

Politics and Culture

Universalism and particularism in discourses about Russia

Gunnar Opeide

А нынче все умы в тумане

Puškin: *Evgenij Onegin*, 3, xii

THERE IS a certain symmetry in the salad of high-sounding concepts in the title of my paper. Of course much can be said about the relations between these four concepts and the realities they seek to distinguish, but to simplify for my purposes here, I say that politics tends to be coupled with universalism and culture with particularism. If we look at Russia from the point of view of Russian as well as foreign intellectuals and of what they expected of her, rather than from the point of view of Russia's political actors, that is on a discursive level, I suggest that there are certain periods when politics is urged in the name of universalist ideas to take the offensive over and against culture and its particularism. Such periods are the 18th century and the Soviet period. Inversely, there are other periods when culture fights off—or is encouraged to fight off—universalism and try to influence politics in accordance with particularistic, nationally or even locally, parochially oriented prescriptions. This pattern largely coincides with the general pattern of European intellectual history.

I repeat, this distinction is largely an intellectual model ; that is, it makes most sense when describing intellectual history. In political and economic history it is much less clear, though still at times discernible.

The 18th century was largely a century of politics and universalism when culture was reduced to such insignificance as to leave nothing more than a blank sheet of paper for the rulers to write on, in

accordance with the political and philosophical wisdom of the time. It was the century of the intellectuals' courtship of power, when it would have been possible to write on walls: Voltaire and Friedrich is true, and Diderot and Ekaterina is true.

The 19th century was different. First and foremost, it was more diversified; there was no single, politico-philosophical discourse that dominated the international intellectual scene, as was largely true of the 18th century. Philosophical universalism stagnated and receded in favor of particularist discourses. Most Western intellectuals withdrew into romantic individualism, bourgeois philistinism, pragmatism, the academic world, or into various national-romantic 'isms'. With some inconsequential exceptions, Western intellectuals showed little positive interest for Russia, Russian rulers and Russian power. True, there was at times a strong Russophobia and fear of Russian-Asiatic despotism and a correspondingly strong Polonophilia; but most intellectuals had no schemes or programmes of a sufficiently universalist kind to ensure a special place or role for Russia. Russia was ignored or expected to mind her own business.

Politics and the course of history and economic development do not change as fast and abruptly as intellectual fashion and currents frequently do. Politics and economy are in some of their most essential aspects circumscribed by a limited number of fundamental generalities which—at least in the long run—tend to give them a certain inertia and stability. In the 18th century the real politics of kings and governments was less universalist than the contemporaneous philosophical discourse. For the 19th century the inverse is true: politics was less particularist than the discourses.¹

What one can say, then, is that European history during the 19th century went slowly in a universalist direction (one of the best descriptions and forecasts is still the first part of *The Communist Manifesto*). This was the central objective precondition for the emergence

¹ It is fair to say that even the absolutist monarchs had more sober and modest ideas of the practical efficiency of their own power than had *les philosophes*. Ekaterina herself said to Diderot that he might have brilliant ideas which might produce beautiful books, but lead to sad results in practical life. She said that he had forgotten the difference between his position and hers. 'You work only upon paper which submits to everything and opposes no obstacles either to your imagination or to your pen, whereas I, poor Empress, I work upon human nature which is irascible and easily offended [la peau humaine qui est bien autrement irritable et chatouilleuse]' (Haslip 1977, 232; parts of the French original are quoted in Strugnell 1973, 177). And Friedrich said similar things about Voltaire. Sometimes one finds more wisdom in kings and other political rulers than in intellectuals.

of marxism which was the most potent reemergence of universalism in European intellectual discourse in the 19th century. This is not to say that it was hegemonic; while history went in a universalist direction, most influential discourses were either individualist/modernist, or nationalist/particularist.

The 20th century is divided. Although the marxist, universalist discourse became the discourse of power in Russia from 1917 and attracted a visible part of Western intellectuals, the dominating discourse in the first half of the century was largely particularist and nationalist, especially in view of the rise of fascism and nazism. The victors of World War II, however, provided the foundation and the core for two competing universalist discourses, two 'grand narratives', that of international communism and that of Western liberal democracy and Western modernity. To some extent, the last one seems to have been fuelled and received its final form as a response to the former. Ten years ago, the first discourse as well as its real, material and political foundation collapsed. What has been the outcome of this? If we compare what Fukuyama wrote in 1989 and Huntington in 1993, we see how rapidly culture and particularism have come back into the intellectual discourse. Postmodernists will have it that the second universalist discourse has collapsed as well. Maybe one can say that on the one hand it ran out of fuel, on the other hand that it was already in a process of decomposition.

I shall look in more detail at the universalism of Enlightenment and its collapse at the turn of the 18th century. I return then to the outcome of the collapse of the communist (and possibly the democratic, modernist) universalism. In the last part of my paper I consider some themes of Russian intellectual history in the light of the universalism-particularism dichotomy.

The figure of the intelligent, or the intellectual, emerged in the Enlightenment in France. *Les philosophes* combined a radical, critical stance towards society with elitism and fascination with power. It was more important to enlighten and influence the powerful than anyone else, so that they could use their power to put right what was wrong in the world. The most powerful were usually the monarchs. Having no success with the French kings, the philosophers turned to more distant monarchs who appeared so more promising as they were seen to wield real absolute power. The more to the East, the

more absolute their power appeared to be. The philosophers introduced a new version of Plato's idea of the Philosopher-King; but now his function, the roles of power and wisdom, was divided in two parts. The most famous couples of this kind were Voltaire and Friedrich II of Prussia, and Diderot and Ekaterina II.

Let us assume that those two monarchs exercised strong and absolute power. But why believe that they could be mobilized for the tasks and ideas of the Enlightenment philosophers? Certainly, the philosophers nourished grand illusions about what power could achieve. In addition, parts of the answer must be sought on the side of the monarchs as well as the philosophers.

Friedrich and Ekaterina were both rare specimens of the race of monarchs; they were artists and intellectuals themselves, that is, almost colleagues of the French philosophers, a fact which contributed to the illusions of what could be achieved through their cooperation with philosophical wisdom.

Next, we have to focus on the civilization-barbarism divide in Europe, or, according to Larry Wolff (1994), the constituting of Eastern Europe as the 'other' in relation to the West. Evidently, there was something at play that we might call international cultural prestige. The Eastern realms were considered barbarian, or at least less civilized than France; from the French point of view, Germany was already something else. The Eastern realms were, in fact, considered partly barbarian by their monarchs as well. Friedrich was regarded as a cultural 'Germanophobe', he wrote mainly in French, and the Prussian Academy in Berlin was under heavy French domination and influence. Ekaterina on her part was already *europäisch gebildet* by her background. The French would sincerely believe that the Eastern monarchs really wanted to civilize their realms, not least because the monarchs themselves made the French philosophers believe so. They made them believe so because the latter were the jury or referees who decided in the international contest about who was civilized or not. Enlightenment, Western education, polish of manners etc enjoyed high status; in particular, to be highly estimated by those who were the masters of wisdom, *les philosophes*, was a mark of status. These were received and listened to in the highest circles of power, though not so much in France itself, and not in England. But in most other European countries: Spain, Italy, Germany, Austria, Poland, and Russia. The flattering was mutual, the philosophers returned the

compliments, naming Friedrich 'Solomon of the North'¹, and the two Russian empresses Elizaveta and Ekaterina 'Semiramis of the North'.

The East-West civilizational divide must be thought of with reference to the concept of universalism. The differences between West and East were so easily conceived of and conceptualized because of the Enlightenment's universalist pretensions. The principal difference between countries and nations was that some were more enlightened and civilized than others. Beyond that there were no essential differences. Human nature was the same everywhere. The world was basically uniform, and the ideas of the rationalist philosophers were supposed to have universal validity. Diderot comments as follows to Ekaterina's assertion in her *Nakaz (Instruction)* that 'Russia is a European power':

It matters little whether it is Asiatic or European. The important point is that it should be great, flourishing and lasting. Manners [mœurs] are everywhere the result of legislation and government; they are not African or Asiatic or European. They are good or bad. [...] If what Peter I brought to Russia was good in Europe, then it should be good everywhere. (Diderot 1992, 85)

The upper, educated layers in each European country had much more in common than they had with the popular majority in their respective countries. The essential difference between countries was the difference in the size of the educated layers, and the task was to equalize and increase the size. The essential separating line was drawn horizontally between layers and segments within each country, not vertically between countries.

The common denominator of the 18 th century Enlightenment, rationalism and classicism was universalism. By contrast, romanticism may be considered as post-universalism. I shall briefly suggest a few ideas on how the change came about.

First, France itself made havoc and revolution out of universalism and frightened the adherents of Russian enlightened absolutism and the rest of Europe. In Ekaterina's opinion the French revolution with its *terreur* and regicide was worse than the Pugačev rebellion.

Second, there were developments internal to intellectual history itself. I shall draw attention to two kinds of such developments. The first is the dissenting voices, Montesquieu, and especially Rousseau. The second is a consequence of the diffusion of the Enlightenment. The influence of Rousseau comes largely in union with the latter consequence.

France was the core of the Enlightenment, and from this core it spread to large parts of Europe. The universal pretensions of the Enlightenment did not trouble most French intellectual milieus which regarded its own culture as a kind of universal culture. Therefore, reaction and resistance against the Enlightenment was late and it was bound to be an internal French affair, but when the reaction came it was sharp. In other countries, the situation was more complicated. In spite of, or rather even because of its universalism, the Enlightenment became nationalized when it spread from France: we talk of a German Enlightenment, a Russian Enlightenment etc. German Enlightenment gradually developed a critical opposition between German and French, Russian Enlightenment between Russian and French. The attitudes towards Enlightenment ideas became more diffuse and ambivalent, endorsing and critical at the same time. More and more people began to look at the universal pretensions of the Enlightenment as French pretensions.

It is at this point we should take a look at Rousseau. Outside France he was cited in support by those who reacted against the French dominance. Outside France the internal split in French Enlightenment was transformed into an opposition between the Enlightenment as national projects and the Enlightenment as a French project disguised in universal draperies. It is easy to see that Voltaire and Rousseau were more in agreement as to what they were against than as to what they were for. Both criticized and condemned prejudices and traditions. The great positive word for Voltaire, however, was reason, and for Rousseau, nature. Even though both concepts or values are universal, and both thinkers were equally great rationalists, which leads them both to a fundamental critique of the contemporary French society, their critique acquires a radically different historical status. Voltaire believed in progress and could discern a positive moment in history, in the history of reason and civilization, in opposition to the history of prejudices, fanaticism and stupidity. For Rousseau history in its entirety was in conflict with nature. And in particular, this whole enlightened civilized minority, on which Voltaire prided himself, was more contrary to nature than anything else. The larger and the more civilized a society, the more it had deviated from what was natural, good etc. Hence Rousseau's sympathy with small, primitive and undeveloped societies: here people were living in harmony with nature, closer to his ideal of the *noble savage*.²

² This ideal is of course not to be equated with barbarism. Rousseau's critique of the westernizing efforts of the Russian tsars of the 18th century amounts to finding that the Russian people remains and will remain in a state of barbarism. His so-called Polish project lets us see his Rus-sophobia as a foretaste of what was to come in the next century. The same point can be made as regards Friedrich II's views on Russia; an enlightener himself, he definitely did not share the French enlighteners' optimism concerning Russia (Groh 1961, 57-59).

It is precisely Rousseau's emphasis on everything natural and inartificial which supports and reinforces the reactions against the French dominance in the other national Enlightenments. German Rous-seauanism maintained that nature expresses itself more genuinely in simple peoples and societies not yet corrupted by urban and refined civilization. Nature spoke German, certainly not French. This nationalism in its first stage was not necessarily inimical to enlightenment, only to the presumptuous French dominance.

Only when this dominance became militarily palpable and politically humiliating, in the Napoleonic era, did nationalism finally shoot through the whole universalist pretense of Enlightenment. I take as example the German philosopher Fichte. He distinguishes between cultures and languages which have been faithful to their roots and cultures which have broken the connection with their origins. German culture is the supreme example of the first, French culture of the second. As an antidote to social conflict, class struggle and revolution, nationalism stood out as the best way to get all members of a nation on one side. In his *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (1808) Fichte addressed the whole German people. Actually, only the Germans can have a fatherland, for only the Germans have a culture which permits them to live in contact with their racial origins. When the political scientist John McClelland, paraphrasing Fichte, uses the expression 'the organic freedom of the national consciousness', he makes the comment that in using these words as if they had a clear meaning, it becomes obvious how easy it is to start speaking about German nationalism in 'German nationalisms own language'.

Presumably a thinker like Fichte would say that a foreigner has no business using language like this (and particularly not in translation) because its full meaning must necessarily be inaccessible to him. Only Germans can be on Fichte's wavelength, and the reception of what he has to say must necessarily sound fuzzy to foreigners. That cannot matter to Fichte, because [...] if *you* can't receive the message clearly, then all that shows is that the message is not meant for you. All those incapable of receiving the message in the fullness of its clarity are foreigners by definition. If Fichte is right, the most important

political messages in the future will not be addressed to the whole of mankind. (McClelland 1996, 634)

This indicates that nationalism is a quasi-universalist notion. It is particularist in the sense that the nation is seen as internally undifferentiated but culturally different, separated and sometimes alienated from any other nation. It is, however, universalist in the sense that this is true in principle for all nations. The world is universally particularistic.

I see a clear parallel between this German nationalist discourse and the contemporaneous Russian discourse on the part of the so-called *archaisty* in their quarrel with the so-called *novatory*, as well as in the later Slavophile controversy. Fruitful insights could be gained from a comparison between Šiškov's linguistic program and Fichte's ideas on the German language. Šiškov had learned that languages and cultures etc had evolved from common roots and then become differentiated. But he had no interest in understanding or describing this development. He disliked change and differentiation and the new literary style that Karamzin had introduced; theories of development were for him just a means to establish a fixed point back to which the language (or the culture) should devolve. This point was Church Slavonic. He was an ignoramus in linguistics and nobody took seriously his claim that Russian had evolved from Church Slavonic. But his ideas struck nevertheless a cord of understanding sympathy. Both parties in the controversy considered simplicity and naturalness as an ideal and they accused each other of mannerism. What the Karamzinists thought of, however, was a *universal*, universally human (*obsceceloveceskaja*) naturalness, whereas the Šiškovians invoked a *Russian* naturalness. In the linguistic and literary programmes, the criterion for the Karamzinists was *upotreblenie* (actual use of language by the educated classes), for the archaists it was proximity to and connection with the linguistic roots. They argued that there could and should be a great distance between the written literary language (as they wanted to construct it) and the everyday language of the educated classes, and that the first also would be more natural because it would be closer to the roots (Lotman 1992; Uspenskij 1994; Uffelmann 1996).

Karamzin's later role as a precursor of the Slavophiles notwithstanding this literary and linguistic debate heralds much of what is

later to come in Russian intellectual history during the 19th century, especially the Slavophile-Westernizer controversy with all its ramifications. In the new century, Russia's cultural situation became different. Self-confidence and tortuousness mingled in peculiar ways in the intellectuals' search for Russia's place in Europe's family of nations and their own place in the Russian national culture. Whereas the Westernism of the 18th century was a self-evident corollary of the dominating philosophical discourse of the time, this question was more open in the 19th century. Russia was considered as a culture and polity *sui generis*, and was bound to make a choice as to which direction she should follow. In the discussions about the choice one may find many parallels with the corresponding German discussions, and the Russian protagonists also inherited most of their conceptual framework from the Germans. This, however, was the situation seen from the point of view of above all the intellectuals. The situation had not changed so much for the tsars, the rulers, politicians and actors who found themselves in the midst of practical life. As a matter of political, strategical and economical necessity, their politics was Westernism in practice, more or less unconscious, reluctant, and halfhearted Westernism, and they had lost most of the philosophical reassurance and underpinnings which Ekaterina was able to enjoy.

From the point of view of Western intellectuals the changes had, in a sense, an even more principal character. After romanticism and the birth of nationalism, the civilization-barbarism divide was cul-turalized, reformulated in terms of culture and national characters, with biological and organicist metaphors. The horizontal divide distinguishing the upper, civilized layer of each country from the masses, receded in favor of a vertical line dividing whole nations and cultures. De Custine claims to perceive the 'russianness' of the Russian elites when he visits Russia in 1839, and advises the Russians to find their own way instead of imitating Europe. Following Rousseau, he speaks as a slavophile. T reproach the Russians not for what they really are, but for pretending to be what they are not. They are still uncultured, which at least leaves room for hope, but I see them constantly busy aping the other nations, and they ape like apes, making fun of those they imitate. [...] The Russians have rotted before getting ripe' (de Custine 1975, ii of).

In the discourse of the 19th century the East-West divide, the civilization/barbarism divide is still present. In so far as this was seen as a

challenge, a problem and a task to be grappled with, the solution proposed by the 18th century was relatively simple: enlightenment and education, emulation. By contrast, the solution of the 19th century: stick to your own and be yourself, is not at all simple; it is very difficult if one all the same wants to be respected by the West and to have one's country play a role and take an important place in the family of European nations. We have to admit that the Russian intellectuals tried hard.

During the cold war, most people thinking of Russia, or, rather, the Soviet Union, thought of the communist empire, which was red, evil, and different; it was the 'second world'. It was seen to be different not on account of its culture which was outside our purview, but on account of its political system and principles, the evil communist universalism, which threatened our good universalism. The discourse was not about culture; there was rather something metaphysical about it when it was said that we would rather be dead than red, or, inversely, rather red than dead. Up to 1990, culture and nationalism were virtually absent from the hegemonic discourse; those who had not immersed themselves in Russian studies, did not think of Russian culture and tradition as an obstacle to Russia joining the Western civilization. We knew of course that the Russians were bearers of a Russian culture and traditions which the communists had not managed to destroy; what we knew about this was either presented as folklore or considered to have been incorporated into a common European cultural heritage. We felt that we could love Russian culture; the blame for all the shortcomings of the Russian economy, standards of life etc we put on communism, the evil universalism. The Russians were victims, but in principle normal human beings like ourselves. Liberate them from the yoke of this evil universalism, and they will spontaneously express their approval of our, good universalism, and start to order their lives and their society in accordance with its principles.

Then came liberation, as a wonder from heaven, and there was a short period, or a point of time, 1990-92, when we were ready to embrace the Russians wholeheartedly, let them into our world to take part in the pursuits and fruits of our civilization. Grand visions were put forward about the common European house and the European Community extending across Siberia to the Pacific. Western universalism had won out, and it was speculated about the end of history

and the new world order. The Russians of course needed our assistance, to be educated and enlightened; it was the epoch of Enlightenment compressed into a period of a few years. The miniature Voltaires and Diderots of the time came over from Chicago to prescribe the enlightening and purifying cure, the shock therapy to undo the monster of planned economy and make Russia fit for participation in the world of universal modernity.

So far, we can hardly say that the project has been successful; rather the result is misery and chaos, psychological and cultural bewilderment. If the way we perceived the Russians during the cold war was biased by our view of communism, and therefore false and prejudiced, it need not be to their advantage if we now come to see them in a more realistic way. When we could not clearly discern the Russians and their culture behind the communist discourse and the Iron curtain, that is, when we did not know them and did not have contact with them, we were prepared to recognize them as potentially jolly good and likeable people, and to include them. Now, just a few years later, how is the picture? During the last ten years people in the field and some others have surely formed personal and inclusive alliances with Russians, but as regards the majority and the broad popular opinion, I am afraid we have entered a process of exclusion. We no longer blame all the problems we now have with Russia, or those that Russia has with herself, on communism. Russian prostitutes, criminals and mafiosi, economic chaos and swindle, corruption and financial black holes are not blamed on an evil political system, but more and more on national character and culture, even if much of this can partly be explained by the heritage of the communist period. The Russians are seen to bear the marks of a culture which is highly different from ours. Now we can apply also to Russia the maxim that a people gets the politicians it deserves.

When we study 19th-century Russian intellectual history, we recognize a strong inclination towards universalist thinking or discourse, notwithstanding the post-universalist backdrop of the time. This inclination takes different forms and directions amongst Slavophiles and Westernizers. By opposing Russia to the West and discrediting the West with being divided and dissentient and living in conflict with itself, Slavophilism and related currents of thought acknowledged the fact of particularization. Their critique was, however, informed by a belief in the ideal of a universal and internally harmonious West, an ideal which had been lost. The West was not

what it was supposed to be. As opposed to the broken West, Russia was posited as an unbroken whole. Russia was destined to play a role in world history which the West had relinquished; or, in Hegelian terms, the *Weltgeist* had moved east. This universalism had actually its point of departure in particularist discourses on Russian culture which, however, was perceived as having certain universal qualities. These qualities would make Russia fit for the mission of saving Europe from its decadence and internal strife, social hatred and class struggle etc. One might argue that this demonstrates a lack of historical perspicacity on the part of the Slavophiles, for the supposed universality of the qualities of Russian culture was just a variation on the universal character of premodern societies.³ This argument may be rejected as eurocentric and would certainly be discarded as inconsequential in the grand models of civilization types introduced by Danilevskij and Leont'ev and reiterated from the old Eurasianists to Lev Gumilev and the new Eurasianists. Eurasianism, being an ideology of geography (and lately of geopolitics [Clover 1999]) in contrast to history, certainly owes much to Russia's overwhelming size. Russia was a continent, a whole world in itself, which could claim dispensation from history, or the historical necessities which smaller nations had to grapple with. Marx' prediction that nations which did not assimilate the capitalist mode of production, that is Western modernization, would perish, did not necessarily apply to Russia. Cultural traits which may resemble those associated with traditional or premodern societies can therefore have another meaning and relevance in the Russian cultural orbit; in the geographical paradigm of Eurasianism such traits are not subject to historical obsolescence. Eurasianism being essentially isolationist, it can paradoxically only envisage Russia as having a history in so far as it relates conflictually, defensively or expansively to the outer world. The logic of the emotional and aesthetic ethos of Eurasianism in itself leads to the end of history.

³ There were also similar currents of thought in Germany. In the 1840s for instance the so-called 'true socialists' took traits of German backwardness to prove the superiority of German wisdom to that of more modern peoples. For example Karl Grün wrote, as quoted by Marx in *Die deutsche Ideologie*: 'Ich möchte doch wissen, ob sie nicht Alle erst von uns lernen müssen, Franzosen und Engländer, Belgier und Nordamerikaner' (Marx & Engels 1958, 476).

By contrast, the Westernizers were historical thinkers, pondering Russian backwardness. A substantial part of them were practical men concerned with what united rather than separated the Western countries and with what Russia could learn from them. They did not belong to the *intelligentsia* as it is conventionally defined. The intelligentsia Westernizers, however, had also noticed the internal split of the Western world, and they agreed with the Slavophiles that the social conditions in modern industrial capitalism were dreadful. In their search for unity and harmony they looked towards a historical stage yet to come, to socialism. In so far as they believed Western Europe to be in a crisis, they saw socialism as the solution. They pretended to see the future of the West equally clearly, perhaps more clearly than the Western intellectuals themselves saw it. They recognized that Russia was not as modern and developed as the Western countries, and they were perhaps filled with doubt as to whether Russia could ever become a successful capitalist country. But they understood the situation to be one where the West was in a crisis and forced to seek a radical, new solution to its problems. Russia, by drawing on her own cultural resources, could skip the capitalist stage and catch up with and join Western Europe in its most modern, the anticipated post-capitalist stage.

There are perhaps no Western discourses which have proved more fatal for Russia than the marxist theory of progressive historical stages or modes of production, because, eventually, it came to rein-vigorate the wishful thinking of Russian 19th-century socialists which had been expressed by Herzen in his dictum on the privilege of backwardness. The Soviet economy, along with historiography and other social sciences, was charged with the task of validating this theory which was the ultimate legitimation of the power of the communists. This only added destructively to the typical motivation for economic growth in any backward, but ambitious country, namely the desire to catch up with and overtake. The economy was put under an obligation to prove itself superior and more advanced than capitalism. The proof had to be given by statistics which stimulated the one-sided emphasis on quantity of production to the detriment of virtually everything else.

I shall not discuss what went wrong with the 'Western' project in the last decade. The name 'shock therapy' might well also be applied in

describing how Peter the Great returned from Western Europe to shear the beards of his boyars. However, the parallel to the 18th century has a fault in that the new Russian leadership exercised much less effective power and control over mobilized and marketable resources than the tsarist governments of the 18th century are supposed to have done. The other part of the parallel might be valid. Just as the 18th century grand universalist narrative collapsed in European romanticism, so too, the post-modernist discourse maintains, not only the communist narrative, but also the Western narrative on universalist modernity has come to a close. Sorry, the party is over, is the message conveyed to the Russians, just as they are ready to join us. On this reasoning, the project of Russian modernization along Western lines was ill-fated from the start.

This might be true, but I believe it is only partly so, or, more exactly, only partly on account of the supposed death of the narratives. The true part of it is expressed by the culturalist turn in the ways we look at the world as exemplified by Huntington (1993), where the contest between two opposite kinds of universalism has been replaced by one between several civilizational and cultural types. This is somewhat reminiscent of the culturalist turn in the discourse of romanticism. The universalist pretensions of Western modernism are more and more regarded by Russia as Anglo-American pretensions. It should be born in mind, however, that, unlike the situation after 1815 when the majority of the other nations did not see England as their principal enemy, one of the present civilizational types, the Western one, stands out as possibly the principal enemy of all the others.

Why? Because it is more powerful than the others? Possibly. The image of clashing civilizations may seem clear on the discursive level. I recall what I said above about the more circumscribed and stable character of real politics. The Western cultural type seems in this perspective to be in an advantageous position vis-à-vis the others (the East-Asian perhaps excepted) because of its abstract, culturally neutral and empty guiding principles (rationalist in Weberian terms). Three of Huntington's cultural types meet in the former Yugoslavia. If the West interferes in the conflict between Muslim and Slav-Orthodox cultures, it might of course be motivated by considerations of *Realpolitik*, but it is not to be understood as an alliance with one of the cultures against the other. Neither does this amount to an expan-

sion of its own culture at the cost of the others as in a zero-sum-game; it is rather an *addition* of some culturally neutral principles to the conflicting cultures in order to liberate politics from ethnically rooted culture, to create a political culture in international and interethnic relations that is not so to speak 'cultural'. When the West interferes on this principle and at times gives support to people of that culture which is most distant from its own, it acquires a special position of strength and prestige. It is worth noticing that the Muslim world, as of this writing, has not protested against the war against Serbia, while it certainly must know that the intention is not to support Muslim culture. People of other cultures may boil with indignation at USA or NATO assuming the role of 'world police', but to no avail; in the long run I believe that this is a narrative that will prevail. Considering the cultural and religious heterogeneity of Asia and Europe taken together, the cultural types of this landmass will probably need a solid infusion of such 'uncultural' Western principles in order to consolidate themselves as united and coherent actors in the international arena. In particular, this kind of Westernism seems to be a necessity for the Orthodox world's regulation of its relations to cultural 'others' in the Eurasian realm.

This brings me to a final comment on two central themes in the Russian ideological discourse after the acknowledged defeat of the 'Western' project: the Eurasianist and the postmodernist themes.

Not surprisingly, it is the Russian nationalists who accept Huntington's culturalist paradigm as well as most of the content of his thesis, while rejecting most of his policy recommendations. Three other civilizations threaten Russia, but instead of aligning herself with the Western one against the Muslim and Chinese ones, Russia should seek to find a balance between all three as a guarantee for its political independence (Cygankov & Cygankov 1998). The Eurasianist movement, by contrast, puts forward the vision of an alliance between Russia and the Muslim world, possibly also the Chinese. Aleksandr Prochanov writes, as quoted by Clover (1999,13): 'The Eurasian idea is an idea of integration. Russian nationalism is the opposite of Eurasianism; the two ideologies are entirely incompatible. A purely ethnic [Russian] conception doesn't take into account Tatarstan or the Caucasus.' The question is about which kind of unifying and integrating principles are necessary for the realization of this universalistic project. Unless there emerges—as a response to some global crisis

as for instance the ecological one—a Utopian-authoritarian ideology, analogous to the emergence of marxism, my view is that there are no other integrating principles at hand than the culturally neutral 'Western' principles considered above.⁴

As regards postmodernism, this seems to me to be a traditional Russian way of thinking in terms of successive stages which is the reason for its rapid reception in Russia during the last decennium. There has emerged a Russian postmodernist discourse which mixes the spiritual antimodernism of the Russian philosophical heritage with Western insights about the present state of the world. Many intellectuals have embraced with relief the idea of going straight to postmodernity (in Russian parlance often called post-contemporaneity *\postsovremennost'*), skipping the stage of modernity, as if postmodernity is something adversely different from and a negation of modernity, and not simply an even more modern modernity. As long as this remains within the playfulness of postmodernist discourse, where paradigms 'are not the tools of *homo faber*, but of *homo ludens*' (Janos 1997, 140), there is not much to worry about.

However, the Russians take ideas more seriously, and we need to be sceptical about the tendency to believe that postmodernism can be used for envisioning and conceptualizing possible solutions to the enormous problems of present Russia (Kozlovskij *et al.* 1995, 222-26; Poljakov 1998, 164-83). We need to be sceptical about the tendency to take the relativistic pluralism of postmodernism to mean that some special Russian way is as good as any Western way, even if, or precisely, when this way in itself rejects pluralism in the name of updated versions of *sobornost'* and *vseedinstvo*.

TROMSØ

⁴ The philosopher Panarin (1995, 61), who otherwise has not made himself known as a West-ernizer, has developed the idea of interethnic and international peaceful co-existence which he interestingly calls the idea of 'the second Rome', and of Russia as the 'second Rome'. 'Его не надо путать с идеей Москвы как третьего Рима [...] Чем является римская идея в современном мире? По моему мнению, она заключает в себе идея единого и открытого пространства для общения разных народов, наций и культур. В этом качестве она не всегда совпадает с демократической идеей, рожденной в Древней Греции. И тогда, и сейчас демократические государства способны были воевать друг с другом, противостоять друг другу, из чего следует, что демократическая (греческая) и римская идеи часто расходятся между собой. Гарантией мира является не сама по себе демократия, а римская идея единого межэтнического и межнационального пространства.' Саадаев would certainly argue that this idea of the second Rome could be nothing other than Catholic Christendom.

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