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## **A Question of Singular Ought We to Tackle Research on Interculturality in an Interdisciplinary Approach?**

Speech on the occasion of an honorary doctorate  
conferred by Ilia State University Tbilisi on January 26th, 2017<sup>1</sup>

Rector Magnifice, dear colleagues, dear students, dear guests!

Georgia is one of the richest countries which I have the pleasure to know – *rich in hospitality!*  
This evening with its warm welcome shows this richness anew – please accept my sincere  
thanks for your kind invitation and for your coming!

You have invited me to speak on the question: Ought We to Tackle Research on  
Interculturality in an *Interdisciplinary* Approach? As you will see, this is a question of singular  
(*numerus singularis*).

- (A) Three simple questions arise immediately from this topic: (A1) What are researchers like? (A2) What is *culture* like? (A 3) What means *inter*?
- (B) Having found answers to these questions, we might follow the advice of Leibniz:  
*theoria* never without *praxis*.

### **A. THEORIA**

#### **1. Who is We?**

Let us start with the question: *Who is We*, the researchers—or future researchers—here in the hall? There are now rare cases of human beings, artificially produced from *three* parents in Ukraine.<sup>2</sup> (Which is highly problematical from an ethical point of view). But we here, resembled at Ilia State University, we all derive from *two* parents, which gave us their genetical material.

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<sup>1</sup> Special thanks go to Oliver Reisner (political science), Willi Xylander (biology), Valentin Frank (medicine) for their critical suggestions on the draft manuscript. Remaining faults are mine. mtv

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.sciencealert.com/world-first-in-ukraine-as-three-parent-baby-born-to-an-infertile-couple>  
[01.02.2017]

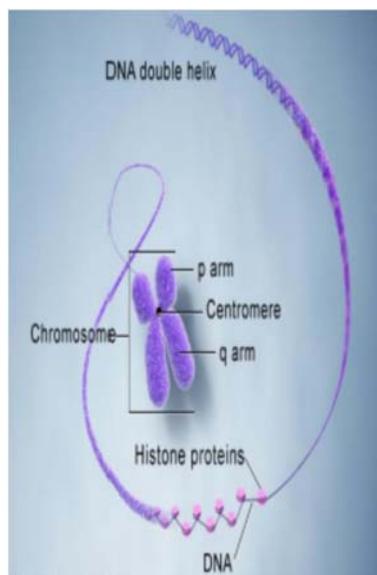


Fig 1: Chromosome. DNA double helix with proteins.

With the effect that we are twofold--each of us has a sort of *twin inside*. The dominant genes decide about our phenotype. The recessive genes are not materializing but may bequeath information to our children – you may have black hair because the respective genes<sup>3</sup> are dominant, but the unborn, invisible, yet very real twin inside you on the recessive genes might transfer blond or red hair to your children or grandchildren. (Dear students, when you have tonight a look into the mirror and on your body, may be you should have a consultation with Lord Voldemort on this point. It is much more intriguing than the simple Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde story. Dear colleagues, you might have a look into the Schlemihl story of Chamisso.<sup>4</sup> What happens when you sell your shadow to the devil? What says society, when you remain shadowless?).

Pablo Neruda once wrote: “Of the many men whom I am, whom we are, / I cannot settle on a single one“. Allelomorphically, we are *diploid*, here is our phenotype and there is the non-pheno, the non-visible, the hidden one. In biochemical terms, the “I” is a “We” that phenotypically will be realized in one concrete form.

Our chemical hereditary system is nothing special. We have it in common with other mammals. It consists of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) threadlike molecules [волокнистый voloknístyy] and some cell structures. Austrian-Swiss biochemist Gottfried Schatz said about the chemical hereditary system: »It determines what we *can* be. Transmission errors in the chemical system—so-called mutations—change our body«.

<sup>3</sup> The colour of the hair is one of the complicated items; probably there are more than ten genes involved deciding about the proportion in various stages of one's life of the two variants Eumelanin (dark) and Pheomelanin (light) of melanin pigment. For an introduction see the Forensic Molecular Biology Department of Erasmus University Rotterdam at <http://hirisplex.erasmusmc.nl/>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://archive.org/details/peterschlemihlsh00chamiala>.

## 2. Is our “I” a singular?

But is our phenotypical “I” really a singular? The human body only can survive because of a special kind of *reciprocal hospitality*—the genetic material, which we received from our parents, co-exists with *microorganisms* such as bacteria in the intestine, about a trillion creatures per milliliter, some two kilograms in each of us, which is heavier than our brain.

So what looks from the outside, from the phenotype to be a *Homo sapiens*, actually is a *composite organism*. In the Caucasus region,<sup>5</sup> you find many *lichen* [ЛИШАЙНИК *lisháynik*], a *symbiotic organism* of fungi and/or algae/bacteria. In Northern Europe,<sup>6</sup> some of them combine cyanobacteria capable for photosynthesis (Prokaryota) living in symbiosis with filaments of multiple fungi (Eukaryota). In a way, *Homo sapiens* combines Prokaryota and Eukaryota, too. When you have tonight a look into the mirror and on your body and on your belly, please remember that you have two quadrillions (the 15<sup>th</sup> power of 10) of bacteria inside you. Only thanks to these two quadrillions you can convert or metabolize food to energy, and survive. Our “I” is not a singular; our “I” is *multifold*.

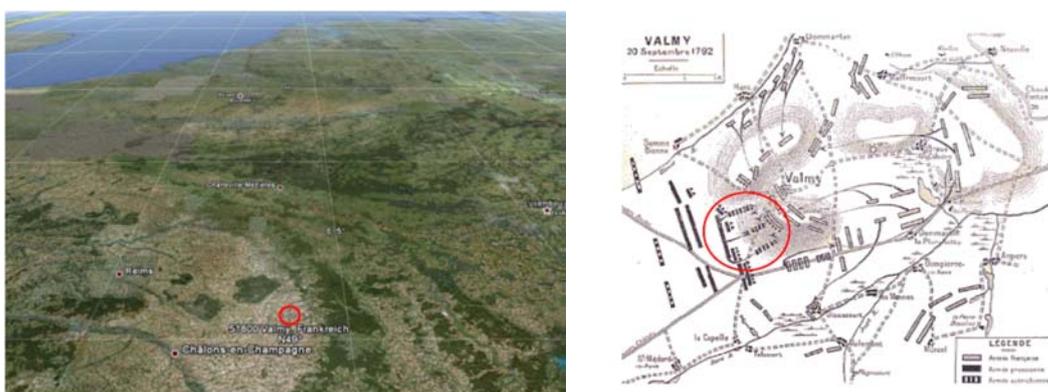


Fig 2: Valmy: location in Eastern France Champagne, battlefield 20.09.1792..

Bacteria have written history, you even might say they are at the roots of our republican system. On the eve of 20th September 1792, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe noted at Valmy: »From here and today a new epoch of world history starts, and you can say, you were there when it happened«. The Austrian-Prussian troops, the professional elite of then European armies, marched through the Champagne on their way to Paris. At Valmy they met the French Army, mostly volunteers without training. But alas! The Austro-Prussian soldiers were not victualled, for days they had eaten nothing but unripe green wine grapes. So they became victims of *shigellosis* [ЖИДКИЙ СТУЛ *zhidkiy stul*]; their intratestinal symbiosis of prokaryota and eukaryota collapsed. Unable to climb up the modest hill, the battle field was full not with their blood but full with their excrements. The Braunschweig duke ordered

<sup>5</sup> cf. Onipchenko, Vladimir G. (2004 ed.): *Alpine Ecosystems in the Northwest Caucasus*. Chapter 8: *Soil algae and cyanobacteria in the alpine plant communities*, p. 233 sq. Dordrecht: Springer.

<sup>6</sup> Paulsrud, Per; Lindblad, Peter (1998): *Sequence Variation of the tRNA<sup>Leu</sup> Intron as a Marker for Genetic Diversity and Specificity of Symbiotic Cyanobacteria in Some Lichens*. In: American Society for Microbiology (ed): *Applied and Environmental Microbiology*, Vol. 64, No. 1, Jan. 1998, p. 310–315. “The lichen species used in the present study were *Nephroma arcticum*, *Peltigera aphthosa*, *P. membranacea*, and *P. canina*.”.

retreat in a sort of tie, and at Paris arrived notice that the French troops *not* had been vanquished. The next day, the French Republic was proclaimed. French history books tell us about General Kellermann and his »Vive la Nation!«. It would have been more correct to erect a monument to gram-negative bacterium *Shigella* from the family Enterobacteriaceae instead, a monument to the first form—still unconsciously—of modern, biological warfare.

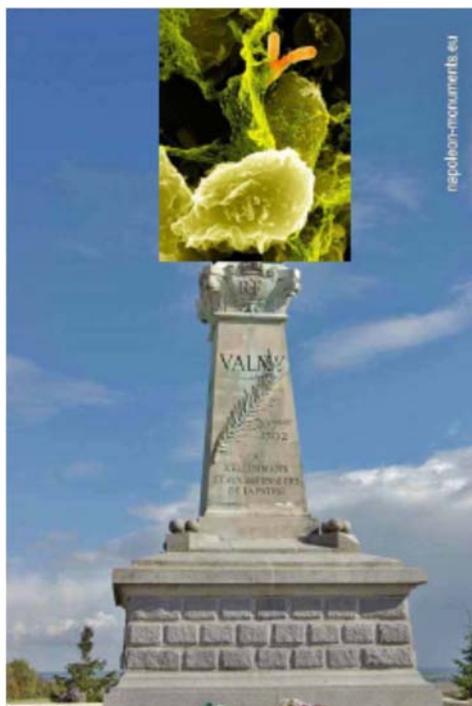


Fig 3: Valmy: proposition for a monument to gram-negative bacterium *Shigella*.

### 3. We are links in a double inter-generational chain

The world history of symbiosis and of *shigellosis* tortured combattants enabling the triumph of *La Grande Nation* bring us back to Gottfried Schatz and to a second term in today's topic, to 'culture'.

Schatz continues: »The special thing about mankind is that we have two hereditary systems—a chemical and a cultural one. The cultural system consists of the *inter-generational dialogue*. It determines *what we actually become*. Our chemical system does not raise us above other mammals, but our cultural system is unprecedented in nature. Its shaping power gives us language, art, science, and moral responsibility.«

Some behavior scientists such as Whiten tend to speak about »Cultures in Chimpanzees«, too.<sup>7</sup> But this only refers to intergenerational reproduction of tools of production, different between several groups of apes in the East African Rift System. Human culture is by far more. When you have a look at the sculpture "Muza" (M. Berdzenishvili, 1971), the lady in front of the Tbilisi Philharmonics, you will find that she represents some of the means of

<sup>7</sup> Whiten et al. (1999): *Cultures in Chimpanzees*. Nature 399, 682 – 685

this inter-generational dialogue which even allows a pluri-generational dialogue. In her hands, she holds the symbols for *liber, sonus, imago, ludus*. Without *Book, Sound, Image, Playing*—you could not refer to culture in this country, bequeathed to you through so many generations.



Fig 4: Musa sculpture by M. Berdzenishvili, 1971, in front of the Tbilisi Philharmonics, displaying the symbols for Liber, sonus, imago, ludus - Book, Sound, Image, Playing.

Culture has been always open for changes. Schatz continues: »The accuracy with which these two inheritance systems carry knowledge from one generation to another is high, but not absolute. Transmission errors—so-called mutations—in the cultural system change our thinking and behavior.«

Such a cultural mutation was the change from a royal to a republican system. And what about the recent change from a static communist party rule to a dynamic democratic system? According to Oliver Reisner, we might use genetics as a metaphor for better understanding the shifting. The seemingly “static Communist party rule” was so only in its formal appearance, let us call this: in its “phenotype”. The hidden half of the “genotype” provided for a lot of informal (cultural, social & economic) practices to circumvent the stagnation on the political level. The “dynamic democratic system” offers more changes on the political level (phenotype) while being counteracted by informal practices to secure the privileged positions by the elites in its deeper social make-up or the hidden half of the “genotype”. So, cultural mutations are all but simple.

The Latin word *mutation* in Greek language would be *μεταβολή metabolē*, a word which you all know from the metabolic processes in your body, and about which you all know that it must constantly keep going in order to live. We might call the French revolution or the post-communist swing a *cultural metabolē*, and we might reflect about the need of constant changes in order to constantly adapt to new group situations on the social level. (And we might reflect about the difficulties to adopt such changes institutionally or individually. There are very old people in nowadays Eastern Germany who have seen and lived through four systemic changes, each of them with a different vision of the world. Similar with university institutions, per definition less flexible than individuals. According to the mutations which they underwent or not underwent, they will imprint their students' thinking and behavior for the rest of their lives).

So, a preliminary answer to the question *Who is We?* might be: We are links, links in a inter-generational chain which is a double one. Our DNA comes from our mother and from our father, as their DNA plus mutations came from their ancestors, and as it will be given later to our children and grand-children. Similarly, each of us is a link for language, art, science, and moral responsibility in the long chain of mutations between our ancestors and our grand-children.

But we scholars have a specific advantage, even when we are only links in a chain, and even when we are truly modest, and call us dwarfs in respect to the many generations ahead, as Bernard of Chartres (1120) said. Isaac Newton (1676) put it this way: "If I have seen further [than others] it is by standing on y<sup>e</sup> shoulders of giants."<sup>8</sup>

#### 4. Is *culture* a singular?

At the core of many a conflict in this very world is the presumed singularity of the respective culture. National leaders feel themselves giants on the shoulders of giants. So, it seems to be necessary to ask: *Is culture a singular?* How could we otherwise talk about inter-culturality which per definition seems to require a plurality of cultures, the one in dialogue (or non-dialogue) with the other and with a third?

In linguistics, grammatical number is a category that expresses count distinctions. When you learn a modern foreign language, most grammars will tell you that there are *two* grammatical numbers and basta: singularis and pluralis.

In Europe, many languages have been or are by far more differentiated. Look to the word *politics*. It stems from Greek language, which had, as all early Indo-European languages, a One-numbering, the singularis, a Two-numbering, the dualis, and a More-than-Two-numbering, the pluralis. The Greek word for more-than-two is *poly*. So, politics is when you have to find agreements between more than two parties. Politics goes beyond the dualis, therefore differentiation is very useful.

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<sup>8</sup> Isaac Newton: letter to Robert Hooke, 5<sup>th</sup> February, 1676.

Semitic languages are by far richer than modern Western standard. According to Wilhelm von Humboldt, Arabic language has singularis for one item; dualis for two; limited pluralis—the paucalis from *pauci*, just a few—for three to nine items; the multitude pluralis for ten and more items; and even the plural-pluralis for an unlimited number. (In modern chemistry you will find a perfect example of oriental-occidental unity in a counterpart to such a numbering: *monosaccharide* simple sugar, *disaccharide* double sugar, *oligosaccharide* sugar of a few, and *polysaccharide* multiple sugar with more than ten simple-sugar molecules). Some Austronesian languages additionally have a trial. Linguists thought for a long time that there would be a quaternal. Many languages have a *paralis* for items which you normally find pairwise, like hands, or twins, or scissors.

In old German books you will find *Chapter one—The other chapter* [not *Second* Bropóñ vtoróy]—*Third chapter*. In Russian or Polish languages, you find important signs of dualis, in some Bavarian dialects, you will find such a *diploid wording* still in use. »There are more things in [grammar and on] earth, Horatio, / Than are dreamt of in your philosophy« as Shakespeare might have put it.<sup>9</sup>

But what about words which gain a plurality not by declination, but which bear plurality inside? What about non-count nouns such as *water* in English, and *mayim* in Hebrew? Both mean the same, one is a *singulare tantum*, having only a singular form; the other is a *plurale tantum*, having only a plural form.

And what about *collectivum* words, such as *team*. You may remember that Wilde, Shaw, and Churchill, likewise are blamed for saying: “England and America are two countries separated by the same language”.<sup>10</sup> In regard to the use of collectiva, you will find such a separation, indeed. British speakers would say: “The team *are* fighting among themselves”; American speakers invariably would use the singularis: “The team *is* fighting among themselves”. Therefore Georgia *are* winning the next Olympics, not *is* winning.

What kind of word is *culture*? Is it a normal singular with a possible plural? Is it a *singulare tantum*? Is it a *collectivum*? Is it a *dualis* which, like a twin, needs a complementary term?

We know that *culture* is a very young word, in the year 2017 is it just two thousand and sixty two years old. Therefore it has nothing to do with proto-Europeans describing plants, animals and ghosts in a peasant’s language, far from modern language setting. We know precisely, who invented the term *culture*. It was Cicero in his *Tusculanae disputationes* written 45 before Christ and dedicated to Marcus Iunius Brutus Caepio (the one who killed Caesar the next year and so declenched a cultural metabole similar to the French revolution).

First Cicero speaks about the need of complementarity between the field and its cultivation, *ager quamvis fertilis sine cultura fructuosus esse non potest. res sine altera debilis. [A field, though fertile, cannot yield a harvest without cultivation. The one is feeble without the other.]* Then he speaks about

<sup>9</sup> cf. Hamlet 1.5.167-8.

<sup>10</sup> Actually there is no source for this except *The Canterville Ghost* (1887) by Oscar Wilde: “We [the British] have really everything in common with America nowadays except, of course, language”.

the need of complementarity between cognition and its cultivation, *sine doctrina animus fructuosus esse non potest*. [Without learning the mind cannot yield a harvest.] And then he tells us that he would use an image, a metaphora, transferring the cultivation idea from the earth field to the young persons head.<sup>11</sup>

*Culture* is basically a metaphor, not more and not less. It is a metaphor for what you, dear students, are doing: *learning*. (Or should do at least.) Philosophy, which in this context basically means just the ability to distinguish ideas and terms, is the cultivation, in Latin: *cultura*, of the soul. Learning with *studium*, which means zeal, (старание *starániye*) draws out your vices by the root, prepares your mind to receive what your professors try to sow, and will make you able to deliver the most abundant fruit when achieving the academic goal.

Dear students, the word culture has been invented by a frustrated professor. My impression is, he preferred mute cabbage to young bright people.

Dear colleagues, a metaphor is a non-count word. You can not count it by cubit, hollow body, light years. It is an image made of words, not a physical object. You may call the ability, to recognize a metaphor as such, cultural alphabetization. It is e.g. the ground for the law system, and for each complex society. Cultural alphabetization might be the most important tool for orientation in a changing environment.

## 5. A fast history of the term *culture*

For understanding, whether culture is a singular or not, let us rush very fast through the reception of the new wording.

One and a half millennia after Cicero, within the French language area, Bruyère, Montaigne, Voltaire, or Rousseau tied up to Cicero by using „culture“, without any attributes, in the meaning „éducation“ (*e-ducere* which means to lead out of somewhere, you may complement: out of *barbarosity*).

Within the English language area, since the 16th century we find composita like „culture of the body“, „culture of their manners“ and „culture of the mind“. (You may say: *Unbarbarosity* of the body, of the manners etc.).

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<sup>11</sup> Nam ut [analogy! Mt, v] agri non omnes frugiferi sunt qui coluntur. [...] sic [icon! mtv] animi non omnes culti fructum ferunt. Atque, ut in eodem simili verser, ut [analogy! mtv] ager quamvis fertilis sine cultura fructuosus esse non potest, sic [icon! mtv] sine doctrina animus; **ita est utraque res sine altera debilis**. Cultura autem animi philosophia est; haec extrahit vitia radicitus et praeparat animos ad satius accipiendos eaque mandat eis et, ut ita dicam, serit, quae adulta fructus uberrimos ferant. | For as not all cultivated fields are harvest-yielding, and as there is no truth in what Attius says,—“Though seed be sown on unpropitious soil, / It springs and ripens by its innate virtue,” [From the Atreus of Attius]—so do not all cultivated minds bear fruit. To continue the figure: as a field, though fertile, cannot yield a harvest without cultivation, no more can the mind without learning; thus **each is feeble without the other**. But philosophy is the culture of the soul. It draws out vices by the root, prepares the mind to receive seed, and commits to it, and, so to speak, sows in it what, when grown, may bear the most abundant fruit.

Within the German language area, Samuel von Pufendorf takes culture as opposed to barbarity and brutal nature, too. Perfectibility in the era of enlightenment means, that the human being can flower out what he carries as potential in him, presupposed he avoids the likewise inherent corruptibility. Culture in this context means a sort of count down till humanity comes to full display. (By the way: if you want to understand the difference between school, loading you with knowledge, and university—imagine Ilia University as a sort of БайҚоңыр Baikonur institution of education counting *ten-nine-eight-...-two-one-start*, charged with unveiling your inner potentials. Remember Humboldt's idea of the university as a place forming a personality.)

The Spanish and Italian language areas went with the French, the American with the English, the Russian and Scandinavian with the German. (In Russian language “kul'turnyj chelovek” still today represents an educated human individual). As to the term *culture*, we find a tripartite Europe. But within all three language areas, *culture* is a *singulare tantum*. There can not be another culture and not a third culture.

Pufendorf's culture as opposed to barbarity and brutal nature, gave legitimation of political power, too. Imagine the sovereign's missionary task to free his subjects from natural barbarity, and to open their cultural potentials. This is important to understand the German or Russian investment in the arts from Baroque times till socialism. On the contrary, British scholars are raised in a country where public subsidies for the arts have been forbidden since 1689, American scholars write in a country where public subsidies for the arts have been installed as late as 1965 and have been cut to zero in 2017. Greater Europe is divided by the different use of a similar word.

Let's return to Valmy. In the eternal fight between the *Gauls* and *les Allemands*, both sides used sometimes cannons and always words. Kant and other frenchophobic German writers distinguished between culture and *civilization*, a term coined 1757 by Mirabeau, for German men an ape-like behaviour uncomparable to truly sophisticated German *Kultur*. Heinrich Heine would comment this approach in his *Germany. A Winter's Tale*: “The Russians and the French held the land, / The British rule the seas, / But our sway is uncontested / In the airy realm of dreams. – Franzosen und Russen gehört das Land, / Das Meer gehört den Briten, / Wir aber besitzen im Luftreich des Traums / Die Herrschaft unbestritten.“ Please note, that both, *civilization* and *Kultur*, were still used as *singulare tantum*, not limited to one of the countries involved. The difference between the countries was, which paradigm men prioritized. (Women have not been asked. I am shure that German women would have depreciated French *civilization* much less than Mr Kant).

In French and English languages, the two terms *culture* and *civilization* coincided. Edward Burnett Tylor would define 1871: “Culture, or civilization, taken in its broad, ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”.<sup>12</sup> (From this ethnological approach Russian Культурология Kul'turologiya should develop, which has

<sup>12</sup> Tylor, Edward Burnett (1871): *Primitive Culture*, London 1871, S. 1.

nothing to do with British Pop Art and its *Cultural Studies*.) Culture, or civilization, for Tylor is a *singulare tantum*. But according to Tylor, not everybody on our planet is partaking in culture, the Pacific people the least, the Florentine renaissance more, the city of London the most, with Tylor on top.

Many years later, 1934, when the British Empire had severely weakened, and accepted parity with the US *marine, and slowly gave les adieux to the idea of a British dominated globe, a certain Toynbee*,<sup>13</sup> in *A Study of History*, again at London, used the pluralis form *civilizations*, which in German reads *Hochkulturen*. Toynbee described the Babylonian civilization, the Egyptian one etc., all of them early societies, religiously hierarchical, urbanized, based on the division of labour.

Again some years later, in his search for an enemy image—the cold war had come to an end and the Military-Industrial Complex of both sides of the former Berlin Wall showed serious exhaustion, close to *shigelosis* risk—a certain Samuel Huntington relocated these early societies to present-day societies. 1993 he staged a *Clash of Civilizations* in Foreign Affairs, 1996 he re-encated this in his book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. Hence we have a war of Islam against..., against what? Against the occident, a medieval term coined against the negatively seen orient and now used by Neo-Nationalists throughout Europe. (We will immediately turn back to this argument, because here is the political need of intercultural studies.)

## HUNTINGTON'S CIVILIZATIONAL DIVIDES

Samuel Huntington categorized the world into nine civilizations, arguing that the fault lines between them would shape international relations and serve as the driving force of conflict in the post-Cold War world.

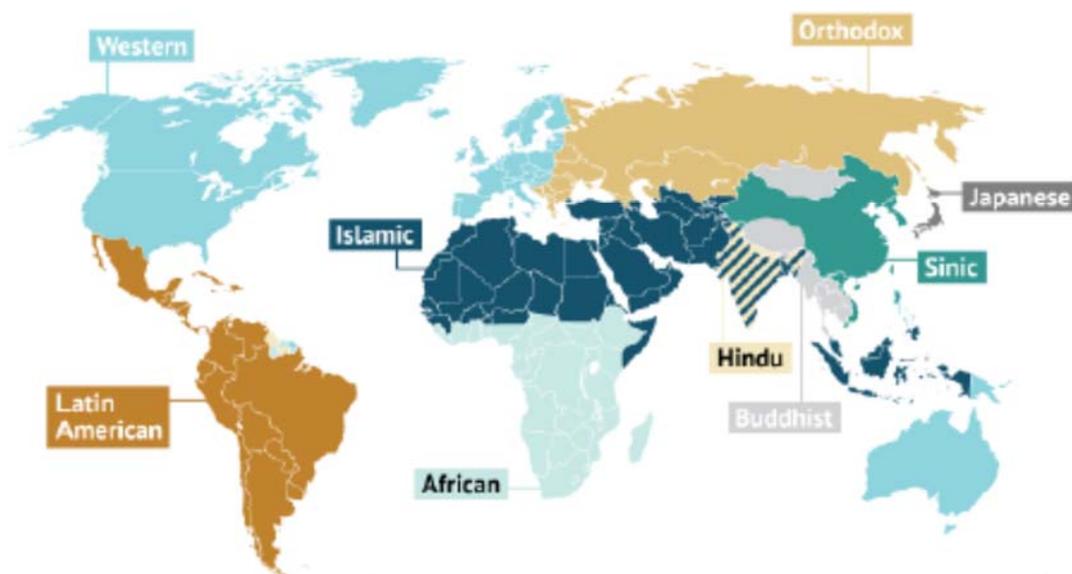


Fig 5: Huntington's Civilizational Divides.

<sup>13</sup> Toynbee, Arnold Joseph (1934 – 1961): *A Study of History*, Bd. I – X, London 1934 – 1954, Zusatzbde. XI – XII ebda. 1959/61

After World War II, between Toynbee and Huntington, Americans found it easy to *buy* things in Dollars even when knowing nothing about the language of the other. But they found it difficult to *sell* things knowing nothing about the habits of the other. Hence they founded *intercultural studies* as well as *area studies*. Thanks to Huntington, intercultural studies have left the mongerial zone and become important in serious matters like war, terrorism, and the like.

But when you search for “cultures” in the plural form, you will encounter a problem. E.g. the American Society for Microbiology works with cultures of prokaryota, of bacteria, and edits the “cultures-magazine”. You will find a “Cultures of Resistance Network Foundation” (“which aims to promote and support organizations, activists, and artists who seek a more peaceful, just, and democratic world [and] does not accept unsolicited grant requests”). You easily see, this is within the British tradition of 16th century, “culture of something”, making appeal to *unbarbarosity*.) You will find The Festival of Cultures at Charlottesville Community („Come and celebrate the cultural and linguistic diversity of our local community”). But you will hardly find “cultures” in the plural form in the same sense as in inter-cultural studies.

To make it short: The latter take their name from *culture*, but they deal with differences and/or similarities between *civilizations*.

## 6. A first conclusion

Rector Magnifice, dear colleagues, dear students, dear guests!

Before we come to a first conclusion, let us have a *pragmatic shift*. Why are we discussing the question: Interdisciplinary studies in Interculturality? We are doing so because our world confronts migration. 2015 has been the year when the virtual community of migrants has conquered a virtual place # 20 in the ranking of nations, between France and the UK.



Fig 6: Migration 2015.

Up to this very day, and since 1648, politics is organized on the national scale. The underlying paradigm for nations is unity. First, since 1648 and the introduction of international law, unity was granted by the figure of an absolute monarch. Ethnic, linguistic, religious heterogeneity just didn't matter. After 1806 we see the rise of a new paradigm, national unity granted by ethnic, linguistic, religious homogeneity of a distinct people which will fight for political autonomy by inventing a unique culture through Georgian or Czech or Bulgarian language schools, national museums, national theatres and the like. Singular culture serves as a tool for fostering political autonomy, for self-regulation.

By the way: It is a double fighting. In Georgia e.g. bottom up against Tzarist oppression, and upside down against other ethnic utterances on the territory, which are now, in a new political mathematics, called minorities. From a juridical perspective the point here is that when you establish a demos replacing the absolute monarch on a given territory, you have to load up the demos spiritually claiming it a para-sacral "nation" in the modern sense, worth sacrificing one's life for the "nation".<sup>14</sup> This is what happens throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The most significant example is the *Tanzimât* (reorganization) of the Ottoman Empire (1839-1876). It used an Arabic word *millet* (nation) to provide autocephaly / autonomy to its diverse personal collectivities identified as confessions such as the Greek Orthodox community, the Armenian community, the Jewish community and the like. Later, the Young Turkish Movement adopted the paradigm of Territorial Collectivity as a base for its claim of territorial authority. Hence it denied the rights of minorities and proclaimed a homogeneous Turkish national culture as the cultural basis for the Turkish demos replacing the sultan.<sup>15</sup> The juridical and political problem is finding the way back from a *territorial collectivity* definition (in the *numerus singularis*) to a *personal collectivities* definition (allowing a *numerus pluralis* on one and the same territory). What we call democracy, is based on a static paradigm horrifying any societal change.

When you want to understand the successful America First!, Mexicans back to Mexico, you just have to look to the statistics: "Caucasians" will become a minority of less than 50 percent in the United States around 2040. Hispanics, Aseans, the Black and the Native Indians Communities will count more citizen together.

Emigration, Immigration, Transmigration as well as Elitist and Global Companies' overcoming of local boundaries is a new reality, lethal for the internal concept of nation states, and lethal for the multilateral concept of inter-nationality. We see with Trump in the US and his American singularity, with LePen and her French singularity, with the AfD and its German singularity, we see in Austria, Hungary, Poland, Turkey, that heterogeneity is

<sup>14</sup> See for example Paul James, *Nation Formation: Towards a Theory of Abstract Community*, Vol. I, Sage, London, 1996

<sup>15</sup> Matthias Theodor Vogt: *Wie weiter in der Armenienfrage? Ein Vorschlag zu den möglichen politischen Folgerungen aus dem „Ökumenischen Gottesdienst im Berliner Dom anlässlich der Erinnerung an den Völkermord an Armeniern, Aramäern und Pontos-Griechen“ am 23. April 2015 und der „Debatte zu den Deportationen und Massakern an den Armeniern vor 100 Jahren“ im Deutschen Bundestag am 24. April 2015.* Europäisches Journal für Minderheitenfragen Vol 8 No 3 2015. Verlag Österreich, Wien 2015

inacceptable for both, for populist nationalists and for their followers. Everybody calls for a singularis for his or her singularity. Culture has become a *singularis exclusivum*, it is no longer a *singulare tantum*.

Let us have a look on an example. The newest scandal in Turkish ideological battles concerns Ahmet Güneştekin's sculpture *Kostantiniyye* (2015) installed outside of the A Plus shopping mall in the Ataköy district of Istanbul. *Ḳoṣṭantīniyye* in Ottoman Turkish (قسطنطينيه) was for four centuries the official name to Konstantinopolis after Ottomans took over in 1453—instead of the Greek ending *-polis*, city, the Arab ending *-iyye*, place, was used. Only in 1928, the new Turkish government changed the official name back to a Greek one—*eis tin polin* means *into the town*. So, Istanbul is not at all a Turk naming, but an Armenian way of stammering Greek language, dating back to the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Güneştekin's sculpture addresses the many names of the town since Byzantium. But immediately after installation, the mob called for take-it-away, threatening to burn down the shopping mall. And so was done in December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016.



Fig 7: Ahmet Güneştekin's sculpture *Kostantiniyye* (2015) installed outside of the A Plus shopping Mall in the Ataköy district of Istanbul, near Atatürk Airport

Threehundred years before, Daniel Defoe started his *The True-Born Englishman* (London 1701) with the phrase: »Thus from a Mixture of all kinds began, / That Het'rogeneous Thing, An Englishman«. Please imagine the fate of a Turkish poet when writing to Erdoğan in 2017: »Thus from a Mixture of all kinds began, / That Het'rogeneous Thing, A Turkishman«. Politically, he could do wrong more than doing so. Genetically, he would be right. And culturally? This question I would like to leave to you and to the debate.

So let us conclude:

1. Inter-cultural studies take their name from *culture*, but they deal with differences and/or similarities between *civilizations*.
2. Each single *civilization* is presumed, to have an inner unity called culture in the singularis and meant to be a *singulare tantum* without pluralis.
3. It is most important to see that such unity-setting is a teleological approach typical for Romantics (Wilhelm von Humboldt "The origin and the end of all shared being is

unity”).<sup>16</sup> In a way, today’s nation states are victims of a too simple understanding of German Romanticism. (Actually, the same Wilhelm von Humboldt once spoke—on behalf of the dualis—about a “Collectiv-Singular, which brings back multifoldness to unity”).)

4. As we have learned, heterogeneity, multifariousness, the plurality of “I” and “We”, is one of the biological keys to the human being. For quite many effects, homo sapiens is a *composite organism*.
5. From all what I mentioned on history, on literature etc. you may have understood that culture is such a *composite organism*, too.
6. But when, in the Romantic epoch, the nation was idealized to have a body of itself (named *Volkskörper*), from the unity approach derived a homogeneity principle. Within a teleological approach, heterogeneity does not combine with the sacralization of a nation.
7. What normatively is needed, is a political (and academic) conception, which overcomes the unity parading and understand societies as a *composite organism*

## 7. What means inter?

A last one more term needs to be clarified. What means *inter*?

The opposite term to *inter* would be *ultra*. In antiquity it described Herakles unable to go *beyond* the street of Gibraltar—*non plus ultra*, you can not go beyond this boundary. Emperor Charles V. cancelled the *non* and coined *plus ultra*, as a sign of his universal power without limits. You will find it in nowadays Spanish coat of arms.



Fig 8: Spain. Plus Ultra.

<sup>16</sup> In a way it is theological. The Old Testament shows traces of *henotheism*. A specific type of a One God religion based on belief in and worship of a single god while also believing in the existence or possible existence of other deities (Schelling on early Ancient Greeks, Max Müller on religion in India). Abrahamatic monotheism developed only later and became a fundamental dogma for all three Jewish, Christian, and Islamic religions in a wide distance from multipolar Eastern traditions which e.g. allowed Jesuits in China inculturation strategies. One and nothing more? Or unity in diversity? It would be intriguing to analyse the United Nation’s cultural policies and the motto of the European Union with linguistic and theological methods.

*Plus ultra* is normality in every academic research. If you would limit yourself there where the foregoing publication had stopped, too, there would be virtually no progress in science, in *sciendum* (in that what we need to know). Each discipline, each researcher has such columns of Herakles every morning at departure. There is no need, to name this and to speak about *ultradisciplinary research* or something like that. Research is *ultradisciplinary research*, or it is not research.

When you go to Rome and cross the river Tevere, you are at Trans- or Trastevere. So *trans* means crossing a barrier. Transnational companies are a kind of business operating beyond national borders and beyond traditional national fiscality, such as Google. Transnational organized crime (TOC) refers specifically to crime offending fundamental values of the international community (culture in the singular). Transnational cultural artefacts is a term within cultural studies to describe a certain type of literary production and reception which one can not curtail to one specific culture or nation. The Armâni or Aromanians or Vlach are a migrant group in the Balkans, named after the Roman Empire, and a typical example of transnational migration. In GDR, a capitalist car was not allowed to stop at the Transit-Autobahn, it had to go straight through. The Transsib does not connect Moscow and Nowosibirsk, instead it connects Moscow and Wladiwostok. *Trans* means avoiding what you pass.



Fig 9: Rome: Tra[n]s-Tevere.

*Transdisciplinary research* “allows investigators to transcend their own disciplines”.<sup>17</sup> So we might at first hand describe transdisciplinarity as a utopia, comparable to Heine’s “But our

<sup>17</sup> According to Rosenfield (1992), Transdisciplinary Research consists in a «collaboration in which exchanging information, altering discipline-specific approaches, sharing resources and integrating disciplines achieves a common scientific goal.» Harvard University defines it «as research efforts conducted by investigators from different disciplines working jointly to create new conceptual, theoretical, methodological, and translational innovations that integrate and move beyond discipline-specific approaches to address a common problem.»

sway is uncontested / In the airy realm of dreams”. But what happens when philologists asked IT specialists to help collecting big data from Shakespeare and the like. They asked for an Extensible Language Markup. The result was Extensible Markup Language XML which you all know and which you all use every day. So, transdisciplinarity may result in practical findings. But as all geniality, one can not command such findings. One has to start within one’s own discipline.

We therefore should modest ourselves to *inter-disciplinarity*. Quoting Aboelela this is a kind of research “undertaken by scholars from two or more distinct scientific disciplines. The research is based upon a conceptual model that links or integrates theoretical frameworks from those disciplines, uses study design and methodology that is not limited to any one field, and requires the use of perspectives and skills of the involved disciplines throughout multiple phases of the research process.”<sup>18</sup>

## 8. From *inter* to *intra*

Concerning our question “What means *inter*?” we can also find an answer in *intra-affairs*. Some of you may have wondered why they have to fill in “Caucasian race” when flying to the United States. Why are Europeans considered as *Homo sapiens caucasicus*? The answer is: with Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (Gotha 1752 – Göttingen 1840), a theorist of epigenesis, who criticized the theory of preformation. Blumenbach was a renowned antiracist, criticizing the presumed superiority of Europeans vs. African people. In his dissertation *De generis humani varietate nativa (On the Natural Variety of Mankind)*, University of Göttingen, 1775) he developed a matrix of “4 [later 5] varieties of man kinds, one evolved from the other”. He explains: “Caucasian variety—I have taken the name of this variety from Mount Caucasus, both because its neighborhood, and especially its southern slope, produces the most beautiful race of men, I mean the Georgian; and because all physiological reasons converge to this, that in that region, if anywhere, it seems we ought with the greatest probability to place the autochthones (original members) of mankind.”<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Aboelela, S. W., Larson, E., Bakken, S., Carrasquillo, O., Formicola, A., Glied, S. A., Haas, J. and Gebbie, K. M. (2007), Defining Interdisciplinary Research: Conclusions from a Critical Review of the Literature. *Health Services Research*, 42:329–346. doi: 10.1111/j.1475-6773.2006.00621.x

<sup>19</sup> Blumenbach 1798, p. 204: „Diese Race erhielt ihren Namen von dem Berge Kaukasus, weil die ihm benachbarten Länder, und zwar vorzüglich der Strich nach Süden, von dem schönsten Menschenstamme, dem georgischen bewohnt sind. Es wird genug feyn, aus der Menge von Augen- zeugen einen einzigen, aber klaffischen, anzuführen, Jo. Chardin Th. 1. S. 171. —Der Stamm der Georgier ist der schönste des Orients, und ich kann wohl sagen der Welt. Ich habe in diesem Lande kein häßliches Gesicht unter keinem der beyden Geschlechter bemerkt; aber ich habe Engelsgesichter gesehen. Die Natur hat hier die meisten Weiber mit Reizen geschmückt, welche man sonst nirgendsieht. Mir scheint es unmöglich sie zu sehen, und sie nicht zu lieben. Reizendere Gesichter, schönern Wuchs als der Georgirinnen, kann man nicht mahlen, u. f. w.“

250 years later we know, that the origin of mankind lies rather in the East African Rift System (for Eve and her mitochondrial DNA) resp. on West African Congo delta (for Adam and his Y-DNA). But as to Out-of-Africa, Greater Georgia corresponds indeed.

More interesting than the questions of origin is it to have a look to the Blumenbach position within the Lewontin 1972--Mitton 1977--Edwards 2003 controversy. Lewontin argued (on the base of a 17 marker analysis) that 99.99 % of genes are non variant between human individuals, from the remaining 0.01 % are

- 85.4 % variations within populations
- 8.3 % variations between populations within one race
- 6.3 % variations corresponding to racial classification. This is 0.00063 percent of all variations.

What does this mean for you, dear students? When you step outside Ilia University, the chance to meet genetic diversity, is 12 times higher than travelling to Timbuktu. Lewontin concludes that races have “no genetic or taxonomic significance”. Many later testings have approved these findings. 1998 the American Anthropological Association stated that racial classification would be meaningless.

Only a few years later Mitton 1977, followed by Edwards 2003 with a world wide controversy, argued that while Lewontin's statements on variability are correct when examining the frequency of different alleles at an individual locus between individuals, it is nonetheless possible to classify individuals into different racial groups with an accuracy that approaches 100 percent when one takes into account the frequency of the alleles at several loci at the same time. This happens because the frequency of the alleles tends to cluster differently for different populations. In Edwards's words, “most of the information that distinguishes populations is hidden in the *correlation structure* of the data.”

So, within one scientific discipline, genetics, we have a first scientific truth (Lewontin 1972) and we have a second scientific truth (Mitton 1977, Edwards 2003). Both stand parallel. The first one corresponds to a certain political position, 1968 was the Flower Power peak year, *normatively* based on the equalness of people and of peoples. From this normative position arose a center left mainstream. It is dominating e.g. in Germany since the 1970s. The second one corresponds to another political position which George Orwell shortened to “All animals are equal. Some are more equal”. This non-normative position accepts inequalities between people and between peoples. All politics in modern democracies has to find a balance arrangement between these two positions.

Let us have a look on one of the inventors of ethnic differentiation, the biologist Blumenbach. He includes among the Caucasian or white variety all Europeans (except Saami and Finish), western Asians up to the river Obi, the Caspian Sea and the Ganges. Finally the inhabitants of Northern Africa. This kind of geography places Tiflis indeed in the middle of a cultural or anthropological triangle.

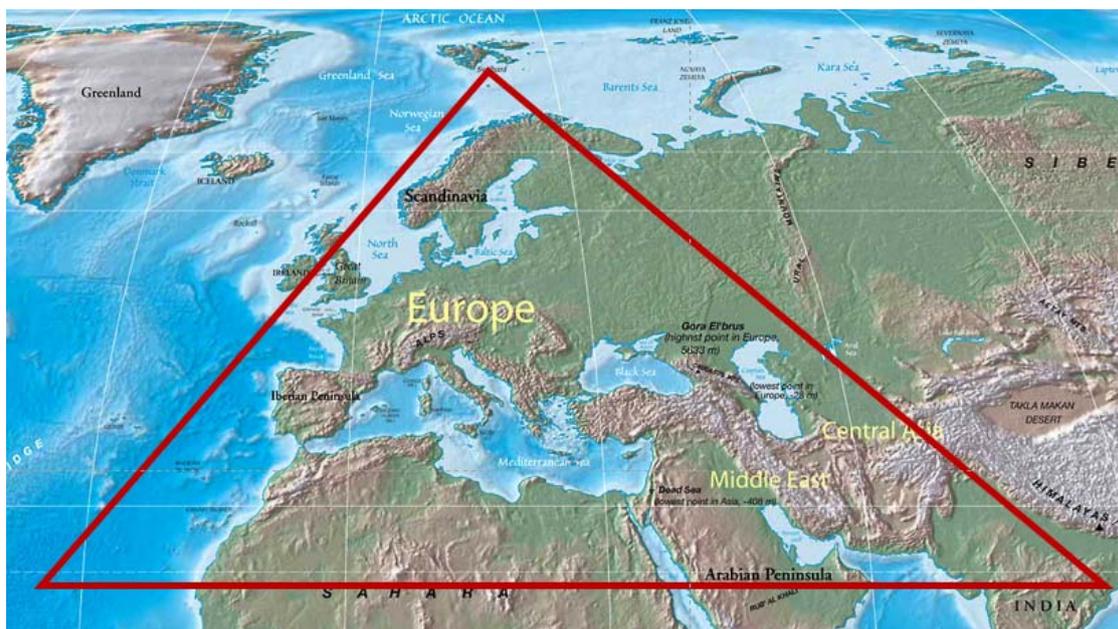


Fig 10: Simplified map of the Blumenbach Triangle (1775)

You might argue that Blumenbach wrote 250 years ago. So what says contemporary genetics? (By the way you may note that genetics bases its research on a singular, on *haplotypes*—from ἀπλόος *haplóos* “single”, combined with εἶδος *eídos* “form”—a single set of chromosomes). Human being has 23 pairs of chromosomes. 22 of these pairs are autosom, equal for both genders. Chromosome nr 23 is a gonosom, either a female homozygous XX, or a male heterozygous XY. You can test either (1) autosomal *atDNA*, or (2) mitochondrial *mtDNA* or (3) *Y-DNA*. Nucleobases are the alphabet of DNA. There are four of them: adenine (A), thymine (T), guanine (G) and cytosine (C). They always go by pairs, A with T, and G with C. Such pairs are called “base pairs”. The 46 chromosomes of human DNA are composed of a total of 3,000 million base pairs. Researchers concentrate on the Y chromosome since it possesses 60 million nucleobases (comparable to 153 million for the X chromosome). Mitochondrial DNA is found outside the cell's nucleus, and therefore outside of the chromosomes. It consists only of 16,569 bases. A SNP (single nucleotide polymorphism) is a mutation in a single base pair. At present, only a few hundreds SNP's define all the human haplogroups for mtDNA or Y-DNA. Maps of Y-findings are rather complex. (

Maps of mt-findings are less complex. Without entering into details, a simplified map of human wanderings based on mt-findings corresponds roughly to Blumenbach: (1) a first variation group in sub-Sahara Africa, (2) wandering to Northern India with the R and U groups installing themselves in the Blumenbach triangle, (3) parallel to other groups installing themselves in the Asian area from where (4) settlement of the American double-continent started, and (5a) a last migration wave starting from nowadays Malaysia, contemporary (5b) to Northern settlements after the glacial maximum

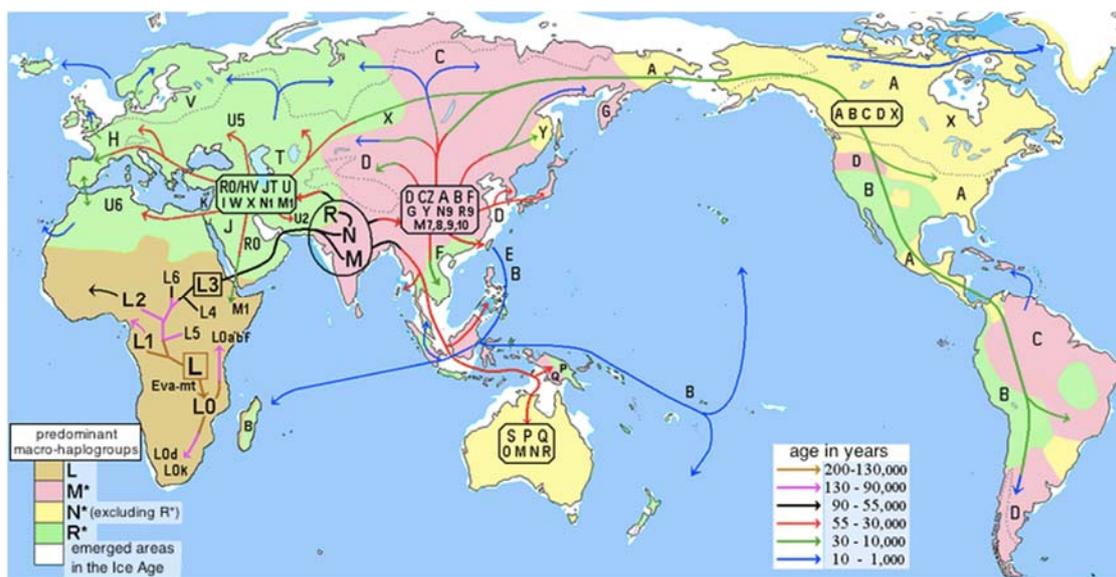


Fig 11: Simplified map of human wanderings based on mt-DNA findings (Lucioni 2014)

Please note that these are not yet hard facts, ethnicity determination through haplogroups still is rather a model in constant evolution. For a complex interdisciplinary study—combining genetical, archeological, and linguistic findings for the Caucasus area—see e.g. Yunusbayev *et al.* 2011 *The Caucasus as an Asymmetric Semipermeable Barrier to Ancient Human Migrations*.<sup>20</sup>

With Blumenbach in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and with contemporary genetics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Samuel Huntington and his *Clash of Civilizations* encounters a serious problem: Within the Blumenbach triangle of orient and occident, his clash becomes an internal, an *intra-cultural* affair between brothers which basically converse in only five families of language (three of them in the Caucasus plus the Indo-European and the Semitic families). All of them believe historically in the same god. Normatively speaking and politically, it might be good, they would know more about their relatedness. And somebody would dare to open *intra-cultural studies*.

## B. PRAXIS

### 9. What means all this in practice?

Rector Magnifice, dear colleagues, dear students, dear guests!

I conclude. What means all this in practice?

<sup>20</sup> *The Caucasus as an Asymmetric Semipermeable Barrier to Ancient Human Migrations*. Bayazit Yunusbayev, Mait Metspalu, Mari Järve, Ildus Kutuev, Siiri Rootsi, Ene Metspalu, Doron M. Behar, Kärt Varendi, Hovhannes Sahakyan, Rita Khusainova, Levon Yepiskoposyan, Elza K. Khusnutdinova, Peter A. Underhill, Toomas Kivisild, Richard Villems, *Molecular Biology and Evolution* (2011) 29 (1): 359-365.

Leibniz<sup>21</sup> reminded us to combine *theoria cum praxis*, Ilia is proud not to forget the teaching component. Supposed, Ilia State University and its partner institutions would open Intercultural Studies (or even *intra-cultural* Studies), how should this program look like?

I propose to you a slogan which might guide the researchers and the candidates, and which might guide the university in case building up such a program: You may remember Schatz: “Our cultural system is unprecedented in nature. Its shaping power gives us language, art, science, and moral responsibility”. Ilia therefore might say: “Without cultural competence, no intercultural competence”.

As for researchers, senior fellows, PostDocs and PhD-candidates:

- **Fellows have to understand the individual and the society as *composite organism*.**
- **Fellows have to understand the *hidden twins* in each of us, on individual and on societal level.**
- **Fellows therefore may need a *critical conscience of singularity discourses*.**
- **Fellows may need a *thorough knowledge* in order to break singularity discourses.**

They need a broad historical knowledge as a base of all. And they need familiarity with a couple of disciplines such as:

- **Parameters of Identity in European Cultural History**
- **Orient and Occident: A History of Distrust and Similarities**
- **Intercultural Law**
- **Sociology of Migration**
- **Economic and Cultural Areas such as Subsahara-Africa; Iberoamerica, Middle East and North Africa, Far East**
- **Intercultural Psychology**
- **Intercultural Philosophy and Esthetics**
- **Intercultural Transformation-Processes and the Role of the Arts**
- **Intercultural Encounters through the Arts**
- **Strategies of Intercultural Cultural Policies (Enculturation Policies: Minorities, Immigration, Multiculturalism, Parallel Societies and Citizenship, Cultural Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution)**

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<sup>21</sup> Leibniz' Denkschrift in Bezug auf die Einrichtung einer Societas Scientiarum et Artium in Berlin vom 24. März 1700, einer wahrscheinlich für D. E. Jablonski bestimmten Skizze der gleichnamigen Denkschrift für den brandenburgischen Kurfürsten vom 26. März 1700 und lautet vollständig: „Wäre demnach der Zweck *theoriam cum praxi* zu vereinigen, und nicht allein die Künste und die Wissenschaften, sondern auch Land und Leute, Feldbau, Manufacturen und Commercien, und, mit einem Wort, die Nahrungsmittel zu verbessern, überdieß auch solche Entdeckungen zu thun, dadurch die überschwengliche Ehre Gottes mehr ausgebreitet, und dessen Wunder besser als bißher erkannt, mithin die christliche Religion, auch gute Policy, Ordnung und Sitten theils bey heidnischen, theils noch rohen, auch wol gar barbarischen Völkern gepflanzet oder mehr ausgebreitet würden.“

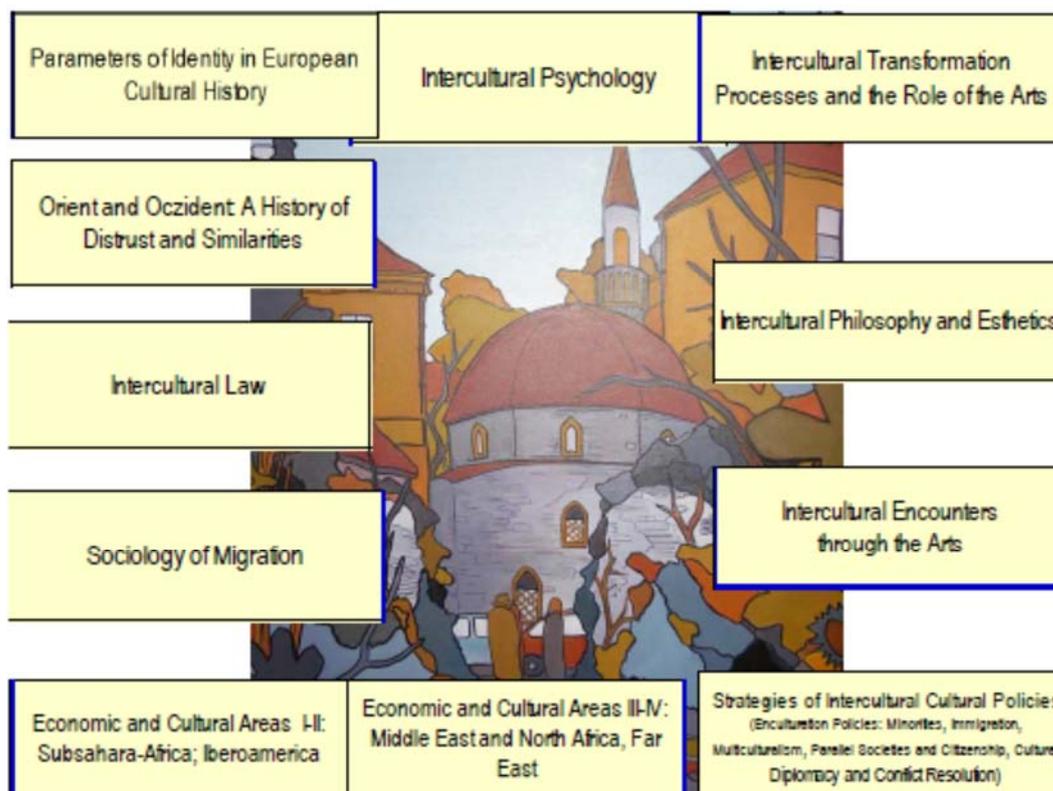


Fig 12: Elements of an Interdisciplinary Approach on Interculturality.

Dear colleagues from Ilia University School of Arts and Sciences, the School of Law, the Iliuni Business School, the School of Natural Sciences and Engineering,

I would be most interested to hear from you, which aspects and which disciplines are missing for a truly interdisciplinary approach to the phenomena of inter-culturality and intra-culturality, according to you, and in which way your chairs might participate within your *RESULT* approach.

Thank you for your hospitality and your kind attention! I am looking forward to your remarks, and to learning from you.