

"FACIO UT FACIAS!"

AN ALTERNATIVE TO CONFLICT

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On Refusing to Understand*

Instead of Introduction

George Khutsishvili

“The usual pattern seems to be that people give non-violence two weeks to solve their problem... and then decide it has ‘failed’. Then they go on with violence for the next hundred years... and it seems never to ‘fail’ and be rejected.”

Theodore Roszak

Conflict is a major paradigm for all fields of contemporary social studies. It is a topic whose citation index is among the highest. It is also mass media’s daily bread, and a persisting headache for politicians and diplomats. Its definition is a challenge for academics. Its incarnation is often a tragedy comparable to black plague for millions of people worldwide. One will hardly succeed trying to explain them the theories that a “constructive violence” also exists, and that every war eventually accelerates progress. Yet, like it or not, conflict belongs to the few issues that “make the world go round”. In our age it also makes the news of the day. “Conflict is a growth industry”, assure us conflict experts¹.

The art and science of conflict resolution has already generated the amount of literature comparable to religious. Various handbooks teach us how to avoid, forecast, de-escalate, settle, transform, use, or just live in peace with conflicts. Most people would like to develop these skills, but real-life situations, unlike those in the books, are usually elusive and subjectively disguised, and the tips often disagree. One way to overcome this Babel was sought in creating a comprehensive and well substantiated conflict theory.

What is normally meant by conflict theory in scientific writings, is either its partly or fully formalized version, or even an abstract mathematical theory often derived from, or based on John von Neumann’s theory of games, to a limited extent applicable to significant fields of social life, or would rather represent a summarized account of various conceptions pertaining to major types of conflict. Fully comprehensive conflict theory is hardly expectable to emerge, but the already discovered regularities should make for more precise and unified definitions, and more adequate interpretation and use of terms. Still, neither of the existing theories has managed to sufficiently clarify the basic issues that brought them to life, to the extent of making them applicable to people’s lives and decision-making.

It is very easy to theoretically imagine the conflict situations relevant to non-zero-sum games where ‘win/win’ or ‘lose/lose’ outcomes are possible, but it is extremely hard to upgrade your living to this elementary truth. Why does it happen that judgments and generalizations jeopardize conversation, interpretations enforce “black/white” (binary) thinking, lack of communication creates “enemy”, and simple otherness grows into intolerance? Do “true” and “false” pictures of conflict really exist, or can their antagonism be overcome? It turns out that these (already) traditional issues of conflict studies are closely linked with the problems of systems analysis, philosophical logic, political psychology, and other fields of modern academic research. Many of the frequently used terms do not necessarily have to be used on the intuitive basis, as they already have clarified and precise meanings in the relevant fields of theoretical knowledge. Yet there are many others that have to be used in all of their obscurity, or to be proven as empty signifiers. ‘Tender is the night’, and ‘life is just a walking shadow’, but we ‘poor players’ have to make it signify something.

Conflict studies are remarkable in comprising both practical and theoretical aspects of the problem. The most reasonable way appears not in seeking a universal formalized version of conflict theory, but in raising the already conceptualized empirical/intuitive knowledge on conflict and related problems to the methodological level of thought, relevantly and correctly engraving theoretical elements, whenever required, into the evolving generalized conception. On the other hand, the already accumulated and conceptualized knowledge on conflict, violence, intolerance, and their perception in human society can significantly upgrade our basic views of human nature, thinking, perception, and communication process.

Another distinctive feature of conflict studies is in their indispensable human dimension. Conflict situations have been studied at interpersonal, inter-group, inter-organizational and international levels², the latter being understood as interstate level (including most wars and violent conflicts that took place before 1990s). The former two appeared interesting mostly to social psychologists, the third to organizational behaviorists/developmentalists, and the fourth to political scientists. It so happened that the type of conflict that was going to become an all-time front-page news and a globally pressing issue since 1980s, had altogether slipped the conflict researchers' attention. These were (inter)ethnic conflicts, often intertwined with other, no less complicated types. This largely happened because of the ideologies of both global political poles which had determined centrality of issues for the bipolar world, and saw the issue of ethnicity in the world processes as dying off and finally doomed. No one could envisage the nationalist boom in the later years, as well as the coming politicization of interethnic intolerance. In view of the sudden and catastrophic collapse of the Soviet empire, it was too easy to start to believe in "the end of history" or the coming "clash of civilizations". Hopefully, the world is now retrieving from the shock caused by the crush of empires, and a somewhat less apocalyptic vision of remaining and emerging disputes is expectable.

Ethnically and/or religiously induced violent conflicts are frequently understood as outbursts of irrational character. Lacking the power of explanation, such an approach in itself creates a conceptual barrier both to conflict resolution and conflict prevention. As the problem is always practical and painful, the approaches to it, whether rationalized or not, should lead to an implementable solution. Another problem is how to transcend incompatibility of the pictures of conflict on different sides. Again, the easiest but not best way would be to state an impossibility of a unified objective picture of a conflict, which would subjectively justify each of the parties, and maybe even invite them to further escalate the existing intolerance.

Considering all the crises that people have to live through, investigate, instigate or overcome, it becomes obvious that people in most cases cannot really prevent or avoid ethnically induced conflict situations, and the crucial problem is how quickly and efficiently they can get out of them with minimized harm. What makes a fundamental importance in practical applications of any conflict theory is not what a conflict situation (at any stage of its development) is, but what the actors think it is, i.e. the problem of conflict understanding largely depends on the problem of conflict perception. Awareness of a common problem, which in most cases precedes progress in negotiations, does not erode rigidity of the pictures of conflict existing for the actors. One way to deal with this problem is through issue, actor, game rule, or (synergizing) structural transformation of conflict, in the course of public peace process or intervention in 'natural' developments. However, Des Cartes's "Cogito ergo sum" might be a universal motto for resolvers of the intolerance-breeding conflict, this gravest challenge to homo sapiens sapiens.

Towards an Inclusive Interpretation of Conflict*

George Khutsishvili

“If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite”.
William Blake, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell

FROM KOAN TO METAOBJECT

One of the twentieth century's most brilliant minds, a Nobel Prize winner in physics Dr. Niels Bohr has solved the wave/particle dilemma in the physics of micro-world by introducing his mind-illuminating complementarity principle, a universal methodological tool for reconciling seemingly incompatible pictures of reality. Suddenly, it was clear that what looked like mutually exclusive and/or incompatible pictures of an object, could be more adequately seen as the complementary pictures of a metaobject. This breakthrough became possible thanks to Dr. Bohr's ability to transcend the conventional limits of a scientific world outlook. Similar processes earlier in the century helped overcome crises in foundations of mathematics and logic (cf. the Goedel's Theorem and metamathematics). They have revealed important aspects of regularities in overcoming major crises of human thinking and understanding, indispensable also while dealing with violent social conflicts, especially those with the issue of ethnicity involved. It turns out we cannot solve any major ethnic, social, or religious conflict without altogether changing, transforming our world outlook, seeing the world from a new perspective, where the problem is rather transcended than decided.

Zen has been one classical way to prevent and totally eliminate conflict mentality by fostering an inclusive, flexible, open and nonviolent worldview. An adept unwittingly transformed his mind while trying to solve a koan, a seemingly meaningless or self-contradictory statement (yet sponsored as significant by the master), and could be even corporally punished for "wrong solutions". The “right solution”, however, never came, as solving koan had never been a goal in itself, but represented a problem no more for an enlightened and transformed mind. In this whole process one thing had to be a priori given, and could not be imposed from the outside: it was the commitment of an adept to the process of opening his own mind. A modern conflicting man is rather committed to close his mind from any revelations, and the European-styled rationality, in its turn, often fosters and breeds mind-closures, the same ones which it later tries to unclose .

How do we learn about a social conflict? We read in a newspaper or a magazine, or watch TV, or just hear someone say that something is happening somewhere. From the very start we learn a biased picture which we tend to believe or not, depending on our own sentiment and credibility of the source. Later we learn about the existence of other pictures of the same conflict, and its perceived complexity grows. The worst, of course, comes if we are (discover ourselves or become) part of the conflict, especially if painful issues of ethnic or religious identity are involved. A methodological model can be offered to rationalize a koan-styled interpretation of conflict - a painful and incomprehensible obstacle you have to transcend on your way to development, even without really understanding how it works, to conflict as metaobject: a kind of reality characterized by higher degree of organization that enables to comprehend an intrinsic moment of incompatibility through a not-fully-rationalized yet adequate tool integrating all its visions and perspectives into one.

You Better Free Your Mind Instead...

Two thousand years ago Patanjali wrote in his Yoga Aphorisms, “Yoga is restraining the mind-staff (Chitta) from taking various forms (Vrittis)” (According to Swami Vivekananda, Raja-Yoga, or Conquering the Internal Nature, Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1982, p. 115). Something blasphemous to a European thought, until Ludwig Wittgenstein in mid-twentieth century came to

the same paradoxical conclusion: you need to stop thinking in order to understand. Apparently, there is something in intrinsic mechanisms of our mind that prevents us from getting to truth, kind of Heisenberg's uncertainty principle in action. The classic way to avoid/overcome this obstacle was to achieve completeness of a picture: wholeness seemed a guarantee against misunderstanding.

'Holy', 'whole' and 'healthy' are three words of the same origin. Soul is immortal as it is whole, and "none has the power to destroy the unchangeable" (Srimad Bhagavad Gita, 2.17). Much later, in the 18th century Immanuel Kant's agnosticism will prove that the thought/perceived/imagined picture of the world never comes close to the supposed destination of gnosis. Cumulative knowledge seems all that can be expected from the evolution of scientific thought. "Dissolution pertains to all that is of compound nature. Elaborate thoroughly your own liberation", said reportedly Gautama Buddha to his disciples gathered at his deathbed. Global vision of the essence of things in their perennial and universal oneness should not need mediation of a rational mind. Can pragmatism of social healing tolerate questions that found no rational answers in millennia? Human mind, its nature and basic laws of functioning are still among greatest mysteries: we actually perceive Nature by means of something whose nature remains obscure to us. This paradoxical situation has historically created variety of approaches and chains of misconceptions including the opposition of mysticism and naturalism in understanding our own selves.

It can clearly be shown that thinking is an un-isotropic process: we are conditioned by some forces to think along enigmatic structural guidelines, so that our scope is inevitably restricted, and we finally are within unending yet closed universe (Einstein's cosmological model of the universe may serve as a good illustration here). Rational thought just cannot be unstructured, and a 'closed-circuit' mindset is a natural outcome. (Our minds should feel like Leibnitz's monads, the elementary substances which 'have no windows but reflect the whole universe'). Strange though it may sound, mind-closures are re-enforced in refined forms of intellect: educated modernity is even more prone to eventually block out in domineering, self-sufficient and all-explaining world outlook than primitive types of intellect have been. This vicious circle can be shattered by unexplained phenomena, undecidable questions and intercultural conflicts, and can only be transcended and overcome in the course of global-structural transformation of mind.

The evolutionary approach shows that no reflections on human thought can result in revealing an underlying rigid and unchangeable structural basis, but that the object of reflection is rather determined by a certain system of predispositions, consolidated by a regularized practice of generations. It is not only a set of schemata to which we tend to relate and adjust the empirical data, but which also make us prefer to perceive only the data that fits into them. Ontogenetically we see that a child's flexible and receptive mind is capable of miraculous transformations, which become less and less feasible as (s)he gets aged and educated. We accumulate knowledge, but truly, the farther one travels, the less one knows: otherwise, pre-technological Oriental wisdom would be useless in the 21st century, which is obviously not the case.

To Think or to Understand? The Dilemma of a Rational Mind

"Is there anything in common between the Bosnian crisis and metamathematics? The common point is that you cannot overcome a major crisis without transforming your mind."(G.K.)

Colin Cherry in his classic "On Human Communication" was concerned about such fundamental issues as why it happens that any community splits into warring camps or rivaling teams, like capital and labor, two parties to a violent conflict, two political parties in some democratic countries, or orthodox and heretics in one and the same country. Cherry shows how a choice of

predefined distinctive features creates the language quanta for various sets of descriptions used in communication process. Let us say a man A knows a man C but a man B does not know C, and A has to describe C to B using only three parameters, like “height”, “weight” and “age”, and only within the opposite states, like “tall” or “low” of the height⁹. Under these conditions it is possible to create exactly eight different descriptions of C, where the meaning of each is predetermined by the agreement on the initial parameters (Cherry describes them as “generalized axes of co-ordinates”), along which the discourse may be extended, and to which it also has to be limited.

This might serve as a simple example of how ‘the common space’ is structured between communicants. Unlike the virtual poor creature C though, who would have to accept the description portraying him like <tall, heavy, old>, to which terms B’s perceptive abilities have been limited by definition, we real creatures utilize in the natural process of thinking and communicating such an indefinitely broad variety of parameters that its power, as well as the power of our intellect, seems to us infinitely rich and inexhaustible. Yet, the first thing we notice about this variety is that every single distinctive feature cannot be used or combined with any other (which is reflected in the structure of our language), thus opening up a structured realm of thought and communication. The other thing we notice is that what is compatible, or just comparable for us, is inadmissible or even unimaginable for others, and vice versa.

It had been known at least since Zeno’s paradoxes (4th century before Christian era) that binary opposition and dichotomic splitting are important tools, at the same time perpetuating and limiting human thinking and understanding. On the other hand, a structural/descriptive analysis (even in simplest cases like Cherry’s example) becomes possible thanks to our ability to somehow feel which of the parameters (features) can be considered together, or applied to one and the same class of objects. Compatibility intuition, present in all natural languages, would turn unrationalizable for humans, as it remains for computers, without a deeply- rooted structural hierarchy existing behind the analyzable process of thought. Socialization, rationalization, conceptualization and standardization of the system of attitudes, judgements and preferences in our mind enhances its structural stability (in evolutionary terms, survivability); yet, this is also what eventually makes it rigid, inflexible and structurally catastrophic. Systems of inter-subjective ‘gravity centers’ in our mental process create, so to say, the skeleton of human thinking and understanding.

A multitude of all possible combinations of all thinkable features/parameters that may be considered in relation to thinking mind, is how close we intuitively get to the idea of thought-space. This may be seen as an idea of a universal class of all dimensions of thought. The elements of this space are organized in a very complex and largely unexplored way, but in all cases they create a realm that is limited by its structure. Major structures of thought can be pictured as arranged in a hierarchy of layers, each of which pertains to a certain age in its development. Those cannot be seen all together, like in a cross-section of a tree stem, but can be gleaned from documents of the age, and are manifest in living bearers of various cultures and civilizations. Every epoch creates a specific set of modes of thinking by which the epoch is largely recognizable. Genesis of the structure of thought can only be traced to simpler formations that had determined extensively and intensively the entire diversity of relatively primitive “worlds”, but not to the entire reconstructed chain of such.

The reader will probably be reminded here of Thomas Kuhn’s very schematic model for the structure of scientific revolutions with periods of ‘normal science’ determined by ‘paradigms’ in between. History and methodology of science, however, have so far to a very limited extent managed to reveal the nature of links and driving forces of major transformations in mind. However, in the power-engine of mind’s structural development, conflict, as history of dialectics from Heraclitus through Hegel shows, should undoubtedly have played a major part. Suffice it to

mention the three great crises in foundations of mathematics caused by (i) Zeno's paradoxes and the Pythagoreans' discoveries of incommensurability of the diagonal and the side in the square, (ii) the intrinsic inconsistency of 'the infinitely small' in Newton-Leibnitz's differential and integral calculi, and (iii) the logical antinomies emerged in Cantor's set theory at the dawn of the twentieth century. In theoretical physics, the 'strange' behavior of micro-particles, inexplicable and contradictory in classical terms, gave rise to modern quantum physics, which has not yet, however, fully outgrown the crisis. In a more practical sphere of politics, a confrontational cold-war mentality of a bipolar world gave an impetus to revolutionary global transformation. Gorbachev and Shevardnadze started in 1980s to speak about a "new political thinking" that should have replaced that mentality in international relations, but they failed to convert the post-totalitarian mentality of collapsing Soviet society before it actually disintegrated into frustrated, antagonistic, and conflicting groups.

Getting back to the structure of mind, the universal organizing principle on the space of dimensions is, unsurprisingly, the tolerance relationship (having its extensional model in Zeeman's reflexive and symmetrical binary relation). Tolerance is a minimum requirement for any two objects to interact, or just coexist without being damaged or transformed, which should not necessarily include subjectivity in understanding this term, or interpreting it in the emotional language of human relationships. General idea of tolerance is closer to that of compatibility, which creates a binary opposition with incompatibility, in its turn closer to antagonism. Tolerance is the least value that can on one scale develop up to identity, and on another up to empathy.

Spielraum, or What is Taboo to Imagine about a Conflict

Social conflict, at least at the initial stages, can be compared to a collision of two trains, neither of which would bother to honk because it is the other train that should disappear before long, for it cannot be real. Group ethnocentrism is usually blamed for distorted perceptions of the parties, but it cannot satisfactorily explain their rigidity. The crucial moment in the socio-cultural world outlooks underlying the expressed positions of the conflicting parties is their consistency, completeness, and self-sufficiency. The kind of consistency in question (similar to pseudo-consistency of the constructions of a paranoid mind) is achieved by purposefully, though not quite consciously limiting perception and filtering information, to maintain the existing issue rigidity and justify preferences made. Completeness and self-sufficiency in the resulting picture of the universe is easily achieved (or, at least, believed in), along with a feeling of "righteousness" which supposedly exalteth a nation, while any different-mindedness is equally righteously demonized.

As a result, a self-justifying mechanism of intolerance is created by the conflict, insurmountable without deep structural and mental transformations in all parties involved. Remarkably, a breakthrough in the public peace process is often made after intolerance is transcended in the party characterized by higher degree/intensity of intolerance. So far, this process is often seen as basically unmanageable, and irrational to the point of being mystified .

These and similar regularities in conflict development indicate that a basic mindset responsible for them can be described as exclusive interpretation, pertinent not only to conflict but also to many other perceived/reflected phenomena and mental constructions. Violent/high-intensity conflicts radicalize perception and foster binary splits in mentality. Yet, at least at a theoretical level of thinking, it is clear that interpretation of conflict situation is not bound to be exclusive. There is a fifteen-stone garden in Japan, but from whatever point you view it, you see only fourteen stones. What is seen from different angles, is not necessarily two different things

(unless you accept a purely phenomenological outlook), and you start to understand only after you realize your perception is bound to be incomplete.

An idea of complete meaning of conflict may be instrumental here: a class of all (quasi-) implications from all possible interpretations of a conflict situation. According to the logic of conflict, meaning is always incomplete because of incompatibilities between implications/interpretations. In these terms, conflict can be defined as a synergic manifestation of incompleteness of factors influencing the dynamic process of social interaction at any given stage (which really means that the process of understanding is potentially infinite). While what is usually called 'conflict' is a temporal cross-section pertaining to high-intensity points in this process. The universe of a given conflict, or Spielraum, is related to the conflict situation as perceived by the parties (despite all incompatibilities, parties to conflict have a common Spielraum!). What is beyond Spielraum, is an indiscriminate realm of what is forbidden to imagine about a conflict, further limited, rationalized and structured as knowledge accumulates. The farther we go in this process, the less we understand; so what is the alternative?

Social reality does not fit into a theoretical cage the mind prepares for it. Spielraum may be understood in structural terms as a subspace of 'legitimate' dimensions of thinking/reflecting/understanding, or as a variety of all acceptable rules of game within a given metagame framework. Conflict mentality keeps outside spielraum all interpretations, explanations, and predictions which contradict the conclusions and judgements made in Spielraum and/or which jeopardize the validity of its structure, thus denying them the right of existence. Tolerant mentality, on the contrary, tries to transform/expand spielraum, ideally to coincide with a given thought-space, so as to comprise as wide variety of phenomena as possible. And for an opened/enlightened mind the problem of acceptance/authorization does not exist at all.

On Cultural-Psychological Grounds of Conflict Mentality

Apart from purely methodo(logical) problems arising in the course of conflict analysis, mediation or negotiation, there are problems created by cultural differences stemming from ethnic/cultural identities of the parties to conflict, as well as of the 'third party'. Voices could be heard about relevance/adaptability of Western-bred conflict mediation/resolution techniques to the 'third world'. For an example, in October 1993 an interesting article appeared in Negotiation Journal written by Dr. Paul E. Salem, professor of political science at the American University of Beirut. Dr. P.Salem, apparently knowledgeable in nuances of both Western and Eastern mentality and relationships, very efficiently raised the question of relevance of Western conflicts resolution, mediation, facilitation and other techniques to the non-Western societies. Westerners found their approaches and negotiation techniques on a more or less stable and secure system they live in, which they accept and wish to maintain. They automatically assume the fundamental principles underlying the same approaches and techniques should be valid everywhere, and the latter may be applied successfully in the rest of the world. Indeed, how can anyone doubt that peace is better than war, suffering should be stopped, warring parties separated, and only peaceful solution sought? While in other communities it seems equally right to interpret what is happening in terms of fighting evil, punishing enemy, forcefully restoring historical justice, demanding withdrawal of peace-keeping forces and seeking military solution to the problem. Much of what a Westerner may consider as self-evident, is not such for a post-Soviet or Middle-Easterner. Furthermore, just to what extent Westerners follow in their everyday lives what they are aware of theoretically? Dr. Salem's idea is not to abandon the Western approach entirely, but to keep in mind the mental/cultural/psychological differences while implementing a negotiating methodology.

The very basic problems started to reveal themselves as soon as the Western-bred institutes of mediation and facilitation were introduced to the post-Soviet dispute resolution. It soon became clear that each of the parties to conflict usually sees mediator as someone to be persuaded in rightness of their stand and, this task being successfully achieved, to be used as a kind of 'agent of influence', or otherwise dismiss him/her on the basis of incompetence. Mediator's traditional approach is, the 'pictures' taken as given, to base his/her negotiative tactics on extending his/her mind to comprehend the inner logic of each of them. If (s)he deals with a conflict that has achieved a certain level of gravity and/or intensity, these inner logics must have incompatible moments, insuperable within at least one party's structure of thinking. Mediator, arbitrator, resolver, whoever in between the parties can never afford offering his/her analysis, or assessing positions, or revealing hidden preferences in them without being exposed to severe criticism from at least one of the parties, which would jeopardize or even discard the mediator's credentials with them. (This situation is reminiscent of Eric Berne's transactional analysis where any 'intruder', even a psychotherapist himself, who attempts to reveal the nature of a game in a group meets a fierce protesting reaction from the game initiator.)

Why Should 'We' Talk to 'Them'?

Identifying an Uncomfortable Party

Post-Soviet communities in conflict develop their awareness of conflict situation by stages. At every next stage they have to painfully acknowledge counter-productiveness of the steps taken at earlier stages. Can we imagine full awareness achieved at an early stage, which would help prevent the conflict from escalating and getting a violent form? This is often a problem even for a developed democratic civil society which appears to have the tools to cope with it. Remarkably, the same is hardly possible in emerging democracies where immature mass consciousness prevails over advanced individuals' vision, and is more feasible in authoritarian systems where public sentiment is restrained by a ruling group's policy.

In a sufficiently intensive social conflict each of the parties would be happy to solve the problem without negotiations entirely: the truth is on our side, 'God is with us', so let the other party realize their faults and accept the offered terms of agreement. Soon it is clear that the other side feels exactly the same way, and is determined and able to endure the confrontation. So negotiations are inevitable; yet it is good to have a strong mediator on your side, hard bargaining seems a bottom-line tactics, and any compromise looks like a betrayal of your own cause and people who have suffered for that cause. There is a major temptation to attribute all the failures and obstacles to a covert support of 'the other party' from 'the third force' (which may partly be true, but is usually globalized; apparently it looks like a shifted locus of control). Perception of the conflict situation as a 'zero-sum game' persists in the parties for a long time, and compromised agreements are thus perceived as imposed from hostile 'third' power(s) rather than elaborated as a rational choice.

Similarly, in a sufficiently intensive social conflict each of the parties would be happy to call the other party the name it feels the other deserves. Soon it is clear that under that name there will be no negotiations. In the meanwhile, mediating parties and international environment have already pragmatically started to use for all parties to conflict the names they chose for themselves. Outsiders are, of course, suspected of being partial, to say the least, and the dispute starts in the community on whether to temporarily accept, at least operationally, the denotation of the other party proposed by itself (which most probably involves the sought status), in order not to ruin negotiating process. Negotiations proper, as well as all relevant diplomatic transactions develop in a very different way from their media coverage and comments on both sides which try to maintain the radicalized state of public opinion.

Equalizing Positions in Rights while Negotiating a Solution

Traditional approach had been based on trying to pick, or point out the only true, or "right" description of the conflict situation. For an interested party, it is often a painful discovery that none of the alternative pictures of the same conflict (expressed in the essential positions of the parties) should need the right of existence, as they already exist. What is more difficult to believe is that each of the pictures is, in its own way, true. In an interpersonal, or even an inter-group conflict we can hardly exclude the probability of one, or all pictures of the conflict to be erroneous, based on false premises, mistaken perceptions or calculations, and thus correctable. In a social, ethnic or international conflict each picture/position is substantiated to the extent that it becomes part of the identity of any individual in the conflicting party, and any mediator which ignores or disregards validity of one picture to the other's favor, is doomed as a professional.

In all cases, a conflict situation primarily assumes the form of a more or less consistent description of events. Expressed positions of the parties to conflict, along with the pertinent historical pictures, make basic scripts, and the 'third party' understanding of events should create a metascript, as it reflects over the principles underlying the basic scripts. Various versions of history of conflict, combined with scenarios of its development, make possible scripts. Attitudes, value systems and preferences of the social environment in which the conflict develops, induce the (possible) contexts in which the scripts may be considered.

First of all, we have to get rid of the incompatibility which is inevitably present: otherwise, we are not dealing with real conflict but rather with misunderstanding in terms. The methodological principle of equality of rights for the conflict pictures/positions does not mean that one picture/position cannot be more substantiated or justified than the other. It only means that a negotiation and mediation process based on a preference between the positions of the parties in an inter-communal or interethnic conflict cannot succeed in principle. We of course stumble at an old philosophical dilemma: how can there exist two different or even mutually exclusive yet true pictures of the same phenomenon or situation? Whatever epistemologically may the answer be, any successful (mediated or self-cured) negotiating process should incorporate the following stages: (a) acceptance of the positions and identification of the parties to conflict as they are (no criticism or corrections!); (b) comparative analysis of the positions of the parties to conflict, picking out and discriminating their compatible and incompatible points; (c) transformation of the existing conflict mentality into an inclusive and reconciled vision; (d) upgrading of the conflict pictures generated by the parties to a unified meta-picture, dwelling on compatible or joint interests, values, problems, goals, and finally transcending incompatibility.

Instead of Epilogue

"Truth is lived, not taught. Be prepared for conflicts..."
Hermann Hesse, Das Glasperlenspiel

If I try to characterize in one word the goal of this essay, it is more religious than theoretical. And if so, why do we have to pass through all these stages at all? Why cannot people start from what has already been discovered as the final truth, and avoid painful discoveries often costing them their lifetime, and sometimes, their lives? The answer is obvious: because that is how we are, that is the path we have to go through, some rapidly, some slowly and painfully, and some never. The path to enlightenment does exist, and tolerance is just an interim state on the way to it. That is exactly why we need to develop techniques to make this transition available for all while we are still active.

The danger exists though that the issues raised in this article may look even more complicated now, instead of being clarified. Yet, let us not forget that the solution is in ourselves, or better, in our souls. The Western thought has always been oriented toward cumulative knowledge of the external reality, the inner world being a secondary issue needed primarily for clearing up the subject/object and stimulus/reaction relationships. The Eastern thought was primarily concentrated on the essential unity of being, of which man's external and internal worlds were secondary and/or complementary sides. A sufficient basis for understanding may be created only in combination of these approaches, enabling us to come back to our common loving home: a peaceful world.

Notes:

A note to the Notes:

Numeration starts from Introduction and continues through the article

1. Fisher R., Kopelman E. and Kupfer Schneider A., *Beyond Machiavelli (Tools for Coping with Conflict)*, Cambridge: Harvard university Press, 1994, p.1.
2. Deutsch, Morton, *Subjective Features of Conflict Resolution: Psychological, Social and Cultural Influences*, in Vayrynen R. (ed), *New Directions in Conflict Theory (Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation)*, London: SAGE Publications, 1992, p.26.
3. The term belongs to Francis Fukuyama. His paper caused lots of discussions at the time when collapse of the Soviet empire was a breaking news, but looks quite irrelevant and odd from the modern perspective.
4. The term belongs to Samuel Huntington, and was first used in his article "The Clash of Civilizations?" published in the summer of 1993 issue of *Foreign Affairs*.
5. See Vayrynen, Raimo, "To Settle or to Transform?", in Vayrinen R. (ed), *ibid.*, pp. 1-7.
6. A brilliant account of foundational crises can be found in S.C. Cleene's *Introduction to Metamathematics* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1952), and in A. Fraenkel and I. Bar-Hillel's *Foundations of Set Theory* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1958).
7. On mind closures and the structural models/types of mentality see in Khutsishvili, George, *Genesis of the Structure of Theoretical Thinking*, Tbilisi: Academic Press, 1989 (in Russian; English Summary).
8. Back in 1995 Ramazan Abdulatipov, then deputy-chairman of the Russian Parliament, desperately commented on his recent trip to his native North-Caucasus region to mediate North-Osset – Ingush dispute, that the pictures of conflict on either side seem irreconcilable, and an objective information about the ethnic conflict cannot exist (Broadcast by Russian ORT TV channel).
9. Since then, several authors have covered various aspects of cultural influences on conflict development and resolution: apart from Morton Deutsch's abovementioned article, cf. Cohen, Raymond, *Negotiating Across Cultures (Communication Obstacles in International Diplomacy)*, Washington, DC: USIP Press, 1991; Faure, Guy Olivier and Rubin, Jeffrey Z. (eds), *Culture and Negotiation (The Resolution of Water Disputes)*, London: SAGE Publications, 1993; Tannen, Deborah, *You Just Don't Understand (Women and Men in Conversation)*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1990; et al. None of them may be seen though as directly or satisfactorily touching upon relationship between conflict resolution and cultural/mentality problems influenced by ethnic/cultural/civilizational differences.
10. See Berne, Eric, *Games People Play (The Psychology of Human Relationships)*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1981 and his subsequent works in transactional analysis.

“We”, “They”, Culture and Conflict

George Nizharadze

The “We” and “They” pronouns are contained in every existing language. “We” basically refers to the group of people “I” identifies itself with. This could be family, relatives, friends, colleagues, a political party, social stratum, nation, etc. Let us call all of them “We” groups. “They”, consequently, are the groups with whom “I” does not identify itself. These could be labeled “Outer” groups. “We” versus “They” represents one of the major classifiers of social reality.

Relationship between “We” and “Outer” groups could be very different, ranging from benevolent and neutral to hostile. In certain cases an individual might value an outer group higher than the group he or she belongs to and try hard to get an access to it (“Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme” by Moliere could serve as an example here). But normally a person gives higher evaluation to “We” group or groups and performs a corresponding behaviour in relation to them. The existence of “We” and “Outer” groups could explain the application of different ethical criteria to those who are considered “We” and to the people belonging to “They”. The conversation of a Negro with an English traveler probably gives the most striking example of such a philosophy. When asked by the Englishman what was good and what was bad the Negro gave the following answer: “It’s good when our tribe attacks its neighboring tribe and seizes its women and cows. It’s bad when the neighboring tribe attacks us and seizes our women and cows”. It is easily understandable that such a thinking style, even revealed in a less extreme form, often causes inter-group conflicts.

Duality of the ethical standard applied to “We” and “They” is observed throughout the world, but the peculiarities of this or that culture contribute to inter-group relationships.

* * *

Individualism versus Collectivism is one of the major variables of the psychology of culture. In the individualist cultures a person is basically driven by his family members’ interests (spouse, children). He is usually a member of a relatively large number of outer groups (like different clubs, associations, etc), but such a membership is mostly voluntary and group impact on the person is relatively weak. The Anglo-Saxon and the North European cultures belong to the most individualist societies.

In the collectivist societies an individual is basically motivated by the interests of the groups he belongs to. For this he gets group help and protection. Besides, the person belongs to fewer “We” groups, but the ties within the groups are stronger than those in the “We” groups of the individualist culture. Most cultures in the world can be considered collectivist.

As compared to individualists collectivists treat “Outer” groups in a better way (at least in terms of hospitality), but, at the same time, they better realize that are dealing with strangers. On the other hand, individualists show more trust in strangers when involved in business relations. For instance, a Georgian (the collectivism level is quite high in Georgia) tries do get help from his acquaintances (a doctor or a provider of some service), whereas a Dutch believes that any doctor,

whoever he is, will properly serve any client. This clearly shows that the dual ethical standard applied to “We” and strangers is more characteristic of the collectivist society.

Individualists’ reaction to a negative treatment of “We” groups will be the same irrespective of the source of such a treatment. Collectivists and especially representatives of the oriental cultures are quite insensitive to the insult aimed at the “We” group if it comes from a high status person.

Conflict theories identify five behavioural styles in relation to conflict situation – competition (struggle for one’s own interests, only), compromise (both parties make a concession), accommodation (the group gives up its interests to maintain a good relationship), cooperation (taking care of one’s own and the other party’s interests) and avoidance (giving up both one’s own interests and the relationship). The findings show that the individualist and collectivist cultures give preference to different styles. Individualists find their own interests more important and for this reason often get involved in competition, cooperation and compromise, whereas collectivists give preference to avoidance and accommodation. However, it is also true that the latter group is often involved in competition (and sometimes even a severe competition) with the “Outer” groups.

* * *

Inter-group conflict is often based on the so-called ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is a belief system according to which the “We” group (basically nation) is in the center of the universe and all the rest is located depending on it. Chauvinism, an extreme case of ethnocentrism, was given a crushing definition by an intelligent French person: ”The most disgusting about chauvinism is not so much the hatred of other nations as the love for what is considered one’s own”.

Ethnocentrism is based on four “axioms”:

1. What happens in our culture is “natural” and “right”. What happens in other cultures is “unnatural” and ”wrong”.

2. Our traditions, habits and norms are universally valuable.

3. Our traditions, norms and values are “right”.

4. It is natural to like your group members, help them, cooperate with them, be proud of your group and at the same time distrust “outer” groups and even be hostile to them.

Ethnocentrism is more or less characteristic of every ethnic group. Two types of ethnocentrism, positive and negative, have been identified. The former is patriotism – love for one’s own nation and the feeling of pride related to it. The latter includes nationalism and chauvinism - hatred of other nations and belief in one’s own superiority. As a rule, nationalism is accompanied by the authoritarian regime, conservatism, thinking stereotypes and aggressiveness.

* * *

Culture has a very strong impact on all the spheres of social reality, including interpersonal and inter-group conflicts. The trends and effects described in the present article do not exhaust the topic. Our bulletin will continue the discussion of these issues.

Entertaining Conflict Theory

George Nizharadze

The history and traditions of conflict theory are not very long, but in spite of this it has already accumulated a vast amount of terms and concepts. This article offers a brief and sometimes not very precise definition of several key concepts of conflict theory, accompanied by entertaining illustrative stories.

The reader has already learned from our previous bulletin about different behavioral strategies used in conflict situations: competition (I and my business, this is what matters and woe to the losers!), compromise (I will give up this and you will give up that, agreed?), avoidance (Get rid of me and do whatever you want!), accommodation (This is what it is. At least this is what I have got used to...), cooperation (Let's feel fine and also do our business together).

Scientists conducted an experiment. They placed people of different nationalities on desert islands, two men and one woman on each. This is what the scientists saw when they returned to the islands in one year's time.

The Spanish had got involved in competition, which resulted in two graves and the woman crying bitterly in between.

The English had avoided conflict. They had built five big houses, three dwellings and two clubs, one for each person. It turned out that they had not said a single word to each other during that time. Why? For a very simple reason: no one had introduced them to their compatriots.

The French had used a strategy containing the components of both cooperation and compromise. They had built a cozy house with a week schedule on it - Monday: Jean-husband, Jacques - lover; Tuesday: Jacques - husband, Jean - lover, etc.

The accommodation strategy was recorded with the Russians. The scientists saw a small, shabby house, saying "Communal Dwelling", and another, bigger building, saying "Session Hall". The Russian lady, that looked very upset, told the visitors "They are nice people, but... We have orgies every night and in the daytime I'm criticized for immoral behaviour".

The most original solution had been found by the Jewish people. They had made a break through using the cooperation strategy and absolutely changed the situation by solving the problem that seemed to be unsolvable. Two houses, with a couple in each, had been built on the island. To the question where the other woman had come from, the amazed visitors received the following answer: "It was very, very hard, indeed, but we still managed to get her".

There is no strategy equally suitable for every conflict situation. Here is an example of how the avoidance strategy can be used with and without success:

A lesson of ethics in a Russian school.

Teacher - Tell me, children, what is it that you like about your classmate Sveta?

Misha – She always tells the truth.

Klava – She helps the students who are not doing well.

Grisha – I like her lips...

Teacher – Shame on you! Get out of the room!

Teacher (Addresses another boy, Vovochka) – Now tell me, Vovochka, what do you like about you classmate Sveta?

Vovochka – I'm leaving, I'm leaving...

An English lord falls of his ship into the sea. He is approached by a shark. The people on the ship shout to him:

- Sir! You have a sword! Use it!

- Cut fish with a knife? Never!

An interesting compromise was achieved between “an individual enterprise” and a large bank.

A Jewish person was selling chestnuts in front of the Chase Manhattan Bank. A friend came up to him and asked for a 50\$ loan. The Jewish person answered - “With pleasure, but I have an agreement with the bank: they should not sell chestnuts and I should not issue credits”.

Here is an example of competition – confrontation:

In the evening time Brezhnev looks at the moon from his balcony and sees the word “Marlboro” written on it. Next evening the American President sees that the word ”Marlboro” is followed by the phrase “Made in the USSR”. Another evening appears another addition “Phillip Morris license”. Finally, the previous inscriptions vanish and what appears in their place is the following: “Warning of the USSR Ministry of Defense: Smoking is dangerous for your health”.

Those who are involved in conflict rarely listen to each other and distort the information received from the other party (communication distortions). This leads to conflict escalation and sometimes draws the third party into the conflict.

Husband – Do not speak so loudly...

Wife – So, I am shouting, that is barking, which means that I am a dog, which means that my mother is also a dog. Mother! Your son-in-law has called you an old bitch!

Different perception or different interpretation of one and the same situation by conflict participants is a frequent source of conflict. I, you and he/she have different subjective realities.

A Frenchman, a German man, a young woman of an unknown nationality and her mother are sitting in a train compartment. The train is entering a tunnel. The passengers find themselves in the dark for a moment. Suddenly, there is a sound of kiss followed by a sound of slap. Mother thinks - The Frenchman kissed my daughter and got what he deserved; Daughter - It seems that the Frenchman wanted to kiss me but kissed my mother by mistake and was punished for that; German person – The French person kissed the girl and slapped me over the face, by mistake; French person – I wish it were dark again so that I could kiss the air and slap the German person over his face.

Five different types of conflict have been identified. It should be mentioned that they rarely exist in a pure form. Any conflict situation contains several types of

components. So, do not blame us if the selected illustrative material is not very accurate. Conflict of interests take place in the following situation: I want this and you want that, or we both want the same (e.g. are in love with the same woman), but only one of us can be satisfied. Ostap Bender's words could serve as an illustration here: "For the last year my ideas have significantly differed from those of the Soviet Government. It wants to build socialism, which I don't want".

Conflict of values takes place in such cases when people have a different understanding of what is good or bad, what is beautiful or ugly, etc.

A colonel found himself among intellectuals. After listening to them for a long time he said: "If you are so intelligent, how can it happen that you do not march?"

We deal with structural conflict when the source of conflict lies beyond its participants and is not dependent on them. The source could be a natural law, an accident, and so on. In this context we could refer to the final dialogue, or, to be more exact, the final argument from the popular comedy "Some Like It Hot", reproduced as accurately as possible.

The hero, dressed in women's clothes, tries to convince the millionaire that he cannot marry him. In response to the argument "I smoke too much" the millionaire answers "It's all right".

- I am a woman with a past
- It's forgiven
- I am a MAN, damn it!!!
- Any person has some weakness.

Information conflict is caused by information deficit, controversial information or its wrong interpretation. However, it sometimes happens, that the desire to specify information causes even a more serious conflict. Such a possibility should not be ruled out, indeed.

Engineers invented a new computer, which knew absolutely everything. A customer, who wanted to check the computer asked it: "Where is my father now?" "Your father is in Florida" – was the answer. The customer burst into laughter. "My father died five years ago" – he said. "You did not put the right question" – said the salesman and entered another question into the computer: "Where is this man's mother's husband?" "This man's mother's husband died five years ago, but his father is having a rest in Florida" – was the answer.

When people just get on each other's nerves we deal with conflict of relationship. "I will take my eye out, so that my mother-in-law has a one-eyed son-in-law..."

* * *

That is all for present. By the way, conflict theory contains many other interesting examples. As for anecdotes, their treasury is inexhaustible, indeed. So, we hope to proceed with this topic in the following issues.

A HERO OR A PSYCOPATH?

Tina Asatiani

Emotions play an important and sometimes a crucial part in people's lives. Positive emotions can give us energy and strength and make our lives more beautiful. Negative emotions weaken and disempower us.

Fear is considered undesirable and even a shameful emotion by most people. People normally experience various fears. We are afraid of death and fate, an open and closed space, a mouse and a dog, height and depth, etc. Fear, at least, makes us feel uncomfortable and we try to avoid the situations, which we perceive as dangerous. By the way, this emotion has a very important function, as it helps us to adjust to the relevant situations. For instance, the fear of injury protects us from getting injured, the fear of punishment protects us from doing harm to others, etc.

It should be noted, that in spite of being genetically determined, the emotion of fear can be easily learned. We are taught from early childhood what is dangerous and what should be avoided. Numerous psychological experiments clearly demonstrate that the emotion in question can be easily linked with neutral stimuli (the stimuli that are not independently related to danger). For instance, a dog gets afraid of a piece of wood after being hurt by it. A child is afraid of a toy if it is associated with a frightening noise. An adult might be afraid of boiling water after pouring it over himself.

It is interesting to note that we are easily frightened by a snake or a scorpion, but for an unknown reason, are less afraid of cars, electricity or a bomb (May be because these stimuli are not neutral for us and we have an instinctive fear of them).

However, there are people who can overcome this emotion. There are also people that do not at all experience fear. I am not talking about kamikaze or the people who consciously wish to die. I am talking about those who have an ability to act calmly and effectively in awful, stressful situations, who are able to walk on the verge of disaster and be saved. The psyche of such people is absolutely healthy. They feel pain as other people do. They were brought up in an ordinary way and were told in their childhood to avoid "dangerous things", but they still developed into fearless people.

The fearless minority exists in every generation. It is just this minority that gives the world astronauts and brave leaders, says one of the American psychologists in his article.

Society definitely needs fearless people. On the other hand, it is well known that a child with a low fear indicator has equal chances of becoming a hero or a psychopath, i.e. a socially dangerous person. These could be considered two sides of the same coin. Stemming from this, the environment in which such a child develops and the way of the child's development are very important, indeed.

When bringing up children we often use punishment and intimidation as methods ("Do not climb up, otherwise you will get a spanking"; "Do not approach a dog, otherwise it will bite you"). These means can be easily used by parents. Besides, they often work. Fear and the accompanying feelings of shame and guilt are considered by parents as the simplest ways to control their children. But the development of the love for others, empathy, that accompanies it (understanding of people's situation, problems and feelings) and self respect, are no less powerful instruments.

Unfortunately, fearless children are not so easily controllable, since their relationship with their parents is not very smooth, they do not care much for other people's reactions and are not very interested in what others think of them. In spite of this, praising and the expression of delight are really important to them. If we do not use like means when dealing with fearless children, they

will easily gain compliments in the street, and what is more important, compliments might be gained for the behaviour which we consider quite unacceptable.

We are all fearful or fearless to a certain extent. You can determine how fearless you are using this entertaining test, presented in the form of questionnaire.

Participation of the Third, Neutral Party in Conflict Resolution

Lia (Khatuna) Sanikidze

Even a general analysis of the current situation in the country clearly shows the necessity of introducing alternative conflict resolution methods into Georgia. This means that the existing conflicts should be settled not only through legal mechanisms (police, court, other official entities), but also via the participation of the third, neutral party.

Alternative methods of conflict resolution, that is the participation of the third, neutral party in the conflict resolution process enables conflicting parties to arrive at a constructive decision, manage individual situations and avoid possible problem situations in the future. The necessity of establishing and developing this kind of service revealed itself in the last decade. Due to the current situation in the country, it is advisable that the interests, expertise and experience of the small group of specialists working in this field become known to general public. Ongoing reforms, intense social activities (development of the third sector) and difficult economic conditions favour the onset of conflicts. Political and ethnic conflicts, that have not been settled yet, present a source of numerous problems. Internally displaced people from conflict areas are under an intensive stress caused by armed conflicts and the necessity to leave their dwelling places. Consequently, it is quite probable, that these people will find themselves in conflict situations. Their present living environment (refugee status, unsettled life, ambiguous future, thoughts about the ways of reestablishing relations when back home) makes the emergence of future conflicts even more possible.

The implementation of alternative conflict resolution methods implies the employment of a general analytic approach. The introduction of such an approach into the public requires serious efforts. Conflict settlement, in itself, is an analytical process, suggesting long term changes. It affects political, economic and social systems. The reason for such an extended effect is, that the process in question covers individual and group needs, their identification and recognition, as well as the institutional developments, necessary for the satisfaction of such needs. Conflict resolution methods aimed at the solution of problems, represent a functional system, which enables every individual in the society to coexist harmoniously with others, settle his relationships with other people and the environment and learn the relevant ways helpful for this purpose.

The institutionalization of an alternative conflict resolution service will help conflicting parties to unite in a single system, based on a mutual trust, consideration of mutual interests and mutually acceptable solutions. In this context, the role of the third, neutral party is the revelation and reconciliation of the interests of conflicting parties. The third, neutral party makes a preliminary assumption, that the parties already possess important information on the essence of conflict and are able to independently find the means for the best solution. The third neutral party

conducts meetings of conflicting parties with the aim to foster their communication and help them to search for the means that were neglected in the past.

Burton says, that while searching for the sources of conflict, conflict resolution is aimed not only at the solution of social, family or ethnic conflict, existing at this moment, but also at the understanding of the essence of conflict, to diminish the influence of the existing source and avoid its possible manifestations. The institutionalization of alternative conflict resolution methods or the involvement of the third party will be one of the guarantors of stability in our country, since the conflict resolution process creates social control in its positive sense, which, in its turn, determines conflict free relations spread to the public level.

It is true that the institutionalization of the named service and the dissemination of the relevant knowledge are complex processes requiring quite a lot of time. The public should be educated in this respect and the mentioned area should be made legitimate. The public will realize the necessity of the third, neutral party's activity and will consider it a normal, additional service only as a result of such a process.

Currently, several NGOs in Georgia are working in this direction (they are funded by different international organizations). It is very important for the country to search for the resources, organizations and supporters, promoting the teaching, research and adjustment of conflict resolution methods. This implies a new approach to national interests, based on the need to create a general peaceful environment.

The International Center on Conflict and Negotiation studies general conflict theories and different methods of their application. In parallel, the Center investigates the national and cultural peculiarities of the country and conflict resolution methods to create an appropriate theoretical framework, identify the relevant strategy to be applied in practice and adjust the existing methods to the Georgian reality.

Under the training programme on conflict resolution, implemented by our centre, training and workshops are conducted with different social groups, like IDPs, leaders of youth organizations, policemen, journalists, staff of government organizations, representatives of national minorities, etc. This activity is carried out with the two following objectives: dissemination of the knowledge on the alternative methods of conflict resolution and the realization of the importance of the third party's involvement. During the training people directly experience the positive aspects of such participation, gain theoretical knowledge and individual skills. As a result, they overcome conflict and problem situations more easily. The same programme provides for training in conflict resolution and the training of the third, neutral party's representatives (i.e. facilitators).

A Charismatic Person

Dali Berekashvili

(With reference to A. Sosland's article "A Charismatic Person in Psychotherapy")

A. Sosland starts the discussion of charisma with a review of Max Weber's teaching.

According to Veber there are three ways of ruling a country:

- 1) Legitimate type, characteristic of the European bourgeois democracies. This type is based on the respect of the law, rather than the obedience to individuals. The law to be respected determines order and the inheritance of power.
- 2) Traditional type, typical, for instance, of the medieval feudal states, is mainly based on the belief in the governance traditions coming from the old days, rather than the belief in the force of the law.
- 3) Charismatic type, based on the belief in the extraordinary abilities of the leader of the society and the obedience to his will. Such a type is often characteristic of totalitarian states.

Sociologists borrowed the term “charisma” from religion. Primarily, it denoted the grace of the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles. In the broad sense, charisma is a divine force, given to a man to overcome his sins and save his soul. However, the term “charisma” meant something different to Veber, who studied the charisma phenomenon in social life. According to Veber, a charismatic person is endowed with an exceptional prophetic gift and an extraordinary will power. The founders of religions (Buddha, Christ, Moses) as well as the founders of branches of different religions (Luther, Calvin) belong to charismatic characters, but their list also includes Chingiz Khan and Napoleon. Among charismatic persons of the XX century are Hitler, Mussolini, Lenin and Stalin, but also Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

Charisma could relate to any activity, irrespective of its ethical aspect. Charismatic can be a person, who is thought to be a saint, or a person, responsible for mass crime.

Thus, according to Veber “charisma could be a personality trait, which is thought to be extraordinary and due to which, the person, possessing it, is considered supernatural or superhuman, or, at least, endowed with a specifically exceptional power or qualities, inaccessible for other people”.

Sosland notes, that from such a definition stems the following - charisma is the quality, due to which, the person possessing it is regarded as a possessor of the above mentioned qualities. But such an evaluation is based on a certain impression only, since it is impossible to check whether the qualities like “supernatural or superhuman” or “specifically exceptional” are really present in this or that case. Therefore, we can assume that charisma is only based on the ability to make an impression of possessing the named qualities. Sosland believes that charismatic is the person, who convinces others that he possess the mentioned qualities.

Sosland makes another important comment. He does not think, that the definition of charismatic person should be limited to the well-known figures in the history of mankind. There is no ground to think that charisma is necessarily related to “greatness”. Sosland believes that one of his objectives is to de-mystify the concept of charisma and free it from what he calls “gigantophilia”.

It is not really necessary to for a charismatic person to be a prominent person, which is proved by the fact, that in psychotherapy, for example, we often encounter such people. The well-known philosopher Karl Jaspers says that psychotherapy develops in the form of sects and is formed around an idealized teacher. Sosland makes quite an appropriate comment when saying that the psychotherapeutic situation in itself requires a charismatic person. Most patients are sure that the psychotherapist has not only necessary knowledge and professional skills, but he is also endowed with exceptional, inexplicable abilities, through which he influences the patient’s

personality and health. The thing is, that the change of consciousness, characteristic of charisma, fully corresponds with the structure of psychotherapeutic impact.

In social life, the demand for a charismatic person has always been conditioned by crisis situations.

As for the nature of charisma, the ideas regarding it are very different and since none of them can be proved, Sosland considers all of them acceptable. For example, charisma can be regarded as God's gift, consisting in the mystical ability to understand the essence of events and influence people. According to another, more moderate definition, charisma is a gift, talent (like musical talent, i.e.). The last definition is somewhat extreme. It says, that charisma is a quality that can be acquired through training, i.e. a sum of professional skills, acquired via purposeful training.

In his review of charisma, Shifer touches upon different aspects of the phenomenon. However, the presence of these aspects is not necessarily required, as none of them unambiguously points to the existence of charisma. However, each of them contributes to the development of this unusual quality.

The first aspect is the charisma of a stranger, which means that it is difficult to influence those people, among whom you were brought up. Influence is much more easily exerted by a stranger (e.g. Corsican Napoleon and Georgian Stalin).

The second aspect is the charisma of inferiority. A charismatic person badly needs a quality pointing to his illness or defect. It is very important for a charismatic person to have some defect or stigma (have a hump, be lame, or have some mental disease, like epilepsy). A "holy disease", epilepsy, especially clearly demonstrates the link between pathology and being the so-called chosen one (Peter I, Napoleon, Julius Caesar).

There is another aspect, labeled charisma of hypocrisy. A charismatic person needs to attract people's attention to his activity, to make it as striking as possible. He uses different means to achieve this, even aggression. Any activity can be decorated with symbols, anthems and rituals. Energetic and easily understandable slogans, that can influence and change people's minds, serve the same purpose.

Another aspect is related to "mission" (a person feels that he has a certain mission).

A next aspect, the fighting position of charisma, is related to the fact, that a demand for charisma always arises in crisis situations, requiring a special behaviour. So, it is very important for a charismatic person to demonstrate his readiness to accomplish certain activity. A charismatic person always tries to aggravate the crisis situation. His strategy is to convince others in its difficulty, convince people that it is very hard to overcome such difficulties and that, fortunately, there is a person who can take a responsibility for combating them. Others just have to guess who that person is. The fighting position implies that the innovatory action starts with a fight with the existing authorities, which entails a reciprocal aggression. Those, who have been a victim, definitely have a better chance to develop charisma comparing to the people that have been deprived by destiny of such a gift. Even when no one attacks the hero, it is necessary to create an impression that he is persecuted by someone.

Shifer also singles out the sexual-mystic aspect of charisma, as he thinks that both components act simultaneously and seem to reinforce each other. Both, the mystic and the sexual have an especial impact on the state of consciousness (even though, it is difficult to define the nature of

such an impact). Besides, they help to develop a belief, that the person, who has these qualities, is endowed with outstanding abilities (Grigori Rasputin could serve as an example here).

Consequently, charisma is a unity of image, ideology and initiative, aimed at the expansion and strengthening of one's own influence.

The relationship of charisma with time and space is an important point, here. It is impossible to be charismatic always and for everyone. Those people are charismatic, who managed to influence a certain group of people during a certain period of time.

Charisma can have different social dimensions. It could be microsocial and macrosocial. In other words, some leaders are followed by a large number of people (e.g. a whole nation), whereas other charismatic leaders are followed by small groups (like religious sects or terrorist groupings).

Finally, Sosland makes a conclusion that the charismatic person we are dealing with is quite unsympathetic, because he is characterized with an emphatic style, stubbornness and obsessive behaviour.

This is what the author thinks of a charismatic person. We cannot, certainly, expect that this opinion will be shared by every person, especially by enthusiastic admirers of someone charismatic. Anyway, this phenomenon seems to be extremely interesting.

Conflict Theories

Rusudan Mshvidobadze

Conflict has been an indispensable part of human life since Adam and Eve were expelled from Paradise. New civilizations appeared and old civilizations died, political systems changed, but the confrontation between people remained the same. Inter-state confrontations as well as the confrontations between ethnic groups have entailed especially negative results for mankind.

“Hot spots” periodically emerge in different parts of the world and to deal with them people of different occupation and status have to invest a lot of energy. It is just the complexity and importance of the problem that determined the development of conflict theory into a separate field.

Representatives of conflict theory tried to identify the basic factors that contribute to the onset of conflicts.

Research conducted in different conflict areas identified numerous sources of confrontation, which had nothing in common at first sight. Later, it became possible to classify those factors, on the basis of which several theories were developed.

Apart from theoretical importance, the existence of these theories also has a practical value. Firstly, they have a diagnostic function. Latent and non-violent conflicts are not often an object of investigation. All the conflicts pass through the stages of birth, maturity, aging and death. It is easier to curb conflict at the starting, latent stage of its development. The factors causing confrontation and identified by conflict theory representatives help public to recognize just this phase, which, in its turn, will facilitate conflict reduction. If conflict still lasts, a general theory

will enable us to consider individual regional conflicts in the context of the processes taking place in different parts of the world, which will definitely facilitate and accelerate conflict resolution.

Out of the existing conflict theories, I will only review three of them in this article. The reason for such a choice is that each theory is based on the motive, which is considered the main factor of the onset of conflict.

1. Modernization and institutional theories. These theories, which are also called economic theories, are presented separately in the relevant studies, but they are so similar to each other, that it is quite possible to review them together.

What does the theory of modernization represent? Which motive is considered basic by its authors?

One of the important problems in the developing countries is the adjustment to those changes that accompany the dismantling of the old, traditional system. Social and economic relations undergo changes. The thinking and life experience of population also changes. This is labeled "the modernization process". The authors of this theory believe that ethnic conflict is an indispensable part of modernization, it's by-product. The reason is that the ethnic groups residing in the country occupy a different level and a different place in the modernization process (in terms of education, mentality and economic status). People in the country believe that social privileges and wealth are unevenly distributed among the ethnic groups. Competition becomes more intense and people start to struggle for the improvement of their economic situation and political status. It should be emphasized, that "modernization gap" in the economic situation and political status might not exist in reality. It is people's perception that matters here. It is quite natural, that the authors of this theory consider economic and political factors the main motives of conflict. In the situation like this, the role of the leader, and the elite, in general, is very important, indeed. Some authors even label it "elite conflict". But why does the population follow the elite?

Researchers think that population gets some economic incentives. Besides, under a certain pressure, people develop the so-called "erroneous consciousness", i.e. misinterpretation of reality, which makes them act against their own interests and enables leaders to manipulate people.

Economic well being and social status could become a source of conflict, but there are some other motives that are no less important. This could be proved by well known facts in the history of conflict, when ethnic groups refused to accept economic incentives and manifested the readiness for any economic difficulties accompanying the maintenance or achievement of independence. It seems that the authors have used the concept of "erroneous consciousness" and the fact of manipulating people by leaders to explain like phenomena, but since leaders have to manipulate people this already means that economic and social motives are not always adequate for the onset of conflict. We can assume, that conflict could be triggered by influencing people's basic values. These are the values that the authors of other conflict theories consider as most important.

2. Cultural pluralism. Some authors call ethnic conflict "cultural conflict", since they believe that these are cultural differences that usually split ethnic groups. Cultural pluralism implies the existence of incompatible "institutional systems" within society. "Institutional systems" are composed of social structures, values, beliefs and actions. In such a system any difference in customs, religion, values or language can become a source of confrontation. According to the

named theory, any pluralistic society is threatened by potential conflicts and the stability of the system can be only achieved through subordination. If we share these principles, then any changes in the pluralistic society (even democratic developments) should be considered a stimulus for conflict. Instability that accompanies any changes makes cultural differences more prominent. Ethical principles of one group, that were always unacceptable for the other group, become the source of confrontation and determine inter-group relationships. In the situation like this, state symbols acquire especial importance.

Opponents of this theory think, that the theory in question does not identify the concrete mechanisms, responsible for the onset of conflict. They believe that cultural differences can stimulate confrontation, but they are not adequate for the onset of manifested conflict.

3. Psychoanalytical theories. The so-called psychoanalytical theories became very popular in the recent period. Their appearance was caused by ineffectiveness of traditional conflict resolution methods. Researchers of conflict focused on those psychological mechanisms, through which people try to cope with their problems by shifting them to the interpersonal or ethnic level.

These authors think that penetration into unconscious processes will give us a new vision of conflict and its participants. Psychoanalytical research shows, that confrontation between two opposing groups is often based on the basic psychoanalytical concepts, like the need to have an enemy, narcissism, or the need of maintaining psychological distance between confronting groups.

The need to have an enemy (enemy image) makes a person or a group search for an object, to transfer a bad part of its "Self", rejected and repressed in the unconscious.

Territorial, cultural or ethnic similarity makes confronting groups distort this similarity and emphasize small differences. This reinforces the identity of people within the group (the feeling of unity), facilitates the formation of "enemy image" and the differentiating qualities develop into the value, for which these people would sacrifice themselves.

Psychoanalysts think that de-humanization and historical enmity are also related to "enemy image". Both processes facilitate group separation and the manifestation of aggression. Both of them imply a stereotyped vision of reality.

The psychoanalytical theory of conflict definitely helps us to become aware of the in-depth confrontation mechanisms. Besides, it has made an important contribution to the identification of common characteristics of conflict behavior, but, in our opinion, it has neglected the concrete, objective situation in which confrontation takes place. The thing is that in most cases the psychological aspect and the objective situation are so much linked with each other, that their separation becomes almost impossible.

All the conflict theories discussed here have some weaknesses, but we find them interesting primarily in terms of the generalization of the sources of conflict.

After the dismembering of the USSR, conflicts spread over the entire territory of the post-Soviet state. Unfortunately, Georgia is not an exception in this respect, but we did not get interested in the experience of other countries, neither at the stage of the onset of conflicts, nor in the course of their development, since conflict is always experienced as a unique event. This could be illustrated by a phrase from L.Tolstoy's novel – "All happy families resemble each other, but every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way". Such a perception (in this case of family conflict) is also typical of ethnic conflict, but perception and feelings are not always reliable.

One of the basic objectives of conflict theory is the identification of common characteristics of conflict origin and resolution. Just for this reason, we find it important to analyze the international experience accumulated by conflict theory and use it for the solution of our problems.

“Fog” in Relationships

Maya Razmadze

In this article I am going to proceed with the issue on effective relationships, the factors, that facilitate or impede the formation of good relationships between people. This time, I would like to draw the reader’s attention to the “image” formation process in people and also to those ways of relationship that prevent an “image” from causing conflict.

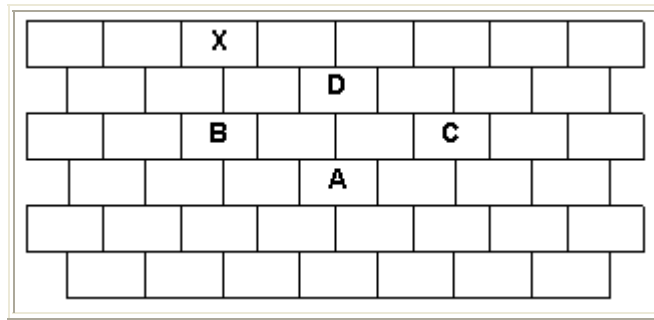
In terms of effective relationship this would mean, that we have to take the partner’s “images” into consideration.

What is an “image”? Now imagine the following: someone is talking to you about an animal, who does not have ears, wings or legs, but it has two eyes and one mouth. Based on this information a certain “image” forms in you and you guess that the animal is a snake

“Images” are formed as a result of perception and thinking, which require some energy and efforts. Besides, the image formation process is accompanied by certain emotions. Our organism makes quite an economical and sensible use of the energy required for “image” formation, and if it invests some of its energy in the creation of an “image”, then it furiously defends it. The more emotionally charged an “image” is, the more energy is spent on its creation, and the more probable it is that our psyche will defend it as much as possible. For instance, you have a certain “image” of your neighbour, a young man (he is decent, polite, and honest). Suddenly you find out that as a very dangerous criminal he was killed by the police, and that he ruthlessly tortured people to get money of them. In this case, due to the obtained information, the existing “image” of the young man has to be replaced with a new “image”, which requires a lot of efforts, is quite stressful and causes a feeling of discomfort. You might even get into an argument with the source of information, depending on the strength of your “image”.

The more conclusions we have made on the basis of a formed “image”, the more energy we have to invest into its alteration or rejection. But people are very different in this respect. Some people find it easier to invest their energy into the alteration of an old “image” and the formation of a new “image”, instead. We call such people flexible, the people, who can change their opinion in response to a sensible argument and do not stick to their previous “images”. Contrary to that, the people who are too much attached to old “images” and cannot change their opinion in spite of sound arguments, are called rigid, or stubborn.

People form “images” throughout their lives. If we think of all the “images” (we have ever formed in our life) as of a brick wall, where every brick represents an individual “image”, then we will realize, that “upper images”, i.e. newly formed “images” are placed on the top of the old ones. If we take one of the lower bricks (“images”) out of the wall, the wall will fall apart.



If we take out Brick A, Bricks B, C and D will also fall out, but if we take out Brick X, nothing will happen to the wall. For example, it is easier to change an opinion about our new acquaintance, than an opinion related to our old friend, because in the latter case we have formed a lot of “images”, have built a big wall and if we take out a single brick (“image”), we will make a hole in it. Our psyche finds all this very difficult and resorts to the strongest defense mechanism – stops to perceive the information contradicting the “image”. As long as we are facing a real threat, we try to see or learn only those facts that will not ruin the wall of “images”. Such a mental state is called “psychological fog”. Everyone knows what happens in nature in the case of real fog – the shape of objects becomes vague and disappears; the sounds also become unclear. When we are in the state of psychological fog, the truth for us is not what we are told, but what we have understood to avoid the attack on our “images”.

If you intend to change a person’s opinion about someone or something, i.e. attack his /her “images”, you can apply the counter-fog technique. It will make things easy for you and will enable you to save your energy.

The Counter Fog Technique

There are two possibilities, here:

1. You know from the very beginning that you will attack the other person’s “images”, or you know that the opinion expressed by you will cause fog in the other person.
2. You do not know that the opinion expressed by you will create fog in the other person, and only guess by his defense reactions that your opinions are different.

When proving something we use two types of statements:

- a) Main statement (which attacks the “image”).
- b) Explanations (through them we want to explain an attack on the “image”).

When we know from the very beginning that we are attacking the “image” through the main statement, it would be advisable to prepare the person we are communicating with, and lead him/him, step by step, to the main idea. Firstly, the other person is not in a psychological fog from the very beginning and will easily accept your arguments. Secondly, we will gradually prepare him for the alteration of his “image”. For instance, a woman knows that her husband does not want her to start working. In this case, it is advisable to prepare a ground by explanations, and only after that tell the husband what she basically wants to say, rather than tell him directly that she is going to start working tomorrow. We assume that this will help to mitigate the conflict.

Now let us consider the other situation, when we do not know that we are attacking a person's "image" by our main statement.

In this case, if we prematurely make the main statement, we will create in our partner psychological fog. The partner's understanding of the main statement will become vague and our arguments (no matter how sensible they are) will not have any effect. In the situation like this, it is important to make the partner feel our positive attitude through gestures, expression, and intonation, obtain his trust, and only after that go to arguments.

The existence of psychological fog in human relationships, caused by an attack on our "images", puts us in a conflict, ambiguous situation. We hope that the above advice will help you to avoid some unpleasant situations, which we often encounter in our life.

Our Choice

Dali Berekashvili

Now that the issue of choice has become so topical for Georgian population, I would like to touch upon the following problems: What do people choose and why? What is the psychological mechanism underlying this or that choice?

Here we will be talking about free choice or real choice, only. It sometimes happens that an action only seems to be based on free choice, whereas, actually, it is not. If a person chooses one of the options and, rather than being determined by free will, his choice is imposed from outside or his behaviour is an imitation of someone else's behaviour, we can hardly say that what we are dealing with is free choice (By the way, some people could argue that such an action is also determined by free choice, because if a person prefers to neglect his own needs or prefers to be driven by other people's will, such a preference also implies a certain choice, choice not to be free. However, a further elaboration on the freedom of will goes beyond the scope of this article).

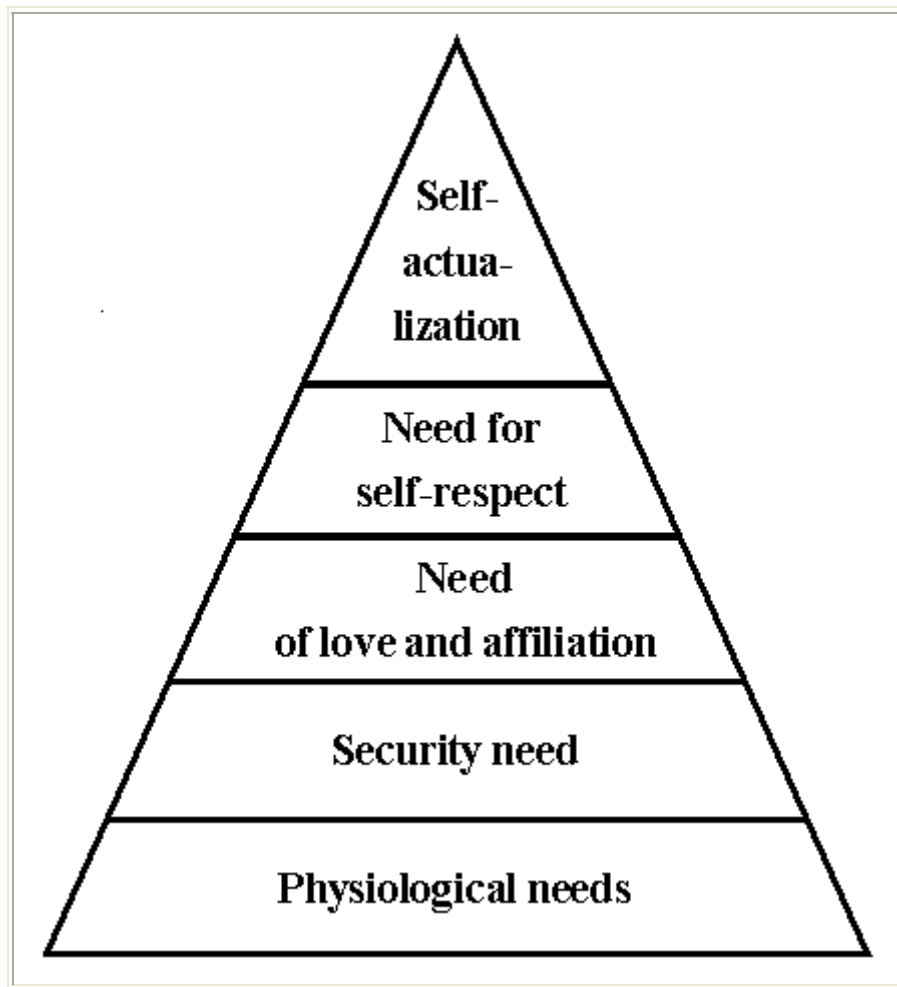
Let us assume that a person is making free choice, that he chooses what he really wants to choose. The relevant questions concerning this situation would be the following: "Why does he want what he wants?" and, "Does he really know what he wants?"

What is the motive of our behaviour or choice?

The well known American psychologist Abraham Maslow, whose diagram we are going to use to highlight the problem, calls a human being a willing creature.

It is true that a human being always wants something or is always in need of something.

Maslow elaborated a hierarchical system of needs forming a pyramid.



The pyramid includes

1. Physiological needs – need of food and drink, oxygen, physical activity, avoiding extreme temperature, need for sensory activity.
2. Security need – need to be saved, to create a stable environment.
3. Need of love and affiliation – a person has a need to love and to be loved by others, to feel that he belongs to a certain group, to accept others and to be accepted by others.
4. Need for self-respect – need to be important and competent.
5. Self-actualization need – a person has a need to actualize his potential to a maximum extent.

The assumption underlying the system is that the basic needs at the bottom of the pyramid have to be more or less satisfied in order for the person to feel and realize the needs at the top. For instance, in case a person is unable to satisfy physiological or vital needs, it will be less probable for him to have any high-level needs. A person suffering from the cold or hunger is not stimulated to obtain quick promotion or compose a piece of music. He is too obsessed with a search for food, etc. It should be noted, that Maslow makes an exception and says that there are also people with a strong will who endure severe physical discomfort for the sake of high level needs. But, in general, he believes that high level needs are formed after the satisfaction of basic needs. According to Maslow, some needs will never reveal themselves unless the lower, basic needs are, at least partially, satisfied.

The higher is the person's position in the hierarchy of needs, the better his personality is developed and the more powerful his potential is.

Maslow thinks that the average person satisfies his physiological needs by 85%, security need by 70%, need for love and affiliation by 50%, need for self-respect by 40% and self-actualization need by 10%, only.

Maslow defines the need at the top of the pyramid, that is the self-actualization need, as a person's desire to become what he is able to become. The person, reaching this level can fully use his capacities and personality potential. Self-actualization does not necessarily imply the creation of pieces of art. A person can actualize himself in the role of parent, worker or athlete. What matters here is a maximum use of one's own potential and doing in the best way whatever you do. Maslow's mother in law could serve as an example here. Maslow considered her a person who had actualized herself, even though she had never written a piece of poetry or music. He said that she was very creative in making soup, and that there is more creativity in making a good soup, than in writing a bad poem.

Maslow believed that only 1 % of people could really actualize its Self. One of the reasons is that many people do not at all realize their potential. Social environment and culture often restrict the self-actualization tendency through different norms and conditions. Mass self-actualization can only take place in "good conditions", that is a person needs a society creating favourable conditions for his development. We cannot point to any society in the history of mankind that created favourable conditions for the self-actualization of all its members. Nonetheless, societies widely differ in this respect. It is also true, that a free society, where a human being is highly valued, creates more favourable conditions for the self-actualization of its members.

The greater is the number of self-actualized people in a society, the better it functions, and, consequently, there is more possibility for a full satisfaction of lower needs by many people. In other words, the greater is the number of self-actualized people in a society, that is of the people making a maximum use of their potential, the more probable it is that such a society will have food, heating, stable and safe environment, guarantees for the future, etc.

If we go from the psychological theory back to our everyday life, we have to say that a consciously made choice should be based on the awareness of its contribution to the creation of a society, enabling people to satisfy both higher and lower needs. Development of self-actualized people necessarily requires a free environment. Any society where many people have a chance to actualize themselves is more ethical, stronger and better developed. This is a society that cares for each of its members.

National Stereotypes in the Soviet Anecdote

George Nizharadze

A generalized Soviet anecdote: Brezhnev and Chapaev are lying in the same bed and both are Jews.

About anecdotes in general:

Z. Freud said that anecdotes were created around three themes: sex, toilet and politics, which is not, naturally, coincidental. Each of us has a deeply buried secret desire to overturn the existing reality, to break rules. Every society has rituals, customs, and other means enabling people to

release the tension caused by such impulses. But if these customs or rituals are unable to do so, the tension mounts and might even end up in explosion.

One of the most important social functions of an anecdote is just the violation of taboos, but it does this through words rather than action. Sex and toilet are the themes that are not normally discussed in public, and the picturing of those in power as idiots or fakers, breaks the existing rules and creates the illusion of power in the people deprived of it.

Starting from the 60-s, that is Khrushchov's period, political anecdotes began to flourish in the USSR and other East Bloc countries. Before that, during the Stalin regime, this form of folk art was a definite pre-condition for travelling to the least hot regions of Arctic and, consequently, had no suitable environment for its development. Later... They say that in KGB, which had a good understanding of the "discharging" function of anecdotes, there was a special division where political anecdotes were created. Anyway, the spiteful jokes about Stalin, Khrushchov, Brezhnev and others became wide spread, indeed, and developed into the symbol of the epoch.

About "national" anecdotes

Three wishes of a French woman: a glass of cognac before and a cigarette after.

There is another category of anecdotes, not mentioned by Freud but used by him as an example in his book "Wit and its relationship with the Unconscious". These are, of course, the anecdotes about representatives of different nations. They just picture one or more national stereotypes. Such anecdotes can be encountered in every country and apart from humor, they also serve a social function – raise self-esteem, compensate the inferiority complex or the complex of guilt, discharge accumulated aggression or irritation by transferring them on imaginary representatives of some other ("not our") nation. Such a psychotherapeutic effect of national anecdotes is small, and is almost never noticed by the person who tells the anecdote or by the listener, but in spite of this, it does exist and does its job.

The Chukchi

At a military training a tank, with a Chukchi man inside, gets out of the rank. The commanding officer becomes furious and roars into the microphone. The Chukchi man with the radio-helmet on his head – "Commander, the cap is talking!!!"

The characters of anecdotes, i.e. representatives of an individual ethnic group, are selected according to the function of the national anecdote described above. The character can be a representative of the ethnic group falling behind "the group that tells an anecdote" in terms of culture, education, living standard, etc. In this case the distribution of roles resembles the circus situation: the clown, who looks like a fool, drops everything and says only stupid things makes children roar with laughter, which soothes the spectator, his self-esteem ("I am not like him!").

I don't know how it is in other countries, but in the USSR such a role was given to the Chukchi. For some time the Chukchi lived on their own – hunted the walrus and drove herds of deer. Other nations in the USSR only knew that such a nation did exist. From the beginning of the 70s, the Chukchi burst into every house and organization and became a part of our everyday life. Here is a Chukchi man painting a black and white TV to make it a colour TV. Another Chukchi throws an arrow to notify rescuers that he is in danger or asks for a new passport after receiving one a week ago ("I have already smoked the old passport"). In short, one day a Chukchi man held a stable position among the traditional characters of national anecdotes and placed himself

next to the Jew and the Georgian, even though the function of these two was somewhat different.

A little more of theory

The English anthropologist Victor Turner described an interesting phenomenon, which he called “power of the weak”. The essence of the phenomenon is the following: it often happens that a weak and oppressed ethnic group acquires the signs of strength in the eyes of the domineering group. As if the weak group has some secret knowledge or some mystic power inaccessible to the domineering group. The Gipsy, who have the ability to foretell the future, could serve a good example here. Eventually, the domineering group forms an ambivalent attitude towards the weak group: it feels respect on the one hand, and irritation on the other, because “we” are open to “them” whereas “they” are closed to “us”. But it is possible to overcome irritation by making its source ridiculous. This is how the second category of national anecdotes is formed.

It is unquestionable that the domineering group in the USSR was Russians; besides, the most popular characters in anecdotes were the Jews and the Georgians. There were also Ukrainian anecdotes but I find it difficult to conduct their psychological analysis because of the insufficient knowledge of Russia-Ukraine relations.

The Jews

After visiting a doctor, a Jewish person says to his wife: You know, Sarah, what we thought to be passion turned out to be asthma.

Anecdotes about Jews have quite a long history in Russia. In the second half of the previous century the Jews managed to hold an important position in Russian social life (especially in the field of commerce) despite the existing discriminating rules. The rich are not favoured in Russia, which shortly showed itself. There appeared a lot of foolish stories about the worldwide conspiracy of Jewish people (power of the weak!), but, in parallel, anecdotes about Jews also appeared. The plots were built around common topics – adultery, mother in law, school, etc. But at the same time clearly formed a dominant feature ascribed to the Jews – greed. It is interesting to note that in German speaking countries, where the Jews are not favoured either, to the character of like anecdotes ascribe a different trait - so to say, attachment of little value to personal hygiene (Two Jewish people meet each other in the baths. One of them sighs bitterly: “One more year has elapsed”). This is a good example of how culture emphasizes the values, which it considers most important.

But let’s go back to Russia. In the Soviet period, for quite understandable reasons, Rabinovich was no longer able to run legal private business. But he followed his mission and started to work in an institution where money was made. (A voice with the Jewish accent: Hallo, is that the base? (meaning supply base) – Yes. - Who am I talking to? – To Ivanov. – Sorry, I must have dialed the wrong number. This must be a military base...)

But in the 60s Rabinovich acquires a new role, which becomes leading in the Soviet anecdote: a Jewish person becomes someone who opposes the Soviet regime in a passive, but, nevertheless, sarcastic way and is at the same time a victim of discrimination because of his ethnic origin. (Khrushchov receives a list of candidates for the post of the chief rabbi of Moscow. Suddenly he starts shouting as he looks at the list: Have you gone mad? Here are only Jews on the list!)

In this series of anecdotes, rather than being the object of humiliating sarcasm, a Jewish person is someone who makes fun of political or social reality, that is he is pictured in anecdote as a

positive character. This shows that like anecdotes were born in the circle of Jewish intelligentsia. So, the Jewish political anecdote is something different. In particular, it is a reaction aimed against “power of the strong” (in this case against the political regime, rather than an individual nation).

The Georgians

A Georgian person stands on Arbat and counts money. A passer-by: Tovarish, (Comrade), how can I get to the Mausoleum? – (With an awful Georgian accent) Go, go, get down to business.

Anecdotes about Georgians also appear in the 60s, which is the period of important developments in the Soviet life. The most important thing was that the “bodies” at the top of the social pyramid were replaced with party nomenclature. As we know one has to pay for everything and the nomenclature had to pay for being in power with certain liberalization of social life. Among other points, the authorities had to close their eyes at the commercial activity prohibited by the official legislation. It seemed as if the regime made an unwritten agreement with its subordinates: Do whatever you want, make money, but mind some limits and what is most important never get involved into ideology or politics.

In Georgia people learned the rules of the new game quite fast and efficiently. Many of our compatriots got to a steady process of money making, and, what is extremely important, differently from the Jews, readily demonstrated their wealth to the public. This was the fact that irritated “the wide circles of Soviet public” most. Georgian characters, Givi or Gogi, that appeared in that period, did not suffer from too much intellect and spoke Russian with an awful accent (a frequent reason of ludicrous incidents), but their main features were a craving for women (a Georgian man can endure hunger for one week and thirst for one day, but he cannot stay without a woman for more than two hours) and a pocket full of money. Anecdotes about Georgians often emphasized that Georgia, in general, had its own living style, different from the Soviet one. It does not mean that anti-Soviet attitude was ascribed to Georgians. Georgians were just considered people with other interests, who did not know many of the things a Soviet person was supposed to know, for instance, the authors of the Marxist ideology or the names of politbureau members. (Who is Brezhnev? The one who plays in “Vremia”?).

It is worth mentioning here that starting from the 90s, that is the dissolution of the communist system, the number of Georgian anecdotes in Russia considerably declined and the “free ecological niche” was occupied by “new Russians”. “The new Russian” in the anecdote resembles the Georgian character in many respects – easily made money, uneconomical spending of money and vulgarness (Two new Russians talking with each other: Look, what a tie I bought for two thousand bucks! – What a fool you are! They sell the ties like this for three thousand bucks round the corner”). Craving for women and accent are differentiating features, of course. Otherwise, these two characters can mostly replace each other, especially, if an anecdote involves the theme of money. Such a derision of richness, pointing to an extremely negative attitude, is something to think about: will Russian culture allow the establishment of market economy and democratic institutions in its own country? Is it possible that October 1917, described by the historian Iakovenko as a global reaction of Russian culture aimed at the restoration of the collapsing basic value – the value that can be called a general equality in poverty, repeats itself in the future?

A Jew is an occupation, a Georgian is a life style, a Chukchi is a diagnosis and a Russian is a destiny...

Note: The anecdotes in the article might be lacking their genuine sparkle due to translation, but hopefully, they are understandable enough to enable the reader to get their gist.

Why cannot we understand each other?

Material Prepared By Nana Berekashvili

Some scientists think that men and women have a different conversation style, as different as that of representatives of totally different cultures.

It's known that women talk a lot, but the scientists, who recorded the participation of men and women in discussions, meetings, etc., found out that men usually speak more frequently and for a longer time than women do.

And yet, who speaks more and what is the difference between these two conversation styles?

Most men feel more comfortable and confident when talking in public, whereas women feel better during private conversation. These two styles could be labeled report-talk and rapport-talk, respectively.

Most of the women fall under the second category. For them, rapport-talk is a way of establishing and improving relationships. Besides, an emphasis is made on the revelation of similarities with the person a woman is talking to and matching experiences. As a rule, the best contacts are established with close people, who make us feel comfortable and free, that is during a frank conversation. But cannot we approach talking in public in the same way as private conversation?

For most men, public talk is a means of preserving independence and establishing one's own place in society. This is done through the demonstration of intelligence and knowledge or the attraction of others' attention by telling interesting stories. But sometimes private relationships are treated in the same way as talking in public, rather than communication with close people.

And yet, where does the stereotype of talkative woman come from?

Research shows that if a man and a woman give the same time to conversation, the listener gets an impression that the woman speaks more than the man does.

Men accuse women of being too talkative, since they hear them speaking in such situations where they would never speak themselves and on such topics, which they, themselves would never discuss (in the circle of close people or on the phone, women do not discuss the topics that are interesting for men, for instance, the broken engine of the car).

Let's imagine a common situation: a family with the talking wife and the silent husband. Wives often express their dissatisfaction because of the taciturnity of their husbands at home, which can't be explained by their tiredness or business. Working women also get tired but they still try to share their ideas or feelings related to this or that news.

The problem here is a conversation style. Men and women talk in a different way. They acquire this style from their childhood. Most people, especially women, regard communication as a means of protecting oneself from hostile world. Friendship between girls is based on the exchange of secrets and sharing of ideas. When a woman is asked who her best friend is, she

always names someone with whom she regularly communicates. When asked the same question, a man names his classmate, whom he meets once a year or sometimes even less frequently.

Women and men also have a different idea of what is important and when it is relevant to talk about important things. For instance, a woman, who had problems with her marital relations told the following story: she asked her husband what was new in the life of their common friend. The answer was “Nothing”. Later she found out that the friend was planning to get married. “How can you call this nothing!” – said the resentful woman.

Men talk to transmit information. For this reason, a wife can interrupt her husband’s activity (for instance, reading a newspaper) only when she has to say something useful or necessary. But for a woman, talking means communicating. It is a way of showing one’s own participation, is a manifestation of listening interest and care.

A man does not usually show that the deterioration of relationships worries him. When he is dissatisfied, he says nothing and demonstrates his dissatisfaction through cold estrangement. This is the reaction that frightens a woman most. She prefers to express dissatisfaction in order to avoid estrangement and reticence, which are inevitable if you try to keep everything to yourself.

Now let’s see what determines the publicity and formality of conversation.

Audience is not the only place in front of which report-talk takes place. The bigger is the number of people participating in conversation, the less we know them, and the bigger is the difference in the social position, the more conversation resembles report-talk. On the other hand, the smaller is the number of people participating in conversation, the better we know them and the closer they are to each other by their social position, the more their conversation can be defined as rapport-talk. Besides, women perceive a situation as public when men participate in it. Some men create a formal, public conversation style even at home, when children are required to behave especially “well” in their father’s presence.

Talking in public can resemble private conversation if it contains many examples and stories from one’s own experience. As a rule, men never take seriously the arguments put forward by a woman in conversation or debates if they are based on her personal experience. Such arguments even make men feel somewhat uncomfortable. Men only believe in rigorous, objective arguments.

For this reason, our relationship often faces difficulties. However, the only problem is that when talking with a person of the opposite gender, we don’t or can’t take his/her conversation style into consideration.

Time at the Cinema and Time at the Life

George Nizharadze

Georgians know American movies almost better than Americans do. Georgians see them before Americans, at least. So, traditional American characters can be even considered part of our everyday life. But there is a “character” in American films (and almost only in American films) who usually remains unnoticed by the audience or cinema critics.

I mean the timer (or a clock) here, which periodically appears on the screen and records the inevitable reduction of a certain period of time. This is the period, during which the hero has to

do a lot of things - beat hundreds of bad guys and switch of the timer when the figures on it are about to vanish. Otherwise a global disaster will take place. Our hero is young and brave, so he always manages to solve this extremely difficult problem. But, anyway, the blinking and squeaking timer is typical of American cinema only, and even though it sounds strange, this "character" can be regarded as a symbol of Western civilization. The thing is that it is the West where an absolutely new understanding of time emerged, the understanding related to the invention and spread of a rewindable clock. Before and after that, in non-western cultures prevailed a dual understanding of time. According to one of the understandings time is cyclic, nothing new happens and the rule of life is established once and for all. Such a philosophy is brilliantly expressed in the book of Ecclesiastes. The other understanding implies that some things do happen, life changes, but these changes are determined by physical or external forces. So, you have to live in the present moment; anyway, you cannot change the future and the events will develop in their own way.

Upon the invention of such a clock, i.e. in about XII or XIII century, Europeans placed it just on the chapel of the church (can you imagine a mosque or an Orthodox church with a clock on it?). From that period a new understanding of time is gradually introduced. Time is unidimensional, irreversible, it runs forward and what is most important, people are able to change the future. Moreover, the future depends on man's activity. In short, the concept of progress emerged.

An impressive picture, indeed: once in fifteen minutes thage chime of bells would spread all over Europe. Another fifteen minutes have elapsed. Remember! You have less time left to fulfil your duty on this earth.

The new philosophy of time was not of course introduced overnight, but in Europe more and more people realized the value of time. This process was largely accelerated with the formation of capitalism, especially in England and then in America, where Benjamin Franklin (the one pictured on a hundred dollar note) imposed price on time ("Time is money").

No other civilization in the history of mankind developed as rapidly as Western civilization. The new understanding of time significantly shaped its type, with all its weak and strong sides. The West is a rapid formation and change of architectural styles, fashions, ideas, and technical inventions. History has preserved a dialogue of a Japanese aristocrat and Dutch merchant about the advantages of their countries. One of the arguments of the Japanese person was such: Does it make any sense to talk with you? Every year you are dressed in a new way. The irony of history is that once stationary Japan has shared Western philosophy. Today it values time even more than the West does and the timer participating in American films is mostly of Japanese production. But Japan is still exceptional in this respect – in no other country or culture time is valued as much as here.

In Georgia, attitude towards time more corresponds to traditional non-western models. In other words, Georgians believe that life goes on and the situation is getting better (You can often hear people saying – This country will settle down, eventually, will not it?) but this is ensured by some external forces, which are not quite clearly defined. People focus on the present but long term plans and, especially their implementation is quite an unusual thing with us. We can say that Georgians are optimists – fatalists. But time is not valued here. Lack of punctuality could be almost considered our national trait. In Tbilisi, with the exception of the underground, there is only one clock (the clock on the municipality building) that works properly.

There is something attractive in such an attitude towards time, and, I would add here, money. But on the other hand such a perspective (if the word perspective is relevant here) is extremely inefficient and in addition to that, is characteristic of the mentality of the poor. It is known that

the mentality of the poor (including the irrational use of time) is the cause of poverty rather than its effect. Today Georgia is a poor country and it is up to us whether it remains like this in the future.

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