

# Summary

## Anthropology of (Non)violence in Russian Cultural History

This special issue is dedicated to problematizing the concept and practice of (non)violence. We set several goals for this issue: to present the field of current critical debate, the ways in which modern theorists of nonviolence raise the question of its meaning, forms and contextual tasks; to problematize the very criteria for dividing violence and nonviolence, to show the nuances of

distinguishing (non-)violence depending on the research optics; to reconstruct the history of nonviolence in Russian culture at the level of ideas, concepts and practices. Introductory article “Non-violence as a Theory and Practice” by **Arseniy Kumankov** presents a comparative review of various approaches to the conceptual description of the notion of nonviolence.

### Theory of Nonviolence: Modern Reflection

Translation of the chapter “What is Nonviolence?” of **Todd May**’s book *Nonviolent Resistance. A Philosophical Introduction* opens the theoretical section of this issue. The author develops a working characterization of nonviolence that allows to frame current discussions of the topic with some precision and clarity. Nonviolence is often interpreted as a social and political practice that is not associated with direct physical pressure and aggression or their threat, that is nonviolent resistance or civil disobedience, activism and social movements. If violence is understood not only as physical coercion, but also as structural violence, then by what means should it be resisted if such a formulation of the question is, in principle, significant?

In the article “On the Limits of Violence” **Giorgio Agamben**’s critique diverges from Walter Benjamin’s exposition of violence’s relation to law and justice,

seeking instead to determine its relation to politics, and in so doing, to uncover the question of violence in and for itself. In other words, the author aims to determine the limits that separate violence from the sphere of human culture in its broadest sense. These limits allow to address the question of the only violence that might still exist on a human scale: revolutionary violence.

“The Claim of Non-Violence” is the final chapter from **Judith Butler**’s book *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?*. Butler examines the philosophical specificity of the situations in which there is a demand for non-violence or when non-violence makes its demands on us. Nonviolence as an ethical “call” cannot truly be understood without the violence involved in the formation of the subject. Butler suggests that the point is not to eradicate this influence, but to take responsibility for a life that challenges the determining power of this formation.

Butler also elaborates on the issue of power violence and suggests that the call to nonviolence must be combined with a critical intervention in the realm of norms that distinguish between lives deemed worth living and regretting and lives that are not.

The article “Judith Butler and the Belligerent Subject” by **Adriana Cavarero** analyzes Judith Butler’s approach to the problem of violence and non-violence, as well as the vulnerability issues related to these topics. The author notes that Butler emphasizes vulnerability as the most important human characteristic.

In addition, the reconstruction of Butler’s thought draws attention to her interpretation of the doctrine of the face of Levinas and the Jewish intellectual tradition behind it. The author discusses Butler’s criticism of the formal definition of human nature, which does not take into account the influence of discursive regimes on the formation of human identity. Butler analyzes the relationship between violence and vulnerability, emphasizing that the recognition of vulnerable lives is structurally dependent on the cultural and epistemological parameters that determine this recognition.

## Questionnaire

### Three Questions on Nonviolence

What theoretical tasks are associated with the concept of “nonviolence”? In this questionnaire **Martha Nussbaum**,

**Artemy Magun**, and **Ruben Апресян** present their views on the topic.

## Philosophies of (Non)Violence

**Oleg Aronson**’s essay “Nonviolence and Powerlessness (Formalizing the Feeling of Evil)” examines nonviolence as a historical phenomenon that has lost its relevance in the form of political action. The author argues that the tool of political power that nonviolent protest cannot cope with is torture. The *de facto* legalization of torture has as its goal not the declared struggle for the security of the state, but the creation of a regime of isolation and fear that prevents the solidarity necessary for nonviolent protest. It is possible to overcome this situation by reconsidering the foundations of nonviolent resistance, recognizing that it is part of the political struggle for rights and therefore part of the world of political violence. Meanwhile, the situa-

tion of crisis reveals a different source of nonviolence: freedom, understood not in the abstract but as an impulse of revolutionary solidarity. Such freedom is what becomes the primary threat to normalizing power and the main target of torture, thus indicating the place of evil in a world that has lost its religious understanding of the term.

The essay “Guilty but Free: The Experience of Guilt and the Problem of (Non) violence” by **Irina Kasje** is devoted to the ethics of experiencing guilt in those moral situations where the question of opposition to mass violence is inseparable from the question of involvement in it. By conceptualizing the notion of experience and examining it from

a historical point of view, the author identifies various cultural patterns and models that regulate the experience of guilt and are relevant today. Tracing the Christian etymology of the feeling of guilt and the close connection of the idea of repentance with the idea of Divine forgiveness as a gift of grace, the author of the essay raises questions about the extent to which secular practices of repentance are possible; the extent to which attempts to instrumentalize the concepts of guilt and responsibility undertaken within the humanist tradition after the Second World War remain workable today; ultimately, how the problematic of guilt and the problematic of (non)violence are related.

In the essay “Violence as Generalization and Nonviolence as Individuation”, **Diana Gasparyan** is trying to trace one of the aspects that allows us to shed light on the essence of violence. Does violence begin at the moment of destruction or distortion of form, aggression in action, direct physical or psychological attack? Of course, violence clearly continues in all these states, but in the search for the essential, it may begin long before them. It can be shown that violence is realized as an act of generalization applied to a fundamentally particular, namely, the individuality of human existence. This is most clearly evident in the interpretation of the ethical nature of the individual, which essentially assumes the non-reducibility of active choices and actions into the passive.

## **War and Peace: (Non)Violence in the Era of Social Cataclysms**

**Petar Bojanić**’s article “What Is ‘Victory’ in the Ethics of War of Orthodox Christianity?” studies the concept of “victory” in war and reconstructs various aspects that determine the conditions of this victory. The main emphasis is on the fact that victory in Orthodox Christian ethics of war can be interpreted not only as military advantage, but also as the end of war and the advent of peace. It is not a moment to celebrate the victor over the vanquished, but the coming of a new peaceful order that replaces war. In analyzing theological literature and folklore, the author detects in them an interpretation of victory that is not connected with the glorification of the victor. Rather, what is discussed is regret about victory in connection with the necessity of using violence to achieve it and the denial of one’s role in it, as it would be impossible without divine intervention. Victory thus becomes a spiritual manifestation of humility and adherence

to nonviolent commandments. Such an approach is normatively remarkable, as it requires mercy from the winner and helps mitigate the consequences of the conflict.

The article “Mercy in Russian Freemasonry: Periods of Peace and War” by **Andrey Serkov** examines the transformation of the idea of mercy in Russian Freemasonry of the 18<sup>th</sup>—20<sup>th</sup> centuries, attempts to put these ideas into practice, and speeches against the atrocities of war. Preserving the ideas of humanism, mercy, and peace even in difficult times was one of the main tasks of Freemasonry.

In her article “Non-Resistance to Evil in the Age of Military Alliances (The Franco-Russian Celebrations of 1893 in the Assessment of Leo Tolstoy and His Supporters)” **Yulia Krasnoselskaya** examines the reaction of the Russian press to the

reception of the Russian squadron in France in 1893 and to Russian-German trade agreement negotiations. The focus is on the question of whether these events were signs of “détente,” minimizing the risk of military conflicts, or evidence of rising international tension. Leo Tolstoy’s response to the events (“Christianity and Patriotism”), as well as Nikolai Leskov (“The Corral”) and Mikhail Menshikov (“The Wall of China”), who also shared his views at the time. Although these writers were united by doubts about Russia’s peacefulness, in regards to the question of the means to counter militarism and isolationism, they had differing views.

**Olga Okhotnikova** and **Alexander Khryakov**’s article “The Atrocities of the Enemy and Our Own Mercy: Russian and German Postcards of the World War I Construct a Nation” examines Russian and German postcards from the World War I era. Postcards were the most popular and democratic means of communication. The patriotic mobilization of World War I forced those at war to consider internal cohesion, which contributed to the formation of shared national identities. The article shows how the communicative characteristics of the postcard turned it into a means of national imagination, allowing for the representation of images of the self

and images of the Other in an accessible form. The commonality of themes and subjects in Russian and German postcards did not, however, cancel out the particularities in the representation of each other.

**Vladislav Aksenov** in his article “From Shame to Internal Emigration: The Emotional Reactions of Russian Society to State Violence in the Years of Wars and Revolutions (19<sup>th</sup>—20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)” uses the methodology of the history of emotions, trauma studies, and the psychology of emotions, and notes, on the one hand, the typicality of public reactions to violence on a psychological level, and on the other, the evolution of rationale that justified violence. Nevertheless, in the majority of cases, we can say that in the conditions of war and revolution, the political metamorphoses of contemporaries could not be explained by the natural evolution of ideas, but rather the resulting psychological trauma. The author concludes that the studied societal reactions allow us to talk about the traumatic nature of the relationship between the individual and the state under an authoritarian regime, which becomes a consequence of cognitive and value dissonance: the individual’s ideas about justice and the responsibilities of the government diverge from the reality of state politics.

## Traditions of (Non)Violence in the History of Russian Society

**Svetlana Adonyeva**’s article “Support, Secret Alms, and Other Vernacular Practices of the Social Order of Northern Russian Villages” observes village practices of mutual assistance and control as vernacular forms of the self-organization of local communities. Field research of the settlements in the basins of the

northeast Arkhangelsk serves as the basis for this article.

The article “Soft/Hard: W. Tan-Bogoraz and Russian Ethnography at the Turning point of the Imperial and Soviet Eras” by **Olga Skubach** discusses the metaphor of *softness/hardness*, which regularly

appears in both fiction and nonfiction texts by W. Tan-Bogoraz. It seems that this metaphor makes it possible to identify the central plot in the biography of the scientist, who for many years hesitated between the “hard” mission of a revolutionary, who doesn’t shy away from violent methods, and the “soft” vocation of an ethnographer. The same metaphor, through the optics of Bogoraz’s reflection, can be projected on the history of Russian ethnography of the 1890s—1920s, which inconsistently sought to overcome its own original colonial character.

**Mikhail Pogorelov’s** article “*Non-Restraint in Russian Psychiatric Hospitals (1880—1910s)*” examines the attempts of Russian psychiatrists to introduce the principle of non-restraint. It became an essential part of professional ideology of the late Imperial Russian psychiatry, which built its professional identity on the basis of humanistic values and patient care. However, these professional ideals came into conflict with the routine of psychiatric hospitals, where cases of violence regularly occurred. The research is based on periodicals, official reports and hospital archives, memoirs of doctors and nurses.

**Irina Gordeeva’s** article “The Idea of Nonviolent Revolution in the Russian Radical Pacifist Movement of the First Third of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century” deals with a history of emergence of the concept of nonvio-

lent revolution as an alternative to violent revolution, created by Tolstoyans at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The author traces the development of the idea and organization efforts of the Tolstoyans to build their radical pacifist movement. The article shows that the concept of the nonviolent revolution was created on the basis of Tolstoy’s ideas as well as folk traditions of passive resistance. The Tolstoyans and sectarian pacifists after the 1917 perceived themselves as participants of the peaceful, spiritual revolution, which is carried out in parallel with the violent revolution of the Bolsheviks.

Based on an interview with Pavel Litvinov and on Vladimir Kormer’s novel *Inheritance*, the article “‘A Good Society Cannot be Built with Bad Methods’: Discussions on (Non)Violence, Politics, and Devildom in Moscow Dissident Circles of the 1960s and 1970s” by **Olga Rosenblum** examines discussions in on the themes of the inadmissibility of violence against representatives of the violent party (the state) and the inadmissibility of violence against those who fight violence (party discipline). Declarations and attempts to create non-hierarchical associations are examined, as are criticisms of these projects, which were characterized as evil temptations and compared to Nechayevism. The article examines the development of the projects of these associations and their attitude to political activity (turning away from politics) as a reaction to this criticism.

## (Non)Violence in Russian Culture

The modern Russian concept of *chelovechnost’* (humanity) evolved under the influence of the French *humanité*, which — similarly to its analogues in other languages — derives from the Latin *humanitas*. The article “On the Concept of Humanity”

by **Dmitri Kalugin** and **Boris Maslov** touches on a set of methodological questions: does the concept of humanity represent merely a construct of cultural history? Is its alienness to a given culture inferrable from the absence of

a corresponding lexeme? Can the notion of humanity supply the foundation to a politics of non-violence? Does the Russian concept differ from analogous concepts in other European languages? The article puts forward counter-arguments against the most notable contribution to the historical semantics of humanity — Koselleck's 1975 study of "asymmetrical" concepts, which shows the influence of the ideas of Carl Schmitt.

**Lena Marasinova's** article "Sovereign's Mercy in Russia of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century" is about the concept of "sovereign mercy," which was the most important component of the worldview of any Russian subject and was also used as an important channel for the representation of power. The contradictory context of using this concept makes it possible to re-evaluate the relationship between the throne and the individual in Russia in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Understanding the essence of *sovereign mercy* often was a serious, almost existential problem for the emperor, especially in the context of capital punishment and a "monopoly on violence." By supremely granting life to a sentenced criminal, the state also granted itself a "monopoly on mercy," which from the point of view of Catherine the Great, who created a compilation of ideas of enlightenment under the title of "Order" of the Legislative Commission, was a sign of the humanization of the of the throne's policies. A detailed comparison of the texts of the Italian philosopher Beccaria and the Order shows the diametrical positions of the Russian empress and the thinker.

From 1744 to 1764, all capital punishments were suspended in Russia *de facto*. Contemporaries and historians associated this measure with the Empress Elizabeth Petrovna's vow, made by her on the night of 25 November 1741. However,

**Sergei Polskoi** in his article "*Clementia Augustae*: Mercy and the "Absurd Vow" of Empress" shows that all known facts contradict this myth, which has proved unusually persistent, as has the refusal to rationalize the empress's actions in historiography. There is no doubt that all the Empress's "moves" towards the abolition of the death penalty and mitigation of punishment policy were political and discursive, i.e., were comprehended in the categories of politics, law, religious ideas and literature of her epoch, and the key concept around which the interpretation of her actions in the presented article is based is mercy (*clementia*). The history and interpretation of the concepts of *clemency*, its connection with the monarchical language of the epoch allows us to contextualize the empress's actions and deprive them of their mystical aura.

**Pavel Uspenskij** and **Andrey Fedotov's** article "The Anthropology of a Witness: The Wartime Self of 19<sup>th</sup> Century in Nikolay Nekrasov's Poem 'Listening to the Horrors of War...'" examines the text against the background of poetry of the Crimean War of 1853—1856, and describes its place on the discursive map of the era. The authors conclude that the poet invented a new subject of wartime of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and discovered an anthropological experience of the emotional understanding of military conflict that was novel for the time. As is shown in the article, Nekrasov's poem reassembled the literary tradition and changed everyday practices of the perception of military conflict.

The article "Two Short Pieces on (Non) violence" by **Mark Lipovetsky** discusses two examples from 20<sup>th</sup>-century Russian literature that represent gestures of active nonviolence based upon different concepts of violence. In the first seg-

ment, the focus is on “violence without the spilling of blood” as represented by Evgeny Zamyatin (*We*) and Walter Benjamin (*Toward the Critique of Violence*). According to the latter, the lack of bloodshed is the most important sign of the sovereign/divine violence of revolution. The second segment explores the concept of the “everyday terror” — as per Olga Freidenberg — reflected in texts by Mikhail Zoshchenko, Ian Satunovsky, Isaac Babel, and Yuli Daniel.

**Boris Stepanov** and **Tatiana Dashkova**’s article “The End of Violence? Reflections on the Repressive Past in Thaw Cinema” discusses the role of Thaw cinema in comprehending the mass repressions of the Stalin era.

Mapping the corpus of films about repression and the frames of representation of the theme, we turn then to a more detailed examination of the history of the Soviet detective and crime drama. By analyzing screen adaptations of the works of Yuri German and Lev Sheinin the authors address the issue of whether the development of these film genres, associated with changes in the ideology of policing, prepared the ground for addressing the issue of repressions. It allows to identify the transformation of cinema as a form of social imagination, which increased its sensitivity to the problem of violence and made cinema an instrument of reflection on the nature and causes of the excesses of repression in Soviet society.

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