilizatsionnoi dinamike XVI-XX veka*, p. 10.

people, who from time immemorial were nomadic cattle herders, started to change over to western agricultural civilization. In this way, the Buryats reflected a peculiar Russo-Buryat synthesis of material and spiritual cultures.

At the moment of Siberia's incorporation, Russia was a feudal state where serfdom was common. All lands beyond the Urals were considered the "sovereign's patrimony" and belonged to the treasury. All lands of the Siberian peoples were declared state property and tribute – *yasak* to be paid in furs – was imposed on the population. Later, *yasak* was replaced by feudal rent.<sup>8</sup> Feudalization of the Buryat society increased social differentiation and strengthened the status of the elites. Buryat nobility called *noions* strove to concentrate in their hands the means of production and enforce non-economic coercion. However, the feudalization process was not finalized because the patriarchal and communal traditions of the people were still strong. On the other hand, the status of the state as a supreme land proprietor with all ensuing fiscal and legal consequences did not create a feudal proprietors' class inside the Buryat society. State policy of the Russian Empire was flexible and diversified to take into account the historical specificities of the economic and social structure of the colonized people. A synthesis of social relations was manifested in the formation of the patriarchal-clannish-semi-feudal organization of the Buryat society. This synthesis of social organization of the Buryat society was typical almost until the late nineteenth century. In this way, like the peasants of Siberia in general, the Buryats managed to avoid the extremes of serfdom, the feudal regime of the metropole. The same factor to a great extent preconditioned a comparatively easy transition of the Buryat economy to capitalist development.

A new stage in the development of the stadial synthesis commenced at the turn of the twentieth century. A further deepening of historical interaction led to an overlapping of social forms and their amalgamation. The fast-paced Russian capitalism pulled the outskirts of Russia into the whirlpool of its development, destroying the pre-capitalistic relations and the patriarchal restraint thereby exerting influence on the economic and social order of

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. E. M. Zalkind: *Obshchestvennyi stroi buryat v XVIII i pervoi polovine XIX v* (Moscow: Nauka, 1970).

peoples in these borderlands. Generally inseparable from the context of Siberia's capitalist development and non-isolated from the economy of the surrounding Russian peasants, the Buryat economy was affected by this influence to the full. Construction of the Trans-Siberian railroad, growth of gold mining and taxes paid in cash from long back exercised strong influence on the commodization of local production and increasingly dragged the Buryat population into commodity-money relations. According to I. A. Asalkhanov, a rather noticeable process of differentiation of the Buryat peasants into the landlords and employees was taking place. In this way, 70 % of farmsteads with the minimal number of cattle could not live off their properties and had to sell their workforce. Apart from employment as day-laborers some paupers left the administrative bounds for seasonal work and toiled as farm laborers at the farmsteads of rich Russian peasants, the Cossacks. Work at gold mines, carpentry, the construction of steamers, mining and deliveries of coal were also related to "seasonal work."

Besides using hired labor in their farmsteads, a small part of peasants resorted to farming out grasslands for business and sold large portions – from 30 to 50 % of their cattle and livestock.<sup>9</sup> In addition to the process of stratification, the bourgeoisification of the nobility (*noions*) was taking place in the Buryat settlements. As noted, the Buryat nobility were not feudal landlords. Landed estates of the *noions* were formed from the seized lands – plough land, farmstead grasslands and haylands in Transbaikalia; the rented lands and the allotted lands. The absence of feudal tenure facilitated the capitalist evolution of their landed estates as they were involved in commodity relations. There were more business leaders among the nobles than among clannish village kulaks. The data cited by P. I. Malakhinov show that in the late nineteenth century 4.3 % of farmsteads were horseless, 3.1 % did not have any cattle and 24 % lacked sheep.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, capitalist relations could not advance reasonably due to immaturity of these relations in the metropolis. New stadial changes in the history of the Buryats and other

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. I. A. Asalkhanov: *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe razvitie Yugo-Vostochnoi Sibiri vo vtoroi polovine XIX veka* (Ulan-Ude: Buryatskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1963), p. 278.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. P. I. Malakhinov: *O dvukh tipakh agrarnoi evolyutsii* (Ulan-Ude: Buryatskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1962), p. 350.

indigenous Siberian peoples commenced after the October Revolution of 1917.

It should be noted that by this time the social orders of the Buryats represented a synthesis of three types of social relationships: the tribal, the feudal and the capitalist. Hence, by the advent of Soviet power the social order of the Buryats featured the synthesis of the three types of social relationships. They interlinked and synthesized not in their pure forms, but in underdeveloped symbiotic, amorphous and unarticulated ways. The great social cataclysm of 1917 was an important milestone in the history of ethnic survival and preservation of the autochthonous traditions of the Buryat people. The October Revolution created a new social order in the country giving a single unique opportunity to minorities and small peoples to escape colonial subjugation, and preserve and develop their traditional spiritual values. From the mid-twentieth century, having closely encountered the phenomenon of western civilization, the Buryat people actively began to absorb the Russian and European cultures with all their spiritual richness. This opened a way towards progress of science and technology, achievements of the global technogenic civilization and spiritual culture.

### **Conclusion**

The ambivalence of the process of synthesis should take account of the twentieth century being also an age of destruction of the original nomadic civilization and culture of the Buryats that began already in the seventeenth century when the Siberian peoples were incorporated into the Russian state. In the modern age, it is hardly possible to speak about the Buryats as representatives of only oriental civilization in all spheres of life. More likely, it is a *socium* with developed Eurasian mentality and Eurasian synthetic culture based on the solid pivot of its national identity.

## Social Liberalism and Holism: Solidarity of Purpose

LYDIA GOMBOEVA<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

It is hard to disagree with the statement of J. J. Rousseau that “to give up your freedom means to abandon your dignity, human rights, even your duties.” On the other hand, being social creatures, men naturally or through contracts unite to live together in states limiting their freedom. This implies that liberalism – different from other political movements, such as anarchism, socialism, authoritarianism and the like in respect to the form of the organization of the state and the love of freedom – must be recognized as the only decent human political platform. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the founder of liberalism, John Locke, declared: “Governments have been created to protect the rights which belong to individuals before the political organization of social relations.”<sup>2</sup> The state should be organized in such a way that reasonable laws could dominate – allowing people to peacefully enjoy their natural rights, such as the rights to life, liberty and property – expanding freedom instead of destroying it. Locke stated that the common good depends on how free and rational people can act in their own interests within reasonable laws. Gradually, liberalism, as John Dewey noted, was enriched by the idea of the sovereignty of the people of J. J. Rousseau, Adam Smith’s concept of free market, and the idea of government for man of Jeremy Bentham’s utilitarianism. Synthesizing the ideas of Rousseau and Smith in a contradictory way has led to the emergence of the leading ideology of the capitalist world.

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<sup>2</sup> J. Dewey: “Liberalism i socialnoe deistvie”; *Demokratiya i XX vek: Khrestomatiya po kursu grajdanskogo obrazovaniya dlya pedagogicheskikh universitetov* (Nizhny: Novgorod, 1997), p. 55. J. Dewey: “Liberalism and Social Actions”; *Democracy and the XX Century: Anthology in the Course of Civil Education for Pedagogical Universities* (Nizhny: Novgorod, 1997), p. 55.

This chapter will attempt to unfold the complementary nature of liberalism and holism, as both of these ideologies have solidarity of purpose and serve as agents of liberal political democracy. Elaborating on this theme, the first part of the chapter clarifies the meaning and types of liberalism, its notion of a "strong state", and the consequences of that in a liberal society. The second part expounding holism speaks of the nature and principles of holism, its metaphysical and psychological foundations, and holism as an ideal ontology for liberal political democracy. The conclusion highlights the manner in which liberalism and holism complement each other in bringing about the establishment of liberal political democracy.

### **Liberalism**

This part of the chapter elaborates the meaning of liberalism and its different types, namely, libertarianism or libertinism and social liberalism. It then clarifies the relation of liberalism with the notion of a "strong state", and finally, considers the consequences of a "strong state" for a liberal society.

#### *Meaning and Types of Liberalism*

The English word "liberalism" comes from the Latin term "*liberalis*" which means "free". Liberalism, as an ideological political movement, recognizes that the individual's civil, political and economic freedoms are the legal basis of the society. From the above mentioned contradictions, as John Dewey noted in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, two main types of liberalism were clearly outlined: libertarianism or libertarism and social liberalism. I. Berlin used the terms "negative liberalism" and "positive liberalism" respectively to refer to these two types of liberalism. The different interpretations of the justice principle and of the state functions, and the required degree of its power served as the basis for this distinction. We briefly consider each of these types of liberalism.

#### **Libertarianism/Libertarism**

According to R. Nozick, this form of liberalism defends the idea of negative liberty, equality, justice and the minimum "weak" state. Here, the negative liberty means the freedom of individuals from external violence, including violence of the state. The latter refers to high taxes and unfair treatment of economic subjects, which,

according to libertarians, infringe upon human rights and liberties and lead to totalitarianism. The libertarian principle of justice, as proposed by R. Nozick, leaves more income, which means more freedom to the most successful. It excludes the state's care for the least fortunate. Libertarianism advocates Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest as the guiding principle of the society. Thus, this type of liberalism proposing a minimal state, leaves "the less fortunate" to take care of themselves or expect help from voluntary welfare organizations. Adam Smith and David Ricardo can be considered the forerunners of libertarianism. Other leading representatives of this form of liberalism are the thinkers of the Austrian School of Economics – L. Mises and F.A Hayek, the American economist M. Friedman, and the American philosopher R. Nozick.

#### Social Liberalism

It is a type of liberalism, which defends the values of positive liberty, equality and justice. Social liberalism is based on the rule of rational law and freedom of debate. It holds for positive freedom or "freedom for". Hence, it asserts the necessity of the social functions of the state, such as free education and guaranteed health care to help the least fortunate. Social liberalism, as expounded by John Rawls, considers that the most successful people – being sensible and humane – will agree amongst themselves to take care of the least fortunate. Social liberalism seeks to ensure equal opportunities for all citizens. Hence, it seems to be the most humane and spiritual form of liberalism for modern Russia and the world. Social liberalism adheres to the concept of a "strong state". A strong state can achieve its primary purpose according to Kant's liberalism, by creating conditions for personal development. The English social liberal G. Samuel writes on this point as follows:

Real freedom means a possibility for us to make the best of our abilities, favorable circumstances, and free energy – otherwise life itself. And namely in this ... viewing the true meaning of freedom, we find a guiding impulse for further development of liberalism in the field of public education, in the struggle against drinking alcohol, in housing, in the matter of improving the social and industrial life – in short, in

everything that promotes a productive activity of the state, society and the individual.<sup>3</sup>

He says further: "More and more recognized is the truth that a nation cannot find a better place for their capital as in the minds of their children; that is why the liberals boldly make a demand for greater support for the needs of public education."<sup>4</sup> We can name J. J. Rousseau as the forerunner of social liberalism because he appeals to the people for freedom though his idea that the "general will is always right". Other leading representatives of social liberalism are I. Kant, J. S. Mill, G. Samuel, J. Dewey, J. Rawls and J. Habermas.

*Liberalism and the Notion of a "Strong State"*

In 1993, Francis Fukuyama proclaimed the "end of history" in connection with the final victory of liberalism of a libertarian type. However, after the events of September 11, 2001 the collision of two liberal state concepts has moved steadily in favor of the idea of a "strong state". In 2004, F. Fukuyama published his book entitled *A Strong State*, in which he proved the necessity of a strong state capable of resisting terrorism, pandemics and natural disasters. In the concept of a "strong state", Fukuyama comprehends the state with a considerable power, but with a limited sphere of influence.<sup>5</sup> We agree with this interpretation of a strong state and would like to note the ambiguity in the following text contrary to this definition expanding the sphere of influence and distorting the liberal democratic idea of the state: "Building a strong state consists of the creation of new government institutions and the strengthening of the existing ones."<sup>6</sup>

In Russia, the concept of a strong state acquires even more clearly expressed state-focused features. A. D. Kerimov, the author of the

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<sup>3</sup> G. Samuel: *Liberalism: Opit izlozheniya principov i programmi sovremennogo liberalizma* (Moskva: Knijnii dom "Librokom"), p. vii. G. Samuel: *Liberalism: Attempt to Present the Principles and Program of Modern Liberalism* (Moscow: Publishing House "Librokom"), p. vii.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. F. Fukuyama: *Sil'noe gosudarstvo: Upravlenie i mirivoi poradok v XXI veke* (Moskva: Act: Act Moscow: Custodian, 2006), p. 36. Cf. also F. Fukuyama: *State-Building. Governance and World Order in the 21st Century* (Moscow: Act: Act Moscow: Custodian, 2006), p. 36.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.



Russian book *A Strong State*,<sup>7</sup> identifies the following features of a strong state: great and potentially powerful; a vast sphere of influence of public authorities; the possession of spiritual power, that is power over minds; the attraction to its side of secular and religious intellectuals; national orientation; and responsibility and transparency of the ruling elite. A. D. Kerimov represents the state as a perfect institution, where all citizens should be obedient to a strong state. This position is unjustified in terms of the overall philosophy of liberalism, as it leads to the transformation of a man into a means and not an end. The state can be strong only if the law rules, which can be achieved either by a strong civil society or a fair elite. The disadvantage of the latter alternative was noted by the 18<sup>th</sup> century philosopher D. Diderot as follows:

One of the great misfortunes for the nation would be two or three consecutive governments, fair, gentle and enlightened, but autocratic sovereigns: prosperity could lead people from the complete neglect of their privileges, to the most hopeless slavery ... Grief to those peoples, whose idea of freedom has been destroyed, even by the most laudable means: the more pernicious are these means for the future. As a result, people are immersed in a sweet dream, but that grave dream lessens a patriotic feeling and interest in the public administration. Give the English three consecutive Elizabeths, and the British would be the last slaves in Europe.<sup>8</sup>

Immanuel Kant pointed out that human nature was similar to the curve destiny from which you cannot do anything right, and everyone having authority would seek to abuse their own power. Kant clearly proved the necessity of a civil society, but for some reason the social concepts of D. Diderot and I. Kant are completely ignored in A. D. Kerimov's concept of a strong state. It should be pointed out that a strong state without the rule of law and a strong civil society is as stable as an iceberg, whose surface part is heavier

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<sup>7</sup> A.D. Kerimov: *Sil'noe gosudarstvo: otvet na vyzov sovremennoi epokhil* (Moscow: Nota bene, 2009). A.D. Kerimov: *A Strong State: A Response to the Challenge of the Modern Era* (Moscow: Nota bene, 2009).

<sup>8</sup> D. Diderot: *Sochineniya: V dvukh tomakh* (Moscow: Mysl, 1991), p. 439. D. Diderot: *The Collected Works*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Thought, 1991), p. 439.

than the submerged portion and the crystalline lattice of ice leaks here and there.

*Consequences of a Strong State in a Liberal Society*

The denoted cult of a strong state without the rule of law and the rule of a civil society contributes to the crisis of liberalism manifested in the following terms:

1. The word “liberal” today is often distorted. For example, local Liberal Democrats sigh of Stalin's administration, but in fact, any totalitarianism, including the Stalinist type, is unnatural to any liberal.

2. Liberalism is wrongfully identified with one of its types – libertarianism. Such thought is as incorrect as the identification of all human beings, for example, with egoists. In today's Russia, where the legitimacy of many people's enrichment is doubtful, while most of the population lives below the poverty level and the rules of the market are not transparent, libertarianism is a significant obstacle to the development of the country. Libertarianism is criticized in the West. For example, G. Rormozer said that western societies were under full authority of liberalism in its perverted form – libertarianism – so rampant that it has led to the individualization of society and morality, to the domination of hedonism in a threatening measure. As a result, we are constantly confronted with the symptoms of internal erosion and even the collapse of society. We deal with the death of values, the death and crisis of culture.<sup>9</sup>

3. Liberalism is criticized for an unjust social system formed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, liberalism is not responsible for the unequal distribution of resources in the period of *perestroika* because privatization was carried out in the virtual absence of market information and legal support from the government as noted by F. Fukuyama. To quote him on this point: “As a result many of the privatized assets have not reached those businessmen who could make them productive.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. G. Rormozer: *Krisis liberalisma* (Moskva: IF RAN, 1996), p. 26. Cf. also G. Rormozer: *The Crisis of Liberalism* (Moscow: IF RAN, 1996), p. 26.

<sup>10</sup> F. Fukuyama: *Sil'noe gosudarstvo: upravlenie i mirovooi poryadok v XXI veke*, p. 36. F. Fukuyama: *A Strong State: State-Building. Governance and World Order in the 21st Century*, p. 36.

4. Liberalism is associated with permissiveness and moral and social degradation. However, many defenders of freedom – such as J. Locke, C. Montesquieu, I. Kant, and others – have written about the necessity of moral education in the country. The illegitimacy of identifying freedom with permissiveness was noted by many thinkers from antiquity to the present day. The moral and social degradation in the country is related to the actual rejection of the idea of upbringing in the modern education system – more precisely its governing structures, the spreading of consumer ideology through the media and the worldview crisis.

5. Though liberalism is accused of its violent spreading through military invasion of several countries, it is a fact that a real liberal appreciates his own and other people's freedom. Liberalism allows others to govern themselves and not to use violence to promote their own views. J. Dewey, a true liberal, wrote: "In the strict sense, nothing can be forced upon them or into them. To overlook this fact means to distort and pervert human nature."<sup>11</sup>

6. Despite the many problems and drawbacks of liberalism, it must be emphasized that liberal democracy remains the landmark that any self-respecting society should seek because without freedom, a man and his society are deprived not only of their human dignity, but also responsibility, creativity and justice, as was noted by I. Kant, N. Berdyaev and J. Rawls respectively. People should be free not only from the point of view of social progress, but also from the perspective of personal growth and understanding as fundamental human problems, as stated in many doctrines linking the ancient idea of the *Logos*, God, *Brahman*, *Tao* and the inexpressible Being with a divine potential in everything and in nature. This leads to the consideration of the philosophy of holism.

### **Holism**

We begin this part by elaborating on the nature and principles of holism. Then we proceed to unravel the metaphysical and psychological foundations of holism. Finally, we consider holism as an ideal ontology for liberal political democracy.

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<sup>11</sup> J. Dewey: *Demokratiya i obrazovanie* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University, 2001), p. 30. J. Dewey: *Democracy and Education* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University, 2001), p. 30.

### *Nature and Principles of Holism*

The philosophy that states that all of us, as well as the whole world at large, are at different degrees of a uniform actualization, facilitated apparently by a psycho-energetic first principle, is called *holism*. According to K. Wilber, holism identifies everything in nature as a part of the whole – the *holons* of the unified developing conscious universe. All *holons* pull to be the whole, pull to be a part, pull up, and pull down. Finding the actual mental form of the existence in the form of different types of mental activity and the different levels of realization – such as mental processes, states and consciousness – occurs as a generating process of the transition of the mind from a being into a possibility. For K. Wilber, the desire for transcendence itself is included in the very fabric of the *cosmos*.<sup>12</sup> Carl Rogers, one of the famous psychologists, supported the holistic intuition. According to him, the universe – from the smallest snowflake to the largest galaxy, from the insignificant amoeba to the most astute and gifted person – is inherent in the development, the tendency towards maturity and the ability to get rid of the existing restrictions.

Holism states two important liberal principles, namely, the dialects of *yin-yang* and the principle “all in one and one in all”. We briefly consider each of them.

### The Dialectics of Yin-Yang

This principle states that the opposites are not exclusive, but complementary and indeed complement each other, as the *Taoist* symbol of *yin* and *yang* illustrates: white in black, black in white. The opposites – such as material and ideal, freedom and the lack of freedom, knowledge and ignorance and the like – complement and complete each other. When applied to the higher basis of being the dialectical principle asserts the identity of the causal reality and the unconditional Absolute – the principle of the identity of *samsara* and *nirvana* in the language of Buddhism. It requires that one should not

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. V. I. Panova, pod red.: *Ecopsychologicheskie issledovaniya 2: k 15-letiyu laboratorii ekopsikologii razvitiya: monographicheskii sbornik* (Moskva: URAO "Psychological Institute", St. Petersburg: Nestor-istoriya, 2011), p. 22. Cf. also V.I. Panov, ed.: *Ecopsychological Studies 2: Toward the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Laboratory of Developmental Ecopsychology: Monographic Collection* (Moscow: URAO "Psychological Institute", St. Petersburg.: Nestor-History, 2011), p. 22.

live in the future – with the hope of heaven and happiness in the future, the “Golden Age” – but in the present and in the here-and-now moment. The dialectical principle is directed against dogmatism as one of the main enemies of liberalism. Moreover, from the dialectical principle, the release of the spirit through the body and vice versa may be possible, which is used in many oriental practices.

#### The Principle “All in One and One in All”

This second principle offers a situational, realized and responsible decision of the dilemma important for the liberal policy: “Is a part for the whole or the whole for a part?” In other words, a holist will say quite clearly that the purpose of the state is not only general welfare of the people at large, but also the welfare of the individual.

#### *Metaphysical and Psychological Foundations of Holism*

Holism is based on metaphysics. Hence, it allows the consideration of the concepts of the soul and the spirit. Socrates taught that everything that is good and honorable in a person is born out of a good soul. I. A. Ilyin noted that the soul associated with the body is not free, but the spirit as a deep manifestation of the Absolute in the soul is free. A spirit or higher consciousness may be considered as a deep soul power that can lead the soul on the way of welfare and self-improvement. For the cognition of a higher metaphysical consciousness, it is recommended that one asks oneself the question: “Who am I?” To this question, one can consistently reply that I am a child, a pupil, a student, a teacher, a father, a leader, a retired or a dying person. Here we are referring to our temporary “I”. To the question “Who am I really?”, there is a natural response, which comes from our original “I”. This original “I” is something more than our different little egocentric “I”. The highest “I” is the spirit. The founder of Logo therapy, V. Frankl, wrote: “Today, apparently, it is more likely to give courage to live spiritually, to remind one that they have a spirit; that they are a spiritual being.”<sup>13</sup> Due to the identification of ourselves not with the “ego”, but with the “spirit” which involves “soul harmonization”, we may experience peacefulness, manifestations of conscience, a sense of justice, compassion

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<sup>13</sup> V. Frankl: *V poiskah smysla* (Moskva: Progress, 1990), p. 105. V. Frankl: *In a Search for Meaning* (Moscow: Progress, 1990), p. 105.

and spiritual power. According to H. Berson, by the immersion into the spiritual level of consciousness, relaxation, meditation or hypnosis one may experience the “creative impulse” or higher consciousness.

The basic human problem according to C. G. Jung is the “non-disclosure of the self” and for A. Maslow is the “Ionna complex”. They separate a human person from his own spirit. The root of the problem is not in the lack of capacity, but being caught up in unsuitable environments. A famous neurophysiologist, Pavlov, stated that the instinct of freedom is inherent in all living beings. Through his experiments on dogs, he showed that the instinct of freedom in some cases can cause atrophy almost completely. In addition, cases of children-Mowgli and the concept of imprinting towards a man, as proposed by K. Lorenz, show that under influence of the unfavorable conditions of early childhood, the human potential remains untapped for the rest of one's life. Such empirical and theoretical discoveries indicate the importance of the psychological atmosphere that can help or hinder one's personal growth. In order to confirm the effect of external force on the development of body systems, Masaru Emoto proposed an experiment: to take one jar of rice soaked in water and every day to say good or bad words to rice. Rice to which was said: “You are good”, after twenty-five days looks and smells good, while the rice to which was said: “You are bad,” got a sharp unpleasant smell and the water was covered with a film. By this analogy, we can assume that the discrete, destructive words and thoughts have a destructive impact on the individual and the society, while positive attitudes ennoble everything, particularly the human person.

*Holism: An Ideal Ontology for Liberal Political Democracy*

Holism appears to be an ideal ontology for politics of liberal democracy. This thesis can also be justified by the exception method. For the convenience of explanation, we arrange mentally the main ontologies in the following order: mechanical materialism, dialectical materialism, holism, dialectical idealism and mechanical idealism. Two extreme alternative ontologies – mechanical materialism and mechanical idealism, which state that the mechanically understood non-developing material world has been created by an ideal essence – are deterministic doctrines in which freedom is nonsense. The

middle two, approximated due to the dialect to holism and the alternative ontologies – the dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels, and Hegel's dialectical idealism consider freedom in terms of the person and his here-and-now situation. Therefore, they give a distorted doctrine of achieving freedom by means of the totalitarian state. In the philosophical literature, there is also a view that spiritual rebirth is possible only through Christian morality, particularly as proposed by G. Rormozer. In fact, liberalism can be a spirituality nourished not only in Christianity, but also in the doctrines of Buddhism, Taoism and *Raja Yoga*, based on the harmonization of the mind, the development of critical thinking skills and consciousness growth. Here, of course, it should be understood that any arbitrarily correct doctrine can be distorted. Considering the two approaches to liberalization – the actor-oriented and the institutional – in terms of holism, it should be recognized that the actor-oriented approach, focused on democratic actors, is the correct approach. Understanding the essence of holism should facilitate the development of a democratic outlook in actors. According to John Dewey, the institutional approach facilitates democracy by making mere external changes. However, it must be noted that institutional changes though they may add conveniences and comforts to life, but they cannot bring about significant moral improvements.<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps, the most striking social liberal, who expressed holistic ideas to a certain degree, was John Dewey. Being an ideological successor of Charles Peirce's and William James's pragmatism, Dewey appeared to be a genius of situational and process philosophy. He considered reality as the process/becoming, not reducible to an ideal world, nor to the fixed laws of existence. In this reality, operating by stiffened concepts, judgments and conclusions is ineffective. Dewey is congenial with holism, approving the concept of the present – the here-and-now existence. He believed that the democratization of society must start with the democratization of education. Moralistically claiming the need of education and self-education of a moral personality, Dewey did not understand the important idea of holistic-Socratic thought: all the virtues are born from a good soul. John Dewey wrote: "When the ego is treated as

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. J. Dewey: *Reconstruction in Philosophy: Human Problems* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920), p. 196.

something self-sufficient, so God himself commanded to defend the view that in the framework of the general reform only ethical adjustments in the individual are important."<sup>15</sup> Correcting the philosopher, we can say that it is not necessary to regard the ego as something self-sufficient. From holism's point of view, the ego being a surface layer of consciousness is rooted in the spirit, which is the deeper level of consciousness, where all people are brothers/sisters. Appeals to the ego which does not know its deep foundations to be moral and useful are of little effect. It is more natural, as a trans-personal psychologist P. Russell claimed, to combine the suggestion of moral precepts with calm breathing and deep consciousness. Consciousness balanced due to holistic thoughts and practices and striving for spiritual freedom is an ideal subject of political freedom. Basic principles of liberalism – liberties, equality and justice – quite naturally fit into the consciousness of a spiritually free person.

### **Conclusion**

Liberalism and holism are positive perspectives and attitudes that favor the development of an individual and a society. They both aim at development and freedom. Holism ennobles the human spirit and liberalism ennobles the spirit of the community. Holism, as a spiritual doctrine, has oriental roots and affirms the idea of Buddhism's nature of consciousness. Liberalism, as a western political movement having its basis in Christian thought, speaks more about economic, political and legal freedoms. Liberalism and holism complement each other, which the etymology of the word "liberalism" and the understanding of the spirit's essence as freedom created by Hegel testify. Both doctrines encourage a person to find the truth in himself/herself. The understanding of self-worthiness and the mutual complementing nature of social liberalism and holism can help to strengthen both cultural trends that contribute to personal development. Besides, understanding the complementarity of liberalism and holism should promote the number and quality of the agents of democratization. Holistic doctrines and practices may contribute to the integrity and development of spiritual maturity in citizens, their non-estrangement from the personal spiritual level of consciousness, from other people, their country, the planet and the

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*



whole universe. Their joint efforts in the development of internal and external freedom can provide the spiritual energy necessary for the creation of the civil society and the constitutional state.



## ***Imago Alterius* as an Orientation of the Cross-Cultural Dialogue and Communication**

LIUBOV IVANKINA<sup>1</sup>

### **Introduction**

This chapter points to the role of the significant other in any type of cross-cultural interaction. *Imago Alterius* has acquired a specific meaning in today's new cultural and space-like dimension. In it, the exchange of cultural values becomes the integral part of the socio-cultural situation. Besides, the interaction among diverse cultures becomes a prerequisite for the existence of one's own culture. *Imago Alterius* is a borderline between the acceptance of the other and individualization of one's own right before the other. The role of the other in our life is well known. Hence, we need to find the ways to solve the fundamental contradiction between individualism and altruism. A. Adler was convinced that the true and inevitable compensation of natural human frailties is connected to the realization of social interest. From the first day of life, a person becomes a part of the interpersonal situation and remains a part of the social field during his whole life. Each person's world possesses a center of its own – the *ego* – in relation to which the significance of everything else is defined. A person is open to the other as a source of meanings. Acting for his own interests, a person encounters the interests of other people, which he often does not understand. Hence, there is the necessity of synchronizing the actions of the subjects, who do not understand each other. Thus, the notion of *Imago Alterius* can play a significant role in interpersonal communication, and thereby define the initial stage of the emerging relationships among people.

Having briefly considered the meaning of *Imago Alterius* and its influence in the interpersonal context, we attempt to show the connection between knowledge about oneself and the other in the first section. Elaborating on the *ego-alter* theory, this section clearly points out that the image of a person's *ego* depends greatly on the

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<sup>1</sup> National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University, Tomsk, Russia.

image of the significant *alter*, who has had an influence on the former. This implies the presence of the *Imago Alterius* at every human, cultural and cross-cultural interaction. The second section expounds on this point by considering the *Imago Alterius* as a conceptual program of human life influencing the interpersonal interaction between representatives of different cultures. The third section speaks of the types of relations and orientations in actions directed towards the other and their consequences in the understanding of one's personality, the cross-cultural paradigm, and interaction among cultures. The conclusion, applying this concept to the Eurasian Frontier, speaks of the necessity of the proper formation of *Imago Alterius*. For, with its help a person determines the cultural space with which he identifies both and differs from others. This, in turn, helps him to understand and accept the other and his/her culture in their uniqueness. We begin by considering the relation between knowledge about oneself and the other.

#### **Connection between Knowledge about Oneself and the Other**

Relatedness of one's knowledge about oneself to the other has been accepted as true long ago. According to P. Mérimée, the key to *Imago Alterius* lies in us because the other people serve as the measure and the benchmark of a person's relationship with himself. The better we know and feel ourselves, the better we can understand the other person, appreciate his position, and empathize with the other. An ideal representation of a person to another – the otherness of someone to the other – is the phenomenon of reflected subjectness. The phenomenology of reflected subjectness presupposes an interpersonal influence. Its origin is the actual image of another person, which an individual emulates in the context of direct interaction among individuals. This can also happen in the context of social and cultural stereotype of persons belonging to a particular group. A reflected subjectness of the significant *Alterius* is inalienable from the *ego* of a person. The *ego* and the *Alterius* are two centers of a mythological system that organizes the life of a person, his survival and his collaboration with others. The transfer of *ego* to the *Imago Alterius* and the subjectivity of the image of the person apprehended – though not always reflected – is a central step in the process of composing a given image. According to the *ego-alter* theory, it is difficult for a person to look at oneself from outside. This results in

the duality of apprehending another person that assumes an opening of the essence of either one or the other during this process.

The markers that differentiate oneself from the other are not set for good, but manifest a territorial, individual, and historical heterogeneity. The differences between the markers of the understandings of oneself and the other depend on the social function and prehistory of a certain individual. According to Y. M. Lotman, one of the main mechanisms of the semiotic individuality is a border – the space defined as *ours, his/her, cultural, safe or harmonically organized*. It is opposed to *their-space, somebody else's, hostile, dangerous or chaotic*.<sup>2</sup> *Imago Alterius* is composed of the variety of subjective assessments and preferences, which, in turn, affect the individuals involved. Every new social contact changes the idea of a person about himself, and his system of such ideas is constantly forming. Conscious behavior is the result of a person's ideas about himself, formed on the basis of his communication with the others rather than his manifestation of what he really is. People around us give a standard for comparison and assess all in accordance with this model: they ascribe traits and consolidate all from the point of view of the social benefit. A man masters a system of assessment oriented towards society rather than a personality. The assessment benchmarks can be subdivided into four groups based on the degree of depth into the person's system of senses and individuality. The first is the social benchmark which aims at the other according to concepts of the *right or wrong*. The second assesses persons based on whether a person is in *conformity with or not in conformity with the standard*. The third type of assessment is based on the moral benchmark of *good or evil*. This and the previous two imply some standard and adherence to it. Besides, they are more significant because they make one responsible for the choice of his/her philosophy of life. The last is the psychological/ personality benchmark that is oriented towards "*I feel*", "*I want*", "*I can*", and "*I think*". Here, one realizes for himself that everything that happens to him always happens in relation to the significant other. This implies the presence of *Imago Alterius* at every human and cultural interaction, to which we turn our attention in the next section.

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Y. M. Lotman: *Vnutri myslyashich mirov. Chelovek – tekst – semiosfera – istoria* (Moskva: 1996), s. 175. Cf. also Y. M. Lotman: *Inside the Thinking Worlds. Man – Text – Semiosphere – History* (Moscow: 1996), p. 175.

### **Presence of the *Imago Alterius* in Every Definite Interactive Activity**

Interpersonal relationships imply definite interaction among persons. K. Jaspers defines communication as a movement of individuals toward one another. It depends on the context of the interaction and its result. The *Imago Alterius* is a peculiar filter of trust-distrust, working in such way that the true information can turn to be unpleasant while the false one can be pleasant. Thus, the *Imago Alterius* sets a psychological readiness to act in a certain way. The socio-psychological aim of *Imago Alterius* is to facilitate or prevent the reception of information. This process is referred to by some authors as "fascination". The *Imago Alterius* is created on the basis of the impression which the other causes. Therefore, the assessment of the other and one's relationship with him are present in it. A favorable impression about a person leads to positive assessments and a positive image, while an unfavorable one causes negative assessments and images. Further, the perception of the other person includes the selection of traits based on the originally formed image, which acts as a regulator of the subsequent behavior in relation to the given person. Hence, understanding the other involves a penetration into the essence of the other and his individuality. Regarding the levels of one's understanding of the other's personality, we can speak of the surface or the more profound levels. The lower level understanding corresponds to a perception of only the external 'picture' of a person's actions without going deeper into his reasons and purposes. At the mid level understanding, we penetrate into the individuality of a person, analyzing some human traits, such as intellectual and temperamental attributes. The most profound level of understanding of a person includes discovering the purposes and reasons for his behavior, connection between certain actions and his personality as a whole, and the skills and abilities latent in him. The better one is able to know the other, empathize with and accept him, give and receive proper responses to each other in interactions – to that extent one has the higher level of understanding of the other.

Actually, *Imago Alterius* is a mythologous marker of the conceptual program of human life. It creates the situation of linguistic and cultural contrast, which, in turn leads to the formation of the stereotypes of a particular communicative behavior in terms of another language and cultural environment. Because of this, it is

obvious that the *Imago Alterius* influences the interpersonal interaction between representatives of different cultures. An individual who identifies himself through the discourse of his representatives draws a borderline of his own ethno-cultural space. According to G. Hofstede, an identical environment provides a person with identical experiences and opportunities. Besides, it fosters identical behavior in specific individualized forms of activity with various degrees of completeness and adequacy. This trait accentuates the problem of cross-cultural influence because common and universal bases are manifested not only in the dialogue of cultures, but also in specific forms and colors according to the individual positions of an *Imago Alterius*.

#### **Types of Relations and Orientations in Actions Directed Toward the Other**

According to F. Trompenaars and C. Hampden-Turner, there are five types of relations and orientations in actions directed toward the other. They are the following: universalism – particularism (rules – relations); collectivism – individualism (group – individual); neutrality – emotionality (range of explicit feelings); specific – diffusive (degree of involvement); and achievement – ascription (definition of a person's status).<sup>3</sup> For E. Hall, depending on the correlation between higher or lower-context messages that express information more or less explicitly, we can speak of high context culture and low context culture. In high context culture, the interpersonal relationships belong to intuition, situation, and traditions. Utterances made in high context cultures often cannot be understood on the basis of their proper linguistic signs. For interpreting such a culture we need not a narrow situational knowledge of the context, but a knowledge that is broad and culturo-logical. Typical high context cultures exist in a number of Asian and Arabic countries. The low context culture is characterized by the explicitly formalized interpersonal relations, strict phraseology and a semantic meaning that does not depend on situations or traditions. In this type of culture, business relationships imply an obligatory formalization of

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. F. Trompenaars and C. Hampden-Turner: *Natsionalno-kulturnye raslichia v kontekste globalnogo bisnesa* (Moskova: 2004), s. 35-40. Cf. also F. Trompenaars and C. Hampden-Turner: *National and Cultural Diversity in Global Business* (Moscow: 2004), pp. 35-40.

detailed contracts. In low context culture, information which is necessary for the appropriate interpretation of a certain expression is contained in the maximum verbalized form. Western countries and the U.S.A. serve as examples of low context culture.

The traits of these two types of cultures accentuate the problem of cross-cultural influence because not only the common and universal bases are shown in the dialogue of cultures, but also the specific forms and colors. This process stipulates an unapparent and graduate mastering of some culturally specific standards in the capacity of general, united, and cultural canons. It forms a broader and more profound context of a globalizing world in terms of which the traditional patterns and imperatives of interacting cultures are interpreted and reinterpreted. For V.A. Balhanov and S.S. Imehelova, trans-culture stands in opposition to multi-culture because the tendency of the growing specialization of diverse cultural *loci* overcomes isolation of national cultures and extends the field of over-cultural creativity.<sup>4</sup> These changes are directly connected with the modern processes of the globalizing world, in which it is necessary to reconcile one's own views with those of others in order to act resolutely and competently, and to accept the outer world. Tolerant attitude supports the aspirations for such reconciliation as a simultaneous acknowledgement of the universal rights and liberties, and the individuality of a person.

So long as axiological differentiations – such as danger and safety; useful and harmful; and one's own and someone else's – underlie the human vital activity in cross-cultural communication, the individual faces the evaluative stereotypes and pre-suppositions that significantly affect the beginning, execution, and consequences of communication. These stereotypes create the identical impressions about any representation of a social group needed to establish one's own and related behavior. The stereotypes, as a rule, are axiologically and emotionally marked. According to D. Matsumoto, the tendency to

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. V.A. Balhanov and S.S. Imihelova: "Missia intelligentsii v dialoge kultur XXI veka"; *Intelligentsia i vsaimodeystvie kultur: materialy VI mezhdunarodnoy nauchnoy konferentsii (Baykalskaya vstrecha): v 2 t. T. 1* (Moscow: Ulan-Ude, 2007), s. 135. Cf. also V.A. Balhanov and S.S. Imihelova: "Mission of the Intellectuals within the Dialogue of Culture of the 21st Century"; *Intellectuals and Interaction of Cultures: Materials of the 6th International Scientific Conference (Baikal Meeting)*, 26–29 November, 2007, vol. 1 (Moscow: Ulan-Ude, 2007), p. 135.



evaluate the world using one's own cultural filters is *per se* neither bad, nor good. This is the normal consequence of socialization and familiarization with culture.<sup>5</sup> One can only speak of either flexible or inflexible ethnocentrism. In the course of the socialization of the individual, the *Imago Alterius* marker delineates one's own border as a communicative personality. The *Imago Alterius* marking in terms of discursive behavior is shown in verbal expressions of evaluating the communicative behavior of a representative of the other culture. This evaluation can be both positive and negative. However, the fact of recognizing the *alterity* is invariable.

Dialogism is one of the directions of searching for overcoming subject-object dualism in modern culture. Dialogue is a process of self-expression and understanding the other person. If the result of a dialogue can be objectified with some sense of certainty, the dialogue process itself is not objectified, but its participants continue their formation, and hence cannot be objectified. Communication is the relational movement of the *ego* to the *alter* within the scope of ethno-cultural context. Communication assumes a multidimensionality of relations. It does not come to a dual relation of the *ego* and the other, but leads to overcoming dichotomic thinking. It unifies the subject and the object as equivalent values in terms of an interacting formation of intersubjectivity. Nevertheless, the traditional binary oppositions continue to exist both in consciousness and in culture.

Stereotyping singles out a simpler emotion, which brings together diverse elements and unites them into a definite idea. No matter how a person interprets the idea, it is important for him to comprehend its formality in the same way as others do and in line with a certain emotional pulse. A community with similarity of motivation and common emotional pulse to beat can create the illusion of authentic mutual understanding between people. A system – of images, prejudices, behavioral stereotypes, and ideological and emotional associative aims – forms an integrated social worldview, which, unlike the cultural worldview, excludes a dialogue and mutual understanding, substituting it for an illusion of understanding based on behavioral synchronization. If we consider culture as the space for intercommunication and dialogue, it discloses the authentic content

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. D. Matsumoto: *Psihologija i kultura* (Semptember: 2002), s. 74-75. Cf. also D. Matsumoto: *Psychology and Culture* (St. Petersburg: 2002), pp. 74-75.

of the personality. In such a situation, the worldview of the society while isolating a person alienates his personality and his social adaptation progresses. If this type of monologic paradigm finally supplants the dialogic approach, it will bring about the end of culture.

The adequacy of the worldview is impossible without the related images, produced by other participants of the situation, which stipulates the need for an existing general structures of understanding. Having its own borders, a life space of a certain individual is included in the multidimensional information, ties with the outer world, and becomes open and transparent. By sharing conventional meanings and models with other people, one gains a general cognitive orientation and intersubjectiveness, on the basis of which the cross-cultural dialogue becomes possible. For cross-cultural dialogue, people involved in the dialogue process require confidence. One attains confidence by cultivating a positive personality, having proper social aims, and being conscious of the images of those with whom he is communicating. One must take care that his confidence leads him to deconventionalization of social relations. The ability and readiness to interpret the other adequately requires that a person possesses the ability to listen during the course of the interaction. This ability to listen allows identifying with the life situation of the partner in dialogue, and understands the reason for his/her specific action.

The idea that each personal existence includes an inborn ability to understand the other is proposed by Martin Heidegger. Emmanuel Levinas regards dialogue through the prism of the *ego*, accepting the other's authority, which generates a feeling of responsibility in him. Comparing the *ego* image and the generalized *Imago Alterius* on the basis of their equivalence of compatibility creates a sense of tolerance. The idea of the presence of the other in the human life brings about anticipation, which G. Garfinkel calls the quintessence of socio-cultural interaction directed to actions which people personalize. The quality of the concept of *Imago Alterius* depends on the level of development of self-actualization and self-conceptualization in a person. According to the psychologist G. Kelly, this personality construct is formed to help perceiving the other. This also can be designated by a concept of *similia similibus* attraction. Further, perception of the other person will include a choice of qualities based

on the originally formed image, which acts as a regulator of the subsequent behavior in relation to the given person. Adhering to these principles – which raise doubts about the validity of one's concepts, their absoluteness, and momentary exactness – fosters the adequacy of a person's perception of the other. In studying cross-cultural relations, any research must focus on one's own and the other's culture, values, traditions, and standards. It also must take into consideration one's readiness for adaptation and cross-cultural interactions. These are manifested in the personal and group dispositions in cross-cultural interaction as aims, formed in terms of a definite *ethmos*. The more self-consciousness is stressed – in the sense of egocentrism and ethnocentrism – and the individual is hyper identified, the stronger becomes the ethnic and cultural isolation.

### Conclusion

In the modern multi-polar world, the dialogue of cultures forms new cultural systems created according to the principle of a non-violent synthesis of diverse traditions and approaches. Therefore, while considering the mechanisms for generating meaningful understanding of other cultures, collision of structures and their dialogical inter-consolidation gain greater importance. This is specifically important for communication on territories, such as the Eurasian frontier. K. Popper, who addressed the idea of an open society, defined society in terms of the individual. In his opinion, it is the people and not the social institutions that are responsible for the development of society. As persons are subject to the life activity of the society, change in the degree of openness of their subjective world is capable of significantly affecting communication forms, structures, functions of the information, communication processes in society, and the social self-organization itself. Thus, by the proper formation of the *Imago Alterius*, a person determines the cultural space, with which he identifies himself, and correspondingly designates that cultural space by which he differs himself from others. It is in cross-cultural dialogue that the ability to accept the other in his/her uniqueness is demonstrated.



## The Ecological and Cultural Aspects of the Eurasian Frontier: The Baikal Region

LARISA MANTATOVA<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

The Baikal region occupies a special place in the very concept of the Eurasian frontier. The following reasons substantiate the above-said claim. The Baikal region serves as the meeting place of oriental and western civilizations. The East and the West are two civilizational opposites and the geopolitical poles of the world. The sustainable development of the humankind depends on their interaction. The Baikal region has the richest history of intercultural ties and dialogue of these two civilizations. Besides, the Xiongnu and Mongolian empires, and other political powers, such as the Rouran, Turkic, Uighur and Khitan khanates existed on this territory. These powers maintained broad international relationships both with the West and the East. The Baikal region lies at the crossroad of the most important global geopolitical pivots, such as the Christian and the Buddhist worlds, Russia and China, and Russia and the Asian-Pacific region. The Baikal region is the geographical cradle of numerous migrations that exercised significant influence on the inhabitants of the Eurasian continent. It is here, the special pattern of coexistence – characterized by the interaction between the oriental and western civilizations and peaceful cohabitation of various ethnicities – were formed. Again, it is in this region, that the historical synthesis of heterogeneous traditions and lifestyles occurred; cultural trends from Europe and Asia crystallized; and spiritual values of Buddhism and Christianity took root. The population of the Baikal region displays extremely peculiar ethnocultural traditions associated with the protection of nature and the maintenance of an optimum level of consumption. Thus, the experience in the Baikal region could provide a paradigm for

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dialogue among various cultures for the sake of the sustainable development of the world.

Having considered the significance of the Baikal region for the very concept of the Eurasian Frontier, for providing the paradigm for dialogue among nations, and for bringing about sustainable development of the world, the first and second sections of this chapter unfold the ecological and cultural aspects of the Baikal region respectively. The first section of the chapter, considering the ecological aspects of the Baikal region presents it as a sufficient reserve of ecological sustainability. Very significant in this regard is Lake Baikal, which maintains the eco-system of the region. The second section highlights the cultural aspects of the Baikal region. Socially and culturally the Baikal region was a natural and non-violent settlement, in which the indigenous population and the newcomers developed an "overlapping zone", based on confessional and ethnic tolerance. This, in turn, transformed the Baikal region into a sociocultural entity characterized by a shared regional identity and mentality. The focus of this mentality was not what differentiated the people, but what united them. The conclusion points to the family feeling that was prevalent among the people of Baikal region is not only significant for the unity of the Eurasian Frontier, but also to foster the spiritual unity of the entire humankind living on this planet. We now turn our attention to the ecological aspect of this region.

### **Ecological Aspects of the Baikal Region**

The Baikal natural territory possesses a sufficient reserve of ecological sustainability. Here large territories practically untouched by economic activity are still preserved. Besides, in this region, there are no signs of hyper-consumption and overpopulation which can negatively affect the ecosystem. The special place given to the Baikal region is based on the global significance of the protection of Lake Baikal, a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site. At its twelfth session held in Merida, Mexico, December 2-7, 1996, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee recognized Lake Baikal as an outstanding example of a freshwater ecosystem. The inclusion of Lake Baikal in the UNESCO World Heritage List expanded opportunities for better regional, national and global awareness about its outstanding value. On April 2, 1999, the State Duma of the Russian

Federation passed the Federal Law on the protection of Lake Baikal, which President Boris Eltsin signed on May 1, 1999. This law introduced a special mode of economic and other activities in the entire territory of the Baikal region, to be carried out in compliance with the principle of balanced solution of socioeconomic problems and objectives of protecting the unique ecological system of Lake Baikal. Besides, this law defines the legal frameworks for bringing about sustainable development in the Baikal region. The Plenary Assembly of the World Federation of United Nations Associations of 2003 held in Barcelona unanimously recognized Lake Baikal and the Baikal natural territory as a strategic territory of global significance within the frameworks of the United Nations' sustainable development programs.

Lake Baikal is the world's oldest lake. Its age is approximately 25 million years. It is also one of the largest lakes in the world. Its water surface area is comparable in size with such countries, such as Belgium, Denmark or the Netherlands. The length of Lake Baikal is 636 kilometers, width ranges from 27 to 80 kilometers, and the coastline stretches for over two thousand kilometers. The local Russians call Lake Baikal the "Sacred Sea". The Buryat-Mongols call it the "Ocean of the Universe." There is a scientific hypothesis that Lake Baikal is an incipient ocean based on the fact that Lake Baikal's shores move apart with the speed of about 2 centimeters per year. Lake Baikal is the world's deepest lake. Nowadays, its deepest depression goes down 1637 meters. At any moment this record depth may be surpassed because the lake is situated in a very active tectonic zone. Lake Baikal is the world's purest natural reservoir of fresh drinking water. It concentrates 20 % of the world's fresh water resources – 23,000 cubic kilometers. It was calculated that the depression of the lake may accommodate the water of all the great lakes together. Filling in this depression would require the entire annual run-off of all rivers of the world. Hence, Lake Baikal is sometimes called "the planet's well." According to the laboratory studies, the water of Lake Baikal is of very high quality. Though it contains very few suspended mineral solids and particles, and a tiny amount of dissolved organic matter, it contains a lot of oxygen. Consequently, the content levels of heavy metal and organochlorine pollutants are three to six times lower in comparison with the international drinking water quality standards. The Lake Baikal

water is the “water of life” – biologically balanced macro and micro-elements. It complies with the modern international requirements of the highest quality water from Switzerland and the requirements of the World Health Organization.

Lake Baikal is one of the geographic centers of the origin of biological species. Until now over 2600 various species have been discovered in Lake Baikal, 84 % of which are endemic species found only there. For instance, the transparent Baikal oil fish – *comephorus* – lives only in Lake Baikal. With its biodiversity, Lake Baikal far surpasses not only inland lakes, but also some seas, such as the Azov Sea, the White Sea and the Baltic Sea. The ecosystem of Lake Baikal boasts a unique combination of various flora and fauna with geological objects having a great significance for preservation of the earth’s genetic resources and understanding of the planet’s biological and geological evolution. The thickness of sediment beds in some parts of Lake Baikal reaches ten kilometers. The information about climate changes and the 25-30 million year geological history of the continent are encoded in the benthic deposits of the lake. Lake Baikal is a phenomenon of natural history, whose magic spiritual impact on all human life is hard to overestimate. Highlighting this point, Valentin Rasputin states:

For a long time the worshipping of Lake Baikal was universal: in some people it primarily appealed to mystical feelings, in others – to aesthetic feeling, while in the others to practical reasons. One is stunned by the view of Lake Baikal because it is too majestic for one’s perception. Lake Baikal was not situated in the place where anything like it could be found; indeed it was not something usual but appealed to a human soul in a manner different from the generic “impersonal” nature. It was something special, unusual and exclusive. Glorious and sacred is Lake Baikal for its miraculous vivifying power and the spirit of timeless and unchangeable native grandeur and secret potency.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, Lake Baikal is the symbol of nature’s transcendental greatness, its spiritual essence, stability and eternity. The preservation of

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<sup>2</sup> V. G. Rasputin: *Sibir’, Sibir’...* (Irkutsk: Artizdat, 2000), p. 68.



Lake Baikal for the contemporary and future generations of people – as a global source of pure drinking water, as a natural monument with its unique biodiversity, and as a phenomenon of cosmic scale – is one of the historical missions of the peoples of the Baikal region.<sup>3</sup> The protection of Lake Baikal is truly the basis of the axiological consciousness of the peoples of the Baikal region. This mentality of the people of the Baikal region is of special interest for the concept of the Eurasian frontier. It is the product of a cultural symbiosis that crystallized over the centuries of economic and social contacts among people of various nationalities. This is "contact mentality" that allows the Baikal people to live in peace with people belonging to different cultures and ethnicities. This recognizes achievements of the people of other cultures and their right to be themselves. This leads to a consideration of the cultural aspects of the Baikal region.

### **Cultural Aspects of the Baikal Region**

The Baikal region displays the ethno-cultural traditions of its indigenous peoples and is congenial to the ethics of sustainable development. According to Area Studies specialists, the Russian settlement in the Baikal region was an essentially natural and non-violent social act, not brought about by war and conquests. Those who came into the region as convicts or by the order of the sovereign eventually developed a readiness and ability to change and adapt their perception of the alien culture. The indigenous population – the Buryats and the Evenks – also developed a capability to perceive and understand the cultures of the newcomers. In a word, both sides found an "overlapping zone" in their perception of the other. This, in turn, brought about a right mind-set that led to confessional and ethnic tolerance.<sup>4</sup> In a certain sense, the Baikal region may be considered a model of a "contact civilization" formed within the framework of the Eurasian frontier.

The indigenous peoples of the Baikal region – the Buryats and the Evenks – are not self-sufficient sociocultural entities outside the Russian civilization. They are carriers of the same cultural and civilizational model as the Russians. Similarly, the Russians absorbed

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. V. Mantatov and L. Mantatova: "Baikal"; *Global Studies Encyclopedia* (Moscow: Raduga, 2003), pp. 38-41.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. K. K. Vasil'eva and S.A. Mel'nitskaya: *Mentalitet sotsiokul'turnykh obshchestv Zabaikal'skogo kraya* (Chita: ChitGU, 2008), p. 162.

the foundations of existence of the indigenous peoples of the Baikal region, their achievements and lifestyles. As a result, a sociocultural entity – characterized by a shared regional identity and mentality – was formed in the region. The experience of the Baikal region suggests that in the course of the formation of a national-cultural policy, it is necessary to combine the “advantage of being different” with the fact that the entire humankind is essentially similar and united. In other words, the attention should be focused not only on the things that make people different, but also on the things uniting them. This particular mind-set forms the ethical and sociocultural universals of the people of the Baikal region.

### **Conclusion**

We realize that people are “one family”, living in a shared house – the planet earth. We need the spiritual unity of the entire humankind on the basis of universal responsibility for everything living on the earth. The United Nations Earth Charter reads: “The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence for the mystery of being, gratitude for the gift of life, and humility regarding the human place in nature.”<sup>5</sup> The deeper we move into human existence, the more we approach each other. The experience of the Baikal region confirms this spiritual truth.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.earthcharterinaction.org>.

## **Ethnic Contradictions and Political Conflicts in the Globalized World: Reasons and Solutions**

ALEKSANDR BOLDONOV & YURI ROMANOV <sup>1</sup>

### **Introduction**

Since the beginning of third millennium, the process of globalization has affected all aspects of human activity. It has transformed the traditional systemic political order. Besides, it has contributed to the emergence of a phenomenon often referred to as "the reorientation and reorganization along a local-global axis."<sup>2</sup> Thus, the peculiarity of the globalization process lies "in the empirically ascertainable scale, density and stability of regional-global relationship networks and their self-definition through the mass media, as well as of social spaces at a cultural, political, economic and military level."<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that the phenomenon of globalization has two angles. It helps solve many present-day issues, but is capable of not only exacerbating old problems, but also creating new ones.

In this context, the first section of the chapter considers the nexus of ethnic contradictions to international terrorism in the globalized world. The second section establishes that global political conflicts are, in fact, the manifestations of diverse ethnic differences and contradictions. The third section deals with separatism as the consequence of such ethnic contradictions and political conflicts. Further clarifying the notion of separatism, this section elaborates on its nature, causes and types in the context of Europe because Russia is considered a European nation. The fourth section attempts to give some solutions to dismantle separatist tendencies and outlooks, which, in turn, can lead to the end of political conflicts and ethnic contradictions. The conclusion highlights the need to improve the socio-economic conditions, enhance regional cooperation among

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<sup>2</sup> Ulrich Beck: *What is Globalization?* (Moscow: 2001), p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

sovereign states, form an international legal framework, and create anti-crisis centers, thereby bringing about the end of political conflicts and separatist outlook of many ethnic groups. Now, we turn attention to the nexus between ethnic contradictions and international terrorism in the context of globalization.

### **Ethnic Contradictions and International Terrorism in the Context of Globalization**

Terrorism is a complicated phenomenon. It occurs in various states in different ways, depending on their cultural and religious traditions, social structure and many other factors. Hence, it is extremely difficult to give a general definition of the term "terrorism". Nevertheless, we can speak of a number of meanings and general features of terrorism, which may pertain to its diverse manifestations. Terrorism ethically justifies the act of violence; it points to the mythologized consciousness of the terrorists; and it appeals to society and its problems. The new essence of terrorism of the late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 21<sup>st</sup> century is defined by the term "international". Researchers from Russia and other countries have linked international terrorism with its repercussions on the globalizing world. For example, the "transition period phenomenon" and construction of the "new world order" are clearly based on the formula "those who are not with us are against us."

Thus, according A. Neklessa, the social and political transformation of the world context entails international terrorism. He links it to the redistribution of power from the national to the global level: the emergence of new subjects of power, such as the global power centers and international regulatory authorities; the transformation of the elites; the emergence of a new social community; the Global North and the concurrent globalization of the alternative space of the Global South; the merger of political and economic functions for strategic cooperation; global governance; the diminishment of political power of the nation-states; and the reduction of the role of public policy and representative bodies of power.<sup>4</sup> On this point the German sociologist Ulrich Beck comments:

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. A. I. Neklessa: "Upravlyayemyy khaos: dvizheniye k nestandartnoy sisteme mirovykh otnoshenii"; *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya*, vol. 9 (2002), pp. 103-104. Cf. also A. I. Neklessa: "Controllable Chaos: Movement

Global terrorism is a type of transnational terrorism, which is not limited to Islamic terrorism. Rather it can align itself with any possible goal, ideology and fundamentalism. On the other hand, a distinction has to be made between the terrorism of national freedom movements that are nationally and territorially bound, and that of the new, transnational terrorist networks which act without any territorial affiliations and across national boundaries and manage, as a consequence, to cancel the national language of war and the military with one stroke."<sup>5</sup>

E. Satanovskiy, the President of the Institute of Israeli and the Middle Eastern Studies, agrees that globalization, having changed the global economy, politics and global security, has made the contemporary international terrorism global as well.<sup>6</sup> Contemporary terrorism has undergone a number of changes and is inseparable from the processes of globalization, which has created a unified international economic space. The majority of states cooperate to various degrees in the field of production of material values. In politics, we witness the emergence "of additional modes of organization going beyond its own borders: transnational, international, macro-regional, national, micro-regional, municipal, and local. This ladder of administrative levels is being crisscrossed by functional networks of corporations, international organizations and non-governmental organizations."<sup>7</sup> Hence they have great opportunities to transfer significant information and financial resources across the world. All such non-governmental organizations play, consequently, a big role in the "creation of the international citizenship legal order ... They embody institutionalization of the community that becomes more and more conscious of its global solidarity and responsibility."<sup>8</sup>

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toward a Nonconventional System of World Relations"; *World Economy and International Relations*, vol. 9 (2002), pp. 103-104.

<sup>5</sup> Ulrich Beck: *What is Globalization?*, p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. E. Y. Satanovskiy: "Globalizatsiya terrorizma i ee posledstviya"; *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn*, vols. 9-10 (2001), p. 18. Cf. also E. Y. Satanovskiy: "Globalization of Terrorism and its Consequences"; *International Life*, vols. 9-10 (2001), p. 18.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 123-124.

<sup>8</sup> A.V. Nazarchuk: *Etika globaliziruyushchegosya obshchestva* (Moskva: 2002), p. 295. A.V. Nazarchuk: *Ethics of the Globalizing Society* (Moscow: 2002), p. 295.

However, the transnational corporations that emerged as a result of globalization have led to the collapse of national economies. The situation is complicated by the fact that globalization has not only failed to remove tension in political and social conflicts, but also has deepened and exacerbated it. "Never has the humanity had such opportunities to enrich the inner life of men, but never has the general intelligence level of men fallen as low as in the present day."<sup>9</sup> Thus, the globalization of international terrorism and the powerful destructive forces behind it have become an invariable factor of economic, social and political instability; military conflicts; and the militarization of the social and international situation in different regions of the world. The new world order is essentially a new scheme of the unipolar world, where each state and ethnic group should know its place and role when pursuing strategic goals of certain transnational, cosmopolitan and "supranational" forces. States of the so-called "golden billion", primarily the G8 countries, are trying to attain this objective. Thus, international terrorism is a product of the developing and globalizing modern social and political world. Therefore, it is not only universal, but also a qualitatively new socio-political phenomenon, posing a real national, regional and global threat with its specific dynamics. Hence, globalization by making the world a global village hurts legitimate rights of smaller ethnic groups economically, socially and politically. Thus, unresolved ethnic contradictions lead to political conflicts and international terrorism is an offshoot of such contradictions and conflicts. In the next section, we move on to analyze further how the ethnic contradictions, in fact, lead to global political conflicts.

#### **Ethnic Contradictions: The Basis of Global Political Conflicts**

According to O. A. Belkov, terrorism is a social phenomenon that represents ideologies, policies and social practices of the forces of the society – such as the individuals, the groups and the institutions – choosing illegal and forcible ways to change the state and social

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<sup>9</sup> I. A. Gobozov: "Krizis sovremennoy epokhi i filosofiya postmodernizma"; *Filosofiya i Obshchestvo*, vol. 2 (2000), pp. 80-98. I. A. Gobozov: "Modern Age Crisis and Philosophy of Postmodernism"; *Philosophy and Society*, vol. 2 (2000), pp. 80-98.

system.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the various oppressed social, ethnic or racial groups strive to change their status by all available methods and means, including terrorism. Hence, the problem of moral justification for such actions arises. Here, self-aggrandizement of an individual or a group and division of people based on the ethical principle takes place. We should also not exclude the symbolic nature of terrorist activities, when such groups seek to impose on people only what they consider as the correct systemic order for the society.

Similarly, new entities – transnational corporations, non-governmental organizations and voluntary transnational associations – have appeared on the international scene as the result of the globalization process. Under the pressure of these powerful non-governmental groups, there occurs a “retreat of the state and privatization of politics ... which pushes politics and state sovereignty to the background.”<sup>11</sup> Moreover, developed countries make attempts to unify culturally the population of developing countries, which, combined with encroachment on the state sovereignty of these countries, elicits a backlash. This is proved by developments in Afghanistan, Iraq, and North African countries, such as Egypt, Tunisia, and others.

From the above-said unresolved contradictions emerge the sharpest and most unsettled questions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – the ethnic issue of the right of nations and nationalities to self-determination. The question arises not only in developing countries, but also in Europe, North America, and in the countries of post-socialist Russia. On a global scale the ethno-national problem is already becoming a real threat to international security and stability. The ethnic issue arises on the global scale due to the confrontation of two trends. The first trend is the movement of nations for self-determination and independence. The second one is the striving for integration, the creation of large multi-ethnic communities and the formation of powerful “super nations.” Both of these trends are objective and they both are enshrined in international law as “the right of nations to

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. O. A. Belkov: “Mezhdunarodnyy terrorizm – slova i smysly”; *Vlast'*, vol. 2 (2002), p. 18. Cf. also O. A. Belkov: “International Terrorism – Words and Meanings”; *Power*, vol. 2 (2002), p. 18.

<sup>11</sup> *Mezhdunarodnyi terrorizm i pravo: Ref. sb. INION RAN* (Moscow: 2002), pp. 63-64. *International Terrorism and Law: INION RAN Papers Collection* (Moscow: 2002), pp. 63-64.

self-determination” and “the preservation of territorial integrity of states”. A general question about the best way conducive to the democratization of international and interethnic relations makes no sense in this context. Neither independent development of nations, nor their cooperation within “a super nation” can be successful without taking into consideration other economic and political factors. However, the existing instability forces people to make a choice. Often they choose to be part of their ethnic identities and fight for the self-determination of their ethnic groups. This tendency to opt for group identity is often referred to as “separatism”. In the next section, we briefly consider separatism as the consequence of ethnic differences and contradictions.

### **Separatism: Consequence of Ethnic Differences**

To consider separatism as the consequence of ethnic differences and contradictions among different ethnic groups, we will analyze its nature, causes and types in this section.

#### *Nature and Causes of Separatism*

Separatism is a political movement that aims to separate a part or an entire territory from a state and create an independent state. It also can find expression granting wider autonomy to a part of a country. Ethnic separatism is a complex and long-term problem that cannot be settled at once by political or military action. Modern separatism, as a political program and as an act of violence, misinterpret the aforementioned principle of self-determination by requiring that each ethnic group have an independent state of its own. Yet, neither legal thought, nor national laws and international legal documents contain such an idea. Hence, we cannot construe the right of ethnic groups to self-determination in the existing system of states and create a system of governance without prejudice to the rights of the rest of the population. For ethnic groups, self-determination means the right to participate in a broader socio-political process, while separatism is secession from the existing system or its destruction for the sake of independent statehood for a separate ethno-cultural community. The ongoing social and economic instability proves to be the main source that fuels escalation of ethnic extremism in a country. On the one hand, it is accompanied by social differentiation, bitter struggle for power, and increasing social and



ethnic contradictions. On the other hand, it is connected with low efficiency and often the inefficiency of the state apparatus and law enforcement agencies to provide reliable mechanisms of legal and social protection of the population.

All these eventually leads to growing attempts to resolve emergent contradictions and conflicts by force, both by governments and opposition groups. The analysis of wars and conflicts of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century allows us to mark out the following causes of separatism. First, mutual territorial claims of ethnic groups conditioned by the historical past of ethnic groups. Second, the indefinite or non-existent borders. Third, the new demarcation between peoples and ethnic groups. Fourth, the repatriation of a formerly exiled ethnic group to its historical homeland. Fifth, the arbitrary change of borders. Sixth, the annexation of the territory of an ethnic group by a neighboring state or partition of an ethnic group among different states. Based on these six causes of separatism the authors speak of six regional types of separatism present in different parts of the world.

#### *Types of Separatism*

Though the authors speak of six different types of separatism, we limit ourselves to the consideration of two types (by its social and cultural nature Russia is considered a European country).

#### West European Separatism

This type of separatism is found in Northern Ireland, Basque Country, Catalonia, Corsica, Flanders and Wallonia, the Faroe Islands, Northern Cyprus, Lombardy, and Trentino. It is characterized by prevalent ethno-confessional roots and socio-economic factors. Hotbeds of separatism in Europe have long been in a state of stable balance. Here, high social mobilization does not go beyond the limits of the "civilized" political struggle, except in Ulster, Corsica and the Basque Country. Generally, the aim of the West European separatists is not creation of an independent state, but the achievement of the widest possible ethno-cultural and politico-economic autonomy within the existing state borders. Most people, in both existing and potential hotbeds of separatism, do not usually consider vague prospects of independent existence attractive. Pragmatic evaluation of difficulties connected with transition to

independent statehood prevails over emotions. Due to the perception of their “small homelands” as parts of the united Europe, Europeans have acquired a complex identity.

#### East European Separatism

This type of separatism is found in Chechnya, Dagestan, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Transdniestria, Gagauzia, Crimea, Novorossiia, Kosovo and Metohija, Macedonia, Republika Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Transylvania and Carpatho-Ukraine. It embraces the former socialist countries of Eastern and Central Europe, including Russia and other new states created in the territory of the former U.S.S.R. The difference between this type of separatism and the West European separatism is clear from the recent – late 1980's to early 1990's – actualization of the main hotbeds of separatism in Eastern Europe. Thus, East European separatist movements strive for complete independence and not just for mere autonomy.

As a result, in Eastern Europe, there are several self-styled states even though they do not possess all the attributes of statehood. For example, the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic and Republika Srpska in Bosnia. Thus, the level of tolerance towards ethnic and confessional minorities here is much lower than in Western Europe. For this reason, the East European hotbeds of separatism are characterized by high level of violent activity, often leading to a great number of casualties among the combatants and civilians. The conflicts in the Caucasus and in the former Yugoslavia are a clear example of this phenomenon.

#### Solution to Separatism

We should also state that the peculiarities of the emergence and development of separatist hotbeds are influenced by their politico-geographical position. In this way, the issue of separatism cannot be settled on a precedent basis. However, we need to make an all-round effort to prevent separatist tendencies that emerge from ethnic contradictions and differences.

Firstly, we must take recourse to all the relevant international declarations and documents that can bring about changes in the global politics and relations between states. For instance, United Nations' Declaration of 1948 on “The Right of Peoples to Self-

Determination" that guarantees the legitimate claim for self-determination; and the "Helsinki Final Act of 1975 on Security and Cooperation in Europe" that affirms the inviolability of post-war borders in Europe. This is important to know these international declarations and apply them concretely in each context of separatism, so as to bring about an amicable settlement for ethnic contradictions and political conflicts.

Secondly, the determination of international criteria and grounds for the use of force in the settlement of global and local conflicts. The military force should not be used in solving ethnic issues. The use of brute force is unacceptable in pursuing political/economic interests of certain individuals/groups, irrespective of what humane goals we intend to achieve. It is the apparent idea of the security system at both regional and global levels. We must prefer the use of political methods of conflict resolution, such as dialogue, understanding each other's perspectives and arriving at a friendly settlement for the achievement of regional and global security. For this reason the struggle against ethnic separatism is declared by the United Nations as one of its top priorities.

### **Conclusion**

Thus, among the important objectives, there should be the improvement of the social and economic environment and regional cooperation between states in order to join efforts in the struggle against ethnic separatism in countries and regions considered to be the main sources of ethnic conflicts. Such cooperation may include formation of the international legal framework and creation of regional anti-crisis centers. The most important factor that must be featured in finding a solution to ethnic contradictions and political conflicts is that the world's countries should deal with this problem as a common problem that affects the world peace. For, only together can they achieve tangible results and put an end to the problem of ethnic and political conflicts.



## National Characters and Themes in the Russian Language: Buryat Literature

SVETLANA IMIKHELOVA<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Literary theorists consider the tendency to synthesize the peculiarities of the national perception regarding the traditions of the European and oriental cultures as one of the indicators of the development-level of Buryat literature and its viability. It results from the specific historical and geographic position of Buryatia at the “crossroads of cultures.”<sup>2</sup> This synthesis is most clearly manifested in the oeuvres of Russian-language writers, since they are much more responsive to the extraneous point of view and other national experience. At the same time, the constant context of a bilingual artist in a dialogical situation contributes the most to the manifestation of whole nation in a text. Hence, “without absorbing someone else’s we would not be able to think about what is ours; we would rest in what is ours not being able to assess its distinctness and actualize its character.”<sup>3</sup> On this point N. Nimbuev, one of the most illustrious representatives of this cohort of Buryat literature, comments: “I believe, it is more important for a non-Russian poet writing in Russian not to mimic the tradition of the Russian literature, but creatively to ... express the very national face and soul of his own people.”<sup>4</sup>

The system of constant and favorite national themes, motives, characters and a specific set of attributes that pass from one work to another allow speaking about their mental nature. This system may be singled out from the works of the Russian-language Buryat writers. However, the system of repetitions and variations of the

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<sup>2</sup> V. T. Naidakov: *Stanovlenie, razvitie i raspad buryatskoi sovetskoi literatury (1917-1995)* (Ulan-Ude: 1996), p. 94.

<sup>3</sup> M. N. Epshtein: *Paradoksy novizny: o literaturnom razviti 19-20 vekov* (Moscow: Sov. pisatel', 1988), p. 270.

<sup>4</sup> N. Nimbuev: *Strenozhennye molnii. Stikhi. Perevody. Proza* (Moscow: Galereya “Khankhalaev,” 2003), p. 6.

semantic material cannot be radically different from that of a writer expressing his or her “self” in their native language. According to scholars, the Buryat writers turn to the Russian language in order to get away from ethnic isolation under the conditions of imminent social modernization. This was begun during the 1920's and the 1930's, when the early Buryat writers passed the “psychological threshold of ethnic alienation,” by succumbing to the “charm of the social self-realization perspectives and the social mobility opportunities in a new, more vigorous society.”<sup>5</sup> This, in turn, overlapped the awakening of national and ethnic identity. The emergence of the Russian-language poets – Munko Saridak alias of B. Naidakov and Solbone Tuya alias of P. Dambinov on the social and cultural scene – has resulted in the manifestation of the unique law, which states that “upon entering into a certain cultural community a culture starts to cultivate its distinctness more vigorously.”<sup>6</sup>

Having established the significance of Buryatia at the crossroads of cultures and the ability of the Buryat literature to give expression to the ethnic and national cultures, we move on to consider various themes, both ethnic and national that are found in the writings of Buryat authors, poets and writers in the Russian language. Some of the themes considered are: the idea of socialism; the idea of freedom; the idea of the city; the idea of education, mysticism and nature; the idea of national Russian culture and ethnic Buryat culture; the idea of national Russian-language; and the idea of national image. The conclusion points to the desire of the Buryat authors in the Russian language to escape the boundaries of ethnic and national possibilities and interests. While they do not want to lose the past and the native, and their wish to be open to new horizons. Inspired by the dialogue of cultures, the Buryat literature will represent the ethnic and the national on the basis of the new personality of the artist, creatively moving into the context of the broadened consciousness of the new civilizational space that is universally and generally valid. We now

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<sup>5</sup> T. D. Skrynnikova, S. D. Batomunkuev and P. K. Varnavskii: *Buryatskaya etnichnost' v kontekste sotsiokul'turnoi modernizatsii (sovetskii period)* (Ulan-Ude: Izd-vo Buryat. nauch. Tsentra SO RAN, 2004), p. 200.

<sup>6</sup> Y. M. Lotman: *Russkaya literatura poslepetrovskoi epokhi i khristianskaya traditsiya* (Moscow: Gnozis, 1994), p. 205.

move to the theme of socialism and other themes as they find expression in Buryat literature.

### Buryat Literature and Idea of Socialism

Initially, the national art was welcomed as a “tool of the campaign and propaganda of the idea of socialism.”<sup>7</sup> The magic of new changes and preliminary successes in the cultural development of the Buryats had an impact on the oeuvres of M. Saridak and S. Tuya. The traditional cultural elements used by the artists did not contradict the new Soviet ideology. The political authorities emphasized the deeper integration of the individual national cultures into the all-Soviet socialist culture. According to them, for example, the Buryat culture which has become part of the Soviet culture should not assume that it could create its own national culture isolated from the Soviet culture. The goal was to develop the Buryat culture by linking it to the common Soviet proletarian culture.<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, the 1922 book of poems entitled *Tsvetostep* (*The Colored Steppe*) by S. Tuya and the 1920's poems by M. Saridak exemplify the integration of the young literature into the more developed one. It certainly reflected the excitement of the new changes. However, it also embodied the age-old spirit of people's life, the traditional lifestyle of the nomads, and the scenery of the vast steppe. In his poem entitled “Oktyabr'skoe” (“October's”) written in 1928, M. Saridak responds to the anniversary of the revolution as follows:

By the unbreakable will of the workers  
 We constructed a swarm of plants  
 Multilingual columns / March as a close-knit family.  
 A nomad rides apace  
 On a red-legged racer...  
 The steel racer gallops frisky / and tears vast fields apart...  
 The steel racer, / Swinging mane  
 Speeded up his starry gallop.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> P. Dambinov: “O natsional'no-khudozhestvennom stroitel'stve Buryatii”; *Buryatievedenie*, p. 180.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. “Tretii s'ezd Sovetov BMASSR (25 marta – 3 aprelya 1927 g.)” (Verkhneudinsk: 1927), p. 26.

<sup>9</sup> *Antologiya Buryat-mongol'skoi sovetskoi poezii* (Moscow: Goslitizdat, 1959), pp. 185-186.

Though the image of the “steel and red-legged racer” is perfectly compliant with the new worldview of the members of the multilingual family, it is quite traditional, since the horse was very singular for the nomadic people. All objects of the socialist world in the literature of that period, such as tractors, trains, airplanes and the like entered the already existing traditional steppe world, where horses graze, grasses breathe and mountains soar up.

The same traits are found in S. Tuya’s oeuvres. Critics mostly accuse him of poetizing an idyllic world of a patriarchal man of the steppe with a carefree gaze. Here, far from the noise, dust, outcry and moaning, in the eternal bliss of simplicity quietly the yurts and herds sink; the soul is without grief and deceit; and all luxuriates are warm in the caress of the sun. Thus, the idealization of the world by the patriarchal man is the subject of debate in M. Saridak’s poems.<sup>10</sup> In his poem entitled “K Sayanam” (“To the Sayan Mountains”), he exclaims, referring to his native mountains: “How I pity, I pity the Sayans / and yurts and quiet valleys... / you are strangled in a drunken buzz / By the giant named Iron.” Though this feeling is expressed not without the influence of the Russian poetry, it is, nevertheless, highly unusual for a young poet to enthusiastically accept the Soviet “new soil”. It is the theme of longing for a traditional and familiar past that causes the outrage of the critics who respond to this poem from the political standpoint.<sup>11</sup> A hankering for the past with its quietness, dear warmth and humaneness looks totally outdated in that historical period.

### **Buryat Literature and Idea of Freedom**

Later a theme of freeing a man from the tight limits of an old ethnic world and acquisition of a new space gains foothold and begins to prevail in poetry. G. Dagurov, a Russian-language poet, expresses the theme of freedom as follows:

I live not in a dull, smoky yurt  
But in a light house in a garden.

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. G. Dagurov: “Munke Saridak (Zametki o tvorchestve)”; *Kul'tura Buryatii* (Verkhneudinsk: 1932), p. 23.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. V. T. Naidakova, ed.: *K 100-letiyu so dnya rozhdeniya Munko Saridaka – Budazhapa Naidakova* (Ulan-Ude: “Izdatel'skii dom ‘Buryaad Unen, 2009), pp. 99-102.



And with the two hundred million people  
I have come to know the beauty of a free life.<sup>12</sup>

The incorporation of a man into the contemporary life, where there is no place for a familiar yurt is perceived by poets as an achievement rather than a loss.

The image of a yurt is preserved in the poetic texts for quite a long time as a symbol of the past and a common marker of conventionalism as opposed to the free new age – the “window, hewn into the world.” Yet, the attitude to the yurt and other national symbolic images remain ambivalent. Just as the past itself is ambivalent to the artist, so also the yurt cannot be univocal and hold only a negative sense of the past. That is why an existential feeling that transcends ideology shows through the gaps of ideological images and motives. The yurt serves as the symbol of the things past, negative and immovable in M. Saridak’s poems. Similarly, G. Dagurov’s poems speak of the yurt as dilapidated, dull, with cold hearth, blind, and smoky. Likewise, N. Damdinov’s works consider the yurt as old, black, full of holes, dark, smoky and sultry. However, all these three poets see the yurt as related to open space, motion and change. M. Saridak’s works particularly see the yurt as directly related to the youth, the song, and flying over the native land.

In 1922, S. Tuya, in his poem “Syn stepei” (“Son of the Steppes”), amalgamates steppe and yurt into a single entity in the mind of a lyrical character. It is expressed by the steppe kissing her daughter-yurt indulging her with full breasts.<sup>13</sup> Here, the spatial image-metaphor is closely linked to the ritual life of the people. Many customs and traditions of the Buryats are associated with childbirth, and the protection of the infant and his mother from the invasions of various evil spirits. The space of the yurt is always the family space. It is narrow and at the same time openly communicating with heaven (*Tengeri*) through the smoke flap. A certain ambivalence of the yurt image is obvious. Despite its archaic character, it symbolizes openness to space indicating a life of freedom.

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<sup>12</sup> G. Dagurov: *Tarasa. Stikhi raznykh let* (Ulan-Ude: Buryat. kn. izd-vo, 1963), p. 32.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. S. Tuya: “*Moya sovest’ chista*” (Ulan-Ude: Izd-vo Buryat. nauch. tsentra SO RAN, 1992), p. 28.

### **Buryat Literature and Idea of the City**

The theme of the city is also ambivalent. The city, being the reflection of the socialist productive life, displays the traditional and ritual component. However, the ritual of initiation into the new life introduces an individual life to the rhythms of the world harmony. The inner space of the yurt has its center – the hearth, the ritual and ontological content. Similarly the outer urban space structures the “large” space with a certain kernel in the center. In the urban sociocultural space, the main avenues and streets are that kernel. N. Nimbuev, in his poem "Vechernii Ulan-Ude", expresses the idea of the city as follows:

The songs fade away far across the Uda.  
On the avenues girls and lads  
Dance *yokhor* in the evenings.<sup>14</sup>

Here, the center is highlighted as a circle, since *yokhor* is traditional dance form, in which the dancers form a circle. It is a dance meant not only for entertainment in the traditional culture, but also for ritual purposes.

### **Buryat Literature and Idea of Education, Mysticism and Nature**

According to B. N. Tomashevskii, poetry is national in its rhythmic material and it is the material essence of art. The art materials are the very flesh of a word and verbalism.<sup>15</sup> However, everything is different in prose. In the Russian-language Buryat prose other accents are seen. The first Russian-language novel is *Poyushchie strely* (*The Singing Arrows*) written by A. Bal'buurov in 1961. Its subject matter is explicitly educational. It acquainted primarily the Russian readers with the peculiarities of the traditional Buryat lifestyle, Buryat ethnography and folklore. The protagonist of the novel named Dorondoev is a connoisseur and collector of Buryat relics. After meeting an exiled Russian revolutionary Kuznetsov, he explains to him many things from the world of the Buryat traditional settlement, its everyday life and spiritual culture. To quote the author on this point:

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<sup>14</sup> N. Nimbuev: "Vechernii Ulan-Ude"; *Pravda Buryatii*, July 17 (1966).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. B. V. Tomashevskii: "Stikh i proza"; *Stikhovedenie* (St. Petersburg: 1996), p. 45.

The host led Savelii Grigorievich to the yurt. Kuznetsov curiously examined this ancient construction, which preceded houses with all Central Asian peoples. Dark and aged, but carefully swiped walls. The roof cone black from smoke and made of shake with a smoke flap in the center. Four rounded poles support this cone. The yurt floor is well puddled ground...<sup>16</sup>

This method of introducing representatives of different cultures into a story of the meeting shows that A. Bal'burov was driven by a desire to set free from the mediation of an interpreter in the communication with the Russian audience. Although the protagonist is condemned by the author for staying apart from the revolutionary activity as the only possible occupation during the transition epoch, he embodies the function of an "interpreter", accompanying the reader into the cultural world of nomadic peoples and educating him/her about the life and activities of these people.

Besides the educational focus of this novel, the traditional Soviet historical, revolutionary, mystical and natural themes receive a specific national resolution in this novel, just as in other national literatures of the U.S.S.R. An ancient legend of the Buryat Khongodor tribe about the singing arrow and other legends produce a special atmosphere of interpenetration of the real, mystical and natural worlds. For instance, the tragic fate of Mani, the most poignant character of the novel, is viewed in combination with the ancient cults of the Sun and the Moon. The image of the Moon signifies the themes of grief, coldness and dismay. Thinking about female disenfranchisement, the author of the novel recalls the Buryat legend about a girl taken by the Moon. Scenes depict the connection of heroes with another religious-mythical world, which, to a large extent, determines their deeds. For instance, the death of Mani on a moonlit night indicates the same associative and image field. All these points to the period in history, during which the national literature begins to free itself from non-literary objectives, such as ideology, politics and enlightenment.

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<sup>16</sup> A. Bal'burov: *Poyushchie strely* (Ulan-Ude: Buryat. kn. izd-vo, 1984), pp. 62-63.

### **Buryat Literature and Idea of National and Ethnic Cultures**

This section expounds how the theme of Russian national culture and ethnic culture in the Russian literature. In the first part of this section we consider the national Russian culture while the second part will deal with ethnic Buryat culture.

#### *National Russian Culture*

Significant changes in the hierarchy of the national cultural elements took place during the Thaw. Significant traits of the national character were expressed in the Buryat poetry of the 1960's. "It is characterized by a certain very detailed and measured rhythm reflecting serenely calm and contemplative thought."<sup>17</sup> According to T.N. Ochirova, restraint in the expression of poetic emotion, lack of strain, striving for harmony of the inner and outer worlds, and complexity of distinguishing the subject-object relations, expressed the consciousness of an oriental man. Not many poets managed to preserve and express it in the non-native language with all its plentitude. Namzhil Nimbuev and Bair Dugarov declared the rural world to be their space, opposing it to the other world with its ties and relationships. The themes of nostalgia for the lost space and its traditional ethnic components once again emerge in the Buryat literature. For, the recently praised communist, social life and industrial existence leaned towards the native and the intimate. Here they displayed similarities with the poetry of the Russian-language poets, such as S. Tuya and M. Saridak, in which this nostalgia for the traditional was expressed. Yet, the very sense of melancholy of the Buryat poets of another generation turned into an existential metaphor "longing for a lost communal home, childhood language and lost, but reinvented folklore."<sup>18</sup>

Similarly, specific and vivid, feeling of longing for the ethnic culture was manifested in the Buryat prose and poetry of the 1970's-1980. For instance, this feeling becomes the fundamental life impulse for the protagonist-artist of V. Mitypov's novel *Dolina bessmertnikov* (*The Valley of the Immortals*) written in 1975. The following words are

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<sup>17</sup> T. N. Ochirova: "Postoyanstvo ili tsena ustoichivosti i bunta"; *Zemli moei molodye golosa* (Ulan-Ude: Buryat. kn. izd-vo, 1981), p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> S. Boim: *Obshchie mesta. Mifologiya povsednevnoi zhizni* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2002), p. 299.

best suited to B. Dugarov's speaker and the protagonist of V. Mitypov's novel:

Nostalgia is an attempt to turn back time and overcome its irreversible flow, turning the historical time into the mythological space. However, the very need for nostalgia is historical. It may be a defensive reaction and a response to break-ups of a transitional historical period. In the past, nostalgia seeks such stability, which is nonexistent at present, longing for lost local dialects and a slow time flow.<sup>19</sup>

The former symbols of one's own world – the mountains, a yurt, the blue dome of the sky, vastness of the steppe, galloping horses, steppe grasses like *aya-ganga* (mother-of-thyme), *sarana* (yellow daylight) and wild rosemary – come back again. These traditional metaphors become symbols of home and comfort. They are the means to escape from overpopulation and the urban facelessness into their own world as a model macrocosm of a steppe – the sky, a yurt, the *cosmos* (*Tengeri*), and the sun – an hearth. The researchers link the artistic orientation toward everything national with the emergence, in the 1970's, of the new phenomenon of national intellectual and artistic elite – the second-generation townfolk. "They are not blood-related with the village and traditional forms of being, and quite often do not speak their native tongue, a phenomenon of culture and its translator."<sup>20</sup> It is possible to speak about the changes in the identity discourse of the Buryats showing through in the works of the Russian-language Buryat writers, as representatives of urban culture. These changes are again connected to the ambivalent essence of their system of imagery.

The realities of urban life in the poetry of Namzhil Nimbuev, such as the waterspout blooming with white flowers and the tram cable melody can hardly be interpreted as traditional. An image of a late night tram corresponds to the quickly changing mood of the speaker. "In a night rolled like a water-melon / a tram, bursting with laughter" or "...on the arc of rotation a lonely autumn tram creeps out like a die-hard stump of a glowing grub." However, the

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 297.

<sup>20</sup> T. D. Skrynnikova, S. D. Batomunkuev and P. K. Varnavskii: *Buryatskaya etnichnost' v kontekste sotsiokul'turnoi modernizatsii (sovetskii period)*, p. 130.

character could also display the rudiments of nomadic consciousness. "A stove burner was my hearth, / a trotting tram was my pacer..." The image of a lark is also steeped in national coloring. "Ah, lark / a little heart of heaven / escaping from arrows!" In a poem "Tonight along the quiet valleys..." it is the lark who connects the sky and the land, night and day, "And early in the morning by the control tower / a steppe lark / rinsed his throat with the water / from a horse hoof print / flew up to the clouds, / to sing / the new day's song." According to B. Dugarov, a poet and a student of Buryat culture:

The symbolic image of a lark as a bird of kindness and harmony with the entire Universe could be born only with the people, who roamed the steppe plains from the times immemorial and closely connected with the environment. Thus the lark's warbles seem to penetrate the whole spiritual universe of a nomad from ancestors to successors and from a myth to a folk song.<sup>21</sup>

#### *Ethnic Buryat Culture*

The pursuit of the Buryat artistic elite even now is orientated toward a semantic national field. Researchers note that the Buryat traditional culture is syncretic and multifaceted in character. In it, it is hard to separate the Buddhist from the non-Buddhist elements, and the oriental from the European aspects. We can trace this character in painting, where the plasticity of Tibetan and Mongolian "tanka" is amalgamated with European art. In the same manner, the Russian-language Buryat poetry combines these dimensions differently by directing the aesthetic energies positively and by considering the Buryat culture and language as equal partners rather than an opposition. B. Dugarov's poetic writings characterize this relation of equality between Russian and Buryat cultures. Composed between the late 1960's and the first half of the 1970's, the poems of B. Dugarov seamlessly combine the artist and the scholar in the author in various stages of development. His poetic nature is inseparable from the professional interests of a folklorist and an historian-

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<sup>21</sup> B. S. Dugarov: "Struna zemli i neba (obraz zhavoronka v Buryatskoi mifologii i poezii)"; *Problemy buryatskoi filologii na sovremennom etape* (Ulan-Ude: Izd-vo Buryat. gosun-ta, 1999), p. 128.

Mongolist. The goal of synthesizing – the conscious and the rational with the emotional and the archetypical – is brought into light by the struggle of traditional antinomies in the artist's consciousness. Thus, the continuation of the dialogue between the national and the ethnic cultures is traced in the Russian-language Buryat poetry.

In the poetry of the early Russian-language Buryat poets like B. Dugarov, the spatial national relics, such as the steppes and the Sayan Mountains are emphasized. What is new is the inseparable connection of the ancestral history to the present and the future. The necessity of the historical memory of the culture of the late Soviet period explains the unity of the spatial and the temporal characteristics of the national images in the Russian-language poetry of B. Dugarov. It happens when an "angle" of the contemporary space can easily be changed to "an eternal circle of camp grounds", the "bluish-light" can come to life in cigarette smoke, and "the yurt of my universe" will reach the Pole Star (*Kochev'e*). The overcoming of the dichotomy of space and time, history and contemporaneity, heaven and earth clarifies and harmonizes the soul of the speaker. For instance, in the poem "Poety" ("Poets"), the language of harmony with the surrounding world aligns Dugarov's speaker with the Tibetan hermit poet Rje-btsun Mi-la-ras-pa and Japanese Bashō. However, alongside these oriental poets, a third poet lives in the mind of the speaker. His name is Fyodor Tyutchev. The Buryat poet feels a spiritual kinship with him throughout his creative work.<sup>22</sup> As we see in the poem "Yurta na neboskrebe" the light intonation and a clear voice of the character, which does not feel lonely in the "urban anthill", but reconciles the mundane and the eternal – both the past and the present. He does not contradict the negative dimensions, but approaches the world, love and art with an ambivalent attitude. The attempt of the poet to satisfy the inner discrepancy is seen in his dialogue with the Russian poet. Dugarov's works portray the antinomy of the Russian melancholy and the harmonious existence of an oriental person.

### **Buryat Literature and Idea of National Russian- Language**

In his poem "Russkii yazyk" ("The Russian Language"), N.

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. B. S. Dugarov: "U kolybeli tyutchevskoi muzy"; *Dusha khotela b bay' vvezdoi...: materialy filologicheskikh chtenii* (Ulan-Ude: 2004), pp. 3-11.

Nimbuev lets the character speak with the “speechless mouths of his ancestors” and “the language of Russian brothers”. The imagery of the poem is based on the antithesis principle. To quote him on this point: “You hover like a dove, mourning about something / in my throat – your bell-tower, / but close to you, as a memory of the ancient Mongols, / as their condemnation of a prodigal son, / a golden eaglet sits under my tongue.”<sup>23</sup> In the Russian-language poets, we see the combination of the “European gracefulness and the sunless caress of the Orient...”<sup>24</sup> The native Buryat tongue is characterized by a number of restrained epithets, such as “rigid wing,” “vermouth steppe” and “sunless caress”. It is an attempt to understand one’s own and native culture, though bitter and persistent, but inherently worthy. A combination of two or more language cultures brings about a definite collision. Yet, it is exactly this collision that opens new edges of understanding the reality for the artist.

The duality drama of bilingual creative personalities is especially evident during the search for transitions from the old to the new. The consciousness that outstrips the daily routine breaks through to the new, but does not stop feeling a chasm between the dynamic creative consciousness and the still static social world. This feeling makes bilingual authors of the entire world akin.<sup>25</sup>

Behind the dramatic situation to which the soul of a bilingual writer is doomed hides the problem of making a new polycultural personality of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that necessitates simultaneously living in both national and globalizing worlds.

A national Russian-language text underwent considerable changes in the *perestroika* and *post-perestroika* periods. The Russian-language Buryat literature looks more solid against the background of the Buryat-language literature, which, after the turmoil of the 1980’s and the 1990’s, is compared to a small creek that “hardly

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<sup>23</sup> N. Nimbuev: “Stikhi”; *Baikal*, vol. 6 (1993), pp. 97-98.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>25</sup> U. Bakhtirkeeva: “Transfer/Transfer”; *Druzhiba narodov*, vol. 12 (2009), p. 178.



makes its way between huge drifts and boulders."<sup>26</sup> New names emerged in both prose and poetry, such as Aleksei Gatapov and Andrei Mukhraev. Representatives of an older generation, like Ardan Angarkhaev, take a shot at the Russian-language prose. The star of Gennadii Bashkuev is in the ascendance. His talent appears to be surprisingly diversified. He is simultaneously a fiction writer, a playwright and a publicist. In his works, one can find changes in the dialogue between texts of various cultures.

### **Buryat Literature and Idea of National Image**

In the plays by G. Bashkuev, the national coloring is smoothened. The characters emphasize the typical and the generalized. That is why they can be played in such a way that their geographical and national belonging will not be of any importance. At the same time, it is seen that the so-called national question is put pointblank by the author as a problem of personal self-identity of a person as in the play "Chukcha" ("The Chukchi Man") written in 2007. In other plays, like "Sad kamney" ("The Rock-Garden") and "Rakushka" ("The Conch") the national image is seemingly shown at the level of external and superficial attributes. Yet, they reveal the problem of the center leading out to universal situations and themes.

This can be seen in the comedy *The New Wife*, written in 2006. It is concerned with the modern reality of national life and changes in the life of contemporary Buryats, sometimes grotesque and often irreversible. Its *pathos* is expressed in the words of the character, an old man named Sokto. To quote: "Look at them Buryats! How have we stooped so low! They cannot ride horses, have never seen a yurt in a lifetime, forgot the language, Chingises went on the bottle..."<sup>27</sup> The protagonist in the story is a henpecked husband named Galdan. In the past, a wife never dared to enter a yurt without her husband's permission. Polygamy was practiced and a man could have three wives. Despite being a henpecked husband, he calls Sokto's talks fairy tales. Nevertheless, he makes a decision to build a yurt in his yard. For several single fellow villagers, this move instilled hope that such an ancient tradition as polygamy may be revived and one of

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<sup>26</sup> V.T. Naidakov: *Stanovlenie, razvitiie i raspad buryatskoi sovetskoi literatury (1917-1995)*, p. 23.

<sup>27</sup> G. Bashkuev: *P'esy raznykh let* (Ulan-Ude: Respublikanskaya tipografiya, 2007), p. 28.

them may become a second wife of the only real, thrifty, kind, reliable and sober man in the village. For Galdan himself, to build a yurt means to maintain his position in a family and dream about a life norm, now lost and forgotten. At the end of the play, the reconciled sides of the conflict hear a baby cry in the yurt, where the newlyweds, his son and daughter-in-law, settled down. The whole action of the play affirms the idea that nothing has changed in the life of the descendants of the nomadic people. He still hopes for balance, stability and eternal values, such as yurt, family hearth, baby's cry or laughter and domestic harmony.

The dialogue between the modern and the eternal, national and universal looks completely different in G. Bashkuev's 1999 short novel *Propavshii (The Lost)*. Here, the protagonist, Zhargal-Zhorik Nurov, leaves his native village and loses his fortune including his own house. His homeless and marginal existence is the reflection of the universal coldness and cruelty of the world. At the same time, it also manifests his personal weakness, wimpishness and inability to stand against difficult circumstances. Far away from the Buryat land, in a Russian village called Berezovka, where he accompanies an old woman named Dolgor in a search for the grave of her son Matvei, killed during the Second World War. Finally, he finds his terminal home. Zhorik dies and brings death to his companion not only because of his own stupidity, but also because of the greed and cruelty of his come-and-go fellow travelers. It is paradoxical that the protagonist refuses to accept his own home left to him by his veteran father, and is buried in the burial ground, where the son of Dolgor – who died for his motherland – is buried. For the author, the theme of “meeting” of two sons of the Buryat people is an attainment of self-identity, both human and national. The national identity of Zhorik-Zhargal, erased and almost lost, returns in the moment of attainment of an existential identity.

### **Conclusion**

As the works of G. Bashkuev indicate we can see the desire to escape the boundaries of ethnic and national possibilities and interests in the mind of a Russian-language writer of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. It goes without saying that the new generation of the Russian-language authors still feels the ambivalence of the sense characteristic of their predecessors. Probably it means that the

nostalgia for the past and the native that until recently has been a sign of the transition, turns into a new feeling not less dramatic and painful. It is the feeling of loss of something important. This time, it is not uniquely national, but universal and generally valid. Therefore, the dialogue between these two sources will probably take another shape and new horizons will open before the contemporary Russian-language writer. Still inspired by the dialogue of cultures, the literature will represent the ethnic and the national on the basis of a new universal personality of the artist, creatively moving into the context of the broadened consciousness of the new civilizational space.



## Literature and Spirituality in the Information Society

IRINA BULGUTOVA<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

The information society is a new stage in the development of the present civilizational model. The ideological paradigm shift with its progressive technological opportunities plays an important role in the formation of such a society. Today, the globalized space is working out a new view on the general line of development of *homo sapiens* with an intensive circulation of knowledge at various levels of human existence: natural, physical, biological, social and spiritual. We witness some particular features of the emerging *noospheric space* or *global consciousness*. According to V. I. Vernadsky, "man is becoming a mighty and ever-growing geological force. This geological force was formed quite imperceptibly over a long period of time. This coincided with a change in man's position on our planet (and his material position first of all)."<sup>2</sup> Modern technologies bring new opportunities in exchanging and learning information and in the means, speed, quantity and quality of its transmission. In these conditions, modern man acquires the ability to reveal the limits of consciousness and subconsciousness in the flow of information, which used to be recorded only in art. Now, the ability of art to encode a large amount of information in symbolic form and its availability at the perceptive level, enable one to study and understand the nature of information as the manifestation of global consciousness seen in the context of spirituality. As P. Teilhard de Chardin put it: "No concept is more familiar to us than spiritual energy. And yet nothing remains more obscure to us scientifically."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Buryat State University, Ulan-Ude, Russia.*

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Vernadsky: "The Biosphere and the Noosphere"; *American Scientist*, vol. 33, nos. 1-2. Reprinted by Executive Intelligence Review, February 2005, from [http://larouchepub.com/other/2005/site\\_packages/vernadsky/3207bios\\_and\\_noos.html](http://larouchepub.com/other/2005/site_packages/vernadsky/3207bios_and_noos.html).

<sup>3</sup> P. Teilhard De Chardin: *The Human Phenomenon* (Sussex: Academic Press, 2003), p. 28.

Having briefly considered that the information society as the new stage for the development of *homo sapiens* at various levels of human existence, including his spiritual development in the context of the emerging noosphere or global consciousness, we attempt to outline, in the first section, that the synthesis of science, religion and art and their respect literature play a significant role in the formation of spirituality, as a feature and value of the human race. The second section highlights the relationship between the information society and the individual's spiritual level, by presenting information networks and twitter as opportunities for the individual to develop his/her own spirituality and spiritual perspective of life. Thus, new technologies of communication by opening new horizons of freedom of choice for the individual, unlock genuine possibilities for spiritual development. The third section elaborates the relationship of the individual spirituality to the emergence of the noosphere or global consciousness, as the latter expands the mental sphere and subconscious of a person, and thereby leads to spiritual transformation. The fifth section points to the influence of the information age on the formation of spiritual attitudes and fundamental values. The conclusion speaks of the need for developing a harmonious world outlook that can help to create an organic unity of the material and the spiritual aspects, and work for the sustainable development of the world. This calls for recognizing the inevitability of the globalization process and the need to preserve spirituality, thereby focusing on the fundamental values that bring together people and cultures for the prospective dialogue. The relationship of literature to spirituality is the first section.

### **Literature and Spirituality**

The synthesis of science, religion and arts is viewed as a necessary stage in creating a complete perception of the world. In modern hi-tech areas of life, the concept of spirituality, as a feature and value of the human race is expanding the cognitive functions of art. This process is evident in the information society, particularly in the art of creative writing – literature. The sphere of artistic consciousness provides for a rich experience of the symbolic encoding of reality and becomes the key to revealing the information, which resides at the unconscious level as the archetype of human life. In the fiction of different historical periods, there are not only certain similar and

coincidental points in comprehending life phenomena, but also natural and logical metaphorical thinking. Literary theory long ago found symbols to encode a large quantity of information and the means to decode it by the recipient.

A variety of views on the arts have initiated the conception of a specific form of knowledge as not having a definite meaning. Yet, as one of the spheres of human understanding, it examines the mind in its natural state of motion and fluidity. Information flow is also characterized by the dynamism and mobility that, nowadays, actuate scientific methodology in the humanities, particularly in literary theory.

### **Individual's Spiritual Level and Informaton Society**

Let us consider the development of the individual's spiritual level in the information society. To clarify this point we use the example of communication on the Internet. Today, many ordinary people have the opportunity to model themselves theoretically as newly created images in the mobile communications environment. Undoubtedly, in the process of creating his/her own individual image and its verbal framework a creator follows and preserves certain rules and patterns. Hence, the emerging logic of the image is subject to certain schemes. Thus, in fiction, the intention of the author's consciousness focuses not just outside, but on the reader's mind. Therefore, there is a prominent dialogic nature to the creative process itself. Similarly, creativity is efficient in active communication on the Internet. Interactivity, as the principle of the information field produces not only the field of creativity, but also co-creativity.

This possibility to communicate and create in the wider context under the conditions of constant motion and change provides new opportunities for the individual to develop spiritually. Therefore, the social networks and twitter are characterized by mobility and collective consciousness for those writing on them. They have similar emotional and energetic posts or twits, though they may describe various spheres of human life. This overlap is on the point of human emotions. At the time, their connection is determined by the context analysis of the figurative sense of simultaneous twits. The very possibility of such a phenomenon as coincidence in the emotional life is beyond any physical communication between people living in different parts of the world. This communication reveals their

experience. At the same moment of time, it is an important point in the comprehension of the noosphere – the moment of its manifestation. According to Vernadsky, “mankind, as living matter, is inseparably connected with the material-energetic processes of a specific geological envelope of the Earth – its biosphere.”<sup>4</sup> Hence, it is important to review the interrelation of spiritual and biological levels of human life. The phenomenon was first noticed in literature and then studied by literary scholars. Now, its stream of consciousness is clearly seen on Twitter.

When the verbally framed context changes every second, 140-digit messages or twits express not only the being of the individual, but also the essence of the collective understanding of that particular moment of time. The information comprehended by people unconsciously is seen as an emotional view of verbally framed images and as the subtext in the general flow. Literary methodology of analysis, the identification of the meanings of words in the general context, and the technique of revealing the implications allow the discovery of the association patterns in the stream of consciousness of the information field accepted in literature. Thus, for example, the analysis of poetic texts shows the coupling of different emotions and the principles of their interrelation. The principle of two oppositions create the fullness of the moment, where one opposed point indicates that another is existing in the subtext or is going to exist in it.

Moreover, the association fields of human sense perceptions and images possess the general laws of complementarity, specifically emotional complementarity, with reference to particular emotions. The emotional aspect of life in the information field is characterized as the energy impact that infects people with certain feelings. Nowadays, social interactions among people play a significant role in the communication networks, seen in different manifestations in the real life. The possibility of people to unite is due to the contact of consciousness at the spiritual level and at the level of mental activity. Spirituality – in the stream of collective consciousness/unconsciousness – may be discovered not only in the overlapping of feelings that occurs on twitter because of the speed of interaction, but also when a person writes the first thing that comes to mind. We can call it as an

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<sup>4</sup> V. I. Vernadsky: "The Biosphere and the Noosphere".



intuitive information download from the general field due to emotionally living the moment.

The manifestation of spirituality is seen within the logic of distance communication, when the dialogue is caused by the interlocutors' set images of themselves. The logic of character image encoding allows the reverse process of decoding information within the analysis of the text/subtext and the association fields of binary oppositions. Principles and methods of literary analysis reveal the information expressed in the process of communication and in the process the essential nature of the individual. What was previously considered as the attainment of truth by applying human knowledge in the field of information technology is presently seen as a certain kind of methodology and a "lie detector", which can be mastered by any person at a certain stage of his/her development. Contextual analysis of the information from different sources and identifying the motivation of the statement make it easy to establish the true value of the facts at a given time. Similarly, it is quite possible not only to read and understand the information due to spiritual development in the information society, but also to create the conditions for the destruction of any chances to manipulate human consciousness. The reduction of possible schemes to manipulate mass consciousness poses some difficulties for governments and multinational corporations. However, the development of new technologies themselves makes it logical for humanity to enter the stage, where the spiritual development of the individual is simply necessary, thereby opening new horizons for freedom of choice for the individual.

### **Global Consciousness and Individual Spirituality**

The general information field, as the global consciousness, expands the mental sphere and the subconscious aspect of the human person. Besides, it involves the formation of new ways of transmitting information from one person to another without any kind of physical interrelation. It is not only about the symbolic and metaphorical imagery, but also about the development of fictional world and creating the capabilities of a person. Thus, the proper level of his literary education helps the person to achieve the harmonious combination of his intuitive and analytical abilities. This allows him to be free with information perceived at the sensory level. V. I. Vernadsky states: "The continual evolution of the nervous

system throughout the geological history of the biosphere has often been pointed out: the fact of its evolution cannot be denied.”<sup>5</sup>

The special meaning of the word and its magical power known even at the stage of ancient times will be actualized in the information society. Therefore, it is especially important to be able to know and use the word as a tool not only to influence human minds, but also as a kind of “programming” scenario for the social development. The art of the word updates the interaction of different time layers and allows us to rethink the concept of the “spiritual energy” of the word and the laws of relations between the virtual and the real.

### **Information Age and Spirituality**

Hence, the information age at one of its natural stages should be based on the understanding of special importance and priority of spirituality as a condition for the development not only of human civilization, but also of humankind. This is inevitable at the present rate of development of new technologies. In our opinion, this is the condition for overcoming the crises inherent in the possible scenarios of technological civilization. Teilhard De Chardin writes:

The double crisis, already built up in the Neolithic Age and now approaching its maximum on the modern earth, stems first of all, as we said, from humanity’s being caught up in a mass (from “planetization” one might say): with peoples and civilizations having reached such a degree of peripheral contact, or economic interdependence, or psychic communion, that the only way they can keep on growing is by interpenetrating.<sup>6</sup>

Today, in the context of globalization, as the information field is becoming the methodology of the humanities, it is especially important to understand the “psychological community” of humanity in the general information field. Literature and spirituality in the information society are particularly significant in intellectualizing the general space of sense perception of all people in the emerging

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<sup>5</sup> V. I. Vernadsky: *Nauchnaya mysl kak planetarnoye yavleniye* (Moscow: 1991), p 20.

<sup>6</sup> P. Teilhard De Chardin: *The Human Phenomenon*, pp. 178-179.

noosphere. In this connection I. O. Shaitanov states: "Networks will exist as the information field and open unknown possibilities. I think that culture will emerge in the network, and *via* the network it will emerge into a new space of its own existence."<sup>7</sup>

At present, it is clearly recognized that the planetary consciousness is being naturally formed within the process of globalization, where culture and arts have to play their special roles as the forms of human spirituality. It is necessary to understand the formation stages of the noosphere and its manifestations. One of the problems of the developing information society is its search for general beginnings and bases. The formation of fundamental values will enable the unification of the contemporary world. The religious and ethnic distinctions that form a scale of values in local cultures result in the isolation of consciousness and slow down the formation of uniform planetary consciousness. At this point in time, the unification of national cultures leads to a loss of a culture's origins and the washing out its system of values. In these conditions it is necessary to pay attention to those spheres of culture and art, which first of all reveal universal values. The turning point in their realization is the recognition of transitional stages, which in particular can be analyzed in the context of the Eurasian frontier.

### Conclusion

A live and harmonious world outlook can be formed in the frame of national cultures, creating an organic unity of its material and spiritual aspects. For the sustainable development of the contemporary world, it is necessary to take into account both of these tendencies: the inevitability of the globalization process, caused by economic reasons; and the need to preserve spirituality, which is realized in a scale of values of a contemporary person within national cultures. The determination of the fundamental values of a modern civilization should lead to the revealing of the increasing number of common views between various cultures for a prospective dialogue.

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<sup>7</sup> I. O. Shaitanov: "Literature – elektronnyaya forma bytiya ili nebytiya"; *Voprosy literatury*, May-June (2011), p. 94.



## **Genre Peculiarities of Minor Forms in the Buryat Legendry: The Case of Oral Compositions of the Alar' Buryats**

Maria Danchinova<sup>1</sup>

### **Introduction**

This chapter elaborates the genre nature of minor forms in the Buryat legendry particularly taking into consideration the oral compositions of Alar' Buryats. The first section of the chapter takes up for consideration the problem of genre delimitation, which is a complex task. Its complexity is caused by the variability, fluctuation and obscurity of genre boundaries, besides its subject matter taking the forms of a legend, tale, short tale or a fairytale. Hence, all researchers agree on the point that it is impossible to find strict parameters of genre delimitation in the minor form. The second section clarifies legends and tales. Expounding on this point, the similarities and differences between legends, tales and fairytales are considered. Besides, the subject matter dealt with in these minor genres is also briefly examined. Finally, the qualities of interrelatedness, interpenetration, fluidity and openness of the genre boundaries that mark these oral compositions are analyzed. The third section specifically looks at the problem of delimitation of Buryat legends and tales. A brief consideration of their origin from mythological material and the three states of their development are taken up for discussion. The specific feature of Buryat oral story as communicating a real event in its historical context is analyzed. The fourth section highlights the peculiarities of the minor genres of Buryat legendry by studying the oral compositions of Alar' Buryats, a contemporary tale and folklore piece of Alar' Buryats in comparison. The conclusion speaks of the possibility of finding various genre enlargements of myths, legends and tales in the Buryat folklore. Though it is not easy to determine their boundaries, our reflection on the minor forms of Buryat legendry opens space for further research. We now move to consider the question of genre delimitation.

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### Problem of Genre Delimitation

The minor forms of oral folk arts include genres of non-fairytale prose, such as legends and tales. According to their formal-semantic structure, these genres are multifunctional. They exercise everyday, historical, toponymical, etiological, aesthetic, educational and ideological functions. The functional aspect raises questions about the distinction between a legend and a tale. From the scholars' standpoint, the problem of genre delimitation is a complex task. Its complexity is caused by the variability, fluctuation and obscurity of genre boundaries. Besides, the one and the same subject matter takes forms of a legend, a tale, a short tale about encounters with evil spirits, and even a fairytale.<sup>2</sup> V. Y. Propp proposes to classify minor genres of oral folk arts by distinguishing between fairytales and stories according to the correspondence of the genres to reality.<sup>3</sup> We agree with the viewpoint of V. P. Anikin on the issue of delimitation of the features of legends and tales. He defends the position of the delimitation of the genres by considering the objective of the non-fairytale prose. He singles out the practical everyday character of the early genesis of such folklore, whereas at the later stage of genre development he finds ideological and aesthetic affirmations of legends and tales.<sup>4</sup> Many researchers agree on one point regarding genre delimitation: it is impossible to find strict parameters of genre delimitation in the minor forms, such as the legends and tales. The genres do not replace the formal-semantic structure of each other, but interact. Having briefly stated the problem of genre delimitation, we move on to clarify the meaning of legends, tales and fairytales.

### Legends, Tales and Fairytales

A legend does not replace a chronicle or an anal because it is a product of oral folk arts. Therefore, a work of folklore prose does not reflect an event in full detail. It does not give the everyday particularities and precise rendering of the whole and the parts. However, in a tale, the components of the narrative structure as a true event and its folklore interpretation, and the imaginative

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. T. V. Zueva and B.P. Kirdan: *Russkii fol'klor* (Moscow: Nauka, 1998), p. 170.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. V. Y. Propp: "Zhanrovyyi sostav russkogo fol'klora"; *Fol'klor i deistvitel'nost'* (Moscow: Nauka, 1976), p. 50.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. V. P. Anikin: "Vozniknovenie zhanrov v fol'klore"; *Russkii fol'klor* (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), pp. 28-29.

symbiosis of a fact and fiction proper are inseparably represented. In considering the genre features of tales, it is necessary to distinguish among varieties of tales as toponymic and historical. The toponymic tales are the earliest forms of this genre. They are aimed at explaining the origin of certain geographical features, such as certain region, rivers, lakes, mountains and settlements. According to their structure, the toponymic tales may be subdivided into two groups: the tales based on fiction and the tales conveying historical facts. The tales based on fiction are characterized by the fairytale-like fantastic features. They are filled with personification and various manifestations of supernatural forces. This genre represents all sides of the natural world, such as the lakes, rivers, mountains, forests and various bodies of water. The tales conveying historical facts manifest real historical events and give information about concrete persons and their activities.

A different composition is observable in the genre of a legend. As a genre, legend is related to non-fairytale prose. Primarily, it is a prose work originating in an oral form. Structurally, a legend will be close to all minor forms of legendry. The latter legends that originated under the influence of religion are similar in their motive with other genres, such as the hagiography of saints, the imagery of saints and the theme of miraculous occurrences: various healings, resurrection, the creation of man and man's struggle against the devil. A real event presented in the legend is necessarily interpreted from a fantastic angle. It contains various relationships between people and nature, all fauna, different birds, trees, plants and the inanimate phenomena. Miraculous and fantastic properties of the legend define its structure, system of images and pictorial means of the genre. The main function of legend is explanation and instruction. The legend is distinguished by a short subjectivity, depicting a one-episode event. If multi-event subject matter is permissible, then the coherence of episodes shapes the development of the action. The subject matter ends with a resolution in which moral teaching is provided or the result of what happened is revealed.

The difference between a legend and a tale consists in that despite the miraculousness and fantasticality of fiction, the legend presupposes an adjustment for the veracity of what happened. Both participants of the oral act, a narrator and a listener, do not doubt the authenticity of events in the legend. This is a major feature

distinguishing legend from fairytale. A legend is related to a fairytale through a number of similar traits. Hence, the resemblance between legend and tale is in the presence of an introduction, or a plot of legendary action. The opening formulas of a fairytale read: "Once upon a time..." or "A certain person..." Such introductions are quite widespread in legends and directly refer to the fairytale genre. The crucial distinction of legend from fairytale lies in the fact that the fairytale's subject matter is based on "miracles", whereas legends only presuppose a miracle that is performed by a certain force. It should be taken into account that a fairytale has a stable form with definite structural specificities, while legend is a freestyle genre that presupposes borrowings of structural elements missing in the fairytale itself. Fairytale has characters based on ordinary persons, such as a peasant, a landlord or a priest. There is no such image system in legend. The genre often depicts fairy creatures, such as angels or saints. Therefore, according to A.F. Losev, the minor forms of non-fairytale prose of the oral folk arts – in particular myths, legends and tales – are characterized by interrelatedness, interpenetration, fluidity and openness of the genre boundaries.<sup>5</sup> The next section briefly considers the delimitation of Buryat legends and tales

### **Delimitation of Buryat Legends and Tales**

The classification of the minor form genres in legendry is directly related to delimitation of the Buryat legends and tales. The inner nature of the Buryats myths, legends and tales is characterized by archaism, syncretism and indivisibility. These elements also explain the difficulty in delimiting these genres. In this regard, it is crucial to keep in mind that the Buryat legends and tales grew out of mythological materials. The correlation of myth, legend and tale leads to ambiguous scientific interpretations not only in Buryat folklore studies, but also in the characteristics of the national non-fairytale prose of many Siberian peoples. For instance, in the Yakut folklore studies, G. U. Ergis refers to myths, legends and tales as non-fairytale forms characterizing the genres according to their objectives in life. In his view, myths originated in antiquity as the explanation of the origin of the world. Tales reflect a glint of

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. A. F. Losev: *Antichnaya mifologiya v ee istoricheskom razvitii* (Moscow: Uchpedgiz, 1957), p. 20.



“historical reality” and legends are generated from real life, albeit with a characteristic gleam of fantasy.<sup>6</sup> In the Tuvian folklore myths, legends, tales and oral stories are considered in their immediate syncretic connection.<sup>7</sup> In the Khakassian folklore myths, legends and tales are united under one term “*kip-chookh*”, which denotes a weighty problem in the delimitation of genre boundaries of minor forms in the Khakassian legendry. From the viewpoint of researchers, the “*kip-chookh*” conveys the single “narrative about real events taking place in the distant past, about rulers, wars, amazing heroes and their heroic deeds that remain in the people’s memory.”<sup>8</sup> N. P. Dyrenkova, student of the short folklore, also combines the genres of legend, tales and myth under the common terms “*kep-chookh*” and “*purungy chookh*” (small stories, legends) and “*tlas*” (piece of news or message).<sup>9</sup>

For A. I. Ulanov, a Buryat scholar, it is necessary to consider three stages in the development of the oral folk arts of the Mongolian people, and Buryats in particular: the depths of primitive society; the syncretic vision of a cave man; and “when a man did not separate himself from nature and could not ‘distinguish’ between heavenly and earthly, societal and natural phenomena.”<sup>10</sup> On the basis of Ulanov’s theoretical prerequisites it is possible to trace several developmental stages of the Buryat oral prose, in particular, its minor forms. Thus, in the early prehistoric time, myths, legends and tales had a common basis without a rigid delimitation of boundaries. For instance, in Ulanov’s view, the myth about Sun or Gall Dulme monster (the fiery tribe), the tale about the primogenitor or the legend about the lake master can be called a legend, a myth or a tale.<sup>11</sup> From the moment of individualization of “self” by separate human beings, a second and more complex period in the develop-

<sup>6</sup> Cf. G. U. Ergis: *Ocherki po yakutskomu fol'kloru* (Moscow: Nauka, 1974), pp. 252, 253.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Z. B. Samdan: “O nekotorykh osobennostyakh sobiraniya i izucheniya tuvinskoi neskazochnoi prozy”; *Issledovaniya po tuvinskoi filologii* (Kyzyl: 1986), p. 151.

<sup>8</sup> V. Y. Butanaeva and I. I. Butanaeva: *My rodom iz Khongoraya. Khakasskie mify, legendy i predaniya* (Abakan: 2010), p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. N. P. Dyrenkova: *Shorskii fol'klor* (Moscow: Nauka, 1970), p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> A. I. Ulanov: “O problemakh izucheniya uligerov”; *Traditsionnyi fol'klor Buryat* (Ulan-Ude: 1980), p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

ment of human ideas commenced. The economic activity engendered new worldviews leading to the conception of genre traits of oral folk arts, such as tales and legends. For example, the tales about primogenitors, legends about heroes and their struggle against all evil forces, legends about lords of mountains, forests and rivers, hunters' narrations, and fairytales about animals are related to this period. The third stage is connected with the growing skepticism of man toward mythology, and the transfer of the oral folk arts from the category of the unconscious to the category of art. In the delimitation of the characteristic features of non-fairytale prose, and the genre of the tale in particular, M. I. Tulokhonov considers the following properties of the genre to be the most important: the assonance and precision of a tale as an oral story in conveying of a real event; and the genre's distinguishability by a proper historical foundation with a transient character. He emphasizes that "the tales are historical and 'documentary' in their origin."<sup>12</sup> This leads to the peculiarities of minor genres of Buryat Legendry.

#### **Peculiarities of Minor Genres of Buryat Legendry**

Many scholars agree in their theoretical views that the minor forms of the Buryat legendry should be considered in an inseparable unity of all the features and peculiarities of myth, legend and tale proper. In them, one should distinguish their historical, philosophical, and religious aspects, and the cultural opening of the world. Let us consider the peculiarities of minor genres on the basis of the oral compositions of the Alar' Buryats. One of the stories is say about a special attitude of a man toward hYn-khaan (the milk deity). According to its poetic variety, this composition carries the features of mythical origin and is related to cosmogonic myths. The myth reads as follows:

At the very beginning the entire Earth was covered with water. Then the supreme god looked upon this world of waters and surprisingly uttered: 'Till when water will overcome this beautiful world?'

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. M. I. Tulokhonov: "Predaniya o Shobol bukhe"; *Traditsionnyi fol'klor Buryat* (Ulan-Ude: 1980), p. 92.

Then the fiery deity Gal-khaan started to try strength against the water deity Uhan-khaan. They wrestled and fought each other, but nobody could win for a very long time. Gal-khaan cannot defeat Uhan-khaan. Uhan-khaan cannot defeat Gal-khaan. Both got very tired.

Then, looking at this struggle, the supreme deity told hYn-khaan (the Milk khan), 'Go down the Earth and throw these unruly two on two sides. Till when this useless war will continue on the Earth? Let this war stop.'

hYn-khaan (the Milk khan) went down to the Earth and threw the two warring khans on two sides. Then the water went its way and fire went its way too. The water went back to normal and the fire found its place.

Since that time everything started growing on the Earth: grass, trees, various plants, birds and animals appeared, the world was filled with sounds and all went well on the Earth.

Since that time all living beings started coming up on the Earth. Animals were born as animals, people were born as people. All moves on the Earth and all live in unity.<sup>13</sup>

The internal structure of this spoken story includes archaic and syncretic features contaminating units of other genre entities, such as elements of philosophical, ceremonial-ritual, religious and spiritual-cultural nature. The introduction and ending of this story is traditional for such kind of myths: "At the very beginning the entire Earth was covered with water" and "Since that time all living being started coming up on the Earth. Animals were born as animals, people were born as people. All on the Earth moves and all live in unity". Before us, there is the "logic" and mentality of the early epoch man. It is the time when the chaos of the world was overcome in the worldview of a man who felt a deep interaction and his inseparability from the whole natural environment. At the same time, the features of the historical time are shown through this tale. It was the time of transition from the unconscious stage of world exploration to practical exploration with the help of the nascent traditions of ceremonial and ritual action until the inception of

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<sup>13</sup> Written and translated by the author with retention of the Alar dialect of the Buryat language in the Alyaty village of the Alar district of the Irkutsk region from Sofya Fadeevna Trofimova, born 1935.

religious foundations. The images of fiery and water deities, their fight, and themes of war and peace refer to the prehistoric times. Before us is the pantheon of ancient gods. Whereas the image of hYn-khaan (the Milk khan) suggest a later revision of the early world origin myth in the human consciousness. This myth underwent further revisions in a new human epoch with a different socio-cultural development and level of socio-economic practice than in the ancient time.

The original form of the myth is beyond the categories of time and space. However, centuries later, it is filled with the conscious vision of a man of sense. Let us suppose that the original formal and semantic side of the myth – in this particular case the story about creation of the world – is repeatedly influenced by other minor forms of folklore, such as legends and tales. The legendary is that the realities of human life are clothed in the forms of the miraculous and the fantastic. In this particular context, they are the amazing capabilities of the Milk God to put out the universal fire. In the cultural and economic human activity of later epochs, a higher stage of material culture's development in the context of this tale was poeticized by means of the nature of the marvelous and in a sense fairytale. The traits of the tale are primarily traced in stating the objective reality. The historical authenticity of the tale is exposed in the subject matter and images of this example. The order of the Supreme deity to the Milk god to go down to the Earth reveals not just ceremonial and ritual practices of an ancient man. It is the period, when the individual consciousness started growing and the beginning of emergence of religion. It is the origin of the future Shamanistic faith.

For comparison let us provide the subject matter of a modern tale emphasizing the special significance and sacredness of the milk product. The contemporary tale says: in May 1988, a storm struck the Irkutsk region and left terrible after-effects on the lives of the locals. Many villages were ravaged by fires. Villages of Bil'chir of the Osinskii district and Alar' of the Alarskii district suffered the most. Entire streets in these villages were burnt out. When the fire was ravaging the village of Alar' an old local woman named Budashkha-toodei was running around the burning house, sprinkling milk on the burning walls and crying out "*Ai khuryi! Ai khuryi!*" – the exclamation addressed to the deity is the same as the exclamation

*"boltogoi"*, which means "Long live!" However, in the appeals of the Alar' Buryats, it is filled with a special meaning "God forbid!" and "Save and protect!" The furious fires started to die off and went out. The entire street, except the old house of this woman, was burnt out.<sup>14</sup> This story displays the traits of a tale showing through. The persisting mythical and religious-ceremonial core draws together the content structure of the narration with the first text. This is proved by the functions of interpenetration and intertwining of genre features of the minor forms in the Buryat folklore.

Another folklore piece of the Alar' Buryats tells about a blacksmith (*darkhan*) as a hero ancestor and a cultural character.

There is a "darkhan" (blacksmith) line in every Buryat family. In such a way people always pray and pray to the "darkhans." In times of old, the elders told where this strength of the "darkhan" line came from.<sup>15</sup>

Several subject matters are intertwined into one in this spoken story. The content reveals the origin of the *darkhan* line in the life of people. The principal subject matter includes the one-episode character of the occurring event. The Supreme heavenly deity sends the omnipotent assistant to people of the Earth.

This one god on the entire Earth and in the universe hears everything and listens to everything. Ah..., to all walking living creatures I will send the Darkhan god at night and he will make real people out of them.

Here certain characteristic features of a mythical text with precise indication of time of the story's inception shows through. It is the ancient time of creation with an image of the protagonist *darkhan* as a cultural character. The locality, in which the action proceeds, is rigidly determined. It is space where the Earth is one of the living venues.

A mythical character of the Buryat folklore is related to the demiurge characters in similar myths of other peoples of the world.

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<sup>14</sup> An interview with S. F. Trofimova.

<sup>15</sup> An interview with S. F. Trofimova

In the first place the *darkhan* is similar to Prometheus, who brought fire to the Earth and taught people all their crafts giving them knowledge. As the symbol of the beginning of the life of all the living beings, such a character exists in the folklore of every nation. For instance, in the Khakassian myths, there is a deity named Umai. She is the patroness of fire and, at the same time, its spirit, who enlivens people on the Earth, protects babies and assists men and women in choosing the right destiny. In the Tatar mythology, there is also the fire god giving life to all living things on the Earth and helping them grow.

Similar to such deities is the Buryat mythical character, which changed the people's way of life on the Earth.

Then this man went down to the Earth ... Suffering and taking great pains he endowed people with fire and might, give those houses and herds, and made everybody happy and lucky...

The mythical nature of the spoken story about the *darkhan* conveys not just a vision of a distant progenitor, but exposes the later layer of the conscious experience of such a worldview. Hence, there is a mythical text with definite elements of latter experiences of man and reflects the ideal and aesthetic functions. The text is spontaneously poeticized and brings new information into the text structure. First and foremost it is a new subject matter. Besides the main subject matter about a cultural character, the theme about procreation is imbedded in the folklore.

At that time childless husband and wife cried together and grieved a lot. They always cherished hopes to give birth or adopt a baby somewhere to bring it up as a man in their joy and for the people.

The *darkhan* assists them in giving birth to a child, who becomes a progenitor of the *darkhan* line. The mythical function of the demiurgic character is supplemented with a new theme – a social and concrete event. Thus, we see not just a birth of a man with the help of the fantastic and miraculous force of cultural character, but a reflection of a quite realistic circumstance – childlessness in the

human world and the problem of procreation. Therefore, the mythical plan engenders new genre features and primarily tales.

### **Conclusion**

Therefore, it is possible to find various genre entanglements of myths, legends and tales in the Buryat folklore. It is also necessary to emphasize the fairytale beginning of these texts. Though it is not easy to determine the genre boundaries of the minor forms' delimitation in the Buryat legendry, since the study has started in this field, undoubtedly, it will define new landmarks in this research.





## Spheres and Aspects of Culture

TSYTSYGMA D. BIDAGAYEVA <sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

In the past, the presupposition of a universal culture – that included both European and other cultures – was widely accepted. However, the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed numerous events of conflicts and clashes caused by cultural problems. Hence, there comes the realization that various cultures should exist simultaneously and interact with each other. This is because culture is considered to include everything a people or a nation possesses. The leading role of the European culture is questioned. It promotes a view that in the contemporary world the primary sources of such conflicts are people's cultural roots, including their religions and identities, and not the ideology or economics.<sup>2</sup> At present, we see the revitalization of religion throughout the world, which, in turn, reinforces cultural differences.<sup>3</sup> In this chapter, we aim to identify and clarify some key issues related to the clash of cultures particularly where religion is a controversial issue.

The first section of this chapter sets the Eurasian Frontier as the context of such clash of cultures, as it is the melting pot of diverse cultures and ethnicities; divergent social group of entrepreneurs, bankers and new generation of politicians; mixture of peoples, such as Buryats, Russians, Tatars, Ukrainians, Jews and Evenks; and representing various religions, such as Buddhism, Shamanism, Orthodox Christianity and the like. To cope with such cultural conflicts and clashes, it is important to form an efficient system of communication based on the awareness of similarities and differences among the cultures. Besides, identifying intercultural

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Samuel P. Huntington: *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996). Cf. also Edward B. Tylor: *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom*, 2 vols. (London: J. Murray, 1871).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Samuel P. Huntington: *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, pp. 28-29.

interferences and coping with them by means of genuine interactions between cultures and languages, based on commonly accepted religious values and principles, thereby understand each other's cultures, cooperate, interact and be united with the other. Buryatia sets an example of such peaceful coexistence in the Eurasian Frontier. The second section attempts to define the notions of "culture" and "cultural sphere" in terms of institutions, technology, ideology and behavior. Such a perception of these notions is vital for effecting genuine understanding among divergent cultures of the Eurasian Frontier. The third section briefly considers language as an important expression of both culture and cultural spheres. Proper grasp of other cultures can happen only through language. Linguistic understanding supplemented by the right perception of non-verbal behaviors, such as gestures, mimics, body language and actions will lead to greater understanding among peoples and nations. The conclusion speaks of the importance of one's knowledge of the trends of speech and behavior in a given culture as the vital means of intercultural communication. Hence, linguo-cultural awareness of people and the ability to use it in the situations of conversation and dialogue is a way cultures can move from conflict and clash to understanding and unity. In the first section, we consider the Eurasian Frontier as the context of a clash of cultures.

#### **Eurasian Frontier: Context of Clash of Cultures**

The recent reforms in Russia and the processes of globalization and unification entail serious changes in the cultural representations and images of all peoples of Russia. Besides, the small nations within Russia strive to identify their ethnic and cultural distinctiveness. Likewise, they would like to retain their cultural values, customs and traditions. In Russia, this problem is accelerated with the appearance of new social groups of entrepreneurs, bankers, and the new generation of politicians. Buryatia is one of Russia's national republics located in East Siberia, the junction between the West and the East. It represents a mixture of cultures and peoples, such as the Buryats, Russians, Tatars, Ukrainians, Jews and the Evenks. It also includes religions, such as Buddhism, Shamanism, Orthodox Christianity and the like. All these processes develop swiftly throughout Russia in an extremely difficult and merciless manner and they encounter many obstacles and restrictions from the state.

Consequently, the social and public life of all regions of the country witness clashes, conflicts and disagreements. These happenings can be explained only from the cultural point of view.

Forming an efficient system of communication based on the awareness of cultural similarities and differences is one of the ways to overcome the existing difficulties. Establishing contacts between nations results in the interaction of cultures. It is possible to present the development of languages and cultures, as the process of constant interactions among nations and their cultures.<sup>4</sup> This interaction of cultures implies mutual understanding and not collision of cultures. With respect to the study of cultural peculiarities of different peoples, it is of particular interest to look into the problems of interference in intercultural communication and translation. These problems are becoming more acute due to globalization, and in the process washes out national cultures. Interferences in this field are often referred to as intercultural interferences. They are related to the differences in cultural conventions, practices and the rules of the use of words in different cultural communities.

Identifying such intercultural interferences is important for communication that takes place in the interaction between languages and cultures. It is worth mentioning that Buryatia can be taken as an example of peaceful coexistence of different peoples for more than 350 years. The principal reason for this lies in the adherence to the Buddhist values and beliefs, which are deeply embedded in the minds and hearts of the local people. Contrary to Huntington's findings, Buryatia is a unique example, where religion helps to understand the people of other cultures, to cooperate, interact and be united with them. Such experience is helpful to build bridges between the West and the East, and in the entire world.

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. V. L. Kurguzov: "Izmeneniya v russkom yazike kak zakonomerniy itog mezhkulturnogo vzaimodeystviya"; *Vostok-Zapad: vzaimodeystviye yazykov i kultur. The Proceedings of the All-Russian Scientific Conference (Ulan-Ude, 3-6 June, 2011)*, red. T. D. Bidagayeva (Ulan-Ude: Izd-vo VSGTU, 2011), pp. 6-10. Cf. also V. L. Kurguzov: "Changes in the Russian Language as the Natural Result of the Intercultural Interaction"; *East-West: Interaction of Languages and Cultures. Proceedings of the All-Russian Scientific Conference (Ulan-Ude, 3-6 June, 2011)*," ed. T.D. Bidagayeva (Ulan-Ude: East Siberian State University of Technology Press, 2011), pp. 6-10.

Acknowledging that language is the most efficient way of communication, this approach corresponds to the scientific direction of language as the principal means of intercultural communication and as the reflection of culture developed by Russian linguists.<sup>5</sup>

### Nature of Culture and Cultural Sphere

Having looked into the Eurasian Frontier as the context of the clash of cultures and how these conflicts have given way to peaceful coexistence for a long period of time in the region of Buryatia, we move now to clarify the meaning of culture and cultural sphere in this section.

#### *Meaning of Culture*

Despite the many attempts to give a definition of culture, scholars have not succeeded in providing a clear description of the term "culture" because of the ambiguity associated with this term. It has come to be understood in a variety of ways. There exists a substantial disagreement among scholars regarding what exactly the term "culture" means. Some usages fail to meet scientific requirements due to their ambiguity. However, the phenomenon of culture itself is complex. Hence, it is necessary to consider "what is included in the notion of culture" and "what is involved in the sphere of culture".

The anthropologist, Edward B. Tylor, provides the classic definition of the term "culture". According to him: "Culture ... is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."<sup>6</sup> T. S. Eliot says that the notion of culture includes a number of elements. Firstly, it is "the way of life of a particular people living together in one place."<sup>7</sup> Secondly, we "can never be wholly conscious [of culture] – there is always more to it than we are conscious of."<sup>8</sup> Thirdly, it is necessary that we bring

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. S. G. Ter-Minasova: *Yazik i mezhkulturnaya kommunikatsia* (Moskva: Slovo, 2000). Cf also S. G. Ter-Minasova: *Language and Intercultural Communication* (Moscow: Slovo, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> Edward B. Tylor: *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom*.

<sup>7</sup> T. S. Eliot: *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (London: Faber and Faber, 1948), p. 120.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 94, 107.

about a further development of the culture in its organic complexity at a more conscious level without changing its original nature; it should still be the same culture.<sup>9</sup> Thus, culture is “the whole way of life of a people, from birth to the grave, from morning to night.”<sup>10</sup> T. S. Eliot's consideration of culture is what sociologists usually call the “high culture”. In this analysis, the existence of cultural diversity is not considered to be a significant value.

Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn provide about 164 different senses of the term “culture”. In general, culture is said to be: “a more or less consistent pattern of thought and action”<sup>11</sup>; “the product of learned behaviour”; “ideas in the mind”; and “a system of ideas, signs, associations, and modes of behaviour and communication”.<sup>12</sup> There are scholars, who even reject the notion of culture altogether, alleging that it is a “logical construct” and a “statistical fiction”. Hence, it seems fair to say that we can take the term “culture” in a very broad sense as a collection of representations or ideas shared by and pervasive throughout the life of a group of individuals. Thus, culture is what the idealist philosopher Bernard Bosanquet calls a “set of dominant ideas” that characterizes a particular group of individuals.<sup>13</sup> Today, people even speak of a “culture of science” and a “culture of health”. In these uses the term “culture” seems roughly equivalent to an “ideology”.

Our consideration of the meaning of culture provides a regulative idea for the study of culture, without giving its complete definition. In fact, we do not even claim that the term “culture” can be defined. Now, we move on to consider the meaning of cultural sphere.

#### *Meaning of Cultural Sphere*

As compared to nature, culture involves everything made and created by man. Culture is often divided into material and spiritual

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Ruth Benedict: *An Anthropologist at Work: Writings of Ruth Benedict* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Jocelyne Couture: “La valeur morale de l'appartenance culturelle”; *Philosophy, Culture, and Pluralism*, ed. William Sweet (Aylmer, QC: Editions du scribe, 2002), pp. 101-130.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Bernard Bosanquet: “The Reality of the General Will”; *International Journal of Ethics*, vol. 4 (1893–1894), p. 311. Cf also Bernard Bosanquet: *Aspects of the Social Problem* (London: Macmillan, 1895), p. 325.

spheres. Material culture embraces all spheres of the material activity of man: tools, dwellings, clothes, transport devices and so on. Spiritual culture involves everything related to the sphere of consciousness: morals, upbringing, education, law, art, philosophy, mythology, religion and the like. Yet, this initial classification of cultural phenomena brings about a confusion and ambiguity because any of the above-mentioned cultural spheres embraces both material and spiritual activities of man. For instance, any kinds of clothes are material, but the system of clothing in a given society in a given historical epoch reveals lots of facts of the spiritual character: mental design of a dress, fashion, symbolization of fashion types, compatibility of different items of clothes, and so on. In its turn, religion is usually considered to be a part of spiritual culture, but it includes some definite material artifacts. For instance, the ecclesiastical architecture, such as temples, Churches, monasteries, convents and cult or Church plates belong to the material sphere despite their spiritual character.

V. G. Gak, the Russian scholar, suggests that the differentiation of cultural spheres, various spheres of social life, aspects revealed in different spheres, and reflection on products of the spiritual and material activity of people<sup>14</sup> are vital for a full understanding of cultural spheres. Thus, the cultural spheres include things mentioned above and many other realities, such as social organization, arts, religion, law, dwellings, clothes, and food. Every cultural sphere can be divided into four aspects: artifacts – material products of man's activity; forms of organization representing the result of man's activities; ideology – the whole complex of presentations, beliefs, symbols relating to this cultural sphere and the like; and behavior – socially accepted actions and reactions of the members of the society, which is often referred to as the "practice". Historically, there have been attempts to distinguish three aspects: institutions, technology, and ideology, to which V. G. Gak suggests the addition of behavior.<sup>15</sup>

The cultural theories proposed by the American behaviorists differentiate and contrast three phenomena: language, culture and

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. V. G. Gak: "Asimetriya v lingvostranovedeniyi"; *Yazikoviy preobrazovaniya* (Moskva: Shkola "Yaziki russkoi kultury"), pp. 139-151. Cf. also V. G. Gak: "Asymmetry in Linguistic and Culture Studies"; *Language Transformations* (Moscow: School "Languages of the Russian Culture"), pp. 139-151.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

behavior. V. G. Gak does not accept this view because any socially marked behavior of man represents a constituent part of the cultural space. Hence, according to him, behavior represents not only a cultural sphere, but also an aspect inherent in any cultural sphere. The correlation of cultural spheres and aspects is displayed in the following table:

Aspects	Spheres					
	Art	Religion	Law	Food	Clothes	Etc.
Artifacts						
Organization						
Ideology						
Behavior						

The content of the table deliberately gives a non-systematic representation of spheres because the borders between aspects are vague and indistinct. For instance, rituals can be partly included into either the organizational or behavioral aspect. In general, the table represents "cultural space", which shows what things are included into culture as the spacious phenomenon. In the next section, we briefly consider language as the expression of culture and cultural sphere.

#### **Language: Expression of Culture and Cultural Sphere**

Considering some examples will prove that the language represents reflections and images of the surrounding world spotted through the corresponding culture. Languages are considerably different from cultural conventions related to formulas of politeness, the use of interjections, and the naming of some time periods. For example, in the Russian language, there is no equivalent to the English word "fortnight", which in its original usage was "fourteen nights" and having the same meaning. In the Russian language, it means "a time period of two weeks". The English word "decade" has the meaning "a time period of ten years" and sounds very similar to the Russian word "декада", which means "a time period lasting ten days."

In communication, there arises the problem of interference. For example, the cultural sphere of "food" includes places of public catering, kitchen utensils, instruments, pots and pans, food proper

and dishes. The aspect of “organization” in the sphere of “food” involves the food system and the organization of nutrition in a definite country, at a definite historical time, with food variations over a year, a month, a week or a day. For instance, the Mongolian-speaking people, including the Buryats, take three meals a day: “үглөнэй хол” (morning meal), “үдэрэй хол” (meal at noon) and “үдэшийн хол” (evening meal). Regarding the interaction between languages and cultures, the correlation of the Buryat notion “хол” [khol] with its English and Russian equivalents is of particular interest. The Buryat word “хол” is fully correlated to its English equivalent “meal”. The English and Buryat words do not fully correspond to the same meaning in Russian, except for the archaic and pompous Russian word “трапеза”. Both, the English word “meal” and its Buryat lexical equivalent “хол” express the generic notion of “the time of having a meal”; both having specific names in English and Buryat: “breakfast” and its Buryat counterpart “үглөнэй хол”, “dinner” and “үдэрэй хол”, “supper” and “үдэшийн хол”. At noon, the main dish is always preceded by a cup of tea, which corresponds to the English or European starters or appetizers as a dish or a drink for the first course stimulating appetite.

In the cultural sphere of nutrition ideology, there is a wide range of rules, beliefs, principles, symbols, rites, ceremonies, food preferences, taboos and dogmas accepted by a society, a nation and a gender group. For example, the notion of “vegetarianism” includes both an organizational aspect, such as the distinct nutrition system that refuses animal source foods, fish and poultry, and the aspect of the vegetarian ideology based on the principle of non-violence for all living beings. However, the Buryat nutrition ideology, on the contrary, is called “non-vegetarianism” based on meat dishes and dairy products because of the severe climatic conditions with long frosty winters, average winter temperatures below – 30°C, and the traditional nomadic animal husbandry.

Finally, the aspect of behavior in the cultural sphere of nutrition is related to the nation’s food traditions of the people. For example, seating people at a table according to the hierarchical organization of the family, clan and tribe. Similarly, with respect to the cultural values, one is guided by values, such as the respect for the elders, table manners and so on. It is recommended to share the first portion of any food or drink with the Gods and sacred spirits before



consuming it. The next portion goes to the head of the family or the most prominent and respected member of the clan, such as the elder or the guest. There are also distinct rituals and rules connected with table manners. For instance, it is accepted to eat the 'buuza<sup>16</sup> with one's hands. There is one more example of Buryat rules related to the use of hands. One should always use his/her right hand to give or take something. Otherwise, it would amount to an insult to his/her partner.

Taking into account the above-mentioned facts, one should not consider the language as something external to culture and cultural spheres. The language is related to the cultural spheres because it is the creation of man. The language artifacts include various phenomena, such as words and other language forms verbalized through sound and writing. The artifacts of the technologies belonging to the linguistic and cultural spheres include all that promote language acquisition, its functioning and perfection, such as the linguistic printed matter – the dictionaries, the encyclopedias and the textbooks; the audiovisual means and the like. The organizational aspect of language, which includes forms of teaching and its use in oral and written speech – the organization of speech, the forms of language use with the informative purpose, and the electronic and the printed mass media. The organizational aspect of the language also comprises the entire systematic and structural organization of the language; and the structural organization of various text types.

The ideological and technological aspects of the language are reflected in two entities: the content of the language sign – the semantic aspect of language forms, social representations and the axiological nature of the language. According to V. G. Gak, the aspect of behavior is reflected in the language sphere as follows: firstly, a verbal reply in some definite cultural spheres and conditions; and secondly, the general trends (constants) of the linguistic behavior realized independently from the cultural sphere and reflecting both general rules of producing an utterance and rules of linguistic behavior typical for the society. Along with the content of verbal reactions, communication is defined by the role of non-verbal

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<sup>16</sup> Buuza – steamed meat dumpling – is a Buryat national dish. It is a dumpling made of spiced and minced beef, mutton and pork. It specially resembles a yurt – the dough is tweaked 33 times, making a hole on the upper side.

reactions and behavior, such as gestures, mimics, body language and actions.

### **Conclusion**

It is very important for intercultural communication to know the trends of speech and behavior in a given culture. Linguo-cultural awareness and the ability to use them in certain situations make a foreigner's speech not just accurate, but authentic: he/she naturally behaves in a conversation or dialogue and constructs his/her speech like a native speaker. This is exactly the way cultures can move from conflict and clash to understanding and unity. Most people will never abandon their right to pursue their own good in their own way. However, this will not close borders for cultural interaction and cooperation, as is proved by the peaceful and harmonious way of co-existence of different nations at the Eurasian frontier.

## The Role of Synonymy as a Method of Systematization of Medical Terminology in Intercultural Interaction

VICTORIA KHANTAKOVA & SVETLANA SHVETSOVA<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

The entry of mankind into the era of cooperation and integration of peoples with different cultures, languages, religions and histories gives special importance to intercultural dialogue. It opens the way to harmonize the culture-civilization systems. The effectiveness of such a dialogue depends on how well its participants are able to understand themselves and each other in all spheres of social life. Hence, there is the need to identify factors, provide safe conditions for human understanding in different situations and at different levels. Thus, the development of intercultural dialogue – in the context of global expansion of the information space and the transition to an information model of the society – is directly related to the organization, transmission and understanding of information. In fact, dialogue is the creation and circulation of different messages considered as the “text.” This is one of the basic descriptions in the linguistic science and hence there is an increased interest in linguistics. For, it is concerned with the problems of organization and understanding information in various types of texts/ discourses, and the rules to understand how information is organized in the communication process. This interest is conditioned by certain achievements in the study of these problems in linguistics which are available today.<sup>2</sup> One of these achievements is the recognition that

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. I. P. Galperin: *Text as an Object of Linguistic Research* (Moscow: Nauka, 1981); O. L. Kamenskaya: *Text and Communication: Textbook for Institutes and Faculties of Foreign Languages* (Moscow: Higher Education, 1990); W. Motsch: "Zum Verhältnis von Satz und Text"; *Deutsche Sprache. Zeitschrift für Theorie, Praxis, Dokumentationen*, eds. W. Motsch, M. Reis and I. Rosengren, 18. Jahrgang (1990): S. 97-125; H. Weinrich: *Textgrammatik der deutschen Sprache* (Leipzig, Wien, Zürich: Dudenverlag, 1993); K. Brinker: "Textsortenbeschreibung auf handlungstheoretischer Grundlage (am Beispiel des Erpresserbriefs)"; *Texte-Diskurse-*

the problem of modeling, understanding and generating texts/discourses has as pivotal “the idea of synonymy in the broadest sense of the word.”<sup>3</sup> In this regard, the main tasks of the science of language should include the study and disclosure of mechanisms for generating information with due regard to the synonymous relations of language units in the text/discourse. This is specifically significant for the development of scientific medical discourse.

Hence, the first section of this chapter analyzes the nature and characteristics of scientific medical discourse. For medical discourse to be scientific, we need a terminological system that is adequate and accurate to express the discoveries in medical science. This needs high degree of the use of terminological units, such as synonymous eponym-terms and toponymic terminology, to make medical reflection more scientific and dynamic. This leads to the clarification of the terminological apparatus in medical science in the second section. Determining the exact etiology of a disease by giving a terminological and semantic structure, helps to express accurately different stages of research and discoveries about an illness. The third section speaks of the scope and formation of scientific medical terminology. As new illnesses and their remedies are invented, there is need to find proper terminology to express them. Usually medical science invents terms from Latin and Greek languages and later finds their equivalents in local languages. This use of Latin and Greek prefixes and suffixes to invent new terms, forms a new terminological system that best express the new developments in medical sciences. The fourth section considers synonymy and synonymous relations of medical terms as a method of systematization of medical terminology. Using synonymy to systematize medical terminology helps to organize medical knowledge obtained from medical research. The conclusion points to the fact that standardization of medical terminology by using synonymy would facilitate dialogue among medical scientists of many countries and

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*Interaktionsrollen: Analysen zur Kommunikation im öffentlichen Raum* (Tübingen: Stauffenburg-Verlag, 2002), S. 41-59; W. Krause: "Text und Textsorte in der fremdsprachigen Kommunikation"; *Texte-Diskurse-Interaktionsrollen: Analysen zur Kommunikation im öffentlichen Raum* (Tübingen: Stauffenburg-Verlag, 2002), S. 191-209.

<sup>3</sup> Y. D. Apresyan: *Lexical Semantics: Synonymous Means of Language* (Moscow: Nauka, 1974).

enhance the work of medical specialists. Besides, the creation of a unified medical language not only would bring about greater development in medical and health sciences, but also would lead to developing intercultural and inter-civilizational relations. In the next section, we move on to consider the nature and characteristics of scientific medical discourse.

#### **Nature and Characteristics of Scientific Medical Discourse**

In the life of any culture and society, medical discourse is an important type of discourse. There is a desire for maximum accuracy in the disclosure of the contents in a medical text. This requires an adequate and competent knowledge of the terminological apparatus of a particular terminological system in medicine. In this regard, an appeal to synonymous relations between terms is a priority. Hence, the establishment of the principles for information choices in a relatively homogeneous semantic space is a guarantee for the adequate and accurate expression of thought. Therefore, the successful communications in the scientific field can become representative of different cultures. In scientific discourse, it is a matter of contributing to the solution of fundamental gnoseological objectives. It consists in giving an explanation of the relationships of a scientific concept with the world and terminological units. In other words, it involves receiving the *data* on a scientific concept, tracing its development, the causes of its variability and the conditions of its manifestations. Similarly, the linguistic analysis of synonymous relations between terms and the revelation of identical specific features in their semantic structure make the science of language useful for specialists of other areas of scientific knowledge in the study and regulation of terminology.<sup>4</sup> However, one should keep in mind that all medical classifications are always conditional and are of importance only for this time in terms of the methodology.

Medical discourse is characterized by the high degree of use of terminological units. These should take a particular position in the terminological system of one of the branches of medical science. In principle, they should contribute to the unambiguous correlation between the form and the content of the term. This is a model of the

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. B. N. Golovin: "Some Problems in the Study of Terms"; *Vestnik MSU*, series 10, no.5, Philology (1972).

“ideal” term, within which there is the ratio: one sounding – one meaning, different soundings – different meanings. The tendency of a term to unambiguity is a quite natural consequence of such a ratio. However, due to some objective reasons, this requirement is not always met even within the same terminological system and the model of the “ideal term” does not work. The development in the terminological system toward various meanings and synonymy is observed in practice. It is difficult to remain in the framework of the model of the “ideal term”, since it conceals the danger of failures in professional communication, especially in the era characterized by an ever greater openness to the world community with intensive international professional and scientific contacts. Hence, there is need for term models, in which there is no uncertainty. These polysemy and synonymy are due to the specificity of human thinking, which strives for uniqueness and accuracy while involved in creating new concepts in the expansion and in changing the already operating scientific concepts. It is necessary to agree with the reasoning of many philosophers, when they say that “the world is not obliged to stay within the framework of our mind”<sup>5</sup> because it is so diverse and is in constant development.

Consequently, the process of scientific reflection of this reality is not static, but dynamic. This initial understanding leads not only to the recognition of science as a dynamically developing field of knowledge, but also to the differentiation of knowledge in medicine. We observe its integration with other areas of knowledge. This fact determines the recognition of models in linguistic science, in which we see a transition from the uniqueness to a polysemy of the term. That is why medical science dealing with the problems of human health and encompassing an enormous amount of concentrated experience in solving these problems is not static, but in constant development in the study of the complex medical phenomena. Hence, it is not an exception, when one and the same phenomenon or discovery in medical science is pictured at different times or concurrently, and in different places, is referred to by different eponym terms. By way of illustration, here are some of the terms of the 44 pairs of synonymous eponyms-terms identified in the modern

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<sup>5</sup> M. K. Mamardashvili: *Arrow of Knowledge (Natural Historical Sketch of Epistemology)* (Moscow: “Languages of Russian Culture”, 1997), p. 22.

English ophthalmologic terminological system: *Adson's syndrome* – *Naffziger syndrome*, *Apert-Gallais syndrome* – *Cushing's disease*, *Strumpell's disease* – *Bechterew's disease*. A. G. Strumpell, German ophthalmologist and therapist, discovered this neurological disease called "*spondilitis deformans*" in 1897, in Germany. However, five years earlier, in 1892, the Russian neurologist and psychiatrist, V. M. Bekhterew, had already discovered this disease. These scientists worked independently of each other and often did not have any information on the studies carried out by others in other countries. This instant can serve as an explanation of the existence of eponyms-synonyms.<sup>6</sup> Another example is the toponymic terminology. Appearance of this terminology is connected with the geographical names of the areas, where the disease was discovered and where it typically spread, as in the cases of *Egyptian ophthalmia* and *American leishmaniasis*. This topic takes us to the issue of terminological apparatus in medical science, to which we turn in the next section.

### Terminological Apparatus in Medical Science

Thus, the development in medical science and the improvement in the technology knowledge about diseases considerably extended the significance of the already nominated notions of eponym and toponymic term. In this context, there is need to introduce the *terminological apparatus* – a different sound form of the term according to the change in the content and volume of the concept. An example of this concept is found in the English medical terminology, commonly known as the *Graves' disease*, *hyperthyroidism* or *exophthalmic goiter*. A. I. Abrikosov, a pathologist, discovered and described for the first time about a granular cell tumor of the larynx (*myoblastoma*), in 1926. This illness was given the name of *Abrikosov's tumor*. Later, this disease was repeatedly investigated and as a result new terms "*myoblastoma*" and "*granular cell tumor*" were added to the initial name of this pathology, which, in turn, characterized this disease with greater accuracy. Thus, in due course, when it is possible to determine the exact etiology of a disease, there emerges a new term, which gives accurate knowledge about the attribution of this concept to a certain class. Eponyms may be

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. S. V. Shvetsova: *Linguistic Analysis of the Ways of Formation of the Terms in the Modern Ophthalmologic Terminological System*, Abstract of PH.D Dissertation (Irkutsk: 2005).

forgotten or remain in the memory of the scientist. This is one of the sources of the appearance of synonymous relations in the terminology of medical science. Hence, the reflection of these events in the semantic structure of the term often is relative and approximate. Since there are numerous cases, where in the name of one and the same phenomenon its different characteristics are considered, there appears the notion of synonymous relations in medical terminology. Synonymous relations explicitly and implicitly reflect the flexibility and plasticity of the human mind in using medical terminology. If necessary, it allows us to switch quickly from fixation of some concepts to others in the framework of the uniform semantic space for full and adequate expression of thoughts, to which all tend in various activities.

Considering the synonymous relations between medical terms, it is impossible to ignore the issue of the relationship between science and the naive linguistic world-pictures with their parallel coexistence and their impact on each other. Recording, storing and transferring of specific knowledge about phenomena in medical science are not limited only to science. Hence, there arises the question of the importance of the *data* of science for the organization of social life, in which the processes and phenomena taking place in the human body also have their names. From this we conclude that the methods of fixation of medical knowledge may be extended, which leads to the formation and expansion of already existing synonymic sets of medical terms. Here, we consider the synonymic set consisting of *Botkin's disease*, *infectious hepatitis* and *jaundice*. In the case of *Hepatitis*, we are dealing with the concept representing the result of the theoretical generalizations. Its cognitive structure reflects information from scientific consciousness. In the term "*jaundice*", as in terms created on the basis of common units, information received from everyday consciousness is included. This word is a mental formation, acting as a natural generalization. Thus, the term "*jaundice*" displays the external signs arising in people suffering from this disease – viral hepatitis. In the process of blockage of biliary duct a portion of the bile gets into the blood, making skin and mucous membranes yellowish. The term "*Botkin's disease*" is a proper name, which in no way reflects the symptoms of the disease or its localization in its semantic structure. Consideration of these medical



terms takes us to the question of the scope and formation of scientific medical terminology.

### **Scope and Formation of Scientific Medical Terminology**

As a rule, scientific discourse specifies the scope of intellectual activity. Here, the choice of forms provides an effective solution to the problem, which the person decides at a particular moment. This choice is connected with a phenomenon of rationality, which in its essence consists in rejecting some variants and preferring others. In our case, we speak about the preference of different types of abbreviations to their full names in scientific communication. In fact, it is the choice of synonymous ratio of short or full forms of terminological names. The study of their ratio is the future perspective of the description of medical terminology we could compare: *CRD* – *cone-rod dystrophy*, *Cyl* – *cylinder*, *SLT* – *selective laser trabeculoplasty*.

In the early stages of the formation and development of medical science, many languages were not able to provide the names of scientific concepts with the required accuracy. Therefore, in many cases, borrowed terms and terminological elements of Latin and Greek languages were used. Hence, the use of terminological elements of classical languages is a convenient and common means in the formation of new terms in scientific medical discourse. Over a period of time, these terms become more prevalent. Besides, the words and elements of Greek and Latin origin are more efficient and accurate, and thereby promote effective communication between specialists in the framework of international cooperation, thereby increasing the cognitive-information potential of scientific exchanges. Even though the medical terminology is formed on the basis of the classical languages, learning scientific and technical concepts and the internationalization of their expression by the national languages is accompanied by the development of their equivalent expression in the national languages as well. This long process of borrowing the words of Greek and Latin origin into the terminology of the other languages is accompanied by the formation of synonymous sets, consisting of borrowed and native terms. Let us consider a few examples: *blepharitis parasitica* (Lat) – *parasitic blepharitis* (Eng), *musculus ciliaris* (Lat) – *ciliary muscle* (Eng) and *oculus sinister* (Gk) – *left eye* (Eng).

A significant replenishment of terminological potential in the field of medicine was carried out not only with the help of the lexical units of the Greek-Latin origin, but also of their elements – prefixes and suffixes – due to an easy process of their connection with the lexemes of other languages. The process of word-formation is accompanied by the formation of synonymous relations between Greek and Latin units, which allows the singling out of synonymy at the morphological level along with lexical synonymy in medical terminology. We should include, for example, Latin prefix *con-* and Greek *syn-*, Latin *intra-* and Greek *en-*, *endo-* and *ento-*. Some prefixes are partial synonyms. For example, the Latin prefix *inter-* and Greek *meso-*, *dia-* are synonymous. Only the Greek prefixes are used in the sense of “between” and “in the middle of”. The same can be said about the Greek prefixes *peri-* and *para-*, which are synonymous only in the meaning of “around” and “near”. The Greek prefixes *hyper-* and *epi-* have one and the same meaning: “above the norm” and “above anything.” However, the fields of their use are different: the prefix *hyper-* is used in clinical terminology in the meaning of “above the norm” for a description of the course of a disease or any state; and the prefix *epi-* is used both in clinical and in the anatomical terminology. The above consideration leads us, to analyze synonymy as a method of systematization of medical terminology.

### **Synonymy: A Method of Systematization of Medical Terminology**

From the above-mentioned facts about the use of synonymy, it is clear that how synonymous relations are formed on the lexical and morphological levels. This fact testifies to the possibility of using the criterion of synonymy to develop the theoretical model of analysis of integrative interaction of synonymous units of one and multilevel accessories<sup>7</sup> and determine synonymy in medical terminology as a system of opposites. However, it is a flexible system of opposites within a single semantic space. From this point of view, the emergence of synonymous terms in the medical science could not be regarded as excessive and unfortunate because thanks to contrasts

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. V. M. Khantakova: *Synonymy of Forms and Synonymy of Meanings: A Theoretical Model of the Analysis of Integrative Interaction between Synonymous Units of One- and Multilevel Belonging* [Text]: The Dissertation of Doctor of Philological Sciences: 10.02.04 (Irkutsk: 2006), p. 335.

within a single semantic whole a medical term takes a clearly identified and defined place in the terminological system.

The knowledge of these relations and the place of each synonym in the terminological system acquire decisive significance with impact on the success of understanding during communication between the members of the scientific medical society. Hence, there is the need to study and determine synonymous relations in the medical terminological system. Besides, synonymous relations play a very significant role in organizing the knowledge obtained from outside information and in the process of the cognition of the surrounding reality. Disruption in these relations happens due to the lack of knowledge of synonyms. This can block the possibility of understanding scientific medical phenomena. We should not let this happen in activities associated with the treatment of illnesses and saving human life. All this testifies to the fact that the knowledge of the synonymous relations within the medical terminological system is one of the most important regulators of the activities of specialists from different countries in medical practice. Hence, it is important and necessary to discover and fix synonymous relations in the medical terminological system. Therefore, according to the International Organization for Standardization, the need to include all synonyms: the standard jargon and the professionally-dialectal synonyms into the first stage of unification and systematization of general terminology, and medical terminology in particular.

### **Conclusion**

Medical terminology has a high degree of consistency due to clear and regularly manifested synonymous relations and that synonymy plays an important role in the systematization of medical terminology. Hence, one of the main tasks of medical terminology is the description of terminological units in terms of synonymy. It would further contribute to the quality of unified standardized terminology which is necessary for the dialogue among medical scientists of different countries. Synonymy would significantly facilitate the work of the specialists in the medical field of knowledge. Besides, the creation of a unified medical language would enhance developing inter-cultural and inter-civilizational relations.



## Conclusion

# Geopolitical Feasability and Sustainability of the Eurasian Union in the 21st Century

VENSUS A. GEORGE

We have come to the end of the volume entitled *Eurasian Frontier: Interrelation of Eurasian Cultures in a Global Age*. The authors of the essays contained in this volume have attempted to unfold the diversity of the Eurasian Frontier: its multicultural, multiethnic, and conflict-prone context; the need to uphold the foundations of the Christian-Communist values in the post-Soviet Russia; the need to integrate transversalism as a study of moral values of the East and the West thereby build bridges between the eastern and the western cultures of Eurasian Frontier; the analysis of social interactions in the Eurasian society at various stages of its historical development so as to develop the Eurasian mentality and national culture, and thereby cultivate a Eurasian national identity; the study of the complementary nature of social liberalism and holism, thereby establishing a liberal political democracy in the Eurasian context; recognizing the importance of the other in understanding oneself and one's culture and the use of this approach as a means of cross-cultural dialogue and communication in the Eurasian Frontier; acknowledging the ecological unity of the Eurasian Frontier, thereby foster the spiritual unity of the entire humankind living in this planet; the need to improve the socio-economic conditions, enhance regional cooperation among sovereign states, form international legal framework, and create anti-crisis centers, thereby bringing about the end of political conflicts and separatist outlook of many ethnic groups among the nations of the Eurasian Frontier; the study of Eurasian literature so as to highlight the common bonds that bind the nations of the Eurasian Frontier, thereby broadening the consciousness of the new civilizational space that is universally valid and bring people together; the need to develop a harmonious world outlook that can help to create an organic unity of the material and the spiritual aspects, and work for the sustainable development of the nations of the Eurasian Frontier and the world at large; to capture the wisdom contained in the Eurasian legends, tales and folklore, and let them

guide the Eurasian national spirit and identity; learning to cope with such cultural conflicts and clashes, by forming efficient system of communication based on the awareness of similarities and differences among the cultures of the Eurasian Frontier; and creating a unified medical language so as to bring about greater development in medical and health sciences, and thereby effectively develop intercultural and inter-civilizational relations.

All the themes contained in this volume express the deeper desire inherent in the people of the Eurasian Frontier to reintegrate economically and politically the post-Soviet space and establish a Greater Eurasian Union. As we conclude this volume, we would like to consider the feasibility of the concept of the Greater Eurasian Union and its sustainability in the present geopolitical contexts of the Eurasian Frontier nations and the world at large. In elaborating this theme, first, we will clarify the notion of Eurasian Union and then speak of its feasibility and sustainability in the present Eurasian and global geopolitical order.

### **Concept of the Eurasian Union**

Since the collapse of Soviet Union, there have been a number of attempts, particularly by the Russian leadership, to reintegrate the post-Soviet space into an economic and a sociopolitical union by bringing together the sovereign states that became autonomous and independent after the breakup of the U.S.S.R. Some examples of such initiatives are the creation of the Union State of Russia and Belarus in the 1990's; the Commonwealth of Independent States initiated immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union; the Eurasian Economic Community launched in 2000; the Eurasian Economic Union initiated as a Customs Union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan in 2006, and the GUUAM group launched in 1997, that included the autonomous states of Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova.<sup>1</sup> Thus, in the present day political parlance, the term "Eurasian Union" is used to refer to several entities. However, it has come to stand for the real Eurasian Economic Union that provides a common economic space among Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan; and the imaginary Eurasian Union – a geopolitical

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Nicu Popescu: *Eurasian Union: The Real, the Imaginary and the Likely* (Paris: European Union Institute for Security Study, 2014), p. 7.

superbloc, sometimes referred to as the Greater Eurasian Union – that is fuelled by the geopolitical aspirations of the Russian President Vladimir Putin.<sup>2</sup> To quote Nicu Popescu on this point:

In fact, however, there are two Eurasian Unions: one real, and the other imaginary. One is economic, and the other geopolitical. The real Eurasian Economic Union is an international organization like many others. It has its legal identity, a secretariat and is staffed by bureaucrats ... But there is another Eurasian Union, one fuelled by the geopolitical aspirations.<sup>3</sup>

In this section, we clarify the concept of Eurasian Union by analyzing the notions of Eurasian Economic Union and Greater Eurasian Union with geopolitical ambitions.

#### *Eurasian Economic Union*

Of the many such initiatives to bring into a union the cultures and nations of the Eurasian Frontier, the only project that has seen the light of day is the formation of the Eurasian Economic Union. It was initiated in 2006 as the Customs Union among Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, launched in 2010, and mutated in 2012 into a Common Economic Space between these three countries. In May, 2014, this project was given a legal status by the signing of the Eurasian Union Treaty by the political leadership of these countries, which officially came into effect on January 01, 2015.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the Eurasian Economic Union exists already. Its physical headquarters includes a bureaucratic structure with a staff of one thousand persons housed in an eleven storey glass and steel building on Vivaldi Plaza in a business complex near Paveletsky railway station in Moscow. It is an international organization like many others, having its legal identity and a secretariat. Its member states exchange trade concessions among themselves and rely on the institution as an external enforcer of rules.<sup>5</sup>

The organization of the Eurasian Economic Union has a four-tiered governance structure that is more pyramidal. At the lowest

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 19.

<sup>3</sup> Nicu Popescu: *Eurasian Union: The Real, the Imaginary and the Likely*, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 9.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

level of decision-making is the executive, the "College of the Eurasian Economic Commission". It has nine members, three from each of the member countries. Once Armenia joins the Eurasian Economic Union, the total number will be reduced to eight, two per each of the four countries. These members are called ministers or members of the board and they preside over the twenty-three departments of the Eurasian Economic Union. The chair of this commission is appointed with tenure of four years. The second in the order is the Council of the Economic Commission, which oversees the activities of the executive. This consists of the three serving deputy prime ministers of the governments of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. It follows the annual rotating presidency. This council takes most of the decisions. On the political front there are two more levels of decision-making bodies: the High Eurasian Economic Council of prime ministers and the High Economic Council of presidents. This four-tier system of administrators steer the diverse activities of the Eurasian Economic Union.<sup>6</sup>

Initially the decision-making was done through a system based on weighted voting, in which Russia had 55% of the votes while Belarus and Kazakhstan had 22.5% each. Two thirds of the total votes were necessary to ratify a decision. This system ensured that no decision is imposed by Russia alone, while no decision could be taken by Belarus and Kazakhstan without the consent of Russia. However, this system was removed. At present decision are made based on the principle of unanimity between the three states, each state enjoying veto power over every decision made. This change was made to attract other Eurasian Frontier nations to join the Eurasian Economic Union.<sup>7</sup>

#### *Greater Eurasian Union*

Russian President, Vladimir Putin, and other "Eurasianists" in the Kremlin's corridors of power nurture the hope that over a period of time the economic integration of the nations of the Eurasian Frontier represented by the Eurasian Economic Union in its present arrangement could evolve into a politically integrated, Russian-led geopolitically relevant Eurasian Union.<sup>8</sup> President Putin launched

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 19.



"Eurasian Integration" as the key foreign policy objective of his third presidential term in the Kremlin. His vision – in proposing this concept the Eurasian Union – was not only to foster a new round of post-Soviet reintegration, but also to turn the Eurasian Union into one of the "building blocs" on a par with the E.U., U.S., N.A.F.T.A., A.P.E.C. and A.S.E.A.N, having geopolitical and global importance. Such a Eurasian Union will crown President Vladimir Putin's efforts to reintegrate the post-Soviet states, thereby make it an instrument to lift Russia up and make it a distinctive pole of influence in a multipolar world by reversing the "civilized divorce" of former Soviet republics from the U.S.S.R.<sup>9</sup>

President Putin expressed this belief in one of his interviews with federal television channels. For him, the Soviet Union was in essence "Russia, but just under a different name."<sup>10</sup> In fact, many in Russia, who accept President Putin's line of thinking, believe that Eurasian integration "could destroy the global dominance of the West and put an end to U.S. hegemony."<sup>11</sup> The Eurasianists in the Kremlin would like to see the real Eurasian Union – as represented by the regional economic body becoming the first step towards establishing the Greater European Union – as represented by President Putin's vision of a geopolitical superbloc. Thus, they see the current Eurasian Economic Union to become the engine of the future geopolitical Eurasian Union.<sup>12</sup> Now the question is whether Eurasian Economic Union can sustain itself and develop into a viable economic forum comprising of many of the nations of the Eurasian Frontier and serve as a means of establishing a geopolitically viable Greater Eurasian Union. This takes us to the question of the feasibility and sustainability of these two types of Eurasian Unions.

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Vladimir Putin: "Novyi Intergrationnyi Proekt dlia Evrazii"; *Izvestia*, 3 October (2011). Available at: <http://izvestia.ru/news/502761>. Cf. also Nicu Popescu: *Eurasian Union: The Real, the Imaginary and the Likely*, p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Interview given by Vladimir Putin on the three federal TV channels, 18 November (2011). Available at: <http://www.vg-news.ru/news-intervyu-putina-trem-federalnym-kanalam-polnyi-tekst>.

<sup>11</sup> Elena Ponomareva and Lubov Shishilina: "Krah Operatsii Vostochnoe Partnerstvo"; 18 June (2014). Available at: [http://zerkalokryma.ru/specialproject/novorossiya/predsedatelstvo\\_latvii\\_v\\_es2015\\_vostochnoe\\_partnerstvo\\_vmesto\\_i\\_li\\_vmeste\\_s\\_rossiej/](http://zerkalokryma.ru/specialproject/novorossiya/predsedatelstvo_latvii_v_es2015_vostochnoe_partnerstvo_vmesto_i_li_vmeste_s_rossiej/).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Nicu Popescu: *Eurasian Union: The Real, the Imaginary and the Likely*, p. 19.

### **Sustainability of the Eurasian Economic Union and Feasibility Greater Eurasian Union**

Here, we raise the question whether the Eurasian Economic Union which officially saw light of day on January 01, 2015, can be sustained as a strong economic bloc including many of the Eurasian Frontier nations of the post-Soviet era, and thereby become the means of establishing the geopolitically viable Greater Eurasian Union in the twenty-first century. We would also like to analyze the feasibility of establishing the Greater Eurasian Union, given the present political situation in the Eurasian Frontier and the world at large.

#### *Sustainability of Eurasian Economic Union*

It is rather too early to speak of the economic impact of the Eurasian Economic Union because its economic foundations look weak and uncertain. The reason for this claim is the rise of the economic weight of the nations, such as the United States of America, the European Union, China and India. These nations have captured the first four places of economic weight, leaving the Eurasian Economic Union to the fifth place. Thus, there has come about a considerable decline of Russia's economic weight and importance as the trading partner for the post-Soviet nations for the last two decades. Hence, the economic rise of the above-mentioned world powers, particularly the European Union and China, has greatly changed the manner of interdependence in the vast territory that was once the Soviet Union. As a result, the European Union and China have become greater trading partners than Russia for every post-Soviet nation, except Belarus and Uzbekistan.<sup>13</sup> There is also the issue of tariffs when the members of the Eurasian Economic Union would like to get access to other trading blocs, such as the World Trade Organization and the European Union. These factors have made the Eurasian Economic Union, seen purely in terms of trade, not entirely attractive; and thus has slowed down the process of other post-Soviet nations joining the Eurasian Economic Union.<sup>14</sup>

Despite these limitations of the economic foundations of the Eurasian Economic Union, the project is moving forward because of

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. Nicu Popescu: *Eurasian Union: The Real, the Imaginary and the Likely*, pp. 11, 16.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

the political will and determination of the Russian leadership. Reintegrating economically and politically all the former Soviet Republics has been the key issue in the foreign policy of Russia since the breakup of the U.S.S.R. Hence, Russia has put in a whole system of other incentives for the post-Soviet Republics so as to lead them into a fuller Eurasian integration, even though it is becoming more difficult for Russia for lack of resources. Russia offers a whole range of subsidies, such as cheaper gas, loans, or repayment in case of tariffs arising from other trade blocs. Subsidies on gas, for instance, will cut heating bills for most of the people of the countries joining the Eurasian Economic Union and therefore, is a popular and attractive proposition. Similarly, Russian labor market is open for all members of Eurasian Economic Union and so migration to Russia becomes very easy.<sup>15</sup> Nicu Popescu comments on this point as follows:

It is also Vladimir Putin's personal project. He has partly staked his place in the history books on reintegrating the post-Soviet space – if not all, then most of it – and made it the centerpiece of his third presidential term. For Putin does not look at Russia's foreign policy engagement strictly in terms of financial logic: he is guided by another rationale, and is ready to spend a few billion a year on a foreign policy project that, in his opinion, brings geopolitical benefits to his country, as well as domestic political benefits for his presidency. Furthermore, the Eurasian Union enjoys quite a wide base of political and societal support in Russia.<sup>16</sup>

There is domestic political support to concept of Eurasian Union. However, there are several strands of Russian domestic opinion on this issue. The main-stream supporters of the project are those who support the emergence of Russia as an assertive great power (*derzhavniki*). This group consists of sections of the society ranging from the nostalgic communist era nationalists to liberal imperialists.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 14. Cf. also "Missia Rossii v 21 veke"; *NezavisimayaGazeta*, 1 October (2010). Available online at: [http://www.ng.ru/ideas/2003-10-01/1\\_mission.html](http://www.ng.ru/ideas/2003-10-01/1_mission.html).

They see the Eurasian Economic Union as a first step towards reasserting Russia as one of the regional poles of influence in a multipolar world, comparable to the European Union or N.A.T.O. The liberal groups visualize the Eurasian Economic Union as a free-trade group with more flexible rules, more open to new members and with more equality between members, which, in turn become a more competitive and corruption-free trade group.<sup>18</sup> The former see Eurasian Economic Union as a means to establish a politically powerful Eurasian Union, while the latter perceive it as a liberal trade-bloc that can be good for Russia and other partners in the group.

In the present situation it seems impossible that the existing Eurasian Economic Union is capable of bringing about a geopolitically powerful Greater Eurasian Union. For, the recently begun Eurasian Economic Union to work, it needs a small number of countries, a manageable number of internal tensions, a reasonable time-frame for its goals to be actualized, and some economic benefit to make it self-sustaining, without any financial loss for each of the states involved in the union. Besides, it needs to focus on strengthening its internal organization before, it can expand. On the other hand, the logic of geopolitical Greater Eurasian Union is totally different. It needs a union of larger number of countries to show that the present Russia as a geopolitically powerful state nationally for domestic consumption and internationally for the world to see and acknowledge. The proposed union should become a reality relatively soon, before Russia loses its economic relevance in the post-Soviet space to the European Union or to China. Thus, there is an inbuilt difficulty in the Eurasian Economic Union steering the emergence of a Greater Eurasian European Union. For, the former needs more time to emerge as a strong economic bloc, while the later needs to be brought about quickly. Any rush to expand creates the risk of adding too many carriages to the train of Eurasian Economic Union and pushing the Eurasian engine to drive too fast will derail it.<sup>19</sup> Hence, in the present situation, the European Economic Union cannot serve as a means to bring about a geopolitically powerful Greater Eurasian Union.

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. Nicu Popescu: *Eurasian Union: The Real, the Imaginary and the Likely*, pp. 14-16.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20

Similarly it seems that the Eurasian Economic Union in its present form is not sustainable. The fundamentals of the Eurasian economy are weak. Russia's economic clout has declined since the collapse of the U.S.S.R. The other post-Soviet nations are also economically not that strong. Many of these nations have not come forward to join this economic bloc. The Russian leadership maintains the existing Eurasian Economic Union by spending its own money to subsidize its poorer neighbors, who are part of the union. Again, Russia keeps its labor-market open by a visa-free entry for the citizens of the member countries so that migration into Russia from post-Soviet states has become alarmingly large so that about 82% of Russians now favor introducing visas for the countries of Central Asia. Anti-immigrant sentiments have become strong among certain sections of the Russian people and have degenerated into violent anti-immigrant riots in the Moscow suburb of Biryulevo in 2013. The opinion of the Russian nationalist opposition on this issue is not a strong undercurrent compared to Putin's popularity; but if Putin's popularity slumps the Kremlin may not find it easy to ignore the nationalist opposition and its views on this issue.<sup>20</sup> It is clear from what we have said that Russia may not succeed in sustaining the Eurasian Economic Union in its present mode of operation, without doing a great deal of economic and sociopolitical damage to the Russian nation and its people.

#### *Feasibility of Greater Eurasian Union*

Despite the fact that Russia has tried hard to promote a viable structure for post-Soviet reintegration, even using the Eurasian Economic Union as a means to achieve this goal, the less it seems to have worked. The reason that appears to support the above claim is that many of the post-Soviet nations are relying on other world economic powers, such as the United States, the European Union and China than on Russia. These nations have become increasingly important players in the post-Soviet space, both by choice and by their economic interests, and demand from the post-Soviet states for a greater foreign policy and economic partnership with them.

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18. Cf. also Nicu Popescu: "The Moscow riots: Russian nationalism and the Eurasian Union"; *EUISS Brief no. 42*, November (2013). Available online at: [http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Brief\\_42\\_Russian\\_nationalism.pdf](http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Brief_42_Russian_nationalism.pdf).

Greater partnership with these nations gives the post-Soviet states the possibility to get tied into other international trade networks and commitments that complicate their possible accession to Eurasian Economic Union and through it to a Greater Eurasian Union. Hence, the real obstruction to the Russian project of Eurasia comes from post-Soviet states themselves. For, they either pay lip-service to Russian leadership or seek to frustrate Russia's reintegration initiatives by driving up its costs. As a result, Russia's judicious efforts to widen and deepen the Eurasian Economic Union to enhance its geopolitical ambitions seem frustrated as there is not much time to achieve either consolidation or expansion.<sup>21</sup>

According to Nicu Popescue, "the truth is that most post-Soviet states have enough wiggle room in regional politics to avoid Russian domination and have ruthlessly availed of this either to distance themselves from Russia or to extract as many concessions from Moscow as possible. This has constantly complicated the implementation of Russia's vision for a geopolitical Eurasia."<sup>22</sup> Hence, he concludes on unfeasibility of the Greater Eurasian Union as follows:

As comparison with the economies of the E.U., U.S. or China would suggest, Russia generates a much weaker gravitational pull than other global economic powers. By launching its project of a Eurasian Union, the Kremlin hoped to compensate for its relative economic weakness through a high-profile display of political assertiveness. However, Putin's excessive political zeal and determination to reverse post-Soviet disintegration has played a key role in starting the conflagration in Ukraine and turning the post-Soviet 'civilized divorce' into a highly uncivilized one. Instead of smoothing the path towards post-Soviet reintegration, Russia finds that it has painted itself into a geopolitical corner, where no post-Soviet states want to join. Against this backdrop, Putin's dream of a Eurasian Union that will evolve into a powerful geopolitical bloc seems much less likely to materialize.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. Nicu Popescu: *Eurasian Union: The Real, the Imaginary and the Likely*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

### Conclusion

Thus, the project of the geopolitical Eurasian Union is facing a number of difficulties. The current and possible future members are ambiguous about their stand in relation to this project and are disinterested in it. Even those who show interest in this project do not want to go beyond economic partnership and surrender their political independence. Since the economics of the Eurasian Economic Union rests on uncertain grounds, there is the need for financial subsidies and incentives from the Russia – which in the long run would be unmanageable. Besides, Eurasia – with Russia having a few small states as allies, many of whom are reluctant partners – can hardly become the geopolitical heavyweight that Russian president Putin hopes to build. Hence, the concept of a geopolitically powerful Greater Eurasian Union seems not only unsustainable, but also not feasible in the twenty-first century geopolitical situation of the Eurasian Frontier and the world at large.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.





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## **The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy**

### **Purpose**

Today there is urgent need to attend to the nature and dignity of the person, to the quality of human life, to the purpose and goal of the physical transformation of our environment, and to the relation of all this to the development of social and political life. This, in turn, requires philosophic clarification of the base upon which freedom is exercised, that is, of the values which provide stability and guidance to one's decisions.

Such studies must be able to reach deeply into one's culture and that of other parts of the world as mutually reinforcing and enriching in order to uncover the roots of the dignity of persons and of their societies. They must be able to identify the conceptual forms in terms of which modern industrial and technological developments are structured and how these impact upon human self-understanding. Above all, they must be able to bring these elements together in the creative understanding essential for setting our goals and determining our modes of interaction. In the present complex global circumstances this is a condition for growing together with trust and justice, honest dedication and mutual concern.

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) unites scholars who share these concerns and are interested in the application thereto of existing capabilities in the field of philosophy and other disciplines. Its work is to identify areas in which study is needed, the intellectual resources which can be brought to bear thereupon, and the means for publication and interchange of the work from the various regions of the world. In bringing these together its goal is scientific discovery and publication which contributes to the present promotion of humankind.

In sum, our times present both the need and the opportunity for deeper and ever more progressive understanding of the person and of the foundations of social life. The development of such understanding is the goal of the RVP.

### **Projects**

A set of related research efforts is currently in process:

1. *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change: Philosophical Foundations for Social Life*. Focused, mutually coordinated research teams in university centers prepare volumes as part of an integrated philosophic search for self-understanding differentiated by culture and civilization. These evolve more adequate understandings of the person in society and look to the cultural heritage of each for the resources to respond to the challenges of its own specific contemporary transformation.

2. *Seminars on Culture and Contemporary Issues*. This series of 10 week crosscultural and interdisciplinary seminars is coordinated by the RVP in Washington.

3. *Joint-Colloquia* with Institutes of Philosophy of the National Academies of Science, university philosophy departments, and societies. Underway since 1976 in Eastern Europe and, since 1987, in China, these concern the person in contemporary society.

4. *Foundations of Moral Education and Character Development*. A study in values and education which unites philosophers, psychologists, social scientists and scholars in education in the elaboration of ways of enriching the moral content of education and character development. This work has been underway since 1980.

The personnel for these projects consists of established scholars willing to contribute their time and research as part of their professional commitment to life in contemporary society. For resources to implement this work the Council, as 501 C3 a non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Columbia, looks to various private foundations, public programs and enterprises.

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