Eurasian Images, Archetypes and Mirages: Vectors from Ancient Times to Nowadays

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ABSTRACT
Alexandre Gnes. Eurasian Images, Archetypes and Mirages: Vectors from Ancient Times to Nowadays. National and ethnic archetype that is being carved in tales, folklore, and epos for centuries, is a key to understanding imagology as a set of images and notions about a culture or nationality. In Eurasia, gradual evolution of archetypes of different peoples was overthrown by World War I, which created new peoples, new borders and new nations. In the article, on the basis of studying Magyar national archetype and its relationships with other Eurasian archetypes, mainly Germanic and Turan, we are outlining a hypothesis that a clear delineation “our own – foreign” that would defy the globalisation, is a necessary prerequisite for the sustainable and productive co-existence of Eurasian cultures and nationalities and an important condition of Eurasia’s future development.

Key words: Europe, Eurasia, Magyars, imagology, archetype, phenotype, migration
Today, we cannot overestimate the importance of discriminating between “our own” and “alien,” “foreign,” “strange.” Suddenly we found ourselves in a strange situation of globalisation that prescribes to us all to become “equal to each other in every sense,” even identical. For Eurasia, this topic is even more important than for the rest of the world, as the two World Wars completely changed and blurred notions of identity and national kinship in Eurasia (Gnes 2011). The idea of the equality and equivalence of all people, who must together adapt to the limitations of “their” planet, puts the images of different cultural communities, both in their uniqueness and in difference from other communities, under a magnifying glass. In Eurasia, the idea of the total equality questions the very notion of cultural identity that has heretofore served as the basis for the unity of certain national and cultural groups (O'Sullivan 2011).

We advance a hypothesis that a fundamental condition for the co-existence of more than seven billion people in the increasingly overcrowded world is the recognition of and respect for the value of the “others,” rather than adjusting everyone and everything to the one globalising mould. Different cultural mould preserve the images of what comprises “their” and the “others.” An important, if not the main challenge of the twenty-first-century Eurasia is the awareness that not only its East and West, but also its North and the South formed fundamentally different images of the world, human, life, culture, etc., and that globalisation should not be understood as a synonym of eliminating all differences between people.
(Sassin et al. 2018). Otherwise, we can anticipate that ere long homo sapiens may become a stranger and, after all, deadly enemy to itself.

In the social research literature, we may find different approaches to the life sciences. In North America, there is a clear division into physical and human anthropology. The former deals with everything from anatomy and studying races to physiology and psychiatry, while the latter with everything from psychology to ethnography. In the Eurasian research tradition, it is common to divide human sciences into biological, psychological, social and spiritual sciences that study different aspects. The main subject of imagology (from Latin imago image and Greek logos word, knowledge) is the figurative perception of “us” and “them” by representatives of different cultures. An imagology researcher is primarily interested in what, and not who represents the culture (Kuitert 2013; Neumann 2010). Therefore, the formation, perception and transformation of the images of people and groups of people is studied by imagology as a branch of social science. Imagology deals with the very process of “creating” and “fixing” images that would eventually be perceived as sustainable.

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in their travelogues European writers Fyodor Dostoevsky, Heinrich Heine and Alexander Kuprin made an attempt not only to describe other countries, cities and peoples, but also to analyse what they saw from the point of view of their nationalities. These works can be considered an initial imagological research. Imagology became a recognised branch of science in the mid-twentieth century thanks to the work of French literary scholars J.-M. Carré and M.-F. Guyard. The former studied in detail the formation of the image of Germany and all the German in French literature of the nineteenth – first half of the twentieth centuries. Relations between France and Germany were never more tragic than at that time. J.-M. Carré (1947, 113) tried to study the images of the French and Germans crated by each other. The latter was interested in the emergence and distribution of ideas about the “strangers” (Guyard 1965, 50).

A new interest in imagological research emerged in the 1950s (Polyakov 2013, 121). In 1966, the Belgian Hugo Dyserinck (1966a; 1966b) published his fundamental article “On the problem of ‘images’ and ‘mirages:’ Their research in comparative literary studies.” He questioned the existence of the concepts of “nation” and “national identity.” The main Dyserinck’s merit is an attempt to rationalise the ideas about “our own” and “foreign.”

The basic concept in imagology is archetype. Carl Gustav Jung described the elements of the collective unconscious with this term. He clearly distinguished the individual and collective unconscious (Jung 2011, 56). The latter is the experience of the people, which is primarily fixed in fairy tales, mythology and epics. Ancient tales, songs and epics are transformed by linguists into other forms, more understandable for a modern person, not only because of the language changes, but also because of the different perception of reality by modern readers and their ancestors. So, an archetype determines the images that dominate the related people. The image cannot be compared with a painting by a famous artist, no matter how expressive it may be; it is rather an sketch that would be gradually refined and altered. At each stage of change, new features of this sketch would appear.

Certain historical events and conditions trigger changes in the spiritual state of a people,
which, in turn, leads to a change in the corresponding archetypes. German researcher Herfried Münkler in his book *The Germans and Their Myths* mentions the speech given by the Reich Chancellor of the German Empire Bernhard von Bülow in the Reichstag on 29 March 1909, five years before the First World War (Münkler 2009). Von Bülow was appealing not only to the Germans in Germany, but also in Austria-Hungary, reminding them the oath of allegiance to the Nibelungs (Münkler 2009, 81). The “Song of the Nibelungs,” whose protagonist is the noble Siegfried, can be called an integral part of the German archetype. During the ninth–thirteenth centuries in Scandinavia, Germany and Iceland, various versions of the legend about Siegfried were composed. There we may encounter different names: Seyfurd and Siegurd, but the meaning was not different. The treacherous murder of a Nordic hero, capable of incredible feats, was a central part of the corresponding archetype. After the defeat in the First World War, the image of a traitor in Germany and Austria was emphasised to be embodied in Hagen, who once had basely killed Siegfried. On the contrary, on 22 June 1915, R. Kipling wrote in the newspaper *The Morning Post*: “No matter how we imagine the division of the world, today the world is divided only into Germans and human beings” (cited by Lasswell 2917, 91).

Fig. 1. Fürst Bernhard von Bülow, Reichskanzler of German Reich in 1900-1909 (left) and his notable speech about Nibelungs (right). © www.quotationof.com
The First World War was the first war of images. British propaganda spread an idea for the Europeans about a “dehumanised Teuton,” represented in different posters as a monster in a Kaiser’s helmet, while captions usually said: “Stop the Hun!” or “Beat the Hun with the Freedom Loan Bonds!” (Le Naour 2015). German propaganda formed the images of Barbarian Russians, eccentric Englishmen and cowardly Frenchmen (Todd 2006). Austrian posters showed rogue Italians and noble Tyrolean riflemen, descendants of Andreas Hofer, who had raised against the Napoleonic invaders almost hundred years before. The protests and resistance of the Tyroleans, which continued in South Tyrol, that was ceded in 1919 to Italy under the Treaty of Saint-Germain, until the end of the 1960s, are a vivid example of the active manifestation of the archetype. The Tyroleans never became Italians, but remained Austrians – therefore all these protests.

Fig. 2. Ferdinand Leeke. Rhine’s Daughters and Alberich (left). Siegfried and three Daughters of Rhine (right). Illustrations to Richard Wagner’s tetralogy *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Rhine is a central, indispensable constituent of German cultural and national archetype.
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It is interesting that the Western Europe’s fear of the “Eastern hordes” began to form from the era of the Great Migration. Through centuries it was incarnated in a negative subconscious image of the steppe spaces of Eastern Europe. The disdainful attitude towards Russians as descendants of the Mongolians manifested during uneasy periods in the West–Russia relations, has the same “imagological mechanism” as the presentation of Germans as modern Huns.

The renaming of St Petersburg to Petrograd and the appearance of postcards depicting people in folk costumes of the pre-Peter era were a symbol of rejecting everything con-
nected with the German world. It was a collective and unconscious outburst of destroying everything German in Russian culture at the War time.

The augmentatio of European peoples’ mutual animosity during the War, backed up by the war of archetypes, was so strong that it redefined ideological moulds and narrations. The hostility to all German (Teutonic), not only to Nazism, could be clearly observed in the film *Alexander Nevsky*, which was released on the USSR screens in 1938. The Soviet introduction of shoulder straps in 1943 instead if rank cubes became unconscious demonstrating the superiority of the sovereign archetype over the communist ideology. A 1941 poster by Kukryniksy with the words of Samuil Marshak “We are fighting great, we are stabbing desperately, we are grandchildren of Suvorov, we are children of Chapaev,” which depicted not only V. I. Chapaev and A. V. Suvorov, but also an archetypal ancient Russian knight, was called upon to show the continuity of generations and to awaken the “collective unconscious impulse.”

Fig. 3. Kukryniksy. A 1941 war poster with the line by Samuil Marshak “We are fighting great, we are stabbing desperately, we are grandchildren of Suvorov, we are children of Chapaev.”
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When we perceive representatives of another people, “strangers,” we inevitably face the necessity of using the “phenotype” concept. Phenotype is a set of characteristics inherent in an individual with a specific genotype at a specific stage of development. This is the physical component of another person’s image. Phenotype contributes to the formation of an idea of different-origin peoples (light-hair Swede, dark-skinned Spaniard), but from the imagologic perspective, phenotypic characterisation does not play a significant role (Dahl 2011). Attempts to use linguistic definitions in describing phenotype lead to such annoying and non-scientific ideas as “Slavic mien” or “Germanic race.” A phenotype, like an image, is constantly changing to a greater or lesser extent (González Sepúlveda 2019). The first changes may proceed under the influence of natural forces, genetics and ecological environment. An image is inevitably formed under the influence of three main characteristics of humans: 1) an ability for abstract (creative) thinking; 2) speech and 3) creative activity (an ability to create household items).

In describing the ethnographic consequences of Russian colonialism in the Upper Volga region, Russian historian Vasily Klyuchevsky (1991, 40-63) delineates phenotype and archetype in describing different peoples. Speaking about consequences of the interaction of the Eastern Slavs with other tribes (primarily Finno-Ugric), he provides a detailed description of the phenotype of a Great Russian. Further, Dr Klyuchevsky, as a geographical determinist, points out the inextricable connection between the “nature” (temperament) of the Great Russians and the continental climate in the vast Eurasian spaces. Hard toil that must be completed in the shortest possible time, and the unpredictability of both natural and social conditions, according to Klyuchevsky, contributed to the formation of a worker’s image as not a human diligently and obediently making his/her everyday duties, but a talented creator, a wonderworker. It is no surprise that in Russian the collocation “a talentless individual” bears a more negative semantic load than “a lazy one.” Heroes of Russian fairy tales rely on what nature has given them from birth, and on supernatural forces of trees, gale and even tempest. For the Russians as Eurasian inhabitants, harsh natural conditions and unpredictability of life predetermined the importance of conciliarity and, most importantly, judging of an individual’s efforts by a team (hence the Russian saying arose “In company, death is beautiful” – the closest but inaccurate English equivalent will be “Two in distress make sorrow less”).

An integral part of the Great Russian archetype is the river Volga. In songs, folklore and literature, it occupies a crucial position and becomes an archetypal symbol, an object of unconditional love: “...When you come home at the end of the journey, lower your palms into Volga.” Volga river is definitely endowed with female qualities (“Mother Volga”). On the contrary, the German river Rhine personifies exclusively masculine principles: “...Be calm, our Fatherland: The guard is firm and reliable, the guard is on the Rhine!” German de facto national anthem during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 was the song “Guard on the Rhine” that emphasised both the responsibility for this “exclusively German” river and the key role of the Rhine as a protector of the German nation. The Rhine is presented as the major natural boundary of the German world. Returning to the Song of the Nibelungs, it should be
noted that this Germanic epic is inseparably linked with the Rhine. Based on the Song of the Nibelungs and other Old Scandinavian folklore motives, Richard Wagner created Das Rheingold opera, an artistic embodiment of the all-German archetypal origins.

Taking the Hungarians as an example, we can assert that the influence of an archetype on fundamental ideas of a nationality about its place in the world is stronger than the influence of the phenotype. According to the official version, the ancestors of modern Hungarians came to the territory of the Carpathian basin in 896. For more than a thousand years, the Magyars have lived in the very centre of Europe in an Indo-European linguistic environment, having adopted almost all the external elements of the Central Europeans, including their phenotype. Modern Hungarians do not differ from Austrians, Slovaks, Slovenes and northern Croats. Nevertheless, the archetype of nomadic warriors manifests itself today through the myth of the Turanian origin of the Hungarians.

![Road signs with ancient Magyar runes](image)

Fig. 4. Road signs with ancient Magyar runes (upper panes) are used now with mythographical purposes to resurrect ancient Hunic and Turan tales. Ancient Magyar runic alphabet with a Latin transcription is presented in the lower pane.

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It is Turanian, not Finno-Ugric, elements of folk art that increasingly appear in numerous in size and tint festivals in Hungary. The festivals must emphasise the Magyar identity and differences from their neighbours ("strangers"). On the entrance to various villages and small towns, one can find the names of these places on tablets with ancient Turkic runes (along...
with names in Latin alphabet).²

Fig. 5. Monuments to Attila, the semi-legendary ancient Hun ruler, in Hungary: in Pilisszántó (left) and Kincsem Lovaspark (right). These monuments have to stress ancient Turan “roots” of the modern Hungarians that are imagined for the most part. © http://myhungary.net; www.ancient.eu

In 2009, a special Hungarian-Turanian Foundation was created, which oversees the ethnographic festival, Kurultay. Every two years representatives of the Turkic peoples, mainly from the countries of the former Soviet Union, as well as a delegation from Bulgaria, come to Hungary to attend the afore-mentioned Kurultay. The Hungarians’ interest in their Turanian roots in no way affects the dominant role of Christianity (Roman Catholicism, Protestantism) in the country’s cultural identity. There are no signs of the Islamisation of Hungary. On the contrary, Hungary steadfastly protests against mass migration to Europe from Arab countries. The fact that representatives of Slavic and Orthodox Bulgaria participated in the Kurultai is noteworthy, as the Bulgarians have the image of an ancient Turkic tribe Bulgars, a part of which migrated in the second half of the seventh century to the

² Magyar runes are likely to have even more ancient, pre-Turkic origin, though a direct relation of this script to Huns cannot be traced. The author has the point showing their mythographic use in our days. Ed. remark.
territory of modern Bulgaria. In this case, the real proportion of the genes of the ancient Magyars and Bulgars among the modern Hungarians and Bulgarians does not matter. The people cherish the memory of heroic ancestors who travelled through the great distances, fought multiple fiends along their way and settled in a fertile land. On the Hungarian TV news channel M1, the borders of the weather map coincide with the map of the Carpathian Basin. A human may learn about the weather not only in the territory of modern Hungary, but also in Slovakia, Transcarpathia, a significant part of modern Romania, Vojvodina, Northern Croatia, Slovenia and the extreme east of Austria. And it is not chauvinism. It is a manifestation of a strong, unbreakable connection of a national culture with its archetype.

Not having studied the whole culture of a foreign nationality, an individual and social group may conclude about it on the basis of a small part of the whole that is closer to them in territory. The examples are unexpected names of Germany and Russia in the languages of their neighbours. The Germanic tribe of Alemans lived where the Swabians now live (the extreme South-West of Germany). Therefore, it is not surprising that in French Germany is called Allemagne. Another Germanic tribe, the Saxons, lived alongside the Finno-Ugrian ancestors of modern Estonians and Finns. As a result, the modern name of Germany in Estonian is Saksamaa, and in Finnish Saksa. In Finnish, Russia is called Venaja, in Estonian Venema. These names are possibly associated with the Wends, who were neighbours of the ancestors of the Finns and Estonians. The Latvians call Russia Krievija, because the ancestors of Latvians (Latgalians and Selonians) coexisted with the Slavic tribe of Krivichs.

Fig. 6. Monuments to the very same Attila, but in modern Turkey. The Turks regard him their ruler in Pre-Muslim era just as the Hungarians theirs.

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Military experts, diplomats, economists and historians are trying to find a way out of the conflict between Russia and the collective West led by the United States, but the need to attract cultural researchers and imagologists is unfortunately not realised. Everybody relies on the attitude “We know what they think and / or what they wish to say / do.” However, it is totally ineffective in the modern situation, since today the image of an individual or nationality is changing much faster than it was before globalised and networked unlimited access to knowledge and information. The abundance of even useful and relevant information about a nationality does not provide any real interaction with its representatives. This often happens due to the study of individual social groups without researching its archetype. It is hardly possible to understand the Germans as a whole nation by studying the mentality of only the Frisians or Swabs.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, European states existed within or at the junction of the three main cultural and ethnographic demesnes: German-Protestant, Roman-Catholic and Slavic-Orthodox. The core of the German-Protestant area was formed by Northern Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Scandinavia. The area of the Romanesque (Latin) Catholic peoples covered Italy, France, partly Belgium, Spain and Portugal.

Fig. 7. Baltic tribes maps demonstrate why the Latvians call Russia Krievija. Slavic tribe of Krivichs lives near borderland of Latgalians and Selonians, ancestors of modern Latvians. © reddit.com
Fig. 8. Proximity of the Saxons to Finno-Ugric peoples inhabiting lands to the east of Elbe, explains the origins of Estonian name of Germany Saksamaa, and Finnish Saksa.

© reddit.com

The Slavic Orthodox monarchies of Russia, Serbia and Bulgaria formed the third cultural and historical region. Roman Catholic Germans lived in Southern Germany and Austria-Hungary. Roman Catholic Slavs were mainly subjects of Austria-Hungary. Romanians and Greeks gravitated towards the Slavic-Orthodox area – though they are not Slavic nationalities, they are still Eastern Christian peoples. Roman Catholic and Calvinist Hungarians are not Germanic or Slavic people. Nevertheless, the Magyars successfully integrated into the Germanic and Slavic ethnographic matrices. As a result, by 1914 the Hungarians had equal rights with the Austrian Germans in the management of the Habsburg monarchy. At that time, the United States and the English part of Canada represented the North American continuation of the Anglo-Saxon and German Protestant cultural area (Beeler 1991). It is no coincidence that the fastest assimilation in the Midwest US states at the end of the nineteenth century was noted among Lutherans from Germany and Scandinavia.

World War I overthrew the status quo that has been forming for many a century. The mentality of the Germans and the French became closer, the United States assumed the role of leadership in the Anglo-Saxon world. The war was not merely a cultural catastrophe. It significantly altered, disrupted and re-drew the contours of the cultural areas of the Old World and Eurasia on the whole. The Versailles Treaty legalised the emergence of new
countries and redrawing of territories without taking into account the history of the formation and relationships of the European peoples’ archetypes.

Fig 9. Europe before the First World War. © reddit.com

In the late 1980s, for some time, there was an illusion of rapprochement of collective heterogenous West and citizens of the former Soviet Union. However, the archetypal
negative load of the participants of the former confrontation deterred this process. In the Yu. Tynyanov’s novel *Death of Vazir-Mukhtar* dedicated to A.S. Griboyedov, the emphasis is put on the intrigues of the British against Russian influence in Persia in the first half of the nineteenth century. Two centuries later, in Russia most of people are no longer surprised by the persistence of ideas of “pernicious influence of Anglo-Saxons.”

In conclusion, it should be noted that an “alien” from the point of view of imagology does not mean an enemy. The attitude depends on what kind of content this concept is filled with. At the beginning of the eighteenth century in Styria, an unknown artist created a “Brief Description of the Peoples of Europe and Their Characteristics.” He depicted representatives of ten European nations and described their characteristics under each of them. From left to right are images of Europeans from West to East: Spaniard, French, Italian, German, English, Swede, Pole, Hungarian, Russian (called a Muscovite) and, finally, a Greek / Turk (melded into one!). Note that the number of negative traits in the characteristics increases from the West to East. This work is obviously not political correct if considered through the modern specs. Each nation is attributed a resemblance with a certain animal. An Englishman is associated with a horse and a Russian not with a bear (that we might anticipate), but with a donkey. Instead, a Pole is associated with a bear. The example of this table shows the low amount of objectivity in imagology of the beginning of the eighteenth century that depicted various archetypes.

In the 2018 book *Evolutionary Environments: Homo sapiens – an Endangered Species?* the authors showed that human perception of the surrounding world is unstable, and this instability increases in direct proportion to the complication of the human environment (Sassin et al. 2018). To admit a reasonable degree of isolation from the “foreign,” “alien” and “strange” does not cause, nor imply hostilities, animosity or enmity with it. On the contrary, the distinction between cultural areas and civilisations can lead to real understanding and respect for those who are not like “us” (Sassin 2019). Globalisation that erases the stints of “our own” and “alien” archetypes, blinds everyone (Ross 2000; Sassin 2020). In modern Eurasia, we have merely one way of sustainable development in the overcrowded situation, a respect to each other’s cultures and nationalities. This respect is possible only if we do not blur distinct features of the cultures, nor fuse them into the united faceless “humanity,” but recognise the essential differences that make every nationality and people unique and irreplaceable.

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**EXTENDED SUMMARY**

**Gnes, Alexandre. Eurasian Images, Archetypes and Mirages: Vectors from Ancient Times to Nowadays.**

In the paper, we apply an imagological approach to studying the evolution of Eurasian sets of images describing “our own” nation and the “aliens.” We advance a hypothesis that a fundamental condition for the co-existence of more than seven billion people in the increasingly overcrowded world is the recognition of and respect for the value of the “others,” rather than adjusting everyone and everything to the one globalising mould. Different cultural mould preserve the images of what comprises “their” and the “others.” An important, if not the main challenge of the twenty-first-century Eurasia is the awareness that not only its East and West, but also its North and the South formed fundamentally different images of the world, human, life, culture, etc., and that globalisation should not be understood as a synonym of eliminating all differences between people. Otherwise, we can anticipate that ere long *homo sapiens* may become a stranger and, after all, deadly enemy to itself.

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By the beginning of the twentieth century, European states existed within or at the junction of the three main cultural and ethnographic demesnes: German-Protestant, Roman-Catholic and Slavic-Orthodox. The core of the German-Protestant area was formed by Northern Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Scandinavia. The area of the Romanesque (Latin) Catholic peoples covered Italy, France, partly Belgium, Spain and Portugal.

The Slavic Orthodox monarchies of Russia, Serbia and Bulgaria formed the third cultural and historical region. Roman Catholic Germans lived in Southern Germany and Austria-Hungary. Roman Catholic Slavs were mainly subjects of Austria-Hungary. Romanians and Greeks gravitated towards the Slavic-Orthodox area – though they are not Slavic nationalities, they are still Eastern Christian peoples. Roman Catholic and Calvinist Hungarians are not Germanic or Slavic people. Nevertheless, the Magyars successfully integrated into the Germanic and Slavic ethnographic matrices. As a result, by 1914 the Hungarians had equal rights with the Austrian Germans in the management of the Habsburg monarchy. At that time, the United States and the English part of Canada represented the North American continuation of the Anglo-Saxon and German Protestant cultural area (Beeler 1991). It is no coincidence that the fastest assimilation in the Midwest US states at the end of the nineteenth century was noted among Lutherans from Germany and Scandinavia.

World War I overthrew the status quo that has been forming for many a century. The mentality of the Germans and the French became closer, the United States assumed the role of leadership in the Anglo-Saxon world. The war was not merely a cultural catastrophe. It significantly altered, disrupted and re-drew the contours of the cultural areas of the Old World and Eurasia on the whole. The Versailles Treaty legalised the emergence of new countries and redrawing of territories without taking into account the history of the formation and relationships of the European peoples’ archetypes.

From the point of view of imagology, an “alien” does not mean an enemy. Human perception of the surrounding world is unstable, and this instability increases in direct proportion to the complication of the human environment. To admit a reasonable degree of isolation from the “foreign,” “alien” and “strange” does not cause, nor imply hostilities, animosity or enmity with it. On the contrary, the distinction between cultural areas and civilisations can lead to real understanding and respect for those who are not like “us”. Globalisation that erases the stints of “our own” and “alien” archetypes, blinds everyone.

In modern Eurasia, we have merely one way of sustainable development in the overcrowded situation, a respect to each other’s cultures and nationalities. This respect is possible only if we do not blur distinct features of the cultures, nor fuse them into the united faceless “humanity,” but recognise the essential differences that make every nationality and people unique and irreplaceable.
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