The problem of terminological precision in studies on cultural exclusion zones

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Abstract

Studying cultural memory and practices of “oblivion” and “remembrance”, scholars encounter a whole range of phenomena which have remained nameless and practically undescribed in special literature so far and, therefore, are, in a manner of speaking, “illegitimate”. Moreover, to use well-established terminology inevitably means to employ traditional approaches, which due to their retrospective character aren’t able to recognize new phenomena. Thus, we should describe such phenomena and “bring them to light” by means of specific terminology. The paper introduces these fundamental terms, allowing for the description of previously unapparent cultural phenomena. The list of these terms includes “cultural exclusion zones”, “current (field) of culture”, “deactualization”, “reactualization”, and “cultural frontier (borderline) zones”.

1. Introduction

In the famous words of Karl Marx, “Humanity should part with its past cheerfully”. In some renderings and interpretations of this statement, the comical element is accentuated, so that we are invited to part with our past laughing. However, is it really possible to part with our past once and for all? According to Marx, laughter guarantees the impossibility of our past returning, but is this truly possible? The notion of progress as a linear, unidirectional motion from simple to complicated, from crude to sublime, which lies at the heart of Marxist
theory, implies the dramatic replacement of a paradigm (or formation, according to Marx). These changes form the qualitative leaps of history, and their main agent is a community of people united by material “bonds”, economic conditions, the means of production and equally all-out relations with other communities. At the same time, all these communities are in a state of constant confrontation or war with each other – even those whose “bonds” have become obsolete, and with whom humanity has already cheerfully parted, as their domination has become impossible due to their backwardness.

However, when speaking about the revolutionary replacement of a paradigm, it is obvious that parting with the past is feasible only on condition of the total replacement of those cultural patterns which took shape during the formation of the paradigm itself. To this end, the intensification of “protective” measures is necessary, which is very unfavourable for a culture and as a rule results in a restriction on creativity and, eventually, the retardation of cultural development. Nevertheless, the adoption of a cultural pattern by all the bearers of the culture is implemented through the acquisition of common experience, whether that be in the situation of the revolutionary or the evolutionary replacement of a paradigm, i.e. the consistent development of a system. This means that such an adoption is historical (in that every cultural pattern contains all the systems of the previous cultural patterns in which it is rooted), universal (in that it is subconsciously shared by all the bearers of a culture) and mental (in that any representative of any given culture automatically submits to the cultural pattern, making the researcher think of such a mentality as a unique behaviour system for all representatives of a single culture). Such are the features of the collective memory of the bearers of culture (Maurice Halbwachs), a resource containing the entire history of the common (social) experience of the formation of that culture (or cultural paradigm). Gaining access to this memory is the only way for a neophyte to attain cultural socialization. This type of memory can be defined as cultural memory after Jan Assmann, assuming of course that we endow the bearers of that collective memory with an identity of the significance of a separate culture. The mechanisms by which collective memory functions serve as a constant reminder of cultural patterns and allow the group of bearers of a culture to join together and form a community. In this sense, a Marxist formation can exist only on the condition that its system of generating relationships is the result of the development of its representatives’ common experience and, consequently, forms their collective memory. However, the economic aspect, which Marxists would see as the only pressing problem, is only one of many elements and aspects of cultural experience, which also includes national “bonds” that are in fact only individual elements of a system of cultural patterns which


4 Troitskiy (2001).
have emerged in the process of the development of common experience. Appealing to these elements, and attempting to replace a whole system of cultural patterns with them, results in political speculation on cultural memory and its ideologization; moreover, thanks to their aforementioned totality and mentality, these elements very easily arouse sympathy in the representatives of the culture.

In the process of cultural transformation, the content of a culture undergoes changes as some of its elements, or patterns, are gradually, or sometimes dramatically, replaced with others; this leads to a certain alteration of the cultural landscape and the consolidation of cultural memory. The replacement of previous cultural patterns with new ones may be provoked by geographical changes, historical circumstances, political situations and any number of other factors, but in any case through this process certain “zones” or “areas” of cultural memory containing repressed elements emerge. It is these non-actual or “obsolete” cultural elements, or rather reminiscences about them, which turn a person into a representative of a specific culture. By virtue of the historical nature of cultural experience, these displaced elements are contained within the current, actual system of cultural attitudes, and cannot be restored without the destruction and rearrangement of the entire system, and the formation of an essentially new paradigm. In the case of a revolutionary change to the cultural paradigm, whatever is displaced becomes defunct, although thanks to its characteristics as an element of cultural memory (its mentality and universality) it cannot be destroyed, indeed from time to time it will re-emerge, returning from specific “zones” (“fields”) of cultural memory, and these zones can be designated as “cultural exclusion zones”.

It is clear that studies on cultural exclusion zones and all their related phenomena require first and foremost terminological precision. In Russia, the humanities along with culture as a whole are historically oriented: that is why the language, which reflects cultural patterns, is also retrospective to a certain degree (not only everyday speech but also the language of science) and constantly returns us to the past, deliberately condemning people to historicism by anchoring whatever is being described to both time and space. It is little wonder that Russian scholars tend to arrange their studies on culture retrospectively, and as a result these works usually lack some crucial element and are not suitable for the description of the current situation. Therefore, our aim is first of all to overcome the limitations of language and to describe phenomena in synchrony (i.e. to communicate their actuality to each other in any given moment). To this end, it seems necessary to emphasize the functionality of the phenomena described. This in turn leads us to reject the well-established terms traditionally used in studies of historical and cultural memory (burdened as they are with the idea of temporality) and to resort to terms that are unusual for the humanities and borrowed from the field of precise and natural sciences. Cultural (collective) memory orients itself on the cohesion of the experience of all its adherents, but this experience functions within the memory not as a sequential entity, but as a
simultaneous whole. The notion of the sequential nature of events (the idea of temporality), introduced from outside, lends an interpretation and a hierarchy which also happens to be an instrument of political, ideological or indeed any other form of manipulation. Our objective is to study the memory mechanisms within a culture irrespective of those influences, and to describe memory from the perspective of the means (and forms) of its functioning, irrespective of the actual content of that memory.

2. Cultural exclusion zones

By necessity, any social environment exists as a medium of interaction based on the precondition of common stereotypes, and thus it is a stereotypical environment. By its very nature, it requires a demarcation line between the familiar and the alien, a borderline\(^5\) that separates civilized lands from barbarian territories (barbarian, that is, from the perspective of social environment in question).\(^6\) However, this topographically constructed system of terminology describes social space as essentially static, and does not reflect its mobility or the constant dynamics of its changes, and so the borders between cultural spaces appear immutable. At the same time, there are marginal territories and phenomena which have either been replaced or are in the process of being replaced in cultural practice, or have been forgotten or are being forgotten, and which therefore constitute the limits of cultural identification. The rigidity of cultural practices informs the character of cultural studies and therefore the results of the research. Meanwhile, the study of marginal phenomena which

\(^5\) Bold print denotes those terms which seem to us to be crucial to the conceptualization of Cultural Exclusion and Frontier Zones (Cefz). Several of them are new to humanitarian studies, some are used in unorthodox combinations, and some are purely functional in character.

\(^6\) A thorough elaboration of the terminology used to describe borders is being undertaken at the Viadrina University, Frankfurt (Oder) by Hannes Kraemer, Concha Maria Hoefler, Peter Ulrich, Kerstin Schoor, and others. Judging by the findings published to date, in the near future we will see a completed universal theory of borders with a corresponding terminological mechanism, but for now we must persevere with the help of a system of converting terms between languages to point out the additional meanings of the terms being used, meanings which elude description due to the functional limitations of the languages themselves. We have chosen the word borderline as it is necessary to emphasize the geographical or topographical connotations of this notion: a borderline divides territories (or for that matter cultivated space and wastelands) inhabited by representatives of different cultures, and thus is the place of encounter and conflict, repression and metamorphosis. At the same time, we wanted to avoid any associations with the notion of limit and all its derivatives, as it is connected with an idea of liminal or liminality elaborated by anthropologists, psychologists and philosophers (mainly existentialists and post-modernists) and relates more closely to time and social/psychological status than to space. For these reasons we have chosen the following equivalents in other languages: die Grenze in German, la frontiera in Italian and la frontière in French. These terms also describe both geographical and state borders.
comprise the areas of repression or “oblivion” and freedom from cultural stereotypes, allows us to examine these stereotypes as if from without, as if we are not subject to their influence. It is worth noting that repressed and “forgotten” things are repressed and forgotten for defined purposes which have influenced the cultural stereotypes themselves, meaning that when we speak of the freedom from cultural stereotypes, we imply that the researcher is influenced by them to a lesser degree than are other representatives of his or her culture.

The functional approach, which permits us to see culture as a mobile and dynamic system, presupposes the usage of different terminology. In this sense, we consider the notion of the actuality-of-culture (i.e. the group of phenomena, which are constantly used in culture and are variably reproduced, being part of the continuum of conscience and biased assimilation) as the most precise definition for the system of cultural stereotypes, i.e. a positive semiotic system as opposed to a negative system of marginal phenomena. Actuality comprises culture as a semiotic system and at the same time terminologically implies non-actuality, which is of more interest to us.

In any culture, these marginal territories become what we may term sanitary zones, preventing the culture from decay and stimulating cultural creativity. “Forgotten” and repressed phenomena are the source of creative energy, themes and tools used for the reproduction of previous cultural experience. However, these marginal phenomena are so different in their content, standards and quality that the only way to study them in their totality is to describe them using a functional approach. A term which is able to provide the most precise description of these marginal zones of culture, without dragging with it a long chain of connotations and associations, must be borrowed from the language practices and semiotic systems of exact and natural sciences. The Chernobyl Exclusion Zone

7 We will not dwell here on the description of the actuality of culture as the analog of a physical field.

8 The term actuality has a very long history and can be traced all the way back to Latin translations the works of Aristotle, where actualitas was used as the Latin equivalent for the Greek ἔντελεχεια (full, complete reality) and ἐνέργεια (activity). Here we use the word to describe the actual existence of society, the unity of historical, social, cultural and other phenomena, which have immediate and urgent significance for all representatives of a given culture. Actuality thus denotes the current circumstances or state of affairs, and it is quite important that in Russian the word актуальное (actuality) has the subsidiary meaning of being modern, fashionable, up-to-date: thus it allows us to emphasize that we are dealing with cross-sectional data that only characterize the present situation. Non-actuality is chosen as a collective term for all phenomena which either no longer belong, or do not yet belong to this current situation. La actualité and la inactualité in French have the same meaning. However, our search for the equivalents to these terms in other European languages has demonstrated that it is impossible to preserve the Latin root in Italian: hence la realtà and la irrealità. The German language does not provide us with a word based on the Latin root with a similar sense. We suggest using die Verwirklichung, which means “realization”, “fulfillment”, “accomplishment” and “actualization”, with keine Verwirklichung as its antonym.
provides the most accurate visual image for the element of cultural topography that we are describing: not only does it satisfy our requirements, but it is also described with its own singular term. The disaster of 1986 gave rise to a peculiar topography which is characteristic for this particular area: for convenience, the territory is divided into the Special Zone (the epicentre, or site of the disaster) and the Exclusion Zone, with the latter in turn comprising two territories with different pollution levels (the 10-kilometre and 30-kilometre Zones). The Special Zone is also a part of the Exclusion Zone, and has become not only the zone of actual exclusion (with its inhabitants evacuated, sometimes against their will, and further residence in the zone prohibited) but also the zone of suppression, or in other words, the zone of cultural exclusion. Officials and authorities have used any means possible to try to force this territory out of the media space, to “forget” it and condemn it to oblivion. The work of clearing the territory around important drainage works, or the construction of water reservoirs is also described by eco-historians, enabling us to conclude the existence of a practice of territorial displacement and the creation of sanitary zones of oblivion and silence, and not only in relation to ecological disasters. In this way we see before us a phenomenon that is universal and common to all cultures: the ecological sanitation of cultural memory by the authorities manifest in space, the phenomenon of the dis-location of memory. The term cultural exclusion zones would seem to be particularly suitable for the description of these zones of omission, oblivion and repression. It should be noted that Marxist “alienation” (the process of workers’ estrangement from the results of their labour) and even the contraposition to it has nothing in common with this notion.

Such zones in the cultural space are created by a dominant ideology (in this case the term ideology is understood not in the purely political, but in the more general sense of the prevalent discourse or Foucault’s discourse of power). This fact in turn inevitably challenges philosophy and literature with the task of deconstructing these areas, reactualizing the deliberately marginalized cultural experience, overcoming oblivion, and finally dismantling the zones of cultural exclusion. Studies on the mechanism of interaction between different cultures
are still fairly essential, as the construction and deconstruction of such zones also takes place in the contemporary cultural space.

These zones, from which repressed (excluded) and forgotten phenomena can at any moment be returned to the field of cultural actuality, are sublated and preserved in everyday cultural practices, i.e. the semiosphere, in the form of labels, associations, direct links, rudimentary terms, idioms, gestures etc. As Lyotard notes in his work *The Postmodern Condition*: “Consider the form of popular sayings, proverbs, and maxims: they are like little splinters of potential narratives, or molds of old ones, which have continued to circulate at certain levels of the contemporary social edifice. In their prosody can be recognized the mark of that strange temporalization that jars the golden rule of our knowledge: ‘never forget’”.11 Juri M. Lotman formulated it as a general principle: “… any fragment of the semiotic structure or separate text preserves the mechanisms for reconstruction of the whole system”.12 As long as these “fragments of the semiotic structure” (in the words of Lotman) are employed in everyday cultural practices precisely as the *fragments* of the single semiotic structure, they can neither be removed nor “forgotten” (assuming, of course, that they keep to their specific role).13 The usage of the functional potential of these “fragments” in everyday practice, and the possibility (ability) to restore the whole system on the basis of any of these “fragments”, i.e. a communion to the phenomena which have been repressed and displaced out to the cultural exclusion zones, is an element of identification practice. Thus a person’s identity may be successfully defined by his or her knowledge of the “cultural exclusion zones” by subject. These zones of culture, which nobody can investigate directly, are hidden and inaccessible to those without any common cultural experience with other representatives of this culture (as in the case of immigrants who are able to understand a foreign language only literally, but not allegorically).

In his work *On the New*, Boris Groys14 describes the mechanisms by which new elements are introduced into a culture, assuming that outside the culture there is something, specifically a profane environment, which is the source of the new. In other words, according to Groys there exists a zone that is separate from cultural practice, one that is similar to what we call the zone of cultural exclusion. However, in spite of the outward similarity between Groys’ conceptual constructs and ours, there remain significant differences. Principal among

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13 There is an exclusion from this rule: if a repressed semiotic system isn’t requested by anyone its fragments will lose their significance for cultural practices (as it sometimes takes place when these fragments neither preserve their own meanings nor have been endowed with new ones). But even in this case they can be reactualized.
14 Groys (2014).
them is the difference in how the essence of that zone is envisaged. Although Groys endeavours to steer clear of the romantic tradition that lies at the heart of modernism, the source of the contraposition of the cultural and non-cultural space can be traced to this very tradition. For Groys, the profane, or non-cultural, zone is an area which is initially unilluminated by culture, but as soon as it is, the illuminated elements cross over into the cultural zone. It is interesting that in Groys’ theory, despite our use of the illuminatory metaphor, it is not very clear which zone is expanding into which: when outlining their basic characteristics at the beginning, he says that culture incorporates elements from the profane, yet from the examples given it is evident that the exact opposite is taking place (viz the example of Duchamp and the Mona Lisa) – the profane appropriates the cultural experience and, in so doing, transfers the practices of profane appropriation to the status of the cultural, although it does not transfer all of them, only that artefact which has been used in the capture of new cultural zones by the profane. According to Groys, this singular artefact is symbolic of a corresponding class of analogous objects, except in this capacity it can be accepted by a cultural archive which is unable to incorporate an infinite number of identical things. The act of displacement from culture, or de-culturization, is linked to the reduction or increase in the cultural value of an artefact, therefore a reduction or increase in its market value is also legitimate in Groys’s view.

Groys’ theory is crucial to the description and understanding of Assmann’s concept of cultural memory, although this theory does not allow us to work with the subjective side of the cultural experience. In contrast to Groys, the concept of culture that lies at the heart of the theory of cultural exclusion zones and borderlands does not assume a qualitative divide. The cultural and the profane are to be found equally in the actual and in the zone of cultural exclusion. Their distribution across these cultural zones is entirely unconnected with their cultural value, but is connected instead to a system of norms which is accepted in one culture or other and allows the bearers of that culture to either use or not to use one or other cultural practice, as well as to remember or not remember one thing or another. The term «culture» here carries no background of intrinsic value, but instead presumes the inclusion of profane content as well. Once again, the division into the cultural and the profane seems outmoded to us following the work of Mikhail Bakhtin and Olga Freidenberg. Moreover, Groys’ theory can be applied in the main to describing processes in art at a time when market economic theory already operates, but is hardly relevant to art from the time of the mercantilists and the physiocrats – in other words it encompasses only the last 2 or 3 centuries. Meanwhile, zones of cultural exclusion and borderlands lay claim to a universality in the description of cultural practice.
3. Deactualization

The existence of zones of cultural exclusion in opposition to the field of cultural actuality is presupposed by the processes of ejection of certain elements from the latter. Cultural repression can be compared to a similar psychological process. Terminologically speaking, the word “repression” as it is used in English seems less than precise to us, the term “exclusion” is more suitable. At the same time, there is an essential link between the processes of repression in psychoanalysis and the processes of exclusion in the theory of cultural exclusion and frontier zones that are highlighted by professor Aleksandr Brodsky\textsuperscript{15}, so we cannot reject psychoanalytical connotations and will use both terms together.

Repressed (excluded) phenomena make their presence felt constantly: they are always near at hand, and ready to emerge at any given moment to influence actuality. However, in spite of this similarity, what interests us more is the process that takes place in culture; this process has its peculiarities as a result of the great variety in the means of repression (exclusion). For this reason, we must be sure to clarify at all times that when we speak of repression (exclusion), we are talking about culture. We therefore also use another term – deactualization – with the intention of emphasizing the relationship with the field of cultural actuality.\textsuperscript{16} Deactualization is the deliberate repression (exclusion) of a phenomenon or idea from the actuality of cultural space and its displacement beyond the borders of the official culture, i.e. it is deprived of the opportunity to transmit its “image”. As such transmissions become less frequent, the phenomenon sinks into oblivion, i.e. all the “labels” and “tags” of this “image” become repressed (excluded) or deconstructed, and obtain new semantic meaning, new content.

In a person’s mental life, prohibition is the only form of repression (exclusion) that can be applied by the centre to those elements which cannot be integrated into the system due to their divergence from normality. The unity of the psychological centre of personality ensures the homogeneity of the mechanism of repression (exclusion). There exist different centres of cultural life within the framework of a single culture, and that in turn shapes different forms and methods of deactualization. Thus, prohibition (or, more precisely, the prohibition of transmission and retransmission of certain elements of culture – persons, events

\textsuperscript{15} On the term of repression with all its psychoanalytical connotations see Brodsky (2015).

\textsuperscript{16} See note 6, where we spoke of actuality. It seems beneficial to preserve previously used roots to emphasize that when describing actualization and deactualization, we are dealing with the stages of a single process. So we suggest using la derealizzazione in Italian. Die Entverwirklichung (with the prefix Ent- which has meaning of moving away, deprivation and separation) is suggested as the German equivalent. To find a satisfying word in French is impossible (the root actual- cannot be preserved without serious change of meaning): but le évincement with its meaning of “removal”, “driving off” or “exclusion” may be a good candidate on this role.
etc. – imposed by authority) is the source of the most severe and, thanks to its legal justification, obvious form of deactualization.\textsuperscript{17}

The prohibitive strategies which governments use to manage processes taking place in the fields of culture and science result in the localization of these spheres, the destruction of the patterns of interaction within them, and consequently in the breakdown of communication, the deceleration of cultural development and advancement and, indeed, the need for a new system; the construction of such a system implies the allocation of functions between its unprohibited elements and the waste of resources which are vital for growth and development. Thus the entire history of science turns out to be the history of constant reform and adaptation to circumstances.\textsuperscript{18}

Every prohibition imposed by authority changes the alignment of forces within a culture and obliges that culture (as a self-regulated system) to adapt to new circumstances. That leads to a temporary decrease in the self-regulating activity of the culture in respect to its elements (or the subjects of culture) while this activity is necessary for the preservation of the content and patterns of internal cultural processes, i.e. for the preservation of the culture's historical dimension and the development of its traditions. Each act of interference in the development of a culture (and particularly any imposition of prohibition) forces history to start all over again. From the historical point of view, it does not take long to restore the proper functioning of cultural processes after such an intervention (a generation, probably), but during this period a restructuring of the culture usually takes place, caused by the dispersal and loss of those meanings which had previously been inherent to cultural phenomena, thanks to the habitual patterns of their perception among representatives of that culture.

By practically expelling banned phenomena from the official cultural context, prohibitions provide opportunities for the creation of cultural exclusion zones. They result in a cultural conversion which over the course of generations becomes irreversible. Thus, for example, cultural processes which took place in the USSR in the 1930s were dramatically different from those taking place 20 years earlier or indeed 30 years later. Moreover, the allegedly artificially cultivated cultural environment was not the reason for these changes: they were provoked by the political and economic reformation of the body of the state and became the reflection of this reformation. Culture cannot exist without the creation of zones of cultural exclusion, and authority, while it may turn out to be a significant

\textsuperscript{17} It is interesting that the word prohibition means not only an action of forbidding something, often by law, but is also connected with a peculiar historical phenomenon: Prohibition was a ban on the manufacture and sale of alcohol which took place in the USA between 1920 and 1933, which gave rise to a whole new (albeit marginalized and criminalized) culture of bootlegging. The terms die Prohibition

\textsuperscript{18} For prohibitive strategies in Russian philosophy, see Malinov and Troitsky (2013). For a description of examples of deactualization, see Ovchinnikova (2015).
factor influencing their make-up, is nevertheless not the only factor, thus we cannot speak of the necessity of totalitarianism for culture.

The elements of official culture deactualized by prohibition never entirely vanish without trace: they are preserved in oral tales, artefacts and documents imprinting the previous existence of repressed (excluded) phenomena in the contemporary culture. However, to remove a ban does not mean to achieve the full restoration of the cultural landscape: deactualization is irreversible. An excised element of culture cannot be returned to its former cultural niche – such wounds tend to heal over. This process of constant regeneration of cultural tissue makes the readmitted element alien to its context: the new transplant utterly changes the cultural landscape and provokes a new reformation.

There is another means of deactualization, different from prohibitions imposed by the political centre. It is implemented by many representatives of a certain culture who, thanks to political propaganda or some explicit or implicit convention, withdraw certain elements of the culture from cultural circulation along with all their traces. It takes place even when there is no official prohibition imposed by the political centre, but there is (although this also is not obligatory) some “signal” or perhaps just a hint. In this situation, one or other element of a culture gradually falls from use, the memory of cultural experience is reshaped, and history is rewritten. This decentralized activity is more effective as it leverages many individual wills, and these persons are ready to take the initiative and keep silent not only about the repressed (excluded) element but also about any other elements which are connected with it, point to it or hint at it. At the moment, we describe this method of deactualization simply as repression (exclusion). Such repression accompanied prohibitions in the 1930-1950s, when local persecutions initiated by peers foreran any ban on publication, censorial expurgation and legal prosecution.

There are some already mentioned discrepancies between repression (exclusion) and prohibition, but sometimes, especially when speaking about the mechanisms that create cultural exclusion zones in general, these discrepancies are negligible, and it is possible to use the term “repression” (exclusion) with its psychoanalytical allusions and consistent imagery as a synonym for the more general notion of “deactualization”. In this sense, a very widespread kind of deactualization, namely censorship, is implemented through the official prohibition of the transmission of cultural elements, but the constant omission of a cultural element brings it under the influence of the mechanism of repression (exclusion).

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19 For examples of repression, see Troitskaya (2015). The psychiatric term repression has well-established equivalents in other languages: la repression in French, la repressione in Italian and die Verdrängung in German.
4. Reactualization

The inverse process, the process by which cultural elements return to the state of actuality, can be termed reactualization. However, this term does not necessarily mean the complete restoration of repressed (excluded) knowledge. Once a phenomenon enters the zone of cultural exclusion, it cannot be restored to its former glory prior to deactualization. Reactualization leads to a more obvious and visible manifestation of previously deactualized phenomena, to their active use and presence in the field of actuality of the culture, but these phenomena will invariably obtain new meanings and functions. As Juri M. Lotman points out:

This reconstruction of language already lost to the system, in which system the given text would have brought meaning, practically always brings with it the creation of a new language, as opposed to the reconstruction of the old one, as this appears from the point of view of the self-knowledge of culture. The eternal flow within culture of specific resources of text with lost codes leads to the process of the creation of new codes, often understood subjectively as reconstructions ("recollections").

Dwelling in the zone of cultural exclusion means the loss of those codes (meanings) that are necessary for the restoration of the semiotic system. A culture must adapt to situations in which some elements of its system are deliberately “forgotten” for one reason or another. In such a situation, for the culture to be reconstructed, it must rearrange the functions of the preserved elements (in the case of deactualization within the framework of a current cultural paradigm) or find some substitute for deactualized elements (if the paradigm itself has been changed). Thus we can affirm that the system of culture before deactualization differs from the system after it. But even more dramatic changes are produced by the appearance of reactualized elements within a system that has already found its equilibrium. The return to the initial state is impossible, as the system obtains new experience, including the experience of deactualization itself, which is incorporated into its structure and defines its form and content. That is why “reminiscence” only resembles the restoration of that which is forgotten, while it is in fact a new state, leading to the rearrangement of func-

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20 Both the Russian and English languages allow us to accentuate the continuity of the different stages of the described process: actualization is supplemented with deactualization while the latter is partially overcome by reactualization. But in other languages (see note 6) it is impossible to preserve the initial roots and therefore we suggest taking as our starting point the synonym for the term reactualization, namely “restoration”. This gives us la restauration in French (with its rather interesting historical connotation with the Bourbon Restoration after the fall of Napoleon), die Restauration in German and la restaurazione in Italian.

tions between elements, and the creation of a new code for the conversion of reactualized experience and the experience of reactualization. These processes are as indispensable as the rising and setting of the sun, thus any discussion of the usefulness or harmfulness of these processes is futile.

5. Frontiers, and the geographical interpretation of cultural exclusion

The way that cultural exclusion zones are presented in cultural topography merits special attention, as there are some peculiarities. In addition to exclusion zones produced by man-made catastrophes (e.g. the Chernobyl and Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disasters), which have specific reasons for the manifestation of the aforementioned peculiarities, there are other areas of repression (exclusion), marginal areas which should not necessarily exist at the cultural frontier, but resemble these “borderlands”. Let us not forget that today’s authorities are either silent or sometimes even directly untruthful when asked to comment on the Chernobyl and Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disasters, what is more they have never been eager to make any kind of comment in the past. Quite the contrary, these topoi have been quickly repressed (excluded) and forced out of the official discourse. Some ethical mechanisms of this suppression have been developed (for example a rationalization: “It is inappropriate to mention this event as it is a tragedy”, – or the exclusion of all names which may remind people about the tragedy).

Marginal territories which a priori form the zones of exclusion (including cultural exclusion) are at the same time territories where two or more different traditions co-exist. The ability of borders to serve as a filter (as has been pointed out by Lotman) allows them to convert the norms of one culture into the norms of another. However it should be taken into account that, contrary to state borders which coincide with certain lines on the map, cultural borders are far more vague.

A frontier (or borderland)\(^{22}\) is a bicultural and bilingual space where the laws (legal, economical, cultural, linguistic etc.) of one culture have already been

\(^{22}\) The term borderland directly refers to the borderline (see note 5) with its geographical and topographical connotations. But we believe that it is also possible to use the term frontier which has the same meaning of a line or border separating two countries and the district near such a line, but is also rich in rather romantic historical associations: the frontier is the extreme limit of settled land beyond which lies wilderness (especially in the western USA before Pacific settlement). This word also has a useful figurative meaning: the extreme limit of understanding or achievement in a particular area (as in the “frontiers of knowledge”). Из американской литературы термин, похоже, был заимствован практически в ею европейских языках. В нашем выборе эквивалентов мы старались сохранить эту богатство значений, даже если только частично: das Grenzgebiet / das Grenzland (or die Frontier) in German, il territorio / la zona di frontiera in Italian and le territoire / le zone frontière in French.
displaced, while the laws of another culture are yet to be put into effect. That is why frontiers offer refuge for marginal persons who cannot belong to any group. Thus, empires used barbaric tribes for the protection of their borders. The same reasons led Russian rulers to resort to the Cossacks, who lived on the fringes of society and did not belong to any state either culturally or legally; therefore they were ready to submit and serve only at their own will and not “by law”.

After the work of Frederic Jackson Turner and Ray Allen Billington, it is appropriate to spend some time on the term frontier as the word which best reflects the transitory character of the borderland. The characteristics of the frontier which have taken shape in contemporary literature, aligning its essence to a transience of condition, to a constant inconstancy, nevertheless differ from the notion of the «encounter between culture and savagery» that was characteristic of the processes of colonization, and it is natural that such a meaning is now ascribed only to historical descriptions. If the conditions are of a rigid line of demarcation, for instance between the Soviet republics and the capitalist world, then the multiculturedness of the borderland will be minimal, while contemporary transparent borders, for example within the EU, suggest a borderland more in the sense of a zone of increased multiculturedness on either side of the formal border. People cross borders, and perceive this transition not only thanks to the signposts, and to the border-posts left behind as souvenirs, but also by experiencing the difference between two nation states, a difference that is felt more strongly the further they venture from the borderline – a difference in structures, in lifestyles, in prices, even in currency symbols, but most of all, a difference in cultures (in cultural norms, stereotypes, attitudes and language). These differences are felt by the subjects themselves, and so we can talk of mental geography, in which the border takes on crucial significance not for the nation state as a political structure, but for its inhabitants. Now the borderland acquires the character of a territory of disparity, i.e. a frontier, where there is no unixed status, but nor at the same time is there any systemic unity with other territories. From the perspective of culture, this is the territory of cultural exclusion, a sanitary zone of multiculturedness between two wholes. The frontier is the territory of absence, the blind zone where every identity is situational, momentary and temporary. Like the zones of exclusion around destroyed nuclear power plants, these actual frontiers exist on the fringes of culture; nobody speaks about them, they do not manifest themselves in any way, and they are literally erased from the official discourse. The single exception is the memorial discourse relating to the glorification of a particular location as a frontier. At this point the location’s status as a frontier is retrospectively rescinded and it becomes fully incorporated into the principal territory. Borderlands exist as self-regulating and self-restoring systems, and are simultaneously the most conservative; the “flickering” identity of the inhabitants of marginal territories requires the hardness of two border structures, ensuring the continuity of this “flicker”, and providing psychological support.
6. Conclusion

All the aforementioned terms have been introduced in the course of our research work, with the aim of drawing attention to certain phenomena which have already been partially described. The Tartu-Moscow Semiotic School (Boris Uspensky, Juri Lotman and others) has played an important role in the development of topographical imagery relating to the study of culture, and the description of some intriguing issues (certain key issues have been outlined). At the same time, the generalizing approach which permits it to highlight patterns from various fields of semiotics (which are sometimes disparate and dissimilar) seems in many respects to be the result of the researcher’s involvement in the process of research: Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle for quantum physics proves itself to be also of use in the field of cultural studies. In all likelihood it is caused, on the one hand, by the fact that it is difficult to describe the results of these researches using our everyday language, and on the other hand by the inability of the researcher to be a detached and impartial observer (something which is especially unimaginable in the case of cultural studies). In any case, the terminology proposed allows us to adjust our research tools in a new way, emphasizing those phenomena and processes which had not previously been accessible and thus had never been the focus of attention.

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