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**THE ISSUES OF A CROSS-CULTURAL DIALOGUE IN ACADEMICIAN
DMITRY LIKHACHOV'S SCIENTIFIC AND MORAL HERITAGE**

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Scholars know that the truth in the Humanities is verified through comparison. Indeed, comparison is neither the ultimate nor universal nor the only way in the quest for truth, however it is highly efficient when applied to the dialogue of cultures.

Nowadays the world has two major approaches to the issue of dialogue of cultures. One of them is based on the premises that 'the Anglo-Saxon civilization', 'the West' is some 'premium' culture type that has proved its supremacy and its right to global domination – as an etalon, a model for the rest of the world cultures – through the whole progress of the world history. In such a context the dialogue of cultures is interpreted as a teacher-student communication or as an interaction between the stronger and the weaker. Another approach views each culture as a treasury, a source for mutual cultural enrichment. Thus, the dialogue becomes an interrelation of those who are equal.

I see these approaches personified in the figures of Samuel Huntington and Dmitry Likhachov. The statement of one and the same scientific fact – diversity of national cultures -has drawn the two of them to essentially opposite conclusions, published almost simultaneously. In the book *The Clash of Civilizations*,²⁷⁹ a total best-seller published in 1996, Huntington divided the world into civilizations of different cultural types, on the basis of shared language, religion and understanding of history. He was taken as an advocate of the 'historical inevitability' concept, the inevitable conflict of civilizations.

The US administration had been practicing Huntington's ideology until Barack Obama's presidency. Even now this ideology has a special significance in the life of an American society. To illustrate this we may refer to the last Oscar ceremony, where instead of *Avatar*, with its unique technological tools and its message of unity with nature and of diverse cultural values, performed at the utmost artistic level, the main awards were given to *The Hurt Locker*, a typical mass-culture product that defends the importance of a 'missionary' function of the American occupation of a 'wild' region of our planet.

In 1995 on the square, at the entrance to this very concert hall where we are holding this Conference, Dmitry Likhachov introduced to the public his *Declaration of the Rights of Culture*²⁸⁰ that was created under the auspices of our University and under Likhachov's supervision. Here I would like to make a synopsis of the *Declaration's*, regulations:

culture is the major source for the humanization of the mankind;

culture of any nation, by way of defining its unique spirit, expresses its creative power and ability, and simultaneously belongs to the world's heritage;

cross-cultural dialogue provides mutual understanding between the nations and identification of their unique spirit;

preservation and development of any national culture should become the concern of the world community;

culture is the basis for social and economic development of nations, states and civilizations, for the rise of human spirit and morals;

inability for mutual cultural understanding and mutually beneficial cross-cultural dialogue has become one of the causes of conflicts and wars in the 20th century;

cultural development and cultural solidarity in the context of economic and political integration of the contemporary world community guarantee tolerance, mutual understanding and democracy, and are also the necessary condition to prevent wars and violence;

implementation of the democratic values and human rights is significantly determined by the extent of cultural development of the society;

the loss of any element of cultural heritage cannot be compensated for and results in a spiritual depletion of the human civilization;

existence of cultures of different nations is endangered in the context of the accelerating civilizational processes;

²⁷⁹ Huntington, Samuel Phillips. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.

²⁸⁰ Likhachov D. S. *Declaration of the Rights of Culture: A Draft*. St. Petersburg: Pushkinsky Dom, 1995. [In Russian].

the originality of national cultures and cultural evolution of the humankind itself are threatened by the on-going expansion of anti-humanist phenomena of commercial mass culture;

national and international measures are needed to protect culture, to provide preservation and further development of culture of any nation, to implement cooperation and efficient dialogue between nations.

It should be mentioned that in the post-Soviet times these approaches constituted the basis of Russia's diplomacy²⁸¹. And after the terrorist attack of September 11th, 2001 the western society has also started to take them in. The establishment of the Alliance of Civilizations under the auspices of the UNO²⁸² and ratification of a number of documents on cultural diversity and dialogue of cultures may serve as an example of changes, inspired by these attitudes.

Our analysis of tendencies in a global cultural development shows that Dmitry Likhachov, but not Huntington, has a future. Though, the underlying principles of the Russian scientist's concept, its significance and its roots in human needs, still don't seem to be understood by many. In this context, it seems to be reasonable to appeal to the core and background of Likhachov's ideas that inspired him to crown his life with the abovementioned approaches to cross-cultural dialogue in the *Declaration*.

First of all, we should focus on Likhachov's understanding of culture: 'It is a vast holistic phenomenon that turns people inhabiting a certain territory, from merely a population into a nation. The notion of culture should cover religion, science, education, moral and ethic behavioural patterns of peoples and states. It is culture that justifies the nation's existence in the face of God.'²⁸³ And Likhachov goes on like this: 'It seems crucial to approach culture as some organic holistic phenomenon, as a certain medium, where different cultural aspects share common trends, the laws of mutual attraction and repulsion... It seems necessary to review culture as a certain space, a sacred field, where, unlike in a game of spillikins, one cannot remove any of its elements without having other elements moved. The loss of a random element of culture may result in its general decline.'²⁸⁴

Such an attitude constitutes the basis for the modern science of culture – culturology. According to a broad approach to the definition of culture the cultural framework comprises everything that is not nature, everything that is created by man. Within such a context culture also covers economy and legal sphere, engineering and technology, etc. Unlike the Marxist approach which treated economy as the 'basis', culturological approach makes it possible to consider economic relations as one of culture's Subsystems. It enables verification of the dependence of economy on other subsystems – ideologies, modes of social life, national traditions and mentalities and others.

Working further on his concept of culture as an integral system of human activities, D. Likhachov also introduced the notion of 'culture-sphere'.²⁸⁵ He points out that its integrity is stipulated by 'the dynamics and the diversity'.²⁸⁶ This is the source where Likhachov's understanding of culture comes from: it is a continuous dialogue between its diverse facts, phenomena, elements, layers, subsystems and cultural sets. Of course, people are the parties of such a dialogue.

There are 1425 Likhachov's publications that we have discovered by now.²⁸⁷ The most prominent of his works on culture are published by the University of the Humanities and Social

²⁸¹ See, for example, *Yakovenko A. V.* Russia supports the observance of human rights all over the world // Dialogue of Cultures and Partnership of Civilizations: The 8th International Likhachov Scientific Conference, May 22-23, 2008. St. Petersburg: SPbUHSS Publishers, 2008, p. 60.

²⁸² *Sampaio J.* Speech at the Plenary Meeting 'Dialogue of Cultures and Partnership of Civilizations' // Dialogue of Cultures..., p. 100; *Sampaio J.* Speech at the Round table 'Dialogue of Cultures and Partnership of Civilizations' // Dialogue of Cultures..., pp. 124-126.

²⁸³ *Likhachov D. S.* Culture as a Holistic Medium // Selected Works on Russian and World Culture. St. Petersburg: SPbUHSS, 2006, p. 349. (Honorary doctors of SPbUHSS). [In Russian]

²⁸⁴ *Likhachov D. S.* Culture as a Holistic Medium, p. 350.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.* p. 358.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.* p. 354.

²⁸⁷ Bibliography of Likhachov's Works // Zapesotsky A. S. Dmitry Likhachov's Culturology. St. Petersburg: Nauka;

Sciences in the book of *Selected Works on Russian and World Culture*.²⁸⁸ Acquaintance with these works presents an amazing ontology of the dialogue of cultures.

'The Word and Visual Image in Ancient Rus' approaches the dialogue in such cultural subsystems as literature and fine arts – through plots, objects and the artist's ideology. It also analyzes the ways in which the society stipulates the dialogue: 'Many cultural phenomena are simultaneous, homogenous and analogous, and they spring from the same source.'²⁸⁹ With the help of icons, frescos, architecture, prayers, manuscripts, seals D. Likhachov illustrates the way literature and different types of art are governed by the social reality. They are also having a dialogue thus making 'one of the most significant features of a cultural progress'.²⁹⁰ However, 'the general development of national arts and culture is stipulated by one area at a time'.²⁹¹

'The Law of Integrity of Artistic Visual Image and Ensemble in the Aesthetics of Ancient Rus' is devoted to the author-audience dialogue.²⁹²

'The "Progressive Trends" in the History of Russian Literature' touches upon the inner dialogue of culture which is performed through 'stylistic codes': 'Literature obtains its matter not from the outside only, but from the inside as well.'²⁹³ Likhachov goes on: 'A work of literature (I am using the word "work", not "author", deliberately, because this is the natural phenomenon of the art itself) serves not only for the reality and itself, but also stimulates the creation of other works. A work of literature has the inherited capacity to "foster" other works of literature. Literature is capable of self-regulation.'²⁹⁴ In this work Likhachov also touches upon the dialogue between the culture and the social reality, and upon the international links of Russian literature: 'The development of national literatures has never been isolated from other literatures. Russian literature has never been isolated either. It was rooted in inner needs but with the assistance of works straight from Bulgaria, the Byzantine Empire... It included the works, shared by all European literatures... Many genres were shared as well: chronicles, hagiographies, histories, various homilies, collections of maxims, narratives, different liturgical genres, etc. But the experience of Russian literature has been limited by geography. It was the literature tightly linked to a specific European region, its Orthodox South-East. In the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries Russian literature extends its borders. New areas are introduced into its experience: the Caucasus, Ukraine, Byelorussia, Poland and Bohemia. In the 18th century the whole of Europe is embraced: Germany, France, England and Italy.'²⁹⁵

Likhachov's paper 'Russian Culture at the Time of Andrei Rublev and Epiphanius the Wise' reveals the way that cultural and national spheres interrelate in the life of nations. The formation of nations in Europe was managed through cultural self-determination. National cultures constituted themselves through their historic roots, appealing to their olden times.²⁹⁶

'On the one hand, Russian culture at the end of the 14th – the beginning of the 15th centuries can be characterized as a confident culture, which relies on the complex culture of old Kiev and old city of Vladimir... On the other hand, it has an apparent connection to the whole Pre-Renaissance of the Eastern Europe. Russia's cultural development in the 14th—15th centuries is marked by the reinforced intimacy with the Byzantine Empire... Bulgaria and Serbia.'²⁹⁷ Through the vast evidence, this work presents a detailed analysis of Russia's cultural dialogue with the Byzantine and South-Slavonic cultures. Likhachov shows that the dialogue is based on 'the

SPbUHSS, 2007, p. 356–434. [In Russian]

²⁸⁸ Likhachov D. S. *Selected Works on Russian and World Culture* // Scientific ed. Yu. Zobnin. St. Petersburg:

SPbUHSS, 2006. (Honorary doctors of SPbUHSS). [In Russian]

²⁸⁹ Likhachov D. S. *The Word and the Visual Image in Ancient Rus*, p. 24. [In Russian]

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Ibid., p. 27.

²⁹² Likhachov D. S. *The Law of Integrity of Artistic Visual Image and Ensemble in the Aesthetics of Ancient Rus*, p. 34–43. [In Russian]

²⁹³ Likhachov D. S. *The 'Progressive Trends' in the History of Russian Literature*, p. 50. [In Russian]

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Ibid. pp. 74–75.

²⁹⁶ Likhachov D. S. *Russian Culture at the Time of Andrei Rublev and Epiphanius the Wise*, pp. 87–163. [In Russian]

²⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 103.

similar ideas, governed by similar conditions'.²⁹⁸ At the same time neither of the cultures is passively experiencing the influence, on the contrary, they take an active part in the new creativity, where national features and traditions are projected: '...the Old Russian culture, being incorporated in the Eastern European Pre-Renaissance, does not lose its own tradition in imitating foreign patterns, but, on the contrary, its main aim is to revive its own national antiquity.'²⁹⁹

This work also contains one of the brilliant examples of culturological analysis of history, demonstrating the way that the situation in other culture's subsystems constitutes the borders in cross-cultural dialogue in spiritual life, in the development of literature and arts: 'Pre-Renaissance had an enormous influence on the development of Russia's culture throughout the succeeding centuries. <... > But Russian Pre-Renaissance did not develop into genuine Renaissance. Pre-Renaissance is still closely linked to religion, and that is its distinctive characteristic. <...> Religion still dominates all cultural spheres. <... > How can the fact be accounted for that Renaissance never succeeded Pre-Renaissance in Russia? The answer should be found in the peculiarities of Russia's historic development: the deficient economy at the end of the 15th – the 16th centuries, a quickened establishment of the centralized state that absorbed cultural resources, the fall of the commune cities of Novgorod and Pskov, where Pre-Renaissance unfolded, and, which is most crucial, the might of the church establishment that had repressed heresies...'³⁰⁰

'Russian Culture of the Modern Times and Ancient Rus'³⁰¹ is the key work to understand Likhachov's attitude to the dialogue of cultures and its role in the cultural dynamics. Here, Likhachov enumerates a number of principles that have the value of laws: 'History of culture develops not only through the changes inside culture, but also through the accumulation of cultural values.' Likhachov argues that 'the cultural values are not changed, but rather created, accumulated or lost'.³⁰² The most important for Likhachov is the connection of a certain culture to other cultures, and also the ways that the previous or foreign cultures are adopted or rejected. Likhachov illustrates 'culture's living in other cultures' by the European culture's handling of the ancient world's heritage. He distinguishes five stages – actually five types of a dialogue that have different contents and results (the 'barbarian style' of the 6th-10th centuries, the Roman style, the Gothic art, the Renaissance, the culture of the late 18th – the beginning of the 19th centuries): 'Each cultural identity handles the past in its peculiar way, it also has a particular set of cultures that feed it as its sources.'³⁰³ Likhachov proves that the attitude to the culture of Ancient Rus was the key feature of the cultural identity of Russia in the 18th—19th centuries: 'This is, for the most part, a permanent and an enormously interesting dialogue between the modern Russia and Ancient Rus, which is not always peaceful. The culture of Ancient Rus was growing more and more significant in the course of this dialogue. Ancient Rus was getting more significant due to the growth of the new Russia's culture which needed it more and more. The call for the culture of Ancient Rus came alongside with the significance of Russia's culture for the world and its weight in the contemporary world's civilization.'³⁰⁴ Likhachov asserts his observations while picturing a striking panorama of the original ambiguous cross-cultural dialogue that lasted for three centuries. He criticized Peter I's activities, claiming that he had broken the connection of Russia to its traditional culture for the sake of its dialogue with the West. (In his 'Peter I's Reforms and the Advance of Russian Culture'³⁰⁵ Likhachov explores that issue in detail.)

Analyzing the specificity of a cross-cultural dialogue 'through the temporal layers', D. Likhachov comes up with some basic principles which are necessary for understanding the laws of cultural development: 'It is not only the culture of the past that has an influence on the contemporary culture, joins in, takes part in a "cultural establishment". The modernity also has a certain influence on the past... on its understanding <...> there is a persistent curious and crucial

²⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 155.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 160.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 162–163.

³⁰¹ *Likhachov D. S. Russian Culture of the Modern Times and Ancient Rus*, pp. 171–190. [*In Russian*]

³⁰² Ibid., p. 171.

³⁰³ Ibid., p. 172.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 181.

³⁰⁵ *Likhachov D. S. Peter I's Reforms and the Advance of Russian Culture*, pp. 164–170. [*In Russian*]

event, that can be defined as a certain celestial "opposition" of cultures – an old and competent one, on the one hand, and a new one with the awareness of its superiority or inferiority over the old one, on the other.³⁰⁶ Both cultures get involved in the dialogue which results in a rapid advance of a new culture based on the opposition and juxtaposition with the older one.

Inadequate mutual understanding and errors are essential features of a cross-cultural dialogue. In this respect Likhachov refers to the assumption of the West that Russia has no parliamentary experience.³⁰⁷ In fact, in between the pre-Mongolian Russia and the reign of Peter I our country had a profound experience of consultative bodies: 'Of course, Ivan the Terrible used cruel practices to people – but he didn't dare to officially abolish the old tradition to consult "the native land"'.³⁰⁸ And such examples are numerous in Likhachov's writings.

The boost of the thousand-year-old Russian culture is connected, for the most part, with its dialogic character as the initial, 'inherited' feature: 'Russia's mission is defined by... the fact that more than three hundred nations – vast, great and scanty, seeking protection – united in it. Russia's culture was formed within the multinational framework.'³⁰⁹ Likhachov saw Russia as a specific bridge between the nations: 'It's not a coincidence that the golden age of Russian culture in the 18th-19th centuries had a multinational content in Moscow and, for the most part, in St. Petersburg. From the very beginning St. Petersburg had multinational population. Its main avenue -Nevsky Prospect – has become an original avenue of tolerance, where Orthodox churches were in close neighbourhood with Dutch, German, Catholic and Armenian churches, and in the vicinity there were Finnish, Swedish and French churches. It is not widely known that the Buddhist church in St. Petersburg is the biggest and the richest Buddhist church in Europe built in the 20th century. And a richest mosque was also built in Petrograd.'³¹⁰

The original openness, regard of diverse cultures, desire to unite and preserve and, somehow, adapt them have, on a large scale, made up the character and the wealth of Russian culture: 'Let us think of the legendary beginning of Rus that was marked by mutual calling of the Varangian princes with the participation of Eastern Slavic as well as Finno-Ugric tribes... Both Ancient Rus and Russia of the 18th-20th centuries were characterized by universalism and the strong craving for different national cultures.'³¹¹

Likhachov perceived the attitude to diverse cultures as a rational as well as a moral issue. It is closely linked with the humanistic essence of the progress of the world community, with the notions of 'good' and 'justice'. According to Likhachov, cultural development follows the pattern that breeds humanism, humanity and evolution of the spirit, but not according to Darwin's law.

All this lets millions of his fellow countrymen regard academician Dmitry Likhachov as the 'consciousness on the nation' and 'the moral ideal' for Russia. The Declaration of the Rights of Culture says that culture of any nation has the right to contribute to the humanistic development of the mankind. Cultural cooperation, dialogue and mutual understanding between the world's nations guarantee justice and democracy, prevent international conflicts, violence and wars.

As a co-author of the Declaration, I am very glad to note that such understanding of a cross-cultural dialogue is meeting its supporters in the world community. And our International Likhachov Scientific Conference contributes to it.

Thank you for your attention.

³⁰⁶ *Likhachov D. S. Russian Culture of the Modern Times and Ancient Rus*, p. 180.

³⁰⁷ *Likhachov D. S. Russian Culture in the Contemporary World*, p. 193. [*In Russian*]

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

³¹¹ *Likhachov D. S. The Fundamentals of European Culture and the Historic Experience of Russia*, p. 367. [*In Russian*]