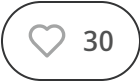


Westernology: Towards a Sovereign Russian Science

by Alexander Dugin



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Alexander Dugin introduces the concept of “Westernology” as a critical framework to analyze and reject Western civilization’s claims to universalism, especially as Russia redefines itself as a distinct state-civilization in opposition to the liberal, globalist West, advocating an intellectual and cultural decolonization of Russian thought rooted in traditional values and the Russian historical experience.

Introduction

Westernology (*Vesternologiya*) is a new concept that should be adopted in the context of the escalating conflict between Russia and NATO countries during the Special Military Operation in Ukraine, especially considering that this conflict, initially political, is now irreversibly transforming into a civilizational one. The political leadership of Russia has proclaimed the country as an independent “state-civilization” or “Russian World.” This declaration has profound implications for the entirety of Russian humanities and education, as it sets new paradigms for Russian

society's historical self-consciousness, its attitude towards Western civilization, and its understanding of other non-Western peoples and cultures.

The Russian Federation Presidential Decree No. 809, “On the Approval of the Foundations of State Policy for the Preservation and Strengthening of Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values,” clearly establishes Russia's worldview orientation towards its “traditional values.” These values essentially form the core semantic framework of the new state and societal worldview, a necessity arising directly from the intensifying confrontation with the West — especially in the broad, civilizational sense.

Russia's orientation towards tradition and strengthening identity is further developed in the Presidential Decree No. 314, “On the Approval of the Foundations of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Historical Education,” where it is explicitly stated that “Russia is a great country with a centuries-long history, a state-civilization that united Russians and many other peoples across Eurasia into a single cultural-historical community, and has made an enormous contribution to global development. At the core of Russian society's self-awareness lie traditional spiritual, moral, and cultural-historical values, which have been formed and developed throughout the entire history of Russia. The preservation and protection of these values are essential conditions for the harmonious development of the country and its multi-ethnic people and an integral part of the sovereignty of the Russian Federation” (Section II, 5).

In other words, the recognition of Russia as a state-civilization and the prioritization of state policy towards historical education and the protection of traditional values necessitates a fundamental reevaluation of the relationship with Western civilization and culture, which has become entrenched over the last few decades, or perhaps even centuries.

Russia's Unique Path: Pros and Cons

This leads us directly to the 19th-century debate between Slavophiles and Westernizers, later continued by the Russian Eurasianists, who followed the Slavophile line. The Slavophiles argued that Russia is indeed a unique and original Eastern Slavic, Byzantine-Orthodox civilization, a distinct historical-cultural type. Later, the Eurasianists supplemented this approach by placing special emphasis on the positive contribution of other Eurasian peoples to the richness and uniqueness of Russian civilization. Synonyms for the state-civilization, or the Russian World, included “Russia-Eurasia” or “the state-world,” “the state-continent.”

This approach was contested by Russian Westernizers, from liberals to social democrats, who insisted that Russia is part of Western European civilization and not something original or independent. Therefore, Russia's task was to follow the West in all spheres: political, cultural, scientific, social, economic, and technological. Russian Westernizers fully embraced the principles of the Enlightenment and modern science,

accepted the theory of linear progress, and agreed that the Western path of development is universal and global, as well as that Western values must be adopted by all peoples and societies. This perspective dismissed Russia's uniqueness and, on the contrary, described it as a backward and peripheral society, subject to modernization and Westernization.

At the same time, in the 19th century, Russian Westernizers had already split into social democrats and liberals. The former believed that the future lay with a socialist society, while the latter saw it in capitalism. However, both groups were united in their unwavering belief in the universality of the Western European development path. They viewed Russia's traditional values and unique identity as obstacles to progressing along this Western path.

During the Soviet era, Marxist ideology, inheriting the social-democratic and communist version of Westernism, dominated in Russian society. The fierce confrontation with the capitalist world and the conditions of the "Cold War" after 1947 introduced a certain element into Soviet ideology that resonated with the civilizational approach of the Slavophiles and Eurasianists, although this was never officially acknowledged. The Eurasianists themselves objectively noted this transformation of Marxism in Soviet Russia, where gradually — especially during Stalin's rule — there was a return to imperial geopolitics and partially to traditional values. However, from the standpoint of state ideology, this civilizational factor was not recognized, and Soviet leaders continued to insist on the international (in essence, Western-universalist) nature of socialism and communism, refusing to acknowledge the Russian dimension of "Soviet civilization."

Nevertheless, the USSR developed a scientific system of critique against bourgeois society, allowing for a certain distance from the ideological codes of Western civilization in its liberal form, which dominated the U.S. and Europe after the defeat of Nazi Germany. However, Russia's own historical path was still interpreted exclusively in class terms, which distorted the presentation of domestic history to the point of unrecognizability, reducing it to a Western framework that did not work. Still, Soviet social sciences maintained some distance from the dominant ideology of Western liberalism, even though they shared the dogmas of progress, Enlightenment, and the main assumptions of the modern era. They accepted the historical necessity of capitalism and the bourgeois system but only as precursors to proletarian revolutions and the building of socialism.

This distance was completely eliminated with the collapse of the USSR and the abandonment of Soviet ideology. At that point, the liberal version of Westernism achieved total victory in social sciences, becoming de facto the foundational ideological framework in the social sciences of the Russian Federation up to the present. This was a result of the state's official policy starting in the 1990s, when the thesis that Russia was part of Western civilization — no longer in an alternative, socialist form but in a direct liberal-capitalist one — became the new dogma. During the perestroika era, Soviet leaders, relying on convergence theories, hoped that

rapprochement with the West and the bourgeois camp could lead to a merging of socialism and capitalism and an appropriate distribution of spheres of influence in humanity, reducing the risks of direct confrontation. However, after 1991, socialism was completely rejected, and the Russian Federation was founded on the principles of bourgeois democracy and a market economy. Social sciences then underwent an intensive transition to liberalism and the direct copying of Western epistemes in all areas of the humanities: philosophy, history, economics, psychology, etc. Some disciplines in the humanities — sociology, political science, cultural studies, etc. — were introduced in the 1980s and 1990s strictly according to Western standards.

Thus, both directly (under liberal Westernism) and indirectly (under communists), Russian social sciences have been dominated for the past 100 years by the idea that Russian society, state, and culture are part of Western civilization. In this situation, the primary goal was either to catch up (liberals) or surpass (communists) the West, while generally accepting all its key criteria, principles, codes, and epistemes. While the communists maintained some distance from “bourgeois sciences,” the liberals completely lacked such distance.

The Transitology Matrix

In the 1990s, Russian Westernizers essentially adopted the paradigm of “transitology.” According to this approach, Russia had only one goal: to rid itself of the remnants of past eras (both Soviet and Orthodox-monarchical) and merge into a single globally Western-centric civilization in its current form. Russian humanities scholars promoting transitology were tasked with facilitating this transition in every possible way, criticizing any tendencies that deviated from this vector, and actively promoting the modernization (Westernization) of social sciences.

Western theories, concepts, criteria, values, methodologies, and practices were taken as models both in content and form (hence the transition to the Bologna system, the Unified State Exam in schools, project-based and competency-based approaches in education). Scientometrics was entirely restructured along Western lines, and the degree of “scientificity” was now evaluated through the lens of how closely works, research, texts, educational programs, scientific articles, and monographs aligned with contemporary Western standards and citation indices. In other words, only that which conformed to the paradigm of transitology, i.e., movement towards the implementation of liberal paradigms and the critique of any forms or directions identified as illiberal, was considered and recognized as “scientific.” This remains the basis of the evaluation system in the humanities today.

The Trap of Western-Centric Universalism

This approach, which has dominated for the past 33 years — and if we consider Soviet internationalism and the alternative form of Westernism, for a full century — has become utterly unacceptable in the context of the Special Military Operation, which

represents a direct clash of civilizations: Russia as a state-civilization versus the civilization of the modern globalist ultra-liberal West. On September 30, 2022, in his address to the Russian people before signing the treaties on the incorporation of the DPR, LPR, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson regions into Russia, Russian President Vladimir Putin referred to this West as “Satanic.”

In particular, he said, “The dictatorship of the Western elites is directed against all societies, including the peoples of Western countries themselves. It is a challenge to everyone, a total denial of humanity, the overthrow of faith and traditional values, and the suppression of freedom, which takes on the characteristics of an inverted religion — outright Satanism... For them, our thoughts and philosophy are a direct threat, which is why they target our philosophers. Our culture and art are a danger to them, so they try to ban them. Our development and prosperity are also a threat to them — competition is growing. They do not need Russia at all, but we need it. I want to remind you that claims to world domination have repeatedly been shattered by the courage and resilience of our people. Russia will always remain Russia.”

A little later, at a session of the Valdai Club in October 2022, the President of the Russian Federation remarked: “It is no coincidence that the West asserts that it is precisely its culture and worldview that should be universal. If this is not stated outright — though it is often said directly — if not, then they behave precisely this way, insisting in fact, through their policies, that these values must be unconditionally accepted by all other participants in international relations.”

This shift in understanding Russia as a unique state-civilization and the rejection of Western culture and worldview as universal brings us back to the Slavophile-Eurasianist paradigm, which was rejected a century ago. It also revives the idea that Western civilization is just one possible path of development and that Russia must seek its own path, relying on traditional values, the meanings and foundations of its history, with the Russian people at its core, alongside the fraternal peoples of Russia-Eurasia, who together created a unique spiritual and material culture. This brings us to the concept of “Westernology.”

Definition of Westernology

It is entirely clear that the civilizational turn in Russian politics cannot maintain an assumption of the universality of Western civilization or tolerate the uncritical acceptance of its foundations and principles. Therefore, it is necessary to radically reassess the attitude towards the West as a whole and, above all, its paradigmatic positions in the field of social sciences. We can no longer accept them at face value without careful and critical examination, and without aligning them with our traditional values and the imperatives of historical education. Western civilization is not only not universal but, in its current state, it is destructive and toxic to the point of deserving the label “Satanic.” This is where the need for Westernology arises, and its meaning becomes clearer.

Westernology is a paradigmatic model for examining Western culture and the humanities, which explicitly rejects the claims of this culture and these sciences to universality, to the ultimate truth, and to the normativity of the criteria that have emerged in this sphere and which the West actively seeks to impose on humanity as something without alternatives.

To some extent, this is reminiscent of the attitude of Soviet social sciences towards bourgeois disciplines and theories, which were to be studied and taught only on the basis of serious and deep critique. The foundation of such critique was Soviet Marxism, which meticulously developed its criteria, methods, and principles. Unlike the Soviet critical model, Westernology raises even more serious objections to the West, rejecting not only Western civilization in its liberal-capitalist form but going much deeper — denouncing the anti-Christian principles of the modern era, as well as the foundations and dogmas of Western European Christianity (Catholicism and Protestantism) from even earlier periods. Russia, as a civilization, has an entirely different foundation and a completely different vector of development, which can be understood and correctly described only within the context of the paradigm of the Russian World, based on our traditional values, with these values placed at the center of attention.

Ethnocentrism as a Phenomenon

The foundation of Westernology begins with a general observation about the natural ethnocentrism of any society. This is a common notion in anthropology and sociology. It means that any group or collective, according to society's natural inclination, places itself at the center of an ordered space. Thus, the claim to the “universality” of its own qualities, norms, and principles (including language, culture, religion, cuisine, clothing, rituals, everyday practices, etc.) is inherent in both tiny archaic tribes and great empires.

The Greeks considered all surrounding peoples to be “barbaric” and themselves to be the “crown of creation.” This idea is also applied to the Jews in the Old Testament and forms the basis of Judaism and, to some extent, Christianity. The Jews are the “chosen people,” while other peoples (the “goyim”) are only partially considered human. The Chinese empire saw itself as the center of the world, hence the name China — *Zhōngguó* (中国), meaning “Middle Kingdom.” The same is true for the Sumerian-Akkadian states of Mesopotamia, the concept of universal power of the Achaemenids, and later, the rulers of Sassanid Iran. This also gave rise to the idea of Eternal Rome and, later, Moscow as the Third Rome. We find similar attitudes even among small ethnic groups, each convinced of the superiority of its own culture over that of neighboring tribes.

Ethnocentrism requires no justification because it reflects the natural desire to order the surrounding world, give it orientation and stable structures, measure it by

establishing basic oppositions — “us/them”; culture (meaning “our culture, the culture of our society”) vs. nature; earth/sky, etc.

Western culture is no exception. Like all others, it is based on an ethnocentric mindset. However, despite being nuanced and hypercritical in many of its aspects, recognizing and pointing out ethnocentrism in all other societies and civilizations, Western culture is completely incapable of soberly acknowledging that its own claims to “universalism” also fall under this phenomenon. In Western civilization’s view, the ambitions of any society to place itself at the center of the universe are seen as “naive illusions,” while in the case of the West, they are considered an irrefutable “scientific truth.” That is, Western ethnocentrism is deemed “scientific,” while all other manifestations of it are regarded as mere “myths,” often dangerous and in need of “debunking.”

Western Ethnocentrism: Early Forms

Throughout different stages of Western history, ethnocentrism has taken various forms. In archaic times, it was a natural characteristic of the Western European tribes and peoples, reflected in their pagan beliefs and cultures. Since in religion, the central place in the universe is given to God (or gods in polytheism), it was logical that the sacred ancestors of European peoples were also considered gods. This was characteristic of the archaic Greeks and Romans, as well as the Celts, Germans, Slavs, Scythians, Iranians, and others.

In classical Greece, ethnocentrism was elevated to the level of philosophy, art, and sophisticated culture, which provided the foundation for a new “rationally” justified version. During the era of Alexander the Great in the Hellenistic period, the idea of a Universal Kingdom was adopted by the Greeks from the Achaemenids. This imperial-cultural synthesis was then fully inherited by the Romans, especially after Augustus, in the imperial period. Christianity placed the Church at the center of existence, inheriting both Jewish ethnocentrism (now transferred to the New Israel, all Christians) and later — after Constantine the Great — the universalist ambitions of Hellenistic culture, as well as the doctrine of the Empire and the *Katechon*, the sacred Emperor.

It should be noted that until the division of the Christian world into the West (Catholicism) and the East (Orthodoxy), the structure of ethnocentrism within the Mediterranean civilization was unified and the same. This was called the *oikoumene* — the inhabited world, at the center of which stood Christian civilization. Even in the Byzantine geographic work of Cosmas Indicopleustes, written in the 6th century, ancient views were preserved that normal people inhabit only the central (Mediterranean) areas, and as one moves towards the outskirts of the *oikoumene*, the people living there become increasingly exotic, gradually losing human traits. Ecumenical ethnocentrism was still ethnocentrism.

Russian Ethnocentrism and the Bipolar Oikoumene

It is important to note that up until a certain point — specifically, the final split of the Churches in the Great Schism of 1054 — the structure of civilizational ethnocentrism was shared by both the West and the emerging Eastern Slavic civilization. However, the decisive factor became the Russians' adherence to the Eastern Church, to Orthodoxy, and Byzantinism. As the once unified ethnocentrism split into two poles — Western and Eastern — Ancient Rus clearly identified itself with the Christian East.

The roots of Russian ethnocentrism lie in Byzantium and Constantinople. While the Western version of the oikoumene, and accordingly the religious-political-cultural ethnocentrism, shifted to Western Europe, where after the usurpation of the title of Emperor by Charlemagne, the West held both main centers — spiritual (Rome, the Papal States) and imperial (a succession of German Emperors from the Carolingians, Ottonians, and Staufens to the Habsburgs). Meanwhile, Byzantium and the Orthodox East were seen by the West as peripheral, populated by “schismatics” and “heretics,” meaning not quite true Christians, and even not entirely human (similar to the wondrous half-humans of the world's outskirts described by Herodotus or Pliny the Elder).

It is precisely here, with the division of the ecumenical ethnocentrism, that the concept of Western civilization begins, and from here, we must start Westernology. Previously, the Christian oikoumene of the East and West was a cultural continuum — both Constantinople (New Rome) and Rome itself were central, and the Eastern Fathers were not opposed to the Western ones. Earlier layers of ethnocentric views, such as the Mesopotamian universal kingdoms, Old Testament religious anthropology, and Hellenistic universalism, were also shared. Later, however, two Christian civilizations emerged, each insisting that it was the sole center.

Thus, we find ourselves dealing with a bipolar oikoumene, a situation that culminated in the Crusaders' capture of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade (1202–1204) and the establishment of the Latin Empire in the Eastern Mediterranean. This was further exacerbated by the fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks, which led to one pole strengthening significantly, while the other nearly disappeared.

At this historical turning point, the mission of the Eastern pole of the Christian oikoumene and the tradition of Byzantine ethnocentrism was taken up by the Moscow tsardom. However, several centuries would pass before the two oikoumenes would clash in a full-scale planetary battle — this would happen during the Great Game between the British Empire and the Russian Empire, then in the Cold War, and finally in the present-day Special Military Operation.

Ethnocentric Metamorphoses of Western Civilization

From the coronation of Ivan the Terrible as tsar — marking the establishment of the Russian version of Eastern Christian Byzantine ethnocentrism — to the global-scale confrontation between Russia and the West, Western ethnocentrism itself went through several significant stages.

If, at an early stage, the Western pole of the oikoumene represented Christian Greco-Roman culture in a specific form (namely Catholicism), then the European Renaissance and Reformation significantly altered its structures and paradigms, deeply influencing European self-consciousness. Western Europe was considered the center of the world and humanity during the Catholic Middle Ages, but new motifs — Renaissance humanism, individualistic Protestantism, rationalist philosophy, and the materialism of modern science — transformed Western European culture into something entirely different. The West still viewed itself as the center of the world, but now based on new foundations. The “arguments” for its ethnocentrism and claims to universality became science, secular political organization, claims to rationality, and placing not God, but man, at the center. Naturally, by “man,” what was meant was the modern Western European man. It was according to this model that all other concepts and theories of humanism, secularism, civil society, democracy, etc., were built. Traditional medieval estates receded into the background, and the bourgeoisie took center stage.

At the same time, this modern Europe entered the age of colonization, asserting its ethnocentrism on a planetary scale and imposing its “superiority” on all other peoples of the Earth. Enslaving entire nations and conquering continents and civilizations took place under the banner of “progress” and “development.” The West believed that more developed societies had every right to subjugate less developed ones. This gave rise to Western racism, most vividly reflected in the works of the staunch British imperialist Rudyard Kipling, who cynically referred to colonialism as the “White Man’s Burden.”

Rationalism, scientific inventions, and technological discoveries, combined with the values of the Enlightenment and the doctrine of progress, became the new substance of European ethnocentrism during the colonial era. The West continued to place itself at the center of the universe, but now in a completely different guise, justifying its universality by appealing to entirely new criteria.

Meanwhile, in Russia, the traditional version of Byzantine oikoumenism continued to prevail. Orthodoxy defined the core identity and, along with it, the heritage of the Christian civilization, which had once represented a continuum with the entire Mediterranean culture — a paradigm once shared with the peoples of Western Europe. At a certain point, the West entered the modern era and dressed its ethnocentrism in new forms, while Russia, for the most part, remained faithful to the original civilizational core of the Christian oikoumene, which the West gradually and

progressively abandoned or transformed beyond recognition, even to the point of opposition. In modern Europe, God was replaced by man; faith and revelation by reason and experiment; tradition by innovation; spirit by matter; eternity by time; and constancy or decline (as in the primary sacred scriptures and traditions) by progress and development. Thus, Western culture found itself in opposition not only to Orthodoxy — embodied primarily in Russia after it inherited the Byzantine legacy and, through it, Greco-Roman civilization — but also to itself. This led to the myths of the “Dark Ages” and the uncritical glorification of modernity, the era of the modern age.

In this situation, traditionalist and conservative Russian society, along with the Russian state, appeared to the West not only as “schismatics” but as the embodiment of backwardness, barbarism, and a dangerous threat to everything progressive and developed. If Russia had lacked the means to defend itself from the West, it would have, like other traditional societies, fallen victim to aggressive colonization. However, Russia resisted, not only militarily but also culturally, maintaining its adherence to its Orthodox-Byzantine identity.

Thus, from the 18th century onwards, another crucial element was added to the opposition of the two ecumenical ethnocentrisms: the West embodied modernity, a new edition of universalism, while Russia defended itself, holding onto the belief that its path alone was truly universal and salvific. This path lay in loyalty to Orthodoxy and the traditional order, particularly the sacred monarchy and the class hierarchy, which were largely preserved in Russia until the Revolution of 1917. The West embodied modernity, while Russia embodied tradition. The West represented a secular, materialistic world; Russia stood for sacredness and spirit.

Early Versions of Westernology

From the moment the West fully transitioned to the paradigm of modernity, the relationship between it and Russia as civilizations fundamentally changed. From that point on, Westernism, especially beginning with Peter the Great, became a mindset of part of the Russian elite, who gradually accepted the position that the Russian Empire was also a European power and therefore destined to follow the same path as the Western countries. The theme of Moscow as the Third Rome gradually faded (especially after the event of the church schism in Russia, with the Old Believers, who upheld ancient piety, being pushed to the periphery), and the process of modernization/Westernization of Russian society began. However, even as it succumbed to Western epistemology, Russia in the 18th century still vigilantly defended its political and military sovereignty, allowing the old Russian way of life to persist in many areas through inertia.

In the 19th century, the Slavophiles clearly identified this paradox, and it is here that the foundations of Westernology were laid, though not yet under that name. The Slavophiles clearly formulated the principles of Russia’s unchanging core identity as

the heir to the Eastern Christian oikoumene, including its ethnocentric position in the world, and exposed the arbitrary claims of Western European civilization in the form of modernity to universality. Nikolai Danilevsky formulated the theory of cultural-historical types, according to which European civilization was in decline (based on the criteria of Orthodox civilization faithful to Christian roots), while the Slavs — primarily the Russians — were entering an era of flourishing and the revival of their civilizational core, preparing to fulfill their mission. From this perspective, the entire history of Western Europe, or the Romano-Germanic world (according to Danilevsky), is viewed through a qualitative distance as something local and lacking any grounds for absolutizing its historical experience. What the West proclaims as “truth,” “benefit,” “development,” “progress,” “good,” “freedom,” and “democracy,” etc., must be placed in a specific historical, geographical, and “ethnic” context, and should not be taken as something unquestionably true and axiomatic. What we are dealing with is ordinary ethnocentrism that has far exceeded any natural limits, becoming aggressive, deceitful, despicable, and sometimes irrational, incapable of genuine self-reflection and critical examination.

The Slavophiles, and later the Eurasianists, laid the foundations for Westernology, relying on traditional Russian values. The West can and should be studied, not as the ultimate truth, but as a distinct and unique civilization among others — non-Western ones. In the case of Russian science and the public sphere, it is necessary to strictly separate what might be productive and acceptable for Russia from what is toxic and destructive.

The Slavophiles were particularly close to German Romanticism and classical German philosophy (Fichte, Schelling, Hegel), which inspired a whole generation of Russian conservative thinkers. Another version of Westernology emerged from leftist movements in Russia, particularly the populists, who rejected capitalism as a whole. The populists, like some Slavophiles (e.g., Ivan Aksakov), believed that the core of Russian culture was the peasant commune, which lived according to its ancient laws and ways and represented the optimal form of harmonious spiritual and meaningful existence. They viewed serfdom as a result of Western influence, and its abolition, in their view, should not lead to the development of capitalist relations or the proletarianization of peasants but to the revival of the people’s spirit and traditional values – social, labor-oriented, and ecclesiastical. In this view, the negative aspects of the Russian Empire were attributed to Western influences, and Western ideas — by that time predominantly bourgeois and liberal — provoked deep rejection. Thus, even from the left, a distance from Western civilization was forming, paving the way for Westernology.

A special case was Russian Marxism, which fully shared the ethnocentrism of modern Western Europe, accepting the inevitability and even progressiveness of capitalism and internationalism but still subjected capitalism to radical critique. In the Soviet period, this became dogma, ultimately leading to the collapse of the USSR under the influence of deceptive promises of convergence by Western strategists. In more

pragmatic periods of Soviet history, the ideological class hatred towards capitalists was often fueled by the spirit of populism and Slavophilism. An attempt to bring this issue out of ambiguity was made by the Russian National Bolsheviks, but they did not receive sufficient support from Soviet leadership.

Western Ethnocentrism in Postmodernity

Having traced, in broad terms, the genealogy of Western ethnocentrism up to its manifestation in the paradigm of modernity, this line can easily be extended into the most recent periods of Western history — namely, the paradigm of postmodernity.

Postmodernism is a double-edged phenomenon. On the one hand, it sharply critiques the ethnocentrism of Western European civilization, both in the traditional era and in modern times, insisting on rejecting it and rehabilitating the most extravagant and eccentric, often irrational, views. But on the other hand, it does not question its own “liberatory zeal” and, in the spirit of classic Western colonialism and racism, unhesitatingly seeks to impose its now postmodern Western canon on all societies. While critiquing the West and its civilization, postmodernism becomes a natural continuation of it, and by insisting on globalizing its values, it simply brings ethnocentrism to its logical extreme. Postmodernism not only inherits modernity’s intolerance of tradition but intensifies it, turning it into an aggressive parody, into pure Satanism. From now on, the criterion for “development” and “democracy” becomes conformity to postmodern globalist values and principles. Only that which is based on gender politics, the recognition of minority rights of all kinds, the rejection of any identity, including individual identity, and on transitology (which is now understood as the transition from modernity to postmodernity) is considered “scientific.”

The West has opposed its own universality to Russian civilization since the era of the Catholic Middle Ages. Later, this civilizational opposition evolved into modernity versus tradition, i.e., against Russia’s lingering medievalism, which lasted almost until the early 20th century. During the Soviet period, the civilizational conflict took on an ideological and class dimension: a proletarian socialist society (essentially Russia and its allies) versus the bourgeois-capitalist West.

In the 20th century, Russia also faced a direct manifestation of Western racism in the form of war with Nazi Germany — another version of self-proclaimed bearers of the “White Man’s Burden,” who set out on a campaign against the “Slavic subhumans.”

Finally, today’s postmodern West, claiming the global reach of its civilizational model, confronts Russia’s determination to defend and assert its sovereignty. At first, this sovereignty was of the state, with the recognition of the universality of Western civilizational norms (from 2000–2022), and later it became sovereignty as a clearly proclaimed state-civilization. It might seem like this is merely Russia’s heightened reaction to the West’s situational behavior towards it (NATO’s eastward expansion, attempts to sever post-Soviet states from Russia, failure to honor international

agreements, etc.), compounded by the obvious rejection of postmodernist values sharply opposed by Russia's much more traditional society (except for a thin layer of liberal Westernizers). However, if we place this in a broader historical perspective, it becomes clear that this is not a coincidence, but a pattern. Russian civilization is just now beginning to clearly recognize itself and its foundational principles. The direct confrontation with the West, which at any moment could escalate into an apocalyptic scenario of nuclear war, only adds a special drama to this process of civilizational awakening.

Russia is not simply rejecting the overtly toxic and perverse postmodernism; it is returning to its roots and reasserting its civilizational identity — in other words, its Russian ethnocentrism, in which Russia is the center of the Orthodox (and thus Christian, universal) oikoumene.

Conclusion

Taking the aforementioned considerations into account, we can form a preliminary understanding of what Westernology is. It is an approach to studying the West, in which it is viewed as an independent, distinct civilization. This civilization shares common roots with Russian civilization, but later became its opponent within the broader Christian oikoumene. Subsequently, the West developed an anti-Christian and anti-traditional paradigm of modernity, from which it opposed Russia, attacking it through direct and indirect conflicts (Napoleon, the Crimean War, World War One, the Great Patriotic War, the Cold War). The West's antagonism further intensified in its postmodern and globalist forms (globalism, the Special Military Operation), while persistently claiming universality and absolute authority over its norms, values, philosophies, and worldviews at every stage.

Clearly, at each stage of Western history, in relation to Russian history, the Westernological perspective will vary. From the initial unity within the framework of a shared Christian Middle Ages (where Russia was present indirectly through its Byzantine heritage) to the absolute opposition of the Western postmodern era, we can outline the structure of the intermediate stages. As the antagonism steadily increased, the West's influence became increasingly destructive.

While opposing the West at every stage, Russia has not always had a clear understanding of its own civilizational principles and identity. This understanding has come in waves, with periods of rapprochement with the West — always leading to catastrophe — followed by periods of returning to its roots.

From this, a key conclusion emerges: Today, as we find ourselves in a phase of acute and intense confrontation with the West, in a state of direct war in Ukraine during the Special Military Operation, the social sciences, culture, education, and socio-political initiatives must proceed from the fundamental principle of Russia's uniqueness as a sovereign civilization. Any borrowing (of philosophy, theory, school of thought, concept, or term) from the context of Western philosophy or humanities

should only occur after thorough civilizational semantic analysis, distinguishing the acceptable from the unacceptable, the neutral and constructive from the toxic and destructive. This is the main task of Westernology — to strip the postulates, dogmas, and rules of Western culture and science (from postmodernism back to the religious disputes of the Middle Ages and Reformation, through the entire modern era and the axioms of the Enlightenment) of their claims to universality, and to correlate any thesis, system, or methodology with the foundations of Russian civilization, the Russian World.

The scope of tasks facing Westernology is vast and difficult to fully grasp. It is about a complete and deep epistemological decolonization of Russian consciousness, liberation from the centuries-long influence of toxic doctrines that have captivated Russian thought, subjecting it to alien systems and worldviews.

However, the grandeur of this task should not discourage us. We rely on many generations of our great ancestors — saints, ascetics, devout spiritual figures, hierarchs, monks, tsars, military leaders, heroes, ordinary laborers, writers, poets, composers, artists, actors, and thinkers — who for centuries carried within themselves the Russian spirit and preserved the deep codes of Russian civilization. Our task is only to systematize their legacy, give it new forms, and breathe new life into it.

(translated from the Russian)

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This was very good. Quite comprehensive and edifying. Thank you for the translation.

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Lyss P. Hacker Lyss's Substack Sep 25

What about Sovietism, which has its main concentration in Russia for many decades, and its effects on both Russians and Westerners? Anti-traditional influences were not just flowing from West to Russia, but also in the other direction. Also, Russians killed their Tzar. How can they claim link to old Russian nobility?

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