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Editor's Note

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Editor's Note

Fall 2022

From July 28 to July 30, 2022, it was my pleasure to serve as the Program Chair of the 51st International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations conference — *The Future of Civilization(s)*. This issue of the Comparative Civilizations Review contains a selection of articles presented at the conference.

Monmouth University, situated in West Long Branch, New Jersey, served as a beautiful setting for the conference which hosted an international group of scholars. Individuals from the UK, Ukraine, Russia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Iran, Canada, Japan, and the U.S. converged to throw light on our fractured global landscape. In all, there were twenty-four papers given over a three-day period. Papers that were presented delved into family therapy, and the relationship between optimism, pessimism, and realism. Speakers explored the dominant ideology of contemporary Russia, nationalism in the context of globalization, and the progressive decay of Ethiopian Civilization.

Although many of the attendees would surely challenge my assessment, as I listened to the papers, I was struck by the feeling that presenters acknowledged that our grasp of the global landscape, although inconclusive or uncertain at best, is attended by a desire or ache to make out the ultimate context in which our lives are set.

In "*The Laws of History and Big Data*," Professor Gregory Lewicki of the War Studies University of Gdansk, Poland explored the work of Polish historian and social philosopher Feliks Koneczny (1862-1949). Koneczny founded the original system of the comparative science of civilizations and labored to discover the laws behind the clash of civilizations. Lewicki's paper spoke to the importance of Koneczny's quest.

Independent scholar Peter Hecht in "*Crusading as Philosophical Construct*" illumines the continuing conflict between Western Civilization and Islam by deconstructing modern misconceptions about the Crusades.

"Modern opinion," he argues, "is largely that the planners of the crusades instigated religious prejudice to provide political support for violence, in the name of Christianity." Peter advises that his analysis serves to "expand our understanding of how the Church justified the distinctly non-Christlike behaviors of the Crusaders." He examines not only the social context but the personal goals of ecclesiastical leaders of the time.

On the other hand, Dr. John Grayzel, in *Artificial Intelligence/Quantum Computing, and the Coming Transition from Civilization to Harmonization*, contends that the coming expansive use of artificial intelligence and quantum computing will alter the relations and understanding on which civilizations have traditionally been built. Grayzel insists that there will develop a new paradigm of civilization, a new reality that he says, “will flip our emphasis on delineating differences and conflicts between civilizations.”

In addition, Professor Tatyana Yakhontova of Ivan Franko National University, Lviv, Ukraine, proposed a critical analysis of contemporary Russian discourse. She sought to depict how every-day written texts reveal the way ideologies are reproduced and enacted in Russian life. Her analysis suggests ideologies that have given rise to the tragic war in Ukraine are hidden in plain sight. As she says, they are a product of the articles, websites, and interviews that are a part of daily and professional life.

Is it possible the meaning we find in the world, conflicting ideals, principles of conduct, and differing ends that guide our living, challenge any attempts to arrive at collective decisions? Or maybe these analyses are calling for a system of global politics that is, what I would call, minimally dogmatic. Such a politics would sanction the importance of a critical understanding of the global landscape — an understanding that is inherently inconclusive, indeterminate, and undefined.

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