Eurasia as an Island

1. Eurasian Diversity

The only thing we know for certain about Eurasia is that it is the largest island in the world.

When M HKA, Antwerp's contemporary art museum, started to call itself a Eurasian museum it did so mainly to address the fearsome problems of how the different parts of this vast landmass connect to each other. The artists it embraced as prime references for this move, Joseph Beuys and Jimmie Durham, do not have solutions for the complexity of Eurasia; rather, they voice aspirations in relation to it.

We usually call large islands "continents", to make them more manageable. And Eurasia seems to always have been too much. As a geological term the name became widely used after 1883, when the Austrian geologist Eduard Suess published his book *Das Antlitz der Erde*, ("The Face of the Earth"). Most of the continent — apart from India, the Arabian peninsula and eastern Siberia — is on the Eurasian tectonic plate. In vernacular usage, however, it remains divided in two parts, following the ancient Greek tradition of the three continents. For the Greeks, the border between Europe and Asia went from the Aegean Sea, over the Bosporus, through the Black Sea, via the Kerch Strait and through the Sea of Azov. The Romans extended this line of division further inland, along the river Don.

The presently accepted borders between Europe and Asia, with the Ural Mountains as a main reference, are the outcome of the work done by Philip Johan von Strahlenberg, a Swedish-German officer taken prisoner by Peter the Great after the Swedish defeat at Poltava in 1709. Earlier the border had been drawn further west. Peter the Great not only Europeanised Russia, he also literally dragged its landmass into Europe. And he did so by using a typical European device, that of the border as a clean cut. He reinforced Europe, in the heyday of colonialism. Tsarist Russia can very well be seen as one of the global European empires,[1] but its expansion took place within a coherent geographical territory, bringing with it very specific forms of internal colonisation.[2] Also, turning the Ural Mountains into a border for Europe at the same time obliged European Russia to engage with Asia.

Eurasia is so vast that it is hard to perceive as the single landmass, which it is. The continent is riddled with links between its different locations, which can thereby feel connected even if they are very far apart. The New Delhi-based artist group Raqs Media Collective, believing in precise understanding, often delve into the Proto-Indo-European past to search for common meaning. This culture of steppe dwellers, thought by many researchers now to have originated from the southern Ukraine and the region around the southern end of the Urals,[3] is a fundament for Eastern Slavonic nation-building but also for the ancient Iranian religion, and the belief system formulated in the early Vedic texts — a shared heritage that may be uncomfortable to Indian, Iranian and Russian nationalists alike.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, believing in the primacy of the economy, recently proposed the development of a new Silk Road. He conceives it as a zone of economic development, with a land route through Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Iran and Turkey. In Istanbul this route would make an elegant turn towards Moscow, to continue from there through Belarus, Poland and Germany, all the way

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01 Maarten Vanden Abeele

Portrait of Valentine Zhou, Belleville, Paris.
From the *Eurasiennes* Series
1997
C-print, 80 x 120 cm
© Maarten Vanden Abeele
Courtesy of the artist

to the Netherlands, and then further down to Venice, where it would meet up with the maritime route.[4]

The late Turkish artist Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin, believing in the complexity of experience, advocated the openness of his Eurasian hometown Istanbul through his "Sea Elephant Travel Agency"; a proposed cruise around the Black Sea with artists and thinkers from the region and elsewhere, visiting different ports on the way. "This kind of map is in constant flux through small and big movements; individual and collective decisions by the people; where one by one every man and woman takes their destiny in their hands and moves, changes the land, until Heimat becomes where they are […] All moves and movements reshape the map, like a kind of punch bag."[5]

Even if Alptekin based his project on a "local" Jules Verne story about someone who refuses to pay a tax to cross the Bosporus from the European to the Asian part of Istanbul, he did not want to get stuck in deliberations about the geopolitical position of the Turkish nation state, nor in trying to connect it to the speakers of Turkic languages in today's Central Asia, north-western China and north-eastern Siberia.

The island of Eurasia is not only home to most of the religious, cultural and political constructs that have worldwide impact, and thereby of the history of their flows, transformations, exchanges, approaches and antagonisms. It is also home to over 70% of the world's population. The first people called Eurasians lived in nineteenth century India. They were of mixed racial descent, issuing only to a limited extent from elite intermarriages between Muslim noble families and English officials. More often, they descended from Portuguese and Irish subaltern populations in India. Outstanding proponents of this Eurasian reality were Anthony Ferringhee, a Bengali language folk poet and Hindu mystic, or the poet and early radical thinker Henry Louis Vivian Derozio. The identification of Eurasians as people descending from *métissage* continues till today; one example is a series of photographic portraits by the Flemish artist Maarten Van den Abeele of Parisian women identifying themselves as *Eurasiennes*. Who but such "mixed" people would proclaim themselves as Eurasian, in the same effortless way that many Africans identify themselves with their continent?

2. An Entirely Different Crowd

There used to be an entirely different crowd of people identifying themselves as Eurasians: a group of intellectuals whose project led to remarkable results in different ways. After the Russian civil war many upper class Russians fled to central and western Europe. Among them were Roman Jakobson and Prince Nikolay Trubetzkoy, who were both to become internationally famous for their work within the Prague Circle of Linguistics. To them and their colleagues we owe the linguistic discipline of phonology, systemic notions such as that of the phoneme and structuralism as a more general movement. Trubetzkoy and Jakobson were also active in a movement called "Eurasianism". Trubetzkoy was even its founder and moral leader.

Eurasianism was fuelled by teleology. Its aim was to think a future for the former Russian empire, a future that would be different from its Tsarist past and its then Bolshevik present. It spread rapidly through Russian émigré society. In its brief history the movement published books and magazines, its epicentre moving from Sofia to Berlin and then to Prague and Paris. The movement organised congresses and lecture series, with weekly seminars in places as far apart as Brussels and Belgrade. By the mid-1920s it began to be infiltrated by the Soviet secret services. Although Eurasianism continued to attract new thinkers, it lost others. It was in crisis by the end of the decade. In that period it transformed itself into an organisation that existed till the end of the 1930s. It became

politicised, tending ever more to ally itself with the Soviet regime that proved to be longer-lasting than the émigrés had initially expected and that gradually also became more aligned with traditional Russian nationalism.

Eurasianism, drawing from a multitude of scholarly disciplines became a development platform for ethnography, history and historiography, geography, linguistics, theology and religious thinking, art criticism and the systemic study of literature. Informed by the Russian avant-garde, Eurasianism identified itself as a modernist movement and initially referred explicitly to futurism.[6] Many of its preoccupations were related to broader streams of societal understanding. It was prototypical of the European interbellum movements, seeking a "third way" between liberalism and communism. The Eurasianists fathomed an alternative to parliamentary democracy by advocating a demotic organisation, with engaged citizens providing input through organised bodies that represented the diverse groups constituting society. They strove for an ideocratic government, a state based upon an idea, and were therefore interested in — but also critical of — both Italian fascism and the Soviet system.

At the same time the Eurasianists embedded themselves in the recent advances of international science. The movement also tapped intellectual and spiritual traditions within Russian thought, above all the nineteenth century Slavophiles and the wider critical reflection about the westernisation of the country and how it might relate to a specifically Russian mind-set. But it drew just as much from Russian orientalism, and from then recent Russian scholarly developments in the study of the Turkic and Finno-Ugric languages, folklore and history.

Although the quality and aspirations of its adherents would become very diverse over the years, Eurasianism started as a holistic, organic and dynamic way of thinking, yet topical and individualistic, keen to challenge the *status quo*. The introductory text to *Exodus to the East*,[7] the 1921 book, with which the notion was launched, states: "We reject the possibility of 'last words' and final syntheses. History is for us is not an assured ascent to some prehistorically preordained absolute aim, but a free and creative improvisation, each moment of which is not prearranged according to some general plan, but has its own meaning […]" And further on Georges Florovsky writes: "Only he continues the cultural succession who renews it, who transmutes tradition into his own property, into an inseparable element of his personal existence, as it where, creates it anew".[8]

The key innovative move of Eurasianism was the claim to an innate coherence uniting most of the life space of the former Russian empire. This claim was developed along two main vectors, one geographic and the other cultural-historical. The Eurasianists did not perceive coherence primarily along genetic or genealogical lines. They argued that it was the outcome of people having lived together for a long time in a consistent geographical space, which included reflections on climate, biosphere and transportation geography. Such a consistent space they called a "topogenesis" or "a separate world". To them it was united primarily by a common destiny.

By linking their two vectors, the Eurasianists aimed to undo what Bruno Latour would much later call the "Modern Constitution",[9] the fiction that society and nature may be unrelated. This also had economic consequences. *Exodus to the East*, to which besides Trubetzkoy the geographer and economist Pyotr Savitsky, the musicologist Pyotr Suvchinsky and the religious thinker Georges Florovsky contributed, already presented a well-developed proposal. It contained for example Savitsky's essay "Continent — Ocean (Russia and the World Market)",[10] in which he termed Russia-Eurasia an "ocean

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02–05 Gregorius Fentzel

Europe, Asia, America, Africa. Allegory of the Four Continents
Mid 17th century
After Adriaen Collaert, ca. 1589, based upon Maerten de Vos
Engravings
Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp

continent" in the properly economic sense: an extreme continental zone, very far from sea access, with an economic logic entirely different from the oceanic principle of linking, which he depicted as a likeness of London, a point on a seashore. The high transport costs proper to a continental system may stimulate intracontinental production sites and interests in very specific areas, closely related to one another.

While the notion of topogenesis would have long-lasting effects, the largest immediate impact was made by the claim, astonishing at the time, that the Finno-Ugric and Volga Turkic peoples were just as constitutive to Russia as the Russians. This was a shock-and-awe intellectual move. "Are there many people in Rus' through whose blood vessels does not flow Khazar or Cuman, Tatar or Bashkir, Mordovian or Chuvash blood? Are there many Russians who are completely alien to the imprint of Eastern spirit: its mysticism, its love of introspection, indeed, its introspective laziness?"[11]

Subaltern minorities were suddenly put at par with the dominant culture. The Eurasians claimed that a historical "Turanianisation" of the Russians had taken place.[12] This was made credible through linguistic and ethnographic analysis. Along with the introduction of this "Turanian"[13] element, the Mongol empire, personified by Genghis Khan, was made visible as an important and constructive factor in the formation of the Russian state and its culture.

Both Europe and Asia proper were left out of this equation, and the relation to both of those "excluded" sides was ambiguous. The Eurasianists did not know how to deal with the real otherness of Asia proper,[14] and their turn to the east may even be interpreted as based on the subconscious fear of the "yellow peril" that has been traditionally widespread in Russia.[15] The Eurasianists' evocation of the East served to evocate the specific eastern-ness of Russia itself, and can therefore be seen as a way of rejecting the West. The anti-western

stance cultivated by these émigrés can be situated in a tradition of fraternal conflict[16] between Russia and Europe, enhanced by the uncomfortable émigré position of the authors.

In an elegiac letter from 1930, after he had renounced Eurasianism, Trubetzkoy would even write to Savitsky that the Eurasianists were actually representatives of European-Russian culture. He added that they had proved to be quite good forecasters, but that the outcome they had predicted proved to be a nightmare.[17] Eurasianism was a balancing act between notions of the Russian state and a perceived topogenesis, between the Russian part of the population and the multitude of other peoples for whom the same territory was also home, between the primacy of the Orthodox church and religious tolerance, and finally between Europe and Asia.

This notion of Eurasia-as-Russian-Eurasianism reappeared towards the end of perestroika, most interestingly in the predominantly Muslim former Soviet republics, where it now serves as a platform for the new states to think their identity in a multifaceted way. Kazakhstan's president Nursultan Nazarbaev has even named the university in his new capital of Astana after the idiosyncratic Russian post-war writer Lev Gumilev who styled himself "the last of the Eurasians". But there are also self-proclaimed neo-Eurasianists in the Russian Federation itself, such as the restorationist Alexander Panarin and the conspirationalist Alexander Dugin.[18]

Russian Eurasianism leaves us with the fascinating notion of Eurasia being Eurasia without either Europe or Asia as such. That is hard to understand for a European. But it might be an interesting proposition for Europe all the same.

3. Eurasia as a Horizon of Fear

The symbolic grip, which Europe had developed over the world, unravelled in two wars, which also for that reason can justly be called world wars. While the first First World War had been sufficient to question the European system and open up alternatives — Trubetzkoy's seminal anti-colonial book *Europe and Mankind*[19] from 1920 is an indicator of this — the Second World War delivered the *coup de grâce* for Europe as a world power. It was left morally bankrupt, decolonisation speeded up and the world became organised as a bipolar system.[20]

Europe, in fact, became the main *border* in this new world order, but precisely for this reason it could continue to hang on to its automatisms. As the negotiating platform between the two poles, it could still imagine itself as the centre of it all. Western Europe, in particular, continued to play many international roles, but at the same time it colonialised itself, reeling from the trauma of the war, Nazism and the Shoah, by choosing the United States as its absolute reference and guide. Therefore it was only confronted with the obsolescence of its Eurocentric mind set when the bipolar system collapsed 25 years ago. The fall of the Iron Curtain did not so much bring about a reunification of Europe, as an acute sense of its loss of position.

The horizon of hope represented by an orientation to the west — *Go West, Young Man!* — was replaced by a horizon of fear. The orientation of this horizon is the east. China came to symbolise it. The Chinese danger used to be merely a cartoon-like image of masses of soldiers streaming across endless distances towards Europe. Now China has regained its imperial position as "All Under Heaven", the traditional centre of the world, and has become an economic powerhouse, to which industrial production has been massively delocalised. Europe has become aware that the multipolar world has poles that do not really need it anymore, except as a consumer market. Three of the four BRIC countries are situated in Eurasia: Russia, India and China.

Moreover, in this world with drastically shifting balances, a world in which Iran, Turkey, the Arab Middle East and South-East Asia also suddenly became places to worry about, Europe has at the same time been affected at its very core. We now understand the extent to which colonialism was actually symmetrical, with various repercussions on the countries that produced it, allowing regimes of discipline to re-enter the centre and affecting its cultural structure. These processes did not end with the colonial era. The world does not belong to Europe anymore, but Europe still belongs to the world. Europe is confronted with a proliferation of unexpected consequences of its universalist claims, now that its systems to suppress diversity have unravelled. It finds it virtually impossible to balance even its internal regimes. It experiences hyper diversity, both internally driven — as when it becomes aware of its own queerness — and because of the outside world's response to European rhetoric. Europe can no longer exorcise this capacity of bodies, minds and specificities through the commonwealths of its former colonies.

Europe's traditional political setup is also challenged by the diversity, which the "old continent" offended against for so long. Bottom-up diversity is organising itself in highly effective ways. In 2014, when M HKA invited 28 young artists from all over the world to respond to the notion of identity politics,[21] it found remarkable consistency. In contemporary art identity politics is no longer a key reference, elements of identity are now implicitly present as part of the specificity of offers made by artists who position themselves on a par with their audience, as part of a dialogue between equals. That same horizontal energy is at work in the informal community formation of young people who organise their world as intense interpersonal networks, of which the social media of the internet are merely an echo. The same incredible potential can be seen in new forms of activism, where activists, tapping into the expertise of dedicated citizens, are sometimes equipped with a more advanced analytical capacity than the governing systems they encounter. Such activists can become major political players overnight.

States on the other hand, the vertical institutions that are supposed to organise society, are increasingly at a loss. Decision-making power is ever more concentrated on the supranational level, and is at the same time devolved to regional and local authorities. More fundamentally still, states are unable to cope with the horizontal, fluid ways in which the world has become organised. They have become service providers for their populations. They not only fail to cope with multinational enterprises (a fact that has been evident for sometime already), but they also do not know how to deal with the sovereign intelligence of their masses. The only meaningful relation that states succeed in establishing in this respect is one of manipulation. This is the "soft power" that the Russian state now identifies and uses to reunite its own population under the flag of a monolithic, conservative identity reconstruction, and which it accuses the United States of using as a technology to bring about "colour revolutions" and regime change. This way of envisaging the societal cultural vector as a sophisticated armoury — an enhanced version of the propaganda of yesterday — is in itself proof of the deficiency of contemporary states in respect of diversity as a force in the world.

We are somehow aware of diversity as an asset, sometimes by experiencing hyper diversity in daily life, but also when thinking of our own borough as different from the adjoining boroughs, our own region within our country as different from other regions, and obviously huge chunks of the world as very different from other huge chunks, China versus Brazil, say. Even if our effective knowledge of them often remains astonishingly limited, we do know that

such differentiations still make sense. We relate to them mainly on the level of *Lonely Planet* guidebooks or practical tips for international businessmen. We are liminally aware of the fact that people from here and there and elsewhere are to some extent different because of the traditions they come from. We do not, however, develop a real consciousness of these differences, although that might very well be possible.

One example. In an upcoming book the anthropologist Rik Pinxten even makes this case for what seems to be the holy grail of objectivity: contemporary mathematics.[22] Following sociocultural learning theory, a development of the early 20th century sociohistorical theory of the Russian pedagogue and theoretician Lev Vygotsky, Pinxten pleads for an awareness and cultivation of real diversity even in this field. He points out that, besides the skyscraper of professional western mathematics, there are other substantial structures such as the Hindu, Islamic or Chinese mathematical traditions, and also many smaller buildings, representing local and often very specific, but no less efficient mathematical knowledge. The anchoring point for all education is children, to whom it is mainly addressed, and locally generated "low-rise" mathematics are closer to them than the skyscraper. This is but one case in point.

We might very well invest part of our collective energy in thinking such differences into layered mappings, as the early Eurasianists sought to do on a linguistic level through comparing individual words or "isoglosses" from various languages, to then figure out the potential and the consequences of such differentiations. Why do we not qualify such differences, and develop them into a basic platform to think about a viable organisation of our world, to reconstruct or enhance the way in which our world system works? The system of states, on the one hand, and people, on the other hand, have become mutually disengaged, as discussed above. As a consequence the system of relations between states has also lost the potential to be inhabited by popular good will.

In such circumstances the vast complexity of Eurasia cannot exist even as a valid question, and still less to be dealt with on the basis of sophisticated mind-sets. Eurasia cannot exist, because the structural relations on its territory are enacted by way of primary conflicts, deals and blows, which often result in stalemates. Cultural awareness follows these moves like a shadow. Ukraine was virtually an empty spot on the cultural map of Western Europeans — even though it is one of the largest countries in Europe — until the recent conflict there engaged US/EU and Russian state policies. The Ukrainian conflict has also caused Western Europe to drift further away in Russian public opinion.

The multipolar world is discussed almost exclusively in terms of security issues and international power capabilities, the possibility to exert influence on a global scale through economic, military, political and demographic means. The loss of the bipolar post-war world remains the basic reference point for multipolarity. Even civilisations have become mere pretexts for clashes. There are not many starting points to think an organisation of the world other than such blunt — and only seemingly stable — geopolitical antagonisms.

Contemporary reflection, on the other hand, is most often profoundly "glocal"; it combines incidental local engagements with a cosmopolitan feeling of self. How can we find a basis for a more grounded and integrated future for us all, or at least for those of us who live in Eurasia? The only hope is by the reintroduction of a more complex perspective alongside what is now called "geopolitics".

4. Eurasia as a Horizon of Hope

When M HKA started to call itself a Eurasian museum, it did so out of a sense of surprise at the obedient way, in which the art world followed the geopolitical media image of the

moment, and as an alternative perspective to be tried out, a possible antidote. It based itself on artistic references. An obvious primary reference is the German artist Joseph Beuys. Beuys enacted his legendary performance *Eurasienstab* in the immediate vicinity of M HKA, at Wide White Space Gallery in Antwerp in February 1968.

The performance presented itself as a ritual, with the artist being merely a medium who followed a script with a precise succession of moments, even looking at his wristwatch to know whether he was faithful to its temporality. Beuys transformed the gallery into a symbolic space, smoothing its corners with fat and mounting four felt beams at its centre, fitted precisely between floor and ceiling and forming a square around a central light bulb. The protagonist of the action was the "Eurasian Staff" ("Eurasienstab"), a massive copper staff, bent at the top, also of the same height as the space. The staff initially lay on the floor, covered in sailcloth. It was then activated and finally covered again. Beuys identified copper as a conduit for energy — spiritual energy. In the same way fat and felt stood for the healing power he ascribed to the Tatars, whom he claimed saved him when his fighter plane was shot down over Crimea in the Second World War. To him they stood for "a no man's land between the Russian and German fronts, they favoured neither side".[23]

Beuys can be seen in a lineage of attempts by Western culture to connect to the east as a means of reconnecting to a lost spirituality. He was influenced by anthroposophy, which in its turn drew from theosophy, an ultimate expression of this orientalist tendency. Beuys was critical of this. "It doesn't make sense", he said, "to simply take over yoga praxis, in order to, as it where, pray oneself into health."[24] Eurasia can be seen as Beuys's interior space, as called up in the iconography of his drawings, with honey gatherers and hunters, reindeer and moose.[25] This notion of Eurasia was part of his wider attempt to reinsert a more free and spiritual capacity into European culture. "It may impact the present notions of people in the west, with their culture that became caught in rationality, and geared towards materialism, while the other side is still largely present in Asia".[26]

Therefore Beuys called this complementary side the "Eastern Principle". His aspiration can be very well compared to that of the Eurasianists, extending the east further west. To him the Belgian city of Ostend represented the end of the east. This is a geography not entirely incompatible with "the harmonious economic community from Lisbon to Vladivostok" proposed not so long ago by the Russian president Vladimir Putin.[27] Beuys did not aim for a complete merger between East and West or for multiculturalism, but rather for the capacity that may be the outcome of mutual understanding and vital openness. Using Eurasia to name a fictive state or a political party, as he did, was a reproach to the conformism of progressive political thinking in West Germany at that moment, just as much as to a societal call for East and West to meet, a concern he shared with an artist such as Nam June Paik. Beuys's notion of Eurasia has continued to resonate, although it has not yet become a broad public notion.[28]

Another reference artist who has dealt extensively with the notion of Eurasia is Jimmie Durham. His move to Europe in 1994 was highly symbolic. Durham, of Cherokee descent, was an activist of the American Indian Movement in the late 1970s. In the 1980s he moved to Mexico from the US, the empire that had damaged his people and their culture beyond repair. After a seven-year stay in the city of Cuernavaca, during which he became a reference figure for both the Mexican art scene and the wider world, he moved to Europe, the heartland of the culture that had struck at his continent.

This move is reflected in Durham's art in an apparently joyful way, as was recently thematised in an exhibition in his new home base, the city of Berlin,[29] or enacted in

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06–08 Jimmie Durham

Yakutia. Making a pole to mark the center of the world (left and right) and pretending to be the mouse girl from a cartoon (centre)
1995
Video stills
Photos: Yrjö Haila
Courtesy of the artist

his spaghetti western film The *Pursuit of Happiness*. Durham's essays from the last two decades[30] are testimony of his European work as a consistent and pertinent critique on the tragically rigorous nature of European culture. He engages, for example, with the deconstruction of the notion of architecture. It figures in his work as a synecdoche, an important part of a wider set up. For Durham, architecture acts both as a primary divide — Enkiddu building the first city walls in the Gilgamesh epic, therewith expelling nature from the city – and as an apparatus of normalisation and of hegemony.

But even if Durham has addressed Europe in his art and his writing, Europe was not the continent he migrated to. His 1996 book *Eurasian Project, Stage One* indicates a wider setting. "For me there is a simple fact that the continent of Eurasia is almost impossibly large (much larger than Los Angeles, finally). To say 'Eurasian Project' is absurd. As absurd as the idea 'Prepare for the Future'. (Or maybe even: 'Study History'). It is not that my attempt to become Eurasian is artificial or useless but it is the 'best I can do', in the context of making a pretense of a pretense".[31]

Durham actually migrated to the landmass from which his people supposedly came, and he immediately countered this migratory story by a still vaster claim: that he is a direct descendant of the very first human being. Indeed, all of us originate in Africa, so science tells us, and the still hotly disputed passage via the Caucasus was a migration path for many humans, animals and even plants. As is his usual practice — also in the linguistic reflections that are key to him — Durham here opens up preconceived narratives by letting them enter into wider loops.

"I was in Paris speaking with the Chinese artist Huang Yong Ping. He said that American Indians originated in China. I replied that, since that happened so many thousands of years ago, there was no China at the time. He said, 'Who were we then, I wonder?' I said, 'You were Cherokees'."[32]

Durham made his Eurasian engagement pertinent by his trip to Yakutia in north-eastern Siberia, which he reflected upon in the same publication. He announced in the text that he was making seven poles to mark the seven centres of the Eurasian continent. He added a

picture of another pole which he stated was the eighth, made in Brussels, "because Brussels, where I live, wants to be a financial and political centre."[33]

In the end Durham's poles were realised for such diverse — and often seemingly "not central" — places as Yakutsk, Reims, Plasy, Antwerp, Jølster, Prague or Berlin, but also for Vancouver and Winnipeg. They refer to holy trees like the Nordic Yggdrasil or the Ahuahete tree in the Mexican village of Chalma that Durham commemorated in his 1997 exhibition in Pori, Finland, entitled "The Center of the World or How to Get to Chalma". They refer just as much to the linden or oak trees that used to be constitutive for communities in Eurasia. "Every continent has a tree that marks the centre of the world. And so does every village".[34]

This proposal is obviously at the same time yet another critical address by him to the traditional egocentrism of Western Europe — as symbolised by Brussels being granted an "out of series" pole, because of its ambitions. To Durham Europe is merely a large peninsula of Eurasia, not a continent.[35] Which is not a bad way of looking at it.

When M HKA started to call itself a Eurasian museum, it was first and foremost as a response to the fear governing Western Europe, after it suddenly found out, in the aftermath of the 1989 events, that it was no longer the centre of the world, but instead in danger of becoming its outskirts. The new multipolar world left Europe at a loss, its behavioural automatisms outdated. It seems obvious that this demands a rewiring of European relation patterns to the world and an assumption of the different levels of cultural diversity Europe is struggling with. Contemporary art, geared towards thinking the world otherwise, differently, may be a field in which to develop paths towards this. Besides an enhanced experience of internal diversity, it may also offer concrete engagements with artists from other parts of the world, envisaged as relevant to art and therewith accessible. This may lead to a perception of acquaintance, rather than continuing the alienation or the distance to otherness, which Europe has been so effective in developing.

M HKA engaged substantially and early on with the Chinese and Indian art situations, translating exhibitions into focussed collection engagements.[36] It has done the same for the art scene in Russia and the Ukraine.[37] The notion of Eurasia as a symbolic platform for these engagements suddenly turned them into geophysical relational possibilities. Santiniketan, the academy set up by Rabindranath Tagore in rural Bengal, and Shanghai suddenly became part of the same island, only situated on another side of it.

Russia presented itself as a possible bridgehead towards that wider challenge. As Western Europeans we may feel that Russia is European, yet has its own embedded eastern-ness. That coherent complexity diminished when the USSR fell apart. In the Caucasus and in Central Asia a series of new states emerged. M HKA decided to focus on the key artists of those regions too and it acquired reference works by them through a series of five exhibitions, which it organised with the Moscow curator Viktor Misiano in 2009 and 2010. These exhibitions were entitled "Europe at Large", not as a geopolitical statement, pleading for enlargement, but as a cultural proposal, thinking Europe not in a European way — defined by borders — but as a space fading out gradually. Almaty is the ancestral home of the apple, scientists think, given the great genetic diversity among wild apples in the region. Because of the Tsarist and Soviet past, Brussels or Rome may feel related to this ancestral home of the apple. Not related like close family, but related like family all the same.

5. Forwards, Back to Trubetzkoy

Eurasianism wanted to distinguish a "third continent" within Eurasia, different from Europe and Asia proper, and it

may therefore seem to be the opposite of the integrated image of Eurasia that is our challenge today. Nevertheless it may be inspirational in relation to that challenge, especially through the writings of its founder, Nikolay Trubetzkoy. These writings have meanwhile become a very old historical recollection, separated from us by the horror of the Second World War that was to lead history onto paths different from those the author had hoped for. Nevertheless, his themes and his treatment of them resonate with our contemporaneity.

In his 1927 essay "The Ukrainian Problem", Trubetzkoy pleads for an interdependency between Ukrainian and Muscovite culture. He describes at length how a Ukrainisation of Russian culture was started after Moscow incorporated Polonised Kiev, and how this was continued under Peter the Great and in the post-Petrine period. Trubetzkoy fears that a newly created Ukrainian culture in the early twentieth century would be provincialised and enter a completely antagonistic mode. He formulates this dead end as "posing the question in the form of a dilemma (either/or)".[38]

The 1935 essay "On Racism", in which Trubetzkoy counters the rising tide of antisemitism, also remains a valid read, with its deconstruction of the identity question and its plea for a deeper understanding and sense of responsibility on the part of his specific readership and society at large. The essay ends with a joyful defence of the possibility of mixed marriages between all and everyone.[39] Trubetzkoy's texts occasionally read like premonitions of globalisation. He remarks that in a utilitarian, egoistic world "the Japanese and Germans will find common ground only in logic, technology, and material interest, while all other elements and mainsprings of culture must gradually atrophy".[40]

Trubetzkoy saw himself as a Russian and he was an Orthodox Christian believer, but what was his real aspiration for society? The question is hard to answer. The Prague Linguistic Circle was highly aware of the essential importance of contextuality. Two of its members, Roman Jakobson and Petr Bogatyrev, in their ground-breaking article "On the Delimitation of Folklore and Literary Studies" referred to the censorship of the speech community as crucial for the creation of folklore. Collective admission is of key importance, much as in the case of neologisms.[41] The Circle took a similar approach in seeking the acceptance of its ideas by society at large. Participation in every scholarly congress was planned like a military campaign; allies were recruited from every country, possible adversaries were neutralised, and the Circle's forces were deployed in an optimal way.[42]

The same consciousness of the decisive role of the audience, can be noted in Trubetzkoy's Eurasianist essays. In "On Racism" he makes the brilliant move of shedding new light on character traits seen as Jewish by analysing the behaviour patterns of Russian émigrés, for whom he is writing, towards the foreign populations among which they now live. "The Jews have been émigrés for some two thousand years and possess a stable émigré tradition", he remarks. He writes about a future for Russia, but for a community — interwar Russian émigrés — with a given mindset. That should be taken into consideration. His positions may seem to shift from one essay to another, but this is only seemingly contradictory, as the logic that he is attempting to convey requires him to show now one side of the coin and now another. The broad lines of his work are clearly distinct from the — often narrowly nationalistic — minds he was writing for.

While Trubetzkoy believed in Eurasianist Eurasia as a platform, he certainly did not subscribe to an ideology of empire, which is how the French political scientist Marlène Laruelle recently labelled Eurasianism. He explicitly warned that Russia should avoid attempts to annex any country not located within the geographical boundaries of Eurasia. He endorsed some

of Russia's geographical losses. Even though he felt Russian and the princely family he came from traced its ancestry back to a Grand Duke of Lithuania, he accepted that Finland, Poland and the Baltic provinces had now fallen away from Russia. According to Trubetzkoy, they had no natural, historical or state connection with Russia; they had never been part of the empire of Genghis Khan.[43]

Trubetzkoy persisted with what may be called a third-world stance in the continuation of his analysis in "Europe and Mankind" where he refers to "an optical illusion" in the encounter between colonisers and their counterparts.

"Europeans are quite oblivious to the fact that if "savages" are incapable of grasping certain ideas of European civilisation, the cultures of these "savages" are equally inaccessible to them. […] They completely ignore the fact that the impression of 'grown up children' is mutual, which is to say that the savages also view Europeans as grown-up children".

Although vehemently critical of the Soviet regime, Trubetzkoy endorsed in no less than five articles[44] the decolonising role of Russia under this regime "for the liberation of the peoples of Asia and Africa who are enslaved by the colonial powers", "leading her Asiatic sisters in their common struggle". This was a double bind for Trubetzkoy: he felt that the experiments of the Bolsheviks had downgraded Russia into the ranks of the colonial countries, but this very fact prepared Russia for what he saw as her new historical role as a leader in the liberation struggle. Another positive outcome was that Russia started for the first time to speak to Asians as equals and that it had "abandoned the role of arrogant culture-bearer and exploiter — one that did not suit her at all." This was what the Bolsheviks had to offer, he felt, not only in Asia but also in Russia itself: "not an uprising of the poor against the rich, but of the despised against despisers."[45]

Trubetzkoy often used the word "nation" but that is merely a structural device, a grid that might become the support structure for a network of relations as he envisaged it. He thought about ways to bring people together in the best possible fashion. The platform for this, to which people feel they can belong, he named a "multihuman unit (i.e. a nation or a multinational whole)".[46] If anything he was a multinationalist. These multihuman units can be complementary, reinforcing one another. For him Eurasia had to become a multinational construction, which would allow people to feel part of their own nation within that set up: "The feeling that one belongs to a multinational whole has among its constituents the feeling that one belongs to a definite nation within this whole".[47] He also spoke of Eurasia as a multi-ethnic nation.[48] It is clearly this multi-ethnicity he was interested in, as he stated himself: "to create a new culture or a whole spectrum of related cultures", which until recently were "subjects fit only for ethnographic study".[49] Trubetzkoy would certainly have condemned someone like Dugin as phantasmagorical and as an example of what he called "false nationalism", but he might be interested in the efforts by the new mostly Muslim post-Soviet states of today, to use Eurasianism as a platform for thinking their future.

6. A Dream Projected onto Eurasia

Trubetzkoy continuously thought an ecology of connections, in many different terms. Between past and present: "Nothing is absolutely new in history."[50] Between the external (i.e. culture) and the internal: "Perhaps the main difference between the 'Oriental' solution of life problems and the 'Western' one."[51] Between the communal and the individual: "These two tasks — the national and the individual — are intimately related; they complement and condition one another."[52] Between generations: "Each generation works out its own mixture,

its own canonised synthesis."[53] Between what we would call high and low culture, although for him this means the more widely connected side of intellectual and spiritual development versus their popular roots, as in the 1921 essay "The Upper and Lower Stories of Russian Culture". Between the endogenic and the exogenic: "In terms of the own culture versus others, in addition to this endogenous interaction between a culture's upper and lower stories, both levels are also nourished exogenously by borrowing from foreign cultures."[54] Opting for what he called an all-Russian culture, he at the same time saw this as a basis for differentiating between it and all regional cultures: "Consequently, the Russian culture of the future must be sharply differentiated along regional and territorial lines; instead of the abstract, bureaucratically faceless homogeneity of the past, a rainbow of brightly rendered regional hues should appear."[55]

He was a systems thinker in the best sense, being aware that a societal system is only alive in its dynamics, yet searching for a stable centre and lasting connections. The quality of the dynamics was his core interest. His question was the life and development of a culture and his answer was an uninterrupted emergence of new cultural assets. He saw culture as a collective individuality but in order to continue that, it had to change constantly. He emphasised that the results of one epoch are not valid in the next, but also that they always establish a point of departure for every new effort.[56]

With his colleagues, the structuralists, he was convinced of the essential importance of oppositions, linked to the awareness that those are fruitful only in their connections that allow for differentiation. Trubetzkoy was therefore all about balancing, wanting to acknowledge not only a multitude of positions but also a diversity of connective dimensions. Things acquire their meaning only in relation to other things, as ethnography and phonology had made him understand. What he saw in the real world, but what he noted remained largely unseen, was gradualism.

"Between neighbouring dialects we find transitional dialects that combine features of both. Language is a continuity of dialects, gradually and imperceptibly merging into one another. Languages in their turn combine into families and fall into branches, sub-branches and so on. Within a family, individual languages are related as dialects are within language […]. Separate branches within a family are related as languages within a branch. There is no essential difference between the concepts of branch, language and dialect."[57]

This awareness , which his science gave him, was what he aimed to further articulate. He did not perceive it only in language. He felt that the common view of perfectly monolithic, or homogeneous peoples is nonsense. They are always differentiated further internally: "In any people, even a small one, there will exist several tribal subgroups, sometimes rather sharply distinguished from one another by language, physical type, temperament, customs and so on." The same goes in the other direction, one can also see peoples as parts of larger groupings: "Every people belongs to some group of peoples which is linked by certain general traits. Moreover, one and the same people will often belong to one group by one set of criteria and to a different group by other criteria."[58]

He saw this complexity of differentiation right across the land mass of Eurasia: "The cultures of neighbouring peoples always exhibit comparable features. Therefore, among such cultures we find certain cultural-historical 'zones'. For instance, Asia falls into zones of Islamic, Hindustani, Chinese, Pacific, Arctic, steppe region, etc. The boundaries of these zones intersect one another, so that cultures of a mixed, or transitional, type emerge. […] As a result, we have the same rainbow-like network, unified and harmonious by virtue of its

continuity and infinitely varied by virtue of its differentiation."[59]

In his early research (Trubetzkoy had been a "child prodigy" in linguisitics and ethnography) Trubetzkoy engaged with the culture of "small nations"; with Finnish, Paleo-Siberian, Russian and Caucasian folklore and linguistics.[60] This diversity was genuinely dear to him. The otherwise despised, materialistic Bolsheviks won his grudging support in this respect: he was explicitly positive about Soviet repudiation of Russification and official recognition of the national rights of different peoples. He advocated maximal autonomy, limited only by the need to preserve the unity of the state, because such maximal autonomy was for him consonant with a proper understanding of the Russian state system, which is, after all, Eurasian, created by Russians and Turanians alike. Trubetzkoy's Eurasian dream is clear: "The national substratum of the state formerly known as the Russian Empire and now known as the U.S.S.R. can only be the totality of peoples inhabiting that state, taken as a peculiar multi-ethnic nation and as such possessed of its own nationalism."[61]

"Nationalism" here does sound a bit tricky, but again, we must remember the nature of Trubetzkoy's émigré readership. He attempted to translate a dream into realistic possibilities and his Russia/Eurasia move was no doubt a part of that effort. He was well aware that the perfect solution does not exist. When speaking about transitional dialects, which belong to one or the other of two neighbouring related languages, he ended with the dry comment: "In most cases such disputes cannot be resolved by linguistic means alone."[62] Jakobson once wrote that he did not believe in "the world as a reservoir of peacefully coexisting little cultures", to which Trubetzkoy replied: "Neither do I. If at some time my dreams come true, I can envisage the world consisting of several big cultures with "dialectical" variants, as it were. The difference from the European ideal lies in the fact that, first, there will still be several cultures, not one, and, second, that their dialectical variants will be brighter and freer."[63]

A true respect for diversity is what made Trubetzkoy tick. "No one is higher, no one is lower. Some are similar, and others are not."[64] He viewed self-awareness as the basis for that respect. It is from an understanding of their own natures that individuals (and nations) come to a full awareness of the equal value of all persons and nations.[65] Trubetzkoy therefore condemned concepts such as the "evolutionary scale" and "stages of development", and even stated that the element of evaluation should be scrapped entirely from ethnology, the history of culture, and from all evolutionary sciences, even if he was well aware that this is impossible. But he deeply reproached all selfishness, which made it impossible to understand and value others and thus to be able to connect to them. He profoundly experienced egocentrism as an asocial frame of reference that destroys every form of communication between human beings. As so often in his thinking this line of thought concerned individuals and groups alike. For Trubetzkoy the essential question was how to live together, a question which is not even limited to human beings. This is rendered impossible by an egocentric psychology, a person who subconsciously considers himself to be the centre of the universe, the crown of creation, the best, the most perfect of all things. "Confronted by two other human beings, the one closer to him, more like him, is the better, while the one less like him is worse. Consequently, this person considers every natural group of human beings to which he belongs the most perfect: his family, estate, nation, tribe and race are better than all analogous groups. Similarly, his species, the human race, is more perfect than all other mammals, and mammals are more perfect than other vertebrates, while animals are more perfect than plants, and the organic world more

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perfect than the inorganic. To some degree, everyone is captive to this psychology.[66]

Trubetskoy was searching for something that does not exist, an ideocracy rather than an ideocratic state. In his self-reflective letter from 1930, mentioned above, he wrote that he still could not see an alternative to ideocracy, but that he now saw the profound organic deficiencies of this structure. He added that he therefore could not propagate it anymore. This was not only because he felt that the existing "ideocratic" governments were faltering in terms of content. His critical reflection at that point was more fundamental. He saw that the very system of ideocratic government was leading to bad outcomes. "The change of content does not change the essence of the matter. Stalin remains Stalin, and it does not matter if he acts in the name of the dictatorship of the proletariat or in the name of religious orthodoxy."[67]

To paraphrase George Florovsky, the important thing is not what exactly the Eurasians thought but what they thought about, the truth they were seeking to detect.[68] This fits with a maxim from Trubetzkoy: "A revolution in world view is the only duty that confronts everyone."[69]

7. For a Progressive Eurasia

Trubetzkoy and Durham are in several ways comparable. They express an interest in linguistics — formulated by the former in

terms of science and by the latter in terms of art — that envisages language as a fluid reality. They are both critical of existing mind-sets; they are both aspirational; they both write out of a sense of urgency. Both therefore address their audience directly, in order to be able to continue their thoughts. Trubetzkoy ends his introduction to “Europe and Mankind” with the line: “All those who in one way or another wish to react to my brochure are requested to forward offprints, clippings or simply letters to the following address: N.S. Trubetzkoy, Docent, Faculty of History and Philology, University of Sofia, Sofia, Bulgaria”. Durham ends his “Art in Bulgaria” text in the catalogue for the exhibition “Strangers in the Arctic” with this line: “As I wrote in a magazine in Paris last year, with no response, if any one reading these words has encouragement for me, or something of interest, or simply an effective small benediction, please write to me.”

The key concordance between them, offering inspiration for our Eurasian theme, is their ongoing focus on differentiation, oscillating between hardened differences and utter fluidity, therewith becoming a source of understanding and remaining dialogical. Trubetskoy and Durham convey the same awareness, albeit in opposite ways: the former continuously arguing that the centre is nowhere; the latter evocating that the centre is wherever we make it happen. They share an awareness that diversity is all around us, and that it cannot be grasped in any meaningful way by establishing borders of difference, by exoticising and antagonising, but that it can, on the contrary, become an inexhaustible source of encounters.

Such encounters between people who are different simultaneously enhance self-awareness and awareness of the other. Gathering happens in the course of this discovery of accords and disaccords, and it only happens after the prior acceptance of the equal value and basic qualitative incommensurability of different people and peoples.

State borders are at best an acceptable evil. For a family or a community the same goes as for the linguistic families, the branches, the languages, the dialects and their speakers who keep them alive by continuously reinventing them. We may feel that borders have to be installed, but they are never truly valid or precise. What we need are centres of the world, and we also need the understanding that such centres cannot stand alone and, even more importantly, that they exist precisely because they are not alone, because they relate respectfully to other centres, both smaller and larger.

Today the territory on which this awareness could be cultivated, is further removed from basic geography than in Trubetzkoy’s time, but his systemic understanding of sustainable dynamics within the relational oppositions of differentiation still holds water. And we still live in places. And states still think in terms of borders, which is sub-optimal but a reality.

Today’s Russian state, for example, can only define itself as culturally diverse, even if it sometimes seems to want to rid itself of its beautiful Dagestan, where several dozen peoples coexist. Russia today can only exist through connections, not only the grand schemes of new Silk Roads and Eurasian Unions, but also those of smaller communicating spheres of mutual influence, with very “near abroads” (the term now used in Russia to refer to other former Soviet republics), even nearer abroads, and slightly more distant abroads. Learning from its own necessities, Russia might teach Europe some of this connective understanding, so that Europe too, may become truly a part of Eurasia.

Moscow has a destiny to connect, not to divide; to be a meeting place, not a fortress; the centre of a world, not of a territory.

Bart De Baere

1 See N. Ostler, *Empires of the Word.* London, 2005.

2 See A. Etkind, *Internal Colonisation: Russia's Imperial Experience.* Cambridge, 2011.

3 See D. W. Anthony, *The Horse, The Wheel and Language: How Bronze Age Riders from the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern World.* Princeton, NJ, 2007.

4 *China to Create Bank to Fund "New Silk Road": Official Media*, Reuters, 12 Nov. 2014.

5 H. Alptekin, "Mutual Realities, Re-mapping Destinies", In: Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin: *I am not a Studio Artist*, Istanbul, 2011, pp.230–237.

6 The memoirs of Roman Jakobson on the early years of his career, edited by Bengt Jangfeldt, are even entitled *My Futurist Years*.

7 *Iskhod k vostoku.* Sofia, 1921, trans. by Ilya Vinkovetsky. In: *Exodus to the East. Forebodings and Events: An Affirmation of the Eurasians*, eds. I. Vinkovetsky and Ch. Schlacks Jr., Idyllwild, 1996.

8 G.V. Florovsky, "About Non-historical People". In: *Exodus to the East*, p.58.

9 B. Latour, *Nous n'avons jamais été modernes — essai d'anthropologie symétrique.* Paris, 1991.

10 P. N. Savitsky, "Continent — Ocean (Russia and the World Market)", trans. by Ilya Vinkovetsky. In: *Exodus to the East*, op. cit., pp. 95–113.

11 P. N. Savitsky, "A Turn to the East", trans. by Ilya Vinkovetsky. In: *Exodus to the East*, op. cit., p. 5.

12 N. Trubetzkoy, "The Legacy of Genghis Khan", trans. by Kenneth Bostrom. In: N.S. Trubetzkoy, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan and Other Essays on Russia's Identity*. Ed. by A. Liberman. Ann Arbor, 1991, p. 207. Further references to Trubetzkoy essays refer to this book, unless otherwise indicated.

13 A controversial name that has been used in different ways. For Trubetzkoy it stands for five ethno-linguistic groups: Finno-Ugric, Samoyed, Turkic, Mongol and Manchu.

14 M. Laruelle, *Russian Eurasianism, an Ideology of Empire.* Washington, 2012, p. 41.

15 N. V. Riasanovsky, "The Emergence of Eurasianism". In: California Slavic Studies, 4. Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967, p. 219.

16 Ibid., p. 57.

17 N. Trubetzkoy, letter to P.N. Savitsky, 8–10.12.1930, translated by Anders Kreuger for M HKA, 2015.

18 M. Laruelle, op. cit., pp. 145–201; 107–144; 83–106.

19 N. Trubetzkoy, "Europe and Mankind", trans. Kenneth Bostrom, op. cit., pp. 1–64.

20 I. Wallerstein, "Connect Whom? Connect What? Why Connect? The World System after 1945". In: *Post-war Avant-Gardes between 1957 and 1986*. Zurich, 2012, pp. 120–134.

21 *Don't You Know Who I Am? Art After Identity Politics*, Antwerpen, 2014.

22 R. Pinxten, *Multimathemacy: Anthropology and Mathematics Education.* New York (in press).

23 Joseph Beuys, in Caroline Tisdall, catalogue *Joseph Beuys*. New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1979, p.17.

24 *Es hat eben keinen Sinn, wenn man nur einfach Joga-Praxis übernimmt und sich sozusagen gesundbetet*. Joseph Beuys, interview with Ursula Meyer, Aug. 1969.

25 See *Joseph Beuys. Eine innere Mongolei: Dschingis Khan, Schamanen, Aktricen: Ölfarben, Wasserfarben und Bleistiftzeichnungen aus der Sammlung van der Grinten.* Hannover, 1990.

26 *Eurasia hat eine Bedeutung in Hinsicht die Begriffe von Ost nach West, auf die Begriffe vom Westmenschen, die vom Kopf her gefaßte Kultur, die sich eben extrem formuliert bis zum Materialismus hin, während das andere doch weitgehend noch präsent ist in "Asia", also im Ostprinzip*. Joseph Beuys, interview with Ursula Meyer, Aug. 1969.

27 *… die Gestaltung einer harmonischen Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft von Lissabon bis Wladiwostok.* In: Süddeutsche Zeitung, 25 Nov. 2010.

28 It seems to have been an initial impulse for Hüseyin Alptekin, SUFLUXUS, 1986, and J&B, 1986. Both have a background of rectangles alternating an image of Beuys and the word "Eurasia".

29 J. Durham, *Here at the Center,* Berlin, 2015; Idem., *In Europe*, Cologne, 2015.

30 J. Durham, *Waiting To Be Interrupted. Selected Writings 1993–2012.* Milan and Antwerp, 2013.

31 J. Durham, *Eurasian Project Stage One,* catalogue for the exhibitions "La porte de l'Europe (les bourgeois de Calais)", Calais and "La leçon de l'anatomie (A Progress Report)", Rheims, 1996, p. 69.

32 J. Durham, "Maybe I Will Do Nothing Visible in Yakutia". In: *Strangers in the Arctic: 'Ultima Thule' and Modernity*, Pori: Pori Art Museum, pp. 138.

33 J. Durham, “Here at the Center of the World (Part 2: The City of Bulgar)”, ibid., p. 143.

34 Ibid., p.139.

35 As the futurist poet Velimir Khlebnikov had done, much earlier on, in 1912, when he spoke about “the peninsular intellect of the Europeans”.

36 *All Under Heaven*, curated by Fei Dawei and Bart De Baere (M HKA, 2004), and *Santhal Family, Positions around an Indian Sculpture*, curated by Grant Watson, Suman Gopinath and Anshuman Dasgupta, (M HKA, 2008), resulting in the acquisition of the entire groundbreaking 2000 Shanghai exhibition *Useful Life*, and an engagement for the Kerala Radicals and the oeuvre of their founder K.P. Krishnakumar, as well as other acquisitions.

37 *Horizons of Reality*, curated by Viktor Misiano, M HKA, 2003, and *Angels of History*, curated by Joseph Bakhstein, M HKA, 2005, resulting in the still ongoing development of a collection of art from Russia and the former Soviet sphere.

38 N. Trubetzkoy, “The Ukrainian Problem”, trans. Kenneth Bostrom, op. cit., pp. 245–268.

39 N. Trubetzkoy, “On Racism”, trans. Anatoly Liberman, op. cit., pp. 277–287.

40 N. Trubetzkoy, “The Tower of Babel and the Confusion of Tongues”, trans. Kenneth Bostrom, op. cit., p. 152.

41 Roman Jakobson and Krystyna Pomorska, *Dialogues*, Cambridge, Mass., 1983, p. 15.

42 A. Liberman, “N.S. Trubetzkoy and His Works on History and Politics”. In: N.S. Trubetzkoy, *The Legacy of Genghis Kahan and other Essays on Russia’s Identity*, op. cit., p. 328.

43 N. Trubetzkoy, “The Legacy of Genghis Khan”, op. cit, pp. 227 and 163.

44 N. Trubetzkoy, “Us and Others”, trans. Kenneth Bostrom for M HKA, 2015; “The Russian Problem”, trans. Kenneth Bostrom, op. cit., p. 108–109; “The Legacy of Genghis Khan”, op. cit., p. 214; and introduction to “Russia in the Shadows”, by Herbert Wells, as quoted in: A. Liberman, “N.S. Trubetzkoy and His Works on History and Politics”, op. cit., pp. 312–315.

45 N. Trubetzkoy, introduction to “Russia in the Shadows”, by Herbert Wells, as quoted in: A. Liberman, “N.S. Trubetzkoy and His Works on History and Politics”, op. cit., p. 315.

46 N. Trubetzkoy, “The Decline in Creativity”, trans. Anatoly Liberman, op. cit., p.289.

47 N. Trubetzkoy, “On the Idea Governing the Ideocratic State”, trans. Anatoly Liberman, op. cit., p. 272.

48 N. Trubetzkoy, “Pan-Eurasian Nationalism”, trans. Kenneth Bostrom, op. cit., p. 243.

49 N. Trubetzkoy, “The Legacy of Genghis Khan”, op. cit., p. 226.

50 N. Trubetzkoy, “At the Door: Reaction? Revolution?”, trans. Anatoly Liberman, op. cit., p. 143.

51 N. Trubetzkoy, “The Temptation of Religious Union”, trans. Anatoly Liberman, op. cit., p. 135.

52 N. Trubetzkoy, “On True and False Nationalism”, translated by Ilya Vinkovetsky, in: *Exodus to the East*, op.cit., p. 73.

53 N. Trubetzkoy, “Europe and Mankind”, op. cit., p. 49.

54 N. Trubetzkoy, “The Upper and Lower Stories of Russian Culture”, translated by Ilya Vinkovetsky, in: *Exodus to the East*, op. cit, p.70.

55 N. Trubetzkoy, “The Ukrainian Problem”, op. cit., p. 262.

56 N. Trubetzkoy, “On True and False Nationalism”, op. cit., p. 72.

57 N. Trubetzkoy, “The Tower of Babel”, op.cit, p.153.

58 N. Trubetzkoy, “Pan-Euroasian Nationalism”, op. cit., p. 240.

59 N. Trubetzkoy, “The Tower of Babel”, op. cit., pp. 155–156.

60 A. Liberman, “N. S. Trubetzkoy and His Works on History and Politics”, op. cit., p.299.

61 N. Trubetzkoy, “Pan-Euroasian nationalism”, op. cit., p. 239.

62 N. Trubetzkoy, “The tower of Babel”, op.cit., p.153.

63 N. Trubetzkoy, letter to Roman Jakobson, 1921, as quoted in: A. Liberman, “N.S.Trubetzkoy and His Works on History and Politics”, op. cit., p. 340.

64 N. Trubetzkoy, “Europe and Mankind”, op. cit., p. 35.

65 N. Trubetzkoy, “On True and False Nationalism”, op. cit., p. 70.

66 N. Trubetzkoy, “Europe and Mankind”, op. cit., pp. 7–8.

67 N. Trubetzkoy, letter to Pyotr N. Savitsky, op. cit.

68 G. Florovsky, 1926, quoted in: A. Liberman, “N.S. Trubetzkoy and His Works on History and Politics”, op. cit., p. 339.

69 N. Trubetzkoy, “The Russian Problem”, op. cit., p. 115.