



EDITORIAL

Editor's Note

The current issue of *Changing Societies & Personalities* aims to investigate value transformations in various spheres of social life, such as the image of religion in the memorial places and its impact on national identity; the concept of time maintaining full openness to the future and remembering the past, as well as messianism in the works of prominent contemporary French philosophers; the balance between openness to global influences and national identity in education; the role of professional organizations in civil society; and review of the research on ethical and psychological reasons in reproductive donation.

Tomáš Bubík in his article *A Graveyard as a Home to Ghosts or a Subject of Scholarly Research? The Czech National Cemetery at Vyšehrad* questions the generally accepted claim that the contemporary Czech society is one of the least religious nations in Europe and stresses the importance of focusing not so much on general claims but rather on specific segments of culture intertwining religious and non-religious elements. Bubík's research is focused on the Vyšehrad cemetery in Prague as a vivid example of close links between the religious and the secular. He shares the assumption about a close relationship between personal religiosity and its funerary expression, being convinced that the study of Vyšehrad gravestones in a historical perspective can contribute to elucidating the transformations concerning the attitude of Czech society towards life and death, the country and its religion. Bubík observes the history of the Vyšehrad national cemetery and its contribution to the formation of national identity in the light of the traditional "mortuary ideology" widespread in the country, concluding that "religion is an important element of the grave architecture of the national cemetery from its founding up until the present, despite the fact that it does not clearly predominate at present".

In the article *"Messianicity Without Messianism": On the Place of Religion in the Philosophy of Jacques Derrida*, Roman Soloviy explores the interpretation of messianicity by the prominent French philosopher Jacques Derrida in the light of ideas expressed by key Jewish thinkers of the beginning of the 20th century. Soloviy stresses that Derrida turned to the analysis of religious issues at different stages of his intellectual career, thus calling into question the traditional view on Derrida's deconstruction as generally being not favourable to religion. At the

same time, Soloviy proves that Derrida's understanding of religion goes far beyond the terms of traditional denominational beliefs and practices. In addition, Derrida denies the traditional concept of time as a sequence of modalized presents: that is why, Soloviy believes, "the future cannot be regarded as a projected continuation of the present. It is not a descriptive empirical future, but a messianic eschatological future, an expectation of the arrival of an unpredictable other, in which our 'come' is turned to the point that we cannot determine, predict, or calculate in advance who or what is coming". Derrida's messianicity, concludes Soloviy, remains fully secular and separate from any particular socio-cultural context.

Fairuza S. Ismagilova, Aleksey V. Maltsev and Erkinbai N. Sattarov in their article *The Uzbek National Tradition in the Pedagogical Practices of Adult Education* search "for the right balance between openness to global influences, on the one hand, and the desire to preserve the country's national identity, on the other", namely, the centuries-old cultural and historical traditions of Uzbek people in the sphere of professional education. Following the results of a focus group analysis, the authors formulated four research hypotheses concerning teaching strategies and methods in the Uzbek education system: (1) Professors tend to choose interactive methods by following one of the four strategies in relation to the national context and national identity; (2) Experts will consider such methods as buddying, discussion, role-playing and metaphorical role-play as having limited applicability in the Uzbek national context; (3) Experts will consider the methods of case study, in-basket technique and shadowing as holding more potential for training the civil service talent pool in Uzbekistan; (4) Experts will consider mentoring, coaching and workshops as the most effective teaching methods. In the conclusion, the authors present the results of the conducted empirical study, which are partly confirmed and partly refuted.

Identification of the main objective and subjective reasons that determine nurses' membership/non-membership in professional associations is the focus of Natalia A. Akimova and Elena N. Medvedeva article *Factors Influencing Nurses' Decision to Join a Professional Association in Russia*. Following a comprehensive literature review, the authors analyse the role of nurse professional organizations as an important element of civil society, describe their history and present status in various countries, including Russia. The authors' intention is to address the existing research gap in studying professional nurse associations in Russia. In-depth interviews with nurses from different Russian regions were conducted to clarify their motivation for membership/non-membership; nurses' awareness of the activities of medical associations; the role of professional associations in nurses' daily practices, etc. The authors conclude that "factors contributing to the popularity of professional nurse associations can be quite diverse: starting from formal obligations... and ending with personal interest and commitment to the organization's goals and mission".

Elvira E. Symaniuk, Irina G. Polyakova and Elena V. Kvashnina present the article *Review of International Research on Ethical and Psychological Barriers to Reproductive Donation*, which covers most recent studies on reproductive donation written in English. The analysis includes about 70 publications devoted to the ethical and psychological motivation of donors to participate in reproductive donation. The

authors believe that the review can be beneficial for professional Artificial Reproductive Technologies (ART) organizations, “in particular those engaged in recruitment of new donors. The results of this review are meant to provide useful information for medical and legal professionals as well as policy makers on reproductive health”. The conclusion is drawn that reproductive donation is underpinned by a variety of motivations and faces multiple obstacles; therefore, research into psychological and ethical aspects of reproductive donation should be continued.

The section OPENING THE DEBATE introduces Dmitriy A. Davydov's article *The Crisis of Humanism and Emerging Post-Anthropocentric Epoch: A Personalistic View*. In a quite provocative way, the author poses the problem of “increasing unpredictability” [...] and “danger of manmade interventions in human nature”, stressing the importance of approaching reality through a personalistic path. The latter is considered to be not a specific philosophical school, but rather “an attitude, a way of thinking that can be present in certain people, regardless of whether they consider themselves to be personalist philosophers or not”. Davydov analyses the concept of “humanism” in the modern socio-cultural context: he insists that the “humanistic civilization” has entered its “sunset period” and sets up a variety of arguments to prove this assumption. He believes that humanism as a historical phenomenon of European culture experiences a deep crisis, which “provides the impulse towards mechanisms of technological changes in the biological nature of individuals”. Turning to the prospects of changing human nature by technologies, Davydov warns about their possible dangers, namely, the “destruction of the universal human ‘lifeworld’”. In particular, Davydov's article may be seen as the invitation to discuss perspectives of transhumanism and its impact over human body and mind.

In the BOOK REVIEW section, one can find Elena Trubina's review of Germaine R. Halegoua (2019), *The Digital City: Media and the Social Production of Place* (New-York University Press). Trubina stresses that the focus of the book is “first, how citizens daily engage in the digital placemaking practices; second, the diversity of ways in which various populations employ navigation technologies and media platforms”.

Discussions around the topics raised in the present issue will be continued in the subsequent issues of our journal. In planning to introduce new interesting themes, we welcome suggestions from our readers and prospective authors for thematic issues, debate sections or book reviews.

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