# Russia and Europe: The Culture of Breakages and the Culture of Repairs[1]

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## Abstract

The article uses the method of technotheological analysis to study the differences between the cultures of Russia and Western Europe. The analysis consists in identifying the techno-religious *Gestalt*, that is, the relationship between the religious background and the things against that background, which is considered as the basis of culture. In order to examine culture in this light, a compact conceptual language can express this unity. Breakages and repairs are such concepts. From a religious perspective, things can break in two ways. There are "this-worldly" breakages which are those that can potentially be repaired: Minor Breakages. And there are "other-worldly" breakages, that is, those that are unrepairable: Major Breakages. Major and Minor Breakages and Repairs form a quadrant of concepts which serve to highlight the specificity of Russian and Western European cultures. Russian culture can be correlated with the culture of breakdowns, the Western European culture is a culture of repairs: They are technotheologically inverse to each other and are in a relation of chiasm. On the one hand, there is a lack of fear of Major Breakage along with the expectation of Major Repairs, with attention to Minor Breakages and no care of Minor Repairs. On the other hand, there is fear of Major Breakages and inattention to Minor Breakages coupled with skill in Minor Repairs and disbelief in the possibility of Major Repairs. This contrast can be exemplified in the thinking of the Russian avant-garde.

**Keywords:** Russia and Europe; Breakdowns; Repair; Gilbert Simondon; Technotheology

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[1] This article is written on the basis of three of my papers published in Russian: "Russia: A Hyper-Non-Coincidence" (Colta.ru, 12.08.2014), "Russia and Europe: Breakages and Repairs" (Colta.ru, 4.07.2017) and "Russian Avant-Garde as a Conflict between the Culture of Breakages and the Culture of Repairs" (Trasllit, №23, 2020).

# Россия и Европа: Культура поломок и культура починок[2]

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**Аннотация**

В статье используется метод технотеологического анализа для изучения различий в русской и западноевропейской культурах. Анализ заключается в выявлении технорелигиозного гештальта, то есть отношения между религиозным фоном и вещами на этом фоне, рассматриваемого как базис культуры. Разработан компактный концептуальный язык, выражающий единство технического и религиозного: это понятия поломок и починок. С учетом религиозной перспективы все может ломаться двумя способами: есть "посюсторонние" поломки, которые потенциально могут быть исправлены, то есть Малые Поломки; и есть "потусторонние" поломки, то есть те, которые невозможно исправить, Большие Поломки. Большие и Малые Поломки и Починки образуют четверицу понятий, которые применяются для выявления специфики русской и западноевропейской культур. Русскую культуру можно соотнести с культурой поломок, западноевропейскую культуру с культурой починок: они технотеологически обратны друг другу и находятся в отношении хиазма. С одной стороны – отсутствие страха перед Большой Поломкой и внимательность к Поломкам Малым наряду с ожиданием Большой Починки и безразличием к Малым Починкам. С другой стороны – страх Больших Поломок и невнимательность к Малым Поломкам в сочетании с искусностью по части Малых Починок и неверием в Большую Починку. Примером этого хиазма может также служить мысль русского авангарда.

**Ключевые слова:** Россия и Европа; Ремонт; Поломки; Гилберт Симондон; Технотеология

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[2] Статья представляет собой переработку трех работ автора, опубликованных на русском языке: «Россия: сверхнесовпадение» (Colta.ru, 12.08.2014), «Россия и Европа: поломки и починки» (Colta.ru, 4.07.2017) и «Русский авангард как конфликт культуры поломок и культуры починок» (Траслит, №23, 2020).

# THE TECHNOTHEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

This text aims to explore Russian culture from a perspective called technotheological. According to this perspective, the foundation of each culture lies in the relationship between the beliefs, either explicit or implicit, and material things. Technotheology examines the religious and the technical in their unity, which is intrinsically structured as a *Gestalt*, i.e. a figure-background relationship: things are always surrounded by some religious background and carve out specific figures on it.

This conception was inspired by Gilbert Simondon's writings where he claims that both, religious and technical thought diverge from a magical unity (as a result of its supersaturation and subsequent phase shift) (Simondon, 1958) and, thus, are isomorphic to each other (Simondon, 2014). Simondon's thesis on the isomorphism of the technical and the religious is reminiscent of the God-Building trend (Anatoli Lunacharsky, Maxim Gorky) and Russian Cosmism (Nikolai Fedorov). What Simondon brought new compared to these ideas is, firstly, the assertion of unity (not to be confused with identity!) of the technical and the religious, and secondly, an indication of the structure of their relationship: this is the structure of Gestalt (as elaborated by German *Gestalt* psychologists).

To think of technics and religion "as one" means to think things theologically and to think theology "materially," technically. This method differs from both the "material turn" in religious studies[3] and the mediology of religion (Debray, 2001), as neither approach achieves the balance between the technical and the religious thought: priority is given to the material, as previously, to the "spiritual." Technotheology claims to look from the "middle" (from the "metropolis," against which religion and technics are like "provinces"), sublating the compromised opposition between "archaic" and "modern." It also differs from Simondon's own philosophy, in which the tension between religion and technics is sublated, mediated by aesthetic and philosophical thought: technotheology posits that we are able to grasp religion and technics in their separateness, or rather, to grasp not them themselves (due to the asymmetry and mutual reversibility of figure and background, this is impossible), but the relationship between them. This relationship is expressed by the *contour* – an active phenomenal line between figure and background.

In order to examine culture in the light of the unity of technics and religion, it is necessary to develop a compact conceptual language, concise concepts that would express this unity; such concepts are *breakages* and *repairs*.

Observing the behavior of things in everyday life, we can see that they frequently break and require our intervention for repairs. Such a view is not a maker's but a user's one, a naïve phenomenological view (as it was revealed in Heidegger's *Being and Time*). Nonetheless, the very making of things also encompasses microcycles of breakages and repairs, and the maker himself can be seen as an ordinary user in situations beyond his expertise.

Taking into account the religious perspective, things can break in two ways. There are "this-worldly" breakages which are those that can potentially be repaired: let's call them *Minor Breakages*. And there are "other-worldly" breakages, that is, those that are

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[3] See, e.g.: *Material Religion*, edited by B. Meyer; D. Morgan; B. Plate; C. Paine. Berg Publishers.

unrepairable: let's call them *Major Breakages*. Minor Breakages are synonymous with: everyday obstacles and mishaps, annoying bullshit, imperfections of the world, absurdity, accidents, failure, roadblocks... Major Breakages are synonymous with: death, insanity, the end of the world, Satan, existential disorientation, catastrophe, total loss...

If breakages are problems, repairs are solutions, and they can also be divided into two types: Minor and Major, "other-worldly" and "this-worldly." Synonyms for *Major Repairs* include: miracle, "salvation," God, "Führer" (charismatic leader), "communism." "technological singularity," immortality, resurrection... Synonyms for *Minor Repairs* are: everyday life in resistance to the forces of entropy, "cultivating one's own garden," labor, technical warranty, public institutions, sustainable development, civilization...

The proposed quadrant of concepts – Minor Breakages, Major Breakages, Minor Repairs, Major Repairs – can grasp the techno-religious *Gestalt*, i.e. the relationship between religious background and technical figures within a particular culture. The techno-religious *Gestalt* is viewed as the basis of culture in the same sense as economics is considered the basis of culture in the Marxist doctrine. The background is always elusive, as we can't focus on it by definition (without turning it into a figure), so it is the primary object of the technotheological analysis.

## RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF RUSSIAN CULTURE

A technotheological analysis of the religious background of culture can draw on Max Weber's sociological analysis of religion. In the context of Russian culture, an attempt at such an analysis was conducted by David Zilberman (1977) in "Orthodox Ethics and the Matter of Communism." It can be argued that the religious background of Russian culture is formed by two fundamental influences: 1) Eastern Christianity and 2) pagan cults, specifically the cult of Mother Earth.

1) On a doctrinal level, Eastern Christianity differs from its Western counterpart due to the Greek inclination for apophatic theology over cataphatic, the dogma of the distinction between essence (*ousia*) and energies (*energeies*, *operationes*) in God, and the dogma of filioque.[4] The Greek Fathers contend that God's essence is neither knowable nor unknowable, but rather *hyper*-unknowable: though absolutely inaccessible to our knowledge, it is still somehow accessible. What we can deal with are the "energies" or "operations" of God, which are as related to His essence as rays are to the sun (see, e.g., Lossky, 1957). In the West, such a perspective has been deemed heretical, absurd, nearly pagan (as the monotheistic God appeared as two deities). The Thomistic dogma embraced by the Roman Catholic Church asserts that God's essence is unknowable but paradoxically also fully identical to His *energeia* (Latin *actus*).

If God's essence remains unknowable, then so too is the essence of things: for humans, access to things is not barred epistemologically, by our cognitive abilities, as with Kant's thing-in-itself, but rather ontologically. Yet, a bearer of the Eastern Christian religious background can deal with the "operationality," the "processuality" of things. Speaking of things technical, this could mean that technology in the Christian East is not

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[4] We do not touch here on the cultural differences associated with the filioque; see more about this in Danilevsky 1895/2015 as well as in my work: Kurtov (2014).

so much about the essence of technology itself, but rather the process of technicization, and moreover, the technicization of that which cannot be entirely technicized (since it cannot touch the essence of the things). Technical operations lack a final cause, as they would if they would lead to some essence of things, thus becoming self-sufficient and interesting in themselves. In contrast, largely under the influence of Saint-Simon and Auguste Comte, technical operations in the West coincided with the essence and final cause of technology: this is precisely what gave rise to the positivist idea of technological progress.

The history of the philosophy of technology in the 19th and 20th centuries vividly demonstrates this difference: from Fedorov to Soviet avant-gardists and science fiction writers, technology was conceived in a utopian fashion, as problematizing the non-coincidence between mortality and eternity, between Earth and outer space, between human equality and social inequality – non-coincidences that can be genetically traced to the non-coincidence of divine essence and energies. Contrastingly, in the West, from Saint-Simon and Marx to Heidegger, technology was rather a tool for invoking the coincidence between science and history, present society and its future, humans and things. It also had a utopian character, but its degree of utopianism was inversely proportional to the technical (divine!) perfection. Only with Heidegger was this utopianism removed: perhaps not in the way the West had intended, but its fate ultimately coincided with technology.

It is maybe in breakage that the non-coincidence of the divine essence and energies is best expressed. What is important is not the breakage as such, but the fact that it redirects attention from the thing as an essence (God, State, commodity...) ≈ to its operationality. Operationality is how a thing becomes itself, its internal structure, its life as an individual organism. As soon as the thing begins to coincide with the world, to gain a stable essence within a socio-economic cosmos, interest in it diminishes. This phenomenon intrigued American historian of Russian science Loren Graham, who observed that while Russian technical achievements are undeniable, they are seldom implemented and commercialized (Graham, 2013).

2) The second factor in the formation of the Russian religious background is the "pagan", polytheistic – the residual presence of the cult of Mother of Earth in everyday life of Russian speakers. This life is unimaginable without profane language – so-called "Russian mat": philosopher S. Bulgakov (1923) once noted that its role for Russian culture was underestimated even by Dostoevsky. Russian mat, according to linguists, goes back to the Slavic cult of Mati Syra Zemlya [Mother Damp Earth] (Uspensky, 1994). Like many other chthonic belief systems, it incorporates motifs of death and rebirth. The essential difference between Russian profanity and profanity in Western European languages is that the latter is often aimed at Christian figures (blasphemy against the Virgin Mary or Jesus), while the former is exclusively pre-Christian, "pagan": it ultimately designates the desecration of Mother Earth.

From a technotheological perspective, the task of obscene language is to convey in a compact form mental states related to some "otherworldly" breakages or repairs (*doesn't work! / works well!*). One of the most popular Russian obscene words refers, by its root, to the female reproductive organ, but has an actual meaning of some

"otherworldly" Major Breakage. This supposedly unspeakable word is a kind of apocalypse without eschatology, the end of the world without hope of salvation. Regular exposure to or usage of such language re-enchants the reality of those involved: on the one hand, it helps them to navigate situations of total disarray, on the other hand, it accustoms them to living within the cyclical time of "pagan" cultures (cycles of deaths and rebirths), time without exit. However, the combination of these polytheistic residues with the Orthodox Christian residues produces a more complex and ambiguous cultural picture: there is still an exit from the cyclical time, yet it seems to be located externally, since the linear time of Christianity is associated with the masculine rather than the feminine principle, manifested in the cult of Earth.

## CONFIGURATION OF THE RUSSIAN TECHNO-RELIGIOUS *GESTALT*

The religious background of Russian culture, defined in this way, contributes to the following configuration of breakages and repairs:

1) Russian culture is characterized by *a lack of overt fear of Major Breakages*: Major Breakage is already embedded in the Orthodox Christianity as the hyper-unknowability of God (breakage of logic); Major Breakage is already present in everyday Russian language – by way of the curse-word's obscenity (breakage of language). We can find traces of these "mythical" residues in such different but influential works as the novel "Generation П" (1999) (where П stands for the obscene expression) by the contemporary Russian writer Victor Pelevin, or the treatise "Cosmology of the Spirit" (1956) by the Soviet Marxist Evald Ilyenkov, in which the author calls for a worldwide "fire" – the destruction of the universe for the sake of its rebirth. All Russian history of the last centuries can be seen as a movement from one Great Breakage to another.

2) Russian culture is characterized by *the expectation of Major Repair* – hoping for an instant miraculous correction of everything without any work. In the Orthodox Christianity, a Major Repair of individual existence – salvation of the soul – is not conditioned by either mundane merits (as in Protestantism) or even by divine grace (as in Catholicism): as the Byzantinist Sergey Ivanov (2016) showed (following Victor Zhivov), it is often an outcome of random events or just luck. The Russian history of the last centuries can also be viewed as a series of fantasies about the Major Repair – in the form of the charismatic leader, God, chance, revolution, the conquest of space and other fantastic technical achievements.

3) Russian culture is characterized by *attention to Minor Breakages*. Whenever a Minor Breakage is detected or caused, Russians seem to exclaim with satisfaction: voilà, we said that if it is broken above, it is broken below! The prevailing Western narrative surrounding "Russian hackers" can thus be accounted for by the technotheological perspective: the cultural context makes breakage valuable and interesting in itself.

4) Russian culture is characterized by *non-mastery of Minor Repairs*. Minor Repairs are simultaneously very comprehensible and totally incomprehensible to Russians: It is comprehensible because representatives of this culture are constantly engaged in them one way or the other – sociologists called it "the repair society" (Gerasimova & Chuikina, 2004). It is incomprehensible because Russians engage in repairs semi-consciously,

meaning they often do not fully pay attention to them. In Russia, repairs are a strange psychomotoric response to Minor Breakages, something like an itch or a compulsion. Unlike Western Europeans, Russians recognize that Major Breakages cannot be addressed by way of Minor Repairs – climate change cannot be repaired by improving car-emissions – but only with a Major Repair. Such a view is personified, for instance, by the "superfluous man" – a popular character of 19th-century Russian literature and late Soviet cinema.

Now let's compare this configuration–which can be called a *culture of breakages* – with the configuration of the Western European techno-religious *Gestalt*, which is the basis for the *culture of repairs*.

## THE CHIASM OF RUSSIAN AND WESTERN TECHNO-RELIGIOUS GESTALTS

In noumenal reality everything breaks down with approximately the same frequency everywhere, yet the filters of national culture produce different phenomenologies of breakages and repairs. Thus, due to a different religious background, Western European culture rests upon a different techno-religious *Gestalt*, which, as we will show below, stands as an inversion of the Russian one.

1) Western European culture is characterized by the *fear of the Major Breakage*. This can be explained by specific aspects of Roman Catholic and Protestant theology, the doctrine of original sin, the iconography of the Last Judgment and Purgatory, depictions of Satan – all of which are absent in the Orthodox Church. These contributed to the strict disciplining of society, the creation of a tyrannical self-censor. Various methods of protection against the Major Breakage have been developed in the West. In the social realm, the most widespread method of such protection is legalism, or "juridism" – a phenomenon largely criticized by the Slavophiles, notably Aleksey Khomyakov (1839/2008) and Ivan Kireyevsky (1839/1979). In the realm of thought it is rationalism, the Cartesian *cogito* that serves as insurance against madness.

For Descartes, the father of European rationalism, the main existential concern was to understand how to avoid cognitive errors, how to make sure that he wasn't asleep or insane at any given time. What protects us from such big errors is the guarantee of the existence of an all-good and perfect God, a God who would never deceive. Without this guarantee – adopted by Descartes from the earlier Scholastic tradition – reason is incapable to grasp the surrounding reality. But to ensure the very fact of the existence of the "I" – even if this "I" perceives the world in an absolutely distorted way – one does not need God. It is enough to have the "natural light" of human reason, which, while doubting the surrounding reality, proves its own reality: at least something is working! Descartes' faith in the ability of reason to maintain an unbroken, automated doubt was later "deconstructed" by another Frenchman, Jacques Derrida: what if madness infiltrated that very doubt? What if we were mad even before we started thinking? Descartes dismissed, "neutralized" this possibility from the outset: I may make some mistakes, he says, or I may even be asleep, but I am definitely not mad. It means that for a rationalist, the reason, or the "thinking I", is also modeled after the "trouble-proof," "fail-safe,"

perfect God: as Derrida (1963/2005) noted, "for Descartes, God alone protects me against the madness" (p. 70).

Let us translate this into technical language: European rationalism, based on its theological background, does not allow for the possibility that *ab initio*, from the very beginning everything is broken and not working. Alternatively, it can be said that rationalism rests upon excluding the possibility of a Major, "otherworldly" Breakage, thus rests upon an irrational fear of the Major Breakage. Technotheologically speaking, for a rationalist, everything can be broken in a small way, in details, in "this-worldly" reality, but not at large, in "otherworldly" reality: God cannot be mad, laws of nature cannot be random, and reason cannot be non-functioning. Once we have secured these guarantees, we can confidently proceed to reasonable arrangements of personal and social life, to Minor Repairs.

2) Western European culture is characterized by *skill in Minor Repairs*. In philosophy, this is expressed in the Cartesian "rules of method" – a belief that small orderings can solve any major problem. In social life, this is the ability to build institutions, discipline labor, regulate everyday life... (everything the "lazy" and "anarchic" Russians seem incapable of). The European material or intellectual product can be secondary, superficial, redundant, but it is always "well done," which is one of the hallmarks of skill in repairs. For Russians, this fact has always been a subject of envy and admiration: no matter how "patriotic" they might be, everyone acknowledges that the best cars are German, and the worst are Russian.

3) Western European culture is characterized by *disbelief or skepticism about Major Repairs*. See, for example, Hölderlin's *Hyperion*: "It would be very nice if people like me occasionally met someone who would upset them a little, who taught them to wage small wars because we always want only major wars, where heavens and hell fight, or peace that would be like the peace of embrace, full union or full separation, but halfness is precisely what we, sons of man, are here for" (Hölderlin, 2008). For Western Europeans, there is no need for Major Repair, as it seems to them that everything can be done with Minor Repairs. These may appear to be not so Minor, if only one doesn't have to rely much on the Major Repair! The last Major Repair in Western Europe was the French Revolution, and all subsequent repairs were only "minor" reactions to historical Major Breakages (especially the consequences of World War II).

4) Western European culture is characterized by *inattention to Minor Breakages*. It can be assumed that it is the fear of the Major Breakage that reduces sensitivity to Minor Breakages. However, this does not mean that Western Europeans are unable to deal with them, it's just that they don't value them for themselves. Minor Breakages are like a shadow on the divine face, an annoying flaw in the perfect system of the universe. Strangely enough, such an attitude to Minor Breakages allows one to cope with them in a truly efficient way (since they don't hypnotize, don't distract). If there is no "otherworldly" breakage, then "this-worldly" breakages have no place in the universe; they should be removed routinely.

As can be noticed, the listed characteristics of Western culture are opposite to the characteristics of Russian culture. In a technotheological perspective, the relationship between Russian and Western European cultures is that of *chiasm*: Western culture vainly

tries to prevent the Major Breakage with Minor Repairs, whereas Russian culture vainly awaits a Major Repair to fix Minor Breakages.

The differences in techno-religious *Gestalts* also give rise to differences in the understanding of freedom in Western European and Russian societies. For Western society, freedom is the "freedom of repairs": the ability to control state power and re-elect its leaders, influence capitalist companies, ensure a comfortable living standard, etc. For Russian society, freedom is the "freedom of breakages": the opportunity to escape state structures, experiment with the social order, disassemble copyrighted devices, etc. (The complete denial of the state laws in Kropotkin's anarchist doctrine can also be traced back to this religious background – to a more anarchic position of the Spirit in the construction of the Trinity without the Western filioque addition.) The Western perception of corruption and "doublethink" phenomena in Russian society as unequivocally negative disregards the difference in anthropological (technotheological) perspectives: what for some are breakages requiring regular repairs, for others are breakages protecting against over-regulating repairs. Indeed, which is more free – a society where everything is permanently being repaired or a society where everything is permanently being broken?

## CONFLICT BETWEEN THE CULTURE OF BREAKAGES AND THE CULTURE OF REPAIR

The chiasm of Western European and Russian techno-religious *Gestalts* is only a particular case of a broader conflict between the culture of breakages and the culture of repairs. This clash is manifested not only in Western Europe's relationship with Russia but also with America. An example is Bernard Stiegler's (2016) book *In the Disruption: How Not to Go Crazy?*, dedicated to the "disruptive" impact of digital technology on contemporary society and culture. To get out of the state of "madness" in which we all are today due to "disruptive innovations," Stiegler argues, we must focus not on the "neo-barbarian" American culture of hackers – these are supposedly outdated – but on the "makers' culture," which creates new things (here we see all the elements of the techno-religious *Gestalt*: fear of the Major Breakage, disinterest in Minor Breakages, skill in Minor Repairs). In the international context, the culture of repairs is represented today by the so-called ethics of technology, flourishing in universities and government committees.

The conflict between the culture of breakages and the culture of repairs can also be observed within a single national culture. A recent example: one part of American society creates "disruptive" technology that potentially leads to multiple Minor Breakages – the large language model GPT-4 – while another part demands suspending its development to avoid the Major Breakage (the destruction of humanity by AI) and gain some time for Minor Repairs (aligning the AI and adapting people to it).

An older but more studied example of this conflict within national borders is the Russian avant-garde of the 1900–1930s. How can the Russian avant-garde be described in terms of breakages and repairs? It has been a unique situation, which can be described by two processes: *the Major Breakage had been completed*, *the wait for the Major Repair had been over* [доломали, дождались].

Minor Breakage is the key to Russian avant-garde aesthetics. For an avant-garde artist, a thing always appears somewhat broken, and their task is to either break it a bit more or entirely. First of all, Shklovsky's "estrangement" as the breaking of everyday perception comes to mind ("We come to the definition of poetry as speech that is decelerated, twisted"). This also includes various theories of breakages applied to poetry, such as Kruchyonykh's concept of "shift" [сдвиг] as a universal poetic category: "lexical deformation of the phrase," that is, breaking grammar and syntax. Vasilisk Gnedov's "zloglas" ("evil voice") provides another example: opposition of "consonance of concepts" to "dissonance of concepts," that is, breakage of hearing. The images of breakage were widely used as metaphors: "Poems should be written in such a way that if you throw a poem out the window, the glass will break" (Daniil Charms). Common for the avant-garde is the (meta)theoretical call for breaking things: "...the color stream liberated from reason, in the first stage, annulled the thing as a cause, then began to deform it and finally destroyed it completely" (El Lissitzky's 1922 manifesto "Overcoming Art", the section on the "Destruction of the Thing").

The Russian avant-garde differs from its Western European counterpart in that it has moved from contemplating breakages to the necessity of repairs. This tendency is most evident in Constructivism. The very process of revealing the structure of a thing requires its breakage, disassembly, disjuncture. Yet, in Constructivism, this breakage is immediately followed by the consideration of how the knowledge gained from it can be used to "repair" all modern architecture. We observe the same progression in Malevich: the breakage of things into primary forms must be prolonged by their reassembly, reparation. Perhaps only in Kandinsky's work the breakage of the thing is not accompanied by a turn towards functionality (which might explain why he was more relevant in Western Europe). In its extreme form, this transition – from breakage to repair – was clearly marked by Wolf Gordin (1921), who wrote that "pananarchy", "anarchy of the spirit" (that is, Major Breakage of the Spirit) must be replaced by the "All-Plan", "Bio-Plan" (that is, Major Repair of the Spirit) (pp. 98-100).

For the avant-garde authors, the Major Repair was already close, almost accomplished, allegedly due to the work on Minor Breakages – which, in its turn, triggered the Major Breakage. These two attitudes toward things harmoniously combined, and there was no contradiction between them. However, when the transition from the culture of breakages to the culture of repairs occurred, a talent for Minor Repairs was needed, which Russian culture *de facto* did not find in itself.

This contradiction marks the theoretical heritage of Aleksei Gastev. On the one hand, he called for optimal automation, that is, mastering Minor Repairs. On the other hand, if we compare this call with similar projects in labor psychology or management in the West – such as Ford's or Taylor's – one can notice how ecstatic, exalted it was, as if it could only arise and exist in the conditions of the long-awaited Major Repair. It seems that in the context of Russian culture Minor Repairs can be effectively carried out only in anticipation of the promised Major Repair. And interesting here is that the latter immediately begins to overshadow and suppress the former. If representatives of Russian culture are invited to "turn on the locomotives of history" or become a "mechanic of other's time" (Gastev, 1922/1972), they are unlikely to go to the factory after that; instead,

like the heroes of A. Andrei Platonov's stories, they will embark on the construction of labor and technical utopias (that is, engage in Major Repair).

And then finally came the Major Repair – Stalinism… Or the Major Breakage? …It is not difficult to confuse repair with a breakage when it comes to the "otherwordly."

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