

Specialties of emotionality in Russia

I am a sick man... I am a spiteful man. I am a most unpleasant man. I think my liver is diseased. Then again, I don't know a thing about my illness; I'm not even sure what hurts. I'm not being treated and never have been, though I respect both medicine and doctors.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Notes from Underground¹

Some specialties of emotionality in the Russian mindset are highlighted in this article² by focusing on historical changes in Russian emotional relating. Special areas of mainly collective emotional relating are chosen to reflect the continuities and discontinuities from the Bolshevik regime and the Stalin era through glasnost to the "post-emotional," media-tailored Putin imago. First, large-scale shaming and humiliation practices embedded in Soviet and Russian institutions have resulted in the urge for collective uniformity and psychic numbing. Secondly, restrictive and punitive childrearing and authoritarian parenting have accompanied the projected futures of patriotic victory, glory, and even the conquest of space that are presented to demand self-sacrifice, wars and (mega)victims as the rebirths of the righteous, and repression of individual needs. Thirdly, the rage of a leader against both the internal and the external enemies of the State is an undercurrent from the Soviet time to the present-day Russia, inflicting fear and submissiveness in the people. In current political apathy, the new saviors of Mother Russia will appear.

These areas of emotional relating are, of course, not the only ones in the complex web of biopsychosocial processes that interact, affecting, and becoming affected by, historical, political, economic and technological developments. Like the flow of genes is in continuous interaction with the environmental factors, so personality is not fixed but relational and flowing, in embracement with different environmental and epigenetic changes. No unilinear causation or reductionist explanation conveys to understanding psycho-socio-historical development. As Zevedei Barbu already stated the principle for the "psycho-historical focus" and

¹ Dostoyevsky (1989), S. 3.

² Parts of this article contain revised extracts from Ihanus (2001).

for "historical psychology": "no psycho-genesis without a socio-genesis" and "no socio-genesis without a psychogenesis."³

The more democratically inclined and emancipatory members of the new "psychoclass" in Russia have to live in the ambivalent cycle of self-exploration and dependency, fluctuating between hope and despair. This image is made more complicated by the constructions of national character stereotypes, by Russians themselves and by other nationalities. Differences in stereotype constructions can contribute to the collective emotion-based and provocative memories and anticipations between the nations. Such memories and anticipations can be rigid but as reflected upon they can also be potential sources for transformations.

Russians have been judged as impulse-controlled and conscientious in out-group judgments (mostly done by Americans or Western Europeans), whereas in-group ratings are more in the opposite direction: impulsive, inactive, generous, impractical and very likeable. Recent studies have indicated that people in the neighboring countries of Russia see Russians differently than people in other parts of the world. For example, Russians are often depicted in the neighboring countries as high in Extraversion and Openness to Experience but low in Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, as lazy, as less modern (bound by tradition, devoutly religious, old-fashioned) and less self-controlled than how they are seen by people in Southern and Western Europe, or in other parts of the world. Russians rated themselves as higher in Openness to Experience, and especially in Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, than others rated them. In other words, members of six neighboring countries had a less favorable view of Russians than Russians had of themselves.⁴

The group mind including group thinking, group intentions, group fantasies and group emotions is a metaphor, a way of speaking. According to contemporary neuroscience and the philosophy of mind, there is no clear evidence based on research that would support the existence of the group mind in the human brain. We are used to referring to individual brain images and individual mental representations. However, even neuroscientists have lately become interested in social-cultural neuroscience and have insisted that developmentally we have, first and above all, "social brains," not isolated brains. Cognitive neuroscientists have been obliged to approach not only social and distributed cognitions but also the "emotional brain" that affective neuroscience is studying.⁵ We seem to have not only cognitive maps but also socially and affectively charged maps for our orienting in our environments. The brain keeps on updating the maps of the relational self that is continuously created in its interaction with the others, while

³ Barbu (1960), S. 200-201.

⁴ Realo et al. (2009).

⁵ see, for example, LeDoux (1996).

the self is developing and changing through oscillations between the "outside" world of others and the "inside" world of memories and imagination.⁶

Even if we cannot strictly delineate a group mind, we all live in social, cultural and historical contexts that contain us and are contained by us. Such contexts provide us with potential for feeling, thinking and behaving in certain common ways to be realized "freely" or through manipulative, suggestive, marketing or enforcing strategies and controls and regulations of the self, depending on the system. We are given several possibilities of connecting with symbols, meanings and rituals. We come across cultural, ideological, spiritual and religious incentives to the emotional states, ideas, models and patterns of behavior, be they then creative, innovative, conspiratorial, or delusional. Our nervous system and its plasticity may be individual and unique but it has many points of contact with other nervous systems, especially now that the social media and the internet offer platforms for sharing, networking, and brainstorming. On the other hand, there are collective outbursts of hate (sub)groups that are flaming and bullying and preparing for different forms of cyberattacks and abductions of identity. An individual nervous system has ever more been caught, monitored and regulated in the Matrix, in the central network nervous system.⁷ In that Matrix, again, both repressed and projected contents as well as both regressive and transformative emotionalities are present.⁸

Shame and shaming

Shame is the consequence of a person's failed attempts at reciprocal relations, of being excluded, refused to relate oneself to others. It is tied to our developmental phases, leaving emotional memory traces to our personality organization. It has different levels of intensity, but even as dormant, such shame memory can be revived with stressful or traumatic symptoms. Shaming is a purposeful act of making somebody to feel him-/herself a failure or a loser.

Shame can encapsulate depression, the feelings of deprivation and humiliation, the fears of becoming abandoned, and the anticipations of re-living traumas. Suppressed anger mixed with dissociations at the core of shame is seeking an outlet through distancing the self from its fear-directed attention and perceptions (that are interpreted within the context of the anticipated repetitions of shame). Self-protection is needed in the face of past losses and current threats. One way is toward the constriction of emotions and cognitions, another toward reaching out to mutual empathic relations and enterprises infused with new challenges and

⁶ Damasio (2000).

⁷ Ihanus (2015).

⁸ Ihanus (2005).

flow experiences. However, dissociations due to shame are often misplaced and delegated to those (to leaders, experts, "me"/"our" groups) who are supposed to be able to treat them right. One can attempt an illusory rapprochement by joining a nurturing, protective and controlling leader, mind expertise or group. The "shameful crimes" of growing, differing, separating and individuating are promised to become healed when the leader, the state, the government, the church, or the mind-controlling profession orders "therapeutic" procedures for finding a release from internal enemies and victims within by externalizing them into aliens, enemies, devils, and mentally deranged. Conformism and succumbing to powers above have gained intense manifestations in totalitarian societies and in their educational and other institutions.

Psychiatry, coined as a term by Reil in 1803, in its self-conscious professionalism is an outgrowth of the Victorian era that set boundaries between the vicious and the virtuous. The absolute status and monopoly of the psychiatric profession legitimized it to treat madness and multiply the range of abnormal behaviors and of diagnostic categories, while trying to tame and discipline the forces of irrational chaos and terror of the almost beast-like human nature. This moral and mental management had utopian undercurrents in the frame of asylum-dom: properly disciplined and controlled inmates were to be revamped into the social order as rehabilitated and re-programmed citizens. This psychoutopia failed and turned into the massive institution of psychiatry with less cures than repressive measures safeguarding the control of disturbing madness. The psychiatric and psychological interventions were expanded to include the new technologies of control. The strict control of emotions and worldviews prepares people for uniformity. Not only psychiatric but many other kinds of manipulative, suggestive, marketing or enforcing strategies and regulations mold the self and the conditions to the way we feel, think, behave, evaluate and choose. Psychiatry has been misused both in Russia and in the Western countries for different kinds of shaming and exclusion measures.

Repressed shame is an especially important Thanatos affect. Actually, one can speak of the "shame family of emotions," ranging from mild bashfulness to the severe rages and outbursts of revenge. It is very difficult to cope with shame because it derives from early vulnerabilities and traumatic attacks on self-esteem and reciprocity. Erik H. Erikson connected shame with helplessness and the loss of self-control: "From a sense of loss of self-control and foreign over-control comes a lasting propensity for doubt and shame."⁹ Shame seems to involve the whole self, unlike guilt, which concerns certain acts for which one can make confession, expiation, penance or reparation.¹⁰

⁹ Erikson (1963), S. 254.

¹⁰ cf. Steinberg (1991), S. 67.

A preverbal child already gets a heavy imprint in its "Thanatomatrix," as a child's strivings for empathic reciprocity are turned down, because of indifference, lack of judgment, belittlement or punishment from others. A child tries, perhaps clumsily but with all its capacities, to reach out for resonance and receptiveness. When it does not succeed, the failure is tightly attached to the development of the self. The self expressed to others has been revealed as "false"; shame maintains collapse, powerlessness, passivity and withdrawal of the self in different connections. Verbal expressions, like "I wish the earth swallowed me," "I'm dying of shame," "what a fool I am," "this I will never forgive myself," are all indicative of the trap situation where we will be prone to prefer death to shame.¹¹ Therefore, it is better not to feel at all.

Shame can thus result in withdrawal from narcissistic injury, but it can also intensify rage and revenge against others (from intolerance to racism, persecution, torture and war) or against one's diminished self (from passive aggression to self-destructive acts). Heinz Kohut has noted that the most intense experiences of shame and the most violent forms of narcissistic rage occur in those who necessarily need a sense of absolute control over an archaic environment. For them, the unconditional availability of an admiring and approvingly mirroring self-object, or the ever-present promise of a merger with an idealized self-object is indispensable for the maintenance of the self and the self-esteem.¹² Thus, shame, revenge and the need for glorification are deeply embedded in a matrix of archaic narcissism and Thanatos functions. What deMause has called "leaders-as-delegates"¹³ possess both protective and persecutory functions. By offering salvation fantasies, they protect people from re-living early traumas, and at the same time, they persecute them for any attempt at individual wanting, growing and changing. In Russia, there is a long and unbroken chain of leaders who have ruled as delegates in possession of those two functions.

If understood and approved in reciprocal relations, shame could develop into moderateness, deliberation and flexible social strategies and undermine primitive defenses. If not understood and approved, shame remains a prison, loaded with unconscious retributive emotions and fears:

"We encounter an intensive shame-problem in people [these analysts], who have been traumatized in their early childhood. They have remained prisoners of shame, as often happens to victims of maltreatment, concentration camp inmates, victims of bullying at school or battered spouses. They remain ashamed of

¹¹ Ikonen & Rechartd (1993), S. 107.

¹² Kohut (1972), S. 386.

¹³ deMause (1982), *passim*.

their inability of awakening acceptance and understanding in those they depend on. In their inner world, Thanatos has taken a cruel stance against libido."¹⁴

This encounter with shame problems, reported by Ikonen and Rechartd from their psychoanalytic practice, is often repeated in the human condition. It begins in early childhood, with shaming experiences of abandonment, and it goes on in the everyday life of the adult, who is afraid of and extremely vulnerable to all kinds of exclusions, rejections, and degradations. Thus, shame is not only the tragedy of the child but also the tragedy of the parents (actually of the parents-as-children) and of the whole society. Shaming ("shame on you!") is a destructive weapon in the hands of educators, leaders and political parties. Its power is too often mystified, hidden and isolated, becoming more and more dangerous.

Public shaming and humiliation were widespread in peasant Russia, and they had several ritualized forms that reinforced patriarchal values in the family and in the community at large. Such shaming practices¹⁵ were a means of regulating sexuality and morality according to double standards that ordered women to adopt conventional roles. Shaming practices are still much alive in current Russian institutions, starting from the family, kindergarten, and school, and extending to the army, church, governmental offices, workplaces, and political forums.

The pedagogical subordination and strict socialization, begun at school, is completed by the Russian army, where most of the young people obey orders absolutely and from which some of them try to escape (even through suicide). Russian men have got used to discuss the unpleasantness and brutality experienced by them in the army. On their part, Russian women, especially during the Soviet time, used to discuss the childbirth humiliations experienced by them in maternity hospitals, where medical personnel stressed the "proper behavior" of the deliverer, and the importance of strictly following every order of the unerring Soviet obstetrics in the "execution of childbirth."

In the Russian situation, the transition from a totalitarian regime via authoritarianism to liberal and democratic reforms is still under its way. Many traces of totalitarianism (public and private spheres not separated) and authoritarianism (public and private spheres separated) are resisting too "loose" freedom in a post-swaddled culture. The archipelagos and vicious circles of shame camps still engulf their victims.

¹⁴ Ikonen & Rechartd (1993), S. 119-120.

¹⁵ see Worobec (1991), S. 139-143.

Russian childrearing

Leon Trotsky mentioned in his speech, in 1925, that it is possible "to evaluate a human society through the behaviors toward the woman, toward mother, and toward child."¹⁶ This kind of evaluation is also crucial in psychohistorical research projects, especially in the psychohistory of childhood, motherhood, womanhood, and the family. However, when studying developmental paths, it is necessary to notice that there are several developmental outcomes derived from initial conditions of the same kind (early experiences, historical contexts), as the idea of multifinality states. On the other hand, different kinds of initial conditions can lead to relatively similar outcomes, as the idea of equifinality proposes. In the wake of the modernization process, and already during the Cold War Era and its aftermaths, there is no one childhood, no one family constellation, nor one emotionality that would be typically Russian, but there is an ongoing pluralization and individualization of life styles, environments, and relational contexts – and a complex mixture of emotionalities.¹⁷ In spite of that, certain psychohistorical undercurrents linked to the experiential, developmental and motivational aspects of childrearing, parenting and educational processes can be discerned.

The images of power are modeled in Russia through family experiences. Parental power-assertive disciplinary practices reinforced stern governmentality and forced "slavery." Many Russian proverbs reflect the beliefs about, and practices of, childrearing: "The father's curse dries one up; the mother's curse destroys"; "Love your child with your heart, but crush him with your hands"; "Parents' beatings make the children healthy"; "If God gives you sons, don't be lazy, teach them and beat them," and "If he did not obey his father, he will obey the whip."¹⁸ Such sayings attest to the parental "logic" that children had to be punished while they were young so that they would later comfort their old parents and would not treat them badly (which was labeled as a sin). The secure old age of the parents was thus to be guaranteed by disciplined children.

Not only sons but also daughters (and wives) were whipped. "Beat the child from infancy, beat the wife from the beginning." Male domination and the law of the husband saw corporal punishment as "sensible, painful, fear-inspiring and healthy."¹⁹ The unjustly disdainful attitude to girls has been imprinted on many Russian women for the rest of their lives. The childhood victims of parental physical and mental violence and primitive defenses (like denial, projections, projective identifications and devaluations) became shamed, confused and resentful

¹⁶ Trotzki (1925), S. 32.

¹⁷ cf. Liegle (1987), S. 155.

¹⁸ for the Russian proverbs, see Elnett (1926), S. 90-134.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, S. 35.

rebels and revolutionaries who murdered the Authority (e.g., the Tsar and his family). Early childhood humiliations, body image intrusions, traumas, retreats and shame may manifest themselves on the political scene as witch hunting, scapegoating, revengeful and destructive acts, and at the same time as psychological numbing (of "bad" memories) and as compensatory impulses to glory and utopia through savior-leaders or mystical merging. The primal scene experiences and sexual molestations must have been common in extended or communal peasant families and later in the crowded *kommunalkas* of the Soviet state. Families sleeping together gave a sexual imprint to a child's cognition of the mother's submission to the father, and gave impetus to the sadomasochistic infantile conceptions of parental sexuality.²⁰

In Russia, the pre-revolutionary peasant families formed the majority and had mainly two types of structure and psychology. The well-to-do peasant family had a strong patriarchal structure with the heavy subordination of both wives and children, especially sons, to the paternal despotism. This patriarchal peasant family resisted the revolutionary pressures the longest, even during the collectivization in 1929–1933. The other type of peasant family was the mother-centered land-poor peasant family whose father was forced to seek work elsewhere and to leave the wife and children in the village. Later these poor mother-centered distressed families became common also in the urban working-class areas.

Public childrearing, that is collective upbringing, was considered advantageous for the proper socialization of children. The first Five-Year Plan (1928–1932) and the recruitment of large numbers of women into industry introduced a rapid growth of preschool institutions in the Soviet Union. For example, between 1928 and 1932 the number of kindergartens and nursery-kindergartens rose from 2,537 to 19,611.²¹ The short-lived flirtation with psychoanalysis at the beginning of the Bolshevik regime was soon over and the psychoanalytic-pedagogical experiments were doomed to be individualist and bourgeois and replaced by official Marxist-Leninist, ideologically correct pedagogy.

Beginning in the 1930s, totalitarian control over individuals was launched, which meant administrative suppression, the negation of sexuality and elimination of anything that resembled a sexual culture. The group fantasies about glorious social and economic transformations were desexualized, filled with sacrifice, idealization and heightened sublimation. Under Stalinist (sexophobic) sexual policy, the "emancipation" of women (declared achieved) and the "socialist family" (newly labeled) only hardened the double (or triple) burden of women. The ideal called the "New Soviet person" promoted by the Party actually gave rights to men and the responsibilities to women. The ideal working woman was a

²⁰ Rancour-Laferriere (1995), S. 156.

²¹ Lapidus (1978), S. 128-135.

kind of androgyne, subordinated to male norms. Female idols were malelike. Gender differences were mostly eliminated in the official propaganda, and in school education until 1943 when coeducational instruction was changed into sex-segregated, which began to polarize sex-role stereotypes.²²

There was also a growing concern in the mid-1930s among the Party about declining birth rates, so that abortion was illegalized, and women were more and more prepared for motherhood. Consequently, homosexuality became a crime (until June 1993), and divorce more difficult to obtain. In July 1944, a new family law (The Family Edict) was accepted which included the nomination of the "heroic mother." Every family received an order to have at least six children. In the same year, 1944, a special law freed men from alimony payments for the support of illegitimate children. Women were deprived of the right to demand such alimony, but could obtain financial assistance from the state. Thus, also polygamous and polyandrous sexual relations were indirectly sponsored by the state.²³ The "great and mighty" Soviet Union desperately needed new builders of socialism, so the worship of motherhood (in fact, of the woman as a birth-giving machine) continued well into the 1960s. Khrushchev's Era (*Tauwetter*) in the 1950s and 1960s did not radically redefine male and female roles, Soviet policy stressing social assimilation rather than sex-role transgression. However, liberalization produced already in the 1960s a diversity of family life patterns in the USSR. White Russian children, however, were implied to be the best Soviet citizens.

One of the most concealed areas of Russian life is the abandonment, orphanhood, punishment, incest, rape, and sexual abuse of children. There are no reliable statistics on these matters, but the real practices are not revealed in officially reported public polls. A majority of Russian parents still use some forms of corporal punishment (mainly flogging) bringing up their children. Some children are reported having tried to commit suicide because of abuse in the family. Sexual violence has become a normative element in many youth sub-cultures.²⁴ In children's homes and boarding schools, beating has also long been the norm.

This "orphan" ("waif," "foundling," *besprizornik*) problem is not new in Russian history, for there were an estimated two million orphans even before the First World War, and by 1923 this number had reached 7–9 million.²⁵ Another large number of orphans in the Soviet Union resulted from the Second World War. The state-controlled care of children deteriorated, and the law did not give

²² Kon (1995), S. 148.

²³ Lapidus (1978), S. 116-117.

²⁴ Kon (1995), S. 215-216.

²⁵ Bosewitz (1988).

children any safety. Although their parents might treat them cruelly, it was very difficult to help them within the law, because the law protected the rights of the parents. Only recently, there has been a change in this regard, since Putin signed (June 2, 2012) the Executive Order approving the National Children's Strategy for the period 2012–2017 in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This strategy is aimed at shaping the state policy to improve the children's overall situation in the Russian Federation.²⁶

"Fools" and "Idiots"

In Russian psychohistory, "poisonous" childrearing techniques have been the guarantee for the ideologically uniformed and socialized personality structures of the Russians. Hard discipline with violent punishments has belonged to the social and psychic realities in Russia. There is abundant evidence for severe corporal punishment in the traditional Russia, peasant life having been full of flogging, beating, and the neglect of children.²⁷ Even today, the repercussions of "black pedagogy" are to be felt in Russia, in spite of current childrearing reforms. Beating has been interpreted as a vital contribution to the Russian educational experience: one is not educated, if one has not been beaten; in effect, one is a "fool."²⁸

The Russian "fool" is a folkloric representation of a character who is both "stupidly" irresponsible and at the same time deliberately provoking punishment. Actually, the situation of a fool is reminiscent of the early stages of a child's psychological development. A fool disturbs the boundaries between the self and the other. The sadistically beaten fool is not only the object who apparently enjoys being abused, but also the subject who mirrors the threatening quasi-differentiation of those who feel themselves on a threshold, just about to throw themselves to their infantile rage. The fool mirrors both the repressed sadistic urges and masochistic fantasies of the Russians. This figure is disturbingly close to the denied perception of oneself in fear of being a fool.²⁹ This Russian uncanny developmental "stage fright" feeds the unquestioning approval of the right of beating the fool and of the necessity of being beaten out of the foolish state.

The psychological molding of a child's personality into a selfless, modest and irresponsible Russian citizen begins in the family. Corporal punishment, "out of fear" obligations, the threats of deprivation of love, combined with "cold" emotional ties, psychic swaddling and uniform but unrealistic ideological, eco-

²⁶ Ihanus (2014), S. 122.

²⁷ see, for example, Ransel (1988).

²⁸ Rancour-Laferriere (1995), S. 122.

²⁹ *ibid.*, S. 122-125.

nomic and moral standards form the basis for a predetermined and submissive existence. A child internalizes his or her "conditions of worth"³⁰ very early on and keeps them strictly in his or her mind: if I do not behave well, I will not be loved.

Children develop, during their socialization, certain defenses and survival strategies. The absolute control of personal desires requires all kinds of frozenness and ossification. The family forms are often closed, the family atmospheres containing secrets, double binds, myths and hierarchies. In kindergarten and later at school, the hierarchy of the leaders and the servants becomes intensified. For example, "for a child in kindergarten a good teacher is a guarantee against all unpleasantness."³¹ A child has to love his or her "good" teacher (later in life leader, or boss) who is on the side of the immutably just world, and who is holding the keys of protection (if you love your teacher) or punishment (if you deceive him or her). The orders of "cruel justice" and the facades of power are learned and internalized very effectively: You must not betray your teacher nor your country. They need your love, but you may get love only if you are submissive (and even betray your friends, if the ideological system demands it).

Not long ago, at the end of the Soviet era, the pedagogical scene was crude, and not so much has changed in the Russian education establishment since then:

"In Soviet schools, many adults, from the janitor to the principal, yell and swear, causing fear in the younger pupils and in order to humiliate the older pupils. [...] 'Idiots! Criminals! Louts! Get lost! I will show you!' Very often one can see the teacher resorting also to bodily measures: banging, kicking, hitting with a pointer and a ruler. *Homo Sovieticus* learns already as a child what moral and corporal humiliation is [...].

In the same way, he or she learns careerism. From early on Soviet people are divided downright maniacally, artificially, and by force into subordinates and bosses, ordinary soldiers and officers, easily led and leaders, 'lower' and 'higher' ones."³²

Independent, free individuals were not allowed to emerge while *Homo Sovieticus* was conditioned to accept submission and subordination. The system has continued to persuade people to conform to ideological uniformity, to the conservative rule of the same leader, government, institution, norm, or code. Change has always meant the destruction of the wholly bad objects and the promotion, to

³⁰ Rogers (1959).

³¹ Gozman & Etkind (1992), S. 21.

³² Rogatshi (1991), S. 46.

utopian fullness, of the wholly good objects. No ambivalences, no combinations of good and bad exist in the uniform power system. After the "changes," the return of the legally instituted same kind of people has secured the cult of (and love for) absolute power and servile modesty.

By continual suggestions, the glorified, mystified and concealed power system gives impetus to the aggressive search for imaginary internal or external enemies. The affect flows are channeled to infantile dependencies on mighty and all-powerful figures that promise reassuring and regressive merging with those who give (nothing) and take (all). In a state of trance-like learned helplessness, all responsibility has been given to those above, and ideas, feelings and actions have been transformed into anonymous sacrifices for the harmonious "justice." People have learned to feel themselves most lively and omnipotent while being ordered to right the injustices. Democratic reforms have been seen to imply "bad" alien intrusion.

The infantile belief in a just and miraculously immutable world reinforced itself through and through. The corruptive and exploitative maneuvers belong to those cast outside the protective zone. "We" can safely be aggressive and punitive against the strangers and aliens who are indifferent to us, or whom we have devalued. "They" are guilty for wanting illegal changes; "they" deserve punishing. "We" are no longer punished if "we" punish "them." "We" will fight for "our" peace.

Family Rules and the "Schooling" of Stalin

The Bolshevik rule had from its beginnings a family-like organization that was rigid and hierarchical. Lenin combined in his leadership exploitative, punitive and rage-prone behaviors, fearing defeat and monitoring real, alleged and would-be enemies as the objects of his intense hatred. Anna Geifman has mentioned all-consuming narcissism, the lack or absence of empathy and incapability to recognize the feelings and needs of others as "a key characteristic of Lenin's personality."³³ Philip Pomper has researched Lenin's early family experiences that were saturated by strict and demanding parenting.³⁴ Children could not express their independence or their spontaneous emotions. The adherence to the parents' belief system and the renunciation and sacrifice of one's own wishes was the only way of getting parental approval. However, such "de-emotionalization"³⁵ does not necessarily lead to the rational regulation and repression of the drive derivatives

³³ Geifman (2004), S. 36.

³⁴ Pomper (1990), S. 6-7.

³⁵ Barbu (1960), S. 202-203.

that may reroute elsewhere as rage and hatred, externalized onto enemies. Rather, it is connected to narcissistic object regulation.

Although Lenin was also suspicious of Stalin and warned his comrades about him, there is a continuation between the two leaders, in their succumbing to the hatred of independence, and the enforcement of punitive ostracism or expulsion. "Conspiratorial thinking"³⁶ united Lenin and Stalin in their pursuit for absolute power. "Illusions of invulnerability," which we all possess to some extent, collapsed in Stalin's childhood by violent beating, bodily injuries, and restrictions at school and at the seminary. As a small child, he was subject to various forms of punishment, which he detested and tried to overcome by using his willpower. Thus, he developed his grandiose self. One who wishes to become definitively "great" cannot actually grow as a human any more. Later, the little man-child, the possessor of great power, did not get the chance to remember the anxieties of helplessness and separation (or the thirst for a nurturing mother). Instead, the images of omnipotence and the facades of absolute omniscience were erected to eliminate every trace of early narcissistic injury and threat of annihilation.

For example, the adult Stalin had to repress large areas of his personal experience in order to be able to proceed with the impersonal persecution and extermination of the "masked enemies" that were good targets for all kinds of projections of the hideous, the bad, and the parasitic parts of the self. He had trouble taking any kind of joke, or any belittling comments directed at him. As a pupil and a student, he had had to endure serious confrontations with and punishments by religious instructors. His thirst for knowledge and forbidden books led to censorship, confiscation and even imprisonment (1896-1897) in the isolation cell of the Tiflis Theological Seminary (from which he was expelled in May 1899).

This was undoubtedly crucial in "schooling" him into a cynical, nihilistic, and programmatically atheistic view of wolf-like humankind. According to Iremashvili, the student Soso saw "everywhere and in everything only the negative, the bad side, and had no faith at all in the idealistic motives or attributes of mankind."³⁷ Stalin's persecutory ideas were the cement in his bunker of power. He needed the crowds of enemies; he collected the forced (and forged) confessions of his enemies, proof of their guilt, in order to purge and appease his own infantile shame and guilt, to maintain his idealized self-image, rather than to come to terms with his bad, humiliated self. Nevermore he would be beaten. Neither would Mother Russia be defeated by her enemies, by foreigners. While legitimizing the dizzy tempo of "dekulakization" and the industrialization of the Soviet Union, he spoke to Soviet managers in 1931 of Russia (Mother Rus') as if

³⁶ on conspiratorial individual and group thinking, see Keen (1988).

³⁷ Iremaschwili (1932), S. 21ff.

she were a child or a woman being beaten by various aliens, exploiters, and capitalist wolves: "But we don't want to be beaten. No, we don't want that! The history of old Russia consisted, among other things, in continual beatings for her backwardness."³⁸

There is no doubt that Stalin was the victim of despotic upbringing – or rather, "flattening" – of child and wife beating. His mother kept him "clean" and "neat," but the overall practice of childrearing in Russia (and in Georgia) was dominated by fear and corporal punishment. Michael Lewis, in his work on child research, has spoken of the "spiraling effect of shame/rage/shame" in childrearing situations. His scenario gives the following sequence of events. A baby is distressed and does not quieten down despite the caregiver's attempts to handle the situation. After a while, the caregiver feels shame because of his or her failure to soothe the baby. Shame turns to rage and the caregiver smacks the child. The child does not calm down, and the abusive act increases the shame and rage of the caregiver. Finally, the spiral leads to child abuse. Abusive parents' "shame-rage spiral" is out of control, and they have trouble stopping the abuse. The scenario may be repeated, resulting in serious injuries or even death to the child.³⁹

When this happens, the child as an adult has an unconscious compulsion to re-live these situations; only then he or she strives to externalize self-blame, becomes angry with someone else (scapegoat), and storms through the actions of revenge toward others. Anger and rage are possibly more comfortable than shame. However, the regular secretive practices of Russian (and Georgian) families produced the archaic matrix for the vicious circle of shame, anger and rage. People close to Stalin have attested to his "slow-burning anger"⁴⁰ toward those who, however vaguely, did not quite approve of the ideal Stalin. Whenever he had picked on an enemy (to carry, vicariously, the burden of his self-hatred and shame), his mind was made up, and he became frenzied, so that anger gave way to full-blown exterminatory rage.

As an extension (an appendix, a supplement) of his self (as a "self-object"), the Party of the working class ("that bore me and reared me in its own image and likeness,"⁴¹ like his mother) was more a fortress, an army locked in combat, than a "hospitable family ready to take in all who sympathize."⁴² Of course, Stalin could not even trust the members of the Party, the "order of sword-bearers"; it was a deceitful family, like his own had been. The Great Warrior was a more

³⁸ quoted by Tucker (1990), S. 9.

³⁹ Lewis (1992), S. 154-155.

⁴⁰ Tucker (1990), S. 163.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, S. 128-129.

⁴² Lapidus (1978), S. 77.

suitable image for Stalin. The Man of Steel had a hard core, not a relational self. The Party, Russia and the whole world were his deceitful erotic (part) objects.

The Stalinist view of the world was singularly meant to be an insurance against the terror of both life and death. Mortality belonged to the despised traitors. Stalinist culture was eager to make use of human engineering through conditioning, proposed in Pavlov's theory of conditioned reflexes (or, to some extent, in Bekhterev's theory of collective reflexes). Consciousness should be automatized and shaped through the control of its environment, its base, and even its unconscious. The targets of conditioning were not supposed to know its mechanisms. They should adopt their controlled roles, and play them, like Stanislavskii's actors, so completely as to lose their own identities⁴³: Stalin is speaking, ergo the masses are applauding.

Lenin had already initially modeled the "new man" and stressed in his famous slogan that "it is necessary to dream." Hitler and Stalin may have both been "good" hallucinating dreamers. Nevertheless, the nightmarish stage of their dreams became the reality that tricked millions of actors into conditioned applauding and killing reflexes. They did enter the dreams of their Masters. Their roles as "new men" sucked out their identities and they were directed by "invisible" engineering powers like puppets who could be eliminated at their Master's will. No wishes, no emotions, no motivations were asked of manipulable objects.

Postemotional Politics in Putin's Era

Putin's (b. 1952 in Leningrad) career had started quite humbly. His grandfather was a cook, but, rarely enough, he had worked as a cook for the Lenin family and for Stalin. The grandfather did not become a victim of the Stalinist repressions. Putin's father was wounded while defending Leningrad during WWII, and limped thereafter for the rest of his life. He worked later in a train car factory. Vladimir's two elder brothers died of hunger during the siege of Leningrad. He was born to a mother who was already 41 years old, a deeply religious woman who had her son secretly baptized in the Russian Orthodox faith. The family lived in a horrid communal apartment without hot water and without a bathtub. Overall, Putin's parents did not use to tell him anything about themselves and their background.⁴⁴

Vladimir Putin went through the Soviet educational system, from school (where he was bullied) and party pioneers to university studies (in the Faculty of Law), obtaining a degree in economics. After finishing his studies in 1975, he was recruited to the State Security Committee (KGB), and in 1984, he was sent to the KGB Red Banner Academy and Foreign Intelligence School. He learned to

⁴³ Groys (1992), S. 43-44.

⁴⁴ Putin (2000), S. 3-12. See also Ihanus (2014).

obtain and analyze information about foreign political parties and their leaders. Under the KGB, he worked abroad in the German Democratic Republic from 1985 until 1990, when he began working in Leningrad. In August 1991, he resigned from the KGB and was transferred to the reserve. Putin had posts in Anatoly Sobchak's (Mayor of St. Petersburg) Office, heading foreign relations and commercial cooperation. His Moscow career began in 1995 when he was appointed the Deputy Head of the Presidential Property Fund under Pavel Borodin. Putin turned out to be a "stern enforcer" in the implementation of presidential decrees. He made his way up the Kremlin hierarchy; he was appointed Director of the Federal Security Service (earlier the KGB) by Yeltsin in July 1998 and Secretary of the State Security Council in March 1999.

As a political leader, Putin achieved fame miraculously as if from nowhere. This "from-nowhere man" was given a tough, but also smiling and attractive image. He was commissioned to lead Russia into the next century and millennium. His "heroic" path to the presidency has been described in a children's book published in 2000 in a style reminiscent of the hagiographies of Lenin and Stalin. When asked who the greatest Russian of the 20th century was, Russians placed Lenin first, and Stalin next to him. Peter the Great is still considered the most esteemed Russian leader of all time. It is noteworthy that the image of Stalin as a ruthless terrorizer-persecutor has to some extent been replaced (and displaced) by the image of Stalin as the patriotic defender of law and order and the fatherly savior of Russia.

Putin's image and commission refer to lawful surgical-hygienic operations: the womb of Mother Russia should be cleansed of whatever poisonous placenta (Chechen criminals, rat-like officials, international terrorists) that are sucking out its vitality. Putin has openly spoken of the necessity for a "dictatorship of law" as the sole rational basis on which to govern Russia. Thus, law and government are not clearly differentiated from presidential authority.

Ambiguous nationality is experienced by the individual in and through identification with the charismatic leader who dissolves the distinction between subjectivity and objectivity in political relations. The leader also has maternal capacities for containment (of different delegations), transformation (as the bringer of new innovations and laws) and deliverance (from daily miseries).⁴⁵ As Norton states, the transformative process through, in and with the charismatic leader "takes place within that of containment and comprehension, as the fetus develops in gestation."⁴⁶ The charismatic leader is figured ambivalently: "at once servant and dictator, the affirmation of subjectivity and an objective representation

⁴⁵ Norton (1988).

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, S. 121.

of the people, structure and antistructure, the sign of their distress and the agent of their deliverance."⁴⁷

Under Putin's reign, the nationalist-pedagogical Russia is still far away from the "performative" idea of a nation, as Homi Bhabha would call it.⁴⁸ This would entail being conscious of multiplicity of coexisting different histories within the national ("interstitial") space, which would be open to all kinds of "in-between," "hybrid" interactions, interferences, negotiations and transformations. Putin is clearly no "freestyler": his "performances" cling openly to national relics, political dogmas and officially accepted beliefs and religions. Small religious groups are not endorsed officially, and only the Russian Orthodox Church, some other traditional Christian churches, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism are acceptable.

I have used the term "postemotional politics" in connection with the Russian political scene. This concept is derived from Stjepan G. Mestrovic's "postemotional society" and the "postemotional self."⁴⁹ Russian-style consumer society has become more and more saturated with emotionally-laden media and entertainment fantasies. Russian "malestream" politicians have also had to adopt the features of the "postemotional self," which involves being "nice," smiling and politically correct. Public relations, opinion polls and marketing and legitimizing strategies have to be taken into account in campaign technology if the postemotional self is to survive in politics.

Yeltsin could still publicly exhibit emotional upheaval (anger, hostility, sentimentality, depression), but Putin already has to keep his emotional outbursts in check, to fake or simulate various sentiments in order to succeed in post-emotional manipulation and media empowerment. His charisma (the pose of power) is "cool" and in line (or on-line) with media programs and he certainly has to learn to smile somewhat more. As Mestrovic suggested, "TV commentators, professors, politicians, ministers, doctors, and almost everyone in postemotional society must present the most emotional messages (death, catastrophe, joy, indignation) in the blandest terms possible."⁵⁰

In order to meet the demands of media publicity and marketing, those in the limelight have to verbalize their "emotions" (rapidly-changing reactive comments) so that they can be monitored and channeled, their "authenticity" being irrelevant. The relational self survives through manipulable and anonymous net contacts and fake communities and identities.

In his first formal news conference (July 18, 2001) open to all journalists Putin stayed cool and controlled but he lost temper and raised his voice when

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, S. 121.

⁴⁸ Bhabha (1994).

⁴⁹ Mestrovic (1997).

⁵⁰ Mestrovic (1999), S. 62.

asked about allegations of abuses by Russian troops in Chechnya. Even this kind of public expression of hostility may still be part of the Kremlin media tactics connected with well-prepared and rehearsed media spectacles and doses of secrecy. Putin himself is willing to let the media people attach their own characterizations and labels to him. In March 2015, when he suddenly disappeared from publicity for 10 days, different kinds of rumors and conspiracy theories flourished. Appearing again in public after an unusually long absence, Putin laughed off speculations by saying, "It would be boring without gossip." The return to the limelight after sudden disappearance was a method used by Stalin to reveal the enemies and their plans.

Postemotional politics also involves managing terror, nightmarish disaster and threats of annihilation. Emotionally withered selves crave for the spectacular images of self-management and downloadable pleasures. Putin's passionless image, a leader icon with a sober mind and a healthy body, with a touch of retro sexuality, has been deliberately designed and circulated throughout the media. People in the information society are both isolated from each other and connected to "interactive" situations. The interplay between highly individual looseness and merging into charismatic groups is indicative of a survival mentality. A narcissistic fear of loneliness, emptiness and chronic depression are cured by the "surface-elegant" technologies of self-management rather than by the "deep dynamic" insights. Different forms of extremism, manifested as the thrills of "unlived lives," seem necessary when people are robbed of a secure identity.

Russian politics have also become eroticized, regardless of Putin's passionless media image. Putin has even been called the "sexiest man in Russia." He appeals to both women ("handsome" and "sexy") and men ("tough" and "stern"). During Putin's first presidential campaign, the Russian research institute Romin collected voters' views of Putin. It was found out that 25.4% saw him as a "wrestler," 16.3% as a "boss," 12.9% as a "patriot," 11.2% as a "member of the intelligentsia," 10.0% as a "reformer," 6.5% as a "dictator" and 4.3% as a "puppet"; only 0.7% saw him as a "bureaucrat," and 0.3% as a "loser." In Russia, he is also called a "grey cardinal," a "real man" and a "rational terminator." Quite recently, Putin has admitted being "in love," after divorce. Perhaps this was supposed to give softer tunes to his public image. Whether this promises more positive international relations, remains to be seen.

Putin's face has become a virtual "interface" with which people are "intimately" involved. The sexual attributions to this leader image represent disillusionment and helplessness among the Russian people. We should bear in mind that opinion research in Russia fluctuates very much, and the results may change all of a sudden when questions are reformulated to ensure that the responses needed for political purposes are given. Thus, there are almost simultaneous results "showing" that 75% of Russians are in favor of censorship, while 65% of Russians support

the free media. Putin's popularity in Russia soared high after the annexation of the Crimean peninsula but economic setbacks may turn this trend in an opposite direction.

Fantasy and Mother Russia

Group-fantasies may act like guardian angels in Russia. The fantasies about an international conspiracy against the boundaries of the Holy Body of Mother Russia abound in nationalist-religious thinking. These kinds of fantasies give support to omnipotent isolation and give shelter from too painful inner and outer realities and from other fantasies (fantasies of the "other"). The utopian dreams tend to reanimate the symbiotic "glorious" state with no disasters and no alien intrusions, with no humiliations and no curses. Russians should be once more "sure of Russia's golden age, of her blessed utopian 'home,' which was destroyed by certain alien and foreign elements, but to which Russia may return if she casts off the foreign yoke."⁵¹ The Russian national psyche, the truth and the pure faith should remain in "original" wholeness. On the other hand, Mother Russia is also Mother Moist Earth (*mat' syra zemlya*)⁵², taking the dead to her symbiotic embrace and leading them back home, to the underworld habitat, the maternal womb of the earth, ready to give birth again.

The quest for "origins," for the absolute beginning and the utopian "home" reflects the desire for the "blank page," or for the primordial wide-open space, i.e. for uncontaminated purity where nothing has been spoiled yet. Utopian societies (and utopian texts), as Eric Naiman notes, "seek to seal themselves off from the rest of the world," protecting their ideal states "with many rings of walls or with framing devices that serve as the narratological equivalent of a moat."⁵³ The self-protective operations used by utopian societies and texts are directed against such categories of human interaction (e.g., language, history, disease, sexuality, and crime) that would connect to reality, and would "thwart an individual's (or society's) attempts at isolation from temporal, spatial, or bodily contamination."⁵⁴

The "contaminants" of Russia are accused of being the parasites of the Holy Body, ungratefully demanding independence after having sucked and exploited the best parts of the Body. In Kleinian terms, the "good" parts are threateningly flowing out, and the persecutory objects are about to invade the whole body.⁵⁵ At the same time, the unity of the national (maternal) body is falling into pieces re-

⁵¹ Yanov (1987), S. 85.

⁵² Hubbs (1988), S. 59-60.

⁵³ Naiman (1991), S. 512.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, S. 512.

⁵⁵ Klein (1946), S. 99-110.

sulting in the severe anxieties of persecution, of being trapped and atomized into merciless chaos. The split into ideal objects ("we," the righteous believers and patriots) and persecutory objects ("them," the conspiring aliens, Jews, Freemasons, Muslims, all kinds of "terrorists," etc.) arouses intensive envy so that experiencing the ideal object and the persecutory object is equally painful. To defend against this psychic pain by trying to get rid of the perception of reality leads only to the proliferation of painful perceptions and to the multiplication of the split-off parts, of those persecutory reminders of the basically irrational split. The fragmentation of the national body image has given birth to deadly "bizarre objects," the mutants of the human mind.

The atmosphere of revenge is hovering over the shamelessly humiliated maternal Russian body. Under the totalitarian regimes, the cohesion of the society demanded the establishment of uniform personality structures and the elimination of the manifestations of individual private life. In the Soviet education for "monophilia"⁵⁶ (the love of uniformity), there was no room for "philoxenia" (the love of the alien). Nowadays, the ritualistic and symbolic integration of the three "great" Soviet traditions – revolutionary, labor, and patriotic – has become ever more difficult. An attempt has been made to sacralize and mix these traditions with religious rituals and symbols, but this kind of political religion with its War and Victory emblems and all-or-nothing allegiance to ordered norms and values is losing its mobilizing power among the younger generation. Summarizing "key symbols" (like the Eternal Flame or the Victory Day) "represent for the participants in an emotionally powerful and relatively undifferentiated way what the system means to them."⁵⁷ These symbols cannot totally be "lived into" any longer.

The revenge for the loss, however, is still prioritized over the acceptance of pluralistic, multi-vocal existence of different nationalities in Russia. In the face of the threatening deconstruction of edifying symbols, and of looming ambivalences, crime is interpreted as signifying "the vulnerability and penetration of the composite social body."⁵⁸ In Russia, criminals are not only those who rob and steal, but also those "suckers" and "parasites" who have deprived the maternal body and now want to separate from it. No separatism is allowed for those criminals and mafiosos (e.g., Chechens) who are fighting for independence. The striving for autonomy has always carried with it the seeds of impossibility and shamefulness. The punishment of crime has in Russia indeed become even "a metaphysical pre-occupation for utopian mentalities."⁵⁹ Criminals and their punishment is needed in order to efface the unpleasant memories of childhood punishment and to sooth

⁵⁶ Gozman & Etkind (1992), S. 40-46.

⁵⁷ Ortner (1973), S. 1339.

⁵⁸ Naiman (1991), S. 512-513.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, S. 512-513.

the pain of ambivalence in the experience of the truth, the holy, and of intimacy. The ambivalence, if accepted, would at the same time bind together and separate opposites like blessed and accused, sacred and disgusting.

Political Apathy

All kinds of extremisms, as the shocking "solutions" of problems, are springing forth in Russia. An extremism most often includes the hollow phraseology and the ready-made worldview with highly polarized black–white distinctions that promise to make the world more controllable and predictable. The protection from the legacy of terror and absurd power politics has resulted in political apathy, and alienation from "eternal" economic "reforms." In several surveys on Russian political attitudes, it has turned out that over half of the Russian population does not support any political party or cannot give any answer as to a political attitude. About half of the population adapts itself passively to economic "reforms" without bothering about politics and over 40 percent prefer escaping into privativeness.

Russian political and economic attitudes are evidently based on psychological foundations and consequences drawn from a long chain of childhood traumatization and learned helplessness, and from the history of ideological addiction, anesthetics and psychic swaddling. Commentators on Russian issues have remarked that the "Sixties generation" introduced the moral themes of guilt and responsibility to the Russian political scene, thus paving the way for the more liberal climate of perestroika.⁶⁰ At the same time, commentators noticed the "curious" and "paradoxical" fact of political depression and passivity among the young. These youngsters never lived through the system of totalitarian terror:

"They never believed the official slogans, never trusted those in power, never thought they lived in the happiest country in the world. They cannot be considered healthy either, though. The children of sick parents, they saw the inadequacy of the belief, hope and love of the older generation and clearly understood that state, politics and everything connected with them were not worth any feelings."⁶¹

Old disciplinary and educational practices do not lose their grip all at once. Psychohistorically, this political depression and killing of affect is not "curious" or "paradoxical." "Denial" of the affect or de-emotionalization can be seen as a

⁶⁰ Gozman & Etkind (1992), S. 70.

⁶¹ *ibid.*, S. 73.

part of a many-layered developmental process, of a kind of protective zone, which may open up in a therapy situation (or in a societal crisis) into certain sequences, for example, early humiliation, retreat, shame, rage, and disgust, which will follow one another abruptly.

"Black" pedagogy with its post-traumatic stress manifestations, privative-ness, "interest clubs," and closed families with the "telescoping of generations"⁶² are accompanied in Russia by other means of retreat from shame, such as political apathy, mass alienation, conservative national patriotism and military mentality backed by rigid institutions (e.g., army, party organizations, criminal economic power bunkers, a dogmatic Church).

New Saviors

Recently, even the "new age" has reached Russia with the different sects, mental healers, pedagogues, life coaches, prophets and mystics of salvation (and destruction), appealing to "mosaic" personalities and promising to restore the power and the glory of those once humiliated. Are these new more colorful and charismatic leaders only constructing new kinds of prisons of shame, based on the earlier denied humiliations, collapses and injuries of the hurt and abused child? Are they actually enforcing new kind of thanatology and repeating the history of leading the supporters to become megavictims?

The positive developmental trajectories could lead to enriching mutual relations instead of mutually aided total destruction. The shame-imprinted trajectory, however, is more likely to produce another outcome: "We" will fight for "our" peace as willing megavictims until the end of the world. The unconscious fantasy of the war-as-rebirth will be exploited by the savior-leaders. "We"/the "righteous" try to evade the feelings of deprivation and humiliation, the fears of becoming maltreated and excluded, and the haunting anticipations of the repetition of early shame and traumatic re-living as almost dead.

The process of structuring evil, as outlined by Bollas⁶³, seems to be part of the unconscious experience both in Russia and in Western countries. The "blocks" reappear and inflict the malicious and paranoid enemy chase. The process involves the following steps. The evil one presents himself/herself to the victim as good, offering actively good love, politics, religion, etc. The recipient perceives this as corresponding with a desired or needed state (transformation, progress, prosperity, hope, trust, love). Thus, "a false potential space" has been created. The victim becomes "malignantly dependent" on the evil one (the only source of "goodness") who suddenly changes the presentation from good to threateningly

⁶² Faimberg (2005).

⁶³ Bollas (1995), S. 210-212.

malevolent (you will lose everything unless you obey my every order). The victim is "radically infantilized," totally helpless and ready to be abused in every possible way. The last collapse state of the victim is the "murder of being," "psychic death" (you have no self, no will, no desires; you are emptied, already dead).

The pervasively malevolent and sadistic acts are repetitions of the victimized childhood self of the perpetrator. This dissociative state of mind could be called "satanic," since, as Ross has concluded, "almost every Satan or major internal monster I have worked with [in therapy with satanic ritual abuse survivors] has turned out to be a child in disguise."⁶⁴ The "satanic" state of mind is characterized by Mollon as including "extreme destructiveness, the pursuit of power, an envious hatred of life and love, a gross narcissism that opposes concern for others, a hatred of vulnerability and weakness, extreme pride and arrogance, and above all a devotion to lies and confusion as opposed to truth."⁶⁵ No wonder Putin fears Russia becoming bullied, encircled and strangled. Mother Russia's pride has to be saved by ritualized male mastery, resisting weakness, "rainbow pride," too much emotionality, and indecision. Terminator therapy may use rough aversive methods to reach the ideal.

The pre- and perinatal uteral basis of the death anxiety, the sense of being a victim is imprinted in the mind-brain-body of an infant already at the beginning. The perilous menacing face of the mother that was to protect her baby is for the child the utmost signal of the threat of destruction, of the deletion of the not-yet-psychically-even-born self. Infantile memories of birth as suddenly implying dying are shared to some degree by all human beings, but they cannot later be consciously grasped. Mentally, a child is merged with fussy images of blood, blood sucking, devouring and becoming buried alive. In order to reach some soothing outlets an infant is forced to build primary fantasies of becoming saved by the almighty maternal powers and webs of bliss.

These psychic powers will also later have a suggestive and seducing impact on maltreated children when they have become adolescents and adults who are experiencing their life situation as an impasse, a disaster in both socio-emotional and socio-economic relations. The powers that are clung to vary in their outlook (be they political, religious, military, ethnic, economic) and intensity (from moderate to fanatic), but their promise of reward (a release from anxieties and pains) through finding a real enemy is irresistible to those who feel like being victims. One's anxiety is projected onto the unknown face of the other, which has to be attacked.

Such is the individual-psychological psychodynamic-style explanation, with slight social-psychological additions, of the readiness to wage war. Still, the

⁶⁴ Ross (1995), S. 153.

⁶⁵ Mollon (1996), S. 178.

mass-scale commitment to war cannot be understood without trying to reach an early emotional memory-trace basis for such suggestibility. How can even virtual Facebook-like "interactive" messages serve as triggers and contribute to some peoples' desire to destroy and kill (as in the cases of some school shooters)? These complex phenomena need a lot of attention in future research on the roots of violence, not just in Russia but globally.

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