

Historical Psychology & Sociology: Contents and abstracts

Mirror images in culture

Yu. V. Liubimov. Imago alterius (The Image of the East in the European tradition) (pp. 5–26).

The stereotype of the East in the European mind has always had great importance in international, and especially political, relations. At the same time, the political and economical context has also played a significant role in producing the European image of the East. The territorial distance between the bearers and the subject of this image has been a considerable factor as well, while those who fostered such views were politically committed groups: statesmen, bureaucrats, businessmen and men of letters. Western views have influenced the image of the East in the other parts of Europe as well, particularly, in Russia. The Russian stereotypes of the West will be the subject of the next article.

A. N. Mesheriakov. Self-identity of the Japanese in their relations with the West and ways to overcome national complexes (pp. 27–41).

After Japan had been ‘discovered’ by Europeans in the middle of the 19th century, this country started an intensive modernization process, which provoked both a complex of national inferiority and an intensive search for a new identity. While this complex was quickly overcome in politics, economy and war, the complex of corporal inferiority was not, partly because of the thesis of ‘yellow danger’ diffused in the West. As a result, the Japanese sought to compensate this inferiority complex by fostering its opposite, namely a superiority complex, in which the corporal parameters that had been considered ‘shortcomings,’ such as body composition and skin color, were now presented as peerless virtues.

A. A. Brudny, A. M. Demilkhanova. The ‘Doppelganger’ phenomenon and a ‘mirror stage’ (pp. 42–54).

Psychological research of the Doppelganger phenomenon suggests that a fixation at a “mirror stage,” as proposed by Lacan, serves as a basis of its existence. Experimental research of participants who were fond of imitational computer games demonstrated quite unusual results. In the “draw a person” projection technique, respondents tended to double in pencil images. The authors suggest that these findings are a manifestation of new ways to understand reality.

Conceptions of history

V. A. Shnirelman. A word of ‘the naked (or less naked) king’ (pp. 55–74).

A ‘civilizational approach’ is popular in contemporary Russia among both academics and general public. The author scrutinizes its methodological basis as well as its social significance. He argues that the approach does not meet any scholarly demands and suffers from shallow rhetoric. Moreover, it provides the general public with doubtful “knowledge,” which fosters racist positions. The public discourse based on the ‘civilizational approach’ demonstrates that contemporary Russian scholarship lacks social responsibility.

Psychology and economy

L. E. Grinin. The psychological dimension of economic crises (pp. 75–99).

Economists consider various factors of economic crises, among them psychological ones, such as the fluctuation in businessmen’s and consumers’ moods (between optimism and pessimism, euphoria and panic). These emotions play an important role that is comparable to their role in war or revolutions. This article discusses the psychological aspects of economic cycles and crises (which are their dramatic phases) and, furthermore, some general aspects of business psychology.

Russia: social-psychological images of history

N. L. Pushkareva. A micro-analysis of the emotional links in a ‘New Russian’ family in the 16th century (pp. 100–119).

Based on solid archival research, the author presents us the first-known documented case in Russian history of a voluntary rejection of a destined bridegroom by a

young bride. This story is in stark contrast with the stereotype of Ivan the Terrible époque as excluding unconventional behavior as a consequence of a very narrowly defined private space.

On the diminutive facts of the large history (Interview with N. Pushkareva) (pp. 120–121).

The very rare cases of a voluntary choice of marriage partners were symptoms of the coming New Age. Attention to the unique and particular in history characterizes the post-modern scientists. This is important for achieving a better understanding of ourselves.

Social violence: a comparative historical view

N. V. Mityukov. Calculation of war losses by means of the Lanchester Models (pp. 122–140).

This article describes an advanced method of calculating both human losses in past wars and probable losses in potential future armed conflicts.

A. M. Burovski. Modern youth and 'the cult of violence' (pp. 141–149).

Critical researches and historical comparisons demonstrate that the notion of growing aggressiveness among the modern youth is groundless. The real trend is different: while the amount of social violence appears constant through time and space, today it is being sublimated from the physical sphere into symbolic and virtual spheres.

A. P. Nazaretyan. Virtualization of social violence: a sign of the epoch? (An extended comment to A. M. Burovski's article) (pp. 150–170).

An upward trend in violence is an illusion, which is conditioned by certain basic mechanisms of perception and memory. In fact, social violence is becoming more indirect and symbolic. Its displacement into virtual reality is perhaps one of most remarkable trends in the development of civilization.

Evolutionary studies in religion

Michael J. Puett, Adam B. Seligman, Binnett Simon, Robert P. Weller. Ritual and Its Consequences. An Essay on the Limits of Sincerity (pp. 171–183).

Four American authors (among them, a historian of religion, an anthropologist, a sinologist and a psychoanalyst) jointly investigate ritual vs. 'sincere' attitudes and behavior. They argue that rituals are a major factor in helping to maintain cultural diversity, while they coexist simultaneously in this divided and imperfect world. Here, a Russian translation of the Introduction to their book (Oxford University Press, 2008) is published.

Scientific heritage

E. O. Berzin (1931–1997). Following the Iron Revolution (pp. 184–194).

The author was a well-known specialist in the history and culture of South-East Asia. The article is remarkable by its well-argued solution of the 'simultaneity puzzle' in the Axial Revolution, which was formulated by Karl Jaspers, namely: What were the reasons of the radical transformations in thinking and value systems that occurred during a very short period in an enormous geographical and cultural space from Judea and Greece to India and China? E. Berzin demonstrates that it was the response of cultures to the challenge of the Iron Revolution, after which the worldviews, norms and values of the Bronze Age had become self-destructive for these societies.

Essays

S. V. Prozhogina. Nostalgia: A sketch of the continuing pain resulting from the Algerian independence war (pp. 195–219).

The French-speaking, Arab writer, explains the dramatic history of this anti-colonial war. Even half a century after Algerian independence, neither the Algerians who expelled the French, nor the French who had to leave North Africa, have been able to come to terms with the failure of the expected harmony between their two distinct cultural worlds.

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