

Conceptual History, Cultural History, Social History¹

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Abstract:

V. M. Zhivov's introduction to *Studies in Historical Semantics of the Russian Language in the Early Modern Period* (2009), translated here for the first time, offers a critical survey of the historiography on *Begriffsgeschichte*, the German school of conceptual history associated with the work of Reinhart Koselleck, as well as of its application to the study of Russian culture. By situating *Begriffsgeschichte* in the context of late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century European philosophy, particularly hermeneutics and phenomenology, the author points out the important, and as yet unacknowledged, role that Russian linguists have played in the development of a native school of conceptual history. In the process of outlining this alternative history of the discipline, Zhivov provides some specific examples of the way in which the study of "historical semantics" can be used to analyze the development of Russian modernity.

Keywords:

Begriffsgeschichte, conceptual history; history of ideas; historical semantics; Russian cultural history

The history of concepts, or *Begriffsgeschichte*, to use the original German [word] (since this direction of historical-philological work emerged and developed in Germany), assumed the identity of a separate discipline to a large extent thanks to the works of Reinhart Koselleck and, in part, his older colleagues Otto Brunner and Werner Conze, who collaborated with him in the editing of the ground-breaking work, *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*.² This school, as one might expect, had its precedents. The journal *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* began publication already in 1955, and it is customary to trace the intellectual lineage of this approach to Rudolf Eisler's 1899 *Wörterbuch der philosophischen Begriffe*.³ The distinctiveness of modern *Begriffsgeschichte*, which is ostensibly tied to its growing prominence in the humanities, becomes quite obvious in the light of comparison. In its origins, it somewhat resembles the history of ideas, as it evolved in the English-speaking world. The crucial characteristic that differentiated the German variety from the very beginning, however, was its attention to the word as such [*k slovu kak takovomu*], that is, to the historical-philological component in the analysis of intellectual processes.

Such a turn in *Begriffsgeschichte* is, of course, not coincidental. One easily discerns a continuity with German philosophical thought, as it developed in the twentieth century. First and foremost, I mean hermeneutics. Ideas and concepts do not exist by themselves,

¹ V. M. Zhivov, "Istoriia poniatii, istoriia kul'tury, istoriia obshchestva," in V. M. Zhivov, ed., *Ocherki istoricheskoi semantiki russkogo iazyka rannego Novogo vremeni* (Studia philologica) (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2009), 5-26. The editors of *Вивліоѳика* would like to thank A. D. Koshelev, managing editor of "Iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury," for allowing us to publish this original translation by Boris Maslov <maslov@uchicago.edu>.

² Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, Reinhart Koselleck, eds., *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*. Vols. 1-8 (Stuttgart: E. Klett, 1972-1993).

³ [*Wörterbuch der philosophischen begriffe und ausdrücke, quellenmässig bearb.* von dr. Rudolf Eisler (Berlin: E. S. Mittler und sohn, 1899). Zhivov cites the 1910 edition of this work]: Rudolf Eisler, *Wörterbuch der philosophischen Begriffe*, historischquellenmässig bearb. von dr. Rudolf Eisler (Berlin: E. S. Mittler, 1910).

as abstract metaphysical essences. They live in texts (and they give life to texts) and in this life of theirs they demand a dialogue with tradition. The evolution of concepts is a hermeneutic process, a process of “effective history” (*Wirkungsgeschichte*), to use Hans-Georg Gadamer’s term. In Koselleck’s works, echoes of Gadamer, who was his teacher, are numerous and substantive. This continuity, however, has a more general and broader significance. The background against which *Begriffsgeschichte* emerges is supplied by the mode of analyzing [the act of] perception [*poznavanie*], which has distinguished phenomenological studies since at least [Wilhelm] Dilthey and [Edmund] Husserl. Perception begins to be studied without any premises, in its immediacy, giving rise to conceptualizations of language that stress its cognitive and everyday instrumentality (in Russia, this line is developed in Gustav Shpet’s works, in particular, in his *Inner Form of the Word*).⁴ In Germany, this process has had an impact not only on philosophy, but also on philology and linguistics proper (e.g. the works of Jost Trier).⁵ One can even suppose that the appearance of the project of Brunner, Conze, and Koselleck, as well as of the latter’s later theoretical studies, did not so much form a new approach in the domain of *Geisteswissenschaften* [the humanities—Trans.] as extend this broad philosophical movement to history.

Indeed, the principal object of *Begriffsgeschichte* in the form in which it is represented in Koselleck’s works is history itself. Koselleck studies the language of history, the language employed to write history, and the language in which history takes place. He writes about the ever-present tension between social history and the history of concepts, or, put differently, between the historical fact and its linguistic embodiment: “Social history (*Sozialgeschichte oder Gesellschaftsgeschichte*) and conceptual history stand in a reciprocal, historically necessitated tension that can never be cancelled out.”⁶ Koselleck is well aware of the absolute dominance of language in history, inasmuch as texts are not only highly significant participants in history (in the form of contracts, juridical acts, orders, etc.), but also history’s very material: “As soon as an event has become past, language becomes the primary factor without which no recollection and no scientific transposition of this recollection is possible.”⁷ In this, Koselleck goes further than Lucien Febvre and Mark Bloch (both of whom he cites), for whom mental structures remain objects of study by a historian, without reducing him to the subordinate status of an observer [*ne podchiniaia ego sebe kak nabliudatelja*].

On the other hand, unlike Hayden White, Koselleck does not make the radical—and undoubtedly dangerous—move into metahistory.⁸ Although Koselleck writes about “the fiction of the (f)actual,” which becomes real only “in the medium of linguistic

⁴ G. G. Shpet, *Vnutrenniaia forma slova. (Etiudy i variatsii na temy Gumbol'dta)* (Moscow: GAKhN, 1927).

⁵ Jost Trier, *Der deutsche Wortschatz im Sinnbezirk des Verstandes: Die Geschichte eines sprachlichen Feldes* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1931).

⁶ Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*. Trans. by T. S. Presner and et al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 23.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁸ See Koselleck’s introduction to White’s *Tropics of Discourse* and White’s preface to the English translation of Koselleck’s articles, in *ibid.*, ix-xiv, 38-44.

fiction,"⁹ he retains a certain space for history "outside of language." He writes that "the difference between so-called actual history and its interpretation is determined, and the determination of the difference itself can only be made by linguistic means,"¹⁰ and assigns a certain autonomy to the history of society, indicating that "the difference between acting and speaking [...] also in retrospect prevents social 'reality' from ever converging with history in its linguistic articulation."¹¹ Koselleck's emphasis is on the impossibility of constructing or of comprehending history without the history of concepts. It is easy to agree with that [proposition], especially in light of the contribution that the studies of Koselleck and members of his team have made to the understanding of historical process. This approach, however, circumscribes the attention of conceptual historians to history. Koselleck, needless to say, is far removed from Hegel's historical determinism, yet he is also not fully free of this tradition. Without a doubt, he is influenced by Heidegger, particularly the late Heidegger's concept of the history of being. It is not surprising, therefore, that in Koselleck, as N. E. Kuposov points out, "history serves [...] as some kind of absolute [*samovlastnyi*] force capable of imposing on nations [better: on humanity – V. Z.] their fate."¹² The history of concepts, as Koselleck presents it, is first and foremost the history of historical concepts.

It appears that the growing interest in *Begriffsgeschichte* in international research in the humanities is related to [scholars'] preoccupation with the historical—as opposed to synchronically-descriptive—problematic, and to the predominant attention, in post-structuralism, to the construction of processes rather than states. Koselleck and his colleagues turned out to be post-structuralists *avant la lettre* and, in part, against their wishes. Following these developments, German conceptual history moved to the fore, and other national traditions followed suit. In more recent years, Russian scholarship has also begun to encompass this line of research. Here one can point to the work by scholars at the European University in St. Petersburg, who published a volume on *The Concept of the State in Four Languages*, edited by O. Kharkhordin,¹³ and later a collection of essays on *Historical Concepts and Political Ideas in Russia in the 16th-20th Century*, edited by N.E. Kuposov.¹⁴ E. N. Marasino's publications also present interesting starting points.¹⁵ The

⁹ Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 28,

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 43-4.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹² N. E. Kuposov, "Istoriia poniatii vchera i segodnia," in N. E. Kuposov, ed., *Istoricheskie poniatiia i politicheskie idei v Rossii XVI-XIX veka* (St. Petersburg: European University at St. Petersburg, 2006), 9-32, here 17.

¹³ Oleg Kharkhordin, ed., *Poniatie gosudarstva v chetyrekh iazykakh* (Moscow: Letnii sad, 2002). The volume develops ideas that are presented in an earlier work by O. Kharkhordin, which was later included in a collection of his articles. Oleg Kharkhordin, *Main Concepts of Russian Politics* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005).

¹⁴ N. E. Kuposov, ed., *Istoricheskie poniatiia i politicheskie idei v Rossii XVI-XX veka* (St. Petersburg: European University at St. Petersburg, 2006).

¹⁵ E. N. Marasino, "Russkii XVIII vek: Tekst i real'nost'. (Vmesto predisloviia)," *Canadian American Slavic Studies* 38, no. 1-2 (2004), 1-10; *ead.*, " 'Rab', 'poddannyi', 'syn otechestva' (k probleme vzaimootnoshenii lichnosti i vlasti v Rossii XVIII veka)," *Canadian American Slavic Studies* 38, no. 1-2 (2004), 83-104.

present volume can similarly be regarded as a contribution to the development of this research paradigm.¹⁶

These isolated and specialized works cannot be justifiably compared to the fundamental studies by Koselleck and his colleagues. On the other hand, it is difficult to agree with Peter Thiergen, who, in the preface to his aptly-titled edited volume, *Russische Begriffsgeschichte: Beiträge zu einem Forschungsdesiderat* [*Russian History of Concepts: Contributions to a Field in Need of Exploration—Trans.*], writes that "Russia and the Soviet Union supplied a less than fertile soil to conceptual history" and cites as a reason for this [ostensible fact] that "conceptual history demands freedom of thought," which never existed in Russia (and, *a fortiori*, in the Soviet Union).¹⁷ It is not my intention to enter into debates on free thought in Russia or recall Chaadaev's pronouncements, as my German colleague does.¹⁸ In my view, he is mistaken in implicitly contrasting Western European achievements in the domain of *Begriffsgeschichte* with Russian backwardness and presenting Russian studies with the task of "catching up."¹⁹ The backwardness of Russian studies is comparable to the backwardness of Italian or Iberian studies, which makes one doubt the utility of generalizations appealing to the character of "national" history and instead suggests that we seek an explanation in the particulars of different intellectual traditions. After all, the English variety of *Begriffsgeschichte* represented in

¹⁶ Needless to say, the history of Russian concepts is not a territory reserved only for Russian scholars. German historians and philologists who study Russian material have touched on some problems of *Begriffsgeschichte*. Here one must first of all note the publications of Ingrid Schierle: "Sich sowohl in verschiedenen Wissensgebieten als auch in der Landessprache verbessern': Übersetzungen im Zeitalter Katerinas II," in G. Lehmann-Carli et al., eds. *Russische Aufklärungsrezeption im Kontext offizieller Bildungskonzepte (1700-1825)* (Berlin: Arno Spitz, 2001), 627-642; *eadem*, "Vom Nationalstolze': Zur russischen Rezeption und Übersetzung der Nationalgeistdebatte im 18. Jahrhundert," *Zeitschrift für slavische Philologie* 64:1 (2005-2006), 63-85; *eadem*, "'Syn otčestva': Der 'wahre Patriot'," in P. Thiergen, ed., *Russische Begriffsgeschichte der Neuzeit: Beiträge zu einem Forschungsdesiderat* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2006), 347-367; *eadem*, "'For the Benefit and Glory of the Fatherland': The concept of *Otechestvo*," in R. Bartlett and G. Lehmann-Carli, eds. *Eighteenth-Century Russia: Society, Culture, Economy: Papers from the VII International Conference of the Study Group on Eighteenth-Century Russia, Wittenberg 2004* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2007), 283-295. Among the numerous lexicographical studies of Helmut Keipert one finds a certain number of works that fall under Koselleck's paradigm, e.g. H. Keipert, "*Kosmopolitizm*: ein brisantes Wort in der Lexikographie des 20. Jahrhunderts," in *Sprachnormen und Sprachnormwandel in der russischen Sprache des 20. Jahrhunderts. Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von O. Müller* (Rostok: Der Fachbereich, 1998), 167-190; *idem*, "*Glasnost*": Zu den lexikographischen Voraussetzungen für begriffsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen im Russischen," in P. Thiergen, ed. *Russische Begriffsgeschichte der Neuzeit: Beiträge zu einem Forschungsdesiderat* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2006), 1-21.

¹⁷ Peter Thiergen, "Begriffsgeschichte: Traditionen, Probleme, Desiderat," in P. Thiergen, ed. *Russische Begriffsgeschichte der Neuzeit: Beiträge zu einem Forschungsdesiderat* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2006), xiii-xxix, here xx.

¹⁸ Exactly how much freedom of thought is required for the healthy functioning of *Begriffsgeschichte* remains, of course, a debatable question. Here one might recall that some of the initial intuitions of this approach derive from works of M. Heidegger and O. Brunner that are to a certain extent tied to the orientations of National Socialism (Koposov, "Istoriia poniatii vchera i segodnia," 11-14). That epoch can hardly be regarded as one in which intellectual freedom blossomed.

¹⁹ Thiergen, "Begriffsgeschichte: Traditionen, Probleme, Desiderat," xxv.

the works of Quentin Skinner²⁰ and John Pocock²¹ also has distinctive characteristics conditioned by a different intellectual atmosphere.²² With regard to these studies one might also pose the question to what extent they represent "*Begriffsgeschichte in strengem Sinn* [in the strict sense of the word—Trans.]."

Thiergen cites this "strict sense" in his discussion of V. V. Vinogradov's *History of Words*²³ and, as one might expect, finds that his studies do not satisfy that criterion.²⁴ In my view, one should question the relative validity of this strict-sense criterion, asking to what degree it corresponds to a rigorously defined domain of knowledge as opposed to Koselleck's specific interests and idiosyncratic hypotheses (posing such a question should not in any way impugn the distinguished achievements of the main theorist of conceptual history). As already mentioned, Koselleck's chief interest was history, and, for this reason, the concepts that were the focus of his attention were socio-political concepts. Of principal value for Koselleck was all that related, in one way or another, to changes in the construction of temporality, and, first and foremost, the distinguishing traits of modernity (*Neuzeit*). This is precisely where such concepts as history, time, modernity, progress, epoch, civilization, etc. belong.

Would it be fair, however, to contend that, beyond concepts within this sphere, *Begriffsgeschichte* has no substantial objects of study? It appears that such a restriction would not only be counter-productive but also contradict the very principle on which this field is built. In different epochs, the conceptualization of history appealed not only to temporality as such, but also to concepts that were not intrinsically temporal. Before modernity, history advanced toward the Last Judgment, so that its temporality could become subsumed by eschatology.²⁵ This means that in late antiquity or the Middle Ages or—to speak only of the non-elite part of the population—in the early modern period, salvation was a category no less important than temporality and the concept of history came in contact with such "non-historical" concepts as salvation, sin, penance, fear, humility, etc. It does not appear possible to draw objectively a boundary between concepts that defined the cultural consciousness of many generations and concepts upon which the historical consciousness rested: history is part of culture, and culture is part of history.

One might object, of course, that such an approach absolutizes culture, which represents a category that is even vaguer than that of history (which Koselleck absolutizes). Yet in this case terminological disputes boil down to the choice of this or that word and add little to the elucidation of sense. Without delving too deep into these emerging aporias, we can define culture as a sum total of inherited (i.e. those that are

²⁰ Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*. Vols. 1-2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

²¹ J. G. A. Pocock, *Politics, Language, and Time: Essays in Political Thought and History* (London: Methuen, 1972).

²² Cf. N. E. Kaposov, *Kak dumaiut istoriki* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2001), 284-294.

²³ V. V. Vinogradov, *Istoriia slov* (Moscow: Tolk, 1994).

²⁴ Thiergen, "Begriffsgeschichte: Traditionen, Probleme, Desiderat," xxi.

²⁵ Cf. Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time*. Trans. by K. Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 232.

subject to memory [*memorializuemykh*]) discursive, social, religious, aesthetic and cognitive practices that are modified (i.e. assume a historical projection) in the process of transmission. History is nothing but a series of such modifications constructed by consciousness; it is that dynamic being within which these practices are realized. These definitions, moving as they do in a vicious circle, suffice to clarify that which is the object of our study and, in particular, to expand the domain of conceptual history beyond "historical" concepts to encompass "cultural" concepts. The latter category, ostensibly, is intrinsically tautological since no "extra-cultural" concepts are imaginable. One may even say that the history of concepts is the history of culture, regarded as a dynamic verbal activity and revealed through the history of words (language) that articulate the conceptual domain.²⁶

Such an approach to the history of concepts undoubtedly sidesteps the "Begriffsgeschichte in strengem Sinn" posited by Thiergen, yet it seems to be more flexible, allowing for a wider spectrum of research agendas, and, one hopes, more fruitful. Moreover, it appears that it is better adapted to Russian studies, inasmuch as in the history of Russian discourse—even more so than in the history of discourse of other European languages—the socio-political sphere is not clearly separated from, on the one hand, the domain of Christian religion, and, on the other, the domain of popular magic. Once we adopt this approach (I return to its advantages below), the Russian history of concepts is revealed to possess a rather rich (pre-)history. I have in mind, first of all, V. V. Vinogradov's studies on the history of words. It is worth keeping in mind that Vinogradov was far from a provincial Soviet linguist. In the 1920s and 1930s, he was, on the whole, abreast of developments in the humanities in Europe, in particular, through the works of G. G. Shpet, already mentioned above, and was aware of the significance of the history of words for the history of society (even though he was more interested in properly linguistic and stylistic aspects of lexicology); note his observations on the history of words *dekadent* 'a decadent man', *dekadentsvo* 'decadence', *intelligentsiia* 'the educated class', *kiseinaia baryshnia* 'philistine lady', *otshchepenets* 'a social outcast.'²⁷ The line of inquiry was, to an extent, continued by Iu. S. Sorokin²⁸ and especially in some studies by A. A. Alekseev, who is fully engaged with the problem of the relation between lexical and social change.²⁹

The shift towards a history of culture provides further purchase to the research on Russian conceptual history. Given his focus on the history of "historical" concepts, Koselleck views the Enlightenment as a watershed moment. While stipulating that the identification of the moment of change (and the articulation of history into epochs)

²⁶ Cf. Thiergen, "Begriffsgeschichte: Traditionen, Probleme, Desiderat," xxvi-xxvii.

²⁷ Vinogradov, *Istoriia slov*, 135-137, 227-229, 243-245. Vinogradov's theoretical formulations in his publications from the 1940s-1960s are adapted to the Soviet variety of Marxism and for that reason have little substance to them; cf. V. V. Vinogradov, *Leksikologiya i leksikografiya. Izbrannye trudy* (Moscow: Nauka, 1977), 75-76.

²⁸ See Iu. S. Sorokin, *Razvitie slovarnogo sostava russkogo literaturnogo iazyka, 30-90-e gody XIX goda* (Moscow, Leningrad: Nauka, 1965).

²⁹ See A. A. Alekseev, "Semanticheskoe 'snizhenie' kak otrazhenie sotsial'noi struktury v russkom iazyke XVIII veka." *Russian linguistics* 4, no. 1 (1978), 3-12.

depends on parameters that are taken to be significant, Koselleck clarifies what precisely the Enlightenment has overturned in history. Modernity begins with the Enlightenment inasmuch as the Enlightenment identifies itself as a "standard-bearer of a new time (*Neue Zeit*)."³⁰ From then on, "[t]ime does not just remain the form in which all histories take place, but time itself gains a historical quality. Consequently, history no longer takes place in time, but rather through time. Time is metaphorically dynamicized into a force of history itself."³¹ Instead of reproducing what has already been, the future is transformed into the domain of the new and the unknown, and this modifies the basis of historical consciousness and the very construction of history. The French Revolution, as a revelation of the absolutely new and unforeseen, represented one of the major impulses behind this change and, at the same time, its symbolic point of departure.

The Russian Enlightenment, by contrast, is a very special kind of Enlightenment, dissimilar to those of France or Germany. As Kant thought (in his notes on "Was ist Aufklärung"),³² the French or the German Enlightenment represented the coming into being of individual responsibility, which permits those who are enlightened to separate the domain of submission and the domain of free thought. In this regard, the Enlightenment marked the [individual's] emancipation from the state as the chief agent of historical order and social discipline. The Russian Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, by contrast, was much more closely tied to the state, it was introduced by the state (at least, under Catherine the Great) and controlled by it, so that, in effect, it may be termed a "statist Enlightenment."³³ The state's control encompassed, most importantly, control over history and over the future. For this reason, in the Russian Enlightenment the reconceptualization of time and the reconceptualization of history did not take place, or, to be more precise, the concept of modernity was built not from the elements of an autochthonous Enlightenment, but instead adopted from the French and the Germans as a ready-made product. Accordingly, the Enlightenment certainly cannot serve as a watershed moment for the Russian history of concepts.

It is quite obvious where such a watershed moment is instead to be located in the Russian case. A new life, and hence new thought and new words, appear in the Petrine epoch. It does not seem to be the case, however, that along with them a radically new understanding of history comes into being,³⁴ which means that those two decades do not qualify as Koselleckian "saddle period" (*Sattelzeit*). Yet such a transition is patently

³⁰ Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 160.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 165.

³² [Immanuel Kant, "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?" *Berlinische Monatsschrift* (Dezember-Heft, 1784), 481-494]. Cf. Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" In P. Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (New York, 1984), 32-50.

³³ Cf. V. M. Zhivov, *Iazyk i kul'tura v Rossii XVIII veka* (Moscow: Iazyki russkoi kul'tury, 1996), 422-427.

³⁴ Certain changes in the conceptualization of history at the end of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century did occur. At that time, Russians ceased compiling chronicles and began writing histories (Andrei Lyzlov's 1692 *Scythian History* [*Skifskaja istoriia*, ed. A. P. Bodganov (Moscow: Nauka, 1990)] is probably to be regarded as the first such history); in the Petrine period, several historical works are published that resemble Western models. History is founded on causal linkage between the events described, and this is something that chronicles have no use for. That, however, is not the kind of far-reaching revision of temporality that is postulated by Koselleck.

observable once we turn to concepts of culture, as opposed to concepts of history. In the domain of cultural concepts the Petrine period marks a turbulent appropriation of new conceptual paradigms. As has repeatedly been pointed out, it begins before Peter, but is characterized by the greatest intensity and (one should add) compulsion during his reign. How these new paradigms are to be assessed in their entirety is rather unclear. Undoubtedly, they represent elements of a Eurocentric modernization, however we define this process, whose universalist pretensions are rather doubtful.³⁵ They are, at least in some aspects, characterized by rationalization and secularization, although one should not exaggerate the significance of these parameters for Peter's policies as a whole.

The appearance of new realia and new concepts increases the demand for new words. This demand was in part satisfied by borrowings, whose avid acquisition is often regarded as the main linguistic process of the period of Petrine reforms. Studies of Petrine borrowings are numerous.³⁶ As Fred Otten has shown, many of these borrowings appear already in the last decade of the seventeenth century and thus antedate the main reforms.³⁷ Some scholars regard the domestication of loan words as a direct result of the cultural revolution that brought with it new objects and new concepts;³⁸ such a straightforward interpretation, however, cannot be accepted in this form as it demands important qualifications, which would, among other things, take into account the fact that new words could represent instances of re-labeling, that is, new signifiers for old phenomena.³⁹

In any case, loan words do not solve the conceptual problems that modernization poses for society. They can serve as auxiliary material, but cannot organize a new discursive practice. This impossibility is due to the fact that social and religious institutions, or models of behavior and rituals of everyday life, never change radically. However pandemic a cultural revolution, everyday behavior and the discursive practices tied to it retain, if not an identity, then at least continuity with the past. The gradualness of changes in discourse is paralleled by the gradualness of social changes: during Peter's reign, new discursive practices are first mastered by a small elite and then slowly encroach on other sectors of the society (this process, one must suppose, was not complete even by the time of the 1917 revolution when it – due to the disappearance of the old elite – ceased to be relevant). This means, among other things, that new discursive

³⁵ Cf. Simon Dixon, *The Modernization of Russia, 1676-1825* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1-24.

³⁶ W. Christiani, *Über das Eindringen von Fremdwörtern in die russische Schriftsprache des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1906); N. Smirnov, *Zapadnoe vliianie na russkii iazyk v petrovskuiu epokhu* (St. Petersburg, 1910); E. E. Birzhakova, L. A. Voinova, L. L. Kutina, *Ocherki po istoricheskoi leksikologii russkogo iazyka XVIII veka. Iazykovye kontakty i zaimstvovaniia* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1972).

³⁷ Fred Otten, *Untersuchungen zu den Fremd- und Lehnwörtern bei Peter dem Grossen* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1985).

³⁸ James Cracraft, *The Petrine Revolution in Russian Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).

³⁹ Zhivov, *Iazyk i kul'tura v Rossii XVIII veka, 146-150*; *idem*, review of: James Cracraft. *The Petrine Revolution in Russian Culture*. Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004. *Slavic and East European Journal* 49:2 (2005), 337-338.

practices do not claim a monopoly. A Petrine "nestling,"⁴⁰ who speaks in the newly fashionable jargon, is compelled to switch to a generally comprehensible idiom when talking to representatives of the older generation or to members of other social groups. His linguistic habitus is highly marked, and it is only several generations later that it becomes fully acceptable, at least among the nobility.

While loan-words inundate texts of the Petrine period, in the later period they for the most part disappear from the language. The rejection of loan-words was largely due to a change in the linguistic orientation, now directed toward the French and German purist models of language and style.⁴¹ Yet one may suppose that considerations of verbal pragmatics (*pragmaticcheskie faktory*) also played a role in this "purgation" of language: non-domesticated loan-words proved to be a bad means of communication. Neither of these factors of purification had an impact on the other reflection of cultural revolution in historical semantics; I am referring to linguistic calques. As a rule, semantic shifts were not regulated by theories of language and style and did not hinder comprehension as much as unfamiliar loan-words did. Although the meaning that emerged as a result of semantic shifts was new, it was new only in part, since it was correlated with the old meaning in accordance with particular semantic schemata that were, by and large, familiar to language users. Of course, communicative conflicts could also arise on this ground, and they are occasionally alluded to in eighteenth century satire;⁴² that, however, was a marginal phenomenon. Semantic shifts were occurring on a massive scale, yet relatively imperceptibly, and as a result became sedimented in language.

Semantic shifts represent not only a phenomenon of the history of words, but also a phenomenon of the history of concepts, since words with newly acquired meanings comprised a new conceptual paradigm and supplied a basis for discursive practices associated with modernization. In some cases, the process of semantic calquing of foreign words left a visible imprint already in the Petrine period, [as can be seen] in intratextual glosses. Such glosses, that is, Russian equivalents to non-domesticated borrowings, are very numerous in texts from the time of [Peter's] reforms. They eliminate the communicative conflict (by explaining the unfamiliar word), while, on the one hand, permitting the borrowing to perform its semiotic function as a symbol of the new

⁴⁰ A quotation, now part of common idiom, from A. S. Pushkin's *Poltava* (1828-1829), which memorably refers to the tsar's comrades-in-arms as "fledglings of Peter's nest." (Translator's note)

⁴¹ Zhivov, *Iazyk i kul'tura v Rossii XVIII veka*, 171-183.

⁴² For example, one finds the following scene in Gorodchaninov's *Little Old Mitrofan in Retirement* (G. N. Gorodchaninov, *Mitrofanushka v otstavke, komediia v piati deistviakh. Rossiiskoe sochinenie G. G.* [Moskva, 1800], 87):

Zasluzhenov [Mr. Merit]: That bride would not be to your taste.

Domosedova [Ms. Housewife]: Oh, sir, surely there is nothing to taste in her. I guess she is not a piece of veal.

Zasluzhenov (contains laughter).

Mitrofanushka: What gibberish you just said, mother. Nobody's talking about veal!" Miscomprehension occurs due to the collision between the literal meaning of the word *vkus* 'taste' and the semantically shifted meaning that is due to the calquing of French *goût*. That metaphorical *taste*, however, realized a metaphorical pattern that was quite conventional, so misunderstanding here arises due to the apparent bone-headedness of the comic character.

"European" culture and, on the other, fulfilling their own didactic task: they teach new "enlightenment" words to the reader undergoing a process of enlightenment. In this way one should explain examples such as those one finds in Feofan Prokopovich's *Pravda voli monarshei*: "*rezony ili dovody*" [both words mean 'arguments' – Trans.], "*ekzempli ili primery*" [both words mean 'examples' – Trans.], and so on.⁴³ Such glosses are distinctive of the new kind of secular literature cultivated by Peter.⁴⁴

For the most part, glosses are the exact semantic equivalents of the loan-word being glossed: the borrowing and the gloss embody the collision of two discourses, one linked to tradition, the other to modernization, whereby the new – and this is distinctive of Russian modernization – may appear as a result of simple relabelling of the old. Yet in some cases, the loan being glossed accentuates in the gloss a meaning (a semantic component) that previously was peripheral or not distinctly articulated and, as a result, correlates the old word with a new concept, cf., for example, the glosses in *General'nyi Reglament ili Ustav* [General Regulations or Statutes] (1720):⁴⁵ "*direktsiia (ili upravlenie)*" [directorship (or governance)], "*general'nye formuliry (obraztsovyia pis'ma)*" [general formulars (standard letters)], *aktsidentsii ili dokhody* [Akzidenzen or revenue], etc. *Upravlenie* 'governance' is a polysemous word; its correlation with the new word *direktsiia* 'directorship' emphasizes one of its components, which corresponds to the bureaucratization of power during Peter's reforms. Similarly, in *Artikul voinskii* [Military Statutes] (1715) we find "*satisfaktsiia ili udovol'stvie*" [satisfaction or contentment].⁴⁶ The word *udovol'stvie* 'pleasure, contentment' acquires a new meaning that is correlated with the concept of a nobleman's sense of insulted honor, and the moral recompense that such an insult calls for.

Russian modernization led to the appearance of a secular culture, yet in Russian conditions, this innovation was far more radical than the secularization of culture in the West in the early modern period.⁴⁷ In the West, an elite secular culture existed in the Middle Ages and was reflected in a whole series of phenomena outside of the cultural usage in Muscovy, such as the system of courtly interaction, chivalry and the chivalric

⁴³ *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii*, vols. 1-45 (St. Peterburg, 1830-1916) [hereafter *PSZ*], VII: № 4870, 606, 607, 634.

⁴⁴ Cf. I. Vasilevskaia, "K metodologii izucheniia zaimstvovaniia (russkaia leksikograficheskaia praktika XVIII veka)," *Izvestiia Akademii nauk SSSR. Seriya literatury i iazyka* 26, no. 2 (1967), 165-171; Birzhakova, et. al., *Ocherki po istoricheskoi leksikologii russkogo iazyka XVIII veka*, 63; see also many examples of such glosses in the dictionary of loan-words—under the rubric 'glosses'—in the latter work (101-170).

⁴⁵ *PSZ* VI: № 3534, 141-160.

⁴⁶ Chistiakov, O. A., ed. *Rossiiskoe zakonodatel'stvo X-XX vekov*. Vols. 1-9 (Moscow: Iuridicheskaiia literatura, 1984-1994), IV: 353.

⁴⁷ For a number of reasons, one should be cautious when speaking of the secularization of Russian culture in the eighteenth century. First, for the majority of the population and, apparently, for the larger part of nobility, religious culture, at least in the form of "superstitions," remained dominant. Neither Lomonosov nor Sumarokov could even approach the popularity of Dimitri Rostovsky's *Chet'i minei* [Menaion for Daily Readings]. Second, the elite culture of the empire did not neglect to look for religious justifications for the political regime established by Peter (A. S. Lavrov, *Koldovstvo i religiiia v Rossii. 1700-1740 gg.* [Moscow: Drevlekhranilishche, 2000], 344-346; Ernest A. Zitser, *The Transfigured Kingdom: Sacred Parody and Charismatic Authority at the Court of Peter the Great* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004], 140-168). A closer consideration of these issues, however, is not necessary in this context.

novel, scholarly jurisprudence that appealed to the classical heritage, and so on. Of course, even in the Western Middle Ages, the compass of this secular culture was relatively small and its status incommensurate with that of religious culture. Nevertheless, a secular culture did exist, and modern secularization could extend an already inhabited zone. In Russia no such zone existed, and the whole array of concepts that were necessary for a secular culture had to be created from scratch. It would be hasty to claim that Russians had no notion of love and mated like animals that are not privy to any lofty feelings. Nor should we suppose that they were not capable of conveying these feelings verbally, as some verbal instruments were contained in folklore. Yet in book culture, which was entirely religious, no words or concepts were available in this domain. To be more precise, such words did exist, but they belonged to the semantic field of the sinful and the forbidden (as, for example, nouns *liubostrastie* 'self-willed erotic passion' and *pokhot* 'lust', the verb *raspaliat'sia* 'to be inflamed'), so that their connotations contained elements of religious valuation that were difficult to eliminate.⁴⁸ It was by no means an easy task to develop a set of concepts in which such connotations would not be perceived. It took until the middle of the nineteenth century (if we limit ourselves to the language of the elite) before it was solved.

To a large extent, within the sphere of romantic love, this process involved semantic calques and could be characterized as a secularization of Slavonicisms.⁴⁹ It was as a result of this process that the words *strast* 'passion', *strastnyi* 'passionate', *obaianie* 'charm', *obaiatel'nyi* 'charming', *soblaznitel'nyi* 'tempting', which in the book language of the pre-Petrine period designated various aspects of devilish activity, were transformed into terms for positive qualities and emotions of love. This transformation took place under the influence of their French equivalents *passion*, *passioné*, *charme*, *charmant*, *seduisant*.⁵⁰ The same may be said about the semantic transformation of words such as *mechta* 'dream', *mechtanie* 'daydreaming', *mechtatel'nyi* 'dreamy', *prelest* 'beauty, charm', *prelestnyi* 'beautiful, charming' (cf. French *rêve* and *charme*). The secularization of concepts can be observed also in other semantic domains; compare, for instance, the changes in the monarch's title: *tsar* 'tsar', which due to countless biblical and liturgical uses was primarily associated with *Tsar* 'Nebesnyi' 'King of Heaven', changes to *imperator* 'emperor', which in Russian has no religious connotations.

⁴⁸ In their youth, both Trediakovsky and Lomonosov attempted to ignore these connotations and used *pokhot* with the positive meaning of erotic attraction (see Zhivov, *Iazyk i kul'tura v Rossii XVIII veka*, 170). Yet these juvenile provocations had no long-term consequences, and gleeful *pokhot* never entered the Russian language.

⁴⁹ Cf. Zhivov, *Iazyk i kul'tura v Rossii XVIII veka*, 497-509.

⁵⁰ Vinogradov, *Leksikologiya i leksikografiya. Izbrannye Trudy*, 93-94; Gerta Hüttl-Worth, "Problemy mezhslyavianskikh i slavyansko-neslyavianskikh leksicheskikh otnoshenii," in *American Contributions to the Fifth International Congress of Slavists. Sofia, 1963* (The Hague: Mouton, 1963), 133-152, here 145-146; *eadem*, "Rol' tserkovnoslyavianskogo iazyka v razvitiu russkogo literaturnogo iazyka. K istoricheskomu analizu i klassifikatsii slavyanizmov," in *American Contributions to the Sixth International Congress of Slavists. Prague, 1968* (The Hague: Mouton, 1968), 7-15, here 14-15; Iu. M. Lotman, "O sootnoshenii poeticheskoi leksiki russkogo romantizma i tserkovno-slavyanskoi traditsii," in *Tezisy dokladov IV Letnei shkoly po vtorichnym modeliruiushchim sistemam. 17-24 avgusta 1970 g.* (Tartu, 1970), 85-87, here 86-87.

At the same time, the eighteenth century witnessed the intensification of the interaction between Church Slavonic and vernacular lexical elements, which was of cardinal significance for the formation of the lexicon of the Russian language and the evolution of its conceptual system.⁵¹ One of the factors of this intensification was the disappearance of boundaries between separate registers of written language, which resulted in book diction and colloquialisms becoming mixed together in one bag. One of the significant processes in the lexicon of the Russian language of the eighteenth century was the emergence in written texts of a whole set of words which undoubtedly existed earlier but escaped fixation in writing (see in this volume the discussion of words such as *grekhovodnik* 'frivolous person', *zaspāt*, *prispat* 'kill an infant [by overlaying]').⁵² This means that "demotic" concepts, which were linked to words unknown to traditional book language, were coming to the surface to claim a place in cultural consciousness, entering into interaction with concepts of the elite culture.

Naturally, the character of semantic shifts could be quite complex and irreducible either to semantic calquing or to the opposition to "demotic" meanings. In such cases, general schemata can fail to apply, and individual cases of semantic development call for separate studies which must often build on a great mass of material. Here I will point to research on the concepts *narod* 'people, nation, simple folk', *narodnyi* 'national', *narodnost* 'nationality.'⁵³ While in medieval written culture the word *narod* 'people' was polysemous,⁵⁴ in the eighteenth century a special meaning 'simple folk, plebs', which previously demanded an adjectival descriptor (*prostoi narod*, *chernyi narod*), came to be foregrounded.⁵⁵ In *The Dictionary of the Russian Academy* this meaning is not yet fixed; here, a descriptive expression *prostoi narod* 'simple folk' in the meaning 'plebs' [*chern*, *prostoliudiny*] is given in the article *narod*.⁵⁶ In *The Dictionary of the Church Slavic and Russian Language* (1847), this meaning makes its appearance as 'inhabitants of a country or a state, who belong to lower classes' (*zhiteli strany ili gosudarstva, prindlezhashchie k*

⁵¹ On this see already Vinogradov's 1927 study, republished in Vinogradov, *Leksikologija i leksikografiia. Izbrannye trudy*, 27-34.

⁵² [V. M. Zhivov, "Grekhovodnik. K istorii slova i poniatii" and "Zaspannye mladentsy i materi-detoubiitsy: iz istorii slov i poniatii," in *Ocherki istoricheskoi semantiki russkogo iazyka rannego Novogo vremeni*, 405-430 and 370-404, respectively].

⁵³ Schierle, "'Vom Nationalstolze': Zur russischen Rezeption und Übersetzung der Nationalgeistdebatte im 18. Jahrhundert," 75-85; D. A. Badalian, "Poniatie 'narodnost' v russkoi kul'ture XIX veka," in N. E. Koposov, ed., *Istoricheskie poniatii i politicheskie idei v Rossii XVI-XIX veka* (St. Petersburg: European University at St. Petersburg, 2006), 108-122; A. Ebbinghaus, "'National' (*narodnyi*) und 'nationale Eigenart' (*narodnost*) in der russischen Literaturkritik der 1820er Jahre," in P. Thiergen, ed. *Russische Begriffsgeschichte der Neuzeit: Beiträge zu einem Forschungsdesiderat* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2006), 51-79; cf. also Vinogradov, *Istoriia slov*, 936-937.

⁵⁴ I. I. Sreznevskii, *Materialy dlia slovaria drevnerusskogo iazyka po pis'mennym pamiatnikom*. Vols. 1-3 (St. Petersburg, 1893-1912), 2: 320-321.

⁵⁵ See *Slovar' russkogo iazyka XVIII veka*. Vols. 1-16 (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 1984-2006), 14: 17-18; *narod* can be used in the meaning of both Latin *populus* and Latin *plebs*.

⁵⁶ *Slovar' Akademii Rossiiskoi*. Vols. 1-6 (St. Petersburg, 1789-1794), 5: col. 43; *Slovar' Akademii Rossiiskoi, po azbuchnomu poriadku raspolozhennyi*. Vols. 1-6 (St. Petersburg, 1806-1822), 3: col. 1175-1176.

nizshim sosloviiam).⁵⁷ This new polysemy develops, as one might suppose, as a result of the semantic calquing of the French *peuple*.⁵⁸ This, however, does not exhaust the semantic development within this lexical group. While the noun *narod* reproduces the polysemy of the French *peuple*, the adjective *narodnyi* ties together, as remarked upon already by P. A. Viazemskii,⁵⁹ the meaning of French *populaire* and *nationale*. Hence arises the spectrum of meanings, which varies between different authors, of the new formation *narodnost'* (beginning from 1819), which can be interpreted and used by individual authors as an equivalent of French *nationalité* and German *Nationalität* and even as an equivalent of Polish *narodowość*.⁶⁰ As part of the well-known Uvarov triad *Pravoslavie, Samoderzhavie, Narodnost'* 'orthodoxy, autocracy, nationality', *narodnost'* stands, as B. A. Uspenskii perceptively remarks, as the Russian answer to the French *fraternité* within the no less famous French triad *liberté, égalité, fraternité*; both designate the organic unity of a nation.⁶¹ For the evolution of the conceptual structure of the adjective *narodnyi* one should also keep in mind Soviet formations such as *narodnyi zasedatel'* 'people's accessor', *narodnyi sud* 'people's court', *narodnyi komissar (narkom)* 'people's commissar' in which *narodnyi* means 'belonging to the institutions of "popular" power' as opposed to the institutions of the old regime. This discursive practice in turn indicates that the Soviet regime, from the very beginning, constructed its legitimacy on the conceptual opposition "people vs. power" rather than—as the modern European liberal regimes do—"society vs. state."

As a result of numerous and multidirectional semantic shifts, semantic calquing and subsequent semantic regrouping, the Russian version of that "metaphysical language" whose absence Pushkin lamented in 1824-1825, slowly comes into existence.⁶² Vinogradov once commented on the eighteenth century mixing between "Church Slavonic morphology and French semantics."⁶³ In the second part of the nineteenth century, the rebuilding of the conceptual system of the Russian language that was prompted by such

⁵⁷ *Slovar' tserkovno-slavianskogo i russkogo iazyka, sostavlennyi Vtorym Otdeleniem Imp. Akademii nauk*. Vols. 1-4 (St. Petersburg, 1847), 2: 399. It should be acknowledged that in the eighteenth century such uses are sporadic, so it is not surprising that they are not recorded in dictionaries. Beginning in the nineteenth century, especially in the context of debating the problem of national specificity, *narod* appears more frequently with this meaning; cf., for instance, F. V. Rastopchin's letter to P. D. Tsitsianov of January 10, 1806: "There is no need to write to you in what state of despondency the whole of Russia, so to speak, finds itself. Lack of success, the betrayal of the Germans, ignorance about the past, doubts about the future, and—to add to this—the recruiting process, a bad year and a calamitous winter, all of this filled both the nobility and the people [*narod*] with sadness." P. I. Bartenev, ed., *Deviatnadsatyi vek: istoricheskii sbornik*. Vols. 1-2 (Moscow, 1872), 2: 106.

⁵⁸ Cf. P. Imbs, ed., *Trésor de la langue française; dictionnaire de la langue du XIXe et du XXe siècle (1789-1960)*. Vols. 1-16 (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1979-1994), s.v. *peuple*.

⁵⁹ *Damskii zhurnal* № 8 (1824), 76-77.

⁶⁰ V. I. Saitov and P. N. Sheffer, eds., *Ostafevskii arkhiv kniaziei Viazemskikh*. Vols. 1-5 (St. Petersburg: izd. grafa S. D. Sheremet'eva, 1899-1913), 1: 357.

⁶¹ B. A. Uspenskii, "Russkaia intelligentsia kak spetsificheskii fenomenon russkoi kul'tury," *Rossiiia/Russia* 2/10 (1999), 7-19, here 16.

⁶² A. S. Pushkin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*. Vols. 1-16 (Moscow, Leningrad: Izd-vo AN SSSR, 1937-1949), 11: 21, 34; 13: 187.

⁶³ Vinogradov, *Leksikologiya i leksikografiia. Izbrannye trudy*, 33.

processes is largely complete, thus it becomes possible to speak of a period of stability, albeit a brief one. The conceptual structures we observe in that period represent a complex synthesis of Church Slavonic linguistic heritage; modernizing processes of the eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries, as part of which concepts associated with the new "European" culture were acquired; "demotic" usage which served as a prism in which concepts borrowed from the Western culture were refracted. This complex texture, which conditions the richness of the educated Russian language, remains to a large extent unstudied. As mentioned above, the first attempts at such research, which appeared in recent years, have proven to be quite fruitful. The present book adjoins these first attempts. [...]⁶⁴

The diversity of studies contained in this book makes it possible to touch upon a broad spectrum of problems arising in research on historical semantics focusing on concepts that are important for the evolution of culture. Semantic changes in that sphere amount to changes in the verbal structure of a society's memory, its self-consciousness and self-construction. They not only reflect the dynamic of a culture, but constitute the texture of that dynamic. Semantic changes condition the tensions that exist in that texture and that are generated by the collision between the old and the new, the lofty and the low, the bookish [*knizhnoe*] and the everyday, the public and the private. By analyzing different conceptual domains we inquire into different types of collision. So far we have accumulated only very limited material for the construction of a typology of historical-cultural processes of this kind. Yet the very posing of these problems lays a foundation for future work in the domain of historical semantics. We hope that the present book will serve this goal.

⁶⁴ [A summary of the chapters contained in the 2009 edited volume is omitted from this translation—Trans.]