



# World Public Forum “Dialogue of Civilizations”

## Conference proceedings

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## The Conception of the World in the Context of the Modern Paradigm of International Relations

*Can the mind of a man grasp what a human mind has created?*

*Paul Valery*

Once, passing by a garden, an Eastern ruler noticed an old man who, making strenuous effort, was planting a peach tree. He paused and asked him: “Wherefore plant that tree trying so hard? Your life is coming to an end and you will hardly live to see this tree bear fruit.” Then he continued: “And well, I know you are going to say - that our ancestors worked for us and we must work for our children. But tell me – what is the use of thinking about the past which is gone or the future which has not come yet? It is only the present moment that we have!” Thus, about to immediately continue his way, he finished his speech. However, he was stopped by the words of the gardener: “How can you, a ruler, understand me, a gardener? Your reluctance to recall the past means that it was the kind you would rather not have had. Your reluctance to think about the future means that it scares you. So, there is nothing in your present moment that I might be jealous of as it came from a wicked past and is impending to become a terrifying future”.

The 20<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries make the border between the two millennia, between the past and the future. It is the moment – our present - that is worth looking at through “the gardener’s” eye - at least to be able to draw the attention of “the ruler”.

Wisdom of the Bible teaches that there is a time for everything that is done on earth – there is a time to scatter stones and there is a time to gather them, but each activity has a system of its own design or “architecture”. The contemporary period of “gathering stones” has been shaped by globalization, the main tendency of the past 500 years of human civilization, so masterly defined by William Connolly as a set “globally recognizable dangers”. It is these “globally recognizable dangers” that have been for centuries motivating the mankind to conduct a search for an alternative “cultural stimulus to rethink the strategy of identity and the strategy of differences that help present-day countries to define otherness and fight with it”.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Connolly W.E. Identity // Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox. Ithaca, N.Y., 1991. P. 45.



To identify otherness and especially to fight with it is becoming more and more difficult, since in relation to globalization we speak not of a linear process, but of a corpuscular one that is developing frontally in several directions. Among them the principal ones are:

“Mental” or cultural-ideological globalization is a complex long-term historical process involving traditions, religion, culture and ideology.

Territorial globalization – the process of consolidation of national and supra-national structures.

Economic globalization which has two forms of development – globalization of markets (of capital, labour force, goods and services) and globalization of economic structures – consolidation of organizational sectors in economies – from medieval workshops to global corporations.

Globalization of information and communication which includes development of means for data transfer to cover the Earth and circum-terrestrial space, computerization of most life-sustaining activities of people.

Ethnic globalization that consists of population growth and mutual assimilation of various ethnic groups.

Forming a supra-national global managing structure – World Government.

It should be emphasized that all the six aspects of globalization create an intricate complex of dangers to what we now consider as the deep-rooted tradition and even the very basis of human existence – endangered are such traditional concepts as those of family, state, national (ethnic) identity, national culture, local economy and many other things. These are “the globally recognizable dangers” which tend to replace the conventional forms of life-sustaining activities of man instead of trying to comply and coexist with them. We have either to remain mere observers of some traditional forms disappearing or to take them under our custody and to make attempts to integrate them into a new global system with minimal loss for the both.<sup>2</sup>

Alexandr Alexandrovich Ignatov, Head of Information Analysis Agency of the Presidential Property Management Department of the Russian Federation, stresses that globalization processes are the most active when they take place in culture. It is in this sphere that we can

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<sup>2</sup> Drozdov Yu.I., Markin A.G. Operatsiya “president”. Ot “holodnoy voyny” do “perezagruzki”. M., 2010. P. 22-23.



expect to see very soon the elements of global supra-culture which, in its turn, is to determine the “spiritual climate” on our planet in long perspective.<sup>3</sup>

I would like to add for myself that culture is the sphere that is most dependent on subjectivism that lies in the scope of mainly humanitarian knowledge and is most unlikely to lead to warfare. It is the field of culture that gives rise to the two most important (from my point of view) phenomena of the modern age, which can harmonize the controversial effects of globalization on our life. These are – (1) the birth of scientific humanitarian conception of the world and on its basis (2) creating the global ethics of development for the mankind. Who is capable to make generalizations of such scale and scope and instrumentally how?

Today’s situation is different, and a new system of classifying cultural phenomena is an urgent issue of intercultural communication, taken as both a field of knowledge and a method of research and the way “to find a narrow pass between globalization and preservation of cultural pluralism, between violence and political methods of settling conflicts, between the culture of war and the culture of mind”.<sup>4</sup>

It is no coincidence that I give here this quotation from the paper written by Ilya Prigozhin, a Nobel Prize winner and a ‘poet of thermodynamics’. The metaphor he suggests lends credibility to the uniqueness of the contemporary stage of the universe when the search of a new classification has become urgent and has got a scientific form of tautomeric existence of cultural phenomena. The point at issue is that contemporary cultural phenomena can take two forms of existence – historically determined and hence static, and historically undetermined, that is dynamically changing and transforming every second. The mankind has been for centuries studying the historical roots of cultural phenomena overlooking their constantly changing present and foreseeable future. And this is very well illustrated by his metaphor:

*Let us look at a simple gravity pendulum, both ends of which are connected with a rod, with one end being pivoted, while the other can swing with an arbitrary amplitude. If displaced with a push from its resting equilibrium position, it will (after making several swings back and forth) eventually stop in its initial (i.e. lowest) point. This is a well-known fact. But if we turn the pendulum upside down, with its suspended mass in the upward, opposite to the lowest, position, it will sooner or later drop to one side, left or right, with a very slight vibration being sufficient to make it swing to either side. Now then, the upward (unstable) position has*

<sup>3</sup> Ignatov A.A. Strategiya global'nogo liderstva Rossii. Pervoocherednye nepryamyje strategicheskiye deystviya po obespecheniyu natsional'noy bezopasnosti. Nezavisimaya gazeta, September 7, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Prigozhin I. Kost' ezshe ne broshena // Sinergeticheskaya paradigma. M., 2002, p.21.



*virtually never been in the focus of scientists' attention... The very notion of instability can be thus said to have been ideologically banned to an extent. The reason for this lies in the fact that the instability phenomenon will naturally lead us to most nontrivial and serious problems, the first of which is that of prediction.*<sup>5</sup>

These considerations will reveal a new depth if we turn to the theory of equilibrium in games developed by John F. Nash. Equilibrium of the pendulum can be achieved in two extreme points of its amplitude – the lowest (stable) and the uppermost (unstable). It is quite obvious that to achieve and keep balance in these two points we need totally different means and essentially distinct ethic patterns of behavior. Equilibrium in the lowest point is achieved spontaneously, it is determined and lacks potential for self-development as it is ruled by the law of entropy leading to energy dissipation and depreciation; on the contrary, equilibrium in the uppermost point is less energy-intensive, energy-consuming, less determined and has a higher degree of freedom. Undeniably, all these facts are valid only on the Earth with its gravitation and atmosphere, so we are speaking about the conception of the world, meaning a human life nowhere else but on the Earth.

The key concepts and issues of life style, such as diet, production, identity, fear, memory, pleasure, fate, power (authority), politics, can no longer be reduced to the local equilibrium of social systems (equilibrium of local social systems), as their effects manifest themselves in equilibrium of the dynamic pattern of the whole world development. Finding them, in turn, requires people's acting in accordance with the common ethics and morality of a higher standard than the ones we have now as well as rethinking (on its grounds) all cultural phenomena in the widest meaning of the word.

Firstly, the new ethics requires clarity in the *spatial approach* to cultural phenomena, or, in essence, it requires clarity in the correlation between what is labeled overall culture and what is the variety of multimodal local, ethnic, religious cultures. Secondly, we face the problem of *time* losing its previous physical completeness and requiring more and more to be designed by the mankind.

Speaking about space in terms of culture we mean “space and man”, the Earth's noosphere, the space that has both physical and socio-biological parameters, or geocultural space. It denies the statement of territory (or space) losing its former importance while any point of the Earth is

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<sup>5</sup> Prigozhin I. Filosofija nestabil'nosti. // Voprosy filosofii. №6. 1991. Pp.46-57.



now within fast and easy reach thus making distance seem illusionary and territory control lose its advantage.<sup>6</sup>

Here I beg to disagree. It is, as a matter of fact, the case of “original accumulation of spatial capital”. Today, one is able to control (to inhabit) incomparably larger territories than even only 50 years ago, one’s capabilities to influence space are rapidly growing thus intensifying the tendency of “space privatization”, and the day will come soon when the struggle for territory will be pursued not by states and their armies, but by small groups and individuals. The illusion of “deterritorialization” leads those who have given it credit to the extraterritoriality of mind (in Russian also called the “homelessness” of mind) and to the loss of spatial identity that is going to be difficult and expensive to regain since habitable territories will be scarce. Today’s danger of losing spatial identity is seen by many contemporary thinkers as a global threat. As Jonathan Sacks writes, “It is when we lose the sense of vision that we find ourselves, in effect, without a map or a destination.”<sup>7</sup>

Speaking about today’s time we speak about the time without the present. We speak about the time that has only the past and the future and a conventional sense of the present that in fact is a system of innumerable relations, causes and conditions that originated in the past and depend completely on the future.<sup>8</sup>

Space modeling brings about the necessity to model the time, to bring to light the chronological paradigmality of life phenomena and to plan the processes previously considered spontaneous.

As recently as a few decades ago the parental ethics required to instruct the children to preserve the accomplishments of the past, however, today the parents’ only hope is that their children will go with the tide and be able to keep up with the times and fit in with the constant changes at a minimum loss. Not so long ago the lifetime of a generation or even of a few did not presuppose any rapid change in life’s foundations. Today, a generation’s lifetime is a long enough period for several paradigms of being to change and follow one another even if the lifestyle is static.

Although purely technical, the key concept of modernity is the concept of chronoculture – the speed of developing certain artificial forms and socially conditioned models of behaviour

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<sup>6</sup> Zygmunt Bauman. *Liquid modernity*. M. & others, 2008. Pp. 118-119.

<sup>7</sup> Sacks J. *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations*. Continuum International Publishing Group, 2002, p. 84.

<sup>8</sup> Tenzin Gyatso Jetika dlja novogo tysjacheletija. СПб, 2005, с. 47-48.



of individuals, societies or macrosocial groups. Chronoculture directs its focus of attention to the process and its time as if ignoring the space. It is, in fact, an illusion, since space today is often understood not as a local and comprehensible area but as the world in its entirety, while part and parcel of the vision of the world in the mind of most people is the idea of “privatized locality”, the ties to one’s real or retrospective place of residence, the mystical and mythologized *Genius loci* (spirit of place).

Contemplation on whom a model of the space-time continuum belongs to brings us to the thought about the essence of the human *self* (*ego*) – one of the greatest enigmas of the humanity.

The last decades have witnessed radical changes in the conditions of human existence, an individual has got remarkably more freedom to act, with his actions being of a wider range and having more serious consequences than before. Nowadays the ego clashes have become more frequent, as the ego of any individual urges the person to seek his own aims not necessarily agreeing with the aims of others. How to conduct a dialog, to communicate, how to benefit not only from rivalry but also from cooperation with “others”? How to ensure mutual gain with “the others” respecting their interests and not sacrificing yours? Finally - can we keep being ourselves and be “other” at the same time? Should we or not?

In 1944 John von Neumann launched a new field of mathematics – the theory of games. The bedrock of it is the so-called “prisoner’s dilemma” that stipulates that two prisoners will fail to achieve mutual gains if they are non-cooperative. What, then, can be said about equations with n-participants or about non-cooperative games, which are not the case of “pure rivalries” (i.e. not zero-sum)?<sup>9</sup> The optimal result rests on partnership and mutual trust which can be hard to attain. A Canadian programmer Anatoliy Rappoport developed a program called “Tit for Tat” which prescribed to be cooperative only in the first round of the game, while in the following rounds just to mirror the moves of the opponent. Thus, an aggressive player seemed at first to be in the lead, but in the long run lost the game. That was the mathematical triumph of the idea of cooperation, though the victory was dearly paid for. In the late 80’s a Polish mathematician Martin Novak developed a program that sporadically, in 3-4 turns, ignored the last move of its opponent. The program was dubbed “Schedraya” (Generous) since it didn’t make it possible for a ruthless opponent to bring the game to a dead-end in a circle of

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<sup>9</sup> Zenkevich N.A. Vydajuvijsja vklad v teoriju igr i ee prilozhenie v oblasti jekonomiki i teorii menedzhmenta (K 80-letiju so dnja rozhdenija Dzhona Forbsa Njesha). // Rossijskij zhurnal menedzhmenta. vol.6, № 4, 2008, p.171.



revenge, giving the rivals an opportunity to come to an agreement. The best result was achieved when 20-25% of moves were spontaneous rather than determined by the opponent's actions.

The program was a breakthrough not only in the game theory but also in the ethics of human relations, for it disclosed a mystery of success which was given to man by nature itself – sometimes it is essential to erase some memories, thus starting everything anew, from scratch. The tactic of turning a blind eye to or ignoring some hostile actions is more efficient than that of an-eye-for-an-eye type. It appeared that the world can not survive relying solely on a strict rule of law. The rule of law should be backed up with the ethics of mercy that helps to forget about some actions amenable to punishment. Moreover, it was admitted that some of the actions might be outside the eyeshot of justice thus creating a segment of non-determined activity so crucial for effective development.<sup>10</sup>

This idea was aphoristically voiced by Paul Valery, a man-of-letters. He said, “power without abuse loses its charm” and however questionable it might sound from the moral point of view, it is a naked truth in politics.

It should be added that motivation for 20-25% of undetermined actions, i.e. 20-25% of all spontaneous behavior remains an open question and a key one. Our research is an attempt to tackle this issue from the humanitarian point of view. “High” style in literature, ethics of the beautiful, spirituality are hardly universal, as they are applied in the situations of spontaneous behavior by those who are familiar with a particular culture and its standards. Therefore, the most important metaphysical problem of today is the need for a brand new paradigm of subject-object relations, very different if compared with the majority of secular deterministic doctrines already seen and heard of.

Archimedes once said: “Give me but one firm spot on which to stand, and I will move the Earth.” Today we need a place to stand on for the Earth to stay in balance, for the mass of the pendulum is turned upside down and is about to fall. To keep the wobbly pendulum upturned and then guide its fall in the desired direction or at least to predict the consequences of this process are the goals of what we call “going back to the Conception of the World”. Culture in the widest sense of the word is destined to give us *the* foothold in this seemingly utopian undertaking, while the lever will be “Ethics for the New Millennium” if we may use

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<sup>10</sup> Sacks J. *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations*. Continuum International Publishing Group, 2002, p. 225-226, 275-276.



the words of Tenzin Gyatso, revered Dalai-Lama the 14<sup>th</sup>. Comprehension of dynamic equilibrium phenomenon bestows the quality of multi-dimensionality to the search of the Conception of the World. The mass of the falling pendulum is a swiftly spinning top. The spinning top symbolizes the dynamic space-time equilibrium, the movement of the pendulum portrays the irreversible progressive development of the system. For any movement is not a form of equilibrium but an attempt to reach it when it has not yet been attained. The equilibrium we speak of is the one between the reality and the forms of thinking corresponding to it. Forming the Conception of the World is a move to reach such equilibrium, a step to microsystemic modeling (simulation) of the world that will give us a chance to go on to analogue thinking - a more developed form compared to the one prevailing today, a fruit of anthropogenic era based on binary logic of a human mind.<sup>11</sup> Undoubtedly, the language of mathematical physics gives a helping hand to classical scholars motivating them to make a step forward - to a new reality. It gives us an opportunity to proceed from the words of natural languages to an action-meaning or, rather, process- result paradigm – and by means of analogue thinking to create images, pictures, icons to be able to finally see the templates of microculture built on the notion of the Conception of the World as an inhibitor for spontaneous global comprehension of cultural codes as well as of significance of our reality on the whole.

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<sup>11</sup> Povel' Lui, Berzh'e Zhak. Utro magov. M., 2008, c.134, 376-379.

