



# THE HEDGE OF HISTORY

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Just as in a medical death certificate, in every international conflagration there are immediate, antecedent and fundamental causes, as well as other relevant facts that, without being directly related to the process that produces the conflict, contribute to it. From the point of view of geopolitical inquiry, the study should focus on the fundamental cause, from which the others derive.

Thus, in this essay we will bypass the conjunctural dynamics that have led the European Union to desist from the full implementation of the Minsk Agreements on Ukraine, to one of the five guiding principles for the official common policy towards Russia, since 2016. On the contrary, we will focus our analysis on the search for perennial issues (the idea of unity and inviolability of the millennial historical experience of Russia's existence, and the preservation of its cultural and civilizational constants over time), which will allow us, so to speak, to try to undertake a certain [archeology of the future](#).

The starting point of our inquiry must necessarily be Vladimir Putin's address to the nation on February 21, 2022, in which, in short, he declared the death of Fukuyama and proclaimed the resurrection of history. That is to say, the moment when the Russian President presented an amendment to the entire US world order, denying the legitimacy of NATO to arrogate to itself the power of "arbiter of the destiny of humanity," a thesis that was [later reiterated](#) by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, the basic principle of which is that Russia has the moral authority to oppose Western efforts to prevent the natural course of history from leading to the advent of a multipolar world. In elementary terms, this is a reformulation, in a global key, of the classic Roman distinction between potestas and auctoritas.

The argument articulated by the Kremlin is based on the assumption that nation-states coexist in an essentially anarchic international environment, due to the non-existence of a supranational authority capable of preventing recourse to military intervention in the affairs of other nation-states, and of enforcing those international laws from which their legitimacy would emanate. In the absence of all this, there is a substitute, called international order, which, in its present form, is more a reflection of the foreign policy of a bloc than a participatory and pluralist legal framework.

However, this central premise limits itself to uncovering the chessboard, without implying that the compartmentalization of nation-states is chaotic. On the contrary, this vision infers that nation-states act rationally by opting for those strategies that best suit the achievement of their national objectives, evaluating their opportunity cost and feasibility.

Furthermore, this theoretical framework assumes that nation-states must equip themselves with a set of beliefs and knowledge—tacit and explicit—consistent with the reality of their situation in the international sphere, for which it is useful to approximate [Donald Davidson's concept](#) of objective truth, understood as "the intersections of points of view," by advocating that "the basis of objectivity is intersubjectivity," so that truth is not "an object," but a set of beliefs inferable through the triangulation of statements from different contexts.

In other words, the beliefs of a nation-state—as a subjective community—are justified to the extent that they stand in a dialectical relation (thinking against, [andere Dasein](#)) with the beliefs of another nation-state, and not because there is a cardinal correspondence between the elements of the set of facts, which makes them radically interpretable without depending on any prior knowledge of the beliefs of the other.

Accordingly, in order to really know what its place in the world is, a state—as a nation—must be endowed with an attributive relational framework, in the sense adduced by [Gustavo Bueno](#); that is, that of a moral body from which emanates a normative force ([δικαιοσύνη, dikaiosyne](#)), the purpose of which is the preservation (i.e., formation of the [civilizational identity as social capital](#)) of the existence of the group as such, for the sake of a moral hegemony ([ἡγεμονία, direction](#)) which is not compatible with the social atomism proper to the dominant current of Western thought. The latter, by advocating [a concept of identity](#) stemming from an act of individual self-affirmation intended to reconcile the demand to be respected on equal terms ([isothymia](#)) and the demand to have particular rights ([megalothymia](#)), which requires a normative moral relativism that fragments state cohesion, by legitimizing that anyone can subjectively determine which acts are moral or immoral; the deep-rootedness of individualism eclipses social and moral meanings.

Consequently, as Alexander Dugin has repeatedly pointed out in Heideggarian tones, the Russian situation, its "Being-in-the-World" (In-der-Welt-sein) is a struggle against moral disorientation, to secure its "Being-in-itself-itself-within-the-World" ([mit-Dasein](#)) as a fulcrum to separate the authenticity of the Russian "Being-there" ([Dasein](#)) from the artificiality of the postmodern world of [appearances and simulacra](#), and to distance oneself from the secular creed that the essence of man is his existence, even if it is based on the illusion that we can morally self-determine ourselves in a world as saturated with signifiers as it is empty of meanings, just by wishing it, thus reducing the idea of the state to that of its legal order, so that all human problematics can ultimately be aseptically reduced to juridical regulations.

In contrast, Dugin—again with Heidegger—argues that Dasein (the realm in which the structure of being manifests itself) is given to man within himself, thanks to which he has a direct and immediate experience of this structure and its elements, enabling him to answer the central question of metaphysics: Why is there something rather than nothing?

It is precisely in the area of ontology that there are the intersections from which patterns of common values and purposes emerge that serve to codify a morality with the aforementioned attributive characteristics. This, of course, is more a becoming than an event; something that develops over time, defining a certain politeia that is also a Dasein.

Naturally, this morality, as an ideological product, reflects a certain social reality and refracts an opposite reality, so it must necessarily be endowed with a significance that represents something that is beyond its circumstance, so it acts both as a sign and as a symbol. As a sign, (σημείον), because it points to something, being itself contingent on conjunctural exigencies, and as a symbol inasmuch as it participates in the attributive relation (*mit Sein*), but also religare, to which it represents.

The Russian Orthodox Church performs this double symbolic function, of unity (σύμβολον, symbolon) that glimpses a rupture (διαβολικός, *diabolikós*), and referential, thanks to the fact that religious language allows the transmission of national myths as narratives symbolizing deeply important concepts, but hardly expressible in an explicit way; and at the same time, it acts as a sign, serving religion as the substance of culture, and culture as the form of religion (see Leo Tolstoy, Daniil Andreev, inter alia).

In this way, the sophisticated thought of Alexander Dugin is transmuted into the metaphysics of the Russian people, by the voice of the Orthodox Church, whose symbolic language makes it possible to express in religious terms the core of the existential concerns of the Russian political intelligentsia.

Thus, when Patriarch Kirill criticizes pagan anthropocentrism for giving any earthly idol the highest veneration, and teaches that polytheism (false religious consciousness) leads first to polarity, then to national disintegration, and finally to mutual destruction—he is revealing a potent metapolitical message, easily extrapolated from the idea that only the one true God is indisputable and unconditioned, a significance whose cornerstone is to preserve tradition as the moral cultivation from which the members of the community are hatched, by tacitly apprehending the set of social habits and rules that emerge not from the body of opinions, but from the stock of attitudes that condition all

political action (Michael Oakeshott, Roger Scruton).

But religious language is certainly not the only semantics capable of unfolding as a symbolic instrument for similar purposes. Scientific language also lends itself to such use. Such is the case of Lev Gumilyov's work, whose scope must be interpreted symbolically rather than literally, which would explain why his theses (based on the vital incarnation of a patriotic collective, a behavioral stereotype shared subconsciously by all members of a given civilizational entity, understood as the juxtaposition of an ethnogenetic perspective and an original theory of unity), enjoy such a prevalence in contemporary Russian society.

The systematic analysis of the structural elements of the Russian people transcends definitions, based on criteria such as language, culture, territorial integrity or economic model, by emphasizing the awareness of its internal structures, the recognition of its own identity, and its will to be, or *passionarnost'* (passionarity—*virtù*), as opposed to all other identities and wills, thus making the *andere Dasein* and *mit-Dasein* of Heidegger's ontology reappear as a theology of crisis (κρίσις, crisis, a transformation process in which the old system cannot be maintained).

We can thus understand *passionarnost'* as symbol and as (teleological) sign. In its symbolic function, it expresses the moral imperatives ("be who you ought to be") of its bearers; while acting as a sign, it denotes the set of aspirations to reach certain "sacred goals"—of being, not with its circumstances, but in spite of them—epic traits easily recognizable in the *Hegelian hero*.

All in all, passionarity symbolizes, once again in a Heideggerian key, the impossibility of escaping the threat of "Non-Being," taking refuge in a time without space, remarking that the loss of space means the loss of temporal presence; and consequently, the loss of being. At the same time, operating as a sign, passionarity points out that time without direction is time under the total control of space.

In addition to the latent use of Heidegger's central concepts (whose Catholic background osmotically permeates his work), part of the attraction that Gumilyov's thought arouses is explained by the fact that it is easy to establish a correlation between the cyclical story of passionarity and the ideas on the rise and fall of peoples, present in the best-known works of Oswald Spengler and Arnold J. Toynbee, in which they portray history as a process in which civilizations pass through specific stages of youth, maturity, and senility.

These elements are also present in a relevant way in the thought of Lev Gumilev, who develops them in a series of stages that open and close the cycle of a civilization, being the **фазы надлома**—crisis phase—the high point in which a culture lacks sufficient internal cohesion to avoid the transition from an attributive order to a distributive order, in which the primacy of social atomism leads one culture to end up resigning itself to being a subsidiary of another.

The symbolic language of Gumilyov's geographical determinism allows Vladimir Putin and his followers to make use of these metaphorical terms to characterize the immediate causes of the situation in Ukraine, in terms that resonate strongly in the collective consciousness of the Russian people.

Such is the case with references to external attempts to deterritorialize sovereignty and citizenship rights, in order to reduce people to abstract distributive individualities, depriving them of the cultural values that give moral meaning to their lives. Thus, when the Russian president and his chancellor speak of borders, they paraphrase Heidegger in the voice of Gumilyov, in arguing that a boundary is not so much the place where something stops, as the site from which something begins its presence.

Without an explicit awareness of the boundaries that shape people's actions, they are deprived of the referential—and therefore attributive—framework that delimits the meaning of civil duties and moral obligations, because one and the other are blurred outside the confines of the nation-state.

This, which is true in any country, is especially true in Russia, precisely because the weight of geography determines the dimension of the political. A territory with the size and diversity of the Russian Federation is socially unviable without the existence of a strong State, in the absence of which there is no alternative but a state of anarchy, simply because the logic of profit, typical of the free market, cannot meet the needs of the inhabitants of a territory of such magnitude that it requires eleven time zones, and with a socio-cultural complexity that requires a civil nucleus capable of enabling a cohesive political subject, harmonizing the ambivalences present in the significance of the intercultural, interethnic and interfaith identities of Russian society.

The dynamics of this core must be, a fortiori, refractory to tribalization which is characteristic of the multicultural model prevailing in the West, because its *raison d'être* is the opposite; that is, the development of a civilizational code that fulfills the function of consolidating the ideas of continuity of the "Being-in-the-World" of Russia and in the mentality of Russian citizens; the "Being-in-itself-within-the-World" also already mentioned.

Hence, the Russian people are even more suspicious of the siren songs of the Western bloc than of their own system of government, having witnessed the systematic destruction of nation-states, set in motion by the Western interventionism of the 21st century which was convinced, as Western promoters were, that they had reached the end of history.

From this recent testimony, and from their historical memory, derives a different notion of the concept of freedom among the Russian people, who prioritize freedom from foreign interference over freedom to trade without hindrance.

As we have seen throughout this analysis, the survival of the national framework and of a certain idea of Russia, in order for history to take its course, is a fundamental idea in Russian philosophy and religion, something whose historical continuity can be traced back to the times of the struggle for religious hegemony between the Byzantine Empire and the Holy Roman Empire, an agonism that arose from the discussion on the survival of the imperial potestas in Byzantium, and the questioning of Charlemagne's auctoritas. The Orthodox Church adopted a third way—still in force in Russia under the current patriarchate—the symphonia (συμφωνία, agreement), whose postulate is that Church and State represent interdependent and complementary powers, co-determined in their oppositions and relations.

That primordial ideological and political antagonism has been adapting its manifestation to the signs of the times (Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Napoleonic Empire, Third Reich, Cold War), without the fracture—the aforementioned *diabolikós*—between the two geographical fields ever really disappearing, and with it the risk of this latent tension being resolved violently.

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*Santiago Mondejar Flores is a consultant, lecturer and columnist on geopolitics and international political economy. This article appears courtesy of [Posmodernia](#).*

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*[Featured](#): "Kama near Elabuga," by Ivan Shishkin; painted in 1895.*

